Welcome to the third issue of *Peregrinations*. With this issue we inaugurate a wholly-transformed journal. First, it will be published on the internet (at no cost), making it available to many more readers. Second, this issue is the beginning of *Peregrinations*’ broader focus on all of medieval art and architecture, not just that created to enhance pilgrimage. Third, *Peregrinations* now joins the ranks of other juried journals in our wish to promote the best scholarship, with all scholarly articles subject to a double-blind refereeing process.

For future issues we are actively seeking articles on any aspect of medieval art and architecture, including: long and short scholarly articles, scholarly book reviews, review articles on issues facing the field of medieval art history, interesting notes and announcements, useful website recommendations, new archeological discoveries, and recent museum acquisitions as well as calls for papers and conference listings. One particular feature which we wish to draw your attention to is the photo articles and the photo bank. Here we hope to provide excellent-quality images that can be down-loaded and used by art historians in the classroom and in their research.

To round out the scholarly portion of the journal, we are also seeking short, amusing excerpts from medieval sources, poorly-worded student papers, comments on the Middle Ages in movies, etc.

Again, welcome to *Peregrinations*. Any suggestions or comments you have concerning the journal would be most welcome. Please feel free to e-mail us at: blicks@kenyon.edu or rtekippe@westga.edu.

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Medieval Medicine, Magic, and Water: The dilemma of deliberate deposition of pilgrim signs

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Becket's death at Canterbury in 1170 initiated yet another pan-European cult. These famous holy places were only a few of literally thousands of European shrines, each attracting its 'own' pilgrims. Pilgrimage accelerated with the pace of life until it was ingrained tradition by the twelfth century, and it remains one of the hallmarks of the Middle Ages, like the fairs of Champagne, the Bayeaux Tapestry, the Quest for the Grail, the Black Prince.

Finucane 1977, 39.

Introduction and Approach

Although pilgrim signs have appeared in archaeological literature since the mid- nineteenth century [Smith 1846], most analyses have been descriptive and not interpretive [Koldeweij 1999]. Other important characteristics of these artifacts have been neglected, and deserve more exploration, such as the reason why such a large proportion of pilgrim signs have been found in watery contexts. Many have remarked about the curious fact that pilgrim signs seem to turn up in watery contexts, but no one has yet explored this or other questions in depth. This lack of interpretive analysis may be due to the fact that these artifacts were mass-produced and made of base metals, and are thus perceived to be of low value. This article will show that despite this perceived low value, these objects were seen as extremely valuable to those who wore them. Another reason for the lack of interpretive analysis is that, until recently, the data sources within Great Britain were scattered. It is only within the past decade that the evidence has been brought together in an accessible form, specifically with the publishing of three catalogues by Brian Spencer, from collections in Norfolk, Salisbury, and London. With these, a serious effort at interpretive analysis can now proceed.

The article will examine pilgrimage by compiling a data set of pilgrim signs from archaeological excavations in England, Ireland, and Scotland, primarily from the work of Brian Spencer. The data sample consists of 420 pilgrim signs, and the total known number of signs found in England is approximately several thousand. However, the data sample represents the majority of signs discovered by archaeological excavations with a secure find context, which is relevant to the present study. Furthermore, these pilgrim signs represent a small proportion of the total number of shrines that existed in the medieval period. There are many shrines for which no pilgrim sign has been found, including many which have been described as receiving large numbers of pilgrims, such
as Regensburg in Germany [Spencer 1968, 139]. This problem however is inherent in the nature of archaeological investigation.

**Function and Context**

A pilgrim sign may be defined as a religious token, believed to possess thaumaturgic powers, acquired by a pilgrim at a shrine. It was worn by the pilgrim while undergoing the journey. Although some signs were made of precious metal such as gold and silver, the majority of pilgrim signs produced were a tin-lead alloy and formed from being cast in moulds, while some were merely stamped from thin sheets of metal, referred to as bracteate [Spencer 1998, 4]. Pilgrim signs were produced in two main forms. Ampullae, the most popular type of pilgrim sign in England from the 12th to the 14th century, were hollow containers that contained holy water or some other liquid. (Figure 1) and were worn as a necklace. The other type were badges attached to a pilgrim's clothing, usually on a hat or purse, by being stitched on through a couple of holes or by a pin to clothing. Most English badges were attached with a pin, while most continental forms were stitched to the wearer's clothing. [Spencer 1998, 4] To avoid confusion, when referring to both badges and ampullae, the term “pilgrim sign” shall be employed. Whenever one type of pilgrim sign is being discussed, the appropriate term, “badge” or “ampullae” shall be used.

On the continent, pilgrim signs were first associated with the pilgrimage to the shrine of St James at Santiago, Spain. For reasons which are not clear to us today, the scallop shell was used by Santiago pilgrims to identify themselves as such, sewing the shell onto their pilgrim bag or hat [Spencer 1968]. With the advent of Canterbury as a pilgrimage destination in the 12th century came the origins of pilgrim signs in England. St. Thomas Becket's shrine at Canterbury was the most popular shrine in England throughout the late medieval period, attracting not only native English, but many foreigners, as attested in historical accounts and the large number of Canterbury signs found on the continent [Koldeweij 1992]. After the holy martyr’s death, some forward thinking monks saved his spilled blood and preserved it in a well, where it became infinitely diluted, yet undiminished, in power. It is the water from this well that was sold in the first pilgrim signs, ampullae, in England. Other sites in England associated with pilgrimage imitated this practice and ampullae were the dominant form of pilgrim sign until the fourteenth century.

Other artifacts associated with pilgrims include the traditional attire worn by a pilgrim: the hat, boots, water bottle, staff, and scrip, or knapsack. These last two items were sometimes blessed at Mass before the pilgrim set out on their journey [Finucane 1977, 41]. Pilgrim signs, however, differ from all these other objects in one important aspect; they were considered to be relics themselves, having obtained the virtue, or

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1 However, a mold for the Regensburg badges is known. See Denis Bruna, *Enseignes de Pèlerinages et Enseignes Profanes* (Paris, 1996), p. 354.
power, of the saint by coming into physical contact with the shrine or the actual relics [Spencer 1968]. This ability for the miracle working properties of relics to be passed by physical contact, a sort of holy “radioactivity,” is well attested in the miracle lists recorded at the shrines [Finucane 1977].

Due to the miracle-working ability attributed to pilgrim signs, they were used in medieval magic and medicine. Relic water from ampullae was often used in hope of effecting cures at home, [Finucane 1977, 94] and many pilgrims donated pilgrim signs to their local church, and these were kept ready in case the need arose for a cure for the sick or dying [Spencer 1978, 238]. The value of pilgrim signs as secondary relics with thaumaturgic powers is attested by contemporary documents. Lists of church valuables at Pilton, Somerset and the bridge chapel at Bridgenorth include pilgrim signs [Spencer 1978, 247].

Other magic-making abilities are apparent in the archaeological record in the discovery of pilgrim signs as foundation deposits [Merrifield 1975, 34] and their incorporation into church bells [Spencer 1998]. Medieval folk belief held that placing magic items under the foundation when building a new house protected a dwelling from evil. It was also believed that the loud clang of church bells warded off evil. Badge designs were integrated into church bells to amplify this ability.

Pilgrim signs are loaded with meaning, some explicit, others implicit. The most obvious meaning of a pilgrim sign is that it represents a specific saint and shrine, by incorporating images of the saint or inscriptions of their name. Many 13th century Canterbury ampullae have inscribed on them the phrase: OPTIMUS EGRORUM MEDICUS FIT TOMA BONORUM (“Thomas is the best doctor of the holy sick”). Another popular form of Canterbury badge portrays the reliquary bust of Thomas Becket, (Figure 2) which contained the skull fragment relics of the holy martyr. This reliquary was displayed prominently to the pilgrims near the shrine and served as a climax of their visit. After ampullae fell out of fashion in the 14th century, this badge was the most popular form of Canterbury sign [Spencer 1968].

