The Carolingian *cocio*: on the vocabulary of the early medieval petty merchant

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The word cocio *(i.e. petty merchant or broker in classical Latin) was a rare term that after a long absence in written Latin reappeared in several Carolingian texts. Scholars have posited a medieval semantic shift from 'merchant' to 'vagabond'. But this article argues that this consensus is erroneous. The Carolingian* cocio *continued to refer to petty commercial agents, that is, to small merchants. Furthermore, the term's appearance in capitularies and its subsequent medieval vernacular afterlife together suggest that the term was borrowed from (unattested) proto-Romance usage. A corrected history of the early medieval use of* cocio *illuminates the relationship between spoken and written Latin as well as aspects of social, religious, and economic history in the Carolingian period, and speaks to the promise of language to shed light on economic realities.*

In classical Latin, *cocio* was a term for a small-scale merchant, broker, or dealer.[1] The word was pejorative and vulgar. 'Huckster' might be a good translation, but *cocio* bore a sharper edge. After a long absence in surviving texts from about the fourth century to the eighth, *cocio* (with orthographical variants such as *coctio*, *coccio*, *cotio*, *cogcio*) reappeared in Carolingian Latin. A late eighth-century antiquarian work reported upon the word's supposed etymology.[2] In 789, a capitulary of

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1 *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (Leipzig, 1900–) [hereafter *TLL*], vol. 3, col. 1400, *s.v.* 'cocio'; *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P.G.W. Glare, 2nd edn (Oxford, 2012) [hereafter *OLD*], vol. 1, p. 374, *s.v.* 'cōciō'.

2 Paul the Deacon, *Epitome Pompei Festi de verborum significatione*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Leipzig, 1913), p. 44 (*s.v.* 'arillator'), p. 19 (*s.v.* 'coctiones').

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Charlemagne, later repeated, forbade *cotiones* and similar persons from wandering the country and carrying out 'deceptions'.[3] In 859, Archbishop Hincmar of Reims wrote that not only horsemen but *cocciones* were performing robbery (*rapina*) in the context of a military campaign.[4] A late ninth-century historian, Notker the Stammerer, told two stories about *coctiones* treated mildly by Charlemagne.[5] With these examples to hand, dictionaries of medieval Latin – Du Cange, the *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch*, Niermeyer's *Lexicon Minus* – have endorsed the idea of a definitional shift, from 'huckster' to something broader, like 'vagabond', 'vagrant' (*homo vagus*, 'Landstreicher'), or 'tramp'.[6] In this view, *cocio* lost its core meaning of buying and selling while retaining derogatory associations of mobility and lowliness.

That consensus is inaccurate, however. The Carolingian *cocio* was not the early medieval resuscitation and semantic alteration of a museum-piece word. Instead, the word firmly retained its association with buying and selling. This article argues that *cocio* survived unchanged under the waterline of common speech before reappearing in writing, a hypothesis borne out by the word's Romance afterlife. That sheds light on the relationship between spoken and written Latin (not to mention antiquarianism, capitulary policies, the challenges posed by armies, and monastic storytelling). But more importantly it

[3] *Admonitio Generalis* (23 March 789), c. 77, ed. H. Mordek, K. Zechiel-Eckes and M. Glatthaar, *Die Admonitio generalis Karls des Großen*, Monumenta Germaniae Historia [hereafter MGH] Fontes iuris 16 (Hanover, 2012), p. 230 = c. 79, ed. A. Boretius, *Capitularia regum Francorum*, MGH Capitularia 1 (Hanover, 1883), no. 22, pp. 60–1. For the later reiterations: *Capitulare missorum speciale*, c. 45, ed. Boretius, MGH Capit. 1, p. 104; Ansegis, *Collectio capitularium*, Appendix 1, c. 34, ed. G. Schmitz, *Die Kapitulariensammlung des Ansegis*, MGH Capit. ns 1 (Hanover, 1996), p. 669.

[4] Hincmar of Reims, *Epistola* 126, ed. E. Perels, *Hincmari Archiepiscopi Remensis Epistolarum pars prior*, MGH Epistolae 8.1 (Berlin, 1939), p. 63.

[5] Notker the Stammerer, *Gesta Karoli Magni imperatoris*, 1.8; 2.12, ed. H.F. Haefele, *Notker der Stammler: Taten Kaiser Karls des Großen*, MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum [hereafter SRG], ns 12 (Berlin, 1959), pp. 11, 72.

[6] C. Du Cange *et al.*, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, rev. edn (Niort, 1883–7), vol. 2, col. 384c (*s.v.* 'cociones'); the entry appears already in the first edition: C. Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* (Paris, 1681), p. 1034 (*s.v.* 'cociones'); O. Prinz *et al.*, *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch* (Munich, 1959–) [hereafter *MLW*], vol. 2.2, col. 764 (*s.v.* 'cocio'); J. Niermeyer and C. van de Kieft, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, ed. J. Burgers, rev. edn, 2 vols (Leiden, 2002), vol. 1, *s.v.* 'cocio'. Technically, Du Cange's argument differs somewhat from that of the modern dictionaries. Du Cange, *Glossarium*, vol. 2, col. 384c, cobbled together from his *testimonia* the idea that '*Cociones* are said, by both ancient and medieval writers, of those who follow after markets of sale or sites of exchange, who, while stalling for time, dispute and pretend to haggle over price with merchants, as they steal and carry off the merchandise itself' ('*Cociones*, priscis, et ætatis mediæ Scriptoribus, dictos qui fora venalium et nundinales mercatus sectantur, qui dum contantur, licitantur, et de pretio cum mercatoribus contendere simulant, merces ipsas subripiunt et auferunt'). Thus Du Cange assumed that the meaning of the *cocio* was always primarily pejorative: that is, *cociones* never referred to real merchants, but to swindlers or rogues pretending to be honest traders ('the sort who, among us, are called in the vernacular *Coquins*').

suggests a new avenue of information for small-scale economic life. The Carolingian *cocio* illuminates a poorly attested but central figure in the early medieval economy: the merchant-pedlar.

Cocio in classical Latin

Cocio is of uncertain etymology.[7] It is not related to *coquo* ('to boil') despite superficial similarity to that word's derivatives (*coctio*, 'cooking'; *coquus*, 'cook'; *coquina*, 'cookery').[8] The oldest meaning was an individual involved in small-scale commercial activity. Its closest synonym was said to be *arillator*, an even rarer word for petty dealer.[9] In Antiquity, *cocio* was common enough to give rise to a few derivatives (e.g. *cocionor*, 'to traffic in petty goods'; *cocionatura*, 'brokery') and a cognomen or two (*Cocio*, possibly *Coctio*).[10]

One finds the word in comedy, mime, satire, graffiti, and inscriptions, places where 'low' language is preserved. Plautus may have used the word in his *Asinaria*, if Joachim Camerarius (1500–74) was right to emend a manuscript reading of *coaetio* to *cocio* (not the consensus in the latest editions).[11] The word then appears in a fragment from the lost mime *Necyomantia* ('Necromancy') by the first-century BCE farce-writer Decimus Laberius:

> duas uxores? hercle hoc plus negoti est, inquit cocio;
> sex aediles viderat
>
> Two wives? Good lord, that's even more trouble, to quote the *cocio*;
> he had already seen six aediles.[12]

This is usually taken as a jab at Julius Caesar's expansion of the aedileship from four to six in 44 BCE and a rumour that he was planning to legalize polygamy.[13] Laberius' editor argues that the *cocio* here was not a character

7 C. Panayotakis (ed.), *Decimus Laberius: The Fragments* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 304–5. A. Ernout and A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine: Histoire des mots*, 4th edn (Paris, 1979), p. 130, suggest an Etruscan origin; see also A. Ernout, *Philologica*, 3 vols (Paris, 1946–65), vol. 1, p. 42.

8 *Pace* Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, *s.v.* 'cocio'.

9 *TLL*, vol. 2, col. 575, *s.v.* 'arillātor'.

10 *TLL*, vol. 3, col. 1400; TLL Onomasticon, col. 529. *TLL*, vol. 3, col. 1400 also lists uncertain cases: *cocionator*, *cocionatrix*, *cocionaria* (preserved in glosses in possibly corrupt form).

11 Plautus, *Asinaria*, l. 203. In the Teubner edition (ed. G. Goetz and F. Schöll, *T. Macci Plauti Comoediae* (Leipzig, 1922), fasc. 1), this reads: 'Vetus est "nihili coactiost" – scis quoius: non dico amplius' (recording Camerarius' proposed emendation in the *apparatus criticus*); older editions kept *coctio*. For good discussion see Panayotakis, *Laberius*, p. 304.

12 Laberius, Fragment 42, ed. Panayotakis, *Laberius*, p. 300.

13 Panayotakis, *Laberius*, pp. 303–7.

in the play, but that the expression *hercle plus negoti est* (literally 'by Hercules, this is more trouble') was proverbially linked with a petty merchant.[14] Aediles were responsible for regulating markets, so their reduplication would have been bad news for hucksters.[15] Maybe the point was just that a commoner's sense was common sense.

