

# LANDSCAPES OF PILGRIMAGE IN MEDIEVAL BRITAIN

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**Archaeopress Archaeology**

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# Chapter 1

## The Purpose and the Pilgrim

### 1.1 Research Aims

Amongst the various cultural and religious phenomena within Medieval Christendom, pilgrimage and the industry it spawned stands as an enduring testament to devotion. Stimulating growth in sacred art, music, literature and a steep rise in saint cults during the later Medieval period, the influence of pilgrimage is also felt in areas which are traditionally seen as secular in nature such as trade, communications networks and hospitality. Pilgrimage in Medieval Christendom has in the past been viewed and addressed in distinctly simplistic terms, focussing on the shrine and material culture generated from this site. This is an insufficient and unbalanced scope of study, considering the complex factors which made pilgrimage both desirable and practical for the laity. Principally, within British scholarship the shrine at the pilgrim's destination receives the large majority of attention, with little or no attention to how the pilgrim travelled, and their experiences in terms of journeying practicalities and movement through disparate landscapes en route.

In my research I seek to redress this imbalance, paying particular attention to the journeying aspect, examining through four British case studies the route-network and accommodation possibilities available to the pilgrim, the sites encountered along the journey, and potential for interaction with the landscape from a sensory perspective. This 'journey-centric' approach will be driven by an interdisciplinary methodology, primary data and body of secondary source material, showing the act of pilgrimage in its entire sense, and not merely the final approach to the shrine which so dominates current pilgrim studies. This interdisciplinary methodology is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.4. Therefore the urban context of pilgrimage, whilst discussed, will not form the bulk of research. My primary research aims which are expressed through the four case studies (discussed in Chapter 2) are as follows:

1. To develop a methodology which addresses the study of pilgrimage from an interdisciplinary perspective within the Medieval Western context, considering the processes motivating pilgrims, the practicalities of sacred travel, and the experiential aspects encountered en route.
2. To identify the surviving archaeological evidence for Medieval pilgrimage, and compare this record with that offered by the documentary data.
3. To differentiate between the pilgrims' experience and interaction with the landscape with that of 'secular/commercial travellers' (such as merchants).
4. To explore this sensory dialogue between pilgrim and landscape through theories of liminality and perception applied to topographical data.

### 1.2 Structure of Book

This book is comprised of seven chapters, which aim to lead the reader from the specific sanctuaries already discussed by prior scholarship, out into the landscapes and topographies which form the majority of the pilgrim experience. Chapter 1 presents a background to the phenomenon of pilgrimage both as a world-wide practise and in the specific context of Medieval Christendom, introducing the means and motives of pilgrimage in relation to Christian dogma and the general route networks.

Chapter 2 expands on these themes in relation to current theoretical approaches employed by archaeologists, historians and anthropologists when addressing pilgrimage in the historical and contemporary record. Problems which can occur when addressing concepts such as spatial delineation are also highlighted, along with the current conceptualising of the ritual of pilgrimage from an anthropological standpoint. Archaeologically definable features of pilgrimage are also discussed, and aspects in the historical literature which inform on and confirm pilgrim activity at certain sites. This chapter ends with a detailed explanation of my method for fieldwork and the collection of primary data sets, including the categories of monument or site recorded. The justification for the selection of the four case study sites is supplied and reasons given for the exclusion of Canterbury as a case site.

Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 comprise the majority of this book, and these four chapters show the application of my method to the four case studies (see Chapter 2), involving both primary data collected from fieldwork, and desk based research into available scholarship on these sites. For consistency, these chapters follow the same structure, which addresses the topographical, economic and ecclesiastical environments of the broader area in which the study site is located; the Medieval route network available in the area; the development and fabric of the pilgrim site itself; the distribution of relics and pilgrim souvenirs relating to the cult; the archaeological/building evidence of pilgrimage between the origin site (a term explained in Chapter 2) and the pilgrim site; the distribution of church dedications in the local area; the experiential aspects of the landscapes between the origin site and the pilgrim site; and finally some brief conclusions drawn from the case study. Where possible I have included ground plans of the

major ecclesiastical buildings in each case study, however with sites such as Bodmin Priory it has been impossible to locate any such data.

Chapter 7 draws on themes raised throughout the preceding four chapters, expanding on concepts which resonate with landscape theory and the comparisons of universality and locality in terms of the pilgrim experience. Further comparisons are drawn with universal continental pilgrim routes, trends relating to the souvenirs and the concept of ‘pilgrim culture’ are addressed, and elements linked to the landscapes of the case studies are compared and contrasted. These themes are then expanded further in relation to pilgrimage in cultures far removed from the Medieval West to support the application of my methodology to pilgrimages universally, when combined with specialised knowledge of the religious and social aspects of the culture in question. Finally, concluding remarks are offered, and followed by suggestions for future avenues of research in this field.

### 1.3 What is Pilgrimage?

*‘Science walks on the earth. Poetry flies above the earth. Both are necessary for the progress of man; but his progress is his pilgrimage and his pilgrimage is his becoming.’* (Macaro, 1973, 14)

The phenomenon of pilgrimage can be found in a wide range of belief systems throughout human history, either as a specific term or event, or as a manner of experiencing the landscape within daily routine. A precise definition of the term can and has presented problems to scholars, who have struggled to strip the term of the cultural baggage which accompanies the act within each cultural and historical context. In this book I use my own definition of pilgrimage, based upon my research, as ‘the undertaking of a journey to a site which holds specific relevance to the pilgrim’s system of belief’. All combinations and nuances of this religio-cultural process hold a distinct spiritual state as their goal, and demonstrate an effort to relinquish the normative state of being temporarily in a bid for divine contact (Turner and Turner, 1978, 3). Three fundamental tenets are required in order for pilgrimage to be considered a desirable and effective manifestation of spirituality:

1. One or more forces have the power to influence the course of our lives.
2. It is possible to engage with those forces and potentially influence their actions with regard to our own fate.
3. There are certain places where one can be ‘closer’ to these forces, where we are able to experience their power more fully and establish a relationship with them.

