

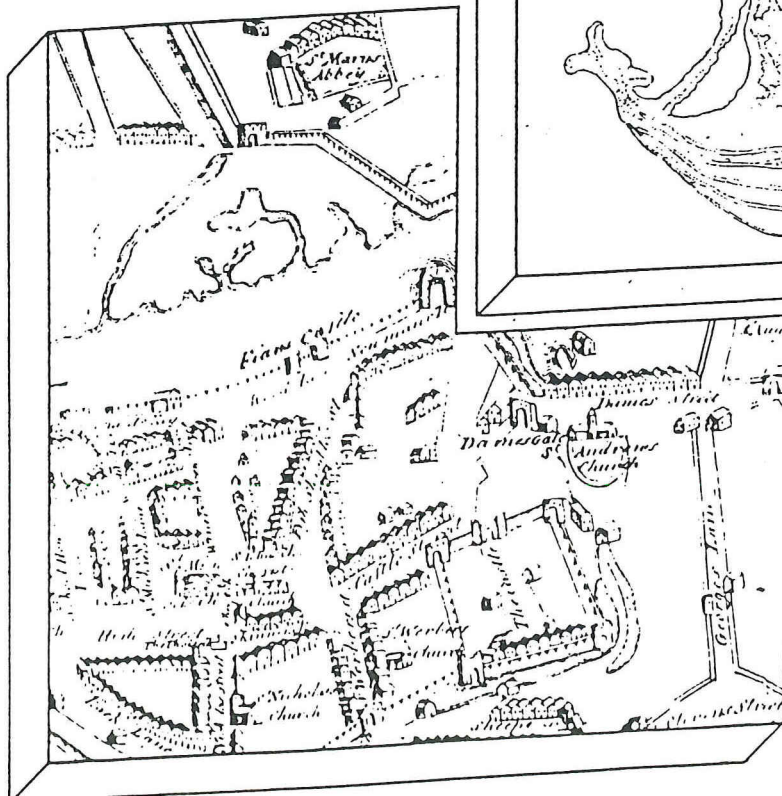
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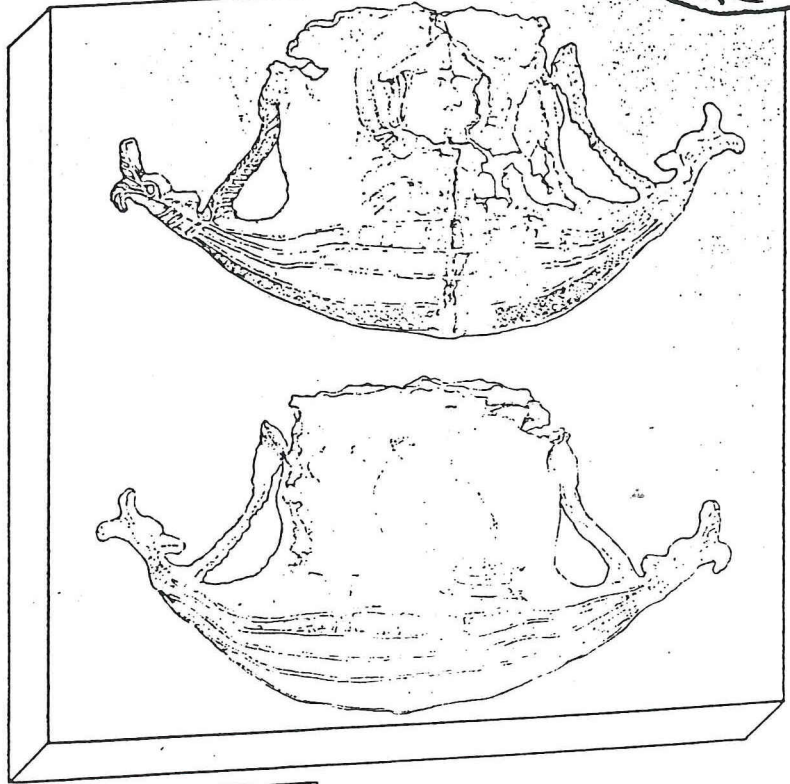
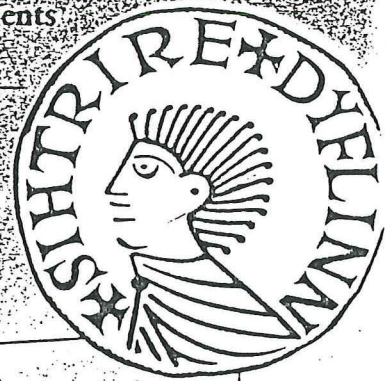
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Fascicules 1-5

Royal Irish  
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# Miscellanea 1

1. Dublin 840-1300: An Archaeological Bibliography  
PATRICK F. WALLACE
2. A 'Winchester-style' Bronze Mount  
ANDREW HALPIN
3. Ship Graffiti and Models  
ARNE-EMIL CHRISTENSEN
4. Romanesque Bookbinding Fragments  
JOSEPH McDONNELL
5. Pilgrim Souvenirs  
BRIAN SPENCER



Editor  
PATRICK F. WALLACE

## Pilgrim Souvenirs

To Brian with best wishes  
and warmest thanks  
from Brian

Brian Spencer

### Abstract

Like tourists today, medieval pilgrims often wore souvenirs of the places they had set out to visit. This practice is discussed here in the light of four such souvenirs brought back to Dublin during the first half of the thirteenth century from sanctuaries at Worcester, Canterbury and Rome. The configuration as well as the iconographical detail of each of the Dublin finds is also considered in the context of comparable or related pilgrim souvenirs that have been found abroad.

## Introduction

Next to building and beautifying churches, going on pilgrimage was the most popular method by which medieval laymen actively pursued the path to heaven. And yet there was in many and perhaps most pilgrims a strong streak of the earthy tourist. Nowhere is this revealed more clearly than in the matter of souvenirs. Then, as now, travellers found it hard to resist the inclination to commemorate their journeys by leaving behind graffiti and picking up souvenirs at the places they visited. Both practices were roundly condemned for the damage they caused by the Franciscans of Mount Sion, custodians of the holy places in Jerusalem. William Wey made a careful record of their prohibitions in 1458 and yet returned to England with a cargo of mementoes—'a ston of the Mownte of Calvery, a stone of sepulkyr, a stone of the holy cave of Bethleem' and so forth (Williams 1857, xxix).

Chippings and scrapings of this sort had for centuries travelled westward, ending up, as likely as not, among a parish's collection of relics and curiosities. The foundations of medieval London were laid in stone from quarries in Kent and Surrey, but the highest stones of all, those in the gilded cross on the spire of Old St Paul's, came from Calvary, the Holy Sepulchre and 'the place where God stood when he ascended into Heaven'. Had the quarrying of souvenirs been allowed to go unchecked there can be little doubt that ultimately there would have been fewer holy places left to visit. One answer was to put shrines under constant surveillance. Another was to manufacture and sell commemorative souvenirs. Pilgrim souvenirs of silver and earthenware were being made in the Holy Land as early as the sixth century, and by the time of William Wey pilgrims to Jerusalem could buy replicas of the Holy Sepulchre or boxes of 'the earth from which God fashioned Adam'. But it was not until the twelfth century that inexpensive souvenirs—badges and ampullae—began to be available at the major pilgrim centres of the west (Spencer 1968).

In 1199, the year after he became pope, Innocent III conferred on the canons of the basilica of St Peter the exclusive right to make and sell 'lead and pewter signs bearing the images of the apostles Peter and Paul'. These, the papal document explains, were the signs or badges with which pilgrims 'adorn themselves for the increase of their own devotion and as proof of their accomplished journey'; and the grant was reinforced with a threat of excommunication on any who dared to infringe it (Baluzius 1682, 305–6). From this it is clear that the buying and wearing of manufactured souvenirs was already an established practice at Rome. The document underlines this by stating that the pope and his predecessors had always been entitled to the revenue accruing from the sale of pilgrim signs. We are left to draw the conclusion that the careful exploitation of the souvenir trade would now provide St Peter's with a lucrative sideline.

