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Cristina Sánchez-Carretero *Editor*

Heritage, Pilgrimage and the Camino to Finisterre

Walking to the End of the World

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Cristina Sánchez-Carretero
Editor

Heritage, Pilgrimage and the Camino to Finisterre

Walking to the End of the World



Springer

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Foreword

The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela is a pilgrimage to Land's End. The far northwest corner of the Iberian Peninsula where Santiago—the capital of the autonomous community of Galicia—is located was known from ancient times as Finisterre. The multiple connotations of the term Finisterre, now the place name of an Atlantic cape, are one of the factors behind the present recuperation of pilgrimage and its new forms.

The pilgrimage to Santiago in the twenty-first century is a complex phenomenon in which postmodern cultural hybridization is made manifest. It is religious and secular, spiritual and corporal, local and global, real and virtual. Although this pilgrimage has always had an international dimension, this has been intensified with the improvement of technology and the communication media characteristic of globalization, to the extent of facilitating virtual and transnational experiences. In Brazil, for example, the Saint James's routes have been reproduced offering itineraries to places presided by statues of the saint.

Despite this delocalization, the valorization of the Saint James's Way as cultural heritage has emphasized the spatial dimension of the pilgrimage. Today it is seen as a journey into the past which must be done on foot, as it was before the days of motorized transport. Pilgrims follow historical routes in the footsteps of medieval pilgrims, imitating their practices. This illustrates the difficulty of separating the tangible and intangible dimensions of heritage. The senses are inevitably linked to concrete things: monuments, places, paths, and even the act of walking. Thus, the current revival of the pilgrimage can help develop the localities the routes pass through on their way to Santiago. Many towns and villages see the St. James's Way as an opportunity to overcome their situation of marginality—caused by their distance from large geographic centers—and to be placed on the new international map of pilgrimage.

The link between pilgrimage and territory and local space is the main theme of this book, which has assumed the challenge of analyzing such a complex phenomenon. To do so, it focuses on one of the St. James's routes that is probably the most obvious manifestation of the pilgrimage's current transformation. At the same time, the book shows this particular route as a laboratory in which

one can observe many of the features which characterize the pilgrimage revival in general. The route is the continuation of the way from Santiago de Compostela for approximately a further 90 km, to the region of Costa da Morte, where Cape of Finisterre is located. This cape has now become a new non-religious goal for the pilgrims, who conclude their journey watching the sunset over the ocean and performing other renewal rituals.

The recuperation and promotion of the route were part of the “Xacobeo” programs set up by the autonomous government of Galicia in 1993. Thus, the rich and diverse heritage of Saint James’s Way was placed at the forefront of the government’s tourism strategy. In recent years, the route has also received support from the European Union by means of rural development programs whose philosophy is based on managing local resources and cultural heritage in particular.

The economic and sociocultural effects of these programs, particularly those related to the promotion of the Saint James’s Way, have not been analyzed with the thoroughness they deserve. Unfortunately, academic research on pilgrimage in the twenty-first century in Galicia has not kept pace with the rate at which it has become a relevant social phenomenon. The design and implementation of tourism, culture, and heritage policies lack input from the social and human sciences, as do the processes of creating public opinion and social debate.

This book is therefore a necessary and relevant contribution. The anthropological perspective which guides this work is worthy of note for various reasons. Firstly, its global perspective takes into account the multiple factors which intervene in the transformation of social practices and cultural meanings. Another specific contribution is its ethnographic perspective, based on field observation and interaction with participants, in this case, mainly pilgrims and the inhabitants of the places through which the route passes.

Although pilgrims are acknowledged as the protagonists, their motivations and experiences are often stereotyped by publicity images or statistics. The local inhabitants are frequently forgotten about. As in many other tourism contexts, the heritage policies linked to the Xacobeo programs have taken more the “guests” than the “hosts” into account. This book emphasizes the importance of studying the perspectives of both agents and the relationship between them. It is crucial to look beyond the magic words which are repeated over and over again and which support an entire system agreed on by apparent common consent. “Heritage” is one of those words. This research proves on the contrary that the idea of heritage that encourages a pilgrim to go to Costa da Morte differs from that of the inhabitants of this region. Not even local governments share the same concept of heritage. No doubt this is a huge obstacle for the implementation of the model of rural development promoted by the European Union whose philosophy sees heritage as a meeting point between residents and visitors where the interests of both parties are brought together.

This book analyzes how the promotion of the pilgrimage is affecting the transformation of the Costa da Morte area and the ways of life of its inhabitants. To do so, new concepts are coined and proposed to identify realities and new phenomena related to the pilgrimage. From the 1990s onward, pilgrims have certainly ceased

to be a foreign feature in this region's landscape. But the results of the development programs based on heritage and pilgrimage have not met expectations. While there has been a certain degree of improvement in some municipalities, the region still suffers an important demographic decline and emigration flux.

This book will undoubtedly help to detect and rectify these errors. The research has been carried out using a participative methodology which allows all participants to have their say, therefore gaining a deeper and more accurate understanding of this pilgrim's way. This insight focuses not only on the walkers but also on those who live on the periphery of the way and who should be the first to benefit from the development encouraged by pilgrimage in the twenty-first century.

Nieves Herrero

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Chapter 1

To Walk and to Be Walked... at the End of the World

Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

*To be a pilgrim consists of letting the Camino go through you...
you are walked by the Camino*

(pilgrim, fieldnotes 7-2-2011)

1.1 Introduction¹

To walk... and to be walked; this expression is used by many pilgrims on the Camino to describe the act of walking as a transformative experience. Walking the Camino is not so much about hiking but about 'letting the Camino go through you' as the pilgrim in the initial quote explains. In this book, we will analyze the expression 'to be walked by the Camino' from the viewpoint of those living in the towns and villages through which this pilgrimage route passes.

At a pilgrimage conference in 2011, in Antwerp, I asked the audience to close their eyes, breathe deeply, and visualize a place, person, object or scene related to

¹The chapters presented in this book are part of the research project 'Processes of Heritagization in the Camino: Santiago-Finisterre-Muxía' funded by the Galician Government (INCITE09606181PR). In addition, this chapter is linked to the network TRAMA3, funded by CYTED, Science and Society Area; and the project NEARCH funded by the European Commission CULTURE program, this publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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the Camino de Santiago; whatever came to mind. When they opened their eyes, I asked how many had visualized the Camino landscape: 90 %. Sixty percent had visualized a pilgrim; 30 % visualized some of the paraphernalia associated with pilgrims such as shells, walking sticks or a backpack; 10 % of the audience, houses, buildings or a church in a village, town or city; when I asked how many had thought of the inhabitants of those towns or villages, the answer was unanimous: nobody.² Most of the conference attendees visualized a rural landscape, half of them thought of pilgrims, but no one had visualized the local residents.

This anecdote illustrates the one-sidedness of studies on the Camino to Santiago de Compostela. The large number of studies concerning the pilgrimage route contrasts with a near-absence of research into both the effects of the pilgrimage on the daily lives of the people who live along the route, and the commodification processes that result from the exploitation of the Camino for tourism purposes. This book seeks to contribute to redress this imbalance by analyzing the Camino from different perspectives: that of the processes of ‘heritagization,’ that of the effects of pilgrimage on local communities, and that of the perceptions of the pilgrims. To do so, the book focuses on a rather new and unknown section: the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía.

The project ‘Heritagization Processes along the Camino de Santiago: Route Santiago-Finisterre-Muxía’ addresses three issues: firstly, the consequences of pilgrimage on the daily lives of those living in the towns and villages through which the route passes; secondly, the heritage construction processes (heritagization) taking place along the Camino; and thirdly the ideas of the walkers on the history and mythology of the region and the perceptions of them on the qualities and the religious or spiritual dimensions of the route (Fig. 1.1).

This book is the result of a three-year research project (2010–2012) at the Institute of Heritage Sciences (Incipit), Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) in collaboration with the Meertens Institute (Amsterdam). It is based on multi-disciplinary collaboration between anthropologists, sociologists, historians and archaeologists. Various complementary methods were used for the project: historical, mythological and ethnographic studies of the route (Chaps. 2 and 3); data surveys to analyze the socioeconomic impact of the pilgrimage on businesses along the route and in Finisterre (Chap. 5); ethnographic fieldwork, particularly in three places on the Camino: Vilaserío (municipal district of Negreira), Olveiroa (municipal district of Dumbría) and Finisterre (municipal district of Finisterre) (Chaps. 4 and 6); and surveys to analyze the pilgrims’ motivations (Chap. 8).

A number of different results were obtained through complex analytic framework. With regards to heritagization processes for instance, it is worth noting from an ethnographic viewpoint the differences between what is considered ‘heritage’ by institutions and by local townspeople (see the conclusions to Ballesteros-Arias and Sánchez-Carretero 2011; Sánchez-Carretero and Ballesteros-Arias 2014; and Sánchez-Carretero 2012).

²The answers were not mutually exclusive. One person could visualize various things at once, for instance, a pilgrim in a rural landscape.



Fig. 1.1 Map of the Finisterre-Muxía Camino. *Source* Anxo Rodríguez-Paz

As for the effects on the local population, the main conclusion from the study, based on sociological surveys, is that there is a clear connection between the increase in the number of pilgrims following the Santiago-Finisterre route and changes in the local communities' productive model, which in recent years has moved towards offering services related to the pilgrimage. These activities socially and economically boost local communities on the pilgrimage route (Parga-Dans 2012a, b). While the data reflects growth and revitalization of local communities resulting from this phenomenon, qualitative and ethnographic research has shown that this productive revitalization also brings about changes that can be a source of conflict in local communities, such as hidden economy, sharp increases in transient population at specific times of the year, interpersonal conflict and resource management by new institutional bodies.

1.2 The Pilgrimage to Finisterre

Instead of ending in Santiago like the rest of the Caminos, this route finishes at the Cape of Finisterre and Muxía on the Galician North-West Atlantic coast, ‘where the land ends and the sea begins’ (Vilar 2010: 9).³ In Latin, *Finisterrae* means ‘the end of the earth.’ Both Muxía and Finisterre are part of The Coast of Death, a territorial label that aimed at forging emergent identity links among the inhabitants of one of the poorest areas in Galicia. The coastline is distinctive for its high cliffs, peninsulas and coves that give protection to small villages. This complex geography made the area quite inaccessible from other parts of Galicia. The name ‘Coast of Death,’ as explained by Paula Ballesteros-Arias in Chap. 6, was fully established in the 1990s to promote the coastal area between Cape Finisterre and the Sisargas Islands in Malpica. During that decade an association called Neria was founded to promote and coordinate rural development and it was linked to EU Leader funds for the development of rural areas. The main objective of Neria was to ‘promote and coordinate rural development, improve life conditions and to help end rural depopulation.’⁴ The association wanted to promote the whole region and needed to find a good name for the area.

