

**We Are Not the Periphery:
Barbarian Economies and Northern Europe in the Exchange
Patterns of Western Eurasia, 1800 BC – AD 900**

A dissertation
submitted to the faculty of the University of Minnesota

by

Arnold A. Lelis

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Bernard S. Bachrach
(advisor)

December 2013

© Arnold A. Lelis, 2013

Acknowledgements

Not long after my father's untimely death in 1989, I was being told that "We need another professor Lelis." This circumstance was among the many considerations converging around this time that inspired me to re-start my higher education. The road embarked upon then—which turned out to be far longer than I ever imagined when I started—has culminated, so far, in the completion of this dissertation. Along the way, I have received the support and encouragement of a very large number of individuals and institutions.

It should be said at the outset that none of this would have been possible without a steady and generous stream of public financial support. Both during the undergraduate and graduate phases of my education I have benefitted greatly from the availability of Federal student loan programs. Further, when I came to the University of Minnesota to start my graduate studies, I received from the University a fully funded fellowship in my first year, with many years of Teaching Assistantships and Research Assistantships to follow. From 2006 onwards, I have been fortunate to hold a full-time adjunct position at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, which has enabled me to support myself during the many long years as an ABD, ever pursuing the moving target of a complete and finished dissertation.

Further, it has been my great good fortune to have access to excellent library resources, both at U Mass – Boston and especially at Minnesota. At UW – Stevens Point, the ILL coordinator never failed to locate and deliver even the most obscure foreign-language materials that I frequently needed for the dissertation research and without which the work could not have been completed. To her my thanks and appreciation.

The excellent faculty at U Mass – Boston provided me with a superb undergraduate foundation for advanced studies. I especially want to thank Professors Paul Bookbinder, Clive Foss, and William A. Percy, who wrote letters for me when I was applying to graduate programs. Moreover, Bill Percy gave me the opportunity to participate in a stimulating and controversial project researching the issue of Roman

marriage ages, which resulted in a book co-authored by myself, Bill Percy, and Beert Verstraete.

At Minnesota, I continued to receive support, encouragement, and excellent mentoring from a large number of faculty both within and outside the Department of History. My special thanks goes to Tom Noonan, who brought me to the University of Minnesota and supported my pursuit of the study of the eastern Baltic lands. I was included in Noonan's "kruzhok," his circle of graduate students who would meet regularly in his office to discuss our work and to share ideas. Other faculty members who were most involved in my development as an historian include especially Bernard Bachrach, Ruth Karras, Kay Reyerson, Jim Tracy, and Peter Wells, all of whom served also on my final examination committee. Prof. Bachrach, who advised me during the long process of completing the dissertation, always insisted upon the highest standards of scholarship and professional style, which undoubtedly made the finished product much more balanced and coherent than it would have been otherwise. Last but not least, I must thank the highly competent staff in the Department of History Graduate Studies office, who cheerfully put up with my endless delays and extensions and who always made the bureaucracy work.

My appreciation goes as well to the cohorts of fellow graduate students that I met during my years of residency at Minnesota, who collectively shaped a congenial and cooperative atmosphere in which we all flourished. Special mention must go to Ellen Arnold, Chris Freeman, and Roman Kovalev, but especially to my incomparable friends of the select circle we called the Pigs of Uranus: Mike Ryan, Eric Richtmyer, and Mike Sizer. Many were the nights that we spent with music, wine, and smelly cheeses. Eric was my housemate my last three years in Minneapolis, during which we pursued endless rounds of discussion on history and philosophy. Mike Sizer remains my truest intellectual companion. Thank you, Mike, first for introducing me to Paris, and always for your unfailing interest in my work.

Finally, and most importantly of all, I must express my thanks and appreciation to Heidi Sherman. We met originally in Tom Noonan's "kruzhok," and have been together ever since, sharing first the vicissitudes of life in graduate school and later the struggles

to survive as professional academics, along with many memorable travel adventures. Heidi is my true partner in life in every way, and it is difficult to see how I could have come this far without her. Along the way we got married, and the snug and homey house that we share with our three cats—the big, black Binksis and the classic stripeys Egbert and Ælfifu—is a blessing that keeps my life sane and secure.

To my Uncle Ojārs,
who was my first teacher regarding the wider world
and who inspired me to learn much, much more.

Abstract

Examination of long-term exchange patterns involving northern Europe and neighboring regions of western Eurasia reveals that the world of the North has, typically, played an important role both as producer and consumer. Especially in the Carolingian period (AD 700 – 900), the system as a whole can be characterized best as a vast circuit of exchange flows rather than in terms of center – periphery relationships. The major regions participating in the western Eurasian exchange circuit were the North (Scandinavia – Baltic), Latin Christendom, European Russia, Byzantium, and the Islamic world of the Middle East and North Africa.

Exchange within the circuit always operated at multiple levels, including elite and non-elite gift giving and resource sharing, but also including independent, professional merchant-adventurers who redistributed goods and materials for profit. This class of entrepreneurs can be analyzed further into long-distance wholesale traders, who linked the top-level nodal places in the system, and others who linked the nodal places with points in the local area down to the capillary level of individual producers and consumers. Typically, members of the mercantile class traveled armed and formed ad hoc aggregations for mutual protection. In the Carolingian Empire, their activities were governed by rules and administrative practices derived, ultimately, from the Late Roman.

Commercial exchange can and does operate successfully even in pre-state and non-urbanized societies, i.e., without elite direction or coercion. The evidence shows that pre-commercial societies will incorporate commercial modes of behavior into their socio-economic value systems when opportunity to do so arises. Even “peasants” will behave entrepreneurially, feeding into the larger exchange system both as producers and consumers.

TABLE of CONTENTS:

Acknowledgements	i
Dedication	iv
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Abbreviations	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction: The Evolution of a Project	1
<i>Intentions and revisions</i>	1
<i>Definitions</i>	7
<i>The chapters</i>	10
<i>A note on formatting</i>	14
Chapter 2: The Question of An Early Medieval Economy	
2.0 Introduction	16
2.1 Dopsch and Pirenne	20
2.2 Reaction and Dogma	34
2.3 Northern Waters and Archaeology	51
2.4 The Primitivists and Their Critics	64
2.5 McCormick and Wickham	67
2.6 Conclusion	74
Chapter 3: The Northern Background: Potentials and Early Development	
3.0 Introduction	76
3.1 Geology, Climate, and Resources	77
<i>Geology and metals</i>	81
<i>Climate and soils</i>	84
3.2 Areas of Settlement and Avenues of Exchange	87
<i>The Neolithic Baltic and north central Europe</i>	89

<i>The Bronze Age Baltic and central Europe</i>	92
<i>The amber routes</i>	96
<i>Communications over mountains and rivers</i>	98
3.3 Local Development and Mediterranean Contacts	103
<i>Slaves</i>	104
<i>Copper, tin, and bronze</i>	106
<i>Salt and iron</i>	112
<i>Elite mobilization vs. entrepreneurship</i>	114
<i>Beginnings of Mediterranean dominance</i>	121
<i>Transalpine trade: Greeks</i>	124
<i>Transalpine trade: Romans</i>	130
3.4 The Effects of Roman Expansion	139
<i>Provincialized Temperate Europe</i>	142
<i>The Rhine - Danube interface zone</i>	145
<i>Roman influence north</i>	150
3.5 Conclusion	154
Chapter 4: From Roman to post-Roman I: The Imperial System and Its Fate, AD 200 – 600	
4.0 Introduction	158
4.1 Decline of the Imperial Economy	162
<i>The Antonine plague</i>	163
<i>Metal production</i>	164
<i>Ceramics production</i>	165
4.2 The End of the Roman Mediterranean	168
<i>The annona transport and its effects</i>	169
<i>Justinian's plague</i>	172
4.3 Imperial Unity and the Barbarians	176
<i>Relations along the frontier</i>	178
<i>Late Roman structural changes</i>	180

	<i>Barbarian capabilities and their place in the late Roman system</i>	185
	<i>Africa and the Vandals</i>	192
	<i>Contradictions in Roman policy</i>	194
	<i>Socio-cultural changes</i>	197
4.4	The Case of Roman Gaul	199
	<i>A model province of the High Empire</i>	200
	<i>A potential for self-sufficiency</i>	205
	<i>Structural changes of the third and fourth centuries</i>	208
	<i>The fifth-century transition</i>	220
4.5	Conclusion	223
Chapter 5:	From Roman to post-Roman II: The New Temperate Europe, AD 400 – 700	
5.0	Introduction	225
5.1	Merovingian Gaul	226
	<i>The structure of the state</i>	227
	<i>Economy and demographics</i>	232
	<i>The Mediterranean connection</i>	237
5.2	Along the Former Frontier	245
	<i>Trade and instability</i>	245
	<i>Danubian variations in the transition</i>	251
	<i>Alamannia and the Rhine</i>	257
	<i>New spheres of influence: Franks and Avars</i>	269
5.3	Northern Connections East and West	275
	<i>Post-Roman eastern and central Europe</i>	276
	<i>Development in Denmark and Sweden</i>	281
	<i>Northwestern waters</i>	295
5.4	Theorizing Dark-Age Europe	304
5.5	Conclusion	336

Chapter 6:	AD 700 – 900: The Carolingian Continent	
6.0	Introduction	341
6.1	The Carolingian Exchange System in Historiographic and Geographic Outline	342
	<i>The evidence of the Rhos guests</i>	346
	<i>The geographic outline of the exchange system</i>	349
	<i>Competing theories of Carolingian production and exchange</i>	354
6.2	The New Mediterranean	366
	<i>The economic condition of Lombard Italy</i>	369
	<i>The eastern connection</i>	374
	<i>The emergence of Venice</i>	379
	<i>Volturno and Rome: alternative models</i>	381
	<i>Italy and the North</i>	388
6.3	From the <i>clusae</i> to the <i>emporía</i>	391
	<i>From Italy to Francia: the trans-Alpine trade goods</i>	392
	<i>The Alps and the clusae</i>	397
	<i>Trans-continental routes from the Alps to the sea</i>	407
	<i>The Iberian connection</i>	418
6.4	Francia and the Rivers	422
	<i>The role of the abbeys</i>	422
	<i>The Seine</i>	426
	<i>The Meuse</i>	430
	<i>The Rhine</i>	436
6.5	Conclusion	442
Chapter 7:	AD 700 – 900: The <i>negotiatores</i> and the Western Eurasian Circuit	
7.0	Introduction	445
7.1	The Northern Waters and the Way East	448
	<i>Carolingia and England</i>	450

<i>Carolingia and Denmark</i>	460
<i>Carolingia and the Elbe</i>	479
7.2 The Baltic Sea Realm	497
<i>Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia</i>	500
<i>The southern shore and the Slavs</i>	538
7.3 The Western Eurasian Circuit	555
<i>The Russian rivers and the great East</i>	556
<i>The Baltic system between East and West</i>	579
<i>From the North Sea to Italy: the Carolingian corridor</i>	602
<i>Mediterranean return</i>	614
7.4 The <i>negotiatores</i> and Their Privileges	622
<i>Theodosian foundations</i>	624
<i>The Lombard kingdom</i>	635
<i>Carolingian rules and privileges</i>	642
<i>A bridge to the future</i>	648
Chapter 8: Patterns and Conclusions	650
<i>Geography and resources</i>	650
<i>Levels of exchange</i>	656
Bibliography	665

List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations appear in the footnotes and the bibliography:

Ancient Europe

Ancient Europe 8000 B.C. – A.D. 1000: Encyclopedia of the Barbarian World. Vol. 2, Bronze Age to Early Middle Ages (c. 3000 B.C. – A.D. 1000), ed. Peter Bogucki and Pam J. Crabtree.

Birka Studies 3

The Twelfth Viking Congress: Developments Around the Baltic and the North Sea in the Viking Age, ed. Björn Ambrosiani and Helen Clarke. Birka Studies 3.

Göttingen 150

Der Handel des frühen Mittelalters, ed. Klaus Düwel, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, Dieter Timpe, 9 – 99. Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa, Teil 3. Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, dritte Folge 150.

Göttingen 156

Der Handel der Karolinger- und Wikingerzeit. Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa, Teil 4. Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, dritte Folge, 156.

Gudme and Lundeborg

The Archaeology of Gudme and Lundeborg:

Papers Presented at a Conference at Svendborg, October 1991, ed. P. O. Nielsen, K. Randsborg, and H. Thrane.

Heirs of the Roman West

Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium. Vol. 1: The Heirs of the Roman West, ed. Joachim Henning.

Long Morning

The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies, ed. Jennifer Davis and Michael McCormick.

Markets in Early Medieval Europe

Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and 'Productive' Sites, 650 – 850, ed. Tim Pestell and Katharina Ulmschneider.

Settimane [no.], [year]

Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo [no.]. Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, [year].

Silver Economies

Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society in Scandinavia, AD 800 – 1100, ed. James Graham-Campbell, Søren Sindbæk, and Gareth Williams.

Wulfstan's Voyage

Wulfstan's Voyage: The Baltic Sea Region in the Early Viking Age As Seen from Shipboard, ed. Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas. Maritime Culture in the North 2.

Chapter 1: Introduction: The Evolution of a Project

This thesis was conceived as a contribution to the ongoing debates regarding the nature of the so-called Dark Ages of early medieval Europe. At the beginning of the first decade of the twenty-first century, it appeared that the battle lines were drawn, still, between the camps of the Primitivists on one side and those of the Continuitists on the other side.¹ I was joining the ranks of the latter.

In essence, the first side seemed determined to regard the early medieval West as materially desolate and demographically diminished, a period in which pre-state political structures prevailed and market-based economic relations were scarce to non-existent. From this viewpoint, early medieval Europe could best be understood in terms similar to those used to study chiefdoms and other pre-state societies in other parts of the world. Against this view, the other side insisted that the societies of the Merovingian and Carolingian periods in the Latin Christian West maintained functioning state systems, preserved and applied those aspects of Roman knowledge and practice which they found useful, and were far less hapless on an economic and material level than what was assumed by the Primitivists. Indeed, it seemed that the Primitivist position might be most vulnerable precisely on the point of economic development. In other words, if it could be demonstrated that Carolingian Europe had the capacity to participate in a vibrant and commercially based interregional trading system, and that its leaders consciously shaped administrative and diplomatic policy to support and promote such trade, then much of the supposed “primitiveness” of the era would evaporate at a stroke.

Intentions and revisions

I had come to the University of Minnesota to study under Professor Thomas S. Noonan. Accordingly, I soon became familiar with Noonan’s work on the trans-continental trade routes that linked the Islamic Middle East with the Scandinavian – Baltic world across European Russia. Although there was only a smattering of literary evidence for this

¹ These terms are, of course, highly charged and used primarily by the adherents of one side against the supporters of the other. See Section 2.0 below for a discussion of the terminology and a more complete outline of the two positions.

trade, Noonan was able to use archaeological evidence and particularly numismatics—his specialty, the analysis of Islamic silver *dirham* hoards—to trace the beginnings, growth, and changing configurations of this trade.² Especially in the eighth and ninth centuries, the massive transfer of wealth from the Islamic East to the Viking North was taking place while European Russia and Scandinavia had, as yet, little state development and minimal urbanization. Moreover, it was clearly a trade motivated by profit-seeking. In short, there would appear to have existed a vast exchange network involving northern and eastern Europe that operated in direct violation of the basic assumptions that the Primitivists were seeking to apply to western Europe.

Noonan's interest extended, of course, to the network of northern European *emporium*.³ These were becoming focal points of research for scholars working on issues of trade and urbanization in the Scandinavian and northwest European regions in the 1980s just as Noonan was developing his numismatic research on the trade routes across Russia. For the Scandinavian scholars, especially, these *emporium* or proto-urban hubs of international trade and standardized craft production appeared as the key forerunners of later urban and economic development in their region.⁴ From Staraja Ladoga in northwestern Russia, the *emporium* network extended through sites such as Birka in Middle Sweden and Ribe in Jutland to western termini such as Hamwic in Wessex and Dorestad in the Rhine delta. Here, then, was another exchange network, operating successfully in a milieu that a Primitivist would regard as incapable of supporting significant commercial activity. Indeed, Noonan identified the Staraja Ladoga *emporium* as the major conduit of Islamic silver into the Baltic. But as the trail of *dirhams* disappears westwards of Denmark, the North Sea end of the system held less interest for

² Noonan's work is referenced extensively in Section 7.3, subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* below, which see.

³ For the development of a typology of *emporium* and the application of the model to the northern European trading nodes of the eighth and ninth centuries, seminal was Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade AD 600 – 1000* (London: Duckworth, 1982). See discussion of Hodges' contributions in Section 2.3, in Section 5.3 subsection *Northwestern waters*, and in Section 5.4 below.

⁴ Expressions of this outlook include Johan Callmer, "Urbanization in Scandinavia and the Baltic Region c. AD 700 – 1100: Trading Places, Centres and Early Urban Sites," in *Birka Studies 3* (Stockholm, 1994); and Helen Clarke and Björn Ambrosiani, *Towns in the Viking Age* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991).

Noonan, and I had, as yet, a very incomplete picture of the extent and intensity of the trade links from Scandinavia to Anglo-Saxon England and Francia.

After Professor Noonan's untimely death in 2001, I continued my studies with Professor Bernard S. Bachrach, along with which came a shift in focus from the eastern to the western side of early medieval Europe. Bachrach's work revolved around the military aspects of early medieval European civilization, challenging both traditional notions of diminutive armies, inadequate supply systems, and incompetent leadership as well as Primitivist theories of early medieval plunder-states operating without benefit of regular logistics and bureaucratic administration. Against these, Bachrach has posited the survival of Roman infrastructure such as city walls, roads, and bridges, sophisticated and professional military organization including the specialized units necessary for siege warfare, and a sound system of logistical support including fiscal estates and centralized, bureaucratic administration.⁵ Like Noonan, Bachrach supported the use of archaeological data to supplement the often unsatisfactory documentation available, and encouraged the reading of extant literary sources in a manner to reveal aspects of contemporary economic systems that the writers, themselves, had not intended.⁶ Furthermore, Bachrach cautioned against the uncritical application of anthropological models of primitive socio-economic systems to historical situations, such as the Carolingian empire, where such models were largely inappropriate, and he opposed unjustifiably minimalist readings of the archaeological record of early medieval Europe that tended to maintain a Primitivist impression of conditions during this period.⁷

Unlike contemporary eastern and northern Europe, western Europe in the Carolingian period (ca. 700 – 900) has a considerable amount of preserved documentary

⁵ References to Bachrach's works are to be found throughout the following chapters, but most prominently in parts of Section 4.4, Section 5.1, Section 6.3, and Section 6.4.

⁶ So, for example, a moral tale in Gregory of Tours concerning a merchant taking some wine down the Loire from Orleans to Tours reveals the existence of at least (1) a wine trade on the Loire, (2) vineyards capable of producing surpluses for sale, (3) and the availability of boats, which pre-supposes a boat building capacity with all of its tributary skills and materials. It also tells us that merchants and their "servants" traveled armed. Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks* 7.46. For his part, Noonan often repeated his rejection of the traditionalist idea that historians can study only those things, which are explicitly mentioned in written sources.

⁷ Here see especially Bernard S. Bachrach, "Anthropologists and Early Medieval History: Some Problems," *Cithara* 34 (1994): 3 – 10; and idem, "Fifth Century Metz: Late Roman Christian Urbs or Ghost Town?" *An Tard* 10 (2002): 363 – 81.

material. Much of this material comes from the archives of abbeys and other ecclesiastical institutions, who were keen to guard the *diplomae* of privileges that they had received from Frankish kings and emperors. Additionally, however, there exists an extensive *formulary* from the reign of Emperor Louis the Pious (814 – 40), which includes a number of privileges intended for merchants unconnected with institutions of the Church.⁸ Clearly, since a formulary by its nature is a collection of ready prototypes (“boilerplates”) for frequently issued documents, this would suggest that there was a steady demand or need for privileges of this type, which should, in turn, suggest the presence of a significant mercantile sector in the Carolingian empire in the early ninth century. My thesis project, then, was intended to take another look at those formulae of Louis the Pious that appeared to have a direct bearing on the issue of merchants and mercantile activity.

First, there would be a close analysis of the text of the relevant *formulae* and a comparison with similar documents issued in the Late Roman, Merovingian, and earlier Carolingian periods. This aspect of the work was undertaken with the hypothesis that it would be possible to trace continuities in language and in administrative practice over the centuries in question. Furthermore, it was hoped that such an analysis would help to demonstrate that the issuing of *diplomae* of merchant privileges in the earlier ninth century was *not* an element in a fossilized legalistic ritual—a ceremonial performed by rote but devoid of practical significance.⁹

Meanwhile, to help support the idea that the *formulae* of merchant privileges were expressions of a living legal and administrative system and that the documents composed following the *formulae* were of real utility to the recipients, a second and—to my mind—crucial aspect of the thesis was to be a thorough re-evaluation of the context in which the mercantile privileges were issued. To create such a context, it would be necessary to review the ongoing discussion regarding the economic structure of continental

⁸ The standard edition is *Formulae imperiales e curia Ludovici Pii*, in *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, ed. Karolus Zevmer (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1886), 285 – 328.

⁹ Such an interpretation has been advanced, for example, regarding administrative forms in the Loire valley of the seventh century in Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400 – 800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 111: “They must sometimes be purely formulaic survivals, as indeed can be presumed from their preservation in formulary books. . . [and] they could perhaps best be seen as evidence of meaningless civic ritual.”

northwestern Europe. Increasingly, it seemed, the newer data and evaluations were trending toward a more positive view of the economic capacity of the Carolingian empire, which in turn suggested the possibility of a synthesis that would close out much of the minimalist – primitivist position. It seemed crucial, in particular, to explore more intensively possible Frankish participation in the North Sea exchange network with Anglo-Saxon England and Scandinavia. Indeed, the most famous and oft-quoted of Louis the Pious' *formulae* concerning merchants, no. 37 "Praeceptum negotiatorum" of 828, explicitly mentions Quentovic and Dorestad, the primary Carolingian ports on the English Channel and the Rhine delta, respectively.¹⁰ This aspect, it seemed to me, had been largely neglected in the mainstream conversation to date, but it might well prove to be decisive in demonstrating that there existed in the Carolingian realms a class of merchant-adventurers, who participated in international long-distance exchange and who actively sought protection for themselves and their activities from the Carolingian rulers.

That, in essence, was the outline of the thesis project as conceived. In the event, however, the construction of context turned out to be a far more massive undertaking than I had imagined, particularly once I had decided that the economic and exchange conditions of the Carolingian period and the early Viking Age could not be properly understood except within an even larger context of recurrent patterns of exchange involving northern Europe, central Europe, and western Europe which, in important aspects, reached back into the European Bronze Age of the second millennium BC. Furthermore, it became increasingly clear to me that a proper textual analysis of the merchants' privileges from the *Formulae imperiales e curia Ludovici Pii* would constitute an equally massive undertaking.¹¹ In my mind, the context—the material and institutional foundations that might enable mercantile activity—had to come first.

What lies before you, then, is an exploration of *longue durée* conditions in Europe and the Mediterranean that created and channeled the potentials for production and exchange in and among the several constituent regions. The way that these potentials

¹⁰ *Formulae imperiales*, ed. Zeumer,

¹¹ See the brief overview of the issues involved in Section 7.4 below. The project must encompass at least the Theodosian Code, the Visigothic, Lombard, Burgundian, and Frankish law codes, an analysis of the tolls, fees, and taxes mentioned in the sources, and a review of the entire Lombard and Frankish diplomatic tradition from the sixth century through the ninth.

were realized or activated varied from one major period to the next; the variations, however, can best be seen as particular expressions of the underlying pattern rather than as novel and disconnected episodes each with its own set of fundamental characteristics. Nevertheless, as my ultimate focus was still the Carolingian period and the early Viking Age, the density of coverage of these pattern-variations steadily increased throughout the chronological sequence, with comparatively much more detailed discussion of the period from ca. AD 500 onwards and most expansive specifically for the 700 – 900 period.¹²

Along the way, certain conceptual themes that I had entertained at the start, as for example, the idea that the imperatives of conquest, conversion, and commerce operating in concert would be significant in framing the processes of Latin Christian (including Carolingian) expansion into northern Europe, turned out to be of little utility in the end, and were quietly dropped. Other realizations emerged in their place. One of the most significant of these was the conclusion that neither state-level political organization nor urbanization, as conventionally understood, are necessary preconditions for the emergence of viable exchange systems—even those that transcend local-area and regional boundaries. Further, that what might be called “entrepreneurship,” for lack of a better term, can and does emerge regularly at the “grass-roots” or capillary level in a variety of local situations, and that given appropriate stimulus pre-commercial societies can and do incorporate increasing levels of long-distance, commercial exchange into their local value systems.¹³ Ultimately, top-level mercantile professionals, such as might be reflected in the *formulae* of privileges from the time of Louis the Pious, depend upon the widespread participation, however marginal, of ordinary people in the production and consumption networks—at least as much so as they depend on the patronage of wealthy but limited elites. The cumulative result of production, transportation, and consumption

¹² This is not unlike the scheme of presentation followed in Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). In McCormick’s work, however, almost all of the data that he adduces as part of his re-evaluation of the state of communications in the early medieval Mediterranean derives from the 700 – 900 period.

¹³ These ideas are finding support in a rapidly growing body of theoretical work and diverse case studies, especially in publications dating from ca. 2000 onwards. Some of these are referenced in Section 6.2, subsection *The economic condition of Lombard Italy*, Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and England*, and Section 7.2, *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* below.

of goods on a number of levels are the continent-spanning circuits of exchange of the eighth and ninth centuries, which among them tie together much of western Eurasia.

Definitions

Some definitions are in order. Most fundamentally, the approach taken in this thesis assumes that material objects, including archaeologically recovered artifacts, possess an intrinsic reality aside from any specific discourse in which they may be involved. Such remains can and have been interpreted from a wide array of viewpoints and assumptions, including the classic art-historical, the nationalistic, the processual, and, most recently, the post-processual.¹⁴ From my point of view, the distribution of natural resources, human engagement with these resources, the production of artifacts, and transportation of raw materials as well as artifacts—all of these may, potentially, be traceable in the material record, and all of these may be interpreted as aspects of economic activity.

“Economic,” then, for the purposes of the present thesis, refers to any human activity in which time and labor is invested in finding, obtaining, producing, transforming, transporting, or exchanging physical substances or objects made from physical substances, regardless of the purposes to which such physical substances or objects may be put by a recipient or consumer of such substance or object. At the most basic, such economic activity would include a simple act such as picking up a piece of amber from a Baltic beach—an investment of time and effort to pick up said piece of amber rather than let it lie. If the amber piece is then shaped in some way, or attached to some other object—a thong, for instance, to hold the amber in place around the neck as decoration or as an amulet—then this is a further investment of time and energy, hence economic. If the piece of amber, raw or modified, is exchanged for some other substance or object, then this is further economic activity, as is the possible transport of said amber piece, modified or unmodified, over a short or long distance.

By this definition, the psychological or cultural motivation of any of the participants in such a chain of time- and energy-investments is irrelevant. So long as

¹⁴ A brief discussion of the evolution of archaeological theory over the past century or so is in Section 2.3 below.

there is engagement with a physical substance or object in terms of any of the broad categories of action listed in the preceding paragraph, the participants in these time and energy investments may believe that they are honoring some god, or maintaining social networks, or forging political alliances, or making a profit. Indeed, it may be quite difficult to determine the exact psychological motivations and cultural meanings associated with different kinds of physical objects and economic activities. The motivation and the cultural meaning attached to any economic activity (as defined above) would not, however, alter the fact that economic activity is taking place. In other words, so long as there are physical traces of such activity—archeobotanical shifts in pollen counts indicating increases or decreases in forest cover and hence changes in land use, traces of settlement patterns in the landscape, remains of infrastructure such as bridges and docks, detritus of mining and manufacturing activities, finds of finished objects—there is the possibility that we may reconstruct at least part of the complex of economic activities in which the population of a specific place at a specific time typically engaged.

As defined above, economic activity includes exchange, which may be separated conceptually from the aspects of production and transportation. For present purposes, exchange may be defined as any transaction in which physical substances or objects made from physical substances are transferred from one party to another. “Exchange,” then, covers the full range of possible motivations for such transfers. In other words, just as in the case of economic activity more generally, an exchange may be effected regardless of whether the individual engaged in the exchange transaction believes that he or she is fulfilling some ritual purpose, negotiating some socio-political objective, or simply gaining some material advantage. Strictly speaking, “exchange” should be the preferred term for all such transfers where the motivation of the participants is in doubt, as must be the case for the overwhelming majority of instances within the time-frame of this study. In practice, however, I have frequently substituted the terms “trade” or “commerce” in situations where it seemed likely that at least one of the parties to the transaction conceived of the transaction as some form of profit-taking—of material advantage realized through the transaction, itself—rather than as an element in a ritual or socio-political process.

In terms of definition, the most problematic element in the standard triad of production – distribution – demand is the last. Most broadly, it could be said that production and distribution (transport and exchange) of physical materials or objects ultimately are motivated by the satisfaction of material needs and desires—satisfying demand, in other words—and that demand is, therefore, an aspect of economics.¹⁵ To define all forms of demand and its satisfaction as economic in nature, however, raises the same kinds of difficulties as the extension of the concept of entrepreneurship to all means of effecting material acquisition—even to the application of organized violence, i.e. warfare and plunder.¹⁶ Raiders may be enterprising, in a sense, but their manner of enterprise is fundamentally opposed to the processes of peaceful production and exchange. Similarly, some forms of demand and consumption clearly constitute links in a chain of economic transactions, while others represent purposes that no longer fit comfortably within such a framework.

As an example, a craftsman in Ribe¹⁷ might have a demand for stocks of bronze metal, whether recycled locally or imported from outside, which he will then transform into bronze objects for further distribution (sale or exchange). The craftsman’s demand for bronze clearly is economic in nature. The demand for objects produced from the metal stock is more difficult to classify, however. Scandinavian women of the property-owning class wanted such brooches not only to hold up their dresses but also to serve as status markers—neither of which purposes fits the definition of economic activity that was advanced above. The brooch could, however, be considered as part of the reserve wealth at the family’s disposal, potentially to be exchanged or capitalized for some other purpose, and thereby re-enter the realm of economic transactions as one possibility among others. As another example, from the second millennium BC, when there was

¹⁵ Cf. John Moreland, “Concepts of the Early Medieval Economy,” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 1 – 34. Moreland points out that too much attention in the study of early medieval economics has been devoted to the aspects of demand—especially, elite demand for luxury goods—and distribution, the latter including long-distance traders and *emporium*, to the neglect of the aspect of production.

¹⁶ See discussion of this issue in Section 3.3, subsection *Elite mobilization vs. entrepreneurship* below.

¹⁷ Ribe, on the west coast of Jutland, was a major *emporium* or node in the exchange system of the eighth and ninth centuries. See discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* below.

widespread distribution of bronze from central Europe along the Scandinavian coastlines, if the distribution takes the form of axe heads it may be considered an economic phenomenon to the extent that these axe heads generally are regarded as having been tools intended for practical use. In the form of a *lur* (a kind of trumpet), however, whose purpose primarily was ritualistic, the bronze no longer exists in a strictly economic context.¹⁸ In all cases involving bronze, meanwhile, the original mining of the constituent ores, the smelting and alloying processes, and the distribution and shaping of the resultant metal definitely are aspects of economic activity.

Similarly, the production of wine and its distribution are economic activities. The wine might be used variously in the performance of a religious rite (as in the Christian mass), in the construction of socio-political relationships as in certain Iron Age chiefdoms in Temperate Europe, or simply imbibed for its own sake. But none of these forms of wine consumption can be regarded as economic in any strict sense. Altogether, it is on the demand or consumption side that the boundary of the economic and the non-economic becomes most blurred, and also the most difficult to demonstrate conclusively through the record of material remains. The evidence presented here will, therefore, focus on the aspects of production and distribution (transportation and exchange).

The chapters

Chapters 2 – 7 are presented here as originally composed, with minimal revision. They comprise, accordingly, a fairly accurate reflection of the evolution of my thinking on the subject of the early medieval economy and the role of the North within that economy. While many of the defining assumptions with which I started the project remained valid to the end, I also found much that was unexpected but which, when incorporated into the original conceptual framework, led to a much richer, more vibrant and more complete image of Carolingian-era exchange patterns than I had imagined possible.

Without doubt, it was the bibliography that underwent the most striking augmentation. Chapter 2 defines the Primitivist – Continuitist opposition, as I originally saw it, and outlines the main trends in scholarship during the twentieth century that

¹⁸ See discussion in Section 3.2, subsection *The Bronze Age Baltic and central Europe* below.

pertained to the issues of early medieval economics and trade. The review starts with an analysis of the classic opposition of Dopsch and Pirenne—which ca. 2000 was still being referenced routinely as the point of departure in discussions of these issues. It continues with the raft of neo-Pirenneist minimalists of the 1970s and their late-twentieth century primitivist heirs, while noting as well the persistent voices of continued opposition to this apparently dominant interpretation. In this context, Hodges played a unique role. In one sense he was in league with the minimalist/primitivist camp while at the same time his work had the potential to revolutionize the mainstream discussion through his extensive use of the newly available archaeological data—especially that stemming from ongoing excavations in the North Sea and Baltic Sea regions—and the construction of new models based on the archaeological data. From my particular point of view, Hodges’ work offered an avenue whereby the northern connections of continental Latin Christian Europe might be highlighted, ultimately with a view to balancing the disproportionate attention perennially devoted to the Mediterranean side. Finally, the recent major works by McCormick (*Origins of the European Economy*) and Wickham (*Framing the Early Middle Ages*) seemed to suggest ways that the old controversies might be put to bed, at last, and a new synthesis formulated.

By the time I had worked through the data on the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, the Roman period, and the early post-Roman transition phase (Chapters 3 – 5), it clearly had become necessary to revisit the literature in a much more intensive manner than had been done in Chapter 2, to reconsider the theoretical positions of the major participants in light of the evidence I had accumulated, and to analyze their respective assumptions and models. The result was Section 5.4: “Theorizing Dark-Age Europe.” Similarly, Chapter 6, which focuses on the Carolingian period and the systems of production and exchange across continental Europe from Italy to Francia, starts off with yet another intensive review of the shifting trends in the understanding of these topics (Section 6.1: “The Carolingian Exchange System in Historiographic and Geographic Outline”), now bringing in Lebecq and Henning alongside McCormick and Wickham as representatives of major theoretical positions. Further, Chapter 7 introduces the work of a growing number of post-millennial researchers and theorists, such as Moreland, Skre, and

Sindbæk, who are working primarily from the ever-increasing archaeological data coming out of Britain and Scandinavia and transforming our perception of the potential role of commercialization in pre-state and early state societies. Thus, the present study ended with a far more multi-dimensional model of its subject than it had entertained at its inception.

Another major change from the original concept of the study was the part played in it by the Mediterranean-side exchange connections. As mentioned above, I had intended to focus on the exchange connections of the Carolingian empire with its northern neighbors—not least because the Mediterranean side had been so persistently covered by previous studies, with McCormick's *Origins of the European Economy* now topping the list. I found, however, that the North could not be properly understood without recurrent reference to developments in its opposite, Mediterranean pole. Moreover, it became increasingly apparent to me that the pattern of production and exchange in the Mediterranean often paralleled rather than contrasted with the pattern of production and exchange in the North.

This was particularly true in the matter of the imperial Roman system, which during the time of its operation profoundly affected both Mediterranean and Temperate European exchange patterns. The Rhine – Danube interface zone across Temperate Europe and the *annona*-transport network in the Mediterranean were two sides of the same coin. For a full appreciation of the changes it was as necessary to describe the demise of the *annona*-transport and the re-configuration of Mediterranean trading routes (parts of Chapter 4) as it was to describe the collapse or transformation of the Roman *limes* and the realignments in Temperate European exchange patterns to which that led (parts of Chapter 5). The Carolingian period also required continued references to the southern connections, both in terms of the links between the northwestern (Dorestad, Quentovic) and southeastern termini (Venice) of the transcontinental Carolingian trade corridor and in terms of the ubiquitous influence of a burgeoning slave trade across Europe which, following McCormick's argument, was motivated by a demand for labor in certain Mediterranean areas, including the Caliphate. Ultimately, regular inclusion of the Mediterranean in the discussion made it possible to situate the North within a wider,

western Eurasian exchange circuit, in which the Carolingian continental system was also a key participant.

The extensive discussion of the political or administrative aspects of the collapse or transformation of the imperial Roman system in the West in interaction with the “barbarians” (parts of Chapter 4) may appear, at first, to be another digression. Engagement with these issues was necessary, however, in order to establish a base-line from which the question of institutional continuity from the Roman to the post-Roman could be addressed. The test case was the transition from Roman Gaul to Merovingian Gaul (Section 4.4 and Section 5.1). If it could be demonstrated that the Merovingian kingdoms remained economically viable and administratively coherent, then there was little reason (pace Pirenne) for supposing the opposite for the empire of the Carolingian-era Franks which was, of course, a direct successor of the Merovingians. In turn, institutional continuity within an effective administrative apparatus would support the contention that Louis the Pious’ *formulae* for merchant privileges reflect a real and important mercantile sector within the overall ninth-century economy. In the event, the present study never reached the in-depth analysis of the documentary evidence that was projected, originally. However, the discussion of economic viability in Gaul that persisted across the Roman to post-Roman divide contributed greatly to the understanding of Carolingian continental Europe as a key link and participant in the emerging western Eurasian exchange circuit.

Last but not least, throughout this study, a persistent theme has been the effects of geography and environment on production and exchange. These issues were addressed first in Chapter 3, particularly regarding the effect that the occurrence or absence of specific resources—metals, furs, amber—have had on the ability of the North to engage in trans-regional exchange. Specifically, the fact that local sources of copper, silver, and gold are absent over a vast stretch of territory in northern and Eastern Europe means that any objects made from these materials that are found in this territory had to arrive there by some process of exchange. In other words, close attention to the distribution of resources not only reveals much about the productive potential of a given area or region but also can, in many cases, give modern researchers important clues about the exchange

networks that must have been in place. Certain areas recur as focal points of settlement, production, and exchange. So, for example, Denmark thrived in the late Mesolithic, played the role of “core” to the “periphery” of its Scandinavian neighbors in the Bronze Age, displayed unusual accumulations of wealth during the Roman Iron Age, and served as the major interface between the exchange networks of the Scandinavian – Baltic region and those of the North Sea region during the Carolingian period. In general, geography also determines the likeliest paths of travel routes—hence, as well, the likeliest directions of exchange links and the likeliest placement of nodal points in the exchange networks. These and similar considerations have figured in the discussion throughout Chapters 3 – 7.

One of the inherent difficulties in undertaking a project that spans multiple cultural eras and multiple regions is that the writer must become reasonably well acquainted with the current status of research in a wide array of fields and sub-fields. One cannot read everything that might be relevant, and no doubt there may be many data points and interpretations in the discussion that follows to which an expert in any of these fields might object. My hope, nevertheless, is that the exercise has been worthwhile to the extent of making some contribution to the understanding of exchange patterns in Europe both over the long term and, more specifically, within the Carolingian period of 700 – 900.

A note on formatting

The Chapters are divided into numbered Sections (2.0, 2.1, 2.2, etc.) that have titles in roman font, with most Sections in turn subdivided into unnumbered *subsections* with titles in italic font.

Frequent cross-references by Section and *subsection* are included in the footnotes to guide the reader to those locations where the primary discussion of any given issue or topic may be found. It may be hoped, as well, that the cross-references will placate, to some extent, those readers to whom a different linear arrangement of the discussion might have seemed more natural and more appropriate.

In the footnotes, the full form of citation is used the first time that a source appears in each chapter. Subsequent citations of a source within a chapter use the short form. All of the sources referenced, both primary and secondary, are listed in the master Bibliography. The style of the citations and the bibliographic entries follows the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Chapter 2: The Question of An Early Medieval Economy

2.0 What was the shape and condition of the economy in Latin Christendom in the early medieval centuries? Was there, in fact, anything worthy to be regarded as an “economy” at all? Even to pose the question in this form is to admit, from the outset, that many of the terms in the debate have been set from a viewpoint whose adherents have, in one guise or another, sought to answer it in the negative. Given this position, it might seem that almost the entire twentieth century could be summed up as a straightforward struggle between more or less constant “minimalist” and “maximalist” interpretations of the available evidence—with the former tending to dominate. That dominance, however, is at least partly illusory. Minimalist dogma has been challenged in every decade since the 1930s, often in the most surprising and inventive ways and from a variety of scholarly sub-fields and disciplines. Moreover, expanding historio-geographical horizons, new theoretical positions, and development of new data all have been at work redefining and recontextualizing the debates.

The attitudinal poles that have defined much of the contending historiography on early medieval economics arose, originally, on the basis of contrasting stances toward the question of the Fall—or otherwise—of the ancient Greco-Roman civilization that preceded the European Middle Ages. While ideas about the nature of the Roman state and its economy have not lacked for variety and contentiousness,¹ there also has been a tacit assumption underlying that discussion, namely, that the system being studied represents a high level of cultural, political, and economic integration, with extensive literacy, sophisticated power relationships, broad institutional continuity, and impressive infrastructure.²

¹ The question of an ‘Ancient economy’ saw controversy between primitivists and modernists in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and further strife between substantivists and their critics in the 1950s to 1970s. See the discussion of the main lines of thought in Heidi M. Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market: Emporia Trading in Western Eurasia from 500 B.C. to A.D. 1000” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2008), Chapter 1.

² A recent and representative summary of this kind of baseline assumption is the opening chapter of Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3 – 45; see also Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome: and the End of*

For the early Middle Ages, no such consensus can be assumed. On the one hand, some have maintained and continue to argue that the transition from late Roman to post-Roman involved little drastic change in the overall infrastructure and prosperity of the western provinces from the fifth to the eighth centuries. On the other hand, many have held that the end of centralized Roman administration in the West was accompanied by a slide into infrastructural decadence and economic squalor, which conditions were hardly remedied before the eleventh century.³ It is the latter, who emphasize discontinuity between the Roman and the early medieval, especially in terms of political and economic structures, who have been labeled “catastrophists,”⁴ “minimalists” and “primitivists”⁵—usually by their adversaries. Almost always, as the labels imply, those who postulate a decided break between the Roman and the early medieval periods also assume that the latter was distinctly inferior to the former in institutional sophistication and material prosperity. Meanwhile, the partisans of essential continuity from the Roman to the post-Roman normally reject notions of early medieval retrogression; Michael McCormick has called them “maximalists,” while Chris Wickham has used “continuitists.”⁶ Thus, the opposing camps and their epithets.

As the more detailed discussion below will make clear, however, a straightforward opposition between minimalists and maximalists is a conception that has scarcely ever done justice to the full spectrum of viewpoints and inputs on the question of an early medieval economy. In the first place, there are many examples of what might be

Civilization (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), for an archaeological viewpoint. For further discussion on the question of the “fall” of Rome, so far as it pertains to the current project, see Sections 4.2 – 4 below.

³ Among currently active participants, a strong representative of the latter position has been Richard Hodges, starting with *Dark Age Economics* (London: Duckworth, 1982). For the former position, see the numerous works of Bernard S. Bachrach, including “The Practical Use of Vegetius’ *De Re Militari* in the Early Middle Ages,” *The Historian* 47 (1985): 239 – 55; “Imperial Walled Cities in the West: An Examination of Their Early Medieval *Nachleben*,” in *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). 192 – 218; and “Fifth Century Metz: Late Roman Christian Urbs or Ghost Town?” *An Tard* 10 (2002): 363 – 81.

⁴ Alfons Dopsch, *The Economic and Social Foundations of European Civilization* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1937), 4.

⁵ Both terms appear, for example, in Bernard S. Bachrach, “Magyar – Ottonian Warfare: *À propos* a New Minimalist Interpretation,” *Francia* 28 (2001): 212 – 13 and n. 7.

⁶ Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 2; Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400 – 800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.

called *recombinant positions*, in which arguments along the continuity-catastrophe axis are detached in some way from conclusions regarding the health or failure of subsequent medieval Europe. One such would be the stance taken by both Chris Wickham and Richard Hodges in articles published in 1989, in which they admit significant socio-economic changes in post-Roman Europe but argue that these represent a deliberate redistribution of wealth and power rather than an inadvertent loss of either in the society as a whole.⁷ There are many other variations.

In the second place, there has been an ever evolving sense of how to contextualize⁸ the economic development of the early Latin West in reference to other regions and other periods. Most immediately, the context must include the Mediterranean based Greco-Roman civilization and the contrasting cultural condition of those regions and peoples of Temperate Europe that lay beyond the sway of the former; this was the original frame of the discussion.⁹ However, during the course of the twentieth century the circumscribed “Roman vs. barbarian” dialectic has been widely breached, bringing into consideration effects originating outside of the immediate Late Roman and post-Roman western world. The first great leap in expanded contextualization was Henri Pirenne’s dramatic proposal, first published in the inter-war period, to link the course of early medieval economic (and thereby political and cultural) development to the rise of Islam.¹⁰ This placed the issue inside an overarching world-historical framework—at least, into one encompassing Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Near East. Far less famously, Pirenne acknowledged, at the same time, a thriving Scandinavian trade system, which he contrasted favorably with that of Carolingian

⁷ This is the position implied in Chris Wickham, “Italy and the Early Middle Ages,” and Richard Hodges, “Archaeology and the Class Struggle in the First Millennium A.D.,” both in Klavs Randsborg, ed., *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.* (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1989), 140 – 51 and 178 – 87, respectively.

⁸ The idea of *contextualization* appears also in McCormick, *Origins*, 6 – 12. While he applies it primarily to the expansion of the database pertaining to the question—to which his own work has made a very substantial contribution, it clearly has other applications as well.

⁹ Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, summarizes the debates within this framework as of ca. 1920. See discussion in section 2.1 below.

¹⁰ Henri Pirenne, “Mahomet et Charlemagne,” *Revue belge de Philologie et d’Histoire* 1 (1922): 77 – 86; idem., *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, trans. Bernard Mial (New York: Meridian, 1939). See discussion in Section 2.1 below.

northwestern Europe.¹¹ In the long run, it has been the ongoing study of these Scandinavian and related trade systems, which were structured around the northern waters of Europe rather than the Mediterranean, that has done most to open the door to a reappraisal of the economic potentials of Carolingian continental Europe.¹² Furthermore, the study of the northern trade systems has involved the accession of disciplines outside of traditional historiography—most notably, the very extensive use of archaeology—and the articulation of theories, models and concepts designed to come to grips with processes of political, social, and economic development in situations where written documents are insufficient (as they are for most phases of European history before the thirteenth century) or almost entirely lacking.¹³ In a related but even more recent development, there have been efforts to place European medieval phenomena within a comparative perspective, especially an anthropological one, in terms of which material from disparate times and places around the world might be made relevant also to the question of the condition and functioning of politico-economic systems in the early medieval West. Needless to say, these numerous model-builders and anthropologically minded historians have had equally numerous critics.¹⁴

In the third place, but crucially important to be recognized is the ongoing augmentation of the database upon which judgments and positions—of whatever theoretical stripe—can be based. To a considerable extent, the documentary evidence—chronicles, *vitae*, capitularies, *diplomae* and other texts—that can be brought to bear regarding the economic condition of early medieval Europe has long been catalogued and referenced; few texts are entirely new discoveries. Nevertheless, even the most oft-quoted document may reveal new insights when approached with new questions, analyzed more systematically, or juxtaposed with other evidence in novel ways.¹⁵ One of

¹¹ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 236 – 41.

¹² See discussion in Section 2.3 below.

¹³ Prominent here have been Richard Hodges, Klavs Randsborg, Chris Wickham, and many others. See discussion in Section 2.3 below.

¹⁴ See, for example, the attack against certain aspects of the anthropological project in Bernard S. Bachrach, “Anthropologists and Early Medieval History: Some Problems,” *Cithara* 34 (1994): 3 – 10.

¹⁵ This point is made strongly by Jennifer Davis and Michael McCormick, “Introduction: The Early Middle Ages: Europe’s Long Morning,” in *Long Morning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 4 – 5, pointing out also that some new documents or document collections have been identified recently.

the best examples of the results possible with the application of such methods is Michael McCormick's *Origins of the European Economy*, of which more below. The most dramatic increase in data has come from archaeology, however; this is true especially from the 1970s onwards, as new methods and expansive projects have found application in many European countries.¹⁶ As a result, historians have, now, the opportunity to test their judgments against a base of material evidence much broader than that which was available to earlier generations of scholars.

The sections that follow outline the development—over the past eight decades or so—of the various ideological stances and the interactions among them, the shifts in contextualization, and the relationship both of theory and contextualization to the expanding data base. The question of an early medieval economy has long been recognized as definitive—essential to be answered if the period is to be evaluated correctly. Accordingly, the cumulative volume of writing on the topic is immense, and one is tempted to resort to the disclaimer encountered ever more frequently in the *Literatur* sections of German monographs: that the relevant historiography *ist lang unübersehbar geworden*. Still, an overview is both possible and instructive.

2.1 Dopsch and Pirenne

Already mentioned in the opening paragraphs above, the names of Alfons Dopsch and Henri Pirenne are associated inextricably with the “maximalist” and “minimalist” poles in the debate concerning the early medieval economy. The fact has been recognized explicitly by both McCormick and Wickham, the authors of the two most compendious and up-to-date studies on the topic thus far published in the new millennium. We read that “[t]he clear and contrasting positions about Carolingian commerce developed by two distinguished economic historians, Alfons Dopsch... and Henri Pirenne... still echo and

¹⁶ Davis and McCormick, “Introduction,” 5, call it an “avalanche of new data from the soil and the sea.” New methods include the extensive use of aerial photographic surveys and the development of underwater archaeology. Territorially expansive projects have been undertaken especially in Germany—the so-called *Rettungsausgrabungen* ahead of modern highway construction and the strip mining of “brown coal”; see Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, eds., *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2002) for an overview of developments. See section 2.3 below for a detailed discussion of relevant archaeological theory and practice.

shape the discussion three quarters of a century later” and that “[ca. 1970], we looked for an overview of western European development in this period to Alfons Dopsch and Henri Pirenne, both born in the 1860s, who worked out their major rival contributions in the 1920s.”¹⁷ Wickham goes on to say that “although Dopsch has (unjustly) faded a little into the background, he has not been replaced by any successor, and Pirenne is still a key point of reference, cited all the time.”¹⁸ The essence of the “rival contributions” can be approached through a juxtaposition of Dopsch’s *Economic and Social Foundations of European Civilization* with Pirenne’s *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, both of which have seen wide distribution in English as well as in their original German and French, respectively.

From the outset, Dopsch situates himself in opposition to a corpus of ideas that have posited, in one way or another, that the medieval was either brought about by some peculiarity or other of the Germanic peoples or can be understood in reference to such peculiarity, especially in contrast to the Romans. The humanists with their idea of the “Gothic,” the Romano-file Enlightenment *philosophes*, the purveyors of “Mark-theory” with its ideas about the associative and communal nature of Germanic society and landowning, and the partisans of the then-current “Sociological theory” involving stages of evolution from the primitive to the civilized—all, according to Dopsch, represent “intellectual ideals” but poorly grounded in the actual source material.¹⁹ On the one hand, some of these theories and associated debates are now obsolete. No one, for example, still discusses Mark theory—at least, not in the terms current a century ago; for Dopsch, however, the issue is vital, and he returns to attack the ideas associated with a primitive, communal Germanic Mark system frequently throughout the book.²⁰ On the other hand, the ideas of the Sociological theorists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries appear more directly as intellectual forerunners of current anthropological and “primitivist” approaches to medieval European society and politics.

¹⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 2 for the first quote; Wickham, *Framing*, 1 for the second.

¹⁸ Wickham, *Framing*, 1.

¹⁹ Summarized in Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 27 – 8.

²⁰ Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 5 – 20, 42, and 139 – 57, especially.

Of equally sustained relevance have been the key points that Dopsch identifies in the work of Fustel de Coulanges.²¹ In brief, these are that (1) Germanic “barbarians” were not opposed to Roman civilization, (2) there was much peaceful interpenetration of Germans as soldiers and *coloni* among the Romans, (3) Roman landowners kept their properties, on which forms of bound labor already were widespread by the fourth century, (4) the incomers also practiced private rather than communal ownership of property, (5) there was pronounced social gradation among the Germans, (6) Germans already had their own monarchical state-level political systems by the fifth century, and that (7) those groups who crossed into Roman territory at that time were significantly different from the tribes described in Caesar and Tacitus. These points describe, approximately, Dopsch’s own position; moreover, he appreciates Fustel de Coulanges’s rigorous treatment of the source material—a methodology to which he himself subscribes. Former errors and misconceptions will be eliminated by the application of strict historical method, but also by drawing in the disciplines of archaeology, pre-history, and philology, he says.²² Both the general thrust of the abovementioned points and the methodological outlook have remained remarkably current over the subsequent decades.

Dopsch continues to surprise with the modernity of his outlook. His description of *Germania libera* in the Roman Iron Age (AD 1 – 400) includes the insight that the Germanic peoples were not nomads but settled, sophisticated agriculturists; indeed, that the region of central Temperate Europe had had a more or less stable settlement pattern with little “geographical progress” since the advent of the Neolithic there thousands of years earlier.²³ Further, Dopsch reads passages from Tacitus’ *Germania* to establish his

²¹ Fustel de Coulanges, *Histoire des institutions politiques de l’ancienne France* (Paris: Hachette, 1875). The points are summarized in Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 20 – 1.

²² Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 28 – 9.

²³ Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 30 – 3. This viewpoint—that comparable settlement patterns covered central Europe in the Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron ages—is current among archaeologists today. The essence of this insight is that from the fourth millennium BC onwards, there are no large swathes of primeval wilderness within this territory. Specific settlement patterns may change over time, and the average size of individual settlements tends to increase, slowly, but central European society is sedentary and agriculturally based throughout the period. By way of introduction, see Alasdair Whittle, “The First Farmers,” in Cunliffe, Barry, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Prehistoric Europe*, ed. Barry Cunliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 136 – 66. “[T]he result by 5000 BC and after

arguments concerning the nature of the agrarian Germanic society; he stresses that it was a mixed society, with unequal distribution of land based on social rank, and with various ranks of elite landowners and free farmers coexisting with tenants and slaves.

Importantly, in this view, the Germans at home were already well used both to agricultural labor and to differentials in wealth and status, thus making their integration into the Roman version of an agricultural class-society far less problematical than a Germano-primitivist viewpoint would imply.²⁴ The use of Tacitus, however, might be considered naïve by today's standards.²⁵

Throughout his Chapter 3: "Romans and Germans in the Age of Migrations," Dopsch stresses the various forms of intercourse between Germans and Romans from the first century AD onwards and uses both archaeology and textual criticism to demonstrate continuity of life, property, administrative units, and trade from the fourth century into the fifth and sixth and beyond. In his Chapter 4: "The Occupation of the Land by the Germans in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries," Dopsch discusses the settlement of the barbarians in Roman provinces in terms that are not, on the whole, inimical to Walter Goffart's vision of this same process. Although Dopsch follows the traditional view that actual properties were transferred to individual members of the Gothic, Burgundian, and other Germanic nations that sought settlement on Roman territory, he also admits that in many cases this may have entailed no more than a transfer of the rent revenue, and he

was a completely altered map. This was not just a question of adding new figures to the scene, but of a physical and social landscape altered forever, both by incomers and the indigenous population. New resources brought from outside, clearance and alteration of the natural vegetation, permanent settlements and zones of settlement with an increased sense of place. . . all contributed in various ways to a new mental outlook" (pp. 165 – 6).

²⁴ Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 34 – 47. This discussion speaks to points (4) and (5) in the paragraph above.

²⁵ The use of classical Greek and Roman texts as sources for data regarding the "barbarian" peoples to the north of the Roman empire has been severely criticized in recent decades. See for example the collection of essays in Heinrich Beck, ed., *Germanenprobleme in heutiger Sicht* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), especially the articles by R. Wenskus, "Über die Möglichkeit eines allgemeinen interdisziplinären Germanenbegriffs" (pp. 1 – 21); D. Timpe, "Ethnologische Begriffsbildung in der Antike" (pp. 22 – 40); W. M. Zeitler, "Zum Germanenbegriff Caesars: die Germanenexkurs in sechsten Buch von Caesars *Bellum Gallicum*" (pp. 41 – 52); A. A. Lund, "Zum Germanenbegriff bei Tacitus" (pp. 53 – 87); and N. Wagner, "Die völkerwanderungszeitliche Germanenbegriffe" (pp. 130 – 54). The applicability of traditional ethnic labels to the cultures and peoples of ancient Temperate Europe has been challenged as well, as in Peter S. Wells, *Beyond Celts, Germans and Scythians: Archaeology and Identity in Iron Age Europe* (London: Duckworth, 2001).

stresses that Germans and Romans were settled in an intermingled and generally cooperative manner.²⁶ In a variety of ways and in nuanced arguments, Dopsch throughout this chapter combats systematically the idea of Germanic settlers bringing in a primitive, communal land regime into former Roman provinces; in his view, this pertains in areas close to the former frontier such as Bavaria and Alamania as much as elsewhere. Chapter 5: “The Division of the Soil and Agrarian Economy in the Late Roman and Early Medieval Periods” further stresses the continuity of the late Roman estate system, Roman tax and administrative systems and concepts, and their further slow evolution into the manorial systems familiar from later medieval centuries. Included is a detailed discussion of the close equivalence between Roman and Germanic terms relating to tenures, duties, farming methods, and so forth. Again, the “Mark theory” is demolished. Politically, the German nations and their leadership had evolved over several centuries of Roman contact and interference.²⁷ Their elites were ready to adopt Roman lay and ecclesiastical offices, while the lower grades of Germanic society became merged in the post-settlement era with Roman dependent classes.²⁸ Thorough treatment is given also to the Church establishment and to the rise of “feudalism,” matters which need not detain us in the present instance.²⁹

In Chapter 10, Dopsch attacks the dogma of post-Roman urban collapse. Administrations headed either by count or bishop replaced Roman municipal government in the *civitates*, but the places as such remained vital. Roman infrastructure, especially the walls, was maintained or converted. He notes the presence of merchants in many of

²⁶ Cf. Walter Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans AD 418-584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), whose central thesis is that in almost all cases it was portions of the tax revenue of the affected provinces rather than physical property that was distributed to the contracting barbarian group.

²⁷ Regarding the nations: “All the above-mentioned German tribes existing in historical times were certainly not originally national units, but... were fused together gradually by a union of different parts and remnants of the peoples”; Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 175. This anticipates one of the major aspects of the thesis of Reinhart Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln: Böhlau, 1961), which has since become the orthodox position regarding Migration Age ethnogenesis.

²⁸ Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 178, 214 – 18, 231 – 36.

²⁹ For a traditional approach to the topic of feudalism, see Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Manyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); the standard revisionist work is Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).

these places.³⁰ The theme of commerce is continued in Chapter 11: “Industry and Trade.” Dopsch adduces extensive evidence for a wide range of craft production and other commercial activity, especially in Gaul of the sixth century, which sustained the luxury consumption of the elite, army supply, and many other needs.³¹ Sporadic but persistent documentary evidence both from Italy and Gaul suggests that merchants continued to fulfill both private commercial and government (revenue collecting) functions throughout the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries. Further, Dopsch extends his view beyond the erstwhile Roman frontier to indicate that these areas, also, had not been devoid of commerce. Finally, the economy continued to be monetized as in Roman times, with obligations typically discharged in gold or silver coin and Roman standards in minting largely retained.³²

The preceding review has barely skipped along the surface of a work that is based throughout on close argument from varied and detailed data. It is not so much that Dopsch defends a theoretical or rhetorical position, though it is clear enough what that is and is restated at the conclusion: the fifth and sixth centuries are “the organic and vital connecting link between late Roman and Carolingian times,” and the “Carolingian Renaissance” only completes and extends what had been introduced and established earlier.³³ It is the detail and the close analysis *per se* that is of the essence, and it is the systematic accumulation of the vast body of evidence that supports the conclusion. Herein lies the persistent value of Dopsch’s work, as recognized in the introduction to this section. It cannot be killed with a rhetorical silver bullet to a theoretical heart. To demolish it would mean, rather, to take apart and refute every one of the constituent arguments, one by one.

Pirenne was no less of a painstaking and systematic scholar than was Dopsch. Nevertheless, the works for which Pirenne is most famous are characterized much more by persuasive and fluid exposition than by detailed analysis of factual data. The short

³⁰ Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 314 – 15, 322, 324.

³¹ Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 331 – 7. Dopsch makes use of what might be called an “implied economy” approach to the sources: reports of luxurious living, for example, necessarily mean that the material items involved in that lifestyle were either produced locally or imported.

³² Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 360 – 83.

³³ Dopsch, *Economic and Social Foundations*, 390.

1922 article “Mahomet et Charlemagne” sets up three elegant propositions.³⁴ First, that the Mediterranean and the communications that it facilitated had for millennia been the focal point of civilization in the West, most lately during the period of the Roman empire. This “millenary equilibrium” was broken with the appearance of the Carolingian empire—a “cataclysm displacing the axis of the world” to the north where it never before had been. Furthermore, Mediterranean traffic no longer touched the shores of Gaul, bringing in train the rapid collapse of commerce, industry, and urban life, leaving the new northern empire as “a rural economy without outlets.”³⁵ Second, that modern historians have been unable, hitherto, to see the overarching pattern and to give the Carolingian epoch its correct evaluation because of the preconceived Antique – Medieval boundary ca. AD 500. It has become an insurmountable abyss, which historians neither of the Ancient nor the Medieval have risked to breach.³⁶ The true starting point of the medieval West is *not*, as such a fractured perspective might indicate, the conquest of Gaul by the Franks. While Clovis did, indeed, prepare the ground for Charlemagne in a strictly local sense, all of the barbarian kingdoms in the West throughout the sixth century and into the seventh, in fact, continued in a Mediterranean orbit, and their *physionomie*—infrastructure, culture, economy, coinage—remained essentially Roman.³⁷

The third assertion is that it was the Muslim invasion and conquest of the Mediterranean in the seventh century that achieved what the Germanic invasions of the fifth had not. Striking with “elemental force,” unlooked-for, it “threw itself athwart the current of history.” In short, the former western provinces now were cut off from their cultural and economic wellsprings in the East, and the Mediterranean, which formerly

³⁴ Pirenne, “Mahomet et Charlemagne,” 77 – 86.

³⁵ Pirenne, “Mahomet et Charlemagne,” 77 – 9. Throughout, the English paraphrases of Pirenne’s assertions are my own. Of particular importance is the last one preceding this note, which in the French reads “une économie rurale sans débouchés.”

³⁶ Pirenne, “Mahomet et Charlemagne,” 79. Pirenne ignores, here, the ongoing work of Dopsch, who by 1922 had already breached this divide extensively. When and how the idea of an Ancient – Medieval boundary became so firmly fixed in the minds of westerners is a topic of great interest, but which cannot be pursued here. Walter Goffart, “Zosimus, the First Historian of Rome’s Fall” and idem, “The Theme of ‘The Barbarian Invasions’ in Later Antique and Modern Historiography” (both in Walter Goffart, *Rome’s Fall and After* [London: Hambledon Press, 1989], 81 – 110 and 111 – 32, respectively) argues that the two key ideas—a fifth-century “fall” of Rome, caused by barbarian invasions—originated among Byzantine historians of the sixth century.

³⁷ Pirenne, “Mahomet et Charlemagne,” 80 – 4.

had connected them, now was no more than a barrier that isolated them. Now, indeed, the Franks took up their historical mission to refashion a western civilization under the new conditions, but this mission had never been called forth if the Muslims had not “de-axis’ed” the historical evolution of the world.³⁸

The book length version of Pirenne’s thesis expounds the first and third of the above propositions at much greater length as Parts One and Two of the volume, without altering substantially the essence of the argument; a fair amount of evidence appears in support, now, but the style remains impressionistic and rhetorical.³⁹ The Germanic invasions did not destroy Roman civilization; in fact, these people would have been quite powerless to do so even had they wanted. Except in England and in the frontier provinces along the Rhine and the Danube, a few tens of thousands of tribesmen dissolved into the Latin population; no question of retaining Germanic tribal customs or social structures. In Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Africa, the Germanic kingdoms maintained Roman law, administration, land tenure, and other features of the late Roman political system. The kingdoms shared three essential Roman-based features: they were secular rather than theocratic, the king had absolute power within his realm (such as the power to appoint and remove officials at will), and this power was supported by immense wealth in the form of taxes on landed property and tolls on trade. Constantinople continued to be regarded as the sovereign power over all, and dominated the Mediterranean world with its prestige, diplomacy, and subsidies, even after its military efforts were exhausted.⁴⁰

After some disturbance and pillage during the invasions, prosperity continued with all Roman systems intact. Possibly, the lower social ranks were better off because the new regimes reduced the tax burden. Commercially, the western provinces continued to benefit from Mediterranean trade connections to the richer East, which dominated the economy just as it dominated politics. Syrian and Jewish merchants abounded in the cities of Italy, Gaul, and elsewhere. Southern Gaul with its ports was the richest part of Merovingian Gaul, where oriental spices and other goods continued to arrive in

³⁸ Pirenne, “Mahomet et Charlemagne,” 84 – 6. “Désaxée” is the term used in the original.

³⁹ Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, trans. Bernard Mial (New York: Meridian, 1939). In the preface, Jacques Pirenne explains that this work was a preliminary synthesis, which his father had intended to rework later into more closely argued form.

⁴⁰ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, Part One, Chapter 1, *passim*.

abundance. Papyrus continued as the staple writing material, and lamps filled with African oil rather than candles lighted the churches. Merovingian *diplomae* and other sources confirm the existence of trade, merchants, and well-appointed towns. Roman gold coinage, standard and abundant, continued as the basis of both trade and taxation.⁴¹

Culture, according to Pirenne, tells the same story: “If we cannot say that literature continued to flourish, it did at least continue to vegetate, in Rome, Ravenna, Carthage, and Toledo, and in Gaul.”⁴² In all but the outer frontier zones, Latin continued as both spoken and written language of all classes. A pervasive “orientalizing tendency” emanating from the East dominated both Christian and barbarian art styles. Though Christianity and the Church were pillars of continuing *Romanitas*, society remained in essence secular and literate.⁴³

Thus far, one should note, Pirenne’s ideas appear to parallel Dopsch’s to a very significant degree. Part One of *Mohammed and Charlemagne* minimizes the disruptiveness of the invasions and emphasizes integration of the newcomers into a civilization that remains essentially Roman. Nevertheless, there are differences between the two. One is a difference in geographical focus. To be sure, Dopsch treats Gaul, Italy, and the other western provinces, but he also spends much time studying the areas along the Rhine and the Danube—and on both sides of the former frontier. His idea of Romano-Germanic integration embraces Temperate as well as Mediterranean Europe. Pirenne writes off the frontier provinces—Germania, Rhaetia, Noricum, Pannonia—from the start; a small loss, but a loss nonetheless. For Pirenne, the focus of *Romanitas* and continuity is the Mediterranean, while barbarism and decay increases in proportion to distance from the inland sea. In particular, it is the connection with the East of the Mediterranean that is vital. It is *Oriental* spices and silks, *Syrian* merchants, *Gaza* wines, *Egyptian* papyrus, and *Byzantine* gold standard, culture, and political influence that keep civilization alive in the West. The second difference between Dopsch and Pirenne concerns the attitude taken towards the Germans. While Dopsch sees many developments in pre-invasion Germanic society that have similarities with conditions on

⁴¹ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, Part One, Chapter 2, passim.

⁴² Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 123.

⁴³ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, Part One, Chapter 3, passim.

the Roman side and facilitate integration afterwards, Pirenne seems to deny to the Germans any independent capacity to maintain Roman cultural levels.

These differences underpin the conclusions that Pirenne comes to in Part Two of *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, regarding both the end of the ancient Mediterranean system and the nature of Carolingian civilization that arose on the basis of that collapse. The Arab Muslims are no mere conquerors, for their progress brings with it an alien religion, language, legal system, and lifestyle. In other words, any territory where once Muslim authority establishes itself becomes *ipso facto* alienated from the formerly prevailing current of civilization. Presently, all the Mediterranean lands from Syria to Spain are in Muslim hands, and even the Mediterranean coast of Gaul, though not conquered, becomes a ruined no-man's-land of raid and counterraid. The connection between the East and the West was thus broken, especially so after the loss of Sicily to the Muslims in the first half of the ninth century blocked Byzantine ships from the Tyrrhenian Sea. Further, Pirenne asserts: "There was no longer any traffic in the Mediterranean, except along the Byzantine coast."⁴⁴

From here, Pirenne proceeds to describe the economic ruin which ensued from this novel blockage of the Mediterranean, and to fend off potential counter-evidence. If travelers are indicated, "[w]e must not confuse the circulation of merchandise with the movements of pilgrims, scholars, and artists."⁴⁵ In fact, there were no more Syrian or oriental merchants, and "all the products which they used to import were no longer to be found in Gaul."⁴⁶ No more papyrus, spices, silk—and no more *gold*. Pippin and Charlemagne minted only silver deniers, which Pirenne sees as a sure sign that regular international wholesale trade had collapsed. "Gold resumed its place in the monetary system only when spices resumed theirs in the normal diet."⁴⁷ Mention of merchants disappears from the sources, along with the social role of the merchant class as moneylenders and social benefactors. Literacy disappears along with them. Muslim

⁴⁴ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 166. Pirenne's characterization of the cultural effects of the Muslim conquests could be challenged on a number of grounds, but it is not necessary to pursue the matter at this point.

⁴⁵ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 168. McCormick now has made use of precisely this kind of evidence; see Section 2.5 below.

⁴⁶ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 169.

⁴⁷ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 173.

merchants do not come to Christian lands. Only the Jews are left as middlemen between the two sides.⁴⁸

Only Venice and the port towns of southern Italy escape the general trend, says Pirenne, for these places maintained contact both with Byzantium and with the Muslim infidels. Venice now took over the role previously played by Marseilles of channeling to continental western Europe the very few silks and spices still reaching there. In return, the Venetians shipped timber and slaves to the Muslims. Amalfi and Naples fared similarly, maintaining the trade and independence of their fleets between the Muslims, Greeks, and mainland Christians, allying with one party or another as opportunity demanded. In southern Italy, therefore, there still were exotic goods, culture, and gold to be found. Elsewhere in the West, these things were extinct.⁴⁹

Because of the cessation of trade and the concomitant isolation from Eastern cultural roots, in the seventh century post-Roman Merovingian Gaul gradually became transformed into the early medieval Carolingian empire. Society, government, culture—all now were finally de-Romanized and reconstructed. Pirenne's analysis of the rise to power of the Carolingians and the reorientation of the papacy to this new power can be passed over for the present. His views of the emerging Carolingian economy, however, bear closer examination. Here is a restatement of the idea Pirenne broached in 1922, that northwestern Europe had become “une économie rurale sans débouchés”: “We perceive an Empire whose only wealth was the soil, and in which the circulation of merchandise was reduced to a minimum.”⁵⁰

The only exception that Pirenne saw was the “busy navigation” of the Low Countries, where commerce with England and the Frisian coast had existed already in Roman times. Now Duurstete (Dorestad) on the Rhine and Quentovic on the Canche were the major ports of this trade, and other Carolingian *tonlieux* (toll stations) also were in place from the Seine to the Meuse. “This commerce, however, was oriented towards the North, and had no longer any connection with the Mediterranean.” It included the

⁴⁸ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 173 – 4.

⁴⁹ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 175 – 84. Interestingly, McCormick also has emphasized the key role of Venice—although within a framework significantly different from that envisaged by Pirenne. See discussion in Section 6.2, subsection *The emergence of Venice* below.

⁵⁰ Pirenne, “Mahomet et Charlemagne,” 79; idem, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 236.

northern rivers, Britain, and the northern seas, and the Frisians here were as the Syrians had formerly been in the Mediterranean. But the hinterland of the northern ports extended no farther south than the “threshold of Burgundy.”⁵¹ This northern trade had thrived, in large part, because of the expansive trade of Scandinavia during this same period—a trade that reached as far as Byzantium and Baghdad and whose high point was in the tenth century. As Pirenne admits: “The Carolingian Empire had therefore two sensitive economic points: one in northern Italy, thanks to the commerce of Venice, and one in the Low Countries, thanks to the Frisian and Scandinavian trade.” However, because the Norsemen crushed the Frisian trade in the mid-ninth, there was no economic renaissance earlier than the eleventh century.⁵² Clearly, then, Pirenne was aware already of the existence of the North Sea and Scandinavian spheres of commercial activity, as well as the early importance of Venice—the very areas whose continued study has done the most, especially in recent decades, to establish the groundwork for positive re-evaluations of the Carolingian economy.⁵³

Pirenne, however, steadfastly refused to admit any positive evidence. True, Scandinavian trade was vital and growing *because of its connections to the East*; but the Frisian trade zone had no oriental products. It is documented that in 856 the Duke of Brittany granted to the Bishop of Nantes the income from tolls there; but this is meaningless, because Nantes had been destroyed by Vikings. In various sources there is “mention of merchants and merchandise. And it is quite possible to construct, with these scattered elements, an edifice which is merely a fantasy of the imagination.”⁵⁴ The Carolingians had no money lending, no gold minting, no professional merchant class, no Oriental products, minimum circulation of money, illiteracy, no more collection of the land tax, and its towns were mere fortresses—“a civilization which had retrogressed to the purely agricultural stage; which no longer needed commerce, credit, and regular exchange for the maintenance of the social fabric.”⁵⁵ Further, “it would be a mistake to imagine that there was any trade between ‘Francia’ and Spain... The only imports from

⁵¹ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 236 – 9; the long quote is from p. 238.

⁵² Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 239 – 40.

⁵³ Detailed discussion of this evidence will be found below in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, *passim*.

⁵⁴ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 241.

⁵⁵ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 242.

Gaul of which we have mention were those of slaves; brought, no doubt, by pirates, and by the Jews of Verdun.” Pirenne maintains that there was no class of professional merchants-capitalists as in Merovingian times. There was “hawking of articles of value of Eastern origin, and this was carried on by the Jews.”⁵⁶ Occasional grain speculation, selling off of personal possessions, selling supplies to the army, or carrying contraband arms across frontiers—for Pirenne, none of this counts; it is “the trafficking of adventurers, not to be regarded as normal economic activity.”⁵⁷ Resupplying the palace at Aix (Aachen) “gave rise to a regular service. But this was not a commercial affair; the purveyors were subject to the control of the palace.”⁵⁸ The toll exemptions granted to abbeys illustrate nothing more than a “privileged revictualing service.” There were markets aplenty, but these were “frequented only by the peasants of the neighborhood, peddlers, and boatmen.”⁵⁹

The detailed list of Pirenne’s negative assertions is necessary, for it demonstrates not only a determined denial of all positive evidence pertaining to the shape of the Carolingian economy but actually a systematic attempt to preempt any arguments to the contrary. In fact, almost all of the above categories of evidence that Pirenne endeavors to dismiss have been used, now, successfully, to reconstruct a much more positive view of commerce and economic well-being in continental western Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries; this applies particularly to Michael McCormick, on whose works more below. What lies behind Pirenne’s antipathy to the Carolingian period as opposed to the Merovingian? Pirenne himself admits that some of the Jews mentioned in the sources are engaged in bona-fide trade: “Here, incontestably, we are dealing with great merchants...” through whom “the Occidental world still kept in touch with the Orient.”⁶⁰ Why, then, the earlier denials? How is a Carolingian world served by Jewish international merchants so radically different from a world served by Syrian (and Jewish) merchants? It seems that we must be dealing here with a set of prejudices, or *idées fixes*,

⁵⁶ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 249 – 50.

⁵⁷ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 251.

⁵⁸ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 251.

⁵⁹ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 253.

⁶⁰ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 256 – 8. Pirenne cites Jewish merchants mentioned in the formularies of Louis the Pious (*MGH: Formulae Merowingici et Karolini aevi*, ed. Karolus Zevmer [Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1886]) nos. 30, 31, 32, 37, and 52.

one of which certainly is that of the East as the indispensable source of wealth and culture, with the Mediterranean as its vector. Further, a set of classic liberal assumptions about trade are indicated, including an antipathy to government regulation and deification of the gold standard.⁶¹

One thoughtful attempt to explain the evolution of Pirenne's socio-economic theories and his understanding of the processes of historical evolution is Paolo Delogu's "Reading Pirenne Again."⁶² Pirenne's ideas stemmed, ultimately, from his research on the rise of the Flemish towns in the eleventh century, which he saw as deriving from the rise of a new mercantile class. The essential features of this new class were that (1) they demanded and received a special legal status and (2) set up and operated networks of long-distance trade, which were autonomous of the market in local products. In Roman times, similarly, the imperial administration had fostered the existence and activities of such a class, and while vestiges of such an administrative and legal framework persisted, as in Merovingian Gaul, so long did that class also persist; when Roman-style government finally collapsed, so did trade and the mercantile class thus defined.⁶³

Au milieu d'une société qui glissait vers le régime de la propriété seigneuriale, les villes s'étaient maintenues vivantes par le commerce et avec elles une *bourgeoisie libre*.⁶⁴

In other words, Pirenne recognized something in the nature of a "free middle class" in Roman times, in Merovingian Gaul, and again in the eleventh century and onwards; but not in the period in between the latter two. Further, Delogu notes that Pirenne had developed a conception in which economic history is marked by discrete, step-like developments conditioned by (1) changes in external conditions and (2) a pattern of psychological responses to the changed conditions. Carolingian Europe, cut

⁶¹ Cf. Bernard S. Bachrach, "Pirenne and Charlemagne," in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History: Essays Presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 228, n. 71: "The economic 'theory' that undergirds Pirenne's thinking is in need of elucidation if the role he attributes to various historical phenomena is to be understood."

⁶² Paolo Delogu, "Reading Pirenne Again," in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 15 – 40.

⁶³ Delogu, "Reading Pirenne Again," 21 – 3.

⁶⁴ Quoted by Delogu from Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de l'Europe* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1936), 39. The italics are mine. The draft of this work was completed in 1917, actually, while Pirenne was a prisoner of the Germans.

off from trade, developed a “psychology” in which the profit motive was discarded; whereas the merchant class of the eleventh century arose in response to renewed opportunities to engage in profitable trade, and were therefore intrinsically “capitalist” in outlook from the start.⁶⁵ Moreover, Pirenne’s dedication to the idea that external causes produced discrete shifts in “psychology” caused him, in turn, to overemphasize such external effects and to neglect the possibility of continuous, internal socio-economic change. He was forced, in the end, to select and evaluate evidence arbitrarily in order to suit the pre-conceived notion of a break ca. 700 while denying a similar break for ca. 500. It was, accordingly, in critiques of his evidence that his thesis was attacked most forcefully.⁶⁶

2.2 Reaction and Dogma

It is scarcely possible to overestimate the impact that Pirenne’s conceptions have had on subsequent historiography. To be sure, Pirenne’s work has done little to shift the traditional periodization scheme off of its accustomed late-fifth century pivot. Much serious attention has been given to Pirenne’s vision of a kind of ‘indian summer’ of Romanness under the barbarian successor kingdoms, and to his identification of the Muslims as the proximate cause of its final demise. Publication of *Mahomet et Charlemagne* in 1937 precipitated responses from various quarters almost immediately, including numerous critiques, questions, and alternative suggestions, which touched on all parts of the thesis. The number, variety, and creativeness of the responses makes it all the more surprising that, despite this very lively debate, a dogmatic acceptance of Pirenne’s ideas about the post-Merovingian era—retrogression, feudalism, isolation, poverty, illiteracy—had, by the 1970s, become entrenched as the dominant position in discourse about the nature of early medieval Europe generally.

⁶⁵ Delogu, “Reading Pirenne Again,” 25 – 30. The source for this aspect of Pirenne’s thought is Henri Pirenne, “Stages in the Social History of Capitalism,” *American Historical Review* 19 (1914): 494 – 515.

⁶⁶ Delogu, “Reading Pirenne Again,” 35 – 38.

Already in 1937, Henry Moss commented on both Pirenne and Dopsch and questioned the “continuist” positions of both.⁶⁷ Regarding Pirenne’s thesis of a Merovingian Gaul that remained essentially Roman, Moss opines that the late Roman imperial bureaucratic constitution of Diocletian and Constantine had brought a decisive change in the social and economic conditions of the empire, conditions in which landlords acquired great control over their dependants. In the west, subsequently, the central bureaucracy lost control over this landlord class, and its decentralizing tendencies then led progressively to general chaos, localization of government, decline of cultural standards, and so forth. For Moss. “[t]he onus of proof, therefore, lies on those who would seek to show that industry and trade suffered no vital and permanent setback” when the political framework of the western Empire collapsed.⁶⁸ Such proof is not to be found, particularly not in Pirenne’s star witness, Gregory of Tours: “in face of the barbarous conditions in France delineated by Gregory of Tours, stronger proofs than Pirenne has been able to adduce are required before we can be confident of the survival of a highly developed machinery of trade.”⁶⁹ Dopsch’s evidence, says Moss, often is polemical, one sided and overstated: “The quality of his voluminous evidence varies considerably, and much of it has already been called into question.”⁷⁰

In 1943, Robert Lopez accepted the idea that the Arab invasions of the seventh century—not the earlier Germanic invasions—marked an epoch: Arab conquest permanently changed the culture in the affected areas.⁷¹ He challenged, however, that part of Pirenne’s thesis that tied the Arab advance to an alleged disappearance from the west of gold, papyrus, oriental cloth, and spices. The availability and use of these items in the West depended both on changes in local preferences and on changes in the

⁶⁷ H. St. L. B. Moss, “Economic Consequences of the Barbarian Invasions: Revisions in Economic History,” *The Economic History Review* 7 (1937): 209 – 16.

⁶⁸ Moss, “Economic Consequences,” 215.

⁶⁹ Moss, “Economic Consequences,” 216, referring to a critique by Norman H. Baynes, “M. Pirenne and the Unity of the Mediterranean World,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 19 (1929): 224 – 35. Baynes points out how uninformed Gregory is on matters anywhere outside of Gaul and takes that as evidence of the scarcity of regular communications between Gaul and other areas of the Mediterranean. Pirenne does, in fact, rely heavily on Gregory of Tours. In Part One, Chapter 2, where the thesis of Merovingian economic *Romanitas* is pursued, among references to primary sources 36 percent (64 out of 178, at a rough count) are to one of several works by Gregory.

⁷⁰ Moss, “Economic Consequences,” 216.

⁷¹ Robert S. Lopez, “Mohammed and Charlemagne: A Revision,” *Speculum* 18 (1943): 14 – 38.

Byzantine and Muslim worlds, but never was a function of one single cause. Far from being expressions of mere wealth or utility, gold coins, papyrus documents, and rich vestments were controlled substances that involved political considerations in their distribution. Gold coinage bearing the ruler's image, for example, was regarded as an imperial regalian right, which was seldom violated. Similarly, Constantinople established a monopoly over the papyrus supply, appending their official imprint on every scroll and in effect taxing the creation of papyrus documents. They also controlled closely the manufacture and distribution of various grades of fine cloth, especially those involving purple dyes and gold embroidery. When the Arabs conquered Syria and Egypt, they continued to use Byzantine gold coinage until ca. 690, and exported papyrus to Constantinople, so any changes in availability of these items in the west cannot be put down to their action. Papyrus ceased to be produced in Egypt only after Arab chancelleries converted to the use of paper in the tenth century. Fancy cloth actually became more available, because Arab regalian control over the Syrian makers of high-grade textiles was less strict than the Byzantine had been. As for spices, wars in Asia nearer to the sources of supply may have temporarily made some of them more scarce in the eighth century, a situation remedied again in the ninth.⁷²

Dennett's 1948 article on "Pirenne and Muhammad" sought to demolish even more aspects of the thesis.⁷³ Most tellingly, Dennet disproves the idea that the Muslims either wanted to cut trade with the Christians or were in a position to do so. He reanalyzes the naval record to show that the Byzantines, not the Arabs, dominated the Mediterranean up to the 830s, and that Marseilles was never attacked at all until 848. No sudden closure of the Mediterranean ca. 650 is indicated. Furthermore, if Muslims, South Italians, Venetians, Byzantines, and Scandinavians all are engaged in active trading, is it credible that Carolingian Gaul alone would not participate in this activity?⁷⁴

On the contrary, there is plenty of evidence for exotic goods like silks and spices in Carolingia. However, Dennett considers that the basic economic prosperity of Gaul

⁷² Lopez, "Mohammed and Charlemagne," passim.

⁷³ Daniel C. Dennett, Jr., "Pirenne and Muhammad," *Speculum* 23 (1948): 165 – 90.

⁷⁴ Cf. the almost identical sentiments expressed in McCormick, *Origins*, 613: "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?"

had been damaged beyond repair already in the third century, when political instability and barbarian incursions reduced the cities and wrecked the export trade in bulk goods, which had made Gaul rich in the first and second centuries. If Mediterranean commerce is to be the underpinning of cultural continuity in Gaul then, according to Dennett, we have to demonstrate an economic *revival* under the Merovingians, not mere continuation of late Roman conditions.⁷⁵ But in fact, the Merovingians understood so little of the Roman system that “[t]he principle fact of the Merovingian period was the decomposition of public power” as the ignorant kings gave away immunities and otherwise destroyed the bases of their own authority.⁷⁶ Dennett dismisses the idea that such a government could maintain let alone revive a complex economy:

The crude Western barbarians were not able to develop—indeed, they were too ignorant to preserve the state and the culture they took by conquest, while the Arabs on the contrary not only preserved what they took but created from it a culture which the world had not known for centuries, and which was not to be equaled for centuries more.⁷⁷

Arabophilia aside, here is a confirmed minimalist attitude towards the early medieval West, in particular regarding the capacity of the Merovingians to operate an effective, rational administration. It may be noted, in addition, that Dennet uses the same argument against the economic health of Merovingian Gaul that Pirenne used to discount evidence of commerce in the Carolingian realms: a few enterprising merchants can always manage to make profits from the transport and retail of exotic, high-value, low-bulk goods such as silk and spices; by itself, such trade does not prove the existence of a viable market economy.⁷⁸

This small sample of responses to *Mohammed and Charlemagne* within a decade or so of its publication represents several noteworthy trends. For one thing, every major

⁷⁵ Dennett, “Pirenne and Muhammad,” 178 – 80.

⁷⁶ The argument is expounded in detail in Dennett, “Pirenne and Muhammad,” 184 – 90. The quote is on p. 184.

⁷⁷ Dennett, “Pirenne and Muhammad,” 189 – 90.

⁷⁸ Dennett, “Pirenne and Muhammad,” 185 – 6.

aspect of Pirenne's thesis had been attacked.⁷⁹ While Lopez somewhat indirectly challenges the idea that there was any clear-cut difference between the Merovingian and Carolingian periods in terms of access to and distribution of luxury items, and Dennett demolishes any idea of a Muslim naval blockade of trade before the mid-ninth century, quite definitely Moss, Baynes, and Dennett all reject the proposition of cultural, political, and especially economic continuity between the late Roman and Merovingian periods. Each in his own way asserts the barbarousness of the sixth century. In the 1930s and 40s, *this*, clearly, is regarded as the orthodox position by the majority. Therefore it is, perhaps, somewhat unfair to blame Pirenne alone for the minimalist dogmatism of the 1970s. However, those who already were inclined to believe in a de-civilized early medieval Europe could generalize Pirenne's rhetorically persuasive statements about a regressed, "natural" Carolingian-era economy all the way back to the time of the political collapse of the western Empire; in this way no doubt Pirenne contributed to the outlook of the latter-day minimalist school of the "Dark Ages" lying between the fifth and the eleventh centuries.

Responses to *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, meanwhile, showed a remarkable variety and creativity as well as criticism. One of the most remarkable rejoinders to the Pirenne thesis was that of Sture Bolin, the Swedish numismatist, who in 1953 proposed that far from being isolated from the Muslim world, Carolingian western Europe had, in fact, acted as a conduit for the international trade between the Arabs and the Scandinavians.⁸⁰ As evidence, Bolin presents an analysis of the fluctuating ratios in the value of gold to silver within the Arabic world in the eighth and ninth centuries, and claims that the adjustments in weight of the Frankish silver denier of the same period had been designed to keep the denier tuned to the value of gold in the Caliphate. Carolingian Europe was prosperous so long as the commerce in furs and slaves from Scandinavia flowed to the Arabs via Francia, but from the mid-ninth century the Scandinavian trade

⁷⁹ Cf. Adriaan Verhulst, *The Carolingian Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2, who characterizes the period of the late 1930s to 1950s in early medieval historiography as one "driven by an attack on Pirenne's work."

⁸⁰ Sture Bolin, "Mohammed, Charlemagne and Ruric," *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 1 (1953): 5 – 39.

began to bypass the West. Now the flood of Islamic silver reached Scandinavia from the east, via Russia, and the western Europeans were cut out of the loop.⁸¹

As noted above, Pirenne had been aware of the Scandinavian connection to Byzantium and the Middle East—indeed, according to his preconceived ideas this trade was more legitimate than that of the North Sea region, in which Francia participated, because the former involved genuine Oriental luxuries and quantities of precious metals as a medium of exchange and the latter (in his view) did not. But while it is mentioned in *Mohammed and Charlemagne* the Scandinavian trade to the east remains there a rather dim phenomenon, remote from the focus on the miseries of Carolingia; in “Mohammed, Charlemagne and Ruric,” the Scandinavian trade is illumined boldly and brightly. With Bolin, it is no longer a primarily Mediterranean-centered world. Instead, Bolin presents a system of dynamic circuits in the trade relations of western Eurasia, a network in which the main currents of exchange may shift from one region to another as conditions change: “We are shown here a picture of an active and widely ramified international trade in which the Mediterranean certainly does not play an unimportant part.”⁸² No region is permanently favored nor permanently disadvantaged. Moreover, far from being cultural-economic assassins, the Arabs here are a wellspring of general prosperity, inciting worldwide economic activity via their floods of Nubian gold and Central Asian silver.

About a decade later, Karl Morrison published a numismatic appraisal of Carolingian trade and came to significantly different conclusions.⁸³ At the outset, it should be mentioned that Morrison’s own review of the post-Pirenne debate on the early medieval economy shows that there was no shortage of views contesting Pirenne’s basic tenet regarding the Arabs as terminators of the commerce of western Europe; many, in fact, were saying just the opposite. However, all of these sanguine assessments

⁸¹ Bolin is, thus, a forerunner to Thomas S. Noonan and many others, especially in Scandinavia and Russia, who have continued to study the trade links between Scandinavia and both the East and the West in the eighth to tenth centuries.

⁸² Bolin, “Mohammed, Charlemagne and Ruric,” 24. Cf. also the ideas of Maurice Lombard, “Les bases monétaires d’une suprématie économique. L’or musulman du VIIe au XIe siècle,” *Annales. Economies – Sociétés – Civilisations* 2 (1948): 188 – 99, who thought that the Arabs used gold to purchase furs, slaves, and other merchandise from the West.

⁸³ Karl F. Morrison, “Numismatics and Carolingian Trade: A Critique of the Evidence,” *Speculum* 38, no. 3 (1963): 403 – 32.

founded on the plain absence of a numismatic record (so far as it then was known) that would support notions of massive Arabic gold or silver circulation within Carolingia. Chief among the critics were Grierson, Perroy, and Himley, with the latter stating that “L’islamisation économique de l’Occident diffère hautement des réalités; elle présente tous les traits d’un mirage collectif.”⁸⁴

For Morrison, the positive contribution of the critiques was the call for a more rigorous examination of the available numismatic evidence. Accordingly, he began by outlining some important caveats in the evaluation of coin finds, namely that (1) coins may travel from place to place for a number of reasons, of which trade is only one possibility and (2) a coin hoard may indicate that the place where it was deposited was relatively *un-frequented* rather than a nexus of activity.⁸⁵ Moreover, most Carolingian issues must be dated approximately on the basis of stylistic changes, therefore making impossible the establishment of year-by-year or decade-by-decade nuances in output, distribution, and so forth. Rather than reflecting responses to international currency flows, the fluctuations in the weight of the Carolingian denier denote greater or lesser profits taken at various times by the minters (the royal government or its agents) or, in other words, the discrepancy between a “mint pound” of silver that did not vary vs. an “account pound” of finished coins which did.⁸⁶ While rejecting the idea that coin hoards can accurately reflect patterns of trade, Morrison did conclude that “ninth- and tenth-century Europe knew a relatively sophisticated economy, which required a stable currency in a larger and a smaller denomination, and which could absorb large numbers of coins.” However, it was a “highly localized trade area extending no further than the borders of the Empire.”⁸⁷ Economic activity was concentrated especially in northern

⁸⁴ Philip Grierson, “Carolingian Europe and the Arabs: The Myth of the Mancus,” *Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire* 32 (1954): 1059 – 74; Édouard Perroy, “Encore Mahomet et Charlemagne,” *Revue Historique* 212 (1954): 232 – 8; F. J. Himley, “Y a-t-il emprise musulmane sur l’économie des états européens du VIIe au Xe siècle?” *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 5 (1955): 31 – 81, with the quote from p. 81.

⁸⁵ Morrison, “Numismatics and Carolingian Trade,” 409.

⁸⁶ The detailed argument regarding Carolingian coin weights and mint practices is in Morrison, “Numismatics and Carolingian Trade,” 412 – 26.

⁸⁷ Both quotes are from Morrison, “Numismatics and Carolingian Trade,” 427.

France and the Low Countries, and patterns in the distribution of coin hoards reflect local political upheavals rather than international trade currents.

Morrison, thus, ended by supporting Pirenne on the notion that the Carolingian world was for all intents and purposes a closed economy. He differed radically from Pirenne, however, in describing that economy as sophisticated, dynamic, and monetized. Both conclusions were derived from a rigorous examination of *numismatic evidence only* and that limited to what had actually been discovered to date in Carolingian territory. Other evidence, most of it developed since 1963, can demonstrate that there were, indeed, commercial connections between the Carolingian Empire and outside areas.

But the demonstration based on internal numismatic evidence of a sophisticated and monetized Carolingian economy should have put to bed the arguments of the minimalists; the surprise is that it did not do so. Numismatics as a discipline subsequently has been of crucial importance also in deciphering the economies of Anglo-Saxon England and Scandinavia contemporary with the Carolingian and Ottonian economies. However, even numismatic data admits of varying interpretations. In 1959, the same Philip Grierson mentioned above had published a call for caution in evaluating coin finds of the early medieval centuries.⁸⁸ In the Dark Ages, says Grierson, there was little or no trade in the modern sense of the term. Self-sufficiency on both vertical and horizontal axes was the universal ambition, and wealth was transferred chiefly through institutions such as elite gift giving, the upkeep of retainers and mercenaries, dowries, wergilds, ransoms. With so many alternative ways that goods and coin might move about, trade *per se* was the least likely and needs to be proved where claimed.⁸⁹ With this, Grierson had introduced into the historiography of early medieval economics modern anthropological notions of gift-giving economies and other pre-modern social phenomena that were to prove highly influential in future decades.⁹⁰ Acceptance of these

⁸⁸ Philip Grierson, "Commerce in the Dark Ages: A Critique of the Evidence," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (5th Series)* 9 (1959): 123 – 40.

⁸⁹ Grierson, "Commerce in the Dark Ages," 139 – 40.

⁹⁰ As Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 9 had it: "It effectively introduced the growing literature of economic anthropology to medieval history." The ramifications of this will be explored further in Sections 2.3 and 2.4 below.

ideas would, of course, tend to invalidate demonstrations such as that by Morrison regarding the Carolingian economy.

Thus, while many other aspects of Pirenne's thesis had been thoroughly tested and rejected, his picture of a minimal, de-commercialized, and profoundly agrarian Carolingian economy was given new life—partly through the introduction of anthropological theory, and partly by a shift in historiographical focus away from trade and towards early medieval agrarian organization.⁹¹ The minimalist heyday of the 1970s is well represented by two monographs published in that decade, both originally in French but then translated also into English. First, Renée Doehaerd's *Le haut Moyen Age occidental* of 1971, which appeared as *The Early Middle Ages in the West* in 1978.⁹² The bulk of the material in Doehaerd's volume is organized in three broad chapters: "The Scarcity of Production" (pp. 1 – 74); "Agricultural and Related Types of Production" (pp. 75 – 147); and "The Circulation of Consumer Goods" (pp. 149 – 216). All of them contain an impressively thorough, descriptive discussion of their respective topics with extensive use of primary source material, including chronicles and many saints' lives as well as the inevitable Gregory of Tours, which give incidental references to economic activity. That it does provide references to so many disparate but relevant texts is one of the valuable features of this work; there is practically no archaeological data. More striking, however, is the apparent determination to give this evidence the most pessimistic possible interpretation.

Already in the Preface, Doehaerd asserts that the lack of economic data in the early medieval sources is an "expression of people's lack of interest in an order of things over which they believed they had no influence."⁹³ Chapter 1 then starts with the assertion that scarcity was the endemic condition in the Frankish empire, and the collapse of the Roman system "left men equipped only to provide for their own subsistence" in all

⁹¹ Verhulst, *Carolingian Economy*, 4 – 7 outlines the major developments in what he calls the second phase of post-Pirenne discussions on the early medieval European economy, including the publication of documents relating to the Carolingian manor and important conferences 1965 – 1988.

⁹² Renée Doehaerd, *The Early Middle Ages in the West: Economy and Society*, trans. W. G. Deakin (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1978).

⁹³ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, vii.

the Germanic successor states.⁹⁴ Rather than an “indian summer” of Romanness (as I have called it) in Merovingian times, Doehaerd brings the onset of Pirenne’s vision of a closed agricultural society back from the eighth century to ca. 500. Further, she accepts uncritically literary reports of famine with their deaths and horrors and interprets this to mean that there were no reserves of food or money. Indeed, the scarcity was so profound that routine food deliveries were regarded as suitable miracles for local saints.⁹⁵ The rich feared famine no less than the poor, and had no other guarantee against it than the formation of enormously extensive estates including hundreds of peasant farms, whose meager surpluses delivered as fixed rents in good times or bad alone ensured livelihood.⁹⁶ The population had dwindled greatly since the second century, and the scarcity of labor meant that almost everybody had to be involved in primary food production, leaving little time or energy to produce anything else. Nevertheless, Doehaerd is forced to admit that “the technical quality of the work related to production does not seem to display any sign of falling off” compared with Roman times.⁹⁷

Of course, when the intercession of St. Judoc causes four boats with provisions to appear at a hungry community, this could as readily be construed as evidence for a routine trade in surplus produce in eighth-century Gaul rather than proof of catastrophic scarcity needing divine grace to alleviate.⁹⁸ The key is in the interpretation. Chapter 2 describes the system of land holdings, estate organization, and terms of tenancy in the countryside, once again stressing that this was a life of bare subsistence. In the last ten pages, however, comes a description of productive activities by peasants and other estate-dwellers that are far from being strictly agricultural. According to detailed lists of dues, assets, tenancies and the like—mostly from larger estates and especially from the eighth and ninth centuries onwards—this rural economy delivered long and varied lists of

⁹⁴ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 1.

⁹⁵ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 4.

⁹⁶ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 7.

⁹⁷ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 22.

⁹⁸ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 4, again, for this particular incident and others. In general, given the ubiquity of local saints in Gaul of the early medieval centuries, if the examples of saint-wrought long-term and universal freedom from want that Doehaerd advances here are at all representative of the crop of vitae, then one could plausibly argue that Gaul must have been an exceedingly prosperous country during this period.

products and services; ran installations such as lime kilns, mills, breweries and taverns; engaged in industrial projects such as mining and salt production; and supported a range of specialty crafts such as goldsmiths, furriers, weapons-makers, saddlers, turners, coopers and many others. Peasant services included transport and *marketing* of estate surpluses such as wine, or work in one of the many aforementioned non-agricultural pursuits. Peasants delivered wool and linen clothing, items of wood such as hop-poles and barrels, iron objects including ploughshares and scythes, shingles and tiles, torches, and many other objects, often in staggering quantities.⁹⁹ Yet, after all this evidence for productivity and a thriving economic system, Doehaerd reflexively asserts once again that this was a society dominated by scarcity both in practice and in mentality.¹⁰⁰

The third chapter, on “The Circulation of Consumer Goods,” has similar contradictions. Doehaerd starts by asserting that everyone was a producer of their own basic goods and that there was no market for surpluses.¹⁰¹ Yet, in the pages that follow, it turns out that there was a large and thriving commerce in foodstuffs, both within Gaul and extending internationally.¹⁰² The existence of specialized non-rural craftsmen, international trade, many and varied types of traders, markets, roads and bridges, ports, ships and carts, the international networks extending from Francia in all directions—all this and more is described. In the fourth chapter, less extensive than the first three and dealing mainly with currency issues, she reiterates the idea that Carolingian silver coinage was influenced by the circulation of Muslim dirhems.¹⁰³ Immediately following, however, one finds more of the incongruous minimalizations that mark this text:

But can we really claim that it was the movement of precious metals over such enormous areas that determined the change from gold to silver in the Frankish world, where international trade occupied so small a place, where so few men earned a living from it, and where people had so few goods to export? ... This is perhaps once again an over-estimation of the importance of foreign trade as a

⁹⁹ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 127 – 36.

¹⁰⁰ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 137.

¹⁰¹ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 149 – 50.

¹⁰² Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 152 – 9.

¹⁰³ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 231 – 2. René Doehaerd, “Les réformes monétaires carolingiennes,” *Annales. Economies – Sociétés – Civilisations* 7 (1952): 13 – 20, had been among the crop of writings sanguine on the topic of extensive *positive* influence of the Arabs in western European economics.

factor in the economic situation in the West, whereas in reality the level of production meant that it was of marginal importance.¹⁰⁴

These statements are the more startling because they are embedded within a discussion of coinage whose general thrust is to demonstrate that the Carolingian rulers issued good money in appropriate denominations and amounts in response to real needs for such a currency.

The recurring mismatch in *The Early Middle Ages in the West* between the evidence and the rhetoric suggests two alternative interpretations. One could simply say that it is a function of the dominant minimalist attitude to early medieval economics—an attitude abetted and furthered by Pirenne but by no means his sole responsibility. No matter what the evidence, the *idée fixe* of the agrarian subsistence economy must be upheld. The other possibility is that the author herself was aware, to a lesser or greater extent, of the inconsistencies, but either did not feel them sufficiently strongly to remove them or even inserted them deliberately in order to let her work conform with the prevailing dogma. Either way, Doehaerd's monograph illustrates the prevailing intellectual climate in the 1970s regarding the question of an early medieval economy in western Europe.

The other example of the dominant 1970s mindset to be examined here is the monograph by Georges Duby, which came out originally in 1973 and saw its English edition in 1974.¹⁰⁵ In the Foreword, Charles Wilson, general editor of the Cornell University series in which the translation appeared, announced, in effect, that Duby will be treating the early medieval economy as embedded in pre-modern social conditions:

In the Middle Ages, as in the Ancient World, economic institutions were rarely able to function independently. Only gradually, in the course of the six centuries described by M. Duby, did economic activities and functions free themselves and become superimposed upon the non-economical.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 232, 233.

¹⁰⁵ Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, trans. Howard B. Clarke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).

¹⁰⁶ Charles Wilson, introduction to *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, by Georges Duby, trans. Howard B. Clarke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), x.

Duby himself follows with a similarly tone-setting pronouncement:

In any attempt to investigate those symptoms of growth which gradually caused *this exceedingly primitive culture* to emerge from barbarism between the seventh and twelfth centuries, we must above all refrain from misapplying models based on the modern economy.¹⁰⁷

Both of the above position statements relate directly to the rise of the influence in ancient and medieval historiography of ideas from economic anthropology. If ideas concerning an ancient economy based on a closed household model had been driven from the field by the modernism of Rostovtzeff in the 1930s,¹⁰⁸ the economic anthropological approach to pre-modern economies also had been growing steadily in strength. Here, the seminal works were by Malinowski and by Mauss.¹⁰⁹ In the 1940s and '50s, the Columbia University economist Karl Polanyi developed a theory which combined classic economics and the new economic anthropology into a system which came to be known as substantivism.¹¹⁰ At all times and in all places, the “material acts of making a living” depend on the environment and community in which they are situated. That is to say, there will be institutions set up in a given society within which such activities can be played out; this is the “substantive” definition of economy. There also is a “formal” definition of economy, which subsumes rational calculations revolving around supply-demand considerations in any situation. Only in purely capitalistic societies do the two definitions of economy coincide perfectly—in the institution of a free marketplace. The other basic institutional forms are those of the closed household, of reciprocity, and of redistribution and exchange.¹¹¹ While Substantivism was contested on a number of

¹⁰⁷ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 3. The italics are mine.

¹⁰⁸ Michael Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), was the definitive embodiment of his approach.

¹⁰⁹ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (London: Routledge, 1922). Original essay Marcel Mauss, *Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques* (Paris: Alcan, 1925); first published in English as *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Trans. Ian Cunnison. London: Cohen and West, 1954. Both of these works concentrated on gift-exchange as a phenomenon of practical economics in pre-modern societies.

¹¹⁰ Karl Polanyi, “The Economy as Instituted Process,” in *Trade and Markets in the Early Empires*, ed. Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensburg, and Harry W. Pearson (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957), 243 – 70 .

¹¹¹ The preceding summary of Substantivism is modeled after the discussion of same in Sherman, “Barbarians come to Market,” Chapter 1.

grounds over the next couple of decades, particularly by the so-called Formalists,¹¹² it remained also highly influential, for it offered ways for historians to approach economic phenomena in historical situations in which few or none of the modern market-oriented structures were visible. Though not explicitly Substantivist, the reference to embeddedness and the caution against modernist models in the quotations above clearly are inspired by Substantivist ideas.

Duby makes the applicability of anthropologically based theories to early medieval Europe explicit from the very beginning: “At the end of the sixth century Europe was a profoundly uncivilized place.”¹¹³ Moreover, the land was dominated by forest: 40 percent even in the Seine basin. And it was very thinly populated: perhaps 5.5/km² in Gaul, less than half that in Germany and England.¹¹⁴ So far as we can tell, the tools in use at the time were mostly made of wood and very primitive, so that “we should keep in view the overall picture of a poorly equipped agrarian society forced to tackle the natural environment virtually bare handed.” To judge from the few documents available, grain yields were in fact catastrophically low: from 1.8 to 1.6 or less to seed sown, depending on the type of grain. “Europeans of those times lived permanently with the spectre of starvation.”¹¹⁵ All along, Duby is constructing also a picture of the domainal and social structure of western Europe: “By means of their rights over land, kings, noblemen, cathedral clergy and monks accumulated in their barns, cellars and storerooms a considerable proportion of what this wild, unprofitable countryside and destitute peasantry produced.”¹¹⁶

Duby asserts further that the collection of tithes and rents was complemented by pillage as a regular source of income, and this was a normal and perennial activity for all free men. All accumulation, however, was matched by a process of continuous gift-giving, especially on the part of the elite: “this uncivilized world was wholly imbued

¹¹² See Richard R. Wilk, *Economies and Cultures: Foundations of Economic Anthropology* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 9 – 11, for the results of this confrontation.

¹¹³ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 3.

¹¹⁴ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 13. At a rough calculation, “Gaul” from the Pyrenees to the Rhine would have had around 3.5 million people altogether under these specifications.

¹¹⁵ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 29.

¹¹⁶ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 42.

with the habit of pillaging and with the need for offering.”¹¹⁷ It is in this institutional structure, which rests on the foundations of a primitive agrarianism, that Duby sees the essence of the early medieval political economy. Peace between neighboring groups was secured wherever “[t]he risky policy of alternating raids was being replaced by a regular round of mutual offerings.... [A] considerable proportion of what was produced was drawn into the heavy traffic in *necessary generosity*.”¹¹⁸ Much productive energy, in fact, went into the crafting or importation of elite ornaments and other treasures, much of which production routinely was invested into prestige-securing funereal ceremonies—as grave goods. In Duby’s judgment: “No form of investment could have been more unproductive than this, yet it was the only one to be widely practiced.”¹¹⁹ When the Church succeeded in abating the practice, the same treasure then accumulated as offerings in churches and monasteries! Such wealth that was not sunk into votive offerings, however, did tend to circulate through various levels of gift exchange; there was, indeed, a lack of real trade, but this did not mean that there was no circulation of goods.

Duby is more precise about the temporal parameters of his observations than was Doehaerd, who mixes evidence from all the centuries between the sixth and the eleventh. The former makes it clear that he considers the sixth century to have been the demographic and economic nadir in western Europe, and the picture that he paints, as summarized in the preceding paragraphs, refers particularly to the Merovingian era. Under the Carolingians, from early on in the eighth century, an economic upswing was evident to him, and this included a steady increase in real trade. Notably, in the latter observation, Duby’s position is the opposite of Pirenne’s. The primitivism that Pirenne saw in the eighth and ninth centuries has been shifted to the sixth and seventh and vested, now, in the Substantivist raiment of embedded institutions of redistribution and exchange, all based on principles that contemporary economic anthropologists would recognize as orthodox and sound. Equally notable is Duby’s highlight on the political

¹¹⁷ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 48.

¹¹⁸ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 50, 51. The italics are mine.

¹¹⁹ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 54.

economics of plunder in this primitivizing system, thus bringing to prominence a set of ideas that would be greatly expanded by others in the 1980s and '90s.¹²⁰

However, Duby allows that some trade had always existed: “The expansion of trade... was only the very gradual and incomplete dovetailing of an economy of pillage, gift and largesse into a framework of monetary circulation.”¹²¹ While at first the ambition of the elite to live like the Romans kept a traffic in luxuries alive, eventually surpluses from manors, monasteries and even peasant farms began to flow to markets. Town life and currency had survived best in Lombard Italy, but in the eighth century Carolingian silver coinage became increasingly accepted for all manner of transactions as the population expanded again and the countryside produced growing surpluses. As Duby explains:

The role of commercialization was not always ‘marginal’ and this traffic was collectively generating an ever greater volume of cash transactions.... The economic concentration represented by the great estate made a powerful contribution towards associating the work of the land and its fruits with trading activities.¹²²

This flatly contradicts Pirenne. Further, activities such as slave trading and arms dealing, which Pirenne dismissed as the economically irrelevant pursuits of “adventurers,” Duby asserts were contributing to a “clear impression of sustained growth, causing genuinely commercial activities to spread at the expense of a gift economy.”¹²³ Duby’s description of the trading systems emerging in the seventh century and growing steadily in the eighth, ninth, and tenth is far more robust even than Doehaerd’s. Duby is having the same problem as Doehaerd: the evidence for commercial dynamism proves exceedingly lively and is constantly threatening to get out of hand—to escape the minimalist reigns holding it in check.

Accordingly, Duby hastens to reassert the theoretical framework: “Commercial expansion was ushered into an environment still that of a peasant society dominated by

¹²⁰ See discussion in Section 2.4 below.

¹²¹ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 57.

¹²² Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 96, 97.

¹²³ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 104.

war leaders and priests. Trade was not influential enough to reshape it except locally.... [T]hese developments amounted to a mere surface ripple.”¹²⁴ The commercial growth was predicated on political reconstruction under the Carolingians, which created internal peace, on a reorganized monetary system, and on a consolidated aristocracy, who continued to profit from victorious wars *ad externum*. Charles Martel, Pippin, and Charlemagne had made the aristocrats rich and able to afford luxuries. Under Louis the Pious, the process stalled, for a number of reasons, and royal leverage over the aristocrats dwindled away.¹²⁵ Shorn of their war profits, the aristocrats turned to intensifying the exploitation of their manors in order to sustain the lifestyles to which they had become accustomed. Subsequently, the tension between this imperative for exploitation of the peasantry and the unintentional acceleration of commercial development to which this gave rise led to the emergence of a full-blown commercial and re-urbanized society by the end of the twelfth century.¹²⁶

To sum up, the works of Doehaerd and Duby illustrate two important aspects of the scholarship on the early medieval European economy around the decade of the 1970s. On the one hand, they reflect a kind of dogmatic minimalism and incorporate the then current state of anthropological theorizing into their approaches to the matter. Duby’s work in particular appears to be a forerunner to the later primitivist approach. On the other hand, both monographs display a density of data on aspects of early medieval agriculture, craft production, industrial enterprises, and various levels of exchange or marketing that go far beyond that surveyed by Pirenne. In other words, regardless of the theoretical or thematic approach that any particular author might apply to it, the body of data itself was becoming ever more fleshed out and integrated.

¹²⁴ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 106.

¹²⁵ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 110 – 11. See Timothy Reuter, “The End of Carolingian Military Expansion,” in *Charlemagne’s Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814 – 840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 391 – 405, for a followup to these ideas.

¹²⁶ That, in brief, is the thrust of Part Three of *Early Growth of the European Economy*. Duby also shows considerable awareness of the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian connections with Francia in the ninth and tenth century and the overall positive effects that these were having in the growth-trend of the European economy; these matters are covered in his Chapter 5: “The Final Assault.” pp. 112 – 54.

2.3 Northern Waters and Archaeology

As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, it has been the ongoing study of the emergence of trade systems and urbanization around the northern waters of Europe—the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, rather than the Mediterranean—that in the long run has done most to open the door to a reappraisal of the economic potentials of Carolingian continental Europe. Whereas the historiography on continental western Europe was haunted by the ghost of the supposedly ruined classical civilization,¹²⁷ in Scandinavia (as in parts of continental Europe northeast of the former *limes*) there had been no ancient urban or literary tradition. Therefore, the development that led eventually to the full integration of Scandinavia into high medieval Latin Christian civilization was pristine in the sense that it had no locally pre-established benchmarks to live up to, so that even quite insignificant beach landing sites could be marked on the maps of trading networks and welcomed enthusiastically as harbingers of proto-urbanism. Furthermore, there were no contemporary (fifth to tenth centuries) native written records aside from runestones, and the coverage of the Scandinavian development in Latin Christian sources ranged from thin to tenuous to non-existent. Practically, the only way to get at the traces of the development of trade and urbanism around the northern waters was through archaeology, broadly defined. The last few decades especially have seen a vast accumulation of data on such archaeological sites—not only in Scandinavia but also in the British Isles and on the continent, showing that the development was both broadly based and multi-regional. Along with the accumulation of material evidence has come the need for theoretical frameworks or models by which the systems and processes involved in these multi-regional interactions might be reconstructed and interpreted. The models no less than the reflections in the material record have tended to place the continental West and the more northern lands into the same developmental context.

The work of the archaeologists, who are recovering the northern trading worlds of the eighth and ninth centuries, is situated within a complex set of intellectual traditions,

¹²⁷ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 48, believes the early medieval Europeans themselves were thus haunted: “Europe in the seventh and eighth centuries was bewitched by memories of an ancient civilization whose material forms had not been completely obliterated and whose remains she would endeavor to re-use as best she could.”

some of which are reviewed in Ian Hodder's *Archaeological Theory in Europe*.¹²⁸ It was the culture-historical approach, which focused on the evident artistic and technological achievements of civilizations and was consciously historical in outlook that dominated archaeology in the pre-World War II era. Products of this approach included the attempts to correlate archaeological data with historically known ethnic and linguistic groupings.¹²⁹ The concept of an archaeological culture was articulated specifically by V. Gordon Childe, who represented an adaptation of Marxist materialist thinking in addition to other currents.¹³⁰ In the Soviet Union, Marxist ideology dictated an archaeological focus on quotidian material culture, especially on that of the non-elite, which led to extensive excavations of early medieval settlements, villages and farms. This focus was imposed also on the East Bloc countries after the war; in East Germany, Karl-Heinz Otto laid the foundations for Marxist archaeology:

Material culture reflects ancient societies and their level of development; it signifies the forces of production that determine people's conditions in life and their relationships in the process of production. The economic embraces the social. Thus society's genetic development can be studied retrospectively with the aid of material culture, even in times before the appearance of written sources.¹³¹

Thus, high-quality archaeological reports and related historical studies were routinely introduced by prefaces invoking the historical theories of Marx and Engels and employing a Marxist-oriented analytic vocabulary.¹³² Hodder points out that more often

¹²⁸ Ian Hodder, ed., *Archaeological Theory in Europe: The Last Three Decades* (London: Routledge, 1991).

¹²⁹ The practice of correlating historic and prehistoric ethnic identities with artifact assemblages found an early expression in the works of the Swedish archaeologist Oscar Montelius and a vigorous further development by Gustaf Kossina. According to this line of thinking, which the latter researcher named the *Siedlungsarchäologische Methode*, the distribution boundaries of archaeological cultures correspond with the settlement boundaries of ethno-linguistic groups. Oscar Montelius, "Ueber die Einwanderung unserer Vorfahren in den Norden," *Archiv für Anthropologie* 17 (1888): 151 – 60 and Gustaf Kossina, *Die Herkunft der Germanen: zur Methode der Siedlungsarchäologie* (expanded 2nd edition: Leipzig: C. Kabitzsch, 1920).

¹³⁰ V. Gordon Childe, *The Dawn of European Civilization* (London: K. Paul, Trench, and Trubner, 1925).

¹³¹ Quoted in Christoph Kilger, "The Slavs Yesterday and Today: Different perspectives on Slavic Ethnicity in German Archaeology," *Current Swedish Archaeology* 6 (1998): 100.

¹³² An excellent example of a product under these auspices is the introduction to Joachim Herrmann, ed., *Von Homer bis Plutarch*, vol. 1 of *Griechische und lateinische Quellen zur Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas*

than not the lip-service paid to Marxist dogma was simply a cover for the pursuit of old-fashioned culture-history.¹³³ With the collapse of the East-Bloc regimes, the mask of vulgar Marxism fell away. However, the intellectual influence on European archaeology of Marxism is far more sophisticated than the references to its more dogmatic and vulgar variants above might suggest, and it is pervasive. As Hodder notes: “Indeed my two main further impressions of European archaeology concern the overall acceptance of the centrality of historical inquiry and the widespread incorporation of Marxist theory.”¹³⁴

The biggest changes in the practice of archaeology in Europe came in response to the “New Archaeology” or Processualism from America in the 1960s.¹³⁵ It was the influence of processualist ideas, and in England much more so than elsewhere, that directly shaped the interpretations that would be applied to the rapidly growing bank of archaeological data that was coming out of the northern sites. Along with a rejection of “culture-history,” the new approaches stressed societies and social processes as the objects of study, viewed cultures as adaptations to external conditions, and sought general laws to explain them. There was an emphasis on quantitative methods and mathematical models, including systems theory and models drawn from the discipline of geography.¹³⁶ Colin Renfrew became a leader in the application of the new ideas:

In this way there emerged a new mode of archaeological research and writing... with a particular interest in exchange, in ceremonial monuments... cemeteries... and settlement patterns and central places... as the evidence for those processes in the archaeological record....

(Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1988), in which he discusses European history ca. 700 BC to ca. AD 500 in terms of “Sklaverei-gesellschaft”; “klassengesellschaftlichen Zivilisation”; “Volkerschaften in gentilgesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen”; “der Epoche der militärischen Demokratie”; “Klassenauseinandersetzungen”; “Stammeskönigreiche, geprägt von sozialökonomischen Zwischenstrukturen”; “Feudalgemeinschaft,” usw.

¹³³ Ian Hodder, “Archaeological Theory in Contemporary European Societies: The Emergence of Competing Traditions,” in *Archaeological Theory in Europe: The Last Three Decades*, ed. Ian Hodder (London: Routledge, 1991), 5.

¹³⁴ Hodder, “Archaeological Theory in Contemporary European Societies,” 22.

¹³⁵ Sally R. Binford and Lewis Binford, eds., *New Perspectives in Archaeology* (Chicago: Aldine, 1968), is the representative work of this movement.

¹³⁶ Thus Timothy Champion, “Theoretical Archaeology in Britain,” in *Archaeological Theory in Europe: The Last Three Decades*, ed. Ian Hodder (London: Routledge, 1991), 132.

This is the so-called ‘processual archaeology’ with its emphasis on social and economic processes, its systemic view of culture and its acceptance of neo-evolutionary social typologies, embracing all the new scientific, mathematical, statistical and geographic techniques.¹³⁷

Renfrew has collaborated in the application of catastrophe theory to archaeology, and in the development of the concept of “peer polity interaction” between societies.¹³⁸ Generally, the models assumed that external factors such as environmental change or population growth were responsible for systems changes.¹³⁹ Reactions to and against the processualist project have taken a number of disparate forms—all loosely grouped under the heading of post-processualism. Included here are the French neo-Marxist anthropologists, whose ideas have found specific application to the study of the archaeological data coming out of northern settlement sites.¹⁴⁰ Also, world-systems center – periphery approaches were applied to the study of “long-distance exchange links, especially in prestige goods” on a trans-regional scale in pre-modern societies.¹⁴¹

Foremost among those who have applied the theories and methods of the “New Archaeology” to issues of trade and urbanization in early medieval northwestern Europe has been Richard Hodges. He has produced a number of monographs on the topic, of which the first, *Dark Age Economics*, has proved to be both influential and controversial. Hodges is no minimalist in the sense that Pirenne (when writing about the Carolingian period) or Doehaerd can be so characterized:

But we can claim that there was no air of destitution in early medieval Europe, with the possible exception of the Merovingian period. The collapse of the Roman civilization may well be a classic systems collapse—a consequence of ecological, demographic and social stress—yet the invading communities were destined to rebuild the ruins that were left. The immediate interest is that they

¹³⁷ Champion, “Theoretical Archaeology in Britain,” 132, 133 – 4.

¹³⁸ Colin Renfrew and J. Cherry, eds., *Peer Polity Interaction and Sociopolitical Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹³⁹ Champion, “Theoretical Archaeology in Britain,” 134.

¹⁴⁰ Champion, “Theoretical Archaeology in Britain,” 134 – 6. See for example Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley, eds., *Ideology, Power and Prehistory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

¹⁴¹ Champion, “Theoretical Archaeology in Britain,” 137. Also Timothy Champion, ed., *Centre and Periphery: Comparative Studies in Archaeology* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

undertook the reconstruction on their own terms, thus giving the medieval world a different cultural character from the Roman one. But they also conformed to processes which are embodied in trajectories found throughout history, throughout the world.¹⁴²

This manifesto clearly embodies the processualists' concern with systems and with universal models. Furthermore, Hodges expressly states his intent to re-examine the Pirenne thesis in light of the accumulated archaeological data and the new anthropology-based interpretations of said data. While his approach is also historical, the privileging of archaeological data over literary sources and the resolute application of processual interpretations to this data reconstructs an early medieval Europe that differs radically from the hitherto more familiar one.¹⁴³

Hodges identifies his core anthropological ideas concerning trade or exchange as being those of Polanyi, Sahlins, and Dalton.¹⁴⁴ A glance at the titles will confirm that the foundations for the approach have been built from studies of places and periods far removed from early medieval Europe, most often of societies that had no written record. On these counts, Hodges and his cohorts have come in for some stringent criticism:

The use of South Pacific parallels in such work as that of Grierson and Hodges to explain universal truths about early medieval Europe seems to me as absurd as to ignore the fact that historical sources for early medieval Europe exist... The term ESM (a term invented for prehistoric studies by Colin Renfrew—being the initials of 'Early State Module') which Hodges uses in reference to an Anglo-Saxon

¹⁴² Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 5.

¹⁴³ Appropriate here is the comment by Bachrach, "Pirenne and Charlemagne," 223 n. 46, that "[d]espite the fact that Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*... provides a rather peculiar view of North Sea and Baltic trade, a careful reader nevertheless can grasp the relevant facts."

¹⁴⁴ Polanyi, "Economy as Instituted Process"; Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine, 1972); George Dalton, "Karl Polanyi's Analysis of Long-Distance Trade and His Wider Paradigm," in *Ancient Civilization and Trade*, ed. Jeremy A. Sabloff and C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975), 63 – 132; idem, "Aboriginal Economies in Stateless Societies," in *Exchange Systems in Prehistory*, ed. Timothy K. Earle and Jonathon E. Ericson (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 191 – 212; and Paul Bohannon and George Dalton, eds., *Markets in Africa* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1962).

entity about which we have considerable literary and political evidence is meaningless.¹⁴⁵

A similar attitude towards archaeology more generally was expressed earlier by Moses Finley: “It is self-evident that the potential contribution (of archaeology) to history is... inversely proportionate to the quantity of the available written sources.”¹⁴⁶ Others have argued, however, that it is precisely in conjunction with historical sources that the archaeological record can be made to reveal the kinds of time-bound and rapidly fluctuating effects that outside trade typically has upon societies.¹⁴⁷

A fundamental idea in the theoretical modeling that Hodges applies to early medieval trade and economic development is that different levels of socio-political organization will have distinct and characteristic economic structures, and that either can be inferred from the other: “the degree of organization may be understood in the light of the exchange patterns within that society.”¹⁴⁸ Building upon the institutional categories of reciprocity, redistribution, and exchange (as advanced by Polanyi), it has been argued that reciprocity-based relations attenuate with distance from the kin-group and must be replaced by other mechanisms, while redistribution can be seen as a tension between leveling mechanisms, which tend to counteract accumulations of wealth and power, and mobilizing mechanisms, which tend to place power and resources at the disposal of an elite.¹⁴⁹ The level at which market exchange operates in a society can be correlated with the condition of its market *places*: societies without defined market places have a weak or non-existent market principle; in societies possessing peripheral markets, the market principle works in the exchange of some commodities, but does not impinge on

¹⁴⁵ David M. Wilson, “Trade between England and Scandinavia and the Continent,” in Göttingen 150 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985), 255.

¹⁴⁶ Moses I. Finley, “Archaeology and History,” *Daedalus* 100 (1971): 174 – 5.

¹⁴⁷ Robert McC. Adams, “The Emerging Place of Trade in Civilizational Studies,” in *Ancient Civilization and Trade*, ed. Jeremy A. Sabloff and C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975), 457 – 8.

¹⁴⁸ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 13; Colin Renfrew, “Trade as Action at Distance: Questions of Integration and Communication,” in *Ancient Civilization and Trade*, ed. Jeremy A. Sabloff and C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975), 3 – 59.

¹⁴⁹ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 14 – 15. N. Smelser, “A Comparative View of Exchange Systems,” *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 7 (1959): 173 – 82; T. K. Earle, “A Reappraisal of Redistribution: Complex Hawaiian Chiefdoms,” in *Exchange Systems in Prehistory*, ed. T. K. Earle and J. Ericson (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 213 – 29.

subsistence or on basic questions of land and labor allocation; while societies where market places are ubiquitous are “dominated by the market principle and the price mechanism.”¹⁵⁰

Hodges particularly likes the modeling of Carol A. Smith, who has correlated levels of social organization and commercialization with geographical analysis. Of the types of spatial organization or networking outlined by Smith, three are referred to extensively by Hodges. First, the *solar central place*, which serves as a regional center for partially commercialized exchange at administered markets. The *dendritic central place*, meanwhile, is a node on a trans-regional network of partially commercialized exchanges that radiate from a core area toward peripheral or subordinate areas; the dynamic in this kind of network is monopolistic (controlled by operators from the core region) and colonializing. The *interlocking central place* model, which includes freely interacting nodes at various hierarchical levels, reflects a modern, fully competitive market.¹⁵¹ The challenge, notes Hodges, is to be able to identify the “behavioral patterns which are the correlates of reciprocity, redistribution, and market exchange,” and to discern such behavior patterns in the patterns of archaeological data—in the articulation of settlement remains and the distribution of specific goods, for instance.¹⁵² Renfrew identifies contrasting distribution patterns (distance-decay models) that distinguish down-the-line exchanges, prestige-chain trading, directional trade with redistribution from central places, and free-lance trade carried on by middlemen.¹⁵³ Further, there is the typology of towns and other settlements and their relationship to patterns of trade. The difficulty lies in separating an abstract definition of urbanism from culturally and chronologically determined sets of features; many have been attempted, with varying degrees of success and acceptance. Hodges settles for the ad hoc definition that a “town”

¹⁵⁰ Bohannon and Dalton, eds., *Markets in Africa*, as paraphrased in Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 15. Hodges gives no page reference for the original *locus* in Bohannon and Dalton.

¹⁵¹ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 16 – 17; Carol A. Smith, “Exchange Systems and the Spatial Distribution of Elites: The Organisation of Stratification in Agrarian Societies,” in *Regional Analysis*, ed. Carol A. Smith (New York: Academic Press, 1976), 2: 309 – 74.

¹⁵² Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 18.

¹⁵³ See discussion in Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 18 – 19; Renfrew, “Trade as Action at Distance,” *passim*; Colin Renfrew, “Alternative Models for Exchange and Spatial Distribution,” in *Exchange Systems in Prehistory*, ed. T. K. Earle and J. Ericson (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 71 – 90.

is a relatively densely populated place, the majority of whose inhabitants are not primarily engaged in agricultural production, and which houses more than one institutional function.¹⁵⁴ Societies with peripheral markets (as early medieval Europe is assumed to be) display market centers or towns that are variously described as *dendritic central places* (Smith), *ports of trade* (Polanyi), or *gateway communities* (Hirth). According to the latter, “[t]hese communities flourish at the passage points into and out of distinct natural or cultural regions... and link their regions to external trade routes.”¹⁵⁵ The most common term in the modern literature for such places in early medieval northern Europe, and the one that Hodges adopts, is *emporium*.¹⁵⁶ For Hodges, state formation also can be “considered in spatial, social and economic terms,” and will, therefore, be discussed along with the changing structures of trade and settlement.¹⁵⁷

Armed thus with theory and models, Hodges proceeds to examine the evidence for trade and economic development in early medieval Europe, always giving primacy to the archaeological record rather than to the written sources. His catastrophist view of the Roman – medieval transition, however, appears to be based on undemonstrated assumptions rather than evidence, and leads him to some conclusions that seem startlingly ahistorical. He suggests, for example, that Roman craft industry survived in Gaul because it fed goods to the new Germanic funerary rites now practiced there, and he speaks of trade routes being initiated across the Alps ca. AD 500 as if no Roman had ever crossed them. Hodges distinguishes the Rhine and the Paris basin as foci of exchange activity, but associates this with the centers of Austrasian and Neustrian political power, respectively. This was, according to Hodges, directed trade along *dendritic networks*, i.e., serving primarily to connect political centers on the continent with places farther afield in England and Denmark and functioning through administered *nodes* such as the *emporia*.¹⁵⁸ While this may sound primitivistic to the traditional historian, Hodges sees that “it remains clear that despite the decline of the Mediterranean world the indigenous

¹⁵⁴ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 20 – 3.

¹⁵⁵ K. G. Hirth, “Inter-regional Trade and the Formation of Prehistoric Gateway Communities,” *American Antiquity* 43 (1978): 37.

¹⁵⁶ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 23 – 5.

¹⁵⁷ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 25 – 8.

¹⁵⁸ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 29 – 33.

wealth of the Merovingian kingdoms and the territories beyond possessed real economic potential.”¹⁵⁹

Under the Carolingians in the eighth century, Hodges sees the trade connections with England and Denmark intensifying, as witnessed by the emergence of *emporia* sites such as Hamwic and Hedeby. Control of the trade continued to be important to the prestige and political power of the kings. As trade increased in volume and was increasingly handled by professionals, the periodic fairs and markets at the nodal points of the international system (Hodges’ type-A *emporia*) became permanent administered trade centers (Hodges’ type-B *emporia*). However, when the international system was disrupted in the mid-ninth century and the *emporia*, by Hodges’ models, lost their function as nodes in a *dendritic network* of *directional trade*, they either disappeared or, if the local area had generated enough economic development, joined the growing ranks of *central solar places* serving areas of local or regional trade.¹⁶⁰

An early and insightful response to Hodges’ presentation is that of the archaeologist G. Astill from 1985.¹⁶¹ Astill brilliantly synthesizes the main argument¹⁶² in *Dark Age Economics* but also makes several important observations in critique of Hodges. Regarding problems and inconsistencies in the methodology, Astill points out that “model is piled upon model with the data vanishing from view under the weight of theory,” and that many of the theories being applied are inadequately explained.¹⁶³ The complaint here is not that Hodges is seeking to apply anthropological theory to early medieval European archaeological data—this Astill approves—but that he does it too superficially without proper presentation of data and sufficient attention to its nuances and complexities. Hodges asserts, for example, that fine metalwork was distributed on the basis of royal gift-exchange, but analysis of Frankish metalwork found in Kentish graves of the sixth century suggests that it was available to a broad elite stratum earlier in the period and was restricted only under King Ethelbert (ca. 560 – 616)—perhaps

¹⁵⁹ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 38 – 9.

¹⁶⁰ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 47 – 65.

¹⁶¹ Grenville G. Astill, “Archaeology, Economics and Early Medieval Europe,” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 4 (1985): 215 – 31.

¹⁶² Astill, “Archaeology, Economics and Early Medieval Europe,” 216.

¹⁶³ Astill, “Archaeology, Economics and Early Medieval Europe,” 218 – 19. The quote is on p. 218.

indicating the late establishment of a royal monopoly over such items. In other words, the kings may have moved to control trade after it was established and flourishing and a source of evident profit, rather than have initiated the trade on their own. Moreover, it is evident that Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians could produce metalwork as good or better than that of Francia, which undermines the notion (implicit in Hodges) that the latter played the role of *core* to the *periphery* of the former two. In any case, it is likely that there were several levels of exchange: prestige goods may have circulated on the basis of gift-exchange and observed rules of equivalence in the status-value of goods exchanged, while slaves, raw materials, and non-prestige commodities may have been traded on some other basis. Finally, says Astill, Hodges has paid too much attention to royal initiative, the coastal *emporium*, and coins as the exclusive barometer of commercial activity. Inland markets, rural productivity, and alternative mechanisms of exchange may have played an equally important part in trade and economic development.¹⁶⁴

Clearly, Hodges had achieved no definitive solutions in *Dark Age Economics* but had, rather, set in motion further attempts to deal systematically and theoretically with the increasing volume of archaeological data on early medieval economic activity in northern Europe. His own ideas were far from static, showing continual evolution over the years from one publication to the next. In the 1999 article “Dark Age Economics Revisited,”¹⁶⁵ Hodges avers that a shift has occurred in the interpretative scheme, away from “mercantilism” as the governing explanation for the growth.¹⁶⁶ Now, long-distance trade in luxury goods should be seen as a peripheral activity in the *emporium*, which primarily functioned as regional centers. However, Hodges continued to insist upon the role of elite leadership in both aspects of development. The trade networks had their roots in the

¹⁶⁴ Astill, “Archaeology, Economics and Early Medieval Europe,” 220 – 9. Astill’s suggestions have been borne out in subsequent studies of Anglo-Saxon England and Scandinavia. See discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and England* and Section 7.2, subsection *Eight- and ninth-century Scandinavia* below.

¹⁶⁵ Richard Hodges, “Dark Age Economics Revisited: W. A. van Es and the End of the Mercantile Model in Early Medieval Europe,” reprinted in Richard Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings? Re-reading Early Medieval Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 2006), 63 – 71.

¹⁶⁶ “Mercantilism,” in this context, refers to “a paradigm that lent emphasis to the pioneering endeavors of merchants after the end of the migrations.” Hodges, *Dark Age Economics Revisited*, 63. See also the historiographical discussion regarding the evolution of the “mercantilist” approach in Richard Hodges, *Towns and Trade in the Age of Charlemagne* (London: Duckworth, 2000), 69 – 76.

sixth and seventh centuries as “long running connections, almost certainly founded upon personalized trading treaties,”¹⁶⁷ while the classic *emporia* of the eighth and ninth centuries were designed and built according to preconceived models. Unfortunately, Hodges fails to state, here, what he thinks might have been the source of this urban model. Altogether, while there are apparent shifts in theoretical emphasis in this article as compared to *Dark Age Economics*, the overall picture is no clearer. A neutral observer might wonder why the two threads of inquiry—regional development in productivity and urbanism alongside a network of interregional long-distance trade relations—cannot be pursued concurrently, with attention to the resonances between the two developments?

While an integrated interpretative framework remains elusive, the positive addition of growing amounts of data from excavations has been ongoing now for several decades. As one site after another is excavated, recorded, and analyzed, the scope, complexity, and influence of the economic networks represented by these sites becomes ever clearer. One of the earliest to be uncovered was Haithabu/Hedeby at the base of the Jutland peninsula, excavated and published by Jankuhn and his collaborators from the 1940s onwards.¹⁶⁸ Haithabu was one of the largest and richest of the so-called *emporia* sites of the ninth and tenth centuries, situated at the interface between the North Sea and the Baltic circuits. Dorestad on the lower Rhine was the major port for the Rhine basin with connections both to England and to Scandinavia.¹⁶⁹ Hamwic, the *emporium* for Wessex situated near modern Southampton has been published in volumes edited by Morton and Andrews.¹⁷⁰ Wade has studied Ipswich in East Anglia.¹⁷¹ Quentovic, on the Channel coast south of Calais has only recently been located and is still very much a

¹⁶⁷ Hodges, “Dark Age Economics Revisited,” 67.

¹⁶⁸ Herbert Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 8th edition (Neumünster : K. Wachholtz, 1986), is the definitive edition.

¹⁶⁹ W. A. van Es, “Dorestad Centered,” in *Medieval Archaeology in the Netherlands: Studies Presented to H. H. van Regteren Altena*, ed. J. C. Besteman, J. M. Bos, and H. A. Heidinga (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990), 151 – 82; W. A. van Es and W. J. H. Verwers, “Excavations at Dorestad 1: The Harbor: Hoogstraat I,” *Nederlandse Oudheden* 9 (1980).

¹⁷⁰ A. D. Morton, ed., *Excavations at Hamwic, Volume 1: Excavations 1946 – 83, Excluding Six Dials and Melbourne Street* (London: Council for British Archaeology, 1992); P. Andrews, ed., *Excavations at Hamwic, Volume 2: Excavations at Six Dials* (London: Council for British Archaeology, 1997).

¹⁷¹ Keith Wade, “Ipswich,” in *The Rebirth of Towns in the West, AD 700 – 1050*, ed. R. Hodges and B. Hobley (London: Council for British Archaeology, 1988), 93 – 100.

work in progress, though preliminary reports are available.¹⁷² Many others could be named; a good synopsis of the current state of our knowledge of the networks centered around the North Sea can be found in Chris Wickham's latest tome.¹⁷³

In all cases, the accumulation of precise archaeological data on specific sites can lead to ever clearer generalizations concerning the economic, social, and political structures within which these sites functioned. At Ribe on the west coast of Jutland, founded as the earliest of the *emporium*-type sites in Denmark shortly after AD 700, precise stratigraphic evidence of trade goods and massive amounts of craft production (glass bead working, metal casting, Rhenish and Frisian pottery, silver, amber) connects this site chronologically and typologically with eighth- and ninth-century northwestern continental Europe and Scandinavia.¹⁷⁴ The excavations of Birka in Middle Sweden, another one of the most important nodal points of ninth- and tenth-century commerce, has set in train perhaps the most extensive series of publications, which have not only covered this site itself from a variety of disciplines and viewpoints but have served as a forum for discussions of Scandinavian Viking Age development more generally.

One of the most notable in the Birka Studies series was Volume 3, which published papers delivered at the Twelfth Viking Congress held near Stockholm in 1993. Johan Callmer reviewed and analyzed the various types of regional and trade centers (over eighty known at the time from lands all around the Baltic) and showed how they evolved over several distinct phases and periods.¹⁷⁵ D. M. Metcalf argued for intensive three-way commercial contacts between Scandinavia, England, and continental western Europe in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries based on his analysis of Anglo-Saxon, Frankish and Ottonian-era coin finds.¹⁷⁶ Thomas S. Noonan analyzed the vast hoards of Muslim silver that were deposited around the shores of the Baltic from the mid-eighth to

¹⁷² David Hill, David Barrett, Keith Maude, Julia Warburton, and Margaret Worthington, "Quentovic Defined," *Antiquity* 64 (1990): 51 – 8.

¹⁷³ Wickham, *Framing*, 681 – 8.

¹⁷⁴ Claus Feveile and Stig Jensen, "Ribe in the 8th and 9th Century: A Contribution to the Archaeological Chronology of Western Europe," *Acta Archaeologica* 71 (2000): 9 – 24.

¹⁷⁵ Johan Callmer, "Urbanization in Scandinavia and the Baltic Region c. AD 700 – 1100: Trading Places, Centres and Early Urban Sites," in *Birka Studies 3* (Stockholm, 1994), 50 – 90.

¹⁷⁶ D. M. Metcalf, "The Beginnings of Coinage in the North Sea Coastlands: A Pirenne-like Hypothesis," in *Birka Studies 3* (Stockholm, 1994), 196 – 214.

the early eleventh century, a phenomenon that indicates lively contacts with areas of the Middle East during this period including commercial interactions.¹⁷⁷

The most recent addition to the body of intensive research on specific major *emporium* sites is the series on Kaupang, with the first volume appearing in 2007.¹⁷⁸ Located on the south coast of Norway southwest of Oslo Fjord, Kaupang has long been known, but its importance in the *emporium* network is only now beginning to emerge. The *emporium* site (Kaupang *per se*) is being studied in conjunction with the local region—the Skiringssal. The studies involve a host of disciplines ranging from geology and palaeobotany to toponymic analysis and the study of poems and law codes that have bearing on the place; of course, there are extensive archaeological reports as well. On the theoretical plane, most interesting is the explicit emphasis on the parallel development of the regional “central place” and its associated *emporium*.¹⁷⁹

The aggregate effect of such studies, of which the foregoing are but a small sample, has been to reveal a world of economic (and social and political) development in northern Europe that had formerly been invisible. Furthermore, as this “northern arc” of activity becomes better understood, the insights gained are having a feed-back effect upon the evaluation of the economic condition of continental western Europe in the early middle ages. Evidence of such effects could clearly be seen in the mid-1980s, for example in the Göttingen series on aspects of early medieval trade. Volume 3 in the series, on aspects of trade in the Merovingian period, has articles covering literary, legal, and archaeological sources and includes the continent, England, and Scandinavia in its survey.¹⁸⁰ Volume 4 in this series does the same for the Carolingian period and the Viking Age, although here the attention is more focused on the north rather than on the

¹⁷⁷ Thomas S. Noonan, “The Vikings in the East: Coins and Commerce,” in *Birka Studies 3* (Stockholm, 1994), 215 – 36.

¹⁷⁸ Dagfinn Skre, ed., *Kaupang in Skiringssal: Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1* (Nordske Oldfunn 22) (Oslo: University of Oslo, Museum of Cultural History, 2007).

¹⁷⁹ See especially Dagfinn Skre, “Towns and Markets, Kings and Central Places in South-Western Scandinavia c. AD 800 – 950,” in *Kaupang in Skiringssal: Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1*, ed. Dagfinn Skre (Nordske Oldfunn 22) (Oslo: University of Oslo, Museum of Cultural History, 2007), 445 – 58.

¹⁸⁰ Klaus Düwel, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, and Dieter Timpe, eds., *Der Handel des frühen Mittelalters* (Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa, Teil 3. Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, dritte Folge 150) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985).

continent.¹⁸¹ These volumes are virtual handbooks on their respective topics, with many of the articles still referenced as fundamental. The research foundations that were laid, thus, three decades ago have proven sound.

2.4 The Primitivists and Their Critics

As Adriaan Verhulst has remarked, since the mid- to late 1980s the discussion about the state of the early medieval economy has once more concentrated on the study of trade related phenomena.¹⁸² In a paper delivered in 1988, Pierre Toubert reviewed and refuted the minimalist interpretation, which was largely based on pessimistic views of the economic efficiency of the *grand domaine* in the Carolingian heartlands. Toubert argued that the evidence pointed, rather, to demographic increase, changes in managerial technique to maximize productivity and exploitation, and a steady increase in all manner of goods and products stemming from the system. Moreover, the estate managers also were creating a transport and marketing infrastructure, intended primarily for their own uses but dovetailing increasingly with the growing inter-regional and international trade networks.¹⁸³ In a compact form, Toubert built upon the evidence that had already been collected in works such as those by Doehaerd and Duby.¹⁸⁴ His alternative, more positive interpretation of this evidence fit well with the growing awareness of the importance of long-distance trade in the Carolingian period.

It was also in the 1980s, however, that a new minimalist or primitivist interpretation gained strength. While its focus has been primarily on the social and political structures of Carolingian and Ottonian Europe, the arguments have had fall-out effects upon the view of the economic aspects of this period as well, and therefore need a

¹⁸¹ Klaus Düwel, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, and Dieter Timpe, eds., *Der Handel der Karolinger- und Wikingerzeit* (Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa, Teil 4. Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, dritte Folge 156) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1987).

¹⁸² Verhulst, *Carolingian Economy*, 7 – 8.

¹⁸³ Published as Pierre Toubert, “La part du grand domaine dans le décollage économique de l’Occident (VIIIe – Xe siècles),” in *La Croissance agricole du Haut Moyen Age: chronologie, modalités, géographie: Centre culturel de l’Abbaye de Flaran: dixièmes journées internationales d’histoire, 9, 10, 11 septembre 1988* (Auch: Comité Départemental de Tourisme du Gers, 1990), 53 – 86.

¹⁸⁴ Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages* and Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*; see discussion in Section 2.2 above.

brief review. Interestingly, a prominent aspect of the neo-primitivist argument revolves around the role of plunder in the political economy of eighth- to tenth-century continental Europe, and in this way recalls one of the main themes in Duby.¹⁸⁵ The thesis that the Carolingian political and military system was heavily dependent upon access to tribute and plunder from successful, expansionistic military campaigns, which then was redistributed to the armed followers of the leaders, was restated by Timothy Reuter:

We must, then, think of a very large-scale circulation of goods on this level of gift-giving and tribute-payment, which ran largely parallel to and independently of the normal 'economic' circulation of goods... It was motored by the inflow of tribute and plunder from beyond the borders, and it was largely, if not exclusively, controlled by the king.¹⁸⁶

Our perception that the Carolingian period is somehow less barbaric than the Merovingian is, according to Reuter, a kind of "optical illusion" created by the classicizing Latin literature of the Carolingian renaissance; in fact, the political culture of the Franks was but little different from that of the Bretons, Danes, and Slavs with whom the former had regular contacts.¹⁸⁷ After the division of 843, East Francia (Germany) emerged the dominant section militarily and politically because it had the best access to an open frontier and the reserves of tribute and plunder that that provided.¹⁸⁸ Elsewhere, Reuter was able to argue that even in the eleventh century, at Henry III's death, the German kingdom still had little institutional continuity beyond the ties of personal elite loyalty to the chief: "In spite of a certain continuity provided by the imperial title, Henry III was still the leader of a very large scale war-band."¹⁸⁹ The idea of primitiveness is carried even farther by Gerd Althoff, who believes that elite conflicts were handled according to elaborate ritual behaviors rather than through the exercise of hierarchical

¹⁸⁵ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 75 –7, 104 – 11.

¹⁸⁶ Timothy Reuter, "Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th series 35 (1985): 85.

¹⁸⁷ Reuter, "Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire," 91.

¹⁸⁸ Reuter, "Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire," 93. The political capital accruing from access to dynamic frontiers and its importance in the later Carolingian politics is explored in much greater detail in Julia M. H. Smith, "Fines imperii," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 169 – 89.

¹⁸⁹ Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages, 800 – 1056* (London: Longman, 1991), 285.

authority and judicial process: “At least up to the end of the thirteenth century medieval Europe was one of what anthropologists have called societies without states.”¹⁹⁰

Further, along this line of thinking, it must be true that a society having no real state structure cannot be expected to have any but the most primitive economy; this is implied, and sometimes stated explicitly.¹⁹¹ Though indirectly, the primitivist arguments regarding political and social relations have the effect of inhibiting positive reappraisals of economic activity in the Carolingian and Ottonian period. The critiques of the primitivist position, however, have an opposite effect. One of the best examples here is the work of Bernard S. Bachrach, who has done a series of studies on warfare in the early medieval period in western Europe. In his survey of medieval siege warfare, for example, Bachrach points out that the strategic focus of operations continued to be the network of fortified cities and other positions built by the Romans, especially in Gaul and Italy, supported by the equally sophisticated logistical infrastructure of Roman roads and bridges; attacking and defending these positions required discipline and specialized training of large numbers of troops.¹⁹² Bachrach emphasizes the continuity in military organization, strategy, and tactics from the Roman to the post-Roman period in western Europe. Large numbers of defenders (one per every four feet of wall) and even larger numbers (4: 1 over defenders) of disciplined attackers, with siege equipment, were necessary; that towns in Gaul averaged 1,500 yards of wall implies a robust demography throughout the period.¹⁹³ In his detailed discussion of the demographic aspects of medieval warfare, Bachrach exposes the fallacies inherent in arguing for small numbers of troops in Merovingian, Carolingian, and later medieval armies based on the supposed

¹⁹⁰ Gerd Althoff, *Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter: Kommunikation in Frieden und Fehde* (Darmstadt: Primus, 1997), 98.

¹⁹¹ Reuter, “Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire,” 91, thinks the pessimistic view of Duby on the condition of the Carolingian economy is realistic.

¹⁹² Bernard S. Bachrach, “Medieval Siege Warfare: A Reconnaissance,” review essay, *The Journal of Military History* 58 (1994): 119 – 33.

¹⁹³ Bernard S. Bachrach, “On Roman Ramparts,” in *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare: The Triumph of the West*, ed. Geoffrey Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 69.

illiteracy and innumeracy of contemporary leaders and staffs and on the presumption of a “barter economy” for the period.¹⁹⁴

As this small sample shows, current research into the practical realities of early medieval warfare reveals the opposite of a primitive, stateless, and economically inert society. Other lines of research that indirectly support the idea of a dynamic and prosperous Carolingian and Ottonian Europe could be adduced. Herbert Ludat, for example, has argued that through the reign of Otto III at least, the German emperors were pursuing a neo-imperial strategy in central Europe that sought to subordinate new kingdoms such as Poland and Bohemia into an overarching commonwealth.¹⁹⁵ Similarly, Stephan Weinfurter discusses the Byzantinizing political aspirations of the Salian kings, including extensive building programmes.¹⁹⁶ Such activities and ambitions would not be consistent with the image of barbaric war-chiefs subsisting on a barter economy. The hydra of primitivism is hardly likely to be vanquished once and for all; other variations on that theme will, no doubt, appear in the future. A benchmark for the long-term trend in thinking on early medieval economic issues *per se* might be that the chapter on the Carolingian economy in Volume 2 of the *New Cambridge Medieval History* was assigned to Adriaan Verhulst.¹⁹⁷ In a condensed version of what would appear later as the Cambridge textbook on *The Carolingian Economy*, Verhulst describes a modestly prosperous agrarian economy that also showed considerable industrial production and commercial activity.

2.5 McCormick and Wickham

The first decade of the twenty-first century has seen the publication of two massive volumes which, between them, represent in outline the current state of our knowledge

¹⁹⁴ Bernard S. Bachrach, “Early Medieval Military Demography: Some Observations on the Methods of Hans Delbrück,” in *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages: Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History*, ed. Donald J. Kagay and L. J. Andrew Villalon (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), 3 – 20.

¹⁹⁵ Herbert Ludat, *An Elbe und Oder um das Jahr 1000: Skizzen zur Politik des Ottonenreiches und der slavischen Mächte in Mitteleuropa* (Köln: Böhlau, 1971).

¹⁹⁶ Stefan Weinfurter, *The Salian Century: Main Currents in an Age of Transition*, trans. Barbara M. Bowles (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

¹⁹⁷ Adriaan Verhulst, “Economic Organisation,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 481 – 509; Verhulst, *Carolingian Economy*, as cited above.

about the economy of early medieval western Europe. Of the two, Michael McCormick's *Origins of the European Economy* is more focused on issues of communications and trade, while Chris Wickham's *Framing the Early Middle Ages* includes discussion of the political and social conditions and of the non-commercial aspects of the economy. Both present a wealth of factual data and rich, up-to-date bibliographies. The two approaches are, in fact, complementary in several ways, which will become apparent presently.

In a sense, McCormick's massive project undertakes to reexamine some key aspects of Pirenne's thesis, namely the supposed interruption of traffic in the Mediterranean after the middle of the seventh century and the de-commercialization of the Carolingian economy that resulted, ultimately, from the former fact. As was pointed out in the sections above, there already had been many studies that tended to disprove one or the other of these contentions. McCormick contrives to dispose of both at once, and definitively. To do so, he exploits and correlates a wide range of source materials and methodologies, including new approaches to literary sources in several languages, prosopography, hagiography, numismatics, and hefty doses of archaeology. The result, as he himself stresses, is a new context for the old debates.¹⁹⁸ Further, to show more clearly the long-term trends, McCormick extends his overview from AD 300 to 900, a broader scope than most other researchers have used in the past.

To start, McCormick agrees with those who see a long-term decline in Roman prosperity from around AD 200, which continued into the seventh century. The trend is by no means uniform. Interestingly, it seems to affect earliest and most severely the provinces in the northwest, and only reaches areas in the east at a late date; Syria, for example, enjoyed an economic efflorescence from the fourth to the sixth centuries, while signs of diminishing industrial production and disruption in rural settlement patterns appear in Britain and northern Gaul already in the third and fourth. Population also diminished, especially after 541 when bubonic plague struck the Mediterranean and

¹⁹⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 4 – 12. The languages of his primary sources are above all Latin, Greek, and Old Church Slavonic, which he has combed with some rigor; there are some additions (by no means exhaustive) from Arabic and Hebrew sources.

remained pandemic for two centuries.¹⁹⁹ There are economic rallies in the fourth century and again ca. 500, but they do not stem the overall ebb. The pattern of Mediterranean shipping had been formed around the main lines of the fiscal transfers of goods commanded by the Roman state, especially the routes from Africa and Egypt to Rome and Constantinople, and the shipping patterns shifted accordingly as the western provinces lost wealth and political coherence relative to the east. In the sixth and seventh centuries, vessels from eastern ports served western Mediterranean waters, though on a reduced scale. Hit hard by the recurrences of plague, the sailing network contracted further when the *annona* shipments from Egypt to Constantinople were interrupted by Persian conquest in 617; they were never resumed. The result, according to McCormick:

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.²⁰⁰

Thus, there is no one cause—and certainly not the Arabs—that is responsible for a sudden interruption of a stable Mediterranean-centered world, but a long term systemic decline or transformation from the High Empire to the seventh century.

The bulk of the book develops various kinds of evidence that demonstrate that disparate classes of travelers (ambassadors, pilgrims, traders, slaves, exiles) and material things (relics, coins, letters) moved from one place to another—especially between east and west—both in the Mediterranean and in connecting areas. The time frame for this more intensive portion of the study, 700 – 900, is exactly those centuries during which the Mediterranean and western Europe were traditionally regarded as “closed” to traffic and commercially dead. In opposition to that view, McCormick has documented 669 individual travelers²⁰¹ (implying many more when companions and servants are taken into account) and similar numbers of material objects that moved along a network of

¹⁹⁹ Reuter, “Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire,” 40. The sixth-century plague is rapidly coming into scholarly focus; see now the volume Lester K. Little, ed., *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

²⁰⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 103. The decline of the Roman system is the topic generally of “Part I: The End of the World,” pp. 25 – 119. See also the discussion in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 below.

²⁰¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 270.

routes in these centuries, most of whom must have made use of pre-existing infrastructure in order to complete their movements. Further, we can discern peaks and lulls in the frequency of movements, suggesting for example that 775 – 825 was one period of particularly lively activity.²⁰²

In the aggregate, the evidence demonstrates that Mediterranean shipping by ca. 800 had recovered from the nadir it had suffered about a century earlier. Around AD 700, most of the sailing patterns that had characterized the late Roman Mediterranean had, in fact, died out; the one route that remained vital was the so-called “trunk-route” that connected Constantinople via the Aegean and Ionian seas to Sicily and Rome. By 800, the picture had altered radically. While the aforementioned trunk route continued to operate, and a number of new networks were springing up, including renewed connections between parts of western Italy and now-Muslim Africa, the greatest new development was the opening of the Adriatic and the sudden appearance of Venetian merchant-sailors at ports from Rome to Alexandria. The new mercantile trunk-route up the Adriatic to Venice connected on the landward side with roads over the Alpine passes. From the itineraries of Carolingian travelers as well as evidence for state-supported infrastructure along these routes (inns, toll stations), it is clear that these were the primary lines of communication running from northern Italy to the Frankish heartlands along the Rhine, Meuse, and Seine, and that passage along them was both normal and frequent. Taken together, we can see here around the turn of the ninth century the emergence of a communications corridor from northwestern Europe to northern Italy and Venice, and thence via the Adriatic to a reconfigured Mediterranean.²⁰³

Armed with the evidence for networks of communication over both sea and land, McCormick then backs into a discussion of the trading systems implied. This is the subject of the last part of the volume, in which he outlines the “trading worlds” of the Caliphate, Byzantium, Spain, Scandinavia and Russia, but concentrates on the traces of

²⁰² See discussion in Section 6.2 below.

²⁰³ McCormick, *Origins*, 676 Map 23.1 best shows the aggregate pattern, though it represents only a fraction of the evidence that McCormick has compiled. Chapters 17 and 18 outline the new configuration of sea routes. See also the discussion in Sections 6.3 and 6.4 below.

merchants and mercantile activity in Italy and Francia.²⁰⁴ The Latin sources of the eighth and ninth century were prejudiced against merchants and commerce, and this has resulted in a dearth of contemporary witnesses for such activities in this period; this, in turn, has misled many modern scholars into a minimalist interpretation of the Carolingian economy, but increasing accumulations of evidence, especially archaeology, is now beginning to overturn that viewpoint.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, McCormick says, it makes little sense to regard Carolingian continental Europe as uniquely disadvantaged:

The Carolingian empire was surrounded by a series of trading worlds which were now beginning to intersect and interweave. Are we to believe that it alone went unwashed by currents of trade?²⁰⁶

The texts do make incidental mentions of merchants, revealing at least the presence of such persons at discrete times and places. When such mentions are plotted on a map, they form patterns that correlate to the lines of communication evident from other sources and suggest a world of dynamic commercial interchanges.

Finally, McCormick reviews and integrates the concrete evidence concerning the presence of markets and emporia, exotic trade goods and industrial products, coins, slave trading, and much else—the same evidence which other researchers have kept turning up, though many have hitherto attempted to minimize its import. He is no “maximalist” or “continuitist,” inasmuch as he recognizes a systemic break between the ancient Roman world and the medieval. However, the Carolingian empire is economically dynamic for him, and it is closely interconnected with a Mediterranean which, if it did suffer a nadir in the seventh century, is again alive and thriving in the eighth and ninth.

Wickham also is no continuitist. His project in *Framing the Early Middle Ages* is, in fact, to establish parameters for the discussion of systemic change in most parts of the former Roman world between 400 and 800. To do this, he develops a set of analytical categories—“fiscal structures, aristocratic wealth, estate management, settlement pattern, peasant collective autonomy, urbanism, exchange,”²⁰⁷ to put it succinctly—and applies

²⁰⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, “Part V: Commerce,” 571 – 798.

²⁰⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 12 – 15, 573 – 8.

²⁰⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 613.

²⁰⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 825.

these comparatively to ten select regions: Denmark, England, Ireland, Gaul, Spain, Italy, Aegean and Anatolia, Syria-Palestine, Egypt, and Africa (Tunisia). Wherever available and appropriate, archaeological data is used to check written sources and comparisons are made between the two data sets; in the case of Denmark, well nigh all of the available evidence is of the former kind. Like McCormick, Wickham adduces a phenomenal mass of data in his analysis and revisits many old as well as current historiographical debates. Though his approach is different from McCormick's, involving from the outset political and sociological analyses that McCormick does not touch upon, Wickham also ends up backing into what is, effectively, an economic synthesis of the early medieval world. The conclusions to which he comes in that synthesis, particularly regarding Francia and its northern neighbors, are remarkably conformable to the aggregate picture presented in *Origins of the European Economy*.

To start, Wickham asserts that the most fundamental parameter to be considered is the form of the state. Where it exists at all (in his view it did not yet exist in Denmark ca. 800, for example, despite the wealth and dynamism of exchange evident in Denmark throughout the period of this study), a state is based primarily on control and distribution of land or on the assessment and collection of taxes. By its nature, a state with taxing capabilities will be more stable, more centralized, and have a greater ability to appropriate and redistribute surplus production; such were the Roman empire and its Byzantine and Arab successors. The aristocracies in a tax-state typically are more closely involved with fiscal structures and have more wealth and more far-flung patterns of property ownership, all of which—together with the redistributions carried out by the state itself—creates and maintains robust and integrated exchange networks. In states whose primary resource is land, not taxes, all of these conditions are diminished, leading ultimately to less robust demand and exchange systems, which are also less extensive and less integrated. In stateless peasant and tribal societies, typically, demand and exchange networks are even more circumscribed.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ See Wickham, *Framing*, 56 – 61, 693 – 708, for the most focused theoretical discussion. The fundamental arguments are developed throughout the book. See discussion in Section 5.4 below.

Wickham's emphasis on the political and social underpinnings of economic behavior is broadly conformable with the kinds of anthropological thinking on economic issues in history that were surveyed in section 2.3 above.²⁰⁹ In particular, it will be noticed that his stress on state action and elite demand as motors in creating and maintaining exchange systems parallels Hodges' interpretations of the archaeological record in early medieval northwestern Europe; in Hodges, elite demand and more specifically royal gift exchange are definitive. However, Wickham supports no hint of primitivism (nor, for that matter, of traditional Marxism) in his analysis. On the matter of gift exchange he says: "gift exchange, although universal at all political and social levels, was seldom large-scale enough to characterize whole systems."²¹⁰ That is to say, exchange networks even in land-based states and peasant societies will reflect "economic logic" in how they are articulated, though the networks might vary widely in scope and volume depending on conditions and show other differences based on the modes of production involved.

To gain a comparative overview of the exchange systems operating in all of the ten focus regions, Wickham chooses to look at ceramic distributions. Though hardly foolproof, this category of evidence has certain advantages for the purpose. For one thing, potsherds are among the most durable and easily recognizable of archaeological materials, and have, therefore, been widely studied; in other words, the database for ceramic comparisons across time and space is relatively well developed. Further, while (almost) everybody had pots, the kinds of pots that people had depended on the characteristics of the exchange networks within which they lived or with which they had contacts.²¹¹

One of the most interesting of Wickham's findings, especially from the point of view of the present thesis project, is that Francia—the swath of northwestern Europe between the Loire and the Rhine, broadly speaking—shows industrial-scale production and regional distributions of ceramics throughout the fifth to eighth centuries. Moreover,

²⁰⁹ Wickham, *Framing*, 694 – 700 discusses the various theories of exchange and the associated historiography.

²¹⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 695.

²¹¹ Wickham, *Framing*, 699 – 706, sets up the theoretical framework for this analysis.

despite the fact that the Frankish kingdoms became increasingly land- rather than tax-based during this period, the Frankish aristocracy maintained patterns of property ownership on a more extensive geographic scale than any other in the sample, and indeed was conspicuously more wealthy than any other—perhaps even more than the Byzantine or Arab. Italy, by contrast, though hardly destitute, after the upheavals of the fifth and sixth centuries showed much more modest degrees of wealth and very circumscribed spheres of aristocratic activity.²¹² The condition of Francia is a kind of anomaly in terms of what might have been expected theoretically, but it demonstrates that northwestern continental Europe was anything but stagnant and primitive economically. In general, the exchange networks in the north were more active and more robust than in the Mediterranean in the seventh and eighth centuries; the example of Denmark demonstrates that peasant-level societies also could accumulate considerable wealth when tied into these networks.²¹³ In short, Wickham’s conclusions, together with McCormick’s, provide a very firm foundation for the study that I am undertaking.

2.6 Conclusion

The preceding survey of the historiography on the question of an early medieval economy is far from exhaustive, but the main lines of development are clearly distinguishable nonetheless. From the 1920s till today, there have been numerous improvements in theoretical understanding of it, and a great broadening in geographical and comparative context within which the question is raised. Most important, however, has been the steady accumulation of more data. A study such as Wickham’s *Framing the Early Middle Ages* simply would not have been possible a few decades ago, because most of the archaeology that forms roughly half of his database had not yet been undertaken. This is true also of McCormick’s *Origins of the European Economy*, though here the weight of new archaeological data (such as excavations of Mediterranean shipwrecks) is felt less prominently. The new data sometimes demonstrate that societies in parts of the former Roman world became simpler or less integrated than they had been earlier. On

²¹² Wickham, *Framing*, 203 – 19,

²¹³ Wickham, *Framing*, 794 – 819. See also the discussion in Sections 7.1 and 7.2 below.

the whole, however, the trend is in the opposite direction, particularly for northwestern and northern Europe. As Bachrach said over a decade ago:

As more and more coin hoards are discovered and European numismatists learn more about statistics and especially about fuzzy set theory, the primitivists will be buried under the material remains which working archaeologists continue to discover.²¹⁴

It is true, of course, that data in and of itself cannot constitute understanding or interpretation, and people may legitimately vary and disagree. Appropriate here is a passage from H. White:

One must face the fact that, when it comes to the historical record, there are no grounds to be found in the record itself for preferring one way of construing its meaning rather than another... We can tell equally plausible, alternative, and even contradictory stories... without violating rules of evidence or critical standards.²¹⁵

The selection is taken from the heading to Chapter 1 in Richard Hodges' *Goodbye to the Vikings?* Hodges goes on to argue, as I have done, that the wealth of new data on northern exchange systems is making certain conclusions increasingly inescapable. In short, anyone who still wishes to construct a vision of an early medieval northwestern Europe that is primitive and stagnant will have to plausibly explain away the growing evidence for the production and transport of material objects throughout this region. Though theoretically possible still, that task is growing ever more difficult.

²¹⁴ Bachrach, "Anthropologists and Early Medieval History," 4.

²¹⁵ H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 5 – 7.

Chapter 3: The Northern Background: Potentials and Early Development

3.0 As has been stated already in the Introduction and in the previous chapter, it is one of the fundamental contentions in this thesis that the economy of early medieval Europe in the Carolingian and Ottonian eras (roughly AD 700 – 1000) cannot be understood fully without due attention to the material exchanges that were ongoing between continental western Europe and the North Sea, Baltic Sea, and trans-Elbian regions to its north and northeast. A geographical focus on these northern regions and their connections with Francia and the Rhenish countries adds a dimension to the question of early medieval European commercial development that greatly broadens the perspective within which it can be viewed, and frees the question from over-reliance on evaluations of the health of Europe's Mediterranean connections.

Altogether, it would not be unfair to say that the Mediterranean perspective has continued to dominate the discussion. Most famously, of course, it was Pirenne's thesis and the resultant reactions to it that maintained a southern focus on this issue for much of the twentieth century.¹ In a very recent major work, although he acknowledges the existence of the northern connection, Michael McCormick still focuses overwhelmingly on Mediterranean evidence in his argument for the economic vitality of Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries.² In his equally weighty but even more recent work on early medieval Europe, Chris Wickham features three northern countries—Denmark, England, and Ireland—among his ten focus areas, and a fourth (Gaul-Francia) turns out to be more dynamic in its northern than its Mediterranean parts.³ Nevertheless, the other six focus areas are firmly embedded in a Mediterranean context, and Wickham has practically nothing to say about Scandinavia beyond Denmark nor about the southern and eastern Baltic lands. Despite the increasing infiltration of data from the northern parts of Europe

¹ The thesis, that the post-Roman West continued to prosper due to its Mediterranean connection but fell into economic squalor once that connection was finally broken by the Arabs, was announced first in Henri Pirenne, "Mahomet et Charlemagne," *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 1 (1922): 77 – 86. See discussion in sections 2.1 and 2.2 above.

² Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

³ Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400 – 800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

into the general discussion, detailed awareness of northern economic development and its impact on continental early medieval Europe tends still to be limited to specialists in the prehistory and history of individual northern countries and to those interested in economic-anthropological theory.⁴

It is not my intention to deny the importance of continued contacts with Mediterranean trading systems for the economic development of early medieval Europe, nor to minimize the role of infrastructural and institutional continuity from the Mediterranean-based Roman state into Carolingian times and beyond. However, an appreciation of the northern dimension to economic development in post-Roman Europe greatly increases the scope of the field in which economic activities and institutions—including the privileges awarded to merchants in Carolingian charters—can be seen to be operating. By the eighth and ninth centuries, the commercial development of the North Sea and Baltic regions already far exceeded the Roman-era achievement in this direction. To better understand this growth, it will be useful to start with a review of the environment and resources of the northern areas, their settlement patterns and avenues of communication, and the main phases of development that they experienced before the Roman conquest up to the Rhine and Danube.

3.1 Geology, Climate, and Resources

Mainland or continental Europe extends westwards from the main mass of Eurasia as a peninsula between two defining sets of seas and straits.⁵ On the south, the landward limit of Europe is set by a sea-level connection through the Straits of Gibraltar, the Mediterranean sea and its Aegean bay, the Dardanelles, Marmora, and Bosphorus chain, the Black Sea, Kerch Straits, and the Sea of Azov, with the mouth of the Don as its farthest extension. On the north, the defining waters are a little more difficult to perceive as a bounding system, since the western half includes the open Atlantic and the only partially enclosed English Channel and North Sea; the Baltic Sea is, however, as nearly

⁴ For the growing historiographical impact of northern data, see the discussion in section 2.3 above.

⁵ To perceive the North Sea and the Baltic as a system forming a water boundary for continental Europe is hardly an original idea, but one that tends to be given far less attention than it deserves. See, most recently, Nils Blomkvist, *The Discovery of the Baltic: The Reception of a Catholic World-System in the European North (AD 1075 – 1225)* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 8.

landlocked as are the Mediterranean and Black Seas, connecting to the broad Kattegat only through the narrow Sound and the two Baelts.⁶

From another point of view, of course, these same waters that were just defined as boundaries could behave as the organizational cores of ecological, cultural, and historiographical⁷ systems. To a certain extent, the Mediterranean has functioned in this way for Ancient writers (the *Mare Nostrum* idea), in the geographical notions of Latin Christians (the schematic *mapi mundi* with the Mediterranean as the upright limb of the T-cross), and in modern literary and scholarly perceptions.⁸ The most thoroughgoing attempt to interpret the Mediterranean as a unified environment having a persistent determinative effect on human cultures and activities within its zone of influence was that of Fernand Braudel.⁹ In the words of Horden and Purcell, Braudel has brought a sense of “the physical environment as both defining the contours of the region and as delimiting freedom of movement within it.”¹⁰

The example of Braudel’s work on the Mediterranean brings up certain noteworthy critiques and caveats regarding the attempt to integrate environmental and cultural data into an *histoire total*. First, there is an arbitrary assumption by the *Annalistes* that geographical/economic conditions and processes always represent the long-term determinative elements in the historical equation while political and other cultural aspects of human experience necessarily belong to the mid-range or ephemeral. On the contrary, environmental factors may be the most constant, but they also may not be determinative in every historical situation. The goal should be a *historical ecology*,

⁶ The straight line distances (approximately) between key points south and north: 950 miles from Rostov to St. Petersburg; 900 from Rostov to Riga; 650 from Odessa to Danzig; 550 from Trieste to Stettin or from Genoa to Antwerp; 460 from the mouth of the Rhône to the mouth of the Seine; and 225 from Narbonne to Bordeaux.

⁷ I.e., systems of thinking about past and present identities and historical experience that go beyond the strictly historiographical. The term *metahistorical* might also be used, although that has become somewhat limited by its current employment in world-history discourse.

⁸ Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 16 – 17, 27 – 30.

⁹ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds (London: William Collins Sons and Co., 1972), especially Part 1.

¹⁰ Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 37. They further explain Braudel’s work in terms of the *Annales* school’s “concern to integrate geography and history as closely as possible” (p. 38). This in turn rests upon a long tradition of geographical-historical thinking, including that of Alfred Philippson, Paul Vidal de la Blache, and Lucien Febvre (pp. 38 – 9).

which would describe the multi-faceted interaction between human cultural forms or activities and environmental conditions in an integrated manner. Here, however, the obstacle lies both in the enormous depth of data needed to inform any such all-inclusive model and the difficulty in fashioning the model in the first place. In the opinion of Horden and Purcell, no theory or methodology to merge adequately the environmental and the cultural has been devised, yet, and even if one were devised it would be practically impossible to apply it to a region as vast as the Mediterranean.¹¹ A similar statement could be made regarding the North Sea-Baltic Sea region.

Horden and Purcell's solution for their major study of the Mediterranean is to eschew any attempt at a *histoire total* of the region and instead to focus on *histoire problème*; i.e., on case studies in which Mediterranean environmental conditions demonstrably interact with local and intra-regional cultural developments, practices, and events. In other words, they will illustrate discrete ways in which the general ecological principles of the Mediterranean province may mesh with economic, social, political, and other histories.¹² This is an approach that we can usefully apply to aspects of northern geography in terms of their impact on historical development. There is no definitive study on the region of Europe's northern waters to match Braudel's (or even Horden and Purcell's) work on the Mediterranean.¹³ Rather, it is necessary to stitch together a review of the various ways in which natural conditions there have impacted human activity from a number of disparate sources.

At its most abstract, environment may be considered as an intersection of geology and climate. These basic natural forces account for the shapes and interrelationships of landforms and water bodies, the distribution of ores and other minerals, rainfall and temperature averages and their seasonal fluctuations, and major cyclical events such as periods of continental glaciation. Vegetation is conditioned by these fundamental variables, though it also produces feedback effects: soil formation, and the conservation of moisture, for example. The activities of the more mobile animal and human

¹¹ Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 41 – 9.

¹² Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 44.

¹³ An interesting beginning in this vein for the Atlantic angle of Europe, which overlaps somewhat with what I am calling the “northern waters,” is Barry Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and Its Peoples, 8000 BC – AD 1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

populations in turn are conditioned by the foregoing and also may produce feedback effects.¹⁴ In describing interactions among these various actors or forces, it is important to avoid the kind of mystical or deterministic thinking that produced the Ancient theory of “climes,” or essays on geography-induced “characters” of peoples as lately as the nineteenth century.¹⁵ The more nuanced approach known as Human Geography, which was pioneered by Paul Vidal de la Blache and his followers in the late nineteenth century, advanced “possibilistic” rather than deterministic views, according to which natural conditions offered potentials that humans might exploit. It is important, however, to remember that such possibilities do not represent static or ideal levels of interaction or exploitation.¹⁶ The long-term experience of the eastern Baltic region can serve as an illustration of this point. The earliest post-glacial inhabitants were hunter-gatherers of the Narva culture, who tended to settle in low-lying areas around lakes and watercourses where fish and waterfowl were plentiful.¹⁷ Some agricultural practices arrived with the Corded Ware/Boat-Axe culture, which appears in the area ca. 2500 BC, while the “decisive shift to an agro-pastoral economy occurred between 1300 and 600 bc [*sic*],”

¹⁴ Beavers, for example, quite obviously modify the landscapes that they inhabit. On a larger scale, Ivan T. Sanderson, *The Continent We Live On* (New York: Random House, 1961), 150–6, describes the former North American grasslands as a product not only of rainfall averages but also of the environment-modifying actions of prairie dogs and buffalo. Environmental modification by pre-industrial human populations can include things like extensive deforestation for agriculture, or overgrazing in semi-arid environments leading to desertification. In the latter regard, see the report in Robert A. Hutchinson, “The Bible as Field Guide for A Wildlife Restoration Dream,” *Smithsonian* (Feb 1990): 106–15, on experiments in the Negev desert, which suggest that the present desolate aspect of much of the Middle East is due to environmental degradation produced by pastoral nomadism. Anthropologists currently speak of “cultural landscapes” even in low-technology eras; e.g., in parts of Europe, the activities of hunter-gatherers and early agriculturalists contributed to the formation and persistence of peat deposits and heaths; I. G. Simmons, “Humans and Environments,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 10–11.

¹⁵ See Lucien Febvre, *A Geographical Introduction to History*, trans. E. G. Mountford and J. H. Paxton (1924; reprint New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), 1–31, on the historical development of ideas concerning the effects of geography on human history. Febvre claims that the recently (since the 1890s) developed “Human Geography” as a scientific discipline has escaped past pitfalls in conceptualization.

¹⁶ Karl S. Zimmerer, “Human Geography and the ‘New Ecology’: The Prospect and Promise of Integration,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 84, no. 1 (1994): 108–25, points out that many ecologists now reject the notion of static, equilibrium-seeking ecosystems and instead see environments as inherently unstable, prone to chaotic adjustments spurred by a variety of contingent conditions. Human interaction with the environment can also be seen in this light.

¹⁷ Marija Gimbutas, *Balti aizvēsturiskajos laikos: Etnogēnēze, materiālā kultūra un mitoloģija* (The Balts in prehistoric times: ethnogenesis, material culture and mythology), trans. from the Lithuanian by Andris Aramins (Riga: Zinātne, 1994), 31–42.

marked by a shift in settlements to dryer, upland areas with light soils.¹⁸ The productivity of agriculture in the region increased steadily due to various improvements in technique over the subsequent millennia, reaching by the twelfth century AD levels that could potentially produce a grain surplus. However, a grain export trade was initiated only in the fourteenth century when a higher level of political organization consolidated its hold over the area.¹⁹ During this entire time span, the climate and geology of the area remained relatively constant.²⁰

Geology and metals

The north and east of the European continent display some fundamental geologic contrasts with its western and southern areas. The structure that underlies the Baltic Sea as well as Scandinavia, northeastern Germany, Poland, and all of European Russia between the Carpathians, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Urals, and the Arctic shore is a block of Precambrian shield rock, formed in the Archean and Proterozoic eons, which like many other so-called “shield” formations has remained stable over many hundreds of millions of years. This East European “platform” lies exposed in Scandinavia and part of Ukraine but elsewhere is overlaid by more recent sedimentary layers.²¹ The geologically recent Quaternary glaciations have further scoured and leveled the inherently low relief surface of this plate over the entire Baltic watershed. The glaciations also have left a belt of moraine deposits in an arc from the southern shores of the Baltic into the eastern Baltic and northwestern Russia, which have affected soil formation and subsequent agricultural potential, and the torrents of glacial meltwater that accompanied the end of the Ice Age

¹⁸ Marek Zvelebil, “The Agricultural Frontier and the Transition to Farming in the circum-Baltic Region,” in *The Origins and Spread of Agriculture and Pastoralism in Eurasia*, ed. David R. Harris (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 340.

¹⁹ E. Tõnisson, *Die Gauja-Liven und ihre materielle Kultur (11. Jh. - Anfang 13. Jhs.): Ein Beitrag zur ostbaltischen Frühgeschichte* (Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1974), 164. The high level of development in material culture reached by the peoples of the eastern Baltic *before* their conquest by German-led crusaders in the thirteenth century is emphasized also by Ēvalds Mugurēvičs, “Interactions between Indigenous and Western Culture in Livonia in the 13th to 16th Centuries,” in *From the Baltic to the Black Sea: Studies in Medieval Archaeology*, ed. David Austin and Leslie Alcock (London: Routledge, 1990), 168 – 78.

²⁰ Simmons, “Humans and Environments,” 8 – 9, discusses briefly the post-glacial climatic variations in Europe, including the Holocene Optimum of the sixth to third millennia and the Little Optimum of AD 900 – 1250.

²¹ Pavel M. Dolukhanov, *The Early Slavs: Eastern Europe from the Initial Settlement to the Kievan Rus* (London: Longman, 1996), 8 – 10 and fig. 1, describes the geology underlying his area of study.

had a major impact in shaping the watercourses of the Russian and North European plains as we know them in the historical period.²² The pattern of seacoasts, rivers, bogs, and hilly uplands that was formed by these geologic processes has channeled human activities in the area, affecting not least the patterns of communication and exchange that have unfolded over this landscape.

To the west and the south of this relatively stable East European geologic core, a bewilderingly complex sequence of collisions, rifts, orogenies, erosions, sedimentations and re-elevations over the past 400 million years (from the Devonian period onwards) has resulted in that agglomeration of terranes, which we know as western, central, and southeastern Europe.²³ The still-ongoing Alpine orogeny has been responsible for the Alps, the Carpathians, the mountain ranges of the Balkans, and the Caucasus; the raising of Anatolia, the Iranian plateau, and Cyprus also belong within this complex of recent geologic events. Thus, while the Baltic is a shallowly flooded portion of an ancient continental platform, the Mediterranean is a remnant ocean basin—called the Tethys Ocean by geologists—being steadily narrowed by converging tectonic plates and upfolding of the former seabed.²⁴ This is a process too gradual to be noticed on human-historical time scales but does create instability that manifests itself in human experience as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

One crucial result of the contrasting geologic histories of the East European platform and the surrounding regions is that the vast northern and eastern plains of Europe are devoid of most metals. Specifically, neither gold, silver, nor copper sources are to be found within the region. With the exception of low grade iron ore—the so-called “bog ore” that occurs ubiquitously in low lying, waterlogged places—ore deposits are found only around the fringes of the East European platform: in the exposed shield

²² Dolukhanov, *Early Slavs*, 10 – 13 and fig. 2. See also the map diagramming the Elbe, Oder, and Vistula river systems in relation to the three most recent glacial advances in Carl Schuchhardt, *Vorgeschichte von Deutschland* (Berlin, 1943), 1, Abb. 1. Continental ice-sheets had melted away from all but parts of Scandinavia by 9500 BC; Simmons, “Humans and Environments,” 7.

²³ John McPhee, *Annals of the Former World* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 553, 559, gives a brief summary. The topic is explored in great technical detail in Peter A. Ziegler, *Evolution of the Arctic – North Atlantic and the Western Tethys* (Tulsa: American Association of Petroleum Geologists, 1988).

²⁴ McPhee, *Annals of the Former World*, 511 – 14.

rock of Sweden, in the Harz, the Erzgebirge, in the Carpathian basin, in the Caucasus, in the southern Urals;²⁵ also in the main ranges of the Alps, in the Balkans generally, in Anatolia, on Cyprus. Most of the aforementioned areas are associated with the most recent orogeny and the uplifting of the seabed layers, where ores are most apt to occur.²⁶

This distribution of metal sources has profoundly affected cultural development and exchange patterns. Copper metallurgy appeared earliest in Anatolia (ca. 6900 BC), and copper-arsenic bronze in the Transcaucasus ca. 3800 BC. In the Balkans and the Carpathian basin, meanwhile, the civilization that Marija Gimbutas calls “Old Europe” had independently developed copper metallurgy 5500 – 3500 BC.²⁷ When the far-ranging Kurgan people of the North Caucasian and Pontic steppes acquired bronze technology from the Transcaucasians after ca. 3500 BC, they spread it over vast areas of the steppes as well as into southeastern and central Europe.²⁸ However, Gimbutas states explicitly that “[t]here was no copper ore in the steppe zone north of the Black Sea.”²⁹ In a different context, she states as explicitly that there were no copper deposits within the maximal territory of proto-Baltic settlement between the Oder river and the Volga-Oka region.³⁰ Similar statements could be collected for other sub-regions of northeastern Europe in terms of the (non-)availability of copper, and of silver and gold also.

These facts lead to a far-reaching conclusion, namely, that any and all objects made of copper, bronze, silver, or gold that are attested in archaeological deposits anywhere in Scandinavia,³¹ northeastern Germany, lowland Poland, the Eastern Baltic,

²⁵ The Urals are the result of another complex series of geologic events starting in the Carboniferous and ending in the Permian period which joined the East European and Siberian plates to form Eurasia. Some of the issues involved are outlined in Andrés Pérez-Estaún, Dennis Brown, et al., “Uralides: A Key to Understanding Collisional Orogeny,” in *Lithosphere Dynamics: Origin and Evolution of Continents*, ed. D.G. Gee and H.J. Zeyen (Uppsala: Europrobe Secretariate, 1996), 29 – 38.

²⁶ McPhee, *Annals of the Former World*, 512 – 19, for the copper deposits of Cyprus and insights into ancient metallurgy on the island.

²⁷ Marija Gimbutas, “The Beginning of the Bronze Age in Europe and the Indo-Europeans: 3500 – 2500 B.C.,” in idem, *The Kurgan Culture and the Indo-Europeanization of Europe: Selected Articles from 1952 to 1993*, ed. Miriam Robbins Dexter and Karlene Jones-Bley (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man, 1997), 137 – 44. See also further discussion in Section 3.3, subsection *Copper, tin, and bronze* below.

²⁸ Gimbutas, “Beginning of the Bronze Age in Europe,” 145 – 60.

²⁹ Gimbutas, “Beginning of the Bronze Age in Europe,” 145.

³⁰ Gimbutas, *Balti aizvēsturiskajos laikos*, 63.

³¹ The copper deposits of Sweden were not exploited until the thirteenth century AD; Wilhelm Koppe, *Der Lübeck-Stockholmer Handel von 1368 - 1400* (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1933), 18 – 37.

and European Russia *could not have been produced from exclusively local resources*. Whether from near or far, either the objects themselves or their material had to have been imported. In other words, wherever these metal objects appear there is a need to explain the mechanism by which they might have arrived, including the possibility that an exchange network of some kind was in operation. One precious resource available in the Baltic region that could balance the value of imported metals was the amber of Jutland and, especially, of the southeastern Baltic shore.³² Amber is a durable substance that survives well in archaeological deposits; other potentially tradable products of the European northeast, however, typically leave little or no trace of their production and export. These include furs, honey, wax, and slaves—all of which are attested as export trade goods in documentary sources from various periods.

Climate and soils

Turning from geology to climate, the lands around the North and the Baltic seas enjoy a relatively mild climate due to the prevailing westerly winds and ocean currents.³³ While subsistence farming was possible even above sixty degrees north both in Scandinavia and in European Russia, most of Sweden, Finland, and Russia north of about fifty-seven degrees north, lie in the *taiga* or boreal forest zone with very short growing seasons. Occupying a strip that broadens rapidly westwards from the Urals, the temperate mixed forest zone covers the middle Volga and Volga-Oka basins of western Russia, Belarus, the eastern Baltic, and moves on westwards through Poland and Germany.

Concerning the rich Bronze Age in Scandinavia, for example: “Metal was brought in from metal-controlling societies in central Europe.” Helle Vandkilde, “Bronze Age Scandinavia,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 73.

³² Arnolds Spekke, *Senie dzintara ceļi un Austrum-baltijas ģeografiskā atklāšana* (Stockholm: Zelta Ābele, 1962), discusses the amber trade between the Baltic and the Mediterranean from the Bronze Age to the Middle Ages. This is an updated and expanded version of idem, *The Ancient Amber Routes and the Geographical Discovery of the Eastern Baltic* (Stockholm: M. Goppers, 1957). A recent analysis of amber exchange in the sixth and seventh centuries AD is Florin Curta, “The Amber Trail in Early Medieval Eastern Europe,” in *Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Felice Lifshitz and Celia Chazelle (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 61 – 70.

³³ Dolukhanov, *Early Slavs*, 14 and fig. 3. Cf. the northwest coast of North America from southern Alaska to northern California, which enjoys a similarly mild and moist climate. By contrast, the northeast coasts of both North America (from Labrador to Maine) and Eurasia are much colder and far less amenable in these same latitudes.

The “podzol” or ashy type of soil prevails both in the taiga and the mixed forest zones of northeastern Europe, which is a marginally productive soil requiring fertilizer inputs (such as animal manure, fish meal, or other sources of lime and nutrients) to maintain long-term productivity.³⁴ In much of Sweden and Finland the soil is poor and thin due also to the glaciers scraping the area down to shieldrock just a few thousands of years ago, particularly in upland areas. In these lands, the most productive soils occur where sediments that settled in post-glacial meltwater lakes and seas overlie belts of sedimentary rock; one such area stretches across central Sweden including Västergötland, Södermanland, and Uppland.³⁵ Generally, those areas of central and southern Scandinavia, including Denmark, where the soil is of the “brown” type characteristically support mixed deciduous forest as well as productive agriculture, in contrast to the poorer soils that show predominantly taiga vegetation and are less productive in farming. In addition to central Sweden just mentioned, such favored places include the areas around Oslo, Stavanger, Bergen, and Trondheim, and Denmark including Skåne, Sjælland, Fyn, and most of Jutland. Less productive areas such as southwestern Jutland and northwestern Germany have sandy, glacial outwash soils.³⁶

Similar configurations of topography, forest cover, and agricultural potential obtain along the southern shore of the Baltic. The moraine belt of western Russia continues into the North European plain, forming regions of uplands (up to ca. 300 meters) and small lakes (*Seeplatten*) from former East Prussia through Pomerania and Mecklenburg into Holstein and southeastern Jutland. This moraine belt of varying depth, greatest in East Prussia and Mecklenburg but thinning out towards the base of Jutland, shows up clearly in maps of woodland types, as do the mountains that surround Bohemia, the Thüringer_Wald, the Harz, and the other ridges that articulate the landscape of central Germany. In between the differently wooded highlands in the north and the south lay plains, often sandy and boggy and with poorer soils than in either the northern moraine

³⁴ Dolukhanov, *Early Slavs*, 14–18 and figs. 4 and 5.

³⁵ This information derives primarily from lectures delivered by Professor John G. Rice in the course, “Roman Catholic Scandinavia” (Geog 5178 / Hist 5118), spring 1998 at the University of Minnesota.

³⁶ Kristian Kristiansen, “Center and Periphery in Bronze Age Scandinavia,” in *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 74–5.

belt or the southern upland areas. In addition to the topographical articulation of north central continental Europe, a climatic gradient also is at work here, with maritime wetter and milder conditions towards the west shading off into dryer and more continental conditions towards the east.³⁷ Interestingly, the middle segment of the Elbe river runs approximately between two different kinds of mixed deciduous and coniferous forests that cover the North European plain in Germany and Poland; as will be noted later, the middle Elbe area in the early Middle Ages approximated an ethno-linguistic boundary between Germanic and Slavic peoples, and this division continued in the ninth century as an economic frontier.³⁸

In the geographical introduction to his study of indigenous cultural development within the Roman frontier zone in central Europe, Peter Wells gives a description of the Elbe, Rhine, and upper Danube basins that generally confirms the preceding analysis and extends it somewhat westwards and southwards.³⁹ Wells divides the region into three zones of differing natural conditions and potentials. North of the Erzgebirge, Harz, Teutoburger Wald, Rothaargebirge, and Eifel-Ardennes lies the North European plain, sandy and damp, not good for grain farming but supporting cattle raising, and crossed by many navigable water courses. The “hilly uplands” that extend across the bulk of west central Europe have better soils for agriculture plus metals and good building stone. The region is bounded by the Alps in the south, which have “excellent pasturage and abundant mineral resources, but limited agricultural potential.”⁴⁰ While the lowlands of Belgium, northern France, and southern England can be conceived as extensions of the

³⁷ Sebastian Brather, *Archäologie der westlichen Slawen: Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Ostmitteleuropa* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 90 – 2, discusses the soils, climate, and vegetation of Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic; his Abb. 14 (p. 93) offers an excellent visual representation of the geographic relations in this region.

³⁸ See discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and the Elbe* below.

³⁹ Peter S. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak: How the Conquered Peoples Shaped Roman Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 6 – 10 and fig. 2.

⁴⁰ Wells, *Barbarians Speak*, 9.

North European plain,⁴¹ the underlying geology here in many places produces rich agricultural soils similar to those of the “hilly uplands” of central Germany.⁴²

Broadly speaking, the geographic focus area of the present study lies within Temperate Europe, a concept used extensively by Wells also. Temperate Europe contrasts with the Mediterranean zone to the south, which has had its own distinct cultural history, and the sub-Arctic zone to the north in which environmental conditions preclude many of the kinds of development that are possible in the temperate zone. It certainly encompasses most of France, the British Isles, central Europe north of the Alps, the southern half of Scandinavia plus the territory of present-day Poland and the Danube-Carpathian basin. The definition should be extended eastward to include the eastern Baltic lands and those comprising the upper and middle Dnieper, the upper Don, and the Volga-Oka basins of western Russia. Further generalizations about the potentials of the lands within this zone will not be useful, especially as the economic potential of a region is the product both of the natural environment and the cultural practices, including specific technologies, that humans apply to it.⁴³ Likewise, it will not be efficient to try to describe here at the outset every relevant locality in the area of study in all of its geographical detail. Details will be supplied, henceforth, as the context demands.

3.2 Areas of Settlement and Avenues of Exchange

The archaeology of prehistoric Europe is one field that has been particularly sensitive to the interaction between human cultures and natural environments or geographic settings. As a result of many decades of intensive archaeological investigation, various post-Ice Age cultural horizons of the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age,⁴⁴ their

⁴¹ So, for example, in the geographic overview of his focus areas at the beginning of Wickham, *Framing*, p. 43 for Gaul, p. 47 for England.

⁴² Paul Vidal de La Blache, *Tableau de la Géographie de la France* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1994), discusses the territory of France province by province in terms of its geologic structure and economic uses.

⁴³ Paul Vidal de La Blache, *Principles of Human Geography*, ed. Emmanuel de Martonne, trans. Millicent Todd Bingham (New York: Henry Holt, 1926), 211 – 25, discusses the contrasting subsistence strategies in the Mediterranean zone, in “Central Europe” between 45° and 55° north latitude, and in “Northern Europe” above 55° north. Interesting as this is, it presupposes developed but pre-modern agricultural civilizations in contrast to hunting-gathering or industrial societies.

⁴⁴ The dating of these periods is somewhat arbitrary and in many cases differs from one region to another. *Mesolithic* starts ca. 8000 BC. *Neolithic* in central Europe dates from about 5500 BC, in which region

spatial distribution, and areas of interaction have come into reasonably clear focus, so that a general “history” of development in prehistoric Temperate Europe can begin to be described.⁴⁵ Relevant to the purposes of the present thesis is the observation that from quite early on in this prehistory certain settlement patterns and directions of communication between them had emerged and would be repeated, with variations, in subsequent proto-historic and historical eras.

The term “communications” has been chosen deliberately for its ambiguity. At issue is a wide range of interactions, including the exchange of cultural traits between farmers and hunter-gatherers, mechanisms of language diffusion, elite gift exchange, and possible commerce. So far as any of these types of communication (as well as others not specifically listed above) involve the transport from one region to another and transfer from one population to another of actual physical objects, such communications should be considered to have an economic dimension in addition to whatever ritual, social, or political value or process they might also have represented or involved.⁴⁶ The distribution of objects and materials visible in the archaeological record shows that populations in central Europe and Scandinavia were consciously engaged in production specializations—which were at least partially conditioned by the differing local environments—and in the erection of exchange systems for the differentiated production. In other words, the medium- and long-range distributions of archaeologically traceable objects and materials, in addition to their other possible meanings, signify trade or exchange networks.

Bronze Age commonly runs 2000 – 800 BC and *Iron Age* 800 – 1 BC; for Scandinavia, the beginning dates are later.

⁴⁵ Barry Cunliffe, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Prehistoric Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), is still a good survey. For a review of archaeological cultures Paleolithic to Viking Age from a North European perspective see the excellent Göran Burenhult, ed., *Arkeologi i Norden*, 2 vol. (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1999).

⁴⁶ Further discussion of the theoretical and methodological foundations behind this approach appear in context in the various Sections and subsections that follow. According to a recent summary by Robert Tykot, to understand the exchange of objects or materials it is necessary to establish not only the provenance of objects but also the conditions of their “procurement, transport, manufacture, use, recycling, and disposal. The reconstruction of this entire sequence of activities is necessary for a full understanding of the associated human motivations and types of behavior.” Robert H. Tykot, “Trade and Exchange,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 65.

The Neolithic Baltic and north central Europe

A very early kind of exchange system has been suggested to have been active during the long transition from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic in some of the territory with which the present study is most concerned, namely northern Germany and the region of modern Denmark. The *Linearbandkeramik* (LBK) culture, which featured cattle herding, some cereal cultivation, settlements of post-built longhouses, the characteristic decorated pottery, and stone adzes spread rapidly northwestwards from Hungary after ca. 5500 BC.⁴⁷ In Germany, the northern and western limit reached by this culture approximates the limits of the “hilly upland” region or, more specifically, the areas of loess soil within this region; the loess belt with its Neolithic colonists extends westwards through central Belgium into the Paris basin also.⁴⁸ Northwards and westwards of this limit, on the North European Plain, Denmark, Brittany, and other areas not involved in the initial colonization, various Mesolithic cultures based on intensive hunting-gathering continued, but also selectively acquired artifacts, subsistence strategies, and other cultural forms from the LBK people. Possibly, interactions between LBK and members of the Mesolithic Ertebølle culture of the North German plain and Denmark were initiated by seasonal transhumance—the grazing of cattle down on the plains. Julian Thomas explains selective acquisition of elements of LBK culture (a derivative pottery, shaft-hole polished stone adzes, some cereal grains and domestic pigs) by processes of prestige building among Ertebølle groups, “which would have had the effect of enhancing the social position of those among the foraging bands who were in a position to pass on valued items as gifts.”⁴⁹

Once entered upon, the process could have engendered feedback effects that would have led to greater willingness to make the social, cultural, and economic

⁴⁷ Julian Thomas, “The Cultural Context of the First Use of Domesticates in Continental Central and Northwest Europe,” in *The Origins and Spread of Agriculture and Pastoralism in Eurasia*, ed. David R. Harris (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 313.

⁴⁸ For the westward extension of the (*Linear*)*Bandkeramik* culture, see Andrew Sherratt, “The Genesis of Megaliths: Monumentality, Ethnicity and Social Complexity in Neolithic North-West Europe,” *World Archaeology* 22, no. 2 (1990): 153, fig. 1. Interestingly, the areas of northern France occupied by the LBK and its offshoots approximate the political-economic core of the French nation (“le Bassin parisien”) as outlined by Vidal de La Blache, *Tableau de la Géographie*, 137–9.

⁴⁹ Thomas, “First Use of Domesticates,” 314, referring to K. Jennbert, “Neolithisation—a Scanian Perspective,” *Journal of Danish Archaeology* 4 (1985): 196–7.

adjustments necessary to incorporate ever more Neolithic elements into the indigenous culture mix. The result, however, according to Julian Thomas, was not the acculturation of the Mesolithic peoples to the farmers but a “reformulated” Neolithic, in which groups living along the fringes of the LBK area “chose to engage in new networks of contact and new social and economic practices.”⁵⁰ Notably, it was the members of the Cerny culture of northern France and the Funnel Beaker culture (TRB) who were the leaders in the synthesis. Under their impetus, throughout the fringes of continental northwestern Europe, the British Isles, and Scandinavia “Neolithic” cultures arose in which foraging remained an important or even dominant component of the overall subsistence strategy but included also elements of cereal farming and animal husbandry in a wide variety of combinations. Throughout these cultures, shared material-cultural elements such as funerary monuments, polished stone axes, plain bowl pottery, and ditched enclosures “provided a framework for social integration and interaction between communities practicing diverse subsistence strategies.”⁵¹ Moreover, the new hybrid culture remobilized the stagnant LBK areas as well.⁵²

The discussion concerning interactions of late hunter-gatherers and early farmers in the fifth millennium BC is relevant to the present study in several fundamental ways. First, there is a remarkably clear correlation between the areas occupied by particular culture groups and the environmental zones discussed above in Section 3.1. In the late sixth millennium, the LBK farmers occupy the hilly uplands or, more specifically, the “loess plains” within that zone, leaving ridges such as the Harz as islands of non-settlement. The sandy glacial outwash plains of central Poland see extensions of Neolithic settlement in the fifth millennium. At the opposite cultural pole, so to speak, continues the thriving Mesolithic Ertebølle culture, which is concentrated along the shores of Mecklenburg and Holstein (on the northern slopes of the South Baltic moraine belt), eastern Jutland, the Danish islands, and Skåne.⁵³ Second, it must be noticed that the incoming farming populations did not rapidly overwhelm and displace all rival cultures in

⁵⁰ Thomas, “First Use of Domesticates,” 317.

⁵¹ Thomas, “First Use of Domesticates,” 319.

⁵² Thomas, “First Use of Domesticates,” 320.

⁵³ The map of culture areas in Sherratt, “Genesis of Megaliths,” 158, fig. 4, clearly shows these relationships; discussion on pp. 157 – 9.

this northwestern and north central European region—contrary to what might be expected following stock assumptions about the demographic and productive and hence cultural and political superiority of farming versus hunting-gathering societies generally.⁵⁴ This introduces a proper caution against over-ready assumptions about relations between theoretically superior *core* cultural-economic areas vis-à-vis equally theoretical *peripheries*. Just as Mesolithic Denmark proved capable of a remarkable degree of agency and choice in its relations with the bearers of Neolithic innovation, so we should not assume that eighth- and ninth-century-AD Denmark was necessarily the passive recipient of politico-economic relations determined by an elite Frankish core and transmitted by *directional trade* along a *monopolistic dendritic network* to the north.⁵⁵

A third aspect of the Mesolithic – Neolithic transition in north central Europe that must occupy our attention is the discussion of processes of cultural and socio-economic exchange by which this transition is thought to have proceeded. Marek Zvelebil proposes that during the so-called “availability phase” of farmer – forager contact (communication between the two sides, but no change yet in fundamental economic and social structures)⁵⁶ extensive trade took place: from the side of the farmers, cows, pots, and axes exchanged for amber, furs, seal fat, and honey from the foragers. Some of the items have an intrinsic subsistence value; seal fat appears to have been in high demand among the LBK farmers and their successors south of the Baltic, while cows may have represented a hedge against failures in the foraged food supply for the Ertebølle and other foraging groups. Indeed, the ability to engage in long-distance trade on the part of groups

⁵⁴ Marek Zvelebil and Kamil V. Zvelebil, “Agricultural Transition and Indo-European Dispersals,” *Antiquity* 62 (1988): 578 – 9, pointed out that early Neolithic farmers often had no real demographic advantage over intensive hunter-gatherers under favorable circumstances; this was in the context of a discussion of population movements in relation to language replacements in Europe. M. Zvelebil, “Agricultural Frontier,” further discusses the dynamics and the timing of the foraging-farming transition in the Baltic region.

⁵⁵ Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade AD 600 – 1000*. London: Duckworth, 1982), 29 – 33. See Chapter 2, Section 2.3 above for the historiographical context. Relations of exchange between the Carolingians and Scandinavia will be addressed in detail in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and Denmark* and Section 7.3, subsection *The Baltic system between East and West* below.

⁵⁶ Modeling of the foraging-to-farming transition according to phases of *availability*, *substitution*, and *consolidation* was proposed in Marek Zvelebil, “Mesolithic Prelude and Neolithic Revolution,” in *Hunters in Transition: Mesolithic Societies of Temperate Eurasia and Their Transition to Farming*, ed. Marek Zvelebil (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 5 –16, and has been widely regarded as standard.

inhabiting the eastern Baltic region not only led to cultural hybridization but allowed them to persist in a mixed foraging-farming subsistence mode (the “substitution phase”) far longer than is common. In a sense, the foraging aspects of Eastern Baltic Corded Ware culture were sustained by commercial seal hunting, which seems to have expanded significantly during the second millennium BC.⁵⁷ Zvelebil and others place the kinds of exchanges outlined here in the context of anthropological concepts such as reciprocity arrangements, competition over prestige-bearing items, and social/cultural disruption.⁵⁸ While there are some tantalizing hints in that direction, there is no opportunity yet to speak of the role of enterprising individuals as catalysts in these exchanges, nor is it possible to quantify the part played by trade in the overall mix of economic activities.

The Bronze Age Baltic and central Europe

Similar patterns of cultural diffusion and exchange can be seen in the Baltic region during the subsequent Bronze Age, as described by Kristian Kristiansen.⁵⁹ The distribution of bronze artifacts and other aspects of the northern Bronze Age culture in the second millennium BC mirrors the distribution of farming and cow-herding settlements, the transition to which in Scandinavia occurred ca. 3000 BC.⁶⁰ The Bronze Age socio-cultural complex was developed most fully in the core areas of good farmland, including once again greater Denmark (Jutland, the islands, and Scåne) as well as the northeast coast of Germany, central Sweden, the Oslo Fjord region, and other Norwegian enclaves, but becomes attenuated in marginal areas such as upland southern Sweden and the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia. Bronze weapons, lurs, gold cups, and other prestige or ritual objects, barrow graves with deposited goods, and rock pictures are the material reflections of this culture. Both the bronze, itself, and at least some of the ideas concerning its social and ritual uses came to Scandinavia from the south—from central

⁵⁷ M. Zvelebil, “Agricultural Frontier,” 334 – 7, 340; fig. 18.7 shows the products and exchange patterns of the Baltic region ca. 2000 BC.

