

the northern regions of Carolingian Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries than had been the case in the seventh century. If future research bears this out, it would confirm further much that we have seen in these chapters.

So rare spices, Arab drugs, incense, and precious silks were making their way to Italy, and from Italy across the Alps to the Frankish heartland. Continuing research will probably add more wares to the list.¹³⁸ These extremely costly goods were being purchased in the markets of the Muslim world and, perhaps to a lesser extent, of Byzantium. It is here that the testimony of the Arab coins of Carolingian Europe resonates most obtrusively. The conventional wisdom has tended to be that whatever luxury goods the impoverished Carolingians imported from the Middle East had to be paid for in cash; hence one might have supposed a drain of Carolingian silver toward the Islamic world.¹³⁹ But the merchants who were purchasing these luxuries were also acquiring dirhams and dinars: the purchase of the costly luxuries of the more developed economies, in other words, did not exhaust the resources the western traders had brought to eastern markets. Despite the high value of the goods they acquired in the southeast, whatever wares westerners had brought to exchange there seem to have been of greater value than incense, spices, and silks, for the Adriatic traders returned home with Arab currency. The great influx of Arab money started around 775. In precisely these years we observe very substantial imports of silk into Rome. Within another decade or two, at most, the first new Arab drugs were reaching northern Italy, and an Arabic word of Malay extraction was written in a parchment book near the middle Rhine; the markets of Rome attracted Arab merchants at the same time that Venetians traveled to the Middle East. What wares allowed the underdeveloped economy of Carolingian Europe to buy and import such extraordinary and expensive luxuries from the greater economies of the south and east, and still bring home the cold, hard cash of the *dinar manqūsh* and dirham?

138 For instance the sherds of Iraqi or Egyptian glazed glass dated c. 900, and discovered in 1992 in a fill layer at Fulda during the construction of the Dommuseum, where I recently saw them.

139 Spufford 1988, 49–52, nonetheless has argued for a more positive balance of trade when slave exports permitted.

European exports to Africa and Asia

AMIDST A GENERAL surge in the communications linking northwestern Europe to the more developed economies of the Mediterranean, coins and high-value goods entered the Frankish empire from the Arab and, probably, Byzantine worlds. Since there is not the slightest hint that precious metals flowed out of Europe, this leaves little doubt that Europe exported goods of high value to exchange for the eastern imports. Frankland certainly moved some goods toward the south. Alcuin, for instance, expected help for his merchant clearing customs both on his way to Italy and en route home: necessarily he was conveying some merchandise to sell in the south.¹ What exactly he and other merchants were transporting is less clear. Whatever it was needed to be of high value, portable and saleable in Italy or beyond.

1. Lumber, fur, and arms

The most emphatic statement has claimed that Europe exported English tin, Venetian lumber, furs, Frankish weapons, and slaves, but spent little effort sustaining these assertions with evidence.² A source from the second half of the tenth century shows that horses, slaves, wool, linen and canvas textiles, tin, and swords were shipped across the Alps in that period (above, p. 680). Slaves, tin, and swords will have been marketable beyond Italy. But one cannot use developments of 1000 to prove those of 800.

1 Alcuin, Ep. 77, 119.2 and 4–5: “Italiae [in the dative] mercimonia ferentem” and “. . . in montium claustris a vestris non teneatur tolneariis constrictus, sed per latitudinem caritatis latam habeat eundi et redeundi semitam.”

2 Lombard 1972, 23 (originally published

1947). With effort and goodwill, one can discover some evidence for some of these assertions in his further essays published *ibid.*; see below. The lack of method necessarily compromised the impact of his stimulating and valuable insights.

Nonetheless, arguments of increasing strength can be made for Carolingian exports of lumber, furs, swords, and slaves. Alcuin's merchant certainly did not drag logs across the Alps. But Italy and the Adriatic façade of the Balkans had forests closer to the sea and the ships. The hypothesis that lumber was exported from Italy to the wood-deprived areas of the Caliphate gains plausibility from the ecological disparities between the two areas.³ But it must remain a hypothesis, since today the evidence for ninth-century Adriatic lumber exports to the Arab world is zero.⁴ The hypothesis receives some encouragement from late tenth-century Byzantine concern about Venetian wood shipments to the Arabs.⁵ Furthermore, the Venetian treaty with Lothar I paid careful attention to the Venetian rights to cut wood on the mainland. This might point indirectly in the same direction, but the Venetians will have needed lumber for their own ships and the treaty seems to imply in any case that these rights are limited to firewood.⁶ Future archaeological and palaeobotanical evidence from the seabed or the Arab world may someday allow us to go further.

Fur is another matter. Some of the fine furs voraciously consumed by the Islamic world certainly traveled along the northern arc.⁷ Perhaps this was the source of supply for the Constantinopolitan furriers' shops that a fire destroyed in 931.⁸ Although details are hard to come by in the Carolingian sources, we know that Jewish merchants operating out of Frankland imported furs into the Arab

3 Lombard 1972, 107–76.

4 *Ibid.*, 133 and 149n176 (originally published 1958), typically claims that Andreas Dandolo's *Chronica per extensum descripta*, 8, 1 (for which he supplies the reference, "Muratori, 12, p. 170") states that Leo V categorically prohibited the export of long lumber needed for shipbuilding. It says nothing of the sort. At 144.31–3 (of Pastorello's edn., 1942–58; cf. the 18th-C. edition: L. A. Muratorius, *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, 12 [Milan, 1728]. 167B–C), Dandolo says only that Leo forbade communications with Syria and Egypt ("ne quis in Syriam vel Egiptum auderet accedere"). Cf. Dölger no. 400; R328.

5 A Byzantine embassy of 971 threatened to burn any Venetian ships carrying wood to the Arabs, after which the doge forbade the shipping of weapons and wood of strategic sizes to the Arabs, *Decretum*, July 971: *Venedig*, no. 14, pp. 26–30; Dandolo, *Chronica*, 8, 14, 178.17–24. Contrast

Lombard 1972, 133–4, who has confused the report of the three ships.

6 *Pactum Hlotharii*, 24–5 and 30, 134. 21–34 and 135.15–17; c. 24 and 30 are imprecise; c. 25 specifies that the woodcutters may only fell non-(fruit-)bearing trees "quantum ad collum portare potuerit, lignamen faciendum, non ad pectus trahendum," which I take to mean limited to sizes which can be carried (in a basket) fastened at the neck, as firewood (*lignamen*, not *materia*), not pieces which must be carried over the shoulder.

7 Ibn Khurradadhbih, text, Pritsak, p. 253, translation, p. 256, cf. for 921, Ibn Fadlan, p. 107, with 98n207. For the Arab evidence on the fur trade, see the thorough discussion of Jacob 1891, 18–50, and Martin 1986, 5–14. On furs in Abbasid costume, Serjeant 1951, 73–5.

8 "Leo Grammaticus," 321.4–8; Ps.-Symeon, Constantine and Romanos, 40, 744.18–20; cf. John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, Romanos I, 26, 226.20–3; A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 2: 809.

world.⁹ Furs do occur in Frankish monastic inventories, and it would be surprising if the Frisian merchants who exported Frankish wine, swords, and grain to Scandinavia did not acquire there the forest products whose subarctic collection system is well known.¹⁰ They were certainly an object of commerce inside the Carolingian empire. Records of a meeting that Charlemagne held with his grandees in 808 show that he attempted to fix the prices of high-quality cloaks, especially fine marten and otter coats (priced at 30 s.) as well as sable ones (10 s.). The meeting occurred at either Nijmegen or Aachen. In the former case, it is worth remembering that Dorestad was but a day distant, and that the place for which these prices were to be fixed may have been the market associated with the palace. The fact that the meeting seems to be concerned only with luxury goods reinforces this hint.¹¹

We cannot follow the furs through Frankland toward the Alps.¹² In fact, when Notker depicted the oriental finery which Charlemagne's grandees had purchased from Venetians at Pavia, he seems to include fine furs along with silk and other exotic textiles.¹³ This shows that the monk of St. Gall did not fully understand the sources and circuits of Venetian trade. It is also the earliest text which indicates that the Venetians dealt in the other great forest product of their time, after slaves. Since the finest furs came from the far north and the Slavic territories of central and eastern Europe, Notker's ignorance of their western origin may hint that, in the 880s, the Venetian stock was not reaching the Mediterranean

9 Ibn Khurradadhbih, trans. Jacobi 1971, 252; see Ch. 23.3.

10 Whether furs mentioned in Carolingian inventories were of local origin or imported from afar is unclear; cf. e.g., *Gesta Font.* 13, 4, p. 103, where Johanek's caution (1987, 37) about a mention of Black Sea beaver ("ex cane Pontico") is well founded. The author loves to enliven his vocabulary, and he lifted the expression unaltered from Isidore, *Origines*, 12, 2, 21, Lindsay. Cf. the bishop of Augsburg's gifts of fur to the monks of St. Gall in 908, *Schatzverzeichnis*, no. 118, 121.21–2. Subarctic collection: Ohthere, in the Old English *Orosius*, p. 20.

11 *MGH Capit.* no. 52, 5, 1.140.1–6; cf. no. 51, 7, "De roccis et sagis," 139.1. The next item of *Capit.* no. 51 (which could be the agenda for the meeting in which the decisions recorded in no. 52, were made) was c. 8, "De mercato palatii nostri," 139.2. That year Charles was at Nijmegen from the

beginning of spring until Easter; otherwise he was at Aachen: BM 431b–439b.

12 The 107 "pelles ad pellicium" recorded as annual imperial revenue from Remedius' ministerium in the Lower Engadine and Vintschgau in the Rhaetian Alps, presumably came from local trapping: *Imperial Polyptych*, 394.10.

13 *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 17, 86.15–21, with *ibid.*, Hefele's nn9–10: "Ceteri vero utpote feriatu diebus, et qui modo de Papia venissent, ad quam nuper Venetici de transmarinis partibus omnes orientalium divitias advectassent, Phenicum pellibus avium serico circumdatis et pavonum collis . . . alii de lodicibus, quidam de gliribus circumamicti procedebant." The king was making fun of their lovely furs and silks. They were destroyed by the brambles, rain and blood spatters that came with a royal romp in the woods, while the king's cheap sheepskin emerged intact.

through the Frankish empire.¹⁴ One way to explain his misunderstanding would be if the furs were then coming from the north through the Slavlands, perhaps along the Amber Trail and through the Noric Alps, thereby skirting the Frankish toll stations, not to mention the Viking invasions. If Venice was in fact the “Frankish” port where Ibn Khurradadhbih’s Jewish merchants embarked, the testimony of Frank and Muslim converge, for fine furs were one of the Radhanite merchants’ exports to the Caliphate (Ch. 23.3).

Weapons leave deeper tracks. As iron production increased around the empire, Frankish craftsmen manufactured more exceptionally fine weapons and armor. European swords traveled the entire length of the northern arc to users in Baghdad. Thus Ibn Khurradadhbih identifies swords as one of the Rus traders’ key wares.¹⁵ A generation later, Ibn Fadlan mentions their arms, and he calls them “Frankish” (*ifranjiya*).¹⁶ Though this prohibition was no more effective than others, Charlemagne’s effort to halt the export of weapons signals that the volume was large enough to alarm the Frankish ruler.¹⁷

The sword market was highly competitive, to judge from the fact that the blades bore the ninth-century equivalent of trademarks. They were inscribed with “ULFBERHT” or other Frankish men’s names, and they have been discovered in large numbers outside the Carolingian empire. The names are those of Frankish armorers or imitators whose shops seem to have centered on the Rhineland. Archaeologists have retrieved such weapons from the Rhine near Mannheim and Speyer; eight have been found at Dorestad itself.¹⁸ That exports overcame Charlemagne’s embargo is proved by the swords themselves. Overall, some 100 Ulfberht swords have been found along routes associated with the entire northern arc. At least seventy-nine Frankish swords have been identified in Scandinavia from the late eighth into the tenth century.¹⁹ Some eighty examples of another, tenth-century type have been excavated in Norway and Sweden.²⁰ From an economic perspective, it is striking that, while the first Frankish swords were exported as finished products, subsequently sword blades were sent unfinished to Scandinavia. There they received handles in the local taste. This suggests specially targeted export production, which hints at growth.²¹

14 On the geography of fur producing, Lombard 1972, map facing p. 190; and Martin 1986, 5–14.

15 Pritsak 1971, text, p. 256; trans. p. 253.

16 Pritsak 1971, 250–1, with n36. Cf. Ibn Fadlan, p. 118.

17 MGH *Capit.* no. 44, 7 (A.D. 805), I.123.13–19: “De negotiatoribus qui partibus Sclavorum et Avarorum pergunt . . . ut arma et brunias non ducant ad venundandum . . .”; swords

are explicitly mentioned in one Rhenish MS (Vat. Pal. lat. 773, s. ix¹; Mordek 1995, 799–801) of MGH *Capit.* no. 40, 7 (803), I.115.18 with 39; cf. *ibid.*, no. 20 (779), 20, I.51.15 (“De brunias”); cf. also *ibid.*, no. 273, 25, 2.321.1–19.

18 Steuer 1987a, 156 and 152, respectively.

19 *Ibid.*, 152–3nn95 and 96.

20 *Ibid.*, 153.

21 *Ibid.*, 152 with n95.

Charlemagne’s efforts to curtail the export of Frankish swords were explicitly aimed at the Slavs and Avars. In fact swords manufactured around 800 and in the early ninth century are found outside the empire, along the same Amber Trail where Arab and Byzantine coins cluster.²² The famous blades also reached the Muslim world across the Mediterranean: Ibn Khurradadhbih lists them as one of the Radhanites’ wares.²³ Recent archaeology tends to confirm their southward export. In the late eighth and ninth centuries, such weapons found their way across the Alps into the Slavic principalities of the Adriatic façade. The logical route for these swords will have been through Venice, and it is not impossible that the Frankish weapons discovered in Croatia were but spillovers from a larger Venetian export stream.²⁴ The same “trademark” inscriptions that have caught archaeologists’ attention were well known in tenth-century Baghdad. A treatise on the alphabets of the world composed there in 987 describes the alphabet of the Franks as resembling that of the Greeks, although it seemed to Arab eyes more regular. As the learned author noted, “We have often seen it on Frankish swords.”²⁵ Such arms also traveled to Iraq from Italy as a Carolingian princess’ diplomatic gift to the Caliph.²⁶

2. Europeans

But one ware we have met more frequently than all others combined. Whether we look at merchants serving the court, trading on the Danube or traveling to Venice, over and over again we encounter the same merchandise: the human ware of slaves, Europeans hunted and captured across the continent and exported to foreign climes. Not only was their value high: they had a singular advantage

22 *Ibid.*, Abb. 13; cf. Vinski 1983.

23 Trans. Jacobi, p. 252.

24 Vinski 1983; Vinski 1983–4 adds no new witnesses.

25 Muhammad ibn Ishāq known as Ibn al-Nadīm, *al Fihrist*, p. 23. See in general Zeki Validi 1936; cf. Richter Bernburg 1987, 677.

26 Diplomatic gifts seem sometimes to advertise the wares of a particular region: e.g. the drugs, spices, and silks Harun al Rashid sent to Charlemagne: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 807, p. 123. In 905–6, Bertha of Tuscany sent as gifts to al Muktafi: “fifty swords, fifty shields, and fifty lances of the type used by the Franks, twenty garments woven with gold, twenty Slav eunuchs, twenty beautiful and elegant Slav slave girls, ten big dogs against which no wild

beast could prevail, seven falcons and seven sparrow hawks, a silk (?) tent with all its fittings, twenty garments made from a wool produced by a mollusk collected from the sea bottom in that region, whose colors change like the rainbow, and three birds from the country of the Franks which if they see poison in food and drink make frightful screeches and beat their wings, and glass pearls which remove arrows and spearheads, even if the flesh has grown back around them.” My trans. from the Italian of Levi della Vida 1954, 25. For “sea wool” (cf. Latin *lana maritima*) garments: R503, which indicates that they came from Sardinia, an origin which this text seems to confirm, given the links between Tuscany and Corsica (Ch. 17.4).

which nullified the cost of mountain transport imposed by the Alpine successor to the old Rhône route. They moved themselves over land. In fact, they could even be forced to carry additional wares on their way to the market.²⁷

Slavery has played a notable part in the broader discussion about the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages and the nature of medieval society. Scholars have lately resumed a debate launched by Marc Bloch on the fate of slavery and the transformations of the European labor force and the social system in which it was embedded. The question has been whether agrarian slavery died under the Carolingians or later, and why.²⁸ Important though it is, this debate has shed little light on the other aspect of early medieval slavery investigated by modern scholars, the slave trade.

