

CONFRATERNITY OF PILGRIMS TO ROME



NEWSLETTER

August 2008 No. 4

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Editorial

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

There are five articles, two 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. Janet Skinner has written an account of her experiences on her cycling pilgrimage from Canterbury to Rome, after which Howard Nelson continues his series of articles intended to explore the extraordinary richness that Rome presents to the modern pilgrim with one dealing with Christian traces from before the time of Constantine. Chris George tells us about the *Codex Amiatinus*, William Marques describes the first Annual General Meeting of the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome, its founding and its new status as an unincorporated charity, after which Joe Patterson describes a group pilgrimage to Rome along the *Via Francigena Sud*.

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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In the saddle with Sigeric: Canterbury to Rome by bicycle

Janet Skinner

Arriving late in Canterbury and leaving at 8am, I found nowhere open to give me a stamp for my pilgrim record, but the YHA does a good impression. I set off on a warm April morning at a smart pace and promptly got lost, several times. There is always a tap in a cemetery and I was lucky to find one as I neared Dover, thirsty and with an empty bottle. The only excitement in Dover was when a noisy earthquake rocked the building as we breakfasted.

No *tsunami* in the Channel and the ferry deposited me in Calais, where I learned there are few buses on a Saturday and none on Sunday in France. From Wissant on Day Three I marched inland and off across Europe, past Caesar's Camp and the Field of the Cloth of Gold. I was the first pilgrim at the campsite at Guines, where the locals knew of the *Via Francigena*, and received a free night.

My feet were sore: boots off, sandals on. In a tent at 3am my teeth chattered with the cold so loudly I think I started the dawn chorus. After a few days my hips ached because my rucksack was too heavy. I sent the camping equipment home but then found that after walking 25km there was no reply at two B&Bs. Luckily the *Chaussée Brunehaut* is an excellent, straight road for walking but I had to go another 5km to find a bed for the night. I decided the daily worry of finding accommodation was more that I could cope with so next day I returned home by bus and train. I had the first Pilgrim Record issued by the CPR and I had failed.

Three weeks later, traveling by bicycle, I made my way back to Arras and set off again. Crossing the plains dotted with First World War cemeteries was saddening. It was clear why so many had died out in the open, with no natural cover. Medieval tactics used with modern weapons.

For me cycling was the way to travel. I still got lost, never found the Merovingian cemeteries, but had time to stop and stare at old buildings over a coffee. Accommodation in YHA or hotel was better than camping and I got tips from locals about what to look for in the next town. Laon has a funicular railway to get up into the hilltop town with walls, narrow streets and old buildings.

Vauclair Abbey is a short deviation from the route well worth making; quiet, peaceful ruins. On that road I caught up with the sole pilgrim I met on the whole trip. A Frenchman using the both *Topofrancigena* map and detailed local ones, he too had been frequently lost using only the former.

As I was relatively close I made a detour to the Belgian border to visit the Merovingian capital Stenney and the Abbey at Orval, returning to the *Via Francigena* at Reims three days later. I was excited to find a plaque at the gate into Châons-en-Champagne stating this was the Roman *Via Appia*, passing from Milan

to Boulogne. Charlemagne's brother Carloman was buried here but I found no reference.

The 30km from Coole towards Brienne, where Napoleon learned his military craft, is easily followed. It's an old Roman road, straight and covered in white gravel, but walkers beware. There is no shelter and little habitation. Food, water and sun hats are a must. The wall around Clairvaux is most impressive but unfortunately the abbey remains are closed on Tuesdays. The Abbey at Mormant is on view by the road around farm buildings.

The most difficult town to enter was Besançon. I missed the route because the new TGV train line is being built across the road. The main road becomes an express route: no pedestrians, no bicycles. After two hours of wandering I suddenly found myself in a retail park with a cycle route towards the town centre. It was difficult leaving next day, walking and riding up a steep hill with much traffic until I could get off the road at Morre.

I was lost several times that day but saw the most wonderful steep gorges and tumbling rivers. I also had my first puncture. The Jura Mountains lead into Switzerland and finally to Lausanne on Lake Geneva. Experiencing only my second wet day in three weeks I passed Chillon castle (recommended) along the lakeside, and then followed a flat cycle route along the river Rhône with mountains rising steeply in waves above me.

The *Via Francigena* is promoted at St Maurice and I was given a medal depicting St Maurice the Martyr. I stayed at the Abbey. From Martigny to Orsières I caught a train up the first 20km of incline. The remaining 25km to the top of the Great Saint Bernard Pass I cycled and finally walked. The road got steeper, the scenery more rugged, as I rose above the tree line and to the snow. How did Napoleon get 42,000 men, cannons and horses over it? At the top I found my second and last puncture.

Because of roadworks, gravel and frightful drops I was walking downhill next morning when a truck stopped and offered me a lift all the way to Aosta. I discovered the people of the Aosta Valley speak French as well as Italian.

The sun shone and it got warmer as I went south. It only rained on one further day. I was soon down onto a flat valley under mountains holding castles and towers. At Donnas a piece of original Roman road lies beside the modern one. After the peace of the mountains I was shocked to witness a robbery in Santhià but out of town the traffic was quiet enough to follow the historic route past paddy fields. I crossed the river Po by bridge instead of ferry as intended and spent time in Pavia, Piacenza and Fidenza. I do wish the streets were not cobbled.

The Apennines were cooler with beautiful little villages and haymaking going on at full pace. Once over the Passo della Cisa it was downhill to the sea. Lucca, home of Puccini, was fascinating behind its massive walls. Leave by the Porta Elisa and

make for the green-domed basilica. The road does a gate-leg and you reach the *Via Romana*.

San Gimignano was heaving with visitors and I could not get accommodation so I set off for Siena. My back brake cable snapped. I had to walk down hills and cycle up for a change. San Quiricio is a quaint little hill-top town with a parochial house. Sadly as in many places I was on my own, with beds for 20 pilgrims.

My daughter had arranged to meet me in Rome. I was ahead of schedule so stayed in a mobile home 3 nights on Lake Bolsena and in an hotel 2 nights on Lake Bracciano. In Ventralla kind nuns looked after me at a monastery. I was entranced by the Mithraeum and by the Roman remains at Sutri. And suddenly I was on the outskirts of Rome, arriving at St Peter's at exactly 12 noon on Monday 2nd July.

