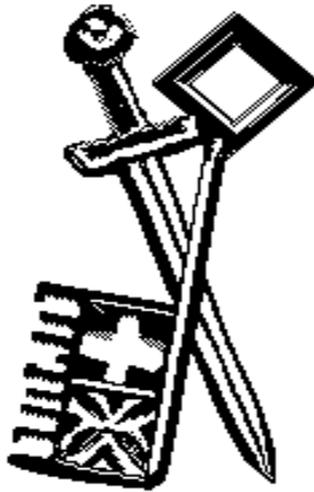


**CONFRATERNITY  
OF  
PILGRIMS TO ROME**



**NEWSLETTER**

**December 2010 No. 11**

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## Editorial

This is the eleventh issue of the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome's *Newsletter*.

There are four articles, three book reviews, a list of additions to the CPR library and the section entitled "Secretary's Notebook," containing short items of information likely to be of interest to our members, after which there is an index of all the articles and reviews published in the first ten issues of our *Newsletter*..

Giovanni Caselli, who pioneered research into the history and origins of the *Via Francigena* in the early 1980s and who was responsible for its first mapping, presents an article based on the introduction to his first book, Babette Gallard and Paul Chinn describe the work they have been doing to investigate links between the *Camino de Santiago* and the *Via Francigena*, from Arles to Vercelli, preparing a guidebook to make the journey from Santiago to Rome (or vice versa) a feasible proposition. Two pilgrims who completed the journey from Canterbury to Rome in one go in 2010, Garry Ridgeway and Frank Burns, one on foot, the other by bicycle, write of their experiences and reflections, both of them undertaking their pilgrimages as sponsored ventures.

As always, articles on all aspects of the pilgrimage to Rome are invited for subsequent issues. As a rough guide they should be somewhere between 1000 and 1500 words, according to the subject matter. Book reviews (300-500 words maximum) are also invited, as is also information suitable for inclusion in the "Secretary's Notebook" section. In the interests of variety the editors have decided to limit accounts of pilgrim journeys to one per issue.

Short items can be sent in an email but longer articles should be included as attachments and most WORD and RTF documents are acceptable. If you send pictures, though, please do not integrate them in the text but send them as separate files.

We would like to thank Ann Milner once again for providing a PDF file for the electronic version of this issue.

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## The Oldest Road: Mapping Sigeric's route, the *Via Romea-Francigena*

Giovanni Caselli

In July 1985 this writer decided to investigate and map out the land route taken by Sigeric, Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury, on his return from Rome in the year of grace 990. Until then many people had talked and written about this journey and this route, known as the *Via Francigena* in central Tuscany, but no historian or archaeologist had ever surveyed it on the ground. A series of studies and reflections that greatly increased my knowledge of the Middle Ages grew out of this experience.

### ***Via Romea-Francigena*: the first European road**

*"Chiamansi romei in quanto vanno a Roma" (Those who travel to Rome are called Romeans)*

Dante, *Vita Nova*

In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, an extensive collection of records covering the history of that people from 445 to 1150, we find the following mention: "In 990 Sigeric was consecrated Archbishop [of Canterbury] and, in the same year, he went to Rome for the *pallium*."

The voyage of the Saxon prelate would simply have been listed among the many that saw medieval kings, archbishops, monks and pilgrims going back and forth between Rome and the British Isles, had he not kept a precise written record of his journey. This invaluable guide, written for Sigeric by one of the members of his retinue (though unfortunately not in much detail), presents a typical "romeaggio", i.e. one of the many pilgrimages that took place between the British Isles and the city of St. Peter's between the fourth and the fourteenth centuries. This is a document of extraordinary interest, since it is the only full description of the complete itinerary of a pilgrim to Rome in Anglo-Saxon times.

Rome is on the way to Jerusalem and from the fourth century onwards many pilgrims walked the *Via Romea*, making the long and arduous journey which, through Rome and along the ancient *Via Appia Traiana Nova*, reached Brindisi, the gateway to the Levant.

### **Canterbury**

In 640, when Jerusalem fell under Islam, the flow of devotees to the Holy Land ground to a halt, only to be resumed, at intervals, during the Crusades and, as a continuous flow, only in the High Middle Ages. Thus Rome and Compostela remained for many centuries the only *foci* of extensive pilgrimages.

Equipped with gourd and stick, the more tenacious and resourceful travellers navigated medieval Europe, driven by religious fervour and perhaps a sense of freedom. The pilgrimage thus became not only the realization of a personal need, and a metaphor for life itself, but also a practical and visible way of spreading the Christian spirit and religious culture. Among the multitudes who came to Rome from the fifth-sixth centuries were important clergy who came to pay homage to the Pope and to receive Investiture blessings from his hands. There were preachers and evangelists who sought to spread the Catholic faith in the many areas in barbarian Europe that were still pagan or heretical.

The earliest pilgrims were Scots (*Scoti*), the name of the original inhabitants of Hibernia (today's Ireland), which later conquered the north of Britain, exterminating the Picts and calling that land Scotland. (The Scots who remained in Hibernia gradually became known as Irish.)

The Scots who had been evangelized in Hibernia in Roman times and who, before the Viking and Norman invasions, had not suffered invasions by pagans or Arians, had kept the orthodoxy of the Church of Rome intact. However, the Celtic inhabitants of Hibernia were to be completely destroyed by Vikings, Saxons and Normans from the tenth century onwards.

In Britain, after the evangelization of St. Augustine in the late sixth century, Saxon kings, bishops, abbots and archbishops began to go to Rome regularly, establishing a kind of umbilical cord with the Vatican where they created an enclave with their own churches, hostels and a library, and provided guards for the Pope himself. This road network would, in time, become known successively as the *Via Romea*, *Voie des Anglais*, *French Road* and *Via Francigena*.

It is in this context that the journey to Rome by Sigeric Archbishop of Canterbury took place. What makes it particularly important is that it was recorded and that, quite by chance, this record survived. Such a trip to Rome was obligatory for an archbishop since each new one was required by law to receive his *pallium* of investiture from the hands of the Pontiff, a fine embroidered woollen cloak worn by prelates.

Nearly ten centuries later, in the summer of 1985, I reconstructed in detail, and for the first time, the exact route that Sigeric took and traced, one stage after another, all its thousand miles from Canterbury to Rome. The complete mapping of Sigeric's route was carried out by technicians from the Italian Military Geographical Institute based on my drafts and was published in 1990, the 1000th anniversary of the voyage, by a publisher in Florence (*Via Romea, Cammino di Dio*, Giunti Publishing Group, Florence 1990).

Finally, it should be noted that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is also a historical document of inestimable value for the history of the years between 445 and 1150. There are important references not only to Sigeric's journey, but evidence, too, of the many trips of Anglo-Saxon kings, knights and religious dignitaries

### **The *Via Romea/Francigena*: a great natural route**

It seems that, since time immemorial, contacts between the Mediterranean and the North Sea have taken place along the great waterways of the rivers Rhône,

Loire and Rhine. Of these the Rhône is the only river that empties the waters of the misty north into the Mediterranean. In central Europe the courses of these rivers are so close together that only a short overland trip is needed to transfer passengers and goods from the boats of one river to those of the next.

However, it is not inconceivable that the valleys of both the Dora Baltea and the Dora Riparia [rivers in northern Italy] have constituted two access routes to the easy mountain passes of the Mont Cenis and the Great and Little Saint Bernard, after which a journey could then continue northwards. The first along the waterway Rhone-Saone or Loire rivers, the latter by land along the watershed between the Rhine-Meuse and Loire-Seine.

These passes were already known in proto-historic times. The Great Saint Bernard in particular offered an opportunity to connect with the British Isles, through the natural watershed Besançon-Langres-Châlons-en-Champagne, Laon-Reims-Arras-Wissant, the oldest route in Western Europe. The earliest routes are the ones that follow the ridges while those that follow river valleys are definitely more recent since, contrary to what many authors assume, river valleys are impassable without boats, roads or bridges. (Scholars who don't walk won't understand this simple fact!)

This route is strewn, among other things, with a large number of Celtic hill-forts, all of them tribal capitals which developed into Gallo-Roman and, eventually, the modern French cities mentioned above. The road we know runs close to a natural route based on a watershed which is, for the most part, an alignment of low hills and mountain ranges, all ridge paths forming a highly effective road system and constituting the shortest route connecting the Alps with the English Channel. It was thanks to an already highly-developed road network that Caesar could move easily through Gaul with his army. Agrippa used this infrastructure when he set out to connect Milan with Reims and Amiens.

## **Sigeric's secondary role on the medieval stage**

The Anglo-Saxon Sigeric was invested as Archbishop of Canterbury in 990. He was educated in the ancient abbey of Glastonbury under the guidance of Dunstan (later Saint Dunstan), at the time of a major cultural revival in England. Around 970, Dunstan, along with Oswald and Ethelbald, promoted, from Winchester, the "regularis concordia", the monastic rule for religious of both sexes, which resulted in an Anglo-Saxon religious awakening. Dunstan exercised all his influence to ensure that in 985 Sigeric would become bishop of Wiltshire. Four years later, following the untimely death of Archbishop Ethelgar, Sigeric was summoned to succeed him at Canterbury.

According to William T. Stubbs, a nineteenth-century English historian whose studies, published in 1874, have enabled the reconstruction of the exact route of the *Via Romea Francigena*, Sigeric arrived in Rome in July 990 and visited some 23 Roman churches in just two days. After being received by Pope John XV (989-996), Sigeric returned immediately to England following the route described in the document transcribed by Stubbs and which I have used. (Given the poor reputation of the papacy during those years, however, we should not be surprised that Sigeric did not remain any longer in Rome!)

It is by sheer chance that we have detailed knowledge of the Archbishop's Roman itinerary and we have the names of 79 of the 80 *submansiones*, the overnight stops, in all likelihood, on his journey back to Canterbury. The route was transcribed by an unknown hand in the appendix of a list of tenth-century Popes preserved in the British Library. Sigeric is not a prominent historical figure and his signature appears on only a few minor documents yet in his time he enjoyed some reputation as an intellectual.

Cultured, a lover and patron of letters, Sigeric collected a substantial library which he left in his will to Canterbury cathedral. He died on October 28th 995, when the *Chronicle* records that "in 995 the star referred to as 'comet' appeared and Archbishop Sigeric passed away; Aelfric, bishop of Wiltshire was chosen to succeed him. "

### **The Romean roads**

The itinerary described by Sigeric is the most direct - and was therefore probably the most popular - between England and Rome. It was not, however, the only road existing in the tenth century to link the Channel coast to Italy, neither is it the only one to be called *Via Romea*, *Via Francesca* or *Via Francigena*. It is, in fact, symptomatic that one of the most important modern Italian medieval scholars - Giuseppe Sergi - ignores it in his important work on the ancient routes connecting Piedmont with France.