Cocio was seen as a low word. A Pompeian graffito reads, 'Miccio cocio tu tuo patri cacanti confregisti peram' ('Miccio, huckster, you ripped off your father while he was taking a shit').[16] In his *Satyricon*, Petronius (first century CE) used the word when his rascally protagonists are trying to sell a stolen cloak to buy back a tunic into whose lining they had secretly sewn (also stolen) coins.[17] In a comical predicament, two rustics accuse the protagonists of stealing a fine cloak; the protagonists accuse the rustics of stealing their raggedy tunic (the rustics are oblivious about the coins). The affair brings in the market's small dealers, *cociones*, drawn like sharks to chum.[18] 'One of those *cociones*, a bald man with a very lumpy forehead, who used to do legal work from time to time', slyly offers to act as a trustee for the cloak, his real plan being to give the cloak to thieves (*praedones*).[19]

Aulus Gellius, who preserves the Laberius quote, describes *cocio* as one of the many 'obsolete and obscene words' that Laberius borrowed 'from the more squalid usage of the common people'.[20] *Scholia* to poetry drew connections between *cociones* and greed.[21] A gloss on a passage of Horace about a man so lucre-hungry he was called 'Mercuriale' speculates the person behind the nickname was named Coctio, 'as all

[14] Panayotakis, *Laberius*, pp. 306–7.

[15] E.g. Juvenal, *Satire* 10, lines 100–2, ed. J. Willis, *Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis, Saturae Sedecim* (Leipzig, 1997), p. 137; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 1.24–5, ed. R. Helm, *Apulei Platonici Madaurensis Opera quae supersunt*, 3rd edn (Berlin, 2008 [1931]), vol. 1, pp. 22–3.

[16] *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* [hereafter *CIL*], 4.2416. See S. Levin-Richardson, 'Bodily Waste and Boundaries in Pompeian Graffiti', in D. Dutsch and A. Suter (eds), *Ancient Obscenities: Their Nature and Use in the Ancient Greek and Roman Worlds* (Ann Arbor, 2015), pp. 225–54, at p. 230. Someone has added to this graffito another: *Miccionis statum considerate* (*CIL* 4.2416), either 'Think about the position of Miccio' or 'Think about Miccio's status'.

[17] Petronius, *Satyricon* 12–15, ed. K. Müller, *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon Reliquiae*, 4th edn (Leipzig, 1995), pp. 8–12. See G. Ammannati, 'Una nota a Petronio (*Sat.* 14, 7)', *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici* 56 (2006), pp. 207–9.

[18] Petronius, *Satyricon* 14.7, ed. Müller, p. 10: 'cociones, qui ad clamorem confluxerant'.

[19] Petronius, *Satyricon* 15.4–5, ed. Müller, p. 11: 'nescio quis ex cocionibus, calvus, tuberosissimae frontis, qui solebat aliquando etiam causas agere'.

[20] Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 16.7.4,12: 'Neque non obsoleta quoque et maculantia ex sordidiore vulgi usu ponit . . . Item in Necyomantia cocionem pervulgate dicit, quem veteres 'arillatorem' dixerunt. Verba Laberi haec sunt: duas uxores? hercle hoc plus negoti est, inquit cocio; sex aediles viderat'. (*A. Gellii Noctium Atticarum libri XX*, ed. C. Hosius (Leipzig, 1903), vol. 2, pp. 169–70.)

[21] Ammannati, 'Una nota', p. 209 n. 1.

coctiones strive after lucre'.[22] A *scholium* on Terence conjectures that *cociones* are named after *cupiditas* ('greed').[23]

But this disdain represents the view from on high. A late inscription from Rome mentions a 'Pacatianus the *cocio*'.[24] This fragment of an urban prefect's edict, thought to be from the fourth century CE, puts the term neutrally alongside other working-class professions and statuses (*stabularius*, *acutarius*, *tabernarius*, *plebeius*). Given the fragmentary state of the inscription, it is hard to say in what spirit Pacatianus was given this title. But this seemingly neutral use suggests that not all Romans thought the term so disgraceful.

Coctiones in Paul the Deacon (late eighth century)

'Hoping to add something to your libraries, seeing as I have very little to offer of my own, by necessity I have taken a loan from another.' So wrote Paul the Deacon, sometime in the 780s or 790s, to Charlemagne.[25] He had finished an epitome of the twenty-book glossary of Sextus Pompeius Festus (who wrote in the later second century CE), itself an epitome of Verrius Flaccus (first century CE).[26] Paul's epitome consisted of short entries containing words and their meanings, often with an etymological twist. It is difficult to say how much of the collection is Verrius Flaccus, Pompeius Festus, or Paul the Deacon.[27] But the book represents the state of Latin lexicography in the age of Charlemagne.

Cocio appears twice in Paul's *Epitome*, first as a synonym for *arillator* and second in a stand-alone entry.[28] *Arillator* was an old-fashioned word for 'huckster' or 'broker'. We possess little trace of how this word was used. Greek glosses offer μετάβολος (= μεταβολεύς), 'one who

[22] Pomponius Porphyrio, *Commentum in Horatium: Sermones*, ed. A. Holder (Innsbruck, 1894), on *Sermones* 2.3.25 ('Unde frequentia Mercuriale inposuere mihi'), p. 297: 'Mercuriale[m] quasi lucrosum, quia Cocio appellabatur. Omnes enim cociones lucro student.' In another *scholium* on Horace, the word is associated with *negotiatores* who 'travel from one place to another': Pseudo-Acro, *Scholia in Horatium*, Sermones 2.3.22, ed. O. Keller (Leipzig, 1904), vol. 2, p. 391: 'Sicut negotiatores et cociones transeunt de uno loco ad alium locum'.

[23] *Scholia Terentiana*, ed. F. Schlee (Leipzig, 1893), on *Eunuchus* 2.2, 99: 'cupedia, cupiditas, unde cotiones et alii cupidi, ut sunt telonearii et mercibus insistentes, cupedinarii vocantur'.

[24] *CIL* 6.31895, line 6.

[25] Paul the Deacon, *Epitome* (preface), ed. Lindsay, p. 1 [= ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp 4 (Berlin, 1895), p. 508]: 'Cupiens aliquid vestris bibliothecis addere, quia ex proprio perparum valeo, necessario ex alieno mutuavi.'

[26] For this work, see S. Lanciotti, 'Tra Festo e Paolo', in P. Chiesa (ed.), *Paolo Diacono: Uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio* (Udine, 2000), pp. 237–50; R. Cervani, *L'Epitome di Paolo Diacono del 'De verborum significatu' di Pompeo Festo: Struttura e metodo* (Rome, 1978).

[27] C. Villa, 'Uno schedario di Paolo Diacono: Festa e Grauso di Ceneda', *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 27 (1984), pp. 56–80.

[28] Paul the Deacon, *Epitome*, ed. Lindsay, p. 19 (*s.v.* 'arillator'), p. 44 (*s.v.* 'coctiones').

exchanges or barters', and similar neutral terms for dealers.[29] A few medieval writers, relying on Paul's *Epitome*, Aulus Gellius, or the glosses, much later revived it.[30] Paul's short entry offers a pseudo-etymology that mentions the *coccio* in passing:

> **Arillator**, qui etiam coccio appellatur, dictus videtur a voce Graeca, quae est αἶρε, id est tolle, quia sequitur merces, ex quibus quid cadens lucelli possit tollere. Lucellum diminutivum est a lucro.[31]

> An **arillator**, which is also called a *coccio*, appears to be named after a Greek word, which is αἶρε, that is 'pick up', since he follows after merchandise, from which he can pick up such petty lucre (*lucellum*) as happens to fall. 'Petty lucre' (*lucellum*) is a diminutive from 'lucre' (*lucrum*).

The (false) etymology reinforces the impression that a *cocio* was a pedlar so lowly he was liable to scavenge his wares. The image is of a man skulking after a cart on a bumpy road, not much better than a ragpicker, whose 'lucre' is so insubstantial as to merit a diminutive. *Cocio* then has its own entry stressing the unscrupulousness of such dealers:

> **Coctiones** dicti videntur a cunctatione, quod in emendis vendendisque mercibus tarde perveniant ad iusti pretii finem. Itaque apud antiquos prima syllaba per U litteram scribebatur.[32]

[29] *TLL*, vol. 2, col. 575.

[30] Rather of Verona, *Praeloquia* 1.23, ed. P. Reid, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis [hereafter CCCM] 46A (Turnhout, 1984), 24: 'Ponamus namque ante oculos quemlibet prefecti filium, cuius auus iudex, abauus tribunus uel scoldascio, atauus cognoscatur miles fuisse: quis nouit illius militis pater arilator an pictor, aliptes an auceps, cetarius an figulus, sartor an fartor, mulio an sagmio fuerit, postremo eques an agricola, seruus an liber?'; Guido de Columnis, *Historia destructionis Troiae* 5.3, ed. N.E. Griffin (Cambridge, MA, 1936), p. 48: 'hic arilatores, quos mercatores uulgariter appellamus'.

[31] Paul the Deacon, *Epitome*, ed. Lindsay, p. 19 (*s.v.* 'arillator'). One tenth-century manuscript seems to have muddled an attempt to list *coccio* alongside *arillator* in the heading: Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 10.3 Aug. 4° (*saec.* x), fol. 11r: 'Arillator coccier'. The elucidation of *lucellum* ('petty lucre') may incorporate a scholium into the text. A. Walde and J.B. Hofmann, *Lateinisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 2 vols, 3rd edn (Heidelberg, 1938–54), *s.v.* 'arillator', vol. 1, p. 67, posits *arra* ('token payment, interest'), as the genuine etymology.

[32] Paul the Deacon, *Epitome*, ed. Lindsay, p. 44 (*s.v.* 'coctiones').

