



Merchant Adventurer Kings of Rhoda

The Strange World of the Tucson Artifacts, 775-900

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Section I. Inscriptions and Texts

1. Theodore's Conquest of Rhoda, 790 (from the Latin)
2. The Whole History, in a Nutshell, 790-900 (from the Latin)
3. Romans Across the Sea, about 800 (from the Latin)
4. Benjamin, Joseph and King Israel III, about 300-900 (from the Latin)
5. Discipline Conquers All, about 800 (from the Latin)
6. They Came to Rome by Sea in A.D. 775 (from the Latin)
7. Jews Calling Themselves Christians (from the Latin)
8. A Hebrew Table of Nations (from the Hebrew)
9. The Death of Oliver (from the Old French)
10. Roland Addresses His Sword Durendal (from the Old French)
11. William of Orange's Family (from the Old French)
12. No Lineage Matched That of Aymeri (from the Old French)
13. Memorial Stone of a Jew from Italy, about 800 (from the Hebrew)
14. Aëtius, Savior of the Western Empire (Gibbon)

Introduction

Extraordinary events were taking place in the year 775. Baghdad was the capital of the world, which formed, for the first time in history, an international ecumene, a unified trading zone. At this exact moment, a group of Gallo-Roman traders and Frankish expeditionary forces including Jews from Brittany, Wales, and Gaul called Rhadanites or Rhodanites set sail from Rome's port to voyage to Egypt, Palestine and Persia, seeking the fabled riches of Terra Incognita beyond India and China. Jews everywhere looked for the appearance of the Messiah: It was seven hundred years after the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Jewish state under the Romans. Now the Holy Land was a protectorate under Charlemagne, the son of Pepin. Commerce was booming. Knowledge and science were about to enter upon a renaissance. The Papal States sprang into existence, to last another thousand years.

Charlemagne had just conquered Italy and allied himself with both the Byzantines and the Abbasid Caliphate. The illiterate, six-foot-tall, squeaky-voiced Frank, who adopted the name David and was to go through as many wives and concubines as his biblical namesake, was thirty years old. A steely leader, he had a brilliant career of ruthless conquests and canny political maneuvers before him, one that would make him the first Holy Roman Emperor and earn him the title in posterity of Father of Europe as well as insure his place as the foremost hero in the nascent epic literature of France, Italy, Spain and Germany, the so-called Matter of France, or *chansons de geste*.

Mercantile empires were forming in Central Asia. Revolution had toppled the Umayyad caliphate, replacing it with the Abbasids under Al-Mansur. Baghdad was considered the world's most powerful and sophisticated metropolis. Harun Al-Rashid would found the famed House of Wisdom there, a research center to rival the ancient library at Alexandria. The Tang Dynasty ruled in China and soon reached the zenith of its innovative and creative contributions to world civilization. Both the Tang capital and their major port at Canton numbered over a million inhabitants within their city walls.

By 900, much of this cultural and economic upsurge was gone, erased by the hand of history in catastrophic developments that swept the Christian as well as Arab world and extended from West to the East. As the elderly Oliver in Calalus signed the last entries and inscribed his final surviving words on artifacts exhumed in Arizona more than a millennium later, civil war gripped the Toltec colonies in ancient Mexico. Violent northern tribes wiped out Roman Rhoda in a single day.

The Tang Dynasty fell. The Abbasid Caliphate slipped into decline amid success and dissension. The squabbling heirs of Charlemagne tore apart his empire with bloody feuds while murderous bands of armed nobles trampled peace underfoot in city and countryside. The Papacy became a sewer of corruption and depravity, entering its lowest point. Judaism was riven with internal schism and apostasy, while anti-Jewish tendencies swelled to alarming proportions among Christians, to peak during the First Crusade. Viking and Muslim raids laid waste most of Europe. There followed a century, as it has been called, without writing, without recordkeeping, in Western Europe and large parts of the world. Latin decayed, morphing eventually into French, Italian and Spanish, its place taken in barbarian lands by German, Anglo-Saxon and other previously unknown tongues.

Climate change buried the Tucson Artifacts under a six-foot mudslide on the Santa Cruz river. Trade ground to a halt and the sea lanes to China and across the Pacific Ocean stagnated and slowed. The new Dark Ages would not begin to lift until after the year 1000, which most of

Christendom expected to usher in the Resurrection and last judgment of souls. If the end did not come as expected, the new Fatimid caliph Al-Hakim's razing of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and destruction of all churches, monasteries, manuscripts, synagogues and Torah scrolls in 1009 sent a thunderclap throughout the West as resounding as the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410.

