

CONFRATERNITY OF PILGRIMS

TO ROME



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NEWSLETTER

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Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome

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Editorial

This is the third issue of the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome's *Newsletter*. We started on a modest scale to begin with - two issues a year, June and December, in 2007 - but in 2008 we plan three: April, August and December. Eventually we hope to make it a quarterly publication.

There are six articles, four book reviews, a listing of new 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. Veronica O'Connor has written an account of her experiences on her pilgrimage from Canterbury to Rome in 2002, after which Almis Simans tells us about the Seven Pilgrim Churches in Rome. Janet Skinner provides answers to the question "Who was St.Maurice?", after which Peter Robins discusses Medieval Itineraries to Rome. Howard Nelson has written about traces of Saints Peter and Paul in the first of a proposed series of articles intended to explore the extraordinary richness that Rome presents to the modern pilgrim, then, in "Michael," Alberto Alberti tells us about a very different medieval Italian pilgrimage, to the Sanctuary of the Saint Archangel Michael in the Gargano mountains.

In future editions, if the need arises, we will also include a Members' Page. In the meantime, however, 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.

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The *Via Francigena*: Canterbury to Rome. “A Pilgrim’s Tale” in the footsteps of Sigeric, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Veronica O’Connor

My pilgrimage is based on ancient documents that include the journal relating the return of Sigeric, Archbishop of Canterbury from 990-994, from Rome. He departed from Canterbury in 990 to receive from the Pope his Pallium, a white embroidered stole and symbol of his ordination as Archbishop. I therefore decided to relive his journey by travelling on foot from Canterbury through France, Switzerland and Italy.

It began on Easter Sunday March 31st 2002 , with a solemn and moving blessing given by the Dean of Canterbury on the very spot where Thomas Becket was murdered in the twelfth century. The following day, on a very damp Monday morning, I set off from the Cathedral’s historic gates with my very lightweight rucksack firmly set on my back, my well-travelled umbrella in hand and a certain apprehension about the 2000 kilometres ahead of me, but also happy to be finally on my way. However, after about 20 minutes of turning around in circles, I was already lost, and suddenly I laughed: here I was with the idea of walking to Rome and I couldn’t even find the Pilgrims Way out of Canterbury!. But with the help of some incredulous passers-by, when hearing I was to walking to Rome, I was able to continue the first day of my pilgrimage walking the North Downs Way through leafy country lanes, crossing green pastures by nimbly climbing over numerous high stiles and arriving late afternoon in Sherperdswell, a small village where, in 990, Sigeric and his retinue had equally made it their first halt. After a restful night, I walked the last 17 kilometres separating me from Dover where, on arrival, I was ready and eager to cross the channel - not on foot, but by boat, of course!

During the following two weeks in sunny but cold and windy weather, I walked through the agriculture regions of the Pas de Calais and the Somme, where I discovered many small villages still haunted by two world wars and where each military cemetery is a poignant reminder of those tragic events. Along my way, I stayed in a village called Amettes and visited the house where St. Benoît-Joseph Labre - the patron saint for modern-day pilgrims - was born in 1748. This young man, having been refused entry to various monasteries due to ill health, decided to walk the rest of his life along the major pilgrim routes in Europe. He spent his last few years living in total destitution on the steps of the Madonna dei Monti church in Rome where he eventually died at the young age of 35 years. He was canonised by Pope Leon XIII on April 14th 1893 - and without the approval of many.

I also visited and admired the great cathedrals of the north: Arras, St. Quentin, Laon and Reims, all majestic in their Gothic splendour! In Reims I met my friend François and on a grey and rainy day we walked along the canal towpath leading out of the city and then through the mist-covered vineyards of the Champagne valley. Here seasonal workers were fixing wires along the leafless vines in preparation for the spring. Happily for us and to brighten the day, we shared a bottle of Champagne with a friendly wine merchant and eventually set off in the afternoon very light-headed and fleet of foot. However at six o'clock (having deviated a few kilometres off our route), we realised that we were still a long way from our final destination and a short call on his mobile to his wife was necessary to put us back on the right road – by car! We had walked 27 kilometres - instead of 22!

My journey continued towards Châlons-en-Champagne and Langres. This last, a town set high on a hill, is magnificent with its Gothic cathedral and medieval walls - though the climb up there was tough! One day, not far from Vitry-le-François, I was walking, absolutely scared out of my wits, in thick fog along a narrow twisting road when a car stopped at my level and a lady cried out:

- What on earth are you doing there?

- I am walking to Rome,

- But you are mad to walk in such weather!

- No, no I am English!

- Come, I'll take you to my home which is in the next village.

And a few kilometres later I found myself driving through well-kept grounds to a "sleeping beauty"-style château where my good Samaritan and her mother invited me to share the family's lunch.

On Monday April 22nd I arrived in Bar-le-Duc, a provincial town that was alive with the young and the old protesting about Sunday's Presidential election and the possibility of a National Front person becoming President. I was amazed that the school children taking part, though it was term time, were the most active with their shouting slogans and deafening percussion instruments. Here I stayed overnight as a guest of the local parish and was grateful for the peace of a room in the presbytery. The next day one of the priests took me by car to visit the last resting place of Charles de Gaulle, Colombey-Les-Deux-Eglises (this was off my route) and as I stood beneath the tall massive granite "Croix de Lorraine" that dominates the surrounding countryside, I remembered Churchill's inferred words: "the Cross of Lorraine is the heaviest I have to bear!" Afterwards we continued by car to Clairvaux where the former Cistercian monastery, founded and led by St. Bernard in the twelfth century, is today a high-risk security prison. Nevertheless, I was pleased to hear it will eventually close and hopefully rebuilt to its former glory. There is a convent across from the prison where the nuns give hospitality to the prisoner's families and, after inviting me to share their lunch, explained the tough conditions within the prison and the hardship

endured by the families, coming mainly from countries such as Russia, North Africa and Iran. In the afternoon I walked on to Chaumont.

After continuing my way through the magnificent pastures of the Franche-Comté region I made the interesting discovery of its small cheese-making villages, Mamirolle and Vernierfontaine, where I was given excellent hospitality by two families. I was now at the foot of the Alps and on May 4th I arrived wet and cold in snow-covered Pontarlier. The following day I battled my way up to Les Fourgs (the last ski resort before the Swiss border), through strong icy winds and flurries of snow. I also had to walk the 17 kilometres there by road because the mountain paths were slippery due to the snowy conditions. Here, as I waited for my hospitality family, I spent the Sunday afternoon drying out and warming myself in the local school, as this was the only place open because it was the second round of the Presidential elections. The election staff treated me generously to food, wine and hot coffee, another way of getting warm, and I finally left there late afternoon in very high “spirits”!

The next day I found myself in Auberson, the Franco-Swiss border, where two custom officers were waiting for eventual cars or lorries to pass through but surely not a pilgrim on foot. After many explanations and much laughter, I requested that they stamp my special pilgrim’s passport to mark my border crossing and this they did with much amusement.

The walking through Switzerland was wonderful because the country is so picturesque with its smooth lakes reflecting snow-capped mountains, its green pastures and hillsides covered with spring flowers, its well-fed cows with their tinkling bells echoing around the fields and well-marked mountain paths to help the pilgrim not lose his way. In good weather conditions I made my way from Yverdon-les-Bains to Cossonay and Lausanne, where I followed the narrow route around Lake Lemman and took the high path along its steep-sided vineyards to Vevey. I continued around the lake to Montreux, where flowers were planted in colourful profusion along the lakefront and where, to my surprise, stood an excellent life-size bronze statue of Freddy Mercury. A well-laid path along the river Rhône took me to Aigle and St. Maurice, where I attended Sunday morning mass in the beautiful St. Maurice d’Aguane Abbey and was moved by the glorious choir and public singing. Out of Martigny the pilgrim’s route climbs to the mountain villages of Sembrancher and Orsières where steep and sometimes narrow paths go through beautiful pine forests leading to the high valleys and the Great Saint Bernard pass. Ten days of happiness with excellent weather and walking conditions. And from this country, said to be “inward-looking,” I was given never-to-be-forgotten hospitality from kind families, parishes and nuns.

In Bourg Saint-Pierre, the last village before the pass, Father Berthelou, a slightly deaf but dynamic priest of eighty years and kindness itself, gave me a bed for the night. And later in the afternoon, I watched him make rhubarb

jam, listened to his thoughts on the newly-voted abortion laws that he deeply opposed and heard how he buys up all the cheese from the surrounding villages to sell to visitors, so keeping local industry going. On the advice of the monks at the Great Saint Bernard pass and because of the risk of avalanches, he took me by car the next day for a few kilometres along the twisty mountain road - his driving as dynamic as himself. He eventually stopped when we could go no further and then made me put on a pair of wooden snowshoes from some bygone age so that I could negotiate the snowy pass. After his rapid blessing on the spot, I set off thus attired and armed with my old umbrella as a snow pick to climb the aptly named *Combe aux Morts* - the Coomb of the Dead!

Luckily for me the weather was clear and there was a lady called Marie who was making for the pass on sealskin-covered skis and she agreed to accompany me through this difficult passage. So with her patient help and some anxious moments, I slowly made my way up through the coomb to the top of the pass but, due to the melting snow making the snowshoes useless, I had to climb the last slippery slope on all fours. I then walked, happy and relieved, the last few metres to the hospice. Nevertheless, I was a little sad too, because my old umbrella and companion of former pilgrimages was now broken beyond repair - victim of the deep snow! On arrival, a priest gave me some hot tea and told me the story of this ancient pilgrim's halt. The hospice, situated at 2473 metres, has given hospitality to pilgrims since the Middle Ages and saved many lives from the perils of the snow with the help of its famous St. Bernard dogs. Their warm and helpful hospitality to pilgrims still continues today and so, in this peaceful place, I spent a quiet and spiritual night.

With another umbrella in hand, a donation from the hospice as mine was either in its museum or a bin, I set out early in the morning with a priest and Bella, the hospice's avalanche dog, to escort me safely along the still snow covered paths and ridges to the road which the Italians had already cleared of its snowy white winter blanket.

I was now in Italy, where the sun was already shining, the morning sky a pale blue and surrounded by snow-capped mountains as a backdrop. The whole place literally took my breath away as it was so majestic. There was absolute silence and I was alone in the world except for some frightened marmots hastily retreating from me just a few yards away. I was filled with an immense joy not only because I was half way through my pilgrimage, but also because I had crossed the Alps safely with the kindness of many. I stopped for a while in this extraordinary site to meditate and to thank God for so much happiness and well-being and, after these few moments of reflection, I continued my way down the steep hairpin fifteen-kilometre road drop to St. Rhémy-les-Bosses, a resting place too for Sigeric on his journey to Rome, and the Aosta Valley.

The valley with its mountains, waterfalls and hilltop villages is just as beautiful as Switzerland but with history and culture as well. The villages, with their stronghold castles dominating the countryside, their medieval quarters and where the churches attract all to their silent interiors for moments of pray, are places for spiritual thoughts and historical discoveries.

Soon the mountains receded and the Po plain opened up before me, a large, flat valley with rice fields and canals as far as the eye can see. But here today the historic pilgrim's path, *La Via Roma*, is now a major road and I must follow it to continue my way. Therefore, with much hesitation, I began the most difficult part of my walk since leaving Canterbury. The trucks and cars were driven so fast that, each time I was overtaken, I nearly did a double backward somersault. It was terrifying! And I had to suffer that for a many more kilometres!

