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THE WAY TO SANTIAGO TODAY: A MULTICULTURAL DEBATE¹

In a review of the abundant academic literature available on the Ways to Santiago we get the impression that historical studies are certainly more abundant than those focusing on the present. As noted, the recovery of the Pilgrim owes as much to the Camino friends associations as to European and Spanish researchers who, thanks to their tenacity, have rediscovered the medieval tradition of pilgrimage, signposting the Way's ancient remains and coding them as they went, to serve as an example for its contemporary revival. It is beyond doubt that history and humanistic appropriations have generally contributed in very prominent way to making the Jacobean a mass phenomenon. However, this finding cannot make us forget that today, (almost a quarter of a century later, we can talk of the full recovery of the Camino de Santiago), there are still few systematic studies on the actual pilgrimage to Santiago. Anthropological or geographical monographs are scarce, minority studies on a sociological or tourists who walk to Compostela are scarce, the appropriations of the economic impact of the Jacobean are almost nonexistent. Therefore, in these pages we will primarily make a reflection in a social sciences framework,

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and more particularly in geography, regarding the route to Santiago in a western capitalist and fully European society. Our aim is to encourage future research into this type that, somehow, are beginning to grow in the Anglo-Saxon universities and Northern Europe due to the interest aroused by the pilgrimage as a metaphor for modern man (COLLEMAN & EADE 2004).

Any analysis carried out on the present will emphasise a concept, valid for the whole world and the whole phenomenon of pilgrimages, multiculturalism. Western Europe multiculturalism that joins the plurality of religious beliefs and walkers. An expression that has seen a diverse contemporary society take a pilgrimage to Santiago, just as they did in the medieval twelfth century. To best express our view we have established five sections. The first will focus on the Way, its medieval origins, the main historical avatars recorded until its revival in the second half of the twentieth century. In the second section we deal with the diversity of images that currently convey the whole Jacobean phenomenon. A production of very important public references existing alongside a society that lives on a daily basis with the images taken from advertising, literature and even from animation that use the powers of computing. A third section is devoted to analyzing how walkers and pilgrims perform searches in the early twenty-first century for their journey to Santiago; in particular, the value acquired by slow mobility and relaxed enjoyment of the landscape (SOBRINO & LOPEZ SILVESTRE 2006, LOIS 2011). The fourth focus of attention refers to the Camino as a geopolitical object throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first century. An almost unprecedented approach to a matter of undoubted relevance: earthly power, expressed at different scales (from local to European), have tended to appropriate the pilgrimage route to their own advantage, as a means of expression or projection of some their most outstanding achievements. Finally, the fifth section deals with a strictly disciplinary demand in our case: what does the Camino de Santiago give to the current knowledge of geography? This is a more personal approach from the author, because we believe that if history has allowed the world to precisely know the Jacobean past and has greatly helped in its present recovery, geography can give quite a contemporary approach to a cultural route, the spaces that surround it and the attitude of humans walking about it, and ultimately a return to the ways of seeing and knowing the world of previous generations.

1. El Camino de Santiago: from the Middle Ages to the present

As was stated at the beginning, tens of thousands of pages on the creation of an important Christian shrine in western Finisterre during the Middle Ages have been written. Although new evidence on the origin has been discovered and the news on the Camino de Santiago's consolidation is multiple, it has enabled us to extract some ideas for our reflection. First, the pilgrimage route to Compostela was stated as the most important, the most popular throughout the medieval period (MORALEJO 1993, BARREIRO 1999). This was true for a combination of circumstances: travel to Jerusalem was dangerous, even after the first Crusades, and the pilgrimage to Rome was always hampered by political instability and continuous wars that took place in Italy; in particular, the long period of dispute between the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire. Furthermore, the consolidation of the Compostela sanctuary occurred parallel to the affirmation of political power in the Kingdom of Galicia (primarily through the figure of the Archbishop of Santiago), directly related to Asturias-León, Castile and Portugal. Third, together with the consolidation of Santiago de Compostela as the major religious and political centre of the time, the definition of a main pilgrimage route (the French way) encouraged the construction of an urban network in the Christian North of the Iberian Peninsula, enabling the construction of a path populated by sacred symbols (churches, *cruceiros*, bridges, fountains, etc.); in general, allowing the configuration of a sacred space, an object of a varied set of interventions (and appropriations) throughout history and qualifying for our preferential attention.