⁵⁸ M. Zvelebil, “Agricultural Frontier,” 331 – 3, 337 – 9.

⁵⁹ Kristian Kristiansen, “Center and Periphery in Bronze Age Scandinavia,” in *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 74 – 85.

⁶⁰ See here the chronological and spatial chart of Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Bronze Age cultures of the Baltic region in M. Zvelebil, “Agricultural Frontier,” 329, fig. 18.4

Europe, but the cultural system engendered on the basis of these objects and their applications involved active exchange networks within the Baltic-Scandinavian region itself. As Kristiansen says:

I thus propose that social organization during the Bronze Age was based on a close relationship between prestige goods exchange and the ideology of (foreign) tribal elites. This was sustained by a complex ritual system to which alone the elite had access.⁶¹

Exchange and alliance networks stemming in the first place from southern Scandinavia (the area of Denmark) facilitated the growth of other centers further northwest and northeast:

Thus, the maintenance of regional centers depended upon a complex interplay between agricultural expansion (surplus production) and participation in alliance networks with southern Scandinavia that gave access to exotic ritual information and prestige goods.⁶²

Kristiansen's description of Bronze Age Scandinavia reveals a cultural-economic system that has increased in hierarchical complexity beyond that of the Neolithic period. Some processes of the agricultural-transition phase discussed previously, such as the seal fat trade from the eastern Baltic, would have been continuing during the second millennium BC. In the environmentally favored areas of Scandinavia, however, a more intense traffic in high-value goods was now at the focal point of social and political development. Several facets of this development and Kristiansen's treatment of it are important for our purposes. First, Kristiansen observes that core-periphery relationships operate here on two distinct levels. On a local scale, centers are exploiting their agricultural hinterlands for surplus production and other modes of support, while on a regional scale various centers stand in hierarchical relationships to each other, with those in the Danish area ultimately the most powerful or prestigious. This analysis engages, in slightly different terms, a recurrent theme in the study of proto-historic development in northern Europe, namely the distinction between local "central places" and *emporia*—

⁶¹ Kristiansen, "Center and Periphery in Bronze Age Scandinavia," 79.

⁶² Kristiansen, "Center and Periphery in Bronze Age Scandinavia," 83.

nodes in hierarchical networks of long-distance trade. Notably, Kristiansen has no suggestion that the two levels or functions are irreconcilable or that they belong to chronologically separate phases; indeed, most successful in the regional system are centers that successfully “hierarchize” their local areas. This contrasts markedly with the analysis that Richard Hodges gives for early medieval northern Europe, where a phase marked by long-distance trade through *emporia* contrasts politically and economically with a subsequent phase of development focused on regional or local centers.⁶³

Kristiansen’s emphasis on the exchange of prestige goods among elites, however, conforms with the general theoretical outlook maintained by Hodges, Zvelebil, Sherratt, J. Thomas, and many others.

A second aspect of the Scandinavian Bronze-Age exchange system that is of interest here is the notable increase in territorial scope of the exchanges and the increased value in the goods traded. Relations were maintained over hundreds of kilometers between centers in greater Denmark and those in southern Norway or central Sweden. Kristiansen believes that the rock carvings indicate fleets on “trading expeditions,” and in some centers exchange or trade might have been on a large scale; in any case, the integration of the coasts of Scandinavia into a common culture depended on frequent contacts and seaborne trade.⁶⁴ In the other direction, there necessarily had to be long-distance exchanges with the sources of bronze to the south, in central Europe; moreover, the “extraordinary wealth and richness” of southern Scandinavia during this period indicates that not mere occasional foodstuffs (fish, cattle, sheep) but some high-value items must have been traded for this exotic substance.⁶⁵ Kristiansen suggests that these were amber and furs; as possible evidence, he cites the observation that these items are not found in Scandinavian burials once the Bronze Age in the north is underway—

⁶³ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 47 – 52. Cf. Johan Callmer, “Urbanization in Scandinavia and the Baltic Region c. AD 700 – 1100: Trading Places, Centres and Early Urban Sites,” in *Birka Studies 3* (Stockholm, 1994), 50 – 90, where development of central places in Scandinavia is a process concurrent with the appearance of trading places, including *emporia*. The approach taken in Dagfinn Skre, ed., *Kaupang in Skiringssal: Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1* (Nordske Oldfunn 22) (Oslo: University of Oslo, Museum of Cultural History, 2007), also deliberately combines the study of the concurrent development of an emporium, Kaupang, and the local “central place,” Skiringssal.

⁶⁴ Kristiansen, “Center and Periphery in Bronze Age Scandinavia,” 83 – 4. It is also possible, however, that seaborne warfare—either for political dominance or for plunder—is reflected in some of the rock images.

⁶⁵ Kristiansen, “Center and Periphery in Bronze Age Scandinavia,” 83.

possibly for the reason that these goods were now needed for export.⁶⁶ Thus was Bronze-Age Scandinavia linked with central Europe and, further, with the Mediterranean in a system which, as Kristiansen says,

was able to transcend barriers of different subsistence strategies and differences in the level of social organization. Instead, such differences could be manipulated by ritual and ideological means.⁶⁷

The material exchanges both within Scandinavia and with the bronze-producers in central Europe are, thus, to be seen as embedded in the socio-political transactions of the participating elites. This emphasis tends to mask, however, the realization that we have here a system in which considerable quantities of tangible material are being exchanged—materials and objects, moreover, which have economically functional as well as ritual and prestige value. Kristiansen admits, for instance, that certain types of small bronze axe widely distributed throughout the northern Bronze Age cultural area were tools plain and simple.⁶⁸

If there were “trading expeditions” along the Scandinavian coastlines, how were these actually organized? The larger the scale of the trading, the more likely that many of the items changing hands were not primarily of ritual or prestige-building or alliance-forming value, and, therefore, the less likely that all such trading or exchange directly involved the immediate participation of chiefs and other elite personnel. There must have been non-elite persons that handled the practical aspects (at least) of the transport, storage, and trading of many of the individual objects—persons who, conceivably, may have become specialists in such services. Even in transactions at the elite level, there may well have been specialists—elite individuals skilled in negotiations with the central European bronze-producers, for example, who could be relied upon to get the most metal possible for the furs and amber being delivered and were routinely chosen to head such missions. At either level, such persons could legitimately be seen as a species of merchant. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to imagine how the available evidence could

⁶⁶ Kristiansen, “Center and Periphery in Bronze Age Scandinavia,” 83 and Note 4. Though Kristiansen never states this in so many words, the foundation for this trade is the fact that copper was not being produced locally in Scandinavia.

⁶⁷ Kristiansen, “Center and Periphery in Bronze Age Scandinavia,” 84.

⁶⁸ Kristiansen, “Center and Periphery in Bronze Age Scandinavia,” 79.

be made to yield positive proof of such mercantile specialists in the northern European Bronze Age.

The amber routes

One way or another, quantities of bronze were moving north and amber, at the very least, was moving south. Indeed, the traces of this ancient amber trade from northern Europe have long been an essential key for modern efforts to unlock the prehistory of the region in at least two fundamental ways. First, it explains the level of material cultural development in the North. In the words of Oscar Montelius from a century ago:

The investigations of the last few decades have incontrovertibly proved that the culture of the inhabitants of Northern Europe, long before the beginning of our era, was uncommonly high. The explanation of this remarkable phenomenon is to be sought in trade, trade which, even in the remote periods with which we are concerned, was of a far greater significance than has hitherto been recognized.⁶⁹

In this sense, the observations of much more recent researchers such as Kristiansen are scarcely proposing any radically new insight; they are, however, taking advantage of a huge expansion in the available archaeological database and of advances in theoretical modeling of trade or exchange relationships. Further, as Navarro specifies:

while Northern Europe may have had various raw stuffs at its disposal for purposes of bartering with the South, amber was the one distinguishable and *imperishable* substance which it exported on an extensive scale.⁷⁰

Baltic amber was prized in the Mycenaean world of the second millennium BC, where, as Arnolds Spekke has remarked: “The man of the Bronze Age... was in some way symbolized by the Bronze arms and by the amber sacred ornaments—both his physical and spiritual means of defense, so to speak.”⁷¹ Moreover, though its talismanic value may have diminished in later cultural ages, Baltic amber continued to be an item in high demand in the Mediterranean world for decorative and other purposes right through

⁶⁹ Quoted thus in J. M. de Navarro, “Prehistoric Routes between Northern Europe and Italy Defined by the Amber Trade,” *The Geographical Journal* 66, no. 6 (1925): 481, citing an unnamed article in *Prähistorische Zeitschrift* (1910), pp. 249 ff.

⁷⁰ Navarro, “Prehistoric Routes,” 481.

⁷¹ Spekke, *Ancient Amber Routes*, 14.

the Roman period, resulting in frequent references to the substance, its properties, uses, places of origin, and trade in a long list of Greek and Roman literary works.⁷² Thus, the frequency of Ancient references to amber plus its archaeological recoverability and its susceptibility to chemical analysis revealing the point of origin of different samples have, in combination, facilitated the early reconstruction of the routes through Central Europe along which amber was traded or exchanged.⁷³ This is the second fundamental way in which the amber trade has served as a window into the prehistory of the North. In a sense, the distribution of amber deposits between the south shore of the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean play as crucial a part in resolving the trade patterns of this region in the Bronze and Iron Ages as do the silver hoards of European Russia and the Baltic region in the study of Viking Age trade routes.⁷⁴

In his 1925 presentation to the Royal Geographical Society, J. M. de Navarro outlined in considerable detail the then-current state of research into the ancient amber routes, an outline which remains essentially valid.⁷⁵ By plotting the locations of amber deposits—mostly in graves, more rarely in hoards—throughout Central Europe between the Baltic and the Adriatic and correlating these with other datable artifacts in each locality, Navarro was able to identify both the likeliest routes along which amber moved or was exchanged for other materials and the specific Bronze- and Iron-Age horizons in which different routes and areas were most active in these exchanges.

The earliest axis of exchange, Navarro's "Central Route," led from the west coast of Jutland up the Elbe; branching, then, either through Bohemia or through upper Franconia; reconverging at Passau on the Danube; and thence up the Inn and over the Brenner pass into northern Italy. This route became active ca. 1800 BC, within a couple of centuries of the onset of the Bronze Age in Central Europe (according to the dating then current) and coinciding with the beginnings of the Bronze Age in Scandinavia. It

⁷² Spekke, *Senie dzintara ceļi*, 18 – 49, gives excerpts from sixteen authors ranging from Herodotus to Artemidorus of Ephesus.

⁷³ Tykot, "Trade and Exchange," 67 – 70, discusses the crucial importance of establishing the natural provenance or exact point of origin of materials in order to better understand the patterns of their diffusion. Obsidian and copper in the prehistoric Mediterranean have been so analyzed.

⁷⁴ For discussion of the Viking Age silver hoards, see Section 7.2 and Section 7.3, subsections *The Russian rivers and the great East* and *The Baltic system between East and West* below.

⁷⁵ Navarro, "Prehistoric Routes," passim.

was the bronze of tin-rich northern Bohemia, the core area of the Únětice culture (Aunjetitz culture) of the early Bronze Age, that initially attracted the Jutish amber and set the Bronze Age trade currents in motion. Moreover, a type of spiral gold finger ring, made (presumably) of Transylvanian gold (Dacia, in the Roman-era sources), features frequently in Únětice graves and is found also in Jutland.⁷⁶ In other words, we have here three areas of concentrated settlement—Jutland, northern Bohemia, Transylvania—each with an internationally tradable product or resource not found in either of the others, linked in an archaeologically discernible pattern of exchange.

In the Hallstatt period, during the seventh century BC, Prussian or southeast Baltic amber joined the exchange systems.⁷⁷ Here, Navarro traces the route from the lower Vistula, overland crossing the Netze and Warthe rivers to Glogow on the Oder, and upstream to about Wrocław; south then over the Sudeten mountains on the Glatz pass, and down the Morava to the Danube. A Bronze Age fort at Braunsberg overlooks that confluence, just east of later Roman Carnuntum. Thence the main route swings south through Burgenland and Slovenia (Carniola, as Navarro puts it) to the Adriatic coast. The dearth of amber deposits in the Veneto indicates that this land way into Italy, crossed by many rivers, was not favored, and the amber traveled further by sea across to Picenum and other areas along Italy's eastern coast.⁷⁸ In general, as Navarro describes it, trade relations between parts of the Baltic, Württemberg, Austria, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, and other places during the Iron Age were becoming increasingly complex. Discerning Italians, for example, were importing high quality Prussian amber for themselves at the same time that they were exporting low-grade amber from the Apennines to the lake dwellers of western Switzerland.⁷⁹

Communications over mountains and rivers

The increase in complexity of exchange in the Temperate European Iron Age will be addressed in greater detail in the subsequent section. Navarro's description of the routes

⁷⁶ Navarro, "Prehistoric Routes," 483 – 6.

⁷⁷ Both Jutish and Prussian amber chemically is characterized as *succinite*. It is distinguishable from amber originating in other regions, such as Sicilian *simetite*, for example. Navarro, "Prehistoric Routes," 481 – 2.

⁷⁸ Navarro, "Prehistoric Routes," 497 – 9.

⁷⁹ Navarro, "Prehistoric Routes," 501 – 2.

taken by the amber trade, however, can be analyzed to reveal several important considerations about the manner in which geography channels communications—both in the specific case of Central Europe between the Baltic and the Mediterranean and more generally.

Geologically young, high and sharp mountain ranges such as the Alps almost always serve as barriers rather than avenues;⁸⁰ paths through such ranges follow gorges formed by glacial action and steeply falling rivers up to a passable notch or saddle through to a similar river gorge on the other side.⁸¹ The Alps as a whole have up to a dozen or so major passes of this kind, which connect the watersheds of the upper Danube, Rhine, and Rhône with the valleys formed by the tributaries of the Po from the southern side. Traverses are complicated by the circumstance that the Alps form multiple parallel ranges, with major watercourses more often trending the same way as these ranges rather than cutting through them. As a consequence, human travelers seeking a short route across the mountains frequently have to surmount a series of passes rather than only one.

Mentioned by Navarro in connection with the amber trade, in the early medieval period, the Brenner Pass (1,374 m) was the easternmost of the passes in regular use between Carolingian Temperate Europe and northern Italy. It connected Verona on the Adige from the Italian side over the main range of the Alps in that sector with Innsbruck in the middle Inn valley. From there, travelers wishing to proceed directly to Augsburg, Swabia, and the upper Rhine had to overcome additional transverse ridges. Eastwards from the Brenner, the altitudes of the passes tend to diminish, but the number of ridges to be traversed also tends to multiply. Westwards of the Brenner, the passes increase significantly in height, culminating with the Great St. Bernard (2,469 m) that connects the Val d'Aosta over the Pennine Alps with the upper Rhone. From the northern side, the uppermost Rhine has the distinction of being the only watercourse from the northern side that cuts a broad corridor through all of the parallel ridges until it reaches the main range

⁸⁰ Cf. the Himalayas, roughly coeval with the Alps. The Italian “microcontinent” vis-à-vis the terranes of Europe to its north is closely analogous with the encounter between the Indo-Australian plate and Eurasia, except that the scale is much larger (along all dimensions) in the latter case.

⁸¹ See Ludwig Pauli, *The Alps: Archaeology and Early History*, trans. Eric Peters (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 193 – 6, for a descriptive overview. Pauli observes that the upper river gorges were very difficult to traverse, more so than the passes themselves.

of the Leopontine and Rhaetian Alps, which separate it from the valleys leading down to Lake Maggiore and Lake Como on the Italian side. Of the multiple passes in this sector, most important were the Julier (2,284 m), Septimer (2,310 m), and Splügen (2,113 m) passes. The Romans developed the former two passes into a wagon road over the mountains while the latter served as a major pack trail.⁸² They saw intensive use again in the early medieval period. The westernmost set of passes out of Turin in the upper Po watershed lead to Provence and the Rhone valley. In no sense impassable, the Alps nevertheless provide definitely limited thoroughfares.⁸³

One wishing to go from the Mediterranean north into Temperate Europe might bypass the Alps entirely. To the west are the Aude-Garonne route to the Atlantic coast of Gaul and, even more significantly, the Rhône-Saône corridor that reaches towards both the Seine and the Rhine watersheds.⁸⁴ To the east, the Alps can be circumvented via the Ljubljana Gap—through Slovenia, Carinthia, and Burgenland to Carnuntum on the Danube and hence upstream into southern Germany, northwestwards to Bohemia and the Elbe country beyond, or across Moravia into Poland.⁸⁵

The Iron Age amber route follows the latter track. Unlike the early Bronze Age amber route between Jutland and Bohemia, which appears to follow the Elbe, for most of its distance the Iron Age route from the southeast corner of the Baltic to the head of the Adriatic cannot be identified with any watercourse; rather, it cuts across several notable

⁸² Reinhold Kaiser, *Churrätien im frühen Mittelalter, Ende 5. bis Mitte 10. Jahrhundert* (Basel: Schwabe, 1998), 176 – 7; see also the excellent detailed map of the Chur region and its passes (p. 174 Karte 20) and the less detailed but broader picture of Roman trans-Alpine highways between northeastern Switzerland and Salzburg (p. 21 Karte 3). For a study of this area and its transport routes in the imperial Roman period, see B. Overbeck, *Geschichte des Alpenrheintals in römischer Zeit auf Grund der archäologischen Zeugnisse. 1. Topographie, Fundvorlage und historische Auswertung* (Munich: Beck, 1982).

⁸³ This fact was appreciated by Carolingian administrators when they erected a series of toll and control points at these passes—the *clusae*, to be discussed in greater detail below; see Section 6.3, subsection *The Alps and the clusae*. On Alpine travel in the prehistoric and Roman eras see also the essays collected in D. van Berchem, *Les Routes et l'histoire: Études sur les Helvètes et leurs voisins dans l'empire romain* (Geneva: Droz, 1982).

⁸⁴ This point is made quite clearly at the outset in Barry Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction* (New York: Methuen, 1988), 8 – 9; the topography of the southern littoral of Gaul and its connections inland is described in more detail on pp. 38 – 40 and map fig. 16. Much more on the Rhone corridor and its role in exchange patterns will be said in subsections *Transalpine trade: Greeks* and *Transalpine trade: Romans* below.

⁸⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 369 – 76, describes this route in some detail while tracing the locations of finds of early medieval coin in the region between the head of the Adriatic and Moravia.

streams, including the Netze, the Warthe, the Danube, the Drava, and the Sava. Even where it might be thought that a river course would offer an easier passage, as in the case of the upper Oder, the actual route rejects this apparently ideal passage around the Sudeten range and strikes much more directly over the mountains from Wrocław to the upper Morava.⁸⁶ Since we may assume that the people who traveled here would have discovered and employed the most efficient available course for their needs, the layout of the route bears further analysis.

Nothing is simpler than to unfold a modern relief map and to trace ideal “trade routes” along blue-inked river lines. In many cases, however, the apparent advantages of such avenues of transport may prove to be illusory when tested against real conditions—especially, conditions prior to the modern age. In most cases, the dredged channels and leveed and manicured banks of today’s rivers bear little resemblance to what these waterways looked like in pre-modern periods.⁸⁷ A perfect example of this caveat are the rivers that cross Poland and northeastern Germany. On the wooded and swampy North European Plain, even large rivers such as the Elbe tend to be shallow and braided, with swampy banks.⁸⁸ On a map, there plainly are numerous close approaches between navigable rivers that could carry a traveler from the Elbe up the Havel, across to the Oder, up the Warta and Netze to the Vistula, to the Bug, to the Pripyet and the Dniepr and so on. On closer inspection, many of these apparent linkages are impracticable.

Shifting, silt-clogged channels are only one potential hazard. In places where “still waters run deep,” as the saying goes, trees fallen into a watercourse may block smaller rivers and even result in barrage-like accumulations; this, apparently, was the case with the Netze (Notec) in north central Poland. Here rocks and fallen timbers not only formed an impassable barrier on the river channel but added to the broad expanse of marshlands surrounding it. The country between the Oder and the Vistula in its pre-modern, unreclaimed state was extraordinarily swampy, in general. In most places, river

⁸⁶ This analysis refers to Navarro, “Prehistoric Routes,” map on p. 485

⁸⁷ Some idea of pre-modern conditions and the behavior of wild rivers can be gained from spending time on undeveloped stretches of waterway, where such still exist, both in non-motorized craft on the river itself (canoes, kayaks) and on foot along its banks and terraces.

⁸⁸ See Raimund Ernst, *Die Nordwestslaven und das fränkische Reich: Beobachtungen zur Geschichte ihrer Nachbarschaft und zur Elbe als nordöstlicher Reichsgrenze bis in die Zeit Karls des Großen* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1976), 52, 54 – 5, 57.

channels were, in fact, inaccessible from landward due to this reason, which further reduced their utility as avenues of transport.⁸⁹ In short, the Iron Age amber trail across Poland was following one of only a limited number of practicable routes threading between morasses and crossing rivers at places where the banks were not swamped and inaccessible.

Rivers with deep and strong currents and well-defined, accessible banks may present a different set of impediments to travel. The Rhine, swift and broad, allows no accumulations of silt and debris to block passage. Here the limiting factor is the strength of the current, which works to the advantage of anybody traveling downstream but makes the return journey upstream extremely difficult. According to contemporary sources, Frisian merchants heading up the Rhine in the ninth century used gangs of slaves walking on the riverbank to tow their craft against this current.⁹⁰ The Romans developed considerable traffic up and down the Rhine when the river formed a part of their military frontier, using rowers.⁹¹ However, while the Romans may have had the resources and the manpower to ply the Rhine with watercraft employing large crews of rowers, it should not be assumed that this procedure will be equally appropriate or economical for all other users of this same waterway. Thus, even a river free of obstacles and with accessible banks may prove daunting for travel.

Movement of people and goods even along likely-seeming waterways should never be assumed; it must be demonstrated. There may have been boat traffic on the middle Elbe in the Bronze Age, but one cannot assert this without some positive evidence. Boats there certainly were, in Temperate Europe, from the Mesolithic

⁸⁹ J. N. von Sadowski, *Die Handelsstrassen der Griechen und Römer durch das Flussgebiet der Oder, Weichsel, des Dniepr und Niemen an die Gestade des Baltischen Meeres*, trans. and intr. Albin Kohn (Amsterdam: Meridian Publishing Co., 1963), 1 – 28.

⁹⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 654 and n. 64. McCormick states here that the journey upstream from Rotterdam to Strasbourg took ten to eleven weeks, while boatmen moving downstream could make up to 100 km per day.

⁹¹ Five military ships of third- to fourth-century date were recovered from the Rhine at Mainz in 1981/82 and are conserved at *The Museum of Ancient Shipping* in Mainz, Germany. They are up to 21 meters long and feature rows of oars on both sides. See the brief description of these finds in Ronald Bockius, “Antike Schiffsfunde in Deutschland,” in *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2002), 241.

onwards.⁹² Nevertheless, travelers, even when carrying loads of amber or bronze, may have elected to pack such things on their backs or onto a beast of burden rather than into a canoe or some other craft. In many cases, river valleys served as preferred corridors even in relatively low lying areas. So, for example, was the valley of the Lippe, leading due eastwards from the lower Rhine towards the middle Weser, and thence by various land routes either northwards into (Lower) Saxony or eastwards into Thuringia. An old fashioned map of Germany with splash contours can suggest the general way in which the terrain of the “hilly uplands” zone might channel transit in this region.⁹³

Nevertheless, here as with the question of waterborne travel, assumptions about preferred routes cannot be made dogmatically so as always to favor river valleys as opposed to the higher ground in between. We already saw, above, that the amber route crossed a mountain range (Sudeten Mts.) rather than follow the valley of the upper Oder.

Generally, the choice will depend on which option presents the fewest difficulties,⁹⁴ and this in turn will depend on the geologic particulars of each locality. Smooth river floodplains or terraces will be preferred where the surrounding high ground is broken into peaks and ridges. The opposite will be the case where the high ground is relatively smooth but the watercourses run in convoluted ravines.⁹⁵

3.3 Local Development and Mediterranean Contacts

The previous section will have demonstrated that exchange patterns involving the transfer of considerable quantities and value of tangible goods were established within central and northern Europe in the Neolithic and the Bronze Age. These exchange patterns depended, ultimately, on the environmentally determined occurrence of products and

⁹² A dugout 9.5 m long has been recovered from Tybrind Vig, a site from Mesolithic Denmark; Steven J. Mithen, “The Mesolithic Age,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Prehistoric Europe*, ed. Barry Cunliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 105 – 6.

⁹³ A pertinent example is Louis Halphen, *Études critiques sur l’histoire de Charlemagne* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1921), map insert following p. 144, which illustrates the entire northwestern quadrant of Germany in this graphic style. Preferred military lines of march and merchants’ itineraries often coincide.

⁹⁴ Possibly, there is a kind of cost-benefit calculus that weighs difficulty of passage against increased distance that would have to be traversed in order to avoid the difficulty.

⁹⁵ A good example of the latter is in northern Latvia. Here, the main overland route between Riga and Pskov has always run along the rolling, glacier-smoothed tableland in between the major watersheds. In particular, no road of importance follows the gorge of the Gauja, which snakes through the region. In this geologic situation, the smoothest ground is found farthest from the watercourses.

resources that could be traded—especially high-value items such as metals, amber, and furs but also more mundane resources such as seal fat or cattle. In addition, such inter-regional exchanges were channeled by the relative practicality of some land and water transport routes over others. However, the environmental and geographic patterning of production and distribution of exchangeable resources needs to be understood also in terms of the socio-political structures and regional cultural patterns within which the participants—both individuals and peoples—operated. That is to say, attention must be given both to the ongoing social, economic, and political developments in later Bronze Age and Iron Age Europe and to the broad regional interrelationships among the Baltic North, continental Temperate Europe, and the Mediterranean.

Slaves

For no branch of potential commerce is the evaluation of socio-political and cultural development more crucial than for the transfer of captives for purposes of coerced labor, i.e. a trade in slaves. Slavery is not an institution that occurs automatically in all times and places.⁹⁶ Moreover, unfreedom and rights-lessness—the conditions which, more than an application to drudgery, define the condition of a slave⁹⁷—are among the aspects of culture that are most difficult or impossible to demonstrate archaeologically.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ The crux of the matter is expressed thus by Marvin Harris: “Once the prisoner has been brought back to the village, the treatment he can expect is determined largely by the capacity of his hosts to absorb and regulate servile labor...”; *Cannibals and Kings: The Origins of Cultures* (New York: Random House, 1977), 104.

⁹⁷ Fundamental on the socio-cultural aspect of slavery is Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). See also Ruth M. Karras, *Slavery and Society in Medieval Scandinavia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 6 – 11, who postulates four defining aspects of slavery: (1) an inherent inequality in power relations in a number of spheres, with the slave at an absolute disadvantage in all of them vis-à-vis those defined as masters or slave-owners, (2) an absence of kin-group or other social support for the enslaved person, who is thereby an outsider, (3) the confiscation of the slave’s productivity by the owner, the latter disposing also of the slave’s upkeep and means of production, and (4) the inclusion of a recognition of slavery among the ideological constructs of the slave owning society.

⁹⁸ Heiko Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen in Mitteleuropa: eine Analyse der Auswertungsmethoden des archäologischen Quellenmaterials*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse 3. Folge, no. 128 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1982), 518.

An attempt to identify possible evidence for slavery and unfreedom in prehistoric Europe has been made, however, by D. Gronenborn.⁹⁹ Ethnography records many cases where a non-state society, sometimes even a pre-agricultural society, encompasses social practices that can be defined as slaveholding. Specifically, Gronenborn discusses the Northwest Coast Indians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Indians of the southeastern United States of the sixteenth century, the Iroquois, and the Maori. He also references the treatment of slaves in medieval and modern West Africa, particularly in regard to physical abuse and the disrespectful disposition of the mortal remains of slaves. In all cases, the existence of slavery in a society depends on the existence of social hierarchy—where the “free” comprise at least two distinct social layers—and on the exercise of violence, typically endemic inter-group conflict.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, in the more decentralized and economically less developed societies slavery/unfreedom is closely tied not only to warfare and the underscoring of hierarchical status-relationships but also to practices such as ritual cannibalism and human sacrifice, “besonders in nicht staatlichen Gesellschaften ohne entwickelte Marktwirtschaft, in denen Kriegsgefangene keine oder nur eine geringe ökonomische, sondern vielmehr eine symbolische Rolle spielten.”¹⁰¹ Thus, any culture that shows archaeological evidence of social hierarchization and warfare might be interpreted as a potentially slave-holding society.

Gronenborn advances such evidence for a number of settlement sites in central Europe all the way back to the early Neolithic, including the presence of earthworks, deliberate mutilation of bones and their disrespectful disposal, evidence of massacres, and other atrocities.¹⁰² As he himself points out, however, such evidence may be equivocal, and plenty of pre-state societies in the ethnographic record have *not* included forms of slave-holding. Moreover, for our purposes, the focus of Gronenborn’s discussion is somewhat off the point. Even if a class of unfree persons existed in various Neolithic and Bronze Age cultures across Temperate Europe under the terms which

⁹⁹ Detlef Gronenborn, “Zum (möglichen) Nachweis von Sklaven/Unfreien in prähistorischen Gesellschaften Mitteleuropas,” *Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift* 42 (2001): 1 – 42. Included is a thorough review of the relevant literature and an assessment of the *status questionis* as of 2001 (pp. 1 – 8).

¹⁰⁰ Gronenborn, “Nachweis von Sklaven/Unfreien,” 30.

¹⁰¹ Gronenborn, “Nachweis von Sklaven/Unfreien,” 28.

¹⁰² Gronenborn, “Nachweis von Sklaven/Unfreien,” 22 – 8.

Gronenberg has defined, and some number of these were exchanged among elite holders as prestige objects,¹⁰³ this still would amount to far less than a concerted long-distance slave trade that transferred significant quantities of labor from one region to another.

If parts of Bronze Age Temperate Europe were involved in such a trade, one might look for evidence of a number of “supply side” effects similar to those that emerged in West Africa in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, including “predatory states,” the displacement of target populations to more defensible positions, and the spread of trade and kidnapping networks preying on their own communities.¹⁰⁴ Alternatively, one could attempt to bring indirect evidence of a demand for slaves either in regions within Temperate Europe or areas accessible to it, such as parts of the Mediterranean. To postulate a long-distance slave trade from indirect evidence on the “demand side” would require a demonstration that (1) the society in question was culturally, socially, and economically organized in ways that would accommodate the employment of significant amounts of unfree labor and (2) the demand for such labor exceeded local supply. In the absence of verbal evidence, many of the elements in such patterns could be detected only by a thoroughgoing analysis of the demographic and settlement histories of the relevant regions. Such a synthesis has yet to be produced, however, not least because many phases of these histories are, as yet, poorly understood. Bronze Age Scandinavian elites may have been running slaves south (in addition to amber, furs, and other northern products), but we have no actual evidence of this.

Copper, tin, and bronze

It is different with the production and distribution of metals. Unlike slaves, copper and bronze are quite readily identifiable archaeologically both as to their sources (ores, mines) and as individual artifacts (weapons, tools, vessels, ornaments)—especially where the latter have been deliberately deposited, as in a grave assemblage. Moreover, investigation into the evolution and spread of metal-using technologies and their

¹⁰³ This is a possibility to which he returns frequently; Gronenborn, “Nachweis von Sklaven/Unfreien,” 11, 12, 21.

¹⁰⁴ For a summary of these phenomena, see Martin A. Klein, “The Slave Trade and Decentralized Societies,” *Journal of African History* 42 (2001): 49 – 65.

associated cultural changes offer a means of comparing overall trajectories of economic, social, and political development in various parts of Temperate Europe and the Mediterranean.

The comparability of Mediterranean and more northern societies is clearly demonstrated by the spread of metal-working technologies in these regions, as currently understood. Much of the present discussion stems from a seminal article by Colin Renfrew, in which he asserted that the development of metallurgy in southeastern Europe was autonomous from and in many ways farther advanced than that in the contemporary Near East.¹⁰⁵ Archaeological research suggests that smelting, a relatively advanced stage in the ability to work with metals, was achieved in southeastern Europe earlier than in the Near East or in the Mediterranean. By the mid-fifth millennium BC, “metalworkers there had far surpassed the quantity and quality of work being carried out in the Near East and Mesopotamia.”¹⁰⁶ Copper ore was dug from mines in Serbia (Rudna Glava) and Bulgaria (Ai Bunar) throughout the fifth millennium BC. By contrast, the earliest copper mining site in Italy thus far known, at Monte Loreto, Genoa province, dates to ca. 3500 BC, which post-dates mines in the Austrian Alps at Brixlegg (ca. 3800 BC, or even late fifth millennium). The excavators of Monte Loreto opine that copper mining and smelting technology likely spread into Liguria from the Alpine region.¹⁰⁷ In short, in terms of this crucial cultural development, no area of the Mediterranean had a clear edge on parts of inland Europe to the north through the fourth millennium BC. As Parkinson puts it, “by the fifth millennium B.C. copper production in Europe was more sophisticated than its

¹⁰⁵ Colin Renfrew, “The Autonomy of the South-east European Copper Age,” *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 35 (1969): 12 – 47. Renfrew identified five stages in the technical mastery over metals: (1) cold hammering and drilling beads of native copper, (2) annealing—the application of heat during the shaping process, (3) casting molten metal, (4) extracting metal from ores by smelting, and (5) alloying.

¹⁰⁶ William A. Parkinson, “Early Metallurgy in Southeastern Europe,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 321. While smelting copper ore requires less heat than melting native or pure copper (1,083° C), it also requires an oxygen-reduced atmosphere. Parkinson suggests that the technique of producing graphite-decorated pottery, whose firing requires a similar atmosphere, came to be applied to ore smelting (p. 319).

¹⁰⁷ Roberto Maggi and Mark Pearce, “Mid Fourth-millennium Copper Mining in Liguria, North-west Italy: The Earliest Known Copper Mines in Western Europe,” *Antiquity* 79 (2005): 66 – 77. The dates are based on calibrated radio-carbon analysis of charcoal samples from the mining sites.

Asian counterpart and dramatically influenced trade networks and socioeconomic organization.”¹⁰⁸

The diffusion of tin-bronze metallurgy continued to find parts of Temperate Europe in a position of leadership or parity with Mediterranean regions in certain aspects of economic development. The earliest examples of copper-tin alloy artifacts occur in the Near East ca. 3000 BC. However, “Bronze production on a significant scale first appeared in about 2400 B.C. in the Early Bronze Age central European Únětice culture.”¹⁰⁹ As noted above under the discussion of the amber trade routes, this Únětice culture (Aunjetitz), centered on Bohemia, was near one of the few tin sources in Europe—the Erzgebirge.

In general, quite aside from the connection with the Baltic and the amber trade, the growing demand for bronze or its constituent elements created throughout Bronze Age Europe a lively trade in these materials.¹¹⁰ The onset of a metal-using cultural complex in much of Europe around the turn of the second millennium BC has been summarized in a “Bronze Age Hypothesis” by Christopher Pare, the principle arguments in which are the following:

- (1) Bronze was fundamental both in economic production and social reproduction.
- (2) It was therefore essential for societies to obtain bronze (or copper and tin).
- (3) As the vast majority of societies did not have local supplies of copper and tin, they were obliged to participate in exchange networks, which linked them, directly or indirectly, with distant sources of metal.
- (4) Consequently, and compared with earlier periods, the Bronze Age was characterized by a massive increase in exchange.

¹⁰⁸ Parkinson, “Early Metallurgy in Southeastern Europe,” 318.

¹⁰⁹ Mark Pearce, “The Significance of Bronze,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 6. The study of the origins and diffusion of tin-bronze technology in Europe and the Near East is a field that has been experiencing frequent revisions, due especially to the development of new dating techniques for various materials related to the bronze industry. Cf. here the summary based on research conducted up to the late 1990s in Christopher Pare, “Bronze and the Bronze Age,” in *Metals Make the World Go Round: The Supply and Circulation of Metals in Bronze Age Europe*, ed. C. F. E. Pare (Oxford: Oxbow, 2000), 1 – 38.

¹¹⁰ Pearce, “Significance of Bronze,” 8 – 10. The widespread circulation in Europe of bronze or its constituent elements is emphasized also in Pare, “Bronze and the Bronze Age.”

(5) The exchange system lent itself to control by emerging elites, which tend to be more noticeable in the Bronze Age than in previous periods.¹¹¹

With that final point in the “hypothesis,” Pare steps into an unresolved controversy concerning the nature of Bronze Age economics, to wit: On what basis did the production and exchange networks increasingly visible in the European Bronze and Iron Ages operate? During the later Bronze and Iron Ages, roughly 1200 – 1 BC, economic activity in transalpine Temperate Europe became increasingly complex, with considerable investment into mining, manufacture, and commerce. This was true especially in the early Iron Age or Hallstatt period (800 – 400 BC), as extensive mining and distribution of iron and salt augmented the flow of resources in Europe. Two major alternative explanations have been advanced for these phenomena, which may be characterized as an entrepreneurial model on one side and an elite-dominance model on the other side.

The former viewpoint, well represented by Peter S. Wells in *Farms, Villages, and Cities*,¹¹² is important to the present study in several ways. First, it demonstrates how complex economic activity can arise under pre-state conditions; i.e., *not* under the direction, necessarily, of an overarching, hierarchically constituted political authority. Second, as Wells states,¹¹³ conditions in Iron Age central Europe were repeated farther north in the early medieval period and form, thus, a useful body of comparative material for commercial activity in the northern “world” in the Carolingian era.¹¹⁴ Third, Wells emphasizes the role of individual entrepreneurship in this economic development:

The changes that occurred in the final millennium before Christ can be understood in terms of the interplay between the basic subsistence economy and the much smaller but more dynamic economy of manufacturing and trade. The

¹¹¹ Pare, “Bronze and the Bronze Age,” 24.

¹¹² Peter S. Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities: Commerce and Urban Origins in Late Prehistoric Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

¹¹³ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 10, 193 – 200, 204.

¹¹⁴ On Scandinavia, see discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* and Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* below. For the idea of a linked series of “trading worlds,” see Section 6.1, subsection *The geographic outline of the exchange system*, with further amplification in Section 7.3 *passim*.

entrepreneurs who took advantage of new possibilities of commerce and industry played a major role in the cultural changes.¹¹⁵

This latter point directly concerns the understanding of economic activity in the Carolingian period. If individual enterprise in extending and maintaining trade contacts played a key role in the Iron Age, why should the same not have figured at a later date also? The existence of entrepreneurial commerce does not obviate other types of exchanges, such as elite gift-giving of luxuries and “socially determined exchanges” at more mundane levels. However, some utilitarian objects responded to supply-demand calculations, and the desire for novelties and luxuries could stimulate communities into greater productivity to satisfy such demand at a profit to themselves.¹¹⁶

Temperate Europe generally has soil and climate appropriate for dispersed small farming. Thus, the settlement pattern in this area was of individual farmsteads, hamlets of two to three such farmsteads, and some slightly larger villages of up to 50 – 100 people.¹¹⁷ This pattern of independent subsistence and potential for modest surplus production both retarded the development of hierarchical, authoritarian political systems in the area and gave scope to economic enterprise in rare commodities. In the late Bronze Age, glass beads were widely distributed among all types of settlements or their associated graves. Since glassworking was practiced only in a few places and the beads had no utilitarian value, we have here an archetypical luxury good, moreover one that many peasant households could afford to acquire.¹¹⁸ The beads represent evidence of surplus wealth as well as evidence of some system of production and widespread distribution. Textiles, by contrast, were produced for local consumption almost everywhere. Pottery also was produced locally. Here, however, an element of commerce

¹¹⁵ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 10.

¹¹⁶ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 23 – 5. The key is the *motivation* of people to work harder or longer than they otherwise might. Mobilization of peasant labor for greater productivity is a theme that has been widely pursued in the anthropological literature, but such mobilization usually is seen as a function of some manner of coercion exercised by a ruling elite. See Marvin Harris and Eric B. Ross, *Death, Sex, and Fertility: Population Regulation in Preindustrial and Developing Societies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 38 – 43, 73 – 5; also Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 24, for his take on this phenomenon in the early history of Rome. Wells is significant in that he proposes that motivation in Bronze Age Europe might have been achieved through more democratic means, i.e., through the operation of market forces.

¹¹⁷ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 17 – 18, 40 – 6.

¹¹⁸ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 56 – 7.

intervened in the form of graphite—a substance commonly used in the decoration of pots but which could be obtained only from a few, specific deposits. Thus, itinerant graphite traders may be surmised, who may also have transmitted knowledge of new techniques and styles over large territories.¹¹⁹

Most importantly, the 1200 – 800 BC period saw a significant increase in the circulation of bronze. Bronze was worked on virtually every settlement larger than a single farm by craftsmen who functioned primarily as peasants;¹²⁰ this situation was similar to that of potters. However, backpack-sized hoards of whole and scrap bronze suggest that the local bronze workers were in communication with professional bronze smiths-traders. Broken and worn out bronze tools would be traded for new ones or recast on the spot. In general, while most bronze was, thus, continually recycled and not discarded (a small proportion was deposited in graves), the increased quantities that were circulating had to stem from significantly expanded mining operations in those special areas where copper ore was obtainable. It has been estimated, for example, that some five- to six hundred miners worked at once in the deposits at Salzburg and some three- to four hundred similarly at the mines in Kitzbühel; the total mass of copper produced in Austria alone during this period may have amounted to 50,000 tons.¹²¹ As much of the metal was invested in agriculture in the form of sickles and other tools that made production more efficient, farmers could produce more surplus with which to pay for more metal (and, directly or indirectly, feed more miners), thus setting up a positive economic feedback loop.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 57 – 8.

¹²⁰ The re-melting of copper-tin alloy actually requires a lower temperature than the melting of pure copper, and there are fewer problems associated with bronze casting than with casting pure copper also; Vajk Szeverényi, “The Early and Middle Bronze Ages in Central Europe,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 24. Thus, unlike the smelting and alloying of copper and tin, which requires much greater technological mastery, the re-melting and shaping of already produced bronze is technologically straightforward, and remains associated with those activities are found widely distributed in Bronze Age settlements.

¹²¹ If distributed uniformly over the 400-year period in question, this would amount to 125 tons of copper per annum.

¹²² Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 50 – 2, 58 – 67. A high level of organization in these enterprises is indicated in that not only did food have to be procured for the hundreds of miners and smelters but also vast quantities of wood, needed both in the mine-pits and for the smelting processes. Szeverényi, “Early and Middle Bronze Ages in Central Europe,” 24.

If trade can be defined as “the peaceful exchange of goods,” then late Bronze Age Europe had it: not only glass beads, Baltic amber, and Mediterranean seashells were available as luxuries, but graphite and bronze moved in industrial supply networks, and other utilitarian goods (cattle, hides, wool) also appear to have been traded.¹²³ Importantly, most of this economic activity was circulating *within* the central European region itself, rather than responding to outside demand.¹²⁴

Salt and iron

The next step up in the economic development of Temperate Europe was the initiation of two further large-scale extractive industries. Though rock salt and iron had been available since at least 1000 BC, the opening of the salt mines at Hallstatt and the foundation of massive iron-producing centers in Slovenia such as Stična ca. 800 BC mark the beginning of the Iron Age.

In the case of Hallstatt, a producing mine would take up to five years to develop, and the techniques used in the earlier shafts were similar to those used in alpine copper mining. Therefore, it is thought that thriving copper miners in the region deliberately capitalized skill, labor, and other resources in order to start up a new industry at this time. From the evidence of graves, it seems that some two- to four hundred miners and their families worked the deposits down to ca. 400 BC, creating some 3,750 meters worth of galleries and extracting an estimated two million cubic meters of salt. The product was traded northwards down the Traun river and in all other directions by packhorse. In return, the miners were able to obtain a wide range of tools, weapons, and luxuries ranging from Baltic amber to African ivory. The distribution of grave goods suggests

¹²³ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 74 – 5.

¹²⁴ See, however, Szeverényi, “Early and Middle Bronze Ages in Central Europe,” 27 – 9, who sees central Europe in the Bronze Age as a “margin” for the “prehistoric world system” focused on the Near East “core.” The discussion of the European Bronze Age economy in the context of a world-system goes back to Andrew Sherratt, “What Would a Bronze-Age World System Look Like? Relations between Temperate Europe and the Mediterranean in Later Prehistory,” *Journal of European Archaeology* 1, no. 2 (1993): 1 – 57. A reversed cause-effect relationship would be the case according to Susan Sherratt, “Circulation of Metals and the End of the Bronze Age in the Eastern Mediterranean,” in *Metals Make the World Go Round: The Supply and Circulation of Metals in Bronze Age Europe*, ed. C. F. E. Pare (Oxford: Oxbow, 2000), 82 – 95, in which she considers that the availability of massive quantities of scrap bronze in the Aegean in the late second millennium BC—much of it flowing to the Eastern Mediterranean from central Europe via Italy—contributed to the destabilization of the earlier Bronze Age kingdoms of the region.

that wealth was shared fairly evenly among the members of the community; there is no evidence of slaves or other exploited labor. Meanwhile, the introduction of large quantities of salt into the economy of Temperate Europe facilitated meat preservation, which benefited both primary food producers and others such as travelers, craftsmen, and miners.¹²⁵

Similarly, centers such as Stična (Slovenia) began to produce massive amounts of iron. Here, a community in a rich agricultural area began to exploit equally rich iron ore deposits and to export the product to iron-poor areas. The graves of Stična include many items of bronze and iron manufacture, exotic pottery, and Baltic amber, showing the prosperity of the population.¹²⁶ Wells evaluates the formation of production centers such as Hallstatt and Stična thusly:

The commercial enterprises were begun by individuals who perceived the possibilities of gain in the industrial production of salt and iron and who had at their disposal the wealth with which to finance the initial stages of extraction. These entrepreneurs were motivated by the desire to acquire additional wealth in the form of the wide range of luxury goods then in circulation—such as fine bronze objects as ornate cauldrons and helmets, gold jewelry, and ornaments of amber, glass, and ivory—as well as the security, status and power that accompanies wealth.¹²⁷

Given the volume of materials involved, the breadth of distribution of raw and finished materials, and the apparent distribution of the rewards of production, one could conclude that most of the activity represented in the exchange networks of the late Bronze and Iron Age in Temperate Europe was based on economic or “commercial” considerations rather than following prescribed social or ritual forms of behavior.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 81 – 9.

¹²⁶ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 89 – 97.

¹²⁷ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 98.

¹²⁸For the Aegean region of the late Bronze Age, Susan Sherratt also speaks of “alternative networks: the erosion of monopolistic control by entrepreneurial activity, uniting European ‘barbarians’ and eastern Mediterranean ‘free traders’ in a mobile commodity flow which undermined and swept away the earlier system.” Susan Sherratt, “End of the Bronze Age,” 89. See also Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* below for a discussion of the ways in which the availability of exotic materials and objects may transform a pre-existing system of more limited, local exchange. The social purposes of the acquisition of wealth may remain substantially unchanged, but the society becomes more entrepreneurial in

Elite mobilization vs. entrepreneurship

Against this “entrepreneurial” interpretation of the archaeological record stand models, which focus explanations of exchange and economic development on non-commercial motivations, such as gift-giving, especially where such exchanges are controlled or directed by elites. Wells at the outset defines trade, mining, and manufacture—in a word, all activities not directly tied to subsistence—as commercial.¹²⁹ For this he has been criticized as sounding like a Wall Street booster and for ignoring most aspects of the “political and social context within which the commercial centers existed.”¹³⁰ Likewise, Klavs Randsborg complains (gently) that Wells has passed up opportunities to address “consideration of social hierarchies and of contacts between princes and magnates” as well as non-commercial aspects of economic development, especially in the very brief discussion of the Early Medieval period that closes out the book.¹³¹

The “political and social context” and the “social hierarchies” to which these reviewers allude is, of course, the broadly recognized phenomenon of the emergence of much greater differentials in wealth and, presumably, status in Bronze Age Europe than what was seen in the Neolithic, and the continuation of these processes of social differentiation into the Iron Age. Examples of the dominance of this focus are ubiquitous. In his introduction to “Part 5: Masters of Metal, 3000 – 1000 B.C.” of the *Encyclopedia of the Barbarian World*, Peter Bogucki emphasizes the “pronounced and sustained differences in status, power, and wealth” that accompanied the rise of bronze-using societies. These relationships, as exemplified in the many excavated burial mounds of the period, point to a society divided into elite and commoners, in which the chiefs had control over farmers, herders, and craftsmen and over the accumulation, redistribution, and display of wealth—especially, wealth in bronze objects.¹³² In the same volume, Mark Pearce introduces a question as to whether “the metals trade caused the emergence

order to maintain and increase access to the new value-bearing materials or objects, which over time may become the preferred means of building social capital and so further entrench the entrepreneurial element.

¹²⁹ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 8.

¹³⁰ Janet E. Levy, review of *Farms Villages, and Cities: Commerce and Urban Origins in Late Prehistoric Europe* by Peter S. Wells, *American Anthropologist* 88 (1986): 721.

¹³¹ Klavs Randsborg, review of *Farms Villages, and Cities: Commerce and Urban Origins in Late Prehistoric Europe* by Peter S. Wells, *Science* new series 228 (10 May 1985): 713.

¹³² Peter Bogucki, “Introduction,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 3, 5.

of elites or whether, conversely, their emergence favored the development of metallurgy.” In either case, there were synergetic effects between the two, and bronze appears to have been a vehicle for accelerating the emergence of elites and for securing their dominance.¹³³ An elite-focused analysis of the development of Bronze Age economy and society dominates also in one of the most recent syntheses on the topic, by Kristiansen and Larsson.¹³⁴ Majority thinking about development in the European Iron Age has run along similar lines. Thus also Wells more recently, in the context of discussion of a “rich grave” of ca. 550 BC at Hochdorf, states:

Current interpretations consider individuals buried under large mounds, in elaborate wooden chambers with abundant gold, feasting equipment, and links with the Mediterranean societies as chieftains in societies in which ranking was important to the economic and social functioning of communities.¹³⁵

How might “ranking” and elite dominance manifest itself, concretely, in the economic life of the Bronze Age? One way to map such influence would be to note the placement of elite centers in relation to metal sources, craft production centers, areas of agricultural production, and to the routes by which these are connected. One such pattern has been noted in the location of a number of forts, interpreted as elite centers, that appear to have been placed where they could best control the traffic in ore and metal issuing from specific Alpine mountain valleys.¹³⁶ The issue of “control” is, however, problematical: in what guise was it exercised? i.e., what was the relationship between the possessors of the fort and the miners and metalworkers up the valley? Clearly, a range of possibilities may be imagined. At one end of the spectrum, the relationship might be predatory: the fort is a base from which to plunder the traffic moving to and fro between the valley and the outside world, but the occupants of the fort stand in no recognized customary relationship with the miners or the traffickers. At the other end of the spectrum, the

¹³³ Pearce, “Significance of Bronze,” 10, 11.

¹³⁴ Kristian Kristiansen and Thomas B. Larsson, *The Rise of Bronze Age Society: Travels, Transmissions and Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹³⁵ Peter S. Wells, “Hochdorf,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 80.

¹³⁶ Stefan Winghart, “Die Eliten der mittleren und späten Bronzezeit: Grundlagen, Entstehung und Vorstellungswelt,” in *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2002), 174 Abb. 2, where the locations of eleven such places are shown along the north edge of the Bavarian Alps between the Lech and the Salzach.

purpose of the fort might be cooperative: the occupants of the fort ward off attacks or encroachments on the resource areas and the traffic, for which either the miners or the travelers or both pay agreed-upon tolls or taxes. In between lie various grades of dependent relationship, in which through some combination of custom and coercion the elite in the fort exact a tribute from the miners/traders, perhaps even to the extent of having reduced the miners to the status of slaves. The mere placement of an elite center in proximity to a metal-producing area does not allow us to distinguish between these possibilities.¹³⁷

The ambiguity in the relationship between the socio-political structures of Bronze and Iron Age Europe and its economic processes is not resolved by an attempt to include both under one overarching definition, as does Wells in *Farms, Villages, and Cities*:

The best way to understand the economic and social changes in late prehistoric Europe is to view the cultural landscape as dispersed and decentralized and any divergences from that pattern as the result of specific efforts on the part of individuals to gain wealth through one or another form of entrepreneurial behavior, either commerce in the usual sense or warfare or perhaps clientship.¹³⁸

The strength of Wells' thesis lies in the way that it consistently foregrounds considerations of economic organization and motivation and is not distracted by preconceived ideas about the embeddedness of economic activity in "primitive" societies. The attempt to unify all varieties of wealth-gathering under the aegis of "entrepreneurship," however, raises important theoretical questions. Specifically, in identifying as "entrepreneurial" the spirit involved in raiding and plunder as a means to wealth and power, Wells appears to be following Grierson and Duby¹³⁹ and anticipating

¹³⁷ A more detailed discussion concerning the interrelationship of the mining areas, forts, and certain bronze-rich settlements further north on the Danubian plains is in Stephan Winghart, "Mining, Processing and Distribution of Bronze: Reflections on the Organization of Metal Supply between the Northern Alps and the Danube Region," in *Metals Make the World Go Round: The Supply and Circulation of Metals in Bronze Age Europe*, ed. C. F. E. Pare (Oxford: Oxbow, 2000), 151 – 9. Winghart stops short of making sweeping socio-political conclusions from these relationships, however.

¹³⁸ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 35.

¹³⁹ Philip Grierson, "Commerce in the Dark Ages: A Critique of the Evidence," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (5th Series)* 9 (1959): 123 – 40, who introduced the idea that most goods in early medieval Europe did *not* move on the basis of trade; and Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, trans. Howard B. Clarke

Reuter's characterization of the Carolingian state.¹⁴⁰ But the idea of a plunder economy is only workable under certain caveats. In one sense, raiding must be the very opposite of peaceful economic exchange, for, logically, as the certainty of being plundered increases the motivation to produce a plunderable surplus ought to decrease proportionally. Furthermore, even where the possibility of recouping losses through counter-raiding is present, time spent attacking and defending plus wear and tear on resources in the process must represent a net loss of material assets. Therefore, a predatory system should work best where one party consistently can be the robber rather than the robbed and either find ever new "prey" or can manage its predations in such a way as to maintain a sustainable return from the same victim.¹⁴¹ A further step in the latter direction would be the transition from "hunter" to "herder," i.e., to set up a stable state system in which sustainable levels of taxation replace undisguised robbery.¹⁴²

The evidence does appear to confirm the existence of an elite stratum in Bronze and Iron Age European society and a growing degree of endemic warfare,¹⁴³ both in turn coexisting with a significant and growing level of production and distribution of material goods and resources. As outlined above, the economic upswing of the late Bronze Age depended upon a feedback relationship between increased bronze production and greater efficiency and motivation on the part of peasant producers. The key in this system,

(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), who saw warfare or its curtailment as instrumental at several turns of the development of the early medieval economy. See discussion in Section 2.2 above.

¹⁴⁰ Timothy Reuter, "Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th series 35 (1985): 75 – 94.

¹⁴¹ One is reminded here of the contrast between the recurrent boom-and-bust cycle of the lynx and the hare as compared with the more judicious management of prey populations exercised by wolf packs.

¹⁴² The inspiration for these observations comes from several sources. One very explicit treatment of human political-economies in terms of predator-prey relationships is the thesis of *macro-parasitism* developed in William McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 5 – 13. Similar ideas occur in the works of Marvin Harris, for example in *Cannibals and Kings*, 69 – 82; also, again, Harris and Ross, *Death, Sex, and Fertility*, 38 – 43, 73 – 5. A classic instance of the theme appears in the discussion of the Ottoman state in Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (abridged) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 172 – 8. Cf. also Saint Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 4.4: *Remota itaque iustitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia? quia et latrocinia quid sunt nisi parva regna?*

¹⁴³ Walled hilltops suggest a necessity for defense, and the frequency of settlement-wide burn layers in lowland locations in the late Bronze Age suggest the effects of aggressive action. Furthermore, at least 25 percent of graves contain some bronze objects, among which frequently are spearheads and swords, suggesting that much of the society was armed. A few exceptionally rich graves, containing luxury ornaments, more impressive weaponry, and ritual war gear made of rare hammered sheet bronze suggest that some individuals claimed political leadership positions. Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 46, 55, 67, 71, and 75 – 6.

according to Wells, was the activity of itinerant bronze traders-smiths, who distributed new and recycled old metal, fashioned or helped fashion objects of everyday use, produced exceptional objects on commission, and spread knowledge of styles and techniques.¹⁴⁴ One way or another, if the system was to work, these traders-smiths had to enjoy some degree of immunity from the endemic violence otherwise indicated in that society. At first glance, a single backpacking individual abroad on the trails between settlements might be among the first targets of “entrepreneurial” robbery. The burial of backpack-sized loads of bronze suggests that such robbery was a real concern.¹⁴⁵

Several solutions offer themselves. First, it is very difficult to calculate the exact degree of danger—the likelihood of meeting with would-be despoilers; the risks may have been at a level deemed acceptable relative to the potential gains. Second, it is most likely that the itinerant traders-smiths themselves were well armed and able to defend themselves against all but the most potent brigands. The degree of invulnerability would increase, of course, if we postulate that such persons may have traveled with one or more assistants or peers; in such a case, only the largest “armies” of the time would have posed a serious threat.¹⁴⁶ Third, the traders-smiths might well have enjoyed culturally constructed protections against molestation. The possibilities are manifold, including considerations of honor (beneath the dignity of an elite warrior to engage with a peddler), of hospitality, and of culturally encoded utility—taboos against harming persons perceived as playing a specialized role important to the society as a whole. In fact, graves that include assemblages of anvils, awls, bronze ingots, and the like, thought to be smith’s graves, frequently are also of above-average wealth in other objects, suggesting that some traders-smiths at least were of relatively high status; such graves are never of the highest rank, however.¹⁴⁷ Accordingly, we may hypothesize a profile for the late

¹⁴⁴ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 67 – 71.

¹⁴⁵ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 60 –4 for the composition of such hoards. “Much of the trading activity was probably carried on by merchants traveling on foot with their goods packed on their backs. The size of many of the bronze hoards corresponds closely to the amount of metal a person can carry” (p. 75).

¹⁴⁶ Cf. the argument advanced by Pirenne regarding the behavior of a re-emergent merchant class in tenth- and eleventh-century medieval Europe. Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade*, trans. Frank D. Halsey (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 123 – 5.

¹⁴⁷ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 68, for smiths’ graves.

Bronze-Age trader-smith that includes not only special skills, access to special materials, and entrepreneurial spirit but also readiness to physically defend himself and endowment with certain cultural intangibles such as special status and immunities. In essentials, this figure is a fair prototype of the privileged merchant of the Carolingian age.

A model exists, therefore, for an “entrepreneurial” interpretation for much of the evident economic development in later Bronze Age and early Iron Age Europe. The model should exclude from its definition activities such as tribute-gathering and raiding which, though they may lead to wealth accumulation, are inherently non-productive and thus overly broaden the concept. Iron deposits are much more broadly distributed across Europe than copper and tin, and once the technology for producing it became generally known most communities could make their own.¹⁴⁸ This together with the fact that iron tools were even more effective in essential tasks (clearing land, building, reaping) than were bronze meant another increase in the efficiency of all types of production in Temperate Europe, from basic agricultural work to more sophisticated industries. Conditions in Temperate Europe in the early Iron Age (Hallstatt period, 800 – 400 BC) resembled those of the late Bronze Age in terms of social organization and levels of endemic violence. The main difference was in the upsurge of industrial production, which now included large quantities of salt and iron (for tools and weapons) in addition to the continued use of bronze for ornaments and vessels. If iron production and blacksmithing became increasingly widespread and localized over the centuries, the salt-peddlers and bronze traders-smiths would still have had to move their wares from the few sites of primary production along far-flung distribution networks. Meanwhile, according to Wells’ model, in production centers such as Hallstatt (for salt) and Stična (iron) the work would not have been carried on coercively, under the aegis of a politically dominant

¹⁴⁸ Henriette Lyngstrøm, “Farmers, Smelters and Smiths: Relations between Production, Consumption and Distribution of Iron in Denmark, 500 BC – AD 1500,” in *Prehistoric and Medieval Direct Iron Smelting in Scandinavia and Europe: Aspects of Technology and Society*, ed. Lars Christian Nørbach (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2003), 21 – 5, outlines this development for Denmark, parallels to which are to be found in other parts of Europe also. Indeed, the transition to iron technology for tools and weapons seems to have happened spontaneously in widely scattered areas of Europe, and often earlier than generally supposed. Eva Hjärthner-Holdar and Christina Risberg, “The Introduction of Iron in Sweden and Greece,” in *Prehistoric and Medieval Direct Iron Smelting in Scandinavia and Europe: Aspects of Technology and Society*, ed. Lars Christian Nørbach (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2003), 83 – 6.

elite, but cooperatively, under the leadership of “entrepreneurs” for the sake of mutual prosperity.¹⁴⁹

Nevertheless, mobilization by elites of the resources of a society has been a basic theme in anthropology for some time,¹⁵⁰ and the growth of centers in Bronze and Iron Age Europe—rich burials, fortified places—that could be regarded as the product of such elite co-optation of a society’s resources has spurred the proliferation of elite-dominance models for explaining the economic relations in these periods. As with the example of the placement of (presumably) elite-occupied forts in relation to metal-producing Alpine vales, however, the exact mechanism through which elite-dominance or elite-mobilization might have been exercised often remains undemonstrated. Appropriate here is the critique of Kristiansen and Larsson’s *Rise of Bronze Age Society* in a review article by Anthony Harding, in which Harding castigates the authors for uncritical and one-sided use of evidence to substantiate their claim that the explanation for most Bronze Age phenomena is diffusion of ideas and techniques (within a *world systems* framework) through the agency of elite travelers.¹⁵¹

More far-reaching yet is the critique of elite-dominance models advanced in Marc Vander Linden’s reassessment of the Corded Ware and Bell Beaker cultures of the third millennium BC.¹⁵² Vander Linden stresses that there is little or no actual evidence for hierarchization, neither among the various subregions where these cultures were manifest, nor within the individual communities that made up the broader culture areas. The maintenance of a high degree of cultural conformity over broad areas of Europe in these two cases “requires that all groups involved explicitly agree to exchange

¹⁴⁹ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 85 –7, 89 – 94, 98 – 9. This point about entrepreneurial leadership appears to have been misunderstood in J. D. Muhly, review of *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, by Peter S. Wells, *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1170. Muhly concludes that the notion of shared profitability in enterprise is incompatible with the proposition of entrepreneurial wealth accumulation, so that if the grave goods at Hallstatt and Stična indicate a relatively even distribution of wealth then said entrepreneurs must have lived somewhere else! But this is an overly narrow view of entrepreneurship, derived from the stock image of the fat-cat financier, perhaps.

¹⁵⁰ Elite mobilization of societal resources was proposed as a type of economic or exchange activity in N. Smelser, “A Comparative View of Exchange Systems,” *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 7 (1959): 173 – 82.

¹⁵¹ Anthony Harding, “Facts and Fantasies from the Bronze Age,” *Antiquity* 80 (2006): 463 – 5.

¹⁵² Marc Vander Linden, “For Equalities are Plural: Reassessing the Social in Europe during the Third Millennium BC,” *World Archaeology* 39, no. 2 (2007): 177 – 93.

information, practices or people,”¹⁵³ but the interactions need not have been dominated by elite individuals. Admittedly, there is much more evidence for hierarchical relationships both within and among communities in the Bronze and Iron Ages than in the Neolithic. Nevertheless, in the later periods also there is room to consider the agency of non-elite persons and non-elite oriented processes in the social, cultural, and economic development of Europe—such as the activities of enterprising producers and traders.

Beginnings of Mediterranean dominance

From about 600 BC onwards, the discussion of economic development and exchange systems in Temperate Europe is complicated by a significant and sustained change in the frequency and intensity of contacts with the Mediterranean world. Important innovations such as the knowledge of agricultural techniques (in the sixth millennium BC) and of copper-tin alloying (third millennium BC) had come in from outside, and some trade circuits, such as that in Baltic amber, reached outside the world of Temperate Europe.¹⁵⁴ What changed around the middle of the Hallstatt period was not only the frequency and intensity of the contacts but also the character of these contacts. Whereas relations between the two regions hitherto had not markedly favored one side or another, the seventh and sixth centuries BC saw rapid urbanization and state formation in the central Mediterranean, whereby exchanges with transalpine Temperate Europe began to acquire the characteristics of a colonial or center-periphery relationship.¹⁵⁵

Italy in the Bronze Age was undergoing a series of developments that largely paralleled those occurring in Temperate Europe, with growing numbers of settlements, fortified places, expanding agriculture, and bronze metalworking.¹⁵⁶ A possible divergence in the two trajectories may be the observation that settlement size in Italy

¹⁵³ Vander Linden, “For Equalities are Plural,” 187.

¹⁵⁴ Not considered here are possible influences from the steppe region to the east of Temperate Europe. Gimbutas postulated a very heavy influence in the fourth and third millennia BC from that direction, especially in linguistic and cultural terms; her views are conveniently summarized in Marija Gimbutas, *Die Ethnogenese der europäischen Indogermanen*, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft / Vorträge und kleinere Schriften 54 (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1992).

¹⁵⁵ See the collection of essays in Robin Osborne and Barry Cunliffe, eds., *Mediterranean Urbanization 800 – 600 BC* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁵⁶ For a brief survey see Mark Pearce, “The Italian Bronze Age,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 34 – 42.

during the course of the second millennium BC was tending to outstrip that of the more scattered habitation pattern in central Europe: villages of one hundred inhabitants or more were becoming normal in Italy while still comparatively rare in the north. In the Iron Age (beginning ca. 900 BC in Italy), villages in Etruria and Latium had populations of up to one thousand, and that appears to have been one of the circumstances that led to accelerating urbanization and state formation in Italy during the Orientalizing (700 – 575 BC) and Italian Archaic (575 – 450 BC) periods that followed, including also the beginnings of a high-value agriculture focusing on olive groves and vineyards similar to areas in Greece such as Attica.¹⁵⁷ While there was during these periods a great influx of Greek artifacts (armor, bronze vessels, pottery) and other cultural elements (funerary architecture, frescoes, writing) that contributed to the status of local elites, it is clear that the process of urbanization and state building in Etruria and Latium was firmly based on trends that were evident in Italy already before the upsurge in “oriental” influence.¹⁵⁸

Iron Age development in Italy, including urbanization and state building, occurred also in the context of expanding exchange patterns throughout the Mediterranean region, the effects of which were felt differently in various regions. One of the most important variables appears to have been the level of political organization in the different regions, which in turn was at least partially a function of population density.¹⁵⁹ Commerce does not depend on population density, necessarily, as there are numerous examples historically where commerce operated quite effectively in conditions of very sparse settlement—in the fur trades of medieval northern Russia and early modern North

¹⁵⁷ C. J. Smith, *Early Rome and Latium: Economy and Society c. 1000 – 500 BC* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996). An archaeology-based approach to early Italian and Roman history has by now become standard even in textbooks; see for example Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel J. Gargola, and Richard J. A. Talbert, *The Romans: From Village to Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 6 – 9, 11 – 20.

¹⁵⁸ Tom Rasmussen, “Urbanization in Etruria,” in *Mediterranean Urbanization 800 – 600 BC*, ed. Robin Osborne and Barry Cunliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 71 – 90. See also Jean MacIntosh Turfa, review of *Oriente e Occidente: metodi e discipline a confronto. Riflessioni sulla cronologia dell’età del ferro in Italia*, ed. Gilda Bartoloni and Filippo Delpino, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2006.08.10 (online archive number). Turfa provides a very useful summary of the ongoing efforts to reconcile dendrodates and revised 14C dates with more traditional periodization of the Italian Iron Age, plus many other topics of current scholarly interest reflected in this massive volume.

¹⁵⁹ The classic statement on the correlation of population density and the progression to ever more hierarchical forms of socio-political organization is Elman R. Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective*, 2nd edition (New York: Random House, 1971).

America,¹⁶⁰ for instance. Dense population groupings and increasing levels of social organization may have important effects on the nature of trade, however, creating reservoirs of intense demand for goods and resources, and creating possibilities for more coercive economic systems and exploitative exchange relations. Significantly, though evidence for a transcontinental slave trade in Europe is problematical for the Bronze Age, by the sixth century BC there is ample evidence of extensive use of slave labor in the hierarchized polities of the Aegean region, Thrace, and Scythia.¹⁶¹ Mediterranean demand for slaves as well as for metals and other resources that Temperate Europe could supply characterized exchange relations between the two regions for the remainder of the European Iron Age, and acted as a catalyst in a series of social and economic changes in Temperate Europe evident during this time.

Aegean urbanization of the first half of the first millennium BC was not, itself, far in advance chronologically of that in Italy, though both were far behind the old cities of the Levant. According to Lin Foxhall, the eastern Mediterranean particularly was characterized by a “vibrant” exchange system that was “not simply a reification of hierarchical social/political relationships validated by ‘exchange’ and ‘reciprocity,’” nor was it based on the satisfaction of basic “needs.” The commerce was instead driven by a demand for distinguished exotic goods—ceramics, fibulae, jars of perfume, dyed cloth, choice foodstuffs—on the part of the urbanizing populations. Access to such goods was part of the negotiation of status and power in these societies, but was not the monopoly of a narrow elite class.¹⁶² The exchange network spread into Italy along with Greek colonization westward, but in Etruria and Latium, in any case, this did not result in a colonial situation. Rather, Etruscan merchants soon paralleled the activities of Greeks in reproducing the products of Mediterranean civilization and taking them north across the

¹⁶⁰ The market nature of the trade in this instance is illustrated by the demands made by the Native American side for items of adornment to exchange for the pelts, demands which shifted rapidly in conjunction with shifts in Indian, not European, ideas of “fashion.” A. Cannon, “The Cultural and Historical Contexts of Fashion,” in *Consuming Fashion: Adorning the Transnational Body*, ed. Anne Brydon and Sandra Niessen (Oxford: Berg, 1998), 29–35.

¹⁶¹ Timothy Taylor, “Believing the Ancients: Quantitative and Qualitative Dimensions of Slavery and the Slave Trade in Later Prehistoric Eurasia,” *World Archaeology* 33, no. 1 (2001): 27–43.

¹⁶² Lin Foxhall, “Village to City: Staples and Luxuries? Exchange Networks and Urbanization,” in *Mediterranean Urbanization 800–600 BC*, ed. Robin Osborne and Barry Cunliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 233–48.

Alps.¹⁶³ This outcome was due at least partly to the fact that urbanization and state-building in Italy was underway parallel with that in Greece, not imported from Greece wholesale.¹⁶⁴

Transalpine trade: Greeks

By contrast, when the Greeks planted a colony at Massalia (Marseille) ca. 600 BC, the level of political and economic organization of the colonists was far greater than that of the indigenous inhabitants of southern Gaul. The coastal region between the Pyrenees and the Alps possessed a unified culture, but the population lived in scattered groups and was still only semi-sedentary in the seventh century BC.¹⁶⁵ At dozens of sites studied in Languedoc and Provence, clear signs of permanent settlement and features of urbanization begin to appear in the first and second quarters of the sixth century BC, including walls and cult *stellae*. By the fifth century BC, there was evidence of massive deforestation and a great increase in cereal cultivation, and in subsequent centuries these local towns acquired Greek-style public architecture and sculpture as well. Garcia emphasizes that

it is links with the Mediterranean exchange networks that appear to be the economic trump card, equally to obtain manufactured goods, particularly wine, and to dispose of local products, especially cereals.¹⁶⁶

Further:

There is no doubt that the ‘commercial’ model, probably associated with an ‘urban model,’ was more or less imposed upon the indigenous peoples by the Greeks.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ A brief review of Etruscan trading activities is in Bettina Arnold, “Iron Age Germany,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 242–3.

¹⁶⁴ “It is evident that technological and social interactions with Europe flourished and no one in Italy sat waiting for foreign colonists to come and civilize them.” Turfa, review of *Oriente e Occidente*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁵ Dominique Garcia, “Urbanization and Spatial Organization in Southern France and North-Eastern Spain during the Iron Age,” in *Mediterranean Urbanization 800 – 600 BC*, ed. Robin Osborne and Barry Cunliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 169–70.

¹⁶⁶ Garcia, “Urbanization and Spatial Organization,” 174.

¹⁶⁷ Garcia, “Urbanization and Spatial Organization,” 177.

Throughout, she emphasizes the role of a local political elite in the process, who found their power enhanced to the extent that they could respond to the demands of the new mercantile conditions and who organized their society for greater cereal production, redistributing the resultant surpluses to support and control a growing class of artisans and merchants. By the time the Romans organized the south coast of Gaul into the province of Gallia Narbonensis ca. 120 BC, the region was well acclimated to the Greco-Roman style of Mediterranean culture.

Though they dominated the south coast of Gaul culturally and economically, the Massaliots themselves did not attempt to build a territorial hegemony there.¹⁶⁸ Their focus, evidently, was on mobilizing the exchange opportunities, not only along the Mediterranean littoral but also northward, along the Rhône corridor into Temperate Europe. Whereas local activity in the first half of the Hallstatt period focused on the development of industrial resources in the eastern Alps region, in the early sixth century BC, new settlement sites in west central Europe spread across the region from the upper Seine to the upper Danube (the West Hallstatt zone). In centers such as Heuneburg (Baden-Württemberg) and Mont Lassois (upper Seine), evidence for the Greek trade consists of a range of luxury goods, including painted Attic pottery, Greek- and Etruscan-style bronze vessels, wine amphorae, and occasional extraordinary objects such as the bronze *krater* 1.64 m high discovered in a rich grave at Vix near Mont Lassois. Rich graves associated with the new kind of production and distribution centers also contain objects of gold, elaborate couches, and bronze-fitted wagons—all in some way rare and extraordinary. Moreover, the grave chambers are elaborately constructed of hewn oak and sometimes stone, and are located in the centers of large tumuli.¹⁶⁹ As Wells remarks:

These extraordinary objects, most of them of Mediterranean origin, characterize the rich burials of western central Europe and attest to a sumptuous lifestyle on the part of the elite and to access to the most extravagant products of Mediterranean workshops.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ S. T. Loseby, “Marseille: A Late Antique Success Story?” *Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): 165, observes that Marseille had a poor hinterland and its reason for being is quite clearly the harbor.

¹⁶⁹ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 104 – 7, 111 – 12.

¹⁷⁰ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 120 – 1.

There is no doubt that a vital connection existed in the sixth century between elites in west central Europe and the Mediterranean world, and that the linkage was based on some kind of exchange. The question concerns, rather, the organizational structure of that exchange and the processes that allowed such fantastic accumulations of wealth. Given that the Massaliots showed no interest in building a territorial state in southern Gaul, it must be clear that to the Greeks the transactions had ultimately a commercial rather than a political purpose. What did the other side think and who, exactly, was doing the thinking? Answers to these questions depend on the interpretation of a rapidly growing body of archaeological data at West Hallstatt sites, in some cases now encompassing spatially extended studies of interconnected settlement hierarchies around the centers as well as the centers themselves, notably at Heuneburg¹⁷¹ and at Mont Lassois.¹⁷²

One line of interpretation focuses on a socio-politically dominant elite. The very concept of a *Fürstensitz* (princely seat) arose first in connection with the excavation in 1877 of strikingly rich graves near Heuneburg, one of the most studied of the sixth-century BC Mediterranean-linked sites.¹⁷³ The Heuneburg was the center of its local area from the Early Bronze Age, and reached in the seventh to fifth centuries BC a population of several thousand (including the fort itself and nearby “suburbium”) articulated into at least two strata; industries there, including iron working, were on a scale suitable for an export trade.¹⁷⁴

In most contexts, the presence of the extraordinarily rich tumuli graves at Heuneburg, Mont Lassois, and other such centers would be regarded as *prima facie* evidence of a hierarchically situated political elite.¹⁷⁵ Barry Cunliffe¹⁷⁶ has described the

¹⁷¹ Bettina Arnold, “The Heuneburg,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 249 – 52, summarizes the excavation history there and in the surrounding area, a work which is still ongoing. Among the unique features of the Heuneburg itself are its Mediterranean-style limestone and mudbrick wall.

¹⁷² Bruno Chaume, *Vix et son territoire à l’Age du fer. Fouilles du Mont Lassois et environnement du site princier* (Montagnac: Éditions Monique Mergoil, 2001).

¹⁷³ Arnold, “Heuneburg,” 249.

¹⁷⁴ Arnold, “Heuneburg,” 250.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Gimbutas’ interpretation of the extraordinarily rich tumuli graves of the Kurgan culture; Marija Gimbutas, “Proto-Indo-European Culture: The Kurgan Culture during the Fifth, Fourth, and Third Millennia B.C.,” in idem, *The Kurgan Culture and the Indo-Europeanization of Europe: Selected Articles*

complex of socio-economic developments north of the Alps as a classic *prestige goods economy*; this follows standard economic-anthropological ideas, similar to those employed by Hodges for early medieval Europe. Under this scenario, political advantage in a hierarchical system rests upon control of outside trade resources, the flow of which must continue exclusively from the chief down to lower levels in the hierarchy. The paramount chief retains all or most imports and monopolizes the external trade, while vassals or clients get goods from workshops controlled by the paramount.¹⁷⁷

Wells argued, however, that the densely built up settlements associated with the rich graves show no sign of being ritual or political centers but were, instead, centers of intense craft production, apparently serving both as distribution centers for their hinterlands and as staging points for the long-distance trade to the Mediterranean coast: “To judge by the evidence of manufacturing and trade at Heuneburg and the distribution of locally made and imported objects in its hinterlands, the relations between larger commercial communities and small hamlets were purely economic.”¹⁷⁸ Centers such as the Heuneburg would, then, be akin to the northern *emporium* in the early Middle Ages, which were nodes in long-distance trade networks and centers of craft production but not seats of political power. Like the early medieval *emporium*, the late Hallstatt commercial centers disappeared quickly once the trade connection down the Rhône became inoperative in the early fifth century BC.¹⁷⁹ One is left to wonder, nevertheless, whether “individual entrepreneurial skill” *per se*, whatever its stimulating and organizing effect on a community, could have led to the wealth differentials observable in the tumuli graves. In a ritual sense, at least, some individuals were accorded status far above that of their fellows.

The question is complicated by the fact that we have no direct evidence on what goods, exactly, the west central Europeans were channeling to the Greeks in the sixth century BC, nor do we know who actually bore the traffic between the inland production

from 1952 to 1993, ed. Miriam Robins Dexter and Karlene Jones-Bley (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man, 1997), 88 – 90.

¹⁷⁶ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*.

¹⁷⁷ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*. 31 – 2.

¹⁷⁸ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 116.

¹⁷⁹ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 115, 124.

centers and the coast. Possible exports include metals, which the Mediterranean world was using in increasing quantities; British tin has been suggested, also gold and iron from Gaul. Other exportable products may have included resin, pitch, honey, wax, amber, salt, hides, woolens, pork.¹⁸⁰ If slaves were exported—and by the sixth century, the Mediterranean was a market for coerced labor—whence were they taken and by what means? Here, especially, it is tempting to see the power of elite personages able to condemn dependent members of the society for export or to project influence northwards in order to obtain captives from outside groups.¹⁸¹ In other words, an elite possessing socio-political dominance in a stratified society would be in a position both to enslave dependent members of their own society and to organize procurement from outside. Cunliffe sees the West Hallstatt centers as a “core area” whose elites maintained themselves largely by the conspicuous consumption of exotic luxury goods, and who manipulated a “periphery” of more warlike tribes to the north who, in turn, channeled slaves and other resources from a “procurement zone” even farther north back to the core.¹⁸²

The interpretations represented by Cunliffe and by Wells are similar in that both see the socio-political hierarchy or entrepreneurial leadership, itself, in some way a product of the flow of external trade. More recently, it has been asserted that pre-existing *Fürstensitzen* attracted the new Mediterranean trade rather than Mediterranean trade being the catalyst for the unfolding of new centers and the construction of new elites.¹⁸³ The size of the populations in and around the centers and the evident complexity of these societies suggests that multiple processes may have operated concurrently. West Hallstatt chiefs may well have regarded some of the more extraordinary items of Mediterranean manufacture as gifts, or as a tribute, in return for which they facilitated the

¹⁸⁰ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 28.

¹⁸¹ This would follow the argument in Gronenborn, “Nachweis von Sklaven/Unfreien,” 5, 30. However, it would also be possible to imagine less hierarchically organized and more socially destabilizing arrangements, such as the kidnapping networks in Igbo country in Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; Klein, “Slave Trade and Decentralized Societies,” 61 – 4.

¹⁸² Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 32 – 5.

¹⁸³ Jörg Biel, “Macht und Dynamik: Fürstengräber der frühen Keltzeit,” in *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2002), 194.

trade in some manner. At the same time, the volume of goods transported south must have been considerable to offset the high-value manufactures and luxury goods—and, apparently, wine—that were coming north. This implies a busy transport network between the south coast of Gaul and points hundreds of miles inland, and raises questions about the means of transport and the identity and organization of the carriers. The absence of everyday utilitarian items of Greek extraction in the inland centers of commerce implies at least that no Greek merchant colonies were established at these places.¹⁸⁴ Certainly, it was not the chiefs themselves who hauled the stuff to the coast! As in the case of Bronze Age Scandinavia, there is room here to discern Temperate European individuals or groups acting as professional mediators and carriers—in a word, as merchants.

The more intensive exchange relationships that grew up between parts of central and western transalpine Europe and the Mediterranean during the Hallstatt period had long-term effects on Temperate European development generally. Early on, a casualty of the shift in focus of the central Europeans was the bronze trade north to Scandinavia. Having been a participant in the continental exchange systems of the Bronze Age, Scandinavia now became relatively isolated for a number of centuries as people in the Hallstatt zone turned their attention to the south. As Vandkilde explains:

Bronze was increasingly short in supply and the "international" elitist network, which depended on bronze for its existence, simply ceased to exist. From 750 to 700 B.C. new political alliances and social networks were in the making, primarily between the dynastic semi-urban Hallstatt kingdoms and Mediterranean city-states. Scandinavia had become a marginalized region outside the mainstream of events.¹⁸⁵

As we have seen, the “alliances and social networks” between the Hallstatt zone north of the Alps and the Mediterranean was based on high volume, intensive exchange, in which the Mediterranean world was drawing manpower and raw materials out of Temperate Europe and sending back “consumer durables”—manufactures, and also

¹⁸⁴ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 107 – 8.

¹⁸⁵ Vandkilde, "Bronze Age Scandinavia," 79.

products such as wine and olive oil that were unavailable locally in the north.¹⁸⁶ The western transalpine centers collapsed ca. 470 – 450 BC, possibly destabilized, in part, when Greek demand for European products shifted to newly established ports—Spina and Adria—at the head of the Adriatic from ca. 480, and the Po valley replaced the Rhône corridor as the conduit of desired raw materials.¹⁸⁷ This collapse of the erstwhile dominant economic and political force in west central Europe appears to have been one of the chief causes, in turn, of the next phase in both Iron Age European socio-economic development and of European – Mediterranean interaction.

Transalpine trade: Romans

The fourth and third centuries saw the emergence of a new decorative style, the La Tène, which is associated with a restless and militarized society whose material culture—even in terms of prestige objects—is less impressive than the previous period (except in the production of iron weapons), and where fewer commercial and productive centers were created than earlier.¹⁸⁸ Instead, as Wells puts it: “The entrepreneurial energies of ambitious individuals were focused on raiding, looting, and also settling new lands, rather than organizing production systems for commerce.” The primary directions of raid, migration, and pillage were from central Europe southwards. In other words, a society for whom commercial access to products of the Mediterranean culture had become an intrinsic element in the processes of working out socio-economic relationships now sought those status-conferring prestige goods and exotic delicacies—wine, vessels, ornaments—by other means. In the fourth century BC, enterprising warbands of well armed men could and did make successful forays into Italy; rich La Tène graves in Italy, presumably those of leaders, are more impressive than any found north of the Alps during this period.¹⁸⁹ In certain ways, these so-called “Celtic migrations” of the fourth and third centuries BC bear similarity to the Migration Age of the fifth and sixth centuries AD and

¹⁸⁶ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 10.

¹⁸⁷ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 32 – 5.

¹⁸⁸ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 133 – 41.

¹⁸⁹ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 127 – 30, 132. The famous Gallic sack of Rome ca. 387/6 BC was a part of this process or phase in Temperate European – Mediterranean relations. The arguments concerning the date of the sack are summarized in Christopher S. Mackay, *Ancient Rome: A Military and Political History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 24 – 5.

the Viking Age of the ninth and tenth, a topic to which we will return in subsequent chapters.

Mediterranean – Temperate European commercial exchange relationships intensified once more in the second and early first centuries BC. As the expanding Roman state consolidated its political control over the south coast of Gaul—officially, the province of *Gallia Narbonensis* ca. 120 BC—and over the Po basin, Roman traders based in these areas extended procurement networks northwards around both the western and the eastern end of the Alps. The importance to Rome of the resources it could attract or extract both from provinces and areas outside of direct Roman control in the last two centuries BC is well summarized by Daphne Nash, which, as she concludes, sustained the evolving political and military structures of the late republic and the economic development of Italy.¹⁹⁰ The exploitation of provinces by Roman agents (e.g., companies of equestrians under contract to the senate) is not, here, a matter of direct concern. The organization of the flow of resources from uncontrolled territory—i.e., where the resources were obtained not by armed plunder nor by tribute or taxation—does pertain, however, especially as many of the patterns evident in those trade relations were to be repeated along the Rhine-Danube *limes* and in the relations of Carolingian Francia with England, Scandinavia, and trans-Elbia. As Nash puts it:

Trade across provincial borders with foreign communities was handled by a multiplicity of Italian and provincial traders acting on their own behalf or on behalf of larger companies.¹⁹¹

The voluminous trade, which was based on the insatiable Roman demand for slaves, metals, and other resources out of Temperate Europe, had catalytic effects in these societies. Prominent among these were the rapid evolution of provincial and non-provincial groups as middlemen in the trade, the proto-urbanization of a considerable swath of Temperate Europe from central France to parts of the Carpathian basin (the

¹⁹⁰ Daphne Nash, “Imperial Expansion under the Roman Republic,” in *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 87 – 103.

¹⁹¹ Nash, “Imperial Expansion under the Roman Republic,” 97.

Oppida culture), and the provocation of additional warfare in Europe to create a supply of captives for the slave trade.

Nowhere was this interaction between the Mediterranean and the Temperate European worlds more intensive and far-reaching than in Gaul. Southern Gaul had been undergoing a process of Hellenization, urbanization, and commercialization from the sixth century BC.¹⁹² Accordingly, it was in a position to function successfully as a province under intensified Roman economic involvement and administrative presence from the second century.¹⁹³ In addition to raw materials such as metals and hides, and some supplementary foodstuffs such as salted or cured pork, the growing and changing Roman economy in its Italian core demanded increasing quantities of labor—slaves. According to Cunliffe’s review of the evidence, Gaul could have been exporting an average of 15,000 persons a year during the first century BC.¹⁹⁴

In the reverse direction, massive amounts of commodities produced in Italy and other Roman territories, especially wine, were reaching the interior via *Gallia Narbonensis* or *Transalpina*. The volume of the wine trade in particular can be estimated from the volume of amphorae sherds recovered at the major inland transshipment points: at Toulouse (Tolosa) on the Aude-Garonne route and at Chalon-sur-Saône on the Rhône-Saône corridor. Some forty million amphorae in total may have reached Gaul during the

¹⁹² Garcia, “Urbanization and Spatial Organization.”

¹⁹³ See Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 38 – 57, for a detailed essay on the development of this region during the first millennium BC.

¹⁹⁴ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 77 – 8. For background to the growth of a slave economy in and demographic analysis of Italy during the second and first centuries BC, see the extensive discussion in Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 1 – 13, 32 – 4, 67 – 70, 99 – 106. The standard model of ancient Italian demography, on which Hopkins’ discussion is based, derives from the work of K. Julius Beloch, *Die Bevölkerung der griechisch-römischen Welt* (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1886); and Peter A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower 225 B.C. – A.D. 14* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), where the total population by the end of the first century BC is estimated at around six million and the slave population between two and three million. Cf. now Neville Morley, “The Transformation of Italy, 225 – 28 B.C.,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 91 (2001): 50 – 62, who presents a reasoned alternative hypothesis according to which the population of Italy in this period increased from 4.5 to twelve millions. The demographics of slave supply in particular continues to be hotly debated. Two recent entries are Walter Scheidel, “Quantifying the Sources of Slaves in the Early Roman Empire,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 87 (1997): 156 – 69, who argues that in the first and second centuries AD the Roman slave population was up to 80 percent self-reproducing; and W. V. Harris, “Demography, Geography and the Sources of Roman Slaves,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999): 62 – 75, who argues that continued import, self-enslavement, and the enslavement of foundlings were more important. That a large-scale commercial traffic in slaves existed in the Mediterranean in the late centuries BC is not in doubt. See for example N. K. Rauh, *The Sacred Bonds of Commerce: Religion, Economy, and Trade Society at Hellenistic Roman Delos* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1993).

first century BC, representing a minimum import of some 100,000 hectoliters per annum.¹⁹⁵

As it happens, slaves and wine were the two objects within this extensive and growing trade for which we have even approximate quantification. Qualitatively, the exchange relationship appears to involve inequalities that favored the Mediterranean side, expressed in the oft quoted passage from Diodorus 5.26 that Italian merchants could obtain a slave for an amphora of wine.¹⁹⁶ This in turn suggests the applicability of *world systems* theory or the study of *center – periphery* relationships, an approach originally developed by Immanuel Wallerstein to explain the dominance of European civilization in the modern age,¹⁹⁷ but which has seen application to a wide range of pre-modern situations.¹⁹⁸ Rowlands’ introduction to the *Centre and Periphery* volume is very useful in its discussion of the terms involved in a centre/core – periphery relationship and how such an analysis might be applied to a pre-modern situation.¹⁹⁹ Importantly, Rowlands points out that the relationship is not unidirectional:

¹⁹⁵ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 74 – 5. Italian wine production in the first century AD could range from three to ten *cullei* per *iugerum* devoted to vines, the difference depending primarily on high quality specialty- vs. low quality mass-production; Nicholas Purcell, “Wine and Wealth in Ancient Italy,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 13. At 20 amphorae or 500 liters per *culleum*, the volume of wine needed to fulfill the annual demand in Gaul (by Cunliffe’s estimate) would have required only some six to seven thousand *iugera* of Italian vineyards if the wine were of the highest quality and far less if it were the mass-produced variety. An export trade in wine from Campania existed already in the third century BC; Purcell, “Wine and Wealth,” 6 – 7, 16. For a study of the amphorae—the containers through which the ancient wine trade is most visible archaeologically—see A. Tchernia, *Le vin de l’Italie Romaine: Essai d’histoire économique après les amphores* (Rome: École Française, 1986).

¹⁹⁶ Taylor, “Believing the Ancients,” 28, points out that the Greek original is equivocal, the exchange being “a crock of wine (*oinou kerámion*) for a young slave boy (*diákonos*).” To modern sensibilities, the exchange of a person’s freedom for a quantity of consumable intoxicant seems inherently exploitative, redolent of early modern colonial situations such as the purveyance of alcohol to Indians or the exchange of rum for captives on the coast of Africa. In any case, Cunliffe believes that at the height of the trade ca. 100 BC an adult slave would have been worth five or six amphorae of wine or its equivalent; Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 88.

¹⁹⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, 3 vols. (New York: Academic Press, 1974 – 1989).

¹⁹⁸ See, especially, the collection of articles in Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen, eds., *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), some of which have already been referenced above. A. Sherratt’s 1993 essay on Bronze Age core-periphery relations, “What Would a Bronze-Age World System Look Like?” also has been noted.

¹⁹⁹ Michael Rowlands, “Centre and Periphery: A Review of a Concept,” in *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1 – 11.

Centre-periphery as a relationship does not therefore predict a fixed and immutable position but implies that constituent groups will move through different statuses as a necessary feature of maintaining the relationship.²⁰⁰

Shifts in polarity between Temperate Europe and the Mediterranean have been noted above in connection with Bronze Age phenomena. A decisive shift towards core status for the Mediterranean side appears to have been reached by 600 BC, and continued throughout the remainder of the Iron Age. Rowlands defines core/center status as a situation in which resources essential to the reproduction of the center's socio-political system are obtained through exploitation from a periphery, in turn defined as having both greater socio-political costs in providing resources to its core partner and less choice in partners overall.²⁰¹ Rome, with its far greater population, greater aggregate production, superior institutional stability, and superior military organization had more choices in how to deal with its Gallic partners and incurred fewer costs in the relationship than did the Gauls.

The relationship has been modeled by Cunliffe in *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians* according to a scheme inspired by the core-periphery paradigm. Gaul was a huge market for Roman entrepreneurs, both estate owners and merchants. The nodal points in the trade system as it emerged in the second and early first centuries BC were, first of all, at the above mentioned inland transshipment points at Toulouse and Chalon,²⁰² but many other *oppida* served as additional marketplaces. In some of these, trade was conducted under Roman oversight (aside from the coastal cities, these places were Toulouse and Vienne). In others the Gauls themselves regulated the marketplaces; these latter included places such as Chalons, Bibracte, and Montmerlhe. All of the latter were “within free Gaulish territory on an interface between two economic systems: that of the Roman province and that of the heart of free Celtic Gaul.”²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Rowlands, “Review of a Concept,” 10.

²⁰¹ Rowlands, “Review of a Concept,” 5.

²⁰² At these places, much of the wine was transferred from ceramic amphorae, whose remains form good archaeological deposits, to wooden barrels, which under most conditions are not archaeologically traceable; Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 83.

²⁰³ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 83 – 7.

Cunliffe summarizes the components of the core-periphery system, articulated spatially across the subregions of Gaul, thusly:

- (a) Ports-of-trade (or gateway communities)²⁰⁴ at or close to the interface.
- (b) An intermediate zone within which a market economy develops, the individual internal markets being linked directly to the ports of trade.
- (c) An élite redistribution zone in which the élite maintains control over incoming commodities, retaining prestige goods for their own use and organizing commodity flow.
- (d) A procurement zone from which the bulk of raw materials and manpower are derived.²⁰⁵

The intensive commercial contact had catalytic effects on the socio-political development of all the peoples of Gaul, according to their place within this scheme. In central and east-central Gaul, where “ports of trade” were located (point [a] in the list above) and Gallic *oppida* developed (points [b] and [c]), many peoples were entering state-level stages of political organization under this stimulus before the Roman conquest; some, like the Aedui, were evolving a proto-republic—a “constitutional oligarchy,” as Cunliffe puts it.²⁰⁶ Other emergent Gallic polities included those of the Helvetii, Sequani, Biturges, and Avernii certainly, with the probable addition also of the Lingones in Champagne and the Pictones and Lemovices in west central Gaul.²⁰⁷ Polities such as the Aedui were growing rich from participating willingly in the commercial system, and their activities were not only leading to rapid socio-economic change at home but also were having destabilizing effects on peoples further north, such as the

²⁰⁴ Here as elsewhere in *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians* Cunliffe uses these two terms as if they were synonyms, whereas they represent rather different theoretical models of the function of trade/exchange in pre-modern societies. See again Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 23 – 5, and the discussion in Heidi M. Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market: Emporia Trading in Western Eurasia from 500 BC to AD 1000” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2008), Chapter 1.

²⁰⁵ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 200 and Figure 76.

²⁰⁶ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 94.

²⁰⁷ Barry Cunliffe, “The Impact of Rome on Barbarian Society, 140 BC – AD 300,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Prehistoric Europe*, ed. Barry Cunliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 419 – 21. See more recently the articles in Dominique Garcia and Florence Verdin, eds., *Territoires celtiques: espaces ethniques et territoires des agglomérations protohistoriques d’Europe occidentale* (Paris: Errance, 2002), most of which focus on the development of territorial polities in Gaul in the second and first centuries BC.

Belgae (point [d] in the list above), whose society was still based around a more traditional division between subsistence farmers and priestly and warrior elites. The latter people, apparently, were being affected by the more commercially evolved polities to the south through processes similar in many ways to those that operated in the West Hallstatt region and its hinterland in the late Hallstatt period (sixth and early fifth centuries BC). In terms of the commercial system emanating from the Roman “core,” areas such as northern Gaul and Britain were exploited peripheries.²⁰⁸ As will be discussed further in Section 3.4 below, the pattern was recreated in the Roman Iron Age of Temperate Europe (AD 1 – 400) from new positions along the Rhine and Danube.

Processes broadly similar to those in Gaul in the second and first centuries BC were at work concurrently at the eastern end of the Alps—in Noricum.²⁰⁹ Here, an indigenous political entity based on the center called *Noreia* (its exact location remains unascertained) in what is now Carinthia, in the valleys of the upper Drava south of the main range of the Tauern, established a stable diplomatic relationship with the Roman Republic early in the second century. While the Romans evicted an attempted settlement on the lowlands south of the Alps by the Celts of Noricum in 186 BC, they accorded honors and favors to the rulers of Noreia, including ambassadorial exchanges, gifts, and the right to come into Italy to purchase horses. Aquileia was established in 183 – 181 BC in part to serve as a base for commercial contacts with Noricum, and the Noricans sometimes aided Roman forces in Illyria.²¹⁰

Presumably, commercial contacts were developed throughout the remainder of the second and the first half of the first centuries BC; a Norican “gold rush” is mentioned sometime 150 – 120 BC.²¹¹ The main attraction for the Romans appears to have been the

²⁰⁸ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 89 – 92, 97, 104 – 5.

²⁰⁹ The standard monograph on the history of this east Alpine region is still Géza Alföldy, *Noricum*, trans. Anthony Birley (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), focusing on written sources and inscriptions along with the then-available archaeology. See also the richly illustrated Thomas Fischer, *Noricum*, Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2002), which focuses on updating the state of archaeological research on the Roman period in Austria.

²¹⁰ Alföldy, *Noricum*, 28 – 33. The contact with Noricum followed upon Roman expansion into northern Italy in the 220s BC and the re-assertion of Roman control there in the 190s, with the founding of colonies coming in the 180s. The sole source for the details of Roman – Norican contact in the 180s and 170s BC is Livy 39.22.6 – 7; 39.45.5 – 7; 40.53.5 – 6; 43.5.1 – 10; and 44.14.1 – 2.

²¹¹ Alföldy, *Noricum*, 33 – 4; Fischer, *Noricum*, 8.

high grade iron—the *ferrum Noricum*. By the 40s BC, the *regnum Noricum* was the survivor of a century or so of tribal warfare north of the Alps and now controlled an expanded realm that included most of present day Austria east of the Tyrol and parts of western Hungary (Pannonia), thus sitting astride the crossroads of the north-south amber trail and the east-west Danube trade route. As Fischer puts it:

Dies zeigt deutlich, wie stark das *regnum Noricum* von Wirtschafts- und Handelsinteressen geprägt war. Diese ökonomischen Interessen Noricums deckten sich dabei weitgehend mit denen der Römer: ein klares Beleg dafür stellt die Einrichtung der römischen Siedlung auf dem Magdalensberg dar.²¹²

Located in central Carinthia northeast of modern Klagenfurt, the Magdalensberg is one of the best researched sites in the region. In this place, a purely Roman-style merchants' colony appeared around the middle of the first century BC, with residences, storehouses, workshops, imported goods to facilitate Italian-style living, and inscriptions identifying members of Roman or Italian commercial houses that had been present there. Later, under Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius, it was rebuilt to a grander model complete with a temple on a podium, a forum, and other standard features of a provincial *municipium*.²¹³ At the Magdalensberg, then, an early Roman merchants colony²¹⁴—a kind of *emporium*, in effect, probably governed as a *conventus civium Romanorum*—served to organize and facilitate the trade from Noricum south into Italy, concentrating especially on iron products. The iron was smelted near the mines, but was collected and worked in places such as the Magdalensberg.²¹⁵ Thus, in the eastern Alps, Roman commercial and cultural influence penetrated peacefully and prepared the ground for the subordination of the kingdom to more direct Roman oversight after the campaign of 15 BC brought the Roman military presence forward from northern Italy to the upper Danube.

²¹² Fischer, *Noricum*, 9.

²¹³ Fischer, *Noricum*, 69 – 78. Fischer stresses that no evidence so far allows us to associate the capital, Noreia, with the Magdalensberg, though many have guessed at such a connection. See, for example, the arguments for this identification in Alföldy, *Noricum*, 47 – 51.

²¹⁴ Alföldy, *Noricum*, 3 – 7, 45 – 6, discusses the inscriptions upon which these associations are based.

²¹⁵ Fischer, *Noricum*, 13. See also Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 131, 154 – 6, who stresses the pro-activeness of the Noricans in producing the metal and bringing it to the trade termini such as the Magdalensberg.

In general, the late La Tène period in Temperate Europe appears to have been a time of upsurge in economic activity and in the formation of larger population centers. Much of the upsurge, as in Gaul and in Noricum, may be linked directly to Roman commercial stimuli coming into Temperate Europe from the south. Other developments have less of a clear connection to Roman influence, but fit the pattern of economic expansion in the region.

One such instance is revealed in the study of the so-called *briquetage de la Seille* in the upper Moselle basin of eastern France. Within an area of some fifty-eight square kilometers, a number of production sites for salt are characterized by masses of discarded ceramic molds that were used in boiling brine (from local springs) down to salt. While altogether some four million cubic meters of this debris has been surveyed, the trajectory of economic development is revealed by the fact that in the earlier phase (eighth to sixth century BC) there were up to ten smaller centers producing some hundreds to a few thousands tons of salt per year, but a later phase (second and first centuries BC) saw production concentrated in three industrial centers and volume in the tens of thousands of tons per year—much greater than needed for local consumption. Moreover, there is no evidence that wealth was accruing to the resident workers at these enterprises; the profits were retained by others, off-site.²¹⁶ This evidence points not only to a rising volume in the production of bulk goods in Temperate Europe but also a social organization in which middlemen of some kind were able to organize and profit from the labor of others.

Aside from industrial scale enterprises for the mining and processing of resources such as salt and iron, late Iron Age Temperate Europe was undergoing a wave of urbanization—the so-called Oppida culture—that stretched from central Gaul in the west to Bohemia and Hungary in the east.²¹⁷ These are typically walled, planned settlements ranging from twenty-five to up to two thousand hectares in area. Within their perimeters they include elite compounds as well as ordinary one-room houses, with much evidence

²¹⁶ Laurent Olivier and Joseph Kovacic, “The ‘Briquetage de la Seille’ (Lorraine, France): Proto-Industrial Salt Production in the European Iron Age,” *Antiquity* 80 (2006): 558 – 66.

²¹⁷ An early summary of the Oppida phenomenon is John R. Collis, *Oppida: Earliest Towns North of the Alps* (Sheffield: University of Sheffield Press, 1984). See also the short reprise of the topic in idem, “Oppida,” in *Ancient Europe* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 154 – 57.

of manufacture and trade.²¹⁸ Typically, the *oppida* featured industries such as iron production, bronze casting, glass making, pottery making, textile production, and bone and antler carving. Some had mints. According to Wells, they functioned as commercial and manufacturing centers, organizing the productive capacity of their hinterlands. They both gathered the production of their hinterlands and attracted agglomerations of resident craftsmen. Meat consumption at the *oppida* was impressive, and agriculture generally was gaining in efficiency yet again with new types of plows and scythes. Moreover, Roman manufactured goods, wine, and other products were distributed throughout the region.²¹⁹ One of the largest of these (380 ha.) was Manching, in southern Germany near Ingolstadt on the Danube—a place utterly unknown from contemporary written sources but which had an encircling rampart of the *murus Gallicus* type 7.2 kilometers long. It was located on an interregional trade route, had extensive manufacturing, and evidently served as a local market center.²²⁰

3.4 The Effects of Roman Expansion

For about half a millennium, i.e. from ca. 600 BC to the early first century BC, relations of exchange between the Mediterraneans—Greeks, Etruscans, Romans—and the peoples of Temperate Europe had operated from relatively stable positions, with the former occupying the south coast of Gaul and northern Italy and the latter remaining, usually, north of the Alps. The position altered radically, however, in the comparatively short space between 58 BC and AD 16, during which the zone of close Roman control had been pushed from at least 130 miles (from the Carnic Alps to the Danube) up to as much

²¹⁸ Collis, “Oppida.” 155 – 6.

²¹⁹ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 158 – 81.

²²⁰ The excavations at Manching occurred mainly in 1955 – 74 and 1984 – 87, and had resulted in sixteen volumes of reports by 2007. See Felix Müller, review of *Chronologische Untersuchungen in dem spätkeltischen Oppidum bei Manching* by Herbert Lorenz and *Fundstellenübersicht der Grabungsjahre 1961 – 1974* by Hermann Gersden, *Antiquity* 81 (2007): 487 – 9. See also Rupert Gebhart, “The Celtic Oppidum of Manching and Its Exchange System,” in *Different Iron Ages: Studies on the Iron Age in Temperate Europe*, ed. J.D. Hill and C. G. Cumberpatch (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1995), 111 – 20.

as 450 miles (from Vienne on the Rhône to the Rhine delta) northwards.²²¹ The long-term effect of this positional shift was to recreate along the new interface—running roughly along the Rhine and the Danube rivers—relations of exchange very similar to what had obtained during the centuries when the interface zone was along or nearer to the northern shore of the Mediterranean.

The predominantly peaceful and commerce-driven developmental trajectory, which was engaging the Mediterranean and the late Iron Age European worlds in intensive interaction in the second and first centuries BC, took a fundamental shift in course as the result of one of the most violent and successful “entrepreneurial”²²² enterprises of all time: Julius Caesar’s conquest of Gaul 58 – 51 BC. From this venture, Caesar gained a greatly enhanced reputation, immense profits with which to finance his further political ambitions, and a large, seasoned, and intensely loyal Roman army, assets that enabled him to attain paramount political power within the Roman empire as a whole. It could be argued that Caesar’s war of conquest only accelerated an inevitable conclusion: the annexation of Gaul to Rome or, more precisely, the conversion of free and frequently cooperating Gallic polities into provinces controlled under the Roman imperial state system. Its immediate effects, however, upon Gaul north of *Gallia Narbonensis* were ruinous. As Christopher Mackay summarizes:

By the fall of 51 B.C., Caesar had exhausted Gaul into submission. He added 200,000 square miles to the empire of the Roman people. The amount of tribute he imposed on the conquered territory (40 million sesterces) was comparatively small, which indicates how weakened the area was after ten years of warfare. No tribe revolted again until 46 B.C. In his triumph he claimed to have killed 1,192,000 people, and he had seized so much gold that its value dropped by a quarter in Italy. Apart from benefactions throughout the Mediterranean, he paid

²²¹ Reasons for the abandonment of attempts to conquer *Germania* beyond the Rhine after AD 16 are discussed in Colin M. Wells, *The German Policy of Augustus: An Examination of the Archaeological Evidence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 241 – 5.

²²² “Entrepreneurial” if, as Peter Wells has suggested, the acquisition of resources and profits through successful military action can be considered as a kind of “economic activity pursued by other means,” to paraphrase Clausewitz’s famous saying.

100 million sesterces just for the land for his new addition to the forum in Rome.²²³

Even if we assume that Caesar's casualty figures were inflated for effect, the loss of population in Gaul due to battle deaths and mass punitive killings must have reached into many hundreds of thousands. In addition, there were mass enslavements amounting to more hundreds of thousands, as for example of the Veneti and of the Aduatici; in the latter case, the lot auctioned off numbered 53,000, according to Caesar. In the words of Cunliffe:

The countryside in 50 BC must have looked very different from the countryside ten years earlier. The population was decimated, the land ravaged and the old social and economic systems were in ruins... It is difficult now to appreciate the magnitude of the Gallic war, but that it was a major dislocation to Gallic society there can be no doubt. What followed in Gaul and beyond involved massive rebuilding using new bricks.²²⁴

The "massive rebuilding," as Cunliffe puts it, transformed broad sections of Temperate Europe into a string of new Roman provinces: *Gallia Aquitanica*, *Gallia Lugdunensis*, *Gallia Belgica*, *Germania Inferior* and *Superior*, *Rhaetia*, *Noricum*, *Pannonia*, and the *Moesias*; later also *Britannia*, the *Agri Decumates*, and *Dacia*. In these, regular Roman administration, culture, and economic arrangements soon dominated no less than they did in the older Mediterranean provinces. Notably, well over half of the territory that had belonged to the late-La Tène – Oppida culture was converted into land held under Roman provincial administration. In effect, Roman military activity had overrun and in some cases, as in northern Gaul, *outrun* the extent of territory formerly reached by Roman or Italian merchants.²²⁵

Another aspect of the "massive rebuilding" was the extension of spheres of Roman influence north of the Rhine and Danube, drawing back into the regional

²²³ Mackay, *Ancient Rome*, 147.

²²⁴ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 123 – 4. The quote is on p. 124.

²²⁵ This point is made also by Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 7. In Gaul, Roman traders were to be found at Chalon-sur-Saône, but there is no sure evidence that they went farther north; Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 51, 56 - 7, 87. In Noricum, a Roman merchants' colony existed on the Magdalensberg in central Carinthia (Fischer, *Noricum*, 71 – 6), but it is not known that Roman traders visited places along the Danube such as Carnuntum and Manching before 15 BC.

exchange systems people such as those in northern Germany and Denmark who had been relatively isolated since the end of the Bronze Age. Meanwhile, on both sides along the Rhine and Danube arose an intensive interface zone that affected both the provincial and the barbarian populations within this zone. As these major developments laid the foundations for what happened subsequently in the Merovingian and Carolingian periods in northern and central Temperate Europe, each of them will be discussed briefly below.

Provincialized Temperate Europe

The assimilation of broad areas of Temperate Europe into the Roman state system meant the extension of a template for political, administrative, and economic relations that was well established already in places like Italy and *Gallia Narbonensis*. As was discussed above in Section 3.3, parts of Temperate Europe such as central Gaul and the eastern Alps region were heavily integrated into the Mediterranean-based Roman mercantile system even before 58 BC, and were entering into processes of urbanization and state building. While we cannot know where the indigenous developmental trajectory might have ended up in the absence of Roman conquest, it is certain that the Romans remade the systems and re-adjusted the landscape to suit their own needs and preconceptions.

The former *oppida* were remade into Roman provincial centers, frequently moving from a hilltop down into the neighboring valley.²²⁶ The towns continued in their function as nodes or markets in a commercial system, and the Romans connected these market nodes (and administrative centers) to ports north and south with a new network of paved roads and bridges. The trunk line still was the Rhône corridor, with a major hub at Lyon (*Lugdunum*). One branch continued north via Reims to Boulogne (*Gesoriacum*) on the Channel coast, while another veered east via Trier to Cologne on the Rhine.²²⁷ The

²²⁶ Such was the case with the great *oppidum* of Bibracte on its 135 ha. site atop Mont Beuvray, replaced by Roman Autun; Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 133 – 5. The study of pre-Roman and Roman urban centers in Gaul has been a vast and ongoing enterprise. See, for example, the snapshot of the state of research from a couple of decades ago afforded by J. F. Drinkwater, review of P. Bridel, *Aventicum III*; E. Frézouls, *Les villes antiques de la France. Belgique I.*; M. Gayraud, *Narbonne antique*; H. Gallet de Santerre, *Ensérune: les silos de la terrasse est*; R. Lauxerois, *Le Bas Vivrais à l'époque romaine*; M. Mangin, *Alesia: un quartier de commerçants et d'artisans*; and M. Py, *L'Oppidum des Castels à Nage* in *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 292 – 4.

²²⁷ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, map p. 126, 137 – 44. The development of the road network in Gaul receives detailed treatment in Edmond Frézouls, “Gallien und römisches Germanien,” in

countryside was dominated by the system of large estates, *villae rusticae*, whose masters may indeed have been in the majority Romanized Celts, but whose layout and functions greatly resembled Italian prototypes. In short, the new territories became steadily Romanized.²²⁸

Romanization meant not only accelerated and more systematic local development than Temperate Europe had seen hitherto but membership also in an integrated, transregional system that included political, military, administrative, and cultural ties in addition to closer economic connectedness with the Mediterranean world as a whole. The economic dimension of the Roman world has been, however, a matter of intense dispute in the twentieth century—a dispute not unlike the contest between the minimalists and their opponents regarding the early medieval economy.

Early on, Rostovtzeff asserted in bold strokes and in terminology current for early-twentieth century European politico-economic discourse a modernist view of the Roman empire, wherein the “feudal capitalism” of the Republic had been replaced, at the time of Augustus, with a “bourgeois capitalism” derived from “Hellenistic city-capitalism,” based on commerce and industry and leading to rapid urbanization and general prosperity; as the system became stagnant after the second century AD, crisis ensued, which was solved by the imposition of a much more primitive “state capitalism” in the third and fourth centuries.²²⁹ Clearly, Rostovtzeff’s thesis assumed—indeed, depended upon—the reality of far-reaching integration of markets and resource distribution within the Roman world.

Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit, ed. Friedrich Vittinghoff (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990), 467 – 71. In Noricum likewise a network of provincial towns and connecting roads grew up in the first century AD; Fischer, *Noricum*, map (endpaper).

²²⁸ The process of Romanization in its political, urban, and rural aspects is described in detail for Gallia Belgica in Edith Mary Wightman, *Gallia Belgica* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 53 – 133. Similar developments for the eastern Alps are covered in Fischer, *Noricum*, 15 – 21, 53 – 63, and 65 – 122. For more details on the evolution of Gaul under Roman rule, see the discussion in Section 4.4: “The Case of Roman Gaul” below.

²²⁹ This summary is based on Rostovtzeff’s “Preface to First Edition,” included in Michael Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 2nd edition, revised by P. M. Fraser (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), xi – xix.

By contrast, building on the work of Polanyi, Moses Finley's widely influential *Ancient Economy* wholly rejected Rostovtzeff's modernism.²³⁰ Instead, Finley argued that the Roman empire was in reality a collection of self-sufficient city-territories that had little or no structural interactions among themselves and whose internal economic processes were governed by social conventions rather than market forces. While Finley and his followers could not deny all evidence of long-distance trade and markets within the empire, they sought to minimize the scope and effect of such phenomena.²³¹

The topic was revisited in *Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, particularly in Pleket's chapter on "Wirtschaft."²³² While welcoming the Minimalist/Primitivist position of Finley as an "antidote" to Rostovtzeff, Pleket judged that some cities and regions within the empire did produce goods in volume for export along inter-provincial trade networks. Pleket accepted Keith Hopkins's thesis that imperial tax demands had created a structural need for some provinces to export goods to other provinces (to Italy, above all, and to the areas where the army was stationed) in order to win the cash to pay those taxes—in other words, an empire-wide system of economic relations mediated in part by fiscal arrangements.²³³ By these and other arguments, Pleket rejected the Primitivist view of the ancient economy as limited, irrational, and essentially "immobile," substituting the viewpoint that the Roman world was admittedly pre-industrial in its economic methods and productive capacity, but comparable to the capabilities and structural limitations of other European societies up to and including that of the eighteenth century. Moreover, productivity and economic integration in pre-industrial Europe were not stagnant or constant values but exhibited rises and falls from time to time and place to place.

Pleket's evaluation, in effect, put a floor under the discussion that has elevated it considerably above the minimalist position and opened the way to further exploration of

²³⁰ Moses I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

²³¹ See the in-depth discussion of Finley's position in Henri Willy Pleket, "Wirtschaft," in *Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. Friedrich Vittinghoff (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990), 32 – 9. Pleket points out that Finley had, in effect, expanded Bücher's earlier concept of an Ancient *Hausarbeit* economy into the super-*oikos* of a city-state (p. 34).

²³² Pleket, "Wirtschaft."

²³³ Pleket, "Wirtschaft," 43 – 6; Keith Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 B.C. – A.D. 400)," *Journal of Roman Studies* 70 (1980): 101 – 25.

progressive aspects of the Roman economic system. Revisiting the question about a decade after Pleket, Peter Temin sought to demonstrate that, on balance, the Roman empire was best characterized as a market economy.²³⁴ First, the ubiquity of coins demonstrates that quotidian items such as food routinely were bought (at fluctuating prices). There also was a monetized real estate market, and the making of cash loans and the taking of interest were well-attested practices. Even if most peasants were subsistence farmers, they still regularly marketed surpluses. Finally, though local markets were not tied together as closely as today, they were nevertheless in communication.²³⁵ Similarly, studies of Roman *institores* or business agents suggest a world of complex economic pursuits and the possibility of profits in trade being spread among a wide number of participants.²³⁶ Further, on the topic of Roman technological stagnation (as frequently asserted by the Primitivists) or its opposite, a study by Andrew Wilson suggests that the use of water power, at least, was highly developed.²³⁷ Examples of its application are batteries of flour mills around the city of Rome and extensive hydraulic gold mining in northwestern Spain.

The Rhine - Danube interface zone

If the Roman empire appears, thus, economically advanced, integrated, and dynamic not only in its core areas, such as Italy and the city of Rome, but in outlying corners such as the Spanish mines, how did it affect economically trans-frontier areas such as those north of the Rhine and Danube? To answer this question, we must first understand that the Roman frontier itself was no line of static defense but a zone of dynamic interaction; moreover, this conception, according to C. R. Whittaker,²³⁸ was the governing one for the Romans themselves. Rome regarded the entire *orbis terrarum* as its rightful sphere of

²³⁴ Peter Temin, "A Market Economy in the Early Roman Empire," *Journal of Roman Studies* 91 (2001): 169 – 81.

²³⁵ Temin, "Market Economy," 180 – 1.

²³⁶ J.-J. Aubert, *Business Managers in Ancient Rome: A Social and Economic Study of Institores, 200 B.C. – A.D. 250* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); Jeremy Paterson, review of *Business Managers in Ancient Rome*, by J.-J. Aubert, *Journal of Roman Studies* (1997): 268.

²³⁷ Andrew Wilson, "Machines, Power and the Ancient Economy," *Journal of Roman Studies* 92 (2002): 1 – 32.

²³⁸ C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

influence, recognizing no legal bounds to its power but only practical limits of present control; i.e., there was a difference between provinces, with close administration, and unorganized territory, but that was an inherently mutable distinction, with the line of demarcation shifting at the Romans' discretion.²³⁹ The Rhine and the Danube did not remain at the focus of Roman activity across central Europe for four centuries because they made good, strategic defensive positions,²⁴⁰ but rather because these rivers with their connecting tributaries and roads could function as lateral supply lines supporting major strings of military bases.²⁴¹

In this view, the *limes* system along these rivers was not a frontier so much as it was the backbone of a dynamic Roman presence that projected immense influence to both sides—into the frontier provinces from the North Sea to the Black Sea and northwards into *Germania libera*, *Dacia*, and nearer Scythia. In the words of J. J. Wilkes:

What now seems ever clearer is that the Roman military cordon along the [Danube] was the core of a complex pattern of relationships based on settlements and installations on either side of the river. In that sense the river Danube was no longer a line of demarcation but rather the spine for a military and civil association that grew up in the second century and continued more or less intact until the later decades of the fourth century A.D.²⁴²

The system remained geographically stable for so long because the Romans did not discover a way to recreate a similarly capacious and well-connected supply system further north.

²³⁹ Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 10 – 29, 43. The *limes* itself, in original meaning, signified an inroad or access vector rather than a fence.

²⁴⁰ Benjamin Isaac, "The Meaning of the Terms *limes* and *limitanei*," *Journal of Roman Studies* 78 (1988): 125 – 47, notes that this conception was established primarily by Mommsen around the turn of the twentieth century. An interesting elaboration of the concept is in Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), wherein he postulates an expansive phase under the Julio-Claudians followed by the formation of a strategic defensive line along the Rhine-Danube axis in the second century and a third phase (third and fourth centuries) in which the perimeter defense was given up in favor of a "defense-in-depth." See Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 62 n. 4 and 66 notes 6, 7 for positive and negative receptions of Luttwak. Whittaker points out that there is no good evidence that Roman thinking or practice ever conformed to these three "phases" (pp. 66 – 71).

²⁴¹ Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 46.

²⁴² J. J. Wilkes, "The Roman Danube: An Archaeological Survey," *Journal of Roman Studies* 95 (2005): 159.

The Rhine and Danube arteries were supplied, at the start at least, from the Mediterranean areas, with routes developed following the same geographical constraints that had shaped exchange in the Bronze and Iron Age. For the Rhine, the major link was via the Rhône corridor. Once the river and road links across Gaul that were necessary for the maintenance of the initial deployments of the Rhine armies had been well established, however, the infrastructure thus created tended to channel even civilian trade along the same lines, apparently inhibiting the development of alternative routes of trade that might seem to have had fewer intrinsic costs.²⁴³ In the case of Roman Britain, for example, London and the southeast were very strongly connected with the Rhine and also with the port of Boulogne via Dover and Richborough—the last three connected as bases of the *classis Britannica*. Intensive shipping extended up the east coast as far as Hadrians' Wall, while by contrast east-to-west traffic along the south coast of Britain was sporadic at best.²⁴⁴ Both northern Gaul and Britain developed as supply sources for the Rhine army establishment.²⁴⁵

For Rhaetia and the upper Danube, in addition to a road that was opened through the Schwarzwald to Gaul in the later first century AD and earlier routes via Switzerland to Lake Constance and Kempten (Cambodunum), the road over the Alps to the upper Rhine and Chur was of importance. In the fourth century, the road over the Brenner pass via Innsbruck (Wilten, Veldidena) to Augsburg was set with forts and storehouses.²⁴⁶ Notably, the third-century Roman withdrawal from the Rhaetian *limes* back to the line of the Rhine from Basel to Lake Constance and thence north to the Iller retained control over the *navigable* upwards extent of the Danube, i.e. from about the confluence with the

²⁴³ Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 100 and n. 7, referring to calculations by Fulford on the relative costs of sea, river, and road transport. Details of the supply system in both its government-directed and mercantile aspects are discussed pp. 99 – 113. See also a summary of fiscally driven exchange relationships in the Roman empire in Wickham, *Framing*, 76 – 80.

²⁴⁴ Michael Mulford, "Coasting Britannia: Roman Trade and Traffic Around the Shores of Britain," in *Communities and Connections: Essays in Honour of Barry Cunliffe*, ed. Chris Gosden et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 54 – 74. See also discussion in Section 4.4 below.

²⁴⁵ The connection between Romanizing economic development in Gallia Belgica and demand from the Rhine armies is stressed by Frézouls, "Gallien und römisches Germanien," 436.

²⁴⁶ Michael Mackensen, "Late Roman Fortifications and Building Programmes in the Province of Rhaetia: The Evidence of Recent Excavations and Some New Reflections," in *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999), 230 – 9. Grain, perhaps, was grown locally rather hauled over the Alps, but the products of northern Italian military *fabricae* were indeed transported along this route.

Iller downstream.²⁴⁷ Further east, the Romans developed the road from Italy over the Julian Alps to Pannonia.²⁴⁸ The lower Danube received shipments from the Aegean via the Black Sea.²⁴⁹

The Roman military presence along the Rhine and the Danube shaped the frontier zone in many other ways in addition to spurring the development of long-distance supply and exchange networks. In the first century AD, Roman coinage gradually replaced native Gallic monies as soldiers' pay circulated into the *canabae* and *vici* alongside the military posts and, eventually, into the local population more generally.²⁵⁰ The Romans continued and expanded Iron-Age European industries such as pottery making and brass production in the Rhineland and northern Gaul, glass making in Cologne, the quarrying of quernstones, and extensive iron mining. They also planted vineyards, now, along the Rhine and the Moselle.²⁵¹

However, just as native coinage and units of value evidently persisted in northern Gaul long after Roman coins became available,²⁵² so also in other ways the frontier provinces (*Germania inferior* and *superior*, the *Agri Decumates*, *Rhaetia*) were a zone of intense intermixing between Roman and indigenous cultures.²⁵³ Moreover, the Romans and the provincials had lively interchanges with the (relatively) uncontrolled populations living to the north. Whereas it used to be imagined that the Romans maintained virtually a hermetic seal between their civilization on the one hand and the barbarians on the other,²⁵⁴ the more recent conception emphasizes that the Romans set up trade portals—

²⁴⁷ C. Sebastian Sommer, "From Conquered Territory to Roman Province: Recent Discoveries and Debate on the Roman Occupation of Southwest Germany," in *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999), 168.

²⁴⁸ Wilkes, "Roman Danube," 147. This is, of course, the southern segment of the old Iron Age amber route.

²⁴⁹ Wilkes, "Roman Danube," 156, 172.

²⁵⁰ David G. Wigg, "The Development of the Monetary Economy in N Gaul in the Late La Tène and Early Roman Periods," in *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999), 113 – 15.

²⁵¹ Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, 187 – 9.

²⁵² Wigg, "Development of the Monetary Economy in N Gaul," 107 – 17.

²⁵³ Wells, *Barbarians Speak*, 122 – 47, including a map of the Roman frontier zone along the Rhine and the upper Danube (p. 123, fig. 17).

²⁵⁴ Karl Samwer, "Die Grenzpolizei des römischen Reichs," *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst* 5 (1886): 311 – 2.

portoria—in those areas, such as the middle Rhine, where dense and commercially active native populations on the other side made such stations worthwhile to maintain.²⁵⁵

Clearly, the Romans had no qualms about exceeding the Rhine-Danube line when it suited their interests to do so, and this involvement with the lands of *Germania libera*, *Dacia*, and *Scythia* took a multitude of forms.²⁵⁶ In some cases, such as Trajan's Dacian campaigns of 101 – 105, it was a pre-emptive war against a militarily dangerous state-level entity,²⁵⁷ incidentally also securing access to Transylvania's mineral riches.²⁵⁸ In other times and places the focus was on the manipulation of barbarian leaders through diplomatic gifts and subsidies.²⁵⁹

One of the most important considerations continued to be the long term security of basic supplies for the frontier military establishment, and here a number of interesting instances can be reviewed briefly. Part of the reason for seizing the Wetterau district (just northeast of the Rhine-Main confluence) in AD 83 – 85 may have been to protect the major base at Mainz (Mogontiacum) and to interdict the main north-south invasion route along the right bank of the Rhine.²⁶⁰ However, the Wetterau happens to be an extremely fertile lowland loess plain, which soon boasted some 250 *villae rusticae*—enough, according to A. Kreuz, to feed the Roman forces stationed in the Taunus and

²⁵⁵ William G. Kerr, "Economic Warfare on the Northern Limes: *portoria* and the Germans," in *Roman Frontier Studies 1989: Proceedings of the XVth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, ed. Valerie A. Maxfield and Michael J. Dobson (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), 442 – 5.

²⁵⁶ I have argued elsewhere that for Roman and later Greek writers *Germania* and *Scythia* were vague but none-the-less concrete designations for two environmentally contrasting regions to the north of the Greco-Roman world, namely the woodland environment of central and east-central Europe and the steppe environment in parts of southeastern Europe and north of the Black Sea. Arnold Lelis, "Ethnicity and Migrations in the Territory of *Germania*, 500 BC – AD 800: The Correlation of Archaeological, Linguistic, Genetic, and Historical Evidence," (unpublished: submitted June 2003 to members of my MA committee at the University of Minnesota), in the section "Application: Territorial Definition of the Subject."

²⁵⁷ Thus, for example, Luttwak, *Grand Strategy*, 97 – 101.

²⁵⁸ Wilkes, "Roman Danube," 174, for Roman mining activities in Dacia.

²⁵⁹ See for example Lynn F. Pitts, "Relations between Rome and the German 'Kings' on the Middle Danube in the First to Fourth Centuries A.D.," *Journal of Roman Studies* 79 (1989): 45 – 58. Pitts argues for a "third zone" along parts of the frontier marked by intense Roman diplomatic and economic influence that was neither Roman provincial territory nor yet entirely autonomous barbarian land. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 44 – 5, speaks of creating new "limbs" or incipient members of empire among Germanic tribes as older clients are more fully absorbed.

²⁶⁰ Luttwak, *Grand Strategy*, 92 – 3.

Wetterau without recourse to outside food sources.²⁶¹ In a similar vein, Sebastian Sommer has argued that a major motivation for the Roman advance eastwards from the Rhine into the Neckar valley was to develop the agricultural potential of this area through “centrally planned immigration and occupation of the land,” which resulted in a string of evenly spaced *civitates* and other centers filling in behind the advancing fort-line. The *limes* was not advanced further east, according to Sommer, because in its final position it rested on less fertile land; i.e., on land that would not have been worth colonizing if the perimeter were set forward yet again.²⁶² This may be a localized instance of a more general insight developed also by Whittaker: that advances into *Germania libera* for the Romans usually resulted in a negative cost-benefit analysis and thus tended to keep their positions closer to the Rhine-Danube line.²⁶³

Roman influence North

For the most part, then, the Romans settled for forms of control and influence in *Germania libera* looser than those exercised in the provinces. One way that this influence can be plotted is by the distribution pattern of Roman artifacts that are being recovered archaeologically throughout the modern Netherlands, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Denmark, and parts of Norway and Sweden.²⁶⁴ Artifacts might, of course, arrive at their eventual find-spots by a number of means or combinations thereof: as trade items, as official gifts or rewards, as tribute, as plunder.²⁶⁵

To choose between these various possibilities it is necessary to place the imported artifacts in the context of Roman Iron Age (AD 1 – 400) development of settlements,

²⁶¹ A. Kreuz, “Becoming a Roman Farmer: Preliminary Report on the Environmental Evidence from the Romanization Project,” in *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999), 91 –4.

²⁶² Sommer, “From Conquered Territory to Roman Province,” 177 – 88.

²⁶³ Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 85 – 9.

²⁶⁴ The fundamental work on the trans-*limes* distribution of Roman artifacts is Hans Jürgen Eggers, *Der römische Import im freien Germanien* (Hamburg: Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte, 1951). The tremendous pace of archaeological activity in Germany (and neighboring countries) makes it increasingly difficult to update that database comprehensively. See R. J. A. Wilson and J. D. Creighton, “Introduction: Recent Research on Roman Germany,” in *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999), 9 – 11, for the most relevant publications as of the late 1990s.

²⁶⁵ Rafael von Uslar, “Die Germanen,” in *Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. Friedrich Vittinghoff (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990), 733 – 4.

burials, and native artifacts. Much of *Germania* seems to have experienced little change in response to the advent of the Romans; this is true particularly in the forms of the basic subsistence farming-herding economy of the region and its general lack of urbanized centers.²⁶⁶ Some particular areas of *Germania*, however, showed a much higher degree of involvement with the Roman system, one of the most interesting of which are the coastlands between the Rhine delta and Denmark. There, intensively studied agricultural settlements such as Feddersen Wierde show remarkable growth and prosperity in the first-to-fourth centuries, evidenced by clusters of longhouses with both living quarters and facilities for stalling of animals, large numbers of animals (hundreds kept concurrently), and the presence of considerable quantities of Roman imports.²⁶⁷ Though located some 150 miles northeast of the Roman frontier on the Rhine estuary, Feddersen Wierde was engaged in a lively, long-term exchange of products such as meat and hides for Roman luxuries, coins, and manufactured goods. Whittaker suggests even that there was an interregional exchange system involving cattle producing areas to the north of the Rhine (Frisia, coastal Saxony) and prime grain-growing areas (parts of Gallia Belgica) to the south.²⁶⁸

A similarly intense level of indigenous trans-frontier involvement with the Roman side can be observed in many other sectors along the Rhine and Danube, to the extent that several researchers have proposed to understand these interactions collectively, characterized as a zone—with one or more additional zones lying beyond. Whittaker, Wells, and Cunliffe each have proposed such analyses, in which it is attempted to correlate broad, horizontal (in relationship to the frontier line) slices of geographical space with differentiated sets of archaeological finds *and* also differentiated socio-economic processes. In Whittaker's summary, there was

a *Vorlimes* region consisting of those who received the more mundane commodities of regular exchange—ceramics, wine, and probably wheat—in

²⁶⁶ Von Uslar, "Die Germanen," 712 – 23; Kreuz, "Becoming a Roman Farmer," 71 – 90, points out some of the changes that came to Roman-occupied frontier regions such as the Wetterau, including the shift from woodland pasturing of animals to the cultivation of hay meadows.

²⁶⁷ Wells, *Barbarians Speak*, 244 – 5. The Roman demand for animal products could be huge. Wells notes that a single legion would have needed the hides of some 54,000 calves for tents alone (p. 145).

²⁶⁸ Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 113 – 15, 118 – 20, and map fig. 33.

contrast to those beyond, to whom there went mainly rare, prestige articles of bronze, glass, and silver associated with gift exchange.²⁶⁹

According to Whittaker, then, there are two zones, the inner one extending to about 200 kilometers and an outer one extending an unspecified further distance, with different sets of Roman imports and Germanic exports characteristic for each zone.²⁷⁰ Moreover, a different mode or principle of exchange is held to operate in each of the two zones.

Wells' analysis, meanwhile, appears somewhat more elaborate and also more nuanced. He also sees the Roman influence on the trans-*limes* territories varying with distance from the frontier, but in this case the inner zone is only 100 kilometers deep. The valleys of the Lippe and Ruhr rivers in Westphalia, for example, are thick with imported Roman pottery and other utilitarian goods, suggesting intensive, routine commercial exchanges in which the natives increased their productivity in order to acquire such things at Roman border posts, *vici*, and other markets.²⁷¹ Farther out, in a zone 100 – 400 kilometers deep (as far as the Elbe, roughly), the character of the finds shifts, according to Wells. Roman weapons and vessels of bronze and glass turn up in the graves of presumed auxiliary soldiers returning from service in the Roman military; this is increasingly common from the middle of the second century AD.²⁷² Many rich graves contain weapons and fancy Roman vessels.²⁷³ Even in this zone, however, communities could also engage in trade with the Romans, albeit at longer-distance. Some communities were importing Roman metal (bronze and silver) and adopting Roman provincial styles to produce fibulae and ornaments for local consumption.²⁷⁴ In a third, outermost zone, that beyond 400 kilometers, spectacular Roman artifacts found their way to commercial centers such as Gudme on the Danish island of Fyn (which flourished throughout the Roman Iron Age and onwards into the fifth century) and Jakuszowice in

²⁶⁹ Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 122.

²⁷⁰ See the chart in Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 123 fig. 34. Exports from the German side list “geese, soap, amber, hides, wagons, clothing articles.”

²⁷¹ Wells, *Barbarians Speak*, 235 – 6.

²⁷² Wells, *Barbarians Speak*, 236 – 9. In regard to the military gear, Walter Reinhard, “Ein Germane im römischen Militärdienst,” in *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2002), 304 – 5, shows the widespread distribution of Roman military belt fittings in Germany during the late fourth and fifth centuries.

²⁷³ Wells, *Barbarians Speak*, 240 – 4.

²⁷⁴ Wells, *Barbarians Speak*, 244 – 5.

Poland (second to fifth centuries). Both places show evidence of elite residences, accumulations of spectacular wealth, and evidence for various kinds of local production (crafts, mining, amber) that could have underpinned a commercial relationship with the Roman world.²⁷⁵ Notably, Wells emphasizes commercial relations in all zones to a greater extent than does Whittaker.

Cunliffe, as well, identifies zones within *Germania* comparable to, though not identical with, the ones proposed by Whitaker and Wells. In Cunliffe's scheme, a "market zone" extends some 200 kilometers from the Roman frontier, where lower-value imports and Roman coins are common.²⁷⁶ Next, in the "rich burial zone" characterized by luxury imports and graves of the Lübsow type, which encompasses Denmark and the Elbe and Oder watersheds, Cunliffe envisages a "classic prestige goods economy" similar to the one that operated in the late Hallstatt period at places like Mont Lassois and Heuneburg.²⁷⁷ In the Vistula basin and eastwards, Cunliffe sees a "warrior burial zone," in which populations characterized by a more egalitarian warrior culture appear to have become destabilized in the late second and third centuries—recalling events of the early La Tène period in central Europe.²⁷⁸ Cunliffe, much more so than Whittaker and Wells, makes explicit the parallels between the earlier age of Mediterranean-to-Temperate European exchanges and the new set of relationships between Romans and Germanic barbarians that hinged upon the Rhine – Danube frontier.

Altogether, the archaeological evidence shows that Temperate Europe outside the boundaries of the Roman empire was heavily influenced by the presence and activities of Romans on the Rhine and the Danube. Whether demand for supplies for the Roman military along the *limes*, or imports of Roman utilitarian objects, or the transfer of various grades of prestige-conferring and luxury goods, the sheer mass as well as quality of Roman material culture incited far-reaching reactions on the part of indigenous Temperate European populations, including motivation to engage in commercial contacts of various kinds. Clearly, the effects of the interaction had not only economic or

²⁷⁵ Wells, *Barbarians Speak*, 245 – 51. Gudme will be discussed in greater detail in Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* below.

²⁷⁶ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 184.

²⁷⁷ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 184 – 6.

²⁷⁸ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 186 – 9.

material-cultural consequences but also played a part in the evolution of native elites, and possibly accelerated the development of proto-towns, proto-states, and higher levels of organized warfare to the north of the *limes*.²⁷⁹ Along the new frontiers, exchange systems similar to those that formerly had connected the Mediterranean rim with the transalpine regions extended now hundreds of miles further into north-central Europe than had been the case previously. In short, the stage was set for the repetition of patterns of consolidation, expansion, and reaction.

3.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been (1) to outline certain fundamental patterns in the distribution of environmental conditions, natural resources, prime settlement areas, and avenues of communication within the area of study broadly defined and (2) to suggest ways that the foregoing have created a context for recurrent patterns of exchange within this area. Long-distance exchange of material objects and resources has been evident in the Temperate European region certainly from the Neolithic onwards, continuing through the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and into the Roman period. In the latter two periods, especially, connections with the Mediterranean region had gained greatly in frequency and intensity.

In all periods, one of the most fundamental constants appears to have been the concentration of population and material culture in certain favored areas. Denmark, to take one of these, was the location of the highly successful Ertebølle culture at the end of the Mesolithic and transition into the Neolithic. Denmark was the materially and socio-culturally dominant “core” vis-à-vis the rest of Scandinavia in the so-called Scandinavian Bronze Age of the second millennium BC. During the Iron Age, when the northern parts of Temperate Europe became more isolated from the main currents of exchange, Denmark was at the center of the development of the Jastorf culture, which is associated with the crystallization of Germanic language and culture. In the Roman period, sites such as Gudme were again spectacularly wealthy via outside contacts, and Denmark as a

²⁷⁹ Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 127 – 31; Wells, *Barbarians Speak*, 252 – 6; Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 171 – 84. The gradual assimilation of the trans-frontier Germans to the Roman level is a topic that also will receive fuller discussion in Section 4.4 below.

whole experienced considerable economic and political development. Subsequently, Denmark played a key role as interface between the Scandinavian – Baltic world and the Latin Christian world of western Europe in the Carolingian period. Similarly, one can note that northern Bohemia was a core area in the Bronze Age and was, again, a center of dense settlements with a Germanic culture in the first century BC;²⁸⁰ in the second century AD it was the center of the powerful Marcomannic group, and still later the core of the medieval kingdom of Bohemia. A third example may be found in southern Germany, where the distribution of late-Iron Age *Viereckschanzen* is concentrated in the lozenge-shaped area of lowlands between the Alps and the upper Danube.²⁸¹ The Roman province of Rhaetia, defined in the north by a string of forts along the Danube, conformed to the same geographical parameters as had the pre-Roman Celtic culture in that area.²⁸²

Likewise, the main routes of long-distance communication have followed recurrent patterns shaped by the geography of the region. Notably, the Rhône corridor, certain Alpine passes, and the Ljubljana Gap have channeled communications between Temperate Europe and the Mediterranean region from the Bronze Age onwards into the Roman period. In the “hilly uplands” area between the Alps and the North European Plain, routes of travel tended to conform with the trend of valleys and river courses amid the highland areas, while on the plains northward to the Baltic coast the paths threaded among bogs and marshes. Some long-distance routes, such as the Iron-Age amber trail from the southeastern Baltic to the Adriatic, traversed all three of these major topographical zones—the plains, the uplands, and the Alps. By the Roman period, if not earlier, the Rhine and the Danube served as major transport arteries. Moreover, the

²⁸⁰ For the latter, see Angelika Wigg, “Confrontation and Interaction: Celts, Germans and Romans in the Central German Highlands,” in *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999), 41 fig. 1.4, which shows the concentrations of Germanic archaeological finds north of the *limes*. Other massive concentrations are visible in Thuringia and along the middle Elbe.

²⁸¹ Bittel, K., S. Schiek, and D. Müller. *Die keltischen Viereckschanzen*. Stuttgart: Atlas archäologischer Geländedenkmäler in Baden-Württemberg, 1990), fig. 9. The *Viereckschanzen* are a type of rectangular enclosure typical in settlements of that area. They extend also into the Neckar and Main valleys, but their heaviest concentration is on the plains of Swabia and Bavaria.

²⁸² Sommer, “From Conquered Territory to Roman Province,” 160 fig. 6.1. Almost immediately north of the Danube begins a line of highlands, which helps to define the territory. Rhaetia did also include blocks of Alpine territory to the south of the lowlands.

Roman Iron Age confirmed the extensive development of sailing routes, including those between the Rhine and the Thames and along the North Sea coastlands towards Denmark. As will be seen below, most of these lines of communication and exchange remained vital in the Merovingian and Carolingian periods also.²⁸³

Exchange relations in Temperate Europe have been evident from the Neolithic onwards, involving variously both items of sustenance and other desirable resources such as metals, amber, and furs. A fundamental circumstance underlying the trade dynamics is the fact that the North European Plain and the Baltic Sea region generally are devoid of metals, in particular of gold, silver, copper and tin, but the north had an entrance into the exchange systems via furs and amber. Many localities in the “hilly uplands” and Alps regions as well as other areas of western and southeastern Europe, meanwhile, are rich in various metals, including high-grade iron ore. These circumstances, combined with the aforementioned patterns of settlement and connecting routes, resulted, for example, in the Bronze Age exchange system of Dacian gold, North Bohemian bronze, and Danish amber. Moreover, as Wells has demonstrated, from the late Bronze and early Iron Ages onwards the evidence for the exchange systems becomes rich enough to suggest that certain individuals and communities in both parts of Temperate Europe began to specialize in maintaining and facilitating these systems. The mass of material being produced and distributed—e.g., bronze, iron, salt—makes it clear that these activities had real economic motivations and consequences and that they must, therefore, have had a commercial aspect, regardless of what additional cultural meanings they may have carried.

Taken as a whole, the Temperate European region has had ongoing interactions with two additional environmentally definable zones or regions, the Mediterranean and the Eurasian steppe, each of which has had its own distinct developmental trajectory. While Temperate Europe has continued to experience a wide range of interactions with both of these regions from the Neolithic onwards, the interactions involving the steppe zone have not found mention in the present chapter; they will, however, figure in the discussion in Section 5.3 and Section 7.3 below. Interactions with the Mediterranean

²⁸³ See especially Section 5.3, Section 7.1, and Section 7.3.

region, meanwhile, greatly increased in intensity from ca. 600 BC, when parts of the western Mediterranean—the south coast of Gaul and Italy, in particular—clearly overtook the Temperate European areas in their level of economic and political organization. As described by both Wells and Cunliffe, this led to a series of exchanges that could, in part at least, be explained by application of the core-periphery model. Also, with the more hierarchical organization of the Mediterranean societies comes clear evidence of a demand for coerced labor and, thus, for an organized slave trade—the exchange of individuals from Temperate Europe for Mediterranean products such as wine and high-value metalwork. Furthermore, the nature of the exchanges becomes more explicitly commercial, with abundant evidence for both Mediterraneans (Greeks, Etruscans, Romans, South Italians) and Temperate Europeans (Gauls, Noricans) collaborating in the trade.

Finally, Roman military expansion northwards in the first century BC and the early first century AD created a somewhat artificial division in Temperate Europe that cut across previous patterns of development. All of the alpine and much of the hilly uplands region became Roman-administered territory and experienced accelerated commercial and industrial development under the Roman imperial state. Further, the new military and political frontier, in effect, projected the influence of the Mediterranean zone more directly into the northern half of Temperate Europe than it had reached formerly. This new position then recreated many of the patterns of exchange that had characterized interactions between the Mediterranean and the southern half of Temperate Europe previously.

In the subsequent chapters, we will see how the position was transformed once more in the fifth and sixth centuries. The evolution of economic activity and avenues of exchange in the early medieval period led, thence, to the consolidation during the Carolingian era of a larger, transcontinental exchange circuit, which linked all of western Eurasia from the Mediterranean to Scandinavia and from Francia to the Caucasus to form a complex, intercommunicating system. It will be argued that the Temperate and Northern European areas were as important and no less “central” in the overall system than were the Mediterranean and Near Eastern lands.

Chapter 4:
From Roman to post-Roman I: The Imperial System and Its Fate, AD 200 – 600

4.0 Introduction

The extension northwards to the Rhine and Danube of Roman imperial control, and the establishment in the late first century BC and the first century AD of a new interface zone between the Roman-dominated Mediterranean system and indigenous Temperate European societies, had profound effects on subsequent development of exchange systems for populations on both sides of the *limes*. In order to understand the new configurations, it was necessary to offer a brief analysis of the nature of the Roman system.¹ Similarly profound effects followed upon the withdrawal of much of the Roman imperial system and the dissolution or transformation of the former frontier zone, which came in turn some four or five centuries later. Therefore, an evaluation of the systemic transformations in the Roman imperial structure will be necessary in order to understand the emergence of a new, early medieval Temperate Europe around the time of the traditional Ancient – Medieval period boundary. Unfortunately, although the two sides of the process of change—the declining Roman-imperial and the emergent post-Roman Temperate European—are intimately connected, issues of manageability require that they be considered in sequence. The present chapter will focus on the first aspect: the Roman imperial system and its fate.

What happened to the exchange systems of the Mediterranean, Temperate Europe, and the northern waters after the peak of imperial political and military power passed ca. AD 200? This question involves a host of contentious and unresolved issues concerning the fate of the Roman empire in the third to sixth centuries and whether that fate should best be characterized as a “fall” or as a “transformation.” Two recent entries in this debate are representative. On the transformationist side, Walter Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, restates his position that the Romans made deliberate adjustments in policy in the face of changed circumstances and so kept in control of the processes of change without

¹ See Section 3.4 above.

serious disruption.² As the title implies, the emphasis in Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*, is, by contrast, on systemic disruption wrought by barbarian invaders, which had long-lasting negative consequences for the material and cultural level of most people in the former western half of the Empire.³ Clearly, the assessment that one would make of the likely condition of late Roman and early medieval economic systems in Temperate Europe shifts dramatically depending on which choice – or nuance thereof—one would entertain. For at stake is not only the productive capacity of these regions and the persistence or destruction of necessary infrastructure for markets and trade but even the capacity, in social and political terms, of the populations involved to maintain meaningful levels of material exchange as part of their cultural outlook.

The aim in this and the following chapter will be to demonstrate that a level of continuity was maintained—in certain key areas, at least, such as Constantinople, Gaul, the Rhineland, and Denmark—sufficient to sustain surplus production, long-distance interactions, and commerce-oriented cultural infrastructure from late Roman times through the Merovingian period into the eighth century. Fortunately, this demonstration does not depend on the solution of all outstanding issues connected with the fall of the Roman empire! The first decade of the twenty-first century has, in fact, brought forth a number of important works that refine and clarify various aspects of the question in light of fresh thinking and masses of new or re-evaluated data. Though the positions defended by the authors vary widely, much of their data overlap to a significant degree. A reasonable minimal balance of the facts admitted by most participants in the discussion still leaves plenty of room for both the survival of economic activity well beyond a primitive subsistence level and for the persistence of institutional memory in those areas of Temperate Europe with which the present study is most concerned.

Two general points will help to clarify the assumptions under which the proposed analysis will proceed. First, significant change from “Roman” to “Early Medieval” was not the result of a single period of acute crisis—not even the cumulative crises of one

² Walter Goffart, *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

³ Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome, and the End of Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

century, e.g. the fifth. Indeed, our idea of the “Fall of Rome” very likely is the highly persuasive artifact of certain East Roman historians writing in the late fifth and early sixth centuries.⁴ Rome, in fact, underwent continuous change throughout its long history. In his essay on *The First Millennium AD*,⁵ Klavs Randsborg divided that time span into two-hundred year phases, labeled Early Roman, Late Roman, Late Antiquity, Early Byzantine/Early Islamic, Middle Byzantine/Middle Islamic. Such phasing suggests a more continuous process of change through a series of smaller steps—rather than one huge leap or fall at a single point. Further, Randsborg points out an apparent rhythm through these phases, wherein the odd numbered centuries (first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth) seem to be times of rapid build-up or upheaval, while the even numbered ones represent periods of stability and consolidation.⁶

The second general point is that we should not regard the Roman world and the barbarian world to the north as two monolithically opposed entities, each with largely unified experiences, and with clashing trajectories.⁷ Within each of the sides around this conceptual divide, different areas could have strikingly different experiences within the same time frame, while, conversely, Roman and barbarian areas could engage in interaction and display long-term parallels in development. So, for example, Randsborg remarks that the historical development of the northwestern European region might better reflect a periodization of 300 – 500, 500 – 700, 700 – 900; i.e., staggered with that of the main sequence in the Mediterranean, while encompassing both Roman provinces and non-Roman areas in Free Germany and Scandinavia.⁸

Despite the above caveats, we can admit that the period of the *Pax Romana* (first and second centuries AD) has an aspect of ideal Classical-Mediterranean cultural and

⁴ Walter Goffart, “Zosimus, the First Historian of Rome’s Fall,” in idem, *Rome’s Fall and After* (London: Hambledon Press, 1989), 81 – 110. Cf. the trope of the “Middle Ages” originated by the fifteenth-century Italian humanists.

⁵ Klavs Randsborg, *The First Millennium AD in Europe and the Mediterranean: An Archaeological Essay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁶ Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 8 – 9.

⁷ Goffart has repeatedly denied unity of identity and purpose to the barbarians: Walter Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans AD 418 – 584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 4, 24 – 8; Walter Goffart, “Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians,” in idem, *Rome’s Fall and After* (London: Hambledon Press, 1989), 4 – 5; and Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 40 – 55.

⁸ Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 8.

economic integration—the Roman imperial system working at its best—compared to which developments after ca. AD 200 have had, to many modern historians, the appearance of a retreat from prosperity and unity. More precisely, we should say that the structures of the High Empire became progressively altered and in some cases wholly dismantled as time moves forward from the third century into the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. Changes in the imperial superstructure certainly had an impact on the conditions for exchange, both in the Mediterranean and in adjoining Temperate Europe, and the balance of these structural or systemic changes—political, economic, demographic—is fundamental to understanding the post-imperial economy.

It is not the case, however, that every step away from the forms of the High Empire under the Antonines in the second century, or even the reorganized Late Empire of the fourth century, is *ipso facto* a retrogression in viability and well-being.⁹ As Bachrach has said regarding the evolution of cities:

The process by which the *forum*, *thermae*, and *amphitheatrum* gave way to the *moenia* as the basic topographical element that gave definition to the *urbs* is also the process by which the ancient world ended and the medieval world began.¹⁰

The shift in the infrastructural form of towns was paralleled also by a cultural shift from pagan to Christian, but, as Bachrach shows in the case of Metz,¹¹ towns in the Late Roman (fourth and fifth centuries) and post-Roman (sixth century and beyond) periods could and did remain populated and prosperous. Thus, to categorically prefer the classic Greco-Roman pagan city to the walled Christian city must be a matter of personal cultural taste on the part of the observer, not an objective assessment of urban functionality and the general health of Late- and post-Roman society and economy. Similar comments could be made about the preference for a centralized, imperial political

⁹ The so-called “good emperors” extend from the accession of Nerva in 96, through Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius to the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180. The later period of unity and strength extends from the accession of Diocletian in 285 at least through the death of Valens in 378, after which, especially in the fifth-century West, imperial unity and territorial integrity deteriorates once more. See discussion in Section 4.3 below.

¹⁰ Bernard S. Bachrach, “Imperial Walled Cities in the West: An Examination of Their Early Medieval *Nachleben*,” in *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 192.

¹¹ Bernard S. Bachrach, “Fifth Century Metz: Late Roman Christian Urbs or Ghost Town?” *An Tard* 10 (2002): 363 – 81.

system vis-à-vis the regionalized administrations of the Romano-German kingdoms that replaced it in the West in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Whatever long-term damage—infrastructural ruin, cultural decay, depopulation—may have accrued from the political dislocations, invasions, and wars of the third through sixth centuries must be assessed on a case-by-case basis with regard to specific localities, provinces, and regions. This is as true for the Mediterranean portions of the Empire as it is for the frontier provinces and the trans-*limes* areas. Indeed, such an approach has become increasingly standard, recognizing that different areas within the Empire fared strikingly more or less well at various times in the third through sixth centuries and that a uniform descent into chaos and squalor cannot be demonstrated.¹² It is a question, however, of long-term *structural change*, which ultimately affected all areas within the erstwhile Roman imperial sphere of influence.

4.1 Decline of the Imperial Economy

A convenient starting point for an analysis of systemic changes in the centuries of transition from Roman to medieval is Michael McCormick's assessment of the question in Part One of his massive *Origins of the European Economy*.¹³ McCormick refers to studies of changes in population density, agricultural and industrial production, imperial fiscal structures, and transport routes, and also considers the effects of diseases and of political events such as the shift of the capital from Italy to the Aegean and the Persian and Arab invasions. From this data, he comes to the conclusion that we can see the beginnings of Roman demographic and economic decline setting in during the third century and continuing, albeit not uniformly, to a final collapse in the seventh century. Moreover, he concludes that the decline starts earliest in the northwestern provinces and

¹² So, for example, in Randsborg, *First Millennium*; and Dick Harrison, "Plague, Settlement and Structural Change at the Dawn of the Middle Ages," *Scandia* 59 (1993): 15 – 48. More recently, Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400 – 800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), sees systemic change in the Roman world but strikingly different outcomes from this in different regions. Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 25 – 119, also recognizes regional differences in response to what he sees, nevertheless, as an overall decline. See discussion in Section 4.1 and Section 4.2 below.

¹³ McCormick, *Origins*, 25 – 119.

comes latest to the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean.¹⁴ This sweeping and coherent vision of millennial change, covering some five centuries and territories spread over a distance of more than two thousand miles, finishes ca. 700 with a politically and economically shrunken Byzantine rump state and with a similarly shrunken remnant of Mediterranean sea lanes which still connect the Aegean with southern Italy. For McCormick, this nadir becomes, however, the starting point of a rapid revival in Mediterranean shipping and trade in the eighth and ninth centuries—the subject of the rest of his book.¹⁵ For the purposes of the present study, McCormick’s vision can serve as a baseline for discussion and amendment.

The Antonine plague

First, the alleged turning point or beginning of decline ca. AD 200. One possible candidate for an event of a magnitude sufficient to have caused fundamental, unremedied changes in economic potential in the Roman world is the so-called Antonine plague or series of epidemic outbreaks in the 160s to 180s. Our sources, however, are too fragmentary to give us a reliable picture of the true scope or effects of these disease outbreaks.¹⁶ Contemporary writers suggest that from twenty to fifty percent of the Roman population died, that the army was nearly wiped out, and that the disease extended from Syria through Greece and Italy as far as Gaul and the Rhine. None of this can be confirmed, though a long list of modern historians have inclined to believe it.¹⁷ Furthermore, even a die-off of 20 – 50 percent should not necessarily have wrecked the

¹⁴ “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.”

McCormick, *Origins*, 34.

¹⁵ “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.” McCormick, *Origins*, 29.

¹⁶ Two studies, a generation apart, cover much the same ground and come to much the same conclusions: J. F. Gilliam, “The Plague under Marcus Aurelius,” *American Journal of Philology* 82 (1961): 225 – 51; and R. S. Duncan-Jones, “The Impact of the Antonine Plague,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 9 (1996): 108 – 36.

¹⁷ Gilliam, “Plague under Marcus Aurelius,” 225 – 6, 247 – 9. Duncan-Jones, “Antonine Plague,” 122 – 33, adduces circumstantial evidence of dislocation during the plague years: a hiatus or severe drop in mint output, inscriptions, public building, and even brick-making. To put alleged death totals into perspective, the city of Rome’s one million population would have had to succumb at the rate of 2,000 per day (the rate claimed for 189 in Dio Cassius 72.14.3 – 4) for seven weeks to reduce itself by 10 percent, over three months to reach 20 percent, and over eight months to achieve a 50 percent drop.

Roman economy nor undermined the social fabric. Deaths on this scale have been suggested for parts of Europe in the fourteenth century, but with overall positive results both for economic and for social development—so for example in England, where the lot of most people improved in the fifteenth century, political chaos and violence at the elite level notwithstanding.¹⁸ Theoretically, the people of Rome could similarly have enjoyed continued or even enhanced well-being in the third century even if the late-second century epidemics had caused a severe loss of population—and also despite the well-attested decline in political stability after 180.¹⁹

Metal production

More intriguing as a possible marker of an economic shift ca. AD 200 is the suggestion of a break in Roman industrial production around that time. The most telling aspect—if proved accurate—would be a significant drop in metal production, mining and smelting. McCormick reads a battery of evidence to demonstrate just such a break and a general decline in metal production proceeding, again, from northwest to east. Items include the cessation of large-scale mining operations in Spain and Britain, the closing of iron works in Gaul, and a drop in lead and copper pollution found in Greenland ice-cores dated to this period.²⁰ Some of McCormick’s data is echoed in Andrew Wilson’s study of ancient agricultural and industrial machinery, especially water-driven devices.²¹ Wilson points to the cessation of large-scale hydraulic mining in northwestern Spain and Wales after AD 200 and speculates that a distinct fall in silver supplies might account for Roman currency debasement.²²

However, an earlier study by Edmondson suggested that the large-scale, state-operated mining enterprises of the late Republic and the Principate gave way from the

¹⁸ A. R. Bridbury, *Economic Growth: England in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962), passim.

¹⁹ McCormick, *Origins*, 38 – 41, discusses generally declining Roman health levels in the fourth to sixth centuries, with a focus on malaria, leprosy, and bubonic plague.

²⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 42 – 53. “In the west certainly, and in the east generally, the large installations typical of the early empire disappeared” (p. 52).

²¹ Andrew Wilson, “Machines, Power and the Ancient Economy,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 92 (2002): 1 – 32.

²² Wilson, “Machines, Power and the Ancient Economy,” 17 – 29.

third century to a preference for smaller-scale and more dispersed systems of metals production, which are more difficult to see archaeologically; i.e., mining continued, but under a different mode of production than before.²³ Edmondson, moreover, found that mining and minting of precious metals continued in Spain and Gaul even into the Visigothic and Merovingian era.²⁴ McCormick admits that there was still mining in the West up to 400, especially around Sardinia and Elba, and later still in parts of the East which, in his view, now had to ship metal to the West; this reading of the evidence follows the “macro-pattern” that he identified at the outset.²⁵ Thus, the apparent break in mining activity ca. AD 200 is equivocal.²⁶ If, as McCormick says, “Theodoric’s Italy was famished for metal: statues and metal fixtures of older construction disappeared into the metallurgists’ cauldron,”²⁷ the explanation could as well be sweeping cultural change, wherein the old artifacts were no longer valued, as that a collapse in western mining and smelting caused a metal shortage.

Ceramics production

The second branch of Roman industry which McCormick reviews to illustrate long-term economic decline after AD 200 is ceramics, with a focus specifically upon African red slip (ARS) fineware.²⁸ Ceramic evidence is even more central for Wickham’s argument in *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, where he asserts that the types, distribution patterns, production modes, quality and quantity of ceramics found archaeologically “are, in my view, surer guides to economic systems than any other form of evidence.”²⁹ Ceramic evidence serves, thus, as a prime comparative index over space and time, not only of

²³ J. C. Edmondson, “Mining in the Later Roman Empire and Beyond: Continuity or Disruption?” *Journal of Roman Studies* 79 (1989): 84 – 102. “Thus mining was still indeed practiced in the later Roman Empire, but, I would suggest, under a different mode of exploitation. The operation of large-scale mining districts had for various reasons become impractical in a changed economic world. Mining did not cease, but there was now more emphasis on smaller-scale exploitation, less directly controlled by the state.”

²⁴ Edmondson, “Mining in the Later Roman Empire,” 99 – 102.

²⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 44 – 9.

²⁶ The Greenland ice-core pollution diagrams themselves, two of which are reproduced in Wilson, “Machines, Power and the Ancient Economy,” 26, 27, are equivocal. The chart for copper pollution shows some distinct peaks both ca. 200 BC and AD 200, but continues then at a fairly high plateau through 1300.

²⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 49.

²⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 53 – 60.

²⁹ Wickham, *Framing*, 702 – 6, sets out the methodological arguments; the quote is on p. 706.

economies and exchange networks but also of socio-political structures, which Wickham sets to examine systematically region by region.³⁰ Manufactured in huge quantities in the provinces of *Africa Proconsularis* and *Byzacena* and achieving wide distributions, ARS is particularly useful for tracking ongoing changes in the Mediterranean world system.

According to McCormick's synopsis, general distribution of ARS in the West peaks in the second century. A subsequent decline in distribution during the third century is reversed in the 350 – 425 period, during which ARS is found all over the Mediterranean coastlines and even as far north as Brittany, Frisia, Carnuntum, and Crimea. In 425 – 75, however, ARS no longer appears in the north or in Spain and its frequency around the rest of the Mediterranean diminishes severely. The distribution of ARS resurges in 500 – 30, regaining much of its ca.-400 breadth, though not density, in the Mediterranean—and, interestingly, with incidences on the west coasts of Spain and Britain. Finally, in the period of 550 – 600, no ARS can be found north and west of Italy, though its distribution around the eastern Mediterranean appears to have increased in density.³¹ The long-term pattern fits with McCormick's general vision of dwindling production and contracting Mediterranean shipping patterns of AD 200 – 700.

Wickham's more exhaustive region-by-region analysis of patterns of exchange, with ceramics evidence in the forefront, fleshes out McCormick's sketch. The core African provinces were especially geared to export production. As their outlets first to western and later also to eastern provinces dried up or were cut off, and as they failed to develop a self-sustaining internal market for this fineware, manufacture of ARS collapsed at some point in the later seventh century.³² Africa's customer regions, meanwhile, fared extremely variably. In Italy ARS had been universally available, but coexisted with local finewares. With apparently dwindling wealth already in the later fifth century and prolonged disruption by war in the sixth, Italy ceased to import fine ceramics, except in Rome and the head of the Adriatic. Local finewares persisted in Tuscany and along the

³⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 9 – 10, 693 – 708, introduces this procedure, and then places it within a comprehensive theory of economies classified according to their prevailing systems of production and distribution of bulk foodstuffs and quotidian artisanal items. Wickham's model will be discussed along with others in Section 5.4 below.

³¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 55, and maps on pp. 56 and 57.

³² Wickham, *Framing*, 720 – 6.

coasts of southern Italy. Amphorae distributions from Rome to Sicily suggest also a continuing Tyrrhenian trade network, while most northern and inland parts of Italy in the seventh and eighth centuries seem to have abandoned local manufacture of finewares altogether and focused economic activity around relatively small city-territories.³³

In late Roman Spain, ARS was found abundantly along the Mediterranean coast and up the major river valleys, while the interior of the peninsula maintained its own fineware tradition (TSHT). The TSHT tradition simplified but continued in the fifth to eighth centuries, but ARS imports and Mediterranean trade fell away after 628, when the Visigoths reconquered Cartagena.; especially hard hit was the southeast coast, which had depended on the import connection and now reverted to a de-urbanized economy marked by simple, hand-made pottery.³⁴

In southern Gaul, African imports (oil, pottery) continued throughout the sixth century, but then fell away during the seventh. Ceramically, ARS was replaced by a local fineware (DSP), and by coarser ware made in the Rhône valley that maintained distribution across the south for many centuries.³⁵ Surprisingly, northern Gaul and the Rhineland, while largely separate from the Mediterranean exchange networks already in the fourth and fifth centuries, continued production and distribution of Argonne ware, Mayen ware, and other fine and coarse types on a scale of production and market distribution matched only in Egypt and the Levant.³⁶

In the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt had imported ARS but also made its own (Egyptian RS) and other wares, which continued undisturbed and at great volumes after trade links with Africa broke in the seventh century. Similarly, ARS had been imported both to the coasts and far inland in Syria and Palestine, but coexisted there with Phocaean RS, Cypriot RS, and many local wares with a full range of quality. When ARS and other imports were cut ca. 650, most coastal and inland areas retained complex and prosperous economies along with their local ceramic traditions.³⁷ ARS also was shipped through the

³³ Wickham, *Framing*, 729 – 38.

³⁴ Wickham, *Framing*, 741 – 6, 753 – 4.

³⁵ Wickham, *Framing*, 746 – 8.

³⁶ Wickham, *Framing*, 795 – 8. Gaul will be discussed in greater detail in Section 4.4 and Section 5.1 below.

³⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 759 – 62, 770 – 6.

Aegean to Constantinople, especially 550 – 650. It competed with Phocaean RS in the Aegean. African imports, local RS and LRA (amphorae) all ceased after 650, but a new fine ware (GWW) emanating from Constantinople and a new variety of amphora (globular) then replaced these in a still-active Aegean and could be found as far as Cyprus and Sicily. Anatolia and the Greek and Balkan interior, however, experienced extreme simplification in ceramic technology.³⁸

In general, Wickham's extended discussion matches McCormick's outline of changing Mediterranean shipping patterns. However, in Wickham more than in McCormick, one can sense the significant divergences in patterns of economic (and political and social) change experienced from one region to another. Wickham, moreover, emphasizes that interregional exchanges ultimately had to be supported by developments that were specific and internal to each participating region and sub-region.³⁹ Drastic changes in ceramic distributions reflect long-term accumulations of change resulting, at a certain point, in a visible "catastrophe-flip" where a previous pattern is no longer sustainable.⁴⁰ The major systemic shift that stands behind most of the changes noted by both authors is, nevertheless, the same: *the progressive dismantling of the Roman imperial state system and its bulk transport lines in the Mediterranean.*

4.2 The end of the Roman Mediterranean

As noted in Chapter 3 above, Roman state priorities such as supply for the Rhine armies could affect both the pattern of communications routes (the road pattern in Gaul, the sailing patterns around Britain) and economic development (burgeoning of villas in *Gallia Belgica*, trade with *Germania libera*). The largest state-maintained transfer structure of all was the *annona* system that supplied the city of Rome and later Constantinople with essential foodstuffs for their huge populations. As McCormick has it:

Although the importance of state-imposed fiscal transports means that we must speak sometimes of exchange rather than commerce, the economic significance of

³⁸ Wickham, *Framing*, 781 – 7.

³⁹ Both of these points are emphasized strongly in his general conclusion. Wickham, *Framing*, 830 – 1.

⁴⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 13 – 14.

the movement across the sea of millions of bushels of fiscal grain every year. . . is hard to deny.⁴¹

Wickham refers to the Roman Mediterranean as a “world system,” with unique scale and durability. The end of Roman imperial unity and its fiscal structures set in train a long list of other effects that characterize the early Middle Ages.⁴² In his words:

However much the successor states managed to imitate Roman political and economic patterns, which they did in very varying degrees, they did not match that scale. Anything in their local infrastructure that depended on a wider geographical framework, like the supply of grain from Africa to Rome, or the huge wealth of some late Roman senators, could not survive political localization.⁴³

The annona transport and its effects

While it was in force, the *annona* system put its mark on all aspects of Mediterranean trade and communications. The Roman state maintained “stupendous harbor installations” at places like Carthage, Ostia and Portus Romanus, Alexandria, and Constantinople, which could handle hundreds of ships at one time. The bulk goods—grain, oil, wine, firewood—to be delivered, especially from Africa and Egypt to the city of Rome and later Constantinople, were demanded in such quantities that thousands of ships were needed annually to carry them.

The shipping, however, was not operated directly by the state but contracted to private shippers (*navicularii*), who were governed by specific laws. As it was legal for *navicularii* to carry other, less bulky merchandize along with their contracted *annona* cargoes, the state-subsidized routes gained a significant advantage over other shipping lanes, thus shaping or distorting private commerce as well as maintaining certain provinces as the preferred suppliers of grain, oil, and wine. Cargoes, infrastructure, shipping assets, technical knowledge and seafaring experience concentrated

⁴¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 85 – 6.

⁴² Wickham, *Framing*, 10 – 11, 708, 827 – 31. For an early statement of this thesis, see Chris Wickham, “Marx, Sherlock Holmes, and Late Roman Commerce,” review article, *Journal of Roman Studies* 78 (1988): 183 – 93.

⁴³ Wickham, *Framing*, 10.

overwhelmingly along the *annona* routes.⁴⁴ Fundamentally, the model resembles that proposed by Hopkins: imperial taxes provoke commerce as a means of gaining the cash to pay them.⁴⁵ In this case, imperial resources were continually “priming the pump” in order to sustain the massive redistribution of agricultural wealth in the form of staples (grain and oil, primarily), channeling revenues through the provinces that supplied them, and incidentally also creating “an uneven playing field for rival shippers who did not have the advantages of the state subsidies.”⁴⁶

Wherever the *annona* system was most active there also other kinds of commerce boomed. Africa, for instance, thrived increasingly when it replaced Spain as Rome’s primary supplier of oil after AD 200, and even more so as Rome’s primary grain supplier in the fourth century when Egyptian grain was diverted to Constantinople.⁴⁷ In Wickham’s words: “In 400 the western Mediterranean was held together by the tax spine from Carthage to Rome.” The most important collateral effects of Africa’s position as the chief supplier of fiscally mandated production in the West were the dominance of African oil in western Mediterranean markets generally and, even more so, the success of ARS ceramics, which had a range of distribution outside its home region unmatched by any other product.⁴⁸

Conversely, as the state-supported bulk transfers diminished, ceased, or shifted their patterns, trade routes and commerce also shifted or shrank. In the West, according to Wickham, the key break came when the Vandals “broke the tax spine” in 439. While the Vandals did nothing to interfere with commerce, the fiscally mandated transfers to Italy ceased and some senatorial properties were confiscated. The momentum of African productivity was such, indeed, that it diminished only slowly over the next two centuries, and even saw periods of resurgence. Nevertheless, the long-term effects of the

⁴⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 86 – 91, 97.

⁴⁵ Keith Hopkins, “Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 B.C. – A.D. 400),” *Journal of Roman Studies* 70 (1980): 101 – 25.

⁴⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 89 – 90.

⁴⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 91 – 2, 100. Details on the export trade in oil from Carthage appear in J. T. Peña, “The Mobilization of State Olive Oil in Roman Africa: The Evidence of the Late 4th-c. Ostraka from Carthage,” in *Carthage Papers: The Early Colony’s Economy, Water Supply, A Public Bath, and the Mobilization of the State Olive Oil* (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1998), 117 – 235.

⁴⁸ Wickham, *Framing*, 708 – 11.

breakdown of the imperial system not only removed an important prop to African production but also, directly or indirectly, led to reduced wealth and increasing localism among Africa's customers.⁴⁹

McCormick reaches similar conclusions, but from a different set of considerations. Rome fell in population from 800,000 ca. AD 300 to about 350,000 ca. AD 450, and fell further to only 60,000 by AD 530.⁵⁰ This represented a huge drop in the demand in staples for central Italy in just slightly over two centuries of time, while that at Constantinople was correspondingly growing.⁵¹ McCormick sees from ca. 400 onwards a decided change in gross shipping patterns, wherein *navicularii* and ships progressively disappear from the western Mediterranean and are replaced by eastern Mediterranean ships and sailors. Traffic now was concentrated especially on the Alexandria to Constantinople route, and what shipping there still was in western waters was operated also by easterners.⁵²

Linked to this trend is the predominance of Syrian and Jewish merchants in Carthage and other western ports in the fifth and sixth centuries.⁵³ Meanwhile, after some rebound in the sixth century, the total number of ships on the Mediterranean sea lanes falls by some 60 percent in the seventh century and has dropped to less than a tenth of its former volume by ca. 700.⁵⁴ Again, Wickham concurs, but emphasizes, on the basis of archaeological evidence, both that the eastern Mediterranean was more complex in its interrelationships up to the early seventh century and that interregional transfers of bulk products (grain from Egypt, wine from Palestine, oil from Syria, various RS ceramics in overlapping wide-ranging distributions) collapsed quite suddenly ca. 650 once the east Roman fiscal system had been derailed by war and invasion. Paradoxically,

⁴⁹ Wickham, *Framing*, 711 – 13. These conclusions are borne out by the ceramic evidence summarized in the preceding sub-section.

⁵⁰ J. Durliat, *De la ville antique à ville byzantine. Le problème des subsistances*. Collection de l'Ecole française de Rome 136 (Rome, 1990), 110 – 23 and fig. 1.

⁵¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 64 – 6, 105, 112 – 13, expresses a theoretical relationship between population and economic vitality, wherein the latter depends on the aggregate number of “communications” generated. McCormick's economic models will be discussed in more detail along with others in Section 5.4 below.

⁵² McCormick, *Origins*, 112 – 13, 591 - 604

⁵³ McCormick, *Origins*, 101 – 7, 109. At the sixth-century peak, some 2,400 – 3,600 ships yearly delivered eight million *artabae* of Egyptian grain from Alexandria to Constantinople (p. 109).

⁵⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 108. In large part, the figures are based on statistics of ancient shipwrecks datable to various periods.

most of the constituent regions of the east Mediterranean system remained conspicuously wealthy *after* 650 as they had been before that watershed date.⁵⁵

Justinian's plague

One cause of the final collapse of the Roman Mediterranean system, according to McCormick, was the Justinianic plague, which, starting in 541, struck particularly hard at the great port cities and at the seafarers.⁵⁶ A second, definitive signpost of the demise of the system would be the official end of the *annona* distribution in Constantinople after the Persians had seized Alexandria in 617.⁵⁷ Wickham recognizes warfare as one important parameter of post-Roman change.⁵⁸ He allows that a century or more of recurrent Persian and Arab attacks into Anatolia contributed to socio-economic regression in that sub-region, and that the Gothic War of 535 – 54 and the subsequent Lombard invasion contributed to the relative impoverishment and fragmentation of Italy. In Spain, however, neither the Vandal-Alan-Sueve invasion, nor various Visigothic disturbances, nor even the Arab conquest appear to have left any immediate impression in the archaeological record.⁵⁹ The Justinianic plague, meanwhile, plays almost no part in Wickham's discussion; yet, the topic has been receiving increased attention elsewhere, as, for example, in the 2007 volume edited by L. K. Little.⁶⁰ At the extremes, authors have made the Justinianic plague the major causal agent in the Roman – medieval

⁵⁵ Wickham, *Framing*, 713 – 19.

⁵⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 109 – 10, 113. The close connection of the plague with Mediterranean shipping was explored in great detail in Michael McCormick, “Bateaux de vie, bateaux de mort. Maladie, commerce, transports annonaires et le passage économique du Bas-Empire au Moyen Âge,” in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo* (Settimane 45, 1990), 35 – 122.

⁵⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 110.

⁵⁸ Wickham, *Framing*, 719. The others are (1) the strength of fiscally based surplus extraction and geographic movement of goods, (2) the strength of landowners' wealth and how they disposed of it, and (3) the degree to which any region was involved with the Roman system and the degree of dislocation that it suffered when the system fell. “Catastrophe-flips” may be provoked by contingent crises, but they always rest upon long-term structural trends (p. 13 – 14). More discussion of Wickham's theoretical position in Section 5.4 below.

⁵⁹ Wickham, *Framing*, 730 – 1, 745 – 6, 753, 784 – 5.

⁶⁰ Lester K. Little, ed., *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). The historiography and the arguments in favor of far-reaching effects of the “pandemic” are outlined in idem, “Life and Afterlife of the First Plague Pandemic,” in *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3 – 32.

transition,⁶¹ or denied that it had any important effect whatsoever.⁶² An important middle ground was staked out by Jean Durliat, who mistrusted the literary accounts of the plague and challenged specialists to come up with more definite causal evidence for its claimed effects.⁶³

Some contemporary authors, particularly Procopius and John of Ephesus, report horrific losses of life at the onset plague in Constantinople, Palestine, and Syria in 541 – 43.⁶⁴ If such accounts could be generalized to the entire Mediterranean, then that could explain phenomena such as the apparent economic collapse and depopulation of inland southern Italy in the sixth and seventh centuries that Richard Hodges reports.⁶⁵ Dick Harrison argues, however, that there was neither depopulation nor economic collapse but a shift to a more pastoral-based economy and an altered social and cultural outlook.⁶⁶ Moreover, the ceramic evidence suggests that the coastal towns of southern Italy remained wealthy and participated in an extensive Tyrrhenian trade network.⁶⁷ In Syria, Hugh Kennedy reports suggestive evidence of expansive building programmes in cities in

⁶¹ J. C. Russell, “That Earlier Plague,” *Demography* 5 (1968): 174 – 84.

⁶² “[T]he economy of the late Roman Near East in the years after the plague seems to indicate business as usual.” Mark Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600 – 1025* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 66.

⁶³ Jean Durliat, “La peste du VI^e siècle: Pour un nouvel examen des sources byzantines,” in *Hommes et richesses dans l’empire byzantin*, vol 1: *IV^e – VII^e Siècle*, ed. V. Kravari, C. Morrisson, and J. Lefort (Paris: 11989), 107 – 119. The point is made in Little, “Life and Afterlife,” 17. The *Plague and the End of Antiquity* volume is a conscious response to Durliat’s challenge.

⁶⁴ Michael G. Morony, “For Whom Does the Writer Write?” The First Bubonic Plague Pandemic According to Syriac Sources,” in *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 69 – 78.

⁶⁵ Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe: Archaeology and the Pirenne Thesis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 45 – 7, 53. Richard Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings? Rereading Early Medieval Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 2006), speaks of “shantytowns within the ruins” of erstwhile Roman cities (p. 64) and of a “countryside no longer integrated” with the coast and interregional trade systems (p. 65). His studies of the upper Volturno valley and the monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno imply that the area was well-nigh deserted before the monks pioneered their community ca. 700 (pp. 80 – 100, 112 – 13).

⁶⁶ Harrison, “Settlement and Structural Change.” To wit: “early medieval Italy reverted from the agricultural economy of the Roman times to a more silvio-pastoral structure. This was a good adaptation to new demands and a new mentality; it made it easier to survive, since the potential food resources became more varied. Thus, what looks like depopulation may actually be a case of cultural change, with or without demographic decrease” (p. 30). For Italy, “there is no real evidence of a permanent demographic crisis in all parts of the country. Rather, the economic and political circumstances should have made it easier for the peasant population and harder for the rich strata of society, which resulted in the decrease of new buildings and monuments, a decrease that should not be taken as evidence of a general demographic decline” (p. 32). Harrison’s evaluation foreshadows approaches often taken in Wickham, *Framing*.

⁶⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 729 – 30, 736 – 8.

the first half of the sixth century that seem to be cut short from ca. 540 or 550 onwards.⁶⁸ This picture is contradicted by the ceramics evidence, which shows distribution of ARS and other finewares throughout the region up to ca. 650, which implies continued wealth and unimpeded long-distance trade networks.⁶⁹ The single strong argument in *Plague and the End of Antiquity* for a long-term causative effect of the plague on the end of the late Roman Mediterranean system is that advanced by Peter Sarris: a severe reduction in taxpayers and revenue, leading to financial chicanery and reductions in army pay, leading to mutinies and political chaos, leading to inability to withstand Persian and Arab attacks.⁷⁰ This domino sequence, if upheld, would indeed seem to connect Justinian's plague of 541 – 43 to the “breaking of the spine” (as Wickham has it) of the east Mediterranean shipping network ca. 650.

Aside from the preceding argument, and the possibility that plague specifically hit the ports and the shipping lanes,⁷¹ if there was plague-induced demographic reduction or stagnation ca. 550 and afterward, it did not directly damage the Mediterranean trade system. Nor did it hit all of the lands adjoining the Mediterranean uniformly. Bachrach has demonstrated that the attested effects of the plague in Merovingian Gaul were, in fact, limited and transitory, and that the Merovingian authorities took effective measures to curb its spread.⁷² Dick Harrison has argued that the Justinianic plague could not have affected Germany and the North of Europe because the biological vectors of *Yersinia pestis*, i.e. specific species of rat and flea, did not yet exist there.⁷³ A fuller understanding of the scope of the Justinianic plague may come about with the development, that

⁶⁸ Hugh N. Kennedy, “Justinianic Plague in Syria and the Archaeological Evidence,” in *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 87 – 95.

⁶⁹ Wickham, *Framing*, 613 – 26, 713 – 19, 770 – 3.

⁷⁰ Peter Sarris, “Bubonic Plague in Byzantium: The Evidence of Non-Literary Sources,” in *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 127 – 31.

⁷¹ McCormick, “Bateaux de vie, bateaux de mort,” 52 – 65.

⁷² Bernard S. Bachrach, “Plague, Population, and Economy in Merovingian Gaul,” *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 3 (2007): 29 – 57. More on Gaul in Section 5.1 below.

⁷³ Harrison, “Plague, Settlement and Structural Change,” 24 – 9, 37. See, however, John Maddicott, “Plague in Seventh-Century England,” in *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 171 – 214, who insists that it did hit England.

McCormick proposes, of a “molecular history” of the interactions between human populations and pathogens.⁷⁴

Whatever the ultimate cause might be, the seventh century saw the end of state-subsidized shipping in the Mediterranean and so the end of an economic era. The *annona* system promoted trade in replaceable, non-unique wheat and oil—products that most Mediterranean areas could make for themselves—thereby preventing trade systems based on *unique* regional products.⁷⁵ Wickham likewise points out that there was nothing “natural” about Mediterranean integration, the “bulk product hegemonies,” and the inland penetration of goods into Italy and the Levant that were engendered by Roman “political and fiscal underpinning. . . when that went away, so in the end did exchange.”⁷⁶ Or, as McCormick sums up:

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.⁷⁷

The new Mediterranean shipping patterns, already evidenced in the early eighth century, were almost all at first of small, private operators, keeping to coastlines and short routes, but in the aggregate making possible long-distance movements—specifically movements between Gaul and Italy in the west to Byzantium and the Caliphate in the east.⁷⁸ The effectiveness of the private, small-scale shipping network can be gauged also from the fact that it managed to keep Constantinople supplied—even if the city’s

⁷⁴ Michael McCormick, “Toward a Molecular History of the Justinianic Pandemic,” in *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 290 – 312.

⁷⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 116. Cf. Carandini, who argues that Italy lost its economic pre-eminence in the West during the first and second centuries AD as Spain, Gaul, and Africa learned to make bulk commodities such as wine. He, however, asserts that the Roman state created a level playing field for provincials which broke the “monopoly” of Italian landowners over such production. Andrea Carandini, “Italian Wine and African Oil: Commerce in a World Empire,” in *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1989), 16 – 24.

⁷⁶ Wickham, *Framing*, 718.

⁷⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 103.

⁷⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 405 – 29, 450 – 64, 483 – 99, for discussion of post-700 sailing practices. Chapters 5 – 12 *passim* develop the evidence for people and things that moved in the eighth and ninth centuries, especially by Mediterranean sea routes.

population was, perhaps, somewhat reduced.⁷⁹ A parallel suggests itself with the possible shift from large- to smaller-scale operations in late Roman metal production, and also in the organization of the ceramics industry. McCormick remarks on evidence for economic innovation in the Late Roman period, such as the bursts of typological creativity in ARS that accompanied both the 350 – 425 and the 500 – 30 resurgences in distribution. He wonders, also, that increased production appears to have been achieved by lateral extension—through the multiplication of small producers rather than the expansion of larger ones.⁸⁰ Perhaps certain “economies of scale” are illusory, in the long run, and these shifts in the organization of production and transport reflect a failure of Roman state-capitalism.

4.3 Imperial Unity and the Barbarians

Parallel with the long-term transformation of the Roman Mediterranean exchange system were ongoing changes along Rome’s Temperate European frontier. Both the system of *annona*-routes and the complex of installations and supply lines along the Rhine – Danube *limes* were artifacts of the imperial system; both prospered and declined along with the empire as a whole. Moreover, the two systems were linked synergetically, so that changes in Roman relations with and policies towards the frontier peoples—which reached a kind of tipping point ca. AD 400—produced key impacts on the core Mediterranean structure as well. Most notably, this occurred in the case of the Vandal occupation of Africa, which has been identified as the crucial break in the western portion of the Roman Mediterranean fiscal and economic system.⁸¹

Certainly, the barbarian groups who figure so prominently in the historiography of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries played a huge part in the changes that overtook the Roman world during this time. For the purposes of the present study, however, it is

⁷⁹ This point is touched upon also in Wickham, *Framing*, 788 – 91.

⁸⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 55, 58 – 9. “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” (p. 59).

⁸¹ So in Wickham, *Framing* (see Section 4.2, subsection *The annona transport and its effects* above). Equally explicitly, though from a radically different viewpoint, this event was identified as a key calamity in Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); see discussion in subsection *Africa and the Vandals* below.

important to be as precise as possible about the content of such changes. For if the role of the barbarians was not to destroy an otherwise well-functioning political and socio-economic system but rather to serve as catalysts in the revision of such a system that was already tending towards transformation, prospects for continued economic health and the maintenance of a degree of institutional memory are greatly enhanced.

As discussed above in Section 3.4 above, Roman expansion up to the Rhine and Danube in the late first century BC and early first century AD cut across previous lines of development in the lands north of the Alps and the Mediterranean rim—in effect, transposing some hundreds of miles further to the north and east relations of a kind that previously had characterized Bronze- and Iron-Age interactions between Temperate European peoples and Mediterraneans.⁸² Rome’s Temperate-European frontier, having remained relatively stable for four centuries, disintegrated during the course of the fifth and sixth centuries, and it is this circumstance above all, with its apparent movements of peoples and political and cultural transformation of the Roman West—characterized as the Migration Age—that has led many modern (and early Byzantine!) historians to speak of a “fall” of the Roman empire at the hands of barbarian invaders.⁸³ The “external causation” thesis of the fall of Rome, which has found a recent and forceful reiteration in Peter Heather,⁸⁴ has traditionally competed with the “internal decay” thesis.⁸⁵ Neither position is as useful as the recognition that Rome underwent continual change, century by century, both in its internal structures and in its relations with Temperate European “barbarians.” Moreover, these relations always had an economic in addition to a military-political aspect.

⁸² In archaeology, this circumstance is recognized in the designation of a Roman Iron Age period (AD 1 – 400) for finds in Temperate Europe north and east of the Roman provinces.

⁸³ For a critical review of this standard thesis, see Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 23 – 39.

⁸⁴ Initially, Peter Heather, “The Huns and the End of the Roman Empire in Western Europe,” *English Historical Review* 110 (1995): 4 – 41; in extensive detail in Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*.

⁸⁵ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 231 – 2. See also Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*, 3 – 10, who ruefully reviews the trend since the early 1970s to ignore the catastrophic aspects of the end of the Roman period in favor of characterizations such as “transition” and “transformation.”

Relations along the frontier

The interaction in Roman – barbarian relations of politics, military activity, and economics is a guiding theme throughout Thomas Burns' study of the matter.⁸⁶ One consistent thread that Burns identifies is that Rome fit the barbarian peoples to its north into evolving patron-client relationships. This was the case around the time of the formation of *Gallia Narbonensis* in the late second century BC, when certain southern Gallic tribes and elites entered into client relationships initially with the Metelli and Ahenobarbi, and it was still the case in the fourth century AD when emperors from Constantine to Theodosius I were managing—successfully, on the whole—client relationships with Franks, Alamanni, Sarmatians, and Goths.⁸⁷

Overshadowing these symbiotic relations was Roman ideology, which demanded ever renewed victory of Roman-imperial arms and the submission of opponents, an ideology reflected in the rhetoric of the literary sources which persistently paint the European barbarians as savage, threatening, and inveterately aggressive against Roman peace and order.⁸⁸ Roman rhetoric tends to mask the fact that many of the periodic breakdowns in the normally peaceful relations were precipitated by the Roman side—particularly, by the drawing in of barbarian clients into Roman civil wars, which eventually led to reprisals against those that had supported the losing side.⁸⁹ Politically, barbarian chiefs depended on Roman subsidies or tribute to maintain their position just as Romans increasingly depended on barbarian clients to police the trans-provincial areas and on barbarians generally to provide recruits for the Roman army and workers for the civilian economy. Indeed, the changing disposition of Roman armed forces century by

⁸⁶ Thomas S. Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians, 100 B.C. – A.D. 400* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

⁸⁷ Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 42 – 7, 328 – 48. Cf. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 6 – 8.

⁸⁸ Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 13 – 14, 116 – 23, 176 – 9, 270, 330 – 2, 326. For late Roman rhetorical manipulation of barbarian identity and character specifically in the case of the Goths see Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 56 – 72. Roman triumphalism is emphasized also by Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 80 – 4, 176, 184.

⁸⁹ Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 265 – 7, 276, 319, 329 – 30, 333 – 5, 343, 345 – 7, thinks that this was the case both in the Crisis of the second half of the third century and at various times during the fourth.

century had as much to do with internal Roman political considerations as it did with external threats—which were acute only occasionally.⁹⁰

The military-political aspects of the Roman – barbarian relationship were closely paralleled by economic developments, as Burns illustrates with the case of Pannonia. Under the Julio-Claudians, main lines of communication, forts, and colonies were established through Ljubljana north up to Carnuntum and eastwards along the Sava; growth of towns in these areas followed. In the second century, as troop dispositions moved forward to the line of the Danube, urbanization and villa-growth was most noticeable in riverside areas such as Aquincum (Budapest). In the late third century, fortification-in-depth represented yet another infusion of fiscal capital into the region and resulted in growth and prosperity around centers such as Herculia (Gorsium, in western Hungary).⁹¹

Meanwhile, both long- and short-distance trade flourished, not only within the Roman side but also across the *limes*. Archaeology shows significant Romanization on the barbarian side in certain areas such as Moravia and places along the Rhine, including coin usage and Roman pottery and metalwork. When warfare had interrupted trade relations, these were expressly renewed when peace came again, as in the treaties after the Marcomannic Wars (166 – 80). In the fourth century, barbarian Rhine villages looked quite Roman-like, prosperous from selling meat and vegetables to the Roman side.⁹² From the third century onward, as imperial politics increasingly were determined in the frontier areas, barbarian recruits and officers became ever more common in Roman armies, and the frontier zone progressed in economic integration. In the words of Burns: “the periphery had become the center. . . the focal point of a uniquely military culture with its own values and largely self-sufficient economies.” Barbarians were becoming insiders, still outside direct Roman administration but living “in the heart of the frontier

⁹⁰ Thus in the case of Augustus despatching the legions to areas away from Italy, and the Flavian continuation of that policy in creating a more linear dispersal of Roman forces. Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 152 – 3, 216.

⁹¹ Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 205 – 45, 292.

⁹² On trade and integration: Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 209, 212 – 16, 228, 240 – 1, 266, 289, 325 – 6, 341 – 4, 352. Cassius Dio provides the very few scraps of information on trade matters for the late second century, while most of the observations on the fourth century derive from Ammianus Marcellinus.

zone that nourished an emerging composite society in which the old borders were slowly dissolving.”⁹³

Late Roman structural changes

The so-called “third century crisis” precipitated significant changes in the Roman system, but not a wholesale collapse. As was mentioned above in the introduction to this chapter, both “external threat” and “internal rot” have been advanced as basic explanations for this crisis as well as those that followed in the fifth century. These positions may be examined further.

The most recent and comprehensive update of the “external threat” position is Heather’s thesis, propounded in *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, the main points of which run as follows. First, the military-fiscal system of the Principate was just adequate to deal with European barbarians and the comparatively disorganized Parthian empire; however, in order to meet the challenge of the reconsolidated and significantly stronger Sasanids, Rome was forced greatly to expand its military at the price of a significant increase in centralization of fiscal resources and expansion of centralized administration, all of which had profound political, social, and economic consequences. Second, while the new Dominate system worked well and sustained Rome through the fourth century, the advent of the Huns late in the fourth century precipitated a further increase in the level of external pressures which the Romans were unable to counter and that broke the Roman system forever during the course of the fifth century.⁹⁴

Opposed, most explicitly, is the vision of Goffart as updated and reiterated in *Barbarian Tides*: that the threat to Rome from external sources was not categorically different in the fifth century than earlier, but that the Romans themselves, for reasons stemming from internal causes, chose to treat barbarian groups differently and so

⁹³ Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 307 – 8. Cf. here C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 222 – 42, chapter titled “The Symbiosis of Frontier Societies.”

⁹⁴ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 58 – 65, 115 – 18, 146 – 58, 343 – 8, 433 – 4, and 445 – 50. Heather’s editorial stance in this volume is clearly catastrophist: “And in the course of the fifth century, the western half of the Roman Empire, along with all the structures and procedures it had maintained over centuries, ceased to exist, leaving behind the corpse that lies at the heart of this book.” (p. xiv). Much of his data, however, might support an alternative interpretation.

hastened a far-reaching transformation of Roman society.⁹⁵ The balance between these two viewpoints is germane not only to questions of economic viability in the late-Roman and post-Roman world but also of institutional continuity.

In the second half of the third century, two distinct manifestations of the “crisis”—whatever its ultimate causes—were a spate of limited but destructive raids by barbarians over parts of the Rhine and Danube frontiers and a tendency to incipient federalism: the autonomous Gallic Empire of Posthumus (260 – 74) and the equally autonomous Palmyra under Odenathus and Xenobia (262 – 74) organizing the Roman East.⁹⁶ The issue of territorial fragmentation was put aside, for the time being, by the emperor Aurelian (270 – 75), who liquidated the interim autonomy of Palmyra and Gaul. The response to the locally severe barbarian raids included a wholesale revision of Roman strategy and infrastructure, with profound long-term consequences. One of the most important of these responses was the building, with imperial approval and under imperial direction, of circuit walls around and citadels in provincial cities.

First, the building of these fortifications, which required a huge amount of materials, labor, and expertise, shows that the provinces and the imperial government had still an economy and, therefore, a fiscal resource base that was essentially healthy—robust enough to sustain that effort.⁹⁷ Once in place, this military infrastructure not only transformed the appearance of the late Roman city—became an essential component of the “topography,” as it were—but reoriented strategic thinking and practice for centuries

⁹⁵ See especially Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 101 – 7, 135 – 86. The latter section reviews the legal and practical details of barbarian settlement in Roman provinces, particularly in Italy and Gaul. The argument that many Romans, themselves, welcomed fundamental changes in the erstwhile imperial system is presented in Walter Goffart, “An Empire Unmade: Rome, A.D. 300 – 600,” in idem, *Rome’s Fall and After* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1989), 33 – 44.

⁹⁶ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 66, describes the “Gallic Empire” as fully Roman and non-separatist—merely an expedient for local elites to make sure of an available dispensation-point of imperial largesse. Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 254, observes that during the height of the crisis the Roman world was subdivided into five regions (Italy plus Africa and the Alpine provinces, the western Mediterranean with Spain and southern Gaul, the northwest including northern Gaul with Britain and the Rhine, the Balkans, and the East) and that no one could hold more than two of these at any time.

⁹⁷ On the effort involved in building such city fortifications, exemplified by the case of Bordeaux, see Bachrach, “Imperial Walled Cities in the West,” 198; he also emphasizes that the central government approved and oversaw the rebuilding efforts (pp. 192 – 5).

to come.⁹⁸ There also was a significant correlation between late Roman *urbes* or *civitates*, defensive walls, and the permanence and viability of the ecclesiastical establishment, namely bishops' seats.⁹⁹ In short, whatever damage had been sustained in the troubles of the third century was not fatal. The cities and the economy were soon rebuilt, and a massive investment in new infrastructure successfully carried through, because the Roman system as a whole had not yet reached a point of failure.¹⁰⁰

The new urban defenses were part of a “defense-in-depth” strategy, including the walled towns, strengthened legionary fortresses, smaller forts along the main roads, and fortified government food depots—all designed to limit damage from enemy incursions, to frustrate enemy re-supply efforts, and to provide support for mobile reserve armies countering incursions.¹⁰¹ In terms of providing military security, the new system worked well at least through the time of Valentinian I (d. 375). In the longer term, however, the logic of defense-in-depth led to a condition in which all but the most rear-ward areas—the unassailable refuges of the ruling elite in places such as Ravenna and Constantinople—could be considered (at least temporarily) expendable, so long as the government could continue to collect enough revenues to sustain itself and the armies that protected it.¹⁰² From such a viewpoint, it would make sense for Constantinople

⁹⁸ Bachrach, “Imperial Walled Cities in the West,” 193, notes that “some eighty percent of the one hundred and fifteen *urbes* that are listed in the *Notitia Galliarum*” were so fortified, with deliberate re-use of material from previous structures; summary of the long-term strategic consequences: pp. 201 – 10. S. T. Loseby, “Bishops and Cathedrals: Order and Diversity in the Fifth-Century Urban Landscape of Southern Gaul,” in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 154, points out that some city walls in Gaul may be of later date than the immediate aftermath of the third-century crisis.

⁹⁹ In his study of fifth-century Provence, Loseby, “Bishops and Cathedrals,” 144 – 6, points out that all but one of the pre-existing *civitas*-capitals in the area became episcopal sees and that only five episcopal sees were placed in locations that had not been *civitas*-capitals. Bachrach, “Imperial Walled Cities in the West,” 195, stresses that it was the walled cities that remained permanent ecclesiastic centers, often with complete bishops' lists, while undefended sites typically lapsed into intermittence.

¹⁰⁰ Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 62 – 4, describes settlement continuity in the Danube provinces and the Balkans as evidenced by the appearance ca. AD 400 of “fortified centers” replacing villas—not forts nor towns, but centers of rural economic activity. In many areas, these persisted into the sixth century or even later. Thus, even though the landscape was changing, there was no social or economic collapse. Harrison, “Plague, Settlement and Structural Change,” argues generally for changes in lifestyle in the Roman world in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries but not collapse nor loss of functionality.

¹⁰¹ Bachrach, “Imperial Walled Cities in the West,” 197. The Roman defense-in-depth system is described in detail in Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 130 – 90.

¹⁰² This is the thrust of the summary in Luttwak, *Grand Strategy*, 191 – 2.

deliberately *not* to rebuild a regular army in the West after the time of Theodosius I (d. 395)—not because of a lack of fiscal resources or manpower, but because western armies in the hands of a string of usurpers had posed a recurrent danger to the eastern regime.¹⁰³

A further structural flaw in the late Roman empire was the recurrence of sometimes lengthy periods of contention for power at the top; this became routine once again in the fifth century. While the Theodosian dynasty in Constantinople remained remarkably stable and unchallenged,¹⁰⁴ in the West, despite that a kind of Theodosian dynastic succession could be stitched together up to the death of Valentinian III in 455, real power was in the hands of military strongmen who fought each other for the post of *magister militum* under a figurehead emperor. Setting aside questions regarding the aims and motives of Honorius' *magister militum* Stilicho from 395 to 408,¹⁰⁵ it is clear that Stilicho's murder in 408 further weakened Ravenna's ability to deal with a spate of usurpers and several barbarian armies.¹⁰⁶ As Kulikowski puts it:

When the scene of these usurpations shifted from Britain to Gaul, the conflict begun by the Rhine crossing became a full-fledged civil war amongst Romans. And that, ultimately, is the most important of many conclusions possible, and it is not in itself particularly novel.¹⁰⁷

In other words, it is in part the disfunctionality of the late Roman political system that allowed room for barbarian groups increasingly to insert themselves into Roman territories. The regime in Ravenna was able to ride out the turmoil until the emergence of a new strongman, Flavius Constantius, around 411, who then capably and methodically eliminated, neutralized, or pacified most outstanding threats to centralized Roman authority in Italy, Spain, and Gaul. Constantius' death (apparently, from natural causes) in 421, however, set off both a dynastic crisis and a new round of civil war among

¹⁰³ So argued in Goffart, "Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians," 18 – 22.

¹⁰⁴ Important for this achievement were tenacious conservation of dynastic legitimacy and astute manipulation of the Christian cult. Kenneth G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperium in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

¹⁰⁵ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 216 – 21.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul, Usurpers in Britain," *Britannia* 31 (2000): 325 – 45, analyzes the situation in Gaul and Spain 405 – 11.

¹⁰⁷ Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul, Usurpers in Britain," 343. Alaric's Visigoths, meanwhile, were present in Italy.

Roman commanders for the position of generalissimo until 433. The winner, Aëtius, again proved dynamic and capable for the two decades that he was in power, but his murder in 454 led in turn to renewed political chaos. From 455 to 476, at least eight short-lived emperors including Majorian (457 – 61) and Anthemius (467 – 72) and assorted strongmen such as Ricimer (*magister militum* 457 – 72) and Gundobad (king-maker in Italy from 472 until his departure for the throne of Burgundy in 473/74) maneuvered around the throne of Italy, none of whom succeeded in reversing or stemming the accelerating forces of dissolution that were dissipating imperial authority in the West.¹⁰⁸ In short, from 400 to 476, in at least thirty of those seventy-six years (408 – 11, 421 – 33, and most of 454 – 76) the attention and resources of the Roman politico-military elite in the West were devoted primarily to internecine struggles for power.

Since Heather's rhetorical position in *Fall of the Roman Empire* is that the barbarians *did too* destroy Rome, he must attempt to minimize Roman failings. His argument that the third-century shift to greater centralization of fiscal resources and expansion of the imperial bureaucracy did not alienate the elite classes but only "renegotiated" their relationship with the imperial government seems well taken. The politically active landowning elite supported the government which in turn dispensed offices, favors, and rewards and—most importantly—upheld the legal system that protected the properties and, thereby, the lifestyles and culture of the elite. However, to say simply that "periodic conflict at the top was the price to be paid for the Empire's success in integrating elites across its vast domain" and to argue that this was not a flaw but a limitation, a kind of "rhythm" in high politics, amounts to a whitewash.¹⁰⁹

The late Roman system still represented a major upward shift in the center of power, away from localities and toward regional centers and imperial seats, so that competition for power at the center intensified. Economically, also, while elite prosperity in the form of luxury spending continued, it became more concentrated now around the imperial centers, with smaller towns declining reciprocally.¹¹⁰ Both trends are consistent with the revision in strategic thinking—defense-in-depth and its ultimate logical

¹⁰⁸ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 222 – 4, 236 – 44, 251 – 62, 369 – 84, 390 – 9, 425 – 7.

¹⁰⁹ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 115 – 18, 130 – 40. The quote is on p. 131.

¹¹⁰ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 118, notes the possibility of economic effects of this kind.

consequences for political outlook. Thus, while the Roman system became even more narrowly focused on the needs of the elite than it had been before, the recurrent chaos of power struggles at the imperial center, which Heather accepts so blithely, had its own severe costs to everybody.¹¹¹

Barbarian capabilities and their place in the late Roman system

How do the barbarians fit into the picture? For most of the fourth century, Rome appeared to be as much in control of the northern frontier as it ever had been. All along the Rhine and Danube, Constantine's efforts had brought back quiet and renewed peaceful symbiosis with all the major barbarian groups, which condition continued then for decades. Julian's victory at Strassburg in 357 over a much larger force of Alamanni appeared to confirm Roman superiority to any barbarian threat, and Valentinian I's aggressive re-fortification of the frontier would continue that impression.¹¹² The disaster at Adrianople in 378, though in itself no greater than many a defeat that Roman arms had suffered in the past, in retrospect has all the earmarks of a "catastrophe-flip"—a contingent event that marks a critical threshold in long-term incremental developments. Whether by design or insufficiency, after Adrianople the Romans always had at least one large, coherent, and autonomous barbarian group operating *within* their frontiers. Over time, the number of such groups tended to increase, to interact synergistically with the abovementioned instability in imperial power politics, and, at length, even to alter the lines of the Roman Mediterranean system.