(Davidson and Gitlitz, 2002, xvii)

Thus pilgrimage can be considered both an act of devotion and personal gain, an exposure to the divine through some

manner of hardship, solitude and a journey to a location or artefact which embodies the spirit of the divine, with the hope of obtaining lasting benefit from the experience. Certain locations become centres of pilgrimage typically through a perceived link with the divine, either through a miraculous event channelled through an earthly representative (or seemingly directly from the divinity itself), or via the remains of someone who was known to have been closely linked to these forces, a ‘saint’ or ‘holy person’.

The universality of pilgrimage is represented in the wide and varied array of sites globally which draw visitors throughout the year, each hoping for a mystical contact with the divine. These numerous sites embrace varied, rich and complex religious, social and cultural histories, of which a few examples are given below from the ‘main world religions’. Within the Islamic tradition, the attendance of the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) at least once in every Muslim’s lifetime forms one of the five pillars of the faith (Esposito, 2011). Within Hinduism there are a vast array of pilgrimage sites, include the Shivkhori (a cave site dedicated to Lord Shiva) in the Jammu and Kashmir region, the temple of Vaishno Devi (dedicated to Shakti, a manifestation of the ‘Great Divine Mother’) and the well-known city of Benares or ‘Varanasi’ in the Uttar Pradesh region, situated on the banks of the holy Ganges river, which in a simplistic sense can Benares be regarded as the spiritual hub of Hinduism and creation (Feldhaus, 2003; Eck, 1999). Within both the Buddhist and the broadly pre-Buddhist animist ‘Bön’ traditions of Tibet (as well as Hindu and Jain traditions), Mount Kailās is an important site of pilgrimage, at which an annual circumnavigation is performed by devotees, clockwise for Buddhist and Hindu pilgrims, counter-clockwise by Jains and Bön practitioners (Davidson and Gitlitz, 2002, 416 – 417). Judaic pilgrimage sites are predominantly geographically local to Israel and Palestine, this being the area of the majority of events in Jewish religious scripture. The city of Jerusalem is a point of convergence for some of the most sacred sites in Jewish (e.g. the Western Wall), Islamic (e.g. the Masjid Al-Aqsa mosque) and Christian (e.g. the church of the Holy Sepulchre) traditions, and the Dome of the Rock with its multi-layered history presents a hub of monotheist pilgrimage (Armstrong, 2011).

Within the Medieval Christian context, pilgrimage can be taken as a performed allegory for the movement through life towards ‘Heavenly Jerusalem’, the true ‘home’ of every Christian both in life and death. Earthly life is an exile from the heavenly state, and progress through it is a journey that culminates in reunion with God, reflected in the early 14th century within Dante’s extended metaphor ‘the road of our lives’ in ‘The Divine Comedy’ (Alighieri, 1998, 45). It is also present throughout Bunyan’s late 17th century work ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’, in which the character ‘Christian’ travels from the ‘City of Destruction’ (i.e. the earthly profane realm) to the ‘Celestial City’ (i.e. paradise (Bunyan, 2008)). Whilst the Canterbury Tales would seem like an obvious inclusion in this series of allegorical tales,

its purpose is much more profane in that it sought to satirise a variety of the social types one would find performing pilgrimages (Webb, 2000, xii). It does not provide much in the way of the underpinning ideology surrounding pilgrimage, but instead remarks upon the sometimes mercenary motives of undertaking a pilgrimage, such as those of the pardoner who wishes to sell his indulgences at the shrine of Thomas Becket.

The theme of movement from the profane to the sacred environment is recurrent within theological scripture, and two aspects become immediately important with regard to scholarship: the landscape through which one moves, and also the manner in which one moves through the landscape (Webb, 2002). In order to fully realise and investigate the pilgrim experience of the Medieval laity, these two aspects must be dealt with equally (Webb, 1999, 237). On the primary level there is the practical and earthly matter of navigating through the various topographies, the physicality of travel over hills, through valleys, in sheltered or exposed stretches of terrain. On a subtler level there is the mental aspect of movement to consider; the qualities imbued to the mind through personal memory, religious scriptural reverberations, experiences of sight, and the alternating penitent and meditative experiences which can be triggered by travelling by foot through familiar and unfamiliar landscapes. This environmental influence upon the pilgrim has been addressed in the modern anthropological field, and one of the many studies of Hindu pilgrimage culture which deals specifically with this link between topography, spirituality and perception is Feldhaus' 'Connected Places: Region, Pilgrimage and Geographical Imagination in India' (2003), which concentrates on the Maharashtra region. With special attention to the role of the river (most notably the Ganges) in Hindu spirituality, Feldhaus writes that '*people in Maharashtra have created religious texts, abstract concepts, and concrete images through which they bring various places along a river together in their minds and imaginations...they do this by moving their bodies from place to place: by travelling on pilgrimages.*' (Feldhaus, 2003, 18). This embodies a concept which has yet to be applied properly to pilgrimage in the historical and archaeological record, and forms an important aspect of my approach. Landscapes are comprised of landmarks, sensory dialogues, reference points for the traveller which link individual sites, collective local/personal memories, and folk/religious lore, which when approached from a spiritual perspective (as adopted by the pilgrim) transform the journey from that encountered in the daily profane cycle, and make it part of a process of transformation. This is further discussed in Chapter 2, in relation to theoretical approaches utilised in anthropology.

#### 1.4 Pilgrimage in the Medieval West

Pilgrimage is by no means exclusive to Christianity. Pilgrimage had been practised in the West at cult sites long before Christianity reached the continent, one brief example of which would be the site of Delphi in Ancient Greece (Webb, 2000, xi). Situated on Mount Parnassus,

this pan-Hellenic sanctuary of Apollo was famed for its connection to the Pythian Games, and its oracle, receiving visitors from around the Hellenic world who wanted to present sacrifices and votive offerings to Apollo or hear the oracle's predictions (Burket, 1985, 172).