At this time Innocent III was directing his energies towards shedding the load of minor business that was clogging his administration and to eradicating the ring of parasites—profiteer money-changers and forgers—that he had found operating in and about the papal chancery. His ruling on what was, on the face of it, a trifling, shopkeeping matter may therefore have had as much to do with bureaucratic tidiness as with the allocation of profits. Other factors, too, combined to prompt some form of central regulation and control. From the church's viewpoint, pilgrim souvenirs were not merely a source of revenue but a novel form of advertising; the pilgrim's hat was fast becoming the medieval travel brochure. The pilgrim, on the other hand, regarded his leaden trinkets not simply as mementoes but as secondary relics imbued with protective and wonder-working properties and, judging from the evidence of many shrines, the church was not slow to give official encouragement to this popular belief.

At Compostella, also, the church authorities were at this time seeking the pope's support for claims that in their case amounted to maintenance of copyright. Progenitor of all pilgrim badges, the scallop of St James had become so universally popular that counterfeit shells were offered for sale all along the route to Compostella, and even distant shrines, like Canterbury and Mont St Michel, incorporated the shell in the designs of their own pilgrim souvenirs. But the frequency with which archbishops of Compostella subsequently sought papal authority to excommunicate those who exploited the scallop-shell outside

Compostella illustrates the difficulty of enforcing such proprietary claims (Spencer 1974, 113–15).

However, Compostella's problem was a special one and arose from the fact that the scallop, having emerged as the badge of the patron saint of pilgrims, also came to be looked on as the emblem of pilgrimage itself. Elsewhere, as at Rome, the problem was primarily a local one. Sooner or later the churches at most important pilgrim centres were to be faced with the difficulty of retaining control over a trade that demanded little skill or capital and an art-form that in essence was a branch of folk-culture and was rooted in the crowded street and market-place.

Excavations by the National Museum of Ireland in High Street, Wood Quay and John's Lane, Dublin, have brought to light at least four pilgrim souvenirs of notably early date, each of them brought back from a sanctuary abroad. (Further research into and conservation of the excavated material may well lead to the identification of additional specimens.) Three of the four considered here are ampullae, decorative little flasks of tin, intended to contain a dose of the thaumaturgic relic-water that was being distributed to pilgrims at many shrines in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Two of these came from Canterbury at a time when the pilgrimage to Becket's tomb and the scene of his martyrdom was at the peak of its international fame. The third is the only surviving example of an ampulla from the shrine of St Wulfstan at Worcester. The last souvenir in this group involved the longest journey by far, for it is a pewter badge commemorating a pilgrimage to the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul in Rome.

## Two Canterbury ampullae (Figs 1 and 4)

Pilgrims' ampullae served two purposes. Like pilgrim signs they were badges of merit, tokens of an accomplished pilgrimage, and usually bore some indication of their places of origin. Until the fourteenth century, they seem to have been worn high up on the chest, suspended from a cord or chain round the neck. As they were not so much worn as flaunted, eye-catching ornament and bright, occasionally painted surfaces were sometimes expected to compensate for indifferent design and poor workmanship. The popularity of garish travel souvenirs seems to be as old as the organised tourist trade. But ampullae were designed chiefly as cheap, impermeable containers in which pilgrims could take away a drop of the miraculous healing water that was a feature, if not the principal attraction, of many pilgrim resorts (Spencer 1983, 307–9). Normally the ampulla was then kept by the pilgrim for its supposed prophylactic powers, though sooner or later its contents might have to be used in cases of dire need.

Soon after Thomas Becket's martyrdom in 1170, the famous Canterbury water, reputedly tinged with the martyr's blood, was being carried off in ampullae as far as France, the Low Countries and Scandinavia, as well as to Ireland. At first the water was sold in wooden containers, special ones set with mirrors being designed for ladies: Both wood and pottery were found to have serious drawbacks, however, and before long phials of lead or tin were being mass-produced. By 1200 the word 'ampoller' described a new type of craftsman at Canterbury. By that time also other shrines in the midlands had begun to follow Canterbury's example (Spencer 1971b; 1982).

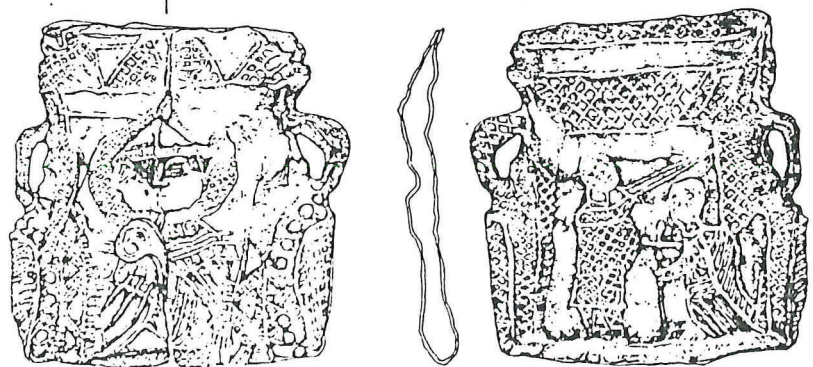


Fig. 1. Ampulla from the John's Lane end of Wood Quay, Dublin; front and back. (This and subsequent illustrations are reproduced at actual size.)

At least eighty thirteenth-century ampullae from Canterbury have been recovered from various sites during the past decade (1975–85), including the two from Dublin discussed here. This substantial addition to the stock of evidence has helped to confirm a typological arrangement already tentatively suggested (Spencer 1975; 1983, 306–7) for the commonest sort of Canterbury ampullae, namely those with a flat-sided flask surrounded by a circular band, often inscribed (cf. Fig. 8), a type which will be touched on again in the section dealing with the souvenir from Worcester.

Here it should be noted that Canterbury's pilgrims were also offered various alternative forms of ampullae, all of them quite distinct from the mainstream sort mentioned above, as well as differing from each other. During the last quarter of the thirteenth century, for example, some ampullae looked like miniature versions of contemporary costrels of earthenware, with barrel-like bodies at right angles to a cylindrical neck (Egan 1986, fig. 11; Spencer 1987, 221, no. 53), while other house-shaped ampullae were obviously based on the gabled *chasses* which at the time were still being produced by the enamellers of Limgoes (*ibid.*, 220–1, nos 51–2; Borenus 1932, 77, figs A, B). During the first quarter of the century, on the other hand, ampullae in the form of scallop-shells were also tried (Spencer 1971a, fig. XXI, v; 1974), while ampullae of roughly rectangular shape were another option that was available for a time to Canterbury's pilgrims. Sometimes the rectangular outline was achieved by surrounding the flask with a square frame (Forgeais 1863, 100) instead of a circular one (cf. Fig. 8). A square-framed ampulla of this character was recovered (1976) from an early thirteenth-century context during excavations in High Street, Perth (Perth Museum C2245, A9264, MI-4A).