There are different accounts to explain the origin of the name Coast of Death. The term ‘death’ might be linked to the fact that this coastline represents Europe’s continental Finisterrae, where the land ends and the sun sets in a *mare tenebrosum* or dark sea, as the Atlantic Ocean was called in Medieval times; but the name could also be related to the numerous shipwrecks in the area. As the official guidebook for the area explains, there is a dark legend regarding Galician inhabitants who were believed to have provoked shipwrecks in order to steal their load.⁵

Cape Finisterre is part of the Coast of Death and it is said to be the westernmost point of continental Europe, although geographers have now shown that both Cape Touriñán—also in Galicia and very close to Finisterre—and Cape Roca in Portugal are further west. Other European mythical ‘ends of the world’ include Land’s End in Britain, Finistère in French Brittany, and Dingle in Ireland.

This research project was carried out on this particular section of the route because its promotion amongst pilgrims is relatively recent, although documentation shows that there were pilgrimages to the area from as early as the 12th century (Pombo 2000), with testimonies of pilgrims who visited the sanctuaries dedicated to Santo Cristo in Finisterre, Virxe da Barca in Muxía and hermit San Guillerme in Cape Finisterre (Vilar 2010). However, the links between pilgrimage to Finisterre and Muxía and the cult of Saint James are not that clear. Margry and Vilar explore these links in Chaps. 2 and 3 respectively and conclude that the

³This route can be walked West–East towards Santiago, which is officially recognized by the Catholic Church. See Margry (Chap. 2) for an explanation on both directions.

⁴www.neria.es/quienes-somos.aspx, accessed July 23, 2014.

⁵<http://www.turismocostadamorte.com/ga/upload/des/59aGuia%20Xeral%20Costa%20Morte%20GAL.pdf>, accessed 23 July, 2014.

Camino towards Finisterre is related to the Marian pilgrimage to Muxía, the Christ of Finisterre and the hermit of San Guillermo rather than to St. James, and therefore in its East–West direction is not an old Jacobean route.

There are two types of historical accounts that link Finisterre and Muxía with Santiago: On the one hand, there are studies that see the pilgrimage to Finisterre and Muxía as a medieval construction and a unifying Christian strategy against Muslims; on the other hand, there is the sun worship explanation of pre-Christian origin, mostly upheld by 19th century Galician nationalists. In addition, there are several legends that connect these places and which are explored in the first part of this book. The use of legends to establish links among sanctuaries was a common strategy employed by the Catholic church to redirect pilgrims from major sanctuaries to less popular ones (Herrero 2009: 168).

It was not until the late 1990s that this part of the route began to be promoted; therefore its connection with the pilgrimage route is relatively recent, as is the economic, social and cultural impact on the places along the Finisterre-Muxía route. Furthermore, economic and heritage policies are being developed and fostered in response to the rise in tourism.

The revival of the Caminos began in the 20th century thanks to the ‘Associations of the Friends of the Camino de Santiago’ and subsequently various administrations contributed to the project. In 1993, the year of the Camino’s inclusion on the World Heritage List and a ‘holy year’ or ‘xacobeo’,⁶ the Galician Government initiated the ‘Xacobeo’ program. The Finisterre-Muxía Route was then included as one of the Caminos de Santiago (Vilar 2010). Between 1997 and 2004, the Galician Association of Friends of the Camino (AGACS) and Asociación Neria organized annual pilgrimages to Finisterre and Muxía. This part of the Camino de Santiago is not officially recognized by the Catholic Church and pilgrims walking the route do not receive the *compostela*, the recognition granted by the Catholic Church to those pilgrims who have walked at least 100 km of the Camino, as this route is less than 100 km long and does not end in Santiago. For these reasons, as well as its connection with sun worship, many local neighbors and pilgrims call this route ‘the Camino of the atheists’.⁷ In fact, the Catholic Church keeps a firm grip on the heritagization processes of the rest of the Caminos, but maintains a clear *ignoratio* strategy in relation to the Finisterre route: the Church does not officially oppose this route, but neither does it recognize it.

The route from Santiago to Finisterre and Muxía consists of three to five stages. Some pilgrims walk for three days from Santiago to Finisterre, adding one more day to walk from Finisterre to Muxía. Others take four days to reach Finisterre; whilst some walk first to Muxía and then from Muxía to Finisterre. Others don’t go to Muxía at all, while many pilgrims simply catch a bus from Santiago to reach ‘the end of the world.’

⁶A Xacobeo, jacobeo or holly year is a jubilee year that occurs when July 25th, the day of St. James, falls on a Sunday. For more information on this topic, see Vilar, this volume.

⁷This expression was recorded during ethnographic fieldwork among owners of small restaurants and hostels, as well as among pilgrims. However Margry, in his surveys and fieldwork, did not encounter it (Margry, Chap. 8).

There are various options of how to tackle the stages between the main points of the route:

Option 1:

1. Santiago-Negreira (22 km)
2. Negreira-Olveiroa (33 km): some pilgrims sleep at Vilaserío and walk directly from Santiago to Vilaserío; others walk from Negreira to Vilaserío (13 km)
3. Olveiroa-Cee (19 km)
4. Cee-Finisterre (16 km)
5. Additional stage: Finisterre-Muxía (31 km)

Option 2:

1. Santiago-Negreira (22 km)
2. Negreira-Olveiroa (33 km)
3. Olveiroa-Muxía: (28 km)
4. Additional stage: Muxía-Finisterre (31 km)

The structure of the route and its various alternatives—either finishing in Finisterre, in Muxía, or going to both places—is partly the source of conflict between the two arrival points, Muxía and Finisterre.

The Finisterre Camino reintroduces the idea of reaching the end of the Camino as the purpose of pilgrimage. According to Margry, ‘modern pilgrimage to Santiago changed the idea of pilgrimage from ‘reaching a goal’ (the shrine) to ‘being under way’” (Margry, Chap. 8) and the Camino to Finisterre brings back that urge for an end to mark the experience. It is physically impossible to continue as there is no more land ahead, only the ocean. The same idea is described in a municipal video by the pilgrim hostel-keeper in Finisterre: ‘Pilgrims reach the end and cannot continue any further. Finisterre was the end of the Camino of the Stars, the Milky Way.’⁸

The construction of Finisterre as a tourist attraction is based, according to anthropologist Nieves Herrero, on a symbolic event (Herrero 2008: 123–138). Those on the margins are looked down on by the official discourse and are, at the same time, part of the emotional repertoire and symbolic universe of dominant culture (Shields 1991: 5, cited after Herrero 2005: 122). These characteristics—being rejected and on the margins—allow the ‘marginal places’ to become ‘mythical places’. The stigma of marginal places, such as the Coast of Death, calls for a reconfiguration process in order to change the emotional repertoire linked to such places. In the present case study, Asociación Neria and the mayor of Dumbría (one of Neria’s promoters) made a conscious effort to transform the Coast of Death, which has the stigma of being poor and isolated, into a tourist attraction; a place worthy of being visited. In fact, the same reasons that forged the image of an isolated, semi-abandoned and poor part of Galicia also turned the Coast of Death into a tourist destination.

⁸Municipal video produced by Fisterre TV: <http://www.concellofisterre.com/ga/web/info.php?idc=37> accessed March 17, 2012.

Fig. 1.2 ‘No fire’ sign with evidence of fire in Cape Finisterre. *Source* Peter Jan Margry



Many pilgrims are attracted to the nostalgic idea of an isolated ‘end of the world’ and long for traditional pilgrimage as opposed to *turigrinos* (‘tourgrims’). The history of nostalgia dates back to the mid-1950s (see Starkie 1957), although it was triggered by modernization rather than by today’s touristification.⁹

In the reconfiguration of Finisterre as a mythical place, various rituals were promoted and, at the same time, some of them were institutionally banned; the act of burning clothes, for instance. Some pilgrims symbolically burn objects that they have used during the Camino such as t-shirts, socks or boots, as well as notes, letters or postcards; they may even burn symbols that they have carried from the beginning of their pilgrimage for this purpose alone. This is described in many guidebooks and books on the Camino to Finisterre as a ‘purification ritual of the end of the Camino’ (Pombo 2004; Rudolph 2004: 44; Vilar, this volume). Margry, in Chap. 8, gives a detailed description of the different types of rituals carried out by pilgrims, concluding that one third of those arriving in Finisterre made a fire and ‘when it was not possible to execute the fire ritual, as it sometimes simply proved too wet to do it, the result was an ‘unfinished’ feeling’ (Margry, Chap. 8). Fires were banned in 2011 after strong winds caused them to spread on various occasions. However, there are only a few unofficially worded signs informing pilgrims of this (Fig. 1.2).

Due to the fire ban, some pilgrims started to hang objects on the radio antenna masts at the Cape, instead of the fire ritual. However the climbing involved is risky and this practice has also been banned. In spite of the ban, pilgrims have recently started placing the objects on smaller, more accessible masts at the Cape (Fig. 1.3).

Placing objects at the Cape and the burning of clothes are two recurrent themes that come up in the interviews with Finisterre locals as the main source of conflict between them and the pilgrims.¹⁰ Some aspects of the behavior condemned by the locals are indeed part of the pilgrims’ mental map of what it takes to be ‘good

⁹See Margry’s comments on Starkie’s writing (Margry, Chap. 2).

¹⁰The conflicts between the various actors involved in the camino are explored in Chap. 4.



Fig. 1.3 Pilgrim paraphernalia deposited at a radio mast in Finisterre Cape. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

pilgrim' ending his or her route in Finisterre. There are different ways in which the pilgrims' behavior is learned, produced and reproduced. Mass media—internet, books and films—is one of them; guidebooks or other books written by pilgrims, blogs and various internet sources all illustrate how to be a pilgrim (Vilar, this volume; Schrire 2007: 77). The film *The Way* (2010) directed by Emilio Estévez and performed by Martin Sheen, is a recent example of the Camino's media popularity. Another example is the Korean bestseller by Kim Hyo Sun, who gave fame to the Santiago pilgrimage in Korea. Capitalizing the book's huge success, the Korean TV channel 'Yon Hap News' screened a reality show based on five Koreans walking the Camino, the best-selling author among them.¹¹

The large number of references to the Camino in written sources—as demonstrated in Chaps. 2 and 3—and in the mass media is both cause and effect of the pilgrimage's success. Mass media expert Martín-Barbero points out that not only do we live in societies with mass media, but our societies are mass-mediated and the media construct us (Martín-Barbero 1987).

Another ritual act besides fire rituals consists of obtaining the *Fisterrana* or the *Muxiana*. Both municipalities have created a certificate to grant to those who complete the pilgrimage to Finisterre or Muxía. The number of *Fisterranas* has grown exponentially, from 1312 certificates in 1998, to 17,983 awarded in 2010 (Parga-Dans, this volume) (Fig. 1.4).

¹¹http://www.lavozdegalicia.es/noticia/television/2013/10/18/camino-santiago-plato-reality-emitiran-corea/0003_201310G18P62991.htm (Accessed 17 July 2014).



Fig. 1.4 Reproduction of a *Fisterrana*

Finally, an important ritual when reaching the Cape, weather permitting, is the contemplation of the sunset over the ocean. This ritual is described in detail by Margry in Chap. 8.

