Money and Pilgrimage in Early Medieval Europe (c. 600-1100)

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Abstract
Pilgrims, as long-distance travellers who left familiar territory behind, were frequent users of coined money. They needed it to sustain themselves on the journey, and also to indulge in distribution of alms and other offerings at their destination; many would also use money to engage in casual commerce at all stages of their route. This brief survey considers the range of ways in which pilgrims might have used coins to fulfil practical and spiritual needs, exemplified by case-studies, before looking at possible examples of pilgrims' coins in the material record.

Introduction: a bag of silver

Despite being a layman – indeed, a member of the aristocratic class infamous for arrogance and rapine in tenth-century France – Gerald of Aurillac (d. *c.* 909) has gone down in history as a man whose piety burned as fiercely as his earthly appetites. A *vita* of Gerald by one of the leading holy men of the age, Odo of Cluny (d. 942), used him as a vehicle to explore how the French secular elite should and should not behave. For all that the details of Gerald's life may or may not be reliable, at least in the form recounted by Odo, the text conveys a rich and textured impression of what life was like in tenth-century France, including a robust form of Christian devotion. One of Gerald's supposed virtues was a passion for pilgrimage to the holy city of Rome. There the tombs of the apostles could be seen and touched, and there the heir to St Peter presided, with the power to absolve even the most heinous sins. Gerald supposedly undertook the long journey to Rome no fewer than seven times, and in describing these trips, Odo shines small, sharp spotlights onto a whole world of pilgrims moving to-and-fro, and onto those who supported them and profited from them. Money featured at every turn. Gerald was not one to travel lightly, and brought with him large amounts of silver coin that he spent freely on cloth and other goods in the course of his journey. People, ranging from merchants dealing in luxury goods to desperate beggars, plied him (often successfully) for cash. In Piacenza, Gerald encountered a ferry where tolls from *Romei* – "Rome-seekers"

– were a plentiful, dependable source of income[1]. What is most striking of all is the monetary payment that signalled Gerald's own personal devotion to St Peter. The lofty count would carry ten *solidi* of money suspended from his neck in a bag, all the way from his home to Rome. Odo succinctly yet powerfully underlined the significance of this bag of money: «*tamquam supplex seruus domino suo, quasi censum defferet*» ([Gerald] offered this by way of census, like a humble servant to his lord)[2]. Cash became, in Gerald's hands, a means of expressing proper and equitable social relations: the count used it to show due deference to his lord, in the same way his own servile tenants would do to him[3].

As Gerald's experiences demonstrate, money was deeply intertwined with the experience of pilgrimage in the earlier Middle Ages (taken here to mean the period between the seventh and eleventh centuries). That is the theme of this short contribution. It cannot and will not give a complete overview of this vast and rich subject, and in any case that task has already been undertaken by a number of other scholars[4]. Even the economic dimensions of pilgrimage have been discussed insightfully elsewhere[5]. The present chapter therefore offers something more specific: a consideration of how and why coined money in particular was a vital part of the pilgrim experience, and continued to be throughout the early Middle Ages. Various written sources paint a picture of pilgrims' use of coin in remarkably vivid hues, and permit the identification of certain actual finds as probable artefacts of pilgrimage.

Money and pilgrimage: piety and practicality

To look at pilgrimage and money at this time is to perceive something rare and important for the period: a situation in which coined money had several specific roles, only some of which were formally economic in the commonly understood sense of modern times. On the one hand, coined money provided a tool for transferring value in a way that was fixed and enduring; on the other, it was emphatically not anchored to any one economic sphere or viewpoint[6]. There was no sense of coinage and its use being indecorous as long as its function was clearly signposted. Thus figures like Count Gerald made a display of money on their journeys as pilgrims; others (as shall be seen) made a display of handing it over at their destination. Doing so presented no contradiction

1 Odo of Cluny, *Vita sancti Geraldi Auriliacensis* I.29, ed. Bultot-Verleysen 2009: 176-177; trans. Sitwell 1958: 119-120.

