



# Saints, Shrines, and Souvenirs

The Effects of the English Reformation on Pilgrim Badge Use

— a presentation by Melanie Olmsted —



Thomas Becket Pilgrim badge from the College of Wooster Art Museum.

## What are Pilgrim Badges?

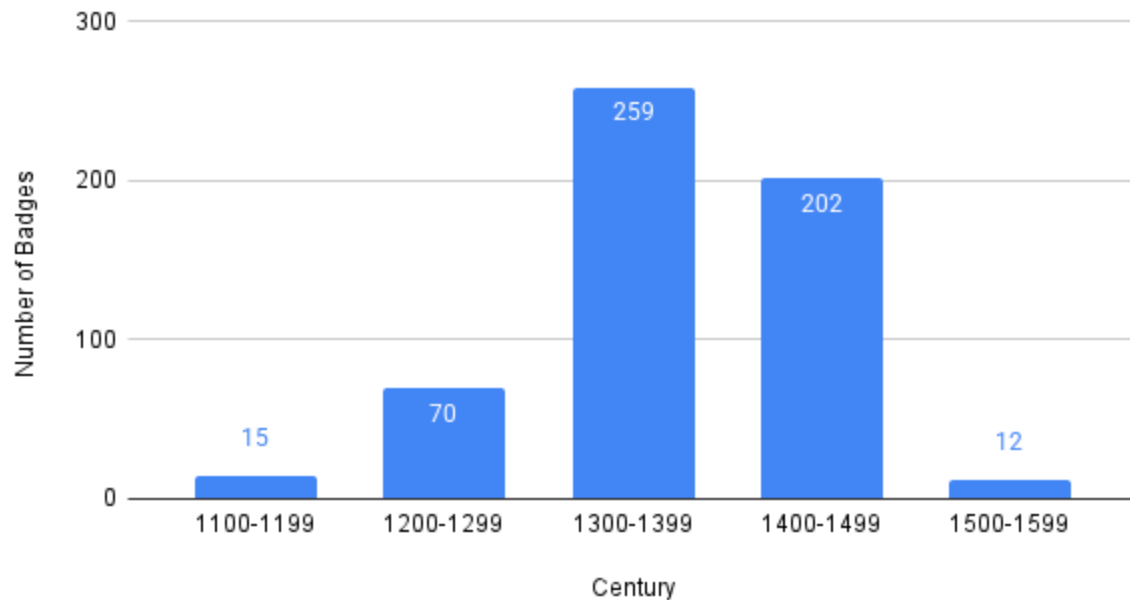
- Small metal objects
- Worn on coats or hats
- Depict saints

