

REVIEW ESSAY

Some Recent Trends in the Study of Pilgrimage and Tourism

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The relationship between pilgrim and tourist is a complex one. The histories of both phenomena are closely interwoven, and it can be argued that the activities of pilgrimage were over time transformed into tourism. Religious pilgrims travelled for spiritual purposes but often engaged in sightseeing along the way. In the contemporary world, secular travellers similarly and occasionally switch modes to engage in spiritual activities such as meditation retreats and visiting churches and temples. The three books reviewed in this article are focused on pilgrimage. The idea of tourism, however, is always present. Robert A. Scott in *Miracle Cures: Saints, Pilgrimage and the Healing Powers of Belief* (University of California Press, 2010) concentrates on medieval pilgrimage with a particular interest in illness and cure. Peter Manseau in *Rag and Bone: A Journey Among the World's Holy Dead* (Henry Holt and Company, 2009) has produced a popular, very readable essay on relics which covers a variety of shrines and practices, both orthodox and unorthodox, and a wide geographic spread encompassing many religions, viewed at least in part from a sceptical angle. Anna-Karina Hermkens and her co-editors Willy Jansen and Catrien Notermans have produced, in *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrims in the Modern World* (Ashgate, 2009), a collection of chapters on a range of issues relating to pilgrimage and in particular the cult of the Virgin Mary. Of particular interest for this review article is the somewhat incongruous notion of relics that travel (or travelling relics), rather than relics which remain fixed to a particular site.

Some Views of Pilgrimage

Moved by Mary reviews a number of pilgrimage theories.¹ Victor and Edith Turner's concept of *communitas*, where pilgrims travel together providing

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company and protection in an egalitarian manner,² is contested by John Eade and Michael Sallnow for whom “social boundaries and distinctions are reinforced” by pilgrimage.³ This in turn is contested by Anna-Karina Hermkens, who states that pilgrimage “actually construct[s] ... the sacred.”⁴ Catrien Notermans identifies pilgrimage as exemplifying affects of belonging, continuity, and closeness, and argues that the Virgin Mary has the ability to link both the local and the global,⁵ linking “time and space.”⁶ *Moved by Mary* also demonstrates the importance of the landscape and the way in which the “landscape frames, shapes and gives meaning” to pilgrimage through stories, messages, and the like.⁷

Pilgrimage is an activity that has been engaged in throughout the ages across a wide range of belief systems, such as the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Russian Orthodox, Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions, among others. Sites visited by pilgrims cover a broad range and include both man-made and natural phenomena such as rivers, mountains, rock formations, buildings such as temples, cathedrals, and stone structures including Buddhist *stupas*. Peter Manseau, while researching for his popular book *Rag and Bone*, travelled to a number of pilgrimage sites, both local and international, which belonged to various religions including Russian Orthodoxy, Islam, and Buddhism.⁸ The pilgrim to Marian shrines, in particular, has a vast number to choose from, and *Moved by Mary* covers many examples including sites in Bougainville, Poland, Indonesia, Bolivia, and Portugal.

¹ Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans, ‘Introduction: The Power of Marian Pilgrimage,’ in *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, eds Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), p. 3.

² Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), p. 13.

³ Hermkens, Jansen, and Notermans, ‘Introduction,’ p. 3.

⁴ Anna-Karina Hermkens, ‘Mary’s Journey through the Warscape of Bougainville,’ in *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, eds Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), p. 85.

⁵ Catrien Notermans, ‘Connecting the Living and the Dead: Re-membering the Family through Marian Devotion,’ in *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, eds Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 146-147.

⁶ Hermkens, ‘Mary’s Journey through the Warscape of Bougainville,’ p. 69.

⁷ Hermkens, ‘Mary’s Journey through the Warscape of Bougainville,’ pp. 70, 72.

⁸ Peter Manseau, *Rag and Bone: A Journey Among the World’s Holy Dead* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009), pp. 137, 153, 177.

