Scots Pilgrimages to Rome (1877–1903): educational fieldwork for Victorians and Edwardians?

This article aims to address a largely unexplored feature of the life of the Scottish Catholic community during the pontificates of Pius IX and Leo XIII. Although it has certainly been acknowledged that pilgrimages from Scotland to Rome took place in this period, no systematic study of the same has been pursued. While not claiming any comprehensiveness in its treatment, the present article aims to stimulate interest in this fascinating example of a wider Scottish Catholic experience. Moreover, it is the author’s particular thesis that ‘pilgrimage’ in this period was a form of adult education, providing interaction with the histories, cultures, and popular religious practices of other nations, as well as providing an important mirror by which was constructed (in part) the national and religious identities of the pilgrims themselves.

Scotland is not well served in terms of previous studies of pilgrimage, in groups or by individuals, in the modern era. Amongst comparative studies which merit inspection at the outset of this investigation, therefore, two treatments in particular stand out. Judith Champ has produced a broad survey of pilgrimage to Rome from England which is abundant in observations based on a careful reading of a variety of primary and secondary sources. Brian Brennan’s survey of pilgrimage from France to Rome is more focused on a narrow period of time, 1873–93, but is a rich source of ideas for related work in the Scottish field. Brennan’s article includes the memorable quote from Mgr. Charles-Emile Freppel, Bishop of Angers, in 1873 that pilgrimages are ‘the thermal waters of piety, the spiritual baths where souls may come to regenerate themselves and get new energy’. The imagery is resonant, not just of the aftermath of the 1858 apparitions at Lourdes, but also of the growing perception of pilgrimage as an escape from the harsh realities of contemporary society.

It is important that some conceptual framework be brought to this study at the outset. The line between antiquarian narrative and scholarly...
analysis grounded in a philosophical overview is a fine one in a topic such as this. The classic theoretical treatment of modern pilgrimage is the so-called Turnerian thesis, namely that pilgrimage is a liminoid experience, lived outside the established norm of one’s life. It takes the pilgrim beyond normality, particularly in the social interaction of the journey which creates a temporary communitas of shared aims and aspirations. This view of the ‘otherness’ of pilgrimage in the human life experience has been challenged, however, in recent years. Mary Lee Nolan and Sidney Nolan, in their exhaustive study of modern European pilgrimage, in itself a seminal study in the field, caution the reader as to the narrow range of sources employed by the Turners: the work of these latter authors, they state, is ‘primarily based on a relatively small number of cases from Ireland, England, France, and Mexico.’ More recently, Simon Coleman and John Eade have demonstrated dissatisfaction with the conceptual edifice presented by the Turners. They highlight the need to question seriously and profoundly the view of pilgrimage as by definition exceptional in human beings’ life histories. They passionately urge that the conceptualisation of pilgrimage move beyond its ‘theoretical ghetto’ within the anthropology of religion. In short, it is a somewhat heated debate – but one not to be avoided entirely. At the conclusion of this article, some tentative observations will be offered as to where the Scottish evidence (such as it is) sits in the context of these wider arguments.

Scots Pilgrimages to Rome (1877–1903)
The Russian artist, Grigori Grigorevich Chernetsov (1801–65), captured the pomp and colour of papal Rome in the middle of the nineteenth century. Within twenty years of Chernetsov’s painting, however, the political realities facing the papacy were very different. By 1871, Pius IX was a ‘prisoner of the Vatican’ as a consequence of the annexing of the Papal States in 1860 and the fall of Rome to the

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6 Mary Lee Nolan and Sidney Nolan, Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe (Chapel Hill 1989) 3-4.
forces of Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel in September 1870. In January 1871, with recent events magnifying the emotions of the occasion, a party of staff and students of the Scots College in Rome were presented to Pius IX. In a letter to his parents, dated 22 February 1871, young Thomas Crumly from Govan wrote of his encounter with Christ’s vicar on earth:

On 4th January we had an audience of His Holiness the dear old Pope. The poor old man, amidst all his sorrows and afflictions, has always a saintly smile and seems as cheery and well-looking as ever. ... The pope never leaves his palace but is there visited daily by crowds of good Christians who go to console with their Father and offer him their sympathy and contributions.9

These youthful observations by a future canon of the diocese of Dunkeld offer a unique insight into a perception of the papacy and, by extension, Rome which was, no doubt, shared by Crumly’s fellow seminarians. The pity is that his is the only contemporary Scottish voice from that generation of Roman-educated seminarians to have reached us and, therefore, there has to be a certain caution in awarding similar sentiments to a wider group.

Nevertheless, Crumly does highlight two themes which will be recurring ones in the planning of Scots pilgrimages to Rome over the next four decades. First, the pope, bishop of Rome, city of saints and martyrs, has himself become a modern martyr in the face of Garibaldian aggression, anti-clerical diatribe and liberal intolerance. Indeed, the pope is a living icon of the suffering Christ. Time and again, this theme will inform the deferential language of pilgrims at a papal audience. Second, and as a direct consequence of the first, Scottish pilgrims habitually offer words of consolation, emphasising how the pope might be rejected by those closest to him geographically but how he can still find comfort in the support of those who inhabit the ultima Tule, namely Scotland as described in the classical term adopted commonly at the time which presented the homeland as far-off, distant, the very ends of the earth. They also brought the pope monetary offerings as well as other gifts which say something about the social origins of the pilgrims.

Between the audience described by Crumly in 1871 and the death of Leo XIII in 1903, there were five major Scottish pilgrimages to Rome: in 1877, 1888, 1893, 1900, and 1903. The first of these, in 1877, was occasioned by the Golden Jubilee of Pius IX’s consecration as a bishop. In a pastoral letter of 19 March 1877 to the priests of the

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Eastern District, Bishop John Strain emphasised that Scots were about to partake in a great event of historic proportions. Such sentiments represent a key building-block in Scottish Catholic identity. Catholics, by virtue of their link with the Holy See, are presented by Strain as striding a stage larger than any given locality:

As the Catholic world is about to unite in celebrating the Episcopal Jubilee of our Holy Father, Pius IX, on the third of June of the present year, it will be our duty to join in the Celebration, and I feel sure that every Catholic among us will deem it a privilege to be enabled to do so....The great object is to make the collection universal, so that, if possible, all may be able to say that they had a part in a celebration of which the annals of the Church show no similar example since her establishment to the present day; for, since the days of St Peter, no Pope has so long occupied his chair, nor has there been one of whom it can be said that he has been a bishop of the Church for half a century of her existence.  

