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4 Motivations and purposes of travel in the Carolingian age

4.1 Introduction

As in modern times, people in the Carolingian age travelled for various purposes. However, travelling in the early Middle Ages involved additional difficulties and risks. It not only cost time and money, a long absence could also entail unwanted troubles at home. Besides, travellers could expect to encounter various dangers on their way, such as robbery or harsh weather conditions. All this obviously did not keep people from hitting the road. Every individual likely had a primary purpose for their travels, whether engaging in trade, embarking on a pilgrimage, or fulfilling tasks or missions assigned by their ruler, master, or senior. Achieving these objectives likely served to offset some of the costs and risks associated with their journeys.

Our knowledge of early medieval travel is based on previous works on this topic. Besides general works on medieval travel, such as those of Norbert Ohler,¹ and surveys on travellers and mobility in the early Middle Ages, such as those by Étienne Renard² and by Gergory I. Halfond,³ there are studies on specific themes concerning early medieval travellers.⁴ These works focus on why, where, and how early medieval people journeyed.

A closer look at the testimonies offered by the historical sources suggests that people usually did not travel for a single purpose, i.e. that one trip could be motivated by multiple reasons. However, as the sources tend to focus on the motive that is most relevant to its author – for example, hagiography being mainly interested in religious travel purposes –, mentions of the complete set of motives related to a specific trip are the exception.⁵ The intention of this paper is to show how comparing various sources allows us to prove that assigning multiple purposes and motivations to a sin-

¹ Ohler, *Reisen* (42004). See also Schmitz-Esser, *Travel* (2015). This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Numbers JP19KK0014, JP19H00546, JP24K04300, and JP24K00129.

² Renard, *Sur la route* (2019).

³ Halfond, *Transportation* (2009).

⁴ For example, Bruand, *Voyageurs et marchandises* (2002), 117–153; Türck, *Christliche Pilgerfahrten* (2011). Despite its title, McCormick, *Origins* (2001), deals with various kinds of travellers in the early medieval Mediterranean world. Luckhardt, *Charisma of distant place* (2020), 22–53, makes a useful survey of “practicalities of early medieval travel”.

⁵ Cf. Bruand, *Voyageurs et marchandises* (2002), 126; Luckhardt, *Charisma of distant place* (2020), 26, 45.

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gle journey was a common phenomenon, and that, if such missions were successful, several aims could be achieved with just one trip.

Focusing on the theme of multiple motivations among travellers is not a novel approach.⁶ Courtney Luckhardt emphasised the religiously motivated activities of travellers alongside other “secular” motivations by stating:

While the religious behavior of a slave, messenger, or trader might seem incidental, the power afforded to any individual through their association with a distant holy place was central to medieval people's understanding of the power of God. Expanding the definition of religious travellers to people with a variety of motivations for travel is necessary because of the way that movement from place to place formed a fundamental part of people's conceptions about power and holiness in the period.⁷

Luckhardt emphasises the importance of expanding the concept of religious travellers to include individuals with various motivations for travelling.⁸ A more comprehensive study of the various motivations of travel and how they were combined, however, is still lacking. This is the purpose of the present study. It discusses the multiple factors and motives that were associated to early medieval travels by considering the relation between voluntary purposes and motivations emerging from requests and mandates.⁹ To this end, the following will analyse a kind of travel economy and explore how it was achieved, by considering different networks of people and information in the Carolingian age. For a better understanding of travel purposes and motivations, this chapter first focusses on journeys undertaken with religious purposes and then on those with political tasks.

4.2 Travels in a religious context

Carolingian society was not as mobile as ours, yet we can assume that a considerable number of people were on the move. We can refer, for instance, to short trips taken by peasants to local markets to sell their farm surplus and/or to buy necessities, al-

⁶ It is true that listing up various types of travellers in the Frankish world, *Halfond*, Transportation (2009), 1558–1562, speaks of “a variety of purposes” that prompted or motivated travelling, which “need not have been mutually exclusive, and, indeed, often were not”. However, what he discusses is not the multiple motivations of a single traveller, but rather the common routes, technology, and infrastructure employed for travels with various motivations.

⁷ Luckhardt, Charisma of distant place (2020), 3. Cf. ibid. 198: “(R)eligious travel was not separate from other kinds of movement, but rather amplified and mirrored by them.”

⁸ Cf. Chélini, Die Wallfahrten (2002), 115: “Außerdem war die Wallfahrt zur gesellschaftlichen Gewohnheit geworden, und jeder Ortswechsel entwickelte sich zu einer Art Wallfahrt, falls sich am Wege Heiligengräber befanden.”

