

# From Pilgrim to Tourist and Back Again: Travel as a Sacred Journey

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## **Introduction**

This paper uses historical ethnographic data from the travelogues and accounts of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land coupled with modern anthropological studies of pilgrimage to begin to rethink the relationships between pilgrimage and tourism in modernity. Beginning in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, Christian pilgrims have recorded the places they saw, the things they did, and who they did them with in the Holy Land. Many of these accounts survive today giving us an inside look into the psyches of religious travelers throughout history. Looking at these historical antecedents, begins to situate these accounts within the modern literature surrounding the study of pilgrimage as an inter-disciplinary field.

I focus my analysis by looking at pilgrimage and tourism as two ends of a continuum, both representing the same phenomenon in travel: the sacred journey as described by Nelson Graburn.<sup>1</sup> Using Graburn and others' analyses of tourism, I apply their ideas onto the contemporary and historical landscape of travel to the Holy Land, ranging from the use of Roman *itineraria* of Late Antiquity to my own observations from travel to the Holy Land in the summer of 2015.

## **Pilgrimage/Tourism**

This paper, does not aim to negate the usefulness of the terms pilgrimage and tourism within some contexts. Rather, I highlight the continuities and similarities, which are quite compelling, between sociocultural constructions of pilgrimage and tourism. In order to best illuminate this point, a quick history of the study of the anthropology of pilgrimage and tourism is required.

Merriam Webster's dictionary defines pilgrimage as, "the journey of a pilgrim, especially to a shrine or sacred place,"<sup>2</sup> and defines tourism as, "the practice of traveling for recreation."<sup>3</sup> These definitions are both simplistic, and not mutually exclusive. Clearly a pilgrim could be traveling to a shrine or sacred place as a form of recreation, or re-creation, as the term can be interpreted. What becomes problematic in the study of pilgrimage and tourism is that both pilgrimage and tourism have cultural connotations which exacerbate perceived distinctions between the terms. Pilgrimage is seemingly put on a pedestal in comparison to tourism. Nobody wants to be labeled a tourist – it holds a perceived negative connotation. Whereas we think of a pilgrim as someone who is undertaking a rigorous journey for a religious reason; these travelers are held in a higher esteem. These cultural connotations do not match even our dictionary entries of the terms, and we must separate the words pilgrimage and tourism from their 21<sup>st</sup> century cultural connotations. Badone summarizes these connotations, "the popular depiction of the tourist as a superficial hedonist seems far removed from the image of the pious pilgrim motivated by faith to undertake arduous and ascetic journeys to centers of religious devotion."<sup>4</sup>

The study of pilgrimage and tourism has undergone distinct theoretical developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many scholars believe that "rigid dichotomies between pilgrimage and tourism, or pilgrims and

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<sup>1</sup> In his article, "Tourism: The Sacred Journey", found in *Hosts and Guests*, 1989

<sup>2</sup> "Pilgrimage." Full Def. 1. *Merriam Webster Online*. Accessed May 2016.

<sup>3</sup> "Tourism." Full Def. 1. *Merriam Webster Online*. Accessed May 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Badone and Roseman 2007, 2

tourists, no long seem tenable in the shifting world of postmodern travel”.<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt that the context in which the earliest Christian pilgrims traveled to the Holy Land is far different than the contexts in which they travel today. This is not even to say that every pilgrim traveling before the institutionalization of modernity was a purely pious pilgrim, either. What becomes even more problematic with the study of ethnographic examples of pilgrimage are the various motives relevant within various accounts. Motivation and belief are key factors in the identity of a traveler. Too often, motivation and belief is lost, or not mentioned at all in the accounts of pilgrims. This could be because these factors are not entirely understood by the writers themselves, as Badone speculates.<sup>6</sup> We often have a multitude of motivations for undertaking travel, and rarely can explain every single one in detail. Thus, distinctions between pilgrims and tourists must be fluid as our understandings of motivations are equally fluid.

However, still existent, the most frequent differentiators between pilgrimage and tourism cited are notions of piety and other religious behavior. However, even these understandings are based upon Durkheim’s ideas of social collectivity which create and help identify the aspects of emotion that we often consider religious. But collective experience can be broadly defined. For example, collective experiences like a sporting event, *Star Trek* conventions, or mobilization for war evoke a religious-like emotional reaction.<sup>7</sup> Pilgrimage can induce an extension of collective experience.

Pilgrimage is often characterized as the religious, while tourism is understood as the secular. These characterizations, too, fail to withstand a quick measure of usefulness. Secular travel, if predicated on a search for a form of the sacred, could most certainly be characterized as a pilgrimage. Trips to war memorials, famous landmarks, and museums all constitute legitimate examples of secular pilgrimages. Conversely, there has been an explosion of religious tourism across the world; sites like Jerusalem, Mecca, Varanasi, and Karbala are all extremely popular sites for religious tourism. In 2015, there were over 300 million visitors to religious shrines across the world – a number that has been increasing every year for the past two decades. Religious travel is estimated as an 18 billion dollar a year industry.<sup>8</sup> What’s more, a new category of the *pilgrim tourist* has emerged in contemporary scholarship further providing evidence for the blending of the two categories.<sup>9</sup>

The supposed nuances of definition belie the cultural significance of human travel. The study of pilgrimage and tourism are inherently overlapping, but these important truths become lost with one’s desire for labeling. It is more illuminating toward the study of human travel to understand the similarities between pilgrimage and tourism rather than their perceived distinctions. In the past twenty years, anthropologists have seen pilgrims and tourists, not as distinct identities, but rather as complimentary to each other. Anthropologists posit that through the ever globalizing world, intertwined with the variable trajectories of postmodern travel, the motivations and beliefs of contemporary travelers become muddled together since tourists and pilgrims often encounter and utilize the same infrastructures, and ultimately seek the same goals. Respected anthropologists Edith and Victor Turner have stated, “A tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist.”<sup>10</sup> Clearly, there are undeniable links between pilgrimage and tourism. I propose abandoning any distinctions between pilgrimage and tourism and rather think of them as parts of a continuum.