A delegation some 150 strong made its way to Rome where it presented the aged Pius with the not inconsequential sum of £2000. Bishop Strain addressed the pope in the following terms:

Beatissimo Padre. Filii tui de longe veniet ... although you share your pontifical office with all your predecessors, your faithful people hold in particular esteem the person of Your Holiness in whom they recognise a special character which obliges them to love you with a special affection. Your severe trials; your perseverance in standing up against the powers that be in this century; your wisdom in teaching the Truth that the purity of the Faith might be maintained; your solicitude in governing the whole Church in furthering the elimination of schism and restoring peace to Christ’s fold; your special care lavished on us for so many years and which you will continue to expend for the good of the Church and humanity: all these contribute to the admiration for your person and justify the universal affection in which you are held.... Far-off Scotland, the ultima Tule, presents itself with the other nations to offer its tribute on this occasion.

Bishop Strain went on to provide a description of Scotland, after the ‘great apostasy of the 16th century’, once more beginning ‘to blossom in the Faith’ (shades of Newman’s ‘second spring’). He ended with the request that Scotland, like England (in 1850), be granted the

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10 Scottish Catholic Archives (hereafter SCA) ED 10/15/14.
11 SCA ED 3/223/1
re-establishment of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. A glimpse of the pope’s reply to these words is provided by newspaper reports of the period. Of particular interest is Pius’s reference to Edinburgh as the Athens of the North ‘for her culture of the sciences, of literature and of the fine arts, all of which flourish under her tutelage.’ However, it is a less than perfect city due to the need for a ‘greater increase of the true religion of Jesus Christ.’ Catholics in Scotland are urged to pray for such an increase for ‘when the number of Catholics had reached its due measure, His Holiness would grant the desires expressed by Monsignor Strain ... and reconstitute in Scotland ... the Catholic hierarchy.’

It was not to be. In less than a year, Pius IX was dead and succeeded by Leo XIII. A diplomat by training, he lacked the common touch of Pio Nono yet immediately inherited the pained sympathies of his supporters in taking on the mantle of ‘prisoner of the Vatican’. In the first official action of his pontificate in March 1878, on the very day of his coronation, Leo decreed that the Catholic hierarchy of bishops be restored in Scotland. It is surely a hyperbolic conceit to accept that this first act retained a special place in the heart of the elderly pontiff. Yet it becomes yet another recurrent leitmotiv in the addresses of Scots at papal audiences.

Some ten years after Leo’s election, in 1888, a pilgrimage left Scotland for Rome to mark the Golden Jubilee of the pope’s priestly ordination (the actual date of the anniversary was 31 December 1887). Around 130 pilgrims arrived in the Eternal City in February, carried by the railways which were beginning to make mass movements of travellers throughout Europe possible in a manner without precedent. Archbishop Charles Petre Eyre of Glasgow had made this perception plain in an address to a meeting of clergy at a National Council of Scotland held on 17 August 1886:

A very special source of encouragement to us is the easy and unrestricted communication with Rome. Steamers plough through the ocean – railways cover the continent – the Alps are tunnelled and so they rapidly bring the Bishops to the presence of Peter. If history established the fact that nations have become

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12 The Scotsman, 19 May 1877, 7.
13 Nevertheless, one cannot be entirely dismissive of the ‘official’ papal memory of the act. At the audience with the Scots pilgrims of 1888, Leo observed that: ‘Most pleasing to us has been the noble and distinguished manifestation of your homage to which you have just given expression; and with peculiar satisfaction is it that we have heard your grateful sentiments towards us for having ten years ago restored to Scotland the Catholic hierarchy, at which time our heart rejoiced with an exceeding great joy when it was vouchsafed us to commence auspiciously the supreme pontificate by a deed so salutary and memorable – a deed of which the remembrance solaces and refreshes us.’ The Scotsman, 24 February 1888, 7.
corrupt precisely in proportion to their alienation from, or opposition to the Holy See, it also shows that improved relations with Rome have regenerated or reintegrated them.¹⁴

Eyre’s musings, when considered in the context of the 1888 Roman pilgrimage, provide hints of an ultramontanism which is not necessarily corruptive of national identity. Eyre’s was a sophisticated, cultured mind, interested in medieval history, law, and architecture, and he was feted by contemporaries outside the Catholic community (gaining the honorary degree of LL.D. from Glasgow University in 1892), as well as criticised from within.

A remarkable poem by a beadle and church officer of a Glasgow kirk, Robert Thomson, was published in the Glasgow Herald (and reprinted in the Glasgow Observer) in celebration of Leo’s 1888 anniversary. It includes a stanza towards its end which proclaims:

An’ noo I’m dune. Farewell, gude sir,  
I’m glad your folk hae made a stir  
In honour o’ their minister.  
May you be spared  
To tak’ your walks for mony a year  
In your kailyard.¹⁵

Indeed, the pilgrims who took their places at the papal audience of 1888 – led by Archbishops Strain and Eyre, the Marquess of Bute and Lady Bute, Lord and Lady Herries of Dumfries, and various Maxwells – made an impressive ‘stir’. With ladies entirely in black, gentlemen in evening dress, gloves forbidden, white neckties de rigueur, Leo was presented with £2362, a gold chalice ‘from the ladies of Edinburgh’, and, from the sisters of St Margaret’s Convent in the same city, an album entitled Reliquae Scotiae Sacrae with photographs of Scotland’s heritage of ruined abbeys and cathedrals.¹⁶ According to contemporary reports, however, the pope was much more interested in the figure of Mr D. P. McDonald of the ‘Long John’ Distillery, Fort William, who dressed ‘from head to toe’ in Highland gear.¹⁷

¹⁴ Charles Petre Eyre, Sermon preached at the Opening of the National Council of Scotland. 17th August 1886 (Glasgow 1886) 13.
¹⁵ Glasgow Observer, 7 January 1888, 1. A short article with the full text of this poem is presently in preparation by the present writer. More generally, a critical re-visiting of the concept of ultramontanism in a Scottish context is matter for yet another article.
¹⁶ Glasgow Observer, 25 February 1888, 7.
¹⁷ A contemporary newspaper report appears, surely inadvertently, to provide an instance of papal favouritism in the question of Scotland’s historic east-west divide. ‘During the reading of the first address by Archbishop Smith from his diocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, his Holiness appeared wearied and distrait; the corners of his
Only five years later, in 1893, Leo celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his episcopal consecration. Once again, in February, a party of around a hundred pilgrims left for Rome, joining with an English pilgrimage en route in London. Although, therefore, a British pilgrimage in terms of its organisation, in part, by the Catholic Union under the leadership of the Duke of Norfolk, the Scots were fiercely resolute on the matter of their distinctiveness, insisting on a separate audience with Leo XIII from the rest of the party. This wish was granted when the Scots were presented to the pope on Sunday 26 February with the English and Welsh pilgrims having their audience the next day. Nevertheless, this moment of demonstrable separation of identity must not be considered typical of the otherwise apparently congenial mix of relationships.