Besides the direct material aspects of the Way and the holy city, it is beyond doubt that the pilgrimage to Santiago has decisively contributed to establishing the idea of Europe. A hegemonic Christian idea, which was western and multinational in the Middle Ages. In addition, walking allowed direct contact with the land and nature and thus led to the spirituality of the continent to be cemented. Of course, the urban role was strengthened in a period where there was an overwhelmingly rural majority. It also allowed for much improved infrastructure and road safety, the need to have fluid communication in progressing societies. On another level, the management of the Jacobean forced dialogue, agreement between different political and social actors, from bishops and archbishops, kings and lords through to the increasingly powerful bourgeoisie of the cities.

Even the notion of multiculturalism remains reinforced today, when Muslims and Jews both benefited from the existence of the Way.

Profoundly this all changed with the end of the Middle Ages and the triumph of the Protestant Reformation, a religious movement to break from Rome which from the outset condemned outward religious showings and of course pilgrimages. Santiago not only lost German, British and Dutch devotees from the sixteenth century, but also the ongoing fighting between the Emperor Charles V and the French Kings deprived the sanctuary of visitors from that nation. The Camino de Santiago is reinterpreted as a key to catholicity, as an exclusive reference to Iberians and Italians, in a phase that will lead directly to their crisis. A total decadence is proven by testimonies that narrate the virtual disappearance of the pilgrims in the nineteenth century or the bewilderment felt by the Chapter of Santiago on the arrival of three researchers willing to recover the post-civil war Jacobean (VÁZQUEZ DE PARGA, LACARRA & URÍA 1948, 1992 reprint). The first and only conscious attempt to reassess the role of Santiago came in the second half of the century when the conservative Compostela church encourages its parishioners to pilgrimage during successive saint years. This Jacobean reactionary appropriation would allow General Franco to launch the first major campaign of monumental reconstruction of the Camino and Santiago, and promote the Jacobean as an alibi for national Catholicism emerging from the Civil War (CASTRO 2010). The coup of July 18, 1936 and its subsequent degeneration into a military conflict were presented as a *crusade* against Freemasonry and Communism. As expected, the image of St. James the Warrior ("Santiago and Close Spain") will be used over and over again throughout this period.

A time defined by the milestones of 1948, 1954 and 1965 as Holy Years, which enabled much historic rehabilitation work on Santiago and its Ways (Portomarín, O Cebreiro, etc.). As a complement since 1954, and coinciding with the regime opening up to the exterior, tourism begins to be boosted in the holy city, first with the Royal Hospital's rehabilitation as a Parador (CASTRO & LOIS 2006), then with the construction and opening of Burgo de las Naciones in the 1960s. The Camino was formalized by the regime, but still had not emerged as a popular pilgrimage movement. This would occur between 1960 and 1980 when a group of researchers recovered the importance of the Jacobean and make it known (M. Diaz, P. Caucci, R. Plötz, etc.) and when, in parallel, they start associations to become friends of the Way (with the key role played by E. Valiña). This drive has seen a gradual increase in the number of travellers going to Santiago and, above all, it will create a favourable environment for the emergence of the

Xacobeo between 1980 and 1993. Undoubtedly, the Holy Year of 1993, with successful promotion from the Galician government, is the end of the recovery path for the first major historical and cultural route of Europe. Its conversion into a mass phenomenon and an example for all the world's peregrinations has also much to do with the expression of its contents and a regional, democratic Spain, a country that joined the European institutions by justifying their secular membership to the continent through the Jacobean legacy. Since its incorporation into Europe in the mid-1980s, coinciding with this fundamental Holy Year, recognition has been never-ending, such as The Council of Europe's European Cultural Route (dating from 1987), the Declaration of Santiago de Compostela and the Camino as World Heritage Site by UNESCO (1985 & 1993 respectively), the European Cultural Capital, Santiago in 2000, the Europa Nostra award, etc. The pilgrimage route has become a true symbol of the contemporary revival of pilgrimages, the first Way that has generated a mass movement of people from around the world to various religious shrines or milestones of any kind. But perhaps its most important attribute in this is that the Way works and as a spiritual-tourist mass destination, with 200,000 to 300,000 walkers a year qualifying for the Compostela (at least 100 km on foot or 200 km by bike or on horseback), as well as several million conventional tourists.

As we will explain, it is possible to list a set of characteristics that individualize the pilgrimage to Compostela in the present and define the elements of undoubted specificity. Firstly, the Way has multiple meanings for the person involved, from the strictly religious to the more ecological contact with nature, the search for new relationships and, so increasingly common, the desire to find oneself in a setting where one can enjoy the scenery and the face to face exchange with other people. In addition, the route itself is an intense experience in life, as much in the sense of the term tourism (travelling to accumulate indelible memories) as a strictly personal sense (having time to yourself). Consequently, the Way is plural, with people who do not believe in the same thing and have different goals, but coincide and meet in sacred places; maybe it is better to say resacralization in recent times.