Turning to pilgrimage's rise within the Christian framework on an *institutional* level, this being the broad state of pilgrimage within the later Medieval period, Christian pilgrimage in the Medieval West can be said to have evolved from monastic and ascetic practises in the 4th century Syrian church (Vöörbus, 1958; Olson, 1989). The culture of *movement* and *wandering* for certain members of monastic communities was initially condemned by church fathers, who feared that this exposure to the profane world outside of the precinct walls would corrupt the monks (Brock, 1973, 4). However the possibilities for ascetic development and revelation beyond the typical confines of religious houses, and the opportunities this practise offered for seeing new places and extending their influence became visible and eventually garnered a tacit support in the church (Brock, 1973, 5). As the power and administrative centre of Christianity spread west into Europe, this desire for seeing and accessing sites which echoed events recorded in scripture or the *vitae* ('lives' or biographies) of saints found a willing and receptive audience. Within pre-Christian contexts there were those who made their own travels to sites of sacred significance to undertake rituals or receive imparted wisdom from priests, and Christian pilgrimage (prior to becoming more formalised and a commercial advantage to local settlements) followed similar patterns of motivation, mainly curiosity and reverence (Webb, 1999, iv).

The most celebrated pilgrimage site in Medieval Christendom was Jerusalem, which held within its walls a rich catalogue of sites that either hosted or played a role within the scriptures; most significantly those which featured in the Passion. Eusebius of Caesarea (a prominent Roman historian between the 3rd and 4th centuries AD) records visitors or 'pilgrims' routinely being shown biblical sites, suggesting that the practise was already established by this point (Stopford, 1999). The two other sites which formed the upper echelon of Christian pilgrimage destinations during the Medieval period were the cities of Rome, and Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain. Within Britain, we can see references to Rome luring several noble and royal figures of the English kingdoms on pilgrimages during the late 6th century in Bede's 'History of the English Church and People', and this sacral movement between Britain and Rome became increasingly common during the 7th century, including for 'layfolk' (Webb, 2001, 11). By the 9th century, Rome had become such a popular location for pilgrims throughout Europe that four main groups were to be found constantly within the city's walls; English, Frankish, Frisians and Lombards (Webb, 2001, 12). Santiago de Compostela was the third principle pilgrimage site in Christendom, and home to the hugely popular cult of St James the Apostle. St James not only became the patron saint of pilgrimage, but

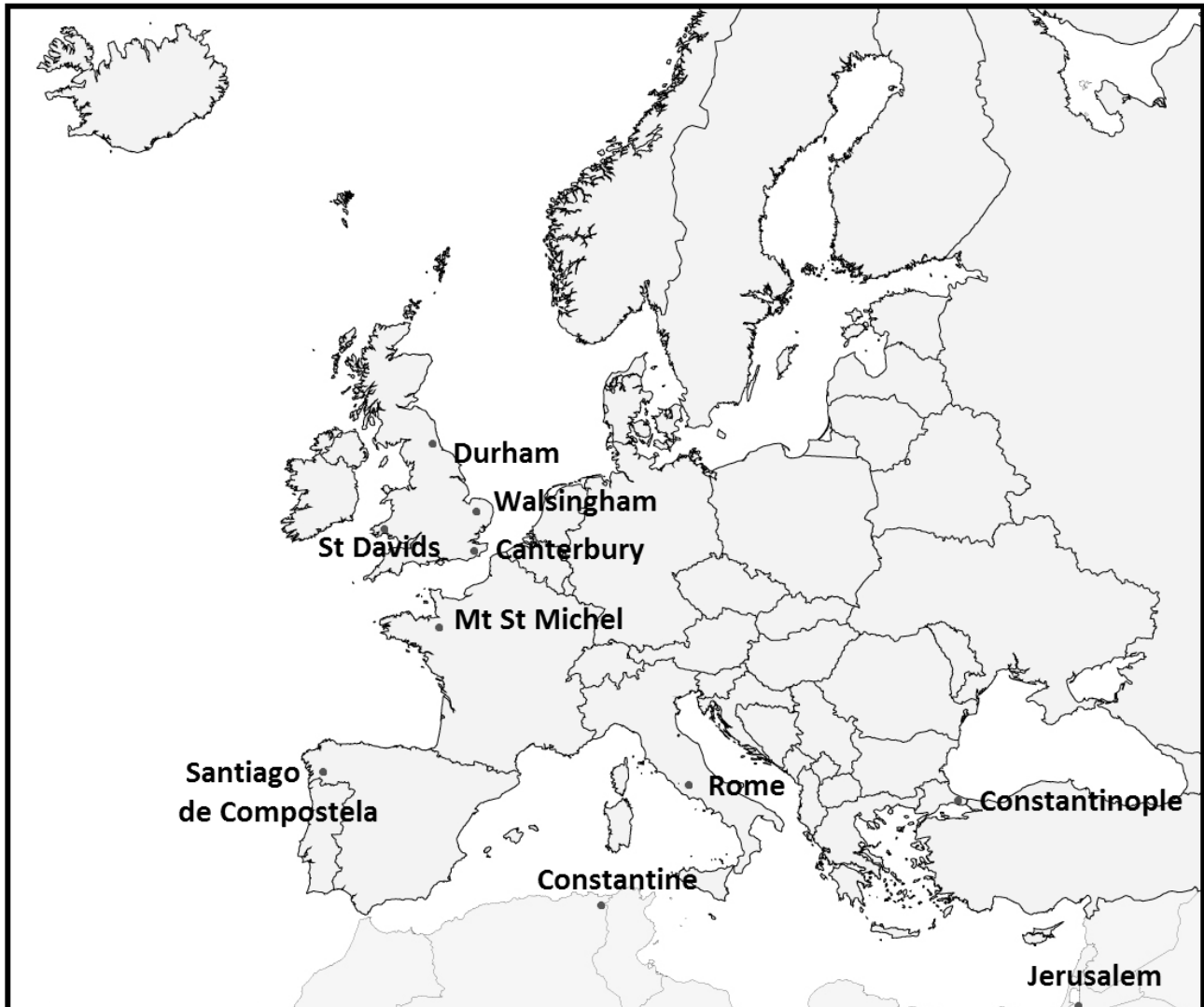


FIGURE 1. MAP DISPLAYING SOME OF THE KEY PILGRIMAGE SITES IN MEDIEVAL CHRISTENDOM BY THE 14TH CENTURY.  
DRAWN BY AUTHOR.

came to embody the practise through being identified with the Scallop shell, a piece of iconography which originated at the Santiago cult site and whose emblem has been found on numerous pilgrim souvenirs distributed around Christendom (Webb, 2002, 4).