The Scots' 1893 pilgrimage was the first organised by Thomas Cook's famous travel firm and it is interesting to note the discrepancies between the company's view that 'everything was carried out with satisfaction and success' with the somewhat more critical memoirs of some of the pilgrims themselves. All does not appear to have gone according to plan and the complaints of the pilgrims remind one that any pre-conceived images of the sedate nature of nineteenth-century travel often fall well short of the reality. One pilgrim writes of reaching Paris where:

...we had already noticed signs of a want of organisation at the railway station and at some of the hotels. Confusion reigned supreme. Many of the pilgrims reached Paris without knowing their hotels. They had relied on the committee affording them that information, but who the committee were or what were the

18 *Glasgow Observer*, 11 February 1893, 8.
19 See letter of 11 October 1892 from Archbishop Angus Macdonald of St Andrews and Edinburgh to the clergy of his archdiocese: 'Possibly it may be thought advisable to arrange to go with the English pilgrims for the sake of the advantageous travelling terms. But I imagine that it would be the wish of all of us that Scotland should have its own distinct representatives, and a separate day of audience, to present to His Holiness, in the name of the Catholics of this country, their congratulations, and the expression of their homage and veneration.' SCA ED 5/122/1.
20 The Scots joined the English pilgrims for a pre-audience Mass in the Basilica of St John Lateran on Monday 27 February. They also came together for receptions at the Scots College (hosted by the rector, Mgr. James Campbell), the Hotel de Roma (hosted by the Duke of Norfolk), and the English College (hosted by Cardinal Vaughan of Westminster). *Glasgow Observer*, 4 March 1893, 8.
21 *Cook's Excursionist and Travel Advertiser*, 18 March 1893.
arrangements no one was able to say.... The station from which
the departure was made witnessed the usual scramble for seats.
The spectacle of friend losing friend, losing luggage, ticket or
purse was amusing in the extreme.22

The Holy Year of 1900 was the occasion for the next formal visit
to Rome. This was also the year which saw the 300th anniversary of the
foundation of the Scots College by Clement VIII in 1600. Mgr. Robert
Fraser, rector of the College, brought the celebrations forward from the
actual anniversary month of December to April to coincide with the
presence in the city of around 70 Scots pilgrims drawn from the
dioceses of St Andrews and Edinburgh, Dunkeld, Aberdeen, and
Glasgow.23

By April 1903, the date of the final Scottish audience with Leo
XIII, Queen Victoria was dead and a new king, Edward VII, sat on the
British throne. There is, perhaps, something symbolic of the hopes for a
new century and a new reign that the highlights of the 1903 pilgrimage
were two-fold. On Tuesday 28th April, around 85 pilgrims, bearing a
gift of £1000, were received by Leo in the now customary audience. He
was 93 years of age and celebrating his Silver Jubilee year as pope.
Indeed, the Scots were reportedly quite affected by the fact that their
audience coincided with the very day on which Leo reached the
milestone of equalling the ‘days of Peter’ (as traditionally and piously
calculated). The next day, Wednesday, the pilgrims stood on the steps
of St Peter’s Basilica to cheer King Edward VII as he made his way to
the Vatican Palace and into the presence of Leo XIII.24 The sight – in
1903, let it be emphasised – of a reigning British monarch being
received by the Vicar of Christ in Rome must have given occasion for
optimism and multifarious aspirations amongst the Scots Catholic
pilgrims who were witnesses to the event. The greater the pity,
therefore, that no diary or extended reminiscence has survived.

Pilgrimage or Religious Tourism?
A narrative outlining the Scots pilgrimages to Rome in the pontificates
of Pius IX and Leo XIII is, of course, only part of the story. As
indicated at the outset, new approaches are beginning to emerge which

22 Glasgow Observer, 4 March 1893, 8. Another pilgrim wrote of hearing that ‘in Paris
more than twenty persons were billeted for the same room. One gentleman told me he
was billeted with three priests, and comically remarked it was too much of a good
thing. Another said he was billeted with three old ladies and slyly observed it was too
23 SCA ED5/125/8. It is worth noting in passing that the earliest printed record of a
party of Scots pilgrims visiting the Scots College’s summer villa in Marino is to be
found in St Peter’s College Magazine 2 (1914) 166.
24 Glasgow Observer, 9 May 1903, 4.
Raymond McCluskey

attempt to revise scholars’ understanding of pilgrimage through a variety of ‘analytical prisms’. It seems justified to ask, therefore, what such revised conceptualisations of pilgrimage might have to offer the study of Scots pilgrimages in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Can insights generated by sociologists and social anthropologists throw significant light on such a historical focus?

In seeking answers to these questions, the remainder of this article will focus on one particular ‘analytical prism’ which has emerged with ever greater clarity and frequency in publications and working papers over recent years. The idea that tourism, generally, and education are intertwined has generated a growing literature. Indeed, Alan Machin has argued forcefully that virtually all forms of tourism began for educational reasons, asserting that tourism is essentially about enabling the traveller to explore ‘dynamic information environments.’ However, while Machin certainly devotes attention to ‘pilgrimage’, it is medieval pilgrimage which features in his argument as an antecedent to later developments up to the present day by way of the Grand Tour, spas and resorts, excursions and package holidays.

In fact, pilgrimage represents a problematic strand in the tourism-as-education discourse. Sociologists, such as Luigi Tomasi and Lutz Kaelber, have sought to emphasise the difference between medieval and (post-) modern pilgrimage. Due to a mixing of the sacred with the profane in late modernity, writes Tomasi, pilgrimage has ‘been compelled to change its form, although its essential core remains the same: reaching the destination to obtain salvation or grace.’ Kaelber, significantly in a chapter with a medieval focus, posits that ‘societal transformations in the advent of modernity have led to a further mixing of the sacred and the profane in travel, and that most recently there has been, as postmodernists would argue, an implosion of boundaries between pilgrimage and other forms of travel.