There is a strange feeling on finishing such a journey. Elation tinged with the knowledge that there is nowhere to go on to tomorrow. I first read about the *Via Francigena* in a book printed by the Italian Tourist Board in 1999. It has taken a long time to plan and execute. Let no one be unaware that this is a very different journey from the one to Santiago de Compostela. The route from the Italian border was easy to follow with frequent marking over the Apennines and detailed notice boards in Latinum. Generally locals are aware of the route except for Tuscany who chooses to ignore.

I am 62, cycling long distances over the last 15 years. While this trip was not too strenuous, except for the Great Saint Bernard Pass, and visually, historically and culturally pleasing, I did find it very lonely. I was frequently the only person at a hostel or hotel and there were no groups of pilgrims to stop and chat to as on the Santiago route. Nevertheless I am delighted to have travelled the *Via Francigena*. Oh! And to my daughter's question - am I going to cycle to Jerusalem next? The answer is a resounding "No!"

Rome for the modern pilgrim, 2: Christian traces from before the time of Constantine

Howard Nelson

This is the second in a proposed series of articles attempting to give a chronological focus to the extraordinary jumble of monuments presented to the pilgrim when he or she arrives in Rome. The previous article (*CPR Newsletter* 3, April 2008) outlined the traces which remain of Peter's and Paul's time in Rome; this one looks at the period between their deaths about 64 AD and the conversion of Constantine in 312 – a long period during which the infant church grew steadily, despite a number of official persecutions, but which – and apart from the catacombs – has left little physical trace¹.

The first recorded martyr, Stephen, on trial for his life, declared that the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands², and we know from the many references in Paul's letters that the early Christians met for worship in each other's houses. Moreover, the early Christians tended to be poor and of low social status; and a sect subject to sporadic persecution would not have embarked, even if it had had the land and the means, on an ostentatious building programme. The church buildings that had grown up by the end of the 3rd century were destroyed, as Eusebius makes clear³, during the persecutions of Decius (r. 249-251) and Diocletian (in 302-303).

It is therefore unrealistic to expect to find much in the way of specifically Christian iconography or architecture, or traces of an overtly Christian cult, before the early 4th century and the time of Constantine.

The catacombs, used for Christian burials from about 200 onwards, are therefore the main focus of this article, but I shall also touch on Ostia Antiqua, where there remains vivid evidence of the *insulae*, the multi-storey apartment blocks in which most of the Roman population lived; and describe some of the *tituli*, the early parish churches built on the site of earlier Roman houses, which belonged, according to tradition, to Christian men and women who gave their property to the church, and traces of which are still visible below the present-day buildings.

The catacombs

¹ The planned series of articles is offered as the basis for an eventual, and shared, "CPR Pilgrim's Guide to Rome", so all comments and improvements will be warmly welcomed by howard.nelson@wanadoo.fr (please note change of e-mail address).

² Acts 7:48

³ Eusebius, *History of the Church* VIII, 2

The almost total absence of any other evidence of Christian iconography before the time of Constantine makes the catacombs of special importance. Of the 70 or so known in and around Rome, five are open to the public:

- San Callisto, south of the city, on the Via Appia Antica
- San Sebastiano, nearby
- Santa Domitilla, nearby on the Via delle Sette Chiese
- Sant'Agnese, to the northeast of the city, on the Via Nomentana
- Priscilla, to the north of the city, on the Via Salaria

all are worth a visit; each adds something to the overall picture. And they are huge: there are miles of tunnels, arranged on as many as 5 layers, with tens of thousands of burials in each⁴.

The early Christians lived in daily expectation of the second coming and the resurrection of the dead, and for this reason shunned the pagan practice of cremation. At the same time, land for burial was expensive; so the tunnels dug into the soft *tufa* rock –compacted volcanic ash which hardens when exposed to air, whence the stability and longevity of the catacombs - provided an ideal solution. Bodies were wrapped in winding sheets and laid in simple horizontal niches (*loculi*) cut into the *tufa*, which were then sealed with clay or marble slabs, generally bearing inscriptions, and decorated with a host of early Christian symbols. In time, wealthier families had entire chambers dug out for the sequential burial of family members, and these chambers (*cubiculae*), frequently decorated with frescoes, provided the location for the earliest illustrations of Biblical scenes.

Contrary to widespread belief, the catacombs were not used as hiding places; and only cult-places to the extent that Christian families met for anniversary/memorial meals at the tombs –such meals being frequently depicted in the frescoes. San Sebastiano (early known as ad Apostolorum) with its link to the cult of Peter and Paul, may be an exception to this general rule (see below).

Clement of Alexandria, writing about 190, invited the early Christians to avoid inappropriate imagery, suggesting instead:

⁴ The earliest catacombs are in fact the Jewish catacombs, not regularly open to the public, though study visits may be arranged through the Pontificia Commissione di Archaeologia Sacra.

“and let our seals be either a dove, or a fish, or a ship scudding before the wind, or a musical lyre ..or a ship’s anchor ..For we are not to delineate the faces of idols, we who are prohibited to cleave to them; nor a sword, nor a bow, following as we do, peace; nor drinking-cups, being temperate.”⁵



Advice which can be seen to have been widely followed in the inscriptions on the slabs covering the *loculi*, in all the catacombs.

The choice of scenes on the walls of the *cubiculae* was apparently governed by two main and linked concerns: to illustrate the theme of salvation; and to draw out the parallels between Old and New Testament themes. Thus Noah and Jonah are frequently depicted, both having been saved from and through water –thus pre-figuring Christian baptism. Moses, through his striking of water from the rock, and the gift of manna, prefigures both the Eucharist and baptism. Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac prefigures the crucifixion; Daniel is saved from the lion’s den, Shadrach and his companions from the burning fiery furnace, and Susanna from the elders.

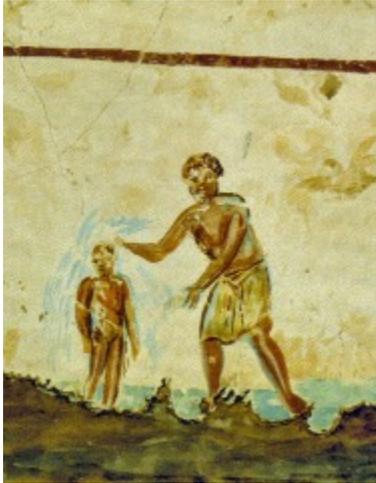
The earliest image of the Virgin and Child appears in the catacomb of Priscilla, now sadly faded (see below), but better preserved in a late 19th century photograph which was then water-coloured⁶.