Not all badges copied reliquaries, rather they depicted symbols or objects associated with certain saints, such as the wheel of Saint Catherine. (Figure 3) Others portrayed secondary relics of the saints kept at their shrine, such as the gloves of Thomas Becket (Figure 4) or the instrument of Becket's martyrdom, a sword. (Figure 5) Many of these latter signs exemplify the finest craftsmanship, as they were created as elaborate and detailed miniature swords complete with scabbard. All these images were part of a well-established iconography that would have been familiar to the medieval person, and each pilgrim would have had a wide variety of images to choose from at the stalls outside the shrines that sold pilgrim signs. However, not all of them are immediately clear to us today, thus many signs cannot be assigned to a particular shrine or saint.
Findspots, Water, and Pilgrim Signs

Badges are found overwhelmingly in watery contexts. This curious depositional context is not exclusive to England. A large number of pilgrim signs have been found in watery contexts at towns along continental European rivers such as the Seine, the Somme, the Loire, the Saone, the Scheldt, the Meuse, and the Weser [Spencer 1978, 238]. It has been pointed out that due to the material that most badges are made of, lead, they are more likely to survive in watery contexts [Spencer 1968, 1998]. This may account for part of the explanation as to why they are found in water, but I believe that there is more to it than that. Brian Spencer has noted that very few badges have been found on inland sites in London, and they are conspicuously absent from sites where it might be expected for them to be found where conditions allow for their preservation, such as the City Ditch and wells and rubbish pits [Spencer 1998, 25]. The only locations in England where a substantial amount of pilgrim badges have been found on land are Norwich [Margeson 1993] and Winchester [Spencer 1990b]. These are the only sites in England where more badges have been found on land than in watery contexts. However, the Norwich sample is composed of seven badges, while the Winchester sample is four badges. Spencer posited that, perhaps the obligatory spot where pilgrims would cast their badges into the river at Winchester has not yet been found.

A likely candidate for such a spot has been found at Canterbury [Spencer 2000]. In the 1980's a group of metal detectorists investigated the Stour River at the exact spot where returning pilgrims would first encounter it, (Figure 6), at Eastgate Bridge adjacent to the hospital for pilgrims, which remains standing to this day. They recovered
over 200 pilgrim badges before being ordered to halt by the authorities. These badges were viewed and hastily recorded by Brian Spencer before being put up for auction. The total lack of any early badges has left Spencer to believe that the river was dredged in the late 14th/early 15th century. Another cause for the lack of early badges could be that badges were recycled, which is attested by written sources [Spencer 1968].

![Figure 6](image_url)

**Figure 6**

Badges are also conspicuously absent at other locations where one would expect to find them. On long distance pilgrimages, pilgrims often stayed at hospitals, many of which were originally founded specifically to host pilgrims. Thus, medieval hospitals would be one place where one might expect to find pilgrim badges. However, a review of several medieval hospital excavations uncovered a paucity of pilgrim badges. The excavations reviewed include: St Mary's Hospital, Strood [Harrison 1970]; St James and St Mary Magdalene, Chichester [Lee & Magilton 1989]; St Mary Ospringe [Rigold 1964, Spencer 1980], SS Stephen & Thomas, New Romney [Rigold 1964]; Tintern Abbey [Courtney 1989]; St Bartholomew’s, London [Ponsford and Price 1998]; St Giles, Brompton Bridge [Cardwell 1995]; and St Mary Spital, London [Thomas, Sloane, and Philpotts 1998]. St Mary Ospringe, commonly called Maison Dieu, and St Giles, Brompton Bridge, were the only excavations that reported any pilgrim badges. Finds from non-archaeological circumstances are also predominantly recovered from watery contexts. The “core” collection of the Museum of London (finds that do not come from formal archaeological excavation) consists of 1021 medieval badges, of which 739 are pilgrim signs and the rest are secular badges. Of the 739 pilgrim signs, 45% have the Thames as the find spot, with most of the remainder from riverside sites [John Clark; pers. comm.]. However, the medieval secular badges have a similar distribution of find spots.

In comparison, not many signs have been found in watery contexts throughout the rest of the British Isles. However, the total number of signs found outside of England is very low. Only eighteen badges have been found in Scotland, most of them on land and in Perth. Only six have been found in Ireland. To my knowledge, no pilgrim signs have
been found in Wales. Two of the Irish badges come from burials at St. Mary’s Cathedral, Tuam, Co. Galway. The other published pilgrims badges from Ireland were all found in Dublin. Three are from English shrines, two ampullae from Canterbury and one ampulla from Worcester. The other sign is a badge from Rome [Spencer 1988]. It has been suggested that the lack of badges from watery contexts in Scotland might be explained by the amount of archaeological investigation in Perth and relative lack of archaeological inquiry into rivers and the paucity of dredging compared to the amount of this type of work done in England [Yeoman, pers. comm.]

One problem with the suggestion of pilgrim signs being intentionally deposited in water is the fact that these objects were perceived as having magical properties, and thus very valuable. Yet, if pilgrim signs were valuable, why would pilgrims dispose of them by throwing them in the water? Documentary evidence shows that pilgrims were in the habit of purchasing more than one badge. Therefore it is conceivable that pilgrims who purchased more than one badge did so with the intention of disposing of one by throwing it into water. There was no practical difficulty for pilgrims in complying with two contradictory beliefs, one calling for keeping a pilgrim sign, and the other requiring its deposition [Spencer 1978, 250].

Unfortunately, there are no accounts in contemporary literature that describe pilgrims disposing of their signs in rivers. Assuming that this is deliberate, it is likely that there was no single motivating factor, rather many reasons for doing this. In the archaeological literature pertaining to pilgrim signs, it has been suggested that this was sort of an offering of thanksgiving for a safe return from the dangerous journey [Spencer 1998]. The practice of depositing metal objects in water in other time periods, such as the Bronze Age [Bradley 1998] and Iron Age [Fitzpatrick 1984], is well established. In these periods, it was primarily weapons that were deposited in water. Because these are prehistoric periods, there are no contemporary documents that explain why people did this, yet the traditional interpretation is that the practice was intentional and done for ritual purposes as some sort of votive deposit. Votive deposits were also carried out during the Roman period at places like Bath [Cunliffe 1988]. Throwing special metal objects into the water may be some sort of universal practice occurring throughout many cultures. Even today, this ritual is carried out with wishing wells, where people throw coins into water. People in medieval times may have been aware of these earlier practices if they found these artifacts in the river, just as we continue to do today. They became aware that people in the past had placed metal artifacts in water and thought it was appropriate for them to do so as well. That secular badges show a similar distribution of depositional context as pilgrim signs suggests that more than just religious motives for disposing of badges in the water were at work. It supports the argument that one of the motives for this ritual was a cultural awareness that special metal artifacts should be deposited in water.

Perhaps it is related to the universal symbolism of water. Water is essential to life and is often perceived as an element of cleansing and healing, precisely the same qualities associated with shrines, relics, and pilgrim signs. As mentioned earlier, many shrines were associated with holy wells, which is one reason why ampullae were the dominant form of early pilgrim signs in England. Veneration of many holy wells date to before the Christian period [Rattue 1995]. If this pagan practice continued into the
Christian period, it is not inconceivable that votive deposits could have also continued. If pilgrims were throwing their signs into water, they may not have been able to consciously express why they did so, except than to say that it is what they thought it appropriate, due to many motivating factors in the ritual.