In summary, therefore, in adjusting to modernity, pilgrimage has required re-articulation as a concept and re-invention as an activity. Accordingly, the argument – as explored in the present article – that ‘pilgrimage’ in the modern era can be interpreted as an educational

26 Working papers and articles by Alan Machin can readily be accessed at his homepage: www.alanmachinwork.net. The quotation and reference here is taken from “Retracing the Steps: Tourism as Education”; www.alanmachinwork.net/Retracing-the-Steps-Tourism-as-Education.
27 Medieval Pilgrimage to Religious Tourism, 22.
28 Ibid., 66-7.
activity is surely handicapped by a lack of conceptual precision as to what exactly the defining characteristics of modern pilgrimage are. In essence, it might be argued that pilgrims of the modern era are religious tourists — a distinctive breed — acting out roles which faintly imitate and echo the actions of the ‘authentic’ pilgrims of the medieval centuries. Is the traveller to Graceland today any less a pilgrim than the visitor to Peter’s tomb in Rome? The boundaries between pilgrimage and tourism are, consequently, unclear.29

The arguments being produced in the pilgrimage-tourism debate are clearly important and demand attention. However, the historian cannot remain a passive observer of such theories; rather it ought to be the particular role of the historian to contextualise the on-going discourse. For example, it can only serve as a useful corrective to remind scholars that, in a fundamental sense, recognition of difference between medieval and modern pilgrimage pre-dates the beginnings of analysis of whatever (post-) modernist hue. At a ceremony in St Mary’s Cathedral, Edinburgh, marking the departure of the Scottish Pilgrimage to Rome of 1893, Archbishop Angus Macdonald was conscious of discordant voices disputing the application of the term ‘pilgrimage’ to the event about to take place:

There were many, he said, who were inclined to disapprove of pious pilgrimages, looking upon them as superstitious or, at all events, as useless; but he pointed out that in entering upon that particular pilgrimage they were not only acting upon natural instinct founded upon their rational nature, but upon a principle which was sanctioned by Holy Writ, and upon a practice of the Catholic Church from the earliest days. There were some, he continued, who sneered, again, at the modern style of pilgrimage in contrast with that which obtained in earlier days, but this objection arose from confusing that which was essential with that which was accidental. The accidental form of a pilgrimage must necessarily vary in different ages and in different circumstances, but none the less the spirit in which it was performed – and there lay the real essence and merit of the pilgrimage – remained the same. He pointed out the many objects that would occupy the attention and the interest of those going in the stupendous monuments of ancient pagan Rome, and in the monuments of ancient and mediaeval Christianity; but

said that there was one object [Leo XIII] which united in itself all those interests and associations.... The object of the pilgrimage was distinctly, therefore, a religious object, and they would be actuated by a religious feeling in entering upon it and carrying it through.  

Macdonald had received his philosophical education at Ushaw College, Durham, where he had also studied theology before ordination to priesthood in 1872. In his homily of 1893, something of the measure of that education is hinted at. The archbishop applied Aristotelian concepts of substance and accident – as Aquinas in his turn had done in his writing on the Eucharist – in order to emphasise for his listeners the elemental nature of pilgrimage as a concept as a journey with a religious object, quite separate from the contemporary trappings of steam trains, shopping for souvenirs, or general sightseeing. Archbishop Macdonald clearly thought the point worth saying, which is telling in itself, but, as Machin has demonstrated, with the exception of the use of railways, other accusations laid against the nineteenth-century 'pilgrim' were already prevalent in medieval pilgrimages which generated their fair share of guidebooks, local leaders of groups, and social festivities.

Pilgrimage as education

It is, however, Archbishop Macdonald's reference to the monuments of ancient and medieval Rome and the fascination which these would present for the travellers which provides a starting-point for a closer examination of the Scots pilgrimages to Rome as educational activities. There can be no argument here about pilgrimage as an education in the formal sense of structured fieldtrips negotiated within a curricular course of study – such a notion has parallels in the late nineteenth century (as will be illustrated) but is largely anachronistic for the period. What is being argued here is that pilgrimage played its part in a contemporary discourse which focused on ideas of personal and moral improvement which are at the very heart of the adult education movement.

In 1849, Giovanni Battista de Rossi re-discovered the Catacombs of St Callixtus. The catacombs had never completely vanished from the knowledge of scholarly elites, but De Rossi's advocacy and endeavour in their systematic surveying and cataloguing galvanised others to follow in his footsteps, including the English convert, James Spenser.

30 The Scotsman, 13 February 1893, 5.
32 See 'Retracing the steps'. See also M. Feifer, Going Places (London 1985).
Northcote. The catacombs represented various understandings. For Protestant visitors, Bibles in hand, they pointed to a simpler, purer Christian existence and, therefore, might be appropriated into their mental landscape. For the Catholic pilgrim, however, the catacombs were powerful symbols of both the antiquity of their Church and of its unbroken continuity from ancient to modern times. Moreover, their passageways strewn with the tombs of venerable early martyrs, the catacombs provided antecedents for the modern 'martyrdom' of the Church and especially the papacy after 1870.

By the end of the nineteenth century, an excursion to the catacombs had taken its place as a core component of the pilgrimage to Rome, alongside visits to the traditional seven churches and the inevitable papal audience. There is only one clear reference, however, to Scots pilgrims visiting the catacombs in the period under examination. The Glasgow Observer noted that the 1903 pilgrims 'drove' to the catacombs before returning in time to see the king enter the Vatican.

Nevertheless, there are cryptic references to the role of guide in Christian antiquities being adopted by two rectors of the Scots College, Alexander Grant (rector, 1846–78, coinciding exactly with Pius IX's pontificate) and his successor, James Campbell (rector, 1878–97). Campbell, especially, has a reputation which has suffered most famously as the barely disguised object of Frederick Rolfe's opprobrium in his novel, Hadrian VII. But both Grant and Campbell were keen amateur students of the archaeological activities being conducted so close to their Roman home. According to his obituarist, Grant used to act as guide for guests wishing to visit the newly-excavated catacombs:

Living on terms of intimacy with many of the first thinkers of Rome, in his younger days he took an active share in their studies, and was a member of several academies. To the late Father Marchi he was bound in ties of the warmest affection, fostered by their common tastes. In his company he witnessed