The story of merchant-adventurer Jews active in pre-Columbian America must be understood against the backdrop of early medieval history and cross-cultural perspectives. Although they called themselves Romans, and the first three kings came from France, these long-distance voyagers were part of an international trading world that extended from Far West to Far East, touching points in Arabia, Africa, India, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Indonesia. The founders of Rhoda spoke Frankish, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and Slavonic, as noted by the Arab geographer Ibn Kurradadhbah in his famous description of them as Rhadanites. This term can be traced to Rhodes (Isle of Roses), the source of important colonies and all commercial law in the ancient Mediterranean. The present "reader" offers an eclectic selection of texts and documents aimed at illuminating some of the cultural interconnections and economic horizons. Most readings are excerpts translated from Latin, but some are taken Arab, Hebrew, Old French, and even Chinese sources. They range from a Buddhist monk's description of Fu-Sang, early church councils and the emperor Justinian's codification of Roman civil law in the early sixth century to Arab geographers and copper plates of Indian rulers in ninth century Kerala. With the notable exception of the Book of Josippon, a prime Hebrew historical source, which was composed in the eleventh century, a good many of these collateral texts coincide with and are contemporaneous with the very time frame of the Tucson Artifacts. Four accounts of the coronation of Charlemagne in Latin sources relate to the year 800, mentioned on the Great Cross. The Carolingian embassy to Harun Al-Rashid and inventory of hostels and churches in Jerusalem come from the same period. So too the charming tale preserved by Notker the Stammerer of Charlemagne's identification of a Viking longboat in Narbonne, which we reprise here as proof that Breton merchantmen traded in the Mediterranean as well as ships owned by Jews.

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1.

Theodore's Conquest of Rhoda, 790

Of the eleven Latin inscriptions signed by Oliver, this one counts as the best composed and most celebrated. The Great Cross was the first of the set of strange ceremonial objects bearing Latin and Hebrew unearthed by chance in 1924 outside Tucson, Arizona and now in the keeping of the Arizona Historical Society. Unlike so much of the evidence for Old World contact and influences in pre-Columbian America, which has to be pieced together and defended with complex arguments, the Tucson Artifacts constitute a self-contained, complete, easily readable and self-proved historical record. The Great Cross happens to have been the first that was found, on September 13, 1924, and there has been nothing like it since. Its discovery was instantly sensationalized in the headlines of the day (see II. Newspaper Reports). Not only do we learn the names and nationalities of the first three "Roman" governors (silvanus, cf. Pima si'wan, English swami) of Rhoda (probably the site of Tucson on the Santa Cruz River), as well as the geographical setting for their exploits (Terra Incognita, a label for North Mexico that persisted on maps until the 18th century), but also we are forcibly struck by the date January 1, 800. Casually mentioned, almost carelessly recorded, and improbably preserved, the information places the events exactly within the context of Charlemagne's rise to the position of Emperor (Christmas 800) and is consistent with his known favoritism to Jews (called Romani in the laws of the time) and interest in gaining gold, spices and other riches from newly forged long-distance trade connections extending through the domains of the Caliph in Baghdad. All the incongruous, unlikely elements that make the Tucson Artifacts a unique and seemingly dismissible witness to pre-Columbian history are introduced in this brief annalistic text—Jewish and Christian symbols, Roman and Barbarian law, Old World and New World peoples, classical literature and the Bible, military and religious themes. From IAB. The Great Cross (900), in The Tucson Artifacts (2017), pp. 2-7.

To the memory of Romans (*Romani*, Gallo-Romans, and others): to Brittany (*Britannia*) and Albion's Jacob (Iago), to that second Aëtius, Theodore (Tudor), and to Israel of the Seine Province in Gaul, consuls of mighty cities with seven hundred soldiers each. A.D. 800, January 1.

We are carried by sea. Calalus (Hebrew "empty, all used up," Hohokam) is Terra Incognita (Unknown Land). The Toltec (Builder Race) governor was as a king ruling widely o'er the peoples (Vergil, *Aeneid* 1:21). They were transferred, Theodore deploying his troops before the city of Rhoda (Rose-City), and more than seven hundred captives were taken. Not one of them in the city was exempted from gold (*auro*). Theodore, a true man of the highest valor, reigns for fourteen years. Jacob reigns for six, God aiding him. Have no fear. In the name of (the God of) Israel. Oliver.

Reborn with gold (*urre*) was Jacob. With God helping him, he reigned with a strong hand (Deut. 26:8) in the way of his ancestors (Lev. 26:45). Sing unto the Lord (Ps. 67:5, 95:1, 87:1). May his fame live forever (Ps. 110:10, 113B:18). Oliver.

2.

