In many ways it is appropriate to think of Constantinople and Jerusalem as poles of the late antique world, and as each other’s antipodes. To regard the former as being the seat of imperial and earthly power and the other the locus of heavenly power, and the travel between them dictated solely by these concerns, with pilgrims drawn to the sacred pole and bureaucrats drawn to the secular one. But to do so would not do justice to the nature of these two cities as urban centers, and the wide range of motivations for travel that the two could command. It also under-emphasizes the importance of the places in between these two nodes through which travelers of all kinds would have to pass, on a journey that took many weeks.

The fourth century saw the emergence of new roles for the ancient cities of Constantinople and Jerusalem, the former as an administrative capital, and the latter as a spiritual one. Although these roles would continue to coalesce throughout the fourth through seventh centuries, the need for communications infrastructure to connect the two cities resulted in investment throughout the period. Three main concerns would ensure that communication routes were kept open: the needs of the imperial administration and the military, the need to ensure the movement of goods and trade, and the new need that arose after the fourth century, the need to ensure the safety and comfort of pilgrims to the holy sites of Christianity. In this article I argue that it is by considering these three strands in tandem as part of an integrated system that we can appreciate the developments that went into maintaining the communications networks between the imperial city of Constantinople and the holy city of Jerusalem in the fourth through seventh centuries.

In this article I will outline more precisely what I mean by an integrated system using my chosen term, braided network. I will then demonstrate the applicability of the concept to the communications routes between Constantinople and Jerusalem, with specific reference to the fourth through seventh centuries. I will examine what drew diverse types of traveler to each city, and then place the cities in a wider regional framework by looking at the roads that connected them. Specifically, I will challenge the modern convention of referring to the trans-Anatolian route as

Note: My thanks to Konstantin Klein for the invitation to contribute to this volume. Part of the research for this article was carried out at the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED) in Istanbul as a Visiting Fellow in 2016.
the ‘pilgrims’ road’, which is misleading in light of the complex nature of the braided network.¹

**Braided Network System**

In trying to understand the interplay of politics, economics, and religious motivations on the road networks of Late Antiquity, I have found it helpful to think in terms of *braided systems*.² A braided system, like a plait of hair or fibers, is made up of several strands that are bound together, but also intersect and diverge. Like a braided river system, to extend the analogy, in which it is the force of the water through the system that determines which channels merge together, and whether new channels open up, different networks within the system have greater force at different times, influencing how the braided system as a whole develops. This is a useful way of thinking about the road system in Late Antiquity: built by the imperial administration and the military for communication and supply needs, but equally used for other purposes, like trade and pilgrimage. The latter categories have an impact on the former, as the imperial administration set up customs stations and protected roads used by merchants, investing in infrastructure, or providing protection and charitable institutions along routes used by pilgrims. The distinct motivations of each group might tug the system in new directions: a remote shrine (a hermit’s cell or healing spring) could become a popular pilgrimage site, or the source of an exotic trade item could attract merchants. But the other strands will react and follow to support or benefit from the new node. To gain a holistic picture of the networks linking Constantinople and Jerusalem in the fourth through seventh centuries, I will proceed to examine the three main identifiable strands in the braided system: 1) administrative (and military) traffic, 2) trade, and 3) pilgrimage. First, it is necessary to consider the importance of our cities for each type of travel.

**Capita Viae: Constantinople and Jerusalem**

Constantinople and Jerusalem had very different functions from one another in Late Antiquity, as seen elsewhere in this volume, and thus different attractions as destinations for travel. Both were unique among the cities of the late antique world, and Jerusalem’s status as a holy city for Christianity definitely colored much of its other

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¹ The term “Pilgrim's Road” first appears in the works of William Ramsay (1890, 197; 1899, 166), and refers – in the singular – to the route of the Bordeaux Itinerary, and is adopted by French (1981). The route has no known ancient name, and I will use the singular form for the sake of convenience. However, the tendency to romanticize the name is problematic, as I will discuss below.

² Whiting 2020, 63–65.
interactions. Nevertheless, they did both have relevance for officials and merchants, as well as for pilgrims, in multifaceted networks as we shall see below.

For Constantinople, it is easy to understand the convergence of administrative, mercantile, and religious interests on the capital of the empire. The administrative role of the city as the imperial capital is particularly salient. The imperial court as well as its attendant offices and law courts would be the primary motivator to ensure the movement of information. The movement of information of course equated to a movement of people who were the only physical means by which messages could be conveyed. In 330, Constantinople replaced Nicomedia within a Tetrarchic system which included capitals at Trier, Milan, Sirmium (and Ravenna from 402). Antioch also hosted the imperial court at one time or another; Valens spent the winter of 385 – 386 in Ankara. Rome continued to be the seat of the Senate, although a senate was also established at Constantinople.³ Until the early fifth century, the court was often itinerant, following the person of the emperor – or emperors – between capitals and on military campaigns. There was also a strong tendency towards centralization of the government, and most administrative, legal, and financial matters were addressed directly by the emperor.⁴ For example, the monk Sabas of the Judean Desert traveled to Constantinople twice, once in 511 to petition the Emperor Anastasius on doctrinal matters, and for the second time in 530 to the court of Justinian to request remission of taxes for the provinces of Palaestina Prima and Secunda following the Samaritan revolts, and funds to rebuild churches and improve security.⁵ Religious and political-administrative matters centralized around the emperor.

This centralization necessitated an investment in infrastructure. In fact, Lukas Lemcke has recently argued that the official imperial communications service, known in Late Antiquity as the cursus publicus, was restructured and experienced a “golden age” in the fourth century in part due to mobility of the emperor. This generated the need to maintain communications on diverse subjects, not just channeling information from the provinces to Constantinople when the emperor was in residence there, but needing to locate the emperor in whatever province he might be, should he be absent.⁶ As the emperor increasingly became based at Constantinople, so too did all the branches of central government, and the city’s natural advantages as a communications hub were amplified. Of course, the vast majority of information traffic issuing from the capital was not destined specifically for Jerusalem. The focus of military operations, for example, in the east was mainly on the Mesopotamian frontier, and there were communications routes to northern Mesopotamia that did not require crossing the Taurus Mountains (the main natural barrier to north-south communications between Anatolia and Syria / the Levant).⁷

³ Jones 1964, 133.
⁴ Jones 1964, 403 – 406.
The emperor also served as arbiter in religious disputes, as seen above in the case of Sabas’ first journey to Constantinople. In the fourth and early fifth centuries Constantinople lacked official ecclesiastical authority; instead it derived symbolic authority from its status as the imperial capital. It was not until the council of Chalcedon in 451 that Constantinople was elevated to a patriarchate. Nevertheless, it was a frequent location for church councils. The seven ecumenical church councils between 325 and 787 were all convened in Asia Minor – and three of them in Constantinople – partly because it served as a sort of cross-roads location between east and west, and partly to be near the emperor who had to convene the council and ratify its decisions. Bishops traveling for church councils counted as imperial officials and were granted the right to use the *cursus publicus*, although this was not necessarily a frequent occurrence. Furthermore, Constantinople’s status as a religious center was enhanced through acquisition of important relics and famous churches that made it a pilgrimage destination in its own right.