If pilgrim signs were offerings of thanksgiving for a completed journey, then it can be said that pilgrim signs encompass the entire scope of pilgrimage. A journey is not complete until one has returned home. So depositing a pilgrim sign at the end of a journey places the sign in the same location of the beginning of the journey. The pilgrim sign ended up at the point from which the owner had set out on pilgrimage [Spencer 1990b]. Thus, the pilgrim sign deposited as thanks for safe return is found at the site of both the beginning and end of a pilgrimage, and at the same time its imagery represents the goal of the journey. Therefore the start, climax, and conclusion of the pilgrimage are found in the context and imagery of the sign. Water also acts as a symbolic and physical boundary marker. It is the border between the city and the country, civilization and wilderness, inside society and outside society. The river itself is between the two and thus, can be described is liminal. Consequently, upon returning from a pilgrimage, before re-entering normal society, as one crosses the threshold, the pilgrim performs a ritual by throwing the sign of their liminal period into the water. This supports Turner's model of pilgrimage as analogous to a rite of passage discussed in the next section.

Archaeology and the anthropology of pilgrimage

The work of Victor Turner is the seminal work within the anthropology of pilgrimage. While it focused primarily on contemporary Christian pilgrimage, it is relevant to medieval pilgrimage. Turner described pilgrimage as a sort of rite of passage. However, within Christianity, it is a voluntary rite, though heavily encouraged and practiced, especially in medieval Europe. Using Van Gennep's model of the rite of passage, Turner portrayed pilgrimage as a period of liminality, a separation from conventional society punctuated by rituals of separation and reintegration. During this period there is a reversal of the status quo, the normal rules and social barriers that govern society are broken down or reversed and those undergoing the experience, experience *communitas*. All are seen as equal and achieve a higher level of maturity or some other form of spiritual growth.

Many of the characteristics of Turner's theory can be found in an interpretation of the archaeology of pilgrimage described in this article. Pilgrims were separate from mainstream society. During the Middle Ages the majority of the population, especially the lower classes, was not very mobile, spending most of their lives not very far from where they were born. For many, pilgrimage was a rare opportunity to leave their home, family, and friends. Pilgrimage was unique in that it was perhaps the only chance to travel available to everyone, no matter what their class.

This separation from society did involve an appropriate rite in church liturgy. Various rites of blessings for intending pilgrims were practiced at Salisbury, York, Hereford, and other English cathedrals. According to Finucane, these rites have been compared by some French historian-sociologists to rites of separation as described in Van Gennep's model [1977, 41]. The pilgrim signs worn by travelers, in addition to their attire, marked them as pilgrims and separate from society, and therefore immune from
political-military conflicts between countries wherever they traveled, as described above. The normal rules of society were not applicable during pilgrimage. This is illustrated by pilgrims renouncing possession of material goods and living on charity, though usually discouraged within mainstream society. This aspect of pilgrimage caused problems in the late medieval period, as some people dressed up as pilgrims so that they could receive offerings, even though they never went to any shrines. Many used pilgrim badges purchased from others to show as “proof” of their journey [Spencer 1968].

One part of Turner's theory that does not seem to hold true is the breakdown of social barriers. Although people from all classes practiced pilgrimage, these class barriers seem to have remained. Many wealthy pilgrims purchased badges made of precious metals, such as the silver gilt badge of St. Nicholas found near Bradford. These expensive badges are well attested to by documentary evidence. For example, Philip the Good and Charles the Bold, Dukes of Burgundy, purchased badges of gold, silver-gilt, silver, and pewter. Many of these were for members of their retinue, who were given badges of value that matched their rank. Charles VIII of France purchased 42 gold and silver signs from the shrine of Our Lady of Embrun. However, not all noblemen wore pilgrim signs made of precious metal. Louis XI of France is known to have worn a lead badge [Spencer 1998, 12]. Thus, while the social barriers while not completely dissolved, they were relaxed a bit. This relaxation of social barriers is demonstrated in the lodging of pilgrims at inns and hospices, which were not segregated according to the normal social barriers of society. Indeed, access to the area within most shrines was open to people of any social status, while outside of shrines, access to special areas was limited according to social status.

When pilgrims arrived at the shrine, they practiced more rituals. Upon arrival, they often followed a prescribed route through the shrine to view the various relics on display. The route was usually laid out so as to cause minimal disturbance to the normal proceedings of a church and its clergy. The church architecture of the medieval period was often designed to accommodate the housing of relics. During the visit to the shrine, pilgrims would leave their votive offerings. This was usually in the form of coins or wax. It was customary when making a vow of pilgrimage to bend a coin to represent the vow, and to give that particular coin as one's offer. This was usually done when some tragedy had been averted, such as ships surviving fierce storms or when a family member having been revived from death. Wax candles were also common offerings for this type of miracle. Wax offerings also took the form of body parts that had been inflicted with ailments but had been cured through an invocation of a particular saint. The cured person would then go to the shrine of said saint for thanksgiving. For these pilgrims, who had already received a miracle, or those just going on pilgrimage for the sake of pilgrimage, once the offering had been made, then they would hear Mass, and then journey home. Those who were ill and hoped for a cure would find a comfortable spot in the church and wait.

If the model of Van Gennep's rite of passage is to be followed, then pilgrimage requires a ritual of reintegration into society. I believe this rite is not recorded in documentary sources, but illustrated in the archaeological record. It has already been mentioned that deliberate deposition of pilgrim signs in water may have been some sort

2 http://www.findsdatabase.org.uk/hms/pas_obj.php?type=finds&id=37540
votive offering, thanksgiving for a safe journey [Merrifield 1975, Spencer 1978]. This could also act as the rite of the return to society. As the pilgrim returned home, they took the pilgrim sign, the representation of their journey and separation from society and threw it into the water, which not only represented the healing aspects of pilgrimage, but also symbolized boundaries, the boundary between the liminal period of pilgrimage and normal life, thus ending this phase of their life and beginning a new one. So far, the archaeology of pilgrimage has been discussed in conjunction with Turner's theory of liminality, but the evidence also supports the critics of Turner's model, Eade and Sallnow. Their main contention with Turner's theory is the idea that all the rules and social barriers were broken down or reversed. It has already been demonstrated that the archaeological evidence does not fully support this, and can be said to refute it. Eade and Sallnow describe pilgrimage as occurring in a religious void, where each participant possesses their own ideas about what pilgrimage meant. This model adheres to the documentary and archaeological evidence. Each pilgrim voluntarily underwent a pilgrimage. They made their own decision as to which shrines to visit and which routes to take within the constraints of their class and gender. Furthermore, of the thousands of pilgrim signs discovered since the mid-nineteenth century, very few are identical badges, further supporting the notion of individual choice and volition.

**Conclusion**

This article has focused on an interpretive analysis, considering pilgrim signs within the context of the entire pilgrimage experience and what they meant to those who wore them. They designated the wearer as a pilgrim and affirmed their right to protection and charity as a politically neutral Christian. Pilgrim signs also represented the actual journey itself, the rite of passage and period of liminality, and the spiritual reward for accomplishing a pilgrimage. As symbols of this rite of passage, pilgrim signs were used in the ritual of reintegration into normal society as votive deposits in rivers. There were many motivating factors for this ritual. The water recalled the symbolic properties of healing and cleansing associated with Christianity and pilgrimage, specifically the curative waters from holy wells found at many English shrines such as Canterbury. The act also recalled the long tradition of votive deposits in water going back at least as far as the Bronze Age up to the present day. Furthermore, as signs of pilgrimage, they represented the higher spiritual status achieved by the pilgrims which transcended the medieval belief that all were equal in death attested by their use as grave goods.

