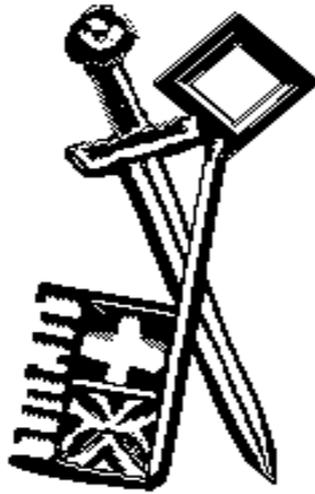


**CONFRATERNITY  
OF  
PILGRIMS TO ROME**



**NEWSLETTER**

**AUGUST 2011 No. 13**

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## Editorial

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

There are three articles, 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

Ian Brodrick continues and concludes his discussion of pilgrimage in Egypt in the second part of his extended article on the subject. Chris George encourages the reader to walk the road to Rome while Francis Davey explores the possibility that William Wey may have undertaken his two pilgrimages to Jerusalem subsidised by King Henry VI, a written version of the talk he gave to the Friends of the Bodleian Library on March 8<sup>th</sup> this year.

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 for providing a PDF file for the electronic version of this issue.

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## ***Egypt and Pilgrimage, Part 2\*\*\****

Ian Brodrick

### ***The Egyptian Eastern Desert. A Pilgrimage to the very start of Christian Monasticism.***

For me, it is for St. Anthony that I made my first trip and indeed pilgrimage, to Egypt proper.

The anonymous work, *History of the Monks in Egypt*, written at some time in the 4th century, says of Egypt: *“there is no town or village in Egypt or the Thebaid that is not surrounded by hermitages as if by walls, and the people depend on their prayers as if on God Himself...Through them the world is kept in being.”*

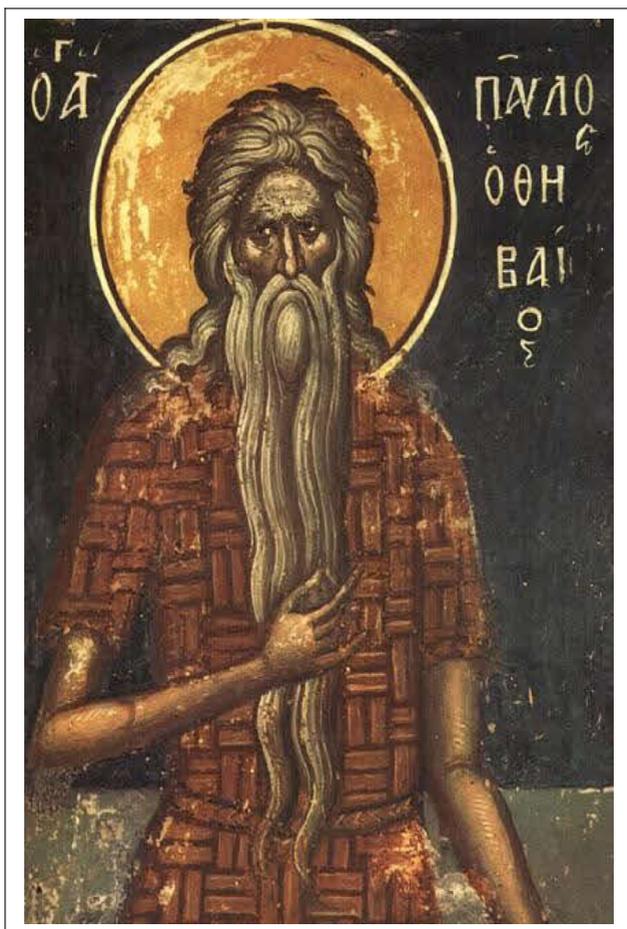
I doubt if Anthony or Paul made any claim to precedence, originality, or even greatness. Nonetheless, it is **Saint Anthony of Egypt** who is credited as the Father of Christian Monasticism – in fact with the founding of eremitical or anchoritic monasticism (characterised by isolation)

Anthony, Paul and Pachomius (founder of communal monasticism) were only expanding on an idea and practice that had already existed among “Pagan” and Christian groups, and indeed amongst Christian women. It is quite likely indeed that the examples from Buddhist Monasticism, some seven centuries older, were of influence.

Christian and other monasticism was doubtless already being practiced in the deserts of Egypt and Ascetics commonly retired to isolated locations on the outskirts of cities. It may be assumed that Pachomius brought his rigour and discipline to that.

By the 2nd century there were also famous female Christian ascetics, such as Saint Thecla in what is now Syria. Communities of nuns were established before Saints Paul, Anthony and Pachomius began their work. It may be said that it is these women who should be truly credited with the origin of the monastic vocation. After the death of his parents in the 270's, the young Saint Anthony was able to entrust his younger sister to a **parthenon**, or proto convent of women – largely to allow him to follow a path of isolation and not that community.

Whatever else, It can be said that after Saint Anthony and St Paul, there were two basic types of monasticism in Egypt, and later on, the world – the eremitic or solitary and the coenobitic, or communal life.



*Paul the Anchorite - Author and date unknown*

Paul of Thebes, commonly known as Saint Paul the First Hermit or St Paul the Anchorite (d. c. 341) preceded St Anthony into the desert and is regarded by some as the first Christian hermit, probably also by way of the omission of unknown others! Saint Anthony described him as "the first monk". We mostly know of his life from the writings of St. Jerome and his work, *Vita Pauli* (Life of Paul), which was written between 375 and 380 AD. St. Jerome tells us that, while it may have been St. Anthony who founded the monastic way of life by inspiring others, Amathas and Macarius, who were disciples of Anthony, affirm that Paul of Thebes was actually the originator of the practice.

Paul's anchoritic lifestyle was remarkably harsher than his known predecessors and his intention perhaps more vigorously pursued. His effort created the monastic or coenobitic movement by example.

According to Jerome, Paul was apparently born to rich parents in the year 228. By the age of sixteen, he had lost his parents during the persecutions of Decius and Valerianus, renounced his inheritance consecrated his life to God. He fled to the Eastern desert in c. 250 living in the mountains of this desert in a cave near a clear spring and a palm tree, the leaves of which provided him with raiment and the fruit of which provided him with his only source of food till he was 43 years old, when a raven started bringing him half a loaf of bread daily. He would remain in that cave for the rest of his life, almost a hundred years – until he was 113.

Jerome further relates the meeting of Anthony the Great and Paul, when the latter was aged 113. Jerome tells us that Anthony was told of someone living in the desert that was holier than he. Hence, he set out to find Paul and, having succeeded, had a friendly conversation with him. That evening when the Raven came to bring the saint's nourishment, he came with a whole loaf so that both the holy men might have substance.

They conversed with each other for one day and one night.

When Paul thought that he was approaching death, he asked Anthony to fetch the cloak which the patriarch Athanasius had given him. However, when Anthony arrived at the cave where Paul had lived those many years, he saw angels carrying the soul of the holy ascetic to heaven. Paul's body remained in the cave, but two lions approached and dug a grave into which Anthony placed Paul's body wrapped in the cloak he had fetched. Anthony is said to have kept Paul's tunic of palm leaves, which he wore to celebrate the occasions of Easter and Pentecost.



*The Hermits St Anthony and St Paul by Albrecht Durer, 1500-1504*

## **St Anthony**

Anthony is notable for being one of the first known Christian ascetics to attempt living in the desert proper, completely cut off from civilization. Without perhaps having that intention, he moved away from the distractions of society and the city and into the wilderness, by founding his first hermitage in AD 305.

The *Life of Anthony*, written around 360 by Athanasius of Alexandria sometime before 374, tells us that Anthony was born in Coma near Herakleopolis Magna in Lower Egypt in 251 to wealthy landowner parents. When he was about 18 years old, his parents died and left him with the care of his unmarried sister. The account is filled with struggles with the devil, and events and philosophy from the 4<sup>th</sup> Century mind which would be remote to most of us. In 285, at the age of 34, he decided to follow the words of Jesus: "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven; and come, follow Me."

Saint Anthony decided to follow the hermetic path and after disposing of any wealth, headed out into the desert region called the Nitria in Latin (Wadi El Natrun today), about 95 km west of Alexandria, some of the most rugged terrain of the Western Desert. Here he remained for some thirteen years. After further periods living in solitude in a closed tomb, and then for 20 years in a ruined Roman fort in the desert at ar Pispis, now Der el Memun, he is said to have emerged serene, and enlightened. The legend of Anthony was born.

In 311 Anthony visited Christian prisoners in Alexandria in search of martyrdom. The governor of Alexandria declined to oblige and he returned to the old Roman fort and then travelled further into the Eastern Desert of Egypt again seeking solitude. The hagiography indicates that he travelled to the wilderness for three days, until he found a spring of water and palm trees in the remote mountains of the Eastern Desert, settling in a nearby cliff cave.

Anthony himself did not organize or create a monastery; a community grew around him on the desert edge based on his example and with a rule of worship and physical labour. Anthony himself cultivated a garden and wove mats of rushes. He and his disciples were regularly sought out for words of enlightenment, the "*Sayings of the Desert Fathers*".