In the fourth and fifth centuries, Constantinople had an estimated population of around 500,000. The sheer scale of the urban population means that the city has been seen as a black hole into which the produce of the empire disappeared. 80,000 inhabitants were entitled to the free ration of grain and oil, the *annona civitatis*, which was mainly imported from Egypt. Although the state played a role in some of this circulation, particularly of the grain originating in Egypt, recent studies show that diverse products reached the capital via diverse exchange mechanisms. Three quarters of the city’s population was not entitled to the grain ration, and had to source their staples and extras through other means. Constantinople was the biggest center of consumption in the Late Antique world. Marlia Mundell Mango’s work on the commercial map of Constantinople has shown there were extensive and numerous facilities, both state-owned and private, dedicated to food storage, production and distribution/sale (like warehouses, bakeries, and markets). But it was not the case that products only flowed to the capital to be consumed there; Constantinople was an important production site, especially of luxury and state-controlled goods, like precious metalware. Some valuable items of Constantinopolitan workmanship doubtless found their way into the churches of the Holy Land. For example, the chronicler Theophanes records for the year 427/428 that Theodosius II sent to Jerusalem, in addition to money, “a golden cross, set with precious stones to be fixed on

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8 Lemcke 2016, 85–87.
9 The relics of Prophet Samuel were brought from the Holy Land to Constantinople overland in 407; Jerome comments on the crowds “from Palaestina to Chalcedon” (*unde Palaestina usque Chalcedonem*) who turned out to watch the progress. Jer. *Adversus Vigilantium* 5.
10 Mango 1985, 51 estimates the population of that period at 300,000 – 400,000. Durliat 1990, 259 – 261, 269, offers a higher estimate of 600,000 – 650,000.
the holy site of Calvary”. Although it is not specified it seems fair to speculate that this cross was the product of a Constantinopolitan workshop. Constantinople was more than just a center of consumption, drawing products and people in. It was also an unavoidable nodal point in the overland communications network between Europe and the East Mediterranean.

At the Jerusalem end, the story is rather different. As Benjamin Isaac drily puts it: “Roads lead to Jerusalem because people want to go there, not because it is a natural halting place or caravan city.” In Late Antiquity, the city’s place at the center of the emerging concept of a Christian ‘Holy Land,’ as a destination in its own right, had a palpable effect on the city’s status. Certainly the city’s importance in the eyes of the imperial administration and the military (in whose interests the road networks were maintained) must have diminished after the legion stationed there, the Legio X Fretensis, was relocated to Aila c. 284. Although the city may have retained cultural importance in the region, it is difficult to see it as a locus of administrative importance on the empire-wide level. The provincial capital was at Caesarea Maritima. Even within the Christian church’s administrative hierarchy, the bishop of Jerusalem was initially subordinate to the metropolitan bishop at Caesarea Maritima, until the elevation of Jerusalem to status of patriarchate in 451. However, the structuring of Jerusalem and its hinterland as a terra sancta, especially the large numbers of monastics who came to reside in the city and its environs created a significant power base in religio-political issues, enabling it to rival Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria in the east and exercise considerable influence.

What then of military or strategic matters? As seen from the case of Sabas, monks could petition the emperor on issues that could be considered matters of strategy. Sabas requested funds for a fort to protect his Judean desert monasteries “on account of the inroads of the Saracens”, much as the monks in Sinai had requested Justinian fortify their monastery. This again testifies to the influence that one strand might have on another in a braided network: the increased presence of pilgrims and monasteries and their steadily accruing wealth made them vulnerable to raiding, and thus in need of imperial resources to protect them. After the end of the third century, the Levant was not particularly heavily garrisoned. There were forts in the desert areas, along the Strata Diocletiana from the Negev to the Middle Euphrates, but not much in the way of forts in the urbanized areas. Antiochus Strategos mentions a garrison at Jericho during the Persian invasion of 614. Ironically, it was the communications routes that proved vulnerable: when the Persians invaded

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13 Theoph. AM 5920 (AD 427/8).
14 Isaac 1990, 105.
15 Cf. contribution by Kötter in this volume.
16 Cyr. Scyth. VS 72, though Sabas’ fortification was never built. Isaac 1990, 93. On Sinai, see Proc. Aed. 5,8,9.
17 Conybeare 1910, 505.
they did so not from the east, but from the west, where the coastal highway had provided them with access to Caesarea Maritima from Antioch.

Our understanding of Jerusalem as an economic operator is heavily influenced by its holy status. ‘The Economics of Byzantine Palestine’ published in 1958 by Michael Avi-Yonah mainly focuses on church finances, and despite advances in the field, not much has changed in terms of scholarly focus on the economic life of Jerusalem itself. The church was a major consumer of luxury products like metalware and textiles, probably mainly acquired as gifts. However, for example the large amount of incense used in the liturgy could make Jerusalem a logical market for products from the Red Sea and Arabian trading circuits in a pattern of direct exchange.

Pilgrimage is often emphasized as an economic force, and that pilgrims’ desire for tokens and memorabilia drove manufacture. Pilgrim tokens are assumed to have been produced in Jerusalem based on the iconography matching loca sancta there. Hexagonal glass pilgrim flasks with both Christian and Jewish motifs are also presumed to have been produced in or just outside Jerusalem in the sixth and seventh centuries. Pottery typology indicates that Jerusalem might have been a center for regional types of pottery, but previous research has focused particularly on types that are associated with religious contexts (candlestick/slipper lamps). This can be considered the direct impact of one strand in the braided network (pilgrimage) on another (trade and manufacture). However, so far the assumption that Jerusalem is the production center for these goods is based on typology rather than petrographic analysis to determine the source of the clay, and to my knowledge no production sites have been found in Jerusalem or its immediate environs, but the variety of pottery found in the city from regions adjacent to Jerusalem does suggest that Jerusalem was part of local regional circulation of products not exclusively associated with pilgrimage.

Jerusalem’s activity in the regional agrarian economy has been investigated in relation to the extensive capacity for wine production at monasteries near Jerusalem,

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18 Cf. Kingsley 2004, 74–78 for a critique of the focus on ecclesiastical “artificial economy”, and suggestions for reframing the question.
19 Eivind Seland (2012) has studied the fourth-century Liber Pontificalis for evidence of exotic products acquired through trading networks in the Red Sea for use in the liturgy in the city of Rome; it seems logical that Jerusalem would have been reliant on similar trading networks.
20 Rahmani 1993.
21 Barag 1970.
23 One type of lamp is known to have been produced at Beit Nattif, 20 km SW of Jerusalem, in the fourth to fifth centuries. Gardner 2014, 286.
24 Magness 1993, 182.
for the production of so-called Gaza wine. Gaza wine gets its name from the amphorae which transported it around the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, which were produced mainly at Gaza and Ascalon, but also at other sites in Palestine (both monastic and secular) and even at Aila on the Red Sea. An agricultural boom in the Byzantine period led to expansion in many previously marginal areas, particularly in the Negev Desert southwest of Jerusalem, and installations related to wine production are prevalent throughout Palestine. This wine was drunk in Constantinople at the coronation of Justin II and was praised by Gregory of Tours. Of course, part of its desirability and ‘brand’ derived from its origin in the Holy Land, and it is possible that the monks in and around the Holy City were actively involved in this economic activity.