> ***Coctiones*** are named after 'delay', because in buying and selling merchandise they arrive late at a just price. Accordingly among the ancients the first syllable was written with a U.

We cannot verify whether this orthographical claim (*cucio* for *cocio*) is true (the etymology is certainly fanciful) but the impression once again is unflattering.

Given the *Epitome*'s respectable transmission, one might ask whether it stands behind the apparent revival of the term in Carolingian texts.[33] This is doubtful. First, Paul saw no need to define the term. Second, there is reason to suppose it never truly disappeared.

Cotiones in the capitularies (789, *c.*802, 827)

In 789, *cocio* appeared in Charlemagne's *Admonitio Generalis*, one of the future emperor's most significant legal decrees, the normative articulation of his project of societal 'correction'.[34] With over forty manuscripts, the *Admonitio* was widely read and profoundly influential.[35] Themes varied from the normalization of liturgy to the punishment of criminals. Each of the *Admonitio*'s eighty chapters was addressed to a contingent within the kingdom, whether particular (e.g. *episcopis*, 'for the bishops'; *clericis*, 'for the clerics'; *sacerdotibus*, 'for the priests'; *populo*, 'for the people') or general (*omnibus*, 'to everybody'). *Cocio* appears in Chapter no. 77 (no. 79 in Boretius' older edition), 'partly for the priests, partly for everybody'. The most recent editors classify it as one of four chapters (cc. 74–7) directed 'against current abuses of presumptuousness and deception'.[36]

[33] P. Chiesa and F. Stella, 'Paulus Diaconus', in P. Chiesa and L. Castaldi (eds), *La trasmissione dei testi latini del medioevo – Mediaeval Latin Texts and their Transmission (Te.Tra.)*, vol. 2 (Florence, 2005), pp. 482–506, at pp. 482–5.

[34] *Admonitio Generalis* (23 March 789), ed. Mordek, Zechiel-Eckes and Glatthaar. The chapter numbering in this edition differs from that of the older edition by Alfred Boretius, *Capitularia regum Francorum*, MGH Capit. 1 (Hanover, 1883), no. 22, pp. 52–62. For discussion of the *Admonitio generalis*, see above all the 'Einleitung' to Mordek *et al.*, *Admonitio Generalis*, pp. 1–160. Other valuable treatments include J. Nelson, *King and Emperor: A New Life of Charlemagne* (London, 2019), pp. 258–64; H. Mordek, 'Admonitio Generalis', in A. Cordes (ed.), *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, 2nd edn (Berlin, 2008), vol. 1, pp. 76–8; R. McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of European Identity* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 239–40; R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789–895* (London, 1977), pp. 1–44.

[35] Mordek *et al.*, *Admonitio Generalis*, pp. 63–111 (manuscripts), pp. 112–47 (impact). For a more detailed discussion of the manuscripts, see H. Mordek, *Bibliotheca capitularium regum Francorum manuscripta: Überlieferung und Traditionszusammenhang der fränkischen Herrschererlasse* (Munich, 1995), p. 1082 (index entry).

[36] Mordek *et al.*, *Admonitio Generalis*, p. 27: 'gegen aktuelle Unsitten der Anmaßung und des Betrugs'.

Chapter 77 restricted *cotiones* and *mangones*, another disparaging word for 'merchants', from travelling over the country and perpetrating frauds, while condemning *nudi cum ferro* ('naked men with iron', thought to mean 'penitents in chains') who also went from place to place. The text reads as follows in the edition by Mordek, Zechiel-Eckes, and Glatthaar:

> 77. ***Aliquid*** *sacerdotibus, aliquid omnibus*. Item ut isti mangones et cotiones, qui sine omni lege vagabundi vadunt per istam terram, non sinantur vagare et deceptiones hominibus agere, nec isti nudi cum ferro, qui dicunt se data sibi poenitentia ire vagantes. Melius videtur, ut si aliquid inconsuetum et capitale crimen conmiserint, ut in uno loco permaneant laborantes et servientes et paenitentiam agentes secundum quod sibi canonice inpositum sit.[37]

> 77. *Partly for the priests, partly for everybody.* Also [it is decreed] that those *mangones* and *cotiones*, who without any law wander as vagabonds across this land, shall not be permitted to roam and carry out deceptions upon people. Neither should those naked men with iron, who say that they are travelling upon a penance given to them. It would seem better, if they have committed some unusual and capital crime, that they be made to remain in one single place, labouring and serving and doing the penance according to what is canonically imposed on them.

This decree reappeared in later capitularies. It appeared in abbreviated form (omitting the part about the *nudi cum ferro*), in a capitulary designated the *Capitulare missorum speciale* by Alfred Boretius, dated tentatively to 802.[38] It later made its way, verbatim, into the *Collectio capitularium* of Ansegis, a widely copied compilation of Carolingian law-making published in 827.[39] Thus, this *capitulum*'s use of the word *cocio* had a wide ninth- and tenth-century audience. How one interprets *cotiones* depends on both how one explains the goals of the *capitulum* and what one makes of the other named groups, *mangones* ('petty merchants') and *nudi cum ferro* ('naked men with iron'). Three explanations have been proposed.

[37] *Admonitio Generalis*, c. 77, ed. Mordek *et al.*, p. 230 (= c. 79, ed. Boretius, pp. 60–1).
[38] *Capitulare missorum speciale*, c. 45, MGH Capit. 1, p. 104. 'Ut mangones et cociones et nudi homines qui cum ferro vadunt non sinantur vagari et deceptiones hominibus agere.'
[39] Ansegis, *Collectio capitularium*, Appendix 1, c. 34, ed. G. Schmitz, *Die Kapitulariensammlung des Ansegis*, MGH Capit., ns 1 (Hanover, 1996), p. 669.

The first view is that the law was directed against non-elite mobility.[40] The Carolingians' decentralized political model depended on local mastery of local problems, so the unmoored presented challenges. One was the delivery of justice. It was easy for guilty people to escape justice by fleeing from one jurisdiction to another.[41] Capitularies condemned pilgrims and clerics wandering without papers (*litterae*).[42] A second concern had to do with the burden of care. Capitularies urged secular and religious officials not to neglect 'poor people and pilgrims wandering about'.[43] But a flip-side of this was the risk of parasitical mendicancy. Janet Nelson has thus plausibly described c. 77 of the *Admonitio Generalis* as part of the 'uneasy undertone' of the Carolingian institutionalization of charity.[44]

A second view dwells on religious dangers.[45] Many wanderers made their living as travelling pseudo-prophets, relic dealers, magicians, and hedgerow preachers.[46] The *Rule of Benedict* begins with a condemnation of *gyrovagi* ('wanderers round about'), travelling monks who lived on charity.[47] The 'deceptions' of religious wanderers were not merely spiritual, but material: it was axiomatic that they solicited gifts. Not only were such arrangements disordering when 'holy' men and women were disingenuous; they were corrupting for the genuinely pious. Gregory of Tours describes a wandering ascetic who became a drunkard due to the rivers of wine poured in his direction.[48] In the case of the *nudi cum ferro*, the distorted ideal type would have been a charismatic penitent like St Hospicius, who lived 'fettered with iron chains for bodily purity' (*constrictus catenis ad purum corpus ferreis*) –

[40] J. Nelson, 'Opposition to Pilgrimage in the Reign of Charlemagne?', in V. Garver and O. Phelan (eds), *Rome and Religion in the Medieval World: Studies in Honor of Thomas F. X. Noble* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 65–82, at pp. 73–4.

[41] Nelson, 'Opposition to Pilgrimage', pp. 75–6.

[42] *Capitulare missorum speciale*, c. 2, MGH Capit. 1, p. 102: 'Ut fugitivi clerici et peregrini a nullo recipiantur sine commendatitiis litteris.' See Nelson, 'Opposition to Pilgrimage', p. 75.

[43] *Capitulare missorum generale*, c. 27, MGH Capit. 1, p. 96.

[44] Nelson, 'Opposition to Pilgrimage', pp. 73–4.

[45] B. Filotas, *Pagan Survivals: Superstitions and Popular Cultures in Early Medieval Pastoral Literature* (Toronto, 2005), pp. 273–4.

[46] In addition to Filotas, see V. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, 1991); D. Harmening, *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1979); H. Mordek and M. Glatthaar, 'Von Wahrsagerinnen und Zauberern: Ein Beitrag zur Religionspolitik Karls des Großen', in H. Mordek, *Studien zur fränkischen Herrschergesetzgebung* (Frankfurt, 2000), pp. 229–60; J.-P. Devroey, 'La poudre du duc Grimoald: Une affaire criminelle au début du IXe siècle', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 96 (2018), pp. 349–63.

[47] Benedict of Nursia, *Regula* 1.10, ed. A. de Vogüé, Sources Chrétiennes 181–3 (Paris, 1972), vol. 1, p. 438. See D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2002).

[48] Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 8.34, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, 2nd edn, MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum 1.1 (Hanover, 1951), p. 403 (compare *Historiae* 5.21, p. 229).

and who was thought to have committed a serious crime in earlier life – whose self-abasement became the source of his sanctity.[49]

A third interpretation is that the *capitulum* focused on economics. Like many premodern governments, the Carolingian state attempted to control the minutiae of buying and selling. They restricted markets, blocked the sale of items, regulated the presence of merchants, and meddled with prices.[50] The primary meaning of both *mango* and *cotio* was, of course, 'merchant'. As Janet Nelson has noted, the text may have intended this meaning.[51] That would seem to leave the *nudi cum ferro* as an exception, but the misdirection of semi-obligatory gifts from local ecclesiastical authorities to unauthorized fraudsters was also a part of the moral economy of Carolingian officials.[52] The point would be to prevent unscrupulous wanderers of any sort from swindling local populations, whether through shady deals or dishonest alms-seeking.