One day, about two kilometres from Vercelli, on this large and straight road, I heard a voice: "Veronica, Veronica!" I had a flash of insight: maybe, to relieve me of my fright, was it God calling me at last? But no! I looked over to the other side of the road and I saw a strange, long-bearded man on a bicycle. It was Christian, a friend of François from Reims, who had asked him to look out for me; he too was on his way to Rome. We had lunch together and talked about the difficulty of negotiating dangerous roads and above all of those mad drivers who think they are racing a Formula One car. He was the only pilgrim I had met since leaving Canterbury two months previously, and I was delighted to share these moments with him. In saying goodbye, we promised to meet up in Reims and to exchange our thoughts on the trials and tribulations of modern-day pilgrims.

From town to town - Pavia, Corte San Andrea with its ancient pilgrim's hostel, Piacenza, Fiorenzuola d'Arda, Fidenza and Fornovo. These large and small towns with their historical cathedrals and churches and where Sigeric, Archbishop of Canterbury passed through and prayed on his return from Rome in 990, today they are part of my spiritual and cultural pilgrimage. And I shall never forget Chiaravalle and my visit to its magnificent Cistercian abbey set in a field of sunny fluo-coloured rapeseed and where inside, ladies were creating, along the full length of the main aisle, a carpet of fresh flowers for the feast of Corpus Christi. I was overwhelmed with admiration and it was hard to leave.

Once again I am up in the mountains, the Appennine Chain, with villages from another age, a forest with thousands of chestnut trees and the Passo della Cisa, a thousand-year old and inescapable passage for all pilgrims on their way to Rome. In one of the villages. I met two Dutch trekkers, Hans and Rubens, and we walked the next few days together as we were staying in the same villages and overnight hostels. We admired the wonderful panoramas, the multi-coloured spring flowers and old villages, took shelter in a barn during a torrential rainstorm, picnicked on bales of straw and finally

crossed the pass in fine weather and singing “Climb every mountain” as we reached the top. Their good humour and the fact that they spoke excellent English made crossing the mountains very friendly and convivial.

Now it was Tuscany that filled me with joy as I walked through the countryside with its soft, rolling hills and tall cypress trees dominating the skyline, its neat rows of vineyards and silvery olive trees, and the villages: Pietrasanta, Camaiore, Altopascio, Fucecchio and many more, with their ochre-coloured houses and beautiful churches where inside one finds a refreshing coolness after a day’s walk in the relentless heat. And not forgetting the great historical towns of San Gimignano, Lucca and Siena, and though I gave myself an extra day for visits, there were so many monuments to see, that I’ll have to come back another time.

Next it was the farming region of Lazio that I walked through with its recently harvested fields displaying neatly aligned large rolls of hay. Soon I came across the dark turquoise blue lakes of Bolsena, Vico, Baccano, popular resorts where people from the towns find respite from pollution and the overbearing summer heat. On Sunday, June 16th. I arrive in Aquapendente, located high on a hill and from where, in the far distance, I believe, I can see the shadowy hills of Rome as I am now only fifteen days walk from the Holy City. But before then there is more beautiful countryside to cross and more hilltop villages to discover and *La Via Roma* passes through them from one end to the other. So everyday I walk up and stroll through the steep-sided narrow street of these villages, visiting their medieval quarters and churches with their beautiful ancient frescoes - a real delight for the eyes!

And one day not far from Rome, walking along the edge of a forest road I saw ahead of me two or three walkers. “Ah!” I said to myself, “other pilgrims to accompany me on my last few days?” But no, because as I approached them, I noticed the stiletto-heeled shoes and the shorts that were very short indeed! They were ladies plying the oldest trade in the world and, needless to say, here the cars drove slowly by! On passing, we greeted each other shyly with a timid “Buon Giorno” and I noticed that they were very young and beautiful. As I continued on my way, I thought a lot of them and about their daily life, whether it rained or was fine, and at what resembled their future - may God bless them!

My last night on the road I spend in La Storta, a scruffy suburban town of no particular interest, but I hardly sleep as my mind is racing at the thought of the final issue of this long pilgrimage on foot. The following morning I start off early for the final twenty-one-kilometres walk that was mainly along a dusty industrial road and at a major crossroad I take the Via Trionfale, the old Roman and well-named road leading to Rome. I hastily leave my rucksack with the nuns and cross the road to the dried-out hilly park just opposite the convent, where I climb the highest slope for my very first glimpse of the city and its famous white dome. After this, I then walk the last

four kilometres very light-footed towards the Vatican where, on this Sunday, June 30th the square is virtually empty as the previous day had been the feast of Saints. Peter and Paul. I seat myself across from St. Peter's Basilica and strong emotions take over, for though I am happy to be contemplating my surroundings, a certain kind of sadness prevails as I realise it's the end of my journey.

The next morning, a priest welcomes me to the Vatican for a private visit, he presents me with the pilgrim's visitor's book in which I write a few words and afterwards he gives me a parchment - a written testimonial to mark the end of my pilgrimage. He then takes me down to the crypt where I glimpse the marbled sepulchres of previous popes and finally arrive at a tomb which is below that of St Peter and there, in a tremulous voice, I read an appropriate passage from the Bible. At the end of this solemn moment, I was able to partake in a special semi-private audience given by Pope Jean-Paul II for a few cardinals, bishops, priests and their families and the papal benediction was the highlight that marked the end of my peregrination from Canterbury to Rome.

I have a few days ahead of me to explore the Eternal City and to help me on my way and finalise my pilgrimage, I have been given the names of the 21 extant churches that Sigeric, Archbishop of Canterbury visited and prayed in during his stay in 990. But as I amble tirelessly through the city's historical streets, I decided to visit any of the numerous churches I see along my way. But there was one church I specially wished to find and that was the church of the Madonna dei Monti where St. Benoît-Joseph Labre died in 1783. I eventually came across it and climbed the few steps where he camped on a bed of straw, in total destitution, for the last days of his pious life and died there on a Good Friday. As I looked around me absorbing the sights and the smells of present day Rome, I tried to imagine his life on these steps during the eighteenth century and what he endured in the ignorance of those around him, but I found it too difficult to shut out the hustle and bustle of my surroundings. So I eventually entered the cool church for some peace, to find his sepulchre and light a candle in his name.

This long pilgrimage on foot and these last few days discovering Rome will remain etched in my memory for the overriding emotion I felt, by the hospitality I received along the way, by the spiritual and cultural enrichment experienced and also a certain sadness, as it was the end of a very long and marvellous journey.

Go pilgrim
Pursue your quest...

Go on your way
Let nothing hinder you
because faith is a journey,
path, goal.

And the believer is always en route
towards the Promised Land

And when our pilgrimage
on this earth ends
Welcome us in your house
where we shall live near you
for ever and ever.

St. Anthony, *Liturgy of the Hours* (translated from French. - VOC)

The Seven Pilgrim Churches of Rome

Almis Simans

San Pietro, Santa Maria Maggiore, San Giovanni in Laterano, Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, San Sebastiano fuori la Mura, San Paolo fuori la Mura, Santa Maria Trastevere.

Carol Payne and I travelled sections of the *Via Francigena* during August and September 2006.

I think it's fascinating to realise that one of the main reasons that pilgrims embarked on journeys to Rome was the belief that by visiting the Seven Pilgrim Churches there they would receive indulgences (remissions of their sins). Here is some background to these superb religious sites that still inspire and sometimes awe the twenty-first century pilgrim.

Pilgrims throughout the ages have walked to or visited the Seven Pilgrim Churches of Rome as have popes, several saints and many members of the nobility. As Rome was founded on her seven hills, so her Christian foundations rested on these seven churches. The traditional route which included all seven churches stretches for twenty-two kilometres.

The origin of this itinerary dates back to 1552. In Rome, the period before Lent (time for austerity and sobriety leading up to Easter) had been celebrated as a carnival for centuries. By the 1500s it had reached the heights of excess. The artist Bruegel painted his now famous *Battle between Carnival and Lent* to show the contrast between the two occasions, the sacred and the profane.

In 1552, St. Philip Neri, known as "the Second Apostle of Rome," inaugurated a Spiritual Carnival complete with picnics and processions to replace the excesses of the existing pre-Lenten carnival. St. Philip was a pious eccentric who convinced his followers to engage in manual work as acts of humility. He led the people of Rome along the Road to Paradise, the *Via Paradisi*. The itinerary included visits to the places of Rome's Christian origins such as the tombs beneath St. Sebastian's Church. He then showed them the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul and impressed upon them the great honour and responsibility Rome had as the capital of the Christian Church.

Walking the Road to Paradise became so popular that the Pope allowed an indulgence to be granted to those who took part. Michelangelo was eighty years old when he made his visit to the seven churches. Due to his advanced age and as a reward for his work on St. Peter's, he was allowed to ride a horse and was granted a special double indulgence, one for himself

and another for anyone of his choosing. The tradition of granting indulgences for walking the Road was discontinued only in 1950.

Having arrived in Rome we decided to spread our visits to the pilgrim churches over the next few days to avoid the real possibility of being overwhelmed by the city's groaning smorgasbord of architectural, religious and cultural treasures.

In early Imperial Rome only a few Christian communities existed and they had neither prayer rooms nor public areas in which to meet. Following the Jewish custom, each community would meet in private houses, where the nascent Christian communities would remember the life of Jesus. These private residences (*tituli*) were the origins of Rome's titular churches. It was during such gatherings that the Old Testament and the arrival of the Messiah were honoured. The language of this early liturgy (public worship) was Greek. Each *titulus* community operated independently, directed by an *episkopos* (overseer), and from this evolved the office of *episcopus* or bishop. By 140 A.D. there were about fifteen thousand Christians in Rome and the Church necessarily began to take on an institutional character.

St. Peter's (*San Pietro in Vaticano*) Without a doubt, most pilgrims travel to Rome to visit the famous basilica of St. Peter's as well as the ancient Roman ruins.

St. Peter's is situated in the Vatican, a speck of prime Roman real estate, a separate sovereign state to Italy. The Vatican is the world's smallest independent city-state with its own post office and stamps, a judicial system, railway station, television station and a special police force, the Swiss Guard.

The Swiss Guard was founded in 1506 by Pope Julius II, enlisted from the mercenaries of the Cantons of Switzerland and renowned as excellent fighting infantrymen following their victory over the Burgundian cavalry in 1476. It is thought that the uniforms of the Swiss Guard were designed by Michaelangelo, in the medieval red, yellow and blue of the Medici popes.

"No Italian male would be seen dead in striped pantaloons, stockings and ostrich plumes which is why they have to get the Swiss to wear the uniforms" (Rachael Oakes-Ash, *Sydney Morning Herald*). These days the men are recruited from Switzerland's four Catholic Cantons and have to be between 19 and 25 years old, at least 5ft 9ins tall and single during their tours of duty.

* * * * *

On our first morning in Rome, we made our way to St. Peter's square. This was a huge open area bordered by an oval colonnade. In its centre was an obelisk brought from Egypt by Caligula in 37 A.D. and on top of it was an orb

crowned by an iron cross which was thought to contain a fragment of the True Cross and the ashes of Julius Caesar.

We joined the short line at the security gate and, once through, we walked up the steps to the awesome entrance of St. Peter's Basilica. Not only the biggest of all Roman Catholic churches, it was also the most visited church in the world, the shrine honouring the remains of Jesus' primary Apostle, St. Peter.

Both the basilica and the Vatican have had a long and interesting history. Originally the Vatican Hill area was a wasteland flanking the Tiber. Around the beginning of the first century A.D. the area was reclaimed, due to population growth and the need to enlarge Rome's useable space. Gardens were developed. Villas and impressive buildings were erected, including a mausoleum dedicated to Emperor Hadrian. In 37 A.D. Caligula built his private circus there, which Nero later used as a stage for persecuting Christians.

Situated near Caligula's circus was the *Via Cornelia*, flanked by an assortment of tombs, altars and mausoleums in keeping with Roman law, which stipulated that all burial places had to be located outside the city walls. It was near the *Via Cornelia* that St. Peter was probably secretly buried around 67 A.D., after having been executed on Nero's order.