34 J. Pemble, The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South (Oxford 1987) 122 writes that 'it was knowledge of the Bible, far more than knowledge of the Classics or pictures or poetry, that was the distinctive cultural characteristic of the Victorian propertied classes; and in the Mediterranean the Bible was being recalled all the time.' See, too, Champ, English Pilgrimage, 169-70.
36 Glasgow Observer, 9 May 1903, 4.
37 F. Rolfe, Hadrian VII (London 1904), chapter 15.
most of the early discoveries of Christian antiquities made during the century, and those who had the pleasure of accompanying Dr. Grant on a visit to the Roman Catacombs long retained the impression on their memory. To many those visits brought the gift of faith.38

Grant’s was, perhaps, not the most original mind, but he was a harvester of knowledge, steeped in the Latin classics, and an esteemed conduit of British ecclesiastical affairs for a learned audience in the pages of the *Annali delle Scienze Religiose*, edited by the distinguished Cardinal Antonino Saverio de Luca.39 James Campbell’s obituarist also alludes to his subject having been ‘regarded as an authority in Christian Archaeology and in certain questions in Church History, on which subjects he wrote some minor works’.40

As the nineteenth century moved into its latter decades, however, pilgrimages to Rome became less the preserve of informal journeys by groups of individuals, aided and abetted by custodians of local knowledge such as the rector of a Roman college, and more the tours, organised around nations or dioceses, which still today play a major role in the facilitating of pilgrims’ journeys to their destinations. Central to this development was the adoption of the Thomas Cook travel company’s services as agents for the pilgrimages in 1893 onwards. Thomas Cook’s involvement serves as a salutary corrective to the view that the history of modern Scottish Catholic pilgrimage is essentially a Catholic narrative. Thomas Cook (1808–1892), a Baptist, founded his travel firm as an off-shoot of his resolute evangelical beliefs and commitment to temperance (travel offering a morally uplifting and educative alternative to the attractions of alcohol).41 Although he retired from day-to-day running of his company in 1879 – the commercial progress of his initiative continuing under the auspices of his son and, later, grandsons – it is, nevertheless, right to emphasise that the 1893 and later pilgrimages are examples of how narratives of communities’ pasts cross each other. The history of Catholic pilgrimage in this period cannot be understood without acknowledgement of the

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39 McCluskey, Scots College, 80.
40 *Scottish Catholic Directory* (Glasgow 1903) 247.
41 E. Swinglehurst, *Cook’s Tours: The Story of Popular Travel* (London 1982).
assistance of a business model inspired, at least initially, by Protestant evangelical ideals.

Despite the grumblings of 1893 pilgrims alluded to earlier in this article, Thomas Cook brought an increasingly sophisticated approach to the preparations and activities of the pilgrims. Itineraries prepared in advance and presented to pilgrims gained in detail with each successive venture. By 1903, the 'itinerary of the tour' ran to six closely-printed pages of text. The brochure which included this outline not only provided commentary on the sights of Turin, Genoa, Pisa (Leaning Tower – 'the view from the summit is extensive and beautiful'), Florence, Milan, and Lucerne, but offered additional pages on Rome itself. Prominent on page seven is the outline of a tour of 'Ancient Rome', offering special carriage drives and lectures, with an inclusive charge for three days' excursions of 25 shillings. The tours of the relics of Ancient Rome were accompanied by Dr S. Russell Forbes, a man whose expertise in the history, architecture and antiquities of Rome was famous in his day. Pilgrims who opted for the tour were introduced to the Circus Maximus, the Colosseum, the Forum and the Capitoline Hill (to name only a few).

Where guides organised by Thomas Cook were not available, however, pilgrims continued to avail themselves of the local knowledge of Roman-based clergy and seminarians. Rev. Alexander Stuart of St Columba's, Edinburgh – 'agent' (i.e. diocesan representative) for the St Andrews and Edinburgh archdiocese in arranging the 1893 pilgrimage – made it clear in the instructions sent out to prospective pilgrims that:

Special facilities will be afforded the pilgrims for visiting all the shrines and objects of interest. Several priests who have been educated at Rome, and are conversant with the city and its sights, will accompany the Pilgrims. These have kindly promised to do what they can for the comfort and information of those who cannot speak the language.

Similarly, in 1903, a report in the Glasgow Observer recorded that:

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42 SCA ED6/194/5
43 Forbes (1845–1933) was a prominent and well-respected writer on Roman antiquities, producing Footsteps of St Paul in Rome (London 1882) and Rambles in Rome: An Archaeological and Historical Guide to the Museums, Galleries, Villas, Churches, and Antiquities of Rome and the Campagna (London 1882). His tombstone in Rome's Protestant Cemetery records that he lived in Rome for 62 years and gives as his epitaph the somewhat excessive claim that 'This Was The Noblest Roman Of Them All.' (Stone 751 as included in the catalogue of tombstones provided by the Accademia di Danimarka in Rome at www.dkinst-rom.dk/protecm/work/pcEN.html).
44 SCA ED 5/123/1.
The rest of the week was admirably utilised by the Committee in arranging that the pilgrims should see all the principal churches of Rome, the most famous sights of the Eternal City, but when Sunday came all felt the time had been too short. Still, it had been well employed, and the pilgrims one and all felt how much they owed to Dr Mullin, Dr Rogan, Fr Forsyth, and Fr McBain, who were indefatigable in giving their services to those who felt strange amid the sights of the Eternal City. A word of thanks is also due to the young priests of the (Scots) College who, familiar as they were with Rome, kindly conducted each a small party round, and helped make the pilgrimage pleasant and instructive.

What is particularly intriguing in reading accounts of tours by representatives of Thomas Cook or the more ad hoc clerical guides is the issue of transferable knowledge. In other words, what learning took place amongst the pilgrims of that era? It would seem perverse to argue otherwise than that the tours described represent a model of fieldwork not too far removed from that advocated in more contemporary educational initiatives. There still remains a market for companies offering learning holidays and cruises, with guest speakers and expert on-site guides. The context today may be more developed in terms of the articulation of a proactive understanding of adult and lifelong learning, but the realistic origins of that context would seem to be present in the Scots pilgrimages of 1893 onwards.

If knowledge was being transferred from ‘experts’ to the pilgrims, the range of subject-matter was certainly broad: geography, topography, language, architecture, music, culture. Yet there must be a question concerning the dynamic in the teacher-learner relationship during the pilgrimages. If transfer of knowledge is perceived as being dependent on the disposition of the learner (curiosity and attentiveness vital), it is difficult in the first instance to judge the success or otherwise of the pilgrims’ response to the learning opportunities provided to them. There are, in short, no evaluations of the tours in the modern sense to enlighten the historian. Pilgrims sat no tests on their return to their homes and parishes. The recordable assessment of learning – new knowledge gained or previous knowledge enhanced or


46 Glasgow Observer, 9 May 1903, 4.
enriched – achieved during a pilgrimage simply does not exist. Learning was not a single or principal aim of the pilgrimages. It had to take its place alongside leisure and pious action in contributing to the pilgrim experience.