The main features of the Carolingian slave trade have already been mapped.²⁹ Still, a few new sources deepen and extend the picture. Work to date has relied almost exclusively on the Latin evidence. The slave trade which, after all, was geared to export, gains by being seen in a broader context. It was a Carolingian phenomenon, but it was not only that. From a general and economic perspective, the Arab slave raids on the Frankish, Italian, or Byzantine shores might have been but a variation on Charlemagne's army attacking Saxony, or Frankish (or Slavic) and Scandinavian slave hunters operating in the obscure but overflowing human reservoir of the Slavic principalities. *Mutatis mutandis*, the better documented life-stories of enslaved Byzantine boys shed some light on the tragedies we will never recover, those of the silent peoples dragged down to the shore at Venice, Cherson, or points in between, and shipped across the sea to a life of enslavement in a foreign world.

The language of slavery

The terminology of slavery in the Carolingian age has never been exhaustively analyzed.³⁰ Latin *servus* or Greek *doulos* had meant "slave" clearly enough in the

27 Verlinden 1955–77, 2: 120.

28 The discussion has moreover fed into the broader debate about the "feudal revolution," the shift from predominantly public structures of administration and governance to private ones; see Bloch 1947. Bonnassie 1991 (originally published 1985), 1–59, and Hoffmann 1986 come to rather similar conclusions from different evidence; Bois 1992 (originally published 1989), 13–33; Wickham 1991. On the Marxist inspiration of much of the debate:

Verhulst and Bourin 1991, 55. For an excellent review of the literature, Pelteret 1995, 4–24, which ranges far beyond the early medieval England of the title. For the "Feudal Revolution" debate, see Bisson 1994 and 1997, and the responses which he has elicited.

29 Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 705–19 and 2: 114–33. Schaub 1913 is primarily concerned with patristic (and a few Carolingian, 72–81) theories of slavery.

30 Contrast the systematic lexical scrutiny of

classical period. By the eighth century, they had become more ambiguous. Very noble bishops used them to refer to themselves in a humility formula that was becoming fashionable – "Servant of the servants of God" – while Byzantine officials commonly and proudly called their state service "servitude" (*douleia*). In neither case would the classical meaning "slave of the slaves of God" or imperial "slavery" render accurately the contemporary nuance.³¹ So we are not surprised that these words do not always refer unmistakably to slavery.

Two other sets of words are less problematic. *Mancipium* or, in Greek, *andrapodon* normally refer to slaves in a more conventional sense, even though centuries of Christian ideals had begun to undermine the classic understanding of slaves as "tools with voices," at least insofar as the slaves were also Christians.³² Most importantly for our purposes, the broader word for "prisoner" (*captivus*; cf. Greek *aichmalōtos*) came to mean, usually, "slave," for military violence remained the main source of the stream that fed the international slave trade of the early Middle Ages. This was the most miserable sort of slave, the "captive" whose status was deplorable enough to give Italians the word for "bad" (*cattivo*).³³ *Captivus* was so used on both sides of the Alps. Thus the eighth-century *Life of St. Bonitus of Clermont* records the saint's efforts to curtail the slave trade when, late in the seventh century, he was the royal official in charge of Marseilles:

Not long thereafter, as it was customary in that place that men were sold and condemned by the punishment of exile and enslavement (*captivitatis*), he commanded by his decree that it should never occur; rather, those whom he could find who had been sold, he redeemed and brought home, as was his habit.³⁴

Around the middle of the eighth century, the biographer of St. Eligius of Noyon (sed. 641–60) uses the terms interchangeably: "With great mercy and dispatch, he went wherever he understood a slave (*mancipium*) was to be sold, and immediately paid the price and liberated the slave (*captivum*)."³⁵

Pelteret 1995, 261–330; a similar effort for the Carolingians would scrutinize all kinds of sources, including those in early Germanic; a valuable comparative perspective would come from including the Greek and the Old Church Slavonic.

31 On "servus servorum Dei," see, e.g., Levison 1946, 238n6; *douleia*: Kazhdan and McCormick 1997, 194.

32 Bloch 1947, 37–41; Bonnassie 1991, 30–2; Hoffmann 1986.

33 Heers 1981, 23–64.

34 V. Boniti (BHL 1418), 3, 121.3–6: "Non multo post inibi, ut moris erat, homines

venundari atque exulitatis captivitatisque pena damnari, suo nusquam fieri praecepto esse decreto; sed magis eos quos repperire potuisset venditos, sicut semper agere consueverat, redimendo ad propria reducebat." Note that this report of prohibition is ambiguous. Did it refer to the slave trade in general? Or merely to judicial enslavements?

35 Vita Eligii Noviomagensis (BHL 2474–6), 1, 10, MGH SRM 4.677.4–6: "Sane ubicumque venundandum intellexisset mancipium, magna cum misericordia et festinatione occurrens, mox dato praetio liberabat

Capture, sale, a lifetime of enslavement and, for a few, redemption, intertwined in ninth-century minds. Thus, for instance, Paulinus, patriarch of Aquileia, whose ecclesiastical purview extended into the Slavic lands and whose province straddled the Amber Trail: in a theological treatise, he interwove the words of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans with Colossians 2, 14 about the "sale" of mankind into the "captivity" or enslavement of sin. The deed of sale was erased by the redeeming blood of Christ. Revealingly, he slipped in the word *captivi* where his biblical source had spoken of the *servi* who were "sold under sin."³⁶ Describing the devastation wrought in Italy by Arab raiders, Pope John VIII wrote to Charles the Bald: ". . . the blood of the Christians is poured out, a people devoted to God is devastated by constant massacre. For if any escapes the flame or the sword, he becomes booty, he is dragged away as a *captivus* and made forever an exile. Behold, the towns, castles and estates perish, stripped of inhabitants . . ."³⁷ In the words of a Lombard monk of Monte Cassino, the combination of civil war and Arab marauding were devastating southern Italy even as the shipment of Italian slaves to the Caliphate had the opposite effect on the enemies of Christendom: "the places across the sea are bolstered by the male and female *captivi* . . . of our race."³⁸ A moralizing treatise which is no later than the eighth century enjoins: "Do not dare to make a man captive, because the Lord says 'He who has kidnapped a person and sold him and has been convicted of the crime, let him be put to death'" (Exod. 21, 16). The further connection between *captivi* and commerce is implicit in the statement's context, for it is redolent of trade: let there be no greed, no love of gold and silver, no lending at interest, no tampering with weights and measures: one must do unto others as you would have them do unto you.³⁹

Footnote 35 (cont.)

captivum . . ." On the date, Wattenbach et al. 1952-90, 127-8. The work combines with invented stuff genuine material from the first, lost *Life*. It is in any case revealing of the 8th C. Cf. the *Leges Alamannorum*, 27, 2, 97.9-10, where "captivum faciendi potestas" seems to refer to selling the *mancipium* of line 7 outside the province (cf. 97.14-15).

36 "Nos uero redempti, quia fuimus captiui, uenundati sub peccato (Rom. 7, 14), obligati nimirum in eo cyrographo decreti quod ipse tulit de medio, delens sanguine suo, quod nullius alius redemptorum delere potuit sanguis." *Contra Felicem libri tres*, 1, 25, *CC Cont. Med.* 95.30.7-31.11. Cf. Romans 6, 16-22 on the "slaves of sin" ("serui . . . peccati") and their liberation.

37 *Registrum*, 22, *JE* 3062, 20.3-5.

38 Erchempert, *Historia Lang. Ben.*, 18, 241.11: ". . . ultramarina loca captivis nostrae gentis diversi sexus et aetatis fulciebantur."

39 Pirmin (?), *Scarapsus*, 17, 48.22-49.22: "Nullus avarus sit, quia apostolus ait: . . . aurum et argentum vestrum eruginavit . . . usuras nullus presumat accipere, quia dominus ait: 'Non fenerabis fratri tuo ad usuram pecuniam nec fruges' (Deut., 23, 19) . . . Nemo mensuras dublicias, nec stateras iniustas habeat, quia dominus ait: 'Non habebis in saeculo diversa pondera, maius et minus' (Deut., 25, 13), . . . Quod enim proficit homini, si lucretur universum mundum, se autem ipsum perdat? (Luc. 9, 25) Et iterum ipse dominus: 'Prout vultis, ut faciant vobis

The spread of *captivus* as a common word for slave reflects an incipient and informal distinction. "Normal" slaves were assumed to be linked to the land and immobile; slaves subjugated by violence, on the other hand, were mobile merchandise. The latter might sometimes be called *mancipia*, but the former were never called *captivi*.⁴⁰ "Land" slaves are well attested, for instance in the constantly repeated Frankish formulas confiscating, describing or confirming ownership of "real estate and slaves" (*res et mancipia*).⁴¹ Such human chattels are equally well-attested in lists of individual slaves attached to specific estates or slated for manumission.⁴²

The last aspect of the Carolingian language of slavery is the most famous. Whether we speak English, French, German, or Italian, our word for "slave" derives from "Slav." The medieval Latin ethnic term "Sclavus" added to its proper meaning the derived one of "slave." Nothing could make more clear the role of the Slavic east in supplying the slaves sold by early medieval Europe. The earliest attestation of the new meaning had been thought to occur in imperial diplomas for Magdeburg issued in 937.⁴³ The general lag between language and reality would make an early tenth-century record of a Carolingian linguistic innovation unsurprising. Some scholars nonetheless contend that the new meaning actually emerges in 857, in east Francia, in royal diplomas issued for Niederaltaich and Würzburg.⁴⁴

homines bona, et vos facite illis similiter' (Luc. 6, 31). *Hominem captivare non praesumitis, quia dominus in legem ait: 'Qui furatus fuerit hominem et vindederit eum et convictus fuerit noxie, morte moriatur.' Et iterum . . .*" The attribution of the work to Pirmin has been seriously challenged. In any case, it survives in at least two MSS from around 800: Angenendt 1972, 59-61, cf. 56-7.

40 In 806, Charlemagne's *Divisio regnorum*, 11, *MGH Capit.* no. 45, 1.128.45-129.6, forbade his sons to obtain real estate and established slaves (*casati servi*) in their brothers' kingdoms; he explicitly exempts merchants' wares, including *mancipia*. Similarly, Charles declared that those guilty of failure to perform their military duties must pay not in land or slaves, but in gold, silver, *pallea* (fine textiles of uncertain nature), weapons, animals, or other wares, which are "useful." The implication is that such slaves were not easily transformed into cash or otherwise of value to the king;

that is, Charles is thinking of slaves established on the land, with which they are mentioned in the same breath. *MGH Capit.* no. 74, 2 (811), 1.166.28.

41 For instance, in the capitularies and related documents: e.g., *MGH Capit.* no. 196, 15 (A.D. 829), 2.34.18 ("praedia et mancipia"); no. 259, 12 (853), 2.270.7; no. 273, 6 (864), 2.313.24-314.7; 14, 2.315.30-316.7; 23, 2.320.13 and 15; *Concilium Triburense*, 49 (895), *ibid.*, 2.240.36. Confirmation: e.g., D Loth I, no. 22 (823).

42 E.g., the gift of Helmgau, one of our travelers, to St. Martin of Tours in 813 included over 300 slaves: *Gallia christiana* 14 (Paris, 1856), *Instrumenta*, no. 12; D Loth I, no. 136 (855).

43 Verlinden 1942, 122-3; cf. Verlinden 1955-77, 2: 999-1010.

44 Thus Reuter 1985, 93, with n92, on DLG no. 80 (Bodman, 857; original confirmation of immunity for Altaich; p. 117.27 "homines ipsius monasterii tam ingnuos

Two changes

Two very important changes affected the slave trade under the Carolingians. The first is a double expansion: volume increased, even as the geographic scope grew, for the trade now became geared more to export than to satisfying local needs.⁴⁵ The slave trade seems strangely disconnected from slave labor inside the Frankish empire, if in fact slave production continued to be crucial to the agrarian economy. So far there has been little specific evidence of the settling of enslaved captives on Frankish estates. Although Verlinden made a plausible case from changing patterns in collections of model legal documents that the purchase and use of slaves on Carolingian estates was declining, the capitularies and records of real transactions show that the process was drawn out and complex, if indeed it was occurring in such a clear-cut fashion.⁴⁶ More work is needed to clarify how patterns of slave-owning inside the empire changed over time and space. For instance, slaves and other unfree laborers seem proportionately more numerous toward the eastern edges of the empire. This has been connected with these regions' less developed rural economy, compared with the areas west of the Rhine. But it is worth noting that these eastern lands bordered on the main slave-hunting grounds and first document the semantic equivalence of "Slav" and "slave."⁴⁷

The second main shift concerned the geography of Frankish supply. In the sixth and seventh centuries, warfare against Frankland's neighbors had fed the slave markets.⁴⁸ England's quarreling kingdoms supplied more wares, as is clear

Footnote 44 (cont.)

[!] quam servos sclavos et accolos super terram ipsius commanentes"; cf. p. 117.31-2: "cum omnibus rebus sibi subiectis <et homi>nibus tam ingenuis quam s<e>rvis, cuiuscumque sint nationis . . ." where the last clause seems to recognize the ambivalence of the term *slavus*, following P. Kehr (MGH *Diplomata regum Germaniae ex stirpe Karolinorum* 1, Berlin, 1932, 426 s.v., where "sclavus" is treated as a common noun), and on D Arnulf no. 66 (Frankfurt 889; original confirmation of immunity for Würzburg; p. 99.10: "aut homines ipsius aeclesiae sive accolos vel Sclavos in ulla restringendos . . ." where it alone is a new word. Comparison with the older form of the formula seems to me particularly revealing, e.g. BM 910 of Louis the Pious

for Marmoutier (19 November 832): PL, 104.1216B-C: "cum mancipiis et accolabus diversi sexus et aetatis."

- 45 Verlinden 1955-77, 1: 718-19; Johaneck 1985, 253-4.
 46 Verlinden 1955-77, 1: 718-28. Cf. Hoffmann 1986, and Bonnassie 1991, 51-9. Pelteret 1995, 251-9, lays out in clear and thoughtful fashion how evolving mentalities, including a changing understanding of freedom, conspired with economic and social developments to foster the disappearance or transformation of slavery in England.
 47 Verhulst 1990, 100-1; Verhulst 1991, 200. Cf. Pelteret's analysis of the differing geography of slave-holding in Anglo-Saxon England reflected by Domesday Book: Pelteret 1995, 185-240.
 48 Verlinden 1955-77, 1: 663-7.

from anecdotal evidence ranging from Gregory the Great's purchase of English slave boys in Gaul to the story of Balthild, the Anglo-Saxon slave girl who rose to be queen of the Franks and founder of Chelles and Corbie.⁴⁹ The latest hints of this stream of supply – in which the Frisians were involved – comes in that early eighth-century legend about Gregory the Great's Angle slave boys in Rome and also, I should think, in the fact that a Carolingian bishop's English father had been a merchant at Marseilles around the middle of the eighth century.⁵⁰ It is possible that English slave shipments to the Po valley resumed – or continued – late in the ninth century (above, pp. 679f).

The establishment of more peaceable relations within Britain may have lessened the flow of English slaves.⁵¹ The Anglo-Saxons' conversion to Christianity was another factor. In any case, the English supply was probably supplanted by another source, which increased as the British flow diminished.⁵² That source was the Slavs.

The beginning of the European trade in Slav slaves is murky. Slave trading, it is frequently supposed, attracted into the Slavlands in 623 or 624 the caravan of Frankish traders led by the merchant Samo, though there is no explicit evidence of what they were buying and selling. Samo helped the Slavs defeat the Avars and became their ruler, in the process fathering thirty-seven children by his twelve Slavic wives. Frankish merchants apparently continued to trade in Samo's territory for at least seven years, until Samo's Slavs turned on them. This triggered wars with the Merovingian king Dagobert and Slavic raids on Thuringia.⁵³ Whether or not Samo and the others were already dealing in slaves, the conflict itself produced a large number of them. Dagobert encouraged the Alamannians and the Lombards to attack the Slavs around 632. They returned home with a "great number of captivi from the Slavs."⁵⁴ Although obscurity veils the later

- 49 Ch. 2129; see in general, Levison 1946, 8-10.
 50 *Annales Petaviani*, a. 790, MGH SS 1.70; cf. 3.170 and, for the date, Levison 1946, 713.
 51 See e.g., Pelteret 1995, 70.
 52 Pelteret 1995, 74-9, nonetheless suggests (77) that "from the mid-tenth century on the [Anglo-Saxon] slave trade was geared mainly to the export of persons abroad, although the internal trade did not cease." But he is mainly focusing on the problem of export in general, not export toward the Mediterranean. His examples suggest that these later exports were going mainly toward Scandinavia and Ireland; the

relative distances – and therefore transport costs – equally suggest that closer sources of supply were economically advantageous for Mediterranean markets.
 53 Fredegarius, *Chronicae*, 4, 48, 68, and 74-5, 144.14-145.6; 154.18-155.17 and 158.13-159.5. Slave trade: Verlinden 1933 and Verhulst 1970, 14; no evidence: Claude 1985a, 74-5.
 54 Fredegarius, *Chronicae*, 4, 68, 155.1-17, ". . . et pluremum [!] nummerum [!] captivorum de Sclavos Alamanni et Langobardi secum duxerunt."

development of the trade in Slavs, there is no question of its reality under the Carolingians.⁵⁵

Developments beyond Europe decisively influenced this second shift. Christians or not, up until the mid-seventh century, Europeans who were exported south wound up as slaves in the Byzantine empire or one of the Germanic successor states. However miserable their mortal existence, their souls were safe. The Muslim conquests changed that. After some hesitation, European Christians came to a consensus that the Muslims were not Christian heretics, but "infidels," indeed, "pagans," alien to the biblical tradition.⁵⁶ To convinced Christians it was of small consequence that Christian slaves lost their mortal bodies to alien masters. But their immortal souls were a different matter. It was but a small step to conclude that any who contributed to their damnation were liable to a similar fate themselves. For an age obsessed with salvation and hell, this was no trifle. The Arab triumph can only have reinforced nascent efforts by Christian leaders to curtail the export of their own people. Hence there arose a series of partial prohibitions on the export of slaves, that is, of Christian slaves.⁵⁷ This new development enhanced the attractiveness of the heathen Slavs in the path of expanding Frankish power, even though Christians still were sold overseas, one way or another.