Goffart specifically rejects the idea that the "Germans" of the fourth and fifth centuries were politically more coherent or militarily more effective than they ever had been. However, it is important to realize that this denial is motivated by the desire to defeat notions of an evolving Germanic unity rising to overcome Rome in a decisive,

¹¹¹ Cf. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 37 – 8: "External security for the Empire presupposed internal restraint and discipline; it was critically undermined by civil wars between competitors for the imperial throne."

¹¹² Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 81 – 6, on Roman military and diplomatic superiority, the consolidation of Germanic polities, and their relations of reciprocity with the Romans.

historic conflict.¹¹³ Goffart recognizes that Roman actions themselves had created conditions that unsettled the empire:

The Empire was disturbed by the uncoordinated activities of its multiethnic neighbors; its freedom of action was seriously limited by the need to defend its frontiers. But this instability was the cost of being an empire, that is, of itself exerting outward pressure of many kinds on the people whom it had not yet conquered but reserved the right to subjugate in the future.¹¹⁴

Essentially, this is little different than the summary offered by Heather:

There is... an inbuilt tendency for the kind of dominance exercised by empires to generate an inverse reaction whereby the dominated, in the end, are able to throw off their chains.¹¹⁵

In other words, Rome itself created whatever Germanic menace there was through its own interactions with *Germania* taken from a position of strength.

There are several hints that the Germanic confederacies along the Roman frontier in the fourth century were more than just empty names—that there were movements towards greater political sophistication.¹¹⁶ Since the 1960s, especially among German scholars, the dominant paradigm for such political consolidation or crystallization has been the theory advanced by Reinhard Wenskus that barbarian “nations,” *Stämme*, or *gentes* formed around an elite leadership core—a *Traditionskern*, which could weld members of smaller ethnic groups into larger unities.¹¹⁷ While Wenskus’ paradigm stressed ideological and political principles, Heather’s interpretation of these

¹¹³ “The northern barbarians were more concerned to fit into the Roman sphere than to cling to and affirm their past; they adopted the religion of the Empire; they sought and acquired positions defending and governing Roman provinces. Their encounter with the Roman world, which needed them, is a much fuller and better documented story than their efforts, such as they may have been, to maintain or achieve continuity with their origins.” Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 6.

¹¹⁴ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 25.

¹¹⁵ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 459. Initially, Heather dismisses the Germanic barbarians as “simple agriculturalists with a penchant for decorative safety-pins” (p. xii). Nevertheless, in subsequent passages, Heather concedes cultural development on the part of the Germanic barbarians that could make them credible partners of the Romans in the transformation of the ancient world.

¹¹⁶ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 30 – 1, suggests that the third-century emergence of larger “confederacies” were simply opportunistic responses to temporary chaos on the Roman side, which enabled raiding. Cf. Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 306 – 7, who says that ca. 300 Rome had re-stabilized the frontiers but faced barbarians who were “tougher” than before.

¹¹⁷ Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln: Böhlau, 1961). Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 66 – 7, strongly criticizes this theory and its motivations.

developments adds a significant economic or material dimension. New wealth, coming into *Germania* from Roman contacts both direct and indirect, was fueling a socio-political revolution—a new level of violence in the society, reflected in more numerous weapons-burials and in the formation of armed retinues. Thus, greater wealth led to a fierce struggle to control it, which led to the “emergence of specialist military forces in order to win it. The outcome of these processes was the larger political confederation characteristic of Germania in the fourth century.”¹¹⁸

One example of such fourth-century confederacies would be the hierarchies among Alamannic kings and sub-kings that are mentioned in the Roman sources.¹¹⁹ The most advanced political entity north of the Danube probably was the Tervingi Goths of today’s Wallachia and Moldavia, who appear to have been evolving permanent political institutions in the fourth century.¹²⁰ An indication of growing Gothic maturity can be read from the events of the later 360s. After inconclusive campaigns in Tervingia in 367 and 369, Emperor Valens concluded with King Athanaric a revision of the treaty of 332 (made with Constantine), in which the Goths accepted new trade restrictions but Valens gave up the right to demand Gothic soldiers for service in the Roman armies. As Heather remarks: “No low-level barbarian, Athanaric was a client king with a coherent agenda for renegotiating his relationship with the Roman Empire.”¹²¹ Although Roman imperial ideology required that the 369 treaty be couched in terms of Roman victory and Gothic submission, the reality of the relationship was far more nuanced.

What about barbarian military capabilities? Here, also, Goffart gives a definite negative, arguing that even long exposure to Roman military practice, weapons and drill, could not effect significant improvements in barbarian fighting ability because qualitative improvement is possible only if “sustained by radical sociopolitical transformation.”¹²²

¹¹⁸ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 91 – 4.

¹¹⁹ Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 336.

¹²⁰ See Herwig Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 69 – 79, for a description of Tervingi society. Cf. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 53: “Nowhere do we detect a vibrant desire for independence, let alone an impulse to state formation.”

¹²¹ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 72 – 6; the quote is on p. 76. For more on the trade aspects of the treaty, see Section 5.2, subsection *Trade and instability* below.

¹²² Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 30. Goffart sees no such transformation. See also Hugh Elton, “Defence in Fifth-Century Gaul,” in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton

Some evidence of “sociopolitical transformation” has already been advanced above. Heather observes that increasingly, by the fourth and fifth centuries, there was evident a cultural tendency among Germanic tribesmen to accept processes of consolidation—to join the winner’s group at the end of a contest over power. Thus, only three to six groups, not a dozen or more as earlier, now had to be welded in order to produce one entity capable of challenging Romans.¹²³ In other words, whereas in the first century BC or first century AD tribesmen had preferred to maintain loyalty to smaller ethnic units, by the fifth century German political culture had evolved to the point where ordinary free men looked for more centralized authority. This was true most conspicuously in those groups that began to operate on Roman territory.

The record of barbarian – Roman encounters from the late fourth century onwards suggests, in fact, that a degree of parity had been achieved. In the Balkan campaign of 377 – 82, both sides maneuvered effectively, but the final outcome was not a decisive defeat of the Goths but a kind of compromise. Moreover, normal Roman practice had been to resettle *subdued* barbarians on their territory in dispersed fashion, whereas the *receptio* of “untamed” Tervingi as a block into Moesia in 376 was most irregular. That the Romans at the same time destroyed another group of Goths that was similarly attempting to cross the river suggests that they simply did not have the forces to deal at once with two barbarian armies of about 10,000 in that frontier sector. Even after Adrianople, which could be regarded as a fluke of bad decision-taking and bad luck on the Roman side, Theodosius I saw two of his armies defeated by the self-same Goths before the peace was agreed in 382.¹²⁴ It is unclear whether Gratian’s armies in 378 could actually have destroyed the Goths, but *chose not to do it*.¹²⁵ In any case, these Goths stayed together as a coherent force.

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 167 – 76, who disparages the military attainments of Visigoths and Franks.

¹²³ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 452 – 5.

¹²⁴ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 159 – 66, 171 – 6, 184 – 8. Peter Heather, *The Goths* (London: Blackwell, 1996), 132, argues that in 376 Romans had only enough forces to keep out one group.

¹²⁵ After 378, normal Roman procedure was containment and settlement rather than destruction of barbarians: “pin [them] into positions where they became disposed to negotiate and make a treaty.” Goffart, “Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians,” 14; earlier, Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, 33 – 5, set out the same principle more generally. Herbert Schutz, *The Germanic Realms in Pre-Carolingian Central Europe, 400 – 750* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 28 – 34, emphasizes that at various times in the

The events of the next century or so can be seen, therefore, as an ongoing negotiation between the strategic aims of barbarian groups on Roman territory and those of the Roman leadership.¹²⁶ No mere bands of undisciplined savages, barbarian armies did not mindlessly plunder or “run riot” in the provinces; they had rational agendas. Addressing the circumstance that four sizable barbarian groups, most of whom previously had been long-term permanent residents along the Danube frontier, all sought entry into Roman territory in the opening decade of the fifth century, Goffart remarks:

It is hard to believe that the wholesale desertion of *barbaricum*. . . was not shaped by the common perception, however indistinct, that warriors could improve their condition by forcing their existence on the attention of the Empire, demanding to be dealt with, and exacting a part in the imperial enterprise. This possibility of a common impulse inspired by the Gothic example is a conjecture that deserves to be advanced and entertained.¹²⁷

Barbarian armies plundered when they must in order to stay alive, but they seem to have realized from the very beginning that this was unsustainable and inefficient as a long-term solution. Already in 380 in Macedonia and Thessaly the Visigoths had obtained a tribute arrangement with the Roman towns.¹²⁸ Similarly, the Vandals, Alans, and Sueves in Spain, after a year or so of widespread plundering, appear to have come to terms with local Roman authorities: the plundering ceases and Spain is parcelled out among the constituent tribes of the invading force. As Goffart puts it: “The four peoples in Spain, having won a moment’s calm, tried to organize for themselves a provincial settlement foreshadowing what the patrician Constantius would do for the Visigoths in Aquitaine in 418.”¹²⁹ Much of the damage that the Goths did from 395 to 415 in the

Balkans in the 370s and 380s the Romans were either too weak to refuse treaties to barbarian groups or too unwilling to destroy potentially useful barbarian military manpower. Unlike Goffart, Schutz stresses the ongoing “Germanization” of the Roman army.

¹²⁶ Everett L. Wheeler, “Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy,” *The Journal of Military History* 57 (1993): 7 – 41 and 215 – 40, despite the misleading title, argues the case for Roman use of strategic thinking in policy making.

¹²⁷ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 95.

¹²⁸ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 184.

¹²⁹ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 101 – 5. The quote is on p. 117.

Balkans, Italy, and southern Gaul seems to be due to the refusal of the imperial government to give this army and its leadership an acceptable deal.

When Roman authorities are willing to deal, however, the outcomes appear to be workable and beneficial to both sides. From 382 to 395, Theodosius I could count on effective Gothic troops in his wars against western usurpers.¹³⁰ The usurper Constantine III may have made some kind of arrangement with the Vandals, Alans, and Suevi in northern Gaul that stopped the plundering they had wrought in 406 and restored calm 407 – 09.¹³¹ Possibly, Constantine III's erstwhile *magister militum*, the sub-usurper Gerontius, authored the settlement of the Vandals, Alans, and Suevi as a police force in Spain in 409.¹³² Most famously, in 418 the imperial government granted permanent settlement to the Visigoths as autonomous federates in *Aquitania*, an arrangement which became a model for the subsequent Burgundian and Ostrogothic settlements.¹³³ The exact nature of these arrangements has been a matter of intense controversy. The fundamental division here is between those who continue to believe that the Romans handed over actual property—land, buildings, and slaves—into the possession of barbarian settlers and a minority who, following Goffart, believe that the barbarians received shares in the tax revenues from designated provinces, not possession of the physical revenue-producing properties themselves.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 212 – 13.

¹³¹ So argued by Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul," 333, 338, 341 – 2. For the dating of the Vandal-Alan-Sueve invasion, see the beginning of subsection *Africa and the Vandals* below.

¹³² Thomas S. Burns, "The Settlement of 418," in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 53 – 4.

¹³³ E. A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians: The Decline of the Western Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 23 – 37 and 50 – 2, is a standard account. Cf. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, 103 – 25, and now Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 127, 135 – 43. See also Burns, "Settlement of 418," 56 – 63.

¹³⁴ Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, unveiled the thesis in 1980; the latest and most comprehensive restatement of it is in Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 119 – 86 and 253 – 62, including a review of the many critics and a refutation of their objections. See also Herwig Wolfram and Andreas Schwarz, eds., *Anerkennung und Integration. Zu den wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen der Völkerwanderungszeit 400 – 600* (Wien: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988), which reports the proceedings of a conference at Zwettl, Austria, devoted to Goffart's thesis. Jean Durliat, "Le salaire de la paix sociale dans les royaumes barbares," 21 – 72 in this volume, strongly supports Goffart, incorporating the latter's thesis into his own expansive views regarding late Roman fiscal structures and their survival into the early Middle Ages; the latter will be discussed in Section 5.4 below. Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 423 – 4, gives a typical rejection of Goffart (specifically, on the Burgundian settlement), regarding Goffart's interpretation as a "very forced reading" and asserting that "there is no doubt that . . . here is the division of actual estates, parts of which were to be handed over to the Burgundian freemen."

Whatever the exact mechanism may have been, we can observe that provinces in which such settlements were implemented experienced relatively little turmoil, loss of prosperity, or disruption of normal Roman life; this is in contrast to times and places where unsettled barbarian armies are on the move through Roman territory.¹³⁵ Established within the framework of Roman legal and administrative procedure (whether that of *hospitalitas*, as in the traditional view, or on the basis of manipulating the revenue system, as per Goffart), the barbarian rulers served as viceroys, continuing Roman-style administration in their assigned territories. This was done especially brilliantly in Italy under Theoderic the Ostrogoth 490 – 527.¹³⁶ Goffart has spoken of “[t]he more or less orderly garrisoning of Gaul, Spain, Africa, and Italy” with barbarian forces as a matter of choice on the part of the Romans: “The late Romans surely did not want privileged aliens in their midst, but there were other things that they wanted even less.”¹³⁷ More recently, Goffart asserts that it was committed Roman policy to bring barbarians into the empire and place them in positions of power, so bringing about a *translatio imperii* to barbarian leadership.¹³⁸

Heather blames progressive loss of revenue, due to barbarian occupation of growing numbers of western provinces throughout the fifth century, for the eventual collapse of the imperial center in Italy.¹³⁹ But is an imperial center that devotes so much of its resources and attention to internecine power struggles rather than to the public good really worth its keep? Moreover, the Romans were getting a good return on lost tax revenues in the form of loyal military service, crucially in 451 when the Visigoths joined other Roman and allied contingents to defeat the Hun invasion of Gaul.¹⁴⁰ When given opportunity by disarray on the Roman side, settled barbarians could try to improve their positions. The Visigoths did so abortively in Gaul in 425, 430, and 436 – 9; successfully

¹³⁵ Indeed, the lack of outcry and revolt in the affected areas strongly supports the idea that in the settlements Romans were *not* losing actual property to the barbarians. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 126, 127, 166 – 7. Moreover, the barbarians “were not candidates for peasantry but proud veterans enriched by booty and hoping for a life of martial leisure” (p. 179).

¹³⁶ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 193, points out that both Odoacer and Theoderic had ruled better than most of the “Roman” emperors of the fifth century prior to 476.

¹³⁷ Goffart, “Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians,” 21 and 17, respectively, for the two quotes.

¹³⁸ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 192.

¹³⁹ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 242 – 50, 295 – 8, 344 – 5, 395 – 7.

¹⁴⁰ Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 50; Wolfram, *Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, 136 – 8.

in both Gaul and Spain after 468 under Euric.¹⁴¹ It is undoubtedly true that the multiplication of powerful constituents within Gaul and other parts of the western empire tended to make the West increasingly ungovernable from a center.¹⁴² In one sense, this was only an extension of the age-old issue of armies and regional elites throwing up usurpers. The change in the game wrought in the course of the fifth century was that, whereas formerly a round ended usually with a sole winner, now multiple players remained with positions on the board at the end of each contest. Moreover, as Goffart argues, there were many Romans in the West who, for reasons of their own, were willing to countenance such changes and, concurrently, to distance themselves from Constantinople.¹⁴³

Africa and the Vandals

At one key point, the story of Rome's interactions with its Temperate European barbarians intersects with the story of structural changes in the Roman Mediterranean: in Africa, with the Vandals. Indeed, the career of the Vandals in the decades before Africa exemplifies the ability of barbarian groups to rise to positions of power and autonomy within the late Roman system. From 405¹⁴⁴ to 429, the Vandals in Gaul and Spain had both plundered and suffered some serious losses,¹⁴⁵ but they also had enjoyed long stretches of tranquility,¹⁴⁶ had been able to fend off Roman armies on occasion,¹⁴⁷ and

¹⁴¹ Peter Heather, "The Emergence of the Visigothic Kingdom," in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 84 – 6.

¹⁴² Before autonomous barbarian enclaves had become entrenched, the main constituencies in the West that had to be satisfied in any political settlement were: the Army of Gaul/Germany, Army of Italy, Army of Illyria, Gallic landowners, Italian landowners, members of the latter two as imperial bureaucrats, and the court at Constantinople. The addition of barbarian power centers made inclusive political agreement well nigh impossible. Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 382.

¹⁴³ Goffart, "An Empire Unmade," passim.

¹⁴⁴ Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul," 325 – 31, redates the Rhine crossing to 31 December 405; Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 74, accepts this.

¹⁴⁵ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 96 – 7 and 106: Asdings bloodied by Franks in 405 – 6, Alans and Silings by Visigoths in 418.

¹⁴⁶ When they could reach agreements with local Roman authorities. Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul," 333, 338, 341 – 2; Burns, "Settlement of 418," 53 – 4; also Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 105. Notably, no one bothered them in Baetica 422 – 29.

¹⁴⁷ So in Baetica in 422. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 107.

had shown remarkable resilience and group coherence.¹⁴⁸ Unlike the Visigoths in 418 and Burgundians and Ostrogoths later, however, the Vandals had never received official recognition or settlement from the imperial government. In 429, when King Geiseric led them to Africa, the reconsolidated Vandals were once again striking out on their own account. By 439, they had taken the key provinces of *Proconsularis* and *Byzacena*—the heart of the grain and oil producing areas of Roman Africa, plus the great port city of Carthage.¹⁴⁹ By 442, the imperial governments both West and East had recognized Geiseric as *rex socius et amicus*, and his son Huneric was betrothed to Eudocia, a full-blooded Theodosian princess.¹⁵⁰ By 474, after a failed naval expedition against Carthage in 468, the emperor Leo signed a treaty with the Vandals which in effect ratified their independence.¹⁵¹

The synopsis of the Vandal's career exemplifies the potential of barbarian groups within the late Roman system. Regarding both Vandals and Sueves, Goffart remarks that they, "having survived the test of initial endurance, were reborn as lasting components of the late Roman world. . . . The past of both, either as mid-Danubians or as invaders, was over."¹⁵² Goffart further points out that "[t]he Vandals turned into a formidable military force and a long-standing threat to Mediterranean security."¹⁵³ In other words, they had become fully qualified players in the Roman power game. However, neither their diplomatic victories nor their use of the African fleet to project their power around Sardinia and Sicily and even threaten the Italian mainland were as important to the long-term trajectory of the late Roman system as were the fiscal effects of their takeover of Africa. Most directly, Geiseric confiscated the African properties of the Roman senators and distributed them among his followers.¹⁵⁴ Further, though the Vandal regime took no

¹⁴⁸ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 263 – 6, describes the recombination of defeated Alans and Silings with the Hasdings as the birth of a new "supergroup."

¹⁴⁹ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 267 – 71, 288 – 90.

¹⁵⁰ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 290 – 2.

¹⁵¹ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 395 – 407, 426 – 7.

¹⁵² Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 107.

¹⁵³ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 107.

¹⁵⁴ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 293 – 5. The senators flee to Italy and bemoan their losses to Valentinian III. Clearly, we have here the dispossession of a class of elite estate owners and their replacement with a new, Vandal, class of elite proprietors—not the creation of a new yeomanry.

steps to interfere with production or trade,¹⁵⁵ the revenue of Africa now was lost to the imperial government at Ravenna and the system of *annona* fleets compromised. As Wickham puts it, whereas “the western Mediterranean was held together by the tax spine from Carthage to Rome. . . . [t]he Vandal conquest of Carthage in 439 broke the tax spine.”¹⁵⁶ In other words, more than a loss to the imperial budget, which would further limit the western regime in its efforts to field armies against barbarian contestants,¹⁵⁷ the Vandal conquest provoked a “catastrophe flip” in which the Mediterranean exchange system as a whole began to transform and fragment.

Contradictions in Roman policy

The political reconfiguration of the Roman world as it evolved through the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries can be viewed as the interplay of three sets of strategic, long-term aims. The first was the ambition of Temperate European barbarian groups and individuals to find an advantageous place within the Roman imperial system; many tried and quite a few had notable success. The other two are opposite and often conflicting impulses on the Roman side—to find, on the one hand, workable accommodation with and integration of the barbarians but to seek, on the other hand, opportunities for eliminating them. These opposite impulses are clearly evident in the decades around AD 400. In the East, Eutropius granted Alaric’s Goths settlement and a share of the tax revenues in 397; Eutropius, however, was overthrown and the agreement cancelled in 399, followed by a massacre of many of the barbarians within the eastern Empire in 400.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, in the West in 408, Stilicho announced a sweeping agreement with

¹⁵⁵ In the treaty of 442, Geiseric undertook to continue grain shipments to Italy. Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 292.

¹⁵⁶ Wickham, *Framing*, 709, 711.

¹⁵⁷ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 296 – 8, notes Ravenna’s fiscal straits in the 440s and translates the lost revenue into lost troop strengths. He remarks further that the fiscal difficulties were forcing the regime to cut back on the privileges that it extended to its chief constituents—the elite landowners and office-holders. In other words, the loss of Africa was having socio-political repercussions at the heart of the western Empire.

¹⁵⁸ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 212 – 15. Clearly, by 397, the Romans in Constantinople had already developed the concept of a “Goffartian” type of barbarian settlement, but the majority did not want to implement it.

Alaric's Goths but was forthwith deposed, his agreement abrogated, and many barbarians in Italy slaughtered.¹⁵⁹

To what extent were Roman choices constrained by adverse realities? It is interesting to observe the apparent ease with which Constantinople was able to exert its will in Italy when it chose to do so: first in 425 to secure the young Valentinian III on the western throne, and second when installing Anthemius in 467.¹⁶⁰ East Roman forces under Aspar were able to contain the Vandals in Africa in 435. However, an expedition in 440 – 41 to reverse the Vandal seizure of Carthage had to be cancelled in order to counter a major offensive of the Huns in the Balkans.¹⁶¹ Subsequently, the Vandals were able to checkmate Majorian's projected stroke against them in 461 by a pre-emptive strike against the naval assets gathered along the southeast coast of Spain.¹⁶² Finally, when a major East-West operation against Africa was mounted under Anthemius in 468, the huge armada suffered a setback from a Vandal counterattack at Cape Bon near Carthage, which was enough to dissuade the Romans from all future efforts in that direction for over sixty years and, according to Heather's conclusions, set the seal on the fall of the western Empire: "Basiliscus' defeat had destroyed the last chance of regenerating a dominant imperial force."¹⁶³ After Cape Bon, the imperial center at Constantinople had decided, evidently, that continued efforts in the West were not worth the expense, and this consideration was not to be reversed until the accession of Justinian's resurgent and aggressive regime in the second quarter of the sixth century. But how different are these "Romans" from the Romans who fought Carthage in the third century BC!

¹⁵⁹ Federico Marazzi, "The Destinies of the Late Antique Italies: Politico-Economic Developments of the Sixth Century," in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 125, notes the violent anti-barbarianism and siege-mentality in fifth-century Italy.

¹⁶⁰ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 388 – 94. Heather stresses in these pages that Constantinople was committed to shoring up the West at every opportunity and sent what forces it could in every emergency. See, however, Goffart, "Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians," for an opposed viewpoint.

¹⁶¹ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 290 – 2, 388 – 9.

¹⁶² Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 397 – 9. This episode, among so many others, demonstrates the military and strategic capabilities of the barbarian Vandals.

¹⁶³ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 399 – 406; the quote is on p. 406. Basiliscus was the commanding general. Anthemius disposed of the equivalent of 100,000 lbs. of gold, had 1,100 ships, and 30,000 men.

Nevertheless, while considered policy moved Roman authorities to accept and sometimes even to welcome barbarian settlement and participation within the empire, the Roman side persisted also in actions designed to destroy barbarian groups regardless of whether such groups were actively inimical to Roman interests. In other words, if the goal always had been to effect a “more or less orderly garrisoning” of the western Empire,¹⁶⁴ then the constellation of member kingdoms in a post-Roman commonwealth across the western Mediterranean and Temperate Europe might have been rather different than it turned out in fact. How different might the fifth century have been if Alaric’s proposal to establish his Goths as a federate force in Noricum and Pannonia had been accepted? Using the Visigoths against the Vandals and Alans in Spain in 416 – 18 and the Huns against the Burgundians on the Rhine in 436 – 37 shifted the group counters on the board but did not, in the long run, result in the Romans regaining control of Spain and Gaul. In these and many similar instances the Romans were proceeding as a master chess player might—forcing trades of material in order to get to an advantageous endgame position. In the sixth century, Justinian was still pursuing such a game with unabated energy. Unlike a chess board, however, in this game new pieces were apt to come into play from outside, and over the long term the Roman position steadily deteriorated. Most clearly, this conclusion is supported by the outcome of Justinian’s moves against the Gepids.¹⁶⁵ Long settled in the Carpathian basin, they, like most other barbarian groups in the vicinity of the Roman frontier, had entered into cultural, economic, and political symbiosis with the Romans. The Gepids were replaced now by the Avars, who had none of these attributes and who precipitated further serious losses for East Rome in the Balkans. Goffart’s damning comment: “[The Gepid’s] pretension to endurance continually affronted an Eastern Empire that could not bear to have a force on its borders without wishing to destroy it.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Goffart, “Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians,” 21.

¹⁶⁵ The details of the combinations involving the East Roman government and the Gepids, Lombards, and Avars are set out concisely in Schutz, *Germanic Realms*, 345 – 53. The Gepid kingdom had included Sirmium, an important frontier capital.

¹⁶⁶ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 114.

Socio-cultural changes

The slow transformation of the Roman Mediterranean exchange system in the fifth through seventh centuries was paralleled, thus, by an equally gradual transformation of the political landscape, especially in the European provinces of the Empire. What effect did the latter have on the ability of post-Roman states and societies in the West to maintain economic health and institutional continuity? As in the case of the dismantling of the imperial Roman Mediterranean, the effects of political decentralization differed markedly from one province and region to another. Nevertheless, here also a few general observations will help to establish a foundation for the discussion in the sections to follow.

One of the best recent descriptions of the reality of Classical high culture in the late Roman West appears in Heather's *Fall of the Roman Empire*. By the fourth century, says Heather, the provincials in Gaul and the Rhenish provinces had constructed a fully Roman rural and urban landscape, were as good Latinists as Italians, and were fully integrated into the political system. Heather exemplifies this with vignettes from the lives of Symmachus, a senator from Rome, and Ausonius, a rhetor and high office-holder from Gaul, whose careers intersected at the imperial court in Trier in the 360s and 370s.¹⁶⁷ According to Heather, the continued vitality of this elite culture and the lifestyle that went with it depended on the persistence of an imperial center: "Wealth, dignities, favors, promotions: all flowed from the imperial presence, the point at which the tax revenues of western Eurasia were redistributed." To gain access to the court and to qualify for such benefits, and to be acceptable to their peers, civilian elite individuals had to demonstrate their ability to compose letters, poems, and panegyrics and otherwise to embody the refinements of education, literacy, and cultivation that were a hallmark of this political class.¹⁶⁸ In order to serve the barbarian kings who replaced the imperial centers in the West, a full Roman classical education was no longer necessary, although at first it was appreciated. In time, this aspect of Roman culture faded, or became the

¹⁶⁷ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 32 – 45. Heather's description of Gaul in the later fourth century illustrates, incidentally, that this area was far from experiencing any material collapse or abandonment of Roman civilization.

¹⁶⁸ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 132 – 40, reviews the lifestyle and functions of the Roman elite class in its material, political, and cultural aspects. The quote is on p. 27.

province of clerics.¹⁶⁹ Though the barbarian rulers freely employed educated Romans, institutional continuity decayed, according to Heather, along with the Classical culture.

Profound cultural and institutional change is ascribed, thus, primarily to a change in the political superstructure—a change which had in turn been forced by barbarians muscling their way into an otherwise viable Roman governing system.¹⁷⁰ Alternatively, the cultural changes that Heather notes can be seen as an aspect of transformations that were generated primarily in the Roman world itself. The elite civilian lifestyle that included an expectation of *otium cum dignitate*—a cultured repose away from public duties—eroded in the face of what Goffart identifies as progressive “barbarization” (or: militarization) and Christianization of Roman society, both being aspects of the long-term simplification of society the outcome of which was a medieval society in which surplus should legitimately support only a military class and the clergy.¹⁷¹ The militarization of Roman political society had its roots in the crisis of the third century, and continued into the fourth and the fifth centuries in the solidification of a military aristocracy separate from the civilian landowners and bureaucrats; increasingly, this military caste included first frontier provincials and then barbarians. By the sixth century in both East and West, power was negotiated primarily among individuals from a military-aristocratic super elite stemming from families of diverse ethnic origins.¹⁷²

Along with political and cultural “simplification” came changes in administrative practices, including the fiscal system. However, as Goffart comments: “What took place in fifth-century Gaul and Italy was a retreat, but a retreat in good order, leaving intact notable remnants of the systems that were discarded.”¹⁷³ The destination of this “retreat” or the sum of the cultural, political, and economic changes was a post-Roman or early

¹⁶⁹ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 440 – 2.

¹⁷⁰ This is the crux of the argument in Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 141, 262 – 3, 343, 365 – 7, 375 – 9, 381, 432.

¹⁷¹ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 188 – 91, 228 – 9, 230, 234 – 9. “Private life was a blessing whose elimination was not deliberately sought by anyone. Yet over a period of three or four centuries, nothing proved harder to protect against the dual inroads of military exigency and religious fervor; *otium cum dignitate* was simplified out of existence” (p. 236).

¹⁷² Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 188 – 97. One of Goffart’s goals in this argument is to underscore the melding of Roman and barbarian elites and so to disallow any idea that a “Germanic” replacement culture had triumphed over the “Roman.”

¹⁷³ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 236.

medieval world in which, as Wickham argues, the efficiency and centralizing capacity of the Roman tax-state was replaced in most areas by states based instead upon control of land and rents, or even by sub-state systems. Concurrently, for a few centuries, the proportion of surplus remaining at the disposal of non-elite individuals—“peasants,” broadly speaking—increased vis-à-vis that which could be mobilized by the elite.¹⁷⁴ In essentials, Wickham’s position agrees with Goffart’s: “Latin Christendom found that social fluidity, political fragmentation and economic weakness agreed better with the ideology it professed than would a rallying to the support of central power.”¹⁷⁵

The restructuring of the Mediterranean system, the impact of Roman – barbarian interactions on the superstructure of the imperial state, the socio-cultural and political changes in late Roman civilization—all of these were long-term processes which, in the aggregate, may be seen as bringing about a turn in historical era. The issue is, however, should such wholesale change legitimately be seen as a catastrophe? Among the more recent discussants, divergences in attitude play a more prominent part than do disagreements about actual data points. In any case, the way that the systemic changes played out in detail varied considerably from province to province and region to region. On the side of continuity, it is not controversial that East Rome or Byzantium survived the wreckage (if such it was) of the sixth and seventh centuries and enjoyed periods of renewed power, wealth, and influence in the centuries to come.¹⁷⁶ For the purposes of the present study, the test case for collapse or significant continuity is Gaul.

4.4 The Case of Roman Gaul

As a foundation for his revolutionary study of Mediterranean economic revival in the eighth and ninth centuries, Michael McCormick placed a sweeping vision of economic and demographic decline, a decline that started earliest in the northwest of the Roman empire ca. 200 and that had subsumed, by 700, even the more persistent blooms of

¹⁷⁴ Wickham, *Framing*, 56 – 150, 519 – 88. See again the discussion of Wickham’s theories in Section 5.4 below.

¹⁷⁵ Goffart, “An Empire Unmade,” 43.

¹⁷⁶ The exact nature of that survival may be contested, however. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 39, 197, 234, 236, asserts that the the empire of the East was transformed equally as much as was the former Roman West. Wickham, *Framing*, 72 – 9, 124 – 9, argues that Constantinople at least maintained throughout the organizational level of a “tax-state,” which was not done anywhere in the West.

prosperity in the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁷⁷ Implicated as a core constituent of the Roman northwest, then, Gaul, and northern Gaul especially along with Britain and the Rhine provinces, flickers only feebly and intermittently during the sixth- and seventh-century indian summer of Antiquity in the East. For McCormick, Gaul or *Francia* re-emerges rapidly as a dynamic economic player in the eighth century.¹⁷⁸

However, this long-term process need not be viewed only from the standpoint of a Mediterranean perspective. Gaul north of the *Massif Centrale*, though thoroughly Romanized, was the largest and most integrated definably non-Mediterranean space within the Empire, and intrinsically rich in economic potential. Gaul was a striking example of success in Rome's policy of imperial integration during the first and second centuries AD. As such, it not only evolved standard Greco-Roman civic institutions and socio-economic organization but was intimately involved in the workings of the Roman fiscal system, so that the unfolding of Gallic prosperity in the second and early third centuries was no less a function of imperial structures than was the Mediterranean commerce based on *annona*-routes. Third- and fourth-century changes in the Gallic economy were driven not so much by some inexorable process of millennial decline as by responses to discrete structural shifts, both acute and long-term. These include the political crisis of the third century, the fiscal and strategic restructuring of the late third and early fourth centuries, and the development of a northwestern sphere of exchange involving central, western, and northern Gaul, Britain, and the Rhine provinces. These developments interacted also with the growing economic and military potential of the trans-*limes* barbarians. In the fifth century, ongoing Gallic socio-cultural change combined with barbarian invasion and barbarian integration to lay the foundations, by the end of that century, for a new political settlement centered on northern Gaul.

A model province of the High Empire

From ca. 600 BC at the latest, Gaul had been in active contact with the Mediterranean world, with contacts between Gauls and Romans intensifying in the second and first

¹⁷⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 25 – 119. See above the introduction to section 4.1 and the subsection on *The End of the Roman Mediterranean*.

¹⁷⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 639 – 69.

centuries BC. Moreover, even before the Caesarian conquest of the 50s BC, Iron Age Gaul had entered into a phase of indigenous political consolidation, urbanization, and industrial expansion.¹⁷⁹ In one sense, incorporation within the Roman imperial system accelerated and fulfilled in Gaul the processes of Mediterranean integration and political sophistication. In another sense, the surge in urbanization, the consolidation of communications infrastructure, and the expansion of productivity that Rome brought created for Gaul the preconditions for an eventual return to greater autonomy.

Structurally, the framework for Roman imperial integration of Gaul could be described as consisting of (1) an intensively colonized and Latinized Provence and *Narbonensis*, (2) the massive Rhine army establishment, (3) the new imperial center at Lyon (*Lugdunum*), and (4) a network of road and river communications tying them all together. *Narbonensis* and Provence, indeed, tended to a trajectory that had more in common with other Mediterranean areas than with the other three Gallic provinces—*Aquitanica*, *Lugdunensis*, *Belgica*—and with the two Germanies.¹⁸⁰ The Mediterranean roots of *Narbonensis*, however, fed Roman influence northwards along the trunk line of the Rhône corridor, whence it branched from the vicinity of Lyon to fan out across western, central, and northern Gaul and to the Rhine. The permanent, multi-legionary Roman military establishment along the Rhine bracketed the Gallic space on the northeast,¹⁸¹ and had, by AD 50, as Drinkwater says, made the Rhineland “the powerhouse of Romanisation in the north-western provinces.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ See Section 3.3, subsections *Transalpine trade: Greeks* and *Transalpine trade: Romans* above. J. F. Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul: The Three Provinces, 58 BC – AD 260* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 137, emphasizes the high level of pre-Roman development in Gaul and that Gallic *civitates* or polities typically had multiple urban centers. Drinkwater’s view of the economic and political development of Gaul up to AD 260 generally supports the arguments that will be made in Chapter 5 concerning the viability of Gaul in the early post-Roman period. Cf. throughout Edith Mary Wightman, *Gallia Belgica* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). Though Wightman focuses on the province of *Belgica* and the two Germanies (essentially, the territory between the Seine and the Rhine), her topics cover much the same ground as do Drinkwater’s. Her treatment is noticeably less synthetic and more detail-oriented, as well as more pessimistic in many of its conclusions.

¹⁸⁰ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, passim, refers to the latter areas as [*Gallia*] *Comata* or “The Three Gauls.” *Germania Inferior* and *Superior* are implicitly included as part and parcel of this context.

¹⁸¹ See Section 3.4, subsection *The Rhine - Danube interface zone* above for a discussion of the reasons why this position remained relatively constant throughout the first four centuries AD.

¹⁸² Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 56. One reflection of the rapid urbanization and Romanization of the Rhineland populations was the promotion of Trier (*Augusta Treverorum*) and Köln (*Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium*) now to full colonial status.

The road net, originally laid out by Agrippa and Augustus and completed under Claudius (AD 41 – 54), was designed both to give Roman forces efficient access to the entire territory of Gaul and to secure a supply line from the Mediterranean to the strategically crucial Rhine garrison.¹⁸³ Lyon, meanwhile, aside from its position at a key node in the transport network and its function as an administrative center for The Three Gauls, was deliberately built up into a center for imperial cult and regional politics designed to coopt the Gallic elite.¹⁸⁴ The position of *Lugdunum* was oriented to the Mediterranean connection: a port on the Rhône 200 miles inland but reachable by sea-going ships from the Mediterranean, adjacent to the central Gallic *civitas* of the Aedui (between the Saône and the upper Loire), and connecting also to *Helvetia* (western and central Switzerland) and the Rhine—all very logical from a *southern* viewpoint.¹⁸⁵ Its development and the placement of the Rhine army were dictated by Roman political and strategic aims rather than local needs.

Comatan Gaul between Lyon and the Rhine was brought, thus, under pervasive Roman influence both politically and economically. On the political side, the Gallic *civitates* were juridically transformed into Mediterranean-style city states and the Gallic elite converted into civic leaders and rural landowners.¹⁸⁶ The elite built Roman-style public buildings and residences in the official *civitas*-capitals and Roman-style villas out in the countryside.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 21, 38, 93. See also Section 3.4, subsection *Provincialized Temperate Europe* above for the origins of the Roman road system in Gaul.

¹⁸⁴ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 93 – 103 (administration), 111 – 14 (political and cult center). Lyon was a magnificent Mediterranean showplace with all amenities, a miniature Rome, impressive to visiting provincials and Gallic *civitas*-leaders doing ceremonials at the Condate temple (dedicated first to Augustus and later to all of the Augusti) and attending the *Concilium Galliarum*.

¹⁸⁵ For Lyon as a Mediterranean port see McCormick, *Origins*, 77, 79. For the strategic layout of the post-conquest road net, see again the outline in Barry Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction* (New York: Metuen, 1988), map p. 126, 137 – 44; and in more detail Edmond Frézouls, “Gallien und römisches Germanien,” in *Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. Friedrich Vittinghoff (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990), 467 – 71.

¹⁸⁶ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 22, 103 – 11, 161 – 8, 171 – 83. In Gaul as elsewhere, Rome adopted the expedient of ruling through the medium of a landowning class.

¹⁸⁷ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 142 – 57 (towns), 161 – 6 (villas). A dressed-up version of the Iron-Age rectangular stone farmhouse or *aedificium* remained common among more elaborate constructions. This suggests the persistence of a class of small proprietors among larger, elite landowners. See also Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 105, who speaks of a “sudden mushrooming of stone buildings” in the second half of the first century AD, with some 50 percent of villas in *Belgica* being built within that timeframe.

On the economic side, the major engine driving Gallic development was fiscal demand in the form of supplies for the Rhine armies.¹⁸⁸ This was, in other words, a classic example of the same kind of fiscal economic pump-priming that was behind the Mediterranean exchange system. As Drinkwater describes it:

If money was to be paid then money had to be earned; in other words surpluses would have to be produced to be exchanged for money in the course of trade. Conveniently and neatly, the biggest customer for such produce would have been the army itself. Money raised in taxation in Gaul was therefore spent on the produce of the Gallic hinterland.¹⁸⁹

Fiscal demand worked synergistically with the road and river network and the socio-politically driven building programmes in town and country to produce an upsurge in urbanization, commerce, and prosperity throughout the Three Gauls during the first and second centuries AD. Drinkwater emphasizes the tremendous impact of the improved road and river-transport system on accelerating the post-conquest development of Gaul.¹⁹⁰

He also emphasizes the commercial nature of the development as a whole. This can be seen in the growth of *vici*, both official and unofficial, at economically active sites in addition to the *civitas*-capitals.¹⁹¹ It can be seen further in the efflorescence especially

¹⁸⁸ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 65, calculates the Rhine garrison at some 44,000 plus the men of the fleet, or roughly 15 per cent of the entire armed forces. Further, he estimates that the army cost 400,000,000 sesterterii annually, or approximately 60,000,000 sesterterii for the Rhine army, which “probably came very close to the annual sum raised by direct taxation of the Three Provinces.” Among other supplies, this army would have needed some seventy tons of wheat per day, making wheat growing a profitable business for Gallic and Rhineland farmers (pp. 128, 167, 178): “we may assume that common sense and convenience ensured that the bulk of these commodities was provided by the Three Gauls” (p. 128). Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 148, 156, 189, 191, echoes this assessment, especially for Somme region grain in the first century AD and for various products in the more eastern areas of *Belgica* in the late second and third centuries. See also Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 103 – 6, for evidence of state intervention in the distribution of goods in the northwestern provinces.

¹⁸⁹ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 129. See again Hopkins, “Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire,” for the generalized argument.

¹⁹⁰ “In establishing a planned, measured, mapped, advertised, maintained and policed all-weather [road] network, and in providing that comprehensive political and administrative framework and that technological expertise without which it could not have worked as a whole, the Empire gave the Three Gauls the integrated system which they previously lacked.” Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 124.

¹⁹¹ See the discussion on the term *vicus* in Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 135 – 6. Rather than being strictly an adjunct to a Roman auxiliary camp, as the term sometimes is construed in the context of emporia studies, a *vicus* in Gaul often had its own magistrates and was, in effect, a recognized, though politically

in the second century of a mercantile class, the corporations of *nautae* or freshwater boatmen (contrasted to the *navicularii* or saltwater shippers), who handled much of the exchange both on the rivers and on the overland road segments connecting the major river routes. Like Mediterranean shippers, *nautae* both hauled supplies for the Roman government and conveyed private goods for distribution. Major items carried included great quantities of stone for the various building projects, fine ceramics, and glassware. Overall, the quantity and quality of material goods available had increased greatly under Roman rule, as had general prosperity. All of this is visible in the archaeological and epigraphic record which, as Drinkwater says,

is bound to produce one single overriding impression. . . the very significant presence of commercial and industrial activity, and hence of a prosperous, confident, and self-aware artisanal and trading class.¹⁹²

The focal point for economic activity as for politics in Gaul during the High Empire was Lyon, which was the base for the trade associations of the *utricularii* (lightermen) and the *vinarii* (vintners) plus many others. As Drinkwater says:

They therefore accommodated a host of non-resident *negotiatores* in oil, pottery, foodstuffs and the like. Dominating the whole commercial scene were, however, the great river-shippers, the *nautae*, of the Rhône and Saône. Not just sailors, but important traders in their own right, the *nautae* should be seen as the cream of the *negotiatores*. As *nautae* they were probably responsible not to the local magistrates at Lyon, but to the imperial governor; they entered local trade-associations, but probably to give themselves a place in local life.¹⁹³

undistinguished, urban development not connected with any military installation. See also Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 91 – 7, whose comments on the Gallic *vici* follow those of Drinkwater.

¹⁹² Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 127, 186 – 8, 196 – 8, on the *nautae* and economic development. The quote is on p. 196. Epigraphy is the major source for our knowledge about this class and their activities. See also Frézouls, “Gallien und römisches Germanien,” 459 – 61, 489 – 95. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 106 – 7, points out that inscriptions of *seviri augustales* (imperial freedmen, engaging in trade) and *negotiatores* cluster in Provence and along the Rhône – Moselle corridor. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 154 – 6, raises questions concerning the social organization of trade: was it, perhaps, a sideline for landed interests?

¹⁹³ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 197. The second most important commercial center was the great riverport of Köln (p. 188). Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 100, emphasizes the economic importance of Trier: “Of the cities in Belgica, Trier certainly has the best claim to be regarded not as an empty status symbol, a pale reflection of imported Mediterranean ideas or a mere parasite on the countryside, but as an active generator

In essentials, then, Lyon in the second century AD functioned in much the same way—and for similar reasons—as did the great Mediterranean *annona*-ports. In Gaul, however, as in other parts of the Empire, the turn of the third century AD appeared to bring changes.

A potential for self-sufficiency

Many decades ago, Dennett thought that the wealth and sophistication of Gaul in the second century was due to its “natural trade” of products to the Mediterranean, and that this system of prosperity had been wrecked ca. AD 200 never to be restored.¹⁹⁴ The first part of his observation, on Gallic second-century prosperity, certainly finds backing in the preceding discussion; the second part, concerning a calamitous break ca. AD 200, is far more problematical. Drinkwater, indeed, argues strongly that a high level of prosperity was maintained until the end of the Gallic Empire in AD 274. Lyon declined. Bordeaux, Brittany, Belgica (especially its wool trade), Trier and the Rhineland as a whole, and even the *Agri Decumates*, however, prospered at least into the 250s. Moreover, while Lyon and central Gaul appear to have been declining as export centers in the third century, they continued to serve as a market for the exports of other regions within greater Gaul—that is to say, they had to be able to pay for such imports and had to have maintained a fair degree of economic health even if they had surrendered their pre-eminence. In short, though the literary sources for the period are pessimistic, archaeology and epigraphy suggest that some areas declined, some showed growth, but nowhere is there a sign of collapse.¹⁹⁵

of wealth through production and trade.” She remarks also that unlike Lyon, which had the guise of a transplanted Italian city, Trier always was a city of the North, and overtook Lyon in importance during the Severan period (p. 157).

¹⁹⁴ Daniel C. Dennett, Jr., “Pirenne and Muhammad,” *Speculum* 23 (1948): 165 – 90. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 149, points out, however, that the incidence of Menapian hams and Morinian geese in Rome is known only from literary references in Martial and Pliny. Production of iron in *Belgica* and of woolens is attested archaeologically and epigraphically, respectively (pp. 139 – 40, 149 – 51).

¹⁹⁵ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 83, 214 – 24. “The picture of the Three Gauls which I propose for this period leading up to the establishment of the Gallic Empire is therefore one which is basically a continuation of that which I proposed for the period of the High Empire, namely of a generally settled, wealthy and peaceful land” (p. 222). Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 89, 131, emphasizes repeatedly that the pre-conquest Belgic heartland around Amiens and the Somme valley flourished early (first and second centuries) but later (second and third centuries) fell into prolonged recession, while Trier and other eastern areas grew.

One way to characterize the shift in the foci of Gallic prosperity after AD 200 is that the Mediterranean connection is waning while exchange connections among the coasts of Gaul, Britain, and the Rhenish areas are waxing.¹⁹⁶ To make the point more broadly, it seems that the shift in commercial patterns involves an emerging northwestern trading world that is no longer so dependent upon imperial fiscal action to give it direction. Thus, despite adverse trends such as currency debasement and tax collection in kind rather than coin that was “strangling” the tax – trade symbiosis and thereby bypassing the need for urban-based middlemen to facilitate it, access to commerce outside of state directives was a key to continued growth.¹⁹⁷ In parallel with the long-term geographical change in economic focus, the locus of manufacture of the fine ceramics called “Samian ware” migrated from Tuscany to Lyon ca. 10 BC, to La Graufesenque ca. AD 20, to Lezoux (*Ledocus*) ca. 110, and finally to eastern Gaul, concentrating especially around Trier and Tabernae (Rheinzabern) from the late second century onwards. With production at the Auvergne sites in the millions of pieces annually, widespread distribution, and precise datability, Samian ware represents an entire, large, market-oriented industry. Replaced increasingly in popularity by Köln glassware, Samian ware declined after AD 200 and collapsed ca. 230, but these were changes in taste rather than symptoms of economic catastrophe.¹⁹⁸

The episode of the Gallic Empire of 260 – 274 confirmed both the regional economic viability and the potential for political autonomy inherent in the northwest of the Empire. However much Gaul had accepted Romanization and was content to be part of the empire, it also retained significant cultural uniquenesses, and the Gallic elite were much less involved in extra-provincial ambitions than were their counterparts in Spain

¹⁹⁶ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 19, notes that the Atlantic, western parts of Gaul had maritime opportunities. He further postulates an integrated regional trade area bounded by a triangle including the Rhineland-Moselle area, Britain, and Aquitaine, and connecting also with Spain (p. 224).

¹⁹⁷ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 223. “[H]elped by the initial presence of the military markets, the Gallic economy achieved such an impetus that eventually it was able to run under its own momentum, not directly tied to army-purchases” (p. 224).

¹⁹⁸ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 187 – 8. On p. 227 n. 41, Drinkwater mentions but does not explore the possibility of a trans-Rhenine market. Clearly, commercial connections down the Danube and into *Germania libera* would add further incentive to base industry and trade in the Rhineland. See Section 3.4, subsection *Roman influence north* and Section 4.3, subsection *Relations along the frontier* above. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 142 – 7, gives detail on early production of *sigillata* in Lorraine and on Argonne wares.

and Africa, rarely venturing further into imperial politics than the confines of the Condate temple and the activities of the *Concillia Galliarum* in Lyon.¹⁹⁹ In other words, local identity persisted and the leading strata retained opportunities for local political activity. Furthermore, by AD 200, as Drinkwater points out,

the Rhine army, recruiting almost exclusively from the Germanies and the Gallic hinterland, was no longer the Roman army *in* Germany but the Roman army *of* Germany—an accepted, essential and integrated part of the life of the whole of the Three Gauls.²⁰⁰

It may be noted that it is only another small evolutionary step from “the Roman army *of* Germany” to a late-Roman army of the Rhine that was more barbarized and included Frankish *foederati*.²⁰¹ In the context of the deepening imperial crisis of the mid-third century, which included Gallienus’ abandonment of the Rhaetian *limes* (probably in 257) and the capture of Valerian by the Persians in 260, one Latinus Postumus took charge of the defenses on the Rhine and wove the strands of a thoroughly acclimated regional defense force, a political elite with a tradition of regional aloofness, and a prosperous regional trade area into an independent state within the Roman system, which maintained itself successfully from 260 to 274.²⁰² Heather sees the Gallic Empire as an “entirely non-separatist, properly Roman regime: quite simply a way of making sure that a satisfactory slice of the imperial cake was distributed in their own corner of the Empire.”²⁰³ The stress in this evaluation is on the integrity of the Roman imperial system, which, despite its structural flaws, Heather is determined to defend. However, the stress might equally well be laid on the evident fact that, in the third century, the tax revenues and manpower of Gaul and its northwestern neighbors sufficed to provide a viable base for Roman-style government. Moreover, support for the Gallic Empire was

¹⁹⁹ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 18, 72 – 3, 111 – 14, 189 – 208. “Gallo-Roman civilisation was a true hybrid, and not just an artificial transplant. In the first place, Severus allowed Celtic to be used in courts of law; secondly, native leagues officially replaced Roman miles as the means of indicating distances along Roman roads in the Three Gauls” (p. 83).

²⁰⁰ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 69.

²⁰¹ See Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 226, regarding the composition of Julian’s army.

²⁰² Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 64, 89, 224 – 5; Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 193 – 5, has a similar summary of events, although in her account the regime appears less stable than it does in Drinkwater’s.

²⁰³ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 66. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 192, also hints at “unrest” on the part of north Gallic elites regarding scarcity of preferments to imperial office.

not simply a matter of highly-placed landowners accessing favors from a convenient imperial dispensation-point but was more broadly based. As Drinkwater says:

[the Gauls] responded well to the new Rhine-based empire, and helped to make of it something more than just a disconnected limb of the Roman Empire. I would argue that the Gallic Empire was in fact founded on and supported by the essentially prosperous society and economy of High Roman Gaul described in the previous chapters—the Gaul not just of the great aristocrats but also of the smaller farmers, the *nautae* and the *negotiatores*, and the urban craftsmen and traders. It was solidly based, and it worked.²⁰⁴

So, if it worked in the third century, why could it not work in the fifth and sixth? In Drinkwater's view, it was the "reckless imperialism" of Aurelian, who forcibly re-annexed Gaul, that irrevocably damaged it materially and psychologically, opened it to barbarian attack, and ushered in a period of decline and ultimate ruin: "The Crisis affected the Three Gauls particularly badly, because it had come so savagely, and so late; what followed was a quite different society."²⁰⁵ But was it so different, really, in political-economic essentials? To test the proposition, what is needed is evidence for or against the continuation through the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries of the constituencies Drinkwater mentions in his assessment of the success of the Gallic Empire.²⁰⁶

Structural changes of the third and fourth centuries

We may start with the cities. Whereas new *vici* sprang up in Gaul early with the construction of the military road net and the surge in commerce that accompanied it, the

²⁰⁴ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 225. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 197, points out that Postumus had trouble minting enough coin to pay his troops and was forced to a devaluation of the silver issues, which might suggest a more pessimistic economic situation for the Gallic Empire than that argued by Drinkwater.

²⁰⁵ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 226. This assessment may be questioned. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 198 – 9, remarks on the benevolent activities and achievements of the emperor Probus in Gaul until 283, for example.

²⁰⁶ R. Van Dam, "The Pirenne Thesis and Fifth-Century Gaul," in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 331 – 3, anticipates some of the argument in this sub-section. Van Dam points out the inordinate Mediterranean-centeredness of traditional views of Roman Gaul, that the conversion of Gaul into a Mediterranean hinterland had done violence to Gaul's natural affinities with its northwestern neighbors, and that from a north-based perspective it is Aquitaine and Provence that are the "periphery." He also makes the point that, to the extent that economic activity is culturally imbedded, to understand economic changes one must look also at cultural changes (p. 324).

big surge in architectural aggrandizement in the *civitas*-capitals—the elites engaging in *aemulatio*—did not get under way until the mid-first century AD, and leaped forward especially ca. AD 100. From the mid-second century, with the Gallic *urbes* more or less complete, the elite shifted resources to improving the countryside with fancy villas and rural *conciliabula*—forum-like public spaces not associated with a major population center. Even *vici* began to receive some of those building resources.²⁰⁷

Gallic urbanization during the High Empire was doubly dependent on stimulus from Roman imperial policy. First, the political and administrative stress on *civitas*-capitals, which focused local elite activity upon these places. Second, the tax-supported military procurement system that depended on an urban based commercial class to facilitate it. With the Third Century Crisis and the establishment of the Tetrarchy came changes in tax policy, which let much of the energy out of the system.²⁰⁸ To the extent that the Gallic towns (and Gallic commerce) were creatures of the state, similar in a sense to the *annona* routes in the Mediterranean, they suffered when the changes came. Many smaller industrial and commercial centers failed to survive, according to Drinkwater:

Following the great Crisis of the third century most [cities] would be transformed into bases of governmental and ecclesiastical administration, much reduced in area and sheltering behind thick defensive walls put together from expensive materials looted from the remains of the public buildings and monuments of their recent heyday.²⁰⁹

The argument is, then, that Roman intervention had artificially accelerated urbanization in Gaul to start, and then Roman policy changes had just as arbitrarily curtailed it. To the extent that this may be true, however, it could be argued here as in the

²⁰⁷ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 189 – 91. Cf. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 88, who says that it is unclear whether town houses or country houses took precedence in construction. In *Belgica*, the contrast was not between town and country building phases but rather a shift in focus from the western to the eastern parts of the province over time (p. 139).

²⁰⁸ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 111 - 18, stresses the greater centralization of revenues in his analysis. He argues that the elite suffered no net losses in the reorganization, but that their activities now were drawn away from the local civic sphere and refocused on the imperial capitals. The point about the effect of changes in taxation (moving from cash payments to collection in kind) was made also by Hopkins, “Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire,” 123 – 4.

²⁰⁹ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 158. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 200, points out the psychological break that must have been occasioned by the destruction of erstwhile cemeteries and the recycling of their inscribed markers as building materials. See also Bachrach, “Imperial Walled Cities in the West,” 192 – 3.

case of the Mediterranean that it had a long-range positive outcome—that the late Roman and early medieval centuries represented a return to a more natural and sustainable pattern of exchange. An example might be found in the contrasting fates of Arles and Marseille. From the time of Julius Caesar, the Romans had deliberately downgraded the commercial and political importance of the latter and built up that of the former despite inherent difficulties in keeping its harbor in working order. Despite becoming the new imperial capital in Gaul at the turn of the fifth century AD, during the fifth and sixth centuries the commercial importance of Arles diminished while that of Marseille, with its superior deep-water port, became paramount once more on the coast of the *Midi*. As Loseby indicates, there was continued and perhaps even growing commercial activity and prosperity in Provence during the fifth through seventh centuries, but some towns gained while others lost.²¹⁰

A closer look at the transformation of north Gallic cities in the late third and fourth centuries presents a similarly nuanced picture. In *Belgica*, according to Wightman, archaeological burn layers can be found in all of the towns but cannot be correlated to a single event such as the barbarian invasion of 275; *bagaudae* or imperial troops, at various times, could be equally responsible. The mean area enclosed by the new town walls was twelve hectares. Amiens, barely a quarter of its first-century heyday, was at twenty hectares; Tongeren reduced by two thirds or forty-five hectares; Reims—sixty hectares. Metz, with a seventy-hectare enclosure included most of its former area. Trier remained at 285 hectares inside a six-kilometer perimeter. Everywhere but in Trier, there is little or no proof of active suburbia outside the walls but, rather, evidence for diminished population density inside; one third of former *vici* show no sign of continued occupation in the fourth century, while another one third of them seem substantially reduced. Shabby buildings overlaid many former public spaces in the towns; only Reims and Metz (and Trier) received new monumental buildings in the fourth century. Altogether, towns in northern Gaul were rapidly losing their imported

²¹⁰ S. T. Loseby, “Marseille: A Late Antique Success Story?” *Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): 179 – 83.

Mediterranean layout and style.²¹¹ Towns still served as administrative centers. They also served as storehouses for surplus and as loci of production—the latter especially in the form of imperial factories at Trier, Metz, Reims, and Tournai.²¹² Service industries and ordinary craft production appear diminished, however. Most survivable appear to have been towns with riverside rather than more land-centered locations, especially places along the Scheldt and the Meuse such as Tournai, Cambrai, and Verdun. In this way, as Wightman admits,

later economic geography was prefigured in the fourth century, and this lends support to the view that a certain, albeit low, level of economic activity persisted throughout and that the sites never quite sank to the passive, essentially pre-urban form that has sometimes been suggested.²¹³

It is interesting to compare the picture painted by Wightman and Verhulst, who concentrate on *Belgica* and the far north of Gaul, with the systematic survey of twenty-one picked Gallic *civitates* conducted by Carlrichard Brühl.²¹⁴ The overwhelming number of case studies in Brühl's survey present a definite pattern, which can be summarized. First, extensive destruction of the former town ca. 275, leading to reconstruction within a (usually) significantly reduced, walled perimeter in the late third or early fourth century. These walls remain in service, then, until they are superseded by extensions in the eleventh century or later.²¹⁵ Second, in the overwhelming number of cases, Brühl identifies the site of a late Roman *praetorium* inside the walls (and directly adjacent to them, usually), which subsequently serves as the comital, ducal, or royal

²¹¹ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 220 – 33.

²¹² Bachrach, "Fifth Century Metz," , points out that the Metz *gynaecia* represented a large-scale wool cloth industry, producing uniforms and blankets for 120,000 Roman personnel in Gaul, plus blankets for horses and mules.

²¹³ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 239 – 41, 270. The quote is on p. 241. Cf. Adriaan Verhulst, *The Rise of Cities in North-West Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1 – 23, where he questions any direct link, in the region between the Somme and the middle Meuse, between Roman towns and those of the eighth – ninth centuries.

²¹⁴ Carlrichard Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas. Studien zur Profanpogographie spätantiker Civitates vom 3. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert*, vol. 1: *Gallien* (Köln: Böhlau, 1975). He explains his criteria for choosing this particular "cross-section" of twenty-one out of some one 115 late Roman walled towns on p. 3. Focusing on towns in north central and central Gaul, his study overlaps in some instances with those of Wightman and Verhulst.

²¹⁵ Brühl gives the length of the walled perimeter in meters and the enclosed surface area in hectares at every stage of construction.

palace in the town for centuries to come. The series of occupations often culminates with a modern “Palais de Justice” on the same site. Third, Brühl argues, in most cases, that the original cathedral was built inside the walls and, indeed, on the site of the one presently known.²¹⁶ Both the cathedral and the episcopal palace or *domus* were, typically, right up against or in the immediate vicinity of the wall, and in a position diametrically opposite to that of the *praetorium*. Altogether, the argument is strongly continuist.

A representative example of Brühl’s approach and conclusions, and one of particular interest to the present study, is the city of Paris.²¹⁷ After the late-third century destruction of left-bank Roman Lutetia, a wall 1750 m long and enclosing thirteen hectares was built on the Île de la Cité. Inside was the *praetorium*, where now stands the “Palais de Justice,” used by Julian in the 350s, by Clovis, and by the dukes of Paris later. The later Merovingian kings may have stayed elsewhere in the vicinity, however—at Quierzy or Clichy, for example. There is no proof of any bishop of Paris before the mid-fourth century, and the original cathedral, which was dedicated to St. Stephen, lies underneath the present Notre Dame. The fortified island was, thus, the center of power. On the left bank, however, in addition to the important abbeys of Ste-Geneviève and St-Germain-des-Prés, a thriving suburbium persisted from the fourth century up until the devastating Viking attacks of the later ninth century. Thereafter, suburban development shifted mostly to the right bank, where, by the early twelfth century, some 1800 m of new walls enclosed an additional 39.5 hectares.²¹⁸

The case of Paris shows that secular administrative and ecclesiastical seats of power moved into the new encientes ca. AD 300 or shortly afterwards, and functioned continuously in their new setting. It also shows that the life of a late- and post-Roman city was not confined to the often narrow acreage that had been fortified. Paris was a center for artisanal production and trade throughout the late Roman, Merovingian, and

²¹⁶ The argument is based on his consideration that very few Gallic towns had official bishoprics before the time of Constantine; i.e., cathedrals appeared *after* the new town walls had been constructed. The extra-mural churches, he claims, served as burial places, not episcopal seats.

²¹⁷ Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas—Gallien*, 6 – 33. The treatment includes a discussion of the abbey of St-Denis.

²¹⁸ Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas—Gallien*, 7 – 23.

Carolingian periods.²¹⁹ Most of the population of Paris likely lived in the left-bank suburbium, not on the Île de la Cité.

One argument that has been advanced to signify economic deterioration in fourth and fifth century Gaul is the diminishing number of inscriptions on gravestones and other memorials—monuments that used to be erected in large numbers by members of the mercantile classes in the second and third centuries.²²⁰ We must remember that the kind of private self-advertisement represented by the inscribed monuments announcing various merchants and artisans and their organizations is a *cultural* phenomenon: it is not necessary to the function of any of these professions but is a manifestation of the prevailing civic ethos of the first through third centuries, paralleling the great expansion of formal public architecture and public spaces. Thus, while the existence of inscribed monuments can help to demonstrate the existence of a commercially active middle class, a reduction in frequency or even absence of such does not unequivocally prove that commercial activities had diminished or failed; it could signify merely a cultural shift in representational practices.²²¹ In this way, the available evidence is inherently asymmetrical.

Certainly, there were wholesale changes from the open city with its secular public structures of the High Empire²²² to the walled late Roman city, which presently came to feature Church buildings. Loseby points out that, far from being a sign of urban decline, the building of churches and other ecclesiastical structures reflected the continuing health and vitality of many late Roman cities. In his view, cathedrals often were placed at first in the suburbs because space for building in the preferred city centers was not available;

²¹⁹ On Merovingian trade, see section 5.1, subsection *The Mediterranean connection* below.

²²⁰ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 196 – 8, 203 – 4, 220, 222, on inscriptions. Though some areas, notably the Rhineland, were still producing monuments in the 250s, the peak of such activity had been ca. AD 200. Cf. Frézouls, “Gallien und römisches Germanien,” 431, on the importance of inscriptions as evidence. Hopkins, “Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire,” 123, notes the diminished pace of public building and inscriptions as a result of what he regards as the “economic depression” of the third century.

²²¹ Peter S. Wells, *Barbarians to Angels: The Dark Ages Reconsidered* (New York: Norton, 2008), 70 – 87, 111 – 13, argues for continued occupation of most Roman cities into the early Middle Ages, and for a cultural change in architectural styles and occupation patterns in Roman *Londinium* (London), especially, in the third and fourth centuries. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 268, 272 – 3, 279, reviews some of the issues posed by the decline in inscriptions.

²²² Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 142 – 55, provides a lucid description of the architectural and planning elements that made a typical Gallic city of the first and second centuries AD.

as opportunity offered, bishops moved their seats inside.²²³ In the case of Marseille, impressive church buildings in the fourth century marked the beginnings of the recovery in the city's fortunes.²²⁴ In northern Gaul, Bachrach has traced the outlines of both pagan and Christian redevelopment in Metz in the fourth century, including an early (ca. 315) church by St. Clement and new baths by Valentinian I.²²⁵ Archaeological investigations reveal that the intramural spaces of late Roman and early medieval Gaul sometimes saw partial abandonment, but as often saw continued use and redevelopment. Neither the walls themselves nor the changeover from secular-pagan to Christian architecture inside or outside the walls need signify ruin or decay. The case of each city must be investigated carefully and individually.²²⁶ Despite all the real changes, fourth- and fifth-century Gallic towns in south and north still retained secular administrative, economic, and new ecclesiastical functions, as well as serving as the focal points of political ambition and military strategy.

Fourth-century Trier was, of course, a special case. Already distinguished from all other north Gallic towns in the late second and third centuries, this city was established as an imperial capital under Constantius Chlorus in the 290s.²²⁷ From Constantius and his son Constantine I to Valentinian I and Gratian, the city acquired new monumental structures, including a palace, an audience hall, new baths (never completed, apparently), and a cathedral. The countryside also saw relatively unreduced occupation and some impressive new villa building. The demand in Trier for foodstuffs, building

²²³ Loseby, "Bishops and Cathedrals," 149 – 54. See T. S. Loseby, "Arles in Late Antiquity: *Gallula Roma Arelas* and *Urbs Genesis*," in *Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Neil Christie and S. T. Loseby (Aldershot: Scolar, 1996), 58 – 64, for a detailed discussion of the slow transformation of the pagan Roman city into a Christian city during the fifth and sixth centuries. Throughout, Arles retained considerable economic vitality.

²²⁴ Loseby, "Marseille," 167 – 8.

²²⁵ Bachrach, "Fifth Century Metz," 365 – 8. Before the Crisis, Metz may have had around 35,000 inhabitants. The massive walls that were built in the late third century enclosed seventy-two hectares and about 10,000 inhabitants. There was some contraction, then, but also continued vitality. Drinkwater points out that many important Gallic cities even before the Crisis had relatively modest populations; *Lutetia* (Paris) had only 6,000 – 10,000. Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 155 – 6.

²²⁶ Bachrach, "Fifth Century Metz," 363 – 4, 369 – 72, accuses Guy Halsall of prejudice and distortion of evidence in the latter's argument that Metz fits the British model of a post-Roman "empty shell"—a city essentially depopulated, what Halsall calls a "ghost town."

²²⁷ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 200, 211 – 12. Early instances of impressive infrastructure included the stone bridge over the Moselle, the Porta Nigra, the Barbarathermae, and a circus, plus more mosaics than any other place in *Belgica* (pp. 78, 83, 86 – 9).

materials and other supplies, luxuries, and labor sustained a sub-regional economy in its vicinity.²²⁸ This is, of course, the physical basis of Heather's glowing image of the prosperity, sophistication, and profound Latinity of Gallo-Roman culture in the fourth century before it was, in his view, wrecked by barbarian invasion.²²⁹ Trier and its environs, animated by the weight of late Roman imperial government and culture represented one pole of the landscape in fourth-century northern Gaul. The other must be sought in the phenomenon of the vanishing villa and the emergence of an alternative socio-cultural paradigm away from the imperial center on the Moselle.

Under the High Empire, Gaul had become a landscape of villas ranging in size from modest stone farmhouses to palatial elite residences.²³⁰ The rural economy was varied, but geared toward marketable goods: wine, but especially wheat and wool, for which the greatest customer was the Roman army along the Rhine.²³¹ This accounts for the extraordinary development of the Somme basin, for example, in the early Roman period.²³² After the third century, the number of occupied villas and the density of rural settlement generally appear to decline.²³³ To date, the most comprehensive study of rural sites in northern Gaul is that completed by Paul Van Ossel, published in 1992.²³⁴ If based

²²⁸ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 234 – 8, 257 – 9.

²²⁹ See again Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 32 – 43. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 259, remarks that Ausonius, one of the chief protagonists in Heather's essay and the composer of the optimistic *Mosella*, leaves out of his poem evidence for contraction and decline—matters such as abandoned villas.

²³⁰ The ubiquity of the villa over many parts of Roman Gaul was demonstrated above all through aerial surveys conducted by R. Agache; see “La campagne à l'époque romaine dans les grandes plaines du Nord de la France,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, part 2, volume 4, ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975), 658 – 713. Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 168, aptly remarks that “such is the ever-increasing ubiquity of the villa that it is perhaps best to assume that villas are to be expected wherever the land could support settled farming.” Variations in the density of villas from one area to another were due to local climate and geology. Cf. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 101 – 19.

²³¹ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 134 – 51, discusses various industries in northern Gaul: stone quarrying and carving, iron mining and smelting, pottery and tiles, lead, copper, salt, glass, grain, hides, woollens.

²³² Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 167, 178; Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 105, 131 – 3, 148, remarks that over half of the villas in Belgica were built in the second half of the first century, but that the Somme region had peaked by the late second. From Flavian times onward, its grain was going more to local towns than to the army.

²³³ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 243 – 62. Villa abandonment was noticeable in the Somme region by AD 200, and 80 percent of Nervii and Tungri sites were abandoned by the fourth century. Cemetery evidence suggests reduced populations in many areas.

²³⁴ Paul Van Ossel, *Etablissements ruraux de l'Antiquité tardive dans le nord de la Gaule* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1992). Coverage is of the territory bounded by the Seine, the Marne, the Moselle basin north of Metz, the Rhine, and the North Sea in the period from AD 260 to 476

solely on sites that are datable, the rate of survival from the third into the fourth century rarely falls below 50 percent in any sub-region, and is as high as 93 percent in some.²³⁵ More precisely, active improvement or passive preservation of rural Roman infrastructure predominates in the Moselle and Rhineland regions up to the time of Valentinian I and Gratian (into the early 380s), but “squattérisation”—gross changes in function of existing buildings or in the extent of their utilization—is noticable in northern France and Belgium already from the beginning of the fourth century. In the second half of the fourth century, many rural settlement sites in Belgium and northern France show new types of wood-built structures. In the fifth century, these same areas practically show only wooden structures. In general, few sites are known to survive into the fifth century; some show destruction, most are simply abandoned at some undeterminable time.²³⁶ The transformations are marked by a distinctly un-Roman re-mixing of domestic with economic functions and the loss of separation of the military and public from the civil and private. However, the new-style rural buildings, especially those built in wood, bridge from the late Roman to the Merovingian period.²³⁷

The changes in rural settlement patterns thus parallel chronologically and geographically changes in the urban landscape. While Drinkwater has opined that the Roman villa in Gaul proved more durable than the Roman town and pointed to the general prosperity of the Gallic countryside before the calamities of the third century,²³⁸ he also has pointed to social tensions that arose in both town and country due to tight controls over wealth and productivity exercised by the official administration, merchant entrepreneurs, and landowners. Tightly wound, the system could produce disturbances.²³⁹ It is possible, then, that parts of Gaul were tending away from the Roman model already in the third century—of which the eruptions of *Bagaudae* may be

(p. 41). His voluminous data extends primarily to sites published as of 1986 (p. 35); rural archaeology has continued to progress apace since then.

²³⁵ Van Ossel, *Etablissements ruraux*, 67 – 9.

²³⁶ Van Ossel, *Etablissements ruraux*, 172 – 82. His data confirms Wightman’s impression of earlier decline (or: transformation) in the west and north than in the east and south of northern Gaul.

²³⁷ Van Ossel, *Etablissements ruraux*, 183 – 4.

²³⁸ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 171 – 83.

²³⁹ Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 223.

an overt symptom.²⁴⁰ The phenomenon of the *Bagaudae* thus joins others—the transformation of the towns, the ongoing abandonment of Roman-style villas in most of northern Gaul, the abandonment of epigraphy as a mode of self-advertisement—that point to systemic socio-cultural change despite the restabilization of the imperial regime in the fourth century based on Trier.

A further symptom of this ongoing process of change was the appearance of a new funerary rite, first described as a cultural complex by Joachim Werner in 1950.²⁴¹ The so-called “row-grave culture” was identified as the product of Germanic immigrants and associated, ultimately, with the Franks.²⁴² Guy Halsall has pointed out, however, that neither the timing nor the location of the appearance of such graves fits well with any documented immigration of trans-frontier barbarians (not *laeti*, not Franks); moreover, the artifacts themselves are as much Roman as they are “Germanic” and the burial rite as a whole has no clear parallel in *Germania libera* before it appears in northern Gaul. Even the “Germanic brooches” of the female graves seem to have been made by Roman craftsmen—perhaps with borrowed motifs, but not necessarily for an alien public.²⁴³ As this type of burial activity peaks ca. AD 400, along with the activities of the *Bacaudae*, Halsall concludes that it represents competitive negotiation of power among the late-Roman local elites.²⁴⁴ In other words, Roman civilization is not being destroyed by

²⁴⁰ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 199 – 200, thought that the *Bagaudae* perhaps were “local tyrants” in suspense between adherence to the imperial system and complete separation from it, who were but incompletely re-integrated after the Gallic Empire was put down. Cf. J. F. Drinkwater, “The Bacaudae of Fifth-Century Gaul,” in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. F. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 208 – 17, who agrees with Wightman’s take on the movement in the third century and analyzes its resurgence in the fifth century as the expression of autonomous post-Roman leadership in those areas of Gaul where Roman writ was not enforced as thoroughly as it used to be—which would be most areas of the north, and especially Armorica.

²⁴¹ Joachim Werner, “Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation,” *Archaeologia Geographica* 1 (1950): 23 – 32.

²⁴² See, for example, the discussion of cemeteries in Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 252 – 6, where she identifies on the basis of artifacts found in the richer of the row-graves the formation, in the fourth century, of a new, Germanic, rural aristocracy.

²⁴³ Guy Halsall, “The Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*: Forty Years On,” in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. F. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 196 – 207. The distribution of these graves is widespread in many north Gallic areas between the Loire and the Rhine (Fig. 17.3).

²⁴⁴ Halsall, “*Reihengräberzivilisation*: Forty Years On,” 205 – 7. This conclusion is based in part on the standard notion in current anthropology that lavish grave-goods and graveside feasting represent elements of status-negotiation that are found typically in periods of socio-political stress and uncertainty. Halsall

barbarian invasion nor undermined by infiltration; rather, in northern Gaul the Gallo-Romans themselves are renegotiating the shape of their society and culture even while the imperial center in Trier is still in operation. We have here a definite step towards the “simplification” and “militarization” of society that distinguishes the early Medieval from the Antique.²⁴⁵

All of which is not to deny the presence of barbarians in northern Gaul and along the Roman side of the Rhine. From the time of the Gallic Empire onwards, there is ever more frequent evidence for settlement of barbarians on Roman territory,²⁴⁶ regular recruitment of barbarians into the Roman military, and barbarian soldiers assuming more prominent roles in the political narrative. *Laeti*, surrendered barbarians (*dediticii*) given land and rights on Roman soil in return for hereditary military service, are known in northern Gaul from the time of Emperor Probus (276 – 82).²⁴⁷

Barbarian soldiers—Franks, in particular—played a prominent role in the events of the fourth century, including two usurpations.²⁴⁸ Most interesting is the case of Carausius the Menapian, whose power base appears to have been the coastal areas from Boulogne to Xanten and who for ten years (286 – 96) defied first Maximian and later Constantius Chlorus.²⁴⁹ The areas northwards of the main road from Köln through Tongres and Bavay into Picardy had always been marginal in terms of assimilation to the

stresses that “the subjects of these graves might be Roman or German, civilian or military” (p. 207); it is their competition for status in this unstable milieu that is the issue. Cf. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 232: “it is usually impossible to tell whether the artifacts are evidence of intrusive invaders, peaceful settlers, or even Gallo-Romans who had adopted the new frontier culture.”

²⁴⁵ Cf. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 230 – 9, on the slow transformation of the late Roman world as a whole; barbarians followed along but were not the cause of this trajectory. See also Wickham, *Framing*, 476 – 7, who comes to very similar conclusions regarding the socio-economic transformations in northern Gaul in the fourth to sixth centuries.

²⁴⁶ In this connection, it is interesting to note Joachim Henning, “Strong Rulers—Weak Economy? Rome, the Carolingians and the Archaeology of Slavery in the First Millennium AD,” in *Long Morning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 37 – 41, who asserts that fourth-century Gaul was the scene of a struggle between the late Roman villa-based agricultural economy, which employed coerced labor, and the village- or farmstead-based Germanic system that had developed beyond the *limes* since the early centuries of the Common Era. Henning believes that Germanic settlers were forming incipient villages in Gaul in the fourth century, but that these were destroyed by the Roman authorities, who delivered survivors in chains to Roman-style estates. On the village-based socio-economic system, see further in Section 5.2, subsection *Alamannia and the Rhine*, and Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* below.

²⁴⁷ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 210.

²⁴⁸ Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 222 – 8.

²⁴⁹ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 200.

Roman administrative and economic system of the first and second centuries. They were the least Romanized even during the High Empire, and abandoned as ungovernable in the fourth century; points along this road had been among the earliest to be fortified.²⁵⁰ Also, the Usurpation of Magnentius in Gaul in 351 appears to have been backed especially by barbarian troops.²⁵¹

Moreover, from 357/8 onwards we have definite mention of some groups of Franks settled as Roman subordinates in Toxandria—roughly the area between the mouth of the Scheldt and the Lower Meuse. As argued by Thomas Anderson, certain provisions in the *Pactus Legis Salicae* derive from this early period and reflect that these officially settled groups served as *laeti* in the Roman military.²⁵² Quite aside, thus, from the well-known phenomenon in the fourth and fifth centuries of individual barbarians—Merobaudes, Arbogast, Stilicho, Ricimer, Odoacer—making their way into the highest echelons of the Roman system, we have a rather less visible but no less far-reaching process ongoing in northern Gaul and along the Rhine that amounted to a regarrisoning of the area largely with barbarian troops, with groups of Franks foremost.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 89, 204 – 5, 208.

²⁵¹ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 210. These observations appear relevant to the contention in Goffart, “Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians,” 19 – 20, that Constantinople deliberately omitted to reconstitute a Roman army in the West in the fifth century because such armies too often had been turned against the eastern center. It would seem that barbarian manpower was particularly important in such ventures.

²⁵² Thomas Anderson, Jr., “Roman Military Colonies in Gaul, Salian Ethnogenesis and the Forgotten Meaning of *Pactus Legis Silicae* 59.5,” *Early Medieval Europe* 4, no. 2 (1995): 129 – 44. See also Jean-Pierre Poly, “La corde au cou: les Francs, la France et la Loi Salique,” in *Genèse de l'état moderne en Méditerranée: approches historique et anthropologique des pratiques et des représentations* (Paris: Boccard, 1993), 287 – 320. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 233 – 40, asserts that the cemetery evidence in the Rhineland and northern Gaul indicates mutual assimilation of barbarian and Gallo-Roman in the fifth century.

²⁵³ In this connection, see H. A. Heidinga, “Frankish Settlement at Gennepe: A Migration Period Centre in the Dutch Meuse Area,” in *Gudme and Lundeborg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 202 – 8, who describes a Frankish settlement of ca. 390 – 500. Located at the Meuse – Niers confluence (some 20 km southeast of Nijmegen) and probably connected with Roman military installations nearby, Gennepe was the residence for a group of Frankish soldiers. The site features eight large halls and over a hundred smaller structures and workshops, including blacksmithing and silver and gold work. Although coins cease ca. 405, southern imports continue here throughout the fifth century. Heidinga sees it as a minor center involved in the transition from Roman to Frankish power.

The fifth-century transition

The viability of early fifth-century Gaul can be tested in light of the events of the Vandal-Alan-Sueve invasion of 406 – 09. First, the Franko-Roman troops give every indication of having fulfilled their defense duties as expected: they mauled one major contingent of the invading forces, the Asding Vandals.²⁵⁴ Second, according to Kulikowski, Constantine III was able not only to rally Roman officialdom in the Gallic prefecture to his side but to stop and pacify the invaders. This analysis very clearly shows (a) that imperial government was alive and efficient in early-fifth century northern Gaul, and (b) that the area was prosperous enough to have surpluses sufficient to handle some tens of thousands of extra mouths at short notice, in addition to maintaining regular Roman forces and *foederati*—i.e., *not* a land depopulated and falling into economic disfunction.²⁵⁵ Some cities in the north were devastated by the invaders, notably Mainz, but others such as Metz were captured without major damage.²⁵⁶ The shock of Vandal-Alan-Suevic deprivations in southern Gaul in 409, to which, according to Kulikowski, they were incited by Roman sub-usurpers against Constantine III, serves mainly to highlight the continued prosperity of that region.²⁵⁷ Archaeology suggests, in fact, that both cities and villas in Aquitaine continued to flourish throughout the fifth century.²⁵⁸

During the course of the fifth century, permanently settled barbarian groups came to dominate the political landscape in Gaul, so that by the 470s southern Gaul had become, effectively, a Visigothic – Burgundian condominium. This engendered far-reaching adjustments on the part of the Gallo-Roman elite, who reconciled themselves to serving in a new political system and vigorously applied themselves to building up the

²⁵⁴ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 96.

²⁵⁵ Kulikowski, “Barbarians in Gaul, Usurpers in Britain,” 333, 337 – 8, 342. This observation speaks, once again, to the potential ability of the north to function autonomously.

²⁵⁶ On Metz, see Bachrach, “Fifth Century Metz,” 369 – 70.

²⁵⁷ Kulikowski, “Barbarians in Gaul,” 331, 338 – 9. See Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 96 – 100, for a review of the evidence and a critique of Kulikowski’s conclusions. M. Roberts, “Barbarians in Gaul: The Response of the Poets,” in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 97 – 106, reviews the laments of several poets regarding these events. However, none of this is proof that the actual damage was in fact severe and pervasive—only that it was unusual in the experience of long-secure southern Gauls.

²⁵⁸ H. Sivan, “Town and Country in Late Antique Gaul: The Example of Bordeaux,” in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 132 – 43. The evidence includes extensive pottery production in and distribution from Bordeaux and fine mosaics and bathhouses in new villa constructions.

Gallic Church and developing Christian ideals as an adjunct of their modified identity.²⁵⁹ The mechanisms by which barbarians became settled in Gaul and elsewhere remain contentious.²⁶⁰ It may be observed, however, that Goffart's interpretation offers additional insights into pressures that would have tended to undermine the erstwhile Roman taxation system and contributed to the construction of a post-Roman nobility. One of the advantages to the system, as Goffart argues, was to eliminate the state in the shape of its increasingly unwieldy tax-collecting functions as the middleman between the taxpayer and the recipient of state subsidies: the individual barbarian soldier would do his own collecting from his allotted payers. All in itself, the restructured relationship would tend both to convert a public tax obligation into a kind of private rent and to accelerate the militarization of society by creating a class of proprietors—the *sors* holders—permanently obligated to military mobilization.²⁶¹

At the same time, the *sors*-holders constituted a privileged, tax-exempt group, which has all the earmarks of a noble class. The complexities of Burgundian legislation suggest that while barbarians sought to acquire actual landed property, Gallo-Roman landowners would attempt to acquire some of the tax-exempt *sortes*, thus tending to merge the two sides of the elite class into one.²⁶² Regardless of how the barbarian settlement was carried out, a crucial observation remains that there is no evidence of widespread upheaval or unrest as a result of it;²⁶³ no radical population replacement, no institutional breakdown, no ruin and chaos. Thus, even if it were actual land and chattels that were seized by barbarian recipients, it would mean only a replacement in personnel among the elite landowners, with no impairment in the productivity of the landscape.

²⁵⁹ Aspects of this process are discussed in: M. Heinzlmann, "The 'Affair' of Hilary of Arles (445) and Gallo-Roman Identity in the Fifth Century"; M. A. Wes, "Crisis and Conversion in Fifth-Century Gaul: Aristocrats and Ascetics between 'Horizontality' and 'Verticality'"; J. D. Harries, "Sidonius Apollinaris, Rome and the Barbarians: A Climate of Treason?"; and H. C. Teitler, "Un-Roman Activities in Late Antique Gaul: The Cases of Arvandus and Seronatus," all in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 239 – 51, 252 – 63, 298 – 308, and 309 – 17, respectively.

²⁶⁰ See section 4.3, subsection *Barbarian capabilities and their place in the late Roman system* above.

²⁶¹ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 180 – 2. In addition to thus "privatizing" some of the revenue collection duties, the late- and post-Roman governments also did away with their obligations to provide the *annona militaris* and the *stipendium*.

²⁶² For a discussion of the relevant Burgundian laws, see Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 143 – 61.

²⁶³ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 134, makes this point emphatically.

Under Aëtius from 432 to 454, the imperial government in the West could reassert its hegemony over the increasingly complex set of political power groups within Gaul. As evident with the brief careers of Avitus and Majorian, however, in the later 450s it had become very difficult to find a candidate for emperor who could satisfy both the Gallic and the Italian constituencies.²⁶⁴ After the fall of Majorian in 461, while the Visigoths and the Burgundians proceeded to carve up southern Gaul,²⁶⁵ Majorian's erstwhile *magister militum*, Aegidius, disassociated himself from further involvement with the imperial politics of Italy and the south.²⁶⁶ Thereafter, until 486, he and his son Syagrius appear to have headed a Roman regime in northern Gaul, with at least one group of Franks as official allies. In the few sources that are available, Aetius and Syagrius are styled *reges Romanorum*,²⁶⁷ one of their counterparts was the chief or *rex* of the Franks of Tournai, Childeric. As signified by the signet ring discovered in his tomb, this Childeric was either an officially recognized subordinate of the Roman "kingdom" in northern Gaul or he was an autonomous confederate; in either case, between the Romans and the Franks, government was maintained over an area that had long since undergone profound socio-cultural changes—militarization and simplification, and a blurring of Roman and non-Roman.²⁶⁸

In no case should this shadowy late-Roman "kingdom" be regarded as a kind of last gasp on the threshold of socio-economic ruin. Administratively, it seems to have encompassed much the same territory as the future sub-kingdom of Neustria, with its seat at Soissons.²⁶⁹ Economically also, as will be discussed in section 5.1 below, there was continued viability that connected the late Roman economy with the early Merovingian,

²⁶⁴ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 375 – 9, 382 – 4, 390 – 1.

²⁶⁵ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 415 – 25.

²⁶⁶ See also the summary in Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 303 – 5.

²⁶⁷ See the discussion in S. Fanning, "Emperors and Empires in Fifth-Century Gaul," in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 288 – 97, who demonstrates that the term *rex* was not unusual in Roman sources of the third century and later, even when applied to Roman rather than barbarian rulers.

²⁶⁸ Wells, *Barbarians to Angels*, 47 – 69, places Childeric's grave in the archaeological context of similar fifth- and sixth-century graves found in various places in the former Roman frontier zone. He regards Childeric as the prototype of a post-Roman king, symbolizing both Roman alliance and Germanic royalty.

²⁶⁹ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 261 – 2, identifies the area around Soissons as one of unusually visible continuity in terms of Roman-style estates. See also Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas—Gallien*, 35 – 42, for a discussion of the city. Here, a rectangular wall of 1450 m enclosed twelve hectares, but there were suburban settlements outside already in Roman times.

and beyond.²⁷⁰ When Clovis defeated Syagrius in 486, it was a militarily leveraged take-over—supported by Bishop Remigius of Rheims, no less—of a going concern.

4.5 Conclusion

Both the system of fiscally determined *annona*-transports in the Mediterranean and the military-fiscal system along the Rhine – Danube *limes* were creatures of the Roman imperial state. That is to say, they operated on a scale that was made possible only by the powers of the imperial administration and its unified control over vast expanses of land and water. While they operated, both of these systems exercised tremendous influence on the exchange patterns in the Mediterranean and in Temperate Europe, respectively. As the unity of the systems was broken, or as the imperial center lost or let lapse aspects of that centralized administrative control which sustained the optimal functioning of these systems, both the Mediterranean and the Temperate European economies and exchange patterns altered once more.²⁷¹

If the Roman imperial system gradually lost its former scale and influence over the course of the fifth and sixth centuries, this is not to say that all areas of the former Empire entered into irremediable economic and institutional decline. This was clearly evident, for example, in the analysis of how various Mediterranean regions fared after the *annona* system began to fragment. The introduction of barbarian groups does not alter the impression. In particular, actual devastation seems to have been the local exception, not the general rule, even in the frontier areas; this issue will be addressed in detail in the following chapter. In many places, and especially in Gaul, late Roman socio-economic forms and institutional infrastructure survived the transition largely intact and continued into the sixth century—but now under new management.

The progressive reduction or withdrawal of imperial-level administration did, however, bring long-term changes. Many of these had their roots in the centuries while the imperial system was still intact. One such set of changes was the cultural and socio-

²⁷⁰ One telling detail is that the imperial *gynaecium* in Tournai was still operating, and probably produced Childeric's cloak. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 307.

²⁷¹ This is argued explicitly for the Mediterranean in Wickham, *Framing*; see subsection *The annona transport and its effects* above. The contention seems no less true regarding the evolution of the frontier zone; see section 5.2 below. For Wickham's underlying theory, see section 5.4 below.

economic transformation that was ongoing in northern Gaul from the mid-fourth century. Another, to be addressed in the following chapter, was the catalytic effects that Roman trade and diplomatic contacts had in the trans-*limes* territories—effects that indirectly were bringing about socio-economic and political consolidation in areas as far distant as Denmark. As the imperial position along the Rhine and Danube dissolved in the course of the fifth and sixth centuries, these and other transformations gained in prominence and combined to shape a new, early medieval Temperate Europe.

Chapter 5: From Roman to post-Roman II: The New Temperate Europe, AD 400 – 700

5.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter focused on the waning—transformation or slow dissolution—of two overarching Roman imperial structures: the *annona*-transport system in the Mediterranean and the military-fiscal complex along the Rhine – Danube *limes*. In Temperate Europe, the latter position had exercised a huge influence in terms of cultural and economic development on both sides of the frontier throughout the first four centuries of the Common Era. As Roman imperial control over the Rhine-Danube interface zone fragmented during the fifth and sixth centuries, what emerged in its place was a new configuration of territorial, political, and economic relations on both sides of the erstwhile frontier. The emergence of such a new configuration does not, however, presuppose the destruction or negation of all previous Roman institutional and economic input in Temperate Europe. Conversely, the withdrawal of the imperial system from areas of Temperate Europe and its replacement by post-Roman structures does not necessarily equal institutional collapse and economic squalor in the affected territories.

As will be seen in the sections below, areas along the former frontier fared variously. In most cases, there are clear indications that economic viability was maintained, and exchange systems continued to operate. In parts of west-central Europe in the late Roman and Migration Age periods (AD 200 – 600), a new style of intensive village agriculture evolved that formed the socio-economic basis not only of the Merovingian kingdoms and the emergent Danish state but of the subsequent Carolingian empire.¹ These developments contrasted, apparently, with the trajectory in the Avar – Slav dominated east-central parts of Temperate Europe, so that during the seventh century an east – west cultural and economic division came to replace the formerly dominant north – south contrast; this division persisted at least throughout the Carolingian and part of the Viking period (eighth and ninth centuries).

¹ So argued especially by Joachim Henning; see idem, “Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe during the Early Middle Ages: Which Way Was ‘Normal’?” in *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 41 – 59. See also the discussion in section 5.2, subsection *Alamannia and the Rhine* below.

Meanwhile, major exchange routes continued to function as well. Temperate Europe continued to be linked with the Mediterranean at least through the Rhône – Saône corridor and via alpine passes from northern Italy to the Rhine. Further, exchange systems involving northwestern continental Europe, the North Sea, and the Baltic were sustained throughout this period, so that by ca. 700 foundations were in place for a further expansion of mercantile activity in the North; this circumstance will be of crucial importance in the analysis of the exchange patterns of the Carolingian period of 700 – 900.

Overall, as in the Mediterranean so also in Temperate Europe, many regions and local areas maintained a high degree of prosperity. In Gaul especially, Romanized barbarians proved capable sub-imperial continuators of Roman-style government, preserving those parts of Roman administrative practice that continued to be relevant in changed socio-economic conditions and adopting innovations as needed. It was precisely here that certain fundamental transformations in the shift from Roman to post-Roman fulfilled themselves earliest and most thoroughly. Based on the success of these processes, the Merovingian state and the Merovingian economy constitute a true bridge from the late Roman fifth century to the early Carolingian eighth.

5.1 Merovingian Gaul

The Merovingian state that Clovis (481 – 511) founded succeeded on the basis of three convergent processes or conditions. First, its elite constituencies represented the substantial completion of the socio-cultural process of militarization and simplification that had started earliest in northern Gaul.² If the long-term trajectory of late Roman to early medieval development was to lead to this conclusion, then it stands to reason that the region that resolved the new configuration ahead of others would gain an advantage. Further, in a more general sense, Gaul experienced the crisis of political and economic transition already in the late fifth century—much earlier than it occurred in Italy or Spain. Whereas Italy's transitional crisis was to come in the second half of the sixth century and

² See discussion in Section 4.4, subsection *Structural changes of the third and fourth centuries* above.

Spain's even later, Gaul under the Merovingians was reviving already in the early sixth.³ Paradoxically, the condition that ensured success and durability in the negotiation of these far-reaching transformations of the former Roman system was the survival of significant portions of the Roman economic and administrative infrastructure.⁴ The Merovingians headed a system that was on a larger scale and more dynamic than any other post-Roman polity save Byzantium and the Caliphate. For the purposes of the present study, this situation allows us to trace within Gaul not the break-down but the further evolution in patterns of exchange and associated administrative structures.

The structure of the state

It bears repeating that by the time of Clovis, the Franks had been settled on Roman soil for well over a century (at the least since the 350s) and had become fully integrated into the social and political fabric of the north.⁵ Thus, when Clovis defeated and executed Syagrius and took over the government, there was no fundamental disruption, only a change in top management.⁶ The governmental system remained intact and continued to

³ Chris Wickham, "Rethinking the Structure of the Early Medieval Economy," in *Long Morning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 28 – 30, outlines very briefly the different experiences of Britain, Gaul, Spain, Italy, Africa, and Byzantium in terms of the timing and the depth of their "fall" from their condition under the Roman empire and the timing and the trajectory of their recovery afterwards. More fully, the argument is that economic crises match times of political crisis, and that such crises may also reduce the scope of the influence exercised by the elites. This observation is part of the theory that he develops in detail in *Framing the Early Middle Ages*; see the discussion in Section 5.4 below.

⁴ In fact, a general argument could be made to the effect that the viability of any post-Roman state was limited by the health of the Roman structures in its territory, though such structures might be utilized in novel, non-Roman ways. Walter Pohl, *Die Awaren: Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567 – 822 n. Chr.* (München: C. H. Beck, 1988), 55 – 7, comes close to such an argument in discussing the deteriorating conditions in the Carpathian basin in the sixth century.

⁵ For a summary of the extent of such integration see again C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 252 – 3, 257 – 78. Cf. Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 392 – 4. "[F]or the first time Frankish warbands were flexing their muscles on Roman soil" (p. 394). Heather sees no substantial activity of Franks on "Roman soil" before the 460s; it is as if the Salian settlement never happened. Similarly, Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400 – 800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 44, regards the Franks as the "least Romanized"; when Roman defenses weakened in the later fifth century, the Franks "just moved in." This ignores the long history of federation and left-bank settlement that the Franks had had earlier.

⁶ Karl Ferdinand Werner, "Conquête franque de la Gaule ou changement de régime?" in idem, *Vom Frankenreich zur Entfaltung Deutschlands und Frankreichs. Ursprünge – Strukturen – Beziehungen. Ausgewählte Beiträge* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1984), 1 – 11, stresses the political and administrative continuity in northern Gaul in the transfer of authority from the Romans to the Franks.

function under the Merovingians as it had under late Roman governors—in a manner greatly reduced from that of a previous age, when Roman provincial aristocrats had focused on civic careers, but corresponding to the needs and outlook of the new, militarized and “simplified” society.⁷ Northern Gaul might have been organized under a Gallo-Roman dynasty (such as the incipient line of Aegidius and Syagrius) or under a barbarian line. Clovis, through his success, capability, and ruthlessness created the Merovingian dynasty that dominated the region in happenstance, but Clovis did not create the structural elements that called for such a development, and that kept it going once it was in place.⁸

As Clovis’ success on the battlefield co-opted the adherence of the Romano-Frankish military aristocracy, and his ruthless dealings with rival Frankish royal houses eliminated possible competition, so his baptism gained the loyalty of the Gallo-Roman civilian or clerical aristocracy. Unlike Italy, where the senatorial class rejected Ostrogothic rule despite Theoderic’s brilliantly successful reign,⁹ by the early sixth century in northern Gaul there was no elite constituency that was intrinsically opposed to the newly established system.¹⁰ Merovingian government was only as good as the individuals in power at any time—this is clear from the vignettes of life in Gaul given us by Gregory of Tours,¹¹ but the case was no different under the Romans nor, for that matter, in any other time or place. The Merovingians set up a reasonably stable political system in which, under the rule of one multi-headed dynasty, northern Gaul dominated

⁷ Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 88 – 93. “By starving it financially, the Gallo-Roman aristocracy had long before managed to reduce provincial administration to a shadow and had privatized much of revenue collection, police protection, and even justice” (pp. 92 –3).

⁸ See the discussion in section 4.4, subsections *Structural changes of the third and fourth centuries* and *The fifth-century transition* above.

⁹ This point is made in Walter Goffart, *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 192 – 3, 223 – 7.

¹⁰ After the victory at Vouillé in 507, Clovis was acclaimed with Roman titles and widely recognized as the hegemonic power in northwestern Europe. S. Fanning, “Clovis Augustus and Merovingian *Imitatio Imperii*,” in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 321 – 35. Bernard S. Bachrach, “Fifth Century Metz: Late Roman Christian Urbs or Ghost Town?” *An Tard* 10 (2002): 380 – 1, makes the further point that Clovis and the Franks showed due dedication to *imitatio imperii* also in the *divisio* of the realm that followed upon Clovis’ death in 511.

¹¹ See, for example, Guy Halsall, “Nero and Herod? The Death of Chilperic and Gregory’s Writing of History,” in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 337 – 50.

militarily and politically over central and southern Gaul and the western half of central Europe north of the Alps.¹²

Within Gaul itself, the political power centers were in northern cities or satellite palaces (Paris, Soissons, Rheims, Metz, Orléans), with control of territories redistributed along with changes in the fortunes of the constituent *regna*. Each *regnum* regularly included access to the trade, revenues, and resources of the central and southern regions. As summarized by Innes:

Divisions were essentially allocations of tax revenue between different royal courts, and the whole system was possible because of the inheritance of a sophisticated administrative infrastructure on the level of the *civitas*.¹³

In other words, the Merovingian kingdoms were a functioning *state* despite the greatly reduced bureaucratic component.¹⁴ The above-mentioned *civitates*, including the walled *urbes*, continued as the key features not only of the military and strategic landscape¹⁵ but also of secular administration, in addition to functioning as focal points of the clerical establishment.¹⁶ Moreover, they continued to be connected to each other through the largely intact network of Roman roads.¹⁷ Indeed, just as the roads continued to play into

¹² In the sixth century, before Lombard power was consolidated, they tried also to bring northern Italy into their orbit. Walter Pohl, “Gregory of Tours and Contemporary Perceptions of Lombard Italy,” in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 131 – 43.

¹³ Matthew Innes, *Introduction to Early Medieval Western Europe, 300 – 900: The Sword, the Plough and the Book* (London: Routledge, 2007), 278. The standard survey of Merovingian politics currently is Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 481 – 751* (London: Longman, 1993). For Merovingian administration, the fundamental work is Eugen Ewig, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien: Gesammelte Schriften (1952 – 1973)*, 2 volumes, ed. Hartmut Atsma (München: Artemis, 1976 – 79).

¹⁴ According to the terms employed in Wickham, *Framing*, 57 – 61, the Frankish kingdoms were a “rent state” rather than the higher grade “tax state,” but a state nonetheless. See further in the discussion in section 5.4 below. Cf. here primitivist opinions regarding Frankish polities, e.g. Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade A.D. 600 – 1000* (London: Duckworth, 1982), 188 – 9, where he views them as chiefdoms.

¹⁵ See again Bachrach, “Imperial Walled Cities in the West: An Examination of Their Early Medieval *Nachleben*,” in *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 192 – 218.

¹⁶ On changes and continuities in the towns of sixth-century Gaul, see Nancy Gauthier, “From the Ancient City to the Medieval Town: Continuity and Change,” in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 47 – 66.

¹⁷ Stéphane Lebecq, “Entre Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age: permanence et mutations des systèmes de communications dans la Gaule et ses marges,” in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda Antichità e alto Medioevo* (Settimane 45, 1998), 462 – 70.

the logistics of early medieval warfare,¹⁸ the overall structure of the Merovingian state depended on the existence of reasonable communications between the northern power centers and the rich central and southern districts; if these were not present, then the political economy of the system would make no sense.

One of the outstanding proofs of the success and viability of the Merovingian state was the great wealth and far-flung scale of operations of its aristocracy. As analysed by Chris Wickham, the extent and structure of a state will have direct bearing on the ability of the elite to amass and maintain wealth and property. The multi-provincial holdings of Italian senators in the later Empire were intimately connected with the scale of Roman fiscal structures in the central Mediterranean and, more generally, with access to the machinery of Roman government.¹⁹ With the progressive collapse of the overarching imperial Mediterranean system and the “simplification” of tax collecting and other administrative functions, both central and local aristocracies, who were, as Wickham puts it, “too imbricated with the state. . . not to be altered totally when the state changed,” generally were much reduced in scope of property holdings and influence, though their structural role as major landholders in both Roman and early medieval societies remained constant.²⁰

In contrast with Italy, where after the Gothic War (535 – 54) and the Lombard invasion (568) aristocratic landholdings were generally modest, scattered, and confined to the territory of one *civitas*, Gallic aristocrats—and, especially, those in the politically powerful north—frequently had landed interests on a *regnum*-wide scale and could even transcend such subregional boundaries. Wickham points to several defined exchange networks: the Rhine and Meuse area, the Seine basin, Aquitaine, and the Rhône-Saône, which are defined not only by landholding patterns but also by networks of *amicitia* and ceramic distribution. Nevertheless, the study of wills and other documents indicates that some aristocratic property holdings could transcend these boundaries,

¹⁸ “Siege warfare in Europe focussed upon these fortified cities and lesser fortified population centers. These were linked by the Roman transportation system which made possible a very high level of logistic sophistication.” Bernard S. Bachrach, “Medieval Siege Warfare: A Reconnaissance,” *The Journal of Military History* 58 (1994): 127.

¹⁹ See the definition of “aristocrat” and the analysis of the late Roman aristocracy in Wickham, *Framing*, 153 – 68.

²⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 168.

particularly in north-south connections. The Frankish aristocracy circulated through the Merovingian courts as the loci for political action and the redistribution of favors, but they also had great wealth and personal properties independent of royal gifts. In the area around Paris, in particular, one sees a checkerboard of estates, both royal palaces and the lands of great nobles and those of great ecclesiastic foundations, creating a landscape of power and of political rivalry unlike any other that can be documented in the post-Roman world (except, perhaps, for the area around Constantinople and the sea of Marmara).²¹

Thus, while Merovingian Gaul had radically reversed the Roman-era power relations between the Mediterranean and the northwest,²² with the center of power now permanently residing in the latter position, it maintained administrative integrity over both north and south. The degree of unity maintained was sufficient both to guarantee considerable revenues to the royal courts and to enable aristocrats to sustain widespread landholdings. Culturally, continuity is demonstrated by the persistence of Latin literary culture, for example in the figures of Gregory of Tours in Aquitaine and of Venantius Fortunatus in northern Gaul into the later part of the sixth century.²³ In Aquitaine, numbers of classic Roman villas date as late as the seventh century.²⁴

Generally, however, especially in the north, the style of elite residence changed, which reflected the trend in the militarization of secular society and the disparity already in later Roman times between the civilian senatorial and military elite residential styles. Similar changes came in other habits such as dress, with the standardization of the long tunic, the military mantle, and trousers; dining, with seating around long tables and a new

²¹ Wickham, *Framing*, 168 – 202, on the aristocracy of Gaul/Francia. In Italy, only the Lombard king, the pope, and the dukes of Spoleto and Benevento could compete with the the Frankish aristocracy in scale of landholdings (pp. 214 – 18). According to Wickham’s theories, the scale of aristocratic power is an essential measure of the vitality of exchange networks. See discussion in Section 5.4 below.

²² Trier, however, had functioned as an imperial capital for the northwest and the Rhine frontier from the late third century to the early fifth. See discussion in Section 4.4, subsection *Structural changes of the third and fourth centuries* above.

²³ Wickham, *Framing*, 175. Gregory of Tours was an exponent of the empire-wide Christian literary style that had emerged in the fourth and fifth centuries and continued to develop in the sixth. See Peter Brown, . “Gregory of Tours: Introduction,” and Walter Goffart, “Conspicuously Absent: Martial Heroism in the Histories of Gregory of Tours,” both in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 6 –7 and 381 – 4, respectively.

²⁴ See in H. Sivan, “Town and Country in Late Antique Gaul: The Example of Bordeaux,” in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 132 – 43.

emphasis on roast meat; and recreation, with a focus on hunting.²⁵ Even with the cultural changes, Merovingian society preserved those aspects of Roman practice and learning which it found particularly useful. So, for example, in the all-important matter of military science and training, the early middle ages continued to study Vegetius' *De rei militari*, and in general Merovingian military organization and methods followed Roman models.²⁶

Economy and demographics

What was the overall condition of Merovingian society and economy? Certainly, it had to be healthy and robust enough to sustain the evident wealth of the royal courts and of the aristocracy. In contradiction to the view prevalent only a few decades ago, which saw Merovingian society as squalid, degraded, and sparse, strides in archaeological research since the 1970s reveal a much more positive picture. As well as maintaining their Roman walls, Merovingian cities sensibly reused Roman buildings and typically kept the street grid, except where these were displaced by extensive new construction, especially of ecclesiastical complexes. Likewise, there was no break in technological expertise; however, a change of taste in surface decoration is evident.²⁷

Of rural sites, over 500 have now been studied. Typically, settlements featured large post-and-beam built halls and various outbuildings, many of the latter in the form of sunken huts used for various economic activities. Interestingly, most of the abandoned (and, therefore, excavatable) sites appear to date from the seventh to tenth centuries, while most Merovingian row-grave cemeteries appear to be associated with villages and hamlets that have been in continuous occupation to the present day. The implication is, accordingly, that stable settlement was achieved early on in the period, which suggests

²⁵ Wickham, *Framing*, 200 – 2.

²⁶ Bernard S. Bachrach, "The Practical Use of Vegetius' *De Re Militari* in the Early Middle Ages," *The Historian* 47 (1985): 239 – 55; and idem, "The Education of the 'Officer Corps' in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries," in *La noblesse romaine et les chefs barbares du III^e au VII^e siècle*, ed. Françoise Vallet and Michel Kazanski (Paris: Association Française d'Archéologie Mérovingienne, 1995), 7 – 13.

²⁷ Patrick Périn, "Settlements and Cemeteries in Merovingian Gaul," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 69 – 74. A detailed survey using both archaeological and textual data is ongoing by Nancy Gauthier and Jean-Charles Picard, eds., *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIII^e siècle* (Paris: de Boccard, 1986).

further that there need not have been any serious demographic interruption between the late Roman and the Merovingian eras. A paradigm for the political and cultural shift may be provided by the cemetery at Frénouville in Lower Normandy, where a cluster of rich row-graves intrudes upon the edge of an ordinary Gallo-Roman Roman burial ground. As subsequent graves of ordinary inhabitants then follow the style of the row-grave funerary rite, the scenario appears to be of a small “Frankish” elite group taking possession of the territory around the time of Clovis and bringing about profound cultural reorientation but minimal demographic displacement.²⁸

The disappearance of the Roman villa in northern Gaul, then, does not equal depopulation or even economic disruption, necessarily.²⁹ At least half of former Roman villa sites show continued occupation, though at a reduced material level, for example in the substitution of wooden for stone buildings or the abandonment of heating and bathing apparatus. As discussed above, the process of militarization and simplification of society had largely “de-Romanized” the cultural landscape even before the Franks took over, and “the end of the villas does not seem to reflect economic or political weakness.” Rather, according to Wickham’s theories, that process reflects a diminution in the contrast between “aristocratic” and “peasant” housing in the early Merovingian period.³⁰ Early Merovingian elite residences have not yet been excavated; i.e., they are not easily visible.³¹ Like Périn, Wickham concedes that much of the current settlement pattern may have been established in the sixth century, so that the archaeological evidence pertaining to these early settlements is inaccessible. There may have been some retreat from the chalk plateaux into the river valleys, so that overall the number of settlement sites in the

²⁸ Périn, “Settlements and Cemeteries,” 77 – 80, 84 – 5. Artifact chronologies from the “dressed burials” of northern France and southwestern Germany are well understood, so that graves and cemeteries can be accurately dated. Such burials are rare to nonexistent south of the Loire (pp. 82 – 3). The developments discussed here by Périn follow up the phenomena addressed in Guy Halsall, “The Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*: Forty Years On,” in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. F. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 196 – 207. See section 4.4, subsection *Structural changes of the third and fourth centuries* above.

²⁹ This is the reappraisal that emerges in Paul Van Ossel and Pierre Ouzoulias, “Rural Settlement Economy in Northern Gaul in the Late Empire: An Overview and Assessment,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 13 (2000): 133 – 60.

³⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 475 – 7. The quote is on p. 476.

³¹ Wickham, *Framing*, 506 – 7.

sixth century is perhaps 50 percent less than at the height of the Roman period and may indicate as much as a 50 percent reduction in total population.³²

Wickham's cautious estimate may be regarded as a minimal number; with the continuous inflow of new archaeological data, the population baseline for the sixth century will likely be revised upwards presently. But what was the population *before* the postulated 50 percent drop? Beloch originally gave Gaul no more than 3,390,000 at the time of Caesar's conquest, but was later forced to increase his estimate upwards to 4,500,000. Drinkwater, by contrast, considers that Gaul north of Narbonensis had some eight million at the time of the conquest, or an average density of some 15 per km². Both Beloch and Drinkwater, however, suggest that the population of the region increased under Roman rule, reaching in the third or early fourth century up to 10 – 12 million (Beloch) or 12 million (Drinkwater). Drinkwater further emphasizes that there is no warrant to speak yet of depopulation as a result of the upsets of the later third century.³³ Therefore, a 50 percent reduction from a high of some 12 million ca. AD 400, though probably exaggerated, would still leave Gaul with a population of 6 million in the sixth century, when, by all indications, the population and settlement pattern had restabilized.³⁴ That would still leave an average density of over 11 per km². Contrast this with the image of desolation in Duby, who advanced a density estimate of 5.5 per km² in Gaul, with only some 3 million inhabitants:

Those forest-clad lands were virtually empty. . . In this human void, space was plentiful. What constituted the real basis of wealth at that time was not ownership

³² Wickham, *Framing*, 504 – 8.

³³ See the discussion in J. F. Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul: The Three Provinces, 58 BC – AD 260* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983)q2a, 169 – 70, 221 – 2, where he cites the figures from K. Julius Beloch, *Die Bevölkerung der griechisch-römischen Welt* (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1886), and advances his own estimates. The discussion concerns the territory north of *Gallia Narbonensis*, i.e. from the Massif Central to the Rhine. Today's France has some 547,000 km², and the territory of *Narbonensis* approximately balances the land between the current northeastern French border and the Rhine. Dividing eight million by fifteen results in 533,000.

³⁴ Cf. Geary, *Before France and Germany*, 115, where he considers that ca. AD 500 there were some 6 – 7 million Gallo-Romans and 150,000 – 200,000 Franks.

of land but power over men, however wretched their condition, and over their rudimentary equipment.³⁵

Notably, Duby's estimate of the population in sixth-century Gaul is considerably lower even than Beloch's worst for pre-conquest Gaul. In part, an image of wholesale disruption in and abandonment of Roman land usages finds support in a recent article by F. L. Cheyette, in which he advances evidence for a serious climatic anomaly in Europe for the fourth through seventh centuries.³⁶ Cheyette points to the obliteration of Roman centuriation, silting in of ditches, and ruin of Roman-style farms as well as a drastic reduction in the number of settlements by the sixth century in almost every European region. Impoverishment, depopulation, and the abandonment of arable for pastoralism, including extensive regrowth of forests, were the socio-economic effects of the colder and rainier climate. If substantiated by further climatological data, the prosaically named "early medieval cold period" may be admitted to have had a significant effect on the ancient to medieval transition; nevertheless, there are caveats.

First, some of the data that Cheyette uses to demonstrate breaks in settlement continuity appear to be problematical. Especially, the survey of settlements in northern France by Peytremann shows that substantial numbers of settlements from all major phases—some 40 per cent—indeed continue to ca. 1000 or even farther; this is true for those that were established before AD 400, as well as for the ones originating in the fifth century, in the sixth century (the largest group), and in the seventh century.³⁷ Second, the apparent shift from grain farming to pastoralism would mean a change in lifestyle, diet, and settlement patterns, but would not necessarily translate into "impoverishment" in the

³⁵ Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, trans. Howard B. Clark (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 13. Duby postulates even lower population densities of 2.0 and 2.2 per km² for contemporary England and Germany, respectively.

³⁶ Frederic L. Cheyette, "The Disappearance of the Ancient Landscape and the Climate Anomaly of the Early Middle Ages: A Question to Be Pursued," *Early Medieval Europe* 16 (2008): 127 – 65. There was increased rainfall and a 1°C decrease in average temperature—enough to severely curtail grain harvests (pp. 157 – 63).

³⁷ Cheyette, "Climate Anomaly," 142 fig. 2, reproducing data from Édith Peytremann, *Archéologie de l'habitat rural dans le nord de la France du IV^e au XII^e siècle* (Saint-Germain-en-Laye: Musée des Antiquités nationales, 2003).

health and daily comforts of ordinary people.³⁸ Similarly, reforested land may have a number of productive uses, including the pasturing of pigs, a source of building materials, and fuel for glass works, potteries, and iron smelting.³⁹

Whatever their numbers and lifestyle may have been, it is clear that the sixth-century peasantry of northern Gaul were sufficiently productive to undergird the wealth of the Frankish aristocracy and of the Merovingian kings. Furthermore, as stressed by Wickham, stability and robustness in the agricultural sector was augmented by an unusual degree of stability and scope in the exchange networks of northern Gaul. Invisible in the written sources of the period, the existence of medium-distance commercial pottery distributions has now been demonstrated archaeologically for the entire late Roman and Merovingian period.⁴⁰ In other words, far from experiencing catastrophe and radical regression, northern Gaul remained economically integrated on a level surpassing every other post-Roman area except for some sectors of the Mediterranean coastline, Constantinople, Syria, and Egypt.⁴¹

The wealth of the Frankish kings, the stable exchange system, and agricultural productivity combined, thus, to create in northwestern Europe a new “core area,” situated between the Loire and the Rhine, that dominated its neighbors politically and economically.⁴² Along with the aforementioned political organization of the Merovingian state, wherein southern areas were controlled and shared by the northern

³⁸ The issue of increased pastoralism in early medieval Europe has been current for some time now. See Dick Harrison, “Plague, Settlement and Structural Change at the Dawn of the Middle Ages,” *Scandia* 59 (1993): 16, 30; more recently Tamara Lewit, “Pigs, Presses and Pastoralism: Farming in the Fifth to Sixth Centuries AD,” *Early Medieval Europe* 17 (2009): 80 – 2, addresses evidence for increase in mixed farming and animal husbandry in the landscapes of Gaul and Italy, not abandonment.

³⁹ Cheyette, “Climate Anomaly,” 152. The extent of early medieval forests was, of course, a major point in the primitivist interpretation of Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 5: “the forest seems to have held sway over the whole of the natural landscape.” See also discussion of reforestation in Klavs Randsborg, *The First Millennium AD in Europe and the Mediterranean: An Archaeological Essay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 65, 73.

⁴⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 794 – 8. He defines Northern Gaul as lying north of a line from Tours through Dijon to Basel. Within this area, fine-ware distributions match the extent of those in Syria and Palestine, while coarse-ware areas match those of Egypt and the Aegean. Wickham’s evidence is particularly valuable because of the rigorously comparative approach taken.

⁴¹ “[T]he north Gallic ceramic networks seem to have been the most stable land-based exchange systems that can be documented in our period north of Syria.” Chris Wickham, “Overview: Production, Distribution and Demand,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 282.

⁴² Wickham, “Production, Distribution and Demand,” 282.

power centers, and with the broad scale of action and wealth of the Frankish aristocracy, we have a set of structural elements that strongly suggest, in combination, that exchange in Merovingian Gaul was not only possible but vital and commercially viable. Moreover, because of ongoing changes in the socio-political climate, during the course of the sixth century the Merovingian kings lost the ability to collect the old Roman land taxes.⁴³ This left them with a heightened interest in revenue from taxes and tolls on commerce, as their right to collect the latter remained unchallenged.⁴⁴

The Mediterranean connection

The convergence of royal interest and commercial potential is illustrated brilliantly in the case of Marseille and the Rhône corridor. This prime geographical communications way, which connects the Mediterranean with Temperate Europe has found mention more than once so far in this study.⁴⁵ The work of S. T. Loseby demonstrates that it was no less active and significant in the sixth century AD.⁴⁶ Throughout its history, Marseille has prospered during those times when it could function as an *emporium*—as the point of exchange between the Mediterranean world and the world to the north. Recent archaeology in the old harbor area of Marseille, recovering many varieties of imported amphorae and commercial pottery as well as revealing efforts to improve and extend the harbor in the sixth and seventh centuries suggests the extent of commercial activity in the city. Moreover, it is clear from the written sources that Marseille was regarded as *the* Mediterranean port of the Merovingian kingdom as a whole.⁴⁷ Conversely, as Loseby points out,

⁴³ See Walter Goffart, “Old and New in Merovingian Taxation,” in idem, *Rome’s Fall and After* (London: Hambledon Press, 1989), 213 – 31.

⁴⁴ Goffart, “Merovingian Taxation,” 216, emphasizes profits from royal justice as the other chief source of revenue for the government in the seventh century. See also Walter Goffart, “Frankish Military Duty and the Fate of Roman Taxation,” *Early Medieval Europe* 16 (2008): 166 – 90.

⁴⁵ See above in Section 3.3, subsections *Transalpine trade: Greeks* and *Transalpine trade: Romans*; and Section 4.4, subsection *A model province of the High Empire*.

⁴⁶ S. T. Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirene Thesis, I: Gregory of Tours, the Merovingian Kings, and ‘un grand port’,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 203 – 29.

⁴⁷ Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirene Thesis, I,” 206 – 17.

in the age of Gregory of Tours, the ability of Marseille to function as an emporium is an equally valuable pointer to the vitality of contemporary interregional exchange.⁴⁸

The documents show that an amazing variety of goods were to be had in Marseille, from all over the Mediterranean, from the Near east, and even from Indonesia (cloves). In other words, throughout the sixth and seventh centuries, there was at least a long-distance trade in luxuries that was maintained in the Mediterranean; in the sixth century, there was yet commercial bulk traffic as well, in various grades of commercial ceramics and in oil, certainly.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, neither archaeology nor the written sources tell us what Gaul was exporting in exchange for these imports.

Royal involvement, meanwhile, appears in several ways. First, the kings maintained high officials in Marseilles and at the royal toll station nearby at Fos, as well as a warehouse or *cellarium*. Indeed, Fos was the first in a series of royal toll stations at regular intervals up the Rhône corridor. The extent of sophisticated administrative machinery put into place, designed to maximize profit and access to imported goods for the kings and their beneficiaries demonstrates that the tolls and the commodities were of a value high enough to justify all these efforts at control.⁵⁰ Second, the so-called “quasi imperial” gold *solidi* and *tremisses*, issued in the name of the Byzantine emperor but struck to Germanic rather than Byzantine weight standards, clearly were issued under royal auspices and intended to facilitate trade to the *north* rather than to the Mediterranean. In the seventh century, these same coins were issued under the name of the reigning Merovingian. Again, this effort to provide a gold coinage for northern trade indicates that there *was* such trade and of sufficient volume and value to justify the

⁴⁸ Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirene Thesis, I,” 207. Note, however, the dampening opinion in Wickham, “Production, Distribution and Demand,” 283, who views the flourishing *emporium* of Marseille as significant “socio-politically” but, because it dealt mostly in small-volume luxury items, of no great impact on the economy of Gaul as a whole.

⁴⁹ Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirene Thesis, I,” 218 – 19. Loseby cites several Merovingian documents, including the Marculf formulary and privileges granted to St-Denis and the abbey of Corbie.

⁵⁰ Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirene Thesis, I,” 222 – 3. “The scale of Merovingian power and the sophistication of their administration has until recently been underestimated by historians” (p.228). On this point, see also Bernard S. Bachrach, “Plague, Population, and Economy in Merovingian Gaul,” *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 3 (2007): 39, 40, for instances where Merovingian officials acted to block communications routes in the interest of preventing the spread of plagues.

minting.⁵¹ Finally, as evident from the accounts of Merovingian politics and treaties, control of Marseille and the sharing of its profits was a key item in the negotiations and relations of the sub-kingdoms. Marseille was the opening to the Mediterranean. As Loseby sums it up:

None of this makes sense unless there was something worth exploiting, and in the case of Marseille that something can only have been trade.⁵²

From the sparse evidence available for the sixth and seventh centuries, an outline of the major exchange routes emerges, nonetheless.⁵³ Overseas connections from Marseille (primarily), Nice, Fos, and Agde were widespread; most prominent among these were the ports of the Levant from Alexandria to Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome.⁵⁴ Inland, the best documented route is, again, that of the Rhône-Saône corridor; presumably, most of the overseas imports went north along this route.⁵⁵ In the sixth century, a parallel route from Clermont through Bourges and Orléans to Paris also was in

⁵¹ Loseby, "Marseille and the Pirene Thesis, I," 223 – 5. The distribution of these coins inland follows the pattern of the river routes in France and continues as far as southern England and Frisia. See, however, Adriaan Verhulst, *The Rise of Cities in North-West Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 25 – 33, 41 – 2, who adheres to the theory that the Merovingian coins found at town-sites in the lower Meuse and Scheldt watersheds probably represent non-commercial activities.

⁵² Loseby, "Marseille and the Pirene Thesis, I," 225 – 9. The quote is on p. 228.

⁵³ Published about half a generation apart, two important studies of Merovingian trade and communications come to similar overall conclusions. First is Adriaan Verhulst, "Der Handel im Merowingerreich: Gesamtdarstellung nach schriftlichen Quellen," *Early Medieval Studies* 2 (1970): 2 – 54, who appends a collection of all relevant passages from narrative and documentary sources (158 in total). The other is Dietrich Claude, "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich auf Grund der Schriftquellen," in Göttingen 150 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985), 9 – 99, who uses the same base of written evidence but discusses it in greater detail. Lebecq, "Entre Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age" (1998), addresses both written and archaeological evidence from an updated viewpoint but concentrates on a narrower range of issues than do Verhulst and Claude. Dagmar Schwärzel, *Handel und Verkehr des Merowingerreiches nach den Schriftlichen Quellen: Ein Darstellungsversuch in 12 Karten* (Marburg: Vorgeschichtliches Seminar, 1983), which charts on a series of maps the locations involved in the fragmentary mentions of Merovingian trade (depending, especially, on Verhulst), illustrates graphically just how thin the written evidence base is.

⁵⁴ See Schwärzel, "Handel und Verkehr des Merowingerreiches," maps 11 and 12. The pattern of connections bears comparison with similar patterns illustrated in Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 676, map 23.1: Merchant Communications, A.D. 700 – 900. In both cases, Frankish northwestern Europe has communications as far away as the eastern Mediterranean. One significant difference is that while Marseille functions as the main entrepôt in the Merovingian period, in Carolingian Europe that role belongs to Venice.

⁵⁵ There is general agreement on this point. Verhulst, "Der Handel im Merowingerreich," 6 – 7; Claude, "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich," 38 – 40.

use, indicated by a string of Jewish colonies in those places.⁵⁶ In the sixth and seventh centuries, a transverse route through Autun and Nevers and thence down the Loire to Nantes and the island monastery of Noirmoutier was important, with lively connections to Ireland. Passenger traffic, the export of wine, the import of slaves, and the salt trade inland from the coast all took place along this route.⁵⁷ North of Paris, which appears to have been a thriving city throughout this period, Rouen, Amiens, and Quentovic emerged as important points for travel and goods transfer in the seventh century, especially for cross-Channel contacts with England.⁵⁸ For the Meuse, Moselle, and Rhine routes, written sources are meager or, in the latter case, non-existent before the eighth century.⁵⁹

Traffic in the Merovingian kingdom used both land and water transport. Unlike some earlier researchers, Lebecq maintains a positive view on the condition of the Roman road network in Gaul in the sixth century, pointing out the frequent mention of roads in the sources. If they were sometimes impassable, this does not mean that they were never repaired. Indeed, the kings were keenly interested in the maintenance of the roads both for commercial and for military reasons, and the long list of tolls that they collected from various aspects of overland travel went, at least in part, toward public upkeep of the roads.⁶⁰ There were, nevertheless, changes. One seems to have been greater reliance on pack animals than on wheeled transport.⁶¹ Another was, despite the persistence of road

⁵⁶ Verhulst, "Handel im Merowingerreich," 18.

⁵⁷ Verhulst, "Handel im Merowingerreich," 7 – 8, 23 – 4; Claude, "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich," 40 – 1; Schwärzel, *Handel und Verkehr des Merowingerreiches*, 20.

⁵⁸ Verhulst, "Handel im Merowingerreich," 8 – 9, 12 – 13; Claude, "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich," 41 – 2. The North Sea and Channel routes will be discussed in Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters* below.

⁵⁹ Verhulst, "Handel im Merowingerreich," 9 – 10; Claude, "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich," 42 – 4. Exchange patterns along the Rhine and in the eastward reaches of the Merovingian kingdom up to ca. 700 will be treated in Section 5.2, subsection *Alamannia and the Rhine* below.

⁶⁰ Lebecq, "Entre Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age," 462 – 73. The tolls will be discussed in detail in Section 6.3 below. Cf. the pessimistic attitude towards the roads taken in Claude, "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich," 28 – 31. The frequent flooding and sedimentation of the roads could possibly be evidence in favor of increased rainfall in the sixth century, as was argued in Cheyette, "Climate Anomaly."

⁶¹ Lebecq, "Entre Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age," 475 – 7. See also his detailed discussion of vehicles, their load limits, and average speed (pp. 473 – 5). On the early medieval shift to using more pack animals also in the East as well as the West see Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 76. On the importance of maintaining good roads and bridges from the standpoint of military logistics, even into

maintenance and use, a shift to greater use of water routes. Here Lebecq sees a general trend, with Merovingian capitals always occurring in river towns, towns prospering as they lay nearer to the water, and even monasteries taking care to enjoy ready access to the advantages of water transport.⁶²

The written sources change their focus over the course of the sixth and seventh centuries. The sixth century, dominated by the frequent incidental references to matters of trade in Gregory of Tours,⁶³ refers almost exclusively to the import and distribution of luxury wares such as exotic wines, spices, and jewelry. This circumstance has led many researchers to the opinion that Merovingian trade was largely confined to such items and represented, therefore, a miniscule part of the overall economy. Moreover, according to this view, the clientele for these luxury imports steadily diminished over time, with a consequent dwindling of long-distance trade overall.⁶⁴ Both Verhulst and Claude admit, however, that some bulk and retail trade in staples existed. Certainly, oil was a mass import, and it was distributed even into the far north.⁶⁵ Considerable quantities of oil or wax were needed, in fact, to maintain the extravagant ritual lighting in churches either by lamps or candles.⁶⁶ Other bulk trade items included salt, wine, and grain.⁶⁷

the Carolingian period, see also Bernard S. Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare: Prelude to Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 136 – 7, with sources. See also Bernard S. Bachrach, “Animals and Warfare in Early Medieval Europe” (Settimane 31, 1985): 710 – 23, for a discussion of the speed, range, upkeep, and load-hauling capacity of various combinations of animals and vehicles (oxen, horses, wagons, carts, packs).

⁶² Lebecq, “Entre Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age,” 477 – 91. Edith Mary Wightman, *Gallia Belgica* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 278 – 9, 311, commented on the growing importance of the Meuse in the fourth century, and the role of the rivers in the re-configured north of the early medieval period. The phenomenon of “fluvialization” is doubted by Claude, “Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich,” 17 – 18, who points out that river transport was much used already by the Romans.

⁶³ In Verhulst’s *Quellenanhang* (Verhulst, “Handel im Merowingerreich,” 25 – 52), of the seventy-four excerpts from narrative sources that pertain to trade-related matters in the late fifth or sixth centuries (no preserved *diplomae* date from this period), fifty-one of the total are from the works of Gregory of Tours.

⁶⁴ Verhulst, “Handel im Merowingerreich,” 24; Claude, “Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich,” 97, speaks of the long distance luxuries trade “overshadowing” the trade in staples.

⁶⁵ Schwärzel, *Handel und Verkehr des Merowingerreiches*, 2, conveniently groups together all the textual references to this product. Massive imports of oil are demonstrated archaeologically at Marseille. Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirene Thesis, I,” 213 – 15, on the amphorae.

⁶⁶ Gauthier, “From the Ancient City to the Medieval Town,” 58, who stresses the magnificence of display inside the churches, which in outward dimensions could be quite modest in comparison with late Roman or later medieval structures. To supply the hundreds of churches in Merovingian Gaul with the requisite oil, wax, silks, precious metals, incense, and wine—ritually necessary—would have comprised a considerable enterprise.

Claude speaks of evidence for country markets, where staples and items of craft production might be exchanged. Moreover, there is frequent mention of retail trade in the towns of a wide range of goods, from foodstuffs to jewelry.⁶⁸ There was also regional production and trade in heavy items, such as marble sarcophagi in the southern provinces, stone sarcophagi generally in the towns, and cast-gypsum sarcophagi in the Seine basin, all of which in turn imply extensive industries.⁶⁹ Finally, even in the north of the kingdom, where literary witness is practically absent except for the larger cities (Paris, Rheims, Metz), the presence of commercially produced pottery and the continuity in rural settlement suggest an economy that depended on a stable population, which was generating a considerable level of demand. Along the Rhine, in Austrasia, and in Neustria hierarchical distribution networks could project up to 200 – 300 kilometers, and artisanal skill levels were maintained.⁷⁰

Overall, mentions of exotic Mediterranean imports into Gaul decrease markedly in the seventh century. In their place, the sources now more often mention the Loire trade, including the export of wine to Ireland, and a new phenomenon: royal privileges granting exemption from tolls on road and river transport and, in some cases, a direct share in the profits of trade either in money or in kind.⁷¹ In the seventh century, these grants concern especially Marseille, Fos, and the Rhône-Saône corridor, but also involve the Loire, with northern monasteries, in particular St. Denis and Corbie, as the usual beneficiaries.⁷² Claude makes the interesting suggestion that by the early seventh century, the multiplication of royal tolls along the trade routes had forced merchants to raise their prices, thus lessening demand for their products. As monasteries were able to circumvent the tolls by special privilege, demand dropped even further, thus tending further to reduce the position of the independent merchants and lay the foundations for

⁶⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 800; Verhulst, “Handel im Merowingerreich,” 24.

⁶⁸ Claude, “Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich,” 45 – 51.

⁶⁹ Périn, “Settlements and Cemeteries,” 75 – 7. Périn stresses that no hint of these activities appears in the written sources.

⁷⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 795 – 8. See also Joachim Henning, “Strong Rulers—Weak Economy? Rome, the Carolingians and the Archaeology of Slavery in the First Millennium AD,” in *Long Morning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 50, who emphasizes the growing archaeological evidence for high levels of craft production in Merovingian towns and cities.

⁷¹ See here Verhulst’s *Quellenanhang* (Verhulst, “Handel im Merowingerreich,” 47 – 52), items 140 – 158.

⁷² See Claude, “Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich,” 39 – 41, 78 – 9, for a survey.

the much greater involvement of ecclesiastical entities in trade in the eighth and ninth centuries.⁷³

However, we may glance at one of the most oft-quoted of these royal charters for clues regarding the continued viability of long-distance trade through the Mediterranean ports in the seventh century: the privilege confirmed for the Abbey of Corbie on 29 April 716 by Chilperic II.⁷⁴ Corbie's agents were, according to the long-standing privilege, entitled to draw annually, from the royal warehouse or *cellarium* at Fos, quantities of exotic foods, spices, and aromatics.⁷⁵ The royal warehouse at Fos most likely contained the proceeds of that proportion of the tolls that were paid in kind on products that passed through Fos.⁷⁶ Further, it is highly unlikely that Corbie took all or even a major fraction of the entire annual store.⁷⁷ We might, speculatively, multiply the quantities awarded to Corbie by a factor of one hundred, yielding then 3,000 lbs. of pepper, 1,500 lbs. of cumin, 200 lbs. of cloves, 100 lbs. of cinnamon, 200 lbs. of nard, 3,000 lbs. of *costum*, 5,000 lbs. of dates, 10,000 lbs. of figs, 3,000 lbs. of pistachios, 10,000 lbs. of olives, 5,000 lbs. of *hidrio*, 15,000 lbs. of chickpeas, 2,000 lbs. of rice, and 1,000 lbs. of *auro pimento*, plus great quantities of the more mundane oil (500 tonnes) and *garum* (3,000 hogsheads). Seen in this light, the trade in exotic foodstuffs, spices, and aromatics assumes a greater than trifling volume.

During the seventh century, trade from Gaul to the north, to Ireland, England, and eventually Scandinavia, becomes increasingly visible; this, along with the possible shift of focus to river routes, and the development of new economic centers such as palaces,

⁷³ Claude, "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich," 81 – 3. The burdensome growth of tolls may have been a consequence of the diminishing ability of the kings to raise other kinds of revenue, leaving income from tolls as one of the main options remaining to them.

⁷⁴ Léon Levillain, *Examen critique des chartes mérovingiennes et carolingiennes de l'Abbaye de Corbie* (Paris: Ecole des Chartes, 1902), 235 – 7, no. 15, is the original modern critical edition. Chilperic II hereby reconfirmed earlier charters (now lost) that date to the mid-seventh century.

⁷⁵ Schwärzel, *Handel und Verkehr des Merowingerreiches*, 4 – 5. The list of exotics includes pepper, cumin, cloves, cinnamon, nard, *costum*, dates, figs, pistachios, olives, *hidrio*, chickpeas, rice, and *auro pimento*.

⁷⁶ Claude, "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich," 12, suggests that tolls may have been taken in kind as well as in cash. The levels of Merovingian tolls are, unfortunately, unknown. The highest Carolingian toll rate recorded was 10 percent.

⁷⁷ Claude, "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich," 36, suggests that dozens of monasteries may have had privileges of toll-free transport. No doubt the same could be said for drawing privileges at the *cellaria*.

emporium, and monasteries is the essence of the global changes that Lebecq proposes in summary to his study of Merovingian communications routes.⁷⁸ Certainly, the pattern of attention in the preserved documents reflects such a gradual shift in focus, with northern loci such as the annual fair at St. Denis and the ports of Rouen, Quentovic, and Dorestad coming into view during the seventh and especially in the eighth century.⁷⁹ Accordingly, while, as suggested above, Mediterranean trade was by no means dead or dying in the seventh century, trade in the northern waters accelerated during the seventh and expanded greatly during the eighth century.

The Merovingian kindoms played a crucial role in stabilizing Gaul early in the period of transition from Roman to early medieval. Throughout the sixth and seventh centuries, the balance of the evidence suggests that not only were rural settlement patterns and cities maintained at a functional level, but that all areas of Gaul, both north and south, maintained a fairly high degree of economic competence and prosperity. The range of economic activities included both intra-regional trade networks, such as the salt and wine trade on the Loire and the pottery networks in the north, and long-distance inter-regional trade, which connected Gaul with the Mediterranean throughout this period and presently also with Ireland and England and other areas to the north and east. The constituencies of Gaul had, in some respects, changed since the time of the Gallic Empire in the third century. The landed senatorial elite had disappeared or transformed itself into a more militarized aristocracy, and the elite clerical establishment that in part replaced it was something new, but the capacity of the new elites to support an independent state in northwestern Europe was at least as great as that of the old. Though the Roman corporations of merchants and shippers and their custom of erecting inscribed monuments also were gone, mercantile activity and craft production, and a considerable level of demand for such services, continued as well. Merovingian *Francia* had, with its early and successful negotiation of the transition, become northwestern Europe's hegemon and elite trend-setter.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Lebecq, "Entre Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age," 501.

⁷⁹ Claude, "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merowingerreich," 42 – 4, 52 – 5, 71 – 3, 79 – 81, 98.

⁸⁰ On this point, see the summary in Wickham, "Production, Distribution and Demand," 279 – 83.

5.2 Along the Former Frontier

As in the Mediterranean and in Gaul, the later fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries brought increasingly far-reaching transformations to the Roman – barbarian interface zone along the Rhine and Danube, and also brought accompanying responses to these changes from the regions of Temperate Europe beyond the immediate frontier zone. Just as the gradual disappearance of the system of massive fiscal transfers in the Mediterranean affected each local area differently in the long run, so the retreat of the Roman imperial system from the commanding position it had enjoyed along the Rhine and the Danube had different effects in Britain than it had along the Rhine, in southern Germany, in Austria, in the Carpathian basin, and along the lower Danube.

For a complete evaluation, each of these regions would have to be analyzed in a manner similar to what has been sketched out for Gaul in Section 5.1 above; within the limits of the present study, this will be impossible. It will be possible, however, to trace briefly the persistence of patterns of exchange, settlement, and productivity in many Temperate European areas and to suggest how some trans-regional connections continued to operate during the late Roman and Merovingian periods, while certain others were transformed. One notable effect was the increasing irrelevance of the longstanding frontier line, so that, in many places, neighboring territories that had been administratively separated now combined into new political and socio-economic entities. Moreover, the overall orientation shifted. Whereas interactions and exchanges during the Roman period had followed a south-to-north layering of zones, by the seventh century the greatest contrasts in central Europe were between a western, Frankish-dominated sphere of influence and an eastern, Avar – Slav sphere.

Trade and instability

In the AD 369 treaty between Emperor Valens and the Tervingian king Athanaric, concluded on the lower Danube, the Gothic side gave up their right to Roman subsidies and agreed that trade across the Danube would be limited to two designated places. Valens, meanwhile, resigned his right to call on Gothic troops to serve in Roman wars. This represented a considerable curtailment of relations such as they had been since the

322 treaty with Constantine I, by which the Goths had *unlimited* trade access but would have to serve as federate soldiers; the active nature of the erstwhile open trade is illustrated by the quantities of wine amphorae found north of the Danube.⁸¹ The situation here is similar in many ways to that on the middle Danube two centuries earlier. There, also, in the context of military operations against and peace treaties with Marcomanni, Quadi, and Iazyges, the written sources incidentally mention Roman insistence on re-negotiating trade contacts. The gist of the new rules is that access to trans-Danube trade will be more restricted than it had been before the hostilities.⁸²

Certainly, the Romans took steps to control the trans-frontier trade with the barbarians.⁸³ However, it is quite clear that both sides were interested in maintaining economic exchanges and that these exchanges involved a considerable volume of goods.⁸⁴ Indeed, from the two episodes of treaty-making in the late second and in the fourth centuries it may appear that relatively unrestricted access to trade may have been more common than a restrictive regime; in other words, barbarians normally were free to trade at Roman posts, but this freedom might be abridged in situations where the relationship had become strained.⁸⁵

If active trade was the normal and expected condition, what would be the effect of arbitrarily imposed restrictions?⁸⁶ Thompson says that the Romans regularly forbade the

⁸¹ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 72 – 6. The same treaty was mentioned in a different context in section 4.3, subsection *Barbarian capabilities and their place in the late Roman system* above. The source for this incident and its military and political context is Themistius *Or.* 10.205.

⁸² Lynn F. Pitts, “Relations between Rome and the German ‘Kings’ on the Middle Danube in the First to Fourth Centuries A.D.” *Journal of Roman Studies* 79 (1980): 50, gives a translation of the relevant passages in *Cassius Dio* 71.15 –16 and 18 – 19, 72.2. Dio is our sole source for these proceedings. See also E. A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians: The Decline of the Western Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 12 – 13; Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 119 – 21.

⁸³ That is the guiding idea in “Introduction: Economic Warfare,” the opening chapter in Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 3 – 19.

⁸⁴ Pitts, “German ‘Kings’ on the Middle Danube,” 55 – 7, highlights the volume of trade and the transformative effects that it was having on parts of Moravia and Slovakia near to the Danube *limes*. See also section 3.4, subsections *The Rhine - Danube interface zone* and *Roman influence north*, and section 4.3, subsection *Relations along the frontier* above for additional discussion of Roman – barbarian trade.

⁸⁵ Pitts, “German ‘Kings’ on the Middle Danube,” 51 – 2, argues this, opining that the restrictions mentioned by Dio had not been normal earlier and were lifted again after a brief time; she points out also that Rome had peace with the Marcomanni and Quadi throughout the third century.

⁸⁶ By the fourth century, barbarians were used to negotiating “punishments” with the Romans as a price for restoration of normal relations; but they would not accept Roman measures that they felt were unjust or

export of strategic materials—“armor, weapons, horses, beasts of burden, money, whetstones, iron, grain, salt or anything that might be of military value”—to enemies,⁸⁷ but this left open the expectation that peoples not at war with the Romans might receive at least some of the listed goods. In 370 – 75, however, according to Thompson, the list of prohibited articles was extended to include wine, oil, and gold, and the prohibition now encompassed “the barbarian world in general, whether at war with the Empire or not.”⁸⁸ Notably, the timing of these later decrees coincides with Valens’ restrictive 369 treaty with the Tervingi and with Valentinian I’s aggressive efforts to re-fortify the Rhine and Danube and generally to reassert Roman dominance along the frontier. When Valentinian started building Roman forts deep in the territory of the Quadi, who had been living as peaceable clients for some time, he provoked a destructive Quadi invasion of Pannonia in 374.⁸⁹

Goffart lays great stress on the long-settled stability of many barbarian peoples along the Danube frontier up through the fourth century, which contrasts with the un-settlement of many of these peoples in the fifth century.⁹⁰ He also mentions disruptions in trade and client relationships of the settled barbarians with Rome as a possible motivation for their decision to uproot themselves in the first decade of the fifth century.⁹¹ It seems that the argument could be made more acute: considering the degree of symbiosis that had grown up along the frontier over some four hundred years,⁹² enforcement of the new restrictions on trade of 370 – 75, continued over two or three

excessive. Thomas S. Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians, 100 B.C. – A.D. 400* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 341 – 2.

⁸⁷ Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 10, citing *Digest* 39.4.11 and 48.4.1 – 4.

⁸⁸ Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 10, citing *Cod. Justin.* iv. 41.1 and 63.2.

⁸⁹ Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians*, 342 – 3. Pitts, “German ‘Kings’ on the Middle Danube,” 52 –3, unequivocally blames Valentinian I for the break-down in peaceful relations in this sector of the frontier.

⁹⁰ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 86, on the stability of Sueves (including Marcomanni and Quadi) and Vandals. He also outlines the rather sketchy movements of Gepids, Lombards, Rugi, Sciri, and Herules in the Danubian region in the fifth and sixth centuries (pp. 199 – 209).

⁹¹ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 87.

⁹² For the symbiosis, see again Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 222 – 40. For the sector of the frontier opposite Noricum and northern Pannonia see Pitts, “German ‘Kings’ on the Middle Danube,” *passim*, for a conspectus of the increasingly involved Roman – barbarian relations.

decades, would have seriously hurt the prosperity of the Danubian peoples. Some of them reacted by aggressively seeking relocation.⁹³

Significantly, it seems that at least limited trans-Danube trade was maintained even during the middle of the turbulent fifth century. Once again the incidental witness appears in a treaty, this time between the eastern Empire and the Huns ca. 438: among other things, the Huns insist that regular frontier marketplaces be maintained.⁹⁴ What was being exchanged? The sources tell us nothing; however, Heather's assumption that the trade between the Huns established in the Carpathian basin and the Romans must have followed the standard nomad-animals-for-sedentary-grain paradigm must be off the mark in this context.⁹⁵ The Hun state in the 430s and 440s consisted of a core of mounted "ethnic" Huns, plausibly estimated by Heather at around 15,000 with ten times that number of horses, and groups of subject peoples—Rugi, Herules, Lombards, Sciri, Sarmatians, Gepids, Goths—each of which can be estimated at a fighting potential of 10,000 or more and at an overall size for each group, including dependants, of 50,000 at least.⁹⁶ The total numbers, thus, approach half a million, and unless we are to imagine the creation of a supply system from the Roman side to feed these people on a scale approaching that of the *annona* operations for the city of Rome or Constantinople, we have to admit that they were fed for the most part on local resources.

In other words, at least some of the Huns' subject peoples, or portions of all of them, had to function primarily as peasant agriculturists—a role to which they were long

⁹³ Cf. the assurance in Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 202 – 4, that it was pressure from the Huns moving into the Carpathian basin in force already ca. AD 400 that was unsettling the local peoples and driving them against the Romans. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 75 – 80, reviews the evidence and doubts that there was a significant Hun presence in the Carpathian basin before ca. 420. Both arguments overlook the possibility that the Huns could have moved into the Carpathian basin *as overlords* without necessarily displacing any of the pre-existing population.

⁹⁴ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 300 – 1. Priscus is the source.

⁹⁵ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 147, 326 – 8.

⁹⁶ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 328 – 333, for the incorporation of (mostly) Germanic barbarian groups into the Hun war machine. Cf. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 199 – 209. See also the discussion of the numbers of Ostrogoths, Gepids, and Huns involved in Attila's 451 campaign against Gaul in Bernard S. Bachrach, "The Hun Army at the Battle of Chalons (451): An Essay in Military Demography," in *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung: Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. Karl Brunner and Brigitte Merta (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg, 1994), 59 – 67. Bachrach estimates a minimum of some 20,000 Goths, 10,000 Gepids, and 20,000 Huns for a total of 40,000 – 50,000 under Attila and a similar minimum number of Romans plus allies under Aëtius. He also believes that the ecological conditions in central Europe would have caused the Huns there to give up their steppe nomad style of fighting (p. 66).

accustomed whether in the Carpathian basin itself or in other areas of Temperate Europe before being mobilized by the Huns.⁹⁷ Of course, the large quantities of gold that the Huns were able to extort from the Romans, as later the Avars did from the Byzantines, was an important element in their ability to recruit and reward barbarian leaders and their retainers.⁹⁸ However, such “subsidies” cannot explain the basic economic support systems that must have been in place. Not even the most savage and dedicated barbarian reaver can subsist on chewing gold. Either for payment or by coercion, someone had to grow the food, make the clothing, make the weapons, tend the horses and do all of the other thousand and one things that were necessary to keep the Huns’ war machine fed and functioning. Much closer to the mark than the idea of starving barbarians somehow kept alive by Roman subsidies is the contemporary Roman observation that “[the Huns] have no concern for agriculture, but, like wolves, attack and steal the Goths’ food supplies.”⁹⁹ That is to say, the “Gothic” subjects had the job of producing and delivering food to their overlords.¹⁰⁰

As Herwig Wolfram pointed out some two decades ago in his *History of the Goths*, due to destabilization of Roman – barbarian relations in the late fourth century, “a ‘Scythian’ koine—carried by the Goths—did in fact spread over the Roman provinces of

⁹⁷ An important economic asset for the Huns would have been Roman Pannonia. Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 286 – 7, assumes the reality of cession of parts of Roman territory on the middle Danube sometime 425 – 433. See, however, Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns: Studies in Their History and Culture*, ed. Max Knight (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 87 – 90, who points out the problematical nature of any such cession.

⁹⁸ Attila Kiss, “Die Guldfunde des Karpatenbeckens vom 5. – 10. Jahrhundert: Angaben zu den Vergleichsmöglichkeiten der schriftlichen und archäologischen Quellen,” *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 38 (1986): 105 – 45, summarizes the chronology of East Roman payments to the Huns, and later payments to post-Hun peoples in the Carpathian basin including Gepids, Ostrogoths, and Avars. Constantinople delivered over 10,000 kg of gold in the fifth century, and some 20,000 kg more in 573 – 626. Of these amounts, only some 52 kg of gold from hoards and rich graves in the Carpathian basin pertaining to the periods in question have been recovered. Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 326 – 7, for the effects of gold on the Huns’ political economy.

⁹⁹ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 362, quoting Priscus fragment 49. The idea that Roman subsidies somehow kept alive post-Hun groups in the Carpathian basin in Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 18, likewise suffers from a lack of any explanation as to how the gold might be translated into actual sustenance.

¹⁰⁰ The fact that “real Huns” may not have liked to eat grain in no way diminishes the importance of Germanic agriculturalists in the Hun empire. On Hun dietary customs see Maenchen-Helfen, *World of the Huns*, 174 – 8.

the middle and lower Danube.”¹⁰¹ Wolfram’s observation agrees with Heather’s that linguistically and in terms of the material culture represented in the graves of the Carpathian basin in the middle of the fifth century Attila’s empire would appear to have been largely “Gothic.” The richest graves—“staggeringly rich,” as Heather puts it—feature gold-garnet decorated objects, the decorative style that presently became the distinguishing mark of the highest elites all along the erstwhile frontier zone.¹⁰² In the late Roman and post-Roman world of the fifth and sixth centuries, the Danube had become an axis of political and cultural transition that reached westwards from the Black Sea into Gaul and Britain.¹⁰³ The decorative style associates with attempts at state-formation. The style was impressively represented in the grave of Childeric I at Tournai.¹⁰⁴

Wells points out that graves of similar richness with a very similar catalogue of objects have been found also in Moravia and Transylvania, with less complete arrays also in Hungary, southern Germany, and in eastern France. Altogether, according to Wells:

[T]he striking similarity between the Childeric grave and the others shows that individuals of status comparable to Childeric lived in different parts of Europe and were part of a shared system of symbols and meanings. The special objects included gold bracelets, gold fibulae, gold-and-garnet ornament on weapons and garments, sets of iron weapons, and horse-related items.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Herwig Wolfram, *The History of the Goths*, trans. Thomas J. Dunlap, new and completely revised from the 2nd German edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 130.

¹⁰² Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 331 – 2, 364. Germanic rich graves are found on the Pannonian side of the Danube as well as to the north and east of the river (p. 331, map 12). Heather stresses that gold had not been a notable feature of earlier Germanic burial traditions; this material became available in quantity due to the success of the Huns’ extortions from the Romans (p. 363 – 5).

¹⁰³ The Danubian influence extended eastwards, as well; see Igor O. Gavritukhin and Michel Kazanski, “Bosporus, the Tetraxite Goths, and the Northern Caucasus Region during the Second Half of the Fifth and the Sixth Centuries,” in *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 83 – 136.

¹⁰⁴ Peter S. Wells, *Barbarians to Angels: The Dark Ages Reconsidered* (New York: Norton, 2008), 58 – 63, describes the objects found in this grave and their political-cultural significance in the late-fifth century context.

¹⁰⁵ Wells, *Barbarians to Angels*, 63 – 9; the quote is on p. 67. See also Birgit Arrhenius, *Merovingian Garnet Jewellery: Emergence and Social Implications* (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historien och Antikvitets Akademien, 1985), 101 – 126, and Distribution map I on p 119, who argues that the garnets used in Childeric’s grave goods came from an exclusive workshop in Constantinople, though there were “satellite workshops” in the Carpathian basin, southern Germany, and northern Gaul that might assemble the decorations. The assembly technique used, according to Arrhenius, was “cement cloisonné,” using gypsum or substitutes such as aragonite or heulandite.

Wells situates graves of this type in the context of the transition from Roman to post-Roman constructions of political power across Temperate Europe, negotiations in which references to imperial Roman forms are still very potent but new associations are being added. He also emphasizes that only in the case of Childeric I do we have an explicit correlation between such a grave assemblage and a political actor known to us from the historical record.¹⁰⁶ This fact underscores once again the uniquely successful outcome of the political and cultural transition in Gaul, and suggests that other areas along the axis from the English Channel to the Black Sea may have lacked either the economic or also the social conditions for an equally successful transition. A brief review of the fate of individual sectors along the Danube may clarify the point.

Danubian variations in the transition

In his broad study of European development during the first millennium AD, Klavs Randsborg noted that settlements increased steadily in all areas south of the Danube up to ca. 400. After 400, villas disappeared in the Balkan provinces and tended to be replaced by “fortified centers”—rural complexes that were neither villas, forts, nor towns. Everywhere south of the Danube, some Roman sites of the first to fourth centuries persisted into the fifth century, but only south of the Drava did they extend also into the sixth.¹⁰⁷ Randsborg’s view of relative continuity of settlement in the area of the former Yugoslavia and Bulgaria agrees with V. Velkov, who, despite cataloguing numerous episodes of warfare and destruction in the area from the late fourth century to AD 602, nevertheless considers that towns generally survived or were rebuilt, and that some of them even reappeared, albeit under different names, in the period post 680.¹⁰⁸

By contrast, Heather asserts that barbarian activity in the Balkans was fatal to the Roman-style socio-economic life that had hitherto prevailed in these provinces. Specifically, citing more recent archaeological work in the Balkans, he describes a two-step retreat. First, abandonment of villas in the wake of the Gothic-Roman campaigns of

¹⁰⁶ Wells, *Barbarians to Angels*, 67 – 9.

¹⁰⁷ Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 62 – 4.

¹⁰⁸ Velizar Velkov, *Cities in Thrace and Dacia in Late Antiquity (Studies and Materials)* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1977), 34 – 59.

376 – 82 but the building of new elite residences in the cities to replace those vacated in the countryside. Second, the permanent destruction of Roman urbanization north of the Haemus in the 440s by the Huns; at Nicopolis, a 380s – 440s layer of rich buildings now met destruction, never to be replaced.¹⁰⁹ If borne out, these new accounts of a violent end to Roman socio-economic infrastructure in all or parts of the Balkans would be an important datum in support of the possibility that barbarian military activities seriously impacted economic potentials, at least in some areas. Nevertheless, such destruction must be demonstrated for each specific location and not assumed or extrapolated.¹¹⁰

How about the provinces of the middle Danube? For the fifth and sixth centuries, the archaeological picture remains confused. Although overall tending to pessimism, Neil Christie in his review of the situation reports finds that might suggest urban evolution similar to that in Gaul, with the construction of churches, intramural burials, mentions of bishops. Former Roman federates appear to be living in or in near proximity to late and post-Roman sites.¹¹¹ In Pannonia, however, there is no clear indication of the kind of socio-cultural merging of Roman provincial and barbarian that in Gaul is evidenced by new burial customs culminating in the Row Grave phenomenon, although there might, theoretically, be “Romans” among the “Gothic” elite graves discussed above. Further, unlike the Franks, neither Huns nor Ostrogoths nor Gepids nor Lombards established a stable, long-lasting state in the Carpathian basin, and all of these peoples

¹⁰⁹ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 171 – 6, 307 – 11. Heather cites A. G. Poulter, “The Transition to Late Antiquity on the Lower Danube: An Interim Report (1996 – 8),” *Antiquities Journal* 79 (1999): 145 – 85, for the destruction and abandonment of villas ca. 380; and A. G. Poulter and T. F. C. Blagg, *Nicopolis ad Istrum: A Roman, Late Roman, and Early Byzantine City: Excavations 1985 – 1992* (London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1995), for Nicopolis.

¹¹⁰ For Heather, it is an important part of his argument that the Huns wrought irreparable damage not only in the Balkans but in the Po valley and in Gaul as far as Orleans. *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 343. Bachrach, “Fifth Century Metz,” 470 – 2, recognizes the possibility that both the Vandals and the Huns occupied Metz in 407 and 451, respectively, but that on neither occasion was the city destroyed, and that Gallic towns in general show few signs of destruction in the fifth century.

¹¹¹ Neil Christie, “Towns and Peoples on the Middle Danube in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,” in *Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Neil Christy and Simon T. Loseby (Aldershot: Scolar, 1996), 71 – 98. “At times historians and archaeologists are too ready to believe in the destructions of barbarians and to deny the possibility of a stubborn persistence of ‘native’ settlement. Yet there are numerous hints of such persistence even in the most exposed regions, in the form of burials, church survival, placenames, artefact styles, associated with or close to former Roman sites” (p. 93). A fundamental difficulty is that the ceramic sequences of this era and region are not well understood, as yet (p. 94).

either relocated or disintegrated. Politically, the later fifth century was far more chaotic here than in Gaul. It seems, in fact, that despite the intrinsically high economic potential of the area, some groups had lost their connection to productive activity and had, instead, become entirely specialized in warmaking. In other words, once the constituent groups of the Huns' system no longer functioned as parts of an integrated whole, some of them may have found themselves dependent, indeed, on subsidies and plunder for survival; Thompson speaks of starving Goths desperately raiding each other for cattle.¹¹² It may be noted in passing that this situation clearly points up the unsustainability of mutual plunder as a long-term basis for any political economy.

Despite that they concern a relatively quiet sector of the Danube, the affairs of late-fifth century *Noricum Ripense* (roughly, modern Austria between the Alps and the right bank of the Danube) inevitably find their way into practically every discussion of the late Roman transition because they have been preserved for us in a uniquely informative local source—the *Vita S. Severini* by Eugippius.¹¹³ Thompson argues that no regular Roman provincial organization nor military presence existed in *Noricum Ripense* by 454 when, according to his view, the *Vita* commences.¹¹⁴ Instead, local townsmen and fragments of former garrisons are fending for themselves and negotiating with the local barbarian “power”—the Rugii, who are based just north of the Danube. The local “Romans” are surprisingly successful in fending off concerted barbarian attacks on their towns, but they suffer from lack of sustained leadership (except that provided by our saint!) and experience steady attrition in their position.¹¹⁵ Most interestingly from the

¹¹² “They had been living on plunder and robbery, and they had practically no productive means of their own.” Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 19. True enough! But this applies only to certain specialized groups in the frontier zone, not to the economic potential of trans-Danubian Temperate Europeans generally. Further, how willing would the members of such groups be to take up the life of Roman *coloni* were they to be given actual farms in Roman provinces?

¹¹³ Eugippius, *Vita Sancti Severini*, ed. Rudolf Noll (Schriften und Quellen der alten Welt 2) (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1963). Notable referents to this source include Christie, “Middle Danube,” 84 – 5; Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 116; Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 407 – 15; Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 113 – 33; Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome: and the End of Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 17 – 20; Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 253 – 6; and Wickham, *Framing*, 339 n. 86.

¹¹⁴ Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 115 – 24.

¹¹⁵ Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 128 – 30.

point of view of this study, the locals on the south side of the Danube are extremely eager to have access to the *nundinae* or weekly markets held on the *Rugian side*.¹¹⁶

Moreover, the instances of Rugian kidnapping of individuals and relocation of at least one town's-worth of population to a place of the Rugians' choosing—for the purpose of securing “tribute,” according to the *Vita*¹¹⁷—have all the earmarks of a concerted policy of building up productive resources under Rugian control. In other words, if we once abandon the idea that these incipient barbarian polities were, invariably, disruptive of good economic and social order and incapable of constructive action—if we admit that they may have had the potential to rearrange local productivity, manpower, and commerce into a post-Roman configuration—then the events and processes reflected in sources such as the *Vita S. Severini* take on a much more positive aspect. On the whole, it seems, the Danubian Rugii would have preferred to join some of their countrymen who had already found places down in Italy.¹¹⁸ However, while opportunity to realize this goal appeared to be blocked, they were making the most of their present position.

We know, in this case, that the Rugii were punished in 487 – 88 (the *Vita S. Severini* terminates with 482) by Odoacer and forced to abandon their position, which was held after them (also transitorily) by the Lombards;¹¹⁹ a stable Upper/Lower Austria state did not form at this time. It turned out differently in neighboring Bavaria, the former *Rhaetia II*. This territory had been highly developed and prosperous under the Romans, with an extensive fortifications system along the Danube, many towns, a dense road net, and a productive system of villa agriculture. By 550, it was once again a stable agricultural society, headed by a Frankish ducal house, “set in motion as a part of Merovingian and Lombard political history.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 122 – 3. Thompson wants to know “(i) why the citizens of Boiotro were so anxious to trade in the country north of the Danube, (ii) what goods they proposed to offer for sale, (iii) what they hoped to import in exchange for their exports, (iv) why there was no local market inside the old Roman frontier which would have satisfied their needs.” Excellent questions, to which we have no ready answers.

¹¹⁷ Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 127, 130 – 2.

¹¹⁸ Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 125; Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 113.

¹¹⁹ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 113, 207 – 8; Christie, “Middle Danube,” 85 – 6.

¹²⁰ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 219 – 20.

What happened in the interval between ca. 400 and 550? Generally, researchers agree that Rhaetia/Bavaria experienced extensive damage from warfare in the late Roman period, along with settlement by immigrants from a variety of barbarian groups.¹²¹ According to Wilfried Menghin, there was extensive depopulation of the countryside due to German attacks, but also considerable settlement by Germanic elements based on documentary evidence for barbarian *laeti* and artifacts of Alemannic and Elbe-German type mixed in among provincial Roman finds in the fourth and fifth centuries. Among the non-Roman finds are objects of the Friedenrain-Prest'ovice type, which are often interpreted in support of the theory that Bavaria was created by a migrating Bohemian *Boii* elite. In the later fifth century, Rhaetia appears overrun by various Germanic groups, including above all Alemanni. The archaeological evidence denies a concerted migration from Bohemia in the early sixth century, pointing rather to continuity in settlement of the groups present heretofore—including provincial Romans—and a fusion into the Row-grave culture prevalent throughout the western parts of the former Roman borderlands.¹²²

Menghin ultimately accepts, despite the archaeological evidence, that the creation of a Bavarian identity must have stemmed from an immigrant tradition-carrying elite, probably from Bohemia. In this way, he adheres to Wenskian orthodoxy, which continues to dominate German-language scholarship on issues related to early medieval ethnic origins, especially in the case of Germanic-speaking groups or territories.¹²³ A much more radical interpretation has been propounded by Willi Mayerthaler.¹²⁴ He

¹²¹ Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 120.

¹²² Wilfried Menghin, *Frühgeschichte Bayerns: Römer und Germanen, Baiern und Schwaben, Franken und Slawen* (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 1990), 24 – 5, 30, 42 – 7. Herbert Schutz, *The Germanic Realms in Pre-Carolingian Central Europe, 400 – 750* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 281 – 7, also emphasizes the extremely mixed character of the “Germanic” immigrants.

¹²³ Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln: Böhlau, 1961), 560 – 9, on Bavaria. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 220 – 1, firmly rejects any idea of a pre-sixth century Bavarian identity or tradition or of any concerted *Landnahme*. He also considers the Wenskian paradigm to be a latter-day continuation of nostalgic, Germanic *Altertumskunde*, designed to generate historical continuities over long periods of time where none are, in fact, demonstrable (p. 20). See also Charles Bowlus, “Ethnogenesis: The Tyranny of a Concept,” in *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Andrew Gillett (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 241 – 46.

¹²⁴ Willi Mayerthaler, “Woher stammt der Name ‘Baiern’ ?” in *Das Romanische in den Ostalpen: Vorträge und Aufsätze*, ed. Dieter Messner (Wien: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984), 7 – 72.

emphasizes the continuity of the Romanized population and its speech, especially in eastern Rhaetia and Noricum and in particular in the region around Salzburg—the once *Iuvavum*. In the evolution proposed by Mayerthaler, first the name of the town was replaced by the more stable name of the local river to produce *pagus Ivarus*, which through various changes became late Latin *Pagoivaro* and thence, through still later Germanization, ultimately, *Bayern*. The epicenter of the emerging ethno-linguistic political identity, according to Mayerthaler, was Salzburg, as demonstrated by the curious coincidence of the Bavarian-German dialect areal and the boundaries of the archbishopric of Salzburg. Thus, it would be a persistent Romance or “Ladino”-speaking population and a Roman administrative center rather than an incoming Germanic warband that contributed most to the formation of the early medieval Bavarian *Stamm*.¹²⁵ For his temerity in setting aside the dominant paradigm, Mayerthaler has been roundly criticized.¹²⁶

For the purposes of this study, the essential point is the observation that, in Bavaria, an odd assemblage of leftover Romanized inhabitants and immigrating German-speaking people could settle down together in a functional socio-political entity only a generation or so later than a very similar process fulfilled itself in northern Gaul.¹²⁷ Roman populations survived in Augsburg, Regensburg, Passau, Lorsch, and in many

¹²⁵ See Mayerthaler, “Woher stammt der Name ‘Baiern’ ?” 34 and 68, for maps illustrating the pattern of Alemannic settlement and the province of Salzburg. According to Jonathan Couser, “The Changing Fortunes of Early Medieval Bavaria to 907 AD,” *History Compass* 8, no. 4 (2010): 332 and n. 12, the linguistic derivation of ‘Baiuvarii’ from ‘Pagus Ivari’ was presented in a paper at the 1982 Zwettl symposium (Austria) by Otto Kronsteiner.

¹²⁶ Typical of the criticisms of Mayerthaler, especially from the side of the Germanists whom he assails, are those in Peter Wiesinger, “Antik-romanische Kontinuitäten im Donaauraum von Ober- und Niederösterreich am Beispiel der Gewässer-, Berg- und Siedlungsnamen,” in *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern: Teil I*, ed. H. Wolfram and W. Pohl (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), 263 – 6. Herwig Wolfram, “Einleitung oder Überlegungen zur *Origo Gentis*,” in *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern: Teil I*, ed. H. Wolfram and W. Pohl (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), 20, warns sternly that “man nicht leicht über die 1961 von Reinhard Wenskus erarbeitete ‘Aspekte des Stammesbegriffs’ hinauskommen kann.” See also Couser, “Changing Fortunes of Early Medieval Bavaria,” 331 – 2, for a review of what he calls the “‘Vienna School’ of ‘Germanists’ ” and their opponents.

¹²⁷ Joachim Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum. Das bairische Herzogtum der Agilolfinger* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1991), 551 – 64, considered Bavaria to be a true Roman successor state, with many fiscal (ducal, in this case, until 788) properties, which appear to have a connection with earlier Roman installations. See the summary in Couser, “Changing Fortunes of Early Medieval Bavaria,” 334 – 5.

country districts, suggesting continuity.¹²⁸ A scarcity of archaeological data on local sixth-century economic activities prevents further analysis. One may surmise, however, that the politically stable duchy would have been impossible if the territory had not possessed some degree of economic functionality. Moreover, as was mentioned above in the Conclusion of Ch. 3, the lowland area between the upper Danube and the Alps has, recurrently, been a “core area” of cultural and economic development. It should surprise no one that after a brief period of transition it continued play this role in the early medieval period.

Alamannia and the Rhine

As in Rhaetia and along the upper Danube, in Alamannia and the Rhine region the third to sixth centuries are a mixed tale of continuity, destruction, and reconstruction. Unlike the case for Gaul, which lies immediately to the west, for this region written references on matters of economic productivity and exchange for the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries are almost totally absent, so that everything we know must be derived from archaeological data. These are, however, comparatively rich. What they reveal is a region that underwent transformations very similar to those in Gaul, discussed above,¹²⁹ including a simplification of material culture and social relations but also the continuation of long-distance exchange and at least a few urban centers.

¹²⁸ Schutz, *Germanic Realms*, 287 – 91. More pessimistic is Christie, “Middle Danube,” 86 – 7, who is sure only that Regensburg (Castra Regina) survived continuously. Both Schutz and Christie speak of Germanic federates along the upper Danube possibly forming a core of continuity, especially as they were incorporated first in the Ostrogothic frontier system under Theoderic the Great and then drawn into the Frankish orbit. See also the exhaustive analysis of the evolution of Augsburg and Regensburg in Carlrichard Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas. Studien zur Profantopographie spätantiker Civitates vom 3. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2: *Belgica I, beide Germanien und Raetia II* (Köln: Böhlau, 1990), 193 - 255. A Roman *municipium* and capital of *Rhaetia II*, Augsburg shows very little infrastructural continuity from Roman to early medieval times, according to Brühl, and no great political importance until the eleventh century, although a martyr’s cult—of St. Afra—may have persisted on the site from the fourth century onwards. In Regensburg, by contrast, which never had any urban status under the Romans, the Roman walls remained in service until expansion began in the early tenth century, and there appears to have been continuous official occupation in the area around the late Roman *praetorium* in the northeastern quadrant of the *castrum*—first by the Bavarian Dukes, then by Carolingian rulers. No bishopric or other evidence of organized Christianity existed in Regensburg, according to Brühl, until the seventh century. Clearly, the question of continuity or its opposite can be considered according to multiple categories, which may be quite independent of each other.

¹²⁹ Section 4.4, subsections *Structural changes of the third and fourth centuries* and *The fifth-century transition*, and Section 5.1.

On the left bank of the Rhine, many of the major centers had been walled before the late-third century crisis, and all had walls by the later fourth century. Köln (*Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium*) had a fortified perimeter of 3910 m enclosing 97 ha already in the first century. The Rhineside *canabae* under the legion base at Mainz (*Mogontiacum*) started building its walls around the mid-third century, which eventually cut across the northeastern end of the *castra*, after the latter was abandoned around the mid-fourth century, and totaled some 3850 m with an interior space of 98.5 ha. At Worms, a wall of 1950 m enclosing 23 ha was built probably under Valentinian I (370s). At Speyer, a Valentinian fortification of 1250m enclosed 9.5 ha on the later Domhugel. At Straßburg (*Argentorate*), an existing *castra* was refortified ca. 370, having a wall of 1810 m and enclosing 18 ha, which in this case left out extensive civilian settlements around the fort.¹³⁰ All of these towns suffered variably in the barbarian attacks ca. 275,¹³¹ the mid-fourth century, 406 – 7, and 451, but all of them maintained their walls and at least some settlement continuity. Remarkably, most of them did not experience the same kind of radical “contraction” that characterizes so many of the Gallic *urbes* ca. AD 300.¹³²

The official establishment of Christianity fared otherwise, however. The overwhelming number of Gallic *civitates*, including Metz and Trier, maintained an episcopal presence continuously from Roman—primarily fourth-century—beginnings. By contrast, in Köln, Mainz, and Straßburg, discernable Roman bishoprics lapsed in the fifth century and were revived in the sixth, while at Worms and Speyer bishoprics were, in all likelihood, erected for the first time in the sixth century.¹³³ Brühl speaks of a

¹³⁰ Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas—Germanien*, 10 – 11, 98 – 100, 120, 137 – 9, and 156 – 7. In the *Agri Decumates* (roughly, Baden-Württemberg), walling of Roman towns began ca. AD 200. Helmut Bernhard, “Niedergang und Neubeginn: Das Ende der römischen Herrschaft,” in *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002), 306 – 8.

¹³¹ While raids earlier in the third century struck southwards, along the Rhine destructive raids occurred in 275, with many Roman fortresses and cities damaged or destroyed. Bernhard, “Niedergang und Neubeginn,” 306 – 8. This coincides with the forcible re-incorporation of the Gallic Empire into the Roman imperium and with the end of the last efflorescence of monument building in eastern Gaul on the part of Roman mercantile groups. See Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 220, for the monuments at Igel and Neumagen.

¹³² See the summary in Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas—Germanien*, 257 – 8.

¹³³ Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas—Germanien*, 15 – 17, 101 – 5, 121 – 4, 139 – 40, and 158 – 9.

pattern of tenuous acculturation to Christianity in the late Roman period and a re-paganization in the fifth century.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, despite their apparently unorganized condition, these places must have had considerable populations even in the sixth century: “Man setzt kein Bistum ‘auf die grüne Wiese’.”¹³⁵

The foregoing facts of fortification, settlement, and Church history provide a kind of index by which we can judge the level of development in the Rhine region during the transition period. While it shows a somewhat different trajectory than the more western and southern Gallic parts of the Merovingian kingdoms, especially in terms of local culture and the strength of the ecclesiastical establishment, it also illustrates the stabilizing and organizing effects of the Merovingian system, which had, by the late sixth century if not earlier, fully assimilated the Rhenish region. As will be seen below, a hiatus in Church organization or the availability of coinage cannot *ipso facto* be taken as a sign of economic prostration. New archaeology in places like Köln, published since Brühl’s second volume appeared in 1990, shows ever more signs of uninterrupted production and exchange activity in the Rhine region.¹³⁶

In terms of rural settlement, the late third century witnessed a wave of villa-destruction along the Rhine; those that survived, however, saw expansion again in the fourth.¹³⁷ The settlement picture in the *Agri Decumates* is mixed, with some barbarians coming in even before AD 260 but some Roman villas persisting into the early fourth century; the German *limes* was abandoned only gradually—definitively not until Valentinian I built new chains of *castella* along the Rhine. Elbe-Germanic immigrants mixed with local Romanized elements and continued a Romanized lifestyle. Over fifty hill-top settlements in southwestern Germany have been identified for the late Roman period, which were the seats of Alamanni warlords—client kings of the Romans,

¹³⁴ Summarized in Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas—Germanien*, 259 – 60.

¹³⁵ Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas—Germanien*, 140. Cf. Bachrach, “Fifth Century Metz,” 373 – 4, vs. the conceit that early medieval cathedrals often appeared in “ghost towns.”

¹³⁶ One such is Sven Schütte, “Continuity Problems and Authority Structures in Cologne,” in *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe’s Barbarians*, ed. G. Ausenda (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 163 – 75.

¹³⁷ Bernhard, “Niedergang und Neubeginn,” 310 – 11. Cf. Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 53 – 7, who gives numbers for villas and other settlement types surveyed around Nijmegen, Köln, and Mainz, showing declines variously in the third, fourth, and fifth century.

operating in symbiosis from the early fourth century onwards and forming a kind of buffer state. At these sites and in the Main-Franken area, the metalwork and tools are, in the fifth century, of a quality equal to that of Gaul and other Roman provinces.¹³⁸

Despite that the relationship was punctuated occasionally by military violence, Roman – German contact increased during the fourth and fifth centuries. In addition to assimilation in settlements and in certain aspects of material culture mentioned above, a further indication of widespread integration of the two sides in the context of military service and recruitment lies in the distribution of “Germanic” weapons graves westwards between the Rhine and the Loire, and the distribution of burials with Roman metal-decorated military belt assemblies eastwards of the Rhine as far as the Oder.¹³⁹ A further example of the hybrid culture forming in the lands along the former frontier are the objects recovered from an elite woman’s grave of ca. 400, which included Germanic-style jewelry (brooches and hairpins) alongside Roman-style high quality glassware.¹⁴⁰ As in Rhaetia and in northern Gaul, in Alamannia and along the Rhine the culture in the later fourth and fifth centuries was rapidly evolving towards the characteristic post-Roman Row-grave culture.

One of the most valuable new insights into the lifestyle typical of people in the Merovingian territories east of the Rhine comes from Lauchheim, situated in the highlands between the Danube and the Neckar, not far south of where the Rhaetian *limes* once ran. A rescue excavation there 1986 – 96 unearthed an almost complete cemetery of the mid-fifth to late seventh centuries (1308 graves), associated with a settlement (excavations ongoing since 1989) that averaged some 250 to 300 inhabitants.¹⁴¹ Exotic items in the graves include an Ostrogothic gold-garnet belt buckle, a full ensemble of a Lombard elite woman’s fibulae and bead necklace, and a “Frankish” woman with a silken

¹³⁸ Horst W. Böhme, “Germanen im Römischen Reich: Die Spätantike als Epoche des Übergangs,” in *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002), 295 – 300.

¹³⁹ Böhme, “Germanen im Römischen Reich,” 304 – 5.

¹⁴⁰ Böhme, “Germanen im Römischen Reich,” 301. The objects come from grave no. 4756 of the Krefeld-Gellep cemetery (Nordrhein-Westfalen).

¹⁴¹ Ingo Stork, “Lauchheim in frühen Mittelalter: Ein einzigartiges Ensemble,” in *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002), 321 – 30.

dress and glass vessel. One young girl's grave had, along with jewelry, a collar of gold threads fine enough to have been made in a Byzantine workshop. Two young boy's graves had complete adult weapons complexes and sacrificed horses, reminiscent of Merovingian princely graves. Some elite graves featured Roman-style spoons and finger-bowls. One grave of a middle-aged man held, besides richly decorated gear, a gold seal-ring, which must have been used in validating official acts. Four graves had Christian gold-foil crosses. Altogether, some fifty-three graves of men, women, and children can be classified as rich, distributed widely in family groupings among the sixth-century burials, but becoming concentrated in one separate grouping among the later seventh-century burials.¹⁴²

Of the associated settlement, "Mittelhofen," some nine hectares had been excavated before 2002, revealing a village that had continued from the sixth century into the twelfth. The buildings all have been wooden structures to date, with post-and-beam architecture, most commonly single-aisled structures of roughly 6.5 x 18 meters that were divided between human and animal living quarters. Smaller structures served as granaries and workshops, especially for textile work. Milling of grain was done in the settlement, as was iron smelting. Buildings were organized into homesteads surrounded with fences and shallow ditches.¹⁴³ One compound of late-seventh century date, significantly more impressive than the others, encompassed 3400m² inside an unusually solid fence, with eleven buildings, six of which were granaries. Moreover, the compound included six rich graves, with rich weapons, gold-brocaded cloth, bronze and glass vessels, and gold-foil crosses. One woman's grave had a very fancy gold-garnet cross, possibly of Frankish make.¹⁴⁴

The complex of the Lauchheim cemetery and the "Mittelhofen" settlement shows continuity of habitation over the entire Merovingian period, and a degree of modest prosperity. Notably, the common citizens and the elite usually are buried together and reside side by side in similarly constructed buildings, although in the seventh century one family begins to distinguish and separate itself from the others. While there are no proofs

¹⁴² Stork, "Lauchheim in frühen Mittelalter," 322 – 4.

¹⁴³ Stork, "Lauchheim in frühen Mittelalter," 325 – 6.

¹⁴⁴ Stork, "Lauchheim in frühen Mittelalter," 327 – 9.

of commercial exchanges, residents are at the least producing cloth and iron in addition to growing grain and keeping animals. Meanwhile, judging by the rich objects in the elite graves, some individuals clearly circulated in a wide world beyond the village, and seem to have had connections with the political power centers of the day; Lauchheim lay on the road that led from the Rhine and the Neckar valley over the highlands to the Danube at Donauwörth. While more provincial and isolated than settlements may have been in the heartlands of northern Gaul of this period, the socio-economic relations reflected here appear to have been broadly similar.

A further argument for a reasonable level of prosperity and continuity in the “Merovingian East” of the sixth and seventh centuries is the existence of watermills. Formerly, scholars believed that in post-Roman central Europe the technology of water driven mills had been lost along with Roman political control, or maintained only in monasteries and on the manors of aristocrats.¹⁴⁵ Since 1993, however, archaeologists have learned to recognize the remains of watermills at a number of places in southern Germany, including Dasing, Lauchheim, and Großhöbing. Even more striking is the floating mill in use on the lower Rhine that was found at Gimbsheim.¹⁴⁶ While the examples identified are from the eighth century and later, others must have existed in the sixth and seventh—possibly the one at Lauchheim. Meanwhile, as the grinding stones wore out quickly (in two years or less, at Dasing),¹⁴⁷ the widespread existence of mills would mean a market for replacement quernstones—thus, a long-distance commercial industry.

Exchange networks in the sixth- and seventh-century Rhine region were investigated already half a century ago by Joachim Werner.¹⁴⁸ Werner assumes that we are dealing here with a “rein agrarischen, naturalwirtschaftlichen Gebiet” without

¹⁴⁵ Framed thus by Uta von Freeden, “Die Wassermühle: Ein antikes Erbe,” in *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002), 331.

¹⁴⁶ Freeden, “Die Wassermühle,” 331–3.

¹⁴⁷ Freeden, “Die Wassermühle,” 332. The stones were quarried in the Eifel or in the Alps, and transported along the rivers.

¹⁴⁸ Joachim Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft im östlichen Merowingerreich nach archäologischen und numismatischen Quellen,” in *Moneta e Scambi nell’ alto Medioevo* (Settimane 8, 1961), 557–618. This article continues to be widely referenced.

coinage.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, he identifies production of iron and iron goods, glass ware, ceramics, and quernstones as visible industries and potential items of exchange in the region, as well as a large volume wine trade. The primary transport arteries are the rivers, but Roman roads connect southern Germany over the Alps to Italy.¹⁵⁰ That the extra-regional link to Italy continued to be vital and functioning in the Merovingian period is demonstrated by the intriguing distribution of Egyptian-made “Coptic” bronze wares, which are found in north Italy, in southern Germany, along the Rhine, and in southern Britian, while they are not found in Gaul. The distribution pattern of these wares signifies, according to Werner, “einen nicht unbedeutenden Fernhandel von Oberitalien nach Süddeutschland und zum Rhein im 7. Jahrhundert.”¹⁵¹

On the whole, however, Werner downplays the role of commerce in the economy of the eastern Merovingian lands. Distributions of fibulae and other small metal objects signify the *Wanderbezirk* or circuit of itinerant bronze (and silver and gold) smiths, who would cast objects on the spot according to demand; this is different than the Roman system, where craftsmen settled in one place would distribute their products commercially.¹⁵² Similarly, gold foil crosses (to be placed in graves) were fashioned on the spot from gold coins. Werner asserts that the Ostrogoths did not trade with the peoples in Germany, but passed fine objects such as *Spangelhelme* (banded helmets) and fibulae northwards as gifts.¹⁵³ He notes the presence of both Ostrogothic and Byzantine (Exarchate) silver issues, dating from 493 to 578, in Alamannia and throughout the Rhine basin. However, since they are found typically as grave goods (“Grabboli”), he regards them as having had no purchasing power north of the Alps, and, therefore, not a

¹⁴⁹ Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft,” 557. This is in line with the primitivist outlook of the day. See further in Section 5.4 below.

¹⁵⁰ Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft,” 561 – 3.

¹⁵¹ Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft,” 564 – 5, map Abb. 2 (p. 566). The quote is on p. 565. Cf. the distribution of “Lombard” gold foil crosses in northern Italy between the Po and the Alps and in the Alamannic area of southwestern Germany only (map Abb. 3, p. 567).

¹⁵² Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft,” 568 – 76.

¹⁵³ Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft,” 578, distribution maps Abb. 8 and Abb. 9 (pp. 579, 580). Ian Wood, “The Frontiers of Western Europe: Developments East of the Rhine in the Sixth Century,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 234, expands on the connections between Theoderic and the Thuringian court, and some of the fine material objects available at the latter.

reflection of trade but of the involvement of troops from the north in the wars of Italy from the 530s to the 560s.¹⁵⁴

Finally, Werner notices the widespread occurrence of *Feinwaage*—scales for weighing bullion, with counterweights, that are found in men’s and even some women’s graves, with distribution from just north of the Seine (and in southeastern England) eastwards to the Rhine, Switzerland, Alamannia, Thuringia, and Saxony. This area overlaps with that of the distribution of Merovingian mints, which are found as far east as the Rhine but cluster much more densely from the Paris area westwards and southwards. This “Feinwaagenlandschaft” was, then, in contrast with the “Monetarlandschaft” south of the Seine, an area of “Naturalwirtschaft” or barter economy, where coins were unneeded except for long-distance trade.¹⁵⁵

Several observations can be made here. First, the evidence clearly shows the continued importance of the Rhine as a zone and conduit of economic activity, as it had been in Roman times; in fact, arguably, it was more central to the Merovingian state than it had been to the Romans.¹⁵⁶ Further, in addition to the glass, ceramics, quernstones, and wine that were carried along the river intra-regionally, it would be extraordinary if the only extra-regional trade item on the Rhine in the seventh century were the “Coptic” bronze pots. There must have been other items imported, which fail to show up in the record, not to mention that something had to be sent southwards in return. And, since the “Coptic” wares show up already ca. 600, whatever disruption to trans-Alpine commerce the Gothic and Lombard wars may have wrought in the sixth century is not hampering transport in this sector in the early seventh century.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, it would seem that already

¹⁵⁴ Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft,” 578, 581 – 5, maps Abb. 10 and Abb. 11 (pp. 582, 583). Werner’s reluctance to interpret any material distribution as evidence of commerce is in line with the prevailing minimalist climate of the day, exemplified best by Philip Grierson, “Commerce in the Dark Ages: A Critique of the Evidence,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (5th Series)* 9 (1959): 123 – 40. For discussion, see section 5.4 below.

¹⁵⁵ Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft,” 586 – 93, map of mints and scales-finds Abb. 15 (p. 591). Cf. Böhme, “Germanen im Römischen Reich,” 296, who regards Alamannia, Franconia, and Westphalia in the fourth century as a lively trade zone between Romans and Germans, but with copper currency disappearing after 355.

¹⁵⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 78, remarks: “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.”

¹⁵⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 78 – 9, is concerned with conditions at the southern end of the Alpine passes.

in the seventh century, the Rhine is becoming a major axis of exchange between northwestern Europe and the Mediterranean—a role it certainly played in the Carolingian period of the eighth and ninth centuries.¹⁵⁸ It is not necessary to think that the Rhine route and the Rhône route must somehow exclude each other. In the Merovingian kingdoms of the sixth and seventh centuries, both were in operation.

Of equal significance is Werner's identification of a "Feinwaagenlandschaft," or a region covering a broad swathe of Temperate Europe in which the dominant medium of exchange would appear to have been weighed bullion (including coins) rather than specie. The crucial point to make here is that an exchange system so based need not be considered economically inert and non-commercial; indeed, as will be seen in Sections 7.2 and 7.3, in the eighth and ninth centuries this very same medium sustained a huge volume of trade across multiple regions of western Eurasia from the North Sea to the Caliphate. In the sixth-century Rhineland, where coins of disparate issue and value might be found (as evidenced by the grave deposits), a weight-based system of valuation in which coins could readily combine with other forms of precious metal would have been eminently practical. In essence, such a system is not very different from that which Randsborg describes: in late Rome and adjacent parts of Temperate Europe in the third to sixth centuries, hoarded metal functioned as a means of exchange and as a means for social mobilization.¹⁵⁹ Randsborg also points out that this wealth did not reside exclusively at large central places but could be found also at the "parish level"—as grave goods, for example.¹⁶⁰ In other words, even "peasants" in early medieval Europe often possessed expendable resources—accumulated surplus—which might be used in various ways. When such surplus is translated into precious metal objects and placed in a grave

¹⁵⁸ The discussion of this major axis of communications and exchange is an important component of McCormick's argument in *Origins*; see especially pp. 670 – 87. The northwest to southeast axis of transcontinental communications will be discussed more fully in Section 6.3 below.

¹⁵⁹ Klavs Randsborg, "The Migration Period: Model History and Treasure," in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 62 – 4.

¹⁶⁰ Randsborg, "Model History and Treasure," 63. The site of Lauchheim, with its gold foil crosses in graves, comes to mind. The presence of expendable resources or accumulated surplus wealth throughout early medieval societies at both elite and non-elite levels is a phenomenon that recurs in many areas of early medieval Europe.

it becomes archaeologically visible; but one should not believe that this was ever the sole use to which surplus in these societies could be put.

That the “Feinwaagenlandschaft” of northern Gaul and Germany represents a broadly articulated economic exchange zone is supported by other artifact distributions. These include a class of sheet bronze basins with decorated rims (Perlandbecken) that were manufactured locally and occur from the Seine to the Elbe.¹⁶¹ A type of Frankish fibula, the Hahnheim Bügelfibel, also is found throughout this same area.¹⁶² If such objects were, as Werner asserts, made by itinerant craftsmen, then this suggests a parallel with the late Bronze Age in central Europe, where entrepreneurial individuals spread metalwork techniques and styles and reshaped scrap metal into new objects over large territories.¹⁶³

The existence of a cultural-economic zone encompassing northern Gaul and the lands along the Rhine and contrasting with a different zone comprising western and southern Gaul dovetails with the overarching political construction of the Merovingian kingdoms.¹⁶⁴ The centers of political and military power in northern Gaul were in the area of overlap between the monetized south and the weight-scale east.¹⁶⁵ They drew on the resources of both regions, furthermore accessing Mediterranean goods via Marseille and the Rhône while also controlling an Alpine-Rhenish route for long-distance exchanges. In terms of socio-cultural development also, northern Gaul would have resembled the Rhenish east much more than southern Gaul, but this, as I have argued, was not necessarily a detriment but the wave of the future.

And the east was not living in primitive squalor. According to Arrhenius, in the sixth century, Trier was the site of an exclusive “central workshop” where a cadre of skilled workers continued late Roman industrial traditions of cutting marble and other

¹⁶¹ Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft,” 565, 568, type illustration Abb. 4 and map Abb. 5 (p. 569).

¹⁶² Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft,” Abb. 6 (p. 573).

¹⁶³ See discussion in Section 3.3, subsection *Elite mobilization vs. entrepreneurship* above.

¹⁶⁴ See discussion in Section 5.1, subsection *The Structure of the state* above.

¹⁶⁵ This is not to assert that specie could never be employed in the areas northeast of the Seine. See Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 39, for a brief summary of the activities of the Missionary St. Amand in the area around Ghent in the 630s and '40s. St. Amand used sums of *money*—4,000 tremisses in one instance—to purchase property for his ecclesiastical establishment. The point is, however, that this was a region in which economic transactions could be and were completed on the basis of weighed precious metal.

fine stone with water-powered saws. Trier was the likeliest site where garnet stones (of Type 1, imported from Bohemia) were cut to the shapes used in the phase of garnet cloisonné jewelry work that was centered upon the Frankish lands in the 520 – 580 period. It is characterized by the stones distributed from the central workshop in Trier and by what Arrhenius calls the “sand putty” technique of assembly. The industry flourished not only in Trier but in “satellite workshops” in Köln, Mainz (two there?), and two more in undetermined places in southern Germany, which together produced many tens of thousands of brooches and decorations for many other kinds of objects such as sword pommels and scabbards.¹⁶⁶

Although garnet decoration-making may be considered to be a luxury industry, aimed at the top 8 – 9 percent of the population,¹⁶⁷ its existence in the Rhineland confirms the impression of continued wealth, technical ability, and functioning distribution networks. Of the Roman cities on the Rhine, Köln at least continued to function under the Franks without serious interruption, maintaining Roman buildings, markets, industries, and port facilities.¹⁶⁸ That the network of riverborne trade was expanding into the eastern peripheral areas can be demonstrated by sites such as Karlburg, where a proto-town of the early seventh century has been excavated. Situated at a ford over the Main about twenty-five kilometers northwest of Würzburg, the early layers of the site include a ships landing, post-built houses, workshops, and objects testifying to contacts with the Rhineland and with Fulda.¹⁶⁹

Perhaps most telling of all is the archaeological evidence gathered in the Büraburg – Fritzlar area (northern Hesse), which shows a stable peasant society with productive mixed farming and local industries in the early medieval period.¹⁷⁰ Of the settlement

¹⁶⁶ Arrhenius, *Merovingian Garnet Jewellery*, 127 – 61, and Distribution map II on p. 159. Arrhenius also estimates the amount of labor needed to shape the garnets (1.0 – 1.5 man-days per stone), and the total volume of sixth-century production based on her (very low: 530,000) estimate of the population of Germany in the sixth century (p. 195).

¹⁶⁷ Arrhenius, *Merovingian Garnet Jewellery*, 195, arrives at these percentages based on the number of graves containing garnet jewelry in southern German cemeteries.

¹⁶⁸ Schütte, “Continuity Problems and Authority Structures in Cologne,” 163 – 75.

¹⁶⁹ Peter Ettel, “Zwischen König und Bischof: Der Siedlungskomplex von Karlburg,” in *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002), 339 – 42.

¹⁷⁰ Henning, “Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe,” 43 – 6.

sites that have been excavated thus far, at least one (Geismar-Fritzlar) had evidence of bronze and iron production/working, glass working, and bone and antler artifacts in various layers dating from Roman times to the eighth century—in other words, industrial productivity over many centuries; other sites had one or more of these activities at different times.¹⁷¹ The productive sites are *not* located in the forts that begin to appear in the area in the eighth century, and they long pre-date the development of the accompanying manorial system.¹⁷² Henning asserts that the manorial system, when it was introduced here, did not engender new economic development so much as it merely situated itself over the pre-existing pattern of rural settlement and production.¹⁷³

The key element in the new socio-economic system, according to Henning, was the peasant hamlets and villages.¹⁷⁴ These evolved first in the trans-*limes* areas and spread onto erstwhile Roman territory, according to Henning, only as the Roman socio-economic system, which depended on coerced agricultural labor on elite-controlled estates, was withdrawn from any given area.¹⁷⁵ The villages consisted of farmsteads with multiple buildings, which included stalling for cattle, and long-handled scythes and three pronged iron pitchforks that were employed in the production and storage of fodder for the animals, all supporting an advanced animal husbandry along with grain farming on a three-field system.¹⁷⁶ It is this socio-economic complex, says Henning, that served as the foundation for the subsequent economic and political development of northwestern Temperate Europe.¹⁷⁷ Strikingly, neither the special implements nor the building types

¹⁷¹ Henning, “Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe,” 44 and n. 26.

¹⁷² Henning, “Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe,” 42.

¹⁷³ Henning, “Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe,” 47 – 8.

¹⁷⁴ Henning, “Strong Rulers—Weak Economy?”

¹⁷⁵ Early examples of such spread were in the *Agri Decumates* and Toxandria: “The archaeological evidence thus suggests that the new logic of family- and farmstead-based farming could not be fully realized within late antiquity’s social, fiscal and legal structures. It needed lands where the Roman writ no longer ran.” Henning, “Strong Rulers—Weak Economy?” 40 – 1. The presence of such villages becomes, in effect, a kind of litmus test for a completed transition from the Roman to the post-Roman in Temperate European provinces. According to Henning, they dominated the landscape in Merovingian Francia and Germany.

¹⁷⁶ Henning, “Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe,” 45 – 8; Henning, “Strong Rulers—Weak Economy?” 42 – 5.

¹⁷⁷ In its emphasis on the productivity of autonomous agrarian communities, Henning’s theory of socio-economic development in early medieval Temperate Europe intersects with Wickham’s idea that the “peasants” in the early post-Roman centuries were, for a time, less subjected to the demands of the elite and were, therefore, more prosperous than they had been under the Romans or would be under the Carolingians.

and settlement layouts occur in the eastern European lands, and the socio-economic and political structures were, accordingly, very different there.¹⁷⁸ Settlements of the type found around Büraburg – Fritzlar do occur, however, to the north—in Denmark and other parts of southern Scandinavia. In fact, northern Germany and southern Scandinavia both evolved, during the Roman Iron Age (AD 1 – 400), in reaction to the Roman presence along the Rhine – Danube. In the sixth and seventh centuries, the more southern areas such as Hesse became incorporated into the Frankish kingdoms. Denmark, however, continued on a more autonomous trajectory.¹⁷⁹

New spheres of influence: Franks and Avars

Frankish military and diplomatic success in the early sixth century ensured control of the Rhine, Hesse, Thuringia, and Saxony, and Merovingian influence spread rapidly eastwards along the Alps and down the Danube as well. Ian Wood has outlined the matters involved with this influence.¹⁸⁰ While military action played a part in the subjugation of Thuringia (531),¹⁸¹ Saxony (556), Alamannia,¹⁸² and intervention in Italy (535 – 75),¹⁸³ the primary issue otherwise was one of elite marriage exchanges. In general, in the early to mid-sixth century, the rulers of the Franks, Thuringians, Lombards, and Gepids were entwined in a tangle of serial marriages, of which numerous episodes might be recounted. A strong Frankish – Lombard connection appears to have been initiated by the Austrasian branch of Clovis' successors, as first Theudebert I (r. 534 – 547/8) and then his son Theudebald (r. 548 – 555) were married to the Lombard sisters, Wisegard and Walderada, respectively, daughters of the Lombard king Wacho and Austrigusa, Wacho's Gepid second wife. When Theodebald died in 555, his great-uncle

¹⁷⁸ Henning, "Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe," 45 – 8.

¹⁷⁹ The Scandinavian development will be discussed in section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* below.

¹⁸⁰ Wood, "Frontiers of Western Europe," passim.

¹⁸¹ Uta von Freeden, "Früher Adel: Luxus und elitäre Abgrenzung," in *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002), 334 – 5, points to the multi-storey female rich grave at Zeuzleben in Thuringia dated to 525 – 50, which contained Thuringian and Frankish objects. It suggests a Thuringian elite family working for the Merovingians, becoming Frankicized.

¹⁸² Wood, "Frontiers of Western Europe," 236 – 8.

¹⁸³ Wood, "Frontiers of Western Europe," 239 – 42.

Chlothar I took over both the kingdom and the widowed Walderada—until the Frankish bishops made him give her up. Meanwhile, a daughter of Chlothar I by his third wife Indegund, Chlothsinda, was sent east in 555 to marry Alboin, the son of the presently reigning Lombard king Audoin.¹⁸⁴ Walderada was sent down to Bavaria in 556 to marry Garibald I, the young duke recently installed there. Their daughter Theodelinda in 589 married the then Lombard king Authari (in Italy) and subsequently also the next king, Agilulf, in 590.¹⁸⁵

The diplomacy and the exchanges of women in the sixth century were accompanied, no doubt, by the delivery of gifts and other kinds of material exchanges. Few details are known, though in general one can observe that any material objects that were transferred as gifts first had to be acquired in some way—ultimately, had to be produced by someone. Wood says that Theoderic the Ostrogoth had gotten “furs, blond-haired boys and damascened swords from the Warni” of northern Germany.¹⁸⁶ In 556, the Saxons were forced to agree to an annual tribute of 500 cows, which, as Wood points out, was a “significant exercise in distribution” of resources.¹⁸⁷ For the most part, the lively dynastic diplomacy of the sixth century illuminates little about the underlying economic details. It does show, however, that the “Scythianized” former Roman frontier zone of the fifth century was still active as a zone of east – west communications and cultural exchange in the sixth century, at least from northern Gaul to the Carpathian basin. Communications were significantly curtailed by the advent of the Avars.¹⁸⁸

Like the Huns a century and a half earlier, the Avars were a Turkic nomad horde and established themselves as a hegemonic force in the Carpathian basin in the late

¹⁸⁴ These royal shenanigans were grist for the salacious moralizing of contemporary writers such as Gregory of Tours. For summaries of these relationships, see Wood, “Frontiers of Western Europe,” 232, 235 –6, 238 –9. Notably, all of this took place while the Lombards were still resident in the Carpathian basin.

¹⁸⁵ See Pohl, “Perceptions of Lombard Italy,” 133 – 5, for more detail on the Franco-Lombard-Bavarian affair involving Walderada.

¹⁸⁶ Wood, “Frontiers of Western Europe,” 250. Wood places this in the context of Ostrogothic – Thuringian gift-exchange, including heavy Ostrogothic influence on Thuringian metalwork.

¹⁸⁷ Wood, “Frontiers of Western Europe,” 251.

¹⁸⁸ Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 370 – 9, specifically accuses the Avars of having interrupted the age-old Amber Trail that had run through central Europe from the Bronze Age. In his view, commerce revived on segments of this route after Charlemagne had destroyed the Avar state in the 790s.

560s.¹⁸⁹ Their passage into southeastern Europe was hastened to the extent that Constantinople was still trying to eliminate barbarian powers in the frontier zone by serially pitting group against group.¹⁹⁰ In this (as it turned out) final gambit, a potentially stable and at least semi-Romanized Gepid kingdom in the Carpathian basin was traded in for a much more alien and intractable force. By 581, the Byzantines had to surrender Sirmium to the Avars and evacuate the population; in 582, whatever was left of the city burned to the ground and was not renewed. This, then, marks the end of any record of urban continuity in the Carpathian basin.¹⁹¹

In his analysis of the Avar state, Walter Pohl identifies three main elements.¹⁹² First, the Avars remained dedicated to pastoralism, which maintained the horses necessary to a nomad-style cavalry, and they preserved the cultural ethos and political claims of steppe hegemony. Second, they successfully translated their military dominance into a command over the surplus agricultural and crafts production of the indigenous peoples living in the core area of their state. Third, they were able to conserve and manipulate a huge hoard of precious metal, which circulated to elite retainers and subordinates, thus helping to maintain the central position of the Khagan. The treasure derived overwhelmingly from the approximately six million *solidi* that Constantinople paid out to the khagans from 573 to 626.¹⁹³ Pohl stresses that the source of this third pillar of Avar power was, in effect, the product of the Roman state's ability to tax—and of the Avars' success in winning for themselves temporarily (for less than a century) the status of well-paid federates. The Avars, by themselves, never succeeded in operating an *urban*-based economic and tax system; after Sirmium, they made no further

¹⁸⁹ That the Huns were culturally of Altaic origin is left in no doubt by the detailed reports we have from Priscus, who accompanied the East Roman diplomatic mission to Attila in 449; Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 313 – 24, referring to Priscus fr. 11.1 – 15.2. See also Maenchen-Helfen, *World of the Huns*. For the Avars, the major work is Pohl, *Die Awaren*.

¹⁹⁰ See again Schutz, *Germanic Realms*, 345 – 351. According to Schutz, the Gepids were allies of the Franks, while Justinian was using the Lombards and Avars to destroy the Gepids. For an evaluation of Roman policies in this area, see section 4.3, subsection *Contradictions in Roman policy* above.

¹⁹¹ As Pohl remarks, it is not recorded that the Avars ever attempted to live in any city, except in Sirmium in the months between the city's fall and its destruction by fire. Pohl, *Awaren*, 70 – 6, on the campaign to win the city and the aftermath.

¹⁹² The following analysis is from Walter Pohl, "Zur Dynamik barbarischer Gesellschaften: Das Beispiel der Awaren," *Klio* 73 (1991): 595 – 600.

¹⁹³ Pohl, "Dynamik barbarischer Gesellschaften," 598. See also Kiss, "Guldfunde des Karpatenbeckens," 109. Six million *solidi* approximate 20,000 kg of metal.

attempts.¹⁹⁴ Though the Avar lands continued to be economically productive, their organization devolved to a pre-urban level.¹⁹⁵

The consolidation of Avar hegemony marks the end of any mention of politically organized Germanic groups in the Carpathian basin or eastwards.¹⁹⁶ Where the Huns had worked primarily with subordinated Germanic groups and, apparently, used Gothic as a *lingua franca*, the analogous function for the Avars was fulfilled by Slavs (*Sclavenes* in the sources¹⁹⁷) and Slavic.¹⁹⁸ Pohl expressly treated the association as a symbiosis in which Avar power provided military and diplomatic cover that enabled Slavic settlement to reach its historic westward limits in Slovenia, the eastern Alps, Bohemia, and the East-Elbian region. Avar aims were to exercise a monopoly in protection over their Slavic clients, but also to stabilize the limits of this sphere of influence vis-à-vis the western powers, Franks and Lombards. Peace in the west left the khagans free to concentrate on the Balkans and Constantinople.¹⁹⁹ Episodes such as the Avar – Frank encounters in central Europe in the 560s and 590s, the devastation of Istria, the success of Queen Brunichildis in negotiating a cessation of hostilities²⁰⁰—all of these events fit Pohl’s proposed pattern.

¹⁹⁴ Pohl, “Dynamik barbarischer Gesellschaften,” 596, 598, 599.

¹⁹⁵ Pohl, “Dynamik barbarischer Gesellschaften,” 599, describes productive settlements of craftsmen working at a provincial Roman level of proficiency, and the evident ability of the khagans to dispose of food supplies.