2 Odo of Cluny, *Vita sancti Geraldi Auriliacensis* II.17, ed. Bultot-Verleysen 2009: 220-221; trans. Sitwell 1958: 146-147.

3 Cfr. Feller 2017.

4 Among others, see Birch 1998; Webb 1999; Webb 2002; Bartlett 2013: 410-443.

5 See, in addition to relevant sections of the works cited in the previous note, Bell, Dale 2011.

6 Zelizer 1994; Nelms, Maurer 2014; Naismith 2023: esp. 7-10.

with the fact that the coins could (and eventually would) be dispersed, probably through commercial channels. That did not matter; what did carry weight was how a particular person made use of them for a particular purpose. Currency was characterised by an inextricable bond with individual humans, and more especially with their direct interaction. One could not give a coin to a saint, or to a beggar at a saint's shrine, without being there; in theory one could send a proxy or subordinate to carry out that task, but doing so carried less weight. Even kings, aristocrats and bishops put a high premium on handing over their own donations to deserving recipients – on thereby overcoming what Peter Brown called «the facts of distance [to reach] the joys of proximity»[7].

That act carried extra weight in the post-Roman centuries when the quantity of coined money in circulation had plummeted. It never went away altogether, but it was certainly never the norm, and this consequently meant that using coined money became a conscious choice, a deliberate statement on the part of one or both parties in an exchange[8]. Under these straitened circumstances, using coin became an even more potent statement of identity; one that encapsulated material worth and the capacity to do with it whatever a person needed or wished to[9]. Many alternatives were available, at least in theory. For those who dealt regularly with the same face-to-face community (such as the denizens of a village or town, or even a well-trodden trade route), formal and informal credit mechanisms were probably the most common alternative[10]. But pilgrims were unusual in passing over long distances and dealing with diverse people. The nature of pilgrimage therefore meant that pilgrims' money generally had to be coined money. Even pilgrims heading for regional centres would have quickly passed out of familiar territory[11]. Pilgrimages on this level were probably more numerous overall, but there is generally more information about long-distance, high-profile pilgrimage centres, above all Rome and (especially from the tenth century) Jerusalem.

Journeying anywhere as a pilgrim constituted a risk. Robbers knew to target pilgrims, in part because more-or-less all pilgrims would have at least a small amount of money with them. That was the expectation of the Muslim raiders at Fréjus who in the early tenth century took control of the major western passes through the Alps and demanded tolls from the pilgrims who used them[12]. Pope John XVIII supposedly begged the warlike Fulk Nerra, count of Anjou (d. 1040), to rid Rome of the troublesome Crescentius, who was preying on the

7 Brown 1981: 87-87.
8 Naismith 2023.
9 For money and identity, see Travaini 2018.
10 Travaini 2018: 106-111.
11 Webb 2002: 114-153; Bartlett 2013: 425-433.
12 Versteegh 1990: 369-371; Ballan 2010: 29.

steady traffic of merchants and pilgrims near the city[13]. A less violent but more pervasive threat was that pilgrims might be fleeced by profiteers and hucksters. One Carolingian capitulary from the time of Emperor Carloman (879-84) sternly forbade locals from overcharging travellers of any kind[14], and stories of pilgrims being set upon by robbers eager for cash are ubiquitous: a whole party of English bishops and aristocrats was robbed outside Rome in 1061, in a case that became a scandal[15].