Anthony, it is said, would speak to those of spiritual search, leaving the worldly to Macarius. On occasions, he would go to the monastery on the outskirts of the desert by the Nile to visit the brethren, then return to his inner monastery. Saint Anthony prophesied about the persecution that was about to happen to the church and the control of the heretics over it, the church victory and its return to its formal glory, and the end of the age.

When the death of Saint Paul - the First Desert Hermit - approached, Saint Anthony went to him and buried him, after clothing him in a tunic which was a present from St Athanasius the Apostolic, the 20th Patriarch of Alexandria. In 338, he was summoned by Athanasius to help refute the teachings of Arius – the Arian Heresy. Saint Anthony reportedly lived for 105 years and died in 356.

Athanasius' biography helped propagate Anthony's ideals. Athanasius writes, "For monks, the life of Anthony is a sufficient example of asceticism." The biography helped to spread the concept of monasticism, particularly in Western Europe through its Latin translations.

Apparently buried on the limestone mountain where he had chosen to live, his remains were found and transferred to Alexandria in 361. Then to Constantinople and in the eleventh century, the Emperor gave them to French count Jocelin. Jocelin took them to La-Motte-Saint-Didier, renamed Saint-Antoine-en-Dauphiné in South Eastern France, where the Catholic Church credits them a number of miraculous healings, primarily from ergotism, or "St. Anthony's Fire". Two recovered nobles founded the Hospital Brothers of St. Anthony in honour of him. Some Maronite, Chaldean, and Orthodox churches seek to follow St Anthony's monastic rule to this day.

### ***The Desert Fathers Philosophy***

**No earthly Christian state** The lives of the Desert fathers coincided with the period of legalisation of Christianity in the Roman Empire (in 313). Indeed, the Emperor could now be a Christian and [Christianity](#) held political power. The hermits doubted that religion and power could mix to produce a fully Christian society. The only Christian society was spiritual and a "Christian state" impossible.

**Primacy of love** Love is held above every other element in spiritual life including learning, prayer and finding wisdom. Without love the other practices were without purpose. Love is a spiritual identification with others despite any difficulties, even to a kind of death of the personality.

**Authority of God's Will** The basic and largely single principle of the Desert Life was that God is the authority. The Desert life started out with a clean break from the world and adherence to that Will which would end attachment to unreal values.

**Purity of Heart** The goal of practice was "purity of heart" and therefore a clear view of reality, inner and outer. True peace could thence be found without unnecessary striving.

**Some Sayings of the Desert Father** *One of the Elders, "It is not because of evil thoughts that we are condemned, but only because we make use of these evil thoughts."*

*Abbot Pastor, "If someone does evil to you, you should do good to him, so that by your good work you may drive out his malice."*

*An Elder, "A man who keeps death before his eyes will at all times overcome his cowardliness."*

### ***Saint Pachomius 292-348 AD***

Another Egyptian, **Saint Pachomius**, is credited as the founder of coenobite or communal living in monasteries – also in Egypt - at Tabennisi, between 318 and 323 AD. Pachomius was born in the Upper Thebaid in Egypt around 292 AD, but little is know about this early life. When, in 313, forcibly enlisted to serve Constantine 1<sup>st</sup> against Maxentius and while being transported on the Nile to Alexandria, the kindness of the local Christians led Pachomius to the faith. He became openly Christian at his discharge.

In 314, at the age of 22. He became a hermit inhabiting a deserted temple of Serapis and then became disciple of Palemon, sharing his cell.

Pachomius came to believe that a community of monks working together could achieve more internally and externally, than hermits living alone.



*Egyptian, Saint Pachomius (ca. 292-348), also known as Abba Pachomius and Pakhom, is generally recognized as the founder of Christian coenobitic monasticism.*

After leaving Palemon, Pachomius founded his first monastery at Tabennisi near Denderah in about 323.

By the time of his death from plague in 346, monks, he had founded and presided over eight or nine monasteries of men, and two convents – a total of 3000 monks or more.

**The Community**

*"The fundamental idea of St. Pachomius' rule, was to establish a moderate level of observance (moderate in comparison with the life led by the hermits) which might be obligatory on all; and then to leave it open to each - and to indeed encourage each - to go beyond the fixed minimum, according as he was prompted by his strength, his courage, and his zeal" (Abbot Butler, Lausiac History", I, p. 236).*

From a secular point of view, a Pachomian monastery was a self-sustaining industrial community in which almost every kind of trade was practised. This, of course, involved much buying and selling, and monasteries had ships of their own on the Nile, to convey agricultural produce and manufactured goods to the market.

From the spiritual point of view, the Pachomian monk was living under a rule more severe, even when allowance has been made for differences of climate, than that of the Trappists.

A Pachomian monastery would typically be a walled enclosure containing the

community in a number of houses. There would be forty or so monks to a house and thirty to forty houses in a monastery. The monks might live in houses dedicated to their work, or even nationality.

In strong contrast with the individualism of the eremitical life was the discipline which prevailed in the coenobitical monasteries founded by St. Pachomius. The monastery would be ruled by an abbot with provosts with subordinate officials. There were vows - of chastity and poverty for instance and, in monastic community, obedience to the abbot. The life might include fasting, abstinence (sometimes from alcohol and meat), and service, such as helping with labour, charity or education.

According to St. Jerome - famous for translating the Bible into Latin - in the preface to his translation of the "Rule of Pachomius," dinner tables were laid twice a day - but customarily some monks eat only the first one, while others ate bread, water, and salt in their cell.

On Saturdays and Sundays monks would assemble in the church for Mass; on other days the Office and other spiritual exercises were contained in the houses. It is often quoted that the early Coenobitic Rule became basis for all Christian monastic orders, including that of Saint Benedict.

In popular imagination it was St. Benedict of Nursia (480 - 550) who gave us Christian monasticism. Is the link between Pachomius and Benedict credible?

### ***The Spontaneous spread of Monastic Practice, 350 – 450 CE***

After the deaths of Anthony and Pachomius in the mid third century the Pachomian, communal monasteries were principally in the south of Egypt. In the north of Egypt there was one communal coenobitic monastery at Canopus, near Alexandria. On the other hand eremitical monasteries, were widespread, and especially in the north. It is supposed that as monasticism spread eastwards it was using the common eremitical or solitary model.

Mount Sinai was colonised in 373 AD by eremitic monks and Raithe (supposed to be Elim, one of the places where the Israelites camped following their Exodus from Egypt) in a similar period. So within a generation of St Anthony and Pachomius, both solitary and communal monasticism spread outside Egypt, first to Palestine and the Judean Desert and thence to Syria and North Africa.

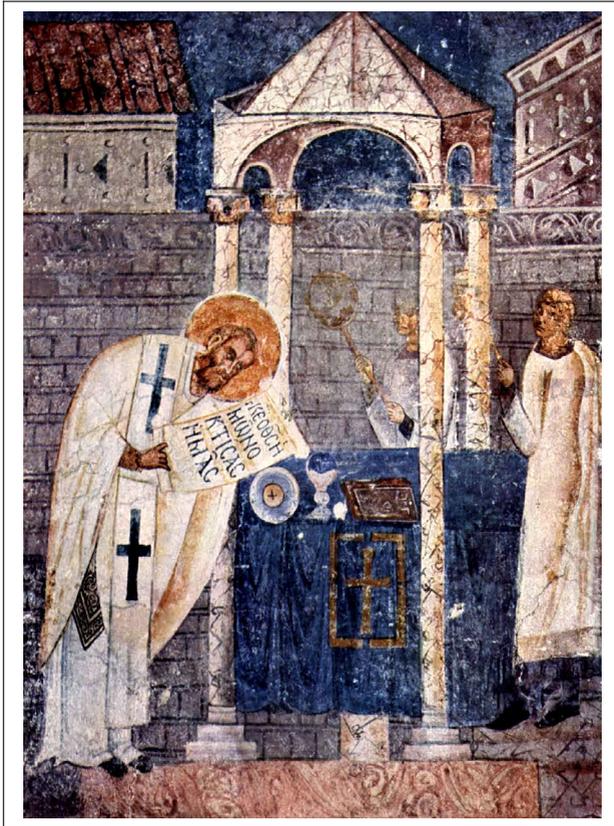
St. Hilarion, a disciple of St. Anthony, founded eremitic monasticism in his native city Gaza and then Cyprus. His friend, St. Epiphanius, left Egypt to found a monastery near Eleutheropolis in Palestine about 330AD

By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Palestine began to supersede Egypt as the centre of monasticism, but using its models and methods.

Saint Basil of Caesarea codified the precepts for these eastern monasteries in his Ascetic Rule, or *Ascetica*, which is still used today in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

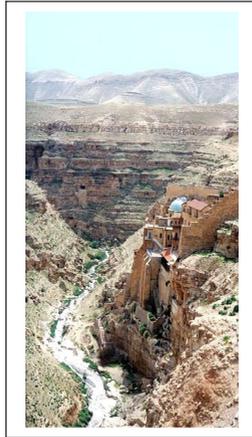
Both St. Basil's communal and St. Anthony's eremitic monasticism formed a hybrid lavrite system, meaning that before isolation in a *lavra* or eremitic environment, aspirants should follow an apprenticeship in a communal cenobium

The lavrite style of monastic living had begun in the area of Wadi Al Natrun in North Egypt. 600 hermits lived individually in the area but relying for sustenance on central organisation at Nitria. This too spread to Palestine - at Mar Saba for instance.