¹⁹⁶ Though not, of course, the end of all Germanic-speaking individuals. Florin Curta, “The Slavic *lingua franca* (Linguistic Notes of an Archaeologist Turned Historian),” *East Central Europe* 31 (2004): 139 – 40, recounts evidence for Slav contact with Germanic speakers in the region from the mid-sixth to the early seventh century.

¹⁹⁷ Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500 – 700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 36 – 119, discusses the sixth- and seventh-century sources and their use of the term.

¹⁹⁸ The hypothesis, that the startlingly wide spread of Common Slavic throughout eastern Europe (before the formation of local Slavic dialects/languages) could be explained through linkages with the Avar sphere of political influence, was advanced both by Omeljan Pritsak, “The Slavs and the Avars,” in *Gli Slavi Occidentali e Meridionali nell’ Alto Medioevo* (Settimane 30, 1983), 353 – 432; and Horace G. Lunt, “Common Slavic, Proto-Slavic, Pan-Slavic: What Are We Talking About?” *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics* 41 (1997): 7 - 67. It is now accepted, with refinements, also by Curta, “The Slavic *lingua franca*,” 132 – 48.

¹⁹⁹ Pohl, *Awaren*, 117 – 21. See also Innes, *Early Medieval Western Europe*, 198: “Avar domination of central Europe provided an umbrella under which ‘Slavicisation’ could proceed apace.”

²⁰⁰ Schutz, *Germanic Realms*, 296 – 7. Regarding Brunichildis’ efforts: “The negotiations brought about a century of peace and the free flow of precious objects and stylistic influences between the Franks and the Avars” (p. 297). He appears oblivious, however, to the Avar – Slav symbiosis theory.

However stable, the new configuration seems to have altered the patterns of exchange along the former Danubian frontier zone. Conspicuously, royal women from the west no longer circulated as far east as the Carpathian basin. By 610, nothing more is heard of attempts at cooperation between the Lombards and Avars-Slavs. In the seventh century, the Danube is no longer a frontier. Instead, the upper course of the river lies in a Frank-dominated sphere, while the middle Danube, as Wood says, is now “a waterway running through the heart of the Avar world.”²⁰¹ There is very little evidence for traffic along the river between these two spheres. Practically, the only source is Fredegar Book IV, with its laconic references to the Frank Samo who, with partners, went east to trade with the Slavs and founded an enigmatic Slav “*Reich*” somewhere in the Franco-Avar borderlands in the 630s – ’50s; at one point Samo’s Slavs killed the members of another gang of Frankish *neguciantes*.²⁰² Parties of Frankish merchants, therefore, went east at times; what, exactly, their business was, we do not know.

Ian Wood considers that Frankish influence, which dominated central Europe in the sixth century, lost its leading role to the Avar-Slav complex in the seventh.²⁰³ More accurately, it should be said that the Avars established in the Carpathian basin a stable state-level counterbalance to Frankish influence, which resulted in the long-term division of Europe into two contrasting socio-cultural spheres, separated along a north – south axis running roughly from Holstein to Slovenia. Merovingian hegemony continued over Alamannia, Bavaria, Hesse, and Thuringia, and even to an extent over Frisia and Saxony. This hegemony was based on a fully realized post-Roman socio-economic and political order. As Schutz says, regarding the Frankish sphere:

[T]he Frankish sources reflect the degree to which Roman legal traditions, methods, terminology, interpretations and definitions contributed subtleties to Frankish usage until the Frankish organization of its subject peoples had nearly

²⁰¹ Wood, “Frontiers of Western Europe,” 232, 244.

²⁰² Pohl, *Awaren*, 256 – 61, with extensive references. Claude, “Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merovingerreich,” 74 – 5, points out that Samo himself is never named explicitly as a slaver, though many modern commentators have assumed that he was one.

²⁰³ Wood, “Frontiers of Western Europe,” 245, 253.

reached the same degree of institutionalization as had the Roman *foedus* system.²⁰⁴

By contrast, the Avars were, as Innes calls them, “a consciously non-Roman Empire.”²⁰⁵ The Avars’ nomad-style tribute taking political organization meshed well with the emergent, equally non-Romanized Slavic socio-cultural trajectory. Whereas “Germanic” societies had evolved in the context of intensive interchange with the Romans along the erstwhile frontier zone and could merge successfully with transforming Roman provincial societies, Slavic lifestyle and culture could be described as a positive response to an *absence* of the Romanizing effect—societies at home in an even more radically “simplified” environment than that of northern Gaul.²⁰⁶ Researchers have long been aware of the extremely modest material level of archaeological cultures identified as early Slavic.²⁰⁷ It used also to be imagined that the spread of this and other Slav-associated archaeological cultures was achieved by means of clearly discernible migratory tracks from east to west.²⁰⁸ More recently, Sebastian Brather has demonstrated that the current state of archaeological research will not support any analysis of the process of Slav settlement in terms of direction, nor speed of movement, nor of the size of the groups involved; nor is it possible to identify territorially distinct sub-cultures

²⁰⁴ Schutz, *Germanic Realms*, 314. Schutz concentrates particularly on the Franks’ manipulation of the concept of *amicitia*, insisting on the subordination of their “friends” but at the same time leaving them as autonomous peoples (pp. 314 – 15).

²⁰⁵ Innes, *Early Medieval Western Europe*, 198.

²⁰⁶ “Where former Roman provinces were ‘Slavicised’, in the Balkans, the structures of provincial society had collapsed in the fifth and sixth centuries, in a countryside detached from the apparatus of taxation, trade and town life.” Innes, *Early Medieval Western Europe*, 197. Overall, Innes (pp. 194 – 99) offers an excellent summary of the Avar-Slav phenomenon. It agrees closely with my own thinking on this issue. See Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 120 – 189, for a nuanced, archaeologically-based view of Slavic settlement in the Balkans.

²⁰⁷ These are variants of the Prague-Korchak complex, featuring very simple hand-made pottery, urn cremation burials, and small, sunken, log houses (*Grubenhäuser*) with clay ovens. Sebastian Brather, *Archäologie der westlichen Slawen: Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Ostmitteleuropa* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 55 – 6.

²⁰⁸ East-bloc archaeologists appeared to be able to trace the expansion of this culture by routes both north and south of the Carpathians from the region of its formation (in western Ukraine, by many accounts) ultimately as far as the territory of the erstwhile DDR. Zdenek Vana, *The World of the Ancient Slavs* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), 32 – 5. Joachim Herrmann, “Wanderungen und Landnahme im westslawischen Gebiet,” in *Gli Slavi Occidentali e Meridionali nell’ Alto Medioevo* (Settimane 30, 1983), 75 – 101, referred to a migration stream down the Elbe from Bohemia and also identified other movements across Poland, both contributing to the Slavicization of the territory up to the Elbe-Saale line in eastern Germany.

within the generalized gamut of Prague-Korchak finds.²⁰⁹ In other words, a migration-based model will not work, and the picture is, rather, of an uneven but generalized outgrowth in eastern Europe of a new lifestyle based around small, egalitarian communities with minimal hierarchical political development.²¹⁰ Walter Pohl has characterized it as a rhizome-like process: “Es setzte sich durch, Slawe zu sein.”²¹¹ But this process benefited from the organizational and military strength of the Avars.

With the exception of Samo’s ephemeral Slav “*Reich*” and the Avar khaganate itself, there is no evidence for state formation or even large settlements from the Danube northwards to the Baltic Sea coast earlier than the eighth century.²¹² In many areas, it is even impossible to date occupation securely in the sixth and seventh centuries. In the country between the Elbe and the Oder, the earliest dendrodates so far obtained for Slav settlements, derived from the remains of wood-lined wells and timber-and-earth ramparts, go back no further than ca. 700.²¹³ Economic and political development in northeastern Germany and northwestern Poland seems to coincide with the appearance of *emporia* on the Baltic shore in the first half of the eighth century, and to accelerate ca. 800 with the arrival of the Carolingian state at the Elbe.

5.3 Northern Connections East and West

The sequences of events that transformed the former Roman – barbarian interface zone in the vicinity of the Rhine and Danube also rearranged the exchange relationships that had emerged with northern Europe during the Roman Iron Age (AD 1 – 400). In at least one

²⁰⁹ Brather, *Archäologie der westlichen Slawen*, 58 – 9, 61.

²¹⁰ “The breadth and speed of ‘Slavicisation’ is best understood in terms of the appeal of a culture of independent and self-sufficient agrarian settlement for [areas] adjusting to a retracting Mediterranean economy and the Roman state, and cut off from mechanisms for the acquisition of surplus wealth and social status.” Innes, *Early Medieval Western Europe*, 197.

²¹¹ Pohl, *Awaren*, 95.

²¹² An exception might be Walachia and Moldavia, where by the late sixth century Slav settlements (*khōrion*) consisted of 250 – 300 men of military age plus women, children, and elderly; in addition to the formation of chiefdoms. Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 323 – 34. The total population of such settlements would be 1,000 – 1,200.

²¹³ Sebastian Brather, “The Beginnings of Slavic Settlement East of the River Elbe,” *Antiquity* 78 (2004): 314 – 29. See also Paul M. Barford, “Silent Centuries: The Society and Economy of the Northwest Slavs,” in *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 62, who points out that Slav settlement could be earlier but archaeologically invisible or undatable.

area, via the North Sea coast from the Rhine to Denmark, direct contacts from the Roman world to the North appear to have existed.²¹⁴ Distribution maps of Roman artifacts show many types occurring as far north as coastal Norway and southern Sweden.²¹⁵ More generally, it can be asserted that southern Scandinavia no less than other trans-*limes* areas of Temperate Europe was affected by the Roman presence along the Rhine and Danube, though they often felt that influence more indirectly than did the peoples in the immediate vicinity of the frontier. Most importantly, in the area of Denmark (and, perhaps, also in Middle Sweden), a trajectory of development not unlike that undergone by more southerly peoples such as the Marcomanni and Quadi, the Alamanni, and the Franks brought significant socio-economic advances and the beginnings of political consolidation in the AD 200 – 700 period.

As late as the fifth and early sixth centuries, Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea region enjoyed active lines of communication to the southeast as far as the North Pontic region, to the south into central Europe as far as the Danube, and with the Rhine area to the southwest. By the late sixth century, the southeastern connection had disappeared, and the southwestern one, linking, particularly, Denmark with the Merovingian kingdoms, had greatly increased in importance. This shift in the orientation of avenues of exchange coincides with the re-orientation of political and socio-economic spheres of influence discussed in the previous subsection. A key aspect of the increased communications with the West was the North Sea trading system, which emerges definitely during the seventh century and continues, then, into the eighth and ninth centuries.

Post-Roman eastern Europe

In the third and fourth centuries, and possibly as late as ca. 450, the western Ukraine and Moldavia witnessed a flourishing material complex known to archaeologists as the Cherniakhov culture. The complex featured advanced agriculture with iron-tipped

²¹⁴ See section 3.4, subsection *Roman influence North* above.

²¹⁵ The pioneering survey for the overall distribution of Roman artifacts to Temperate Europe is Hans Jürgen Eggers, *Der römische Import im freien Germanien* (Hamburg: Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte, 1951). See also Ulla Lund Hansen, *Römischer Import im Norden* (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige nordiske Oldskriftselskab, 1987).

ploughs, fine wheel-made pottery, and evidence of emergent state-level social structures—at least six large, fortified centers, such as Alexandrovka, in contrast with numerous smaller, but still substantial, undefended villages.²¹⁶ Iron and ceramics production appears to have been spread ubiquitously among the various settlements. Antler comb-making, however, seems to have been a commercial enterprise centered upon one particular settlement, from which the products had wide distribution.²¹⁷ From the fourth century onwards, glassware also was produced within the Cherniakhov region; remarkably, these objects are found across a broad territory stretching to the northwest, across present-day Poland and eastern Germany, but clustering most thickly around modern Denmark.²¹⁸

Although the exact mechanism of transfer is not immediately evident, the distribution pattern clearly indicates that overland routes of communication connected the northwestern Black Sea region with the southern Baltic and southern Scandinavia.²¹⁹ One of the richest graves in Denmark from this period, that of an elite woman at Årslev on the island of Fyn, contained an array of prestige goods of types rare or unique in Scandinavia but typically found around the lower Danube and in the north Pontic area in the fourth century. Interestingly, Birger Storgaard has postulated that this is the grave of a woman who came to Denmark as an exogamous bride, bringing along unprecedented objects and introducing exotic tastes and techniques into local craft production.²²⁰ Going in the other direction, and also on the basis of long-distance exogamy, were Scandinavian

²¹⁶ Peter Heather, *The Goths* (London: Blackwell, 1996), 55, 70 – 2, 75 – 84. At Alexandrovka, huge amounts of amphorae sherds indicate the consumption of imported wine. This culture evidently has some connection with the Goths, who were settled in the region from the third century to the late fourth or mid-fifth (pp. 11 – 50, 117 – 20).

²¹⁷ Heather, *Goths*, 80 – 3.

²¹⁸ Heather, *Goths*, 78 and fig. 3.6.

²¹⁹ Ulf Näsman, “The Justinianic Era of South Scandinavia: An Archaeological View,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 263 – 8. Näsman relates the Black Sea glass imports to a far-reaching complex of exchanges centered upon Denmark; see below.

²²⁰ Birger Storgaard, “The Årslev Grave and Connections between Funen and the Continent at the End of the Later Roman Iron Age,” in *Gudme and Lundeberg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 160 – 4. Cf. below Florin Curta’s analysis of prestige goods exchange in sixth- and seventh-century eastern Europe, also involving, in his view, long-distance exogamy.

iron combs, used in wool processing, that have been found in Moldavia and western Ukraine.²²¹

In the sixth and early seventh centuries, conditions in the northwest Pontic region were radically different. In a large portion of the area formerly occupied by the Cherniakhov culture, the open steppes from the shores of the Black Sea northwards up to 200 kilometers appear to be a “dead zone” devoid of settlement, both of agricultural villages and nomad camps. Settlements are found to the north, starting around the 200-meter elevation, typically in river valleys. On the steppe there are no finds from this period except for rich burials placed in much older, pre-existing mounds, which Florin Curta interprets as those of prestigious individual men from the settlements up north. The culture in the settlements is that of a simple agricultural society, and probably identifiable with the emergent Slavic ethnicity. Curta attributes the settlement pattern to (defensive) Byzantine aggression emanating from lines of fortification on the lower Danube and in Crimea.²²²

Where the Cherniakhov culture appeared to be rapidly approaching the level of Roman provincial material culture and was oriented to contacts to the south as well as to the northwest, it would seem that sixth-century societies in east central Europe between the Carpathians and the Dnieper were organized on a lower material and socio-political level than what had existed in the region in the fourth century. The record of Byzantine interactions with Slavic leaders in the sixth century as well as the archaeology of Slav settlements reveal, according to Curta, a society undergoing phases of “great man” and “big man” mobilization on the way to forming chiefdoms.²²³ One item in support of this theory of emergent sixth-century elite and leadership status among the people of this region is the distribution pattern of a class of fibulae, Slavic bow fibulae, first identified as a type by Joachim Werner.²²⁴ Remarkably, such fibulae, which seem to have been

²²¹ Storgaard, “Årslev Grave,” 164 – 5.

²²² Florin Curta, “The North-western Region of the Black Sea during the 6th and early 7th Century AD,” *Ancient East and West* 7 (2008): 149 – 85.

²²³ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 297 – 310, 319 – 34, along with a discussion of the anthropological theories upon which the interpretation is based. In the fourth century, the region already had incipient barbarian states, such as that of the Tervingian Goths; see section 4.3, subsection *Barbarian capabilities and their place in the late Roman system* above.

²²⁴ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 247 – 9, with a discussion of the archaeological methodology.

items of elite women's dress and are found on settlements in the territory of Romania, Moldova, and western Ukraine, have their closest matches in two restricted, non-adjacent areas: the Crimea and the former East Prussia.²²⁵ Curta insists that this represents a pattern of long-distance exogamous marriage exchanges among the elites in the three areas, rather than commerce or the activity of itinerant craftsmen.²²⁶

This argument is very similar to Curta's argument regarding sixth- and seventh-century amber distribution in east central Europe.²²⁷ While notable quantities of amber were buried in elite female graves in the Carpathian basin and in Crimea, i.e. at a distance of 750 – 1500 kilometers from its southeast Baltic source, there is little or no amber found in the intermediate distance. To Curta, this strongly suggests another complex of elite gift-exchange.²²⁸ The exchanges ceased, Curta says, when the Baltic elite partner disintegrated, part of a process of acute cultural change in the south-eastern Baltic in the seventh century:

In early medieval eastern Europe, amber helped define unique social hierarchies, and the breakdown of long-established exchange networks was the consequence, not the cause, of the demise of competitive elites that had been responsible for its widespread consumption in the sixth and seventh centuries.²²⁹

We have, thus, at least two ostensibly non-commercial "elite exchange" systems, one involving bow fibulae and the emerging Slavic societies east and south of the Carpathians, the other involving amber and elites in the Carpathian basin.²³⁰ Both

²²⁵ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 249 – 69, along with a discussion of the "nearest neighbor" method of analysis. Many "nearest neighbor" pairs of fibulae are those directly between Crimea and East Prussia.

²²⁶ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 269 – 74.

²²⁷ Florin Curta, "The Amber Trail in Early Medieval Eastern Europe," in *Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Felice Lifshitz and Celia Chazelle (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 61 – 79.

²²⁸ Curta, "Amber Trail," 64 and table 4.1, for the distribution; 67 – 71, for the argument of elite gift-exchange.

²²⁹ Curta, "Amber Trail," 71 – 2. The quote is on p. 72. See also Florin Curta, "East Central Europe," *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003): 283 – 91, where he argues against over-reliance on the commercial exchange models which have come recently to dominate interpretations of early medieval developments. Curta proposes that new, improved gift-exchange models are applicable especially in eastern European contexts.

²³⁰ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 195 – 6, makes it clear that large quantities of amber were available in "Gepidia" in the first half of the sixth century, while the Gepids still dominated the area. Certainly, the elite burials in the Carpathian basin in the "Early Avar" and "Middle Avar" archaeological periods (ca. 570 – 700) must refer primarily to Avar or Avar-connected elites. In "Amber Trail," Curta studiously avoids ethnic designations.

systems involved also relatively focused areas in the southeast corner of the Baltic and in Crimea. One argument in favor of the elite gift-exchange model in these cases is the absence of evidence for the paraphernalia of commerce, such as hack silver or portable scales, from the deposits in east central Europe during this period. Nevertheless, the model leaves many unanswered questions concerning the identity and nature of the Prussian and Crimean elites, the choices of partners made on all sides, the mechanisms through which the actual exchanges took place, the modes of transport and the routes taken, and the practicalities of the production of metal brooches and amber beads. Whatever the nature of the east central European systems in the sixth and seventh centuries may have been, however, their circulations stop at the southeastern shore of the Baltic Sea rather than continuing on to southern Scandinavia as they did in the Roman Iron Age. The impression is given of a large region in eastern Europe which has significantly reoriented itself.

Changes in the exchange patterns of central Europe in the sixth century conformed with the emerging west – east re-orientation discussed above.²³¹ Before the Avars, some populations in the Carpathian basin clearly had active connections both with Scandinavia and with Italy. The Gepid and Lombard areas in the first half of the sixth century correspond with a characteristic mix of artifact forms found in each one; i.e., while no single artifact belongs exclusively to one group or the other, many artifacts occur in both groups, and all are used also by third parties, the selection of items and styles in the case of each group is unique.²³² Shared items included types of Roman provincial stamped pottery and military gear; generally, women's jewelry and combs tended to show the most frequent divergences. Both groups used styles that were common further west. However, Lombard styles show more connections with Scandinavia and Italy, while Gepid selections included Prussian amber and Crimean brooches.²³³ The Lombard case recalls earlier south – north connections of the Ostrogoths, Thuringians, and Warni as well as the transalpine traffic that continued to

²³¹ Section 5.2, subsection *New spheres of influence: Franks and Avars*.

²³² Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 203, emphasizes that there is no artifact that is by itself diagnostic of either Gepid or Lombard identity, and that only the *combination* or selection of artifacts and styles reveals a contrast between the two cultural areas.

²³³ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 191 – 204, for a detailed discussion of the archaeology.

connect northern Italy with the Rhine region in the sixth and seventh centuries.²³⁴ The case of the Gepids, meanwhile, foreshadows the relationships that prevailed to the east under the Avars and Slavs.

The largest and, in some ways, most easily traceable distribution pattern in Temperate Europe in the fifth and sixth centuries is that of Roman and Byzantine gold. As was noted above, accumulated treasure could and did serve as a medium for the mobilization and transfer of the potential for various kinds of enterprises, from church building to war-making, and was used in this way both by the Romans and by the barbarians.²³⁵ Hoards, containing especially *solidi*, skyrocket in frequency in the late fourth century, peak AD 400 – 450, and plummet again after 450, with a strong correlation to imperial tribute payments.²³⁶ This general contour of the frequency and size of hoards found to the north of erstwhile imperial territory can be used as a baseline against which to discern regional developments. In the row-graves of the Rhineland, gold and silver peak ca. 520 – 560, and large amounts of gold occur still until ca. 600. Presumably, this phenomenon would correlate with the consolidation of the Merovingian kingdoms in the Rhineland and *Francia*. Interestingly, Frisia experiences a peak of hoarded gold—some fifty coins—in the 500 – 550 period. Scandinavian deposits, meanwhile, follow the same contour as the general distribution, though at a lower level in terms of quantity. The latter datum demonstrates the truth that Scandinavia was continuously, though somewhat indirectly, affected by the currents of historical development to the south.

Development in Denmark and Sweden

The key to development in northern Europe and its relations to events in the rest of Temperate Europe is the sequence in the area of Denmark. As Wells points out,²³⁷ after a

²³⁴ See discussion in Section 5.2, subsections *Alamannia and the Rhine* and *New spheres of influence: Franks and Avars* above.

²³⁵ Section 5.2, subsection *Alamannia and the Rhine*. See again the model presented in Randsborg, “Model History and Treasure,” 61 – 5.

²³⁶ Randsborg, “Model History and Treasure,” 66 – 73. See also Kiss, “Guldfunde des Karpatenbeckens.”

²³⁷ Peter S. Wells, “Interactions between Denmark and Central Europe in the Late Prehistoric Iron Age: The Prelude to Gudme and Lundeberg,” in *Gudme and Lundeberg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 151 – 9.

hiatus of several centuries, the Danish area was resuming close contacts with more southern areas already in the second and first centuries BC. The contact is attested by finds of objects imported from the *oppida*-zone and imitations of such objects produced by local craftsmen in Denmark. Especially prominent are items such as “ornate Celtic cauldrons,” made of bronze and even silver, and ceremonial wagons. They are found in rich burials and in votive bog-deposits, suggesting that the objects had “special social importance or . . . ritual significance” for the local society.²³⁸ Such artifacts represented a revival of status markers—cauldrons and wagons—that had been specially associated with ritual and status in the Bronze Age; further, they can be associated also with mythologies concerning inexhaustible pots of mead or food and vehicles to the afterworld.²³⁹

Wells explicitly draws attention to the fact that Denmark has no local sources of copper and tin.²⁴⁰ In other words, regardless of the uses to which bronze (and gold and silver) was put, for the Danes, obtaining the metal was a question of establishing some kind of exchange relationship with the outside world.²⁴¹ Wells suggests further that for the Celts from the *oppida* to the south exchanges with the Danes would have been of commercial significance: a way to obtain, in exchange for metal, the amber, furs, and slaves of the north.²⁴² When the Empire established itself on the Rhine and Danube around the turn of the common era, Roman metal, glass, and ceramics began to go north to Denmark. For the Danes, this represented only a change in southern partners, not an abrupt change in the character of their foreign relations; nor did it interrupt the trajectory of internal development. As Wells sums up:

evidence suggests a consistent pattern in the development of society from the late pre-Roman Iron Age to the later Roman Iron Age, with elite groups gaining in

²³⁸ Wells, “Interactions between Denmark and Central Europe,” 151 – 3.

²³⁹ Wells, “Interactions between Denmark and Central Europe,” 155 – 6.

²⁴⁰ Wells, “Interactions between Denmark and Central Europe,” 151.

²⁴¹ See my discussion in section 3.1, subsection *Geology and metals* above, regarding the absence of the so-called colored metals and precious metals from a huge area of Europe between the Baltic and the Urals. Denmark and adjacent portions of the North European Plain are the westernmost extensions of this metal-less region. The important exception is iron. High grade bog ore was available in the area of Denmark, for example in the interior of Skåne. On this last point, see Charlotte Fabech, “Reading Society from the Cultural Landscape: South Scandinavia between Sacral and Political Power,” in *Gudme and Lundeberg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 171.

²⁴² Wells, “Interactions between Denmark and Central Europe,” 157.

economic and political power, concentrating wealth and production, and continuing to acquire and to use foreign imports to express and to enhance their status.²⁴³

The further socio-political evolution of Denmark and *Germania libera* as a whole is taken up by Lotte Hedeager in her contribution to the *Centre and Periphery* volume.²⁴⁴ Like Wells, Hedeager stresses the mobilizing impact of imports from the south. Unlike the areas closer to the *limes*, where Roman goods were common everyday objects, not used in burials, and Roman political interference was strongly felt, the areas in a zone 400 – 600 kilometers beyond the frontier had much greater political and cultural independence but used Roman imports—bronze, silver, glass—as prestige goods, particularly in rich burials.²⁴⁵ Socio-political change was accelerated by the availability of and competition in the possession and display of such objects. No longer used primarily in the context of community sacrificial ritual (diminution and then end of bog deposits) and not yet used as all-purpose capital (no hoards), the rich burials of northern Germany and Denmark of the first and second centuries AD represent, in Hedeager's view, a secularization of precious objects—used now for purposes of private competition for status among emergent elite families. The objects were emblems of exalted individual contacts with the prestigious alien Empire to the south, and what counted was the sheer quantity of such objects of which one might dispose.²⁴⁶

An alternative argument is that of Charlotte Fabech, who focuses on the evolution of elite control over votive processes in Roman Iron Age Denmark. In her view, the elite were able, over time, to divert ritual deposits from bogs and other water-bodies, to which anyone in the community might have free access, to locations on land, which they were

²⁴³ Wells, "Interactions between Denmark and Central Europe," 157 – 8. It should be noted that the primary motives in maintaining exchanges of material objects may have been different for the Danes and the Celts. This did not hinder the exchanges, nor does it invalidate the possibility that they were motivated partly by profits.

²⁴⁴ Lotte Hedeager, "Empire, Frontier, and the Barbarian Hinterland: Rome and Northern Europe from AD 1 – 400," in *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen (New Directions in Archaeology) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 125 – 40.

²⁴⁵ Hedeager, "Empire, Frontier, and the Barbarian Hinterland," 126 – 7. Cf. the models used by Whittaker, Wells, and Cunliffe, discussed in section 3.4, subsection *Roman influence north* above.

²⁴⁶ Hedeager, "Empire, Frontier, and the Barbarian Hinterland," 129 – 30.

then able increasingly to control and to monopolize. Emergent “lords,” in Fabech’s view, had by AD 600 consolidated on their equally emergent estates the ritual functions of society, thus anticipating by several centuries the fulfillment of the process with the foundation of Christian churches in the same locations. As with Hedeager, Fabech stresses the key role of precious objects, and gold in particular, as a means of creating charisma and distinction for would-be leaders. Archaeologically, the key to the process is the appearance of gold sacrifices (burial of bracteates, for example) in the fifth century. Politically, according to Fabech, it must correspond to a transition in Denmark from chieftainships to petty kingships.²⁴⁷

In parallel with the consolidation of greater elite control and social differentiation came, in Hedeager’s words, “a profound change in the pattern of settlement and production throughout northern Europe.”²⁴⁸ The so-called Celtic field system of extensive long-fallow agriculture was abandoned everywhere in the first to second centuries AD. It was replaced by intensive agriculture, which featured stabling of animals, manuring of arable, production of fodder from meadows and its storage in barns, and a much more stable settlement structure than heretofore. Farmsteads were larger, more solidly built, with greater byre-capacity, and with granaries, smithies, new querns, and new crafts techniques evident. The farmsteads were enclosed, often arranged in regular rows.²⁴⁹ Socially, the larger farmsteads with much larger dwellings (longhouses) imply greater numbers of people living on each one, and probably the beginnings of social divisions within the farmstead—owners, and dependents. At the same time, the reorganization of the villages also may have been responding to demands from the emergent elite: the new farms were better able to produce surpluses and, perhaps, to deliver a part of them as tribute.

²⁴⁷ Fabech, “South Scandinavia between Sacral and Political Power,” 170 – 7.

²⁴⁸ Hedeager, “Empire, Frontier, and the Barbarian Hinterland,”

²⁴⁹ Hedeager, “Empire, Frontier, and the Barbarian Hinterland,” 133 – 4. This is the same kind of economy that Joachim Henning, “Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe,” identified in the Bùraburg – Fritzlar area of northern Hesse. In Denmark, an arch-typical village of this kind was Vorbasse, which has been fully excavated. The settlement persisted from the first century BC till about AD 1100. It saw expansion in the third century and climaxed in the fourth, with nineteen farms, but remained a substantial entity throughout the Viking Age. See the review in Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 76 – 8.

Possible demands for tribute are related to yet another aspect of the socio-political development in Denmark and Germany. The competition for status involved the militarization of the society, signified by the addition of weapons and spurs into elite graves. Scattered widely over the landscape, such graves suggest elite networks in the first and second centuries AD that increasingly were able to mobilize the population for warfare. Contact with the Romans meant not only access to exotic prestige goods to structure social competition, but also exposed the local societies to concepts such as hierarchical command structures, fighting for material reward, and tactical specialization. By AD 200, the rich graves tended to cluster in certain areas such as southeastern Fyn and southeastern Zealand, signifying an advance in the process of centralization. Mass weapons-deposits shed light on the evolution of fighting forces. The third-century deposit at Ejsbøl Mose in southern Jutland suggests a force that included some specialization and hierarchy: some two hundred men bearing shields and spears, with sixty also carrying swords, and nine as mounted leaders with spurs and gold-trimmed gear; 675 arrowheads suggest that there also were missile specialists in this force. Leaders who hoped to control such retinues (hirds) also had to find the means to maintain, reward, and entertain them. This could mean both increased war and robbery and increased efforts to control land and its agricultural production.²⁵⁰

The many strands of archaeological evidence for rapid socio-economic development in Denmark in the Roman Iron Age converge upon southeastern Fyn in the area of Gudme. The settlement itself appears as a major conglomeration of Vorbasse-type farmsteads, averaging 4,000 m² in extent, but including at least fifty within an area so far estimated to extend over forty to fifty hectares; at an estimated six to ten persons per farmstead, Gudme had a population of at least 300 – 500.²⁵¹ Jørgensen insists that no “princely seats” have been found among these “ordinary farms” despite that many of them show traces of specialized craft production such as gold smithing.²⁵² Others, however, have identified the conspicuously large longhouse (40 x 9 meters) at Gudme III

²⁵⁰ The preceding paragraph is a summary of the argument in Hedeager, “Empire, Frontier, and the Barbarian Hinterland,” 130 – 3.

²⁵¹ Lars Jørgensen, “The Find Material from the Settlement of Gudme II—Composition and Interpretation,” in *Gudme and Lundeberg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 60 – 1.

²⁵² Jørgensen, “Find Material from the Settlement of Gudme II,” 56.

as an elite residence.²⁵³ A similar pattern obtained, for example, at Lauchheim in Württemberg, where the seventh-century elite residence was similar in style of construction to the rest of the village, but the elite compound differed from the other farmsteads in the number, type, and size of the buildings it included.²⁵⁴

What specially distinguishes Gudme is not the splendor of its residences but the richness of its artifacts. The area shows many signs of extensive metalworking, such as crucibles and waste from goldsmithing, and there are many caches of precious metal. These include apparent scrap hoards (for reshaping into new objects), matched jewellery sets, and aristocratic gifts—rare and expensive objects for use only on special occasions. There is also at least one “treasure chest” or capital hoard—the most likely characterization, according to Vang Petersen, of the original 1833 Broholm hoard discovered in the area.²⁵⁵ In addition to the settlement areas, many precious objects have been found in cemeteries, especially the large and distinguished, aristocratic burial ground of Møllegårdsmarken (over 2000 graves excavated).²⁵⁶ The number of objects is greatest in the 325 – 550 period, overlapping the Roman Iron Age and the Migration Age (Germanic Iron Age, by Danish terminology), but peaks especially in 480 – 550.²⁵⁷ Striking is the large proportion of imports, from the Roman empire and other distant places.

Viewing the rich finds at Gudme, it seems that this place more than any other in contemporary Denmark or the North illustrates the above-mentioned theories of socio-political development. The key to it, as Hedeager says, is in the “social processes resulting from the conversion of prestige goods into political and economic power,” in turn leading to reorganization of production, to classes, landownership, and states.²⁵⁸

²⁵³ Palle Ø. Sørensen, “Gudmehallerne: Kongeligt byggeri fra jernalderen,” in *Nationalsmuseets Arbejdsmark* (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 1994), 25 – 39.

²⁵⁴ Stork, “Lauchheim in frühen Mittelalter.” 327 – 9.

²⁵⁵ Peter Vang Petersen, “Excavations at Sites of Treasure Trove Finds at Gudme,” in *Gudme and Lundeberg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 30 – 9. I have not been able to ascertain an aggregate estimate for the total amount of treasure unearthed in the Gudme area, nor on the island of Fyn, nor in Denmark as a whole for the Roman Iron Age and Migration Age periods.

²⁵⁶ Karsten Kjer Michaelsen, “Iron Age Cemeteries and Settlement Structure in the Gudme – Lundeberg Area,” in *Gudme and Lundeberg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 48 – 52.

²⁵⁷ Jørgensen, “Find Material from the Settlement of Gudme II,” 56.

²⁵⁸ Hedeager, “Empire, Frontier, and the Barbarian Hinterland,” 139.

At Gudme, the process involved several intertwining strands. Fabech speculates that Gudme, in addition to being a powerful cult center, may have served as a political balance-point for Fyn, or even the center of an incipient confederacy, but she argues that it did not exercise political hegemony so much as it spread an artistic and ideological influence over Fyn and other nearby areas.²⁵⁹ Gudme attracted the most attention and wielded the greatest charisma because of its superior foreign connections. Only here, Fabech points out, are found “pan-European symbols of power and status, i.e. scabbard mounts, sword-beads and ‘othrings’ from sword pommels.” Typically, these objects or decorations are done in gold. One garnet-inlaid back-plate of a gold buckle was similar to those in Childeric’s grave and the rich grave of Blucina in Moravia.²⁶⁰ Ambitious elite individuals would go adventuring to the south, to gain experience in the more militarized milieus of Huns, Ostrogoths, Gepids, to win gold and other prestigious objects, to acquire exotic brides, and to bring these back to Denmark.²⁶¹ In this way, such individuals and their families accrued charisma and status. And this rather than any crude attempt to force subservience on the local farmers underpinned the emergence of a Danish kingdom around AD 700.²⁶²

Ulf Näsman goes farther and postulates that a Danish kingdom existed already in the sixth century. The first mention of Danes in the Mediterranean-oriented early medieval literary sources is the sixth-century raid on the Rhine delta by one King

²⁵⁹ Fabech, “South Scandinavia between Sacral and Political Power,” 177 – 80. The limits of Gudme’s influence may be indicated by the fact that southeast European glass is distributed through Fyn to eastern Jutland, but is not found in western Jutland. Storgaard, “Årslev Grave,” 166. For the association of cultic power and the gold bracteates, their production, styles, and distribution, see Morten Axboe, “Gudme and the Gold Bracteates,” in *Gudme and Lundeberg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 68 – 77.

²⁶⁰ Fabech, “South Scandinavia between Sacral and Political Power,” 177 – 8. See the discussion of gold-garnet decoration as signifier of elite status and state-formation in section 5.2, subsection *Trade and instability* above. Fabech references Arrhenius, *Merovingian Garnet Jewellery*, for the identification of the buckle. It is of a type made with garnets shaped in a central workshop in Constantinople, examples of which are found especially in the Carpathian basin, Germany, and northern Gaul, but also in Ukraine, Russia, and Scandinavia.

²⁶¹ Näsman, “Justinianic Era of South Scandinavia,” 261 – 3, interprets Scandinavian artifacts in central and southeastern European contexts as evidence for such adventuring contacts. For foreign brides, see discussion in subsection *Post-Roman eastern and central Europe* above.

²⁶² Fabech, “South Scandinavia between Sacral and Political Power,” 178 – 80.

Hugelac (Chlochilaic) recorded by Gegory of Tours.²⁶³ Further, analysis of the archaeological record in Denmark suggests a significant degree of consolidation and stability by the sixth century. Hundreds of hillforts, ringforts, dykes, and fjord barrages are known in Scandinavia from the late Roman Iron Age and Migration periods. Evidence for warfare, however, which rises steadily from the second century and culminates in the fifth, dies down rapidly in the sixth century. Concurrently, a dearth of rich burials in Denmark in the sixth century could indicate that social rankings had (temporarily) stabilized, removing the need for competitive burial behavior. In addition, the archaeological record suggests territorial consolidation in Denmark, with some fifteen sub-regions in the early Roman Iron Age reduced to seven by ca. AD 400—comparable in size to early Anglo-Saxon polities—and only two or three left in the Merovingian era.²⁶⁴ Finally, although the area of Denmark was in frequent communication with the events unfolding to the south, it had not experienced any major invasion or migration event. Accordingly, it occupied, in Chris Wickham’s terms, “a relatively neutral peripheric area. . . less disturbed than almost anywhere in continental Europe.”²⁶⁵

The preceding paragraphs have focused on the prestige-goods exchange system that demonstrably tied Denmark to other parts of Europe. There are indications, in addition, that exchanges of a commercial nature might have been ongoing in parallel with the more visible movement of elite treasures and gifts. A fundamental economic fact in Denmark, conditioned by the geology, is that all metal other than iron must be imported. As the amount of metal circulating increases, the likelihood that all of it can be accounted for by processes of gift-exchange correspondingly decreases.²⁶⁶ If the metal trade to the

²⁶³ Näsman, “Justinianic Era of South Scandinavia,” 257 – 8, 271. There is some controversy over the identity of this figure, however, with some scholars identifying him as a ruler of western Sweden. Wilhelm Holmqvist, *Swedish Vikings on Helgö and Birka* (Stockholm: Studio Granath, 1979), 54.

²⁶⁴ Näsman, “Justinianic Era of South Scandinavia,” 260 – 1, 272 – 4.

²⁶⁵ Wickham, “Production, Distribution and Demand,” 280. Cf. also Wickham, *Framing*, 54, where he touts Denmark as “a model for what a ‘free German’ social system might develop into with minimal influence from Rome—or from their major successors in northern Europe, the Franks.”

²⁶⁶ Appropriate here is Wickham’s judgment that “gift exchange, although universal at all political and social levels, was seldom large-scale enough to characterize whole systems.” Wickham, *Framing*, 695.

North was a commercial enterprise already in the late pre-Roman Iron Age,²⁶⁷ the likelihood of some kind of commercial role in the greatly increased circulation of bronze, silver, and gold in Denmark in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries AD must also be correspondingly greater.²⁶⁸

Significantly, the Gudme central place lies just five kilometers inland from an associated port or landing-place known as Lundeberg; indeed, the area some six kilometers long by two to four kilometers wide from the coast inland to Gudme Lake forms an intensive cultural landscape that includes many settlement areas, cemeteries, and hoards known as Gudme-Lundeberg.²⁶⁹ Starting ca. AD 200 and continuing into the seventh century, the landing-place stretches for some 900 meters along the shore of the Great Belt, with an intensive occupation zone (culture layer) extending 30 – 75 meters in from the shore. The deposits include evidence for trade, crafts, and ship-repair activities. Used and new ship rivets in large numbers attest to the latter, and strengthen the idea that Lundeberg was the nodal point for southeastern Fyn's overseas connections. Glass beads are scattered over large areas near the beach, suggesting that this commodity was distributed here rather than at inland centers. More prestigious luxury items, such as imported Roman glass vessels and terra sigillata, are found only in fragments—interpreted as casualties of transport en route to the central place at Gudme; metal prestige goods, less likely to break accidentally, are not found here.²⁷⁰

Thomsen interprets this as elite-controlled trade, bringing in luxury items from overseas, founded on elite control of the local agricultural surplus—the earliest known such complex in Denmark from the Roman Iron Age.²⁷¹ Jens Ulriksen concurs, and

²⁶⁷ Wells, “Interactions between Denmark and Central Europe,” 157. See also section 3.2, subsection *The Bronze Age Baltic and central Europe* above, where I discuss the possibility of specialists in metal exchange operating in Bronze-Age Scandinavia.

²⁶⁸ As long ago as 1907, H. Willers pointed out that many Roman bronze objects found in *Germania libera* were damaged or otherwise second-rate goods, e.g. scrap votives—hardly the quality suited for diplomatic gifts! Willers assumed trade as the mechanism of distribution for such objects. Heinrich Willers, *Neue Untersuchungen über die römische Bronzeindustrie von Capua und von Niedergermanien, besonders auf die Funde aus Deutschland und dem Norden hin* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1907), 94 – 8. We may postulate that the recipients wanted such objects for their scrap metal value.

²⁶⁹ Per O. Thomsen, “Lundeberg—an Early Port of Trade in South-East Funen,” in *Gudme and Lundeberg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 24 fig. 1, for a map of the complex.

²⁷⁰ Thomsen, “Lundeberg,” 23 – 5, 27 – 8.

²⁷¹ Thomsen, “Lundeberg,” 25.

situates Gudme-Lundeborg within the long-term development of maritime exchange in Danish waters. Landing-places proliferated with the advent of sail-powered craft in the seventh century, serving not only elite centers but also modest local settlements with equally modest craftwork and imports. Conversely, however, every important center boasting rich imports also must have had a connection to a port or a landing-place, because so many of such items—of gold, for example—had necessarily to be imported. The beginnings of the phenomenon reach back into the third century, particularly to the coasts of Sjaelland and Fyn.²⁷²

If Lundeborg emerged originally to serve as an overseas access point for the elite central place of Gudme, it soon added other functions. The site shows evidence of extensive craft production: carpentry; bronze-, silver-, and goldsmithing; blacksmithing; amber, bone, and antler working. The evidence includes tools, a forge, crucibles and molds, slag, and other kinds of debris. By Thomsen's interpretation, the elite trade attracted craftsmen to the site, but these then produced goods for widespread local consumption.²⁷³ There is evidence to suggest that the community of craftsmen and traders were not dependent exclusively on Gudme. For one thing, as Nancy Wicker points out, the Lundeborg site appears to have been active seasonally, during the six months of summer—and, therefore, the craftsmen could not have been the same as the farmers from the local settlements.²⁷⁴ Also, Lundeborg made its own pottery from local clay, of a type that was not common inland.²⁷⁵ Altogether, the evidence suggests emergent, non-elite exchange networks. In Ulriksen's words:

Finds of scales, weights, hack-silver, *denarii* and Roman copper coins from Lundeborg demonstrate that at least part of the economy of the late Roman Iron

²⁷² Jens Ulriksen, "Danish Sites and Settlements with a Maritime Context, AD 200 – 1200," *Antiquity* 68 (1994): 801 – 2, 804 – 5, 807 – 8. Ulriksen points out that these early, third- and fourth-century, sites bear a close structural resemblance to the *emporium* of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries (p. 808).

²⁷³ Thomsen, "Lundeborg," 25 – 7.

²⁷⁴ Nancy Wicker, "The Organization of Crafts Production and the Social Status of the Migration Period Goldsmith," in *Gudme and Lundeborg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 149.

²⁷⁵ Ole Stilborg, "Ceramic Contacts in the Gudme-Lundeborg Area in the Late Roman Iron Age," in *Gudme and Lundeborg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 103 – 5.

Age was involved in trade, at special sites, which must have concerned a wider group than the absolute élite of society.²⁷⁶

The later sixth and seventh centuries saw further evolution in Denmark and elsewhere in Scandinavia along the lines already described. Distribution maps of elite artifacts and concentrations of rich burials, when viewed within the wider geographical framework of central and northern Europe, strongly suggest that places like Fyn, Zealand, Bornholm, Öland, and Gotland could and did serve as interface points in traffic between the continent and mainland Scandinavia²⁷⁷—one reason for their prominence in the material record. For example Bornholm, with its rich Sorte Muld cemetery, makes a north – south connection between southern Sweden and the region around the Oder mouth as well as participating in a transverse west – east sequence of nodal places. At the same time, the proliferation of landing-places in the seventh century, with finds of tools and scrap suggesting quotidian craft production and many of them serving quite undistinguished hinterlands, indicates a growing non-elite exchange system that paralleled and complemented the more visible prestige goods network.²⁷⁸

Evidence mounts for a high degree of socio-political development in Denmark in the later sixth and seventh centuries that continues, then, into the eighth and ninth. Jørgensen has characterized it as “a complex society with a clear stratification in settlements.”²⁷⁹ The structural range runs from aristocratic centers evidencing large buildings and conspicuous resource consumption, especially of metals, at one end down to ordinary farms and villages at the other end, with several types of trading and manufacturing settlements in between. In general, the density of known sites with specialized, intensive craft production and rich in metals is increasing conspicuously.²⁸⁰ The central places of the earlier period, such as Gudme, Sorte Muld, Boeslunde (on Zealand), Uppåkra (in Skåne) persist, in most cases, but at a reduced level. Meanwhile, new elite centers that typically start in the early seventh century and continue into the

²⁷⁶ Ulriksen, “Danish Sites and Settlements with a Maritime Context,” 808.

²⁷⁷ See, for example, Storgaard, “Årslev Grave,” figs. 10 and 11.

²⁷⁸ Ulriksen, “Danish Sites and Settlements with a Maritime Context,” 804 – 5.

²⁷⁹ Lars Jørgensen, “Manor and Market at Lake Tissø in the Sixth to Eleventh Centuries: The Danish ‘Productive’ Sites,” in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003), 175.

²⁸⁰ Jørgensen, “Manor and Market at Lake Tissø,” 176 – 9 and map fig. 15.1. Notably scarce are sixth – seventh century sites in western Jutland.

tenth take the first rank; these include, especially, Toftegård, Lejre, and Tissø, all on Zealand. Like the earlier centers, they feature multiple large wooden halls (350 – 550m² in area), extensive evidence for fine metalwork, and foreign prestige goods—typically, now, coming from Anglo-Saxon England and the Frankish kingdoms.²⁸¹

Jørgensen interprets the Tissø manor not as a permanent residence but as a seasonal cult site, associated with weapons sacrifices in the lake dedicated to the Norse deities.²⁸² The ideological context for these ritual deposits, which begin around AD 600, is explained more clearly by Axboe: no longer a need to call attention to one's lineage in a competition for status and power but sacrifices “primarily to the gods as the maintainers of the established world order.”²⁸³ Tissø displays rich evidence for aristocratic presence as well as a huge volume of fine metalwork done on site and large-scale trading. Overall, Jørgensen sees it as part of the royal itinerary on Zealand, with the main seat located at Lejre. Both the Tissø complex and Lejre persisted through the Viking Age, bespeaking profound institutional, social and political continuity in this part of Denmark over half a millennium.

Jørgensen's classification of Danish settlement sites in the post-Roman period into several hierarchically functional categories clarifies the phenomenon long recognized in Scandinavian archaeology, which has commonly gone by the designation of *Stormandsgårder*—usually translated as “magnate farms.” Typically, such sites have included evidence of an elevated volume of craft production plus evidence of social aggregation or stratification—as if under the direction of a “big man” or aristocrat. With more detailed data becoming available, we can draw distinctions between prosperous agricultural settlements such as Vorbasse, which include some unusually large halls and some craft production but otherwise show no evidence of having been aristocratic or cult

²⁸¹ Jørgensen, “Manor and Market at Lake Tissø,” 177 – 81. These sites all have been excavated extensively.

²⁸² Jørgensen, “Manor and Market at Lake Tissø,” 183, 197 – 9, 203 – 4; Tissø is interpreted to mean “Tyr's Lake,” referring to one of the war gods.

²⁸³ Morten Axboe, “Danish Kings and Dendrochronology: Archaeological Insights into the Early History of the Danish State,” in *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians*, ed. G. Ausenda (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 227. Axboe in his discussion cites extensively to Lotte Hedeager, *Iron Age Societies: From Tribe to State in Northern Europe, 500 BC to AD 700* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

centers, and places like Gudme, Lejre and Tissø, which did have aristocratic pretensions and cult functions and so should be regarded as occupying a higher socio-political rung. Interesting as well are sites such as Bejsebakken in northern Jutland and Næs in southern Sjælland, where large numbers of pit-houses (350 and 70, respectively) have been excavated, which contained numerous loom weights and spindle whorls. At Næs also were found fifty-seven wicker-lined wells fed by an artificial water channel that were used for flax retting. The finds suggest that these were sites of specialized, large-volume textile production, implying a trade in cloth.²⁸⁴

The developmental trajectory outlined above for Denmark was reproduced in some other areas of Scandinavia also, most notably in the area of Middle Sweden or the provinces surrounding Lake Mälaren: Uppland, Södermanland, and Västmanland. An extensive maze of channels and islands, Mälaren reaches inland over seventy miles from Sweden's central Baltic coast, and the archaeology of the district suggests that it provided communications and interface opportunities for the populations in the surrounding districts.²⁸⁵ Rich boat-graves at Vendel and Valsgärde (in Uppland) with foreign prestige goods date as early as the sixth century and continue into the seventh. The earlier graves include objects from central Europe while the later ones feature Frankish prestige items.²⁸⁶ In this way, Middle Sweden reflects the general Scandinavian pattern of changes in extra-regional contacts, shifting over time from an eastern to a western orientation.

Such finds suggest the evolution of elites, chiefs, or even kings in the region during the sixth and seventh centuries—sometimes referred to as the Vendel Period *Sveariket* or Swedish state.²⁸⁷ Further, the remarkable site of Helgö, on an island in the eastern end of Lake Mälaren, operated as a production center for fine metalwork over the whole of the first millennium AD, but especially in the 400 – 700 period. The scale of

²⁸⁴ Jørgensen, “Manor and Market at Lake Tissø,” 179. At Næs there also was evidence for antler working (combmaking) and trade (weights).

²⁸⁵ Birgit Arrhenius, “Aspects on Barter Trade Exemplified at Helgö and Birka,” in *Gudme and Lundeberg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 191 – 22.

²⁸⁶ Birgit Arrhenius, *The Chronology of the Vendel Graves* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitets reprocentral, 1980).

²⁸⁷ Göran Burenhult, ed., *Arkeologi i Norden*, vol. 2 (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1999), 301 – 20, discusses the contents and implications of the rich graves, with illustrations.

production is suggested by the bronze casting remains, with more than 90,000 fragments of casting molds and 300 kilograms of crucible fragments. Remarkable foreign objects include a gilded bishop's crozier from Ireland and an Indian bronze buddha. The standard interpretation of Helgö is that it had some kind of connection with or served the interests of the rulers of the area in the period before the eighth century; ca. 750, it was superseded by the *emporium* of Birka on another island just to the west.²⁸⁸

The archaeological evidence from Migration Age Denmark and Middle Sweden demonstrates that certain areas of the North already had sufficient socio-political organization and productive capacity to engage in international exchange, and not merely as passively exploited peripheral peoples but as active agents.²⁸⁹ Further, the record shows that Scandinavia as a whole and Denmark especially re-oriented its long-distance contacts during the course of the sixth century. In the fifth century, glassware had reached Denmark both from the southeast (north Pontic region) and from the Elbe region²⁹⁰ and the Alps. Metalwork circulated between Denmark and central Europe, and areas along the Rhine. During this stage, Scandinavia had little interchange with those parts of Gaul to the west of the Rhineland and with Britain. The southeastern connection had disappeared by the end of the fifth century, and, from the mid-sixth onwards, a strong new link was forged with Francia and, possibly, Anglo-Saxon England.²⁹¹

²⁸⁸ Wilhelm Holmquist, *Swedish Vikings on Helgö and Birka* (Stockholm: Studio Granath, 1979), 10 – 68. See also Helen Clarke and Björn Ambrosiani, *Towns in the Viking Age* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), 70 – 1; and Burenhult, *Arkeologi i Norden*, 320 – 3. For Birka, see discussion below in Chapter 5.

²⁸⁹ A colony consisting of soldiers and merchants from the Sveariket and Gotland was established on the central coast of Kurland in the early seventh century at Grobiņa, in present day southwestern Latvia. Birger Nerman, *Grobin-Seeburg: Ausgrabungen und Funde* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1958). Nerman led the excavations at Grobiņa in the 1930s.

²⁹⁰ Sven Gustavs, “Germanisches Handwerk/Feinschmiedehandwerk von Klein Köris: Ein Bericht mit Blick auf Gudme-Lundeborg,” in *Gudme and Lundeborg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 118 – 27, describes intensive fine metal work and glass work in a late-third century village in present day Brandenburg. The site is remarkable in that it shows a great volume of materials and objects imported from Roman provinces to the west and a long-term resident crafts specialist (or: specialists) in an otherwise ordinary settlement hundreds of miles from the nearest Roman frontier. No elite residence has thus far been located in the vicinity.

²⁹¹ Näsman, “Justinianic Era of South Scandinavia,” 262 – 8, including distribution maps. See also Randsborg, “Model History and Treasure,” 69 fig. 2, for distributions of brooches that connect Scandinavia with central Germany, the Rhineland, northern Francia, and Kent.

The progression can be illustrated with changes in the imagery on the gold bracteates. Originally a kind of *interpretatio germanica* of Roman medallions and imperial emblems, Danish and other Scandinavian craftsmen in the fourth and fifth centuries integrated the symbolism with indigenous mythic associations—a kind of *interpretatio nordica*.²⁹² By the late sixth century, Denmark was importing Frankish prestige objects and the imagery on bracteates, gold foil figures, and picture stones was, according to Näsman, reflecting Merovingian ritual in a kind of *imitatio regni Francorum*.²⁹³ The consolidation of Merovingian hegemony and territorial control in the northwestern part of Europe along with the removal or eclipse of rival influences such as the Goths and Gepids had left the Franks as default models for those living further north.²⁹⁴ In the sense that Denmark imported Frankish prestige goods and usages, as Wickham notes, it may be considered peripheral, but it remained independent and had free choice in what to accept and what to reject.²⁹⁵

Northwestern waters

The re-orientation of Denmark to northwestern Europe during the course of the sixth century is one aspect of the emergence of a post-Roman North Sea exchange system. Once fully formed ca. 700, it involved the Frankish kingdoms, Anglo-Saxon England, the Frisians, Norwegians, and Danes in a booming commercial economy, with active connections into the Baltic and points east. Regular ports with official interest become visible already by 600. The most recent data suggests, however, that even during the blank sixth century, where the light of written records rarely penetrated northwards of Paris, northern Gaul and the lands about the lower Rhine were in mutual communication with southeastern England and with southern Scandinavia.

²⁹² Näsman, “Justinianic Era of South Scandinavia,” 262. For the indigenous mythology portrayed on the bracteates, see again Axboe, “Gudme and the Gold Bracteates”; and Karl Hauck, “Gudme als Kultort und seine Rolle beim Austausch von Bildformularen,” in *Gudme and Lundeborg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 78 – 88.

²⁹³ Näsman, “Justinianic Era of South Scandinavia,” 274 – 7.

²⁹⁴ Näsman, “Justinianic Era of South Scandinavia,” 277 – 8.

²⁹⁵ Wickham, “Production, Distribution and Demand,” 280 – 1.

One of the first to suggest that there had been a Merovingian sphere of influence projecting into the North Sea was Ian Wood.²⁹⁶ In his view, the sixth-century expansion of Frankish hegemony eastwards of the Rhine (Bavaria, Thuringia, Saxony) was matched by the exertion of diplomatic influence northeastwards into Scandinavia and, especially, across the Channel into England.²⁹⁷ Further, Wood suggested that the Franks employed the Frisians as carriers, which, if true, would give these people inhabiting the coastlands north of the Rhine delta a key role long before their independent trading activity becomes evident in the later seventh and eighth centuries.²⁹⁸ Of similar vintage to Wood's essay is the first edition of Richard Hodges' *Dark Age Economics*, in which he discusses the "revival" of long-distance trade in northwestern Europe in the late sixth century in terms of elite controlled and conditioned "directional trade" in which exchange was "aiming for central places and their persons"; in the case of Kent and King Aethelbert, it was "directional trade emanating from the Paris basin." According to this view, the emergent North Sea trade system existed to initiate and to facilitate the exchange of prestige goods among equally emergent post-Roman elites in northwestern Europe.²⁹⁹

Was early medieval trade in the northern waters restricted to this narrow socio-political function? Already in 1985, G. Astill questioned Hodges' models and suggested that in the case of Kent, a broader sixth-century flow of prestige items, reflected in Kentish cemeteries, became notably scarcer toward the end of the century—perhaps

²⁹⁶ Ian Wood, *The Merovingian North Sea* (Occasional Papers on Medieval Topics 1) (Alingsås, Sweden: Viktoria Bokförlag, 1983).

²⁹⁷ King Aethelbert of Kent got a Frankish princess, Bertha, to wife, and Wood wants to regard southeastern England up to the Thames as "client kingdoms" of the Merovingians. Further, the East Anglian Sigbert, son of Redwald, had a distinctly Austrasian name and spent time in exile in Francia. Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, 12 – 17. Unresolved is the issue of how Merovingian power might have been projected over the intervening miles of salt water. The attempt to conjure up a Merovingian naval capability by John Haywood, *Dark Age Naval Power: A Re-assessment of Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Seafaring Activity* (London: Routledge, 1991), has been criticized. See Bernard S. Bachrach, review of *Dark Age Naval Power*, by John Haywood, *Choice* 29 (1992): 1282.

²⁹⁸ Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, 11. The recovery of nearly fifty coins including many *solidi* from sixth-century Frisia might corroborate Wood's speculations, especially as this contradicts the general trend of rapidly diminishing coin hoards in territories north of the former Roman frontier after the fifth century; see Randsborg, "Model History and Treasure," 73 – 4, figs. 6a, 6b, and 6c. Mention of Frisian commercial activities does not occur until the seventh century. Claude, "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merovingerreich," 71 – 2.

²⁹⁹ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 33 – 6. The need to further control such exchanges led, according to Hodges, to the emergence of the *emporion* in the seventh and eighth centuries. See discussion below in Section 5.4.

because now their distribution had come under royal monopoly control. Similarly, Frankish royal involvement in trade and oversight of ports, evident from ca. 600, may have been tapping into a pre-existing trade system rather than setting up a new one.³⁰⁰ More recently, Stuart Brooks has discussed the sixth- and seventh-century development of Kent in terms not unlike those applied to Denmark in the discussion above.³⁰¹ There is a remarkable degree of continuity from Roman through Early Anglo-Saxon and Middle Anglo-Saxon periods in the siting of nodal centers—estates, markets, ecclesiastical foundations, *villae regales*—along avenues of communication (Roman roads, coastlines) and at environmental interface points.³⁰² Brookes also identifies patterns of overseas commerce (foreign objects, scales) in zones along the north and east coasts of Kent or “price-making markets” throughout the sixth century. In the seventh century, the spread of imports is more restricted and concentrated in certain coastal centers, while coin use becomes increasingly prevalent; Brookes interprets this as the imposition of royal control over commercial activity.³⁰³

The data from Kent suggests, therefore, that unofficial trade from southeastern England to the Continent continued throughout the fifth and sixth centuries. Over the past two decades, through re-evaluation of the “dark earth” layers above first- and second-century Roman building in Britain, British archaeologists have come to recognize that habitation continued in the towns through the third and fourth centuries.³⁰⁴ The prevailing opinion regarding Roman Britain remains, however, that it suffered a systemic crash in the fifth century—a crash that resulted in the almost total atomization of political

³⁰⁰ G. Astill, “Archaeology, Economics and Early Medieval Europe,” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 4 (1985): 220 – 1.

³⁰¹ Stuart Brookes, “The Early Anglo-Saxon Framework for Middle Anglo-Saxon Economics: The Case of East Kent,” in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003), 84 – 96.

³⁰² Brookes, “Early Anglo-Saxon Framework,” 86 – 91.

³⁰³ Brookes, “Early Anglo-Saxon Framework,” 92 – 4.

³⁰⁴ Brian Yule, “The ‘Dark Earth’ and Late Roman London,” *Antiquity* 64 (1990): 620 – 28; Bruce Watson, “‘Dark Earth’ and Urban Decline in Late Roman London,” in *Roman London: Recent Archaeological Work*, ed. Bruce Watson (Portsmouth RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L.L.C., 1998), 100 – 6. See also Wells, “Roman Londinium to Saxon Lundenwic: Continuity and Change (A.D. 43 – 800),” in idem, *Barbarians to Angels*, 88 – 120.

and economic relationships in the lowland areas. Kingdoms such as Kent that are visible by the second half of the sixth century are the products of re-consolidation.³⁰⁵

On the opposite side of the Channel, the orthodox view from northern Francia is not much different. Lebecq sees a void between the integrated Roman economy of the fourth century and the commercial revival in the North Sea in the seventh century.³⁰⁶ Long-distance trade from the Mediterranean to northern Gaul could sustain itself on the structures inherited from the Empire, but it was delivering only luxury goods to the elite, while such international commerce to Britain as there is appears to be moving around Francia either along the Atlantic or the Rhine. As an exception, the wine trade from western Gaul to Ireland barely appears in the record—perhaps because it was run by “barbarians,” or perhaps because it was totally lacking in any kind of official structure.³⁰⁷

These latter speculations probably are the key to understanding the style of the economy around the English Channel and the North Sea in the fifth and sixth centuries. While government in northern Gaul did not lapse, a regulated and monetized economy retreated in favor of one where exchanges could be effected through weighed amounts of precious metal—Joachim Werner’s *Feinwaagenlandschaft*,³⁰⁸ which included the Rhenish lands as well as southeastern England and Francia north of Paris.³⁰⁹ Indeed, the same practices have been demonstrated in contemporary Denmark and Middle Sweden, all of which suggests the possibility of a broad economic exchange area around the North Sea based upon free-lance traders and craftsmen. The mid-sixth century grave of a smith in Normandy, which contained tools, weapons, and coins, affords a glimpse of a high-status artisan who, similar to the merchants mentioned in the written sources in more

³⁰⁵ For a clear summary of this view, and explanations of the slow processes of re-consolidation that ensued, see Wickham, *Framing*, 303 – 33. See also Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*, 117 – 19, for the extreme drop in material sophistication in England in the fifth – seventh centuries.

³⁰⁶ Stéphane Lebecq, “Les échanges dans la Gaule du Nord au VI^e siècle: une histoire en miettes,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 185 – 202.

³⁰⁷ Lebecq, “Les échanges dans la Gaule du Nord,” 186 – 92.

³⁰⁸ Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft,” 590 – 2. See discussion in section 5.2, subsection *Alamannia and the Rhine* above.

³⁰⁹ Werner’s *Feinwaagenlandschaft* has an interesting correspondence with Duby’s projected “contact zone” between an immature but growing Germano-Slav sphere and decaying, former Roman colonial survivals “reaching final stages of dilapidation”; this contact zone is supposed to lie along the Channel, around Paris, in Burgundy, Alamannia, Bavaria. Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 4.

southern areas, had mobility beyond the purely local level.³¹⁰ Unorganized though such an exchange system might be, the irregular, individualistic enterprises could not exist unless people were producing surpluses and wanted to use them for trade. The independent craftsmen and the free-lance traders co-existed with persistent north Gallic and Rhenish commercial pottery production, albeit the distribution areas of the latter were reduced.

The unofficial, uncontrolled, and individualistic trading system suggested here would form a logical parallel with the socio-cultural “simplification” of the north Gallic areas that was discussed above in regard to the transition from Roman to Merovingian Gaul.³¹¹ Another aspect of the system was the transformation of shipping patterns. Large-scale transport between Britain and the continent was available still in the fourth century, as evident for example in Julian’s supply arrangements on the Rhine in the late 350s. As early as the late third century, meanwhile, the Channel and Rhine Delta coasts may have been detaching themselves from imperial control. This can be seen in the advent of raiding by the *Saxones*, against which the imperial authorities erected the “Saxon shore” defenses in the late third and fourth centuries.³¹² It also is suggested in events such as the rebellion of Carausius the Menapian of 286 – 96.³¹³ Regular official transport from Britain to Gaul and the Rhine probably ceased soon after the time of Constantine III in the early fifth century, and Roman traffic to the northeast apparently ceased also around this time.³¹⁴ By the sixth century, from having been raiders, the “Saxons” are figuring more as settlers along the Channel coasts, thus creating a network

³¹⁰ Lebecq, “Les échanges dans la Gaule du Nord,” 194. There are obvious parallels with the craftsmen evidenced in contemporary Scandinavian contexts.

³¹¹ See section 4.4, subsection *Structural changes of the third and fourth centuries* above.

³¹² Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 153 and fig. 39, map of the *Litus Saxonicum*.

³¹³ Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 200. See the discussion in section 4.4, subsection *Structural changes of the third and fourth centuries* above.

³¹⁴ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 29: the “dendritic trade route northwards from the Rhine” was at an end by the fifth century. Hodges cites data from Lotte Hedeager, “A Quantitative Analysis of Roman Imports in Europe North of the Limes (0 – 400 AD), and the Question of Roman-Germanic Exchange,” in *New Directions in Scandinavian Archaeology*, ed. Kristian Kristiansen and Carsten Paludan-Müller (Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 1978), 191 – 216. See, however, Ulla Lund Hansen, “Beyond the Roman Frontier,” in *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1989), 52 – 3, who maintains that overseas trade from Gaul and Britain to Scandinavia continued during the fifth century, in part because it was deflected to this relatively peaceful area by the wars on the Continent. If so, our “Saxons” must have been the carriers.

of cross-Channel connections that can easily be seen as a framework for facilitating commercial exchanges in addition to other forms of communication.³¹⁵ Thus, as with other sections of the Roman periphery, the “Saxonization” of the northwestern waters between the British Isles and the Continent had both an initially disrupting and a later constructive aspect.

By AD 600, we again have good evidence of resumed official involvement in regulating exchange and of an international trade route reaching southeastern England across the Narrow Seas from the Rhine, which in turn connects across the Alps with the Mediterranean.³¹⁶ Exotic items in Kentish cemeteries demonstrate the long-distance trade connections and the importance of Kent and the Thames as a major entrepôt area for Anglo-Saxon England. Amethyst beads, glass vessels, and wheel-thrown pottery especially were exotic items that accumulated in Kent, with much of the pottery representing “bottles” for imports of wine. These “Group 1” imports imply, according to Huggett, a monopoly exercised through central control, and political boundaries, with re-export only to elite persons in other Anglo-Saxon areas.³¹⁷ Other items receive wider distribution, however, none more so than the very numerous amber beads, whose Baltic origin demonstrates trading connections with Scandinavia.³¹⁸ In his final analysis, Huggett suggests a multi-valent exchange system: “directional exchange” between rulers in connection with diplomatic arrangements, “emissary trading” on the part of agents working for royal masters, but also independent, itinerant merchants, signified by weights

³¹⁵ Barbara Yorke, “Gregory of Tours and Sixth-Century Anglo-Saxon England,” in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 113 – 30. Yorke advances the important insight that the “Jute” areas of southern England (Kent, Isle of Wight, south Hampshire) can be redefined as those that had the closest connection with “Saxon” enclaves on the shores of Francia (Ponthieu, Normandy). The fact that, by the middle of the sixth century, the Merovingian kings had full control of these settlements and their naval assets suggests a possible mechanism by which they could have policed the Channel waters and projected political influence into southern England. The possibility of cross-Channel connections is noted as well in Lebecq, “Les échanges dans la Gaule du Nord,” 195 – 7.

³¹⁶ Werner, “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft,” 563 – 6.

³¹⁷ J. W. Huggett, “Imported Grave Goods and the Early Anglo-Saxon Economy,” *Medieval Archaeology* 32 (1988): 90 – 1.

³¹⁸ Huggett, “Imported Grave Goods,” 64 – 6, and fig. 1. In this distribution, Kent plays a minor role, with far greater concentrations evident in East Anglia, the Midlands, and Wessex.

and balances, transferring “quantities of metalwork, beads, pottery and glassware across the Channel in both directions.”³¹⁹

That broad-based trade and productivity was possible in seventh-century Anglo-Saxon England finds support in more recent studies employing massive new data obtained through metal-detecting, which has become an important adjunct of archaeological research in the United Kingdom and Denmark.³²⁰ Even with a bare minimum population estimate of 500,000 people, Anglo-Saxon England would have needed at any one time something like 2.5 million yards of cloth, at least two million pieces of metal for brooches and strap-ends to hold up the clothing, plus shoes, cups, plates, furniture—and some 140 tons of salt per annum just to preserve herring, if everyone ate only ten fish in a year.³²¹ Moreover, in England as in Denmark there is evidence for organized mass production, such as the sixth-century looms found at Pakenham, Suffolk, and mentions of large numbers of *servi* and *ancillae*, which suggest an unfree labor force.³²² Some 140 Merovingian and other foreign gold coins now are known from England dating to 530 – 670, only five of which come from contexts that appear to be non-commercial.³²³ This strongly suggests that the monetized mercantile system of Merovingian Gaul extended across the Channel into England.

On the Frankish side of the English Channel, a definite milestone in the development of mercantile activities in the northern waters was the foundation of

³¹⁹ Huggett, “Imported Grave Goods,” 93 – 4. Huggett is responding to models proposed by Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, as well as counterarguments from Astill, “Archaeology, Economics and Early Medieval Europe.” See discussion in Section 5.4 below.

³²⁰ Katharina Ulmschneider and Tim Pestell, “Introduction: Early Medieval Markets and ‘Productive’ Sites,” in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003), 1 – 10, address the emergence of “detecting” and its impact on archaeology. As of 2003, already 6,500 single finds of coins and 250 hoards in England of 600 – 1180 had been ascertained. Mark Blackburn, “‘Productive’ Sites and the Pattern of coin Loss in England, 600 – 1180,” in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003), 23.

³²¹ James Campbell, “Production and Distribution in Early and Middle Anglo-Saxon England,” in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003), 12 – 15. The salt calculation is based on early-modern records for the amount of salt needed per fish, averaging to about one ounce or 28 grams.

³²² Campbell, “Production and Distribution,” 16 – 17.

³²³ Michael Metcalf, “Variations in the Composition of the Currency at Different Places in England,” in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003), 37 – 8.

Quentovic ca. 590. Long lost, the site was identified by surveys in the early 1990s.³²⁴ Numismatic evidence shows that it was active by AD 600 and existed in some form until the late tenth; finds demonstrate connections to England, to Frisia and the Rhine, and to the Baltic.³²⁵ According to Lebecq, the *vicus* on the Canche replaced the old Roman port of Boulongne at this time because the ships of the day, with their flat-bottomed hulls, preferred low, sandy banks for landings³²⁶ Royal interest soon turned the place into a major entrepôt, so that it served monasteries throughout the Paris basin and northern Neustria; many of them maintained a physical presence in the Canche valley, as if to make sure of convenience and access.³²⁷

Thus, the turn of the seventh century represents a major turning point in exchange relationships in the northern waters. Merovingian Francia and Kent, at least, found it interesting to involve themselves in what Lebecq calls a “structuration des grande échanges” between Gaul on one side and the overseas North on the other; he notes that the early minters in northern Francia appear to have Anglo-Saxon names, suggesting that Anglo-Saxons, Celts, and Frisians had more to do with “re-animating” the trade at this time than had the Franks.³²⁸ It should be argued, rather, that significant trade had existed all along but came now under official auspices. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the expanded and centralized port facilities and the notable increase in coinage on both sides of the Channel give the seventh century much more of the color of active commerce than anything that was visible in the sixth. In the seventh century, the northern neighbors of the Franks all wanted to mint coins, which soon led to Frisian and Anglo-Saxon imitations of Merovingian tremisses; e.g., Frisian Dronrijp issues inspired by the mint at Maastricht.³²⁹ At the end of the seventh century, coinage in Francia, Frisia, and England

³²⁴ David Hill, “The Siting of the Early Medieval Port of ‘Quentovic’,” in *Rotterdam Papers VII: A Contribution to Medieval Archaeology*, ed. A. Carmiggelt (Rotterdam: Bureau Oudheidkundig Onderzoek van Gemeentewerken Rotterdam, 1992), 17 – 23.

³²⁵ Stéphane Lebecq, “Quentovic: un état de la question,” *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 8 (1993): 75, 78.

³²⁶ Lebecq, “Quentovic,” 78, and the topographical diagram of the lower Canche, fig. 1. Presumably, Quentovic was the place with the desired landing conditions closest to a short passage across to Kent.

³²⁷ Lebecq, “Quentovic,” 78, and fig. 2, illustrating the connections with St-Bertin, St-Vaast d’Arras, Centula St-Riquier, St-Germain-des-Près, Combs-la-Ville, Ferrières-en-Gâtinais, Villemeult, and Fontenelle-St-Wandrille.

³²⁸ Lebecq, “Les échanges dans la Gaule du Nord,” 201.

³²⁹ Lebecq, “Les échanges dans la Gaule du Nord,” 199 – 200.

turned to silver issues. In the eighth century, Anglo-Saxon England saw an explosion of silver minting everywhere from Wessex to York.³³⁰ In terms of distribution, aside from the ports and certain inland “hot spots” where economic activity was especially concentrated, the coinage spread remarkably evenly over the landscape so that, as Metcalf concludes, “not rural isolation, but rather the long arm of international trade” is what the patterns indicate.³³¹

Similarly, Quentovic was the first of many *emporium* or *wics* that sprang up during the seventh century, thus setting a foundation for further expansion of the northern trade network in the eighth century. In the case of Maastricht on the Meuse and its influence on the Frisians to the north, we seem to be seeing a true bridge between late Roman towns in northern Gaul, that tended to survive best in riverside locations, and the burgeoning North Sea trade zone.³³² Walcheren-Domburg in the Scheldt-Meuse-Rhine estuary was, after Quentovic, the earliest known of the *emporium* on the Frankish side, founded ca. 600,³³³ eventually, its place was overshadowed by Dorestad on the Rhine, which was active by the 640s. Rouen existed as a mint and a port by the end of the seventh century. On the English side, Ipswich can be added to the ports of Kent, and Londonwic was a large (148 acres) and thriving *emporium* serving much of England in the second half of the seventh century.³³⁴

In the seventh century, the lands about the northern seas were experiencing an economic buildup and a great increase in commercial activity in addition to symptoms of greater regulation such as coinage and the emergence of larger port centers. Ports connected the coasts of Frisia and Gaul with the coasts of England, and Anglo-Saxons, Frisians, and increasingly large areas of the Merovingian kingdoms were drawn into the

³³⁰ Blackburn, “‘Productive’ Sites and the Pattern of coin Loss,” 26 –33.

³³¹ Metcalf, “Variations in the Composition of the Currency”; the quote is on p. 45.

³³² According to Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 2 – 5, 26 – 9, Maastricht was one of only four cities in the far north of Gaul that had continual habitation from the late Roman through the Merovingian periods. It also had artisanal production in the sixth and seventh centuries and minting activity in the seventh century, but Verhulst sees that as a function of Pippinid expansion to the north via the Meuse rather than of commercial activity.

³³³ Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 41 -2, remarks on the quantity of tremisses (100 – 2000) and sceattas (500 – 800) that have been found on this site, which signify its commercial importance in the seventh century.

³³⁴ Lebecq, “Les échanges dans la Gaule du Nord,” 199 – 201; Campbell, “Production and Distribution,” 13 – 15.

exchanges. A further aspect of the increasingly close interaction was the conversion to Christianity of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms during the course of the seventh century, which not only formed a transcontinental cultural link between England, Francia, and Italy but brought into England a form of elite organization—the Church and its monastic establishments—that could parallel the secular aristocracy in the process of stabilizing social relationships and mobilizing economic productivity.³³⁵

It is probably no accident that the hints of commerce between western Gaul and Ireland coincide with the great age of Irish clerical activity and influence on the Continent.³³⁶ Ca. 700, the advent of Anglo-Saxon missionary travels and activities coincided with the foundation of an *emporium* at Hamwic in Wessex. The response in Denmark, which had been looking to Francia for outside inspiration since the later sixth century and had certainly participated in unofficial commercial contacts across the North Sea in the meantime, was to set up an *emporium* at Ribe on the west coast of Jutland.³³⁷ These events set up the unfolding of even more intensive engagement in the North Sea region in the Carolingian period of AD 700 – 900.

5.4 Theorizing Dark-Age Europe

The evidence presented in the foregoing sections and in Chapter 4, though far from exhaustive in any area, should suffice for a working overview of the two principle issues with which these chapters are concerned. The one is the extent to which Roman imperial institutions and forms of economic organization may have survived the transformative period of the fifth and sixth centuries and, thereby, provided a foundation for early

³³⁵ See Campbell, “Production and Distribution,” 17 – 19, on the economic aspects of the Anglo-Saxon Church ca. 700. For a concise review of the process of Christianization in seventh-century England, see Carole M. Cusack, *The Rise of Christianity in Northern Europe, 300-1000* (London: Cassell, 1999), 88 – 118.

³³⁶ Almost all of our documentation of this commercial activity comes from the *vitae* of various Irish saints. Archaeologically, development around the Irish Sea in the fifth to seventh centuries features a mix of sites similar to those in Denmark: central places, where craft production and luxury imports appear to be controlled by local elites, and landing places, where commercial interchange involves both local people and long-distance traders. David W. Griffiths, “Trade and Production Centres in the Post-Roman North: The Irish Sea Perspective,” in *Gudme and Lundeberg* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994), 184 – 8.

³³⁷ Hamwic and Ribe belong to a distinct type of controlled trading site. The development of this type of site in early medieval northwestern Europe and its introduction into Scandinavia is discussed in Heidi M. Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market: Staraja Ladoga and Emporia Trading in Western Eurasia from 500 BC to AD 1000” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2008), chapters 4 and 5.

medieval continuations of such forms. The other is the extent to which, regardless of the presence or absence of Roman forms, various late Roman and early post-Roman societies in Europe demonstrate a capacity for economic productivity and a significant level of economic exchange activities. In the pages that follow, the evidence will be tested against a selection of the most influential approaches and models that have governed scholarly discourse on these topics over the past half-century or so. As the primary concern of the present study is the relationship between the early medieval Northwest and North of Europe, the focus of the discussion will be on the data from these geographical areas.

In 1959, Philip Grierson challenged historians of the early Middle Ages to demonstrate, through concrete evidence, that commerce strictly defined—i.e., goods being produced, transported, and traded on the basis of market relations or profit-seeking—ever existed in this period. In other words, the default assumption ought to be that it did not, and that exchange or transfer of wealth was almost always based upon some other mechanism: elite gift exchange, rewards for followers, mercenaries' pay, dowries; ransoms, wergilds, tribute, and plunder.³³⁸ In part, this challenge was meant to be a call to incorporate anthropological models into early medieval historiography, which presently found a huge response from Richard Hodges and many others (see below). More tacitly, however, the challenge assumed *a priori* that the early Middle Ages (“Dark Ages”!) were an economically impoverished period in which evidence for unembedded exchange should be expected to be at a minimum.³³⁹ And this assumption in turn must rest upon the further assumption that the Roman empire preceding the early Middle Ages either had been operating at a similarly low level or had suffered a fall of some extent in order to leave the early medieval West in its presumed low socio-economic condition.

Some have, in fact, supported the view that the Roman empire was a pre-market or failed market society. As lately as 1991, Klavs Randsborg wrote that the Roman

³³⁸ Philip Grierson, “Commerce in the Dark Ages: A Critique of the Evidence,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (5th Series) 9 (1959): 123 – 40. See discussion in Section 2.2 above.

³³⁹ The foundations for such a supposition had been firmly planted by Henri Pirenne, especially so for the Carolingian era; see discussion in Section 2.1 above. Others soon broadened the idea to include the Merovingian or even late Roman period; see Section 2.2. The highly influential notion that a pure market economy can exist only in capitalist societies and that elsewhere it is more or less “embedded” in non-economic socio-cultural constructions comes from Polanyi and his followers; also Section 2.2.

empire failed to uphold a functioning imperial economy—indeed, that it *could not* do so anywhere except in the eastern Mediterranean because elsewhere it was simply too undeveloped.³⁴⁰ For Randsborg, the “primitiveness” of the economy of the Empire explains the breakdowns and dislocations that begin to show themselves around the turn of the third century.³⁴¹ A view similar to Randsborg’s was long championed by Moses Finley and his followers.³⁴² More recently, however, the emerging compromise view has been to regard the Roman empire as a pre-modern (pre-capitalist) system, which nevertheless achieved a considerable degree of productivity and market integration.³⁴³ Indeed, it would be difficult to understand developments such as the trade in wine and slaves that involved southern Italy, *Gallia Narbonensis*, and inland Gaul in the second and first centuries BC other than in terms of market relations and market motives on the part of most of the participants.³⁴⁴ Similarly, for the first, second, and third century up to ca. 270, the great prosperity, urbanization, and cultural development in the Gallic provinces involved a thriving economy that included a high degree of commercialization.³⁴⁵ Roman Britain and southern Germany were similarly developed and prosperous.

³⁴⁰ Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 120 – 1, 169.

³⁴¹ These phenomena were surveyed briefly in section 4.1 above. The evidence suggests that some kind of systemic change was affecting the Roman empire ca. 200. It is my opinion, however, that no one yet has really been able to define and to explain what that was. Certainly, it would not be simple economic failure due to lack of sophistication or development! See Ross Balzaretti, “Cities and Markets in the Early Middle Ages,” in *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe’s Barbarians*, ed. G. Ausenda (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 114 – 19, for some useful insights on models and research agendas.

³⁴² Moses I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), is the major statement of this position. In part, it was a reaction against “modernism” such as that of Rostovtzeff; see discussion in Chapter 3.4 above.

³⁴³ See Henri Willy Pleket, “Wirtschaft,” in *Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. Friedrich Vittinghoff (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990), 25 – 160, and the discussion in Chapter 3.4. A concise and positive statement along similar lines is Peter Temin, “A Market Economy in the Early Roman Empire,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 91 (2001): 169 – 81. Indeed, an analysis such as Keith Hopkins, “Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 B.C. – A.D. 400),” *Journal of Roman Studies* 70 (1980): 101 – 25, depends on the capacity of the Roman system to generate market responses.

³⁴⁴ For an overview, see Barry Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction* (New York: Methuen, 1988), 38 – 105.

³⁴⁵ So above all Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, passim; see Section 4.4, subsections *A model province of the High Empire* and *A potential for self-sufficiency* above. See also Edmond Frézouls, “Gallien und römisches Germanien,” in *Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. Friedrich Vittinghoff (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990), 429 – 509. Interestingly, though Drinkwater stresses that Roman Gaul was thick with villas practically everywhere that agriculture was at all possible (p. 168), he nevertheless feels obligated to insert minimalist disclaimers into the narrative: “at this time the

To accept the current majority position on the shape of the Roman economy in the High Empire also means, therefore, that we would have to accept a drastic devolution in the Roman system in order to arrive at Grierson's assumed point of departure for the "Dark Ages." Just such a devastated, depopulated, and de-institutionalized landscape was imagined in Duby's influential statement dating to the 1970s.³⁴⁶ The same is essentially true for Richard Hodges, whose premises concerning sixth-century Europe—especially in the original 1982 edition of *Dark Age Economics*—were unabashedly catastrophist.³⁴⁷ As was shown above, Duby's viewpoint derived from the substantivist theories advanced by Polanyi and his followers.³⁴⁸ Assuming overwhelming embeddedness, Duby constructed an early medieval economic and political system that revolved around gift-giving and plunder as its primary drivers. Hodges, meanwhile, enthusiastically espoused a long list of economic-anthropological models—part of the "new archaeology" that had developed in the 1960s and 70s.³⁴⁹ Both Duby and Hodges saw important reconstructive and re-coalescing tendencies already present and growing in the sixth to eighth centuries. Nevertheless, both of them start the sixth century with the preceding Roman system almost entirely absent, thereby tacitly accepting Grierson's point of departure.

First, we may take the issue of depopulation—strongly emphasized in Duby,³⁵⁰ and present also in Hodges. Theoretically, depopulation might create conditions for political devolution.³⁵¹ Hodges asserts population collapse and political devolution in Britain, with a fall from some 3 – 6 million ca. AD 300 to only 600,000 Anglo-Saxons living in some fifty to one hundred small, tribal groupings ca. AD 550, and only slowly

cultivated areas were still islands in the northern Gallic sea of forest and marsh"; "Of course, it must be conceded that by present-day standards this wealth was but a thin veneer overlying the basic poverty of a pre-industrial economy. . . most people in this world would have lived dangerously close to starvation" (pp. 161, 188 – 9). Such statements are worthy of Doehaerd and Duby!

³⁴⁶ Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*. Duby, nevertheless, notices a steady reconstructive trend from a sixth-century nadir. This is one of the underlying themes of the first part of the book, "Foundations," pp. 3 – 72.

³⁴⁷ See Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 29 – 39, for a summary of his starting position.

³⁴⁸ See the discussion in Section 2.2 above.

³⁴⁹ See the discussion in Chapter 2.3 above.

³⁵⁰ Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 12 – 13.

³⁵¹ In other words, a reverse application of the proposition that increases in population density drive the evolution from band, to tribe, to chiefdom, to state. Elman R. Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective*, 2nd edition (New York: Random House, 1971).

coalescing into larger units.³⁵² For Hodges, continental northwestern Europe also must have experienced a near-total break from the preceding Roman order—a socio-cultural breakdown due to the vast influx of alien Germanic people.³⁵³ Indeed, Hodges has an equally determined catastrophist outlook when he speaks of sixth-century Italy and of the early medieval Mediterranean in general.³⁵⁴ As one specific example, Hodges pictures the upper Volturno area as an economic and demographic near-desert before the founding of the monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno ca. 700.³⁵⁵ Altogether, Hodges’ theoretical narrative would fail if the sixth century in northwestern Europe were not a time of rebuilding political and economic forms almost from zero. We have seen, however, that in northern Gaul the process of change was ongoing from the mid-fourth century, at least, and AD 500, far from being a low point of collapse, in fact saw the unfolding of a new political order in Gaul that was quite far from being primitive. Regardless of what the situation might have been in fifth- and sixth-century England, sixth-century Gaul was politically, economically, and demographically stable and powerful.³⁵⁶

Generally, evidence for late Roman and early medieval population reduction is problematical.³⁵⁷ As Dick Harrison has pointed out, modern scholars interpret late Roman sources as reflecting chronic manpower shortages, which in turn are taken to reflect an actual demographic decline. It may be, however, that what the sources reveal is

³⁵² Richard Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings? Re-reading Early Medieval Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 2006), 10, 28, 33. Cf. Wickham, *Framing*, 303 – 14, who gives a figure of three million for Roman Britain in the fourth century, but only one million left in the lowlands ca. 500. Wickham postulates a near-total collapse of government, with political units ca. 500 of sub-county size—else the few Anglo-Saxon immigrants never could have prevailed.

³⁵³ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 29 – 38, 47 – 50, 187 – 9. It is only in this way, for example, that Hodges can speak of the sixth-century trade route across the Alps and along the Rhine as a pristine development.

³⁵⁴ Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe: Archaeology and the Pirene Thesis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 30 – 53. The Mediterranean was, they say, in a “prehistoric” condition from ca. 640 to the mid-ninth century (p. 75).

³⁵⁵ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 80 – 116.

³⁵⁶ See the discussion in Section 5.1 above. As discussed there in subsection *Economy and demographics*, the minimal population figure for Gaul in the sixth century is around six million or about 50 per cent of what it was at its Roman-era height.

³⁵⁷ See Section 4.1, subsection *The end of the Roman Mediterranean*.

a discrepancy between the needs of the Roman state and the interests of the people.³⁵⁸

Harrison then addresses changes in settlement pattern:

Moreover, regression in one kind of settlement (such as the *villae*) does not imply a necessary population decrease, but rather the restructuration (sic) of settlement.³⁵⁹

This observation of Harrison's is appropriate in the case of Gaul and the great changes in rural habitation noted there in the fourth and fifth centuries.³⁶⁰ Even increases in forest cover may signify free pig-farmers in forest huts replacing villages and villas of agrarian *coloni* and *servi*. Moreover, as Harrison points out, there is the question of interest on the part of researchers and the visibility of evidence:

A 'crisis' might therefore reflect a low level of interest among archaeologists rather than a historical period of decay. It may also reflect the inability of modern scholars to interpret the remains.³⁶¹

Pessimistic observations have been offered regarding changes in early medieval housing styles. Almost everywhere, post-built timber houses replace stone, brick, and tile structures, with apparent loss of skill in a wide range of building techniques.³⁶² But it is a cultural prejudice of sorts to assume that people living in timber buildings must necessarily have degraded lifestyles. An interesting datum comes from early medieval Luni, in Italy: in the sixth century it had barbarian post-built houses but also Byzantine coins and eastern Mediterranean amphorae and glass.³⁶³ Clearly, building style has no necessary correlation with presence or absence of sophisticated trading connections. Moreover, we have seen that settlements of timber-built houses and barns signified a high

³⁵⁸ Harrison, "Plague, Settlement and Structural Change," 15 – 16. See further in the discussion of Wickham below.

³⁵⁹ Harrison, "Plague, Settlement and Structural Change," 33.

³⁶⁰ See Section 4.1, subsection *The Antonine plague* and section 4.2, subsection *Justinian's plague* above.

³⁶¹ Harrison, "Plague, Settlement and Structural Change," 34. A good instance of this phenomenon is the attitude of British archaeologists toward their "dark earth" layers.

³⁶² Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*, 95 – 6, 108 – 9, contrasts the superiority of the former with the squalor of the latter. Hodges and Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe*, 82, speak of timber buildings amid decaying masonry in Britain from the fourth century onwards.

³⁶³ Hodges and Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe*, 30 – 2. Along the same lines, Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*, 110 – 11, admits that the negative changes he notes may be due to a shift in cultural preferences, and that from post-holes alone it is not possible to tell whether the superstructures they bore were plain or fancy.

level of agricultural productivity, crafts production, and social stability both in Germany (Lauchheim, Büraburg-Fritzlar) and in Denmark (Vorbasse, Gudme); indeed, such settlements signified rapidly evolving socio-political conditions in Denmark, and in Germany and northern Gaul they were the necessary socio-economic foundation for the subsequent Carolingian and Ottonian political superstructures.³⁶⁴

None of this impresses the primitivists. The “degradation” in building styles and materials is held to accompany a steady demise of Roman urban life. Everywhere, says Hodges, “it is now clear that virtually every Roman center was either reduced to small-scale elite homesteads by the later seventh century (if not before) or totally deserted.”³⁶⁵ Even in the Mediterranean, says Hodges, where the imperial economy lingered into the sixth century and towns continued for a while as centers of demand and distribution, imperial society had collapsed and shantytowns filled the ruins of the Mediterranean urban landscape, in which artisans hung on, hoping for “a revival of Byzantine fortunes” that never came.³⁶⁶ According to Randsborg, late Roman fortified sites also disappeared 600 – 800, replaced by new royal centers such as Ingelheim. Only Roman roads and ecclesiastical structures remained to link, eventually, the Roman towns to High Medieval towns.³⁶⁷

We have seen, however, that there is much evidence for significant continuity of Roman towns throughout Gaul and on the Rhine as well as in Italy. In Gaul, major centers that thrived during the Merovingian period include at least Köln, Metz, Rheims, Paris, Bordeaux, and Marseilles.³⁶⁸ As Bachrach has shown, the made-over late Roman towns in Gaul with their fortifications and churches remained a permanent part of the

³⁶⁴ Henning, “Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe,” 45, 48. For developments in Germany and Denmark, see Section 5.2, subsection *Alamannia and the Rhine* and Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* above.

³⁶⁵ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 10.

³⁶⁶ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 23, 25 – 6. For contrast, see the far more nuanced discussion of fifth- and sixth-century Italy in Federico Marazzi, “The Destinies of the Late Antique Italies: Politico-Economic Developments of the Sixth Century,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 119 – 59.

³⁶⁷ Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 87, 90.

³⁶⁸ See in Section 4.4, subsection *Structural changes of the third and fourth centuries* and section 5.1, subsection *Economy and demographics* above.

landscape—hardly ruined or deserted.³⁶⁹ New royal centers such as the Carolingian palaces at Aachen and Ingelheim were a response to evolving needs, but were situated in relationship to existing centers such as Köln and Mainz. Finally, the very existence of the towns and new building both in and outside of them implies a continuation, in Gaul at least, of a high degree of artisanal competence. Not just metalwork, but also glass making, stone carving, tile and brick making, and mass production of some pottery types remained in practice.³⁷⁰ Merovingian society was fully capable of building and furnishing richly appointed spaces when it had a mind to do so—churches, for example.³⁷¹ One might also remark on the build-up of ecclesiastical infrastructure in Northumbria in the later seventh century, the scale and quality of which proves both wealth and artisanal competence.³⁷²

Perhaps the most grievous charge that is laid at the feet of the early Middle Ages is that of loss of basic competency in the manufacture of ordinary, everyday goods. So Duby has asserted that “we should keep in view the overall picture of a poorly equipped agrarian society forced to tackle the natural environment virtually bare handed.”³⁷³ Such a view cannot apply to Henning’s Hessian villagers, who used heavy iron pitch-forks and long scythes as part of a sophisticated, value-added agricultural system.³⁷⁴ But none of this impresses the primitivists. In Gaul after 400, crafts production collapsed, say Hodges

³⁶⁹ Bachrach, “Imperial Walled Cities in the West”; idem, “Fifth Century Metz.”

³⁷⁰ See again Périn, “Settlements and Cemeteries,” 75 – 7; and Wickham, *Framing*, 795 – 8. Discussion in Section 5.1, subsection *Economy and demographics* above.

³⁷¹ On the small but rich churches of the fifth and sixth centuries, see again Gauthier, “From the Ancient City to the Medieval Town,” 57 – 61.

³⁷² For the implied wealth of Northumbria, see the comments by Campbell, “Production and Distribution,” 17 – 18. More generally, English and specifically Northumbrian architectural achievements are described in Charles B. McClendon, *The Origins of Medieval Architecture: Building in Europe, A.D. 600 – 900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 59 – 84. McClendon’s study demonstrates that our impression of early medieval western European architecture is formed largely from the dearth of surviving evidence: almost everything has been torn down, replaced or remodeled by later ages. In particular, the interior plastering and fresco painting is almost always gone, so that we have little opportunity to imagine the splendor that the buildings had in their original state.

³⁷³ Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 16.

³⁷⁴ Joachim Henning, “Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe,” 45 – 6. The evidence from early medieval German and Danish villages should lay to rest also the trope of endemic starvation among early medieval peasants. These village societies were well able to feed themselves. The Danish evidence suggests that peasant communities regularly had surplus to trade, as well.

and Whitehouse.³⁷⁵ Further, “in many areas the archaeology of consumption—notably household goods—is virtually invisible,” says Hodges.³⁷⁶

The same is asserted by Ward-Perkins. Rome had produced quantities of high-quality goods with wide distribution at all levels, so that good pottery (as an archaeologically visible example) might be found even at a peasant homestead; in the late and post-Roman layers in most places, such objects are scarce or often nonexistent.³⁷⁷ The end of the Roman period meant not just a qualitative change or a reduction in scale but the “disappearance of whole industries and commercial networks” with no more market for “low-value functional goods”; further, “post-Roman Britain in fact sank to a level of economic complexity well below that of the pre-Roman Iron Age.”³⁷⁸ Only craftsmen involved in making prestige objects such as jewelry and fine metalwork maintained their skills, but their products were available only to a select few. As conclusive proof, he offers the Sutton Hoo burial, where marvelous gold-garnet clasps are matched with a miserably poor clay bottle—the best imported pottery of which anyone in East Anglia in 625 could conceive.³⁷⁹

Ward-Perkins’ assertions regarding the level of craft-production available in early seventh-century Anglo-Saxon England return us to the complex of issues at the heart of the primitivist interpretation of early medieval Europe: a degraded subsistence economy, supporting a devolved elite of chiefs and warriors (and clergy), whose most conspicuous products are prestige items—especially those made out of precious metals—that are produced under elite auspices and circulate among the ranks of the elite through cycles of gift-giving and plunder. Primitive economy, primitive polities.

For Duby, these are the preconditions for a society that ran on non-market principles: “First, this uncivilized world was wholly imbued with the habit of pillaging and with the need for offering.”³⁸⁰ Leaders, that is, through a combination of sharing out their wealth to followers plus making offerings to the spiritual (either pagan or Christian),

³⁷⁵ Hodges and Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe*, 83

³⁷⁶ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 25.

³⁷⁷ Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*, 88 – 94, 104 – 6.

³⁷⁸ Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*, 117 – 18.

³⁷⁹ Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*, 117 – 19.

³⁸⁰ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 48.

keep up an open flow of wealth throughout the society: “a considerable proportion of what was produced was drawn into the heavy traffic in necessary generosity.”³⁸¹ Duby insists, however, that this circulation cannot be considered trade, and that renders problematical the origin of all the wealth that he believes to be so circulating. Part of it must be plunder, and part created by the special craftsmen that were kept by the rulers, both western barbarian and Byzantine, to turn out dazzling, rich objects for purposes of representation and display.³⁸² Nevertheless, Duby also says that buying and selling with money was normal: “the fruits of peasant toil inevitably entered the world of commerce.” True trade expanded, but this was only “the very gradual and incomplete dovetailing of an economy of pillage, gift and largesse into a framework of monetary circulation.”³⁸³ Thus paradoxically, while Duby emphasizes the system of “necessary generosity,” he all but admits that this system could not really function unless it was tapping into a real economy of production and trade. Still, from Duby, we are left with no clear way to evaluate the mechanics of this relationship.

For Hodges also, the market economy has disappeared along with the Roman empire. He suggests that the Germans had not grasped fully the importance of the market system.³⁸⁴ This is typical of Hodges’ assumptions. We have seen ample evidence that the peoples to the north of the Roman frontiers understood Roman markets very well, and, indeed, were eager to participate in them.³⁸⁵ Hodges also speculates that the economy of Roman Gaul “was sustained in part to provide for the mortuary rite” of the Germans.³⁸⁶ In context, this formulation heightens the sense of a market economy undermined by a primitive cultural outlook. The truth is, nevertheless, that before goods can be destroyed in competitive rituals—placed, for instance, in votive deposits or in graves—someone had to produce them, and they represent, therefore, real production: labor, materials, expertise, investment. Whether the sacrificed material was made originally by the people executing the sacrifice or by others, in most instances we should

³⁸¹ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 48 – 51.

³⁸² Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 52 – 3, 56.

³⁸³ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 47, 57.

³⁸⁴ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 30.

³⁸⁵ See the discussion in Section 5.2, subsection *Trade and instability* above.

³⁸⁶ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 30.

assume that what is sacrificed represents only a fraction of what the living own and enjoy. This allows us to glimpse the level of power, wealth, and productivity of the societies that are engaged through the rituals, even if the ritual activity itself seems non-productive from a modern economic viewpoint.

Richard Hodges' modeling of sixth- and seventh-century political and economic conditions in northwestern Europe expressly depends on the reality of a near total break from Rome and a society rebuilding itself virtually from zero. Duby, coming from a substantivist position, could emphasize "embedded" transactions without having necessarily to suppress all references to market-oriented production. In Hodges' models, however, there is a much closer and much more exclusive bond between the shape and functionality of the economic exchange system on one side and the level of political organization on the other side.³⁸⁷

The clearest exposition of this comprehensive political-economic theorizing is from Hodges in collaboration with Whitehouse. Early medieval European kingdoms, they say, are at the evolutionary stage of "complex chiefdoms or incipient states." Further: "The economic correlates of such systems are not competitive markets. Instead the elites within these kinds of society foster administered markets in which the artisan classes are small and are usually affiliated to the elite." Long-distance trade partnerships are revealed archaeologically when concentrations of imports appear at places distant from their origins, and these trade relations also must be regulated by the elite. Specifically, *emporium* sites embody these aims, and are "one of the hallmarks of a complex pre-market economy and a complex pre-state society. . . . Inter-regional market-places do not exist in pre-state societies, and the mode of production and distribution is far simpler and centrally organized."³⁸⁸

One aspect of the economic modeling proposed by Hodges (and Whitehouse) fails immediately: the Merovingian kingdoms cannot be regarded as "complex pre-state societies." As discussed above, the Merovingian state that Clovis founded was a nearly seamless continuation of late Roman governance in northern Gaul. Moreover, the

³⁸⁷ See again Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 11 – 27, for the origins of the models that he applies. An especially prominent influence in the evolution of the modelling is that of Colin Renfrew in the 1970s.

³⁸⁸ Hodges and Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe*, 91 – 3.

political economy of Merovingian Gaul depended on a complex distribution of southern resources and revenues among the northern courts, prominent among which were tolls collected on thriving international commerce, overseen by royal officials.³⁸⁹ These are not the arrangements of a chiefdom but of a state.³⁹⁰ So are the Merovingian military structures, both their mobile forces and their fortified cities.³⁹¹ Frankish kings distributed plunder among their troops—but so did Roman generals. During certain phases of its long career, the Roman state profited immensely from its ability to acquire the treasure and resources of others through the application of military force.³⁹² Unless in an Augustinian sense, however, no one, I think, would consider the Roman Republic of the third and second centuries BC to be a mere plunder-driven chiefdom. The occurrence of plunder as a component of Merovingian and, later, Carolingian warfare should not in itself allow us to make judgments regarding the primitiveness of these state systems.³⁹³

Similarly, though it is undoubtedly true that the Merovingian courts served as major re-circulation points for wealth and privileges among the kings and their elite followers, this fact alone should not allow us to consider that the Merovingian economy, as a whole, operated almost exclusively on the basis of gift-exchange. Here again the parallel with the Roman system is obvious: were the imperial courts not the distribution points of favors, gifts, offices, and indulgences to elite constituents? Are modern halls of government any less active in these functions? The conclusion to be drawn should be that all political systems distribute unearned benefits to privileged persons, and that each

³⁸⁹ See the discussion in Section 5.1, subsections *The structure of the state* and *The Mediterranean connection* above.

³⁹⁰ See again Wickham, *Framing*, 102 – 15, 168 – 203, who analyzes the Merovingian state in terms of the changes in its tax system and in the remaking of its aristocracy. According to Wickham, these two elements are key to understanding and evaluating any political system; see more on Wickham's theories below.

³⁹¹ See again Bachrach, "Medieval Siege Warfare"; also Bernard S. Bachrach, "Quelques observations sur la composition et les caractéristiques des armées de Clovis," in *Clovis: histoire et mémoire*, ed. Michel Rouche (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997), 689 – 703.

³⁹² See Daphne Nash, "Imperial Expansion under the Roman Republic," in *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen (New Directions in Archaeology) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 89 – 93, for the efficacy of this procedure, especially in the third and second centuries BC. Most famously, of course, the spoils of the Third Macedonian War freed Italy from the burden of taxation as of 167 BC.

³⁹³ Timothy Reuter, "Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th series 35 (1985): 75 – 94, attempts to characterize the Carolingian empire as a plunder-based system, with a strong implication of its primitiveness.

will do so according to its kind. In the late Roman empire, “gifts” revolved around appointments to high bureaucratic offices and to favorable adjustments vis-à-vis the revenue process. In the Merovingian state, the issue was land grants and the distribution of treasure, reflecting the fact that a significant structural change in the political economy had intervened; nevertheless, both were state systems.³⁹⁴

Grierson’s list of non-commercial, socially or ideologically motivated types of exchange or disposal of material goods no doubt played a part in late Roman and early medieval societies. This would certainly be true in the case of certain prestige items—emblems of power too potent to let on the market, which must be given and received according to some other rationale. It was probably no more possible for your average barbarian aristocrat to buy gold-garnet insignia than for an ordinary Roman senator to purchase a diadem; accordingly, where such an item is found, a claim to special status or a diplomatic connection may be recognized. Doubtless, other special objects were heirlooms, or components of dowries, or rich rewards to distinguished followers. The question becomes, then: how many of the objects that we see in archaeological deposits might have, conceivably, been ordinary enough or sufficiently neutral in meaning for them to be traded and acquired simply as material objects without special ceremony?

Overwhelmingly, of course, it is the special items that tended to be placed in contexts where archaeologists are liable to find them—places like graves and votive deposits. Unless they were small things like coins that might easily be lost, most ordinary metal objects would have been recovered when worn, damaged, or out of fashion—never just discarded in the trash!—to be melted and recast or reforged. They remain invisible thereby, and it is only with new devices such as the metal detectors that we are beginning to appreciate just how much “ordinary” metal there may have been in these supposedly primitive societies. Objects made from perishable materials like wood and fiber tend to be even more invisible. But these are the items that likely would have been bought and sold in some fashion.

³⁹⁴ The arguments regarding Rome as a tax-based state and the Frankish kingdoms as a land-based state are summarized in Wickham, *Framing*, 56 – 61.

A certain proportion of the mobile wealth of Roman and early medieval societies was dedicated to acquiring intangible or ideological benefits, and, therefore, in a sense destroyed from a purely materialistic viewpoint.³⁹⁵ At different times, varieties of such behavior included votive deposits in north European bogs, treasures placed in graves, and wealth donated to the Church. As Wells points out, such “destruction,” especially in funerary contexts, is part of the negotiation of status among families or individuals in unstable or unsettled times. It should be observed, however, that periods of competitive sacrifice may occur in societies at many different stages of socio-political development. Danish society in the Roman Iron Age and the Row-grave culture of the fourth through sixth/early seventh centuries both engaged in competitive funerary display, through the placing of rich grave goods—but so did the Romans, as Randsborg points out, in the building of variably impressive stone tombs and sculpted epigraphs.³⁹⁶ In the Roman case, the behavior was in the context of a fully established, sophisticated state system, while in the Danish case it seems likely to represent a stage where a proto-state elite was evolving for the first time.

The case of the lands from Neustria to Bavaria, where the Row-grave phenomenon was localized, lies at an intermediate level—definitely a society with state-level institutions, but, as Wickham argues, representing a less efficient form of state than the Roman.³⁹⁷ The Franks had inherited a viable economic foundation in Gaul and the Rhineland provinces and were successfully operating a reduced form of Roman administration. The *Reihengräber* culture represents the process of sorting out and re-negotiating both the integration of Frank and provincial-Roman in northern Gaul and the Rhenish areas and the completion of the transition to a post-Roman, “simplified” form of society.³⁹⁸ A version of this process was working itself out also in Anglo-Saxon England.

³⁹⁵ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 54 – 5. “No form of investment could have been more unproductive than this, yet it was the only one to be widely practiced by this infinitely penurious society.”

³⁹⁶ Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 151 – 2. We might also recall the competitive banqueting behavior of the Roman elite, which involved the conspicuous waste of huge sums on exotic foods.

³⁹⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 56 – 124. Efficiency, in this case, is measured by how able the state is to collect and redistribute resources.

³⁹⁸ See the discussion in Section 4.3, subsection *Socio-cultural changes* and Section 4.4, subsection *Structural changes of the third and fourth centuries* above. Heiko Steuer, “Archaeology and History: Proposals on the Social Structure of the Merovingian Kingdom,” in *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider,

As Hodges says, the royal ship burial at Sutton Hoo of ca. 625 is the last great funerary destruction of movable goods in this part of Europe.³⁹⁹ In it we see not only a claim to a position of dominance on the basis of conspicuous destruction of wealth but a reflection of the far-flung exchange networks that could reach East Anglia at this time: there were goods from Britain, from Scandinavia, from continental Europe, and even from exotic lands to the east (cowrie shells, e.g.). The very plain ceramic bottle that was interred along with the precious metalwork and exotica probably contained imported Frankish wine—surely a luxury fit for a great king, which puts the item in better perspective for us.⁴⁰⁰

In terms of the battery of models that Hodges applies to the early medieval data, most sixth-century artifact distributions reflect “directed trade” or elite gift exchange. In other words, items are distributed to chosen recipients primarily for purposes of alliance building, or social networking, or in the context of patron-client relationships, rather than for the purpose of satisfying material needs.⁴⁰¹ Danish bracteates of the sixth century found in Frisia, Kent, Normandy, and Aquitaine represent “gift exchange between courts.”⁴⁰² So do the Frankish and Mediterranean prestige goods that come into Kent with Aethelbeht’s marriage to Bertha. Goods coming to southern England from the Seine or the Rhine are used mostly in feasting and in burial, Hodges says, and he hastens to add that “[t]he goods were given as gifts in a chain of directed relations rather than

1989), 100 – 22, tries to explain the Frankish political economy strictly on the basis of royal gifts to chosen individuals, who then signify their privileged status by converting part of the received wealth into funerary display. He ignores, thereby, the very real institutional structures within which Merovingian aristocrats negotiated their relationships.

³⁹⁹ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 34.

⁴⁰⁰ See again Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*, 117 – 19.

⁴⁰¹ Similarly, Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 121, asserts that long-distance exchanges of “luxuries” in Roman Iron Age *Germania libera* were done via “social links” *without reference to cost*, i.e. non-economically motivated. He asserts further that “no case exists of isolated trading activities” (p. 140); none that are “isolated,” that is, from complete embeddedness in an elite social process. His own data would seem to indicate that in fact there was quite a lot of plain trade, at least in the near-frontier areas and along the North Sea coast. The insistence on the mechanism of elite gift-exchange to explain transmission of almost all goods is a theoretical stance *chosen* by Randsborg, not one forced upon him by the data. See the more nuanced views on Roman – barbarian exchange of Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*; Peter S. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak: How the Conquered Peoples Shaped Roman Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); and Barry Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction* (New York: Methuen, 1988). Discussion in Section 3.4, subsection *Roman influence north above*.

⁴⁰² Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 33.

traded as cargoes.” Meanwhile, the western Baltic is getting Byzantine gold—either via eastern Europe or as “directed trade” from central Europe⁴⁰³

For the earliest, sixth-century phases of northwestern European development, Hodges speaks of all exchanges in terms of elite relationships and the “directed trade” model. African amphorae and ARS ceramics that are found around western Britain at this time illustrate, says Hodges, the “directional mode of this system aiming for central places and their persons.” So do the possible connections at this time between Aquitaine and Ireland. This is the context, according to Hodges, within which “we must envisage a system bringing tableware and wine and seeking slaves and possibly leather.” Dalkey island, near Dublin, probably was one site where this trade was expedited.⁴⁰⁴ Hodges’ elite-focused analysis is, however, introducing distortions at this point. Griffiths has argued that Irish Sea sites such as Dalkey Island were not elite centers:

I would suggest that continental imports arrived in the Irish Sea region not so much by a multiplicity of independent journeys, but through re-distribution at a beach market such as Dalkey. Slaves, leather, wool and furs are likely to have been the attraction for Gaulish or Iberian traders.⁴⁰⁵

Already in 1985, Astill warned that the exchange of prestige objects, the purpose of which is to “underpin social status,” must not be confused with the procurement of economic resources, even if both transactions are parts of a single set of negotiations; they represent two different types of value.⁴⁰⁶ Moreover, it seems quite clear that when the Mediterranean merchants come to the Irish Sea coasts, though their business model may include the delivery of luxuries to elite personages at central places, their own motive should be termed as profit in trade. Properly, Hodges here should be speaking of a “dendritic central place” exchange system, a model appropriate to the case of agents from a more market-oriented society establishing trade relations with a society for whom market-based trade is more peripheral.⁴⁰⁷ It is a pattern that often may imply colonial or center-periphery relations, and it is, in fact, what lies behind Cunliffe’s discussion of

⁴⁰³ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 33 – 4.

⁴⁰⁴ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 33, 37, 38.

⁴⁰⁵ Griffiths, “The Irish Sea Perspective,” 186. See Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters* above.

⁴⁰⁶ Astill, “Archaeology, Economics and Early Medieval Europe,” 221.

⁴⁰⁷ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 16 – 19.

Mediterranean – Temperate European trade in Gaul from the sixth to the first centuries BC.⁴⁰⁸ We may note that in the northwestern waters in the sixth century as earlier in Iron Age Gaul, trade relations provoked a wide range of responses and developments. Irish ships, it seems, were carrying on the trade with Aquitaine.⁴⁰⁹

When Hodges turns to Francia, he lists prestige goods for the courts of Austrasia and Neustria, gift exchanges, or “direct exchange for slaves” as the modes of engagement,⁴¹⁰ leaving the precise nature of the exchange system envisioned quite uncertain. Invoking yet another model developed in the 1970s, Hodges speculates that the activities of Jewish and Syrian traders “may indicate the mechanism by which these goods were moved from Italian to Rhenish or Parisian foci,” and a “down-the-line exchange network with central places/persons instead of a chain of villages may provide a spatial expression of this trading system.”⁴¹¹ In this way Hodges attempts to gather the potentially autonomous activity of the long-distance merchants under the umbrella of the elite prestige economy. To put things in this manner, of course, misses the overarching structure of the Merovingian political economy and the institutional controls that the Merovingians exercised over the activities of merchants.⁴¹² It should be noted that the primary interest of the Merovingian kings in the trade coming up from the Mediterranean was not in receiving prestigious “gifts”—though they surely obtained their share of imported luxuries—but in collecting tolls on the traffic. In other words, they were less concerned with monopolizing the imports for prestige purposes, and in directing this traffic to elite centers of consumption, than with making sure that the merchants moved through the royal toll-stations and surrendered a percentage of their cargoes to royal agents.

⁴⁰⁸ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*, 81 – 105. See discussion in Section 3.3, subsections *Transalpine trade: Greeks* and *Transalpine trade: Romans* above. Hodges himself refers to a “dendritic trade route northwards from the Rhine” from the Romans to the barbarians, which, however, he regards as having ceased by the fifth century. Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 29. That he fails to notice a similar pattern in the Irish Sea in the sixth century may be due to his presumption of primitiveness for this period.

⁴⁰⁹ See above in Section 5.1, subsection *The Mediterranean connection*.

⁴¹⁰ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 31.

⁴¹¹ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 31.

⁴¹² See again section 5.1, subsections *The structure of the state* and *The Mediterranean connection*.

For Hodges, it is essential to have all or nearly all exchange moving under elite auspices in order to set up the next stage in his theoretical scheme, namely, the emergence of what he calls the *emporium*.⁴¹³ In view of much of the sixth-century evidence, however, it seems that a more multi-valent scheme would come closer to the reality of the situation. Astill suggested as much in 1985: “it may be necessary to propose that goods were exchanged in various ways according to different standards.”⁴¹⁴ At the least, in the sixth and early seventh centuries we have the following exchange situations that do not directly involve elite gift-giving as the chief motivating circumstance. First, there is the import of high-value, exotic foodstuffs and luxury manufactures into southern Gaul from overseas; these are distributed northwards up the Rhône corridor at least as far as Paris. A similar long-distance trade system appears to link northern Italy across the Alps to the Rhine and thence to the Thames basin. In addition, there are Mediterranean entrepreneurs (or Iberian, or Gallic) trading in the Irish Sea, as well as a traffic in wine between western Gaul and Ireland. A network of short crossings connects Francia and Frisia on one side with England on the other side, evidenced by distributions of metalwork and wine bottles. Francia, Frisia, and England connect further with southern Scandinavia and the Baltic. And, finally, in Danish waters, landing places such as Lundeberg on Fyn serve not only to facilitate the import of prestige items for local elites but also effect the manufacture and distribution of items in more general demand, such as glass beads, antler combs, and bronze fibulae.

At the crux of the issue lies the interpretation one wishes to impose upon the archaeological record in places such as Kent, which now has revealed a range of “ordinary” trade goods in addition to rich items of prestige value. Both Astill and Huggett, for example, have suggested that free-lance traders were responsible for much of the distribution.⁴¹⁵ If much of the trade before the late sixth century was free-lance, then the kings ca. 600 were moving in on a going concern in order to limit and control it

⁴¹³ It is due more to Hodges than to anyone else that this term has become rooted in the scholarly discourse on early medieval trade in northwestern Europe. *Dark Age Economics*, 47 – 65.

⁴¹⁴ Astill, “Archaeology, Economics and Early Medieval Europe,” 222.

⁴¹⁵ See the discussion of Kent in Section 5.3 above, subsection *Northwestern waters*. In fairness it should be noted that Hodges also mentioned the possibility of free-lance trading activity, but adjudged it too difficult to assess, while the role of kings or their emissaries in forging trade links seemed, to Hodges, much more obvious. *Dark Age Economics*, 39.

for their own purposes.⁴¹⁶ Alternatively, and this is Hodges' position, an increasing traffic in prestige goods, under elite direction all along, led to the establishment of controlled market-places for the clearing of such goods—under royal auspices. The Frankish rulers promoted the rebirth of North Sea trade in the later sixth century, employing Frisians as intermediaries. They greatly expanded Quentovic and Dorestad, so setting loose, after ca. 670, a trading system of “a scale and complexity hitherto unimagined.”⁴¹⁷ Hamwih in Wessex and Ribe in Jutland were responses to the Frankish initiative, and followed the same model. Hodges distinguishes two types of *emporio*, or coastal trading site, of which Type A is a more intermittent and less closely controlled nodal point for long-distance trade and traders (in some ways like the Scandinavian “landing place” model), while type B operates continuously, is closely regulated by royal authority, but also does a much greater volume of trade.

Completing the series is a type C site, the “solar central place.”⁴¹⁸ Remarkably, this type of site, which Hodges sees emerging in the ninth century, presupposes the abandonment of long-distance international trade and a re-focus on local-region economic development, for which the type C site acts as an organizing hub. Hodges insists that the two, *emporio* vs. solar central places, represent discrete phases of political-economic development.⁴¹⁹ Both depend on royal mobilization; but we must ask: “how were major monopolistic centres, located in places to maximise long-distance trade, transformed into networks of markets. . . serving regions?”⁴²⁰ Hodges' dedication to the logic of his theories thus forces the evidence into a kind of procrustean bed, where

⁴¹⁶ Astill, “Archaeology, Economics and Early Medieval Europe,” 220 – 1. Cf. Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 121, 140 – 1, 144, who speaks of “monopolistic” arrangements impinging on the distribution of goods in several different situations from the Roman Iron Age or the Migration Age. Randsborg appears to be elaborating on Hodges' models.

⁴¹⁷ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 11.

⁴¹⁸ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 50 – 2. He borrows the concept (p. 16) from Carol A. Smith, “Exchange Systems and the Spatial Distribution of Elites: The Organisation of Stratification in Agrarian Societies,” in *Regional Analysis*, two volumes, ed. Carol A. Smith (New York: Academic Press, 1976), 2:309 – 74.

⁴¹⁹ In keeping with this notion, Hodges pronounces that the ninth-century transition from class B *emporio* to class C solar central places “was an expression of the transformation of much of Europe from kin-based political structures towards the creation of state systems.” Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 65.

⁴²⁰ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 14. An example of the latter type is the monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno—supposedly a monopolistic center for the manufacture, distribution, and political manipulation of prestige goods for a local area (p. 15).

regional markets and long-distance trade networks cannot coexist, while a more intuitive logic would consider that the two types of market are complementary.⁴²¹

Hodges complicates the picture further in a 1999 article in which he ostensibly repudiates his earlier thinking.⁴²² Referencing Van Es' extensive excavation of Dorestad,⁴²³ Hodges now asserts the importance of urbanization and local-regional economic development as against long-distance trading activities:

The long-distance trade model placed emphasis upon mercantilism rather than the evolution of urbanism. It encouraged an archaeology that concerned itself with the chronology of trade relations rather than how towns and trade played a critical role in the political formation of post-Roman Europe.⁴²⁴

Broad excavation has shown now, says Hodges, that places like Dorestad and Hamwic had, in fact, been regional centers "involved in agrarian and craft production" in which long-distance trade "was a limited waterfront activity."⁴²⁵ He goes on to postulate that the *emporium*, similarly to monasteries, were sustained in part through networks of satellite properties. In all of this he continues to insist, however, on the primary role of conscious policy-making on the part of the political elite. At one stage, says Hodges, "fluid peer-polity arrangements"⁴²⁶—Frankish royal initiatives and Anglo-Saxon, Frisian, and Danish reactions—created the type B *emporium*. At another stage, development shifted to the type

⁴²¹ See the criticism of Hodges on just such grounds from Ulriksen, "Danish Sites and Settlements with a Maritime Context," 808 – 9. See also Henning, "Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe," n. 54, in which he criticizes Hodges' focus on the elite as the movers of all economic development.

⁴²² Hodges, "Dark Age Economics Revisited: W. A. van Es and the End of the Mercantile Model in Early Medieval Europe," first published in *In Discussion with the Past: Archaeological Studies Presented to W. A. van Es*, ed. H. Sarfatij, W. J. H. Verwers, and P. J. Woltering (Zwolle: Foundation for Promoting Archaeology, 1999), 227 – 32; reprinted in *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 63 – 71.

⁴²³ The two most important publications on Dorestad are W. A. van Es, "Dorestad Centred," in *Medieval Archaeology in the Netherlands: Studies Presented to H. H. van Regteren Atsma*, ed. J. C. Besteman, J. M. Bos, et al. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990), 151 – 182; and W. A. van Es and W. J. H. Verwers, *Excavations at Dorestad I: The Harbour; Hoogstraat I* (Amersfoort: Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek, 1980).

⁴²⁴ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 63.

⁴²⁵ Van Es had combined rural archaeology approaches with mercantile models to arrive at his understanding of Dorestad. Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 64. This would have fairly well undermined the opposition between B- and C-type sites that Hodges had developed earlier.

⁴²⁶ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 71. For an introduction to peer-polity theory and its application to early medieval northwestern Europe see Colin Renfrew, "Introduction: Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-political Change"; and Richard Hodges, "Peer-Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change in Anglo-Saxon England"; both in *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change*, ed. Colin Renfrew and John F. Cherry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1 – 18 and 69 – 78, respectively.

C central marketing system—“ in line with Charlemagne’s economic strategy to integrate and enlarge his underdeveloped economy.”⁴²⁷

The foregoing is in need of some serious unscrambling. First, the obvious critique of Hodges’ 1999 position is, once again, that there is no necessary opposition between the development of long-distance trade and the development of local centers and local productive capacities. It must be clear that long-distance trade will be attracted to local economic development, while local economic development is stimulated and modified by the availability of long-distance trade contacts. Neither side in this essentially dialectical relationship needs to be given absolute priority. The type of local development and the character of long-distance exchange relationships will, of course, vary diachronically and spatially as different physical circumstances and different socio-economic structures may come into the equation.

It seems, however, that parallel strains of local development, including concentrated settlement areas, and long-distance transfer of various objects and materials, including both prestige items and more utilitarian resources, have been occurring in Temperate Europe for many millennia: in the Neolithic, in the Bronze Age, in the Iron Age, in the Roman period. Why should it not be so also in the early medieval age? It may be useful to organize *some* of our data from the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries in terms of elite Directed trade (sixth century), monopolistic Dendretic central-place systems (the *emporia*, seventh and eighth centuries), and Solar central places (ninth century). It is not necessary to imagine, however, that *all* economic and exchange activity in the respective periods happened exclusively or even primarily within the confines of the designated model.

Second, the standard typology of the early medieval northern *emporia* always has recognized that these sites involved intensive crafts production in addition to long-distance trade activities; Hodges’ own description of the *emporia* sites shows as much.⁴²⁸ Both the international trade and the crafts production were present, for example, at Lundeborg as early as the third century—long before the development of Dorestad, or

⁴²⁷ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings*, 67.

⁴²⁸ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 56 – 65. Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market,” Chapters 4, 5, and 6, discusses these aspects of the *emporia* sites much more fully.

Hamwic, or even Quentovic.⁴²⁹ While all of the aforementioned places have the characteristics that can classify them as *emporia*, they each fulfilled their function as trade-interface and production sites in rather different contexts. That is to say, the local socio-economic development at Gudme ca. AD 300 probably was still at a proto-state level, while King Ine's Wessex ca. 700 was already an institutionalized kingdom. Carolingian Dorestad, meanwhile, was supervised by an imperial bureaucracy and served as the northern entrepôt for the vast and economically complex Rhine basin. Naturally, the exact relationship of the denizens of the emporia—merchants and craftsmen—to the local authorities and local society may have been quite different in each case, and so also the means of sustenance for the exchange sites may have differed. Hamwic and Dorestad may have enjoyed networks of support properties, but the same seems very unlikely to have been true of *emporia* like eighth- and ninth-century Staraja Ladoga, or of those along the southern shore of the Baltic Sea that appeared early in the eighth century, when that hinterland probably was not yet highly developed.⁴³⁰

Another way to look at the preceding argument is within the larger context of the long-standing assumption that a strong correlation exists between the level of trade and the degree of urbanization. Pirenne's argument for the re-emergence of a mercantile class in high medieval Europe depended on this correlation.⁴³¹ More recently, this assumed correlation seems to lurk in the background behind much of the archaeologically-based research on early medieval northwestern Europe and Scandinavia; this can be seen from the titles of many of the pertinent publications.⁴³² If the equivalence between urbanization and commercialization is supposed to be strict and definitive, then that invites some far-reaching corollaries. To the extent that Roman

⁴²⁹ Ulriksen, "Danish Sites and Settlements with a Maritime Context," 808: "From its very beginnings [Lundeborg] was oriented towards crafts and trade; both find-material and site lay-out are virtually the same as at sites which came into use 400 – 500 years later under a different political-economic system."

⁴³⁰ The North Sea and Baltic Sea *emporia*, their networked connections, and their catchment areas will be discussed in Sections 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3 below.

⁴³¹ Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade*, trans. Frank D. Halsey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1925).

⁴³² A sample would include Clarke and Ambrosiani, *Towns in the Viking Age*; Johan Callmer, "Urbanization in Scandinavia and the Baltic Region c. AD 700 – 1100: Trading Places, Centres and Early Urban Sites," in *Birka Studies 3* (Stockholm, 1994), 50 – 90; Adriaan Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*; and Richard Hodges, *Towns and Trade in the Age of Charlemagne* (London: Duckworth, 2000).

towns diminished or disappeared, then, trade also must have diminished or disappeared, leaving the scene open for primitivizing models of step-by-step socio-economic reconstruction such as those used by Hodges. Likewise, trade cannot really reappear until proper towns reappear. In one sense, such an equation is correct. There is no doubt that urbanized agglomerations of people will require intensified supply and support structures—of which the imperial Roman *annona* system is one extreme example. However, lively and extensive production and trade networks may exist without towns just as they may exist without states. For our purposes, nowhere is this realization more crucial than for the Baltic Sea region of the eighth and ninth centuries, where urbanization was minimal but trading activity was prominent and ubiquitous.

Finally, there is the issue of elite control over exchange systems. There is no doubt that elites, would-be elites, and other persons may try and sometimes succeed in skewing, controlling, or even monopolizing various aspects of the exchange systems that operate within any given society.⁴³³ The question is whether elite control and direction is everywhere and always the prime driver of economic development and trade. For all that Hodges insists on the determinative role of leaders such as Charlemagne, it seems that royal initiatives often may be taken in reaction to ongoing developments. Here, again, Kent and the establishment of Quentovic in the late sixth century may be examples. If the emporia-building kings succeeded in channeling much of the exchange activity in the northern waters in the seventh and eighth century, this is still not to say that they *created* all of the activity. Whether we are speaking of Fyn and Sjælland in the third to fifth centuries or Francia and England in the sixth and seventh centuries, we will find that some kinds of production and distribution are very much controlled by the elites of the day, while others exist at a much broader-based level. At all levels, enterprising individuals may prosper by producing and carrying goods for different kinds of markets, operating under a wide variety of conditions and rules. We have already seen glimpses of such enterprise in the landing-places around Denmark, in the English Channel, in the

⁴³³ So, for example, Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 121, 140 – 4, speaks of “monopolization” in a wide range of situations pertaining to the Roman Iron Age and the Migration Age.

Irish Sea, at Marseille and in the Rhône corridor. In the following chapter we will see it in the activities of (among others) Venetians, Frisians, and Scandinavians.

If Hodges' economic-anthropological models and urbanization theory alone will not capture all the possibilities of exchange, what might? One comprehensive and unique position on the question is that held by Durliat, summarized in the *Sixth Century* volume.⁴³⁴ While he admits the existence of some kinds of trade in the late Roman period, especially around the Mediterranean coastlines, he rejects the existence of a mass market in staple goods. Government mandated price restrictions and transport difficulties subjected "le grand commerce" to rigid constraints and rendered it unprofitable for all but high-value items, so that inland cities especially had to subsist on their own resources, or starve if such proved insufficient.⁴³⁵ Only the state was capable of organizing the vast amounts of surplus necessary to feed the metropolitan centers, and the *ponction publique* ran around 20 percent under the Romans and in the Germanic kingdoms as well.⁴³⁶ Whether it is secular officials or bishops in charge, both in late Roman *and* early medieval periods it is the government that arranges for the collection, transport, and storage of staples. Money is little used, and merchants are not active agents of supply and demand but passive intermediaries. The object of trade, says Durliat, was to procure necessities that were locally unavailable, including such things as salt and metal and also—for the rich—luxury goods. It was not about marketing a hypothetical surplus.⁴³⁷

Durliat's vision has the virtue of being total. If there were no significant changes in fiscal arrangements and in the supply systems for staple goods between the late Roman and early medieval periods, then there also can be no question of a political-economic breakdown and, therefore, no need for models that presuppose such a breakdown. The drawback is the very limited scope that is left for the free-lance circulation of goods; at

⁴³⁴ Jean Durliat, "Les conditions du commerce au VI^e siècle," in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 89 – 117.

⁴³⁵ Durliat, "Les conditions du commerce au VI^e siècle," 96 – 8. Only salt and minerals, says Durliat, were included as relatively low-cost bulk items in "le grand commerce."

⁴³⁶ Durliat, "Les conditions du commerce au VI^e siècle," 100 – 1. On the taxes: Jean Durliat, *Les finances publiques de Diocletian aux Carolingiens (284 – 889)* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1990). See, however, Goffart, "Merovingian Taxation," for a more mainstream view.

⁴³⁷ "Le but premier du commerce est donc de procurer les biens indispensables qui manquent sur place, comme le sal, les produits miniers ou—pour les riches—les produits de luxe, non de vendre d'hypothétiques 'surplus'." Durliat, "Les conditions du commerce au VI^e siècle," 115.

least, such possibilities are overshadowed by the massive state-controlled bulk staples sector. Durliat's fundamental premise concerning the uninterrupted efficiency of the fiscal system has few adherents, however. Comparing the sixth- and seventh-century fiscal institutions of Byzantium, which did preserve the late Roman system relatively intact and continued to operate it, with those of the Merovingian kingdoms does not leave one very confident that the two were as equivalent as Durliat claims.⁴³⁸ Chris Wickham, for one, sees Byzantium and Merovingian Francia as two fundamentally different types of states, wherein the essential characteristic of the latter is the absence of strong taxing powers.⁴³⁹

A second alternative to Duby and Hodges are the matured theories of Chris Wickham, as presented in *Framing the Early Middle Ages*. Certain aspects of Wickham's theory of the early middle ages in Europe already have been touched upon. These include his analysis of late-Roman and post-Roman exchange networks in several regions, based on ceramics data; analysis of the level of state-formation in the same regions, based on the level of bureaucratic abstraction and ability to tax (or absence thereof); and analysis of the scale and behavior of the aristocracy in the respective regions.⁴⁴⁰ At the crux of Wickham's system lies the proposition that there is a direct positive correlation between the efficiency of the government and, therefore, the extent to which the elite can appropriate the surplus of the society on the one hand, and the general level of economic prosperity—productivity and commercial activity—that will be present in the society on the other hand.

An early version of this theory was presented in the *Birth of Europe* volume (1989).⁴⁴¹ There *was*, Wickham says, a break between the Roman and the Medieval, namely, a breakdown of the Roman state land tax. This in turn had a host of symptoms

⁴³⁸ For the Byzantine side see Michael F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c.300 – 1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁴³⁹ Wickham, *Framing*, 56 – 150, comparing all of his focus-areas from the point of view of their tax systems.

⁴⁴⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 56 – 150, 153 – 258, and 693 – 824, for the states, the aristocracies, and the exchange networks, respectively. See the discussion in Section 4.2, subsection *The annona transport and its effects*, and Section 5.1, subsection *The structure of the state* above.

⁴⁴¹ Chris Wickham, "Italy and the Early Middle Ages," in *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1989), 140 – 51.

and consequences. Landowners became stronger than the state. Building patterns changed. There was a shrinkage of international exchanges; many of which had been a function of the Roman state system that created artificial imbalances among the Mediterranean provinces, which all produced the same essential products. Africa, for example, retained more wealth now, and exported less. There was, however, no drastic de-urbanization or population collapse. Moreover, the peasants generally benefited from the changed circumstances. In fact, according to Wickham, “[t]he overall level and sophistication of material culture declined because the peasantry were better off.” It was only the Carolingian state which began to reverse the trend once more, raising again the level of elite control and increasing the general level of material prosperity and commerce but also increasing, once again, the level of exploitation of the commons.⁴⁴²

In the same volume, Hodges joined Wickham’s position, asserting that peasant poverty is proportional to the efficiency of the tax system, while peasant prosperity is tied to the expansion of the market system. In Britain, for example, says Hodges, post-Roman peasants “practiced a subsistence economy, paid no tax and lived relatively better than they had for centuries, though in materially restricted circumstances.” In the Carolingian period, the economy was restructured once more, especially by the monasteries, “creating a surplus for storage and subsequent sale.” Though the peasants lose rights, the increased commercialization brings prosperity also to the villages; therefore, it would be wrong to speak of a class struggle here.⁴⁴³

The paradox asserted by Wickham and supported by Hodges—that peasants under reduced state systems retain more wealth but that the level of material sophistication and availability of goods becomes diminished for them as it does for everyone else—has radical implications. It sets new light on the collapse of many Roman-period industries of mass production and on the abandonment of some forms of material sophistication—

⁴⁴² The quote is in Wickham, “Italy and the Early Middle Ages,” 148. Notably, in spirit if not in all details, Wickham’s outline is echoed in Dick Harrison’s piece of almost the same vintage. Harrison, “Plague, Settlement and Structural Change.”

⁴⁴³ Richard Hodges, “Archaeology and the Class Struggle in the First Millennium A.D.,” in *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg, 178 – 87. Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1989), 178 – 87; the quotes are on pp. 181 and 185. Throughout this article, Hodges calls stridently for a history of the early Middle Ages to be written from the point of view of the peasant producers rather than the elite managers.

baths and indoor heating systems, for example—that are mourned so eloquently by Ward-Perkins.⁴⁴⁴ It also calls into question the traditional primitivist images of early medieval scarcity, haplessness, starvation and squalor that appear in Doehaerd and Duby.⁴⁴⁵ In addition, Wickham’s viewpoint reverses the presumption that early medieval lords exercised a dominance over the laboring classes proportional to the supposed material degradation of the latter.⁴⁴⁶

Wickham does not disparage the peasants. On the contrary, using Denmark as his prime example, he considers that peasant-dominated societies before the emergence of state-level socio-economic structures can enjoy elevated material comfort, prosperity, and autonomy.⁴⁴⁷ Without the pressure of elite demands for more surplus production in the form of rents and labor services, however, peasant societies will tend to work less and correspondingly reduce the level of demand that they generate: surplus will be consumed in feasts and community feasts, and rates of population growth may drop to avoid pressures to work harder. In fact, the characteristics that commonly have been interpreted as “failures” or “inferiority” of the early Medieval socio-economic scene—relative lack of economic specialization, relative lack of scale and complexity in artisanal production, relatively simple agrarian technologies, and restricted population—can be seen as logical results of a peasant dominated society, according to Wickham. “Markets for external, commercial exchange exist, but they are marginal in most versions of the peasant mode.”⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁴ Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*, 87 – 120.

⁴⁴⁵ Renée Doehaerd, *The Early Middle Ages in the West: Economy and Society*, trans. W. G. Deakin (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company, 1978), 1 – 22; Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 5 – 30. As noted in the discussion in Section 2.2 above, both Doehaerd and Duby present much evidence for prosperity and competence; however, they hold to an editorial stance that maintains the opposite condition.

⁴⁴⁶ “By means of their rights over land, kings, noblemen, cathedral clergy and monks accumulated in their barns, cellars and storerooms a considerable proportion of what this wild, unprofitable countryside and destitute peasantry produced.” Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*, 42. Since Duby is imprecise about his time frame, however, it could be supposed that this statement might refer to the resurgence of elite-organized commerce in the eighth and ninth centuries, not to the sixth and seventh centuries when elite dominance would have been at its lowest ebb, according to Wickham and Hodges.

⁴⁴⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 495 – 8.

⁴⁴⁸ Wickham, *Framing*, 535 – 50. The quote is on p. 537. See, however, Angeliki E. Laiou, “The Early Medieval Economy: Data, Production, Exchange and Demand,” in *Long Morning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 99 – 104. On the one hand, she accepts Wickham’s thesis: “The correspondence he establishes between elite wealth and exchange is compelling” (p. 102). On the other hand, she raises important

Alternatively, where society is more elite-dominated, accumulations of surplus in its hands will support a level of demand stable enough to engender elaboration and specialization in artisanal production and greater complexity in the patterns of exchange. Elite wealth is based on the extent of their land holdings, on the intensity of their exploitation of dependents, and on access to the spoils of the tax system. All over early medieval Europe, says Wickham, a kind of “leopard pattern” of greater concentrations of lordly (including royal and ecclesiastical) power in some places and of greater peasant-domination in other areas characterizes the landscape. Among the largest “spots” of elite dominance is northern France, which can be recognized by the more extensive distributions of ceramics, glass, and metal in that area and the presence of wealthier landowners and larger estates.⁴⁴⁹

Wickham’s theories, like Hodges’ models, place emphasis on the mobilizing role of elites.⁴⁵⁰ Wickham’s system has the advantage, however, of combining and balancing more successfully aspects of market forces and social forces that can and do intermingle in transactions.⁴⁵¹ Importantly, Wickham recognizes that so long as something tangible is transferred, any transaction is also an economic transaction—there are expectations of compensation, in other words, and such expectations operate at all socio-economic levels, from the most simple to the most complex. The essential point, says Wickham, is the

questions concerning the effects of peasant capacity for self-initiated innovation, for complex production, and the effects of aggregate low-level demand on long-distance exchange systems. While the thrust of Laiou’s comments is to suggest that autonomous peasant communities might support *more* sophisticated and complex economic systems than Wickham supposes, the critique of Wickham in Roger Collins, “Making Sense of the Early Middle Ages,” review article, *English Historical Review* 124 (2009): 60 – 4, goes in the opposite direction. He ridicules the entire notion of a “peasant mode of production,” which in its pure form indeed presupposes the absence of a state, and is at pains to highlight Wickham’s marxist connections. Overall, Collin’s review is entertaining, but it misses the point of Wickham’s theory.

⁴⁴⁹ Wickham, *Framing*, 535 – 6, 540 – 50. For a concise restatement of the thesis, see Wickham, “Rethinking the Structure of the Early Medieval Economy,” *passim*.

⁴⁵⁰ See, however, the challenge to this view brought by Henning in “Strong Rulers—Weak Economy?” 45 – 53. Henning characterizes the eighth and ninth centuries in the Carolingian realm as a period of economic retrogression, stagnation or—at the least—of a sidetracking of the strong post-Roman development of the Merovingian period. Henning sees a revival of coerced labor and the villa system (bi-partite estates, now) as the villain behind it. In other words, in this case an increase in elite power had a counterproductive effect.

⁴⁵¹ Wickham, “Rethinking the Structure of the Early Medieval Economy,” 19 and 30, introduces and concludes the restatement of his thesis with the assertion that linkages between the two prevailing approaches to the study of early medieval economic development, the “production model” and the “distribution model,” had never been properly theorized, hitherto.

scale of the economy, which is equivalent to the complexity of the economy. At a simple level, as in peasant production modes, there can be extensive but local and small-scale exchanges: on the basis of social reciprocity, through ad hoc sale by producers, sale at local markets. Exchange at this level is always present, as is a trade in luxuries. The latter, however, by definition will always be marginal to the rest of the economy.⁴⁵² Therefore, says Wickham, what matters for the analysis is not the presence of a trade in luxuries but the scale of the economy that supports that luxury trade, and scale will be achieved as producers, especially peasants, feel secure enough to risk specialization; i.e., risk dependence on the market to supply an increasing portion of basic needs. A fully scaled market economy, therefore, will feature bulk production and exchange of basic foodstuffs, artifacts, and building materials.⁴⁵³ As Wickham sums up:

These are the main items in all large-scale exchange networks in world history up to the nineteenth century. . . . They are, quite simply, the principle markers of the scale of any economic system, if they exist at all.⁴⁵⁴

There is an equivalence, then, between scale and complexity, and systems will gain in complexity as elites gain in power and wealth.⁴⁵⁵ Further, Wickham ties these propositions together with the peasant-prosperity paradox: “elaborate productive patterns and large-scale bulk exchange are above all signs of exploitation and of the resultant hierarchies of wealth.”⁴⁵⁶ The private demand and redistributive actions of wealthy elites can support and provoke the movement and production of increasing numbers of goods, some of which will become available to the poorer classes; whereas if the elites are poor, then the market depends on the demand of the poorer classes and will shrink. In other

⁴⁵² Note the similarity in attitude here to Durliat, “Les conditions du commerce au VI^e siècle,” 107, 117, who likewise takes a marginal view of the luxury trade, emphasizing that the “real economy” concerns trade in bulk staples.

⁴⁵³ The preceding paragraph is a summary of the argument in Wickham, *Framing*, 695 – 9. Note the similarity in emphasis with Durliat. Unlike Durliat, however, Wickham says that the early medieval period is characterized by an abeyance of trade in bulk staples.

⁴⁵⁴ Wickham, *Framing*, 700. As basic bulk items Wickham lists: grain, wine, oil, live animals, fish; ironwork, woodwork, cloth, leatherwork, ceramics; stone, timber; copperware, bronzework, glass (pp. 699 – 700).

⁴⁵⁵ As the general economy gains in wealth and scale, there is a corresponding increase in the scale of the luxury trades as well. The Roman period trade in marble, a luxury building material, could assume bulk proportions, for example. Wickham, *Framing*, 696.

⁴⁵⁶ Wickham, *Framing*, 707.

words, poorer elites make poorer production systems, and peasants will have “less access to goods that were not local, or that require productive complexity.”⁴⁵⁷ Finally, Wickham asserts that most exchange was *intra*-regional, and it was only as economic complexity returned in one area after another that these areas “ventured back into interregional exchange.” Long-distance routes and networks, like those studied by McCormick, are important, but they are not the crux of development.⁴⁵⁸

The virtue of Wickham’s system lies in its ability to comprehend both material and social aspects of historical situations and unite them in a fluid calculus that has a considerable degree of explanatory power. At the same time, it avoids the kind of primitivizing judgments that bedevil the theories of Duby and Hodges. In particular, Wickham gives proper due to the strength of the Frankish state and its economic complexity, even in the poorly documented depths of the sixth and seventh centuries. He reveals the economic potential of Denmark. Instead of an artificial opposition between *emporia* or long-distance trade nodes and “solar- central places” or local market centers, Wickham’s theory shows them as components of a single economic system that was evolving steadily in complexity from the Merovingian to the Carolingian period. As will be discussed in the next chapter, northwestern Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries saw growth both in bulk trade and in luxury trade.

It seems, nevertheless, that Wickham’s system does not capture all possible variations. The equation between material elaboration and social hierarchy fails in Ireland, for example, where an extremely complex social system existed on a material base which, by all accounts, was exceedingly modest.⁴⁵⁹ In the Irish case, social complexity is revealed by written sources, especially legal texts. Such sources do not exist for Denmark at this time, which leaves open the possibility that Danish society could have been far more advanced in the direction of a state level society than can be read from the archaeological material alone.⁴⁶⁰ There is also the issue of long-distance

⁴⁵⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 706 – 7.

⁴⁵⁸ Wickham, *Framing*, 707 – 8.

⁴⁵⁹ See the discussion of Ireland in Wickham, *Framing*, 354 – 64. See also the comment on Irish towns in Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 47 – 9.

⁴⁶⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 364 – 9, on the Danish polity. Wickham steadfastly refuses to grant statehood to Denmark until sometime in the Viking Age—essentially beyond the period covered in his study.

trade and, particularly, the trade in luxuries to reconsider. Wickham concedes the existence of such trade even at the simplest developmental stages. But while it may be true that, generally speaking, most production and exchange occurs locally and intra-regionally, the additional stimulus that accrues from long-distance and luxury trading may, though a small percentage of the whole, have a large effect on long-term economic growth. This idea will be developed further in the following chapter.⁴⁶¹

In contrast to the theory-minded Hodges and Wickham, McCormick's approach seems strikingly atheoretical. Hints of theory appear in the form of McCormick's evident interest in "the spatial patterns of human movement" and in the effects of large aggregations of population on both movement and exchange—"the 'social mass' model of human interaction."⁴⁶² In contrast to the views of Wickham just noted above, McCormick emphasizes the importance of systems of long-distance contact: "Linking supply and demand over distance is essential to economic specialization which, in turn, is critical to economic growth."⁴⁶³ Behind these considerations seems to lie an acceptance of standard modern economic theory; he wonders, for example, why the *ARS* manufacturers and other Roman entrepreneurs failed to take advantage of "economies of scale" and organize themselves into larger concerns.⁴⁶⁴

In his *Origins of the European Economy*, McCormick focused on establishing facts of movement—both people and objects—across (primarily) Mediterranean spaces in the eighth and ninth centuries. While he noted the various types and purposes of movement—pilgrims, diplomats, merchants, slaves; relics, coins—the individual

Randsborg, *First Millennium*, 69, 181 – 5, sees the emergence of a Danish state ca. 1000. Näsman, "Justinianic Era of South Scandinavia," 257 – 9, 269, postulates a Danish kingdom in the sixth century on circumstantial evidence.

⁴⁶¹ In the early modern period, trans-oceanic trade accounted for only a small percentage of the European economy, yet it is generally accepted that this trade was an important spur to the accumulation of wealth for those European nations that engaged in it.

⁴⁶² McCormick, *Origins*, 64 – 7. The quotes are on pp. 65 and 66. McCormick evokes "social mass theory" as part of his discussion of the shift in shipping from the western to the eastern Mediterranean (p. 105). His reference for the theory is John Carl Lowe and S. Moryada, *The Geography of Movement* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975).

⁴⁶³ McCormick, *Origins*, 64.

⁴⁶⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 58 – 9. Similar notes have been sounded by others: Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, 189 – 90; Durliat, "Les conditions du commerce au VI^e siècle," 107. Such queries entirely beg the question of whether "capitalist" forms of organization are in fact more efficient and more desirable than other forms.

motivations were less important in the aggregate than the fact of movement and connection.⁴⁶⁵

In effect, to interpret the data in this way is to escape the constraints of social theory, and this realization has immediate application to the present study. Actual verbal content from the peoples and cultures of most of northern Europe in the early Middle Ages is minimal, to say the least, and likely irretrievable. What we do have, however, is a large and growing record of the occurrences of various physical objects and materials throughout the territory of northern and Temperate Europe. Markets and long-distance exchanges can and do exist at all socio-economic levels from the simplest to the most complex. So does entrepreneurship, or the active agency of individuals in purposefully producing things and moving them from one location to another. What people are thinking while they produce things or participate in exchanges, while they are manipulating and transporting all manner of objects and materials, is less important than the fact that energy is, in fact, being expended to manipulate and to transport. And we may note the volume of material flows, and the directions that they take, without necessarily knowing the social context of the movements.⁴⁶⁶ Nevertheless, as McCormick also says, “All the data in the world will not take us toward what really happened if we fail to organize the new data into plausible economic systems.”⁴⁶⁷

On a final note, McCormick is a great enthusiast for all manner of innovative data-sources or techniques. He has spoken several times of a “molecular approach” to the early Middle Ages.⁴⁶⁸ For example, now DNA can be used to identify the presence,

⁴⁶⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, passim.

⁴⁶⁶ This paragraph outlines the approach that I have attempted to take in the present study.

⁴⁶⁷ Michael McCormick, “Part One: Discovering the Early Medieval Economy,” in *Long Morning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 15. In a sense, McCormick’s statement here reflects the positivist attitude that once was expressed by Ranke—that the historian’s purpose is to reconstruct the past “wie es eigentlich war.” Positivism has been out of fashion of late. Nevertheless, as Carlrichard Brühl has remarked more recently, there are worse things than to be labeled a Positivist: “Wer mich darum einen ‘Positivisten’ schelten will, der mag dies getrost tun. Ich kann mir schlimmere Vorwürfe denken als diesen.” Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas—Gallien*, 1.

⁴⁶⁸ Michael McCormick, “Toward a Molecular History of the Justinianic Pandemic,” in *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 290 – 312. Also idem, “Molecular Middle Ages: Early Medieval Economic History in the Twenty-First Century,” in *Long Morning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 83 – 97. Here, McCormick identifies electronic searches in digitized manuscripts, archaeology, and the application to historical questions of

movements, and origins of a vast variety of organic substances and entities, including microbes, people, parchment, food crops, animals.⁴⁶⁹ Further, spectroscopic analysis can help determine the places of origin of metals and of ceramic fabrics. Metal-detecting can locate great numbers of hitherto invisible objects all over the landscape. Soil phosphate content analysis can determine the presence of past human settlement activity in the absence of other remains. The list of new techniques could be extended. All of them contribute vast amounts of new data, which tends to reinforce the growing realization that a great deal of important history happened in times and places that have been poorly represented by traditional sources of information such as written documents and classical archaeology. In particular, new and old methods of data-gathering are revealing a greater density and complexity of human occupation and activity in many parts of early medieval northwestern, central, and northern Europe.

5.5 Conclusion

Along with Chapter 4, the present chapter has sought to survey both the continuities and the changes that characterized Temperate Europe and the Mediterranean from the third to the seventh centuries. The survey has shown that the Roman imperial system, as it existed ca. AD 200, did not survive as a structural whole. Chapter 4 discussed the course of transformation in the Roman Mediterranean. Here in Chapter 5, the discussion has focused on the equally far-reaching changes in Temperate Europe. On the whole, however, despite the overarching structural changes, few areas experienced catastrophic collapse. This is as true of the Temperate European areas surveyed here as it was of the Mediterranean lands considered in the previous chapter. In both regions, the record shows that post-imperial conditions could vary strikingly from one local area to another, and that components of the previous system persisted or dwindled at different rates and quite unevenly from one local area to another.

Along the Temperate European frontier of Rome, trade between Roman provinces on one side and autonomous barbarian peoples on the other side had been well

scientific or molecular techniques as the three leading edges of the new, greatly expanding data base for early medieval history. In his discussion, he focuses on the last of the three.

⁴⁶⁹ McCormick, "Molecular Middle Ages," 85 – 97.

established by the third century, and was exerting transforming effects on barbarian societies both in the near-frontier zone and in more distant areas. By the late fourth century, the sides had become sufficiently integrated that the disruption of accustomed trading activity may have been one of the causes of the great unrest along the Rhine and Danube that becomes evident ca. 400. Barbarian groups that found themselves in charge of Roman Mediterranean provinces in the fifth and sixth centuries—Visigoths, Vandals, Burgundians, Ostrogoths—often turned out to be capable post-Roman managers of the areas that they occupied. Similarly, following the breakdown of Roman control over the interactions in the frontier zone during the fifth century, barbarian groups such as the Rugi, Lombards, and Gepids had to make the best of their circumstances. The scant available evidence suggests that, as in the case of the Rugi in Noricum, they took rational steps to maintain and reorganize the productive capacities of their territories. In many cases, such as in Bavaria and in the Rhine provinces, a high degree of stability and productivity re-emerged already by the end of the sixth century.

Typically, as in Bavaria, the post-imperial order emerged with the participation of the Romanized provincials. There seems to be a strong positive correlation, in fact, between the long-term success of a barbarian group and the health of Roman economic and administrative systems in any given territory. Nowhere was this more evident than in Gaul, where the Franks at the end of the fifth century took over the late Gallo-Roman government and economy largely intact. The Merovingians took full advantage of surviving Roman institutions and infrastructure, they avidly accepted imperial honors from Constantinople, and they performed credibly as the heirs of Roman political and cultural dominance in northwestern Europe.

Sub-imperial Gaul, though more successful in the long term than most other regions of the former Roman empire, was, nevertheless, different in important ways from its first- and second-century predecessor. In northern Gaul, Roman – barbarian socio-cultural assimilation had been ongoing since the mid-fourth century, resulting ultimately in an early transition to what Walter Goffart has called the “simplified” social structure of the medieval period. At the same time, Gallic cities had been rebuilt on a new model and rural settlement patterns had changed radically. Moreover, the fiscal system had been

greatly altered, to the point that (in terms of Chris Wickham's theory) it was now a different *type* of state than Rome had been, or Byzantium continued to be.

By the end of the sixth century, the Roman imperial system operated still only in those areas that were directly under the control of Constantinople: the eastern Mediterranean, Italy, Africa, the coast of Spain. Outside of direct control, a myriad of different local areas, including larger and smaller post-Roman states, both interacted with each other (what Hodges calls *complex peer polity interactions*) and looked still to the reduced imperial center. With a minimum of expenditure, Byzantium could continue to manipulate barbarian states and rulers, primarily by retaining its position as the ultimate source of prestige and charisma. We can perceive rays of such influencing in multiple forms emanating from Constantinople in the fifth and sixth centuries. One such is the quantity of gold bullion infused into central Europe and the north through the Huns and Avars. Another is the exalted titles bestowed upon Clovis in 507. Imperial workshops in Constantinople and elsewhere in the East continued to produce uniquely prestigious items—crowns, special jewellery, robes in purple, cloth-of-gold and silk—unavailable at any price except as gifts from the emperor, while special commodities such as papyrus also moved under the imperial seal.⁴⁷⁰ Indeed, if much of the characteristic gold-garnet insignia deployed ubiquitously in the Rhine – Danube frontier zone in the fifth and sixth centuries were in fact products of an imperial workshop,⁴⁷¹ then the entire process of post Roman elite formation in those parts of Temperate Europe could be seen in some sense as a Byzantine creation.

In early medieval Europe and the Mediterranean, exchange had at least four distinct levels. The top level comprised the Byzantine prestige production and distribution system discussed above, and its parallels elsewhere: gold-garnet decorations and special helmets produced and distributed locally within northwestern Europe, for example.⁴⁷² The second level consisted of what might be termed “ordinary exotic goods”: non-imperial silks, spices, aromatics, specialty wines, and the like. These

⁴⁷⁰ Robert S. Lopez, “Mohammed and Charlemagne: A Revision,” *Speculum* 18 (1943): 14 – 38.

⁴⁷¹ Arrhenius, *Merovingian Garnet Jewellery*, 96 - 126.

⁴⁷² In the sixth century, a center for gold-garnet jewellery production emerged at Trier, with satellites in the Rhineland. Arrhenius, *Merovingian Garnet Jewellery*, 127 – 61.

continued to travel across the Mediterranean and to arrive in western ports such as Marseille throughout the sixth and seventh centuries, with distribution northwards.⁴⁷³

The third level was the continued production and distribution of bulk goods such as ARS pottery and olive oil within the Mediterranean, at least in coastal areas, through the seventh century. This level was active as well in Francia and the Rhine basin, where commercial pottery production continued throughout, even if on reduced scales, along with the production of wine. Both the pottery and the wine were being exported northwards by the early seventh century, if not earlier. Some of the trading activity in the Irish Sea and some of the crafts production at Danish landing places also should fit into this category. All of this is part of a viable reconstruction of economic relations in northwestern Europe in the sub-imperial period. Ongoing in the fifth through eighth centuries, this process includes the emergence of the *emporium* and the opening up of the northern waters to intensified trade links.⁴⁷⁴

Finally, there is the level of local production and exchange, the scope and quality of which varied extremely from area to area. As was suggested in the discussion in section 5.4 above, there is increasing material evidence as well as theoretical justification (Wickham) for the proposition that early medieval societies were, even at the common level, far less hapless and destitute than many have hitherto believed. Ordinary peasant prosperity was notable in many areas, including Denmark, Hesse, and Württemberg. In these more prosperous areas, level-four exchange served as a platform for tying in to level three exchanges, and some even of level two (amber, glass beads).

The further waning of Byzantium after the sixth century was balanced by corresponding growth in Merovingian Francia, in England, and in Denmark. Prosperity fueled interactions, and interactions were driving to greater production and prosperity; both contributed to socio-political consolidation in these areas. One could conceive

⁴⁷³ In the earlier part of the Migration Age they might travel also over alternative routes. Von Freeden, "Früher Adel: Luxus und elitäre Abgrenzung," 334 – 8, speaks of a man's grave at Eschwegen-Niederhone (Hessen), hewn in dolomite, stocked with a silver horse harness with Persian motifs, and other fancy imports from Byzantium, Egypt, and India or local copies thereof. According to von Freeden, these goods indicate a lively overland trade.

⁴⁷⁴ It is this same reconstructive process that Lebecq perceives when he speaks of a great re-orientation in Gallic trade focus from the south to the north during the sixth and seventh centuries. Lebecq, "Les échanges dans la Gaule du Nord," 202.

Temperate Europe in the seventh century as dominated by three somewhat unequal but distinct and stable poles of influence and organization: Francia, Denmark, and the Avar khaganate in the Carpathian basin. While the first exercised informal hegemony in northwestern Europe, serving as a kind of secondary quasi-imperial center, the second, though in communication with the first, maintained a high degree of autonomy and undisturbed development. Thus, while definitely re-oriented towards the West since the early to mid-sixth century, Denmark built on its outstanding progress of the previous centuries.⁴⁷⁵ The lively communication between Denmark and Francia translated in the subsequent period into more intensive trade relations and the opening up of the Baltic to international trade on an unprecedented scale. The Avar-Slav sphere in central and eastern Europe, meanwhile, seems relatively isolated from these currents of exchange through the seventh century. Parts of the region started to become drawn into the surrounding trade circuits from the early eighth.

⁴⁷⁵ Appropriate here is the comment that “Gudme and Lundeberg around 500 document an accumulation of wealth on a scale so far unmatched anywhere in the North for half-a-millennium.” Wickham, *Framing*, 368.

Chapter 6: AD 700 – 900: The Carolingian Continent

6.0 Introduction

The wholesale transformation of the Roman imperial system in Europe ca. AD 200 – 600 and the emergence of the new Temperate Europe ca. AD 400 – 700 were complementary processes.¹ Together, they had the effect of bringing about a thorough reconfiguration of productive activities and exchange relations in the Mediterranean, in western and central Temperate Europe, and in regions connecting with the latter to the east and north. Similarly, the relations of exchange that the core areas of western and west central Europe maintained with surrounding regions in the 700 – 900 period form a coherent whole. Yet, again, for the sake of manageability, the analysis will be divided into two parts. First, the present Chapter 6 will survey the communications and the economic potentials of Carolingian Europe from its Mediterranean connections in the south to its northwestern shoreline along the English Channel and the North Sea. The subsequent Chapter 7 will describe how the transcontinental lines of exchange extended into the northern waters and beyond the Elbe river to the North and the East and contributed, thereby, to the completion of a larger-scale western Eurasian circuit.

Both parts of the demonstration are necessary in order to establish, finally, the context within which officially recognized merchants obtained their status and privileges. Far from being fossilized formalities or mere licenses to bring exotic gifts to the emperor, the privileges of the *negotiatores* that are preserved in the Carolingian formularies were documents of essential utility for a class of international entrepreneurs, who played a key role within the dynamic and complex world of Carolingian commerce. These documents reflect the configuration of the Carolingian trade system and suggest the wealth and opportunity that the system could generate for its more favored participants.

The productive potential of the early medieval economy in western Europe, the reality of significant long-distance exchange connections, and the socio-political structure of the Carolingian state and its administrative systems all have been objects of intense, long-standing debate. The entrenched minimalism or primitivism of the 1970s has

¹ See above Chapters 4 and 5.

retreated considerably during the past three decades in the face of much new archaeological data and reexaminations of the documentary record. The ground currently contested in the historiographical debates involves, first, the balance between agrarian development and the possible catalytic or mobilizing effects of international exchange and, second, questions regarding the primacy of elite-directed or institutional leadership in economic development vs. private or non-elite, entrepreneurial initiative.

6.1 The Carolingian Exchange System in Historiographic and Geographic Outline

In the Spoleto volume of 1981, Robert Fossier took a systematically pessimistic view of production and commerce in Carolingian northwestern Europe.² First of all, Fossier pointed to the discouraging influence of Christian values, which promoted charity and redistribution of wealth rather than accumulation and profit.³ Next, Fossier pointed to a “médiocrité lamentable” in the level of technology: no iron tools, no *ferrarius* (blacksmith) at the major monasteries, horrible harvests, no improvements in animal harness or in sowing techniques, as yet.⁴ Further, though there is some evidence for trade and of infrastructure to support exchange activities, the customers were only a “handful of clerics and warriors” and the merchants only a tiny group of specialists: Syrians and professional *mercatores* hawking arms, rare textiles, and spices.⁵ Finally, in Fossier’s

² Robert Fossier, “Les tendances de l’économie: stagnation ou croissance?” In *Nascita dell’ Europa ed Europa carolingia: un’ equazione da verificare* (Settimane 27, 1981), 261 – 90.

³ Fossier, “Stagnation ou croissance?” 266. Cf. the discussion of Christian ideology and the anti-commercial bias in the early medieval written sources in Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 12 – 15. As many other scholars had done, Fossier accepted the ideology at face value.

⁴ Fossier, “Stagnation ou croissance?” 267. Though this article has no footnotes, Fossier clearly is following, here, the then-influential views of Doehaerd and Duby. See Renée Doehaerd, *The Early Middle Ages in the West: Economy and Society*, trans. W. G. Deakin (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1978); Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, trans. Howard B. Clarke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974); and the discussion in Section 2.2 above.

⁵ Fossier, “Stagnation ou croissance?” 268 – 9. The disparaging tone and bleak outlook follow the attitude towards this same evidence expressed in Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*; see discussion in Section 2.1 above. Cf. the summary of this traditional view in McCormick, *Origins*, 15: “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.” McCormick points out that the anecdotal evidence in the written sources must be

view, the inefficiency of labor (thirty serfs needed to support one monk of St-Bertin) and low birthrates precluded any economic expansion during the Carolingian period.⁶ Fossier did admit the presence of some positive evidence. Mills there were, and blacksmiths in a few places, and possibly the three-field system. Wine, wheat, flax, and wool circulated on the rivers, through *portus* and fairs, and monetary reform facilitated exchange.⁷ Regardless, for Fossier, the final assessment must be that the Carolingian age showed, as yet, no wave of economic development as would come in the eleventh century and beyond, but only “un frémissement,” a trembling of the surface—itself interrupted by the attacks of the Saracens, Vikings, and Magyars.⁸

The traditional and pessimistic view of the Carolingian economy expressed by Fossier received some stiff challenges even at the *Settimane* where he delivered it. Karl Ferdinand Werner complained that Fossier was making of Charlemagne an emperor over paupers and beggars, pointed to metal industry in the Meuse basin, and observed that Charlemagne’s military and political achievements must have had a suitable economic base.⁹ In the same vein, Pierre Riché pointed out that hundreds of churches and monasteries were built in the Carolingian period, a prodigious achievement implying a solid economic foundation.¹⁰ Concerning demography and settlement, Eugen Ewig asserted that Carolingian Rhineland villages were stable units with permanent churches from ca. 700.¹¹ Even Philip Grierson—hardly the wild-eyed maximalist!—opined that Charlemagne had created a viable new coinage for northwestern Europe.¹² Based on much new data gained from archaeology and on reinterpretation and re-contextualization

evaluated within a broader context, which, due especially to much new archaeological evidence, is presently undergoing rapid change.

⁶ Fossier, “Stagnation ou croissance?” 270 – 2.

⁷ Fossier, “Stagnation ou croissance?” 267, 268, 269.

⁸ Fossier, “Stagnation ou croissance?” 273. The phrase “un frémissement” is one that Fossier borrows, with acknowledgement, from Duby, without naming the specific publication. It seems to come from Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 106 – 7, “a surface ripple,” as translated by Deakin. Fossier asserts further that in terms of the economy, at least, later medieval Europe *does not* derive directly from the Carolingian, and that this is due particularly to the effects of the later ninth- and tenth-century attacks (p. 274). It will not be possible to address this issue within the confines of the present study.

⁹ K. F. Werner, in the discussion portion of Fossier, “Stagnation ou croissance?” 275 – 6, 278.

¹⁰ Pierre Riché, in the discussion portion of Fossier, “Stagnation ou croissance?” 284.

¹¹ Eugen Ewig, in the discussion portion of Fossier, “Stagnation ou croissance?” 282 – 2, 284.

¹² Philip Grierson, in the discussion portion of Fossier, “Stagnation ou croissance?” 286 – 8.

of the written sources, the challenge to the traditional view has only grown stronger over the decades since the 1979 session in which these exchanges occurred.

In the initial chapter of the *Long Eighth Century* volume,¹³ John Moreland presents an insightful viewpoint on the pendulum swings in the twentieth-century historiography of early medieval Europe and its economy.¹⁴ According to Moreland's critique, the contest has been between those historiographers who would make of the Medieval an alien "Other" and those who would make of it a kind of primitive-modern "Same" teleologically tied to the present; both have been distracting and debilitating to efforts to truly understand medieval society and economics on its own terms. Whereas the dominant paradigm around the turn of the twentieth century was that of a purely natural barter economy and widespread autarky in the early Middle Ages, the prevailing view then shifted to that of a pseudo-modern monetized economy, which prevailed around mid-century and into the early 1960s.¹⁵ Inspired by Grierson's 1959 article,¹⁶ which opened early medieval historiography to the influence of anthropological and particularly Maussian models, the subsequent decades saw the dominance of studies in which gift-giving and plunder took center stage and even coins, where present, could not be relied upon to reflect commercial transactions.¹⁷ Valuable though it was to escape the dual traps of autarky and market exchange in thinking about the early medieval economy, the approach of the anthropological medievalists, according to Moreland,

resulted only in the construction of anOther [sic] concept of the early medieval economy. This is an economy in which aristocratic exchange and consumption are placed at some remove from production; and in which the emphasis on "generosity and martiality" link the archaeological and historical accounts in the

¹³ Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham, eds., *The Long Eighth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

¹⁴ John Moreland, "Concepts of the Early Medieval Economy," in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 1 – 34.

¹⁵ Moreland, "Concepts of the Early Medieval Economy," 3 – 5.

¹⁶ See again Philip Grierson, "Commerce in the Dark Ages: A Critique of the Evidence," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (5th Series)* 9 (1959): 123 – 40.

¹⁷ See the discussion in Section 5.4 above, and especially Grierson's list of alternative mechanisms of wealth-redistribution.

construction and reproduction of an heroic age. This approach is one which fails to consider the totality of economic activity in the early middle ages.¹⁸

In particular, Moreland points out that the gift-economy enthusiasts of all stripes have focused on the relations of the circulation and exchange of goods to the exclusion of any consideration of the relations of production—which must precede any possible exchange. Indeed, the gift-giving models, which tend to highlight mead halls and ring-givers, do little justice, says Moreland, to the “abundant indicators that production, distribution and consumption in early medieval Europe were linked in much more complex and variegated ways.”¹⁹ Further, there has been a growing realization that objects have intrinsic qualities and values, and that the same object may move through different domains, such as commodity, gift, hoard. Finally, and most importantly, Moreland makes the point that “gifts and commodities are not mutually exclusive, and need not be seen as successive stages in an evolutionary developmental cycle.”²⁰

Both *The Long Eighth Century* and its earlier companion volume, *The Sixth Century*,²¹ were researched and published under the aegis of the European Science Foundation project on the Transformation of the Roman World, which ran from 1993 – 98. Group 3 under this project, including the editors and contributors to the above-named volumes, was charged to investigate “production, distribution and demand” in the post-Roman and early medieval period.²² The wealth of new data and analysis compiled in these two volumes, together with other works from the late 1990s onwards,²³ establishes

¹⁸ Moreland, “Concepts of the Early Medieval Economy,” 21.

¹⁹ Moreland, “Concepts of the Early Medieval Economy,” 21 – 2.

²⁰ Moreland, “Concepts of the Early Medieval Economy,” 30 – 4. The quote is on p. 31. On the point regarding successive stages of socio-economic evolution, see the discussion in Section 5.4 above.

²¹ Richard Hodges and William Bowden, eds., *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

²² See the comments on the project and its outcome in Richard Hodges, “Henri Pirenne and the Question of Demand in the Sixth Century,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 3 – 5; and Chris Wickham, “Introduction,” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickha (Leiden: Brill, 2000), ix – x.

²³ Among the most significant: McCormick, *Origins*; Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400 – 800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Tim Pestell and Katharina Ulmschneider, eds., *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003); Joachim Henning, ed., *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium*, vol. 1, *The Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007); and Jennifer R. Davis and Michael McCormick, eds., *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 13 – 104: Part One: Discovering the Early Medieval Economy.

a new benchmark for considerations of the economic condition of continental Europe in the Carolingian period. As will be seen in the discussion below, Carolingian Europe performed remarkably well in all three of the basic categories set forth in the Group 3 brief. In terms of exchange, the Carolingian heartlands in northwestern continental Europe possessed an integrated network of road and water communications lines, which in turn connected to the Mediterranean in the south and to the North Sea countries in the north. Production, both of agricultural and manufactured items, was far more successful and widespread than was imagined even a couple of decades ago.²⁴

Perhaps most importantly of all, there is increasing evidence that the scale of demand or consumption in Carolingian Europe was much larger than hitherto believed, not only in terms of the elite demand for imported and domestic luxuries but in terms of goods manufactured for or delivered to a broader public.

Development in Europe during the Carolingian period of ca. 700 – 900 was not uniform.²⁵ Therefore, it will be necessary to build up a comprehensive view of the Carolingian economy and its various connections through a series of closer views of regions both within and without the Frankish empire.

The evidence of the Rhos guests

In the *Annales Bertiniani* for the year 839, an arresting tale is told. In May of this year, the emperor Louis the Pious received at Ingelheim a Byzantine embassy in whose party were a group of “Rhos.” The Byzantine ambassador stated that these Rhos had made their way to Constantinople for purposes of “friendship” and that the emperor Theophilus desired Louis to expedite their return to their homeland by a safer route than the one by which they had come to him. After investigating, Louis determined that the homeland of

²⁴ The scale and variety of fiscal resources that the Carolingian government could marshal on a yearly basis for the equipment and supply of their large armed forces is yet another indicator of the productive capacity of Carolingian Europe, especially in its heartlands. See Bernard S. Bachrach, “Are They Not Like Us? The Carolingian Fisc in Military Perspective,” in *Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Celia Chazelle and Felice Lifshitz (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 119 – 33.

²⁵ Chris Wickham, “Rethinking the Structure of the Early Medieval Economy,” in *Long Morning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 19 – 31, offers a useful reprise of his theories and reiterates the region-by-region chronological variances in post-Roman crisis and recovery. He also emphasizes the need to focus on production and internal development as leading elements in economic revival, rather than inter-regional exchange.

the Rhos was Middle Sweden, but he also suspected that they might be spies; the *Annales Bertiniani* do not state explicitly that Louis sent them on into the Baltic.²⁶

Jonathan Shepard argues, however, that finds of certain Byzantine coins in Scandinavian deposits of the mid-ninth century suggest that these Rhos did, in fact, complete their journey. The items in question are “five copper *folles*, a half-*follis* and a silver *miliaresion*” of Emperor Theophilus (829 – 42)—small-denomination coins that are otherwise exceedingly rare in Scandinavia. One was found in the thick of the vital transshipment port of Hedeby, situated at the base of the Jutland peninsula, where otherwise only a *follis* of Basil I (867 – 86) is known.²⁷ Two more *folles* and the *miliaresion* of Theophilus have been found in Birka, the *emporium* for the Lake Mälaren area of Middle Sweden and the next major stop in the Baltic Sea trade network 750 km northeast of Hedeby. With the *miliaresion* dated to 838 – 40 and *folles* of no other ninth-century Byzantine emperor known from Birka, it once again suggests a unique and chronologically circumscribed advent. Two further copper coins, a *follis* and half-*follis* of the same dating as the others, made into pendants and found in a woman’s grave, had come to rest in the remote outpost of Styrnäs on the Bothnian coast 400 km north of Birka. Finally, a coin of Theophilus, likely a *follis*, has been reported from a pre-tenth century layer in the excavations at Gorodishche, 800 km east of Birka, the earliest outpost at the outflow of the Volkhov river from Lake Ilmen and precursor of the later Novgorod.²⁸

The faint but unique trail of low value Byzantine copper of 830s vintage continues, thus, the documented journey of emissaries from the north that came first to Constantinople but then found themselves sent onwards into *Francia*. As Shepard

²⁶ See the translation in *The Annals of St. Bertin*, trans. and annot. Janet L. Nelson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 44; and the detailed treatment of the episode in Jonathan Shepard, “The Rhos Guests of Louis the Pious: Whence and Wherefore?” *Early medieval Europe* 4, no. 1 (1995): 41 – 60. Nelson unfortunately translates *Rhos* as “Russians,” which for the ninth century is highly problematical. She does point out, rightly, that this is the earliest mention of the people that appear in later sources, above all in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, as *Rus’*. For a way into the literature concerning the crucial issue of early Rus’ origins and identity, see Shepard, “Rhos Guests,” 47 n. 20. The exchange routes that crossed European Russia in the Carolingian period will see further discussion in Section 7.3, subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* below.

²⁷ Shepard, “Rhos Guests,” 48.

²⁸ Shepard, “Rhos Guests,” 50 – 2.

emphasizes, small copper change of Byzantine origin is practically unknown in the Baltic Sea region of this period, and even *milaresia* usually date to the mid- to late tenth century, thus making the string of coins associated with Emperor Theophilus particularly unusual. Furthermore, as Shepard says:

[S]uch low-denomination coins are most unlikely to have been used as currency in commercial transactions. Neither are they likely to have been regarded as objects of inherent value or as normally having much aesthetic appeal. . . . These considerations alone could point to the coins having been brought to the Baltic world on a single occasion, and virtually by chance, by a traveller or travellers coming more or less directly from the Byzantine world.²⁹

In its own way, the tale of Louis the Pious' "Rhos guests" is as significant as is the tale of Charlemagne's elephant.³⁰ Anecdotal oddities, in one sense, both episodes highlight the existence of far-reaching international lines of communication among the western Eurasian worlds of the eighth and ninth centuries. These worlds were, fundamentally, four: Latin Christendom, especially those parts of continental western Europe that comprised the Carolingian empire; the Byzantine sphere, which stretched from Italy across the Aegean and Anatolia to the northeastern shores of the Black Sea; the Islamic world, from the Atlantic in the west through North Africa, the core Near Eastern lands, and onwards into western Central Asia; and the northern European world of Vikings and Slavs around the Baltic Sea and across European Russia. Each of the four had extensive interactions with the other three. While warfare and raid played some part in these interactions, in most times and places the traffic was preponderantly diplomatic and commercial. An elephant could, exceptionally, make its way from India to the Caliphate and thence across the Mediterranean to Italy, Francia, and Saxony.

²⁹ Shepard, "Rhos Guests," 54 – 5.

³⁰ Richard Hodges, "Charlemagne's Elephant," in idem, *Goodbye to the Vikings? Re-reading Early Medieval Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 2006), 73 – 4, uses Harun al-Rashid's gift of an elephant to Charlemagne in 801, and the elephant's subsequent death on a campaign to the Danish border in 810, as an inkling of long-distance trans-cultural connections ca. 800: "The story of the elephant draws the thinnest of historical threads together, forging connections between the Arabs, Latin Christendom and the Vikings." A much more robust treatment of the elephant's journey is in McCormick, *Origins*, 273, 411, 520, 890 – 1, including details on the Mediterranean voyages of the ambassadors who arranged the transfer and the convoy that went to Africa to fetch the beast and bring it to Italy.

Scandinavian individuals could, perhaps less exceptionally, circulate from northwestern Russia to Constantinople, thence to Francia, and finally back into the Baltic. The startling originality and uniqueness of the anecdotal journeys of the elephant and of the “Rhos guests” tend to eclipse the fact that less marvelous exchanges among and across the four “worlds” were, in fact, routine.

The geographic outline of the exchange system

Awareness of international or interregional lines of communication in the Carolingian period is not altogether a recent development. Even Pirenne recognized the thriving trade between Scandinavia and the Caliphate—which he contrasted so favorably vis-à-vis his idea of a devolved, purely agrarian Carolingia.³¹ A decade or two after Pirenne, Sture Bolin proposed that the Scandinavian world, Carolingian western Europe, and the Caliphate were involved in intensive exchanges in which, at first, the Frankish empire played the role of middle-man between the Muslims and the Scandinavians but subsequently lost this position when the latter developed direct contacts with the Middle East over the Russian river routes.³² More recently, Hodges and Whitehouse connected fluctuations in *emporium* trading in Europe’s northwestern waters and variations in the composition of Islamic silver hoards in northern and eastern Europe with major ninth-century changes in the policies of Abbasid caliphs and the shifts in resource-allocation subsequent to these.³³ Paradoxically, while the far less densely populated and urbanized Scandinavia was recognized early on as a participant in international long-distance trade during the Viking Age, the Frankish and Mediterranean lands have tended to receive

³¹ Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, trans. Bernard Mial (New York: Meridian, 1939), 236 – 41. See the discussion in Section 2.1 above.

³² Sture Bolin, “Mohammed, Charlemagne and Ruric,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 1 (1953): 5 – 39. Bolin based his analysis on correspondences in weights and values between Arab and Frankish silver and gold coinage. An earlier version of his views was published in Swedish in 1939. See the long note on the history of Bolin’s research project on p. 5 of “Mohammed, Charlemagne and Ruric.” See also the discussion in Section 2.2 above.

³³ Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe: Archaeology and the Pirenne Thesis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 115 – 57.

much more pessimistic evaluations of their long-distance exchange potential in the same time period.³⁴

Since the publication of Michael McCormick's *Origins of the European Economy* in 2001, a primitivistic view of the Carolingian-period Mediterranean is no longer possible to uphold. For the 700 – 900 period, McCormick has catalogued 682 separate long-distance movements in the Mediterranean, which have been explicitly documented.³⁵ The patterns of movement show both continuity and change from the Merovingian period. First, communications continued between the Byzantine heartlands around the Aegean on the one hand and Italy on the other hand. Second, there were continued and even intensified communications in the eighth and ninth centuries between Latin Christian western Europe as a whole and the now-Islamic lands of North Africa, Egypt, and the Levant. However, whereas in Merovingian times the primary entrepôt for exchanges between Temperate Europe and the Mediterranean had been Marseilles, by ca. 800 that role belonged to Venice. Consequently, the main trunk line in north-south communications no longer ran up the Rhône from Marseilles but northwestwards, from Venice through the Po region of northern Italy and thence over the Alpine passes down into Francia and, ultimately, to the northwestern coastlines with their *emporìa*.³⁶

As an exception to his dismal view of Carolingian economics, Pirenne had conceded Venice and the northwestern coasts as areas of creditable commercial activity.³⁷ McCormick's work not only reinforces the appreciation of the key role of the north Italian connection for the economy of the Frankish empire but he, unlike Pirenne,

³⁴ For example, in the same volume where they speak of lively interchanges between the Caliphate and Scandinavia, Hodges and Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe*, 54 – 77, characterize the Mediterranean as a realm of collapsing exchange systems: from ca. 640 to the mid-ninth century, it was in a “prehistoric” condition (p. 75).

³⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 858 – 964. This is the core of Appendix 4, which documents a total of 828 long-distance movements in the Mediterranean, 609 – 968. The 146 seventh- and tenth century movements that also are included in Appendix 4 do not represent a complete tally for those periods. The documented movements represent only a small fraction of the total amount of traffic; see discussion in Section 6.2 below.

³⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 523 – 31 for the rise of Venice; 393 – 402, 445 – 9, 474 – 81, and 548 – 9 for the Alpine passes and land travel in general. See the detailed discussion in Sections 6.2 and 6.3 below.

³⁷ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 175 – 80 and 236 – 40, for Venice and the northwestern coast, respectively. “The Carolingian Empire had therefore two sensitive economic points: one in northern Italy, thanks to the commerce of Venice, and one in the Low Countries, thanks to the Frisian and Scandinavian trade” (p. 240).

demonstrates the intensive communications that tied the two ends of the northwest-to-southeast overland trunk line together.³⁸ Moreover, the routes were used not only by pilgrims, armies, and diplomats but also for purposes of trade. Applying his method of source-cataloguing and spatial-correlating to incidental mentions in the Carolingian sources, McCormick reveals a ubiquity of merchants and mercantile activity between Francia and Italy in the eighth and ninth centuries. These data correlate, in turn, with new evidence for production and trade in the Frankish heartlands of northwestern continental Europe.³⁹

The Mediterranean was the stage for the multi-sided interaction of the Byzantine, Muslim, and Latin Christian worlds, to which the Alpine passes and Venice at the southeastern end of the main transcontinental communications lines were, for the Carolingians, the primary access points. At the northwestern end of the corridor, the *emporium* on the coasts of Francia connected to the North Sea and the British Isles, which were the scene of interaction of the Latin Christian and North European worlds. It is now well accepted that trade between Francia and Anglo-Saxon England was growing rapidly during the seventh century.⁴⁰ In the eighth and ninth centuries, evidence for lively, high-volume exchange across the Channel and the North Sea becomes much more abundant, so much so that the trade entered into the diplomatic exchanges between Charlemagne and Offa of Mercia and that the Carolingian ports of Quentovic and Dorestad were singled out for special attention in the documents of Louis the Pious.⁴¹ The trade with England formed an integral part of the northwest-to-southeast communications corridor across Frankish-ruled continental Europe, effectively linking the British Isles overland with northern Italy and, beyond, to the Mediterranean and the orient.

Furthermore, the trading system of the northwestern waters passed a significant milestone right around AD 700 with the foundation of two new *emporium*: Hamwic on the

³⁸ Pirenne regarded the two as entirely separate. Regarding the activities of the “Frisians,” Pirenne states: “This commerce, however, was oriented toward the North, and had no longer any connection with the Mediterranean.” Further, the hinterland of Quentovic and Amiens extended southwards only to “the threshold of Burgundy.” Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 238 – 9.

³⁹ McCormick, *Origins*, 639 – 69, 678 – 87, 696 – 728. See discussion in Sections 6.3 and 6.4 below.

⁴⁰ See the discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters* above.

⁴¹ For the eight- and ninth-century trade between Francia and Britain, see Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and England* below.

Channel coast of Wessex, and Ribe on the southwest coast of Jutland. The foundation of Ribe, in particular, marks the institutionalization of trading connections across the North Sea between Scandinavia on the one hand and Latin Christian England and Francia on the other hand.⁴² From Denmark, the trading system soon projected northeastwards into the Baltic itself, with a standard *emporium*-type settlement established at Birka in Middle Sweden by ca. 750.⁴³ Meanwhile, similar trading settlements sprang up all along the southern shore of the Baltic sea during the eighth and ninth centuries, thus drawing in the Slav-inhabited East Elbian lands into the trading network as well. Archaeological and documentary evidence shows that traders (and missionaries) from northwestern Europe—i.e., from places west of Denmark—traveled as far as Birka, certainly, and probably were involved in the South Baltic trade also.⁴⁴

In effect, the connection from the coasts of England, Francia, and Frisia to Denmark and the Baltic beyond formed an important adjunct or branch to the main northwest-southeast trunk line across Frankish Europe—and was of great interest to Carolingian policy-makers.⁴⁵ This becomes clear ca. 810 with the re-founding of Hedeby by the Danes as the major transshipment point between the Baltic and the North Sea, and Carolingian diplomatic and missionary efforts in the Baltic during the first half of the ninth century. Concurrently, with Charlemagne’s establishment of a firmly controlled frontier between the Franks and the Slavs in the Elbe region of northern Germany, overland trade into the East Elbian lands also becomes visible.⁴⁶ Moreover, the already intensive material exchanges that were ongoing between the Latin Christian and North European worlds in the eighth century become aggravated by the addition of

⁴² For the traffic between Scandinavia and the Frankish world, see the discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and Denmark* below.

⁴³ The subject of *emporium*-type trading settlements in northwestern and northern Europe in the early medieval period was first given prominence in Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade AD 600 – 1000* (London: Duckworth, 1982). Some of the problems with Hodges’ theoretical approach were taken up in Section 5.4 above. See now Heidi M. Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market: Emporia Trading in Western Eurasia from 500 BC to AD 1000” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2008), [parts of CHs 4 and 5]. Sherman explicitly connects the Scandinavian *emporium* with earlier models in Francia and England.

⁴⁴ See the discussion in Section 7.2 below.

⁴⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 606 – 12, unreservedly recognizes the “northern arc” as an important conduit of trade in the Carolingian period. Since his major focus and area of expertise is the Mediterranean, however, McCormick’s treatment of the north is limited.

⁴⁶ See the discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and the Elbe* below.

Scandinavian or Viking raiding upon the coastlines of northwestern Europe in the ninth. Much of the raiding appears to be intimately tied to the pattern of trade routes and ports and also connected with fluctuations in the flow of silver between the Caliphate, the Baltic, and Carolingia.⁴⁷

In the ninth (and tenth) century, the North European and Latin Christian worlds thoroughly interpenetrated, especially so in the British Isles and on the coasts of Francia and Frisia. To an extent, though much less so than in the east, the Scandinavians in the west interacted also with the Muslim world. This took the form, especially, of a Viking-operated slave trade from Ireland to Muslim Spain and North Africa.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, Latin Christendom also had its commercial connections with Iberia, important enough to have been explicitly modeled in some of Louis the Pious' formulae.⁴⁹ These were copies of *diplomae*, charters of rights, issued to named Jewish merchants of Lyon and Saragossa. Here also, presumably, the main article of trade was slaves.⁵⁰ Accordingly, it appears that the Spanish route like the North Sea route to Scandinavia was a significant adjunct to the main northwest-to-southeast communications corridor, perpendicular to it and leading to the southwest while the North Sea route led off to the northeast. Altogether, the system as a whole appears increasingly dynamic and complex the more its details are investigated. While it seems certain that the axis from the Channel coast and the Rhine delta over the Alps into northern Italy was the primary line of communications and exchange across the Frankish empire, the absolute weight and importance of the subsidiary routes to this main corridor is not possible to ascertain.⁵¹ It seems, however, that while the Iberian connection is better documented, the Baltic connection had the

⁴⁷ The question of silver transfers between Carolingian western Europe and the Viking world, as well as that between the Vikings and the Caliphate, is complex and has been much discussed. The historiography includes the article by Bolin, "Mohammed, Charlemagne and Ruric," mentioned above, and many others that will be touched upon in the sections to follow.

⁴⁸ Gwyn Jones, *A History of the Vikings*, revised edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 213 – 15. Viking slaving around Ireland was a recurrent phenomenon; see Donnchadh Ó Corráin, "Ireland, Wales, Man, and the Hebrides," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*, ed. Peter Sawyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 87, 90, 96.

⁴⁹ The standard edition is *Formulae imperiales e curia Ludovici Pii*, in *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, ed. Karolus Zevmer (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1886), 285 – 328.

⁵⁰ See the survey of the Spanish connection in McCormick, *Origins*, 674 – 8. Discussion in Section 6.3, subsection *The Iberian connection* below.

⁵¹ In the present study, there will be no attempt to investigate the ninth-century Danube and the Carpathian basin in terms of its commercial potential.

greater impact in terms of volume of goods traded, economic stimulus, and political fallout.

Finally, returning to the North, it will be necessary to outline the portion of the western Eurasian exchange circuits that lay between the Baltic Sea realm and the East. These involved river and land routes over European Russia, which connected Scandinavia with both Byzantium and the Caliphate. The earliest Scandinavian-connected outpost in northwestern Russia, at Staraia Ladoga on the lower Volkhov river, dates to the mid-eighth century, contemporaneous with the foundation of Birka in Middle Sweden.⁵² By the late ninth century, the overland connections from the northeastern Baltic to the Black Sea and the Caspian, i.e., to both Byzantium and to the Islamic lands, were well established. While it appears exaggerated to regard this so-called “northern arc” as a direct trade link between the Carolingians and the Middle East, there is no doubt that Middle eastern goods—especially silver, but also glass beads and other exotica—reached the Baltic in great quantities and affected the Baltic Sea trading system in significant ways. Conversely, Scandinavian traders may have occasionally delivered western manufactures—Frankish-made swords, in particular—to Middle Eastern markets. Though indirect, the connection from the coasts of northwestern Europe through the Baltic realm over European Russia to Byzantium and the Caliphate was a true circuit—illustrated, by chance, in the travels of Louis the Pious’ “Rhos guests.”

Competing theories of Carolingian production and exchange

A complete description of the Western Eurasian exchange circuits of the eighth and ninth centuries has not yet been written. Nor will one be attempted here in the sections to follow. Nevertheless, the outline of the system as presented here forms the framework for the activities of documented Carolingian merchants; in other words, the significance of the latter cannot be properly understood without a detailed grasp of the former.

⁵² Sherman, “Emporia Trading in Western Eurasia,” (CH 6). See also Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus: 750 – 1200* (London: Longman, 1996). On the flow of Islamic silver into the North, the authoritative source is the essays collected in Thomas S. Noonan, *The Islamic World, Russia and the Vikings, 750 – 900: The Numismatic Evidence* (Aldershot: Ashgate/Variorum, 1998).

Furthermore, the level of understanding that we currently have of this system is a relatively recent achievement. In many ways, the publication in 2001 of Michael McCormick's *Origins of the European Economy* placed the discussion on a new, higher level than it had attained previously.⁵³ The extent of the Mediterranean communications lines revealed by McCormick's work has implications for every other part of the system. As Joachim Henning has said:

Now, thanks to McCormick's successful efforts in analysing the situation on the southern border of the Frankish kingdom, recent findings about the situation north of the Alps appear in a new light.⁵⁴

In other words, as Henning argues further, expanded northern trade was not compensation for lost Mediterranean connections, but was part of a general expansion of exchange that involved both the Mediterranean and Temperate Europe, the West as well as the East. Or, to put it yet another way, McCormick's data and interpretations in *Origins* strongly support the idea that inter-regional exchange in Europe and the Mediterranean in the eighth and ninth century was, in fact, behaving systemically—that the linkages among the several regions or “worlds” were having a more than superficial or trivial effect on economic activity in all of them.⁵⁵

An increasing willingness, among at least one set of scholars,⁵⁶ to view the early medieval West as an active participant in trans-regional exchanges is one aspect of the newest conversation regarding the early medieval economy, which has emerged in the decade or so from the late 1990s to the present (ca. 2010). Another crucial aspect of this conversation circles around the relationship between growth in the agrarian-based local

⁵³ For a similar sentiment, see Joachim Henning, “Slavery or Freedom? The Causes of Early Medieval Europe's Economic Advancement,” *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003): 269 – 70. McCormick, *Origins*, 391 – 2, asserts that both the anecdotal aspect of his data and the implications of the aggregate shifts that they reveal over time and space during the eighth and ninth centuries are “fatal. . . for the notion of a Mediterranean reduced to prehistoric levels of communication.”

⁵⁴ Henning, “Slavery or Freedom?” 270. For a survey of the Mediterranean side of the Carolingian system, see the discussion in Section 6.2 below.

⁵⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 431 – 43, interprets the ebb and flow of communications quarter century by quarter century as evidence of trans-regional linkages that are exerting systemic effects on participating regions.

⁵⁶ Broadly, these would include the contributors to Hodges and Bowden, eds., *The Sixth Century* (1998); Hansen and Wickham, eds., *The Long Eighth Century* (2000); Henning, ed., *Heirs of the Roman West* (2007); and Davis and McCormick, eds., *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe* (2008), to name only the most salient collections.

economy on the one hand and the effects of long-distance trade on the other hand. Closely allied to the latter point is the debate concerning whether elite direction and demand—the actions of kings, aristocrats, and clerics—or autonomous, self-directed enterprise of peasants and merchants ought to take primacy in shaping increased prosperity and economic expansion.⁵⁷ Finally, and very specifically, there is McCormick’s thesis, introduced in *Origins*, that assigns a catalytic role to the emergence ca. 800 of a revitalized slave trade across Europe to the Mediterranean.⁵⁸ It will be useful to present, here, as most representative in the multi-polar discourse, an outline of the positions taken on the above issues by Stéphane Lebecq, Chris Wickham, Joachim Henning, and Michael McCormick.

In his contribution to the *Transformation of the Roman World* volume, Lebecq offers a concise summary of his views on the evolution of economic systems in the post-Roman West.⁵⁹ First, he emphasizes continuity in trade that linked Merovingian Gaul to the Mediterranean throughout the sixth century and into the seventh.⁶⁰ After ca. 600, however, Lebecq’s attention shifts to the northern side of Gaul, to the North Sea and the constellation of new ports and trade links that emerges around the northern waters in the seventh and eighth centuries.⁶¹ Lebecq notes the shift in the focus of economic activity from the south to the north without any implication of severance or dislocation; it is an

⁵⁷ While these all are issues of long standing; they have been enlivened, currently, by the influx of much new data and the application of new approaches. The competing theoretical viewpoints concerned in the discussion of these issues were reviewed in Section 5.4 above.

⁵⁸ See McCormick, *Origins*, 733 – 77, for the core of this argument.

⁵⁹ Stéphane Lebecq, “Routes of Exchange: Production and Distribution in the West (5th – 8th Century),” in *The Transformation of the Roman World AD 400 – 900*, ed. Leslie Webster and Michelle Brown (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 67 – 78.

⁶⁰ Lebecq, “Routes of Exchange,” 67 – 70 and Fig. 27. On this point, Lebecq’s comments agree in spirit with those of Pirenne and, more recently, Loseby. See discussion on the Merovingian state and trade in Section 5.1 above. Elsewhere, Lebecq has discussed Merovingian continuity in transport systems and craft production; see Stéphane Lebecq, “Entre Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age: permanence et mutations des systèmes de communications dans la Gaule et ses marges,” in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda Antichità e alto Medioevo* (Settimane 45, 1998), 461 – 501. It should be noted that the work of Bernard S. Bachrach also argues strongly for continuity from late Roman to the Merovingian and into the Carolingian periods, from the aspect of military matters: infrastructure (roads, fortifications), logistics, organization, training, technical expertise.

⁶¹ Lebecq, “Routes of Exchange,” 73 – 8 and Fig. 30. See also Stéphane Lebecq, “Les échanges dans la Gaule du Nord au VI^e siècle: une histoire en miettes,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 185 – 202; Lebecq, “Entre Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age,” 487 – 99; and the discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters* above.

organic process of development in the north rather than of collapse in the south that creates the new focus.⁶² In his words:

[T]he maritime peoples of the north (Celts, Anglo-Saxons and Frisians) around AD 600 slowly and systematically began to exploit sea routes which hitherto had only been used sporadically, thus opening up the possibility of long-distance trade.⁶³

What followed was the proliferation of new ports and trading places, *emporια* and *wics*. Regarding the initiative in this development, Lebecq continues:

This spread of new trading places. . . is very instructive. Most of them were totally empirical [sic] in origin, due to the initiative of maritime communities, which, no doubt encouraged by the stabilization of society along the North Sea littoral after centuries of migration and piracy, from then on threw themselves into trading activity.⁶⁴

In most cases, kings moved in to police and to extract revenue from *emporια* that were not royal foundations but establishments that had arisen by other means. In any case, the coastal *emporια* thrived in symbiosis with the emergence of markets in their hinterlands, such as the wine fair at St-Denis and colonies of Frisian traders in the Rhenish cathedral towns. Lebecq contrives, thus, to unite the development of trade on the northern waters with regional development within the Frankish realms:

In such a way one can consider that the burgeoning of a north European merchant-based economy during the seventh to ninth centuries, which made itself felt even in the countryside, resulted, at least in part, from the combination of two factors: first, the dynamism of the interior, fuelled by the return of agricultural growth since the third century, supported by a powerful aristocracy and given

⁶² See, in this context, the conclusion in Lebecq, "Entre Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age," 501, where this shift in international or exterior orientation is identified as one of three major aspects of change from the fifth century to the eighth, the other two being (1) a growing emphasis on waterways for transport and (2) the construction of new communications lines to new centers increasingly deviating from the original Roman road net.

⁶³ Lebecq, "Routes of Exchange," 73, 75.

⁶⁴ Lebecq, "Routes of Exchange," 75. In other words, this interpretation is diametrically opposed to that of Richard Hodges, who gave the initiative in creating the *emporια* to the elite: to kings or chieftains. See the review of Hodges' theories in Section 5.4 above.

impetus by the peace during the Carolingian period; and second, the dynamism of the maritime milieu which assured it not only the perspective of unhoped-for expansion, soon to extend to the Baltic world and Scandinavia, but also the possibility of financial remuneration in silver coinage.⁶⁵

The role of the kings consisted, then, mainly in their ability to provide security for society as a whole. Even the new silver coinage that emerged in the later seventh century, “infiltrated” all sectors of the Frankish economy, and “led to the rejuvenation of almost the whole of the west in the second half of the eighth century,” was, according to Lebecq, an initiative of Anglo-Saxon and Frisian traders, originally. Meanwhile, although the “powerful aristocracy” is mentioned, it is given no specified role except, by implication, to seek to participate in the marketing of the surpluses from their estates and accumulate profit via the new medium of silver coins.⁶⁶ In sum, though Lebecq gives appropriate nods to the kings, to the aristocracy, to economic growth in the countryside, and even to the “flourishing peasantry,” it is grass-roots trading activity, especially around the coastlines of the north and on the northern rivers, that appears to take the leading role.

On certain fundamental points, Wickham agrees with Lebecq. Like Lebecq, Wickham sees a continuation of trading systems in the Mediterranean throughout the sixth century and into the seventh, which continue thereby to connect Gaul with the rest of the Mediterranean world.⁶⁷ The trend in the western Mediterranean and in southern Gaul is, however, towards decline and fragmentation of exchange systems, according to Wickham. Moreover, whereas Lebecq highlights the evidence for the availability of luxuries and exotica in sixth-century Merovingian Gaul,⁶⁸ Wickham asserts expressly that while the luxury trade was “socio-politically significant,” it was not able to determine the

⁶⁵ Lebecq, “Routes of Exchange,” 77 – 8.

⁶⁶ Lebecq, “Routes of Exchange,” 76 – 7.

⁶⁷ Chris Wickham, “Overview: Production, Distribution and Demand,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 283 – 92, gives a convenient summary of his views on the state of exchange systems in the western Mediterranean in the sixth and seventh centuries. See also the discussion in Section 4.2, “The End of the Roman Mediterranean,” above.

⁶⁸ See again Lebecq, “Routes of Exchange,” 67 – 70 and Fig. 27. The evidence is taken primarily from written sources.

economic system; i.e., Marseille flourished, indeed, but the imports that funneled through it and spread over the Merovingian kingdoms are archaeologically invisible—and were economically insignificant. Instead, Wickham emphasizes the stability and continuity in agrarian settlement in the northern half of Gaul and the remarkable “continuity of medium-distance exchange” as illustrated by “the north Gallic ceramic networks.”⁶⁹ Thus, while Lebecq never gives a precise explanation for why the focus of economic activity shifted from south to north during the fifth to the eighth centuries, Wickham grounds a similar observation in the contrasting fate of exchange systems of non-luxury goods in the south and north.

Furthermore, Wickham ascribes a much more definite role to the elite than does Lebecq. Like Lebecq, Wickham points to 120 years of unity and expansion under the Carolingians (ca. 720 – 840) as the background condition favoring the re-expansion of trade.⁷⁰ More specifically, however, Wickham sees the ability of the aristocracy to appropriate surplus and to convert surplus into demand for goods and services as the key to economic mobilization. He believes that the peasantry on the whole was freer from elite demands during the sixth and seventh century than they had been previously under the Roman system; but this meant a lower level of material wealth and sophistication for everyone.⁷¹ In Merovingian post-Roman Europe, towns continued to serve as centers, artisanal production was maintained, and the Frankish aristocracy appears to have been exceptionally powerful in terms of wealth and the extent of their properties.⁷² Thus, as Wickham says, “Francia had both unusually rich landowners and unusually widely available artisanal production in the eighth century,”⁷³ but it was the elite-led reorganization of this favorable economic foundation that turned it towards significant growth.

⁶⁹ Wickham, “Production, Distribution and Demand,” 282 – 3. See also the discussion in Section 5.1, subsection *Economy and demographics* above.

⁷⁰ Chris Wickham, “Overview: Production, Distribution and Demand II,” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 347. This is a continuation of his essay with the identical title in the *Sixth Century* volume (1998).

⁷¹ See the discussion in detail of Wickham’s theory in Section 5.4 above. A summary of the principles, applied to the eighth century, is in Wickham, “Production, Distribution and Demand II,” 372 – 7.

⁷² See the discussion in Section 5.1, subsection *The Structure of the State* above.

⁷³ Wickham, “Production, Distribution and Demand II,” 351.

In Wickham's view, then, Francia enjoyed an early turnaround—already ca. 550—from the slow decline of the late Roman period, but it was the expanding manorial economy, designed to satisfy increasing elite demand while also feeding a growing non-elite market, that is the key to Carolingian economic development. Moreover, Wickham emphasizes that internal exchange—particularly, commercial exchange of staple goods rather than luxuries—is always more important and precedes significant inter-regional or long-distance trade. In this view, the *emporia* on the northwestern coasts are an expression of the wealth and elite mobilizing power of the interior.⁷⁴

Like Lebecq and Wickham, Henning too argues for continuity in economic systems from the late Roman period to the Merovingian. Lebecq sees continuity primarily in the long-distance Mediterranean trade connections of Gaul—with a new, northern trade system increasingly replacing the former in importance from ca. 600 onwards. Wickham focuses attention on the strength of intra-regional exchange systems in northern Gaul and the Rhineland, and on the impressive Frankish aristocracy, who early on were able to regenerate demand and thereby serve as economic mobilizers, first for Merovingian and then for Carolingian society.

For Henning, however, the key to post-Roman economic development in Temperate Europe is the peasantry. A relatively concise iteration of Henning's thesis appears in a 2004 article in a German volume devoted to issues in Roman – German cultural synthesis.⁷⁵ There, Henning argues that the Germanic populations in the late Roman border provinces and nearby areas of *Germania libera* continued and expanded upon late Roman advances in agrarian technology. Specifically, Henning discusses new, more efficient ploughs, sickles, and scythes. The Germanic peasants lived in well-organized and self-managing communities—permanent villages, where they used the advanced iron tools in a productive regime of grain farming and animal husbandry. Such

⁷⁴ Wickham, "Production, Distribution and Demand II," 347 – 52, 356. Note that this formulation reverses that of Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 47 – 50, who placed long-distance, elite-directed trade ahead of internal development in an evolutionary sequence.

⁷⁵ Joachim Henning, "Germanisch-romanische Agrarkontinuität und –diskontinuität im nordalpinen Kontinentaleuropa—Teile eines Systemwandels? Beobachtungen aus archäologischer Sicht," in *Akkulturation: Probleme einer germanisch-romanischen Kultursynthese in Spätantike und frühem Mittelalter*, ed. Dieter Hägermann, Wolfgang Haubrichs, Jörg Jarnut, and Claudia Giefers (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 396 – 435.

villages, according to Henning, were established north of the *limes* already in the third and fourth centuries, and were spreading into northern Gaul in the fifth century. Once established, they continued to form the economic base of medieval Europe for many centuries to come, regardless of the changes in socio-political arrangements that followed from one period to another.⁷⁶

From this point of view, the collapse and disappearance of the Roman villa-type of agrarian organization represents not an economic crisis but a step forward; in other words, in northern Gaul and Germany, the earliest centuries of the medieval period ought to be seen as an advance in rural efficiency. In fact, this aspect of Henning's argument lies very close to Wickham's consideration that the peasants in Temperate Europe in the first two or three centuries after the collapse of Roman administration and its surplus-extracting powers actually witnessed a gain in prosperity. Further, as emerges from Henning's large-scale survey of the "Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm" (2007),⁷⁷ Henning agrees with both Lebecq and Wickham in taking a sanguine view of the economic condition of the Merovingian realms in the sixth and seventh centuries. Merovingian prosperity, according to Henning, featured the continuation of many Roman towns in northwestern continental Europe as centers of industrial and craft production, serving as market and supply centers for the enterprising rural populations surrounding them:

[The early European town] was supported by sound trade and exchange activity, and by craft and agricultural production, which were controlled by aristocratic power only to a small extent, if at all.⁷⁸

For Henning, however, the rise of the great estates that the Carolingians encouraged in the eighth and ninth centuries resulted in a severe regression in urbanism, as the elite constructed autarkic rural economies around monastic centers and diverted

⁷⁶ Henning, "Germanisch-romanische Agrarkontinuität," 421 – 6. See also the discussion in Section 5.2, subsection *Alamannia and the Rhine* above.