Pilgrims thus represented a significant source of wealth to be tapped by fair means or foul, on the presumption that they were a captive audience who would have money with them. A few, like Gerald, would have a lot of money. Figures of this stature must have been the bread and butter of one Frenchman, Peter of Le Puy, who in the eleventh century relocated to Ephesus to act as a sort of tour guide to pilgrims and other travellers[16]. Others were not so well supplied. When Fulk Nerra reached Jerusalem on the first of his three or four visits in 1003, he found that a toll was being exacted from pilgrims at the entrance to the city, and he paid the way not just for himself and his companions but for many others as well[17]. Here and elsewhere, money was a necessity for handling life in more highly monetised societies than those of northwest Europe, and the level of pilgrims' preparedness for this harsh reality check varied widely. Bernard the monk, who left a narrative of his journey to the Holy Land around 870, was clearly frustrated by the many fees and papers required for travel in Egypt after landing at Alexandria, and was surprised by the practice of weighing the local coinage[18]. Pilgrims were also perceived as a predictable and lucrative source of commercial demand, again for the reason that they were far from home and in need of both supplies and items critical to their devotions. Otto I (936-73) granted the abbot of St Gall the privilege of holding a market and minting coins at Rorschach in Switzerland, because the traffic of pilgrims heading for Rome presented a good opportunity for the benefit of the monastery[19]. At Conques in the southwest of France in the early eleventh century, for example, the popular shrine of St Foi saw a healthy trade in candles that pious visitors would light in the church. One merchant who realised that the price of these candles was so low that he could make a handsome profit by taking them home

13 *Chronica de gestis consulum Andegavorum*, ed. Halphen, Poupardin 1913: 144-147. This early twelfth-century text weaves together legend and material from earlier sources, but the general point is plausible (especially assuming "*Crescentius*" means John Crescentius).

14 Capitulary of Ver c. 13, ed. Boretius, Krause 1897: 375.

15 Naismith, Tinti 2019: 546-547.

16 *Miracles of St Foi* II.3, ed. Robertini 1994: 157-158; trans. Sheingorn, Clark 1995: 119-120.

17 *Chronica de gestis consulum Andegavorum*, ed. Halphen, Poupardin 1913: 50.

18 Tobler, Molinier 1879: 309-320.

19 Sickel 1879-84: Otto I, no. 90. It has been suggested, though not on very strong evidence, that certain imitations of the coinage of Strasbourg might be the products of this mint at Rorschach, Nau 1990: 134.

to sell on incurred the wrath of the saint, who set alight the candles he had stuffed down his shirt. Another story from the same collection described the robbery of a man who was travelling to Conques with some cloth to sell; it was pointed out in emphatic terms that the commercial aspect of the trip was incidental to the man's love of the saint, and that casual trade among pilgrims was an established custom[20].

For the most fiercely devout, a steady supply of money was not needed at all on pilgrimage: poverty and charity were an integral part of the experience. St Willibald (d. *c.* 787) in his old age recalled with pride how he and his companions had begged for bread at Pygela near Ephesus, and then eaten it sat around the town's fountain[21]. Penury and hardship was not the norm, however, and instead most chose to gather money in advance of leaving. On some level, this meant that pilgrimage was more feasible for those with greater resources – and by extension that a rise in the popularity of pilgrimage partially ensued from more people having the requisite wealth, or the will to use it in this way[22]. Even so, it was rare in the early Middle Ages to have ready access to significant amounts of cash. Many expedients were therefore used to raise the money needed for pilgrimage. Members of one tenth-century guild in Exeter could expect support from their fellows, to the tune of five pence each, if they decided to go *æt supfore* ("on the southern pilgrimage")[23]. A man named Mathias, who had managed to vindicate his claim to partial ownership of a mill in the face of resistance from the abbey of Vendôme, voluntarily gave up his rights to the abbey in return for five *solidi* of coins to support a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the eleventh century[24]. This was a common practice for anyone with land: it would be sold or temporarily granted to a church, in return for a sum of money and sometimes other expensive essentials such as horses.

It was not for nothing, then, that one of the distinguishing trappings of the early medieval pilgrim was a purse or satchel[25]. Gerald's purse contained no small amount of cash. He and other wealthy travellers would go as a group, gaining safety in numbers at the cost of additional mouths to feed. Another option was to deposit cash with trusted contacts on the trip out, to be retrieved and used on the way home: that was the strategy used by one aristocrat from southwest France who set off for Jerusalem in the late tenth century but was shipwrecked

20 *Miracles of St Foi* I.24 and IV.1, ed. Robertini 1994: 125-127, 224; trans. Sheingorn, Clark 1995: 91-92, 182-183.

