Episode Book

EPISODE #5586

The Ancient World Was More Connected Than You Think

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SYNOPSIS

Daniel wrote in with a hypothesis: in the ancient world, long-distance travel was elite-only, the earth was thought flat, and an ordinary traveler from a distant land would have been as inconceivable as an alien from another planet. Almost every clause turns out to be wrong. Drawing on the ORBIS geospatial model of Roman roads and sea routes, pilgrimage inscriptions at Philae, diaspora communities, and the work of Colin Adams, Ray Laurence, Claudia Moatti, and Philip Harland, this episode examines how ordinary people actually moved across the Mediterranean — and why the "elite-only" picture persists anyway.

TRANSCRIPT



Corn

Here's the question that started this one. If you were an ordinary person living in the Roman world, could you actually go somewhere? Not as a soldier, not as a senator on official business, not as a king with an entourage. Just you, with whatever you had, wanting to see a different part of the world.



Herman

And would anyone at the other end even be able to make sense of you.



Corn

Right. Daniel wrote in with this whole hypothesis he wants us to tear apart. He says the impression we get of the ancient world is that long-distance contact was a tiny pool of elites. Soldiers, kings, officials. That there was no realistic mechanism by which an ordinary person from Rome or Jerusalem would travel somewhere else, meet locals, swap ideas, share information about where they came from.



Herman

He's hoping he's wrong.



Corn

He is explicitly hoping he's wrong. And then he pushes it further. He says, in the pre-cartographic era, at a time when the accepted dogma was that the earth was flat, if such a person managed to speak the local language, would people even be able to conceive of somebody having come from a territory very distant from what they thought the world looked like? Would it be like meeting an alien who looked and spoke like a human, but claimed to come from another country across a sea? As astounding as someone today saying they just flew to Earth from a distant planet.



Herman

That's a great image. And it's wrong in about four different ways.



Corn

So let's take Daniel's hypothesis apart and see how much of it survives contact with the evidence.



Herman

Start with the shape of it. The claim is that long-distance contact in the ancient world was elite-only. Soldiers, kings, officials. Ordinary people from different civilizations never met, never exchanged ideas, and couldn't have conceived of each other's existence.



Corn

And almost every clause in that is falsifiable.



Herman

Two of them fall immediately. The flat earth premise is a modern myth. Educated Greeks and Romans knew the earth was a sphere by the fifth century BCE. That's not a fringe position, that's the Library of Congress saying it plainly. And the elite-only picture is explicitly rejected by the scholars who work on this. Colin Adams and Ray Laurence, writing in 2001, put it flatly. Travel and mobility were not solely the preserves of the rich. All but perhaps the very poorest could travel if need be.



Corn

Which is a much stronger claim than people expect.



Herman

It's a striking sentence. Not "some non-elites traveled." All but perhaps the very poorest.



Corn

So the arc for today. First, what infrastructure actually existed. Then, the concrete mechanisms by which ordinary people moved. Then the deeper question Daniel's really asking, which is what it was like to encounter a stranger from a distant land, and whether the alien analogy holds up at all.



Herman

And we should kill the flat earth thing properly, because it's load-bearing in his question.



Herman

The flat earth belief is largely a nineteenth-century invention. Draper in 1874, White in 1896, Washington Irving's Columbus biography in 1828. It comes out of the conflict thesis, the idea that science and religion have always been at war. It says far more about Victorian politics than about antiquity.



Corn

Jeffrey Burton Russell's line is the one to remember. With extraordinary few exceptions, no educated person in the history of Western Civilization from the third century BCE onward believed the earth was flat.



Herman

Eratosthenes calculated the circumference of the earth around 240 BCE. And he was close. That's not a culture that's confused about the shape of the planet.



Corn

Okay. So the cosmology premise is dead. What about the infrastructure?



Herman

The infrastructure is the part that surprises people. Stanford built a geospatial model of the Roman world called ORBIS. Walter Scheidel's project, published 2015. It models 632 sites, roughly 85,000 kilometers of roads and desert tracks, about 28,000 kilometers of navigable rivers and canals, and 1,026 sea routes.



Corn

Fifty-three thousand miles of road.



Herman

And that's the model's coverage, not the total. It covers about ten million square kilometers and reflects conditions around 200 CE. Roman roads were being built from about 300 BCE onward. They radiate from towns and get less elaborate as you move away from urban centers. Gravel, markers, that kind of thing.



Corn

So there's a physical network.