In the Middle Ages there were three main *Via Romea*: the ones via the Little and Great Saint Bernard passes and that, of lesser importance, perhaps, via the Mont Cenis. After crossing these three main Alpine passes the three routes fanned out in several directions: the one over the Mont Cenis led through Chambéry and Lyon and on towards Paris or Reims; the one over the Little Saint Bernard descended down to the Val d'Isère, while that over the Great Saint Bernard went either to Lausanne, Besançon and then Reims, or via Neuchâtel, Basel, Strasbourg, Speyer, Worms, etc. The latter was the one most frequented by the Carolingians and the German emperors. Later, in the thirteenth century, the Alpine passes multiplied and by then there were the Simplon, the Sankt Gotthard, the Brenner and several others in between.

### **The crossing of the Channel**

The French section of the *Via Romea*, north of Besançon, was essentially the route taken by the Scottish and Saxon evangelists and founders of monastic communities, the "Chemin des Anglais", as I heard it called in 1985 in Laon.

Before the tenth century the customary landing point on the French coast was Quentovic, near modern Etaples at the mouth of the river Canche, south of Boulogne. There are also historical sites which speak of landings in Brittany, a region settled by Britons fleeing the Saxon invasion, but those heading for Rome undoubtedly landed at Quentovic. Many Roman cities, including Boulogne and its port, had fallen into ruins during the fifth century, and under the Saxons first and the Vikings later, harbours and docks were almost invariably situated within river estuaries.

From Dover (Dubris) from Lympne (Lemanis), or from Hastings and Pevensey, the traveller made a crossing 30, 40 and even 50 km long, on narrow boats with a square sail, to reach the port of Saxon Quentovic, from where they reached Amiens, Soissons, Paris, or otherwise the great city of Reims.

In the tenth century, the Vikings destroyed Quentovic in a period of inland raids perpetrated by sailing up the rivers. With their slender boats the Vikings reached as far as Orleans and Reims.

With Quentovic destroyed, the crossing of the Channel took place, as in prehistoric times, at its narrowest point. It is not by chance that in 990 we see Sigeric crossing the Channel from Strouanne (Sombre), near Wissant, coming north along the Roman road through Arras and Therouanne. From the tenth century onwards however, restoration works took place on road networks, beginning with the rehabilitation of Roman roads, ancient Gallic trails, bridges, stations, hostels, churches, monasteries, etc.

## **In the Holy City**

Since the eighth century there already existed in Rome, in the Vatican enclave called Borgo Leonino, the Schola Saxonum, "... military corps," writes historian Joshua Musca, "formed by the Anglo-Saxons living in the city [...]. This armed body cooperated in defence of the city and was not unique, but the Anglo-Saxons were the first of the northern barbarians to offer their swords to the Popes, grateful for its care in saving their souls."

The Schola Saxonum, located on the site of Santo Spirito Hospital, between the Vatican and the Tiber, had two churches, St. Mary and St. Michael (still called "in Sassia"), and was a centre for housing English pilgrims, that is, those kings, merchants, knights, repentant bishops and abbots who went to Rome to collect relics and books, to visit sacred places, or even to end their days.

At the end of the seventh century Benedict Biscop, abbot of Jarrow, made several trips to Rome, always returning home with mules laden with elegantly bound rare manuscripts. This Anglo-Saxon abbot followed in the footsteps of Irish Fathers (the Scots) who, already for centuries, had gone along the "Flanders Way," heading for Fulda, Sankt Gallen, Bobbio, Lucca, Fiesole or Taranto (as was the case of San Cataldo).

## **Sigeric and the Pope**

But back to Sigeric. The Saxon prelate arrived in July, after maybe two months of travel and after a journey of about a thousand miles (1,600 km), in a swelteringly hot Rome, deserted and riddled with malaria, where he stayed for three days as a guest of the Schola Saxonum. Sigeric remained in Rome just enough time to have lunch with the Pope and, rather hastily, visit twenty-three churches, including the main churches and places of martyrdom of the Apostles along the consular roads.

The Rome Sigeric saw, as he reached the top of Mons Gaudi (Monte Mario), is described by the anonymous author of the *Mirabilia*, the archaeological guide to the City in the year 1000. At that the city and the papacy were in an uproar, the patrician families were vying for power and each nominated its own Pope who, in most cases, was almost immediately assassinated by a rival faction. Silvio Solero writes that John XV was Pope from August 985 to March 996. The son of a priest, he succeeded John XIV, who had been assassinated, in less than clear circumstances, by anti-Pope Benedict VII.

John XV was not a Pope loved by the Romans, who were then dominated by the noble Crescenzio. During the ten years of his pontificate – a long one, for the times – he received Theophany, Empress of the Franks in Rome, who was well received by the people. France then intervened to prevent the deposition of Arnulf, Archbishop of Reims. It intervened again in England to reconcile King Ethelbert with Richard, Duke of Normandy, by imposing the "Truce of God", as it was then called, the peace imposed by the Pope.

### **The *pallium***

The *pallium* was a simple woollen cloak, decorated with the sign of the cross, and symbol of an archbishop's investiture. "In the eighth century," writes Joshua Musca, "popes changed the custom of giving the *pallium* to archbishops: from a symbol of their authority and obligatory for metropolitans to receive such a gift in Rome, in the ninth century the consignment of the *pallium* became the *sine qua non* to consecrate, a novelty which was to cause some resentment amongst the English clergy in particular. "

### **The Venerable Bede, the abbeys of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow and the mystery of the *Codex Amiatinus***

In Alcuin's Northumbria, and especially in the abbeys of Jarrow and Wearmouth, was one of the most important cultural centres of the High Middle Ages. While pagan and Aryan hordes roamed the continent, Catholic Christianity, with the help of the Augustinians (who arrived from Canterbury) and the Scots or Irish monks (coming from Bangor and Iona) created one of the main ecclesiastical schools of Roman Christianity in these towns. Jarrow was the home of the great Anglo-Saxon historian Bede (673-735), the author, among other things, of the biographies of the abbots of the two founding monasteries: Benedict Biscop, Ceolfridus, Eosterwine and Sigfrid. The first three of these were brothers of noble birth and the beginning of the eighth century repeatedly between the late seventh

### **Ceolfrudus anglicorum**

"In 595," as we read in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, "Pope Gregory sent Augustine to Britain with many monks to preach the Gospel."

Together with St. Augustine and his companions, as the Venerable Bede writes in his *Chronicle*, "all those things that were necessary for prayer and for the Office of the rites of the Church" came to Canterbury: "sacred vessels, vestments for the altar and for the church, vestments for priests and clergy, relics of the holy apostles and martyrs, and many books." In the same years in which Augustine arrived in England, the production of copies of Bibles and Gospels began in the islands' abbeys. A few years later, masterpieces of Celtic or Celtic-Byzantine art begun to arrive on the continent, along with their authors.

These were valuable tools for the evangelists who, between the fifth and the ninth centuries, left the British Isles in large numbers to found monasteries in every corner of Europe. In Bede's biography of Ceolfrith (642-716), founder of Wearmouth (or Monkwearmouth) and Jarrow (Northumbria), it is stated that this abbot commissioned three large Bibles, "tres pandectes novae translationes," two of them for the abbeys of Wearmouth and Jarrow, and one for Pope Gregory II.

The *Chronicles* speak of a dedicatory inscription, in the preface of the Bible destined for the Pope, which refers to the abbot Ceolfrith as the donor of the gift as a sign of faith, from one of the most extreme and remote parts of the world, as England was then regarded: "extremis de finibus". Ceolfrid, who knew the road to Rome, having travelled there many times, personally accompanied the party in charge of the dispatch of the great book destined for Pope Gregory II.

Around eighty monks from Wearmouth and Jarrow set off on June the 4th, 716. This is the earliest date known to us for the export of a book from England. Ceolfrid, now seventy, fell sick during the journey and on the 25th of September of that year, after a long illness, died at Langres on the *Via Romea*. Notwithstanding this fatal event, the book, a witness of his religious fervour and pride as an abbot agent, continued its journey to Rome where, however, it never arrived. Why did Ceolfrid's gift never reach its destination?. Why could it not have found its way, somehow, but let us remain in the hands of the Pope? The question

### **The Book vanishes - the Book reappears**

In 744, under the Lombard King Rachis, Erfo erected the abbey of San Salvatore on the eastern slopes of Mount Amiata. In the eighteenth century, upon the suppression of the monastery by order of the Grand Duke Peter Leopold of Hapsburg Lorraine, a great ancient Bible went from the Abbey's library to the Medici library in Florence (Biblioteca Laurenziana), where it still is today. This great Bible is known as *Codex Amiatinus*, from its place of provenance, the Abbey of Monte Amiata.

The introductory page of this mammoth volume carries an inscription (or premise) by a certain "Petrus Langobardorum", and for this reason the book was always regarded as the work of an Italian. And this remained so until the end of the last century when a bibliophile, G. B. de Rossi, noted that some of the names in the entry inscription of the book had been erased and rewritten. Upon a thorough examination, one of the names thus erased turned out to read "Ceolfridus Anglicorum." Later, another bibliophile, G. A. Hort, noted that the dedication coincided with the one quoted in Bede's biography of Ceolfrid.

The story had come full circle: The *Codex Amiatinus* was, without doubt, the volume created by the monks of Jarrow and Monkwearmouth on behalf of Ceolfrid. However, another enigma remains: when Ceolfrid's brothers arrived at the foot of Monte Amiata - if indeed they ever got that far - the famous Benedictine monastery did not yet exist. There was instead an infamous inn called "Mala Mulier" (The Bad Wife). That the book was eventually found on the road to Rome, very near the infamous inn, is an unquestionable fact. But could it be that Ceolfrid's brothers had taken the book to the inn for their life or work, and Ceolfrid's intention to return the book to the monastery?

### **The infamous inn**

In his invaluable *Dictionary* (Geographical, physical, historical dictionary of Tuscany, Florence, 1833) the historian Emanuele Repetti describes a location known as "Callemala," in the area opposite the Abbey of San Salvatore on the *Via Romea*: "Callemala, Callimala (Callis mala = Bad Road) in Val di Paglia. A vanished hamlet, sited on the southern slope of the mountain of Radicofani, on the ancient Roman road, where up to the tenth century there was a church under the title of S. Cristina, patronage of the Abbey the S. Salvatore Mont'Amiata [...] In 1072 (December 23rd ) Count Ugo Ranieri, and Count Ildebrando of the clique of associates of the Visconti of Campiglia di Val d'Orcia, donated a manor with land in the hamlet of Collimala to the Amiantine Abbey.

Perhaps the same manor was located at Mala Mulier, where he owned property as it appears in two documents of the same Abbey [...], the last of which [of 1107] refers to a hospital located at Mala Mulier on the *Via Francesca*. The same must refer to the hamlet of Mala Mulier, thus named in Irish itineraries to Rome, where is stated that on the mountain called Clemunt (Radicofani) is the castle Mulier Mala inhabited by very bad people. The itinerary mentioned refers, in fact, to that of the Icelandic Viking Abbot Nikulas de Munkthvera, of which I shall write later.