With the turn of the millennium, pilgrimage started both to become more formalised, with the *Libri Poenitentiales* ('Book of Penances') listing pilgrimage in varieties of length and hardship as components of punishment for crimes, and specific pilgrim hospitals and guest halls being established to cater for this burgeoning travel industry (McNeil & Gamer, 1990). It also began to gain detractors within the Roman church, particularly towards two groups of pilgrims: women, and monks. Women it was felt were unsafe and liable to distract the attentions of other pilgrims, and similarly to the objections of the Early church fathers, some figures in the Roman church (especially St Bernard) felt that monks required 'stability' above all else to contemplate God, not to be undertaking journeys to shrines, and that '*everyone shall remain where he has been placed, and where he has taken his vows,*

*there shall he fulfil them before God.*' (Webb, 2001, 13) Towards the end of the 11th century, a range of saint cults had been established throughout Europe and into Turkey, modern Israel and North Africa (see Figure 1 above), developed as sites of pilgrimage offering relics, miracles, sacred souvenirs, and accommodation, with varying degrees of veneration and curiosity (Adair, 1978, 9). By the 12th century the shrines of lesser saints and martyrs had sprung up '*like mushrooms after rain*' across Christendom, and England was no exception (Adair, 1978, 10). Figure 1 above shows the key pilgrim sites, but there were numerous other popular shrines such as Limoge (St Martial), Tolouse (St Sernin), Florence (the cult of the 'Holy Shroud'), Salzburg (Our Lady of Maria Plain) and many more (Webb, 1999).

Along the roads and pathways which led to these various pilgrim shrines, different classes of pilgrim could be encountered, embodied in the characters described in the Canterbury Tales who were a mixture of professional ecclesiastical figures, tradesmen, aristocracy and soldiers (see Chapter 1.3). The layfolk were driven by a mixture



FIGURE 2. PILGRIMS REPRESENTED IN STAINED GLASS AT CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL. 'CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL, CANTERBURY PILGRIMS', PHOTOGRAPH BY TAYLOR, 2005. CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE 2.0, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

of piety and touristic impulse, eager to see and venerate at the shrine but also keen to see outside the normal confines of their environment (Webb, 1999, 4). Personal motivations for pilgrimage amongst the laity were as varied as the individual pilgrims themselves, but can be broadly placed within two categories; the wish to implore for divine aid at a shrine on behalf of oneself or a relative, and the opportunity such an act offered in terms of travel and temporary escape from '*the daily and domestic setting*' (Webb, 2002, 45). So overt was the second motivation that, for some, pilgrimage appeared to be an excuse to shirk discipline and duty by a variety of social classes and professions, from vagabonds and fugitive serfs to monks and nuns (Webb, 2002, 45). Monastic figures would travel to ecclesiastical destinations for a variety of reasons, possibly with a desire to pay devotions to a particular cult centre, but also predominantly with administrative business, diplomacy or communications to impart to another institution on behalf of the head of their order (Russell, 1944). This also enabled the travelling monks to be mobile and visit shrines despite some orders and figures declaiming pilgrimage as a distracting activity.

Due to this disapproval the official motives for these journeys were frequently commercial, administrative or diplomatic, with Gerald of Wales accompanying the Archbishop of Canterbury (Baldwin of Forde) around Wales on a recruitment campaign for the Third Crusade in 1188 (Kightly, 1988). Amongst the itinerary on this mission of propaganda were Holywell and St Davids, both relatively major features of the British pilgrim landscape. However, these visits were not the primary reason for the journey, although they undeniably involved an aspect of pilgrimage: yet to what degree can we call these figures 'pilgrims' (Kightly, 1988, 68)? This mixture of sacred and profane stimuli can also be seen in the corresponding rise in the production of pilgrim badges and souvenirs at pilgrimage sites, produced under strict license by the monks who cared for the shrine, and those who were caught producing 'black market' badges were dealt with severely (Spencer, 2010, 7). These souvenirs fulfilled the role of spiritual talismans, but also as 'status' symbols, verifying the bearer as someone who had completed a pilgrimage, and also generated significant revenue for the shrine sites (Spencer, 2010).

The foremost pilgrimage sites in England were at Canterbury (St Thomas the Martyr), Durham (St Cuthbert), Ely (St Ethelreda), Walsingham (Our Lady of Walsingham), Rochester (St William of Perth), Winchester (St Swithun) and Worcester (St Wulfstan and St Oswald); all of whom boasted impressive cults and shrines dedicated to their respective patron saints. In an architectural development which echoed their counterparts in Europe, these shrines were typically set up in a Saint's chapel which '*normally occupied the bay immediately behind the High Altar, and was enclosed by screens usually of timber.*' (Cook, 1957, 34) The presence of pilgrims at cathedral churches was so common during the Medieval period that '*one of the main reasons that prompted the elongation of the choir-arm in many cathedrals during the thirteenth century was the provision of a Saint's chapel with an ambulatory for the easy circulation of pilgrims.*' (Cook, 1957, 34) Typically, pilgrims would be guided on a specific route around the cathedral, visiting different stations and culminating in the Saint's shrine or reliquary where devotions would be made.