Perhaps some light can be thrown on the matter of learning if one asks questions about the pilgrims themselves, their backgrounds and social origins. Could it be argued from these factors that pilgrimage was a means of providing a broadening experience? Do the Scots pilgrimages provide evidence of a socially levelling process – the creation of communitas as encapsulated in the Turnerian thesis? While it is difficult to be certain about the completeness of surviving lists of pilgrims, it can, nevertheless, be asserted with confidence that the Scots pilgrimages were not ‘industrial’ pilgrimages such as were emerging in France. The names are those of a Catholic aristocracy, gentry, and middle class with the necessary financial assets in order to partake in the adventure of travel. They were, in a sense, social descendents of the Grand Tourists – and they already came with a certain level of formal education.

The extant 1893 list is printed (unlike the handwritten 1900 names) and has an air of finality about it. The most readily identifiable names are those of the clergy. Very Rev. John Provost Maguire of Glasgow (1851–1920) had been educated by Jesuits at Stonyhurst, before proceeding to Glasgow University, and Propaganda College, Rome. He would become Archbishop of Glasgow in 1902. Rev Robert Fraser D.D. (1858–1914), SCR (1877–83), was Professor at Blairs College at the time of the pilgrimage, and future Rector of SCR (1897–1913). Rev Charles J. Duthie (1841–1910) travelled with his sister. His was an especially interesting background, with schooling at Malborough College, Edinburgh Academy, and Trinity College, Dublin, before conversion to Catholicism and study at SCR (1888–90). A final example, Rev John Lister, provided another colourful ancestry. Though never a student in Rome he was born in Luxembourg and educated in Belgium at the College of Arlon and the Seminary of Bastogne before completing his studies for the priesthood at St Peter’s College, Partickhill (1874–77).

These few examples suffice to illustrate a trend. In total, the clerical pilgrims of 1893 represented a wide sweep of continental education: seven at SCR; one at Propaganda (Rome); two at Scots College, Valladolid, Spain; three at St Sulpice or Issy in the Parvisian

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47 Extant lists of Scots pilgrims to Rome survive for 1893 (SCA ED 5/123/2), 1900 (SCA ED5/125/8), and 1903 (Glasgow Observer, 18 April 1903, 4). The 1888 pilgrims are listed in John George Cox, Jubilee-Tide in Rome (London 1888) 105-6.
48 See respective entries in Johnson, Scottish Catholic Secular Clergy.
environs. Another was educated at Maynooth in Ireland, two more at Ushaw in County Durham, and only two whose seminary education was Scottish-based at St Peter's, Partickhill. The majority of these clergymen, therefore, were used to travel and living abroad and pilgrimage to Rome was broadening only in the sense of adding to a formative experience which was already an integral part of their intellectual makeup.

The 1893 list also features gentrified pilgrims such as General Lord Ralph Kerr, the son of the 6th Marquess of Lothian, the Honourable Mr and Mrs B. Maxwell, and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell. The majority of the travellers, however, are untitled and it is disappointing to have to admit that the recording only of surnames, with a mere handful of first initials (with the noted exceptions of Mr Tady Glancy and Mr Smith Sligo), makes certain identification difficult in the main. Nevertheless, what can be asserted is that the vast majority of ladies on the pilgrimage were unmarried, e.g. Miss Mullen, Miss Weir. It is only natural to speculate that many of these ladies would have been schoolteachers and, indeed, there is a distinct possibility that at least two of their number are identifiable. Miss C. MacDonald is almost certainly Catherine MacDonald, a teacher in Motherwell in this period, while Miss Gordon may well be Annie Gordon, a teacher in Galashiels who would later join the Sisters of Notre Dame in 1907.

Such speculation is not as risky as it might seem given the context of the social roles and aspirations of female teachers of the period as leaders in the local Catholic communities. Pilgrimage to Rome provided a host of opportunities for reinforcement of one's sense of status and identity. What needs emphasising is that several of the female pilgrims journeyed to Rome more than once, such as Miss Fairley of Dunkeld and Miss Rogan of Glasgow in the pilgrimages of 1900 and 1903. Miss McCabe of Glasgow joined the pilgrimages in 1893, 1900, and 1903. Without the restrictions on movement imposed by husbands or families, single women of means found an appropriate 'chaperoned' opportunity to travel and learn about the world beyond their locality through the Church-sponsored pilgrimage to the See of Peter.

Ultimately, being a pilgrim in Rome threw up a series of memorable moments. Male or female, schoolteachers could not but react emotionally to the high drama and impressive ritual of papal audiences. They, along with those of other professions, were swept up in a rhetoric heavily reminiscent of the classroom, with the pope

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49 Annie Gordon and Catherine MacDonald are both listed in B. Aspinwall, 'Catholic Teachers for Scotland: the Liverpool Connection', *IR 45* (1994) on pages 56 and 59 respectively.
addressed as 'teacher' and the pilgrims described as 'children'. These terms of reference appealed to deep-seated, psychological pre-dispositions and added powerfully to the experience. It was also, quite clearly, a rhetoric which reinforced pilgrims’ pre-existing social roles rather than taught new ones.

More than this: pilgrimage also reinforced the identity of the travellers as Scots. So often the history of the Catholic community in this period is presented as a history of the Irish in Scotland – but the accounts of pilgrimages to Rome have so little mention of Ireland or Irish connections that when links are made they stand out as unusual. In 1893, pilgrims visited the marble bust of Daniel O’Connell situated where he died in Genoa (something of a tradition amongst Catholic pilgrims from the British Isles to Rome at this time). It was a priest who is reported as striking up the song God Bless Ireland. An educated guess can identify the priest in question for amongst the pilgrims is listed Rev P. Hickey which can only be Michael P. Hickey, an Irish priest of the Waterford and Lismore Diocese on loan to the Diocese of Galloway, serving in Dumfries, Kilmarnock, Wigtown and the Birnieknowe from which he would leave for Ireland shortly after the 1893 pilgrimage. He had a fierce reputation for being a pugnacious correspondent to newspapers and staunch promoter of the cause of Irish nationalism. He would eventually become Professor of Irish at St Patrick’s College, Maynooth (1896–1909).