### **A Bible Made in England**

After the identification of the *Codex Amiatinus* it was noted that the volume was an imitation of the *Codex Grandior* by Cassiodorus, a large Bible in nine volumes brought to England from Rome in earlier years, most likely by the same Ceolfrid. The late nineteenth-century identification of the *Codex Amiatinus* as the sixth-century copy of the original Italian aroused the enthusiasm of British antiquaries, proud to know that the oldest extant complete Bible in one volume

This Bible differs from others produced in the British Isles, being highly influenced by Mediterranean decorative styles. It is clear that the miniaturist wanted to follow models from the "classical" world, thus avoiding an "insular" style. This trend towards the imitation of Mediterranean styles is associated with the twin monasteries of Jarrow and Monkwearmouth in one of which the Bible was produced. If the Mediterranean style had some influence on the insular it did not, however, enjoy the popularity of the latter. This Bible is a copy of the sixth century *Codex Grandior* now lost, which was a "pandect" or, in other words, a complete Bible containing both the Old and New Testaments. It was made in three copies, of which the *Codex Amiatinus* is the only that has come down to us.

According to Bruce-Mitford, two or three sheets similar to those of the *Codex*, the same size, number of lines of text and "uncial" calligraphy, are preserved in the British Museum. These are known as the "Middleton sheets". One more sheet similar to these was found in a bookshop in Newcastle in 1909. The *Codex Grandior* also served as a model for the portrait of Matthew in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. This is a very bulky codex. Bruce-Mitford thinks it consisted of 1030 folios, and weighs over 50 kg and that for every bifolium [a sheet of writing support material, generally parchment during the Middle Ages, folded in half to produce two leaves - i.e. four pages] it took a whole calf skin. The two major illustrations in the *Codex Amiatinus* are a portrait of Ezra and the image of the Majesty of Christ. The portrait of Ezra in particular is done in the "illusionistic" style of late antiquity. The forms are modelled in chiaroscuro and the colour is natural. This contrasts with the abstract image of the symbol of Matthew, the man, in *the Book of Durrow*. The page depicting the Majesty of Christ is less "classical." One reason for this may be that the *Codex Grandior* may not have contained such an image.

The use of gold should indicate a Byzantine influence, however. This is also suggested by similarities between the iconic portrait of Ezra and a famous Byzantine portrait of the tenth century depicting St. Matthew. The illuminator had assimilated the Mediterranean influence so well that it was either believed to be Byzantine or that the miniature had once belonged to the *Codex Grandior* and bound later in the *Amiatinus*. The portrait of Ezra is the first of its kind to appear in a British manuscript. The writer is shown at work, with his books arranged in a case behind him.

### **Ezra or Cassiodorus?**

The illuminated frontispiece of the *Amiatinus* therefore represents the prophet Ezra but, as it has been postulated, the ancient Saxon illuminator may instead have intended to represent Cassiodorus himself, sitting next to a library containing nine open codices, precisely those which Cassiodorus donated to the *Vivarium* of the English community. The *Codex Amiatinus* also contains two pages that show a kind of aerial view of the Tabernacle in the Temple of Jerusalem.

This massive Bible consists of 1030 sheets or folios (i.e. 2060 pages), its size measures about 50 x 65 cm and its total weight is approx. 34 kg. It took the skins of 1550 calves to produce such an extraordinary book. (*Florence, Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, Ms. Ar. 1.2.1*) — Bible [Vulgate, Codex

## **King Pepin, Pope Stephen II, and the temporal power of the Roman Church**

Along the *Via Romea-Francigena*, as on a great stage for the medieval West, some of the most important events in the cultural history of Europe took place during the formation of the modern nations.

In 750 the Merovingians ruled over the Kingdom of France. But a *coup d'état* by Pepin, son of Charles Martel, marks the rise to power of the Carolingian dynasty. Pepin the Short, as he was called, came to rule over the Franks then seeking the approval of what was in those days the highest moral authority: the papacy. Soon Pepin obtained recognition from Pope Zacharias, and this prompted him to declare himself king of the Franks at Soissons and to depose Childeric, the rightful king. The king was anointed the following year by Archbishop Boniface. Pepin the Short was the first Frankish king to be anointed by an ecclesiastic authority.

This approval of illegality by a Pope was motivated by practical reasons, namely survival. The Exarchate [Orthodox bishopric] had already been expelled from Ravenna, and Rome itself was threatened by the Lombards. The Papacy, which had long sought to free itself from the empire of Constantinople, took the opportunity, with Pope Stephen II, to gain political power dependent on the Frankish monarchy, indebted to the papacy for its legitimacy. Such an alliance became even more urgent when Aistulf, King of the Lombards captured Ravenna (751) and seized Rome for tribute. In the same year an unprecedented event occurred. Stephen II decided to pay a visit to Pepin in the royal palace at Corbeny on the *Via Romea*, thus sanctioning, with such a tangible gesture, the alliance between Rome and the Frankish throne which then, between 771 and 814 would belong to Charlemagne.

The journey was prepared well ahead of time, with great zeal. The Pope and his retinue were provided with a formidable armed escort to safeguard their journey. Fifteen days before departure a request came to the Pope from Byzantium in which the Emperor asked the Pope to intercede with King Aistulf for the return of the Exarchate of Ravenna to the Empire. Thus, with the blessing of the Emperor, Stephen II with his Frankish escort and the Ambassador of Constantinople moved on to Pavia, along the road to France. Stephen knew very well that Aistulf would reject the Emperor's request, but his real mission was a different one. He took the opportunity in order both to serve his own interests and, at the same time, impress the Emperor. The negotiations between the Pope and King of the Franks took place between Ponthion and Quierzy

south of Reims. The Pope and King Pepin established the *covenant (promissio carisiaca)* according to which the successors of St. Peter would receive lands hitherto the domain of the Lombards and Greeks.

On the occasion the Pope also conferred to Pippin the title of *patricius*, declaring him the regent and protector of Italy. The king of the Franks became "Patricius of the Romans", or, in other words, Defender of the Church. Meanwhile Aistulf besieged Rome, thus the pact was soon put to the test. Stephen II and King Pepin crossed the Alps swiftly and the Frankish army besieged Pavia. While the Pope continued his return journey to Rome, Aistulf, who rushed in defence of Pavia, agreed to surrender the city and promised to lift the siege on Rome. Alas, the promise did not last, for as soon as Pippin returned home, Aistulf marched on Rome and restored the siege. While the Romans strived to defend their city, Stephen sent his envoys to Pippin, who this time marched on Pavia with a mighty army, forcing Aistulf to lift the siege and hasten back to defend his own capital.

Aistulf was finally forced to surrender and thus the Querzy pact was enforced. Having defeated the Lombards, Pepin gave the conquered lands to St. Peter. This action gave rise to the temporal power of the papacy, thus giving birth to what for centuries after the disappearance of the Franks (until 1871) the whole world would know as the Papal States.

The stage of this drama, fundamental for the history of Europe and which had as its leading characters Stephen II, Pepin and Aistulf, was the *Via Romea-Francigena*. Since then the journeys of Frankish emperors along Sigeric's Route became so frequent that this road became de facto *Via Francigena* (namely, "the road that comes from France"). However, many centuries would elapse before, in the 1990s, such a name was to be officially given to this road.

### **The first approach between the Papacy and the Franks**

The first English missionary who came from Northumbria to Christianize the heathen peoples of the continent was Willibrod, who evangelized Frisia [an ancient region consisting of the Frisian islands and part of what is now Holland and north-west Germany]. He travelled to Rome in 718 and again in 722, when he was ordained a bishop without a particular seat but with authority over the nations east of the Rhine. From 732 Willibrord had his seat in Mainz.

Willibrod was a contemporary of Boniface, who was born in Wessex, and succeeded him in Mainz. The first approach of the Pope to win over the sympathy of the Franks was his request to Charles Martel to protect Boniface in his perilous work of evangelization of the Germans. When Pepin dethroned the last king of the Merovingian dynasty in 751, with the blessing of the Pope, he was anointed by Boniface: this was the first "royal anointing" in history. The anointing of kings was a Semitic tradition since Biblical times, equivalent and

alternative to crowning. It came to Europe along with Christianity but here it accompanied, rather than replaced, crowning. The first European ruler to be anointed and thus introducing this tradition on the continent was a Visigothic king of Spain in the eighth century.

### **Alcuin, Charlemagne and the Carolingian Renaissance**

Two centuries before Sigeric, Alcuin, the teacher and tutor of Charlemagne, travelled the same route several times, starting from faraway Northumbria, on the Scottish border. Born in York, capital of Northumbria, around 735, Alcuin (alias Flaccus Albinus) spent the first part of his life in the monastery of that city, the main centre of English learning at that time. In 767, succeeding Ethelbert (ordained Bishop), Alcuin of York became a teacher in the York school, which with him was to become a focus of attention for many scholars. During this period Alcuin made three journeys to Rome, and his presence is reported in various centres of learning in France and in Italy. In the winter of 780-781, for example, he went to collect the *pallium* for Eanbald, the new Archbishop of York. On his way home in March 781 met an old acquaintance in Parma: Charlemagne, who was going to Rome to celebrate Easter.

It was here, on the *Via Francigena*, that the king suggested to Alcuin that, when his mission was accomplished, to help educate and reform the court and the clergy of his kingdom. Alcuin, though now fifty, agreed. Perhaps the death of his beloved teacher, or the wars that plagued Northumbria, made the separation from his homeland less painful. Thus from 782, with Alcuin, master of the *schola palatinae* at Aachen and then at Tours (where he died in 804), a crucial link for the development of European culture was established between English culture and the Carolingian Renaissance.

### **Other “romeans” who described the Via Romea-Francigena**

#### ***Nikulas of Munkthvera***

In 1154 a Viking Abbot of Thingor Iceland, Nikulas of Munkthvera, went to Rome and he too wrote a diary, much more detailed than Sigeric's account, but with not as many names on the list of *submansiones* or halting places. After having passed Stade [Stettin?], Hannover, Mainz, Strasbourg and Basel, Nikulas entered Sigeric's route at Vevey, where, he writes: "converge the streets of the Franks, the Flemish, of the southern Franks, the British, the Germans and of the Scandinavians."

He then halted at Bourg Saint-Maurice and Bourg Saint-Pierre, and went beyond what he calls the Grand Combin, namely the Great Saint-Bernard Pass, where the ruins of the temple of Jupiter Poeninus could be seen in the hospice of St. Peter. Beyond the pass, Nikulas halted at Etroubles, Aosta, Pont Saint-Martin, Ivrea, and Vercelli, Pavia, Piacenza, and Fidenza (then called Borgo San Donnino).

The Abbot of Thingor tells us that between Piacenza and Fidenza was the Hospice of Eric I of Denmark, after which he mentions Taro (Borgo Val di Taro), Munibard (Mount Bardone), Pontremoli, Santa Maria Aulla, Luni, Lucca and the hospice of Matilda (Altopascio). From here he crossed the river Arno at Arnblak, namely the Arne blanca (XXIII) of Sigeric.