21 Hugeburc, *Hodoeporicon*, c. 4, ed. Holder-Egger 1887: 93.

22 Bede notes a rise in English pilgrimage to Rome in the late seventh century *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* V.7, ed. and trans. Colgrave, Mynors 1969: 472-473, coinciding with a period of surging monetisation (Naismith *forthcoming*); note also a significant rise in pilgrimage to Jerusalem from western Europe in the late tenth century; Ritter 2020; Gabriele 2011: 73-93.

23 Whitelock, Brett, Brooke 1981, vol I: 59.

24 Métais 1893-1904, vol. I: no. 210; see also nos 250 and 251.

25 Webb 1999: 21.

between Italy and Africa[26]. Most, however, travelled on a much tighter budget. Peter Damian (d. 1073) in one of his letters passed on the edifying story of a couple from northern Italy who undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, bringing with them two purses of cash. One of these was accidentally dropped into a lake, but despite initial misgivings the couple tightened their belts and persevered with what remained. On the return journey they stopped at the same lake and sought to purchase a meal from a fisherman. Peter Damian makes a point of the couple not haggling with the fisherman: they accept his price without demur. They then find the lost purse of money inside the fish[27]. Monetary thrift and prudence emerge as a recurring theme in relation to pilgrims. Carolingian rulers proclaimed that pilgrims should not be charged tolls, although the frequent repetition of this order suggests it was not consistently implemented, and there is at least one reference to traders from England who masqueraded as pilgrims to avoid paying tolls[28]. Circumstances thus forced pilgrims to use money, and they should be protected in their honest spiritual endeavour; at the same time, pilgrimage and profit motives should not mix, at least in theory: in practice, it was probably difficult to distinguish all but the most devout pilgrims and flagrant merchants.

Pilgrims spent their carefully amassed sums on three main things. One of these has been treated already: necessities arising from the journey itself. That would mean food, accommodation and, sometimes, transport. All of these might be provided free of charge to the poorest among pilgrims, and indeed catering to the needs of pilgrims could be a drain on the resources of church institutions. At Rome, one bull of 1053 and another superficially dated to 797 but probably also from the mid-eleventh century both concern special rights for the church of S. Salvatore in Terrione, which was charged with the burial of dead pilgrims[29]. Second was for offerings to major churches, above all the destination itself, like Gerald of Aurillac's ten *solidi* tied around his neck. Third was for almsgiving to the poor, which was another important part of the experience.

Spiritual expenditures: pilgrims and coin finds

Money is not just a matter of numbers; nevertheless, it is useful to have some idea of scale, and there are strong hints that wealth could cascade downwards and outwards in rich torrents where pilgrims travelled frequently, and above all when wealthy pilgrims came to town. St Oswald of Worcester (d. 992) was praised for the thousands of pennies he allegedly dispersed to the

26 *Miracles of St Foi* II.2, ed. Robertini 1994: 153-154; trans. Sheingorn, Clark 1995: 116-117.
27 Peter Damian, *Epistolae* 169, ed. Reindel 1983-93, vol. IV: 249.
28 Collected in Webb 1999: 30-32; see also Whitelock 1979: 848.
29 Birch 1998: 144-146.

poor while on pilgrimage to Rome[30], and when King Robert II the Pious (996-1031) toured major pilgrim shrines of southern France, «his hand was never empty for the poor» («*a pauperibus vero eius manus nunquam fuit vacua*»)[31]. Other such references are legion, and it is no surprise that the population of the poor and indigent gravitated towards pilgrimage centres, where such largesse was more predictable. One Carolingian capitulary even criticised those beggars who falsely claimed to be gathering money for pilgrimage[32], while both Bede and Odo of Cluny found fault at the opposite end of the spectrum: huge charitable donations needed to be sincere and pious, not just a matter of show, which was clearly a long-term challenge for those who worried at the morality of monetary wealth and its place in the spiritual economy[33]. They nonetheless attest to very large charitable disbursements.