A succession of emperors continued to persecute the Christians until Constantine recognized the potential of the powerful dynamic inherent in that community and made Christianity the state religion. The first of Constantine's Christian buildings was a basilica erected over the site of St. Peter's tomb at the foot of the Vatican Hill.

The basilica became a favourite with pilgrims and kings. Popes and royals donated money to enlarge it. Around 400, Rome went through a period of decline and was sacked by the Barbarians. When Rome was threatened again in 753, Pope Stephen III crossed the Pennine Alps via the Mont Joux Pass and supported Frankish King Pepin the Short's claims that he was chosen by God to rule. The pope anointed the Frankish leader the first "King by the grace of God." In return Pepin guaranteed the Church its rule over Rome and large parts of Northern Italy, an alliance which became known as the Holy Roman Empire. In 800 Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne (Charles the Great) in St. Peter's.

The papacy grew in power and accumulated vast wealth. Several new churches dedicated to the Virgin - the Santa Marias of Cosmedin, Trastevere, Aracoeli and Sopra Minerva - were built using its wealth. However, by 1300 Rome and St. Peter's were going to ruin. The Pope and his entourage were exiled to Avignon in 1305.

After the papacy returned from exile in Avignon in 1395, it found its original domicile, the Lateran Palace, in ruins. Determined to make a fresh start, Pope Boniface IX began constructing a complex of palaces in the area of Vatican Hill.

In 1452, with the support of Leon Battista Alberti and Bernardo Rossellino, Pope Nicholas V decided to restore both St. Peter's Basilica and Rome herself. He proceeded to restore the ancient Aurelian Walls and transformed Hadrian's Mausoleum into Castel Sant'Angelo. Bridges and aqueducts were rebuilt and forty basilicas making up the Holy Stations of pilgrimage were built.

Nicholas' jewel-in-the-crown was the creation of a small city on Vatican Hill, a holy city, different from the everyday city of Rome across the Tiber. There was only one way to reach it and that was by the bridge of Castel S. Angelo. However it took another 50 years until Pope Julius II (1503-1513) issued the order for the demolition of the old Basilica of St. Peter's, prior to a total rebuilding. Julius II requested Bramante, Raphael's mentor, to rebuild St. Peter's. The newly invigorated and rebuilt city attracted millions of pilgrims along with their money.

* * * * *



We entered the huge portico. On the wall next to one of the massive doors was a plaque engraved with part of the Bull (papal proclamation) which Boniface VIII declared the first Holy Year in 1300. Turning around to the right we could see Bernini's statue of Constantine seated on his horse experiencing his *In Hoc Vincens vision*.

The pilgrim then proceeds into the basilica itself. A wonderful, open ambience, one's feet slide quietly across the smooth marble floor. Immense columns rise up and light filters through the various stained glass windows.

We made our way to the altar of Gregory I, the Pope who had sent Prior Augustine to the land of the Angles some thirteen hundred years ago. Gregory, Now a saint, he preferred to be known as the "servant of the servants of God." His name was also linked to the musical form he promoted, which we know as Gregorian Chant.

We walked towards the amazing Baldacchino, a canopy on columns located over the papal altar. High above the altar was the dome designed by Michelangelo, a huge tiara crowning the tomb of St. Peter which lay below the papal altar. We were soon drawn as if by a magnet to the end of the basilica, where the Chapel of the Cathedra admitted a suffused light through an alabaster window in the shape of a dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit onto St. Peter's chair, held high above the chapel's altar.

Back towards the papal altar, there were four pillars which supported the dome and in each pillar was a niche containing a statue. Collectively called the Four Relics, they represented St. Veronica who had wiped Jesus' face on His way to Calvary, St. Helena who had found the True Cross, St. Longinus, the attendant of the Roman centurion who had pierced Jesus' side with a lance to ascertain whether He was dead and St. Andrew, the apostle and brother of St. Peter. The niches were created to hold relics of these saints.

Wow! So much to see and take in. I'd had enough for the time being and Carol also needed a break. It was important to remember to pace our visits to these sites to minimise cultural overdose.

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The next day we caught a bus to Piazza Argentina and then bus #87 to **St. John in Lateran (*San Giovanni in Laterano*)**. The hot sun quickly prompted us to enter the cool interior of the cathedral. St. John's was "the Mother of all churches" and was dedicated to Jesus, St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. The property had once belonged to the Laterani family but when they fell out of grace with Constantine he confiscated the property and gave it to his new Church.

This was Rome's first cathedral, where Constantine allowed the pope to set up the Episcopal chair (Bishop's seat of power) after 312. Charlemagne was baptized here in 800 and crowned at St. Peter's soon after. Popes were crowned here up until the nineteenth century and the papacy resided here until Pope Clement V transferred the papal seat to Avignon in France around 1305.

The 1735 façade appeared to be modelled on that of St. Peter's. There was a statue of Constantine in the left portico, and the bronze doors of the central portal had been taken from the old Curia, the Senate House of the Roman Forum.

At noon we joined a tour of the museum and visited a number of ornately decorated rooms containing papal treasures and artworks collected over the last fifteen centuries. At the conclusion of the tour we left the relative coolness of the basilica and walked out into the heat.

Just across the road was a bronze sculpture of St. Francis with his disciples depicting a scene from the saint's life associated with St. John Lateran. The sculpture depicted the arrival of Francis and his companions who had traveled to Rome to get approval for their Order. While the Brothers were making their pilgrimage to Rome, Pope Innocent III had a dream in which a poor man was supporting an edge of the basilica of St. John in Lateran, which was on the verge of collapse. When Innocent met Francis, he

recognized him as the man in his dream and as the saint who God had sent to restore not only the basilica, but the Church in general.

We were too hungry to walk directly to the next pilgrim church, so found a pleasant outdoor restaurant nearby, where the meal was quickly prepared, satisfying and very affordable.

Refreshed, we continued to the church of the ***Holy Cross in Jerusalem (Santa Croce in Gerusalemme)***. The church was high on every pilgrim's itinerary and its present name was given to it during medieval times. In 325 an old Roman palace was consecrated as a church to house the Passion Relics that Helena had brought back from Jerusalem and soil from the Holy Land was used to pack its floor.

The present basilica was a large cavernous building with a chapel at either end of the main altar. The Chapel of the Passion Relics was remodeled in 1930 to house the relics from the Holy Land. Suitably austere and foreboding, the chapel imparted a sense of the importance and significance of the relics displayed behind the altar. There was a young attendant sitting on a chair reading a book while keeping a wary eye on visitors.

We walked around behind the altar to view the relics. Amazing, really. Each relic was displayed in its own reliquary. It was difficult to see the relics' details from behind the glass partition. There were two thorns from the Crown of Thorns and a nail from the Crucifixion. The nail was a Roman type. Of all the Crucifixion nails displayed in the churches and cathedrals of Europe, it was held that this was the one most likely to be one of the actual nails used in the Crucifixion.

The *Titulus* was the piece of wood nailed onto the cross detailing the crimes of the victim. On Jesus' Cross it bore the words, "Jesus of Nazareth, King..." The *Titulus* was discovered in 1492, built into the wall of the basilica behind a mosaic that was being repaired. Helena was said to have divided the relic into three parts, giving one to Constantine who was then building his new capital, leaving one in Jerusalem and sending the last to Rome.

Another reliquary contained splinters of the True Cross. The *palibum* (horizontal piece) of the good thief's cross was also displayed. On the other side of the main altar was the Chapel of St. Helena. A large mosaic of St. Helena overshadowed the entrance of her chapel.

We had reached our threshold of basilica visits for the day and were now making a conscious effort to appreciate the treasures about us. However, there was one more pilgrim church to visit before we could call it a day.

St. Mary Major (Santa Maria Maggiore) The name of this church refers to its being the city's principal or major church dedicated to St. Mary. A

childless Roman patrician and his wife both had a dream in which the Virgin appeared and requested them to build a church in her honour. Aided by Pope Liberius, the summit of the *Esquiline Hill* was chosen as the site for the new church. In those days the summit area contained a large complex of gardens. A miraculous snowfall in August 358 outlined the base of the church. The legend of the snowfall is now commemorated each year on August 5 when white rose petals are dropped from the dome during mass. It is the largest of the eighty churches dedicated to the Virgin and one of the city's most important points of pilgrimage. It is the only church in Rome where Mass has been celebrated every day without interruption since the fifth century.

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The bus stopped at the pilgrim church of **St. Sebastian Outside the Walls** (**San Sebastiano fuori le mura**), which was built above the Catacombs of St. Sebastian.

Sebastian was born in Gaul but grew up as a Christian in Milan and joined the Roman army in 283. He was later promoted to the elite Praetorian Guard, the emperor's bodyguards. During this time he effected miraculous cures, converted and baptized other soldiers. As Diocletian's persecutions intensified, Sebastian hid Pope Caius in the imperial palace. Eventually, Sebastian was betrayed and sentenced to death by loosed arrows. After the execution a pious widow retrieved his body but was surprised to find him still alive, whereupon she nursed him back to health. Sebastian returned to the palace to confront Diocletian. The emperor was astonished to see a man he believed to be dead and had him bludgeoned to death.

Set behind a grille in a church wall was a stone showing two foot prints. The label stated that these were the footprints left by Jesus when he met Peter on the *Via Appia*.

This was our opportunity to visit one of the well-known catacomb complexes. We joined the next tour and our Italian guide, who had a striking American-Italian accent, bade us follow her down into the dark coolness of the underground complex. The catacombs were the first Christian burial grounds near Rome. They were official burial grounds, not hiding places for Christians during times of persecution.

The Romans practiced both inhumation (burial) and cremation. Bodies were buried outside Rome's walls according to law and the catacombs were constructed to house them. Christians did not perform cremations because they believed in a future bodily resurrection. So more and more underground chambers were cut out of the soft Tufa rock to accommodate the growing number of corpses. It was believed that the bodies of Peter and

Paul were brought to these catacombs for safekeeping during Valerian's persecutions of 258.

The use of catacombs as burial chambers declined after Constantine ordered the cessation of all persecutions against Christians and new cemeteries were opened. The catacombs brought a constant stream of pilgrims to revere the dead and purchase relics of the saints. Churches were built above some of the catacombs, but in time the underground burial chambers were neglected. Only the ones below St. Sebastian's were regularly maintained. During the Barbarian invasions, the catacombs were damaged and most of the martyrs' remains were removed to the safekeeping of churches within the Aurelian Walls. The underground burial places lay forgotten for many centuries.

We caught Bus #188 back to Piramide Station and took the metro to San Paolo Station. From there it was a short walk to the surprising church of **St. Paul's Outside the Walls (*San Paolo fuori le mura*)**. Paul was executed in 67 A.D. as a Roman citizen at Aquae Salviae, about three kilometres from the present church. According to legend, his head bounced three times, creating three springs, now the *Abbazia delle Tre Fontane* (Abbey of the Three Fountains). The most likely site of his burial was near the road to Ostia, about two kilometres from the city walls. Constantine built the first church here over his grave in 324. The original basilica proved to be too small for the number of pilgrims drawn to the tomb and in 385 plans were drawn up to build what was to become the largest church in the world until the rebuilding of St. Peter's in the sixteenth century.

In 1700 the Tiber flooded, making St. Paul's inaccessible to pilgrims, so its Jubilee functions were temporarily transferred to St. Mary's in Trastevere. In 1823 an overnight fire destroyed the treasure filled church of St. Paul's. Although much restored over the centuries, the rebuilt basilica retained much of the sense of the original.

