

## Vooraf

Op het colloquium *Les chemins de Compostelle, itinéraire culturel européen et patrimoine mondial. Histoire, enjeux et perspectives* (4-5 april 2023, Toulouse) zou ik namens de Camino Academie een presentatie geven over ons project naar nieuwe pelgrimspaden. Dit paper zou in het Frans worden vertaald en gepubliceerd worden door de Presses de l'université Toulouse Capitole. Door omstandigheden moest ik afzien van deelname aan bedoeld colloquium en ook de vertaling van de artikelversie van mijn lezing ging niet door.

In plaats van deze bijdrage in portefeuille te houden leek het me passend om ze hierbij toegankelijk te maken via de site van de Camino Academie. Niet als zelfstandig *Camino Cahier* maar als losse publicatie. Het biedt immers niet alleen een synthese van ons project dat ooit begon onder de vlag van 'Reinventing pilgrimage' maar geeft ook enkele perspectieven voor vervolgonderzoek.

Paul Post, februari 2023

### **In the footsteps of the Camino.**

#### **A Research Project On New Pilgrim Paths in Europe**

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## Opening

When it comes to pilgrimage in Europe, we are in the special situation of going through what I think is a historically unique process of change. A development process similar to what happened in the 4th and 5th centuries (emergence of Christian pilgrimage), in the early and late Middle Ages (pilgrimages linked to relic cults and penitential practices) and at the end of the 19th/beginning of the 20th century (emergence of new Marian places of pilgrimage).<sup>1</sup> Comparisons and analyses are difficult because we are still in the midst of them. But from the long 1960's of the last

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<sup>1</sup> See overviews like: S. COLEMAN & J. ELSNER: *Pilgrimage. Past and present in world religions* (London 1995) Ch. 5: « Christian pilgrimage from the Middle Ages to the present time », 104-135; J. CHÉLINI & H. BRANTHOMME: *Les chemins de Dieu. Histoire des pèlerinages chrétiens, des origines à nos jours* (Paris 1982).

century and especially manifest and accelerated from the 1990's I see a great process of transformation in three related manifestations:

(a) First, the explosive rise of a renewed Camino to Santiago de Compostela linked to a shift of the pilgrimage accent from place to way and route expressed in Germanic languages in a shift from Dutch: *bedevaart*/German: *Wallfahrt* to *pelgrimage*/*Pilgerfahrt*.<sup>2</sup>

(b) Second manifestation is the enormous emergence of new pilgrim paths all over Europe in the wake of that camino revival. That process is rightly referred to as caminoization.<sup>3</sup>

(c) And third, often forgotten, in clear relation to both developments mentioned above, there is the true explosion of pilgrim accounts. In book form or through blogs and vlogs, Camino pilgrims in particular report on their journey.<sup>4</sup>

Study of these new developments of the ritual repertoire of pilgrimage is still only tentative and exploratory; after all, we are still in the middle of the process and developments are still surprising us. However, we can distinguish between the phenomena, the ritual practices of which I just named three clusters, on the one hand, and underlying processes and facilitating factors on the other. Of the latter I mention the strongly emerged hiking/hiking culture, religious dynamics, individualization, current travel culture and tourism, heritagization, but digitalization also plays a role.

### **Context: a Large Scale Research Project**

In the context of those current pilgrimage dynamics, the Dutch Camino Academy (a platform where academia and pilgrim practice meet) conducted in 2021-2022 a large-

