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This summer, my Burch Fellowship provided me with the opportunity to study medieval and modern pilgrimage in Spain, England, and Ireland in preparation for writing an honors thesis this Fall. In the course of my travels to these countries, I was able to learn about pilgrimage in an academic setting through visits to museums and archives and through discussions with leading scholars, and also to experience pilgrimage through visits to medieval pilgrimage sites and participation in several modern versions of medieval pilgrimages.

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Burton Westermeier

EXPLORING MEDIEVAL PILGRIMAGE IN SPAIN, ENGLAND, AND IRELAND

The first part of my project took place in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, a city which has been the destination of pilgrims to the tomb of Saint James since the Early Middle Ages. In Santiago I met with Professor George Greenia of the College of William and Mary, as well as seven other faculty and students from William and Mary who were carrying out various research projects related to pilgrimage. During the first week, we spent our time exploring the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and learning about its history, art, and architecture.

After a week in the city of Santiago, we took a bus to the town of Ferrol on the northwestern coast of Spain. As a port town, Ferrol was one of the points where medieval pilgrims from England, Ireland, and other northern countries would have disembarked to begin their pilgrimage.

Today, it is the starting point for the modern Camino Ingles. For the next week, we hiked the 118 kilometers back to Santiago, stopping each night at a pilgrim's hostel known as an albergue. In every town that we passed through, we paused to talk to local people and learn about any interesting customs, art, architecture, or history related to pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.



Almost every place we stopped had something interesting to offer, from a miracle-working sixteenth-century crucifix in Ferrol to a guided tour of a twelfth-century medieval tower in Pontedeume. Another important part of the experience was talking to fellow pilgrims along the way. Learning about the motivations of modern people to

go to Santiago provided an interesting point of comparison to thinking about the reasons a person in the Middle Ages might have gone on pilgrimage. Upon our return to Santiago de Compostela, each of us had time to work on our own individual research projects for the next two weeks. I was able to visit the Museum of Pilgrimage and use their extensive collection of pilgrimage-related material. With the help of Professor Greenia, I was also able to access some materials from the archives of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. I also worked with

Professor Greenia on the beginning of a project to transcribe the papal bull *Deus Omnipotens*, which describes the history of pilgrimage to Santiago upon the rediscovery of the relics of Saint James in the nineteenth century, and to produce a new English translation from the original Latin manuscript.

The next part of my project involved departing for England. Having experienced pilgrimage in Santiago, I wanted the opportunity to research it using the best resources available in order to prepare for my Honors' Thesis in the fall. I started with a week-long visit to the University of Birmingham, where I was able to meet with Dr. William Purkis, an expert on pilgrimage in medieval Iberia. Next, I traveled to London, where I stayed for several weeks carrying out research using the collections of the Institute for Historical Research and the British Library. At the same time, I also was able to visit several other pilgrimage sites throughout England including Worcester, Durham, and Walsingham. Each location had unique features that I was able to observe and to combine with what I already knew to create a better understanding of medieval pilgrimage for myself.

While in England, I also found some time to do a bit of sightseeing. One of my most enjoyable days was spent walking along Hadrian's Wall and visiting several of the Roman forts. Finally, for the last week, I travelled



to Ireland in order to visit several additional pilgrimage sites. I climbed Croagh Patrick, a mountain in County Mayo on which Saint Patrick legendarily did battle with the devil's mother, and also took part in the famous three-day pilgrimage at St. Patrick's Purgatory on Lough Derg. Finally, in order to see a contemporary site of pilgrimage, I visited Knock where the Virgin Mary was said to have appeared in the 19th century. The experiences that I had on my Burch Fellowship this summer have already had a significant influence on my academic trajectory.

My understanding of pilgrimage was both dramatically increased and also transformed by what I saw, discussed, and learned from the scholars I met, the fellow pilgrims I encountered, and the new sources I was exposed to. My history Honors Thesis, which grew out of the information I learned, is currently being written on the subject of the relationship between pilgrimage and twelfth-century medieval expansion. The connections I made while traveling also led to my first opportunity to present a paper at an academic symposium when I gave a presentation on mass pilgrimage and crusading at the 2013 Annual Symposium for Pilgrimage Studies at the College of William and Mary.