⁷⁷ Joachim Henning, "Early European Towns: The Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm between Dynamism and Deceleration AD 500 – 1100," in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 3 – 40. The discussion covers the territory from the Loire to Bavaria and from the North Sea to the Alps and centers around seven "types" of centers, which show evidence of concerted industrial or professional craft production, including monastic establishments and villages.

⁷⁸ Henning, "Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm," 29.

peasant labor from the productive village farms to the inefficient manorial demesne.⁷⁹

Far from being an engine for the revival of demand sustained at a higher and more sophisticated level of material culture, as Wickham sees it, Henning flatly declares that

the *curtis* system was designed for the efficient absorption of tributary surplus and was anything but the driving force that led to increased agricultural productivity.⁸⁰

Henning admits that the Carolingian period recorded great achievements in the realm of high culture, but insists that the Carolingian neo-Roman state severely dampened economic growth. A vibrant economy continued on the margins of the system, according to Henning, in the *emporia* and the *wics*, which functioned as a kind of compensation for economic losses inland due to the temporary triumph of the bipartite manor. The Carolingian elite extracted profit from the trade ports but were instrumental neither in their founding nor in their demise. Free enterprise, says Henning, survived in the shadows of the main economic organizational model, despite oppressive tax-taking, in “small niches for self-determined action, for free market activities, and for craft production for unknown consumers.” The economy and urban life revived as the estate system declined again, with the speed of the recovery proportional to the distance from “aristocratic power structures.”⁸¹ Henning thus stridently rejects the model of elite-driven economic revival, which is so central to Wickham’s viewpoint and received a benign nod also from Lebecq.

McCormick’s positions on the core issues in debate regarding the nature of the early medieval economy are, perhaps, the most complex. At the outset, it should be noted that he differs from Lebecq, Wickham, and Henning in dating the revival of Europe’s economic fortunes to the Carolingian period—*after* ca. 700, i.e., to the eighth century, not to the fifth (Henning, the establishment of the post-Roman peasantry), or the

⁷⁹ Henning, “Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm,” 10 – 20.

⁸⁰ Henning, “Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm,” 24 – 5. He follows with a reiteration of his thesis regarding technologically advanced, self-managing peasants as the foundation of the early medieval economy (pp. 25 – 6). It should be noted, nevertheless, that “efficient absorption of tributary surplus” demanded an attempt at close bureaucratic management of vast, far flung properties. Whether or not the estate management system squelched peasant initiative to some degree, it succeeding in delivering an impressive amount of resources for elite uses—for example, to the Carolingian military. See again Bachrach, “Are They Not Like Us?”

⁸¹ Henning, “Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm,” 29 – 31.

sixth (Wickham, the socio-economic consolidation of Francia), or the seventh (Lebecq, emergence of the North Sea trading system). Crucially, McCormick's judgment in this matter depends on a Mediterranean-centered viewpoint, and reflects his extensive research that has focused on that sea.⁸² However, McCormick's view encompasses Temperate Europe and its northern adjuncts, as well.

In one recent article, McCormick starts with an early medieval West that is seen in surprisingly primitivistic terms. In contrast with the Roman world earlier, the High Medieval world to come, and contemporary Byzantium and the Caliphate, early medieval kings led political entities grounded in "persönlichen Banden," with limited use of the written word, a dearth of means of payment, underdeveloped markets and production systems, widespread autarky, and a mentality focused on gift-giving and the spoils of war. The outlook might be summarized in the section title: *Kein Geld—kein Apparat*.⁸³ Landed and hoarded wealth concentrated in the hands of the elite, continues McCormick; however, even limited trade gave opportunities for much more rapid gain than from the accumulation and redistribution of treasure or from the management of estates:

Die Geschwindigkeit und auch die Erträge, die sich mit Investitionen in den Handel erwirtschaften ließen, übertrafen die der Landwirtschaft.⁸⁴

In other words, in an agro-heavy, primitivistic socio-economic environment, trade could be an agent of creative destabilization ("konnte produktiv destabilisierend wirken") and became a catalyst for greater economic specialization and efficiency.⁸⁵ The rulers, who needed prestige goods to set themselves apart from their aristocratic peers, as well as assemblies of the high and mighty collectively, served to stimulate the activities of merchants from far afield, creating a demand for things such as silk, furs, fine weaponry,

⁸² Notably, Michael McCormick, "Bateaux de vie, bateaux de mort. Maladie, commerce, transports annonaire et le passage économique du Bas-Empire au Moyen Âge," in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo* (Settimane 45, 1998), 35 – 122, which explores the details of the collapse of the Roman shipping system in the Mediterranean; and McCormick, *Origins*, which reveals a new world of Mediterranean communications 700 – 900.

⁸³ Or: no money and no infrastructure. Michael McCormick, "Um 808: Was der frühmittelalterliche König mit der Wirtschaft zu tun hatte," in *Die Macht des Königs. Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit*, ed. Bernhard Jussen (München: C. H. Beck, 2005), 58 – 61. The parameters set out here would not seem out of place in Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*. Possibly, the primitivistic tone was determined by the outlook of the volume as a whole.

⁸⁴ McCormick, "Was der frühmittelalterliche König mit der Wirtschaft zu tun hatte," 62.

⁸⁵ McCormick, "Was der frühmittelalterliche König mit der Wirtschaft zu tun hatte," 62 – 3.

spices, and drugs. Further, rulers not only attracted trade but also, from the mid-eighth century, facilitated it with the minting of coins, the chartering of many new markets, and the extension of mercantile privileges; meanwhile, as they encouraged and facilitated trade, they also profited greatly from the tolls that the growing traffic provided them. The kings in the early medieval West did not have the means to interfere in the workings of the economy that were available to a Roman or Byzantine ruler, but this negative was, in fact, a positive. While the rulers provided the framework for exchange with coinage, markets, and tolls, and stabilized transaction costs by maintaining peace and justice, the merchants, in effect, enjoyed *laissez faire* conditions. This led to freer, more adventurous traders, to the opening of new routes, and to a general growth of trade and investment in productive infrastructure and technology.⁸⁶

Remarkably, McCormick manages, thus, to find a leading or catalytic role for trade in Carolingian Europe even while assuming relatively primitivistic baseline conditions in this society. In other recent publications, the primitivistic framework fades away. In “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’,” for example, he waxes quite positive regarding the health of the Carolingian economy. Among other details, he evokes a refurbished view of the bipartite estates: “spreading across economically advanced regions” in Francia and northern Italy, spurring development of the transport system, marketing surpluses near and far, and feeding an expanding population.⁸⁷ Even more radically, in “Where Do Trading Towns Come from?” McCormick suggests that the buying power of kings may have been crucial in “[fanning] the flickering flame of demand” and ramping up the volume of exchange, but that their involvement in the infrastructure of trade—the founding of towns and *emporium* and the establishment of regulations and tolls—was more re-active than pro-active.⁸⁸ Rather, *entrepôts* such as

⁸⁶ McCormick, “Was der frühmittelalterliche König mit der Wirtschaft zu tun hatte,” 64 – 71. His appreciation of the role of royal and aristocratic demand in stimulating long-distance trade parallels Wickham’s ideas, to an extent. Wickham’s emphasis is, however, on elite-demand stimulus to the internal market, primarily. McCormick’s view of the mercantile element as a frontier of freedom and innovation somewhat parallels Henning’s, but from strikingly different background considerations.

⁸⁷ Michael McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’: How the Slave Trade Fuelled the Carolingian Economy,” *Past and Present* 177 (2002): 22 – 4. This viewpoint on the great estates directly contradicts Henning’s. See further in the discussion in Section 6.4 below.

⁸⁸ Michael McCormick, “Where Do Trading Towns Come From? Early Medieval Venice and the Northern *Emporium*,” in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 44 – 6.

Venice appeared, through the initiative of players who typically are quite invisible in the written record, “near natural or political borders”—i.e., at locations with “ecological and communications liminality.” Major *emporium* and emergent trading cities established links between “worlds,” such as between the Caliphate and Carolingia or between Carolingia and Scandinavia, but they also connected to smaller markets and local hinterlands.⁸⁹ As McCormick summarizes:

To understand the growth of the new trading towns. . . we must look beyond them and discover the markets they served.⁹⁰

In *Origins of the European Economy*, McCormick systematically refutes the many and varied arguments, from Pirenne up into the 1990s, that have been made for a pessimistic view of the early medieval economy in Europe and the Mediterranean.⁹¹ Two of his observations are of particular interest to the present study. First, that the presence of fully formed, complex urban centers is *not* a necessary precondition for commerce.⁹² Second, that a society can participate in international trade through production and marketing of agricultural surplus, and that the presence of commercial opportunities will, at the same time, have a long-term, positive stimulating effect even in an overwhelmingly agrarian society.⁹³ Thus, while much of his recent commentary freely admits the importance of the agrarian sector as the foundation of Carolingian prosperity, McCormick nevertheless gives primacy to long-distance exchange as the engine of economic development. Most specifically, he argues that the key to the early upsurge of the European economy in the eighth and ninth century was a massive international slave trade, by which some Europeans—Venetians, for example—accrued great wealth through delivering other Europeans into Mediterranean slavery. In other words, it was this

⁸⁹ McCormick, “Where Do Trading Towns Come From?” 46 – 55.

⁹⁰ McCormick, “Where Do Trading Towns Come From?” 50.

⁹¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 573 – 80. This makes his position in the 2004 *Macht des Königs* volume all the more startling.

⁹² “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.” McCormick, *Origins*, 577, and n. 14. This has been a recurrent if not always explicit consideration here, especially in Chapters 3 and 5. Cf. the traditional viewpoint of Adriaan Verhulst, *The Rise of Cities in North-West Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), which assumes the close correlation of commercial activity with the emergence of proper towns.

⁹³ McCormick, *Origins*, 578.

valuable, exportable commodity that primarily gave Carolingian Europe its entrance into the international marketplace, accumulated capital, and set Latin Christendom on the path to more diversified growth in later centuries.⁹⁴

In the sections to follow, the positions of the four scholars outlined above will be compared with the available evidence in greater detail. There are some broad areas of consensus. All of them agree that a lively trading world in the northern waters existed from the seventh century onwards.⁹⁵ All of them have admitted a blooming agrarian sector for continental western Europe in the early Middle Ages, albeit with marked differences of viewpoint regarding the timing of the phenomenon. Major differences focus (1) on issues of elite-dominated demand and organization vs. the more individualistic enterprise of peasants and traders, and (2) on the relative importance of intra-regional and local exchange networks vs. longer-distance and inter-regional trade. Regardless of how one chooses to resolve the contradictions, the baseline conditions in Carolingian Europe for production and exchange appear much more positive than most people imagined two or three decades ago. Correspondingly, the significance of mercantile specialists within this system, including the *negotiatores* whose privileges have left a trace in the *formulae* of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, also has increased.

6.2 The new Mediterranean

It emerges from the preceding discussion that the condition of exchange systems in Carolingian Europe might be evaluated according to three strands of evidence. First, the capacity or incapacity of a given region or local area to produce surpluses that could be marketable. Second, the presence or absence of merchants and mercantile activity,

⁹⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 733 – 77, for the core of the argument, with incidental references scattered *passim*. “The European commercial economy in the Mediterranean was born precisely in the dynamic centers of the slave trade with the Arab world, in Naples, Amalfi, and in Venice” (p. 776). The argument appears in concentrated form in McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’”; and a spirited defense of it is in Michael McCormick, “Complexity, Chronology and Context in the Early Medieval Economy,” *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003): 307 – 23. Critiques of McCormick’s slave-trade thesis include Andreas Schwarz, “Some Open Questions,” *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003): 279 – 82; Henning, “Slavery or Freedom?” 269 – 77; and Florin Curta, “East Central Europe,” *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003): 283 – 91. McCormick’s evidence and the critiques will be considered in detail throughout the following sections.

⁹⁵ Lebecq, “Routes of Change”; Wickham, *Framing*, 681 – 8; Henning, “Slavery or Freedom?” 270; McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’,” 22.

including routes or networks over or through which goods might circulate. And third, the balance, interplay, or tension between elite-directed production and exchange vis-à-vis self-directed or “private” initiatives. In order to provide a southern anchor for the Carolingian system—to demonstrate, in other words, that the trans-Alpine world had an active outlet in this direction—it will be necessary first to address the Mediterranean.

According to McCormick, practically the only functional sea corridor that continued to link Constantinople and the East with Italy and the West in the later seventh and first half of the eighth century was the “ancient trunk route”: from the Tyrrhenian sea through the straits of Messina, across the Ionian sea to the west coast of Greece, and thence around the capes of the Peloponnesos into the Aegean.⁹⁶ As has been noted, McCormick sees AD 700 as the nadir of the slow unwinding of the Roman system and, simultaneously, as the point of rapid rebound for a new system of communications and commercial activity.⁹⁷ We can accept that ca. 700 was a transformational pivot point in the configuration of Mediterranean routes. There is some evidence to suggest, however, that the trough was less deep than McCormick supposes.

Even if traffic was concentrated primarily along the above-mentioned route, it appears to have been regular and heavy; the continued political interest of Constantinople in Italy and Rome in the seventh century alone would guarantee this.⁹⁸ There was no slackening of such interest in the first half of the eighth century.⁹⁹ That much more traffic is recorded for the first half of the eighth than for the second half of the seventh century is partly the effect of McCormick’s research design, which chose to focus on the 700 – 900 period; for the seventh century, says McCormick, his collected data is “merely

⁹⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 502 – 8.

⁹⁷ See McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’,” 27 n. 26, for a reiteration of this point and an extensive bibliography on the discussion.

⁹⁸ In Appendix 4 of McCormick, *Origins*, 853 – 8, twelve out of the 43 Mediterranean voyages for the period of ca. 650 – 700 were between Constantinople and some point in Italy. Three others were from Gaul to Jerusalem, by an unspecified route, which may well have involved the “trunk route.”

⁹⁹ Appendix 4 of McCormick, *Origins*, 858 – 71, for the period ca. 700 – 750 catalogues ninety-nine movements of various kinds, of which thirty-seven are, again, between Constantinople or the Aegean and points in Italy and overwhelmingly of an official nature. The operations of Arab fleets account for a considerable portion of the remaining sixty-two “movements.”

illustrative.”¹⁰⁰ Even at the supposed nadir, then, of Mediterranean travel there was considerable traffic on some routes. McCormick’s method has been criticized on the grounds that the voyages of pilgrims and diplomats do not reflect commercial ties.¹⁰¹ McCormick argues, however, that the evidence of the pilgrims’ travels, especially, and even that of many of the more official travelers such as envoys, presupposes the availability of private shipping that ordinarily was engaged in some other kind of business—i.e., in trade.¹⁰²

What evidence do we have for possible Mediterranean commerce in the later seventh and early eighth centuries? Though the hints are sparse, they are, in fact, more numerous than one might suppose. The link between Constantinople and southern Italy, so evident in regular diplomatic traffic, seems to have served also as a corridor for a continuing Byzantine state food supply operation from Africa, Sicily, and southern Italy. According to John Haldon, state officials still collected the *frumentum* (grain tax) and exercised *coemptio* (forced sale of supplies at government-set prices) in southern Italy and Sicily in the later seventh and eighth centuries.¹⁰³ Thus, even though the traditional imperial *annona* system had collapsed with the loss of Egypt ca. 617, something very much like it was still being run from a different location a century later. If it is commonly accepted that other types of exchange “piggy-backed” on the official *annona* transport in the period up to the early seventh century, transports of grain from Sicily

¹⁰⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 852. According to McCormick, “[t]he investigation has approached exhaustiveness for sources in Latin, Greek, and Old Church Slavonic” that refer to persons traveling on the Mediterranean 700 – 900; however, due to his own inexpertise with Hebrew and Arabic, only a small sample of the potentially “rich harvest [that] is still to be gathered in the Arabic and Hebrew records” was included (pp. 123 – 4).

¹⁰¹ See for example Curta, “East Central Europe,” 290: “Given the nature of the impressive amount of data presented in McCormick’s book, however, the evidence is more of communications than of trade.” This statement echoes Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 168, where it is asserted: “We must not confuse the circulation of merchandise with the movements of pilgrims, scholars and artists,” who “followed the hazard of circumstances”—unlike merchants, who must use regularly established routes. As pointed out by McCormick, however, Pirenne himself used a shift in the pattern of pilgrim travels between the seventh and eighth centuries (*Mohammed and Charlemagne*, p. 169) to advance his thesis of Mediterranean disruption; see McCormick, *Origins*, 271 n. 3.

¹⁰² McCormick, *Origins*, 271 – 5. This consideration applies to the AD 700 – 900 period generally, not just to the early eighth century. Nineteen of the 400-odd documented travelers are specifically identified as merchants, while many others explicitly are taking ship with traders of some sort.

¹⁰³ John Haldon, “Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World, ca. 660 – 840,” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 244 – 7.

back into the Aegean could have continued to have a similar effect in the later seventh and eighth centuries.¹⁰⁴

In addition to a possible *annona*-like system running along the trunk route from southern Italy to the Aegean, the western Mediterranean as a whole may have remained active to an extent—more so than McCormick’s pessimistic view would allow. Andreas Schwarz has pointed out a section in the *Lex Visigothorum* of the mid-seventh century, *de transmarinis negotiatoribus*—which suggests that overseas trade was still active in Spain at that time.¹⁰⁵ Even more intriguing is the early-seventh century wreck off Fos-sur-Mer: Levant bound, and loaded with grain from “Continental European locations.”¹⁰⁶ Though it may have ceased by ca. 700, a Gallic grain trade to the Mediterranean anytime in the seventh century suggests that the Merovingian-era long-distance exchange system involved more than just luxury goods or exotic foodstuffs such as are enumerated in the privileges to Corbie.¹⁰⁷ Drinkwater identified grain (wheat) as the premier cash-crop for villa-owners in Roman Gaul.¹⁰⁸ If a grain trade from Gaul into the Mediterranean continued (or: resumed?) in the sixth and seventh centuries, then this speaks volumes for economic vitality, as this would satisfy Wickham’s requirement that an economy show trade in staple goods in order to qualify as commercialized.¹⁰⁹

The economic condition of Lombard Italy

On the whole, seventh- and eighth-century Italy appears to have maintained a modest level of economic vitality and commercial complexity, which in turn elevates our evaluation of the commercial potential of the Mediterranean entire. Although, says

¹⁰⁴ Wickham, *Framing*, 788 – 9, mentions the Sicilian connection in his discussion of long-distance grain supply networks for Constantinople in the eighth century. For the role of *annona* transport in the Roman-period Mediterranean, see discussion in Section 4.2 “The End of the Roman Mediterranean,” subsection *The annona transport and its effects* above.

¹⁰⁵ Schwarz, “Some Open Questions,” 279, citing *Lex Visigothorum* 55.11.3.

¹⁰⁶ Henning, “Slavery of Freedom?” 275.

¹⁰⁷ See discussion in Section 5.1 “Merovingian Gaul,” subsection *The Mediterranean connection* above, for the privilege confirmed for the Abbey of Corbie on 29 April 716 by Chilperic II. This privilege continued earlier ones dating to the mid-seventh century.

¹⁰⁸ J. F. Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul: The Three Provinces, 58 BC – AD 260* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 167. See discussion in Section 4.4 “The Case of Roman Gaul,” subsection *A potential for self-sufficiency* above.

¹⁰⁹ See discussion of Wickham’s theory in Section 5.4 above; also Wickham’s position in Section 6.1, subsection *Competing theories of Carolingian production and exchange* above.

Wickham, as a result of the Gothic War and the Lombard invasion “Italy had, in economic terms, become a loose set of unrelated sub-regions,” most local areas maintained some degree of material wealth and competence; this is illustrated above all in the various sub-regional ceramic distributions.¹¹⁰ Another good indication that commercial life continued in Italy throughout the later sixth and seventh centuries is the persistence of coinage, including low-value silver issues alongside high-standard gold currency. These were minted alike by the Exarchate and by the Lombard kings and circulated freely across a permeable economic boundary between the two political sides.¹¹¹ Lombard Italy was characterized as well by a persistent though small scale urbanism.¹¹²

Concurrently, at least in certain areas, there was a wholesale reconfiguration in the countryside along lines remarkably similar to what Henning argues for Europe north of the Alps. The latter point emerges strongly in Riccardo Francovich’s studies of the evolution of Tuscan hilltop settlements in the post-Roman period.¹¹³ The pattern of development in Tuscany, derived from Francovich, may be summarized as follows:

1. The collapse of the classical town landscape in Tuscany starts already in the second century. Some revival of villa agriculture occurs in the fourth to fifth centuries.

¹¹⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 729 – 32, 736 – 7; the quote is on p. 731. See also Federico Marazzi, “The Destinies of the Late Antique Italies: Politico-Economic Developments of the Sixth Century,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 119 – 59, who supports a similar view. See also Ross Balzaretto, “Cities, Emporia and Monasteries: Local Economies in the Po Valley, c. AD 700 – 875,” in *Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Neil Christy and Simon T. Loseby (Aldershot: Scolar, 1996), 214 – 18, on towns of northern Italy.

¹¹¹ Alessia Rovelli, “Some Considerations on the Coinage of Lombard and Carolingian Italy,” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 195 – 205. Rovelli stresses the continuity through Ostrogothic, Byzantine, and Lombard rule in Italy. Lombard coinage was always bi-metallic (p. 203). In some areas, the Byzantines maintained a full tri-metallic series until the early eighth century (p. 198).

¹¹² Wickham, *Framing*, 211 – 214.

¹¹³ Riccardo Francovich, “The Hinterlands of Early Medieval Towns: The Transformation of the Countryside in Tuscany,” in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 135 – 52; and Riccardo Francovich, “The Beginnings of Hilltop Villages in Early Medieval Tuscany,” in *Long Morning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 55 – 82.

2. An end to the antique landscape comes in the fifth to sixth centuries. It is marked by a loss of control over the peasants and thus the destruction of the old socio-political system that supported the Senatorial class. A weak aristocracy continued, manifesting itself in building churches on the ruins of villas and abandoned towns. The remaining urban centers become fortresses.¹¹⁴
3. In the sixth to eighth century, peasants build egalitarian hilltop villages of wooden huts, undifferentiated housing which typically is rebuilt every generation. This is the foundation for the medieval landscape to come.
4. The re-assertion of elite presence in the villages becomes visible in the later eighth to tenth centuries through differentiation: construction of walls, larger houses, and storage areas on the hilltops. These phenomena are part of the *curtense* system, promoted by the Carolingians.
5. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, stone-built *castelli* appear on the hilltops. Until ca. 1100 they are built by local workers with indifferent skills, thereafter by specialist builders in the latest fortification techniques. This is the first phase of *incastellamento*.
6. A second phase of *incastellamento* occurs in the thirteenth century, with some of the earlier *castelli* abandoned while some of the remaining ones grow into true, fortified, hilltop towns.¹¹⁵

In Tuscany, then, egalitarian villages of autonomous post-Roman peasants laid the demographic-economic foundations for subsequent stages of medieval development characterized by the revival of aristocratic power that superimposed itself upon the productive landscape.¹¹⁶ Francovich describes the agricultural system of the Tuscan

¹¹⁴ Luni, for example, was a Byzantine garrison town. Francovich ascribes the signs of Mediterranean connectivity in places such as Luni to the presence of the army, not to private commerce; outside imports ceased when the Lombards took the place. Francovich, "Transformation of the Countryside in Tuscany," 139.

¹¹⁵ Francovich, "Transformation of the Countryside in Tuscany," passim. There is some degree of unclarity in Francovich's discussion of the later stages, likely because he assumes that readers will be familiar with the details of the *incastellamento* issue.

¹¹⁶ This is Henning's argument for the course of development in Germany and Francia. "[T]he manorial economy may be seen as a reaction to the high levels of productivity attained in the West during and shortly after the late Roman period by individual farmsteads. . . . It was only logical that the manorial system would not displace such units of production but, instead, would maintain preexisting relations

hilltop villagers: intensively cultivated hillsides with olive, fruit, and nut trees, vines, and vegetable gardens while valley floors remain open for grain farming and pasture.¹¹⁷ The evident productivity and, therefore, prosperity of the villagers leaves open the possibility that they were producing high-value agricultural surpluses not only for subsistence but for the market—in order to acquire manufactures and luxuries from outside. While the organizational structure of an exchange system based on the aggregate of demand of peasants is not visible at present, the possibility that such a system existed in Lombard Italy and Merovingian trans-Alpine Europe has been enunciated cautiously but clearly by Angeliki Laiou in her summary to Part One of the *Long Morning of Medieval Europe* volume. Giving due deference to Wickham’s thesis (“The correspondence he establishes between elite wealth and exchange is compelling”), she points out nonetheless that peasants could have been responsible for “slow technological development, small-scale-production, and small-scale demand which nevertheless was important in the aggregate.”¹¹⁸

A further line of development in sixth- and seventh-century Italy, which contributes directly to the changed configuration of long-distance exchange in the eighth and ninth centuries, is the evolution of towns and ports at the head of the Adriatic and in the Po delta area. The Roman *civitates* in the Veneto, typically located inland from the coast, mostly declined or were abandoned, while sites on the lagoons or along the rivers and canals—Comacchio, Torcello, Ferrara, Cittanova—show remains of amphorae, landing stages, and other trade-related artifacts and infrastructure. At Torcello, for

between them and interfere as little as possible in the production process, in order to tax individual farmsteads more effectively. The result of such circumspect economic behavior seems to have been substantial economic gains for landlords.” Joachim Henning, “Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe during the Early Middle Ages: Which Way Was ‘Normal’?” in *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 47 – 8. The farmsteads were, already in the Merovingian period, organized into permanent villages. Joachim Henning, “Strong Rulers—Weak Economy? Rome, the Carolingians and the Archaeology of Slavery in the First Millennium AD,” in *Long Morning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 44. The major difference between Tuscany and the North European plain was topographical.

¹¹⁷ Francovich, “Hilltop Villages in Early Medieval Tuscany,” 62. “The archaeological evidence shows that *incastellamento* was established on a network of pre-existing settlements, and that the organization of peasant labor was modelled on this pre-existing framework” (p. 68). This closely parallels Henning’s statement in the previous note.

¹¹⁸ Angeliki Laiou, “The Early Medieval Economy: Data, Production, Exchange and Demand,” in *Long Morning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 99 – 104. The quotes are on p. 102 and p. 103.

example, imported artifacts are in evidence for the entire seventh century. The development was, then, in the direction of communities with an economy rooted in local agriculture or fishing that also participated in a burgeoning exchange network—some of which, at least, involved goods coming long distance overseas.¹¹⁹

Apparently, the head of the Adriatic in the Lombard period was evolving along lines very similar to those of the North Sea region in the sixth and seventh centuries: not only are the “landing places” similar in placement and structure to those in northwestern Europe, but there seems to have been an early medieval small-scale economy in the Po delta just like there was around the North Sea.¹²⁰ This suggests an early commercial revolution in the head of the Adriatic, one that started right after the collapse of the late-Roman – Ostrogothic phase had ended.¹²¹

An indication that the trade in the Po delta had reached a significant level of activity by the early eighth century, and so aroused the interest of the Lombard kings, is the so-called Comacchio Pact, in which the traders of that delta town are directed to pay certain tolls at a number of river ports upstream; this has been interpreted as evidence for an extended trade network along the Po and its tributaries around the turn of the eighth century.¹²² An additional impression that trade in the Po valley and at the head of the Adriatic had reached a strategically significant volume by the mid-eighth century comes from the *Leges Ahistulfi* 1.4, in which King Aistulf in 750, as he was moving against Ravenna, forbade commercial contacts between his subjects and any *Romani*—i.e., Byzantine citizens in places like Comacchio and Venice.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Sauro Gelichi, “Flourishing Places in North-Eastern Italy: Towns and *emporía* between Late Antiquity and the Carolingian Age,” in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 77 – 104.

¹²⁰ See discussion in Section 5.3, subsections *Development in Denmark and Sweden* and *Northwestern waters* above.

¹²¹ Cf., however, the views of Balzaretto, “Cities, Emporia and Monasteries: Local Economies in the Po Valley,” 218, who argues that the role of overseas, long-distance trade in the development of the Po valley in the eighth and ninth centuries has been exaggerated. It may be significant that Balzaretto’s article (1996) appeared a full decade earlier than Gelichi’s (2007). See also McCormick, *Origins*, 631, who sees only “tiny quantities of exotic goods” moving from Comacchio to Pavia in the early eighth century. This follows McCormick’s general viewpoint that communications and trade in the Mediterranean region were at a nadir ca. 700.

¹²² McCormick, *Origins*, 862 – 3, dates the *Pactum* to 10 May 715, under King Liutprand, and summarizes the provisions. See also the translation and discussion in Balzaretto, “Cities, Emporia and Monasteries: Local Economies in the Po Valley,” 219 – 25.

¹²³ McCormick, *Origins*, 631 and n. 55.

The eastern connection

One relatively well documented journey of the early eighth century, which illustrates the reconfiguration of Mediterranean communications and exchange systems ongoing around that time, is that of St. Willibald from Anglo-Saxon England to Jerusalem and back again.¹²⁴ First, Willibald in the summer of 721 crossed from Hamwic to Rouen, where he found a market in progress.¹²⁵ Next, he made his way across Gaul and over the Alpine passes into northern Italy—rather than proceeding down the Rhône to the seacoast at Marseille.¹²⁶ Significantly, when they were ready to depart from Naples, an Egyptian merchant ship just happened to be available for them in that port; it took them via Calabria and Monemvasia to Ephesus, illustrating the continued existence of the “trunk route.”

Equally significant is the fact that they were able to find other merchant vessels on the coast of Asia Minor and around Cyprus which eventually got them to Umayyad Syria, whence they traveled further by land down to Jerusalem. Willibald spent some three years in the Levant, able to travel freely to cities in Lebanon and Syria—on what McCormick suspects were journeys connected with illicit trading.¹²⁷ In any case, Willibald explicitly brags about his success in smuggling a vial of super-expensive balsam aromatic past the Muslim customs agents once he was ready to return north into Byzantine territory. He sold the balsam in Constantinople, which was increasingly the indispensable hub for all travels in the Aegean region, regardless of ultimate destination.¹²⁸ In Constantinople they joined a diplomatic party that took the “trunk route” back to Italy, landing again in Naples.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Chosen for this purpose and discussed in detail in McCormick, *Origins*, 129 – 34. The source is the *Vita Willibaldi* of the nun Hugeburc.

¹²⁵ See discussion of the Channel *emporía* in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and England* below.

¹²⁶ On the condition of Marseille in the later seventh and eighth centuries, see S. T. Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirene Thesis, II: ‘Ville Mort’,” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 167 – 93. See also the discussion in subsection *From the clusae to the emporia* below.

¹²⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 133.

¹²⁸ The centrality of Constantinople in the eighth-century Byzantine politico-economic system is stressed by Haldon, “Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World,” 230. See also McCormick, *Origins*, 505 – 7, on the “trunk route” from Sicily to Constantinople as nearly the only practicable one for most of the eighth century. Further, his comment on the city itself: “[W]hat recent scholarship has disclosed about town life in early medieval Asia Minor [confirms that] the old urban centers dwindled

Notably, though it took Willibald more than a year to reach Jerusalem from Naples, he encountered no insuperable obstacles, nor was he hindered by Muslim officials, coming or going. The entire episode shows that there was no wholesale destruction of Mediterranean trade by the Muslims, and no successful Byzantine blockade of communications with the Caliphate.¹³⁰ By the mid-ninth century, as illustrated in another of McCormick's anecdotal travels, a Christian pilgrim could travel overland to southern Italy and find Muslim ships there to take him directly to Egypt. There he would find a bureaucracy and infrastructure well practiced in the business of processing such pilgrims, issuing permits, collecting *jizya* and tolls, and maintaining facilities along the road to Jerusalem.¹³¹ Again, the traveler from Europe encountered no serious obstacles, but his route now was much more direct—resembling, in a way, the communications that had existed between southern Gaul and the eastern Mediterranean in the sixth century.¹³²

To understand the shift in routes that had taken place from ca. 700 to ca. 850, it is necessary to address the economic condition of the eastern Mediterranean, i.e. of Byzantium and the Caliphate in this period.¹³³ From the mid seventh to the mid ninth, Byzantium was undergoing a period of crisis and retrenchment. While it retained the integrity of its political and administrative systems, its economy throughout the eighth century appears to have been dominated almost entirely by this government apparatus. The state sustained a monetized circulation, but siphoned off almost all surplus to support the administration, the army, and the careers of the elite who operated the system.¹³⁴

away and Constantinople emerged as the great solitary city of the empire" (p. 302). In other words: economic concentration along with political and military concentration on that one key point. It is almost more like a new Punic-era Carthage, rather than a New Rome.

¹²⁹ McCormick, *Origins*, 134, ends the story of the freelance trader-monk and shrine-tourist Willibald.

¹³⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 577 – 8.

¹³¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 134 – 7.

¹³² For illustration, compare McCormick, *Origins*, 135 Map 5.2, illustrating the pilgrimage of one Bernard in 867, with the maps in Dagmar Schwärzel, *Handel und Verkehr des Merowingerreiches nach den Schriftlichen Quellen: Ein Darstellungsversuch in 12 Karten* (Marburg: Vorgeschichtliches Seminar, 1983).

¹³³ See McCormick, *Origins*, 582 n. 27, for comparison of habitable land area and population in the tenth and eleventh centuries: Caliphate 35 – 40 million, Byzantine empire 15 – 20 million.

¹³⁴ Such is the conclusion that is to be derived from Haldon, "Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World," 226 – 43, 261.

While merchants are rarely visible in the sources until the eleventh century, the Byzantines maintained trade connections throughout the eighth and ninth centuries: with the Bulgars, via the Black Sea and ports such as Trebizond with the Khazars on the Caspian steppe and with the Caliphate, also directly from Anatolia to the Caliphate.¹³⁵ Constantinople itself, of course, remained as a major center of consumption, trade, and production, and its power sufficed to maintain the Aegean as an integrated trade area even in the eighth century, while the constituent micro-regions probably varied extremely in local wealth and sophistication.¹³⁶

Wickham suggests further that the Aegean sea system connected via the “trunk route” to the eighth-century Tyrrhenian sea network. Here, in Byzantine South Italy were local elites richer than anywhere else in the western Mediterranean, supporting a more complex trade system than in the Lombard north, with Sicilian grain and Calabrian wine moving along non-fiscal networks, stimulating the development of Naples, Amalfi, Gaeta, and Salerno and penetrating inland to places like Benevento and San Vincenzo al Volturno. According to Wickham, “in 800 the Tyrrhenian Sea was the most complex maritime exchange zone in the Mediterranean.”¹³⁷

It appears, however, that the pull generated by growth and demand in the Caliphate had an even greater economic stimulus effect than did the Byzantine system, an effect that not only propelled Venice to a key position in the Mediterranean world and opened a new set of routes that cut slantwise across the axis of the Byzantine “trunk route,” but which also served as the catalyst for the future economic development of Europe as a whole.¹³⁸ Wickham, in *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, took a generally positive view of the state of production and exchange in Egypt and the Levant in the early

¹³⁵ Haldon, “Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World,” 255 – 7. With the Bulgars, it was a closely controlled trade that required merchants to obtain licenses, threatened confiscation of goods to those caught trading without one, and death to those who attempted to export weapons and gold (p. 256). The similarity to late Roman practice is obvious.

¹³⁶ Wickham, *Framing*, 789 – 92. “The dominant role of Constantinople as a fiscally supported centre for commercial exchange matches the dominance of the tax-based state hierarchies for the landed aristocracies of the empire” (p. 791). Haldon and Wickham both focus on the government and the aristocracy as the forces that determined the shape of the Aegean economy in the eighth and ninth centuries.

¹³⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 736 – 8, 788 – 9. The quote is on p. 738.

¹³⁸ Here we come again to McCormick’s key thesis regarding the slave trade. See the summary of the argument in McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages,’” 38 – 52.

post-Roman period up to ca. 800.¹³⁹ This picture is confirmed by Alan Walmsley for Palestine and Syria in the seventh to ninth centuries under the Umayyads and the early Abbasids.¹⁴⁰ After the upheavals of the early decades of the seventh century, which saw Persian invasion and Arab conquest, the area settled down to renewed prosperity. Improving already by ca. 680, the area was flourishing in the early eighth century. This continued under the Abbasids (post-750), even though the political and economic center shifted eastwards to Iraq.¹⁴¹ Most cities had survived conquests and revolts more or less intact. New marketplaces filled city centers in the eighth century. New caravanserais served the connecting routes. As Walmsley sums up:

The prominence given to urban shopping complexes, *khâns* for the production, storage and exchange of goods, and caravanserais to facilitate the movement of people and goods strongly indicates that commerce and the market economy experienced a strong resurgence in *Bilâd al-Shâm* under the Marwânid Umayyads. The caliphs, especially Hishâm and al-Walîd II, seem to have intentionally built up the infrastructure of trade with the clear purpose of encouraging the movement and exchange of goods. In the following ninth and tenth centuries, after the relocation of the imperial capital to al-‘Iraq, towns came to depend increasingly on production and trade for their continued viability, once state patronage of projects ceased and government administration became centralised in the major centres.¹⁴²

The “movement and exchange of goods” was not confined to the territory of the Caliphate but connected readily to areas outside of its boundaries. This can be seen clearly in the fact that, while Antioch and its ports did decline from the seventh century, other cities from Lebanon to Gaza continued to thrive in the Islamic period, both as

¹³⁹ Wickham, *Framing*, 759 – 80.

¹⁴⁰ Alan Walmsley, “Production, Exchange, and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean: Old Structures, New Systems?” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 265 – 343. For the habitable corridor between the eastern shore of the Mediterranean and the desert, which stretches from the Negev in the south to Cilicia in the north, inclusive, Walmsley uses the Arabic term *Bilâd al-Shâm*.

¹⁴¹ Walmsley, “Production, Exchange, and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean,” 267 – 71.

¹⁴² Walmsley, “Production, Exchange, and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean,” 272 – 90. The quoted passage is on p. 290. The reigns of Hishâm and al-Walîd II span 723 – 44.

commercial ports and as naval bases. Whether by sea or by land, generally trade relations between Byzantium and the Caliphate were maintained during the entire Umayyad and early Abbasid period.¹⁴³ In Walmsley's view, a major reconfiguration and upsurge in international trade was set in motion by the Abbasid caliphs ca. 800 and culminated in the tenth century:

The construction of large and wealthy imperial cities in al-‘Irâq, especially Baghdâd, the regularisation of routes along the Euphrates valley to the Mediterranean, and the forging of direct sea routes through the Arabian Gulf to China and East Africa under Hârûn al-Rashîd (786 – 809) created a vibrant long distance trade network without geographical or commercial precedent. In the next century, and especially with the rise of the Fâtimids in Egypt (from 969), Cairo took a pivotal role in combining the Red Sea – Indian Ocean trade route with renewed contacts across the Mediterranean Sea, the latter initiated by fledgling maritime states on the Italian peninsula.¹⁴⁴

It is clear from the comments that follow that Walmsley is operating with a traditional, negative and pessimistic view of contemporary Europe—a Europe ill-qualified as a viable trade partner for the splendid Islamic world that is his area of expertise. However, with the updated and much more positive view of seventh- to ninth-century Europe now available, and especially with McCormick's research on the rapid evolution of new Mediterranean communications routes in the eighth century, we can set a much earlier date for significant links of commercial exchange between Carolingian Europe and the Caliphate. Most specifically, this refers to links between Egypt and Venice, which appear to be in place already in the early ninth century.

¹⁴³ Walmsley, "Production, Exchange, and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean," 291 – 5.

¹⁴⁴ Walmsley, "Production, Exchange, and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean," 296, 298. See also his summary (p. 343), where he states that "[b]y the end of the eighth century merchants, Muslim and non-Muslim, were travelling long distances by land and water to destinations beyond the Islamic realm to acquire desirable commodities for the profitable markets of an increasingly sophisticated and culturally unified Islamic society."

The emergence of Venice

McCormick agrees that the eighth- and ninth-century Islamic world was a rising and prosperous market for outside resources. In particular, he correlates the period of stability inaugurated by the Abbasids ca. 750 with an end to expansionist warfare and, coincidentally, a final outbreak of bubonic plague in the 740s that decimated the population in much of the Caliphate.¹⁴⁵ In other words, the Caliphate was entering an economic growth phase just when it had suffered a setback in the resident labor supply and sources of outside labor in the form of war captives were drying up. It was this conjunction of circumstances, argues McCormick, that provided Europe an opportunity to accelerate its own process of wealth accumulation. Europeans, and Venetians in particular, started supplying to the Muslims what they wanted most: slaves.¹⁴⁶

The resurgence of a Mediterranean slave trade from Europe to the Caliphate coincided, according to McCormick, with a decisive shift in the primary sea lanes; namely, the rapid opening of the Adriatic route, which overshadowed the ancient east – west “trunk route.” Whereas the Byzantine position at the head of the Adriatic had all but collapsed by the early eighth century, Byzantine interest and activity had revived again by the early ninth century—marked by a confrontation with Charlemagne in 806 over nominal control of the new super-port: Venice.¹⁴⁷ An early vignette of things to come is the Venetian slave dealers that were found—and suppressed—in 748 in the city of Rome by Pope Zachary.¹⁴⁸ In the ninth century, Venetians are abundantly evident in ports all over the central and eastern Mediterranean: Africa, Alexandria, Syria,

¹⁴⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 753, for the connection between the plague outbreak and the labor supply.

¹⁴⁶ McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’,” 41 – 3, for a summary.

¹⁴⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 523 – 31, for the rise of Venice in the eighth century. No imperial war fleet had been seen in the Adriatic from 709 to 806. In the ninth century, the increased Adriatic traffic also revived Greek and Balkan transit routes, such as the one over Corinth, and to accrual of new wealth in those areas (pp. 531 – 5).

¹⁴⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 618. Slave trading had been an ongoing enterprise from southern Gaul in the sixth and seventh centuries; ca. 700, Gallic slaves could be found in the markets of the city of Rome (pp. 625 – 6).

Constantinople. Meanwhile, Venice has become also the premier port for both Frankish and Byzantine diplomats moving between east and west.¹⁴⁹

McCormick describes Venice as a multi-valent interface—environmentally, between the sea and the north Italian plain of lagoons, riverways, and roads; systemically, as the major connecting point between the trans-Alpine world of Temperate Europe and the eastern worlds of Byzantium and the Caliphate.¹⁵⁰ McCormick points to impressive circumstantial evidence of a rich and voluminous trade affecting the head of the Adriatic: in places like Venice and Grado there is surging church construction, quantities of precious metals and fabrics and spices, Arab gold *dinars* physically present in hoards, and virtual *manкуси*—units of account derived from the Caliphal *al dinar al manqūsh*—all suddenly in visible abundance ca. AD 800.¹⁵¹ The source of this suddenly evident wealth, argues McCormick, must be the export of some commodity from Europe sufficiently valuable to return Arab cash in addition to the very valuable fabrics and spices. Most precisely, this wealth must represent the two- to three-fold gain in the price of a slave between the European and the Middle Eastern shores of the Mediterranean.¹⁵²

It is important to bear in mind that, however crucial the Venetian – Adriatic route might have become by the ninth century, it was hardly operating in a vacuum. In Italian waters in the eighth century, in the opinion of Wickham, the Tyrrhenian was home to a “bouyant” *non-fiscal* exchange network, which had “no parallel in the eighth-century

¹⁴⁹ McCormick, *Origins*, 526 – 9. Especially striking is the incidental evidence of the routine presence of Venetian traders in Alexandria, which McCormick takes from the miracle story of the *Translatio s. Marci* (pp. 238 – 9).

¹⁵⁰ McCormick, “Where Do Trading Towns Come From?” 48 – 50, 55, 58 – 9. Venice had “ecological and communications liminality” (p. 55). The interface function of *emporium*, *ports-of-trade*, and other types of entrepôts has been a standard feature in a long line of theories regarding intercultural and interregional exchange. What distinguishes McCormick’s view of Venice is the extraordinary geographical reach of the connective function that he assigns to it.

¹⁵¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 255 – 8, 323 – 40, 526 – 30, 545 – 6. “In the Veneto, everything smells of commerce” (p. 633). The discussion of the *manкуси* derives in large part from the work of A. Rovelli; see her comment in Rovelli, “Some Considerations on the Coinage of Lombard and Carolingian Italy,” 210 n. 48. McCormick, *Origins*, 387, points out that the 447 Arab gold *dinars* found in southern Europe to date would equal 28,281 Arab silver *dirhems*—which is indeed impressive as a token of the flow of wealth in the Mediterranean until one realizes that the Baltic Sea region so far has revealed hundreds of thousands of buried *dirhems*. See discussion in Section 7.2.

¹⁵² McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’,” 39 – 40, 43. “So how is it that Arab gold and silver were, indubitably, entering western coffers at the same time as these fiendishly expensive imports arrived?” (p. 40). See also McCormick, *Origins*, 756 – 7, Table 25.1, for a set of comparative slave prices in Italy, Frankland, Byzantium, and the Caliphate.

Mediterranean. . . in terms of scale. . . [I]n 800 the Tyrrhenian Sea was the most complex maritime exchange zone in the Mediterranean.” Not surprisingly, it was followed up in the ninth century by the very active commercial activities of Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi as well as by the easy integration of Sicily into the commercial world of the Arabs.¹⁵³ Connections from Italy to Africa abounded in the eighth and ninth centuries. These included Arab raids and conquests and the pervasive slave trading—frequently involving captives from southern Italian localities being taken to Africa—but also involved commerce that was expressly safe from molestation according to Muslim law.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, the old “trunk route” continued active. Byzantine – Arab naval actions abounded along the route, and, most interestingly, the Byzantines intervened directly in the slaving operations as well—recapturing Christians from the Arabs, indeed, but not to free them, rather to divert them to the market in Constantinople.¹⁵⁵ In this way, the ancient “trunk route” in the ninth century had become a considerable slave route.

Volturno and Rome: alternative models

If eighth- and ninth-century Italy was, thus, surrounded by active networks of Mediterranean commerce, how did this activity interface with concurrent development on land—in the peninsula, on the sub-Alpine plains of the north, and beyond? Here it may be useful to look at Richard Hodges’ excavation project at San Vincenzo al Volturno—an impressive monastic complex of the eighth and ninth centuries sited on the upper Volturno river at the northern edge of Campania.¹⁵⁶ Between the arrival of a group of monks in a near desert in 703 and the destruction of the site in a Saracen raid of 881, San Vincenzo was one of the largest and richest abbeys in Latin Christendom: at its peak, it

¹⁵³ Wickham, *Framing*, 736 – 8. The quotes are on p. 738.

¹⁵⁴ For the African connection post-700, see McCormick, *Origins*, 243 – 4, 268, 511 – 15, and 627 – 9. Arab fleets from Tunisia attacked Italy and the islands in 700 – 10, 727 – 35, 740, and 752 – 3. After a long lull, the raiding resumed in 812 – 20, and became intensive after 826 (pp. 510, 514).

¹⁵⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 505 – 8, records fifteen Byzantine war fleets making the run to Sicily 697 – 901, and battles. Selling of Christians: p. 629. Henning, “Slavery or Freedom?” 271 – 2, rightly points out that Arab and Byzantine slaving activities, so far as they involved no direct dealings with Latin Christian partners, contributed no accrual of wealth or capital to Europe—the profits would have gone to said Arabs and Greeks.

¹⁵⁶ Richard Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings? Re-reading Early Medieval Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 2006), 80 – 156. Hodges likens the site to the discovery of “a new chronicle” in terms of the richness of new data that it offers (p. 80).

had 300 monks, an equal number of lay brothers, hundreds of servants, and a cadre of skilled, resident craftsmen.¹⁵⁷ In the late eighth and early ninth centuries, the abbey was well-connected, enjoying a charter from Charlemagne (787) and relations with Louis the Pious; and it was designed deliberately to accommodate streams of elite visitors and to reflect in its design the aspirations of the Carolingian world both to a *renovatio imperii* and to an orderly, standardized, Christian lifestyle.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, according to Hodges, the abbey played the leading role in the economic revival of the entire local region.

The building and rebuilding of the monastic complex in itself was a spur to economic and technical (re)development: craftsmen were imported to produce, on site, the glass, roof and floor tiles, nails, and lime mortar used in the construction.¹⁵⁹ A row of permanent workshops was established alongside the church where, according to Hodges, San Vincenzo's resident craftsmen turned out prestige objects—goods which the abbey traded to local elite personages in the context of a “gift economy,” whose purpose was to incite a return flow of donations.¹⁶⁰ Finally, from the mid-ninth century, the abbey is beginning to take on the appearance of a typical manorial center, with storehouses and granaries, and it becomes the center of a landscape of dependent villages from the tenth century onwards.¹⁶¹

At every step, Hodges emphasizes the leading role of the elite—in this case, the monks—in creating and guiding the upper Volturno through a series of developmental steps that follow the same general pattern that he identified for the development of northwestern Europe, including the latter's *emporia* network.¹⁶² It is elite centers such as San Vincenzo that were associated with the introduction of more intensive management

¹⁵⁷ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 81 – 2, 87 – 94. Hodges believes the area to have been largely deserted and in a “prehistoric” condition since the collapse of the Roman countryside in the sixth century (pp. 111 – 13).

¹⁵⁸ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 97 – 8, 101 – 10, 117.

¹⁵⁹ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 92 – 4, 98. Hodges remarks that use of roofing tiles and lime mortar were techniques and materials reintroduced into elite settings in the eighth century.

¹⁶⁰ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 118 – 36, 139 – 40, 142 – 4. The San Vincenzo workshops, says Hodges, were making “prestige goods that were probably used in transactions with urban and rural patrons in the embryonic principality of Benevento” (p. 144). In the eighth and ninth centuries, Benevento was long past being “embryonic.” However good Hodges' archaeological data might be on the site itself, statements such as this call the reliability of his interpretations into question. Regarding the craftsmen,

¹⁶¹ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 139, 140, 147.

¹⁶² See the discussion of Hodges' theories in Section 5.4 above. In his stress on elite socio-economic leadership, Hodges agrees with part of Wickham's thesis as well.

techniques over surrounding farming areas, exercising “resource control.”¹⁶³ In its heyday as a purveyor of prestige goods, San Vincenzo gave gifts that reinforced developing social differences—it ran a thriving gift economy in the best anthropological tradition.¹⁶⁴ The countryside around San Vincenzo remained undeveloped, says Hodges, until, from the mid-ninth century onwards, the abbey got out of the international game and refocused on becoming a local manorial lord—but it is expressly *investment by the abbey* that creates the villages and effects the shift. This latter point, of course, closely parallels Hodges’ idea that northwestern Europe transitioned from long-distance exchange based around “type B *emporia*” and refocused on the development of regional markets around “type C” central places around this same time.¹⁶⁵

On a much larger scale, many of the issues and patterns of development that Hodges outlined for San Vincenzo al Volturno can be seen in the city of Rome. In a certain sense, early medieval Rome is the elite center *par excellence*—the seat of the popes, headquarters of the Church, the site of dozens of highly prestigious monasteries, and one of the premier pilgrimage destinations of Latin Christendom. Even Hodges was forced to admit that the sheer concentration of elite establishments in the city would have maintained a certain level of demand for basic supplies.¹⁶⁶ For the later eighth and first half of the ninth century, Paolo Delogu describes for Rome a kind of broad-based autarky. Much of the food was imported into the city from papal estates (*domuscultae*) in the local central Italian area or from the estates of resident aristocrats; there was little marketing of food, no evidence for merchants’ professional associations, and the bi-metallic currency from the papal mint was limited in output and was steadily debased throughout the eighth century. Coins, says Delogu, were not circulated for quotidian purposes but hoarded—to be used to expand landed holdings or to acquire luxuries. Indeed, payments very often were not in cash but in the form of privileged lease

¹⁶³ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 115.

¹⁶⁴ See the theoretical discussion in Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 148 – 9.

¹⁶⁵ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 140, 147 – 55.

¹⁶⁶ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 74, opines that in the sixth and seventh centuries, Rome’s urban life was squeezed in between “a constellation of monasteries”—that it was not so much a town as a “collection of elite centers with thousands of inhabitants that necessitated a bare minimum of production and procurement services.” Cf. Wickham, *Framing*, 735, who notes that imports continued in the city at a significant level until ca. 700, which implies the survival of international connections and commerce.

agreements on properties—which the recipient would use to enhance his self-sufficiency. Labor, too, typically was organized on a *corvée* basis, i.e. performed by dependents.¹⁶⁷

Delogu readily admits that there was considerable wealth in Rome, and that the place maintained an urban ethos. The popes supported considerable monumental building in the city in the late eighth and early ninth centuries: rebuilding aqueducts, embellishing and upgrading churches.¹⁶⁸ They injected stimulus into the system, but it was financed, according to Delogu, from papal land revenues between Ravenna and Benevento, plus tribute from trans-Alpine kings.¹⁶⁹ In other words, this was a society that was prosperous, indeed, and that had resources sufficient to undertake impressive representation projects, but it was a society run on non-commercial principles. It was, as Delogu puts it, a “patriarchal economy.”¹⁷⁰ Under the prevailing socio-economic system modeled here, skilled individuals, such as master builders or craftsmen might be honored and well-provided for,¹⁷¹ but they as well as more common workers and peasants perform services essentially for no more than the right to a livelihood; they are unable to translate their skills and their labor into private enterprise or individual profit.

Rome and contemporary San Vincenzo would appear, then, to represent typical instances of a generalized Carolingian trend in which, in contrast with the apparently more commercial-oriented Merovingian and Lombard period in Gaul and Italy, large elite corporate entities such as abbeys, churches, and the *curtenses* of the Frankish state itself absorbed and regulated much of the economic output of the society as a whole.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ Paolo Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century: The Economic System,” in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 105 – 10.

¹⁶⁸ Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 108; note 15 lists a number of papal initiatives. See also Charles B. McClendon, *The Origins of Medieval Architecture: Building in Europe, A.D. 600 – 900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 123 – 7, 143 – 7, discourses in detail on the great surge of papal building at this time. McClendon emphasizes that the architecture was consciously designed to reflect imperial forms current in Constantinople and so to lay claim to a like dignity in the West.

¹⁶⁹ Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 108. This agrees with Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 75, who stresses the Carolingian sponsorship of the eighth-century building programme that transformed Rome into a “real town” once more.

¹⁷⁰ Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 109.

¹⁷¹ Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings?* 138 – 9, makes the interesting observation that the quarters of the craftsmen at San Vincenzo were built with the most prestigious materials—lime mortar and roofing tiles, which suggest that they possessed an elevated status.

¹⁷² It would, thus far, tend to confirm Henning’s major thesis about a pervasive imposition of elite controls over substantial portions of the economy. See again Henning, “Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm,” *passim*.

Further support for modeling a non-commercialized exchange system in Carolingian Italy comes from the work of Rovelli and Balzaretti. Rovelli points to the striking absence of the new, post-781 Carolingian silver coinage from most archaeological contexts in late-eighth and ninth-century Italy. She argues that there was a “generalized shortage of coinage. . . since the factors that lead to a wide diffusion of coinage were absent.” People used the silver *denarii* for hoarding, for purchase of immovables, for fines, and for tolls—but not for everyday transactions.¹⁷³ Rovelli admits that the mints concentrated in northern Italy reflect commerce in the Po valley, but believes that this was “the only commercial route of any prominence in Italy.”¹⁷⁴ Balzaretti is dubious even on the latter point. Although it is common to think of the Po valley as a rapidly growing commercial system from ca. 700 onwards, Balzaretti argues that most of the visible activity involves not a regional North-Italian trade, but *local* town-country networks, based around growing urban monasteries. Thus, in north Italy, a more cellular development still dominates exchange in the eighth century, and evidence for international trade is rather meager.¹⁷⁵

The issue is, then, to reconcile the evidence for a prevalent, elite-dominated, non-commercially based socio-economic system with no less clear-cut evidence for significant communications and trade networks. Regarding San Vincenzo al Volturno, it may be that, unlike contemporary Tuscany, the upper Volturno did not yet have prosperous, peasant-managed village communities ca. 700; but this may be a local anomaly, or it may be that archaeologists have not yet recognized the traces of these communities. Further, even if we grant that San Vincenzo functioned as the catalyst for an elite gift-economy in northern Campania, this still leaves unanswered questions. Regardless of the purpose of the finished objects, there is still an industrial cycle happening here: materials are acquired and labor is applied to the materials, even if the “profit” is replaced by a balance of payments denoted as return donations. How did the monks acquire in the first place the precious materials which go into the prestige objects

¹⁷³ Rovelli, “Some Considerations on the Coinage of Lombard and Carolingian Italy,” 205 – 17. The quote is on p. 217.

¹⁷⁴ Rovelli, “Some Considerations on the Coinage of Lombard and Carolingian Italy,” 220 – 1.

¹⁷⁵ Balzaretti, “Cities, Emporia and Monasteries: Local Economies in the Po Valley,” 219, 224 – 8.

that their craftsmen produced? Indeed, how were the craftsmen recruited, retained, rewarded? Can we accept that they all somehow had become San Vincenzo bondsmen, as Hodges appears to assume? Or did they have alternative options for the employment of their skills? And if they were, as Hodges points out, honored and exceptionally well-housed, does this evident status not imply a measure of independence? In any case, San Vincenzo arose not in a developmental wilderness but in the context of a thriving Tyrrhenian trade network. In other words, this archetypical example of the Carolingian ecclesiastic-imperial complex operated either in parallel or in interaction with a more commercialized economy.

A similar analysis can be made for aspects of papal Rome in the eighth and ninth centuries. If much of the development in Rome, such as the building programme, might have been organized on a non-monetized and non-commercial socio-economic basis, it is more difficult to see how this could have been the case with the astounding quantities of silk dispensed through the papal offices. As McCormick stresses, this “fabulously expensive item” was not manufactured anywhere in the Carolingian empire, so that it and other, equally expensive exotic products such as spices had to be imported—and somehow paid for.¹⁷⁶ Delogu acknowledges the issue, but minimizes the role of commerce. In his view, the popes could have paid for their silk in stored up bullion—gold from revenues out of the former Exarchate and from southern Italy. Further, he suggests that much fabric could have come to the popes in the form of gift-tribute.¹⁷⁷ But if this latter were the case, how did the gift-givers in turn acquire the stuff or the means to purchase it? And, surely, gift-giving could not explain the quantities of silk in the possession of Pope Hadrian.

¹⁷⁶ McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’,” 37 – 8, with references. In the 770s alone, Pope Hadrian I gave away at least 837 silk hangings and altar coverings (and maybe as many as 1100), for an estimated total of some 3000 square meters of fabric. This does not count silk vestments and clothing also worn by the clerics.

¹⁷⁷ Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 111 – 13, 116. McCormick, *Origins*, 618, 620, notes that Byzantine acts greatly reduced certain sources of papal revenue during the course of the eighth century. Nevertheless, Pope Gregory III (731 – 41) was spending annually 100 – 125 lbs. of silver and 8 – 10 lbs. of gold on “liturgical furnishings of silver or gold (solid or plate), gems, and silks,” and that the level of expenditure on such luxuries had increased ten-fold by the late eighth century.

Delogu considers that the evident richness of the city of Rome in the eighth and ninth centuries could not have been based on commerce. He admits the regional distribution of the new, high quality “forum ware” that is manufactured in the city.¹⁷⁸ He notes the construction of new, fancy houses in the city, and suggests that much of the luxury wares in the city were bought by noble residents of Rome and pilgrims.¹⁷⁹ But he insists that the lack of any record of Roman international merchants nor of a Roman navy or merchant shipping, plus the fact that the popes were bound to suppress the slave trade, disqualifies the city as a commercial center.¹⁸⁰

Delogu’s evidence could, however, quite easily fit an alternative interpretation. It may well be that the city’s purchasing power derived primarily not from engagement in trade or manufacture on the part of its major constituents, but from sources such as rents and tributes. Nevertheless, it seems equally clear that Rome is, in fact, a major market,¹⁸¹ served by a lively exchange network.¹⁸² If Rome has no fleet of its own, it can easily make use of the ships of Greeks or of other Italians at need.¹⁸³ Indeed, this can be taken as an example of one of McCormick’s main contentions: that the eighth- and ninth-century Mediterranean was swarming with private shipping, whose usual business was trade but which could be utilized or commandeered also for official purposes and for non-commercial travel. One of the most telling details is the fact that the popes were collecting *teloneum*—tolls, duties on the conveyance of goods and the use of

¹⁷⁸ Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 108. Wickham, *Framing*, 736, notes that forum ware was distributed from Provence to Sicily, and sees it as a sign of economic recovery: “Rome is the first city in Italy to show clear signs of a locally fuelled growth in demand and economic complexity, which is visible by 800 at the latest.”

¹⁷⁹ Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 108, 113 – 14. The houses and an elite market for luxuries would be evidence for growing capacity of the elite to generate demand and are, of course, just the phenomena that in Wickham’s view would undergird a general trend toward market sophistication and commerce.

¹⁸⁰ Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 114 – 17.

¹⁸¹ Cf. the divergent views of Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 115 n. 29, and McCormick, *Origins*, 622 – 4, on the reliability of the report of one al-Walid ibn Muslim of Damascus, recorded ca. 810. Al-Walid describes the lead roofs of the great city, and multiple markets for animals, blacksmiths, and money-changers—all suggestive of Roman wealth, international trade, and infrastructure for the support of trade and travel, according to McCormick. Muslims, it seems, could come and trade here.

¹⁸² McCormick, *Origins*, 625, speaks of Campanian wine coming north to Rome in amphorae, while Roman and northern Italian lamps and stone ware are going back south to Campania.

¹⁸³ Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 114 – 15.

infrastructure—at the *portus* of Rome.¹⁸⁴ As Delogu points out, this clearly indicates that the tolls-paying shippers are not papal agents but independent merchants. What it also demonstrates is that the scale of commerce at the port of Rome was large enough to be worth the trouble to tax.¹⁸⁵

Italy and the North

The city of Rome represents one of four areas in Italy, identified by McCormick, where mentions of the presence or movements of merchants cluster in the eighth- and ninth-century sources; the others are southern Campania, Byzantine South Italy and Sicily, and the Po valley.¹⁸⁶ While for present purposes we can pass over further consideration of the two southern clusters, the Rome cluster and the Po valley are of primary concern because both of these areas, and the mercantile activity that we may glimpse there, had direct connections with the world of Temperate Europe across the Alps. It seems, in fact, that Rome was a major transmitter of exotic goods coming from the south and the east to the north, in particular not only of silk but also spices and aromatics. For, in addition to the great demand generated by the Church establishment itself, and its direct involvement in supplying such items northwards on occasion, Rome was the destination of a steady throng of northern pilgrims, who would spend their money not only at shrines and for relics,¹⁸⁷ but on eastern exotica.¹⁸⁸

That the northerners came to Rome for purposes of business as well as religion is illustrated by the fact that Frisian and Anglo-Saxon *scholae* were established at Rome. These were ostensibly organizations of pilgrims, but pilgrims, especially Anglo-Saxon

¹⁸⁴ Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 117. Specifically, Pope John VIII (872 – 82) was collecting *teloneum* from Amalfitans.

¹⁸⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 622, also notes that Benevento would allow merchants from the Campanian ports to proceed northwards overland to Rome upon the payment of a toll. The significance of toll-taking as a reflection of exchange activity will be discussed further in Section 5.3 below.

¹⁸⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 615 – 17. A non-exhaustive survey turned up 130 mentions of merchants in Italy in ninety sources. The mentions, says McCormick: “unveil nodes in a network of commercial communications” (p. 617). Cf. Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 107, who is far less sanguine about the significance of such mentions.

¹⁸⁷ Included in the big business of religion was a well-organized but illicit trade in relics. Delogu, “Rome in the Ninth Century,” 107 n. 10.

¹⁸⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 620 – 2. He thinks that Rome was the site of exchange involving northern and southern merchants, with the wares including slaves as well as exotic imports such as spices and aromatics and silk.

pilgrims, were notorious for using pilgrimage as a ruse for the evasion of tolls on trade.¹⁸⁹ The mercantile interests of northerners at Rome are confirmed by King Alfred's care to win toll-free status for the Anglo-Saxon colony in Rome in the 880s.¹⁹⁰

In the Po valley, the stream of pilgrims and other northern travelers going to and returning from Rome intersected with the northern river network that connected to Adriatic ports such as Venice and Comacchio. Pavia, in particular, turned into a major market, where Venetians beset the pilgrim camps, pushing oriental finery and perfumes. In McCormick's words:

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. . . . In other words, pilgrim caravans conveniently brought part of the Frankish market for eastern goods to the Venetian's home turf, thereby transferring to the buyers the expense and difficulty of transporting Venetian wares across the Alps.¹⁹¹

Those who had not stocked up on exotic eastern wares in Rome had a second chance to do it in northern Italy, before they headed back over the passes. References to merchants cluster around many of the north Italian cities: Milan, Brescia, Cremona, Pavia, and at the Adriatic lagoons.¹⁹²

In the ninth century in the north, the primacy of Venice is undeniable. Venetian merchants had connections not only throughout the Po network but with the other three "clusters" of Italian mercantile activity—Rome, Campania, and Byzantine southern Italy—in addition to direct contacts with Muslim ports such as Alexandria. Venice was a major market for other north Italian traders, while Venetian merchants paid rich tolls at

¹⁸⁹ McCormick, *Origins*, 621. Recall the behavior of St. Willibald in the Levant, touched upon above. The subject of Anglo-Saxon toll evasion will be revisited in Section 6.2, subsection *Carolingia and England* below.

¹⁹⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 622.

¹⁹¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 680 – 1. Although specific evidence for the Pavia pilgrims' market is from the later ninth century, it seems certain that such markets in northern Italy would have been in operation much earlier. See also Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 103, that Pavia in the late eighth century "was the place in Western Europe where the most beautiful objects were to be found."

¹⁹² McCormick, *Origins*, 631 – 3. In this region, twenty-five individual merchants are named in documents dating to 769 – 899. Other *mercatores* are mentioned as groups or as a general phenomenon. Cf. Balzaretto, "Cities, Emporia and Monasteries: Local Economies in the Po Valley," 224, on traveling merchants mentioned in eighth-century sources.

places like Mantua (recorded in 862), which can be taken as an indication of the volume and value of the goods passing through the Po networks in the ninth century.¹⁹³ Finally, the importance of Venice can be seen in the recurrent trade treaties that were struck between this nominally Byzantine city and the Franks in the ninth century.¹⁹⁴

In the ninth century, then, Venice was not only the northern terminus of a newly dominant trans-Mediterranean route connecting Carolingian Europe with the Caliphate, but it was actively involved with the other major Italian trade networks and it, even more so than Rome, interacted economically with the trans-Alpine Europeans. Moreover, whereas Rome developed its market in large part on the basis of its spiritual assets—the shrines and relics to draw pilgrims, and its vast, resident ecclesiastic elite—Venice, as McCormick points out, emerged not through the direction of a king or other arbitrary authority but through a process of “self-organizing criticality”—the crystallization of a response to a long-term developmental trend.¹⁹⁵ The trend in question is, of course, the reconfigured Mediterranean system of communications that is emerging in the eighth century. The inclusion of the Po valley, which already was increasing its agrarian prosperity and local trade in the early eighth century, into the Carolingian empire as of the fourth quarter of the eighth century greatly increased pre-existing trans-Alpine connections.¹⁹⁶ The “secular rhythms” that McCormick notes in the frequency of source references to travel and communications feature a rise from ca. 700 – 750, then a lull from 750 – 775, a marked surge 775 – 825, a second lull until ca. 850, and a rising trend again for the later ninth century.¹⁹⁷ For Italy, the most obvious bracketing events for the central period of peak activity are the Carolingian conquest and assimilation of the Lombard kingdom ca. 775 and the resumption of large Muslim raids upon southern Italy ca. 825, which is precisely the period of the emergence of Venice as the major player in Mediterranean communications. As Wickham puts it:

¹⁹³ McCormick, *Origins*, 633, 637. At Mantua, the Venetians paid in pepper, cumin, and linen in addition to cash, which reveals some of the wares that they were trading up the river.

¹⁹⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 633.

¹⁹⁵ McCormick, “Where Do Trading Towns Come From?” 42, 44 – 5, 49. This idea is very similar to what Wickham, *Framing*, 13, calls a “catastrophe flip.”

¹⁹⁶ McCormick, “Where Do Trading Towns Come From?” 57.

¹⁹⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 434 – 41.

The rise to international importance of northern Italy's merchants was based on the carrying trade between the East and the Frankish lands for a long time.¹⁹⁸

To test these correlations, it will be necessary next to demonstrate a system of communications and exchange that could form viable links from northern Italy and the Adriatic across the Alps to the shores of the Channel and the North Sea.

6.3 From the *clusae* to the *emporía*

It seems certain, then, that eighth- and ninth-century Italy and the Mediterranean can be considered as economically viable, indeed vibrant, areas. It also appears that part, at least, of the evident prosperity of Italy—and of Rome and the Po valley in particular—was due to active connections with the world of Temperate Europe beyond the Alps. Similarly, the link to Italy and the Mediterranean was crucial to the economic growth of Carolingian Europe. From the early eighth century onwards, it appears that the main trunk line in north-south communications no longer ran down the Rhône to Marseille but southeastwards, in a broad corridor of routes, from Francia over the Alpine passes. The Po plain at the foot of the Alps with Venice and the roads to Rome was the gateway to the Mediterranean for the Frankish world of the north. Conversely, the trans-Alpine corridor connected Italy with the Frankish heartlands—the northern-flowing rivers and, ultimately, the northwestern coastlines with their *emporía*.¹⁹⁹

Movement back and forth over the Alps between Francia and northern Italy is amply illustrated through a variety of written sources, which show that this corridor, as well as certain important adjunct lines of communication diverging from it, was not traveled merely by armies, pilgrims, and official personages but also by merchants and

¹⁹⁸ Wickham, *Framing*, 734. The emphasis on North Italian involvement in long-distance luxury trade is intended as a contrast with the continued underdeveloped trade in bulk items in the region. In this sense, Wickham agrees with the assessment of Balzaretto, “Cities, Emporia and Monasteries: Local Economies in the Po Valley,” 219, 224–8.

¹⁹⁹ Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 102, speaks of the northwest and southeast as the “commercial poles” of Carolingia. The latter gave access to the Byzantine east, luxuries, and more developed economies; the former included the northern rivers leading to the North Sea, “less civilized lands”—and slaves. Duby also speaks of the presence of merchants between these poles. In essence, Duby had already outlined the argument that McCormick was to follow in much greater detail some two-and-a-half decades later, without, however, Duby's primitivistic baggage.

their wares.²⁰⁰ Archaeological evidence comes into play mainly through the finds of single coins and coin hoards along the routes. What is generally missing is material evidence for the transport of the actual wares, which speaks in turn to the physical conditions inherent in the route and, hence, the types of exchange that might take place along it. The key fact is, of course, that anyone or anything traveling between the Frankish lands and Italy would, at some point, have to traverse one of the high Alpine passes. Inherently, this tended to discourage traffic in heavy, bulk items such as grain, olive oil, wine, and commercial pottery.²⁰¹

From Italy to Francia: the trans-Alpine trade goods

What did cross the Alps were relatively light and high-value items.²⁰² From the south, these included silk, aromatics, and spices.²⁰³ Spices and aromatics were common in Italy, with pepper, cumin, cinnamon, and *costus* (a variety of ginger) weighed out by the sack, pound, or ounce, and a richness in “the casual vocabulary of exotic substances,” according to McCormick, that implies familiarity. North of the Alps, by the late eighth century, these substances were also available, but less reliably and at great cost; vocabulary tended to simplify to *pigmentum* for spices and *incensum* for aromatics.²⁰⁴ Nevertheless, these exotic substances are mentioned ubiquitously in the records and letters of the Frankish clergy and of the Carolingian kings, both in the context of routine

²⁰⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 393 – 402, 445 – 9, 474 – 81, and 548 – 9, for the Alpine passes and land travel in general. More detailed discussion below. Cf. Peter Johanek, “Der fränkische Handel der Karolingerzeit im Spiegel der Schriftquellen,” in Göttingen 156 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1987), 7 - 68. Johanek, however, concentrates on Francia and the North, leaving out most of the references to the Alps and Italy.

²⁰¹ In McCormick’s words, the shift from the Rhône to the Alps as the primary avenue of transport between the Mediterranean and Temperate Europe, which happened over the course of the seventh century, marked the end of bulk water transport into Francia and “sounded the death knell of low-value, high bulk Mediterranean imports.” McCormick, *Origins*, 79; also 548 – 9. Consequently, unlike ancient Mediterranean trade systems, Carolingian trans-Alpine commerce cannot be demonstrated conveniently through a trail of amphorae sherds and ARS distributions.

²⁰² An interesting exception to this rule was the transport of a ton of roofing tin from Charlemagne and the abbot of St. Martin of Tours to Pope Hadrian in the 780s. “Hadrian’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.” McCormick, *Origins*, 701.

²⁰³ One traditional item that was no longer exported north of the Alps was papyrus. It was, however, still manufactured in Egypt and readily available in Italy. The papal curia continued to use it until the eleventh century. McCormick, *Origins*, 704 – 7.

²⁰⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 708.

distributions to monks and as special gifts to elite persons. Primarily, they appeared now in medical contexts—as ingredients in potions or unguents. Aside from occasional mentions of such uses in personal letters, spices used medicinally fill the medical handbooks both in Italy and north of the Alps. As a crowning datum, McCormick mentions the term *cafora* used in a handbook from Lorsch ca. 800; it and the substance it denotes, camphor, had both been but recently borrowed by the Arabs from the Malay speakers of Borneo and Sumatra. Trans-Alpine Europe was, accordingly, in communication with the greater world of international exchange and discovery that stretched eastwards across the Middle East and South and Southeast Asia.²⁰⁵

If spices served primarily a medicinal purpose, the role of aromatics was even more specialized and, in a sense, more crucial, for these substances touched upon the spiritual. The liturgical ritual in Carolingian churches required increasing quantities of incense to be burned, which meant a growing need to import frankincense (*olibanum*) and myrrh (*myrrha*). Moreover, the most expensive substance of all, balsam, was a necessary ingredient of the chrism or anointing oil, which, by regulation, had to be concocted afresh yearly. All of these substances had to be imported over the Mediterranean from southern Arabian and East African sources.²⁰⁶

It is interesting to compare in this connection the great quantities of olive oil burned in the lamps of Gallic churches in the fifth and sixth centuries, when the supply from Africa was still unproblematical. Oil-burning lamps were replaced subsequently with wax candles—a material supplied from the north.²⁰⁷ Another “liturgical imperative,” to borrow McCormick’s phrase, for Christian churches everywhere was wine for use in the Eucharist. For Francia, this need could be supplied from intra-

²⁰⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 708 – 16. This is similar to the situation revealed in the privilege confirmed for the Abbey of Corbie on 29 April 716 by Chilperic II (Léon Levillain, *Examen critique des chartes mérovingiennes et carolingiennes de l'Abbaye de Corbie* [Paris: Ecole des Chartes, 1902], 235 – 7, no. 15). The list of items which Corbie’s agents may collect at the royal *cellarium* at Fos included *cloves*, which could only have come from the eastern end of the Malay archipelago.

²⁰⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 716 – 19.

²⁰⁷ For the demand for lamp-oil, see discussion in Section 5.1, subsection *The Mediterranean connection* above.

regional sources, for vines could be grown as far north as the Seine basin and the Moselle-Rhine area.²⁰⁸

The volume of silk moving north from Italy would seem to be even greater than that of the exotic spices and aromatics. It has long been known that this material appears ubiquitously in Carolingian sources, no less than in Merovingian, worn by both women and men of the elite and used abundantly in churches.²⁰⁹ Although silk could circulate as a gift item among the Carolingian elite, along with other precious items of gold and silver, its ultimate source both in the Frankish lands and in Italy was commerce; diplomatic gifts of highest quality silk from Byzantium accounted only for a miniscule portion of the supply.²¹⁰ For silk as well as for spices and aromatics, almost all evidence points to a southern supply orientation, with Italy as the immediate supplier and the nature of the Alps routes as a limiting condition on the types of goods that normally were carried. As McCormick sums up:

The reliance on Alpine routes to Italy was fundamental for all forms of Carolingian communications. . . . For the next few centuries, northern Europe was essentially open to low bulk, high value goods from the southeast: coins, spices, incense, and textiles.²¹¹

At the same time, McCormick continues:

²⁰⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 716. The wine trade of Francia to the north will be discussed in Section 6.4 below. See also Thomas S. Noonan and Roman K. Kovalev, “Wine and Oil for All the Rus’! The Importation of Byzantine Wine and Olive Oil to Kievan Rus’,” *Acta Byzantina Fennica* 9 (1999): 118 – 52, which also raises the issue of long-distance trade in ritually essential substances.

²⁰⁹ McCormick, *Origins*, 719 – 20. Early work on cataloguing the Carolingian sources on use of silk was done by E. Sabbe, “L’importation des tissus orientaux en Europe occidentale au haut moyen âge (IX^e et X^e siècles),” *Revue belge de Philologie et d’Histoire* 14 (1935): 811 – 48 and 1261 – 88. According to McCormick, an exhaustive study of the available source material has not yet been accomplished; *Origins*, 719 n. 112, 722.

²¹⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 724, is quite definite on this point, contrasting the small pieces given even at the most important diplomatic junctures on record with the vast quantities generally on record. McCormick, *Origins*, 724. Cf. on this point Robert S. Lopez, “Mohammed and Charlemagne: A Revision,” *Speculum* 18 (1943): 14 – 38, who looked at Byzantine diplomatic gifts as an important facet of post-Roman Mediterranean exchange. There is no doubt that the imperial workshops in Constantinople supplied many of the most highly valued, prestige-conferring items in circulation in Europe during the early Middle Ages, but this does not mean that the volume of such gifts formed a significant portion of total exchange. See discussion of concurrent levels of exchange in the Conclusion of Chapter 5 above.

²¹¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 725 – 6. The quotes are from p. 726. Curta, “East Central Europe,” 287, adds the fascinating detail that “[b]y 800, millefiori beads manufactured within the Caliphate reached the western Balkans along a trade route from the Near East to the Adriatic and further north, across the Alps to the Rhine valley.”

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.²¹²

According to McCormick's thesis, the evidence points to a massive north-to-south slave trading system as the primary means of maintaining a favorable balance of payments. There is no evidence for exports of lumber to the Caliphate before the tenth century.²¹³ Northern pelts are mentioned in Carolingian sources, but there is no evidence that they went across the Alps into Italy. The bulk of the fur trade, in any event, went to the Caliphate across European Russia. The same appears to be true for "Frankish" swords.²¹⁴ There is consistent evidence for this highly-valued merchandise on the "northern arc" between Scandinavia and the Caliphate, but very little trace of traffic in these items via the Adriatic.²¹⁵

By contrast, argues McCormick, there is abundant evidence all over Carolingian Europe for the buying, selling, and transport of Europeans—slaves—and their delivery to Mediterranean markets. Furthermore, slaves would make an ideal item in trade on the trans-Alpine route because they not only carried themselves, as it were, over the passes but could be made simultaneously to bear other merchandise besides.²¹⁶ Further, McCormick argues that there was a distinction in Carolingian terminology between slaves already settled for use at home, *mancipii*, and fresh captives, *captivi*, who were destined for enslavement and sale, and that the numbers of the latter were rising noticeably throughout the eighth century. Finally, the new term, *sclavus*, derived from the ethnic designation for Slav peoples to the east, points to a shift in the main supply of such captives for the Franks, from the British Isles in the sixth and seventh century to the eastern borderlands in the eighth and ninth.²¹⁷

²¹² McCormick, *Origins*, 729.

²¹³ McCormick, *Origins*, 730.

²¹⁴ Furs and swords on the "northern arc" will be considered in Section 7.3, subsections *The Russian rivers and the great East* and *The Baltic system between East and West* below.

²¹⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 730 – 3, for furs and swords moving south over the Alps.

²¹⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 733 – 4. The pioneering work on early medieval slavery is Charles Verlinden, *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale*, 2 vols. (Bruges: De Tempel, 1955 –77).

²¹⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 734 – 47.

The routes taken by the European slave trade were complex. An east – west route seems to have run from East Central Europe via Switzerland and Gaul to Spain; a more northerly overland branch ran from the Elbe region through Mainz, Verdun, and Lyon, also to Spain.²¹⁸ An important junction and slave market, according to McCormick, was on the Walensee in northeastern Switzerland, where slaves arrived from various northeastern and northern locations and proceeded thence either to Spain or passed over the Alps in the vicinity of Chur. The later alternative is an example of how routes from the Frankish lands funneled their human cargo into the Po valley, and to Venice.²¹⁹ The reality of Venice as a hub for trade with the Frankish lands is evinced by the minting of silver *deniers* in the city—to match the currency that was standard in the Carolingian empire and so easily to access its commerce.²²⁰ Further evidence that slaves were among the chief wares in question comes from the recurrent trade treaties between Venice and the Carolingians throughout the ninth centuries—treaties which purport to limit this trade, but, as McCormick believes, really were honored very extensively in the breach.²²¹

McCormick speculates that the Venetians may have had an alternative way into the slaving grounds of East Central Europe along the ancient Amber Route that skirted the eastern end of the Alps through Slovenia and eastern Austria. He supports this idea with the geographic logic of the situation—the proximity of Venice to the Ljubljana Gap—and with the consideration that the Venetians thereby would have avoided the Carolingian toll stations at the *clusae* or Alps passes. He also suggests that the trail of coins that begins to be visible along this route around the beginning of the ninth century shows that this route had been reopened at this time, after a long hiatus. Finally, he adduces anecdotal evidence from the destruction of the Orthodox mission of Methodius (somewhere in the Carpathian basin, possibly around Sirmium) in the 880s, at which time up to 200 clerics and converts were indiscriminately enslaved by Frankish slave raiders

²¹⁸ McCormick., *Origins*, 761. The Spanish connection will be discussed further in subsection *The Iberian connection* below.

²¹⁹ 761.

²²⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 758.

²²¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 763 – 5, 768. See also McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’,” 47 – 49. McCormick cites here Ibn Khurradadhbih’s observation that Rhadanite merchants were bringing from an unspecified port of ‘Frankland’ “eunuchs, male and female slaves, furs and swords.” McCormick argues that this port must be Venice (p. 49).

and brought to Jewish slave buyers in Venice—where a few of the captives were redeemed by a Byzantine diplomat.²²²

McCormick's suggestion of a re-opening of the Amber Trail in the early ninth century has been challenged by Florin Curta on a number of counts.²²³ He complains that McCormick has missed a number of Byzantine coin finds in the Balkans, finds which Curta says show Constantinople and the Danube—not Venice and the Adriatic—to be the dominant direction of exchange penetrating southeastern Europe.²²⁴ Further, Curta sees Bulgaria as the main supplier of slaves to the Byzantine market and the Russian route as the main conduit of Slavic slaves to the Caliphate. Both of these systems leave Venice quite out of the loop.²²⁵ If valid, Curta's objections would significantly reduce the potential flow of slaves directly to Venice out of the Slav lands. However, such a case would only re-emphasize the crucial role in north – south communications played now by the central and western Alpine passes! Moreover, McCormick has energetically disputed Curta's evidence, alleging Curta's coins all are located east of the Iron Gates, so that they do not necessarily connect in a Danube-oriented exchange pattern with the coins along the Amber Trail. Further, many of the coins could have arrived at their find spots through Bulgar – Byzantine warfare or some other means not connected with trade.²²⁶

The Alps and the clusae

In the Carolingian period, the key to north – south communications and exchange between the Mediterranean and continental northwestern Europe were the Alpine passes. As noted in an earlier chapter, the Alps were by no means impassable, but the number of practicable crossings was finite, and the approaches and exits to and from these crossing-

²²² McCormick, *Origins*, 761 – 3, 765 – 7. The discussion of coins along the Amber Trail from Istria to the Danube is on pp. 370 – 9. See also McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’,” 49 - 50. McCormick notes that the southwestern Slavic borderlands were a relatively lawless area, where Christian slavers could kidnap other Christians with impunity.

²²³ Curta, “East Central Europe,” 283 – 91.

²²⁴ Curta, “East Central Europe,” 283 – 4.

²²⁵ Curta, “East Central Europe,” 290 – 1. Curta emphasizes that there is no link from Venice overland through eastern Europe that connects with the “northern arc.” This is undoubtedly true; see discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *The southern shore and the Slavs* below.

²²⁶ McCormick, “Complexity, Chronology and Context,” 313 – 16.

points tended to channel movements into observable, analyzable spatial patterns.²²⁷

Another fundamental observation is that the approaches and exits in both directions present a braided, network-like configuration, so that the convergences and divergences of routes on the two sides of the mountains are somewhat asymmetrical. This is particularly true of the central portion. The eighth- and ninth-century Alps crossing routes from the north debouched into the north Italian plain along a relatively compact arc some 170 miles broad from Turin in the west to Verona in the east; it will be most convenient to organize the analysis of the routes starting from the Italian side.

The city of Turin is situated near the western headwaters of the Po. From here, an upland valley leads westward to Susa, whence the route forks. Turning to the southwest, one crosses the Mont Genève pass (1854m) and comes into the valley of the Durance, which leads down into southern Provence and Languedoc. Turning to the northwest from Susa, one crosses the Mont Cénis pass (2082m), and enters into Savoy, with options thence either down the Isère to Grenoble and Valence or more directly west to Vienne and Lyon. Properly speaking, the passes that lead out of Turin are a westward rather than a northward connection. McCormick suggests, on the basis of the distribution of north-Italian coins both in Provence and at Veullin and Angers in the Loire valley, that there was a regular connection from Italy to the west as well as to the north.²²⁸ Overland travelers from northern Italy to southern or western Gaul might well use the passes west of Turin.

The next set of routes leads from the upper Po valley northwestwards up the Dora Baltea river (a left-bank Po tributary) to Ivrea and Aosta; at that juncture there is again a fork. Taking the southwest fork, one would go over the Little St. Bernard pass (2188m), which on the westward side leads down to the headwaters of the Isère. From here, the

²²⁷ See the discussion in Section 3.2, subsection *Communications over mountains and rivers* above. The discussion which follows here is informed primarily by visual-topographical analysis of maps (1: 3,000,000 scale and 1: 1,500,000 scale) in a standard world atlas of recent date, and Google Maps; as well as Wikipedia articles to check details of routing and elevations in particular locations. Not every pass that is in use today was also in common use in the eighth and ninth centuries. My most important guides in this regard were articles from Helmut Beumann and Werner Schröder, eds., *Die transalpinen Verbindungen der Bayern, Alemannen und Franken bis zum 10. Jahrhundert* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1987), which will be referenced below. See also Appendix A, where the passes and their approaches and exits are described in greater detail.

²²⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 686 and Map 23.2.

options are the same as for travelers over the Mont Cénis pass. On the northern fork out of Aosta, one would cross the Great St. Bernard (2472m). This route leads down into the upper Rhône valley—above Lake Geneva. From here, there would seem to be a number of options, including following the Rhône down to Lyon; or striking westwards from Geneva through Burgundy towards the upper Loire or the upper Seine; or passing through the broad Aare valley of western Switzerland to reach the Rhine below the Bodensee.

The Simplon pass (2006m), like the Great St. Bernard, is approached from the upper Rhône in Canton Valais, but from much farther up this valley. It comes down into Italy into the Val d'Ossola and continues along Lake Maggiore, connecting thus with the Ticino river, which leads directly down to Pavia. On the Italian side, accordingly, the Simplon pass is one of seven which start from the general area of Milan and involve one or another valley leading upwards from Lake Maggiore or Lake Como. While the westernmost, the Simplon, connects to the upper Rhône, the others are focused on central Switzerland and the upper Rhine.

From Lake Maggiore, then, there are three other valleys that lead up to a pass. The Valle Leventina goes to the St. Gotthard pass (2106m). This route takes one into a high, plateau-like juncture of the main Alps ridges, and requires the surmounting of further passes to continue either northwestwards towards Bern, northwards to the Vierwaldstättersee and the Reuss, or northeastwards to the Vorderrhein (the western branch of the uppermost Rhine) and Chur. The Valle di Blenia goes up to the Lukmanier pass (1917m), thence down to the Vorderrhein—and to Chur. Finally, the Valle Mesolcina goes up to the St. Bernardino pass (2065m). The descent here is, however, to the eastern branch of the uppermost Rhine, the Hinterrhein, which leads nearly directly north to Chur.

The other half of the passes that one accesses from the area of Milan all involve going northwards along Lake Como and the Mera river. West to east, first comes the Splügen pass (2117m); here one also finds the Hinterrhein almost directly north and can follow it down to Chur. Next is the Septimer pass (2311m), which connects to the Oberhalbstein, a valley tributary to the Hinterrhein. Just east is the Julier pass (2284m),

which does the same. The complication here is that in order to reach the Julier pass one must first surmount the Maloja pass (1815m), which technically speaking connects the Lake Como – Mera river route not with the headwaters of the Rhine but with the headwaters of the Inn—the valley known as the Ober and the Unter Engadin. Two other high passes from the Engadin eastwards of the Julier pass might take one to Chur on the Rhine: the Albula pass (2315m) and the Flüela pass (2383m). Continuing down the course of the Inn river towards the east-northeast one arrives at Innsbruck and finally at Passau at the confluence of the Inn with the Danube.

Finally, two important passes are reached, from the Italian side, not from the area around Milan but from Verona. This strategic city sits on the Adige river where it comes out of a long valley leading northwards through the widest portion of the Alps ranges. Ascending northward past Trent to Bolzano, one comes to a fork, whence turning to the northwest through the Val Venosta (Etschtal) one reaches the Reschen pass (1504m); continuing more nearly north from the fork at Bolzano, one goes over the Brenner pass (1370m) and comes quickly to Innsbruck. Like the Maloja pass, then, the Reschen and the Brenner also in the first instance leave one in the Inn valley, which one could follow down into eastern Bavaria or further to its confluence with the Danube at Passau. Alternatively, one would have to cross a second pass to reach western Bavaria, Alamannia, or the upper Rhine. One likely continuation northwards from the Brenner pass via Innsbruck is through a gap in the Bayerische Alpen at Mittenwald, which leads towards Augsburg. From the Reschen pass, a likely continuation could be the Arlberg pass (17933m), which leads into Vorarlberg and to a connection with the upper Rhine between Chur and the Bodensee.

Eastwards of the Brenner pass, routes northwards out of the Veneto and Friuli become even more complex, where one or two parallel ranges must be crossed even to reach the upper Drava valley before crossing over the main range of the Austrian Alps. In any case, the connections from this northeastern corner of Italy concern the Carpathian basin and will not be pursued further. Meanwhile, concerning communications between northern Italy and the Frankish lands north of the Alps, the schematic summary presented above illustrates the braided nature of the various alternative routes and also reveals some

interesting convergences. Above all, there is an evident multiplicity of options whereby one might, traveling out of northern Italy, reach the upper Rhine and, in reverse, a similar number but not entirely overlapping selection of ways that lead to Lakes Maggiore and Como from the north. Clearly, the two lakes and their outflow rivers, the Ticino and Adda must play a major role in channeling travelers and trade down into the heart of the Po valley, while Chur is a major point of convergence for travelers going north and highlights the importance of the Rhine. The passes heading westwards out of Aosta or Turin (as also the Simplon, from Lake Maggiore) appear more suitable for those whose aim is for Gaul—whether central, northern, western, or southern.²²⁹

That the Alps routes were, in fact, used in the Carolingian period, and used heavily, is clear from the generalized evidence on trans-Alpine travel that McCormick presents in *Origins of the European Economy*. Carolingians crossed the Alps in large and small groups, in all weathers, and at any time of year. Tens of thousands of troops went over the Alps between 754 and the 890s. Carolingian kings logged thirty passages. In the Frankish assimilation of the Lombard kingdom, at least 178 individuals of vice-comital or higher rank (plus their entourages) went to Italy over the mountains. Six popes traveled north, as did many legates, while Frankish churchmen went to Italy.²³⁰ The speed of overland travel varied, but averaged between twenty-five and fifty kilometers per day; the Carolingian court averaged twenty-five to thirty kilometers per day on its peregrinations.²³¹ Exceptionally, a journey from Piacenza to Rheims in 869 took only fifteen days; normally, the expected time from Rome to Rheims was from forty to sixty-six days.²³² In this way, we can demonstrate that long-distance overland travel, even between northwestern Temperate Europe and Italy, was frequent and normal. The

²²⁹ See Appendix A for a graphic table-layout of the routes and more detailed descriptions of them.

²³⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 397 – 8, 481.

²³¹ Cf. Bernard S. Bachrach, “Animals and Warfare in Early Medieval Europe” (Settimane 31, 1985): 717 – 19. Oxen drawing wagons or carts could make 15 km/day, while horses or mules could make 30 km/day. Mounted military units without baggage could make up to 50 km/day, if there was no fighting, and up to 75 km/day if they could rest the next day. Clearly, sustained high rates of travel would have required logistical support en route, such as availability of fresh mounts and stores of fodder and food.

²³² See McCormick, *Origins*, 476 – 80. The straight-line distance from Rome to Rheims is a little over 1000 km, which would make forty days at the rate of twenty-five kilometers per day. Of course, the way is far from straight. McCormick notes that inns near the Julier and Septimer passes were spaced 15 – 33 km apart, average 26 km (p. 478 – 9). The straight-line distance from Piacenza to Rheims is a little over 600 km, which would make fifteen days at forty kilometers per day.

trans-Alpine passes did not serve merely as necessary thoroughfares, however. They also were sites of another crucially important element in the Carolingian exchange system: the *clusae*.²³³

The *clusae* were official installations—transverse walls, watchtowers, hostels—which enabled government agents to monitor and tax the traffic through the abovementioned passes. They, as well as the *emporium* on the Channel and North Sea coasts, comprised the key anchor points in the system of Carolingian toll-taking on travel and commerce—a system that was both pervasive in the types of activities that it sought to regulate and widespread geographically. It is no accident that the key points in the system lay directly on the southeast – northwest trunk line or communications corridor that connected northern Italy with the Frankish heartlands, an axis that continued southeastwards from Venice down the Adriatic to the Levant and northwestwards across narrow seas to Anglo-Saxon England. This was the corridor that bore the lion’s share of the traffic, and therefore it was the one that the Carolingian regime was most interested to control.²³⁴

The placement of the *clusae* on the trans-Alpine passes reflects a profound geographic logic. Since the annexation of the Lombard *regnum* in 774, the Carolingians had taken steps to integrate the northern half of Italy with the rest of the Frankish empire.²³⁵ It is not difficult to find *diplomae* issued by Carolingian rulers in Italy

²³³ See J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 192 – 3, *s.v.* *clusa*. Niermeyer derives it from *cludere*, to close, and defines it as 1. a mountain pass or pass road, or 2. a fortification meant to block a mountain road. These definitions overlook the specific functions of the Carolingian *clusae*. See also Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1879), 351, *s.v.* *claudo* > *cludo*, *clusum*; and *claustra*, which can be means of shutting or blocking, or can be fortifications. Whereas *claustra*, *sg. claustrum* is neuter, the medieval noun has become feminine.

²³⁴ In the *Formulae imperiales e curia Ludovici Pii*, one section of *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, ed. Karolus Zevmer (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1886), 285 – 328, document no. 37, “Praeceptum negotiatorum,” dated to 828 (pp. 314 – 15), specifically mentions the *emporium* and the *clusae* as places where even those merchants, who otherwise are to be exempt from tolls, will have to pay a duty of 10 percent on their goods. There were *clusae* on the Pyrenean frontier as well; see subsection *The Iberian connection* below.

²³⁵ See, for example, Rovelli, “Some Considerations on the Coinage of Lombard and Carolingian Italy,” 205 – 7, on how Italy was brought into conformity with standard Carolingian silver coinage from 781. Reinhard Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” in *Die transalpinen Verbindungen der Bayern, Alemannen und Franken bis zum 10. Jahrhundert*, ed. Helmut Beumann and Werner Schröder (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1987), 43 – 5, outlines the ties between Frankish ecclesiastical foundations and properties in Italy as well as the settlement of considerable numbers of vassal Franks (including Alamanns and Bavarians) in northern Italy.

concerning tolls, responsibilities, and privileges similar to such documents issued in localities to the north,²³⁶ there were treaties, as seen above, which attempted to regulate commerce between the empire and the city of Venice. Generally speaking, however, the Carolingian rulers did not attempt to police the shorelines of Italy in respect to trade going to or coming from foreign shores; the sole example is from a capitulary of Lothar I in 823.²³⁷ Instead of patrolling hundreds of miles of beaches, inlets, lagoons, rivers, landings, and ports, they had available a much more expedient alternative: they would tax the trade as it moved through a finite set of Alps crossings. Italian economic activity in the eighth and ninth centuries, especially in the north, depended on two-way trade across the Alps; the traffic with Italy was equally important for long-distance entrepreneurs from the north. Therefore, whatever the *fisc* might be able to collect locally in Italy, it surely would be able to capture much more of the value of this trans-continental exchange at the *clusae*.

The existence of the *clusae* demonstrates both that considerable commercial traffic moved over the mountains and that the Carolingian state had a great interest in this traffic. In this way, they were no different from the Merovingians, who by the early seventh century were heavily invested in commerce tolls as a source of income.²³⁸ One of McCormick's chief arguments regarding the early medieval economy is that, despite the overwhelming preponderance of the agrarian sector over the commercial in terms of overall production, the latter had much greater potential for rapid mobilization of enterprise and much quicker return on investment.²³⁹ McCormick argues further that a similar consideration applies to the revenue side of the equation. The Byzantines realized

²³⁶ Hildegard Adam, *Das Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich und das spätkarolingische Wirtschaftsleben* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996), passim, takes many of her examples of various tolls or toll exemptions from Italian documents. See also Th. Szábo, "Antikes Erbe und karolingisch – ottonische Verkehrspolitik," in *Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter: Festschrift für Josef Fleckenstein zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Lutz Fenske, Werner Rösner, and Thomas L. Zotz (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1984), 126, 133 – 4, 136, 138, 141 – 3, for Italian examples of Carolingian documents that assert a public duty of subjects in things such as road and bridge maintenance.

²³⁷ In 823, Lothar I ordered that commerce *infra mare* in Italy be conducted only at authorized *porturae*, in order so to preserve his *iustitiae*—his royal right to collect tolls. So summarized in McCormick, *Origins*, 420, 909. From *MGH Capitularia*, no. 158, 1.319.26 – 8.

²³⁸ See discussion in Section 5.1, subsection *The Mediterranean connection* above.

²³⁹ McCormick, *Origins*, 578. See the discussion of the positions of McCormick, Wickham, Henning, and Lebecqz in subsection *Competing theories of Carolingian production and exchange* above.

only 5 percent of their income from taxes on trade and the rest from land taxes, but they made sure that customs houses functioned efficiently both around Constantinople and in key provincial locations.²⁴⁰ A Merovingian or Carolingian king, who no longer had the option to collect land taxes as such, or a Danish king whose country had not yet developed such institutions, would be even more interested in commerce tolls than the Byzantine state. As McCormick explains:

[T]he 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*.²⁴¹

In their own day, the Romans had both improved the passageways over the Alps and fortified the defiles as part of the defense of Italy.²⁴² In the sixth century, the Alps region as a whole and, therefore, control of the passes fell to the Merovingian Franks.²⁴³ In the Carolingian period, the passes or their *clusae* continued to be fortified and could serve as barriers to isolate Italy in political contingencies. Moreover, in the divisions of the empire that occurred in the ninth century, the trans-Alpine passes are parceled out among the subdivisions in order that each might have access to Italy.²⁴⁴ These provisions are reminiscent of the sharing of access to Marseille among the Merovingian sub-kingdoms, and may be taken as a further indication of the systemically central role that the Alps routes and Italy played in the overall royal income in both the unified Carolingian empire and in its successor kingdoms.

²⁴⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 579.

²⁴¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 579.

²⁴² Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” 32 – 4, 48. The sources mention *claustra*, and archaeology has revealed either barrage walls and a castell at the crest of a pass or larger forts on the approaches at lower elevations.

²⁴³ Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” 23 – 30. Frankish control of the passes as far east as the Reschen continued despite defeat in northern Italy; the Lombards ceded the vales of Aosta and Suza, which gave the Franks control over the Mont Genève, Mont Cénis, and Little and Great St. Bernard passes (pp. 29 – 30). See also the discussion in Section 7.4, subsection *The Lombard kingdom* below.

²⁴⁴ Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” 36, 46 – 7.

Information on the actual infrastructure at the passes during the Carolingian period is fragmentary. According to Schneider, the Romans had built wagon roads over the Mont Genève, Little St. Bernard, Maloja, Julier, Reschen, and Brenner passes, with improved pack trails elsewhere. After the Roman period, however, none were drivable.²⁴⁵ The fortifications and barrier walls typically were not on the crests but in the valley approaches. On the Italian side, a wall with a supporting *Hochburg* lay athwart the Dora-Baltea valley between Aosta and Ivrea, for example, far down from the St. Bernard passes. Another *claustrum* is mentioned specifically on the Italian side of the Mont Cénis pass. The passes that converged upon the upper Rhine seem, however, to have been controlled from a post on the north side, under the responsibility of the Bishop of Chur.²⁴⁶ In addition to the *clusae* or toll stations in the Val de Susa, the Val d’Aosta, and at Chur, McCormick speaks also of a fourth—at Walenstadt on the Walensee.²⁴⁷

The Carolingian state was concerned with facilities for travelers on or near the passes. Thus, the monastery of Novalesa in the Val de Susa had the commission, given by Lothar I in 825, to maintain a hostel on the Mont Cénis pass for the sake of travelers. If the concern was primarily for Rome-bound pilgrims, merchants also could benefit from such facilities.²⁴⁸ Another such hostel is mentioned on the Great St. Bernard pass.²⁴⁹ Another “Xenodochium” may have been situated south of Chur, on the Septimer pass.²⁵⁰ Further, the entire stretch of old Roman road from the Septimer and Julier passes to Chur and thence to Bregenz at the eastern end of the Bodensee probably was a royal road, with royal *tabernae* and *stabula* (inns and stables) along it, many of which in the early ninth

²⁴⁵ Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” 32. The contrast in the original is between “Fahrstraßen” and “Saumpfaden.”

²⁴⁶ Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” 34, 36; McCormick, *Origins*, 642. As the bishopric of Chur controlled territory also on the Italian side of the passes, the bishop’s involvement is not decisive for supposing that this particular *clusa* might have lain to the north. With the convergence of multiple pass-
options directly upon the city of Chur, however, the supposition is supported by geographic logic.

²⁴⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 642.

²⁴⁸ DD Lothar I no. 4, given in Marengo 25 February 825 for Novalesa: *in monte Ciniso quoddam hospitale. . . ad peregrinorum receptionem. . . tanta substantia. . . per quam sufficeret diurnus pauperum Christi concursus tolerari*. Quoted in Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” 37. The monastery was to receive additional properties to help it sustain this charge.

²⁴⁹ *Annals of St. Bertin*, s.a. 859: *hospitale quod est in monte Iovis*; quoted in Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” 38. Schneider thinks the hospice was connected with other royal properties in the area to the north of the pass.

²⁵⁰ Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” 38 – 9, for a detailed discussion of the sources and controversy regarding this object.

century were recorded as fiefs of the bishop of Chur.²⁵¹ McCormick speaks also of a transverse route through north central Switzerland, through Zürich and the Walensee, as “the key route from the Carolingian west toward Chur.” The volume of traffic expected on the Walensee itself is indicated, according to McCormick, by the permanent stationing of ten royal *naves* upon this fifteen-kilometer lake to serve as ferries, and by “the fact that the Frankish treasury expected the ferries to make £8 a year.”²⁵² He also mentions a royal estate on the Bavarian side of the Brenner Pass, where eleven households owed mounted messenger service; this of course suggests a royal interest in the pass and traffic.²⁵³

Two anecdotes show that merchants in fact used the passes. A letter of Alcuin’s is very revealing, as it addresses (1) the existence of the *clusae* in the mountains, (2) the fact that mercantile agents traveled to and fro between Francia and Italy, and (3) that tolls normally were collected on goods at the *clusae*, but one might obtain the privilege of an exemption.²⁵⁴ The second and most telling episode comes from a collection called *Honorantie civitatis Pavie* (of ca. 1000) and concerns Anglo-Saxon merchants in Italy. McCormick’s summary is worth quoting in full:

The *Honorantie* reports convincingly that English merchants once rioted when they were forced to empty their packs at the customs crossing. Their king then

²⁵¹ Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” 39 – 40. McCormick, *Origins*, 398 – 9, remarks on the profitability of these establishments: “A surviving piece of [Louis the Pious’] polyptych. . . shows that there was more than piety and strategic self-interest behind them: the inns returned a tidy profit to the imperial treasury.” See also Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 85 – 6, who names Schaan, Chur, Zuoz, Ardez, and Lantsch in this area as places that had royal *tabernae*, which were held by bishop or count in return for a fee of one pound [silver = 240 *denarii*].

²⁵² McCormick, *Origins*, 395.

²⁵³ McCormick, *Origins*, 399. However, Alois Schmid, “Bayern und Italien vom 7. bis zum 10. Jahrhundert,” in *Die transalpinen Verbindungen der Bayern, Alemannen und Franken bis zum 10. Jahrhundert*, ed. Helmut Beumann and Werner Schröder (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1987), 99, asserts that neither Charlemagne, nor Louis the Pious, nor Lothar I ever used the Brenner pass personally. Schmid also speaks of the heavy involvement of Bavarian leaders and armies in the politics of Lombard Italy in the late sixth and seventh centuries, but notes that archaeological traces of Lombard influence are much greater in Alamannia than in Bavaria (pp. 60 – 7). This may be a reflection of the importance of the trans-Alpine passes to the upper Rhine already in the seventh century, as well as an indication that Bavaria did not as yet have a hinterland to its north and east as developed as the Rhineland was in the Merovingian period—hence less commercial traffic and exchange from Italy to Bavaria.

²⁵⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 678, 729, quoting Alcuin *Epistolae* 77: his agent “Italiae mercimonia ferentem” should be “in montium claustris a vestris non teneatur tolneariis constrictus, sed per latitudinem caritatis latam habeat eundi et redeundi semitam.”

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.²⁵⁵

Again, the episode is rich in confirmations of important aspects of the trans-Alpine trade system. First, there is the fact of official toll-taking at the crossings into Italy. Second, whatever the yearly group of Anglo-Saxon merchant adventurers was bringing to Italy—in packs, apparently—was more valuable to them than ten times the total of fifty-plus-two pounds of pure silver together with assorted quality merchandise.²⁵⁶ Finally, it clearly shows the integration of English trade into the northwest – southeast exchange axis. The Carolingian system did not merely supply elite customers in Francia; it served as a trans-continental conduit.

Trans-continental routes from the Alps to the sea

The *clusae* must be viewed as one crucial anchor point in an empire-wide system of communications infrastructure and official regulation that was in place in the eighth and ninth centuries. Both infrastructure and regulation are reflected in ubiquitous albeit fragmentary references in the sources—*capitularia* and *diplomae*, primarily—of the eighth and ninth century. The most recent thorough analysis of the system, by Hildegard Adam,²⁵⁷ reveals a number of important characteristics. The map of specific localities mentioned as places of toll collection or toll exemption give an impression of the

²⁵⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 679. McCormick connects this episode with the reign of Alfred the Great, who also negotiated terms for his merchants with Pope Marinus in the early 880s.

²⁵⁶ The toll rate of 10 percent at the *clusae* is suggested by the “Praeceptum Negotiatorum” of 828 (no. 37 from *Formulae imperiales e curia Ludovici Pii*). The stipulation to pure silver may refer to the fact that a “mint pound” of silver produced an “account pound” in finished coin that had lost some silver due to the (legal) profit-taking of the minter. In other words, by requiring payment in bullion rather than in coin, the late-Carolingian authorities were tacitly admitting the loss of silver-weight of the currency since the high standard days of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. See the argument in Karl F. Morrison, “Numismatics and Carolingian Trade: A Critique of the Evidence,” *Speculum* 38, no. 3 (1963): 414 – 26. Nominally, a “pound” of silver was equal to 12 *solidi* or 240 *denarii*. Therefore, the Anglo-Saxon merchants are carrying goods valued in excess of 12,500 silver *denarii*, which is a considerable sum by any definition.

²⁵⁷ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich* (1996).

system.²⁵⁸ Western Gaul is well represented with numerous points in the Loire valley and northwestern Aquitaine. Another cluster is around Paris and on the lower Seine. The entire Rhine watershed, especially the delta area, the core area of Austrasia from the middle Meuse to the Moselle, and the string of Rhenish towns from Mainz up to Straßburg is thick with mentions. The points that appear in southwestern Saxony, on the upper Main, and on the Danube thickly from Regensburg downstream may be considered as newer ninth- or even tenth-century developments.²⁵⁹ Finally, a string of mentions proceeds southwards from Burgundy along the Rhône into Provence, Septimania, and Catalonia.²⁶⁰

In addition to the generic term for tolls, *teloneum* and its variant spellings, there are over fifty terms referring to more specific types of toll-payments in the Carolingian sources.²⁶¹ No single source lists them all, and the selection of terms that appears in specific documents tends to change over the course of the eighth and ninth centuries. Moreover, the terms are almost never defined in any direct way, so that their exact meaning, intent, and application must be inferred from the contexts in which they appear. According to Adam, some conferred rights simply to transverse roads, bridges, and waterways, or to enter through guarded gates. Others conferred a right to some specific service: docking, towing; pasturing of animals or cutting of wood en route; food and fodder, shelter and stabling at resting places. Finally, some tolls implicitly or explicitly also conferred the right to conduct business at the place where the toll was collected.²⁶²

Altogether, the system of tolls reflects a pervasive and extensive infrastructural framework for travel, for trade, and for facilities that supported both of these; it also reflects, originally in any case, a right to make use of public land ways and waterways. In principle, sovereign—i.e., imperial or royal—ownership of water, land, and other

²⁵⁸ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 270.

²⁵⁹ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 31 – 2, 121 – 8, takes her study into the early tenth century and pays close analysis to the Raffelstetter Zollordnung from Upper Austria. This source lies geographically and temporally beyond the scope of the present study, and will not be pursued here.

²⁶⁰ The latter pattern demonstrates that the Rhône route was not altogether dead. See discussion below on the Spanish connection between Lyon and Saragossa in subsection *The Iberian connection*.

²⁶¹ See Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 37 – 68, for a glossary of these terms.

²⁶² The bulk of Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, is devoted to contextual analysis of the various terms as they appear in the sources. For tolls referring to waterways: pp. 100 – 38. For tolls referring to land-ways: pp. 138 – 60. For tolls referring to markets and trade: pp. 161 – 92.

resources gave the ruling authority the right to regulate and tax the traffic that moved over or through these sovereign assets, including especially places where improvements had been made: bridges, ferries, fords, ports, inns.²⁶³ Originally, it was also a sovereign and, therefore, a public duty to maintain needful infrastructure.²⁶⁴ This idea is supported by the explicit assertions made in the capitularies of Charlemagne, Louis the Pious, and Lothar I concerning the duty of all classes of citizens to contribute to the maintenance of bridges and roads throughout the realm.²⁶⁵ According to Adam's analysis, all of the various tolls essentially were acknowledgments of the sovereign power over avenues of communication, over natural resources and man-made facilities, and over markets and trade; but one still had to pay the local owner or overseer for actual consumption or service: pasture and wood used, food and fodder eaten, a bridge lifted or a gate opened.²⁶⁶

Adam suggests that the Carolingians were reviving a Roman- and Merovingian-era toll system that had lapsed for a space.²⁶⁷ This opinion may be based, however, on an outdated view of Gaul in the seventh century. Communications infrastructure had survived far better than once was thought.²⁶⁸ The early privileges given to St-Denis to hold an annual market and collect the tolls thereof is good evidence that such practices

²⁶³ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 75 – 87, reviews the kinds of infrastructure that the Carolingians maintained. Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” 39 – 41, asserts that the Merovingians claimed control over all major land and water routes within their kingdoms, as did the Ostrogoths and later the Lombards in Italy. The Carolingians rested on this tradition as well.

²⁶⁴ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 143.

²⁶⁵ Szábo, “Antikes Erbe und karolingisch – ottonische Verkehrspolitik,” is the fundamental study of this topic. Szábo believes that these public duties had been preserved in Italy, which inspired Charlemagne and his successors to attempt to reintroduce such demands north of the Alps after their annexation of the Lombard kingdom in 774; the earliest capitulary on the matter is by Pippin in Italy 882 – 87. (p. 126 – 7). However, an immunity issued by Charlemagne in 775 for the church in Metz stresses that the immunity does not extend to specified public duties: *de hoste publico, hoc est de banno nostro, quando publicitus promovetur, et wacta vel pontos componendum* (MGH DD Karl d. Gr. no. 91, p. 132) (quoted in Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 150 – 1). The early date suggests that an *antiqua consuetudo* (ancient custom) of duty *pontos componendum* existed in the north prior to inspiration from Lombardy.

²⁶⁶ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 156 – 7. Lists of the most usual tolls for various use- and access-rights are on pp. 135 – 7, 139 – 40, 156 – 8. For toll-taking as an aspect of regalian rights, see pp. 213 – 17.

²⁶⁷ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 120.

²⁶⁸ See again Lebecq, “Entre Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age,” *passim*; Bernard S. Bachrach, “Medieval Siege Warfare: A Reconnaissance,” *The Journal of Military History* 58 (1994): 127; Bernard S. Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare: Prelude to Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 136 – 7; and the discussion in Section 5.1 “Merovingian Gaul” above.

had continued throughout the seventh and earlier eighth centuries.²⁶⁹ Charlemagne clearly was interested not only in maintaining bridges but in facilitating travel and commerce generally, as numerous documents attest. Capitularies from the first decade of the ninth century stress that tolls are to be collected only where there are improvements that benefit the traveler and toll-payer, where there are bridges, where there are ships (therefore—commerce), and not on mere foot traffic.²⁷⁰ In other capitularies of similar date, Charlemagne warns innkeepers to charge travelers fairly, and to stand ready to supply food and fodder even at night.²⁷¹ It should be noticed that the first decade of the ninth century stands approximately in the middle of a period (775 – 825) that McCormick has identified as a great surge in communications all over Europe and the Mediterranean. One of the characteristics of this period may be construed as assiduous care on the part of the highest political authorities to assert the public nature of the ways and to protect and facilitate travel and trade.²⁷²

By the time of Louis the Pious (814 – 840), it appears that unofficial or illegal toll-taking had proliferated already to the point that traffic was seriously harassed. Louis emphasized repeatedly that, in principle, the passage of ships in a clear channel, or under a bridge, and not approaching shore to trade should entail no charges.²⁷³ Nor should land travelers be taxed in unobstructed countryside.²⁷⁴ Tolls were unjust where water barriers

²⁶⁹ Dietrich Claude, “Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merovingerreich auf Grund der Schriftquellen,” in Göttingen 150 (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985), 51 – 2, for a summary of the seventh- and early eighth-century history of the fair of St-Denis.

²⁷⁰ *MGH Capitularia* I no. 44 (p. 124) of 805: no tolls legal in places *in quibus nullum adiutorium iterantibus praestur*. *MGH Capitularia* I no. 57.7 (p. 144). Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 140, 151.

²⁷¹ *MGH Capitularia* I no. 55.2 (p. 142): cf. express prohibition on other types of transactions at night: *De negotio super omnia praecipendum est, ut nullus audeat in nocte negotiare in vasa aurea et argenta, mancipia, gemmas, caballos, animalia, excepto vivanda et fodro quod iter agentibus necessaria sunt*. Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 157 – 8 and n. 461.

²⁷² In the words of Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik,” 42, the Carolingians had “Interesse an sicherung des allgemeinen bzw. privaten Verkehrs, vorzugsweise von Pilgerreisen und Handelsfahrten.” McCormick, *Origins*, 641 – 2, using the description of Matthew in the *Heliand* as evidence, argues that the toll-collector was a thoroughly familiar part of the landscape in the Frankish lands ca. 800.

²⁷³ *MGH Capitularia* I, no 139.17 (p. 284): Louis the Pious 818/19: *Capitula legibus addenda: ubi naves per mediam aquam aut sub pontem ierit et ad ripam non adpropinquaverit neque ibidem aliquid emptum vel venandum fuerit, ulterius teloneum non detur*. From Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 118.

²⁷⁴ *MGH Capitularia* I, no 143.1 (p. 294): Louis the Pious, 820: *Capitula de functionibus publicis: Volumus. . . ut nullus teloneum exigat. . . neque in silvis neque in stratis neque in campis*. From Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 140.

did not exist.²⁷⁵ Rather, tolls were legitimate only where natural conditions had required an improvement such as a bridge or a causeway.²⁷⁶ The un-lawful toll-taking was, in fact, a business akin to piracy. And just as piracy presupposes that rich and numerous prizes are sailing on the infested seas,²⁷⁷ so the roads and waterways of Carolingia must have been thick enough with the movement of people and goods to make such activity both tempting and worthwhile.²⁷⁸

In Hildegard Adams' view, boat traffic, marketplaces, and bridges were the key elements of the system. Ships on the rivers of Carolingia were the primary carriers of commerce, and ships were particularly hard hit with increased tolling.²⁷⁹ Therefore, it became increasingly important to obtain toll exemptions in order to reduce the costs of commercial transport, to receive the significant income from the tolls in specified places, or to build or oversee a piece of infrastructure such as a bridge or a boat-landing. In the earlier ninth century, Louis the Pious several times granted specific ecclesiastical entities the right to operate a given number of ships on a particular body of water toll free. Conversely, for the ninth century, there are sixteen concessions to collect tolls on ships. Documents also mention rights to build ship landings both on the Loire and on the Rhine; these would have been doubly profitable for the owning clerics, as free berths for their own ships and as toll income from the ships of others.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁵ MGH *Capitularia* I, no 141.4 (p. 289): Louis the Pious, 819: *Capitulare missorum: ubi nec aqua nec palus nec pons nec aliquid tale fuerit unde iuste census exigi possit*. From Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 140.

²⁷⁶ MGH *Capitularia* I, no 139.17 (p. 284): Louis the Pious 818/19: *Capitula legibus addenda* states further that people cannot be made to use infrastructure if they have an alternative way. Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 141. Elsewhere, Louis complains that freelancers are stringing ropes across rivers and making people cross "bridges" placed in open fields! (p. 151 -2). Such things were already done in the time of Charlemagne; McCormick, *Origins*, 640 – 1.

²⁷⁷ Thus McCormick: "Piracy requires a reliable supply of victims." So, if there was piracy [around the Mediterranean], that means "there was steady shipping to be interrupted." McCormick, *Origins*, p. 208 – 9.

²⁷⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 640, makes a similar point: unauthorized tolls springing up is evidence that people were developing interest in the growing traffic.

²⁷⁹ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 100 – 1. Adam names the Loire and the Rhine as the most active riverine arteries.

²⁸⁰ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 101 – 12, 135. Furthermore, a total of over seventy *diplomae* that grant some kind of toll exemption on land travel are known from the ninth century (p. 159). Adam (p. 125 n. 322) cites the wording of a *diploma* of Charles the Bald for St-Germain-des-Prés (Tessier DD Karl d. K., I, no. 88 [p.241]) as a model "Zollprivileg": *jubemus ut naves potestatis ejusdem sancti Germani monasterii. . . ad quascumque civitates, castella aut portus vel cetera loca accessum habuerint, nemo*

In the earlier ninth century, it was common to issue blanket exemptions from all tolls on all rivers; in the later ninth, it was more and more common to forgive either (1) a specific kind of charge at all places, or (2) all charges at some specific location.²⁸¹ Over time, many illegal toll-taking spots had become accepted as part of the landscape of communications, as income from toll-taking had become embedded in the socio-economic fabric. Also, by the mid-ninth century Carolingian rulers increasingly were surrendering responsibility—and upkeep duty—over infrastructure to subordinate authorities. Tolls purely for passage over roads or rivers multiplied. Particularly, as Adam says, the *pontonarii* or bridge-keepers wanted to charge everybody, both those that passed *over* the bridge and those that passed under it.²⁸²

The system of communications revealed in the capitularies and *diplomae* concerning tolls was closely tied to markets, which in the ninth century seem to have existed in great numbers. As Adam stresses repeatedly, the real intent of much of the toll-structure was geared to the taxation of trade by means of controlling access to any and all venues where trade might be pursued.²⁸³ In other words, the places where tolls are mentioned as liable to be collected are also marketplaces, and such places were legion! An early instance says that the *portaticum*—a toll to pass into a harbor or through a land gate—shall be paid at the entrance to any city, town, or port.²⁸⁴ The *ripaticum* was a charge for approaching a (undeveloped) riverbank for purposes of trade in that place; a *portus*, meanwhile, might refer both to beaching spots and places with docks or quays, but having also permanent stores and warehouses. Conversely, every waterside settlement had its landing and toll places, illegal or otherwise.²⁸⁵ Bridges were particularly important junctures—intersections of land and water traffic and therefore,

fideliū nostrorū nec quislibet exactor iudiciarię potestatis nec ullus telonarius de ipsis aut hominibus qui eas pręvident ullum teloneum. . . aut ullam redibitionem accipere vel exigere audeat.

²⁸¹ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 104, 137 – 8.

²⁸² Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 119 – 20, 150 – 2. In her terms, it is a devolution from “öffentliche Gewalt” to “nachgeordnete Gewalte” (p. 150). McCormick, *Origins*, 686, speaks of a slackening of coin movements from Italy north along the Rhine axis ca. 850, which may be a reflection of the changed communications climate in Carolingia; however, there was no cessation of such movement.

²⁸³ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 125.

²⁸⁴ Levillain DD Pippin I, no. 6 (p. 20): *portaticum* to be paid at *quaremlibet civitatum, oppidorum, portuum oris*. From Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 126.

²⁸⁵ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 128 – 34.

typically, markets.²⁸⁶ A *diploma* of Charles the Bald for St-Denis in 845 gives a detailed list of places where the monks or their agents shall be free of tolls, including, at the end, “bridges and other markets.”²⁸⁷

Who was paying the tolls? One large and perennial group of people regularly transiting the Carolingian realms, the pilgrims, was expressly toll-exempt and otherwise protected. Their toll-free status goes back at least to the reign of Pippin III (741 – 68).²⁸⁸ As McCormick translates:

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. . . or on water transport, nor make a claim on any pilgrim on account of his baggage, nor collect any toll from them.²⁸⁹

A further instance of the care devoted to this class of travelers was the hostels that the Carolingian rulers ordered to be built at the *clusae*, ostensibly for the benefit of these “peregrini” or “pauperes Christi.”²⁹⁰ Though they paid no tolls for the right to use the infrastructure of travel, even pilgrims—following Adam’s analysis—still would have had to spend money along the way for the actual food, shelter, and vehicles that they used, and thus would have contributed demand and profit to every area through which they passed. In 747, St. Boniface remarked on the numbers of Anglo-Saxon women traveling through Gaul and Lombardy and, all too frequently, ending up as prostitutes;²⁹¹ this may or may not be an accurate vignette of a kind of free-lance commercial activity widespread along the major thoroughfares of the Carolingian empire.

²⁸⁶ Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 154, explains that bridges were prime marketplaces because they were “wichtige Verkehrsknotenpunkte für den Warenverkehr zu Lande wie auch vom durchfahrenden Schiffsverkehr entsprechend frequentiert.”

²⁸⁷ From Adam, *Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich*, 154 n. 451: Tessier DD Karl d. K., I, no. 66 (p.192): *ubicumque advenerint, tam in civitatibus, castellis, vicis publicis, portis, pontibus vel reliquis mercatibus*. A straightforward translation of the list as “cities” and “castles” and so on is somewhat problematical. *Civitates* and *castella* might both be walled places with concentrated population, but their juridical status would have been different. A *vicus publicus* may refer to an “unincorporated” rural trade and crafts center, or perhaps to a more official *emporium*. The form of *portis* suggests a city gate more than a “harbor.”

²⁸⁸ Pippin III, began his de facto rule from the time of the death of his father Charles Martel. Until 747 he ruled as “mayor” jointly with his brother Karloman; in 752 he officially took on the title of king. Further confusion lies in the fact that in German document collections he goes down as Pippin I.

²⁸⁹ McCormick, *Origins*, 640, translating from *MGH Capitularia I* no. 13, 4, 1.32.5 – 10.

²⁹⁰ DD Lothar I no. 4, for Novalesa, in 825. Louis II

²⁹¹ Boniface *Epistolae* 78, 169.15 – 25: of the women, “paucis remanentibus intactis,” but became “adulterae.” Quoted in McCormick, *Origins*, 164.

The movement of privately owned goods intended for use rather than for sale also was explicitly exempted from the payment of tolls. This would apply to goods moving between the scattered properties of a single owner, including of course institutional estate-holders such as abbeys. McCormick again translates capitularies of Pippin III and of Charlemagne:

About tolls we so command that no one take a toll from food supplies and wagon transport which is. . . not commercial (*absque negotio*); about pack animals also, wherever they are going.

Similarly also, neither [let tolls be exacted] from those who, without commercial involvement, transport their own property from one residence to another or to the palace or 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*).²⁹²

To put it another way, that part of the Carolingian system of production that was tied up in an autarkic “command economy” managed by elite corporate entities such as the great monastic and fiscal estates could operate quite unhindered by the official system of taxation imposed upon movement and exchange. We may conclude, therefore, that however great was the proportion of the Carolingian economy that was tied up thusly, sufficient economic activity generated by these self-same estates and other participants was *commercial*—and, thereby, liable to tolls—to make the toll system immensely profitable and a target for unauthorized encroachment.²⁹³ As McCormick has it: “Tolls do not mean estate transports or transfers. They mean commerce.” Further:

²⁹² McCormick, *Origins*, 640 and 641, from Pippin III (*MGH Capitularia* I no. 13, 4, 1.32.5 – 10) and Charlemagne (*MGH Capitularia* I no. 44, 13, 1.124.29 – 125), respectively.

²⁹³ This consideration effectively puts a limit on Henning’s argument that the autarkic management style of the estate owners retarded or even reversed the economic gains of the Merovingian period, where enterprising peasants and townsmen had cooperated in a more commercialized system; see again Henning, “Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm,” 14 – 21. However much greater Carolingian production might have been without the dominance of the estate mode of organization, the system as it was produced plenty of marketable wealth.

“Charlemagne was not the kind of king who wasted time putting toll collecting stations where no commercial goods moved.”²⁹⁴

Even the untaxed movements of goods between the far-flung units of the great estates likely contributed to the development or maintenance of serviceable transport infrastructure throughout the Merovingian and into the Carolingian period.²⁹⁵ The movement of purchased goods, even when intended for consumption rather than resale, was taxable, as was the transport of items intended for the market. In theory, ecclesiastical entities were supposed to trade only for necessities; however, the principle came to be interpreted quite broadly, so that profit from the sale of agricultural and craft surplus could be considered as resources “necessary” for the church or monastery to carry out its mission.²⁹⁶ Thus, regardless of the possible effects of management style, considerable quantities of goods were created on the estates, circulated along the transportation network, and marketed.²⁹⁷ The assiduity and frequency with which abbots and other ecclesiastical leaders sought and received privileges—both the right to move goods without paying tolls and the concession to collect such tolls paid by others—attests to the liveliness and importance of this traffic. Moreover, many of the largest, richest, and most prestigious monasteries situated themselves strategically by major market centers and on waterways—clearly, with the foresight to avail themselves of the opportunities of exchange.²⁹⁸

There is every reason, then, to include the locations of those monasteries and churches that are obviously sited on major waterways as well as those that are known to

²⁹⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 641, 644.

²⁹⁵ McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages’,” puts it this way: “In so far as the central domaine mobilized and transported to the centre the necessary production of dispersed, often far-flung possessions—cereals, especially, but also olive oil, wine, even iron or lead—the system of bipartite estates intensified transport systems, leaving visible traces in an improving infrastructure.”

²⁹⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 640 – 1. More extensively, see the discussion in Adam, *Zollwesen*, 200 – 5.

²⁹⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 802, asserts explicitly that the expansion of the manorial system after ca. 750, which was marked by intensified agricultural production and exploitation of dependant labor, was “aimed at exchange.” See further discussion in Section 6.4 below.

²⁹⁸ Stéphane Lebecq, “The Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange of the Frankish World between the Seventh and the Beginning of the Ninth Centuries,” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 121 – 48. See also J. P. Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange dans l’économie franque entre Loire et Rhin,” in *Mercati e mercanti nell’alto Medioevo: l’area euroasiatica e l’area mediterranea* (Settimane 40, 1993), 327 – 89, for a discussion of the evolution of commercial involvement by ecclesiastic institutions.

have received toll- and transport-related privileges in our overall picture of the exchange network stretching over Carolingian Europe, along with the known locations of markets, fairs, passes, towns, ports, and bridges. Not only did such corporate entities feed their surplus production into the exchange system, but their estate centers also were epicenters of elite demand for long-distance luxuries such as the silk, spices, and aromatics that merchants brought over the Alps from Italy. The string of episcopal cities along the length of the Rhine also must have constituted a considerable chain of aggregate demand.²⁹⁹

Another, even more concentrated and regularly recurrent market was the Carolingian general assembly. Occurring on average once every year throughout the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, and continuing afterwards as well, these court occasions convoked hundreds of ecclesiastic and secular magnates to do imperial business, who in turn brought their thousands of friends and retainers. Here, indeed, was a prime market for enterprising long-distance merchants to sell luxuries. As McCormick says:

The concentrated demand of the normally 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.³⁰⁰

While many of the items acquired by the Carolingian rulers and their elite followers would have been distributed as gifts, it is important to bear in mind that the overwhelming majority of these gifts had, at some point, to be purchased from a professional seller. As a further tie between the imperial court and the world of commerce, McCormick points out the proximity of several Carolingian palaces to a major *emporium* or to a commercially active city.³⁰¹

In addition to pilgrim traffic, the surplus product from the estates, and the luxuries bound for both secular and ecclesiastical elite centers, at least one other important category of traffic moved over the Carolingian communications network: the slaves and

²⁹⁹ On the Rhenish cities, McCormick, *Origins*, 664.

³⁰⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 665 – 8. The quote is on p. 668. See the discussion on the documents associated with certain *fideles*. . . *negotiatores*, who serve as purveyors to the court, in Section 6.3 below.

³⁰¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 664, names Aachen within 32km of Maastricht, Nijmegen 40km from Dorestad, and Ingelheim just 25km from Mainz.

the dealers in slaves. While it may be true that slave-catching was not practiced intensively within the more settled, core areas of Francia, the threat of enslavement and the ubiquitous presence of slaves in transit through these areas was nevertheless commonplace. Moreover, the transiting slave caravans would have produced important “multiplier effects” wherever they passed due to the need to feed and otherwise maintain these “wares” and their keepers.³⁰² Also, unless they carried privileges to the contrary, the slave dealers would have been among the most regular and most likely payers of the many tolls that marked the routes. Whether they came from the Slavic east or the Scandinavian north, and whether they were bound for the Italian or for the Spanish market, many slaves crossed through the heart of Carolingia and left profit in their wake. In McCormick’s words:

As the slave trains crossed France, they shed some wealth wherever they passed. And when the slaves were finally sold off, the profit ended in Frankish traders’ purses.³⁰³

In light of the foregoing discussion, it may be argued that the admittedly fragmentary evidence nonetheless suggests a picture of intensive communications and exchange networks across the Carolingian lands north of the Alps. The main channels of this traffic, where possible, made use of the major rivers: the Loire, the Seine, the Meuse, the Rhine. And while the articulation of the routes over Francia is not always clear, the northwestern terminus of the communications corridor—the counterpart to the *clusae* at the southeastern end—certainly was the coastal *emporia*. These extended across an arc that is somewhat broader than the arc of Alpine pass exits in northern Italy from Turin to Verona, but is nevertheless concentrated. They included Rouen on the lower Seine, Amiens on the Somme, Quentovic on the estuary of the Canche (near Boulogne), Maastricht on the lower Meuse, and Dorestad near the head of the Rhine

³⁰² On the impact of the slave trade in the core regions of Francia, see the doubts expressed in Henning, “Slavery or Freedom?” 271 – 3; and the vigorous rebuttal in McCormick, “Complexity, Chronology and Context,” 308 – 12.

³⁰³ McCormick, “Complexity, Chronology and Context,” 310.

delta.³⁰⁴ Like the *clusae*, the *emporium* served as prime toll-collection points as well as gateways to a wider trading world beyond. Whereas the ports of Italy connected with the great Mediterranean trading worlds, the *emporium* connected with Anglo-Saxon England, the North Sea, and Scandinavia.³⁰⁵ For the Carolingian economy, these northern connections were every bit as important as the southern ones.

The Iberian connection

The primary overland communications corridor through the Frankish empire outlined above had several tributary branches. Most of these, including the rich Loire river system and the Danube route, which was becoming increasingly important in the later ninth and early tenth centuries, lie outside the focus of the present study. For present purposes, two other branches must, however, be recognized. Of these, the routes overland from the Rhine towards the middle and lower Elbe region and into the West Slavic area will be addressed in the context of Carolingian North Sea connections to Denmark and the Baltic Sea world. The Spanish route from Lyon to Saragossa will best be handled at once. While it is clearly part of the broader Mediterranean world, it nevertheless is a branch separate from the main corridor that connected Francia with northern Italy. It cannot be ignored because three of the core documents that expressly concern Carolingian merchant privileges unmistakably refer to persons whose activities were situated along this transverse line.³⁰⁶

It has been traditional to regard the south coast of Gaul as a zone devastated and bereft of commerce in the eighth century. Famously, Pirenne had asserted that the Arab conquest of Spain and their attack into Languedoc and Provence “absolutely put an end” to western Mediterranean commerce ca. 720 and pronounced Marseille “dead.”³⁰⁷ Though far less dramatically, this also is the conclusion drawn in the most recent

³⁰⁴ The most complete list of these northwestern *emporium* occurs in a *diploma* of Charlemagne for St-Germain-des-Prés. *MGH DD Karl d. Gr. no. 122* (p. 171), quoted in Adam, *Zollwesen*, 165 – 6. The distance from Rouen to Dorestad is some 260 miles, cf. 170 for Turin to Verona.

³⁰⁵ See Section 7.1, subsections *Carolingia and England* and *Carolingia and Denmark* below.

³⁰⁶ These are the *Formulae imperiales e curia Ludovici Pii*, no. 30, no. 31, and no. 52.

³⁰⁷ Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 166, 168.

thorough examination of Marseille in the eighth century, that by Simon Loseby.³⁰⁸ Loseby catalogues a string of compounding failures in Marseille in the later seventh century: the destruction of the Bourse – Corne artisanal quarter, the end of gold coinage, failure of local pottery production, and the decline of imports such as oil and papyrus. In the sixth and seventh centuries, Loseby says, Marseille had resisted the general contraction of economic activity because it had served as the “main gateway for the vast and wealthy Frankish market.” Now, this “greatest Merovingian port had been relegated to the margins of the Carolingian empire.”³⁰⁹ Loseby places his conclusions within a pessimistic and terminal view of eighth-century Mediterranean exchange:

The late antique Mediterranean *koine*, its international ramifications represented above all by thousands upon thousands of sherds of amphorae and fine pottery, had slowly but inexorably dissolved, leaving only the host of regional and local economies lurking beneath it. . . . The Carolingian *renovatio* would encompass many things; a revived Mediterranean trade was not among them.³¹⁰

Loseby concedes that some trade continued in Marseille in the eighth century.³¹¹

In any case, the state of exchange on the Mediterranean coast of Gaul in the eighth and ninth centuries need not be linked exclusively with conditions in Marseille. Both Loseby and Hildegard Adam mention Arles as a port regaining importance in this period.³¹² Generally speaking, as Loseby also points out,³¹³ a relative decline in importance of the Rhône and Provence ports can be ascribed to the surge in trans-Alpine traffic after ca. 700. Nevertheless, the waters between the south coast of Gaul and the west coast of Italy were far from desolate. In the later eighth century, the Lombards and the popes were interested in Corsica and Sicily, respectively. In 798 – 813, Charlemagne mounted a

³⁰⁸ Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirenne Thesis, II.”

³⁰⁹ Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirenne Thesis, II.” 191, 192.

³¹⁰ Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirenne Thesis, II.” 192 – 3. This article appeared the year before McCormick’s *Origins of the European Economy*, which might help to explain the unrelievedly pessimistic outlook.

³¹¹ An Anglo-Saxon merchant is resident in the city ca. 750; Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirenne Thesis, II.” 192. Adam, *Zollwesen*, 166 and n. 26, mentions that Louis the Pious in 822 still was confirming the rights of the bishop of Marseille to collect tolls from ships that came from Italy; and Charles the Bald in an 845 *diploma* for St-Denis mentions Marseille as a destination that its agents may wish to visit.

³¹² Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirenne Thesis, II.” 193; Adam, *Zollwesen*, 167.

³¹³ Loseby, “Marseille and the Pirenne Thesis, II.” 179 – 80.

strong naval defense against Saracen raiders in this area. There was a multitude of routes, of ships, of attacks—in other words, yet another lively region in a supposedly dead sea.³¹⁴

Of even greater interest is the overland route that appears to connect Lyon with Septimania and Catalonia. Septimania apparently boasted a large, wealthy, and politically and commercially active Jewish community throughout the seventh century, which the anti-Jewish legislation of several of the later Visigothic kings failed to destroy.³¹⁵ Furthermore, all of the Carolingian rulers starting with Peppin the Short (740 – 768), Charlemagne (768 – 814), Louis the Pious (814 – 40), and Charles the Bald (d. 877) pursued explicitly pro-Jewish legislative agendas, protecting among other things the capacity of the Jews of Carolingia to engage in the long-distance slave trade between the eastern Slavic hinterland and Iberia. Jewish soldiers and colonists figured prominently in the creation of the Spanish March, and Lyon was a major center of Jewish economic and cultural influence. The *Formulae imperiales* nos. 30, 31, and 52 of Louis the Pious were created explicitly to confer privileges upon Jewish merchants.³¹⁶

Even aside from the *Formulae imperiales*, there is documentary and literary evidence concerning the presence of merchants and communications along the Spanish route. Tolls were collected at Les Cluses at the Mediterranean end of the Pyrenees, as well as at Narbonne and Barcelona.³¹⁷ Agobard of Lyon asserted that Jews were kidnapping Christians and selling them via Arles into slavery in Spain.³¹⁸ A letter of Eulogius of 851 mentions contingents of merchants (*cohortes negotiatorum*) bound for Saragossa and a connection between Spain and Mainz.³¹⁹ In the late ninth century, a

³¹⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 516 – 22.

³¹⁵ Bernard S. Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 3 – 26.

³¹⁶ Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy*, 66 – 131, passim. Detailed engagement with the *Formulae imperiales* nos. 30, 31, and 52 appears on pp. 87 – 97.

³¹⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 642.

³¹⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 675, citing Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum* 195.149 – 59. We might consider that Agobard's specific charges are untrustworthy. However, they imply a public knowledge of routine slave trading into Spain in the earlier ninth century. Archbishop Agobard of Lyon (816 – 40) spent decades fighting to reverse imperial pro-Jewish policy and to curb Jewish influence. For more details on the Agobard affair, see Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy*, 98 – 102.

³¹⁹ McCormick, *Origins*, 677, citing Eulogius *Epistolae* 3, 6, 499.1 – 500.8.

caravan of merchants heading south from Verdun over Langres was bound for Spain.³²⁰ A trail of coins also marks the Spanish route. Hoards and stray finds include late Visigothic issues, various eighth- and ninth-century western Mediterranean Arab issues in copper, silver, and gold, and Carolingian silver deniers.³²¹

According to Wickham, after a general decline in pottery quality in the Spanish interior throughout the fifth century, the chronology of known political developments such as the post-570s *Pax Visigothica* or the Arab invasion of 711 appears to leave no visible traces in the material record of the peninsula. Local conditions and trajectories vary with respect to each other, with greater complexity in southern areas, but with most areas maintaining a low but constant tradition of professional ceramics production. Some areas show improvement in the eighth century, some in the ninth, while others remain constant from the fifth century onwards. Not until the arrival of glazed pottery with Islamic forms in the late ninth and tenth centuries is there a significant departure. In Wickham's analysis, both the Visigoths and the early Umayyads maintained a coherent state structure over a society that was significantly less wealthy than in Roman times. The return of more sophisticated pottery then coincides with the rebuilding of aristocratic wealth in the ninth and tenth centuries.³²²

What, then, would be the economic basis of a Spanish route from southern Gaul in the eighth century? Certainly, Iberia was no richer a market than southern Gaul itself was at this time, and probably significantly poorer overall than the booming heartlands of Francia, or the Po valley. Yet, it seems that the connection between Gaul and Iberia had become well-traveled and well-established by the late eighth century—and important enough to receive repeated attention by the emperor Louis and his clerks in the early ninth century.³²³ As this development took place many decades before the full bloom of the Emirate of Cordoba in the late ninth and tenth centuries, we must conclude that it was driven not by superior Spanish wealth or material sophistication but by some other

³²⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 677 – 8. The Meuse was navigable upstream up to Verdun, where also a major east – west road crossed the river (p. 646). This combination of circumstances made of Verdun an important nexus of communications ways.

³²¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 345 – 9, 645.

³²² Wickham, *Framing*, 741 – 59. “This account of the changes in patterns of exchange substantially flattens out some of the iconic moments in Spanish history” (p. 746).

³²³ Witness, again, documents no. 30, no. 31, and no. 52 in *Formulae imperiales e curia Ludovici Pii*.

process. The evidence for activity along the Spanish route does not contradict the pattern of McCormick's "secular rhythms" in Mediterranean exchange: a surge 775 – 825, then a lull, and renewed growth from 850 onwards.³²⁴ Quite possibly, there is a connection here with the same surge in Islamic economic growth and demand ca. 750 that also led to the emergence of the Venetian – Adriatic route in the second half of the eighth century. Possibly, Spain became a preferred conduit for European slaves to North Africa. Between Lyon and Saragossa, however, the players that dominate the record are Jewish merchants. Without doubt, the connection contributed wealth both to the Carolingian empire and to the Iberian peninsula.

6.4 Francia and the rivers

The purpose of the previous subsection was to demonstrate that a dense and lively network of exchange and communications existed across continental western Europe in the Carolingian period, which connected a reconfigured Mediterranean across the Alps with Francia and with ports on the northern waters. In order to allay possible doubts remaining about the economic significance of this communications system, it will be necessary to review briefly the condition of production and exchange within Francia more specifically—to demonstrate, in other words, that this region had the capacity to function as something more than just a sparse elite consumption zone for imported luxuries. Ideally, the analysis would be organized around the three largest river systems in the Frankish heartlands: the Seine, the Meuse, and the Rhine. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to start with a more general review.

The role of the abbeys

In his own analysis of Gaul in *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, Wickham separated the parts north of Lyon from the Mediterranean system and declared that these maintained a greater degree of systemic integrity in terms of elite property-holding patterns, commercial pottery distributions, and overall commercial activity than any other place east of Egypt and the Aegean. Building on the sixth- and seventh-century foundations,

³²⁴ See again McCormick, *Origins*, 433 – 41.

the hierarchical articulation of distribution routes and markets increased still more in the eighth and ninth centuries.³²⁵ Wickham emphasizes the commercial nature of the system, including in this the participation of the manorial system from ca. 750 onwards, which Wickham characterizes as intensifying agricultural production and exploitation of peasant labor and being “aimed at exchange.”³²⁶ These conclusions are based, of course, on the theoretical importance that Wickham ascribes to fiscal structures and elite wealth as underpinnings necessary for the growth in mass commercial production and distribution of items of everyday use. As he sums up:

The concentration and geographic scale of aristocratic wealth in northern Francia was arguably sufficiently great to compensate for the end of the fiscal system, and the movement of goods between the lands of the great owners, plus the scale of their buying power, were arguably sufficient almost to match the infrastructural importance of the fiscal system for exchange in Egypt.³²⁷

The part of the economy of Francia that is most visible in the extant sources is that of the great ecclesiastical entities such as the abbeys of St-Denis, St-Germain-des-Prés, and Prüm. As was mentioned in the previous subsection, the monastic establishments and their far-flung properties interacted intensely with the network of communications and exchange. As Devroey argues, the domanial economy could not function without a system of exchange. Establishments relied on the ability to market surpluses in order to acquire necessary things that their own properties did not produce—things that might include salt, wax, incense, dietary complements, cloth. This was true particularly of the smaller establishments, who did not possess in-house the range of resources boasted by the larger ones. That grain could be bought on the market in times of famine demonstrates that a market for staples existed as well.³²⁸ The leaders of these establishments clearly understood economic organization in space and time. They adjusted the proportions of local production that would be dedicated to subsistence or to

³²⁵ Wickham, *Framing*, 794 – 802. For Gaul in the sixth and seventh centuries, see the discussion in Section 5.1 above.

³²⁶ Wickham, *Framing*, 287 – 93, 802.

³²⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 804. Wickham’s stress on the positive effects on economic growth of elite dominance runs diametrically contrary to the views of Henning; see discussion in Section 6.1, subsection *Competing theories of Carolingian production and exchange* above.

³²⁸ Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 330 – 2, 340 – 3.

sale according to local circumstances, as they adjusted the proportion of dues to be paid in kind or in coin. They deliberately sought alternative sources of supply for imported objects based on comparative price.³²⁹

The mercantile activities of the ecclesiastical organizations—the “commerce d’église”—were restrained and limited, in theory, by the idea of the “just price” and the distinction made, explicitly in the case of Charlemagne’s capitulary of 806,³³⁰ between “négoce” and “profit”, where the former represented buying for need or fairly redistributing surplus wealth, while the latter involved buying speculatively in order to sell dearer later. Nevertheless, the abbeys often had little choice but to convert their abundant marketable surpluses into reserves of silver.³³¹ Furthermore, as seen already in the previous subsection, from the seventh to the eighth and still more in the ninth century the number and scope of legal privileges and the numbers of church organizations that received them continually increased. One particularly telling form of privilege was tax- or toll-exemption for merchants or agents attached to monasteries—*neguciantes* or *negotiatores*—who flocked to such employment both in urban and rural contexts. Monasteries used their immunities to erect new markets at additional locations among their properties.³³² In short, regardless of the dominant ideology, the picture on the ground is one of growing commercial activity, activity in which the Church did not hesitate to involve itself.

Just as the organizational and legal framework for commerce grew, so did productive capacity.³³³ One example of potential productivity is the estimate that ca. 800 the Carolingian fisc produced annually, on some 600 estates, no less than 18,000 horses

³²⁹ Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 344 – 5, 350 – 1, 354.

³³⁰ *Capitulare missorum Niumagae datum*, March 806. *MGH Capitularia I*, no. 46 (p. 132). Referenced in Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 356 n. 92.

³³¹ The discussion of the tension between Christian ideology and the reality of a market economy is in Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 344, 348, 355 – 7. The need for the Abbey of Prüm to sell some of its salt and wine *de necessitate superflua* was noted already by a high medieval commentator (p. 348).

³³² Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 358 – 86, *passim*.

³³³ The case is well summarized by Bachrach: “It is now well established that beginning in the eighth century, the economy, that is, the production of goods and services, in Gaul began a process of robust expansion that was accompanied by significant demographic growth.” Bachrach, “Are They Not Like Us?” 119. Even if Henning is correct to say that the form of economic organization employed on the large estates was inefficient, its output was great nevertheless.

for use by the army, including as traction in supply trains.³³⁴ Since their surplus was destined for government needs, including above all the supply of the army with food, animals, and equipment, the great fiscal *villae* may be seen as non-commercial in nature. However, though the management style of the great ecclesiastic estates also may have been oriented toward seigniorial exploitation of dependents rather than commercial efficiencies,³³⁵ and they also had to contribute to the needs of the government,³³⁶ there can be no doubt that the monasteries and their various properties and dependents produced a huge amount of movable wealth, some of which entered the market.³³⁷

During the seventh century, the number of Gallic monasteries had increased from about 215 to some 550, with the vast majority situated not in solitudinous “deserts” but near cities or in the midst of well-developed, productive landscapes and ready avenues of communication.³³⁸ Thus, the typical foundation of a monastic complex included a range of assets: land, labor, and food processing facilities, such as mills (*farinariae*), wine presses (*torculariae*), and breweries (*cambae*); further, they might operate salt ovens, forges, and spinning and weaving workshops. In addition to a wide range of labor services and deliveries of finished articles such as pieces of clothing or metal tools,³³⁹ the monasteries also demanded from their dependants transport services, which are enumerated in detail. The polyptych of St-Germain-des-Prés, for example, imposed “a rigorous system of transport charges”: *angariae* (cartage); *carropera* (cartloads); *vinericia* (wine transport); *magisca* (in May, hauling battens); *wichariae* (transport to

³³⁴ Bachrach, “Are They Not Like Us?” 128.

³³⁵ See again Henning, “Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm,” 19 – 24.

³³⁶ Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 334 – 5.

³³⁷ Despite his primitivizing tendencies, Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 96 – 7, also spoke of the mobilizing effects of the great estates: “The role of commercialization was not always ‘marginal’ and this traffic was collectively generating an ever greater volume of cash transactions. . . . The economic concentration represented by the great estate made a powerful contribution towards associating the work of the land and its fruits with trading activities.”

³³⁸ Lebecq, “Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange,” 122 – 7. The inventories and descriptions of establishments such as Corbie or Fulda could serve as models of fully equipped economic enterprises for the time. Concerning communications: “[The monasteries] were already connected to the outside world—or were to be so before long—thanks to the road, river or sea communication network, not only with the aim of accomplishing their evangelising mission, but also with that of opening themselves to the market” (p. 129).

³³⁹ Lebecq, “Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange,” 132, notes that some *villae* of St-Denis were obligated to supply cloth; now *Grubenhäuser* have been found with tools in these places, “which shows the extent to which the data in our written sources must be taken seriously.”

Quentovic); *portatura* with *parafredi* (with horses); or with *navigia* (ships) down the Seine to the *villa supra mare* that the abbey owned at Quillebeuf.³⁴⁰

The focus on the economic activities of the ecclesiastic estates is necessary because so much of the available sources concerns these establishments, but it is likely that secular estate owners engaged in similar activities. What did Francia produce? Grain of course, but there is also a long-list of non-agricultural, crafts and industrial specializations, summarized in Verhulst's *Carolingian Economy*: linen and woolen cloth making, iron mining and working, forging of arms and armor, pottery production, salt production, and glass-making.³⁴¹ These activities were pursued generally in the core Frankish area between the Seine and the Rhine, with local concentrations of one or another of them depending on local conditions, resources, and expertise. In addition, and probably the one product more than any other that gave Francia an entry into international commerce, there was wine.

The Seine

The northern limit of vine-growing in the early Middle Ages ran along a line roughly Le Mans – Paris – Rheims – Köln. This meant that both the Seine and Rhine river systems included an upstream wine producing area as well as an easy and convenient shipping gradient downstream into the non-producing zone and, finally, to seaports, whence the vintage could reach further markets in England and Scandinavia. As Wickham so aptly has pointed out, northwards of the middle Seine and Rhine, wine was a *luxury*, hence highly lucrative for anyone who had the means to organize its production and trade:

Throughout the post-Roman period. . . there was a commercial reason why one might want to specialize in wine production at access points for northern trade. . . Wine may have been the one agrarian product whose trade maintained its vitality [after Roman times], thanks to the ecological margin that ran across the north Frankish heartland.³⁴²

³⁴⁰ Lebecq, "Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange," 129 – 36.

³⁴¹ Adriaan Verhulst, *The Carolingian Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 72 – 84.

³⁴² Wickham, *Framing*, 284 – 6. The quotes are on p. 286.

The Seine basin was the core area of the Neustrian subdivision of the Frankish realm. As was discussed in Chapter 5, Paris was a commercially vibrant city throughout the Merovingian period, and the area around Paris was a powerful and wealthy landscape.³⁴³ The degree of development and technological sophistication reached in the Seine basin generally in the eighth and ninth centuries is, perhaps, reflected most strikingly in the great number of water mills. As McCormick puts it, “by 830, the monks of St-Germain-des-Prés had built or bought mills everywhere they would work and were investing in better ones”; other ecclesiastical establishments as well as secular magnates were doing the same.³⁴⁴ Like other major abbeys, St-Germain-des-Prés owned a great number of properties and thousands of dependants in the Paris region—which, among other things, produced great quantities of wine. According to Verhulst, the annual production equaled some 15,000 *mud*, or over 75,000 gallons, of which only 2,000 *mud* were consumed in-house.³⁴⁵ This would leave some 65,000 gallons of wine each year for the market.

The focal point of commerce in the Paris basin in the eighth and ninth centuries was the annual fair held by the abbey of St-Denis—on 9 October, the Feast of St. Denis and the end of the grape harvest in Île-de-France.³⁴⁶ In other words, the primary *raison d'être* of this major commercial venue was to market the one product of the Seine basin that had the broadest and most lucrative appeal.³⁴⁷ The history of the fair can be

³⁴³ On the urban character and commercial potential of Paris, see also Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d'échange,” 376.

³⁴⁴ McCormick, “New Light on the ‘Dark Ages,’” 23, with references. Similarly, Lebecq, “Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange,” 134, notes that in Neustria in the eighth century, every valley had a *farinarium*—sometimes with extensive stream-engineering. He also wonders if they were not using the works of Vitruvius for guidance; certainly, the monks were copying mss. of Vitruvius. This would be a phenomenon similar to the continued use of Vegetius as a guide to military practice, for which see Bernard S. Bachrach, “The Practical Use of Vegetius’ *De Re Militari* in the Early Middle Ages,” *The Historian* 47 (1985): 239 – 55.

³⁴⁵ Verhulst, *Carolingian Economy*, 101 – 2. Of course, St-Germain-des-Prés was by no means the only large wine producer in the Seine basin, only the best documented.

³⁴⁶ Lebecq, “Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange,” 142.

³⁴⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 648, comments: “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.” McCormick goes on to say that the periodic (once yearly, in this case) nature of the St-Denis fair shows that there was insufficient demand, yet, in the area to support a *continuous* marketplace. But this overlooks both the specialized nature of the St-Denis fair and the fact that the city of Paris, not 10 kilometers distant, continued to serve as a non-seasonal marketplace in the Carolingian period just as it had in the Merovingian.

approximated from surviving *diplomae* that the abbey held, and from other written sources. One tradition places the beginnings of the fair in the reign of Dagobert I (629 – 39).³⁴⁸ Certainly, it existed already in the early eighth century, when Childebert III in 709/10 confirmed for St-Denis the right to collect and keep the tolls on the business transacted not only at the fair itself but in the entire area of Paris. These privileges were reconfirmed by Peppin III in 753, and extended into the ninth century.³⁴⁹

The fair of St-Denis stimulated commerce throughout the Seine region. On one level, the commerce-oriented activities of powerful religious houses such as St-Denis, St-Germain-des-Prés, and the cathedral chapter of Notre Dame in Paris attracted the participation of professional merchants to the greater Paris area, whether these worked directly as agents for one of the monasteries or operated free-lance.³⁵⁰ At the same time, the forces of commerce set loose by the large “concerns” penetrated also to the local level. As was noted above, St-Denis used its immunities in order to establish subsidiary or capillary markets, *mercata*, on many of its *villae* or satellite properties.³⁵¹ These abbey villa-markets provided the mechanism by which peasants and other small producers could participate in the general economy, thus adding not only to the supply but also to the demand—including demand for some kinds of “luxuries.” In the words of Lebecq:

What is certain, however, is that the development of these rural markets, midpoints between the units of agricultural production and urban markets, allowed access to a lucrative market, and the opportunity to acquire cash, to peasants who had a surplus or specific produce to sell. They found this indispensable for acquiring rare goods for themselves.³⁵²

³⁴⁸ On this point, see the extensive references in Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 373 – 4, and n. 156. The source in question is not a charter but the narrative *Gesta Dagoberti*, which was, however, composed in the ninth century. Lebecq, “Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange,” 142, comments that this evidence is accepted by some but remains uncertain. There is also a genuinely fraudulent *diploma*, purporting to be from Dagobert I, that was composed by the monks of St-Denis ca. 900; Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 375, and n. 159.

³⁴⁹ See Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 374 – 5, and ns. 157 and 160. The *diplomae* in question are *MGH DM* no. 77 (pp. 68 – 9): Childebert III for St-Denis, 709/10; and *MGH DD Kar I*, no. 6 (pp. 9 – 11): Peppin III for St-Denis, 8 July 753.

³⁵⁰ Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 375 – 9. The point was made more generally above.

³⁵¹ Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 383 – 6.

³⁵² Lebecq, “Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange,” 140 – 1. The quote is on p. 141.

Thus, from ca. 700 at the latest, the Seine basin with its commercial focal point around Paris and the fair of St-Denis had at least a semi-commercialized economy. Primarily, it was oriented around the marketing of agricultural surplus, with salt moving upriver while foodstuffs such as honey and, above all, wine were moving downstream.³⁵³ The outlet for this market was northwards—downriver and oversea. As McCormick has remarked, “fairs work best when they join contrasting economic zones.”³⁵⁴ In the case of the Seine basin, this is the ecological boundary between the wine growing region to the south and all the countries to the north. The English Channel and the Seine, meanwhile, provided the avenues by which traders from these northward regions could readily access the interface point. The above-mentioned *diplomae* of Childebert III and Peppin III specify Saxons (Anglo-Saxons, we would say) and both Saxons and Frisians, respectively, as nationalities of traders frequenting the St-Denis fair.³⁵⁵ If we follow McCormick’s definition that, in order to qualify as long-distance or interregional, trade connections should span more at least 300 kilometers, then it is unquestionable that the Paris basin would qualify. The straight-line distance from Paris to Southampton, the site of Hamwih, the nearest major *emporium* on the English side, easily exceeds that distance; it would be longer by actual river miles and Channel crossing. The straight-line distance from Paris to the *emporium* at Quentovic is only some 200 kilometers—but, of course, Quentovic was only the jumping-off place for ports across the straits.³⁵⁶

It was the northern demand that opened up this market, and once that had occurred, trade in other materials and commodities “piggybacked on the basic demand for French

³⁵³ McCormick, *Origins*, 647. He notes also that by 900, another industrial scale product had joined wine in the commerce of the Seine: madder, by the cartload, used in cloth-dyeing. In his words: “[Madder] adds a new dimension. The sale of a craft ingredient in such large quantities testifies to the snowballing effect of the market, which appears to have precipitated the commercialization of new goods, or of old goods in new quantities. It reveals a new articulation and specialization of the market” (p. 651 -2).

³⁵⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 648.

³⁵⁵ Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 374, n. 157.

³⁵⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 648. Much of the northbound commerce of Neustria appears to have gone through the *emporium* of Quentovic, despite the availability of the Seine as a water transport route. As noted above, Rouen on the lower Seine and Amiens on the Somme were counted among the toll stations—therefore, entrepôts—of Neustria, but they were subsidiary to Quentovic. For a more complete description of the Neustrian communications system, see Stéphan Lebecq, “La Neustrie et la mer,” in *La Neustrie: les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, ed. Hartmut Atsma (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1989), 1:405 – 40.

wine.”³⁵⁷ Indeed, while Carolingian Neustria comprised a well-integrated economic region, including a homogenous circulation of silver coinage, it was oriented to the sea and had comparatively fewer exchanges with its landward neighbors.³⁵⁸ The profits from the trade with the north, mainly, must have paid for the Mediterranean luxuries that entered Neustria from the south and southeast. In any case, Neustria and the *emporium* of Quentovic do not appear to have been the primary transit route for Mediterranean goods heading further north.³⁵⁹ That role was reserved for the Austrasian rivers—the Meuse, but most especially, the Rhine.

The Meuse

The territory of the Netherlands and Belgium is one of the most intensely studied landscapes in Europe. It is all the more surprising, therefore, how little agreement or clarity there is still regarding relations of exchange in the Meuse region in the early medieval period. A study by Koch (1970) dated Quentovic to ca. 670, Witla (at the mouth of the Meuse) to ca. 690, and Dorestad as a mercantile settlement (earlier, there was a church and a fort) to 777; Deventer emerged as a military-religious “Stützpunkt” in 775, but its career as a trading place began only in the ninth century with the appearance of imported Rhineland ceramics.³⁶⁰ Certainly, his dates for the beginnings of Quentovic and Dorestad are too late;³⁶¹ the late and cautious dating, however, reflects the state of the question as it was still at that time. For the Meuse system, specifically, Koch usefully fixes the earliest mention of the shadowy *emporium* of Witla—archaeologically

³⁵⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 652

³⁵⁸ Devroey, “Courants et réseaux d’échange,” 347. Certainly, land routes connected the Seine basin to the Loire, to Burgundy, to Lorraine. For example, quantities of lead for roofing regularly reached St-Denis from the mines of Melle in Poitou; see McCormick, *Origins*, 652; and for more detail, Florian Tereygoel, “Production and Circulation of Silver and Secondary Products (Lead and Glass) from Frankish Royal Silver Mines at Melle (Eighth to Tenth Century),” in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 123 – 34. Nevertheless, all of these connections carried far less volume of traffic than did the outlet to the north.

³⁵⁹ Such, at least, is the judgment of McCormick, *Origins*, 687.

³⁶⁰ Anton C.-F. Koch, “Phasen in der Entstehung von Kaufmannsniederlassungen zwischen Maas und Nordsee in der Karolingerzeit,” in *Landschaft und Geschichte: Festschrift für Franz Petri zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 22. februar 1986*, ed. Georg Droege, Peter Schöller, Rudolf Schützeichel, und Matthias Zender (Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid, 1970), 312, 313, 316, 316 – 17. Most of Koch’s discussion is based on written sources and philological analysis.

³⁶¹ Quentovic, for instance, dates to the late sixth century. See the discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters* above.

unlocated and quite possibly unrecoverable due to repeated flooding and sedimentation around the mouth of the Meuse over the past thirteen centuries.³⁶² It is significant, surely, that an *emporium* existed at the mouth of this river already in the later seventh century—around the same time, in other words, that so many other *emporia*, *wics*, and *mercimonia* become visible in the written record: Quentovic and Dorestad, Rouen, Hamwic, Lundenwic.³⁶³ The presence of the Witla *emporium* implies that the Meuse was an avenue of commerce.

In Koch's brief survey, the next "phase" is the series of destructive Viking attacks on these coastal trading-places from the 830s to the 860s. From the 860s, however, he also notes the appearance of a new designation for many towns in and around the territory of present-day Belgium, that of *portus*, which in his view unequivocally denotes a sea- or river port. Maastricht, Huy, Namur, and Dinant on the Meuse are so named, as is Metz on the Moselle and Ghent, Tournai, and Valenciennes on the Scheldt.³⁶⁴ Koch further adduces some revealing detail about the layout and character of these *portus* from the example of the abbey of Stavelot, which owned certain *sedilia in portu Hoio et Deonanto* (Huy and Dinant):

Diese *sedilia* kann man sich vorstellen als die parallel zum Fluß aneinandergereihten kleinen Grundstücke, worauf die Wohn- und Vorrätshäuser der Kaufleute standen. Darum glaube ich, daß die *sedilia* in Dinant die Existenz einer Händlersiedlung daselbst bezeugen.³⁶⁵

A longitudinal layout along a single street running parallel to a shore or a riverbank with landing facilities, which is divided up into small, regular parcels for individual merchants or craftsmen, is one of the standard forms of the classic northern *emporium*, found for example at Dorestad and at Kaupang (southern Norway). Therefore, Koch's surmise that the later ninth-century *portus* on the Meuse were at least partly settlements of merchants is accurate, no doubt.

³⁶² Koch, "Kaufmannsniederlassungen zwischen Maas und Nordsee," 313 – 14.

³⁶³ See Wickham, *Framing*, 681 – 3, for a summary of these emerging trading places in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. See also discussion of the eighth- and ninth-century North Sea trading system in Section 7.1, subsections *Carolingia and England* and *Carolingia and Denmark* below.

³⁶⁴ Koch, "Kaufmannsniederlassungen zwischen Maas und Nordsee," 318 – 19.

³⁶⁵ Koch, "Kaufmannsniederlassungen zwischen Maas und Nordsee," 319 – 20.

The emergence of a network of mercantile centers along the Meuse in the later ninth century fits with the theoretical scheme that Hodges proposed in *Dark Age Economics*: two phases of long distance luxuries trade carried on via coastal *emporium* followed by a third phase (starting around the middle of the ninth century) in which the long distance trade centers were replaced by “solar central places” acting as more circumscribed, intra-regional market centers. Hodges believes that this ninth-century transition represents a conscious decision on the part of Carolingian rulers to turn away from long distance “directed trade” via the *emporium* to intra-regional development.³⁶⁶ Koch suggested a close connection between the unfolding of the *portus* and the Viking presence in Frisia and the Rhine delta.³⁶⁷ What is needed, however, is a closer analysis of the development of the Meuse region from the sixth to the earlier ninth century, and a more precise evaluation of the relationship of this region to the Rhine delta as well as the latter’s overseas connections during this same time frame.

Maastricht lies at the point where the old Roman road from Köln westwards to Tongeren, Bavay, Cambrai, and Amiens bridges the Meuse. The bridge was the most permanent feature of the place, remaining in use until the thirteenth century.³⁶⁸ On the left bank, Maastricht had a late Roman fort and two known Merovingian churches. Furthermore, the settlement exhibits “topographical continuity” from the fifth to the sixth century and shows every sign of being a thriving *vicus* in the sixth and seventh century, with habitation throughout the modern town center, stone houses, and abundant signs of craft production: ceramics, bronze, leather, bone and antler, glass.³⁶⁹

Some fifty kilometers upstream lies Huy, the next urban (or: urban-like) center. Huy also had a bridge, an early church, and suburbs on both banks of the Meuse, which

³⁶⁶ See the discussion of Hodges’ theories in Section 5.4 above.

³⁶⁷ Koch, “Kaufmannsniederlassungen zwischen Maas und Nordsee,” 321. This insight is illuminating. See discussion Section 7.3, 6.2, subsection *The Baltic system between East and West* below.

³⁶⁸ For a very clear and detailed map of fourth-century northern Gaul and the lower Rhine area, see Paul Van Ossel, *Etablissements ruraux de l’Antiquité tardive dans le nord de la Gaule* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1992), 408, Carte 1. Notably, the road paralleled the Meuse – Sambre line along a track some 10 – 20 kilometers to the north, i.e. upon the watershed between these and the Demer basin; it did not lie in the river valley of the former. For the bridge at Maastricht, see Frans Theuws, “Where is the Eighth Century in the Towns of the Meuse Valley?” in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 159.

³⁶⁹ Theuws, “Where is the Eighth Century?” 159. Theuws refers to recent excavations at both Maastricht and Namur. See also Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 3, 5, 26 – 7.

feature remains of metal-working, bone-working, and kilns for ceramics. On the strength of the latter, Verhulst admitted “functional continuity” for this site from the fifth to the eighth century and also noted the coalescence of the settlement nuclei into an unquestionably urban entity with commercial activity by the eighth century.³⁷⁰

Another twenty-five kilometers upstream from Huy lies Namur, on the point formed by the confluence of the Sambre with the Meuse. Continuing from the late Roman settlement and showing an improved waterfront on the Meuse side, Namur was a Merovingian *vicus*, with further improvements to the waterfront and evidence of an artisanal settlement with bronze, bone, and antler working in the sixth and seventh centuries.³⁷¹ Finally, Dinant, yet another twenty-five kilometers up the Meuse, is very little known between late Roman times, when a road crossed the Meuse there, and the mid-eighth century, when it is called a *castrum*.³⁷²

The archaeology suggests, thus, that the middle Meuse had a minimum of three urban or urbanizing centers in the sixth and seventh centuries with hints, at least, of commercial activity. Merovingian royal residence is known at Maastricht (Childeric II, 668 – 70) and suspected at Namur (692).³⁷³ Furthermore, all four of the above-named towns had mints and named Merovingian minters: thirteen seventh-century *monetarii* are known from Maastricht, eight in Huy, four in Namur, and six in Dinant.³⁷⁴ The moneyers and the Merovingian *tremisses*, some of which circulated or were imitated far into the delta area to the north, had long been interpreted as signs of commerce.³⁷⁵ Verhulst, however, opted to explain the minters and the coins politically—as a reflection of the expansion northwards of Pippinid influence throughout the seventh century.

³⁷⁰ Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 5 – 7, 29 – 31.

³⁷¹ Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 7; Theuws, “Where is the Eighth Century?” 155 – 6.

³⁷² Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 7, 32 – 3, 48.

³⁷³ Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 26, 32.

³⁷⁴ Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 27, 29; Theuws, “Where is the Eighth Century?” 156 – 7, 159.

³⁷⁵ Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 27 – 8. Theuws, “Where is the Eighth Century?” 153 – 5, summarizes the historiography. Whereas Rousseau (1930) argued against Pirenne in favor of Merovingian roots for the eleventh-century Meuse commercial towns and saw the Meuse as a link in a long-distance trade from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, more recently Despy and Devroey have seen the Meuse as a largely local system until the tenth century. This, generally, is also Verhulst’s conclusion in *Rise of Cities*.

Dorestad was the attraction there, and whatever long-distance commercial stimulus may have reached the middle Meuse came from the north, not from the south.³⁷⁶ In this Verhulst drew inspiration from an earlier article by Theuws, in which the latter cast sixth- and seventh-century development in the middle Meuse and surrounding areas into a strictly-held center – periphery mold, and with a strong primitivist outlook.³⁷⁷ For Theuws, mints had primarily a socio-political role:

The presence of mints near areas where elite groups control the production of non-subsistence goods or goods of extra-regional importance is no coincidence. It has been put forward by others that *monetarii* reminted strange coins (or bullion) that were not recognized or trusted by elites in another region. . . . *Thesauri* of elite groups often travelled long distances. The *monetarius* was at the node of a regional elite network and long distance exchange, but also the juncture between the two. . . . The coins were probably not used as money as we know it and only participated in a limited number of kinds of elite controlled transactions. Neither does the circulation of gold coins permit the conclusion that a market economy was functioning in Austrasia already in the 6th and 7th centuries.³⁷⁸

Following this line of interpretation, Verhulst concludes that middle Meuse economic development derived not from transiting long-distance trade but from gradual increase in exploitation on the part of the abbeys and the estates of the Frankish aristocrats in the area, which from the late seventh or eighth centuries finally generated demand for luxury imports; sure signs of commercialization come only in the ninth century, but even then the Meuse is not an international trade route.³⁷⁹ A complication in the picture arises from Theuw's later article on the eighth century, where he points to the apparent collapse and abandonment of Merovingian-era artisanal and trading quarters

³⁷⁶ Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 28 – 33. He considers, however, that the monetary activity in Maastricht and Huy stimulated urbanization (p. 30).

³⁷⁷ Frans (F. C. W. J.) Theuws, "Centre and Periphery in Northern Austrasia (6th – 8th centuries): An Archaeological Perspective," in *Medieval Archaeology in the Netherlands: Studies Presented to H. H. van Regteren Altena*, ed. H. H. van Regteren Altena, J. C. Besteman, Johannes Maria Bos, and H. A. Heidinga (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990), 41 – 69. Theuws makes of the Merovingian Franks a tribal society, wherein elites compete for control of plunder, prestige goods, and dependant labor.

³⁷⁸ Theuws, "Centre and Periphery in Northern Austrasia," 59.

³⁷⁹ Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 42 – 3, 47 – 50.

both in Maastricht and in Namur. Possibly, he says, Carolingian equivalents continued to function at these towns in the eighth century, but at sites yet unexcavated; nonetheless, there is an unmistakable break between the Roman – Merovingian topography and the post-Carolingian development at these places.³⁸⁰ At Maastricht, there appears to have been a marked decline of population at the same time as a fort was built—including the abbey of St-Servatius within its perimeter. Documents indicate that Maastricht was one of five Carolingian toll stations along the northwestern coast of the empire, but this, says Theuws, does not guarantee continuity from the earlier period.³⁸¹

Nevertheless, it is likely that the existence of the Maastricht tolling post gives a significant clue to interpretation. We might, for the sake of argument, accept that some kind of dislocation occurred in the Meuse towns—or even more generally in the Carolingian lands—in the eighth century. The Carolingian toll station and the fortified abbey on the site of the more overtly mercantile Merovingian town would be symptoms of a change in administrative and political relations, combined perhaps with a shift of productive activities out of the towns and into the countryside. In both situations, however, trade and production for the market is indicated: seen from artisanal and ship-landing activities 500 – 700, seen by documented toll-taking and fortification of a commercially strategic location in the 700 – 900 period. Moreover, the existence of the *emporium* Witla at the mouth of the Meuse, which existed at least from ca. 690 to 836, suggests strongly that the Meuse was an international route into Austrasia from the north. Indeed, the fact that Witla gets little to no attention in the Carolingian administrative documents might tend to support Henning’s argument—quite *contra* Hodges!—that the *emporia* were entrepreneurial trading sites occupying a position liminal to that of the

³⁸⁰ Theuws, “Where is the Eighth Century?” 156 – 8, 160. It is not clear to me whether Theuws still holds to the outlook on the Merovingian Meuse that he presented in “Centre and Periphery in Northern Austrasia”; that he speaks in “Eighth Century” of Maastricht having possibly been an international trade site throughout the period (p. 155) suggests that his views may have modified. Cf. also Henning, “Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm,” 10 – 11, including figs. 1 and 2, and 15 – 16, who maps Maastricht, Huy, and Namur as functioning post-Roman *civitates* with active industrial production 500 – 700, but speaks of the collapse of these sites in favor of rural and monastic production centers in the Carolingian period.

³⁸¹ Theuws, “Where is the Eighth Century?” 160.

more officially controlled trade.³⁸² Over one hundred kilometers apart, Carolingian Maastricht and Witla were dual but divergent responses to the identical impulse of Meuse-connected exchange.

It is more difficult to say, from existing evidence, whether trade moved down the Meuse from Verdun. Certainly, eastern and Mediterranean luxuries could have come by road from the Rhenish ports, especially from Köln; however, the main artery for moving goods across Europe between the Mediterranean and the North undoubtedly was the Rhine, which was a much broader and more direct highway.³⁸³ Finally, if the Meuse was less connected to the larger currents of trade in the Carolingian period than were the Seine and the Rhine then that may be because, unlike its Neustrian and Rhenish competitors, the Meuse valley had no distinct, high-value product such as the wine of the upper Seine with which it might readily enter the international market.³⁸⁴

The Rhine

From its alpine headwaters in the area around Chur to its North Sea delta, the Rhine covers twice the distance of either the Seine or the Meuse. It also formed the most direct and most traveled route for people and goods moving northwards out of Italy, both to destinations within the northwest of the Carolingian continent and to points further overseas—to Anglo Saxon England and to Scandinavia.³⁸⁵ Furthermore, the Rhine intersected with important land and water routes to both east and west. Roads led westwards into Austrasia and, beyond, into Neustria.³⁸⁶ The Moselle was a major waterway connecting Metz and Trier to the Rhine, while the Main was a major river route

³⁸² Henning, “Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm,” 27 – 31. Henning stresses that Carolingian elites found ways to take profits out of the *emporia*, but had little or nothing to do with their inception nor with their eventual survival or demise.

³⁸³ McCormick, *Origins*, 687, for a general comment on the primacy of the Rhine route for trade moving north out of Italy.

³⁸⁴ Alternatively, it might be argued, following Henri Pirenne, “Draps de Frise ou draps de Flandre?” *Vierteljahrschrift für Social- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 7 (1909): 308 – 15, that the *pallia fresonica*, which claimed international renown in the ninth century and was distributed by Frisian merchants, was in fact cloth made in Flanders by weavers following a Roman-inspired tradition of craftsmanship. Even if this were correct, however, the precise route by which the cloth entered international trade would remain uncertain.

³⁸⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 653, 687. For the northern overseas connections see discussion in Section 7.1 below.

³⁸⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 725, describes the Rhine as the major conduit of goods from Italy to west Francia.

eastwards toward Thuringia and Bohemia. Overland routes into Hesse and Westphalia struck northeastwards towards the Elbe region.³⁸⁷

The course of the Rhine itself presented a number of potential demand-centers, including the episcopal *civitates* and the Carolingian palaces: Constance, Basel, Strasburg, Speyer, Worms, Mainz with Ingelheim nearby, Köln, and the palace at Nijmegen.³⁸⁸ The economic importance of the episcopal towns along the Rhine shows up clearly in Henning's analysis: whereas the overall number of old Roman *civitates* in Francia with significant urban craft production declines from twenty-seven in the Merovingian period to nine in the Carolingian, along the Rhine the drop is only from seven to five.³⁸⁹ Near the head of the Rhine delta stood the international *emporium* of Dorestad.

Dorestad has long been recognized as a major entrepôt.³⁹⁰ Koch has discerned a non-commercial core on the site in the form of a Celto-Roman settlement plus a church and fort complex predating the commercial *wik*.³⁹¹ It seems clear, however, that Dorestad had an important commercial function by the mid-seventh century at the latest. To the extent that Dorestad exercised any kind of drawing power upon the attention of the Pippinids in northern Austrasia, as argued by Verhulst,³⁹² the struggle over possession of Dorestad between the Pippinids, or early Carolingians, and the autonomous Frisian polity in the late seventh and early eighth centuries may have had multiple motivations. Certainly, for the Frankish side, eventual success meant the vindication of political hegemony over Frisia and the extension of the Frankish ecclesiastic and administrative

³⁸⁷ On the latter, see discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and the Elbe* below.

³⁸⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 664. Wickham, *Framing*, 678, 681, emphasizes the wealth and commercial importance of Köln in particular, seeing it as a key sign both of prosperity in the Frankish heartlands and of the consolidation of Frankish political power. In general, Wickham argues for continuity of settlement and economic activity from late Roman through Merovingian to Carolingian times. However, cf. Carlrichard Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas. Studien zur Profanpogographie spätantiker Civitates vom 3. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2: *Belgica I, beide Germanien und Raetia II* (Köln: Böhlau, 1990), passim, who in almost every case sees institutional disruption in the Rhenish towns during the Merovingian period.

³⁸⁹ Henning, "Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm," 9 – 11. The carry-over sites are those of Strasburg, Worms, Mainz, Köln, and Duisburg.

³⁹⁰ Even Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 237, acknowledged this.

³⁹¹ Koch, "Kaufmannsniederlassungen zwischen Maas und Nordsee," 314 – 16.

³⁹² Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 28 – 31. For all that Verhulst refuses to ascribe commercial significance to the presence of minters along the Meuse as well as in Dorestad, this is nevertheless one of the best indices that there was a need for coin in these places at such date as the minting is attested. One likely reason for such a need is to facilitate commerce.

system northwards of the Rhine. The aspect of trade, or control over an emerging key point in the evolving North Sea exchange system, however, must also have played a role.

In the fifth century, the Frisians had expanded their territory from north of the Rhine delta southwestwards as far as the Scheldt estuary. Frankish missionaries began to access Frisia in the seventh century, though progress in converting the Frisians began only with the Anglo-Saxon Wilfred ca. 677. Meanwhile, a mint issuing *tremisses* similar to those of Maastricht is known in Dorestad from the 640s, which already implies the presence of exchange activities at this site near the southern edge of Frisia. In 687, Pippin II of Austrasia took control of Dorestad from Radbod, the pagan king of the Frisians, and held it until his death in 714. A briefly resurgent Radbod reasserted his control over Dorestad 714 – 19, until his final defeat by Charles Martell. Subsequently, in 734, Martell conquered and annexed all of Frisia up to the Lauers river in present-day northern Netherlands.³⁹³

Again, the recurrent military and political attention invested into Dorestad and the Rhine delta area suggests that it was a strategic prize of some importance, and, considering the indications of trade-related activity in Dorestad throughout the seventh century, part of its value must have derived from its commercial potential.³⁹⁴ By all accounts, Dorestad was the premier northern port of Carolingian Europe in the later eighth and earlier ninth centuries, a period spanning roughly the reigns of Charlemagne (768 – 814) and Louis the Pious (814 – 840). More closely, this assessment agrees with McCormick's scheme of "secular rhythms" in the frequency of communications 700 – 900, according to which 775 – 825 represents a peak of activity.³⁹⁵ Dorestad received honorable epithets from ninth-century writers, in phrases such as "vicus nominatissimus"

³⁹³ Despite his outdated archaeological data, the clearest and most useful short summary of the political fortunes of Frisia in this period is in Dirk Jellema, "Frisian Trade in the Dark Ages," *Speculum* 30 (1955): 16 – 17. The fundamental study of Frisians and their trading activities is Stéphane Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs frisons du haut Moyen Âge* (Lille: Presses universitaires de Lille, 1983).

³⁹⁴ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 39 – 40, makes a similar point about the attraction of Dorestad.

³⁹⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 434 – 41. The fact that the Mediterranean region and the North Sea region exhibit a similar pattern is one very strong indication that the two sides of the Carolingian continent were, in fact, linked in a larger exchange system. Cf. the similar periodization for Dorestad in Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 41 – 2.

and “vicus famosus.”³⁹⁶ More than any other place, Dorestad, along with Quentovic and St-Denis, receives the most attention in the Carolingian legal and administrative documents, being named as a primary toll-collecting post and placed under the oversight of an imperial official. In the 775 – 825 period, particularly, there is no doubt that Dorestad was a major Carolingian port, responsible for channeling the trade between the Rhine basin and the North Sea region.³⁹⁷

The site of Dorestad, situated on the Kromme Rijn east of Utrecht, occupied some sixty hectares at its peak and stretched for some 1500 meters along the left bank of that Rhine branch, with a population estimated at 1,000 – 2,000. It featured long wharves built out into the river bed, a wood-paved street parallel to the riverside, and post built longhouses as well as smaller structures serving as residences, workshops, and warehouses. The permanent inhabitants included a balanced mix of peasants, craftsmen, and traders. Altogether, both in form and function, Dorestad is a prime example of the *emporium* type of northern European settlement.³⁹⁸ It and other coastal *emporia* and *wics* in northwestern Europe also have been called “mushroom towns”—“villes champignons”³⁹⁹—because of their very rapid growth in the eighth century, seeming to spring to life out of nowhere in the minds of many earlier researchers, as well as the collapse of many of them again by the mid to late ninth century.

Like northern *emporia* in general, Dorestad featured a considerable amount of craft production on site; trades included woodworking, bone-working, leatherworking,

³⁹⁶ So quoted in Simon Coupland, “Dorestad in the Ninth Century: The Numismatic Evidence,” *Jaarboek voor Munt- en Penningkunde* 75 (1988): 5.

³⁹⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 653, refers to it as occupying the “threshold” position between Austrasia and the North. Wickham, *Framing*, 683, states unequivocally that Dorestad was “the main port for the export of Rhineland products.”

³⁹⁸ For a summary of the layout and functions of the town, both Wickham, *Framing*, 683, and McCormick, *Origins*, 653, are useful. See also the analysis of the *emporium* settlement type in Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market,” Chapter 4 passim, which focuses on Dorestad and Hamwic to identify the type. The most extensive excavation at the site of Dorestad was completed by van Es; see W. A. van Es, “Dorestad Centred,” in *Medieval Archaeology in the Netherlands: Studies Presented to H. H. van Regteren Atsma*, ed. J. C. Besteman, J. M. Bos, et al. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990), 151 – 182; and W. A. van Es and W. J. H. Verwers, *Excavations at Dorestad I: The Harbour; Hoogstraat I* (Amersfoort: Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek, 1980).

³⁹⁹ This characterization was coined by J. Dhondt, “Les problèmes de Quentovic,” in *Studi in onore Amintore Fanfani*, vol. 1, ed. Gino Barbieri, Maria Raffaella Caroselli, and Amintore Fanfani (Milan: A. Giufré, 1962), 181. Cf. McCormick, *Origins*, 653: “The emporium mushroomed out of the marshy countryside.”

weaving, and smithing in various metals. Most of the goods that moved through Dorestad were not, however, produced there but came to Dorestad from upriver: wine in barrels, several types of commercially produced Rhineland pottery, Rhineland glass, metalwork including famous Rhineland broadswords, and quernstones made of basalt quarried in the Eifel mountains.⁴⁰⁰

The construction of Dorestad, as well as the goods that were produced in it or transited through it, describe an entire regional economy. As McCormick remarks, Dorestad used “hectares of timber,” not only in buildings and wood paved streets but in the long wharves, up to 200 meters in length by the mid-ninth century, due to the constant eastward shift of the Kromme Rijn in its bed away from the original riverbank.⁴⁰¹ Much of the timber came from far upstream, in Alsace, which along with other upriver areas, 500 kilometers from Dorestad, also was the source of barrel staves made from silver fir (*abies alba*); the barrels were filled with the wine of the middle Rhine and the Moselle.⁴⁰² Alsace also exported a surplus of grain downriver.⁴⁰³

The establishment and continuous tradition of ceramics works in the Rhineland from Roman times onwards depended in part on the local availability of suitable clay plus water and firewood as, for example, in the Vorgebirge area west of Köln.⁴⁰⁴ Similarly, the production of quernstones depended on the natural occurrence of suitable stone in the Eifel mountains that cross the middle Rhine; importantly, the trade in finished as well as semi-finished quernstones demonstrates that relatively low-cost objects of quotidian use could be traded profitably down the Rhine in the eighth and ninth centuries, thus coming

⁴⁰⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 683;

⁴⁰¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 653, 700.

⁴⁰² McCormick, *Origins*, 653 – 4.

⁴⁰³ McCormick, *Origins*, 655 – 6, 699. That Charlemagne prohibited its export in times of famine signifies that the grain trade was a regular business in ordinary times. Conversely, letters from clerics begging for gifts of grain *do not* prove that this item was unavailable on the market. Grain out of the Rhine region may have moved as far east as Hamburg; see discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and the Elbe* below.

⁴⁰⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 657 – 61, on Rhine ceramics; up to some two dozen major production sites are known, with overlapping traditions of production forming a continuous sequence. More up to date is Wickham, *Framing*, 801 – 4. The major types of Rhenish ceramics found both in Francia and oversea are Mayen, Badorf, Tatinger, and Pingsdorf.

close to Wickham's theoretical requirement for a commercialized economy.⁴⁰⁵

Meanwhile, the relatively more luxury-oriented glass manufacture had been a Rhenish specialty since the second or third centuries during the Roman period. The product of the renowned Rhenish swordsmiths, in turn, depended in part on a longstanding technological tradition. In part, however, it would have been facilitated by the ongoing iron mining and smelting industries in nearby areas such as the Ardennes.⁴⁰⁶

In short, more than the other sub-regions of the Frankish heartlands of northwestern continental Europe, the Rhine in the Carolingian period represents a particularly well-developed system of production, communications, and demand. If, as Wickham points out, the volume of Mediterranean goods in all northern areas was limited, “mostly luxuries, marginal to the economy as a whole,”⁴⁰⁷ then this still does not cancel the importance of the Rhine as a route of communications between the Mediterranean, across Carolingian territory, to the countries of the North. Frankish society was rich enough to consume a steady stream of such luxuries in any case, which necessarily helped to support the exchange system as a whole. At the same time, the relatively large Rhine region produced locally a broad range of agricultural and crafts goods, ranging from low-cost bulk items such as grain and quernstones, to luxuries such as glass vessels and elite weapons, to mid-range items such as wine, cloth, and ceramics—all of which were marketable both within the region itself and northwards oversea. Finally, the Rhine system featured an expert mercantile class, identified in the sources with the ethnic label of Frisians, who plied the river system and the seas beyond. Above all, both in the written sources as well as in the archaeological data, it is the Frisian traders and the products of the Rhine that connect Carolingia with England, Scandinavia, and the greater East.

⁴⁰⁵ This point was made already by Jellema, “Frisian Trade in the Dark Ages,” 31: “This would seem to show that Frisian merchants were dealing not only in pottery, glassware, cloth, and luxury goods, but also in semi-finished heavy goods for every-day life.” For Wickham's economic theory, see discussion in Section 5.4 above.

⁴⁰⁶ Theuvs, “Centre and Periphery in Northern Austrasia,” 56 – 8, on iron production in the Ardennes in the Merovingian period; McCormick, *Origins*, 703, on iron production in the Jura mountains as well as in the lowland Rhine delta area.

⁴⁰⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 800.

6.4 Conclusion

The purpose of the present chapter has been to survey and to evaluate the communications and the economic potentials of Carolingian Europe from its Mediterranean connections in the south to its northwestern shoreline along the English Channel and the North Sea. The results have been generally positive both for production and for exchange.

Among the currently leading theoretical approaches to the economic systems of the 700 – 900 period, none any longer support the traditional idea that a primitive subsistence economy—presided over by similarly primitive political structures barely beyond the level of tribal chieftaincies—prevailed over most of Europe at this time. The debate now focuses mainly on two issues. First, there is the unsettled matter of the interrelationship of agrarian production with the stimulus of long-distance, inter-regional trade; second, there are divergent views on whether grass-roots initiative or elite, institutional direction should claim the credit for economic growth in early medieval Europe. In one sense, this construction of the question recasts an older conceptual dichotomy—that between exchange as driven by considerations of profit and market forces, on the one hand, and exchange as conditioned and constrained by non-economic, socio-cultural considerations, on the other hand.

The evidence presented throughout the preceding sections suggests that multiple systems of production and multiple modalities of exchange coexisted in and around Carolingian Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries. Both in Italy and in trans-Alpine western and west-central Europe there was evidence for sophisticated, highly productive peasant economies, which of themselves had the potential to generate demand for the circulation of trade goods. Concurrently, much of the production and distribution of surplus both north and south of the Alps was directed by large, elite organizations—abbeys, most prominently. Further, the wealth and sophistication of the elite, both clerical and secular, constituted an important market for exotic luxuries, thus supporting an international trade in such items at a far higher level than heretofore supposed.

As a whole, early medieval western Eurasia consisted of a number of interacting Worlds, namely, the Islamic, the Byzantine, the Carolingian dominated Latin Christian,

and the North European. While it may be possible to characterize some as intrinsically wealthier and economically sophisticated than others—the Caliphate, for example, might be given the highest marks on both counts—none of them can be seen as passive or isolated. Indeed, all of the above-named Worlds generated resources with which they could enter the international market, all of them generated demand for the import of various items, and all of them served also as conduits for resources in transit. Moreover, the production, demand, and transport in all major regions was sustained at a level that was far from trivial—much more than merely the supply of an elite fringe market.

Chapter 6 has focused on that part of the system which connected Carolingian western Europe with the Byzantine and Islamic worlds via the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean in the eighth and ninth centuries was a vital and functioning zone of multilateral exchange. Furthermore, the reconfigured major axis of Mediterranean communications ran from the southeastern Mediterranean up the Adriatic to Venice and continued, thence, northwestwards in a broad transcontinental corridor of routes, which connected northern Italy across the Alps with Francia and, finally, with the *emporía* on the northwestern coastlines of Carolingian Europe. This corridor, also, was far more traveled than scholarly consensus until recently had allowed.

The traffic along these routes was as diverse in character and organization as were the systems of production that fed resources into circulation. On one side, there was the highly centralized and bureaucratically regulated fiscal-mercantile system run by the Byzantine state, which controlled the Aegean and still had a considerable influence on the routes to Italy. At the same time, networks of local or private entrepreneurship operated in the Po valley and in the Tyrrhenian sea. Similarly, the traffic on the roads, rivers, and Alpine passes of western Europe involved the interaction of pilgrims, monastic business interests, the Carolingian government, and various communities of entrepreneurial traders.

Whether by design or by capacity, the Carolingian system was a compromise between government regulation of exchange and unregulated, grass-roots enterprise. Indeed, one reason that it is possible to reconstruct so much of the communications and exchange network in continental western Europe in this period is the preservation of

capitularia and *diplomae* issued by the Carolingian authorities. The regulations, exemptions, and privileges reflected in these documents reveal much of the infrastructure and organization of the exchange system. They also suggest its great and growing volume and value, and that relations within the system were dynamic and susceptible to re-negotiation.

The Mediterranean brought exotic eastern goods to the markets of Italy and Francia. Francia itself, meanwhile, was a region that produced a variety of goods with which it could enter the international marketplace. This market was, however, oriented towards the world of the North. Chapter 7 will describe how the transcontinental lines of exchange extended into the northern waters and beyond the Elbe river to the North and the East and contributed, thereby, to the completion of a larger-scale western Eurasian circuit.

Chapter 7: AD 700 – 900: The *negotiatores* and the Western Eurasian Circuit

7.0 Introduction

The transcontinental lines of exchange, discussed above in Chapter 6, extended across narrow seas to Anglo-Saxon England. They also reached, both by sea and by land, towards the vast spaces of Scandinavia and the Baltic. The connections with England continued northwestwards the main communications corridor that linked Francia over the Alps with Italy and, beyond, with the Mediterranean and the East. The Scandinavian and Baltic connection established a crucial exchange link perpendicular to that of the primary northwest-to-southeast corridor and, ultimately, an alternative, non-Mediterranean connection with the East, i.e. with Byzantium and the Caliphate. These northward connections were just as important to Carolingian Europe as were its ties to the Mediterranean. Together, the four “worlds” of Carolingian Christian Europe, the North, Byzantium, and the Caliphate comprised a large-scale communications and exchange circuit.¹

In his *Origins of the European Economy*, Michael McCormick spoke of the trading systems burgeoning in the Carolingian era and concluded, rhetorically:

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?²

As we have seen in the previous chapter, there is no sound basis for believing anything of that nature. Rather, Francia maintained lively, well-established communications both to the south—to Italy, primarily, but also to Spain—and to the north. Trans-Alpine traffic operated on a number of levels, from the movement of armies, diplomats, and elite “gifts” at one end of the spectrum, to the stream of common pilgrims and their personal purchases at the other, with several types of professional traders in between, both independent entrepreneurs and dependent agents.³ Similarly, different levels of exchange

¹ For a more detailed outline of this circuit, see Section 6.1, subsection *The geographic outline* above.

² Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 573 – 613; the quote is on p. 613.

³ For a more detailed discussion of the merchant class, see Section 7.4 below.

may be discerned in the northward flowing traffic, especially in terms of the types of goods that Neustria, Austrasia, and the Rhine system were sending to the North. In the North Sea and Baltic regions no less than on the Carolingian continent or in the Mediterranean, elite-led redistribution enterprises co-existed with local-level, capillary trade and entrepreneurial movements.

For the North in the 700 – 900 period, the documentary base is radically sparser than it is for Carolingia. Therefore, the argument concerning relations of exchange in these regions must be developed overwhelmingly on the basis of archaeological evidence. Decades of intensive work in Britain, Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Scandinavia, and the former Soviet Union have ensured, however, that this database now is sufficient to support an analysis of exchange patterns. The near absence of written materials from Scandinavia and the Baltic in this period highlight the fact that these areas operated under a socio-political system that differed greatly in terms of hierarchical organization from the systems in place in the Frankish empire, Byzantium, and the Islamic lands.⁴ It is often assumed that the lack of certain forms of elaboration in political and bureaucratic hierarchy necessarily correlates with an undeveloped system of production and exchange. To an extent, this idea of a necessary correlation between the socio-political and the economic finds embodiment in Chris Wickham's theory of the key, catalytic role that elite demand and taxation plays in the stimulation of economic growth and sophistication.⁵ However, Wickham himself has observed that northern Gaul under the Franks was a region far richer and economically sophisticated than the form of the state, with reduced forms of taxation and administration, might have suggested.⁶ He also has observed that small-scale, entrepreneurial marketing for profit occurs even in simple peasant societies.⁷

⁴ For a comparative study of early medieval socio-political systems, see Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400 – 800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2 – 150. More specifically, for Wickham's view of political development in Ireland, England, and Denmark: pp. 303 – 79.

⁵ See again the discussion of Wickham's theory in Section 5.4 above.

⁶ Wickham, *Framing*, 113.

⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 537, in the context of Danish village society: "Markets for external, commercial exchange exist, but they are marginal in most versions of the peasant mode." Joachim Henning, of course, has a much more sanguine and expansive view of the economic potential of peasant entrepreneurship; see discussion in Section 6.1, subsection *Competing theories of Carolingian production and exchange* above.

It shall be argued in the sections to follow that the societies of the North were no less active in production and exchange, and at multiple levels, than were members of the Frankish, Byzantine, and Islamic worlds. As remarked in the Conclusion of Chapter 6, all of the above-named worlds generated resources with which they could enter the international market, all of them generated demand for the import of various items, and all of them served also as conduits for resources in transit. Exchange operated under somewhat different rules in each of these worlds, but it operated nonetheless. Pointedly, the absence of advanced, bureaucratic state structures in much of the North did not preclude vital economic activity and a favorable balance in the transfer of wealth for this region.

In such a case, it becomes difficult to assign roles of “center” and “periphery” to any of the constituent worlds of the western Eurasian trading circuit. Rather, it will be most useful to look at the actual goods that circulated among these worlds, and the directions that they took. The North Sea and the Baltic comprise a system of interconnecting waterways which, in a manner similar to what the Mediterranean does for the south, not only defines the northern contours of Europe’s landmass but also represents an environmental and resource zone.⁸ The internationally marketable resources of the North have always included amber, furs, and slaves.⁹ One constant limitation for this region, at least for the eastern half of it between the Baltic sea and the Urals, has been an absence of metals except for deposits of iron.¹⁰ The accumulations of silver that start in the eighth century in archaeological finds all around the Baltic are all the more remarkable for this fact, underscoring the ability of the Northerners to gain entry to international exchange at a high level.

Traders linked this northern world back to the west—to Anglo-Saxon England and Francia. Thus, the same ports on the northwestern edge of the Carolingian continent

See also evidence for peasant entrepreneurship in early medieval Tuscany in Riccardo Francovich, “The Hinterlands of Early Medieval Towns: The Transformation of the Countryside in Tuscany,” in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 135 – 52.

⁸ For a detailed analysis of the qualities of this zone, see Section 3.1 above.

⁹ See Section 3.2 above. Trading from the Baltic region to more southern areas of Temperate Europe has been ongoing at least from the opening of the North European Bronze Age ca. 1800 BC.

¹⁰ See Section 3.1, subsection *Geology and metals*, and Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* above.

that served to export the products of Neustria and the Rhine served also to take in the reverse flow from the North—of furs, slaves and, possibly, silver. This vital, two-way trade had the attention of Carolingian diplomats and toll-takers. It also, no less than the trade to the south, constituted the sphere of operations of the Carolingian mercantile class, whose privileges are preserved in the imperial formularies.

7.1 The Northern Waters and the Way East

Regular contacts, including mercantile exchanges, between the Frankish dominated parts of northwestern Europe and other lands around the North Sea was no new phenomenon. As discussed above,¹¹ there was at least indirect Merovingian influence in Denmark in the form of prestige goods, some of which reached even as far as Middle Sweden. In addition to the flow of elite goods, the proliferation of productive sites and landing places throughout the area of greater Denmark in the fifth to seventh centuries shows that all levels of society were being drawn into increasingly lively exchange networks. Similar small-scale, unofficial trading networks apparently extended along the coasts of Frisia and on both sides of the English Channel in the sixth century. Ca. 600, it appears that the royal power started to take an interest in this trade both in England and in Francia. The seventh century, accordingly, was characterized by the development of *emporia*, particularly Quentovic and Dorestad on the continental shores and Lundenwic on the Thames.¹² These were places of exchange—including exchange of long-distance trade items—and of craft production, which also showed signs of official involvement such as mints or toll collecting.

The turn of the eighth century is marked by the foundation of two additional *emporia*: Hamwic, on the Channel coast of Wessex, and Ribe, on the west coast of Jutland in Denmark. Both places are notable for their regular layouts, as if planned following a pre-conceived, standard model.¹³ Furthermore, both are commonly assumed

¹¹ See Section 5.3, subsections *Development in Denmark and Sweden* and *Northwestern waters* above.

¹² For the existence of a *Lundenwic* in the seventh century, see Susan Kelly, “Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England,” *Early Medieval Europe* 1 (1992): 3. More discussion in subsection *Carolingia and England* below.

¹³ See again the analysis of the early medieval northern European *emporium* model in Heidi M. Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market: Emporia Trading in Western Eurasia from 500 BC to AD 1000” (Ph.D.

to have arisen under the direction of royal authority: King Ine (688 – 726), in the case of Hamwic, and an early state-level Danish power in the case of Ribe. We have, thus, a suggestion of greater involvement of the state in the sponsorship of trade in the eighth century than heretofore, and of more regulation or standardization in marketing practices. No less important is the evidence of organized mercantile activity in Denmark, which confirms that from the early eighth century onwards Scandinavia definitely is tied into the North Sea trade network, which already was tying together Francia and Anglo-Saxon England. On all sides, evidence for trade as well as for official involvement in matters of trade, both documentary and archaeological, generally is much more abundant or easily recognizable in the eighth and ninth centuries than in the sixth and seventh.

By ca. 750, a standard-model *emporium* had appeared also in Birka in Middle Sweden, extending the trade system into the heart of the Baltic sea region. Simultaneously, a trading outpost appeared on the Volkhov river—Staraja Ladoga, the earliest proto-urban site in northwestern Russia and the inception of the great eastern trade to Byzantium and the Caliphate that would emerge in the ninth century.¹⁴ Additionally, throughout the eighth century, *emporium*-like settlements were growing at intervals along the southern shores of the Baltic. By the end of the eighth century, Charlemagne had brought the eastern frontier of the Frankish empire to the Elbe, thus establishing direct landward contact with the Baltic sea region as well.

Viewed from the Frankish empire, the eighth century had brought intensification of exchange with Anglo-Saxon England and the opening of the Baltic realm both to lucrative trade and to possibilities of political and cultural interaction. The levels of involvement reached ca. 800 continued, then, throughout the ninth century.

dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2008), 150 - 203. Details on Hamwic and Ribe are on pp. 189 – 95 and 223 – 30, respectively.

¹⁴ Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market,” 231 – 44 and 269 – 84, for summaries of Birka and Staraja Ladoga, respectively. For further discussion of Ladoga, see Section 7.3, subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* below.

Carolingia and England

In terms of geology and climate, lowland England is very similar to northern France.¹⁵ It is not unreasonable, therefore, to expect that the two areas would share similar trajectories of economic development, particularly in agricultural potential and population density.¹⁶ Certainly, this was true in the Roman period, as both Gaul and Britain were densely settled, highly prosperous provinces into the third and fourth centuries.¹⁷ Wickham's analysis of Gaul has demonstrated, now, that whatever disruption had occurred in northern Gaul as a consequence of the transition from Roman to post-Roman in the fifth century had largely subsided by the sixth, and that the re-stabilized economic and political system under the Merovingians resumed growth from ca. 550 at the latest. At the most conservative estimate, there had been no more than a 50 per cent reduction in population in Gaul, leaving at least six millions, plus active commercial pottery networks and evident aristocratic wealth.¹⁸

By contrast, the prevailing view of post-Roman Britain remains that of wholesale socio-economic disruption and economic collapse.¹⁹ Aspects of this collapse, according to Wickham, included the disappearance of villas by the end of the fifth century, the near-total disappearance of urban habitation, replacement of Romano-British ceramics and building styles with incoming Anglo-Saxon varieties, and a reduction of population in lowland Britain from 3 – 4 millions in the fourth century to about one million ca. 500.²⁰ For Wickham, the key element in the collapse is the loss of state structures and socio-political hierarchy, for, according to his theory, the scope and sophistication of production and exchange are directly related to aristocratic (and state) control of the land

¹⁵ Wickham, *Framing*, 43, 47. See also discussion in Section 3.1 above.