The Whole History in a Nutshell, 790-900

As the keeper of history under its kings, Oliver composed this brief timeline of events at Rhoda. It appears on 3AB, the second of the leaden inscribed double crosses from the Silverbell Road find site. From The Ab Ovo Cross (900), in The Tucson Artifacts (2017), pp. 10-13.

From the beginning (lit., “from the egg”), A.D. 790-900. Naught but by the cross. While war raged, Israel died. Pray for the soul of one of Israel. May the earth lie lightly upon thee. As He was unto our fathers, so may God be unto us (I Kings 8:57). He adds glory to the glory of our forefathers. Israel was a defender of the faith. He reigned sixty-seven years. Israel the Second reigns for six years. Israel III has now begun his reign at twenty-six years old. It has been a war to the death. To vanquish or die. Flourishing with ancestral honor, day after day.

In either event, however, our spirits will not be broken, thanks be to God. With time slipping by, on the other hand, that font and source of evil, now comes our final day and the unavoidable end. I the Lord am with ye (Is. 52:6). Oliver.

3.

Romans Across the Sea

*Continuing the series of finds and recording the names of the first two kings of Rhoda is this single leaden cross, brought to light on November 30, 1924 by Charles E. Manier. Rougher than the others, it seems to have been made by other hands than those Oliver signed (1, 3, 5, 6, 7), although its Roman capital script and gold infill lettering are the same. Was it made as a single cross, possibly an unsatisfactory attempt, or did the other half get separated in the catastrophic mudslide that buried the whole set of ceremonial objects of the Romani in 900? Could its other half still lie buried in the caliche on Silverbell Road? From *The Albion Cross (9th cent.)*, in *The Tucson Artifacts (2017)*, pp. 14-55.*

Levites

+

Albion

Theodore (Tudor, Tewdr)

Jacob (Iago)

(We are) Romans carried (across the sea)

4.

Benjamin, Joseph and King Israel III, about 300-900

The Latin text on this artifact is the longest and most complex, taking the form, in part, of annals, telegraphic entries on the history of a realm or the feats of a people, such as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which is from the same time. Set down in 900, it apparently captures information from previous efforts at record keeping as well as five hundred years of oral tradition, as acknowledged in Oliver's mention of his father Josephus, or Joseph. There is also a degree of analysis and introspection. From The Josephus Cross (900), in The Tucson Artifacts (2017), pp. 16-23.

Benjamin ruled o'er the peoples. It is from the Province of the Seine that the bravest of the Gauls have always come to Rome. So Benjamin came to the aid of the people to lay the foundation for the City. He built a perimeter wall for the City. Of enormous strength was Benjamin. He filled the multitudes with awe. He was killed by Thebans. This I heard from my father five hundred years afterwards after his death (about 850?). In memory of my father, Josephus.

Anno Domini 880. Israel III, for freeing the Toltecas, was exiled. He was the first to break with the custom. There was an earthquake. Panic laid low all mortal hearts. The third year after he had fled abroad, they returned to the city and kept within the walls. A dead man thou shalt neither bury nor burn within the city. Before the city lay a plain. Hills ringed it round. It has been one hundred years since Jacobus was king (i.e., since about 800). Jacobus would throw himself into the thick of battle. He saw to everything. He would fight a multitude of men by himself. Often did he smite the foe. Israel turned his attention to creating priests. Ours is rather a life of rulers of men.

Anno Domini 895. Terra Incognita. Would that I could finish my efforts to serve the king. It is uncertain how long this type of life will continue. Many things could be said with this war raging. Three thousand have been slaughtered. The leader with all his principal followers has been taken captive. We sought nothing but peace. But God ordains all things (Is. 46:9). Oliver.

5.

Discipline Conquers All, about 800

This cross contains just names, formulae, and mottoes. From The Judas-Benjamin-Isaac Cross (about 890), in The Tucson Artifacts (2017).

Sacred

Levites and Israelites

Judas

Benjamin

Isaac

Discipline Conquers All

Oliver

We are of Rome.

(Our temple commemorates) the Good Land (of King David).

Benjamin is praised.

6.

They Came to Rome by Sea in A.D. 775

Not a Latin cross like the others, this artifact (18) takes the form of a nehushtan or brazen serpent carried by the children of Israel in the wilderness (Num. 21:9). In addition to Hebrew phrases it bears Latin mottoes and catchwords. The ruler Theodore mentioned is thought to be Todros, or Makhir, exilarch and nasi, Charlemagne's Jewish deputy in Narbonne, who died July 6, 793). The Tucson Artifacts (2016), pp. 41-42.

Discipline conquers all

Levites and Israelites

We are carried across the sea to Rome. Calalus was an unknown land. They came in A.D. 775 and Theodore ruled o'er the peoples.