55 Vercauteren 1934, 212–14, suggested that the slave convoy traveling to the market mentioned in the *Life of St. Gaugerici* of Cambrai (d. 623/6) came from Slav territory, a suggestion echoed by Verhulst 1970, 14; *Vita Gaugerici* (BHL 3286), 12, MGH SRM 3.656.16–657.2. This is no more than a possibility. The suggestion is based on the deduction that the slave trader was traveling southwest on the old Roman road between Bavay and Cambrai. While it is true, as Vercauteren asserts, that this road continues toward the "east," to Cologne, that by no means proves that slaves traveling on it necessarily had been hunted east of Cologne. The same road crosses the Meuse at Maastricht (see, e.g., Chevallier 1997, 229–30) and the slaves were just as likely to have been purchased there, from a North Sea source. The later 7th-C. *Life* in this instance most likely bears witness to the age of its composition: see Van der Essen 1907, 207–8.

56 Rotter 1986, 247, although the concept of "paganus" itself may not have been perceived as starkly as "heathen" (49).

57 Nonetheless, the earliest texts from the Frankish kingdom are aimed at Jews as much as at "pagans." The Council of Clichy (626/7) forbade selling Christians to Jews or pagans: *Concilia Galliae*, a. 511–a. 695, CCL 148A.294.106–114. The council of Chalon-sur-Saône (647/53), 9, forbade the export of any slaves outside the kingdom because of fear that Christians would be subject to "Jewish servitude," "Iudaica servitute . . . implicita," *ibid.*, 305.50. King Ine of Wessex (688–726) also forbade west Saxons to sell members of their own tribe ("his agenne geleod") overseas: *Laws*, 14, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 1.94. In the second or third decade of the 8th C., Duke Landfrid I forbade the sale of slaves outside Alamannia without his approval, without giving any reason: *Leges Alamannorum*, 27, 1–2, 97.1–17.

Getting slaves

Christian or pagan, the export of Europeans is inherently hard to track. Almost nothing survives which compares to the later medieval Italian notaries' records of sale, or what has been reported as the "day-book" of a tenth- or eleventh-century slave merchant at Old Cairo in Egypt.⁵⁸ Moreover, exporting slaves is by definition a transient phenomenon and less liable to leave lasting traces. Slaves destined for export will have been in the Frankish empire only for a few weeks. Historians have sometimes pointed to a holy man's biography which might give a glimpse of a troop of Slav slaves bound for the block in Mainz. But if they were indeed slaves, the meaning was so obvious to the contemporary biographer that he felt no need to specify it.⁵⁹

Individual exported slaves and their traders generated no records connected with ecclesiastical real estate, which is where we get most Carolingian archives. The best documents are legal sources that attempted to control or tax the trade. Narrative and other literary sources cast occasional shafts of light. The first glimmer has just appeared from archaeology, in the form of the cartography of the very instrument of enslavement: iron shackles (Figures 25.1 and 25.2) that constrained captives' necks have recently been mapped across central Europe.⁶⁰

Future research might draw inspiration from the well-studied Atlantic slave trade. Pens must have held the slaves at assembly points, which would have to be situated near major routes. One might further imagine that such holding conditions, not to mention castration, would engender poor hygienic conditions and therefore higher mortality rates. The result will probably have been summary burials of a population abnormally weighted toward the prime slave profiles of

58 See the sources used by Verlinden 1955–7, e.g. 2: 840–68; "day-book," Richards 1989, 67.

59 Eigil of Fulda, *Vita Sturmii* (BHL 7924), 7, 139.12–15: "Tunc quadam die dum pergeret, pervenit ad viam, quae a Turingorum regione mercandi causa ad Mogontiam pergentes ducit, ubi platea illa super flumen Fulda vadit; ibi magnam Sclavorum multitudinem reperit, eiusdem fluminis alveo gratia lavandis corporibus se immeruisse"; cf. the judicious reserve of Johaneck 1985, 246–7.

60 Henning 1992, who assumes that they are as likely to reveal slaving centers as other forms of imprisonment. Even with that

uncertainty the inquiry is worth pursuing. From our period, Henning (419) identifies an iron collar, part of a small hoard of iron objects, at the late 9th-/early 10th-C. Slavic ring fort or "mound castle" ("Burgwall") at "Staré Zámky," at Brno-Líšeň (Figure 25.1). On the site in general, see Staňa 1985, 190; on the find, Staňa 1961, 111, a copy of which I owe to the kindness of Dr. Blanka Kavánová. The scarcity of iron probably made metal shackles the exception; wooden yokes or rope were likely more frequent. For instance, *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.178.19 and 179.6; Theophanes, A.M. 6254, 1.433.12–13; cf. A.M. 6078, 1.255.6–7.



Figure 25.1. Witness to slavery? A neck-piece or collar of a late ninth- or early tenth-century shackle, discovered in the ring fort "Staré Zámky" (Brno-Líšeň). This piece of the sort of chain which held human beings in the Slavlands has been hypothetically linked with the slave trade. The high cost of iron in Carolingian Europe nonetheless suggests that most slaves would have been shackled with wooden yokes or ropes on their way to the block in Venice or elsewhere. Courtesy of Blanka Kavánová, Archeologický ústav Brno.

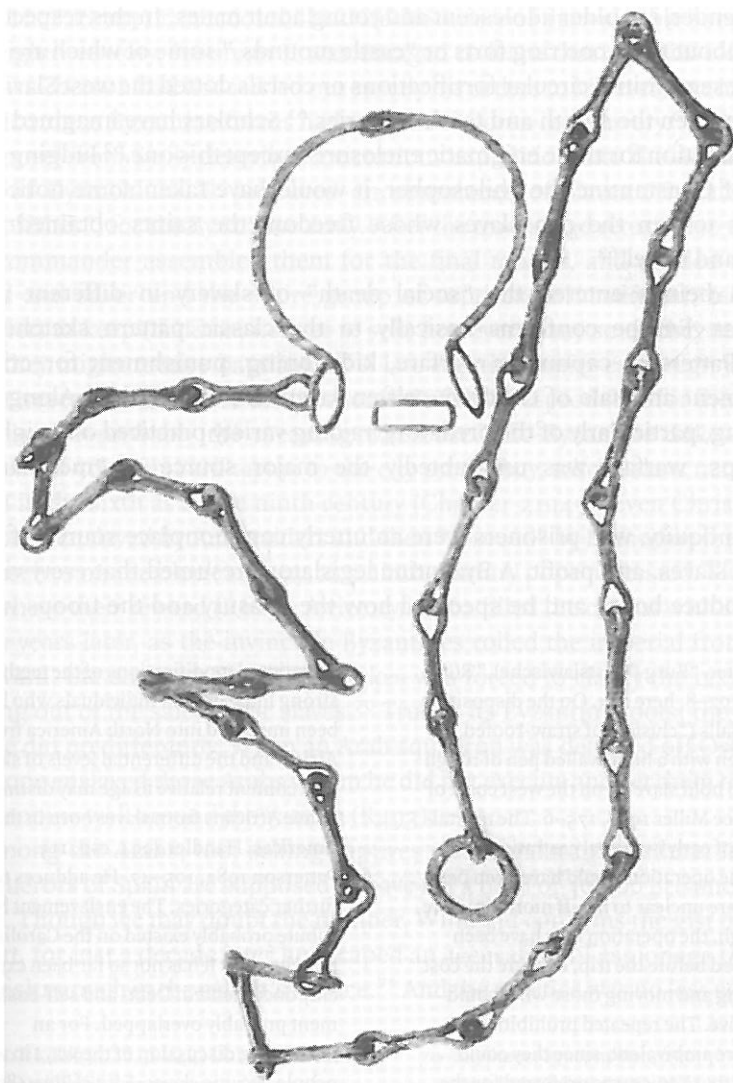


Figure 25.2. Complete neck shackle, from Krivina (Museum Ruse, Bulgaria). This slightly later, remarkably well preserved tenth-century find shows a complete assembly of which Figure 25.1 is the sole surviving piece. The chain slipped through the loops of the collar to fasten it shut, and then was attached to the captive's limbs. Courtesy of Ilya Prokopov, The National Museum of History, Sofia.

age and gender, i.e. older adolescent and young adult males. In this respect, one wonders about the 2,000 ring forts or "castle mounds," some of which are quite small. These primitive circular fortifications or corrals dotted the west Slavic territories between the eighth and tenth centuries.⁶¹ Scholars have imagined every possible function for these enigmatic enclosures except this one.⁶² Judging from the Life of Constantine the Philosopher, it would have taken some noticeable structures to pen the 900 slaves whose freedom the saints obtained from Rastislav and Kocel.⁶³

Human beings entered the "social death" of slavery in different ways. Carolingian Europe conforms basically to the classic pattern sketched by Orlando Patterson: capture in warfare, kidnapping, punishment for crimes, abandonment and sale of children, self-enslavement, and birth.⁶⁴ Along with kidnapping, particularly of the predatory, raiding variety practiced on neighboring groups, warfare was undoubtedly the major source of "merchandise slaves."⁶⁵

As in antiquity, war prisoners were an utterly commonplace source of merchandise, slaves, and profit. A Byzantine legislator presumed that every victory would produce booty, and he specified how the treasury and the troops would

61 B. Wachter, "Burg (Westslawische)," RGA 4 (1981): 202–8, here 203. On the disposition of slave jails ("clusters of straw-roofed huts, each with a high-walled pen of rough stakes to hold slaves") on the west coast of Africa, see Miller 1988, 175–6. The mortality rates of early medieval castration and where the operation would have been performed are unclear to me. If mortality were at all high, the operation may have been performed before the trip, to spare the cost of feeding and moving those who would not survive. The repeated prohibitions at Venice are ambivalent, since they could indicate that Venice was preferred for the operation, or they could have created an incentive to castrate elsewhere.

62 See e.g., Váňa 1970, 87–106, and Staňa 1985.

63 15, 20, p. 162. The palaeoanthropological study of skeletons buried in the slave-consuming countries might hold promise for detecting imported Europeans, and not just from DNA. Again, the more advanced study of African enslavement can supply inspiration. For instance, certain

intentional modifications of the teeth are strong indicators of individuals who had been imported into North America from Africa, and the differential levels of skeletal lead content relative to age may distinguish native Africans from slaves born in the Americas: Handler 1994, esp. 115.

64 Patterson 1982, 105–47. He adduces two further categories. The enslavement by tribute probably existed on the Carolingian marches, but it has not so far been explicitly documented. Debt- and self-enslavement probably overlapped. For an interesting discussion of the ways in which people became slaves: Edict of Pîtres (864), 34, MGH Capit. no. 273, 2.325.37–327.16.

65 Patterson 1982, 115 on organized kidnapping. For penal enslavement see, e.g. Lex Salica, D-Text, 15, 4 (free woman who goes with slaves), p. 55; cf. above, 134; below 179. For the enslavement of an abandoned child: Ch. 22.2, on the salt peddler; self-enslavement: R186. Birth must have supplied most slaves mentioned on Carolingian estates. See however, below, 177.

divide it.⁶⁶ Plenty of anecdotes illustrate the nature of that valuable booty. Early in the eighth century, Justinian II was enraged to learn that a punitive expedition against Cherson had not carried out exactly his orders to kill everyone it captured: the victorious Byzantine forces had sold the children into slavery.⁶⁷ A contemporary novel from Sicily describes a victorious expedition into the Adriatic, in the area of Dyrrachium. It produced an abundance of slaves ("hē aikhmalōsia pamlēthēs") for the Byzantine army. After the troops had returned to their base, the commander assembled them for the final muster, and divided the booty, "gold and silver and the entire group of captives (aikhmalōsian), telling each (soldier) to keep (*diatērein*; i.e. not to sell) however many souls they received, so that they might receive baptism."⁶⁸ A late eighth-century campaign into mainland Greece was hailed for the great crowd of slaves it produced for the empire.⁶⁹ This is also probably the meaning when the Italo-Byzantine duke of Naples carried off 500 Lombard captivi to the city on the bay, whose slave market flourished in the sixth as in the ninth century (Chapter 21145). Even Christians who had been enslaved by Arab raiders and then "rescued" by Byzantine forces found themselves on the block anyway, as a ninth-century pope protested. The soldiers must have their reward (R625). A victory in 962 filled the capital with slaves and, a few years later, as the invincible Byzantines rolled the imperial frontiers ever eastward, the emperor John I Tzimiskes was forced to clarify the tax problems arising out of the sale of war slaves.⁷⁰ True to its Byzantine roots, the church of Rome did no differently. When an Arab squadron was defeated off Ostia in 849, the pope enslaved those Arabs whom he did not execute and set them to building the Leonine wall around the Vatican (R493).

Among the Arabs, too, selling captives was standard procedure. In 714, the conquerors of Spain are supposed to have led a train of 30,000 prisoners back to Syria. Though we may doubt the number, Willibald confirms the gist of the Arab report, for just a decade later he escaped an accusation of espionage thanks to a Spanish eunuch in the caliph's service.⁷¹ And the practice was no less common in

66 Leo III, *Elogia*, 18, p. 244; Dain 1950. See in general Verlinden 1993.

67 Theophanes, A.M. 6203, 1.377.29–378.2–3 and 11–13; cf. the slightly variant account of Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 45, 108.15–16, with Mango's comments, *ibid.*, pp. 202–3. Theophanes or his source attributes the soldiers' sparing of the children to their sense of mercy. This may be true, but they also stood to make a handsome profit.

68 *Vita Pancratii Tauromenii* (BHG 1410), 1.263 and 270.

69 Theophanes, A.M. 6275, 1.456.28–457.2.

70 Skylitzes, *Synopsis hist.*, 250.56–7; John I, *Novella* (= *Collatio tertia*, Nov. 25), pp. 257–8; Dölger no. 754.

71 The account of the enslaved Visigoths comes from the early modern Maghrebin scholar al Makkari (c. 1577–1632), whose compilation preserves many lost sources of recognized value: E. Lévi-Provençal, "al-Makkarī," *Et 6* (1991): 187–8. Contrast on the reliability of the report of the booty: Sánchez-Albornoz 1973, 1: 55 and Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 291. Willibald: Ch. 5.1.

the Germanic successor states. The Merovingians took many slaves in their campaigns; the same is true for other tribes, as the Slavic prisoners of the Alamanni and Lombards have already shown.⁷² In this respect, the armies of their eighth- and ninth-century descendants certainly did not innovate.

For Alcuin, it was obvious that war produced slaves: the classical Latin words for "slave" told him so. In an age without dictionaries, real or imagined etymologies determined the meaning of most words. True to ancient tradition, Alcuin thought the word *servus* derived from having been preserved from death in war, while it was obvious that *mancipium* came from the words for having been made a captive by force (*manus*).⁷³ But the learned Anglo-Saxon did not have to look in Isidore of Seville to find out about war slaves: his countrymen were still taking them generations after the scholar left York. And he was an eyewitness to the Carolingian expansion, achieved largely by military force and punctuated by explicit mentions of the taking of large numbers of *captivi*.

Naturally, the terse reports of Frankish campaigns only exceptionally mention routine events like the taking of captives and their fate. They also rarely mention that people were killed in battle. Both were normal parts of early medieval warfare, and elicited comment only in unusual circumstances, when for instance the numbers were very high, or they affected individuals of exalted status. Huge numbers appear to be the reason *captivi* are recorded, for instance, in 747, 753, 782, 783, 788 – when 1,000 Byzantine soldiers were captured in Italy – 791, and 796. Although the mainstream royal historians were sometimes reticent, other observers make clear that prisoners were taken in great number. In 796, a serious witness claims that a third of the population of Saxony was carried off.⁷⁴ Military operations may have shrunk in scale and frequency

72 Verlinden 1955–77, I: 663–7.

73 Alcuin, *Interrogationes et responsiones in Genesis*, PL, 100.557B: "... enim homo ab homine superatus, jure belli possit occidi, quia servatus est, servus est appellatus. Inde et mancipia, quia [sunt] manu capta." Cf. Isidore of Seville, *Origines*, 9, 4, 43 and 45, Lindsay.