The baptism of Christ is closely associated with the story of Jonah in the catacomb of Calixtus.

Some of Christ’s miracles are depicted: the healing of the paralytic, the raising of Lazarus, and particularly the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. And he is most frequently depicted as the Good Shepherd –e.g. in the catacombs of Santa Domitilla and San Calixtus.

⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* Book III, ch. XI

⁶ See Jeffrey Spier, *Picturing the Bible*, p. 178 for a very clear reproduction.



Curiously, the crucifixion is entirely absent from the catacombs; but one of the earliest known representations is on the carved door of the church of Santa Sabina, also in Rome, and dated to ca 432.

The Catacombs of San Sebastiano

Although not the oldest or the best preserved of the catacombs, San Sebastiano is the most interesting, for several reasons (apart from the church, which I mean to cover in the next article). The catacomb itself seems to have begun as a Roman cremation pit (there are three Roman tombs, in fine condition, around the base of the pit), from which the digging of the tunnels –seven miles of them –led off.

The public tour includes an open-air space (*triclia*) at ground level where the anniversary meals are said to have taken place. The red-plastered wall of this area contains many *graffiti*, some addressed to SS Peter and Paul, and the guides explain that their bodies were moved here for greater safety during the persecution of Valerian (r 253-260), before being moved back by Constantine at the time of the building of their basilicas. Against this it is argued that such a move would have been unnecessary since tombs, even of Christians, were sacrosanct, and

impractical since their burial-places were inaccessible during the persecutions; and that there is no archaeological evidence of any resting place at San Sebastiano. Nor –see my previous article –does the evidence discovered below the high altar of St Peter’s support the story of a move of the relics, and their subsequent replacement under the authority of Constantine. What was needed during the persecutions, however, was an alternative place of gathering and worship, which the *triclia* provided: hence the *graffiti*. Whatever the truth of this, the scratched inscription “Petrus et Paulus orate pro Victor”, datable to 239-260, is very moving.

The church itself, though built some hundred years later on the site of Sebastian’s burial in the catacomb, was originally called Basilica Apostolorum, reinforcing the site’s traditional association with Peter and Paul.

During the tour, look out especially for the images in the “Cubicula of the Sacraments”, showing among other scenes the story of Jonah and the baptism of Christ, and elsewhere, images of the Good Shepherd.

The catacombs of San Callisto

This was the first “official” place of Christian burial, and it includes a “chapel of the popes” where seven early popes, martyred between 235 and 274, are buried. Bodies or bones were brought from far afield for burial close to the martyr’s tombs.

The principal martyr remembered here is Santa Cecilia (d. 230), patroness of music and musicians, though her body was moved to the church dedicated to her in Trastevere when it was built in 820. A copy of the statue of the saint in the church has been placed on the site of her original tomb.

Nothing is said on this tour about memorial meals (elsewhere described as a pagan custom tolerated by the church), or a *triclia* dining area, but there are a number of paintings of people gathered round a table.

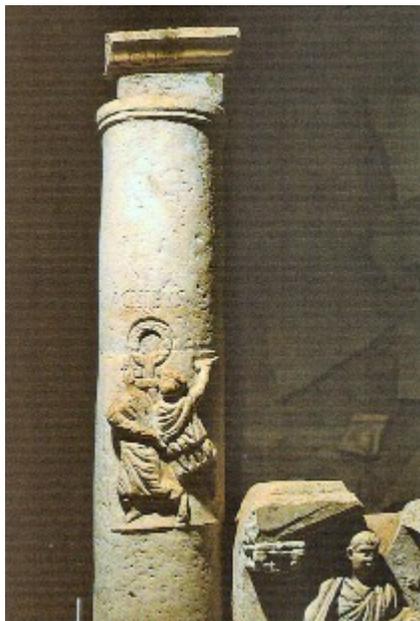


As in the case of all the catacombs, San Callisto was despoiled by Saracen raiders in the early 9th century, and all the bones were gathered up and removed to churches in the city centre, where they could be better protected.

Unlike San Sebastiano, and despite the importance of St Cecilia, no Constantinian basilica was built on this site.

The catacombs of Santa Domitilla

This is possibly the oldest Christian cemetery. As elsewhere, the great majority of the niches, having been despoiled, are now empty, but a few (2,000 out of 150,000) remain intact, with their original sealing-slabs still in place. I was shown only one fresco of about 400 on my tour: Peter and Paul, as older bearded men. The iconography was clearly established early!



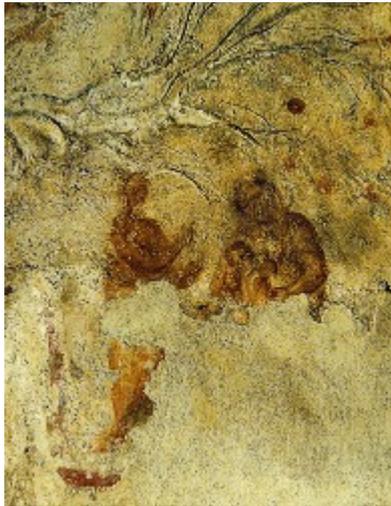
Of greatest interest here is the three-aisled basilica built in 390-395 over the tombs of the martyrs Nereus and Achilleus, slaves of Domitian's niece Flavia Domitilla (buried in the same catacomb). Petronilla, perhaps the adopted daughter of Peter, was also buried here. One of some dozen memorial churches built on or near the site of martyrs' tombs after the great Constantinian basilicas, later in the 4th century, it retains much of its original form, having escaped the Renaissance remodelling of so many of Rome's churches – and hence is of great interest. A graceful, uncluttered space, half below ground level, it includes a central area marked off with a low wall – a *schola cantorum* as found in a small number of other early churches, such as San Clemente – and a short stone column carrying a very early depiction of a martyr's death.

The bodies of Nereus and Achilles were moved to the present church dedicated to them on Via delle Terme di Caracalla in 524.