The greatest significance of pilgrim signs can be found in their role in medieval medicine and magic. By coming into contact with the shrine or relics of a saint, they obtained the same miracle working properties. Their use in magic was demonstrated in the archaeological record with their discovery in foundation deposits [Merrifield 1975] and their incorporation into church bells [Spencer 1998]. However, the most important aspect of their magic was their miracle-working ability to cure illnesses. Medieval people turned to saints just as easily as doctors for cures [Finucane 1977]. The most effective way to receive a miracle from a saint was to make a pilgrimage to their shrine. However, pilgrim signs, as signs of the saint and their power, were just as potent, as acknowledged in the inscription seen on many Canterbury ampullae: “Thomas is the best doctor of the holy sick.”
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The Labyrinthine Path of Pilgrimage
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Within many of the great Gothic cathedrals such as Chartres Cathedral, San Michele Maggiore, Pavia, and San Vitale, Ravenna, lay large floor labyrinths. Most of these face the altar as the dominant feature of the nave, and are either round or octagonal in shape. They vary in size from cathedral to cathedral. In France, some measure a massive twelve and half meters in diameter, large enough to walk on, following the path into the center. (Figure 1) The geometric structure that appears in the architectural labyrinths also appears in computus manuscripts, which feature calendar computations, astronomical computation, and cosmological texts. This article will examine how pilgrimage became embodied in the concept of the labyrinth, beginning with the earliest known use of these medieval floor labyrinths, the Auxerre pelota ritual and its possible predecessors, then it will investigate its connection to Easter and its embodiment in ecclesiastical dance that reflected the harmony of the spheres and the tripartite dance of the angels.

The earliest surviving computus manuscript that uses a labyrinth in an illustration is dated 806-22. It features an ancient Cretan-style labyrinth. (Figure 2) In contrast, the oldest surviving depiction of a church-style labyrinth is found in a tenth-century computus manuscript, contains a calendar, Easter cycles, and annuals. (Figure 3)
Figure 4 depicts a cathedral-style labyrinth, dated 1072, which was inserted in a text on how to calculate the date of Easter. The diagram on the upper right-hand side bears the inscription *Quattuor haec sunt bona: spernere mundum/ nullum / sese/ sperin,* “these are the four excellences / to despise the world/ to despise nobody/ despise oneself or for oneself to be despised.” These representations of the church-style labyrinths date two-hundred years earlier than the floor labyrinths in the European cathedrals.³

The labyrinths on the cathedral floors became known as “the path to Jerusalem,” a symbol of pilgrimage. This is reflected in etchings and drawings of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, which show members of the congregation sedately walking on the paths of the labyrinth, while other drawings show monks praying on their knees demurely crawling around the path of a turf labyrinth. (Figure 5) These images of the contemplative walker of the labyrinth have remained in the public mind, inspiring a contemporary growth in the popularity of church labyrinths and groups walking labyrinths. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that these meditative walks around the path of the labyrinth occurred prior to these eighteenth and nineteenth century images.

In the eighteenth century many labyrinths were removed from cathedrals, including that at Reims Cathedral which was removed in 1778 on the orders of Canon Jacquemart, who claimed that the noise of the children playing on the labyrinth disturbed the divine service. The Canon found the noise so distracting that he paid 1,000 livres out of his own pocket to have it removed.⁴ The labyrinth at Sens Cathedral was also removed, so the existing labyrinth is a
reconstruction. The original was destroyed in 1768 again because of the noise of the children playing on it. Whatever the reason for this destruction, they were no longer held in reverence that their position in the nave implies. They had lost their original meaning and were reduced to a place for children to play games.

However, there are records and descriptions of singing, dancing and ball-games in the late Middle Ages performed on the cathedral labyrinths. Medieval records reveal that the clergy danced on some of these labyrinths. The most extensive medieval records on ecclesiastical dance are those of the *Auxerre pelota* ritual. This dance was performed on the floor labyrinth at the Cathedral of St. Stephen, Auxerre, on Easter Monday Vespers. The Bishop of Mende, G. Durandus, late thirteenth century, mentioned that occasionally on Easter and sometimes at Christmas, priests and their clerks played ball games accompanied by songs and dances. The rules and a description of the ball-game dance are preserved in a decree of 1396.

The Dean would gather the canons for Vespers on the floor labyrinth, the newly-elected canon would present the Dean with a ball that had to be large enough to be held in both hands. Holding the ball in his left hand the Dean performed a *tripudium* movement, a dance that considered of three movements: turn, halt, and counter-turn. While they danced, the monks sang the Easter hymn *Victimi Paschali laudes*. Meanwhile, the canons joined hands in a Chorea, and danced, *circa daedalum*, around the labyrinth. As the dance was being performed the Dean would throw the ball back and forth continuously. Unfortunately, how the dance was actually staged is unknown. The dance was described as *tripartite* and ‘garland-like.’

Unfortunately, the Auxerre labyrinth was destroyed for unknown reasons shortly before 1690, and as no drawing survives, the structure is unknown. However, it is thought to be similar or the same as the Chartres labyrinth. (Figure 1) There is some evidence that Easter dances were performed by clerics during Easter Vespers at Chartres, in the metropolitan church in Sens, and Amiens Cathedral. The bishops of both Auxerre and Chartres were subject to the Archbishop of Sens, and ecclesiastical rituals as well as iconographic architectural features like the labyrinth, would be shared among various church in the archdiocese.
The tripartite structure of the dance of the clergy had an ancient foundation. To Plato (c. 428-347 B.C.), the heavens abounded with dance and music. The movement of the planets and the stars created or was the source of the choral dance of the heavens. The universe of Plato was constructed by two great circles, the circle of the Same and the circle of Other. The circle of the Same was the fixed stars, unchanging and constant. The circle of the Other consisted of the spheres of the seven planets that encircled the earth, with visibly different orbits. The motion of the Same was right to left, east to west. The motion of the Other was left to right, west to east. The circle of the Other appeared to travel, east to west. However, it actually traveled with the fixed stars east to west, which took a day to complete an orbit while the sun that traveled west to east took an entire year to complete its orbit. The planets moved to the right, while the fixed stars moved to the left around a stationary earth. The choric dance reflected this tripartite structure: turn to the heavens from east to west, counter-turn to the planets from west to east and halt, the stationary position of the earth. This choric dance was performed to the harmony of the spheres. A siren on each of the eight celestial spheres, that made up the circle of the Other, each siren uttering a single note while the fates, Lachesis, Clotho and Atropos sung from a distance to their music. This was an ancient dance that revealed the mysteries of the visible world.

In Plato’s Republic, in the story of Er, Er traveled to heavenly spheres, in the afterlife to the music of the harmony of the spheres. Er then returned to Earth and related his experiences. This story was later replicated in Cicero’s Dream of Scipio. Traveling through the heavenly spheres was implicit in the work of Plato and Cicero. However, it was made explicit by the fourth century A.D., in Macrobius’ Commentary on the Dream of Scipio. The assumption that the soul traveled through successive heavenly spheres as a vehicle of reincarnation belonged to the integration of Neo-Platonism.

The anonymous Neo-Platonic writer Pseudo-Dionysius (c. fifth-sixth century A.D.) used the concept of the illumination of God traveling through the angelic spheres. The hierarchy of the nine angelic spheres danced a tripartite dance. The purpose of the dance of the angels was to spread the illumination of God to the human hierarchy below. The head of the human hierarchy was the hierarch or bishop, whose main task was to mimic the angelic hierarchy. The hierarch preformed the Eucharist and the main purpose
of the Eucharist was to pass on the illumination of God.\textsuperscript{22} By the time the large
labyrinths were built into medieval cathedrals, Pseudo-Dionysius’ \textit{Celestial Hierarchy}
and the \textit{Ecclesiastical Hierarchy} were two of the most influential books of their time.

The \textit{tripartite} dances of the clerics at Auxerre on Easter Monday were danced on
a labyrinth that consisted of twelve concentric circuits. These twelve circuits of the medieval
labyrinths may have represented the medieval concept of the universe. (Figure 6)

The medieval universe was depicted as twelve spheres; the four elements (earth, water,
fire, and air) in the center, then the Moon, the Sun, the five visible planets, and the fixed stars. These
twelve spheres were the spheres of \textit{computus} used to calculate the date of Easter. In the \textit{computus}
manuscripts the cathedral-style labyrinths are only shown in their round form, while the
octagonal labyrinths were preserved for the floors of the cathedrals. Indeed, this was the
shape of many baptisteries and baptismal fonts of the period.

