281 Money (*Pecunia*)

According to Isidore,[[1]](#endnote-1) money (*pecunia*) is said as if a herd (*pecudia*) from cattle (*pecore*) or from one of a herd (*pecude*), because in antiquity money was accustomed to being made from the hide of cattle, or because the possession of a man consisted especially in cattle. Wherefore Augustine says, book 11, *Super genesi*, c. 21,[[2]](#endnote-2) nor should men be lovers of money, unless they think they would be more excellent for it.

¶ But because Christ, “A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven,” Matt. 19[:23]. It is to be known that money is weighty, dangerous, and contagious.

Because of the first, Christ wishing his disciples to be disengaged, it is said in Luke 9[:3]: “Take nothing for your journey; neither staff, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money.”

Because of the second, the wife of the elder Tobias said to Tobias 5[:24]: “I wish the money for which you have sent him, had never been.”

¶ Literally, those carrying money through the fatherland are in danger. Wherefore Seneca in the book, *De fortuitorum casis*,[[3]](#endnote-3) I have lost my money. Perhaps you have lost yours.

¶ Again, I have lost my money. O happy you, if with it you have lost your avarice.

Again, I have lost my money. And that which he lost many lost, you will be freer from this. It ornamented you. You think fortune is damnable because it is a remedy. Blessed Peter seeing the danger of money, Acts 8[:20]: “Keep your money to yourself, to perish with you.”

Again, the same [Acts] c. 5[:5], Ananias and Saphira were damned by their money.

¶ Because of the third, it is agreed that money is much handled, it contaminates them by their fingers, so money treated by love infects the mind, Eccli. 10[:10]: “There is not a more wicked thing than to love money.” The reason of this can be had by the Philosopher, first book of the *Politicarum*,[[4]](#endnote-4) because the supply of money grows lavishly. Wherefore the poet,[[5]](#endnote-5) your love of cash grows as much as the money itself has grown. Because of these things the holy man Francis[[6]](#endnote-6) prohibited his brothers that they should not receive money through themselves nor by any intermediate person.

¶ However it is to be known according to the same Philosopher,[[7]](#endnote-7) that the use of money is double. One for its proper use, as buying and selling. Another for the community which is through exchange.

In the first use as commonly, it is sin about which Eccle. 5[:9]: “A covetous man shall not be satisfied with money.”

In the second it can be meritorious if shared well in common according to the saying, Prov. 8[:10]: “Receive my instruction,” that is, wisdom, “and not money.” This is if a man having money commits it for wisdom, for the defect of which he is reprehended. That one who buried the money of his lord in the earth, which the lord wanted that he trades it with the money lenders to the multitude, Matt. 25[:27]. Wherefore Augustine, *De verbis Domini*, sermon 5,[[8]](#endnote-8) if you have money, bestow it. For by bestowing money, you increase justice, Psal. [111:9]: “He has distributed, he has given to the poor; his justice (remains).” Wherefore also king Josiah distributed money long collected into the uses of the temple, 4 Kings 22[:4]. Wherefore he also merited to be rewarded through a found book concerning the evils to come. Wherefore in this figure he received.

¶ Joseph as a dispenser placed money in the top of the sacks of some of his brothers, Gen. 44[:8] because he wanted that things be prepared for the pouring out rather than for detention.

1. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 16.18.4 (PL 82:584): Pecunia prius de pecudibus et proprietatem habebat et nomen. De corio enim pecudum nummi incidebantur et signabantur. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 11.15 (PL 34:437): Neque enim essent etiam homines amatores pecuniae, nisi eo se putarent excellentiores, quo ditiores. Cui morbo contraria charitas non quaerit quae sua sunt, id est non privata excellentia laetatur: merito ergo et non inflatur (I Cor. XIII, 5, 4). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Seneca, *De remediis fortuitorum* ed, Ralph Graham Palmer (Chicago, Institute of Elizabethan Studies 1953, p. 50): Sensus. Pecuniam perdidi. Ratio. fotassis te illa perdidisset. Sensus. Peconium perdidi. Ratio. Habebi vnum periculum minus. Sensus. Pecuniam perdid. Ratio. O te foelicem, si cum illa auaritiam perdidisti: sed si manet illa apud te es tamen vtcunque felicior: quoniam tanto malo materia subducta est. Sensus. Pecuniam perdidi. Ratio. Et illa quidem per quam multos: eris in via expeditor, domi tutior. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Aristotle, *Politics* 1.10 1258b4-7 (Barnes 2:1997): For money was intended to be used in exchange, but not to increase at interest. And this term interest, which means the birth of money from money, is applied to the breeding of money because the offspring resembles the parent. Wherefore of all modes of getting wealth this is the most unnatural. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. Juvenal, *Satires* 14.139 (LCL 91:468-469): crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crevit,

your love of cash grows as much as the money itself has grown. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Francis of Assisi, *Regula non bullata* 8: Unde nullus fratrum, ubicumque sit et quocumque vadit, aliquo modo tollat nec recipiat nec recipi faciat pecuniam aut denarios neque occasione vestimentorum nec librorum nec pro pretio alicuius laboris, immo nulla occasione, nisi propter manifestam necessitatem infirmorum fratrum; quia non debemus maiorem utilitatem habere et reputare in pecunia et denariis quam in lapidibus.

<http://www.franciscanos.org/esfa/regnb-b.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Aristotle, *Politics* 1.9 1257a7-19 (Barnes 2:1994): Of everything which we possess there are two uses: both belong to the thing as such, but not in the same manner, for one is the proper, and the other the improper or secondary use of it. For example, a shoe is used for wear, and is used for exchange; both are uses of the shoe. He who gives a shoe in exchange for money or food to him who wants one, does indeed use the shoe as a shoe, but this is not its proper or primary purpose, for a shoe is not made to be an object of barter. The same may be said of all possessions, for the art of exchange extends to all of them, and it arises at first from what is natural, from the circumstance that some have too little, others too much. Hence we may infer that retail trade is not a natural part of the art of getting wealth; had it been so, men would have ceased to exchange when they had enough. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Augustine, *Sermo De scripturis* 61.3 (PL 38:410): Habes pecuniam, eroga. Erogando pecuniam, auges justitiam. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)