More often, however, the flask itself was given a more or less rectangular shape, interrupted only by a slight narrowing at the junction of the neck and body. An ampulla of this kind was brought back to Dublin in the early years of the thirteenth century (Fig. 1; National Museum of Ireland E173:3057). It was discovered in a pit at the John's Lane end of the Wood Quay site (Wallace 1985, 405–6). On the front is depicted a demi-figure of St Thomas of Canterbury, wearing a low-crowned mitre and holding a crozier in front of him. His head, which is surrounded by a nimbus, is cast in low relief, while the crook of his crozier is modelled in the round. This small protuberance, which is a regular feature of Canterbury ampullae in the earlier part of the thirteenth century, made it necessary to divide one half of the mould down the middle, along the line of the crozier, so that the casting could be withdrawn with the crook intact. Above this hieratic figure is a border of zigzags alternately hatched and plain, while on either side are bands of ornament, outwardly curving as if to give the illusion that the body of the ampulla was ovoid in section. The outer bands are decorated with circular bosses and the inner with pyramidal bosses. These bosses also occur on a comparable ampulla recovered from the site of Billingsgate Market lorry park, Lower Thames Street, London, in 1984 (Fig. 2), although this example has,

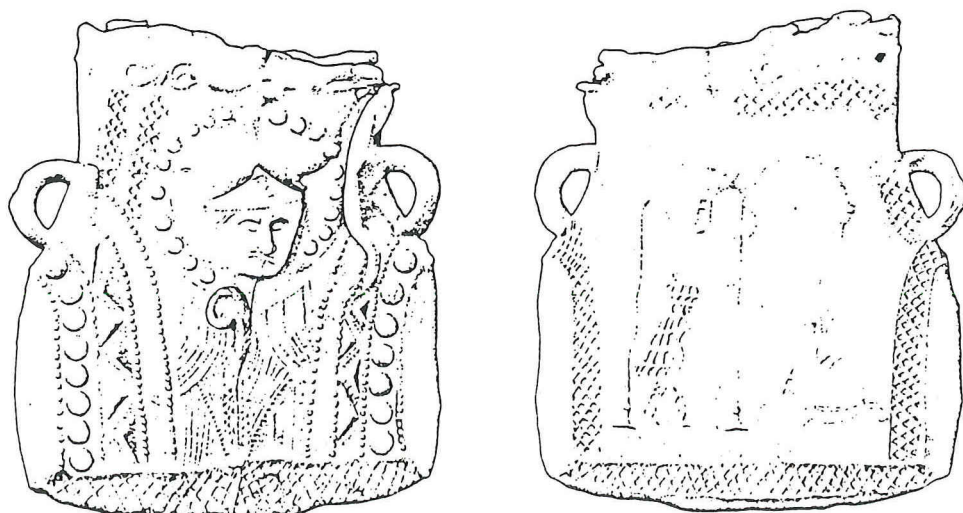


Fig. 2. Ampulla from Billingsgate, Lower Thames Street, London; front and back.

additionally, an innermost band of zigzag ornament alternately cross-hatched and blank and a border of running scroll-work at the mouth. Another, somewhat later, 'rectangular' ampulla from the same site (Fig. 3) (Museum of London 84.254), on the other hand, has only a single ornamental curving band, studded with pyramidal bosses. Both sorts of bosses and both forms of linear ornament, zigzag and scroll, are a *sine qua non* of most other kinds of Canterbury ampullae made during the first half of the thirteenth century (cf. Figs 5 and 8).

On the reverse of the Dublin find is a sketchy representation of Becket's martyrdom (Fig. 1, right). A knight, probably intended for Reginald Fitzurse, dressed in a hauberk of mail with a knee-length slit skirt, brings down his sword on the archbishop's skull. Becket is represented as either kneeling or sinking to the ground whilst yet keeping a hold on his archiepiscopal cross-staff. The scene is reserved against a background of unbroken cross-hatching, save for a narrow strip just below the mouth of the vessel. Here the ampulla has been sealed in a very characteristic way, by vigorously nibbling and crimping the vessel's narrow mouth, a process that has bruised and virtually eliminated the surface ornament. This over-emphatic type of seal was possibly a response to the common belief that St Thomas's water had, especially in the hands of the unworthy, the power to boil over, as it were, and disappear from its container.

The backs of the two Billingsgate finds are worn even smoother than that of the Wood Quay specimen, presumably from long usage as pendants round their wearers' necks. The same subject, Becket's murder, can, however, still be perceived on them, and on the ampulla (Fig. 2) that most nearly resembles the Wood Quay find, the figures of the archbishop and his assailant are depicted beneath a canopy supported on three spindly columns. This architectural embellishment is further evidence of an early thirteenth-century date. Very similar arcades are depicted on Canterbury ampullae found at Paris (Musée de Cluny 13063) and Bergen (Bryggens Museum, Bergen). These ampullae, in turn, are believed to be earlier than 1220, the year in which St Thomas's body was translated to a new shrine, since they depict the occurrence of miracles at the tomb in which St Thomas was first buried (Gay 1887, under 'Ampoule'; Herteig 1969, 208-9; Spencer 1975, 245).

Probably belonging to the same period, the first decade or two of the thirteenth century, is another Canterbury ampulla of unusual form (NMI reg. no. E132:X264), also found at Wood Quay, Dublin (Fig. 4; Wallace 1985, pl. 16, XIV, p. 404). This was recovered in a dumped infill behind a thirteenth-century waterfront revetment. Like all the others illustrated here, this ampulla is a slender, almost flat-sided vessel of tin or tin-lead alloy. The body of the flask takes the form of a double-ended, crescent-shaped ship, reminiscent of the ships in the Bayeux Tapestry. Its high stem and stern posts terminate in grotesque animal heads. The ship has a prominent external keel and its planking consists of four strakes on each side. On the uppermost strakes are delineated three oar-ports, while rigging fore and aft suggests that the vessel was conceived as having an

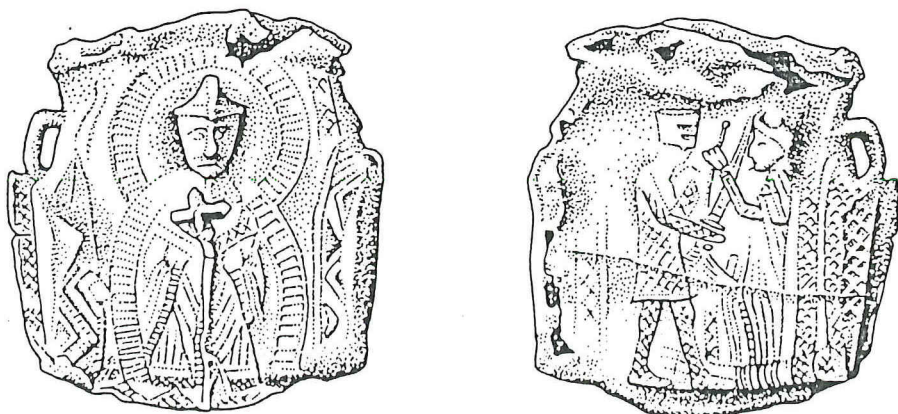


Fig. 3. Ampulla from Billingsgate, Lower Thames Street, London; front and back.

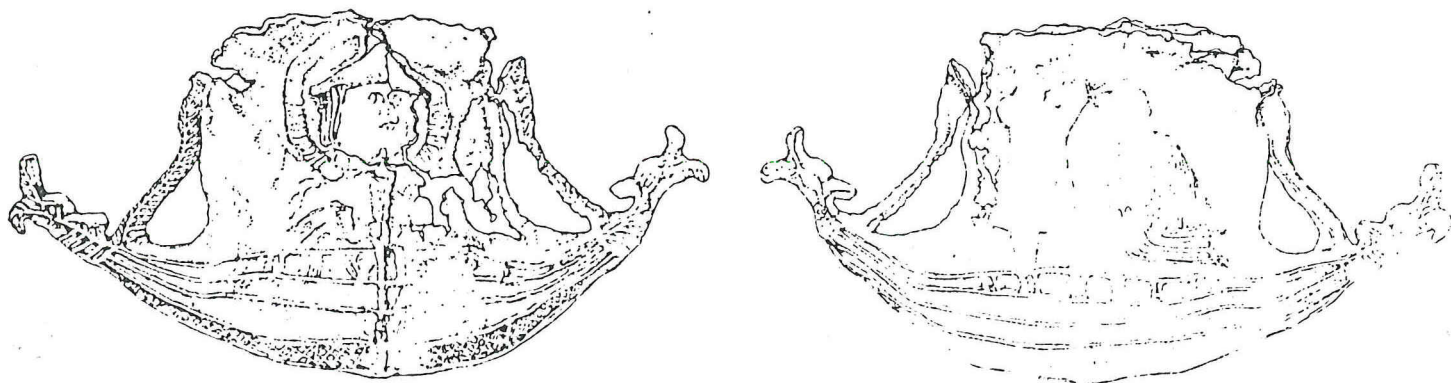
auxiliary sail. Midships, however, the neck of the ampulla supervenes. On its front is depicted a half-length figure of St Thomas, as if standing in the ship. His lightly sketched vestments and hands that grasp the shaft of his crozier are now difficult to discern, but his mitred head and the top of his crozier again stand proud of the surface (when found, the crozier still retained its crook). On the reverse of the neck is a version of Becker's martyrdom (Fig. 4, right) somewhat similar to that on the 'rectangular' ampulla discussed above. Here, however, it can be seen that the knight wears a conical helmet over a mail coif in addition to a hauberk of mail and mail hose. His armour is the sort that was in fashion during the last thirty years of the twelfth century, but thereafter soon became outmoded, especially in regard to the helm, which after *c.* 1200 was likely to be flat-topped and to enclose the entire head. The design of the ship, too, was being steadily superseded during the thirteenth century by ships with stern rudders and straightened stern-posts.