*Basil of Caesarea 11<sup>th</sup> Century Frescoes in the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Ohrid, Macedonia*

While Basil indicated that solitary spots should be chosen as sites for monasteries, they soon found their way into cities. According to one scholar, at least fifteen monasteries were founded at Constantinople in the time of Constantine the Great; but others affirm that the three most ancient ones only dated back to the time of Theodosius (375-95).



*Mar Saba in Palestine.*

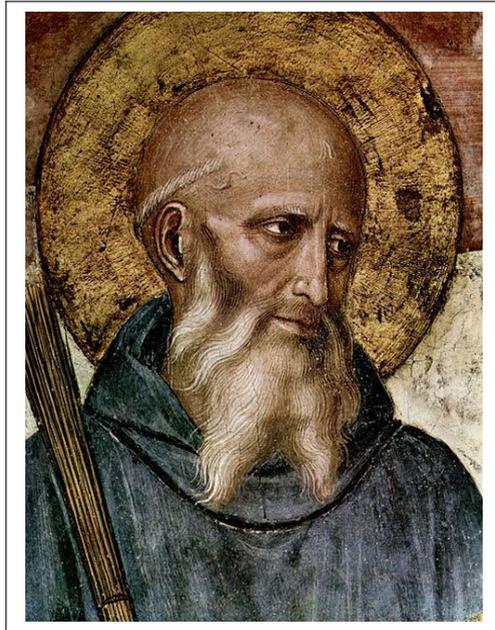
***Chalcedon 451 AD. The formalisation of Monasticism.***

Eastern Christian monasticism thus developed for around a century and a half, and as a spontaneous religious movement, to the time of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE. At that Council, monasticism was formalised as part of the life of the formal Christian Church.

Monasteries were not to be erected without the permission of the bishop. Monks were to receive due honour, but were not to be involved with the affairs of Church or State, but were subject to the bishop, etc.

**Benedict of Nursia (480–547 CE)**

We know that in about the year 500, Benedict became so disillusioned by what he perceived to be the immorality of Roman society that he gave up his formal studies and chose the life of an ascetic monk in the pursuit of personal holiness, living as a hermit in a cave near the rugged region of Subiaco. This action was in the direct tradition of Egyptians Paul the Anchorite and Anthony the Great.



*St Benedict. Fra Angelico CE. 1437-1446 Museum of St Mark's, Florence.*

Like Anthony and Paul in the Eastern Desert, a community formed around Benedict. That community preceded the foundation of the monastery of Monte Cassino in 529. The Rule of Benedict was written near the end of his life and based on his experience, and that of his predecessors.

What were Benedict's influences in this journey? In Chapter 73 of the Order, Benedict comments on the Rule of St Basil the Great and quotes the earlier Rules of Augustine of Hippo and Saint John Cassian - and the anonymous Rule of the Master.

Of the known principle influences on the Rule of Benedict, it can be said that all of them lie in the direct lines of Egyptian Christian spirituality and Monasticism:

- **Saint Basil the Great** Archbishop of Caesaria of Cappadocia, founder and organizer of the monastic movement in Asia Minor, visited Egypt and its monasteries around 357 A.D. during his careful study of monasticism in Egypt, Palestine, Coelesyria, and Mesopotamia - Basil's monastic ideal is set forth in a collection of his writings known as the "Asceticon", or "Ascetica" He founded several monasteries in Pontus (now Northern Turkey), over one of which he himself for a time presided, and very soon monasteries, modelled after his, spread over the East. His writings were the basis of the Byzantine monasticism and later of the Eastern Orthodox Churches.
- **Saint John Cassian** himself (360-435AD) lived in Egypt for seven years and there wrote his two famous books, *Institutes* and *Conferences*.

- **Saint Augustin of Hippo** was a Roman African, born in 354AD in the municipium of Thagaste (present-day Souk Ahras, Algeria). His 386 conversions to Christianity followed a reading of the life of the Egyptian Saint Anthony the Great.

It is not unfair to state that Egypt, and its founding fathers is the home of Christian monasticism and the heart of the Christian monastic impulse which Benedict founded. That movement is an ancient, African and Asian one in origin.  
***The Places of Pilgrimage - the Spread of Monasticism in Egypt***

### ***Wadi Natrun (Sketes) and the Nitran Desert***

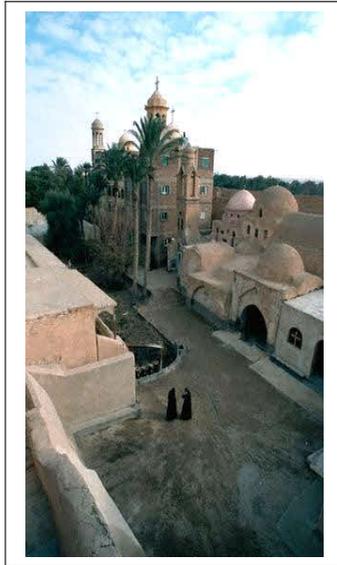


Wadi El- Natron is located 100 km to the north west of Cairo and nearer to Alexandria. It is a natural depression in the western desert. Today it consists of salt lakes and salt flats lying in the desert.

Between the 3rd century and 7th century A.D Wadi El Natrun and the Nitrian Desert contained numerous monasteries, solitary, communal and lavrite. The first monk to settle in Wadi Natrun was Macarius the Egyptian, whose retirement to the desert took place in 330 A.D. He became spiritual father to 3,500 or more monks in the desert, and the monastery has been continuously occupied from then to the present day. Saint Amun followed Saint Anthony to be the first to build a *kellia* [group of hermit cells] from sole hermits in the Nitrian Desert.

By the end of the fourth century AD Christian settlers moved towards four monastic communities: (old) Baramus, Macarius, Bishoi and John Kolobos (John the Little). Initially these monasteries were simply collections of individual cells and dwellings centered on specific churches and communal facilities but they gradually developed into enclosures with walls and watchtowers for protection from raids from desert nomads.

The Natrun's communities declined with the Muslim conquest of Egypt in 641 A.D. Monasteries were wrecked and looted and only four monasteries remain in the region, all dating from the fourth century A.D.



*Inside the Syrian Monastery (El Sourian) 1990*

By the fourteenth century, monastic life appeared to be more cenobitic as the monks gathered within the enclosure walls for protection.

A tax imposed on monks from 705 began a decline in Monasticism and by 1088 there were 712 monks at Wadi al-Natrun in seven monasteries. By 1712, there were only thirty monks in the four known monasteries.

The remaining active monasteries are -

- *the Monastery of St. Marcarius (Deir abu maker)*
- *the Monastery of St. Bishoy (Deir Anba bishoy)*
- *the Syrian Monastery (Deir el Surian)*
- *the Monastery of St. Paromeus (Deir EL Baramous)*

There are many important cave, retreat sites in the surrounding area and huge quantities of early Christian archaeology including hermitages, monasteries and caves.

Twenty of the earliest monastic settlements have been found at Wadi el-Naturn, including the remains of the Monastery of the Armenians, the Monastery of the Abyssinians, the Monastery of the Nubians, the Monastery of Saint John the Little, the Monastery of Moses the Black (which may be the old Baramus Monastery) and a church dedicated to John the Little and other mostly mud built establishment characterised by domes and vaults.

The existing monasteries are of various dedications, generally have a surrounding high wall (from 9<sup>th</sup> Century) with churches keep, towers, refectories, and a guest house. Paromeus is the oldest being founded by Marcarius the Great around 335 CE, They have invariably been rebuilt and reoccupied on several occasions following destruction by Berber and Bedouin, but today are expanded and subject to expansion, research and rebuilding by the Coptic Church. St Marcarius in particular has newly found crypts and relics associated with St John the Baptist and the Prophet Elijah

There are numerous archaeological projects researching the deep Christian origins of the place and run by foreign Universities such as Yale and Leiden. In the current time the monasteries openly welcome visitors, regardless of faith. The monasteries can be visited throughout and Wadi Naturn is a fairly quick, easy journey from Cairo and indeed Alexandria.