Jews Calling Themselves Christians

Jews are documented living in Nantes, the capital of Brittany, from 465, when the Council of Vannes forbade clerics from partaking in meals with Jews, probably a reflection of the city's dominant Jewish merchant families inviting Christian associates and officials to seders during Passover. In the sixth century, a mixture of Frankish and Roman law prevailed, with the Bretons called Romani (penitential titled Excerpta de libris Romanorum et Francorum). In the eighth century, the bishopric was vacant and the Breton kings assumed all authority, nominally pledging fealty to the Franks as counts. On June 24, 843, the Normans invaded, killing the Frankish bishop Gunhard. Another Frank, Actard, was elected bishop, but King Nominë expelled him along with the entire clergy in a new attempt to establish a Breton church independent of the Franks. When the civil war ended with emperor Charles the Bald, Actard alone returned but was again driven out by King Salomon, who replaced him with the separatist bishop Gislach. Pope Hadrian and the ruling bishops of the Frankish kingdom decided to accept this fait accompli and looked to install Actard in another bishopric in the archdiocese of Rheims. These events prompted the learned and rancorous churchman Hincmar to lecture the pope in a long open letter on episcopal translations in 872. In the midst of making a rather far-fetched legal case that a bishop who forsook his original see was like an adulterer, Hincmar drops a much-discussed casual reference to Jews in Nantes, "who call themselves Christians," perhaps the first explicit reference to the phenomenon of crypto-Judaism in Welsh and British history. Here is the context, translated for the first time. The trail of Jews in Nantes may be picked up again in the tenth century. It is likely that Jacob, the second king of Rhoda, was from Brittany, as was the famous hero Roland, and of course Oliver, together with his father Joseph. Brittany long resisted being unified with France, politically, ecclesiastically and culturally, not becoming part of France until 1547. Hincmar of Rheims, Letter XIII, De quibus apud, Patrologia Latina 126, 221.

The Blessed Gregory says an adulterer is someone who seeks pleasure rather than offspring in carnal intercourse. Rightly also is every person serving vainglory said to be committing adultery with the word of God since they desire not to produce children unto God with sacred eloquence but to flaunt their own knowledge. Whoever is attracted to speaking by the lust for glory devotes his efforts more to pleasure than procreation. In the same way, anyone who trades his own Church for riches and a plenitude of powers and things of this earth is justly called an adulterer. Thus for a bishop to desert a city out of cupidity—a city [Nantes] in which there resides a count as well as noble clergymen and noble lay persons, not to mention commoners and peasants and even Jews living within the parish under Christian guise (*sub nomine Christiano*), if I am to believe what people say—to desert that city, I say, in the heat of ambition, and to take another see that is vacant, and to hold onto a see in which he was ordained, in which he can live without any danger of death, is not only wicked but also dangerous and pernicious, since the holy canons have ruled concerning even that vacating bishop who jumps suddenly to a vacant Church (Conc. Antioch. Can. 14): “that if any bishop vacating a church jumps suddenly over into a vacant church and takes over that see without a proper act of council he must of necessity be thrown out, even if all the people wish him to have that see which he snatched.”

8.

A Hebrew Table of Nations

From The Book of Yosippon comes this capsule ethnic history of Western Europe, partially based on 1 Chron 1:1-9. Prominent is mention of Bretons, called sons of Rifat. Such a specific knowledge of the Bretons and the Loire valley made the first commentators on The Book of Yosippon think it might have originated among Nantes Jews, although current scholarship attributes it to late tenth century southern Italian authorship, influenced by Frankish and Byzantine sources. Translated from the German of Dagmar Börner-Klein and Beat Zuber, Josippon: Jüdische Geschichte vom Anfang der Welt bis zum Ende des ersten Aufstands gegen Rom (Wiesbaden: Marix, 2010), pp. 30-36.

Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah. Noah begat Shem, Ham and Japheth. The sons of Japheth are Gomer, Magog, Madai, Yavan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras. The sons of Gomer are Ashkenaz, Rifat and Togarma. The sons of Yavan are Elisha, Tarshish, the Kittim (Cyprians) and the Dodanites (Rodanim).

The world however had only one language and one way of understanding. As they now went out from the East they found a valley and said to one another, "Let us build a city here." Then did Yahweh descend in order to look upon the city and the tower. Yahweh spake, "They are one people. Let us go down and confuse their language." Then didst Yahweh scatter them from that place over the whole earth. On that account He called it by the name Babel.

