Distributive Trade, Mother of Enterprising: A Historical Perspective

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Abstract

It is not until the 20th century that distributive trade becomes recognised for its contribution to society. Throughout the earlier history, retailers are typically lowly regarded in elite discourses that must have affected the venture and spirits of retail entrepreneurs and potentially restricted retail services available to ordinary consumers. The connection of production, distribution and service was historically an invisible consideration. Nevertheless, from the time the first cities emerge in 4th millennium BCE[1] the daily lives of city households largely depend on access to exchanging for necessities and other goods within the city. Yet, retailers typically remained small enterprises in economic and service terms much longer than manufacturers. This paper suggests that ideologies conditioned entrepreneurs differently and contributed to retail industry's late catch-up with manufacturing industry and the introduction of dynamic distribution services to ordinary consumers.

Key words: *Ancient economic enterprising; archaeology; currency; exchange; ideology; invention; private enterprise; state intervention; trade; urbanisation*

Introduction

This paper aims to contribute a historical perspective illuminating the development of distributive trade enterprises on the background of socio-economic contexts influenced by ideology[2] espoused by ruling and philosophical elites. A study of the history of distributive trade suggests that far from being encouraged, retail traders were typically discriminated against by embedded ideology and state intervention restricting the dynamic of retail trade enterprising and service to consumers. Whilst the very recent former retail trade regimes of China and the former Soviet Union are well known representations in point, it is less well known how other ideologies conditioned distributive trade enterprising and retail traders in earlier history.

Retail trade and retail traders were typically lowly regarded even if from the time cities first emerge in southern Iraq 4th millennium BCE the distribution of necessities is as much a prerequisite for city population survival as is the production of necessities. Then as in following millennia the connection of production, distribution and service was an invisible consideration. With the advent of the industrial revolution in 18th century CE, manufacturers start to become large by today's terms by individual entrepreneurship and industry consolidation. It is not until 20th century that retailers begin to exhibit a similar or complementary propensity for growth and entrepreneurship and then only by a relatively small number of retailers whilst the vast portion of single shop retailers in developed economies are being routed in a fraction of the time that manufacturing industry took to consolidate and give birth to niche SMEs. Historically, mass retail services have taken the back seat to mass manufacturing of consumers goods.

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[1] Gregorian calendar: BCE = Before Common Era; CE = Common Era.

[2] Ideology: a) The body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture. b) A set of doctrines or beliefs that form the basis of a political, economic, or other system. Source: The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, fourth edition updated 2003.

This paper explores distributive trade history across contributions by archaeologists, anthropologists, historians and other scholars, and ancient narratives, organised as follows: In sections 1.0-1.4, the discourse of archaeology and history, evidence of early exchange and distributive trade, a synthesis of the evidence and setting the stage for enriching the context discourse. In sections 2.0-2.4, the trading environments in selected ancient cities, and England's Magna Carta 1215 CE providing a fillip to distributive trade enterprise in northern Europe. In sections 3.0-3.4, the received image of traders and ideologies potentially influencing trade and traders. Section 4.0 concludes and suggests why the category of 'single shop' retailers warrants increased research and more than sympathy.

1.0 Cultural history is wondrously dynamic

The past can be studied to illuminate the present (Liddell-Hart, 1972). History helps to identify more or less stable concepts and has potential to bring additional alternatives and answers to dealing with enterprise enigmas at individual, institutional, structural, and service levels. Nevertheless, the problem of what a researcher can do is exacerbated in the case of research on ancient societies. Finley (1973) in his *The Ancient Economy* suggests "abandoning the anecdotal technique of dredging up an example or two as if that constituted proof". Findley presents us with the choice to not engage on writing on ancient history or to attempt to force accounts of such history no matter how incomplete (Carmona and Ezzamel, 2005). The choice is less difficult when the evidence is rich and so this paper shall proceed with its contribution.

How and when we know what about past humanity starts with archaeology. Whilst originally archaeology derived its significance through the historical disciplines, the study of history is becoming increasingly dependent on archaeology (Vernoit, 1997). New archaeological finds and reinterpretation of existing finds have the potential to change cultural history. Nevertheless, Smith (2004) argues that recent advances in trade research owe more to the sheer accumulation of data, that is, extant archaeological artefacts, than to any conceptual sophistication. We know more about ancient life in some places as compared to other places, because archaeologists have uneven access to existing and potential exploration sites. Further, archaeology is a resource demanding science and modern archaeology is at different stages of maturity and priority in different countries. Thus, cultural history inclusive of retail trade history is wondrously dynamic and will continue to be written and overwritten as yet undisclosed distant pasts become physically revealed to us through scientific excavation and analyses gradually exhausting the evidence. Until a few decades ago, interest and the resources available to archaeology and access to archaeological sites tend to focus grand symbols, for instance temples and palaces. Of less focus were the areas of people's dwellings among which crafts shops and retail shops and public market places, if any, are likely to be located.

1.1 Synthesising some scholarly discourses on the emergence of distributive enterprise

Community production of surpluses and trade emerge more or less simultaneously in history. Trade of the retail kind can be traced to West Asia circa 6th millennium BCE. In the region stretching from present day southwest Iran to southeast Turkey, through Iraq and Syria, some household producers exchanged products with other household producers. They traded by equivalencies. The notion of money did not exist. Commodities and handicraft were exchanged for equivalent commodities and handicraft. Traders needed to have produced something or some things surplus to his/her own needs, the needs of his/her household, and the needs of the immediate village community. The same communities recorded production and kept accounts (Schmandt-Besserat, 1999; Nissen *et al*, 1993).

Evidence of the earliest trade is archaeological and the context is everyday life in village communities in West Asia 6-7000 years ago. Some extant artefacts originate wholly or partially from outside the geographical area in which they were excavated, for instance, stone and metal objects and ceramic pottery. Pottery is distributed across the region 6th millennium BCE. Pottery kilns excavated at Tell Sabi Abyad, northern Syria, suggest work specialisation and pottery capacity beyond the needs of the immediate community (Akkermans *et al*, 2006). Pottery from a single clay source was found as much as 600 miles apart; some pottery must have moved 300 miles or more (OIUC, 2003; Owen, 2000). According to Owen, the spread of Halaf-fashion[3] pottery across Iraq, Syria, and Turkey represents "the first really widespread cultural horizon", as first detected by Davidson and McKerrell (1976).

Excavations of numerous small, mostly short-lived 6th and 5th millennium BCE communities in present day Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar provide archaeological evidence of these communities acquiring items from southern Iraq, for instance, pottery, spindle whorls, and ornaments (Carter and Crawford, 2001; Oates *et al*, 1977; Roaf, 1976). Oates *et al* suggest that traders travelled down the Gulf in search of fish and possibly pearls and exchanged with local communities along the way.

According to Yoffe (1995) and Algaze (1993), some recent archaeological finds in present day Iran, Syria, and Turkey represent 4th millennium BCE settlements involving people from southern Iraq, who went 'abroad' to trade for critical resources not available in southern Iraq, for instance, timber, stone, and metals. Algaze (2005) suggests that trade at the time was spurred by natural differences in productivity between southern Iraq and surrounding areas. Archaeological evidence attests to a diffusion of 'produced' non-perishable objects. Whilst the perishable nature of food commodities obliterates almost any trace for archaeologists to find, archaeologists have concluded that some communities produced food commodities surplus to own needs. However, no records have been found to suggest what these communities did with the surpluses.

According to Marfoe (1987), 4th millennium BCE Uruk, southern Iraq, directly exploited the highland resources of Syria. Larsen (1987) suggests the existence of a trading network of entrepreneurial traders. Oates (1993) argues that "no single thread of evidence attests any form of trade". Nevertheless, mid 3rd millennium BCE three categories of traders exist at Ebla on the river Euphrates, Syria. According to Archi (2003), "The man/men of the quay" at Ebla were involved in commercial activity. Archi identifies traders involved in small-scale commercial activity, implying retail traders; traders engaged in large-scale trade, implying traders who buy bulk or cargoes and break the latter into small lots, consistent with present day wholesalers; and travelling merchants, implying import-export traders travelling between foreign sellers and buyers to put caravan and/or boat size cargoes together. Oates' lack of evidence does not eliminate the possibility of trade. (Re-) distribution was centralised and there was a high degree of authority, but it is not clear what was being organised. It is plausible that trade between cities and between regions 4th millennium BCE was carried out by traders operating as agents or principals or both on behalf of central administrations. Private traders and central administrations can go hand-in-hand. Central administrations were not prohibiting private trade enterprising. The extant diffusion of non-perishable objects was not accomplished without the interaction of people and communities across short and long distances. Placing the region in a contemporaneous fertility context, Breasted (1935; 1933) suggests the "Fertile Crescent", according to his map a crescent-shaped geographical area circa three times the size of Peninsular Malaysia, traversed by the rivers Euphrates, Jordan and Tigris, enclosed by the northern arch of the Tauros and Zagros mountains, and reaching from southwest Iran to the Mediterranean through Iraq, Syria, southern Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. People migrated from the highlands to the river plains and exploited the fertile lands there. The earliest known cities emerge in 4th millennium BCE on the plains of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, present day Iraq (Algaze, 2005; Postgate, 1992). Urbanisation beyond village-scale became the latest societal realm (Adams and Nissen, 1972). The region comprising today's southern Iraq and southwest Iran fosters growing and competing city-states, a "veritable revolution in human spatial, social, political, and economic organization" (Algaze, 2005; Kouchoukos and

[3] Tell Halaf is an archaeological site in northern Syria. Dating to circa 6th millennium BCE, the culture of Tell Halaf is characterised by glazed pottery painted with geometric and animal designs. Halaf ceramics is one of the first recognisable fashions. It is a delicate ceramic and suggests the feature of specialisation, that is, craftsmen who do not have to work in the fields.

Hole, 2003). The social transformation which takes place is accompanied by a surge in innovation and economies of scale in production and distribution of commodities (Krugman, 1995; 1991). Extant archaeology places the emergence of similar urban development elsewhere in the world to 3rd and 2nd millennium BCE and there is a geographical association with voluminous rivers, for instance, Egypt (the Nile river), Pakistan (the Indus river), and China (the Yellow River). Unless future archaeology tells us otherwise, 4th millennium BCE southern Iraq is the earliest known cradle of sustained urban development and of entirely new demands on distributive trade.

Modelski (2003; 1997) reviews the archaeological evidence of the earliest known cities. At the dawn of 4th millennium BCE, Eridu with "no less than" 4,000 inhabitants is thought to be the largest city. Uruk became the largest city in 4th millennium BCE, with 15-20,000 inhabitants at mid millennium and 50-80,000 inhabitants at the close of the millennium. Another five cities are thought to have had >10,000 inhabitants at the close of the millennium. Uruk is by far the largest city and the center of 4th millennium BCE southern Iraq. For early 3rd millennium BCE, Modelski lists another ten cities with >10,000 inhabitants, among them, Kish with circa 40,000 inhabitants and Umma with circa 25,000 inhabitants. Early 3rd millennium BCE there appears to be at least twelve substantial cities in southern Iraq[4]. According to Kuhrt (1995), by mid 3rd millennium BCE eighty percent of the population of southern Iraq live in cities larger than forty hectares, equivalent to eighty percent of the population living in cities >8,000 inhabitants.