The neck of this ampulla appears to have been foreshortened and to have lost its loop-handles in the process. The present ragged top edge suggests that, in order to get at its precious healing dose, the owner followed the frequent practice of slicing through or paring away the thin, soft metal of the ampulla just below the crimped seal. The problem of access must have been similar to that presented by heat-sealed plastic wrappers today.

A Thames-side site at Sunlight Wharf, Upper Thames Street, London and the Billingsgate site mentioned above have also recently yielded comparable ship-shaped ampullae (Fig. 5: left, private collection; right, Museum of London 84.407). In both instances the mouth of the ampulla and its suspensory handles are intact. On one side St Thomas is shown enthroned with his right hand raised in blessing. On board with him are a praying suppliant, on the right, and a coxswain holding the steerboard with his right hand and reaching up to touch St Thomas's sleeve with his left. On the other side is depicted Christ on the cross flanked by the figures of Longinus holding a spear and Stephaton holding a bucket. The scene here is presumably a reference to the dedication of Canterbury Cathedral, Christchurch, or more specifically to its great rood, which remained one of the principal attractions to pilgrims, alongside the Becket cult, throughout the thirteenth century.

It may be that when Canterbury's mould-cutters devised their ship-formed souvenirs they had in mind the requirements of those who, like the pilgrim from Dublin, came from overseas or the needs of the many travellers who visited Canterbury before embarking for the Continent. For them such an explicit representation of St Thomas as a protector of seafarers would have had instant appeal, based, as it was, on a catalogue of miracles at sea that ranged from assisting sailors to turn a heavy capstan or refloating a grounded ship to bringing storm-tossed vessels, including at least one Irish ship, safely to port (Salzman 1926, 96-7). Significantly, late fourteenth-century pilgrim badges commemorating the shrine of St Thomas invariably include two model ships to represent typical votives suspended at the shrine by grateful pilgrims (Spencer 1987, 222, no. 63).

Fig. 4. Ampulla from Wood Quay, Dublin; front and back.





It is more likely, however, that the ampullae from Wood Quay and London were of a sort made primarily for the feast of the *Regressio Sancti Thomae*. This festival was held every year at Canterbury to mark the anniversary of Becket's return to England and triumphal entry into Canterbury on 2 December 1170, after he had spent more than six years in exile and in bitter conflict with King Henry II. Only a month after his return, the news of his murder was being carried to every corner of Christendom, and, on the wave of emotion that followed, the last days of Becket's life began to be likened to Christ's Passion and his progress to Canterbury on 2 December to Christ's entry into Jerusalem.

Throughout the thirteenth century St Thomas in a ship crossing the Channel or landing at Sandwich holds a position of prominence in scenes from his life. Sometimes the famous episode was extended by showing also his entry into Canterbury on horseback. In the second half of the fourteenth century both scenes, Becket crossing the Channel and riding into Canterbury, were used to good effect as large pilgrim badges. Even if these picturesque badges were initially designed to relate to the *Regressio* festival, they soon became immensely popular as general souvenirs of the Canterbury pilgrimage. Carrying forward the iconography of the ampulla from Wood Quay, the pewter badge depicted in Fig. 6 and found (1979) at Bull Wharf, Upper Thames Street, London (Museum of London 82.8/3), shows St Thomas standing in a ship, accompanied by two devotees, a sailor handling rigging in the sterncastle and (perhaps as a nationalistic touch) a figure of St George looking out from the forecastle. This is the sort of souvenir that would have been familiar to Chaucer's pilgrims in the 1380s and 1390s, long after ampullae had ceased to figure prominently among the mementoes and amulets bought by Canterbury pilgrims.

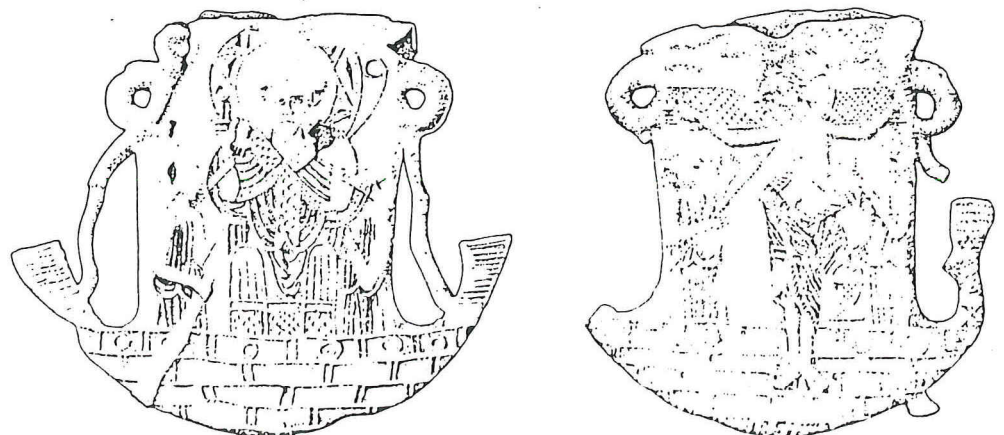
## A Worcester ampulla

(Fig. 7)

The cult of St Wulfstan of Worcester doubtless reached the people of Ireland through contact with traders and settlers from Bristol, where he was held in special veneration. There it was remembered that the force of Wulfstan's preaching had stopped a thriving slave-trade between Bristol and Ireland and that even in his lifetime his miraculous intervention had rescued sailors in jeopardy on the Irish Sea. As a protector of seafarers on that route his reputation had grown to rival that of St Nicholas and St Thomas of Canterbury (Darlington 1928, 43, 156).

Wulfstan had been made bishop of Worcester four years before the Norman Conquest. By 1075 he was the only Saxon prelate left in England. The reputation he earned for sanctity during his lifetime was enhanced after his death in 1095 by the occurrence of miracles at his tomb. But it was not until 1201 that his cult suddenly caught the popular imagination. There followed an astonishing increase in the number of miracles so that at times fifteen or sixteen people a day were cured of their ailments or afflictions (Luard 1869, 391).

Fig. 5. Ampullae from Sunlight Wharf, Upper Thames Street, London, and from Billingsgate, London; front and back from identical finds.