***The Coptic Church itself divides monasticism into three rather than two categories.***

***(a) Monarchism***

*The anchorites or hermits who lived in complete seclusion, only visiting the abbot when they needed counsel. Each hermit organized his own prayer, clothing, food and work. The first anchorite in the world was Saint Paul. He lived for eighty years in the Egyptian desert without seeing a single person.*

*Some hermits entered into the inner deserts and settled there for tens of years, seeing no one. Saint Mary of Egypt was one of these, and is also considered as one of those hermits who are called "Pilgrims", who had no specific cell but lived homeless, wandering in the wilderness.*

***(b) The Coenobitic System***

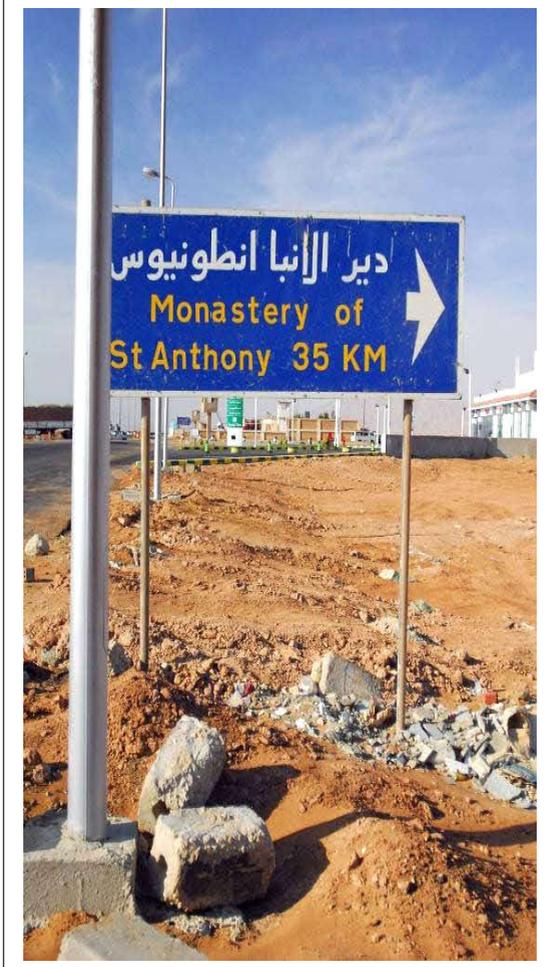
*Under this system, founded by Saint Pachomius in Upper Egypt, the monks lived in a community inside the walls of the monastery, in association with each other, governed by an abbot and by rules. Even through this system Christian monasticism never lost its yearning for monarchism.*

***(c) The Communal, Lavrite or Semi-eremitic Life***

*This form of monasticism is mid-way between monarchism and the coenobitic system. The mode of Saint Anthony's life as described by Saint Athanasius was actually semi-eremitic in essence, for the monks lived in separate caves*

or cells and assembled occasionally for the Divine Liturgy or spiritual meetings. Thus Saint Anthony prepared the way for the communal order. In the wildernesses of Nitria and Scetis the communal order was established by Saint Amoun and Saint Macarius the Great. There the ascetics lived not in absolute isolation, but in cells built at such a distance that they could neither see nor hear one another. They gathered for communal prayer on Saturdays and Sundays.

### **The Places of Pilgrimage**



*The Way off the Coast Road to St Anthony's*

There are many ancient and current monastic sites in Egypt, which go back to the very start of Christian practice. There are two particular sites of the “founders” – the desert fathers. The Monasteries of St Paul and of St Anthony are in the Eastern Desert of Egypt between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea Coast. St Paul’s is a 5<sup>th</sup> Century foundation while St Anthony’s was more than likely founded in some form during the life of St Anthony, if below his hermitage in the third century. I will take you to St Anthony’s and leave you to find St Paul’s for yourself.

### ***The Monastery of Saint Anthony***

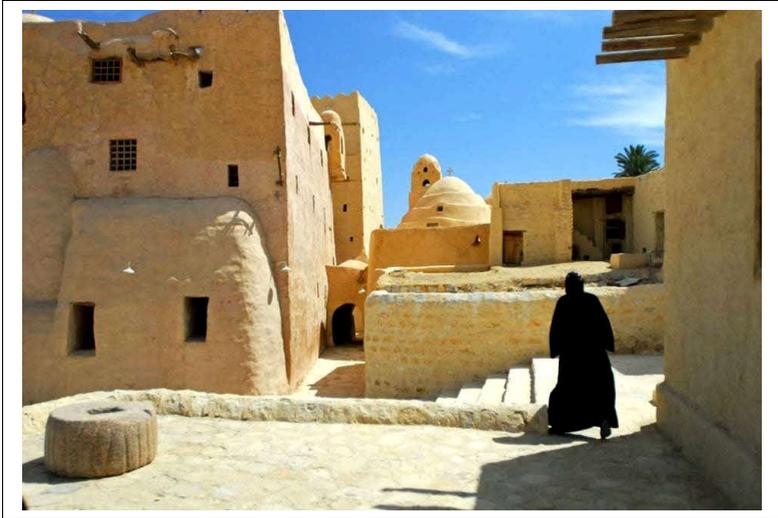
The modern Coptic Orthodox monastery is located in the same oasis in the Eastern Desert, in the Red Sea mountains found by Anthony. It is about 155 km (100 miles) southeast of Cairo and accessible from Cairo, Suez or Hurghada by public bus. The monastery was built around 356. Little is known about its earliest history.

During the sixth and seventh centuries, many monks from the monasteries of Scetes went to the monastery of Saint Anthony, in order to escape the frequent attacks by the Bedouins and Berbers. The monastery itself was plundered a number of times by the Bedouins of the Eastern Desert, who partly destroyed it in the 11th century. It flourished between the 12th and 15th centuries, but was plundered again in 1454 by the Bedouins. In response to these attacks, a fortress-like structure was built around the monastery for its protection.



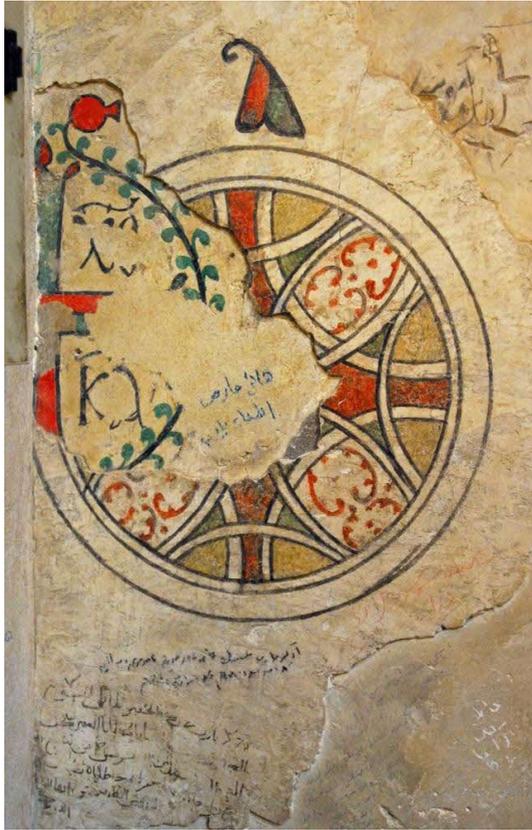
*Leaving St. Anthony's Cave*

The modern monastery is a self-contained village with gardens, a mill, a bakery and five churches. The walls are adorned with paintings of knights in bright colours and hermits in more subdued colours. The wall paintings have been worn over the centuries by soot, candle grease, oil and dust. In a collaborative effort between the Supreme Council of Antiquities and the American Research Centre in Egypt, restoration has been undertaken on the paintings. The oldest paintings in the monastery date to the 7th and 8th centuries, while the newest date to the 13th. There is also woodwork inside Saint Anthony's Church that has been restored.



*Inside St. Anthony's Monastery*

The monastery has a library with over 1,700 handwritten manuscripts. The library probably contained many more volumes, but was significantly reduced by the Bedouins who plundered the monastery and used many of the manuscripts as cooking fuel.



The cave where St. Anthony lived as a hermit is a 2km walk from the monastery, and 680 meters above the Red Sea. In 2005, the monks' cells dating to the 4th century - the oldest ever found - were discovered beneath the Church of the Apostles. Like all of Egypt's monasteries, the monastery of St. Anthony is experiencing a renaissance and a growth in the number of its monks. The current abbot of the monastery is His Grace Bishop Yustus (Justus).

There are many, many other significant monasteries and places of Christian and other religious significance in Egypt. Every area of delta, river valley and desert contain the remains.



*The route to St Anthony's cave 2009. (Photo Regula Burri)*

### ***The Monastery of St Paul***

The Monastery of St. Paul (Deir Anba Bula), has always been associated with the Monastery of St. Anthony, being some 40km to its South. It is the neighbour of St Anthony's, and can be visited at the same time and I will leave the interested to do so without further explanation.

### ***Egypt and Christianity, so what, nothing new?***

I would invite you to watch a BBC video - *Extreme Pilgrim, Ascetic Christianity*. It can be found in numerous places on the internet. i.e. (<http://orthodoxfathers.org/bbc-extreme-pilgrim-ascetic-christianity.htm>). It is a film I would like to have made and saved the previous thousands of words!

In it we see Pete Owen-Jones, a vicar in a Sussex parish but now, 15 years later, he feels that the Church of England is too much a faith of the head, and not enough a faith of the soul, the heart or even the body. He now sets off on a quest in search of a more physical and mystical path to enlightenment. "What I'm looking for," he says, is a spirituality that is absent from western Christianity. A spirituality I know exists in the extremes of world religions." He walks the very route from Cairo and then on camel the routes that Anthony would have taken to find his path, and the same route which I have taken.