These are the families of the sons of Japheth and the lands to which they were scattered according to their languages, their lands and their peoples: The sons of Gomer are the Franks, who live in the country of France on the Seine River. The sons of Rifat are the Bretons, who live in the country of Brittany on the Loire River, and the Seine and Loire rivers empty into a sea of the Ocean, that is the Great Sea. The Togarma comprise ten families, among them Kusar, Pecheneg, the Alans, Bulgars, Kanbina, Turk, Bus, Sachoch, Hungarians and Tolmac. All these have settled in the north, and the names of their lands are named after them. They have settled on the rivers of the Volga; but Hungarians, Bulgars and Pecheneg have settled on the great river named Danubi, that is the Danube.

The sons of Yavan are the Greeks, who live in Ionia and Macedonia. Medes are the Daylamites, who live in the country of Kurdistan. The sons of Tubal are the Tuscans, who live in Tuscany on the river by Pisa. The sons of Meshech are the Saxons. Those of Tiras are the Russians. Saxons and Angles live on the Great Sea (Atlantic, North Sea), the Russians camp on the river of Kiev (Dnieper), which pours into the Caspian Sea.

The sons of Alisha, these are the Alemanni, who live between the Mountain of Jove and Septimus (Great St. Bernard and Septimer Pass), and from them stem the Langobardi (Lombards), who came from the other side of the Mountains of Jove and Septimus. They conquered Italy and live there to this day on the Po and Ticino rivers. From them stem the Burgundians, who live on the Rhone River and from them also the Bavarians, who live on the Rhine River, which runs into the Great Sea. The Ticino and Po run into the Venetian Sea (Adriatic).

The Tarsians, they came with the Macedonians with a religion, and from them stemmed Tarsos. As the Ishmaelites took the land of Tarsos, its inhabitants fled to the borders of the sons of Yavan and waged war on the Ishmaelites who were in Tarsos.

The Kittim, these are the Romans, who have settled in the plains of Campania and on the river Tiber. The Dodanites are the Danes, who live between sea inlets of the Ocean (Atlantic) in the land Denmark. It was in Dania, in the midst of the Great Sea, that an oath was sworn not to serve the Romans. They concealed themselves in the waters of the ocean and thus it did not happen that the rule of Rome reached unto the farthest islands of the sea.

With the Dodanites are grouped also Moravians, Croats, Sorbs, Lučanin, Luachin (Poles), Krakovians and Bohemians. They settled on the shore of the sea from the border of Bulgaria to the border of Venice on the sea, and from there they extended themselves outward to the Saxons, to the Great Sea. They are called Slavs (Slaves) and others say that they descend from the sons of Canaan, but they are related to the Dodanites.

The Death of Oliver

The legend of Roland—and his steadfast friend and companion at arms Oliver—goes back to the birthplace of Arthurian legend in medieval Brittany. Ninth century baptism records in France already reflect that Roland and Oliver were favored names for brothers and especially twins in noble families. Roland and Oliver became paradigms for military prowess and honor. Oliver as a name is deeply rooted in Welsh history—think of Oliver Cromwell. The meaning of AOI in this Old French epic from the eleventh century, which was foundational for the entire subsequent epic literature in the “matter of Charlemagne,” is not known, but it probably was a musical cue or refrain to the troubadour or jongleur performing the piece. Battle cries from the song of Roland were shouted by the soldiers of William the Conqueror in their charge to victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Adapted from Gerard J. Brault, La Chanson de Roland. Student Edition (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1984), pp. 121-23.

Oliver senses he has received a mortal wound,
 One he will never be able to avenge.
 He strikes now like a hero in the thick of things,
 He hacks through spears and shields,
 Through feet, and fists, and saddles, and ribs.
 Anyone who saw him dismembering Saracens,
 Piling one corpse on top of another,
 Would have recognized him for a true knight.
 Nor does he want to forget Charles’s battle cry,
 But shouts “Monjoie!” loud and clear.
 He calls Roland, his friend and peer:
 “Noble comrade, do come next to me!
 In great pain shall we part today.” AOI

Roland looks Oliver in the face,
 It is wan, livid, colorless, and pale.
 Bright blood streams the length of his body,
 To the ground it falls in spurts.
 “God!” says the Count, “I know not what to do now.
 Noble comrade, your valor, what a shame!
 There is no man who can measure up to you.
 Alas, fair France, how bereft it shall be
 Of worthy knights, how destitute and defeated!
 The Emperor suffers a heavy loss in you.”
 With these words, he sits stunned upon his horse. AOI

Roland Addresses His Sword Durendal

*In medieval cultures, swords were given names and endowed with great powers. It was customary to give a boy coming of age of the warrior class his sword for life. Excalibur, Arthur's sword, comes to mind. Often the sword was engraved with a serpent figure, as on artifacts 11 and 12. Roland's sword had the name Durendal, perhaps derived from "valley of dread," a mythical place where its steel was forged. Charlemagne's sword was named Joyeuse, and Oliver's Hauteclere. Anglo-Saxon kings had swords with snakes engraved on the blades. Roland's catalogue of conquests tallies well with the lands the Bretons and other Gallo-Romans helped the Franks defend from the invading Muslims in the eighth century, when they turned back the tide of Islamic advances under Charles Martel. Adapted from Gerard J. Brault, *La Chanson de Roland. Student Edition (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1984), pp. 142-43.**