The previous sections have demonstrated the wide range of activities taking place in each of the capita viae of our imaginary journey, and the different kinds of motivations for travelers to make that journey. The analogy of braided networks that simultaneously cater to the needs of various kinds of travelers can be extended: journeys making use of these networks and infrastructure need not have exclusively one motivation. Particularly for late antiquity, the way that Christianity permeates many aspects of daily life (and the way it colors our sources, many of which are hagiographies), means that many journeys involved prayer or a visit to a shrine and could take on attributes of pilgrimage. This can often make it difficult to decode what is a pilgrimage and what is not, and is further reason why thinking in terms of braided networks can be useful.

For example, the journeys famously made by empresses such as Helena (in 327) and Eudocia (in 438) to Jerusalem are often referred to in scholarship as pilgrimages because of their acts of piety and patronage there. Socrates tells us that Eudocia’s first journey to Jerusalem in 438 was made in answer to a vow, and Sozomen tells us that Helena traveled to Jerusalem for the purpose of prayer. However, even among ancient sources the pilgrimage motivation is disputed, and a wider look at the sources shows us that these visits to Jerusalem took place as part of larger journeys that themselves are modeled on the imperial grand tour (iter principis). Eusebius of Caesarea describes Helena as journeying through the eastern provinces in imperial magnificence and notes that she bestowed countless benefits on cities,

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27 Kingsley 2002.
29 Socr. HE 7,47; Sozom. HE 2,1.
30 Holum 1990.
individuals, and soldiers, dispensing both money, charity, and justice.\textsuperscript{31} Evagrius Scholasticus, describing Eudocia’s first ‘pilgrimage’ notes of her visit to Antioch that she used it to proclaim her affinity with Antioch’s philosophical (pagan) tradition, and to perform acts of civic patronage by rebuilding the city’s walls.\textsuperscript{32} To Eudocia is also attributed a poem discovered at the baths at Hammat Gader near the shores of Lake Tiberias. The poem is classicizing in style, yet in the sixth century at least the same baths were regarded as a place of miraculous healing.\textsuperscript{33} Is Eudocia’s presence there an act of civic or religious patronage? Sometimes the strands in the braided network are not at all distinct.

Another example of a journey where the strands are indistinct is the journey from Jerusalem to Constantinople made by the aristocrat-turned-ascetic Melania the Younger in 436. She traveled from Jerusalem to Constantinople to be involved in the marriage negotiations of the daughter of Theodosius II to Valentinian III, and to convert her uncle who was a pagan senator.\textsuperscript{34} Thus the purpose of her visit was partly official, partly personal and partly religious. Her uncle managed to supply her with some sort of permit to use the facilities of the \textit{cursus publicus}. Although she was nominally traveling in the guise of an imperial official, the journey offered her many opportunities to demonstrate her holiness. She often resided in churches instead of inns, like a pilgrim. The power of her sanctity was able to surmount bureaucratic hurdles. The fact that it took the station master at Tripoli some time to realize that this senator’s niece wielding a dubious official permit and trying to requisition more animals than she was entitled to was in fact a holy woman on a mission from God, shows that in Late Antiquity the lines could be very blurred indeed.

\section*{The Journey: Routes and Processes}

And what then of the process of getting from Constantinople to Jerusalem or vice versa? Not everyone could be a Sophia and be miraculously transported from one to the other.\textsuperscript{35} For most this meant a long journey of over a month, passing through localities each with their own characteristics and roles to play in regional and inter-regional networks.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the routes that ‘directly’ connected Constantinople and Jerusalem are far from direct, instead passing through a series of nodes, and relying on a combination of land and sea travel. They rely on routes and nodes that were originally conceived of for different purposes. The trans-Anato-

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{31} Euseb. \textit{VC} 3,44.  \\
\textsuperscript{32} Evagr. \textit{HE} 1,20 – 21. He is the one who expresses skepticism of “other historians” who claim Eudocia’s motives were solely religious.  \\
\textsuperscript{34} Gerontius \textit{Vit. Mel. Jun.} 50 – 56.  \\
\textsuperscript{35} Cf. Klein this volume.
\end{flushright}
lian highway to Antioch (known in modern scholarship as the Pilgrim’s Road) was a military-administrative highway, as was the ‘coastal corridor’ connecting Antioch and Alexandria via the Mediterranean coast. These were adapted and maintained in Late Antiquity for the purpose of integrating Jerusalem into the communications network.

In the following section I will trace the main overland routes as divided into three stages (Constantinople-Ancyra-Antioch, the coastal highway between Antioch and the coast of Palaestina, and the overland journey between the coast and Jerusalem). I will consider the route both as geographically determined by the physical landscape but also consider the cultural landscape of cities and their function as nodes in braided networks in their own right. I will also consider the very specific impact of pilgrimage on the routes.

Before focusing on the overland routes, a brief consideration of the maritime routes would be pertinent. Late Antique Constantinople was a port city, separated from the Asian landmass by the Bosphorus (c. 3 km from the mouth of the Golden Horn to Chalcedon); Jerusalem is located 50 km inland and not connected to any navigable waterways. Any journey from one to the other would necessitate a combination of water and land travel.

To access the Levantine coast from Constantinople requires sailing through the Sea of Marmara and out the Dardanelles into the Aegean, essentially island-hopping from one island to another, or tramping along the coast, which provided opportunities to sleep on land (avoiding night sailing) and refreshing the supplies of fresh water on board. A ship could also keep within sight of the coastline, avoiding the open sea. Rhodes and Cyprus are important island stops for accessing the Levantine coast. The frequency of small islands and the shape of the coastline of Asia Minor are both helpful and harmful as they could serve as both a refuge and a hazard. The sheer number of shipwrecks found along coast of Asia Minor from the Bronze Age onward gives an idea of the statistics of running afoul of the local geology.

The coast of the Levant is rather different, a straight coastline with sandy beaches but exposed to the open sea and wind. Anchorages are frequent with a port on average every 6 km. The large number of available ports would give many alternatives to a traveler, particularly in the case of pilgrims making their way to Jerusalem. Even ports that did not possess a direct inland access towards Jerusalem or other cities would be easily linked by the coastal highway to another city that joined with the road network of the interior. For example, Dor (Tantura) was apparently not directly connected by an official highway with the interior, and traffic from Dor likely made its way either south to Caesarea Maritima (a distance of about 13 km) or north to Ptolemais (c. 35 km) before linking up with inland routes.