*Father Lazarus, the hermit. St Anthony's, Western Desert, Egypt. BBC. Extreme Pilgrimage, Episode 3.*

What is it that we seek in Pilgrimage? I would say we can find the roots of Western faith in Egypt, raw and real.

In Egypt we can also rediscover our relationship to the world's older faiths to the East which were well known in the Eastern Mediterranean. We know that the Alexandrian Empire brought contact with the East, creating the later Sassanid and Greco-Bactrian Kingdoms – and Indo Graeco-Buddhism.

Early Christian monastic practice bears much resemblance to Buddhist monastic practice which would have been well known to the Alexandrians and other people of the Eastern Mediterranean via Asoka's envoys and the various sects following those paths. We can be proud of those links and seek to understand them as so many people did in those four hundred years around the time of Christ.

We can find that although the conditions could not be different, the very spiritual roots of Christianity can be found in Celtic Ireland, and indeed England, in the deserts of Capadocia, in Palestine and, I believe, wherever we look. The inspiration and newness of the time.

We can also see the institutionalisation and failure of the Church to provide that spirituality and begin to find again what we have lost. None of these processes are speedy or to be judged successful or otherwise.

I refer again to the shameful persecution of Christians by other Christians in the post-Nicene world, the expulsions of mystics and those seeking direct spiritual experience, in favour of the evolving dogma of the Church. At the Council of Chalcedon even the monks were to be controlled and kept out of Church affairs. We can also begin to wonder what we have lost and gained in

the process of the evolution of formal Churches in the West, and indeed what we might regain. What indeed can the future be. What can we become? Can our act of Pilgrimage be part of something a little more expansive and inclusive?

Certainly the expansion in the range of pilgrimage for the more adventurous is possible. A new appreciation of world traditions and what underlies them. A

new appreciation of cultures – and a certain feeling for what has been done in our name.

There are those who gain so much from pilgrimage. There are those who merely expand their egos, or "even spiritual" egos – if that is understandable? We can look at the desert fathers effort to rid themselves of ego and find a raw reality. There is something to learn there.

### **The Future**

My own journey in the future will include the routes and places of Abraham. (<http://www.abrahampath.org/route.php>) - to Jerusalem and hopefully Medina.

I also want to see some more of Egypt's origins and work out some usable, safe routes including Fayoum and the Wadi Natrun areas, and then on to Palestine and (Mar Saba etc.) back to Cappadocia with far greater understanding of the rock-cut caves of the monks who lived there in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. The Coptic Church official route of the Holy Family achieves the Egyptian goals in one – and the route to Jerusalem the rest!

It will be interesting to walk the old pilgrimage route on Sinai to St Katharine's, founded by Justinian in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Visiting St Katharine's without that has seemed less than edifying. More of that to come.

Closer at hand it will include the Celtic and British Churches before St Augustine and his friends expunged them as best they could - in an understanding of their similarities to the birth of Christianity and its earlier and purest days.

My future will certainly include some of the other great pilgrimage routes of Buddhism in India and the areas of Graeco Buddhism where East and West mixed so easily and without conflict.



## ROME AWAITS YOU!!

Chris George

A visit to the Holy Land has been, and presumably always will be, at the top of the “wish list” of a Christian with the pilgrim habit embedded in their DNA.

There were for long periods over the centuries when it was neither possible or at least a very difficult place to reach . The present day political situation in the area is still not exactly encouraging.

Back in 2007 having walked the *Via Francigena* from Canterbury to Rome, leaving Canterbury on the 7th July 2005, that fateful day for London, I arrived in Rome on the 15th September. Fortunately Don Bruno Vercesi was on hand to see me, write out my *Testimonium* No. 309, and give me “the tour” and I left Rome with a wish to return and make my pilgrimage on foot to Jerusalem. So in preparation I met with James Carty in London early in 2007 seeking his advice and eventually set off from St Peter’s Square in April 2007 . Unfortunately when halfway across Greece I suffered an injury to my hip and had to abandon the pilgrimage and limp home.

On a subsequent visit to Rome, with my wife this time, I reflected on the many reasons there were to come to Rome throughout the Middle Ages and up to the present day.

However, despite the appeal of Rome, there have been periods when the city has not been so popular. Take for example the actions of two of our Kings.

Our Crusader King Richard the First, on his way to the Holy Land in 1190, travelled through Italy to take ship. His route took him quite close to Rome but he never bothered to divert for a visit.

A King in dispute with the church and the Archbishop of Canterbury made it known that no subject of his was to visit Rome. Henry the Second, when he was upset with Thomas à Beckett, considered that loyalty to the Pope should not have precedence over loyalty to the Crown.

We owe our gratitude to an Archbishop of Canterbury, who received his appointment some 170 years or so before Beckett, for the basis of *the Via Francigena* which the CPR does so much to promote.

The journey undertaken by Sigeric to Rome in 990 to receive his *pallium* (a white woollen stole/scarf with six black crosses on it, forming his seal of office) and blessing from the Pope on his appointment was then considered a “must-do” for a new Archbishop. However, by the beginning of the 1300’s, this “duty” of journeying to Rome began to fall from favour of church leaders and indeed kings who, in the past, had felt obliged to pay their respects to the current occupier of the Cathedra Petri. Certainly decades later when the move to Avignon took

place the pull of Rome diminished even further.

When the Papal “switch” to Avignon took place Rome suffered another down grading as “the” place to visit.

The beginning of the new century in 1300 provided an opportunity to encourage visitors back to Rome, especially since Pope Boniface VIII declared 1300 a Jubilee (Holy) Year. Thousands flocked to Rome in that year and the Pope and his cardinals gathered together great treasures and popular relics to show to the masses. It had been expected that the Pope would grant plenary indulgences and this hope was fulfilled, but only if a certain number of churches in Rome were visited by the pilgrims who were arriving in their thousands.

Obviously all this influx caused a great strain on the facilities in Rome. (Will London cope, in 2012, with the thousands expected to crowd in to watch the Olympic competitions?)

Jerusalem had its Palmer’s Badge, Santiago its cockle- shell, so the *vernicle* (St Veronica’s image of Christ;’s face on a badge) was introduced to signify a visit to Rome.

Europeans all came their various ways to Rome, but the Alps were a barrier for all. When I walked to Rome, like hundreds of thousands before me, I chose the Great Saint-Bernard Pass but even in August I had a snowstorm to enliven proceedings. However my afternoon and overnight stay at the Hospice remains one of the highlights of my pilgrimage.

Many journals still exist written by travellers to Rome recounting the dangers they faced. These dangers were both natural and man-made. Many pilgrims were attacked by robbers and Aelfsige, Archbishop of Canterbury, froze to death in 959 whilst trying to cross the natural barrier of the Alps.

We have our maps and guide books today. I for one am eagerly awaiting the publication later this year of Alison Raju’s Cicerone guide to Part 1 of the *Via Francigena*. Back in the 1250’s Mathew Paris (no relation to *The Times* feature writer I think ...) produced a guide not only to Rome but to Jerusalem as well.

However despite all the difficulties over the centuries a pilgrimage to Rome still remains to this day a great attraction for thousands worldwide.

I shall never forget mine in 2005. I shall always remember the anticipation I felt as I ticked off the miles – sorry, kilometres - over those last few days.

The experience of my arrival in the Eternal City was made extra special as my elder daughter flew in to Rome without my knowledge, tracked me down in La Storta that penultimate night, and walked in to Rome with me the next day .

If you have thought about walking the *Via Francigena*, then have a go! Rome is waiting !!



*Great Saint-Bernard Pass – Hospice in December 2010 (Photo: Pierre Rouyer)*

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# William Wey: the King's Pilgrim?

Francis Davey

*A talk given by the author to the Friends of the Bodleian Library on  
March 8<sup>th</sup> 2011*

Sixty years ago I came up to Oxford to start my degree course in Classics. Just before and just after I came here I had to sign two documents, giving two guarantees. The first was the Official Secrets Act, which I signed just before leaving the RAF, something which I am sure many of you have also signed. The other was in the autumn: I had been invited to go to France with an Oxford rugby team and I had not previously had a passport. Because of the Exchange Control Act, which limited the amount of foreign currency or travellers' cheques which one could take abroad, I had to have my passport countersigned by the bank manager to certify that the currency I had obtained was within the prescribed limits. Five hundred years before I signed these documents pilgrims from this country had to give similar guarantees. The exact wording can be found in Constance Storrs' book, *Jacobean Pilgrims from England to St James of Compostella* (1994). The pilgrim had to promise not to divulge to anyone else secrets of the realm and to remain "the king's loyal subject." In addition, the pilgrim was not permitted to take gold or silver, coined or uncoined, more than was necessary for his reasonable expenses on the journey.