2. Which images today: the construction of a global product

It is becoming habitual in a Holy Year, a Xacobeo, to be accompanied by an ongoing war of numbers that does nothing to determine how many pilgrims and how many conventional tourists are visiting Santiago. In an

irresponsible attitude, various politicians in charge of the Camino's management and promotion have always provided an exaggerated millionaire figure, 8, 9 or 11 million visitors in Compostela. And this when the official statistical agency in Spain (according to the Institute of Tourism Studies and Regional Galicia, IGE) refer to 4, 5 or 6 million tourists in the whole of Galicia. From the institutions, there is not a minimally responsible attitude on Jacobean statistics, which can be considered a serious error. Only the existence of a Way Observatory between 2007 and 2010, four full years, allowed us to know the phenomenon of pilgrimage on some methodological basis (CETUR & JACOBEAN 2007-2010). So, we know that the total number of classic pilgrims travelling to Santiago per year is between 200,000 in a normal period and roughly 300,000 in a Holy Year. We know only approximate totals from walkers who have collected the *Compostela* at the Pilgrim Office, a source without rigor or official character and not to be considered as true statistical figure but only an approximation. We indicate this because not all genuine pilgrims wish to collect the *Compostela* (a religious-based document and voluntary) and because the Pilgrim's Office of a Cathedral Chapter cannot ever have a statistics department in Europe. In any case, this is the only figure available that gives us an initial estimate on the pilgrimages to Santiago.

But as stated in various studies (BLANCO & GARRIDO 1994; CETUR & XACOBEO 2007-2010), for each walker entering Compostela there is a various number entering conventionally. The magic of the Camino inevitably attracts mass tourism (with a cultural veneer) that occupies the streets of the historic centre of Santiago, tourism that is also encouraged by Santiago being declared World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Regarding the number of tourists or visitors, it has been precisely estimated that 85% target Santiago de Compostela when spending their holidays or rest days enjoying Galicia. Therefore, up to 4 or 5 million people from other places go to the city each year, a figure that we can assume is increased by 50% in a Holy Year (SANTOS 1999 & 2006). But from any perspective, visiting is not strictly tourism. Some people only spend a few hours in Santiago because they stay elsewhere while numbers of over a million correspond to genuine tourists staying in hotel establishments in Compostela. Another point of interest is to know the pilgrims' places of origin. Thus, we see that they are mostly Spanish, but its hegemony is limited in a normal year and reaffirmed on the celebration of a Xacobeo. In fact, a very characteristic feature of modern pilgrimage is that of holy year promotional campaigns which tend to almost exclusively move citizens of our country (the above said 100,000 more pilgrims and a million more visitors). The foreign pilgrimage has

continuously increased without a significant change in a Xacobeo with respect to a normal year (SANTOMIL 2011). Finally, if the origins of the pilgrims are looked at we would find Germans and Italians above all, although traditional Jacobean countries like Portugal, France, Holland and Belgium maintain good numbers. In this regard, perhaps the most significant is the remarkable increase in the number of nationalities with any citizen who walks to Santiago, more than 100 or 120 nowadays, which tells us the phenomenon of globalization. Above all the flow North Americans, Canadians, Japanese and Koreans, although in 2010 there was the curious presence of pilgrims with Iranian or North Korean nationality. Meanwhile, in Spain the walk to Santiago is from all over the country, with a relative influence of pilgrimages (walkers per 100,000 inhabitants) in urban communities (Madrid and Catalonia) or crossed by the Camino (Navarra, Castilla y Leon, Basque Country, etc...).

A highly novel fact of the actual Xacobeo phenomenon is its conversion into an object of a mass promotional images and a product that, through books, movies, memories or feelings, we can acquire (SANTOMIL 2011). This is an example of how the Way has perfectly adapted to the current period of history, where images and icons, with their enormous popularity, become as important as the real world. If we produced a small report on those symbolic elements that have recently contributed to the popularization of the route to Compostela, we would have to begin by highlighting a series of books that narrate the trip, sometimes written by well-known authors, and have helped encourage various people to walk to Santiago. These are not great works or texts by true connoisseurs of contemporary pilgrimage (for this refer to C. Nooteboom, E. Valiña or A. Pombo, among others), but authentic *bestsellers* supposedly written in their entirety by media personalities. We refer to, as the most outstanding examples, the work of P. Coelho, with an undoubted importance in awakening the Brazilians interest in the Way, the book of the famous actress S. MacLaine, and the work of H. Kerkeling, the German comic-television presenter, who with his million-selling book revived a strong flow of walkers from that nation to Compostela. These three outstanding examples express the new dimension acquired by a secular cultural route that has now also become an existential product that can solve problems and contradictions of modern humans. The mass production of cultural objects related to the Way and the idea of an Atlantic Finisterre is not just restricted to literature, both European and American cinema has taken the Way to the big screen. Just as Shirley MacLaine did *Way*, Charlie Sheen and his son have made a film about its meanings, *The Way*, that after the French had made *Saint Jacques-*