⁹ I do not deal with those who unwillingly left home – such as refugees, prisoners of war, or slaves – because it is difficult to find their multiple motivations or purposes for their movement.

though they also would have gone there by order of their secular or ecclesiastical lords on other occasions.¹⁰ Likewise in an economic context, long and short journeys were voluntarily taken by merchants and traders, whose travels were fundamentally motivated by commercial intentions.¹¹ However, Courtney Luckhardt asserts that, despite their economic motivations, these merchants may have “also prayed at the tomb of a saint or behaved as pilgrims” during their travels, therefore their commercial journey could also be partially motivated by the quest for religious salvation.¹²

Among these religiously motivated journeys, we must mention those undertaken by missionaries and pilgrims. Missionary activities often had a twofold motivation. Carolingian texts, for instance, often refer to Carolingian monarchs commissioning missionaries to Christianise people in regions such as Saxony. Meanwhile, hagiographic sources – such as the various *vitae* of Anglo-Saxon missionaries on the continent – tend to emphasise their intrinsic motivation, their inner desire for the mission. This motivation, to leave home and follow the sacred mission, was bound to the concept of *peregrinatio* and the wish to convert their Saxon relatives on the continent – who had remained heathens – to Christianity.¹³

Peregrinatio was also used to refer to “pilgrimage”. We can find traces of those who travelled to visit sacred sites for prayer on both regional and transregional scales in the Carolingian sources.¹⁴ Besides pilgrimage forced or motivated by the need to repent, such travels could be undertaken voluntarily as devotional journeys. Even criticism of – or opposition to – pilgrimages from churchmen may prove the spontaneity of most pilgrimages. Since Late Antiquity, for example, long-distance pilgrimages, such as those directed to Rome and Jerusalem, were occasionally criticised because they detracted from the honour that would have been due to local holy places. Pilgrims seemingly preferred to choose distanced holy sites, as they appeared holier and more profitable from a religious perspective. In addition, those who left their home to make a new life in another place under the guise of pilgrimage (such as

¹⁰ *Bruand, Voyageurs et marchandises* (2002), 143–149; *Renard, Sur la route* (2019), 8–9.

¹¹ For merchants, traders, and their travels, see *Bruand, Voyageurs et marchandises* (2002), 117–125; *McCormick, Origins* (2001), 571–679.

¹² *Luckhardt, Charisma of distant place* (2020), 3.

¹³ *Padberg, Mission und Christianisierung* (1995), 61–68; *Mehdorn, Prosopographie der Missionare* (2021), 358–359. This kind of motivation for the sacred mission was based on the order of Jesus to his disciples, namely the Great Commission to evangelise the world. The motivation of missionaries to follow this order could be summoned up eschatologically, since they believed that apostolic preaching to the gentile nations was necessary because of the coming end of the world and that any corresponding endeavours would be successful because God had prepared the gentiles to turn away from idolatry and accept the preaching. Thus, in such a framework of thought about salvation history, gentiles were prepared for conversion through divine work, and the missionaries responded to the divine plan of salvation through their obedience to the Great Commission. *Padberg, Mission und Christianisierung* (1995), 41–48.

¹⁴ For pilgrimage in early medieval Europe, see *Chélini, Die Wallfahrten* (2002).

those women who left to become prostitutes in distant towns) were frequently criticised.¹⁵

Although spiritual motives prevailed, pilgrims could combine this aim with additional purposes or tasks, thus the motivation of a pilgrim for travel did not need to be purely religious. Einhard in his *Vita Karoli*, for example, reported that many nobles who pilgrimaged from Francia to Rome visited Carloman, the retired mayor of palace, in Monte Soratte.¹⁶ Even though not clearly described, we cannot ignore the possible political significance of such visits.¹⁷ Noble pilgrims could also be commissioned to convey messages between regions north and south of the Alps. A traveller could be appointed with such an additional task during his or her journey – for instance when Pope Stephen II entrusted a pilgrim with a letter addressed to King Pepin of the Franks to tell the king about his plan to visit him in Francia.¹⁸

Another, rather unusual, example helps us to further understand the manifold purposes of a single pilgrim. In the late 860s, a monk called Bernard, probably from northern Francia, travelled from Rome to the Holy Land with some companions he met in Rome – the monks Theudemund of San Vincenzo al Volturno and the *Hispanus* Stephen. Bernard later wrote a travel record titled *Itinerarium*, which may be read as a guidebook addressed to other pilgrims heading to the Holy Land.¹⁹ Comparable travel groups were customary for such pilgrims.²⁰ The presence of travel companions may have assisted a traveller in several ways. For Bernard, the presence of Theude-

15 *Constable*, Opposition to pilgrimage (1979), esp. 125–131.

16 Einhard, Life of Charlemagne 2. Ed. *Sot/Veyrand-Cosme/Bellarbre*, 6.

17 Cf. Schieffer, Die Karolinger (2014), 57. Although they do not deal with Carolingian examples, the following studies on early medieval royal pilgrimages from Britain and Ireland to Rome demonstrate how these journeys were often combined with political concerns. Pengelly, Rome (2010), 134–152; Thomas, Three Welsh kings (2020).

18 Le Liber Pontificalis 94.15. Ed. *Duchesne*, 444. A bishop of Brescia, probably Antonius, sent a letter to his colleague bishop, perhaps Salomon II of Konstanz, to ask about the political situation in the East Frankish kingdom, especially about the question who among the sons of Louis the German would rule the kingdom of Italy. Following his questions, he wrote: “I hope that you wish to reliably inform me about the safety of your holiness and that when your men are travelling to Rome or others are seeking Italy for their needs, you should instruct them to divert to me, and I will afford them with some assistance in your honour.” We may assume the answer from Salomon to Antonius could be entrusted to one person under his jurisdiction who travelled to Italy, particularly embarking on a pilgrimage to Rome. Collectio Sangallensis no. 39. Ed. Zeumer, 421: *De sospitate sanctitatis vestrae certum me reddere velitis et vestris Romam pergentibus seu reliquis pro sua necessitate Italiam petentibus intimate, ut ad me divertant, et in vestro honore eis aliqua impendam subsidia*. This letter is transmitted only in an anonymised form. Cf. *Epistolae variorum* 798–923, no. 144. Ed. Schröder, 325–326.