¹⁶ One difference would be the absence of wine-production potential, as the northern limit of grape vines extended only to the middle Seine basin.

¹⁷ For the prosperity of Gaul and a northwest European trading system in the third century, see J. F. Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul: The Three Provinces, 58 BC – AD 260* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 212 – 26. See also discussion in Section 4.4 above.

¹⁸ Wickham, *Framing*, 169 – 202. See also discussion in Section 5.1 above.

¹⁹ Wickham, *Framing*, 303, characterizes the case of Roman Britain as the “most striking example. . . of a province of the empire whose Roman socio-economic structures and identity broke down, quickly and almost totally, apparently for internal reasons.”

²⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 306 – 313. Typically, estimates of “Anglo-Saxon” population in the sixth century are even lower than Wickham's. Cf., for example, Richard Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings? Rereading Early Medieval Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 2006), 11, who gives Anglo-Saxon England only 600,000 ca. AD 600.

and of the peasants who work on it.²¹ According to Wickham, Romano-British society devolved to political units of sub-county size, which alone gave the opportunity for incoming Anglo-Saxon groups to prevail politically and culturally. From the early seventh century, a process of recomposition of political order began. Records of land-grant charters as evidence of the re-consolidation of state authority and elite land-holding—of *bokland* as opposed to unchartered *folcland*—appear only ca. 670, and are a sign of the acceleration of this process in the later seventh century.²²

If we suppose that the generally accepted picture of English political devolution and subsequent recomposition in the fifth to seventh centuries may be more-or-less accurate, this still does not mean that the capacity of the early Anglo-Saxon period for production and exchange was entirely nil. It appears, rather, that—whatever its political organization—sixth-century Anglo-Saxon society supported a network of exchange routes that connected the southern and southeastern coastlines of England with the coasts of Francia and Frisia.²³ As in Denmark, Germany, and Italy, southern England also must have had peasants capable of raising their production capacities sufficiently to obtain in exchange desired objects from abroad. The fact that the kings of Kent appear to have taken some kind of control over this trade ca. 600 points not only to the advance of reconsolidation in political power around that time but also to the richness and volume of the pre-existing trade—else it would not have been worth while to try to regulate it. Moreover, with the new evidence obtained through the widespread application of metal-detectors to early Anglo-Saxon sites, it is now clear that in the seventh century considerable numbers of coins circulated everywhere in lowland England and that a hierarchical system of inland markets already connected the hinterland to the coasts.²⁴

²¹ In one aspect, the argument boils down to the consideration that aristocratic landlords will seek to increase their coercive control over peasant labor and production as opportunities to profit from the exchange of production increase, and, conversely, that the less there is of exchange, the less need there is for landlords to attempt that kind of coercive control. Wickham, *Framing*, 264 – 5.

²² Wickham, *Framing*, 313 – 25.

²³ See discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters* above.

²⁴ See the essays in Tim Pestell and Katharina Ulmschneider, eds., *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003). See also the discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters* above.

The journeys of Benedict Biscop in the later seventh century between Northumbria and Rome offer an early instance of the activation of the northwest to southeast transcontinental communications corridor and its extension across narrow seas to England. According to contemporary sources, Biscop went to Italy six times, returning each time (the sixth was ca. 679/80) loaded down with rich merchandise, including books, icons, and silken robes, at least some of which expressly was resold.²⁵ Even if Biscop may have received some of these treasures as gifts from Italian churchmen who wished to aid in the establishment of the faith in the northern mists of barbarian Britain, the wording of the sources makes clear that he regularly acquired objects via purchase.²⁶ This, in turn, implies a steady source of wealth back home in Northumbria sufficient to sustain repeated, long-distance expeditions in pursuit of exotic goods.

Another telling aspect of Benedict Biscop's activities was the construction, under his direction, of impressive stone abbey churches at Wearmouth and at another site nearby—impressive due to the departure from Irish and Anglo-Saxon traditions of building in wood and also for the work of imported Gallic craftsmen who applied advanced stone carving and decorating techniques and made glass for the windows.²⁷ Around the same time, Wilfrid, another Northumbrian churchman who had visited Rome and been inspired by what he had seen there, was building stone churches with complex plans at Hexam and Ripon, also with the help of Gallic masons. Similar building took place in seventh-century Canterbury as well.²⁸ These aspects of the Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical establishment in the seventh century point not only to cultural contacts as far as Rome and to the dissemination of the latest fashions in architectural design and craftsmanship far to the north prior to AD 700, but they also point to the wealth of England, which could construct stone churches and monasteries, fill them with treasures, hangings, icons, and books, and support persons such as Bede and many hundreds more of monks—all from the surplus of a relatively small area such as Northumbria.

²⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 621 and n. 16.

²⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 621 and n. 16.

²⁷ Charles B. McClendon, *The Origins of Medieval Architecture: Building in Europe, A.D. 600 – 900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 72 – 83, for details on the architecture and its historical context.

²⁸ McClendon, *Origins of Medieval Architecture*, 66 – 72.

The Northumbrian stone churches with their Gallic masons and glass-makers are in a way reminiscent of the situation and influence in its local region of San Vincenzo al Volturno.²⁹ Further, according to the latest evidence, Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical entities like their contemporaries in Francia were becoming involved in productive enterprises. One example is in western Mercia, where ten brine-boiling hearths with lead pans contributed to a salt production center—Saltwich, or *vicus emptorium salis*—that is documented in the late seventh and early eighth centuries and was reorganized under the Mercian king and the church of Worcester 716 – 17.³⁰ Another example is the complex at Flixborough, in northern Mercia, a planned settlement of the late seventh century whose evidence for “high-status ecclesiastical occupation” include a church, cemetery, window glass and silver styli, lead from the Peak District, and pottery from Ipswich as well as from Francia and Frisia, all known only from archaeology. Additionally, there are tools for working bone, leather, iron and other metal, and evidence for cloth production “on an industrial scale.”³¹

The spread of ecclesiastical foundations in England in the seventh century had long-term catalytic effects on the development of production and future settlement, but the sites of such foundations in turn had been conditioned very often by pre-existing opportunities of land and water communications. Many of the Alfredian *burhs* of the late ninth century, which later became towns or market centers, were preceded on site by an earlier minster with evidence for involvement in trade. In turn, many minsters had been sited on estuaries, on navigable inland waterways such as the Thames, or along the old Roman roads—a situation very much like that in Francia. As Ben Palmer observes:

It appears that the founders and later heads of some of these minsters were well aware of the trade potential created by the location of their abbeys.³²

²⁹ See discussion in Section 6.2, subsection *Volturno and Rome: alternative models* above. The excavation leader at Volturno was Richard Hodges, in whose view this major monastery in southern Italy (Campania) served as a production center for prestige goods, intended to fuel an elite gift-giving economy between the monastery and the local secular nobility, and as the fountainhead of general economic development in this area.

³⁰ John Moreland, “The Significance of Production in Eighth-Century England,” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 100 – 1.

³¹ Moreland, “Production in Eighth-Century England,” 94 – 5.

³² Ben Palmer, “The Hinterlands of Three Southern English *Emporia*: Some Common Themes,” in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003), 49 – 53. Cf. Palmer’s map of

Both Ben Palmer and John Moreland speak of a hierarchy of sites in Middle Anglo-Saxon England that appear to be connected, directly or indirectly, with sources of foreign trade goods. They also argue effectively against the now-traditional Hodgesian model, according to the original version of which an autarkic countryside languished without effective interaction with the few coastal *emporia*, whose main *raison d'être* was, then, to channel prestige goods under the supervision of emergent kings; in the more recent version, Hodges wishes to make of the *emporia* the sole catalyst of productive activity inland.³³ The emergence of the four major Anglo-Saxon *emporia* of Hamwic, London (*Lundenwic*), Ipswich (*Gipeswic*), and York (*Eofofowic*) paralleled rather than preceded evolution in the hinterland, where from the middle of the seventh century onwards four levels of active sites can be identified.³⁴

The top tier consists of sites with elite occupation plus evidence of prestige or luxury goods, much metal, coins, imported goods, and evidence for intensification of economic activity.³⁵ Palmer describes one such site, Brandon in Ely, as having a “waterfront industrial area” that included a ship landing as well as cloth dying and weaving facilities.³⁶ A second tier of sites is much like the top tier in terms of types of imports and other goods found, plus evidence of some kind of intensive production, but here there is no direct indication of elite residence on site. A third level has no elite presence or even exceptional production, but still shows imported or commercially produced objects. The fourth level is that of ordinary peasant households, largely

“productive” and trading sites and Roman roads (p. 49, Fig. 5.1) with the map of pre-1750 navigable waterways in England (p. 52, Fig. 5.2). The Severn and Avon, the Humber and Trent, a set of rivers connecting to the Wash, and the Thames represent four well-articulated and deeply penetrating inland waterway systems. For the argument regarding the situation of Frankish abbeys on lines of communication, see Stéphane Lebecq, “The Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange of the Frankish World between the Seventh and the Beginning of the Ninth Centuries,” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 121 – 48, and the discussion in Section 6.4, subsection *The role of the abbeys* above.

³³ See the résumé and rebuttal of Hodges in Moreland, “Production in Eighth-century England,” 69 – 81.

³⁴ Moreland, “Production in Eighth-Century England,” 81 – 7, connects the emergence of new “productive” sites in the later seventh century with the long-noted transposition of settlements known as the Middle Saxon Shuffle. The shift entailed not only a change in the sites of settlements but also in the techniques of building and in burial practices—old cemeteries abandoned for new ones near churches. All speaks for a profound cultural and economic change that set in ca. 650.

³⁵ Moreland, “Production in Eighth-Century England,” 87 – 91, with a long list of sites and their attributes. Also Palmer, “Hinterlands,” 53.

³⁶ Palmer, “Hinterlands,” 54.

invisible in the record but supporting or enabling the existence and functioning of the other three.³⁷

The integration of these four levels of productive sites, and of the hinterland as a whole with the *emporia*, is demonstrated by three interrelated phenomena. First, there is the very widespread occurrence, now visible due to the metal-detecting efforts, of *sceatta* coinage on all types of sites throughout lowland England, plus about 20 per cent Frisian and Frankish issues from the region of the Rhine delta.³⁸ As Moreland remarks, communications between the materially rich sites were “mediated (at least partially) through the *sceatta* coinage.”³⁹

Second, the inland communications system of waterways and roads, which appears to have determined the placement and subsequent flourishing of many hinterland sites, served as an effective network for the distribution both of foreign imports and of domestic commercial products. The most outstanding of the latter in this period was the Ipswich ware, the first post-Roman wheel-made pottery in England, which had dense distribution throughout East Anglia and was found also on many sites in Mercia and Kent.⁴⁰ Even more telling than the inland distribution of Ipswich and various foreign wares is the traffic in relatively low-cost bulk items. Specifically, basalt quernstones were imported from the Rhineland, finished at *emporia* such as London, and distributed widely throughout the hinterland. This, according to Palmer, reflects not only the hierarchical nature of the distribution system but also the high volume of the trade, which

³⁷ Moreland, “Production in Eighth-Century England,” 96, with a summary of the levels. Also Palmer, “Hinterlands,” 54 – 5.

³⁸ See the statistics in Mark Blackburn, “‘Productive’ Sites and the Pattern of Coin Loss in England, 600 – 1180”; and Michael Metcalf, “Variations in the Composition of the Currency at Different Places in England,” both in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003), 20 – 36 and 37 – 47, respectively. The geographic distribution of single finds concentrates *sceattas* above all in Kent and London, with East Anglia close behind. Chronologically, there is a steep rise in coinage in the later seventh century, a marked peak throughout the first half of the eighth, and then a considerable drop again in the second half of the eighth.

³⁹ Moreland, “Production in Eighth-Century England,” 92.

⁴⁰ Helena Hamerow, “Agrarian Production and the *emporia* of Mid Saxon England, ca. AD 650 – 850,” in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 224 – 7, including distribution map Fig. 5 (p. 227).

alone could make commerce in such utilitarian objects profitable.⁴¹ In addition, imported emmer wheat, also not seen in Britain since Roman times, has been found at an otherwise undistinguished landing place (Lake End Road) on the upper Thames and elsewhere along the Thames and in East Anglia, signifying an overseas grain trade.⁴²

Finally, the same inland communications system of waterways and roads that brought imported and commercial goods into the hinterland took hinterland products back out to the interregional interface points at the *emporium*. It is clear from the several studies cited above that Middle Anglo-Saxon England was highly productive, whether in agricultural (grain, meat, wool), crafts (weaving, metal working), or industrial (salt, iron, lead) production, with variation in specialization and emphasis from site to site. Significantly, just like distribution reached deeply into the lower levels of the site hierarchy, the counter stream of production flowed upwards into the *emporium*. The provisioning of the *emporium*, whose populations ranged from some 1,000 – 1,500 at York, to 2 – 3,000 at Hamwic and Ipswich, and to some 8,500 – 13,700 at London, was itself a major enterprise, involving above all the delivery of beef. The evidence for deliveries of beef to the *emporium* matches evidence for growing specialization in cattle pasturing at various sites.⁴³ Furthermore, as Palmer argues, the English countryside was mobilized for intensification of production not only in agricultural products but also in crafts output; his analysis is worth quoting in full:

While the *emporium* have been touted as production centers, none of the household units at the *wics* would have looked out of place in the countryside, and production at the *emporium*, although diverse, does not seem to have been on a scale even close to the amount needed to support the trade which appears to have passed through them. Given the ubiquity of weaving evidence at rural sites, it would be hard to argue that many of the textiles reaching the *emporium* were not already in a finished state. Early sceattas associated with weaving debris at

⁴¹ Palmer, “Hinterlands,” 56. The distribution of quernstones in England also confirms the capacity of the Frankish economy to generate surpluses for the market. See discussion in Section 6.4, especially subsection *The Rhine* above.

⁴² Palmer, “Hinterlands,” 56.

⁴³ Hamerow, “Agrarian Production and the *emporium*,” *passim*. Incidentally, the population estimates place Middle Saxon London in the same league, size wise, with the average Gallic *civitas*-capitals of the High Imperial period.

Shakenoak on the Upper Thames. . . and lava querns and Ipswich ware found in weaving sheds at West Stow. . . may support this.⁴⁴

There is growing evidence, thus, for capillary trade that reached deeply into the socio-economic matrix of Anglo-Saxon society ca. 700. As presented, the analysis makes no explicit claim, one way or the other, regarding elite management vs. private entrepreneurship in the organization and management of the system.⁴⁵ Trade goods and evidence for intensified production are found at elite sites as well as at sites where elite presence cannot be directly demonstrated, and no doubt the system combined both kinds of initiatives.

Interestingly, the major exception to the picture of mixed development elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon England is the situation of Hamwic in Wessex. Wessex shows significantly fewer “productive” sites than the other regions, and very few imported goods in the hinterland, which may reflect the fact that this southern area of England is not well served by penetrating, navigable waterways. Therefore, due to the absence of spontaneously evolving inland trade, unlike in the other major areas, in Wessex the establishment of international trade on a higher level required royal intervention. It is notable that the *emporium* at Hamwic was founded around the same time that Wessex as a whole was organized economically around a system of royal manors, some of which appear to have funneled foodstuffs to the *wic* while others supplied iron; the local *sceatta* coinage also circulated primarily within the *wic* itself, and only sparsely in the hinterland. In this particular case only, Hodges’ model of *emporia* as royal creations appears to fit, but here also, exceptionally, the site failed to survive changing conditions in the ninth century because the artificial foundation had no organic inland trade system behind it. Ironically, it is Hamwic that has become “the type site for the English *emporia*.”⁴⁶ Nevertheless, even though the political and economic organization of Wessex and its *emporium* differed somewhat from other English areas, it is clear that the Wessex

⁴⁴ Palmer, “Hinterlands,” 55.

⁴⁵ Nevertheless, both Moreland, “Production in Eighth-Century England,” 103, and Palmer, “Hinterlands,” 50 – 4, highlight the prominence of ecclesiastic elites in rural settlement and development ca. 700.

⁴⁶ This is the analysis from Palmer, “Hinterlands,” 58 – 60. The quote is on p. 60. Hamwic still may be regarded as “typical” in terms of its standard layout and in the trade and craft production functions that it performed.

countryside was well peopled and prosperous during this period, and in this it matches the other areas.⁴⁷

Altogether, the archaeological evidence shows Anglo-Saxon England ca. 700 as a credible trading partner for Francia; the reality is confirmed by finds of continental products such as ceramics and quernstones.⁴⁸ The early eighth century also brings documentary evidence for relationships of exchange between the two areas. A *diploma* written for St-Denis in 709/10 is the first continental source explicitly to mention “Saxon” traders, here in the context of visitors to the abbey’s annual October fair.⁴⁹ In 720, the aristocratic Anglo-Saxon pilgrim Willibald started his long trek to Jerusalem by crossing from the recently founded Hamwic to Rouen, where he found a market in progress.⁵⁰

Much more remarkably, a study by Susan Kelly has turned up ten *diplomae* of the early to mid-eighth century, issued by English kings, which grant to several ecclesiastical establishments the privilege of toll exemption for specified numbers of ships at certain named ports.⁵¹ Seven of the ten extant documents were signed by King Æthelbald of Mercia (716 – 57), one is by Offa of Mercia (757 – 96), and two by Eadberht of Kent (regnal years unknown). Five of the surviving privileges went to abbesses of the dynastically well-connected Minster-in-Thamet, two for Bishop Ingwald of London (716 – 45), and one each to the clerical community in Worcester, Rochester, and Reculver. One *diploma* by Aethelbald, confirmed later by Offa, granted one ship of Minster-in-Thamet toll exemption throughout the Mercian realm. In all other cases, the exemption was for one or two ships specifically at the Mercian controlled port of London, at the port of Sarre, and at Fordwich (the latter two in Kent, on the then-navigable Wantsum

⁴⁷ See the interesting analysis of population and productive capacity in Wessex in relation to the (low) burden of royal tribute demanded under the Laws of Ine, in Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade AD 600 – 1000* (London: Duckworth, 1982), 135 – 8.

⁴⁸ The evidence today goes far beyond what was available three decades ago. Cf. Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 44 – 5: “The Hamwih activity, as well as these other concentrated coin finds, suggest some formidable mobilization of the Saxon economy in response to a late Merovingian commercial network extending from northern France.”

⁴⁹ *MGH DM* no. 77 (pp. 68 – 9): Childebert III for St-Denis, 709/10.

⁵⁰ ‘Ibi fuit mercimonia.’ Reported in McCormick, *Origins*, 129, 131.

⁵¹ Kelly, “Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England,” 3 – 28. The list of the ten documents is on pp. 4 – 6.

channel). Kelly points out that the list of recipients and ports sketches the outlines of the main trade route from the continent, which followed along the channels and estuaries of the north coast of Kent en route to the Thames and London.⁵²

Altogether, the details in these few documents reveal much about trade and elite involvement in trade in England in the eighth century. The involvement in trade of abbeys on the Kentish coast is quite clear.⁵³ Minster-in-Thanel received the remission of half-toll at London on a second ship that it was buying from a Frank, Leubcus. Eadberht gave Minster-in-Thanel toll remission (at Sarre and Folkwich) for yet a third ship that the abbey itself was constructing, but on the condition of pre-emption rights over the merchandise. The grant of two ships toll-free at London to the bishop of Worcester illustrates the interest in trade of hinterland centers. Moreover, the wording in the earliest of these charters, by Æthelbald ca. 716 – 17, implies that it was not the first of its kind. Indeed, Kelly believes that toll taking had started already in the late seventh century. In England, tolls were collected by a reeve, or royal *prefectus*, which may have been the equivalent of the *procuratores* in charge at Frankish *emporium*. In general, while Kelly believes that the Anglo-Saxon bureaucracy in the eighth century must have been less sophisticated than that in Francia, she points out the many parallels between the English and Frankish practice in regulation of trade.⁵⁴

If eighth-century Anglo-Saxon England was more fragmented politically than the consolidated Carolingian state along the southern shores of the Channel, then this condition seems not to have impeded in any way the ability of the English to serve as lively and important trading partners for the Frankish side. In fact, the Anglo-Saxon

⁵² Kelly, “Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England,” 4 – 11. Fordwich was then the port for Canterbury, Sarre, at the double tide mark on the Wantsum channel probably a toll station, and Rochester was on the Medway estuary, which was a route into the Kentish interior.

⁵³ Minster-in-Thanel owned multiple assets including arable, marshes for cattle and sheep, Weald woods for pigs, also Weald iron, and there were salt pans on the Wantsum channel. Kelly writes: “It is possible that the Minster estates were producing surpluses of various commodities, such as salt or wool, which could be sold or bartered locally or transported to the London emporium, but firm evidence is lacking. On a speculative plane, it may even have been the case that Minster ships were travelling across the Channel to Quentovic and other Continental ports, there to acquire merchandise both for the community and for further transport to London.” Kelly, “Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England,” 15 – 16.

⁵⁴ Kelly, “Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England,” 16 – 25. In general, Kelly takes a remarkably progressive, pro-mercantile view of the evidence, which, at the time she was writing, was far less impressive than it has become subsequently.

kingdoms of the eighth century seem to have had considerable ability to organize their own territories even in the absence of island-wide political unity; therefore, their capacity to regulate and participate in trade should not be surprising.⁵⁵ Indeed, eighth-century England shows a remarkable range of parallels in socio-economic development with its neighbors to the south.

The archaeological record shows that coins, ceramics, quernstones, and grain were shipped from the continent to England. Wine, surely, should be added to this list, even without direct material evidence. In return, it may be that the greatest commodity in the return flow was English made cloth. The diplomatic exchange in 796 between Charlemagne and Offa of Mercia mentioned several trade-related issues, among which was Charlemagne's complaint that the cloaks or *segi* that the English were delivering had been shortened of late, i.e. were no longer conforming to the customary and expected measure of cloth. The implication is that the trade in finished, standardized items of clothing had been regular and long-established.⁵⁶ Thus, the bulk trade flowed both ways, and it kept the ports and toll stations busy on both sides of the narrow seas. In the eighth century, Anglo-Saxon England was very much an extension, in terms of commercial traffic, of the trans-continental corridor of communications which, in the other direction, connected the Frankish heartlands with Italy.

Carolingia and Denmark

To an extent, to separate Neustrian and Rhenish trade with England from the trade to Denmark and the Baltic is an artificiality. Especially, this is so from the point of view of the infrastructure of trade—the *emporium*, whose basic layout and function were remarkably standardized, wherever they were located. The goods going northwards also were more or less the same, including ceramics, quernstones, and wine. To an extent, then, whether it is Frankish or Frisian traders crossing from the ports of Neustria and the

⁵⁵ The organization of Wessex ca. 700 was discussed above. In contemporary Mercia, it appears that the kings built a network of fortified towns or central places and instituted an obligation to regular military service on the part of the citizenry. On this, see Steven Bassett, "Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia," *Early Medieval Europe* 15 (2007): 53 – 85.

⁵⁶ Mentioned in McCormick, *Origins*, 799 n. 14 and 703. The exchange between the two kings was mediated through Alcuin *Epistolae* 100.

Rhine delta to England or Frisians following the coast to Denmark, both streams were parts of an integrated North Sea trade.

Despite the ties of international trade, which from the founding of Ribe early in the eighth century connected all of the coastlines of the North Sea, Carolingian relations with Denmark and the Baltic beyond were significantly different than Carolingian relations with England. Eighth-century Anglo-Saxon England, I am arguing, was a society economically and culturally similar, broadly speaking, to Francia, showing many of the same institutions and patterns of development. Denmark and many other areas in Scandinavia and the Baltic were highly productive, like England was. The pattern of development in Scandinavia and the Baltic was, however, quite different than in the case of England, not least because nowhere in the North during the eighth and ninth century did the Christian church enjoy the kind of institutional presence and mobilizing function as it did in England and in continental northwestern Europe. Moreover, while Carolingian relations with the Anglo-Saxons were invariably peaceful, the Danes and other Vikings in the ninth century mounted a significant armed encroachment upon the North Sea trading system and the coastlines of both the British Isles and the Frankish empire. Neither the cultural differences nor the military and political conflicts prevented ongoing trade, which was important to both sides. Nevertheless, the Franks had to deal differently with the Danes than they dealt with the English.

The key to the North Sea system as a whole and to Carolingian entry into this system is the situation and activities of Frisia and the Frisians in the fifth to ninth centuries.⁵⁷ Even in the fifth and sixth centuries, communications flowed along the coasts of northwestern Germany and the Netherlands between Jutland in the east and Frisia, Francia, and England in the west.⁵⁸ The centrality of Frisia in a northern exchange network is suggested further by the large number of gold coins found in this area in the

⁵⁷ For an introduction to the topic, see the early, brief, but very useful article by Dirk Jellema, "Frisian Trade in the Dark Ages," *Speculum* 30 (1955): 15 – 36. The later, much more exhaustive, and still fundamental work on the subject of Frisians is Stéphane Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons du haut Moyen Âge* (Lille: Presses universitaires de Lille, 1983).

⁵⁸ See again the discussion on this point in Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters* above.

sixth century, as well as the concentrations of early *sceattas* in the later seventh century.⁵⁹ Further, the rising fortunes of Frisia in the early post-Roman period are reflected in the apparent expansion of Frisian control from their core area in the northern Netherlands (the modern provinces of Friesland and Groningen) southwestwards into the Rhine delta and southwards into the Ijssel river basin.⁶⁰ Lebecq, however, minimizes the ethnic aspect of Frisian identity, focusing instead on the close involvement of the Frisians in the Anglo-Saxon migration and settlement of England and the close linguistic ties among all of these west-Germanic North Sea peoples.⁶¹ As Jellema sums it up, similarly:

By around 500 a “Friso-Anglian” people controlled the North Sea coastlands of Europe. They also gained control of the Rhine mouths. These Frisians must have played a large part in the “North Sea” culture which bound together the North Sea coastal regions, and they also served as middlemen for contacts between the North and the Merovingian realm.⁶²

For Lebecq, part of the explanation for Frisian primacy in the commercial evolution of northwestern Europe is ecological and geographic. The core area of Frisian identity and population density was not in the sandy, wooded inland areas of today’s eastern Netherlands but on the borders of the sea. There, along the shores of the numerous lagoons, inlets, and channels—much more numerous and penetrating than they are today—they built habitations on artificial mounds, *terpen*, from which they exploited the surrounding salt-meadows, ideally suited for intensive stock raising. Having a

⁵⁹ On the sixth-century gold, see Klavs Randsborg, “The Migration Period: Model History and Treasure,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 84 and Fig. 6 on p. 74. For gold *tremisses* and silver *sceattas* of the seventh century and later, see Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 50 – 60. Lebecq, explicitly *contra* Grierson, connects coins with merchants and mercantile activity (pp. 49 – 50). Jellema, “Frisian Trade in the Dark Ages,” 23, adds the details that a Frisian hoard of ca. 675 contained coins minted in Marseille and that *sceattas* were minted in Marseille specifically for trade to the north. Generally, according to Jellema, the distribution and mutual influences of Merovingian, Frisian, and Anglo-Saxon coins of the seventh and early eighth centuries strongly suggest ties of commerce among these areas.

⁶⁰ On the formation of the early medieval “Grande Frise,” see in detail Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 101 – 10. The southwestern boundary of their area apparently was the *Sincfal* or the southern shore of today’s *De Honte* or Western Scheldt estuary (Zeeland). In the northeast, they extended along the coast to the Weser.

⁶¹ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 106 – 9. The linguistic closeness of the Frisians and the Anglo-Saxons contributed also to the success of Anglo-Saxon missionary efforts in Frisia starting from the late seventh century (p. 115).

⁶² Jellema, “Frisian Trade in the Dark Ages,” 22 – 4. The quote is on p. 24.

surplus of meat and dairy products and ready access to navigation, but lacking in grain, the terp-dwellers developed water-bourn ties of exchange with grain producing areas to their south.⁶³ Thus was Frisian trade and expansion born from a need to redress a local imbalance in the staple goods of everyday existence.⁶⁴ The terp-dwellers not only produced meat and dairy products, but they also engaged intensively in fishing, produced hides, leather, and parchment from the skins of their animals, and wove cloth from the wool of sheep raised on the salt-meadows. The latter, according to Lebecq, included the fine *pallia Fresonica* mentioned in the Carolingian sources.⁶⁵

Over time, the evolution of Frisian trade, based in the first instance on their ability to produce a number of goods locally that could be marketed to other areas, led to the emergence of *Handelsterpen*—mound settlements on channels and estuaries that were dedicated not to primary production but to functioning as trade centers. The model for this type of Frisian settlement is the terp that was excavated at Emden and whose origins date to the later eighth century. It comprised a single street parallel to the water side some 250 m in length, lined with small houses suitable for workshops or stores (unlike the much larger, aisled longhouses of the agricultural terps), and with a small wooden church at each end. The settlement was only 50 – 70 meters deep. It reflects, therefore, the standard configuration of a northern European commercial center of the early medieval period, whether it be a later ninth-century Meuse *portus* as described by Koch

⁶³ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 119 – 28, including a geologic map of the Netherlands (p. 121, Fig. 24), a map of the early medieval channels and terps in western Friesland province (p. 122, Fig. 25), and a map of the distribution of areas thickly strewn with terp-villages in Friesland and Groningen provinces, in coastal Ostfriesland and Niedersachsen, and along the west coast of Schleswig (p. 127, Figs. 27 and 28). These areas had unusually high population densities. Estimates ca. 900 for the terp areas of Friesland and Groningen are 30,000 and 12,500 with densities of up to 20/km² and 12/km², respectively (p. 125).

⁶⁴ From its very inception, then, Frisian trade would seem to satisfy Wickham's *sine qua non* for a commercialized economy: sub-regional specialization in and marketing of bulk staple goods. See the discussion of Wickham's theoretical stance in Section 5.4 above. Cf. also C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and economic Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 118 – 9 and Fig 33, who postulates a similar trade in the Roman period between the grain-producing areas of northern Gaul and the trans-*limes* North Sea coastal area of terps or wurts such as Feddersen Wierde. Though the latter site flourished before the early medieval period, it has been most thoroughly studied and can serve as a type-model for later terp villages.

⁶⁵ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 129 – 34. This directly contradicts the views of Henri Pirenne, "Draps de Frise ou draps de Flandre?" *Vierteljahrschrift für Social- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 7 (1909): 308 – 15, who was sure that the "Germanic" Frisians were capable of making only primitive homespun, and that the makers of the *pallia Fresonica* were, in fact, Roman-trained Flemmings.

at Huy and Dinant,⁶⁶ or the extensive landing place of Lundeberg that served the elite center of Gudme in Denmark in the third to sixth centuries,⁶⁷ or Viking-age Kaupang in southern Norway,⁶⁸ or the top-level *emporium* of Dorestad itself.⁶⁹ The Frisian trade centers both in the north and in the Rhine Delta area formed a dense, hierarchically structured network of exchange. As in contemporary lowland England, the movement was two-way, with the products of Frisian farming, fishing, and crafts villages reaching external markets and external products filtering back down into the local villages. Also, as in England, economic circulation is substantiated by the ubiquitous incidence of coins, both single finds and hoards, on practically every Frisian site from this period, from the *emporium* to the *Handelsterpen* to the ordinary rural villages.⁷⁰

In effect, the Frisian merchant starts out as a typical autonomous, entrepreneurial peasant of the Henning model, practicing an intensive agriculture generically similar to that in other northwest and west central European areas from Denmark to Swabia and from Hesse to Neustria. This economic model has been adapted in the terp villages to the specific environmental conditions of the low-lying North Sea coastal zone, the imbalances of which, perhaps, made the Frisians more disposed to seek external exchange opportunities than did other peasant communities. Additionally, the coastal environment forced the Frisians, more so than most other peoples, to become expert boatmen, and the special configuration of the southern shores of the North Sea and of the Rhine delta offered more amenable, far-reaching routes for navigation than did most other areas.

Lebecq credits the Frisians with the development of the forerunners of both the hulk and the cog ship-types, which became the dominant carriers of northern European

⁶⁶ Anton C.-F. Koch, "Phasen in der Entstehung von Kaufmannsniederlassungen zwischen Maas und Nordsee in der Karolingerzeit," in *Landschaft und Geschichte: Festschrift für Franz Petri zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 22. februar 1986*, ed. Georg Droege, Peter Schöller, Rudolf Schützeichel, und Matthias Zender (Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid, 1970), 319 - 20. See discussion in Section 6.4, subsection *The Meuse* above.

⁶⁷ See discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* above.

⁶⁸ See discussion in Section 7.2 below.

⁶⁹ For details on the site and layout of Dorestad, see the discussion in Section 6.4, subsection *The Rhine* above.

⁷⁰ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 139 – 62, 249 – 50, for the discussion of Frisian ports and trade hierarchies and for the deep penetration of coinage, respectively.

trade in the later medieval period.⁷¹ Both of these Frisian ship types had relatively small cargo capacities (10 – 20 tonnes) and hulls that could easily be beached upon the sandy North Sea shores and estuaries. By the end of the eighth century, these ships were propelled primarily by sail, where practicable, though they also were rowed, poled, and towed at need, the latter especially when moving up the larger rivers, such as the Rhine. Lebecq sees a synergy between the improvement in the means of transport and the unfolding of the Frisian trading system, with sail power enabling merchants to take more direct routes across open seas.⁷²

Likewise, Lebecq sees the relatively protected waters around Frisia as an ideal laboratory for long-distance sailing development. The later Zuider Zee (or: Ijsselmeer, at present, since completion of the enclosing dam before World War II) was then a smaller, freshwater lake, the Aelmere. In the south, this lake connected to Utrecht and Dorestad via the Vecht river and the Crooked Rhine. In the north, it connected to the Waddenzee via the channel of the Vlie river. The string of sandy barrier islands that protect the Waddenzee from the open North Sea continue eastwards beyond the Ems estuary to the mouth of the Weser, providing an ideal in-shore channel for exploration, colonization, and trade towards Denmark. From the Jade Bay eastwards, one might stay in-shore of the islands of Scharnhorn and Neuwerk and either enter into or cross the broad mouths of the Weser and Elbe estuaries, or one might strike more boldly across the Helgoland Bay to the northeast to reach the islands and channels off the west coasts of Schleswig and southern Jutland.⁷³ The in-shore channels available for much of the way to Denmark made sailing this route less perilous than it would have been if the entire way were exposed directly to North Sea storms, and allowed the Frisians to gain experience with lowered risks.

Meanwhile, in the southwest of early medieval Greater Frisia, the Lek and the Waal branches of the Rhine as well as the Meuse and the Scheldt all debouched into a

⁷¹ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 165 – 83. Evidence comes both from archaeologically recovered wrecks and from images on northern silver coinage. Lebecq relies extensively on the research of Detlev Ellmers, *Frühmittelalterliche Handelsschiffahrt in Mittel- und Nordeuropa* (Neumünster: Wachholz, 1972).

⁷² Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 176 – 80, 218 – 21, on sails and towing, respectively.

⁷³ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 185 – 7, 194 – 5, and map Fig. 44 on p. 194.

broad gulf that occupied most of the surface area of present-day Zeeland. This gulf, like the Waddenzee, was protected from the North Sea proper by a string of barrier islands, or “dune islands,” as Lebecq calls them. Lagoons, protected by barrier islands and reaching inland to St-Omer and far up the Iser, continued westwards almost to Cap Gris Nez at the Straits of Dover. Beyond the straits, a further string of barrier islands then created a sheltered channel south of Boulogne to the mouth of the Somme, so that from Frisia the site of Quentovic on the Canche could be reached almost entirely by following these relatively safe, in-shore routes.⁷⁴

In sum, the full development of the Frisian long-distance trading network during the eighth century converged chronologically with a significant improvement in navigation technology in the northern waters, including the standard application, now, of wind power, which encouraged the regular sailing of direct routes across open seas as well as the more protected in-shore routes. It converged also with the growth and multiplication of *emporia* sites in the North Sea region and with the progress in the area of the Netherlands of Christianization and incorporation within the Frankish state system. For our purposes, it is important to note that missionary adventurism and military expansion, both in Frisia and in the North Sea region generally, followed in the paths of pre-existing exchange routes.⁷⁵

The pre-existence of lines of communication to the northeast is confirmed in the story of the missionary St. Willibrord. At some point between 695 and 714, Willibrord, who had the support of Pippin II of Austrasia, traveled to Denmark and attempted to proselytize the savage pagan king, “Ongendus.” Though he was cordially received, his preaching had no effect. On the return journey, he got into some trouble on an island, “Fositeland,” said to be on the boundary between the Danes and the Frisians, when he polluted a pagan sacred spring and slaughtered some pagan sacred cattle. On another,

⁷⁴ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 185 – 7, 203, and map Fig. 48 on pp. 200 – 1. Cf. the evidence regarding in-shore navigation along the north coast of Kent, including the Wantsum channel, in the eighth century. Navigation along the coasts of southeastern England appears, thus, to be responding to similar considerations as in Frisia. See discussion in subsection *Carolingia and England* above.

⁷⁵ Jellema, “Frisian Trade in the Dark Ages,” 18 – 20. Jellema recognized that Anglo-Frisian traders had maintained northeastward contacts throughout the sixth and seventh centuries, a fact that is demonstrated by the presence of Merovingian pottery along the North Sea coast as far as Denmark.

undatable missionary excursion, Willibrord came to “Walichrum” and smashed a pagan idol there.⁷⁶

Willibrord’s missionary exploits illuminate some important aspects of North Sea conditions ca. AD 700. First, the cordial reception that Willibrord got at the court of the reputedly savage Danish king suggests that foreigners could expect to be welcomed in the area of “Denmark,” which in turn suggests a local society that was no stranger to such contact with foreigners. Clearly, many of the western foreigners frequenting Denmark ca. 700 would have been Frisians, who by then were well along in their evolution towards the role of northwestern Europe’s primary long-distance traders. As there is no hint that Willibrord needed special shipping resources in order to make his journey to Denmark, it is probably correct to surmise that he was carried there and back by a Frisian ship and crew—who, normally, would be engaged in trade rather than in the ferrying of saints. In other words, the same argument can be made here for the North Sea that Michael McCormick makes for the Mediterranean: the voyages of saints and pilgrims indicate the existence of maritime assets on which religious travelers could find passage but whose regular business typically included many other kinds of transport, both of goods and of people.⁷⁷

If missionaries like St. Willibrord were not pioneers of new sailing routes, they certainly were at the forefront of a significant cultural shift in the North Sea region that was ongoing throughout the eighth century. Willibrord’s *vita* provides at least three significant data on the cultural position ca. 700. In addition to the Danish king, who is uninterested in the Christian message, we find pagan sacral institutions on the island of “Fositeland,” and a pagan shrine at “Walichrum”—the latter apparently a site of some importance, as Willibrord made it the seat of his mission after he threw down the pagan idol. The presence of pagan religious institutions along both the eastern and the western routes from Frisia is analogous to later Christian shrines that gave spiritual comfort to

⁷⁶ Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, 9 – 11 and 14, for the Denmark – Fositeland and the Walichrum episodes, respectively.

⁷⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 270 – 7. McCormick stresses that the “social profile” of Mediterranean travelers is heavily skewed in favor of elite persons—clerics and diplomats—because of the nature of our sources. The same is the case in regard to accounts of travel in the northwestern waters. Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 188 – 92, 204 – 5, draws on a number of accounts of elite voyages, clerical and secular, to inform his view of Frisian sailing methods.

long-distance travelers on these routes, and it reinforces the idea that these already were busy mercantile corridors at the time of Willibrord's mission. "Walichrum" doubtless refers to the *emporium* site of Domburg on the strand of Walcheren island. Situated on one of the "dune islands" that separated the gulf of Zeeland from the open sea, Domburg served as the entrepôt between the river mouths of the Scheldt, Meuse, Waal, and Lek on the east and routes to East Anglia, the Thames, Kent, and both sides of the Channel to the west.⁷⁸ The *emporium* of Domburg continued as an important exchange place until 837, when, in the wake of a Viking attack, a large number of residents are said to have relocated eastwards to Dorestad.⁷⁹

Willibrord's success in overthrowing paganism and establishing himself on the western edge of the gulf of Zeeland was part of a lengthy transitional period in the advance of Frankish power into the Rhine delta area from the south. Austrasia's secure forepost to the north throughout the seventh century clearly was at Maastricht.⁸⁰ The Franks did not take definitive control of Utrecht and Dorestad until the death of the pagan Frisian king, Radbod (689 – 719), and Charles Martell's successful invasion of Kennemerland or southern Holland in 715 – 19.⁸¹ In 734, Charles Martell took a fleet into the northern heartland of Frisia, killed the last independent Frisian king, and destroyed pagan infrastructure. Nevertheless, northern Frisia remained a culturally contested area throughout the later eighth century, as evidenced by the martyrdom of St.

⁷⁸ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 141 – 4, and map Fig. 31 on p. 143. The complex beach site includes a Roman settlement of the first to second centuries with a putative shrine to the northern goddess, Nehalennia. This is followed by the early medieval *emporium*, coin dated from ca. 600 to the mid-ninth century. Lebecq points out that contemporary sources never use the terms *emporium*, *vicus*, or *portus* for this site (p. 142), though the archaeological evidence and its geographical situation clearly indicate its function as an *emporium* in the sense that modern English-language scholarship uses the term; Lebecq uses the term *comptoir* (p. 144). Archaeologically, with a single street paralleling the beach, it has the appearance of a typical *wic* settlement. Finally, there was a Viking settlement on this beach in the later ninth century.

⁷⁹ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 142, with sources.

⁸⁰ See discussion in Section 6.4, subsection *The Meuse* above. It is unclear how far secure Frankish control extended northwards down the Rhine. Köln lay firmly within the Frankish world, but Frankish control at Dorestad during the seventh century was intermittent at best.

⁸¹ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 112 – 13. According to Lebecq, Pippin II was able to seize control of southwestern Frisia, up to the course of the Old Rhine, 690 – 95. Willibrord's establishment on Walcheren must be viewed in this context. During Radbod's last war against the Franks 714 – 19, he led a Frisian fleet up the Rhine in 716, devastating the area up to Köln. Lebecq points out the parallel to similar Viking incursions in the later ninth century (p. 212).

Boniface at Dokkum in 755 and the variable missionary successes of St. Willehad.⁸² In the ninth century, however, the Frisians in the sources appear as dedicated Christians, which signifies that the missionary endeavors of the later seventh and eighth centuries did, finally, achieve the cultural assimilation of the Frisians to the rest of Carolingia.⁸³

How did the incorporation of Frisia into the Carolingian state during the eighth century interact with the evolution of Frisian trade? It is clear from the foregoing that, at least from the sixth century onwards, the Frisians had been the most active and pioneering among North Sea peoples in maintaining and expanding maritime contacts within the southern North Sea region. Spurred by environmental conditions and facilitated by geographic circumstances, Frisian trading activity in the seventh and eighth centuries was already intrinsically entrepreneurial and profit-seeking, and it continued so into the ninth and tenth centuries, unhindered by the cultural shift from paganism to Christianity.⁸⁴ Likewise, the result of the intervention in this ongoing enterprise by the Carolingian state, through the taking of administrative control over Frisian trading centers and of bringing the Frisian traders under the purview of the Carolingian legal system, was a positive synergy between the ambitions of the Carolingian elite and the motivations of the traders.⁸⁵ To paraphrase Lebecq, although the Frisians had to suffer regulations and

⁸² Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 115. Lebecq gives Willehad's dates of activity in northern Frisia as 770 – 780s. Willehad's *vita* makes clear that the population in the north was only marginally Christianized even at this late date. See *Anskarii vita S. Willehadi episcopi Bremensis*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica AD 50 – 1050*, vol. 2, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz (Hanover: Hahn, 1829), 378 – 81, for the relevant episodes. From information given in the *vita*, the year of Willehad's arrival in Frisia might have been any time 765 – 74, but he is recruited and sent into Saxony by Charlemagne in 781.

⁸³ By the ninth century, Christianity was sufficiently well established in Frisia that Frisian colonies and influence elsewhere in Europe can be traced partly by references to certain saints' cults that were of Frisian origins. See Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 45 – 8, 238, 243 – 4, 263, 265 – 6, for discussion of this and other aspects of Frisian involvement with Christian practice. Lebecq sees the ninth-century Frisians as forerunners of the pious Christian long-distance merchants of the High and Late Middle Ages (p. 266).

⁸⁴ Regarding the independent Frisian trader, Lebecq asserts: "Maître de son entreprise, il était naturellement intéressé au profit qu'il en pouvait tirer: il était mû par l'appât du gain." Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 263. Lebecq further points out that the written sources, from which this "portrait" emerges, are negatively disposed to profit-seeking trade, but that their reproachful attitude does not diminish the value of the evidence that they provide. On the nature of the medieval sources and their anti-mercantile animus, cf. McCormick, *Origins*, 12 – 15.

⁸⁵ See again Henning's rather negative view on the interaction of entrepreneurial trading and elite encroachment on such activity in Joachim Henning, "Early European Towns: The Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm between Dynamism and Deceleration AD 500 – 1100," in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 29 - 31. Henning believes that the elite took profit out of

directives imposed by Charlemagne, they greatly benefited from the security and protection afforded by the “Carolingian peace.”⁸⁶

Above all, the involvement of the Frankish state had the long-term effect of consolidating the emerging Frisian trade network and of centralizing it. Most particularly, it elevated the pre-existing *emporium* of Dorestad into an international focal point of exchange between three major arms or directions of supply and demand: the routes westward to the east coast of England and into the English Channel, the routes eastward to Jutland and beyond, and the Rhine route to the south.⁸⁷ Dorestad, at the divergence of the Lek and the Crooked Rhine, stood at the ideal geographical access point to all three. By the Lek, one arrived at the Zeeland gulf, Domburg, and all points west. By the Crooked Rhine, one came to Utrecht, whence the Old Rhine offered the bold sailor a direct course northwest across to Norfolk, the Humber, and York. Alternatively, northwards from Utrecht via the Vecht one came into the Aelmer, the Vlie, the Waddensee, and thence into the North Sea coastal route to Jutland. Southeastwards from Dorestad, one moved upstream on the Rhine to the rich cities and countryside of the Rhine lands and, ultimately, to the Alps crossings to Italy.

The *emporium* or *wik* at Dorestad, with its typical single-street layout that paralleled the riverside of the Crooked Rhine for over a kilometer, was active long before Carolingian rule was established permanently over the place in the early eighth century. Nonetheless, it appears that the Carolingians took care to develop this place as *the* hub of Frisian trade, attracting to it the dynamism of the Frisians the better to control it—both

the *emporia* or *wics*, but that they had little or nothing to do with starting or maintaining them, and that entrepreneurs in the Carolingian period had to exist upon the margins of a largely controlled economy. Cf. also Michael McCormick, “Um 808: Was der frühmittelalterliche König mit der Wirtschaft zu tun hatte,” in *Die Macht des Königs. Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit*, ed. Bernhard Jussen (München: C. H. Beck, 2005), 69 – 70, who posits that the relatively limited means of interference in trade exercised by the Carolingians as compared with the Romans or the Byzantines was, in fact, a positive condition for the development of trade. Lebecq has the most positive view of the interaction, at least in the case of the Frisians.

⁸⁶ “Les Frisons, quant à eux, s’ils ont pu avoir à souffrir du dirigisme de Charlemagne, il semble surtout qu’ils ont su tirer profit des conditions favorables de la ‘paix caroline’.” Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 117.

⁸⁷ For a view of the entire system, with the three major arms clearly delineated, see Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, map Fig 51. on pp. 232 – 3. Cf. Wickham, *Framing*, 689: “Dorestad’s role was as a funnel for interregional exchange, at an important nodal point, in this case a meeting-place between the sea lanes and the spinal river traffic of the Rhine, leading directly into a major political heartland region.”

for profit and for strategic purposes. As has been mentioned previously, Dorestad was one of the most important of Carolingian toll stations, one of the most productive of Carolingian mints, and the most common point of arrival or departure for travelers to and from England as well as the *entrepôt* for the goods of the Rhine basin, England, and Scandinavia. Dorestad itself was an important crafts-production site. Frankish as well as Frisian merchants mingled there.⁸⁸

For the latter, the consolidated, centralized trading system, along with the protection of the Frankish state and the privileges that it was willing to grant to loyal subjects engaged in trade, meant that the independent Frisian owner-operators of merchant vessels could operate increasingly as the key wholesalers within the system. The pattern of attested Frisian activities and colonies in the eighth and ninth centuries suggests that, outside of Frisia itself, the Frisian merchants focused on carrying goods between the major production and transshipment points within the system.⁸⁹ In England, their routes extended to York, London, and Hamwic; in Neustria, to the Seine. Along the Rhine, Frisian colonies were placed strategically at the largest wholesale markets: at Straßburg for Alsatian wine, grain, and the timber of the upper Rhine basin, at Worms for wine, at Mainz for grain, and at Köln for glass and fine arms. Lebecq speculates that there might have been an additional wholesaling center for Rhineland quernstones, perhaps at Koblenz.⁹⁰ While the Frisian traders responded to pre-existing growth in production and demand in all of these areas, the transport network that they established and maintained stimulated further growth and demand.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 149 – 60, for the detailed discussion of Dorestad. Lebecq points out that Dorestad is uniquely well documented in the contemporary sources as well as having been extensively excavated today (p. 141). The record is, thus, more complete for Dorestad than for any other eighth- or ninth-century trading site in northern Europe. See also the discussion of Dorestad in Section 6.4, subsection *The Rhine* above.

⁸⁹ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 243 – 67, for the character of the Frisian merchants and the special protections that they enjoyed, not only in Carolingia but also in Scandinavia.

⁹⁰ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 225 – 34, for Frisian trading colonies in England and along the Rhine. Cf. the discussion in Section 6.4, subsection *The Rhine* above, where the resources and demand centers of the Rhine basin were discussed from the point of view of the Carolingian continent rather than from that of the North Sea trading system.

⁹¹ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 225. Lebecq stresses the wholesaling role of the Frisians thusly: “Aux Frisons donc les grands espaces, aux autres la concentration et la redistribution des produits du négoce” (p. 237).

From the point of view of the greater western Eurasian trade circuit, the most significant new development that resulted from the evolution of the Frisian dominated North Sea long-distance trading system in the eighth century was the extension of standard *emporium* sites to Denmark and further into the Baltic Sea region. It is a remarkable circumstance of synchronicity that both Hamwic in Wessex and Ribe on the southwest coast of Jutland appear at roughly the same time—right at the turn of the eighth century. Both are markers, therefore, of a threshold ca. 700 in the expansion and intensification of pre-existing North Sea trading activities.⁹²

It is unclear if Willibrord's Danish king "Ongendus" already presided over a standard-model *emporium* at Ribe at the time of the saint's unsuccessful missionary effort. The beginnings of Ribe are securely dated dendrochronologically to 705,⁹³ therefore, since Willibrord's voyage has a *terminus ante quem* of 714, it could have been already in place. In any case, the timing of the missionary effort has little direct relationship to the unfolding of regular commerce on the western shores of Jutland, for, as argued above, Willibrord was following in the wake of traders' traffic, not vice-versa. More pertinent to the foundation of Ribe is the elite center of Dankirke only a few kilometers to the southwest of Ribe. Among the finds at Dankirke are bars of silver, weights, and imported Merovingian-era Frankish goods, especially glass beads and vast amounts of sherds from sixth-century Frankish glass vessels, all of which points not only to considerable wealth and elite power but also to overseas contacts of long duration and the capability to conduct exchange on site.⁹⁴ In other words, the standard-model *emporium* that appeared at Ribe at the beginning of the eighth century was not a bridgehead for foreign, quasi-colonial commercial exploitation of a backward indigenous

⁹² For an overview of the seventh- and eighth-century network of northern *emporium* and other urban centers see Wickham, *Framing*, 681 – 8.

⁹³ See Claus Feveile and Stig Jensen, "Ribe in the 8th and 9th Century: A Contribution to the Archaeological Chronology of Western Europe," *Acta Archaeologica* 71 (2000): 13, for the dendrochronology. See also Morten Axboe, "Danish Kings and Dendrochronology: Archaeological Insights into the Early History of the Danish State," in *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians*, ed. G. Ausenda (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 218, for the historical context of Willibrord and Ongendus. Major construction on the Danewirke rampart further south has been dated dendrochronologically to the 730s (p. 220 – 2).

⁹⁴ See Sherman, "Barbarians Come to Market," 228 – 9, for discussion and sources on Dankirke and its relationship to Ribe.

society but an incremental local initiative aimed at regularizing and expanding pre-existing relations of exchange with the lands to the west.⁹⁵

Ribe's archaeology shows the full range of Frisian-carried goods and Frisian-associated coins, proving that it, like western terminals such as Hamwic and York, served as a major node in the North Sea network.⁹⁶ Ribe's location points to eastward connections across the isthmus and thence to the important Danish islands of Fyn and Sjaeland and to the province of Skåne in today's southern Sweden.⁹⁷ However, the most important connection between the North Sea network and the Baltic Sea realm to the east developed not at the latitude of Ribe but somewhat further south, at the Schlei fjord and Haithabu.

During the eighth century, Frisian colonists were settling the coastal islands east of the Ems, extending by mid-century into the North Frisian islands off the west coast of Schleswig and the southwest coast of Jutland. This migration and settlement into an environment similar to that of the Frisian homeland in the northern Netherlands was clearly of an agricultural nature, but it paralleled the eastward extension of Frisian trading routes.⁹⁸ By the middle of the eighth century, meanwhile, the Frisians had a settlement on the Baltic Sea side of the Jutland isthmus. A portage across Jutland might be made at Ribe, before the peninsula swells to much wider proportions just to the north, but the ideal place for such a maneuver is further south, at Haithabu. From the North Sea, one can sail here into the mouth of the Eider and thence up its northern tributary, the Treene, to the landing place at Hollingstedt. Thence, a mere eighteen kilometers of overland trek over fairly level ground takes one to Haithabu near the head of Schlei fjord, which cuts deeply inland from the Baltic Sea. Though it was refounded and expanded greatly ca. 808 by king Godfrid of Denmark, it was the Frisians who pioneered the settlement and

⁹⁵ For a more in-depth discussion of development in Denmark from the seventh through the ninth centuries, see Section 7.2 below.

⁹⁶ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 85. For further discussion of Ribe, see section 7.2 below.

⁹⁷ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 235.

⁹⁸ Stéphan Lebecq, "Frison et Vikings: Remarques sur les relations entre Frisons et Scandinaves aux VIIIe – IXe siècles," in *Les mondes normandes (VIIIe – XIIIe s.)*, ed. Henri Galinié (Caen: Société d'Archéologie Médiévale, 1989), 46 – 7 and map Fig. 1.

set the beginnings of what would prove to be the key North Sea to Baltic Sea link and transshipment point from the eighth into the eleventh century.⁹⁹

Haithabu, like Ribe, shows the full range of goods from the Rhenish countries that the Frisians stockpiled and wholesaled at Dorestad: swords, glass, wine, ceramics, textiles—and basalt quernstones. Despite the narrow and shallow channels both of the Treene and the Schlei, which limited the size of ships that could approach Hollingstedt and Haithabu, respectively, the Frisians did not hesitate to transport the heaviest of bulk items across the isthmus. This is demonstrated by the archaeological recovery of Eifel quernstones not only in Haithabu itself but also on the Danish islands to the east.¹⁰⁰ Generally, the distribution of Carolingian products and manufactures all over Scandinavia (Norway, Denmark, Sweden) as well as along the southern and eastern shores of the Baltic leads Lebecq to identify the decades around 800 as the “apogee” of Frisian trading activity and of a “knotting together” of the eastern and western sides of Jutland at this time.¹⁰¹ Lebecq argues further that Frisians sailing out of Haithabu were the ones who developed and maintained the route along the coast of Sweden to Birka on Lake Mälaren in Middle Sweden, where another standard *emporium*-like settlement arose around the middle of the eighth century.¹⁰² Birka would be, then, the most distant of Frisian outposts in their three-limbed, Dorestad-centered trading system, making of the northeastwards branch a major transverse adjunct or tributary to the main continental corridor of trade and communications that ran from Italy, over the Alps, through the Carolingian heartlands, and connected to Anglo-Saxon England.

Though the standard and uniform layout at Birka, as at other *emporia*, precludes the identification of a distinct Frisian colony, there is evidence enough to suggest Frisian presence both here and at the “productive site” of Helgö nearby, which was the focal

⁹⁹ Lebecq, “Frison et Vikings,” 46 – 8; Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 85 – 8, 195 – 7, and maps Fig. 45 of the Hollingstedt landing place and the isthmus complex as a whole. The Eider – Treene and the Schlei fjord each penetrate inland some 40 kilometers from their respective seas, so that over four fifths of the distance can be traversed by water at this place. Lebecq credits the Frisians with a remarkable intuition of space to recognize and develop this spot and to abandon the alternative sea route around the north of Jutland (p. 236).

¹⁰⁰ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 75 – 83, for trade goods; 195 – 7, for transport over the isthmus. Lebecq, “Frison et Vikings,” 49, for the eastward distribution of quernstones.

¹⁰¹ Lebecq, “Frison et Vikings,” 49 – 50.

¹⁰² Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 197 – 9, 202, and maps Figs. 46 and 47.

point of exchange relations and fine crafts production in the Lake Mälaren area before the appearance of Birka. And, while Birka was founded by Scandinavian initiative, the Frisian connection during the second half of the eighth century must have done much to establish the importance and prosperity of this place.¹⁰³ In Baltic waters as in England, along the English Channel, and along the Rhine, the Frisians primarily exploited and expanded pre-existing infrastructure and development to build their own network of long-distance exchange among the most important points in the northern European system of production and exchange.¹⁰⁴ The long history of emerging central- and landing-places around the coastlines of Denmark and in Middle Sweden during the Merovingian period makes it extremely unlikely that initiatives for increased production and trade in these areas relied primarily on outsiders such as the Frisians.

Nevertheless, it is doubtless true that Frisian efforts opened the Haithabu isthmus route and, thus, gave the Carolingian West its first direct window upon the Baltic North, through which the riches of this world could now begin to flow.¹⁰⁵ The integration of Denmark and the Baltic into the Frisian-dominated North Sea trading system is reflected in the travel times that Lebecq has calculated between certain key points. Analyzing the sources, he concludes that there are two tiers of rates of travel attested among a number of points along the northern rivers and seas, one of approximately thirty miles per day and the other of approximately sixty—a contrast which he explains as that between vessels that laid over for the night and vessels that sailed continuously. Either by the slow or the fast mode, Frisian ships out of Dorestad could reach York, London, Hamwic, or Hollingstedt in a comparable number of days—either in 8 – 11 or 4 – 5. Stated in somewhat different terms, a Frisian merchant could bring a cask of Alsatian wine down the Rhine and either to Hampshire, Yorkshire, or Jutland in twenty-five days. As Lebecq

¹⁰³ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 84, 202, 234, 246. For further discussion of Middle Sweden and the Baltic Sea region, see Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* above, and Section 7.2 below.

¹⁰⁴ This is the insightful formulation in Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 229.

¹⁰⁵ This metaphorical formulation appears in Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 195; and Lebecq, “Frison et Vikings,” 46. It should be noted that in his focus on the accomplishments of the Frisians, Lebecq tends to minimize the agency of the Scandinavians and other peoples of the Baltic, resulting at times in an impression of a kind of center – periphery relationship.

says, these calculations illustrate the efficiency and the unifying or integrating effects of Frisian trading enterprises upon Francia and the other lands around the North Sea.¹⁰⁶

The opening of regular and lucrative trade with Scandinavia by way of Dorestad and the North Sea coast between Frisia and Jutland reinforced the pre-existing connection of elite cultural influence that Francia under the Merovingians had already been exercising in Denmark and Middle Sweden in the sixth to seventh centuries.¹⁰⁷ Just as they did in the Merovingian period, so also in the Carolingian period, Frankish prestige objects and styles could be found on elite sites in Scandinavia—in the extensively excavated graves at Birka, for example.¹⁰⁸ The relationship between the long-standing elite influence from Francia to parts of Scandinavia and the burgeoning Frisian commercial enterprise towards the Baltic is insufficiently studied.¹⁰⁹ However, it seems clear that tolls—taken, primarily, at Dorestad—on the lucrative Baltic trade would have been an important and growing resource for the Carolingian fisc, which in turn would have been among the main reasons why the Carolingian rulers tended to prioritize and heighten diplomatic activities in the direction of Denmark and Sweden.¹¹⁰

Most revealing of the importance to the Carolingians of these northeastward connections are the missionary voyages of St. Anskar, who traveled both to Denmark and to the Middle Swedish Birka from the late 820s to the 850s. Like the aforementioned St.

¹⁰⁶ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 206 – 9, 222 – 5. “[V]oilà ce que j’aurais envie d’appeler le miracle de la navigation marchande des Frisons du haut Moyen Age” (p. 224).

¹⁰⁷ See again discussion on this point in Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* above.

¹⁰⁸ For western European elite objects or stylistic and technical influences on Scandinavian-made elite objects—jewelry and glassware, primarily—that are found on Gotland and in mainland Middle Sweden, see Holger Arbman, *Schweden und das Karolingische Reich. Studien zu den Handelsverbindungen des 9. Jahrhunderts* (Stockholm: Wahlström und Widstrand, 1937), which, despite its vintage, is still important for the study of these grave goods.

¹⁰⁹ See, however, Herbert Jankuhn, “Karl der Große und der Norden,” in *Karl der Große, Vol 1: Persönlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed. Helmut Beumann (Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1965), 699 – 707, who makes a strong case for lively commercial and cultural contacts between Francia and Middle Sweden going back to the seventh century, at least. In his view, the involvement of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious with Denmark should be seen in the context of this ongoing relationship

¹¹⁰ For Frankish diplomacy on their northeastern frontiers in the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis, see especially Raimund Ernst, *Die Nordwestslaven und das fränkische Reich: Beobachtungen zur Geschichte ihrer Nachbarschaft und zur Elbe als nordöstlicher Reichsgrenze bis in die Zeit Karls des Großen* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1976; and idem, “Karolingische Nordostpolitik zur Zeit Ludwigs des Frommen,” in *Östliches Europa, Spiegel der Geschichte: Festschrift für Manfred Hellmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Carsten Goerke, Erwin Oberländer, Dieter Wojtecki (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1977), 81 – 107. More discussion on this point in subsection *Carolingia and the Elbe* below.

Willibrord, who pioneered missionary efforts in Frisia and Denmark around the turn of the eighth century, and St. Boniface, who worked in Germany and also in Frisia during the first half of the eighth, Anskar enjoyed the highest level of official patronage and support.¹¹¹ Whereas Willibrord had found in Denmark a cordial but “savage” and uninterested pagan king, Ongendus, Anskar was traveling in the company of a Danish prince and retinue who had just been induced to accept baptism. Furthermore, Anskar and his companions found additional willing converts once they had arrived in the area of Denmark;¹¹² this suggests that the cultural situation in parts of Denmark in the early decades of the ninth century was similar to what had obtained in successive parts of Frisia during the course of the eighth century. Louis, however, soon sent Anskar on to Middle Sweden—to Birka, where this missionary found yet another pagan but cordial king willing to allow the former to carry on with his preaching.¹¹³ In other words, within less than a century and a half, the tentative reach of missionary effort stood some 800 kilometers (from Jutland) or even 1200 kilometers (from the Rhine delta) further than it did at the time of Willibrord.¹¹⁴ There was no advance of Latin Christian missionizing reach of anything like this magnitude in any other sector of the Frankish frontier vis-à-vis pagan Europe.

As had Willibrord before him in the journey to Denmark ca. 700, so did Anskar proceed to Middle Sweden ca. 830 along routes already established by long-distance merchants. However, whereas Willibrord’s use of a [Frisian] merchant ship and crew is only a reasonable surmise based on circumstantial considerations, not confirmed in the terse account in Alcuin’s *vita* of Willibrord, Rimbart states explicitly that Anskar set out for Birka in the company of merchants.¹¹⁵ Indeed, it is the evidence of the *Vita Anskarii*

¹¹¹ In 826, Anskar was selected for the prestigious but dangerous mission to Denmark and Sweden by the emperor Louis himself, and richly equipped both by the emperor and by the bishop of Köln. Rimbart, *Vita Anskarii* 7.

¹¹² So, in any case, in *Vita Anskarii* 8.

¹¹³ Rimbart, *Vita Anskarii* 9 – 11.

¹¹⁴ The extension of mission to Middle Sweden was precipitated by the advent of a Swedish embassy at the emperor Louis’s court; Rimbart, *Vita Anskarii* 9. This gives additional context to the incident of the “Rhos guests” a decade or so later, which according to the *Annals of St. Bertin* took place in 839. See Section 6.1, subsection *The evidence of the Rhos guests* above.

¹¹⁵ The term used is *negotiatores*, the same as in the imperial privileges for merchants. Rimbart, *Vita Anskarii* 10.

that Lebecq uses, primarily, to construct his arguments regarding Frisian trading activities in the Baltic in the early ninth century and the course followed between Haithabu and Birka.¹¹⁶ For our purposes, the ethnic affiliation of the long-distance traders on the Haithabu – Birka route is less important than the pre-existence of the route itself. As in the case of piracy in the Mediterranean and of the illegal proliferation of tolls on Carolingian land and river routes, the fact of piracy in the Baltic confirms that there was already, at that time, commercial traffic regular and lucrative enough to be worth the effort to plunder.¹¹⁷

The fact that Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* gives us at least two explicit and crucial data on Baltic trade ca. 830—the presence of *negotiatores* and the presence of pirates on the Haithabu – Birka route, while Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* gives no such data for the route between Frisia and Jutland ca. 700, seems to signify more than just a stylistic difference between two Carolingian hagiographers. As was discussed above, the first standard *emporium* site in Denmark, Ribe, appeared only at the very beginning of the eighth century. This suggests that Willibrord made his missionary voyage just around the time that North Sea exchange activity in the direction of Jutland was first becoming regular and constant, and that the free-lancing northern Frisian peasants-shippers on this route may not yet have appeared as full-fledged *negotiatores* in the eyes of Frankish observers. By contrast, at the time that Anskar took his mission to Birka, that place had been functioning as a standard-model *emporium* for at least half a century and having, moreover, a firm link with Haithabu, itself definitively refounded as a major trade hub in 808.¹¹⁸ Not only was the Scandinavian world better known to the Franks by then, but routes, nodal points, and exchange relationships were far more advanced in the North Sea as well as the Baltic Sea areas. The mention of both *negotiatores* and *pyratae* in the latter area in the earlier ninth century should be seen as part of the evidence for the continuing growth of the northern exchange system.

¹¹⁶ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 188 – 9, 197, 206. In fact, the *Vita Anskarii* is practically the sole firsthand Latin source for events and conditions in the Baltic in the ninth century.

¹¹⁷ Anskar and his companions are overcome by pirates along the east coast of Sweden, lose their valuable gear including forty bound books, and are forced to continue to Birka on foot. Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii* 10 – 11.

¹¹⁸ For further discussion of Haithabu and the events around 808, see subsection *Carolingia and the Elbe* and Section 7.2 below.

The preceding analysis leads to two conclusions. First, neither ca. 700 nor ca. 830 did a pioneering Latin Christian missionary foray far to the northeast of the then-current extent of Frankish controlled territory represent an opening of a hitherto unexplored sailing route. Rather, in both cases the missionary traveled along a path already well trodden by traders. Second, despite that Anskar's voyage from Jutland to Birka ca. 830 was an extension of missionary reach twice as great as that represented by Willibrord's adventure from the Rhine delta to Jutland ca. 700, the former still was not sufficient to keep pace with the even more rapidly accelerating advance of exchange systems and their associated infrastructure that was ongoing in the North. In other words, the fact that standard-model *emporium* trading had made the leap from Jutland to Middle Sweden more than half a century before the corresponding leap was made by western missionaries-diplomats reveals how much more rapid was the spread of the former in relation to the latter. The exchange systems of the North not only connected the Scandinavian – Baltic realm ever more regularly with Carolingia, but were linking also ever farther to the east and south, across Russia to Byzantium and the Islamic world. However incompletely, the Franks must have been aware of these developments, and it is no surprise that Louis the Pious (814 – 40) would seek to use willing missionaries such as Anskar to maintain or extend Frankish influence in this vital direction.¹¹⁹

Carolingia and the Elbe

While seaborne routes were bringing the trade of the Baltic region from Denmark into Dorestad and thence into the Rhine, other routes were pushing eastwards across northern Germany from the Rhine to the Elbe over land. In comparison with the well-studied activities of the Frisian merchants in the North Sea, the question of overland Frankish trade towards the northeast has been rather neglected. In part, the neglect stems from the fact that written documentation for this overland trade is even scarcer than are the meager references to Frisian shipping activities. Additionally, there is the circumstance that, in

¹¹⁹ For a fuller discussion of the diplomatic uses of Christian conversion and mission, see Karl Hauck, "Der Missionsauftrag Christi und das Kaisertum Ludwigs des Frommen," in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814 – 840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 275 – 96.

regard to northern Germany in the eighth century, the attention of historians has been quite distracted by the numerous recorded episodes of war making, Christian conversion, and diplomacy that ensnared the Franks with the Saxons and Slavs. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to undertake at least a sketch of the conditions of production and exchange in the north German – Elbe river area both before and after Charlemagne’s expansionist activities had brought the Carolingian frontier northeastwards to the vicinity of the latter right around AD 800.

In the *Vita Sturmi* of Eigil of Fulda, a passage describes how the saint, in his wanderings in the countryside around the recently founded monastery of Fulda, came upon “the road, which conducted those traveling for the sake of trade from Thuringia to Mainz, where that street hastened over the Fulda river; there he encountered a great multitude of Slavs/slaves” who were bathing in the river.¹²⁰ This is practically the only explicit reference to commercial activity in the territory between the Rhine and the Elbe for the entire eighth century, but it tells us no more than do the equally laconic passages in Fredegar concerning slave trading along the upper Danube in the seventh century.¹²¹ Specifically, while the *Vita Sturmi* lets us know that there was ca. 740 regular trade from Thuringia to the Rhine at Mainz, the term *Sclavi* is left entirely ambiguous, so that it might represent a large gang of captured Slavs bound for the slave markets or a large group of free ethnic Slav traders. It also is unclear whether the Fulda crossing should be imagined as a bridge or a ford.

Similarly, in the story of St. Lebuin, who tried to preach to the pre-conquest Saxons, it is placed in the mouth of a Saxon participant at their folk-gathering to say that they, the Saxons, regularly receive ambassadors from the Northmen, the Slavs, and the

¹²⁰ “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 multitudine reperit, eiusdem fluminis alveo gratia lavandis corporibus se immersisse.” Eigil of Fulda, *Vita Sturmi* 7, 139.12 – 15, quoted in McCormick, *Origins*, 741 n. 59. Sturm was abbot of Fulda from 747 to 779. As this episode is presented as occurring before the actual founding of the monastery in 742 – 44, we are dealing with conditions between Thuringia and the Rhine as they were ca. 740.

¹²¹ For the terse mentions regarding one Samo and other Frankish traders-adventurers on the Frankish-Avar borderlands, see discussion in Section 5.2, subsection *New spheres of influence: Franks and Avars* above.

Frisians.¹²² We have seen in many contexts throughout the preceding sections that diplomatic contacts often involve the exchange of material objects, and that elite gift-exchange may be accompanied or paralleled by exchanges whose purpose is mundanely economic rather than political or representational. In particular, eighth-century Frisian “ambassadors” may be supposed to have had trade interests on their agenda. However, while the Frankish annals mention Saxon fortresses, meeting places, and cult sites, they never allude to any Saxon trade centers—a *wic* or an *emporium*. That the Frankish sources were, in fact, interested in such places is well demonstrated by the flurry of attention devoted to the ports of Rerik and Schleswig/Haithabu ca. 808, in the context of the Danish king Godfrid’s assertion of control over the trade in the western Baltic around that time.¹²³ It seems, therefore, that in the case of pre-conquest Saxony the argument *e silentio* of the Frankish sources may be acceptable. And this, in turn, requires an explanation for the apparent absence of marked mercantile activity in Saxony when compared to its neighbors Frisia and Denmark.

Certainly, the land of the continental Saxons was not isolated. Distributions of trade goods such as Eifel quernstones along the Saxon portion of the North Sea coast demonstrate the possibilities of trade contacts between the populations inland up the Ems, the Weser, and the Elbe on one side and the coasting Frisian traders on the other. Nevertheless, the dearth of such finds in the inland portions of Ostfriesland and Wigmodia suggest that in the eighth century, at least, such contacts were not extensively activated. Ian Wood has argued, based on landholding patterns revealed in gifts to ecclesiastical foundations such as Fulda and Echternach, that aristocrats eastwards of the Austrasian frontier could hold land in more than one tribal locality and that they were in communication with the Austrasian elite of the Merovingian era (to ca. 750). On this basis, Wood speculates:

The Austrasian frontier was. . . permeable, and once across the frontier it appears that patterns of aristocratic landholding ensured a network of contact and

¹²² “Nordmanni vel Sclavi, Frsones quoque seu cuiuslibet gentis homines si quando ad nos mittunt nuncios, cum pace suscipimus ac modeste audimus.” *Vita Lebuini Antiqua*, 6.20 – 2, in *MGH Scriptores* 30.2, p. 794.

¹²³ On this point, see McCormick, *Origins*, 579. More discussion on Rerik, Haithabu, and the strategic nexus of Jutland and the lower Elbe below.

communication which stretched towards the Slav frontier. It goes without saying that this must have provided a context for the distribution of goods such as Mayen ware and other types of pottery, as well as metalwork.¹²⁴

The implied model is, of course, a version of elite demand-driven economic development, but he offers no artifact distribution maps that might demonstrate the material influence emanating from the Rhine. He does note, however, a curious lack of *scaettas* in Saxony, which certainly raises questions regarding the extent of Saxon participation in the Carolingian and North Sea exchange system of the eighth century.¹²⁵

Denmark, Hesse, Frisia, Francia—in all of these northwestern European areas the dominant mode of primary production during the Merovingian period was that of autonomous, highly productive peasant communities practicing intensified mixed farming.¹²⁶ It would be reasonable to suppose that an analogous mode of production would dominate in continental Saxony, which lay between these areas and enjoyed similar soil and climate conditions.¹²⁷ If so, there should have been a substantial population in the general area of today's Niedersachsen, producing an agricultural surplus and, therefore, with the potential to engage in capillary marketing activities similar to those of farming settlements in Denmark. An order of magnitude for the potential population may be derived by imagining a single such farmstead of five to ten inhabitants in every square kilometer within the rectangular-shaped territory bounded by the Ems

¹²⁴ Ian Wood, "Before or after Mission: Social Relations across the Middle and Lower Rhine in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 163.

¹²⁵ Wood, "Before or after Mission," 163 – 4.

¹²⁶ For the outlines of the argument, see again Joachim Henning, "Germanisch-romanische Agrarkontinuität und –diskontinuität im nordalpinen Kontinentaleuropa—Teile eines Systemwandels? Beobachtungen aus archäologischer Sicht," in *Akkulturation: Probleme einer germanisch-romanischen Kultursynthese in Spätantike und frühem Mittelalter*, ed. Dieter Hägermann, Wolfgang Haubrichs, Jörg Jarnut, and Claudia Giefers (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 396 – 435; and idem, "Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe during the Early Middle Ages: Which Way Was 'Normal'?" in *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 41 – 59.

¹²⁷ The areas of Saxony best studied are those near the coast, including *wurt*-settlements. According to the analysis of house types in *Germania libera* during the Roman Iron Age (AD 1 – 400) by Johanna Brabant, *Hausbefunde der römischen Kaiserzeit im freien Germanien. Ein Forschungsstand* (Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte 46) (Halle: Landesamt für archäologische Denkmalpflege Sachsen Anhalt, 1993), the majority in Saxony as elsewhere were three-aisled hall structures. These are the structures associated in Denmark, Frisia, and Alamannia with the intensive agricultural economy described by Henning, and would tend to support his contention that this type of socio-economic system had become widespread throughout the Rhine – Danube – Elbe area even before the collapse of the *limes* and of the Roman villa economy.

river in the west and the Ilmenau in the east, or with its corners at Emden, Münster, Goslar, and Lüneburg.¹²⁸ This territory of some 150 x 200 km or 30,000 km², which corresponds to those parts of Saxony situated upon the lowland North European Plain, north of the “Hilly Uplands” environmental zone,¹²⁹ should have had by this rough calculation a population of 150,000 – 300,000 surplus-producing farmers; that some 30 per cent of the area is moorland or swamp, unsuitable for agriculture, would be balanced by the fact that settlements usually were not isolated farmsteads but hamlets of two or three such farmsteads together. A further check on this estimated population with a density of five to ten persons per kilometer square is the estimated population densities of the contemporary Frisian areas: intensely developed Friesland province with 10 – 20 per km², less developed but still terp-based Groningen province with 9 – 12 per km², and forested, sandy-soiled Overijssel inland with four persons per km².¹³⁰ Moreover, the tribute of five hundred cows that the Saxons paid annually to the Merovingians 556 – 630s suggests precisely the kind of economic productivity envisioned by the Henning model of early medieval northwestern European economics.¹³¹

Both written and archaeological sources indicate that the area of Saxony, despite having a substantial aggregate population and a potentially surplus-producing economy, was relatively little engaged in exchange, in contrast with some of its neighbors. Several reasons might be suggested to explain the discrepancy. First, most of Saxony did not have water-way connections to the most high-demand, developed, and partially urbanized areas in the region—the Rhine, Neustria, and England—that were as practicable or

¹²⁸ The land to the west of the Ems can be considered “Frisian.” On the eastern boundary, there is good reason to believe that the land between the Ilmenau and the Elbe, known as the Altmark, remained Slavic rather than Saxon in settlement at least up to ca. 900. See especially Matthias Hardt, “Linien und Säume, Zonen und Räume an der Ostgrenze des Reiches im frühen und hohen Mittelalter,” in *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 46 – 53.

¹²⁹ This calculation leaves out coastal, Frisian influenced Ostfriesland and Wigmodia, the Saxon inhabited areas north of the lower Elbe in Schleswig and western Holstein, the Nordthüringgau between Braunschweig and Magdeburg, and the Saxon areas of the Hilly Uplands environmental region such as northern Hesse and parts of Westphalia. Some of these certainly had higher population densities than that hypothesized for the lowland plains.

¹³⁰ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 125 – 6. See discussion in subsection *Carolingia and Denmark* above.

¹³¹ For details and references, see Ian Wood, “The Frontiers of Western Europe: Developments East of the Rhine in the Sixth Century,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 237.

convenient as those that the Frisians enjoyed. Moreover, the Saxons since their heyday as raiders and traders in the North Sea and Channel area in the third to sixth centuries seem to have neglected their seafaring skills, while the Frisians had augmented their own. Possibly, the local ecological balance did not press the Saxon farmers in quite the same way as it did the terp-dwellers of northern Frisia, so that the Saxons had less incentive to develop relations of exchange with the outside.

Second, it appears that Saxony lacked a special, high value commodity with which it could gain a profitable place in the international marketplace. It has been suggested above that Neustria had such a commodity in the wine of the upper Seine basin; that the Rhine region had not only wine but also ceramics, glass, weapons, and even quernstones; that England was at least partly balancing its trade accounts with the production of cloth; and that the Frisians, before they became long-distance middlemen wholesalers between the aforementioned areas, had their own cloth, meat, and fish to sell from their tidal coastland areas. Saxony conceivably might have produced timber and surplus grain, as the Rhineland did also, but with poorer access to outlets such bulk, relatively low-value commodities were more difficult to market profitably. The Saxon salt mines around Lüneburg and the silver mines of the Harz were not much developed before the end of the ninth century.

Finally, unlike Frisia and Denmark, the Saxon lands in the seventh and eighth century made no bridge to markets beyond their own area; i.e., Saxony had no opportunity yet to enter into the stream of international exchange as a necessary avenue of transit between other areas. According to the new consensus on the issue that has emerged over the past two decades or so, the territory beyond Saxony to the east, namely the lands of the trans-Elbian western Slavs, was less developed socio-economically even than was pre-commercial Saxony. In the eighth century, some stimulus was reaching the borders of the Eastelbian Slav country in the form of *emporía* along the southwestern shores of the Baltic sea, but these trading places connected back to the west via Denmark, not Saxony. Indeed, it was not until the military advance of the Carolingian empire in the last quarter of the eighth century had established a string of border control posts in the Elbe region that we have the first sure information concerning long-distance trade

relations extending from Frankish western Europe eastwards into Eastelbia. The ninth century, then, brings evidence of rapid socio-economic development in the territory between the Elbe and the Oder, and, concurrently, visible development of trade networks and urbanizing nodal points across Saxony.¹³²

Frankish control over the middle Rhine, southern Hesse, and Thuringia had been uninterrupted from the mid-sixth century.¹³³ As the vignette from the *Vita Sturmi* suggests, regular trade connections extended from the Rhine (Mainz) into Thuringia by the earlier eighth century, and archaeological data from places such as Fulda in southern Hesse and Karlburg on the Main river suggest that the regions east of the Rhine that were in the Frankish orbit had been seeing steady economic development.¹³⁴ Environmentally, the Main valley and the area around Fulda belong to the Hilly Uplands region, as do Thuringia and Hesse as a whole. Thus, Charlemagne's "advance to the Elbe" should be seen, in geographic and environmental terms, as an extension onto the North European Plain where, arguably, economic development was following a different course than it had been doing in the Hilly Uplands areas of Germany.¹³⁵

It may be, in part, that the socio-economic development of pre-conquest Saxony has been overshadowed in the minds of researchers by the rich and engrossing source material on the military and political events in Saxony during the eighth century generally and during Charlemagne's Saxon War of 772 – 804 especially.¹³⁶ The pretexts

¹³² The development of the Eastelbian area will be discussed in detail in Section 7.2 below.

¹³³ See discussion in Section 5.2, subsection *New spheres of influence: Franks and Avars* above.

¹³⁴ Peter Ettl, "Karlburg am Main (Bavaria) and Its Role As a Local Centre in the Late Merovingian and Ottonian Periods," in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 319 – 40, describes a complex some twenty kilometers northwest of Würzburg that combined military, ecclesiastic, and commercial components. The review of old and new excavation data in Thomas Kind, "Das karolingerzeitliche Kloster Fulda—ein *monasterium in solitudine*. Seine Strukturen und Handwerksproduktion nach den seit 1898 gewonnenen archäologischen Daten," in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 367 – 409, demonstrates that east-Rhenish areas in the eighth century were engaging in value-added economic practices such as the construction of water mills and the establishment of fruit orchards.

¹³⁵ In general, it is better to think of the Saxon wars as expanding Frankish borders *northward* rather than eastward. From the Rhine, the pre-772 border ran through the region of the Lippe and Ruhr rivers, then through Hesse and northern Thuringia in a roughly east-west direction as far as the Saale, which it then followed south to the juncture of the Thüringer Wald and the Erzgebirge. See Louis Halphen, *Études critiques sur l'histoire de Charlemagne* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1921), map insert following p. 144.

¹³⁶ See, however, Martin Lintzel, *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1961), volume 1 of which reproduces over two hundred pages worth of detailed studies on the Saxon polity, its territorial organization, social structure, and laws both before and after the conquest. The voluminous literature

and purposes of the Carolingian expansion into Saxony have been the subject of far-reaching discussion.¹³⁷ Ian Wood has suggested that it was Bonifacian propaganda that made of the Saxons inveterate pagans and Carolingian propaganda that made them out as dangerous aliens and, therefore, in need of subjugation and forced conversion.¹³⁸

Whether or not the threat of Saxon aggression in the eighth century was actual or invented, it seems clear that the Carolingian advance to the Elbe served military, political, and ideological rather than commercial purposes.¹³⁹ The political and ideological would, in the context of Saxony, include forced conversion.¹⁴⁰ Unlike the extension of Latin

concerning the Frankish wars against the Saxons and their results includes the classic approaches in Walther Lammers, ed., *Entstehung und Verfassung des Sachsenstammes* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967); idem, *Die Eingliederung der Sachsen in das Frankenreich* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970); and Martin Lintzel, *Der sächsische Stammesstaat und seine Eroberung durch die Franken* (1933, reprint Vaduz: Kraus Reprint, 1965), 43 – 51.

¹³⁷ Much of the earlier literature on the Saxon wars, on the Elbe frontier, and on the beginnings of German expansion eastwards in general is reviewed and analyzed in Ernst, *Die Nordwestslaven und das fränkische Reich*, passim.

¹³⁸ Wood, “Before or after Mission,” 164 – 6.

¹³⁹ Ernst, *Die Nordwestslaven und das fränkische Reich*, 92 – 193, concerning Charlemagne’s dealings both with the Saxons and with various Slavic peoples in the Elbe region. See also Bernard S. Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare: Prelude to Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 6 – 50, for an outline of the military strategies pursued by the Carolingian leaders Pippin II (d. 714), Charles Martel (d. 741), Carloman (retired 747) and Pippin III (I) (d. 768). In general, their efforts were aimed at reconquering or subduing all the provinces belonging to the *Regnum Francorum*, which in the northeast included Frisia, Hesse, and Thuringia. Their operations against the Saxons were designed first and foremost to protect the latter possessions. Bernard Bachrach, “Charlemagne’s Military Responsibilities *am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung*,” in *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung: Das Epos “Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa” und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799*, ed. Peter Godman, Jörg Jarnut and Peter Johanek (Paderborn: Akademie Verlag, 2002), 240 – 3, argues strongly that the campaign against Saxony was motivated by the desire to redeem this north German province, which had slipped from imperial grasp after the AD 9 disaster, and that Charlemagne never contemplated advances north and east of the Elbe because these would transgress the limits established under the Julio-Claudians.

¹⁴⁰ Relevant works on the missionizing impulse in Carolingian Europe include Martin Lintzel, “Karl Martells Sachsenkrieg im Jahre 738 und die Missionstätigkeit des Bonifatius,” *Sachsen und Anhalt* 13 (1937): 59 – 65; Theodor Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg, 1954, reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972); Lawrence G. Duggan, “‘For Force is not of God’? Compulsion and Conversion from Yahveh to Charlemagne,” in *Varieties of Religious Conversion in the Middle Ages*, ed. James Muldoon (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), 49 – 62; Richard Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997), 193 – 227; Carole M. Cusack, *The Rise of Christianity in Northern Europe, 300 – 1000* (London: Cassell, 1999); Guyda Armstrong and Ian N. Wood, eds., *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000); Ian Wood, “Missionaries and the Christian Frontier,” in *The Transformation of Frontiers: From Late Antiquity to the Carolingians*, ed. Walter Pohl, Ian Wood, and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 209 – 18; Lutz E. von Padberg, “Die Diskussion missionarischer Programme zur Zeit Karls des Großen,” in *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung: Das Epos “Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa” und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799*, ed. Peter Godman, Jörg Jarnut and Peter Johanek (Paderborn: Akademie Verlag, 2002), 125 – 43; Martin O. Carver, ed., *The Cross*

Christian connections across the North Sea to Denmark and the Baltic Sea region, then, the extension of Frankish control from the Rhine to the Elbe appears as a case where conquest and conversion preceded rather than followed pre-established lines of commerce. In that way, Carolingian and especially Charlemagne's efforts in northern Germany in the eighth century resembled, on a smaller scale, the rapid northward shift of Roman control in the 59 BC – AD 17 period, which, undertaken primarily for political and military considerations, far outran the exchange relations which had obtained between the Romans and various Temperate European groups in Gaul and in the eastern Alps area before the expansion.¹⁴¹ And, as the establishment of a permanent Roman presence along the Rhine and the Danube brought about a reconfiguration of exchange relationships in Temperate Europe as a whole, so the establishment of a permanent Frankish presence and political boundary in the Elbe region brought with it similar changes in exchange relationships in the area of northern Germany on both sides of this river.

The earliest information regarding commercial activities along the new Elbe frontier comes from a single paragraph in the Diefenhof Capitulary of 805.¹⁴² First, it names a string of border posts from the lower Elbe in the north to the Danube in the south, along with their *missi*-rank commandants. These are Bardowick on the Ilmenau just south of its confluence with the Elbe; *Schezla* at some uncertain location south of Bardowick; Magdeburg on the Elbe; Erfurt in central Thuringia; Hallstadt and Forchheim in upper Franconia south of the Thüringer Wald; Premberg on the Naab river west of the

Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300 (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK : York Medieval Press, 2003).

¹⁴¹ For Roman expansion from the Mediterranean shores to the Rhine and the Danube and its transformative effects upon Temperate European exchange relationships, see discussion in Section 3.4 above.

¹⁴² *MGH Leges: Capitularia regum Francorum I*, 44.7: Capitulare missorum in Theodonis villa datum secundum, generale, p. 123, lines 13 – 21:

De negotiaribus qui partibus Sclavorum et Avarorum pergunt, quousque procedere cum suis negotiis debeant: id est partibus Saxoniae usque ad Bardaenowic, ubi praevideat Hredi; et ad Schezla, ubi Madalgaudus praevideat; et ad Magadoburg praevideat Aito; et ad Erpesfurt praevideat Madalgaudus; et ad Halazstat praevideat item Madalgaudus; ad Foracheim et ad Breemberga et ad Ragenisburg praevideat Audulfus, et ad Lauriacum Warnarius. Et ut arma et brunias non ducant ad venendum; quod si inventi fuerint portantes, ut omnis substantia eorum auferatur ab eis, dimidia quidem pars partibus palatii, alia vero medietas inter iamdictos missos et inventorum dividatur.

Böhmerwald, and Regensburg and Lorch on the Danube.¹⁴³ Much has been made, in the literature, of the placement of these posts in relation to the ethnic boundary between Germans (Thuringians and Saxons) and Slavs (Sorbs, Wilzi, Abodrites) in the region of the Elbe.¹⁴⁴ For Charlemagne, this placement dovetailed with his strategic considerations, in which potential commerce at first played a secondary role.¹⁴⁵ According to Siegmund Wolf, however, Bardowick may have been a pre-existing exchange place for the Saxons and the Abodrites, the Slavic people of eastern Holstein and western Mecklenburg, as *Schezla* was for the Saxons and the Slavs of Altmark and Erfurt was for the Thuringians and the Sorbs.¹⁴⁶

Second, paragraph 7 of the Diedenhof Capitulary of 805 states that merchants seeking to trade with the Slavs and the Avars should go no further than the aforementioned border posts; moreover, that the authorities in charge at these posts should make sure that the traders were not bringing arms and armor to sell beyond the frontier.¹⁴⁷ Thus, in 805 at any rate, Charlemagne and his advisors wished to keep those merchants that were seeking to open (or: continue?) trade relations with East Central

¹⁴³ For discussion of the placement of these border posts see Michael Schmauder, “Überlegungen zur östlichen Grenze des Karolingischen Reiches unter Karl dem Grossen,” in *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 57 – 97.

¹⁴⁴ For the ethnic situation along the Elbe frontier, see especially Siegmund Wolf, “Die slavische Westgrenze in Nord- und Mitteldeutschland im Jahre 805,” *Die Welt der Slaven* 2, no. 1 (1957): 30 – 42; Manfred Hellmann, “Karl und die slawische Welt zwischen Ostsee und Böhmerwald,” in *Karl der Große*, vol 1: *Persönlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed. Helmut Beumann (Düsseldorf: Verlag L. Schwann, 1965), 708 – 18; Joachim Herrmann, “Herausbildung und Dynamik der germanisch-slawischen Siedlungsgrenze in Mitteleuropa,” in *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn, Teil 1*, ed. Herwig Wolfram and Andreas Schwarz (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985), 269 – 80; Lech Leciejewicz, “Das Karolingische Reich und die Westslawen: Zur Entfaltung einer Kulturgrenzzone im 8. – 9. Jahrhundert,” in *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn, Teil 2*, ed. Herwig Friesinger and Falko Daim (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985), 147 – 55; Hardt, “Linien und Säume, Zonen und Räume”; and Schmauder, “Überlegungen zur östlichen Grenze des Karolingischen Reiches,” 57 – 97. For discussion of economic development among the Slavs in the lands east of the Elbe, see Section 7.2, subsection *The southern shore and the Slavs* below.

¹⁴⁵ It has been argued that Charlemagne’s military and diplomatic strategy in northern Germany followed ethnic lines. See discussion in Ernst, *Die Nordwestslaven und das fränkische Reich*, 111 – 38. More recently, Hardt, “Linien und Säume, Zonen und Räume,” has argued that Charlemagne in fact tried to set up a Roman-style fortified boundary along the length of the Elbe from its mouth up to the confluence of the Saale, but that developments after the first decade of the ninth century rendered this line untenable and that the frontier reverted subsequently to a more ethnically based line.

¹⁴⁶ Wolf, “Die slavische Westgrenze.”

¹⁴⁷ For further discussion on the significance of these passages for the organization and privileges of the long-distance merchants, see Section 7.4 below.

Europe under the oversight of the border authorities, in part at least in order to interdict strategically sensitive items from crossing the frontier. The passage reveals, in any case, that some exchange activity by professional merchants was being directed toward areas east of the Elbe. This information thus builds upon the incidental mention from over half a century earlier, in the *Vita Sturmi*, of regular mercantile traffic from the Rhine as far as Thuringia.

If trade was reaching the Elbe frontier in the early ninth century, it certainly would have been present at Magdeburg, situated at a key west – east ford over the Elbe. At Magdeburg the Elbe runs in multiple channels among several islands, thus forming a natural ford, a place where this major river could be most easily crossed; later, it would have been a likely place to build a permanent bridge. Also, the swampy Elbe valley is narrowest at this point—only seven kilometers broad, but over twenty kilometers wide both north and south of this place. A river crossing here would, therefore, greatly shorten the expanse of swampy, difficult ground to be traversed.¹⁴⁸ The most recent archaeological work at Magdeburg has uncovered traces of fortification ditches dating to the sixth century, which may be identifiable with the Thuringian state of that time. Other finds datable to ca. 800 must refer to the establishment of a Carolingian presence.¹⁴⁹ The precise location of the Carolingian fort has not been discovered, but it almost certainly was somewhere within the later cathedral complex. At this point, where roads from the west and southwest first reach the left bank of the river opposite an island, there is a high bank suitable for building. The seasonally occupied long-distance traders' emporium or *Wik* would have been situated on the slope under the fort.¹⁵⁰ Thus we could say that the

¹⁴⁸ Albrecht Timm, *Studien zur Siedlungs- und Agrargeschichte Mitteldeutschlands* (Köln: Böhlau-Verlag, 1956), 106 – 7. The placement of an important city at a place where a river channel is cut by islands is evident at Paris and at Rome, and should be considered a standard type of placement. For the case of Rome in this regard, see Michael Rostovtzeff, *Rome*, ed. E. J. Bickerman (Oxford University Press, 1960), 15.

¹⁴⁹ Thomas Weber, "Urban Archaeology in Magdeburg: Results and Prospects," in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 275 – 81. Depending on the interpretation of the discovered trench segments, the enclosure could have been from 3 – 4 up to 10 – 12 ha in extent. Charlemagne first reached the Elbe in the vicinity of Magdeburg during the campaign of 780, when he subdued the Nordthüringgau; see Ernst, *Die Nordwestslaven und das fränkische Reich*, 122. The fort and border post at Magdeburg must have been established at some time between 780 and 805.

¹⁵⁰ Fritz Rörig, *Magdeburgs Entstehung und die ältere Handelsgeschichte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952), 40. As Magdeburg was one of the earliest objects of interest to German scholars working on issues

area that was eventually built-up in medieval times seems to have been determined by slight differences in elevation along the riverbank.¹⁵¹

Unlike the flourishing Rhenish urban centers with local demand factors in abundance, the *emporium* or *wik* at ninth-century Magdeburg was a frontier post with few resident demand factors. The *wik* was the scene of very lively activity only at those times that the merchant caravans would arrive and set up booth and shop for exchange with the Slavs who would come from the other side of the river, but it was largely deserted during most of the year. Rörig insists that there was no permanent merchant settlement here until the time of Otto I. The caravans would come and go regularly, and Magdeburg was in essence a “Jahrmarkt bestimmt für den Grenzverkehr” —the location for a fair serving the cross-border traffic. Rörig has almost nothing to say about the garrison of the fort, except that it probably required the services of a few resident craftsmen and perhaps one or two representatives of the merchants’ groups, who would remain in the *wik* during the off season to oversee the maintenance of the few buildings and guard whatever wares might be stored there.¹⁵²

It seems that nothing is known about the size of the garrison, nor about the manner and frequency with which the troops and commanders were rotated through the post. Timm suggests that there was a settlement here serving as a year-round market already in the ninth century, despite Rörig’s assertions to the contrary. He also speaks of peasant villages in the lowlands immediately surrounding the growing town in the tenth century, which supplied it with foodstuffs.¹⁵³ Lechner, meanwhile, has identified several pre-Ottonian establishments in the area: the fort, the monastery of St. Mauritius, a

of trade and urbanization in the future German East, many of the fundamental works are of a considerable vintage.

¹⁵¹ There is some evidence that Magdeburg’s original *suburbium* was taking shape in several straggling settlements and religious foundations on the roads approaching the *Kastel* and *Wik* from the west and southwest. As this area was prone to flooding, however, the great expansion of the city carried out by Otto I and his Queen Editha in the mid-tenth century extended instead to another plot of high riverbank just north of the original fortifications. This is the high medieval mercantile center of the town known as the Altmarkt around the Johanniskirche. Georg Lechner, “Die Anfänge der öffentlichen Wohlfahrts- und Gesundheitspflege in Magdeburg,” in *Städtewesen und Bürgertum als geschichtliche Kräfte: Gedächtnisschrift für Fritz Rörig*, ed. A. von Brandt and W. Koppe (Lübeck: Verlag Max Schmidt, 1953), 468 – 71.

¹⁵² Rörig, *Magdeburgs Entstehung und die ältere Handelsgeschichte*, 14, 26. Rörig emphasizes that the merchants traveled in large groups and he invariably refers to these groups as “caravans.”

¹⁵³ Timm, *Studien zur Siedlungs- und Agrargeschichte Mitteleuropas*, 108, 114.

Carolingian manor and a St. Stephen's church, the latter two along the roads leading up to the fort from the south. In his view, a passage from Thietmar indicates a residential area south of the fort as well.¹⁵⁴ These hints may suggest that the presence of the officially approved fort and *wik* had encouraged further accretions and that, by the beginning of the tenth century, the place was showing signs of haphazard growth with increasing density of population.

Conditions along the newly-formed Carolingian frontier in the Elbe region in the early ninth century are, perhaps, even more clearly illustrated in and around Hamburg near the mouth of the river. As was the case further upstream in the area around Magdeburg, the many kilometers-broad floodplain of the Elbe in its lower reaches tended to be waterlogged and marshy, with numerous islands and the braided channels of tributary streams. The marshy floodplain is delimited sharply by the edges of the relatively dry, uneroded tableland of gravel soils (called *Geest* in the German literature) that forms the surface over most of the areas on both sides of the Elbe estuary.¹⁵⁵ Carolingian Hamburg or *Hamaburg* was situated at the interface of the *Geest* with the marshy floodplain and at a spot where two small tributaries of the Elbe, the Alster and the Bille, formed a narrow peninsula.¹⁵⁶

Nordalbingia, or that part of Saxon territory lying north of the lower Elbe, became a key component of the Frankish position along the Elbe in the ninth century, and its history reflects the primacy of military, diplomatic, and even missionary considerations for the Franks over those of commerce in this area. Briefly (804 – 808), Charlemagne had ceded this territory north of the Elbe to his Slav allies, the Abodrites, as a reward for helping him vanquish and deport the Saxons. Abodrite weakness in the face of Danish aggression, however, convinced Charlemagne that he would have to organize the defense

¹⁵⁴ Lechner, "Die Anfänge der öffentlichen Wohlfahrts- und Gesundheitspflege in Magdeburg," 469 – 71.

¹⁵⁵ Data on the geology and topography of the lower Elbe area are from Reinhard Schindler, *Ausgrabungen in Alt Hamburg: Neue Ergebnisse zur Frühgeschichte der Hansestadt* (Hamburg: Gesellschaft der Freunde des vaterländischen Schul- und Erziehungswesens, 1957), 103 – 5. Abb. 38 shows clearly the contrasting areas of open water, marshy floodplain, and *Geest* around the lower Elbe and the adjoining coast of the North Sea.

¹⁵⁶ Schindler, *Ausgrabungen in Alt Hamburg*, 103 – 4. So far as archaeology has been able to prove, there was no Roman, Saxon, or Slav settlement of much significance on this site before the early ninth century. See also reports of later excavations at Hamburg in Ralf Busch, ed., *Domplatzgrabung in Hamburg: Teil I* (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1995), which, however, do little to overturn Schindler's interpretations.

of Nordalbingia on the basis of a Frankish occupation of the country.¹⁵⁷ In 809, however, the Franks' first move into the territory north of the Elbe was not directed to Hamburg. Instead, Charlemagne ordered one *comes* Egbert to cross the Elbe and build a fort at Esesfeld, on the river Stör, near modern Itzehoe about fifty-five kilometers northwest of Hamburg. A glance at the map makes clear that this position was designed to counter strategically the Danish positions along the Eider river, the Dänewerke, and Haithabu. Indeed, it would appear to be much more powerfully placed there both as a threat to the Danes and as a support for the Abodrites of Wagria than would be the case with a position at Hamburg.

The decade after the founding of Esesfeld saw continued instability in Nordalbingia, including a combined Danish and Abodrite attack on the place. Louis the Pious (814 – 840) was able to intervene in the internal affairs of Abodritia as well as to take advantage of dynastic strife within Denmark. The next strategic development reported in the sources again bypassed Hamburg. In 822, Louis built a fort at Delbende, in a river valley on the north bank of the Elbe somewhere near Lauenburg, in the southwestern corner of Abodrite Polabia, i.e. about forty kilometers east of Hamburg; it is reported that the local inhabitants (Slavs) were driven away from the vicinity of the fort. As did Esesfeld against the Danes, the establishment of Delbende made excellent strategic sense at a time when the Franks were having recurrent problems with their erstwhile Abodrite allies.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, Delbende can be seen in relationship to Bardowick, some 12-15 kilometers south of the Elbe, on the Ilmenau not far north of Lüneburg, an important *entrepôt*, which Charlemagne took care to secure as early as

¹⁵⁷ Schindler, *Ausgrabungen in Alt Hamburg*, 114 – 6, wishes to associate this period with certain finds of pottery and a burn layer. The political and military developments of the lower Elbe region in the first decade of the ninth century are covered in detail by Ernst, *Nordwestslaven und das fränkische Reich*, 173 – 86. The main primary source of information about military and diplomatic events on the northeastern frontier of the Frankish empire are the *Annales regni Francorum*, which, however, break off in 829. A reissue of the 1895 MGH edition is *Annales regni Francorum*, ed. Reinhold Rau (Quellen zur karolingische Reichsgeschichte, Teil 1) (Darmstadt, 1955).

¹⁵⁸ For Frankish relations with Danes and Slavs and their strategic aims along the lower Elbe and towards Scandinavia during the reign of Louis the Pious, see Ernst, “Karolingische Nordostpolitik zur Zeit Ludwigs des Frommen,” 81 – 95.

805.¹⁵⁹ This advance to Delbende might have connections with the trade routes crossing the Elbe in this area.

The first mention of *Hamaburg* occurs in the *Vita Anskarii*, according to which Louis the Pious in late 831, upon Ansgar's return from his first journey to Sweden, decided to erect a missionary archbishopric on the north bank of the Elbe at this place. Presumably, Ansgar's seat would not have been placed in a wholly undeveloped location but rather in one with preexisting defensive works and church buildings. However, it is impossible to date any such structures either from written or from archaeological sources.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, extensive excavations have made certain that an early ninth-century Carolingian border fort existed on the site: a rounded rectangular structure of about 100 meters on a side, composed of an earthen rampart and ditch, reinforced with planking on the outside and with a palisade along the top, large enough to accommodate a garrison of a few hundred men and a modest clerical establishment.¹⁶¹

As becomes clear from further wording in Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*, however, the border post at *Hamaburg* comprised not only a Carolingian military-ecclesiastical complex, which was its official function, but also an unofficial civilian or mercantile settlement. Thus in 845, when *Hamaburg* was attacked and destroyed by Vikings, Rimbert speaks of the archbishop organizing the residents of both the *urbs* and of the *suburbium* for defense, and, after the failure of this defense, of the complete destruction

¹⁵⁹ Ernst, *Nordwestslaven und das fränkische Reich*, 175 – 7. This location for Bardowick is argued by Wolf, “Die slavische Westgrenze in Nord- und Mitteldeutschland im Jahre 805,” 30 – 42. It agrees with the location indicated in Schindler, *Ausgrabungen in Alt Hamburg*, Abb. 38. Notably, the Diederhof Capitulary 44.7 of 805 does not mention *Hamaburg* among the trading posts on the Elbe frontier that were evidently of importance to the Franks.

¹⁶⁰ Gerhard Theuerkauf, “Die Hamburger Region von den Sachsenkriegen Karls I. bis zur Gründung des Erzbistums (772 – 864),” in *Domplatzgrabung in Hamburg: Teil I*, ed. Ralf Busch (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1995), 13, argues that a fort was built at *Hamaburg* between 817 and 822, i.e. during the time that Frankish relations with the Abodrites were worsening, after the building of Esesfeld but before the building of Delbende. The sequence of Carolingian fort-building on the lower Elbe would, then, move neatly upstream from west to east. There is, however, no compelling reason to prefer this sequence.

¹⁶¹ For details of the excavations and the reconstruction of the size, shape, and structure of the fort see Schindler, *Ausgrabungen in Alt Hamburg*, 66 – 74, 118 – 25; with some revisions in Caroline Schulz, “Heidenwall oder Hammaburg: Eine Neubewertung der Pressehausgrabung,” in *Domplatzgrabung in Hamburg: Teil I*, ed. Ralf Busch (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1995), 62 – 3. Caroline Schulz, “Befunde auf dem Hamburger Domplatz,” in *Domplatzgrabung in Hamburg: Teil I*, ed. Ralf Busch (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1995), 49, enumerates the sequence of known or implied wooden churches at Hamburg from the ninth to the early eleventh centuries.

of both the *civitas* and the *vicus*.¹⁶² While we need not imagine that this “urbs” or “civitas” was particularly large or splendid, the terminology does indicate quite certainly that in 845 *Hamaburg* had already a complex character. In other words, while the official part of the settlement occupied the low elevation of *Geest* between the marshy beds of the Aller and the Bille, a settlement of traders, craftsmen, and food suppliers occupied the marshy fringes of the *Geest* elevation, making use of the navigational access afforded by these small river channels. Their presence shows clearly in the archaeological discovery of workshops, cattle sheds, and docks that were built upon pristine marsh-ground at the foot of the fort. Moreover, while the sources speak of long-lasting desolation of the official settlement after the attack of 845, archaeology shows that the structures of the traders and craftsmen were rebuilt almost immediately, giving that part of the settlement an unbroken continuity from the early ninth century onwards.¹⁶³

We see, then, that commercial interests followed hard on the heels of Carolingian military and ecclesiastical activities in the Elbe frontier region, even in places that were not recognized officially as *emporia* sites. The nature of the remains found in the marsh settlement at *Hamaburg*, down to the earliest layers, suggest commerce and crafts production, including coins, weights, fancy jewelry, and charred grain. The fact that there is no discernible break in the archaeological evidence of the commercial settlement suggests further that this commerce did not depend exclusively upon supplying the up-slope military-ecclesiastic establishment, but that it could exist on its own even while the official installations remained in abeyance for a decade or two.¹⁶⁴

It is known that Charlemagne demanded and received the assistance of Frisian maritime assets during his campaigns on the Elbe, particularly in 789.¹⁶⁵ The route between northern Frisia and Jutland of course passed across the Elbe estuary, so it would be no great surprise that Frisian ships had found their way into the river for their own

¹⁶² *Vita Anskarii* 16.

¹⁶³ Schindler, *Ausgrabungen in Alt Hamburg*, 14 – 35. Schindler believes that the extensive preservation of the fort structures is due in part to the circumstance that it was not rebuilt immediately, and there was natural accumulation on top of the destruction layer (p. 74).

¹⁶⁴ A rebuilt church must have existed in Hamburg by the 960s at the latest, because the banished Pope Benedict the Grammarian was, at Otto I's orders, detained in Hamburg and died there in July, 965. Schulz, “Befunde auf dem Hamburger Domplatz,” 49.

¹⁶⁵ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 29 – 30, 212.

purposes. Nevertheless, as the evidence at Hamburg indicates, the opening of the Saxon rivers to significant traffic did not predate the establishment of a Frankish military and political presence in the Elbe region. During the ninth century, it appears that Frisian traders contributed to the development of Saxony from two intersecting directions: from the North Sea inland up the Ems and the Weser and its tributaries, and from the Rhine along the roads to Magdeburg. Particularly, Charlemagne himself chose one of the sites of the ecclesiastical network that was supposed to help to assimilate and pacify the newly won Saxon territories because of its position on a river accessible to Frisian sailors from the north at the juncture of a public road.¹⁶⁶

The road in question was the main transverse route through Saxony from the Rhine to the Elbe. From Köln, the main route ran to Dortmund, Soest and Paderborn, and from there branched onwards either via Hameln, Hildesheim, and Brunswick or via Corvey, Gandersheim, Goslar, and Halberstadt, both branches meeting again at Magdeburg. Each of these places had its royal fort, and many of them were also elevated to the status of bishop's sees or became the location for abbeys. All of these foundations were in place already by the end of the reign of Louis the Pious in 840.¹⁶⁷ Other major routes connected to the Elbe frontier from the area of Mainz and Frankfurt through southern Hesse, through the Lahngau or the Wetterau, either northwards through Amöneburg, Buraburg and Eresburg to the aforementioned major west – east route or via Fulda to Erfurt in Thuringia.¹⁶⁸ In general, the lines of Frankish military campaigns and the subsequent network of administrative and trade routes followed the same

¹⁶⁶ The place is Eltze, on the Leine river. See Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 215 and map Figure 49 on pp. 216 – 17. In the companion source volume (p. 342) Lebecq quotes the *Saxon Annalist* s.a. 815: “sede episcopatus dignam iudicavit, tum propter delicatam ipsius loci amenitatem, tum propter confluentem negotiandi commoditatem, quippe cum naves Fresie de Wisara per Leinam ascendentes eundem locum locupletare, publicus etiam usitatissimusque viarum transitus celeberrimum possent reddere.” The original is in *MGH Scriptores* 6, ed. G. Waitz (Hanover, 1844), 570 – 1.

¹⁶⁷ Hans Planitz, *Die Deutsche Stadt im Mittelalter: Von der Römerzeit bis zu den Zunftkämpfen* (Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1954), 43 – 7 and 50 – 3, discusses the early development of these northern German towns.

¹⁶⁸ See Hardt, “Linien und Säume, Zonen und Räume,” 43 Abb. 1, for a clear map of the roads and the major points on these roads as far as Eresburg and Erfurt.

geographical imperatives through central and northern Germany as the Romans had followed many centuries earlier.¹⁶⁹

The conditions of exchange along the Elbe frontier of the Carolingian empire ca. 800 depended, thus, on the relatively unmobilized economies on both sides of the river in the eighth century—both among the Saxons and among the Eastelbian Slavs. As with the Roman advance to the Rhine and the Danube some eight centuries earlier, the case here was one of economic stimulus following closely upon a military and political advance to a new position that had, in effect, gone beyond the range of previously established regular trading contacts. Once in place, however, the stimulus of the military and political frontier had the effect of catalyzing socio-economic developments both on the Saxon and on the Slavic side. These developments took up the bulk of the ninth century. It seems likely, however, that already in 805, at the time of the promulgation of the regulations in the Diederhof Capitulary 44.7, the Elbe frontier was the target for international trade interests, and that the demand generated by merchants coming overland from Mainz and other commercial centers on the Rhine was contributing greatly to the economic mobilization of the Elbe region.¹⁷⁰

By contrast, there can be little doubt about the importance of the North Sea and Baltic trade to the overall economic system of the Carolingian empire, both as a stimulus to production in the Rhine provinces and as a source of supply of exotic goods. Indeed, the route from Frisia to Denmark formed one of the three main limbs of the Frisian wholesale trading network, with the Rhine and the connection to Anglo-Saxon England forming the other two. The early establishment of the route to Denmark and the focus of Frankish diplomatic or missionary efforts in this direction underline the importance of this exchange connection to both the Franks and to the Scandinavians. It also reveals that the condition of production and exchange systems in the Scandinavian lands themselves was relatively advanced, though Scandinavian polities lacked, as yet, the bureaucratic administrative trappings of the Carolingian state.

¹⁶⁹ See Colin M. Wells, *The German Policy of Augustus: An Examination of the Archaeological Evidence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), foldout map following p. 323, for an overview of the geographical conditions.

¹⁷⁰ For the discussion of these effects, see Section 7.2, subsection *The southern shore and the Slavs* below.

In England, however, the Frankish world had a partner in economic exchange that was following a trajectory of development most conformable to that on the continent. The latest research data show that England was developing rapidly in the later seventh and eighth centuries, and that hierarchical networks of distribution funneled imports and exports through the primary *emporium* locations such as London down to a variety of lesser sites along riverways and into the countryside. In terms of bulk trade, this one of the three main limbs of the Frisian wholesale network probably was the greatest and most lucrative, though perhaps unable to compete with the Scandinavian limb for certain exotic items, mainly silver and slaves. The Anglo-Saxons of the eighth century shared, moreover, a Latin Christian cultural affinity with the Franks and were beginning to develop legal forms, such as charters of trading privileges, that were analogous to Carolingian forms.

It is fair to say, nevertheless, that the North Sea connection from Frisia to Denmark offered to the Carolingian empire its most far-reaching northward opening. It activated intensive exchange relations with the great world of the North, itself. But in addition, through the mediation of the North, it drew the Latin Christian western end of the European continent into the full circuit of western Eurasian exchange impulses which, from the mid-eighth century onwards, flowed to the Islamic world over Russia as well as over the Mediterranean. Accordingly, it will be necessary to take a closer look at the Baltic Sea region, both in its own right as a thriving economic zone in the eighth and ninth centuries with its own characteristics, and as a link in the larger circuit.

7.2 The Baltic Sea Realm

Broadly speaking, the North, which along with the lands of European Russia, of Islam, of Byzantium, and of the Carolingian-dominated west of the European continent comprises one of the four distinct economic and cultural “worlds” of western Eurasia in the early Middle Ages,¹⁷¹ is almost synonymous geographically with the Baltic Sea basin. This catchment area includes practically all of Sweden, all of Finland, the northwestern corner

¹⁷¹ For the definition and summary of the “four worlds” system as I originally conceived it, see Section 6.1, subsection *The geographic outline* above. Subsequently, it was decided to include European Russia as a fifth “world,” independent of the North.

of Russia, all of the modern Baltic States, practically all of present-day Poland, and parts of northeastern Germany.¹⁷² For the purposes of this study, the Norwegian coast and southwestern Sweden, all of Jutland and the Danish islands, and the Elbe with its tributaries between Lauenburg and the Erzgebirge will be considered as belonging primarily to the Baltic-centered system.¹⁷³

The territory thus outlined comprises both the Scandinavian nations and those Western Slavs who lived between the Elbe and the Vistula but north of the Erzgebirge – Sudeten – Carpathian chain, as well as Baltic and Finnic peoples of the eastern Baltic. All of the major ethno-linguistic constituent groups of the Baltic region participated in its exchange systems. As Paul Barford puts it:

[T]he southern coasts of the Baltic have been relatively neglected in considerations of early medieval European trade networks, despite the fact that they are the obvious focus of attention for Scandinavian sites facing them. The evidence suggests that the Baltic was an area of maritime contact no less vibrant than the contemporary North Sea or Mediterranean.¹⁷⁴

In other words, this system needs to be considered in its own right as a zone of production, exchange, and transit of goods in addition to the fact that, as a whole, it interacted intensively in the eighth and ninth centuries with the North Sea trading system discussed in Section 7.1 above.

There are certain features which unite the North as a region in contrast with the cultural and economic worlds of Latin Christendom, Byzantium, and the Caliphate. First, in the eighth and ninth century the entire region was, as yet, largely unaffected by the international monotheisms of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, so that its cult practices

¹⁷² For an exceptionally clear image of the Baltic Sea basin, see Nils Blomkvist, *The Discovery of the Baltic: The Reception of a Catholic World-System in the European North (AD 1075 – 1225)* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 12, Fig. 1: “The Baltic Rim, drainage system.” Blomkvist includes the lands draining into the Kattegat (northeastern Jutland and the southwest coast of Sweden) as if they were part of the Baltic, which technically should be seen to end at the Sund and the Bælts.

¹⁷³ This procedure can be justified in the same way that reference can be made to a “Mediterranean” communications and exchange system, even where some of the areas that functionally belong to that system technically lie outside of its watershed or of its environmental zone. On the geologic and climatologic characteristics of the Baltic region, see discussion in Section 3.1 above.

¹⁷⁴ Paul Barford, “Silent Centuries: The Society and Economy of the Northwestern Slavs,” in *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 74.

were still responding primarily to indigenous lines of development in each sub-regional area. A practical consequence of this was that, in Scandinavia and the West Slav lands during the period covered in the present study, the Christian Church had no chance to play the kind of institutional, economically mobilizing role that it did in the Carolingian realms and in Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁷⁵

Second, the North had no pre-existing local traditions of centralized, bureaucratic state-building of the type represented in the Caliphate, Byzantium, and the post-Roman Latin Christian west. Despite peripheral contact with the Roman state and with various post-Roman polities to the south of the region, which may have had a role in inspiring greater elite mobilization during the late Roman and Merovingian periods, the development of a greater degree of socio-political hierarchy within these societies also was, throughout the eighth and ninth centuries, still following local impulses rather than conforming to imported models.¹⁷⁶ Practically, this meant that the incipient states in the north did not yet have written laws, bureaucratic regulations of trade, and writs of privilege such as we find, for example, in the Frankish empire and in the contemporary Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

Finally, the North also had no local tradition of urbanization such as we find in the Ancient Mediterranean world and that was transmitted from that world to the

¹⁷⁵ See Section 6.4, subsection *The role of the abbeys* and Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and England* above for the economic role of the Church in the western lands. Despite the efforts of missionaries such as Anskar in the ninth century, Christianity did not gain a permanent *institutional* presence in Denmark until the later tenth century and the eleventh century in Norway and Sweden; see Birgit and Peter Sawyer, “Christianization and Church Organization,” in idem, *Medieval Scandinavia: From Conversion to Reformation, circa 800 – 1500* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 100 – 12. Also in the West Slav lands north of Bohemia and Moravia, stone churches and permanent bishoprics did not antedate the tenth century; see Sebastian Brather, *Archäologie der westlichen Slawen: Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Ostmitteleuropa* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 335 – 54.

¹⁷⁶ See Sawyer and Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia*, 49 – 57, for a brief outline of state-formation in the Scandinavian lands. For greater detail, see Claus Krag, “The Creation of Norway”; Else Roesdahl, “The Emergence of Denmark and the Reign of Harald Bluetooth”; and Thomas Lindkvist, “The Emergence of Sweden,” all in *The Viking World*, ed. Stefan Brink with Neil Price (London: Routledge, 2008), 645 – 51, 652 – 64, and 668 – 74, respectively. For the West Slavic lands along the southern shores of the Baltic in the eighth and ninth centuries, a useful and up-to-date introduction to issues in state-building is Christian Lübke, “Ests, Slavs and Saxons: Ethnic Groups and Political Structures,” in *Wulfstan’s Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 50 – 7. For Poland, see Andrzej Buko, “Unknown Revolution: Archaeology and the Beginnings of the Polish State,” in *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 162 – 78.

Temperate European provinces of the erstwhile Roman empire.¹⁷⁷ In the lands around the Baltic in the eighth and ninth centuries, cities such as contemporary Paris, or Köln, or London had not existed, hitherto. This meant that the demand factors associated with emerging central places such as Skiringssal (southern Norway), Tissø (on Sjælland), and Uppåkra (in Skåne) were of a much lower order than those emanating from the numerous towns and cities in Carolingia, Byzantium, and the Caliphate.

The pre-state and pre-urban conditions prevailing in the Baltic region in the eighth and ninth centuries did not, however, hinder an accelerated engagement in exchange relations with neighboring worlds, both to the west and to the east, and an equally rapid evolution of socio economic relations within the Baltic realm itself. It is one of the constant themes of the present study that various types and levels of exchange—including exchange relations of a commercial or entrepreneurial nature—may coexist, and that hierarchical, centralized socio-political systems are not a prerequisite for widespread entrepreneurial behavior. The purpose of the following subsections will be to explore the evolution of exchange-related behaviors in the eighth and ninth centuries, first in Scandinavia and then in the Slavic lands along the southern Baltic shore, especially in regard to the new openings for increasingly lively long-distance trade contacts that emerged during the eighth.

Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia

At the outset, it should be noted that the periodization reflected in the above subtitle is rather at odds with the traditional understanding of Scandinavian or “Viking” history. By that convention, the Norse people or Vikings break quite suddenly and dramatically into the orderly Carolingian reconstruction of Latin Christendom with their 793 raid on

¹⁷⁷ This point is emphasized in Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market,” 209 – 10. The literature on urbanization in Viking-Age Scandinavia is vast and expanding. See, for example, Anders Andrén, “The Early Town in Scandinavia,” in *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1989), 173 – 77; Björn Ambrosiani and Helen Clarke, *Towns in the Viking Age* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991); Johan Callmer, “Urbanization in Scandinavia and the Baltic Region c. AD 700 – 1100: Trading Places, Centres and Early Urban Sites,” in *Birka Studies 3* (Stockholm, 1994), 50 – 90; and, in an updated version, Johan Callmer, “Urbanisation in Northern and Eastern Europe, ca. AD 700 – 1100,” in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 233 – 70.

Lindisfarne, ushering in a period of strife and upset that does not fully resolve itself until the events of 1066.¹⁷⁸

Similarly, the bracketing of the eighth and ninth centuries as a unit of focus dissects an important phase in Scandinavia's international exchange relations from the point of view of Scandinavian contacts across Russia with the Islamic world. This eastward orientation originated around the middle of the eighth century, peaked in the earlier tenth century, but then experienced a definite reversion to a western focus by the turn of the millennium.¹⁷⁹ The inflow of Islamic silver into the Baltic region certainly was having important effects on the nature of exchange at the major trading centers such as Birka and Kaupang by the middle of the ninth century, and this silver became a generalized medium of exchange throughout the more settled areas of Scandinavia in the tenth century.¹⁸⁰

However, it is the purpose of this Section neither to review the history of the Viking Age nor to reconstruct the totality of the Scandinavian Rus' adventure. It is, rather, to show how developments in Scandinavia coincide with and reinforce the developments in exchange relations that were ongoing in the more western parts of Europe, for which the eighth and ninth centuries may conveniently be labeled as Carolingian. This periodization matches that adopted for the Mediterranean side of the Carolingian exchange networks in Michael McCormick's *Origins of the European*

¹⁷⁸ See for example the classic summary of the Vikings and their effects in Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, vol. 1: *The Growth of Ties of Dependence*, trans. L. A. Manyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 15 – 38. A more contemporary review of the criteria for periodizing the Viking Age can be had in Bjorn Myrhe, "The Beginning of the Viking Age—Some Current Archaeological Problems," in *Viking Revaluations*, ed. Anthony Faulkes and Richard Perkins (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1993), 182 – 204.

¹⁷⁹ The relations of Scandinavia with European Russia and the Islamic lands were brought into more detailed focus particularly by the works of Thomas S. Noonan. See especially the collection of essays from the 1980s in Thomas S. Noonan, *The Islamic World, Russia and the Vikings, 750 – 900: The Numismatic Evidence* (Aldershot: Ashgate/Variorum, 1998); idem, "The Vikings in the East: Coins and Commerce," in *Birka Studies 3* (Stockholm, 1994), 215 – 36; idem, "Volga Bulgharia's Tenth-Century Trade with Samanid Central Asia," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii aevi* 11 (2000/01): 140 – 218; and the concise overview in idem, "Scandinavians in European Russia," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*, ed. Peter Sawyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 134 – 55.

¹⁸⁰ For the development of the silver-based exchange system in Scandinavia, depending primarily on eastern sources of the metal, see the essays in James Graham-Campbell, Søren Sindbæk, and Gareth Williams, eds., *Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society in Scandinavia, AD 800 – 1100* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011). Reference to the various aspects of the issue covered in the individual chapters will be made in the discussion below.

Economy, which thereby facilitates comparisons between the southern and the northern sides of the western Eurasian trade system.¹⁸¹

As was remarked in the introduction to Section 7.1 above, a milestone in the North Sea trade system was the more-or-less simultaneous establishment ca. 700 of Hamwic in Wessex and Ribe on the southwestern coast of Jutland. Both were archetypical examples of the northern *emporium* type, including regular plots for traders and craftsmen, a street grid, and evidence for long-distance trade and high-value craft production on site. Both *emporia* have been explicitly tied to royal initiative in their founding and oversight. In the case of Hamwic, it seems clear that this *emporium* was, indeed, a product of royal initiative on the part of King Ine of Wessex, as a conscious effort to bring into Wessex the kind of burgeoning of production and exchange that was proceeding more spontaneously in Kent, East Anglia, and the Midlands in the later seventh century.¹⁸² It is important to stress that the development of Hamwic was a response to conditions in Anglo-Saxon England rather than a quasi-colonial plantation emanating from a Frankish “center.” Similarly, if an *emporium* appeared simultaneously in Jutland, then we need to inquire about the conditions in later seventh- and early eighth-century Denmark that made such an emergence possible.

We have seen that Denmark in the late Roman and Merovingian periods was unusually stable and prosperous.¹⁸³ A revolution in agricultural methods and land-use patterns, which resulted in larger, more prosperous, and more hierarchically organized peasant villages—essentially identical to the peasant-directed socio-economic revolution

¹⁸¹ McCormick, *Origins*, begins his analysis from ca. AD 300, but the bulk of his evidence and discussion concerns the 700 – 900 period. For a summary overview of the western Eurasian trade system as a whole, including especially the North and the Carolingian west, see Section 7.3 below. Cf. the justifications for choosing ca. 800 as a cut-off point in Wickham, *Framing*, 5, and his summary of the salient characteristics of the 400 – 800 period (pp. 819 – 31). Cf. also Matthew Innes, *Introduction to Early Medieval Western Europe, 300 – 900: The Sword, the Plough and the Book* (London: Routledge, 2007), xv – xvi, and his argument for considering the Carolingian period as one that establishes a unified “template” in western Europe upon which regional variations built after ca. 900. Interestingly, in his latest overview of Danish history, Klavs Randsborg, *The Anatomy of Denmark: Archaeology and History from the Ice Age to the Present* (London: Duckworth, 2009), deviates both from the traditional Viking-Age and the Rus’-oriented perspectives, dividing that portion of his survey into “Lords and Sea-Kings (700 – 950)” and “Kingdom Builders (950 – 1050).”

¹⁸² See Palmer, “Hinterlands,” 58 – 60, and the discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and England* above.

¹⁸³ See discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* above.

that Joachim Henning has identified in the German lands along the former imperial frontier¹⁸⁴—took place in Denmark from the third century. This development was accompanied by evidence for greater elite control over ritual behaviors, and the emergence of central places—especially the remarkably rich Gudme – Lundeberg complex on the east side of the central island of Fyn. In the sixth and seventh centuries, we find a society with few signs of conflicts, within which central places and rich elite-complexes such as Dankirke in southwestern Jutland, Tissø on Sjælland, and Uppåkra in Skåne continued to develop, including evidence for the import of prestige goods from the Merovingian world that was Scandinavia’s primary extra-regional influence during this period.¹⁸⁵ In comparison with sixth- to eighth-century England, contemporary Denmark or certain Danish central places like Gudme were wealthier, but with a less “linear” political development.¹⁸⁶ Further, Wickham recognizes settlement hierarchy in Denmark, present from the fifth – sixth centuries in any case:

- (1) “well-organized small villages” of five to ten farmsteads, present all over the landscape;
- (2) *stormandsgårder* or “magnate farms,” the residences of local chieftains with more wealth and prestige than ordinary well-to-do village householders;
- (3) central places, including a hall, a port, a cluster of houses;
- (4) “A fourth level, urban centers, did not develop until the eighth century, with Ribe and Hedeby.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ For an overview of his arguments, see again Henning, “Germanisch-romanische Agrarkontinuität.”

¹⁸⁵ See H. Jarl Hansen, “Dankirke: Affluence in Late Iron Age Denmark,” in *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development During the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. K. Randsborg (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1989), 123 – 8; Lars Jørgensen, “Manor and Market at Lake Tissø in the Sixth to Eleventh Centuries: The Danish ‘Productive’ Sites,” in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003), 175 – 207; and Lars Larsson, “The Iron Age Ritual Building at Uppåkra, Southern Sweden,” *Antiquity* 81 (2007): 11 – 25, for details on these centers. For the re-orientation of Scandinavia to a western or Merovingian model for elite culture, see again Ulf Näsman, “The Justinianic Era of South Scandinavia: An Archaeological View,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 277 – 8. See also the discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* above.

¹⁸⁶ Wickham, *Framing*, 372. In general, Wickham’s summary discussion of the development of Denmark parallels the analysis presented here and in Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* above.

¹⁸⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 370 – 1. “Hedeby” and “Haithabu” are alternative terms for the same Viking-Age trading center, the first preferred by Scandinavian writers and the second by Germans. English-language scholarship uses one or the other, arbitrarily.

Wickham characterizes the villages as prosperous, with an independent, free peasantry, and no sign of control of production by the “chieftains.” In the same vein, the elites are stable but they exercise little control. Imports flow uncontrolled at least down to the level of the magnate farms, and the central places in his view are centers of elite aggregation more than centers of political control.

The settlement hierarchy recognized by Wickham needs to be viewed in combination with the proliferation of landing-places around the coastlines of Denmark.¹⁸⁸ While these sites are apparent from the third century onwards, the majority, according to Jens Ulriksen, were established in the seventh and eighth centuries and “probably as part of a common north European development of trade.”¹⁸⁹ Ulriksen ties the increase in landing-places to the development of sail-driven ships in Scandinavia and to the emergence, in effect, of a commercial exchange network that supplied the needs of ordinary villagers for specialized goods as well as supplying prestige goods to the elite:

The many small landing-places do not seem to have developed solely from the nautical activities of local potentates. Their frequency within even short distances along a coast-line implies a broad interest in sea-faring involving a sizeable part of the hinterland population. With the introduction of the sail, small crews of 4 – 5 men could voyage over larger distances in smaller ships, opening up external contacts and extending them to people without the means to muster a large crew.¹⁹⁰

The settlement hierarchy along with the numerous landing-places serving both elite and non-elite settlements suggests a society with the capacity to organize capillary distribution and exchange networks with a degree of penetration to the grass-roots level

¹⁸⁸ Jens Ulriksen, “Danish Sites and Settlements with a Maritime Context, AD 200 – 1200,” *Antiquity* 68 (1994): 797 – 811.

¹⁸⁹ Ulriksen, “Danish Sites and Settlements with a Maritime Context,” 804.

¹⁹⁰ Ulriksen, “Danish Sites and Settlements with a Maritime Context,” 804 – 5; the quote is on p. 805. For the question of ship development in Scandinavia, see the concise review in Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, “Ships as Indicators of Trade in Northern Europe 600 – 1200,” in *Maritime Topography and the Medieval Town: Papers from the 5th International Conference on Waterfront Archaeology in Copenhagen, 14 – 16 May 1998*, ed. Jan Bill and Birthe L. Clausen (Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 1999), 11 – 20. In his view, sails came into use at some indeterminable time between the fifth and eighth centuries (p. 16). For a more detailed treatment, see Gunilla Larsson, *Ship and Society: Maritime Ideology in Late Iron Age Sweden* (Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, 2007), 92 – 9. Cf. the discussion of Frisian ship development in Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 165 – 83.

similar to those of contemporary Anglo-Saxon England; meanwhile, both the English and the southern Scandinavian developments coincide with the expansion of Frisian trading activities in the seventh and eighth centuries.¹⁹¹ But, whereas England by the later seventh century was closely following the Frankish trajectory of development, with coinage mediating much of the exchange, with the institutionalized Church playing a large role in the organization of production and trade networks, and with kings issuing regulatory documents at least from the beginning of the eighth century, these features are either problematical (coinage, royal power) or plainly non-existent (written documents, the Church) in southern Scandinavia at this time. Therefore, the emergence of the more intensively connected exchange systems in and around Denmark in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries must have been constructed according to some alternative principles.

According to the most recent consensus on the issue of exchange media in Scandinavia (and also in the Slavic lands along the southern shores of the Baltic),¹⁹² economies mediated generally through regulated, monopolistic royal coinages such as the Anglo-Saxon sceattas or Carolingian deniers did not prevail in the Scandinavian kingdoms until the late eleventh or twelfth centuries.¹⁹³ In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the dominant exchange medium both at the urban or proto-urban centers and out in the rural areas generally was hack-silver, i.e. weighed (not counted) coins, fragments of coins, fragments of jewelry, and ingots or bars of silver.¹⁹⁴ However, this period of the generalized hack-silver economy in the Baltic only starts, thus, around the close of the period under scrutiny in the present study. In the ninth century, there is little indication that silver was in use as a general medium of exchange out in the countryside, and even at the key *emporium*, such as Kaupang and Birka, the use of hack-silver is not

¹⁹¹ For the origins and expansion of the Frisian North-Sea-and-Rhine trading system, see the discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and Denmark* above.

¹⁹² This consensus underlies the essays collected in Graham-Campbell, Sindbæk, and Williams, eds., *Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society in Scandinavia, AD 800 – 1100* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011), *passim*.

¹⁹³ Gareth Williams, “Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society: An Overview,” in *Silver Economies* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011), 348 – 9.

¹⁹⁴ For the hack-silver economy of the tenth century, see Cecilia von Heijne, “Viking-Age Coin Finds from South Scandinavia”; and Kenneth Jonsson, “Sweden in the Tenth Century: A Monetary Economy?” both in *Silver Economies* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011), 185 – 202, and 245 – 57, respectively.

evident until the mid-ninth century.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, the dominant source of the silver, first at *emporium* and then more generally about half a century later, is eastern, i.e. Islamic dirhams, and western coins remain relatively scarce until the later tenth century, when the sources of Islamic silver had dried up and hoards were henceforth dominated by Anglo-Saxon and German coinage.¹⁹⁶

Notably, all of the aforementioned developments postdate the heyday of Carolingian trade with Scandinavia in the first quarter of the ninth century, and the earliest of them—the emergence of hack-silver at the major *emporium*—comes a century and a half after the foundation of the *emporium* at Ribe and the establishment of more regular trading contacts with the west. Therefore, in the period under study here, we are looking for processes by which Scandinavian society at all levels gradually became accustomed to the use of silver as an exchange medium for most if not absolutely all transactions. It is important to recall, once again, that Scandinavia had no local sources of silver (nor of gold nor bronze), so that the establishment of a silver-based trade system depended, first of all, on the ability of the Scandinavians to gain access to outside sources of silver. Plunder, of course, played some role in the acquisition of silver from the west from the 793 attack on Lindisfarne onwards. However, current evidence suggests that most of the treasure extracted by “Danish” armies in England and Francia in the mid- to late ninth century remained in England and Francia and was not repatriated to the Scandinavian homelands.¹⁹⁷ The bulk of silver in Scandinavia from western sources in the eighth and ninth centuries must, therefore, have arrived there by some peaceful

¹⁹⁵ Svein Harald Gullbekk, “Norway: Commodity Money, Silver and Coin”; Julie Askjem, “The Viking-Age Silver Hoards from Eastern Norway”; and Ingrid Gustin, “Coin Stock and Coin Circulation in Birka,” all in *Silver Economies* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011), 93 – 111, 173 – 84, and 227 – 44, respectively.

¹⁹⁶ This is consistent in the evidence from sites all across Scandinavia. See, for example, Gullbekk, “Norway: Commodity Money, Silver and Coin,” 97 – 100; Heijne, “Viking-Age Coin Finds from South Scandinavia,” 192 – 3; Gustin, “Coin Stock and Coin Circulation in Birka,” *passim*; Jonsson, “Sweden in the Tenth Century: A Monetary Economy?” 248; and the summary in Williams, “Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society: An Overview,” 349.

¹⁹⁷ Simon Coupland, “Raiders, Traders, Worshipers and Settlers: The Continental Perspective,” in *Silver Economies* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011), 120 – 4.

exchange process, i.e. primarily through trade. The same is even more true for Islamic silver arriving in Scandinavia from the east.¹⁹⁸

The gradual conversion to a metal-based exchange system and the greater commercialization of the Scandinavian economy that went forward during the eighth and ninth centuries, though facilitated by the increased availability of exchange opportunities and silver influx both from the west (from ca. 700) and from the east (from ca. 750), derives directly from the socio-economic conditions already attained in southern Scandinavia by the end of the seventh century: a productive, agricultural village society, a stable social and settlement hierarchy, and a sea-borne communications network with a proliferation of landing-places serving both elite and non-elite settlements. To explain the unfolding of more commercialized exchange relations from these conditions, including the emergence of a new valuation of silver and of more intensive overseas contacts, traditional models are insufficient. Both Søren Sindbæk and Dagfinn Skre have criticized the lately dominant model of display, to prestige gifts, to incipient markets progression, including the emphasis on gift-giving and plunder, the focus on incipient towns with their long-distance trade and coinage, and the Substantivist notion of “embedded” vs. “neutral,” market-mediated exchange generally.¹⁹⁹ In the place of these constructions, Sindbæk and Skre propose an alternative understanding of eighth- and ninth-century development in Scandinavia that recognizes and expands upon the basic socio-economic conditions already summarized above. Most essentially, in Sindbæk’s summary, based on the latest data:

¹⁹⁸ Noonan has stressed the contrasting geographic conditions of the northwestern European seas vs. the Russian river routes, and how the latter would tend to make the typical Viking-style raid, which was so common in the west, problematical and unattractive in the east. See Noonan, “Scandinavians in European Russia, 135.

¹⁹⁹ Søren M. Sindbæk, “Silver Economies and Social Ties: Long-Distance Interaction, Long-term Investments—and Why the Viking Age Happened,” 41 – 3, and Dagfinn Skre, “Commodity Money, Silver and Coinage in Viking-Age Scandinavia,” 67 – 9, both in *Silver Economies* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011). As Sindbæk, “Silver Economies and Social Ties,” 42 – 3, points out, the Substantivist contrast of embedded vs. disembedded cannot stand because people in embedded systems can and do make calculated exchanges, and people in neoclassical economic systems do not simply pursue narrow self-interest at all times. Further, Skre, “Commodity Money, Silver and Coinage,” 67, remarks: “As I see it, the understanding of Viking-age economy has, for many years now, suffered from two problems: and exaggerated belief in the significance of silver and coinage; and an over-reliance on gift-giving being the main type of exchange in the early Viking Age and before. The consequence of both is that trade in that period is underestimated and underinvestigated.”

They put beyond reasonable doubt three facts: (i) market-type exchange was known and practiced throughout the Viking Age (and even before) in Scandinavia; (ii) it pervaded beyond the rank of elites; and (iii) the apparent scarcity of silver, or precious metal more generally, before the great influx in the ninth century was no hindrance to this.²⁰⁰

The typical, prosperous Scandinavian household produced most of its basic necessities, including grain and livestock, cloth, and simple utensils. Such things could be accumulated as a kind of insurance against future wants, but they also could function as *commodity money*, whereby heads of cattle, measures of grain, and lengths of cloth had not only their own intrinsic value as goods that could be traded to be consumed but also could serve as media for other exchanges and function as units of account.²⁰¹

Through a generally recognized system that assigned relatively constant values to goods that even ordinary village households could produce, the system of *commodity money* went beyond pure barter relations and enabled villagers to obtain materials and specialty objects that normally were not produced at home, including iron, whetstones, finer cloth, shoes, soapstone vessels, jewelry, antler combs, riding gear, weapons, and boats. All such things had to be broadly distributed in the rural economy, and the transactions that effected the distribution were not those of social bonding but those of consumers and craftsmen. Skre describes it as “regular, low-profile trade in necessities, utensils and modest luxuries in local and regional networks.” He states further:

Neither gift-giving, nor Viking raids, nor trade in the period’s few markets and towns can account for the wide distribution of these products in the Viking Age. Exchange with the prime intention of acquiring objects, not to establish social relations, must have existed in a rural context throughout the first millennium and before.²⁰²

As the archaeological material demonstrates, market-oriented exchange behavior was ubiquitous. Among the supporting evidence for widespread distribution and

²⁰⁰ Sindbæk, “Silver Economies and Social Ties,” 43.

²⁰¹ For a detailed discussion on the theory and practice of *commodity money* both in the Viking Age and long after into the High Middle Ages see Skre, “Commodity Money, Silver and Coinage,” 67 – 80.

²⁰² Skre, “Commodity Money, Silver and Coinage,” 68.

circulation of commodities and media of exchange is the fact that hoards regularly contain only one part of a hacked jewelry piece (so the other parts must have ended up elsewhere), the existence of regional patterns in the distribution of objects, which supports the idea of intense regional exchange networks, and the large numbers of single finds of tradable objects found on settlement sites.²⁰³ The landing-places around Denmark clearly were part of these pervasive networks that penetrated to the local level and provided access to specialty goods to local inhabitants. Typical materials found at these sites include traces of bronze casting and finished bronze jewelry, scales and weights, hack-silver, and tools for working with metal and wood—evidence, in other words, for trade and crafts production for the local market.²⁰⁴ The exchange networks extended over and connected all of the areas of Scandinavian settlement from the coasts of Norway, through southern Scandinavia (Denmark) and Middle Sweden, to the shores of the Gulf of Bothnia. An eighth-century grave site from the far northern Lofoten islands off the Norwegian coast, which contained objects ranging from the Arctic (a walrus ivory bead) to Jutland (Ribe brooches) and included gold, and a “chieftain’s” farm in the same area with “Frankish Tating-ware sherds and a gold-foil decorated funnel-beaker. . . illustrates,” as Sindbæk remarks,

how the network of urban trade permeated pre-Viking Scandinavia even to its far corners. In terms that are meaningful for the Age in question, there was no such thing as rural versus urban regions in Scandinavia. Every part of Norway maintained long-distance links with the budding urban network, and the opportunities and competition it generated.²⁰⁵

One of the best examples of the relatively low-value but necessary specialty goods that most Scandinavian households sought to acquire through the above-mentioned

²⁰³ Sindbæk, “Silver Economies and Social Ties,” 43.

²⁰⁴ Ulriksen, “Danish Sites and Settlements with a Maritime Context,” 805. “In general this find-material does not indicate great wealth, and imported goods are scarce” (p. 805).

²⁰⁵ Sindbæk, “Silver Economies and Social Ties,” 59. In my opinion, Sindbæk misuses the term *urban*, which must derive from the inherited notion that there must be a close correlation between intensive exchange networks and urbanism. Essentially, all of Scandinavia in the seventh and earlier eighth centuries might be classified as “rural” but had, nevertheless, pervasive and penetrating local and regional trade systems. The Scandinavian networks included incipient urban centers such as Ribe, but they were in no way caused by such centers.

trade networks were the oval brooches, worn in pairs at the shoulders, that characterize Scandinavian women's dress from the seventh or eighth century through the tenth. With over three thousand examples recovered thus far,²⁰⁶ these brooches are among the most common of Viking-Age finds in Scandinavia. Typically, they were made of bronze which, though ultimately imported, yet was a metal that ordinary Scandinavians could afford.²⁰⁷ Clearly, some of these objects were manufactured on demand at local outlets such as the Danish landing-places. Others, meanwhile, were mass-produced at the top-level trade centers that appeared in Scandinavia from ca. 700 onwards—at Ribe, Kaupang, Haithabu, Birka, Åhus.²⁰⁸ The scale of the quotidian jewelry-manufacturing activities is evident in the many thousands of fragments of molds and crucibles recovered at these sites. Furthermore, the steady increase in size of the oval brooches from some 4cm in length and 10g of bronze ca. 700 to some 8 – 10cm and 100g of metal ca. 900 is yet another index of the steadily increasing wealth of Scandinavian society as a whole during the period under study. Finally, it is important to stress that the oval brooches had not only a utilitarian function but also a role in the construction of social status: they were among the necessary outward signs of a woman of householder (rather than dependent) rank. Every respectable Viking woman had to own a pair.²⁰⁹

Thus, while the market for both utilitarian and prestige objects operated pervasively within Scandinavia even before the appearance of what Wickham calls the fourth level of urban places in the hierarchy of sites,²¹⁰ once these sites began to operate it clearly had a stimulating effect on the pre-existing networks. Regular exchange

²⁰⁶ Sindbæk, "Silver Economies and Social Ties," 50.

²⁰⁷ For bronze jewelry as an affordable choice for ordinary Scandinavians, see the discussion in John Ljungkvist, "Handcrafts," in *The Viking World*, ed. Stefan Brink with Neil Price (London: Routledge, 2008), 189. Bronze was imported as scrap. See also Majvor Östergren, "The Spillings Hoard(s)," in *Silver Economies* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011), 325, for a description of the bronze hoard at Spillings, Gotland, where 20kg of bronze scrap had been buried in a locked wooden chest.

²⁰⁸ For the development and absolute chronology of bronze artifacts at Ribe, see Feveile and Jensen, "Ribe in the 8th and 9th Century," 13, 17 – 19. The larger oval brooches and some other characteristic fibula types date from ca. 790, which Feveile and Jensen suggest as the beginning of the Viking Age. Examples of the same types "are found over most of Scandinavia" (p. 19). Smaller oval brooches were already manufactured during the Late Germanic Iron Age (Denmark, to ca. 780 – 90) and the Vendel period (Sweden, 550 – 800).

²⁰⁹ See the discussion of brooches in Sindbæk, "Silver Economies and Social Ties," 47, 50 – 3. Most of the archaeologically visible material relates to women: oval brooches, glass beads, locks and keys—the possessions of "respectably wealthy" women (p. 53).

²¹⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 371.

relations, first with the West starting ca. 700 and then with the East, brought increasing access both to bronze and to silver, which is reflected not only in the steadily increasing size of the women's bronze oval brooches but also in the steady increase in the frequency and size of silver hoards throughout Scandinavia in the eighth and ninth centuries. As with the oval bronze brooches, the silver hoards represent not only commercial wealth but also social capital. Once silver became more readily available, it was incorporated into the system of *commodity money* alongside the traditional goods that had been used for that purpose. Over the course of the eighth and ninth centuries, silver gradually became the dominant medium both for market exchanges (more flexible and readily divisible than heads of cattle or weapons or pieces of whole jewelry) and for wealth accumulations aimed primarily at social purposes (imperishable compared to cattle, grain, cloth).²¹¹

In Sindbæk's analysis, a society that was concerned primarily with land, livestock, kin, and social status became interested in accumulations of moveable wealth such as silver hoards precisely because it enhanced their ability to store up value and maintain social networks. Above all, such accumulations of moveable wealth facilitated the negotiation of marriages, which were the cornerstone of rural Scandinavian society. In his words:

My suggestion is, then, that a major motivation for affluent Scandinavian peasants to engage in long-distance exchange—and thus enter into a silver economy—was that products acquired in this way could ease some of the most controversial issues of their social networks: the negotiations over the long-term status and personal property with which spouses, women in particular, entered into marriage. The incentive for trade and raids alike, I suggest, was ultimately driven by the hubs of family relations: by marriage and the negotiations of the families connected with it.²¹²

²¹¹ Skre, "Commodity Money, Silver and Coinage," 81 – 3.

²¹² Sindbæk, "Silver Economies and Social Ties," 56. In effect, rather than representing different types of societies as in the Substantivist view, it seems that "disembedded" market activities can serve "embedded" social purposes.

Silver in large quantities was first brought into Scandinavia by Frisian traders, who were already accustomed to conducting their business in scaettas and deniers, around the turn of the eighth century. Henceforth, silver accumulations become visible in Scandinavian deposits some twenty to fifty years after such contact is first made in any particular area.²¹³ The Scandinavians, however, incorporated the greater availability of commercial contacts and the influx of metal into their pre-existing exchange systems and adapted them for their own social purposes.

Both the social or display – prestige and the practical or accumulative – commercial aspects of the increasingly silver-based exchange system are clearly visible in the composition of the hoards. Many of the items, including certain styles of arm- and neck-rings, ingots, and even fragments of jewelry correspond to standardized units of weight and therefore represent metal intended as capital. At the same time, some caches of metal objects appear to represent someone’s personal collection of status symbols such as sets of women’s brooches and beads.²¹⁴ In the eighth and ninth century, while silver was used for commercial transactions at the *emporium*, ordinary Scandinavians outside of such centers tended to use Carolingian silver coins, especially, as items of jewelry for prestige or ritual purposes rather than as exchange media.²¹⁵ Further, the hoard discovered at Duisminde on the southern Danish island of Lolland appears to be a cache of mostly Carolingian prestige objects—weapons fittings and riding equipment of gilded silver, some 1.3kg total. Many of these objects came originally from five distinct Carolingian sets, which had been converted into prestige jewelry, pendants and the like, by local craftsmen working for Danish elite owners of said objects. The sets were buried together sometime after 950, when the objects had ceased to convey the prestige associated with them in the ninth century. Capitalized as a hoard, the objects now had only commodity value.²¹⁶

²¹³ Skre, “Commodity Money, Silver and Coinage,” 81.

²¹⁴ See Anne Pedersen, “Jewellery in Hoards in Southern Scandinavia,” in *Silver Economies* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011), 153 – 72; and Askjem, “Viking-Age Silver Hoards from Eastern Norway,” 177 – 80.

²¹⁵ Coupland, “Raiders, Traders, Worshippers and Settlers,” 119; Askjem, “The Viking-Age Silver Hoards from Eastern Norway,” 180.

²¹⁶ Egon Wamers, “The Duisminde Hoard,” in *Silver Economies* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011), 309 – 20.

Thus, we see that market behavior and display – prestige behavior operated concurrently and at multiple, coexisting hierarchical levels in eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia. All levels and purposes were affected by the increasing availability of metal—especially silver—after ca. 700. The mass of metal in the hoards, in whatever shape it was deposited, usually would have started out as coins—either Carolingian deniers or Islamic dirhams.²¹⁷ In some cases, the silver came to Scandinavia as plunder, but this was most common precisely in those areas of Scandinavia that were most remote from the emerging commercial centers.²¹⁸ Accordingly, to understand the ways by which silver (and bronze and gold) primarily came into Scandinavia, it is necessary to reconstruct the configuration of Scandinavia’s long-distance trading routes, its connections to the west (and to the east), and the nodal points or *emporium*, which anchored the system of extra-regional contacts.²¹⁹

The area of Denmark played a role vis-à-vis the rest of the Scandinavian – Baltic region not unlike the one performed by the Frisians in the North Sea region. Not only was Denmark the readiest access point for contacts coming from the west, from Frisia, along the coast of Saxony.²²⁰ Three major directions or sub-networks of long-distance exchange within the Scandinavian - Baltic region also converged upon Denmark.²²¹ One of these went northwards, first to the Oslo-Fjord area and the *emporium* of Kaupang in Skiringssal. This area was emerging as a political center within eastern Norway during

²¹⁷ Coupland, “Raiders, Traders, Worshippers and Settlers,” 124, remarks upon this when discussing the Viking hoards at Westerkliof, Frisia. The larger of them comprises 1.556kg of silver and thus represents close to a thousand deniers. The largest Viking silver hoard found thus far is the one at Spillings, deposited after 870/71, which totaled 67kg. Östergren, “The Spillings Hoard(s),” 323.

²¹⁸ Sindbæk, “Silver Economies and Social Ties,” 59, puts it thus: “The observation that the earliest Viking raids probably issued from western Norway, which had no towns, rather than from southern Denmark, which had at least one, is no argument against the commercial, and more exactly urban, origin of the Viking phenomenon. On the contrary, it seems natural that a new source of moveable wealth should be sought out by exactly those actors in the network who were geographically most disadvantaged by the existing configuration, and most familiar with investing in extended sea-voyages.”

²¹⁹ Clearly, the argument outlined above favors Michael McCormick’s view regarding the stimulating or catalytic effects of long distance trade while it lends little support to Wickham’s theory that economic mobilization must be a function primarily of demand generated by coercive elites and state structures. See the reference to both Wickham’s and McCormick’s views in Sindbæk, “Silver Economies and Social Ties,” 43 – 4.

²²⁰ See discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and Denmark* above.

²²¹ Herbert Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 8th edition (Neumünster: K. Wachholtz, 1986), 125, makes a similar analysis.

the eighth century, while its trading center at Kaupang dates from ca. 800. It was a top-level site comparable to Birka and Ribe, with a linear layout similar to those already discussed at places like Dorestad and Emden, in this case stretching over 700m along the waterfront.²²² Kaupang shows traces of crafts production and foreign trade similar to those at other *emporia* such as Ribe and Birka, including molds for metal-casting, pottery, loom weights for weaving, glass beads, weights for balance scales, and silver. Kaupang was a major stop on a route that continued up the western coast of Norway—literally, “the way north.”²²³ Indeed, archaeology shows imported goods, including metals and foreign prestige items, reaching as far as the Lofoten islands in the eighth and ninth centuries.²²⁴

Clues about the manner in which these far northern areas could participate in international trade come from a unique source: the account of the voyages of Ohthere, a leading man from the far north of Norway, as recorded in King Alfred’s edition of *Orosius*.²²⁵ A wealthy man in his own country, Ohthere owned some of the usual set of European livestock, including some 20 each of cows, sheep, and pigs, as well as horses for plowing, but he had in addition some hundreds of domesticated reindeer. While these resources would have been primarily for the subsistence of his own household, Ohthere had other sources of income as well. From the Finnic natives of the north (similar to today’s Sami), he collected tribute, which included the pelts of marten, reindeer, and bear, bushels of feathers, and lengths of shioprope made of walrus hide and seal hide. Rope made of walrus hide was considered the best. Moreover, walrus ivory was a

²²² See Lars Pilø, “The Settlement: Extent and Dating,” and Dagfinn Skre, “The Emergence of a Central Place: Skiringssal in the 8th Century,” both in *Kaupang in Skiringssal: Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1*, ed. Dagfinn Skre (Nordske Oldfunn 22) (Oslo: University of Oslo, Museum of Cultural History, 2007), 161 – 78 and 431 – 43, respectively.

²²³ Stefan Brink, “Naming the Land,” in *The Viking World*, ed. Stefan Brink with Neil Price (London: Routledge, 2008), 60 – 1.

²²⁴ Sindbæk, “Silver Economies and Social Ties,” 58 – 9.

²²⁵ Currently, the last word on this account is the collection of papers in Janet Batley and Anton Englert, eds., *Ohthere’s Voyages: A Late 9th-Century Account of Voyages along the Coasts of Norway and Denmark and Its Cultural Context* (Maritime Culture of the North 1) (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 2007). See also “The Accounts of Ohthere and Wulfstan,” in Omeljan Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus’*, vol. 1: *Old Scandinavian Sources Other Than the Sagas* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1981), 689 – 703.

precious luxury item in high demand.; walrus and whale hunters regularly sailed up to three days northwards from Ohthere's bailiwick for this resource.²²⁶

Ohthere had, therefore, at least three things of outstanding value that he could market towards the south: pelts and hides of forest/tundra animals, walrus shioprope, and walrus ivory. He also had at least one ship, which likely was similar in size, construction, and sailing capability to the Gokstad and Tune ship type, i.e. 20 – 23m long, with around thirty rowers plus sail and a cargo capacity of some six to eight tons.²²⁷ Aside from whale and walrus hunting, Ohthere's account refers to three specific journeys. One was a two-week exploration northeastwards, around North Cape into the White Sea region or "Biarmaland."²²⁸ Later sources suggest that there was significant trade from Scandinavia to this region, and that the region may have had contacts also with Arab traders; nevertheless, Ohthere's voyage appears to have been an exploratory venture, in search of walrus and perhaps furs, primarily, so we should not imagine that by the late ninth-century the "North-way" was already a transit route to further markets.²²⁹

For all practical purposes, the Scandinavians living in the Lofoten islands were at the end of the road, at a distance of a month's sail under reasonably favorable conditions from Kaupang (*Sciringes healh* in the text). This is Ohthere's second journey, described tersely and in general terms. Evidently, men of the far north were familiar with the route and its conditions.²³⁰ Ohthere's information demonstrates the means by which long-distance trade goods could reach any place along the Norwegian coastline. Conversely, anyone along this coast who had a marketable resource, especially valuable things such as walrus shioprope and walrus ivory, and who had access to shipping, could bring this

²²⁶ For a discussion of Ohthere's economic activities, including walrus hunting, livestock farming, and tribute gathering see Irmeli Valtonen, "An Interpretation of the Description of Northernmost Europe in the Old English Orosius" (MA thesis, University of Oulu, 1988), 85 – 104.

²²⁷ Anton Englert, "Ohthere's Voyages Seen from a Nautical Angle," in *Ohthere's Voyages: A Late 9th-Century Account of Voyages along the Coasts of Norway and Denmark and Its Cultural Context*, ed. Janet Bately and Anton Englert (Maritime Culture of the North 1) (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 2007), 118. For the ship type, see also Crumlin-Pedersen, "Ships as Indicators of Trade," 2 – 17. For greater detail on ship types in the later ninth century, see Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, "Boats and Ships of the Baltic Sea in the 9th and 10th Centuries: The Archaeological and Iconographic Evidence," in *Wulfstan's Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 235 – 45.

²²⁸ Englert, "Ohthere's Voyages," 125 – 8. See Valtonen, "Old English Orosius," 75 – 83, for a discussion of the native peoples of this region.

²²⁹ Valtonen, "Old English Orosius," 75 – 8.

²³⁰ Englert, "Ohthere's Voyages," 122 – 5.

item to market at Kaupang or distribute it to any other point along the coast. In addition to the resources of the far north already enumerated, specific places in Norway also produced soapstone, widely used for utilitarian vessels throughout Scandinavia, and whetstones—indispensable for maintaining bladed tools and weapons.²³¹

Finally, Ohthere also describes a voyage of five days under optimum conditions from Kaupang south to Haithabu/Hedeby (*Hæþum* in the text). He names lands and islands to his starboard and port side along the way, which allows modern researchers to reconstruct his route across the Oslo Fjord, then south along the west coast of Sweden, and around the island of Fyn either through the Store Bælt or the Lille Bælt.²³² Sailors avoided the treacherous Skagen cape at the northeastern tip of Jutland and the dangerous lee shore of northwestern and northern Jutland generally, which even in modern times is exceptionally thick with shipwrecks.²³³

However, the northwestern coast of Jutland between Ribe and the western entrance of the Limfjord were less dangerous in the Viking Age than today because some large lagoons along that coast, since closed off by sand barriers, were still open and available as havens.²³⁴ The Limfjord area was a focus of economic activity in the eighth and ninth centuries, with a number of centers and evidence for cloth production, but with a narrow and twisting channel some 180km long, easily barred by local powers. Frisian traders might have taken the route along the west coast of Jutland and through the Limfjord. They also might have aimed more directly northeastwards across the North Sea from Frisia to the high landmarks and deeper, safer waters of the northern shores of

²³¹ On soapstone, see Per Storemyr and Tom Heldal, “Soapstone Production through Norwegian History: Geology, Properties, Quarrying, and Use,” in *Interdisciplinary Studies on Ancient Stone*, ed. J. J. Herrmann, Jr., N. Herz, and R. Newman (Asmosia V Proceedings) (London: Archetype Publications, 2002), 359 – 69. Large areas of soapstone deposits are known in southern Nordland province, in several places around Trondheim, between Bergen and Stavanger, and in the south of eastern Norway, extending also into today’s west coast of Sweden (p. 360, Fig. 1).

²³² Englert, “Ohthere’s Voyages,” 119 – 22. For more detailed discussion, see Jens Ulriksen, “Viking-Age Sailing Routes of the Western Baltic Sea—a Matter of Safety,” in *Wulfstan’s Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 135 – 7.

²³³ On this point, see Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 8th edition, 123 – 4 and Abb. 61; and Crumlin-Pedersen, “Boats and Ships of the Baltic Sea,” 246, who confirms the dangers of the north shore and the “Skagen reef.” Cf. Christer Westerdahl, “Transport Zones in Wulfstan’s Days,” in *Wulfstan’s Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 210, who discusses landmarks for sailing from southern Norway or, alternatively, western Sweden to the Jutland tip.

²³⁴ Crumlin-Pedersen, “Boats and Ships of the Baltic Sea,” 246.

the Skagerrak. It seems likely that the latter route, made possible by the full development of sail technology by the end of the eighth century, might have contributed to the establishment of Kaupang ca. 800. Nevertheless, as Crumlin-Pedersen points out, the most natural and convenient termini for Frisian sailing would be the protected coastal route up to southwestern Jutland, which led alternatively either to Ribe or into the Eider – Treene inlet, Hollingstedt, and the portage to Haithabu.²³⁵ Evidently, Scandinavian-based travelers – traders such as Ohthere and Wulfstan also made for the southern Danish *emporium*.

The second major shipping route within the Scandinavia – Baltic region connected Denmark with Middle Sweden.²³⁶ From Haithabu and the Schlei fjord, this route ran first through the westernmost reach of the Baltic between the southern coasts of the Danish islands and the coast of Holstein and Mecklenburg, further between Skåne and Bornholm, along the coast of southeastern Sweden (Blekinge and Møre), through the narrow Kalmarsund between the mainland and the long island of Öland, and finally north along the east coast of Sweden to the entrance of Lake Mälaren, where Stockholm lies today. Callmer describes a multitude of settlement areas and possible harbors on Æro, Langeland, Fyn, Lolland, Falster, Møn, and southern Sjælland, any of which might make suitable landing places for trade or refuge along the western segment of this route.²³⁷ For those skippers not turning north into the Sound, the south coast of Skåne posed dangerous, shallow waters all along and sandy reefs at both ends, but also a string of settlements in the coastal zone and at least one mid-level port.²³⁸ After the difficult winds and currents in the Bornholm gap between southeastern Skåne and Bornholm, the east coast of Sweden continued to offer a variety of settlement clusters, ports, and coastlines. These included the major port of Åhus on the east coast of Skåne, whereafter the

²³⁵ Volker Hilberg, “Hedeby in Wulfstan’s Days: A Danish *emporium* of the Viking Age between East and West,” in *Wulfstan’s Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 81, 83, mentions Limfjord development; further discussion of the Limfjord and Frisian sailing options in Crumlin-Pedersen, “Boats and Ships of the Baltic Sea,” 246 – 7.

²³⁶ Much of this route is described in great detail in Johan Callmer, “Wulfstan and the Coast of Southern Scandinavia: Sailing Routes from Langeland to Møre,” in *Wulfstan’s Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 116 – 30.

²³⁷ Callmer, “Wulfstan and the Coast of Southern Scandinavia,” 116 – 21.

²³⁸ Callmer, “Wulfstan and the Coast of Southern Scandinavia,” 121 – 3.

generally sandy shorelines of the first part of the voyage give way to complicated archipelagoes of rocky coasts and innumerable islands. This type of coastline prevails from Blekinge and Möre northwards to the Mälaren area.²³⁹ All along, Callmer notes landmarks visible from offshore that a navigator could use to keep his bearings along these coastlines.

A skilled navigator interested not in local trade at the various landing-places along the route but in completing the transit from southern Denmark to Middle Sweden could avoid the dangers of coastal sailing, with their natural hazards and possibilities of ambush. In this case, a skipper could set his course by major landmarks. Westwards from the Schlei fjord, the first turn towards the northeast would be at the south cape of Falster. Next, the course lay in the fifty-kilometers-wide channel between the high (143m) cliff at the eastern end of Møn and the cliffs of Cape Arkona at the northern tip of Rügen off the southern Baltic shore, both of which were visible from the middle of the channel. Avoiding the hazards of the Skåne coast, the skipper would run the thirty-five-mile-wide Bornholm gap close to the northwestern point of this island. Similarly, he would cut off the deep bay along eastern Skåne and the coast of Blekinge, aiming towards Utlängen at the eastern end of the latter. From there, one could proceed up the Kalmarsund, only three-kilometers at its narrowest, or round Öland on the seaward side.²⁴⁰

Bornholm, Öland, and Gotland—the three major islands situated along this route off the coast of Sweden between Skåne and Middle Sweden—were rich and commercially active areas in their own right. Bornholm was a producer of jewelry and iron objects from the Roman Iron Age (1 – 400) through the eighth century, with evidence for use of local bog-ore iron as well as imported raw material from both Scandinavia and the German – Polish areas to the south. Many traces of imported luxury goods, weights, and prestige objects are known from Bornholm, along with an impressive

²³⁹ Callmer, “Wulfstan and the Coast of Southern Scandinavia,” 123 – 8.

²⁴⁰ Ulriksen, “Viking-Age Sailing Routes of the Western Baltic Sea,” 141 – 2, for the direct route. See also Callmer, “Wulfstan and the Coast of Southern Scandinavia,” 116 - 30, for additional references to the geographical features and associated sailing conditions mentioned in this paragraph.

elite center at Sorte Muld on the northeast coast.²⁴¹ Similarly, Öland had an iron industry based on imported ore, rich graves from the Vendel period (ca. 550 – 800, in Sweden), a trading center at Köpingsvik, and evidence for other crafts production as well as imports.²⁴²

The largest and most impressive of the three is Gotland. Situated northeast of Öland and some 85 – 120km off the coast of eastern Sweden, Gotland occupies a strategic position in the central Baltic sea area and is replete with testimonies of a rich material culture and exchange. Some forty-five landing places ring the island, including six major harbors, one of which, Paviken, often is counted among the Baltic *emporia*. Like the province of Uppland on the mainland north of Lake Mälaren, Gotland has rich Vendel-period burials of aristocratic members of retinues. They are distributed both around the most important harbors and at inland elite centers associated with the ports.²⁴³ Gotland is notable for its many picture-stones depicting ships, which date 500 – 1100 and emphasize the importance of oversea communications to the Gotlanders. Also, of the known graves from this period, Gotland has the most as compared with any other area of Sweden. Most remarkably, of all the quarter-million or so coins found in Sweden that date to ca. 800 – 1050, fully two thirds have been recovered on Gotland, either as single finds or from hoards. The hoards are not confined to the ports and elite centers but are distributed ubiquitously among the roughly 400 Viking-Age farms—individual farmsteads rather than villages—all over the island.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ Anne Nørgård Jørgensen, “Harbors and Trading Centers on Bornholm, Öland and Gotland in the Late 9th Century,” in *Wulfstan’s Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 146 – 49.

²⁴² Nørgård Jørgensen, “Harbors and Trading Centers on Bornholm, Öland and Gotland,” 150 – 2.

²⁴³ Nørgård Jørgensen, “Harbors and Trading Centers on Bornholm, Öland and Gotland,” 153 – 5. For more detail on the coastal sites, see Dan Carlsson, “Harbors and Trading Places on Gotland AD 600 – 1000,” in *Aspects of Maritime Scandinavia AD 200 – 1200*, ed. Ole Crumlin-Pedersen (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 1991), 145 – 58. Carlsson suggests that the density of coastal sites now demonstrated for Gotland, Blekinge, and Skåne may have been typical of Scandinavian coastal areas generally (p. 158).

²⁴⁴ Nørgård Jørgensen, “Harbors and Trading Centers on Bornholm, Öland and Gotland,” 155 – 7. The farms are distributed over a surface area of roughly 3000km² for the island as a whole, 40 per cent of which was forested at the time (pp. 152 – 3). The Gotland metal totals include the largest Viking-Age hoard found to date, at Spillings, which contained 67kg of silver including 14,700 coins. Östergren, “The Spillings Hoard(s),” *passim*. This hoard, which dates to the later ninth century, appears to contradict the prevalent idea that Gotlandic hoarding mainly post-dated ca. 900 (p. 328). Östergren puts the number of Viking-Age farms on Gotland at 1,500 (p. 327).

Originally, Gotlandic prosperity appears to have been based on stock raising, which gave the islanders something to trade with the mainland for raw materials, especially iron. Viking-Age deposits suggest extensive iron smithing and jewelry-making industries on Gotland. At Visby, there are 7,500m³ of slag representing some 10,000 tons of forged iron that accumulated up to the 1250s. The vagueness of the dating makes it difficult to say whether an extensive iron-working or specifically weapons-making industry existed on Gotland already in the eighth or ninth century.²⁴⁵ Widespread evidence of expert smithing on the island and farms with the name “Smiss,” however, lead Magnusson to suggest that

[i]t is possible that the “Smiss” farms in various ways represent an early trade organization, with the trading itself concentrated to one or more locations on the island, but with the production spread throughout almost the entire island.²⁴⁶

It is more certain that the Viking-Age Gotlanders specialized in the export of dress-jewelry. Whereas Gotland women wore a type of brooch unique to the island, there is a large amount of detritus from the production of the standard Scandinavian oval brooches as well as indications that some types of dress pins with elaborately shaped heads, worn by women in the eastern Baltic (parts of Latvia, in particular), also were manufactured on the island. Gotland, in other words, imported raw materials (iron, bronze, silver) and supported craftsmen that would make such materials into lucrative finished products to market on both sides of the Baltic sea.²⁴⁷

Thus, the strategically placed and commercially active island of Gotland may have been as important for the second of the three primary long-distance routes within the Scandinavia – Baltic region as was the link that this route made from southern

²⁴⁵ Gert Magnusson, “Iron Production, Smithing and Iron Trade in the Baltic during the Late Iron Age and Early Middle Ages (c. 5th – 13th Centuries),” in *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic: Papers from the Second Estonian – Swedish Symposium Sigtuna, May 1991*, ed. Ingmar Jansson (Stockholm: Department of Archaeology, Stockholm University, 1995), 67 – 9.

²⁴⁶ Magnusson, “Iron Production, Smithing and Iron Trade in the Baltic,” 68. Certainly, there was an important weapons industry on Gotland in the early thirteenth century, when in 1229 and 1230 Pope Gregory IX sent letters to Gotlandic churchmen ordering a stop to such trade to the “pagans” of the eastern Baltic who were, at that time, resisting the German crusaders (p. 69).

²⁴⁷ The brooch and pin making is discussed in Ingmar Jansson, “Dress Pins of East Baltic Type Made on Gotland,” in *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic: Papers from the Second Estonian – Swedish Symposium Sigtuna, May 1991*, ed. Ingmar Jansson (Stockholm: Department of Archaeology, Stockholm University, 1995), 83 – 90.

Scandinavia to Middle Sweden. The latter, however, comprising the provinces of Södermanland, Västmanland, and Uppland was an area of socio-political and economic development comparable to that of the area of Denmark between Jutland and Skåne.²⁴⁸ From ca. 750, Middle Sweden had a standard, top level *emporium* at Birka on the island of Björkö in Lake Mälaren, which served as the entrepôt for long-distance traffic to and from Middle Sweden as well as a local trade and production center for the surrounding hinterland.

Through the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, Birka expanded in an orderly grid pattern with well-marked individual lots of crafts men and merchants—an area known to Swedish archaeologists as the “black earth,” which signifies intensive human habitation, covering some seven hectares in total with less than 2 per cent excavated so far. The finds from even that small percentage have been very rich, however. In the summary by Björn Ambrosiani, who has been the leader of the Birka excavations project for the past couple of decades, much of the trade of Birka with the densely settled Mälaren area would have been in perishables such as food and clothing, which leave little to no trace in the archaeological record. Visible are the tools and detritus of the usual set of crafts found in northern European *emporia*, including bronze casting of all the standard jewelry forms, glass bead manufacturing, comb making, perhaps textile manufacturing, but certainly pelt dressing or finishing.²⁴⁹ Birka supplied the thousands of farms in the area with simple craft and trade goods such as combs, knives, needles, everyday dress jewelry, beads, perhaps also textiles and salt.²⁵⁰ In exchange the thousand or so inhabitants of Birka received everyday supplies and raw materials from the hinterland, but also from further afield.

²⁴⁸ In Middle Sweden, relatively dense settlement with a strong agricultural base and hints of incipient state-formation go back to the sixth century. The archaeological record shows several elite centers and many rich burials, especially in Uppland, as well as the very rich productive site of Helgö on Lake Mälaren. See discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* above.

²⁴⁹ Björn Ambrosiani, “Birka,” in *Arkeologi i Norden 2*, ed. Göran Burenhult (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1999), 371. Notably missing is iron working/smithing, which surely must have been present but has not shown up in the narrow expanse thus far excavated.

²⁵⁰ Simple iron knives are ubiquitous in both male and female Viking-Age graves, even where other grave goods are absent. See Henriette Lyngstrøm, “Knives from the Late Iron Age in Denmark,” in *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic: Papers from the Second Estonian – Swedish Archaeological Symposium, Sigtuna, May 1991*, ed. Ingmar Jansson (Stockholm: Department of Archaeology, Stockholm University, 1995), 79 – 82.

Raw materials necessary for Birka's industries included raw pelts, antler (for comb making), metals, whetstones, and amber, many of which have specific source areas—amber, for example, would come from the southeastern shores of the Baltic; whetstones would come from southern Norway. Closer at hand, Birka functioned as the gateway for the products of the Gulf of Bothnia area to the north. The western shores of the Gulf had had defined settlement areas already many centuries before the Viking Age, including enclaves in today's Hälsingland, Medelpad, and Ångermanland provinces along the central Bothnian coast.²⁵¹ Sunded, the most southerly, longest settled (going back to ca. 400 BC), and continuously cultivated area, with evidence for larger villages by the third to sixth century, may have been producing grain and flax surplus by the fifth – sixth centuries. The central area, Medelpad, which may have been the core area of a Bothnian petty kingdom of the Migration Age, controlled the iron-rich inland area of Jämtland to its northwest, while South Ångermanland, with access to the forests of the Ångermanälven basin, may have functioned as a source of fur, antler, and meat. In Ramqvist's view, the central places of Hös (Sunded), Högom (Medelpad), and Frånö (South Ångermanland) served as redistribution centers for their respective commodities.²⁵²

Clearly, Birka was in a position to receive needed raw materials such as iron, pelts, and antler from the Bothnian sub-region to its north—its own back yard, so to speak. Bothnian iron appears to have been distributed in the form of spade-like ingots, which have been found in Middle Sweden, Gotland, and as far southwest as Bornholm and which Magnusson calls “currency bars” pertaining to a Baltic “common market.”²⁵³ Of course, iron could have been used as a species of *commodity money* for exchange purposes, but this would in no way diminish its importance as an essential raw material for indispensable items such as weapons, tools, nails, and rivets. Iron was, moreover, produced in impressive quantities, estimated at some 3,400 tons total for Jämtland and

²⁵¹ See Per H. Ramqvist, “Resources, Population and Power in the Migration Period: An Analysis of the Archaeological Remains in Central Norrland,” in *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic: Papers from the Second Estonian – Swedish Archaeological Symposium, Sigtuna, May 1991*, ed. Ingmar Jansson (Stockholm: Department of Archaeology, Stockholm University, 1995), 33 – 8. P. 34 Fig. 3 shows the settlement cores around the Gulf of Bothnia.

²⁵² Ramqvist, “Resources, Population and Power in the Migration Period,” 37 – 8.

²⁵³ Magnusson, “Iron Production, Smithing and Iron Trade in the Baltic,” 67.

2,100 tons for nearby Dalarna province in the early middle ages.²⁵⁴ Ambrosiani suggests that the transport of heavy raw materials like northern iron to Birka was easiest in winter, over ice, producing a yearly cycle of a winter market in raw materials from the north, stockpiled then for use on site or for summer export over water to other markets in the south. Some of the northern furs and iron would have paid for foreign luxury items, evidence of which we have from the thousands of graves in and around Birka.²⁵⁵

Finally, Birka as well as Gotland are positioned to be the natural starting points for the main route from the Baltic into European Russia. This ran from Middle Sweden to the Åland islands, which form steppingstones across the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia, thence eastwards through the Gulf of Finland to the Neva and Lake Ladoga, and onwards by various river combinations to the Dniepr and the Volga. Staraja Ladoga, on the Volkhov river just south of Lake Ladoga and the main gateway into the Russian river system from the northwest, has clear Scandinavian influences in its foundation layers, which, like Birka, date to ca. 750.²⁵⁶ The issue of Scandinavian – Rus’ trade in the eighth to ninth centuries is problematical, for it is difficult to demonstrate that trade goods actually moved along this route.²⁵⁷ It is demonstrable, however, that during the later eighth and ninth centuries Scandinavians settled widely and in considerable numbers in European Russia, from Staraja Ladoga and Novgorod in the northwest to the upper Volga

²⁵⁴ Gert Magnusson, *Lågteknisk Järnhantering i Jämtlands Län* (Jernkontorets Berghistoriska Skriftserie 22) (Stockholm: Jernkontorets, 1986), 309 – 11. These amounts are of the same order of magnitude as those from other northern European iron-producing areas, though they pale in comparison with the volume of production in Roman Italy. If the Jämtland production was spread over 800 years, this would work out to an average of 5,000 spade-shaped billets per year produced in Jämtland alone (p. 310). There is ample material support, in other words, for an iron trade of considerable volume in the Viking Age.

²⁵⁵ Ambrosiani, “Birka,” 374 – 5. Some 1100 of the graves have been excavated since the 1870s. The most recent compendium of the results is in Greta Arwidson, ed., *Birka II: Systematische Analysen der Gräberfunde*, in three volumes (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 1984 – 89).

²⁵⁶ For an analysis of Staraja Ladoga and its key interface position between Russia and the Baltic see Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market,” 257 – 312.

²⁵⁷ Björn Ambrosiani, “Birka and Scandinavia’s Trade with the East,” *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 32, no. 3 – 4, Festschrift 2 for Thomas S. Noonan, ed. Roman Kovalev and Hedi Sherman (Fall-Winter 2005 – 06): 289, asserts that “a preliminary conclusion is that the so-called ‘northern route’ between the Franks and the Arabs, passing through Scandinavia and Russia, obviously never has existed, as such.” See, however, Section 7.3, subsection *The Baltic system between East and West* below, where the issue of exchange between the North and European Russia will be explored in detail.

and the middle Dniepr in the east and south, respectively.²⁵⁸ Certainly, almost all of the massive amounts of Islamic silver that are found in the Baltic, and especially thickly in hoards from Middle Sweden and Gotland, came to the North by the Ladoga – Gulf of Finland route.²⁵⁹ Thus, unlike the Norwegian way, which tapers out after the Lofoten Islands, the second major transit way within the Scandinavian – Baltic realm not only had an extension to its own sub-Arctic Bothnian hinterland but it also connected with an international travel and exchange route eastwards, which gives rise to the possibility, at least, that some of the importance of this route derived from long-distance transit trade.

Like the Norwegian route, which is described in some detail by the “Othere” source, the Haithabu – Birka route also has some associated ninth-century narrative background from incidental details in the *Vita Anskarii*.²⁶⁰ Similarly, the outlines of the third primary long-distance exchange route within the Scandinavia – Baltic region appear in the source known as “Wulfstan” which, like “Othere,” was an interpolation within King Alfred’s edition of Orosius.²⁶¹ Wulfstan’s account can be analyzed into three discrete sections. In the first, he gives general sailing directions for a seven day, non-stop voyage from Haithabu eastwards along the southern shore of the Baltic to Truso at the eastern edge of the Vistula delta, i.e. in the land of the Old Prussians at the southeast corner of the Baltic sea. Interestingly, he marks reference points to the north, including the islands of Bornholm, Öland, and Gotland, but makes no effort to articulate the various areas and thriving ports on the south side, referring to them all simply as “Wendland,” or the land of the (western) Slavs. Next, there is a section which gives intimate and accurate detail about the waters of the Vistula lagoon and the channels that lead to Truso. Finally, Wulfstan has some rather fanciful things to say about the Prussians and their customs,

²⁵⁸ See the detailed evidence for Scandinavian settlement in European Russia in Ingmar Jansson, “Communications between Scandinavia and Eastern Europe in the Viking Age: The Archaeological Evidence,” in *Göttingen 156* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1987), 775 – 90. The issue of Scandinavian settlement in European Russia will be addressed in detail in Section 7.3, subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* below, with more recent data.

²⁵⁹ Thomas S. Noonan, “Why the Vikings First Came to Russia,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 34 (1986): 321 – 48.

²⁶⁰ See the discussion of Anskar’s voyages in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and Denmark* above.

²⁶¹ See Janet Bately, “Wulfstan’s Voyage and His Description of Estland: The Text and the Language of the Text,” and Judith Jesch, “Who Was Wulfstan?” both in *Wulfstan’s Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 14 – 28 and 29 – 36, respectively.

which fall into the popular genre of *mirabilia* concerning lands at the limits of geographical knowledge.²⁶² Although Wulfstan does not say what business he had in Truso, we can surmise that its importance derived from its function as the Baltic region's amber port.²⁶³ We also know from archaeology that the southern shore of the Baltic had, by the late ninth century, a string of at least half a dozen major ports between Haithabu and Truso engaging in trade and craft production in a manner similar to their counterparts on the Scandinavian side. Accordingly, the southern Baltic shore route must take its place alongside the Norway route and the Haithabu – Birka run as a major transit corridor.²⁶⁴

It will be noted that all three of the primary long-distance routes of the North converge upon southern Scandinavia, i.e. in the southwestern corner of the Scandinavian – Baltic region and, in the ninth century, most specifically at the *emporium* of Haithabu on the east side of the Jutland isthmus. Conversely, the routes could be viewed as radiating from Haithabu to the north, northeast, and east—in straight-line distances, some 500km to Kaupang, 650km to Birka, and 600km to Truso, respectively. Within this framework, shippers of the ninth century had a sophisticated understanding of sailing directions and the relationships among the various islands and coastlines, as reflected in the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan. It has been suggested, for example, that Wulfstan's references to Skåne, Bornholm, Öland, and Gotland to his port side on the seven-day run to Truso—the latter two certainly being invisible from a course laid parallel to the south Baltic shore—actually represent longitudinal lines perpendicular to the route spaced at roughly 60nm or 100km intervals, which in turn represent average distance made good in a full day-night's sail under reasonably good conditions.²⁶⁵

²⁶² This analysis is from Przemyslaw Urbánczik, "On the Reliability of Wulfstan's Report," in *Wulfstan's Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 43 – 7.

²⁶³ Jesch, "Who Was Wulfstan?" 31, remarks that amber has been found in the British Isles both in sixth-century Anglo-Saxon graves and in Anglo-Scandinavian York in quantities suggesting import.

²⁶⁴ The south Baltic ports and other details about production and exchange in the lands south of the Baltic will be discussed in subsection *The southern shore and the Slavs* below.

²⁶⁵ Seán McGrail, "Seafaring Then and Now," in *Wulfstan's Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 271 – 4. See also George Indruszewski and Jon Godal, "The Art of Sailing Like Wulfstan," in *Wulfstan's Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 275 – 92, for further discussion of Viking-Age navigation techniques. The practicability of sailing according to the sailing directions and average speeds indicated in the Viking-Age sources has been demonstrated by modern trials of Viking ship replicas.

The configuration of the northern exchange network was articulated further into transport zones determined according to persistent, underlying conditions such as (1) types of coastline and waterway and the kind of ships or boats most appropriate for each, (2) contrasts and transfer points between sea – river, land – water, and summer – winter modes of transport, and (3) linguistic – cultural zones.²⁶⁶ The steep and rocky coast of Norway with its deep-water anchorages, for example, contrasted with the shallow and sandy beaches prevalent around Denmark and along the southern shores of the Baltic.²⁶⁷ Westerdahl casts such transport zones as “elongated, coast-bound socio-cultural spaces,” one example of which would be the extension of Danish and Northwest-Slavic influence along the south Baltic shore as far east as Truso.²⁶⁸ Nodal points or “transit points” in the system would, according to Westerdahl, appear at the boundaries or interfaces of these transport zones; so for example, in the case of Bornholm, Öland, and Gotland, which sit on the boundary between the mainland Scandinavian and south Baltic zones.²⁶⁹

The geographic and environmental conditions that shaped the transport zones and their prime interface points remained largely unchanged from the centuries before ca. 700 through the Viking Age that followed. We have seen as well that traffic and exchange through these zones had been active from at least the third century in the case of Danish waters and the sixth and seventh centuries regarding the routes along Norway and Sweden.²⁷⁰ We have seen further that participation in exchange connections and

See, for example, Anton Englert and Waldemar Ossowski, “Sailing in Wulfstan’s Wake: The 2004 Trial Voyage Hedeby – Gdansk with the Skuldelev I Reconstruction, *Ottar*,” in *Wulfstan’s Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 257 – 70.

²⁶⁶ See the discussion in Westerdahl, “Transport Zones in Wulfstan’s Days,” 206 – 11.

²⁶⁷ Westerdahl, “Transport Zones in Wulfstan’s Days,” 209. See also the corroborating discussion on regional ship types in Crumlin-Pedersen, “Boats and Ships of the Baltic Sea,” 235 – 45.

²⁶⁸ Westerdahl, “Transport Zones in Wulfstan’s Days,” 211, 213.

²⁶⁹ Westerdahl, “Transport Zones in Wulfstan’s Days,” 208 – 9. It should be noted that Westerdahl’s analysis in many ways is an elaboration of earlier Substantivist “port of trade” and Hirth’s “gateway communities” models in that these also stressed the placement of such interface points at environmental, transport, and political-cultural boundaries. For a concise discussion, see Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market,” 25 – 35.

²⁷⁰ See again the discussion in Ulriksen, “Danish Sites and Settlements with a Maritime Context,” *passim*, and the discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* above. For greater detail on the distribution of some Anglo-Saxon and Continental artifacts in Scandinavia in the sixth and seventh centuries, which illustrate long-distance exchange patterns, see Ulf Näsman, “Sea Trade during the Scandinavian Iron Age: Its Character, Commodities, and Routes,” in *Aspects of Maritime Scandinavia AD 200 – 1200*, ed. Ole Crumlin-Pedersen (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 1991), 23 – 38.

elaboration of exchange methods, such as the introduction of silver into the commodity money system, might evolve organically from within a society with a pre-commercial orientation, moreover including actors with heterogeneous aims and contributions.²⁷¹

The milestone represented by the establishment, at Ribe ca. 700, of the first *emporium* in Scandinavia of the standard northwest European model consists not in the *creation* of long-distance exchange in the North but in giving such pre-existing exchange further definition, which included an accelerated influx of commodities from western Europe and improved access to precious metals.

While both western goods and silver achieved wide distribution in many parts of the Scandinavian – Baltic region, the nodal points in the network—those places that properly could be called *emporia*—were relatively few. According to Sindbæk, only seven places qualify: Ribe and Haithabu in southern Jutland, Kaupang in southern Norway, Åhus in Skåne, Birka in Middle Sweden, Groß Strömkendorf in Mecklenburg, and Truso in the former East Prussia. What defines them is their function as wholesale depots of long-distance trade goods and raw materials as well as outstanding centers of craft-production. Archaeologically, they can be identified through quantitative analysis: the nodal sites will show a significantly greater density and more complete sampling of remains in the abovementioned categories than non-nodal sites.²⁷² Indeed, as Sindbæk explains, there is a close connection between the ability of a site to function as a top-level crafts production center and access to long-distance trade, which derives squarely from the need to obtain the raw materials necessary to each particular craft. Iron forging and cloth weaving were uniformly present at nearly all centers and even in many ordinary villages and farms, for the simple reason that raw iron and fiber were produced

²⁷¹ See the definition of trading networks in Søren M. Sindbæk, “Networks and Nodal Points: The Emergence of Towns in Early Viking Age Scandinavia,” *Antiquity* 81 (2007): 119 – 20. “The conceptualization of spatial, social or economic relations as a network, continuously being formed by a heterogeneous assemblage of actors, offers a more organic approach to prehistoric trade and its locations than the previous perspectives that assigned agency in advance to external force or internal social process. . . In a network perspective, a trading-place is not primarily a political or economic structure, but a traffic junction—a point where certain networks of traffic convene” (p. 120). Sindbæk bases his theory on the work of Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

²⁷² Sindbæk, “Networks and Nodal Points,” 120 – 6. The extent of the areas excavated at a large number of sites and the amounts of material recovered from these now makes possible such a quantitative analysis.

ubiquitously within the Scandinavian – Baltic region. By contrast, comb-making was considerably more restricted, tending to be practiced only at medium and top-level trading centers, because these were the places that would have the most ready access to the relatively scarce antler raw material—available within Scandinavia, but typically brought from afar over the long-distance routes within the region. The most restricted crafts—those found only at the handful of nodal *emporía*—are those that depended upon raw materials imported over long-distance routes from outside the region, namely bronze casting and glass bead making.²⁷³

Thus, there was a synergy between long-distance trade and top-level crafts production, which tended to make the few nodal *emporía* stand out so vividly from the rest of the network. Further, the geographical placement of these *emporía* responded to the structure of the various transport zones within the Scandinavian – Baltic region. On the basis of these considerations, Sinbæk proposes the following theory of the expansion of trade networks in the North in the eighth and ninth centuries:

The location of nodal points or 'hubs' would not be random, but influenced by topography and the conditions it created for transportation. Unlike most central-place functions, which are served by local traffic and thus depend on maximum accessibility from a hinterland, the function of a nodal point is exercised through long-distance traffic and will therefore be stimulated in particular by topographical restrictions that guide traffic into corridors. . . . In short, the geographical outcome of these concerns would be a network with a few sites in boundary-locations acting as hubs or nodal points for long-distance traffic within a widespread web of more local contacts. There were only a few nodal points because these were regarded by individual long-distance traders as the optimal locations for meeting other long-distance traders, and the most obvious choices of sites were those where journeys came to a halt anyway.²⁷⁴

²⁷³ Sinbæk, "Networks and Nodal Points," 126 – 7.

²⁷⁴ Sinbæk, "Networks and Nodal Points," 128 – 9. See also p. 129 Fig. 6, which shows the bold trunk lines connecting the *emporía* superimposed upon a fine net of subsidiary routes enmeshing all of the coastlines and criss-crossing the narrower sea lanes of Scandinavia and the Baltic. See also Søren Sinbæk, "Routes and Long-Distance Traffic—the Nodal Points of Wulfstan's Voyage," in *Wulfstan's Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 72 – 8, where these ideas are reiterated in greater

Brought into being through the influx and expansion of long-distance trade, the nodal *emporia* were essentially an autonomous system, albeit one which interacted with the pre-existing socio-economic and political structures of the North as well as its geography.²⁷⁵ Moreover, the *emporia* did not sit atop a network that was arranged hierarchically. Shippers who specialized in long-distance trade would move between the nodal points, but other shippers distributed the goods and craft products of the trade hubs directly to customers ranging from the elite in the richest central places to ordinary villagers at the most makeshift landing places. Conversely, not only craftsmen resident at the *emporia* but ordinary farmers and other small producers could directly input their surplus in foodstuffs, raw materials, or craft goods into the loosely organized network.²⁷⁶

The characteristics of the nodal *emporia* show up clearly at Ribe. It is no accident that Scandinavia's first visible, permanent international long-distance trading place was situated on the southwest coast of Jutland, which was at the geographical limit of the sheltered inshore waterways that led along the North Sea shore from Frisia. The Ribe *emporium* received not only western imports but also commodities from many parts of Scandinavia and the Baltic, becoming thus the original, full-fledged exchange interface between the world of the North and the Latin Christian world.²⁷⁷ The unusually precise

detail. "[I]t was the motivated acts of individual agents that edited practices associated with exchange into recognizable social structures, recursively constituting travelling as routes and exchange as trade" (p. 72). The nodal points were, above all, those places where large cargoes were both assembled and broken down. Sindbæk stresses that this is not a new typology of sites but a characterization of activities at a site (p. 72). Finally, it may be noted that Sindbæk's explicit connection between long-distance trade and raw materials necessary for certain crafts is conformable with John Moreland's call for greater attention to *production* alongside demand and transport in discussions of early medieval economies. See Moreland, "The Significance of Production in Eighth-Century England."

²⁷⁵ Sindbæk, "Networks and Nodal Points," 129. "[I]n early Viking Age Scandinavia, the networks of trade and politics were not by far coincident."

²⁷⁶ This point is argued strongly in Jens Ulriksen, "Viking-Age Sailing Routes of the Western Baltic Sea," 139 – 41, who also criticizes Callmer, "Wulfstan and the Coast of Southern Scandinavia," 114 – 16, for attempting an overly elaborate hierarchical typology of coastal sites on insufficient evidence. Also, following the concluding analysis in Sindbæk, "Networks and Nodal Points," 129, it becomes clear that the four-layered hierarchy of Scandinavian sites proposed in Wickham, *Framing*, 370 – 1, in which places like Ribe and Haithabu occupied the highest position as "urban" centers, is off the mark because the *emporia* generally lack the multi-functionality of a full-fledged urban establishment and scarcely any of them evolve into medieval towns. These points were recognized long ago in the typology of *emporia* developed in Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 47 – 65.

²⁷⁷ Significantly, Ribe achieved this function despite the relatively difficult access to it from the Scandinavian side, which involved either a dangerous sail along the exposed western coast of Jutland or an overland trek from the southeast coast. See the discussion above, based on Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein*

stratigraphy of the excavated portions of Ribe can, moreover, serve as a key for dating artifact types and thus improving our chronological understanding of other Scandinavian – Baltic sites.²⁷⁸ Ribe’s bronze dress-jewelry industry with its far-flung distribution was, of course, a function both of its access to supplies of bronze from the west and its connection to the Scandinavian network. Ribe’s glass bead-making also depended on imported raw glass or semi-finished beads in combination with a widespread Scandinavian market.²⁷⁹

Ribe also represented the first major influx of silver and coinage into the North. Anglo-Saxon sceattas appear in the earliest layers of ca. 710, followed by the local minting of sceattas of the “Wodan-monster” type, in large quantities, starting from ca. 720. Metcalf characterizes this as “a controlled currency [that] was imposed upon the town.”²⁸⁰ The sceatta coinage continues in Ribe up through ca. 820, when it is replaced by another locally minted series.²⁸¹ The marketplace at Ribe was, thus, reflecting the conditions of exchange in England and Frisia, which were seeing rapid monetization during the later seventh and early eighth centuries.

The regular, standard-model layout of the trading site, the mint, and the proximity to Ribe of the outstanding elite center of Dankirke all suggest the possibility that Ribe was the creation of a state-level political authority in southern Jutland on a par with King Ine’s Wessex. Dendrodating has ascertained, now, that large-scale building projects such as portions of the Danewirke rampart system across the Jutland Isthmus in the vicinity of Haithabu were completed in the earlier eighth century, and other building layers might be

Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit, 123 – 4 and Abb. 61; and Crumlin-Pedersen, “Boats and Ships of the Baltic Sea,” 246.

²⁷⁸ See Feveile and Jensen, “Ribe in the 8th and 9th Century,” passim. P. 23 Fig. 15 shows the geographical range of Ribe’s material connections, from northern Norway and Middle Sweden in the north and east to southern England, the Seine basin, and the Rhineland in the west. The stratigraphy is intact for the period 705 – 850 (p. 17).

²⁷⁹ The rather small excavation area (100m²) that established the chronology had some 7000 bronze mold fragments and over 9000 pieces of glass, which is an indication of the intensity and volume of high-end craft production at Ribe. Feveile and Jensen, “Ribe in the 8th and 9th Century,” 17, 22. For the broad-based market for bronze brooches, see the discussion above and Sindbæk, “Silver Economies and Social Ties,” 47, 50 – 3.

²⁸⁰ D. M. Metcalf, “The Beginnings of Coinage in the North Sea Coastlands: A Pirenne-like Hypothesis,” in *Birka Studies* 3 (Stockholm, 1994), 206 – 7.

²⁸¹ Hilberg, “Silver Economies of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries AD in Hedeby,” 210.

even earlier.²⁸² It is possible that a state-level power organized and oversaw the Ribe *emporium* and the mint, making and enforcing rules and collecting some kind of toll in exchange for peace and protection.²⁸³

In the longer run, it was Haithabu rather than Ribe that became southern Jutland's premier marketplace. This is underscored by the fact that all three of our major written sources that have anything extensive to say about travel in the Baltic in the ninth century—Ohtere, Wulfstan, and the *Vita Anskarii*—name Haithabu as the southwestern terminal of their respective voyages. The geographic logic and advantages of placing a North Sea to Baltic isthmus crossing at Holingstedt and Haithabu have already been discussed; likewise, the credit for establishing the connection, which appears to have been an initiative of the Frisians starting around the middle of the eighth century.²⁸⁴ Whether or not actual “Frisians” made the trip to Middle Sweden, it appears likely that the opening of regular communications with the west via the Hollingstedt – Haithabu portage in combination with the model of the Ribe *emporium* had a catalytic effect upon the organization of trade in the Lake Mälaren area.

The standard-model *emporium* of Birka, which shares so many characteristics with Ribe and sites in the west such as Hamwic, begins at or soon after 750. As at Ribe, at Birka also there are strong hints that the political authority in Middle Sweden was involved in founding and administering the place. One is the presence of an elite stronghold on the island of Adelsö just three kilometers distant.²⁸⁵ Further indications come from the *Vita Anskarii*, which speaks repeatedly of royal involvement in Birka, of a

²⁸² Axboe, “Danish Kings and Dendrochronology,” 220 – 2. “The defensive works are also of a size that must mean that the successive powers that built them had control over substantial areas, in order to be able to undertake the construction itself, to ensure the necessary forces for maintenance and guarding, and on occasion to be able to call up the necessary defenders” (p. 222).

²⁸³ See also Sherman, “Barbarians Come to Market,” 226 – 30, for a review of the debate concerning state formation in Denmark and its relation to the Ribe site.

²⁸⁴ See discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and Denmark* above. See also Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 53 – 6, 79 – 125, who generally agrees with Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, but with much additional data. Jankuhn, for example, expounds upon the north – south landway, the *Heerweg* or *Ochsenweg*, from central Jutland to Saxony that intersected with the Haithabu isthmus portage (pp. 55 – 6, 122).

²⁸⁵ Ambrosiani, “Birka,” 372 – 4. This parallels the proximity of the elite center of Dankirke to Ribe, which is widely believed to have been the seat of the political power in that area of Jutland in the seventh and eighth centuries. In the case of Birka, however, the main seat of power lay some 50km to the north, at Uppsala, of which Adelsö was just an outpost.

“praefectus” of the Swedish king who oversaw affairs at the *emporium*, as well as the fact that the Frankish missionaries had to ask the king permission to preach and to build a church there.²⁸⁶ In any case, the presence at Birka of individuals from outside the area of Middle Sweden is corroborated by analysis of stable isotopes in bones recovered from a sampling of Birka graves. One fairly rich burial of such a foreign person dates to ca. 750, which coincides roughly with the beginnings of Birka as well as the opening of the Jutland isthmus passage.²⁸⁷

In the case of Haithabu, the historical record states explicitly that King Godfrid of the Danes came there in 804, that in 808 he attacked and destroyed the Obodrite port of *Reric*, and subsequently settled merchants at Haithabu and strengthened the defensive works of the Danewirke across the isthmus.²⁸⁸ The actions of the Danish king and the reactions of Charlemagne make plain that by ca. 800 everybody—Franks, Frisians, and Scandinavians—understood that Haithabu was *the* key interface point for North Sea – Baltic trade, a trade voluminous and lucrative enough to be worth fighting over.²⁸⁹ Remarkably, although Charlemagne brought an army to Nordalbingia in 810 (including the hapless elephant), a settlement was reached between the Franks and the Danes that left Haithabu in the hands of the latter. McCormick points out the parallel with Venice, where Charlemagne challenged Byzantium for control of that key Adriatic port in 810 but settled for an agreement that left Venice outside of Frankish suzerainty while guarantying trade access.²⁹⁰ Schematically, we may consider Venice and Haithabu as equally

²⁸⁶ *Vita Anskarii* 11, 19, 26, 30. At Ribe, ca. 860, Anskar had to ask permission of the Danish king Horic, so that by the mid-ninth century Ribe was certainly under royal control; *Vita Anskarii* 33.

²⁸⁷ Anna Linderholm, Charlotte Hedenstierna Jonson, Olle Svensk, and Kerstin Lidén, “Diet and Status in Birka: Stable Isotopes and Grave Goods Compared,” *Antiquity* 82 (2008): 446 – 61.

²⁸⁸ This king is variously transcribed as Godfrid, Godofrid, and Göttrik. The source is the *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 804, 808, and 809.

²⁸⁹ For a good sample of the voluminous literature on the importance of Haithabu, see the references listed in Hilberg, “Hedeby in Wulfstan’s Days,” 79 – 80.

²⁹⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 579 – 80. McCormick is no doubt correct that Godfrid wanted to collect tolls on the trade at the North Sea – Baltic interface. But, as he also points out, both the Frankish and the Danish leadership had a fairly sophisticated understanding of trade flows. Subsequent Danish kings signed trade treaties with the Franks, e.g. King Sigfrid with Louis the German in 873; Hilberg, “Hedeby in Wulfstan’s Days,” 83. In the ninth century, “it is possible to observe a thorough royal Danish interest in peaceful and growing trading activities with the Frankish kingdoms.” Diplomatic contacts were frequent throughout the ninth century, along with exchanges of prestigious gifts (p. 83).

important to the Franks ca. 800—as crucial access points for Mediterranean and Baltic trade, respectively.

In the context of the political crisis over Haithabu, a further detail of interest is that in 809 Godfrid sent *negotiatores* as emissaries to the Franks. The use of this term by a Frankish annalist reinforces the surmise that by the first decade of the ninth century, at least, there were persons operating in southern Jutland that a Frank would recognize as members of the professional merchant class.²⁹¹ Similar terminology occurs when Anskar obtains permission from King Horik the Elder (of Denmark) to establish a mission and Anskar chooses Haithabu as the best spot, for “ubi ex omne parte conventus fiebat negotiatorum.”²⁹² The liberalization of religious practice in Haithabu encouraged “negotiatores” from Dorestad to come there and occasioned the growth in the amount of goods available in the place.²⁹³ Further, we learn that many residents of Haithabu had already gone to Dorestad or to Hamburg to receive baptism, which implies the possibility of Scandinavians traveling to Carolingian ports on peaceful business.²⁹⁴ Of course, such contacts existed long before the intervention of Christianity. Nevertheless, the sparse written record confirms that ninth-century Haithabu was overflowing with wares of all sorts and swarming with both western and Scandinavian merchants. It also was the principal point of contact between the Carolingian world and the North.

Ninth-century Haithabu was the nodal *emporium* par excellence, for until ca. 900 it did not function as a market for the local area but exclusively as a place of exchange for long-distance trade.²⁹⁵ High quality imported woolen cloth (*Kammgarnstoffe*), traces of which have been found in southern Norway, was most likely produced in Frisia and

²⁹¹ The source is the *Annales Mettenses*, s.a. 809. Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 1:30 and 2:330, argues that these *negotiatores* were Frisians.

²⁹² *Vita Anskarii* 24.

²⁹³ *Vita Anskarii* 24. “[E]t negotiatores tam hinc quam ex Dorestado locum ipsum libere expeterent, et hac occasione facultas totius boni inibi exuberaret.” Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 127 – 8, translates this as “sich Güter und Vorräte aller Art im Überfluß anhäufden,” which goes somewhat beyond the wording of the text. Nevertheless, it seems that the plural *boni* implies material goods rather than a more abstract kind of “good,” especially since it appears in the context of *negotiatores*.