## Who is Thomas Becket?

- Archbishop of Canterbury
- Martyr and saint
- Healing abilities

# Research Questions

Number of Surviving Thomas Becket Pilgrim Badges by Century



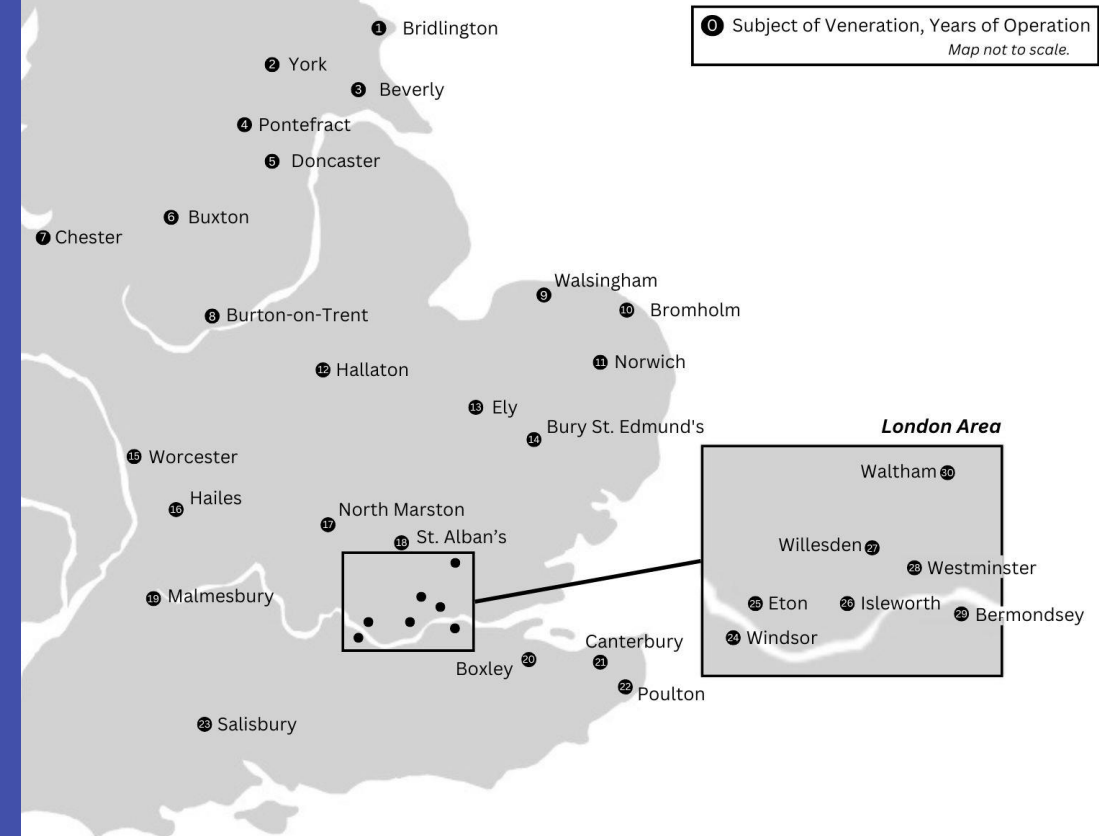
Quantitative analysis using Kunera database.

- Why did pilgrim badges disappear from the archaeological record?
- What can be learned about the English Reformation by looking at pilgrim badges?
- What can be learned about English pilgrim badges by looking at the Reformation?

# Development of Christian Pilgrimage Culture

2 <sup>nd</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> centuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rise of the cult of saints- People visit martyrs at gravesites</li> <li>4<sup>th</sup> century- Monumentalization begins</li> <li>Holy becomes embedded in the landscape</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> centuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People visit shrines on pilgrimages</li> <li>Popularity increasing over time</li> </ul>
12 <sup>th</sup> -16 <sup>th</sup> centuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilgrimage is popular and common</li> <li>Ordinary people go on local pilgrimages</li> </ul>

## English Pilgrimage Shrines



- ① St. John of Bridlington, 1379-1537
- ② St. William of York, 1227-Unknown
- ③ St. John of Beverly, 1379-1537
- ④ St. Thomas of Lancaster, 1322-1530s
- ⑤ Mary, 1350-1538
- ⑥ St. Anne, 1400s-1538
- ⑦ St. Werburgh, 800s-1538
- ⑧ Mary and St. Modwenna, 1100s-1538
- ⑨ Mary, 1061-1538
- ⑩ Holy Cross, 1204-1536
- ⑪ St. Julian and Richard Caister, 1416-1500s
- ⑫ St. Morrell, 1100s-1532
- ⑬ St. Etheldreda, 679-1541
- ⑭ St. Edmund, 903-1539
- ⑮ St. Wulfstan, 1095-Unknown
- ⑯ Holy Blood, 1270-1538
- ⑰ Rector John Schron, 1315-1700s
- ⑱ St. Alban, 700s-1553
- ⑲ St. Aldhelm, 857-Unknown
- ⑳ Holy Cross, 1300s-1538
- ㉑ St. Thomas and Mary, 1170-1538
- ㉒ Mary, Unknown-1541
- ㉓ St. Osmund, 1099-1538
- ㉔ Henry VI and Rector John Schorn, 1471-1534
- ㉕ Mary, 1440-1538
- ㉖ St. Bridget of Sweden, 1415-1539
- ㉗ Mary, 939-1538
- ㉘ St. Edward the Confessor, 1163-Present
- ㉙ Holy Cross, 1117-1538
- ㉚ Holy Cross, 1016-1540