19 *Itinerarium Bernardi Monachi* 1. Ed. *Ackermann*, 115.

20 However, it was not always easy for a traveller to find travel companions. For example, a priest named Hruodrad got permission from an anonymous chorbishop in his diocese to travel to Rome, perhaps for a pilgrimage. He could not find companions promptly, as indicated in a letter by Einhard. Einhard then wrote to a bishop (also anonymous) to intermediate. Einhard begged his pardon for the delay in Hruodrad’s travel who still had a strong will to achieve it. Thus, Einhard asked for the bish-

mund, a monk from San Vincenzo al Volturno, could have been particularly important since this abbey lies between Rome and S. Michele al Gargano – a major route used by many pilgrims including Bernard and his companions. Theudemund was probably familiar with the region and may have been a helpful guide in finding accommodation among the local hospices or other institutions, or in the abbey itself.

Bernard mentioned a single church in southern Italy that they visited on their way to Jerusalem: the church dedicated to the Archangel Michael on Monte Gargano. They visited this famous destination belonging to the Michaeline pilgrimage on their way from Rome via Bari to Taranto, from which point they sailed to Alexandria.²¹ Although Bernard described the vegetation of the mountain, the character of the church building, and its furnishings, their visit to Monte Gargano may be interpreted as a necessary task in terms of a convenient travel route rather than solely due to their devotion to the Archangel.²² The reason is that Bernard clearly stated at the beginning of his report that their motivation to travel abroad was their desire to see the holy places in Jerusalem,²³ a statement suggesting this was their primary motivation. It was only after achieving their main goal in the Holy Land that, on their way back home, they visited a place called *Mons Aureus* in southern Italy.²⁴ From there, the pilgrims travelled further north to Rome and parted ways. Bernard only headed home, however, after visiting several churches in Rome and the monastery of Mont-Saint-Michel in north-western France.²⁵

Thus, after accomplishing a journey motivated by their initial purpose to visit the Holy Land, Bernard appears to have pursued another purpose on his return trip, namely his desire to see other holy places. A closer examination of his *Itinerarium* allows us to further clarify his secondary motivation. His mentions of Monte Gargano and Mont-Saint-Michel suggest that Bernard also intended to visit sacred places in veneration of the Archangel Michael: his *Itinerarium* is bookended by a visit to the former at the beginning and the latter at the end of his pilgrimage. The other ecclesiastical institutions Bernard visited in *Mons Aureus* and Rome may likewise be associated with the veneration of St. Michael. Researchers have identified the crypt with seven altars in *Mons Aureus* which Bernard describes with a cave in Olevano sul Tuscolano, an area renowned for its veneration of St. Michael.²⁶ Regarding Rome, Bernard describes the city's sacred topography as follows: St. John's basilica in the Lateran in

op's permission to travel once again. Einhards Briefe no. 8. Ed. Grabowsky et al., 86–87. For permission for clerks and monks to travel, see below.

21 *Itinerarium Bernardi Monachi* 2–5. Ed. Ackermann, 116–117.

22 Cf. Arnold, *Footprints of Michael* (2013), 90–91, 113.

23 *Itinerarium Bernardi Monachi* 1. Ed. Ackermann, 115: (. . .) *volentes videre loca sanctorum, que sunt Ierosolimis.*

24 *Itinerarium Bernardi Monachi* 20. Ed. Ackermann, 125.

25 *Itinerarium Bernardi Monachi* 21–22. Ed. Ackermann, cc. 125–126.

26 *Avril/Gaborit, L'Itinerarium* (1967), 281–293; *Itinerarium Bernardi Monachi* 64–65. Ed. Ackermann.

the east of the city, St. Peter's in the west, and numerous relics scattered throughout the city.²⁷ The relic collections in the Lateran Basilica (*Sancta sanctorum*) included those of the Archangel Michael.²⁸ If Bernard traversed between the eastern and western parts of the city, he would have likely encountered another site of veneration for St. Michael along the banks of the Tiber river, where Castel Sant'Angelo is located today.²⁹

Thus, although Bernard does not explicitly express this in his book, we may deduce his devotion to the Archangel from his visits to these four sites of veneration: Monte Gargano, *Mons Aureus*, Rome, and Mont-Saint-Michel.³⁰ This secondary motivation remains concealed behind the primary purpose of his pilgrimage as stated in the opening sentences of his *Itinerarium* – perhaps because this primary purpose could be shared with a broader audience of potential readers in comparison with his devotion to the Archangel.

Moreover, Bernard's *Itinerarium* leads us to another theme for discussion. In the initial segment of his travel narrative, Bernard mentioned that he obtained permission from Pope Nicholas I for his pilgrimage before departing Rome with his companions.³¹ This procedure was not uncommon. Since Late Antiquity, lower clerics and monks were required to obtain travel permission from their bishops or abbots. This was a crucial preparatory step because they were forbidden from travelling without permission by canons and the monastic Rule of St. Benedict. This practice persisted into the Carolingian era, with legislative prohibitions against unauthorised travel.³² In

27 *Itinerarium Bernardi Monachi* 21. Ed. Ackermann, 125.

28 *Maskarinec*, City of saints (2018), 133–136.