1.3 Pilgrimage, Tourism and Heritagization

There is a wide range of views on pilgrimage and a constant re-evaluation of the concept. Simultaneously, there are a growing number of multidisciplinary studies on pilgrimage in different academic contexts. A quick look at the Centre for Pilgrimage Studies website (University of York) gives an idea of the worldwide interest in pilgrimage. The aim of this section is to briefly summarize the connections between pilgrimage, tourism and heritage, but not to cover the whole spectrum of pilgrimage studies.¹²

Eade and Sallnow (1991) established three key factors for the study of pilgrimage: person, place and text. A few years later Coleman and Elsner (1995) added a fourth factor, movement. Sharon Roseman, in her analysis of the bid by Santiago de Compostela officials for their city to be named a European City of Culture, suggests that there is an important factor to be added to the traditional way of analyzing pilgrimage: that of heritage or cultural tourism (Roseman 2004: 70). The present book will be focusing on this.

Tourism and pilgrimage are two fields of study that emerged independently but then, in the last few decades have evolved side-by-side and they now intersect and complement each other. The well-established fields of anthropology and sociology of tourism have proven that tourism-travel comes in many shapes and sizes and tourists have varying motivations (Cohen 1979; Smith 1989; Urry 1990). The aforementioned 'movement' factor has been successfully applied to pilgrimage in relation to tourism. Along the same lines, Coleman and Eade (2004) coined the term 'kinetic rituals' when referring to the experience of pilgrimage.

Tourism studies have dealt profusely with the anthropology of movement. Urry (2002), Clifford (1997) and Appadurai (1996), among others, stress the fact that we live in 'worlds in motion,' questioning the approach that sees pilgrimage as an exceptional activity. In our study, the non-exceptionality of pilgrimage is significant, for the perspective switches from that of the pilgrims' to the point of view of the residents of the areas that are being 'pilgrimage'd' or 'walked.'

The futility of dividing tourists and pilgrims into separate categories is nothing new. As Badone and Roseman (2004: 2) clearly reveal, 'rigid dichotomies

¹²The bibliography of pilgrimage is too broad to be covered in this introduction. With the purpose of giving some general recommendations for studies on what it means to be a pilgrim, see the pioneer book by Turner and Turner (1978), Coleman and Eade (2004), Reader and Walter (1993), Morinis (1992) and Margry (2008a). For an analysis on pilgrimage routes as cultural heritage see Roseman (2004), Margry (2008b), and Roseman et al. (2008); for studies on pilgrimage and tourism see Cohen (1992), and Badone and Roseman (2004).

between pilgrimage and tourism, or pilgrims and tourists, no longer seem tenable in the shifting world of postmodern travel'. The non-separation or continuum between tourists and pilgrims is also pointed out by Reader's study on the pilgrimage route or *henro* that joins 88 Buddhist temples round the Japanese island of Shikoku (Reader 2005). In fact, from the hosts' viewpoint and the effects of pilgrimage on local policies and everyday life that we attempt to cover in the present book, the classical tourism/pilgrimage debate is useless. Pilgrimage is seen locally as a way of developing the tertiary sector and, therefore, no distinction is made between pilgrimage and tourism. According to Badone, both pilgrimage and tourism can be considered related forms of voluntary travel. In fact, she suggests that all tourist experiences are some sort of pilgrimage, and that tourism can be considered a type of religious experience (Badone 2014). Frey uses the expression 'leisure with meaning' (1998:254) to refer to the type of tourism bound for Santiago. Other authors, such as Margry, argue that 'it is contraproductive to use the concept of pilgrimage as a combination term for both secular and religious phenomena, thereby turning it into much too broad a concept' (Margry 2008b: 14). Along these lines we follow Margry's standpoint on the usage of the term 'spiritual' as a broad 'portmanteau concept, that comprises all expressions, in words or behavior, which relate in a transcendent way to one's existence and to the search for meaning in life' (Margry, Chap. 8).

1.3.1 *Heritagization*¹³

In comparison to the large amount of works on the topic of pilgrimage and tourism (see references mentioned above), the intersection of heritage and pilgrimage did not receive much attention (Collins-Kreiner 2009: 445–448; Collins-Kreiner and Gatrell 2008; Wiley 2005). The analysis of the heritage regime in which pilgrimage takes place provides a different angle to look at the well-known "tourism plus pilgrimage" perspective to understand the internal dynamics of the pilgrimage to Finisterre. Our point of departure is the idea that pilgrimage is inserted in a heritage machine (Alonso González 2013) or heritage regime (Bendix et al. 2012); to use two of the most telling metaphors that are currently being employed to think about heritage.

In this book, we will use the concept 'heritagization' instead of 'heritage'. Paraphrasing Davallon, anyone looking at the notion of heritage today will notice the relative instability of such a notion as it designates realities which are largely contradictory: 'this is the reason why the quest for the right definition of this notion has been replaced by the study of the concept of heritagization' (Davallon 2010: 39).

¹³This section draws from an earlier version presented at the Association of Critical Heritage Studies, Göteborg 2012.

Heritagization refers to the processes by which heritage is constructed. This concept has been widely used among scholars in the south of Europe, by contrast with the invisibility of this term in English. The terms ‘patrimonialización’ in Spanish, or ‘patrimonialisation’ in French, have been employed since the mid-1990s and its use was well established in the decade beginning in 2000.¹⁴

In the English-speaking world, heritagization was first used by Walsh in 1992, as a pejorative way to refer to ‘the reduction of real places to tourist space (...) that contribute to the destruction of actual places’ (1992: 4); focusing on the idea of the destruction of culture produced by tourism. This was in line with the idea of selling ‘culture by the pound’ that Davydd Greenwood (1977) developed in the 1970s. This pejorative connotation marked the use of the term in English until very recently. For instance, in two articles written by Carmen Ortiz and Sánchez-Carretero for *Ethnologia Europaea* and for a book published by Sage, the word ‘heritagization’ was rejected by the journal editors and the book editors because it was not considered a common term in English (Sánchez-Carretero and Ortiz 2008, 2011). However, in the last few years, the term ‘heritagization’ has been employed in English with the same meaning as the equivalent terms in French, Portuguese or Spanish, referring to the processes by which heritage is constructed.¹⁵ Nevertheless, these articles rarely cite earlier works on the subject from non-Anglo traditions; leading to the invisibility, in the English-speaking academic world, of works on ‘heritagization’ conducted in the south of Europe.

The term in English is now well-established, due, also in part, to the role of Canadian scholarship. For instance, the Encyclopaedia of French Cultural Heritage in North America, funded by the Canadian Heritage Department, the Quebec Government and Laval University, describe their project using the word ‘heritagization’ as a synonym of heritage building processes.¹⁶ In addition, a Network of Researchers on Heritagization was recently created to serve as a network of ‘critical researchers on the heritagization of different countries and languages.’¹⁷ Even though the term ‘heritagization’ with this meaning has only recently been incorporated into English, the idea behind the concept has been used since the 1990s. For instance, Kirshenbaltt-Gimblett (1995, 1998), Hufford (1994) and Abrahams (1994) stress the idea of heritage as a meta-cultural production and a social construction.

Leaving aside Walsh’s pejorative use of the word, most of the definitions of heritagization share common elements, for instance the emphasis on the aspect of process and its social construction. Roigé and Figolé define it as ‘those processes of cultural production by which cultural or natural elements are selected

¹⁴In Spain, see for instance García (2007), Pereiro (1999), and Prats (2005); and in France, Faure (1998), Amougou (2004), Davallon (2006), and Drouin (2006).

¹⁵Bendix (2009), Flesler and Pérez Melgosa (2010), Margry and Sánchez-Carretero (2011), Margry (2011a, b) all offer examples of the use of ‘heritagization’ in English.

¹⁶<http://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/en/authors-instructions.html>, accessed October 2, 2012.

¹⁷<http://respatrimoni.wordpress.com>, accessed October 2, 2012.

and reworked for new social uses' (Roigé and Figolé 2010: 12); Margry as 'the process by which cultural phenomena or cultural objects, old and modern, are labelled 'cultural heritage' by the involved actors and, as a consequence, acquire new meanings, undergo transformative changes and become an instrumentalization of the past for the future' (Margry 2011a, b: 336); and Davallon as 'the act by which a norm, a canon inherited from the past, is contested, subverted, submerged by a new categorization constructed from the present' (2006: 95, cited after Roigé and Frigolé 2010: 11).

In this book, the emphasis on the heritagization of the Camino de Finisterre/Muxía offers an alternative perspective on the relationship among the different actors involved, which will be analyzed in Chap. 4.

1.4 On Names and Conflicts

The last part of this introduction is aimed at clarifying the usage of place-names, starting with the name of the Cape itself. The term Finisterre, in Spanish, is used consistently throughout this book. Nevertheless, when the authors write in Spanish or Galician, we use the name Fisterra, because the norm is to respect the original language, in this case Galician, for place names. The variations between Fisterra and Finisterre follow an internal dynamic that Finisterre residents referred to explicitly during fieldwork.¹⁸ Our collaborators considered the name of their village to be Fisterra (in Galician) and that they are Fisterrans. Therefore, the emotional link is established with the label 'Fisterra'. Everyone we interviewed, however, was in agreement as to which name should be used to promote the village internationally: Finisterre. Antonio,¹⁹ in his mid-forties and owner of a bar well-known by pilgrims, insisted on the importance of keeping the 'name of Finisterre on the map... and by insisting on the Galician term 'Fisterra' we get the opposite effect' (fieldnotes 20-7-2011). According to Antonio, the village needs to be marketed as 'Finisterre instead of Fisterra because that is how we show on the maps; that is how everybody knows us, and we need to be on the map' (fieldnotes 20-7-2011). Finisterre should be the name used in every tourism brochure because of its international relevance: 'A name is also heritage' (fieldnotes 15-6-2011). The idea is that old maps already included the reference to Finisterre and therefore, it's a term with added value that should always be used in the same way. However, the fact is there is no continuity in how Finisterre is promoted and the issue raises strong criticism on behalf of the owners of bars and restaurants.

¹⁸For more information on place branding strategies see Jiménez-Esquinas and Sánchez-Carretero (forthcoming).

¹⁹We maintain anonymity of our collaborators, except in those cases in which they explicitly requested the opposite.

The second name-related issue deals with the controversy around the name of the route itself. Some people call it ‘an extension’ of the Camino de Santiago while others refer to it as ‘the end of the Camino.’ Those of the first opinion use various terms to express it: extension, continuation, prolongation and epilogue, all of which share the idea of a continuation beyond Santiago. The term ‘extension’ is employed by the Galician Association of Friends of the Camino (AGACS) and was used particularly from 1997 to 2004, in the organization of activities related to the route. This term is analyzed by Vilar (this volume) and is associated with the idea that the ending point of the Camino de Santiago is the city of Santiago de Compostela. Continuing beyond the city means extending this pilgrimage route, thus the use of the term ‘extension’ of the Camino de Santiago to Finisterre and Muxía. In a similar vein, some online guides use the term ‘epilogue’ (see, for instance, <http://caminodesantiago.consumer.es/los-caminos-de-santiago/epilogo-a-fisterra> and <http://elcaminotheway.com>).