Shupp (1998) suggests communities inhabiting the region are not homogeneous and "contain people with different traditions who continued to maintain separate social institutions…until circa 3500 BCE, when some sort of catastrophic realignment of population patterns began". If so, a 'melting pot' of cultures provided the impetus for the monumental 4th millennium BCE social, structural and spatial transformation by the emergence of cities. The development of urbanisation and large temple structures are more or less simultaneous (Jared, 1999). According to Falkenstein (1954), the development of civilisation is most closely connected with the temples. Falkenstein suggests that the temple could muster both the labour resources of the temple personnel and the labour force of the entire city and city-state for tasks concerning the temple. Foster (1981) and other scholars dispute Falkenstein's suggestion. Nevertheless, the 4th-3rd millennium BCE urbanisation elements of public buildings, public land, and specialised labour and centrally marshalled and directed labour forces suggest that some form of temple institution was at the centre at least in the early stages of the societal reorganisation that Jacobsen (1946) saw as presupposing a high degree of organisation and direction in the societies which achieved the temple structures. Palace buildings start to appear in southern Iraq early 3rd millennium BCE. Leadership by the temples becomes augmented with kingship and transforms the early city module of peer polity, possibly associated with increased warfare among cities for the control of trade routes (Renfrew, 1986; Adams, 1981). Both temples and kings in the region regulated the population within each their power and in each their way. King Hammurabi's law code early 2nd millennium BCE is the earliest known code encompassing traders. King Hammurabi's code prescribes rules for his subjects to observe and settle disputes by and, specifically, mentions the interests of retail traders and their customers.

Accountability becomes embedded across households and their village communities in West Asia circa 8th-7th millennium BCE. These communities begin to make records of production and to keeping accounts (Schmandt-Besserat, 1999; Nissen et al, 1993). Village communities followed circa 4th millennium BCE by city societies counted by hand moulded objects made from clay and prepared accounts of livestock, farm implements, production and commitments. Accountability came under seal of authority by incised, miniature stamp seals impressed on clay lumps applied to sealing, for instance, storeroom doors, basket and jar lids, and pouches, the latter containing counting objects, that is, sets of accounts. Known as "tokens", the counting objects are not only

[4] Adab, Akshak, Bad-Tabira, Kish, Lagash, Larak, Larsa, Nippur, Sippar, Umma, Ur, and Uruk

mnemonic aids. Taken together, the tokens and seals represent both the earliest known system of accountability and non-verbal sign system for transmitting information of a nature that in the present we would consider to be economic information (Schmandt-Besserat, 1999). According to Schmandt-Besserat, numbers came before letters and played a distinct role in the invention of writing, proto-cuneiform, by accountants by the close of 4th millennium BCE (Holst, 2006). Mattessich (2000) argues that the system of 'mechanical aids' of tokens and seals in practice encompasses both the 'tedious work' of bookkeeping and the 'big picture' of accounting according to community requirements at the time. Basu and Waymire (2005) argue that accountancy developed to extending kin-based cooperation to cooperation between large, diverse groups of people; accountancy "is one of the institutions necessary for large-scale human cooperation to emerge" and a salient administrative tool to traders. The 1993 discovery of a set of accounts at Hacinebi, present day Turkey, dating to the latter part of 4th millennium BCE and bearing distinct characteristics associated with the city of Uruk, southern Iraq, suggests that some sets of accounts were conveyed over long distances (Stein and Misir, 1995).

Examining evidence of trade by extant cuneiform tablets of two 3rd millennium BCE periods, Bossuyt *et al* (2001) find that trade related tablets excavated in eleven cities of the region cited connections with thirty other cities in the region, attesting to widespread trade. Further, Bossuyt *et al* find on the trade flows that "distance did seem to matter less in ancient than it does in modern times, implying that autarky (self-sufficiency) was not more, and perhaps even less sustainable five millennia ago". It is not until the traders of Assur early 2nd millennium BCE that we have evidence of some trader organisations of substantial size and geographical reach. The evidence on retail traders is myopic throughout 4th-2nd millennium BCE, possibly because subsistence needs of the populations at least in the earlier millennia were largely satisfied by distribution controlled by the central administrations. Whilst portions of the populations would have been looking to exchanging for more and other provisions and non-food goods there is no archaeological evidence how they might have done so in 4th-3rd millennium BCE.

Extant cuneiform tablets dating to early 2nd millennium BCE provide rich description of the operations of traders in the city of Assur, present day Qal'at Shergat, northern Iraq. Assur traders established a trading station in the city of Kanesh, present day Kultepe, Turkey (Veenhof and Demaree, 2003; Veenhof, 1995). Trader families of Assur traded in a wide network reaching from Iran to the Mediterranean. The Assur traders traded in metals, wool and textiles and frequently exchanged for silver and gold. The cuneiform tablets suggest that prices were subject to supply and demand in this trade network. As cities grew, retail trade and long distance trade grew, and trade enterprises differed in size, retail enterprises being the smallest. Energised by the prospects of trade, production, product variety and product sophistication grew. Social and spatial scale becomes broadly evident in 3rd millennium BCE. Some villages in the vicinity of cities grow into towns. Villages typically become fewer and smaller if not hamlets. Cuneiform tablets dating to late 3rd millennium BCE reveal the employment of large numbers of male and female slaves in production under central administrations. These slaves were taken away in wars as booty and typically augmented city populations and increased productivity in the cities of the conquerors. Late 3rd millennium BCE the "wool office" of Ur employ in the order of 16,000 female slaves for spinning and making wool garments (Englund, 1998). The wool office of Ur circa four thousand years ago is a large industry by any measure. The wool and woollens trade is centrally controlled with trade agents acting for the central administration on distributing the products to both the domestic and export markets. Export markets offered luxury goods in exchange. Centralised production systems are typically pervasive through the time of early village communities, through city and city-state societies, and through 3rd millennium BCE. However, central administrations can and did trade with and through individual traders on more or less arranged terms and do not seem to mind private sellers and buyers.

Trade in real property 3rd millennium BCE attests participation by private individuals. Gelb *et al* (1991) find from extant cuneiform tablets that in 3rd millennium BCE "practically anyone could be either a seller or a buyer. This is especially important for the fields since this evidence shows that landed property could be sold and consequently 'owned' by private persons and not exclusively by the temples or state as claimed until recently". The most conspicuous participants in the land market are temple and palace officials, traders, scribes, and shepherds. Women participate frequently as both sellers and buyers of land. If central administrations were this 'relaxed' about landed property transactions it is plausible that central administrations did not mind or interfere with private trading initiatives on retail trade and long distance trade. Private trade initiatives were not an issue with the central administrations. Gelb *et al*'s "sellers and buyers" and traders would have been left to find their own ways, the latter with suppliers and consumers. In that case, entrepreneurial trading initiatives must have blended in 'noiselessly' with the existing redistributive systems. Extant official documents of the period do not suggest conflict between entrepreneurs and central administrations.

The earliest known social insights to trade and consumption are by the authority of southern Iraq folklore, proverbs written on clay tablets at scribal schools late 3rd, early 2nd millennium BCE. These 'school tablets' are messages of mundane life Scribes were trained by copying and reproducing the basic components of the cuneiform script, signs and words arranged in lists, and by memorising popular sayings and proverbs. According to Alster (1997), these proverbs are "not expressions of an intellectual system", they "reflect a genuine living tradition" and mirror antecedent society. Leick (1999) argues that the proverbs represent a non-institutional social message. The message of the earliest known proverbs is one of human self-reliance and responsibility for one's life. Focus is on the individual house-holder on whose good judgement depend the happiness and survival of the whole family, and ultimately society. Humour and ridicule, weapons of the weak, are frequently invoked to disparage arrogance and pomposity. The general outlook appears to be secular, for instance, "A man without a personal god does not procure much food, does not procure even a little food. Going to a river, he does not catch any fish. Going to a field, he does not catch any gazelle. He is unsuccessful in ritual preparations, he is unsuccessful in important matters. Yet were his god favourable toward him, anything he might name would be provided for him" (UET 6/2 252/1-8) and "A man without a god - - for a strong man it is no loss" (UET 6/2 253/1). Individuals trade, "He who has silver, he who has lapis lazuli, he who has oxen and he who has sheep wait at the gate of the man who has barley" (UET 6/2 263/1-4) and some equivalent is more equivalent than another, "He who pays with high-valued silver negotiates a favourable position" (18.6/23). Traders were not held in high regard, "You, trader, how small you made the amount of silver! And how small you made the amount of oil and barley!" (3.65/128) and "Weighing scales made with sinews are a trap made for the feet; a man should not take a trader for his friend" (3.64/127-128) (Alster, 1997). The latter four proverbs clearly refer to retail trade and retail traders. The proverbs augment other evidence that private sector distributive trade had a visible if not prominently acknowledged role in daily life in West Asia 4th and 3rd millennium BCE.

In summary, the volume of entrepreneurial trade in the forms of long distance trade and retail trade might have been relatively small 4th millennium BCE, but increases over time in association with the rate of the urbanisation and population growth revealed by archaeologists.

1.2 The exchange transaction: contexts and exchange media

The archaeological and other scholarly evidence on 4th millennium BCE southern Iraq suggests that exchanges in the cities were largely command-type, but private exchange initiatives were not discouraged. According to Silver (1983), the greater region of southern Iraq 4th-2nd millennium BCE "experienced lengthy and significant period of unfettered market activity as well as periods of pervasive state intervention".

How might exchange equivalents have been sorted out by the exchanging parties? For instance, mass produced bevelled-rim, tempered clay bowls have been excavated in their thousands at mid

4th millennium BCE southern Iraq sites of grand buildings identified as temple sites. The bevelled-rim bowls are thought to be for measures of grain, each bowl on average holding between 0.6 to 0.8 litres of grain (Dahl, 2005). Proto-cuneiform writing late 4th millennium BCE includes a picture of a bowl and a head suggesting the concept of a ration of food (Owen, 2004). The bevelled-rim bowls of more-or-less standardised sizes suggest exchange of labour services for food. Individuals exchanging their labour for food may have worked in construction, maintenance and renovation, and in fields and other production units, for instance, pottery, textiles, bread, and beverage production. The context of extant bevelled-rim bowls suggests the temple is a large employer. It is less clear if the bevelled-rim bowls signify the issuance of rations as in a redistributive, administered labour, centralised system determined and operated by temple institutions or if these bowls represent food measures by which more or less voluntary workers were compensated commensurate with various categories of labour and craftsmanship. According to scholars on the earliest known written records in proto-cuneiform and proto-elamite, the ideogram for labourer might be taken to mean slave and vice versa. According to Englund (2004), female slaves "seem" to be among the labourers at the temple institutions. If so, there is no evidence that slaves received measures of food that were different from the measures given to others for same work.