The catacombs of Priscilla

As with each of the catacombs, the sheer size is astonishing: by no means the largest, the catacomb of Priscilla extends over 13 km, and holds some 40,000 burials. The uppermost level of three, dating from the 2nd century, is the only level you can see (but since the catacombs were dug out downwards, the upper layers are the oldest).

Especially noteworthy among the several examples of early Christian iconography is the first Madonna (ca 200) –where she is depicted with the prophet Balaam, pointing to a star above her (from Numbers 24:17 –“a star shall come forth from Jacob”).



This catacomb also includes the first Adoration of the Magi (ca 240); combinations of OT and NT scenes –Moses, Susanna, and Lazarus; and the breaking of bread.

The catacombs of S Agnese

Here I quote verbatim from the notes I made at the time of my visit.

“The Blue Guide says this is the best preserved of the catacombs and certainly the few corridors we see are neater than the others. It includes two graves with skeletons still visible, and a number of easily-legible inscriptions. I find the word “*carissime*”, and two small graves of little girls who died at two years old: “*Athanasia virgine qui vixit duo annos et . . . dies.* ” And the Chi-Rho symbol. All very touching and very human, and very similar to our feelings in cemeteries today. Because that’s all they are: cemeteries: they just happen to be very early ones, and to contain hundreds of thousands of graves. This one was in use in the 3rd and 4th centuries. Agnes –only 12 when she died –was clearly a major martyr”

The abandonment of the catacombs

The tombs of the martyrs in the catacombs became major sites of pilgrimage, but after the sack by the Goths in 537, the Lombards in 755 and the Saracens in 846, the remaining bones were transferred by the cartload⁷ to churches within the city walls, and the catacombs were largely abandoned and forgotten. In three cases however, Constantine or his successors built basilica churches directly over the site of martyrs’ tombs: San Sebastiano, San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, and Sant’Agnese, all of which survive⁸.

Ostia Antiqua

The ancient port of Rome at the mouth of the Tiber, some 20 km below the city and easily reached from Stazione Osiense, makes a fascinating excursion from the city. Gradually abandoned after the transfer of the harbour and its business to Portus on the north bank of the river, the town of 80.000 inhabitants was never overbuilt, with the result that some of the Roman buildings remain standing up to second and third-storey level. Apart from a single small basilica-style church, built between 350 and 400, in the centre of the town, there are no traces of early Christianity (indeed, archaeology has revealed more extensive traces of a range of oriental cults); but the value of a visit to Ostia Antiqua, from our point of view, is the insight it gives into the living conditions of the average inhabitants of Rome during the early Christian period. Some of the *insulae*, the large apartment blocks, are astonishingly well-

⁷ One source indicates that the Pantheon, Santa Maria Rotunda, received 40 cartloads of bones!

⁸ Resources (so far) in the CPR library for the catacombs include Jeffrey Spier, *Picturing the Bible: the earliest Christian Art*, New Haven etc: Yale University Press, 2007; Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai et al., *The Christian Catacombs of Rome: history, decoration, inscriptions*, Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2002; Carlo Sandetti, *Guide to the Catacombs of Priscilla*, Vatican City: Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology, 2005.

preserved; and though no trace remains, individual dwellings in buildings like this must have been the site of most of the earliest Christian activity in Rome.

The Tituli

The survival of individual names in the earliest parish churches, or *tituli*, built in Rome (25 are extant) has been taken as evidence that they were founded on the site of earlier house-churches⁹ but where excavations below these churches have been made, and are open to the public, you tend to find yourself looking at the basement-level of an *insula*, where there are no evident signs of a Christian presence. The following notes cover only those churches that I have been able to visit so far.

Titulus Marci, today's **San Marco**, founded in 336 by Pope Marcus at the foot of the Via Lata in the heart of imperial Rome (and now incorporated into the Palazzo Venezia on the Piazza Venezia), was one of the first churches (after Constantine's San Giovanni in Laterano and Santa Croce in Gerusalemme) to be built within the city walls. The first church on the site was installed within the walls of a former upper-class urban palace¹⁰; the marble pavement of the original house can still be seen in the present crypt.

Titulus Iulii, or Basilica Iulii et Callisti, today's **Santa Maria in Trastevere**, was founded by Julius I (s 337-352) on land originally given to the church (and presumably developed in some way) by Pope Callistus (s 217-222), in an attempt to Christianise one of the most populous quarters of Rome. Excavations have revealed traces of an earlier building below the present 12th century structure, but these are not open to the public¹¹.

Titulus Pudentis, today's **Santa Pudenziana**, was probably founded by Pope Damasus I (s 366-384) on the main thoroughfare (the Vicus Patricius) running through the thickly populated area of Subura below the Esquiline hill. The original building seems to have been installed in the courtyard of a former *insula*, the surrounding walls of which can be seen, still forming the walls of the present church¹². It seems clear that the site originally belonged to a family named Pudens: Pudentia herself was the sister of Praxedes, whose church stands nearby, and they are said to have been the daughter of a senator Pudens who gave hospitality to Peter (or maybe Paul) when he first arrived in Rome. While the legend is touching, and the way in which the church preserves traces of the pre-existing structure fascinating, it cannot be said that archaeology itself reveals anything of the early

⁹ Almis Simans' article in *CPR Newsletter #3*, April 2008, includes on p. 11 a paragraph on the origins of the *tituli*.

¹⁰ Brandenburg, op. cit., p. 112.

¹¹ Brandenburg, op. cit., p. 112-113.

¹² Brandenburg, op. cit., p. 138-139 goes into considerable detail about the adaptation of the original building.

Christian cult. The apse mosaic, dating from 390, is the oldest of its kind in Rome: in it the Apostles, wearing togas, resemble Roman senators or philosophers.

Titulus Clementis, today's **San Clemente**, must be one of the best-known and most striking churches of Rome, preserving as it does all three of its sequential layers. The upper (present street level) church dates from 1128. It stands above a church built in the 4th century under Pope Siricius (s 384-399), which itself was built over a 1st century public building of some kind (possibly a mint), and which included a Mithreum, still identifiable today. The association with Pope Clement I (s 90-99) and the belief that the church stands on the site of his own house is probably due to a confusion with a 4th century namesake who actually founded the church. Again, while the legend of earlier Christian use is powerful and appealing, there is little in the way of actual evidence¹³.

