

## **Trade in the Ancient Near East: Lagaš, Ur, Larsa, Mari**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Whether trading for the palace, temple, other merchants, or on one's own account, Mesopotamian merchants traveled to distant cities in search of profitable dealings. Sumerian Lagaš, Ur, and Larsa, and Akkadian Mari merchants transported goods by donkey caravan, river boat, and sea-going ship. They reached Tilmun in the Persian Gulf, Magan in present day Oman, Meluhḫa in the Indus Valley, Emar, Ebla, and Aleppo far to the north, Ešnunna and Ugarit on the Mediterranean Sea, and Elam in the east. Damkara imported and exported building materials, precious stones, edible oils, ivory, tin, large quantities of copper, woolen garments and cloth, barley, and other grains. Palaces acquired food for their citizens and copper and tin to manufacture tools and weapons of war. Temples obtained the goods needed to conduct both sacred rites and secular commercial operations. Merchants grew wealthy and influential. Kings made war on each other, and they and their city-states rose and eventually declined. But without extensive trading activities a king's success and the success of his city-state would have been unlikely.

Keywords: Trade in the ANE, ANE Traders, Damkara, Lagaš, Ur, Larsa, Mari

## INTRODUCTION

“As soon as people need more than they themselves, their family, or their community can provide, they go in search of the articles they need and aim to acquire them by the exchange of articles of equal value. From this moment trade is born.” (Leemans, 1960, p. 1)

Ancient Mesopotamia began at the Persian/Arabian Gulf and extended north and west to include the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, the tributaries flowing into the two rivers, and the river valleys. The Fertile Crescent included Mesopotamia, took in the territory west to the Mediterranean Sea coast and then South into Egypt. For maps see Schomp (2004, p. 9). It encompassed all or part of the modern countries of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Egypt. It is commonly referred to as the Ancient Near East (ANE) (Kuhrt, 1995, p.1; Snell, 1997, p. ix).

Farming developed in the northern foothills of the Fertile Crescent by 9,000 BCE. By 5500 BCE people had migrated south and established settlements in Southern Mesopotamia. By the fourth millennium two cultures flourished near the Persian Gulf: Sumer on the gulf and Akkad to the north (Snell, 1997, pp. 11-14; Schomp, 2004, pp. 6-7).

Soil deposited by the Euphrates and Tigris rivers as they flowed south from northern and eastern mountains into the gulf gave Sumer an alluvial topography. Sumerian farmers developed irrigation systems to water their fields. A checkerboard comprised of irrigated, cultivated land and desert used for sheep grazing resulted. The northern terrain of Akkad consisted of broken limestone interspersed with shallow valleys and low hills. The rolling hills meant irrigation was not feasible so farmers depended upon rainfall to water their crops. Cultivation spread into the desert on a line of the diminishing rainfall contour (Postgate, 1994, pp. 14, 18).

Desert stretched west from Sumer and Akkad; to the east rose the Zagros Mountains. Land between the two areas remained uncultivated; it received little rain and irrigation was out of reach. Travel between them was limited to two or three routes that offered ease of traverse and water for livestock. Isolated from one another the citizens of Sumer and Akkad initially had little contact. But though they had their own political, military, language, and cultural traditions they shared a lifestyle based upon farming and the raising of sheep and goats (Postgate, 1994, p. 18). Within each, city-states developed including Lagaš, Ur and Larsa in Sumer and Mari and Babylon in Akkad.

As their populations increased, cities needed goods they neither grew nor manufactured. The south lacked trees for lumber and stones for building. Northern cities needed agricultural products such as manufactured woolen cloth, barley, and oil. Thus from the earliest times of civilization trade went on between cities in the north and south and beyond. By the early third millennium traders traveled in long distance commerce between city-states. Ancient traders bought, sold, transported, and stored goods. Their risks included physical harm, changing consumer wants, and disruptions from war between cities. They developed financing schemes and performed informal customer research. Kings recognized that these trading activities provided necessary goods to their subjects and supported the evolving merchant class (Leemans, 1968, p. 179; Postgate, 1977, pp. 10, 14, 72-75).

This paper describes trade and traders in Sumerian Lagaš, Ur, and Larsa and Akkadian Mari during the third and second millenniums. A review of trade in ancient Mesopotamian Sumer and Akkad may provide insights for 21<sup>st</sup> century marketers. After all, the economic structures that exist today also existed in prototype forms several thousand years ago (Moore and Lewis, 1999, p. 17).