It is a virtual certainty that something or some things of mutually agreed equivalence passed from the recipient of a service or a good to the party parting with a service or a good. Which one of set equivalent, use equivalent, and perceived equivalent were involved or if more than one of these equivalents or gift giving were involved to satisfying both parties is less certain. The modern notion of money did not exist. What is thought to be the earliest known coin, the "Lydian Lion" made from electrum, an alloy of gold and silver, is minted circa 600 BCE in the Greek province of Lydia, present day Turkey (Mitchiner, 2004). The Lydian Lion is thought to have been too large a denomination to play a role in ordinary people's lives. Nevertheless, according to Greek historian Herodotus (484-432 BCE), the first coins were made by the Lydians for use in retail trade that Herodotus claims the Lydians invented. Extant evidence does not support Herodotus on either claim, but Herodotus is a source that retail goods are exchanged for coins in his time. According to Kraay (1968; 1964), (Greek) rulers did not originally issue, that is, mint, coins for use in retail trade.

The notion of media of exchange or currency not abstract as in money exists 4th millennium BCE, in the forms of agricultural produce, handicrafts, metals, and stones. Barley was the original medium of exchange. By late 3rd millennium BCE, traders exchange for gold and silver. Southern Iraq at the time use a unit of weight measure and currency, the "shekel", one shekel weighing 8.4 grams thought to have been originally derived from the weight of 180 barleycorns. Hafford (2000) argues that objects of 0.14 grams, 1/60 shekel, were weighed, suggesting weighing of currency of high value. As little as 9 barley corns as originally represented by 1/60 shekel were not likely to constitute a useful equivalent even in retail trade. Besides, the mechanical scales required for weighing 1/60 shekel are likely to have been few and belonging to the elites. Nevertheless, the shekel would have been used in bulk and retail trade for quantifying trading equivalents. The proverb, "Weighing scales made with sinews are a trap made for the feet…" contributes an explanation why weighing scales are not typically identified at archaeological excavations. Sinews perished with time and non-perishable elements of a weighing scale may have scattered and not be identifiable to archaeologists. Nevertheless, weighing of silver and other metal media of exchange was the transaction norm in West Asia 3rd and 2nd millennium BCE (Silver 2004; Schaps, 2004; Vargyas, 2002; Dercksen, 1996; Archi, 1993; Steinkeller, 1989; Foster, 1977). Elsewhere in the greater region, Egypt introduces "deben" 2nd millennium BCE, one deben weighing circa 91 grams, according Hudson (2004) and Henry (2004) a unit of account for administrative purposes, for instance, tax payments, bearing no relation to a specific object and to intrinsic value, that is, an arbitrary unit of weight, suggesting similarity with money. Hudson's point about similarity with money would bear on the shekel as well. Nevertheless, if as suggested by archaeologists both shekel and deben originally relate to defined grain measures (Hafford, 2000; Petrie, 1926), the shekel and deben were neither truly arbitrary units of account and media of exchange nor were they without intrinsic value. Being grain measures, at least to begin with, the shekel and deben and their fractions would have struck a familiar chord with ordinary people who relied on grains for food and livelihoods. Circa 2000 BCE, Hekanakht exchanges his surplus production by way of both exchange in kind and for an exchange medium based on the "shat", a unit of weight 1/12th of a deben, suggesting the latter medium is high value. According to Allen (2002), the Hekanakht accounts offer "unparalleled insights into the economic life of a moderately well-to-do Egyptian family..". The person Hekanakht possesses a "marketing mind" and operates his agricultural enterprise for profit. Hekanakht owns his farmland. His one reference to a central administration concerns grain he needs to pay as tax assessed on his farm animals. Hekanakht aims to rent more farmland in exchange for grain and homemade cloth spun from flaxseed harvested on his land. Hekanakht's labourers and craftspeople, the latter identified as skilled, are 'paid' in kind. James (1984) construes from the Hekanakht documents that Hekanakht exchanges "24 copper debens", equivalent to 288 shat, for renting additional farmland, suggesting that the copper deben is a piece of copper of standard weight and integrity routinely used in exchanges involving relatively large sums circa 2000 BCE. From circa mid 2nd millennium BCE there is evidence of the shat in the form of silver and gold (Silver, 2004).

Silver (2004) defines coins as "an object, usually but not necessarily of metal, which circulates as a medium of trade, and whose value is guaranteed by the stamp of the issuing authority". Thus, Silver separates the notion of money, starting with coins, from the ancient shekel and deben and fractions, none of which were stamped. Silver's position is that the shekel and deben are units of account in the form of units of weight that can be applied to weighing objects, usually metals, to account for some mutually accepted exchange value(s). To traders and customers, exchanging by units of accounts and money would be equally complex, making 3rd millennium BCE through to the present complex in mundane economic terms. It would be far fetched to claim that ancient Iraq and Egypt units of account were primitive as compared with the notion of money. Modern units of account, that is, money in the nature of coins, bills and other transfer instruments, depend on the issuer(s) as compared to the ancient pieces or ingots of copper, silver, and gold which depended on a societal appreciation of value by some norm obtained at a particular time in a particular space. Nevertheless, the two sets of units of account and money have in common their portability and immediate, domestic exchange value recognition, and uncertain, long-term storage value in connection with wealth accumulation. When the shekel and deben were created, their respective grain equivalencies could be easily converted in exchange situations across their host societies. However, for subsequent generations of exchangers the grain basics were usurped by complex relationships with metals that, nevertheless, were adopted and adapted by individual societies in the promotion of exchange. Aristotle (384-322 BCE) in "Politics", suggests that coins came about because "it was too difficult to carry around the various necessities of life". Coins saved "the trouble of weighing and to mark the value" relative to earlier metal media of exchange. Coins enabled people to acquire necessities without having to carry necessities around with them for consumption or exchange or both. Nevertheless, pieces of various unmarked, unadulterated metals of various weights and shapes and perceived if not registered values had identical exchange functions to coins, before the introduction of coins.

1.3 A synthesis on the evidence of distributive trade 4th-2rd millennium BCE

Summing up the evidence of the relatively few selected 'glimpses' on trade history over several millennia, societies in Breasted's (1935; 1933) Fertile Crescent exchange across food chains and 'economic' systems by reciprocity, redistribution, individual-to-individual and public market exchanges 4th-2nd millennium BCE. Exchange equivalents soon include units of accounts that augment and substitute for equivalent exchanges of daily necessities and handicrafts. The temples and the kingships receive some goods and services on a basis of reciprocity and acquire additional goods and services from redistribution. Redistribution is by centrally determined 'exchange rates' for categories of labour. The craftsman and the supervisor receive more in exchange for their labour as compared to a menial labourer. The central administration keeps some share of the production for its own consumption including to trade abroad in exchange for luxury goods. Retail market exchanges are for equivalents as perceived by consumers and retail traders and as set by central administrators for the types of goods that are a part of the redistributive system. The archaeological record shows large city populations and major population centres in the region and period. These populations depended on domestic production and distributive trade in a combination of redistribution, long distance trade, and retail trade.

Archaeological reports and contributions of other scholars in the past ten to twenty years refresh and augment the contributions of earlier attempts to come to grips with socio-economic changes in a region stretching due west from southwest Iran to the Mediterranean 4th-2nd millennium BCE. Breasted (1935; 1933) designating this region as the Fertile Crescent succinctly characterises its potential for exploitation by human ingenuity and human ingenuity did indeed exploit the potential. The picture that emerges is of innovative and growing city societies inhabiting the region, each city typically centrally administrated first by temple institutions and subsequently by temple and kingship institutions. By the close of 4th millennium BCE unprecedented large societies had obtained the wherewithal to systematically producing in excess of the needs of the direct labour and immediate dependents, for instance, food, beverages, pottery, textiles. The earliest known mass production and large-scale organisational techniques were developed by people living in the earliest known cities. Systematic and regular trade begin with these cities that gradually reach farther and farther out in search for raw materials and goods not available or in short-supply domestically and for good exchange rates for domestic production. Extant archaeological evidence is not a continuous line of revelations. Extant monuments of buildings, context of artefacts, and written representations are widely separated in time and space and typically predisposed to activities of the elites. Nevertheless, the magnitude of the urban revolution attributable to ancient societies in southern Iraq is abundantly documented in archaeology. Anthropological interpretations lean toward long distance trade and retail trade as being widespread and to be expected.

Distributive trade in these societies received its impetus and degree of sophistication from the contemporaneous dynamics of innovation and the growing needs of rapidly growing populations coming together and organising on cities as population centres. Similar, documented Greek and Roman developments follow circa two millennia later.

1.3 Some thoughts across time and discourses: setting the stage for enriching the discourse

Greek historian Xenophon (circa 430-355 BCE) in "Memorabilia", his defence of Socrates, narrates Socrates' dialogue with Aristodemus on surplus production, "Socrates: Then you are not aware that by means of the manufacture of one of these alone - his barley meal store - Nausicydes not only maintains himself and his domestics, but many pigs and cattle besides, and realises such large profits that he frequently contributes to the state benevolences; while there is Cyrebus, again, who, out of a bread factory, more than maintains the whole of his establishment, and lives in the lap of luxury; and Demeas of Collytus gets a livelihood out of a cloak business, and Menon as a mantua-maker, and so, again, more than half the Megarians by the making of vests. Aristodemus: Bless me, yes! They have got a set of barbarian fellows, whom they purchase and keep, to manufacture by forced labour whatever takes their fancy...".

Greek historian Plato (427-347 BCE) in his "The Republic" contributes a 1st millennium BCE reflection on the connection of trade and city. Informing about Athens by his interlocutors Adeimantus and Socrates, "In this city itself, how will they exchange what they have produced with one another? It was for just this that we made a partnership and founded the city…Plainly, by buying and selling….Out of this we will get a market and an established currency as a token for exchange". According to Plato, people's desire to "exchange what they have produced with one another" was the reason people moved together in cities. Retail trade was the reason for "an established currency of exchange". The archaeological material and narratives available to scholars on 1st millennium BCE Greek and Roman contexts far exceed similar evidence available for analyses of Fertile Crescent, Indus Valley, and China/Yellow River contexts of the preceding millennia.

2nd millennium BCE if not earlier, cities begin to incorporate and allocate spaces for people wishing to trade to exhibit and trade their goods, for instance, Ur, southern Iraq (Barber, 1994; Falkenstein, 1953). At first, public markets are typically located on the periphery of towns and cities. In the latter part of 1st millennium BCE, public markets are in central locations in Hellenistic Athens and Republic Rome. In central locations, leaders and functionaries of the political system can and do oversee and control the course of market activity. Public markets become a part of the conventional structure of state government as trading grows in importance to economic activity and livelihoods. The Roman “macellum” becomes a marketplace for both goods and ideas at the centre of economic and political life in Roman cities, similarly to the Hellenistic Greek “agora” a few centuries earlier. The 1st millennium BCE public market systems of the Greek agora and Roman macellum are followed 1st millennium CE if not earlier by the similar Persian and Arabian systems of the “bazaar” and “suq”. The archaeological record is myopic on a chronology. Nevertheless, the agora, macellum, and bazaar/suq are the earliest known public market systems that spread across regions.