Robert Scott's book *Miracle Cures* explores the many reasons why someone in the medieval period would go on pilgrimage, reasons which included being ordered by the local bishop "as penance for their sins," for indulgences, and to strengthen their faith or for curative purposes.⁹ Alternatively, pilgrimage was an opportunity to give thanks for recovering from illness or surviving a calamitous event. Medieval citizens had much to test them, such as issues of poverty, harsh rural living, and difficulties of urban living such as overcrowding, poor life expectancy, illness, famine, and plague.¹⁰ As social services were not available, people turned to religious institutions for help, and accessed God via the saints.¹¹ Scott suggests pilgrims were assisted by being able to escape the harsh conditions of close living, hard work, pollution, and other hardships, to an improved environment resulting in the restoration of good health.¹² The pilgrim believed that a visit to a shrine and relics related to holy identities could facilitate a cure; Scott has a particular interest in this relationship and in the placebo effect, and how that may play an important role within the pilgrimage and healing processes.¹³ In addition, medieval pilgrimage permitted those tied to the land to have a good reason to travel.¹⁴

Pilgrimage and Tourism: Similar yet Different

There is certainly complexity and perhaps even difficulty involved in comparing tourism and pilgrimage; "two principal theoretical positions can be distinguished ... the one tending to identify pilgrimage and tourism (convergence), the other tending to see them as fundamentally dissimilar (divergence)."¹⁵ There is much opposition between "pilgrim and tourist," as well as the dichotomies of "healthy and sick, good and bad helpers, sacred and secular."¹⁶ These complex relationships have existed throughout the ages in many forms. There are pacifist pilgrims who have been massacred on their

⁹ Robert A. Scott, *Miracle Cures: Saints, Pilgrimage, and the Healing Powers of Belief* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), p. 68.

¹⁰ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, pp. 3-25.

¹¹ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, pp. 23, 29.

¹² Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 128ff.

¹³ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, pp. 128-148.

¹⁴ John M. Theilmann, 'Medieval Pilgrims and the Origins of Tourism,' *The Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 20, no. 4 (1987), p. 93.

¹⁵ Erik Cohen, 'Pilgrimage and Tourism: Convergence and Divergence,' in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. Alan Morinis (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), p. 48.

¹⁶ John Eade, 'Pilgrimage and Tourism at Lourdes, France,' *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 19, no. 1 (1992), p. 31.

sacred journeys, whilst others who were themselves more violent pilgrims, such as the Crusaders who massacred the *ifidl* (and on occasions, their fellow Christians). Islamic pilgrimage, or the *hajj*, is a required obligation, whereas Christian pilgrimage can be by choice (although it could become an obligation through prescribed penance). The tourist is interested in pleasure and is essentially looking for new and different experiences; indeed, tourism developed from a desire to see other cultures but has become of more general interest, and is not so focused on specificities. The pilgrim is drawn to the spiritual centre and wishes to become integrated into that centre.¹⁷ Pilgrims engage in religious rituals on their journey and move “from the prophane [sic] periphery towards the sacred centre of the religious ‘cosmos’,”¹⁸ creating a deepening of faith and more intensive spirituality than in their home environment.¹⁹ Also, upon arrival at the centre, the pilgrim is able to partake of the power of the shrine.²⁰ The tourist usually returns home to everyday life whereas the ideal for a pilgrim is to remain at the spiritual centre living in a purified state.²¹ To die at the holy places of Jerusalem or Mecca meant that at the Last Judgment, or on the Day of Resurrection, the believer would be in the presence of God.

Convergence can be seen in the argument that the pilgrim is an early form of the tourist.²² The tourist and pilgrim can be similar in that they may ‘drift’ in the search for their goal.²³ Like many of today’s tourists, medieval pilgrims could not always just decide to leave home,²⁴ and planning may take into account the time of year, the “debts [that] had to be settled, provisions made to cover work obligations and, for the head of a household, decisions taken about how to provide for the family.”²⁵ The pilgrimage route needs to be planned and, ideally, include other pilgrimage sites along the way, together with other places of interest.²⁶ Modern travel organisers enable the pilgrim on a

¹⁷ Erik Cohen, ‘A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences,’ *Sociology*, vol. 13, no. 2 (1979), pp. 182-183.