One he had crossed the Arno, Nikulas mentions Sanctinus Borg (San Genesio) then Martinus Borg (Poggibonsi) and Semunt, which is the mountain of Siena and Siena itself. Then follow San Quirico, Acquapendente, Clemunt, which should be Radicofani, since the Abbot tells us that it lies north of Acquapendente, thus Mala Mulier, the vanished village below Radicofani which we described above. Shortly after Bolsena he mentions Borgo San Flaviano (now Montefiascone), then the "Baths" of Viterbo (the hot water pool called Bullicame), then Sutri, Baccano and, finally, Rome.

This itinerary conveniently connects the *Via Romea* of Stade with the *Via Romea-Francigena*, still an ideal route for Scandinavian latter-day pilgrims.

### **Philip II Augustus**

Nearly forty years after the voyage of Nikulas Munkthvera, King Philip II Augustus (1180-1223), the builder of Paris, returned to France in 1191 from the Third Crusade. He listed the stages of his journey, and these too coincide with the stages of the Italian *Via Romea-Francigena*.

From Otranto, the itinerary passes through Bari, Barletta, Sarpi, Benevento and Frosinone, then it lists *Sancti Petri* (Rome). North of Rome the French king halted at *Sutre* (Sutri) then at *Bieterve* (Viterbo), *Munt Flascun* (Montefiascone), *Sanctam Cristinam* (Bolsena), *Ekepenndante* (Acquapendente), *Redcoc* (Radicofani), *Briche* (Briccole), *San Clerc* (San Quirico), *Bon-Cuvent* (Buonconvento), *Senes-la-Velle* (Old Siena), then *Marche Castellum* (Rêncine), *Seint-Michel Castellum* (Poggibonsi), *Castellum Florentin* (Castelfiorentino), then *Saint Denis de Bon Repast* (San Genesio), *Arle-le-Blanc* and *Arle-le-Nair* (branches of the Arno), *Grasse Geline* (Galleno), *Hopital* (Altopascio), *Luchek* (Lucca), *Munt-Cheverol* (Monte del Salto della Ceva), *Saint-Leonard* (San Leonardo al Frigido or Massa), *Lune* (Luni now ruins), *Sanctam Mariam de Sardena* (Sarzana), *Lealbile* (Villafranca) and *Punt-Tremble* (Pontremoli). King Philip II crossed the pass of *Munt Bardun* (Monte Bardone), *Saint Beneit* (San Benedetto just before the pass of Montelungo) and finally *Seint Morant in Monte Bardum* (San Moderanno in Berceto). The itinerary continues north of Tuscany along the *Via Francigena* up to Vercelli, then it passes through Turin and crosses the Alps at the Moncenis pass.

## The historical route

We have seen how the route, as it has historically come down to us, follows a watershed, albeit not always exactly tracing it. This is, of course, a consequence of changes occurring in proto-historic and Roman times when, for example, at the foot of the escarpment of the Artois uplands, Agrippa built the road from Milan to Besançon, Reims, Théroutanne and Arras. The main watershed line of north-eastern France begins from the peninsula of Cap Gris-Nez, near Calais, between the estuaries of the Somme and the Lyse-Scheldt, and between the Meuse and the Rhône.

Only at its bend in Martigny, in Switzerland, did one need to cross a river, the Rhône, in order to reach the Great Saint Bernard Pass. In the Alps, natural roads are, quite obviously, no longer ridges or watersheds, but valleys. Once in Italy, from the Val d'Aosta the road runs along the valley floor up to Ivrea, where it comes out in to the Pô valley, and from where it runs along the watershed leading to Santhiá and Vercelli, which of course it is the *Via Romea-Francigena*. The natural route then terminates on the bank of the river Sesia. Over this river, between here and Lucca, the road runs along Roman roads leading to the *Via Emilia* up to Fidenza, where it begins to follow the valley of the river Taro. In more ancient times it did not follow the valley but the watershed between this river and the next, the Baganza. Once in Tuscany the road descended to the ancient city of Luni on the Tyrrhenian coast, and following hereon the Roman road, it arrived at Lucca. From Lucca to the Arno it again runs on a watershed that avoids extensive marshes and shallow lakes. To the south of the Arno the *Via Francigena* (here this has always been its proper name) follows the ridges of Central Tuscany which are the oldest roads of the region, having been used since prehistory, first as hunters' paths and later as important highways in Etruscan and Roman times.

The Roman basis of the *Via Romea-Francigena*, from the English Channel to Rome, is easily identifiable with the help of a good historical atlas. From Sangatte, a prominent Roman fort towering above Wissant, between Calais and Boulogne, an auxiliary Roman road leads to *Taruenna* (now Théroutanne), from where *Nemetacum* (Arras) is reached by a "Chaussée" still in use today. It then runs through the nearby Camaracum (Cambrai), *Augusta Viromanduorum* (Vermand), *Noviodunum* (Soissons), *Durocortorum* (Reims), and *Durocatalauni* (Châlons-en-Champagne).

From Châlons, the road, a dead-straight dirt trail across the cornfields of the Marne plateau, reaches *Andemantunum* (Langres), *Vesontium* (Besançon), and Lausanne on Lake Geneva. It then follows the coast of this lake through *Viviscus* (Vevey), then reaching *Octodurum* (Martigny) and *Augusta Praetoria* (Aosta). The route in Italy is all followed on Roman roads, almost up to Fidenza, as we have seen above.

## How far and how long

It has been calculated that a Roman garrison could take one month to reach Britain from the town of Romulus, though only a few Roman soldiers from Italy actually reached England. Rome mainly recruited Gauls and Germans, both for the Caudian invasion and for garrisons on the border. In my experience this timing is feasible but unlikely to have actually been achieved, even though in Roman times roads were much straighter and in much better condition than in Ceolfrid, Alcuin or Sigeric's times. While on foot on the plains or the hills, 30-35 km per day, every day for a month, could be walked by young fit soldiers. A horseman could cover 50 to 70 km per day while a herald or messenger could, with a change of horses, cover very many more. It is thus highly unlikely that a Roman soldier would have covered 1000 miles in less than 50 days.

The 1600 km - or if you prefer the one thousand miles - that separates Canterbury from Rome, could therefore hardly be covered in four weeks at an average speed of 51 km per day by an elderly archbishop on a mule. Those who could cover the distance in seven weeks - at an average of 32 km per day - must have been very few. An archbishop or an abbot, who travelled with a large retinue of clerics, monks, guards and servants, most of them on foot, others on mules - rarely on horseback - would take months for a journey to Rome and back.

Like Ceolfrid, Sigeric too must have had long stays in cities, monasteries and palaces along the road or near it. Such a trip would not take place often in a

lifetime and those who travelled must have taken the opportunity to visit important places and people en route. If Sigeric took at least four months for the trip, spending only three days in Rome, we know from Bede that Ceolfrid took 114 days to reach Langres from Jarrow, where he died. He left his monastery on June 4th, and reached Langres on September 25th. He crossed the ~~the Danube~~ to land at Quentovic on the French coast, within the estuary of the

## Conclusions

If the route followed by the Archbishop of Canterbury already existed since time immemorial, its first description only dates back to the time of the archbishop himself.

It is a curious fact that the thousandth anniversary of the voyage of Sigeric almost coincided with the removal of borders in Western Europe, an area for a long time divided but at the same time always united both by the *Via Romea* and by a shared culture to which the *Via Romea-Francigena* has undoubtedly contributed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Pilgrim-only accommodation (with credencial), donation basis, available in the *Abbazia del S.S.mo Salvatore* (Via del Monaterio 54), 27km after San Quirco d'Orcia and 28 km before Acquapendente. Open all year except Christmas and Easter. Contact Padre Amedeo (0577-777352, email [padreamedeo@virgilio.it](mailto:padreamedeo@virgilio.it) or [abbaziasansalvatore@virgilio.it](mailto:abbaziasansalvatore@virgilio.it)).

(See flyer illustrated on page 25)

## Cycle pilgrimage: Canterbury to Rome

**Frank Burns**

Many years a wheel exploring the world, I wanted to address the most ancient of routes in Europe: the *Via Francigena*. First walked by St Augustine in 598 when he went to Rome to receive the *pallium* (his seal of office as the first Archbishop of Canterbury), it has recently been re-established using the travel notes of Archbishop Sigeric in 990 (one of the early “bloggers” perhaps?). Although I had the benefit of a pair of wheels for my journey, carrying my pilgrim’s passport, I was able to qualify for the official *Testimonium* granted to pilgrims when they arrive at St Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

Following ancient routes, especially routes of religious and historical significance, has always been a passionate interest of mine. My journey along the *Via Francigena* came in the wake of several other long journeys, including notably the ancient Camino de Santiago de Compostela. So why did I do it? Was it just for the sheer pleasure and challenge of completing it? The answer to that question could easily have been “yes”, but in my recently acquired role as translator for the Claretian Curia in Rome, I was presented with a letter that had come out of Haiti just 48 hours after the earthquake.

**Claretians in Haiti** January 12th saw Haiti (the poorest country in the west) suffer its most devastating earthquake. 230,000 died, along with 300,000 injured. The six-month anniversary of the quake reminded us of the continued desperation of the situation.

For many years, my wife and I (along with a team of helpers and supporters) have supported the humanitarian efforts of the Claretian Missionaries in Belize. But on this one occasion, our attention deservedly shifted to the people of Haiti in their time of need. The Claretians in Haiti have spent several years building the infrastructure of their future work, including an elementary school, which was completely destroyed. Words from the letter vividly describe the impact:

*“The vast majority of concrete structures had completely collapsed... huge cracks which would hardly stand another aftershock marred the house structure. In fear of the house’s instability, people were sleeping outside on the patio, along with a few acquaintances and neighbours who had lost everything... We*

*are in deep trouble, many deaths, bodies scattered everywhere, houses crumbled with people still inside... Every time I go out and see the city I ask myself: Am I dreaming or is what I see true? Is this the Port-au-Prince that I have known? But it is not a dream; it is a reality... The ten-year-old church and the public elementary school that the Claretians helped to build were destroyed."*

The money raised through this sponsored venture will go directly to helping to rebuild the elementary school. At the time of writing, that total stands at £5,500.

**To be a pilgrim...** In medieval times, the greatest travellers were usually pilgrims, who would set off on foot from their own front door in the direction of a distant holy place. They had to endure not only the hardships of the journey itself, but also the ever present dangers of disease, hunger and highway robbers. Many died en route. Those that arrived at their destinations could not rely on Ryanair to take them home again! The only way home was back the way they had come, on foot or horseback. This is what we would call "travel with a purpose."

Modern pilgrimage is a much more clinical experience, though not without its stresses and dangers. With the invention of the bicycle, another mode of transport is added to the duo of walking and horseback. On both the routes to Santiago de Compostela and to Rome, the pilgrim must demonstrate he has travelled 'under his own steam' in order to qualify for the *Compostela* or the *Testimonium*. To do this, he has to carry a credential or passport, have it officially stamped along the route, and present it at journey's end at the appropriate office.