Conclusion

So we are left with the catacombs, vivid and touching links with the life and beliefs of some of our earliest Christian ancestors. The modern pilgrim does not need to be in search of martyr's memorials to be moved by the immediacy and the presence of so many who died in the faith.

¹³ Detailed account at Brandenburg, op cit, pp. 142-152.

The *Codex Amiatinus*

Chris George

There are, as some of us know to our cost, many individual towns, villages, palaces, cathedrals, abbeys, churches and works of art that tempt you to linger a while, all the way along the *Via Francigena* from Canterbury to Rome.

Fairly high on my list when I set out from Canterbury in July 2005 were two books I wanted to see: one very old and one quite new one

The ancient book is one of the oldest Anglo - Saxon books in existence, the *Vercelli Book*, written in the late tenth century and discovered in the cathedral library in Vercelli in 1822. It contains poems and prose homilies.

It is thought that this book was left by one of the numerous Anglo - Saxon pilgrims on their way to Rome and I was hoping for a peek at it. However as I arrived in Vercelli right in the middle of August, the cathedral library, like the rest of Italy at this time of the year, was - closed! So it was on to Abbadia San Salvatore on the slopes of Mount Amiata for a look at the “new” one.

The “new” one is a facsimile of the *Codex Amiatinus*, a copy of the Bible which Ceolfrith, Abbot of the twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow in Northumbria, had made at the end of the seventh/beginning of the eighth century. The original now resides in the Laurentian Library in Florence.



Ceolfrith had, in fact, had three copies made from a model coming from Cassiodorus' Vivarium. The only one surviving is the one in the Library in Florence.

But where does Abbadia San Salvatore come in and where exactly is it?

It is south of Siena. Mount Amiata looms up as you leave San Quirico D'Orcia and the Abbadia San Salvatore is approximately 27 kms south of there. It is a bit of a pull up to the town from the *Via Cassia*, the road in the valley below, but the views are excellent.

The abbey, where the book is kept, is situated in the centre of this town which is strung out along the slopes of the mountain. The abbey has a wonderful eighth-

century crypt and the book is to be found in the museum which, in September 2005, was in the care of the coincidentally-named curator Marcello Pellegrini. He was most helpful and fortunately spoke very good English. He explained to me that the original *Codex* like the facsimile on display, was very large. It is composed of 1029 parchment leaves and weighs around 50 kilos. It is the most ancient evidence to the Vulgate Latin Bible. It arrived from England, carried to Rome by Abbot Ceolfrith, as a gift to Pope Gregory¹¹ in 716 AD. At an unknown date, but probably towards the end of the tenth century, the *Codex* came to the Monastery of San Salvatore on Mount Amiata where it remained for seven centuries. During the Suppression of the Monasteries which was instigated by Grand Duke Leopold in 1782 it was taken from the Monastery in San Salvatore and ended up two years later in the Laurentian Library in Florence.

Here the first Medicis, followed by the House of Lorena, knew that they had in their keeping one of the most important items of Western culture. This move to the library probably helped to preserve this ancient book with its wonderful miniatures and it is still in excellent condition.

Scholars, historians and art experts have all wanted access to this document produced all those years ago in the scriptorium in sight of the River Tyne. It was therefore decided, at the approach of the twenty-first century, to use all the most modern techniques to produce copies of the Bible which would satisfy all the requirements of modern scientific research. A replica of the exact size of the original was made, to be presented to the Abbey of San Salvatore where the original rested for over seven hundred years. Smaller copies were made for sale to individuals and other libraries and, of course, in the twenty-first century, a CD Rom.

I was shown by the Curator a video of the work of copying and rebinding and the research carried out by chemists on the materials used in the production of the Bible in Northumbria all those years ago. And as I was walking to Rome the Curator Marcello Pellegrini showed me another video, the production of which had been financed by an Italian bank, all about the history of the *Via Francigena*. I spent in total a fascinating three hours in his company, which I didn't mind as it was pouring with rain outside –yet again!!

The first Annual General Meeting of the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome and what lead up to it.

William Marques

The Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome was formed when, at the end of September 2006, a group of past, present and future pilgrims made contact and agreed that it would be a good idea to form a society of English speaking people interested in the pilgrimage routes to Rome. The International Association of the Via Francigena AIVF had been formed in 1997 by Adelaide Trezzini and had done much to foster the rebirth of that route. The AIVF, however, was not a body which enabled people to meet face to face and as an International Association served more as an umbrella organisation.

Our first meeting was held on November 18th 2006 at the Confraternity of Saint James Office, where it was agreed that the name of the group would be the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome (CPR). The objective of the new confraternity was to aid those making a pilgrimage to Rome by foot, bicycle or horse with practical help and information.

When the CPR was formed we had only 15 members and an informal **structure** was adequate as the management of the group and tasks we set ourselves did not need anything more structured. Little more than a year later in January 2008, however, we had grown to more than 100 members and with our increasing workload including a newsletter, library, accommodation list, pilgrim passport and practical pilgrim day, the lack of any structure was no longer feasible. It was agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting in March to discuss the future structure of the confraternity.

It was decided at the March meeting that the CPR needed to have a formal structure and a **constitution** was drafted by Howard Nelson and Ian Broderick. We set the date for the AGM to confirm the constitution and select the committee as the 27th April.

Our objective needed to be changed due to our intention, at some time in the near future, to become a charity and the following wording was agreed:

“The Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome is a non denominational association whose objective is to encourage, inform and assist those making their journey to Rome along historical pilgrimage routes.”

On the 27 April the constitution which was originally drafted by Howard Nelson and Ian Brodrick was considered. It had been amended from the original draft:

1. to make it clear that our large membership outside the UK, who will not be able to attend meetings, are still able to vote;
2. to place an upper limit, for now, on the number of committee members;
3. to make it clear that the first subscription received for new members will be for the remainder of the current year and the next full year.

Further amendments to change the title of the Executive Committee to Steering Group and to change to clause 4.f) to read “object” rather than “objects of the Confraternity” were agreed.

The constitution was unanimously agreed.

William Marques, Joe Patterson, Ann Milner, Alison Payne, Alison Raju, Bronwyn Marques, Ian Brodrick had put their names forward for election to the steering group. As the total number of names was less than our maximum of nine it was decided that the meeting should vote for them as a whole rather than individually.