Kingsley 2004, 28–33, on historical versus present-day conditions.
De Graauw/Maione-Downing/McCormick 2013.
The main advantage of sea travel compared to land travel was speed. For example, between 401 and 402, Porphyry of Gaza sailed from Gaza to Constantinople, via Rhodes. The journey there took 20 days – 10 to Rhodes and a further 10 to Constantinople, and the return journey, aided by the prevailing northerly winds, took only 10 days.\(^3\) The journey by land between Gaza and Constantinople could be reckoned at anywhere between 20 and 54 days.\(^4\) The disadvantages of sea travel were the dangers, unpredictability, and dependence on the seasons and weather. There was also the cost of chartering passage to consider. For travelers with permission to use the services of the cursus publicus, the permit issued by the state was only valid for travel by land.

The cursus publicus, in addition to only servicing travel overland, also only operated on roads classed as public highways, viae publicae. Nevertheless, it is estimated that the Roman Empire was covered by a network of some 80,000 kilometers of public highways.\(^5\) These public highways had two main functions, first to connect destinations of importance (the capita viae), and second, to achieve that connection in the most efficient way possible. The most efficient – and historical sources suggest, the most used – overland route between Constantinople and Jerusalem relying on the viae publicae consists of three stages. The first is the traversing of the Anatolian interior and crossing the Taurus mountains to Antioch (the so-called Pilgrim’s Road). The second stage is the coastal corridor following the Mediterranean shore south from Antioch to one of any number of cities of coastal Palestine from which to commence the third stage: journeying across the interior towards Jerusalem.

The roads and routes that were used to connect Constantinople and Jerusalem were of course not an innovation of the fourth century. The famous imperial roads followed ancient routes that were for a large part constrained by natural features of the landscape. For example, any route connecting Asia Minor with the Levant must cross the Taurus Mountains: the most natural place to do this is through the so-called Cilician Gates (Gülek Boğazı). This is true even today, and the Tarsus-Ankara highway squeezes through the pass at an elevation of 1050 m above sea level.

In addition to mountain passes, other naturally or physically predetermined factors, such as river crossings, the availability of drinking water, or the need for overnight accommodation will affect all travelers in our braided system equally. If they are traveling by foot, most persons, regardless of motivation, will travel at more or

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38 Marcus Diaconus Vit. Porph. 26 – 27, 34, 37 and 56 – 57.
39 The estimates derive from a combination of documents. For Gaza-Antioch, the papyrus account of Theophanes (ca. AD 320) gives a duration of 14 days. Matthews 2006, 61. For Antioch-Constantinople the magister officiorum Caesarius (AD 387) took 6 days in a mule-drawn chariot. Lib. Or. 21.15. The Bordeaux Traveler (AD 333) records 40 (overnight) stops for the same journey. Itin. Burd. 570 – 581.
40 To this can be added approximately 320,000 km of secondary roads. Sidebotham 2011, 125. The confirmation of a road as a via publica depends on milestones and itineraries. Roads that are archaeologically attested but where no official evidence survives may well have been viae publicae, but are more safely categorized as highways or ‘major thoroughfares’.
less the same rate (5 km/h on level terrain, or 25–30 km per day) and require lodging at identical intervals. Passages through more difficult terrain will require infrastructure as well. Egeria mentions stopping overnight at the inn at Mansucrene after a day’s travel, before climbing to the Cilician Gates the following morning (an effort which doubtless necessitated plenty of rest, and plenty of daylight). Routes will also tend to follow the path of least resistance. As these are often determined by natural features they tend to be resistant to change, and so Roman engineered roads of the 1st–3rd centuries are found laid over routes of much greater antiquity, and modern highways follow their course today.

Stage 1: Constantinople–Antioch

Let us begin with the stage from Constantinople to Antioch (Fig. 20). In tracing the route of this first stage, the very first natural barrier is the Bosporus. Constantinople’s location controlling the waterways of the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara was in many ways considered ideal, but presented problems for overland connectivity, considering that Constantinople was also the pinnacle of the Balkans and Thrace, the terminus for the Via Egnatia. A bridge was constructed under Justinian across the Golden Horn upstream of the modern Atatürk Bridge, but did not solve the problem of connecting the European side of the Bosporus with the Asian side. This was resolved by relying on ships and ferries to take passengers across, and was clearly not regarded as much of an obstacle, as casual notes in the itineraries of the Bordeaux Traveler and Egeria indicate. The route known as the Pilgrim’s Road then follows the coast to Nicaea before turning eastwards towards Ancyra (Ankara) in central Anatolia. From there the route turns south, following the foothills of the Cappadocian mountains, keeping to the eastern edge of the featureless central Anatolian plateau and the Tuz Gölü Salt Lake, passing through Tyana and then through the Taurus Mountains at the Cilician Gates. On the other side of the mountains it passes through the metropoleis of Cilicia – Tarsus, Adana, and Mopsuestia (Yakapınar/Misis) – before crossing the Amanus Mountain range, via the ‘Amanid Gates’ (Kara Kapi) squeezing between the mountains and the coast at Porta/Portella (‘Jonah’s Pillars’) another mountain crossing known as the Syrian Gates at Belen south of Alexandria ad Issum (Iskenderun), which placed the traveler within a day’s journey of Antioch. This route is just over 1000 km long. It served in the Roman period when it was constructed, and in

41 Itin. Eg. 10,7.
42 Chron. Pasch. 618,14–19; the Notitia Urbs Constantinopolitanae (mid-fifth c.) also mentions a wooden bridge across the Golden Horn. Seeck 1876, 240.
43 Itin. Burd. 571, Itin. Eg. 23,8. However, the emperor Julian forbade captains from ferrying some troublesome petitioners to Constantinople, and they found themselves stranded at Chalcedon. Amm. Marc. 22,6,4.
Late Antiquity as well, as an interregional highway. Its main purpose was to provide overland connection between Europe on the one hand and Syria, the Levant, and beyond, on the other, and the pass through the Taurus was – and is – the only direct way to achieve that.

Although we know from historical sources that this was the preferred overland route of many travelers including the Bordeaux Traveler, Egeria, Melania the Younger, and Caesarius the *magister militum*, it was by no means the only route across Anatolia. Compare, for example, the itineraries of the Apostle Paul in the first century AD, to cities like Iconium and Pisidian Antioch, Ephesus and Alexandria Troas on the Aegean, none of which are on the Pilgrim’s Road. Paul’s route turns westward

\[\text{Fig. 20: Sketch map of routes in Anatolia and coastal highway to Alexandria, © M. Whiting.}\]
north of the Cilician Gates, following the first-century AD road known as the Via Se-
baste, connecting the Taurus pass with Ephesus via Iconium. ⁴⁴

On the Peutinger Map (of first- to fourth-century date ⁴⁵), the Pilgrim’s Road route
is not even accurately represented. From this document one would gain the impres-
sion that there was no direct link from the Cilician Gates to Tyana, but that traffic
had to pass by way of Iconium (Konya – Yconio on the Peutinger Map). The earliest
milestone evidence along the corresponding section of the Pilgrim’s Road dates to
the reign of Caracalla (AD 216); the inscription specifically refers to repairs on the
roads and bridges, thus the initial paving predates this inscription. ⁴⁶

Paul’s objective was to proselytize and engage with communities – and the cen-
tral Anatolian plateau was comparatively devoid of cities. The advantage of the Pil-
grim’s Road is its speed, the relative levelness of its terrain compared to the western,
coastal areas. The coast of Asia Minor is fairly mountainous, with deep river valleys
running perpendicular to the coastline, making coastal overland communications
difficult and slow. The river deltas are prone to siltation and the ground is marshy
and at risk of seasonal flooding. The Pilgrim’s Road, skirting the eastern edge of
the central Anatolian plateau/Konya plain is altogether quicker, even if it does
miss some of the cultural highlights.