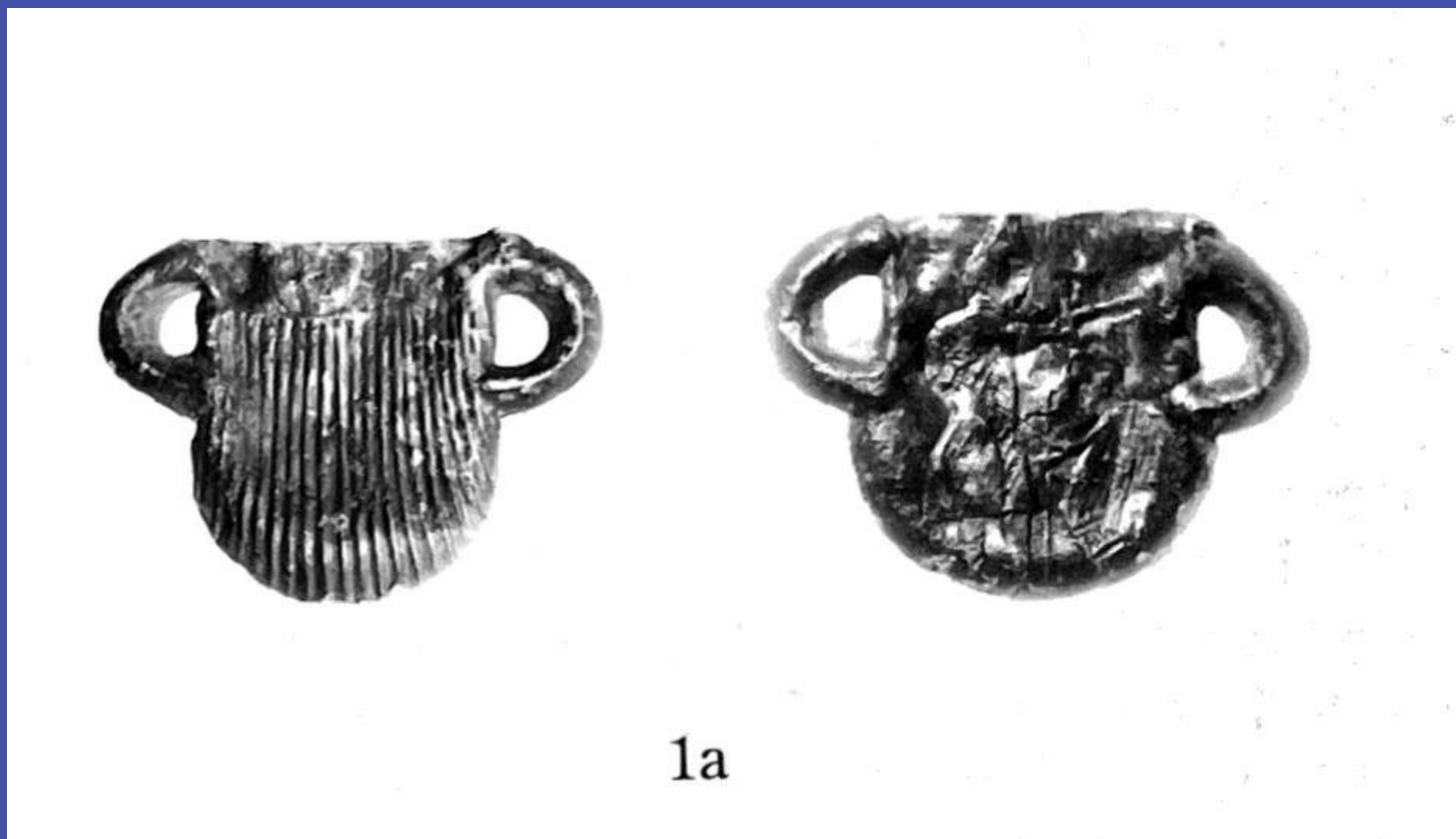


# Badge Function



“The Seven Works of Mercy” (1504) from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

- Touch relics
  - Absorb holy aura of the saintly body
- Communication devices
  - Communicate the relationship between the wearer and the saint
- Protective devices
  - Saint is present with the wearer