Herman

There's a physical network, and there's a state system running on top of it. The cursus publicus. The imperial courier and transport system. Roadside stations at regular intervals along the major roads. You could use it if you had a permit from a governor or the emperor.



Corn

Which is the elite lane.



Herman

That's the elite lane. But here's the thing that reframes the whole question. Sea travel was the fast lane. A voyage that took a month by road might be only a week by sea.



Corn

Say that again.



Herman

A month by road, a week by sea. The Mediterranean connected Italy to North Africa, Egypt, Greece, Asia Minor, Spain, Gaul, Syria. Greek ships could carry up to 500 tons of cargo.



Corn

So if you're an ordinary person with something to sell, the sea isn't a barrier. It's the highway.



Herman

And this resolves a contradiction in the sources that's worth flagging. There's a line in the standard reference material saying few civilians chose to conduct long-distance travel or trade over Rome's roads, with government officials as the primary users. That sits in tension with Adams and Laurence saying all but the very poorest could travel.



Corn

Unless the two statements are about different surfaces.



Herman

That's exactly the resolution. Roads were official-heavy. Sea was the ordinary person's road.



Corn

Okay. So who's actually on the water?



Herman

Let's take the mechanisms one at a time. Pilgrimage first, because it's the cleanest example of class-crossing travel. The Panhellenic festivals, Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia, Nemea, drew travelers from across the Greek world. A truce was declared so people could travel safely to them.



Corn

A truce. That's an entire institution built around the assumption that ordinary people are going to move.



Herman

And it gets better. The temple of Isis at Philae in Egypt drew pilgrims from Greece, Asia Minor, Crete, Cyrene, Nubia. And the inscriptions record who they were. A scribe, a recluse of a god, mimes, and a painter.



Corn

Mimes.



Herman

Mimes and a painter. Not priests, not aristocrats. Working entertainers making a religious journey across the Mediterranean.



Corn

That's the whole thesis in one inscription.



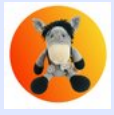
Herman

And Judean pilgrimage to Jerusalem drew diaspora Jews from across the Mediterranean. That's the same mechanism running in a different religious system.



Corn

Trade next.



Herman

Merchants, the emporoi, but also skilled craftsmen. Metalworkers, gem-carvers, potters, stonemasons, glassworkers. Doctors, actors, philosophers. All of them traveling the Mediterranean selling goods and skills. Rome traded with China, India, and Tanzania.



Corn

Tanzania.



Herman

Tanzania. That's not a small world.



Corn

Then there's the part nobody likes to lead with. Enslavement.



Herman

The World History Encyclopedia names political envoys, slaves, and soldiers, especially mercenaries, as major groups who traveled, and notes that most of them traveled usually against their will. The Oxford Classical Refs entry on economic mobility goes further. It calls the enforced movement of enslaved workers by far the largest example of economic mobility in the ancient world.



Corn

Largest.



Herman

By far the largest. So if you're asking whether ordinary people crossed the Mediterranean and met strangers, the honest answer is that the single biggest channel was people being moved as property.



Corn

Which is grim and also the answer to Daniel's question.



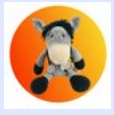
Herman

Both things.



Corn

Migration and diaspora.



Herman

Few restrictions, except in wartime, on the ability of individuals and families to migrate and settle in cities. That's Claudia Moatti's work. And there's a large Jewish diaspora across the Roman world for centuries before 70 CE. Rome, Alexandria, Syria, Babylonia. The Jewish community in Rome dates to the second century BCE.



Corn

Two hundred years before the temple falls.



Herman

Two hundred years of ordinary Jews living in the empire's capital. Philo of Alexandria wrote about Jewish travel in the empire. So did the author of Luke-Acts.



Corn

And then the hospitality layer, which is the part that tells you this was normal enough to build institutions around.



Herman

Greek xenia, the guest-friendship custom. And the proxenos, a city-appointed official whose job was looking after visiting foreigners. Arranging theater tickets, audiences with officials. That's a municipal post. Somebody was paid to handle out-of-towners.



Corn

A city employing a guy whose job is foreigners.



Herman

Roman equivalents too. Hospitium, caupona, inns catering to sailors and soldiers, stabulum, roadside inns. There's an entire commercial hospitality sector.



Corn

So the picture is not a thin trickle of elites. It's a functioning travel economy.



Herman

And here's the line that captures it. A significant proportion of the population could, and did, travel across the Mediterranean to sell their wares, sell their skills, go on religious pilgrimage, see sporting events, or even travel simply for the pleasure of seeing the sights.