On the other hand, those who refer to the route as ‘the end of the Camino,’ emphasize the idea of a pre-Christian pilgrimage which followed the Milky Way, before the existence of the shrine dedicated to St. James. It is sometimes linked to a Celtic past and is considered the ‘authentic’ pilgrimage. During fieldwork, we found various groups of people who shared this idea: pilgrims, restaurant/hostel/bar owners, foreigners who had decided to remain in Finisterre upon ending their pilgrimage, as well as some researchers such as Alonso Romero (1993). For them, Finisterre/Muxía is the original ending point of the whole pilgrimage route to Santiago. They base their opinion on Celtic and pre-Christian origins, which can be interpreted as an explanation more in line with the spirituality of a secularized society (Herrero 2005: 125).

The idea that the Camino to Finisterre/Muxía is not an extension but in fact the closing stage of the pilgrimage is explained plainly and clearly by one of the members of the cultural association ‘Fisterra, the true end of the Camino.’ According to this Finisterre resident, the main goal of their group was to claim that the Camino to Finisterre ‘is not a prolongation. It is indeed the origin and end of the Camino’ (Audio recording GR032, 22-7-2011). This association was dissolved in late 2011, in part because they were accused of having a negative attitude towards Muxía.

The conflicts between Finisterre and Muxía as to which of the two towns is the actual ending point of the Camino are based on explanations related to the route’s origin. Both use historical justifications for their claims, however, as will be explored in Chaps. 2 and 3, the longevity of the pilgrimage route to Finisterre and Muxía does not necessarily mean that it was linked to the Camino de Santiago.

Vilar, in Chap. 3, analyzes in depth the claims of both locations and the line of reasoning used to reinforce significant aspects of each town. In the case of Muxía, it is the cult of ‘Virxe da Barca’ (‘The Virgin of the Boat’) at her shrine next to the sea, whilst in Finisterre, three elements are highlighted: the Gothic image of Christ on the Cross, the Shrine of St William (ermida de San Guillerme), and the Cape’s status as the *finis terrae*, the edge of the known world (Fig. 1.5).

Frey, in her 1998 ethnography study, prior to the Camino de Finisterre boom, confirmed that the sanctuary of Virxe da Barca in Muxía is ‘another site that has

Fig. 1.5 *Double arrow* indicating Finisterre-Muxía in Hospital. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero



an equally rich link to the historical pilgrimages, but is not a common destination for contemporary pilgrims' (Frey 1998: 171). She already pointed out that 'while the majority [of pilgrims] finish in Santiago and spend a day seeing the city before going home, others feel a need to continue beyond Santiago' (Frey 1998: 170). Haab also sees the Camino to Finisterre as a way of consolidating the pilgrims' experience, giving them time to reflect and conclude their Camino before going back home (Haab 1996: 34). The same motivations/themes expressed by Frey's interviewees are also present in Margry's questionnaires analyzed in Chap. 8, 'disillusionment with Santiago, the significance of Finisterre's geographical placement, the contact with a physical end, the personalized rites of ending and purification, the relationship to the past, and the sense of closure' (Frey 1998: 174).

1.5 The Structure of the Book: Walking to the End of the World? or Being Walked?

Whilst the book provides a unified approach to our research questions, it also preserves the peculiarities of each of the authors' voices in terms of personal style, academic tradition, and disciplinary perspective. We suggest readers to immerse themselves in these pages with open-mindedness. As the potential reader travels throughout the book, he or she will find a plurality of styles that are partly related to different academic traditions. To keep these styles intact is a conscious decision so as not to impose a hegemonic format. Therefore, the editor has respected the different styles, methods and angles used by each of the research group members. Results are communicated in different styles: for instance, the straight-to-the-point prose by sociologist Eva Parga-Dans contrasts with the ethnographic descriptions of Margry and Sánchez-Carretero. These approaches prove to be complementary ways of working around the same research questions (Fig. 1.6).

Fig. 1.6 A boot with the message ‘Don’t dream your life’ deposited along the Camino. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero



An example of this multivocality can be found in the first part of the volume, dedicated to general aspects of the Camino to Finisterre, such as the history, myths and legends related to the ‘end of the world.’ In this section, Margry (Chap. 2) provides an international perspective on these topics based on the contents of guidebooks and academic literature on the flourishing theme of pilgrimage to Finisterre, including the esoteric perspective. The other side of the coin is provided by Vilar (Chap. 3), who gives international audiences the chance to gain access to Galician bibliography. His detailed description of the works written mainly in Galicia about the Camino of Finisterre provides an interesting perspective for non-Galician audiences who may have little access to these sources.

Part two of the book is entitled ‘Local impacts of the pilgrimage to Finisterre’ and deals with the effects of pilgrimage on towns and villages from a local perspective. Chapter 4, by Sánchez-Carretero, analyzes heritage policies related to the Camino and how they affect local residents, providing a wide range of testimonies, from mayors and priests to a pilgrim who occupied and lived in a concrete power transmission tower in Finisterre for a couple of years (see Fig. 4.6); in Chap. 5 Parga-Dans uses a quantitative approach to describe the ‘Finisterre boom’ and complements Margry’s analysis of the creation of a mythical sacred place in Finisterre. Chapter 6, by Ballesteros-Arias, offers a micro-analysis of one of the villages along the route, Olveiroa, and its transformation during the last few decades. Otero’s descriptive archaeological tone in the last chapter of the second part is a good example of the multivocality of this study. This chapter focuses on the link between archaeological sites and the Camino to Finisterre in order to analyze the effects of the Camino on the management of such sites.

Finally, part three, entitled ‘Spirituality, Motives and the End of the World,’ focuses on the research conducted by Margry on the motivation behind Finisterre being the ending point for pilgrims. In this chapter, the concept of ‘caminonization’ is employed to refer to the worldwide rise in sacred or spiritual footpaths, primarily stimulated by the success of the Camino, which cannot simply be equated with what is nowadays called spiritual tourism.

The village footpaths in this area are walked by literally thousands of pilgrims each year. Pilgrimage has transformed their landscape, daily life and economy. Coleman, in his study of the Marian shrine at Walsingham in Norfolk, England, suggests that pilgrimage should be used as a lens in order to focus on human behavior rather than focusing on the pilgrimage itself as separated from daily life (Coleman 2002). With this book, our goal is to use the daily life of local residents as a lens to focus on how pilgrimage and heritage machinery are modelling contemporary Galician landscape.

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Part I
History, Myths and Legends
of the End of the World

Chapter 2

Imagining an End of the World: Histories and Mythologies of the Santiago-Finisterre Connection

Peter Jan Margry

A popular Camino Finisterre guidebook seemed to make it easy. Its preface states: ‘Literalism can be a hindrance to a deeper understanding of our lives and our place in the cosmos.’ The author expresses disinterest in whether the remains of Saint James are genuinely deposited in the town of Santiago or even if indeed Jesus traveled to Finisterre to meet Druidic masters as he states elsewhere in the booklet. I assumed he might have had an anthropological view and would have been more interested in how people behave and what they practice. But nothing is less true; his subject actually addresses the issue of whether pilgrims are able to ‘absorb and live out the truth of their [=Jesus/Druids] teaching of unconditional love and forgiveness’ (Brierley 2009: 4). His concern proves thus to be more missionary in nature and shows no relation to any analytical approach about what motivates people to continue wandering along the ‘Camino’ tracks from Santiago to Finisterre and Muxía. However, the author does unintentionally display an indication of the religious ambiguities expressed in relation to the Finisterre footpath. Brierley brings up the presence of Celticism, Christianity, or Esotericism and New Age which is seen expressed with more or less religious, spiritual, or secular intentions by pilgrims, spiritual strollers, or those who see that route as just a secular quest. The mythologizing approach of authors like Brierley and their specific discursive appropriation of the history of the cultus of Saint James are key issues I will address here.

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The necessary contextualization of the present research project on the contemporary heritagization processes along the Camino Finisterre, urges for us to understand how these stories, histories, mythologies and legends about the relationship between Santiago de Compostela and the Galician Atlantic coast strip, and specifically the town of Finisterre, relate to one another and how they have contributed to creation of the sacred site and the new route towards it. Various discourses have played a role in mobilizing people to move beyond Santiago and head for Padrón, Finisterre, or Muxía. The recent boom in ‘follow-up’ or ‘continuance pilgrims’ is directly influenced by and connected with a dynamic skein of old and modern narratives about what is by many regarded to be the actual ending of the Camino de Santiago, namely the once physical ending of the earth, or world, at Finisterre, now on Spain’s Atlantic coast. In order to understand the ‘Finisterre boom’ better and to contextualize and explain the motives¹ walkers and pilgrims have for continuing to the coast, it is necessary to unravel, analyze, and interpret this narrative tangle.

2.1 The James Myth

The European-wide network of pilgrim ways all leading to the Spanish pilgrimage site Santiago de Compostela came into being in the Middle Ages on the presumption that the apostle James the Great was buried in there.² Due to this myth and to the miraculous powers ascribed to him and available at his presumed grave, Santiago had already become a famed pilgrimage center in the eleventh century (Fletcher 1984: 53).

The story that James’ body was shipped from Jerusalem to Galician Padrón and buried in Santiago after being decapitated by king Herod in AD 44 cannot be underpinned by any contemporary historical data. Moreover, the view that his sepulture at one of the edges of Christian Europe in the northwest corner of Spain was an act of honor to James or in memory of him due to his former missionary work in that region in the first century, is also to be regarded as an invented legend (Elliott van Liere 2006). The promotion of Santiago de Compostela since the ninth century as the burial and pilgrimage place of James the Great can to a large degree be interpreted as a construction in the context of the contemporary religious politics of the time. The most plausible theory for the invention of the legends of origin connected to James and his burial in Northwestern Spain relate to the usurpative strategies of the Roman Church in that period (Van Herwaarden 1980; Fletcher 1984: 68–77). That strategy was twofold: as part of a generic missionary endeavor to deepen Christian faith in Europe, and as a more specific geopolitical induced mission or ‘crusade’ to (re-)conquer territories under Islamic

¹See for my research into the motives of walkers and pilgrims my contribution at the end of this volume.

²Márquez Villanueva calls this the eschatological myth of St. James, next to his military (Reconquista) and protonationalist (Spanish crown’s patron) myths (Márquez Villanueva 2004).

‘occupation.’ The Santiago myth and the figure of St. James as *Matamoros*, or Moor-slayer—figuring in the establishment of a western stronghold and realizing a maximalist Christian realm—thus emanate directly from the Christian *Reconquista* of Spain in the eighth century (cf Gallardo 2005; Elliott van Liere 2006).³

From its beginning, the Roman Church has used cults and shrines to support its missionary goals and to create structure and cohesion in European Christendom. Non-Christian religions and indigenous beliefs have, therefore, often been embattled by saint cults and their miracle working. Holy missionaries in particular, not to mention a major apostle, were perfect saintly symbols. It was during the Carolingian empire that the deployment of the sacred power of saints and their relics became a major instrument of the Church (Herrmann-Mascard 1975; Geary 1978: 16–50). In the ninth century, the French abbot Radbertus stated that never before had so many ‘great things’ been realized through relics, and that ‘miracles of saints long asleep in Christ have recently begun to flash forth’ (Geary 1978: 20–21). Saints were recruited to strengthen the threatened geo-political system, especially for the delicate imbalance in the southwestern part of the Christian world where Islam was exerting pressure. At the same time, in the Galician region situated ‘in ultimis finibus,’⁴ the assumed remains of the apostle James were recovered at a small cemetery, from which Santiago derived its epithet ‘Compostela.’⁵ Immediately afterwards this invention of the grave, an important cult dedicated to James took off (Fletcher 1984: 56–57). The *Reconquista* as a movement for re-establishing the unity of Christianity began in the Asturia-Galicia kingdom, stimulated by a new holy place that received a level of sacredness close to that of Rome.