La Mecque and that with the issue of the end of the world and the meaning of existence had been beautifully portrayed in the Spanish film *Mar Adentro*. We are talking about the idea of the Way, its symbolism as a fully contemporary resource that encourages the creation of stories and works of fiction. This evidence has been used for the promotion of conventional tourism, using the Way as one of the leading brands for the promotion of Spain internationally (see posters and pictures from TURESPAÑA, advertising from its network of offices worldwide every year) and a shaft underpinning all Galicia's projection. The autonomous region has been built on a tangible reality and has been visited since the Xacobeo success of 93, just as the Holy Apostle consolidated Santiago and then the Kingdom of Galicia. Today all these powerful tourist images reflect the vitality of the Way, and also its polysemy. So, we can acquire a VIP trip along the pilgrimage route, travelling with our parish, meeting a group of nature loving friends who are walking to Santiago, make the most of the summer solstice and understand the value of this secular journey, etc. The Camino, appears again as an expression of the complexity of this present society, its internal contradictions, and the persistent search by modern man for new experiences and the meaning of life.

This evoked reality explains why the Way to Santiago must be deemed as a global phenomenon, broadcast on five continents. In fact, in recent years, there has been a growing curiosity in Australia, with specialized blogs and campaigns aimed at its popularization in certain environments. Perhaps the most striking has been the importance acquired by the Jacobean in Japan, an ancient oriental culture with a remarkable appreciation for nature, landscape and, at the same time, the preservation of a tradition of pilgrimage to a series of sanctuaries. In Japan tourism to Europe consists of seeing (very quickly, because of the reduced number of vacations) cities with historical and cultural value. Thus, after Barcelona, the Way appears as the second major visitor destination in our country for Japanese citizens. Furthermore, following a custom deep-rooted in their society, they organize forums, exhibitions and all kinds of cultural events related to sacred routes to the east and west ends of the whole Eurasian continent. The pilgrimage from South Korea has increased late, but is growing due to a significant Christian population in this nation. In Israel there is another focus of attention that has been noted for their interest in the Way, special because of the link between the holy cities of Jerusalem, Rome and Compostela. Finally, in this brief review, it should be noted the significance of the Jacobean in North America, as much in Canada as in the United States. Territories have flourishing pilgrim associations, the Camino

is a subject of interest in the academic programs of many universities and the number of events and exhibitions has not stopped growing.

A global pilgrimage route cannot presently stop being multicultural and multi-religious. In fact, recent years have seen the presence of Protestants, Muslims, Jews or Buddhists on the same, in a process where the deepest contemporary pilgrimage becomes a shared spiritual practice from diverse beliefs. The Camino has been internationalized and diversified in many directions. Thus, Catholic pilgrimage has been strengthened, by both parish organizations and the development of religious groups that operate within it. But while other completely secular motivations come together to make up the pilgrimage route, in some work we have noted the *new age* component that the Way presents (IVAKHIV 2003, LOIS 2011). It even says, in the absence of a documented analysis within the social sciences, like the pilgrimage route, it has become a relational space in the affective sense of the term. Quite a few young people after a breakup decide to do the Camino, as it is estimated that during its implementation they will meet people similarly affected by the same problems. Undoubtedly, the walk to Santiago meets implicit diversity in a globalized society in the early twenty-first century, it has been detached from its Catholic-Christian majority and is increasingly linked to models of spirituality (perhaps definable as *light*), which dominate today and which are not without more or less explicit religious components. But democracy, tolerance towards others and the exchange of ideas and experiences dominate everything, in a Jacobean revival that barely has anything to do with the authoritarian Camino of the mid-twentieth century.

In our opinion, the Way has both materially and symbolically been reinforced in the context of contemporary globalization and it is likely to continue attracting tens of thousands of people in the short and medium term. In this regard, it has been suggested that the pilgrimage route very successfully projects the image of *old Europe* in a globalized world in other articles and interventions. This is a much beloved image in the new countries, (including the United States, Canada, Brazil and Australia), where the elite tend to mythologize the value of history. Also, there is an appeal to Eastern societies, where the monumental, landscape and nature are associated to an unquestionable prestige. The Europeans and Spanish meet with their past, with their parents' and grandparents' lifestyles that urbanization has completely transformed. Moreover, while for a Catholic pilgrimage has always been part of their religious identity, to a Protestant or a Buddhist it means having time to oneself, to reflect and nurture the spirit. The Jews return to Sefarat and pilgrimage in the Arab world still has

a strong sense of feeling. Similarly, nowadays we can find a large number of people, many of them young, where *natural* ecological and reinterpretation of existence becomes reality, allowing a few weeks break from a very complex material world where lives are given a new dimension in the fact of pilgrimage. In short, multiculturalism expresses the current Way and, therefore, it is not surprising that from the same powerful images are created (literary, film, etc.) which, in turn, encourage more people to travel along the Way to Santiago.