Just how great might such gifts have been? A monk of Soissons boasted in the early tenth century of how swollen the shrine of St Sebastian was with pious gifts brought by visitors. Unusually, he actually offered figures for the donations: 85 *modii* of coin plus another 900 lbs of gold and silver objects. Both figures, especially the first, must be treated with some doubt. The *modius* was a measure of volume rather than weight, and a rough estimate – assuming Roman *modii* were meant – would suggest that this volume could hold well over a million coins. But one detail from Soissons stands out. It mentions that the mass of coins was brought from diverse lands, including (so the writer claimed) all parts of Gaul, Germany and elsewhere. This is important, for foreign coin was normally barred from circulation in the Carolingian lands. The text could mean coins from distant parts of the empire, but interdicts on circulation between major kingdoms were already well established by this time, and in any case this would not allow for the visitors from overseas (probably meaning Britain and Ireland). In other words, the monks of Soissons were receiving a mix of foreign coins[34]. This is important, because pilgrims would have been well aware of the difficulty in trying to use illicit coin – or at least they would surely have learned the risk after traversing any distance and dealing with locals en route. There are exceptions to this rule. Anglo-Saxon coins are surprisingly well represented among finds of coins from the period *c.* 850-970 in Italy (especially in and around Rome), sometimes being found with locally made coins, which suggests they occasionally entered broader circulation[35]. Even so, in a situation like

30 Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *Vita S. Oswaldi*, IV. 6, ed. and trans. Lapidge 2009: 104-105.

31 Helgaud, *Vita Roberti regis*, c. 21 and 27, ed. Bautier, Labory 1965: 102-105, 126-127.

32 Council of Châlons, c. 45, ed. Werminghoff 1906: 282-283.

33 Bede, *In proverbia Salomonis*, ed. Hurst 1983: 40; Odo of Cluny, *Collationes* I.41, ed. Migne 1844-64, vol. 133: col. 548B.

34 Odilo, *Translatio sancti Sebastiani* c. 36, ed. Holder-Egger 1887: 386. For the question of how many coins 8 *modii* might have held, see Naismith 2023: 81.

35 Naismith 2014.

that at Soissons, it follows that pilgrims must have kept back some amount of "home" money to make their donation at the shrine itself, for the saint would not turn down sincere offerings on account of what stamp they bore.

Pilgrims visiting St Sebastian's shrine at Soissons practised what modern anthropologists would describe as "earmarking": setting aside different batches of notionally identical pieces of money for specific reasons[36]. The concept stems from the work of anthropologists interested in the use of money in modern societies, but the custom was also deeply engrained in the early Middle Ages. Coined money might be made so it could transfer fluidly from one person to another interchangeably, and be exchanged for the same value in every case, but coins were nonetheless perceived as carrying associations with whoever had last touched them, which could work for good or ill. At Bury St Edmunds in the late eleventh century, one pilgrim was horrified to find when he approached the altar that the coin he had picked out to give to the saint – one that came from his own rightful earnings («*ex iustissimis rerum suarum*»), as opposed to others he had from different sources – was gone, and he had to retrace his steps through the town before he found it glinting in the dirt in the marketplace[37].Conversely, the miracles of St Privatus (written at Mende in France between 1054 and 1095) describe how pilgrims would come on the saint's feast day and put offerings of coins into the outstretched hand of a figure of the saint. There was one rich man whose offering was rejected: the coins kept falling out of the metal figure's hand. He tried giving more, wondering if he simply had not been generous enough, but it was only when this man renounced his occupation of church land that his offering would be accepted[38].