Archaeological remains of the urban bazaar in 1st millennium CE Islamic societies in West Asia and North Africa contribute significant dimensions to a study of ancient retail trade. For instance, the Bazaars of Isfahan, Shiraz, and Tabriz, present day Iran, show further aggregation as compared to the Greek agora and Roman macellum; large expanse of public market area and lay-out of market area, shops organised linearly, and over time under one continuous roof, and the incorporation of a section dedicated to long-distance traders, the “caravanserai”, a wholesale market. The latter typically accommodates several, entire caravans for the time it takes to trade their cargoes. The bazaar represents a local centre of economic agglomeration encompassing production, wholesale and retail trade in products of all kinds and types that the long distance traders and bazaar traders perceived to be of interest to local consumers.

On Iran, according to Gharipour (2003), “the creation of cities was based on not only the growth of the population but also on the increase of production, which brought about the growth of trade and accumulation of wealth”. According to Abbas (1994), “Specialisation of occupations and the requirements of the primary societies brought about transactions and over time a special place was specified for this purpose that eventually gave form to Bazaar. These Bazaars were expanded and were turned into the place for transaction of the goods of several villages close together. By its expansion a specific district was created whose inhabitants were experts in various professions and traders. Such districts were conventionally called the Bazaar of the city. The ancient Shush (Susa) at its inception was a good example. Thus the Bazaar became the inseparable part of each city and the place for the exchange of commercial goods from near and far off places”. Nevertheless, the archaeological record is myopic on evidence of a pre-Common Era public market in the city of Susa, present day southwest Iran.

1.3.1 Fast forward to the present

The ancient bazaar and the suq become surviving, dynamic public market concepts in Islamic nations. Of the agora and macellum concepts, the characteristics of the macellum are not typically discernible at today’s public markets and market streets whilst the characteristics of the agora and of the bazaar/suq, in an amalgam, can be discerned in public markets and market streets from New York to Tokyo.

Retail mass market innovation subsequent to the agora, macellum, and bazaar/suq is myopic until the most recent two centuries. According to McKinsey (2001), it is only in recent decades that the retail industry has contributed significantly to technological innovation as compared to manufacturing industry. Nevertheless, seminal spatial and technological change begins with the emergence of full service department stores in city cores in France and USA 1850-1900. The advent of the department store started a revolution for business as well as for society, affecting most facets of economic and social life with its contributions to the economy and consumers; the department store becomes a globalising cultural phenomenon and one of society's most innovative and influential institutions (Tamilia, 2002; Crossick and Jaumain, 1999; Savitt, 1999, 1992; Kramer, 1996; Leach, 1993; Benson and Shaw, 1992; Benson, 1988, 1979; Nord, 1986; Madison, 1976). The department store concept is followed in the 20th century by some retailers configuring customer self service on fast moving consumer goods and launching the supermarket and subsequently the hypermarket concepts. The 'science' of grocery retailing changed circa 1915-1920 with the opening of self-service, dry-goods grocery stores, in USA. The supermarket chain is thought to originate with American grocery retailer A&P, formerly Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Co., in the 1930s. As examples of supermarket spread, Tesco adopts the supermarket concept for London in 1948 and Cold Storage adopts the supermarket concept for Singapore in 1958 and introduces it in Kuala Lumpur in the 1960s. The hypermarket is a French invention. In the 1960s Carrefour transformed the 'super market' into a 'hyper market', a one-stop-shopping concept, by expanding assortment and variety, especially non-food goods, and providing numerous, adjacent parking spaces for the convenience of consumers who increasingly had cars. The size of the real estate that the hypermarket requires and targeting the motorised public meant locating hypermarkets mainly on edge-of-town or out-of-town locations, near traffic arteries and major traffic junctions. With the supermarket and hypermarket began a spatial transformation of retail trade that significantly upped the ante for all retailers and benefits to consumers. In developed economies, the large retail spaces of supermarkets and hypermarkets were soon followed by a variety of small store, self service concepts, for instance, the 24-hour convenience store. The latter inventions begin to make themselves widely felt by consumers in the latter part of the 20th century. By this time, the anti-thesis to the small retail trader, the chain retailer, is already an increasingly frequent organisation form that more than perhaps anything else places the small retail trader at a disadvantage. Organisational "smallness" severely limits small retail trader access to obtaining the benefits of economies of scale that chains enjoy. Retail distribution of fast moving consumer goods directly touches the daily lives of all urban populations. Yet it is not until the 20th century that retailers on fast moving consumer goods begin to widely exploit scope and scale. Until then, scope and scale were exclusively in the domain of manufacturers and wholesalers. In the present, retail trade is a pronounced dynamic process of change and growth in developed and some developing economies. Typically, retail trade by a relatively small number of corporations and retailer alliances are applying scope and scale to attract consumers and increase bargaining power with manufacturers. Nevertheless, whilst small retail traders continue to be by far the most numerous retailers, their market shares are typically declining rapidly in markets that are open to competition.

The numerous small wholesale traders and retail traders that traditionally made up retail trade are typically becoming less numerous. In developing economies, this trend typically began in the 1990s and continues. In developed economies, the trend began earlier and continues. In UK since 1950, all single shop retailers declined to 200,000 from 450,000 and sundry-shop and mini-market type retailers declined to 21,000 from 280,000. Developed economies are at different stages of the trend. For instance, Greece, Italy, Japan, and Spain are at early stages. Germany, Scandinavia, and UK are at late stages. Small retail traders are far from being an extinct category, but the downward numerical trend continues in markets where chains have gained a foothold and are not restrained by national policies other than competition policy (Holst, 2005).

Ghosh (1994) suggests that retail chains driven by economies of scale start to grow from the 1920s onward and ascend with the emergence of the supermarket concept in the 1930s. The growth suggests that not only did consumers adapt to the supermarket format, consumers also adopted the supermarket for its attributes. Some retailers succeed in adapting the supermarket format singularly to consumers' changing needs up until the 1970s if not the 1980s when spatial competition turns plural with the emergence and ascent of hypermarkets, superstores, and supercenters, behemoths as compared to the supermarket and a fillip to accelerated growth of chains. Thus, it took until the latter part of the 20th century or circa 5000 years for retail trade on fast moving consumer goods to augment with spatial and service conditions that to consumers as well as retailers represented a sea change and a consumer alternative to historically small if not cramped retail spaces.

2.0 Contexts: Ancient trading environments conditioning traders

According to Shupp (2000), retail trade is looked upon as servile and demeaning in 1st millennium BCE Greece. Farming and income from land ownership are acceptable. Craftsmen and self-employed individuals receive little respect as only the lowest class of person would labour for others to earn an income. Entering the Common Era, the retail trader is typically the lowest rank among traders and other entrepreneurs and the connection of production, distribution and service is invisible.

2.1 Discourses on Republic Greece

Greek historian Herodotos (circa 480-425 BCE) relates from oral tradition in Lydia, present day Turkey, a Greek state within the then Persian Empire, how Lydia invented coinage and introduced retail trade (Hanfmann, 1983; Tassel, 1998). Hanfmann suggests that Lydia circa 600 BCE is the earliest known prototype of a commercial, monetary urban economy. That is, at the time the agricultural barter economy in Lydia is beginning to be replaced by a monetised trading system, the Lydian ruler minting coinage as currency. This paper's review of evidence of retail trade and exchange media in southern Iraq and Egypt suggests that Lydia did not invent retail trade. The ruler of Lydia may have minted the first pieces of metal now known as coins, but the first Lydian coin, the Lydian Lion, was too large a denomination to be useful in retail trade. Much earlier, southern Iraq and Egypt had each designed weight systems, units of account, for facilitating grain and metals as media of exchange in both low value and high value exchange transactions. The latter metal exchange media, contrary to the first coin, were not minted by rulers who, nevertheless, accepted the other media in exchange at no apparent discount to their exchange value among traders and ordinary people.

Aristotle and Plato are the first theorists to suggest structuring to trade as a profession by identifying categories of traders. Aristotle and Plato place retail trade in a hierarchical perspective and identify retail traders. Aristotle, in "Politics" IX (circa 350 BCE), "For example, a shoe is used for wear, and is used for exchange; both are uses of the shoe. He who gives a shoe in exchange for money or food to him who wants one, does indeed use the shoe as a shoe, but this is not its proper or primary purpose, for a shoe is not made to be an object of barter. The same may be said of all possessions, for the art of exchange extends to all of them, and it arises at first from what is natural, from the circumstance that some have too little, others too much. Hence we may infer that retail trade is not a natural part of the art of getting wealth; had it been so, men would have ceased to exchange when they had enough". Plato, in "Republic" II (circa 360 BCE), "And therefore what they produce at home must be not only enough for themselves, but such both in quantity and quality as to accommodate those from whom their wants are supplied. Very true. Then more husbandmen and more artisans will be required? They will. Not to mention the importers and exporters, who are called merchants? Yes. Then we shall want merchants? We shall"; and further Plato, Republic II, "Suppose now that a husbandman, or an artisan, brings some production to market, and he comes at a time when there is no one to exchange with him, …is he to leave his calling and sit idle in the market-place? Not at all; he will find people there who, seeing the want, undertake the office of salesmen. In well-ordered States they are commonly those who are the weakest in bodily strength, and therefore of little use for any other purpose; their duty is to be in the market, and to give money in exchange for goods to those who desire to sell and to take money from those who desire to buy. This want, then, creates a class of retail-traders in our State. Is not 'retailer' the term which is applied to those who sit in the market-place engaged in buying and selling, while those who wander from one city to another are called merchants? Yes he said". Aristotle and Plato identify husbandmen, artisans, and craftsmen as producers, distributors as traders and retail traders for linking the two former with consumption. Further, from Aristotle and Plato traders can be identified as buying from producers and other traders located on the domestic market and reselling to domestic retail traders, and traders importing, traders exporting, and traders both importing and exporting.

Aristotle (circa 384-322 BCE) wrote the 350 BCE Athenian Constitution. Chapter 51 (Kenyon translation) conveys the foci of state supervision of public markets in Athens and Piraeus,

"Market Commissioners (Agoranomi) are elected by lot, five for Piraeus, five for the city. Their statutory duty is to see that all articles offered for sale in the market are pure and unadulterated.

Commissioners of Weights and Measures (Metronomi) are elected by lot, five for the city, and five for Piraeus. They see that sellers use fair weights and measures.