Corn

For the pleasure of it.



Herman

That's not elite-only. That's tourism.



Corn

So where does the elite-only impression come from, if the reality is this broad?



Herman

Philip Harland's point is the one that matters. Lionel Casson wrote the classic portrait of ancient travel, and Harland cautions that it's derived mainly from writings produced by the elites. Which means it may mislead about the on-the-ground experience of average traders or wanderers.



Corn

The sources are elite, so the picture is elite.



Herman

And Harland notes that historians like Moatti argue scholars have minimized the significance of ancient movement. Not because the evidence isn't there, but because the evidence is scattered across pilgrimage, trade, migration scholarship rather than sitting in one body of work.



Corn

So Daniel's hypothesis isn't just wrong. It's wrong in a way that has a cause. We inherited it from the people who wrote things down.



Herman

Which is a nice irony. The reason we think only elites traveled is that only elites wrote.



Corn

Okay. Now the second half of Daniel's question, which is the more interesting half. Not whether people traveled, but what it was like when they arrived.



Herman

Whether a stranger from a distant land would have been conceivable. Whether it felt like meeting an alien.



Corn

And here's where I want to push, because the premise is doing something sneaky. Daniel's assuming that the ancient person had no framework for distant lands. That the encounter would have been conceptually shattering.



Herman

And the evidence says the opposite. The framework existed. The physical ease of travel didn't.



Corn

So the analogy inverts.



Herman

It inverts completely. Think about what the modern person claiming to have flown to Earth from a spaceship actually has. Nothing. No map, no itinerary, no ethnography, no prior reports of anyone from there. The ancient traveler had all of that. Herodotus, Strabo, Tacitus' Germania. There's an entire genre of writing about distant peoples.



Corn

So the encounter wasn't alien. It was foreign.



Herman

It was foreign in a world that already had categories for foreignness. That's a completely different experience.



Corn

Which brings us to the navigation question.



Herman

Pre-cartographic is fair in a narrow sense. Scholars are split on whether Greeks and Romans made usable maps. Papyrus is too fragile, and no representative maps survive. But the absence of maps isn't the absence of navigational knowledge.



Corn

What did they actually use?



Herman

Itineraria. Lists of cities and ports with distances between them. Sometimes with crude illustrations that aren't to scale. The comparison people make is that they're more similar to transit maps than to contemporary to-scale maps.



Corn

Like a subway diagram.



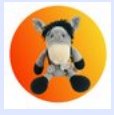
Herman

You don't need the geography to be accurate. You need to know which stop comes next. Extant examples are the Antonine Itinerary and the Tabula Peutingeriana, which is fourth century.



Corn

And sailors.



Herman

Sailors kept periploi, coastal logs, and stadiasmoi, distance records. Maps seem to have been the reserve of scholars rather than everyday travelers.



Corn

So the ordinary traveler wasn't navigating by a map. He was navigating by a list.



Herman

By a list, by a log, by asking. And the lists were good enough that people moved cargo across the Mediterranean for centuries.



Corn

Now, here's the honest part. Daniel asks whether an ordinary, uneducated person would have found a distant stranger's origin inconceivable. And I want to be straight with the listener. The evidence doesn't answer that directly.



Herman

It doesn't. What we can say is that the conceptual framework existed in the culture. Educated people knew the earth was spherical, they had itineraria, they had ethnographic literature. Whether the man selling fish in the forum shared that framework is not documented in anything we found.



Corn

That's a real gap.



Herman

It's a real gap, and it's worth naming rather than papering over. The premise is undercut indirectly, not directly.



Corn

So what's the honest verdict on Daniel's hypothesis?



Herman

Elite-only is wrong. Everyone traveled freely is also wrong. The grain of truth is economic, not conceptual.



Corn

Class, not cosmology.



Herman

Travel was real and widespread. The very poorest were excluded. Adams and Laurence say all but perhaps the very poorest could travel if need be. That "perhaps" and that "very poorest" are doing real work.



Corn

And there's something else worth pulling out. Religion was the great democratizer of travel.



Herman

Pilgrimage and festival attendance cut across class lines in a way that military and diplomatic travel never did. The temple of Isis at Philae drew mimes and painters.



Corn

And the festivals themselves were short.



Herman

Festivals rarely exceeded five days. Travel to them could take weeks or months. So the journey was part of the experience. You didn't go to Olympia for five days. You went to Olympia for a season.



Corn

That reframes what travel meant. It wasn't a commute. It was a project.