The **membership of the steering group** was agreed unanimously.

Although not necessarily part of the AGM the election of Officers took place and the following positions were agreed:

William Marques	<i>Chairman</i>
Alison Payne	<i>Treasurer</i>
Ian Brodrick	<i>Secretary</i>
Bronwyn Marques	<i>Confraternity Secretary</i>
Ann Milner	<i>Webmaster</i>
Alison Raju	<i>Editor Newsletter</i>
Chris George	<i>Editor Newsletter</i>
Howard Nelson	<i>Librarian</i>
Joe Patterson	<i>AIVF Liaison</i>

Neither Chris George nor Howard Nelson are members of the Steering Group but have been elected by the members of the Steering Group as Officers to fulfil the roles above.

The **subscription** is to be £10.00 per annum with a reduction for those who pay for three years in one payment to £20.00 for three years. Any subscription for the current year will also cover the member for next year i.e. till the end of 2009. The subscriptions for members will thereafter run from January to December each year. Subscriptions for newly joining members for a part year will also cover the member for the following year. We will set up the bank account and arrange a convenient method for our members to pay before the start of 2009.

Alison Payne will arrange with Bronwyn Marques to send out a blanket email to everyone when we are ready to start collecting subscriptions.

It was agreed that as a **bookshop** has been set up already by the Confraternity of Saint James we would provide a link from our website to their Bookshop. We need to find out if it would be possible to have a separate folder for Rome/VF books within the CSJ bookshop.

We will have fixed dates for **Steering Group meetings** on the third Tuesday of every fourth month 18.00-21.00 starting from January 2009.

* * * * *

The *Via Francigena Sud*

Joe Patterson

Background

It was in Rome, at the end of my first pilgrimage to that city in 2001, I first met Alberto Alberti. My wife had been contacting him by email and receiving good advice which she passed on to me, whilst I walked in Italy. When I finally arrived in Rome Alberto came to meet me in St Peter's and took my wife and me for a tour of Rome the following day. Since then we have met many times and apart from being a generous and genuine gentleman, it soon became clear that he was passionately interested in Pilgrimage routes and their history, throughout Italy. He is also the co-author of a guide book covering the pilgrim route from Siena to Rome.

In more recent years he has become interested in the *Via Appia Antica*, the old and historic route coming to Rome from the south. With a group of friends, he started to rediscover and reinvent a route that mirrors the old Appia.

So in 2006 I took two friends with me to join Alberto on his inaugural pilgrimage from Formia, on the southern border of the region of Latium, to Rome. We walked in June (very hot) and arrived at St Peter's Basilica on 29th, the feast day of Saints Peter and Paul, to be joined on the steps of the Basilica by hundreds of young pilgrims who had walked through the night from the north. Pope Benedict came onto the steps to chat to the youngsters and this set the seal on a wonderful experience.

This pilgrimage was repeated in 2007 and I again joined, this time taking three English friends with me.

By now the Pilgrimage was developing and Alberto asked if I could advertise his proposals for 2008 to attract more foreign pilgrims. This I did through the good offices of the CSJ and CPR. This year was to be different, however, in that four separate pilgrim groups, starting from different places i.e. Bolsena, Assisi, Monte Cassino and Formia, were to all meet in St Peters Square on 13th May. A grand finale indeed.

So I recruited three friends to accompany me and, in line with the publicity material, Jim Brodie elected to walk from Formia, Yvonne Loftus chose Assisi and Laurie and Marion Clegg started walking from Siena and joined their group in Bolsena. A flight from Bristol to Rome, where we picked up Jim, and a train journey to Formia, found us in our convent in good time for our evening meal, and to meet our fellow pilgrims. They were mostly Italian, but there was also a group of four from Norway.

Day 1

It is important to understand that we were walking with an Italian group and Alberto, our leader, had to rely to some extent on others to make things happen. So on the Sunday morning we all arose very early, to attend a 7.00 am mass at the ancient church of St Erasmus. Good idea, but unfortunately the priest failed to turn up! Undeterred, we continued out of Formia along small roads and tracks to Itri and lunch. Itri boasts an impressive castle and several of the group climbed up to explore, whilst we seasoned hands contented themselves by staying in the bar. The afternoon saw us walking one of the best preserved sections of the old Roman road, before we reached Fondi, our B&B overnight stop. A longish day, of some 25km.

Day 2

After the usual group photos, we walked small roads, lined with glorious flowers, and visited the old monastery, which is being painstakingly restored. Then more small roads, gaining height and leaving buildings behind, we arrived at a farm where the farmer provided cold water and rest. Continuing along a goat path we had splendid views of the coastal plain, very fertile since the marshes were drained. A further climb took us up to the Temple of Jupiter, on Monte S. Angelo, then down to the outskirts of Terracina, where a reception with food had been arranged for us. A few of us were staying in the hotel here, some at the convent, but we all went out for a civic dinner. Lovely as there was no charge. Another long day of 25km

Day 3

We assembled in the main Piazza, one of the oldest in use in Italy. Again on small roads and climbing steadily, we entered the Monte Lipini National Park. Lunch was at the Rangers HQ. Then it is downhill all the way to Fossonova and it's magnificent Abbey. Evening entertainment was watching artichokes being picked, filled and roasted on a grill, then eaten, all in the field.

Day 4

This year Alberto had decided to take some of us (English speaking) on a four day diversion, so we left the main group at Primernova and took small roads to Maenza, which we spied at the top of a large hill. We climbed a up steep ancient path to the town square. Evening entertainment involved rehearsing a song my wife had written especially for the pilgrimage (more later)

Day 5

Stony tracks most of day with good views, wonderful flowers and the sound of cuckoos all day. Were they telling us something? We arrived at Carpineto and walked together to the church, where we were greeted by peals of bells specially rung to mark our arrival. We stayed in the church lodgings and as it was 'Mother's night', the girls were taken to wine, dine and dance whilst we men had our own dinner

Day 6

We walked to Segni. Joined by a group of local people, we climbed up over the hill, about 800m altitude and down into a long valley. Much wildlife seen, wild goats and pigs, together with calves and foals. We picnicked in the woods. Evening brought a civic reception and we all got a loaf (don't ask), a certificate, a presentation on the *Via Francigena Sud* in the local church, a chance to sing with the choir and a civic dinner. The night was spent in a monastery where we all had individual rooms or cells. A really good 22km day.