74 747: *Fredegarii chronicarum continuatio*, 31, MGH SRM 2.181.17–19: "Quod videntes Saxones, ... multi ex eis iam trucidati et in captivitate missi, regiones eorum igneque crematis, pacem petentes, iure Francorum sese ... subdividerunt ..." 753: "... Pippinus rex ira commotus, commoto omni exercitu Francorum, iterum Renum transacto, Saxonia cum magno apparatu veniens, ... et captivos tam viris quam

feminis cum multa praeda ibidem fecisset et plurimos Saxones ibidem prostravisset," *ibid.*, 35, 182.19–24. In the wake of another Saxon revolt and the disastrous defeat and death of three of his highest court officials, twenty-four other grandees and their followers, the *Royal Annals* tell us that Charles the Great ordered the savage execution of 4,500 Saxons: *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.*, a. 782, pp. 60–5; another contemporary witness adds: "et multos vinctos Saxones adduxerunt in Francia": *Annales Petaviani*, s.a. MGH SS 1.17; cf. BM 260b. For 783, Charlemagne's annalist tells us simply that in the Frankish victory, an enormous number of Saxons were killed: "cecidit ibi maxima multitudo Saxonum, ita ut pauci fugam evasisent": *Ann. regni*

thereafter, but the royal surrogates who led the Frankish armies followed tradition. This was surely the case for Louis the Pious, sub-king of Aquitania, whose campaigns provoked a moralist's entreaty (see below). The columns of captives reappeared along with the royal expeditions, for instance when Louis attacked Brittany in 818 and 824.⁷⁵

So Carolingian warfare produced substantial quantities of war slaves, *captivi*. But were they sold? The Franks had certainly done so in earlier centuries, and the practice is explicitly attested for contemporary Byzantines and Arabs. Previous scholars have relied on the general habit of the age and thought so, despite the fact that the taciturn sources do not bother to describe the sale of Frankish war prisoners.⁷⁶ Certainly, some slaves might have been used inside the Frankish empire. For instance, they could be settled on estates to work the ruler's land. In fact, a high proportion of slaves has been noted on some royal estates east of the Rhine.⁷⁷ So some of the Saxons, Avars, Bretons, and others taken in warfare

Franc. s.a., p. 64. His successor's chronicler – who tended to add damaging material which the father's annalists had tactfully omitted – supplies this important detail: "Caesa est eorum infinita multitudo, spoliatae direpta, captivorum quoque magnus abductus est numerus." *Ann. Ein.*, s.a., p. 65. 788: R220. 791: *Annales Laureshamenses*, s.a., MGH SS 1.34, report how the Frankish armies ravaged the Avar kingdom: "sed et predas sine mensura vel numero, et captivos, viros et mulieres et parvulos, innumerabilem multitudinem exinde ducebant." One of the armies had come up from Friuli, and presumably returned to the threshold of Venice with its slaves. 796: cf. the very similar wording on the Saxon campaign, *ibid.*, s.a., p. 37; cf. also *Lorscher Annalen*, 35.19–24. The version of the same information in the *Chronicon Laurissense breue*, 4, 29, p. 34, indicates that the quantities of captives must have been enormous: "Carlus in Saxoniam Francos collocat, Saxones inde educens cum uxoribus et liberis, id est tertium hominem," which seems to mean that every third person was removed from Saxony. The *Royal Annals*, on the other hand, describe both campaigns as great victories, but breathe no word of slave-taking: s.a., pp. 86–91 and 98–9. See

also below, n78, on certain cases of resettlement.

75 818: Ermoldus Nigellus, *Carmen in honorem Hludovici*, says that the Frankish armies that attacked Brittany carried off captives: 3, 1599–1600, p. 122; 824: *ibid.*, 4, 2021, p. 154. Cf. Reuter 1985, 77. The slave trade offers one possible explanation for the hoard of Veullin. It was characterized by a large number of fresh Venetian coins and deposited c. 820/2 near Bourges, on the road leading west toward the Loire river and the Atlantic (above, pp. 683f). The Loire had been important for the import of English slaves in the early 7th C. The deposit date perhaps hints rather at a connection with the war slaves taken in the Breton campaign of 818, which had been launched from Vannes, at the western end of the river and road route to Bourges. On the campaign, see von Simson 1874–6, I: 132–3.

76 Verlinden 1955–77, I: 705–6; Reuter 1985, 77.

77 Verhulst 1990, 92, 93; apparently not so in Rhenish Hesse or Franconia: 96. It is unclear whether this might explain Charles' prohibiting lesser officials from buying slaves from a "servus regis": MGH *Capit. no.* 77, 5, Aachen, 802–3, I.171.7–9; Ganshof 1961, 167.

could have ended up on royal estates. Others were held as hostages, or simply resettled in other parts of the Frankish empire.⁷⁸

But probably not all. In an eighth century not known for abundant testimony, scarcely a decade went by without someone prohibiting slave trading or closing down a slave market. The numbing repetition implies, of course, that the prohibitions were ineffective. And we know that Charlemagne's prohibiting the export of swords has not kept archaeologists from recovering large numbers outside the empire. Besides, the prohibitions were not usually blanket ones. They aimed only at protecting one's own group. No subjects of Wessex, no Alamanni, no Beneventans might be sold outside the home province, ordered the king of Wessex, or the duke of the Alamanni, or Lombards. Even then, however, the legislator foresaw exceptions, for example for murderers. Most commonly, the prohibitions forbade the sale of Christians to pagans. Here too, however, the treaties between the Franks and the Venetians show significant attenuation. One wonders whether it is only a coincidence that, in the ninth century, the emphasis in surviving records shifts from prohibiting the sale of Christians to penance for those who have done so.⁷⁹

Contemporary churchmen were scarcely trying to talk their rulers out of something they were not doing. For instance, in the months after he conquered

78 Contemporary witnesses seem careful to specify when Saxons were resettled or taken as hostages. E.g. in 795: *Lorsch Annalen*, 34.5–12, and *Chron. Lauriss. br.*, 4, 26, p. 34 (cf., however, *Ann. Mosellani*, s.a., 498.36–8, which is less specific); so too in 804, when 10,000 Saxons – the number is from Einhard – were removed from their homes and settled in different places around the empire; in this case, they do not use the term *captivus*: e.g. *Annales Mettenses priores*, a. 804, 91.11–19; Einhard, *V. Karoli*, 7, 10.19–24.

79 Around 732, Gregory III urged Boniface vigorously to repress the sales of Christian slaves to pagans for human sacrifice: JE 2239, Boniface, *Ep.*, 28, 51.18–23. In 743, Carloman's Council of Estinnes forbade the selling of Christians to pagans: *ibid.*, 56, 102.19–20; this may refer to the export of slaves to the north or east, since Carloman's territory did not reach the Mediterranean; *Concilium Romanum a. 743*, 10, MGH *Conc.* 2.1.16.8. Cf., e.g., the assembly held in 772 at Neuching, in Bavaria: MGH *Conc.* 2.99.31–3. Charlemagne prohibited the sale

of slaves except in his representative's presence, as well as "outside the frontier" (*foris marca*) in 779, MGH *Capit.* no. 20, 19, 1.51.9–14. The repetition of this prohibition in 781, extended also to stallions and weapons, at Mantua – near Venice – makes clear the military concern: *ibid.*, no. 20, 19, 1.51.9–14. See also Pippin of Italy, *ibid.*, no. 102, 18, 1.211.9–11 (A.D. 801–10). For the regional or ethnic focus of such prohibitions, e.g., Ine of Wessex, cited above, n57; *Leges Alamannorum*, 27, 1–2, 97.1–17; *Pactum Sicardi*, 3, 218.47–51; homicide: *ibid.*, 4, 219.1–6. Venetian pacts: see below, pp. 763ff. Penance: Halitgarius of Cambrai, *Liber poenitentialis*, PL, 105.700B (same penance as for abortion); Hrabanus Maurus, *Ep.* 30, 1, 449.6–29 (same as for homicide, but mercy should be shown); Regino of Prüm, *Libri duo de synodalibus causis*, p. 212: bishops visiting their dioceses should ask whether there have been any kidnappings and sales into foreign slavery, or anyone has sold Christian slaves to Jews or pagans, or whether Jews have sold any Christian slaves there.

Lombard Italy, Charlemagne received a letter of congratulations.⁸⁰ This work, the first "Mirror of Princes" of the Middle Ages, enumerated what the conqueror had to do to guarantee that God would continue his spectacular support. First of all, God's law should always inspire Charles' royal conduct.⁸¹ The second thing took precedence even over heaping privileges on churches. The conqueror of the Lombards must never let Christians be sold to pagans. Any who does so will have to repay their price when he stands before the throne of Christ.⁸² Cathwulf returns to the theme a little later, when he ranks people who sell Christians to the pagans with witches, poisoners, perjurers, and counterfeiters, and calls for their repression.⁸³ Charlemagne apparently took Cathwulf's sermon to heart, since a year or two later he upbraided Hadrian I when he heard that papal subjects had been selling Christians to the Muslims. Hadrian's response has already shown us that Byzantine slavers regularly operated along the Italian coast. The pope claimed he had repressed those slave ships and traders who had docked in the papal port at Civitavecchia: but Charlemagne's own representative in Lucca had refused to cooperate. Around this time Charles invalidated all sales into slavery caused by the famine and his army's movements (R186). That will have brought small consolation to the Lombards who were already aboard ships sailing south. A few years later, Hadrian would attempt to use Charlemagne's distress over sales of Christians to "pagans" to poison the king's relations with two ranking Ravennate officials.⁸⁴ There is no doubting that this king opposed the sale of Christians to pagans. But there can also be no doubt that this was precisely what was occurring. Nor is there any indication that the royal concern extended to non-Christians.⁸⁵ More than a few Saxons and Avars fell into that category.

80 Cathwulf, *Epistola ad Carolum*, MGH *Epist.* 4.502–4; see in general Anton 1968, 75–9. The letter lacks an exact date, but its tone makes clear that the victory was recent. So much so that Cathwulf recommends (502.42–503.1) that Charles give thanks to God for this success "com omnibus exercitibus tuis . . . com omni regno tuo," which suggests that the Frankish forces had not yet left Italy and disbanded for the winter.

81 *Ibid.*, 503.12–19.

82 *Ibid.*, 503.20–22: "Et christianum vendere, numquam in paganam gentem dimittere. Vae, vae, Christi membrum coniungere membro diaboli, animam perdere, redditor precii eius ante thronum Christi." Hoffmann's (1986, 15n35) emendation "Et

christianum <non> vendere" is unnecessary. The present infinitive (*dimittere*) functions as an imperative in late Latin (e.g. Väänänen 1981, 134); *vendere* is the substantivized object of *dimittere*. The sentence is correctly translated as it stands: "And never allow selling a Christian to the pagan people." Granting privileges to churches: Cathwulf, 503.23–4.

83 *Ibid.*, 504.14.

84 R201. If Gundlach's dating is correct, the accusation came at a time when abundant (pagan and Christian) war slaves would have been available from the Saxon campaigns of 782 and 783.

85 See above, however, n79, on the 781 capitulary of Mantua.

In Charles' last years, his son Louis was on the offensive against the northern marches of al Andalus. Frankish power subjugated Barcelona and, we may believe, produced prisoners. These campaigns are usually reckoned the context for another treatise on right rulership.⁸⁶ Smaragdus' *The Royal Road* (*Via regia*) has sometimes been dismissed as a web of biblical quotations. This accurately describes the texture of the work but misses its plan, and the point. In Carolingian culture, appeal to the word of God trumped all arguments. The concluding chapters reveal what Smaragdus thought was on the king's mind.⁸⁷

Therefore, O most famous king, always seek His support and and take refuge in His protection, so that the Lord may grant you both strength in your arm and victory in war. For thus it has been written *A most mighty tower is the name of the Lord; the just man runs to him, and he will be exalted* (Prov. 18, 10). Therefore salvation lies not in the multitude of men (cf. Ps. Heb. 32, 16; 1 Macc. 3, 19), nor in numerous weaponry: it lies in calling on the name of the Lord. And therefore you too, O most faithful king, so that you might rely on the help of the Lord to defend your kingdom, pray constantly to ask for his protection.⁸⁸

The notion that Carolingian rulers relied on God as well as tactics to achieve victory will surprise no one who knows how they solicited prayers for military success. Smaragdus was simply buttressing with scripture a deeply held tenet of his time.⁸⁹ But it took more than prayers to get God's help. The catch had come a little before. In order for God to hear the king's prayers, he had to obey God: the king must forbid the taking of slaves in war (*captivitas*).

86 For Louis the Pious: Anton 1968, 161–8. For learned and subtle arguments that the treatise was written at about the same time, for Charlemagne, during the Danish war, see Eberhardt 1977, 29–73 and 195–263. Though the case for Charles is not implausible, it does not suffice to exclude Louis the Pious. The main argument is that this particular Visigoth, Smaragdus, cannot be proved to have been associated with Louis when he was king of Aquitaine, although in 809 he already served Charlemagne. But even if Smaragdus were at Charles' court, this would not rule out dedicating a work to the aging emperor's son. And it is striking that he repeatedly calls his addressee *rex*, but never *imperator* (e.g., quotations below; contra: Eberhardt 1977, 224–6). Whether intended for Charlemagne or Louis, the *Via regia* was probably written before c. 814/16, and there was warfare enough to justify the

treatise's references to it: Eberhardt 1977, 197–225. The MS link with the *Filioque* dossier of 809 is only suggestive for the date. The new edition of that material further weakens the case: it shows that Smaragdus was not at Charlemagne's court, since he sent a letter to the emperor about the *Filioque*, and that his embassy to Rome is an old error: *Das Konzil von Aachen, MGH Conc. 2, Suppl. 2.29–35*. For Louis' campaigns, e.g., in 811 and 812: BM p. 238, after no. 519; for Charlemagne's: BM 449b–450, 463a, etc.

87 D'Achery's edition, reprinted in PL, combines into his ch. 30 what are five separate and short chapters in the manuscripts: Eberhardt 1977, 103–4, whose findings in this respect I follow.

88 Smaragdus, *Via regia*, 31[MSS = c. 35] and 32 [=c. 36], PL, 102.969B–C and 970B–C.

89 McCormick 1984.

Forbid therefore, O most clement king, the taking of slaves in your kingdom. Be a most faithful son of that Father [a cagey reference to the issue of fidelity to the other, earthly father] to whom you daily call out with the other brethren: *Our Father who art in heaven*. Whatever He loves and cherishes, you love too. Whatever He hears and forbids, you forbid too . . . For He spoke in command to Moses: *If any man shall be caught afflicting one of his brethren of the tribe of Israel and, having sold him, receives the price, let him be killed and you remove this evil from your midst*" (Deut. 24, 7). He also spoke out through the Prophet Amos and said: . . . *For three transgressions of Israel and for four, I will not turn it back: because it sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes* (Amos 2, 6).⁹⁰

Smaragdus continues in this vein for several chapters, reminding the impressionable Louis that the Lord weakened and crushed the arm of any king who offended Him. The abbot's point is unmistakable. It also appears to be original.⁹¹ God Himself had forbidden the taking of slaves from one's own tribe. Smaragdus was not worried about enslaving Arab infidels, but about Christians. That would be the Visigothic brethren of the tribe of the New Covenant. The choice of biblical quotations suggests, strongly, that they were being captured and sold as slaves.⁹² Smaragdus' concern for them was perhaps strengthened by the fact that he too was a Visigoth, quite possibly from Spain.⁹³

So the victorious armies of Pippin III, Charlemagne and Louis the Pious took substantial numbers of war slaves. Contemporary moralists complained not about slave sales to pagans in general, but against selling Christians to "pagans," i.e., Muslims, and they did so in the context of victorious Frankish military action. Numerous assemblies of bishops reiterated the complaint, showing that it struck a chord with leading representatives of the church. But it was a rare bishop who worried about the sale of pagans to "pagans."⁹⁴ It would

90 *Via regia*, 30, PL, 102.967A–C: "*Prohibendum ne captivitas fiat. Prohibe ergo, clementissime rex, ne in regno tuo captivitas fiat. Esto fidelissimus illius Patris filius . . . Ipse enim Moysi praecipiens ait: 'Si deprehensus fuerit homo sollicitans fratrem, et vendito eo acceperit pretium, interficietur, et auferes malum de medio tui.' Ipse quoque per Amos prophetam clamat et dicit: ' . . . Super tribus sceleribus Israel, et super quatuor non convertam eum: pro eo quod vendiderit pro argento iustum, et pauperem pro calceamentis'."*

91 Eberhardt's detailed research (list: 1977, 136–42) shows that the treatise is even more heavily indebted to earlier writers than previously imagined. But precisely, and almost uniquely, in this chapter,

Eberhardt identified no new borrowings (141–2).