Leaving St. Paul's we took a tram to the area of Trastevere and found the old pilgrim church of ***Santa Maria in Trastevere***. This was the first church in Rome to be dedicated to the Virgin, although it was believed to have been originally dedicated to St. Callixtus, the pope at the time of its construction, a former slave and prisoner. He taught that any sin, sincerely repented, could be forgiven. The church's façade and its mosaics were representative of the designs and decorations of all major Roman churches during Medieval times.

Our stay in Rome came to an end all too quickly, so we both threw a coin into the Trevi fountain, knowing that one day we would return to - Roma Aeterna.

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Who was St Maurice?

Janet Skinner

Having stayed in accommodation at the Abbey of St Maurice I thought I would do some research about this saint. He was, after all, the patron saint of no less than the Holy Roman Emperors. I had no idea what a tangled web I would uncover.

Nature has created a wide flat valley from Montreux on Lake Geneva to Martigny. From there the road leads upwards to the Great St Bernard Pass so the town of St Maurice a few miles before Martigny is an ideal stopping place on the *Via Francigena*. The green glacial waters of the Rhone rush towards the lake and there are hot thermal baths nearby. High snow-topped mountains line the valley and rise behind in tiers. The valley has been a highway for mankind crossing the Alps from time immemorial and, with pilgrims and officials passing along the valley to and from Rome, an abbey was a welcome spiritual and physical resting place.

Usually an abbey was founded around a holy man who lived on the site, but this abbey was created in the village of Acaunus lacking a resident saint. The abbey was built in 515 by Sigismund the first Catholic King of the Burgundians. Lyon was the capital of Burgundy and it's bishop around 440 had been Eucherius. He had written a public letter to a fellow bishop, Salvius, of which Sigismund must have been aware.

The letter related that in 287 Maurice was a Roman commander of the Theban Legion. Actually *thebaei* was a military unit of the Roman army and the legion was based in Northern Italy. From this error legends arose that Maurice was a Coptic Christian from Egypt (where Thebes located) and is portrayed sometimes with a white skin and sometimes black. The legion of Christian soldiers was called by Emperor Maximian to assist in crushing a revolt by the Bagandae tribe but the soldiers refused to kill Christians fighting on the other side. In fact the Roman army had anticipated this type of problem and banned Christians from the army.

Eucherius also informs us that Maximian had the legion decimated, one in every ten soldiers killed, for refusing to carry out orders, and then decimated once again. After that all 6600 soldiers of the Roman army were put to death at Acaunus. In fact decimation was not practiced after the Emperor Galba in 69 A.D.. As for the execution of 6600 soldiers, and by whom?.. This does not ring true. Maximian was co-emperor with Diocletian, the former ruling the Western Empire from 286-305 and the latter the Eastern Empire from 284-306. Maurice is said to have died in 287 at a battle in the area of Acaunus.

Otto 1 (912-973) was the founder of the Holy Roman Empire in Europe which lasted until Napoleon Bonaparte. Charlemagne had been crowned the first Holy Roman Emperor in 800 but his empire was his own and split on his death. Otto decided to enrich the cathedral at Magdeburg in Germany where his mausoleum was built and in 961 had the bones of St Maurice and his companions removed from the abbey at Acaunus first to Regensburg and then on to Magdeburg where they are venerated to this day.

The village became St Maurice, the name Acaunus lost into history, and today it is a pleasant town with a very helpful tourist office. Sigismund's Abbey became very rich over the centuries and has a treasury that can be visited. The Abbey offers accommodation to pilgrims in a house beside the church.

Medieval Itineraries to Rome

Peter Robins

One of the main problems facing anyone wanting to “follow in the footsteps” of medieval pilgrims is that we know next to nothing about their journeys. Few medieval people could write, and even those that could often left no record or, if they did, those records have since been lost. Or they may have written about what they encountered in Rome or the Holy Land rather than which route they took or what they encountered on that route. Even where records do survive, because of their small number we cannot be sure that they are representative of their time; most of them are from the later Middle Ages. Fortunately, Rome was the centre of the medieval Church in Western Europe and a commercial and administrative centre, so was a destination not only for pilgrims, but also for people on Church or secular business. Also, for those heading from Western Europe to the Holy Land, Rome could easily be visited en route. This was particularly the case when ships to the Holy Land sailed from the Apulian ports, though even when Venice came to dominate pilgrim traffic in the later Middle Ages, travellers still sometimes went to Venice via Rome. So routes to Rome are generally much better documented than those to, for example, Santiago.

Itineraries

I've been investigating those records we do have of journeys to and from Rome in the Middle Ages (at least from Western and particularly Northwestern Europe), and plotting them on to a map. Until recently, this would probably have involved arranging visits to obscure libraries to consult obscure documents, and then working out positions on some printed maps. Nowadays, the itineraries we have are increasingly available for free on the web, and the routes can be plotted onto an online map where they can be consulted/amended/improved by anyone with an internet connection (though broadband is recommended for this sort of thing). Some of these documents are sumptuous images of the original illuminated manuscripts, such as the copies of Matthew Paris's 1250 London-Rome/Apulia map itinerary made available by the Parker library at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Most of them are, however, simple scans of printed transcriptions, often nineteenth-century ones that are no longer subject to copyright. Though not as nice to look at, these are generally more practical, as the printed text is easier for the non-specialist to read than medieval scripts. They are also often annotated, for example giving modern equivalents of place names.

There are broadly two categories of itinerary, roughly like their modern equivalents: travelogues, i.e. simple accounts of a particular person's journey (the first day I went here, the second here, the third here . . .), and more generalised guides, perhaps giving alternative routes. An example of

the former is Sigeric's journey from Rome to the Channel in 990, a simple list of places where he spent the night. Matthew Paris's would be an example of the other type, giving several variants through Northern France and over the Appennines. These more general itineraries can be very comprehensive, with numerous comments on the places en route: the *Annales Stadenses*, the chronicle of Albert of Stade, also from the mid-thirteenth century, includes a rather quirky dialogue between two people called Tirri and Firri on how to get from Stade, an abbey town west of Hamburg, to Rome and back. This lists one route out and two alternatives for the return, mentioning several other possibilities. The St Gotthard route includes my favourite piece of advice of all the itineraries: "Cum veneris Basileam, bene fac pedibus tuis, et intrando navem descende usque Coloniam" - "when you get to Basel, be kind to your feet and take a boat downriver to Cologne."

Although I'm primarily interested in medieval itineraries, I've included one pre-medieval one, the famous journey of the "Bordeaux pilgrim" to the Holy Land in 333, partly because it's very detailed, and partly because its early date, a mere twenty years after the Edict of Milan removed the remaining obstacles to practising Christianity in the Roman Empire, means it represents the status as it was for pilgrims using the Roman road network. Similarly, I've also included two which are really post-medieval, as they represent the status as it was at the end of the medieval period: Etzlaub's 1500 Romweg-Karte, a detailed map of the ways through Germany to Rome, produced to help pilgrims attend the Jubilee of that year and the supplement to Estienne's *Guide des Chemins de la France* entitled *Voyages de plusieurs endroits . . .*, a 1552 inventory of roads to thirty-seven shrines, mainly in France, but also abroad, including seven routes to Rome.

Itineraries from England and neighbouring regions

I've only found three detailed itineraries from/to England: Sigeric's, Matthew Paris's, and that of William Wey, who left a detailed itinerary of his two trips to the Holy Land in 1458 and 1462 (the second did not go via Rome). I'm aware that William Brewyn made a similar journey to Wey in 1469, but have not been able to find a copy of this online. And Tanner 2 in the Bodlian Library contains various Itineraria (ff139-140), including *The waie fro Ynglonde to Rome by Frawnce* and *The waye fro Ynglonde to Rome by Flanders and Duchelonde*; the second of these is apparently identical to Wey's first journey, but if anyone wants to go along to the Bodlian and tell us what they consist of or even persuade the library to put them online, that would be very nice. The titles being English rather than Latin implies they are late-medieval.

There are also several others from regions close to England. Emo, abbot of the monastery of Wittewierum in Frisia, went to Rome in 1211-12 on matters to do with the founding of the monastery, first visiting his mother church in Prémontré near Laon. Eudes Rigaud, archbishop of Rouen, went to Rome in 1253-4. Bertrandon de la Broquière, *premier ecuyer tranchant* [officer in

charge of carving the meat in a noble household] at the court of Philippe le Bon of Burgundy, went from Ghent in 1432, and the Romweg-Karte includes a route from Nieuwpoort near Ostend (and one from Utrecht). The anonymous, probably fifteenth-century, manuscript transcribed in the enormous and eclectic collection of documents entitled *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, went from England to Spain to Rome, and on the way back from the Holy Land went from Venice to Calais.

Routes

In principle, pilgrims were free to go any way they pleased. In practice, the obstacles of mountains and rivers channelled them into particular corridors, and the same broad routes crop up repeatedly. Encouragingly, they largely correspond to a map of main medieval roads I have in an historical atlas. The relief map I use on the web, with no clutter of modern roads and settlements, makes it very plain that medieval travellers largely kept to the main river valleys and the main passes. Just as the main obstacle getting into Iberia was and is the Pyrenees, so the main obstacle getting into Italy was and is the Alps, with the smaller obstacle of the Appennines when leaving the Po valley.

Alps

In the western Alps, the main passes were the Montcenis (2084m), accessed from Chambéry and the Maurienne, together with its near neighbour, Montgenèvre (1854m), accessed from the lower Rhone valley via the Durance valley, plus the Great St Bernard (2469m), accessed from Lake Geneva and the upper Rhone. These all feed into the headwaters of the Po.

In the central Alps, the main pass now is the St Gotthard (2108m), a favourite route in the later Middle Ages, though not much used until the notorious Schoellenen ravine was finally bridged in the thirteenth century. Alternatives for travellers from the north were to detour west to the Great St Bernard, or east via the upper Rhine and the trio of passes linking Chur with Lake Como and Milan: the San Bernardino (2065m), Splügen (2113m), and Septimer (2310m).

In the eastern Alps, the passes are much lower, the Brenner being 1370m and the Reschenpass further west 1504m. Further east still, from Vienna, travellers had several ranges to cross, but they barely exceed 1000m.

From the itineraries, it is clear the most-used pass in the west was the Montcenis; even travellers from NW Europe used this, in fact, even the *Annales Stadenses* uses it on the way out, a very lengthy route via Reims. Emo, Paris, and de la Broquière used it; Rigaud went out via the Simplon, and back via the Montcenis. Estienne says that the commonest road from France to Rome is via the Montcenis. Other itineraries such as Philippe Auguste's return journey from the Third Crusade in 1191 also went via the Montcenis. Other documents without a detailed itinerary give enough

information to show they too went via the Montcenis, such as Odo's life of Gerald of Aurillac, who made several journeys to Rome in the ninth century, or the *Historia Compostelana* for Diego Gelmirez's journey from Santiago to Rome (via Cluny) in 1104.

Sir Richard Guylforde, in his "Pylgrymage" to the Holy Land in 1506, to get from England to Venice and back, used the Montcenis both ways, though for other travellers linking England and Venice the eastern passes were better. Wey on both journeys went through Germany and over the Reschenpass; Purchas used a very similar route on the return journey, and Andrew Boorde gives a similar route Calais-Venice in his 1542 *Fyrst Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge*, based on his travels earlier in the century. The *Annales Stadenses* used the Brenner on one of its return routes.

In the central Alps, the Romweg-Karte's routes from the Low Countries go between Chur and Milan, probably via the Splugen, as did Emo on his return journey. Nikulas of Munkathvera, a twelfth-century Icelandic abbot who walked down through Denmark and Germany, was one who took the western detour via the Great St Bernard. The other return route given in the *Annales Stadenses* uses the St Gotthard, as does one of Estienne's seven routes, from Langres via Basel to Milan.