These are miracle stories, and as such carry scant weight as statements of fact, but much more as refracted glimpses of contemporary thought and experience, which find important echoes in deposits of coins. "Out of place" deposits far from home might be considered in relation to pilgrims, and where such deposits occur in or near to a well-known sacred site, that explanation becomes difficult to escape. Such is the case at Rome, where excavations conducted beneath St Peter's before and during the Second World war identified the *Confessio sancti Petri*: part of a small Roman funerary complex, believed in late antiquity and after to be the actual tomb of St Peter[39]. Generations of late antique and medieval pilgrims dropped coins into the *Confessio*, and although there are a few from as early as the eighth and ninth centuries, the quantity mounts up significantly from the late tenth century, with nearly 900 in total from between then and 1100. What stands out most prominently is the range of mint-places represented among these coins. Over 70 locations can be identified, ranging

36 Zelizer 1994: esp. 18-30; Nelms, Maurer 2014: 52-54.

37 Herman the Archdeacon, *Miracles of St. Edmund*, c. 44, ed. and trans. Licence 2014: 340-341.

38 *Miracula sancti Privati* c. 5, ed. Brunel 1912: 8-11.

39 Kirschbaum 1959.

from Dublin in Ireland and Lund in Sweden to northern Spain and Hungary. The best represented general area is northern Italy, which accounts for just over 60 per cent of the finds. Some of these may have been brought by northern pilgrims like the couple described by Peter Damian, but north Italian *denari* were also the normal currency in eleventh-century Rome, so any pilgrim who had changed their money locally might have deposited such coins. But what is striking is how many visitors apparently did *not* follow that course. The *Confessio* contained appreciable numbers of coins from elsewhere, especially Germany (including modern Switzerland) and France, which are unlikely to have been viable day-to-day currency in Rome (Fig. 1)[40].

Fig. 1. Map of mint-places represented in coin finds (post-Roman-*c.* 1100) from the *Confessio sancti Petri*, based on the list in Serafini 1951, and scaled to represent the size of each contribution; white dots represent regions of origin rather than more specific locations (drawn by the author).

40 Serafini 1951. A new study of the coins from the *Confessio* is in preparation.

The deposition of these coins should be imagined with the help of stories like that of Gerald of Aurillac's purse of coin, and the unnamed Bury pilgrim's chosen penny. Visitors to Rome might often have earmarked certain coins to give to St Peter; coins acquired by particular means and charged with a personal quality. In effect, these coins became contact relics in reverse: a piece of the pilgrim left behind in contact with the saint or their shrine, or given for appropriate use by the saint's earthly representatives. This was an experience bound up closely with the physicality of being at a holy place, which is why so many of the relevant miracle stories and other narratives emphasise the moment and place of handover; giving one or more coins was simultaneously a spiritual and an economic act. The coin was a token of personal devotion and respect (hence the terse rejection of the villainous landowner's coins at Mende), and donors could expect their offerings to be used for good, pious ends by the receiving institution. Many other such deposits have been found placed or inserted into meaningful locations such as tombs, albeit mostly from later periods. There must have been many more such deposits: some of those that have been found were placed in inaccessible locations[41]. The coin itself – if it could be retrieved – would normally not be kept, for it was the act, the person and the value that mattered rather than the thing itself. In the normal course of things, most such offerings would sooner or later be spent or melted down[42].

Processes of donation were stage-managed with special care for larger gifts by elites, or at least they are better recorded. An English bishop, Coenwald of Worcester (928×929-957), who visited St Gall was treated to a very elaborate ceremonial welcome. On the day after his arrival (the feast day of St Gall, 16 October), he entered the church and placed part of an offering of money he had brought from the king on the altar, and gave the other part to the monks. He was then led into the monastery and received as a monk[43]. Giving money was important, but emphatically not the whole point of the exercise: here and elsewhere it fitted into a sequence of encounters with the holy. Another English visitor must have been responsible for a very unusual example of a larger offering of this kind that was preserved in its presentational state. Assembled in England in the 940s and then deposited in the Roman Forum beneath the House of the Vestal Virgins, the hoard contained at least 830 coins, as well as two silver "hooked tags" or fasteners bearing an inscription that named Pope Marinus II (942-46) as the intended recipient. The hooked tags strongly imply a presentational context, and a fairly elevated one. Not only was the hoard large and valuable (the equivalent of more than four of Gerald of Aurillac's offerings, for example), but whoever brought it probably expected a personal

41 Travaini 2019; Travaini 2015, Travaini 2013.

42 A rare but important exception to this rule consisted of coins that were regarded as relics: see Travaini 2021.

43 Keynes 1985: 198-199.

audience with the pope, for the hooked tags carry no reference to the donor: a highly unusual omission in this period that may partly reflect humility, but more probably the personal presence of the donor at the point of transfer[44]. As at St Gall, one should picture the Forum hoard being handed over in the midst of serious pomp and circumstance.