92 Eberhardt 1977; 593; cf. 652 and 655, seems to take this differently. It would in any case fit the Christian Visigoths better than the pagan Danes.

93 *Ibid.*, 31–3. Might the Spanish campaigns have been connected with Count Aureolus' enigmatic *commercium* south of the Pyrenees? *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 809, p. 130; cf. Ch. 23n23.

94 Paulinus of Aquileia did urge Heiric of Friuli to redeem slaves (*captivos*) in his moral treatise, *Liber exhortationis*, 56, PL, 99.281B. Both men lived on the main route to Venice, but the recommendation is buried in a host of other injunctions.

be surprising if some of the Frankish *captivi* did not find their way into the slave trade.

Carolingian conquests did not continue. In all probability, the relative proportion of slaves stemming from Frankish – if not Viking and Arab – victories decreased over time. Contemporaneously, there was a change in the geography of acquisition, if not of disposition. As the Frankish juggernaut ground to a halt, other sources of supply opened up along the empire's eastern marches. The 900 slaves the Slav princelings of Pannonia liberated at the request of Sts. Cyril-Constantine and Methodius had been kidnapped for a reason. When the profits were great, the trend was irresistible. But what kind of money could one make selling Europeans in the southeastern Mediterranean?

The economics of slave trading

The difficulties of understanding the workings of an early medieval economy only increase when one considers a phenomenon that connected several different economies, none of which is very well mapped yet. These difficulties make it tempting for historians to rely more on theories than evidence. I shall try to avoid the theoretical and keep it simple. For now, the best thing is to consider the slave trade of early Europe in simple terms of supply and demand, costs, profits, and scale, and to make clear what exactly we can document, and what we must suppose.

Supply and demand

Demand is primordial. Were there no demand for slaves, there would have been no market, no incentive to hunt them down and ship them across the sea. Internal demand for slaves seems to have been slackening in the more advanced regions of western Frankland.⁹⁵ The recognition that slavery persisted as a not insignificant feature of the Carolingian countryside once made this observation somewhat perplexing. Two things have lessened the perplexity. The evidence is mounting that, contrary to even recent conventional wisdom, the population and economy of the Carolingian empire were not stagnant. Demographic growth inside the empire was increasing the supply of labor of all categories, including, probably, home-born slaves.⁹⁶ A second factor was the spread of the bipartite estate and its system of land tenancies held by free or servile peasants, who were

95 Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 718; Verhulst 1990, 100.

96 Demographic growth: e.g., Toubert 1995,

128–32; Lohrmann 1990, 115; slave fertility was probably comparable to that of other low-status peasants: Pelteret 1995, 252–3.

obliged to feed and shelter themselves in return for labor services on the owner's reserve. Manumission has plausibly been proposed as one carrot which would have helped estate operators move slave workers into the heavy burdens of servile tenancy. Not quite free, but not slaves either, servile tenants had to sustain themselves from their *mansus*, their tenant householding, in return for heavy labor services on the lord's domain. The lord's responsibilities to them lessened, even as his profits remained the same or increased.⁹⁷

At the same time that demand for slaves inside Europe was lessening, external demand was probably increasing, at least in the Arab world. It may also have been growing in Byzantium, but the pacification of Greece and some successful campaigns in the east may have reduced the Byzantines' need to import slaves. In the House of Islam, on the other hand, the western wars of conquest ended for several generations with the failed siege of Constantinople in 718 and the Carolingian success in southern France. With them stopped the enormous flow of war slaves, such as that from Visigothic Spain.⁹⁸ The conquests of Sicily and Crete, both in the 820s, were very important, strategically and in terms of slave supply but, in the grand scheme of things, they were more in the nature of codas than overtures. Byzantine resistance was stiffening also, making the annual raids into Asia Minor increasingly expensive. Other sources of slaves became more appealing.

We have dated the Venetians' first recorded effort to supply slaves to the Muslim world to c. 748, that is, during the devastating final onslaught of the bubonic plague (R157). The unusually lethal bubonic plague had struck Africa in 745 and continued to rage over the next seven years (R153). Historical demography, epidemiology, and Arabic sources seem to offer a coherent pattern that suggests in that final pestilence an urban mortality rate of 25 to 35 percent.⁹⁹ One economic consequence of the better documented fourteenth-century Black Death was that it concentrated wealth among survivors and, of course, increased the value of labor.¹⁰⁰ If similar causes produced similar effects in eighth-century Africa, such an epidemic will have supplied survivors with greater means to purchase replacement laborers from any healthy populations which could deliver them to Africa. The epidemiological fact that bubonic plague traveled with – and killed – ships' crews, may imply a temporary dislocation of African shipping, just as we saw at the outset of the era of plagues. What is more, African access to the slave-hunting grounds of Sicily was limited by local political disturbances and renewed Byzantine defenses (Ch. 17.2). The Venetians, in other words, seized a very specific opportunity, created by a spike in demand for labor that arose out of

97 E.g., Verhulst 1991, 200–2.

98 Ashtor 1969, 58.

99 Conrad 1981, 429–41.

100 Concentration: Genicot 1990, 52–3; labor: Genicot 1971, 688–90; more evidence for both: Pirilla 1994, 200–6.

heavy mortality in the Caliphate. The configuration was new. That mortality had not much affected western Europe, which was then “unplugged” from the Mediterranean shipping world that conveyed the contagion. Once the last wave of plague had receded, and regardless of the long-term demographic trend of the Caliphate and Muslim Spain, their economies were booming in the later eighth and early ninth centuries.¹⁰¹ This further increased the demand for labor. And a strong economy meant that there was no shortage of local or more exotic goods, or even silver and gold, to be exchanged for European labor in the form of slaves. In fact the demand was too great for even a burgeoning Europe to satisfy since, at the same time, large numbers of slaves were also imported from subsaharan Africa and from Asia.

As far as Europe was concerned, the supply of slaves looked unending thanks to demographic growth and the inviting wilderness stretching toward the east. But cultural factors would complicate the simple economics of slave supply. Even though some Christian slaves continued to be exported to the Muslim world, the growing barriers to such sales must have raised the costs and constricted the sources of supply toward the unconverted regions of Europe, particularly the Slav territories to the east. It suddenly becomes obvious why the first theological opposition to the mission of Constantine and Methodius arose in Venice.¹⁰² The lagoon settlements were known more for their slave trade than for their dynamic ecclesiastical culture. Control of the new christendoms springing up between the Frankish empire, Byzantium and Bulgaria had obvious political and ecclesiastical stakes, as the east Frankish court and metropolitan churches of Salzburg and Passau vied with Rome, Constantinople, and even Pliska. But beyond ecclesiastical politics there was the profound issue of conversion: shipping baptized Slavs to death and damnation in the Muslim world may have given pause, even to Venetians.¹⁰³

Costs and profit margins

Direct data on the price of slaves at, say Walenstadt or Venice, compared to the price they brought at a place like Alexandria is lacking. What scholarly opinion there is on relative values is not in agreement. But various slave prices scattered through the sources of the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries nonetheless allow us

101 Booming economy: above, p. 586. We do not yet know for certain the demographic trends of the Muslim world in the 8th and 9th C. Dwindling populations in some Syrian villages may indicate only a regional decline, for the consensus is that the Caliphate experienced slow

demographic growth at least down to the 10th C: Gatier 1994, 44–8; Shatzmiller 1994, 56–7.

102 *Life of Constantine the Philosopher*, 16, 1–59, pp. 162–5.

103 See below, on failed Venetian efforts to curtail the slave trade.

to establish the broad outline. The data on the comparative cost of slaves confirms what the direction of the flow of human wares implies: slaves were cheaper in Europe than in the Muslim world.¹⁰⁴ To supply a very rough yardstick for comparison, the first columns of Table 25.1 give the approximate weight of the precious metals contained in the coins.¹⁰⁵ In only one case does a slave command a comparable price in Europe and in the Muslim world. For male slaves, the price runs about three to four times higher on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. Chart 25.1 lays this material out graphically. Even allowing for its imperfections, the comparison makes clear just how profitable the export of Europeans to the Muslim world must have been: the same slave will have tripled or quadrupled in value when transported across the Mediterranean Sea. It suggests furthermore that, though slaves may have been more valuable in Byzantium than in the early medieval west, Byzantine prices sometimes equaled and sometimes were cheaper than those of the Muslim world. This implies two further consequences. Westerners will generally have preferred to sell their slaves in the Muslim world, where they probably commanded a higher price than in Byzantium. And it would have been profitable in some circumstances to export slaves from Byzantium to the Caliphate. But it would have been even more profitable for Byzantine slave traders to seek their wares in the Latin west. This data on prices finds confirmation in the activities of Byzantine slave dealers in the west.¹⁰⁶ Another consideration suggests that the value of European slaves was high enough to produce profits, even if the scale were limited. Most of the Europeans we see enslaved in the Caliphate served in domestic capacities, and so may have commanded a higher price than field laborers, for example. Eunuchs are a case in point.

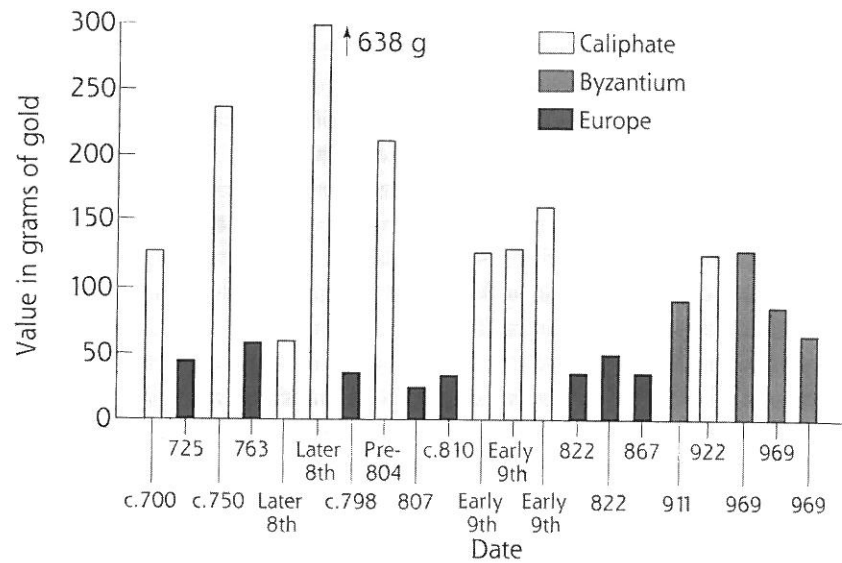
104 Thus already Lopez 1987, 315, but with small evidence. Ashtor 1969, 498–9 with n12, thinks that in our period, the price of slaves was generally comparable, though not equal, around the Mediterranean. For this he cited the 712 document, but converts its value erroneously (=13 dinars: cf. Table 25.1). He recognizes the cheapness of the prices mentioned by Agobard, but dismisses them, since he “doubts most of these [Carolingian] slaves were sold” in the Caliphate.

105 It should be stressed that the comparison only approximates the relative values of slaves in the different economies. The sources are disparate, and slaves’ values varied according to their desirability and short-term supply; the relatively rare Carolingian coinage probably gave it a

higher local purchasing power than the same amount of silver in the Muslim economies. I have not included extreme cases where special circumstances seem to shape prices, for instance, the famine prices mentioned in Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1.115, or those which are not clearly dated and localized in Ashtor 1969. Rāḡib 1993, 758 estimates that ordinary slaves cost around 20 dinars in the Caliphate; however, he too relies on the same work of Ashtor used here.

106 R186; the Byzantine Calabrian dealer condemned by Elias 2: V. *Eliae Spel.*, 18, 855C–856D; in June 960, when the doge attempted to outlaw the slave trade at Venice, he foresaw that Venetian merchants might attempt to set up Greeks as proxy dealers: *Venedig*, no. 13, p. 20.

Chart 25.1. The comparative price of a human being: Carolingian Europe, Byzantium, and the Caliphate



This chart indicates the differing value of slaves on different shores of the Mediterranean, and suggests potential profit margins (see Table 25.1 for details).

TABLE 25.1
The comparative price of a human being: Carolingian Europe, Byzantium, and the Caliphate, 8th–10th C.

Intrinsic value of 1 slave (calculated values in parentheses ^a)				
Silver	Gold	Price	Date, place	Comment
<i>Italy</i> ^b				
	45 g	12 s. AV	725, Milan	boy from Gaul
	47.25–69.3 g	Oxen and gold worth 21 s. AV	763, Chiusi	woman with infant
(306 g)	(25.5 g)	30 s. AR (for 2 slaves)	807, Como	2 local "infantoli"
408 g	(34 g)	1 lb. AR	c. 810, Arogno	woman plus ?her <i>agnitio</i>
	(37 g)	38 Benev. s. = 148 g (for 4 slaves)	867, Gaeta	2 peasants and their wives, age unspecified

TABLE 25.1 (cont.)

Intrinsic value of 1 slave (calculated values in parentheses ^a)				
Silver	Gold	Price	Date, place	Comment
<i>Frankland</i> ^c				
408 g	(37 g)	20 s. AR	c. 798	restitution when a slave kills a slave
408 g	(37 g)	20 s. AR	822, Lyons	lower range of slave price
612 g	(51 g)	30 s. AR	822, Lyons	upper range of slave price
<i>Byzantium</i> ^d				
(630 g)	90 g	20 n.	911, Constantinople	Christians sold by Rus
(892.5 g)	127.5 g	30 dinars	969, Treaty with Aleppo	male Byzantine slave
(595 g)	85 g	20 dinars	969, Treaty with Aleppo	female Byzantine slave
(446.25 g)	63.75 g	15 dinars	969, Treaty with Aleppo	adolescent Byzantine slave
<i>Caliphate</i> ^e				
(1,275 g)	127.5 g	30 dinars	late 7th C., Egypt	male slave
2,376 g	(237.6 g)	800 dirhams	c. 750, Iraq	young girl
594 g	(59.4 g)	200 dirhams	later 8th C., Iraq	male slave
(6,375 g)	637.5 g	150 dinars	later 8th C., Iraq	beautiful girl
(2,125 g)	212.5 g	50 dinars or more	before 804, Iraq	male slave
(1,275 g)	127.5 g	30 dinars	early 9th, Basra	male slave
1,306.8 g	(131 g)	440 dirhams	early 9th, Sidjistan	lower range of male slaves, provincial budget
1,633.5 g	(163 g)	550 dirhams	early 9th, Sidjistan	upper range of male slaves, provincial budget
(1,275 g)	127.5 g	30 dinars	922, Oman	estimated price for an east African king

Notes:

AR – silver; AV – gold.

^a For Italy (Rovelli 1992, 119n24) and Frankland (Spufford 1988, 51), I have used the rate of 1:12; for the Caliphate, gold has been converted into silver at the legal 1:10 rate, although the market rate varied more widely (*ibid.*). For Byzantium I have used the 10th-C. rate of 1:7; *ibid.*

^b 725, CDL 1, no. 36; 763: CDL 2, no. 174 (note that the weights of Desiderius' coins fluctuate, and the fineness also seems to have declined); cf. for the Lombard coins of these different periods: Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 61–2; 807: *Codex diplomaticus Langobardiae*, no. 83; 810: *ibid.*, no. 86; 867: Gaeta, no. 13.

^c 798: *Lex Salica*, E Text, 56, p. 95; 822: Agobard, *De baptismo mancipiorum*, 116.35–6.

^d 911: Treaty of Rus and Byzantines, *apud Laurent'evskaja letopis'*, p. 36, tr. Hellmann 1987, p. 660; others: Antoniadis-Bibicou 1972, 228–9.

^e Late 7th C.: Ashtor 1969, 89; c. 750, Iraq – early 9th C., Basra: Ashtor 1969, 58; early 9th, Sidjistan: Ashtor 1969, 59n2; 922: Ashtor 1969, 58–9.

There is no obvious basis for estimating acquisition and transport costs. They will have eaten into the profits. Nonetheless, compared to textiles, tin, swords, or other goods, slaves added another unmistakable advantage to their high profit margin, which became even more important in light of the changing infrastructures. The shift to the Alpine overland arteries connecting northern Europe to the Mediterranean made little difference for slaves, for they transported themselves over land. Indeed, their backs could carry swords, furs, or even packets of tin as they walked to their own social funeral. Once they reached the sea, their shipment benefited from the economies of water transport. There the need to move human beings swiftly to the final market, and so minimize mortality, will have been one incentive for the accelerating rate of travel we have observed, and also for larger ships. Even if transport costs and mortality lessened the profit margin on this trade, that margin was so broad as to make it exceedingly lucrative. The source of the western wealth that was used to acquire Arab coins and drugs is becoming clear.