Formerly there were ten Corn Commissioners (Sitophylaces), elected by lot, five for Piraeus, and five for the city; but now there are twenty for the city and fifteen for Piraeus. Their duties are, first, to see that the unprepared corn in the market is offered for sale at reasonable prices, and secondly, to see that the millers sell barley meal at a price proportionate to that of barley, and that the bakers sell their loaves at a price proportionate to that of wheat, and of such weight as the Commissioners may appoint; for the law requires them to fix the standard weight.

There are ten Superintendents of the Mart, elected by lot, whose duty is to superintend the Mart, and to compel merchants to bring up into the city two-thirds of the corn which is brought by sea to the Corn Mart".

Greek philosophers typically hold trade and retail trade in low esteem and are preoccupied with other strata of society, seeing dangers to the state from commerce. The Greek economy is based on the "oikos", the household. Hesiod (circa 700 BCE) views the household almost exclusively in its productive aspect as an individual unit organised to carry out labour and acquire subsistence and surplus. Hesiod's Ascran households defined all relationships in terms of productivity and control over resources and each household is set against all others since status and respect can be gained by both self-sufficiency and sharing (Edwards, 2004). Bresson (2003) suggests that ancient Greek traders were classified as either a part of a "merchant aristocracy" or are "poor outcasts, carefully kept by the cities at good distance". Both categorisations place these traders as an integral part of the polity and the agora for domestic trade and the wholesale market, the "emporion", for foreign trade. 1st millennium BCE Greek polities elevate peasant warriors to a high position and see commerce as base and having a corrupting influence on communities. Base acquisition of wealth destroys homogeneity and creates faction. The polities see traders and craftsmen as less willing to defend the civic territory as compared to peasants.

At best, Aristotle took producers and the provision of distributive services for granted. At worst, Aristotle regarded the two lowly, "Those who provide necessaries for an individual are slaves, and those who provide them for society are handicraftsmen and day-labourers" (Politics, Vol. 1). For Aristotle, commerce has two aspects, that is, "oeconomicus" and "chrematisike". The first aspect involves matters from the running of a household to simple trade by equivalencies. The second aspect involves trade for profit. Aristotle thought trade for profit to be an unjustifiable practice and roughly equivalent to theft as it was wholly devoid of virtue. Philosophers, politicians, and generals enjoyed greater civil and social status than those pursuing wealth-creating activities. Philosophies of Aristotle and Plato (circa 428-348 BCE) argue that the purpose of human perfection assumes the activity of reasoning about the theoretic or contemplative life. Trade and mechanical labour prevent this. That is, the latter occupations are not acts of excellence, service to others or service to truth. These occupations are merely a means to making an income and are, thus, base. Nevertheless, neither Aristotle nor Plato could have been under any illusion about the mechanical labour and procuring the materials required to produce the military hardware on which the Greek states depended for conquest and defence. The Greek term Banausos, Βαναυσος, synonymous with (something that is) base (and describing the bias of the warrior class against the values of the commercial class) has inspired the English adjective, banausic, used in connection with mechanical occupation, for instance ‘grease monkey’, a term for a mechanic. The Greek term refers to workers and traders, including farmers, artisans, artists, bankers or financiers, and retail and wholesale traders. In the Greek states, Banausos established a psychological distance between the citizens and the traders and the word was used to condition people to turn away from fields of commercial endeavour. Man should not pursue the mere means of life as Aristotle and Plato suspect traders and others do. Plato (427-347 BCE), a student of Socrates (469-399 BCE), criticises the means of trade rather than questioning its ultimate good. Plato writes in his Euthydemus, Book VIII, “But let there be no retail trade for the sake of money-making, either in these or any other articles, in the city or country at all…..As to the retail trade in these things, whether of barley or wheat set apart for meal and flour, or any other kind of food, no one shall sell them to citizens or their slaves, nor shall any one buy of a citizen; but let the stranger sell them in the market of strangers, to artisans and their slaves, making an exchange of wine and food, which is commonly called retail trade”.

Nevertheless, ancient Athenians were not negative to efforts at making “moderate” profits that were used also for promoting the wellbeing of the city. Ancient Athenian institutions encouraged resident aliens and slaves in business and appear to have been a means for the latter to achieve social advancement and individual liberty, becoming “freedmen”. The majority of enterprises were small-scale efforts operated by the proprietor. Bitros and Karayiannis (2004) suggest that the Athenian system of economic and social incentives was deliberately designed to promote entrepreneurial activities, albeit not among native Athenians. According to Karayiannis (1992), entrepreneurship in ancient Athens was not in the capitalistic spirit we know today as it was limited by the philosophical and ethical restraints imposed on it, ideas of the Greeks on entrepreneurship that are still valid today. The academic discipline of economics derives it name from the Greek word “oikonomia” (Singer, 1958) as applied to the abstract matter of household, estate, and public management, a usage that led to the discipline of political economy in the present via de Montcretien in 17th century CE France (Lowry, 1979).

Four centuries after Aristotle and Plato, historian Plutarch’s (46?-120 CE) work “Solon” suggests the low esteem in which both classical philosophers and the aristocratic ethos continue to hold retail traders and retail trade. In contrast, traders who travel long distances abroad to bringing home foreign goods are appreciated. Aristotle, Plato, and Plutarch position ancient trade and traders in a socio economic perspective relative to the Greek and Roman states and aristocracies and consumers. These perspectives typically persevere in society into the 20th century and perhaps in the present, for instance, state intervention on retail markets and status of foreign trade in the national economy. Ibn Khaldun (1377) observes how merchandise became more valuable when traders transported the merchandise from one country to another and Hume (1752) and other economists highlight gains from foreign trade. Of early economists, only Ibn Khaldun recognises the contribution retail traders make to urban populations

According to Karayiannis (1992), Greek trade was divided into wholesale and retail trade in terms of usefulness, fairness, profitability and risk-taking. Wholesale was justified as useful and not dishonourable, because “the volume, the variety and the quality of goods that circulate in the city are increased; the market discrepancies between demand and supply in the different cities producing different kinds and volume of goods are diminished; and the cost in searching for the goods demanded is decreased”. Karayiannis’ study of Greek philosophers and historians places the small scale of individual retailers in a trade and social perspective. The Greek elite(s) ignored small enterprise’s contribution to ordinary people and the military, preferred large over small trade enterprise and was at best paternalistic if not condescending to small enterprise.

2.2 Discourses on Republic and Imperial Rome

In the Roman Republic, Marcus Cicero (104-43 BCE), a senator, reflected Greek thinking that commerce and trade are "a corruption and degeneration of morals" (De Republica, Book II). In his treatise on Duties, Marcus Cicero writes, "All gains made by hired labourers are dishonourable and base, for what we buy of them is their labour, not their artistic skill: with them the very gain itself does but increase the slavishness of the work. All retail dealing too may be put in the same category, for the dealer will gain nothing except by profuse lying, and nothing is more disgraceful than untruthful huckstering. Again, the work of all artisans (opifices) is sordid; there can be nothing honourable in a workshop" (Fowler, 2004). Nevertheless, when in 64 BCE Marcus Cicero runs for consul, the highest elected office of the Roman Republic, his younger brother, Quintus, writes to him in a letter "…"The first and obvious thing is that you embrace the Roman senators and equites, and the active and popular men of all the other orders. There are many city men of good business habits, there are many freedmen engaged in the Forum (macellum) who are popular and energetic: these men try with all your might, both personally and by common friends, to make eager in your behalf. Seek them out, send agents to them, show them that they are putting you under the greatest possible obligation.." (Halsall, 1998). Quintus Cicero's advice to his brother suggests that the low esteem in which aristocracy held individuals earning income from labour and trade is blended with the recognition by some aristocrats that the former are both important actors (voters?) on the political economy system of the Roman state and some of these actors are recognised for their entrepreneurial habits and energetic behaviour.

According to Smith (1776), the greater part of the Roman Republic citizens have no land and find it hard to maintain their "independency". Nevertheless, if a citizen has little stock he "may either farm the land of another or he may carry on a little retail trade; and if he has no stock he may find employment either as a country labourer or as an artificer. But among the ancient Romans the lands of the rich were all cultivated by slaves, who wrought under an overseer who was likewise a slave; so that a poor freeman had little chance of being employed either as a farmer or as a labourer. All trades and manufactures too, even the retail trade, were carried on by the slaves of the rich for the benefit of their masters, whose wealth, authority, and protection made it difficult for a poor freeman to maintain the competition against them". Thus, famous economist Adam Smith provides a 18th century CE introduction to distributive trade and traders in Republic Rome 509-43 BCE when the Republic was dissolved by Augustus, the first emperor, and the heir of Julius Ceasar. Emperor Augustus is the first Roman ruler to recognise "men of business", the "equites", as a social and hereditary rank second to the aristocracy (Smitha, 1998). These men of business do not include retail traders. According to Oertel (1934), Augustus repulses "the tendencies towards State capitalism and State socialism…" and favours private enterprise, private property, and free trade. Following Augustus, traders on the Roman Empire have favourable conditions throughout the first century CE. Common people including craftsmen and traders can aspire to minor civic posts and advance to higher positions by proving themselves of exceptional skills. Nevertheless, Augustus also prescribes that organisation among craftsmen and traders only be allowed a form of fraternal socialising lest the organisation might harm the state.

Malmendier (2005) argues that in the Roman Republic, private enterprise comes close to the modern corporation as a continuing entity. The "societates publicanorum" first appear as contractors to the Roman government, for instance, on public works, provisioning the military, and collecting taxes. Societates publicanorum were associations of "publicani"[5], that is, entrepreneurs who had formed into a "corpus", the latin word for body, a collective identity distinct from any particular participant and acting as an individual. In the context of the Roman Republic, the societetas publicanorum were similarly structured to the corporations emerging in Europe 17th century CE, the harbingers of the corporation in a modern perspective. The gradual development of a political economy of state and profit-oriented entrepreneurs created tensions in the Roman

[5] Publicani, "to do with the *publicum*", that is, the public.

Republic. Toward the end of the Republic, Augustus took measures to limit the activities of the publicani by abolishing tax farming concessions (Malmendier, 2005).

Republic Rome distinguishes traders by at least two categories, “negotiatores” and “mercatores”, similar to Athens. Negotiatores buy and sell in bulk, domestically and abroad. Negotiatores are wholesale traders with functions similar to present day wholesalers, buying bulk, breaking bulk, finance, and currency exchange. The Roman military organisation is a customer of negotiatores. Mercatores are present in all the public markets and are also operating outside the public market, from shops, stalls, and hawking goods at the side of the road.