29 For this veneration place, see *Shwartz*, Gargano comes to Rome (2013). There was another church dedicated to Archangel Michael near Rome whose dedication date, September 29, had been celebrated in Rome since the fifth century. According to two eighth-century versions of the text so-called *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, this church stood at the sixth milestone of the *Via Salaria*, which ran northeast from Rome. Since Bernard and the others walked southeast from Rome to Monte Gargano and came back from the south, they may not have visited this church. AASS Nov. 2 Pars 1, III Kal. Oct., 127 (f. 121c); *Commentarius perpetuus in martyrologium Hieronymianum*. Ed. Delehaye/Quentin, 532–533; *Dubois*, Les martyrologes (1978), 29–31; *Arnold*, Footprints of Michael (2013), 79–80.

30 Bernard visited several places in the Holy Land, which were related to biblical episodes concerning anonymous angels. These angels were, however, not to be identified with the Archangel. *Itinerarium Bernardi Monachi* 7, 9, 11, 13, 17. Ed. Ackermann, 119–124.

31 *Itinerarium Bernardi Monachi* 1. Ed. Ackermann, 115.

32 Cf. Rule of Benedict, 67.7 Ed. Holzherr/Trans. Thamert, 517: *Similiter et qui praesumpserit claustra monasterii egredi vel quocumque ire vel quippiam quamvis parvum sine iussione abbatis facere; Admonitio generalis 3. Ed. Mordek/Zechiel-Eckes/Glatthaar, 186: Item in eodem concilio necnon et in Antiocheno simul et in Calcidonense, ut fugitivi clerici et peregrini a nullo recipiantur nec ordinentur sine commendaciis litteris et sui episcopi vel abbatis licentia; So-called “Frankfurt capitulary”, in: MGH Conc. 2.1, no. 19 Ed. Werminghoff, 169: De clericis: nequaquam de ecclesia ad aliam ecclesiam transmigrentur neque recipiantur sine conscientia episcopi et litteras commendatitias, de cuius diocesia fuerint, ne forte discordia exinde veniat in ecclesia. Et ubi modo tales reperti fuerint, omnes ad eorum ecclesiam redeant, et nullus eum post se retinere audeat, postquam episcopus aut abbas suus eum recipere vol-*

some instances, the granting authority extended beyond the traveller's direct supervisor, as is evidenced in Bernard's case. When permitted, clerics and monks travelled for religious, educational, or scholarly purposes. The journey of the young monk Lupus, the future abbot of Ferrières, to Fulda for study can be classified in this category.³³

A formal document granting such permission is an *epistola formata*. An *epistola formata* served as both a passport and a letter of recommendation issued by the bishop of the diocese of origin to a travelling cleric. This letter was addressed, for example, to the other bishop in whose diocese the cleric wished to pursue his future career. The sending bishop stated that he granted the cleric's wish and released him from his duties, asking the addressee to receive the concerned cleric, and, if necessary, to ordain him as a priest. A cleric also had to request an *epistola formata* from his bishop when embarking on a pilgrimage.³⁴

Thus, any priest or monk who wished to travel on a voluntary basis first had to obtain his or her superior's permission. However, the reason for a cleric's move from one diocese to another was not always explicitly mentioned in an *epistola formata*. For example, a priest from Worms, allegedly "inspired by Divine Grace" (*inspirante divina gratia*), according to one such letter, wished to be transferred to Mainz. Any reference to his possible ambition for promotion in Mainz is lacking in the letter, which has been preserved as an anonymised *formula*. This priest, the beneficiary of this letter, was probably motivated to travel by another reason than promotion because he had already been ordained a priest in the Diocese of Worms.³⁵ Another cleric, named Egilbertus, also wanted to transfer from Worms to Mainz. In his case, the *epistola* given to him at least does contain a vague reference to his motive for transfer: "because it seems convenient for his own benefit" (*pro quibusdam commoditatibus propriae utilitatis*). As Bishop Samuel of Worms requested Archbishop Otgar of Mainz to accept Egilbertus, if he regarded it as worthy to "promote Egilbertus to ecclesiastical orders",³⁶ we may assume that Egilbertus' "benefit" was his promotion from the priesthood to a higher dignity.

In other cases, the transfer of a priest from one diocese to another was demanded by a superior's orders, as evidenced in such an *epistola formata* indicating that a bishop sent one of his clerics to another diocese since a priest was required to serve

uerit. *Et si forte senior ignorat, ubi suum requirere debet clericum, cum quo fuerit, ipse eum sub custodia retineat et non permittat eum vacare aliubi, usque dum domino suo restituatur.*

33 Loup de Ferrières, Correspondance no. 1. Ed. *Levillain*. Vol. 1, 6; *Kikuchi*, Herrschaft (2021), 716.

34 Formulae extravagantes II, no. 13. Ed. *Zeumer*, 559. A priest also needed an *epistola formata* when he wished to enter a monastery or visit his relative. Formulae extravagantes II, no. 14. Ed. *Zeumer*, 559–560. For *epistolae formatae*, see *Morelle*, Sur les "papiers" du voyageur (2009); *Patzold*, Presbyter (2020), 74–84.

35 *Epistolae variorum* 798–923, no. 8. Ed. *Schröder*, 15–17.