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<sup>5</sup> Badone and Roseman 2007, 2; she cites the chapters in the anthology as evidence for this shifting trend in scholarship.

<sup>6</sup> Badone and Roseman 2007, 4

<sup>7</sup> Badone and Roseman 2007, 3

<sup>8</sup> Tourism & More 2014

<sup>9</sup> See Noga Collins-Kriener and Nurit Kliot 2000, 135 for their description of “Tourist pilgrims”

<sup>10</sup> Turner and Turner 1978, 20

## A Continuum

My understanding of pilgrimage and tourism is central to the aims of this paper. I believe the most useful way of conceptualizing the identity of any traveler is part of a personal continuum of experience. As Valene Smith has laid out, pilgrimage and tourism lie at either end of a conceptual continuum with a variety of experiences connecting them.<sup>11</sup> This continuum allows for stringently pious pilgrims to occupy the same position in a theoretical framework as the secular pilgrim. The contrasts may lie not in intention and belief, but rather in intensity and conviction of motivation. I am not comfortable categorizing pilgrims and tourist as exact mirrors of each other. Having a continuum allows for the category of devout pilgrims to be maintained. There is no doubt that the weeping, prostrate woman upon the Stone of the Anointing<sup>12</sup> is meaningfully different than the selfie-taking, knowledge-lacking tourist at the same locale. There are unique characterizations to each category that deserves some level of distinction, and the continuum allows for greater or lesser levels of intensity and depth of experience to be recognized.

Further, I want to posit that these experiences are relative to each individual. One aspect of travel is a search for novel stimuli and experiences different from their everyday life. From a phenomenological perspective the search for novelty will almost never be the same journey experienced by two travelers. As Graburn notes:

“Obviously what is extraordinary for some – for a rural Britisher, a trip to London to the theater – may be an almost daily affair for others (a London suburbanite).”<sup>13</sup>

The breaking of routine for a perennial traveler will be quite different for that of a first-time traveler. Assuming the relativity of experience, labels of pilgrim or tourist consequently become even more blurred. Ultimately, travel is a desire break quotidian routine to seek out novel experiences in the hope to change one’s world view upon returning home to routine. The continuum of pilgrimage and tourism is best understood through the unifying idea of the sacred journey.

## ***The Sacred Journey***

Nelson Graburn introduces the concept of tourism as a sacred journey providing a theoretical foundation for my own research and field experience of pilgrimage and tourism in the Holy Land. Graburn presents an anthropological paradigm arguing for the sacredness of the tourist’s journey. Sacred in this context does not evoke only a religious connotation; rather sacred can also mean non-ordinary – which is incidentally related to the quest for novelty. This distinction is foundational to Graburn’s analysis of tourism.

In this paper I apply Graburn’s framework of the sacred journey to the types of travel seen to the Holy Land today. In doing so, I limit culturally appropriated definitions of pilgrimage and tourism and dissect these terms into their most fundamental characteristics. The sacred journey is not a novel idea in itself, rather, it is a provocative look into our modern understanding of the tourist. I will outline what I

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<sup>11</sup> Valene Smith 1992

<sup>12</sup> The traditional stone, housed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, that is said to have been where Jesus was prepared for burial

<sup>13</sup> Graburn 1989, 29

find to be the most important and useful aspects of Graburn's model for the sacred journey in order to present how most forms of modern and historical travel fit this mold.

Graburn creates a dichotomy between the ordinary and the non-ordinary; the non-ordinary being any special or noteworthy break from the routine of everyday life. Graburn considers tourism:

"That which is *not* work, but is part of the recent invention, recreation, which is supposed to renew us for the workaday world".<sup>14</sup>

In essence, voluntary travel is a form of play involving physical movement from one place, often home, to another special place, and a return home. The dichotomy between ordinary and non-ordinary (parallel to work/home and play/away), creates the extraordinariness that is travel. The non-ordinary must not be limited for the distance or exoticness of travel, nor for length of trip, as the non-ordinary could be as much as exploring novel parts of one's own city. Graburn aptly notes, "The most minimal kinds of tourism, such as a picnic in the garden, contain elements of the magic of tourism."<sup>15</sup> This idea parallels Victor Turner's concept of liminality in that ritual processes often have a liminal stage where transformations of identity occur. (*Limen* literally means "threshold" in Latin). Once the participant physically or mentally crosses this threshold, they are in the middle stage of a ritual process, a limbo-like interlude where they begin transitioning to their new, or re-newed, post-ritual identity and worldview. Upon completing the ritual, the ritual participant returns home holding new perspectives on their life and identity.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, liminality often evokes *communitas*:

"A relational quality of full unmediated communication, even communion" with others, "which combines the qualities of lowliness, sacredness, homogeneity, and comradeship".<sup>17</sup>

During a period of travel, the traveler is separated from the structures of everyday life and crosses over into the sacred world where *communitas* is generated. Understanding the sacred journey as a ritualized process in itself, Turner's liminality correctly describes the phenomenon of travel – the participant travels to a location, crosses a liminal threshold, while away they are changed in some profound way during an altered state, and upon returning home these changes manifest themselves within the participant's individual conceptions of themselves, their community, and the world.