The ‘retrieval’ of James’ grave in what is now Santiago was described as a ‘re-finding’ in order to stress that this was not an invention *ex nihilo*, but that James had indeed been buried there in the first century. This new narrative was in fact a claim against the Muslim occupiers proving that Spain had already been Christian territory where earlier James had done missionary work himself. Subsequently, passion and translation stories on James were invented to endorse the burial discourse. The earliest texts were collected in the famous 12th century *Liber Sancti Jacobi* or *Codex Calixtinus*. With these mythical narratives, most relevant ingredients were available to ensure the growth of this eccentric situated town, turning it into the third largest sanctuary in the Christian World at the time, after Jerusalem and Rome. The Middle Ages constituted the heyday of the Santiago sanctuary.

³Cf. the theories of Barreiro Rivas (1999: 179–194), who brings up intriguing ideas in this regard, but undermines his views through ex post speculative constructions, lacking supportive data.

⁴This early geographical ultimate designation of the region seems to be a precursory depiction of what later was used as and applied to the coastal place Finisterre (‘finis terrae’).

⁵From ‘compostum’ (burial) and the suffix ‘illa’ (little) (Fletcher 1984: 59). The word ‘Compostela’ was later also incorrectly explained as being a derivation of ‘Campus Stellae’ (=field of stars), in order to align Santiago’s name with its Milky Way myth, the idea of the Camino as a mirror of the (movement of the) stars of the galaxy.

Santiago—and the roads to it—appealed so much to the imagination of the Christian world that ‘Santiago’ became the representation of the archetypal representation of pilgrimage. Its iconographic program—from scallop shell to pilgrim’s staff—became a generic symbol embodying ‘pilgrimage’ and ‘pilgrim.’ It was Dante Alighieri who in 1295 universalized the Santiago pilgrimage by writing: ‘No one is a pilgrim unless they go to or from the shrine of Saint James’ (Dante 2012). Dante explained that the word ‘pilgrim’ was used in his lifetime particularly for those who went to Santiago because, as was said, no apostle shrine was further away from home, as it seemed to be situated at the end of the world. Such views on Santiago have created a leading universal concept on pilgrimage which is still at work today for pilgrimage, in general, and for the Santiago wayfarer in particular.

2.2 Revitalizing St. James and His Camino

Despite or maybe because of Santiago’s sacrosanct status, the Reformation affected Santiago strongly and initiated a sharp decline in the glory and pre-eminence of this state-of-the-art pilgrimage site in the following centuries. Because of the steady drop of pilgrims from northern, reformed countries, Santiago lost its leading international position. Moreover, Santiago’s dominant saintly position in Spain itself was threatened by the rise of the devotion for Teresa of Avila (Rowe 2011). Ultimately, in the 19th century, the emergence of a strongly centralized Spanish nation-state pushed Santiago even further back to an eccentric, regional position. In 1879 the Archbishop of Santiago claimed that the bones of St. James were found anew, this time right under his cathedral. It was the beginning of a reevaluation of the position of St. James within the Spanish nation (Pack 2010). Santiago’s fame and attraction value as a major international place of pilgrimage, however, would not recover before the second half of the 20th century.

Eventually, in the 1970s, the Santiago pilgrimage slowly began to transform again.⁶ Initially stimulated by a growing interest in the medieval art and architecture found along the route and through new publications about the history and the related myths of the Saint James cult, the buried collective memory of a once great European pilgrimage to the grave of the famed apostle was unearthed, revitalized, and reshaped in the way we know it today.

The primary roots for the recent revival of the pilgrimage, however, can even be traced back decades earlier. The fascination for the figure of Saint James and his former cult ignited when a Galician born politician, Francisco Franco,⁷ was in need of an effective ally during the Spanish civil war (1936–1939) against the government of the second Spanish Republic. Within Catholic Spain the person of

⁶How slowly this went comes to the fore in the booklet of religion scholar Iso Baumer who wrote in 1978 an overview on contemporary forms of pilgrimage in which Santiago is emphatically missing (Baumer 1978).

⁷Born in the city of Ferrol, not far from Santiago.

saintly warrior James was still present in the shared memory of the nation and inextricably connected to the early medieval 'liberation' war against the Moors. The initial catalyst for the reanimation of the Camino was thus a mundane one, as Franco appropriated the St. James cult in a political way and stimulated its historiography.⁸ He wanted to identify himself to the nation through the valiant national saintly knight who could connect him personally to a glorious past by mobilizing James again to help unify the population and 'save' Spain (cf. Rowe 2011). In remembrance of his subsequent victory in the civil war, Franco later gave himself—during the Santiago Jubilee of 1954—a central role in the celebration. The cult was 'National-Catholicized,' legitimizing the political regime (de Busser 2008: 43–46). In his speech during a solemn pontifical mass in Santiago's cathedral in the presence of many national, civil, and religious authorities, Franco again praised Spain's crusading spirit, inspired by St. James on behalf of the Church, especially during the civil war. Therefore, Franco rendered St. James a national money offering following the tradition presented on the altar in a gold cup (Starkie 1957: 316–319). As a successful warrior, James was praised, paid, and subsequently raped by national politics.

This political focus on St. James as a national patron and saviour, generated new interest in the history of Santiago and Galicia. New research and publications on the St. James cult were the result. In the 1960s, the Camino as a historic and artistic ensemble of landscape and buildings had already been brought to the state's attention. It was the first official acknowledgment of the physical remains of the cult as regional and national heritage. Parallel to that development, across the northern border, France's own Santiago-connected medieval heritage was found to be at least equally rich, and it became valorized by (art-) historians, who strongly stimulated interest in the four historical French routes of the Camino.⁹

But still, while long-distance walking pilgrimages to Santiago had practically disappeared within and outside Spain, the English traveler-writer Henry Morton passed Roncesvalles (once the major Camino crossing of the Pyrenees) in the same year as Franco's appropriation of St. James. Morton observed that the border crossing village 'never has been more desolate than it is today. The last armies were Napoleon's; the last pilgrims were infinitely more remote' (Morton 1955: 281–282). Morton had a good eye for ritual and religion; he didn't notice any

⁸See on the awarded '*Premio Caudillo*' the contribution of Manuel Vilar (this volume).

⁹The Société des Amis de Saint Jacques de Compostelle, already founded in 1950, started to organize pilgrimages on foot or horseback (Pack 2010: 364). Although Romain Roussel published his *Les pèlerinages à travers les siècles* in the jubilee year 1954, it was Raymond Oursel who provoked a broader interest in the cultural heritage of Santiago in France with his book *Les pèlerins du moyen âge* (1963) in the series titles '*Resurrection du Passé*,' a naming that would prove to be truly providential.

trekking pilgrims along the Camino Francés.¹⁰ Morton's perception of remoteness and emptiness was, however, going to be altered. The double jubilee of 1954—for Mary as well as for St. James—also brought the Irish scholar, Catholic, and 'Celt', Walter Starkie, to Santiago.¹¹ Unlike Morton, it was not his first time in Santiago, which allowed him to make comparisons with his earlier visits. He noticed that three decades earlier the feast of St. James had still been confined to Galician or North-Spanish visitors, but that he hardly recognized Santiago this time. Starkie describes how the politically incited 1954 celebration displayed a triumphal character that reminded him of a reenactment of the pilgrimage and the *pompa* of medieval Santiago (Fig. 2.1).

This extraordinary, politically instrumentalized pilgrimage jubilee indeed attracted many more pilgrims, partly on foot, although those who came from outside Santiago nearly all arrived by air, train, car or bus, a way of traveling that had become a mainstream pilgrimage practice in modern Europe (Starkie 1957: 315–316). In his pensive prose, Starkie expressed his dislike of this progress of modernity in transportation which to his mind had torn the idea of pilgrimage away from its medieval roots. He deplored that and perceived it now as a:

modern enterprise, by facilitating rapid mass travel and eliminating dangers, discomforts and delays on the way to the shrines of the saints, has created the cult of 'pilgrimages without tears' for the million, which is in complete antithesis to the original idea of pilgrimage (Starkie 1957: 323).

Starkie displayed a romantically inspired criticism of the modern pilgrim as 'robotlike,' 'pampered,' and 'too sociable,' for whom travels are supervised by confraternities and tourist organizations to avoid any unforeseen adventure, pejorative comments which are still common today. It made him contemplate and put his hopes on a revitalization of the 'real' (Medieval) pilgrimage, on the lonely waifs and strays who forsake fast-moving, supervised pilgrimages to go suffering instead as wandering and reflective souls on the long, toilsome journey on the Way of St. James (1957: 323–324). Against all odds, given the advance of modernity, Starkie longed for a world where individualized spiritual wandering characterized by silence, meditation, contemplation, and healing solitude would regain relevance (1957: 81–85). The rest is history.

Starkie proved to be not the only one disappointed by the loss of 'traditional' pilgrimaging, although he may have been the first who clearly articulated the potentiality of the religious cultural heritage symbolically represented by Santiago and its historical Camino routes. Before he died in 1976, Starkie could experience

¹⁰This observation is not valid for very important dates, like the jubilee and Marian year 1954. Regular foot pilgrimages did exist in those days, but only during the week of Saint James' feast day (25 July) when pilgrims arrived on foot from the surrounding Galician region. This observation does not imply that in the first half of the 20th century there were never any (foreign) individuals who made the whole journey on foot or by car, as there always have been; various accounts do verify this, but these are the exceptions, like e.g. Starkie 1957: 315, who went there in 1954 and three times before 1930.

¹¹See on Starkie: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Starkie.