William Wey's first chapter is devoted to currency. He lists 40 different denominations of coins which the pilgrim might use between England and Jerusalem. This chapter presents an immediate problem. If the pilgrim was taking with him enough money for the whole return journey, how on earth could he carry it? The weight would have been impossible for one man to carry and there were the hazards of loss and theft en route. On the galley from Venice each pilgrim had a space of six feet by 18 inches in the "dormitory" and in that space he also needed to place, as Wey suggests, a locked chest. There were also the problems of taking a heavy load of money on horseback or mule and of loading and unloading it from the barges probably used on the way. One of the useful and interesting aspects of working on Wey is that one discovers other pilgrim accounts. I have found particularly useful *The Physicians's Handbook* by Richard of Lincoln, doctor, astrologer and pilgrim, who went to Jerusalem in 1454, and *The Guide to the Principal Churches of Rome* by William Brewyn, who went to Rome probably in 1468. Like Wey these two begin their narratives with advice about travel money. Richard of Lincoln says, "He that will to Jerusalem go must first make his change with the Lombards". William Brewyn advises the pilgrim to obtain letters of credit from the banker Jacobo de Medici in London. The Medici bank had earlier opened a branch in Bruges with Jacobo as the manager; he was transferred to London in 1446 when the Medici bank opened its branch there. Why then did Wey not mention either the Lombards or the Medici bank? We do not know. Wey's pilgrimage occurred during the Wars of the Roses and both the Yorkists and the Lancastrians used the services of - 29

the Medici bank which had its fingers burnt by both parties. Another peculiarity is that among the 40 different kinds of currency Wey lists, some were used in places not on his route. William Brewyn also names various foreign currencies but not as many as Wey. Wey's list reads almost like a page from a medieval *Financial Times*. He loved lists and catalogues and one wonders if chapter 1 might contain a schedule produced by Jacobo or another banker which Wey would perhaps have edited in a subsequent version, removing superfluous information.

Turning from the source of the funds one might now consider the actual cost of a pilgrimage. We are fortunate in having some helpful documents from this period, notably wills and the *Computus Rectoris* accounts of the Rector and Fellows of Exeter College, which were published in 1879. Richard of Lincoln gives the cost of cross-Channel transport from Dover to Calais as two shillings for a foot passenger and four shillings and 3d for a horseman. Equating the value of money in the 15th century with today's prices is always very difficult. When I was teaching Classics my pupils would often ask how much a talent, or perhaps a denarius, was worth. The answer depends on many things, ranging from the current price of gold in each period to a notional cost of living index. For pilgrimage purposes I have used Google which gives a table produced by the National Archive which states that £1 in 1450 would be worth £437 today. Other scholars in America and Bristol suggest that the medieval figures should be multiplied by 500. We can only suggest approximate figures for our pilgrims, but Richard's ferry charges equate to £45 today for a foot passenger, or £98 for a horseman, which are not unreasonable fares.

Richard also gives the charges for several river crossings in the Low Countries – usually these equate to £1 a time. Both Richard and William Wey give the fare for the return galley trip from Venice to Jaffa as 40 ducats. A very approximate value here is £4,000 in today's money – not unreasonable for 13 weeks on the galley, with meals included. Professor Nicholas Orme has recently written an invaluable book on Cornish Wills, 1342-1540. One of these is the will of John Dabernon of Calstock, a wealthy mine owner in the Tamar valley who died in 1368, admittedly a century before Wey, but the figures have interest. After leaving individual legacies to a number of religious houses and clergy in the then diocese of Exeter, John Dabernon left 40 marks for someone to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land "in my name and for the souls of all the faithful departed and of all my benefactors for whom I am bound to pray." The rough value of 40 marks is about £11,000 today. One must therefore ask the question: how was Wey able to afford two pilgrimages to the Holy Land within four years? The Rector's accounts give some information about the Fellows' stipends, but Wey's salary in Oxford would scarcely have run to this level of expense.

At the start of chapter 15 of *The Itineraries*, Wey's account of his pilgrimage to Compostella, which was his first pilgrimage, made in 1456, he says that he undertook the pilgrimage "*super me*", on my own behalf. A similar phrase does not appear in chapters 7 and 9, which deal with the two Jerusalem pilgrimages

of 1458 and 1462. A document preserved in the archive of Eton College records the permission given by King Henry VI to William Wey to have leave of absence with full pay to go on pilgrimage. Is it not at least possible that the King was subsidising Wey's journeys?

I said earlier that this talk would deal with money and secrets and one can now consider Wey's motivation in undertaking these journeys.

In chapters 5 and 6 of his book he lists ten *materiae* or reasons for them. The most important of these was to obtain indulgences and Wey is most punctilious, especially in chapter 14 – his pilgrimage to Rome – about giving the precise tariff of indulgences that can be obtained at each church and each altar. He gives similar lists in chapter 15 for Compostella. His journey to Rome alone earned him over 30,000 years of indulgences and seven plenary indulgences. Another reason Wey had for pilgrimage was to see what I have called "recurrent miracles," examples of which are: the lamp at Casope in Corfu, which burned for one year on one filling of oil; the lamp on the altar in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, which lit spontaneously on Easter Day; the wood in the Holy Land where no birds sang for the fortnight from Passion Sunday to Easter Day; and the spring which bubbles forth on Epiphany on the site where the star, which led the three Wise Men, fell to earth. Two of these, the wood and the spring, appear on the *Mappa Terrae Sanctae* (now in the Bodleian) which almost certainly belonged to Wey himself. A final reason for pilgrimage was to see the marks or traces of Christ's time on earth, or marks left by the Virgin Mary. These included supposed traces of Christ's blood or Mary's milk; these were probably flecks of colour on marble which the Franciscan Brothers, who acted as guides for the pilgrims, elaborated – perhaps imaginatively – pointing out for example the exact place where the Blessed Virgin washed Christ's baby clothes.

William Wey is also precise in noting dimensions; for example, the imprint of Christ's foot left at the time of the Ascension. By measuring this he hoped to ascertain Christ's stature. One dimension in particular preoccupied Wey's mind, namely the size of the valley of Jehosophat. For some time I could not understand Wey's obsessive interest in this, but then I found out that the Vale of Jehosophat was supposed to be the place of the Day of Judgement when the dead would rise from their graves. A pilgrim who went to Jerusalem a little after Wey's time, Felix Fabri of Ulm, tells how as he was on the point of setting out a friend came to him carrying a pebble marked with the friend's name. He asked Felix to place this pebble in the Vale of Jehosophat to reserve his place amid the crowds expected on Judgement Day. Those of us who have experienced the placing of their bath-towels by German tourists around a swimming pool or on the beach will realise they are maintaining a tradition at least five centuries old...

Wey describes vividly the hazards encountered by the pilgrim in his long journey across Europe and through the Mediterranean to Jaffa. There were storms, thieves and sickness. There were pirates in the Channel and in the Mediterranean; there were hostile Saracens who made the pilgrims' lives uncomfortable by aggressive demonstrations and stone-throwing. Some of Wey's companions on the journey died, like the French priest who was buried beside the road to Jericho. Despite all these adversities Wey nevertheless went to Jerusalem a second time within four years of his first visit.

Since the Roxburghe edition of *The Itineraries* appeared in 1856 some documents have come to light which give more information about Wey's world. I have already mentioned the accounts by Richard of Lincoln and William Brewyn, but I would like finally to describe a narrative which has only been published in the last five years.

Many of you will know R. J. Mitchell's admirable book *The Spring Voyage*. By a happy coincidence six accounts of the 1458 voyage to Jaffa have been preserved. These are in a variety of languages: Italian, German and Latin, the latter being that by William Wey. In 2006 another account by an Englishman, discovered in the Cologne City Archives, was published for the first time. This consists of a deposition written by another Devonian pilgrim of 1458, William Denys, of Combe Raleigh near Honiton. It had been preserved as it was used in a subsequent trial in 1468.

If I may, I now refer you to the list of Dramatis Personae which has been distributed.

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

**Wey, William 1407-1476;** Devonian, priest, Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford; Fellow and Bursar of Eton College. Lancastrian. Author of

*The Itineraries...* Pilgrimages to Compostella (1456), Rome and Jerusalem (1458 – in the *Morosina*) and Jerusalem (1462). Died at Edington Priory (Wiltshire) on 30 November 1476.

**Brewyn, William;** chaplain, pilgrim to Rome pre-1469. Author of a guidebook to the principal churches of Rome c.1470.

**Cataluxus, Giuliano;** half-Greek, half-Genoese pirate. Especially active in the Mediterranean in 1458; killed Robert Sturmy (see below) in June 1458.

**Denys, William c.1410-1479.** Devonian, pilgrim to the Holy Land in the *Loredana* (see Tiptoft, below) May-August 1458. Yorkist. High Sheriff of Devon in 1466.

**Richard of Lincoln;** doctor and astrologer. Pilgrim to Jerusalem in 1454. Author of *The Physicians's Handbook* (unpublished), Wellcome Trust ms 8004.

**Sturmy, Robert:** Bristol merchant and ship-owner. Carried Compostella pilgrims to La Coruña in three Holy years, 1445, 1451 and 1456, and Holy Land pilgrims to Jaffa in 1446. Mayor of Bristol in 1453. Killed by Cataluxus near Malta on 12 June 1458.