The sacred journey is self-fulfilling. Graburn says that travel is the "best kind of life for it is sacred in the sense of being exciting, renewing, and inherently self-fulfilling."<sup>18</sup> In a way, travel ultimately becomes a quest for novelty. In one's voyage away from the ordinary into the non-ordinary spheres of life, it is novel experiences that satiate our needs for traveling in the first place. While traveling, schedules, routines, and responsibilities fall to the wayside, allowing us to be in charge of our time. Once the chains of ordinary life are broken, we become free to explore and discover our authentic self. In this search for our authentic self, we may experience "flow" as described by the psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi as a "feeling of being truly autonomous and truly connected with the world."<sup>19</sup> Through this emotional connection we create meaningful experiences and memories from our travels

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<sup>14</sup>Graburn 1989, 18

<sup>15</sup> Graburn 1989, 19

<sup>16</sup> Turner 1986, 93-117

<sup>17</sup> Turner and Turner 1978, 250

<sup>18</sup> Graburn 1989, 23

<sup>19</sup> Csikszentmihalyi 1991, 191

that we keep with us for the rest of our lives. This is the self-renewal, self-revitalization, and self-actualization that often accompanies periods of travel.

Travel is a process of transformation in which we change the way we think about ourselves, but also changes the way others think about us. Psychological theories of narrative identity, state that individuals form their identity by integrating their life experiences into an internalized, evolving story of the self. The ritualized process of travel becomes increasingly important to one's recreation of their personal identity.<sup>20</sup> Graburn intentionally labels humans travel as recreation. He means recreation in the most literal sense of the word, that we are literally *re-creating* ourselves through travel. Of course, there are varying degrees of recreation.

Through our endeavors for recreation, we are constantly updating our individual internal narratives. The function of this ever-changing story of self is twofold: first it creates our own understanding of ourselves, and second it influences the way people around us perceive us – in short, travel, specifically marked by the things from travel that stay with us, add to our internal and external identities. The stories, memories, and experiences all become part of our personal narratives combining to recreate identity. Whether we post on our social media accounts, tell a story at a social gathering, or just reflect on experiences, the narratives of our life story are inherently and profoundly transformed through travel and its products. Further, our external personal narratives are constantly being promulgated to everyone and everything we encounter. The clothes we wear, the music we listen to, the souvenirs we take home, the conversations, personal relationships, or even our professions; our narratives and also the stories we tell ourselves and live by, are the means by which other interpret who we are, and these are organic and fluid. Ibn Battuta, the famous Muslim explorer of the 12<sup>th</sup> century notably said, "Traveling – it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller."<sup>21</sup> In travel, upon returning home, we bring with us the stories and memories which become a part of us and shape our own and others' perceptions of us.

Throughout this paper I will be operating under the theoretical umbrella of Graburn's sacred journey, as outlined above, to show how historical and modern examples of travels to the Holy Land exhibit many of the same characteristics of the sacred journey, regardless of their semantic identification as a pilgrim or a tourist. The sacred journey is characterized by a distinct break from the ordinary, periods of self-renewal, additions to fluid personal narratives, and the recreation of identity.

### ***The Creation of a Christian Holy Land***

This project utilizes historical antecedents of travel to the Holy Land as examples of sacred journeys. In order to present these examples I will give a brief history of the ideological creation of a Christian Holy Land and the role the rise of Christian pilgrimage played in that.

The singular event of the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine to Christianity was the fulcrum on which Christianization of the Holy Land rested. Up until this point Christians were persecuted for their faith. With the implementation of the Edict of Milan in 313 CE, Christians were no longer legal pariahs. Almost immediately the shock of the conversion of Constantine was felt by Christians around

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<sup>20</sup> McAdams and McLean 2013, 233

<sup>21</sup> Battutah 2003

the Roman Empire. Christian clergymen, bishops, and laypeople immediately became preferred clients to their patron Constantine. Christians were able to compete for powerful positions within the Roman Empire while maintaining their identity as Christians. For years, this identity excluded them from holding powerful offices and especially from gaining favor from a patron like Constantine. Christians became the authorities on power and knowledge and dominated their non-Christian counterparts, in regards to the Holy Land, particularly Jews. Even though the fate of Christianity became indissolubly linked with the fate of the Roman Empire, Christianity would operate autonomously as the purveyors of power in the Holy Land as a peripheral government.<sup>22</sup> The Church claimed a myriad of religious pilgrimage sites, built churches, formed a coherent historical narrative of Christianity in the Holy Land, and established the foundation for a future Christian Holy Land.

In the aftermath of the conversion of Constantine, the Holy Land was still ideologically Roman, and Christians had yet to form their own unique identity situated within the confines of the Holy Land. The process of creating this memory and identity would shape the trajectory of the Christian faith. In only a few short years, Constantine and his mother Helena, would build hundreds of churches across the Holy Land, supplanting Roman ideology with Christian. Christian ideology was formed, spread, and imbedded in the land through various forms of tactile piety<sup>23</sup> and on-site worship.

The eradication of Jewish ideology and replacement with Roman ideology in the Holy Land, created an environment ready to be possessed by Christians. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, pilgrims began coming to the Holy Land for “prayer and investigation of places” as Alexander of Cappadocia did.<sup>24</sup> These early pilgrims arrived at a land full and rich with history, but one also devoid of a means of portraying this history. There was no universal infrastructure to accommodate groups of pilgrims. There is no denying that many notable events in the New Testament take place in the Holy Land. Before the conversion of Constantine, these places had yet to be properly canonized into the index of Christian holy places. For example, a pilgrim could travel to the site of Jesus’ burial in Jerusalem and find a Roman temple. Without the help of guides, a pilgrim would never know what site he is looking visiting.