All three interpretations are probably partly valid. Carolingian legislation was redundant by design.[53] But the meaning of *cotiones* differs depending on how one takes the text. If one sees the *capitulum* as primarily focused on social or religious affairs, the theory of a semantic shift from 'merchants' to 'vagrants' is credible.[54] Niermeyer and the *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch* posited that *cocio* here lost its mercantile specificity and became a generalized pejorative.[55] There is some support for this in the paired-term *mangones*. Even in ancient times, *mango*, a term for merchants who sold deficient goods, could be used as a generic insult.[56] So it would be possible to translate *isti mangones et cotiones* as 'those rascals and ne'er-do-wells'.[57]

[49] Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 6.6, ed. Krusch and Levison, pp. 272–6, quote at p. 272. Gregory describes an episode in which armed Lombards find Hospicius alone in his cell, and assume because of his chains that he is a *malefactor* who has committed murder (*homicidium fecit*); with an interpreter's help, Hospicius admits that he 'committed wrongdoing with the result that he was bound by this punishment' (p. 273). It is not clear whether Gregory is endorsing the Lombards' presumption, but it is enough to show that the line between penance for crime and penance for 'bodily purity' could be blurry.

[50] A. Verhulst, *The Carolingian Economy* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 129–30.

[51] Nelson, 'Opposition to Pilgrimage', p. 80: 'a translator may make them "swindlers" and "tramps," but why not leave open the possibility that they were what the late Roman words say – namely small-scale traders', though earlier she translates *cociones* as 'itinerant cooks' (p. 74).

[52] Nelson, 'Opposition to Pilgrimage', pp. 76–9; see also T. Kohl, 'Peasant Agency and the Supernatural', *Studia Historica: Historia medieval* 38 (2020), pp. 97–116.

[53] Compare J. Davis, 'A Pattern of Power: Charlemagne's Delegation of Judicial Responsibilities', in J. Davis and M. McCormick (eds), *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 235–46.

[54] *TLL*, vol. 7.2, cols 500–4.

[55] Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, vol. 1, *s.v.* 'cocio'; *MLW* 2.2, col. 764 (*s.v.* 'cocio'). Du Cange, *Glossarium*, vol. 2, col. 384c (*s.v.* 'cociones'), assumes the word was always pejorative. The derogatory intention of the *Admonitio* is clear from *iste* (*TLL*, vol. 7.2, cols 500–4).

[56] *TLL*, vol. 8, col. 300, *s.v.* 'mango' (lines 62–4).

[57] Compare Nelson, 'Opposition to Pilgrimage', pp. 73–4, 80.

But is it credible that Charlemagne's experts coincidentally used two pejoratives meaning 'merchant' without intending to evoke commerce? The choice of *mangones* argues for, rather than against, an intention to evoke lucre. Though *mango* lacked the frequency (and neutrality) of terms like *mercator*, *negotiator*, and *venditor*, it retained its commercial flavour in medieval Latin.[58] Moreover, it had close vernacular parallels, most relevantly Old High German *mangari* (compare English 'monger').[59] *Mango*, spoken aloud, may have been comprehensible to a Germanic-speaking audience as an equivalent of *mangari*.

That raises an intriguing possibility. Classical *mango* and *cocio* are basically synonyms.[60] If *mangones* evoked the familiar *mangari* to Germanic listeners, might *cotiones* have resonated similarly in Romance ears? Multiple Carolingian capitularies acknowledged the basic linguistic split within the empire between the *teudisca lingua* and the *romana lingua*.[61] Could this pairing reflect an ambition to reach a broader audience? We lack independent evidence of a proto-Romance word *cocio* for this period. But, as we will see further below, the evidence for *cocio* or *coctio* as a Romance term in later medieval times is considerable. If we hypothesize that the word *cocio* survived in popular speech, a possibility emerges: the drafters of *capitulum* 77 used an intentionally redundant pair of Latin words to evoke familiar words in the *teudisca* and *romana lingua* respectively, each meaning 'petty merchant'. The capitularies sometimes draw attention to vernacular terms, using phrases such as 'as we say in the vernacular (*vulgo*)' or 'as the folk (*vulgus*) terms it', but this is the exception rather than the rule.[62]

[58] F. Blatt *et al.*, *Novum Glossarium Mediae Latinitatis* (Copenhagen, 1957–), 'Ma', p. 121, *s.v.* 'mango'.

[59] E. Karg-Gasterstädt and T. Frings (eds), *Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch: Auf Grund der von Elias v. Steinmeyer hinterlassenen Sammlungen im Auftrag der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig* (Leipzig 1952–), vol. 6, cols 245–6, *s.v.* 'mangâri'; Mordek *et al.*, *Admonitio Generalis*, p. 231 n. 203. It has been argued that the word *mango*/*mangari* lies behind a famous story told by Agobard of Lyons of his rustic parishioners, who believed in wizards from a land called 'Magonia': Filotas, *Pagan Survivals*, pp. 273–4.

[60] *TLL*, vol. 8, col. 300, *s.v.* 'mango'; *TLL*, vol. 3, col. 1400, *s.v.* 'cocio'.

[61] R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789–895* (London, 1977), pp. 184–205.

[62] In general, vernacular terms are used in the capitularies without comment more frequently than they are accompanied by a *vulgo-* or *vulgus*-phrase. *Brogilus* (walled park for hunting, *MLW* 1.4, cols 1584–5, *s.v.* 'brogilus'): MGH Capit. 1, p. 87, line 23: 'lucos nostros, quos vulgus brogilos vocat' but MGH Capit. 1, p. 295, line 5: 'ad nostros brolios'; MGH Capit. 1, p. 140, line 36: 'De illo broilo'; MGH Capit. 2, p. 370, line 36: 'in broilo Compendii palatii'. *Werra* (war, feud, *MLW* 4.2, cols 864–5, *s.v.* 'guerra'): MGH Capit. 2, p. 440, line 16: 'vel rixas et dissensiones seu seditiones, quas vulgus werras nominat' but MHG Capit. 2, p. 360, line 4: 'si werra in regno surrexerit'. *Falcones* (falcons, *MLW* 4.1, cols 46–7, *s.v.* 'falco'): MGH Capit. 2, p. 117, line 36: 'accipitribus vel capis, quos vulgus falcones vocat' but MGH Capit. 1, p. 45, line 8: 'ut accipitres et falcones non habeant'; MGH Capit. 1, p. 64, line 21: 'nec falcones nec accipitres'; MGH Capit. 1, p. 95, line 23: 'falcones seu sparvarios'; MGH Capit. 2, p. 187, line 33: 'accipitres et falcones non habeant'; MGH Capit. 2, p. 187, line 36: 'atque

That would not rule out social or religious interpretations of the *capitulum*. Even if the individuals pictured by the law were vagrants or religious frauds rather than 'merchants' proper, there would be no reason to posit a semantic shift for *mango* or *cocio*. The more parsimonious explanation would be that non-merchant fraudsters were being called 'petty merchants' as an act of delegitimation. The point would be that the authorities insisted that 'those who without any law wander as vagabonds across this land' were not *really* poor pilgrims or holy wanderers, but mere 'small brokers' and 'hucksters'.

This interpretation undercuts any attempt to see *mangones* or *cotiones* as museum-piece words resurrected by the learned redactors of the *Admonitio Generalis*.[63] The word's sparse *written* transmission misleadingly implies that *cocio* was recherché, the sort of word known only to readers of classical literature or antiquarian texts like Paul's *Epitome*. Were this the case, the later medieval spread of the word's vernacular descendants could be seen as the delayed fruit of Carolingian learning. But it is probably the other way around. The *Admonitio* selected words with vernacular overlap. This has interesting consequences. First, it speaks to the universal ambitions and strategies of the drafters. Second, it hints that other fossils of proto-Romance – alongside the more familiar Germanic ones – may be hidden between the lines of Carolingian legislation.

Cocciones in Hincmar of Reims (859)

In 859 Archbishop Hincmar of Reims wrote an admonitory letter to King Charles the Bald, complaining that men of the king's army were ravaging Hincmar's archdiocese.[64] In the course of extracting provisions, Charles's

falcones ceterasque ad ludendum aves habere non liceat'. Only in two cases have I found a *vulgo*-expression for words that do not appear elsewhere in the capitularies without one, both times for pieces of clothing: *wantos* (gloves, *MLW* 4.2, cols 848–50, *s.v.* 'guanto') (MGH Capit. 1, p. 345, line 9: 'manicas quas vulgo wantos appellamus') and *cotzos vel trembilos* (mantles, *MLW* 2.4, col. 1975, *s.v.* 'cozzus'; the identity of *trembilos* is less clear) (MGH Capit 1, 227, line 36: 'vestimentis spretis nova et insolita assumat, id est quod vulgo nominatur cotzos vel trembilos'). By contrast, there are several vernacular terms which never get the *vulgo*-treatment though they are often mentioned in the capitularies, such as the coats of mail called *brunia* (*MLW* 1.4, cols 1590–1, *s.v.* 'brunia', from Old High German *brunna*).