These shrines were distinct from their previous 'tomb' incarnation being lavish and permitting interaction with the devout: '*The relics were housed in the most sumptuous reliquaries, for only by show could they testify to their powers and invite commensurate gifts.*' (James, 1987, 38) Some incorporated port-holes and niches where the penitent could touch and implore the relics for aid, and others apparently exuded 'holy oil' from disguised valves in the masonry, said to cure diverse ailments and bottled in ampullae for sale. However, evidently the desire to get close to the divine drove some of the laity to extreme measures, as Benedict reports that at the tomb of St Thomas Beckett '*an insane man, Ælward of Selling, actually contrived to climb into the tomb and lie on top of the coffin, much to the consternation of the monks, who feared that the monument might have to be destroyed in order to set him free.*' (Crook, 2000, 260) These cases seem to have been rare yet demonstrate the power that relics held in Medieval Europe, a power which at times shifted from veneration into chaos, as exemplified in this record by Abbot Suger in '*De Consecratione S. Dionysii*': '*As the numbers of the faithful increased, the crowds at Saint Denis grew larger and larger until the old church began to burst at the seams. On feast days it was always full to overflowing, and the mass of struggling pilgrims spilled out of every door. As they fought their way towards the holy relics to kiss and worship them, they were so densely packed that none of them could so much as stir a foot...In the cloister outside, wounded pilgrims lay gasping out their last breath. As for the monks who were in charge of the reliquaries, they were often obliged to escape with the relics through the window.*' (James, 1987, 39) In Britain however, the formalised nature of pilgrimage and its commercial offshoots was gathering criticism towards the end of the 15th century, and there had long been a history of theologians disapproving of pilgrimage which they felt effectively culminated in a form of idolatry, with Thomas a Kempis in his text '*The Imitation of Christ*' criticising the '*localization of the*

*holy in sacred places*' (Duffy, 2005, 190). Combined with a general downward trend in pilgrimage's popularity in Britain during the late 15th century, events such as the Dissolution and Reformation in the mid-16th century, which declared pilgrimage papist in nature and illegal, served to outlaw and interrupt pilgrim activity in Britain. During the post-Reformation period, it is likely that British pilgrims crossed to Europe to perform pilgrimages, being prevented in doing so in Britain. This placed the pilgrim in a very literal state of self-imposed 'exile', a concept further discussed in Chapter 2.1, however the scope of this book does not extend beyond the borders of Britain and the Reformation, and consequently this Early Modern element will not be further mentioned here.

The main point of comparison between British and Continental pilgrimages involving Britain as an origin point concern scale, and the possible motives surrounding choosing a longer or shorter distance. The concept of universality versus localism in terms of a saint cult's value to its laity and pilgrim visitors is discussed at length in Chapter 7, and demonstrated throughout the case studies, which increase in localized appeal throughout the book ranging from a Marian shrine (Walsingham) to that of St Petroc whose appeal was restricted mainly to Cornwall and Dorset. The interpretative aspects of landscape, familiarity and pilgrim theory are left to this final chapter, but I will outline here the differing practical motivations between long distance overseas and local pilgrimages within Britain's borders. As mentioned below in Chapter 1.5, seasonality dictated both the climatic conditions of the journey, and also the possibility of being granted time away from one's agricultural obligations on feudal estates, especially during the lambing and harvesting seasons (Ohler, 1989). One's physical state also played a role in planning the journey, as those travelling to a shrine to beg for cures may not have been in a fit state to undertake long distance journeys. Margery Kempe records going on a pilgrimage to a church of St Michael the Archangel, a mere two miles from her home, and explicitly records it as a pilgrimage, indicating that the meanest journey could be considered a pilgrimage (Windeatt, 2000, 62). One of the most interesting factors, and an excellent indicator of how pilgrimage became more hierarchal and formalised in nature during the later Medieval period, was the purpose of the pilgrimage. A pilgrimage overseas was a monumental undertaking whose cost in terms of time and risk was repaid in prestige, but was an exceptional event for most, and likely to be resorted to for major displays of devotion, pleas of cures for severe conditions or similarly dramatic situations. Instead for the more 'mundane' requests local or at least national shrines were used, and a Lollard preacher is recorded as complaining that a 14th century housekeeper '*would not have gone to Jerusalem in the hope of finding her keys, but she might spend more than her keys were worth on a little journey to an English shrine of the 'servant saint' Zita of Lucca.*' (Webb, 2000, xiii) An unofficial cult, but a popular one, St Zita or 'Sitha' (Anglicised) was depicted in many churches across southern England, and the church of St Benet Sherehog in London contained a chapel dedicated to this domestic saint.

### 1.5 Travel in the Medieval West

Movement on any scale, but especially the volume seen during the Medieval period, depended on a comprehensive route network. In what has come to be regarded as one of the defining books on travel in the Medieval period, Ohler writes that religion, trade and communication were the primary driving forces in developing and refining the system of roads which covered (to varying degrees) Christendom, and that *'the influence pilgrimages had on travel in the Middle Ages cannot be over-stressed'* (Ohler, 1989, 57). On the roads of Medieval Christendom, pilgrims were not by any means the sole travellers undertaking long-distance journeys, as merchants had for centuries made use of and built upon the route networks laid down by the shifting cultures inhabiting the continent (Webb, 2002, 114). However, pilgrims were responsible for bringing some settlements and sites into greater relevance and contact with major roads. Whilst previously these locations had not offered an economic motive for incorporation within the larger surrounding route networks, possession of a spiritual commodity both demanded and necessitated easy access to the laity. This was by no means a more important factor than trade in influencing and expanding the Medieval road system, and Figure 3 below shows some of the larger trade routes and market centres which existed in Western Christendom. Not shown in this map but of huge importance to those travelling towards Jerusalem was the Silk Road trading network, which connected Western Europe with China through a series of overland and maritime routes. For

pilgrims this route network could be exploited by boarding trading boats in Venice heading towards the Holy Land, which docked (amongst other places) at Constantinople and Antioch, both of which offered overland access to Jerusalem (Foltz, 2000). The maritime trading network of Medieval Europe is shown below in Figure 3, and was also used by pilgrims travelling to Santiago de Compostela, Rome and the Holy Land (Mackay & Ditchburn, 1996). A favoured route from British pilgrims during the 14th century who shrank from walking the length of France and Spain to St James' shrine involved boarding trading ships from Southampton to Coruña, only forty miles from Santiago, and was known as the 'English Route' (Storrs, 1995, 9). Many pilgrim badges bearing iconography relating to St James have been recovered from the Thames foreshore. Together with Southampton dock, this would have been a frequently used point to board ships heading for Santiago (Childs, 1999, 123). Many pilgrims would visit the church of St James Garlickhythe for a prayer of safe passage, or thanks for a safe return, before boarding these 'pilgrim ships', as these voyages were not without their dangers (Childs, 1999, 128). Aside from the array of natural disasters there was the danger from pirates; in 1473 'The Mary' from London was seized off Waterford on its return to Ireland with 400 pilgrims (Childs, 1999, 125). In Britain the Marian cult centre of Walsingham (examined in detail in Chapter 3) received several pilgrims who arrived explicitly to give thanks for safe travel on the seas. In the 15th century Nicholas Palmer travelled from Hull to Walsingham as soon as his ship docked from Iceland, and *'in 1457 the York Mercers recorded payments*