The canons and the Deans danced the \textit{tripartite} ceremonial ball dance around the
labyrinth at Auxerre Cathedral. To follow the pattern of these large labyrinths is to
encircle the labyrinth, halt and then encircle the labyrinth in opposite direction, to move
through the labyrinth is to turn – halt – counter-turn. The medieval cathedral labyrinths
have a \textit{tripartite} structure to the center. The medieval cathedral floor labyrinths and the
dance of the clergy were the earthy representation of the \textit{tripartite} dance of the angels,
which spread the illumination of God, as described by Pseudo-Dionysius. This Easter
ceremony was the path of pilgrimage of the soul to receive the illumination of God to
seek the understanding of Perfect. Through the performance of this dance, the Christian
mysteries could transcend the mere natural and enter into the realm of the incorporeal
through the symbols of the corporeal realm. ☪
Endnotes


2 Hermann Kern, Through the Labyrinth (Munich: Prestel, 2000), p. 131. This book is an excellent pictorial reference for labyrinths. However, I believe that Kern’s interpretations are not always completely accurate.

3 A fourth-century floor labyrinth from the Cathedral of Algiers survives, but it is a square Roman-style labyrinth.

4 Kern, p. 160; Keith Critchlow, “Chartres Maze: A Model of the Universe,” Architecture Association Quarterly 5/2 (1973): 11-21. On p. 12, Critchlow mistakenly states that the Amiens labyrinth was destroyed by Canon Jacquemart. The date the destruction is also incorrect.


7 Chambers, p. 67.

8 Chambers, p. 67.

9 Kern, p. 150.

10 Kern, p. 147.


15 Plato, 36d.

16 Plato, 36c-37c.


19 Plato, 617b.


Pursuing the Chemin and the Coquilles St. Jacques in Paris

By Kathy Gower, PhD, Friends of the Road to Santiago, KathyGower@hotmail.com

Paris has been known for centuries as a gatherings point for pilgrims making their way on the Camino de Santiago. The Chemin du St. Jacques, as it is known in France, is particularly marked by both a starting point, the Tour St. Jacques, the only surviving tower of a church built in the 16th century, and the rue St. Jacques itself, which extends kilometers from the center of Paris. The philosopher Pascal did his barometric experiments on the Tour St. Jacques in 1648. It seems the Tour has been shrouded in scaffolding almost since then. (This photo is from 1900, but I did see it uncovered in 1986.)

Pilgrims (pèlerins) arrived in Paris from many points and Paris, as it is today, was a stop and a lure for many diversions, not just the medieval churches and hospitals that proliferated there. It is entirely possible that pilgrims may have visited the Basilica of St. Denis, which the Abbot Suger had built (1136) to honor St. Denis, a patron saint of Paris before the Cathedral of the Notre Dame was built (1190).

If one walks down the rue St. Denis from one of the city portals within the environs of Paris (a somewhat seedy place now), one will pass by the remains of many Camino sites. The Convents of the Daughters of God (no longer in existence) was built near the rue St. Denis by St. Louis, a king of France, to rehabilitate prostitutes and to make honest women out of them in the 13th century. This part of rue St. Denis has similar challenges today.
Continuing down rue St. Denis, one comes upon the site of the Hospital St. Jacques, where St. Ignatius Loyola was one of the many administering to pilgrims up until the 17th century. The site was demolished in 1825. On the corner of rue du Cygne and rue Pierre Lescot there is a house with designs of pilgrim staffs, gourds and scallop shells.

The church of St. Leu & Gilles is a little further south, still standing, on a little street once known as rue du Pèlerin de St. Jacques. The church had its apse removed by the broad hand of Baron Haussmann when he "redesigned" the streets of Paris to prevent small gatherings after the revolution and to make Paris a "modern city".

The area around what is now Les Halles and the Central Culturel Georges Pompidou (the Beaubourg) is steeped in Camino lure. At 51 rue Montmorency, just north, is the oldest house in Paris, built in 1407 as the home of Nicholas Flamel and his wife Pernelle. He was an alchemist and scrivener who endowed many of the churches and orphanages in the area during his time, supposedly with the "gold" he made after interpreting an ancient book in his possession with help from a mysterious fellow pilgrim on the Camino. He was buried in the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents that was dug up to create Les Halles, in part, a vast market place. The Tour St. Jacques was a tower of St. Jacques du Boucherie, a church for the butchers in the area. The gravestone of Nicholas Flamel is located on one of the stairways in the Cluny Museum, having been discovered after many years preserved as a cutting block when a meat market was razed to build the abominable Les Halles.

Pilgrims stopping in to St. Eustache (built 1532-1640), next to Le Halles, housing a famous pipe organ, will see a lovely statue of St. James with his pouch and shell between two other apostles on the left inside of the south entrance.
If one takes up rue St. Denis and St. Martin, a parallel street, the coquilles St. Jacques makes its appearance in interesting ways. At the corner of rue St. Martin and Rue Etienne Marcel look up to find a grinning statue of St. James at the top of the ground floor awnings.

At the church of the Lombard money-lenders, St. Merrie, also shrouded in scaffolding for many years, there is a 19th century statue of the saint near the middle of three portals. It isn't visible try as one may. There are many sites of abbeys, hospitals and churches in the area, all lost through the ages.

By now we've reached Notre Dame, just a few blocks south of the Tour St. Jacques on the Ile de la Cite, which was started in 1163. A visit here requires some time to take in the enduring magnificence, rebuilt several times. A representation (all originals destroyed or in the Cluny) of St. James, with his shell and his staff, is located in the middle portal.

Crossing over the Petit Pont, we reach St. Julien-le-Pauvre, another romanesque-to-gothic style church on the site of a 6th century building on the pilgrimage road. Old and poor pilgrims could stay in the tiny church hospital. In the garden behind the church is the oldest tree in Paris, planted in 1620. At one point it was the parish church for the university area nearby and for the likes of Dante, Rabelias and Thomas Aquinas. No scallop shells, but a lovely, peaceful ambiance.

Walking up the rue St. Jacques, be sure to look up at #27 to see Salvador Dali's sundial, hanging like a street sign. A face, cast in cement in the shape of a scallop shell is a reminder of the pilgrims who passed along the street. The eyebrows are flames representing the sun. *

Next stop is the Hotel Cluny, now the Musée national du Moyen Age, Thermes de Cluny, built on Roman ruins to receive visitors representing the Cluny Abbey in Burgundy. Before going into the courtyard, notice the stone arch on rue de Cluny, the last remaining vestige of a shelter for pilgrims. Scallop shells and walker's staffs decorate the courtyard façade, the emblem of the many medieval pilgrims headed south for Santiago. There is an inaccurate sundial on the wall left of the museum entry, also decorated prolifically with scallop shells.
Once inside, have fun searching for the coquilles: I found several, both on the sculptures of our St. James and in a variety of pilgrimage art. These include pilgrim badges, motifs on the stained glass windows on the building courtyard, decorations on a leather belt, and on a unique iron lock made of many shells.

A partial inventory:
- Sculptures: St. James the Major (in a straw hat, as pilgrim), 15th century
- St. James, with scallop on purse, early 14th century
- Pilgrim Badges (several)
- Painting with apostles, 15th century
- Scallop shells on window edges - 15th century
Stained glass, late 12th century
Locks: one with shells, 16th century

There is also a chest lock with St. James & St. John, end of 15th century...

Plus many scallop shells on the mantel of the fireplace near the entrance….but keep looking
Walk back a block or two to rue St Jacques, pass through the Portal Ste. Jacques, just past the Pantheon and the Universite of Paris, where the original gates of the city of Paris were once marked. Before continuing on past the Sorbonne, the Institut de Géographie and the Observatoire de Paris, turn left on to rue des Fosses St. Jacques …what would have been the moat or sewers outside the walls of 12-14th century Paris. On the wooden doors of No. 169 are carved scallop shells. On the right side of the street is a lovely sign for St. Jacques Brûlerie with a scallop shell in iron hanging beneath the busy coffee roaster.