So too is the enigma of those fresh Venetian silver coins. Why Venice should have issued Frankish coins when it was no part of the Frankish empire has intrigued scholars. We now know what the Carolingian traders were taking down to the lagoon and exchanging for spices, silk, drugs, and incense. For the Frankish wares were so precious that these traders, just like the Venetians on the other side of the sea, were able to acquire all the exotic luxuries they could transport and sell at home and still be left with money, fresh money, in their purses. No Muslim dirhams would enter the Christian empire of Europe. The silver the Venetian traders brought back from their voyages to the Levant was exported north. It will have been restruck as Frankish pennies, impressed with the sign of the cross and edifying legends like "Christian religion"; the Venetians kept for themselves the gold they acquired in the Caliphate and in Byzantium. By somehow agreeing to or extracting the right of striking Frankish money, the clever Adriatic merchants also got to pocket the profit from minting the coin in which they paid for their wares.¹⁰⁷ Analysis of surviving silver from the mint of Venice may cast more light on its origin. Certainly Frankish silver flowed into Venice – Venetian ships plied the Po and its tributaries, and St. Gerald's fellow pilgrims will have paid cash for their purchases at Pavia (Ch. 21.2). We have already met the Milanese penny fused to a dirham from the marketplace of Torcello (Chapter 11). But silver from dirhams was probably mixed with that from recycled Carolingian pennies, and advanced scientific analyses might detect some hint of this in surviving Venetian pennies.

107 On the Venetian coins, Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 217. On profits from striking money, e.g., Grierson 1975,

95–7. The Veullin hoard is heavy with fresh coins from Venice: above, n75.

On the rare occasions when we can specify the scope of Venetian merchant ventures, our informants do not identify the goods the shippers exported. Even so, what they do tell us allows us to surmise the economic implications if they were carrying slaves. Bonus' convoy to Alexandria comprised ten ships. The credible earlier ninth-century cargoes of sixty-three and 221 slaves give a point of departure (Table 13.2). Taking the smaller number would imply some 630 slaves aboard the Venetian ships. Assuming a price of 25 s. silver (midway between Agobard's 20 and 30 s.: Table 25.1), such a convoy's cargo would represent a total investment of 15,750 s., or some £788 in Carolingian silver currency. Table 25.1 indicated that those slaves would have increased in value by a minimum of 17 percent, and more probably 140 percent when they reached the Caliphate. Thus they might have sold for between £917 and £2,018, yielding a gross gain of at least £129, and more probably £1,101, on the outbound voyage alone. That order of magnitude finds comfort in the famous sea investment which the doge Justinian mentioned in his will just a year or so after that convoy had brought the relics (and return cargo) back to Venice.¹⁰⁸

3. Geography of the European slave trade

The geography of the slave trade can be viewed from two perspectives. The broader one takes the position of the consumer societies, and attempts to discern the range of the supply networks which fed the Muslim world's voracious appetite for slave labor. The narrower one examines the share of those supply networks which originated in western Europe. Broadly conceived, the Europeans imported into the House of Islam were only part of the overall picture. Slaves also trudged into the Muslim world from the south, like the Nubians in Egypt or the subsaharan Africans who labored in the fields of Iraq or Oman. From the north-east came central Asian slaves, especially the Turks, who, from servile origins, would rise to such greatness.¹⁰⁹

108 *Ilario e Benedetto*, no. 2, p. 21: "Est enim omnis mea possessio confirmata et abbreviata cum illas iamdictas ducentas libras que in monasterio ***** cum speciebus et ornamentis et laboratoriiis solidis, si salva de navigatione reversa fuerint, libras mille duocentas, de qua sexcentas reservavi dispensandum pro mea anima cuique per breve ubi vel ubi conscripsero." The text is damaged and probably corrupt in some places; it would reward deeper study. But it seems

to imply that Justinian had invested perhaps £1,000 in an overseas venture, which bears comparison with the hypothetical £788 suggested for the convoy of R406. We may hope that ongoing publication of Arabic papyri will extend the evidence of slave prices in the 9th C. and so improve these early and rough estimates.

109 R. Brunshvigg, "Abd," *El I* (1960): 24–40, here 32.

The geographic breadth and the diversity of networks transporting Europeans into the House of Islam is arresting (Map 25:1). Beyond Frankish Europe, one famous stream of slaves tramped toward the southeast along the northern arc. They certainly were doing so by the early tenth century, and they may have started arriving earlier, along with the furs and Frankish swords, if that is how some of the Slavs of Iraq got there.¹¹⁰ Many of these slaves are believed to have been collected along the way as tribute or plunder from the Slav tribes whose territories the Rus traversed. But at Birka, on the doorstep of the river routes toward Byzantium and the Caliphate, we have already met a troop of Christian slaves from the west (above, p. 611). There is no reason to assume that their shipment stopped in the Swedish lakes zone.

The Black Sea would be notorious for its late medieval slave trade. The large numbers of Byzantine slaves held by the Khazars and freed by Constantine-Cyril and Methodius show that the trade goes back to the ninth century. It was another stream that fed the river of human labor flowing into the Caliphate, for we know that the Khazars exported slaves there (Chapter 20n41). To the west, the Bulgarians seem to have shipped slaves to the Byzantines (above, p. 605); others might have traveled toward the Caliphate. Constantinople certainly possessed a slave market, though the details are unknown. Whether or not it played any role in supplying the Caliphate has never been asked.

In fact, in general terms, we may suspect that, from the southern Mediterranean, the northern shore and its hinterland appeared in the ninth century as a vast arc of slave supply. European slaves certainly reached the Caliphate from Spain, from the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy, and from the Veneto. By 900 they were coming from the northern arc as well. Greece has hitherto been more or less a blank in the map of slave supply. This has occasioned little notice, the more so that slavery is not thought to have been very important inside the Byzantine empire (aside from the sale of captives). Yet Byzantine slaves were not uncommon in the Caliphate: we need look no further than the story of Photius' creature, Leontius, former Arab slave and would-be ambassador to the west of the patriarch of Alexandria: "I was born a Byzantine," as he explained to the 869 Council of Constantinople.¹¹¹ We also encounter at Louis the Pious' court the

110 See above, pp. 606–12. In 885–6, Ibn Khurradadhbih does not mention slaves among the wares of the Rus: trans. Pritsak 1971, pp. 256–7; on Slav slaves in Iraq toward 850, above, Ch. 9n28.

111 "Graecus fui genere," in Anastasius' translation: *Concilium CP IV*, actio 9, Mansi 16.155C–E; the severely condensed Greek text sheds no light on wording here:

Mansi 16.397A–B; cf. Pros. Leontius was a *captivus* who had had the good fortune to be purchased by the patriarch of Alexandria. But he was presumably captured by one of the Arab slave-hunting expeditions which multiplied in the eastern Mediterranean also in the last three quarters of the 9th C.

curious case of a eunuch bearing the Slavic name of Drogus, whom Einhard calls a "Greek."¹¹² Finally, we have seen that slaves were cheaper in the Byzantine empire than in the Caliphate (above, Table 25.1). Drogus and the price differential hint that Byzantium, like the early medieval west, exported slaves. An Arab observer confirms that the ancient empire shipped choice girls and eunuchs to Iraq's markets.¹¹³ But Frankland led the way.

In June 845, the bishops assembled at Meaux plaintively evoked the troops of slaves they saw. West Frankish traders, both Christian and Jewish, drove them through many peoples and towns of Christendom on their way to the infidels' markets.¹¹⁴ But the bishops did not bother to specify the roads they took: that was obvious to contemporaries. Taking into account the chief source of supply – the Slavs – and the principal destinations, Verlinden deduced that the main ninth-century routes led from central Europe through the Alps toward Lyons and Spain, on one hand, and toward Venice, on the other. In the tenth century, he thought, the source for Spain shifted further northward, while the Venetians began to derive their stock more from the Adriatic Slavs.¹¹⁵ He is certainly right as far as the ninth century is concerned. We may also suspect that other currents flowed toward Spain and Venice from different quarters or along different routes, including some of those we sketched in an earlier chapter, particularly along a route heading southwest from Mainz, perhaps via Verdun, toward Spain (above, pp. 611f), and from western France toward Italy (above, n75). The slaves towing Frisian boats up the Rhine, or the "merchants' route" running east into Thuringia are equally obvious possibilities (above, pp. 654f). Slaves, presumably imports, were sold at Utrecht early in Charlemagne's reign.¹¹⁶ The tolls collected at the Walensee indicate slaves' movement through the central Alps.¹¹⁷ But there was also a slave market there. This means that two or more slave-trading circuits met in the middle of the Alps. One circuit clearly led toward Italy, via the Septimer or the Splügen passes.¹¹⁸ Walenstadt lies on an excellent route for east–west travel through the Alps, and geography suggests that the slaves for sale there could have been coming from the north – the Rhineland or Bavaria – or the west.

But the densest and surest signs come from the southeast of the Carolingian empire and the Veneto.¹¹⁹ The earliest reference occurs in the 770s or 780s, when Paul the Deacon was still working on his unfinished masterpiece, the *History of*

112 Pros. "Drogus."

113 Al Djahiz (?), *A Clear Look*, 14, p. 159, quoted above, p. 591.

114 Conc. Meld. et Paris., 845–6, 76, MGH Conc. 3.124.7–13.

115 Verlinden 1977; cf. 1955–77, 2: 126–32; for the Spanish market, Constable 1996a, 266–8.

116 DD Kar 1, no. 56 (A.D. 769). The location suggests that they came from England; this would then be the last attestation of English slaves on the Continent before the Honorantie.

117 Verlinden 1977, 378 and 384.

118 *Ibid.*, 384; Imperial Polyptych, 383.1.

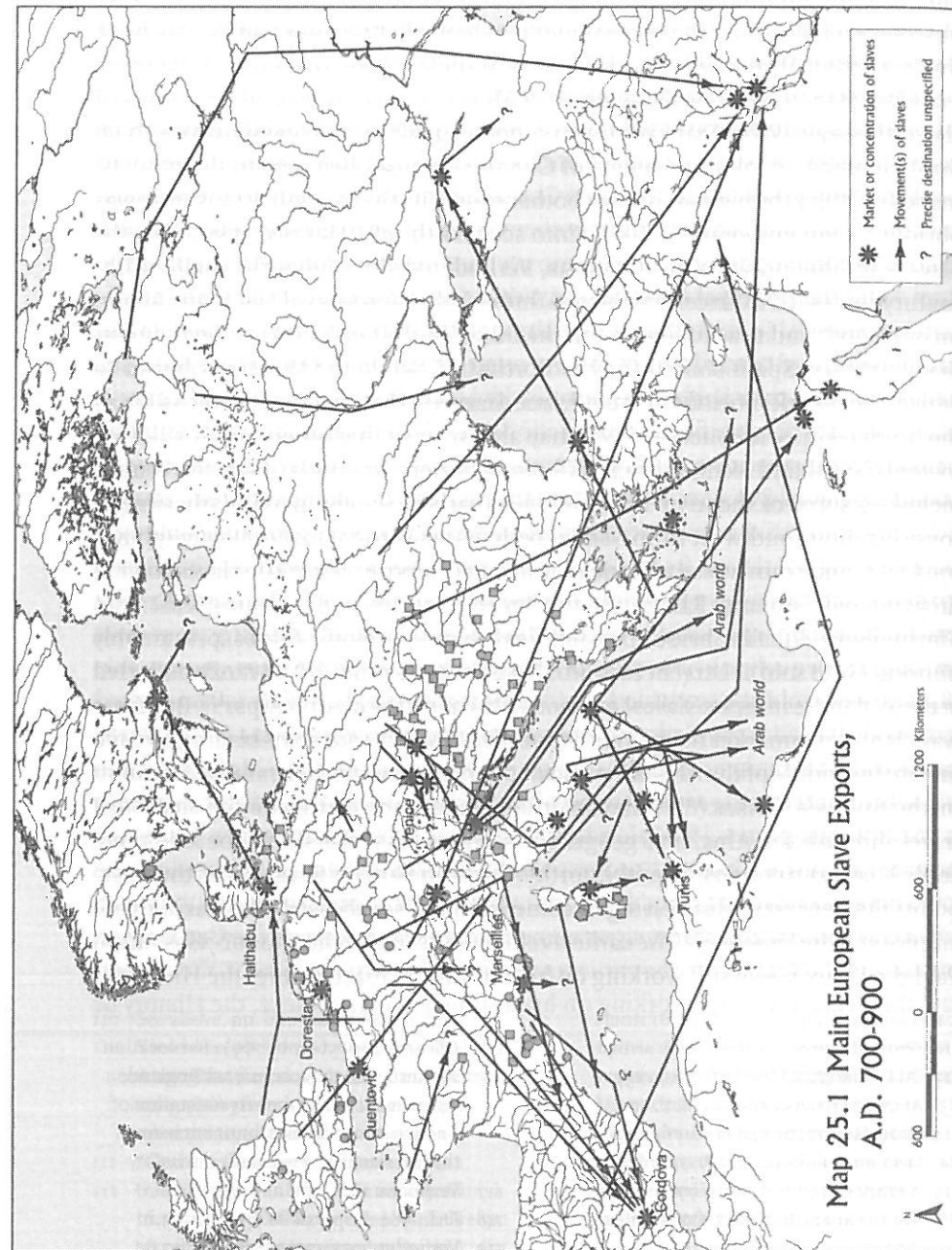
119 Verlinden 1955–77, 2: 126–32.

the Lombards.¹²⁰ Although what he completed reaches only as far as 744, there is no doubt that Paul wove contemporary concerns and calculations through the whole texture of the work.¹²¹

He begins his history with a “scientific” description of the salubrious weather of northern Europe, founded on the ancient climatic theories of health. This, Paul explains, is why the north produces people so prolifically. As he tells it, northern Europe stretches from the Atlantic to the Don River. This vast land mass (explicitly including the Slavic east) deserves the name “Germania,” because of the teeming masses its healthy climate “germinates.” Europe’s high fertility explains the slave trade and invasions of Paul’s own time. “This is why the countless crowds of slaves (*captivorum*) are frequently driven down from this populous ‘Germania’ and sold to the southern peoples.”¹²² From a man who was probably born athwart the corridor leading from central Europe to the Adriatic, this is powerful testimony.¹²³

Toll regulations afford a glimpse of slaves transiting the upper Danube as well as the Alps. Late in the ninth century, Slav merchants, including those who came from Bohemia as well as the mysterious “Rugi,” sold slaves at the Frankish markets along the Danube.¹²⁴ The presence of local and foreign merchants trading in slaves in the same places, shows that this business had long-distance connections, and the locale fits the central European route (“behind Rome”) of the Radhanites described by Ibn Khurradadhbih.¹²⁵ They could have been driving their wares down the long road west toward Spain. But they could also have been marching along the much shorter route that led past Paul the Deacon’s home, toward the leading slave emporium of western Europe, Venice.

The very first Venetian merchants we met were attempting to set up a slave market on the far side of the Italian peninsula and export Christians to Africa. It would be astonishing if the Venetians did not pursue this lucrative trade for which the major hunting grounds lay so close to home. In fact there can be no doubt that they did so. Paul the Deacon’s troops of slaves heading for sale to the southern peoples do not stand alone. The agreements governing relations between Venice and the Carolingian empire confirm the importance of the slave trade.



Map 25.1 Main European Slave Exports,
A.D. 700-900

120 See Goffart 1988, 329-47.

121 This is Goffart’s central and compelling contention about early medieval historical writings, including this one: 1988, 378-431.

122 *Historia Langobardorum*, I, 1, 47.25-48.10, esp. “Ab hac ergo populosa Germania saepe innumerabiles captivorum turmae abductae meridianis populis pretio distrahuntur.” For Paul’s etymology of Germania, cf. Isidore, *Origines*, 14, 4, 4,

Lindsay, and in general, on this passage and its background, Goffart 1988, 382-5.

123 On Paul’s birth place at Cividale del Friuli: Goffart 1988, 334.

124 Raffelstetten Plea, 6, 251.23-8.

125 *Ibid.*, 9, 252.8-10; Ibn Khurradadhbih, tr. Jacobi 253. Koller 1995, 291-2 develops an isolated and unpersuasive argument denying that the Plea depicts a slave trade and reckons absurd the notion that slaves were transported such long distances.