The focus on Jerusalem as a destination for pilgrims in Late Antiquity overshad-
ows what was perhaps the most important nodal point in the communications net-
work of the East Mediterranean: the city of Antioch. Antioch was, at its height in the
fourth and fifth centuries, a city of some 200,000 people, embellished with temples,
churches, colonnades, shops, public baths and other public amenities. It was an im-
portant center for philosophical learning, and thus also became an important locus
of theological learning as well, which would see Antioch be prominent in the theo-
logical disputes of the age. Antioch also had a religious landscape with many
churches and relics, including the relics of Simeon the Elder Stylite.

In the late third century, Antioch was made the capital of the administrative dio-
cese of Oriens, which extended from southeast Anatolia east to the Tigris, and south
to the Red Sea. As such, it was the residence of the comes Orientis, the magister mil-
itum per orientem, and the governor of the province of Syria. It was also the seat of
the Patriarchate of the East. For administrative purposes, thus, Antioch was the most
important city of the Near East, its status similar to that of Alexandria in Egypt. Anti-
och served as the imperial capital under Constantius II and Valens, because of its
proximity to the Mesopotamian frontier. It is sometimes characterized as a ‘frontier

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-fourth century, see French 1994; for an illustrated guide, see Cimok

⁴⁵ The version preserved today is a thirteenth-century copy of a map probably drawn up in the early
to mid-fourth century, itself possibly based on a first- or second-century original. For a recent discus-
sion on the dating, see Talbert 2010. See also French 1981, Table 9a–11a, 118–122.

⁴⁶ RRMAM 3.3, No. 166: Viam Tauri vetustate [conl]apsam conplanatis montibus e/lt caesis rupibus ac
dilata[tis i]tineribus cum pontibus instituitis restituit.
capital’ despite being hundreds of miles from the actual frontier, since it served as the base of operations and winter camp for a number of Persian campaigns, notably during the reigns of Julian, Justinian, Phocas (led by future emperor Maurice), and possibly Heraclius in the 630’s.\textsuperscript{47} This role fell to Antioch in part for geographic reasons. The northern reaches of the Orontes river valley provided transverse access to the interior of Syria and thence the Euphrates and Tigris frontiers. Antioch also had access to the sea via its port at Seleucia Pieria, and north-south communications, as we have seen, via the coastal highway.\textsuperscript{48} The agricultural hinterland of Antioch, which included the much-studied Limestone Massif, was greatly expanded in the late antique period and was capable of supporting the large population of the city and a wintering army (with a few notable exceptions, e.g. under Julian). Antioch was also an important terminus for long-distance trade, as the same routes that in war time led to the Mesopotamian frontier also connected with known trading posts e.g. at Batnae (Suruç)\textsuperscript{49} Antioch was geographically best placed to gather together the roads from the interior, and disperse them north and south. In the sixth century Antioch experienced repeated earthquakes, fire, plague and two sacks by the Persians. However, there was no real possibility for Antioch, however beset, to fade into obscurity – its function as a hub was too important. In many ways the same goes for the other cities of the Levantine coast: the Piacenza Pilgrim (c. 570) described that many of the cities were partly ruined, but it was unavoidable that he should nonetheless pass through them in order to reach Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{Stage 2: The Coastal Highway}

From Antioch the road headed south, re-joining the coast at Laodicea (Latakia). Especially through Lebanon (\textit{provincia Phoenicia}) the coast road is constrained to a narrow corridor by the steep Anti-Lebanon mountains rising to the east. Recent studies have highlighted some of the communications challenges on the routes inland to Baalbek and the Bikaa Valley.\textsuperscript{51} The Mount Carmel range marks the southernmost point of these inaccessible coastal mountains, and after Ptolemais (Akko) the interior of the Levant becomes more accessible. The distance from Antioch to Ptolemais is 445 km. The coastal highway continues down the length of the Mediterranean coast, all the way to the Nile Delta and Alexandria, and was thus yet another crucial

\textsuperscript{47} Kaegi 2003, 230.
\textsuperscript{48} I have elsewhere expressed skepticism about the Orontes itself as the channel for transport of goods, there are many rapids that make navigation uncertain, and furthermore, Seleucia Pieria is not located at the mouth of the Orontes. Instead, the river valley provides a convenient route for land transport. Whiting 2017.
\textsuperscript{49} Amm. Marc. 16,3,3. records that an international trading fair took place there every September.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Itin. Plac.} 1–2.
\textsuperscript{51} Abou Diwan/Doumit 2017.
interregional highway. The coastal road is quite ancient, its antiquity is epigraphically attested for example at the Nahr al-Kalb gorge 15 km north of Berytus (Beirut) where numerous inscriptions from the 13th century BC to the 21st century attest to its importance as a thoroughfare. Another indication that this road was an interregional highway rather than a regional one, is that the Roman road does not pass directly through all of these cities. Some of them, having a stronger relationship with the sea than the land, are located on promontories that would require the road to detour. Thus the Roman road probably passed directly through Berytus and Laodicea (Latakia) but by-passed Byblos and Tyre, with milestones marking the junctions for transverse roads to these cities.

The coastal highway continues south from Ptolemais toward Caesarea Maritima, where physical remains of the road are attested between Caesarea and ‘Atlit, south of Haifa (Fig. 21). The milestones found along the road indicate roadworks were carried out between the second and third centuries; no milestone records the earliest phase of the engineered road. The extension of the road south to Joppa (Jaffa) was repaired in the Byzantine period, evidence of the route’s continued importance as part of a continuous artery connecting the entire eastern Mediterranean, and the ongoing investment in its infrastructure.

**Stage 3: Inland Towards Jerusalem**

South of the Mount Carmel mountain range it was possible to depart from the coastal highway at any of the larger settlements (e.g., Caesarea Maritima, Joppa, Ascalon, Gaza) that served as junctions for the public highways, and turn inland towards Jerusalem. The Piacenza Pilgrim departed for the interior from Ptolemais, touring the northern sites of the Galilee first, then traveling to the Jordan River and then westwards towards Jerusalem. The seventh-century pilgrim itinerary of Epiphanius, which recommends Tyre (40 km north of Ptolemais) as a port for the Holy Land, may have a similar itinerary in mind.