Three issues limit our discussion. First, evidence of ancient trade comes from the unearthed remains of early dwellings and burial sites, carved stone stele commissioned by ancient kings, and Cuneiform writing on clay tablets. Thousands of unearthed tablets contain inventories, promissory notes, deeds of sales, wills, marriage contracts, court decisions, and literary works (Kramer, 1963, pp. 21-24). However, these sources represent only specific periods of time and describe only some events. Other times and events may differ (Lambert, 1977, p. i). An exhaustive treatment of trade is therefore not possible. See Kuhrt (1995, pp. 7-12) for an extended explanation.

Second, scholars have translated many of the no longer extant languages found on clay tablets into English, German, French, Italian, and several others. But difficulties arise in translation because the idioms in the ancient languages may not have precise expressions in the modern languages (Leemans, 1960, pp. 1-2 notes). Moreover the material used here draws upon both English translations of the tablets and of English translations of these other modern language translations of the ancient languages. Leemans provides a discussion of issues involved in translating from translations (1968, pp. 171, 189-191).

Third, archeologists have dated events in the ANE using ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian and Sumerian king lists. For examples, see Kramer (1963, pp. 328-331). While these documents record the succession of kings and the lengths of their reigns they create only relative chronologies. They tell us that Rīm-Sîn I ruled for 60 years, but they don't give us the actual years according to our modern dating system. Scientists have also turned to new technology to date artifacts such as high-precision accelerator mass spectrometry radiocarbon dating (Renfrew and Bahn, 2010, pp. 120-126). But assigning specific dates remains problematic. This paper uses those dates provided by the sources, some of which follow *The Cambridge Ancient History* (Postgate, 1994, p. 39). See Huehnergard (1995, pp. 2117-2119) for Semitic languages and their dates, Lemche (1995, pp. 1202, 1210-1212) for lists of rulers and their dates in ancient Syria and Palestine, and Bertman (2003, pp. 54-59) for historical dates. Because all the dates cited are approximate, circa is used sparingly. And since all the dates are Before the Common Era, BCE is omitted.

## LAGAŠ

In the late third millennium Sumerians established Lagaš northwest of the junction of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Thousands of clay tile records excavated at Lagaš provide evidence from the reign of Ur-Nanše (ca. 2550). The cuneiform writing state that traders imported precious stones, wood, gold, ivory, dates, onions, and copper from Tilmun (Kramer, 1963, pp. 53, 283). Records from the early twenty-fourth century also mentioned kings Lubalanda (ca. 2390) and UruKagina (ca. 2380) whose merchants imported copper through Tilmun in exchange for wool, silver, fat, milk, and cereal products (Potts, 1995, p. 1453).

Tilmun, also spelled Dilmun and Telmun, likely referred to an island in the Persian/Arabian Gulf off the coast of modern Saudi Arabia, today's Bahrain. Note that Tilmun produced neither copper nor wood but imported them from Magan and Meluḥḥa and then sent them north. The probable location of Magan was the Arabian Peninsula in modern Oman. Meluḥḥa, also spelled Melukkha, likely referred to the Indus Valley. Meluḥḥa also imported and sent on ivory and precious woods (Leemans, 1960, pp. 9, 33-34). Indeed, so close was the relationship between traders of Tilmun and Meluḥḥa that Tilmun used the same system of

weights and measures as that found in the Indus Valley (Muhly, 1995, p. 1506). See Potts for a discussion of Tilmun, Magan, and Meluḥḥa locations (1995, pp. 1453-1458).

For several hundred years Lagaš kings battled neighboring city-states over territory. As rulers redirected resources to warfare its temples and public buildings fell into disrepair. Gudea (2141-2122), one of a number of city-state rulers competing for power in the area, swept down from the Zagros hills and conquered the city. Rather than destroy it, he repaired the Lagaš temples and public structures (Roux, 1992, p. 166; Charpin, 1995, p. 811). To secure needed building materials Lagaš traders imported cedars and boxwood from Amanus, stones from the mountains of Amurru, (west of the Euphrates), copper and gold from Meluḥḥa, and diorite from Magan (Leemans, 1960, p. 11-12). But battles continued and the city subsequently fell to the king of Ur, Ur-Nammu (2112-2095).