The earliest surviving treaty was established in 840 and depends to some uncertain degree on earlier pacts. It makes perfectly clear that Venice was a major center for the slave trade, and that Lothar I wanted to insure that his subjects did not wind up on the block there, en route to the Caliphate. The Venetians solemnly promised that they would not knowingly buy, sell, or transport Christians into foreign enslavement (*captivitas*), so long as they were Lothar's subjects ("de postestate vel regno dominationis vestre" [!]). This last clause apparently engendered some unease, and the Venetians went on to promise that they would not transport any Christian under any pretext, in such fashion that he or she fell into the power of the pagans. If they discovered any slave trader who had brought Christians into their duchy in order to sell them, the Venetians would deliver him to the Frankish authorities. They meant traveling, non-resident slave dealers: the Venetians went on to specify that anyone who apprehended such a criminal would receive everything that "that person was bringing with him." This implies that the traders who delivered the slaves to Venice possessed only movable wealth.¹²⁶ Another clause treats a further category of slaves (here called *captivi*). If such slaves were discovered in the duchy, the Venetians would deliver to Lothar's representatives the persons who transported the *captivi*, along with all their property and dependents. Again, these are traveling slave traders.¹²⁷ Finally the treaty attests that Venice was an important center for creating eunuchs, as one would expect in a major slave market serving the Middle East. Although the custom was well established ("inolitam consuetudinem"), the treaty forbade castration. Castrators would themselves be castrated. Nonetheless the Venetians could exculpate the accused, if he found twelve oath-helpers.¹²⁸

Although the treaty makes explicit only in the first case that it concerns Frankish subjects, there can be no doubt that this is the intent of its provisions. Despite its ambivalent status, Venice by then was back under the Byzantine wing, and the Frankish emperor had no power or authority to negotiate—or enforce—conditions for people who were not his subjects, notwithstanding the extension of the prohibition of export to Christians. In fact, his subject Godescalc of Orbais was able to thumb his nose at some very powerful Frankish bishops simply by crossing the lagoon (above, p. 261f) to Venice. If the treaty's conditions had been of universal application, they would have ended the Venetian slave trade overnight.

126 840: Pactum Hlotharii, 3, 131.18–25. For more on the Pact, Ch. 18.1.

127 The text is imprecisely formulated, but it must refer to kidnapped individuals from Frankish territory, since the treaty foresees that the Venetian authorities might decide not to hand over the traders; in that case, the Venetian official of the place

where the kidnapped individuals were being sought (*requiruntur*), would swear an oath, along with five oath-helpers chosen by the Franks, that the kidnapped individuals (*captivi*) had not been delivered to that place. *Ibid.*, 4, 131.26–30.

128 *Ibid.*, 33, 135.22–25.

No such thing happened. Around 876, the doges discovered that some Venetians were buying slaves from "pirates and bandits" and transporting them across the sea ("transfrectantes"). They decided to forbid slave-trading ("ne quis de mancipiis commercium faciant"). It is unclear whether this prohibition was meant to be general, or limited to the victims of piracy. Whatever the intent, it was short-lived.¹²⁹ A tenth-century doge looked back on the decree as corrupt, an abject failure.¹³⁰ In fact, only a few years after 876, the Venetians would water down even more their promises not to trade in Carolingian subjects.

In 880, they negotiated a renewal of the treaty with Charles III. The agreement not to deal in Christian slaves from the Carolingian empire was repeated word for word, with one significant change. This time the Venetians promised not to buy, sell, or ship knowingly Christians from Charles III's power or kingdom, so long as they were free persons ("qui liberi sunt"). They repeated the earlier promise not to transport any Christian into pagan power. But the new limitation of the main clause to free Christians is striking. The extraordinary profits implied by Table 25.1 perhaps helped erode Frankish resolve to protect all their subjects from the block.¹³¹

We may well suspect that these provisions were honored mainly in the breach. When influential individuals' interests were at stake, they allowed the Franks recourse. But it is less than likely that they were scrupulously observed. In fact, when the treaty was again renewed, eight years later, another small change shows that the ban on castrations had been ineffective. The new treaty strengthens the wording which implies that the penalty of castration for castrators would not be retroactive ("ab hoc die inantea").¹³²

Regardless of how well the Venetians observed these treaties, they had no bearing on the Slavlands beyond the Frankish ban. Whether Methodius' cathedral was in modern-day Moravia, or to the southeast, closer to Sirmium, the tragic end of that mission has preserved for us a key witness to the Venetian slave trade, shortly after the 880 treaty. That witness proves that the Venetians paid little more than lip service to the ban on the enslavement of Christians; indeed, money was to be made on the sale of consecrated men, priests and deacons.

In 885, Methodius left behind a large group of disciples at various stages of ecclesiastical advancement. But the political clouds had already been gathering,

129 Andreas Dandolo, *Chronica*, 8, 5, p. 116.

The report is lacking in the *Chronicon Venetum*.

130 Decretum of 960, *Venedig*, no. 13, here p. 19: "Sed de grauitate maligni et inuidi hostis ista constitutio corrupte extitit et transgressa."

131 MGH *Capit.* no. 233, 3, 2.139.1–7; c. 4, 139.8–12, verbatim repeat; c. 34 repeats the earlier engagement about castration: 141.17–19.

132 7 May 888, MGH *Capit.* no. 238, 3–4, 2.144.11–22, as in 880; c. 33 on eunuchs: 146.34–6.

and the atmosphere was palpably heavy when the saint died.¹³³ Methodius' adversaries soon struck his designated successor. Frankish troops descended on the 200 disciples in the cathedral school. The older men were without commercial value, so they were taken out into the wilderness and left to die.¹³⁴ The younger ones, on the other hand, could command a price. In this part of the world, what to do with them was obvious, as the tenth-century biographer of one of the disciples tells us.

And let it be known to all who esteem him, as we have written before, that the heretics tortured these men sorely, and the others – priests and deacons – they sold to Jews at a price. And the Jews took them and led them to Venice, and sold them in accordance with Divine Providence. Then came the emperor's man [сръ mouжь: i.e. a *basilikos anthrōpos*?] from Constantinople to Venice on the emperor's business. And when he heard of the men, he bought some of them, and others he took also, and led them to Constantinople, and told the emperor Basil of them.¹³⁵

The only unusual thing about this event was the slaves' social status. This is why, of the many men and women who were driven over those mountain routes to Venice, the details of their story alone were written down. It reveals to us one of the networks operating in central Europe that supplied the slave market at Venice, and puts the provisions of the Frankish treaties with Venice in their true perspective. Were it not for the personal intervention of a Byzantine emissary – Methodius and some of these disciples had been the emperor's guests at Constantinople just three or four years before – all of the young churchmen would have been sold and shipped. As it is, the Old Church Slavonic text implies that only some of them were purchased by the Byzantine envoy; the fact that a high official had to buy priests shows how scrupulously the Venetians observed injunctions against selling Christians.

The specific case deepens the normative evidence of the treaties, and fills in the shadowy reality of the suppliers of the Venetian emporium. Moreover, the fate of

133 Dvornik 1970, 185–93.

134 Theophylact of Ohrid, *V. Clementis* (BHG 355), 34, 110.10–18, gives the number and observes the treatment of the disciples according to their ages. *Ibid.*, 41, 114.32, identifies the warriors as Nemitzoi (from the Slavic word for Germans); *First Life of Naum*, p. 181 says *eretici*.

135 *First Life of Naum*, p. 181; translation adapted from that of Kusseff 1950, 143–4. The first part of this passage of Theophylact's *V. Clementis*, 34, 110.12–14 (“Whoever of the deacons and priests were younger, the men of the inheritance

of Judas and deserving of strangling sold to the Jews”) closely parallels the first Old Church Slavonic *Life of Naum*, p. 182, and clearly describes the same event. The Slavonic text avoids the miraculous interlude of the Greek version and gives a clearer explanation of what happened to the “priests and deacons” when the slave traders took them to Venice. Although the *Life of Naum* refers only to Naum by name, at this point it is clear that the text is describing what happened to the whole group of, apparently, c. 200 slaves.

the Methodian youths yields a final, precious clue for our broader inquiry. For it proves what the normative sources suggest. If the Methodian cathedral and mission were situated in its traditional location, somewhere in modern Moravia, along the Morava river, then the most direct route to Venice ran along a path already known to us: the Amber Trail across the Danube, through the eastern Alps, toward Venice. Whether or not Austrian place names add another set of tracks to this trail is unclear to me.¹³⁶ But whatever the final judgement on the toponymic testimony, there is no denying that of the *Life of Naum*. The Old Church Slavonic *Life* actually shows the merchants taking slaves from central Europe to Venice.

If, as some now contend, the headquarters of the mission lay in the vicinity of Sirmium, the final stages of the route would still have overlapped with the Amber route. The *Life of Naum* answers the question raised by the Arab and Byzantine coins scattered along the ancient Amber Trail and its branches: they were

136 A widely held scholarly opinion argues from the later medieval testimony of place names that a number of sites formerly (or still) named “Judendorf,” “Judenhof,” or the like (“village” or “farmstead of Jews”) preserve memories of early medieval Jewish traders. No Jews, apparently, resided in some of them by the time they were first mentioned. The settlements cluster in the upper Alpine valleys of the Mur and the Drava–Drau rivers and the watershed between them. They seem to sketch a string of stations connecting the Danube basin with the Adriatic, and so have been interpreted as resting places of early medieval traders traveling between Italy and central Europe: Popelka 1935; cf. Verlinden 1955–77, 2: 122–3. For more recent discussion, see Neumann 1962 and, especially, Wadl 1992, 16, 18–21, and 241–2, as well as Hausner and Schuster 1989, 8, 571. Similarly named sites have turned up further north, although their chronology remains unelucidated. The places cluster along the eastern fringes of Frankish power, including near the Carolingian trading sites with the Slavs: Wenninger 1985, 204–7, with Karte 3. Tempting though the geography looks, thus far this theory comes up short to

judge from specialized Old High German toponymic studies. The late date of the evidence is not so troubling. Although the earliest mentions begin in the 12th C. for Lower Austria and Carinthia, that is when the written record often starts there. However, toponymists have concluded that in these regions place names ending in “dorf” are usually of 11th-C. date, notwithstanding the greater antiquity of similar endings in other areas; see in general Bach 1953–4, 2: 349–55, esp. 354; Wiesinger 1985, 354, notes nonetheless some earlier examples; Ernst 1989, 85. Names ending in “-hof” (not “-hofen”) are equally reckoned to be of relatively recent date: Ernst 1989, 44. The names cannot therefore go back to the 9th C., if the philologists are right. It is still conceivable that the names perpetuate in 11th-C. form earlier traditions about the spots, or that rarer, alternative forms paint a truer picture. It does seem a remarkable coincidence that when *Völkermarkt* first appears in the written sources (1105/26), it is called both “*Volchimercatus*” and “*Forum Iudeorum*,” Wadl 1992, 139; and that a dirham was discovered there (A41).

dropped or buried by travelers with intensive contacts with those two Mediterranean economies. The slave traders purchased their wares far inland, in exchange for goods which have yet to be identified. Directly or indirectly, they sold them to the "southern peoples" whose voracious appetite for northern slaves provided the first great impetus to the development of the European commercial economy.

The Venetians could not bring themselves to abandon so lucrative a trade, and subsequent renewals of the earlier privileges no longer speak of slaves.¹³⁷ Whether they had transited via Venice or some other way, the Carolingian princess of Tuscany had no difficulty finding forty Slav eunuchs and slave girls to send as a present to the caliph in 905–6.¹³⁸ Certainly the Venetian slave trade was still flourishing in 960, when the doge attempted once again to end it, or at least make it a ducal monopoly. The terms of the prohibition show that Jews and Byzantines were still deeply involved in this Venetian trade, although Istria and Dalmatia appear to have gained importance as sources of supply.¹³⁹

It is remarkable that the Venetian slave trade managed to survive the second half of the ninth century. For it faced increasingly stiff competition from the Arabs themselves. We have already seen that a real lull in Arab attacks set in around 750. Raids resumed around 800. Although they would lead to the long-term conquest and occupation of two of the great Mediterranean islands, even in those cases, the newly conquered lands would contribute to the acquisition of slaves. The raids of the ninth century in other words, added another, and important stream of supply to the networks that had sprung up in the eighth.

The first attacks came from Spain. They arose out of the constant warfare that attended the expansion of Carolingian power across the Pyrenees. Thus an Arab raid into Septimania in 793 produced a prodigious haul of slaves.¹⁴⁰ A few years later, Arab corsairs set out from Spain and captured sixty Greek monks on the monastic refuge of Pantelleria, barely 75 km from the Tunisian coast in the strait of Sicily. Charlemagne was able to redeem some of them and restore them to their home. That the Frankish emperor should become involved in so small and distant a raid underscores the novelty of the Muslim slave hunts: a few decades later an operation on this minute scale would scarcely have furrowed the royal eyebrows (R272). The early raids were hit-and-run operations aimed at collecting slaves. For instance, one attack on Corsica carried off all the inhabitants of a town

137 See *Praeceptum Widonis* (891), *MGH Capit.* no. 239, 2.147–8; *Praeceptum Rudolphi*, (924), *ibid.*, no. 240, 148–9; *Praeceptum Hugonis* (927), *ibid.*, no. 241, 150–1.

138 Above, 126.

139 *Decretum*, June 960, *Venedig*, no. 13, here pp. 20–1. Kretschmayr 1905, 1: 110–11,

takes the exemption clause ("excepto . . . pro causa palatii") as establishing a monopoly; cf. Hoffmann 1968.

140 Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 145–6, observes that the implied total of 225,000 slaves is impossible.

except the aged and infirm: the raiders left behind those without value on the slave market (R290). By 813, slave-gathering raids had become so regular that a count of the Spanish mark could foresee their movements and set an ambush for one, capturing eight Arab ships returning from Corsica; he liberated more than 500 captives manifestly destined for the markets of al Andalus (R318). The Spanish raids got attention from as far away as Rome. They reached a new sophistication by adding ransom to their operations, since Pope Paschal I redeemed captives from Spain. The same incident implies that the Africans were also entering the slave-collecting business.¹⁴¹

The African invasion of Sicily brought new system and scale to the slave hunting. This is clear, for instance, from the story of one of our travelers, Elias the Younger. The tasks were clearly divided. Some men were slave hunters: they tracked down the children and captured them. They then took them down to the beach, where they sold their prey to a slave merchant who awaited with a transport ship. The trader presumably could refuse any unsuitable captives. Once the ship was full – 220 slaves in Elias' case – it shoved off for Africa. The second time, no Byzantine warship rescued Elias, and the African Christian slave merchant sold him directly to a customer in Africa (above, p. 246).

Over and over again, the profile is the same. The Arab raiders were as eager to collect saleable men and women as to plunder treasure (e.g. R441–42; R451; R654). As the "industry" matured, it probably took on new characteristics aimed at maximizing profits and reducing costs. When the raiders established a relation of symbiosis with the societies on which they preyed, they expanded profits by entering the ransom business.¹⁴² All it took was regular relations with the prey society that allowed them to communicate with their prisoners' homes and to negotiate handsome payments for captives whose age made them worthless on the block, or who were worth more in ransom than their market value. Although the process is best attested for the Cretan Arabs, it surely functioned in similar fashion in the west, as Pope Paschal's ransoms suggest. One eastern text depicts with chilling detachment the standard procedure. Around 873, the raider Said attacked various Aegean islands with a fleet of some fifty-four ships, ranging as far north as Proconnesus. To evade Byzantine pursuit they moved quickly: everyone they captured was loaded into the ships, and sorted only when they reached a safe haven. At that point, the prisoners were separated into three groups. One group was imprisoned, surely because they convinced their captors they would be ransomed. Another group was earmarked for sale. The members of the third group were killed. The reason we know about this occasion is because a priest

141 R350, esp. "a transmarinis regionibus."

142 On ransoming of prisoners otherwise destined for slave markets in the

Ummayyad and early Abbasid periods, Khouri 1991.

bound for slaughter – he must have been too old to fetch a decent price on the market – talked the executioner out of it.¹⁴³

A second feature of the economic development of this Arab slave trade was the proliferation or expansion of local slave markets. When Elias was captured in the 830s, the market was improvised on the beach. As the slave-collecting industry expanded, it was clearly advantageous to develop permanent markets closer to the hunting grounds. From the local market, middlemen could convey the slaves across the Mediterranean to the great markets of Tunis, Tripoli, Alexandria, and Baghdad. And so we hear of slave markets at Palermo, Reggio di Calabria, and Naples and probably at Taranto.¹⁴⁴ The slave collecting showed no sign of abating as the ninth century turned into the tenth, and the Italian peasant or cleric snatched from his field or church and transported to Africa became a familiar figure.¹⁴⁵ Slaves, Muslim or “infidel,” became a typical cargo of Muslim ships hired in Sicily for the voyage to Africa.¹⁴⁶ Meanwhile, human wares continued to pack the beaches, and informal markets sprang up wherever the haul was rich. It is remarkable that northern European slave trading survived the powerful competition of this direct Arab slave collecting in southern Europe. But it would be surprising if that competition did not eat into northern European profits.