Herman

And it tells you something about how ordinary people thought about distance. If you're willing to spend three months getting somewhere for a five-day festival, you don't think of the world as small.



Corn

There's a nice piece of evidence on that. Pericles' funeral oration, as reported by Thucydides. We throw open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners from any opportunity of learning or observing.



Herman

That's Athens advertising its own openness.



Corn

And the flip side is Socrates. In Plato's Crito, he's being criticized for never having traveled. You never went out from the city to a festival, or anywhere else, except on military service. You had no wish to know any other city or other law.



Herman

So not traveling was noteworthy enough to be a criticism.



Corn

It was a character flaw.



Herman

And then there's the comic poet from fifth-century Athens. If you've never seen Athens, your brain's a morass. If you've seen it and weren't entranced, you're an ass. If you left without regrets, your head's solid brass.



Corn

That's a tourism slogan.



Herman

That's a tourism slogan from twenty-four hundred years ago. Which tells you that the experience of going somewhere, being impressed, and coming back was a familiar cultural reference.



Corn

So the ancient world was more connected than we assume.



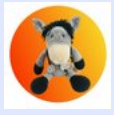
Herman

And more stratified than we'd like. Both things are true.



Corn

Which is the honest answer to Daniel. He wanted his hypothesis challenged. The challenge is that the world was smaller than he thought and harder than he thought, and the barrier was money, not imagination.



Herman

The imagination was fine. The wallet was the problem.



Corn

There's one more layer here that I find interesting. The flat earth myth isn't just wrong. It's a case study in how we misjudge the past.



Herman

It's a nineteenth-century polemic. Draper, White, Irving. It says more about Victorian arguments over science and religion than it says about antiquity.



Corn

So the thing Daniel's using as a premise isn't an ancient belief at all. It's a modern invention about the ancients.



Herman

Which means the alien analogy is doubly wrong. It assumes the ancient person had no framework, and it assumes the framework they lacked was cosmology. Neither holds.



Corn

The ancient traveler had a framework. The modern person claiming to be from a spaceship doesn't.



Herman

That's the inversion. The one who'd be shattered by the encounter is us.



Corn

So if you're an ordinary person in Rome, and you meet a Jew from Alexandria who's come to sell glass, what actually happens?



Herman

You probably don't think much of it. You've met foreigners. There's a proxenos in town whose job is handling people like him. There's an inn down by the harbor where sailors from everywhere drink. There's a festival coming up where people from six provinces will show. He's unusual. He's not inconceivable.



Corn

He's a Tuesday.



Herman

That's the answer to Daniel's question. The alien analogy doesn't hold because the encounter wasn't rare enough to be alien.



Corn

Although I'd push on one thing. The very poorest. What does that actually mean?



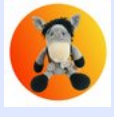
Herman

It means the people at the absolute bottom of the economic scale. The ones who couldn't afford passage, couldn't afford to leave work, couldn't afford the risk. Adams and Laurence hedge with "perhaps" because the boundary isn't sharp.



Corn

So it's a gradient, not a line.



Herman

It's a gradient. A craftsman can travel. A day laborer probably can't unless he's being moved. A slave is being moved whether he wants to be or not.



Corn

Which is the darkest part of the answer. The largest single channel of ordinary-person movement was people being moved as property.



Herman

By far the largest. That's the Oxford Classical Refs phrasing.



Corn

And that's the thing the elite-only picture misses in both directions. It misses that non-elites traveled. And it misses that a lot of them traveled because they had no choice.



Herman

Both errors come from the same source. We read the elite writers, and the elite writers wrote about elites.



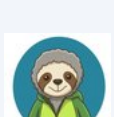
Corn

So the honest summary is that Daniel's hypothesis is wrong on the cosmology, wrong on the elite-only framing, and right on one thing. Travel was hard, and the poor were excluded.



Herman

The mechanism he was looking for existed. He just had the wrong mechanism in mind. He was looking for infrastructure that didn't exist. What he missed was the sea, the pilgrimage networks, the diaspora, and the trade.



Corn

And the mimes. Okay. Let's take stock, because I want to land one thing before we move on. The question Daniel's really asking isn't "could they travel." It's "would they have understood each other."



Herman

And the answer is that the ancient world had institutions built specifically for that. The proxenos. Xenia. Hospitium. The caupona. These aren't ad hoc arrangements. They're standing infrastructure for handling strangers.



Corn

So the encounter wasn't just possible. It was expected.