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<sup>2</sup> See Ch. 5 in P. POST: *In het spoor van de camino. Verkenning van hedendaagse pelgrimsroutes in Europa* (= Camino Cahier 6B) (Camino Academie 2022) [Post-In-het-spoor-van-de-camino-essay-Camino-Cahier-6B-2022.pdf\(caminoacademie.nl\)](https://caminoacademie.nl/post-in-het-spoor-van-de-camino-essay-camino-cahier-6b-2022.pdf), 43-50; cf. for pilgrimage terminology: P. BERBÉE: « “Bedevaart” en “pelgrimstocht” in Nederland. Over oude termen en nieuwe methoden in bedevaartonderzoek », in N. Lettinck & J. van Molenbroek (red.): *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid. Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuwse Nederland aangeboden aan prof.dr. A.H. Bredero* (Utrecht 1986) 167-199; P. BERBÉE: « Zur Klärung von Sprache und Sache in der Wallfahrtsforschung. Begriffsgeschichtlicher Beitrag zur Diskussion », in *Bayerische Blätter für Volkskunde* 14 (1987) 65-82.

<sup>3</sup> M. BOWMAN, D. JOHANNSEN & A. OHRVIK (eds.): *Reframing pilgrimage in Northern Europe* = *Numen* 5-6 (2020) Special issue.

<sup>4</sup> S. VAN DER BEEK: *New pilgrim stories. Narratives, identities, authenticity* (= PhD study Tilburg University 2018) [in print as edition in Ritual Studies Monographs series, Carolina Academic Press (Durham, NC)].

scale research project on newly emerging pilgrim paths in Europe. First the paths in the Netherlands were examined (by now there are more than 80 new paths there that adorn themselves not only with the label “pilgrimage” but also call themselves “Camino” or “Camini”) and then the focus turned to Europe.

The intention was first to map the field (where, when, how many, what kind...?), and then we explored the phenomenon further using a multimethod approach (literature research, historical research, ethnography, ‘netnography’, interviews, expert meetings). An important part were interviews with people from different EU countries, both academic experts and those involved in the paths. Short summaries of those interviews were posted on YouTube.<sup>5</sup> Three publications (online, open access) reported extensively on the findings of this pioneering project.<sup>6</sup>

## Data

When it comes to data on the new paths just a short note.<sup>7</sup> As far as an overview of current European pilgrimage paths is concerned, there are, as far as we know, no major current scientific inventory of them or descriptive national or European studies. We can, however, collect data about them indirectly through many eclectic sources.

Two guides played an important role in the project. French (internet) journalist Fabienne Bodan produced two significant pilgrimage route guides, the first for the world (2018, 800 *chemins* in five continents) and the other for Europe (2019, 800 *chemins* in 28 countries).<sup>8</sup> Neither guide is a scientific project and thus contains little

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<sup>5</sup> See overview of the interviews in: P. POST: *Verslag van het Camino Academie project Re-inventing Pilgrimage in Europe* (= Camino Cahier 6A) (Camino Academie 2022) <https://www.caminoacademie.nl/wp-content/uploads/Verslag-reinventing-pilgrimage-in-Europe-Camino-Cahier-6A-2022.pdf> sub 2.3., 13-22.

<sup>6</sup> P. POST: *Kruisende wegen: over de opkomst van nieuwe pelgrimspaden in Nederland. Een veldverkenning* (= Camino Cahier 5). (Camino Academie: Utrecht 2021). <https://www.caminoacademie.nl/camino-cahiers/camino-cahier-5-kruisende-wegen-over-de-opkomst-van-nieuwe-pelgrimspaden-in-nederland/> ; P. POST: (composition): *Verslag van het Camino Academie project Re-inventing Pilgrimage in Europe* (=Camino Cahier 6A) (Camino Academie: Utrecht 2022) <https://www.caminoacademie.nl/wp-content/uploads/Verslag-reinventing-pilgrimage-in-Europe-Camino-Cahier-6A-2022.pdf> ; P. POST: *In het spoor van de camino. Verkenning van hedendaagse pelgrimsroutes in Europa* (= Camino Cahier 6B) (Camino Academie: Utrecht 2022) [Post-In-het-spoor-van-de-camino-essay-Camino-Cahier-6B-2022.pdf](https://www.caminoacademie.nl/wp-content/uploads/Post-In-het-spoor-van-de-camino-essay-Camino-Cahier-6B-2022.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> See an overview of the available data collected for the project: P. POST: *Verslag* (Camino Cahier 6A) sub 3, 30-34.