## UR

Ur-Nammu first conquered Ur, then Lagaš, then went on to overcome other nearby towns and cities. He established the Ur III Dynasty with Ur as the capital of Sumer and Akkad. He dug new irrigation canals and dredged old ones to boost the land's productivity. He encouraged Ur traders to export the agricultural products grown by the region's farmers (Bertman, 2003, p.109). Ur, on the banks of the Euphrates, became the port for the trade because then the gulf waters likely extended further inland than now (Kuhrt, 1995, p. 19). For the next 100 years Ur III kings continued to subjugate and improve territories in southern and middle Mesopotamia. In the process they created an unprecedented degree of economic centralization which required these conquered provinces to remit taxes to the Ur III state, often assessed and paid in the form of cattle (Postgate, 1994, pp. 41-42; Yoffee, 1995, p. 1395).

However grain, usually barley, served as the medium of exchange during the fourth to second millenniums. Besides taxes, people used grain for buying and selling most everything. They loaned it at interest and exchanged it for other commodities. But commodities were often priced in silver as well to facilitate commercial record-keeping. Silver was also used by merchants as a unit of accounting and as a medium of exchange and by individuals to purchase household goods and commodities. Traders, in their role as money-lender, made loans in silver. Often traders maintained silver on deposit with merchants in the cities where they bought and sold goods (Foster, 1977, pp. 35-36). Note that governments had not yet minted coins. Instead individuals kept small silver ingots and wore spiral coils on their arms. The silver coils were easily broken up into precise weights and used for payment (Postgate, 1994, p. 203).

Ur merchants sailed back and forth to trade with Tilmun. They imported copper from Magan and sissoo-wood and ivory from Tilmun (Leemans, 1968, pp. 215-217). And Tilmunite traders loaded ships and sailed to Ur with their goods (Leemans, 1960, p. 31). An Ur text describes Ea-nāšir, a trader who lived and worked on Tilmun during the reign of Rīm-Sîn I (1822-1763). He imported copper on a wholesale basis. He was a "big businessman" in copper," an *alik Tilmun* in the Akkadian language—one who went to Tilmun. In one deal he paid for the copper with textiles and silver he received from the Nanna-Ningal temple in Ur. In another he had a large order from King Rīm-Sîn. Ea-nāšir shipped large quantities of copper from Tilmun to the palace. One delivery weighed 18,000 kilograms (slightly more than 39,683 lbs.). And the tablets recorded yet another deal where Ea-nāšir bought copper for the king's account and for private merchants Nannî and Arbituram. The merchants gave Ea-nāšir trading capital, most likely silver, textiles, clothing, aromatics, and oils, to buy copper in Tilmun for

them. Several other dealers also gave Ea-nāšir trading capital for the purchase of copper on their accounts. Ea-nāšir bought a large quantity of copper in Tilmun, loaded it on ships, but sent all of it to the king's palace at Ur. The dealers in Ur who were waiting for their copper were unhappy that their orders had not been delivered. But Ea-nāšir's dealings with the palace were much larger than those with private merchants. His smaller business with the private accounts probably seemed less important and he neglected them. The private traders sent a number of urgent messages that informed Ea-nāšir of their great displeasure (Leemans, 1960, pp. 48-56).

Evidence of Ur merchants' wide-ranging commercial activities comes from cylinder seals carved with impressions that identified the owner. Ur artisans created these cylinder seals from bronze, bone, and lapis lazuli stone imported from the east. They "... are of a specific Mesopotamian type common in the major Iraqi port of Ur (Lawler, 2011, p. 31)." To close and secure a storage room or to indicate that the contents of a jar were intact a merchant applied a dollop of wet clay to a door or jar top then rolled his seal over it. These seals have been found as far away as Susa, the Elamite city east of Ur in what is now southeastern Iran. See Postgate, (1977, pp. 26-32) and Pittman (1995, pp. 1509-1603) for extended discussions of cylinder seals.

## DAMKARA

Cuneiform documents identify the damkara as traders of goods. While the damkara carried on some local trade in, for example, fish most was with other towns and city-states. Ur-Enki, a damkarum, bought 234 minas (a unit of weight) of copper-alloy from traders in Tilmun. The Tilmun sellers likely acquired the copper in Meluḥḥa, loaded it on boats, and then sailed to Tilmun. Ur-Enki combined the copper with other goods and transported the lot to Lagaš, first by boat and then by donkey caravan. Damkara also bought and sold silver, wool, dates, barley, slaves, and many other items needed for daily living that local communities could not grow or manufacture (Leemans, 1950, pp. 40-41, 44-45).