Widespread knowledge and advertisement of *authentic* Christian pilgrimage sites came with documentation and description. Eusebius<sup>25</sup> documented the discovery of the rock of Golgotha not far from the place believed to be the burial place of Christ. Eusebius’ reports attracted Christians to flock to see the discovery of the sacred burial site of Jesus. From the years 326-335 CE, the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, atop the very site of Jesus’ tomb, attracted the attention of Christians across Europe. The connection between event and place as seen at the site of Jesus’ tomb would establish a long-standing Christian tradition of worship at holy places.<sup>26</sup> Eusebius understood the relationship between sight and touch and place on the memory of humans. He knew that Christianity would not receive significant attention and following in the Holy Land without forms of tactile worship and the development of a Christian pilgrimage route.

Eusebius began to mitigate the lack of known Christian places in the Holy Land with his *Onomasticon*. This small book is a gazetteer of Christian Holy Land sites. It is set up like a glossary stating site name, location, and biblical verse in which it is found. Eusebius’ gathered this work to highlight the ubiquity of Christian sites in the Holy Land. Eusebius collected every known reference of a Christian site in the Holy Land in the New Testament. Eusebius hoped these now catalogued sites would be visited

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<sup>22</sup> Wilken 2012, 75

<sup>23</sup> Tactile piety is the worship of bones, shrines, martyrs, books, or any material objects

<sup>24</sup> *Ch. V 11.2*, as reported by Eusebius

<sup>25</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339 CE), he was the Bishop of Caesarea and author of *Historia Ecclesiastica*

<sup>26</sup> Wilken 2012, 111

and developed creating a landscape dominated by Christian places ready to stimulate the senses of Christian pilgrims. This book would also allow pilgrims to travel to more obscure Christian sites and begin to lay the routes for future pilgrims to follow. These sites only furthered the canon for places for pilgrims to engage in worship tangibly.

Without the stimulation of human senses, memory is formless and empty.<sup>27</sup> A memory that is couched entirely in the mind will rarely survive as such. A memory formed by touching, seeing, or smelling an object will sustain. On this notion, Eusebius appealed to the senses of eager Christians looking to travel to the Holy Land. Christianity rooted itself in the Holy Land through the opportunity to see and *feel* where Jesus did the same. Paulinus, a bishop from Campania in Italy said this of the Holy Land, “No other sentiment draws people to Jerusalem than the desire to see and touch the places where Christ was physical present and to say from their own experience, ‘We have gone into his tabernacle, and have worshipped in the places where his feet stood’”.<sup>28</sup> This desire to walk in the footsteps of Jesus drove the formation of a unique Christian Holy Land.

Through the actions of Constantine and Helena in their building campaigns, the landscape of the Holy Land was physically transformed to reflect a new Christianized Holy Land. The new churches, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, combined with writings like the *Onomasticon*, drew in the first Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. It is in this cultural milieu that the very first written account of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land was compiled; the *Itinerarium Burdigalense*.

### **Historical Accounts**

#### *Itinerarium Burdigalense*

My chronology of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land begins with the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* (*IB*), the first written itinerary and account of a pilgrim to the Holy Land. This pilgrim, hailing from Bordeaux, France, traveled to Palestine in the year 333 CE. This pilgrim’s account is comprised of two main components; first, a logbook of places they stopped to rest (*stationes*) and to change horses (*mutationes*), and second, a list of important religious places (mostly in and around Jerusalem) that the pilgrim found particularly interesting.<sup>29</sup> This first account is often disregarded as simply stenographical, lacking theological material, and not wholly dissimilar to Eusebius’ gazetteer, *Onomasticon*. In her analysis on the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, Jas Elsner writes how this work begins to reflect the emergence of a new literary genre, that of the sacred journey.<sup>30</sup> This work represents the first depiction of the new sacred Christian topography created in the years after Constantine’s conversion. The pilgrim’s account of Jerusalem is key. This section highlights descriptions of the pilgrim’s journey to and away from the city. These travels take the pilgrim to various denoted Old Testament sites that establish the religious and historical background of the land itself. These sections contrast starkly with the neophyte Constantinian, Christian city of Jerusalem. It is here that the pilgrim recounts following the Stations of the Cross, visiting churches, and experiencing the ideologically rich Christian Holy Land. It is important to note that the pilgrim did not exclusively visit Christian sites. He recounted seeing the Temple Mount, multiple statues of the Roman Emperor Hadrian, and a “perforated stone, to which Jews come every year, anoint it, lament themselves with moans, and tear their cloths, and thus depart.”<sup>31</sup> As the pilgrim travels through Jerusalem and other remnants of the Holy Land, he is traveling through time on a

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<sup>27</sup> Wilken 2012, 115

<sup>28</sup> *Ep.* 49.14

<sup>29</sup> Irshai 2009, 471

<sup>30</sup> Elsner 2000, 181

<sup>31</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 591.7 (CCSL 175:20)

historical journey. One cannot separate the collective Jewish histories of place from the Christian ones. Though this pilgrim actively seeks out locations with specific Bible references, his journey cannot be read as a denunciation of other historical, religious, or ideologies as a visitor, rather he should be read as a visitor to a fluid and dynamic religious landscape in the Holy Land. Through this fluid and dynamic religious landscape, the *IB* can be viewed as a pilgrim, tourist, traveler, visitor, or whatever label one chooses to apply. Clearly, the *IB* problematizes static definitions of pilgrimage and tourism.