The fascination of the 'pilgrim's progress' is to travel in the footsteps of tens of thousands of others, along the very same route whose history stretches back 1000 or more years. In the case of the *via Francigena*, its history goes back 1400 years to the year 598 when St Augustine trekked to Rome. His return journey would have taken a minimum of 6 months, probably more.

**Sunday August 29th: the big send-off!** The first drops of rain came from the blessing at Buckden Towers (near Huntingdon) at the hands of Father Chris. It rained holy water!! So the words of the famous Irish blessing did come true: "may the rain fall softly on your fields (i.e. my bike) and may the winds be ever at your back". I had a helpful wind almost the entire day. Thank goodness for that. But thank you to the members of the parish who gave me a rousing send off after the 9am Mass. I could hear the applause as I left the grounds of the Towers!

I could fill pages with my experiences along the *Via Francigena*, but lack of space prevents me, so here are a number of snapshots.

**The Dartford Crossing** I had to find an obscure control point, where a friendly man with a car and cycle carrier would pick me up, and take me across the bridge. When I eventually found it, Chris (a local lad) was commuting home from work and waiting for the same lift, so that gave me some confidence. The serendipities of the journey had already kicked in. Sharing my story briefly with Chris, he valiantly decided to cycle with me and guide me through the warren of roads leading through Gravesend, Rochester and Gillingham, and made sure I knew exactly where the Youth Hostel was, before saying farewell. A real gentleman of the road!

**Canterbury Cathedral** The pilgrim's passport definitely worked. When I showed it at the gates of the Cathedral precinct, they ushered me in free of charge (normally £8) and took me immediately to the Welcome Office, where I was told that Canon Clare was expecting me. Even though I had arrived early, she adjusted her schedule to accommodate me, and guided me into the inner sanctuary of the Cathedral to a chapel not normally open to visitors, but reserved for pilgrims either at the beginning or end of their journey. The chapel is called Our Lady of the Undercroft, remote in the crypt of the Cathedral, and bathed in a mute light light that gave it a fitting atmosphere. She very kindly pronounced the words and prayers given to pilgrims as they set off on their journeys. Afterwards, she told me a little of her 32 day walking pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, and we were able to share one or two experiences in common.

**Cyclist-philosopher?** I'd like to think I did a lot of deep thinking while I pedalled the miles, but the truth is you ponder on lots of inconsequential: when will this hill end, how long to the next break, what mileage is there still to cover...? Cyclists, like long distance walkers and runners should feature amongst the world's greatest philosophers, but name me just one... We have the time to solve the world's problems, but our thinking is inevitably egocentric.

**Brie** As I entered a village looking for a *boulangerie*, I noticed it was called Brie, and fully expected to see the famous cheese advertised everywhere. The *boulangier* was quizzical when I asked the obvious question, but it would seem that his village enjoys the selfsame status as our own Stilton... no real connection at all. Then I passed through another village called Brie...

Then I discovered a village called Ham, and wondered if there was a nearby Sandwich. The nearest I got was a Sandcourt!

**Youth Hostel in Reims** I had a couple of very pleasant North Africans as room-mates, until it came to turning out the lights. Because it was Ramadan, they insisted on going through their prayer routines in the room itself, then afterwards they watched movies on a laptop. When I eventually got to sleep, I was rudely awoken by security guards who were checking for gatecrashers, and I realised that another person had sneaked into the room without checking in. Security had left without detecting him, and later he slipped out and disappeared. But

before I could resume some kind of sleep, the two remaining lads rose at 4.30am to have breakfast before sunrise. (I was beginning to wonder if sleep had gone out of fashion!) As I sleepily crept out of the room at 7.30, they were deeply back into the land of nod, gently snoring as I closed the door on them. A night never to be forgotten!

**From Langres to Champlitte** I left Langres under the most perfect conditions possible. Early morning coolness, bright sunshine, the contours of the landscape now undulating, flowering meadows, dappled sunlight through the leaves of moist woodland... just like the UK really! But all this had been preceded by a quintessential French breakfast: warm croissant and *pain au chocolat*, and a strong coffee to waken every fibre of my being.

**It being Sunday morning** I expected to see all the churches open and people flocking for their Sunday worship. In fact, all churches seemed firmly locked, which got me thinking: had they all been reading Richard Dawkins lately? Then I got to Champlitte, and arrived at the beginning of a mass that was to celebrate the labours of the volunteers who work for the Hospitalite de Lourdes (people who care for the sick en route to Lourdes). Everybody seemed to be there from this small town, and so was their Bishop, so this was a big occasion. These were some of the serendipities that made this journey so very special.

**The people I met** The first pilgrims I met were a large group of Italians doing a few short sections of the route (in reverse). I met them near Clairvaux Abbey (now a high security prison!) and they were thrilled to meet someone doing the whole journey. Down the road I met Martin, a Frenchman, who had started in Reims. He was the picture of a genuine pilgrim, with his heavy backpack and his pilgrim's staff. Then on the outskirts of Pontalier, I chanced by Keith and Pauline who had spent 33 days walking from Canterbury, and they weren't even half way to Rome! As I was speaking to them, a German lady, Alke-Brigitte, recognised us as fellow-pilgrims, and joined the friendly gathering. We exchanged details, and we are still in touch with each other.

**Filipe** Though I could tell you about many more encounters, I will just mention Filipe (from Portugal), whom I met as a fellow 'couch surfer' in the Youth Hostel at Lucca. At 28 yrs of age, he had just finished his PhD in Physics, and while waiting the three months for his viva examination, he set off on his bike to visit all the major places of pilgrimage in Europe, starting with his native Fatima, through Santiago to Lourdes, then to Rome on his way to Jerusalem. We became firm friends on the remaining journey to Rome, sharing the final 'Kodak moments' in St Peter's Square in front of the Basilica.

**Mountains climbed** The Alps were definitely the high point, especially the mighty Great Saint-Bernard Pass that divides Switzerland from Italy. It was a gruelling 45 km (28 miles) climb from Martigny to the height of 2,473 metres (8114 feet) above sea level (twice the height of Ben Nevis). The climb took me a

whole day, but the rewards made the efforts worthwhile. At the top, you can look across the borders of both countries at views that stretch for miles, you can be entertained by the famous Saint-Bernard dogs, and you can get to stay at the ancient Augustinian Hospice established by Saint Bernard de Menton on the summit to care for the pilgrims who passed this way in medieval times. Remote though this place was, I met Alison Raju from Nottingham (who was helping there as a volunteer), a veteran pilgrim, who had just finished writing a book about the northern section of the *Via Francigena*.

**Journey's end** Filipe and I not only cycled right into the heart of Rome (unscathed!) but we were able to cycle right into the heart of the magnificent Saint Peter's Square. It is one of the most perfect pieces of "environmental development" you could ever find, and there isn't a better place to finish a long pilgrimage than that.

**Things that bear a message** We have all had experiences that seemed to have encapsulated a message of importance. Well, what do you make of this one? My cycle computer worked perfectly right to the end. But as I left the Vatican, I noticed the cable had snapped and it was locked onto my final mileage... Was this telling me the journey was really over?

**The Testimonium** The story of acquiring the final certificate of completion could fill pages. But here is a synopsis of my experience.

Have you ever been frustrated by bureaucracy? Well, the Vatican has plenty of it, and lots to spare! I arrived at St Peter's at 9am, made my way to the pilgrim office, and Don Bruno Vercesi took me (along with Mario, a French Canadian pilgrim) to an inner office, questioned us about our journeys, filled in a big book with our details (I am pilgrim no. 2006 to be registered), got us to write summaries of our experiences, then asked us to return at 11.15am. We did, only to be joined by five Italians and three young Germans, then we were given a lecture tour of parts of the crypt that tourists don't get to see, followed by a short service in an Irish chapel... At 12.30 we came out, three and a half hours later, brandishing the *Testimonium!*

The long wait gave Mario and me the opportunity to climb the 500 plus steps to the top of the cupola of the Basilica, and admire the exquisite symmetry of the entire Vatican. The climb is arduous but worth it. The Vatican had been built to demonstrate the power of the Church at a time when popes enjoyed extensive political, as well as religious, influence. That demonstration of power still attracts millions of visitors every year.

Curiously, during the concluding service of prayers and readings, two of the German lads confessed they weren't Christians. Well, that got Don Bruno's missionary spirit into overdrive, but I could see that his ministrations were falling on deaf ears, but the lads did smile generously and thanked him for his advice.

If you would like to read more about this journey, please visit my webpage at [www.frankburns.wordpress.com](http://www.frankburns.wordpress.com)  
“May the winds of life be ever at your back”

\* \* \* \* \*

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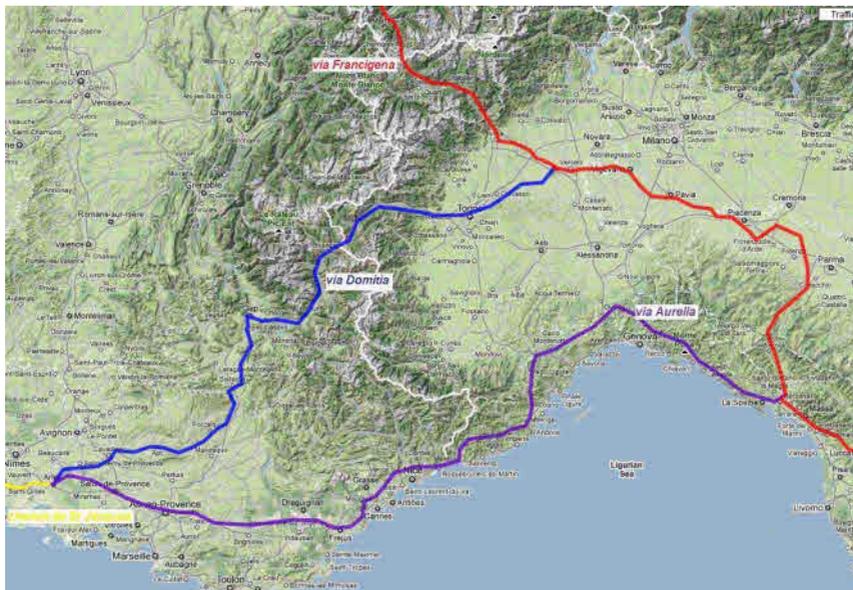
New pilgrim-only accommodation in the Abbatia San Salvatore

## Liaisons - linking the *Saint James' Way* and the *Via Francigena: Via Domitia and Via Aurelia*

**Paul Chinn and Babette Gallard**

Over the last four years Paul and I have travelled along the *Via Francigena* and written guides for its pilgrims, but we had more or less decided to call a halt to our travelling by May 2009, when we opened our hostel in Arles. Naively, perhaps, we had assumed that the majority of pilgrims would be starting from Arles with a view to going part or all of the way to Santiago de Compostela. We were wrong. Within just a few weeks of opening our doors, we were meeting people coming from and going to Italy, using Arles as their transit point, following a variety of routes and telling as many different stories, but all with one

common experience: it was a tough route, generally hard, overly circuitous and poorly marked. We tried not to listen, we told ourselves that the GR653D from Arles to the Montgenèvre pass was well established and the alternative, Menton to Arles, would be inaugurated in May 2010. In fact, the subject was well and truly closed until a Dutch retailer of our books told us that he was receiving an increasing number of requests for a guidebook that would cover the intersection between the *Saint James' Way* and the *Via Francigena*.