36 *Epistolae variorum* 798–923, no. 20. Ed. *Schröder*, 38–39: *si meritis augescentibus dignum sanctitas vestra iudicaverit, ad ordines ecclesiasticos provehendi.*

in a local church. For example, Amalar of Trier wrote an *epistola formata* to an archbishop, possibly Heistulf of Mainz, at the request of a certain *confrater* Odomacrus, who had a church in the latter's diocese and lacked priests for pastoral care. Amalar then absolved a cleric named Richard from his canonical obligation to stay at his place and permitted him to be ordained in the other diocese. In this case, the travelling cleric thus received promotion; however, neither his motivation nor his own intention is considered by Amalar in his *epistola formata*. Although we do not know whether Richard had hoped for this promotion, the date of his ordination is recorded in the sole manuscript which transmits this *epistola formata*, suggesting that he benefitted from this transfer.³⁷

In some cases, the cleric's motivation is more clearly specified in an *epistola formata*. In the middle of the ninth century, for example, Archbishop Theutgaud of Trier wrote to the West Frankish King Charles the Bald, requesting "all" the ecclesiastical dignitaries, and "all" the faithful of his kingdom to support Hegilo – a priest from the diocese of Trier who wished to visit the sites of saints in that kingdom. Thus, Hegilo's motive to travel appears to have been a pilgrimage. However, his trip's purpose was not limited to this. Theutgaud further wrote that Hegilo "wanted to visit you more freely and intimately" (*ad vestram praesentiam liberius ac familiarius accedere valeret*). This plural form of address ("you" [*vos*]) seems to refer to both the king and the West Frankish ecclesiastical dignitaries to whom this letter was addressed. There are two ways of interpreting this passage. Hegilo may either have hoped for a promotion of his career in the West or have been commissioned with a "diplomatic" task by one of his superiors. This *epistola*, however, does not refer to Hegilo's intention for the "requested" meeting.³⁸ Thus, we can observe here either a traveller with twofold motivation, or one led by private and official purposes. In any case, Hegilo's case is another example of a religious traveller with multiple motivations to undertake a specific journey.

4.3 Travels in a political context

Having examined religious travels with multiple motivations, I shall now focus on political journeys. These were usually undertaken on behalf of a superior and, in this sense, may be defined as "mandated" journeys. However, travellers within a political context could be motivated by additional personal motives, relating either to business or private aims.

Firstly, kings and emperors travelled constantly to effectively govern their realm. This ruling system is usually referred to as "itinerant kingship" or "Reisekönigtum".

³⁷ Cf. *Epistolae variorum 798–923*, nos. 9, 27. Ed. Schröder, 17–20, 51.

³⁸ *Epistolae variorum 798–923*, no. 31. Ed. Schröder, 61–63.

Through this practice, rulers could efficiently communicate with their magnates, regional elites and – at least occasionally – with their populace. Additionally, kings and their royal courts could manage their finances effectively during their travels, thanks to agricultural produce from royal estates scattered across their domains and the provision of short-term accommodation by ecclesiastical institutions.

However, Carolingian monarchs did not journey throughout their entire kingdom; instead, their movements were concentrated in some core regions.³⁹ This restriction of the royal itinerary was supplemented by the movements of secular and ecclesiastical elites travelling between their home regions and the royal court, as well as within the districts under their jurisdiction. Delegating authority and power to royal kin and travelling elites was crucial for the Carolingian royal government, a devolution that is particularly evident in the activities of the royal agents known as *missi dominici*.⁴⁰

In addition to these elites, messengers carrying oral and written messages were on the move and often played significant roles in maintaining long-distance communication channels within the vast kingdom. Both “official” (or political, or administrative) and “private” messages were exchanged through these messengers.⁴¹ Furthermore, diplomatic envoys travelled on a larger geographical scale between the Frankish kingdom, the papacy in Rome, the Byzantine imperial court, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and the court of Abbasid caliphs.⁴² This form of royal governance – alongside repeated military campaigns that expanded the kingdom – relied on the maintained Roman roads and (particularly in the newly integrated eastern regions) expanded networks of roads,⁴³ while rivers and seas also facilitated mobility.⁴⁴

People travelling on behalf of the royal government did not necessarily undertake their journey at their own expense (otherwise, they might have been demotivated!). In the case of the royal *missi* and other envoys, for example, who travelled to accomplish tasks commissioned by the king, the latter also made provisions for these journeys. These *missi* were provided with so-called *tractoria*, documents ensuring that

39 Werner, Missus – Marchio – Comes (1980), 193–194; Gravel, Distances, rencontres, communications (2012), 52–62.

40 For royal *missi*, see Kikuchi, Herrschaft (2021).

41 For messengers in the early Middle Ages see Scior, Boten im frühen Mittelalter (2021).

42 Borgolte, Gesandtenaustausch (1976); Bieberstein, Gesandtenaustausch (1993); Nerlich, Diplomatische Gesandtschaften (1999); Hack, Codex Carolinus (2006–2007). The Carolingian age is famous for the fact that popes travelled north of the Alps for the first time. Their purpose was to visit Carolingian monarchs for various reasons. Engelbert, Papstreisen (1993).

43 Renard, Sur la route (2019), 8; Gravel, À la recherche des routes (2022). Of course, on these roads – as well as on rivers and seas – people travelled not only for governmental purposes.