Beginning circa 200 BCE, the city of Rome builds and organises public markets for mercatores. Walker (2003) quotes Varro (116-27 BCE), “After all these things which pertain to human sustenance had been brought into one place, and the place had been built upon, it was called a Macellum”. According to De Ruyt (1983), the macellum emphasises the desire on the part of city leaders to separate the buying and selling of food and other goods from the other functions of the forum. Thus, the city leaders established the Cuppedinis market for generic goods of any kind and luxury goods, the Piscarium market for sea food, the Squarium for meats, Vinarium for beverages, Boarium for trading of cattle, and Holitorium for vegetables, fruits, and herbs. Consumers shop at different macella for different types of food. Retail traders are specialised on a particular food or non-food category. The macellum focuses consumer needs by categories of daily necessities and not consumer convenience whilst narratives on the Greek agora suggest that the agora is a sundry market offering as many categories as are made available to retail traders. Same-category retail traders are thought to frequently group together on the agora sales area.

At the end of the Rome Republic the ties between Roman senators and traders are not as close as is usually assumed (Andreau, 2001). Nevertheless, both senators and equites can set their freedmen up in business and be patrons to clients to making a financial interest in trading possible. Sons of senators frequently give up senatorial aspirations and enter professions of the equite class. Custom prevents Roman aristocracy from engaging in retail trade and a law 218 CE, the Lex Claudia, prohibits senators from engaging in overseas trade. The senators and the equites possessed the capital that typically entrepreneurs did not, yet, officially, members of Rome’s upper classes cannot aspire to high political life if engaged in any type of trade.

According to Metropolitan Museum (2004), at the end of the first century BCE, international trade has expanded greatly involving the five powers of the Roman Empire, Parthian Empire, Kushan Empire, the nomadic confederation of the Xiongnu, and the Han Empire. Alexander’s empire is trading from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. Known as emporia, a vast network of strategically located trading posts enables exchange, wholesale distribution, and storage of goods. Domestic and international trade of the Roman Empire catered to the Empire in two ways. Romans could not by themselves produce enough necessities, commodities, and goods to maintain both their various lifestyles and the military. Trade within the Empire and trade to and from other nations had to come through territories of the Empire by traders’ caravans and shipping. Goods of Arabic, Persian, Indian, and Chinese origins provided the Roman Empire with the opportunity to collect taxes and customs duties to supporting the state apparatus, infrastructure development, and military. Items needed by the Empire included wheat, iron, tin, copper, silver, gold, precious stones, jewellery, pottery, animals, timber, clothing, beverages, and honey. According to Parker (1984), the shipping volume of commodities and goods during the five centuries of the Roman Empire is perhaps not exceeded until circa 16th-17th century CE. This suggest that a large amount of capital is channelled into trading activities and high social ranks, restricted on trading, finance a part of it and share in its profits and losses.

Through the Roman Republic and subsequently the Roman Empire, circa 500 BCE-500 CE, retail trade increasingly becomes an integral part of Roman distributive trade, the latter growing vastly in volume and geographical reach. The custom and system of distributing free grain to a portion of the population of Rome augments rather than competes with the initiatives of both wholesale and retail traders. Nevertheless, whilst negotiatores, the wholesale and long distance traders, are well regarded and typically considered useful to the state, mercatores, the retail traders, are barely tolerated, a 'necessary evil' in a way, and to be strictly controlled.

2.3 Distributive trade 10th century CE Constantinople. Retail trade regulations

Constantinople is the capitol of the Byzantine Empire, the part of the Roman Empire that continues after Rome's fall 476 CE. Traders in 10th century CE Constantinople were regulated by the "Book of the Eparch", the emperor Leo VI (Stephenson, 2002; Koder, 1991; Freshfield, 1938). Grocers sold food and non-food items, the latter including resin, cedar and linseed oils, camphor, gypsum, pottery, and nails. According to Mango (2000), grocers are 'scattered throughout the city" as are bakers whilst non-food "specialised" traders tend to be clustered on public market areas typically designated to city colonnades and porticos at this time. Viewed in a perspective of service to consumers, the 10th century CE Constantinople retail market system suggests greater convenience to consumers as compared to the preceding macella system in Rome. Nevertheless, in both Rome and Constantinople some retail traders operated outside the public market areas. At a time when in the fallen empire on Rome the authority of the state had virtually disappeared, the Byzantine Empire adhered to tradition. According to Oikonomides (2002), "Those in power intervened frequently in economic life and at many points of it, working on the basis of the old theory that the purpose of action of any kind was to foster the smooth operation of the state machine of the empire". Byzantine trade regulations are not primarily intended to serve the interests of the producers, traders, and consumers. This tenor is similar to that of the prededing Roman Empire (Geanakoplos, 1966). The Book of Eparch regulation on grocers is a unique window to a centrally controlled retail trade environment of circa 1000 years ago. Control is by inclusions and omissions and much detail in a large urban society immersed in Roman law as was Europe at the time, and plural cultures,

Reg. 1 - Grocers may keep their shops throughout the city as well in the squares as in the streets, so that the necessaries of life may be easily procurable; they shall sell: meat, salt fish, meal, cheese, honey, olive oil, vegetables of all kinds, butter, dry and liquid resin, cedar oil, camphor, linseed oil, gypsum, bowls, vessels, etc. nails, bottles in fact every article which can be sold by steelyards and not by scales. They are forbidden to sell any article which comes within the trades of perfumers, soap-chandlers, linen-drapers, taverners or butchers. Any contravention is punished by flogging, shaving, and exile;

Reg. 2 - Any grocer who has weights or measures which do not bear the seal of the eparch or who files the coinage[6], or refuses to take a tetarteron[7], bearing for authenticity the effigy of the sovereign, shall be flogged, shaved and exiled;

Reg. 3 - Every grocer convicted of fraud in completing a sale or who raises the agreed price, shall pay a fine of ten nomismata[8]. Anyone exposing his wares for sale on a Sunday or a feast day shall be liable to the same penalty;

Reg. 4 - Grocers are to watch over the special commodities of their trade imported from abroad so that anyone, whether or not a member of the guild, who hoards against a time of scarcity may be denounced to the eparch and punished by him;

[6] that is, reducing the metal content.
[7] a coin, denomination.
[8] Nomismata, plural for nomisma, a type of coin.

Reg. 5 - Grocers shall sell their wares and make a profit of two miliaresia per nomisma[9]. If their measures show that they have exacted a greater profit they shall be flogged, shaved and cease to trade as grocers; and

Reg. 6 - Any grocer who openly or secretly tries to raise the rent of another grocer shall be liable to the aforesaid penalty.

Nevertheless, Byzantine state control of retail trade can be flexible as shown by the regulation on the baker's guild. The price of bread in Constantinople was controlled, but by *Reg. 4*, "Bakers are to go to the eparch whenever the price of wheat rises or falls so that with the help of the symponos the weight of bread may be regulated according to the cost of the wheat". That *Reg. 4* is a significant concession by the state becomes clear from the relatively intrusive *Reg. 1*, "Bakers shall sell bread by weight fixed according to the price of corn as ordered by the eparch. They are to buy corn in the warehouse of the assessor by quantities corresponding to the amount upon which the tax of one gold nomisma is payable; and after grinding it and making it into fermented bread they shall calculate their remuneration at the rate of one keration plus two miliaresia per gold nomisma, the keration for the net profit, and two miliaresia for paying the hands and the animals employed in grinding the grain as well as the cost of firing and lighting". Bread was clearly handled by a mandatory guild. Nevertheless, there was no compelling reason for every single craft and trade in Constantinople to be organised into a compulsory guild (Maniatis, 2001). Many trades dealing in other basic consumer goods of equal or grater importance to the general public remained 'unorganised', for instance, milk, eggs, fruits, vegetables, clothing, furniture, utensils, and building materials. Butter and cheese were handled by the grocers' guild. Koder (1995) attributes the Book of Eparch omissions to the omitted goods being sold largely by a multitude of small traders on both a permanent and itinerant basis and the state/eparch being cognisant of the potential effect of price controls on regularity of supply and market availability of perishables. Nevertheless, these small retail traders were compelled to operate in designated market places.

The regulations on traders in Constantinople show how pervasive and elaborate state control on domestic trade had become since King Hammurabi's law code circa beginning 2nd millennium BCE included some rules for traders to follow and Aristotle wrote rudimentary control on trade and traders into the Athenian Constitution 350 BCE.

2.4 England's Magna Carta: opening the door to distributive trade in post-Roman Europe

England's "Magna Carta" 1215 CE was a fillip to retail trade and long distance trade. The Magna Carta was the most complete social contract of its day, agreed by the king, his/the barons, and the London elite, reflecting "the commune of the whole land" (Clanchy, 1983). The Magna Carta provided a new kind of property right by its recognition of distributive trade's place in society.

The Magna Carta protected English subjects from arbitrary confiscation by the crown or state and gave protection to both English and foreign traders, "..a Merchant likewise, saving to him his merchandise.." (*item 14*); "All Merchants (if they were not openly prohibited before) shall have their safe and sure Conduct to depart out of England, to come into England, to tarry in, and go through England, as well by Land as by Water, to buy and sell without any manner of evil Tolts, by the old and rightful Customs, except in Time of War. And if they be of a land making War against us, and such be found in our Realm at the beginning of the Wars, they shall be attached without harm of body or goods, until it be known unto us, or our Chief Justice, how our Merchants be intreated there in the land making War against us; and if our Merchants be well intreated there, theirs shall be likewise with us" (*item 30*). Further, the Magna Carta provides for uniformity of measures, "there shall be but one measure of wine throughout the realm, and one measure of ale,

[9] Miliaresia, a type of coin, 1/12th the value of one nomisma. That is, the allowed 'profit' is equal to 16.67 pct of the sale price.

and one measure of corn, that is to say, the quarter of London; and one breadth of dyed cloth, russets, and haberjects, that is to say, two yards within the lists. And it shall be of weights as of measures" (*item 25*). In contrast to the Magna Carta, earlier Roman law, first emanating from the Roman Empire based on Rome and subsequently from the Roman Empire based on Constantinople, provides for distributive trade as being a part of the state and inseparable from state matters. The Magna Carta's economic provisions heralded separation of the economic sphere from political control in Europe. The Magna Carta sent a strong signal to the pluralistic setting of European states. Gradually institutions conducive to economic growth take shape, that is, first farmers and traders in England, then farmers and traders on the European continent gradually come to keep some of the fruits of their successes.

3.0 The received image of traders

Trade entrepreneurs distributing daily necessities and sustenance goods to consumers appear to typically be tolerated until 1st millennium BCE. At least there is no documentary evidence that traders were held in low regard or the opposite. When cities first emerge 4th millennium BCE and through 3rd millennium BCE, central administrations are much involved in production, distribution of the production in exchange for labour, and exchanging for luxury goods by long distance trade. Nevertheless, entrepreneurs on both production and trade increasingly interact with the central effort and increasingly augment domestic distribution. Retail traders are lowly regarded by the Greek and Roman elites 1st millennium BCE. Long distance traders are less lowly regarded as long distance trade is considered by the state to have merit. This tenor continues in the following millennia.