<sup>8</sup> F. BODAN: *Guide des chemins de pèlerinage du monde* (Rennes 2018).  
F. BODAN: *Guide des chemins de pèlerinage d'Europe* (Rennes 2019).

elaboration of concepts or reasoning concerning them (e.g. what exactly are the criteria for inclusion as “chemin de pèlerinage”?) and does not include an introduction with a background or an objective. In the European guide, Bodan often indicates when a route was created. These data confirm the picture that we saw in our Dutch project on new pilgrim paths: many pilgrim routes emerged in the 1990s with a clear growth spurt around 2013 (especially after 2015 in the Netherlands). According to Bodan, the peak in 2013 data is mainly due to new routes in Eastern European and Scandinavian countries.

Another guide is *Britain's Pilgrim Places* by Nick Mayhew-Smith and Guy Hayward (2020).<sup>9</sup> Pilgrimage places are presented as part of a web of more than 100 pilgrimage routes and paths, mainly those of the *British Pilgrimage Trust* (BPT). A major difference between it and the Bodan guide is the better quality of the documentation related to the sacred sites and routes (e.g. historical, architectural, hagiographic and ritual information).

So far my introduction of the project. This conference seems an excellent opportunity to report some of the results of our analysis to an international audience of experts. Due to time I limit myself to four themes.

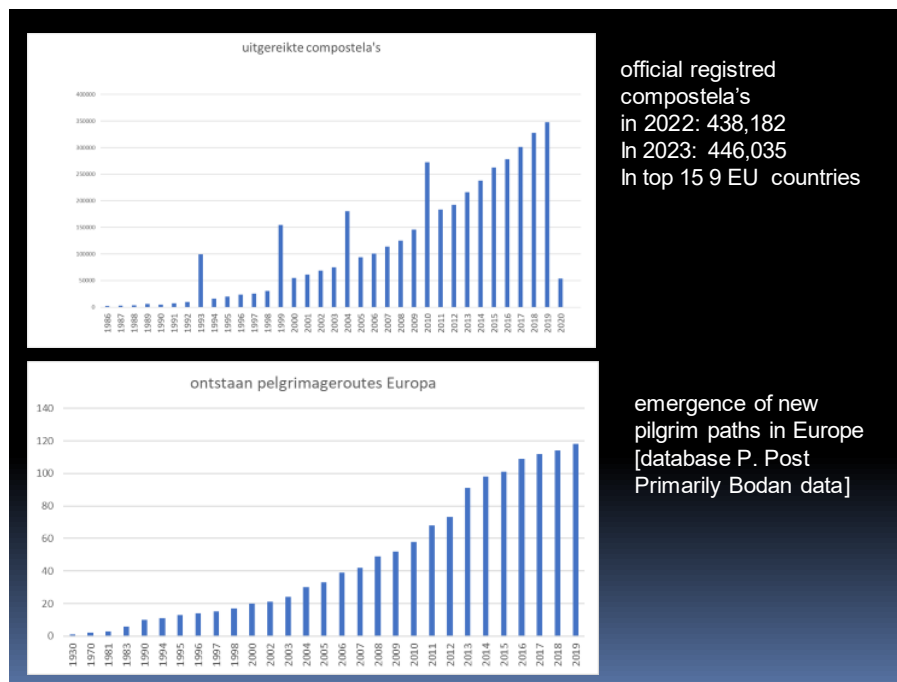
## Caminoization

My first theme, caminoization, enables us to identify a series of fundamental aspects and dimensions of these dynamics. Although it is easy to lie and manipulate through statistics and diagrams the juxtaposition of the diagram of the emergence of the Camino (obtained *compostelas*) and that of new pilgrim paths in Europe is significant. [see diagrams]<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> N. MAYHEW-SMITH & G. HAYWARD: *Britain's pilgrims places. The first complete guide to every spiritual treasure* (London 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Of course, the data for the two diagrams are different. Official *compostelas* counted in the Santiago office: <https://oficinadelperegrino.com/en/statistics-2/> ; 2023 was a top year: 446.035 pilgrims; in the top 15 are 9 EU countries. The pilgrims paths figures are based on a database mainly fed by the Bodan data.