44 Ohler, Reisen (4²⁰⁰⁴), 239–241; Halfond, Transportation (2009), 1557–1558. Compare Ohler, Reisen (4²⁰⁰⁴), 81–107.

they would be accommodated and provisioned at the cost of the royal fisc. They also stood under special royal protection during these missions.⁴⁵

Apart from such financial and legal support, political travellers had to prepare for their journeys in the same way as other travellers for their own purposes. For instance, in order to accomplish a mission in a region where an individual was unable to communicate with others in his or her mother tongue, a traveller either had to learn a relevant language or be accompanied by an interpreter.⁴⁶ Relevant examples of learning materials in the Carolingian period include the so-called *Kassel Glossaries* (*Kasseler Glossen*) and the so-called *Paris Conversations* (*Altdeutsche Gespräche*). Both contain Latin and vernacular texts and are particularly interesting in the context of early medieval mobility as they contain phrases in dialogue form.

The *Kassel Glossaries*, supposedly written in the early ninth century in Bavaria, comprise lists of Latin and Old Bavarian vocabulary and phrases.⁴⁷ They are transmitted in a Bavarian manuscript produced in the first quarter of the ninth century. This manuscript in Quarto (Universitätsbibliothek Kassel, Landesbibliothek und Murhard-sche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel, Ms. theol. 24) contains the canon law collection *Dionysio-Hadriana*, as well as some further sources on the practice of penance, and the vernacular text *Exhortatio ad plebem christianam*.⁴⁸ The *Exhortatio* was written in Latin and Old High German to serve local priests, who did not have sufficient knowledge of Latin, as a model sermon. It was probably composed in the framework of Charlemagne's endeavour to promote basic religious education in the vernacular, as suggested by the reference to the emperor's order (*dominationis nostrae mandatum*).⁴⁹ Regardless of whether Archbishop Arn of Salzburg, the early ninth-century imperial representative in Bavaria, was indeed involved in its production,⁵⁰ the inclusion of the *Kassel Glossaries* and the *Exhortatio* in this manuscript suggests that either the producer, the holder, or the user of this manuscript was genuinely interested in translations between Latin and Old High German (or Old Bavarian). Moreover, whether the target language was Old Bavarian, as many scholars believed, or Latin, as suggested recently by Florian Kragl,⁵¹ it is clear that the *Kassel Glossaries* contain phrases that were useful during travels outside one's own language area. They include phrases such as "Who are you?", "Where are you from?", "What were

⁴⁵ Kikuchi, Herrschaft (2021), 24–33. Cf. Bruand, *Voyageurs et marchandises* (2002), 125–126. Compare these four paragraphs above with Ohler, *Reisen* (2004), 234–258.

⁴⁶ Cf. Ohler, *Reisen* (2004), 143–145.

⁴⁷ For these glossaries see Penzl, "Gimer min ros" (1984), 395–400; Penzl, *Stulti sunt Romani* (1985); Bergmann (Ed.), *Althochdeutsche und altsächsische Literatur* (2013), 225–227.

⁴⁸ Bergmann (Ed.), *Althochdeutsche und altsächsische Literatur* (2013), 225.

⁴⁹ Text and German translation: Hellgardt (Ed.), *Vom St. Galler Abrogans* (2022), 1270–1275. For this text see Kikuchi, Herrschaft (2021), 199 and the further literature cited in n. 624.

⁵⁰ For him Kikuchi, Herrschaft (2021), 399–409. For the possibility that Arn was involved in the production of the *Exhortatio* see Diesenberger, *Predigt und Politik* (2016), 177.

⁵¹ Kragl, *Deutsch/Romanisch* (2015), 306–312.

you searching for?", "We were searching for what we needed", and "What was your need?"⁵² As the contents of the manuscript suggest that its user was either a bishop who had to manage his diocese and discipline priests, or a priest who had to provide pastoral care in his parochial church, the travels it presupposes are those of a priest mandated by his bishop to go outward to achieve commissioned tasks.

The second piece is the *Paris Conversations*. It consists of marginal notes which can be found on fols. 1^r, 2^v, and 3^r of the manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS. Lat. 7641 and on fol. 50^v of the manuscript Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Regin. lat. 566, which originally belonged to the Paris manuscript as its first page. The main text on these folios is the so-called *Abavus-glossary*, with entries from Latin to Latin. The manuscript was probably compiled in the early ninth century, with notes likely added by a scribe from the region of Sens at the end of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century.⁵³ Kragl recently challenged the view – held by earlier scholars – that these marginal notes represent a copy of a Latin-to–Old High German–phrasebook for travel. According to him, these notes were not copied from such a phrasebook but were instead written down by a native Romance-speaking monastic novice while learning the German language.⁵⁴ Regardless of which opinion holds true, it is important to note that this text contains phrases that could have been used or heard during travels for the benefit of one's superior: "From which land (*patria*) do you come?" – "I was in *Francia*", "What were you doing there?" – "I was sent there (*missus fui*)", and so on.⁵⁵

Therefore, both the *Kassel Glossaries* and the *Paris Conversations* provide insights into model conversations that Carolingian learners of a foreign language would have learned and practiced. One of the scenarios in which they might have used these phrases was during conversations on a journey, a presumption that is indeed reflected in the model phrases. In some sense, we may say learning a foreign language was motivated by the learners' wish or need to travel. However, more significant is the fact that both texts imply these phrases were meant to be used in the context of mandated journeys, which could involve learning a foreign language. In these cases, learning a foreign language belonged to the preparation required for mandated travels, expenses the travellers had to bear by themselves. In what follows, I will inquire whether this kind of cost was compensated. Due to the limitation of our sources, I will only be able to discuss journeys executed in the context of royal services.