Roland struck the sardonix stone,
 But the steel only grates, it does not break or nick,
 And seeing that he cannot fracture it at all,
 He commences to weep unto himself,
 "Well, then, Durendal, how fair and clear and bright you are!
 How you shine and flash athwart the sun!
 Charles was in the vales of Maurienne
 When God in heaven commanded him through an angel
 To give you to a certain count his captain.
 So did the noble king and great gird me with it,
 And with it I conquered Anjou and Brittany,
 So did I conquer Poitou and La Maine,
 With it I conquered free Normandy,
 So did I conquer Provence and Aquitaine,
 And Lombardy and all Romagna,
 With it conquered Bavaria and the whole of Flanders,
 And Burgundy and all of Poland,
 Constantinople, which owed Charles fealty,
 For in Saxony he does as he wishes,
 With it I conquered Scotland . . .
 And England, which he held to his account,
 Conquered with it so many lands and realms
 Which Charles now holds, he of the white beard.
 For this sword I feel naught but pain and grief,
 I'd rather perish than leave it with the Pagans.
 Father God, let not France be so dishonored!"

11.

William of Orange's Lineage



Although composed in the twelfth century, this Old French epic harks back to the days of Charlemagne's son and heir Louis the Pious, who ruled from 813 to 840. It centers on William of Orange, the son of Aimeri, believed to be identical with the Jewish Prince whom Charlemagne summoned from Babylonia as the protector of the Spanish March. There are more chansons and epics about William than any other figure. William became a popular name in the nobility of France, England, Spain, Germany and Italy, down to and extending beyond William the Conqueror and the kings of England. The "foreign-born" Ermengard, whose origin was Beaulande ("the land of the good," i.e. Palestine; see V.2), became a convention of troubadour poetry and a traditional name among Narbonnaise aristocracy. Here William boasts of his heritage (the literal meaning of geste). From The Coronation of Louis, in Guillaume d'Orange: Four Twelfth-Century Epics, trans., with an intro. by Joan M. Ferrante (New York: Columbia UP, 1974), p. 86.

“From no man have I ever kept my name.
I am William the marquis, by God's grace,
The son of Aimeri, whose beard is now gray,
And Ermengard, renowned for her bright face.
Bernard is my brother of Brabant fame,
And Hernaut of Gironde on the sea, and brave
Garin, whose deeds will ever be praised,
Bueves of Commarch, who leaves terror in his wake,
Guibert of Andernas, the youngest in days,
Aimeri, too is our brother of noble grace,
Who enters no lovely home, but remains
Outside in the wind and breeze all the day,
So he helps to destroy the Saracen race....”

No Lineage Matched That of Aymeri

More on the Jewish princes or nesim (sing. Nasi) of Septimania and Toulouse, who figure in French epic as Christian heroes three to four centuries later. The name first occurs in the Annals of Einhard as Haimericus. This is believed to be a corruption of Makhir, the Babylonian exilarch who came to the West about 760 and became the protector of the Spanish March and trusted vassal for the Carolinian kingdom under the Frankish name Theodoric (Old French: Thierry; German: Dietrich; Hebrew: Todros; Greek: Theodore; mentioned in the Tucson Artifacts). In this turn-of-the-thirteenth-century Old French epic by a clerical writer, probably working at the court of Champagne under patrons Henry and countess Marie, we encounter the geste tradition in one of its most polished manifestations during the heyday of courtly love and chivalry. Aymeri is characterized as a paladin of Charlemagne and the father of William Hooknose, duke of Aquitaine. The troubadour author probably enjoyed the patronage of Ermengard, viscountess of Narbonne, heiress of Aymeri II and one of the most famous women of her day along with Eleanor of Aquitaine and Countess Marie of Champagne. In song and story, Aymeri marries Hermenjart (Ermengard), described as being of foreign extraction. The couple has seven sons who all become champions. William is the second of them; he becomes a saint in the church following a martial career. The Latin and Old French versions of these legends appear to rest on much earlier chansons de geste composed in Judeo-Occitan, the spoken language of the South of France. A family chronicle called Ma'aseh haMakiri ("Deed," or Geste, of the Makhiri) is known from the late eleventh or early twelfth century. It incorporated contributions by Nathan and Menahem, sons of Makhir. The Jewish influence on medieval epic and romance is considerable. Aymeri is here linked strongly with Roland and Oliver. In its present form, the Chanson d'Aymeri comprises 4708 verses. They were probably composed by Bertrand de Bar-sur-Aub in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. Michael A. H. Newth, Aymeri of Narbonne: A French Epic Romance (New York: Italica, 2005), pp. 2-3 (Prologue).