**Tiptoft, John, Earl of Worcester, c.1427-1471;** scholar and man of action. Yorkist, cousin of Edward, Duke of York, later King Edward IV. Pilgrim to the Holy Land in the *Loredana*, 1458. Beheaded on 18 October 1471.

Early in 1458 Robert Sturmy, merchant and sometime mayor of Bristol, who had already provided ships for Compostella pilgrims to La Coruña, organised a rather bigger convoy. He had taken pilgrims to La Coruña in the three Holy Years, 1445, 1451 and 1456; these had all been successful. In 1446 he tried to arrange a similar voyage to Jaffa. Unfortunately, on the return journey the ship was wrecked off Methoni (the south-western tip of Greece) on 23 December and 37 pilgrims and crew were drowned. Despite this setback, Sturmy organised another mission, of three vessels, to the eastern Mediterranean, with the special intention of breaking into the alum trade. This trade had previously been a Genoese monopoly and Sturmy was therefore running a great risk of offending that powerful city. Genoa was sympathetic to a notorious pirate called Giuliano Cataluxus, who had a Genoese father and a Greek mother from Mitilene. It would be an anachronism to call him a privateer but his activities were very similar to those of later mariners, since he was acting with covert Genoese support. On 9 June, as Sturmy's little convoy was passing between Malta and Gozo, Cataluxus, with four vessels and 800 men attacked him, killing Sturmy himself and capturing his ships.

William Wey's galley had left Venice three weeks earlier on 18 May 1458, reaching Corfu on 4 June and Cande on the seventh. At this period Venetian pilgrim galleys travelled in pairs for safety. Each had a complement of 25 cross-bowmen, dedicated marines, who were not to be used as oarsmen but whose duties were to defend the ship in case of attack. In 1458 the two galleys were the *Morosina* in which Wey travelled and the *Loredana* in which a rather larger group of Englishmen was sailing. This group was led by Sir John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester, noted Yorkist and cousin of the future king Edward IV. Tiptoft had arrived in Venice only 36 hours before the *Loredana* sailed. Normally pilgrims had to wait some time in Venice for their galleys; Margery Kempe, for example, had to wait 13 weeks. In 1462 William Wey waited eight weeks. In Venice preparations for the spring voyage were long and complicated and there was a tendering and selection procedure among the *patroni* who wished to provide and lead the galleys to Jaffa. When the final two selections had been made tents were pitched in St Mark's Square where potential clients could make their

choice and book their place. The *patroni* themselves were carefully vetted. Tiptoft had a party of 28 including his chef, his barber, his chaplain and his organist. A group like that probably came from England to Venice by sea since the logistics of transport and accommodation for their journey across northern Europe would have been very difficult. Tiptoft then arrived just before the *Loredana* set sail. He had such enormous influence that he persuaded the *patronus* Alessandro Loredano to stand down in favour of his cousin, Balthasar Diego, and himself act as Tiptoft's personal guide. This would have cut right across Venetian protocol. I mention these details to show Tiptoft's great influence.

The two galleys set off from Venice on 18 May. Cataluxus had an excellent intelligence network and decided to capture Sir John Tiptoft during his voyage and hold him and possibly some other English pilgrims to ransom. As the *Loredana* and the *Morosina* were en route between Crete and Rhodes they were spotted by one of Cataluxus's captains, who set off in pursuit of Tiptoft. When they were about 20 miles off Rhodes the pirates challenged the *Loredana* to stop. Balthasar Diego replied that his galley was from Barcelona, not from Venice, and also advised the pirates that he had some cases of the plague on board. The pirate captain bore away and reported the encounter to Cataluxus. The two Venetian galleys meanwhile continued to Jaffa which they reached on 18 June. The 197 pilgrims disembarked and under the guidance of the Franciscans performed their 13-day pilgrimage around the traditional sites in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Cataluxus, realising that his minion had been duped, decided to ambush Tiptoft during the return passage. As the pilgrim galleys sailed westward back to Venice, they heard at each port of call that Cataluxus was waiting for them. The message was the same when they put in at Cyprus, Rhodes and Crete. Finally when they reached Corfu, they had definite news that the Genoese pirate was waiting for them off Ragusa (Dubrovnik). Tiptoft decided to push his luck no further. Between Corfu and Ragusa lay the port of Durres (nowadays Durazzo in Albania). William Wey, in describing the outward journey in May 1458, states that the Venetians maintained a flotilla of 15 fast patrol boats (*galeae subtiles*) to protect the interests of their settlements in the Adriatic. Tiptoft again exerted his extraordinary influence and obtained the services of one of these *galeae* to take him back to Venice. His plan worked. He returned northwards at high speed, leaving the pirate ships in his wake. They did not, as far as we know, harass the other pilgrims who eventually reached Venice on 6 September. Tiptoft travelled on to Padua where he remained in the university for the next two years, enhancing his already considerable reputation as a scholar.

The fact that Wey undertook a second pilgrimage to the Holy Land only three and a half years later (despite his experiences in 1458), leads one to enquire further about his motivation to travel. William Wey describes in Chapter 7 what might be termed the normal hazards of pilgrimage: sea-sickness, discomfort, cut-purses, poor food and lack of privacy. He had braved hostilities in Europe, skirting two war zones. He and his companions had had stones thrown at them by Saracen boys and had been pursued by hostile Turkish ships. All these hazards were bad enough but the Cataluxus episode was potentially even worse. Wey had survived and by the autumn of 1458 he had fulfilled the stated objects of his pilgrimage. He had investigated the recurrent miracles, he had seen the traces of Christ's time on earth and he had acquired an impressive tally of indulgences, including seven plenary ones. Was there perhaps in 1462 another, different, reason for his expedition? Perhaps the king realised how useful Wey could be and how important the information he brought back. Perhaps he accordingly subsidised Wey's final pilgrimage and guaranteed his letters of credit. This, of course, is unverified supposition on my part. In considering this period new information sometimes comes to light; for example, since Bandinel edited *The Itineraries* for the Roxburghe Club, in 1856, the *Guidebook ...* by William Brewyn was purchased by the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral in 1922. In 2002 Richard of Lincoln's *Physicians's Handbook* appeared in a sale of rare books and was saved for the nation. It is now in the Wellcome Trust Library. I have already referred to the publication of William Denys's deposition by the Bristol Record Society in 2006. When R. J. Mitchell wrote her excellent book *The Spring Voyage* in 1963, her six pilgrim accounts did not include William Denys's exciting story. As a result, Mitchell describes the return home through the Mediterranean in summer 1458 as "uneventful." A reasonable conclusion on the evidence available at that time.

It may well be that further documents will be discovered in archives or salerooms which will show conclusively whether William Wey was or was not the King's pilgrim.

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## Additions to the CPR Library, May to August 2011

Howard Nelson

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

**Freeman, Charles**, *A new history of early Christianity*, New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 2011. 377pp.  
Location: CPR. Acc no. #5217

**Norwich, John Julius**, *The Popes: a history*, London Chatto & Windus, 2011. 505pp. Location: CPR. Acc no. #5216

**Watkin, David**, *The Roman Forum*, London, Profile Books, 2011. 279pp.  
Location: CPR. Acc no. #5214

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## Secretary's Notebook

Bronwyn Marques

**Membership** The Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome has 214 current members: 23 from Australia, 2 from Belgium, 6 from Canada, 1 from Cyprus, 2 from Denmark, 3 from Finland, 4 from France, 8 from Ireland, 2 from Italy, 1 from Kenya, 3 from New Zealand Norway Poland and South Africa, 2 from Spain, 3 from Sweden, 1 from Switzerland, 36 from the United States of America and the rest from the United Kingdom.

We issued 57 pilgrim records in 2010. This year we have already issued 54 pilgrim records.

**CPR Library** This is situated at the CSJ offices at 27 Blackfriars Road and details of the items held can be found via our website.

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.

**CPR Photo Gallery** The CPR Photo Gallery is available via our website. It has been significantly enlarged and now covers the entire *Via Francigena* and Rome. 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.

## New books/route information

**Walkers' guide book in English** A new walkers' guidebook to the first part of the *Via Francigena* (Canterbury to the Great Saint-Bernard Pass) will be available in mid-September (from lagre general bookshops, the CSJ, Amazon etc.) and reviewed in the December issue of the CPR *Newsletter*. (The second part, covering the section from the Italian border down to Rome will be published next year.)

Alison Raju, *The Via Francigena, Canterbury to Rome – Part 1, Canterbury to the Great St Bernard Pass*, Cicerone Press 2011, £14.95, ISBN: 978 1 85284 487 5,

### **An Italian Odyssey: One Couple's Culinary and Cultural Pilgrimage** Nigel

this book, the story of their walk along the pilgrim path from Switzerland to Rome. The kindle version costs \$5.99 US (regular \$9.99 US), £4.99 + VAT (regular £6.99) €4.99 and includes 40 colour maps plus additional photographs (viewable in colour with a kindle colour-enabled device) and is available for sale through Amazon.com, uk and de More information from their blog: [http://littlegreentracs.typepad.com/my\\_...\\_indle.html](http://littlegreentracs.typepad.com/my_..._indle.html)

### **Good Vibrations: Crossing Europe on a bike called Reggie**

Last summer Andrew Sykes cycled from his home in Berkshire in the UK to Brindisi in Southern Italy along the route of the *Eurovelo 5* and, to a larger extent, along the route of the *Via Francigena*. He has spent the last few months writing a book about his journey and it's now finished! Under the above title it can be downloaded at Amazon for reading on Kindle and other devices.