As part of the procedure that led to Wulfstan's canonisation, Pope Innocent III took the important step of appointing a commission to verify the evidence of sanctity. The commissioners' report was to include the deposition of sworn instances of miracles (Kemp 1948, 104-5; Cheney and Cheney 1967, 70, 77). Records, doubtless compiled in response to this requirement and subsequently continued (Darlington 1928, 117-77), present a picture of the church at Worcester teeming with pilgrims. They included people of rank like Adam de Hereford, who brought the royal treasure from Ireland after King John's expedition of 1210 (Luard 1869, 392, 407). Caught on this wave of popular emotion, John himself adopted St Wulfstan as his patron and arranged to be buried before the high altar at Worcester, between St Wulfstan and St Oswald, thereby, it was said, fulfilling Merlin's prediction that he should be placed among the saints (Darlington 1928, 43, 91). By 1218 the offerings of pilgrims had contributed substantially towards the rebuilding of the church around a gorgeous new shrine of St Wulfstan. Some twenty years later, when the surviving miracle-book ceases, the fame of the so-called 'new saint' was known throughout England and in France and Ireland also.

To this spontaneous fervour of the people was doubtless added the advocacy of the highest authority in Ireland, John Comyn, archbishop of Dublin. Comyn was one of the panel of prelates appointed in 1202 to verify the authenticity of St Wulfstan's miracles (Darlington 1928, 141-3; Luard 1869, 401) and his appointment may have owed something to his former connection with the monastery at Evesham, which had been founded by another saintly bishop of Worcester. Another advocate was an Irish pilgrim who had been mutilated in 1212 at the command of Hugh de Lacy. After returning to Ireland, the pilgrim built a church of St Wulfstan in gratitude for the recovery of his speech at St Wulfstan's tomb. Another pilgrim, we now know, returned to Dublin somewhat later with a tin souvenir of his pilgrimage to Worcester (Fig. 7) (Ó Ríordáin 1971, pl. VIc; National Museum of Ireland 1973, pl. 15; Spencer 1984, figs 1-2).

This ampulla (NMI reg. no. E71:3661), recovered during excavations in High Street, Dublin, is the most striking and perhaps the most impartial proof of the popular religious fervour surrounding St Wulfstan. Though it is, in fact, the only known pilgrim souvenir connected with Worcester, evidence at other important pilgrim centres suggests that the ratio of surviving pilgrim signs to the numbers originally manufactured is often in the order of one to hundreds of thousands (Spencer 1968, 139).

The ampulla is a slim, flat-sided vessel, widest at its mouth and tapering to the base and, for most of its length, surrounded by a narrow circular band. The band, which would help to stabilise the vessel as it hung at the wearer's neck, is fitted

Fig. 6. Pilgrim badge from Bull Wharf, Upper Thames Street, London. The back is fitted with a pin and clasp.



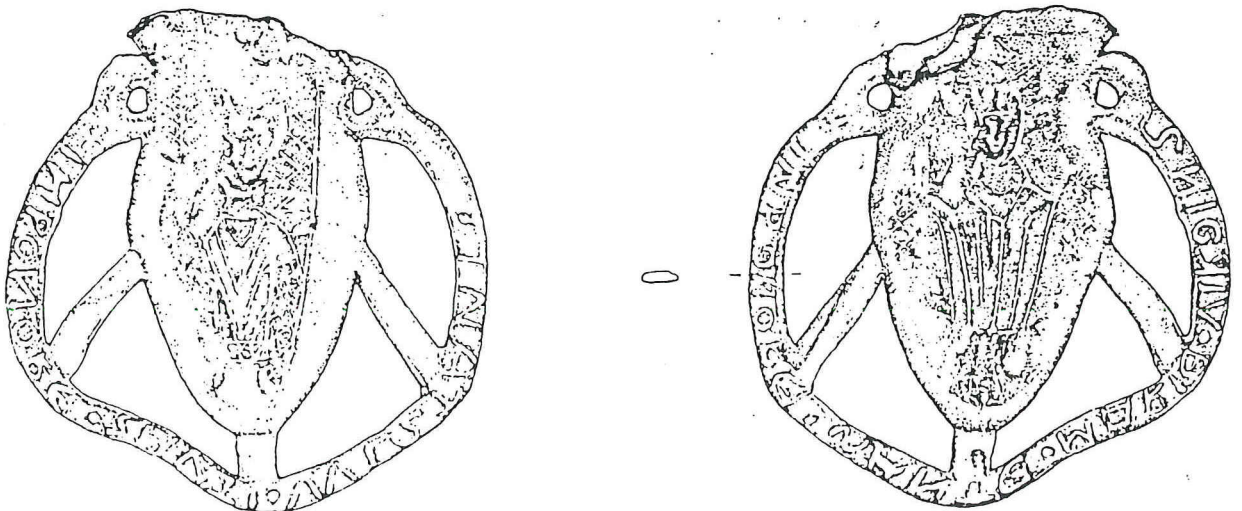
with two suspensory holes at the points where it clasps the ampulla, just below the mouth. Again, to prevent the accidental loss of its draught of supernatural medicine, its mouth has been securely and characteristically sealed by crimping. Figures are depicted on both sides, but the mould-maker sketched them so clumsily that it would have been almost impossible to identify them without the inscriptions on the encircling border.

On one side (Fig. 7) is the standing figure of a bishop wearing episcopal vestments, raising his right hand in blessing and holding a crozier in his left. This, we are told, is St Wulfstan. The (reversed) inscription reads + IN HONORE . SANTI . WULSTANI. The exaggerated height of his crozier may simply result from the artist's incompetence. But its prominence is perhaps to be taken as an allusion to the popular belief, current by the middle of the twelfth century, that Wulfstan, miraculously aided by St Edward the Confessor, had fixed his crozier into the stonework of the Confessor's shrine so that it could be dislodged by no-one but himself. This was Wulfstan's unimpeachable answer to those Normans who sought to deprive him of his staff of office because he was neither learned nor sophisticated enough for their taste. Subsequently one of the minor exhibits to pilgrims, Wulfstan's crozier nevertheless attracted sufficient offerings for its ownership to become in 1312 a subject of dispute between the hospital of St Wulfstan at Worcester and the monastic community of the cathedral church (Wilson 1920, 121-3).

The cathedral priory was dedicated to St Mary. It was natural, therefore, that the standing figure of the Virgin should be depicted on the other side of the ampulla (Fig. 7). She wears a rudimentary crown and robes that can only be described as full in cut and length. There is just a suggestion that the artist may have intended her to hold the Holy Child on her right arm and a fleur-de-lys in her left hand. Her identity is confirmed by the words + IN HONORE . SANTE . MARIE.

By the middle of the twelfth century the people of Worcester were already much devoted to an image of the Blessed Virgin that stood above the high altar (Thorpe 1849, 121-3). By the fifteenth century the image was attracting rich offerings from far and wide (Nicolas 1826, 240). The treasures that adorned it were plundered by thieves in 1480 (Willis-Bund and Page 1906, 108) and finally by the reformers in 1537 (Gairdner 1890, 587), when Latimer gave the same level of importance to Our Lady of Worcester ('our grett Sibyll') as to 'here old syster of Wolsyngham' and 'hyr younge syster of Ipswyche' (Ellis 1846, 207). Though some pilgrims still adhered to St Wulfstan (Woodruff 1914, 23) the wonder-working image of the Virgin had clearly become Worcester's main attraction. But even in the thirteenth century, when the popularity of St Wulfstan was at its peak,

Fig. 7. Ampulla from High Street, Dublin; front and back.



his cult was curiously entangled with the cult of the Virgin. Some pilgrims were summoned by her to St Wulfstan's tomb. Others saw her, either alone or with St Wulfstan, in visions at the tomb (Darlington 1928, 135, 173, 176) and, in the case of the mute referred to above, St Wulfstan was seen to kneel before her and beg her to intercede on the Irishman's behalf (*ibid.*, 142). The juxtaposition of St Wulfstan and St Mary on an ampulla from Worcester was therefore as natural as the conjunction of the two apostles on the badge from Rome, which will be considered below.