Ibn Khaldun's (1377) observations and thoughts on 14th century CE North Africa and West Asia Islamic society reflect the inspiration written into England's Magna Carta circa a century and a half earlier that recognised the necessity of trade and shored up the standing in society of traders generally. Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldun like Aristotle qualifies the character of the trader. According to Ibn Khaldun, the trader's character is "remote from that of manliness which is the characteristic quality of rulers and noblemen". Ibn Khaldun also observes that some traders "have noble souls and are magnanimous, but they are very rare in this world". Two centuries earlier, another Muslim writer might have put his finger on a or the major issue, one of morality, concerning the received image of traders. In his 1082 CE Qabus Nama (A Mirror for Princes), Kai Ka'us ibn Iskandar describes the appropriate behaviour for various occupations, for instance, "A merchant who is dishonest will not be trusted again". Ibn Iskander assigns to traders the practicing of honesty as a pre-qualification for being successful on interfacing with customers and acquiring good standing in society, a sentiment that runs through to today. The pre-qualification by Ibn Iskander regarding honesty in the acquisition of trust and implied by Ibn Khaldun is easily recognisable in all occupations today that wish to retain customers.

The earliest unqualified acknowledgement that small trade entrepreneurs receive can be attributed to Adam Smith (1776). Smith's 18th century CE observations of 'Homo economicus' and the market society in North America recognise the contribution by retail traders. Nevertheless, four centuries prior to Adam Smith, Ibn Khaldun acknowledged distributive traders' contribution to sustaining urban populations with necessities and sustenance goods and the growth of urban societies. Ibn Khaldun's description of the trader's character as being "remote from that of manliness" compares traders directly to "rulers and noblemen". In contrast, earlier negative narratives on small traders position small traders as a class of people among ordinary people. In Ibn Khaldun's view, "utility" and "commerce is a natural way of making profits……it does not mean taking away the property of others without giving anything in return". Ibn Khaldun travelled in North Africa and West Asia and observed the contribution of labour and utility as the means of building up the wealth of a community, increased productivity, and exchange of products in city markets. To Ibn Khaldun, "these are the main reasons behind a community or nation's wealth and prosperity; commerce is a natural way of making profits……it does not mean taking away the property of others without giving anything in return. Thus, it is legal". Ibn Khaldun's truth about commerce: "buy cheap and sell dear. There is commerce for you". Further, according to Ibn Khaldun, "capital accumulation is through man's efforts; governments' arbitrary interferences in man's property result in loss of incentives that can eventually lead to a weakening of the state; expropriation is self-defeating for any government as expropriation is a form of oppression, and oppression ruins society".

Ibn Khaldun and Adam Smith in 2nd millennium CE connect small enterprises and growth of domestic economic activities on the market and point to long distance trade, export and import in today's terms, as but one contributor to growth. Long distance trade introduced new products, for instance, luxury products and technology and desires to replicate that which was not available domestically. With some past thinkers foreign trade overarches domestic trade particularly retail trade. By leaving the more numerous retail traders out of the thought equation these thinkers overlook the repeating phenomenon that exists above the level of a subsistence economy. That is, some form of retail activity precedes consumption and contribute to economic agglomeration, making retail traders significant contributors to the socio-economy.

The narrated beliefs about retail traders would have been affected by some unique retail trading practices experienced infrequently or frequently by customers, for instance, product adulteration, weight manipulation, and price gouging. That is, dishonest and opportunistic practices, resulting in counter measures in the nature of central regulations. Previously, ethics and some norms are for the individual trader to gauge and practice from his/her perspectives. The narrations suggest that the latter were not always in tune with the perspectives of customers. As retail trade matures in the 20th century a similar set of beliefs has cropped up. That is, narratives and evidence of collusion between producers, between retail traders, and between producers and retailers, for instance, price maintenance and product exclusivity, and below-cost selling and unethical advertising. This suggests a role for the state on regulating the behaviour of retailers as a group, for instance, weights, measures, product standards, advertising, and collusion. Albeit, there is a balance to be observed by the state if unsavoury practices by the few are not to become the denominator for the many. If retailing is about distribution to consumers, when consumers are given choice, that is, when there is unfettered competition between retailers on same-goods and general same-geographical area consumers will vote with their feet on the practices of individual retail traders and return to a retailer only if benefits to the individual consumer outweigh retail trader practices that are detrimental, if any.

3.1 Ideological contexts conditioning trade entrepreneurs

The term ideology is associated with French thinker de Tracy (1754-1836). For de Tracy, ideology was the science of ideas and their origins, the material environment that shape what people think. Bell (2000) suggests that ideology is "an action-oriented system of beliefs" and not to render reality transparent, but to motivate people to do or not do certain things. Ideology differs from economic thought, but the two are not independent of each other. Ideology can and will influence both economic thought and economic practice. Scholars have attempted to describe in a variety of ways and by places how and the extent to which ideology affected people's actions and the economic and market spheres. Some discourses suggest that ideological pronouncements were more conservative than the practice(s) in place and that ensued, suggesting different interpretations and inculcation and enforcement at the grassroot level (Aristotle, 384-322 BCE; Giardina (2004) on the Western Roman Empire; Laiou (2002); Matschke and Tinnefeld (2001) on the Eastern Roman Empire; Martin Luther (1524) on Europe). Nevertheless, ideology affected people's propensity to engaging in trading activities.

It is only in 19th and 20th century CE that autarky, the pervasive, ideological norm of self-sufficiency begins to wane in many societies. The ideal of self-sufficiency was espoused starting with the Greek philosophers (Finley, 1973) and through religions in Europe. The ideological tenor across Europe 900-1800 CE placed the highest value on minimal activity to do with own production and economic concerns. Weber (1905) saw this tenor as traditionalism and graduated it by bringing the environment in which we live into the equation, “A man does not "by nature" wish to earn more and more money, but simply to live as he is accustomed to live and to earn as much as is necessary for that purpose”. Contrasting the tenor of European ideology, Ibn Khaldun (1377) provides an account of every-day life in some Islamic states and Smith (1776) a similar account of North America, both accounts suggesting that surplus production by individuals and trade were constructive pursuits at the time and in the places of the two accounts.

3.2 Post the empire on Rome: The Roman Church in Europe

The idea that a price could be settled through negotiation between buyer and seller in the general population was an alien notion in Europe pre-16th century CE in contrast to Islamic states at the time.

Some historians, economists, and sociologists use the terminology “feudal” and “feudalism” in connection with society and as a system for the period following the breakdown of the empire on Rome in Europe 4th-5th century CE (Bagley, 1961). The *Pax Romana* of the expired Roman Empire 5th century CE evaporated and with it its accompanying benefits of safe conditions for trade and manufacture and a seemingly unified cultural and learning environment of ideology and long distance trade networks. Traders did not seem or no longer seemed to provide anything of obvious value, serving as middlemen who took their profit off the labour of others, buying cheaply and selling to someone else for more than it was worth. In the following centuries, according to Bloch (1961), "The feudal system meant the rigorous economic subjection of a host of humble folk to a few powerful men”. Nevertheless, “The concept of the State never absolutely disappeared”, but what remained of the state was subordinated to the interests of the feudal leaders. Society is made up of fiefs and vassals, the former receiving fees and the latter paying fees. Whilst hierarchical relationships were embedded they were variable and pliable. The flows and ebbs of power structures produced a variety of socio-economic environments in different places at different times. Social mobility was as a rule not possible. Traders met with different opportunities in different socio-economic environments and potentially had the choice of moving from one environment to another to improve their lot. Borders were open. Political authority was dispersed amongst a hierarchy of persons who exercised in their own interest powers normally attributed to the state. Reynolds (1994) argues that the conventional ‘ism’ of feudalism does not hold. There is no “feudal system”, at least not an overarching one. Nevertheless, trade and traders laboured under feudal systems in Europe up until 12th-13th century CE.

Circa 1000 CE, Aelfric (955?-1010 CE), abbot of Eynsham, Wessex contributed a widely dispersed concept of society (Duby, 1978) that, at best, did not recognise distributive trade as a factor in people’s lives, “In this world there are three social orders”. These were “laboratores”, labouring men, “oratores”, praying men, and “bellatores”, fighting men. Aelfric qualifies laboratores as ”ploughmen and husbandmen”, the people on the farms, the peasantry, in effect excluding traders from his concept of society. At Aelfric’s time, the term peasantry applied also to the village blacksmith, cooper and miller, and to craftspeople in farm households, but this does not begin to make a case for traders. Autarky was Aelfric’s view and that the clergy assert superiority over laboratores and bellatores (Scheil, 1999).

The Roman Church, surviving the fall of Empire on Rome, imposed pernicious regulations, for instance, of “just wage” and “just price” (Hart, 1988). Pope Gregory the Great (590-604 CE) decreed circa 600 CE, “We have learned that the serfs of the Church are grievously burdened in the matter of prices of grain, so that the purchase price fixed for them is not observed in time of plenty. And it is our desire that the standard purchase price be observed in their regard at all times according to the official prices, whether the harvest be great or small….”. Every product and service had a fixed price even if external circumstances made the prices unworkable and the livelihoods of producers and distributors were threatened. Church clergy promoted economic regulations in the name of protecting the congregation, that is, the citizenry from "crafty" traders. Both the Roman and Protestant church-state establishments were biased against traders. Hart (1988) suggests that this bias was in part because government and church officials were not dependent on trade and trading for their positions in society and because trade inevitably created an independent class of people, less beholden to a paternalistic state for their livelihoods. If traders prospered their status and power grew and might rival or influence the official and state apparatus.

Guilds are a Roman invention, the initiative initially coming from private entrepreneurs and stamped out by Imperial Rome only to subsequently be adopted primarily as a means to better controlling entrepreneurs by categories. Guilds reached their zenith in Europe 12th century CE and became product/production specialised (Gies and Gies, 1994). By 14th century CE the trading/trader element disappeared from the guilds altogether and the craft guilds "were in possession of the field", according to Cole (2000). The unit of production was the workshop of the individual master-craftsman who held his position through membership of his craft guild that subjected him to wide regulations that included guarding the consumer against exploitation and shoddy goods. For retail traders, to transact business with craft workshops must have become difficult when the trade elements were ejected from the guilds and must have remained particularly difficult until the industrial revolution 18th century CE put workshops under pressure from factories and a new set of power relations challenges emerge for retail traders to cope with, that is, large wholesalers on domestic manufactures by factories. Rowling (1968) argues that the evolution of the trader class 10th-15th century CE came about because trade as a career required the abolition of feudal obligations, albeit without the protection of feudal lords, traders experienced problems in protecting their property. In this apparent vacuum, guilds offered traders similar protection and support as previously provided by lords to their vassals. Both feudal lords and guilds extracted a price affecting traders and consumers. Traders were restricted. Each occupation had its own guild fixing prices and arranging trade. Gaining entry to a guild was difficult. In effect, the guild protected the existing jobs and did not create new ones. According to Cole (2000), "Guilds assumed many different forms under the varying circumstances of their origin, in Holland and Italy, France, England, Scotland and Germany. But underlying all their different manifestations, a fundamental identity of principle can be found; for, in all, the direct control of industry was in the hand of associated producers". The tendency to guilds held up until 18th century CE when the notion grew that guilds were detrimental to competition. Adam Smith (1776) argues that "It is to prevent this reduction of price, and consequently of wages and profit, by restraining that free competition which would most certainly occasion it, that all corporations, and the greater part of corporation laws, have been established ….. and when any particular class of artificers or traders thought proper to act as a corporation without a charter, such adulterine guilds, as they were called, were not always disfranchised upon that account, but obliged to fine annually to the king for permission to exercise their usurped privileges". From an opposite ideology, guilds were found wanting by Marx and Engels (1848). Marx' and Engels' "Communist Manifesto" takes issue with the guild system for the system's rigid division of social rank and argues that the system is oppressive. Nevertheless, in history guilds gradually contributed to monumental status enhancement of production and service professions.