Graburn notes that:

“A journey is seldom without purpose”<sup>32</sup> and because the “journey lies in the non-ordinary sphere of existence, the goal is symbolically sacred and morally on a higher plane than the regards of the ordinary workaday world.”<sup>33</sup>

Even though Badone and Roseman say that it is exceedingly difficult to get an emic perspective on the goals of a traveler so many years ago<sup>34</sup>, we can safely assume that the pilgrim who embarked on this life-changing journey would have understood the significance of his undertaking. This type of trip is drastically different than traveling to the next city over, and the goals and rewards parallel these drastic differences. This pilgrim undoubtedly sought what Berlyne calls “human exploratory behavior”, which is:

“Behavior whose principle function is to change the stimulus field and introduce stimulus elements that were not previously accessible.”<sup>35</sup>

The account of the *IB* fits well into Graburn’s framework of the sacred journey. It is clear that this pilgrim engaged in both stereotypical pilgrimage and touristic acts. Much of what highlights the sacred journey in the *IB* is the mere existence of the narrative itself. These Roman *itineraria* read eerily similar to the myriad of travel blogs on the internet today. They are encapsulations of experience, written down, and presented for all to read. The traveler in both the *itineraria* and the modern travel blog have an audience and an image of their travel that they want that audience to accept. In traveling from Bordeaux to the Holy Land, the pilgrim surely entered into Graburn’s notion of the non-ordinary. Though what is left of the pilgrim’s narrative relays to us nothing about any sense of self-fulfillment, it is not imprudent to assume that this experience changed his way of thinking upon his return home.

Reducing the experience of a pilgrim traveling to the Holy Land in the 4<sup>th</sup> century as the same as a traveler in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be problematic. Both travelers embark on their journeys in entirely different historical contexts. I hope to stress that historical and modern accounts are similar at the *experiential level*. There is undoubtedly incomparable contextual differences underlying the worldviews in which these travelers departed home. However, from a phenomenological perspective, the experience of the *IB* would mirror that of any traveler in modernity.

### *Itinerarium Egeriae*

The next pilgrim account, the *Itinerarium Egeriae (IE)*, was by a nun from the western reaches of the Roman Empire, probably Spain though her exact origins remain unknown, who traveled to the Holy Land in the early 380s CE. Her account is much more in depth, religiously specific, and substantive than the *IB*. But of more interest is her temperament, which is entirely different. She enthusiastically writes about her travels noting how she has nothing but time and can take as long as she wants at each location. Wilkinson calls her an “eager tourist with plenty of time at her disposal” and possessing

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<sup>32</sup> Graburn 1989, 23

<sup>33</sup> Graburn 1989, 24

<sup>34</sup> Badone and Roseman 2007, 5

<sup>35</sup> Berlyne 1968, 152



“unbounded curiosity”.<sup>36</sup> She employs connotative adjectives allowing us an inside look on her own thoughts about the environments with which she is interacting. Moreover, her Christianness pervades through the pages more so than the *IB*. She seems to show the most interest and contemplation when dealing with her understanding of the faith. Unfortunately, only one-third of Egeria’s writing have survived, so the understanding we do have is limited. Fortunately, the section that survived described her journeys through the Holy Land, specifically Jerusalem.

She began by traveling south through Egypt, the Sinai, and eventually Jerusalem. Her stay in Jerusalem is said to have lasted three years so this account is of much importance regarding liturgical practice in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE as well as the nature of Christianization of the city at the time. One monk in the 7<sup>th</sup> century named Valerius wrote extensive letters to members of a Galician monastery describing a woman’s “untiring devotion to God”,<sup>37</sup> about the author of the *IE*. This pilgrim’s account is much less concerned with the logistical side of travel writing, rather she occupied her pages with deeply personal accounts focusing on her time as a pilgrim.

Wilkinson himself rather casually asserts, “Between Egeria and the modern traveler there are two striking differences. The modern tourist comes to the East mainly to see buildings and places, but Egeria is equally interested in the local church. Indeed some of her most enthusiastic descriptions are those of monks, nuns, and bishops.”<sup>38</sup> Wilkinson makes a distinction between Egeria and the modern tourist, though, earlier in his book he calls Egeria herself a tourist. Wilkinson’s book, *Egeria’s Travels*, written in 1971, represents the vestiges of cultural historical models of tourism predating modern anthropological theory on the subject. Therefore, his usage of words like “pilgrim” and “tourist” may have seemed innocuous at the time with little controversy. These debates intensified in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the field of anthropology really delved into what it meant to be a pilgrim and a tourist and questioned those distinctions.

In understanding the *IE* through the lens of Graburn’s framework of the sacred journey, we yet again must note the medium in which she presents her account. More than once Egeria directly addresses her reverend sisters (*dominae sorores venerabiles*) showing that her writings were intended for a familiar audience. Graburn discusses the effects that this type of discourse can have on the recipients in his discussion of postcards. In a way, Egeria’s sisters reading her accounts are similar to one receiving a postcard from a loved one during a period of travel. Graburn notes that things like Egeria directly addressing her sisters makes them feel uplifted and share in her amazing experience, but also evoke slight tinges of jealousy.<sup>39</sup> Certainly Egeria wanted to share her journey to the Holy Land with the ones she loved who would equally appreciate it, but she also knew it would increase her prestige within the group. Graburn understands the dynamics behind these multiple motives.

Egeria’s travels are inherently self-fulfilling, and this comes through to the reader today. She relates that she travels to pray at the holy places but also to satiate her curiosity for the world. Throughout her account, she speaks of the “custom” of her company to arrive at a site, say a prayer, read an appropriate passage from the Bible, say another prayer, and move on.<sup>40</sup> Egeria’s account also exhibits compelling examples of her having both pilgrimage and tourist traits. In many of her visits to specific sites she uses tour guides – an industry so commonly linked with tourism in modernity. In the

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<sup>36</sup> Wilkinson 1971, 4

<sup>37</sup> Jacobs 2004, 117

<sup>38</sup> Wilkinson 1971, 4

<sup>39</sup> Graburn 1989, 29

<sup>40</sup> Jacobs 2004, 119. Her company was probably local tour guides in the form of monks and priests, otherwise, she largely traveled alone.

case of Egeria, her piety and faith cannot be questioned, but at the root of her travel lies the tenets of the sacred journey. She left her home, was moved in a profound way, and she, and others' perceptions of her were transformed upon her arrival back home.