From the coastal plain the elevation of the terrain increases at steady increments. To look at it on the map, there are north-south bands of increasing elevation, with transverse routes of access at various points. To look at it from the ground, the landscape is hilly, and the routes skirt the peaks of the hills. Each city serves as a junction for several other routes to other cities. Caesarea Maritima has at least

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52 Paine/Hitchcock 1873, 111–112; the most recent inscription dates from 2000, see Lindering 2012 (2018).
53 Goodchild 1949, 106.
54 Roll 1996, 553.
55 Roll 1996, 558.
56 Itin. Plac. 4 – 17.
57 Epiphanius Hagiopolita Itin. 1.
four inland routes departing from it; Jerusalem likewise has five roads entering it from various directions. Each city is well-connected, but given the sheer number of roads and junctions, the possible permutations are numerous, and it is clear that various routes might have been preferred for different reasons. For those interested in holy sites, from Caesarea Maritima it was possible to arrive at Jerusalem passing through Antipatris, Lydda-Diospolis and Emmaus/Nicopolis, the route taken for example by Paula and Jerome, and completed in reverse by the Bordeaux Traveler.\footnote{Hier. Ep. 108,8.} It was equally possible to take the coastal road from Caesarea further
south to Joppa, and then to towards Jerusalem via Lydda-Diospolis etc., with little apparent difference in distance covered or time required.⁵⁹

As I have been demonstrating throughout, the main purpose of the roads that linked Constantinople to Jerusalem was not to provide a direct connection between the two cities, instead the route took advantage of existing connections (to Antioch or Alexandria) to make it possible to complete the journey in what I have separated into three stages. Furthermore, even in Late Antiquity this route was not maintained exclusively for Christian (i.e. pilgrimage) purposes, but the imperial administration and military, as well as trade, had a significant share in the traffic along these routes.

Nevertheless, the Christianization of the Roman Empire with Jerusalem as its spiritual center did create new pressures on the road network. In the following section I will explore how the existing road network responded to the needs of Christian users, and how the interplay of the different groups in the braided system remained active.

**Infrastructure Maintenance, Patronage, and Civic Responsibility**

To resume our metaphor of the braided network, in the case of infrastructure that serves a wide variety of users, who is responsible for maintaining it? The government? The Church? The emperor? Typically of Late Antiquity, the answer is all three. Emperors or high government officials like the governors or prefects financed large infrastructure projects, while local officials were responsible for day-to-day maintenance. Changes throughout the period in responsibility for communications infrastructure are a by-product of many of the social changes taking place in the fourth and fifth centuries and beyond. These changes include the so-called “flight of the curiales” and decline of classical civic administration, and the concomitant rise of Christianity.⁶⁰

Up to the mid-fourth century, road repairs were often recorded on milestones, usually bearing the name of the ruling emperor and other times the names of lesser officials (including those responsible for commissioning the work). Road work carried out as part of a military campaign might have the name of the legion who provided the labor. Including the name of the emperor was a propaganda statement of imperial hegemony. Many of the milestones recorded along the Pilgrim’s Road, along the coastal highway, and in Palaestina, have some primary but mainly secondary inscriptions of Constantine and his sons from the period 333–337, and it might be tempting to read them as endorsements of the new Christian Holy Land. However,

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⁵⁹ This route is described in reverse in Theodosius’ *De situ terrae sanctae*, 4. It would probably take three to four days.

⁶⁰ Whittow 1990.
this should not be seen as an overtly Christian message or a promotion of the road for Christian pilgrimage. Instead the message is one of political and dynastic unity and stability following the civil wars of Constantine’s early reign and the execution of his eldest son, Crispus.\textsuperscript{61} Two milestones of Julian (361–363) were discovered along the so-called ‘Pilgrim’s Road,’ one in Pontus/Bithynia and one near Ancyra\textsuperscript{62}; it is clear that the Hellenophile Julian was not promoting Christian travel to the Holy Land. Instead it is likely related to his campaigns against Persia and sojourn in Antioch.

The lack of the overtly Christian associations even by the late fourth century is further made clear by a road inscription at Nahr al-Kalb commemorating the widening of a road cut in the rock during the governorship of Proc[ullus in 382–383. This inscription invokes a pagan god (the Phoenician god, Malek, associated with Zeus), and is written in Homeric Greek intended to appeal to the intellectual elite of the curial classes of the Hellenized cities (who were still in charge of road maintenance).\textsuperscript{63} The strongly pagan intellectual character of the cities of Phoenicia – and corresponding lack of sites Christian holy sites – is likely why Jerome glosses over them when describing Paula’s journey to the Holy Land after arriving at Antioch in 384.\textsuperscript{64}

In many ways, the Nahr al-Kalb inscription is emblematic of the state of affairs in the fourth century. In this period, ordinary maintenance of roads, bridges, etc. was primarily the responsibility of local city governments (the boulê or curia) and their elite members, the curiales. They were also responsible for the operation of the cursus publicus within their city’s territory. Responsibility for the cursus publicus was a munus – a civic obligation – bestowed on the member of the curia elected to the position of manceps for a period of five years. Fodder for the animals was provided for by the annona, i.e. tax revenue, but the manceps had to make up any shortfall from his own resources. This and other civic munera were thus increasingly unappealing and unviable to local curiales. Legislation throughout the fourth and fifth centuries attempted to enforce this obligation, stressing that no class be exempt from contributing to road maintenance – these laws expanded to include imperial domains and the Church among those responsible for maintaining roads and bridges.\textsuperscript{65}

Bishops, based largely in cities, gradually assumed much of the administrative authority that had previously resided with the curiales, who were abandoning their

\textsuperscript{61} See Goodchild 1949, 117–127, Fischer/Isaac/Roll 1996, 295, Isaac/Roll 1982, 95, Thomsen 1917, 93. On milestones in the fourth century and beyond, see Whiting 2015. In fact, of the 128 milestones dating from the reign of Constantine found in Asia Minor, only eight are on the ‘Pilgrim’s Road’.

\textsuperscript{62} RRMAM 3.3, No. 87(A), 139, RRMAM 3.2, No. 115(4), 184–185.

\textsuperscript{63} Hall 2004, 144–145, Hajjar 1990, 2505.

\textsuperscript{64} Hier. Ep. 108,8: Omitto Coeles Syriae, et Phoenicis iter (neque enim hodoeporicon ejus disposui scribere): ea tantum loca nominabo, quae sacris Volumnibus continentur. The Piacenza Pilgrim c. 570 describes the inhabitants of Sidon as very bad people (hominis in ea pessimi), possibly a comment on their lack of piety? Itin. Plac. 2.

\textsuperscript{65} Cod. Theod. 15,3,1–6. A law of Arcadius and Honorius dated to 399 specifically mentions the ‘immense ruin of the highways’. Cod. Theod. 15,3,4.
stations for less onerous positions (e.g. posts in the imperial administration – or joining the Church). Thus the Church was responsible not only for ecclesiastical matters but also the organizing of charity and hospitality (which included pilgrims), but also road infrastructure and bridges. A bridge located ca. 50 km southwest from Ankara has an inscription saying it was completed by the Bishop Paul. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus in northwest Syria, noted that he paid for two bridges to be built near the city “from the revenues of [his] see”. This was still local government, but in a different guise.