Reggio and Naples were of course Christian towns. The symbiosis of the slave hunters and the prey population went very far indeed. For Italian Christians were deeply involved in hunting down other Christians, a development not discouraged by the ethnic diversity of the southern Italian population. Thus the Beneventans had to extract from the Campanian sea cities the promise not to sell most Lombards across the sea (above, p. 748). The prohibition shows that by 836

143 Which could only be attributed to the miraculous intervention of his patron St. Nicholas: R627; *Laudatio Nicolai* (BHG 13522 etc.), 42–4, 171.11–173.19; date: *ibid.*, 2.295–6; cf. 293.

144 E.g., in 857/8, the Arabs conquered the “Iron Castle” of Sicily and sold its inhabitants in the slave market of Palermo: Amari 1930–9, 1: 462–3. Taranto: R577–9; Reggio and Naples: Ch. 21.2. Another such market may be implied by an enigmatic Hebrew poem preserved by the Cairo Genizah. Apparently composed by the southern Italian poet Rabbi Amitai of Oria or Rabbi Silano of Venosa, who flourished in the second half of the ninth century, it describes the arrival of ships loaded with young male and female slaves: ed. and trans. Z. Malachi, “A

Hebrew Poem from Italy on the Slave Trade,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972). 288–9. I am grateful to Ms. Deborah Tor for bringing this remarkable document to my attention.

145 See e.g., *V. Eliae iun.*, 55, 84.1134–86.1160; 57, 88.1186–90.1220; 65, 102.1403–104.1422. Later slave gathering expeditions: e.g., R671 (the victorious Byzantines sold Taranto’s whole population into slavery); R746; R793; R801. In 925, the Arabs captured the Jewish scholar Donnolo, aged twelve, at Oria; his family was sold in Sicily and Africa while he escaped in Taranto: R804.

146 In the early 10th C.: Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn Yūsuf, *Book of Chartering Ships*, tr. Christides 1993, p. 92, cf. p. 87; see also Cahen 1988.

not only Muslim and Christian Africans, but also Campanian Christians had entered into the lucrative circuits which sold other Italians into slavery. They stayed there, to judge by the Roman threat to sell the pope’s opponents to the Saracens at Naples (Ch. 21.2). Nor were the Italo-Byzantines absent from the trade. They were, says Erchempert, pseudo-Christian beasts, who hunted for Christian slaves or bought them from the Arab hunters roving across the Italian countryside and then kept them for themselves or “stuffed the beaches” with their human wares.¹⁴⁷ Places like Naples welcomed Arab corsairs and the slaves they had captured.¹⁴⁸ Christians not only sold slaves to the Muslims: they bought them, as Erchempert states and a lawsuit proves. The case opposed the bishop of Gaeta to a cleric and a layman. The latter two had bought two Italian peasants and their wives from the Arabs and then freed them in return for their land. The bishop fought against this extortion but, in the end, he was forced to accept it.¹⁴⁹ Nor was this only a trait of southern Italians. The Venetians had no qualms about selling Slav ecclesiastics, and the doge’s decree of c. 876 could mean they participated in the new markets created by the Arab raids.¹⁵⁰ In the end, allegiances were made to money, not faiths or ethnic groups. By 873, things had reached such a state that the pope attempted to cajole the Christian rulers of Sardinia into not buying – and probably reselling – “liberated” Christian captives from the Christian Byzantines (R625). As we have seen, the role of Jewish merchants in the slave trade of many regions of Europe is also clearly documented in the Latin, Old Slavonic, and Arabic records; an enigmatic Gaonic responsum from the ninth century may preserve a subtle allusion to such trading. Volume is what looks striking about Venetian and Arab merchants’ shipping of slaves; geographic range is what impresses about the Jewish traders.¹⁵¹

147 Erchempert, *Historia Lang. Ben.*, 81, 264.23–31, explaining a Byzantine defeat. His uncertain Latin requires translation: “But the Greeks, just as they resemble them by their habits, so mentally are they the same as animals, being Christians in name but, in conduct, sadder than Saracens. That is, they both hunted all sorts of the faithful on their own, and they bought them from the Arabs; some they put up for sale, stuffing the beaches of the sea, and (vera = vero?) others they kept as male and female slaves.” “Achivi autem, ut habitudinis [!] similes sunt, ita animo aequales sunt bestiis, vocabulo christiani, set moribus tristiores Agarenis. Hii videlicet et per se fidelium omnes predabant et Saracenis emebant, et ex his alios venales

oceanii litora farciebant, alios vera in famulos et famulas reservabant.”

148 Naples: R514; and Ch. 21.2.

149 Gaeta, 1, no. 13 (October 867).

150 Above, 1129; it might also refer to the Slav pirates that lurked along the Adriatic coast.

151 As Prof. Robert Brody kindly informs me, most references to slavery in Carolingian-era responsa are banal in that they refer to domestic slaves working in a Jewish household. However, he observes that the Commentary on the Tractate of Yebamot, no. 267, p. 116, could refer to the problems arising out of the sale of slaves to non-Jews, and might reflect awareness of a business involving such sales. I am also grateful to Deborah Tor for her help in citing this passage.

The demand was great, the money good, and the doing easy. Although sporadic kidnappings were probably a small proportion of all slave sales, they are the ones that caught the public eye. We have already seen Agobard's report of kidnappings at Lyons and Arles whose victims were taken to Cordova. The story of the court cleric Bodo, who under pretext of pilgrimage to Rome, converted to Judaism and sold his fellow travelers into slavery was a sensational variation on an established theme.¹⁵² It was only natural that Roman fiction depict an African sea captain scheming to sell his passenger into slavery (above, p. 244). There is no reason to think that these activities were limited to Italo-Byzantines or court clergymen. The old monk who deceived Blaise of Amorion into traveling to Bulgaria with him must have turned a handsome profit from the sale of the well-born boy (Ch. 7.3). And it could have been little different inside Carolingian Europe. Whether or not the specifics of the kidnapping cases alleged by Agobard were true, his accusations suggest that the international slave trade sometimes swept up locals in its currents. Agobard in fact claimed that his investigation had turned up witnesses that the slave trader in question had bought Christian slaves in Lyons.¹⁵³ The penitential composed by another one of our travelers foresees a standard penalty for any Christian who sold another into pagan slavery. And that was before the Northmen took up residence on Frankish soil and did unto the Franks as the Franks had done unto so many others. Small wonder that Carolingian bishops visiting their dioceses routinely asked about sales of Christians to pagans and Jews (above, n79).

Even as these considerations shed a new and chilling light on the economics of the Viking and Arab raids – and allow us to surmise what was going on among the silent peoples of the Slavlands – they have another important point to make. They could not have existed without a broader, developed infrastructure for the transport and sale of slaves beyond the frontiers. Which raises the final, most difficult question for us, that of the scale of this slave trading.

We have no consistently reliable figures which allow us to assess the number of exported slaves and, over time, estimate the trend. What I know is laid out in Table 25.2. Some of the numbers are manifestly impossible – the 9,000 slaves packed into six ships according to Bernard. A few numbers look more reliable, and they are big – the 900 slaves freed in southeastern Europe by Constantine and Methodius, the sixty-three slaves per ship liberated by a Frankish count in 813, the 221 delivered by a Byzantine patrol, the 200 seminarians at Methodius' mission, or the third of the Saxon nation whom Charlemagne enslaved on one campaign. They speak of a trade which dealt in substantial, even very large, quantities of slaves.

152 Ann. Bert., a. 838, pp. 27–8.

153 Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 195.149–59.

TABLE 25.2
Movements of large numbers of slaves, 700–900

Quantity	Date	Circumstances	Movement number
<i>60–3,000 slaves</i>			
500	715–31	Lombards captured at Cuma taken to Naples; presumably for sale	1
1,000	788	Byzantine soldiers captured by Beneventans and Franks; presumably sold	2
60	806	Byzantine monks enslaved on Pantelleria redeemed in Spain by Charlemagne	3
over 500	813	captive Corsicans intercepted at Majorca en route to Spain	4
221	835	Italo-Byzantine captives liberated by Byzantine navy en route to Africa	5
900	867	liberated by Constantine and Methodius in Moravia and Pannonia	6
200?	c. 885	St. Methodius' disciples enslaved in Moravia and transported to Venice for sale	7
1,000	886	given by Danelis to Basil I, who sends them to southern Italy as colonists	8
3,000	after 886?	Leo VI later used 3,000 more of Danelis' slaves to repopulate strategic points	9
<i>More than 3,000 slaves</i>			
30,000	714	taken from Visigothic Spain to Syria	10
45,000×5	793	Arab raid into Septimania	11
a third of the Saxons	796	taken away by Charlemagne as <i>captivi</i>	12
9,000	867	captured in Italy and sent from Taranto to Africa, Tripoli, and Egypt aboard 6 ships	13

Sources: 1. *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.400.20–1; see Ch. 21n45. 2. R220. 3. R272. 4. R318. 5. R431. 6. Above, n63. 7. Above, n140. 8. McCormick 1998b, 35n36. 9. Theoph. Cont. 5, 77, 321.3–6. 10. R87. 11. Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 145–6. 12. Above, n74. 13. R577–9.

But the main evidence is qualitative. A first indication comes from the number of our travelers who, incidentally, were enslaved in the course of their lives. Individuals like Elias the Younger, Blaise, the captain of Blaise's ship, and Leontius the pseudo-ambassador, all happen to have become slaves.

The scale of slave dealing was important enough to figure prominently in the treaties between sea traders and continental powers. The Lombards and Franks may have been only partly successful in protecting their subjects from joining the slave cargoes of Venetians and Campanians. Notwithstanding the alacrity with which some Christians sold their fellows across the sea, slave trading was important enough to alarm influential churchmen. The protests of Agobard and Amulo of Lyons might be dismissed as fueled by their anti-semitic agendas, for this they certainly were, and the Christian slave traders who competed with the Jews did not enter their sights. But the public protest of the Council of Meaux is another matter. Not only do these bishops condemn in blanket terms all West Frankish slave dealers ("huius regni"), explicitly including Christians and Jews, but they voice a concern which is striking in terms of the issue of scale. They viewed the export of slaves as a strategic threat to the Frankish kingdom: the numbers were great enough that they might affect the Franks' military competition with the Muslims. A monk at Monte Cassino voiced a like concern a generation later (above n38). The prelates assembled at Meaux could imagine no better solution to the problem than to require that the slave merchants sell their wares inside the Frankish kingdom. This of course would have throttled the trade, for it would have deprived it of the profits generated by the greater value of slaves in the Islamic world.

The level of organizational specialization remains unclear, outside some revealing anecdotes from the Arab slave-gathering expeditions in southern Italy, where specialized hunters worked with the traders. The case of Methodius' disciples indicates that the Jewish and Slav slave traders of central Europe – equally attested in the Raffelstetten Plea – bought from local suppliers and sold to the Venetians. The Venetian pacts with the Franks confirm that their suppliers were not Venetians, or at least did not own real estate in Venice. The Venetians therefore were chiefly middlemen, who specialized in the delivery of these slaves to the southern and eastern Mediterranean markets where they were in such demand. If we may believe Ibn Khurradadhbih, other Jewish merchants kept the entire circuit in their own hands, sailing with their wares from a port which was probably Venice. The fact that these merchants had caught the attention of the head of a caliphal bureaucracy that oversaw communications reinforces the impression that their operations attained an important volume. A further indication of scale comes from the fact that we hear of at least six slave merchants closely connected with Louis the Pious over a few years.¹⁵⁴ One could continue in this vein, but the

¹⁵⁴ *Form. imp.*, 30–1 and 52, 309.4, 310.7–8 and 325.8.

point should be clear. Small wonder that when a Greek priest of Alexandria looked up and saw a Venetian gangplank, he thought of slavery. The fact that we owe the picture to a Venetian only reinforces its value.¹⁵⁵

The export of Europeans to the richer economies of the south was as old as the hills. It was going on at the closing of antiquity, and it continued without interruption through the dark years of the seventh century. But so far as we can tell, the scale of this trade was no larger than the small quantities of eastern goods that arrived aboard the same ships which must have left with human freight. If historians are correct in thinking that the mid-eighth-century *Life of Eligius* is referring to Marseilles when it describes that saint liberating boatloads of slaves, we can get some general idea of the numbers. "He redeemed from slavery up to twenty, thirty and even fifty at a time; once in a while he freed all together a whole column, up to a hundred, as soon as they got out of the ship, of both sexes, from different peoples, that is Romans, Gauls, Britons, and Moors, but especially from the tribe of the Saxons, who like some flock driven from their own homes, in those times were being sold abundantly to different places."¹⁵⁶ "Twenty, thirty, even fifty or a hundred" evokes a scale of operations smaller than the 900 slaves freed by Constantine and Methodius, the 200 enslaved seminarians, or the 220 slaves with whom Elias traveled. Whether these quantities came from Eligius' lost, seventh-century *Life*, or were invented by the early Carolingian author, they give some idea of the scale of the trade between 650 and 750. It was smaller than in the ninth century.



Around 750, the Caliphate suffered a shortfall of labor because of the bubonic plague. Into the breach stepped the Venetians, and next to them also the Byzantine slavers, cruising the coast of Italy and loading Lombards for sale

¹⁵⁵ *Tr. S. Marci* (BHL 5283–4), pp. 253–4: "Sin autem vobiscum in navem ascenderemus, duceremur utique tamquam captivi ad terram quam ignoramus."

¹⁵⁶ "... interdum etiam usque ad viginti et triginta seu et quinquaginta numero simul a captivitate redimebat; nonnumquam vero agmen integrum et usque centum animas, cum navem egredierentur, utriusque sexus, ex diversis gentibus venientes, pariter liberabat, Romanorum scilicet, Gallorum atque Brittanorum necnon et Maurorum, sed praecipuae ex genere Saxonorum, qui abunde eo tempore veluti greges a sedibus propriis evulsi in diversa distrahebantur." *V. Eligii*,

1, 10, 677.6–12. That this concerned specifically Marseilles was argued by Krusch and accepted by Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 668. This appears uncertain to me: the text rather appears incoherent, for it is difficult to imagine how Anglo-Saxons (if that, and not the continental Saxons, are who the 8th-C. author means) and Moors would be arriving from the same place; nor can we imagine that Britons and Anglo-Saxons were imported into Marseilles by ship, so that we would have to assume that the vessels were river boats coming down the Rhône. It seems to me rather that the author had no particular place in mind for Eligius' good works.

across the sea. The last five decades of the eighth century were also the era when the Carolingian conquests could well have flooded the market, both directly, through the capture of large numbers of war slaves, and indirectly, through the disruption of food production. As the slaves flowed out in these final decades of the eighth century, Arab coins, eastern silks, new Arab drugs, and old eastern spices surged into Italy. The slave trade fueled the expansion of commerce between Europe and the Muslim world.

As the Carolingian conquests subsided, and civil war increased, the supply of war slaves probably slackened. Ultimately, the Venetian, Byzantine, and other supply networks simply could not keep up with demand from the south. But even more important, the Frankish empire itself began to feed the voracious system from which it had profited. In the north, it was easier for Vikings to capture Franks, Anglo-Saxons, and Irish, directly and for free, than to pay Franks or Frisians for them.¹⁵⁷ In the south, it was easier for merchants from the Muslim world to purchase their wares on the beaches of Italy, where Italian and Arab hunters were tracking them down locally, in small-scale hunts or in large-scale raids. In an extraordinary irony of history, the European empire which had once profited by supplying slaves from its subjects and neighbors became itself a leading source of supply. Still the demand was insatiable. Next to the southern raiders and their Italian allies, Venetians and Radhanites continued hard at work, developing the traditional supply sources in central Europe in the middle and second half of the ninth century. Central Europe became increasingly integrated into the communications network of western Europe, as some coins, swords, and other goods flowed into it, even as human wealth poured out. The trend of Venetian treaties indicates increasing latitude for slave sales, not decreasing. The turn of the century brought no changes in the substance of the trade.

Amidst the hostilities, some Europeans made money. The human capital continued to flow out of Europe, and the wealth of the more developed world continued to flow in, enriching two tiny corners of the developing European economy, even if direct Arab competition began to cut into their profits from the 810s or 820s. In the Veneto and, as the ninth century turned into the tenth, along the Campanian coast Arab gold and silver allowed more investment in ships, in goods, in churches, and in people. The European commercial economy in the Mediterranean was born precisely in the dynamic centers of the slave trade with the Arab world, in Naples and Amalfi, and in Venice. It would be another generation or two before that economy would begin to retreat from the horrible trade out of which it sprang. And even that retreat would be partial, not permanent.

157 On Viking-Irish slave trading, see Holm 1986, which I owe to the kindness of Dorothy Africa.

This the flourishing slave trade of the later Middle Ages indicates, along with its last medieval prolongation, when it was carried to the western coast of Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹⁵⁸ Once again, the roots of modern Europe – and its daughters – reach deep into the soil of the Middle Ages.

158 Verlinden 1955–77, I: 358–62 observes the growing proportion of black African

slaves in the 14th and 15th C.; cf. I: 835–46; cf. Curtin 1908, 3–10 and 17–45.