### *Itinerarium Antonini Placentini*

Lastly, the account of Antoninus of Piacenza in the year 570 CE provides the last report of a Christian to travel to the Holy Land before the Muslim conquest of Palestine in 634 CE. This pilgrim's account is as complete and as useful as that of *IB* and *IG*. The *Itinerarium Antonini Placentini (IAP)* recounts the pilgrim named Antoninus and his cohort's travels from Piacenza, Italy to the Holy Land. The *IAP* is often criticized for its numerous miscalculations of distances between cities which mar its pages, but the account contains important information regarding the institutionalization of pilgrimage in the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE.

The *IAP* does not focus specifically on historical monuments like the *IB* and it does not value religious texts like the *IE*, but rather, this pilgrim writes of his sensory experiences with the Holy Land.<sup>41</sup> He writes of the stimuli he encounters allowing us a fuller picture into the social nature of Palestine. His account includes descriptions of monuments, people, smells, and sounds he experienced on his travels. He begins his account from Constantinople traveling south through Syria, with the cities of the Galilee being his first pilgrimage stops. He visits Cana of Galilee and sees the nuptial water pots that were filled with wine in Jesus' first miracle. Here we see examples of cultural appropriation of sacred narratives created specifically for the pilgrim. The sacredness of the material culture at Cana is actively advertised as such through marketing by local guides. The pilgrim experiences the same touristic institutions that exist today such as lodging and other tourist-based services. And it is here where we see the pilgrim indulge in a stereotypical tourist act. At Cana, "we reclined upon the very couches, and there, unworthy as I was, I wrote the names of my parents".<sup>42</sup> The pilgrim leaves his own mark on the pilgrimage site in the form of a scribbled graffiti, forming a unique physical connection with the site, and possibly securing a blessing from the Holy Land for his parents.

The *IAP* evokes a strong sense of place within the text. Relying on sensual experiences such as smell, touch, and sight, this pilgrim creates a meaningful and lasting (as evidence by graffiti at Cana) connection with the land. The pages are inundated with descriptions of sights, smells, and tastes that invite the reader into the world he is experiencing. In order to capture these moments of "flow", the *IAP* recounts the immense number and variety of souvenirs he took with him. Graburn correctly notes that "few tourists come home from a vacation without something to show for it," and that "souvenirs are tangible evidences of travel that are often shared with family and friends, but what one really brings back are memories of experiences."<sup>43</sup> Souvenirs are, and have been for millennia, an integral part of the experience of travel. As Carpenter notes, "[A souvenir] helps convert reality into experienced reality."<sup>44</sup> The *IAP* pilgrim took bagfuls of holy soil, jugs of water from the springs of Elisha in Jericho, and multitudes of food stuffs he encountered along the way.<sup>45</sup> These souvenirs were most likely blessed by local monks imbuing them with the sanctity that the *IAP* would want to remember and share.

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<sup>41</sup> Jacobs 2004, 119

<sup>42</sup> *Itinerarium Antonini Placentini* 4 (CCSL 175:130)

<sup>43</sup> Graburn 1989, 28

<sup>44</sup> Carpenter 1974, 17

<sup>45</sup> *Itinerarium Antonini Placentini* 14 (CCSL 175:136-137)

The sacred journey, seen from the outside, can look so many different ways. These historical examples only reinforce the blurring of distinctions between pilgrimage and tourism and their rootedness in the experience of travel. Most, if not all, historical examples of travel to the Holy Land exhibit substantial periods of the traveler engaging in both pilgrim and tourist acts. If we use an understanding of these terms as a continuum the merging of pilgrimage and tourism is accounted for. Further, these historical accounts describe proto versions of the sacred journey described by Graburn. The very existence of written accounts, moments of self-fulfillment, and mementos, whether tangible or not, taken home from their travels all fundamentally highlight travel as a re-creation of identity through the shaping of personal narrative.

### ***Modern Observations***

In the summer of 2015, Dr. Phyllis Passariello and I traveled to various Christian pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land including Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Cana, Migdal, Jericho, and Caesarea. We set out with a few primary objectives. At each of these sites we conducted our field research as participant observers. In doing so, we set out to immerse ourselves into each site and the accompanying touristic and pilgrimage appurtenances. At these sites we primarily observed behavior of travelers and how they interacted with the sites – praying, taking photographs, observing rituals, etc. We also had a special interest in the souvenir industry and what types of souvenirs were marketed at each site. And lastly we talked to as many people as we could in the hope to form relationships and attempt to get a deeper understanding from various individual perspectives. This section does not follow the travelogue model presented in the Roman *itineraria*. In some ways these are excerpts from my own *itinerarium*. I will highlight a few of my observations and specific encounters that I found particularly compelling in addressing my thesis. These vignettes include a beautiful rendition of Amazing Grace, the Stone of the Anointing in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and a Banksy pilgrimage.

#### Amazing Grace

The Pools of Bethesda are an archaeological site matching up to a description of a bathing site in the Gospel of John. Located near the Lion's Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem, these ruins function as a living and vibrant pilgrimage site in their own right, though later evidence suggests that the passages mentioning the pool in the Gospel of John may have been added later. Attached to the archaeological site, within the same enclosed area, is the Church of St. Anne. This church dates back to the Roman Period when it was believed to be a shrine to the god of health, Asclepius. The current edifice can be traced to the Crusader period and the Queen Melisende<sup>46</sup> when it was built over what was believed to be the grotto of the nativity of the Virgin Mary. There is a strong tradition in Christianity to construct ecclesiastical buildings over areas with tenuous claims to important events with often very little, if any, empirical evidence.<sup>47</sup> Regardless of any semblance of factual authentication, both the Pools of Bethesda and the Church of St. Anne function as popular, important, and *authentic* pilgrimage sites.