However, the focus was clearly on Scottish identity when it came to acting on the big stage of Rome itself. The presentation, with piper, of Scottish gifts to Leo XIII in 1888 has already been noted above. In 1893, at a Mass for the pilgrims in St Peter’s basilica on 22 February, along with the perennial Full in the panting heart of Rome and Faith of our Fathers, it was a hymn to St Andrew which was sung (to the familiar tune of Daily, daily, sing to Mary). The hymn, Great St Andrew, Friend of Jesus, made reference to the relationship between the brother-apostles, Andrew and Peter: ‘Sweet St Andrew, Simon’s brother/ Who with haste fraternal flew/ Fain with him to share the treasure/ Which at Jesus’ lips, he drew.' In 1903, the address of the Scots to Leo XIII referred to Coiumba (of Irish origin but, through his connection with Iona, strongly identified with Scotland), Kentigern,

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50 For example, the address presented to Leo XIII in 1893 on behalf of the clergy and laity of Scotland opens with ‘We, your Scottish children’, and informs the pope that ‘we have fully profited by your teaching’. (SCA ED5/123/8) This language is typical of the rhetoric of the papal audience of the period.


and Ninian – without as much as an implicit allusion to Patrick or any other Irish saint.\textsuperscript{53}

At the same time as providing a focus for identification with Scotland, pilgrimage seems to have confirmed pre-conceived notions and ideas: rather than challenging assumptions, it inspired conformity in terms of social position.\textsuperscript{54} Nor did pilgrimage blur social hierarchy. The Duke of Norfolk was paternalistic in his attention to the needs of pilgrims (e.g. at the railway station in Paris in 1893\textsuperscript{55}) but it was always someone of status who actually read the address on behalf of the laity at papal audiences. Finally, pilgrimage was not something entirely set apart from these pilgrims' normal lives. It fitted into a genteel, upper/middle-class lifestyle. Continental-educated clergy, well-travelled aristocracy and gentry, self-promoting town councillors, well-read schoolteachers and other professionals: for many of these the pilgrimage was not such a \textit{liminoid} experience but, rather, a natural continuum in the on-going narrative of their lives. The \textit{communitas} which was created was no less real in its shared joys and pains, but it was marked by the conventional social divisions and hierarchies, with episcopal, clerical and aristocratic leadership to the fore.

While much can rightly be made of the impact of the experience of pilgrimage on those most immediately involved – namely the pilgrims themselves – there remains the absorbing question of the impact pilgrimage to Rome made on home communities. One might imagine that there would be many informal descriptions of continental sights through conversations and lectures to parish sodalities. However, only two concrete references to such knowledge transactions are readily available to the historian.

In June 1900, Father Louis De Meulenaere (1856–1929), a Belgian priest in charge of the mission in Busby, gave a talk on the Scots pilgrimage of that year:

\ldots describing most minutely the buildings of St Peter's and the enthusiastic reception and audience of His Holiness the Pope in the presence of at least thirty thousand pilgrims. The Rev. lecturer described the holy staircase, consisting of 28 marble

\textsuperscript{53} SCA ED6/194/3.
\textsuperscript{54} Although a similar reference has not been found in relation to the Scots in the period under examination, it is recorded that an English pilgrimage to Rome in October 1900 made the social division very clear when it came to lodgings: 'The working-class pilgrims will be lodged at S. Martha's, which is situated close to the Vatican, while the others will be accommodated at hotels.' See \textit{The Scotsman}, 11 October 1900, 5.
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Glasgow Observer}, 11 March 1893, 5: 'Throughout both journeys he (the Duke of Norfolk) was ever busy assisting those in trouble. That there was the most outrageous mismanagement of the pilgrimage no one will question: but we are sure that no blame can be attached to the President.'
steps taken from the House of Pilate in Jerusalem. A most eloquent and interesting lecture was finished by Father Louis distributing the Pope's Jubilee medals to the congregation and also bestowing the Pope's blessing.\(^56\)

With the exception of the mention of the Scala Sancta (to be found opposite the Lateran Basilica), the truncated report of the lecture focuses on links with the person of the Pope himself: audience, commemorative medals, benediction. The latter is particularly interesting as it was customary for Leo XIII to bless pilgrims and ask priests in attendance to bless their people in his name on their return. Here is a rare reported instance of the fulfilment of that papal command. Here too was a sharing in the ultramontane life of the church. The recounting of one person's powerful experiences as a pilgrim taught the varied ranks of his listeners about membership of a cross-national institution and of the honour due its venerable visible Head.

Affording greater insight into the vicarious nature of pilgrimage amongst parish communities is the much more extended account of a lecture delivered by one of the 1903 pilgrims. Rev. John Forsyth (1861–1942) was a Scot and former student at SCR (1883–85). In 1903 he was in charge of the mission of St Cuthbert's in Edinburgh and it was there, on his return from Rome, that he presented what can only be described as a 'multimedia' extravaganza in entertaining and informing his audience.\(^57\) A range of teaching aids was employed: a limelight projector with slides provided illustrations of major features and personalities; a gramophone was used to play recordings of Italian singers; members of the church choir were engaged to sing suitable solos at appropriate moments. One senses that in the telling of his pilgrim's tale, John Forsyth intuitively made the experience a celebration of his mission's community, raising his narrative above mere personal indulgence.

A feature often employed in newspapers and journals of the era was the punctuating of reports with indications of audience reactions. They allow the historian a tantalising glimpse of the interaction between speaker and audience. There are four such markers in the Forsyth report. The first two refer to the laughter of the audience at, firstly, a convoluted joke about peas in pilgrims' meals being nicely cooked and, secondly, the rather more pragmatic point that, unfamiliar with the geography of Rome, the pilgrims were able to search out the

\(^{56}\) Glasgow Observer, 9 June 1900, 13. The report refers to him talking 'at last Mass on Sunday' but the lecture was surely given after the Mass was ended.

\(^{57}\) The very full report of the lecture, to which all references are made, is to be found in the Glasgow Observer, 30 May 1903, 3.
column of Marcus Aurelius which was close to their hotel. The two references to applause during the lecture are more revealing. They seem once again to highlight sympathy for the person of Leo XIII and a shared pride in the prestige of the Church in Rome:

It so happened that this year the Holy Father had been the representative of Our Lord upon earth, the successor of St Peter, for twenty-five years. (Applause).... As Rome is to the world the mother of all civilisation, because there is no Christian nation in the world that did not derive its civilisation from her, so the church of St Peter's is the mother church of every Catholic – it is in a sense the mother church of the Christian world. (Applause)

With evident urbanity, the Rev. Forsyth was able to draw on the pre-conceived notions, not to say prejudices, of his audience in providing evidence of the superiority of the universal Church to which they belonged. Popular ultramontanism – if such it can be termed – was nourished in the majority of Catholic adults (for whom travel to Rome would have been a pipe-dream) through such informal transference of attitudes, complementing the more formal lessons in catechism which their children were receiving in schools. What is perhaps most interesting about the references to laughter and applause in the report, however, is that they provide evidence of an engaged (if frustratingly anonymous) audience. There is a degree of attentiveness which makes one wonder about the range of educational levels and life experiences of Forsyth’s listeners – for it is certain that the priest-lecturer did not patronise his community, making reference in passing to contemporary events, such as the passing of anti-clerical legislation in France.