¹⁸ Cohen, ‘A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences,’ p. 182.

¹⁹ Alan Morinis, ‘Introduction: The Territory of the Anthropology of Pilgrimage,’ in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. Alan Morinis (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), p. 10.

²⁰ Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958), p. 368.

²¹ Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), p. 130.

²² Cohen, ‘Pilgrimage and Tourism: Convergence and Divergence,’ p. 48.

²³ Morinis, ‘The Territory of the Anthropology of Pilgrimage,’ p. 13.

²⁴ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 76.

²⁵ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, pp. 76-77.

²⁶ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 77.

tour of Marian pilgrimage sites to travel “through ... glorious countryside,” and engage in some sightseeing and shopping in Paris,²⁷ while in Italy the pilgrim is invited to shop in Florence and visit the ruins of Pompeii.²⁸ Medieval pilgrims such as Theoderich, in approximately 1170 CE, wrote extensively about Christian pilgrimage in Jerusalem, and produced a text that provides the pilgrim with a travel guide to the Holy Land.²⁹ Ibn Jubayr, who went on the *hajj* in 1183 CE, travelled from Spain by sea and camel to Mecca via Cairo, and returned to Spain by Iraqi caravan to Baghdad and Tyre and then home by ship. While Ibn Jubayr travelled as a penitent, he produced a text to provide guidance to pilgrims on a similar journey, and highlighted Mecca as well as other sites as places of interest for the tourist, such as the pyramids in Cairo. He wrote extensively of the events, people, and cities he saw on his long-distance journey, which took two years and three months.³⁰

The Question of Distance

The distance pilgrims will travel has been the subject of some study and involves “determining whether shrines had local, regional or national renown.”³¹ Scott in his *Miracle Cures* found that there is an average of how far someone will travel,³² and that following its establishment a shrine initially gains local interest and then gradually comes to the attention of pilgrims from more distant places. Consequently, it was found that as “the numbers of local pilgrims diminished ... the numbers from more distant locations increased.”³³ Distances travelled might also depend on which saint is considered the best one to appeal to.³⁴ The medieval supplicant deemed it necessary to be loyal to a particular saint; however, if there were a number of local saints then the most

²⁷ See Harvest Pilgrimages, ‘Graces of France: A 14 Day Pilgrimage – Lourdes to France,’ *Harvest Pilgrimages: Top 11 Pilgrimages* (2012), at <http://www.harvestpilgrimages.net.au/packages/itinerary/2012/GF2012.pdf>. Accessed 23/05/2012.

²⁸ See Harvest Pilgrimages, ‘Graces of Italy: A 14 Day Pilgrimage – Padua to Rome,’ *Harvest Pilgrimages: Top 11 Pilgrimages* (2012), at <http://www.harvestpilgrimages.net.au/packages/itinerary/2012/GI2012.pdf>. Accessed 23/05/2012.

²⁹ Theoderich, *Guide to the Holy Land*, 2nd ed., trans. Aubrey Stewart (New York: Italica Press, 1986).

³⁰ Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. R. J. C. Broadhurst (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952).

³¹ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 85.

³² Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 84.

³³ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 85.

³⁴ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 35.

efficacious for a particular issue might be chosen.³⁵ A traveller might also visit all of them to keep their options open. The local shrines would first be attended, then, if the request was not satisfied, the supplicant might travel further afield,³⁶ creating what Scott calls a hierarchy of saints³⁷ (although at the time of the Reformation, opposition to the “cult of saints” affected pilgrimage).³⁸ Popular and heavily visited shrines, such as Canterbury, were found to draw pilgrims primarily from nearby areas, but pilgrims were drawn from further afield including outside of Britain. Less well known shrines, however, continued to principally attract visitors primarily from local areas,³⁹ although it can be argued that those living close to the shrine were less likely to visit.⁴⁰