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<sup>46</sup> Queen Melisende reigned from 1131-1153 CE

<sup>47</sup> See *The Power of Perception: Authentic Inauthenticity of Christian Pilgrimage Sites in the Galilee* which I presented at the Semiotics Society Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, PA, October 2015

I spent an afternoon at the Pools of Bethesda and the accompanying Church of St. Anne just observing and noting particularly compelling instances of the intertwining of pilgrimage and tourism both as sacred journeys. A group of female Brazilian travelers came into the site and their shirts really caught my attention. This was probably a pre-packaged pilgrimage group, possibly through a local church. It was a group of older women, they spoke in Portuguese, and they all wore the same bright yellow t-shirt that read, “My Time of Transformation”, on the back. Just in one sentence we know that a primary goal of their travel to the Holy Land is to be transformed in some way, and return home to codify those transformations into their new perceptions of everyday life. The t-shirts also read, “Holy Land Pilgrimage 2015”, on the front. In a way, the t-shirts themselves become a part of each traveler’s personal narratives. When they wear those shirts around upon returning home, they are a symbol of their trip; a reminder to their friends and family of the experience they had. Moreover, many of the women were carrying shopping bags from the nearby shops along the Via Dolorosa<sup>48</sup>, acquiring further mementos to remember and share their experience with others.

The group of about fifteen women then went inside the Church of St. Anne and began singing, in unison, Amazing Grace. It was one of the most beautiful renditions of the song I have ever heard. They sang standing perpendicular to the nave and facing the entrance to the church. Their voices, combined with the fitting backdrop and the exemplary acoustics of the building, created a beautiful sound of harmony and life. No doubt did I experience Durkheim’s collective effervescence<sup>49</sup> in this moment – I cannot imagine how alive the singers felt. This was no doubt a devout act of pilgrimage by the group. Interestingly, once they began singing, many people, including myself, began filling the entrance of the church and watching and listening to them sing. Some even took out cameras and began taking pictures or recording – certainly touristic acts.

Overall, for the small amount of time I sat and observed this pilgrimage group I was amazed by how even the minutest of details provided convincing evidence for the blending of pilgrimage and tourism as sacred journeys. Clearly this group traveled to the Holy Land with the intention of seeking some sort of transformation, ultimately of their personal identity. I observed the group engaging in what we might consider both pilgrimage and touristic acts, further providing evidence of the blending of these two terms in contemporary travel. And lastly, all of these experiences create memories that become a part of one’s evolving story of self.

### Stone of the Anointing

Just a short walk away into the Christian Quarter of the Old City lies the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, one of the most important Christian pilgrimage sites in Christendom. The Church was built by Constantine and Helena in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE over the traditional locations of Jesus’ crucifixion on Cavalry Hill, his deposition from the cross, and place of burial. It has been a popular Christian pilgrimage site since its edification. The *IB*, *IE*, and *IAP* all visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and recorded

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<sup>48</sup> The Via Dolorosa is the path that Jesus walked on his way to his crucifixion. Along it are the stations of the passion. This street presents an interesting juxtaposition of an intensely holy site situated within rows and rows of kitschy tourist shops.

<sup>49</sup> Collective effervescence is when a group comes together and simultaneously communicates the same thought or performs the same action.

their experience in their accounts. Today, this site sees millions of visitors each year and stands as the symbol of Christianity in Jerusalem.

Immediately upon entering the church is the Stone of the Anointing which is the traditional spot that Jesus was prepared for burial upon his deposition from the Cross. This singular stone has become one of the most visible and accessible places, because of its proximity to the main entrance, for ritual worship within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In the week I spent in Jerusalem, I returned often to the Stone of the Anointing because there would without a doubt always be some number of travelers crowded around. Here too, I witnessed a number of precepts surrounding the Graburn's sacred journey come to fruition.

The Stone, like many other holy locations in Christendom, is believed to contain special powers. Dr. Passariello and I witnessed people "blessing" many objects upon the Stone. Things like jewelry, clothes, and even souvenirs from the nearby markets were placed upon the Stone in the hope to transfer some power or spirituality into them. Presumably, these objects would be brought back home and given as gifts or kept as mementos of their spiritual experience within the Holy Land. This stone also provides the opportunity for travelers to feel like insiders and be a part of a much larger group. There is no sign in the church that says this is the Stone where Jesus was prepared for burial, it is folk knowledge. Those who know this special history are insiders in this situation. There are countless examples of pilgrimage sites where one must be an insider to be able to visit it or worship correctly. These types of experience are examples of how *communitas* is generated through worship. Generation after generation of travelers doing the same ritual act – like praying at the Stone of the Anointing – creates a connection between those people and the place.