Day 7

We walked to Cori today, where we linked up with the other group. Looked forward to breakfast but it never arrived!! Up into the hills again, to a cheese making farm. They used sheep's milk, tasted good. Interesting walking and impressive scenery. We stayed at a hotel/monastery high up in the town. Great views and they only charged two euros for a bottle of wine!! Only 19km today, so chance to enjoy.

Day 8

We were joined for the day by a huge group of local pilgrims, some sixty in number. We visited a home for sick children and had a huge lunch. Eventually we reached Velletri. Here we heard too many speeches, presentations, etc. This is the downside to this pilgrimage, especially if you have just walked 21k, but is probably necessary for the publicity etc.

Day 9

Some good country walking all day, lunch was at Nemi, given by Alberto's friends, wine, water, cheese, olives, bread and broad beans. The afternoon route followed the lake through the woods to Castel Gondolfo, where we stayed in an *ostello* on the edge of the town. But first to mass in Castel Gondolfo and then entertained by the choir. Good walking, about 20km

Day 10

The last day and it chose to rain. Walked along a busy road at first, but we then arrived at beginning of the longest stretch of the *Appia Antica*, 15km. At first just rough track but then we walked on Roman pavement, marvelling at the sights around us. At the end of the *Appia* we gathered near the church of Quo Vadis, for the final stage through Rome to St. Peter's. When we arrived the heavens opened and the joyous meeting of the four pilgrim groups became a quick dash for shelter under the colonnades. A, damp at times, 20km

The following day we attended the Pope's general audience under a blazing sun and then, as a final duty, the reception in the Municipal offices on the Capitoline Hill. There is a photo on the next page of the specially-prepared pilgrim gift which was presented by the group to the Pope.

Would I recommend others to join this pilgrimage? YEs, very definitely. True it has it's downside, with overlong speeches in Italian, variable food (but the wine is always good), and occasionally quaint organisation. But you will meet people of other nationalities and be befriended, you will walk through wonderful countryside, visit interesting towns, have your luggage carried and generally experience a life you could never arrange on your own.

Wish to know more? Email me (Joe Patterson) at pilgrim2001@uwclub.net



Photo: Alberto Alberti

In the April issue of this *Newsletter* Alberto explained (page 47) that “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.”

Reviews

Via Francigena guide books in English

Paul Chinn and Babette Gallard, *LightFoot Guide to the via Francigena: Canterbury to the Summit of the Great St Bernard Pass*, Fougère: EURL Pilgrimage Publications, 2008, 219pp, ISBN 9782917183014.

Paul Chinn and Babette Gallard, *LightFoot Guide to the via Francigena: Summit of the Great St Bernard Pass to St Peter's, Rome*, Fougère: EURL Pilgrimage Publications, 2008, 224pp, ISBN 9782917183021.

These are what we have all been waiting for!

Two route-finding guides in English, to lead the pilgrim all the way from the cathedral in Canterbury to St. Peter's Rome, whether on foot, on horseback or riding a bike. (And volume 1, covering the sections through England, France and Switzerland, is the first such guide in any language at all.)

Volume 1 covers the first 21,030 kilometres, as far as the Great St. Bernard Pass, while Volume 2 describes the remaining 942, from there to Rome. The route is divided in 77 sections, 1-44 in the first book, 45 onwards in the second, with each daily stage containing a route summary, cultural and historical overview of the region, detailed instructions, a map and a blog extract.

The colour maps for each section not only have the route traced on them but also include numbered GPS waypoints referring to the detailed directions given in the following text, symbols to indicate facilities available in the different places along the way, an altitude profile, map references and, where applicable, pictures of the types of waymarking used. Each section also include listings of accommodation and practical facilities such as doctors/vets, internet café s and tourist offices.

As well as basic information about England (useful for those who don't live there), France, Switzerland and Italy, the introductions to each volume also offer practical advice specifically for walkers, riders and cyclists, information about dogs and horses relevant to each country, useful websites, a short reading list (though without bibliographical detail) and vocabulary lists. At the end of each volume there is also a section that can be used as a pilgrim record.

With these two clearly laid-out books the pilgrim should have no trouble finding his or her way along the *Via Francigena* or places to sleep en route. They do, however, have one drawback, as least as far as this reviewer is concerned. The authors explain that information on areas along the route is restricted to the general and/or topographical, without detailed reference to religious sites, a decision taken partly for reasons of space but also because, in their view, a significant percentage of people following the *Via Francigena* today are either not religious or belong to a

different faith. The pilgrim road from Canterbury to Rome was, however, fundamentally a religious route in its origins, and while many modern-day pilgrims may not be religious in the conventional sense many will be interested in the historical, artistic and cultural aspects of the religious sites along the route. A whole dimension is therefore missing from this otherwise excellent pair of guidebooks.

LightFoot guides are published on demand (POD) and are available from <http://pilgrimagepublications.com/UKShop/PayPal/ppbooks.html> (their shop facility) as well as from the Confraternity of Saint James' secure online bookshop (www.csj.org.uk)

A copy of each volume is in the CPR library.

Alison Raju

Practical advice for riders

The Riding Pilgrim, Confraternity of Saint James (*Practical Pilgrim Notes* series), 2008, 24pp, £2.50

The Confraternity of Saint James has recently published this booklet providing advice on making a pilgrimage on horseback or with a donkey, which has been prepared by riders making their journeys both with and without back-up support. It has been written with the pilgrimage to Santiago in mind but its information on equipment for both you and your mount, hooves and shoeing, vets, insurance, navigation etc. will be equally useful for those preparing to ride to Rome.

Alison Raju

Additions to the CPR Library, March to June 2008

Alberti, Alberto. Michael

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 3, April 2008.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4566.

Associazione Italiana Alberghi per la Gioventù. Mappa degli Ostelli in Italia = Map of Youth Hostels in Italy

[The Association], Rome, A pamphlet, 2006.

Location: CPR PAM 18. Acc No: #4526.

Belloc, Hilaire. The Path to Rome

Thomas Nelson, London, n.d., pp. 375.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4550.