Enough said. On April 1st this year (no intentional irony), Paul and I left Arles with our pack horse, Nellie, and our dog, Flea – the aim being to map the two routes, assess their suitability for the groups we support (walkers, cyclists and horse-riders) and provide alternatives where necessary. In essence a journey from Arles through Montgenèvre to Vercelli (very roughly the route of the old *Via Domitia*) where we would continue along the *Via Francigena* to Sarzana and then head north through Liguria, to join the *Via della Costa*, and then follow the newly inaugurated spur of the Saint James Way from Menton to Arles (even more roughly, the route of the *Via Aurelia*).

We covered 2,290 kilometres and travelled just under four months. Now we are back at our desks, collating thousands of GPS reference points and validating the accommodation lists we gathered along the way. Probably the least inspiring aspect of travelling, except that it also brings back memories, good and bad: places, people, situations flipping from disaster to triumph within seconds, or vice-versa, and finally that indescribable sensation of reaching a place you

have been walking towards for what can seem like an eternity. So, for anyone out there who is considering either of these routes, Paul and I thought it might be helpful if we summarised our own first impressions, and possibly helped you to decide.

## **Arles to Vercelli**

The GR653D runs through dramatic, variable countryside and past some fascinating sites with historical and spiritual significance. The signing is up to the usual good standards of the French *Grande Randonnée* (GR) network, the only potential confusion arising where one route intersects with another, for example near Briançon. Unfortunately, as with so many other networks of this type it is, understandably, created out of an amalgam of existing shorter paths designed for a day excursion, rather than for the long distance walker. As a consequence, the route is sometimes unnecessarily circuitous and arduous, a feature we have endeavoured to ameliorate by offering the less strenuous and more direct minor roads, wherever possible. Nevertheless, the route is tougher than the classic *Via Francigena* or *Saint James Way*, with many climbs (above 1000 metres in Haute Provence) and a number of places blocked by winter storm damage. In contrast, the approach to Montgenèvre (about 500 metres lower than the Col de Great Saint Bernard) is relatively gentle. We passed through on May 1, with no snow on the roads, but up to a metre in depth on the footpaths.

*Accommodation* - generally a good choice over a wide range of prices and access to the Gîte d'Etape used by both mountain walkers and pilgrims.

From Montgenèvre, the descent into the Susa valley is dramatic and beautiful. It seems that early pilgrims preferred this route, because it avoided some of the risks from the brigands and pirates who controlled the coast. St Francis apparently also came this way on his journey to France. With the exception of the first day in Montgenèvre and last outside Vercelli, signing was excellent, perhaps the best we have seen on the entire *Via Francigena* and generally following small footpaths, as opposed to the predominantly busy-road route described in the Monica d'Atti guide. A positive experience, enhanced by the number of pilgrims we met (many more than in our previous travels), and the frequent, warm welcomes from members of local groups who were clearly proud of their place on the *Via Francigena*. The passage through Turin was unpleasant with about 25 kilometres of main road, but the heart of the city was sufficient reward. The final section into Vercelli is currently along a very unpleasant main road, but we managed to plot a much quieter route, which we will appear in our next guide.

*Accommodation* was varied but perhaps favourably comparable with the *Via Francigena* in general.

## Sarzana/Ponzano Superiore to Menton

Here the travelling and mapping was much more complex, because (other than for the last 80km on the *Via della Costa*) we were on our own, trying to find a viable and enjoyable route. Basically there are two choices:

- the coast with its traffic, crowded (and expensive) towns and hotels, but generally flat roads;
- the mountain top/ridge paths with all the risks of height and exposure.

Ultimately, we chose a combination of the two, hoping that by doing so we could provide a varied, exciting, challenging, but also achievable route for everyone. We left the *Via Francigena* in Ponzano Superiore, because this gave easy access onto one of the quietest bridges over the Magra, before taking the *Alta Via de Golfo* and the *Alta Via di Cinque Terra* – routes that are excellently marked either by the CAI (Club Alpino Italiano, i.e. the Italian walking federation (*Alta Via* – high level - routes offer wonderful walking, with unforgettable, awe-inspiring scenery). After this we descended from the *Alta Via di Monti Liguri* on a network of old mule tracks – another evocative experience – principally in order to avoid some of the toughest climbs. Then, after climbing again, we by-passed Genoa and were pleased to discover that an old coastal railway is being turned into a bike and walking route that provides a flat, safe alternative. From here we took the *Via della Costa*, which has been well marked by groups by the Province of Imperia, and follows the hills a few kilometres in from the coast. However, in some places it is often tougher than the high routes, involving some serious scrambling, so we opted for the railway-path wherever it seemed preferable. In essence, the Sarzana/Ponzano Superiore to Menton route is generally strenuous, passing through some very remote areas and should be used with caution. This will be our first guide written for walkers only, though as you will see the section from Menton to Arles is much easier, and could be comfortably followed by cyclists and horse-riders.

*Accommodation* is infrequent, but when found can be excellent and includes beautiful sanctuaries overlooking the Mediterranean, mountain refuges and the odd *agriturismo* (B&B) with lashings of fantastic and inexpensive food.

## Menton to Arles

This section is also known as the GR653A, inaugurated as part of the Saint James network at the end of May this year. After some more stiff hill-walking to pass behind Monaco and Nice, it settles into a pleasant route on broad trails, weaving through the forests and cliffs of Provence and the Cote d'Azur and only briefly touching the coast at St Raphael. But be aware that in the hottest times of the year there are access restrictions to some forest areas. The GR marking is far from complete, particularly in the central section, but the Amis de St Jacques groups have done a pretty good job with cockle shell signs.

*Accommodation* is tricky, because the area is popular with regular tourists and the Amis and religious hostel/paroisie network is still nascent. We opted for camping most of the time.

Hopefully, this brief summary will be helpful. Our guides should be out at the beginning of next year, but in the meantime (or preference), we can also offer our blog <http://burkinaschool.blogspot.com/> which adds colour and meaning to some of the bland statements given here. It also provides details of the accommodation we used.

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## The Dogs of Lazio

**Garry Ridgway**

It had all begun with the weaving of events and moods, as many a pilgrimage does. Dead-end employment; looming old age; suburban frustration; a failed prostratotomy. And indulgent self-analysis which can breed gloom. What is the meaning of life? Is there really a God? A Christian God? A Muslim God?

So I undertook pilgrimages of a modest nature, to holy shrines such as Muktinath in Nepal, Sri Pada in Sri Lanka, and Mount Soroksan in South Korea. They were inspirational but left questions unanswered, although the teachings of Lord Buddha often prevailed.

Then in the European autumn of 2007 I walked the *Camino de Santiago*, from Saint Jean Pied-de-Port in the French Pyrenees to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia. It was a most wondrous pilgrimage -- but I wanted more. I had taken myself off hormone therapy and was hungry for all the world.

In the Middle Ages there were three great Christian pilgrimages. To the tomb of Saint James in Spain; to the tomb of Saint Peter in Rome; and to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem where Christ was resurrected. They symbolised religious power and chance for atonement of ones sins.

From Canterbury to Rome, the pilgrimage route known as the *Via Francigena*. It nagged at me. Rome. The Eternal City. Could I walk that?

In round terms it was a walk of about 2000km, with 40km from Canterbury Cathedral to Dover, taking the boat across the channel to Calais, then 900km across France, 200km across Switzerland, then 900km across Italy. If I pondered too much about it then I would not do it. In 2008 I lacked the will. Then in 2009 I rediscovered the will -- a brutish trip to Argentina did that -- but then my body failed. (A cancerous tumour blocked my urethra. From emergency at Calvary Hospital through three months of retentive catheter to

radiation therapy which, in alliance with hormone therapy, meant I could pee again.)

So what then? Does one live a residual life of ease and gratitude? Rome? It gnawed at me. Indeed I was still reading about the whole trip and studying Roman Empire history. Segments such as the Swiss leg were enticing. I went into training. Long hikes, the swimming pool, weights, tapes of the Italian language. In France I was to rely on my schoolboy French and an uncanny ability to mangle that language like no other.

But really in the end you just do it. I had maps and a pilgrim's passport from the *Association Internationale Via Francigena* and flew to London, took the train to Canterbury, was blessed by Canon Clare in the Cathedral crypt, ate Kentish scones with jam, and left on the North Downs way on 21 July.

It took me 86 days to walk to the Vatican, and really it was a matter of putting one foot in front of the other. It is hard to describe the breadth and depth of the pilgrimage. Yes it was hot in northern France across often barren plains during the harvest. But the pilgrimage was meant, to me, to be more than just a hike. I wanted to commune with the land and the sky and with God. I wanted history and art and wine and cheese and music and joy .. and I got all that.

Also I got confusion and danger, drenching rains and burning sun. In France one tramps from cemetery to cemetery where drinking water is available.

The *Via Francigena* across France is not one easy route. I mapped the stopping places of Sigeric the Serious and often found no recognition of his assignments there a millenium ago. It was a slog, but I delight in France. So that was not important. One must transcend the body. The fact that I could even attempt this was a thrill, given that a year ago I could barely hobble with a bag on my thigh.

Besançon was always a key staging post in my mind. I arrived soaked to the skin but dried out at the local youth hostel. If I could continue then I was on my way to the Alps.

Actually the black dog of depression took hold in Lausanne, but the cure is sleep and more sleep, a stiff talking to oneself and a few beers. Switzerland was a thrill, the glories of the Alps and then the Great Saint Bernard Pass where I met up with Alison from the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome.

Then over the Pass to the fatal beauty of Italy and the first, rugged province of Aosta and onward through Piedmont, Tuscany *et al*. I had envisioned Italy as a stroll from risotto plate to pasta bowl but that was not so. It was quite physically demanding at times, unexpectedly in the mountains between Emilia Romagna and Tuscany, where the route seems to follow that set by the CAI, the Italian

Alpine Club.

I tried to move from one religious refuge to the next. Camping out was difficult in Italy, whereas I could tent it more in France and Switzerland. I hiked up to 30km per day, with the good habit of starting at dawn.

A highlight was an epiphany at Costemezzana, where I sang (badly) to the priest playing the church organ -- and so I opened my heart and mind to Italy. And the country returned that.

What was not a highlight were the dogs in the farmlands of Lazio. I needed my stick, my *bastone*, at times two. Sometimes I was encircled by fangs. Dogs are a fact of life on the *Via Francigena*.

In the Basilica of the Vatican City I was blessed at the tomb of San Pietro by Don Bruno Vercesi. A great honour. And I was in Rome in time for the canonization of Sister Mary MacKillop -- Australia's First Saint. *La Prima Santa*.