In more complicated cases, however, it was necessary for the higher echelons of government to get involved. For example, a series of three bridges built leading to Seleucia Pieria in 524 was overseen by the comes Orientis. In De Aedeficiis (thus occurring pre-550), Procopius records a series of complex bridge repairs in Cilicia, at Tarsus, Adana, and Mopsuestia, attributed by the author to Justinian himself (and thus presumably paid for from state revenue). Procopius states that the condition of the bridges had made the road (which in this case is the Pilgrim’s Road) impassable, and that their condition was due to “the neglect of the authorities” (τῇ τῶν προετοιμασιῶν ἀλλιγμαρίᾳ). Whether we are to infer corruption or simply a lack of funds, clearly the by now foundering local government system had broken down, and imperial intervention was necessary to restore the bridges: their role in sustaining this key interregional communications route was of too much importance to let them crumble.

As society changed, the Christianization of infrastructure and amenities became more pervasive. A useful example is the village of Sykeon in Galatia (ca. 300 km SW of Constantinople). Justinian built a bridge there, and a church next to the bridge “to be a refuge for travelers in winter”. However, we know from the vita of the holy man/bishop Theodore of Sykeon that within a short time a secular lodging house catering to imperial officials and merchants also appeared at this important halting point. However, once Theodore gained fame as a holy man, the place became a

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67 Theodor. Ep. 81, dated c. 449.
68 IGLS III.2 no. 1142. Similarly, at Philadelphia in Isauria, the comes Orientis Auxitius is credited with having spent 3,000 solidi towards restoring a bridge sometime in the fifth or sixth century. Bean and Mitford 1970, 219 –220, no. 251; PLRE II, 206 = Auxitius.
71 Procopius also mentions a new road cut through the mountains north of Antioch on this route. Proc. Aed. 5,5,1 –3. According to David French, an Austrian team has observed traces of a rock-cut road in that area. French 1993, 454. Road works in Cilicia and Cappadocia under Justinian are not exclusively confined to this highway, however.
73 Vit. Theod. Syceon. 3, 6. Theodore was born in the reign of Justinian, and died in 613.
place of regional pilgrimage, and, thanks to its location, one of interregional pilgrimage as well.

The ‘Pilgrim’s Road’

The Christianization of travel infrastructure to pilgrimage is most evident in Palaestina, in the region around Jerusalem which abounded with sites to which could be assigned Biblical associations, and could thus be incorporated into a Christian travel network, providing the appropriate kinds of hospitality to pilgrims. This is particularly evident on the route from Jerusalem to Jericho and the Jordan River, where roadside churches and hostels at regular intervals (in part thanks to imperial patronage) appropriated and mimicked the facilities of secular road networks. This formed a kind of *cursus sanctus*, one might say, mirroring the structure of the *cursus publicus*. We also see this on the Joppa-Jerusalem route with the construction of roadside monasteries, but also with state involvement in security installations, like watchtowers and guardhouses. Even sites with no overt scriptural provenance could integrate themselves into the *cursus sanctus*, by appropriating a Biblical locus, by acquiring relics, and by building churches and religious buildings. Emmaus/Nikopolis came to be associated with the resurrected Christ’s meeting with his two discipies, although the Emmaus of the New Testament story is a different location. The church at the port city of Dor was likely sanctified through the acquisition of relics; a reliquary was found in a side chapel during excavations. The empress Eudoxia endowed a pilgrim hostel at a monastery near Gaza.

What then of the other regions through which pilgrims, particularly those traveling over land, had to pass, namely Phoenicia and the provinces of central Anatolia? Both of these regions were holdouts of paganism throughout the fourth century and beyond and lacked a ready-made Christian topography, which had to be developed through the promotion of martyr cults and holy persons. Very few pilgrim accounts mention Phoenicia in any detail. Jerome skips it for lacking sites of interest. Along the densely urbanized Levantine coast, hospitality through church authorities could have been readily available, as we saw with the journey of Melania the Younger to Constantinople. The Piacenza Pilgrim in the 570’s notes that many of these cities were in a ruinous state, but that Ptolemais had a great number of monasteries.

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74 Hunt 1982, 54 refers to an “alternative system of Christian hospitality”.
75 Fischer et al. 1996, watchtower at Khirbet al Atrash, 124–125, guardhouse at Khirbet ad Dureihima, 149.
76 Dauphin 1993.
77 Marcus Diaconus, Vit. Porph. 53.
78 *Itin. Plac.* 1–2. The cities had been damaged by an earthquake in the reign of Justinian: *tempore Justiniani imperatoris subuersa est a terrae motu.*
Attempting to answer the question of pilgrim-specific amenities on the route through central Anatolia is a bit more complex. The area that the route passes through is vast and consists of numerous micro-regions. The archaeological investigations are sporadic, and synthesizing studies are few. In his 1981 study of the Pilgrim’s Road, French described most of the roadside settlements as ‘mounds’. More recent archaeological investigations have been carried out at some sites, but it is still difficult – and beyond the scope of this article – to piece together a coherent story for the demographic and cultural landscape for the regions through which the Pilgrim’s Road passed, and harder still to assess how this might have directly served pilgrims between Constantinople and Jerusalem. The indicators present in other regions, such as saints’ shrines and monasteries specifically related to the highway, prove elusive, particularly in the archaeological record. Four points seem relevant with regard to reconstructing a Christian pilgrimage route through Anatolia: 1) the settlement pattern and its characteristics, 2) the process of Christianization of the area, 3) the Christian legends associated with localities, and 4) the evidence from pilgrim authors regarding the sacred topography of Anatolia and Asia Minor.

Firstly, the settlement pattern. In contrast to the Levantine coast, for example, the Pilgrim’s Road passes through a landscape that is not heavily urbanized. While there are cities in central Anatolia, in most cases the road does not pass through the city itself, but through its rural hinterland, populated mainly with villages and the occasional imperial estate. Even settlements that have the official status of ‘city,’ like Faustinopolis, may have been little more than villages. Furthermore, the road stations whose names are known to us from literary sources might not have been situated in the settlement from which they derive their name. For example, French identified the road station for Andabilis as a site located about 4 km from the village of Andabilis (Yeniköy), the ‘parent site’ for the road stop. The reasons for selecting a location for a road stop are different for those for selecting a permanent settlement (e.g., accessibility vs. defensibility). Sites like these do not automatically benefit from urban amenities, especially those that could be provided by a city-based ecclesiastical administration. Gregory of Nazianzus evoked life in one such a roadside station (at Sasima, in Cappadocia): “dust everywhere, noise, carriages, lamentations, groans, tax-collectors, tortures and fetters; a population of total strangers and vagabonds.”