As much as the Stone was a locus for devout worship, it doubled as a photo op station. I observed over and over again people requesting their picture be taken as they pray and worship about the Stone. They wanted their picture taken with the holy site as they were performing a ritual with the holy site. Some opted for photos standing near the Stone while other simply took selfies with the Stone. These types of behavior are quite telling when it comes to how people understand their travels. Whether we want to call these photo-seekers pilgrims or tourists simply doesn't matter. At the base of their intention, it is clear that they desire these photos to serve as a token of remembrance and as a token of what they want others to see. Whether it's a new profile picture on Facebook, or a picture on the mantle, photography is a very overt way of solidifying a memory. And as we have seen, photographs and souvenirs are ultimately placeholders of memory that function as builders and sustainers of identity. People want to do and see, and they want to be seen doing. We often wondered while observing selfie after selfie in the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre would historical pilgrims like the *IB*, *IE*, and *IAP* take selfies to document their experience if they could? I tend to think they would.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre highlights the preeminence of sensory experience in travel. I will never forget the Latin Mass I attended at the Church. The Gregorian chant combined with the smell and smoke of burning incense created an unforgettable memory. During periods of travel, we often remember moments like these that stimulate us in more ways than one. Robert Wilken writes, "Memory is linked inescapably to tangible things that can be seen or tasted or smelled and it was to

recollect and remember that Christians first set out, to trace the footsteps of Jesus.”<sup>50</sup> Tactile piety and involvement of the senses has been part of Christian pilgrimage tradition since its very beginning. Sensory experiences solidify memories within our personal narratives, creating a lasting connection with a place. Such connections have been integral to the prolonged tradition of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

### A Banksy Pilgrimage

Not all pilgrimages are religious, and not all tourism is secular. Dr. Passariello and I spent a day in Bethlehem removing ourselves from the city’s religious past and immersing ourselves into its contemporary political situation as observed through art. In short, we went on a Banksy pilgrimage. Banksy is the pseudonym of a British-born street artist famous for political commentary through his characteristic graffiti-style art. Sometime in 2007, Banksy “tagged” approximately twelve locations in and around Bethlehem – many of them on or around the separation wall between Israel and Palestine. As of 2015, only four of them remain.

We set out on our own expedition to find these four Banksy’s. First we found the “Girl Frisking Soldier” piece, which interestingly was within a makeshift covered gift shop. We had to track down the owner of the shop to open up for us as it was closed when we got there. Of course, after viewing the work through a sheet of Plexiglas, we bought some Banksy paraphernalia. We then trekked to find the “Armored Dove,” “Angel Scattering Hearts,” and lastly the “Soldier Throwing Flowers” pieces. This day long endeavor was nothing short of an encapsulation of Graburn’s sacred journey. We left our ordinary, which had become studying Christian pilgrimage sites, and entered into the non-ordinary of the quest for novelty. We found novelty in Banksy. We crossed Turner’s liminal threshold during our physical deportation from our home (hotel) into the middle stages of this pilgrimage’s ritual process. Here we learned about Banksy, created memories, and even picked up a few souvenirs. Upon returning home and reintegrating into our previous lives the things we picked up along this trip stayed with us. I still have and wear the Banksy t-shirt I bought. People ask me about it and the shirt gives me the opportunity to tell stories and relay my memories of the experience which influences the way people see me. This Banksy pilgrimage becomes a part of my personal narrative; it becomes a part of my identity. This is the power of travel as a sacred journey. Whether it is called pilgrimage or tourism does not matter because whatever nomenclature given, the experiential level of travel elicits the same feelings of the sacred journey described by Graburn.

### Conclusions

It is problematic to draw sweeping generalizations from the observations of one summer and the reading of a few historical documents. The aim of this project was not to inherently problematize our cultural definitions of pilgrims and tourists, but rather to critically examine what happens at the experiential level of travel, for all travelers.

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<sup>50</sup> Wilken 1992, 108

I was less concerned with developing new, dynamic definitions of what we might consider a pilgrim or tourist, instead I propose this relationship is a continuum of intensity and depth of travel. Surely there are some travelers who exhibit far more pilgrimage traits and others who engage in far more touristic acts; a continuum accounts for all types of travelers while allowing some degree of distinction along the continuum. I do not feel entirely comfortable taking a stringently reductionist viewpoint in equating pilgrimage and tourism as exact parallels and I think using Smith's construction of a pilgrimage/tourism spectrum adequately addresses my concerns.

However, my chief concern is not the semantic debate involving defining terms. Using Nelson Graburn's framework of the sacred journey, I frame my argument that both pilgrimage and tourism are compellingly similar at the experiential level. Travelers of all kinds experience a physical departure from the ordinary into the non-ordinary, periods of earnest self-fulfillment, the addition of memories and experiences to their personal narratives, all of which ultimately re-creates one's identity. This paradigm of travel appropriately sets aside the connotative nature of the terms pilgrimage and tourism and their external meanings, instead focusing on the shared experience of travel at the intrapersonal level.

The cases I looked at from my visit and study of the Holy Land were compelling but not complete. For the scope of this project I could not have looked at every example from every time period, though I believe most historical examples would have provided me further evidence for travel as a sacred journey. Further study is required to analyze other forms of travel, outside the Roman *itineraria*, through the lens of Graburn's sacred journey. The various manifestations of pilgrimage during the Crusades, the Renaissance, the Victorian Grand Tour, and other forms of postmodern travel all present themselves as suitable for this kind of study.

Ultimately, our cultural connotations and stereotypes of pilgrimage and tourism do not match up with what is actually occurring at the experiential level. Graburn precisely describes how the sacred can be found in all forms of travel that breaks from the ordinary. The experience of travel connects us with ourselves in meaningful ways that cannot be overstated. These experiences create memories and stories and ultimately personal narratives, which in turn manifest themselves in our very identities. This is the process of the sacred journey that is travel. To let the famous Roman philosopher Seneca close; "Travel and change of place impart new vigor to the mind."

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## Acknowledgements

Special thanks is owed to my faculty mentor Dr. Phyllis Passariello for her tireless efforts helping me put this project together, it could not have been completed without her knowledge and expertise. I further want to thank Dr. Tom McCollough for introducing me to the topic of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land during an independent study. And a special thanks to everyone who, in some way, helped me along with this project whether you knew it or not: Beau Weston, James R. Strange, Codi Norred, Rachel Geil, James Bloom, Danielle La Londe, Jim Morrison, John Harney, the House of Peace Hostel, and everyone on the Shikhin Excavation Project.