Undeniably, from numerous data, there is a clear and direct relationship between the rise of the Camino and new pilgrim paths. The rise of the Camino exerts an enormous influence that extends beyond the strict Camino routes to Santiago. We rightly speak here of a process caminoization.<sup>11</sup>

As a general description, caminoization denotes the strong influence and impact of the Camino to Santiago de Compostela, which has been revived since the 1990s, on walking (and to a much lesser extent cycling) routes presented and appropriated as pilgrim paths. The popular Camino functions as a script or scenario, a format, or a mould or model, according to which other paths are designed and experienced.

<sup>11</sup> See for both defining and applying of this concept: *Numen* issue 5-6 (2020) Special issue: M. BOWMAN, D. JOHANNSEN & A. OHRVIK (eds.): *Reframing pilgrimage in Northern Europe*. Contents: M. BOWMAN, D. JOHANNSEN & A. OHRVIK: « Reframing pilgrimage in Northern Europe: Introduction to the special issue », 439-452; M. BOWMAN: « “Rehabilitating” pilgrimage in Scotland: Heritage, Protestant pilgrimage, and Caledonian caminos », 453-482; L. GEMZOË: « In nature’s cathedral: Caminoization and cultural critique in Swedish pilgrim spirituality », 483-507; D. JOHANNSEN & A. OHRVIK: « How to be a pilgrim: Guidebooks on the Norwegian St. Olav Ways and the heritagization of religion », 508-536; L. MIKAELSSON & T. SELBERG: « Caminoization at sea: The Fjord Pilgrim Route in Norway », 537-556; E. VUOL: « Reinventions of an old tradition: Orthodox processions and pilgrimage in contemporary Finland », 557-585; T. SEPP & A. REMMEL: « The pilgrimage landscape in contemporary Estonia: New routes, narratives, and re-Christianization », 586-612; J. BUTLER: « Contemporary pagan pilgrimage: Ritual and re-storying in the Irish landscape », 613-636.

In addition to referring to a process, caminoization is not an natural or supra-natural process that happens to us; it is, to a large extent, a human-made construction. In that light, one could also speak of “caminoification.”

Another important aspect of the caminoization process is that it carries the assumption that the Camino influenced something. This assumption is where the popular walking and hiking culture comes in. Parallel to what we discovered in the Dutch situation, we see in many parts of Europe that pilgrim paths, as long-distance routes, are closely linked to a popular walking, hiking or tracking culture.

Caminoization indicates a process of transferring, of importing and reconceptualizing or of transplanting and translating. It is a fine example of what is called in Ritual Studies ritual transfer.<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that not an original (medieval) version of the Camino is imported and transferred, but rather a version that has already been transferred to the present, namely the Camino that was revitalized in the 1990s, especially in the form of the Camino Francés. In this respect, we can speak of the transfer of a transfer.

The role of Camino veterans who returned from their Camino experience to become ambassadors for the Camino by introducing its format in their respective homes is important. Many organizations, notably the Saint James Societies that has been established in almost all European countries since the 1990s, play a role in spreading the Camino format. There is also the influence of books, films, documentaries and travel reports. The role of path guides and guidebooks, and especially the *hausse* of pilgrim’s accounts deserve a separate mention and study.

Many see the process of caminoization manifested in a range of external, physical and material features. A pilgrimage route is typically marked by symbols. These are often inspired by the shell of the original Camino. Other material elements could be a passport marking the walker as a pilgrim, a proof of walking by collecting stamps along the way, a certificate at the end of the route inspired by the *compostela* one receives in Santiago, stops along the way inspired by the Camino *refugios* or various rituals that indicate the spiritual character of the pilgrimage. One may also think of the role of Saint James churches and chapels along the way.