No lineage from any lord came down
To match the sons of Aymeri the Count.

Know this in truth: no line so fine or proud
Was like this lord's whom my song is about.

...

In one whole month I never could recount
The flow of deeds of which he was the fount.
You all have heard of Aymeri's renown.
From when the king first gave him Narbonne town,
I do believe, until death struck him down,
He did not pass in peace one full year round.

...

And of the sons that Aymeri bequeathed us
No ill-repute was ever heard or meanness.
The truth is this – in written texts we read it –
That Aymeri and Charles, the fierce of feature,

Should have their names in history set clearly.

...

You've heard in song so many times, good people,
How many keeps, how many forts and regions,
To Charlemagne's great will and skill all yielded;
How many Moors and wicked-working heathens
He brought to heel and wrought a fierce defeat on!
On any day no blighted pagan creature
Could fight for long against him and his legions –
Until that day when Roland, their brave leader,
And Oliver, the man he loved most dearly,
Were lost to Charles through treachery and treason,
When Ganelon, with spiteful heart and scheming,
Sold both of them to heathen King Marsile,
With twenty thousand French, the chanson teaches.
They were slain by the great act of evil
Wrought in the land of Spain.

Aëtius, Savior of the Western Empire

Theodore is compared to Aëtius (1A); he like Jacob came from Brittany. Often called the Last of the Romans, the fifth-century Roman general Aëtius was the friend and vanquisher of Attila and helped settle Huns and Alani in Gaul. Some of these in Orleans and Brittany continued to preserve his memory three hundred years later, calling themselves Romani. Here are the stirring events of Aëtius' life as recounted by Gibbon. (Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. II, London: Warne, 286-88, 307-8.)

After the death of his rival Boniface, Aetius had prudently retired to the tents of the Huns; and he was indebted to their alliance for his safety and his restoration. Instead of the suppliant language of a guilty exile, he solicited his pardon at the head of sixty thousand Barbarians; and the empress Placidia confessed, by a feeble resistance, that the condescension, which might have been ascribed to clemency, was the effect of weakness or fear. She delivered herself, her son Valentinian, and the Western empire, into the hands of an insolent subject; nor could Placidia protect the son-in-law of Boniface, the virtuous and faithful Sebastian, from the implacable persecution which urged him from one kingdom to another, till he miserably perished in the service of the Vandals. The fortunate Aetius, who was immediately promoted to the rank of patrician, and thrice invested with the honors of the consulship (432, 437, 446), assumed, with the title of master of the cavalry and infantry (*magister utriusque militiae*), the whole military power of the state; and he is sometimes styled, by contemporary writers, the duke, or general, of the Romans of the West. His prudence, rather than his virtue, engaged him to leave the grandson of Theodosius in the possession of the purple; and Valentinian was permitted to enjoy the peace and luxury of Italy, while the patrician appeared in the glorious light of a hero and a patriot, who supported near twenty years the ruins of the Western empire. The Gothic historian (Jordanes) ingenuously confesses, that Aetius was born for the salvation of the Roman republic (about 390); and the following portrait, though it is drawn in the fairest colors, must be allowed to contain a much larger proportion of truth than of flattery. "His mother was a wealthy and noble Italian, and his father Gaudentius, who held a distinguished rank in the province of Scythia, gradually rose from the station of a military domestic, to the dignity of master of the cavalry. Their son, who was enrolled almost in his infancy in the guards, was given as a hostage, first to Alaric, and afterwards to the Huns; and he successively obtained the civil and military honors of the palace, for which he was equally qualified by superior merit. The graceful figure of Aetius was not above the middle stature; but his manly limbs were admirably formed for strength, beauty, and agility; and he excelled in the martial exercises of managing a horse, drawing the bow, and darting the javelin. He could patiently endure the want of food, or of sleep, and his mind and body were alike capable of the most laborious efforts. He possessed the genuine courage that can despise not only dangers, but injuries: and it was impossible either to corrupt, or deceive, or intimidate the firm integrity of his soul" (portrait from Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, quoted in Gregory of Tours). The Barbarians, who had seated themselves in the Western provinces, were insensibly taught to respect the faith and valor of the patrician Aetius. He soothed their passions, consulted their prejudices, balanced their interests, and checked their ambition. A seasonable treaty, which he concluded with Genseric, protected Italy from the depredations of the Vandals; the independent Britons implored and acknowledged his salutary aid; the Imperial authority was

restored and maintained in Gaul and Spain; and he compelled the Franks and the Suevi, whom he had vanquished in the field, to become the useful confederates of the republic.