According to Laurent Jégou, mobility was a significant characterisation of Carolingian elites. Besides travelling for personal purposes – such as acquiring or reading

⁵² Text and German translation of the *Kassel Glossaries*: *Hellgardt* (Ed.), Vom St. Galler Abrogans (2022), 92–96.

⁵³ For this text, *Bischoff*, Study of foreign languages (1961), 217; *Penzl*, "Gimer min ros" (1984), 395–400; *Bergmann/Stricker* (Eds.), Althochdeutsche und altsächsische Glossographie (2009), 927–937.

⁵⁴ *Kragl*, Deutsch/Romanisch (2015), 293–305.

⁵⁵ Text and German translation: *Hellgardt* (Ed.), Vom St. Galler Abrogans (2022), 97–120.

manuscripts, visiting teachers or friends – ecclesiastical and lay elites also travelled within and outside the Frankish kingdoms to participate in royal governance.⁵⁶ As emerges from the above, such travels may be characterised as “mandated”, or even “obligatory”, which includes, for instance, the journeys of *missi dominici*.

However, elites travelling to participate in general assemblies or to visit the royal court were not only driven by a sense of duty as agents of the royal government but also by the opportunities presented during such an occasion, whether that meant receiving rewards like privileges or land estates or communicating with other members of the elite.⁵⁷ These represented additional motivations for royal agents during their “business trips” which must have been more relevant in cases of long diplomatic journeys, be it to Rome or elsewhere. Although royal envoys were not only financially and logically supported but also legally protected by their kings, they nonetheless pursued personal goals alongside conducting royal business. They could also anticipate some additional positive “side-effects” emerging from their business trips, such as those stemming from networking opportunities with fellow envoys and “business-partners” in their respective destination places. Their travels could also strengthen existing friendships with contacts they may have met in person or communicated with by letter – either before or after such travels.

The case of Amalar of Trier, who repeatedly travelled in the royal service, is a case in point. The most famous of these journeys was his diplomatic mission to Constantinople in 813, when he was accompanied by his fellow *missus*, Peter of Nonantula, the pair developing a friendship during their journey. Upon returning home, Peter requested Amalar to send him a treatise on liturgy, which Amalar had written during their diplomatic mission.⁵⁸ This illustrates that envoys in royal service did utilise their free time, such as long sea voyages, for personal pursuits. During his travels, Amalar also collected information on liturgy and encountered local practices, knowledge that he later used in his works and treatises on liturgy.⁵⁹

Some envoys were entrusted by their friends with tasks to be conducted at their destination. For instance, Alcuin entrusted Angilbert of St-Riquier with a letter to be handed over to Pope Hadrian during Angilbert’s journey to Rome, also requesting Angilbert to bring back precious relics as gifts.⁶⁰ When Abbot Adalhard of Corbie and Bishop Bernharius of Worms travelled to Rome as Charlemagne’s *missi*, Archbishop Richulf charged them with his letter as well as a gift for Pope Leo III. Through this

⁵⁶ Jégou, *Déplacements* (2010), 224.

⁵⁷ Depreux, *Lieux de rencontre* (1998); Mersiowsky, *Urkunde in der Karolingerzeit* (2015), 543–782.

⁵⁸ Amalarii Episcopi Opera. Ed. Hanssens, 229. For Amalar and Peter see Kikuchi, *Herrschaft* (2021), 365–371, 765–767.

⁵⁹ Vedriš, Amalarius’ stay (2018), 288.

⁶⁰ Compare Alcuini sive Albini epistolae, nos. 11, 27. Ed. Dümmmer, 37, 68–69.

letter, Richulf petitioned the pope for the relics of St Caesarius. Leo III granted his wish, providing Bernharius with the relics.⁶¹

It was also possible for royal *missi* sent to Rome to petition for and obtain papal privileges for their institutions, such as diocesan churches and monasteries. As I have argued elsewhere, a significant portion of ninth-century papal privileges were issued only when Carolingian monarchs were involved in the issuing process in some way, whether actual or fictional. Royal interventions are attested for Fulda, Corbie, and other ecclesiastical institutions. This may be because such royal involvements served as a guarantee for the credibility of the supplicants or the content of the petitions. Royal envoys and *missi*, as representatives of the royal court who travelled over the Alps, could have the opportunity to directly petition for privileges concerning their own interests when they met with a pope.⁶² Fulrad of St. Denis, who visited Italy several times as *missus* of Pippin III, obtained two privileges from Pope Stephen II for his abbey in February 757 during his visit to Rome.⁶³ Another relevant case is that of Adalgar of Autun, who was sent by Charles the Bald to Italy in November 876 and February 877. On each occasion, he obtained a papal privilege for his episcopal church of Autun.⁶⁴

Carolingian interest in Roman-Christian Antiquity provides another lens through which to understand the actions of *missi* sent to Rome. As Florian Hartmann's recent article demonstrates, the Franks collected and copied Roman epigraphs found in Italy, as evidenced by some manuscripts which survive from the north of the Alps, containing collections of those epigraphs.⁶⁵ As I argued elsewhere, it must be emphasised that the production of these collections was related to the activities of Frankish envoys, or *missi dominici*, in Italy. For example, collections of Roman inscriptions were made in monasteries such as St-Riquier, Corbie, and Lorsch, whose abbots – Angilbert, Adalhard, and Adalung – are known to have served as royal or imperial representatives in Italy.⁶⁶ Thus, Frankish envoys were simply one possible channel through which Italian Roman cultural heritage and papal authority could be disseminated beyond Rome. These results were a possible “side-effect” of any such travel in royal service.