There were other alternatives. Estienne lists one "in times of war" (presumably when Frenchmen were not welcome in Lombardy), a lengthy detour from Lyon via Geneva, Einsiedeln and the Bernina Pass (2328m) to Verona and Venice. Wey too on his second journey, to avoid conflicts both in the Rhineland and between the Duke of Austria and the Pope, had to make a lengthy detour via Lorraine and the Arlbergpass (1793m), actually higher than the pass he used to cross the main ridge. There must have been many a pilgrim who had to make similar changes.

Matthew Paris depicts a route down the Rhone valley to St Gilles, implying that pilgrims enshipped there for Italy or the Holy Land, a similar journey to that of Richard the Lionheart's forces for the Third Crusade which, after meeting with the French in Vézelay, crossed to the Saone/Rhone valley and took ship from Marseille (the French crusaders left them at Lyon, crossing the Montcenis to take ship at Genua).

Assuming these itineraries are reasonably representative, it's clear that travellers from our part of the world used a wide variety of routes, of which the commonest would seem to be the Seine/Saone/Maurienne corridor to the Montcenis pass. There certainly doesn't seem to be any evidence to support the claim being made in some quarters that Sigeric's route via the Great St Bernard was the main one. Although several mention this as a possibility, only Sigeric has it as the principal route. Nikulas coming from the north also took it, but if he'd been a century later he probably would have used the St Gotthard.

It's not difficult to work out why the Great St Bernard pass does not figure much in the itineraries for despite being a reasonably direct route from the Channel, it is by far the highest of the main passes and consequently the one with the shortest season. There are several records of travellers literally freezing to death on it. Going via Germany and the Reschen or Brenner, as Wey did, may seem a long way round, but in practice there's not that much in it; you have to add a few days to your journey in terms of distance, but as the passes are 1000m lower they're much more likely to be passable and will take less time to cross.

Although the modern road system is not identical to the medieval one, using modern route-finders does give a rough approximation of comparative distances. According to www.viamichelin.com, for example, Sigeric's route Calais-Rome via the Great St Bernard on modern roads would be 1672km; the shortest route however (1630km) corresponds to Sigeric's as far as Reims and after Piacenza, but goes via the St Gotthard, roughly corresponding to Estienne's Langres-Milan route. Using one of Matthew Paris's alternatives to connect Reims with Piacenza via the Montcenis would be several days longer than this at 1780km. Wey's route via Germany and the Reschenpass would be 1751km.

The writer of Purchas's MS used the Montcenis on the outward journey from Plymouth (though as he went there via Santiago, Guadalupe and Montserrat, he was clearly not someone looking for the shortest route!). He says "The nest [next] Mount is Mount Bernard, That waie is bothe long and hard" and "A nother Mount there is, the name Godarde, And that is better then Mount Bernard". ("Next" here being from the Montcenis, this might conceivably mean the Little St Bernard (2188m) rather than the Great, as although this was used by the Romans, who called it *Alpis Graia*, it has few advantages for long-distance travellers and appears to have been little used by them.)

Appennines

As for the Appennines, there too we find a wide variety of routes. The main Roman crossing was the *Via Flaminia*, from Rimini and Fano, and over, or rather through, the famous Intercisa tunnel (still in use nearly 2,000 years later). This was the route used by the Bordeaux pilgrim on his return journey (he did not go via Rome on the way out). Because it was easy to make a detour via Assisi, the *Via Flaminia* was also used by Franciscans such as Rigaud, who used it on his outward journey. It was also used by pilgrims coming from or through Venice and Ravenna, as indicated in the Romweg-Karte and Estienne.

A more direct route from Ravenna was over the Passo di Serra (1150m) to Arezzo, which Matthew Paris gives as an alternative. Wey on his return also used this route. Interestingly, the Serra was also used by the *Annales Stadenses* for not only the Brenner route but also that from the Montcenis; Tirri says this is better than a direct route south from Bologna.

For those coming from the west, using either of these eastern passes is, of course, a long way round, and the Lombards, journeying from Pavia to their possessions in Southern Italy, used the pass further west later named after them, Mons Langobardorum or Monte Bardone (1041m). This was used by Sigeric, and continued to be used in later centuries, such as by Nikulas, Emo, and Barthélemy Bonis, a merchant from Montauban who left details of his route from Avignon for the 1350 Jubilee, a pilgrimage made after his family was struck by the Black Death. Matthew Paris has Monte Bardone as his other alternative.

Others preferred a route further west still, such as Rigaud's return journey, which crossed between Savona and Asti, and Purchas, who also crossed to Savona on the outward journey.

Other routes south from various towns along the *Via Emilia* between Piacenza and Rimini were also used. In the later Middle Ages, as Florence gained pre-eminence among Tuscan cities, a route between Bologna and Florence seems to have been favoured: Emo's return, *Annales Stadenses* on the St Gotthard route, de la Broquière, Wey, the Romweg-karte, and Estienne all use this, the last three specifically mentioning Scarperia (the pass is 882m).

South of the Appennines

In the west, in Liguria, there is only a narrow coastal strip for travellers to use (and in places not even that as the modern railway line is largely in a tunnel). This widens where the Lombard route reaches the coast at Sarzana/Luni, and the coastal hills disappear completely after the Arno basin around Pisa. The Romans built two main roads from here to Rome, the *Via Aurelia* broadly following the coast, and the *Via Cassia* inland via Florence and Arezzo. I've not found any itinerary that used the coastal road from France

or further on from Pisa, and would assume that coastal travellers found it simpler and faster to go by ship. Nor have I found any that used the *Via Cassia* Pisa-Florence-Arezzo.

The Lombards, fearful of attacks by the Byzantines in the east and by coastal raiders in the west, used a middle route via Lucca and Siena, joining the *Via Cassia* near Bolsena, and entering Rome from the northwest on that. Except for the *Via Flaminia*, which enters Rome from the north, all the Appennine crossings in the itineraries listed above join this route at some point. It thus forms a sort of backbone of routes south of the Appennines, and is the basis for the modern revival of pilgrim routes to Rome. However, this concentration is a bit of a distortion since, given the large number of variants, it is clear that the Way to Rome was a network of routes, rather than any specific road. Fortunately, as the profile of the *Via Francigena* project has increased, especially with significant government funding, other routes are now being developed. With any luck we may eventually get a network corresponding more to the variety of the medieval itineraries.

References

I've set up the map on my website at <http://www.peterrobins.co.uk/itineraries/> and the reader may well find that easier to digest than the article above.

This is still very much work-in-progress but, at the moment, consists of a series of Google Earth files, one for each itinerary, with places plotted onto Google Maps. This technology is still very new, and it's quite likely to evolve over time; people are still working out how best to use it. When I get time, I will add more overview information, so you can, for example, click on a particular route/corridor and find which itineraries used this. I also plan to add itineraries to Santiago. If someone wants to tackle those to Constantinople or even Jerusalem, that would be nice.

Each itinerary contains a link to the page for the itinerary on the pilgrim wiki, indicating where there is more information on it, what is known about its background, and where it can be viewed online. <http://www.pilgrim-wiki.com/index.php?title=Category:Itineraries>

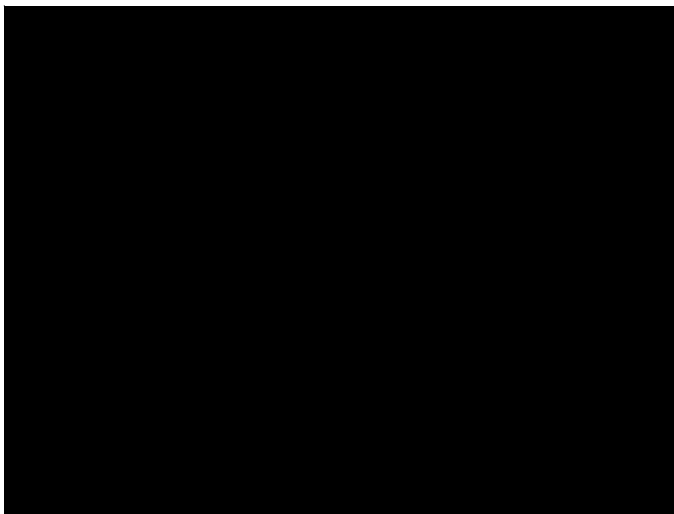
If you know of any other itineraries, and I'm sure there are others, please let me know. Also, please let me know if you have ideas on how this information can best be presented, if you can add information or can identify some of the placenames I've been unable to work out - or of course if you find any errors. I should warn you that researching and setting up this information is interesting, but very time-consuming.

Finally, many of these itineraries can be roughly followed using existing foot or cycle paths, and when I get time I will set up an overview of these on my

website, similar to my overview of Compostellan routes. I hope to write a further article for the *Newsletter* on this.

Postscript: Since writing the above, I have discovered an online copy of the late-fifteenth-century Bruges Itineraries. This is an inventory of roads from Bruges, ranging widely geographically from Scandinavia and Moscow to the Middle East and North Africa.

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In issue #2 of the *Newsletter* we published this picture of a *Via Francigena* sign in Canterbury which is no longer there, asking if anybody knew what had happened to it.

William Pettit of Canterbury County Council has solved the mystery for us: they were “temporary lightweight signs put up just for the weekend when the km 0 stone was inaugurated. They were not serious/permanent signs, but just for publicity and awareness-raising.”

Rome for the modern pilgrim: traces of Peter and Paul

Howard Nelson



Peter and Paul embracing: 4th century catacomb fresco

This is the first in a proposed series of articles intended to make sense of the extraordinary richness, and equally extraordinary jumble, that Rome presents to the pilgrim. I hope it will be helpful to treat the early Christian monuments – which I take to be the modern pilgrim's first focus of interest – in chronological order, and in later articles, cover:

1. Pre-Constantinian traces (mainly the catacombs) and slim evidence below the *tituli*. Also Ostia Antica for a sense of the urban landscape in which the early Christians lived.
2. Constantine and his building programme
3. Parish and missionary churches built by Popes after the move of the capital to Constantinople, and during the period of rule from Ravenna
4. An excursion to Subiaco (Benedict fl. ca 500, while these churches were being built)
5. The Einsiedeln itineraries of ca 800.

(Alison Raju has already covered Sigeric's 23 churches in issue #1 of the *Newsletter*, and Almis Simans covers the Seven Churches of Rome earlier in this issue.)

In due course, pictures of many of the sites and churches to be described in this series will be included in the Gallery now under development for the CPR website.

All this is to be regarded very much as work in progress. I should like to think that this could be the beginning a shared attempt to create a CPR “Pilgrim’s Guide to Rome”.

All corrections, comments, expansions and other improvements will be warmly welcomed by howard.nelson@tiscali.co.uk.

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That Paul reached Rome in about 61¹ and lived there for a few years before his martyrdom in about 64 seems beyond doubt: his letter to his fellow-Christians there, probably written from Corinth in 56, makes clear his desire to come to see them (and indeed to continue to Spain²), and Acts records his arrival there – though not as a free agent – and a stay of two years³. Nevertheless, there is a tantalising gap in the canonical record. Paul’s letters from Rome (Ephesians, Philippians, Collosians and Philemon) refer to his imprisonment, indeed his fetters, which contrasts with the type of house-arrest described at the end of Acts; and the record breaks off before his death. *1 Clement* (a letter written about 95 by the 4th bishop of Rome (s.90-99) to the church at Corinth, and cited below) suggests that Paul did indeed reach Spain, and other sources indicate that he was released from prison to continue his missionary activities until about 67:

“Let us take the noble examples of our own generation. There was Peter who by reason of unrighteous jealousy endured not one but many labors, and thus having borne his testimony went to his appointed place of glory. By reason of jealousy and strife Paul by his example pointed out the prize of patient endurance. After that he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world and having reached the farthest bounds of the West; and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers, so he departed from the world and went unto the holy place,

¹ <http://www.matthewmcgee.org/paultime.html>

² Romans 15: 24 & 28

³ Acts 28:30

having been found a notable pattern of patient endurance.” (1 Clement 5:4-6).⁴

Peter’s case is far less clear, despite the tradition that he was Pope for 25 years. If he had already reached Rome when Paul wrote his letter, Paul would surely have included greetings to him; if he had been there when Paul arrived as a prisoner, or during his two years residence, the author of Acts would surely have recorded it. Early sources are highly confused; the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*⁵, which report Peter’s journey to Rome, his conflict with the magician Simon Magus, the “Domine Quo Vadis?” episode, and his upside-down crucifixion, seems to have been written at least 100 years later. Some modern authors have doubted that he came to Rome at all. There is however a strong, and early, Christian tradition that he died in Rome, first reflected in *1 Clement*; but if so, it seems likely that he only arrived late in the reign of Nero, and possibly only shortly before his martyrdom.

Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, does his best to make sense of the conflicting sources, and comes down in favour of the tradition:

“So it came about that this man [Nero], the first to be heralded as a conspicuous fighter against God, was led on to murder the apostles. It is recorded that in his reign Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified, and the record is confirmed by the fact that the cemeteries there are still called by the names of Peter and Paul, and equally so by a churchman named Gaius, who was living while Zephyrinus was Bishop of Rome. In his published *Dialogue* with Proclus, the leader of the Phrygian heretics, Gaius has this to say about the places where the mortal remains of the two apostles have been reverently laid:

I can point out the monuments of the victorious apostles. If you will go as far as the Vatican or the Ostian Way, you will find the monuments of those who founded this church.

That they were both martyred at the same time Bishop Dionysius of Corinth informs us in a letter written to the Romans:

In this way by your impressive admonition you have bound together all that has grown from the seed which Peter and Paul sowed in Romans and Corinthians alike. For both of

⁴ Pope Clement’s (s. 90-99 or 100) letter to the Corinthians, possibly the earliest surviving non-canonical Christian text, is our first source for the saints’ martyrdom. Clement – who is thought to have known both Peter and Paul - associates Peter’s death with Paul’s but does not say where either took place. Clement’s apparent belief is echoed by Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, and other early writers.

⁵ <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/actspeter.html>

them sowed in our Corinth and taught us jointly: in Italy too they taught jointly in the same city, and were martyred at the same time.

These evidences make the truth of my account still more certain⁶."

If Peter's death and burial in Rome were indeed an "invention" (similar to the discovery of James's bones at Compostela), it was done extremely fast: an almost unbelievably smart move on the part of the Roman Christians to appropriate for themselves the patronage and authority of the first of the Apostles⁷. Does the fact that the two Apostles are commemorated on the same day (29 June) suggest an association between a secure and a less secure tradition?

Peter's tomb

Tacitus⁸ records Nero's cruel and humiliating persecution of Christians in 64 A.D., following the great fire for which they were treated as scapegoats. The martyrdoms of Peter and Paul are thought to belong to this period, and Peter is traditionally supposed to have been crucified in Nero's circus, known to have been adjacent to the present-day Vatican. He seems to have been hastily buried in a pauper's grave in an open-air cemetery on the nearby Vatican hill.

A burial in the crypt of St Peter's in 1940 revealed hollow space under the floor⁹. Pope Pius XII (s. 1939-1958) authorised a dig, which was conducted by four eminent members of the Papal Institute for Christian Archaeology, under the supervision of the Basilica's Director of Administration, Monsignor Ludwig Kaas, and which lasted until 1949. The excavations, started some 100m west of the high altar, revealed a street of Roman tombs, rising gently up the Vatican hill, and dating from the 2nd century AD, and in an excellent state of preservation: they had been filled with earth, removed from higher up the Vatican hill, in the fourth century in order to provide a firm and level foundation for Constantine's basilica. Directly below the high altar the archaeologists found an earlier and much simpler burial, above which, under Pope Anicetus (s. 155-166), a simple oratory had been erected, but of which only a section of red-plastered wall, and a sort of votive shelf, remained.

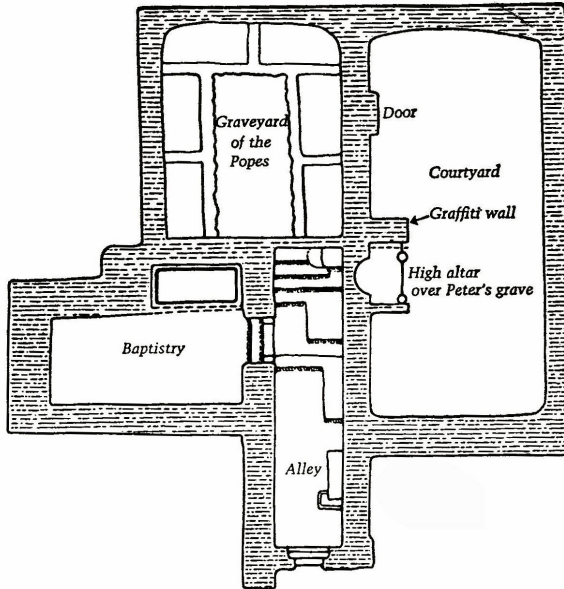
⁶ Eusebius, *History of the Church*, II. 25, 5-8.

⁷ Tertullian writes: "But if you are near Italy, you have Rome, where authority is at hand for us too. What a happy church that is, on which the apostles poured out their whole doctrine with their blood; where Peter had a passion like that of the Lord, where Paul was crowned with the death of John [the Baptist, by being beheaded]"

⁸ *Annals of Imperial Rome*, XV, 41

⁹ What follows is based on J.E.Walsh, *The Bones of St Peter*, Sinag-Taka, Manila, 1987.

This structure seems to be confidently identified with the *tropaion* of Peter¹⁰, mentioned by the Gaius around 200; more recent conjectures suggest that the red wall lay at the centre of a small complex of rooms which included an area for a small congregation, a baptistry, and a burial area.



Hypothetical reconstruction of the earliest group of buildings over Peter's tomb¹¹.

This complex probably survived until the building of Constantine's basilica between 324 and 333. At some point, the red wall had cracked, and had been supported by a small plastered wall, at right angles to it; this wall was found to be covered with identifiably Christian *graffiti*. All but the central section of the red wall, and the *graffiti* wall, had been destroyed in subsequent building projects above and around them. A collection of bones was found in the soil of the original tomb; but – and apparently due to a misunderstanding, even mistrust, between Monsignor Kaas and the archaeologists – a further set of bones, hidden in a niche hollowed out behind the plaster of the *graffiti* wall, were removed without the archaeologists' knowledge and put in a store room, where they remained until long after the excavation report had been published.

¹⁰ Hugo Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches of Rome*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2005, p. 93

¹¹ From Walsh, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

In the 1950's an epigrapher, Prof. Margherita Guaducci, was invited to study the *graffiti* wall; and in the course of her research she discovered the existence of the second set of bones. Both sets were then examined by a professional anatomist, who discovered that the first set included the remains of three individuals, and some animal bones; whereas the second set were from a single individual, a robust man in his 60s or 70s, with all parts of the skeleton represented, except the feet. There were signs that the bones had at one time rested in the earth immediately below, and had also been wrapped in purple cloth (an imperial prerogative) sewn with gold thread. A chunk of plaster had also been found inside the niche, having fallen from the surface of the red wall, inscribed in Greek *Petros eni*: "Peter is [buried?] here".

Dr Guaducci was convinced that these were Peter's bones. Her theory was that they had been raised from their original resting place at a time of danger to the Christian cult and concealed in the *graffiti* wall; the absence of any formal tomb inscription being easily explained by the need to avoid drawing attention to the tomb of the leader of a persecuted sect.

Pope Pius VI announced the discovery and identification of the Apostle's bones in the summer of 1968. They were placed in perspex boxes and replaced with some ceremony in the niche in the *graffiti* wall, where they can be seen during a tour of the excavations; but the guide's presentation is entirely archaeological (there isn't even a place to kneel in veneration), and it is now made clear that science and archaeology can report what they find, but that only faith can decide whether these are indeed the bones of St Peter.

To tour the excavations, which are not included in the more general tours of St Peter's, go past the Swiss guards at the archway immediately to the left of the steps up to the basilica, and find a small door labelled "Uficini di Scavi". There you can book a place on a tour in the language of your choice, but you may have to book several days ahead. (I was lucky: turning up at 9.00 a.m., I was given a place on an under-subscribed English-language tour starting in two minutes!)

After the reliquary and the devotion to the shrine of St James at Santiago, the (possible/probable) relics of St Peter, and the way they are presented, are quite a shock; but the tour gives you a vivid understanding of the way in which the memory of the burial place of the first of the Apostles was maintained. That this is indeed the spot believed from the earliest times to be the site of Peter's tomb seems highly probable (one estimate reckons that Constantine's engineers had to shift more than 1 million cubic feet of soil from the upper part of the Vatican hill to provide a level platform for the

basilica¹², so he and the then Pope – Sylvester - must have been very sure that this, and no other, was the right place), even if the identity of the bones cannot finally be verified.

(Constantine's basilica of 324-333 will be covered in a later article.)

Paul's tomb; S. Paolo fuori le Mura

After the huge crowds swirling around St Peter's, S Paolo fuori le Mura is an oasis of tranquillity.

The presbyter Gaius, in 200, also refers to the *tropaion* of Paul; and there seem to be no conflicting claims for the location of Paul's tomb.

A sarcophagus is visible behind a glass panel below the high altar: its inscription, PAOLO APOSTOLO MART dates from the time of Constantine. Another glass panel let into the floor just in front of the sarcophagus reveals the curved wall of the apse of the original church (built between 383 and 400, after the transfer of the capital to Constantinople in 330), which was orientated in the opposite direction.

The site of Paul's martyrdom: Abbazia delle Tre Fontane

Legend has it that the Apostle's head, struck off, bounced three times, and at each spot a spring opened. The abbey of Tre Fontana commemorates the spot. It is located on Via Laurentina, about 1 km south of its junction with Via Cristoforo Colombo, and not very far from his burial place.

Of the three churches on the site, the third and most distant, S Paolo alle Tre Fontana (fifth century; rebuilt 1599) contains three altars (slightly below present floor level) marking the site of the three springs, and the stump of a stone pillar, said to be the block on which Paul was executed.

Places where Paul may have lived

Santa Pudenziana, first built about 390, is dedicated to the sister of Praxedes (of nearby Santa Prassede). Their father the senator Pudens is said to have given hospitality to Paul. It is located not far from Santa Maria Maggiore, in the coomb between the Esquiline and Viminal hills (the ancient district of Subura). The church, now well below street level, is interesting for having clearly been built on the site of a Roman courtyard building, rather than, like most of the basilicas, built on clear(ed) ground. It contains the oldest surviving Christian apse mosaic (dating from the church's construction, with a Roman theme, and in which Paul is promoted to parallel Peter at the head of the Twelve.

There is also a belief, possibly going back to the second century, that Peter and Paul lodged at or near the site of the basilica Ad Apostolos (i.e. S

¹² Walsh p. 25-6

Sebastiano) on the Appian Way, where the words *domus Petri* are scratched on the wall of one of the adjacent mausolea.¹³

Other places associated with them

The church of S Pietro in Vincoli holds Peter's supposed chains.

The *Blue Guide* (p. 477) records that an oratory, now demolished, but marked by a plaque, on the Via Ostiense near S Paolo was supposed to mark the site where the two saints met. I have not yet located this plaque.

The Mamertine prison and the church of Domine Quo Vadis? remain to be explored.

And if you know of any other links with Peter and Paul in Rome, please do get in touch! (Contact details above.)

¹³ Brandenburg, op cit, p. 68, where this tradition is suggested as the reason for the choice of this location for the cult of Peter and Paul during the Valerian persecution, when their places of worship were closed to Christians.