63 The text has plenty of recondite language, and the learned Alcuin played a role in drafting it: F.-C. Scheibe, 'Alcuin und die *Admonitio generalis*', *Deutsches Archiv* 14 (1958), pp. 221–9; D.A. Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 379–84; Mordek *et al.*, 'Einleitung', pp. 47–63.

64 Hincmar, *Epistola* 126, ed. Perels, pp. 62–5. See the forthcoming article by E.J. Goldberg, 'Vikings, Vassals, Villagers, and the Capitulary of Ver (884)', in V.L. Garver and N. Blan (eds), *Living in a Carolingian World* (forthcoming). Many thanks to Eric Goldberg for sharing this article prior to publication.

men had committed *rapina*, 'robbery'. This was, in Roman law, the name for robbery with violence (a sub-category of 'theft', *furtum*).[65] In a late Carolingian context, *rapina* became the common name for extractive violence carried out in the absence of royal law, or by secular officials in the name of the law.[66] The royal army was entitled to exactions as it marched through internal territory, but these were meant to be circumscribed.[67] Here, Hincmar claimed, Charles's people had gone too far.

In the course of making his complaint, Hincmar underscored that not only 'cavalrymen' but *cocciones* were performing robberies:

> Propterea, domine, quod solum ex hoc valeo, facio, id est Dei misericordiam inde peto et vos exinde commoneo et per villas, in quibus non solum homines caballarii, sed etiam ipsi cocciones rapinas faciunt, admonitiones presbiteris, ut eas raptoribus relegant, dirigo.[68]

> Therefore, my lord, I am doing the only thing I can do about this, which is that I am, first, beseeching the mercy of God and, then, warning you, and throughout the villages in which not only men on horseback but even the very *cocciones* have carried out robberies, I am sending admonitions to the priests for them to read aloud to the robbers.

The 'cavalrymen' (*homines caballarii*) are easy to identify. *Caballarius* generally referred to a horseman equipped with a shield, lance, sword, short-sword, bow, quiver, and arrows.[69] Such soldiers were

[65] G. Kleinfeller, 'Rapina', *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* I.A.1 (1914), cols 233–4.

[66] E. Magnou-Nortier, 'Enemies of the Peace: Reflections on a Vocabulary, 500–1100', in T. Head and R. Landes (eds), *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000* (Ithaca, 1992), pp. 58–79, at pp. 74, 75–6; G. Koziol, 'Pragmatic Sanctions? The Peace of God and its Carolingian Antecedents', in C. Booker, H. Hummer and D. Polanichka (eds), *Visions of Medieval History in North America and Europe: Studies on Cultural Identity and Power* (Turnhout, 2022), pp. 257–86, esp. pp. 259–73; and Goldberg, 'Vikings, Vassals, Villagers'.

[67] For royal exactions, see C. Brühl, *Fodrum, Gistum, Servitium regis: Studien zu den wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen des Königtums im Frankenreich und in den fränkischen Nachfolgestaaten Deutschland, Frankreich und Italien vom 6. bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols (Cologne, 1968).

[68] Hincmar of Reims, *Ep.* 126, MGH Epp 8.1, p. 63.

[69] *Karoli ad Fulradum Abbatem Epistola* (804–811), ed. Boretius, MGH Capit. 1, no. 75, p. 168: 'Ita ut unusquisque cabalarius habeat scutum et lanceam et spatam et semispatum, arcum et pharetras cum sagittis.' B. Bachrach, '"Caballus et caballarius" in Medieval Warfare', repr. in B. Bachrach, *Warfare and Military Organization in Pre-Crusade Europe* (Aldershot, 2002),

expensive to maintain.[70] Although the individual units of Carolingian armies were expected to carry provisions to the mustering place, a great deal had to be requisitioned, licitly or illicitly, from the local populace.[71] Cavalrymen, with their needs, their arms, and their mobility, might be expected to indulge in overzealous confiscation.

But who were *ipsi cocciones*? Elisabeth Magnou-Nortier, in an otherwise illuminating analysis of Hincmar's letter, conflates them with the *homines caballarii*, whom she interprets as 'the men in charge of provisioning the royal army'.[72] Hincmar, in her view, was describing these provisioners as '*cocciones* – highway robbers and plunderers of the villages from which they were to make requisitions for the royal household'.[73] But this mixes up the text in three ways. First, the *homines caballarii* seem to be cavalrymen here, not provisioners.[74] Second, 'highway robbers and plunderers' is too strong for *cocciones*, notwithstanding the term's disreputability. Third, Hincmar's phrasing – 'not only . . . but also' – implies that there was something noteworthy about the contrast between *homines caballarii* and *cocciones*. This is underscored by the pronoun *ipsi*: not only the cavalrymen, but '*even* the *cocciones*' were doing robberies.[75]

One possibility is that the *cocciones* were not part of Charles's military apparatus, but 'vagabonds' emboldened by the bad behaviour of his troops: 'scoundrels, market- and pub-thieves', as one nineteenth-century scholar put it.[76] The scenario is plausible enough. If royal

Essay 9, pp. 173–211; R. Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (VIIe–Xe siècle): Essai d'anthropologie sociale* (Paris, 1995), p. 148; G. Waitz, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, 8 vols (Kiel, 1844–78), vol. 2, p. 293, with n. 5. See also Nelson, 'Ninth-Century Knighthood: The Evidence of Nithard', in J. Nelson, *The Frankish World, 750–900* (London, 1996), pp. 75–87, at p. 79, for a gradual ninth-century 'shift' in the meaning of the word from 'a "ridingman" of indeterminate status' to the *chevaliers* of eleventh- and twelfth-century French.

70 Monastic lords set aside lands to provision them: M. Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 148–9; Verhulst, *Carolingian Economy*, p. 52.

71 See the letter from Charlemagne to Fulrad the Abbot (*c.* 804–11), ed. Boretius, MGH Capit. 1, no. 75, p. 168.

72 Magnou-Nortier, 'Enemies of the Peace', pp. 74–6, quote at p. 75.

73 Magnou-Nortier, 'Enemies of the Peace', p. 75.

74 *MLW* 2.1, col. 1, *s.v.* 'caballarius' (definition I.B: '*equester – beritten*', citing this letter). It is true the word is sometimes used to describe an individual owing services involving horses: *ibid.* (definition II.A.2). But context suggests the usage of the capitularies (*caballarii*, as opposed to *comites* and *vassali*, as lower-level military persons who possessed horses): MGH Capit. 1, p. 136 (c. 3); MGH Capit. 2, p. 321 (c. 26). Hence their dependent status is emphasized with the word *homines*.

75 *TLL*, vol. 7.2, col. 349 (line 61). Contrast with the pejorative sense of *isti* (*TLL*, vol. 7.2, cols 500–4) highlighted above.

76 F. Dahn, *Die Könige der Germanen*, vol. 8: *Die Franken under den Karolingen* (Leipzig, 1897), p. 181 n. 5: 'Die *cocciones*, die Hink[mar] . . . den *caballariis* entgegenstellt, sind Spitzbuben, Markt- und Kneipen-Diebe, neufranz. *Coquins* . . . nicht nur die *caballarii* rauben in den *villae*, sogar die *cocciones*'.

officials were themselves robbing, what would stop opportunists from doing the same in this war-torn diocese? This use of *cocio* would be in line with the lexicographers' expectations for the word's semantic devolution. But if that were Hincmar's point, he might be expected to say it more openly. The archbishop's letter is focused on wrongdoing by those in the king's vicinity: 'in your palace . . . and in places where you are and through which you travel'.[77]

Another possibility is that *cocciones* refers to a part of Charles's army, entourage, or officialdom that would contrast strikingly with *caballarii*. This could mean warriors on foot, who did not have a horse to provision. But infantrymen joining cavalrymen in pillaging would not be newsworthy, and Hincmar's tone implies a sharper, more shocking contrast. A few scholars have suggested that *cocciones* here refers to 'porters'.[78] That is plausible from context. Still, there is no reason to single out porters as opposed to other subordinate members of a Carolingian military force: slaves, servants, cooks, cart drivers, foragers (*pabulatores*), and the like.[79] Émile Lesne's all-encompassing 'hommes de peine' (i.e. labourers) is more cautious.[80] But such an interpretation presumes rather than evinces a semantic shift from 'merchants' to 'knaves'.

The third possibility is, again, that the word retained its core meaning, which we have argued was present in the capitularies and probably in proto-Romance speech too. Carolingian armies were attractive targets for merchants, and there is indirect evidence that Carolingian kings encouraged their presence for logistical reasons.[81] The decentralized nature of Frankish military supply made merchants useful for provisioning. Merchants – or those alleging to be such – could potentially claim to be acting on behalf of the army. Hincmar's point seems to be that not only the horsemen but tag-along 'brokers', maybe with only the most tenuous claims to officialdom, were committing acts of robbery in the name of the royal army.[82]

[77] Hincmar, Ep. 126, p. 63.
[78] E. Dümmler, *Geschichte des ostfränkischen Reiches*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1886–8), vol. 1, p. 427. This had previously been the assumption of M. Balzer, *Zur Geschichte des deutschen Kriegswesens in der Zeit von den letzten Karolingern bis auf Kaiser Friedrich II.* (Leipzig, 1877), p. 78.
[79] For *pabulatores*, see *Annales Regni Francorum*, *s.a.* 775, ed. F. Kurze, MGH SRG 6 (Hanover, 1895), p. 34; *Libellus miraculorum Bertini* (BHL 1291), c. 9, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH Scriptores [hereafter SS] 15.1 (Hanover, 1887), p. 514.
[80] É. Lesne, *Histoire de la propriété ecclésiastique en France*, vol. 2: *La propriété ecclésiastique et les droits régaliens à l'époque carolingienne* (Lille, 1926), p. 403.
[81] M. McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, AD 300–900* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 665–8.
[82] See also Goldberg, 'Vikings, Vassals, Villagers'.