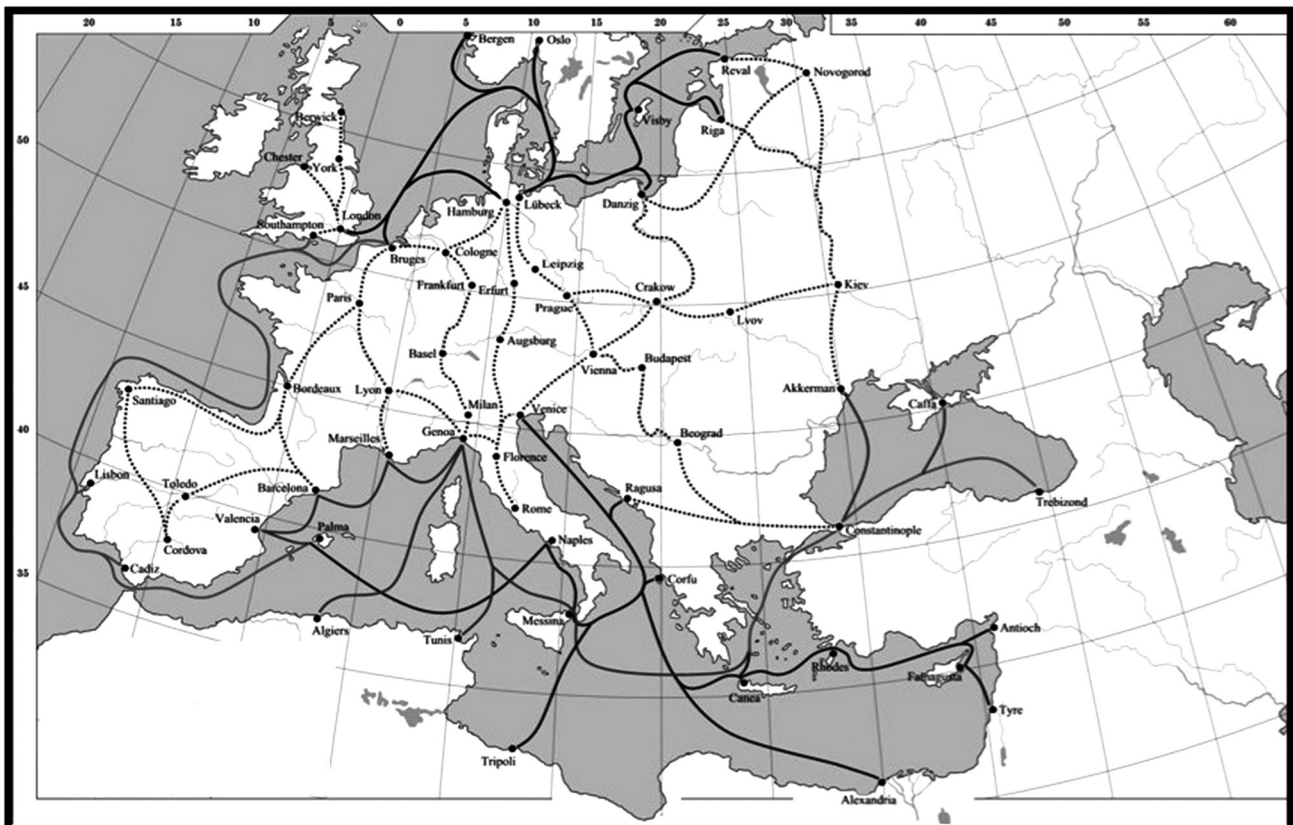


FIGURE 3. MAP OF THE PRINCIPAL FAIRS AND TRADE ROUTES IN WESTERN MEDIEVAL EUROPE. DRAWN BY THE AUTHOR.

for journeys to Walsingham which had been promised in the face of danger to the Katherine of York.' (Childs, 1999, 126) Pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem typically took a sea voyage from the ports of Venice or Bari, to Jaffa, then made their way onward to Jerusalem by land (Childs, 1999, 123). Until the 14th century we see the pilgrim and crusader being interchangeable in the Medieval imagination, with some crusaders being termed 'peregrini' (a Latin term for pilgrims, expanded upon in Chapter 2.1), and until the 13th century the Holy Land crusade was known a 'peregrinatio' (Webb, 2000, xii). However, unlike the crusaders who undertook the voyage to Jerusalem for the purposes of reclaiming the city, pilgrims were driven by a combination of curiosity and piety (see Chapter 1.3), and the crowds of pilgrims which flowed towards Jerusalem in the Medieval period mingled with traders, merchants, and countless varied social classes (Chareyron, 2005). Meeting the needs of those visiting these pilgrimage centres we can see from the 12th century the emergence of literature explicitly aimed at the wealthier literate class of pilgrim, who wanted to know how to get there and what to see; in essence, guide books. These were not unknown before the Medieval period, with Egeria the Pilgrim writing her account of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the late 4th century (the 'Itinerarium Egeriae'), which records the liturgical seasons and practices of the region, a report on the historical and sacred places of Jerusalem, and a general travelogue (Wilkinson, 2006).