Medieval pilgrims, however, were generally unable to travel for extended periods of time and tended to visit local shrines.⁴¹ Other influences affecting travel may have been financial crises affecting the ability to pay for the journey, particularly if it was some distance away.⁴² In the fourteenth century, the Black Death saw a decrease in travel by pilgrims because of fear that the disease would spread; additionally, the death rate meant that manpower could not be spared.⁴³ To overcome this, the medieval pilgrim made use of a labyrinth which might have been established at a spiritual centre such as a church.⁴⁴ The labyrinth had as its centre the destination of the pilgrimage (for example, Jerusalem) and those unable to go to the ‘real’ Jerusalem would walk the labyrinth with sincere intention. The most recent example in Australia is the establishment of a labyrinth at Westmead Children’s Hospital to help patients and possibly their families through illness and stress.⁴⁵

³⁵ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 35.

³⁶ Theilmann, ‘Medieval Pilgrims and the Origins of Tourism,’ p. 95.

³⁷ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 35.

³⁸ Theilmann, ‘Medieval Pilgrims and the Origins of Tourism,’ p. 98.

³⁹ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 84; Theilmann, ‘Medieval Pilgrims and the Origins of Tourism,’ p. 95.

⁴⁰ John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow, ‘Introduction,’ in *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, eds John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 12.

⁴¹ Theilmann, ‘Medieval Pilgrims and the Origins of Tourism,’ p. 95.

⁴² William A. Christian, *Person and God in a Spanish Valley* (New York: Seminar Press, 1972), pp. 64-65; Janet Kahl, ‘Virgin Territory: Mariology in Australia,’ Unpublished Honours Dissertation, Department of Studies in Religion (University of Sydney, 1998), pp. 58-59.

⁴³ Theilmann, ‘Medieval Pilgrims and the Origins of Tourism,’ p. 98.

⁴⁴ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 84.

⁴⁵ Anonymous, ‘It’s a Roundabout Way to Relaxation,’ *The Sydney Morning Herald* (6 July, 2012), p. 3.

Scott found that women tended to visit nearby shrines rather than travel long distances,⁴⁶ as “women in particular were vulnerable to attacks both verbal and physical.”⁴⁷ Travel to far-flung lands in the medieval world held all sorts of dangers for the pilgrim: accidents, religious and secular conflict, bad weather, and bandits.⁴⁸ It could be argued, however, that these dangers afflict both the pilgrim and the tourist, be they medieval or modern. While for the tourist they are misfortunes, for the religious pilgrim such dangers could be viewed as a test, and the more difficult the access the greater the merit obtained.⁴⁹ Hazards tested the pilgrim, whereas a journey too easily accomplished meant less merit. Moreover, greater mobility and improvements in transport⁵⁰ can lead (and have led) to increased visitor numbers. While shrines only accessible by foot may suffer a decline, as seen in *Moved by Mary*, ease of travel has meant that pilgrims travel more often and further.⁵¹ Knock (in Ireland) has its own airport, and Lourdes is easily accessible by car and train.⁵²

Relationship between Promotion and Excess

As the number of pilgrim visitors to a shrine increase, the shrine will become more organised and institutionalised.⁵³ Naturally, there are benefits when more people visit a shrine, particularly through the items donated by pilgrims⁵⁴ and appeals to saints that could be made through gifts such as money or goods of high value.⁵⁵ As Scott notes, giving “gifts to a saint was analogous to buying a lottery ticket today: buying a ticket does not guarantee a win, but without a

⁴⁶ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 68.

⁴⁷ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 77.

⁴⁸ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 77.

⁴⁹ Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, p. 7; James J. Preston, ‘Spiritual Magnetism: An Organizing Principle for the Study of Pilgrimage,’ in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. Alan Morinis (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), p. 35.

⁵⁰ Victor Turner and Edith Turner, ‘Postindustrial Marian Pilgrimage,’ in *Mother Worship: Themes and Variations*, ed. James J. Preston (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), pp. 149-150; Christian, *Person and God in a Spanish Valley*, pp. 64-65.