²⁹⁴ *Vita Anskarii* 24.

²⁹⁵ The lack of a local market at Haithabu is asserted in Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 130.

passed through Haithabu.²⁹⁶ Wine trade is attested by barrels of fir-wood from the upper Rhine found at Haithabu, as well as textual references to persons at Birka in possession of wine. Jankuhn argues that wine was distributed in the foil-decorated Tating jars, especially in a liturgical context along with the diffusion of the Christian cult. Tating jars occur both in graves and settlements in Jutland, southern Norway, and Middle Sweden, i.e. the areas with the most intensive trade contacts to the west.²⁹⁷ Eifel basalt quernstones are heavily represented at Haithabu itself, with distribution around the westernmost end of the Baltic sea, also. Similarly, Norwegian soapstone vessels are heavily represented in Haithabu, though they do not get much distribution beyond there.²⁹⁸ Glass vessels were imported from Frankish workshops.²⁹⁹ Rhine ceramics, Badorf and Tating ware, are found in the ninth century, while a huge influx of Pingsdorf ware belongs to the post-900 period.³⁰⁰ Finally, the Scandinavians imported fine steel blades and spear points from the Rhineland, which found wide distribution over the North and farther east as well.³⁰¹

Imported raw materials in Haithabu are represented by amber from the southwest Baltic, Swedish iron, brass bars, bronze, tin, and lead from the west, mercury for gilding, raw glass, bone and antler, goat hides, furs, and walrus ivory.³⁰² These imports from both the west and the north relate to Haithabu's second primary function as a nodal *emporium*, which is the production of high quality, specialized craft goods for distribution along the trade network. Particularly extensive were Haithabu's metal-working industries, with numerous areas of the settlement surveyed and excavated thus far that show abundant evidence for these pursuits. Dress jewelry made here was distributed en masse to other Scandinavian markets.³⁰³ Extensive comb-making is indicated by some 340,000 antler fragments. High quality woolen cloth was woven in Haithabu starting in the later ninth

²⁹⁶ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 146 – 50.

²⁹⁷ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 150 – 2.

²⁹⁸ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 154 – 8.

²⁹⁹ Hilberg, "Hedeby in Wulfstan's Days," 92.

³⁰⁰ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 158 – 60.

³⁰¹ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 161 – 3. According to Jankuhn, the "Ulfbehrt" brand sword blades had a carbon content of .75 – 1.5%, which is equivalent to today's blade steel (p. 162).

³⁰² Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 163 – 6; Hilberg, "Hedeby in Wulfstan's Days," 93.

³⁰³ Hilberg, "Hedeby in Wulfstan's Days," 94 – 7.

century.³⁰⁴ Pottery for everyday use was made locally, as were glass vessels, in addition to glass bead making for trade.³⁰⁵

The trade in eighth- and ninth-century Haithabu appears to have been on the basis of barter or commodity money, with silver as a prestige commodity.³⁰⁶ Nevertheless, as in Ribe, Haithabu produced imitations of western coin types. Further, Louis the Pious' *Christiana religio* issues circulated.³⁰⁷ As elsewhere in Scandinavia, the late ninth century saw a conversion to hack-silver as an exchange medium in Haithabu, accompanied, however, by the issue of the "Hedeby half-bracteates" that are found widely distributed in the Baltic and especially in the Oder river basin on the southern shore.³⁰⁸ This certainly points to Haithabu's continuation as a major trade center entering the tenth century, which lies beyond the scope of this study. During the ninth century, meanwhile, despite the fragmentary evidence, it seems that transactions in places like Ribe and Haithabu often, if not exclusively, used western coins or western coin imitations as a medium of exchange.³⁰⁹ This further underscores the important influence of long-distance traders—whether Frisians, Franks, or Anglo-Saxons—from the west that came to Scandinavian *emporium* in the eighth and ninth centuries and brought their silver coins with them.

From the above discussion of Ribe, Birka, and Haithabu it is evident that both Denmark and Sweden in the eighth and ninth centuries had political structures that could engage actively in support of regular *emporium* or nodal points in long-distance trade. Elite or royal direction or patronage appears likely from the beginning at Ribe and Birka. In the case of Haithabu, its mid-eighth-century beginnings seem to represent an

³⁰⁴ Hilberg, "Hedeby in Wulfstan's Days," 94.

³⁰⁵ Hilberg, "Hedeby in Wulfstan's Days," 93.

³⁰⁶ Hilberg, "Silver Economies of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries AD in Hedeby," 209.

³⁰⁷ Hilberg, "Silver Economies of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries AD in Hedeby," 2010 – 11. "During the ninth century, coin circulation in the Hedeby *emporium* was dominated by coinage coming from the Carolingian west and the locally minted, imitative Dorestad coinage" (p. 214).

³⁰⁸ Hilberg, "Silver Economies of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries AD in Hedeby," 211.

³⁰⁹ Hilberg, "Silver Economies of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries AD in Hedeby," 214 – 15. See also Heiko Steuer, "Principles of Trade and Exchange: Trade Goods and Merchants," in *Wulfstan's Voyag* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 294 – 5, who identifies the earlier ninth century as dominated by counted sceattas and deniers as the means of exchange. By contrast, Birka did not mint imitations of western coinage and its coin stock at all times was overwhelmingly eastern, i.e. primarily Islamic with a few Byzantine issues mixed in. Gustin, "Coin Stock and Coin Circulation in Birka," *passim*. On the eastern silver flow, see further in the discussion in Section 7.3 below.

outgrowth of entrepreneurial Frisian mercantile explorations in the area of Jutland in the late seventh and earlier eighth centuries. The status of the place shifts abruptly and permanently in the first decade of the ninth century, as King Godfrid unmistakably imposes his authority there. The general pattern appears similar to that in southern England and northern Francia ca. 600, where kings moved to take greater control over trade networks that hitherto had operated informally.³¹⁰

A further insight into the conditions of trade and shipping in southern Scandinavia in the eighth and ninth centuries concerns the issue of control over or policing of the sea ways. We may accept that movement and trade in the North at this time was fairly free and unregulated, still operating primarily on the traditional basis of entrepreneurial sailings among the myriad landing places and commodity money.³¹¹ As the volume and value of trade increased after ca. 700, with regular contacts to the west and the influx of silver, the same level of political authority that in Denmark was able to build (or: refurbish?) the Danewirke in the earlier eighth century also seems to have been capable of mounting patrols on the waterways. The evidence for this is the oft-cited Kanhave canal, a kilometer long and 11m wide, on the island of Samsø, dendrodated to 726. As Axboe explains:

This. . . made it possible to sail out to the west from the protected Stavns fjord on the east coast of the island. It is a construction that cannot have had any sensible local purpose but which has to be understood as an element in some large scale naval control over the inner Kattegat.³¹²

Samsø lies in the middle of the gulf between east central Jutland, Fyn, and Sjælland and is, thus, in an ideal position for monitoring shipping heading to or from the Bælts.

The evidence of Kanhave leads to the surmise that observation and policing of shipping played a greater role in the conditions of trade in southern Scandinavia than hitherto has been realized. Analysis shows that a ship of the Gokstad type would, under sail, have an effective visible height of 10m, which means observability “from the beach”

³¹⁰ On this point, see the discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters* above.

³¹¹ This is far below the level of legal and administrative control over travel on roads and rivers in the Frankish empire, to say nothing of the Byzantine system. See the discussion in Section 6.3, subsection *Trans-continental routes from the Alps to the sea* above.

³¹² Axboe, “Danish Kings and Dendrochronology,” 222.

of 10.2nm/18.8km and up to 29.4nm/54.4km visibility from a height of 120m. This practically ensures that a ship of the given type would be unable to escape detection from the Danish side anywhere during the first 50km on the route eastwards from Schlei fjord to the narrows between Lolland and Fehmarn. Observability is only slightly less certain over the next 80km eastwards to the wider passage between the cliffs of Mön on the Danish side and Cape Arkona on the Slav side. Thereafter, a ship taking the route to the Bornholm gap northeast along the coast of Sweden would continue to be observable from points in Skåne.³¹³

The possibility of monitoring ship traffic in the narrow waters around Denmark and the western end of the Baltic gives a new dimension to the hints regarding Danish political organization in the ninth century. It is reasonable to infer that the lands ascribed to Danish control in the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan, which included today's west coast of Sweden, Skåne, Jutland, and the islands between the latter two, not only comprised a loose ethno-cultural and economic unity but also placed under the king's oversight all of the vantage points necessary to monitor shipping in the narrow waters of southern Scandinavia. Since the Danish kings in the ninth century clearly were interested in promoting peaceful trade (and, probably, directly profiting from the trade in some way), it is also reasonable to infer that the king asserted protection over peaceful shipping in these waters. Similarly, according to Callmer, the people along the coast of Sweden as far southwest as Blekinge acknowledged the authority and protection of the king of the Svear in Middle Sweden.³¹⁴ Apparently, at the end of the ninth century, only Bornholm still maintained independence from the two emerging hegemonic structures.³¹⁵ Anskar's experience with pirates on his way from Haithabu to Birka, meanwhile, shows the limits of royal protection.³¹⁶ It is likely, as Callmer says, that shippers had to negotiate

³¹³ Jan Bill, "Piracy and Naval Organisation in the Baltic Sea in the 9th Century: Some Security Considerations Concerning Wulfstan's Voyage," in *Wulfstan's Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 344 – 8.

³¹⁴ Callmer, "Wulfstan and the Coast of Southern Scandinavia," 128.

³¹⁵ Ulriksen, "Viking-Age Sailing Routes of the Western Baltic Sea," 137. This is according to Wulfstan. The wealth and independence of Bornholm from the Roman Iron Age to the early Viking Age no doubt was a function of its strategic position on the western Baltic sea lanes, both the east – west and the north – south.

³¹⁶ *Vita Anskarii* 10; Bill, "Piracy and Naval Organisation in the Baltic Sea in the 9th Century," 348 – 9.

protection piecemeal with local lords all along the route, or else avoid trouble by sailing in armed convoys and keeping far out to sea. Nevertheless, since shipping along the coasts of Scandinavia had, over many centuries, grown up to be an integral part of the lifestyle of the region, the practice must have been protected also by customary norms.³¹⁷

Altogether, the development of the Scandinavian exchange system in the eighth and ninth centuries can be viewed as the interaction of two sets of influences. One involves the pre-existing socio-economic networks within Scandinavia, which were based on distribution and exchange of locally produced resources, with commodity money as the medium of exchange, and employing an informal network of landing places that served both elite and non-elite settlements and centers. The other, which built upon the structures of the first, involved the rapidly growing availability of outside goods and materials from ca. 700 onwards—non-ferrous metals, in particular. These outside influences had far-reaching catalytic effects on the general level of wealth in Scandinavia, on the organization of the long-distance trading networks—especially in the emergence of the nodal *emporía*, and on the increasing level of political control that local elites came to exercise over the system. Although eastern silver was coming to play a steadily increasing role in these processes, through the end of the 700 – 900 period the major long-distance trading contacts of Scandinavia to the outside remained oriented to the west—to Anglo-Saxon England and, especially, to Frisia and the Carolingian empire.

The southern shore and the Slavs

While the lands along the southern shore of the Baltic clearly are an integral part of the Baltic sea watershed, Viking-Age scholarship has tended to overlook them—as if a neglected step child, kept apart from the favored Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Even Wulfstan’s sailing directions for the journey from Haithabu to Truso mark progress with references to islands and provinces on the Scandinavian side, while stating only that the

³¹⁷ Callmer, “Wulfstan and the Coast of Southern Scandinavia,” 128 – 31. “Although certainly risky and often dangerous, such maritime activity continued without serious interruption. Voyaging routes and patterns of social and political conduct had been well developed” (p. 131).

land of the Wends lies on starboard the entire time.³¹⁸ There is no lack of distinctive, observable detail, with opportunities and hazards, along the southern shore, including the fjords of Holstein, the island of Fehmarn, the deep bays of Mecklenburg, the island of Rügen with the cliffs of Cape Arkona, the lagoons around the mouth of the Oder, the long coast of Pomerania with the 115m height of Rowokół visible far out to sea, the Vistula delta and the lagoons of the southeastern corner of the Baltic.³¹⁹ Archaeology has revealed landing places and areas of settlement along this coastline that existed already in the 700 – 900 period. Thus, in order to gain a balanced picture of the Scandinavia – Baltic exchange system and its development during the eighth and ninth centuries, it will be necessary to compare the characteristics of the “Wendish” and Scandinavian countries and to analyze briefly the connections between the two.

The issue of socio-political and economic conditions on the Baltic coast of east-central Europe ca. 700 relates to the larger issue of the reorganization of east-central Europe under Avar hegemony, which was consolidated in the late sixth and early seventh centuries and divided trans-Alpine Temperate Europe into an Avar-Slav sphere of influence in the east and a Frankish sphere of influence in the west.³²⁰ The Romanized Franks created a viable post-Roman state based on Gaul, which continued many of the political, legal, cultural, and economic structures of the late Roman empire.³²¹ Moreover, the Merovingians provided a model of imperial style to the satellite areas of western and

³¹⁸ “Weonodland him wæs on steorbord.” Bately, “Wulfstan’s Voyage and His Description of *Estland*,” 15. In this regard, cf. Einhard, *Vita Caroli Magni* 12: “Sinus quidam ab occidentali oceano orientem versus porrigitur, longitudinis quidem incomptae, latitudinis vero, quae nusquam centum milia passuum excedat, cum in multis locis contractior inveniatur. Hunc multae circum sedent nationes; Dani siquidem ac Sueones, quos Nortmannos vocamus, et septentrionale litus et omnes in eo insulas tenent. At litus australe Sclavi et Aisti, et aliae diversae incolunt nationes.” (A gulf of the western ocean is stretched out towards the east, of length indeed unknown, [but] of a breadth in fact, which nowhere exceeds 100,000 paces [about 95 miles] while in many places it is found to be narrower. Around this many nations are settled: Danes if indeed Swedes, whom we call Northmen, hold both the northern shore and the islands. And Slavs and *Aesti* and other diverse nations inhabit the southern shore.) This passage shows that the Franks in the early ninth century, when Einhard wrote, had a rather accurate concept of the Baltic and knew the major groups of people that inhabited its western half at least. Einhard’s description improves upon Tacitus *Germania* 43 – 45, who has a rather less coherent idea of the layout of the “Suebic Sea.”

³¹⁹ Hauke Jöns, “Ports and *emporía* of the Southern Coast: From Hedeby to Usedom and Wolin,” in *Wulfstan’s Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 160; also Englert and Ossowski, “Sailing in Wulfstan’s Wake,” *passim*, for the view from shipboard.

³²⁰ See the discussion in Section 5.2, subsection *New spheres of influence: Franks and Avars* above, and especially the works of Walter Pohl cited there.

³²¹ See discussion in Section 5.1 above.

northern Europe, aspects of which were admired and imitated by the incipient state-builders in Denmark and Middle Sweden.³²² Meanwhile, with the socio-political revolution in Avar-Slav central Europe, Scandinavia from the mid-sixth century onwards lost the communications that it formerly had enjoyed with the Danube region and the Black sea. In the sixth and seventh centuries, Scandinavian societies appear stable and free of outside interference, but what outside influences the Scandinavians did accept came from the Frankish west.³²³

Avar east-central Europe was similarly autonomous and stable. The destruction of the Gepid kingdom in 567 and the departure of the Lombards to Italy in 568 put an end to two centuries of chaos that had prevailed along the Danube.³²⁴ In place of the militaristic, hierarchically structured, and Rome-oriented culture of the Germanic groups on the Danube, the Avars created a non-expansionist and distinctly un-Romanized political-cultural sphere. They consolidated their hegemony over the Carpathian basin and aggressively stabilized their frontiers vis-à-vis the Franks and the Byzantines, but their political order did not depend upon continued aggression and streams of plunder. Instead, they maintained overlordship over a constellation of settled agricultural populations, who prospered under the Avar peace and provided tribute in the form of foodstuffs and recruits. The Avars allowed the formation of local defense forces, but at the same time it was in the interests of their system to discourage the emergence of local hierarchies that might pose a challenge to the overlords. The simplified economy that prevailed among the subject peoples was advantageous because it could be easily adapted

³²² This point is made explicitly in Chris Wickham, “Overview: Production, Distribution and Demand,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 279 – 83. See now Peter Heather, “Afterword,” in *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 605 – 23, who identifies Rome, Byzantium, and the Franks – Ottonians as the carriers of imperial civilization, whose ideas and institutions assimilated “barbarian” Europe and so created the culture-region that we know as Europe today.

³²³ See the discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* above.

³²⁴ It is fair to characterize the Germanic barbarian polities that emerged along the *limes* in the first through fourth centuries and competed for a place in the Roman world in the fifth and sixth as direct products of their interaction with the Roman state and its culture; see the discussion in Section 4.3 above. Further, as Florin Curta, “Introduction,” in *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 1 – 6, points out, scholarship has generally concerned itself only with those barbarian groups such as the Franks and the Lombards, who were successful in founding states on Roman territory, especially if such a barbarian group plays a role in the creation myth of a modern European nation. Those barbarian groups that failed in the competition have become today’s “neglected barbarians.”

to a wide variety of environmental conditions that were found in different local areas throughout east-central Europe.³²⁵

Both the egalitarian social conditions and the simple material culture, which routinely are singled out as the most salient features of the Slavic culture that spread throughout east-central Europe in the seventh and eighth centuries, may be explained as adaptive advantages under the prevailing political and environmental conditions.³²⁶ This may help to explain also why there appears to be so little political development in the vast space between the Danube and the Baltic, even though Avar control north of the Carpathian basin, on the North European Plain, must have been tenuous at best. The matter is complicated by the lack of settlement evidence. By dendrodating, the earliest Slav settlements in the northern region occur only ca. 700 rather than in the late sixth or early seventh centuries as previously thought.³²⁷ The earliest visible stronghold-building activity on the North European Plain east of the Elbe takes place in the northwestern end of the Slav territory, in Holstein in the 720s – 30s, with another spurt in such activity occurring in the Elbe – Oder area more generally in the late eighth century. The typical form of these strongholds is circular, with massive earth and timber ramparts, but enclosing an interior area of only 10 – 50m diameter. Larger enclosures of the so-called Feldberg type, also of the eighth century, are found in Mecklenburg. Additional waves of settlement and stronghold formation do not appear until the early tenth century, but that development lies beyond the limits of the present study.³²⁸ There was a rapid emergence

³²⁵ The preceding reflects the compact analysis in Przemysław Urbánczyk, “Early State Formation in East Central Europe,” in *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 142 – 5, which essentially reinforces the discussion in Section 5.2, subsection *New spheres of influence: Franks and Avars* above.

³²⁶ The Avar’s tribute peoples were not all Slavic. Archaeology shows continuous Gepid settlement and burials in Transylvania from ca. 400 to ca. 650, which suggests the persistence of Gepid identity long after their political debacle of 567. See Radu Harhoiu, “Where Did All the Gepids Go? A Sixth- to Seventh-Century Cemetery in Bratei (Romania),” and Anna Kharalambieva, “Gepids in the Balkans: A Survey of the Archaeological Evidence,” both in *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 209 – 44 and 245 – 62, respectively.

³²⁷ Barford, “Silent Centuries,” 62. The dendrodates depend on available wood samples, typically from wells or fortifications, so it is possible that settlements without such features existed earlier. In any case, settlement evidence of any kind from the seventh century is very sparse.

³²⁸ Barford, “Silent Centuries,” 66 – 9.

of central places, forts and proto-towns in Bohemia and Moravia in the ninth century.³²⁹ Between the mountains and the sea, however, it is difficult to find rich central places to match such as Dankirke, Lejre, Tissø, or Uppåkra in southern Scandinavia.

Trade routes in the space between the Danube and the south Baltic shore are equally scarce from the later sixth to the late ninth century. There was apparent contact between the southeastern corner of the Baltic and the Middle Danube and Crimea regions, but these are visible only as distributions of amber and certain types of dress-jewelry.³³⁰ Amber was widespread throughout east-central Europe as a decorative material on fibulae and mounts in the sixth and seventh centuries. It came from the southeast Baltic, where local use of this material reached a peak at this time, but the mechanism of its widespread distribution remains unknown.³³¹ According to Curta, amber from the southeastern Baltic still reached the Carpathian basin and Left Bank Ukraine in the seventh century. However:

In contrast, amber is relatively rare in eighth- and ninth-century assemblages in east central Europe and there is no evidence that the Amber Trail was revived in the aftermath of Charlemagne's conquest of the Avar khaganate. . . . On the contrary, the evidence points to a shift in emphasis from the Vistula to the Dnieper Rivers taking place at some point after 600 AD. In other words, ninth-century amber does not seem to have played any significant role in early medieval exchanges between the Mediterranean and the Baltic across the lands of east central Europe.³³²

³²⁹ See Jiří Macháček, "Early Medieval Centre in Pohansko ne Břeclav/Lundeburg: *munitio*, *emporium* or *palatium* of the Rulers of Moravia?" and Lumír Poláček, "Ninth-Century Mikulčice: The 'Market of the Moravians'?" The Archaeological Evidence of Trade in Great Moravia," both in *Heirs of the Roman West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 473 – 98 and . 499 – 524, respectively. Urbánczyk, "Early State Formation in East Central Europe," 145, suggests that the Slavs of the northern Carpathian basin failed to support the Avar qaganate against Charlemagne in the late eighth century because they were eager for freedom to start building their own political hierarchies in their home territories.

³³⁰ Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500 – 700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 247 – 75, discusses these distributions but rejects trade as an explanation for them.

³³¹ See Audronė Bliujienė, "The Backcountry Balts (*Aesti*) and the 'Northern Gold' in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," in *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 13 – 52. Bliujienė hints at a trade route southwards from the area of East Prussia, but does not discuss it in detail.

³³² Florin Curta, "East Central Europe," *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003): 288 – 9. The quote is on p. 289.

Developments in Moravia appear to confirm the picture of lapsed communications links to the south. The ninth-century Pohansko complex on the Morava river is described as a major settlement, fortified center, and *emporium*, with evidence for extensive craft production and trading activities, but its influences and connections unmistakably are to the Danube and to the Frankish world.³³³ Very few coins are found there, however, as also in the impressive Mikulčice just to the north. Only a handful of coins are known there, and these are Frankish and Byzantine with only one Arab issue among them. As at Pohansko, the dominant influence is Frankish, especially in prestige objects such as weapons, riding equipment, dress jewelry, glass vessels and beads. Clearly a seat of political power, ninth-century Mikulčice was a terminus and a consumer, not a trade center and certainly not a transit point over the mountains to Poland.³³⁴ Similarly, overland connections to Poland from the east are scarcely visible in the ninth century. The earliest dirham hoards that appear on the eastern frontiers of Poland—presumably deriving from the burgeoning Dniepr route and its center at Kiev—date to the late ninth or early tenth century.³³⁵ Only the report of Ibn Khordadbeh, that the Rhadanites had an overland route that connected Spain and Francia via the “land of the Slavs” with Khazar Itil on the lower Volga in the ninth century suggests a possible transit route through the Elbe – Oder – Vistula country.³³⁶

For the eighth and ninth century, then, there is little or no evidence to connect the south Baltic watershed via exchange routes to the south or to the east. Instead, the one area of “Wendland” that shows accelerated growth and trade contacts to the outside already in the earlier eighth century is its northwestern end, along the southern shore of the westernmost arm of the Baltic that leads to the Jutland isthmus. The first major site

³³³ Macháček, “Early Medieval Centre in Pohansko,” *passim*.

³³⁴ Poláček, “Ninth-Century Mikulčice,” *passim*. Curta, “East Central Europe,” 285 – 6, confirms that dirhams are very scarce in the ninth-century Carpathian basin generally. His focus is on the Carpathian basin and the Danube, but that discussion is significant for the condition of contacts towards the north.

³³⁵ Charlotte Warnke, *Die Anfänge des Fernhandels in Polen* (Würzburg: Holzner, 1964), 76 – 7 and maps 6 and 10. Warnke speaks of central Poland in particular as an “island” isolated from the major exchange routes all around it until the late ninth or tenth century. See the very brief discussion on dirham in-flows into Poland overland from the east in the late ninth and early tenth century in Mateusz Bogucki, “The Use of Money in the Slavic Lands from the Ninth to Eleventh Century: The Archaeological/Numismatic Evidence,” in *Silver Economies* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011), 135 – 6, with references.

³³⁶ Warnke, *Anfänge des Fernhandels in Polen*, 78 – 80. She points out that alternative routes could fit with Ibn Khordadbeh’s statement.

eastwards from Jutland was at Starigard/Oldenburg, the central place of the Wagrian tribe of the Abodrite nation. In an early phase, it had a typically round but unusually large 140m in diameter fortification.³³⁷ In the ninth century it tripled in size as a rectangle of 140m x 260. Known as the seat of Wagrian rulers into the twelfth century, the site had court buildings on the Frankish model in the ninth century.³³⁸ Moreover, it was receiving goods from the Frankish west (Rhineland quernstones), Scandinavia (stone vessels), and Russia (spindle whorls), which demonstrates that the site was internationally connected in the ninth century, despite that its harbor and marketplace have not yet been located.³³⁹ Apparently not an *emporium*, coastal Starigard/Oldenburg in the ninth century should be regarded as a central place similar to the rich Scandinavian central places with international imports, which contrasts with the general absence of such places inland in the Elbe – Vistula region.

Other areas with ports and evidence of trade and craft production are situated around the gulf that pushes deeply south between Holstein and Mecklenburg. Chronologically, the earliest of these and the site with the most obvious characteristics of a major *emporium* is on the Wismar bay, at Groß Strömkendorf.³⁴⁰ The general consensus is that this was the Reric mentioned in the *Annales regni Francorum*, which Godfrid of the Danes destroyed in 808. The earliest dendrodate here is 730, with a final building phase ca. 811 and apparent abandonment after 835. On-site crafts included comb making, bronze casting, glass and amber working, and iron smithing, while imports included western artifacts such as Rhineland pottery, quernstones, millefiori beads and glass vessels, and Scandinavian whetstones and soapstone. Further, the international character of the site is reflected in the great variety of burial styles in the settlement

³³⁷ In other words, it was considerably larger than the average 10 – 50m diameter of the typical eighth – ninth-century circular Slav stronghold. See again the outline of northwest Slav settlement history in Barford, “Silent Centuries,” 66 – 9.

³³⁸ This is not surprising in light of the frequent diplomatic contacts of the Abodrites with the Franks ca. 780 – 840, i.e. during the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. See Brather, *Archäologie der westlichen Slawen*, 63 – 6 and Abb. 8.

³³⁹ The detail on Starigard/Oldenburg is from Jöns, “Ports and *emporia* of the Southern Coast,” 162 – 5.

³⁴⁰ Sindbæk, “Networks and Nodal Points,” 121, includes Groß Strömkendorf on his short list of seven nodal *emporia* in the Baltic.

cemetery, both from the North Sea and the Baltic region.³⁴¹ Clearly, the site was a major port during the second half of the eighth century, with its beginnings falling roughly halfway between the founding of the *emporium* of Ribe and the initial settlement of the Haithabu site by Frisians.

In other words, no sooner did organized, international long-distance trade begin to reach southwestern Scandinavia than the western end of the Slavic coast became involved in it as well. The hinterland of the Groß-Strömkendorf site was densely settled already in the eighth century, and included two major central places: Mecklenburg 15km to the south and Ilow 10km to the east. Both of these places had large, oval ramparts dating to the eighth century, and both have assemblages of prestigious imports. Ilow, moreover, had five craftsmen's settlements hard by already in the eighth and ninth centuries.³⁴² In sum, the eighth-century Slav settlement complex by Wismar bay included not only a nodal *emporium* but central places and a densely settled countryside, and was similar, therefore, to several such complexes to be found in contemporary Scandinavia.

A less developed and less well preserved site lies some 45km further east, on the Warnow estuary. This is Rostock-Dierkow, whose dendrodates run from 750 – 817. This site also belongs, then, to the initial expansion of trade in the Baltic. It shows traces of comb making and working in silver, bronze, amber, and glass—which required imported raw materials. Other imports include the usual Rhenish pottery and quernstones. Some high-quality Scandinavian fibulae and a hoard containing a necklace of 144 exotic beads plus a Scandinavian-made, cast silver sword handle signify both the wealth of the local inhabitants and contacts with the Scandinavian side of the Baltic. Regardless, the place seems to have lost its trade and production functions after the early ninth century.³⁴³

By contrast with the aforementioned sites in the Abodrite lands that date to the eighth century, Slav Leubice on the Trave river mouth (forerunner of German Lübeck that was founded ca. 1150) was a settlement of traders and craftsmen whose earliest

³⁴¹ Jöns, "Ports and *emporium* of the Southern Coast," 167 – 8. For greater detail on some aspects of the site, see Astrid Tummuscheit, "Groß Strömkendorf: A Market Site on the Eighth Century on the Baltic Sea Coast," in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003), 208 – 220.

³⁴² For Ilow and Mecklenburg, see Jöns, "Ports and *emporium* of the Southern Coast," 168 – 70.

³⁴³ Jöns, "Ports and *emporium* of the Southern Coast," 170 – 1.

dendrodates are from 819. Rhineland pottery and quernstones as well as Scandinavian fibulae have been found in the settlement, which attest to its international connections. Leubice apparently functioned as the gateway to the Slav fort and cluster of settlements some 30km south up the Trave at Hammer, which in turn had contacts south to the Frankish border post at Bardowiek.³⁴⁴ It would appear, then, that the Leubice – Hammer complex and the development of the Trave route from the Baltic to the lower Elbe in the earlier ninth century is connected, in some way, both with the Danish initiatives to control the sea trade in the westernmost Baltic and with the consolidation of the Frankish position in Nordalbingia and the lower Elbe.³⁴⁵

Further east along the south Baltic shore, early ninth-century hoards of Islamic coins and bar silver found around the Darsser Bodden—the lagoon and its barrier islands at the northern end of Mecklenburg—suggest that the area was accessible to shipping in the Viking Age and had landing places, as did areas of similar terrain in Denmark.³⁴⁶

The large island of Rügen, immediately to the east off the northeast coast of Mecklenburg, had a port and crafts center, Ralswiek, that was founded in the late eighth century. It included, according to Jöns, “a trading and market settlement with a harbour, sanctuary and nearby cemetery.”³⁴⁷ This multi-functional site was a center for pagan religious rituals as well as craft production, including metal, amber, and bone working. Its richness is suggested by a hoard of 2,211 Islamic coins with a *tpq* of 844. A fortified central place lay only 7km to the south. The cemetery shows grave goods with connections to Sweden as well as the eastern Baltic. The complex was in use for some two centuries, with a second growth period around the late ninth century.³⁴⁸

In the complex waters around the Oder estuary, which are the access point for one of the primary north – south avenues from the Baltic inland, the Menzlin – Görke complex is the earliest. Situated some 8km up the Peene river that empties into the

³⁴⁴ Jöns, “Ports and *emporia* of the Southern Coast,” 165.

³⁴⁵ The Frankish position in the area of the lower Elbe in the early eighth century included forts at Esesfeld and Delbende, the border check-point and trading site of Bardowick (mentioned in the 805 Dienenhof capitulary), and the port, fort, and church complex at Hammaburg. See discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and the Elbe* above.

³⁴⁶ Jöns, “Ports and *emporia* of the Southern Coast,” 171 – 2.

³⁴⁷ Jöns, “Ports and *emporia* of the Southern Coast,” 173.

³⁴⁸ Jöns, “Ports and *emporia* of the Southern Coast,” 173 – 4.

western end of the lagoons, Menzlin was a 10ha craftsmen's settlement of pit houses showing detritus of comb making and amber, glass, iron, and bronze working. Imported items included Scandinavian brooches and Thor's hammers as well as Rhenish glass, ceramics, and quernstones, and millefiori beads from the west. The nearby cemetery has burials in Slavic-type urns but with grave goods from the eastern Baltic, Scandinavia, and even Anglo-Saxon England and Francia. Most remarkably, a wooden bridge dendrodated to the 760s crossed the river to the south side, supplemented in the earlier ninth century by a plank road of 800m length. On the south side was the dense settlement site of Görke, with a fort some 6km to the west, which have turned up evidence of weapons, prestige goods, and craft production. Summing up the complex, Jöns writes:

The trading centre, cemetery and road and bridge construction show Scandinavian influence of such a degree that it can be assumed that the site was founded and inhabited by a multi-ethnic, Scandinavian-dominated community which was integrated in Slavic territory. It is also obvious that at Menzlin, the concept of an unfortified, multi-ethnic trading center, under protection of the Slavic nobility as with Groß Strömkendorf and Ralswiek, has validity as well.³⁴⁹

The Menzlin complex was the gateway to the watershed of the Peene, which, as Jöns says, was "a wide densely-populated hinterland."³⁵⁰ Taken together, the features of this site confirm the impression that the entire south Baltic shore from Jutland to the Oder was a locus for trade and craft production at landing places and *emporium* no different than was the case on the Scandinavian side. Site after site shows the same standard features: craft production based on raw materials brought over long distances, goods imported from the west, and even organizational features that correspond to the layout of *emporium* in Scandinavia (and in the North Sea region). The chronology of the sites suggests that it was the development of the Danish *emporium* at Ribe and Haithabu in southern Jutland that led, very shortly, to the opening of the Slavic shore. Moreover, particularly in the case of Menzlin and Groß Strömkendorf, there is a clear relationship between the trading places and local central places, which would have constituted a market for prestige goods and

³⁴⁹ Jöns, "Ports and *emporium* of the Southern Coast," 174 – 6. The quote is on p. 176.

³⁵⁰ Jöns, "Ports and *emporium* of the Southern Coast," 175.

luxuries. Further, the prosperous, settled hinterlands suggest the possibility of non-elite trade relationships as well. Regarding the means of exchange, in the south Baltic as well as in Scandinavia, a wave of Islamic silver coins came into the area in the later eighth to earlier ninth centuries, followed by an apparent interruption and another wave starting at the end of the ninth century and continuing into the first half of the tenth.³⁵¹ Finally, in the relatively narrow waters from Rügen westwards to Jutland, observation of shipping would have been almost as efficient from lookouts on the Slav side as on the Danish side.³⁵² Inevitably, the Slavs on the southern shore would have been aware of the east – west traffic passing between themselves and Denmark, and it would be surprising if they had not found ways to engage with it.

Eastwards of the Oder, development appears to be later than from Menzlin westwards. In the area of the Oder mouth, Usedom, Wolin, and Szczecin were settled in the eighth century, but do not show oversea trade functions until the ninth century. In the case of Wolin, a harbor was developed for a pre-existing settlement from 838 to ca. 900, according to the dendrodates.³⁵³ Along the long coast of Pomerania, Kołobrzeg, a tribal center at the mouth of the Parsęta river and a salt producer, starts in the late ninth century.³⁵⁴ In the area of the Vistula delta, an early port named Puck existed from the seventh century, with Gdąnsk becoming a port only ca. 900.³⁵⁵

The major terminal in the area, however, was Truso at the eastern edge of the Vistula delta.³⁵⁶ Properly speaking, Truso belonged to the Baltic Old Prussians, rather

³⁵¹ Steuer, “Principles of Trade and Exchange: Trade Goods and Merchants,” 299. See also Bogucki, “Use of Money in the Slavic Lands,” 135, who places the earliest phase of silver hoarding in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. These are found only in Prussia, Pomerania, and “Polabia” or northeastern Germany, i.e. in areas along the south Baltic shore. Hoards are not found in the interior of Poland in this period. The size and frequency of the hoards grows markedly in the late ninth century, and are found then primarily in Pomerania and in Little Poland, with the source of the latter coming overland from the east.

³⁵² See again Bill, “Piracy and Naval Organisation in the Baltic Sea in the 9th Century,” 345 – 7, with diagrams of observation radii.

³⁵³ Jöns, “Ports and *emporía* of the Southern Coast,” 176. Władisław Filipowiak, “Wolin und Szczecin—Hafen und Topographie der mittelalterlichen Stadt,” in *Maritime Topography and the Medieval Town*, ed. Jan Bill and Birthe L. Clausen (Copenhagen: The National Museum, 1999), 61 – 2.

³⁵⁴ Marian Rębkowski, “The Maritime Topography of Medieval Kołobrzeg,” in *Maritime Topography and the Medieval Town*, ed. Jan Bill and Birthe L. Clausen (Copenhagen: The National Museum, 1999), 55 – 7.

³⁵⁵ Henryk Paner, “The Harbour Topography of Gdąnsk,” in *Maritime Topography and the Medieval Town*, ed. Jan Bill and Birthe L. Clausen (Copenhagen: The National Museum, 1999), 45 – 6.

³⁵⁶ Sindbæk, “Networks and Nodal Points,” 121, includes Truso on his short list of seven nodal *emporía* in the Baltic.

than to the Western Slavs, though it clearly occupied a liminal position not only in respect to the sea – land interface but also was situated on the western frontier of the Prussians vis-à-vis the Slavs on the lower Vistula.³⁵⁷ Further, the archaeological record shows a heavy Scandinavian presence both in Truso itself (or: Janów Pomorski, as the site is called in modern Polish) and at other places within a 25km radius. According to Jagodziński, the artifacts found and produced at Truso are overwhelmingly with Scandinavian affinities, which reinforces the idea that the creation of this *emporium* was instigated, in large part, by Scandinavians, though with the participation of the local population.³⁵⁸ Crafts at Truso include gold, glass, amber, and iron working as well as the usual comb-making; also, boat building. Finally, its status as a major trading site is indicated by the significant number of coins (274, nearly all Islamic, dating to the early ninth century) and weights (over 300) that were found so far. Based on the artifact types (no dendrodates), the site was occupied from the late eighth century to the early eleventh.³⁵⁹

Northeastwards from Truso, there are numerous other sites with evidence of strong Scandinavian influence and participation in Viking-Age Baltic trade in the former East Prussia, western Lithuania, and Latvia. Notable sites include Kaup-Wiskiauten on the Kurisches Haff, Apuolė in western Lithuania, and Grobiņa on a waterway hard by the modern Latvian port city of Liepāja. All of these places begin before 900, and have evidence of extensive Scandinavian presence and trade-oriented craft production using scarce, imported raw materials. Artifacts from the Latin Christian west do not reach the eastern Baltic shores, but Scandinavian imports abound, and items from the trade over European Russia also show up here.³⁶⁰ Finally, the large Estonian island of Saaremaa,

³⁵⁷ See Marek F. Jagodziński, “The Settlement of Truso,” in *Wulfstan’s Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 192 – 3 and Fig. 13, which shows Prussian and Slavic sites over the territory extending some 70km eastwards from the Vistula. The map shows Truso to be still in the zone of Prussian settlement, with a rather clear boundary separating this from the Slavic zone.

³⁵⁸ Jagodziński, “The Settlement of Truso,” 184 – 6, 191 – 3. Jagodziński speaks of Truso as the eastern limit of the cultural influence of the Danes, specifically (pp. 193 – 4). Cf. the notion in Westerdahl, “Transport Zones in Wulfstan’s Days,” 211, of transport zones as “elongated, coast-bound socio-cultural spaces.”

³⁵⁹ Jagodziński, “The Settlement of Truso,” 183 – 7.

³⁶⁰ Vladas Žulkus and Mindaugas Bertašius, “Handelsplätze zwischen Danziger und Rigaer Bucht zur Zeit Wulfstans,” in *Wulfstan’s Voyage* (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009), 198 – 204.

which lies athwart the Gulf of Riga, may have played a middle-man role between Gotland and the Daugava river area, although this development appears to take shape after rather than before 900.³⁶¹

In summary, ca. 700, evidence for long-distance exchange activity or even settlement along the south shore of the Baltic between Schleswig and East Prussia (exclusive) is quite scarce. During the early to mid-eighth century, however, well-developed *emporium*, central places, and settled hinterlands come into view in the coastal areas from Holstein to Vorpommern (the west side of the Oder mouth area). Some early dates are also obtained for sites in the southeastern Baltic and the coast of Kurland, with Swedish and Gotlandic settlement at Grobiņa dating to ca. 650 and Truso in operation by the late eighth century. Other sites, such as Leubice, Wolin, and Kołobrzeg become active only in the ninth century. At least part of the stimulus for these developments, especially in the eighth century along the western portions of the southern shoreline, must be linked with the establishment of *emporium* in southern Jutland and, with these, a much higher level of trading contacts with the west. This stimulated the exchange systems in the Scandinavia – Baltic region generally, and did not leave out the southern shore. Western imports become scarce eastwards of the Oder, however, while the Scandinavian influence, which is already unmistakable in Holstein, Mecklenburg, Rügen, and Vorpommern, becomes dominant in East Prussia and the eastern Baltic. The Scandinavian influences suggest that numerous lateral, cross-Baltic routes connected the Scandinavian side of the Baltic sea region with the Slavic – Baltic – Finnic side. Further, it underscores that the exchange systems in the Scandinavia – Baltic region were, indeed, stimulated by outside inputs, both from the west and from the east, but that the local players could and did operate and expand these systems under their own initiative.

If Scandinavians were taking the lead in such initiatives, then this must be an effect of the more stable and undisturbed conditions for socio-economic and political development in Scandinavia during the sixth and seventh centuries as compared to conditions on the Slavic side. In any case, firm evidence for Slavic settlement and the

³⁶¹ Priit Ligi, "Saaremaa during the Viking Age," in *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic: Papers from the Second Estonian – Swedish Symposium Sigtuna, May 1991*, ed. Ingmar Jansson (Stockholm: Department of Archaeology, Stockholm University, 1995),

emergence of the first hints of political organization in the southern Baltic coincide with the eighth-century increase in Baltic trade. This trade must have been based on the ability of the Slav side to produce marketable goods and resources. The North European Plain south of the Baltic shore had an abundance of so-called forest products: furs, honey, and wax. It also had some grain surplus, cattle, horses, and salt. Iron could be produced, as seen in the inclusion of iron discs among the species of commodity money in use within the west Slavic sub-region. Slavic pottery is found widely in Sweden, though it is uncertain if this was an export item. Finally, there is the possibility of slave trading.³⁶²

A second spurt in Slav settlement activity dates to the early ninth century,³⁶³ and this probably can be linked with the consolidation of the Frankish frontier in the lower and middle Elbe region in the decades immediately before and after 800.³⁶⁴ As mentioned above, the early ninth-century beginnings of Leubice on the Trave as the northern terminus of an overland route south to the lower Elbe likely is a reflection of the Frankish stimulus in this area. This not only reinforces the evidence for trading activities at Hammaburg that were ongoing throughout the ninth century but suggests also that the Franks on the Elbe were diverting some of the southern Baltic trade to overland and river routes to the west and south. In the ninth century, not all of Slavic trade was moving through the landing places on the Baltic sea.

Did Charlemagne's injunction in the 805 Diedenhof capitulary, that Frankish merchants must go no further than the named border posts such as Bardowiek and Magdeburg, remain in force throughout the ninth century? There is no direct evidence that Rhadanites or any other merchants operated on the river and land routes in the Slavic hinterland eastwards of the Elbe in the ninth century. The increased number of settlements and the typical round "Burgwälle" that multiply unevenly in the lands between the Elbe and the Oder may have been collection points for agricultural and forest

³⁶² For the list of Slavic commodities, see Barford, "Silent Centuries," 70 – 4. See also Björn Ambrosiani, "Birka—Part of a Trade Network," in *Exchange and Trade in Medieval Europe—Papers of the 'Medieval Europe Brugge 1997' Conference*, vol. 3, ed. Guy De Boe and Frans Verhaege (Zellik: Instituut vor het archeologisch patrimonium, 1997), 184, who states that "[t]he western Slavonic areas seem to have been important exporters of wax, honey, and salt."

³⁶³ Barford, "Silent Centuries," 62.

³⁶⁴ See the discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and the Elbe* above.

products, meant for trade, but no regular marketplaces are known within this territory aside from those on the Baltic coast and along the Frankish frontier.³⁶⁵ If merchants from the west were entering the territory and engaging directly with Slavic suppliers, then this exchange was on a very primitive and informal basis. Alternatively, of course, enterprising Slavs could have brought the agricultural and forest products—and slaves—for sale to the merchants at the frontier posts.³⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Frankish influence is evident on the Slavic pottery types of this period, as well as on metal objects including weapons and dress jewelry.³⁶⁷ This suggests pervasive if also unfocused contacts with the west.

Finally, it may be that the inveterate warfare that flared along the Elbe between the Franks or Saxons on one side and the Elbe Slavs (Abodrites, Wilzi, Sorbs) on the other side might be explained, in part, as fallout from an ongoing slave trade. We have hints about the close interrelation of slave-taking and warfare on this front in the early tenth century. To the extent that the Franks and Saxons of the later ninth and early tenth century did not contemplate a systematic conquest of the Slav lands to the east, this may be because the object of the warfare was lucrative slave raiding rather than territorial control.³⁶⁸

The founding of Ribe shortly after AD 700 marks an epoch in the history of the North because it signals the beginning of significantly intensified exchange relations with the Latin Christian world to the west. First, the influx of western goods, materials, and traders and then the influx of silver from the east starting in the late eighth century

³⁶⁵ See the discussion in Brather, *Archäologie der westlichen Slawen*, 245 – 7.

³⁶⁶ In this regard, cf. the privilege granted to the church of St. Maurice in Magdeburg the rights to the tax in honey (*censum mellis*) from a long list of territories in the middle Elbe area. Otto I, no. 303, given in Wallhausen, 28 July 965. *MGH Die Urkunden der deutschen Könige und Kaiser*, vol. 1: *Die Urkunden Konrad I. Heinrich I. und Otto I* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1879 – 84), 418 – 19. The concession of the honey tax to a favored church shows that “forest products” such as honey, that were produced by the Slavic populations, were abundant and valuable commodities. Before the imposition of an Ottonian tax system on the Slavs, such commodities could have brought profits from trade to the producers.

³⁶⁷ Barford, “Silent Centuries,” 66.

³⁶⁸ Gerd Althoff, “Saxony and the Elbe Slavs in the Tenth Century,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 3: c.900 – c.1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 278 – 84, raises doubts against any concerted policy of territorial conquest, and provides some telling vignettes of raid and counter-raid that involved the taking of captives.

rapidly increased the wealth and socio-economic mobilization in the Scandinavian – Baltic region, which then continued apace throughout the ninth century. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the outside stimuli did not *create* a production and exchange system in this region but built upon one that was already well developed and in place by ca. 700.

This is particularly true on the Scandinavian side of the Baltic. Areas of southern Scandinavia were evolving more productive village societies starting in the later Roman Iron Age, and had reached a loose but stable political system by the sixth century. Similar development was ongoing in Middle Sweden by the mid-sixth century as well. By the seventh century, if not earlier, the coastlines of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were tied together by a dense but loosely organized skein of shipping routes and landing places, which served both elite and non-elite centers and settlements. Exchange along these multiple connections flowed easily on the basis of commodity money. Scandinavians traded both utilitarian and luxury items along these routes, including industrial resources such as iron and raw antler for craft production, finished craft goods, foodstuffs, specialized items such as soapstone vessels and whetstones, and precious substances like walrus ivory and amber.

Already in the seventh century, exotic goods were reaching far northern Norway and Middle Sweden, and trans-Baltic connections existed as well. The nodal *emporium* that emerged roughly 700 – 800 only superimposed a higher and more efficiently organized level of connections on the pre-existing communications system. The *emporium* facilitated the import of goods and raw materials, including metals unavailable in the North. The greater availability of raw materials at the *emporium* and the more efficient distribution network in turn increased both the volume of craft production and the standardization of artifact styles, especially in dress jewelry (brooches) and combs. At the same time, the increased level of demand, production, and exchange within the Baltic realm after ca. 700 had the effect of steadily drawing in more and more of the southern Baltic shore into the pre-existing system. Meanwhile, the influx of silver from both west and east was not only an indication of a positive “balance of payments” situation that the

North enjoyed but also had the effect of converting both sides of the Baltic sea to an economy mediated through payments in hack-silver by the late ninth century.

How did the North achieve this favorable balance vis-à-vis the more populous and better organized worlds of Latin Christendom, Byzantium, and the Caliphate? The Scandinavian – Baltic realm had sufficient agriculture plus abundant iron and other raw materials such as wool, antler, and stone to provide for most of the utilitarian needs of its population. It also had special resources that populations to the south might esteem as precious and desirable—walrus ivory, furs, amber; and it could export captives as slaves. In return the North could gain, especially, the gold, silver, and copper-alloy metals that it did not produce itself. As far back as the Bronze Age, northern amber (and probably furs, and possibly slaves) had been traded to central Europe for bronze and gold. In the Iron Age of the first millennium BC, the amber route from the Baltic continued to cross east-central Europe, and the amber trade continued during the Roman imperial period, which also saw astounding amounts of gold collecting in Denmark. A major change in the trade configuration occurred around the middle of the first millennium AD when Scandinavia's contacts to the south through east-central Europe became disrupted. Therefore, what is mainly anomalous in the interregional trade configuration of the Carolingian period is not that the North prospered from its exchange connections with the south but that the long-distance routes of this exchange curved around east-central Europe—across the North Sea to Anglo-Saxon England and Francia in the west, and across the river routes of European Russia to Byzantium and the Caliphate in the east. The exports that allowed the North to prosper within these exchanges remained the same as they had been in previous eras.

Among the five “worlds” of western Eurasia, Scandinavia had a significantly lower level of political and institutional development than did Carolingia, Byzantium, and the Caliphate. This did not, however, prevent the successful mobilization of Scandinavian resources, the emergence of a complex network, and a hierarchy of participants in the system. Common farmers and villagers could market their local surpluses and receive in return items of craft production, capital accumulations (silver, *par excellence*), and the occasional luxury item. Elite personages could do the same at a

grander scale, with correspondingly greater access to imported luxury items. Between them, the professional merchants and craftsmen served both the common and the elite. All of these groups, as they engaged in the exchange system, could be considered as operating on an entrepreneurial basis, although the profits from the entrepreneurship could, at any time, be translated into the construction of social relationships or political alliances. An additional, fourth level of activity, which also could be considered entrepreneurial, was the organized expeditions of Scandinavians both to the west and to the east to obtain more directly the wealth of the outside world.

7.3 The western Eurasian circuit

Chapter 6, above, opened with several key arguments. First, that both the production and the exchange systems of Carolingian Europe were far more robust and sophisticated than prevailing scholarly opinion would have it even as recently as the 1970s. Further, that anecdotal evidence such as the travels of Louis the Pious' "Rhos guests" ca. 839 and the career of the gift elephant sent by Caliph Harun al-Rashid to Charlemagne about a generation earlier reflect the outlines of larger patterns of exchange that tied together the major regions or "worlds" of western Eurasia in the eighth and ninth centuries. And, finally, that the works particularly of Stéphane Lebecq, Michael McCormick, Chris Wickham, and Joachim Henning have laid the foundations for new ways to conceptualize and to theorize the economies and exchange patterns of the Carolingian period.³⁶⁹ The sections that followed sought to outline in greater detail the products, the transport routes, and the institutional structures that supported exchange in the Mediterranean region, in Carolingian continental Europe, in the North Sea region including England, Frisia, and Saxony, and in the Scandinavian – Baltic realm. The purpose of the present Section is to summarize the aforementioned evidence with a view to clarifying the connections and the material flows among the major regions and, most particularly, to examine the ways in which the levels of exchange across the Carolingian-controlled portions of the circuit might have supported or even required the participation of a class of professional merchants—the *negotiatores*—who enjoyed imperial recognition and legal privileges.

³⁶⁹ See the discussion and references in Section 6.1 above, *passim*.

The Russian rivers and the great East

Thus far, the discussion in Chapters 6 and 7 has assumed a quadrilateral scheme underlying the exchange patterns of western Eurasia, namely the Muslim “world” stretching over the Middle East and North Africa, the Byzantine “world” centered on Constantinople, Anatolia and the Aegean, the Latin Christian “world” of western Europe dominated by the Frankish empire, and the North European or Scandinavian – Baltic “world.” In truth, far from being a mere space to be crossed in order to connect the North with Byzantium and the Muslims,³⁷⁰ European Russia should be considered as a fifth “world” in the western Eurasian system, one with its own special characteristics and developmental trajectories.³⁷¹ Here, only those issues in the development of early medieval European Russia that have the most direct bearing on the eighth- and ninth-century inter-regional exchange system will be addressed.³⁷²

For our purposes, European Russia can be understood best as a series of environmental zones, arranged roughly in a north-to-south sequence, which are both traversed and tied together by the major riverine and overland routes. As in Scandinavia, the northern zone of boreal forest or taiga was sparsely inhabited by groups of Finno-Ugric hunter-gatherers, but it was commercially of great importance as the supplier of the highest quality animal pelts. Next southward, the temperate forest zone also produced furs, although these were of lesser quality, generally. The forest zone also produced wax and honey, and in time it proved capable of generating an agricultural surplus sufficient to support the transit of long-distance traders as well as the growth of towns and polities. Before the eighth century, however, populations in most parts of the temperate forest

³⁷⁰ One could get such an impression, for example, from the brief description of the Scandinavian trade to Byzantium and the Caliphate in McCormick, *Origins*, 610.

³⁷¹ For lack of a better term, “European Russia” refers to the vast plain that lies between the Baltic in the west, the Urals in the east, the Arctic ocean in the north and the Black and Caspian seas in the south. For the geologic background and environmental characteristics of this territory, see discussion in Section 3.1 above. The historiography on European Russia is immense and varied, and it will be impossible to give it even the most cursory survey in the context of the present study.

³⁷² For the formation of Kievan Rus’ or the first “Russian” state, which is one of the most central themes of the early medieval period in European Russia, an excellent introduction is Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus 750 – 1200* (London: Longman, 1996). See also Wladyslaw Duczko, *Viking Rus: Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

zone in what is now eastern Belarus and western Russia also were sparse and unstable, regardless of whether these were of Baltic culture as in the upper Daugava area or Finno-Ugric as in the eastern half of the Volga – Oka region. In the forest steppe zone, relatively larger and materially richer settlements of Slavic culture were spreading in the sixth to eighth centuries from western Ukraine across the middle Dnieper as far as the upper Don area. Next come the open steppe lands spread between the forest steppe in the north and the Black and Caspian seas in the south, narrowest at their western end near the lower Danube, then rapidly broadening eastwards across the lower Dnieper, the lower and middle Don, and the lower and middle Volga. These were inhabited by a series of nomadic groups, whose presence might be facilitating or disruptive to long-distance exchange depending on the agenda of any particular group. Finally, in Crimea and elsewhere along the shores of the Black sea, in the Caucasus, and around the Caspian, there were ports and market towns, which potentially could tap the resources from all the zones to the north and channel them to the Byzantine and Islamic worlds.³⁷³

To understand the intensive long-distance exchange system that emerged across the territory of European Russia in the 700 – 900 period it is essential to underscore that this Carolingian-era development was by no means pristine. We have already had occasion to point to an overland corridor of exchange relations between Scandinavia and the northwest Pontic region in the fourth and fifth centuries.³⁷⁴ Long before 700, other exchange networks had penetrated from the Pontic – Caspian region far into the interior of European Russia. Darband, on the western shore of the Caspian, near the eastern end of the Caucasus range, was an important Sasanian military and commercial outpost in the sixth century, evincing exotic luxury goods from Egypt, Syria, and Central Asia.³⁷⁵ The

³⁷³ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 5 – 7, 21 – 3, 71 – 87, 109 – 10. See also Pavel M. Dolukhanov, *The Early Slavs: Eastern Europe from the Initial Settlement to the Kievan Rus* (London: Longman, 1996), 8 – 22, and the discussion in Section 3.1 above.

³⁷⁴ See Section 5.3, subsection *Post-Roman eastern Europe* above. This exchange system can be considered to lie on the extreme western edge of European Russia. See also Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 7, who cite Jordanes as a source for an ongoing trade in exceptional furs from the Swedes to the Romans.

³⁷⁵ Thomas S. Noonan, “Why Dirhams First Reached Russia: The Role of Arab – Khazar Relations in the Development of the Earliest Islamic Trade with Eastern Europe,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 4 (1984): 268 – 9. Noonan’s comments on Darband are part of an extensive review of conditions in the Caucasus region in the 6th – 9th centuries, in particular how these related to issues of trade into European Russia.

city of Darband and the Romano-Byzantine towns around the Crimean Bosphorus were likely staging areas for long-distance trading networks to the north, particularly into the area of the middle Volga and the Kama – Viatka river system that joins the Volga from the Ural side, i.e. near the great right-angle turn that the Volga makes from an eastern to a southern direction of flow. The presence of Byzantine coins and both Byzantine and Sasanian silver vessels along the Kama suggest that the people of this area acted as intermediaries in the exchange of northern furs and southern luxuries in the sixth and early seventh centuries.³⁷⁶ Notably, this trade system predates the organization of a similar trade first by the Khazars, based on the lower Volga, and later by the Volga Bulghar state which arose in the area of the Volga – Kama confluence ca. 900.³⁷⁷

From the sixth century, trade also crossed the southern steppelands of European Russia in an east – west direction. Byzantine diplomacy had achieved an opening to Central Asia so that, after 568, Chinese and especially Sogdian silk traveled westwards on a route around the northern end of the Caspian, which thence slanted southwestwards across the North Caucasian steppe to passes at the western end of the Caucasus range and ports in Abkhazia. Essentially a northern branch of the so-called “Silk Roads,” this route cut Sasanian Iran out of a considerable portion of the silk trade. Concurrently, as visible from the proliferation of silk use and the presence of Byzantine metalwork such as buckles and vessels in North Caucasian areas along the route, the trans-continental luxury trade was having a stimulating effect upon local economic and cultural development.³⁷⁸ Furthermore, the stimulus of the silk trade fed into continued north – south exchanges.

³⁷⁶ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 7 – 8. Franklin and Shepard emphasize that this was trade rather than gift exchange.

³⁷⁷ The role of the Khazars in the cross-Russia trade of the 700 – 900 period will be discussed in detail below. Volga Bulghar hardly arises before the end of the period here under scrutiny; see Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 61 – 5.

³⁷⁸ For the details on the Byzantine – Sogdian silk route, summarized above, see Noonan, “Why Dirhams First Reached Russia,” 251 – 61. One example of the stimulating effect of the trade is the emergence of the upper Kuban region as a center of cultural and political influence in the seventh century (p. 261). On the latter point, cf. Igor O. Gavritukhin and Michel Kazanski, “Bosporus, the Tetraxite Goths, and the Northern Caucasus Region during the Second Half of the Fifth and the Sixth Centuries,” in *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 120 – 36, who suggest that shifts in the styles of prestige objects such as buckles and brooches may reflect a shift in favor of Byzantine political influence in the upper Kuban area during the sixth century. This apparent shift may be connected with the opening of the aforementioned silk route during the second half of the sixth century.

One example is Sogdian re-export of Byzantine objects to areas of western Siberia that were part of the Sogdian economic sphere and a source of furs.³⁷⁹

These pre-existing long-distance trade configurations that involved European Russia were upset in the first half of the seventh century and did not achieve a new balance until the middle of the eighth.³⁸⁰ From 642, when an Arab army first appeared in the south Caucasus, to 750 what dominates the historical record is an ongoing three-way struggle among the Arabs, the Byzantines, and the Khazars for military and political control of the Caucasus region.³⁸¹ The Khazars, successors on the Ponto-Caspian steppes to the Western Türk empire that dominated the central Eurasian steppelands in the fifth and sixth centuries,³⁸² were attempting to bring areas south of the Caucasus range under their hegemony, while the Umayyad-era Arabs (661 – 750) were attempting to extend their conquests north of the mountains. According to Noonan, while low levels of trade between the Arab south and the Khazar north continued through these ongoing wars at places such as Derbent, the re-opening of large-scale commerce had to await the cessation of hostilities.³⁸³

With the coming of the Abbasids (750 – 1258), two associated circumstances had a bearing upon the question of trade between the Middle East and European Russia. First, as Noonan points out, it was important for the new regime to reduce its military

³⁷⁹ Noonan, “Why Dirhams First Reached Russia,” 258 – 9. It may be remarked that Eurasian east – west trade typically has received a disproportionate share of attention from historians, to the neglect of the importance of the north – south dimension in medieval and early modern exchange systems. See the comments on this circumstance in Tomas T. Alsen, “Falconry and the Exchange Networks of Medieval Eurasia,” in *Pre-Modern Russia and Its World*, ed. Kathryn L. Reyerson, Theofanis G. Stavrou, and James D. Tracy (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 135 – 54, especially in regard to trans-latitudinal or trans-ecological (north – south) vs. trans-civilizational (east west) exchanges. Alsen argues that all of these streams of exchange interacted in complex ways throughout the period.

³⁸⁰ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 8, remark on the disruption of luxury production and trade in both Byzantium and Persia as a result of warfare and elite impoverishment during the first half of the seventh century.

³⁸¹ Noonan, “Why Dirhams First Reached Russia,” 174 – 201, details the unabating invasions and counter-invasions and devastation of lands and cities on both sides of the Caucasus range during this century of conflict.

³⁸² On the origins of the Khazars and their relations to earlier Turkic states on the western steppes see P. B. Golden, “The Khazar Sacral Kingship,” in *Pre-Modern Russia and Its World*, ed. Kathryn L. Reyerson, Theofanis G. Stavrou, and James D. Tracy (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 86 – 90. Golden mentions that the Sogdians had been subjects of the West Türks, so that Sogdian trading activities along the Silk Roads and in western Siberia as well as the negotiations with the Byzantines to open the North Caucasian silk route would have fallen under the oversight of this Turkic state.

³⁸³ Noonan, “Why Dirhams First Reached Russia,” 265, 270.

commitments, faced as it was by continued struggles with the Byzantines and recurrent revolt and rebellion within.³⁸⁴ In Noonan's analysis, by 750 both the Arabs and the Khazars were ready for a diplomatic solution, which presently secured a *détente* along the line of the Caucasus mountains, but left Derbent in Arab hands.³⁸⁵

The second circumstance was the commonly cited Abbasid socio-political revolution, which is supposed to have replaced the conquest-minded Arabs with peace- and commerce-loving non-Arabs as the primary constituency of the new regime, and the economic boom that followed upon this shift in outlook.³⁸⁶ As was noted already in Chapter 6 above,³⁸⁷ both Wickham and Walmsley have taken a generally positive view of economic continuity and prosperity in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria in the seventh and eighth centuries. Despite some disruption due to the Byzanto-Persian wars and the Arab conquest in the first half of the seventh century, the area was improving again by 680 and flourishing in the early eighth century.³⁸⁸ The shift in economic focus to the Iraq–Syria corridor was a re-adjustment in the configuration of international trade routes that converged upon the Islamic Middle East rather than a new beginning.³⁸⁹ In any case, it is doubtless true, as Noonan says, that “[t]here were more consumers in Baghdad able and willing to buy more goods than anywhere else in Western Eurasia,” which certainly acted as an inspiration for enterprising merchants to bring furs and slaves from eastern Europe to this exceptional market.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁴ Noonan, “Why Dirhams First Reached Russia,” 203 – 15, presents a detailed list of these involvements.

³⁸⁵ Noonan, “Why Dirhams First Reached Russia,” 201, 216 – 21.

³⁸⁶ This “Abbasid revolution” is referenced, for example, in Noonan, “Why Dirhams First Reached Russia,” 202.

³⁸⁷ See the discussion in Section 6.2, subsection *The eastern connection*.

³⁸⁸ Wickham, *Framing*, 759 – 80; Alan Walmsley, “Production, Exchange, and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean: Old Structures, New Systems?” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 267 – 71.

³⁸⁹ Walmsley, “Production, Exchange, and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean,” 290 – 8. Cf. Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe: Archaeology and the Pirene Thesis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 126 – 57, who focus on Abbasid Baghdad (built starting 762) as the lynchpin of a new international trading network.

³⁹⁰ Noonan, “Why Dirhams First Reached Russia,” 264 – 5. The quote is on p. 264. Similarly, Walmsley, “Production, Exchange, and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean,” 343, states: “By the end of the eighth century merchants, Muslim and non-Muslim, were travelling long distances by land and water to destinations beyond the Islamic realm to acquire desirable commodities for the profitable markets of an increasingly sophisticated and culturally unified Islamic society.”

The consumer boom in the core areas of the Islamic world was fueled in part by the greater availability of gold and silver.³⁹¹ Traces of this precious metal in the form of Islamic silver dirhams, minted under the authority of the Abbasids, form the primary source of evidence for the trade relations across European Russia to the Baltic and Scandinavia in the later eighth and ninth centuries. First, the composition of the dirham hoards in European Russia matches that found in hoards from the core Abbasid areas, which demonstrates that the trade was not peripheral but reached into the heart of the Islamic commercial system. Further, the geographic distribution of the hoards indicates that initially the trade to the north ran over the eastern end of the Caucasus, with Derbent as a major staging point, and the trans-Caspian sea route from the Volga mouths to Jurjan (in the southeastern corner of the Caspian) overtook the former only in the second half of the ninth century.³⁹² The Khazars, now firmly established on the lower Volga and Don steppes, played the middleman role in funneling northern products such as furs, honey, wax, and slaves to Muslim customers, while silver coins, glazed pottery, metal ornaments, glassware, and beads came from the south.³⁹³ Both Arab officials (at Derbent) and Khazar agents (at Itil, e.g.) collected a 10 per cent duty on the traffic.³⁹⁴ Further, while the Khazars facilitated the transit trade of foreign merchants through their territory, they also extended a tribute-gathering network into the forest-steppe and forest zones to the northwest, which by the mid-ninth century extended to the peoples of the middle and upper Dniepr and the upper and middle Oka basins (usually identified as Slavic tribes: Polianians, Radimichians, Severians, Viaticians). The Khazars not only collected tribute but also bought choice furs with silver coins.³⁹⁵

Situated diametrically opposite the expansion of Khazar control and influence in European Russia, Scandinavian activity on the northwestern fringes of the region was,

³⁹¹ Noonan, "Why Dirhams First Reached Russia," 262. This had been observed as far back as Sture Bolin, "Mohammed, Charlemagne and Ruric," *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 1 (1953): 5 – 39, who points to new sources of gold (Nubia) and silver (Central Asia) as an underpinning to his arguments for fluctuating value ratios of gold to silver and links between the Islamic and the West European monetary systems.

³⁹² Noonan, "Why Dirhams First Reached Russia," 151 – 72. From Derbent to Itil, the Khazar political and commercial center on the lower Volga, took 11 – 12 days by land or 8 days by sea (p. 271).

³⁹³ Noonan, "Why Dirhams First Reached Russia," 276 – 8; Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 10.

³⁹⁴ Noonan, "Why Dirhams First Reached Russia," 265, 277.

³⁹⁵ Noonan, "Why Dirhams First Reached Russia," 278 – 9.

until the mid-eighth century, far more modest in scope than the war-making and trading activity of the Turkic-Khazar state on the southeastern steppes. Evidence points to Scandinavian activity in the Åland islands, Gulf of Finland, and Lake Ladoga area from the early Migration Age (fifth – sixth centuries).³⁹⁶ The area had no moveable wealth to plunder nor large centers of population to raid, so that the motivation for Scandinavian exploration and persistence in the area must have been based on some more sustainable activity, such as subsistence settlement or fur-trading with the local Finno-Ugric hunter-gatherer peoples.³⁹⁷ The situation is reminiscent of the earlier Scandinavian colonization along the Gulf of Bothnia or along the northern reaches of the Norwegian coast.³⁹⁸ Indeed, it is possible to imagine a historical scenario in which the Ladoga – Onega sub-region of northwestern European Russia becomes permanently a Scandinavian backwoods colonial extension of “metropolitan” Sweden similar to what actually happened in the Gulf of Bothnia area.

In any case, it is important to emphasize that, up to the middle of the eighth century, any resources, including furs, that Scandinavian settlers or entrepreneurs might collect in northwestern European Russia would have gone exclusively to markets in the west—to Sweden, Denmark, and onwards to England or Francia.³⁹⁹ Staraja Ladoga on the lower Volkhov river—often touted as the first proto-urban settlement in northwestern Russia⁴⁰⁰—appears to have been founded ca. 750 in order to serve the Scandinavian-operated fur trade in the local, northwestern sub-region of European Russia, with no reference to events in the Caucasus.⁴⁰¹ Ladoga served many trade- and transport-related

³⁹⁶ Thomas S. Noonan, “Why the Vikings First Came to Russia,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 34 (1986): 329 – 30.

³⁹⁷ Noonan, “Why the Vikings First Came to Russia,” 322 – 5, emphasizes the poverty of the material culture in northwestern Russia when compared even with contemporary Sweden, to say nothing of the Anglo-Saxon and Frankish lands further west. Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 8 – 9, mention “periodic voyages of Swedish kin-groups as far as Lake Ladoga already in the sixth century,” for purposes of trade and settlement.

³⁹⁸ See discussion above in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia*. Ohthere collected “tribute” in furs from the Saami people inland, and the Bothnian coast north of Middle Sweden produced furs as well.

³⁹⁹ See Callmer, “Urbanisation in Northern and Eastern Europe,” 250, for a very similar assessment.

⁴⁰⁰ So for example, definitively, in Noonan, “Why the Vikings First Came to Russia,” 322 – 3.

⁴⁰¹ Noonan, “Why the Vikings First Came to Russia,” 330 – 40, 346, reviews the archaeological evidence and speaks cautiously of a Scandinavian “presence” at Ladoga from the 750 – 830 period. In Thomas S. Noonan, “Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus’ Towns,” in *XII. Internationaler*

functions, including that of a depot for the trade goods—glass beads and bronze jewelry—that “invigorated” the fur trade with the local Finno-Ugrians. Up to the middle of the eighth century, materials such as glass and bronze in the quantities indicated could only have come from the west.⁴⁰² It appears likely, in fact, that the foundation of Ladoga, like that of the *emporium* at Birka around the same time, was a ripple effect of the opening of the Jutland *emporium* of Ribe and Haithabu dating to ca. 700 and 750, respectively, which led to rapid growth in Scandinavian trade with the North Sea region including England and Francia.⁴⁰³

Coincidentally, however, the cessation of the Arab-Khazar wars ca. 750 and the influx of Islamic silver dirhams into European Russia that resulted from the upsurge in trade relations between Khazaria and the Caliphate soon diverted Scandinavian attention from local trade in the area of northwestern Russian to a new, transcontinental trajectory of enterprise. The fact that silver dirhams were found in the earliest settlement layers at Ladoga demonstrates that networks operated by the indigenous inhabitants of European Russia continued to function during the century of trade disruption, so that objects originating in the Middle East could spread across the European Russian landmass relatively quickly and become visible in northwestern Russian deposits almost as soon as they became widely available in the southeast.⁴⁰⁴ As we have seen, responding to the greater availability of silver from trade to the west in the eighth century, Scandinavians in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were learning to integrate this metal into their value and exchange systems.⁴⁰⁵ When the Scandinavians at Ladoga noticed a surge in the incidence

Numismatischer Kongress Berlin 1997: Akten – Proceedings – Actes, vol. 2, ed. Bernd Kluge and Bernhard Weisser (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2000), 937, however, Noonan asserts: “The origins of Ladoga cannot be linked with the great trade [to the Caliphate]; rather, it would seem that Ladoga was established as a kind of temporary emporia [sic] designed to explore the possibilities for trading and raiding on the eastern fringes of the Baltic.”

⁴⁰² Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 15 – 20. See also Noonan, “Why the Vikings First Came to Russia,” 335 – 7, regarding the bead evidence.

⁴⁰³ See again the discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* above.

⁴⁰⁴ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 14 – 15, 21.

⁴⁰⁵ See again the discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* above, and especially the references to Sindbæk, “Silver Economies and Social Ties”; and Skre, “Commodity Money, Silver and Coinage in Viking-Age Scandinavia.”

of silver dirhams arriving from the southeast, they now had a motive to explore the overland routes to the source of the silver.⁴⁰⁶

The subsequent story of the formation of a regular exchange corridor between the Baltic and Scandinavia at one end and Khazaria, the Caliphate, and Byzantium at the other end involves three somewhat distinct but highly interrelated strands of evidence. Primary is the distribution of hoards of Islamic silver both in European Russia and in the Scandinavian – Baltic world, which proves a close connection between the two regions from the later eighth century onwards. Closely related to the first is the question of the geographical configuration of the actual routes, and how these relate to the proto-urban nodes and incipient states in the region between Khazaria and the Baltic during the period in question.⁴⁰⁷ Finally, there must be consideration of the various commodities that accompanied the silver flow, including their places of origin or production within or outside of European Russia, as well as the various participants in the production and transport of both silver and the other goods.

The earliest dirham hoard thus far discovered in European Russia was at Ladoga, dating to the 780s.⁴⁰⁸ This is contemporary with the earliest known dirham hoard in Scandinavia: nine coins found at Tune in Sweden. According to Noonan, the available numismatic data suggests that Islamic silver was re-exported to the Baltic region almost as soon as it became available in European Russia itself. Further, by his calculations, the rate of re-export for the period 775 – 899 was 45 per cent, albeit with notable fluctuations decade by decade.⁴⁰⁹ Above any other consideration, it is this astounding rate of re-

⁴⁰⁶ Noonan, “Why the Vikings First Came to Russia,” 340: “Thus, it is not at all surprising that once the small Viking community at Old Ladoga became aware that silver coins were available somewhere south of the town, they would soon begin to venture into the Russian forests in search of the source of this valuable silver.”

⁴⁰⁷ It should be stressed, once again, that the present study is concerned only with developments up to ca. 900; it is not, and is not intended to be, a discussion of the formation of “Kievan Rus” as a subject in its own right.

⁴⁰⁸ Noonan, “Why the Vikings First Came to Russia,” 341.

⁴⁰⁹ Noonan, “Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus’ Towns,” 936; idem, “Why the Vikings First Came to Russia,” 343 – 4; Tables A, B, and C (pp. 347 – 8). For an early but more detailed analysis of the numismatic material, see Thomas S. Noonan, “Ninth-Century Dirham Hoards from European Russia: Preliminary Analysis,” in *Viking-Age Coinage in the Northern Lands: The Sixth Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History*, ed. M. A. S. Blackburn and D. M. Metcalf (Oxford: B.A.R., 1981), 47 – 117.

export of dirhams that supports the idea of a “northern arc” of trade from Scandinavia to the Caliphate in the ninth century.

Further, the geographical pattern of hoards in European Russia appears to trace a broad connection between the northwest and the southeast. Between 800 and 874, hoards are consistently found in the subregions of the northwest (the Ladoga – Volkhov – Lake Ilmen watershed), the upper Daugava and upper Dniepr, the upper Volga, the Oka basin, and Khazaria.⁴¹⁰ Notably absent from the list are the subregions of the middle Dnieper, with the site of the future Rus’ capital of Kiev, and the middle Volga, the site of the Volga Bulghar state that played such a prominent role in the trade through European Russia in the tenth century.⁴¹¹ From Khazaria, the routes went northwestwards along the Don and Donets rivers. In the far northwest, the Volkhov river led inland from Lake Ladoga, past the town site of Staraja Ladoga and upstream to Lake Ilmen, whence a fan of small tributaries afforded plausible connections to the upper Daugava and the upper Volga. In between, it is possible to imagine complicated river routes involving the Oka and the upper Volga on one side or the Desna watershed and the middle and upper Dniepr on the other side that might connect the southeast with the northwest.⁴¹² Given the difficulties of travel on wild rivers, and considering the very long detours involved in either the Oka- Volga option or the Dniepr option, it seems likely that much of the traffic between the Volkhov – Lake Ilmen basin and Khazaria used alternative modes of transport—overland trails, and sleighs in winter. In any case, it is best to think of travel across European Russia in the later eighth and ninth centuries as a broad northwest-to-southeast corridor of branching and braiding routes over water and land rather than as one

⁴¹⁰ Noonan, “Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus’ Towns,” 936 and Table I.

⁴¹¹ The lateness (end of the ninth century) of a permanent Scandinavian or Rus’ presence at Kiev, and in the middle Dniepr subregion generally, is acknowledged indirectly in Noonan, “Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus’ Towns,” 942. For a more detailed discussion of the case, see Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 92 – 111. For Volga Bulghar, see again Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 61 – 5.

⁴¹² Noonan, “Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus’ Towns,” 936 – 7, describes the possible combinations of riverine routes, and appears to discount the option of more direct overland routes.

or two primary arteries.⁴¹³ This configuration of routes, which held through the ninth century, was one dimension of the European Russian exchange system.

The other two dimensions, so to speak, were the types of goods that moved through the system and the various participants who fed such goods into or moved them through the communications corridors. In European Russia as elsewhere, the most fundamental level was clearly that of a capillary network, which brought exotic luxuries such as silver coins to the primary producers of desirable “forest products” such as honey, wax, and valuable furs. Makarov’s study of rural settlements in the fur-hunting areas of northern Russia show that large numbers of glass beads, Byzantine glass vessels, amber, imported pottery, imported metal work, and silver coins were found on such sites. In Makarov’s view:

There can be no doubt that the supply of pelts for the international system of commodities exchange was based not only on the extraction of taxes and tribute but also on the well developed practice of local and regional trade. Inhabitants of the backwoods of Northern Russia comprised an important link in this trade network. Participation in commerce and incorporation in a system of long-distance trade were important factors shaping the standards of consumption and the culture of the rural regions of Northern Rus’ in the tenth to the twelfth centuries.⁴¹⁴

Although Makarov’s study is, strictly speaking, anachronistic for the 700 – 900 period considered here, there is ample reason to believe that relations such as those he describes existed in parts of European Russia before ca. 900 as well, following a trajectory similar to the one that was outlined for Scandinavia above.⁴¹⁵ Evidence suggests that amid the generally much sparser settlement pattern that obtained in most areas of central and northern European Russia up to the eighth century there also were

⁴¹³ See Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 5 – 6, 21 – 7, for the difficulties of river travel, and the multiplicity of routes, travelers, and modes of transport. They also identify a separate route that led up the Volga to the Kama-Viatka and the far north, which was not connected with the NW – SE transit corridor.

⁴¹⁴ N. Makarov, “Traders in the Forest: The Northern Periphery of Rus’ in the Medieval Trade Network,” in *Pre-Modern Russia and its World: Essays in Honor of Thomas S. Noonan*, ed. Kathryn L. Reyerson, Theofanis G. Stavrou, and James D. Tracy (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 129.

⁴¹⁵ See the discussion on commodity money and the integration of exotic trade items into the indigenous Scandinavian value systems in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* above.

localities of more intensive settlement and economic development. One such was the area around Lake Nero, some eighty miles northeast of Moscow. The area was rich in fertile agricultural land as well as hunting and fishing resources, metalworking, and early ninth-century dirham hoards, with a central place known as the “Sarskii Fort” pre-existing any organized Scandinavian presence in the area. Moreover, the location connected easily with the upper Volga, with Beloozero (on an alternative route to the Ladoga area), with the far north via the Kostroma, and with the Kliazma – Oka river route to its south. In short, it was well situated to serve as a node in a pre-Rus’ exchange network, which necessarily involved not only long-distance connections to the southern sources of silver and luxuries such as carnelian beads but also both long distance and local connections with the primary producers—the trappers and hunters—of the furs.⁴¹⁶

As was outlined above, the indigenous networks and incipient formation of nodal structures was co-opted increasingly by both Scandinavians working into European Russia from the northwest as well as the Khazar state established in its southeast. The precise mechanism of the co-optation remains in dispute. On the one hand, Noonan speaks of (Scandinavian) Rus’ merchants dealing with “local elites” in order to mobilize local production.⁴¹⁷ On the other hand, Noonan points out that the Radimichians (East Slav tribe) in the upper Dniepr region had been paying a schilling apiece in tribute to the Khazars but as of 885 were now to pay the same to the Rus’ prince Oleg. This, as Noonan rightly notes, implies that “the spread of dirhams from the upper Don-Donets system to northwestern Russia had created an indigenous rural population able to pay for goods with silver coins.”⁴¹⁸ Clearly, in European Russia the situation in the eighth and ninth centuries was not dissimilar to that in the North Sea region in the sixth and seventh: informal, entrepreneurial trading activity, arising organically out of the local socio-

⁴¹⁶ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 21 – 4.

⁴¹⁷ Noonan, “Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus’ Towns,” 939: “[A] small number of Scandinavians worked with the local Finnic, Balt, and East Slavic leaders to collect the furs and slaves needed by the Rus’ merchants on their journey to Khazaria and Baghdad. In return, the local elites received silver coins, glass beads, and other prestigious Oriental imports as well as amber, tin, and other Baltic goods.”

⁴¹⁸ Noonan, “Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus’ Towns,” 942.

economic matrix, pre-existed subsequent moves to exert state-level controls over the activity.⁴¹⁹

Aside from late mentions in the eleventh-century *Russian Primary Chronicle*,⁴²⁰ the main textual sources for the goods-in-trade coming out of European Russia are Islamic. Thus we have the oft-quoted statement from ibn Khurradadhbih (later ninth-century) that Rus' (Scandinavian) merchants could be found in Baghdad, selling "beaver furs, black fox, and swords."⁴²¹ The earlier al Kindi mentions availability of Baltic amber in Iraq in the mid-ninth century.⁴²² More generally, Istakhri declares that the northern goods most desired by the Islamic merchants were slaves, honey, wax, and pelts.⁴²³ The goods fall naturally into several broad categories. Honey, wax, and pelts were resources generally available in the forest-steppe and forest zones. Other than possible depletion, the main issue in the mobilization of these resources was the balance between self-motivation on the part of primary producers to enter into the commodities market and varying degrees of pressure that might be applied to them to increase production.⁴²⁴ Items such as amber and swords, meanwhile, were transit goods that had to be brought into European Russia from the Baltic. Most problematical is the source of the slaves. Slave raiding is an activity inherently disruptive of other socio-economic systems, and one that might have been even more difficult to pursue in the more sparsely settled areas of European Russia than coercive fur collection.⁴²⁵ Whereas at first blush nothing might seem easier than to kidnap some defenseless Finno-Ugrians, Slavs, or

⁴¹⁹ For the comparison on this point, see Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters* above.

⁴²⁰ Quoted in Noonan, "Why Dirhams First Reached Russia," 278 – 9; Noonan, "Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus' Towns," 942.

⁴²¹ Paraphrased thus in McCormick, *Origins*, 610. See p. 688 for a discussion of the dating of ibn Khurradadhbih's work.

⁴²² McCormick, *Origins*, 610.

⁴²³ Noonan, "Why Dirhams First Reached Russia," 277 – 9, who quotes Istakhri on p. 277.

⁴²⁴ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 21, assert that coercion was useless in the northwest and the north, where the sparse Finno-Ugric population, who knew how to obtain the valuable furs, could evade force brought against them. Cf., however, the eleventh- and twelfth-century Novgorodian fur-extraction network across Arctic Russia described in Janet Martin, *Treasure of the Land of Darkness: The Fur Trade and Its Significance for Medieval Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 53 – 60.

⁴²⁵ We know from the example of early Modern Africa that slaving can coexist with other forms of economic activity, and that this coexistence can take a variety of forms, from kidnapping networks within a society to slave-raiding states that prey on their neighbors; see the discussion in Section 3.3, subsection *Slaves* above. For the eighth and ninth centuries, no one so far has identified explicitly slave-raiding states or designated slave-catching areas within the European Russian region.

Balts and “sell them down the river” to the Caliphate, the common assumption that the aforementioned “slaves” were gathered in this manner needs further analysis.

Through the middle of the ninth century, it seems that the extension of resource mobilization was generally much better organized and expansive from the Khazar side than from the Scandinavian side, reaching the middle and upper Dniepr and the upper and middle Oka basins.⁴²⁶ While the details of the process remain entirely unknown, it seems that the Khazars imposed a light tribute (one white squirrel pelt per hearth) but also operated on a commercial basis, paying the locals for choicer furs with objects of value such as beads and silver coins.⁴²⁷ While the Khazars acted as middle men for foreign merchants, the Khazar elite who operated the system clearly were in a position to profit from it directly as well.

The Khazar system probably was at its most developed and complex on the upper Donets and Don and among the large, permanent Slavic settlements in the Oka and Desna watersheds nearby. Structures known to archaeologists as the “white forts” of the Saltovo-Maiatsky culture, dating from the mid-eighth century, appear to have been manned by Avar clients of the Khazars, whose main role appears to have been to guard this central communications corridor and the Slav settlements of the surrounding areas from the threat of other, unallied nomad groups—in the words of Franklin and Shepard, “conserving them as a source of tribute.”⁴²⁸ Protection from more dangerous neighbors, then, would explain the acceptance of a tributary relationship among the most exposed of the Slav groups in the southeastern forest steppe area. Moreover, Alan – Khazar oversight of the trade corridor brought, in Franklin and Shepard’s words, “a higher degree of order and thus trading confidence.”⁴²⁹ In this context, it is possible to imagine

⁴²⁶ Noonan, “Why Dirhams First Reached Russia,” 278 – 9. These areas lie well over halfway between the northern end of the Caspian and the Gulf of Finland.

⁴²⁷ Noonan, “Why Dirhams First Reached Russia,” 280; this would explain how some areas, as that of the Radimichians, were able to pay tribute in coin. Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 78, point out that the white squirrel pelts imply trade relations between the people in the tribute-paying central areas and those much farther north.

⁴²⁸ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 76 – 83. The quote is on p. 81.

⁴²⁹ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 83. They also mention dirhams, carnelian jewelry, the bones of Bactrian camels, and a bronze mirror from Tang China as objects found in the area, showing its connectedness to Eurasian trade flows.

that local Slav leaders and communities might have cooperated even in the delivery of persons living in European Russia into the slave stream.

A network of “service centers,” as Noonan calls them, both the pre-existing Ladoga and new ones such as Gnëzdovo, grew in response to the trade, i.e. they were nodes in a new, Scandinavian controlled system that expanded on the pre-existing indigenous system of links organized around relatively dense areas of population such as the Lake Nero district. Increasingly during the ninth century, the new network of nodal places featured Scandinavian style crafts as well as weapons and trade items such as amber and glass beads and specialized in providing food and supporting the transportation needs of the merchant adventurers who traveled the routes between the nodal places.⁴³⁰ Johan Callmer further analyzes Scandinavian activity in European Russia according to two environmentally conditioned zones: (1) inner Russia in the northwest, the original sphere of Scandinavian involvement, where soils were poor, population sparse, but the furs of high quality, and (2) outer Russia towards the south, where soils were good, populations denser, but the furs were of inferior quality. By the late ninth century, according to this analysis, the Rus’ were making serious inroads into the zone of “outer Russia,” with Gnëzdovo on the upper Dniepr as the key interface node between the two zones. Finally, according to Callmer, until the indigenous economy, stimulated by the overland trade, began to generate demand elements of its own in the tenth century, the proto-urban sites in Scandinavian Rus’ had primarily an aspect of political dominance.⁴³¹

Callmer himself admits, however, that in order to obtain the higher quality furs from the more sparsely settled expanses of northern or “inner” Russia, the Scandinavians had to proceed with discretion,⁴³² which once again raises the question of the typical *modus operandi* of the Scandinavian traders and their organization in European Russia. The *chaganus* of the Rus’ in the ninth century had only nominal authority over what

⁴³⁰ Noonan, “Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus’ Towns,” *passim*.

⁴³¹ Callmer, “Urbanisation in Northern and Eastern Europe,” 250 – 66.

⁴³² “The meaningful collection of tributes on a long time perspective was a delicate matter. There had to be stability and there also had to be both a ‘pull’ and a ‘push’ factor.” Callmer, “Urbanisation in Northern and Eastern Europe,” 251. In other words, “political dominance” would have been more applicable to the conditions that the Rus’ found in “outer Russia,” i.e. in the middle Dniepr and Oka areas.

Franklin and Shepard have called “the extraordinary and protean nature of the Scandinavians’ activities in the eastern lands.”⁴³³ Further, they sum up the Scandinavian – Rus’ traders as “a loose association of ruthless entrepreneurs,” traveling in small bands and loose kin-groups of armed men, competitive with each other and interacting with the indigenous Finno-Ugrians, Balts, and Slavs in a variety of ways.⁴³⁴

Above all, regardless of what kinds of socio-cultural goals the Scandinavian – Rus’ activities might ultimately serve, the immediate motive of such activities in the European Russian region was *profit*. This is made abundantly clear especially in the famous account of the Rus’ as observed by Ibn Fadlan while on a diplomatic mission to Volga Bulghar in 922. In the key passage, ibn Fadlan reports that upon arrival, each Rus’ trader goes to pray at an idolatrous shrine erected for the purpose, stating how many “girls” and furs and other goods he has brought and wishing for a counterpart that will give him as many dirhams as he wants for them without argument.⁴³⁵ Further, according to ibn Khurradadhbih, Rus’ traders in Baghdad using Slav eunuchs as interpreters were not above posing as Christians in order to receive more favorable toll rates on their mercantile activity.⁴³⁶ While ibn Fadlan’s testimony, like Makarov’s archaeological data referenced above, is strictly speaking anachronistic, there can be no doubt that the Scandinavian entrepreneurs in European Russia in the ninth century were driven by similar motivations as the Rus’ of the early tenth.

The extant sources do not allow us to say with any precision when Scandinavians from northwestern Russia first reached Khazaria and the Caliphate. It is reasonable to infer that the trading activities that pre-existed in the Scandinavian sphere around Lake Ladoga would, at some point after ca. 750, been re-oriented increasingly towards the new source of silver. While some of the commodities collected from the northwestern forests might still have found their way westwards—to Birka, and thence to Haithabu, other Scandinavian entrepreneurs would have been seeking for ways to bring these goods to the markets in the southeast. While Staraia Ladoga itself remained the primary *entrepôt*

⁴³³ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 41.

⁴³⁴ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 44 – 7. The quote is on p. 44.

⁴³⁵ So quoted and paraphrased in Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 43 – 4.

⁴³⁶ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 43.

between the Baltic Sea realm and the Russian river system,⁴³⁷ the center of an incipient Scandinavian attempt to create their own state and tribute system in imitation of the Khazars formed, at some point during the ninth century, at Riurikovo Gorodishche (Gorodishche, for short) at the outflow of the Volkhov from Lake Ilmen. Archaeology reveals this to have been a distinctly Scandinavian stronghold, and part of a larger complex including local food-producing villages. The *chaganus* of the *Rhos* mentioned in the Frankish sources in 839 most likely had his seat at this location, while the form of the title clearly defers to at least cultural dominance of the Khazars in European Russia at this time.⁴³⁸

Interestingly, the debut in the written sources of this *chaganus* of the *Rhos* coincides with what John Haldon has identified as the re-monetization of the Byzantine economy in the 830s, a circumstance that might imply an upsurge in commercial activity in the Byzantine world around that time and which might have attracted the attention of Scandinavian raiders and traders coming from the north.⁴³⁹ Possibly, there was a Rus' raid upon the Black Sea coast of Anatolia in the late 830s, and almost certainly a naval expedition against Constantinople in 860. In typical fashion, the Byzantines dealt diplomatically with this new, northern threat, including the supposed accession of the *chaganus* and his people to Orthodoxy in the later ninth century. In effect, the Byzantines helped the Rus' to set up regular maritime trade relations across the Black Sea, which led, finally, to the establishment of the Rus' center at Kiev in the late ninth century.⁴⁴⁰

The growth in trade relations with Byzantium, which apparently were secured by treaties after 860 and again ca. 900, paralleled the disruption of the erstwhile primary

⁴³⁷ Ladoga's function as a transshipment point is demonstrated by evidence of ship- and boat-building activities, such as rivets, found on the site. Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 20; Noonan, "Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus' Towns," 937 – 8, who refers to Ladoga as a major service center.

⁴³⁸ The archaeological attributes of Gorodishche and arguments in favor of it as the seat of the *chaganus* of the *Rhos* or Rus' are discussed in Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 29 – 41, 45 – 6.

⁴³⁹ John Haldon, "Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World, ca. 660 – 840," in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 228, 264.

⁴⁴⁰ See the detailed discussion on Russo – Byzantine relations in Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 35 – 6, 50 – 8, 91 – 111. The Byzantines apparently regarded the Rus' as a barbarous but hierarchical society, i.e. a state with which they could do business (pp. 54 – 5).

southeast to northwest Don – Donets corridor by the nomad Pechenegs in the second half of the ninth century and the growth of upper and middle Dniepr Rus’ settlements such as Gnězdovo (near Smolensk) and Kiev. Franklin and Shepard describe this as a significant historical “nexus” or shift in the exchange relations over European Russia.⁴⁴¹ In short, on the southern flank of the Scandinavian – Rus’ sphere of operations, the connection with the Byzantine world had been firmly established by the end of the ninth century and probably had been active at least from ca. 860 onwards. On the eastern flank of Scandinavian – Rus’ operations there also were efforts at organized raiding to force the Caspian which, however, culminated in the disaster of 912, when a large expedition was annihilated upon its return up the Volga.⁴⁴² By that time, as noted above, the Volga Bulghar state had taken control of trade in the middle Volga area, which continued thence as the main trading center for the Rus’ with the Islamic world throughout the tenth century.⁴⁴³

The establishment of the Dniepr route to Byzantium and of Volga Bulghar as primary trade outlets are, thus, phenomena that condition tenth-century exchange relations in European Russia and are only incipient before ca. 900, which is the cut-off point for the present study. In the space between the Dniepr and the Volga, meanwhile, the ninth century saw a multifaceted expansion of Scandinavian – Rus’ presence and activities. The Gorodishche complex arose at the same time as evidence for a greatly increased Scandinavian presence in the area of Iaroslavl on the upper Volga (near the indigenous Lake Nero complex). By the end of the ninth century there were Scandinavians also at Izborsk, south of Lake Peipus, and at Murom on the lower Oka. The distribution of such centers—typically, forts on riverways—reveal a steady, long-term project to take control over as many of the multitudinous routes across central Russia as possible. At such places, in the words of Franklin and Shepard,

⁴⁴¹ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 97, 104 – 5.

⁴⁴² Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 69, 88.

⁴⁴³ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 70.

[t]he weaponry, fortifications and strategic locations. . . point to the presence in them of some sort of armed elite consisting mainly, if not exclusively, of Scandinavians.⁴⁴⁴

In European Russia after ca. 750, profit was measured primarily in Islamic silver dirhams. We have already seen how the distribution of dirham hoards traces the routes and nodal points in the trade flows across this vast landscape.⁴⁴⁵ The remarkable frequency of hoards of the self-same dirhams that appear also around the shores of the Baltic at latest from the turn of the ninth century is, meanwhile, the surest proof of regular and active exchange relations between European Russia and the Scandinavian – Baltic world. By Noonan’s calculations, something like 40 per cent of the dirhams that entered European Russia were subsequently re-exported to the Baltic, which represents an enormous transfer of wealth to the world of the North.⁴⁴⁶ The crucial question becomes, then, by what means was this transfer of wealth achieved?

Of the 60 percent of Islamic silver that stayed in European Russia, a considerable portion must have entered the local economy.⁴⁴⁷ Some of this would have been received as payment for forest products—especially furs—or for the delivery of persons into slavery by the indigenous Finns, Balts, and Slavs. The rest would have ended up in the pockets of the resident Scandinavians who were, typically, engaged in the trade at a higher level than the aforementioned groups.⁴⁴⁸ So far as these resident Scandinavian

⁴⁴⁴ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 36, 38 – 9, 47 – 9.

⁴⁴⁵ See again Noonan, “Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus’ Towns,” *passim*; also Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 24 – 6, 35 – 6, 39, 75 – 6.

⁴⁴⁶ Noonan, “Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus’ Towns,” 938 and Table II, finds a total of 20,654 dirhams in hoards around the Baltic 780s – 900s. Calculating, for simplicity’s sake, at three grams silver per dirham, this makes some 60 kg of Arab silver arriving in Scandinavia and the Baltic by ca. 900. This figure does not include, for example, the Spillings hoard found on Gotland in 1999, which totaled 67 kg of silver, including “just over 14,300 coins (c. 17kg) both complete and fragmented, and almost without exception Islamic.” Östergren, “The Spillings Hoard(s),” 326. Since the archaeologically recovered hoards must represent only a small fraction of the total amount of silver that entered the Baltic, we can speak of metric tons’ worth of the metal coming into the North already in the ninth century. Much more came from the east in the tenth century.

⁴⁴⁷ On this point, see Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 60 – 1, who speculate that the dearth of hoards in the later ninth century might be due to upheavals in the trading networks or a reflection of a greater need to keep silver circulating within Russia itself as a medium of exchange.

⁴⁴⁸ Scandinavian settlement in European Russia, for example in the area around Iaroslavl, becomes noticeably denser towards the end of the ninth century, which suggests that these immigrants, whose original incentive to enter European Russia had been to engage in the trade, were becoming permanently

traders were drawing their “wares”—the furs and the slaves—from within European Russia, and their trading profits remained in circulation or were hoarded within European Russia itself, the flow of payments is unproblematical.

It is demonstrable, however, that the ninth-century Scandinavian immigration was a rapid influx with direct connections in material culture back to areas such as the Åland islands and Middle Sweden, which suggests, in Franklin and Shepard’s terms, “a picture of close contacts between far-flung areas, and of constant toing and froing on the part of many Rus while in their prime.”⁴⁴⁹ This suggests the further possibility that many Scandinavians came to Rus’, lived and traded there for one season or for many, and then returned to their homelands, repatriating their profits in silver—of which some fraction, then, ended up in the numerous hoards. For such adventurers, armed with swords and weighing scales, the ultimate motivation for their temporary forays into the wild eastern frontier might well have been broadly similar to those of the Norwegian Vikings that set out to rob the British coastlines in the late eighth century: the wild eastern frontier offered opportunities to gather capital in the form of easily movable and fungible wealth, which they could then use to secure or to improve their social position back home in the Ålands, in Uppland, or on Gotland.⁴⁵⁰ The characteristic swords and weighing scales, meanwhile, appear to place these individuals squarely in the category of the arch-typical merchant adventurer. The chief difference between the Rus’ traders and trading communities such as the Frisians on the other side of Scandinavia was the political milieu in which they operated. North and west of the controlled marketplaces of Volga Bulghar, Khazaria, and Byzantium, the traders operated in a space where overt regulation was minimal.⁴⁵¹

established communities specializing in in-country trade. Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 68 – 70.

⁴⁴⁹ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 65 – 7.

⁴⁵⁰ For the argument concerning the entrance of silver into to the socio-economic world of the Scandinavians, see again Sindbæk, “Silver Economies and Social Ties,” 44 – 7, 56 – 8, especially, and the discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* above.

⁴⁵¹ Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 49 – 50, 68, describe their sense of the ninth-century Rus’ as a loose franchise operating under consensus rather than under much direct policing by the *chaganus*. Burials with swords and scales were found, for example, in the Iaroslavl area (p. 68).

Finally, there exists also the possibility that Scandinavians did not simply take silver profits out of European Russia but “balanced payments” by bringing into Russia goods from the west. Amber, of course, came from the Baltic. Sources of tin, meanwhile, also are absent in the space between the Baltic and the Urals just like sources of silver and gold. Deposits of lead-tin alloy, widely used in the manufacture of imitation silver jewelry, are found at various sites in northwestern Russia, sometimes in close conjunction with hoards of silver coins, thus strongly suggesting that the tin was an important raw material traded into Russia. According to Noonan’s summary of the “balance of payments” question, then,

Rus’ merchants bringing scrap glass, tin ingots, amber and other goods exchanged their wares in European Russia and the Orient for dirhams. . . . Since the value of the silver was apparently greater than that of the glass, tin, amber and other northern products, the Rus’ merchants also had to acquire slaves and furs in European Russia which could then be exchanged with Islamic merchants.⁴⁵²

Of course, neither glass nor tin were produced within the Scandinavian – Baltic region itself, so that if Noonan’s analysis is correct we have, here, an inkling of a long-distance arc reaching from Russia back across the Baltic to primary production areas in Carolingia and the British Isles. Moreover, Noonan follows the standard assumption that both furs and slaves must have been obtained by these traders locally, within Russia. The more novel possibility is that Scandinavians brought captives from the Baltic or even North Sea regions eastwards as an alternative to selling such people to Frisian, Jewish, or Muslim traders in the West.⁴⁵³ In other words, items of trade such as the “girls” mentioned by ibn Fadlan may have originated as far away as Ireland or Gaul, or less remotely in Poland, or the eastern Baltic, or Finland.

⁴⁵² Noonan, “Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus’ Towns,” 40 – 1. The quote is on p. 41. Noonan particularly references excavations at Vyzhigsha, a small fortified site between the Iaroslavl area and the upper Oka. See also Callmer, “Urbanisation in Northern and Eastern Europe,” 254, who lists furs, wax and honey, and possibly venison and fish as “traditional woodland products [that] were the strength and attraction for the Rus’.” Callmer adds that “[s]lave hunting had begun as being of only slight importance,” and when it grew in scope “the slaves were procured outside the primary tribute network” in order to avoid upsetting procurement of the forest products. Clearly, Callmer is imagining that the slaving was nevertheless done within European Russia.

⁴⁵³ See Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 18 – 20, for the transshipment of slaves from Scandinavia into Russia. For slave markets in the west, see discussion in the subsections below.

Combined with hints of a substantial trade in industrial raw materials, namely tin, the transit of slaves through or from the world of the North to the East greatly elevates the implied volume of traffic on the so-called “northern arc.” If western Vikings delivered even some of their Christian captives from the British Isles or Francia into the hands of their Rus’ cousins and the latter then forwarded them to Muslim merchants in Volga Bulghar or Khazaria, then it would no longer be true that only Frankish swords and Arab dirhams can be demonstrated to have traveled the entire arc from west to east and east to west, respectively.⁴⁵⁴ Regarding swords as an item of trade across Russia to the Middle East, it is certainly true that a perfected type of blade emerged from Rhenish workshops ca. 800 and subsequently found very wide distribution in all areas inhabited or frequented by Scandinavians, including Russia.⁴⁵⁵ We must assume that some of these were the weapons that ibn Khurradadhbih reports being sold by Rus’ in Baghdad in the later ninth century. We might wonder, however, whether sword buyers in Baghdad were knowledgeable enough to distinguish genuine Frankish make from imitations forged, say, in Middle Sweden.

In summary, it is necessary to return to the most basic fact in the development of trade relations across European Russia, which is that a “northern arc” of linkages between the Scandinavian – Baltic world on the one hand and Byzantium and the Islamic world on the other hand came into existence only after ca. 750 when a fundamental shift occurred in the relations between the Khazars and the Caliphate. This had the effect of re-starting trade relations with the peoples dwelling north of the steppe lands in European Russia and set in motion a significant flow of Islamic silver in the form of dirhams into the region. It would have been through pre-existing indigenous trade networks and nodes such as the area around the Sarskii Fort that dirhams reached Ladoga almost as soon as they began to flow northwards from Khazaria. The subsequent development of the exchange system across European Russia—stimulated, now, by large quantities of

⁴⁵⁴ The summary statement about the goods transiting the “northern arc” is in McCormick, *Origins*, 612.

⁴⁵⁵ See Ewart Oakeshott, “Introduction to the Viking Sword,” in *Swords of the Viking Age*, catalogue and examples by Ian G. Peirce (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), 7 – 8, for the emergence of the perfected blade type and its characteristics. Much of the variation within the Petersen system of sword classification is based on crossguard and pommel designs and decorations which could be attached to the standard blade according to local or individual taste. Lee A. Jones, “Overview of Hilt and Blade Classifications,” in *Swords of the Viking Age*, catalogue and examples by Ian G. Peirce (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), 15 – 24.

Islamic silver and following the broad northwest-to-southeast corridor of routes between the Dniepr and the Volga—can be understood in terms of two interrelated but distinct strands of endeavor, (1) an intensified mobilization of production of marketable commodities within European Russia itself, and (2) the transport across Russia to southern markets of items in trade originating outside of the European Russian region.

For both Scandinavians and Khazars, the key to realizing the first of the above goals lay in extending hybrid tribute and purchasing systems over the indigenous producers of forest products and, probably, organizing some kind of slave procurement system. Although up to the mid-ninth century the Khazar sphere of influence was considerably larger than the one controlled by the Scandinavian – Rus' from their bases in the northwest, by the end of the ninth century the network of Scandinavian forts and centers servicing the needs of transiting Scandinavian entrepreneurs extended over the Russian forest and forest-steppe zones as far as Iaroslavl, Murom, Chernigov, and Kiev. Though typically few in numbers—only a few hundred even in the largest fortified nodal places, it could be justly said that by the turn of the tenth century the Scandinavian entrepreneurs controlled the greater part of the producing areas within Russia, and while it seems that the indigenous primary producers derived some benefit from the increase in trade, the major profits from it accrued to the Scandinavian or Rus' merchant – adventurers.

Competition for the fur- and slave-gathering rights in Russia paralleled the aggressive exploration of alternative routes and trade opportunities. By the mid-ninth century, the Scandinavian – Rus' were not only frequenting the markets of Khazaria but had made contact with the Byzantines in the Black Sea region and had even found their way to Baghdad. Certainly, they sold furs and slaves in these markets, items which would have been obtained primarily within European Russia. There exist, however, hints that the Rus' traders also handled items in trade that came into European Russia from the west. One such category of goods were industrial raw materials such as glass and tin, which were produced in areas to the west of the Scandinavia – Baltic region but most likely stayed within Russia as their ultimate destination. Another would be Baltic amber, some of which found its way via Russia to eastern markets. If we accept, meanwhile,

that at least some of the “Frankish swords” that the Rus’ are reported as peddling to the Arabs were in fact forged in Carolingia, then these would constitute a true item of transit trade over the entire “northern arc” through Russia. Finally, there is the possibility that slaves also were obtained either in the Baltic or even from the North Sea region and taken via the Russian routes to the eastern markets.

Thus, by the end of the ninth century, the Scandinavian – Rus’ long-distance trading enterprise in the European Russian region had developed several distinct lines of commodities-supply, with outlets both into the Islamic world and into the Byzantine world. To a considerable extent this involved only the development of the commercial potential within European Russia itself. In other aspects, meanwhile, it also involved connections with the Scandinavian – Baltic region and with the Carolingian dominated world of Latin Christendom farther west. No one disputes that large amounts of Islamic silver began to flow via Russia into the world of the North in the ninth century. With the outlines of the Scandinavian – Rus’ trading system in hand, we can proceed to re-analyze the effects that the Russian connection had on trade relations within the Baltic and explore possible effects of this connection reaching even further west to England and Carolingia.

The Baltic system between East and West

The flow of Islamic silver into Scandinavia in the ninth century—at least 120kg archaeologically recovered from hoards dated up to ca. 900—is all the more impressive when we recall how sparse was the permanent Scandinavian presence beyond the Volkhov until the late ninth century.⁴⁵⁶ Essentially, a few dozen or no more than a few hundred Scandinavian adventurers active in European Russia at any one time during the bulk of the ninth century were responsible for this astounding influx of wealth.⁴⁵⁷ The inflow of silver was so great that it caused Sture Bolin to theorize a reversal of trade

⁴⁵⁶ This point is emphasized in Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 72. Overestimating, for convenience, the weight of a dirham at 3g, this is the equivalent of 40,000 coins.

⁴⁵⁷ There may have been special occasions when the number of active participants was much higher temporarily, for example at the time of the Rus’ attack upon Constantinople in 860, or at the time of the Caspian Sea raids in the early tenth century. Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 52 – 3, 69, on Rus’ numbers on these occasions.

flows, with Scandinavia as the conduit of Islamic silver to Carolingia from the early ninth century onwards.⁴⁵⁸ Hodges referred to Bolin in 1982 and raised the question of silver from the Baltic as capital for Charlemagne's currency reform ca. 790.⁴⁵⁹ More recently, however, Christer Westerdahl has emphasized Denmark as a barrier more than a conduit between the Baltic and points west, through which some goods passed but others found a limit of distribution.⁴⁶⁰ In order to clarify the potential trans-regional effects that the Scandinavian – Baltic region might have played in the western Eurasian exchange flows of the eighth and ninth centuries, it is necessary first to return to a rigorous review of the chronology of developments.

First, it must be stressed once more that in the 700 – 750 period, practically the only trans-regional link from the North was the one with the rapidly growing North Sea network.⁴⁶¹ The foundation of the standard *emporium* at Ribe, probably under the auspices of a Jutlandic state, near 700 and the pioneering of the Hollingstedt – Haithabu isthmus crossing, probably by the Frisians, by 750 established southern Scandinavia/Denmark as the interface point for trade from the North and from Carolingia and England. By 750, the stimulus of increased trade flows to and from the Baltic had involved also the southern Baltic or Slavic shore—the coast of Holstein and of western Mecklenburg as far east as Wismar bay and the *emporium* of Groß Strömkendorf.⁴⁶² Concurrently, stimulus from the increased exchange with the Latin Christian world had reached Middle Sweden, resulting in the foundation of the *emporium* of Birka right around 750. Further, the explorations of Scandinavians even further east in the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga area had crystalized ca. 750 in the foundation of an incipient, low-level *emporium*-like settlement at Staraja Ladoga on the lower Volkhov. As was

⁴⁵⁸ Bolin, "Mohammed, Charlemagne and Ruric," 28 – 39.

⁴⁵⁹ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 154. "[W]e can only question whether Charlemagne would have ignored the flow of oriental silver into the Baltic and whether the series of incidents relating to the formation of Haithabu by king Godfred are isolated occurrences or incidents relating to a Carolingian policy now lost to us."

⁴⁶⁰ Westerdahl, "Transport Zones in Wulfstan's Days," 212 – 13 and Fig 5. "The distribution of Kufic coins shows a clear concentration by way of Russian inland water systems to Gotland and mid eastern Sweden and mainly to the east of Denmark, in a certain way delimiting the main transport routes along the southern Baltic. On the other hand, signs of direct imports from the Rhine normally cease along the Jutland barrier to the east. Denmark is thus appearing as the pivot" (p. 213).

⁴⁶¹ See again Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and Denmark* above.

⁴⁶² See Section 7.2, subsection *The southern shore and the Slavs* above.

pointed out in the preceding subsection, however, the foundation at Ladoga *cannot* have been intended as a support point for trans-continental trade to Byzantium or the Caliphate but merely as a step-up in the pursuit of trade relations with the indigenous forest dwellers of northwestern Russia with markets to the west in mind. During this first half-century, whatever silver is entering the Scandinavian economy is coming from the west in the pockets of Frisian and other merchants using Anglo-Saxon and Frankish coinage. Whatever goods are exported from Scandinavia are going exclusively over the North Sea to markets in the Latin Christian world.

The next half-century or so, from ca. 750 into the first decade of the ninth century, sees Denmark consolidating its position as the mediator of trade between the North Sea and Scandinavian – Baltic networks. This culminates in the refounding of Haithabu as an expanded *emporium* under the direction of the Danish king by 810, and in the emergence of additional nodal points within the region of the North such as Kaupang in southern Norway and Rostock-Dierkow on the Warnow, Ralswiek on the island of Rügen, and the Menzlin – Görke complex at the western end of the Oder estuary along the south Baltic shore. On the whole, especially considering the forcible attention devoted to securing Danish control over Haithabu and the simultaneous destruction of rival “Reric” on the Slavic shore, the Scandinavian – Baltic system is still oriented to the west.⁴⁶³ With dirham hoards showing up at Ladoga in the 780s and in other places in northwestern Russia in the first decade of the ninth century, however, it is plain that *some* Scandinavians in the later eighth century were beginning to respond to new trading opportunities that had opened up across European Russia ca. 750.⁴⁶⁴ Some part of the tradable items that the Scandinavians were collecting in northwestern Russia now could have been diverted into the rapidly emerging trans-Russian trade corridor to Khazaria. That the first dirham hoard in Scandinavia—at Tune, with nine coins and a *tpq* of 784/85—also appears around this time shows that a trickle of Islamic silver was

⁴⁶³ For Haithabu and Kaupang, see Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia*; for the trading places on the Slavic shore of the Baltic, see subsection *The southern shore and the Slavs* above.

⁴⁶⁴ Noonan, “Why the Vikings First Came to Russia,” 347 – 8, Table A. See Table B *ibid.* for the hoard at Tune on mainland Sweden.

beginning to enter the Baltic also, but not yet in sufficient quantities to overturn the overall westward orientation.

From the first decade of the ninth century to ca. 900, Scandinavian involvement in European Russia grew exponentially. The expansion of Scandinavian – Rus’ activities was reflected in the appearance of Scandinavian artifacts in the Iaroslavl area on the upper Volga, in the foundation of the fortified base at Gorodishche on Lake Ilmen, and in the reports of Rus’ traders as far afield as Baghdad. It was also marked by a proliferation of dirham hoards across a broad swath of European Russia.⁴⁶⁵ Simultaneously, large dirham hoards were cropping up within the Baltic Sea region already in the first half of the ninth century, which demonstrates that some kind of intensive transfer or exchange of wealth between the North and European Russia was beginning during this time.⁴⁶⁶

Within Scandinavia, the influx of Islamic silver was felt to differing degrees in different areas. In general, the heaviest deposits of dirhams are in Middle Sweden, on Gotland, and in parts of the southern Baltic shore, while there are noticeably fewer in southern Scandinavia and fewest in Norway. Nevertheless, by the end of the ninth century Islamic silver finds broad distribution throughout Scandinavia, even outside of the trading centers. Moreover, wealth in silver appeared in forms other than coin. As von Heijne comments:

Metallurgical studies indicate that the silver in some of the Scandinavian jewellery from Viking-age hoards possibly derives from melting down of Islamic coins. . . . The ‘central-places’ were probably multi-functional sites of great importance, and it is likely that many of the coins found at these places, especially the Islamic ones, were intended for use as raw material for fine metalwork.⁴⁶⁷

In the 810 – 900 period, Scandinavia made the transition to the use of weighed bullion or hack-silver as a medium of exchange, which then dominated in most areas throughout the tenth century. Even in Norway, where dirhams were relatively scarce, hacked dirhams became the prevalent exchange medium by ca. 860 at the major node of

⁴⁶⁵ See discussion in subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* above.

⁴⁶⁶ See Noonan, “Why the Vikings First Came to Russia,” 348, Table B, for the growing size and increasing frequency of Scandinavian dirham hoards up to 837/38.

⁴⁶⁷ Heijne, “Viking-Age Coin Finds from South Scandinavia,” 192 – 3, for the distribution of Islamic coins. The quote is on p. 193.

Kaupang.⁴⁶⁸ The same transition had happened throughout eastern Norway, at Haithabu, and in southern Scandinavia generally by 900.⁴⁶⁹ The effect was, then, of a gradual transformation of the way that exchange was mediated in Scandinavia, brought about by the steady influx of silver from the east throughout the ninth century, with the heyday of the hack-silver or weighed bullion economy being actually a phenomenon of the tenth century and therefore beyond the limits of the present study. In part, the afore-mentioned transition was brought to completion by an intensive wave of dirham issues from Samanid Central Asia that began to flow to Volga Bulghar in the 890s and corresponded with the establishment of the latter—dominating the middle Volga area—as the primary market for those Scandinavians – Rus’ that operated in “inner” or northern Russia.⁴⁷⁰ Once again, it is the density of dirham finds in Scandinavia that is the surest evidence for a vital exchange connection between the North and European Russia.

At various times during the ninth century, meanwhile, additional trade-oriented centers appeared along the southern Baltic shore eastwards of the Oder. Both Wolin on the eastern side of the Oder estuary and Truso in former east Prussia show mercantile activity in the first half of the ninth century and, especially in the case of Truso, large numbers of Islamic coins dating to this period.⁴⁷¹ At Kaupang, Carolingian coins dominated through the 830s – 40s.⁴⁷² In southern Scandinavia also (greater Denmark, essentially), Carolingian coins remained dominant at the major trade centers such as Haithabu during much of the ninth century.⁴⁷³ Altogether, it would appear that Denmark and adjoining areas such as southern Norway continued to be oriented towards the North

⁴⁶⁸ Gullbekk, “Norway: Commodity Money, Silver and Coin,” 97 – 9.

⁴⁶⁹ Askjem, “The Viking-Age Silver Hoards from Eastern Norway,” 175 – 82; Hilberg, “Silver Economies of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries AD in Hedeby,” 215 – 18; and Heijne, “Viking-Age Coin Finds from South Scandinavia,” 193, 198 – 9. See also Gustin, “Coin Stock and Coin Circulation in Birka,” 231 – 4.

⁴⁷⁰ For the emergence of the market at Volga Bulghar, see discussion in subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* above. The impact of the wave of Samanid silver is referenced in Heijne, “Viking-Age Coin Finds from South Scandinavia,” 192; Hilberg, “Silver Economies of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries AD in Hedeby,” 215 – 16; and Gustin, “Coin Stock and Coin Circulation in Birka,” 239 – 40. At Birka, single finds show the presence of Islamic dirhams throughout the ninth century, though in surprisingly small quantities.

⁴⁷¹ See discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *The southern shore and the Slavs* above.

⁴⁷² Gullbekk, “Norway: Commodity Money, Silver and Coin,” 97.

⁴⁷³ Heijne, “Viking-Age Coin Finds from South Scandinavia,” 193 – 6. Heijne provides distribution maps of both Islamic and Carolingian coins, dividing them into ninth- and tenth-century finds.

Sea network during this time, while the coin distributions on the southern Baltic shore suggest an orientation towards the eastern trade.

The organization of trade within the Scandinavian – Baltic region in the ninth century, with the influx of Islamic silver as backdrop, was oriented partly to the east and partly to the west. As was noted previously, the westward-oriented trade centered upon Denmark and Haithabu in particular, with three major trunk routes northward along the Norwegian coast, northeastward along the Swedish coast to Gotland and Birka, and eastward along the south Baltic shore as far as Truso.⁴⁷⁴ The trade eastwards from Birka and Gotland, meanwhile, followed the Gulf of Finland, whence the main line continued to Lake Ladoga and up the Volkhov with connections to various alternative destinations from the Lake Ilmen basin. While there is archaeological support for a close connection between Rus' colonization in "inner Russia" and the Åland islands and Middle Sweden,⁴⁷⁵ there can be little doubt that the Gotlanders also were responding to rapidly expanding trading opportunities in European Russia. Indeed, Gotland must be considered in the exchange of wealth between European Russia and the Baltic not only for its close proximity, geographically, to the Lake Mälaren area and the Ålands but also because of the extraordinary proportion of silver hoards that are found on this island—at least as great as that of all of mainland Sweden combined.⁴⁷⁶ The extraordinary accumulations of silver on Gotland and the proliferation of ports around its perimeter clearly point to extremely active engagement with the Baltic exchange system, for regardless of the socio-economic purposes to which the silver accumulations might ultimately be applied, neither Sweden as a whole nor Gotland specifically is a *source* of silver—whatever is found there must have arrived by some exchange mechanism from elsewhere.

The matter of hoards has been subject to widely divergent interpretations. Ambrosiani has suggested even that the ninth-century silver hoards reflect a circumstance in which silver was practically useless for commercial exchanges, and therefore was

⁴⁷⁴ See discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* above.

⁴⁷⁵ See discussion in subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* above.

⁴⁷⁶ Noonan, "The Vikings in the East: Coins and Commerce," 222 – 6, for the analysis of hoards then known to him (1994). According to his Table 1 (p. 223), a total of 17,113 Islamic silver coins in hoards of five or more are found around the Baltic in the ninth century, of which 5,749 were found on Gotland and 5,825 elsewhere within the boundaries of present-day Sweden. Of course, the addition of the 14,000-odd dirhams from the Spillings hoard, not known to Noonan, would raise Gotland's proportion even more.

disposed of by hoarding.⁴⁷⁷ This interpretation fails to explain, however, why Scandinavians then took the trouble to haul so many hundreds of kilos of silver all across Russia just to dump them in the ground. Even if much of it ended up as armrings and other jewelry, that still would mean that silver had significant commodity value as raw metal. An alternative critique of hoards as markers of commercial activity is that proposed by Morrison, wherein he cautions against the assumption that commercial activity was liveliest in the areas with the most hoarding activity. In his view, hoarding activity need have no direct bearing on trade routes and might rather indicate areas where circulation was marginal.⁴⁷⁸ This observation might be applicable to places such as Birka—one of the principle nodal places in the Baltic Sea network and one where commercial transactions would have occurred with great frequency but where there are practically no significant ninth-century hoards and the numbers of stray coins also are relatively low. The lack of deposits, in this case, would be reflecting the fact that coins and bullion were needed to mediate exchanges.⁴⁷⁹ Finally, Metcalf's observation that hoards can be seen as reflecting a local positive balance of payments seems the most apt to explain the situation on Gotland.⁴⁸⁰ It remains to analyze the means by which the Gotlanders were able to accumulate such a surplus.⁴⁸¹

One possibility is that Gotland served as a manufacturing center for metal artifacts. As was mentioned above, there are indications of extensive iron-works on Gotland and production for export of dress jewelry such as brooches for both the Scandinavian and the Baltic market.⁴⁸² Scandinavian customers could have paid for their brooches in dirhams, of course. More directly, it is possible that some of the "Frankish

⁴⁷⁷ Ambrosiani, "Birka and Scandinavia's Trade with the East," 292. This viewpoint ignores the value that individuals' accumulations of silver might have had as commodity money for non-commercial purposes.

⁴⁷⁸ Karl F. Morrison, "Numismatics and Carolingian Trade: A Critique of the Evidence," *Speculum* 38, no. 3 (1963): 409.

⁴⁷⁹ Gustin, "Coin Stock and Coin Circulation in Birka," 229 – 35, discusses the distribution of coin finds through various archaeological layers in three distinct excavations within the larger site of Birka. It should be noted that only .5% of the main settlement area, the "black earth," has been excavated and that this turned out to be a workshop area. In other words, the places where most trade transactions would actually have been completed and coins likeliest to go astray do not figure into the present data-set.

⁴⁸⁰ Metcalf, "The Beginnings of Coinage in the North Sea Coastlands," 202.

⁴⁸¹ For a description of wealth distribution on Gotland and its active maritime interface, see again Jørgensen, "Harbors and Trading Centers on Bornholm, Öland and Gotland," 155 – 7, and the discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* above.

⁴⁸² See discussion of Gotland in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* above.

swords” exported via European Russia were made specifically on Gotland and exchanged for Islamic silver. Neither of these enterprises appears likely to account for all or even a majority of the silver surplus evident on Gotland.

A likelier scenario emerges when we consider the silver accumulations on Gotland in connection with the surprising incidence of Islamic silver on the southern shore of the Baltic. According to Noonan’s figures from 1994, a total of 4,709 dirhams had been recovered from ninth-century deposits in present-day Germany and Poland.⁴⁸³ This figure is roughly 80 per cent of those that Noonan lists for either Sweden or Gotland, and does not consider the hoard of 2,211 Islamic coins with a *tpq* of 844 by the major complex at Ralswiek on the island of Rügen that was discovered post-1994.⁴⁸⁴ The distribution of the ninth-century dirham hoards in the shoreward districts from Holstein to East Prussia suggests strongly that their appearance is connected in some way with the Baltic trading network. Noonan raised the possibility of a grain trade across the sea from the Slav lands to Sweden, only to dismiss it in favor of the conclusion that the silver signified the direct participation of West Slavs in the Russian adventure.⁴⁸⁵ The marked presence of Scandinavian-type material culture and burials at the coastal sites along the south Baltic shore and the dearth of West Slavic cultural traces in European Russia strongly suggests, however, that the oversea trading enterprise was operating under the auspices of Scandinavian culture, at least, and very likely also with a high preponderance of ethnic Scandinavian individuals.⁴⁸⁶ West Slavs may have been enriched by the trade and accumulated some of the surplus that we see as the hoards of dirhams, but the most lucrative lines of oversea trade were in the hands of Scandinavians.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸³ Noonan, “The Vikings in the East: Coins and Commerce,” 223 Table 1. Again, only finds consisting of five or more coins were included in the count.

⁴⁸⁴ For the Ralswiek hoard, see again Jöns, “Ports and *emporía* of the Southern Coast,” 173 – 4.

⁴⁸⁵ Noonan, “The Vikings in the East: Coins and Commerce,” 224, 226.

⁴⁸⁶ The question of Scandinavian influence along the Baltic shores of Poland is treated extensively in the many contributions in B. Stanisławski, S. Moździoch, and P. Wiszewski, eds., *Norse Culture in the Early Medieval Poland* (Wrocław, 2012).

⁴⁸⁷ The incidence of Slavic pottery at sites in Sweden suggests close and regular communications between the opposite sides of the Baltic, in which participants from either side might have been involved in low-level trade. But this would not be the type of trade that led to the remarkable silver hoards. On the ubiquitous distribution of Slavic pottery around the Baltic, see the mention and sources in Jagodziński, “The Settlement of Truso,” 184.

Given the generally undeveloped condition of the interior of the Slavic lands between the Elbe and the Vistula at this time there would have been little possibility for a grain trade across the sea.⁴⁸⁸ At Truso, specifically, a major commodity would have been the amber that is attested as a trade item transiting across European Russia. At Kołobreg at the mouth of the Parsęta river in Pomerania it might have been salt. In the south Baltic generally, the standard forest products honey, wax, furs—were available for trade. The question with these would be whether it was worthwhile to transport such items on the long road to Rus', where the same were readily available through local trade and, particularly in regards to furs, of higher quality.

What remains is the possibility that the most important item in trade to come out of the West Slavic hinterland was slaves, and that this trade specifically accounts for much of the evident accumulation of eastern silver both along the south Baltic shore and on Gotland.⁴⁸⁹ A place such as Ralswiek on the island of Rügen, in close proximity to the mouth of the Oder waterway with its many tributaries, seems ideally suited as a base for this trade, which might well account for the exceptionally large hoard that was found there.⁴⁹⁰ By all accounts, the area around the Oder mouth and within the upriver watershed was the major focus for development in Poland in the ninth century, with the strong indication that its impetus came from the direction of the coast.⁴⁹¹ Under this scenario, the dirham hoards found in the area around the Oder mouth including such nearby areas as the island of Rügen would represent either overseas capital to be used in the trade or profits accruing to indigenous participants. Political conditions in ninth-century Poland are described, currently, as remaining at a tribal level until after the turn of the tenth century, when the formation of a Polish state commenced in west central or

⁴⁸⁸ For the development of the West Slav lands, see the discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *The southern shore and the Slavs* above.

⁴⁸⁹ This line of reasoning follows Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 18 – 20, regarding the western origin of many of the slaves that the Rus' sold in European Russia. See further discussion on this point in the subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* above.

⁴⁹⁰ A strong connection between Ralswiek particularly and Ladoga was noted also in Noonan, "Why the Vikings First Came to Russia," 345.

⁴⁹¹ Bogucki, "The Use of Money in the Slavic Lands from the Ninth to Eleventh Century," 135, confirms the distribution of dirham hoards in Prussia and Pomerania in the earlier ninth century, with larger and more fragmented (hacked) hoards in Pomerania in the later ninth.

Great Poland (the Warthe river basin, essentially).⁴⁹² The socio-political situation in Poland was, therefore, similar to that in the forest and forest-steppe zones of European Russia at this time, which implies similar opportunities in slave trading; i.e., if slaving was possible in Russia at this time it should have been equally possible in Poland. The advantage in procuring slaves from the latter area would have been that in the south Baltic there was far less risk of disruption to an equally lucrative fur supply network—the furs here were simply of inferior quality compared to those obtainable from more northerly areas.⁴⁹³

It is possible, thus, to infer an important slave trading network in the eastern half of the Baltic in the ninth century whose major constituents were the slave-procurement area in the Oder basin, the trading places along the south Baltic shore, Gotland and the Gotlanders as the central hub and the primary operators of the system, and an outlet via the Gulf of Finland to the European Russian market. The inference rests primarily on the circumstance that a strikingly large share of the dirham hoards of the ninth century is found both on the south Baltic shore and on Gotland. Nevertheless, if significant numbers of slaves from the southern Baltic were being transported into Russia, then this would go far towards explaining the “balance of payments” situation between the Scandinavian – Baltic region and European Russia.

Even if the largest slaving operation in the ninth-century Baltic was the one from the West Slavic lands via Gotland to Russia, this by no means excludes a multitude of other slave supply directions.⁴⁹⁴ In Jankuhn’s view, the wealth of the Vendel-period rulers in Uppland (Middle Sweden) in the seventh and eighth centuries can be explained

⁴⁹² Regarding political development in Poland, see again Buko, “Unknown Revolution: Archaeology and the Beginnings of the Polish State,” 163 – 5, 168 – 9; and Urbánczyk, “Early State Formation in East Central Europe,” 141, 146 – 7. It is interesting to speculate that the opportunities and pressures of the slave trade in the Oder basin was one reason for the destabilization of the tribal order in western Poland in the ninth century, and that the relatively isolated or buffered situation of Great Poland in particular gave ambitious individuals precisely in that area an advantage in a transformative state-building revolution.

⁴⁹³ Bogucki, “The Use of Money in the Slavic Lands from the Ninth to Eleventh Century,” 135, mentions an influx of dirhams directly from the east into southeastern or Little Poland in the late ninth century. This could be a plausible effect of the establishment of the Rus’ at Kiev at that time. It is also possible that by the early tenth century some Rus’ had ventured through southern Poland and Moravia to reach markets on the Danube; Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 88 – 90.

⁴⁹⁴ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 141 – 6, presents a detailed summary of the slave trade in the North. In his judgment, it was probably the most lucrative of all the branches of commerce during the period in question.

largely by reference to such a trade, and that it should be connected with the Swedish and Gotlandic outposts along the eastern shore of the Baltic that date to this period.⁴⁹⁵ In other words, the Baltic might well have been a ready source of non-Christian slaves for a western market from the very beginning of the establishment of the Jutlandic *emporium* of Ribe and Haithabu in the earlier eighth century. In the same vein, it is entirely possible that some portion of the slaves from the West Slavic areas in the ninth century could have been transported westwards to Haithabu for sale to the Frisians.⁴⁹⁶ At the same time, there is textual evidence from the ninth century that attests a market in Haithabu of Christian slaves, whose origins could only have been in Latin Christendom.⁴⁹⁷ It remains an open question how much of a practical impact the repeated prohibitions, issued by the Church and by Carolingian rulers, on trade in Christians or at least on the transport of Christians for sale in a pagan country actually had.⁴⁹⁸ In any case, such prohibitions would have been meaningless for Scandinavian entrepreneurs in the northwestern waters in the ninth century, which saw the peak of raiding activity and fairly large-scale invasions both in the British isles and in parts of Francia—in other words, abundant with opportunities for obtaining Christian captives. In Jankuhn's analysis, this labor was in high demand within Scandinavia itself and was involved in the notable upsurge in internal economic development in the North throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. However that may be, it is certainly possible that some of these Christian slaves were traded further eastwards into European Russia.⁴⁹⁹ Finally, it is equally possible that Scandinavians returning to the Baltic from successful ventures in European Russia not only brought with them profits in silver but also in goods—including slaves.

⁴⁹⁵ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 141 – 2.

⁴⁹⁶ Since artifacts of Carolingian provenance are found along the south shore as far east as the Oder estuary, it is also possible that Frisian traders were active on-site at some of the major nodes such as Groß Strömkendorf and Menzlin. For the archaeology, see Jöns, “Ports and *emporium* of the Southern Coast,” 167 – 9, 174 – 6.

⁴⁹⁷ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 142, recounting Rimbert's experiences redeeming Christian captives in Haithabu ca. 870.

⁴⁹⁸ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 141; see also the discussion of such prohibitions in McCormick, *Origins*, 748 – 52.

⁴⁹⁹ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 142 – 3. See again Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 20.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the slave trade within, to, and from the Scandinavian – Baltic region particularly in the ninth century was far from simple and unidirectional. Rather, it assumes the shape of a network of alternative possibilities, in which a variety of individual actors might choose to buy or sell slaves from a number of points of origin to an equally great number of destinations.⁵⁰⁰ The two largest supplying areas appear to have been the West Slavic hinterland south of the Baltic shore and those areas of northwestern Europe that were accessible to Viking raiding. The key middlemen on the western side of the network doubtless were the Frisians. Lebecq mentions Britain as a productive source of slaves for Frisian long-distance traders in the eighth century.⁵⁰¹ Similarly, at multiple points from England to Haithabu, Frisian wholesalers would have provided a ready market for any ninth-century Viking raider or Danish warlord wishing to unload his captives. Since the marketplace of Haithabu lay well beyond the range of enforceable limitations regarding the re-sale of Christian slaves into non-Christian countries, any Frisian merchant who wished to do so could calmly forward such people into the Baltic for destinations in Scandinavia or Russia. At the same time, the Frisians supplied the westward outlet, feeding slaves both from Baltic and northwest European sources into the routes across the Carolingian continent to the Mediterranean.⁵⁰²

Aside from the trade in slaves, undoubtedly the most important branch of Scandinavian commerce in the eighth and ninth centuries was the export of furs. As in European Russia, the pelts of fur-bearing animals, especially those in the more northerly areas where the quality of winter fur tended to be highest, were a prime resource with which the North could enter the interregional exchange system.⁵⁰³ Archaeological proof of trade in this perishable material is scarce; however, the debris from pelt processing occurs in the earliest layers of the Birka *emporium* (i.e. ca 750),⁵⁰⁴ which suggests that

⁵⁰⁰ The level of socio-economic development in Scandinavia in the eighth and ninth centuries was well sufficient to sustain such a network. See the discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* above.

⁵⁰¹ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 227, citing the ongoing warfare in the Isles.

⁵⁰² For the trans-continental slave trade in Carolingian Europe, see the discussion in subsection *From the North Sea to Italy: the Carolingian corridor* below.

⁵⁰³ On the importance of north – south trade, see the discussion in subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* above. Fur trading from Scandinavia to central Europe probably dates back to the second millennium BC; see discussion in Section 3.2, subsection *The Bronze Age Baltic and central Europe* above.

⁵⁰⁴ Ambrosiani, “Birka and Scandinavia’s Trade with the East,” 288.

one of the functions of this nodal site was to serve as a collection point for furs coming out of the northern Baltic and from northwestern Russia. In other words, up until the late eighth century, furs both from the Gulf of Finland – Lake Ladoga area and from the Gulf of Bothnia area came to Birka, to be forwarded thence along the trunk line to Jutland and, ultimately, to markets in England or Francia.

As northwestern Russia became linked with the trans-continental trade routes to Khazaria in the late eighth or early ninth centuries, most if not all of the production in the Ladoga area would have started going towards the southeast rather than towards the west via Birka as before. It is impossible to say if any of the Bothnian fur supply also was diverted towards Russia in the ninth century. In any case, with the alternative outlet to Russia, the stream of furs going from the northeastern Baltic to Denmark and points west may have been less in the ninth century than it was in the eighth. An alternative supply source for furs was northern Norway, as indicated in Ohthere's account of his varied enterprises.⁵⁰⁵ Ohthere's account confirms that a fur trade existed in Scandinavia still in the later ninth century and was reaching western Scandinavian nodal points such as Kaupang and Haithabu, which are explicitly mentioned in his itinerary, which in turn leaves the strong inference that furs from some Scandinavian sources continued to reach markets in England and Carolingia via Jutland and the North Sea throughout the eight – ninth centuries.⁵⁰⁶ The evidence for a market in furs in the Latin Christian west is much weaker, however, than that for the Islamic lands.⁵⁰⁷

Aside from slaves and furs, the Scandinavia – Baltic region also exported valuable materials such as walrus ivory and amber. In the case of amber, whose source was the southeastern Baltic, some went eastwards via Gotland or Birka into the European Russian market, while some also went westwards along the southern Baltic trunk route to

⁵⁰⁵ See the discussion in Inger Storli, "Ohthere and His World—a Contemporary Perspective," in *Ohthere's Voyages: A Late 9th-Century Account of Voyages along the Coasts of Norway and Denmark and Its Cultural Context*, ed. Janet Bately and Anton Englert (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde, 2007), 87 – 97.

⁵⁰⁶ See the discussion in Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 153, on the various possible sources of pelts for the fur trade via Haithabu. Furs were taken as tribute from Finnic hunter-gatherer societies, but also hunted by Scandinavians in the highlands of Norway. Schleswig itself produced marten pelts as late as the twelfth century.

⁵⁰⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 730 – 2, discusses the difficulties in tracing a clear line of fur supply from the North across Carolingia.

Haithabu. Amber was especially favored as a decorative or luxury material within the Baltic itself, as indicated by the ubiquitous presence of amber working everywhere within the Scandinavian culture area, including finds at Truso,⁵⁰⁸ Ladoga,⁵⁰⁹ Birka,⁵¹⁰ at Menzelin, Ralswiek, the Warnow estuary, and Groß Strömkendorf along the south Baltic shore,⁵¹¹ and at Haithabu.⁵¹² Telling in this regard is the circumstance that finds of amber in Anglo-Saxon England peak distinctly in the later ninth century, which corresponds precisely with the period of greatest Scandinavian or “Danish” activity in the Isles.⁵¹³ Amber is found also at Dorestad.⁵¹⁴ While it was, no doubt, brought thither from Jutland by Frisian merchants, it may be that even here it was destined for Scandinavian-culture customers around the North Sea rather than for a Carolingian market. Walrus ivory from the northern coastlands of Norway, however, has been found in carved objects from Latin Christian northwestern Europe, so that some traffic in this luxury material must be assumed.⁵¹⁵

Just as Ladoga was the Scandinavian gateway into European Russia so Denmark—and especially Haithabu, during the ninth century—played the role of primary interface between the North and the Latin Christian west. The Frisian merchants, who operated the link from England and Carolingia to Denmark, “balanced the payments” against Scandinavian slaves and furs in a variety of ways. In the first place, they brought Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian silver coins, which circulated at the *emporium* and often were treated as prestige objects by Scandinavians even into the ninth century.⁵¹⁶ Probably the most expensive and prestigious commodity from the west was wine, especially Rhine wine, traceable in Haithabu as elsewhere through the barrels in which it

⁵⁰⁸ Jagodziński, “The Settlement of Truso,” 184.

⁵⁰⁹ Olga I. Davidan, “Om hantverkets udveckling i Staraja Ladoga,” *Fornvännen* 77 (1982): 170 – 9.

⁵¹⁰ Ambrosiani, “Birka,” 371.

⁵¹¹ Jöns, “Ports and *emporium* of the Southern Coast,” 168, 170 – 1, 173 – 4.

⁵¹² Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 163.

⁵¹³ Jesch, “Who Was Wulfstan?” 31.

⁵¹⁴ W. A. van Es and W. J. H. Verwers, *Excavations at Dorestad I: The Harbour; Hoogstraat I*. (Amersfoort: Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek, 1980), 169.

⁵¹⁵ For incidences of walrus ivory in the ninth century see Storli, “Othere and His World,” 92 – 4.

⁵¹⁶ See the discussion on silver and coinage in Scandinavia in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* above.

was delivered.⁵¹⁷ Imported goods included also fine woolen cloth,⁵¹⁸ Eifel quernstones, glass cups, Rhenish pottery (Badorf), and weapons—both finished swords and unfitted blades.⁵¹⁹ Finally, there also was the import of industrial raw materials, including bronze, tin, lead, mercury for gilding, and glass.⁵²⁰ In the case of tin, Lebecq states explicitly that Frisians obtained this material via their connections with southwestern England. Once in the Frisian long-distance wholesaling network, it could as easily be delivered to Haithabu as to any of the other Frisian-served markets; thus, the tin alloy found as ingots on sites in Rus’ traveled almost the entire “northern arc,” in this case starting in Britain, carried by Frisian wholesalers as far as Haithabu or perhaps even Birka, and carried onwards into European Russia by Scandinavian – Rus’ merchant-adventurers.⁵²¹

Did Islamic silver also figure in the exchange of specific commodities between the Latin Christian west and the Scandinavian – Baltic north in the eighth and ninth centuries? Hodges and Whitehouse assumed as much in 1983:

Dirhems would have been readily exchanged for Rhenish wine, Rhenish jugs with tin-foil decoration (Tating ware), Rhenish glasses, Rhenish quernstones and possibly Rhenish weapons.⁵²²

Previously, Hodges had speculated that silver imported from the Baltic fueled the reform of Carolingian currency under Charlemagne ca. 790.⁵²³ Dirhams do not begin to appear

⁵¹⁷ See Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 150 – 2. Jankuhn speculates that the so-called Tating jars from the Rhineland, often decorated with tin-foil crosses, were used in conjunction with the imported wine, particularly in the context of the spread of the Christian rite. He also mentions walnuts imported as an elite delicacy. Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 80, mentions the possibility of Rhenish *Reliefbandamphoren* as wine containers.

⁵¹⁸ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 146 – 8. Fragments of such cloth have been recovered from graves at Birka, Kaupang, and the ship burial at Oseberg.

⁵¹⁹ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 154 – 5, 159 – 60, 161 – 3. See also Sindbæk, “Networks and Nodal Points,” 121 – 6, on the distribution of selected western imports in Scandinavia. On the importance of Rhenish products for Frisian trade generally, see Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 75 – 83.

⁵²⁰ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 164 – 5.

⁵²¹ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 228, asserts categorically that the Frisians were the distributors of tin, which entered their network at Hamwic. He also mentions requests by elite persons for supplies of lead and tin in the ninth century. For tin as an import into European Russia, see discussion in subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* above.

⁵²² Hodges and Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe*, 119. Further, they speak of “trade patterns” evident from the excavated Birka graves that “link the Baltic Sea communities directly to the Caliphate, and as a result the Scandinavians were recipients of an astonishing array of exotica and silver which cannot have failed to impress any west European merchant.”

in the Baltic until the 780s, however, and in large quantities only after 800, hence the possibility that silver reaching Carolingia via the Baltic had any effect on Charlemagne's coinage policies is minimal. Similarly, as discussed above, the trade in Rhenish products to Scandinavia was well established already in the eighth century before the flow of eastern silver could play any part. Thus, any contributions that the Russian connection may have made to the North Sea trade could be considered only for the ninth century or the second half of the period here under discussion.⁵²⁴

Western traders such as the Frisians typically did business in counted coin and used Carolingian deniers, especially at places like Haithabu, where eastern hack-silver is not widespread in evidence until the last decade of the ninth century. Moreover, the "heyday of the influx of Carolingian coinage to the north," as Volker Hilberg calls it, did not occur until the second quarter of the ninth century.⁵²⁵ Hilberg's statement should be considered in conjunction with the large output of *Christiana religio* coins from the mint at Dorestad and Dorestad's position as the central hub of the Frisian trade network, including the branch to Denmark and the Baltic.⁵²⁶ The first half of the ninth century included also the period of most intensive diplomatic engagement of the Carolingians with Scandinavia, as exemplified by Ansgar's mission to Denmark in the 820s and his first mission to Birka ca. 830.⁵²⁷ Altogether, it would appear that until the 840s the North Sea side of the Scandinavian trading world continued to operate along lines established in the eighth century. Nevertheless, the increasing availability of dirhams in Scandinavia during the ninth century along with the development of commodity money and the

⁵²³ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 154, referencing Sture Bolin's theories in support. "[W]e can only question whether Charlemagne would have ignored the flow of oriental silver into the Baltic and whether the series of incidents relating to the foundation of Haithabu by king Godfred are isolated occurrences or incidents relating to a Carolingian policy now lost to us."

⁵²⁴ Regarding the glitter of exotic eastern luxury objects in Birka, Ambrosiani, "Birka and Scandinavia's Trade with the East," 287 – 8, asserts that before the end of the 800s "essentially all of the imported material found at Birka originated from western and southern sources." To test this assertion would require the re-examination of the Birka graves material, which cannot be undertaken here. In any case, Carolingia could readily obtain eastern commodities such as silk and spices from the Mediterranean side, via Italy and the Alps; see discussion in Section 6.3, subsection *From Italy to Francia: the trans-Alpine trade goods* above.

⁵²⁵ Volker Hilberg, "Silver Economies of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries AD in Hedeby," 211.

⁵²⁶ For the coins, see Simon Coupland, "Money and Coinage under Louis the Pious," *Francia* 17, no. 1 (1990): 41, who estimates that the output could have been as high as 4.5 million deniers 820 – 840.

⁵²⁷ Cusack, *The Rise of Christianity in Northern Europe*, 135 – 9. See also the discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and Denmark* above.

particular fungibility of silver within that system suggests that eastern silver should have been a payment option for western imports even in the earlier ninth century, so it would be surprising if some of that Islamic silver had not ended up in the pockets of Frisian merchants, been taken back to Dorestad, and there traded in to the mint for fresh Carolingian deniers.⁵²⁸

According to the preceding analysis, despite the influx of Islamic silver during the first half of the ninth century, up to the 840s the most constant and influential long-distance trade connection of the Scandinavian - Baltic region still lay to the west rather than to the east. The regular commerce between the Frisian-operated North Sea network and southern Scandinavia that had been established ca. 700 with Ribe and reinforced with the re-founding of Haithabu ca. 810 continued to expand steadily into the second quarter of the ninth century. It is interesting to compare this pattern with McCormick's outline of Mediterranean long-distance exchange connections to and from Europe 700 – 900, calculated by quarter-centuries, which posits a peak of activity 775 – 825 and a falling off in 825 – 850.⁵²⁹ If the contrast between the Mediterranean and the North Sea side is true, then that would suggest that going towards the middle of the ninth century Carolingia's connection with the world of the North was gaining in importance relative to its connections with the Mediterranean side.

Significant disruption of or re-arrangement in North Sea exchange patterns comes in the second half of the ninth century. This is tied to the upsurge in Viking raiding around the coastlines of the North Sea, the British Isles, and Francia, including the large “Danish” armies that operated in England and Francia for several decades during this period.⁵³⁰ For our purposes, the significant aspect of this warlike activity is the way that it involved so many of the top-level nodal places in the North Sea region, i.e., those that

⁵²⁸ With a standard weight of 1.7g and purity of average 85 per cent, 4.5 million *Christiana religio* deniers would have used some 6,500 kg of silver; Coupland, “Money and Coinage under Louis the Pious,” 38, for the standard weight and purity analysis. Cf. some 120kg of Islamic silver recovered thus far from ninth-century Baltic hoards. For the tight control over coinage by the Carolingian authorities at Dorestad, who would have interdicted the circulation of dirhams within the empire, see McCormick, *Origins*, 321, 654. Regarding the source of minting silver at Dorestad, McCormick states: “Either it was shipped there to be coined. . . from inside the Frankish economy, or it entered that economy at Dorestad” (p. 671).

⁵²⁹ See the discussion and charts in McCormick, *Origins*, 431 – 43.

⁵³⁰ For a recent overview, see Angelo Forte, Richard Oram, and Frederik Pedersen, *Viking Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 54 - 80.

were most prominent in organizing and mediating the multi-sided commerce among Anglo-Saxon England, Carolingia, and the North.⁵³¹ In England 840 – 55, Viking attacks struck Southampton (Hamwic) in Wessex, repeatedly in northern Kent and elsewhere around the Thames estuary, and generally all along the coastline from Sussex to Lincolnshire.⁵³² From 866 onwards into the early tenth century, York was stably in Scandinavian hands, East Anglia was Danish from 870, and London was held by the Danes 871 – 85.⁵³³ While the goals of the Vikings appear foremost as plunder, overlordship, and colonization, the fact remains that by the early 870s the entire east coast of the island of Great Britain from York to London inclusive along with three of the four top-level *emporium*—York, Ipswich, and *Lundenwic*—and most of their commercial hinterland was under Danish control.⁵³⁴

In Francia, Vikings held Noirmoutier and operated up the Loire 842 – 73, and up the Seine to Paris in 845, 857, 861, 865, 885, and 889. They attacked Quentovic in 842, held Amiens in 883, controlled the Scheldt from a base at Condé for a year in 882, and generally raided the entire Seine – Rhine area 872 – 92. Stability returned to the area due to significant defeats of invading forces in 891 by Louvain and with Charles the Simple's co-optation of the Viking Rollo as Count of Rouen in 911⁵³⁵ Here, the authors of *Viking Empires* downplay the consensus of contemporary sources:

The image given [in the chronicles] is one of protracted crisis and a slide into anarchy and economic collapse as the great trading centers of the empire fell one by one before the onslaught.⁵³⁶

Given the pattern of the attacks, it does appear, however, that the Viking raiders were consciously focusing on key points in the Frankish trading system, including the very

⁵³¹ See the discussion in Section 7.1, subsections *Carolingia and England* and *Carolingia and Denmark* above.

⁵³² Forte, Oram, and Pedersen, *Viking Empires*, 66 – 7.

⁵³³ Forte, Oram, and Pedersen, *Viking Empires*, 70 – 8.

⁵³⁴ While they largely disregard the economic implications of the Danish invasion Forte, Oram, and Pedersen, *Viking Empires*, 73, do mention the “stranglehold maintained by the Danes on the chief commercial center of southern Britain in the 870s” (London), and they remark on “the richest commercial center north of London” (York) as well (p. 70).

⁵³⁵ Forte, Oram, and Pedersen, *Viking Empires*, 60 – 4.

⁵³⁶ Forte, Oram, and Pedersen, *Viking Empires*, 60.

important Seine basin.⁵³⁷ Included in this pattern would be the destruction of the Frankish outpost of *Hammaburg* by a Danish fleet in 845, a place that seems to have begun to acquire some characteristics of a trading depot at the head of the Elbe system in the preceding few decades.⁵³⁸

As with the unfolding of the relatively peaceful North Sea trading system of the eighth and early ninth centuries, the key to understanding the effects of Scandinavian aggression in the North Sea region in the mid- and later ninth century lies in Frisia. Already in 810, northern Frisia was paying silver tribute to Viking overlords,⁵³⁹ and Vikings or Danes held fiefs in Frisia up to ca. 880. Much of the Scandinavian presence in the earlier ninth century can be connected with Charlemagne's and Louis the Pious' diplomacy with Denmark and with the Frankish civil wars, when Carolingian kings and emperors granted fiefs to pretenders to the Danish throne or as rewards for services rendered in attacking family rivals.⁵⁴⁰ Subsequently, the Dane, Rorik apparently held all of Frisia between the Waal and the northern end of today's Holland in fief from 850 to at least 873, and effectively guarded that territory and the Rhine from incursions of other Vikings.⁵⁴¹ Meanwhile, Dorestad had been raided repeatedly after 834, in concert with the destruction of Witla (836) and Domburg (837), in what looks like a concerted attack on the Rhine-mouth *emporia* and a withdrawal of the mercantile community—from Domburg to Dorestad in 837, and finally dispersing from Dorestad to Deventer, Stavaren, and Tiel after a final attack on Dorestad in 863. In the later ninth, according to Lebecq, the Frisian trading system that long was concentrated at the central *emporium* of Dorestad now was split into northern, western, and Rhine branches.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁷ On the importance of the Seine basin with Paris and St-Denis in the trade of Neustria towards the north, see discussion in Section 6.4, subsection *The Seine* above.

⁵³⁸ For the beginnings of *Hammaburg* and its incipient trading functions, see discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and the Elbe* above.

⁵³⁹ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 50, reports that the Frisians were able to pay a *danegeld* of one hundred pounds of silver, which Lebecq sees as evidence for rich and voluminous commerce carried on by the Frisian community.

⁵⁴⁰ Simon Coupland, "From Poachers to Gamekeepers: Scandinavian Warlords and Carolingian Kings," *Early Medieval Europe* 7, no. 1 (1998): 87 – 91.

⁵⁴¹ Coupland, "From Poachers to Gamekeepers," 95 – 101. Successful attacks breached the territory only in 857 and 863.

⁵⁴² Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 142 – 62, discusses Domburg, Dorestad, and the other Frisian ports in the Rhine delta area. In his judgment, the demise of Dorestad split the Frisian trading world

It appears, however, that the Viking attacks did not destroy the former Frisian North Sea system so much as reconfigure it. While Lebecq speaks of Viking “animosity” towards Dorestad in particular, he also notes that Frisians joined with the Danes in forays against England in 855 and 866; in 896 they were on the other side again, serving Alfred against the Danes. Frisian maritime assets and expertise appear, thus, to have been perennially in demand in the North Sea region.⁵⁴³ Further, the rebuilding of Domburg as a Scandinavian settlement after 837, which lasts then up to the late ninth century, probably coincides with the establishment of Danish fiefs in the Rhine delta area from ca. 840 to the 880s, and suggests that the rebuilt Domburg served not only as a southwestern base for Scandinavian ships (and leaders?) but might have continued in its function as an alternative entrepôt as well. As was argued above, while Maastricht and Dorestad are definitively mentioned in the sources as points of Carolingian administrative oversight of trade on the Meuse and Rhine, respectively, the failure of Witla and Domburg to appear in these same contexts may indicate that the latter lay outside of close control and belonged instead to a more liminal position between the world of regulated trade and travel within the Carolingian world and the world of the entrepreneurial merchant adventurers on the North Sea and the Baltic.⁵⁴⁴ The Frisians could operate successfully in both worlds.

Finally, although it may well be that after the abandonment of Dorestad some of the Frisian traders shifted their bases of operations to cities up the Rhine and to developing the land ways across Lower Saxony, it certainly is incorrect to speak of a “closed” Baltic, as Lebecq does, for the later ninth century.⁵⁴⁵ The unabated vibrancy of Haithabu and the recorded later-ninth century voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan, with implied connections westwards to Anglo-Saxon England, are sufficient to reject such an idea. Furthermore, there continued to exist a Frisian route from the Rhine to Denmark, only now passing via Deventer and Stavaren rather than Dorestad and Medemblik as

into a westward and a northern branch, with the two parts never equaling the whole that once was based on Dorestad (p. 275). This is not the only possible interpretation of the evidence, however.

⁵⁴³ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 150, 212 – 13. He also notes Charlemagne’s commandeering of Frisian maritime assistance in the Elbe campaign of 789 (p. 212).

⁵⁴⁴ See discussion in Section 6.4, subsection *The Meuse* and Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and Denmark* above. On Domburg and Witla, see also Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 142 – 6.

⁵⁴⁵ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 73, 96, 243.

before. A more accurate characterization of the situation in the later ninth century would be that in certain ways the Scandinavian – Baltic world extended itself into the North Sea region, and that many Frisians operated there more under the aegis of Scandinavian rules than under Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon regulation. Until peace came in the 890s in both England and in Francia, this would have included an unrestricted trade in captives for a variety of possible markets whether in Carolingia, in the Baltic, or even farther east.⁵⁴⁶

As was discussed previously, exchange in the Scandinavian – Baltic region operated on several distinct levels.⁵⁴⁷ In Scandinavian Rus', the evidence was clear only for a stratum of local producers—suppliers at the capillary level of furs and other “forest products”—and for the Scandinavian mercantile adventurers, “armed with swords and scales,” who functioned as professional, long-distance traders bringing such things and also slaves to Khazar and Byzantine markets.⁵⁴⁸ Unlike Rus', where evidence for elite gift exchange is as shadowy as the ninth-century Rus' *chaganus* himself,⁵⁴⁹ Frankish prestige goods are abundantly attested in Denmark, Middle Sweden, and on Gotland in both Merovingian and Carolingian periods.⁵⁵⁰ In the proliferation of undistinguished landing places on so many of its coastlines, Scandinavia also has abundant evidence for local, capillary trade with small producers and consumers as well as trade involving central places that are tied into the larger network. Between were two strata of professional traders: the long-distance carriers who connected the nodal *emporia* such as Birka, Haithabu, and Dorestad, and those that distributed imported commodities, raw materials, and finished items of craft production from these primary centers to subsidiary nodes and local landing places.

⁵⁴⁶ Jankuhn, *Haithabu*, 145 – 6, makes the connection between the slave trade and the cessation of Danish attacks by the end of the ninth century.

⁵⁴⁷ See the concluding paragraph of Section 7.2 above.

⁵⁴⁸ See discussion in subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* above.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. however Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 247 – 75, who argues for elite gift-exchange networks in eastern Europe in the sixth and seventh century.

⁵⁵⁰ Jankuhn, *Haithabu*, 21 – 2, 45 – 6, for the Merovingian connections. See also discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Development in Denmark and Sweden* and Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* above.

As in Rus', the profile of the professional trader included arms and scales as standard equipment.⁵⁵¹ Lebecq stresses that the Frisian trader was armed and traveled in aggregated groups such as multi-ship convoys on the major sea lanes, e.g., from Haithabu to Birka or from the Rhine across to England.⁵⁵² Jankuhn opines that piracy in the Baltic was a new phenomenon in the ninth century; regardless, as in the case of the Mediterranean, the presence of pirates proves that there was volume and value of trade worth attacking, and there is evidence that the professional carriers and many if not all of the local potentates along the major routes were interested in arranging or providing some degree of security.⁵⁵³ Similarly, though armed and ready to defend themselves, the long-distance traders preferred to base their operations in nodal points that not only occupied key geographic interfaces but also enjoyed the protection of a local power; such, clearly, included Ribe, Haithabu, and Birka. At such places, the long-distance traders paid tolls (presumably) in exchange for peace and security. Latin Christian sources speak of a *comes vici* in Haithabu and a *praefectus vici* in Birka.⁵⁵⁴ Clearly, these terms have been transferred to the Scandinavian context based on an observed parallel between the functions of these personages and officials such as might be found in Dorestad and other *emporia* with royal oversight in England or Francia. In the eighth and ninth centuries, Scandinavian states did not yet have bureaucratic administrations nor did they use Latin titles for persons in authority. Nevertheless, there must have been customary norms of behavior at the trading places which, at the larger and most central ones, were supervised by persons of rank and authority sufficient to enforce such norms and any additional regulations, such as the collection of tolls and fines, that the local state power may have added to customary norms. Unlike Rus', where the *chaganus* seems to have had little control over the bands of autonomous merchant adventurers operating between the Baltic

⁵⁵¹ Jankuhn, *Haithabu*, 127, remarking on grave goods. On the prevalence of weights and scales in the conduct of trade in Scandinavia, especially from the late ninth century into the tenth, see Steuer, "Principles of Trade and Exchange," 295 – 8, 303 – 4.

⁵⁵² Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 188 – 90, citing the voyages of of Ansgar in 829 and Ibbo of Trier.

⁵⁵³ Jankuhn, *Haithabu*, 127. For security concerns and strategies between Schlei fjord and Öland see Callmer, "Wulfstan and the Coast of Southern Scandinavia," passim; and Bill, "Piracy and Naval Organization," passim, especially on the possibilities for monitoring traffic between Schlei fjord and Bornholm from land-based observation points.

⁵⁵⁴ Jankuhn, *Haithabu*, 139, with references.

and Khazaria, in the Scandinavian – Baltic region oversight and also security were appreciably greater.

In origins, the Frisians seem to have been enterprising farmers-traders from the northernmost provinces of the Netherlands along the shores of the Wadden Sea.⁵⁵⁵ During the eighth century, some of these farmers-traders became full-time, professional, profit-seeking, long-distance carriers connecting top-level nodal points in all the countries adjoining the North Sea while also reaching up the Rhine and into the Baltic past Denmark. A similar evolution can be glimpsed in the Scandinavian – Baltic world. This pertains especially to the case of Gotland, where farmers and craftsmen appear to have been regularly involved in Gotland's far-flung exchange relations within the Baltic, and where there is an extraordinary accumulation of imported silver.⁵⁵⁶ Ohthere's situation and reported activities likewise point to a person who combined a farmstead with various hunting, tribute-taking, and trading enterprises, including routine voyaging to the top-level nodal *emporium* at Kaupang and Haithabu. It would seem that Ohthere should be considered in the ranks of those entrepreneurs who connected the top-level nodal points with subsidiary nodes and local markets—in this case, plying the long Norwegian coastal route.

In short, eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia shows abundant evidence not only of elite prestige-building, state-building, and military adventuring on the one hand and steadily growing prosperity on the part of common peasants, craftsmen, and householders on the other hand. It also included at least two levels of exchange specialists who tied high and low together through a complex, bi-level network, and who were free-ranging and at least semi-autonomous entrepreneurs. They connected Scandinavia and the Baltic to European Russia and to the Latin Christian west. And their ranks included persons of prestige and expertise sufficient to qualify them as diplomats—intermediaries between Scandinavian kings and Frankish emperors.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁵ On Frisian origins, see again Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 119 – 38, and the discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and Denmark* above.

⁵⁵⁶ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 117, 202, 249 – 1, remarks on the parallel between the Frisians and the Gotlanders and discusses the phenomenon of farmers-traders, *paysans/navigateurs* or *bauernkaufleuten* in general.

⁵⁵⁷ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 30

From the North Sea to Italy: the Carolingian corridor

On the Latin Christian side of the North Sea, we are back in a milieu characterized by far higher levels of state power and bureaucratic administration, especially in the Frankish empire, and by institutional entities such as the abbeys, which played a significant role in economic organization both in Francia and in England.⁵⁵⁸ The Carolingian state expended considerable effort in promoting and regulating travel and exchange across its territory, especially in the broad corridor of northwest-to-southeast routes from the Channel and North Sea coastlines across the Alps into northern Italy.⁵⁵⁹ It will be the contention in the pages to follow that a class of professional, long-distance exchange specialists played a part here similar to those in the world of the Scandinavian – Baltic. The Carolingian economic system as a whole thrived in large part due to the entrepreneurship of this class. In the relatively much more highly structured Carolingian world, however, this role was itself institutionalized to a degree unknown in the North or in the wild east of European Russia.

Certainly, there were aspects of production and redistribution in which the professional merchants played no part. There can be no doubt, for example, that elite gift-exchange was practiced among the Carolingian rulers, their aristocratic followers, and their counterparts on the ecclesiastical side of the elite.⁵⁶⁰ If elite persons request certain goods or raw materials from their peers as gifts, this does not mean that the mentioned items *could not* have been obtained through some kind of regular market

⁵⁵⁸ See discussion in Section 6.4, subsection *The role of the abbeys* and Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and England* above.

⁵⁵⁹ See discussion in Section 6.3, subsection *Trans-continental routes from the Alps to the sea* above. See also McCormick, *Origins*, 579 – 80, on the evident interest in trade, coinage, and markets exhibited both by Danish and Carolingian rulers.

⁵⁶⁰ See the updated review of this issue in Florin Curta, “Merovingian and Carolingian Gift Giving,” *Speculum* 81 (2006): 671 – 99. Curta includes distributions of plunder, subsidies or tribute demanded by the ruler, gifts to the Church, and dowries. He consistently neglects the production side of these transactions, e.g., in Guntram’s feast and gift-distribution to the soldiers (p. 685), which required huge stocks of food and thousands of objects. Similarly, whatever the semantic import of *beneficium* in Carolingian society (p. 689), the practice of granting benefices describes a *political* system, not an economic one. A benefice confers on the recipient the right to profit from certain properties, but the actual realization of such profit must come from real economic activity on and between such properties.

channels.⁵⁶¹ Further, to the extent that the products transported really were intended for an abbey's own use, bulk transports between the scattered properties of an abbey were non-commercial; however, it is clear that many abbeys did produce surpluses intended for sale.⁵⁶² Similarly, the various products that the Carolingian government received from its hundreds of villas and which it used for government purposes, such as supplying the army, should be considered as fiscal rather than commercial transfers.⁵⁶³ However, it appears also that professional weapons-suppliers followed the armies ready to sell gear such as shields to the soldiers.⁵⁶⁴

At the opposite end of the social hierarchy, we must suppose that there were many inhabitants of the Carolingian empire who themselves produced all or almost all of what they consumed and used and so were in fact living on the basis of self-sufficiency disconnected from any real participation in a market system.⁵⁶⁵ The contention here is that a sizeable though unmeasurable cross section of both the elite and non-elite did have access to a commercialized market system and that these connections were not insignificant in shaping overall economic behavior and enhancing prosperity. As in European Russia and in the North, the long-distance trading network reached down to the capillary level, allowing small producers to market surplus and to receive silver and trade goods in return. Lebecq offers the example of an Anglo-Saxon *scaetta* found at Villiers-le-sec, a *villa* dependent on St-Denis. In his view, this represents a transaction in which an inhabitant of the villa sold his surplus directly to an Anglo-Saxon merchant plying the

⁵⁶¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 699 – 701. A case in point is the supplies of tin requested by the pope and promised by Charlemagne, while we know that ingots of tin-alloy were shipping as far east as forts in the Volga – Oka region of central Russia—surely not as “gifts” in the latter case.

⁵⁶² McCormick, *Origins*, 640 – 1, on toll exemptions for goods transferred among an abbey's properties; 698 – 707, for the transport of bulk goods within Carolingia, generally. Among the bulk items stockpiled by some monasteries for sale on the market were grain, lead, and wine.

⁵⁶³ On the Carolingian villa system and its management, see Bernard Bachrach, “Are They Not Like Us? The Carolingian Fisc in Military Perspective,” in *Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Celia Chazelle and Felice Lifshitz (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 119 – 33.

⁵⁶⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 667 n. 100.

⁵⁶⁵ Cf. the views expressed in Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, trans. Howard B. Clark (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 106: “Commercial expansion was ushered into an environment still that of a peasant society dominated by war-leaders and priests. Trade was not influential enough to reshape it except locally.” Following the fashion of the day, Duby saw the entire society living on the basis of scarcity and self sufficiency. See also the discussion in Section 6.1, subsection *Competing theories of Carolingian production and exchange* above.

Seine route.⁵⁶⁶ Regardless of the questions about macro-economic stimulus and coinages that Lebecq raises, the crucial point for present purposes is the implication of grass-roots surplus vending to international traders. Similarly, part of the great stream of commerce flowing northward out of Dorestad would consist of the surpluses of grain and wine sold by Rhenish farmers to Frisian wholesalers.⁵⁶⁷

As in the Scandinavian – Baltic region, in England, Francia, and northern Italy it is possible to discern a penetrating, multi-level exchange network. In England, river systems such as those of the Thames and the Humber connected numerous landing places and “productive sites” in the hinterland to the top-level nodal points such as the *emporia* of *Lundenwic*, Ipswich, and York.⁵⁶⁸ Along the rivers of Francia, in addition to markets at places variously described as *vici* and *portus*, at bridges, and at towns, there was provision for the collection of a toll, the *ripaticum*, at places where landing might be made at an otherwise undistinguished riverbank for purposes of trade. Clearly, such places corresponded in function with the numerous, equally undistinguished landing places found along the coastlines of Scandinavia.⁵⁶⁹ The right to collect such *ripaticum* along the Lek was granted, for example, to the bishops of Utrecht by Charlemagne and Louis the Pious.⁵⁷⁰ In the Po valley, local networks binding monasteries and towns to their immediate hinterlands abounded.⁵⁷¹ Through such interface points, members of local economies that produced or stockpiled marketable goods—farmers, craftsmen,

⁵⁶⁶ Lebecq, “The Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange,” 145. For Lebecq, this is part of a larger argument regarding northern peoples such as Anglo-Saxons and Frisians seeking out Neustrian and Austrasian markets, including monastic ones, in the late seventh and eighth centuries and paying in silver *sceattas*, which were “disseminated through the heart of the Continent” and so “helped to precipitate the monetary conversion” to *denarii*.

⁵⁶⁷ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 270 – 1.

⁵⁶⁸ See discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and England* above.

⁵⁶⁹ See discussion in Section 6.3, subsection *Trans-continental routes from the Alps to the sea* and Section 6.4, *passim*, above.

⁵⁷⁰ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 158 – 9, with sources.

⁵⁷¹ See the discussion in Ross Balzaretti, “Cities, Emporia and Monasteries: Local Economies in the Po Valley, c. AD 700 – 875,” in *Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Neil Christy and Simon T. Loseby (Aldershot: Scolar, 1996), 213 – 34. Balzaretti argues that in the period which he covers the Po communities are sophisticated and growing but show little evidence of ties to an international, *emporia*-based long-distance trading network. If this is true, then it may be because the Po valley at this time is not producing commodities with which it might enter the international trading system.

abbeys, towns—enjoyed the opportunity of feeding such items into the far-flung, trans-continental superstructure of long distance trade routes and their major nodal points.⁵⁷²

The long-distance exchange networks crossed and tied together multiple, overlapping sub-regions of production and surplus-vending.⁵⁷³ McCormick has observed a statistical correlation between pilgrim voyagers from Latin Christendom and residence within 100km of a major *emporium*, which phenomenon he ascribes to the influence of the observed comings and goings of merchants at such places.⁵⁷⁴ Moreover, we have much anecdotal evidence concerning individuals and institutions that variously participated in, maintained, or sought to regulate the long-distance exchange connections not only within Carolingia but also on its northern and southern interfaces with other sub-regional exchange systems.⁵⁷⁵

The earliest literary source to substantiate the existence of commercial traffic between Francia and Anglo-Saxon England is Bede's report of a Frisian slave buyer at *Lundenwic* in 678.⁵⁷⁶ A century and a half later, we have incidents recorded in the *Miracula Goaris* of Frisian merchants, whose ships were being towed up the Rhine by gangs of slaves and one of whom paid a fine of one pound of silver to the St. Goar monastery. The presumable source of both the slaves and the silver was the North Sea trading system, generally, and the Scandinavian connection over the North Sea more specifically.⁵⁷⁷ Of course, the Frisian entrepreneurs mentioned in these stories might well have confined their activities to the Rhine, but at the lower end of their routes they would

⁵⁷² Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 107 – 8, despite his primitivist agenda, admitted retail trade in bread and wine and widespread trade in staples generally already in the eighth and ninth centuries.

⁵⁷³ See McCormick, *Origins*, 612, who makes a similar point regarding overlaps among several trading worlds." The view of overlap in the present study includes not only overlaps, for example, between Carolingia and Scandinavia or Carolingia and the Caliphate as large blocks ("worlds") but also seeks to show sub-regional complexities of contact, overlap, and exchange.

⁵⁷⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 157 – 8. "One might expect a sort of mental proclivity to movement, encouraged by acquaintance with the traveling merchants who clustered in these settlements."

⁵⁷⁵ Hodges, *Goodby to the Vikings?* 72, from an article published originally in 2000, still believed that in the time of Charlemagne there was little contact between England, France, and Germany and the Mediterranean, except pilgrim traffic; also, that the Carolingian world was largely isolated diplomatically from Byzantium and the Caliphate. Since the publication of McCormick, *Origins*, this viewpoint can no longer be accepted.

⁵⁷⁶ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 23.

⁵⁷⁷ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 26, 218 - 22. See also McCormick, *Origins*, 654 and n. 64. The source is Wandalbert of Prüm, *Miracula S. Goaris* 29, 74.10 – 76.1, in Heinz. Erich Stiene, ed., *Wandalbert von Prüm, Vita et miracula Sancti Goaris* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1981).

have had access to the trade hub of Dorestad, which in turn connected both with England and Denmark. Frisians certainly went as far up the Rhine as Strasburg, and carried bulk cargoes—grain, wine, timber, pottery, millstones—back down to Dorestad. McCormick has speculated that some, at least, of the slaves that towed the Frisian riverboats up the Rhine against the current might have been sold off as unnecessary to the downstream run, and thereby have entered the stream of trans-Alpine traffic to Italy.⁵⁷⁸ If so, then we have a tenuous but plausible Frisian-activated link from the North Sea all the way to the Mediterranean via the Rhine and the Alps. In any case, there was a *schola* of Frisians in Rome in the ninth century, whose members were mobilized for the defense of the city in 846.⁵⁷⁹

Anecdotal evidence also connects the Rhine basin with England. In this case, the story concerns one Frisian merchant, Ibbo, who gives up his free-lancing ways to work as the mercantile agent for the abbey of St. Maximin in Trier.⁵⁸⁰ Lebecq speculates that when Ibbo dedicates himself along with *omnibus quae habebat* this would have included “his capital, his boat or boats, and perhaps his slaves.”⁵⁸¹ The episode also illustrates the routine aggregation of shippers into convoys for mutual security, even on the relatively short run from the Rhine over to England, as Ibbo sails in the company of six other ships unrelated to his monastic employers.⁵⁸² In this way, at least, merchant practice in the relatively secure eighth-century southwestern North Sea area paralleled that of shippers and merchant adventurers in the Baltic and in European Russia.⁵⁸³ The likeliest departure point for transmarine expeditions such as Ibbo’s would have been the hub of the Frisian

⁵⁷⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 654 – 5. The precise interface point where transfers would most often have been made from the Rhine system to the trans-Alpine leg is not known (p. 663).

⁵⁷⁹ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 25. Their mobilization for military purposes strongly suggests that these were not run-of-the-mill pilgrims but merchant adventurers accustomed to carrying and using weapons. See further discussion on this point in Section 7.4 below.

⁵⁸⁰ *Vita prima Maximini* 14, and *Vita Maximini auctore Lupo* 19. For a transcript of the relevant passages and full bibliographic references, see Stéphane Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons du haut Moyen Âge: Corpus de sources écrites* (Lille: Presses universitaires de Lille, 1983), 142 – 5.

⁵⁸¹ Lebecq, “The Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange of the Frankish World,” 144. This anecdote refers to the eighth century, according to Lebecq.

⁵⁸² In view of the greatly added costs, it is unlikely that merchants traveled with “military households” the members of which had no function but to provide defense. All free members of a ship’s crew might be armed, of course, but their primary purpose would be to handle the ship. Security was gained through the aggregation of numbers of merchants into a traveling party, not by the maintenance of armed escorts.

⁵⁸³ See also McCormick, *Origins*, 656, for an analysis of this incidental mention of long-distance trade practices.

trading system, Dorestad. It is of interest that Ibbo used the same craft on the Rhine and Moselle as he used to cross the Narrow Seas to England. Meanwhile, Lebecq asserts further that Dorestad was the main debarkation point for Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians coming to the Continent.⁵⁸⁴

Ibbo's venture fits into the context of growing connections between Anglo-Saxon England and the Frankish mainland. As was discussed above, these connections evolved from informal trading networks in the sixth century to the beginnings of state regulation of such trade in the seventh century and expanding, commercialized links across the Channel and the Narrow Seas from the late seventh into the eighth and ninth centuries. The evidence, especially for the latter phase of expansion, has become abundant, including the spread of silver coinage, the widespread involvement in trade of Church establishments on both sides of the Channel, and the penetration of networks far beyond the nodal *emporium* such as Quentovic, Dorestad, Hamwic, and *Lundenwic* into the hinterlands of lowland England, Neustria, and Austrasia.⁵⁸⁵ Documentary evidence for cross-Channel travel and exchange include the afore-mentioned reference in Bede to a Frisian slave-dealer in London in 678, the outbound route of St. Willibald from Hamwic to Rouen 721,⁵⁸⁶ and privileges to the Abbey of St-Denis that explicitly mention "Saxons" as frequenting the annual wine fair.⁵⁸⁷

As illustrated in the correspondence between Charlemagne and King Offa of Mercia in 796,⁵⁸⁸ traffic between the Frankish empire and England had become regular and voluminous. Four points regarding trade relations are raised. First, Charlemagne avers that he has discovered Mercian traders mixing into the stream of honest English pilgrims in order to evade the entry tolls, and declares that henceforth when found these traders, who pursue profit rather than serve religion (*lucra sectantes, non religioni*

⁵⁸⁴ Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 156 – 7.

⁵⁸⁵ See discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters*, and Section 7.1, subsections *Carolingia and England* and *Carolingia and Denmark* above.

⁵⁸⁶ For Willibald and his voyage, see again McCormick, *Origins*, 129 – 34.

⁵⁸⁷ Explicitly mentioned in DD Kar I, no. 6, given by Pippin I for St-Denis, 8 July 753. In *MGH Diplomata Karolinorum*, vol. I: *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Grossen*, ed. Engelbert Mühlbacher (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1906), 9 – 11. See also McCormick, *Origins*, 648 – 9, on the importance of the annual fair at St-Denis in establishing long-distance trading links.

⁵⁸⁸ This correspondence is recorded as Alcuin *epistola* 100, in *MGH Epistolae*, vol. 4: *Epistolae Karolini aevi* 2, ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), 144 – 6.

servientes), shall be brought to an appropriate place to pay the tolls, while the others shall continue on their way in peace.⁵⁸⁹ The passage clearly recognizes the commercial nature of the merchants' endeavor. Moreover, it implies that the English pilgrim traffic across Francia was voluminous enough to make Anglo-Saxon smugglers think that they could lose themselves in that crowd. Next, however, Charlemagne promises full protection in Carolingian jurisdictions for legitimate trade (*legitime iuxta antiquam consuetudinem negotiandi*) pursued by Offa's subjects, and requests the same consideration from Offa for Frankish merchants operating in Mercian jurisdictions.⁵⁹⁰ In other words, Charlemagne has no wish to curtail trading activity; rather, he is happy to protect and support it, so long as it conforms with established rules. Further, it shows that the Frankish and Anglo-Saxon markets were joined in two-way traffic. Third, Charlemagne promises to fulfill Offa's request for some special building stone (*petrae nigrae*).⁵⁹¹ This item would come under the heading of elite gift exchange, but does not obviate the fact that such building materials might be distributed commercially, also.⁵⁹² Finally, Charlemagne requests that Offa order that the cloaks the Mercians sell to the Franks be made again to the size specifications as were customary previously (*prolixitate sagorum. . . ut tales iubeatis fieri, quales antiquis temporibus ad nos venire solebant*).⁵⁹³ This speaks to a long-standing trade in standardized clothing items and, incidentally, implies that the Mercian wholesalers were attempting to pad their profits by skimping on cloth.

The documentary reference to the export of cloth from England to Francia in wholesale quantities matches the archaeological evidence coming from English *emporia*, landing places, and "productive sites." In return, at least grain and quernstones were bulk items that came to England from the Continent.⁵⁹⁴ In other words, the trade across the Channel and the narrow seas was far more than elite-oriented luxury trade and involved a

⁵⁸⁹ Alcuin *epistola* 100, 16 – 21.

⁵⁹⁰ Alcuin *epistola* 100, 22 – 7.

⁵⁹¹ Alcuin *epistola* 100, 36 – 8.

⁵⁹² See McCormick, *Origins*, 699, on the co-existence of elite gift exchange and commercial trade in the same materials. He suggests that the stone in question may have been the "pierre noir" of Belgium, from the vicinity of Tournai, whence it could be floated down the Scheldt (p. 699 n. 14). See again Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons*, 78, for the Frisian capacity to transport heavy freight.

⁵⁹³ Alcuin *epistola* 100, 39 – 41.

⁵⁹⁴ See the discussion in Section 7.1, *Carolingia and England* above.

considerable part of the productive capacities of both sides. Wickham has spoken positively regarding commercial continuity in northern Gaul from the sixth century onwards, citing bulk trade in wine, oil, salt, livestock, cloth, and slaves as well as mass-produced ceramics, all supported by stability in population, urban centers, persistence in large-scale landowning, the maintenance of a high level of crafts expertise, and hierarchical distribution networks.⁵⁹⁵ The Carolingian period was a continuation upon Merovingian foundations rather than a new departure, characterized by wealthy cities, internal complexity of exchange, greater hierarchy in routes and markets, supported by expansion of the manorial system now “aimed at exchange,” with corresponding increase in elite demand and, therefore, in artisanal sophistication and scale of production.⁵⁹⁶ In line with his theoretical outlook, however, Wickham sees both the Merovingian trade to the Mediterranean via Marseille and the Carolingian North Sea trade as “peripheral” to the economic activity of the Seine – Meuse – Rhine heartland.⁵⁹⁷ Moreover, Wickham strongly supports the idea that Offa’s Mercia had achieved political articulation but was quite backward economically, so that Offa was still operating a “dendritic,” elite-centered “directional trade.”⁵⁹⁸

In light of the newer data on the level of production and the articulation of exchange networks in lowland England in the eighth century, it must be admitted that lowland England, at least, participated in a “real” economy with Francia in which bulk products moved alongside scarcer and more costly goods. In turn, this situates the Anglo-Saxon traders as carriers of long-distance trade complementing or rivaling, to an unknown extent, the better established Frisian system. Explicitly, they operated under

⁵⁹⁵ Wickham, *Framing*, 796 – 800. “It seems that, at the level of bulk products, there was active exchange at least between neighboring city territories, throughout the Merovingian period” (p. 800).

⁵⁹⁶ Wickham, *Framing*, 801 – 5.

⁵⁹⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 800 – 1, 803. Wickham makes the interesting observation that Merovingian elite demand provided support for the long-distance Mediterranean luxury trade in a manner similar to Late Roman fiscal support for Mediterranean trade (p. 801); however, the parallel would seem to require a long-distance bulk trade with the Mediterranean as a foundation. For Wickham’s theoretical position, see again the discussion in Section 5.4 and Section 6.1, subsection *Competing theories of Carolingian production and exchange* above.

⁵⁹⁸ Wickham, *Framing*, 813 – 14, 818. The trade models are those developed by Renfrew and others and championed by Hodges; see discussion in Section 5.3, subsection *Northwestern waters* above. Regarding the trade to Scandinavia, Wickham states that anything sent North became, in effect, a luxury (p. 818).

imperial protection just as Frisian, Frankish, and Jewish merchants did.⁵⁹⁹ The reach of their activities can be illustrated further. One anecdotal incident, probably datable to the late ninth century, reveals Anglo-Saxon merchants rioting at one of the Alpine *clusae* over tolls, which led to an official renegotiation of toll rates for this group.⁶⁰⁰

McCormick gives a possible list of trade goods carried by the aforesaid Anglo-Saxons, comprising “horses, male slaves, female slaves, wool, linen and canvas textiles, tin, and swords.”⁶⁰¹ King Alfred’s negotiations ca. 882 – 84 for tax and toll exemptions for his subjects resident in Rome shows the extent of their penetration into Italy.⁶⁰² Thus, Anglo-Saxon traders, like Frisians, traversed the entire northwest to southeast corridor.

In addition to Frisians and Anglo-Saxons, a third major class of participants in the Continental exchange network were the ecclesiastical entities and their agents. The situation of abbeys at locations designed to promote or at least have access to trade and the evident interest of abbeys in producing marketable surplus has already been noted.⁶⁰³ This was true on both sides of the Channel, where for example, Kentish abbeys received privileges for trading ships that they operated and Neutrian abbeys such as St-Denis and St-Germain-des-Prés were heavily involved in wine export.⁶⁰⁴ At minimum, a monastic complex had to generate enough revenue to pay for the imported “luxuries” such as silks and spices that merchants brought north from Italy over the Alps, as well as any other commodity from whatever source that its members needed or wanted that an abbey did not produce on its own properties.⁶⁰⁵ The interests of the largest and politically best-connected abbeys were trans-continental in scope, as in the case of St-Denis, which in

⁵⁹⁹ As indicated in Alcuin *epistola* 100, 22 – 7. For the parallel with other instances of documented protections and privileges for merchants in Carolingian jurisdictions, see discussion in Section 7.4 below.

⁶⁰⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 679, summarizing material from the *Honorantiae civitatis Paviae*, compiled ca. 1000. By the new terms, the Anglo-Saxons now had to pay “a forfeit fee of 50 lb. of refined silver. . . 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.” It is not clear whether the fee covers all Anglo-Saxon merchants or only a specific sub-set of them, and how often the fee was to be renewed.

⁶⁰¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 680.

⁶⁰² McCormick, *Origins*, 679.

⁶⁰³ See discussion in Section 6.4, subsection *The role of the abbeys* above.

⁶⁰⁴ See discussion in Section 6.4, subsection *The Seine* and Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and England* above.

⁶⁰⁵ For Italian imports, see discussion in Section 6.3, subsection *From Italy to Francia: the trans-Alpine trade goods* above.

775 received a grant of the entire Valtellina—on the main route connecting the upper Rhine and Chur via the passes to Milan and Pavia.⁶⁰⁶ Further, grants of immunity from tolls such as many abbeys enjoyed in the lands north of the Alps were extended into Italy after the conquest of the Lombard kingdom, which demonstrates that the Frankish abbeys were in fact interested in the transport of commercial goods across the Alps.⁶⁰⁷ Another prominent instance of privilege seeking by churchmen for the Italian trade is a letter from Alcuin to the bishop of Chur, dating to the early 790s, requesting protection and toll exemption for his merchant-agent as the latter travels to and from Italy.⁶⁰⁸

The examples of Alcuin's *negociator* and the Frisian, Ibbo working for St. Maximin of Trier join many other instances in the documentary record where an abbey seeks and receives immunities for its commercial agents. The record implies that large numbers of professional traders were employed in this way, either by elite individuals or institutions, which in itself would attest to the importance of this profession in eighth- and ninth-century Carolingia. However, it would be misleading to regard the professional mercantile class in the Latin Christian world as a mere adjunct to the ecclesiastic and secular aristocratic elite.⁶⁰⁹ In addition to those merchants who directly served the abbeys, or the imperial palace, or who focused on the great aggregation of demand represented by the general assemblies,⁶¹⁰ there must have been many others who brought long-distance exchange into less distinguished marketplaces, including the urban

⁶⁰⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 399. The diploma in question was issued by Charlemagne at Quirzy, 14 March 775 = DD Kar I, no. 94, in *MGH Diplomata Karolorum*, vol 1. McCormick emphasizes the political utility of such grants: "This put control over a critical entrance to Italy. . . in the hands of an abbot who was always one of the king's closest collaborators."

⁶⁰⁷ McCormick, *Origins*, 679, citing a grant of immunity from tolls in Italy given to St-Denis by Charlemagne on 14 March 775 = DD Kar I, no. 93, in *MGH Diplomata Karolorum*, vol 1.

⁶⁰⁸ Alcuin *epistola* 77, in *MGH Epistolae*, vol. 4: *Epistolae Karolini aevi* 2, ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), 118 – 19. The relevant portion of this short letter is as follows: *Hunc nostrum negociatorem, Italiae mercimonia ferentem, his litteris tuae paternitatis commendo protectioni, ut per vias vestrae patriae tutus eat et redeat; et in montium claustris a vestris non teneatur tolneariis constrictus, sed per latitudinem caritatis latam habeat eundi et redeundi semitam.*

⁶⁰⁹ On this point, see Wickham, *Framing*, 805, who admits that merchants could be autonomous as well as being dependents of a specific elite entity, but considers the entire class as "a structural element in the aristocratic network." On the position and status of the professional mercantile class, see also the discussion in Section 7.4 below.

⁶¹⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 665 – 6, counts seventy general assemblies during the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, held usually in the vicinity of one of the trade hubs of the Frankish heartland.

centers as well as innumerable smaller markets and semi-informal landing places.⁶¹¹ Typically, merchants traveled armed and in groups on the land routes as well as on the seas, and the protection of traveling pilgrims and merchants both were among the regular duties of the Carolingian authorities.⁶¹²

Certainly, the fourth major group of professional traders operating in the Carolingian lands, the Jews, whose communities are attested particularly at Lyon and Verdun, must have been largely autonomous in their activities. Their status as recognized and protected long-distance merchants is evident from the privileges specifically accorded to them under Louis the Pious.⁶¹³ Their apparent specialty in trade was slaves. We have seen slaves in the context of Frisian traders on the Rhine and Anglo-Saxon traders at the Alpine passes, which suggests that any slave traffic carried by these groups found its way into Italy. By contrast, the Jewish slave trade out of Francia seems to take a transverse orientation, via Verdun and Lyon to Marseille or overland to Muslim Spain. It is possible to speculate that the source of many of the slaves on this route would have originated on the eastern borders of the Carolingian realm, coming into the exchange system out of the trans-Elbian lands or from markets along the upper Danube or Moravia.⁶¹⁴ It is also possible that captives from the British Isles or from the Baltic could have fed into this transverse stream.

Whatever the ultimate source of the human cargo or the precise routes followed, there is little doubt that the slave trade represented the single largest export in terms of

⁶¹¹ Wickham, *Framing*, 608, names Paris, Reims, Verdun, Trier, Metz, and Mainz as important urban centers in the northwest through the eighth century. Regarding smaller, independent traders, one need only recall the Frisians mentioned passing St. Goar on the Rhine for an impression of this type and their activities.

⁶¹² McCormick, *Origins*, 402, on the dangers of travel and the gathering of merchants into large groups. On protection of travelers and suppression of banditry, McCormick adduces the example of Louis II in ninth-century Italy (p. 679).

⁶¹³ See the discussion in Section 6.3, subsection *The Iberian connection* above. For the privileged position of the Jews and the consistent care of the Carolingian rulers, especially Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, to protect this community even in the face of virulent attacks from the clergy, see Bernard S. Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 66 – 105.

⁶¹⁴ For the development of overland trade routes from the Rhine towards the eastern frontiers of the Frankish empire, see discussion in Section 7.1, subsection *Carolingia and the Elbe* above. Jewish traders as the main actors in the commerce on the Elbe frontier is argued strongly by Rörig, *Magdeburgs Entstehung*, 8 – 14, 18 – 19, 22 – 4, 27 – 9.

value that Latin Christendom sent southwards into the Mediterranean zone.⁶¹⁵ The Carolingian lands did not normally serve as a source of captives and therefore suffered little loss of human capital while accruing the profits of a middle-man position. Moreover, as McCormick points out, there was a considerable multiplier effect particularly with this type of trade, paying for food, fodder, lodging, ferry tolls, and tax *ad valorem*:

As the slave trains crossed France, they shed some wealth wherever they passed. And when the slaves were finally sold off, the profit ended in Frankish traders' purses.⁶¹⁶

Altogether, both the internal and external trade of the Carolingian empire was more complex than the exchange systems in the North and in European Russia, which can be explained at least partly by the greater density of population, concentrations of wealth, and inherited traditions of distribution networks and artisanal expertise here than in the regions discussed previously. To an extent, the Frankish heartland operated independently of the other sub-regions, and was oriented not only to internal exchange along the main river routes but also to a very active engagement with Anglo-Saxon England and with the Scandinavian – Baltic realm. However, the northwest also connected with the Mediterranean. While bulk products such as grain and wine did not normally cross the Alps to Italy, many other things such as lead and cloth (and Scandinavian furs?) did so. There is sufficient documentary evidence for a steady trade in a variety of items from northwest to southeast, and the reverse, and for routine travel not only of pilgrims, soldiers, and diplomats but also of professional traders of many stripes over impressively long distances. Anglo-Saxons and Frisians reached Italy while Italian merchants reached at least as far northwest as Francia, and Jewish traders likewise joined Francia to the Mediterranean. Above all, perhaps, it was the slave trade that tied the transcontinental system together from north to south. Supporting and regulating this

⁶¹⁵ This point is discussed in considerable detail in McCormick, *Origins*, 733 – 77. In the ninth century, the main traffic was divided into Spanish and Italian streams (p. 761). See also Map 25.1 on p. 762 for the major routes and destinations.

⁶¹⁶ Michael McCormick, “Complexity, Chronology and Context in the Early Medieval Economy,” *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003): 310. McCormick asserts that slaves in Francia sold for 240 – 360 silver pennies or the equivalent of one horse, 17 – 25 cows, or enough bread for a family for three to four years (pp. 310 – 11).

activity was an imperial government that not only collected tolls and taxes on travelers and transiting goods but provided infrastructure, maintained protection, and bestowed privileges.

Mediterranean return

To complete the survey of the western Eurasian trade circuit in the 700 – 900 period it is necessary to return once more to the Mediterranean. It was through the Mediterranean, after all, that the flow of long-distance “luxury trade” items such as silk and spices reached across the Alps into Francia and England. It was also the Mediterranean that connected the chief European export of the period—slaves—with its ultimate markets in the Caliphate.⁶¹⁷ Additionally, like European Russia and the Baltic, Latin Christendom was a net importer of precious metals, both silver and gold, from the Islamic world which, as McCormick points out, underscores the high value that the return flow of western European exports must have enjoyed. He places the Venetians in the middle of the commodities export and the bullion distribution thus:

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. . . restruck as Frankish pennies, impressed with the sign of the cross and edifying legends such as ‘Christian religion’; the Venetians kept for themselves the gold that they acquired in the Caliphate and in Byzantium.

The merchants that reached Venice from the north could, in turn, exchange their trans-Alpine wares for

all the exotic luxuries they could transport and sell at home and still be left with money, fresh money, in their purses.⁶¹⁸

The inflow of silver into Carolingian Europe is much clearer, then, at the southeastern end, at Venice, than it is at its likely northwestern terminal at Dorestad. In any case, the vignette of a high-powered and highly lucrative Mediterranean trade via

⁶¹⁷ Other potential exports from Europe into the Mediterranean, such as lumber, furs, and arms are difficult or impossible to demonstrate for the period before 900. McCormick, *Origins*, 729 - 33.

⁶¹⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 758. Although Venice technically lay outside of Carolingian jurisdiction, it nevertheless operated an official mint striking standard Carolingian coins.

northern Italy in the early ninth century presents a situation that has changed dramatically from that prevailing about a century earlier. As was discussed above, McCormick's analysis of shipping patterns identified the early eighth century as the nadir in Mediterranean long-distance exchange.⁶¹⁹ Wickham's analysis tends to corroborate McCormick's, stating that (1) by 700, all major Mediterranean ceramics types had either ceased production or were rare outside of their home regions and (2) that aristocratic wealth in the western Mediterranean had reached a lowpoint ca. 700 but began to rebuild slowly from there.⁶²⁰ Further, while McCormick states that the only regularly working route of long-distance communications in the Mediterranean ca. 700 was that leading from Constantinople and the Aegean to southern Italy, Wickham points out the Tyrrhenian sea as the single sub-regional network within the Mediterranean in the earlier eighth century that was sustaining a commercial economy over a relatively large area.⁶²¹

Thus, as also discussed previously,⁶²² there was never a time when communications and exchange in the Mediterranean were entirely dead. With only a single "trunk line" and, apparently, only one reasonably vibrant sub-regional network in operation ca. 700, conditions in the Mediterranean for much of the eighth century would, indeed, seem to have reached a low ebb. From a different point of view, however, it could be argued that the later seventh- and earlier eighth-century Mediterranean was paralleling developments in the contemporary North Sea and Baltic regions. Autonomous Tuscan peasant villages with diversified agricultural output, for example, appear functionally similar to German and Scandinavian villages with intensified, mixed stock-raising and grain farming, with the implication that the former no less than the latter could have formed part of an exchange system that reached the capillary level of individual, entrepreneurial producers/consumers. Similarly, the Po subregion ca. 700 was

⁶¹⁹ McCormick, *Origins*, 118 – 19,

⁶²⁰ Wickham, *Framing*, 716 – 17, 758 – 9. Ceramics distributions and elite wealth are two of Wickham's prime categories of diachronic and trans-regional comparison.

⁶²¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 503 – 8; Wickham, *Framing*, 738: "There is no reason to hypothesize a fiscal support for this. . . the crucial point here is that the underpinning of the Tyrrhenian network must have been entirely commercial by now; and, as such, it had no parallel in terms of scale anywhere else in the eighth-century Mediterranean. This subregional level of exchange was less articulated than it had been in the sixth century, and more marginal to local economies, but it added to their complexity, and testifies to a buoyancy in demand which joined all the major cities of the coast together."

⁶²² See discussion in Section 6.2, subsection *The eastern connection* above.

showing networks of small landing-places similar to those in evidence around the coastlines of southern Scandinavia and the rivers of lowland England.⁶²³ In the Mediterranean as whole, by ca. 700 shipping had largely abandoned the former pattern of direct, long-distance routes connecting major ports such as Marseille and Alexandria or Carthage and Constantinople to a new pattern of shorter, in-shore sailing segments sequentially connecting a larger number of stopping points of widely varying size and importance. This, again, is highly reminiscent of the contemporary situation in the English Channel, along the southern shores of the North Sea, and around the coastlines of Scandinavia and the Baltic that are emerging into view around this time.⁶²⁴ Moreover, as McCormick states, the entire system, as it was evolving, rested on entrepreneurship rather than state control:

[T]he 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. . . . 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.⁶²⁵

It was the emerging entrepreneurial shipping network, of course, that enabled voyages such as those of St. Willibald in the early eighth century. And while such a network was sufficient to keep a certain amount of commodities and travelers circulating through the Mediterranean region, the region as a whole possibly was less involved in exchange with the Temperate European world in the half-century between ca. 700 and 750 than before or after.⁶²⁶ The impetus to a renewal of more intensive contacts from

⁶²³ See discussion in Section 6.2, subsection *The economic condition of Lombard Italy* above.

⁶²⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 418 – 25. Mediterranean sailing practice in this period involved frequent beaching of ships where no ports were available, which is another aspect that is strikingly similar to practices in the northern waters.

⁶²⁵ McCormick, *Origins*, 568.

⁶²⁶ See again McCormick, *Origins*, 433 – 41, with charts, that show a low point in communications ca. 750 and a rapid upsurge in same from 750 to 825. See also Wickham, *Framing*, 728, 732 – 5, 739 – 41, and

Francia and other northwestern European areas towards the south came, apparently, from the Muslim side of the Mediterranean.

Syria, Palestine, and Egypt had survived the late-Antique transition in better economic condition than almost any other region or sub-region, which continued to be true under the first century or so of Arab rule⁶²⁷ According to Wickham, it was the shift in tax policy under the Abbasids, which centralized the fiscal system in comparison to how it had been under the Umayyads (661 – 750), that revived regional-level exchange in the eastern Mediterranean.⁶²⁸ Fundamentally, this follows the general, traditional view of an “Abbasid revolution” in political and economic relations that leads to a period of bloom in world-wide trade relations.⁶²⁹ McCormick, however, puts a finer point on the matter. It was just when the Muslim world was in train to sustained economic growth during the eighth century that a major outbreak of plague hit much of the Muslim Mediterranean in 745 – 52. With local labor supply thus significantly reduced and the influx of war-captives from aggressive expansion experiencing a long hiatus after 718, the door was open for enterprising Europeans to profer an alternative supply of servile labor. McCormick connects this macro-shift in labor supply-and-demand relations with the “first recorded effort [by Venetians] to supply slaves to the Muslim world,” which dates to 748.⁶³⁰

In other words, just as trade relations between the Latin Christian world and the pagan North were expanding rapidly in the eighth century, including potential access to new supplies of slaves out of the Baltic, a new or expanded market particularly for the

750 – 9, for the generally contracted but not necessarily impoverished economies around the western Mediterranean in the eighth century.

⁶²⁷ See the survey of the evidence for continued economic health in these areas in Wickham, *Framing*, 759 – 80. See also the discussion in Section 6.2, subsection *The eastern connection* above, with reference to Walmsley, “Production, Exchange, and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean,” passim.

⁶²⁸ Wickham, *Framing*, 778 – 80. Effective fiscal systems, from Wickham’s theoretical outlook, stand alongside elevated levels of elite wealth and demand as engines driving economic expansion and sophistication.

⁶²⁹ Another version of this traditional view, oriented specifically to the issue of Middle Eastern commercial contacts with Scandinavia, can be found in Hodges and Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe*, 123 – 57. See also the discussion on the “Abassid revolution” in subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* above.

⁶³⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 753 – 4. “The Venetians. . . seized a very specific opportunity, created by a spike in demand for labor that arose out of heavy mortality in the Caliphate. . . Once the last wave of the 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.”

later commodity unfolded at the opposite, southern side of western Europe. It is fair to say that changes in the Muslim world in the mid-eighth century served as a catalyst to the full activation of the western Eurasian trade circuit at both its southeastern and its southwestern ends. As was seen above, it was the cessation of the Arab – Khazar wars and the surge of Islamic silver into European Russia that soon drew Scandinavian merchant – adventurers from northwestern Russia to open regular contacts between Scandinavia and the markets of Khazaria and the Caliphate.⁶³¹ In the Mediterranean it was the surge in the demand for servile labor in the Muslim world that led most directly to the revival of long-distance trade routes and provided additional stimulus to areas north of the Alps, which mobilized to meet the increased demand.

One of the two main exchange routes from the Latin Christian to the Muslim worlds was the one operated by Jewish merchants out of central France and the Rhône valley to Muslim Spain. This probably is best seen as a continuation of trading patterns in the Merovingian – Visigothic period, where Jewish merchants operated in Gaul, Septimania, and Spain.⁶³² Certainly, the developments of the eighth century stimulated and expanded the flow of exchange along this route, so that many of the “slave trains” of which McCormick speaks regarding the earlier ninth century must have been heading towards Spain.⁶³³

More dramatic and complex is the emergence of the second great outlet from the Carolingian realms to the Muslim world—Venice. McCormick characterizes the rapid emergence of Venice and the Adriatic route during the eighth century as the “Venetian breakthrough,” which had a transforming effect on Mediterranean trade relations as a whole.⁶³⁴ In the early decades of the ninth century, Venetian ships are regularly plying routes to Muslim North Africa, including Alexandria. On the European side, Venice was the most natural entrepôt for traffic passing over the Alps, through the passes and the Carolingian *clusae*, with the best connections in particular to the Rhine system.⁶³⁵

⁶³¹ See discussion in subsection *The Russian rivers and the great East* above.

⁶³² See Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy*, 3- 26, 44 – 65.

⁶³³ McCormick, “Complexity, Chronology and Context in the Early Medieval Economy,” 310.

⁶³⁴ McCormick, *Origins*, 523 – 31, gives the narrative and its supporting evidence in detail.

⁶³⁵ See discussion in Section 6.2, subsection *Italy and the North* and Section 6.3, subsection *The Alps and the clusae*, above.

Venice also, however, tapped into the trade of the Carpathian basin to its northeast, i.e., the lands east of Frankish Bavaria, which still comprised the Avar kingdom until the 790s and afterwards, in the ninth century, became a contested ground between the Franks, the Byzantines, Bulgars, and local upstart Slavic states. According to McCormick, the ancient amber route around the eastern end of the Alps was reopened in the ninth century as far as Carnuntum on the Danube.⁶³⁶ This implies possible commerce with the emerging *emporium* (Pohansko) and central places (Mikulčice) of Moravia. However, as discussed above, ninth-century Moravia shows no evidence of having functioned as a transit point to areas further north. In other words, whatever trading activities penetrated into the area out of the head of the Adriatic were almost entirely separate, at least in the ninth century, from those activities that originated out of the Baltic southwards into the territory of present-day Poland.⁶³⁷ What occurred in the Carpathian basin in the ninth century was, apparently, extensive slave-raiding, the product of which flowed primarily to the transshipment point of Venice.⁶³⁸ It is of interest that a source specifically refers to Jewish slave traders operating in the Carpathian basin, who take the captives to sell in Venice.⁶³⁹ On this evidence, it would appear that Jewish trading activities were by no means confined to the Rhône valley and the Spanish route, but also had a foothold in the Venetian *emporium*. Though technically outside of Carolingian jurisdiction, Venice interacted closely with Carolingian authorities

⁶³⁶ McCormick, *Origins*, 369 – 78.

⁶³⁷ On these points, see discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *The southern shore and the Slavs* above. Curta, “East Central Europe,” 290 – 1, challenges McCormick’s data concerning east central Europe as a source of slaves for entrepreneurs operating out of Latin Christendom. Instead, he points to Bulgaria as the major source of slaves out of southeastern Europe, which would have been marketed through Constantinople, not Venice, and sees Byzantine influence penetrating into the middle Danube in the ninth century. Curta asserts, correctly, that there was no link between the Adriatic and the Baltic along the old Amber Trail in the ninth century; however, McCormick does not claim such a link, only that the route had been re-activated from the head of the Adriatic as far as the Danube.

⁶³⁸ McCormick, *Origins*, 765 – 8, discusses the situation, with extensive reference to the fate of St. Methodius’ mission in the later ninth century. The source (*First Life of Naum*, quoted on p. 766) explicitly mentions Methodius’ disciples being sold to Jewish slave traders, who take them to Venice.