It was at during the later Medieval period however that these informative and practical guides became more widespread in connection with pilgrimage. Matthew Paris wrote an itinerary or guide to the route from London to Rome in 1250, Adam of Usk published his route itinerary for the same journey between 1402 and 1406, and the itinerary of William Wey details the roads linking Calais, Rome and Venice in 1458. The Bruges Itinerary is a 15th century road inventory for Western Europe, and for the French traveller, Charles Estienne's 1552 '*La Guide des Chemins de France*' would have proved invaluable. Upon arrival in Rome, the affluent pilgrim could turn to their copy Leon Battista Alberti's 'Descriptio Urbis Romae' (c.1433) or William Brewyn's 'A XVth Century Guidebook to the Principle Churches of Rome' (c.1470), which includes details of the route from Calais. For those travelling along the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, the 12th century 'guide book' (the Codex Calixtus) for pilgrims travelling the Camino de Compostela de Santiago offers a variety of practical information including mileage stages, key towns and religious sites along the route, descriptions of the peoples and regions of Spain encountered along the Camino, and detailed notes on the churches and cathedral of Santiago itself (Stones *et al.*, 1998). Discussed in Chapter 2.2 are the key British travel guides and surveys which contribute towards the research in this book. Accommodation opportunities for these travellers (aside from informal lodging with family or friends) came in three forms. The inn or guesthouse has been a commercial service offered throughout history, and was the most commonly used option by merchants

and traders, who tended to have more ready cash than other non-commercial wayfarers or pilgrims. An option generally for high status guests and pilgrims involved lodging at a monastery; the degree of luxury depended on the status of the guest. Priors were often obliged to house visiting nobles and members of the aristocracy (and at the larger and more celebrated monastic sites, royalty). The Benedictine rule of hospitality made shelter available to pilgrims, although in less opulent surroundings than the Prior's guest chambers, typically bedding down in rooms such as a Great Hall or guest dormitory (Webb, 2002, 82). British examples are given in the studies presented in chapters 3 through to 6. The final option for poor travellers and pilgrims were the various hospital institutions. Deriving from *hospitium*, which originally denoted a manner of 'house, billet, shelter, hospital, [or] rented room', by the 12th century a reference to a *hospitium* had come to mean a guesthouse which offered travellers board and lodging, as well as almshouses which offered more permanent accommodation to those who were sick, destitute or elderly (Webb, 2002, 86). These institutions were funded through donation, land tenure and the income derived from their estates, and thus could offer free temporary shelter for pilgrims and wayfarers as part of their charitable obligation. The religious landscapes in Britain through which the pilgrim travelled were highly populated by religious houses, particularly Augustinian. Linking these institutions with the route networks and parish churches were 'a dense network of sacred sites', creating 'a landscape defined by ritual movement which linked the more eminent centres of pilgrimage and monastic houses with a host of minor sites' (Whyte, 2009, 21). An example of how monastic institutions impacted upon the formation and economic infrastructure of the surrounding area is provided in Chapter 4, examining the role of Beaulieu Abbey in the New Forest, Hampshire. These institutions helped to develop the route networks, as they needed to be well connected to local centres of commerce in order to sell the produce of their estate; typically wool, timber and flour (Massachaele, 1997). They also competed to attract pilgrims, to whom they were obliged to offer hospitality, but these visitors represented a potential bonus to the Priory account book through revenue from the sale of religious souvenirs and shrine donations.

The research by Stenton (1936) and Hindle (1976) underpins most modern investigations into the road network of Medieval Britain. Drawing on a range of source material including contemporary cartographic evidence, royal itineraries and travel literature (such as John Leland's 'Itinerary'), these two scholars suggest that the route network in Medieval Britain was fairly comprehensive, involving four major 'King's Roads' (i.e. Watling Street, Ermine Street, the Fosse Way, and the Icknield Way) which formed the basis for smaller routes connecting the various settlements across the county. Stenton concludes that the '*tracks and paths for communication among villages, hamlets and individual homesteads had clearly been established over the centuries, and the reasonably ubiquitous via regis, or*



'king's road', indicated that a series of prioritized roads did exist as medieval 'A' routes, linking major hubs', which existed alongside the 'lesser' informal tracks and paths which ran across rural areas linking villages, farming communities and religious institutions (Stenton, 1936, 3). This presents in most cases at least an overlapping series of single paths which converge on each-other from point A to point B, and with larger distances which cover numerous regions we can see use made of long distance trade routes and communication networks (Hindle, 1976). A detailed analysis of the Medieval road networks in Norfolk, Wiltshire and Hampshire, Denbighshire and Flintshire and Cornwall are presented in my case studies (chapters 3 through to 6). Below is an example of the routes used by

Edward I during his movements around Britain, collated and mapped by Hindle (1976). These form part of the basis for my investigations into each case study's route network, and whilst not being an exceptionally clear map it does give an appreciation for just how extensive the Medieval road network of Britain was. It is also worth bearing in mind that these also represent merely the major routes which were thought to be serviceable for the king's travels, and a larger, more informal network of tracks, paths, trails and roads were present within the rural areas which were largely available to the pilgrim. The time of year could influence the quality of the journey as much as the routes taken, with seasons being a popular feature of illuminated manuscripts. For many, winter represented the very worst

