

How the Phoenicians Invented Purple

They did it without the use of lustrous vowels.
Or solar-powered calculators. They could not interrogate
electronics or rely on transponders. They could not shoulder
the locks which pulley freight and cargo ships across isthmuses.

A word like "purple" must have sounded like consonantmash,
like gravel compote, pebble tapanade. I doubt whether Phoenicians
could even modulate the volume of their masticating for they
had little culture, outside of Sea Worship and Ocean Decay.

They did it without timesheets or timeclocks, all those
types of clicking-minute designs. They crafted Teflon
origami from orders overseas and sliced through
seaweed canopies of primitive decrees.

They pulverized shellfish until goop oozed out dye
and purpled the robes of lieges and emirs and satraps.
They harnessed one idea ballasted by regional prowess
and brute degree. And they ran with it until an alphabet
formed from the clamor of that commerce.

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