Second, the process of the Christianization of the area has bearing on the visibility of Christian shrines and hospitality. The cities of Anatolia are sometimes regarded as holdouts of paganism, but this probably only applies to the urban elites. Bishops of Ancyra and Tarsus were present at the council of Nicaea in 325, and Ancyra was originally considered as a venue for that council. So both Christians and pagans were
active in these cities throughout the fourth century. Furthermore, cities were more likely to be the site of martyr cults, as the original trial, execution, and burial of the martyr was more likely to have taken place in a city. This was the case with the cult of the martyr Plato of Ancyra, whose veneration was carried by Ancyra natives to Constantinople and the Holy Land.\textsuperscript{82} The process of conversion of the countryside is typically slower than that of the cities.\textsuperscript{83} It is therefore possible that Christianity was slower to transform some of the rural locales through which the Pilgrim’s Road passed. However, the unlikely elevation of Sasima to episcopal see in 372 shows that the transformation of rural areas was being implemented. The process was probably complete in the fifth century, and by the sixth century tales of local holy men were popular among rural communities.

This brings us to the third point, namely the role of narrative, landscape, and memory in the construction of sites of pilgrimage. It is noteworthy that many of the legends associated with holy sites in Anatolia date from the medieval period, and do not seem to trace back to late antiquity. This is the case with an early church building at Andabilis, which in the medieval period acquires the legend of having been built by Helena during her journey to the Holy Land. Medieval frescoes show that the church was dedicated to Constantine and Helena, but it is unclear – and unlikely – that the legend goes back all the way to the fourth century. Another case in point is the legend of the martyr Orestes of Tyana.\textsuperscript{84} According to early martyrology, he was martyred 24 km from the city, having been dragged there by a wild horse and his body cast into a river. It is not until a twelfth-century version that this event is associated with a specific locale – a thermal spring at Batos – and that healings are said to occur there. There are many thermal springs in the Tyana area, some of which were consecrated to Zeus and considered holy sites in pagan times, but do not appear to have been recorded as famous sites of Christian pilgrimage and healing. Nevertheless, Gregory of Nazianzus, writing in 382, twice mentions a bath at Xanxaris (thought by Berges and Nollé to be identifiable with Aqua Calidae, a road station mentioned on the Peutinger Map and by the Bordeaux Traveler), and his second letter mentions that he is staying at a monastery there.\textsuperscript{85} Could this be a glimpse of possible “alternative Christian hospitality”, to which Gregory as a man of the church would have been entitled, possibly more so than a lay pilgrim?

Finally, we must consider the evidence from pilgrim itineraries. Egeria (ca. 380) mentions the shrine of Euphemia at Chalcedon, but nothing of religious interest between Tarsus and Chalcedon. It is a journey that would have taken several weeks, yet she finds nothing worth recording. The sites that are of interest to her lie off the route of the Pilgrim’s Road: she makes a detour of several days from Tarsus to visit Seleucia and the shrine of Thecla, and she expresses hope to visit Ephesus on a separate

\textsuperscript{82} On the cult of Plato in Late Antiquity, see Foss 1977.
\textsuperscript{83} E.g. Caseau 2004.
\textsuperscript{84} For primary texts relating to Tyana and its hinterland, cf. Berges/Nollé 2000.
journey, after her return to Constantinople. The pilgrim itinerary of Theodosius, dating to ca. 530, mentions a number of holy shrines in Asia Minor relating to apostles and martyrs, at Caesarea, Gangra, Euchaita, and Sebastia, however Ancyra and the shrine of Plato is the only one mentioned that actually lies along the Pilgrims’ Road (Fig. 22). We also know of several other major pilgrimage and healing shrines, for example, of Michael the Archangel at Germia in Galatia. However, it seems from the accounts of Egeria and Theodosius, written a century and a half apart, that there was not much to interest a Holy Land pilgrim directly on the Pilgrim’s Road. Instead the Pilgrim’s Road is revealed as dependent on the state network, but braided by many users. Ancyra emerges as an important node in this braided network, with a garrison, but also famous for trade, especially textile production.

![Fig. 22: Sketch map of Pilgrim’s Road and pilgrimage sites in Anatolia, © M. Whiting.](image)

In reality, the term ‘Pilgrim’s Road’ is something of a misnomer. When considering the motivations for travel between Constantinople and Jerusalem it is easy to see the lure of the Holy City and its shrines and thus over-ascribe a pilgrim’s motivation to the majority of journeys. The fault for this lies, in part, in modern nomenclature. The name Pilgrim’s Road was originally ascribed to the Constantinople-Ancyra-Tar-

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86 Itin. Eg. 22,1–23,6, Ephesus: 23,10.
87 Theodosius De situ terrae sanctae 15.
89 Foss 1977, 31. Cf. also Foss 1977, 56 for the suggestion that it was merchants from Ancyra who spread the cult of Plato the Martyr, especially to Constantinople.
sus road by William Ramsay, and the name chosen because it is the route described in the Bordeaux Itinerary, whose anonymous author has traditionally been known as the ‘Pilgrim of Bordeaux’. Hence, the Pilgrim’s Road. This is the term adopted by David French, as the complete route has no known ancient name (although the section through the Taurus mountains was apparently known as the Via Tauri).\(^9\) However, over time there has been some slippage of the apostrophe – instead of referring to a pilgrim in the singular, it has come to be referred to as the Pilgrims’ Road (plural), assumed to be on account of it being the route for countless pilgrims en route to Jerusalem.\(^1\) As I have shown, this is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is far from the only route that travelers, pilgrims or otherwise, could have used for traveling through Anatolia and Asia Minor. And secondly, it implies that the bulk of travelers were pilgrims, or even that the road’s raison d’être was pilgrimage, which obscures the vast amount of travel for other reasons that took place along this route. It conveys the idea that the primary caput viae was Jerusalem, and ignores other more probable destinations for the bulk of traffic in Late Antiquity, principally the capital of the eastern diocese, Antioch. Finally, it promotes the idea that Asia Minor was devoid of sites of interest to pilgrims, when, in reality, many sites of great renown were simply not located on this artery.

Conclusion

There is no single ‘Pilgrims’ Road’ between Constantinople and Jerusalem. There is no way to get from Constantinople to Jerusalem that does not involve a mixture of sea and land travel. There is no fixed overland route (though it is constrained by natural geographic features at some points). There were different options for crossing Asia Minor or for accessing Jerusalem from the coast, although some seem to have been more popular than others.

It also wasn’t just pilgrims on the road. Although Jerusalem is difficult to uncouple from its sacred attributes, other factors also placed the city within regional and interregional networks, of which the wine trade is but one aspect. Constantinople is a hub for a complex system of networks in which Jerusalem is but one node. The roads which reached Jerusalem were in part maintained and served pilgrims so well because they connected other locations like Antioch or Alexandria or any of the dozens of cities in between. They connected with theaters of military activity, with important raw materials and the empire’s agricultural tax base, which was partly used to feed the capital, but produce also entered Constantinople (and other cities) via mechanisms of trade, including the holy wine of Palestine.

\(^9\) RRMAM 3.3, No. 166.
\(^1\) Cf. Hunt 1997, 256.
While it is tempting to see Constantinople and Jerusalem as opposites: one the secular capital of the Byzantine world and the other its spiritual capital, with pilgrims constantly flowing from one to another, this is a misleading perception of the roles played by both cities and the networks that existed connecting them. It is important to situate these cities in their landscape and recognize the spaces in between not as empty places on a map but integral nodes in complex and interweaving networks.

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