⁵¹ Christian, *Person and God in a Spanish Valley*, p. 65; Kahl, ‘Virgin Territory: Mariology in Australia,’ pp. 55-56.

⁵² Robert A. Orsi, ‘Abundant History: Marian Apparitions as Alternative Modernity,’ in *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, eds Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), p. 215.

⁵³ Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, p. 25.

⁵⁴ Theilmann, ‘Medieval Pilgrims and the Origins of Tourism,’ p. 96.

⁵⁵ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 34.

ticket one has no chance at all.”⁵⁶ In order to draw as many pilgrims as possible, advertising as widely as possible is a necessity,⁵⁷ and this has become much easier with the advent of mass media and the internet, where there are numerous online virtual pilgrimage sites promoting ‘reality.’⁵⁸ Lourdes is used as an example in *Miracle Cures* to demonstrate that initial interest generated by the Marian apparitions of St Bernadette was followed by promotion and development with the increasing numbers of visiting pilgrims.⁵⁹

Simon Coleman in ‘Mary on the Margins? The Modulation of Marian Imagery in Place, Memory, and Performance,’ in *Moved by Mary*, examined closely the activities of the pilgrim site of Walsingham, particularly the interplay between tourist and pilgrim and the impact on the town.⁶⁰ Walsingham has both Catholic and Protestant Marian shrines and has become a major pilgrimage centre. Pilgrims visit both kinds of shrines and “the local Methodist Church ... in the High Street”⁶¹; although the focus for pilgrims will be the shrine connected to their own religious beliefs, in visiting the other sites out of interest they can be said to have momentarily become tourists.⁶² Coleman found that “the formerly mixed village economy of the Walsingham High Street has been observed to have largely given way to pubs, cafés and religious souvenir shops.”⁶³ Travellers collect souvenirs of their trip, whether religious or secular, and an overarching issue relating to shrines is commercialisation. Many items can be bought such as magnets, medals, and holy water, and by indulging in purchasing these items it can be argued that pilgrims have had a strong stake in creating such commercialisation.⁶⁴ For Robert Orsi, overt commercialisation is such an issue that in his chapter ‘Abundant History: Marian Apparitions as Alternative Modernity,’ in *Moved by Mary*, he questions how this excess originated. For him, the Marian pilgrimage site has too much excess in everything: “too many candles, too many statues and images, too many rosaries, too much desire and need and too

⁵⁶ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 34.

⁵⁷ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 45.

⁵⁸ Mark W. MacWilliams, ‘Virtual Pilgrimages on the Internet,’ *Religion*, vol. 32, no. 4 (2002), p. 316.

⁵⁹ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, pp. 89-98.

⁶⁰ Simon Coleman, ‘Mary on the Margins? The Modulation of Marian Imagery in Place, Memory, and Performance,’ in *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, eds Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), p. 29.

⁶¹ Coleman, ‘Mary on the Margins?,’ pp. 24, 29.

⁶² Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, p. 9.

⁶³ Coleman, ‘Mary on the Margins?,’ p. 24.

⁶⁴ Kahl, ‘Virgin Territory: Mariology in Australia,’ p. 7.

many souvenir stores hawking too many things.”⁶⁵ Sanne Derks also addresses this issue in her chapter in *Moved by Mary* on pilgrimage in Bolivia, and observes that commercialisation is one of the few ways that the local population can make a living.⁶⁶ Although souvenirs can be seen as being touristic and commercial, those returning from pilgrimage want to show others where they have been and what they had undergone, and they want to be reminded of their experience.⁶⁷ Jill Dubisch, in concluding *Moved by Mary*, argues that items such as medals and holy water maintain the connection⁶⁸ with the shrine, giving the souvenirs a greater complexity than first appears.

Relics

The souvenir also arises in *Rag and Bone* where Manseau, showing an interest in a wide range of relics, describes visits to saints’ shrines and relates stories of relics being stolen and used to establish other sites.⁶⁹ Manseau decided to travel to various pilgrimage sites while he was waiting for the birth of his first child. He felt that he needed to know more about relics:

I suppose I found in this period of expectation, waiting for the arrival of a child, something similar to what I felt when faced with pieces of saints, a feeling that life and death are not always black and white.