3.3 In early Islam

When urbanisation emerges in Arabia with Makkah and Yathrip, nomadic husbandry becomes insufficient to support the food needs. Trade increases. The Holy Qur'an unambiguously supports trade on conditions in the form of cultural obligations and the moral requirement of fair dealing. Within the overriding conditions, markets function largely by supply and demand and negotiations between buyers and sellers.

According to Bell's (1970) scholarship on the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Qur'an first addressed people who were directly and indirectly engaged in trading in Makkah and Yathrip. Qusayy bin Kilab, the fourth grandfather of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) gathered his tribe, the Quraish, in Makkah and founded the city state of Makkah circa 480 CE. Makkah did not possess cultivable land. It is thought that the Quraish travelled to trade in Syria and Yaman. Qusayy's grandson, Hashim, the grandfather of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him), first conceived the idea to take part in the trade that passed between the eastern countries and Syria and Egypt through Arabia and also to purchase the necessities of life for the Arabians so that the tribes living by the trade route bought these from them and the traders living in the interior of the country were attracted to the market of Makkah (Maududi on Surah 106). By the end of 6th century CE the traders of Makkah had gained control if not monopoly of the trade passing up and down the western coastal fringe of Arabia to the Mediterranean. According to Bell, in many ways the people of Makkah still retained the outlook of the nomads. Discontent in Makkah "may be largely traced to the tension and even conflict between nomadic mores and the new way of life which commercial activity fostered".

Pre Islam, trading was based on benefit and interest to the extent that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) called these trade markets 'the places for evil' (Gharipour, 2003). Trade markets were suffering from lack of regulations and morality in the trade. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) pronounced regulations to recover the trade in the society which flourished by trading. The objective was a trade system that would decrease the difference between the wealth of classes within the society, creating an economic balance if not equality. Collecting wealth without considering others was prohibited. Moral trading, 2:275; 6:152; 7:85; 11:85, and warning of materialism imply the obligation of preference of God and his prophet over the interests of family and clan as well as of goods and chattel (9:24). Trading must be carried out justly and fairly. Similar principles of justness and fairness are embedded in other religions as well. Nevertheless, Islamic society is alone in from the outset incorporating trade and traders in the fabric of society and as a source of societal welfare.

3.4 Reformation: 16th century Europe

Introducing the first wave of protestant reformation, Augustinian monk and theologian, Martin Luther (1483-1546) wrote circa 1524, "One cannot deny that buying and selling is a necessary activity that we cannot do without and that can be transacted in a Christian manner especially when buying and selling goods serving useful and honest purposes. Even the patriarchs sold and bought cattle, wool, cereals, butter, milk and other goods. These are God's gifts which he gives us of the earth and distributes among human beings. But foreign trade with the buying of goods from Calcutta and India and similar places, with costly silk and gold wares and spices, which are only ornamental and useless and drains the country and its people of money, should not be allowed by a real government and prince. However, I will not let this occupy me now, because I think that like fashion and luxuries squandering on imports will automatically cease when we run out of money..". Accepting the necessity of trade, Luther was of the opinion that trade and thereby consumption should be limited to life's essentials

Introducing the second wave of reformation, lawyer and humanist John Calvin (1509-1564) placed the same value on a worker as on clerics. Honest callings should be pursued with equal diligence. If work is good then wealth is a just reward regardless of occupation. In contrast, the Roman Church seems to have been a custodian of the wealth of individuals until 17th-18th century CE, viewing ordinary people as consumers rather than as producers (Grice-Hutchinson, 1978). Trade endangered personal salvation. Whilst trade can be honest, it presented great temptation for sin.

Calvin (1536) wrote "(1)…For if we are to live, we must use the necessary supports of life; nor can we even shun those things which seem more subservient to delight than to necessity. We must therefore observe a mean, that we may use them with a pure conscience, whether for necessity or for pleasure…Accordingly, Paul, not without cause, admonishes us to use this world without abusing it, and to buy possessions as if we were selling them….There have been some good and holy men who, when they saw intemperance and luxury perpetually carried to excess, if not strictly curbed, and were desirous to correct so pernicious an evil, imagined that there was no other method than to allow man to use corporeal goods only in so far as they were necessaries: a counsel pious indeed, but unnecessarily austere; for it does the very dangerous thing of binding consciences in closer fetters than those in which they are bound by the word of God. Moreover, necessity, according to them, was abstinence from every thing which could be wanted, so that they held it scarcely lawful to make any addition to bread and water….this liberty is not to be restrained by any modification, but that it is to be left to every man's conscience to use them as far as he thinks lawful. I indeed confess that here consciences neither can nor ought to be bound by fixed and definite laws; but that Scripture having laid down general rules for the legitimate uses we should keep within the limits which they prescribe". "(2) Have done, then, with that inhuman philosophy which, in allowing no use of the creatures but for necessity, not only maliciously deprives us of the lawful fruit of the divine beneficence, but cannot be realised without depriving man of all his senses, and reducing him to a block…". "(6) The last thing to be observed is that the Lord enjoins every one of us, in all the actions of life, to have respect to our own calling….no work will be so mean and sordid as not to have a splendour and value in the eye of God". At a time when Europe was transforming from an agrarian mediaeval economy to an era of increasing trading and manufacturing activities, Calvin both accepted and encouraged trade and production and opposed abuses of exploitation and self-indulgence. According to Tawney (1926), Lutheranism and Calvinism made themselves accommodating to trade and industry and to the expanding trader class. Calvin gave the trader class what the Roman order could not, that is, a theological justification of commerce, albeit restricted by a behavioural codex subject to which productive activity other than self-sufficiency could be used for the glorification of God (Tawney, 1926). Weber (1905) suggests that the religious reformation led by Luther and Calvin caused the subsequent rise of commercial and industrial activity. In 16th-17th century many Protestants who were traders left England for America and brought their trading acumen and beliefs with them (Hart, 1988).

The religious reformation succeeded an era of equally polarising, hierarchical relationships in European society(s). In the latter era, real and perceived obligations committed each "member of the tribe" to serve his/her superior against receiving the latter's protection. In the absence of overriding 'royal' power these mutual obligations offered resiliency on a local basis. Territoriality was reduced to a network of personal allegiances similar to the Arabian tribal system that Ibn Khaldun (1377) observed. This was the era that conditioned distributive traders Europe until 16th century CE. Until then, neither rulers nor church bestowed any goodwill on distributive traders and much less encouraged commerce among ordinary people or saw a societal need for distributive trade. Autarky was the stated rule and to be disregarded by the elites for the elites. In contrast to Luther, Calvin promoted the idea that ordinary people may fend for more than necessities. Calvin lifted the status of both production and trade to now accommodate ordinary people in the choice of professions. Professions were equal as long as they were conducted in a manner deemed to be good in society. Luther did not disagree with Calvin on this.

4.0 Conclusion

The evidence suggests that distributive trade is the 'mother of enterprising', associated with the production of commodities and handicrafts that were surplus to household and farm village needs in an era going back 7-8 millennia and West Asia, particularly present day Iraq and Syria. Producers exchanged surpluses with other producers of surpluses, giving birth to distributive trade. As the earliest known cities emerge in West Asia during 4th millennium BCE, city dwellers become dependent on distributive traders for subsistence and other consumption needs not satisfied by central redistribution. Over time, consumption needs going unsatisfied by central redistribution grow and the role of distributive traders grows. Household and village autarky is first invented and first discarded in West Asia before 2nd millennium BCE. In Europe, autarky becomes an elite ideology that is pursued well into 2nd millennium CE before being discarded.

In the present, the livelihood endeavours of retail traders that first Greek and Roman elite thinking 500 BCE-500 CE discredit have become both service and acts of excellence. Throughout the first five thousand years of retail trade history, polity discourses are typically put downs of retail trade and retail traders rather than polity standing aside and encouraging the transformation of embedded beliefs about both retail trade and commerce generally. Rulers, public administrators, and elites failed to make the connection of production, distribution, and service. Until 20th century, there is barely a grain of recognition of the contribution and potential contribution of retail traders to facilitating the daily lives of ordinary people. It is left to the imagination and scholars to gauge how this conditioning of both retail traders and consumers by rulers, public administrators, and elites in the past affected the spirits and horizons of retail traders and consumers - and led to the remarkable retail trade transformation that in recent decades is accelerating in both developed and developing economies that have few impediments to distributive trade competition or are reducing the impediments.

As a social group, small retail traders were never given constructive encouragement and, in recent decades, typically much of a chance to rediscover and unfold the spirit of entrepreneurial initiative that Ibn Khaldun (1377) detected among traders in some 14th century CE Islamic states, Calvin (1536) encouraged in 16th century CE Europe, and Adam Smith (1776) identified in 18th century CE North America. In contrast, consumers are finally benefiting and are being courted and small retail traders continue to struggle and typically moving toward extinction, devoid of courtship. Nevertheless, for at least five thousand years small retail traders played a monumental role in distributing daily necessities and other goods to city populations whose dependence on convenient access to retail shops increases over time rather than decreases. Whilst small retail traders are far from becoming extinct, as a category of entrepreneurs they warrant increased research, coaching, and systematic attempt to reinstall agency in the “single shop’ without short changing consumers and leaving the field to a relatively few corporate chains. In the case of Malaysia, the dearth of retailers grouping together in voluntary or corporate organisation with the aim to obtaining scale and scope is a case in point (Holst, 2005). Until recently, Malaysian retailers and consumers were conditioned by a retail market environment that was closed to foreign competition. When the market was partially opened up and change arrived in the unique forms of Carrefour and Tesco, Malaysian retailers were typically unprepared for developments that retailers in developed economies had been experiencing for one or more decades and some of the latter retailers had dealt with more or less successfully. In the developed economies there were past retail development patterns and innovations to learn from had the latter been known or broadcast to Malaysian retailers in connection with the opening up of the Malaysian market. As Liddell-Hart (1972) suggested, the past can be studied to illuminate the present. Whether endogenous or exogenous, history helps to identify more or less stable concepts and has potential to bring additional alternatives and answers to dealing with enterprise enigmas at individual, institutional, structural, and service levels.

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