A damkarum worked for the king, temple, and for himself. To oblige the king he bought or traded for food, clothing, jewelry, and whatever else the king and his family wanted. But apparently damkara did not work exclusively for the state. The king was an important customer and he provided protection at times. On the other hand traders served as a source of needed and desired goods for palace and populace which would otherwise be difficult for the government to obtain. And traders provided liquid capital when the palace needed to borrow it (Powell, 1977, p. 27).

Ur-gepar, son of Šuna, worked with the palace. In the eighth year of king Šu-Sîn (2030) of Ur he exported 70 kur of palace-owned barley and 10 talents of wool to Magan and Tilmun (Leemans, 1960, p. 22). The palace kept enough to feed its workers but used the excess over current needs to acquire imported goods including copper. Kings always desired quantities of tin and copper for they comprised the main ingredients of bronze. With bronze they manufactured tools such as hoes, axes, chisels, knives and saws and weapons including lance points, swords, daggers, and harpoons (Kramer, 1963, p. 103).

Damkara traded textiles manufactured by the temple. The Ur temple complex set up weaving facilities that employed thousands of female weavers: about six thousand women at nearby Girsu and thirteen thousand in and around Ur. Woolen clothing and cloth not needed for local use were exported in exchange for metals, precious stones, leather goods, sesame oil, barley, and other natural resources (Leemans, 1950, p. 43; Postgate, 1994, p. 218; Robertson, 1995, p. 447). For example a damkarum might purchase grain, deliver it to the temple to feed

slaves and workers, and take in trade woolen goods produced by temple workers. Records state that Lu-Enlilla, a damkarum, “. . . worked on behalf of the powerful Nanna-Ningal temple complex at Ur (Potts, 1995, p. 1456).” Lu-Enlilla received leather skins, finished woolen garments, and raw wool from the temple’s storehouse. He traded these for Magan copper, ochre, semi-precious stones, ivory, onions, and aromatics desired by the temple (Leemans, 1960, p. 21).

After expeditions to foreign places such as Tilmun, Ur damkara most always tithed to the goddess Ningal. A tithe was due the temple in thanks for a successful expedition. Unsuccessful missions required a contribution to insure that the next one would be successful. And whether the merchant was a citizen of Ur or of another city, a tithe was expected and given (Leemans, 1960, pp. 31-32).

The Elamites on the northeast border and Amorites on the northwest conducted military campaigns in Ur and by 2004 it lay in smoldering ruins. After the fall Isin and Larsa rose to ascendancy and fought with each other for control of the territory (Bertman, 2003, pp. 56-57). Larsa ultimately succeeded.

## LARSA

Larsa was a late third/early second millennium Sumerian city on the Euphrates north and east of Ur. King Rīm-Sîn I (1822-1763) made Larsa the capital city when he overpowered the kingdoms of Isin and Ur (1794/3) (Postgate, 1994, p. 39; Charpin, 1995, p. 815; Kuhrt, 1995, pp. 78-79).