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<sup>12</sup> P. POST: « Ritual transfer als ‘re-inventing ritual’. Liturgische ‘Bewegungen’ und rituell-liturgische Referenz », in *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 58,2-3 (2008) 149-164.

Others note a more internal dimension of the experience of caminoization through an emphasis on the sacred and spiritual character of the route. It is first about the profile of the pilgrimage route itself; therefore, the destination is not as significant as the journey. The physical effort of walking is another significant aspect; experiences and encounters, such as those with nature and the landscape, are important; and, as previously mentioned, so are interactions with the past and tradition. The transformative nature of the tour is often noted, and the element of healing, of beneficial walking that is good for the body and mind, is part of the Camino profile.

### **About Religion<sup>13</sup>**

If we look at the overall situation of religion and pilgrims on the new paths in European countries, an interesting variant picture appears. Pilgrimages are approached and experienced differently depending on the country because of the role of institutional religion.

In countries where religion has been strongly determined by the Reformation, such as the Scandinavian countries and the UK, there is clearly a renaissance or rehabilitation of pilgrimage. For a long time, pilgrimage in these countries was part of a banished old form of religion: Catholicism. It was only recently that pilgrimage could be discussed and practiced without being immediately associated with “obsolete” Catholic rituals.

In Catholic countries, as well as in mixed Catholic and Protestant regions, such as Switzerland and Germany, another aspect is impacting pilgrimage. Pilgrimage belongs to often deeply rooted devotional repertoire and is one of the cornerstones of what we sometimes refer to as cultural Christianity. The problem with the label pilgrimage now lies mainly in its relationship to the church as an institution that has increasingly come under pressure. Think especially of the scandals of sexual abuse that shocked everywhere in Catholic countries.

If we focus on the Netherlands and Flanders, we see an interesting picture set against the background of what we sketched above. In Flanders, pilgrimage is still linked to the church and that is why many people do not want to get involved in it when it is labelled as pilgrimage. There are hardly new pilgrim paths in Flandres. In the Netherlands, the situation is distinctive. Here we have passed the phase of distrust and

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<sup>13</sup> See for an elaboration of this theme: POST: *Verslag* (Camino Cahier 6A) sub 3.4., 37-38; POST: *In het spoor van de Camino* (Camino Cahier 6B) sub 4, 32-42.

also that of rehabilitation as in the UK and Scandinavia. Walking and pilgriming intersect, and on pilgrim routes open-minded people seek contact with ecclesiastical and religious elements and partners. The result is as said more than 80 new pilgrim paths at this moment.

In addition to the discussed elements of ecclesiastical institutional religion, the other side of our ritual-sacral domain holds a particularly important role in newly emerged pilgrim paths: that of religiosity and spirituality. Instead of experiencing sacredness in an institutionally anchored way, there is now a more intuitive, individual experience of the sacred that is expressed through the spirituality of nature and the landscape and through solidarity and community. Walking itself is an important medium as an embodied ritual activity. Spirituality pilgrimages sometimes have links to new “syncretic” religious movements, such as (neo)paganism, which involve processes of Celtization or pre-Christian references<sup>14</sup> and can also be embedded in an ecclesiastical or generally religious context, sometimes even through new forms of pilgrimage theology.