In this context, we must also mention the manuscript *Codex Einsidlensis 326* (Einsiedeln, Bibliotheca Monasterii Ordinis Sancti Benedicti 326). Apart from a sylloge of Roman antique inscriptions, it contains the famous description of crossing routes of

⁶¹ *Epistolae selectae pontificum Romanorum*, no. 9. Ed. *Hampe*, 67–68. For Adalhard and Bernharius, *Kikuchi*, *Herrschaft* (2021), 312–318, 442–443.

⁶² *Kikuchi*, *Authority at a distance* (2023), 18–23.

⁶³ *Kikuchi*, *Herrschaft* (2021), 528–531; *Kikuchi*, *Authority at a distance* (2023), 19.

⁶⁴ *Kikuchi*, *Herrschaft* (2021), 302–306.

⁶⁵ *Hartmann*, *Karolingische Gelehrte* (2015).

⁶⁶ *Kikuchi*, *Authority at a distance* (2023), 16.

the City of Rome, the so-called *Itinerarium Einsidlense*.⁶⁷ Michael I. Allen recently argued that this description of routes and sites worth visiting in the City of Rome may have been written by Einhard, who visited during a royal service. If this is true, then Einhard recorded geographical information that had caught his interest during his business trip. This could be influential for another journey –namely the travel taken to Rome by his monk, Ratleik, to acquire relics. Ratleik may have been able to prepare himself for his *furta sacra* using the geographic information provided by the *Itinerarium*, which bore fruit in the form of the *Translatio sanctorum Marcellini et Petri* to Seligenstadt.⁶⁸ We may count this episode as another example of positive “side-effects” emerging from business trips executed by royal agents. Similarly, other royal *missi* sent to Rome and Constantinople could obtain relics and bring them back to their home institutions.⁶⁹

Another journey by Fulrad is likewise worth mentioning here. According to the author of the *Translatio sancti Viti*, Fulrad – driven by his deep religious devotion to saints, – begged King Pippin for his permission to travel to Rome and bring back saints’ relics. The king not only allowed him to go, “but also thanked him for such a longing” (*sed et gratias pro tali desiderio retulit*). Fulrad then travelled with his lay relative to Rome, returning with the relics of St. Alexander, St. Hippolytus, and St. Vitus.⁷⁰ Although this hagiographic text does not mention it clearly, Stoclet suggested that Fulrad’s journey could be related to one of his travels to Rome executed in the context of royal service.⁷¹ Whether this is the case or not, we can suppose Fulrad’s repeated travels to Italy made it possible for him to negotiate with popes over translations of Roman relics to Francia. The most suggestive clue is his stay in Rome in 756 as the representative of Pippin. At that time, Fulrad was active (alongside a Roman deacon, Paul) in negotiations between the Roman Church and the Lombards. This Paul was the brother of Pope Stephen II and would eventually succeed him as Paul I, under whose pontificate translations of Roman relics was widely permitted.⁷² Their acquaintance may thus have played a role in Fulrad’s negotiation with the pope over the translation of relics.

⁶⁷ On this codex, see Einsiedler Inschriftenammlung und der Pilgerführer. Ed. Walser; *Del Lungo*, *Roma in età carolingia* (2004). For the *Itinerarium Einsidlense*, Santangeli Valenzani, “*Itinerarium Einsidlense*” (2014).

⁶⁸ Allen, Pilgrims on earth (2016).

⁶⁹ As mentioned above, Angilbert was requested by Alcuin to obtain relics in Rome during his travel as the royal representative. On such occasions he could obtain other relics for his own abbey of St. Riquier. Furthermore, Angilbert stated in his *De ecclesia Centulensi libellus* that his abbey possessed other relics which royal envoys brought back from Constantinople. *Chronique de l’abbaye de Saint-Riquier* 9. Ed. Lot, 61–62.

⁷⁰ *Translatio sancti Viti* 2. Ed. Irene Schmale-Ott, 32, 34.

⁷¹ Stoclet, *Autour de Fulrad* (1993), 367.

⁷² Cf. Smith, *Old saints* (2000), 320–322; Kikuchi, *Herrschaft* (2021), 528–530.

4.4 Conclusion

People in the Carolingian era travelled despite various risks and costs. Each traveller had a principal motive, whether voluntary or mandated. However, to compensate for these drawbacks, travellers could act “cost-effectively” on their way. The sources tell us that travellers regularly used occasions emerging from their trips to serve different tasks or purposes. This means that a single journey could be motivated by multiple factors. These additional tasks and motivations were not always personal. Indeed, the evidence refers to a wealth of cases where they were assigned by others, be it their superiors or friends. This is particularly evident in the cases of royal envoys. Although financially and logically supported and legally protected by the king, they also pursued their own goals during their journey besides merely carrying out royal business. Thus, personal and official motivations could be combined in a single journey and those travelling in an official capacity could also expect some positive “side-effects” from their business trips. As shown by the evidence discussed in this chapter, certain forms of travel-economy were clearly realised in the Carolingian age. By demonstrating the multifaceted nature of early medieval travel undertaken by individuals, and exploring the relevant motivations and purposes of these journeys, this chapter has hopefully facilitated a fuller understanding of the significance and impact of mobility in the Carolingian world.

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