## Early Ampullae: 1171-1200



## Later Ampullae: 1200-1538

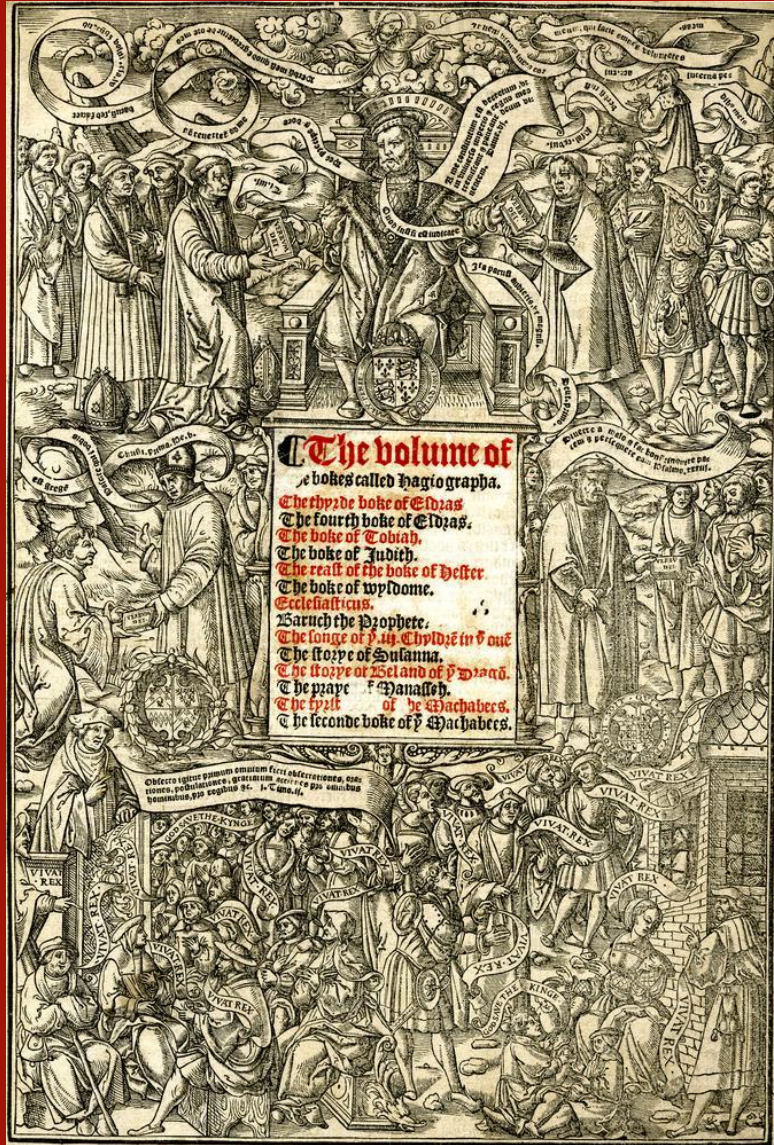




## Badges: 1270-1538

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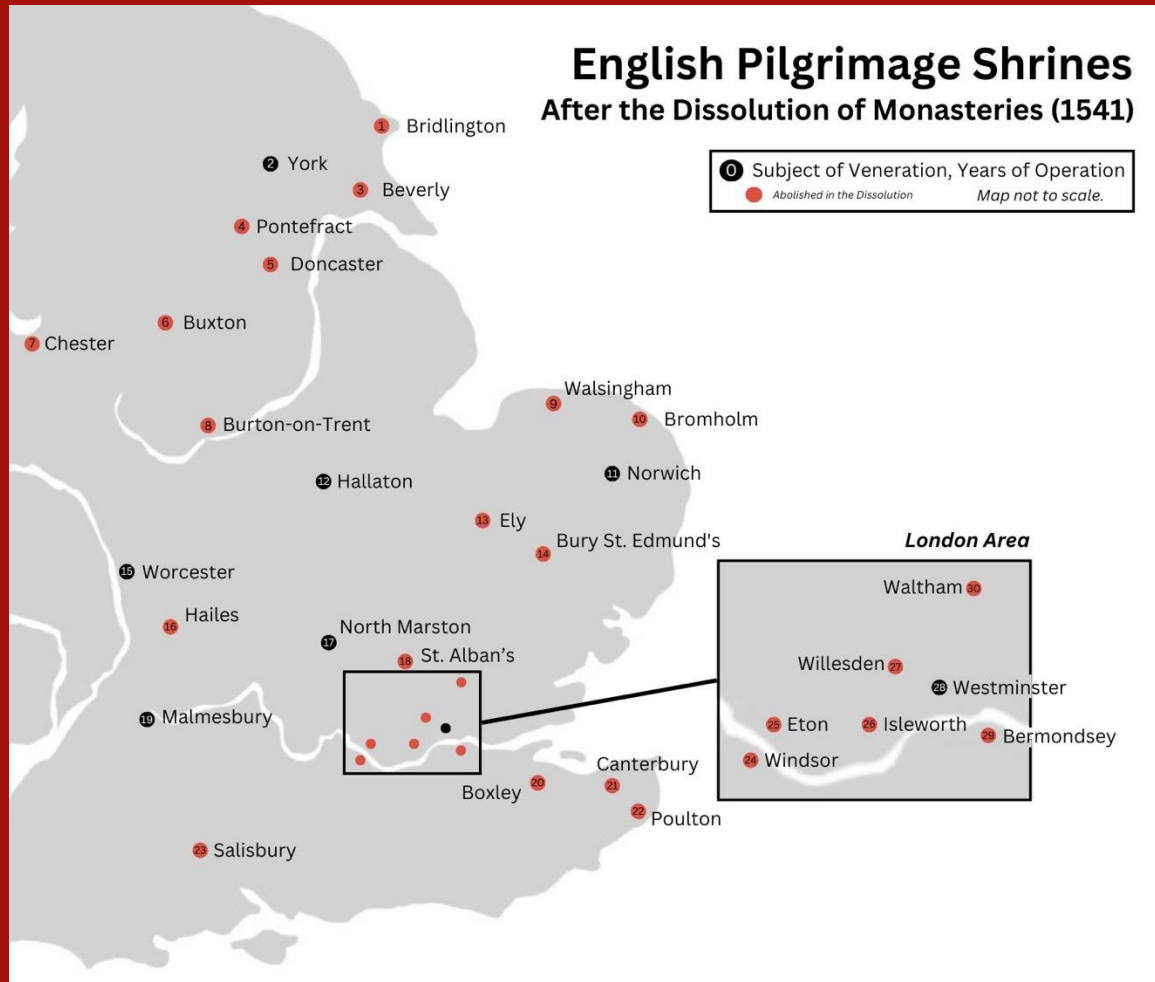




Cranmer Bible woodcut (1539), British Museum.

# The End of Badges

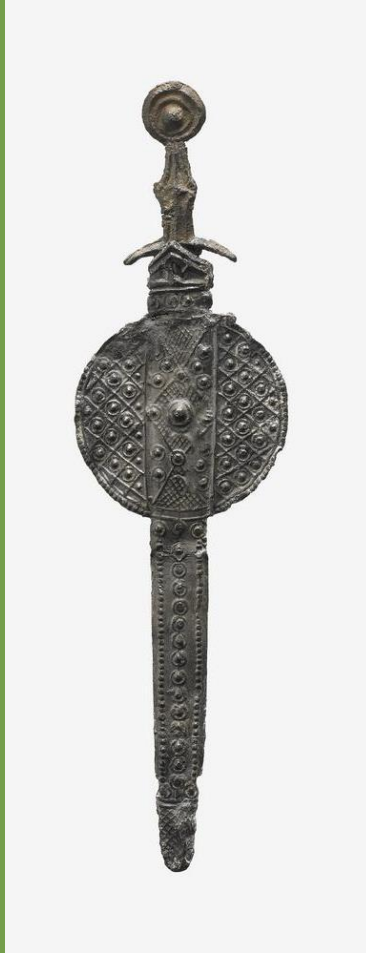
- 1534: Separation from Rome
  - Henry VIII is the head of a new church
- 1536-1540: Attacks on the cult of saints
  - Henrician Injunctions
  - The Act for the Abrogation of Certain Holydays



# The End of Badges

- The dissolution of the monasteries
  - Removal of the holy from the landscape
- Destruction of Thomas Becket's shrine
  - Veneration of St. Thomas made illegal
- Badges disappear

# Conclusions



Becket badges from The British Museum.

1. Pilgrim badges rely on the cult of saints and the locality of the divine to work
2. Pilgrim badges illustrate how the English Reformation changed the material culture of ordinary people