Many churches and congregations, especially at the local and regional levels, have viewed the emerging interest in pilgrimage as a pastoral and missionary strategy. It is a triad with interaction and overlap of the following three strategies:

- (a) First, pilgrimage is used as an instrument for deepening faith and catechesis.
- (b) Second, it is employed to restore the often lost relationship between religion and culture and society, to be (again) present and relevant in the world. In the UK, this relationship and becoming relevant is expressed by terminology such as “bridging” and “fresh expression.”
- (c) Third, there is an ideological or theological approach. Through pilgrimage, a certain religious spirituality is promoted that is considered relevant for church life, religious education, theology and liturgy.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> POST: *In het spoor van de Camino* (Camino Cahier 6B) sub 6, 51-52; BUTLER: « Contemporary pagan pilgrimage »; cf. Butler’s website: <http://drjennybutler.com/> (accessed Jan. 2022); A. FEDELE: *Looking for Mary Magdalene: Alternative pilgrimage and ritual creativity at Catholic shrines in France* (= Oxford Ritual Studies) (Oxford/New York 2013). See in this context also the ‘reconstructed’ pre-Christian pilgrim path Via Arduinna: <http://www.trekkings.be/viaarduinna.htm> (accessed Jan. 2022).

<sup>15</sup> GEMZOË: « In nature’s cathedral: Caminoization and cultural critique in Swedish pilgrim spirituality »; B. ROEBBEN, K. WELLING & L. WIEMER: « Schritte in Richtung einer Pilgerdidaktik? Vorstellung der Forschungsergebnisse des SpiRiTEx-Projekts 2018 in Belgien », in *Theo-Web. Zeitschrift für Religionspädagogik* 18,2 (2019) 113-125; B. ROEBBEN: « Sacred spaces, rituals and



We see this strategic triad widely reflected in different ways across Europe.

### A Web of Paths and Lines

It is very important to note that pilgrim paths are not isolated routes but are part of a complex network of lines with nodes, crossroads, intersections and overlap. This perspective of pilgrim paths in the broader setting of a web of paths as threads and lines put me on the trail of studies of lines by Scottish anthropologist Tim Ingold.<sup>16</sup>

Every hiker in Europe will recognize that the path one follows is constantly crossing or joining other paths. Pilgrimage trails cross and join nature trails, long-distance footpaths, the *grandes routes* or *grandes randonnées* (GR), heritage trails, and so forth. There are also paths that one will not find in guidebooks or on maps. These are the paths of farmers and shepherds, and everywhere, especially on the borders of Europe and other border regions, there are shortcuts: still-existing smuggling paths and the routes that refugees follow.

There appears to be a whole network of routes that refugees use, with or without local guides. Well known are the paths that allow one to cross the border of Italy and France unseen in the Liguria region. Several travel accounts by hikers and pilgrims tell of the unexpected confrontation with these paths and their users. Tim Parks, who with his wife traces the escape route of Garibaldi and his men from Rome to Ravenna, encounters both migrants and pilgrims on crossing and overlapping paths along the way.<sup>17</sup> Pilgrims on the Via Romea point out to Parks that they are walking in the wrong direction and migrants hide in the bushes.

The paths of the pilgrim-walker cross those of refugee-migrant. The comparison that is sometimes made between the migrant/refugee and the pilgrim is controversial.<sup>18</sup> There are certainly parallels. Originally, the pilgrim is indeed the *peregrinus*, the stranger on the road walking in the fields. But the major and, in my view, yet distinguishing point is that the refugee does not walk voluntarily (it is not for nothing

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texts in European teacher education. The rationale behind the SpiRiTEx-Project », in *Greek Journal of Religious Education* 1,1 (2018) 9-22.

<sup>16</sup> T. INGOLD: *The life of lines* (London/New York 2015); Idem: *Lines. A brief history* (London/New York 2016).

<sup>17</sup> T. PARKS: *The Heros Way. Walking with Garibaldi from Rome to Ravenna* (New York 2021).

<sup>18</sup> B. GROEN: *Streifzüge und Reisesegen: Liturgische, ökumenische und interkulturellen Perspektive* (Graz 2018).

that forced migration is spoken of) and the modern pilgrim does walk of his own free will.

## Pilgrim Activism

An interesting and topical development is that pilgrimage in Europe is increasingly a means of expressing critical engagement, of raising issues and of expressing anger and solidarity.