The implication is of lucre-seeking by coercion. It is possible that the *rapina* that so vexed Hincmar's archdiocese involved not only outright thefts – horsemen riding into villages and seizing things at sword-point – but subtler threats of violence by supposed 'brokers' working for the army. Locals may have been forced to make sales or purchases at ruinously bad rates. Indeed, this would have increased the need to insist that such behaviour was *rapina*, not commerce. Doubtless the phrase 'those *cocciones*' intentionally evoked *capitulum* 77 of the *Admonitio Generalis*.[83] Hincmar knew the old capitularies well, and a pointed appeal to the laws of Charles's grandfather and namesake was definitely the archbishop's style. As with the capitularies, it is most parsimonious to assume that the term still denoted actual buyers and sellers, even if Hincmar meant this to be as pejorative as had the drafters of the *Admonitio*.

Notker (883/7)

The best evidence that *cocio* came to mean something like 'vagabond' or 'tramp', without a hint of commerce, comes from the *Gesta Karoli*. This Life of Charlemagne is thought to have been composed between 883 and 887 by Notker 'the Stammerer' (*c*.840/50–912), monk and teacher in the monastery of St Gallen.[84] The folkloric, episode-driven text is a good reflection of late ninth-century ideals of kingship, less so of early ninth-century realities. A major theme is Charlemagne's openness to individuals of low-status origin. Two stories of this sort depict Charlemagne showing respect to a poor, bedraggled cleric given the name *coctio*.

In the first story, Charlemagne takes mercy on a wandering cleric who has become the butt of ridicule. At an unnamed grand basilica, 'a certain cleric from among those who wander about' (*quidam clericus de circumcellionibus*) had entered the choir during a service. Standing dumbstruck and foolish (*mutus et amens*) among the celebrants, and scarcely aware that the emperor was watching, the man was told off by the precentor (*paraphonista*) for not singing:

[83] Hincmar's *ipsi* is reminiscent of the capitularies' *isti*, albeit without the inherent pejorative sense of the latter. The *isti* of the capitularies, to judge from the apparatus in the editions of the *Admonitio Generalis* and of Ansegis, was reliably present in surviving manuscripts.

[84] Notker the Stammerer, *Gesta Karoli*, ed. Haefele. For the dating, see Haefele, *Notker*, pp. xii–xvi; for the authorship, pp. vii–xii. The ascription to Notker, first proposed by Melchior Goldast (d. 1635), was defended by K. Zeumer, 'Der Mönch von Sankt Gallen', in *Historische Aufsätze, dem Andenken an Georg Waitz gewidmet* (Hanover, 1886), pp. 97–118, since which it has largely been accepted.

> Then he, not knowing what to do or where to turn, dared not leave, but 'turning his head in a circular way' (cf. Isaiah LVIII.5) and gaping his outstretched cheeks, he did his best to imitate the appearance of a man singing. The others were unable to stifle their laughter, but the puissant emperor, who could not be shaken from his mental solidity even by major affairs, most decorously, as if he had not so much as noticed the behaviour of this *coctio*, waited for the end of the mass. Then calling over the poor man (*miserus*) and pitying him for his works and his sufferings, he consoled him this way: 'Have many thanks, good cleric, for your singing and works.' And to alleviate his poverty, he ordered him to be given one pound of silver.[85]

It looks as if the word has lost its commercial sense. The man's descriptors all suggest passivity, lowliness, and ignorance (*mutus*, *amens*, *ignavus*, *nesciens*, *miserus*). Notker appears to have thought that *coctio* meant something like 'wretch'.

Even then, a hint of lucre remains. In calling the cleric one 'of the *circumcelliones*', Notker was not referring to Donatist heretics of the fourth- and fifth-century African countryside, but to a usage enshrined by Cassiodorus, Isidore of Seville, and multiple canonical collections.[86] *Circumcelliones* (also *circilliones*, *circiliones*, etc.) became a synonym for the *gyrovagi* or wandering monks condemned by the Rule of Benedict.[87] The widely read *Concordia regularum* of Benedict of Aniane, regurgitating earlier wisdom, explained that *circumcelliones* were

[85] Notker the Stammerer, *Gesta Karoli*, 1.8, ed. Haefele, pp. 10–11: 'Cum autem itinerando venisset Karolus ad quandam grandem basilicam et quidam clericus de circumcellionibus ignarus disciplinae Karoli in chorum ultro intraret et nihil omnino de talibus unquam didicisset, in medio cantantium mutus et amens constitit. Ad quem paraphonista levato periculo ictum ei, nisi caneret, minabatur. Tum ille nesciens quid ageret, quove se vertere posset, foras exire non ausus, cervicem in modum circuli contorquens et dissolutis malis hians cantandi qualitatem iuxta possibilitatem imitari conabatur. Caeteris ergo risum tenere non valentibus fortissimus imperator, qui ne ad magnas quidem res a statu mentis suae moveretur, quasi gestum coctionis illius non adverteret, ordinatissime finem praestolabatur missae. Postea vero vocato ad se misero illo miseratusque labores et angustias illius hoc modo consolatus est eum: "Multas gratias habeas, bone clerice, pro cantu et laboribus tuis"; et ad sublevandam eius paupertatem iussit ei dari unam libram argenti.'

[86] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 8.5.53, ed. W.M. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911), vol. 1, n.p.: 'Circumcelliones dicti eo, quod agrestes sint, quos Cotopitas uocant, supradictae haeresis habentes doctrinam. Hi amore martyrii semetipsos perimunt, ut uiolenter de hac uita discedentes martyres nominentur' ('*Circumcelliones* are so called because they are country folk (*agrestes*), what they call *Cotopitae*, holding the doctrine of the aforementioned heresy [Donatism]. They get themselves killed for love of martyrdom, so that in leaving violently from this life they might be called martyrs'). Taken up almost verbatim by Hrabanus Maurus, *De clericorum institutione* 2.58, Patrologia Latina 107, col. 375C. See R. Lorenz, '*Circumcelliones – cotopitae – cutzupitani*', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 82 (1971), pp. 54–9.

[87] *MLW* 2.2, cols 603–4, *s.v.* 'circumcellio (circellio, circillio)'.

those 'who under the habit of monks wander hither and hither, carrying their hypocrisy with them, circulating among provinces, never sent, never fixed, never staying put, never sitting down'. Their cons varied, but they all shared one goal: 'What all of them are after, what all of them seek is either the prize of a lucrative poverty or a payment for feigned sanctity.'[88] The fact that Charlemagne gives the *coctio* a pound of silver may reinforce this impression.

On the other hand, there is no hint of lucre in the second story about a *coctio*. Here, the *coctio* is another poor cleric who warns Charlemagne of Pippin the Hunchback's plot against his father, which took place in 792.[89] In Notker's telling, the conspirators hashed out their plans in the church of St Peter at Regensburg, only to realize that 'a single cleric (*clericus*)' hiding under an altar had heard all. Under coercion, they forced the man to swear to secrecy. But judging his oath dispensable, the man rushed to the palace in the middle of the night:

> And when he had at last passed, with the greatest difficulty, through the seven gates and doors to the chamber of the emperor, hearing his knocking, the ever wakeful Charles was led to the greatest amazement, as to who would presume to trouble him at such a time. Nevertheless, he commanded the ladies, who as part of the queen's and his daughters' retinue used to accompany him, to go out and see who was at the door and what he was after. When they went out and saw this very lowly individual (*persona vilissima*), they bolted the doors shut and, with great laughter and guffawing, tried to hide themselves in the corners, blocking their mouths with their clothes. But the most wise emperor, whom nothing under heaven could escape, diligently inquired of the women what they were thinking and who was knocking at the door. Getting the answer that there was a shaven, idiotic, raving *coctio*, dressed only in linen and leggings, who was insisting upon speaking with him without delay, he ordered him to be admitted. The man at once threw himself upon his feet and revealed everything in due order.[90]

[88] Benedict of Aniane, *Concordia Regularum*, 3.22, ed. P. Bonnerue, CCCM 168A (Turnhout, 1999), p. 45.

[89] Notker the Stammerer, *Gesta Karoli*, 2.12, ed. Haefele, pp. 70–5. For the conspiracy, see *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern*, ed. J.F. Böhmer, E. Mühlbacher *et al.*, Regesta Imperii I, 3rd edn (Hildesheim, 1966), no. 320a.