Herman

That's the thing. The world was set up to receive foreigners, which means foreigners arriving was a normal event.



Corn

Which is a much more interesting answer than "yes, some people traveled."



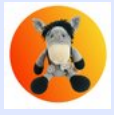
Herman

It is. And it makes the flat earth premise look even sillier. You don't build a municipal office for handling foreigners in a world where foreigners are inconceivable.



Corn

You do not.



Herman

There's a detail I want to flag before we get to the last stretch. The itineraria weren't just lists. Some of them had illustrations. Crude, not to scale. And the comparison scholars make is to transit maps.



Corn

Which is a modern thing.



Herman

Which is a modern thing, and it's a useful comparison because it tells you what the itineraria were for. They weren't for understanding the shape of the world. They were for getting from one place to another.



Corn

Function over form.



Herman

And that's a very different kind of knowledge than cartography. It's procedural, not representational.



Corn

Procedural meaning you know the steps.



Herman

You know the steps. You know that from here you go to there, and from there you go to there, and the distance is this much. You don't need to know what the coastline looks like.



Corn

Which is exactly what a sailor needs.



Herman

Exactly what a sailor needs. And the periploi were the same thing on water. Coastal logs. Which port, what's the landmark, how far to the next one.



Corn

So the navigational knowledge was there. It just wasn't in map form.



Herman

It wasn't in map form. And maps seem to have been the reserve of scholars rather than everyday travelers. That's the World History Encyclopedia phrasing.



Corn

Daniel's pre-cartographic framing is right in a narrow sense and misleading in a broad sense. There weren't maps. There was something else that worked.



Herman

There was something else that worked, and it worked well enough to move 500-ton cargo ships across the Mediterranean.



Corn

Okay. I think we've done the question justice.



Herman

One more thing I want to say. The reason this matters isn't just historical trivia. It's that the picture we have of the ancient world shapes how we think about connection in general.



Corn

Meaning?



Herman

Meaning if you assume the ancient world was isolated, you assume isolation is the default and connection is the exception. And the evidence says the opposite. Connection was the default. Isolation was the exception, and it was usually economic.



Corn

That's a bigger claim than the episode.



Herman

It's a bigger claim. But it's the one the evidence supports.



Corn

Fair. And it's the one that makes Daniel's question worth asking in the first place.



Herman

He wanted to be wrong. He was.



Corn

The reason he was wrong is that the world was more connected than the sources suggest, because the sources were written by the people who had the least reason to notice.



Herman

The people who wrote things down were the people who could afford to.



Corn

Which is a nice closing thought. But we're not closing yet.



Herman

No. We've got one more voice.



Hilbert

The itinerary isn't a worse map. It's a better one. A map tells you where things are. An itinerary tells you how to get there. If you're a merchant with a cargo of wine and a donkey that's already lame, you don't want to know the shape of the coastline. You want to know the next town with a stable and a well.



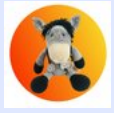
Corn

Huh.



Hilbert

I spent a year in a basement in Naples working on a fragment of what I'm fairly sure was a sailor's periplous. The practical, beat-up road lists that ordinary travelers actually used. So I've handled these things. And the assumption that they were crude because they weren't to scale is backwards.



Herman

Say more about that.



Hilbert

The modern equivalent isn't a transit map. It's a GPS. It's turn-by-turn. It's practical. And the reason we've lost most of them isn't that they were primitive. It's that they were used to death. They were the paperbacks of antiquity. You wore them out and bought another one.



Corn

The survival rate is low because the use rate was high.



Hilbert

That's right. The things that survive are the things nobody used. The fancy atlases sat on shelves. The itineraria went in saddlebags.



Herman

Which is why the evidence is thin.



Hilbert

There's a detail I want to mention because it's the part that actually gets me. The reason we have the Tabula Peutingeriana at all is that a monk copied it in the thirteenth century. Some guy in Colmar who never left his monastery, copying a road map for an empire that had been gone for eight hundred years.



Corn

That's the real story.



Hilbert

Not that the Romans couldn't conceive of distance. That a medieval monk could. He sat there with a quill and copied a list of towns he would never visit, for a world he would never see, because somebody told him it mattered.



Herman

That's a strange thing to do.



Hilbert

It's a strange thing to do. But it's the reason we know any of this. Which is worth remembering when we talk about what survived and what didn't. The survival wasn't about importance. It was about somebody deciding to copy it.



Corn

The picture we have is filtered twice. Once by who wrote it, once by who copied it.