⁶³⁹ McCormick, *Origins*, 766, quoting the *First Life of Naum*.

in Italy, as attested in numerous treaties and especially provisions concerning the traffic in and treatment of slaves.⁶⁴⁰

As was the case with intensified Viking activity in the North Sea, the situation regarding long-distance trading in the Mediterranean became increasingly disrupted in the later ninth century. One aspect of the changes was the growth in Arab slaving activities, especially around Sicily and southern Italy, where both the kidnapping of captives for sale and the ransoming of others was carried out in sophisticated symbiosis with the local populations.⁶⁴¹ These conditions, according to McCormick, explain the rise of southern Italian ports such as Naples and Amalfi as commercial centers in the later ninth and tenth centuries.⁶⁴² An additional complication was the operations of the Byzantine navy in southern Italian waters in the ninth century, who often intercepted Arab slave ships only to divert the captives for sale on their own account. In any case, the trade in slaves freely crossed the religious divides among Muslims, Jews, Orthodox Christians, and Catholic Christians.⁶⁴³

The preceding sketch of the Mediterranean trading world of the eighth and ninth centuries completes the survey of the western Eurasian trade circuit that became fully operational in the ninth century. Remarkably, in the earlier part of the period the Mediterranean network exhibited many of the features found in the North Sea and Scandinavian – Baltic regions: few major trunk-lines of long-distance trade but a skein of shorter, overlapping routes connecting a multitude of points ranging from large port cities to undistinguished local landing places, and operated by a class of private, entrepreneurial merchants-shippers. As the scale of exchange expands remarkably by ca. 800, the focus shifts increasingly to certain nodal points such as Venice that are in a position to re-establish direct, blue-water routes across the Mediterranean that connect the largest markets, and the trade becomes increasingly tied up with treaties, toll collection,

⁶⁴⁰ McCormick, *Origins*, 633, 764 – 5. For the crucial importance of Venice as early as the first decade of the ninth century, see McCormick's summary of the war fought over it between the Franks and the Byzantines (p. 179).

⁶⁴¹ McCormick, *Origins*, 768 – 71.

⁶⁴² McCormick, *Origins*, 776.

⁶⁴³ McCormick, *Origins*, 637, 744 – 5.

and other kinds of interference on the part of governmental entities. These developments are not dissimilar to the transformation of the Frisians from purely individualistic traders operating out of home villages or *terpen* in the northern Netherlands into a more tightly organized system of long-distance wholesalers focused, under Carolingian oversight, on the central hub at Dorestad.

The fact that many local areas in the Mediterranean do not seem to be affected immediately by the upsurge in international trans-Mediterranean trade can probably be explained by the absence, in such areas, of production in specialty goods of sufficient value to make a mark in the international marketplace. Balzaretti had remarked on the great interest among Italian monks in pushing commercial activity—no less so, in other words, than their confreres in Francia.⁶⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the Po valley as a whole does not seem to have experienced any outstanding stimulus from the proximity of the prime *emporium* of Venice until the later ninth century, remaining instead an area of prosperous but compartmentalized city-territory economies.⁶⁴⁵ By one analysis, Carolingian silver coinage in Italy appears to have functioned mainly to facilitate large transactions and did not penetrate into the realm of local, quotidian transactions.⁶⁴⁶ The data from coinage and from the development of local economies in northern Italy underscore the role of Venice as the major exchange interface between trans-Alpine, Temperate Europe and the Mediterranean. It was not only demand for goods and labor in the Arab world but also the wealth and productivity of Francia and its connections to further sources of commodities across the northwestern waters that made Venice—not the Po valley hinterland. It is in the later ninth century that the transit trade through northern Italy finally is penetrating down to the level of local development and an increased

⁶⁴⁴ Ross Balzaretti, “Cities and Markets in the Early Middle Ages,” in *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe’s Barbarians*, ed. G. Ausenda (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 113.

⁶⁴⁵ Balzaretti, “Local Economies in the Po Valley,” 225 – 8.

⁶⁴⁶ Alessia Rovelli, “Some Considerations on the Coinage of Lombard and Carolingian Italy,” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 207 – 21. Rovelli admits that such coins are found in the Po valley, however, which was a major international trade route.

participation in trade and competition over its proceeds among interested parties in the area becomes visible.⁶⁴⁷

In every major region of the western Eurasian trade circuit, we find that the bulk of the traffic is handled by a class of professional entrepreneurs or merchant-adventurers. While they operate somewhat differently in each region based on the differing political and socio-economic conditions in each of them, they nevertheless share certain characteristics: autonomous, expert, armed, traveling in aggregated groups both on land and on sea, and occupying a socio-legal position distinct from the clerical and military elites on the one hand and from the laboring commoner classes on the other hand. It remains to clarify the status and position of this professional class, particularly for those members of it that operated within the jurisdiction of the Carolingian empire.

7.4 The *negotiatores* and Their Privileges

In the discussion above concerning the transition in Europe from the Roman imperial system to the post-Roman re-configuration of political and economic relations, emphasis was laid on certain aspects of continuity between the two systems. This was particularly the case regarding Gaul, which not only was the earliest of the former western provinces to re-stabilize socio-economically (by the early sixth century) but kept much of the pre-existing Roman administrative framework as well—only working for the Merovingian Franks, now, and adapted to changed political circumstances.⁶⁴⁸ Indeed, ongoing research has demonstrated significant continuity in a variety of fields. Among the best-documented to date are those concerning fortifications, military organization, strategy, and tactics;⁶⁴⁹ and those referring to architecture and building skills.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁷ See the vignette in McCormick, *Origins*, 778 – 81, regarding a court case of Cremona merchants vs. a local bishop in 851, which reflects developments in the Po valley specifically and in the European economy more generally, according to McCormick.

⁶⁴⁸ See the discussion above in Section 4.4 The Case of Roman Gaul and Section 5.1 Merovingian Gaul.

⁶⁴⁹ See especially Bernard S. Bachrach, “The Practical Use of Vegetius’ *De Re Militari* in the Early Middle Ages,” *The Historian* 47 (1985): 239 – 55; idem, “Quelques observations sur la composition et les caractéristiques des armées de Clovis,” in *Clovis: histoire et mémoire*, ed. Michel Rouche (Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997), 689 – 703; and idem, “Imperial Walled Cities in the West: An Examination of Their Early Medieval *Nachleben*,” in *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 192 – 218.

⁶⁵⁰ See especially McClendon, *Origins of Medieval Architecture*, passim.

Concerning the Carolingian era more specifically, it has been remarked that the literati of the day were perfectly at home in adopting classic Latin literary styles when it suited their present purposes, so for example in Einhard's imitation of Suetonius in his *Vita Caroli Magni*,⁶⁵¹ or in the many pieces of formal Latin poetry that were composed at this time.⁶⁵² If the Carolingians were capable of using Roman models for their literary exercises, then it should come as no great surprise if they also should have managed to preserve and adapt aspects of Late Roman legal language and concepts in their official documents, such as the *diplomae* issued to *negotiatores* under Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. More to the point, if the Carolingian government was capable of organizing and managing a far-flung fiscal villa system then surely they could also organize legal structures to manage another aspect of the economy that was unquestionably of great importance to it, namely that of the long-distance merchants,⁶⁵³

The pages that follow will present the outlines of an argument for just such a continuity in legal language and concepts regarding the activity and status of professional merchants operating in the Carolingian realms. It begins with relevant sections of the Theodosian Code, continues with selections from law-giving in the Lombard kingdom, proceeds to a closer analysis of some of the key documents from the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, and ends with a note on the persistence of continuity in administrative practice in the later ninth century forward into the Ottonian era. Due to constraints of space, only the highlights of the argument can be presented here. Nevertheless, the outline should be sufficient to illuminate further the special role and status enjoyed by the class of merchant-adventurers or *negotiatores* in Carolingian Europe.

⁶⁵¹ Sidney Painter, "Foreword," in *The Life of Charlemagne by Einhard* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), 10 – 11.

⁶⁵² McClendon, *The Origins of Medieval Architecture*, 129, comments on the connections between the palace literati of Charlemagne's reign and later patronage of architectural projects. He also cites Peter Godman, ed., *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985).

⁶⁵³ On the organization and centralized administration of the fiscal villa system, see again Bachrach, "Are They Not Like Us?" 119 – 33. Joachim Henning has argued that the Carolingian revival of a villa system modeled on the Late Roman was so pervasive that it caused a regression in the northwest European economy for generations; see again the argument in Henning, "Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm," 3 – 40.

Theodosian foundations

The Theodosian Code was compiled and edited by order of the emperor Theodosius II between 429 and 437. In the west, it was officially promulgated on the 25th of December 438, and immediately gave rise to a lively demand for copies, both official and unofficial, not least on the part of imperial and local officials charged with the implementation of the laws.⁶⁵⁴ Just as Matthews identifies the 430s as a unique period of Late Roman unity and relative security, which enabled the work of compilation to proceed successfully, these same circumstances must have afforded the opportunity for the widespread dissemination of manuscripts of the ‘Code, thus making the ‘Code readily accessible to interested parties in the post-imperial *regna* as well.⁶⁵⁵ Further, professional document-writers continued in their work even as Late Roman bureaucratic government faded away in the sixth century, and it was they, although working under changed circumstances, who perpetuated much of the forms and language of Late Roman law in the composition of documents in the sixth to ninth centuries, constituting one of the most direct links of transmission from late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages.⁶⁵⁶

In none of the post imperial *regna* of the sixth to ninth centuries was the use of written documents in legal proceedings more common and widespread than in Francia.⁶⁵⁷ This is evident especially from the large number of surviving formularies of the seventh and eighth centuries.⁶⁵⁸ Furthermore, manuscripts containing some version of the Theodosian Code are most plentiful from Gaul and Francia, with a wide geographical

⁶⁵⁴ John Matthews, “The Making of the Text,” in *The Theodosian Code: Studies in the Imperial Law of Late Antiquity*, ed. Jill Harries and Ian Wood (London: Duckworth, 1993), 19 – 30.

⁶⁵⁵ Matthews, “The Making of the Text,” 43 – 4.

⁶⁵⁶ Peter Classen, “Fortleben und Wandel spätrömischen Urkundenwesens im frühen Mittelalter,” in *Recht und Schrift im Mittelalter*, ed. Peter Classen (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1977), 29 – 36. “Nachdem mit dem Gesta municipalia die letzten Reste römischer Bürokratie und des alten Aktenwesens verschwunden sind, bleibt die Einzelurkunde mit ihrer lateinische Sprache und vielen alten Formeln ein altes Erbstück, aber jetzt von höheren Wert als einst, und der Erneuerung und Anpassung an fremdes Recht fähig” (p. 54).

⁶⁵⁷ “Nachdrücklich muß man sich immer wieder vergangenwärtigen, daß fränkisches Gerichtswesen, wie uns die Formulare zeigen, von der Schrift außerordentlich viel mehr Gebrauch machte, als kirkliche Archiv-Überlieferung in Chartularen und Originalen erkennen läßt.” Classen, “Fortleben und Wandel spätrömischen Urkundenwesens,” 33.

⁶⁵⁸ Classen, “Fortleben und Wandel spätrömischen Urkundenwesens,” 43 – 4. Extensive use of documents was also made in the Visigothic kingdom (pp. 20 – 3).

distribution and dating from the sixth to the eight/ninth centuries.⁶⁵⁹ In many instances, references in Frankish sources to the Theodosian Code actually refer not to the original but to one of several later versions or digests of it, especially the *Breviary* of Alaric II or the *Lex Romana Visigothorum*; the *Lex Romana Burgundionum* also is a possible source. The vital and continuing role played by the Theodosian Code in the construction of law in Gaul is illustrated further by the circumstance that copies or excerpts of the ‘Code or one of its avatars were coupled routinely in the manuscripts with a transcript of one of the so-called “barbarian” codes, which themselves were heavily dependent upon Roman provincial law.⁶⁶⁰ As Ian Wood concludes, “[inevitably,] the student of early medieval law has no option but to look back to the Theodosian Code in order to understand the history of Burgundian and Frankish law.”⁶⁶¹

An examination of the Theodosian Code, which in effect summarizes the most prominent concerns of the fourth- and fifth-century Late Roman state, will confirm that an overriding interest of the state was to secure the revenues and mandatory services upon which its centralized functioning depended.⁶⁶² It is no surprise, then, that regulations concerning merchants and trading activities appear overwhelmingly in this context. The taxes pertaining to merchants and commerce were primarily three: the *vectigalia*, the lustral tax, and finally a general sales tax on all transactions.

The *vectigalia* was a tax on the transport of goods, set by long standing practice at 12.5 percent.⁶⁶³ The obligation to pay this tax was reiterated in several places in the Theodosian Code. The earliest edicts on the matter of the *vectigalia* included in the Code were from Constantine in 321, at the head of the chapter on “Imposts and forfeitures” (*De*

⁶⁵⁹ Ian Wood, “The Code in Merovingian Gaul,” in *The Theodosian Code: Studies in the Imperial Law of Late Antiquity*, ed. Jill Harries and Ian Wood (London: Duckworth, 1993), 164 – 6.

⁶⁶⁰ Wood, “The Code in Merovingian Gaul,” 176. The richness of the legal source material available to Merovingian kings, almost all of it ultimately derived from Late Roman precedents, shows up in edicts such as the *Decretus Childeberti* of Childebert II (575 – 96): “Childebert may not have had the Theodosian Code itself at hand, but he had all the alternatives. His is sophisticated legislation in a sub-Roman tradition” (p. 174).

⁶⁶¹ Wood, “The Code in Merovingian Gaul,” 177.

⁶⁶² Thus C. Dickerman Williams, “Introduction,” in Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmundian Constitutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), xx: “In the later Empire, no subject was more alive [than taxation].”

⁶⁶³ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 94 (4.13.6). All English renderings of passages from the Code herein are quoted from Pharr’s translation.

vectigalibus et Commissis); 4.13.1 – 3,⁶⁶⁴ followed by 11.12.3 (year 365), 4.13.6 (year 371), 13.5.23 – 4 (year 393), and *Novela* 13.1 of Valentinian III (year 445).⁶⁶⁵ Two of the statements on this topic are particularly sweeping. The first is *CTh.* 11.12.3 of the year 365, which includes the following:

For the payment of the imposts is no small public service, and it must be rendered on equal terms by all persons who are engaged in trade or in the transportation of merchandise.⁶⁶⁶

The other, from *CTh.* 4.13.6 of the year 371 reads as follows:

In the name of no person whatsoever shall any reduction whatsoever be made in the payment of imposts, but all classes of men who wish to engage in commerce shall pay the customary eighth, and no exception shall be made in this matter for military persons.⁶⁶⁷

An important exception to the general rule was for goods transported for one's own use, so ordered in *CTh.* 4.13.2 of the year 321:

No impost shall be exacted by the rural police from any provincial for any goods that he transports for his own use or for the fisc, or for those goods which he brings home for the operation of his farm. But those goods that are transported for other than the aforesaid purposes or for purposes of commerce, We make subject to the customary tax payment.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁴ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 93 – 4.

⁶⁶⁵ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 94, 304, 394, and 527.

⁶⁶⁶ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 304. “Vectigalium enim non parva functio est, quae debet ab omnibus, qui negotiationis seu transferendarum mercium habent curam, aequa ratione dependi.” Latin text transcribed from Theodor Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi cum constitutionibus sirmondianis* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1905).

⁶⁶⁷ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 94. “Ex praestatione vectigalium nullius omnino nomine qu(ic)quam minuatur, quin octavas solite constitutas om(ne) hominum genus, quod commerciiis voluerit interess(e, de)pendat, nulla super hoc militarium exceptione facien(da).” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

⁶⁶⁸ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 94. “Universi provinciales pro his rebus, quas ad u(su)m proprium vel ad fiscum inferunt vel exercendi ruris (gr)atia revehunt, nullum vectigal a stationariis exigantur. Ea vero, quae extra praedictas causas vel negotiationis gratia (portan)tur, solitae praestationi subiugamus.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

Significantly, a similar provision was affirmed by Pippin III in 753, adding to the exception the goods carried by pilgrims.⁶⁶⁹ A further contrast between the two versions is the elaboration in the Carolingian capitulary of the modes of transport that might be taxed and the specification of the places where such taxes or tolls were regularly collected.

Another prominent tax that specifically affected those engaged in merchandizing was the payment of the lustral tax. As expressed in *CTh.* 13.1.1 of the year 356/57:

All tradesmen must pay immediately the tax payable in gold and silver, and only clerics who are called gravediggers shall be excepted, nor shall anyone else be exempt from the performance of this tax duty.⁶⁷⁰

Similarly *CTh.* 13.1.6 of the year 364 asserts:

We levy upon merchants a tax payment in gold and silver, whereby public expenditures may be assisted. . . . For We command such men of all religions and all ranks to sustain this equal share in assisting the State without the indulgence of any special privilege. Furthermore, in this situation that is common to almost all persons, a special plea shall defend only those persons who are very evidently recognized as engaged in business on their own land, through themselves or through their men, and such persons must not be considered so much in the category of merchants as of skilled and zealous masters.⁶⁷¹

Finally, *CTh.* 13.1.9 of the year 372 declares that

⁶⁶⁹ “About tolls we so command that no one take a toll from food supplies and wagon transports which [are] not commercial. . . 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 at bridges or the mountain checkpoints. . . or on water transport, nor make a claim on any pilgrim on account of his baggage, nor collect any toll from them.” Translation of *MGH Capit.* no. 13, 4, 1.32.5 – 10 in McCormick, *Origins*, 640 and n. 4.

⁶⁷⁰ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 385. “Negotiatores omnes protinus convenit aurum argentumque praebere, clericos excipi tantum, qui copiatæ appellantur, nec alium quemquam esse immunem ab huius collatione obsequio.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

⁶⁷¹ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 385. “Aurum mercatoribus adque argentum, quo erogatio publica iuветur, indiximus; igitur exceptione inmunitatis nullus utetur. Omnium enim regionum huiusmodi homines, omnium dignitatum hanc virilem iuvandæ rei publicæ partem sine aliqua privilegii venia iussimus sustinere. Exceptio autem eos tantummodo in hac communi fere sorte defendet, qui proprio rure per se aut homines suos qui evidentissime cognoscuntur negotiantes non tam mercatorum loco haberi debent quam sollertium strenuorumque dominorum.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

All men now occupied in the pursuit of business, whether collectors of purple dye fish or merchants of any other guild, shall be compelled to the payment of the tax payable in gold which is levied upon tradesmen. For a grant of imperial favor given to certain persons is a wrong committed upon the common people.⁶⁷²

The distinction that these edicts attempt to draw seems to be that between those engaged in the direct marketing of their own products—as in the case of rural landowners or their dependant cultivators—and those whose primary function is the distribution and sale for profit of the products of others. Thus, as another example, *CTh.* 13.1.10 of the year 374 exempts from the tax those who “seek and maintain their livelihood by manual labor, such as potters and carpenters.”⁶⁷³ Further in *CTh.* 13.1.10 the contrast between the two categories is highlighted in the case of rustics, who might under specified circumstances undergo a change in tax status:

[O]nly those of the rustic common people who on account of the merchandise and assets of business are among the tradesmen shall assume the lot of a tradesman, since they are not held to the cultivation of their fields by a zeal previously engendered in them, but are involved by their acquired mode of life and by their preference in the buying and selling of goods.⁶⁷⁴

Similarly, decurions who are found to have significant engagement in merchandizing lose their immunity and become subject to the tax (*CTh.* 12.1.50). This legislative thread appears to attain its clearest expression in the following statement in *CTh.* 13.1.8 of the year 370:

⁶⁷² Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 386. “Omnes iam nunc studio negotiationis intenti, seu conchylioleguli seu ex aliquolibet corpore mercatores, ad pensationem auri, quod negotiaribus indicitur, compellantur. Beneficium enim quibusdam datum plebis iniuria est.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*. See also *CTh.* 13.1.19 of the year 403, which repeats a similarly sweeping assertion of tax liability for all businessmen: “Omnes devotionem aurariae functionis agnoscant, quos diversi mercimonii cura constringit, ita ut, quibus negotiandi sollicitudo est, ad solutionem teneantur.”

⁶⁷³ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 386.

⁶⁷⁴ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 386. “[U]t hi tantum, qui pro mercimonio et substantia mercis ex rusticana plebe inter negotiatores sunt, sortem negotiationis agnoscant, quos in exercendis agris ingenitum iam pridem studium non retinet, sed mercandis distrahendisque rebus institutum vitae et voluntatis implicuit.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

Those men only shall be constrained to the payment of the tax payable in gold and silver who are occupied in the management and use of shops in exchanging merchandise by buying and selling.⁶⁷⁵

A problem for the precise interpretation of these texts lies, however, in the essential ambiguity of the terms most commonly encountered where the Code speaks of trade and commerce, namely derivatives of *merc-* such as *mercatores*, *mercimonium*, and *merx* and derivatives of *negoti-* such as *negotiatio*, *negotiator*, and *negotior*. Lewis and Short define both *mercatores* and especially *negotiatores* as primarily those who are engaged in wholesale trade, or are wholesale dealers. They note, however, that this definition belongs to classical Latin, and that in later Latin the terms lost their previously marked nature and became more ambiguously applicable to all types of traders.⁶⁷⁶

Therefore, it is difficult to draw hard conclusions regarding the types of trade that the laws were designed to address simply from the appearance in them of *negoti-* terms. At one extreme, it could be supposed that the lustral tax on commerce was nothing more than a kind of market tax. The ambiguity persists, for example, in *CTh.* 13.1.18 of the year 400:

All tradesmen must pay the lustral tax. Not only those persons, therefore, who are proved to be engaged in trade in the country districts or in the municipalities shall be subject to this tax payable in gold, but also those who engage in pursuing usury and rejoice in the accession of money which increases day by day.⁶⁷⁷

But here again it is impossible to say whether “those eager for the profits of usury” were supposed to be petty loan-sharks or major financiers.

Were there *negotiatores*, by whatever term, who engaged in long-distance trade for private profit? There are a few scattered hints in the Theodosian Code that suggest

⁶⁷⁵ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 386. “Hi tantum ad auri argenticque detineantur oblationem merces emendo adque vendendo commutantes, qui in exercitio tabernarum usuque versantur,” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

⁶⁷⁶ See Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1134 – 5, 1138, 1198 – 9.

⁶⁷⁷ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 387. “Omnes negotiatores lustralem conferre convenit pensionem. Non solum igitur hi, qui probantur in territoriis sive in civitatibus exercere commercia, subcumbant aurariae functioni, verum etiam, qui studentes fenori crescentis in dies singulos pecuniae accessione laetantur.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

that such trade did exist, most of which are to be found in *CTh.* 13.5 *De naviculariis*. For the imperial government, interest in long-distance trade centered on the internal, Mediterranean routes, which were of overriding concern due to the transport along these routes of fiscal goods, including the *annona* for the cities of Rome and Constantinople.⁶⁷⁸ As early as 334, inducements were offered to the shippers of the Orient, where *CTh.* 13.5.7 declares that they were to receive as payment 4 per cent of the value of the fiscal goods plus one *solidus* per 1000 measures delivered. Further, *CTh.* 13.5.23 – 4 from the years 393 and 395 expressly exempt shippers carrying fiscal goods from the *vectigalia*:

We command that only shipmasters shall be exempt from the payment of the impost... (*CTh.* 13.5.23). So that no argument in the name of imposts may be left, We decree that this regulation shall be observed, namely, that no exaction of such taxes whatsoever shall be imposed upon shipmasters when they are proved to be transacting business for themselves, but they shall be exempt from the payment of imposts (*CTh.* 13.5.24).⁶⁷⁹

Further, in *CTh.* 13.5.26 of the year 396, *annona* shippers are allowed to speculate with their fiscal cargoes so long as they deliver the [equivalent amount of?] consigned goods within a set time period:

We learn that shipmasters are converting into profits in business the produce which they have received and thereby are abusing the indulgence granted them. . . which permitted them to deliver the receipts for such produce at the end of two years from the day when they received it. This practice also We do not prohibit, but We add a well considered limitation. . . that within a year from the time they receive such produce, they shall deliver it and shall produce receipts dated from the same consulship. . . It is Our will that. . . they may know that the

⁶⁷⁸ See McCormick, *Origins*, 87 – 92, for a summary of the issues regarding this transport and the shippers involved in its implementation.

⁶⁷⁹ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 394. “Ne qua causatio vectigalium nomine relinquatur, hoc observari decernimus, ut nulla omnino exactio naviculariis ingeratur, cum sibi rem gerere probabuntur, sed a praestatione vectigalium habeantur immunes” (*CTh.* 13.5.24). Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

transmission and delivery must be completed within a year from the time of their receipt of the cargo.⁶⁸⁰

In other words, shippers had ample scope to increase profits on the transport of fiscal goods by selling these at places where higher prices might be obtained and repurchasing a similar amount of goods in some place where prices were lower, so long as these manipulations were completed within a generous two-year period. The only change in these arrangements as of the end of the fourth century was the reduction of the time allowed for such manipulations from two years to one year. A hint as to the manner in which shippers used to exploit this privilege can be derived from *CTh.* 13.5.33 of the year 409, which finally curtails such practices in no uncertain terms:

If any person should accept for export products paid as taxes to the fisc, if he should disdain a direct voyage and should seek remote shores, and if he should sell these products that he had thus carried off, he shall be smitten with capital punishment.⁶⁸¹

Evidently, the former practice of shippers had been precisely to “disdain a direct voyage and [to] seek remote shores.” A similar but somewhat differently articulated license for free-lance trade obtained in the western Mediterranean, as expressed in *CTh.* 13.5.8 of the year 326:

Shipmasters of Spain must not be held to extraordinary public services or be detained anywhere or sustain delays, but they must obtain within ten days from the tax receiver receipts for the products which they have delivered. When they

⁶⁸⁰ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 395. “Comperimus navicularios susceptas species in negotiationis emolumenta convertere eo, quod abutantur Constantinianae legis indulto, quae his ex die susceptarum specierum concluso biennio securitates reportare permisit. Quod nos quoque non prohibemus, sed tantum sententiae consultae definitionis addimus, ut intra annum quo susceperint inferant species et eiusdem consulis securitates reportent, quae etiam diem illationis edoceant. Biennium autem propter adversa hiemis et casus fortuitos in reportandis securitatibus non negamus, dummodo intra tempus superius designatum fides peracti constet officii. Quod ad omnium notitiam volumus pervenire, ut cognoscant transmissionem vel traditionem intra annum susceptionis esse complectendam.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

⁶⁸¹ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 396. “Qui fiscales species susceperit deportandas, si recta navigatione contempta litora devia sectatus eas avertendo distraxerit, capitali poena plectetur.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

arrive at any islands, ports, shores, or ship stations and present these receipts, they shall sustain no disquietude at all.⁶⁸²

In other words, once the Hispanic shipper had delivered his fiscal cargo, the receipt for same served as a kind of “free pass” to conduct any business that he might please on the return voyage, however circuitous that path might be. Of great interest is the enumeration of likely places where Mediterranean trade might occur. The reference to “shores” implies a cognizance of the practice of beach trading, which apparently was quite common already in the Late Roman period.⁶⁸³

Additional insights into the evolving conditions of trade in the fifth-century Empire come from the *Novelae* of Valentinian III (416 – 455). In a kind of last-ditch effort to shore up the fiscal resources, *N.Val.15* of the year 444/45 institutes the collection of a general tax on all sales, as defined in *N.Val. 15.1*:

It is Our pleasure, therefore, that on every sale, one half a *siliqua* per *solidus* shall be paid to the public revenues by the buyer, and likewise one half a *siliqua* by the seller in every contract. In the case of all movable and immovable property, sales and purchases shall be made only under such a condition.⁶⁸⁴

As a *siliqua* was worth 1/24 of a *solidus*, this amounted to a “sales tax” of a little over 4 percent. The collection of this tax in regards to immovable property was secured by the requirement that all contracts for such sales be registered with the proper civic authorities (*N.Val. 15.3*). Regarding the sale and purchase of movables there was an attempt to restrict such transactions to official venues as per *N.Val. 15.5*:

It is Our will that these regulations. . . shall be observed in one and the same way in all provinces and cities. This will be accomplished without the impediment of

⁶⁸² Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 392. “Navicularios Hispaniarum neque ad extraordinaria teneri officia neque alicubi retentos moras sustinere oportet, sed relatorias traditarum specierum intra decem dies a susceptoribus percipere, cumque ad aliquas insulas portus litora stationes accesserint, ostensis relatoriis nullam prorsus inquietudinem sustinere.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

⁶⁸³ On evidence for beach trading, see McCormick, *Origins*, 84 – 5. Mediterranean beach trading sites are the functional equivalent of North Sea and Baltic landing places, and so suggest a trading network that penetrated to the capillary level. See the argument in Section 7.3, subsection *Mediterranean return* above.

⁶⁸⁴ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 529. “Placuit itaque, ut omni venditione per solidum dimidia *siliqua* ab emptore, dimidia a venditore per omnem contractum aequaliter publico conferatur: in omnibus mobilibus immobilibusque rebus venditiones tantum emptionesque dumtaxat tali condicione.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

any error, if definite markets are ordained for the municipalities and their territories. . . Therefore no merchant shall be allowed in general to undertake the sale of the wares of his business, contrary to the observation of this regulation, except at the designated places and the established times. Thus a definite account of the buying and selling can be established at the place where the right to buy and sell has been assigned by the agreement of the provincials, and the diligence of those persons who have been placed in charge of the matter can the more easily find that which We have established above must be paid.⁶⁸⁵

However, *N.Val.24 De negotiaribus* of the year 447 suggests both the complexity of the exchange network in the mid-fifth century western Empire and the increasing difficulties that the imperial state was having in trying to police the system and to extract revenue from it:

Thus We sanction. . . that secret trade shall no further make the merchant rare in the famous cities, and that crowds of merchants shall not be hidden in obscure and sequestered places, to the detriment of the public tax payments. . . therefore. . . all persons who have avoided the cities and are practicing the business of trade throughout the villages and very many ports and various landholdings, shall be held liable for the interests of Our treasury, and they shall be compelled to assume the tax payable in gold, according to the measure which justice shall persuade.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁵ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 529 – 30. “Sed haec, quae tam salubriter ordinamus, in omnibus provinciis atque urbibus una eademque volumus ratione servari: quod absque ullius erroris impedimento explicabitur, si certae nundinae civitatibus earumque territoriis ordinentur. Iubemus enim et in oppidis et in regionibus certo loco ac tempore emendis atque vendendis rebus per honoratorum dispositionem nec non ordinum seu civium sub praesentia moderatoris provinciae manifesta definitione constitui. Nulli itaque mercatori praeter hanc observationem nisi ad designata loca temporibus praestitutis ad negotiationis suae species distrahendas passim licebit accedere, uti certa ratio emendi atque vendendi ibi constare possit, ubi nundinandi ius provincialium tractatu fuerit deputatum et id, quod praebere supra statuimus, facilius eorum, qui praepositi fuerint, valeat diligentia reperire.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

⁶⁸⁶ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 536. “Inter cetera, quae perennitatis nostrae mansuro saeculis ordinamus imperio, hoc quoque, quo aerarii nostri commoda tueri posse salubri suggestione probamus, maiestatis nostrae sancimus oraculo, ne ulterius furtiva negotiatio et claris urbibus rarum faciat mercatorem et obscuris ac reconditis locis in damnum publicae functionis lateat turba mercantum. . . Idcirco. . . omnes, qui declinatis urbibus per vicos portusque quamplures possessionesque diversas exercent negotiationis officium, pro aerarii nostri commoditate retinendos, ut secundum modum, quem iustitia suaserit, aurariam functionem cogantur agnoscere.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

Clearly, while many merchants competed to maintain a presence in the officially approved civic markets,⁶⁸⁷ others were working alternative networks that sidestepped the regulatory system—i.e., in unincorporated settlements (*vici*), ports (*portus*), and rural estates (*possiones*).

Regarding long-distance “foreign trade,” the evidence in the Theodosian Code is even scantier. The thrust of *CTh.9.23* of the year 356 is to maintain control of the money supply through prohibitions against conveying currency for sale (“ad diversa vendendi causa”) and against carrying more than a set amount of cash for the merchant’s own expenses. Therefore,

We decree that harbors and various shores where there is customarily very easy access to ships and byroads of the highways must be guarded by suitable apparitors. . . . For We judge that merchants must not export all kinds of money carried in their ships; in fact, We permit only money established in public use to be so conveyed. Likewise We permit only those wares to be bought which are carried by merchants to different places according to their custom.⁶⁸⁸

It is not clear whether the policing of currency transfers and restrictions on the types of goods that might be bought and transported pertained to external trade or also to exchange among the different regions within the Empire. The customary and allowable goods are not enumerated. The single provision in the ‘Code that clearly addresses exchange of goods over the borders of the Empire is *CTh. 4.13.8* of the year 381:

The impost tax collectors of the eighth shall receive the tax from the delegates of loyal foreign peoples only on those products which such peoples export here from

⁶⁸⁷ Noteworthy in this regard is the situation in the City of Rome ca. 440, where *N.Val.5.1 – 2* intervenes against the jealousy of the local trading guilds and expressly supports the return of Greek traders (“Graecos itaque negotiatores, quos pantapolas dicunt”) for the benefit of the City. Unfortunately, while we may surmise that the Greek trading community maintained long-distance connections with members in other trading centers, the general nature of the term [*panta*]*póles* or *-poletés* does not allow us to define these as long-distance or wholesale dealers rather than retail shopkeepers. See Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 519, for the translation.

⁶⁸⁸ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 244. “Quicumque vel conflare pecunias vel ad diversa vendendi causa transferre detegitur, sacrilegii sententiam subeat et capite plectatur. Portus enim litoraue diversa, quo facilius esse navibus consuevit accessus, et itineris tramites statuimus custodiri per idoneos officiales. . . . Nam pecunias navibus vectas non omnes iudicamus mercatores debere promere, quippe in usu tantum publico pecunias constitutas permittimus conveyi itidemque eas solas species emi, quae mercatoribus more sollempni ad diversa portantur.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

the regions whence they come. But if from Roman soil they should export to their own regions any products, and only those, of course, which the law allows, they shall have those goods duty free and exempt from the payment of the tax.⁶⁸⁹

The intent of this provision appears to be to facilitate Roman exports. Encouragement of export trade is implied also in *CTh.* 7.16.3 of the year 420, though under appropriate oversight:

We decree. . . that no illicit goods shall be exported to barbarian nations and that if any ships should be sent out from any port or shore whatsoever, they shall sustain no extortion or losses. . . [M]asters of ships and merchants shall depose in the official records to what places they are going to sail and that they have not suffered any extortion.⁶⁹⁰

This paragraph illuminates some of the bureaucratic procedures surrounding export trade and suggests that merchants who engaged in it were often subject to unsanctioned oppression at the hands of officials. The goods that might be prohibited from export, however, are not listed anywhere within the ‘Code, itself.

The Lombard kingdom

One indication of continuity in legal and administrative practice in Italy from the Late Roman to the early medieval period is the persistence of professional document transcribers. In the former case, these were employees of the various provincial and civic administrative offices, and are in evidence in Ravenna as late as the sixth century. Later, such professional legal writers were no longer attached to specific administrative offices.⁶⁹¹ However, it is clear that in Italy the profession of document-writing had

⁶⁸⁹ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 95. “A legatis (gen)tium devotarum ex his tantum speciebus, quas de locis pr(opriis), unde conveniunt, huc deportant, octavari vectigal accipia(nt; quas) vero ex Romano solo, quae sunt tamen lege concessae, (ad pro)pria deferunt, has habeant a praestatione immunes ac l(iberas).” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

⁶⁹⁰ Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 175. “Saluberrima sanctione decrevimus, ne merces inlicitae ad nationes barbaras deferantur, et quaecumque naves ex quolibet portu seu litore dimittuntur, nullam concussionem vel damna sustineat, gestis apud defensorem locorum praesente protectore seu duciano, qui dispositus est, sub hac observatione confectis, ut, et ad quas partes navigaturi sunt et quod nullam concussionem pertulerant, apud acta deponant: quorum authenticum nauclerus sive mercator habebit scheda apud defensorem manente.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

⁶⁹¹ Classen, “Fortleben un Wandel spätrömischen Urkundenwesens,” 29, 46.

continued into the Lombard period (568 – 774), so that King Liutprand (712 – 744) felt obliged to issue regulations concerning such writers. The gist of edict 91.8 of Liutprand’s fifteenth year is that such writers must write according either to Roman or Lombard law, and only such things that are allowed in these laws, and that they shall be forbidden to do such writing if proven ignorant of these laws.⁶⁹²

Another indication that Italy under the Lombards continued to function under a sophisticated administrative system comes from the so-called Pact of Comacchio, dated to 715 – 30. Therein, Liutprand addresses the leaders and people of Comacchio “so that you and your men should be able to conduct business (*negotium*) in our territories you should make over to our agents, for the river toll, either in kind or in cash according to old custom.”⁶⁹³ The text then goes on to specify the exact amount of river toll or *ripaticum* payable per ship at a long list of inland ports on the Po river system. As these measures are instituted “according to ancient custom” (*antiqua consuetudo*), it may be assumed that such tolls and the apparatus for collecting them have been in place for a long time. The infrastructure for regulating commercial traffic in the Lombard kingdom may, thus, be seen as a bridge spanning the interval from the Late Roman collection of undifferentiated *vectigalia* to the later Carolingian proliferation of specially named tolls and fees to which commercial travelers were subjected.

Of even greater interest is the attempt of the Lombard rulers to exercise control over the movements of both Lombard subjects and foreigners within the kingdom as well as over its borders. Port officials are mentioned as early as *Capitula* nos. 265 – 8 of King Rotharius (636 – 52)—*De portonario qui super flumen portum custodit*. As elaborated in these four short paragraphs, one of the primary functions of the *portonarius* was to apprehend fleeing thieves and other fugitives, whether they be slaves (*mancipia*) or free

⁶⁹² The enumeration follows that used in *MGH Leges* vol. 4 whence also the transcribed text: “De scrivis hoc prospeximus, ut qui cartolas scribent sive ad legem Langobardorum, quoniam apertissima et pene omnibus note est, sive ad Romanorum, non aliter faciat, nisi quomodo in ipsis legibus contenerentur; nam contra legem Langobardorum aut Romanorum non scribant. Quid si non sciunt, interrogent alteros, et si non potuerent ipsas legis pleniter scire, non scribant ipsas cartolas.”

⁶⁹³ Translation by Balzaretti, “Cities, Emporia, and Monasteries: Local Economies in the Po Valley,” 219 – 20. “[Q]ualiter debeatis uestrum peragere negotium homines uestri seu in modiidquamque in preciiis simulque ripatico pro eo quod antiqua conseutudo ab auctoribus nostris praeferam.” Latin text transcribed from Ludo Moritz Hartmann, *Zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Italiens im frühen Mittelalter* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perth, 1904), 123.

(*homines liberes*).⁶⁹⁴ The category of “fugitive” may have included persons such as those mentioned in Rotharius *Capitulum* no. 244, where it is forbidden to anyone to exit or enter a *castrum* or a *civitas* without the *noticia* of his *iudex*, on pain of fines ranging from ten to twenty *solidi*.⁶⁹⁵ While in this case the strictures appear to apply to departure from or entrance into certain circumscribed areas such as walled castles or towns, the terms *iudex* and *noticia* used in this paragraph have potentially wider implications.

As analyzed by Georgina Tangl in the context of a more sweeping edicts of kings Ratchis (744 – 49) and Aistulf (749 – 56), the *iudex* was not simply a “judge” but was in effect the royally appointed governor of a province or *civitas*—in this case understood as the entire city-territory rather than merely the space inside the walls.⁶⁹⁶ Such an administrative system would have made sense in the Lombard kingdom as described by Wickham: strong kings actively involved in legislating and resolving disputes, but deriving their main political support from the network of cities and their citizen-bodies that had largely survived the sixth-century dissolution of Roman imperial government. In Lombard Italy, aristocrats did not dispose of great landed estates, but rather sought to parlay their high status into appointments to royal offices; presumably, many of these office-seekers functioned in the role of the above-mentioned *iudices*.⁶⁹⁷

The term *noticia*, meanwhile, as analyzed by Tangl in the connection with Ratchis’ and Aistulf’s edicts, had two distinct meanings, both of which could be appropriate in the context of the oversight function of a *iudex*. First, it could mean simply cognizance, knowledge, or agreement; second, it could mean a brief written notice or record, especially one issued to an applicant to be shown to other officials as proof of inspection, identity, or permission. In the case of Rotharii no. 244, it seems that the former definition would be the correct one: a citizen or resident may not furtively leave

⁶⁹⁴ Terms transcribed from *MGH Legum tomus IIII*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz (Hannover: Hahn, 1868), 64 – 5.

⁶⁹⁵ “Si quis per murum de castro aut civitate sine noticia iudecis sui exierit foras, aut intraverit, si liber est, sit culpabilis in curtem reges solidos viginti; si autem haldius aut servus fuerit, sit culpabilis sold. decim in curtem reges.” Text transcribed from Pertz, ed., *MGH Legum tomus IIII*, 60.

⁶⁹⁶ Georgina Tangl, “Das Paßvorschrift des Königs Ratchis und ihre Beziehung zu dem Verhältnis zwischen Franken und Langobarden vom 6. – 8. Jahrhundert,” *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 38 (1958): 46 – 52.

⁶⁹⁷ Wickham, *Framing*, 117 – 20.

or enter a controlled space such as a castle or a walled town but may do so only with the knowledge and permission of the official (*iudex*) set in charge of the place.⁶⁹⁸ About a century later, King Liutprand (712 – 44) issued a regulation (18.III of the year 720) titled *De negatoribus vel magistris*, that a person traveling for business whether within the province or outside of it, if not returned within three years, must give notice to his *iudex* or *missus* or risk losing his property to his heirs.⁶⁹⁹ Noteworthy here is the circumstance that there are royal officials—*iudices* or *missi*—whose job it was to keep track of the whereabouts of persons domiciled in their jurisdiction; presumably, the way that the overdue traveler would make his whereabouts or circumstances known to the responsible official would be in some written form—a letter or similar notice. Further, this regulation does not appear to place any particular obstacles in the way of a citizen traveling about for purposes of business, and accepts that such business might take some considerable time to complete. Altogether, it appears that travel and business activities within the Lombard kingdom had become more frequent and unremarkable in the century or so between the aforementioned edict of Rotharius and this regulation issued under Liutprand, and that such activities routinely involved more than a single city-territory.⁷⁰⁰

The state of Lombard officialdom is further illuminated by the edicts of Ratchis and Aistulf from the mid-eighth century. As explained by Tangl, these edicts (Ratchis nos. 9.V and 13, Aistulf nos. 4, 5, 6, and 9) were motivated by the conjunction of ongoing hostilities vs. the papal territories and the Exarchate of Ravenna, the looming threat of Frankish intervention from the north, and widespread internal discontent and opposition to the regime.⁷⁰¹ For our purposes, the edicts are significant for the information they provide regarding the structure and capabilities of the Lombard administrative system

⁶⁹⁸ Tangl, “Das Paßvorschrift des Königs Ratchis,” 44 – 5.

⁶⁹⁹ “Si quis negotium peragendum vel pro qualicumque artificio intra provincia vel extra provincia ambolaverit, et in tres annos regressus non fuerit, et forsitan infirmitas ei emserit, faciat scire per iudicem aut per missum suum.” Text transcribed from Pertz, ed., *MGH Legum tomus IIII*, 115.

⁷⁰⁰ This impression is conformable with the analysis of Lombard Italy in Wickham, *Framing*, 203 – 19, 644 – 55, 729 – 41, both socio-politically and economically. The basic social, economic, and political units were the city-territories, which typically were viable but isolated and self-sufficient. Inter-regional exchange was becoming livelier again in the late seventh and early eighth centuries, as witnessed by the Lombard – Byzantine commercial treaty of 680 and the abovementioned Comacchio pact (pp. 732 – 3).

⁷⁰¹ Tangl, “Das Paßvorschrift des Königs Ratchis,” 24 – 8.

and the types of traffic that regularly passed to and fro across the borders of the kingdom at this time.

First, Aistulf no. 6 states the most sweeping and general case, namely, that no one may go about for purposes of business, neither by land nor by water, without express authorization from the king or the local governor.⁷⁰² This reconfirms, in somewhat expanded terms, the principle set out in Rotharii no. 244 over a century earlier, namely, that travel within the Lombard kingdom requires the cognizance and authorization of a responsible official. The significant update to current conditions here is the explicit expectation that much if not most of such travel will be undertaken for business purposes—*negotium peragendum*. Further, as an *epistula regis* or formal rescript appears as a requirement in certain cases of trans-border trade in other edicts of Ratchis and Aistulf, it is clear that the generalized provisions of Aistulf no. 6 were meant to encompass trans-border as well as internal trading ventures. In many ways, the regulations in Aistulf no. 6 are similar to those in *CTh.* 7.16.3 of the year 420, where shippers setting out to trade in “barbarian nations” may do so but only under appropriate oversight, including the filing of an itinerary with the responsible port officials.⁷⁰³ In Aistulf no. 4, it is specifically forbidden to do business with the “Roman people,” i.e. with Byzantine subjects in the Exarchate or with residents of Rome and the papal territories, without royal permission to do so. Violators are threatened with hefty fines and dishonor, and responsible *iudices* also pay a penalty for negligence if their subordinates or dependants are caught in violation.⁷⁰⁴

Further, the edicts of Ratchis and Aistulf of the mid-eighth century reveal much more detail about the organization of the traffic control service and a marked shift in the

⁷⁰² “De navigio et terreno negotio: ut nullus debeat negotium peragendum ambulare, aut pro quaecumque causa, sine epistola regis aut sine voluntatis iudicis sui; et si hoc fecerit, conponat widrigildum suum.” Text transcribed from Pertz, ed., *MGH Legum tomus IIII*, 197.

⁷⁰³ See discussion in subsection *Theodosian foundations* above.

⁷⁰⁴ “Et hoc item de illis hominibus, qui negotium fecerint sine voluntate regis cum Romano homine: si fuerit iudex, qui hoc facere presumpserit, conponat widrigild suum et honorem summ amittat; si fuerit arimannus homo, amittat res suas et vadat decalvatus clamandum: “sic patiatu[r] qui contra voluntatem regis cum Romano homine negotium fecerit, quando lites habemus.” Similiter conponat iudex, qui neglectum fecerit as inquirendum, si ante ad eius notitiam pervenit, quod arimannus eius hoc fecisset, aut alius homo in eius iudicaria, conponat widrigild suum, honorem suum non perdat. Et si dixerit ipse iudex, quod ad eius notitiam non venisset, purificet se ad sancta Dei evangelia, quod ad eum non pervenisset.” Text transcribed from Pertz, ed., *MGH Legum tomus IIII*, 196 – 7.

primary focus of its activities. In Rotharius nos. 265 – 8 of the earlier seventh century, the focus was on the *portonarii* or officials in charge of the ports, who were made responsible for apprehending and detaining all manner of fugitives. Given the time period, we may assume that the ports in question were the river ports of the Po system, and that these were considered to be the most significant control points for movement within the Lombard kingdom. In the mid-eighth century, primary responsibility clearly has shifted to the march lords in the north, in charge of the Alpine frontiers of Lombardy, and the governors of Tuscany who must police the border with Rome and the papal territories. Aistulf no. 9 underscores the shift when it makes the *iudices* responsible for apprehending thieves and making sure that they do not escape through the *clusae*.⁷⁰⁵

Indeed, the *clusae* are mentioned explicitly in two of the edicts of Ratchis and Aistulf. The high valleys on the southern slopes of the Alps leading down from the passes, such as the Aosta valley, had been in Frankish hands since the late sixth century; the Lombards, however, maintained checkpoints—the *clusae*—at the points where these high valleys debouched onto the north Italian plain.⁷⁰⁶ In the mid-eighth century, the monitoring of traffic through these *clusae* became a matter of critical political concern. Administratively, under the *iudices* who held overall responsibility for security in the northern marches, a category of subordinate officials, the *clusarii*, did the day-to-day work of detaining and inspecting persons wishing to pass through the *clusae*. According to Tangl's analysis, the northern marches functioned as holding areas: neither those wishing to enter or transit through the Lombard kingdom from the north nor those wishing to exit from Lombardy over the Alps were allowed to leave the march districts until they had undergone appropriate inspection and received the required permissions.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁵ See text in Pertz, ed., *MGH Legum tomus III*, 197.

⁷⁰⁶ Tangl, "Das Paßvorschrift des Königs Ratchis," 6 – 10, reviews this history.

⁷⁰⁷ Tangl, "Das Paßvorschrift des Königs Ratchis," 29 – 36. Ratchis no. 13, which sets out the instructions in the greatest detail, begins thus: "Hoc autem statuere previdimus, ut marcas nostas. . . sic debeat fieri ordinatas et vigilatas, ut inimici nostri et gentes nostre non possint per eas sculcas mittere aut fugacis exietes suscipere, sed nullus homo per eas introire posit sine signo aut epistula regis. Propterea unusquisque iudex per marcas sibi commissas tale studium et vigilantium ponere debeat, et per se et per loco positos et clusarios suos, ut nullus homo sine sine signo aut epistola regis exire possint." Text transcribed from Pertz, ed., *MGH Legum tomus III*, 192. *Clusarii* are mentioned explicitly also in Aistulf no. 5.

Ratchis and Aistulf were as concerned with domestic conspirators leaving the country as with possible anti-regime messages, arms, and other aid coming in from the outside. Ratchis no. 9 lists all of the surrounding states and warns the responsible *iudices*, on pain of death and confiscation of property, that it is expressly forbidden to allow an emissary (*missus*) to depart to any of the aforementioned places except with the explicit permission of the king.⁷⁰⁸ While these considerations were politically the most important ones, it is clear that the majority of the traffic passing through Lombard territory consisted of pilgrims going to and from Rome, and here is where the instructions are most detailed (Ratchis no. 13): pilgrims seeking entrance via the *clusae* are to be interrogated, and those who have convinced the responsible officials that they are, in fact, bona fide pilgrims traveling peacefully (*simpliciter veniant*) may be issued with a brief notice that they have passed such inspection and may proceed. However, in order to cross the opposite frontier into Roman territory, even simple pilgrims must obtain a formal letter of permission from the king or an authorized deputy of the king, which must be inspected and certified once more when they return from Rome to transit Lombard territory homeward bound.⁷⁰⁹ Finally, analysis of the references to *noticiae*, *signa*, and *epistulae* in the edicts of Ratchis and Aistulf suggest the physical form that such authorizations assumed. Most likely, the applicant would receive a tablet of wood with a layer of wax on one side, probably foldable for protection of the contents, upon which short proofs of initial clearances, official seals, and longer formulae of authorization might be impressed as needed. The waxed tablet and its contents served, thus, as a kind of passport that enabled the holder to enter, transit through, and exit Lombard territory.⁷¹⁰

The above discussion makes clear that the Lombard state in the eighth century wielded a sophisticated bureaucratic apparatus, working under centralized, royal control.

⁷⁰⁸ “Si quis iudex aut quicumque homo missum suum diregere presumpserit Roma, Ravenna, Spoleti, Benevento, Francia, Baioaria, Alamannia, Ritas aut in Avaria sine iussione regis, animae suae incurrat periculum, et res eius infiscentur.” Text transcribed from Pertz, ed., *MGH Legum tomus III*, 190.

⁷⁰⁹ See the analysis in Tangl, “Das Paßvorschrift des Königs Ratchis,” 36 – 8, 42 – 4. “Et dum ad ingrediendum venerint peregrini ad clusas nostras, qui ad Romam ambulare disponunt, diligenter debeat eos interrogare unde sint; et si cognoscat, quod simpliciter veniant, faciat iudex aut clusarius syngraphus. . . ut ipsi postea ostendant ipsum signum missis nostris, quos nos ardaenaverimus. Signum post hac missus nostri faciant eis epistola ad Romam ambulandi; et con venerint da Romo, accipiant signo de anolo regis.” Text transcribed from Pertz, ed., *MGH Legum tomus III*, 192.

⁷¹⁰ See the analysis in Tangl, “Das Paßvorschrift des Königs Ratchis,” 38 – 41.

For kings Ratchis and Aistulf at mid-century, their ability to control this apparatus was complicated by political unrest at home and the threat of intervention from abroad. The regulations concern themselves with inspection and tracing of travelers, and restrictions on specific kinds of communications across Lombard borders.⁷¹¹ Nothing is said in these regulations about fees or tolls that might be collected from commercial and non-commercial travelers at the frontiers. That trans-border trade existed is certain given the special restrictions placed upon doing business with partners in the Byzantine and papal territories of Italy. This direction of exchange would follow logically upon previous hints of trade along the Po river axis. It may be, that ca. 750 the trans-Alpine trade out of northern Italy was not yet significant—it would develop rapidly during the later eighth century along with the emergence of Venice and the full unfolding of the North Sea and Rhine river trading systems.⁷¹² To its north, the Lombard kingdom ca. 750 expected diplomatic traffic, which it sought to monitor and control as much as possible, and transiting pilgrims.

Carolingian rules and privileges

Carolingian practice regarding oversight and regulation followed in the tradition set initially by the Late Roman state and continued, in certain aspects by the Lombards. One possible instance of such continuity may be found in the royally imposed obligation to maintain the infrastructure necessary for communications, namely, the roads and bridges. *CTh.* 15.3.6 of the year 423, under the heading of *De itinere muniendo* asserts that *all* must participate in this essential service or duty.⁷¹³ Szabo has argued that such duties had

⁷¹¹ The most general case is stated in Aistulf no. 5. of the year 750: “De clusas, qui disruptae sunt, restaurentur et ponant ibi custodiam, ut nec nostri homines possint transire sine voluntate regis, nec extranei possint introire in provincia nostra similiter sine voluntate regis vel iussione.” Text transcribed from Pertz, ed., *MGH Legum tomus III*, 197.

⁷¹² See discussion in Section 6.2, subsections *The emergence of Venice* and *Italy and the North*, and Section 6.3, subsection *From Italy to Francia: the trans-Alpine trade goods* above.

⁷¹³ “Absit, ut nos instructionem viae publicae et pontium stratarumque operam titulis magnorum principum dedicatam inter sordida munera numeremus. Igitur ad instructiones reparationesque itinerum pontiumque nullum genus hominum nulliusque dignitatis ac venerationis meritis cessare oportet. Domos etiam divinas ac venerandas ecclesias tam laudabili titulo libenter adscribimus. Quam legem cunctarum provinciarum iudicibus intimari conveniet, ut noverint, quae viis publicis antiquitas tribuenda decrevit, sine ullius vel reverentiae vel dignitatis exceptione praestanda.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

been upheld in Lombard Italy continuously from Roman times, and in the later eighth century were either adopted or revived by the Carolingians also for their territories north of the Alps. There are numerous examples of Carolingian capitularies of the earlier ninth century that assert this duty and insist on its fulfillment. The major difference, according to Szabo, was that north of the Alps the tradition of road maintenance could not be revived, but the duty to maintain infrastructure was limited to such bridges that still existed.⁷¹⁴ It is possible that the Carolingian lawgivers were influenced by the example of Lombard legislation that they found before them in Italy, particularly after the 774 annexation of the Lombard kingdom when they became responsible for administering this new addition to the empire. If so, we might surmise that the Carolingians may have adopted provisions and legal principles from the Lombards on other aspects of the regulation of travel and trade. There is no doubt, however, that most of Carolingian practice was an outgrowth of a parallel tradition, based ultimately on Late Roman law, as it evolved independently in the Frankish kingdoms from the sixth to the ninth century.

The evident Carolingian attempt to restrict trade to officially sanctioned markets, which could be the more easily overseen by tax collectors and other government officials, may also be regarded as a continuation of a principle established in the Late Roman period, as for example in *N.Val.15.5*. In theory, as Endemann puts it:

Das Marktregal ist ein Hoheitsrecht des Königs gegenüber dem Markt, ohne bewilligung des Königs darf ein Markt weder bestehen noch eingerichtet werden.⁷¹⁵

However, as Endemann notes, such regalian rights were more difficult to assert in places such as sub-Roman *civitates*, where a market was already established by long-standing custom. In general, the royal claim to the right to regulate markets expressed itself rarely in the grant of charters for new markets. Rather, it consisted most commonly in the

⁷¹⁴ Th. Szábo, “Antikes Erbe und karolingisch – ottonische Verkehrspolitik,” in *Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter: Festschrift für Josef Fleckenstein zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Lutz Fenske, Werner Rösner, and Thomas L. Zotz (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1984), 126 – 33.

⁷¹⁵ (Market regulation is a sovereign right of the king in relation to markets; without the consent of the king a marketplace may neither continue in existence nor be founded.) Traute Endemann, *Markturkunde und Markt in Frankreich und Burgund vom 9. bis 11. Jahrhundert* (Konstanz: Jan Thorbecke, 1964), 38.

establishment of mints and the collection of tolls and taxes in a marketplace regardless of the manner in which such a market might have come into being.

Alternatively, the right to the profits from mints or tolls could be assigned to a third party, or immunities granted.⁷¹⁶ In ninth-century Francia, markets proliferated, ranging in type from the *mercatum publicum*, where tolls might be collected, to “villa-Märkten,” which served mainly as places of exchange of local goods for local use and typically were not subject to taxation.⁷¹⁷ The latter distinction is reminiscent of the exemptions from the “tax payable in gold and silver” that were granted to landowners and rural cultivators who did no more than to market their own produce. The Frankish *mercati publici*, meanwhile, are analogous to the late imperial venues such as the aforementioned “*nundinae civitatibus earumque territoriis*” where business transactions might be regulated and taxed. It may be noted that Adam sees the various tolls and fees collected in the Frankish public marketplaces as a reflection of the Roman precedent of collecting the *siliqua* and other users’ fees in such places.⁷¹⁸

One of the most noticeable features of Carolingian regulation of travel and trade was the great multiplication of various fees and tolls along the landways and riverways. In place of the straightforward Roman *vectigalia* and the Lombard *ripaticum*, long lists of differentiated payments appear, for example, in the exemption clauses of *diplomae* extending privileges to individual *negotiatores*. One such typical list appears in Louis the Pious’s privilege to one Rabbi Domatus and his nephew Samuel, which explicitly names *teloneum*, *paravereda*, *mansionaticum*, *pulveraticum*, *cespitaticum*, *ripaticum*, *portaticum*, *pontaticum*, *trabaticum*, and *cenaticum* as tolls and fees that the recipients will not have to pay.⁷¹⁹ These documents of privilege also reflect the multiplicity of officials who might be involved with the collection of tolls or otherwise attempt to interfere with traveling *negotiatores*. The same formula *Ludovici Pii* no. 30 is addressed

⁷¹⁶ Endemann, *Markturbunde un Markt*, 38 – 49.

⁷¹⁷ Hildegard Adam, *Das Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich und das spätkarolingische Wirtschaftsleben* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996), 183 – 4.

⁷¹⁸ Adam, *Zollwesen*, 192. “Der Marktzoll war ursprünglich ein Sammelbegriff für eine Fülle antiker Zölle.”

⁷¹⁹ *Formulae imperiales e curia Ludovici Pii*, no. 30, in *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, ed. Karolus Zevmer (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1886), 309. For an analysis of the multiplicity of fee and toll payments, see Adam, *Zollwesen*, 37 – 68.

to *omnibus episcopis, abbatibus, comitibus, gastaldiis, vicariis, centenariis, clusariis seu etiam missis nostris discurrentibus necnon et omnibus fidelibus nostris*.⁷²⁰ The Carolingian system of the earlier ninth century was, therefore, at least as evolved as that of the Lombards was around the mid-eighth century in its ability to police travel and trade.

Carolingian pass-documents such as the individual privileges exemplified in the *Formulae imperiales e curia Ludovici Pii*, were not valid for a single round trip only, as seems to be the case in the Lombard regulations of kings Ratchis and Aistulf, but long-term proofs of certain legal rights recorded on parchment that the recipient could keep and present, at need, over an indefinite period of time. Another distinguishing feature of Carolingian regulatory practice was the apparently routine grants of exemptions from payment of tolls and fees extended both to individual *negotiatores* and to institutional players such as abbeys, who wished to engage in commerce. Such exemptions were rare in Roman law-giving and do not appear in the Lombard edicts. In *CTh.* 16.2.6, 8, 10, and 14 of the years 323, 343, 346, and 357, respectively, clerics are freed from the payment of trading taxes on the theory that any profit they realize will go towards funding social services such as care of the poor that the State considered valuable.⁷²¹ In *N.Val.* 35.1.4 of the year 452, however, clerical exemptions from taxes on trading activities are revoked, with the judgment that such activities are not compatible with the service of religion, and clerics who engage in business will lose the protection of their clerical status.⁷²² The large numbers of exemptions granted by the Carolingian rulers to commerce-minded abbots doubtless reflects the circumstance that the abbeys of Francia were playing a large role in economic development at that time.⁷²³

⁷²⁰ *Ludovici Pii*, no. 30, in *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, ed. Zevmer, 309.

⁷²¹ “Omnis a clericis indebitae conventionis iniuria et iniquae exactionis repellatur improbitas nullaque conventio sit circa eos munerum sordidorum. Et cum negotiatores ad aliquam praestationem competentem vocantur, ab his universis istiusmodi strepitus conquiescat; si quid enim vel parsimonia vel provisione vel mercatura honestati tamen conscia congesserint in usum pauperum adque egentium, ministrari oportet, ut, quod ex eorundem ergasteriis vel tabernis conquiri potuerit et colligi, collectum id religionis aestiment lucrum.” *CTh.* 16.2.14, text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

⁷²² “Iubemus, ut clerici nihil prorsus negotiationis exerceant. Si velint negotiari, sciant se iudicibus subditos clericorum privilegio non muniri.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

⁷²³ See discussion in Section 6.4, subsection *The role of the abbeys* above.

Tax and toll exemption was routinely granted to pilgrims transiting Frankish territory. In this way, Carolingian practice continued that of the Lombards, who would let pass anyone that they were satisfied was a genuine pilgrim and of no danger to the State. In general, the Carolingians made no effort to limit or to impede the movement of goods and people through their territories. As is evident from the documents, the major control-points where oversight of merchants and goods entering or leaving the empire and the collection of tolls might take place, were the *emporia* on the northern coast and the *clusae* on the passes south into Italy. Dorestad, Quentovic, and the *clusae* are mentioned explicitly as places where a toll of 10 per cent was to be collected in Louis the Pious' famous "Praeceptum negotiatorum" of 828.⁷²⁴ Clearly, since a toll of 10 per cent was payable even by the most favored *negotiatores* such as those with special access to the palace, it was expected that merchants would be able to realize a handsome profit even after paying the full toll-rates at the key entrance and exit points of the Carolingian transcontinental trading system. In general, it may be asserted that Carolingian regulations regarding trade were designed to encourage, not to impede it, only taking care to reserve to the fisc a fair share of the profits of this trade through the collection of tolls and fees.

Finally, what can we say about the status of long-distance merchant-adventurers or *negotiatores* in the Carolingian realms in the later eighth and ninth centuries? Long ago, Hans Planitz suggested that the people that engaged in long-distance trade did, in fact, attain, due to their specialized function, the status of a special social group with unusual legal privileges. They were expressly granted royally protected venues where they might carry on their trade. Moreover, they were highly mobile and were allowed to carry arms, yet without being subject to the duties of regular military service, unlike other

⁷²⁴ *Ludovici Pii*, no. 37, in *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, ed. Zevmer, 314 – 15. This document has received abundant attention from researchers in the past. It was the subject of a dedicated study by François L. Ganshof, "Note sur le 'Praeceptum negotiatorum' de Louis le Pieux," in *Studi in onore di Armando Saporì* (Milano: Istituto editoriale cisalpino, 1957), 101 – 112. It was referenced in Doehaerd, *Early Middle Ages*, 176 – 7; in Duby, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, 100 – 1; in Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs fresons*, 158 – 9, 256, and 262; in Verhulst, *Rise of Cities*, 57 – 8 and n. 36. Most recently, the "Praeceptum" found discussion in McCormick, *Origins* (2001), 666 – 8 and 674. Interpretations of this key document have been, in all cases, highly dependent on the author's assumptions regarding the condition of exchange and economic activity in Frankish western Europe at the time.

classes of arms-bearing citizens in this society. They were a special class, not serf, not noble, not clerical, but also not yet self-governing; they were under the protection of the king, but subject to his taxes, tolls, and justice.⁷²⁵

The special status of merchants appears in the circumstance that they often were enlisted for diplomatic missions.⁷²⁶ As we have seen, merchants regularly traveled armed and congregated in groups for protection both on land and sea.⁷²⁷ This was true in Russia, in the Baltic and the North Sea, and on the landways across Carolingian Europe as well. The arms-bearing privilege of the *negotiatores* may be traced to the momentous change in Roman policy in the crisis of the fifth century. Whereas the prohibition against the carrying and use of arms by private citizens had been reasserted as recently as *CTh.* 15.15 of the year 364, *N.Val.* 9 reversed this policy and encouraged private citizens to arm and organize themselves for protection against attacks by “brigands,” including barbarian enemies such as the Vandals of Africa.⁷²⁸ In *N.Val.* 13.14 it was clarified that private forces were to be used only for the common defense, not for purposes of oppression vs. the local inhabitants. Exemption from forced military service was already re-affirmed in *N.Val.* 5.3 of the year, which specified that Roman citizens and guild members in particular would only be required to man the walls and gates of the City at need. Arguably, the exemption from military service extended to tradesmen’s guilds and the permission to form privately armed groups for purposes of community defense could, in combination, set the foundations for bands of merchants traveling armed to protect their ad hoc mobile “community” but otherwise not subject to military obligations.

⁷²⁵ Summary based on Planitz, *Deutsche Stadt im Mittelalter*, 58 – 9.

⁷²⁶ See for example Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 127 – 8.

⁷²⁷ Jankuhn, *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 138.

⁷²⁸ “Quoties publicis, possit utilitas, universitatis sollicitudinem ducimus advocandam, ut omnibus profutura inpleantur ab omnibus, nec molestum esse provincialibus nostris credimus, quod pro ipsorum salute disponitur, ut resistendi praedonibus cura subeat. . . singulos universosque hoc admonemus edicto, ut Romani roboris confidentia et animo, quo debent propria defensari, cum suis adversus hostes, si usus exegerit, salva disciplina publica, servataque ingenuitatis modestia, quibus potuerint utantur armis nostrasque provincias ac fortunas proprias fideli conspiratione et iuncto umbone tueantur: hac videlicet spe laboris proposita, ut suum fore non ambigat quidquid hosti victor abstulerit.” Text transcribed from Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri xvi*.

In Aistulf no. 3 of 750, the presumption that merchants will have arms and know how to use them finds expression in the requirement that they serve in the armed forces along with other men.⁷²⁹ Tangl explains this conscription of merchants into the armed forces of the Lombard king as an extraordinary measure necessitated by the contingencies of the mid-eighth century.⁷³⁰ From the Carolingian legal corpus, we have no explicit reference to the arms-privileges of *negotiatores*. However, the oft-quoted Diefenbach capitulary of 805 (44.7) threatens *negotiatores* with confiscation only if they are caught transporting arms and armor for sale across the Elbe frontier, i.e. in excess of that which they might normally carry for personal protection. Nowhere is there a prohibition against merchants carrying arms. Altogether, we may surmise that this matter receives so little mention in the legal sources because it was assumed that it was normal for merchants to carry arms, hence the matter needed no special attention. Along with the other protections and favors extended to them, the right to travel armed in Carolingian territory no doubt contributed to the special status and ethos of this class of Carolingian *fideles*, the loyal *negotiatores*.

A bridge to the future

It lies beyond the limits of the present study to continue the analysis of exchange and mercantile activity under the later Carolingian rulers of the ninth century and into the Ottonian period that followed in the tenth. Evidence points, however, to continuity in bureaucratic practice. In the words of Bachrach and Bachrach:

Of singular importance in the present context. . . [is the] effectiveness of Carolingian capitulary legislation in stimulating the production of written documents for use at the local level, for transmitting information from the center to the localities, and from the localities to the center. . . Matthew Innis concluded

⁷²⁹ “Item de illis hominibus, qui negotiantes sunt et pecunias non habent: maiores et potentes, habeant loricas et cavalos, scutum et lanceam; que sunt sequentes, habeant caballos, scutum et lanceam; et qui sunt minores, habeant coccoras cum sagittas et arcum.” Text transcribed from Pertz, ed., *MGH Legum tomus III*, 196. See also McCormick, *Origins*, 630 – 1.

⁷³⁰ Tangl, “Das Paßvorschrift des Königs Ratchis,” 53 – 4.

that the central government not only maintained regular contact between the localities and the center, but did so through the medium of written texts.⁷³¹

While Bachrach and Bachrach focus on the administration of fiscal properties and on the rules regarding grants of royal benefices, there is no doubt that mercantile activity would have continued to enjoy documentary support in the later ninth century as it had in the earlier ninth. Indeed, *diplomae* issued by Otto 1 (936 – 72) extend commercial privileges to recipients in Magdeburg and Bremen similar in language and substance to Carolingian documents of a century earlier.⁷³²

Overall, the legislation concerning merchants and mercantile activity in eighth- and ninth-century Carolingian Europe is conformable with the general picture of long-distance exchange activities in various parts of western Eurasia in the 700 – 900 period. The major differences in detail that are found in the rules and practices regarding such activity followed in each of the major constituent regions or “worlds” of the western Eurasian trade circuit—the Caliphate, Byzantium, European Russia, the North, and the Latin Christian West—were a function of the governing system, or lack thereof, in each of these regions. All of them, in their own way, facilitated international, long-distance exchange, which in turn contributed substantially to the economic development in each specific region and to the prosperity of western Eurasia as a whole.

⁷³¹ Bernard S. Bachrach and David S. Bachrach, “Continuity of Written Administration in the Late Carolingian East c. 887 – 911,” *Fruuhmittelalterliche Studien* 42 (2008): 111.

⁷³² See in particular Otto I nos. 299, 300, 301, 303, 307, and 309, all in *MGH Die Urkunden der deutschen Könige und Kaiser*, vol. 1, *Die Urkunden Konrad I. Heinrich I. und Otto I* (Hannover: Hahn, 1879), 413 – 19, 422 – 4.

Chapter 8: Patterns and Conclusions

It is time for a summary.

The preceding chapters, though dealing most intensively with material concerning the Carolingian or 700 – 900 period, have covered a wide temporal and geographic range. One advantage of such a broad-based investigation is that it allows to distinguish more readily those conditions and happenstances that may be peculiar to one time and place from those that recur over multiple regions and multiple time-frames. Conversely, a long-term view may reveal better than a more narrow time-frame what characteristics of a given region are the most persistent and normative for that region in regard to a given category of human activity in that region—in this case, a region’s or sub-region’s capacity to engage in exchange.

Geography and resources

The several “worlds” of western Eurasia, whose exchange relations were investigated above, may best be defined culturally—as persistent sets of normative ideas and practices, including norms and practices concerning economic activities. But they also may be conceived as situated in relation to the fundamentals of European geography.¹ The North or the Scandinavian – Baltic realm and its extensions, westward into the North Sea region and eastward into European Russia, encompasses the chain of northern waters that define the north edge of the Europe peninsula.² Of all the trading worlds considered in this study, the North, especially in its Scandinavian – Baltic central portion, has been the most consistently present as an element of whatever overall exchange system was operative in western Eurasia in any time period.

In the Bronze Age, the North had its primary interregional exchange relations with central Europe or the middle portion of continental Temperate Europe.³ At the same

¹ For the definition of the “Worlds” of the 700 – 900 period, see Section 6.1, subsection *The geographic outline of the exchange system*; the details of their exchange relations in the 700 – 900 period are treated in Section 7.3.

² See Section 3.1.

³ For the definition of Temperate Europe as used here, see Section 3.1.

time, Baltic amber, at least, was also reaching the Mediterranean world.⁴ Thus, in the Bronze Age, we could usefully speak of a three-layered series of worlds as the organizing system of exchange in Europe: the North, central Europe, and the Mediterranean.⁵

In the late Bronze Age and during the Iron Age, the North became relatively isolated from the main currents of exchange and developed its culture and economy (agriculture, iron industry) independently. An increasingly dynamic Mediterranean world, meanwhile, interacted ever more intensively with an expanded swath of Temperate Europe extending from Gaul in the west to the Carpathian basin in the east. Both the Mediterranean and the aforementioned areas of Temperate Europe experienced significant increases in production and population during this time, with the Mediterranean, however, outstripping Temperate Europe in political and military organization.

This led, in turn, to a period from the late first century BC to the fifth century AD during which the dominant arrangement in European trading worlds was bipolar, with a Mediterranean-based Roman imperial system in control of half of Temperate Europe while the other half, together with the North, might be considered as an uncontrolled Roman-influence zone. Nevertheless, though Temperate Europe was cut thus in two, the placement of the dividing line between these two zones depended on the geographic fact that the Rhine and Danube rivers offered unparalleled advantages as communications routes capable of supporting the logistics of an extensive frontier establishment. Further, the formation of a frontier sub-culture in the border provinces and episodes such as the Gallic empire in the later third century could be seen in part as a Temperate European economy re-asserting itself against a somewhat artificial Mediterranean orientation. The North, meanwhile, becomes increasingly visible again as a component of the

⁴ The Mediterranean and its Black Sea extension together define the south edge of the Europe peninsula. From this viewpoint, it can be considered as the polar opposite of the North.

⁵ The system might be expanded to consider, as well, a steppe World that perturbed portions of eastern and central Europe periodically, and perhaps also an Atlantic World that extended into the British Isles; this, however, lies beyond the scope of the present study.

interregional exchange system, one symptom of which is the accumulation of gold in southern Scandinavia, as for example at Gudme.⁶

The configuration changed yet again in the 500 – 700 period. As the Roman imperial system collapsed or underwent radical transformation, Temperate Europe re-emerged as an economic and exchange region distinct from the Mediterranean, but becoming divided yet again—this time into a Frankish dominated western half and an Avar-Slav dominated eastern half. The North during this period becomes more visible, again, as a distinct participant in interregional exchange, though oriented from the mid-sixth century onwards exclusively to the west. At the same time, there is impressive economic development and socio-political consolidation evident in the North. The Mediterranean, meanwhile, becomes increasingly fragmented with the retreat of the Roman imperial system, so that it becomes more useful to consider this region as an interface zone between worlds rather than as a coherent trade- and production-world in its own right. The participants across this interface include the imperial rump state of Byzantium, the newly emergent Islamic world that in the Middle East and North Africa, and the Latin Christian world consolidating around Merovingian Gaul.

Avar-Slav east central Europe appears isolated from international exchange: at least, it is impossible to demonstrate the operation of any interregional exchange routes across the eastern half of Temperate Europe at this time. If east central Europe has trans-regional connections, then these would be in the direction of the Pontic steppe and in the expansion of Slavic colonization through the forest-steppe zone of European Russia in the 500 – 700 period. European Russia as a whole is not active in interregional exchange during this period. Thus, while the North connects with Merovingian continental Europe and Merovingian Europe connects with the Mediterranean, the North has no links as yet across eastern Europe to Byzantium and the Middle East. In other words, as of 700, only half of the circuit is fully in place.

The western Eurasian exchange circuit, as I am calling it, emerges in its complete form in the 700 – 900 period, which in the Latin Christian world coincides with the

⁶ It would be worthwhile also to investigate centers of production and exchange patterns in European Russia during this period. It was not possible to pursue this aspect in the present study.

Carolingian era. The western half of the circuit linking the North, Latin Christian continental western Europe, and the Mediterranean continues in operation as before, only with greatly increased traffic. The Mediterranean continues to function as an interface zone, with increasingly dynamic links among the Latin Christian, Islamic, and Byzantine worlds. Finally, interregional exchange links become activated across European Russia, thus completing the circuit and providing the North with an outlet to the east in addition to the well-established one that it continues to maintain with the west.⁷

As this diachronic synopsis reveals, there cannot be any question of geographic determinism—rather, the changing configuration of worlds over long stretches of time reflects human actions in response to opportunities offered by the geographical layout of western Eurasia. A trading world can be defined primarily by its systems of production, its political and administrative systems (especially as these affect conditions of exchange), and its dominant cultural idioms (e.g. Latin Christianity or Islam). Nevertheless, the extent of each world and the connections between the worlds are aspects of the overall exchange system that are strongly dependent of the underlying geography. The North is always connected with the waters that define the northern edge of the Europe peninsula, and with the routes of communications that these waters afford. The Mediterranean always defines the southern edge of the Europe peninsula and the opportunities for communications that its sea-space provides, in addition to representing an environmental zone with unique production potentials; but in terms of exchange it may operate more as a unified exchange region, as during the imperial Roman period, or as an interface zone of communications as in the 500 – 700 and 700 – 900 periods. In between, continental Temperate Europe typically maintains exchange relations both to its north and to its south, while its space may be configured in various ways from one period to another. Finally, European Russia, though in terms of climate its middle portions are effectively extensions of Temperate Europe, follows a trajectory of internal economic development and interregional exchange connections that contrasts with that in the Gaul-

⁷ It may be observed that the geographic analysis is incomplete to the extent that the present study has not consistently followed either the development of the Atlantic edge of Europe as an exchange World or the Danube region. Partly, this stems from an attempt to keep an already sprawling project within some reasonable limits. Also, it should be remarked that there is no evidence that the Danube played any role as a conduit for significant interregional exchange from the sixth century until sometime in the ninth.

to-Carpathians space. In any case, the European Russian world occupies the eastward limits of the Europe peninsula and serves as Europe's interface with the further worlds of the North Asian boreal forest, the Central Asian grasslands, and the Middle East.

The persistent effects of underlying geographical arrangements may be more easily visible in the pattern followed by communications routes both within and between the worlds. As an example, the long coastal sailing routes available in the Scandinavian – Baltic region facilitated the organization of this space into a coherent world in the Bronze Age, helped to maintain it during its Iron-Age phase of relatively isolated development, and supported the role of the North in the interregional exchange system of the Carolingian period. More specifically, the complex coastlines of southern Scandinavia, with their many beaches, harbors, short sailing routes, and opportunities for landward monitoring of traffic supported the emergence in the third through eighth centuries of a locally integrated, multilevel production and exchange network. An available complex of water routes was, apparently, giving rise to a similar network of landing places and productive sites in parts of the Po river area in the seventh and eighth centuries as well. Meanwhile, in all periods, communications between the Mediterranean and Temperate Europe have tended to be channeled into a limited number of practicable avenues, including the Aude-Garonne corridor, the Rhône-Saône corridor, a handful of Alpine passes, and the Ljubljana gap. Examples could be multiplied.

Another, equally important way that natural conditions shape production and exchange is the uneven distribution of resources region by region. Indeed, another way to define the worlds participating in the interregional exchange systems is both by the set of resources that any particular region possesses and might be able to market to its neighbors and by the set of resources which it lacks but may wish to acquire from without. All of the interregional exchange systems addressed in the present study—with the possible exception of the Roman *annona*-supply system—were motivated by the desire of the participants to acquire goods and materials from the outside that were scarce

or non-existent locally and, therefore, engendered the need to develop tradeable resources from their own area.⁸ Two basic considerations emerge from this:

(1) In order to engage successfully in interregional exchange, a region must produce something with which it can enter the market. Particularly, this means the development of some raw material or manufactured good that finds high value and demand in neighboring regions.

(2) The production and transport of interregionally marketable items together with the effort involved in securing the import of such from outside may stimulate the general development of a region's economy. In other words, even if such interregional exchange comprises only a small percentage of the overall economy of a region, sustainable involvement in such exchanges can have a catalytic effect in the growth of local systems of production and transport.

In the western Eurasian configuration of trading worlds, one of the most prominent of the underlying conditions that shaped exchange patterns was the absence of sources of copper, tin, silver and gold over a vast territory stretching from Scandinavia to the Urals. By contrast, many areas within Temperate Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East enjoyed a relative abundance of sources of these metals. The success of the North in acquiring large quantities of metals from outside—bronze in the Bronze Age, gold in the Roman Iron Age, both bronze and silver in the Viking Age—is *prima facie* evidence of the recurrent success of this region in marshalling resources of value to compensate. An early, high-value specialty resource that the North could produce was amber, though over time the demand for amber and therefore its value as a trade item fluctuated greatly.⁹ Items more consistently in demand that the North could provide were furs and slaves.

⁸ This motivation of an economic system contradicts certain modern concepts of such systems, in which efficiency of production rather than the compensatory exchange of resources is seen as the driving force behind successful participation. See discussion in Section 5.4 above.

⁹ The Bronze Age Mediterranean seems to have valued amber not only as a decorative but also as a spiritually charged substance. In the Iron Age, the amber trade from the Baltic to the Adriatic sustained a trans-continental trade route, and amber trading continued to connect the Baltic with the Mediterranean during the Roman period. In the post-Roman 500 – 700 period and continuing into the Carolingian era, however, amber continued to be valued as a prestige item in Scandinavia and in parts of east central and eastern Europe, but it had no significant market in other regions such as the Latin Christian west.

As another example, the Temperate European region thrived in interregional exchange in the Bronze Age by the production of massive quantities of this metal. In the Iron Age, this was joined by iron and salt production. In the 700 – 900 period, Neustrian and Rhenish wine as well as Rhenish quernstones and ceramics were trade items from Francia to the north.

Much of our understanding of the interregional exchange patterns depends upon the durability of the traces that particular items involved in these exchanges may leave in the archaeological record. Thus, it is much easier to trace the movement of metals—especially the non-ferrous metals—and ceramics than the movement of items such as furs, slaves, and wine. In the latter instances, recourse to literary sources, where available, becomes crucial to establish definitively that a trade in such items was, in fact, taking place. As a kind of corollary to the abovesaid, it should be emphasized that similar kinds of exchange, where demonstrated, should not be assigned arbitrarily different values when they occur within different time frames. So, for example, if the production of wine in Italy and the export of this product in large quantities into Temperate Gaul in the late Iron Age (second and first centuries BC) is supposed to have had important catalytic effects in the development of both areas and in motivating the expansion of exchange links to connect them, then it should be supposed that Neustrian and Rhenish wine production and its export to England and Scandinavia in the Carolingian period (eighth and ninth centuries AD) had similar catalytic effects in Francia, Anglo-Saxon England, and the North at that time.

Levels of exchange

In addition to the persistent effects of geography and natural resources distributions, which I had expected to find going into the study, the data collected in the preceding chapters suggests a further set of conclusions—which I had not expected—concerning the multi-level nature of exchange that can be found in most of the regions and time periods investigated. These various levels, which have been mentioned already in several of the Chapter and Section conclusions above, range from the transactions of the elite to the involvement of common producers and consumers.

At the most basic level, it appears that even common villagers—persons engaged primarily in subsistence agriculture and craft production for home use—may become motivated to produce marketable surpluses in order to participate in a trans-local exchange system.¹⁰ Examples abound. In the Bronze Age and early Iron Age in central Europe, the dispersed farming population responded to the availability of bronze and later iron with increased agricultural production, which on the one hand helped to sustain the bronze and iron industries and on the other hand helped to increase agricultural surpluses through the application of metal implements to that task. At the same time, the farmers also were generating enough disposable wealth to acquire pure luxuries, such as glass beads. In seventh-century Lombard Tuscany, villagers invested time and effort into cultivating certain high-value food crops, such as nuts and fruits, beyond the needs of local subsistence. The implication is that they were doing this in response to a market, although it is unclear who the customers might have been. Very likely, considering the description of the Italian economy at that time as not-impooverished but highly fragmented, the marketing area for such village-produced surplus items may have been confined in most cases to the local city-territory. Further, it appears that much of the countryside in lowland England in the later seventh and eighth centuries was tied into the growing interregional exchange system through networks emanating from the major nodes or staging points of the interregional trade—the *emporia* such as London, Ipswich, and York—that reached down to the capillary level. This assertion is founded on the presence of imported goods at many non-elite sites, on evidence for a cottage industry in textile production, and on the distribution of silver coinage, which is now known to have been far more generalized and ubiquitous than what was believed hitherto. Finally, there is the example of southern Scandinavia, where prosperous villages (such as the well-studied Vorbasse site in Jutland) appear to have participated in a higher-level exchange network through the multiplicity of undistinguished landing places scattered along the

¹⁰ Local peasant economies often are considered to have operated on a low level of exchange under the aegis of socially embedded gift-giving. Recent studies have shown, however, that even local, non-commercial exchange networks can be highly complex and sophisticated systems. Therefore, it should be no surprise that participants in such systems would have the capacity to participate in a higher-level exchange system when the opportunity to do so came along. See especially the discussion in Section 7.2, subsection *Eighth- and ninth-century Scandinavia* above.

complex coastlines of that area, which network fed, ultimately, into the interregional exchange system that in southern Scandinavia was represented by nodal points or *emporium* such as Ribe and Haithabu. Brooches made from imported bronze and wrought by Ribe craftsmen were distributed ubiquitously among women of the property-owning class, and imported silver became, by the end of the ninth century, so common throughout Scandinavia that hack-silver was used as the default medium of exchange even for local transactions.

A similar phenomenon occurred in European Russia in conjunction with the opening of trans-regional exchange in the eighth century. The Khazars pioneered the erection of a resource-collecting network that extended from the Khazar base areas on the lower Volga and the North Caucasus steppe far to the northwest across much of the European Russian region—a network designed primarily to procure the furs that the Khazars would sell to customers from the Caliphate. The matter of grass-roots participation in interregional trade is complicated, in this case, by the fact that the Khazars are known to have imposed a tribute in certain areas that they controlled, payable at the rate of one white squirrel pelt per household per annum. In addition to the stocks collected through tribute, however, Khazar agents also *purchased* pelts from the locals. During the ninth century, Rus' adventurers steadily expanded the portion of the European Russian exchange system under their control at the expense of the Khazars, while essentially continuing the systems that the Khazars had pioneered. Thus, we should expect that the demand for northern furs in southern markets continued to be met through a hybrid system of tribute-taking working in tandem with commercial transactions involving non-elite, non-specialist producers.

At issue here is the relative importance in the fur-procurement process that should be assigned to coercion from above vis-à-vis self-motivation on the part of the local common inhabitant to cash in on the opportunity offered by the burgeoning interregional trading system. Traditional interpretations have tended to focus on coercive or top-down initiation and management as explanations. The case of European Russia in the eighth and ninth centuries might be seen as a colonial situation, where foreigners—Khazars or Rus'—organize a lesser-developed area for exploitation, and where any imported

valuables that end up in native hands—silver dirhams, glass beads—must be seen as pay-offs to local chiefs in return for their cooperation with the colonizers. It has been theorized, as most lately by Chris Wickham, that real economic growth happens only to the degree that elites—state structures, aristocrats—are able to impose upon the surplus-creating capacity of the common inhabitants or “peasants,” and that if left to themselves and not mobilized by elite demand, “peasant economies” will happily exist at a low level of material culture and exchange and never bootstrap themselves to a higher level of prosperity. Only under conditions of enforceable elite demand, the theory states, will commercial economies be created and the mass of common inhabitants be drawn into them whether they will or no. The many counterexamples collected above suggest, rather, that even in the absence of elite pressure and demand a peasant society may choose to become progressively involved in producing for a market when given the opportunity to do so—in a sense, converting some of their labor and resources to an entrepreneurial mode of behavior.

Most clearly, a purely voluntary engagement of grass-roots producers with a growing trans-local exchange network can be identified in southern Scandinavia in the seventh through ninth centuries. In late seventh- and eighth-century Anglo-Saxon England, a degree of elite control and direction over economic activity may have been in place already, so that the ubiquitous textile-producing activity in evidence there might have been self-directed only in part. It is possible that the same was true in the hilltop villages of Lombard Tuscany—that the enterprise of the villagers was directed or mobilized by some elite presence that is not readily visible to us. Returning to European Russia in the eighth and ninth centuries, it seems clear that elite demand and control in the form of tribute-taking was in effect. So long as *all* fur production had not been placed under tribute-rules, however, the remaining portion of the fur supply must have been purchased from local individuals (or households, or villages) who were now investing more time and effort into hunting and trapping than heretofore, which investment was motivated on their part by the opportunity to trade for previously unavailable imported goods.

The voluntary participation of peasant producers in the creation of marketable surpluses adds a dimension to our understanding of early medieval production and exchange systems that previously has tended to be overlooked. In particular, it undermines the notion that networks such as that formed by the North-Sea *emporium* in the eighth and ninth centuries functioned primarily to distribute prestige-conferring goods among participating elites, and were, therefore, creatures of the political and diplomatic designs of dominant political figures such as Charlemagne. Instead, the exchange networks—at least in the North and in the Latin Christian world as defined above—functioned to satisfy demand on multiple levels. Further, the exchange networks were operated by a distinct class of entrepreneurs, which in Frankish sources are designated *negotiatores*. These professional traders worked for profit, and their networks were organized hierarchically.

Returning once again to the case of southern Scandinavia 700 – 900, at one level the exchange system connected the multiplicity of landing places that served both elite and non-elite settlements to the *emporium* or nodal points. At another level, the *emporium* in the southern Scandinavian area maintained direct connections both with *emporium* in other Scandinavian – Baltic areas (Kaupang, Birka, Truso) and with *emporium* in the North Sea region (York, London, Dorestad). The *emporium* or nodal points sustained the interregional aspects of the trading system. This is where imports arrived from outside, including high-value materials such as silver, bronze, and glass stock. This is where the most skilled and specialized craft production took place, especially that involving the most precious imported materials—bronze casting of brooches, for example, and glass bead manufacture. Finally, this is where exportable goods were collected and wholesaled for transport to trans-regional destinations—furs and slaves, primarily, in the case of the Carolingian-era North. The producers of the exported items would have included a wide range of participants, from Viking raiders, to slavers working the southern Baltic coast, to tribute-taking chiefs on the far northern coast of Norway, and finally to enterprising individuals who might bring pelts into the nearest wholesaling center. On the demand side, the customers would range from elite personages interested in precious metal and perhaps acquiring a taste for Frankish wine all the way down to peasant householders

who were ready to exchange surplus food stocks or extra yards of cloth for bronze brooches and some silver coins.

A similar situation existed in Carolingian continental Europe. There are distinct nodal points around which interregional trade is organized, including Dorestad and Quentovic on the northern coasts, Verdun and Lyon in Gaul (also Marseille, possibly), and Venice on the Adriatic, representing at least three prominent interregional exchange organizations: that of the Frisians based on Dorestad, who tied together England, Francia, and Denmark; that of the Jewish merchants based in Verdun and Lyon (possibly to be identified with the Rhadanites) who operated the connection with Muslim Spain; and that of the Venetians, who operated the trans-Mediterranean routes between Carolingia and the Islamic world. There is no doubt that the interregional network served elite demand in Francia, delivering silk fabrics to Frankish aristocrats, for example, and spices to the well-stocked pantries of Frankish abbeys. It is less easy to perceive the involvement of the non-elite population in the exchange system.

In Francia, the situation is complicated by the fact that some considerable portion of the production is directly controlled by large, elite institutional entities such as the abbeys with their far-flung properties and the fiscal villas answering to the Frankish kings.¹¹ The fact that so many of the Abbeys, for example, are on record as interested in trade and in the marketing of surplus from their properties implies that a non-elite consumer base *must have* existed in the Latin Christian world at this time, else the mercantile ambitions of the abbeys, and their assiduous pursuit of privileges to facilitate their marketing and transport operations, were wholly unrealistic and undertaken in vain.

The *negotiatores* were members of a class distinct from the clerical and secular aristocratic elite on the one side as well as from the common free citizens and the dependent classes on the other side. The privileges that were accorded them included the right to travel armed while being exempt from military service and immunity from all taxes and confiscations except those—tolls, market fees, and the like—that pertained

¹¹ The degree of this control, and the nature of its effects, are matters currently in dispute. Joachim Henning has claimed that elite control of production in the Carolingian period had become stifling, and was actually causing an economic recession. See the discussion in Section 6.1, subsection *Competing theories of Carolingian production and exchange* above.

directly to their professional activities; and even these might be exempted for the recipients of special privileges. We must accept, therefore, the presence of a significant number of individuals who belonged to this class of specialists in long-distance and interregional exchange, and that as a class they were working for profit. The matter has been clouded by the fact that *negotiatores* sometimes served as agents for abbeys, for individual elite clerics, and for the imperial court. This has led some to picture the *negotiatores* as a dependent class with no independent economic role. In view of the accumulated evidence, however, a better formulation of the relationship between the elites and the merchant class might be that even the most powerful elite entities—abbeys, high churchmen such as Alcuin, and the emperor, himself—found that it was necessary to employ these professionals in order to achieve certain important ends. In other words, though likely quite small as a percentage of the total population, the professional merchant class occupied a key position in the economic functioning of Carolingian western Europe. Nevertheless, not every member of the professional trading class can be pictured as a mercantile aristocrat. Individual Frisian boat owners plying the Rhine trade have all the look of middle-class small business operators, in today's terms. One might also recall the groups of Anglo-Saxon traders that trudged across the continent between England and Italy—untouched by any hint of aristocratic bearing, but engaged in long-distance transport and exchange nonetheless.

Clearly, there were levels of production and exchange that did not depend on the commercial networks maintained by the professional traders. The imperial workshops in Constantinople, which produced the highest-quality textiles using materials such as silk, purple dye, and gold thread or which cut garnets to fashion into pieces of distinctive gold-garnet jewelry and decorative mountings, were an economic enterprise in that there was an investment of skilled labor and precious materials in the fashioning of these things. They were produced, however, not for purposes of exchange for profit but as part of an ongoing programme to maintain imperial Byzantium as a unique source of prestige and were distributed to lesser rulers and would-be rulers in Europe on the basis of political and diplomatic calculations. At the other end of the scale, there is no doubt that much of

primary production remained firmly embedded in local, non-commercial exchange systems that were social constructs, operating under the norms of the local culture. Indeed, there is no reason to deny that many transfers of wealth were effected through the kinds of processes listed in Grierson's highly influential article of 1959—including redistribution of plunder, gifts given by leaders to followers, ransoms, dowries.¹² Even in these types of transfers, it must be remembered that someone at some time had to invest effort and resources into producing the things that were so exchanged.

It is the contention here, however, that economic exchanges with an aspect of entrepreneurialism have been a part of the overall exchange system in many parts of Europe in all time periods from the Bronze Age onwards. Further, that entrepreneurial, commercial exchange systems were robust and widespread in western Eurasia during the 700 – 900 period.

Overall, the legislation concerning merchants and mercantile activity in eighth- and ninth-century Carolingian Europe is conformable with the general picture of long-distance exchange activities in various parts of western Eurasia in the 700 – 900 period. The major differences in detail that are found in the rules and practices regarding such activity followed in each of the major constituent regions or worlds of the western Eurasian trade circuit—the Caliphate, Byzantium, European Russia, the North, and the Latin Christian West—were a function of the governing system, or lack thereof, in each of these regions. All of them, in their own way, facilitated international, long-distance exchange, which in turn contributed substantially to the economic development in each specific region and to the prosperity of western Eurasia as a whole.

The trading networks show some evidence of internal hierarchical structuring. The same cannot be applied to an ordering of the participating regions or worlds, however. To the extent that McCormick may be correct in his assertion of the slave trade as a major engine driving the expansion of the European economy 700 – 900, it may be that the Islamic world with its demand for labor had an extraordinary stimulating effect on the other regions. Additionally, the Islamic world was by far the major producer of

¹² Philip Grierson, "Commerce in the Dark Ages: A Critique of the Evidence," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (5th Series)* 9 (1959): 123 – 40.

precious metals, both gold and silver, during this time, and Islamic silver certainly played a key role in the activation of the European Russian portion of the trade circuit. In my opinion, these considerations still would not suffice to render the other worlds of western Eurasia as colonial extensions of the Caliphate. As McCormick points out, the Latin Christian world experienced a very significant multiplier effect from the enterprise of supplying slaves to the Mediterranean market, so that it is hard to say whether the western Christians or the Muslims benefited proportionately the more from this exchange relationship.

Regarding the North, it participated in the trade with the Islamic world only indirectly, to the extent that some of the supply of slaves forwarded to the southern markets both from the Latin Christian and the European Russian worlds probably came ultimately from sources controlled by northern entrepreneurs. At least as prominent as its contributions to the interregional slave trade, meanwhile, was the role of the North as a link between the Latin Christian west and the European Russian east. Western products such as ingots of tin and high quality steel sword blades transited from west to east, while quantities of Arab silver almost certainly continued their westward track via the North to ports of entry in Francia, where they were reminted. Finally, the quantity of surplus wealth in the form of silver hoards found all around the Baltic point to the North as an economically successful region. None of these observations are conformable with a notion of the Scandinavia – Baltic region as a backward, exploited periphery.

It is more useful, then, to speak not of centers and peripheries or dominant and dependent regions but of a circuit, in which each of the participating worlds contributed to the prosperity of the system as a whole and all derived benefit from their participation in it. Further, it may be observed that the regions with “barbarian economies”—such as the North and European Russia, and, in the eyes of some observers, including Carolingian continental Europe—can and do create effective, dynamic, entrepreneurially-based exchange systems. These exchange systems function equally well as their counterparts in “civilized economies” such as imperial Rome, imperial Byzantium, and the Caliphate. The main difference between the two types resides in the much greater degree of bureaucratic regulation that typically is encountered in the latter type.

The foregoing discussion does not pretend to offer a comprehensive theory of early medieval economics. Rather, it should be regarded as a set of working concepts that emerged in the course of a long process of research and analysis. It is the writer's hope that they may prove useful in forging an updated understanding of western Eurasian exchange systems, particularly the configuration of these systems that was operative AD 700 – 900.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*

Alcuin *Epistolae* 77, 100

Annales regni Francorum, ed. Reinhold Rau. Quellen zur karolingische Reichsgeschichte, Teil 1. Darmstadt, 1955.

The Annals of St. Bertin. Trans. and annot. Janet L. Nelson. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991.

Anskarii vita S. Willehadi episcopi Bremensis, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica AD 50-1050*, vol. 2, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, 378 – 90. Hanover: Hahn, 1829.

Boniface *Epistolae* 78, 169.15 – 25.

Eigil of Fulda, *Vita Sturmii*

Einhard, *Vita Karoli magni*, ed. O. Holder-Egger and G. Waitz, 6th edn. *MGH SRG* (1911).

Eugippius, *Vita Sancti Severini*, ed. Rudolf Noll. Schriften und Quellen der alten Welt 2. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1963.

Eulogius *Epistolae* 3, 6, 499.1 – 500.8.

Formulae imperiales e curia Ludovici Pii. In *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, ed. Karolus Zevmer, 285 – 328. Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1886.

Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*. Trans. and intro. by Lewis Thorpe. London: Penguin, 1974.

Die Honorantie civitatis Papie, ed. C. Brühl and C Violante. Köln, 1983.

Hugeburc. *Vita Willibaldi* (BHL 8931), ed. O. Holder –Egger, *MGH SS* 15.1 (1887). (Thus in McCormick, *Origins*, bibliography p. 980).

Levillain DD Pippin I, no. 6 (p. 20).

MGH Capitularia,

MGH Capitularia I no. 13, 4, 1.32.5 – 10: Pippin III.

MGH Capitularia I no. 44 (p. 124): Charlemagne, 805

MGH Capitularia I, no. 46 (p. 132): Charlemagne, *Capitulare missorum Niumagae datum*, March 806.

MGH Capitularia I no. 55.2 (p. 142): Charlemagne

MGH Capitularia I no. 57.7 (p. 144): Charlemagne, 800s.

MGH Capitularia I, no. 141.4 (p. 289): Louis the Pious, 819: *Capitulare missorum*.

MGH Capitularia I, no. 143.1 (p. 294): Louis the Pious, 820: *Capitula de functionibus publicis*.

Lothar I, in Corteolona, before June in 823. No. 158, 1.319.26 – 8.

MGH DM no. 77 (pp. 68 – 9): Childebert III for St-Denis, 709/10.

MGH DD Kar I, no. 6 (pp. 9 – 11): Peppin III for St-Denis, 8 July 753.

MGH DD Karl d. Gr. no. 91, 775: for church in Metz. (p. 132).

Tessier DD Karl d. K., I, no.88 [p.241])

MGH Diplomata Karolinorum. Vol. I: *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Grossen*. Ed. Engelbert Mühlbacher. Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1906.

MGH Epistolae. Vol. 4: *Epistolae Karolini aevi 2*, ed. Ernest Dümmler. Berlin: Weidmann, 1895.

MGH Leges: Capitularia regum Francorum I, 44.7: *Capitulare missorum in Theodonis villa datum secundum, generale*, p. 123, lines 13 – 21.

MGH Die Urkunden der deutschen Könige und Kaiser. Vol. 1: *Die Urkunden Konrad I. Heinrich I. und Otto I*. Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1879 – 84.

Saxon Annalist. In *MGH Scriptores* 6, ed. G. Waitz, 542 – 777. Hannover, 1844.

Theodosiani libri xvi cum constitutionibus sirmondianis, ed. Theodor Mommsen. Berlin: Weidmann, 1905.

Vita Lebuini Antiqua, in *MGH Scriptores* 30.2, pp. 789 – 95.

Vita prima Maximini 14, and *Vita Maximini auctore Lupo*.

Wandalbert of Prüm, *Miracula S. Goaris*. In *Wandalbert von Prüm, Vita et miracula Sancti Goaris*, ed. Heinz Erich Stiene. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1981.

Secondary literature:

Adam, Hildegard. *Das Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich und das spätkarolingische Wirtschaftsleben*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996.

Adams, Robert McC. “The Emerging Place of Trade in Civilizational Studies” In *Ancient Civilization and Trade*, ed. Jeremy A. Sabloff and C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, 451 – 65. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975.

Agache, R. “La campagne à l’époque romaine dans les grandes plaines du Nord de la France.” In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, part 2, volume 4, ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase, 658 – 713. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975.

Alföldy, Géza. *Noricum*. Trans. Anthony Birley. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.

Alsen, Tomas T. “Falconry and the Exchange Networks of Medieval Eurasia.” In *Pre-Modern Russia and Its World*, ed. Kathryn L. Reyerson, Theofanis G. Stavrou, and James D. Tracy, 135 – 54. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006.

Althoff, Gerd. *Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter: Kommunikation in Frieden und Fehde*. Darmstadt: Primus, 1997.

———. “Saxony and the Elbe Slavs in the Tenth Century.” In *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 3: c.900 – c.1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter, 267 – 92. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

- Ambrosiani, Björn. "Birka—Part of a Trade Network." In *Exchange and Trade in Medieval Europe—Papers of the 'Medieval Europe Brugge 1997' Conference*, vol. 3, ed. Guy De Boe and Frans Verhaege, 183 – 5. Zellik: Instituut vor het archeologisch patrimonium, 1997.
- . "Birka." In *Arkeologi i Norden 2*, ed. Göran Burenhult, 366 – 75. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1999.
- . "Birka and Scandinavia's Trade with the East." *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 32, no. 3 – 4, Festschrift 2 for Thomas S. Noonan, ed. Roman Kovalev and Hedi Sherman (Fall-Winter 2005 – 06): 287 – 96.
- Ambrosiani, Björn, and Helen Clarke. *Towns in the Viking Age*. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991.
- Anderson, Thomas, Jr. "Roman Military Colonies in Gaul, Salian Ethnogenesis and the Forgotten Meaning of *Pactus Legis Silicae* 59.5." *Early Medieval Europe* 4, no. 2 (1995): 129 – 44.
- Andrén, Anders. "The Early Town in Scandinavia." In *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg, 173 – 77. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1989.
- Andrews, P., ed. *Excavations at Hamwic, Volume 2: Excavations at Six Dials*. London: Council for British Archaeology, 1997.
- Arbman, Holger. *Schweden und das Karolingische Reich. Studien zu den Handelsverbindungen des 9. Jahrhunderts*. Stockholm: Wahlström und Widstrand, 1937.
- Armstrong, Guyda, and Ian N. Wood, eds. *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000.
- Arnold, Bettina. "Iron Age Germany." In *Ancient Europe*, 241 – 7. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.
- . "The Heuneburg." In *Ancient Europe*, 249 – 52. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.
- Arrhenius, Birgit. *The Chronology of the Vendel Graves* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitets reprocentral, 1980).
- . *Merovingian Garnet Jewellery: Emergence and Social Implications*. Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historier och Antikvitets Akademien, 1985.
- . "Aspects on Barter Trade Exemplified at Helgö and Birka." In *Gudme and Lundeberg*, 189 – 94. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Arwidson, Greta, ed. *Birka II: Systematische Analysen der Gräberfunde*. In three volumes. Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 1984 – 89.
- Askjem, Julie. "The Viking-Age Silver Hoards from Eastern Norway." In *Silver Economies*, 173 – 84. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Astill, Grenville G. "Archaeology, Economics and Early Medieval Europe." *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 4 (1985): 215 – 31.

- Aubert, J.-J. *Business Managers in Ancient Rome: A Social and Economic Study of Institores, 200 B.C. – A.D. 250*. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- Axboe, Morten. “Gudme and the Gold Bracteates.” In *Gudme and Lundeberg*, 68 – 77. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- . “Danish Kings and Dendrochronology: Archaeological Insights into the Early History of the Danish State.” In *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe’s Barbarians*, ed. G. Ausenda, 217 – 51. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995.
- Bachrach, Bernard S. *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.
- . “The Practical Use of Vegetius’ *De Re Militari* in the Early Middle Ages.” *The Historian* 47 (1985): 239 – 55.
- . “Animals and Warfare in Early Medieval Europe.” *Settimane* 31, 1985: 707 – 51.
- . Review of *Dark Age Naval Power*, by John Haywood. *Choice* 29 (1992): 1282.
- . “Anthropologists and Early Medieval History: Some Problems.” *Cithara* 34 (1994): 3 – 10.
- . “Medieval Siege Warfare: A Reconnaissance.” Review Essay, *The Journal of Military History* 58 (1994): 119 – 33.
- . “The Hun Army at the Battle of Chalons (451): An Essay in Military Demography.” In *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung: Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. Karl Brunner and Brigitte Merta, 59 – 67. Vienna: R. Oldenbourg, 1994.
- . “On Roman Ramparts.” In *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare: The Triumph of the West*, ed. Geoffrey Parker, 64 – 91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- . “The Education of the ‘Officer Corps’ in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries.” In *La noblesse romaine et les chefs barbares du III^e au VII^e siècle*, ed. Françoise Vallet and Michel Kazanski, 7 – 13. Paris: Association Française d’Archéologie Mérovingienne, 1995.
- . “Quelques observations sur la composition et les caractéristiques des armées de Clovis.” In *Clovis: histoire et mémoire*, ed. Michel Rouche, 689 – 703. Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997.
- . “Pirenne and Charlemagne.” In *After Rome’s Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History: Essays Presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 214 – 231. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- . “Early Medieval Military Demography: Some Observations on the Methods of Hans Delbrück.” In *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages: Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History*, ed. Donald J. Kagay and L. J. Andrew Villalon, 3 – 20. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999.
- . “Imperial Walled Cities in the West: An Examination of Their Early Medieval *Nachleben*.” In *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective*, ed. James D. Tracy, 192 – 218. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

- . *Early Carolingian Warfare: Prelude to Empire*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- . “Magyar – Ottonian Warfare: *À propos* a New Minimalist Interpretation.” *Francia* 28 (2001): 211 – 30.
- . “Charlemagne’s Military Responsibilities *am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung*.” In *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung: Das Epos “Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa” und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799*, ed. Peter Godman, Jörg Jarnut and Peter Johanek, 231 – 55. Paderborn: Akademie Verlag, 2002.
- . “Fifth Century Metz: Late Roman Christian Urbs or Ghost Town?” *An Tard* 10 (2002): 363 – 81.
- . “Are They Not Like Us? The Carolingian Fisc in Military Perspective.” In *Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Celia Chazelle and Felice Lifshitz, 119 – 33. New York: Palgrave, 2007.
- . “Plague, Population, and Economy in Merovingian Gaul.” *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 3 (2007): 29 – 57.
- Bachrach, Bernard S., and David S. Bachrach. “Continuity of Written Administration in the Late Carolingian East c. 887 – 911.” *Fruhmittelalterliche Studien* 42 (2008): 109 – 46.
- Balzaretti, Ross. “Cities and Markets in the Early Middle Ages.” In *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe’s Barbarians*, ed. G. Ausenda, 113 – 42. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995.
- . “Cities, Emporia and Monasteries: Local Economies in the Po Valley, c. AD 700 – 875.” In *Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Neil Christy and Simon T. Loseby, 213 – 34. Aldershot: Scolar, 1996.
- Barford, Paul M. “Silent Centuries: The Society and Economy of the Northwest Slavs.” In *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta, 60 – 102. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.
- Bassett, Steven. “Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia.” *Early Medieval Europe* 15 (2007): 53 – 85.
- Bately, Janet. “Wulfstan’s Voyage and His Description of Estland: The Text and the Language of the Text.” In *Wulfstan’s Voyage*, 14 – 28. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Bately, Janet, and Anton Englert, eds. *Ohthere’s Voyages: A Late 9th-Century Account of Voyages along the Coasts of Norway and Denmark and Its Cultural Context*. Maritime Culture of the North 1. Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 2007.
- Baynes, Norman H. “M. Pirenne and the Unity of the Mediterranean World.” *Journal of Roman Studies* 19 (1929): 224 – 35.
- Beck, Heinrich, ed. *Germanenprobleme in heutiger Sicht*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986.
- Beloch, K. Julius. *Die Bevölkerung der griechisch-römischen Welt*. Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1886.

- Bernhard, Helmut. "Niedergang und Neubeginn: Das Ende der römischen Herrschaft." In *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, 306 – 15. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002.
- Beumann, Helmut, and Werner Schröder, eds., *Die transalpinen Verbindungen der Bayern, Alemannen und Franken bis zum 10. Jahrhundert* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1987).
- Biel, Jörg. "Macht und Dynamik: Fürstengräber der frühen Keltzeit." In *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, 190 – 5. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2002.
- Bill, Jan. "Piracy and Naval Organisation in the Baltic Sea in the 9th Century: Some Security Considerations Concerning Wulfstan's Voyage." In *Wulfstan's Voyage*, 343 – 53. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Binford, Sally R., and Lewis Binford, eds. *New Perspectives in Archaeology*. Chicago: Aldine, 1968.
- Bittel, K., S. Schiek, and D. Müller. *Die keltischen Viereckschanzen*. Stuttgart: Atlas archäologischer Geländedenkmäler in Baden-Württemberg, 1990.
- Blackburn, Mark. "'Productive' Sites and the Pattern of coin Loss in England, 600 – 1180." In *Markets in Early Medieval Europe*, 20 – 36. Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003.
- Bloch, Marc. *Feudal Society*. Vol. 1: *The Growth of Ties of Dependence*. Trans. L. A. Manyon. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Blomkvist, Nils. *The Discovery of the Baltic: The Reception of a Catholic World-System in the European North (AD 1075 – 1225)*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Bliujienė, Audronė. "The Backcountry Balts (*Aesti*) and the 'Northern Gold' in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages." In *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta, 13 – 52. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.
- Boatwright, Mary T., Daniel J. Gargola, and Richard J. A. Talbert. *The Romans: From Village to Empire*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Bockius, Ronald. "Antike Schiffsfunde in Deutschland." In *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, 241. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2002.
- Bogucki, Mateusz. "The Use of Money in the Slavic Lands from the Ninth to Eleventh Century: The Archaeological/Numismatic Evidence." In *Silver Economies*, 133 – 51. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Bogucki, Peter. "Introduction." In *Ancient Europe*, 3 – 5. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.
- Bohannon, Paul, and George Dalton, eds. *Markets in Africa*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1962.
- Böhme, Horst W. "Germanen im Römischen Reich: Die Spätantike als Epoche des Übergangs." In *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, 295 – 305. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002.

- Bolin, Sture. "Mohammed, Charlemagne and Ruric." *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 1 (1953): 5 – 39.
- Bowlus, Charles. "Ethnogenesis: The Tyranny of a Concept." In *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Andrew Gillett, 241 – 46. Turnhout: Brepols, 2002.
- Brabandt, Johanna. *Hausbefunde der römischen Kaiserzeit im freien Germanien. Ein Forschungsstand*. Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte 46. Halle: Landesamt für archäologische Denkmalpflege Sachsen Anhalt, 1993.
- Brather, Sebastian. *Archäologie der westlichen Slawen: Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Ostmitteleuropa*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001.
- . "The Beginnings of Slavic Settlement East of the River Elbe." *Antiquity* 78 (2004): 314 – 29.
- Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Trans. Siân Reynolds. London: William Collins Sons and Co., 1972.
- Bridbury, A. R. *Economic Growth: England in the Later Middle Ages*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1962.
- Brink, Stefan. "Naming the Land." In *The Viking World*, ed. Stefan Brink with Neil Price, 57 – 66. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Brookes, Stuart. "The Early Anglo-Saxon Framework for Middle Anglo-Saxon Economics: The Case of East Kent." In *Markets in Early Medieval Europe*, 84 – 96. Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003.
- Brown, Peter. "Gregory of Tours: Introduction." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood, 1 – 28. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Brühl, Carlrichard. *Palatium und Civitas. Studien zur Profantopographie spätantiker Civitates vom 3. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert*. Vol. 1: Gallien. Köln: Böhlau, 1975.
- . *Palatium und Civitas. Studien zur Profantopographie spätantiker Civitates vom 3. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert*. Vol. 2: Belgica I, beide Germanien und Raetia II. Köln: Böhlau, 1990.
- Brunt, Peter A. *Italian Manpower 225 B.C. – A.D. 14*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1971.
- Buko, Andrzej. "Unknown Revolution: Archaeology and the Beginnings of the Polish State," in *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta, 162 – 78. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.
- Burenhult, Göran, ed. *Arkeologi i Norden*, 2 vols. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1999.
- Burns, Thomas S. "The Settlement of 418." In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 53 – 63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . *Rome and the Barbarians, 100 B.C. – A.D. 400*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- Bursche, Alexander. "Archaeological Sources as Ethnical Evidence: the Case of the Eastern Vistula Mouth." In *Cultural Identity and Archaeology*, ed. Graves-Brown et al, 228 – 37. London: Routledge, 1996.

- Busch, Ralf, ed. *Domplatzgrabung in Hamburg: Teil I*. Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1995.
- Callmer, Johan. "Urbanization in Scandinavia and the Baltic Region c. AD 700 – 1100: Trading Places, Centres and Early Urban Sites." In *Birka Studies* 3, 50 – 90. Stockholm, 1994.
- . "Urbanisation in Northern and Eastern Europe, ca. AD 700 – 1100." In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 233 – 70. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- . "Wulfstan and the Coast of Southern Scandinavia: Sailing Routes from Langeland to Möre." In *Wulfstan's Voyage*, 114 – 34. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Campbell, James. "Production and Distribution in Early and Middle Anglo-Saxon England." In *Markets in Early Medieval Europe*, 12 – 19. Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003.
- Cannon, A. "The Cultural and Historical Contexts of Fashion." In *Consuming Fashion: Adorning the Transnational Body*, ed. Anne Brydon and Sandra Niessen, 23 – 38. Oxford: Berg, 1998.
- Carandini, Andrea. "Italian Wine and African Oil: Commerce in a World Empire." In *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg, 16 – 24. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1989.
- Carlsson, Dan. "Harbors and Trading Places on Gotland AD 600 – 1000." In *Aspects of Maritime Scandinavia AD 200 – 1200*, ed. Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, 145 – 58. Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 1991.
- Carver, Martin O., ed. *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK : York Medieval Press, 2003.
- Champion, Timothy. "Theoretical Archaeology in Britain." In *Archaeological Theory in Europe: The Last Three Decades*, ed. Ian Hodder, 129 – 60. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Champion, Timothy, ed. *Centre and Periphery: Comparative Studies in Archaeology*. London: Unwin Hyman, 1989.
- Chaume, Bruno. *Vix et son territoire à l'Age du fer. Fouilles du Mont Lassois et environnement du site princier*. Montagnac: Éditions Monique Mergoil, 2001.
- Cheyette, Frederic L. "The Disappearance of the Ancient Landscape and the Climate Anomaly of the Early Middle Ages: A Question to Be Pursued." *Early Medieval Europe* 16 (2008): 127 – 65.
- Childe, V. Gordon. *The Dawn of European Civilization*. London: K. Paul, Trench, and Trubner, 1925.
- Christie, Neil. "Towns and Peoples on the Middle Danube in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages." In *Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Neil Christy and Simon T. Loseby, 71 – 98. Aldershot: Scolar, 1996.
- Clarke, Helen, and Björn Ambrosiani. *Towns in the Viking Age*. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991.
- Classen, Peter. "Fortleben un Wandel spätrömischen Urkundenwesens im frühen Mittelalter." In *Recht und Schrift im Mittelalter*, ed. Peter Classen, 13 – 54. Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1977.
- Claude, Dietrich. "Aspekte des Binnenhandels im Merovingerreich auf Grund der Schriftquellen." In *Göttingen 150*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985.

- Collins, Roger. "Making Sense of the Early Middle Ages." Review article. *English Historical Review* 124 (2009): 641 – 65.
- Collis, John R. *Oppida: Earliest Towns North of the Alps*. Sheffield: University of Sheffield Press, 1984.
- . "Oppida." In *Ancient Europe*, 154 – 57. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.
- Coupland, Simon. "Dorestad in the Ninth Century: The Numismatic Evidence." *Jaarboek voor Munt- en Penningkunde* 75 (1988): 5 – 26.
- . "Money and Coinage under Louis the Pious," *Francia* 17, no. 1 (1990): 23 – 54.
- . "From Poachers to Gamekeepers: Scandinavian Warlords and Carolingian Kings." *Early Medieval Europe* 7, no. 1 (1998): 85 – 114.
- . "Raiders, Traders, Worshippers and Settlers: The Continental Perspective." In *Silver Economies*, 113 – 31. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Couser, Jonathan. "The Changing Fortunes of Early Medieval Bavaria to 907 AD." *History Compass* 8, no. 4 (2010): 330 – 44.
- Crumlin-Pedersen, Ole. "Ships as Indicators of Trade in Northern Europe 600 – 1200." In *Maritime Topography and the Medieval Town: Papers from the 5th International Conference on Waterfront Archaeology in Copenhagen, 14 – 16 May 1998*, ed. Jan Bill and Birthe L. Clausen, 11 – 20. Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 1999.
- . "Boats and Ships of the Baltic Sea in the 9th and 10th Centuries: The Archaeological and Iconographic Evidence." In *Wulfstan's Voyage*, 235 – 56. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Cunliffe, Barry. *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction*. New York: Methuen, 1988.
- . "Iron Age Societies in Western Europe and Beyond, 800 – 140 BC." In *The Oxford Illustrated History of Prehistoric Europe*, ed. Barry Cunliffe, 336 – 72. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- . "The Impact of Rome on Barbarian Society, 140 BC – AD 300." In *The Oxford Illustrated History of Prehistoric Europe*, ed. Barry Cunliffe, 411 – 46. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- . *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and Its Peoples, 8000 BC – AD 1500*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Cunliffe, Barry, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Prehistoric Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Curta, Florin. *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500 – 700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- . "East Central Europe." *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003): 283 – 91.
- . "The Slavic *lingua franca* (Linguistic Notes of an Archaeologist Turned Historian)." *East Central Europe* 31 (2004): 125 – 48.

- . “Merovingian and Carolingian Gift Giving.” *Speculum* 81 (2006): 671 – 99.
- . “The Amber Trail in Early Medieval Eastern Europe.” In *Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Felice Lifshitz and Celia Chazelle, 61 – 79. New York: Palgrave, 2007.
- . “The North-western Region of the Black Sea during the 6th and early 7th Century AD.” *Ancient East and West* 7 (2008): 149 – 85.
- . “Introduction.” In *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta, 1 – 11. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.
- Cusack, Carole M. *The Rise of Christianity in Northern Europe, 300-1000*. London: Cassell, 1999.
- Dalton, George. “Karl Polanyi’s Analysis of Long-Distance Trade and His Wider Paradigm.” In *Ancient civilization and trade*, ed. Jeremy A. Sabloff and C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, 63 -132. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975.
- . “Aboriginal Economies in Stateless Societies.” In *Exchange Systems in Prehistory*, ed. Timothy K. Earle and Jonathon E. Ericson, 191 – 212. New York: Academic Press, 1977.
- Davidan, Olga I. “Om hantverkets udveckling i Staraja Ladoga.” *Fornvännen* 77 (1982): 170 – 9.
- Davis, Jennifer R., and Michael McCormick, eds. *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- Davis, Jennifer, and Michael McCormick, “Introduction: The Early Middle Ages: Europe’s Long Morning.” In *Long Morning*, 1 – 10. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- Delogu, Paolo. “Reading Pirenne Again.” In *The Sixth Century. Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden, 15 – 40. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- . “Rome in the Ninth Century: The Economic System.” In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 105 – 22. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Dennett, Daniel C., Jr. “Pirenne and Muhammad.” *Speculum* 23 (1948): 165 – 90.
- Detlev, Ellmers, *Frühmittelalterliche Handelsschiffahrt in Mittel- und Nordeuropa* (Neumünster: Wachholz, 1972).
- Devroey, J. P. “Courants et réseaux d’échange dans l’économie franque entre Loire et Rhin.” *Mercati e mercanti nell’alto Medioevo: l’area euroasiatica e l’area mediterranea*, 327 – 89. Settimane 40, 1993.
- Dhondt, J. “Les problèmes de Quentovic.” In *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, vol. 1, ed. Gino Barbieri, Maria Raffaella Caroselli, and Amintore Fanfani, 181 – 248. Milan: A. Giufré, 1962.
- Doehaerd, Renée. “Les réformes monétaires carolingiennes,” *Annales. Economies – Sociétés – Civilisations* 7 (1952): 13 – 20.
- . *The Early Middle Ages in the West: Economy and Society*. Trans. W. G. Deakin. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1978.
- Dolukhanov, Pavel M. *The Early Slavs: Eastern Europe from the Initial Settlement to the Kievan Rus*. London: Longman, 1996.

- Dopsch, Alfons. *The Economic and Social Foundations of European Civilization*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1937.
- Drinkwater, J. F. *Roman Gaul: The Three Provinces, 58 BC – AD 260*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- . Review of P. Bridel, *Aventicum III*; E. Frézouls, *Les villes antiques de la France. Belgique I.*; M. Gayraud, *Narbonne antique*; H. Gallet de Santerre, *Ensérune: les silos de la terrasse est*; R. Lauxerois, *Le Bas Vivrais à l'époque romaine*; M. Mangin, *Alesia: un quartier de commerçants et d'artisans*; and M. Py, *L'Oppidum des Castels à Nages*. *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 292 – 4.
- . “The Bacaudae of Fifth-Century Gaul.” In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. F. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 208 – 17. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Duby, Georges. *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*. Trans. Howard B. Clarke. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974.
- Duczko, Wladyslaw. *Viking Rus: Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- Duggan, Lawrence G. “‘For Force is not of God’? Compulsion and Conversion from Yahveh to Charlemagne.” In *Varieties of Religious Conversion in the Middle Ages*, ed. James Muldoon, 49 – 62. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997.
- Duncan-Jones, R. S. “The Impact of the Antonine Plague.” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 9 (1996): 108 – 36.
- Durliat, Jean. “Le salaire de la paix sociale dans les royaumes barbares.” In *Anerkennung und Integration. Zu den wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen der Völkerwanderungszeit 400 – 600*, ed. Herwig Wolfram and Andreas Schwarz, 21 – 72. Wien: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988.
- . “La peste du VI^e siècle: Pour un nouvel examen des sources byzantines.” In *Hommes et richesses dans l'empire byzantin*. Vol 1: *IV^e – VII^e Siècle*, ed. V. Kravari, C. Morrisson, and J. Lefort, 107 – 119. Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1989.
- . *De la ville antique à ville byzantine. Le problème des subsistances*. Collection de l'Ecole française de Rome 136. Rome, 1990.
- . *Les finances publiques de Diocétien aux Carolingiens (284 – 889)*. Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1990.
- . “Les conditions du commerce au VI^e siècle.” In *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden, 89 – 117. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- Düwel, Klaus, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, and Dieter Timpe, eds. *Der Handel des frühen Mittelalters*, ed. Klaus Düwel, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, Dieter Timpe, 9 – 99. Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa, Teil 3. Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, dritte folge 150. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985.
- . *Der Handel der Karolinger- und Wikingerzeit*. Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa, Teil 4. Abhandlungen der Akademie der

- Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse 156. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1987.
- Earle, T. K. "A Reappraisal of Redistribution: Complex Hawaiian Chieftdoms." In *Exchange Systems in Prehistory*, ed. T. K. Earle and J. Ericson (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 213 – 29.
- Edmondson, J. C. "Mining in the Later Roman Empire and Beyond: Continuity or Disruption?" *Journal of Roman Studies* 79 (1989): 84 – 102.
- Eggers, Hans Jürgen. *Der römische Import im freien Germanien*. Hamburg: Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte, 1951.
- Elton, Hugh. "Defence in Fifth-Century Gaul." In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 167 – 76. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Endemann, Traute. *Markturkunde un Markt in Frankreich und Burgund vom 9. bis 11. Jahrhundert*. Konstanz: Jan Thorbecke, 1964.
- Englert, Anton. "Ohthere's Voyages Seen from a Nautical Angle." In *Ohthere's Voyages: A Late 9th-Century Account of Voyages along the Coasts of Norway and Denmark and Its Cultural Context*, ed. Janet Bately and Anton Englert, 117 – 29. Maritime Culture of the North 1. Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 2007.
- Englert, Anton, and Waldemar Ossowski, "Sailing in Wulfstan's Wake: The 2004 Trial Voyage Hedeby – Gdansk with the Skuldelev I Reconstruction, *Ottar*." In *Wulfstan's Voyage*, 257 – 70. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Englert, Anton, and Athena Trakadas, eds. *Wulfstan's Voyage*. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Ernst, Raimund. *Die Nordwestslaven und das fränkische Reich: Beobachtungen zur Geschichte ihrer Nachbarschaft und zur Elbe als nordöstlicher Reichsgrenze bis in die Zeit Karls des Großen*. Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1976.
- . "Karolingische Nordostpolitik zur Zeit Ludwigs des Frommen." In *Östliches Europa, Spiegel der Geschichte: Festschrift für Manfred Hellmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Carsten Goerke, Erwin Oberländer, Dieter Wojtecki, 81-107. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1977.
- Es, W. A. van. "Dorestad Centered." In *Medieval Archaeology in the Netherlands: Studies Presented to H. H. van Regteren Altena*, ed. J. C. Besteman, J. M. Bos, and H. A. Heidinga, 151 – 82. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990.
- Es, W. A. van, and W. J. H. Verwers. "Excavations at Dorestad 1: The Harbor: Hoogstraat I." *Nederlandse Oudheden* 9 (1980).
- Ettel, Peter. "Zwischen König und Bischof: Der Siedlungskomplex von Karlburg." In *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, 339 – 42. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002.
- . "Karlburg am Main (Bavaria) and Its Role As a Local Centre in the Late Merovingian and Ottonian Periods." In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 319 – 40. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Ewig, Eugen. *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien: Gesammelte Schriften (1952 – 1973)*. 2 volumes. Ed. Hartmut Atsma. München: Artemis, 1976 – 79.

- Fabeck, Charlotte. "Reading Society from the Cultural Landscape: South Scandinavia between Sacral and Political Power." In *Gudme and Lundeberg*, 169 – 83. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Fanning, S. "Emperors and Empires in Fifth-Century Gaul." In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 288 – 97. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . "Clovis Augustus and Merovingian *Imitatio Imperii*." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood, 321 – 35. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Febvre, Lucien. *A Geographical Introduction to History*. Trans. E. G. Mountford and J. H. Paxton. 1924; reprint New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966.
- Feveile, Claus, and Stig Jensen. "Ribe in the 8th and 9th Century: A Contribution to the Archaeological Chronology of Western Europe." *Acta Archaeologica* 71 (2000): 9 – 24.
- Filipowiak, Władisław. "Wolin und Szczecin—Hafen und Topographie der mittelalterlichen Stadt." In *Maritime Topography and the Medieval Town*, ed. Jan Bill and Birthe L. Clausen, 61 – 70. Copenhagen: The National Museum, 1999.
- Finley, Moses I. "Archaeology and History." *Daedalus* 100 (1971): 168 – 86.
- . *The Ancient Economy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.
- Fischer, Thomas. *Noricum*. Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie. Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2002.
- Fletcher, Richard. *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997.
- Forte, Angelo, Richard Oram, and Frederik Pedersen. *Viking Empires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Fossier, Robert. "Les tendances de l'économie: stagnation ou croissance?" In *Nascita dell' Europa ed Europa carolingia: un' equazione da verificare*, 261 – 90. Settimane 27, 1981.
- Foxhall, Lin. "Village to City: Staples and Luxuries? Exchange Networks and Urbanization." In *Mediterranean Urbanization 800 – 600 BC*, ed. Robin Osborne and Barry Cunliffe, 233 – 48. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Francovich, Riccardo. "The Hinterlands of Early Medieval Towns: The Transformation of the Countryside in Tuscany." In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 135 – 52. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- . "The Beginnings of Hilltop Villages in Early Medieval Tuscany." In *Long Morning*, 55 – 82. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- Franklin, Simon, and Jonathan Shepard. *The Emergence of Rus: 750 – 1200*. London: Longman, 1996.
- Freedon, Uta von. "Die Wassermühle: Ein antikes Erbe." In *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, 331 – 3. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002.
- . "Früher Adel: Luxus und elitäre Abgrenzung." In *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, 334 – 5. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002.

- Frézouls, Edmond. "Gallien und römisches Germanien." In *Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. Friedrich Vittinghoff, 429 – 509. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990.
- Fustel de Coulanges, *Histoire des institutions politiques de l'ancienne France*. Paris: Hachette, 1875.
- Ganshof, François L. "Note sur le 'Praeceptum negotiatorum' de Louis le Pieux." In *Studi in onore di Armando Sapori*, 101 – 112. Milano: Istituto editoriale cisalpino, 1957.
- Garcia, Dominique. "Urbanization and Spatial Organization in Southern France and North-Eastern Spain during the Iron Age." In *Mediterranean Urbanization 800 – 600 BC*, ed. Robin Osborne and Barry Cunliffe, 169 – 86. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Garcia, Dominique, and Florence Verdin, eds. *Territoires celtiques: espaces ethniques et territoires des agglomérations protohistoriques d'Europe occidentale*. Paris: Errance, 2002.
- Gauthier, Nancy. "From the Ancient City to the Medieval Town: Continuity and Change." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood, 47 – 66. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Gauthier, Nancy, and Jean-Charles Picard, eds. *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIII^e siècle*. Paris: de Boccard, 1986.
- Gavritukhin, Igor O., and Michel Kazanski. "Bosporus, the Tetraxite Goths, and the Northern Caucasus Region during the Second Half of the Fifth and the Sixth Centuries." In *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta, 83 – 136. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.
- Geary, Patrick J. *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Gebhart, Rupert. "The Celtic Oppidum of Manching and Its Exchange System." In *Different Iron Ages: Studies on the Iron Age in Temperate Europe*, ed. J.D. Hill and C. G. Cumberpatch, 111 – 20. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1995.
- Gelichi, Sauro. "Flourishing Places in North-Eastern Italy: Towns and *emporia* between Late Antiquity and the Carolingian Age." In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 77 – 104. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Gilliam, J. F. "The Plague under Marcus Aurelius." *American Journal of Philology* 82 (1961): 225 – 51.
- Gimbutas, Marija. *Die Ethnogenese der europäischen Indogermanen*. Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft / Vorträge und kleinere Schriften 54 (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1992).
- . *Balti aizvēsturiskajos laikos: Etnoģenēze, materiālā kultūra un mitoloģija* (The Balts in prehistoric times: ethnogenesis, material culture and mythology), trans. from the Lithuanian by Andris Aramins. Riga: Zinātne, 1994.
- . "Proto-Indo-European Culture: The Kurgan Culture during the Fifth, Fourth, and Third Millennia B.C." In idem, *The Kurgan Culture and the Indo-Europeanization of Europe: Selected Articles from 1952 to 1993*. Ed. Miriam Robins Dexter and Karlene Jones-Bley, 75 – 117. Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man, 1997.
- . "The Beginning of the Bronze Age in Europe and the Indo-Europeans: 3500 – 2500 B.C." In idem, *The Kurgan Culture and the Indo-Europeanization of Europe: Selected Articles from 1952*

- to 1993. Ed. Miriam Robbins Dexter and Karlene Jones-Bley, 135 – 79. Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man, 1997.
- Godman, Peter, ed. *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985.
- Goffart, Walter. *Barbarians and Romans AD 418-584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- . “Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians.” In idem, *Rome’s Fall and After*, 1 – 32. London: Hambledon Press, 1989.
- . “An Empire Unmade: Rome, A.D. 300 – 600.” In idem, *Rome’s Fall and After*, 33 – 44. London: The Hambledon Press, 1989.
- . “Zosimus, the First Historian of Rome’s Fall.” In Walter Goffart, *Rome’s Fall and After*, 81 – 110. London: Hambledon Press, 1989.
- . “The Theme of ‘The Barbarian Invasions’ in Later Antique and Modern Historiography.” In Walter Goffart, *Rome’s Fall and After*, 111 – 32. London: Hambledon Press, 1989.
- . “Old and New in Merovingian Taxation.” In idem, *Rome’s Fall and After*, 213 – 31. London: Hambledon Press, 1989.
- . “Conspicuously Absent: Martial Heroism in the Histories of Gregory of Tours.” In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood, 365 – 93. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- . *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.
- . “Frankish Military Duty and the Fate of Roman Taxation.” *Early Medieval Europe* 16 (2008): 166 – 90.
- Golden, P. B. “The Khazar Sacral Kingship,” In *Pre-Modern Russia and Its World*, ed. Kathryn L. Reyerson, Theofanis G. Stavrou, and James D. Tracy, 79 – 102. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006.
- Graham-Campbell, James, Søren Sindbæk, and Gareth Williams, eds. *Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society in Scandinavia, AD 800 – 1100*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Grierson, Philip. “Carolingian Europe and the Arabs: The Myth of the Mancus.” *Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire* 32 (1954): 1059 – 74.
- . “Commerce in the Dark Ages: A Critique of the Evidence.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (5th Series)* 9 (1959): 123 – 40.
- Griffiths, David W. “Trade and Production Centres in the Post-Roman North: The Irish Sea Perspective.” In *Gudme and Lundeberg*, 184 – 8. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Gronenborn, Detlef. “Zum (möglichen) Nachweis von Sklaven/Unfreien in prähistorischen Gesellschaften Mitteleuropas.” *Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift* 42 (2001): 1 – 42.
- Gullbekk, Svein Harald. “Norway: Commodity Money, Silver and Coin.” In *Silver Economies*, 93 – 111. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.

- Gustavs, Sven. "Germanisches Handwerk/Feinschmiedehandwerk von Klein Kōris: Ein Bericht mit Blick auf Gudme-Lundeborg." In *Gudme and Lundeborg*, 118 – 27. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Gustin, Ingrid. "Coin Stock and Coin Circulation in Birka." In *Silver Economies*, 227 – 44. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Haldon, John. "Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World, ca. 660 – 840." In *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham, 224 – 264. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Halphen, Louis. *Études critiques sur l'histoire de Charlemagne*. Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1921.
- Halsall, Guy. "The Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*: Forty Years On." In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. F. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 196 – 207. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . "Nero and Herod? The Death of Chilperic and Gregory's Writing of History." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood, 337 – 50. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Hamerow, Helena. "Agrarian Production and the *emporia* of Mid Saxon England, ca. AD 650 – 850." In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 219 – 32. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Hansen, H. Jarl. "Dankirke: Affluence in Late Iron Age Denmark." In *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development During the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. K. Randsborg, 123 – 8. Rome, 1989.
- Hansen, Inge Lyse, and Chris Wickham, eds. *The Long Eighth Century*. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Harding, Anthony. "Facts and Fantasies from the Bronze Age." *Antiquity* 80 (2006): 463 – 5.
- Hardt, Matthias. "Linien und Säume, Zonen und Räume an der Ostgrenze des Reiches im frühen und hohen Mittelalter." In *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, 39 – 56. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000.
- Harhoiu, Radu. "Where Did All the Gepids Go? A Sixth- to Seventh-Century Cemetery in Bratei (Romania)." In *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta, 209 – 44. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.
- Harries, J. D. "Sidonius Apollinaris, Rome and the Barbarians: A Climate of Treason?" In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 298 – 308. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Harris, Marvin. *Cannibals and Kings: The Origins of Cultures*. New York: Random House, 1977.
- Harris, Marvin, and Eric B. Ross. *Death, Sex, and Fertility: Population Regulation in Preindustrial and Developing Societies*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.
- Harris, W. V. "Demography, Geography and the Sources of Roman Slaves." *Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999): 62 – 75.
- Harrison, Dick. "Plague, Settlement and Structural Change at the Dawn of the Middle Ages." *Scandia* 59 (1993): 15 – 48.

- Hartmann, Ludo Moritz. *Zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Italiens im frühen Mittelalter*. Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perth, 1904.
- Hauck, Karl. "Der Missionsauftrag Christi und das Kaisertum Ludwigs des Frommen." In *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814 – 840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins, 275 – 96. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- . "Gudme als Kultort und seine Rolle beim Austausch von Bildformularen." In *Gudme and Lundeborg*, 78 – 88. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Haywood, John. *Dark Age Naval Power: A Re-assessment of Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Seafaring Activity*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Heather, Peter. "The Emergence of the Visigothic Kingdom." In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 84 – 94. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . "The Huns and the End of the Roman Empire in Western Europe." *English Historical Review* 110 (1995): 4 – 41.
- . *The Goths*. London: Blackwell, 1996.
- . *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- . "Afterword." In *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta, 605 – 23. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.
- Hedeager, Lotte. "A Quantitative Analysis of Roman Imports in Europe North of the Limes (0 – 400 AD), and the Question of Roman-Germanic Exchange." In *New Directions in Scandinavian Archaeology*, ed. Kristian Kristiansen and Carsten Paludan-Müller, 191 – 216. Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 1978.
- . "Empire, Frontier, and the Barbarian Hinterland: Rome and Northern Europe from AD 1 – 400." In *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen, 125 – 40. *New Directions in Archaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- . *Iron Age Societies: From Tribe to State in Northern Europe, 500 BC to AD 700*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.
- Heidinga, H. A. "Frankish Settlement at Gennep: A Migration Period Centre in the Dutch Meuse Area." In *Gudme and Lundeborg*, 202 – 8. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Heijne, Cecilia von. "Viking-Age Coin Finds from South Scandinavia." In *Silver Economies*, 185 – 202. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Heinzelmann, M. "The 'Affair' of Hilary of Arles (445) and Gallo-Roman Identity in the Fifth Century." In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 239 – 51. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Hellmann, Manfred. "Karl und die slawische Welt zwischen Ostsee und Böhmerwald." In *Karl der Große, Vol 1: Persönlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed. Helmut Beumann, 708 – 718. Düsseldorf: Verlag L. Schwann, 1965.

- Hendy, Michael F. *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c.300 – 1450*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Henning, Joachim. “Slavery or Freedom? The Causes of Early Medieval Europe’s Economic Advancement.” *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003): 269 – 77.
- . “Germanisch-romanische Agrarkontinuität und –diskontinuität im nordalpinen Kontinentaleuropa—Teile eines Systemwandels? Beobachtungen aus archäologischer Sicht.” In *Akkulturation: Probleme einer germanisch-romanischen Kultursynthese in Spätantike und frühem Mittelalter*, ed. Dieter Hägermann, Wolfgang Haubrichs, Jörg Jarnut, and Claudia Giefers, 396 – 435. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004.
- . “Ways of Life in Eastern and Western Europe during the Early Middle Ages: Which Way Was ‘Normal’?” In *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta, 41 – 59. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.
- . “Early European Towns: The Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm between Dynamism and Deceleration AD 500 – 1100.” In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 3 – 40. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- . “Strong Rulers—Weak Economy? Rome, the Carolingians and the Archaeology of Slavery in the First Millennium AD.” In *Long Morning*, 33 – 53. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- Henning, Joachim, ed. *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium*. Vol. 1, *The Heirs of the Roman West*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Herrmann, Joachim. *Siedlung, Wirtschaft und gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse der slawischen Stämme zwischen Oder/Neisse und Elbe*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968.
- . “Wanderungen und Landnahme im westslawischen Gebiet.” In *Gli Slavi Occidentali e Meridionali nell’ Alto Medioevo*, 75 – 101. *Settimane* 30, 1983.
- . “Herausbildung und Dynamik der germanisch-slawischen Siedlungsgrenze in Mitteleuropa.” In *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn, Teil 1*, ed. Herwig Wolfram and Andreas Schvarcz, 269 – 80. Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985.
- Herrmann, Joachim, ed. *Von Homer bis Plutarch*. Vol. 1 of *Griechische und lateinische Quellen zur Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1988.
- Hilberg, Volker. “Silver Economies of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries AD in Hedeby.” In *Silver Economies*, 203 – 25. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Hill, David. “The Siting of the Early Medieval Port of ‘Quentovic’.” In *Rotterdam Papers VII: A Contribution to Medieval Archaeology*, ed. A. Carmiggelt, 17 – 23. Rotterdam: Bureau Oudheidkundig Onderzoek van Gemeentewerken Rotterdam, 1992.
- Hill, David, David Barrett, Keith Maude, Julia Warburton, and Margaret Worthington. “Quentovic Defined.” *Antiquity* 64 (1990): 51 – 8.
- Himley, F. J. “Y a-t-il emprise musulmane sur l’économie des états européens du VIIe au Xe siècle?” *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 5 (1955): 31 – 81.
- Hirth, K. G. “Inter-regional Trade and the Formation of Prehistoric Gateway Communities.” *American Antiquity* 43 (1978): 25 – 45.

- Hjärthner-Holder, Eva, and Christina Risberg. "The Introduction of Iron in Sweden and Greece." In *Prehistoric and Medieval Direct Iron Smelting in Scandinavia and Europe: Aspects of Technology and Society*, ed. Lars Christian Nørbach, 83 – 6. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2003.
- Hodder, Ian. "Archaeological Theory in Contemporary European Societies: The Emergence of Competing Traditions." In *Archaeological Theory in Europe: The Last Three Decades*, ed. Ian Hodder, 1 – 22. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Hodder, Ian, ed. *Archaeological Theory in Europe: The Last Three Decades*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Hodges, Richard. *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade AD 600 – 1000*. London: Duckworth, 1982.
- . "Peer-Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change in Anglo-Saxon England." In *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change*, ed. Colin Renfrew and John F. Cherry, 69 – 78. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- . "Archaeology and the Class Struggle in the First Millennium A.D." In *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg, 178 – 87. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1989.
- . "Henri Pirenne and the Question of Demand in the Sixth Century." In *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden, , 3 – 14. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- . *Towns and Trade in the Age of Charlemagne*. London: Duckworth, 2000.
- . *Goodbye to the Vikings? Re-reading Early Medieval Archaeology*. London: Duckworth, 2006.
- . "Dark Age Economics Revisited: W. A. van Es and the End of the Mercantile Model in Early Medieval Europe." First published in *In Discussion with the Past: Archaeological Studies Presented to W. A. van Es*, ed. H. Sarfatij, W. J. H. Verwers, and P. J. Woltering, 227 – 32. Zwolle: Foundation for Promoting Archaeology, 1999. Reprinted in Richard Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings? Re-reading Early Medieval Archaeology*, 63 – 71. London: Duckworth, 2006.
- . "Charlemagne's Elephant." In idem, *Goodbye to the Vikings? Re-reading Early Medieval Archaeology*, 72 – 9. London: Duckworth, 2006.
- Hodges, Richard, and David Whitehouse. *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe: Archaeology and the Pirenne Thesis*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- Hodges, Richard, and William Bowden, eds. *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- Holmqvist, Wilhelm. *Swedish Vikings on Helgö and Birka*. Stockholm: Studio Granath for the Swedish Booksellers Association, 1979.
- Holum, Kenneth G. *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperium in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- Hopkins, Keith. *Conquerors and Slaves*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

- . “Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 B.C. – A.D. 400).” *Journal of Roman Studies* 70 (1980): 101 – 25.
- Holden, Peregrine, and Nicholas Purcell. *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
- Huggett, J. W. “Imported Grave Goods and the Early Anglo-Saxon Economy.” *Medieval Archaeology* 32 (1988): 63 – 96.
- Hutchinson, Robert A. “The Bible as Field Guide for A Wildlife Restoration Dream.” *Smithsonian* (Feb 1990): 106 – 15.
- Innes, Matthew. *Introduction to Early Medieval Western Europe, 300 – 900: The Sword, the Plough and the Book*. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Indruszewski, George, and Jon Godal. “The Art of Sailing Like Wulfstan.” In *Wulfstan’s Voyage, 275 – 92*. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Isaac, Benjamin. “The Meaning of the Terms *limes* and *limitanei*.” *Journal of Roman Studies* 78 (1988): 125 – 47.
- Jagodziński, Marek F. “The Settlement of Truso.” In *Wulfstan’s Voyage, 182 – 97*. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Jahn, Joachim. *Ducatus Baiuvariorum. Das bairische Herzogtum der Agilolfinger*. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1991.
- Jankuhn, Herbert. “Karl der Große und der Norden.” In *Karl der Große, Vol 1: Persönlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed. Helmut Beumann, 699 – 707. Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1965.
- . *Haithabu: ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*, 8th edition. Neumünster: K. Wachholtz, 1986.
- Jansson, Ingmar. “Communications between Scandinavia and Eastern Europe in the Viking Age: The Archaeological Evidence.” In *Göttingen 156*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1987.
- . “Dress Pins of East Baltic Type Made on Gotland.” In *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic: Papers from the Second Estonian – Swedish Symposium Sigtuna, May 1991*, ed. Ingmar Jansson, 83 – 90. Stockholm: Department of Archaeology, Stockholm University, 1995.
- Jellema, Dirk. “Frisian Trade in the Dark Ages.” *Speculum* 30 (1955): 15 – 36.
- Jennbert, K. “Neolithisation—a Scanian Perspective.” *Journal of Danish Archaeology* 4 (1985): 196 – 7.
- Jesch, Judith. “Who Was Wulfstan?” In *Wulfstan’s Voyage, 29 – 36*. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Johanek, Peter. “Der fränkische Handel der Karolingerzeit im Spiegel der Schriftquellen.” In *Göttingen Klasse 156*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1987.
- Jones, Gwyn. *A History of the Vikings*, revised edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).
- Jones, Lee A. “Overview of Hilt and Blade Classifications.” In *Swords of the Viking Age*, catalogue and examples by Ian G. Peirce, 15 – 24. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002.

- Jöns, Hauke. "Ports and *emporía* of the Southern Coast: From Hedeby to Usedom and Wolin." In *Wulfstan's Voyage*, 160 – 81. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Jonsson, Kenneth. "Sweden in the Tenth Century: A Monetary Economy?" In *Silver Economies*, 245 – 57. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Jørgensen, Lars. "The Find Material from the Settlement of Gudme II—Composition and Interpretation." In *Gudme and Lundeborg*, 53 – 63. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- . "Manor and Market at Lake Tissø in the Sixth to Eleventh Centuries: The Danish 'Productive' Sites." In *Markets in Early Medieval Europe*, 175 – 207. Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003.
- Karras, Ruth M. *Slavery and Society in Medieval Scandinavia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Kelly, Susan. "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England." *Early Medieval Europe* 1 (1992): 3 – 28.
- Kennedy, Hugh N. "Justinianic Plague in Syria and the Archaeological Evidence." In *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little, 87 – 95. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kerr, William G. "Economic Warfare on the Northern Limes: *portoria* and the Germans." *Roman Frontier Studies 1989: Proceedings of the XVth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, ed. Valerie A. Maxfield and Michael J. Dobson, 442 – 5. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991.
- Kharalambieva, Anna. "Gepids in the Balkans: A Survey of the Archaeological Evidence." In *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. Florin Curta, 245 – 62. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.
- Kilger, Christoph. "The Slavs Yesterday and Today: Different perspectives on Slavic Ethnicity in German Archaeology." *Current Swedish Archaeology* 6 (1998): 99 – 114.
- Kind, Thomas. "Das karolingerzeitliche Kloster Fulda—ein *monasterium in solitudine*. Seine Strukturen und Handwerksproduktion nach den seit 1898 gewonnenen archäologischen Daten." In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 367 – 409. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Kiss, A. "Die Guldfunde des Karpatenbeckens vom 5. – 10. Jahrhundert: Angaben zu den Vergleichsmöglichkeiten der schriftlichen und archäologischen Quellen." *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 38 (1986): 105 – 45.
- Klein, Martin A. "The Slave Trade and Decentralized Societies." *Journal of African History* 42 (2001): 49 – 65.
- Koch, Anton C.-F. "Phasen in der Entstehung von Kaufmannsniederlassungen zwischen Maas und Nordsee in der Karolingerzeit." In *Landschaft und Geschichte: Festschrift für Franz Petri zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 22. februar 1986*, ed. Georg Droege, Peter Schöller, Rudolf Schützeichel, und Matthias Zender, 312 – 24. Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid, 1970.
- Kopietz, Dr. "Handelsbeziehungen der Römer zum östlichen Germanien." *Historisches Jahrbuch* 13 (1892): 425 – 39.
- Koppe, Wilhelm. *Der Lübeck-Stockholmer Handel von 1368 – 1400*. Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1933.

- Kossinna, Gustaf. *Die Herkunft der Germanen: zur Methode der Siedlungsarchäologie*. Expanded 2nd edition. Leipzig: C. Kabitzsch, 1920.
- Krag, Claus. “The Creation of Norway.” In *The Viking World*, ed. Stefan Brink with Neil Price, 645 – 51. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Kreuz, A. “Becoming a Roman Farmer: Preliminary Report on the Environmental Evidence from the Romanization Project.” In *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson, 71 – 98. Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999.
- Kristiansen, Kristian. “Center and Periphery in Bronze Age Scandinavia.” In *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen, 74 – 85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Kristiansen, Kristian, and Thomas B. Larsson. *The Rise of Bronze Age Society: Travels, Transmissions and Transformations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Kulikowski, Michael. “Barbarians in Gaul, Usurpers in Britain.” *Britannia* 31 (2000): 325 – 45.
- Laiou, Angeliki E. “The Early Medieval Economy: Data, Production, Exchange and Demand.” In *Long Morning*, 99 – 104. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- Lammers, Walther, ed. *Entstehung und Verfassung des Sachsenstammes*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967.
- . *Die Eingliederung der Sachsen in das Frankenreich*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970.
- Larsson, Gunilla. *Ship and Society: Maritime Ideology in Late Iron Age Sweden*. Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, 2007.
- Larsson, Lars. “The Iron Age Ritual Building at Uppåkra, Southern Sweden.” *Antiquity* 81 (2007): 11 – 25.
- Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Lebecq, Stéphane. *Marchands et navigateurs frisons du haut Moyen Âge*. Lille: Presses universitaires de Lille, 1983.
- . *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons du haut Moyen Âge: Corpus de sources écrites*. Lille: Presses universitaires de Lille, 1983.
- . Lebecq, Stéphane. “Frison et Vikings: Remarques sur les relations entre Frisons et Scandinaves aux VIIe – IXe siècles.” In *Les mondes normandes (VIIIe – XIIIe s.)*, ed. Henri Galinié, 45 – 59. Caen: Société d’Archéologie Médiévale, 1989.
- . “La Neustrie et la mer.” In *La Neustrie: les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, ed. Hartmut Atsma, 1:405 – 40. Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1989.
- . “Quentovic: un état de la question.” *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 8 (1993): 73 – 82.

- . “Routes of Exchange: Production and Distribution in the West (5th – 8th Century).” In *The Transformation of the Roman World AD 400 – 900*, ed. Leslie Webster and Michelle Brown, 67 – 78. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- . “Entre Antiquité tardive et très haut Moyen Age: permanence et mutations des systèmes de communications dans la Gaule et ses marges.” In *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda Antichità e alto Medioevo*, 461 – 501. Settimane 45, 1998.
- . “Les échanges dans la Gaule du Nord au VI^e siècle: une histoire en miettes.” In *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden, 185 – 202. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- . “The Role of the Monasteries in the Systems of Production and Exchange of the Frankish World between the Seventh and the Beginning of the Ninth Centuries.” In *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham, 121 – 48. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Lechner, Georg. “Die Anfänge der öffentlichen Wohlfahrts- und Gesundheitspflege in Magdeburg.” In *Städtewesen und Bürgertum als geschichtliche Kräfte: Gedächtnisschrift für Fritz Rörig*, ed. A. von Brandt and W. Koppe, 467 – 76. Lübeck: Verlag Max Schmidt, 1953.
- Leciejewicz, Lech. “Das Karolingische Reich und die Westslawen: Zur Entfaltung einer Kulturgrenzzone im 8. – 9. Jahrhundert.” In *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn, Teil 2*, ed. Herwig Friesinger and Falko Daim, 147 – 55. Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985.
- Levillain, Léon. *Examen critique des chartes mérovingiennes et carolingiennes de l'Abbaye de Corbie*. Paris: Ecole des Chartes, 1902.
- Levy, Janet E. Review of *Farms Villages, and Cities: Commerce and Urban Origins in Late Prehistoric Europe* by Peter S. Wells. *American Anthropologist* 88 (1986): 720 – 1.
- Lewit, Tamara. “Pigs, Presses and Pastoralism: Farming in the Fifth to Sixth Centuries AD.” *Early Medieval Europe* 17 (2009): 77 – 91.
- Ligi, Priit. “Saaremaa during the Viking Age.” In *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic: Papers from the Second Estonian – Swedish Symposium Sigtuna, May 1991*, ed. Ingmar Jansson, 39 – 45. Stockholm: Department of Archaeology, Stockholm University, 1995.
- Linderholm, Anna, Charlotte Hedenstierna Jonson, Olle Svensk, and Kerstin Lidén. “Diet and Status in Birka: Stable Isotopes and Grave Goods Compared.” *Antiquity* 82 (2008): 446 – 61.
- Lindkvist, Thomas. “The Emergence of Sweden.” In *The Viking World*, ed. Stefan Brink with Neil Price, 668 – 74. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Lintzel, Martin. *Der sächsische Stammesstaat und seine Eroberung durch die Franken*. 1933, reprint Vaduz: Kraus Reprint, 1965.
- . “Karl Martells Sachsenkrieg im Jahre 738 und die Missionstätigkeit des Bonifatius.” *Sachsen und Anhalt* 13 (1937): 59 – 65.
- . *Ausgewählte Schriften*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1961.
- Little, Lester K. “Life and Afterlife of the First Plague Pandemic.” In *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little, 3 – 32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

- Little, Lester K., ed. *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Ljungkvist, John. "Handcrafts." In *The Viking World*, ed. Stefan Brink with Neil Price, 186 – 92. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Lombard, Maurice. "Les bases monétaires d'une suprématie économique. L'or musulman du VIIe au XIe siècle," *Annales. Economies – Sociétés – Civilisations* 2 (1948): 188 – 99.
- Lopez, Robert S. "Mohammed and Charlemagne: A Revision." *Speculum* 18 (1943): 14 – 38.
- Loseby, S. T. "Bishops and Cathedrals: Order and Diversity in the Fifth-Century Urban Landscape of Southern Gaul." In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 144 – 55. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . "Marseille: A Late Antique Success Story?" *Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): 165 – 83.
- . "Arles in Late Antiquity: *Gallula Roma Arelas* and *Urbs Genesisii*." In *Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Neil Christie and S. T. Loseby, 45 – 70. Aldershot: Scolar, 1996.
- . "Marseille and the Pirenne Thesis, I: Gregory of Tours, the Merovingian Kings, and 'un grand port'." In *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden, 203 – 29. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- . "Marseille and the Pirenne Thesis, II: 'VilleMort'." In *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham, 167 – 93. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Łosiński, Władysław. "Some Comments on the 'Eastern Route' and Inflow of Arabic Coins into Great Poland during the 10th Century." In *Moneta Mediaevalis. Studia numzmatyczne i historyczne ofiarowane Profesorowi Stanisławowi Suchodolskiemu w 65. rocznicę urodzin*, ed. B. Paskiewicz, 185 – 92. Warszawa: Instytut Archaeologii i Etnologii, 2002.
- Lowe, John Carl, and S. Moryada. *The Geography of Movement*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975.
- Ludat, Herbert. *An Elbe und Oder um das Jahr 1000: Skizzen zur Politik des Ottonenreiches und der slawischen Mächte in Mitteleuropa*. Köln: Böhlau, 1971.
- Lübke, Christian. "Ests, Slavs and Saxons: Ethnic Groups and Political Structures." In *Wulfstan's Voyage*, 50 – 7. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Lund, A. A. "Zum Germanenbegriff bei Tacitus." In *Germanenprobleme in heutiger Sicht*, ed. Heinrich Beck, 53 – 87. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986.
- Lund Hansen, Ulla. *Römischer Import im Norden*. Copenhagen: Det Kongelige nordiske Oldskriftselskab, 1987.
- . "Beyond the Roman Frontier." In *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg, 46 – 53. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1989.
- Lunt, Horace G. "Common Slavic, Proto-Slavic, Pan-Slavic: What Are We Talking About?" *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics* 41 (1997): 7 - 67.

- Luttwak, Edward N. *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- Lyngström, Henriette. “Knives from the Late Iron Age in Denmark.” In *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic: Papers from the Second Estonian – Swedish Archaeological Symposium, Sigtuna, May 1991*, ed. Ingmar Jansson, 79 – 82. Stockholm: Department of Archaeology, Stockholm University, 1995.
- . “Farmers, Smelters and Smiths: Relations between Production, Consumption and Distribution of Iron in Denmark, 500 BC – AD 1500.” In *Prehistoric and Medieval Direct Iron Smelting in Scandinavia and Europe: Aspects of Technology and Society*, ed. Lars Christian Nørbach, 21 – 5. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2003.
- Macháček, Jiří. “Early Medieval Centre in Pohansko ne Břeclav/Lundeburg: *munitio*, *emporium* or *palatium* of the RULers of Moravia?” In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 473 – 98. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Mackay, Christopher S. *Ancient Rome: A Military and Political History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Mackensen, Michael. “Late Roman Fortifications and Building Programmes in the Province of Rhaetia: The Evidence of Recent Excavations and Some New Reflections.” In *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson, 199 – 244. Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999.
- Maddicott, John. “Plague in Seventh-Century England.” In *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little, 171 – 214. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Maenchen-Helfen, Otto J. *The World of the Huns: Studies in Their History and Culture*. Ed. Max Knight. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.
- Maggi, Roberto, and Mark Pearce. “Mid Fourth-millennium Copper Mining in Liguria, North-west Italy: The Earliest Known Copper Mines in Western Europe.” *Antiquity* 79 (2005): 66 – 77.
- Magnusson, Gert. *Lågteknisk Järnhantering i Jämtlands Län*. Jernkontorets Berghistoriska Skriftserie 22. Stockholm: Jernkontorets, 1986.
- . “Iron Production, Smithing and Iron Trade in the Baltic during the Late Iron Age and Early Middle Ages (c. 5th – 13th Centuries).” In *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic: Papers from the Second Estonian – Swedish Symposium Sigtuna, May 1991*, ed. Ingmar Jansson, 61 – 70. Stockholm: Department of Archaeology, Stockholm University, 1995.
- Makarov, N. “Traders in the Forest: The Northern Periphery of Rus’ in the Medieval Trade Network.” In *Pre-Modern Russia and its World: Essays in Honor of Thomas S. Noonan*, ed. Kathryn L. Reyerson, Theofanis G. Stavrou, and James D. Tracy, 115 – 31. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge, 1922.
- Marazzi, Federico. “The Destinies of the Late Antique Italies: Politico-Economic Developments of the Sixth Century.” In *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden, 119 – 59. Leiden: Brill, 1998.

- Martin, Janet. *Treasure of the Land of Darkness: The Fur Trade and Its Significance for Medieval Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Matthews, John. "The Making of the Text." In *The Theodosian Code: Studies in the Imperial Law of Late Antiquity*, ed. Jill Harries and Ian Wood, 19 – 44. London: Duckworth, 1993.
- Mauss, Marcel. *Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques*. Paris: Alcan, 1925. First published in English as *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Trans. Ian Cunnison. London: Cohen and West, 1954.
- Mayerthaler, Willi. "Woher stammt der Name 'Baiern'?" In *Das Romanische in den Ostalpen: Vorträge und Aufsätze*, ed. Dieter Messner, 7 – 72. Wien: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984.
- McClendon, Charles B. *The Origins of Medieval Architecture: Building in Europe, A.D. 600 – 900*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
- McCormick, Michael. "Bateaux de vie, bateaux de mort. Maladie, commerce, transports annonaires et le passage économique du Bas-Empire au Moyen Âge." In *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo*, 35 – 122. Settimane 45, 1998.
- . *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300 – 900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- . "New Light on the 'Dark Ages': How the Slave Trade Fuelled the Carolingian Economy." *Past and Present* 177 (2002): 17 – 54.
- . "Complexity, Chronology and Context in the Early Medieval Economy." *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003): 307 – 23.
- . "Um 808: Was der frühmittelalterliche König mit der Wirtschaft zu tun hatte." In *Die Macht des Königs. Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit*, ed. Bernhard Jussen, 55 – 71. München: C. H. Beck, 2005.
- . "Where Do Trading Towns Come From? Early Medieval Venice and the Northern *Emporia*." In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 41 – 68. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- . "Toward a Molecular History of the Justinianic Pandemic." In *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little, 290 – 312. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- . "Part One: Discovering the Early Medieval Economy." In *Long Morning*, 13 – 18. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- . "Molecular Middle Ages: Early Medieval Economic History in the Twenty-First Century." In *Long Morning*, 83 – 97. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- McGrail, Seán. "Seafaring Then and Now." In *Wulfstan's Voyage*, 271 – 4. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- McNeill, William. *Plagues and Peoples*. New York: Doubleday, 1976.
- McPhee, John. *Annals of the Former World*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998.

- Menghin, Wilfried. *Frühgeschichte Bayerns: Römer und Germanen, Baiern und Schwaben, Franken und Slawen*. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 1990.
- Menghin, Wilfried, and Dieter Planck, eds. *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2002.
- Metcalf, D. M. “The Beginnings of Coinage in the North Sea Coastlands: A Pirenne-like Hypothesis.” In *Birka Studies* 3, 196 – 214. Stockholm, 1994.
- . “Variations in the Composition of the Currency at Different Places in England.” In *Markets in Early Medieval Europe*, 37 – 47. Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003.
- Michaelsen, Karsten Kjer. “Iron Age Cemeteries and Settlement Structure in the Gudme – Lundeberg Area.” In *1991*, ed. P. O. Nielsen, K. Randsborg, and H. Thrane, 48 – 52. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Miller, Daniel, and Christopher Tilley, eds. *Ideology, Power and Prehistory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Mithen, Steven J. “The Mesolithic Age.” In *The Oxford Illustrated History of Prehistoric Europe*, ed. Barry Cunliffe, 79 – 135. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Montelius, Oscar. “Ueber die Einwanderung unserer Vorfahren in den Norden.” *Archiv für Anthropologie* 17 (1888): 151 – 60.
- Moreland, John. “Concepts of the Early Medieval Economy.” In *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham, 1 – 34. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- . “The Significance of Production in Eighth-Century England.” In *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham, 69 – 104. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Morley, Neville. “The Transformation of Italy, 225 – 28 B.C.” *Journal of Roman Studies* 91 (2001): 50 – 62.
- Morony, Michael G. “‘For Whom Does the Writer Write?’ The First Bubonic Plague Pandemic According to Syriac Sources.” In *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little, 59 – 86. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Morrison, Karl F. “Numismatics and Carolingian Trade: A Critique of the Evidence.” *Speculum* 38, no. 3 (1963): 403 – 32.
- Morton, A. D., ed. *Excavations at Hamwic, Volume 1: Excavations 1946 – 83, Excluding Six Dials and Melbourne Street*. London: Council for British Archaeology, 1992.
- Moss, H. St. L. B. “Economic Consequences of the Barbarian Invasions: Revisions in Economic History.” *The Economic History Review* 7 (1937): 209 – 16.
- Mugurēvičs, Ēvalds. “Interactions between Indigenous and Western Culture in Livonia in the 13th to 16th Centuries.” In *From the Baltic to the Black Sea: Studies in Medieval Archaeology*, ed. David Austin and Leslie Alcock, 168 – 78. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Muhly, J. D. Review of *Farms, Villages, and Cities*, by Peter S. Wells. *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1170.

- Mulford, Michael. "Coasting Britannia: Roman Trade and Traffic Around the Shores of Britain." In *Communities and Connections: Essays in Honour of Barry Cunliffe*, ed. Chris Gosden et al., 54 – 74. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Müller, Felix. Review of *Chronologische Untersuchungen in dem spätkeltischen Oppidum bei Manching* by Herbert Lorenz and *Fundstellenübersicht der Grabungsjahre 1961 – 1974* by Hermann Gersden. *Antiquity* 81 (2007): 487 – 9.
- Myrhe, Bjorn. "The Beginning of the Viking Age—Some Current Archaeological Problems." In *Viking Revaluations*, ed. Anthony Faulkes and Richard Perkins, 182 – 204. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1993.
- Nash, Daphne. "Imperial Expansion under the Roman Republic." In *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen, 87 – 103. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Näsman, Ulf. "Sea Trade during the Scandinavian Iron Age: Its Character, Commodities, and Routes." In *Aspects of Maritime Scandinavia AD 200 – 1200*, ed. Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, 23 – 38. Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 1991.
- . "The Justinianic Era of South Scandinavia: An Archaeological View." In *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden, 255 – 78. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- Navarro, J. M. de. "Prehistoric Routes between Northern Europe and Italy Defined by the Amber Trade." *The Geographical Journal* 66, no. 6 (1925): 481 – 507.
- Nerman, Birger. *Grobin-Seeburg: Ausgrabungen und Funde*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1958.
- Nielsen, P. O., K. Randsborg, and H. Thrane, eds. *Gudme and Lundeborg*. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Noonan, Thomas S. "Ninth-Century Dirham Hoards from European Russia: Preliminary Analysis." In *Viking-Age Coinage in the Northern Lands: The Sixth Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History*, ed. M. A. S. Blackburn and D. M. Metcalf, 47 – 117. Oxford: B.A.R., 1981.
- . "Why Dirhams First Reached Russia: The Role of Arab – Khazar Relations in the Development of the Earliest Islamic Trade with Eastern Europe." *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 4 (1984): 151 – 282.
- . "Why the Vikings First Came to Russia." *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 34 (1986): 321 – 48.
- . "The Vikings in the East: Coins and Commerce." In *Birka Studies* 3, 215 – 36. Stockholm, 1994.
- . "Scandinavians in European Russia." In *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*, ed. Peter Sawyer, 134 – 55. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- . *The Islamic World, Russia and the Vikings, 750 – 900: The Numismatic Evidence*. Aldershot: Ashgate/Variorum, 1998.
- . "Coins, Trade, and the Origins of Ninth Century Rus' Towns." *XII. Internationaler Numismatischer Kongress Berlin 1997: Akten – Proceedings – Actes*. Vol. 2, ed. Bernd Kluge and Bernhard Weisser, 934 – 42. Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2000.

- . “Volga Bulgharia’s Tenth-Century Trade with Samanid Central Asia.” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii aevi* 11 (2000/01): 140 – 218.
- Noonan, Thomas S., and Roman K. Kovalev. “Wine and Oil for All the Rus’! The Importation of Byzantine Wine and Olive Oil to Kievan Rus’.” *Acta Byzantina Fennica* 9 (1999): 118 – 52.
- Nørgård Jørgensen, Anne. “Harbors and Trading Centers on Bornholm, Öland and Gotland in the Late 9th Century.” In *Wulfstan’s Voyage*, 145 – 59. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Oakeshott, Ewart. “Introduction to the Viking Sword.” In *Swords of the Viking Age*, catalogue and examples by Ian G. Peirce, 1 – 14. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002.
- Ó Corráin, Donnchadh. “Ireland, Wales, Man, and the Hebrides.” In *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*, ed. Peter Sawyer, 83 – 109. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Olivier, Laurent, and Joseph Kovacik. “The ‘Briquetage de la Seille’ (Lorraine, France): Proto-Industrial Salt Production in the European Iron Age.” *Antiquity* 80 (2006): 558 – 66.
- Osborne, Robin, and Barry Cunliffe, eds. *Mediterranean Urbanization 800 – 600 BC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Östergren, Majvor. “The Spillings Hoard(s).” In *Silver Economies*, 321 – 36. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011 .
- Overbeck, B. *Geschichte des Alpenrheintals in römischer Zeit auf Grund der archäologischen Zeugnisse. 1. Topographie, Fundvorlage und historische Auswertung*. Munich: Beck, 1982.
- Padberg, Lutz E. von. “Die Diskussion missionarischer Programme zur Zeit Karls des Großen.” In *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung: Das Epos “Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa” und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799*, ed. Peter Godman, Jörg Jarnut and Peter Johanek, 125 – 43. Paderborn: Akademie Verlag, 2002.
- Painter, Sidney. “Foreword.” In *The Life of Charlemagne by Einhard*, 5 – 12. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960.
- Palmer, Ben. “The Hinterlands of Three Southern English *Emporia*: Some Common Themes.” In *Markets in Early Medieval Europe*, 48 – 60. Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003.
- Paner, Henryk. “The Harbour Topography of Gdąnsk.” In *Maritime Topography and the Medieval Town*, ed. Jan Bill and Birthe L. Clausen, 45 – 54. Copenhagen: The National Museum, 1999.
- Pare, Christopher. “Bronze and the Bronze Age.” In *Metals Make the World Go Round: The Supply and Circulation of Metals in Bronze Age Europe*, ed. C. F. E. Pare, 1 – 38. Oxford: Oxbow, 2000.
- Parkinson, William A. “Early Metallurgy in Southeastern Europe.” In *Ancient Europe*, 317 – 22. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004.
- Paterson, Jeremy. Review of *Business Managers in Ancient Rome*, by J.-J. Aubert. *Journal of Roman Studies* (1997): 268.
- Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

- Pauli, Ludwig. *The Alps: Archaeology and Early History*. Trans. Eric Peters. London: Thames and Hudson, 1984.
- Pearce, Mark. "The Significance of Bronze." In *Ancient Europe*, 6 – 11. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.
- . "The Italian Bronze Age." In *Ancient Europe*, 34 – 42. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.
- Pedersen, Anne. "Jewellery in Hoards in Southern Scandinavia." In *Silver Economies*, 153 – 72. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Peña, J. T. "The Mobilization of State Olive Oil in Roman Africa: The Evidence of the Late 4th-c. Ostraka from Carthage." In *Carthage Papers: The Early Colony's Economy, Water Supply, A Public Bath, and the Mobilization of the State Olive Oil*, 117 – 235. Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1998.
- Pérez-Estaún, Andrés, Dennis Brown, et al. "Uralides: A Key to Understanding Collisional Orogeny." In *Lithosphere Dynamics: Origin and Evolution of Continents*, ed. D.G. Gee and H.J. Zeyen, 29 – 38. Uppsala: Europrobe Secretariate, 1996.
- Périn, Patrick. "Settlements and Cemeteries in Merovingian Gaul." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood, 67 – 98. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Perroy, Édouard. "Encore Mahomet et Charlemagne." *Revue Historique* 212 (1954): 232 – 8.
- Pestell, Tim, and Katharina Ulmschneider, eds. *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and 'Productive' Sites, 650 – 850*. Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003.
- Peytreman, Édith. *Archéologie de l'habitat rural dans le nord de la France du IV^e au XII^e siècle*. Saint-Germain-en-Laye: Musée des Antiquités nationales, 2003.
- Pilø, Lars. "The Settlement: Extent and Dating." In *Kaupang in Skiringssal: Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume I*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, 161 – 78. Nordske Oldfunn 22. Oslo: University of Oslo, Museum of Cultural History, 2007.
- Pirenne, Henri. "Draps de Frise ou draps de Flandre?" *Vierteljahrschrift für Social- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 7 (1909): 308 – 15.
- . "Stages in the Social History of Capitalism." *American Historical Review* 19 (1914): 494 – 515.
- . "Mahomet et Charlemagne." *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 1 (1922): 77 – 86.
- . *Medieval Cities; Their Origins and the Revival of Trade*. Trans. Frank D. Halsey. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1925.
- . *Histoire de l'Europe*. Paris: F. Alcan, 1936.
- . *Mohammed and Charlemagne*. Trans. Bernard Mial. New York: Meridian, 1939.
- Pitts, Lynn F. "Relations between Rome and the German 'Kings' on the Middle Danube in the First to Fourth Centuries A.D." *Journal of Roman Studies* 79 (1989): 45 – 58.

- Planitz, Hans. *Die Deutsche Stadt im Mittelalter: Von der Römerzeit bis zu den Zunftekämpfen*. Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1954.
- Pleket, Henri Willy. "Wirtschaft." In *Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. Friedrich Vittinghoff, 25 – 160. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990.
- Pohl, Walter. *Die Awaren: Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567 – 822 n. Chr.* München: C. H. Beck, 1988.
- . "Zur Dynamik barbarischer Gesellschaften: Das Beispiel der Awaren." *Klio* 73 (1991): 595 – 600.
- . "Gregory of Tours and Contemporary Perceptions of Lombard Italy." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood, 131 – 43. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Poláček, Lumír. "Ninth-Century Mikulčice: The 'Market of the Moravians'? The Archaeological Evidence of Trade in Great Moravia." In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 499 – 524. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Polanyi, Karl. "The Economy as Instituted Process." In *Trade and Markets in the Early Empires*, ed. Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensburg, and Harry W. Pearson, 243 – 70. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957.
- Poly, Jean-Pierre. "La corde au cou: les Francs, la France et la Loi Salique." In *Genèse de l'état moderne en Méditerranée: approches historique et anthropologique des pratiques et des représentations*, 287 – 320. Paris: Boccard, 1993.
- Poulter, A. G. "The Transition to Late Antiquity on the Lower Danube: An Interim Report (1996 – 8)." *Antiquities Journal* 79 (1999): 145 – 85.
- Poulter, A. G., and T. F. C. Blagg. *Nicomolis ad Istrum: A Roman, Late Roman, and Early Byzantine City: Excavations 1985 – 1992*. London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1995.
- Pritsak, Omeljan. *The Origin of Rus'.* Vol. 1: *Old Scandinavian Sources Other Than the Sagas*. Cambridge MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1981.
- . "The Slavs and the Avars." In *Gli Slavi Occidentali e Meridionali nell' Alto Medioevo*, 353 – 432. *Settimane* 30, 1983.
- Purcell, Nicholas. "Wine and Wealth in Ancient Italy." *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 1 – 19.
- Ramqvist, Per H. "Resources, Population and Power in the Migration Period: An Analysis of the Archaeological Remains in Central Norrland." In *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic: Papers from the Second Estonian – Swedish Archaeological Symposium, Sigtuna, May 1991*, ed. Ingmar Jansson, 33 – 8. Stockholm: Department of Archaeology, Stockholm University, 1995.
- Randsborg, Klavs. Review of *Farms Villages, and Cities: Commerce and Urban Origins in Late Prehistoric Europe* by Peter S. Wells. *Science* new series 228 (10 May 1985): 713.
- . *The First Millennium AD in Europe and the Mediterranean: An Archaeological Essay*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- . "The Migration Period: Model History and Treasure." In *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden, 61 – 88. Leiden: Brill, 1998.

- Randsborg, Klavs, ed., *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.* Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1989.
- Rasmussen, Tom. "Urbanization in Etruria." In *Mediterranean Urbanization 800 – 600 BC*, ed. Robin Osborne and Barry Cunliffe, 71 – 90. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Rauh, N. K. *The Sacred Bonds of Commerce: Religion, Economy, and Trade Society at Hellenistic Roman Delos*. Amsterdam: Gieben, 1993.
- Rębkowski, Marian. "The Maritime Topography of Medieval Kołobrzeg." In *Maritime Topography and the Medieval Town*, ed. Jan Bill and Birthe L. Clausen, 55 – 60. Copenhagen: The National Museum, 1999.
- Reinhard, Walter. "Ein Germane im römischen Militärdienst." In *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, 302 – 5. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2002.
- Renfrew, Colin. "The Autonomy of the South-east European Copper Age." *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 35 (1969): 12 – 47.
- . "Trade as Action at Distance: Questions of Integration and Communication." In *Ancient Civilization and Trade*, ed. Jeremy A. Sabloff and C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, 3 – 59. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975.
- . "Alternative Models for Exchange and Spatial Distribution." In *Exchange Systems in Prehistory*, ed. T. K. Earle and J. Ericson, 71 – 90. New York: Academic Press, 1977.
- . "Introduction: Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-political Change." In *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change*, ed. Colin Renfrew and John F. Cherry, 1 – 18. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Renfrew, Colin, and J. Cherry, eds. *Peer Polity Interaction and Sociopolitical Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Reuter, Timothy. "Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th series 35 (1985): 75 – 94.
- . "The End of Carolingian Military Expansion." In *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814 – 840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins, 391 – 405. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- . *Germany in the Early Middle Ages, 800 – 1056*. London: Longman, 1991.
- Reynolds, Susan. *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1994.
- Roberts, M. "Barbarians in Gaul: The Response of the Poets." In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 97 – 106. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Roesdahl, Else. "The Emergence of Denmark and the Reign of Harald Bluetooth." In *The Viking World*, ed. Stefan Brink with Neil Price, 652 – 64. London: Routledge, 2008.

- Rörig, Fritz. *Magdeburgs Entstehung und die ältere Handelsgeschichte*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952.
- Rostovtzeff, Michael. *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941.
- . *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 2nd edition. Revised by P. M. Fraser. Oxford: Clarendon, 1957.
- Rovelli, Alessia. “Some Considerations on the Coinage of Lombard and Carolingian Italy.” In *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham, 167 – 93. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Rowlands, Michael. “Centre and Periphery: A Review of a Concept.” In *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen, 1 – 11. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Rowlands, Michael, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen, eds. *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Russell, J. C. “That Earlier Plague.” *Demography* 5 (1968): 174 – 84.
- Sabbe, E. “L’importation des tissus orientaux en Europe occidentale au haut moyen âge (IX^e et X^e siècles).” *Revue belge de Philologie et d’Histoire* 14 (1935): 811 – 48 and 1261 – 88.
- Sadowski, J. N. von, *Die Handelsstrassen der Griechen und Römer durch das Flussgebiet der Oder, Weichsel, des Dniepr und Niemen an die Gestade des Baltischen Meeres*. Trans. and intr. Albin Kohn. Amsterdam: Meridian Publishing Co., 1963.
- Sahlins, Marshall. *Stone Age Economics*. Chicago: Aldine, 1972.
- Samwer, Karl. “Die Grenzpolizei des römischen Reichs.” *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst* 5 (1886): 311 – 2.
- Sanderson, Ivan T. *The Continent We Live On*. New York: Random House, 1961.
- Sarfati, H., W. J. H. Verwers, and P. J. Woltering, eds. *In Discussion with the Past: Archaeological Studies Presented to W. A. van Es*. Zwolle: Foundation for Promoting Archaeology, 1999.
- Sarris, Peter. “Bubonic Plague in Byzantium: The Evidence of Non-Literary Sources.” In *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541 – 750*, ed. Lester K. Little, 119 – 32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Sawyer, Birgit, and Peter Sawyer. “Christianization and Church Organization.” In idem, *Medieval Scandinavia: From Conversion to Reformation, circa 800 – 1500*, pp. 100 – 28. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- Scheidel, Walter. “Quantifying the Sources of Slaves in the Early Roman Empire.” *Journal of Roman Studies* 87 (1997): 156 – 69.
- Schieffer, Theodor. *Winfried-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas*. Freiburg, 1954, reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972.

- Schindler, Reinhard. *Ausgrabungen in Alt Hamburg: Neue Ergebnisse zur Frühgeschichte der Hansestadt*. Hamburg: Gesellschaft der Freunde des vaterländischen Schul- und Erziehungswesens, 1957.
- Schmauder, Michael. "Überlegungen zur östlichen Grenze des Karolingischen Reiches unter Karl dem Grossen." In *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, 57 – 97. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000.
- Schmid, Alois. "Bayern und Italien vom 7. bis zum 10. Jahrhundert." In *Die transalpinen Verbindungen der Bayern, Alemannen und Franken bis zum 10. Jahrhundert*, ed. Helmut Beumann and Werner Schröder, 51 – 91. Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1987.
- Schneider, Reinhard. "Fränkische Alpenpolitik." In *Die transalpinen Verbindungen der Bayern, Alemannen und Franken bis zum 10. Jahrhundert*, ed. Helmut Beumann and Werner Schröder, 23 – 49. Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1987.
- Schuchhardt, Carl. *Vorgeschichte von Deutschland*. Berlin, 1943.
- Schulz, Caroline. "Befunde auf dem Hamburger Domplatz." In *Domplatzgrabung in Hamburg: Teil I*, ed. Ralf Busch, 27 – 55. Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1995.
- . "Heidenwall oder Hammaburg: Eine Neubewertung der Pressehausgrabung." In *Domplatzgrabung in Hamburg: Teil I*, ed. Ralf Busch, 57 – 64. Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1995.
- Schütte, Sven. "Continuity Problems and Authority Structures in Cologne." In *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians*, ed. G. Ausenda, 163 – 75. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995.
- Schutz, Herbert. *The Germanic Realms in Pre-Carolingian Central Europe, 400 – 750*. New York: Peter Lang, 2000.
- Schwarz, Andreas. "Some Open Questions." *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003): 279 – 82.
- Schwärzel, Dagmar. *Handel und Verkehr des Merowingerreiches nach den Schriftlichen Quellen: Ein Darstellungsversuch in 12 Karten* (Marburg: Vorgeschichtliches Seminar, 1983).
- Service, Elman R. *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective*, 2nd edition. New York: Random House, 1971.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "The Rhos Guests of Louis the Pious: Whence and Wherefore?" *Early medieval Europe* 4, no. 1 (1995): 41-60.
- Sherman, Heidi M. "Barbarians Come to Market: Emporia Trading in Western Eurasia from 500 BC to AD 1000." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2008.
- Sherratt, Andrew. "The Genesis of Megaliths: Monumentality, Ethnicity and Social Complexity in Neolithic North-West Europe." *World Archaeology* 22, no. 2 (1990): 147 – 67.
- . "What Would a Bronze-Age World System Look Like? Relations between Temperate Europe and the Mediterranean in Later Prehistory." *Journal of European Archaeology* 1, no. 2 (1993): 1 – 57.

- Sherratt, Susan. "Circulation of Metals and the End of the Bronze Age in the Eastern Mediterranean." In *Metals Make the World Go Round: The Supply and Circulation of Metals in Bronze Age Europe*, ed. C. F. E. Pare, 82 – 95. Oxford: Oxbow, 2000.
- Simmons, I. G. "Humans and Environments." In *Ancient Europe*, 7 – 13. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.
- Sindbæk, Søren M. "Networks and Nodal Points: The Emergence of Towns in Early Viking Age Scandinavia." *Antiquity* 81 (2007): 119 – 32.
- . "Silver Economies and Social Ties: Long-Distance Interaction, Long-term Investments—and Why the Viking Age Happened." In *Silver Economies*, 41 – 65. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Sivan, H. "Town and Country in Late Antique Gaul: The Example of Bordeaux." In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 132 – 43. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Skre, Dagfinn. "The Emergence of a Central Place: Skiringssal in the 8th Century." In *Kaupang in Skiringssal: Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, 431 – 43. Nordske Oldfunn 22. Oslo: University of Oslo, Museum of Cultural History, 2007.
- . "Towns and Markets, Kings and Central Places in South-Western Scandinavia c. AD 800 – 950." In *Kaupang in Skiringssal: Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, 445 – 69. Nordske Oldfunn 22. Oslo: University of Oslo, Museum of Cultural History, 2007.
- . "Commodity Money, Silver and Coinage in Viking-Age Scandinavia." In *Silver Economies*, 67 – 91. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Skre, Dagfinn, ed. *Kaupang in Skiringssal: Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series, Volume 1*. Nordske Oldfunn 22. Oslo: University of Oslo, Museum of Cultural History, 2007.
- Smelser, N. "A Comparative View of Exchange Systems." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 7 (1959): 173 – 82.
- Smith, Carol A. "Exchange Systems and the Spatial Distribution of Elites: The Organisation of Stratification in Agrarian Societies." In *Regional Analysis*, ed. Carol A. Smith, 2: 309 – 74. New York: Academic Press, 1976.
- Smith, C. J. *Early Rome and Latium: Economy and Society c. 1000 – 500 BC*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
- Smith, Julia M. H. "Fines imperii." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2, ed. Rosamond McKitterick, 169 – 89. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Sommer, C. Sebastian. "From Conquered Territory to Roman Province: Recent Discoveries and Debate on the Roman Occupation of Southwest Germany." In *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson, 160 – 98. Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999.
- Sørensen, Palle Ø. "Gudmehallerne: Kongeligt byggeri fra jernalderen." In *Nationalismuseets Arbejdsmark*, 25 – 39. Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 1994.

- Spekke, Arnolds. *The Ancient Amber Routes and the Geographical Discovery of the Eastern Baltic*. Stockholm: M. Goppers, 1957.
- . *Senie dzintara ceļi un Austrum-baltijas ģeografiskā atklāšana*. Stockholm: Zelta Ābele, 1962.
- Steuer, Heiko. *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen in Mitteleuropa: eine Analyse der Auswertungsmethoden des archäologischen Quellenmaterials*. Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, dritte Folge, 128. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1982.
- . “Archaeology and History: Proposals on the Social Structure of the Merovingian Kingdom.” In *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg, 100 – 22. Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1989.
- . “Principles of Trade and Exchange: Trade Goods and Merchants.” In *Wulfstan’s Voyag*, 294 – 308. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Stilborg, Ole. “Ceramic Contacts in the Gudme-Lundeborg Area in the Late Roman Iron Age.” In *Gudme and Lundeborg*, 103 – 5. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Storgaard, Birger. “The Årslev Grave and Connections between Funen and the Continent at the End of the Later Roman Iron Age.” In *Gudme and Lundeborg*, 160 – 8. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Stork, Ingo. “Lauchheim in frühen Mittelalter: Ein einzigartiges Ensemble.” In *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, 321 – 30. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2002.
- Storli, Inger. “Ohthere and His World—a Contemporary Perspective.” In *Ohthere’s Voyages: A Late 9th-Century Account of Voyages along the Coasts of Norway and Denmark and Its Cultural Context*, ed. Janet Bately and Anton Englert, 76 – 99. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde, 2007.
- Szábo, Th. “Antikes Erbe und karolingisch – ottonische Verkehrspolitik.” In *Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter: Festschrift für Josef Fleckenstein zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Lutz Fenske, Werner Rösner, and Thomas L. Zotz, 125 – 45. Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1984.
- Szeverényi, Vajk. “The Early and Middle Bronze Ages in Central Europe.” In *Ancient Europe*, 20 – 30. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004.
- Tacitus, *Germania*. Trans. M. Hutton. In *Agricola, Germania, Dialogus*, 117 – 215. Cambridge, MA: Loeb, 1970.
- Tangl, Georgina. “Das Paßvorschrift des Königs Ratchis und ihre Beziehung zu dem Verhältnis zwischen Franken und Langobarden vom 6. – 8. Jahrhundert.” *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 38 (1958): 1 – 67.
- Taylor, Timothy. “Believing the Ancients: Quantitative and Qualitative Dimensions of Slavery and the Slave Trade in Later Prehistoric Eurasia.” *World Archaeology* 33, no. 1 (2001): 27 – 43.
- Tchernia, A. *Le vin de l’Italie Romaine: Essai d’histoire économique après les amphores*. Rome: École Française, 1986.

- Teitler, H. C. "Un-Roman Activities in Late Antique Gaul: The Cases of Arvandus and Seronatus." In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 309 – 17. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Temin, Peter. "A Market Economy in the Early Roman Empire." *Journal of Roman Studies* 91 (2001): 169 – 81.
- Tereygoel, Florian. "Production and Circulation of Silver and Secondary Products (Lead and Glass) from Frankish Royal Silver Mines at Melle (Eighth to Tenth Century)." In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 123 – 34. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Theuerkauf, Gerhard. "Die Hamburger Region von den Sachsenkriegen Karls I. bis zur Gründung des Erzbistums (772 – 864)." In *Domplatzgrabung in Hamburg: Teil I*, ed. Ralf Busch, 9 – 19. Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1995.
- Theuws, Frans (F. C. W. J.). "Centre and Periphery in Northern Austrasia (6th – 8th centuries): An Archaeological Perspective." In *Medieval Archaeology in the Netherlands: Studies Presented to H. H. van Regteren Altena*, ed. H. H. van Regteren Altena, J. C. Besteman, Johannes Maria Bos, and H. A. Heidinga, 41 – 69. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990.
- . "Where is the Eighth Century in the Towns of the Meuse Valley?" In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 153 – 64. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Thomas, Julian. "The Cultural Context of the First Use of Domesticates in Continental Central and Northwest Europe." In *The Origins and Spread of Agriculture and Pastoralism in Eurasia*, ed. David R. Harris, 310 – 22. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996.
- Thompson, E. A. *Romans and Barbarians: The Decline of the Western Empire*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982.
- Thomsen, Per O. "Lundeborg—an Early Port of Trade in South-East Funen." In *Gudme and Lundeborg*, 23 – 9. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Timm, Albrecht. *Studien zur Siedlungs- und Agrargeschichte Mitteldeutschlands*. Köln: Böhlau-Verlag, 1956.
- Timpe, D. "Ethnologische Begriffsbildung in der Antike." In *Germanenprobleme in heutiger Sicht*, ed. Heinrich Beck, 22 – 40. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986.
- Tõnisson, E. *Die Gauja-Liven und ihre materielle Kultur (11. Jh. - Anfang 13. Jhs.): Ein Beitrag zur ostbaltischen Frühgeschichte*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1974.
- Toubert, Pierre. "La part du grand domaine dans le décollage économique de l'Occident (VIIIe – Xe siècles)." In *La Croissance agricole du Haut Moyen Age: chronologie, modalités, géographie: Centre culturel de l'Abbaye de Flaran: dixièmes journées internationales d'histoire, 9, 10, 11 septembre 1988*, 53 – 86. Auch: Comité Départemental de Tourisme du Gers, 1990.
- Toynbee, Arnold. *A Study of History*. Abridged. New York: Oxford University Press, 1947.
- Tummuscheit, Astrid. "Groß Strömkendorf: A Market Site of the Eighth Century." In *Markets in Early Medieval Europe*, 208 – 220. Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003.

- Turfa, Jean MacIntosh. Review of *Oriente e Occidente: metodi e discipline a confronto. Riflessioni sulla cronologia dell'età del ferro in Italia*, ed. Gilda Bartoloni and Filippo Delpino. *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2006.08.10 (online archive number).
- Tykot, Robert H. "Trade and Exchange." In *Ancient Europe*, 65 – 71. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.
- Ulmschneider, Katharina, and Tim Pestell. "Introduction: Early Medieval Markets and 'Productive' Sites." In *Markets in Early Medieval Europe*, 1 – 10. Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003.
- Ulriksen, Jens. "Danish Sites and Settlements with a Maritime Context, AD 200 – 1200." *Antiquity* 68 (1994): 797 – 811.
- . "Viking-Age Sailing Routes of the Western Baltic Sea—a Matter of Safety." In *Wulfstan's Voyage*, 135 – 44. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Unverzagt, Wilhelm. "Überblick über den Stand der archäologischen Stadtkernforschung in Magdeburg." In *Städtewesen und Bürgertum als geschichtliche Kräfte: Gedächtnisschrift für Fritz Rörig*, ed. A. von Brandt and W. Koppe, 461 – 6. Lübeck: Verlag Max Schmidt, 1953.
- Urbánczyk, Przemysław. "Early State Formation in East Central Europe." In *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Florin Curta, 139 – 51. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.
- Uslar, Rafael von. "Die Germanen." In *Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. Friedrich Vittinghoff, 657 – 752. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990.
- Valtonen, Irmeli. "An Interpretation of the Description of Northernmost Europe in the Old English Orosius." MA thesis, University of Oulu, 1988.
- van Berchem, D. *Les Routes et l'histoire: Études sur les Helvètes et leurs voisins dans l'empire romain*. Geneva: Droz, 1982.
- Van Dam, R. "The Pirenne Thesis and Fifth-Century Gaul." In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 321 – 33. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- van Es, W. A. "Dorestad Centred." In *Medieval Archaeology in the Netherlands: Studies Presented to H. van Regteren Atsma*, ed. J. C. Besteman, J. M. Bos, et al., 151 – 182. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990.
- van Es, W. A., and W. J. H. Verwers. *Excavations at Dorestad I: The Harbour; Hoogstraat I*. Amersfoort: Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek, 1980.
- Van Ossel, Paul. *Etablissements ruraux de l'Antiquité tardive dans le nord de la Gaule*. Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1992.
- Van Ossel, Paul, and Pierre Ouzoulias. "Rural Settlement Economy in Northern Gaul in the Late Empire: An Overview and Assessment." *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 13 (2000): 133 – 60.
- Vana, Zdenek. *The World of the Ancient Slavs*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983.
- Vander Linden, Marc. "For Equalities are Plural: Reassessing the Social in Europe during the Third Millennium BC." *World Archaeology* 39, no. 2 (2007): 177 – 93.

- Vandkilde, Helle. "Bronze Age Scandinavia." In *Ancient Europe*, 72 – 80. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.
- Vang Petersen, Peter. "Excavations at Sites of Treasure Trove Finds at Gudme." In *Gudme and Lundeborg*, 30 – 40. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Velkov, Velizar. *Cities in Thrace and Dacia in Late Antiquity (Studies and Materials)*. Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1977.
- Verhulst, Adriaan. "Der Handel im Merowingerreich: Gesamtdarstellung nach schriftlichen Quellen," *Early Medieval Studies* 2 (1970): 2 – 54.
- . "Economic Organisation." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2, ed. Rosamond McKitterick, 481 – 509. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- . *The Rise of Cities in North-West Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- . *The Carolingian Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Verlinden, Charles. *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale*. 2 vols. Bruges: De Tempel, 1955 –77.
- Vidal de La Blache, Paul. *Tableau de la Géographie de la France*. Paris: La Table Ronde, 1994.
- Wade, Keith. "Ipswich." In *The Rebirth of Towns in the West, AD 700 – 1050*, ed. R. Hodges and B. Hobley, 93 – 100. London: Council for British Archaeology, 1988.
- Wagner, N. "Der völkerwanderungszeitliche Germanenbegriff." In *Germanenprobleme in heutiger Sicht*, ed. Heinrich Beck, 130-54. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. *The Modern World-System*. 3 vols. New York: Academic Press, 1974 – 1989.
- Walmsley, Alan. "Production, Exchange, and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean: Old Structures, New Systems?" In *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham, 265 – 343. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Wamers, Egon. "The Duisminde Hoard." In *Silver Economies*, 309 – 20. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Ward-Perkins, Bryan. *The Fall of Rome: and the End of Civilization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Warnke, Charlotte. *Die Anfänge des Fernhandels in Polen*. Würzburg: Holzner, 1964.
- Watson, Bruce. "'Dark Earth' and Urban Decline in Late Roman London." In *Roman London: Recent Archaeological Work*, ed. Bruce Watson, 100 – 6. Portsmouth RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L.L.C., 1998.
- Weber, Thomas. "Urban Archaeology in Magdeburg: Results and Prospects." In *Heirs of the Roman West*, 271 – 301. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Weinfurter, Stefan. *The Salian Century: Main Currents in an Age of Transition*. Trans. Barbara M. Bowles. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.

- Wells, C. M. *The German Policy of Augustus: An Examination of the Archaeological Evidence*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1972.
- Wells, Peter S. *Farms, Villages, and Cities: Commerce and Urban Origins in Late Prehistoric Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.
- . “Interactions between Denmark and Central Europe in the Late Prehistoric Iron Age: The Prelude to Gudme and Lundeberg.” In *Gudme and Lundeberg*, 151 – 9. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- . *The Barbarians Speak: How the Conquered Peoples Shaped Roman Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- . *Beyond Celts, Germans and Scythians: Archaeology and Identity in Iron Age Europe*. London: Duckworth, 2001.
- . “Hochdorf.” In *Ancient Europe*, 79 – 80. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004.
- . *Barbarians to Angels: The Dark Ages Reconsidered*. New York: Norton, 2008.
- Wenskus, Reinhard. *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes*. Köln: Böhlau, 1961.
- . “Über die Möglichkeit eines allgemeinen interdisziplinären Germanenbegriffs.” In *Germanenprobleme in heutiger Sicht*, ed. Heinrich Beck, 1-21. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986.
- Werner, Joachim. “Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation.” *Archaeologia Geographica* 1 (1950): 23 – 32.
- . “Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft im östlichen Merowingerreich nach archäologischen und numismatischen Quellen.” In *Moneta e Scambi nell’ alto Medioevo*, 557 – 618. *Settimane* 8, 1961.
- Werner, Karl Ferdinand. “Conquête franque de la Gaule ou changement de régime?” In idem, *Vom Frankenreich zur Entfaltung Deutschlands und Frankreichs. Ursprünge – Strukturen – Beziehungen. Ausgewählte Beiträge*, 1 – 11. Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1984.
- Wes, M. A. “Crisis and Conversion in Fifth-Century Gaul: Aristocrats and Ascetics between ‘Horizontality’ and ‘Verticality.’” In *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. H. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 252 – 63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Westerdahl, Christer. “Transport Zones in Wulfstan’s Days.” In *Wulfstan’s Voyage*, 206 – 19. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Wheeler, Everett L. “Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy.” *The Journal of Military History* 57 (1993): 7 – 41 and 215 – 40.
- Wheeler, Sir Mortimer. *Rome beyond the Imperial Frontiers*. London: G. Bell and Sons, 1954.
- White, H. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.
- Whittaker, C. R. *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

- Whittle, Alasdair. "The First Farmers," in Cunliffe, Barry, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Prehistoric Europe*, ed. Barry Cunliffe, 136 – 66. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Whittow, Mark. *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600 – 1025*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996.
- Wicker, Nancy. "The Organization of Crafts Production and the Social Status of the Migration Period Goldsmith." In *Gudme and Lundeborg*, 145 – 50. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1994.
- Wickham, Chris. "Marx, Sherlock Holmes, and Late Roman Commerce." Review article. *Journal of Roman Studies* 78 (1988): 183 – 93.
- . "Italy and the Early Middle Ages." In *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg, 140 – 51. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1989.
- . "Overview: Production, Distribution and Demand." In *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden, 279 – 92. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- . "Introduction." In *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham, ix – x. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- . "Overview: Production, Distribution and Demand II." In *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham, 345 – 77. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- . *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400 – 800*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . "Rethinking the Structure of the Early Medieval Economy." In *Long Morning*, 19 – 31. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- Wiesinger, Peter. "Antik-romanische Kontinuitäten im Donaauraum von Ober- und Niederösterreich am Beispiel der Gewässer-, Berg- und Siedlungsnamen." In *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern: Teil I*, ed. H. Wolfram and W. Pohl, 261 – 326. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990.
- Wigg, Angelika. "Confrontation and Interaction: Celts, Germans and Romans in the Central German Highlands." In *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson, 35 – 53. Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999.
- Wigg, David G. "The Development of the Monetary Economy in N Gaul in the Late La Tène and Early Roman Periods." In *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson, 99 – 124. Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999.
- Wightman, Edith Mary. *Gallia Belgica*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.
- Wilk, Richard R. *Economies and Cultures: Foundations of Economic Anthropology*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1996.
- Wilkes, J. J. "The Roman Danube: An Archaeological Survey." *Journal of Roman Studies* 95 (2005): 124 – 225.

- Willers, Heinrich. *Neue Untersuchungen über die römische Bronzeindustrie von Capua und von Niedergermanien, besonders auf die Funde aus Deutschland und dem Norden hin*. Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1907.
- Williams, C. Dickerman. "Introduction," in Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmundian Constitutions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952.
- Williams, Gareth. "Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society: An Overview." In *Silver Economies*, 337 – 72. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Wilson, Andrew. "Machines, Power and the Ancient Economy." *Journal of Roman Studies* 92 (2002): 1 – 32.
- Wilson, Charles. "Foreword." In *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, by Georges Duby, trans. Howard B. Clark, ix – x. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974.
- Wilson, David M. "Trade between England and Scandinavia and the Continent." In *Göttingen 150*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985.
- Wilson, R. J. A., and J. D. Creighton. "Introduction: Recent Research on Roman Germany." In *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. J. D. Creighton and R. J. A. Wilson, 9 – 34. Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology L. L. C., 1999.
- Winghart, Stefan. "Mining, Processing and Distribution of Bronze: Reflections on the Organization of Metal Supply between the Northern Alps and the Danube Region." In *Metals Make the World Go Round: The Supply and Circulation of Metals in Bronze Age Europe*, ed. C. F. E. Pare, 151 – 9. Oxford: Oxbow, 2000.
- . "Die Eliten der mittleren und späten Bronzezeit: Grundlagen, Entstehung und Vorstellungswelt." In *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume—Archäologie in Deutschland*, ed. Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, 174 – 85. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2002.
- Wolf, Siegmund. "Die slavische Westgrenze in Nord- und Mitteldeutschland im Jahre 805." *Die Welt der Slaven* 2, no. 1 (1957): 30 – 42.
- Wolfram, Herwig. *The History of the Goths*. Trans. Thomas J. Dunlap. New and completely revised from the 2nd German edition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- . *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, trans. Thomas Dunlap. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Wolfram, Herwig, and Andreas Schwarz, eds. *Anerkennung und Integration. Zu den wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen der Völkerwanderungszeit 400 – 600*. Wien: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988.
- . "Einleitung oder Überlegungen zur *Origo Genti*." In *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern: Teil I*, ed. H. Wolfram and W. Pohl, 19 – 33. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990.
- Wood, Ian. *The Merovingian North Sea*. Occasional Papers on Medieval Topics 1. Alingsås, Sweden: Viktoria Bokförlag, 1983.
- . *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 481 – 751*. London: Longman, 1993.

- . “The Code in Merovingian Gaul.” In *The Theodosian Code: Studies in the Imperial Law of Late Antiquity*, ed. Jill Harries and Ian Wood, 161 – 77. London: Duckworth, 1993.
- . “The Frontiers of Western Europe: Developments East of the Rhine in the Sixth Century.” In *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden, 231 – 53. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- . “Before or after Mission: Social Relations across the Middle and Lower Rhine in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries.” In *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham, 149 – 66. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- . “Missionaries and the Christian Frontier.” In *The Transformation of Frontiers: From Late Antiquity to the Carolingians*, ed. Walter Pohl, Ian Wood, and Helmut Reimitz, 209 – 18. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Yorke, Barbara. “Gregory of Tours and Sixth-Century Anglo-Saxon England.” In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood, 113 – 30. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Yule, Brian. “The ‘Dark Earth’ and Late Roman London.” *Antiquity* 64 (1990): 620 – 28.
- Zeitler, W. M. “Zum Germanenbegriff Caesars: die Germanenexkurs in sechsten Buch von Caesars *Bellum Gallicum*.” In *Germanenprobleme in heutiger Sicht*, ed. Heinrich Beck, 41 – 52. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986.
- Ziegler, Peter A. *Evolution of the Arctic – North Atlantic and the Western Tethys*. Tulsa: American Association of Petroleum Geologists, 1988.
- Zimmerer, Karl S. “Human Geography and the ‘New Ecology’: The Prospect and Promise of Integration.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 84, no. 1 (1994): 108 – 25.
- Žulkus, Vladas, and Mindaugas Bertašius. “Handelsplätze zwischen Danziger und Rigaer Bucht zur Zeit Wulfstans.” In *Wulfstan’s Voyage*, 198 – 204. Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2009.
- Zvelebil, Marek. “Mesolithic Prelude and Neolithic Revolution.” In *Hunters in Transition: Mesolithic Societies of Temperate Eurasia and Their Transition to Farming*, ed. Marek Zvelebil, 5 –16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- . “The Agricultural Frontier and the Transition to Farming in the circum-Baltic Region.” In *The Origins and Spread of Agriculture and Pastoralism in Eurasia*, ed. David R. Harris, 323 – 45. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996.
- Zvelebil, Marek, and Kamil V. Zvelebil. “Agricultural Transition and Indo-European Dispersals.” *Antiquity* 62 (1988): 574 – 83.