Belloc, Hilaire. The Path to Rome

Kessinger Publishing, n.p., A reprint, 2008?, pp. 214.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4551.

Brett, Peter. Canterbury: pilgrim guide

Canterbury Press, Nowich, 1997, pp. 54.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4554.

Chinn, Paul and Gallard, Babette. Walkers', Cyclists' and Horse Riders' Lightfoot Guide to the Via Francigena: Canterbury to the summit of the Great St Bernard Pass, 1,030 kilometres

Pilgrimage Publications, Fougères, 2008, pp. 216.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4556.

Chinn, Paul and Gallard, Babette. Walkers', Cyclists' and Horse Riders' Lightfoot Guide to the Via Francigena: Summit of the Great St Bernard Pass to Rome, 942 kilometres

Pilgrimage Publications, Fougères, 2008, pp. 221.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4558.

Communauté Artois-Lys. Via Francigena: a cultural route through Europe: Kent - Pas-de-Calais

Departmental Committee for Tourism in the Pas-de-Calais, Lillers, 2008?, pp. 112.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4522.

Kent County Council. Cathedral to Coast: signed cycle routes between Canterbury, Folkestone and Dover

[The County Council], Maidstone, A pamphlet, n.d..

Location: CPR PAM 17. Acc No: #4525.

Labarge, Margaret Wade. Medieval travellers: the rich and restless

Raju, Alison. [Review of] Lack, Katherine, Conqueror's son: Duke Robert Curthose, thwarted King

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 3, April 2008.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4570.

Raju, Alison. [Review of] Mattioli, Fidenza, Immagini di una Via: riflessioni e suggestioni lunga la Francigena

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 3, April 2008.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4567.

Raju, Alison and George, Chris. Editorial

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 3, April 2008.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4560.

Robins, Peter. Medieval itineraries to Rome

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 3, April 2008.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4564.

Shrady, Nicholas. Sacred roads: adventures from the pilgrimage trail

Penguin, London, 2000, pp. 204.

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4553.

Simans, Almis. The Seven Pilgrim Churches of Rome

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 3, April 2008.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4562.

Skinner, Janet. Who was St Maurice?

In: Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome *Newsletter*, 3, April 2008.

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4563.

Howard Nelson

Secretary's Notebook

Membership of the CPR We currently have 126 members (couples are counted as a single member), of which many are from outside the UK.

AGM Please see Chairman's article (page 17) on our new status. The Committee will issue a report in the next *Newsletter* following its first meeting in September.

Future meetings

- *Next open meeting* Saturday 1st November 2007.
- *Practical Pilgrim day* 7th February 2009, Half Day 10.00-14.00.

CPR Secretary's new email address Please note that this has now changed: pilgrimstoromesecretary@yahoo.com

Pilgrims journals – diaries, accounts of individual journeys - are always a welcome addition to our CPR Library. If you would like to donate a journal of your pilgrimage (word-processed, in a binder or folder) please send it to Howard Nelson c/o the CSJ office, 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY.

Guide Books Paul Chinn and Babette Gallard's guidebooks (see Reviews, page 24) will be updated following some changes which have been noted by some pilgrims. These will be in the new additions when published.

Alison Raju's guide book is scheduled to be published towards the end of 2009.

Accommodation List The CPR Accommodation List is available from William Marques - please email culverwood3@yahoo.co.uk if you are planning your journey and would like a copy.

We have had a good deal of feedback from John and Wendy Beecher and also from Ann Milner who is currently on her pilgrimage to Rome and others. Any information received is very much appreciated as places close and new alternatives arise. As so few people walk this route compared to the *Camino Francés* your information is even more valued.

For up-to-date information (in Italian) on the availability (or not) of parish-type accommodation in Italy see the Confraternità di San Jacopo's website www.confraternitadisanjacopo.it and look under "Ospitalità"

Canterbury-Dover Route Peter Robins has updated his maps for the Canterbury-Dover route to use the Ordnance Survey's new OpenSpace API for 'slippy' maps and has included a variant of the North Downs Way via Barfreton Church as well as the routes in the AIVF Guides which have been modified slightly from the previous version to go past Patribourne church.

<http://petersmaps.googlepages.com/canter2dover.html>

Testimonium Database This database has been set up to record the name, date and number of the *testimonium* of pilgrims who have reached Rome. This will be helpful to record the growth the route as the authorities at the Vatican do not issue statistics as they do at Santiago. If you have completed a pilgrimage, either some time ago or recently, and received a Testimonium or the certificate from the Opera Romana Pelleginaggi it would be helpful if you would email the Secretary with details as stated above for inclusion on the database:

pilgrimstoromesecretary@yahoo.com

CPR Certificate You will receive (or may have received by the time you read this) by email from the CPR Secretary a Certificate with your name and membership no. This can be printed out by yourself if you wish for display.

Members' Journeys to Rome

Franz Xavier Brock has sent some information about the continuation of his pilgrimage to Rome. "I started the second part of my way on 25th of April 2008 from Ivrea, where I had to stop last year due to problems with my leg. I was a little bit afraid, that I would not find the route of the *Via Francigena* through Italy. I was more than surprised, that in the meanwhile *the Via Francigena* has been well marked in nearly all provinces I had to walk through.

In addition, the map *La Via Francigena - Cartografia e Gps*, issued by Monica D'Atti and Franco Cinti was a great help for me to find the way (also I was not using the GPS). Only in bigger cities sometimes VF-signs are missing or, when I had left the way for sightseeing sometimes to find the right direction out of the towns was a bit difficult for me.

The OUTDOOR [series] booklet "Via Francigena" by Birgit Gätzmann (in German) could be helpful, but she often mixes up right and left and east and west so I sometimes went wrong following her instructions.

I met some persons who were just marking the way by painting arrows. The VF can be used in both directions: for going to Rome as well as for going to Santiago so they painted the direction to Rome in white and to Santiago in yellow.

For sleeping I often found places where I had to pay nothing for or just for giving a donation. But sometimes you have to be content with a sofa or a place on the ground. I met only a few pilgrims most of them after I had passed the Tuscany. But

being alone on the way did help me to better find to my own and to come a little bit closer to God.”

Ann Milner is on her journey to Rome at present and is writing her blog on route. You can find it at <http://www.walk2rome.me.uk/>

Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome

Founded November 2006

www.pilgrimstorome.org

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