[90] Notker the Stammerer, *Gesta Karoli*, 2.12, ed. Haefele, 72: 'Cumque cum maxima difficultate per VII seras et ostia tandem ad cubiculum imperatoris penetrasset, pulsato aditu vigilantissimum semper Karolum ad maximam perduxit admirationem, quis eo tempore eum praesumeret inquietare. Praecepit tamen feminis, quae ad obsequium reginae vel filiarum eum comitari solebant, ut exirent videre, quis esset ad ianuam vel quid inquireret. Quae exeuntes cognoscentesque personam vilissimam, obseratis ostiis cum ingenti risu et

The *coctio* is, once again, a cleric (*clericus*), and Notker's depiction of him as a 'very lowly individual' (*persona vilissima*) chimes with the earlier episode. The man is dismissed as a *coctio derasus, insulsus et insaniens, linea tantum et femoralibus indutus*. This passage has been treated as the strongest case for the scholarly assumption that the term came to mean something like 'ragamuffin', 'vagrant', or the editor's *Vagabund*.[91] Du Cange, Niermeyer, and the Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch all cite this string of negative qualities *in extenso* as proof.[92] There is some plausibility in this. Certainly, it is not profit-seeking, but risibility that seems the defining characteristic of both *coctiones* in Notker. It is possible, given Notker's Germanic-speaking milieu, that he was unfamiliar with the proto-Romance term, perhaps knowing the word only from the capitularies, where it may have seemed to him to describe a disreputable wanderer. This would, however, make his usage the exception rather than the rule.

On the other hand, being unintelligent, incoherent, and poorly clad are not qualities limited to vagrants. Here it is worth pausing over the word *derasus*, 'shaved'.[93] If Notker's point is only that the *coctio* is bedraggled, one might have expected him to describe the man as 'unshaven'. Certainly elsewhere Notker implies that to be 'hirsute' (*hirsutus*) or 'hairy' (*pilosus*) is to be unkempt, and he has a scene where a man tidies himself up by, among other things, having his face shaved and his hair cut short.[94] What if *derasus* here refers, in the most scornful way possible, to the cleric's tonsure? The whole string of pejoratives, it should be remembered, is presented as the indirect speech of the giggling ladies-in-waiting. Instead of reporting that a 'tonsured cleric' wishes an audience, they tell Charlemagne that a 'shaved huckster' is at the door. That raises the possibility that Notker *did* in fact know the term meant 'petty merchant'. What makes these two clerics risible, then, would be that, through unclerical comportment, they seem like pedlars.

chachinno se per angulos, vestibus ora repressae, conabantur abscondere. Sed sagacissimus imperator, quem nihil sub caelo posset effugere, diligenter a mulieribus exquisivit, quid haberent vel quis ostium pulsaret. Responsumque accipiens, quia quidam coctio derasus, insulsus et insaniens, linea tantum et femoralibus indutus, se absque mora postularet alloqui, iussit eum intromittere. Qui statim corruens ad pedes illius cuncta patefecit ex ordine.'

91 Haefele (ed.), *Gesta Karoli*, p. 105. D. Ganz (ed. and trans.), *Two Lives of Charlemagne: Einhard and Notker the Stammerer* (London, 2008), p. 101, offers 'knave'.

92 Du Cange, *Glossarium*, vol. 2, col. 384c (*s.v.* 'cociones'); *MLW* 2.2, col. 764 (*s.v.* 'cocio'); Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, vol. 1, *s.v.* 'cocio'.

93 *MLW* 3.1, col. 397, *s.v.* 'derado', citing Notker, and stressing the somewhat pejorative tone of the word.

94 Notker the Stammerer, *Gesta Karoli*, 1.21, 1.23, 1.32, ed. Haefele, pp. 28, 31, 44. For a clear use of *deradere*, see *ibid.*, 1.21, p. 29.

After the Carolingians: Romance survivals

The word *cocio* vanishes from Latin after the ninth century. The dictionaries provide no medieval exempla post-dating Notker. In the main databases, there are no medieval examples of the word's use after the ninth century, though one should recall that numerous tenth-century manuscripts reiterated the term's use in the capitulary. *Cocio* reappears in Latin only with the early modern antiquarians, curious about its use in Plautus, Sextus Pompeius Festus, and Aulus Gellius.[95] Until the seventeenth century, no connection was made between the classical term and the Carolingian one, though scholars knew the capitularies. The *editio princeps* of the *Admonitio Generalis*, by Veit (Vitus) Amerbach (1545), struggled with the manuscript reading *cogciones*, assuming it derived from the word 'cuckoo' and meant 'either impostors or fools'.[96] Du Cange seems to have been the first to see that the medieval term was the same as the classical one.[97]

Yet this is only in written Latin. *Cocio* survived in Romance, in a way that suggests robust spoken use.[98] First, however, it is important to dismiss a charming but erroneous derivation. Du Cange thought that *cocio* was related to the Old French word *coquin*, still in his time a term for beggars, drifters, rascals, and crooks.[99] In turn, *coquin* was once proposed as the origin of the English word 'cockney'.[100] A link between *cocio* and *coquin* (to say nothing of 'cockney') would be evidence for the shift from merchant to rascal, since there is no hint of buying and selling in *coquin*. But this charming etymology must be discarded. While there is some uncertainty about the etymology of *coquin* – some have also proposed *coquus* ('cook'), a profession with comparable

[95] Desiderius Erasmus, *Adagia* 4.3.23, ed. J. Clericus, *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Opera Omnia* (Leiden, 1703), vol. 2, col. 1011; Hugo Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis libri tres* 2.12.26.3.n4, ed. P.C. Molhuysen (Leiden, 1919), p. 275.

[96] V. Amerbach, *Praecipuae constitutiones Caroli Magni de rebus Ecclesiasticis et Civilibus* (Ingolstadt, 1545), fol. 31v: 'Mangones barbare dicuntur, qui latine dicuntur in ueteri iure uenaliciarij. Pro deceptoribus hic generaliter uidetur poni. Sic & Cogciones aut pro impostoribus, aut pro fatuis, à nostro *kek*, uel *Gauch*, & hæc à Cuculo, quod à Cræco [*sic*] κοκκῦξ [*sic*, *recte* κόκκυξ] deriuatum est.'

[97] Du Cange, *Glossarium* (1681), p. 1034 (*s.v.* 'cociones').

[98] W. von Wartburg *et al.*, *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch. Eine darstellung des galloromanischen Sprachschatzes* (Bonn *et al.*, 1922–2003) [hereafter *FEW*], vol. 2, p. 832; W. Meyer-Lübke, *Romanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 3rd rev. edn (Heidelberg, 1935), *s.v.* 'coctio' (no. 2017); G. Körting, *Lateinisch-romanisches Wörterbuch*, 3rd edn (Paderborn, 1907), *s.v.* 'coctio' (no. 2295); *TLL*, vol. 3, col. 1400, *s.v.* 'cocio' (lines 74–5, by W. Meyer-Lübke).

[99] Du Cange, *Glossarium* (1681), p. 1034 (*s.v.* 'cociones').

[100] C.P.G. Scott, 'English Words Which Hav Gaind [*sic*] or Lost an Initial Consonant by Attraction', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 23 (1892), pp. 179–305, at pp. 206–11.

negative associations (cf. 'scullion')[101] – most philologists agree that *coquin* derives from the Old French word for rooster (*coq*).[102]

On the other hand, *cocio* gave rise to a host of medieval and early modern Romance terms for petty merchants.[103] Across Romance languages and dialects, derivatives such as *coçon*, *cosson*, *gosson*, *cousson*, *cosso*, *scosson*, and so on denoted merchants of goods like pigs, eggs, butter, grain, fish, and cattle. Gendered forms, such as *cochonnesse*, *cossoneresse*, and *cossenate*, referred to female traders. The abstract word *cossonnerie* meant a collection of merchants or a market, for instance, of poultry and game. The verb *coçonner* ('to resell', 'to be a merchant') appears in multiple contexts. From French, the word led to two Germanic terms for egg-mongers: Lothringian German *kussung* and Flemish *eierkuts*. The best known of *cocio*'s Romance derivatives is probably the Italian *cozzone*. *Cozzone* came to mean 'horse-broker' or 'horse-breeder' (figuratively, 'matchmaker').[104] The derivative verb *cozzonare*, 'to sell (horses)', is a possible origin to the English verb 'cozen'.[105] In short, the Romance evidence is relatively prolific and points in much the same direction: in the later Middle Ages, *cocio* lived on as a term for petty merchants.

It is curious that this well-attested tradition has never influenced the lexicography of the medieval Latin word *cocio*. In part, the problem is that Du Cange's early link with *coquin* acted as a misleading confirmation of the thesis of semantic shift. Another problem is simply that 'petty merchants' are not a feature of the modern economy. In a commercial world like that of the early Middle Ages, as well as the Roman and early modern period, petty dealers were the essence of commerce; by the nineteenth century, they were gradually being displaced by stores like Le Bon Marché, Debenhams, and Macy's, and perhaps even more so in the minds of scholars.[106] In the world of internet commerce, even fewer of us think about the kind of buyer and seller associated with a term like the English 'monger'.

The Romance story supports a hypothesis of continuity. In none of these derivatives do we see semantic blur. The diffusion of terms from *cocio* mitigates against the possibility that the word was revived in the late eighth century as a learned term and disseminated downward.

[101] L. Blanry, 'Etymologie historique du mot Coquin (*Coquus*, *Coquinus*)', *Journal de la langue française*, 3rd ser. 2.6 (1839), pp. 261–73.
[102] *FEW*, vol. 2, pp. 862–3. *Coq* is thought to be of onomatopoeic origin.
[103] *FEW*, vol. 2, p. 832.
[104] S. Battaglia (ed.), *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* (Turin, 1961–2008), vol. 3, p. 931.
[105] *Oxford English Dictionary*, *s.v.* 'cozen'.
[106] See M. Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869–1920* (Princeton, 1981).