Many pilgrims display a critical, activist attitude in that they step out of the rat race of modern Western society to seek “slow paths,” to respect a body that is made for four kilometers per hour, to cherish silence, to meet other people and to pursue simplicity. For many, the pilgrimage is a pause from everyday life. Pilgrims often want to draw attention to certain topics.

In many places, the pilgrimage movement intersects with the climate movement. Since the Climate Summit in Paris in 2015, there have been “climate pilgrims” making “climate pilgrimages” to such summits that, along with the *European Green Pilgrimage Network* and other initiatives, reflect a current eco-friendly or green trend within European pilgrimages.<sup>19</sup>

Another important impetus for using pilgrimage as a means of action is the call for peace, tolerance and reconciliation. A special story is the pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Seven Sleepers or the Seven Saints in Le Vieux-Marché (Brittany/Bretagne).<sup>20</sup> On the initiative of the Catholic Islamist Louis Massignon, a pilgrimage of Muslims and Christians has been held there in the wake of traditional *pardons* since 1954 as an expression of religious tolerance and reconciliation. We now see this in more places, in Lourdes, Taizé and Chartres, for example. In the Balkan countries pilgrimage as a ritual shared by Muslims and Christians has a long tradition<sup>21</sup> and now have impact on new pilgrim paths. I also mention the growing popularity of Sufi Trails, paths leading all over Europe to the sacred city of Konya in Turkey.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.greenpilgrimageeurope.net/> (accessed Jan. 2022).

<sup>20</sup> M. PÉNICAUD: *Le réveil des Sept Dormants. Un pèlerinage islamo-chrétien en Bretagne* (Paris 2014).

<sup>21</sup> L. SPARKS: *Ambiguous spaces: A contextualization of shared pilgrimage in Ephesus* (= PhD study Tilburg University, Tilburg 2011) with bibliography. Key scholars on this subject are: M. Couroucli and D. Albera.

<sup>22</sup> See: <https://sufitrail.nl> (accessed Jan. 2023).

That track of reconciliation and tolerance also specifically extends to protest against certain forms of discrimination. In Norwegian pilgrimage paths (e.g. the Olav Ways), we see how a range of themes are put on the agenda: the environment, the economic system of consumer society, the oil and gas industry, migration and diversity (cultural and sexual, e.g. LGBTI+ rights), and politics concerning national identity, right-wing activism and terrorism.<sup>23</sup> For several years there has been an annual Pride Pilgrimage around Amsterdam Pride, a literal “run-up” to the Pride event along ten churches.

Finally, there are a variety of sometimes underlying strategies and interests in new pilgrimage paths. Many pilgrim paths advocate local, regional or national identities or are linked to the heritage industry. Often there is one complex web of interests: cultural, political, economic, religious. In many places Camino tracks but also many new paths are presented as an EU project. In that perspective it is perhaps no coincidence that the color palette of the EU flag and that of the Camino are the same. Meanwhile, their combination is also widespread.



### **A Characterization of Profiles and Motives**

I am going to conclude with a summary indication of the profile of that modern pilgrim walking on those newly emerged EU pilgrim paths.

New pilgrimage routes are emerging over Europe in the footsteps of the Camino, especially after 2013, as attractive thematic walking and hiking routes. The label

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<sup>23</sup> M. GRAU: *Pilgrimage, landscape, and identity. Reconstructing sacred geographies in Norway* (= Oxford Ritual Studies) (Oxford/New York 2021).

“pilgrimage” represents a certain profile and added value. Based on the European material from the Camino Academy project, the profile of current pilgrimage paths can be described as complex and layered. This multi-layered profile can be outlined via a set of keywords:

(a) Walking and running as a sporting activity and as a popular leisure activity (keywords: pilgrimage as a thematic form of walking, walking culture, tourism, leisure culture, physical sporting performance, well-being, healing, the experience of one’s own body).

(b) Religion, spirituality and “search for meaning” in the broad sense of the term (keywords: walking with a plus, reflecting on the meaning of life, introspection, encounters with others, nature).