3. Slow mobility and local everyday life spaces: the Way's landscapes

Going to Compostela, and we have already pointed out, needs some basic requirements on to how to move (which always involves human effort) and the distance that will need to be covered (a minimum number of miles). These two simple conditions have implied a change of life for thousands of people. Quick mobility is abandoned, no motor vehicles of modern society and time is had (very unusual) to enjoy the surroundings. According to qualitative studies that have been carried out, a pilgrim walks 25 to 30 miles a day if on foot and around 50-55 if on a bicycle. This completely changes the perception of the places visited. We are used to going through rural areas and towns at 50, 60 or 100 km/h., but on the Way to Santiago it is at 5-6 km/h. or 15/20 by bike. Natural, the landscape once again has the same dimension as it was for our ancestors: we know the size of a mountain, a hill or a valley at first hand, we stop to look at all the houses that make up a village or a small town, and lower limbs will slowly feel the effects of walking. Human beings feel small compared to the vastness of the territories where the impression is that nature dominates, in a very different experience to that of the car, train or plane. In addition, there is time. We should not settle for quick conversation patterns of 20 or 30 minutes, but we can linger half the morning meeting others. The experience for the majority of urbanites on the route is a real novelty. The Way not only creates a different microcosm but also implies a rediscovery of oneself and the enjoyment of geographic space; therefore, a new form of tourism where we witness an intense spiritual experience and a more banal practice.

If we focus strictly on the Way, it should be noted that regions of varied landscape are traversed, reinforcing the value of the route. From the green open spaces and intense, organised agriculture from central and western

France to the Iberian Atlantic represented by Galicia, through the Pyrenees Mountains and the vast stretches Northern sub plateau. Therefore, the pilgrimage route is shown as a veritable catalogue of Southwest Europe landscapes. This landscape, we must remember, is fully modern, as in the Middle Ages there was no notion of the peaceful enjoyment of the images projected by the visual environment around us (LÓPEZ SILVESTRE 2008). Unlike this traditional version of the route (very practical, summarized in Codex Calixtine, Book V), the visual sights are today one of the great attributes of the Jacobean, proven by the books and movies produced about the Way to Santiago de Compostela. Moreover, this is a living landscape: Cartesian and placid, near Toulouse and Aquitaine, on very steep hard to cross slopes in the Pyrenees (it is thought that the low usage of the Camino Aragonese is for this fact), agriculture and a shortage of trees to seek cover in Castile, and the leg breaker at the end of a huge effort in Galicia. Everything points to a very intense experience for the modern man. It is an experience that *consumes* the territory at first hand, which strengthens the senses, not only sight but also smell, hearing and touch. In our opinion, new tangible impressions that link perfectly with so loved light *spirituality* and linked to the act of pilgrimage.

As its good users surely recognize, the landscape is changing all the Camino's sections experientially. It consists of a number of elements to give it value, historical and cultural monumentality. While it is true that most of the space covered is considered rural, agricultural or forest, it is also true that every few kilometres we can find bridges, fountains, prepared areas for walkers and small historical centres that help them understand that this is genuine Humanity Heritage. In fact, much of these items are from the medieval period, when crossing a river without difficulty constituted an incentive to establish a route for pilgrimage, as with the creation of specific places for the enjoyment of available drinking water. Thus, the Way has highlighted the importance of building engineering at a time when the road network is characterized by its precariousness, for its poor quality. The pilgrimage route was the only gateway to Galicia that is worthy of any consideration until the nineteenth century (SORIA 1991). Therefore, such bridges like the Puente la Reina or Portomarín define locations of enormous significance in the Jacobean. With respect to the water fountains, their utilitarian character has been evocative on numerous occasions. The pilgrim needs to drink, to constantly regain his strength. Based on this need fountains have populated the entire route and nowadays they are catalogued (restored in good proportion) and marked for use in a new attempt to evoke its significance in the Way's classical period. Finally, the Way to Santiago