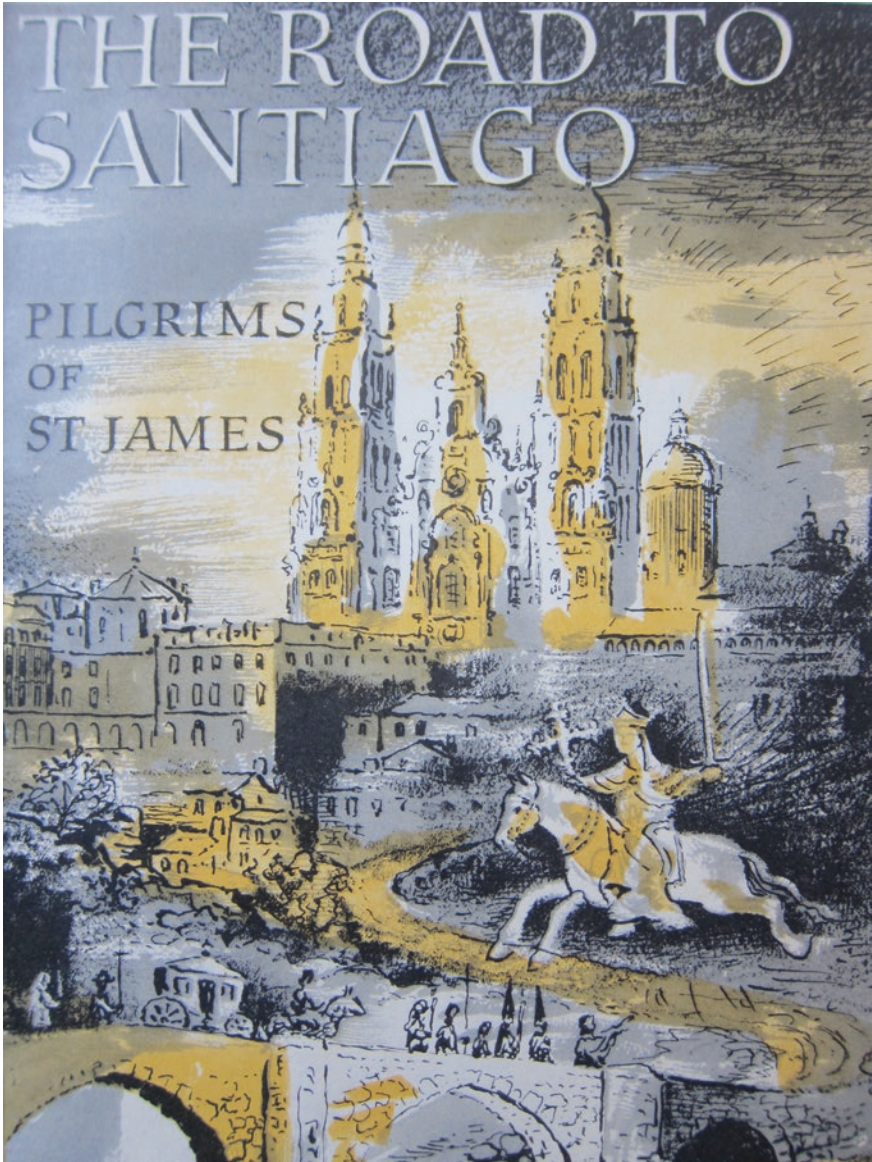


Fig. 2.1 Cover of the book of Walter Starkie on Santiago and the Camino, published in 1957

in hindsight how the seventies proved to be the pivotal point when the popularity of individual walks and long distance foot pilgrimages to Santiago started to revive again. Newly organized groups of ‘friends of the Camino’ started to organize walks, often dressed in imitative medieval outfit, although most still went by car. The walking revival picked up speed after the massive success of a historically

contextualized account by two French journalists who walked to Santiago in 1977. For the first time, a broad-based, modern audience was now drawn into the fascinating narrative of medieval pilgrimage and, more importantly, into the possibilities to re-enact such an endeavor personally in the present day. Nancy Frey's terming of a 'reanimation'—bringing in 'anima' or soul—to the Camino is then well chosen for this era of renewed life for the 'medieval' Camino, which had lost its old spirit or better its ancient appearance during the 19th and first half of the 20th century (Frey 1998: 237).¹² A comparable process related to what became called the Camino Finisterre was about to develop two decades later. While the popular animation of the Finisterre track would take off in the 1990s, the spiritual and mythical aspects of its destination had already been explicated in various publications of a mythic or esoteric genre.

2.3 Roots of Religious and Spiritual Pluralism

The revival of de Camino de Santiago and, subsequently, the continuation to Finisterre have to be explained in context of the changes in the cultural and religious-spiritual paradigms of modern Western Europe. Since the 1970s Santiago and its international Camino network had been increasingly connected to spiritually, esoterically, and ideologically inspired communities and life worlds in Europe. Those appropriated in part the pilgrimage and its tracks in order to connect them with new meanings. While the Camino at that point could be described as a 'proper' Christian pilgrims' way, new competing spiritualities became increasingly related to the pilgrimage. In those years, the Catholic Church—with its Vatican II 'revolution' having just been completed—was still wondering how to deal with popular religion as expressed in saint cults and pilgrimages. The Church again started to recognize the value of collectivity and evangelization in relation to pilgrimage, although without referring to Santiago (cf Bourdeau et al. 1976; Antier 1979). At the same time, the Camino was then partially appropriated on a more individual level by those interested in history, heritage, spirituality, and tourism. The book, *Priez pour nous à Compostelle* (published in 1978), was the major trigger for creating 'Christian' awareness on the route and mobilizing a 'secularized' French public; it stood on older Santiago publications meant for a more limited audience positioning the pilgrimage in a wider historical and spiritual context. Such publications paved the way for the pluralist spiritual appropriation of the Camino and *a fortiori* for the success of the recent continuation towards the Galician Atlantic shore.

However, the English book that for the first time connected the cult of Santiago and its Camino to a comparative religious-spiritual spectrum in a more modern

¹²Frey applies the term 'reanimation' for the period from the 19th century on, but to me the actual (re-)animation started in the 1970s. The words reanimation or revitalisation are less appropriate for the Finisterre route as this track is, in the Jacobean sense, actually a new one.

scientific manner is much older. This classic study, *The Way of Saint James* (1920) by Georgiana King, art history professor at Bryn Mawr University, pays ample attention to chthonic and Celtic cultural elements along the route, in addition to the more traditional and dominant Christian perspective. King not only described these elements, she also related them to the cult of St. James in the chapter 'The constant worship.' This part of her book is in a programmatic way adorned with the quotation 'religions change, but the cult remains the same,' words taken from the Belgian religious scholar and freemason Goblet d'Alviella.¹³ King extensively constructs assumed relationships with a variety of chthonic and Celtic cults, Roman and Oriental religions, and Mithraic and Manichean and other alternative religious movements (King 1920: Vol. 3, 285–369). King can be considered as one of the major sources for the popular genre of pagan, esoteric, and new age books in relation to the Camino. How strongly this echoes in the present comes to the fore, for example, in her mention of the prefiguration of St. James in the person of Priscillian and his heretic Gnostic-Christian sect. Later, this presumption was elaborated upon and popularized by the eminent British historian Henry Chadwick, who concluded, not uncontroversially, that the remains in the Santiago grave belong to Priscillian and not to James (Chadwick 1976). This idea was recently picked up in a popular 2007 fictitious book by Tracy Saunders, called *Pilgrimage to Heresy*. Her view endorses the idea of a basic Gnostic principle of a superior, hidden knowledge, independent of faith, in which the origins of the Camino are assumed to be found.¹⁴ In the 1970s and 1980s such ideas were increasingly written into a new, popular mythology and various alternative discourses around 'Santiago.' In that manner the Camino network was adjusted to meet an increasing demand for individualized spiritual quests, sacred sites and alternative religious world views (Attix 2002). It is also a reflection of the beginning of what the English sociologists Heelas and Woodhead called the process of subjectivisation: a thesis to explain the spiritualization of Western culture with its new religious movements and individuals' claim to their own moral authority (Heelas and Woodhead 2005). Moreover, the magnetism of the 'spiritual' at holy places has been described as an overall quality that seems to constitute pilgrimage in most religions: 'the power of a pilgrimage shrine to attract devotees' (Preston 1992: 33). This aspect can even be discerned at a variety of seemingly secular shrines (Margry 2008) and is certainly applicable to the (re-)constructed Santiago network of the recent past. The universal attraction value of the spiritual is a major factor in the explanation of the regained popularity of Santiago and its Caminos, and especially the new Camino to *Cabo* Finisterre, among a wide variety of walkers within or outside the R.C. Church, believers or not.

In the century between King and Saunders, a wide range of books and guides were written and published by authors who elaborated on the assumptions

¹³On the alleged relationship between freemasons and Santiago, see Young, *Sacred sites of the Knights Templar* (2003).

¹⁴King (1920: Vol. 3, 316); cf. on the Priscillian 'link,' Van Herwaarden (2003: 352–353); Henry Chadwick (1976); Saunders (2007).

expressed by King and others. They started to relate the Camino to all kinds of legends and myths, or they came up with new ideas and speculations themselves. That development is the second major source for the popularity of the esoteric (or ‘New Age’) genre in relation to the Santiago-Finisterre pilgrimage. The genre started to blossom parallel to the revival of the Camino in the 1970s. In that regard, Paulo Coelho’s autobiographical book *The Pilgrimage*, on finding one’s own path and on self-discovery, also exercised with its global success influence as a parallel quest for ‘ancient wisdom’ emanating from the Camino (Coelho 1995).

In the formation of alternative ‘Camino’ interpretations, ‘mystery’ author Louis Charpentier exercised a strong influence.¹⁵ In 1971 he wrote the first Camino-related esoteric bestseller: *Les Jacques et le mystère de Compostelle*. In this book he depicts the Catholic Camino as the heir of a former (pre-)Christian worksite route. He interpreted the Camino as an extended prehistoric worksite, as a way-like ‘university’ for the ‘master builders’ of the megalithic works who developed the knowledge necessary to create the petroglyphs, dolmen, and, during the Middle Ages, the cathedrals which are to be found in supposedly akin forms along the route.¹⁶ He presents the Camino as a universal initiation-trail into knowledge. The book enjoyed great popularity and was translated into Spanish (1973) and German (1979). These editions made a Europe-wide audience familiar with various esoteric theories and speculations brought into relation with the Camino.¹⁷ The emphasis on the megalithic and Celtic culture in such international publications brought Galicia’s Celtic past, especially along the route to Finisterre, into focus (Fig. 2.2).

2.4 The Making of a Camino Finisterre

What is currently called *Camiño Fisterra*¹⁸ in Galician or Camino Finisterre in Spanish is a walking path of approximately 90 km originating in the town of Santiago on the west side. At a bifurcation after the village of Olveiroa leading to either Finisterre or to Muxía, two old villages situated on the Atlantic coast, with Finisterre being by far the most popular destination for contemporary walkers, pilgrims and tourists.

¹⁵For an example of that influence in practice see Aviva (2001: xi–xii).

¹⁶Apart from 1920, he seems to have been influenced by Peake (1919).

¹⁷These ideas crept into novels, guides and websites. The most popular spin-off is Henri Vincenot’s fiction, *The Prophet of Compostela. A Novel of Apprenticeship and Initiation* (1995); on related conspiracy discourses see the following quote: ‘Today, El Camino Santiago is a Christian pilgrimage, but Christianity didn’t invent the route. In fact, like many of Christianity’s holidays and rituals, the Church usurped and repackaged ancient pagan traditions and called them Christian. It’s El Camino’s dirty little secret’, at: <http://francistapon.com/Travels/Spain-Trails/10-Reasons-Why-El-Camino-Santiago-Sucks>, accessed 31 October 2012.

¹⁸As in this context the Finisterre destination is usually considered ‘the real end of the journey,’ physically and religiously and historically (cf. Raju 2009: iv), I will usually abbreviate as ‘Camino Finisterre,’ although also a second track leads towards Muxía. I follow the most often used spelling in English: ‘Finisterre—Muxía’.