The stubborn vitality of relics, like the awful fragility of the earliest moments of life, suggests that between all we know of living and all we fear of dying there is vast gray space in which we can hope only to make sense of it all.⁷⁰

Relics as bodily remains of and items that came in contact with holy persons possess for the pilgrim the power to heal and cause miracles through the power of God.⁷¹ Body parts of saints are important as the spirit of the saint rests in these objects, and can be seen and touched.⁷² Saints are thus present on earth through relics such as “pieces of bone, strands of hair, finger and toenail

⁶⁵ Orsi, ‘Marian Apparitions as Alternative Modernity,’ p. 216.

⁶⁶ Sanne Derks, ‘Religious Materialization of Neoliberal Politics at the Pilgrim Site of the Virgin of Urkupiña in Bolivia,’ in *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, eds Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), p. 128.

⁶⁷ Notermans, ‘Connecting the Living and the Dead,’ p. 146.

⁶⁸ Jill Dubisch, ‘Epilogue: The Many Faces of Mary,’ in *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, eds Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), p. 231.

⁶⁹ Manseau, *Rag and Bone*, pp. 4, 11.

⁷⁰ Manseau, *Rag and Bone*, pp. 16-17.

⁷¹ Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, p. 23.

⁷² Scott, *Miracle Cures*, pp. 35, 39.

clippings, teeth, fragments of clothing” and the like.⁷³ Manseau found that “no religion, no matter how forward thinking its members consider themselves today, has been untouched by some sort of relic veneration in its past,”⁷⁴ making it “possible for the devout to connect with saints.”⁷⁵ Coleman in *Moved by Mary* views the touching of Marian images as important within the pilgrim experience by the way they provide a “sense of the potential proximity of divine power and human identity.”⁷⁶ Manseau reviews examples of fake relics in his chapter on ‘Gentle Ribbing’ in *Rag and Bone*, and concludes that while relics may be fake, they are often nonetheless human and thus worthy of respect of the person they once were. In addition, it would be difficult to persuade those who do believe that relics are ‘true’ to a belief that they are indeed ‘false’ (and vice versa).⁷⁷ Scott proposes that “the point of visiting a saint’s tomb or reliquary was not to gaze: it was to touch, albeit indirectly,”⁷⁸ and “the most desirable way to venerate a saint was to go to the tomb or the site of the saint’s relics and get as close to them as possible.”⁷⁹

The Travelling Relic

It is, however, not just the pilgrim who travels to relics. Relics can travel to the pilgrim. Relic histories often record them being moved legitimately (to prevent calamitous events) or by stealth.⁸⁰ Relic stories also show that if they were stolen or moved, this could only occur with the relevant saint’s acquiescence; as with apparitions, the sites of relics are chosen by the holy rather than by people.⁸¹ A legend of Częstochowa, for example, tells how of a monastery housing the Hermits of St Paul was founded on the spot from which a miraculous picture refused to move.⁸² For Manseau, relics are part of the missionary zeal used for conversion, and he calls them “movable sanctity.”⁸³ He encountered some Buddhist relics travelling in a van through the United

⁷³ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 37.

⁷⁴ Manseau, *Rag and Bone*, p. 9.

⁷⁵ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 38.

⁷⁶ Coleman, ‘Mary on the Margins?’, p. 27.

⁷⁷ Manseau, *Rag and Bone*, p. 132.

⁷⁸ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 39.

⁷⁹ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 39.

⁸⁰ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 42.

⁸¹ Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, p. 369.

⁸² Robert Maniura, *Pilgrimage to Images in the Fifteenth Century: The Origins of the Cult of Our Lady of Częstochowa* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), p. 49; Janet Kahl, ‘Recent Developments in the Academic Study of the Cult of the Virgin Mary,’ *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 33, no. 3 (2009), p. 385.

⁸³ Manseau, *Rag and Bone*, p. 63.

