

as an historical phenomenon and as a powerful metaphor depicting human existence as a journey either to damnation, eternal exile, or salvation, final reunion with God.

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Art and Architecture Along the Pilgrimage Routes to Santiago de Compostela

Eric C. Apfelstadt

The exterior aspect of pilgrimage in the later Middle Ages is nowhere better witnessed than in the great crusading campaigns and along the popular pilgrimage routes which led travelers across Europe to destinations ranging from the Holy Land to Rome to Santiago de Compostela. In the art history lecture for the pilgrimage module at Santa Clara University, the focus is upon the latter manifestation—the vast migration of pilgrims who, motivated by the cult of saints and relics, proceeded from church to shrine, despite often nearly insurmountable obstacles, in pursuit of miraculous intercession in their immediate lives and eternal lots. The pilgrims' visits to holy sites and relics are inextricably bound up with the circumstances of the physical journey, and the transformation which they expected to realize through their experiences along the way closely parallels the goals of the less tangible quests investigated in the literature and philosophy lectures.

The subject of pilgrimage, especially that to Santiago de Compostela, is commonly addressed in the study of medieval art. Entire books have been written about the phenomenon, and chapters devoted to its art and architecture appear in even the most basic surveys of the period, so preparing an interdisciplinary module such as the one at Santa Clara University may involve more a streamlining of familiar art historical material than the creation of a substantially new focus on it. I approached the module initially with the expectation of treating Romanesque architecture and sculpture fairly thoroughly in their pilgrimage context, but that goal has gradually been modified in deference to the novelty of the subject matter for the students from the various participating courses. The major challenge, I now believe, is how to present pilgrimage art and architecture responsibly in a manner that is readily accessible to a mixed audience drawn from several different disciplines. Although the students have grown up surrounded by images, most are far more accustomed to reading historical or literary texts than to dealing in a systematic way with visual material.

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