Michael

Alberto Alberti

One of most revered sanctuaries in the Middle Ages was the Grotto of the Saint Archangel Michael in the Gargano mountains, facing the Adriatic sea. The place was also considered holy in Roman times and it was dedicated to the semigod hero Hercules. It was then adopted by the Longobard conquerors and in the end it became a Christian, when the Angel appeared here to aid the Christians against the barbarians in the year 493. The Archangel is the angel of the Apocalypse as he weighs the souls to judge sinners. He is the winner over the devil and the defender of the pilgrims on their way.

People in Italy went there in large numbers, and their pilgrimage was perhaps more popular than those to the Holy Land. The walk “towards the mountain of the Angel” is one of the fundamental historical itineraries of European history.

From the eighth century, the time of the Longobards, to the thirteenth century, the route in the direction of Jerusalem crossed Italy along the *Via Appia*. The final part to the Mount Saint Angel was called “*Via Sacra Longobardorum*” but it was often used for the pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Pilgrims received a special benediction in the sanctuary and were absolved from the most terrible sins. Graffiti of hands and feet, crosses and various inscriptions, some very old, testify that already from ancient times great numbers of pilgrims arrived there. There are also some runic inscriptions showing that pilgrims came here from Anglia long before Archbishop Sigeric arrived in Rome.

All along the way to the great and mysterious Sanctuary in the Gargano the route is dotted with churches dedicated to the Archangel. Many places are named after him, as well as several small mysterious sanctuaries in the mountains, usually next to springs. It is indeed a Way of the Angel, connecting it to the Mount Saint Michel on the shores of the Atlantic ocean in France.

The stretch in the southern Latium is called the *Via Francigena marittima* and it runs along the Queen of all roads, the *Via Appia*. It is a splendid walk and besides many fine features such as starting from the sea, climbing mountains, touching the shores of four lakes, crossing woods, Mediterranean vegetation, natural parks and so on, it exhibits splendid examples of historical architecture and has several signs of the veneration of the Archangel. This *Via Francigena* not only served as a way of connecting Rome to the harbours of Apulia to sail to the Holy Land, but also as a means of reaching the Sanctuary of the Archangel. This is shown by several

examples of the cult of St. Michael from Formia to Rome in little more than 100 miles.

Mount St. Angel and the sanctuary of S. Angel above Formia, a picture by followers of Raphael of Urbino depicts S. Michael and six angels in the Cathedral of Gaeta , the churches of S. Michael in Collina and of S. Angel in Via S. Angelo in Itri, Mount S. Michael over Terracina and the church of S. Michael. In Sonnino there is also a church dedicated to S. Michael.

In Amaseno there are ruins of an ancient church of S. Angel. Between Priverno and Roccaporga there is the Hill of S. Angel with the ruins of a church. The church of St. Benedict abbot has a painting of S. Angel. In Carpineto Romano a Gothic style church of S. Michael Archangel of the fourteenth century. There is a spring of S. Angel in Montelanico.

In Sezze there are ruins of the church of S. Angel, while the valley of S. Angel and the spring of S. Angel are in the territory of Bassiano. In Sermoneta there is a church of S. Michael Archangel with a sixteenth-century painting and an area dedicated to him. In Norma and in Ninfa there is the Grotto of S. Angel al Mirteto, the ruined Monastery of S. Angel and the church of S. Angel. There is also one in Roccamassima.

At the entrance of Rome through the gate of S. Sebastian you will see a *graffito* of S. Michael and you walk through the bridge of S. Angel to arrive to the famous Castle of S. Angel.

The Sanctuary in Apulia was therefore well connected with crucial points such as the Castle of S. Angel in Rome, the Sacra di San Michele in Piedmont, the chain finally ending in the Mont Saint Michel in France on the Atlantic Ocean

Reviews

Exhibition on and of the Via Francigena

Immagini di una Via. Riflessioni e suggestioni lunga la Francigena, Fidenza Mattioli 1885 Casa Editrice, 2000, 206pp, A4, 3 maps, 33 b/w illustrations, 36 in full colour.

This book records an unusual pilgrimage, an itinerant exhibition of paintings and sculptures about the route from Canterbury to Rome and held in twenty different venues along the way, starting in the former and ending in the "Eternal City." These took place from September 1999 to December 2000 and were organised by the Company of Sigeric for the *Via Francigena Project*, to celebrate the Jubilee Year and raise the profile of an age-old pilgrim route that had long since fallen into neglect. The exhibition, containing 151 watercolours specially painted for it by Jannina Veit Teuten, depicts places along the *Via Francigena*, and together with sculptures by Heather Burnley, tells the story of Sigeric, Archbishop of Canterbury who travelled to Rome and back in 990 to receive his *pallium* from Pope John XV.

The pictures were painted *in situ*, specially for the exhibition, and a travelling puppet show depicting Sigeric's journey was also prepared (with a video made by Teresa Anzillotti), the figures made by Heather Burnley and dressed by her team of helpers. The proceeds from the project went to the Spafford Children's Centre in Jerusalem, a day-clinic still funded entirely by charitable donations.

Immagini di una Via, as its title suggests, presents a selection of the watercolours from the exhibition (thirty of them are reproduced in full colour), along with information in four languages (texts in Italian, French, English and German) about Sigeric and his journey, a facsimile of the account of his return journey listing the seventy-nine stages along the way, an account of the twenty-three churches he visited during his two-day stay in Rome and a large map showing their locations, together with a complete listing of all the paintings included in the exhibition.

This book will be of particular interest to those who have already walked, cycled or ridden the *Via Francigena* but also sets the route in its historical perspective, introducing it pictorially to those who have yet to make the journey.

There is a copy in the CPR library, kindly donated by Veronica O'Connor.

Alison Raju

Sigeric's journey to Rome in 990

Heather Burnley, *Sigeric's Journey to Rome*, Llangollen: ECTARC, 2002, 28pp, A4, ISBN: 1-902502-02-7

A fictional account, using a certain amount of artistic licence, of Sigeric's journey to Rome in 990, based on his record of the 79 stages along the way and on a puppet play on the same theme written in 1999 (see book review above). This book is illustrated with scenes from the play, many in colour, and also contains a useful "Notes for the Reader" section with information on people, places, events etc. about the period in question.

There is a copy in the CPR library.

Alison Raju

Hilaire Belloc's classic journey

Hilaire Belloc, *The Path to Rome*, many editions, first published 1902, variable number of pages (includes up to 77 line drawings).

Joseph Hilaire Pierre René Belloc (27 July 1870 – 16 July 1953) was born in France and became a naturalised British subject in 1902. He was born in La Celle-Saint-Cloud France to a French father and English mother, and grew up in England. His mother Elizabeth Rayner Parkes was also a writer, and was a great-granddaughter of the English chemist Joseph Priestley. She married attorney Louis Belloc in 1867. In 1872, five years after their marriage, Louis died, an Elizabeth brought her son Hilaire, along with his sister, Marie, back to England. After being educated at John Henry Cardinal Newman's Oratory School he served his term of military service, as a French citizen, with an artillery regiment near Toul in 1891. From 1906 to 1910 he was a Liberal Party Member of Parliament for Salford South.

Belloc was a staunch Catholic and one of his most famous statements was "the faith is Europe and Europe is the faith". This sums up his strongly-held orthodox Roman Catholic views. When on his journey to Rome Belloc was sure he was a pilgrim, in that he had no doubt. He was not a tourist and he wrote as though he despised them, though he was no doubt one himself on other occasions. This is a story of a pilgrimage but do not expect a either a traditional travel book or any kind of treatise on religious enlightenment.

Using an Auctor/Lector conversation, Belloc's constant asides about the purpose of the book can be annoying to a modern reader. The thing is that without them you would know much less about the man and it would be much more like one of his despised tourists' guides.

Belloc traveled on foot from Toul (near Nancy) and crossed the Jura, the Alps and the Apennines in order to, in his words, "see all Europe which the Christian Faith has saved." Afterward he related his experiences with the people he met along the way, as well as his reflections on tradition, politics, landscape, and much else.

The book contains a good number of rough landscape sketches and topographic maps he drew during his journey. Make sure you buy an illustrated copy, some of the editions published since copyright ran out do not have the illustrations and the book is very difficult to understand without them.

Belloc tried to accomplish his pilgrimage by walking in a straight line, 30-45 miles a day. This extraordinary route took him well off the beaten track, through isolated villages, over mountain passes, rivers fords, and sparsely populated plains. If he had a choice of going around a mountain or over it, he wanted to go over it. More than once he walked into an inn and told others what he had just done, only to find they didn't believe him!

He fills a similar slot on the pilgrimage to Rome to that which Walter Starkie does on the Camino de Santiago, by showing us what a pilgrimage was like at a time when pilgrimage by foot was thought of as odd now that the train could get you there so much quicker. Writing at the turn of the last century, Belloc describes a countryside unchanged and people with a way of life which was already long gone by then in the big cities of Europe.

For a modern pilgrim the book is inspiring. The distances covered are in general much greater than we would normally attempt. His determination to follow the straight line is remarkable. He is attempting all this with barely any maps. He has no confraternity to help. And if there had been a guidebook he would not have taken that route. Perhaps the Belloc "Path to Rome" will become a well-trodden pilgrim route. I'm not sure he would approve if it did though.

There is a copy in the CPR library

William Marques

William the Conqueror's eldest son

Katherine Lack, *Conqueror's Son. Duke Robert Curthose: Thwarted King*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2007. ISBN 978-0-7509-4566-0, £20, 228pp, index, 8pp b/w photos, 11 maps, 9 family trees.

This is the third book from the author of *The Cockleshell Pilgrim: A Medieval Journey to Compostela* (SPCK 2003) and with which the reader may already be familiar. This time, however, she turns her attention to the eldest son of William the Conqueror, Duke Robert of Normandy, who never, in fact, succeeded to the throne of England as he should have done. In this new book she redresses the balance of opinion on a man who has had 900 years of bad publicity as a rebel, lazy ruler and incompetent idler, and what emerges instead is a portrayal of someone who was, in fact, quite the contrary and who, in some ways perhaps, had too much integrity for his own good.

Very thoroughly researched but with a fast-moving narration, this book is accessible to the non-specialist and revises our understanding of William the Conqueror and his complex relations with his sons, painting a vivid picture of the royal and aristocratic families of northern Europe and their carefully maintained, though always fragile, alliances.

But what, the reader may well be asking, does all this have to do with pilgrimage? A substantial section of the book deals with Duke Robert's participation in the First Crusade. It describes the routes taken and provides insight into the logistics of mounting such an enormous operation, into the way it was financed, "marketed" to attract participants, the details of day-to-day travel, lodging, equipment, battles, losses, sickness and surviving the winter and of those, many of whom returned home after reaching Rome, who had never intended to go to the Holy Land at all but who had joined the Crusade purely in order to undertake a pilgrimage under the protection of such a large group.

The text is accompanied by eight pages of photographs, eleven maps, nine family trees to help the reader understand the complex relationships of the key participants and an extensive bibliography.

There is a copy in the CSJ library.

Alison Raju

Additions to the CPR Library, December 2007 to February 2008

Association "Chemins d'Assise," *Chemin d'Assise à pied de Vézelay à Assise: Chemin de Paix: Guide du Pèlerin*

Les Editions Franciscaines, Paris, CD, plus November 2007 updates downloaded from <http://chemins.assise.free.fr/>, 2007.

Location: CPR PAM 13. Acc No: #4493.

Brunning, Anthony, *Pilgrim to Rome*

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 2, December 2007, pp. 2-23, Account of a walk from London to Rome in 1990, 2007.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4477.