States, “making a circuit of temples and monasteries around the world with occasional visits to an odd assortment of non-Buddhist communities.”⁸⁴ For Manseau, this rather strange encounter appeared to be primarily a money-making mission “to raise funds for the construction of the largest Buddha sculpture in history.”⁸⁵

David Morgan in his chapter ‘Aura and the Inversion of Marian Pilgrimage: Fatima and Her Statues,’ in *Moved by Mary*, reviews the programmes of the International Pilgrim Virgin Statue and the Blue Army. Both organisations are based in the United States and aim to transport a copy of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima to different parts of the world. Morgan postulates that the rarity of such travelling statues is because shrines prefer to have their own statue for pilgrims to visit which brings revenue to the centre. However, the messages of Mary, in particular Fatima’s anti-communist message, could be more widely promoted by travelling the world.⁸⁶ Pilgrims can travel to Fatima in Portugal to see the original statue but, by having a travelling statue, Mary can reach many more pilgrims.⁸⁷

Hermkens, in ‘Mary’s Journeys through the Warscape of Bougainville,’ in *Moved by Mary*, describes a tour in 1997 of the International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima to Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. Bougainville at this time had a history of violence and conflict, and the aim of the tour was a mission of peace.⁸⁸ The statue was taken to an area where a rebel leader resided, and this resulted in the tour being viewed as “visiting the person held most responsible for the crisis and neglecting those who suffered most.”⁸⁹ As Hermkens points out, this use of such a statue as Our Lady of Fatima can have a controversial and even negative effect. Following this tour, a local Marian statue called Our Lady of Tunuru made a pilgrimage tour. Tunuru is a mission station with a chapel and a shrine containing a statue which miraculously survived a major fire, with the fire representing the local chaos. The statue visited a number of villages with many women participating and, following this tour, a peace negotiation resulted.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ Manseau, *Rag and Bone*, p. 55.

⁸⁵ Manseau, *Rag and Bone*, p. 56.

⁸⁶ David Morgan, ‘Aura and the Inversion of Marian Pilgrimage: Fatima and Her Statues,’ in *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, eds Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 50-53.

⁸⁷ Morgan, ‘Aura and the Inversion of Marian Pilgrimage,’ p. 52.

⁸⁸ Hermkens, ‘Mary’s Journey through the Warscape of Bougainville,’ p. 74.

⁸⁹ Hermkens, ‘Mary’s Journey through the Warscape of Bougainville,’ p. 77.

⁹⁰ Hermkens, ‘Mary’s Journey through the Warscape of Bougainville,’ pp. 77, 79-80.

Our Lady of Fatima, on a world pilgrimage tour in 1951, came to Australia.⁹¹ The *Ave Maria* reported that thousands of people lined the streets to see this statue⁹² and the final tour celebrations in Sydney saw “tens of thousands packed into Hyde Park.”⁹³ Indeed, “the travelling statue was deployed as an effort in mass communication using a traditional medium.”⁹⁴ The statue of Our Lady of Fatima was reported as participating in “the worldwide crusade of prayer for peace and the conversion of Russia”⁹⁵:

The travelling statue works integrally with print media and the internet as well as a host of other images of Our Lady of Fatima to convey the blessing and power of Mary to a global audience.⁹⁶

For the organisers of the travelling statue the message of Fatima had accommodated changes in world history; the anticommunist message of Fatima has, after the fall of communism in Russia, altered to a message to do with other perceived sins such as abortion.⁹⁷

Conclusion

Australia has also experienced the visitation of other relics. In 2004, large numbers of people visited the coffin of Pier Giorgio Frassati which came to Sydney during World Youth Day. As it rested at St Mary’s Cathedral, and later at St Benedict’s on Broadway, pilgrims were able to get as close as they possibly could and were observed to be kneeling in prayer by the coffin and kissing it. Coleman discusses the importance of the need to touch Marian images within the pilgrim experience. This provides a “sense of the potential proximity of divine power and human identity.”⁹⁸ Frassati’s body arrived in a lead-lined coffin with the top sealed down, which might give rise to questions about whether the coffin contained anything at all; however, this action is quite in keeping with the travel of relics in the medieval world, where “if [a relic was] exposed to the open air, its powers would dissipate.”⁹⁹ They were thus

⁹¹ Frank Murphy, ‘Australia Greet Our Lady,’ *The Ave Maria* (10 November, 1951), p. 593.