Hilbert

Twice at least. Probably more. Anyway. I have to go. I'm the only one with a key to the side door and there's a delivery coming.



Corn

Okay.



Hilbert

The point stands though. The itinerary isn't a failed map. It's a different tool. And the people who used it knew exactly what they were doing.



Herman

That's a good reframe. Because it changes what we're looking for. If the itineraria were practical tools that got used to death, then the absence of surviving maps isn't evidence of navigational ignorance. It's evidence of navigational success.



Corn

Which flips the whole pre-cartographic framing.



Herman

It flips it. Daniel says pre-cartographic as though that means pre-knowledge. But if the knowledge was procedural, and the procedural tools got worn out, then the absence of maps is exactly what you'd expect from a culture that knew how to get around.



Corn

The tools that survived are the ones nobody needed.



Herman

The tools that got used are the ones we don't have. Which means the archaeological record is biased against the very thing we're trying to find.



Corn

We're reconstructing the travel knowledge of the ancient world from the shelf copies.



Herman

From the shelf copies. And Hilbert's point about the monk is the part that lands for me. Somebody in the thirteenth century decided a Roman road map was worth copying. That's not a culture that's lost the thread.



Corn

It's a culture that knows the thread matters.



Herman

It's a culture that knows the thread matters, even if it can't use it. Which is a strange kind of preservation. The monk in Colmar couldn't have traveled those roads. The empire was gone. But he copied it anyway.



Corn

Because somebody told him it mattered.



Herman

That's the same reason we're having this conversation. Somebody decided the knowledge was worth keeping, and we inherited it, and now we're passing it on.



Corn

Which brings us back to Daniel's question in a way I didn't expect.



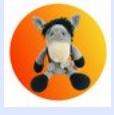
Herman

How so?



Corn

Because the whole episode is about whether ordinary people could conceive of distant places. And the answer turns out to include a thirteenth-century monk in a monastery, copying a map of a world he'd never see. The conception of distance doesn't require the ability to travel it.



Herman

That's the cleanest version of the answer. The framework and the ability are separate things. You can have one without the other.



Corn

The ancient world had the framework long before it had the ease.



Herman

The modern world has the ease, and we're still arguing about whether the framework was there.



Corn

Which is a little embarrassing.



Herman

It's a little embarrassing.



Corn

Okay. So here's the one thing I want to leave with. If you take one thing from this episode, take this. The barrier to ancient travel wasn't conceptual. It was economic. The world was more connected than we assume and more stratified than we'd like, and the people who couldn't travel weren't held back by not knowing the world was out there. They were held back by not being able to afford the trip.



Herman

The corollary. The reason we got the elite-only picture wrong is that the sources we have were written by the people with the least reason to notice everyone else moving.



Corn

The people who wrote things down were the people who could afford to.



Herman

The people who could afford to travel were the people who wrote about it. So we inherited a picture of the world as seen from the top of the pyramid.



Corn

The pyramid was wider at the bottom than the writing suggests.



Herman

Much wider.



Corn

There's one thing I'd flag as open. We don't actually know whether the man selling fish in the forum shared the educated framework. The culture had it. Whether it trickled down is not documented.



Herman

That's the honest gap. And it's worth naming because it's the one part of Daniel's question the evidence doesn't answer.



Corn

The other open question is the road versus sea tension. The sources say roads were official-heavy. Adams and Laurence say all but the very poorest could travel. The resolution is probably that sea was the ordinary person's highway, but it's not fully settled.



Herman

It's not fully settled. And it's the kind of thing that better modeling might eventually resolve. ORBIS is already a step in that direction.



Corn

There's a forward-looking thought. If the flat earth myth is a nineteenth-century invention, what else do we believe about antiquity that's actually a Victorian argument?



Herman

It's a bigger one than this episode.



Corn

It is. And it's the one I'd want Daniel to sit with. Because his hypothesis wasn't just wrong. It was wrong in a way that has a history.



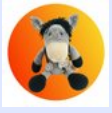
Herman

The hypothesis has a genealogy.



Corn

The genealogy is more interesting than the hypothesis.



Herman

That's a good place to land.



Corn

Thanks to Hilbert Flumingtop, our producer, for the itinerary correction and the monk in Colmar.



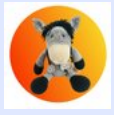
Herman

That was a good one.



Corn

This has been My Weird Prompts.



Herman

If you enjoyed this episode, leave us a review. It helps other listeners find the show.



Corn

We'll be back soon.



Herman

See you then.