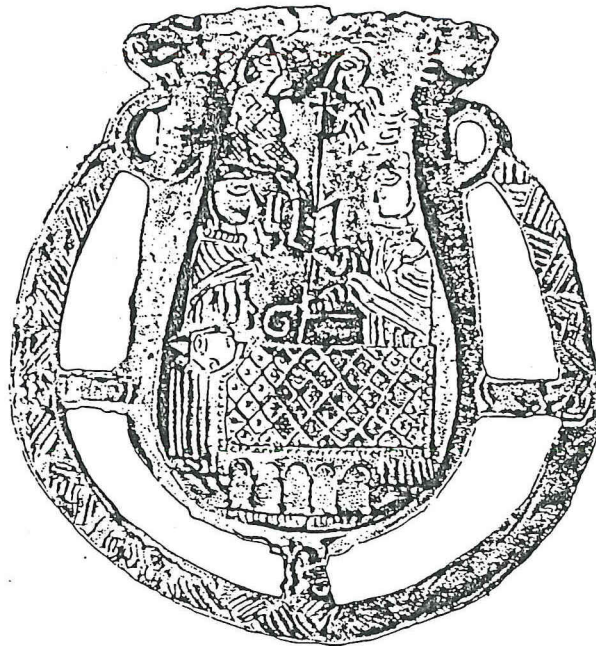
Even during St Wulfstan's lifetime, miraculous cures had been effected by water he had blessed or used in the ritual or by water in which he had dipped the relic he kept for its known healing powers—a bezant with a hole in it, supposedly pierced by the spear of St Longinus (Darlington 1928, 31, 33, 35). It is no surprise, therefore, that during the thirteenth century various disorders should prove susceptible to cure by 'the water of St Wulfstan'. Thus a leprous Welshman who came to the shrine was restored to health when sprinkled with the water; similarly, the infant son of Hugh de Petton was resuscitated in 1221 (Darlington 1928, 121, 163–7; Luard 1869, 413). But the water was just as effective, again even to the point of reviving the dead, in places where it had been carried by pilgrims far from Worcester. A farm-worker, stung in the neck by a poisonous insect, was saved from certain death when a draught of St Wulfstan's water was brought to him in the nick of time (Darlington 1928, 125–6). A baby, drowned in the bath-tub while his nurse's back was turned, was revived because fortunately among those summoned from the neighbourhood there was one who had with him an ampulla of St Wulfstan's water (*ibid.*, 120–1). Another baby, having long lain lifeless, mourned by family and neighbours, was brought back to life when 'an ampulla full of St Wulfstan's water' was brought and poured into its mouth. When the baby was afterwards taken to Worcester to give thanks, the archdeacon of Gloucester interrogated witnesses to verify the story (*ibid.*, 178–9).

The distribution of Becket's and Wulfstan's healing potions were but two instances of a growing fashion. Water from the springs and wells associated with saints and water in which substances connected with saints had been steeped had long been recognised to be of spiritual and medicinal value. In the 1150s, for example, Thomas of Monmouth described how devotees of St William of Norwich were successfully treated with an infusion in holy water of the dust and scrapings from his tomb (Jessopp and James 1896, 135–6, 150, 162, 190). But Canterbury seems to have been the first pilgrim resort in England to have fully exploited the profitable opportunities presented by general belief in such miracles. Indeed, so many thirteenth-century Canterbury ampullae have now been recovered, some from datable contexts, that, as has been stated above, it has become possible to suggest a typological sequence for stages in the development of the most popular kind of Canterbury ampullae, namely those with a flat-sided flask surrounded by a circular band.

Though its details need not be reiterated here, this sequence offers a reasonable basis for dating the ampulla of St Wulfstan, for it is evident that until the end of the fourteenth century Canterbury set the pace and, to some extent, the fashions for the English souvenir trade. Taking the Canterbury series as its context, the ampulla of St Wulfstan comes nearest in resemblance to the Canterbury ampulla illustrated in Fig. 8. In both cases the encircling border is set high on the ampulla, is pierced with loops at the junctions and is also connected to the ampulla by three bars. Three complete examples of this Canterbury type have been found, at London, York and Lodose (Sweden), and a stone mould for casting them was discovered (1979) during excavations on the foundations of a thirteenth-century building at 16 Watling Street, Canterbury. There are grounds for supposing that all of them were made at about the time of the translation of the body of St Thomas to its new shrine in 1220, the fiftieth anniversary of his martyrdom. In all four cases, and incidentally in examples of earlier date also, the outline of the ampulla is shaped like a flattened flask with a round or ovoid body narrowing to a short neck.

Though it narrows very slightly at the neck, the slenderer, pointed profile of the Wulfstan ampulla tends in this particular respect to resemble ampullae that were

Fig. 8. Ampulla found in London; back, depicting Thomas Becket's martyrdom and burial.



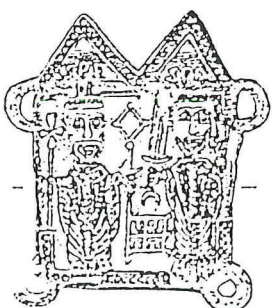
evidently being made at Canterbury at the time of the second jubilee in 1270. By that time the ampulla had lost all trace of a neck and its form had come to resemble that of a sword-chape. But by then, also, the surrounding border had taken on a different and much more ornamental form and the handles had been omitted. With its earlier sort of surrounds, the ampulla of St Wulfstan is therefore likely to have been based on one of the transitional Canterbury types that were probably being circulated during the second quarter of the thirteenth century.

A pilgrim's badge from Rome (Fig. 9)

Cast in a lead-tin alloy, this badge (E71:2888) was recovered during the excavations in High Street, Dublin (Ó Ríordáin 1971, pl. VIa; National Museum of Ireland 1973, pl. 16; Baart *et al.* 1977, pl. 20; Köster 1981, 456). There is reason to believe that it had been obtained at Rome not long after Pope Innocent's regulation of 1199 whereby the Basilica of St Peter secured a monopoly over the manufacture of badges of this sort and over their sale to pilgrims. Beneath a pair of gables and in a space measuring only 37mm high by 26mm wide the Dublin find delineates, as prescribed in the papal document, 'the images of the apostles Peter and Paul'. St Peter is shown wearing episcopal vestments, including a low, conical mitre, in accordance with the practice of reckoning Peter as the first bishop of Rome. In his right hand he holds a long cross, a symbol of the method of his martyrdom. With his left hand he grasps his traditional attribute, a key massive enough to do duty for the more usual pair of keys of the kingdom of heaven. Archaeologically speaking, the key has a lozenge-shaped bow with knobs at the angles and is a type that seems to have made its appearance in the twelfth century and become common in the thirteenth (London Museum 1940, 138-9).

St Paul is likewise shown wearing the chasuble and pallium over the tunic and dalmatic, a graphic if unconventional way of illustrating the ancient tradition that made Peter and Paul co-founders of the church of Rome. Gripped in his right hand is an upturned sword, the instrument and symbol of his martyrdom. The sword has a crescent-shaped pommel, a form that appeared in *c.* 1150 and remained in sporadic use for the rest of the Middle Ages (Seitz 1965, 144-5). With his left hand he holds up a book, here partly obscured by a blow-hole in the casting. This stands either for the book of the Law or more generally for St Paul's evangelical labours in Rome and elsewhere. He is depicted with a bald forehead,

Fig. 9. Pilgrim badge from High Street, Dublin.



wrinkled at the brow and with wisps of hair at the temples. Lest there should be any remaining doubt as to their identities, the figures are labelled above with the respective abbreviations S.PE and S.PA. Only one other badge of essentially the same two-gabled form is known and this (though its provenance is uncertain) is in the museum at Kassell, Hesse, West Germany. The badge is somewhat larger than the Dublin specimen and differs from it only in detail, having crosses above the gables and above the bow of the key, for instance (Köster 1981, 457, n. 5).