It is taking me time to adjust back to life in Australia. (It is hard to find any glory in repairing the lawnmower.) This pilgrimage was the greatest journey of my life -- physical, moral, spiritual. It evoked feelings of the Almighty which I thought were interred. It revealed again the grandeur of mountains and plains and ~~Damberk Hospital - And this was dedicated to the world's most advanced radiation oncology at~~

*Deus nobiscum in via* (God be with us on the way).

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Booklet describing *the Via Appia* in Latium**

CPR members who have taken part in Alberto's previous pilgrim journeys on the *Cammino per Roma* from the south and others interested in this route will be interested to learn that Liv Aldstedt, a Norwegian member who took part, with her husband, in the group that walked the *Via Appia* in Latium in 2008, has now produced a booklet describing the route and their walk, including 210 small photos.

This is only available in Norwegian at present but Mrs. Aldstedt informs us that she is preparing an English edition, which we hope to be able to make available to members and other interested persons when it is ready.

## Walk along the *Via Appia Antica* in 2011

Alberto Alberti is organizing another pilgrim walk next year, starting in the south and finishing in Rome. The programme is as follows:

April 12<sup>th</sup> *Tuesday* Teano - Sessa Aurunca

April 14<sup>th</sup> *Thursday* Castelforte – Minturno

April 16<sup>th</sup> *Saturday* Formia/Gaeta - Fondi

April 18<sup>th</sup> *Monday* Terracina - Fossanova

April 20<sup>th</sup> *Wednesday* Sezze - Bassiano

April 22<sup>nd</sup> *Friday* Sermoneta (*rest day*)

April 24<sup>th</sup> *Easter Sunday* Cori - Velletri

April 26<sup>th</sup> *Tuesday* Castelgandolfo - Roma

April 27<sup>th</sup> *Wednesday* Roma (*Reception ceremonies*)

If you would like to know more or are interested in taking part, please contact Joe

or phone 01305 833331.

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## ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE VIA FRANCIGENA (AIVF)

### LETTER TO FRIENDS SUMMER 2010

With your loyal support, the AIVF is pursuing its goal of the cultural development of pilgrim routes to Rome.

The ***San Pellegrino (Saint Pilgrim)*** banner has flown over this year of 2009-2010! Following its launch in Rome and Lugano, Adelaide Trezzini's book *San Pellegrino tra Mito e Storia* was presented in Paris and in Gualdo Tadino (Perugia), and has been the subject of seven articles in the press. Moreover, St. Pilgrim decided to take to the road again on May 2nd for *Via Francigena* National Day. The AIVF has supported and added interregional proposals, like following the traces of St. Pilgrim and those of Nikulas de Munkathvera from Basel to Vevey. The city of Caltabellotta in Sicily will organise its own St. Pilgrim's walk for next year. San Pellegrino has given its name to Werner's Austrian group of pilgrims.

## **The Itineraries**

□ In Switzerland; the official route (No. 70, well marked) goes through Yverdon-les-Bains but is 20% longer than the one followed by Sigeric with Roman/medieval routes via Jougne, Les Clées, and Orbe which arrives at the cathedral in Lausanne. Since this summer *welcome* and *blessing* of pilgrims is possible at *Notre Dame Basilica* (Place de Riponne, Lausanne). The route from *Martigny-Croix to Bovernier* via Le Brocard is still the one suggested in the TOPO (Be careful - 300m of major roadway) because the new official route has been cut off by a landslide just beyond the footbridge over the Dranse river and after there is poor visibility for crossing the railway tracks!

□ In *Italy* - Topofrancigena B 2007: for the moment, no recent maps because nothing has been decided on. AIVF has closely compared 2 routes, our TOPO and the official MiBAC itinerary: stretches of dangerous roads are similar but MiBAC has about 50 kms more and more altitude differences. Our TOPO is still much in demand for its practical presentation and because it is 80% accurate (latest updates in ZIP format available free-of-charge on request).

Pilgrims should also compare the various Francigena routes available on the market and plan their route carefully. This is extremely important!

□ *Historic routes* - Abbadia S. Salvatore-Sienna and the Paglia river valley are now fully integrated into the *Via Francigena*; inspection, improvements and security measures are being handled by institutions.

2010 marks a greater commitment by the AIVF to promote the Baccano Valley and its ancient main town, the little-known Cesano borgo, a veritable jewel on the approach to Rome.

The AIVF uses every means to revive and make known the historic routes, not just in Italy but in Switzerland as well. For example, it has traced the first part of *the Via Francigena* of NIKULAS (a Benedictine monk who travelled from Iceland to Rome in 1154) from Lake Geneva to Basle. In 2010, the topofrancigena (1:50.000 scale maps) and the dormifrancigena from Basle to Vevey were published. For the extension of the route along the Rhine, a German initiative would be welcome! The AIVF is expanding the European network of *ViaFrancigena* routes along with their associated cultural, spiritual and tourism aspects.

*Via Francigena* signposting in Italy has been improved but is still a problem; take your time and use your compass to follow the TOPO to the letter. You won't regret it!

The *Testimonium* is an extra "gift". Since 2001, 1700 VF pilgrims have been received and are recorded in the St. Peter's Basilica Pilgrims' Register; the Basilica is visited by millions of other pilgrims and tourists.

For pilgrims in a hurry or coming from other routes: there is another *Testimonium* (since 2007) produced and given by the Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi (ORP – their shop is in Pio XII square).

### **Associations**

□ *AIVF-Rome* is pleased to welcome the very valuable assistance of Aldo Romani, an inspector with the archeological superintendency of Rome, among other things. But especially, a real pilgrim. He welcomed Richard for us, who is in Rome preparing a documentary retracing the voyage of Gerald of Wales from Canterbury to Rome in the 12th Century; furthermore, he carried out some checks in Tuscany for the AIVF.

- *General Assembly 2010*, held at the Centre Universitaire Catholique of Lausanne (thanks to Canon Giovanni Polito), decided that the **friends** who have been members for at least two years could participate. Present were Bernard (Besse, Valais), Christiane (Corminboeuf, Fribourg), Thérèse Mauris (president of the Ass. Patrimoine du canton de Vaud), Margot (Collins, Lucerne) – who made suggestions about the new publication to be called: *Via Francigena et voies historiques à travers la Suisse*. It will appear as a **guide** in the local language (useful information about the communes and especially the mediaeval history of sites and monuments to set it apart from other guides) with accurate maps showing routes and directions and the **Dormifrancigena**, updated every 2 years.

□ **Friends** – pilgrims, now numbering 1260 (since 1998) from 29 different countries, mainly France, Holland and Switzerland; we are enriched by your experiences and encouraged by your messages of thanks.

□ **Local VF associations** are being formed to channel public enthusiasm for their own VF with checking out the routes on the ground, maintenance of paths, etc, but especially to be heard by local civic and religious authorities. Abbadia S.Salvatore is preparing to found its own.

AVF-France is working with the FFRP (Fédération Française Randonnée Pédestre), the government, departments and communes to define a valid VF

itinerary from Calais to Besançon. It is not yet known when it will be completed or how closely it will follow Sigeric's historic route (the situation in the Pas-de-Calais is not encouraging). Faced with this uncertain situation, pilgrims on foot are rare, but the VF from Canterbury can be done by bicycle.

In 2010, confronted by the danger of a politico-managerial transformation of the VF, the CEI (Italian Episcopal Commission) founded the ALP association (Ad

Limina Petri – to Peter's tomb, President Don archdiocese of Siena) with the aim of putting the accent back on the VF as a spiritual pilgrimage and insisting on the fundamental necessity of a network of religious and reasonably-priced hospitality and of promoting events along the Italian VF which are held in this spirit. The ALP expressed the wish to work with the AIVF, due to its historic and specific engagement for pilgrims.

Heartfelt thanks to two pillars of the AIVF: Virginie Brouillard (informs about 250 pilgrims a year on top of her daily work) and Hubert Moulin. Adelaide the President (06 85302675 /06 916507710) or Aldo (06 6877221, when they are in Rome) are always happy to meet pilgrims from the AIVF. In case of a SERIOUS PROBLEM, phone or e-mail and we will do our best to help you!

Contacts:

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### **Additions to the CPR Library, August to November 2010**

**Howard Nelson**

*Note: this list does not include items published in the Newsletter*

**Burk, Julie A & Tencer, Neville J**, *An Italian Odyssey: one couple's culinary and cultural pilgrimage*. British Columbia, Veder Media, 2010. 273 pp.

Location: CPR. Acc no: #4936

**Canali, Ferruccio**, *The Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi*. Firenze, Bonechi, n.d. 238 pp. Location: CPR. Acc no: #4941

**Dyson, Stephen L.**, *Rome: a living portrait of an ancient city*. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2010. 467 pp. Location: CPR. Acc no: #4950

**Elsner, Jas**, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998. 297 pp. Location: CPR. Acc no: #4951

**Fontanelli, Claudia**, *San Gimignano: the city with the beautiful towers*. San Gimignano, Mario Manetti, 1998. 120 pp. Location: CPR. Acc no: #4942

**Webster, Leslie and Brown, Michelle, eds**, *The Transformation of the Roman World, AD 400-900*. London, British Museum Press, 1997. 258 pp.

Location: CPR. Acc no: #4952

## Book Reviews

### The Itineraries of William Wey

*The Itineraries of William Wey*, edited and translated by Francis Davey, Bodleian Library Publishing 2010, hardback, £27.99. ISBN: 978 1 85124 304 4.

In Issue 9 of the CPR *Newsletter* (April No.9), members were informed of the publication of Wey's book about his travels to Santiago in 1456, Rome and Jerusalem two years later, and then his final pilgrimage again to Jerusalem in 1462. In fact to call *The Itineraries* "Wey's Book" is to simplify matters - the *Itineraries* are hardly "a book" - rather a series of a dozen different works compiled at different times, each of which is a self-standing composition to the extent that material from one is sometimes repeated in another. A single book, or perhaps three, one for each pilgrimage, could have been produced by Wey from the material presented in the *Itineraries* but this he did not in fact do. To take the most notable example of this lack of editing is the fact that the last work that he compiled - and the last to be included in the collection of writings that comprise the *Itineraries* - was his account of his pilgrimage to Compostella, which was in fact the first of the three pilgrimages that he undertook. For Francis Davey, this was not a problem. Having noted this lack of editing he goes on to say (p111): "This is not to criticise Wey as a poor craftsman, rather it adds to the interest of the book in that one can almost see him at work in his room at Edington...." - the small parish in Wiltshire to which Wey retired at the end of his life. This generous attitude to Wey, on Davey's part, is not surprising: like Wey, Davey is a Devonian and, like him too, he was connected with a famous educational establishment: Wey was a fellow of a Henry VI's College at Eton while Davey is an ex-headmaster of Merchant Taylors' school.