The Forum hoard is an exceptional case. It is even possible to postulate who the donor may have been: a bishop of London, Theodred (d. 951×953), is known to have gone to Italy in this period, and this London connection would also match the strong London element in the most recent English coins. However, the Forum hoard find is one of precious few early medieval finds (leaving those from graves aside) with concrete evidence to indicate its donative context. Other English coins from Rome in the same period may well have been intended for a similar role, but aside from deposition far outside England there is nothing about them to confirm this – perhaps meaning that not all offerings were "dressed up" in this way.

While pilgrims may well have constituted an important conduit for transferring wealth across long distances and also across social boundaries, their actual mark in surviving coin finds is difficult to identify. To the examples described above can be added (albeit sometimes with less confidence) a batch of English coins found in the Pyrenees, on the path later used for pilgrims heading to Santiago de Compostella[45]. One reason for this scarcity of pilgrims' coins is that the readily identifiable examples of "out of place" finds probably represent a small portion of the money that pilgrims used: they would mostly have dealt in the locally acceptable currency, especially for practical necessities and almost certainly for almsgiving (it would be no good to give the poor coins they could not in fact use). What one can identify is therefore likely to be parcels, ranging from one or two coins up to several *solidi* or even pounds, set aside for the specific purpose of donation and kept apart all through the pilgrim's journey. That is clearest on the way *to* the pilgrimage destination, but could also apply on the way back *from* the destination. Byzantine coins from the seventh century and later found in Britain could represent souvenirs, mementos and tangible tokens of distant holy places brought back by travellers[46]. Those associations would not have been exclusive to the original pilgrim. St Wulfstan of Worcester (d. 1095) is not known ever to have left England, but he had a gold Byzantine coin, supposedly touched by the Holy Lance, which he kept as a kind of pocket relic: when dipped into holy water, the resultant drink would bring miraculous cures[47]. There must have been a secondary layer of distribution to enable

44 Naismith, Tinti 2016; Naismith 2016, Naismith 2018.

45 Keynes 2015: 129-137.

46 Naismith *forthcoming*.

47 William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulfstani* II.9, ed. and trans. Winterbottom, Thomson 2002: 78-81.

Wulfstan to acquire this coin, and there is no way to know whether he took possession of it as a relic or as a piece of currency.

Conclusion

Pilgrimage therefore has left only a few tangible footprints in the monetary record of this period. Yet despite operating on the dark side of what it is possible to detect or quantify materially, the relationship of pilgrimage with coin encapsulates very well how money straddled economic, social and cultural spheres. Where pilgrims travelled regularly, it can be safely presumed that outlets existed for them to spend their money, and where money was given to poor pilgrims, or by pilgrims to beggars and churches, it can be safely presumed that means of spending it existed nearby. The world of charity worked hand in glove with the world of commerce. That said, pilgrimage should probably not be seen as a major driving force in long-distance coin circulation taken as a whole. Few pilgrims would carry large amounts of cash. Yet what the pilgrim economy lacked in overall impact it made up for in staying power at favoured locations. Its importance would have been very tangible on steady pilgrim routes, where it was worth setting up markets, mints and tolls to take advantage of passing traffic. At places like Rome or Jerusalem, pilgrims and everything that depended on them may have accounted for a large part of the local economy. In sustaining the material needs of churches and others, pilgrims also nourished their souls, which cannot be forgotten: pilgrims put themselves through hardship and expense for spiritual ends. That did not preclude economic interests, and it certainly did not preclude extensive use of coin. Careful attention to the moral and personal dimensions of money seems to have come to the fore in pilgrimage. The rich were to be open-handed; the poor were to be frugal; all were to use coined money as an expression of the individual relationship they had with the saints.

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