Fig. 2.2 Cover of the German translation of Louis Charpentier's book of 1971, one of the sources for pre-Christian Camino system mythologies. *Source* Peter Jan Margry

Although all branches of the international Camino system are named after their region of departure, this is remarkably *not* the case for the Camino Finisterre, which leads, as it is usually perceived at present, in an opposite direction, away from Santiago. Because of this contrary direction and contrary movement of the

walkers, and its non-Christian connotations, the track is not acknowledged by the Catholic Church. Therefore, in its western direction it does not form a part of the official Saint James pilgrim-ways network.¹⁹ The archdiocese of Santiago, the highest authority on the Jacobean pilgrimage, states apodictically and without any further comment on its website: ‘The pilgrimage to Santiago ends at the Tomb of Saint James in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.’²⁰ Within Catholic theology this is logical, as the shrine of St. James is the sacred destination par excellence in Santiago where a (Catholic) pilgrim has traveled to for so long. Consequently, the Church will not stimulate a pilgrimage continuation after Santiago, based on a non-Christian narrative. It also will not provide a successful walker with an additional recognition of accomplishment (the *Compostela*) as the Church does for those arriving in Santiago.²¹ Moreover, because of continuous public discussion concerning the status of this track, the normative stance has also recently implicitly been expressed in the annual statistics of the *Oficina de peregrinos*.²² In 2011 the office changed the statistical format by also registering the number of pilgrims arriving via the various sub-Caminos leading towards Santiago; therefore, a Camino Finisterre is now explicitly mentioned, but only with the mention of not having more than 202 pilgrims.²³ To interpret this very low figure correctly, one must take into account that this represents the number of those walking only in a real ‘camino,’ that is, in the direction *towards* Santiago. It implies that up till now the Church does endorse the existence of an official Camino Finisterre, but *only* in the West-East direction and not in the more popular East-West direction where over 20,000 travelers continue to the ‘real’ ending after their arrival in Santiago.²⁴

Some guides make the position of the church immediately clear in the first line: the ending of the Jacobean pilgrimage is in Santiago. However, Brierley’s

¹⁹The other way around, from Finisterre to Santiago it does, as this was and still is one of the old routes towards Santiago. But East-West is different as the Camino ends in Santiago and a continuation to Finisterre was never formally regarded as an extension of the Camino (Francés). As already mentioned when speaking of the Camino, Finisterre-Muxía is the eighth route of pilgrimage to Compostela. Although not recognized by the Office of the Pilgrim, by not considering religious, is the second most important way after the French as to the volume of pilgrims is concerned. Almost 30 % since reaching Compostela, continue their journey towards Finisterre and/or Muxía.

²⁰<http://peregrinosantiago.es/eng/faqs/>, accessed 1 August 2012.

²¹Bars and hotels along the route created an alternative stamp system and brevet: the Finisterrana.

²²I have tried to get also an answer from the Church authorities by asking them how, as a pilgrim has to understand the position of the Camino Finisterre. On August 1, 2012 I send emails to the Archdiocese, the Pilgrims office and the Acogida Cristiana for the Camino, but did not get any answer.

²³See: www.peregrinosantiago.es/esp/wp-content/uploads/informes/peregrinaciones2011.pdf, accessed 1 August 2012. In 2012, 144 started in Finisterre and 273 in Muxía, see: <http://www.peregrinosantiago.es/esp/wp-content/uploads/informes/peregrinaciones2012.pdf>.

²⁴Parga-Dans (2012: 4), Fig. 20 based on issued *Fisterranas*, which will be lower to the amount of people who actually went along the trail; let alone all those who arrive (also by other means or by other motifs) in Finisterre.

guidebook states apodictically that in earlier times pilgrims continued to the coast, a route 'rich in pagan rites and rituals.' The guide then recycles the presumed related traditions and reinforces existing ideas that this route has become a Camino in itself by sanctification through all people passing on it towards Finisterre and Muxía. It is obvious that the construction of this Camino has been strongly stimulated by new discourses presented in the walking guides, created to underpin the authenticity of the trail and destination. Most current texts hypothesize that the most frequent continuation in the past was the one to Finisterre.²⁵ This is, however, not the historical truth, as this was true only for Padrón.

The idea of a Camino leading to Finisterre is created in various ways. Three major lines of narrative are important: partly dealing with nature, partly historical (related to the religious practices of Spanish and foreign pilgrims in the Middle Ages), and partly dealing with myths and legends connected or attributed to the region, especially to Finisterre.

The attraction of Finisterre from a natural and historical perspective can be ascertained at different levels. Its stunning natural position at the ocean represents a universal value, an elevated place at the edge of the continent—the *Cabo*—where one can watch the sun 'die' in the sea. In any case, the cliff is the second most visited site of Galicia, just after the Santiago cathedral itself (and, in this perspective, it also competes with the Church). The naming of the town, an 'end-of-the-world'-site, has always been intriguing and attractive to people. The cliff is thus not only visited by walkers and pilgrims; it also attracts all kinds of tourists, including many inhabitants from Galicia itself. Recent guidebooks regularly refer to this by bringing up the ideas of the 'Atlántico misterioso' and the 'dark sea', whether or not in relation to the Celtic legend of the 'sea of the dead' (Vazquez de Parga et al. 1992: Vol. 2, 408). In many texts the lure of the sea is depicted as this point's major attraction.

The current historical narrative deals with the two local sanctuaries that came into being in medieval Finisterre: a combined one where both Santa María das Areas and the Santo Cristo de Finisterre were venerated in the church of Santa María das Areas, and the former hermitage of San Guillermo towards the cape, which was considered as sacred and curative.²⁶ The popularity of the two shrines made a local guesthouse necessary, constructed in 1469, for those who came to visit. A rather precise account from the French lord Nopar de Caumont of his journey to Santiago in 1417 elucidates the differentiation between the two sacred Galician sites—Santiago and Finisterre—in a historical perspective. *Notre Dame de Finibus Terre* is categorized as an independent pilgrimage destination, but increasingly regarded as important enough for Jacobean pilgrims for an additional side visit after having fulfilled their vows in the Cathedral of Santiago. Within the judicial practice of the Low Countries, Finisterre was regarded as an independent pilgrimage destination where (apart from Santiago and many other destinations) convicted citizens were sentenced to perform an imposed pilgrimage (Van

²⁵Fox example in the oldest Finisterre guide, Raju (2009: iii).

²⁶In nearby Muxía, a Marian shrine also came into being, called Our Lady of the Boat, da Barca.

Herwaarden 2003). Nopar described the Finisterre shrine as a major Marian sanctuary situated on the cape at the sea.²⁷ Even the 12th century *Liber Sancti Jacobi* had recommended the collateral benefit of visiting confining sanctuaries while traveling towards Santiago (Vielliard 1963: 79–83). Later accounts, for example one by the Italian Domenico Laffi who voyaged to Galicia in 1670, endorse this view. Laffi wrote in his elaborate diary that he visited Finisterre for its own shrines, but he does not hint about any relationship with the Santiago cult (Laffi 1998:181–184). In another way, however, for English, Irish, or Flemish Santiago pilgrims who arrived by boat in the harbor of Finisterre and continued there on foot towards the grave of Saint James, Finisterre also has functioned as a transit harbor site during the later Middle Ages (Vazquez de Parga et al. 1992: Vol. 2, 37).²⁸

It is anyway evident that the historical sources do not consider Finisterre to be a continuation after Santiago, in connection to St. James. However, they did consider the Saint James shrine in Padrón, about twenty kilometers south of Santiago, to be a complementary and ‘necessary’ destination. Padrón is the town where the legendary arrival of Saint James’ body supposedly took place. The mooring stone to which the funerary boat is said to have been fixed is still an object of veneration in the local parish church (Häbler 1899: 75–76; Vielliard 1963: 138).

This leads to the conclusion that since the existence of the Jacobean shrine in Santiago there has never been a coastal camino or a continuation in the *Jacobean sense* towards Finisterre or Muxía. The (post) medieval attestations of people going from Santiago to the ocean are related to visits for other shrines or because of their longing for the Atlantic sunset.

Although this conclusion might fit the historical past, many older and recent stories, myths, and legends about the Galician geography and Galicia’s religious and spiritual past emphatically suggest such a connection. These narratives make equal contributions to our (modern) history and have created an intricate entanglement with newly generated ‘truths’ about what Santiago and its Camino’s could also stand for. Therefore, it is relevant to take these narratives into account for the Finisterre research project.

A strong boost in the modern linking of Finisterre and Santiago has been realized as a result of the stream of dedicated Camino publications since the 1970s.²⁹ Before 1970 guidebooks did not mention Finisterre as an actual *destination* in relation to the Camino. In 1971, Finisterre pops up in one of the earliest dedicated modern popular Compostela guides, one that was also translated into English. For this guidebook a revival of the Camino as a pilgrimage trail was not yet obvious.

²⁷Vielliard (1963: 133, 138); based on this account, Finisterre is sometimes mistakenly regarded as continuation of the Camino, e.g. in the Europalia catalogue *Santiago de Compostela. 1000 jaar Europese bedevaart*. Gent: Centrum voor kunst en cultuur, 1985, p. 175.

²⁸See, for example, the text of a bulla of Calixtus III of 6 September 1457 in which pilgrims for Santiago passing Muxía may also profit from the indulgences for the local shrine of Our Lady. On boat pilgrims: Viaene (1982: 251–255).

²⁹It was not before the (mid) 1960s that dedicated (art-tourist) guides, route signage and Compostela-certificates came into being, see Pack 2010: 362–363.

It just stated that in those years the common route was becoming an important 'tourist route' and needed a 'modern' guide to make Europe's 'First Tourist trail' known (Arrondo 1971: 4). However, *Route to Santiago* describes the Camino as a tourist trail that has the *capacity* to 'spiritualize modern mankind', something which 'this era of materialism', according to the foreword, especially would need (Arrondo 1971: 4). The foreword reflects the rise of a consumer society in Spain and the spiritual disorientation due to the religious 'revolution' of the long 1960s in the whole of Europe. The practical information part of the guide was thus neither in line with an upcoming walking or pilgrimaging trend as, apart from hotels, it only mentions petrol stations. Author Eusebio Arrondo, member of the association *Los Amigos del Camino de Santiago*, did not exaggerate about the spiritualizing capacities of the Camino. He himself noted that although the traditional Santiago pilgrimage involved a formal Catholic sort of continuation only to Padrón, he already brought up Finisterre as a possibly far more interesting destination, as a place being 'pregnant with mythological mysteries' (Arrondo 1971: 157–159). Arrondo presumed that the location of the former Celtic altar of the sun with its rituals and the enchantment of a daily dying of the sun in the sea was a better offer for the new, upcoming 'spiritual' generations of visitors. Arrondo sounds here like a child of his time; he could have had knowledge (although he does not give any references) of Louis Charpentier's book that was published the same year, in which the idea of a pre-Christian trail leading towards the Atlantic had already been mentioned.³⁰ The use of the 'pregnancy' metaphor is, with hindsight, meaningful because from that period on literature connecting Finisterre with its historical and imagined past to Santiago would start to flourish.