Over the 60-year reign of Rīm-Sîn I the merchants of Larsa left behind extensive bookkeeping accounts on clay tablets. The tablets state that Larsa traders regularly imported tin from Assyrian dominated countries along the middle Tigris. Mined in Persia, donkey caravans and boats moved tin to an Assyrian city, transported it south to Ur, and then moved it on to Larsa (Leemans, 1968, pp. 201-210, 214-15). In the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of Rīm-Sîn I (1800) Itti-Sîn-milki, a trader, paid two shekels of silver to Ekursag-tabanni and Sîn-muballit for sesame oil. The place of the transaction was, presumably, Larsa but the residency of the traders is unknown. Recorded in the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of Rīm-Sîn I (1799) Itti-Sîn-milki paid 40 talents 40 minas of wool to Ahu-tābum, 34 talents to Šamaš-nahrari, the baker, and five talents 48 minas of wool to Ahušnu, the fatterer of animals, in return for unknown goods, most likely silver (Leemans, 1960, pp. 149-150). The same year one Qišti-Irra received, probably from a government treasury, a sum of money (silver). Some of the silver was spent on behalf of the temple of Nergal and its priests. Qišti-Irra provided rams, beer, aromatic plants, and fish for a temple festival (Leemans, 1954, pp. 92-93). In the 31<sup>st</sup> year of king Rīm-Sîn I (1791) government warehouses dispensed quantities of barley, flour, groats (the hulled grains of a cereal), dates, beer, wool, and foodstuffs. The palace likely acquired some of the food items for immediate use while others were offered as trade items (Leemans, 1954, pp. 44-47). In the 39<sup>th</sup> year of Rīm-Sîn I (1783) a merchant recorded purchases of salt and *bappiru*, used for the preservation of fish, from Ešnunna, some distance to the north on the Diyala River, a tributary of the Tigris. Note that Rīm-Sîn I did not rule Ešnunna. However, he had friendly economic relations with it and with Mari’s ruler, Šamši-Adad I (1809-1766), who also controlled Ešnunna (Leemans, 1954, pp. 80-83). By his 40<sup>th</sup> year of rule trade between Larsa and Ešnunna continued but private enterprise declined. The importance of Rim-Sin’s cities declined during the latter part of his rule and especially after the conquest by the Babylonian king Hammurabi (1792-1750) in 1763 and under the rule of the Babylon dynasty (Postgate, 1994, p. 39; Charpin, 1995, pp. 814-815; Bertman, 2003, p. 100).

## MARI

Mari was an Akkadian speaking city-state on the Euphrates in the northwestern part of Mesopotamia. It existed in one form or another from about 4000 to 1760. Over 25,000 cuneiform-inscribed clay tablets from the palace archives of the late third and early second millennium describe a palace point of view about life in the city (Kohlmeyer, 1985, p. 194).

Zimri-Lim (1792–1759) gained control as king of Mari. He governed a vast territory including around the Balikh and Harbur rivers to the north and east (Kohlmeyer, 1985, p. 194). His ascent relied upon the assistance of his father-in-law, Yarim-Lim, ruler of the kingdom of Halab/Yamhad, city of Aleppo (Postgate, 1994, p. 49; Kuhrt, 1995, p. 98). Aleppo—now in modern Syria—traded goods with Mari. It was northwest of Mari some 75 miles from the Mediterranean Sea (Leemans, 1960, p. 138). Other trading partners included Qatna, due west from Mari on the Orontes River and ruled by Amut-pi-El. To the south Rim-Sin and Hammurabi governed Larsa and Babylon respectively. To the southeast Ibal-pi-El reigned in Ešnunna and controlled the main route east. Note that relations with Yarim-Lim of Aleppo and Amut-pi-El of Qatna were especially important because they adjoined each other and shared borders with Mari (Kuhrt, 1995, pp. 99-101). A report sent to Zimri-Lim by one of his officials explains the politics of the time.

There is no king who is strong by himself: 10 or 15 kings follow Hammurabi of Babylon, as many follow Rīm-Sîn of Larsa, Ibalpiel of Eshnunna and Amutpiel of Qatna, while 20 kings follow Yarim-Lim of Yamhad. (Translated from Akkadian by Dossin, 1938, p. 117, and from French by Kuhrt, 1995, p. 99.)

The Mari government needed commodities to trade. It encouraged farmers to produce more than the local populations' needs. It built and maintained irrigation canals from the Euphrates to increase crop production. Local Mari merchants then traded excess produce with nomadic tribesmen who crossed the river valleys into Mari territory with their herds of sheep and goats. In the urban markets tribesmen offered cheese, leather, livestock, wool, woven fabrics, herbs, and truffles in exchange for agricultural produce and handiwork products from the urban city including wood, oils, wine, and semi-precious stones (Kohlmeyer, 1985, p. 194).

An important trade route ran from Mari west through the desert to Qatna. Mari controlled the eastern end and Qatna the western end of the route. Donkey caravans traveled due west from Mari to Tadmor following a chain of oases and then further west to Qatna. From Qatna trade routes ran south to Damascus and Byblos. Mari traders also shipped merchandise north on the Euphrates to Emar. From Emar donkey caravans carried the goods overland to Aleppo. Aleppo controlled trade routes west to, for example, Ugarit on the Mediterranean (Kuhrt, 1995, p. 100).