The configuration of the Dublin badge—a solid, rectangular plaque surmounted by a pair of gables—and the technique of the figure-drawing on the surface are analogous to some of the earliest known pilgrim signs, such as a group of badges, cast in silver as well as lead, that were connected with the cult of the Three Kings at Cologne. In these the gables, three in number, are supported on a Romanesque arcading which, with additional stylistic and iconographic evidence, has made it possible to assign them to the last two or three decades of the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup> Although in isolation features like the mitre, sword and key of the Peter and Paul badge can only be dated within fairly wide limits, together they combine to strengthen more general indications that the badge was made around 1200.

At Cologne the simple architectural form of the earliest badges was to be the prototype of larger, more varied and much more ornate compositions in openwork that were to exercise the mould-cutters' skills during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Elaborate architectural surrounds and superstructures were, in fact, to become a standard feature of the more sophisticated souvenir from major shrines in northern and central Europe.

By contrast, badges from Rome, like those from other important pilgrim centres in Italy, southern France and Spain, seem to have been largely unaffected by the growing pretentiousness of badges elsewhere. By c. 1220, if not before, badges of St Peter and St Paul had assumed a regular form that persisted into the early years of the fourteenth century. These were rectangular plaques, measuring c.30mm high by 35mm wide, with stitching-loops at the corners. On them are depicted half-length figures of the apostles, surrounded by a border which bears the words + SIGNA APOSTOLORVM PETRI ET PAVLI. In contrast to the arrangement of the Dublin badge, St Peter is placed on the right. In consequence, the long cross grasped by his right hand becomes the central feature of the badge, separating the two figures. The symmetry of the design is completed by dressing the apostles alike in simple, flowing robes and by causing St Paul to hold the sword at an angle across his right shoulder and St Peter to rest the key across his left. Their portraits, however, are carefully differentiated according to principles prescribed by ancient tradition. St Paul has a bald forehead (as on the Dublin badge) and a long, pointed beard, while St Peter has a square, bushy beard and a ring of curly hair surrounding a bald crown. Their faces are, in fact, miniature versions of those that from the end of the eleventh century recur with monotonous similarity on papal seals, 'those naked, dead bulls with their frigid images of Peter and Paul', that 'dead lead' which, John Wycliffe complained, was costing 'many thousand pounds by year to our poor land' and enticing all the nations of Christendom to run to Rome (Loserth 1895, 382; Matthew 1880, 66, 82).

Wycliffe wrote these words at a time when popes were exploiting indulgences as a form of revenue. Leaden badges of the type described above, however, were in circulation at least a century before Wycliffe's day. Several examples have recently been found in London,<sup>2</sup> including one which was excavated from an early thirteenth-century context at Billingsgate in 1982. Another was recovered from the bank of the river Mardyke at Stifford, Essex (Spencer 1980). Further

<sup>1</sup>They cannot be earlier than 1164 when the relics of the Three Kings were translated from Milan to Cologne; Edith Meyer-Wurmbach, 'Kölner "Zeichen" und "Pfennige" zu Ehren der Heiligen Drei Könige', in *Achthundert Jahre Verehrung der Heiligen Drei Könige in Köln* (Cologne, 1964), 205–10, 219, 261; Kurt Köster, 'Mittelalterliche Pilgerzeichen und Wallfahrtsdevotionalien', in *Rhein und Maas; Kunst und Kultur, 800–1400* (Cologne, 1972), 152–3; another badge of this type has been recovered from the site of the headquarters of the Hansa at Bergen (University of Bergen Historisk Museum, no. 50365).

<sup>2</sup>For example, Museum of London nos 79.402 and 84.127.

examples have been found in Bavaria, Austria, Poland (Köster 1981, 456, n.5) as well as in Rome itself.<sup>3</sup> Others have been discovered at Lyons (Tricou 1957, 49), at the Pont-au-Change, Paris<sup>4</sup> (Forgeais 1865, 136–7), at Bergen, in a deposit dating from the middle of the thirteenth century,<sup>5</sup> and at Hamburg (Schindler 1948, 25ff and pl. 1). Two more come from the site of St Jernløse Castle at the Danish seaboard town of Holbaek<sup>6</sup> and from Hälsingborg, the nearest point to it on the Swedish coast.<sup>7</sup>

The Swedish specimen is of particular interest for it belongs to an archaeologically related group of at least ten leaden souvenirs that were made in about 1300. All of them were collected by one pilgrim and provide us with a record of his pilgrimage to Rome and to various other famous shrines along his route. He set such store by his badges that he eventually took them, as a kind of passport to heaven, to his grave at the Blackfriars' Monastery in Hälsingborg.<sup>8</sup> The date of the badges suggests that his journey to Rome probably coincided with the first holy year of jubilee in 1300, when great additional remissions and indulgences granted to those visiting the basilicas of St Peter and St Paul gave such impetus to pilgrim traffic that the population of Rome is said to have been a steady 200,000 above normal.

It may be that this pilgrim also qualified for the indulgence of 12,000 years that was the reward of pilgrims from abroad whenever the *vera icon* or true image was exhibited at St Peter's (Furnivall 1867, 3). At any rate, he also procured in Rome a badge commemorating the holy Veronica, the kerchief of St Veronica with the countenance of Christ miraculously impressed upon it. This was the sort of souvenir that Englishmen were soon to be calling the vernicle or verony (Herrtage 1881, 400) and which, by 1400, was becoming familiar to pilgrims everywhere from a variety of circular badges mass-produced in lead and copper-alloys and from more realistic miniature replicas of the Veronica painted on little squares of white fabric, parchment, paper and tawed leather.<sup>9</sup>

The vernicle found at Hälsingborg, however, is a leaden, rectangular plaque, identical in size and form to the Peter and Paul badge found with it; the face of Christ and an appropriate inscription have simply been substituted for the figures and names of the apostles. The same can be said of badges depicting the first Christian martyr, St Stephen, and St Laurence, the most celebrated of the Roman

<sup>3</sup>For an example in the Vatican Museum of Medals see G.B. Parks, *The English traveler to Italy* (Rome, 1954), pl. 14; also Antonio de Waal, *Roma Sacra* (Munich, 1905), 257.

<sup>4</sup>Musée de Cluny, no. 8880; Forgeais 1865, 136–7.

<sup>5</sup>Historisk Museum, no. 50366; information from Mrs Kirsten Tveite.

<sup>6</sup>Information from Mr Rikke Behrend, National Museum, Copenhagen.

<sup>7</sup>Monica Rydbeck, 'Grav 301 vid Dominikanerklostret i Hälsingborg', *Kring Kärnan* 6 (1955), 84–6. Another badge of uncertain provenance is in the British Museum (no. 1924, 10–14, 1).

<sup>8</sup>For other examples of this practice see Spencer 1968, 144; B. Rosen, 'Pilgerabzeichen in einem Grabfund von Helgonabacken in Lund', *Meddelanden från Lunds Univ. Hist. Mus.* 1953, 156 ff.

<sup>9</sup>Leaden vernicles were carried to every corner of Christendom; two of the three found at King's Lynn, for example, can be closely paralleled by specimens in the Vatican Museum of Medals. Vernicles of cloth are often depicted on the hats of fifteenth-century pilgrims, e.g. the miniature of the Pardoner in Ellesmere MS (c. 1400) of Chaucer's *Canterbury tales* and the figure of St Sebald on an altar-piece dated 1487 in Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg (*Neusser Jahrbuch* (Clemens Sels Museum, 1962), 41). Many parchment vernicles have survived. A collection stitched into a Book of Hours made for Philip the Bold was probably begun by Margaret of Bavaria and subsequently added to by other members of the House of Burgundy; C. Gaspar and F. Lyna, *Les Principaux manuscrits et peintures de Bibliothèque Royal de Belgique* (Paris, 1937), I, 421. Vernicles of leather are interpolated in Brussels Bibl. Royal MS 11060–61, p. 8, and MS 5163–64, f. 8v. William Wey appears to have obtained a paper 'vernakyl' at Rome on his way to the Holy Land in 1498 (Williams 1857, xxix).

martyrs (Forgeais 1865, 168–70).<sup>10</sup> Their bodies shared the same tomb in St Laurence-without-the-Walls, a church that was placed immediately after the basilicas of St Peter and St Paul in a short-list of seven recommended by Adam of Usk to those who wanted the benefit of full indulgence without exhausting themselves on the entire circuit of Rome's relics and pardons (Thompson 1904, 207).