Alberto Conte informs us that **the last 150 km of Via Francigena** are accurately described in a new web-GIS: <http://www.francigenalazio.it/en/>. You can download and print the road book in English, Italian and Spanish, with maps and GPS tracks. Moreover, you can download from App store and Android store the App "Via Francigena nel Lazio", a free-of-charge interactive guide with digital maps, audioguide of about 80 points of interest. The project has been developed by ItinerAria for Regione Lazio. Alberto says "I hope it will be useful for you, please give me your feedback" - [www.camminafrancigena.it](http://www.camminafrancigena.it)

**Wiki** There is now a *Via Francigena* Wiki. It's based in Sigeric's home town of Glastonbury, on the Avalon IT site: <http://avalonit.net/VFwiki/>

## Accommodation information

**New Pilgrim Refuge in Rome** A new (pilgrim-only) refuge has now been opened in the Piramide/Porta San Paolo area of Rome by the Italian Confraternità di San Jacopo. Its name is the "Spedale della Provvidenza e San Benedetto Labre" and the address is c/o Istituto Suore Figlie della Divina Provvidenza, Via Galvani 51, 00153 Roma.

It is open from the 20th April to the 30th September, has 40 bunk beds, toilets and showers and is ONLY for pilgrims with a credencial (pilgrim passport). It has no fixed charges but operates on a donation basis. It can be reached on foot (2.5 miles from the Vatican/St. Peter's), by bus (number 75 from the Termini railway station) or by underground (take the metro in the "Laurentino" direction and get off at "Piramide").

*Note:* if any former pilgrims are interested in working there as volunteer *hospitales* (wardens) please contact Mrs Lucia Martellucci, Via U. Balzani, 12, I-00162 Roma. (Home tel: 0039.06.8632 2280, mobile: 0039.328.1328150).

**CPR Accommodation Guide** As announced in *Newsletter #12*, Alison Raju has produced the first part of the CPR *Guide to Accommodation and Services on the Via Francigena, Part 1: Canterbury to the Great Saint-Bernard Pass*. A 20 page A5 size booklet, this is now available with a laminated cover (ISBN: 978-0-9568499-1-5) and costs £5. It is available either from the CPR Secretary or the CSJ bookshop. As explained in the April issue, this is intended to accompany, not replace, existing route-finding guides and provides information on where to sleep and eat, buy food etc. along the way. Like the CSJ guides this is lightweight and slim and will be updated regularly. Part 2 will cover the route in Italy and it is hoped to have this available later in the year. In the meantime pilgrims requiring information on accommodation from the Great Saint-Bernard Pass to Rome can request a copy of the CPR list for the Italian section of the route (in spreadsheet format) by emailing [culverwood3@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:culverwood3@yahoo.co.uk) A slightly less up-to-date form of this list is in the member's-only section of our website.

As always, given the small number of people who walk the route at present (compared to the *Camino Francés*, for example) your feedback is even more valuable in updating and refining the list. This has been very helpful in compiling our existing *Guide* and list and your information will help future pilgrims find accommodation.

**Accommodation guide to the Via Francigena in Italy** An A5-sized guide is available from [www.eurovia.tv](http://www.eurovia.tv) to all the parish-type pilgrim-only accommodation along the *Via Francigena* in Italy and other general "bottom end of the market" accommodation on this part of the route. It is in German but given its schematic layout is easy to use.

## Waymarking

**Waymarking in France** The APCR (Association de Pèlerins de Compostelle et de Rome en Franche-Comté/Besançon) reports that, due to a great deal of hard work on the part of their members, the *Via Francigena* is now fully waymarked in their area, i.e. from the entrance to the *département* of the Haute Marne in the village of Maranville (between Clairvaux and Châteauvillain) as far as the Swiss border. It is waymarked with yellow arrows in the direction of Rome, white towards Caterbury, as well as with "Voie de Sigeric" stickers in areas of historic interest.

They also report a significant increase in the number of pilgrims along the *Via Francigena*, 600 already this year as compared to only half that number in the whole of 2010.

**Way-marking in Italy** Cristina Menghini informs us that the beginning of 2011 it was clear that *Via Francigena* to be waymarked urgently with a "light" signposting on the official route to integrate the existing aluminium signs, completely insufficient or absent in long stretches. Alberto Conte (ItinerAria), developed a supplement to the "Handbook of Signs of the *Via Francigena*", and has submitted it for approval to the Ministry of Culture (MiBAC) Technical Group; the integration concerns a red and white sign by CAI (Club Alpino italiano) with a little black pilgrim in the centre. Alberto Conte has also designed the red and white stickers that have proven very useful for the installation on metal road poles.

The municipality of Monteriggioni, in coordination with the Tuscany *Via Francigena* association, has offered to pay for materials and operating costs for the project. AEFV and MiBAC were informed about it. Cristina offered to take care of the installation of the signs and organize everything in the area. The signage was placed along the official path certified by MiBAC, in close coordination with Alberto Conte, who has been able to rectify signage where Cristina had reported problems and interruptions in the waymarking. She explains that she had the help of many volunteers during the three months of hard work it took to complete the task. So now the *Via Francigena* is very much better waymarked, from Pont Saint Martin all the way to Rome, though this obviously needs constant maintenance due to theft and acts of vandalism that, unfortunately, occur. She therefore ask for our help to report any problems that we or other pilgrims find on the Way so that they can be rectified as soon as possible. For more information visit [www.camminandosullaviafrancigena.com](http://www.camminandosullaviafrancigena.com)

## Along the Way

**Rockfalls on the walkers' route between Martigny Croix and Bouvernier (Switzerland)** Pilgrims (June 2012) have reported rockfalls on this part of the route, with the result that this section is now very dangerous. There is, however, no alternative to this "mountain goat" path up a narrow valley on small uneven

footpaths, with steep-sided cliffs on either side of the river Dranse, the road and railway line below.

You do not actually need a very good head for heights to tackle this section but you do need to be very careful if it is wet or windy, if visibility is poor, if you aren't very agile or are unused to this type of walking, all the more so if you are alone and carrying a heavy rucksack.

Do NOT, however, and under any circumstances at all, even consider walking on the road: this is only two lanes wide, is full of very fast-moving, heavy traffic and there is rarely any hard shoulder to protect you. It is the worst section of the whole *Via Francigena*, all the way from Canterbury to Rome, and if you feel unable to tackle it for whatever reason you will have to resign yourself, reluctantly, to taking the train (frequent service) for the 5km stretch from Martigny Croix to Bouvernier.

**Frescoes in the Chiesa di San Urso, Aosta** Members may not be aware that the medieval frescoes in this church, hidden from view for centuries when the apse was built inside the existing rectangular structure, have now been splendidly restored. These can be visited, free of charge, when the church is open to the public, with a very knowledgeable guide who speaks both French and Italian. No photos allowed but a visit is highly recommended, as also to the recently re-opened Roman cryptorium nearby.

**Crossing the river Pô by boat** If you want to take the "taxi fluvial" (ferry service) across the Pô from Corte Andrea to Soprarivo please note that it is ESSENTIAL to phone 24 hours ahead: Danilo Parisi, 0523 771607, or Giovanni Faravi, 0377 802155 + 0339 12268946

(*Tip*: if your Italian is not up to using the telephone go into a café and after buying your drink ask the owner/person serving you if they can do it for you – local phone calls in Italy are very cheap).

## **General**

**Via Francigena Exhibition at the Great Saint-Bernard Pass** Every year the museum at the Great Saint-Bernard Pass mounts a major exhibition on a specific theme and this year it is devoted to the *Via Francigena*. It opened on June 11<sup>th</sup> and runs until October 2nd.

**Confraternity of Pilgrims to Jerusalem** Members interested in continuing to Jerusalem after they arrive in Rome or walking, cycling or riding there by another route will be interested to know that a Confraternity of Pilgrims to Jerusalem has recently been formed. They have their own embryonic website but the easiest way to access it at present is by putting "Confraternity of Pilgrims to Jerusalem" into Google.

***Next opening meeting Saturday November 19<sup>th</sup>*** This will be held in St. James' Picadilly (the hall in the building next to the church. Please consult our website nearer the time for full details of the programme.

**Pilgrims' Progress** American members Martha Lopez and Lin Galea, together with their friends Pamela Brown and Wanda Roach, started walking from Canterbury on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, after a pilgrim blessing in the cathedral there, and the "California Quartet" is at present on its way through Switzerland. We wish them well as they cross the Alps and continue down through Italy, all the way to Rome.

**Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome**

**Founded November 2006**

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

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