was founded to help to define a major urban network in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, in territories belonging to various Christian kingdoms. Populations sprung up with layouts to provide a service on the Way or numerous new nuclei. The growth of Pamplona, Logroño, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, Burgos, Sahagun, Astorga or Sarria, stay major centres and owe much to the permanence of the Jacobean phenomenon. Undoubtedly, the importance of the route's contemporary revival has been significant in bringing in reconstruction and rehabilitation processes from Roncesvalles to Santiago. The landmark's historic value (especially the work of F. Pons-Sorolla) and the old town quarters have allowed the Jacobean to recreate a reinterpreted environment that encourages the current pilgrimages (LOIS & SOMOZA 2003, CASTRO 2010). In fact, lost in a city or village of medieval origin that is maintained and decorated by motifs that allude to the route is an important part of the experience on the Camino. A path that, from any point of view we analyse it, is also living historical space which has been reformulated in recent decades.

Throughout the whole text we repeated an idea: the Camino includes both heritage material (that just evoked) and immaterial. In the latter, again we must emphasize the importance of mutual understanding and coexistence among pilgrims. For a few days or weeks walking with other people, who were not known to you before and who will not be seen again, or, on the contrary, will become lifelong friends. The earlier mentioned idea of microcosm reappears. With these *travelling companions*, in the strictest sense, we share much conversation time, suffer from the effects of daily walks and enjoy the release from everyday, routine life. We discover the inherent diversity in modern society, the different views of reality, on a secular path that, at the same time, is presented as a metaphor for existence (and this has already been pointed out at the beginning). But not only is there the enjoyment of the company of others who have decided to travel along the Way, but also there are the town and city people on the Way who have created part of the microcosm. In an embodiment of experiential tourism which is as valued as the current pilgrimage, small conversations with farmers and ranchers are to be found, with restaurateurs who serve us or with people of the Jacobean populations that are considered essential. As noted, most of the pilgrims are urbanites and need to meet men and women with quiet lifestyles, who are down-to-earth and express themselves in idiomatic sentences from their particular region. The citizen of today is looking for the other, the different, the even exotic, but not far from their place of residence. In this regard, the experience of the

Way is extremely attractive, even magnetic, for those in need of a profound reorientation of the meaning of life.

4. The construction of stopovers – a geopolitical issue?

In this section we are going to change the subject completely, even if it remains our general reflection on the contemporary revival of pilgrimages to Santiago. Thus, the following paragraphs are devoted to analyzing the Geopolitics of the Way, the different appropriation processes that governments or ideologies have delivered on the pilgrimage route, some of which had been targeted in the previous pages. Firstly, since the late nineteenth century the Way has frequently been used as the theme to reinforce the identity of Spain as a nation. A resource that has been accompanied by the introduction of geography and history, along with wall maps in a nationwide compulsory education system (CAPEL 1976). In fact, the first to claim conservative Spanishness of the Jacobean were members of the very traditional Compostela church, Carlist heirs who joined together in their complaints on political reforms and social progress, the secular idea of "Santiago and close Spain", a St. James certainly a lot more warrior than pilgrim. This substrate begins to be developed in the times of Cardinal Paya and A. Lopez Ferreiro, the Franco regime fully appropriated the Way to Santiago as the myth of the *new Spain*, the national-Catholic Spain, just out of civil strife that was advertised as a crusade that should become the *spiritual reserve of the West*. The pilgrimage route was completely renovated along with the monumental centre of Compostela, from the 1940s until well into the 1970s. As shown by B. Castro in his work, they were not so much interested in encouraging a flow of walkers to Santiago as idealizing the old Spain, a Christian Spain with deep medieval roots and the holder of some apostolic remains of great value (CASTRO 2010). With the transition to democracy in the country all these meanings have disappeared, but the Spanish government continues to use the Way as a metaphor for a renewed, internally diverse nation, connected throughout history with the rest of Europe and respectful to religious freedom and different cultures. St. James the warrior will emerge with strength and from hiding as St. James the politically correct pilgrim.

Undoubtedly, in this recent interpretation of the Way's symbolic value, a partnership has achieved its full strength when it has linked the Jacobean past and present to a united Europe. It is indisputable that the pilgrimages

to Santiago have shaped the historical identity of the continent, an issue that cannot be considered minor in the new democratic Europe, of nations and regions often resorting to the medieval times to find their primeval identity. Furthermore, in the case of the Iberian Peninsula the weak Europeanism shown by its institutions in the nineteenth century (Portugal and Spain as *sick* countries in the eyes of French, British or German) and, above all, during periods of a dictatorship that spread much of the twentieth century, and explains the instrumentalization of the route as an indisputable reason for integration in the European Union in the mid-1980s. Europe was built walking towards Santiago. Dante and Goethe as well as J. Joyce refer to this fact in their work on the traditions of the Way. Therefore, it is not to be of surprise that when the Spanish State prepared its accession to the EEC the Ministry of Culture gave great coverage to the Way to Santiago to accompany the event in Brussels. Neither should it be surprising that one of the first campaigns of the Spanish government in Europe was to achieve recognition of the pilgrimage route as First Cultural Itinerary of Europe. A distinction joined by the Europa Nostra Award and the designation of Santiago de Compostela as European Capital of Culture in 2000. At any time of exaltation of Europeanism (e.g. the signing of a new treaty aimed at further integration) or crisis (such as current economic), the historical myth of Santiago reappears strongly to reinforce European principles, understood in all its plurality.