Ebla, to the northwest, relied on Mari for trade goods. Mari exported lapis lazuli to Ebla and imported wool, woolen and linen clothes, various woods, oil, fragrant resins, wine, grain, and river boats. Indeed, the northern reaches of the Euphrates were lined on both sides with cities dependent upon trade with Mari: Ebla, Carchemish, Emar, Abattum, Tuttul, and Halabit. To protect this trade Mari tightly controlled navigation on the Euphrates between it and these cities (Astour, 1995, p. 1406).

Being strategically located, Mari served as an entrepot in international trade. That is, merchandise came in to Mari, was reassembled into collections for the various markets, and then shipped out. For example, Mari traders imported tin from Elam in the east and then sent some of it further west to states such as Crete. The documents identify one Elamite trader, Kuyaya, as playing a major role in the tin trade. They also mention a Mari merchant, Ishkhi-Dagan, who bought tin ingots. The ingots weighed about ten pounds each. The price of the ingots varied depending on whether Mari was at war or peace with Elam. In time Mari became the main supplier of tin for points west (Muhly, 1995, p. 1509).

Mari also traded extensively with major cities in the south including Babylon and Larsa (Kuhrt, 1995, pp. 100-101). At one point its trading activities reached from Hazor in Palestine, to Crete and Cyprus, to Hattusas in Anatolia, to Elam far to the southeast, and to Tilmun on the Persian Gulf (Kohlmeyer, 1985, p. 195). Tilmun merchants, for example, traveled by sea to Ur and then overland by donkey caravan to Mari. Indeed, one text noted that Babylon delayed such a caravan in a dispute over a well (Potts, 1995, p. 1454).

The palace controlled trade routes and earned considerable income by extracting taxes from caravans and river traffic. It charged levies on transit trade and collected crossing dues, tolls, and boat taxes. As a result Mari became a wealthy city (Kohlmeyer, 1985, p. 195). And it exerted considerable political power between 2600 and 2300 and more so during the period from 1810 to 1760. The latter has been classified as the “Mari Age” (Kuhrt, 1995, p. 95).

Zimri-Lim built an impressive 250 room royal palace at Mari. Other kings wanted to see this showpiece for themselves. One, the King of Ugarit on the Mediterranean Sea, expressed in writing his wish to visit the palace (Kuhrt, 1995, p. 102). These kings did visit Mari and Zimri-Lim traveled to their cities. He once made a diplomatic expedition to Khalab and Ugarit on the Mediterranean with trade as one goal. Of course he traveled with an entourage, some of whom were armed. And his men made careful negotiations before the event with the kings of the states he crossed. He gave many gifts, including daughters for marriage to these kings, to pave the way (Postgate, 1994, p. 258).

However, not all industry was palace controlled. Landowners and merchants grew wealthy from producing and selling food crops and from trade (Kuhrt, 1995, pp. 102, 104). And those traders who received palace favors undoubtedly did quite well. At a time when iron was not known, the king favored traders who imported tin and copper, used to create bronze.

Due in part to extensive trading activities the relationship between Zimri-Lim and Hammurabi, king of Babylon, grew close. Indeed, Zimri-Lim felt close enough to Hammurabi to call him “brother.” However, “brother” Hammurabi sent an army in 1760 and captured Mari, looted the palace, and then destroyed it (Leemans, 1960, pp. 177-178 footnotes; Bertman, 2003, p. 25).

## CONCLUSION

Gudea of Lagaš, Ur-Nammu of Ur and Lagaš, Šu-Sîn of Ur, Rîm-Sîn I of Larsa, Šamši-Adad I and Zimri-Lim of Mari, Hammurabi of Babylon, Amut-pi-El of Qatna, Ibal-pi-El of Ešnunna, Yarim-Lim of Aleppo, and the many other kings and rulers in the ANE depended upon traders to provide adequate food and material accoutrements to maintain life. Traders bought the output from palace, temple, and private farming and manufacturing activities and sold it for profit. Traders imported goods to provide for the needs of king, priests, and commoner including the need to prepare for war.



Today modern traders provide governments with weapons of war, often to both sides of a conflict. In most countries food is readily available in markets, large and small, provided by 21<sup>st</sup> century versions of ancient traders. And religious organizations rely upon businesspeople and governments for financial support. In sum, the activities performed by ancient traders established a model that has spread throughout the civilized world and on into modern times.

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