Burnley, Heather, *Sigeric's journey to Rome*

ECTARC, Llangollen, A version for children, illustrated with pictures of puppets, 2002, pp. 28.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4513.

Condry, Edward, *Internet diary of a cycling pilgrimage from Canterbury to Rome, August-September 2007*

14 pp typescript account of a pilgrimage intended to raise £100,000 for charity, half being for the Save Canterbury Cathedral appeal, 2007.

Location: CPR PAM 14. Acc No: #4495.

Crawford, Francis Marion, *Ave Roma Immortalis: studies from the chronicles of Rome*

Macmillan, London, 1928, pp. 617.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4504.

Crawford, Francis Marion, *The heart of Rome: a tale of the 'Lost Water'*

Fisher Press, Sevenoaks, 1992, pp. 290.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4499.

Drijvers, Jan Willem, *Helena Augusta (248/249-328/329 A.D.)*

Downloaded from www.roman-emperors.org

Location: CPR PAM 11. Acc No: #4491.

Elsner, John, *Pausanias: a Greek pilgrim in the Roman World*

In: *Past and Present*, 135, May 1992, pp. 3-29, 1992.

Location: CPR PAM 10. Acc No: #4490.

Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, Vita Constantini, translation and commentary by Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall, 1999, pp. 395. Location: CPR. Acc No: #4518.

Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*

Penguin, London, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, translated by G.A. Williamson, with notes and commentary in the form of an extended Who's Who, 1989, pp. 434.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4517.

George, Chris, *Memorable places on the way to Rome: the Great Saint Bernard Hospice*

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 2, December 2007, pp. 24-27, 2007.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4478.

Giradet, Jean-Marie; Jacques, Alain; & Duclos, Jean-Luc Letho, *Somewhere on the Western Front: Arras, 1914-1918*

Editions Degeorge, Arras, 2007, pp. 223.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4506.

Hager, June, *Pilgrimage: a chronicle of Christianity through the churches of Rome*

Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1999, pp. 224.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4512.

Hibbert, Christopher, *Rome: the biography of a city*

Penguin Books, London, 1987, pp. 387.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4472.

Kessler, Herbert L. and Zacharias, Johanna, *Rome 1300: on the path of the pilgrim*

Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2000, pp. 237.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4505.

Marques, William, *Riding the Roman Way: [Review of] Gallard, Babette, Riding the Roman Way*

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 2, December 2007, pp. 36-37, 2007.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4483.

Marques, William, *Sketchbook diary of a journey to Rome: [Review of] Lambert, Christopher, Taking a Line for a Walk*

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 2, December 2007, pp. 37-38, 2007.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4484.

Nelson, Howard, *Guidebook to the Via Francigena: [Review of] Roodenburg, Kees: Italien: Franziskaner Wanderweg von Florenz über Assisi nach Rom*

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 2, December 2007, pp. 38-39, 2007.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4485.

Nelson, Howard, *In the footsteps of St Francis: [Review of] Seracchioli, Angela Maria. Di qui passò Francesco (2nd ed., 2006)*

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 2, December 2007, pp. 36, 2007.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4482.

Nelson, Howard, *The CPR Library*

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 2, December 2007, pp. 30-35, Includes a list of the library's holdings at 1st December 2007, 2007.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4481.

O'Grady, Desmond, *Rome Reshaped: Jubilees 1300-2000*

Continuum, New York, 1999, pp. 216.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4501.

Patterson, Joe, *La Via Francigena del Sud or Il Cammino per Roma*

In: Confraternity of Saint James *Newsletter*, December 2007, 2007.

Location: CPR PAM 9. Acc No: #4461.

Patterson, Joe, *La Via Francigena del Sud or il Cammino per Roma*

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 2, December 2007, pp. 28-29, 2007.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4480.

Raju, Alison, *Maps for the Via Francigena: [Review of] D'Atti, Monica and Cinti, Franco: La Via Francigena: cartografia e GPS dal Monginevro a Roma lungo l'itinerario storico*

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 2, December 2007, pp. 39, 2007.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4486.

Raju, Alison, *[Review of] VF Five pilgrims to Rome*

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 2, December 2007, pp. 39-40, 2007.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4487.

Spier, Jeffrey, *Picturing the Bible: the earliest Christian Art.*

Book to accompany an exhibition at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, November 2007 to March 2008.

Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2007, pp. 307.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4520

Howard Nelson

Secretary's Notebook

Membership of the CPR We currently have 117 members (couples are counted as a single member) of which 52 are from outside the UK including: Canada 11, USA 9, and Australia 8.

AGM Sunday April 29th The constitution proposed was unanimously agreed, making the CPR an unincorporated charity with an Executive Steering Committee of seven: William Marques, Joe Patterson, Ann Milner, Alison Payne, Alison Raju, Bronwen Marques and Ian Brodrick. Our large membership outside the UK and unable to attend meetings will still be able to vote and the first subscription (£10 per member per annum, £20 for three years) will run to the end of 2009, to enable us to set all the necessary administration in place. Full details of our new status will be given in the August issue.

CPR Library We now have quite a lot more books (see Howard Nelson's list above), all of which have been catalogued. However, as well as published books about Rome and the pilgrimage, we have also started to collect *pilgrim journals* – diaries, accounts of individual journeys. If you have a copy of your journal (word-processed, in a binder or folder) that you would like to donate to the CPR library, please send it to Howard Nelson c/o the CSJ office, 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY .

Two new guide books Paul Chinn and Babette Gallard have now published their two guide books to the pilgrim route from Canterbury to Rome. A review of each one will be published in the next issue of the *Newsletter* but the two books, each costing £23.99, are now ready and available for distribution.

1. *LightFoot Guide to the via Francigena: Canterbury to the Summit of the Great St Bernard Pass*, ISBN 9782917183014.

2. *LightFoot Guide to the via Francigena: Summit of the Great St Bernard Pass to St Peter's, Rome*, ISBN 9782917183021.

A copy of each will shortly be in the CPR library. The listing of the books is being passed to Gardeners (wholesaler) and Amazon, but may take a couple of weeks for all listings to be updated. They are also available from the CSJ's online bookshop (www.csj.org.uk) as well as from the shop facility on: <http://pilgrimagepublications.com/UKShop/PayPal/ppbooks.html>

Other new books

Via Francigena: a cultural route through Europe, ISBN: 987-2-9531028-0-2
Published by the Communaute Artois-Lys. 114 pp., £8.50.

The book covers the *Via Francigena* from Canterbury to Arras. While there are stage maps and descriptions included sometimes these do not match. In

the UK the map shows the North Downs Way which is the council-approved and soon to be marked route but the description covers the original and slightly longer AIVF route through the villages. There is a good deal of local history included and some information on an internet booking code SFIPFRA for Sea France but this may not get you a discount, just a cup of tea. There is scattergun accommodation and food information. To purchase a copy contact tourismepaysdelalysromane@orange.fr
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/via-francigena/post?postID=2C_tolkCr0c3-rvA4345mUNgVD1mun9e-fDO0d1jAo-SUQ4wURp7x0N2Q3Gpzx0O16V23NSpGorg-L_N3Sb63eQqEOqsHHgzxg>

Along the Templar Trail: Seven Million Steps for Peace, (Pilgrim's Tales, \$27.95 hardcover, \$17.95 paperback). Author and photographer, Brandon Wilson walked 20 miles per day through two continents and 11 countries in a 160-day trek for peace to Jerusalem. He followed a trail long associated with war, one taken 1,000 years ago by Crusaders and those who became the first Knights Templar.

Sunday Times article The paper's centre page spread on April 6th entitled "Step up for Europe's top treks" describes an ATG walk on the *Via Francigena* between San Gimignano and Siena. See: http://travel.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/travel/holiday_type/active/article3681307.ece

New Via Francigena association in France A French Association for the *Via Francigena*, ***Via Francigena France***, has now been formed and is based in Reims. Their objective is to develop the route across France in collaboration with the relevant *départements*, particularly in respect of signage and lodging for pilgrims on foot, cycle or horseback. Their president is François Louviot francois.louviot@wanadoo.fr.

Via Francigena signage Canterbury's Head of Transportation and Engineering has now got a commitment from Kent County Council to ***sign the Via Francigena along the North Downs Way***. They are planning to include a route for horse riders, which would also be suitable for mountain bikes. (There is already a national cycle route 16 from Canterbury to Dover.)

William Pettit has been asked to liaise with Artois-Lys in France to explore the possibility of putting together a bid for European funding for the ***signage and promotion of the Via Francigena in Kent and the Pas-de-Calais***.

Two walks

The inaugural walk along the new GR (loosely) based on the *Via Domitia* from the ***Italian border at Montgenevre to Arles and St Gilles*** will be held May 24-June 14. This is part of the "official" Rome-Compostela route. See

<http://www.compostelle-paca-corse.info/Region/infosregionscompostelle.html#MarcheGR653D>
<<http://www.compostelle-paca-corse.info/Region/infosregionscompostelle.html#MarcheGR653D>>

London to Canterbury - Pilgrimage 2008, The Connection at St. Martin's, 23 May-26 May 2008, a four day walk that starts on the steps of St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London,. This is an annual fundraising event for homeless people and forms an excellent start to the *Via Francigena*. Cost £12.50 per day. See <http://www.smitf-pilgrimage.org.uk/index.htm>

Gift to the Pope - Alberto Alberti of the Italian *Via Francigena* group contacted us with a proposal for a gift to the Pope which was agreed at our last meeting. "On May 14th we will participate in the General Audience of the Holy Father in the Vatican. We would like to offer a symbolic gift as the focal point of our walk. The idea is to have a cone made up by a net in silver. The top of the cone should give the idea of the cupola of St. Peter's cathedral. The bottom would have a script, such as "Peregrinatio ad sedem Petri" with the date and so on. Seven Saint James' shells should hang from the silver net. Each shell would show the name of the seven associations participating to the march with at least five pilgrims."

This will be presented at the end of the multi-group walk described in issue #2 of this *Newsletter* and at which several CPR members will be present.

Members journeys to Rome

Franz Xavier Brock had to stop last year in September while walking from Marburg, Germany to Rome due to problems with his leg. On 24th of April he will go by train to Ivrea and walk the final about 800 kilometres from there.

Ann Sieben completed her winter pilgrimage to Rome as planned. "I left from Canterbury in the middle of December with the idea to walk to Rome by Easter. The Alps certainly posed a challenge but it was very rewarding for me. I would recommend having a partner crossing the Alps. In hindsight, parts of it were on the edge of fool-heartiness for solo travel. Walking more than 65 kilometres in snowshoes over three days to get to the pass was something, a bit strenuous for me though fun. I had an enjoyable time in Rome during Holy Week.

I encountered very little trouble along the way - some loose dogs in the north of Italy, one of whom bit my leg, was the worst of it, and that wasn't so terrible. I otherwise met many very kind and helpful people. I had welded together two keys in the form of an x, which I wore hung around my neck to signify my destination, and was happy to find many people recognized that as the symbol of St Peter, just like they recognized the scallop shell as the

symbol of St James. Most people genuinely like to help pilgrims. If anyone should enquire, ***where the cost of the pilgrimage to Santiago is often rounded up to 1 euro per kilometre, my way to Rome from Canterbury was closer to 2.50 euros.***

I met with the *Via Francigena Association* based in Fidenza, Italy, when I passed through their area. They asked me to write an article for their biannual magazine that will be published in July. I didn't meet any other pilgrims to Rome during the entire three months. I only met one other pilgrim: a Spaniard who started in Rome and was heading to Santiago. We were happy to see each other.

Instead of 'Buen Camino', I heard 'Bon Courage'..."

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Reminder The current ***CPR Accommodation List*** is available from William Marques. As this relies completely on the feedback received by members who travel the route please remember to send him details of the places you stayed while on your journey, so that the information provided can be as up-to-date as possible,.