There is one final glimpse of the extended role played by the Roman pilgrimage – or, rather, the promise of going on pilgrimage – in the context of everyday life in a Scottish Catholic mission which merits recording. The late nineteenth century was a period of growth for groups such as the Catholic Young Men’s Society. Such sodalities sought to promote self-help and continuing education in matters of faith. This did not necessarily mean theology – the talks presented to the CYMS members were often about history and current affairs, with emphasised relevance to a Catholic audience. At a time when the temperance movement was gathering pace, it is no surprise that meetings of temperance societies followed a similar model of talk and discussion. In 1888, Rev. John Bernard Macluskey (1851–1920) delivered such a talk, based on his experiences on the 1888 pilgrimage, to the temperance group in his mission (St John’s) in Glasgow:

The Rev. chairman, in a most eloquent lecture, described the mission of the Scottish deputation to Rome, and described in his
remarks how our Holy Father the Pope received them, and after calling on members to stick firm to the pledge and let the people of Glasgow see that they were worthy of the name of Irishmen and good Catholics. Mr O’Brien then addressed the meeting and told them that if they would take their Rev. chairman’s advice and abstain from drink that in a few years there could be a deputation formed out of St John’s Temperance Society to go to Rome with a present to our Holy Father themselves, which would be a credit to St John’s parish and the country they belonged to.

There would have been many a hardened and weather-beaten face amongst the Rev. Macluskey’s listeners and, as ever, it is frustrating that we have only an allusion to the words of the authority figure of the priest in his role as moral teacher. However, the response to the priest’s words by Mr O’Brien is worthy of paused reflection. Pilgrimage to Rome was being held up as a reward for moral improvement. Whether there was any serious intent in O’Brien’s words about a possible pilgrimage is a moot point. The implied reference is interesting in itself. Certainly, Rev. Macluskey, educated in France at the seminaries of Issy and St Sulpice, would no doubt have been only too aware of the great ‘industrial’ pilgrimage of French working men which had progressed to Rome in the previous year to pay homage to the Prisoner of the Vatican. It is, perhaps, not so surprising that pilgrimage was being presented not just as a means to reformation of life but as a culminating expression of radical change already achieved. As in Rev. Forsyth’s case, Rev. Macluskey’s narrative of his experiences as a Roman pilgrim had translated itself from a mere collection of stories into a shared, community lesson in personal transformation, connected to and rooted in the real experience of working with recovering alcoholics. This is what makes O’Brien’s ‘spin’ so intriguing – a glimpse of the reconstruction of the concept of ‘pilgrimage’ amongst a largely working-class group, mainly of Irish origin.

Conclusions
At the end of this survey, only tentative conclusions can be offered for the most part, given the patchy nature of the evidence and the need for more research on the wider intellectual and social context of the pilgrimages. Yet, by the standards of the general points made at the

58 Glasgow Observer, 25 February 1888, 5.
59 Brennan, ‘Visiting “Peter in Chains”’ 748 notes that ‘organised by the Comité Central de Pelerinages, the first French pilgrimage to visit ‘Peter in chains’ arrived in Rome in May 1873.’ By October 1887, ‘1400 industrial workers, 110 industrialists and 300 clergy made up the group that came to Rome under the leadership of the “Worker’s Cardinal” Mgr Langénieux of Reims and comte Albert de Mun’ (ibid., 756).
outset of this piece, it must be asserted that, given the limited social range of the pilgrims of the period, the presentation of the pilgrimages to Rome as liminoid in the Turnerian sense is problematic. As has been argued, while not (as the popular phrase would have it) something that happened every day, the pilgrimages were in conformity with an upper and middle-class lifestyle, often allowing continental-educated clergy to revisit old haunts or to utilise knowledge learned in foreign lands in former times. The communitas of the pilgrimage party remained hierarchical in its formality – on trains, at papal audiences – but would only naturally have had some interchange between classes during the course of the trip. At the same time, while the pilgrimages were undoubtedly educational for those involved, the pilgrims have left little of substance to provide evidence of the longer-term impact on their lives. The historian is hampered, thus, in his or her ability to assess the educational value of the journey, despite a natural attraction to the idea that pilgrimage must have been, for the most part, a formative learning experience – a veritable fieldtrip, indeed – for those involved, especially given the pilgrims’ social and occupational backgrounds.

Yet it would be wrong to end this article there, with a judicious rejection of the Turnerian thesis and an embracing of the Coleman-Eade counter-argument. For there is, indeed, evidence of the Rome pilgrimage as liminoid when viewed against a particular perception of the Scottish Catholic community. That ‘world-view’ is found in what has been a major source for the pilgrimages, namely the pages of the Glasgow Observer, published from 1885 onwards. For those familiar with the newspaper, it hardly needs saying that it is heavily focused on Irish heritage and identity. The editorial vision looks across the Irish sea as if there were no stretch of water to separate the two countries. Against this background, the historian examining the reports of the Roman pilgrimages is constantly struck by how unconnected they appear with all that is being reported around them, in particular the lack of Irish allusions. In every case, the Glasgow Observer reports of the pilgrimages to Rome in 1888, 1893, 1900, and 1903, with their emphasis on Scottish-related items and symbols, seem like fish-out-of-water in an Irish sea. In sum, these narratives serve as strong reminders that the layout and text of the Glasgow Observer itself urgently need examination in an effort to understand better what expectations of educational attainment were implicit in the wordy – indeed oftentimes sophisticated – reports which it published, as well as its influence in the complicated development of Catholic communities’ perception of their identity as people living in Scotland. This article serves notice that pilgrimage to Rome (and its study with the light it throws on the roles played by convert gentry and an emerging, aspiring Catholic middle class) had its part to play in the development of that Scottish Catholic
identity – an evolving identity which continues, complex and enigmatic as it ever was.

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