Back on rue St. Jacques, continue on just a bit to the NW corner of rue de'l Abbe de l'Epee to see the one remaining remnant of a scallop shell on the church of St. Jacques Haut Pas. (one block north of the Luxembourg Gardens). The building next door housed a hospital founded in the 12th century and gardens where the friars grew grapes and made wine. Jacques de Voragine translated the Golden Legend : The Lives of Saints, from Latin into French here. Today the 17th century building also houses a branch of the Societe des Amis de St. Jacques de Compostelle.

Inside you'll find scallops on the carved capitals and a beautifully carved 17th century wooden votive panel of the apparition of the Virgin of the Pillar (from the Zaragoza legend) with St. Jacques pélerin dressed in scallop shells.

A good ending point for the traditional walk out from central Paris is the Place Saint Jacques, on the Boulevard St. Jacques. Returning back, stop at any of the many lively little restaurants for an order of Coquilles St. Jacques or at least a St. Jacques coffee. You've deserved it.
Notes and bibliography

Most of the "Coquilles" were discovered while walking in Paris. I owe a debt of gratitude to my Parisian walking partner, Michel Besson who is a wealth of knowledge about the Chemin de St. Jacques.

In the Cluny I found a boxed set of maps of Paris through the Ages, published by Media Cartes, Paris which gave a great deal of information on Paris historical sites and has easy to follow guides. The most useful for these purposes where captioned by Arthur Gillette.

*Sundials in Paris, (1995), Notes from Cadrans Solaires De Paris, A. Gotteland and George Camus, translated by Jane Walker and Walter Wells, British Sundial Society. Unfortunately, this sundial was removed after this article was submitted. Only the holes where it was hung remain.

After this article was written, I came across a Confraternity of St. James (UK) booklet, Paris Pilgrim, by Hilary Hugh-Jones and Mark Hassall, published in 1998 which confirmed some of what I found.

I am most grateful to Les Amis de St Jacques de Compostelle who sent a wonderful assortment of information from their archives, including:


Also included in this packet was a fascimile of a page from Les Heures de Marguerite d'Orléans (1430) which is in the Bibliothèque National in Paris. It can be seen at http://www.bnf.fr/loc/bnf035.jpeg or in their Manuscript Collection. A group of pilgrims approaching St. James can be seen in the borders of the illuminated manuscript.

As stated in the Introduction, the subject of this book is the influence of the cult of saints’ relics on both the architecture of early medieval churches in the Latin West and on the later development of saints’ shrines. The uniqueness of this study is its combined focus on the religious practice of the laity and reverential attitude of the ecclesiastic sector towards these holy remains and their role as activators and prompters for the physical transformations in architecture and shrines. By this thesis, John Crook employs the associated methodologies of macrocosmic and microcosmic investigation for locating and analyzing architectural environments, their designs, and the ultimate point of convergence of the cult of relics, the saints’ shrines. The various components of churches such as crypts and churches proper (the macrocosmic settings) containing whole bodies of the saints accommodated the physical wishes of the devout while recognizing the need of the clergy to exercise control over their congregation’s cultic practices. The creation of artistically suitable and “user-friendly” shrines (the microcosmic objects), likewise designed to serve the desires of the faithful, is also part of the material Crook provides in this study.

To most medievalists, the Early Christian West usually means roughly the second through the sixth centuries, but if we understand Crook’s thinking and extend the notion of the cult of relics to the present day (he even includes such secular and humorous examples as vials labeled “Elvis’ Sweat!”), we can then comprehend his title more clearly. His geographic limitation to Italy, the area of former Gaul (France, Germany, and Switzerland), and Britain no doubt made his study manageable, though the unfortunate exclusion of monuments from the Iberian Peninsula leaves one hungry for that material.  

1 Recently, several scholars of medieval Iberian art have begun to investigate this very same phenomenon, namely, the relationship between a shrine and its setting. See articles by Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras, Daniel
Chapter I, *Aspects of Relic Cults*, introduces the subject of the cult of saints from a literary tradition citing the early Patristic writings of Augustine and Ambrose, Latin authors such as Tertullian and Paulinus of Nola, and even the caustic and highly critical sixteenth-century Reformers of England. Included in this chapter are a number of subheadings such as Burial *ad martyres* and *ad sanctos*, *Praesentia*, Translation and Fragmentation, and Thaumaturgical Power that indicate how relics, and belief in them, shaped practice. Crook argues that the cult of relics was an interactive affair that comprised such sensory activities as touching, kissing, and movement around and under shrines of saints, an idea recently explored by other scholars of medieval art.²

Crook continues to interweave an abundance of archaeological and literary material through the remainder of the chapters while disclosing his observations and examples in chronological order. Thus, Chapter II, *The Physical Setting of Relic Cults up to c. 750*, encompassing Rome, Merovingian Francia, and seventh-century Britain, includes such physical examples as the basilica of S. Alessandro in Rome together with its surviving epigraphic evidence, the crypt of St. Victor at Marseilles, and the cult of Etheldreda at Ely as well as such literary luminaries as Gregory of Tours and the Venerable Bede. Crook studies the remains of an early crypt-like structure at the Church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Rome that featured a window (*fenestella*) that allowed the faithful visual access to the graves of these fourth-century martyrs. Apparently there was reluctance on the part of Roman ecclesiastical authorities, at least up to the eighth century, to move the bodies of the saints from their original resting places; and so the *fenestella* was employed to keep everyone content. A similar arrangement was used at the Church of St. Peter in Rome.³ In Gaul, however, translations of saints’ bodies took place as early as the sixth century. Gregory of Tours is highlighted for his rich trove of written evidence (*In gloria martyrum* and *In gloria confessorum*) on the cult of relics and the

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² Several articles in the above-mentioned volume deal with these practices; see also Stephen Lamia, “Souvenir, Synaesthesia, and the *sepulcrum Dominii*,” in *Memory and the Medieval Tomb*, ed. by Elizabeth Valdez del Álamo with Carol Pendergast (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 19 - 41.

architectural structures, mainly crypts, which housed them. Gregory also describes the relationship between altar and relic – especially since the fragmentation of saints’ bodies became more widespread. In some examples, the relic was imbedded within the altar itself, while in other cases it was housed in opulent reliquaries situated atop the altar, and thus given visual prominence. Finally, our Merovingian reporter discusses how the elevation of relics, not necessarily underground but at the main level of the church itself, had an impact on the manner of their display. This novel treatment of holy remains, prompted by the now-burgeoning popularity of relic veneration and the demand for more convenient means of access other than subterranean crypts, led to the erection of a superstructure on the sarcophagus; *sepulchrum* is the word that Gregory uses. Those of St. Denis and St. Martin of Tours are among the most famous and important examples Crook cites. Some were actually positioned behind the high altar of a church thereby increasing their visibility from afar; many were wondrously embellished making their appearance even more compelling. Crook also, and very cleverly, mines the *Vita Eligii episcopi Noviomagensis* for documentary evidence that this patron saint of goldsmiths fashioned a number of magnificent gold, silver, and bejeweled shrines during the first half of the seventh century. He concludes this chapter with British material, noting that patterns there paralleled those of Merovingian Francia.