Spain and Europe are regional realities that are directly linked to the sanctuary of Compostela and the Camino that, at the same time, are presented as the origin of the Galician identity. At a historical level, the existence of the medieval Kingdom of Galicia cannot be understood without the *discovery* of the remains of the Apostle, without the creation of the holy city of Santiago and without the consolidation of centralized power in the figure of the Archbishop of Santiago. Therefore, Galicia the territory formed from the Jacobean phenomenon, its decline in modern times has coincided with the pilgrim crisis and its consolidation as an Autonomous Community in the recent decades has been accompanied (and reinforced) by the revival of the Way. If we focus on the classical period of Galician political establishment, from the 1920s until the Civil War, it can be seen how the role played by Santiago has helped build the idea that the national character of Galicia was attached to the existence of this city and the apostolic sanctuary. Authors as relevant as R. Otero Pedrayo consistently expressed that reasoning to Xeración Nós members and in their capacity as leaders of the Galeguista Party (in this regard, we must remember Otero's extreme religiosity or other training leaders such as A. Bóveda). Galician

nationalism in recent decades has largely been leftist and appears to be quite influenced by Marxism. However, the conclusion of the *Galician Fatherland Day* continues to take place on July 25th, a celebration that always focuses on the city of Santiago, the capital of Galicia, and an idealized population for all the regionalist/ nationalist native sentiment (MOUZO 2010). On a more institutional level, as we have studied, the Galician Autonomous Community has built its personality by enhancing the Camino and Santiago, remember its corporate headquarters. Since the 1980s the city has been significantly embellished with promotional campaigns outside of Galicia that have used the brand 'Xacobeo' as an undisputed benchmark ("Come to Santiago. See Galicia") and the city has affirmed an undoubtedly prestigious image as instrumental in building a historic and prestigious city of old Europe through the support of the regional government (LOIS & RODRIGUEZ 1997).

Just as Galicia develops identity from the Camino and the apostolic sanctuary, the other Spanish regions crossing the Way have also defined their historical personality by using the Jacobean as a reference along with other elements. It is indisputable that Navarra has given great importance to the Way since the 1960s, it has rebuilt and restored many monuments, and has asserted their individuality by recalling the Jacobean character of many cities and towns in the territory. In La Rioja and Castilla y Leon past walkers appear in many different instances, part of its urban network is explained by the medieval tradition of pilgrimage to Santiago and all, without exception, autonomous governments have chosen to focus on the Jacobean legacy. Perhaps more surprising is that territories with strong sense of identity (national, can we say) such as the Basque Country and Catalonia have recently chosen to claim the Way as a significant attribute towards building a strong political personality. In the rest of the country, the preferential consideration of the Northern Way by UNESCO (together the most classic French Way) has seen communities like Asturias and Cantabria become fully Jacobean, where the legacy of the pilgrimage to Santiago was not too important until modern times. Finally, the rest of the autonomous territories also have sought to enhance their pilgrimage to Santiago identity, as evidenced by the recovery of the Ruta de la Plata (which combines Extremadura and Western Andalusia) or Ways from Levante (well-marked and protected in Valencia and Madrid). The driving force of a New Spain, decentralized, tolerant and Europeanist associated to the Jacobean world which extends to all over the regional map. There is no longer any Community that has not acted on any of its Ways, that has not tried to recreate pilgrimage references (Caravaca de la Cruz or Liébana as