Instead, the vernacular tradition suggests that this word as a term for petty dealer never disappeared from common speech, which is probably why it was selected by the authors of the *Admonitio Generalis*.

A world of small merchants?

The possibility that common folk kept the word *cocio* alive for centuries despite its absence in writing recalls an old problem in the study of early medieval economic life. Early medieval authors, disproportionately ecclesiastical and elite, had little to say about merchants, especially petty ones.[107] When early medieval authors spoke of *negotiatores* or *mercatores*, to use the commonest Latin words, they usually meant overseas traders.[108] A memorable example of this occurs in Ælfric's eleventh-century bilingual *Colloquy*. When asked to describe himself, the *mercator* or *mancgere* (Old English cognate of *mango* and *mangari*) replies:

> I climb aboard my ship with my merchandise, and I navigate over the saltwater tracts, and I sell my wares and buy precious wares that are not found in this land, and I bring them back to you here under great danger upon the sea, and sometimes I suffer shipwreck with loss of all my wares, scarcely getting out alive.

This imaginary merchant's wares are all luxury or bulk goods: purple and silk, precious gems and gold, fine clothing and pigments, wine and olive, ivory and brass, copper and tin, sulphur and glass, 'and things like that'.[109]

When it comes to petty brokers on the rural scene, we are not entirely in the dark. We know a bit about the weekly markets where such people must have sold their wares.[110] A few stories, in the context of hagiography, hint at economic realities of what Étienne Sabbe called 'the local pedlar'.[111] In a ninth-century *Translatio Sancti Adelphi*, a certain poor woman (*quaedam paupercula*) of Hochfelden asks her neighbour

[107] McCormick, *Origins*, pp. 12–15; H. Siems, *Handel und Wucher im Spiegel frühmittelalterlicher Rechtsquellen* (Hanover, 1992), p. 22.

[108] D. Claude, *Der Handel im westlichen Mittelmeer während des Frühmittelalters* (Göttingen, 1985), pp. 167–70. Speaking generally, *negotiator* (or *negotians*), the commoner word, more regularly designated long-distance traders, while *mercator* was more polysemic. See also McCormick, *Origins*, pp. 615–16.

[109] Ælfric, *Colloquy*, ed. G.N. Garmonsway (London, 1939), pp. 33–4.

[110] McCormick, *Origins*, pp. 639–69.

[111] É. Sabbe, 'Quelques types de marchands de IXe et Xe siècles', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 13 (1934), pp. 176–187, at p. 177 ('le colporteur indigène'), with discussion at pp. 177–8.

(*vicinus*) to buy 'necessities' (*necessaria*) for her, giving him 2 *denarii* to do so; the neighbour loses them 'by negligence' but by praying to God and St Adelphus in a meadow, rediscovers them among the grass.[112] The 'business' goes 'unfulfilled', but the tale hints at markets allowing small purchases.[113]

In another ninth-century tale, two 'comrades' (*conpares*) attend a regular weekly Saturday market at Fleury 'for the sake of trading (*mercandi gratia*)'.[114] At the end of the day, they have accumulated 12 *denarii* collectively, but the one holding the money refuses to give his comrade his due share. Upon the arrival of a local market official, the would-be swindler swears a rash oath ('By Saint Benedict himself, I did give him those *denarii*!'), suffering paralysis until he confesses and does penance before St Benedict. From the detail that the penitent man offers the saint an iron pitchfork as a votive gift, Michael McCormick has suggested that perhaps the men were selling tools.[115] This may suggest an arrangement where one partner focused on sales, while the other acted as the 'register'. Still, if these men ought to be described as pedlars, they were rather successful ones, since 12 *denarii* for a day's work was a goodly sum.[116]

A final ninth-century story offers 'the one clear case of a small-scale merchant or pedlar that we have'.[117] In this tale, which occupies three chapters of the *Miracles of Saint Germain* (BHL 3475), 'a certain poor man' (*quidam pauperculus*), whose sole possession is a donkey (*asellus*), travels from town to town, buying cheap in one and selling dear in another.[118] His companion (the focus of the story) is a deaf/mute child that the man has picked up from the roadside 'partly for the sake of mercy, but partly from the hope of getting a servant'.[119] This man, his donkey, and the boy convey a load of salt, by foot, from Orléans to

[112] *Translatio S. Adelphi Mettensis* (BHL 76), c. 12 (25), ed. Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.1, pp. 295–6. A bit distressingly, the man seems to bring the rediscovered coins not to the woman in need but to the church of St Adelphus.

[113] *Translatio Adelphi* (BHL 76), c. 12 (25), p. 295: 'infecto negocio'. For discussion, see Sabbe, 'Quelques types', p. 178; McCormick, *Origins*, p. 616 n. 5.

[114] Adrevald of Fleury, *Miracula Benedicti* (BHL 1123), c. 35, ed. Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.1, p. 496.

[115] McCormick, *Origins*, p. 161 n. 6.

[116] The value of a sheep or cow, as McCormick, *Origins*, p. 616 n. 6, notes.

[117] *Miracula Sancti Germani Parisiensis* (BHL 3475), c. 13–15, AASS Maii 6 (1866), col. 782A–D; Sabbe, 'Quleques types', p. 177. Quote and further discussion in McCormick, *Origins*, p. 646.

[118] *Miracula Germani* (BHL 3475), c. 13, col. 792A: 'quidam pauperculus, cui tota facultas unus asellus erat, quem de civitate in civitatem onustum ducens, quidquid in una villa emebat, carius vendere satagebat in altera'. For the proverb, see S. Singer *et al.*, *Thesaurus Proverbiorum Medii Aevi*, 14 vols (Berlin, 1998), vol. 6, p. 469 ('Kauf 5.3: 'Billig kaufen und teuer verkaufen will ein jeder').

[119] *Miracula Germani* (BHL 3475), c. 13, col. 792A: 'partim causa misericordiæ, partim autem spe servitii'.

Paris.[120] In a reflection of the limitations of the vocabulary used for buyers and sellers by monastic writers, the text describes this poor pedlar as a *mercator*.

Overall, then, the written evidence for petty traders is thin, but there are hints. Moreover, non-written evidence suggests that the role of small sellers must have been considerable. The circulation and velocity of coinage was enough that peasants paid dues and thus may have also, like the poor woman of Hochfelden, made purchases in silver coins.[121] Another hint is the archaeological diffusion of material culture into rural settlements; this suggests, as one archaeologist writes, that 'exchange was facilitated by merchant-peddlers travelling inland on a seasonal basis'.[122] The scattered appearance of *cociones* in the ninth century should be added to the few but precious testimonia for such economic agents.

Conclusion

The Carolingian *cocio* did not depart, as scholars have supposed, from its ancient meaning of 'petty broker'. On the contrary, the majority of extant early medieval uses suggest the old meaning remained intact. Paul the Deacon's epitome of Festus, one notes, assumed the definition as known. The *Admonitio Generalis* paired *cotiones* with *mangones*, I have argued, so as to echo the two main vernaculars of the Carolingian world. If the *capitulum* that discussed them meant to designate not 'merchants' but wanderers and rogues, it did so by way of calling them buyers and sellers. Hincmar too had in mind the same class of lowly brokers when he cast the coercive bargaining of men claiming to act on the royal army's behest as 'robbery' (*rapina*). This hints at a wider – but unattested – proto-Romance usage of *cocio*, amply borne out by the later Romance legacy of the world. Alone among Carolingian writers, the monk of St Gall may support the conviction that *cocio* became a generic slur. Then again, as I have suggested above, it is equally possible that this monastic teacher found something inherently absurd in clerics who came off as 'travelling salesmen'.

The Carolingian *cocio*, then, is a tale of semantic continuity, not change. When the word reappeared in surviving Latin in the eighth

[120] *Miracula Germani* (BHL 3475), c. 14, col. 792B.

[121] R. Naismith, *Making Money in the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2023); L. Kuchenbuch, *Versilberte Verhältnisse: Der Denar in seiner ersten Epoche (700–1000)* (Göttingen, 2016); R. Naismith, 'The Social Significance of Monetization in the Early Middle Ages', *Past and Present* 223 (2014), pp. 3–40.

[122] C. Loveluck, *Northwest Europe in the Early Middle Ages, c. AD 600–1150* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 210.

century (it is possible earlier uses have not survived), it still referred to the small-scale dealers that made up so necessary, but so elusive, a part of the everyday economic life of the premodern world. As our sources suggest, such individuals were implicated in religious, social, and military issues. Among early medieval elites, they were still thought of as disgraceful, avaricious, or ridiculous, as had been the case in Antiquity. But it is commercial activity, not vagrancy, that fuelled the pejorative sense of the word.

Still, the written Latin tradition may mislead us. In speech, it is conceivable that the neutral use of the fourth-century Pacatianus inscription remained the rule rather than the exception. The later Romance tradition of *cocio* lacks the negative undertones of the early medieval Latin tradition. It is possible that humble buyers and sellers were looked upon as necessary members of society by a large but now silent portion of the early medieval population; after all, the capitularies had to warn people not to trust *mangones* and *cotiones*. If this is right, the history of the *cocio* may actually be the history of two continuities: the persistence of a sneering attitude toward petty brokerage in elite writing and of a more neutral perspective in common speech. Unlike the former, however, the latter must remain a matter of speculation.

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