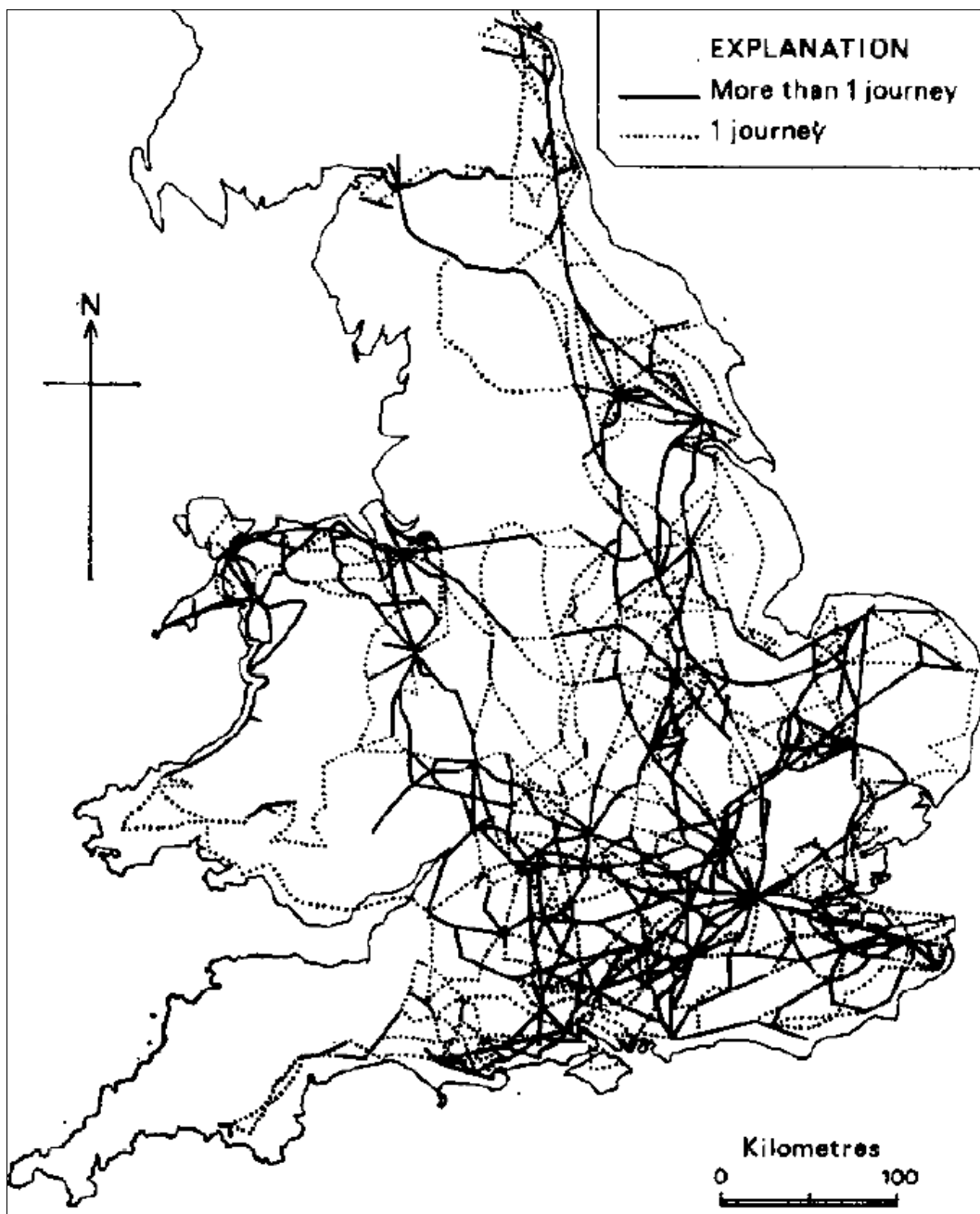


FIGURE 4. THE MAPPED ITINERARY OF EDWARD I, SHOWING THE ROAD NETWORK USED. HINDLE, 1976, 214. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION FROM ©ELSEVIER.

season in which to travel, especially in the wetter lands of northern Europe. Roads were frozen or mired in mud, rain lashed down, and seas were prone to heavy storms (Ohler, 1989, 11). In Britain winter was in all probability the most unpopular season for travel, given the weather and the attraction of the hearth, with '*fear of famine, fear of sickness, fear of bone-chilling cold; fear of death.*' (Henisch, 1999, 30). However, some pilgrimages must have been made during this season due to necessity (such as imploring for a sick relative). Calendar manuscripts show predominantly interior activities such as the baking of bread, the maintenance of hearth fires, and emptying the larder of food stores during winter (Henisch, 1999, 30). This does not mean that spiritual activity was confined to indoors, for whilst a less popular season for feast days, winter did hold several key celebrations, not least the birth of Jesus.

Summer was the season of choice for undertaking travel. The conditions were drier, days were longer, and for pilgrims the months of June, July and August offered a universal range of feast days including the Nativity of John the Baptist/Midsummer Day (24th June), the Apostles Peter and Paul (29th June), the translation of St Thomas of Canterbury (7th July), St Mary Magdalene (22nd July), St James (15th August), the Assumption (15th August), St Bartholomew (24th August), and the nativity of the Virgin (8th September (Reeves, 1995, 167)). Relics were common in churches and cathedrals through Britain, attracting interest from local communities and beyond. The feast of St Thomas Becket's translation was associated with the general feast of relics on the following Sunday, '*an occasion for pilgrimage and the granting of indulgences in many churches with notable relics*' (Duffy, 2005, 47). Medieval calendar manuscripts typically show sheep shearing over the month of June, and at markets and

fairs held during the mid to late summer both wool and wool merchants would have been common sights to the pilgrim among the traffic on the road (Henisch, 1999, 91). However, this may have increased the risk of thieves or outlaws, who viewed these seasonal visitors as easy and profitable prey. For example, Matthew Paris records two Flemish merchants being attacked by thieves on the roads leading into Winchester during Lent in 1249 (Vaughan, 1993, 93). Chaucer uses March and April in his 'Canterbury Tales' as the setting for the company's journey to Becket's shrine, suggesting that, within Britain at least, it was not uncommon for pilgrimage to resume in spring after the thawing of winter, and with spring's progression the sun shone higher and more consistently, leading towards the prime season for travel; summer (Saunders, 2001, 189; Ohler, 1989, 6). The lengthening of the days in this season, combined with better weather allowed for nights spent outside, and in the case of Alpine travel the opening up of mountain passes made summer a popular choice for travel down into Italy over the Tyrol region (Ohler, 1989, 8). For pilgrims there was another element which encouraged their movements during late spring and summer. Throughout the year there were countless feast days, at least 200 of which served as foci for pilgrimage (Nolan and Nolan, 1992, 56). However, during the later spring and summer months there were some of the most important feasts of the liturgical calendar, including Easter, Ascension and Pentecost (all changeable in date), the Virgin Mary's Visitation (July 2nd), Assumption (August 15th) and her Nativity (September 8th (Nolan and Nolan, 1992, 56)). Autumn was advantageous for travel in the hotter, southern territories, as temperatures dropped, though roads were dry, nights warm and snow yet to fall. However, the annual harvest falls in this season, limiting the time of many people for long journeys, rural populations being typically engaged in reaping and gathering their crops (Ohler, 1989, 9).