outstanding examples) or have not used cultural routes as major tourist destinations in their promotional campaigns in other territories. Finally, in this game of geopolitical identities it is necessary to refer to the cities. The Camino de Santiago has helped to found, develop and enrich a number of cities and, most importantly, give them personality and power. We refer to places such as Pamplona and Burgos, León, Sahagún or Santo Domingo de la Calzada in medieval times. Today this fact is exploited by democratic municipal governments aspiring to permanently place their populations in cities with prestigious networks. These networks are built from a common walking past, the existence of protected historical centres in their interior and, as a result of these two facts, the cities' character as attractive destinations for cultural tourism. Along the Way to Santiago there are a number of city monuments and things of historical and cultural interest, increasing in density in urban settings, objects to visit for the walker following the Way or just independently. In any case, its connection to Santiago gives them additional value. It may be used to undertake development plans and urban renewal, promotion and beautification of relatively small towns like Astorga, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, Puente la Reina, Portomarín or Sahagún, where a fortress was found in the recovery of the Way, allowing them to undergo a new phase of dynamism. If we refer to major cities, the relationship that the Way establishes turns them into more central cities (many are provincial or regional capitals) and above all it gives them more attractive strengths in urban and cultural tourism and has made remarkable progress in the northern half of the Iberian Peninsula. The Way continues to generate economic development and prestige abroad, related to reaffirmation processes of cities as strong points in a globally attractive territory.

5. Way of conclusion. What lessons does the Camino de Santiago provide for geographic knowledge?

Throughout our reflection on the multicultural and revitalized Camino today, we have dealt with a variety of topics, ranging from the spiritual pilgrim rebirth process to resacralization of the spaces on the route and going through the different ownership identities thereof. Now we would like to close this argument by asserting the importance of geography as a discipline that can explain most of the dynamics generated by the Jacobean in recent times. Thus, the contemporary recovery of the Way is associated to a new sacred space on the route, the product of public inter-

ventions to rehabilitate churches and other monuments, the cleaning up stretches of the pilgrimage route or the beautifying of bridges, fountains and doors. Is this a new geography of sacred space (post-secular, most likely), we need to develop (BEAUMONT & BAKER 2011). Moreover, the recovery of pilgrimages throughout the world is related to the recent boom in cultural geography. It is an academic tradition that investigates human beings spatial behaviour, their perception of the landscape and mobility together with their religious or spiritual values in different territories. The tradition of walking to Santiago is a great case study to address in the context of spatial and territorial analysis defined by globalization that is compatible with the return to origin.

In Geography the difference in the meaning of space and territory is fundamental. If space refers to the idea of extension, transformation from the different areas of economic, cultural and demographic concerns while territory refers to demarcation and the fact of limiting different parts of the surface. Therefore, on the Camino de Santiago we initiate a study on geographic space or based on their partitioning into different sections. In fact, during the medieval period the territory appeared highly fragmented into smaller chiefdoms and kingdoms of variable limits. The Camino, their protection by both the Roman and the Compostela church made it possible to ensure the safety of the pilgrims, who, thanks to the church, avoided paying continuous tolls along the route and in practice created a higher management authority. At present, however, the route is divided into countries, autonomous regions and municipalities with clear boundaries and responsibilities. All these territories are Jacobean and make this attribute into a fortress for use in the exterior. If territorial meaning shows major changes over the centuries the physical space of the Way remains predominate. The route has remained with little change and the days aimed at exploring are generally similar to those of yesteryear. As noted, the modern pilgrimage largely means a return to slow mobility and contact with nature, similar to the past. On a different level, the analysis of political geography may be present both in the medieval route and in the modern and contemporary periods. On the subject of a material and symbolic value as important as the Camino, continuous phenomena of land appropriation is recorded, reflecting the variation in the territorial map organization at different periods, the significance of different limits, city government and the localities and regions.

As a final note, the contemporary revival of pilgrimages introduces a new element: landscape valuation. The landscape has been defined, and this is reflected in the convention of its defence, approved several years ago

by the Council of Europe as a Western cultural creation. A creation developed from the sixteenth century in painting and architecture, which will go into academic language in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Therefore, the medieval walker to Santiago was only slightly worried about looking around and much more worried about finishing (and surviving) the experience, while the modern citizen is enhanced by the aesthetic and intimate contact with what is seen on the Way. In this aspect, the monumental Jacobean requalification of space reaches a tremendous value for modern pilgrims interested in seeing art, enjoying historic medieval centres and living all these culturally based experiences that recreate a largely idealized story. Undoubtedly, all geographical reflection we have tried to undertake is based on a final and fundamental idea, present in much of the discourse: a game of stages surrounding the current Jacobean phenomenon. On the one hand, it has been indicated that the Way serves as a global reference for pilgrimage in the West and that it spreads worldwide as a brand linked to the concept of old Europe. Furthermore, the pilgrimage route is at the origin of the unity of the continent, it is an important symbol of identity in contemporary Spain and the regions/nationalities it crosses. Thirdly, doing the Way means a return to a human, natural and concrete scale of things, travelling at a speed of 6 kilometres per hour if on foot or 15/20 by bike. Amid these stages is that of the villages, towns and cities that are crossed, that work as a network and give value to its monuments, thus showing that the Camino de Santiago may be one of the most complete Geography lessons in the this early 21st century.

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