From a principle of interest, as well as gratitude, Aetius assiduously cultivated the alliance of the Huns. While he resided in their tents as a hostage, or an exile, he had familiarly conversed with Attila himself, the nephew of his benefactor; and the two famous antagonists appeared to have been connected by a personal and military friendship, which they afterwards confirmed by mutual gifts, frequent embassies, and the education of Carpilio, the son of Aetius, in the camp of Attila. By the specious professions of gratitude and voluntary attachment, the patrician might disguise his apprehensions of the Scythian conqueror, who pressed the two empires with his innumerable armies. His demands were obeyed or eluded. When he claimed the spoils of a vanquished city, some vases of gold, which had been fraudulently embezzled, the civil and military governors of Noricum were immediately despatched to satisfy his complaints: and it is evident, from their conversation with Maximin and Priscus, in the royal village, that the valor and prudence of Aetius had not saved the Western Romans from the common ignominy of tribute. Yet his dexterous policy prolonged the advantages of a salutary peace; and a numerous army of Huns and Alani, whom he had attached to his person, was employed in defence of Gaul. Two colonies of these Barbarians were judiciously fixed in the territories of Valens and Orleans, and their active cavalry secured the important passages of the Rhone and of the Loire. These savage allies were not indeed less formidable to the subjects than to the enemies of Rome. Their original settlement was enforced with the licentious violence of conquest, and the province through which they marched was exposed to all the calamities of a hostile invasion. Strangers to the emperor or the republic, the Alani of Gaul was devoted to the ambition of Aetius, and though he might suspect, that, in a contest with Attila himself, they would revolt to the standard of their national king, the patrician labored to restrain, rather than to excite, their zeal and resentment against the Goths, the Burgundians, and the Franks.

[After Aëtius leads the combined forces of the Western Roman Empire, and defeats Attila, the Avars and other tribes] finally extinguished the empire of the Huns.

Such an event might contribute to the safety of the Eastern empire, under the reign of a prince who conciliated the friendship, without forfeiting the esteem, of the Barbarians. But the emperor of the West, the feeble and dissolute Valentinian, who had reached his thirty-fifth year without attaining the age of reason or courage, abused this apparent security, to undermine the foundations of his own throne, by the murder of the patrician Aetius. From the instinct of a base and jealous mind, he hated the man who was universally celebrated as the terror of the Barbarians, and the support of the republic; and his new favorite, the eunuch Heraclius, awakened the emperor from the supine lethargy, which might be disguised, during the life of Placidia, by the excuse of filial piety. The fame of Aetius, his wealth and dignity, the numerous and martial train of Barbarian followers, his powerful dependents, who filled the civil offices of the state, and the hopes of his son Gaudentius, who was already contracted to Eudoxia, the emperor's daughter, had raised him above the rank of a subject. The ambitious designs, of which he was secretly accused, excited the fears, as well as the resentment, of Valentinian. Aetius himself, supported by the consciousness of his merit, his services, and perhaps his innocence, seems to have maintained a haughty and indiscreet behavior. The patrician offended his sovereign by a hostile declaration; he aggravated the offence, by compelling him to ratify, with a solemn oath, a treaty of reconciliation and alliance; he proclaimed his suspicions, he neglected his safety; and from a vain confidence that the enemy, whom he despised, was incapable even of a manly crime, he rashly ventured his person in the palace of Rome. Whilst he urged, perhaps

with intemperate vehemence, the marriage of his son; Valentinian, drawing his sword, the first sword he had ever drawn, plunged it in the breast of a general who had saved his empire: his courtiers and eunuchs ambitiously struggled to imitate their master; and Aetius, pierced with a hundred wounds, fell dead in the royal presence (454). Boethius, the Praetorian praefect, was killed at the same moment, and before the event could be divulged, the principal friends of the patrician were summoned to the palace, and separately murdered. The horrid deed, palliated by the specious names of justice and necessity, was immediately communicated by the emperor to his soldiers, his subjects, and his allies. The nations, who were strangers or enemies to Aetius, generously deplored the unworthy fate of a hero: the Barbarians, who had been attached to his service, dissembled their grief and resentment: and the public contempt, which had been so long entertained for Valentinian, was at once converted into deep and universal abhorrence. Such sentiments seldom pervade the walls of a palace; yet the emperor was confounded by the honest reply of a Roman, whose approbation he had not disdained to solicit. "I am ignorant, sir, of your motives or provocations; I only know, that you have acted like a man who cuts off his right hand with his left."