To get to grips with the *Itineraries*, Davey has not only put in an immense amount of academic work, but also adopted a practical hands-on approach and visited many of the places mentioned in Wey's disjointed accounts of his three pilgrimages. This empathy for Wey means, as suggested above, that Davey sometimes acts as something of an apologist for Wey. Thus in Chapter 4 he presents us with a translation of a series of 29 Latin hexameters. These were intended as mnemonics, probably for Wey himself, probably formed the earliest draft of his proposed account of his first journey to Jerusalem, and Davey mildly says of them "These do not always measure up to the Virgilian canon." (In fact Wey was a lamentable poet, both in Latin and in the English of his day - as a perusal of Chapter 3, "The way to Jerusalem and the Holy Places" demonstrates - a poem in truly awful rhyming couplets - much of the material for which occurs elsewhere in the *Itineraries*.) Wey was certainly no Geoffrey Chaucer. In fact, to make another comparison, that of Wey with Davey is definitely to Davey's advantage. To give two examples. Davey's translation concludes with two appendices, the first listing Gifts of William Wey to the Chapel at Edington and the second four "essays" by Davey himself. The first,

entitled "The icon of Our Lady of Philerimos," records his detective work in tracking down the this famous relic, seen by Wey on the Island of Rhodes, from where it travelled via France and Italy to Malta and eventually to Montenegro, where Davey finally located it. Or again, Davey's Commentary, at the end of Chapter 14 on Rome, where (p199) in only a dozen lines he succinctly reconstructs Wey's 1458 pilgrimage to Rome, referring back to various passages in the different tracts that comprise the *Itineraries* and not only Chapter 8, "William Wey's Route 1458."

Of especial interest to members of the CPR is the chapter (14) on Rome, mentioned above, which lists the seven Great Pilgrimage Churches in Rome, and a further 124 other churches in the City of which the final 88 are divided into categories based on their dedications - multiple dedications, Apostles and Evangelists, Holy Martyrs, Holy Confessors and Holy Virgins, followed by a brief section on other religious institutions, monasteries of the different orders and hospices of the different nations. It would be good if Davey, drawing on this material, were to produce a booklet, *William Wey: An English Pilgrim to Rome in 1458*, a companion to his *William Wey: An English Pilgrim to Compostella in 1456*, published by the Confraternity of St James in 2000. This latter, incidentally, includes the Latin text of Wey's account which Chapter 15 in the present work, "The 1456 Pilgrimage to Compostella," does not, since Davey has produced a translation and commentary only. Incidentally *An English Pilgrim to Compostella in 1456* also includes the musical notation of the song sung by the Spanish children who danced before the pilgrims in Spain (p 28 with discussion p 62), which again is not repeated by Davey in Ch 15. If Davey were to write a specific book on the pilgrimage to Rome in 1458 he could also take into account the most interesting observations on Wey's route across the Alps in 1458 made by Peter Robins in the CPR *Newsletter* 10 (August 2010 11-12) which appeared after the publication of *The Itineraries*.

To conclude, for anyone who is seriously interested in pilgrimage in the later Middle Ages, Davey's book has two great merits. Firstly it makes available for the first time in a century and a half the words of Wey himself - albeit in translation - for the actual text itself (except for the account of the pilgrimage to Santiago in 1456 see above), one still has to go to the Roxburghe Club edition by B. Bandinell of 1857. On the other hand Bandinell's edition does not include a translation. Secondly there is Davey's invaluable commentary - for example the fascinating speculation (p13) that Wey was not merely a pilgrim but was acting as an agent for the deposed King Henry VI or Queen Margaret of Anjou. This would explain why Henry, as founder of Eton, was generous in granting him leave of absence - and on full pay. As shown by the observations by Peter Robins on Wey's route across the Alps noted above, Davey's research into William Wey, like all good research, acts as spur to further work and here I may note that by chance I came across a snippet about Sir Baldwin Fufford, one of Wey's companions to Compostella in 1456 (cf p 211) - he turns up as a "confrater" of the English Hospice in Rome in 1452 (see 'The English Hospice

in Rome' ed. Allen, John Gracewing' 2005, pp 67, 96 and 265).

**Mark Hassall**

*Note for members interested in purchasing a copy of Wey's 15<sup>th</sup>-century journal:*

The normal retail price is £27-99 but CPR members may buy a copy for £25-50, including inland postage, from Francis at 1 North Street, Topsham, Exeter, Devon, EX3 0AP. Please enclose a cheque made out to Francis Davey. Overseas postage increases the overall cost to £28-00.

## **An Italian Odyssey**

Julie A Burk & Neville J Tencer. *An Italian Odyssey, one couple's culinary and cultural pilgrimage*, Verdera Media, 2010, 273 pages. ISBN 978-0-9865887-0-9.

According to Chambers' English Dictionary an Odyssey is "a long wandering" or the front cover. Some of the wandering is accidental, as the authors frequently get lost along their 1000 mile journey to Rome, but this adds interest to the journey.

The authors, Julie Burke and Neville Tencer, present wonderful accounts of their journey from Martigny in Switzerland to Rome. I say "accounts" (in the plural) because, unusually, both authors write their own story so you can look at the journey from two differing points of view. This makes for both a highly effective and highly honest narrative. We get an insight into the conflicts that often arise when two people are travelling together through a difficult environment and consequently we are drawn into and become part of their story. We can also look at their different temperaments and how they relate to each other. This forthright form of writing certainly brings their journey to life.

The book is laced with culinary information and a tremendous amount of historical detail, all of which I found interesting. For me it brought back many memories of this Camino. For others, I hope it provides not only a good read, and much pleasure but also an inspiration. There is a copy in the CPR library.

**Joe Patterson**

## La Via Francigena

Jean-Yves Grégoire, *La Via Francigena. Sur la trace des pèlerins de Canterbury à Rome, Rennes;* Éditions Ouest-France, 2010. 144pp., 15 maps, 220 colour photographs, 15.90€. ISBN: 978-2-7373-4881-5

For anyone who wants a concise introduction to the *Via Francigena*, its route, history and places of interest, this book is highly recommended.

It follows the course of the pilgrim way taken by Archbishop Sigeric and his retinue in 990AD, from Canterbury down through France, Switzerland and Italy to the "Eternal City," the 1900 kilometre route subsequently referred to as the *Via Francigena* – the "French Road" to Rome.

Described in twelve fairly long *étapes* this book will be of interest to walkers and covering the route by car or public transport. It gives the reader enough information to put him or her "in the picture" as preparation while allowing them to discover for themselves the detail of the joys and beauty of this journey. The text is accompanied by fifteen colour maps and well illustrated throughout with 220 colour photographs. There is a copy in the CPR library.

There is, however, a serious snag with this book; at present it is only available in French...

**Alison Raju**

# Secretary's Notebook

**Bronwyn Marques**

**Membership** We currently have 159 paid up members, some of whom are joint follows according to country: 19 Australia, 1 Belgium, 4 Canada, 2 Denmark, 2 Finland, 2 France, 7 Ireland, 2 Italy, 1 Kenya, 3 New Zealand, 2 Norway, 3 South Africa, 2 Spain, 2 Sweden, 1 Switzerland, 23 USA, 83 UK.

An indication of the rate of growth of numbers on the VF is that the CPR has sent out 57 pilgrim passports this year compared with 32 the previous year.

**Website** Our website has been redesigned for easier use, as well as the ability to pay subscriptions. The most important facility is that there is now a Members' Only section which has back issues of all our *Newsletters*, the accommodation list and other items such as minutes of meetings, the constitution, the annual accounts and reports. Members will by now have received the passwords which will be changed from time to time.

An option to subscribe (at additional cost) to hard copy editions of new editions of our newsletters is now available on our website. Hard copies of past issues can be obtained at our meetings or by contacting the secretary; prices will depend on the number of copies and postage.

**CPR Library** This is situated at the CSJ offices at 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 and details of the items held can be found via our website. If you write a book or article about the *Via Francigena* or a pilgrimage to Rome by any other route we would be delighted to have a copy and we will then be able to write a book review in the *Newsletter*.

Pilgrims' journals are always a welcome addition to the CPR Library. A series of journals written over the years provides an overview of the development of the route itself and you could be part of that history. If you would like to donate a journal (word-processed, in a binder or folder) of your pilgrimage to the CPR Library please send it to Howard Nelson c/o the CSJ office, 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY.

**Accommodation List** If you would like a copy of the CPR accommodation list please email [culverwood3@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:culverwood3@yahoo.co.uk) and request a copy. The list is also available in the member's only section of our website, though the version on the website may not be as current as the one we e-mail.

Due to the small number of people who walk the route, compared to the *Camino Francés*, for example, your feedback is very valuable in updating and refining the list, so if you have walked or cycled but have not given us details of where you stayed it is never too late.

We plan over the course of the next year or two to use the list as a basis for a number of CPR guides to the *Via Francigena* similar to those published by the CSJ. In order to minimise size and weight the *Via Francigena* will be split into at least 3 booklets. Alison Raju has offered to do this but if anyone has a lot of time on their hands I am sure she will be pleased to have some help in the task.

**CPR Photo Gallery** The CPR Photo Gallery is available via our website. I would encourage those with photos of good enough quality to make them available to other members via the website. Please look at the Gallery section of the website for more information.

**Abraham Path Initiative** Members may be interested in the Abraham Path Initiative <http://www.abrahampath.org/about.php>

### **Forthcoming Events**

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December** - Open Day, St James Church, Picadilly  
[if you are intending coming](#)  
so we have an idea of numbers.

The topic is **Pilgrimage East and West** with the following speakers:

- The Kailash Kora – A Buddhist Pilgrimage*** by Ian Brodrick and Rosemary Norton
- Walking the St. Paul Trail - Part of Paul's First Missionary Journey in AD 46*** by Jim Brodie
- Not dead, but perchance sleepeth – English pilgrimage*** by Ian Holdsworth

### **13<sup>th</sup> December – Canterbury**

Hon Massimo Tedeschi has been fundamental in reviving awareness of the *Via Francigena*, the pilgrimage route from Canterbury to Rome, which was first described by Archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury in AD 990. Awareness of the route was almost non-existent when he first contacted the city council in 1993.

In the late 1990s he invited Canterbury to take part in a European Commission-funded promotional project linking the *Via Francigena* and the *Way of St James* to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. This project authoritatively established Canterbury (rather than London) as the starting point. The kilometre 0 stone placed outside Canterbury Cathedral in 2007 formally marks this and is appreciated by pilgrims setting off for Rome.

In 2001, as Mayor of Fidenza, Hon Tedeschi founded the Italian association of *Via Francigena* towns which in 2006 became the European association (AEVF) of which Canterbury was a founder member. The AEVF is now recognised by the European Institute of Cultural Routes as the authoritative body for the

Hon Massimo Tedeschi continues to work as hard as ever at both national and European levels for the advancement of the Via Francigena and is widely respected for his experience and expertise. For these reasons he is to be given a Civic Award by Canterbury City Council.

**AGM** The 2011 AGM is to be held on March 15<sup>th</sup> 2011, together with our Practical Pilgrim Day, at St James Piccadilly. (The venue is subject to confirmation.)

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**Wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas and a  
Happy New Year 2011**

## Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome

Founded November 2006

[www.pilgrimstorome.org.uk](http://www.pilgrimstorome.org.uk)

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