(c) Interest in culture, monuments and history (stepping in the footsteps of past pilgrims, the value of religious tradition, heritage<sup>24</sup>, discovering one’s own religious past, “routes with roots”).

(d) Interest in nature and landscape (keywords: really being “outside,” “slow ways” without asphalt, experiencing the landscape).

(e) Expression of regional identity (keywords: “outside” is mainly outside the city, discovering unknown regions, “meet the locals,” the region presents itself via landscape through pilgrim routes, monuments and language (dialect), tourism).

(f) And a certain activism: people often walk with a mission for a good cause (for attention to marginal zones, for climate change, various diseases (pilgrims as a form of sponsored walk is clearly on the rise), refugees, the conservation of nature, against discrimination).

(g) Apart from these explicit “missions” there is a complex web of more implicit interests and objectives (cultural, political, economic, religious agendas).

### **Perspectives for Further Research**

It is good academic tradition to conclude a paper or research project with perspectives for further research. In conclusion, I will mention two perspectives.

When we look over pilgrimage research, two broad lines can be distinguished there in a very general sense. There are the studies that re-approach familiar data with new

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<sup>24</sup> T.H. WEIR & L. WIJNIA (eds.): *The Bloomsbury handbook of religion an heritage in contemporary Europe* (London 2023).

questioning and interpretive models. Think of influential work by Turner, Morinis, Coleman and Eade<sup>25</sup> and the rise of inter/multidisciplinary<sup>26</sup>. And there are studies that take new material as their starting point. Think here of study of pilgrimage in multicultural UK or research on blogging pilgrims or viral pilgrimages.<sup>27</sup> New pilgrim paths that emerge literally in the footsteps of the Camino will provoke studies of both lines. It is new material that ask for new approaches and new paradigms.

And there is the perspective that beckons in all pilgrimage research: the voice of the pilgrim himself. I confess that our project deals primarily with the perspective of the organizers and the researchers. Also, the profile I gave is primarily the profile of the trails as a ritual phenomenon. There is still the challenge of looking for the voice of the pilgrim, for her/his appropriations (plural!). That is where I see a major role for the already mentioned boom in current pilgrim accounts, narratives and stories; that is where the voice of the modern pilgrim<sup>28</sup> can be heard!

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<sup>25</sup> V. TURNER & E. TURNER: *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture: An anthropological perspective* (Oxford/New York 1978); A. MORINIS (ed.): *Sacred journeys. The anthropology of pilgrimage* (= Contributions to the study of anthropology 7) (Westport, Conn/London 1992); S. COLEMAN & J. EADE (eds.): *Reframing pilgrimage. Cultures in motion* (London/New York 2004); J. EADE: « The invention of sacred places and rituals. A comparative study of pilgrimage », in M. HOONDEERT & P. POST (eds.): *Exploring ritual fields today* (= special issue *Religions* 11) (Basel 2021) 129-140; D. ALBERA & J. EADE (eds.): *International perspectives on pilgrimage studies. Itineraries, gaps and obstacles* (New York 2015).

<sup>26</sup> P. POST: « Ritual Studies perspectives on pilgrimage », in H. Warfield (ed.): *Multidisciplinary perspectives on pilgrimage. Historical, current and future dimensions* (= Pilgrimage Studies 1) (Lausanne etc. 2023) 117-135; P. POST, J. PIEPER & M. VAN UDEN: *The modern pilgrim. Multidisciplinary explorations of Christian pilgrimage* (= Liturgia condenda 8) (Leuven 1998).

<sup>27</sup> VAN DER BEEK: *New pilgrim stories*; P. POST & S. VAN DER BEEK: *Doing ritual criticism in a network society. Online and offline explorations into pilgrimage and sacred place* (= Liturgia condenda 29) (Leuven etc. 2016).

<sup>28</sup> POST, PIEPER & VAN UDEN: *The modern pilgrim*.

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