The remarkable uniformity of these badges may indicate that for at least a century after securing their monopoly from Innocent III the authorities at St Peter's retained strict control over the manufacture and sale of pilgrim souvenirs. By the early fourteenth century, certainly, the approaches to St Peter's had become the established market in which were concentrated requisites and knick-knacks for pilgrims. The forecourt, steps, portico and cloisters were given over to licensed merchants, shopkeepers, money-changers and specialist craftsmen like paternosterers, who between them handled a busy if fluctuating trade that ranged from foodstuffs to the souvenirs required by the 'roamer', the vernicle and the sign of Peter and Paul.<sup>11</sup>

Whether St Peter's managed to keep a hold on the souvenir trade during the fourteenth century is put into doubt by another group of badges, examples of which have turned up as far apart as Rome and Meols, on the coast of Cheshire.<sup>12</sup> Others have been found at various sites in France and Belgium, while in 1984 one example was recovered from a dump of fourteenth-century spoil from the site of Billingsgate lorry park, Lower Thames Street, London.<sup>13</sup> These are a degenerate form of the class of badges already described. Like them, they are rectangular plaques (c. 30mm high by 25mm wide) with stitching-loops. Separated by a long cross, the demi-figures of the apostles are identified, as in the badge from Dublin, by the abbreviation SPE + SPA, though in every case the inscription is partly or entirely reversed. All known examples come from different moulds, yet they are alike in the extremely perfunctory nature of the figure-drawing. Only one badge gives the apostles bearded and distinguishable portraits<sup>14</sup> (Forgeais 1865, 138–9). All of them make do with mere loaf-shaped outlines for bodies. Each apostle has but a single arm, to which is connected a key placed vertically in front of the body and with the bit facing inwards. Like popular ephemera generally, pilgrim badges rarely reach the highest levels of art and craftsmanship. But these badges of Peter and Paul are arguably the most banal pilgrim souvenirs ever made and it is tempting to link them with the half-century of anarchy, social disintegration and poverty that descended on Rome after the migration of Pope Clement V (1305–14) to Avignon. That so many examples have survived may even suggest that they belong to the period of the second jubilee in 1350, when, in spite of Rome's sorry condition, immense numbers of pilgrims again flocked there from every corner of Christendom (Romani 1948).

<sup>10</sup>*Bulletin Monumental* 19 (1853), 525–6; C. Roach Smith, *Collectanea Antiqua*, IV (1857), pl. xxxiv, fig. 5. It should, however, be noted that the souvenirs of some of Rome's lesser sanctuaries were entirely distinctive. Recent finds from London include two late thirteenth-century lead badges from Rome, one of dome-topped form celebrating the image of S. Maria Rotunda in the Pantheon (Museum of London no. 82.8/11), the other a lozenge-shaped sign commemorating the chapel of St John the Baptist in the Lateran basilica (collection of Mr J. Gilbert, London).

<sup>11</sup>Cambridge, Corpus Christi Coll. MS 370 (itinerary of an English pilgrim, 1344), transl. in Parks, *op. cit.* in n. 3, 576; Antonio de Waal, *La Schola Francorum . . . et l'Ospizio Teutonico de Campo Santo* (Rome, 1897), 56. A marble mould for casting both badges of the apostles and vernicles is in de Waal, *loc. cit.* in n. 3. Among the paternosterers (makers of paternoster beads) were many Englishmen and it was from one of them, John Shepherd, that the Society of Englishmen bought a house in 1362 to provide a hospice for English pilgrims in Rome; Anon., 'The English hospice in Rome', *The Venerabile* xxi (1962), 25–42.

<sup>12</sup>Parks, *loc. cit.* in n. 3; Rev. A. Hume, *Ancient Meols . . .* (1863), pl. xxvii, no. 5; Köster 1981, 457; two unprovenanced specimens (nos 94, 5–18, 28 and 1921, 2–16, 69) and a mould for casting badges of this sort are in the British Museum.

<sup>13</sup>Collection of Mr I. Smith, London.

<sup>14</sup>From the Petit-Pont, Paris; Musée de Cluny no. 8879.



The oddest feature of these badges is the way in which both apostles are given one of the keys of St Peter. Eventually, however, the keys of St Peter, on their own or combined with a papal tiara, were to become the standard pilgrim sign from Rome, perhaps reflecting a rise in popular devotion to St Peter and a growing tendency to regard him more exclusively as the founder of the church. The badge of the crossed keys of St Peter, cast in openwork, seems to have made its appearance in the second half of the fourteenth century and, with the vernicle, to have ousted the badges that had been traditional since Dublin's pilgrim visited Rome nearly two centuries before. The vernicle itself rose sharply into prominence after the Black Death swept through Europe and became endemic; in an age of acute anxiety its reputation soared as a protector against sudden mortality. It was natural, therefore, that in the description of a pilgrim written by William Langland in *c.* 1370 he should single out the vernicle and the 'keyes of Rome' from the jumble of pilgrim signs that festooned his hat and clothing and betokened a life-long career of holy travel (Skeat 1869, II 524–32). From then until 1559, when Pieter Breugel painted the beggar-woman pilgrim in *The fight between Carnival and Lent*, pilgrims from Rome were represented with a badge of the crossed keys<sup>15</sup> or, more often, with a vernicle. By 1500, when illuminators of Flemish Books of Hours had taken to painting badges as a form of border decoration, it would appear from their preferences that vernicles of lead and of fabric had become supreme not only at Rome but among pilgrim souvenirs everywhere.<sup>16</sup>

Nine centuries earlier Gozbert, in his life of St Gall, observed with a flash of prophetic insight that so many Irish were pilgrims 'that it would appear that the habit of travelling is part of their nature'. Yet Irish pilgrims were not given to recording their exploits. Of the 570 surviving narratives of pilgrimages to the Holy Land performed before 1500, only one, the itinerary (*c.* 1335–52) of Symon Semeonis, is of Irish origin and even this omits that part of the journey that took Symon to Rome (Esposito 1960). Many, it is true, quite inadvertently left traces of themselves. Such a man was Nicholas Hagonona, a chaplain, whose pilgrimage to Rome was cut short at London in 1401. An Austin friar who had travelled with him from Oxford, not content with stealing his possessions, caused Nicholas to be put in gaol by concocting a story 'qil feusse un wilde Irissman et ennemy a nostre seignour le Roy' (Leadam and Baldwin 1918, 85–6). Another was the pilgrim, presumably a Dubliner and possibly a layman, who left behind what seems likely to be the earliest remaining pilgrim badge from Rome and one of the earliest of all medieval souvenirs of pilgrimage. Under the impact of the Crusades, devotion to Rome had diminished to the extent that many pilgrims had been diverted to the Holy Land. It is perhaps significant that the Dubliner's journey came after the capture of Jerusalem and the Holy Places by Saladin in 1187 and that it marked the revival of Rome as the principal attraction to pilgrims.

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<sup>15</sup>A good example of the badge comes from Pont Notre-Dame, Paris; Forgeais 1865, 140–1.

<sup>16</sup>The MSS are dated 1483–1530; the badges next most frequently represented are of Our Lady of Walsingham and Our Lady of Hal; Kurt Köster, 'Religiöse Medaillen und Wallfahrts-Devotionalien in der Flämischen Buchmalerei des 15. und Frühen 16. Jahrhunderts', in *Buch und Welt: Festschrift für Gustav Hofmann* (Wiesbaden, 1965), 459–504.

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