The development of crypt architecture both north and south of the Alps during the Carolingian Renaissance is the subject of Chapter III, *The Physical Setting of Relic Cults: Rome and the Architecture of the Carolingian Renaissance*. Crook demonstrates that, for most examples, Roman models, especially those dating to the time of Pope Gregory the Great, were employed: this in keeping with the Carolingian concept of *renovatio Romanorum christianorum imperii*. In order to understand the evolution of crypt designs in the domains of Charlemange, Crook first presents the Roman evidence upon which they depended, specifically ring-crypts such as St. Peter’s and corridor crypts such as S. Valentino. Both of these shaped spaces, according to our author, were a direct response to the cult of relics – in the former case, the anneal plan allowed pilgrims to walk behind the grave of the first bishop of Rome and in the latter, the transverse passage gave access to the site containing the saint’s relics. In addition to providing Carolingian examples that depended upon Roman designs, Crook also furnishes the reader with evidence from
England thus extending Rome’s influence across the Channel. For much of this material, as elsewhere, Crook depends most frequently on evidence from documentary and archaeological excavations, since so many of the monuments he cites are either in ruinous state or barely extant. Crook gives two main reasons for the popularity of subterranean crypts in Carolingian Gaul: first, the axial relationship between the altar above and the relic-containing space below, and second, the preservation of the sanctity of the altar area and the reconfiguration of spatial access for relic veneration. He employs a typological approach dividing his monuments into classifications based on design of crypt, although he cautions that “the distinction between ring crypts, corridor crypts, hall crypts, and outer crypts is often blurred.”\(^4\) This admonition, unfortunately, undermines his otherwise exhaustive research. Among the Carolingian and English ring crypts Crook examines are those of Saint-Maurice d’Agaune, St.-Denis (where he offers a different reading of the plan than previously rendered by Sumner Crosby and Jules Formigé), St. Liudger at Werden, and Canterbury where, before the relics of the famous murdered archbishop Thomas Becket were venerated, the cult of St. Dunstan was revered. After a brief \textit{excursus} on rectilinear ring crypts, Crook next turns his attention to corridor crypts with in-depth discussions, largely based on material from documents and excavations, of Saint-Medard, Soissons, St.-Quentin, and Bourges Cathedral with its relics of the protomartyr, Stephen. After including some hair-splitting subsections on variants of these crypts, Crook concludes this chapter with a section on hall crypts – simple quadratic spaces – with eastern and western \textit{loculi} and cites St-Sylvain, Ahun, and St. Wystan’s, Repton as examples.

Chapter IV, an amplification of material from Chapter III, focuses upon what Crook terms “the greater Carolingian shrine-crypts.” Entitled \textit{Architecture and the Cult of}
Saints from the Ninth to the Early Eleventh Century this part also includes a sprinkling of early Romanesque crypts that were intended to accommodate saints’ cults. Featured here is the widely known St.-Gall plan. Despite the contention that it represents the “ideal” Carolingian monastery plan, Crook analyzes it as though it were a real structure following the inscriptions on the plan and other information provided in documents. He reads the east end as having the altar elevated on a platform, an above-ground crypt on the perimeter of this platform, and a chamber below this platform that contained the sarcophagus of the saint and a fenestella for visual and tactile access. Other important examples which Crook studies include St.-Philbert de Grandlieu with its chamber-crypt embedded into the apse area, St.-Germain at Auxerre with its polygonal rotunda, and St.-Pierre at Flavigny that is strikingly similar to Auxerre; all of these are extant. In the section titled “The Last Crypts Intended to Accommodate Saints’ Cults,” Crook concentrates on progressing from the ninth century to the eleventh century while charting the differences from earlier examples. So, at St.-Aignan, Orléans, he identifies a triple-aisled crypt terminating in an apse and surrounded by an ambulatory with five radiating chapels – clearly an elaborate affair. In connection with this monument, our author identifies two phases of construction based on sculptural motifs such as foliate capitals. This section segues into the next: Crypts and the Origins of the Apse-and-Ambulatory Plan in which Crook contends that the link between radiating chapels and the veneration of saints’ relics is unproven. Instead, he proposes that there was a need to provide a greater number of altars in monastic cathedrals. However, if we concede that altars required relics for their sanctification, then we must query this proposal. He marshals evidence from the following sites as proof of his hypothesis: the mid-ninth century crypt at Chartres Cathedral, the early eleventh century crypts at St.-Pierre-le-Vif at Sens and St.-Philibert at Tournus, and the late eleventh century crypt at the Cathedral of Clermont-Ferrand. Crook does not elaborate on the Chartres example; and for St.-Pierre-le-Vif, he simply states that there is no documentary evidence for relics
in the three radial chapels. For St.-Philibert, he contends that the relics of the saint were “more probably displayed at the main level” of the church and that the “main purpose of the crypt with its rectangular radiating chapels was to compensate for the steep eastward slope towards the Saône.”\(^5\) That seems to be quite an elaborate compensation to this reviewer. His most convincing example is Clermont-Ferrand where documentary evidence suggests that the relics of Sts. Agricola and Vitalis were displayed at the main level, thus emancipating crypts from the cult of relics that originally inspired them. However, he does not offer any opinion as to the function of the Clermont-Ferrand crypt. Because of the fundamental change in the physical location of saints’ bodies from “downstairs” to “upstairs,” that is from the subterranean crypt to the church proper, the architectural response was, according to Crook, less obvious than in the ninth and tenth centuries. Instead, the development of shrine-types becomes a more visually prominent construct, and although he gives this attention in the last chapter, he continues his investigation of architecture and the cult of saints in Chapters V & VI.

Chapter V, *Relic Cults in Normandy and England in the 10th and 11th Centuries*, combines material from both Continental and Insular sources, a phenomenon the author underscores on more than one occasion. He states, “It is erroneous and misleading to consider Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical architecture as divorced from the rest of Christendom; yet the narrow band of water which separates England from the mainland has often led scholars to treat architectural developments in the British Isles as a case apart.”\(^6\) Crook begins this chapter with an overview of the architectural influence of saints’ cults in England between the tenth-century monastic reforms and the Norman Conquest. The cult of St. Swithun, created by Bishop Ethelwold at Winchester as an expression of that monastic reform during this time and later that of Ethelwold himself, leads this section that also includes St. Oswald of Worcester whose cult and sumptuous, portable reliquary are described by the chronicler Eadmer. The cult of Cuthbert of Durham whose relics were located behind the high altar of the church and then relocated in the new church is likewise considered, as with the previous monument, from the point of view of documentary evidence. The same problem exists for the Norman saints’ cults

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\(^5\) Crook, p. 158.
\(^6\) Crook, p. 3.
as for England, the lack of both material evidence and adequate historical sources. This is compensated by such late-eleventh century authors as William of Jumièges and Orderic Vitalis. We must also bear in mind that the late ninth and early tenth centuries in Normandy were characterized by frequent attacks from the Vikings, and hence the active movement of saints’ bodies for protection. Given such peripatetic conditions, crypt architecture was thus not an option. In general, relics were elevated into the body of the church, on or behind the high altar, and had little effect on church design. The Norman attitude towards English saints, initially negative, later turned positive once the Norman prelates recognized the advantages of promoting local cults, is a matter which Crook goes into at length, especially singling out Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury. Also included in this chapter is the impact of the Norman Conquest on the architecture of the cult of saints, a phenomenon that initially exerts little or no part in determining architectural form, but by the end of the eleventh century takes shape in the notion of local cults. The examples Crook employs here are some of the most widely known monuments of the Early Romanesque. All of these churches were rebuilt after the Conquest, and his discussion includes both the attitude towards relics and the architecture itself: Bury St. Edmunds, Ely, and Durham – the last two of which employ a form deriving from the apse-and-ambulatory tradition so as to provide easy access to the relics. The apsidally-planned crypt at Bury St. Edmunds, unknown until the 1950s, was constructed to raise up the eastern part of the church; it played no part in the cult of the saint. It mirrored the plan for the presbytery in the church proper where the shrine of St. Edmund was located behind the high altar – the predictable position for such shrines in Anglo-Norman churches. In the late eleventh century the tomb monument of St. Etheldreda, according to the Liber Eliensis, was elevated on the south side of the altar and that of her sister, St. Sexburga similarly enshrined on the north side. Unfortunately, the reconstruction in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries obliterated their later locations. Crook thoroughly presents the archaeological material necessary for understanding the massive undercroft beneath Durham Cathedral with its apse-en-echelon arrangement that was begun in the late eleventh century. The pavement of the feretory follows an apse design, with the flagstones arranged in a semicircular pattern. Crook deduces that the feretory platform itself can be dated to two different phases. The earlier of the two was a raised platform
constructed within the Romanesque apse and possibly before 1104, when the relics of St. Cuthbert were translated. The second took place during the thirteenth-century remodeling of the east end. Crook concludes this chapter by recapping the new interest in the cult of English saints at the end of the eleventh century both by the wealth of hagiographic literature on them and their role in the consecration of great churches built after the Conquest. At times our author appears to digress into either an effusion of historical material or a catalogue of “who’s who” among minor saints and which of them had bodies that were incorrupt, both of which become somewhat distracting to the main points he wants us to consider. There are the occasional sentence fragments as on p. 177: “Firstly, the literary evidence.” and again on p.179: “So, too, at the church of Saint-Étienne, Caen, to which Lanfranc was transferred in 1063.”