⁹² Murphy, ‘Australia Greet Our Lady,’ p. 593.

⁹³ Anonymous, ‘Sydney Farewells Fatima Pilgrim Statue,’ *The Catholic Weekly* (18 October, 1951), p. 5.

⁹⁴ Morgan, ‘Aura and the Inversion of Marian Pilgrimage,’ p. 54.

⁹⁵ Anonymous, ‘Pilgrim Statue Helps Crusade for Peace,’ *The Age* (27 January, 1951), p. 10.

⁹⁶ Morgan, ‘Aura and the Inversion of Marian Pilgrimage,’ p. 59.

⁹⁷ Morgan, ‘Aura and the Inversion of Marian Pilgrimage,’ p. 61; Lena Gemzöe, ‘Caring for Others: Mary, Death, and the Feminization of Religion in Portugal,’ in *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, eds Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), p. 156.

⁹⁸ Coleman, ‘Mary on the Margins?,’ p. 27.

⁹⁹ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, p. 41.

generally found “always encased and displayed in tombs and boxes.”¹⁰⁰ Other relics to have visited Australia are those of St Therese of Lisieux. In 2002, St Therese’s bodily relics were brought to Australia and travelled to each state and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) as part of a worldwide tour.¹⁰¹ In Sydney, the relics were processed in a casket to St Mary’s Cathedral, enabling those viewing the procession to come close to a saint and have close contact with St Therese.

The driving forces behind medieval pilgrimage are also to be found in Australia with the establishment of a number of Marian shrines. At Yankalilla in South Australia, for example, a miraculous image of Mary began attracting pilgrims to it in 1994, a phenomenon that has continued to the present day. Observation in 1998 and again in 2009 has revealed that changes have occurred, similar to those experienced at other shrines throughout the world. As this shrine has continued to exist it has followed the path studied by Morgan and Orsi, where items can be purchased as souvenirs including postcards, key rings, fridge magnets, and holy water. A further change concerns the image itself; the image, originally Mary holding the infant Jesus, has developed into a more adult male figure in 2009. Other developments include the presence of motivations and common motifs found in the medieval world, such as prayer cards on the walls, votive offerings at the base of Marian statues, a healing service held on Sundays, and notes recording healing miracles.

There is no doubt that pilgrimage is a lively field for research with a broad scope. As with religious visions and miraculous images, the study of relics and shrines is a fascinating topic. It has a wide scope for study, including the examination of feelings of scepticism, the risk of negative outcomes, and a criticism of commercialisation. However, the millions of pilgrims each year who visit the wide range of shrines from a number of religions do believe, as their medieval counterparts did, that there is benefit and an efficacy in their worship. The complexities of defining tourism and pilgrimage are difficult and, indeed, some secular tourist activities such as visiting museums and war graves are more often described as pilgrimage.¹⁰² While appearing to be sometimes

¹⁰⁰ Scott, *Miracle Cures*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁰¹ Anonymous, ‘Relics of St Therese arrived in Australia this morning,’ *Catholic News* (31 January, 2002), at <http://cathnews.acu.edu.au/201/130.html>. Accessed 6/06/2012; Johanna Bennett, ‘Thousands welcome relics to St Mary’s,’ *The Catholic Weekly* (14 April, 2002), at <http://www.catholicweekly.com.au/02/apr/14/01.html>. Accessed 6/06/2012.

¹⁰² Morinis, ‘The Territory of the Anthropology of Pilgrimage,’ p. 3.

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sceptical, as Manseau observes, those visiting the relics feel that they have encountered “something powerful and ... real.”¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Manseau, *Rag and Bone*, p. 51.