Chapter VI, *Relic Cults in England in the Twelfth Century*, focuses upon these now flourishing cults, but concentrates exclusively, as the title suggests, on Insular monuments. The skepticism of the first generation of Norman ecclesiastics now gives way to an all-out enthusiasm for local saints and their cults. Our author very succinctly states his methodology for this chapter at the beginning: “In this chapter, I examine the physical setting of a number of individual English saints’ cults, analysing the documentary evidence and, where possible, any surviving physical evidence for alterations made in response to the new interest in the cult of relics in the twelfth century.”

Agreed this has been his methodology all along, though here he deals often with buildings that have already been erected such as Ely, Hexham, St. Paul’s of London, Westminster, Winchester, and Worcester. There are, however, instances wherein Crook presents new cults, such as those of Remigius of Lincoln and William of Norwich. This chapter is less about architectural response and more about relic cults themselves with the notable exceptions of Norwich, Winchester, and St. Peter-in-the-East at Oxford. Here, Crook furnishes us with most interesting nuggets of information: the reliquary niche under the bishop’s throne at Norwich, the “Holy Hole” of Winchester, and the retrospective hall crypt at Oxford.

In Chapter VII it is the development of shrines that receives the author’s attention, in particular, how they were created to accommodate the cultic practices of the faithful.

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7 Crook, p. 210
for display and for access. In doing so, Crook not only harkens back to his original focus in Chapter I, which is the wishes of the congregation to interact physically with the holy dead, but also acknowledges the contrast between the evolutionary dynamism of architectural forms and the conservative, unchanging beliefs and requirements of the faithful. Aptly titled *The Development of Shrines*, Crook here studies shrines themselves as relic containers, unlike in the previous chapters wherein he considered the larger, architectural context for holy remains. After discussing the various vocabulary words used to denote this object with a presentation of their nuanced meanings (words such as *arca*, *feretrum*, *sepulchrum*, etc.) our author takes us back in time to Merovingian Francia, then to the Carolingian renaissance, and finally to surviving Romanesque shrines at both Insular and Continental locales. In this historical excursion Crook covers such material as Merovingian whole-body elevations and their superimposed monuments, Carolingian shrine-crypts, raised structures of the Romanesque period that supported the relics usually elevated behind the high altar, and raised reliquaries supported by columns or a more elaborate base incorporating niches or apertures for pilgrims to ensconce themselves in order to reap the *beneficia* of the saint’s *potentia*. Some of the earlier material in this chapter is a recap from previous chapters though Crook does add new monuments to his ever-growing catalogue. The fresher material may be found in the Romanesque section on tomb-shrines, for it is here that Crook presents a brief examination of the tomb of Christ at Jerusalem as the archetype for tombs outfitted with what he calls “portholes”; he even lists several examples of the iconography of this tomb as it appears in western European art. He then presents several examples of Insular and Continental tomb-shrines similarly outfitted with these *fenestellae*, among which I cite that of St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury, St. Candida at Whitchurch Canonicorum, and St. Omer at his eponymous town. He concludes this chapter with examples of tombs raised on pillars citing, among others, that of St. Radegonde at Poitiers and what he terms “integrated monuments” which are comprised of a base and a
coffin attached to an altar, giving the shrine of St. Sylvanus at his eponymous church in Ahun as one example.

The illustrations that accompany the text consist of black-and-white photographs, architectural plans, and cross sections. In the former instance, most are clear, some grainy, others even dramatic in their vantage point, especially figures 75 and 83 – bird’s-eye-views of the feretory platforms at Durham and Winchester Cathedrals respectively. The diagrams are often helpful, though sometimes one wishes for more specific information such as in figure 84: it is difficult to locate the feretory of St. Swithin when the plan of the east arm of the church is superimposed onto that of the crypt. The prose itself is dry, declarative, and often sprinkled with numerical measurements that tend to distract and confuse the non-archaeologist. Are they all actually relevant to the thesis? His bibliography is exemplary for the amount of material he covers. Crook thoroughly mines original sources, demonstrates command of recent literature on his subject, and integrates his archaeological sleuthing with hagiography and architectural history. This is a useful volume, if somewhat difficult to read from cover to cover. Its merits are based on his overview of the subject and the information he brings to so many monuments.

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Spencer was born in Keighley, Yorkshire in 1928. He studied History at the University of Leeds and in 1952 was hired by the Museum of London after it was re-established in Kensington Palace after World War II. He was involved in both aspects of the museum, archaeology and art history. In 1954 he helped excavate the Temple of Mithras in London and years later talked of the excitement of the find and the interest of the crowds who came to observe. In 1972, he curated the beloved exhibition Chaucer’s London which drew over 75,000 visitors.

When the museum (now merged with the Guildhall Museum) moved to its new quarters in the Barbican Centre in 1974-75, he helped install the medieval galleries and became the acting director until the museum opened officially. From then, until his retirement in 1988, he was the Keeper of Medieval Antiquities and put on many exhibitions and published numerous works on a wide variety of topics from seals to the unusual find of cheater’s dice.

He established his international reputation by focusing on the hitherto neglected area of pilgrim souvenirs. What began as a single lecture on “Pilgrim Badges and the London Pilgrim” became a lifelong journey of learning, scholarship, and generosity as he almost single-handedly created the study of a new field. He defined what these objects were, their function, manufacture, style, and iconography. He identified every major souvenir and badge found in England and many on the continent in the last few decades. His grasp of medieval popular culture, history, and hagiography was unparalleled. His impact is reflected in the frequency with which his work is cited not only in almost every article and book on medieval souvenirs, but in works as far afield as the paintings of Robert Campin, the works of Chaucer, and souvenirs from the temple of Bodhgaya in India. He wrote numerous articles, contributed to many archaeological reports, and published important catalogues of the collections from the Kings Lynn Museum in Norfolk (1980), the Salisbury Museum (1990), and his masterwork, the Museum of London in 1998.

Beyond his exemplary scholarship, what set Brian Spencer apart was his great generosity and enthusiasm for all aspects of medieval art and culture. He corresponded with great numbers of scholars, students, collectors, amateurs, and the just plain curious, sharing his insights and thoughtful opinions. Most far-reaching was his involvement with metal-detectorists (called mudlarks). Shunned by some scholars, he reached out to them and offered his expertise in exchange for a chance to look over and photograph the objects they discovered. In this manner, the Museum of London and other public institutions were able to acquire objects that would have otherwise disappeared on the open market, or if they were not acquired, they were at least recorded for the use of later
scholars. The mutual respect between the mudlarks and Spencer can be seen at low tide when the graffiti “Brian Spencer Rules O.K.” can be seen under one of the bridges over the Thames.

His other great interest was in horticulture and he and his wife Joan shared a lifelong fascination with different plants and growing conditions. Every year from his beautiful garden he brought plants into the Museum of London to be sold for charitable donations to the Imperial Cancer Fund.

Brian Spencer is survived by his widow, Joan, three children, and six grandchildren.

Those lucky enough to have met him will remember his kind generosity and gentle sense of humor. He will be very much missed.