Charpentier not only positioned the Camino within a new esoteric context, he also brought up ancient 'secrets' by 'revealing'—inventing—a thousand-year-old pre-Christian pilgrims' route to the west in Galicia. He assumed that this road formed part of a trans-European network linking two other ancient pilgrim ways through the continent: a Mid-France track leading to another 'end of the world,' namely Bretagne-Finisterre, and a southern English route connecting to the Stonehenge complex. These routes linked a supposedly ancient megalithic civilization and their shrines with the Atlantic. Subsequently, other esoterically inspired books started to expand and recycle the presumed atavist aspects and qualities of Finisterre: the mysterious 'end of the world' and its 'sea of the dead' in combination with myths related to antiquity, for example about the presence of a sun altar and related rituals (Morín and Cobreros 1976: 378–380). Charpentier's idea of an initiation route also resonates in a book by Morín and Cobreros. The Spanish authors perceive the route as one that has been in use for thousands of years, one that forms an indigenous tool to (re-) discover oneself in a metaphysical manner. The route is presented as a way to transform oneself without the necessity of adopting Eastern spiritualities (like zen or yoga) and becoming freed from

³⁰The idea of an older 'alternative' Camino is inserted as a 'historical fact' in Domínguez García's (2012) biased lemma on St. James in Brill's encyclopedia on pilgrimage.

materialism, consumption, and modern mediatisation by physical spiritual activity (Morín and Cobrerros 1976: 383–386). It presages the common wording contemporary walkers use to describe the qualities of the present Camino network. Later on, in an article not without bias, Domínguez García stated that it would have been the Spanish writer and political anarchist Fernando Sánchez Dragó who identified in his book *Historia Mágica* the ‘historical’ esoteric Camino (Domínguez García 2012; Sánchez Dragó 1999). Actually, with his gnosticism based on unwritten Celtic and pagan legends and again the symbols in romanesque art along the route he builds on earlier publications, although as a known person he has put the esoteric issue better on the Spanish map.

The recent establishment of an additional Camino Finisterre is rather well documented. After all the spiritual ‘preparatory work’ expressed in esoteric publications, the market was prepared to go ahead along such lines. It is not coincidental that one of the oldest New Age communities in the world, Lindfarm in Scotland, became the producer of the major guide describing the new spiritual path towards Finisterre (Brierley 2003/9). Although there always were individual walkers, often from Germany, England, or other Northern countries, who traveled to the sea and the sun at Finisterre and who applied some initial markings to the then still unplotted route,³¹ the rising interest of (foreign) walkers became indirectly clear with the appearance of the first dedicated description directing to Finisterre in 1992. This publication in the series by the pro-active English Saint James Confraternity was initially no more than a flyer with hints for walkers on how to reach Finisterre; it did not suggest that the route was a part of the network of Santiago-related Caminos (Raju 1992). How new the initiative was, is illustrated by comparing it with a Spanish Santiago guide from those years, the *Guía Mágica*, which is dedicated to the final part of the Camino, including a special addition for Finisterre (Aracil 1991: 130–132). This additional chapter, however, still did not make any mention of a prolongation of the path or provide any information on its spiritual potential: it only has a short description of the manifold reiterated myths on the sun cults and the Celts. It was local historian Antón Pombo who already in 1989 brought up the Finisterre route as an ‘essential’ continuation of the Jacobean pilgrimage and pleaded for retrieval and signalization of the paths (Pombo 1989, 1997). For him the traditional connection was interrupted due to the decline of the Santiago pilgrimage after the Reformation.

One manner of trying to retrieve a presumed old track was for those authors the search for reminiscences of Saint James. As patron saint of Galicia (and Spain), it is not difficult to find James represented everywhere; therefore, it is easy to create a lineage through the countryside that is totally ‘Jacobean’—a practice that is also known in areas outside of Spain to invent or construct regional Caminos.³²

³¹For them, the English Saint James Confraternity published already made a flyer in 1992 written by Alison Raju titled: *Some hints for walkers*. Cf. Alonso Romero (1993a: 123–124) which mentions foreign pilgrims who marked the presumed track around Hospital with yellow paint in 1992.

³²See for example Grabow (2010) and Margry (1994).

The Galician author Fernando Alonso Romero endorses the view that the general interest shift towards walking to Finisterre took place during the first half of the 1990s, and he claims his personal agency in that process within the region: ‘Before the publication of my book on the Finisterre Way neither the regional government nor the tourist institutions of Galicia were very interested in that Way.’³³ After June 1993, when Alonso Romero published his book *Camiño de Fisterra*, including a reconstructive description of the possible route, things quickly started to change with the involvement of regional institutional actors (Alonso Romero 1993a: 116–128). At that time, Alonso Romero was already a professor of English philology at the University of Santiago, having a special personal interest in the (Celtic) history and traditions of Galicia and their relationship with Irish culture.³⁴ On his Galician project he writes: ‘My incentive to research the Finisterre Way was to study the pagan origins of the Way of St James (...) on the ancient stimulus that [was] Christianized in Mediaeval times.’³⁵ He was not the first Galician writing about pagan and Celtic questions, as that had already been done by ‘nationalistic 19th century authors from the region (Herrero 2009: 165–167). However, it was Alonso Romero’s popular publication relating it to the Camino network, combined with increasing foreign interest in this area, which helped to accelerate the process. This development urged the Church to publish a ‘caveat’ brochure in the same year in which the presumed Jacobean ending in Finisterre was described as ‘mistaken, irrational, and un-Christian’ (Aviva 2001: xiv).

By bringing Alonso Romero’s book to the market as a trilingual production, the publisher did not only intend to reach a regional market, but he also aimed for an international audience. Moreover, by titling the book *Camiño de Fisterra*, Alonso Romero more or less coined the path in the Jacobean tradition, although with the presumption of an older pagan pilgrimage tradition. Within the context of the success of the European Jacobean Camino network, the publication triggered the imagination of local and regional parties on how to commodify Galicia’s past and stimulate its natural, spiritual, tourist, and recreational potential (Herrero 2008; Santos 2002; Tilson 2005).

Alonso Romero wanted to underpin the pagan origins of the Christian Camino in an academic and cultural way. He was, however, not the first to postulate continuity with a pre-Christian road or an ‘ancestral’ pilgrim way, as the aforementioned Charpentier had already postulated such ideas already in the 1970s. Alonso Romero summarized his viewpoint:

Let me say that in ancient times the Cape of Finisterre was the remotest and most westerly point of the known world. Man from early times, conceived of it as a close link with the

³³Email exchange between Alonso Romero and Margry, 30–31 July 2012.

³⁴Like a second Thor Heyerdahl, Alonso Romero tried in 1977, unsuccessfully, to [re]create the ‘Atlantic relationship’ between Galicia and Britain/Ireland by crossing the sea in the Iron-Age boat ‘Breogan’, named after a Celtic chief, made of wicker and hides, see Stone (1978: 218–222).

³⁵Email exchange between Alonso Romero and Margry, 30–31 July 2012.

Great Beyond, a link with the Celtic Other World which the people living on the Atlantic coast imagined as existing on some island to the west which they called the Land of Eternal Youth because time, illness and death were unknown to its inhabitants and happiness was eternal. The origin of the so called Island of the Eternal Youth, or Paradise, lies in the beliefs of our ancestors, the Indo-Europeans; beliefs which were related to the daily movement of the sun across the sky and its descent every evening towards the west and disappearance below the horizon of the sea at nightfall. So it is understood that even from early times man had an overwhelming desire to see where the known world ended, because the threshold of the Great Beyond was found there, in that place far out to sea where the sun hid itself and where, it was supposed, lay Paradise. Hence the attraction which Land's End on all the Atlantic coasts has always held for man, and especially the Finisterre of Galicia to where that multitude of stars forming the Milky Way leads us. This is a celestial reflection of the earthly path taken by medieval pilgrims which later became the Way of St James, but which had already appeared in the beliefs of the Pythagoreans when they said that souls had to follow this celestial path in order to enter into the Other World or Kingdom of Pluto...³⁶

Alonso Romero perceived the presence of Bronze Age rock carvings along the track as the most important artifacts for the discovery of the route's origin. That origin was his main goal next to establishing the pagan origins and the 'other world', the island of paradise beyond the seas, where the sun goes every day. The roads were required to lead to paradise, and the invention of Santiago was necessary to bring the different pilgrims roads together and lead them towards Finisterre.³⁷ Others have elaborated on the Celtic discourse of the Camino.³⁸ The dissemination of such stories also converted scholarly authors seeking a truth that 'reveals a deeper kind of meaning' (Aviva 2001: xix).

Moreover, the construction of this Camino could also build on connections of what has become known as 'New Age' spiritualities. Inspired by the long pilgrimage tradition and archeological findings from a Celtic past, books started to appear in which the pre- and non-Christian aspects of Galicia and the Camino are brought up in order to find new explanations for the seemingly 'mysterious' presence of a Camino. This Camino is equated to an earthly Milky Way, which has endured for such a long period, attracting people from all over the world and, therefore, seemingly having universal qualities and importance. Frey had already discovered that the few persons she interviewed traveling to the coast in the mid 1990s (then still by bus) were strongly motivated by the Celtic past of Finisterre (Frey 1998: 175–176).

The Celtic question on the presence and culture of the Celts in Galicia is a long-standing and much debated issue (López Cuevillas 1953). In a historical perspective some mention of Celts is found in classical sources and mostly traced back to old place names and archeological findings. The available classical sources refer to the region

³⁶Email exchange between Alonso Romero and Margry, 30–31 July 2012.

³⁷Interview of Fernando Alonso Romero in Santiago, October 8, 2012. For him the Galician Atlantic sanctuary of San Andrés de Teixido or 'Andrés do cabo do mondo' also played an important role in the ancient spiritual world of the Celts in Galicia. See also Alonso Romero (1993b, 2002, 2005).

³⁸For example, Antón Bouzas Sierra, Aportaciones para una reinterpretación astronómica de Santiago de Compostela, in: *Anuario Brigantino* 2009, no 32: 47–92, see: <http://anuariobrigantino.betanzos.net/Ab2009PDF/2009%20INDICE.htm>.

only in a minimal way. The promontory (cape) of Finisterre was cited by Pliny as *Artabrum*, *Nerium*, or in this context in a self-explanatory way, as *Celticum* (Pliny 77; MacBean 1773). The actual cape where the supposed ‘Celtic’ sun altar is often situated was, however, according to Ptolemaeus, located on the Mongia promontory, next to the present Muxía (Ferrarius 1677: 57; Medico 1611: 494) (Fig. 2.3).



Fig. 2.3 Italian graffiti on one of the road signs, stating ‘towards the end of the world’. Source Peter Jan Margry

Many modern authors have postulated the idea that the entire world at that time regarded Finisterre as ‘the extreme tip of the world’, the most remote part of Europe. This is something that could not be established for many centuries, and ultimately it did not even prove to be true. This idea reflects an *ex post* local insiders’ perspective. However, it is obvious that the proper naming of the place—Finisterre—inspired many to speculate about its meaning and past. The name alone generated a vast repertoire of myths projecting its history far into prehistoric times. The use of a wide variety of folkloristic material ‘helps us to understand all the better the mysterious attraction the headland of Finisterre had in ancient times,’ Alonso Romero explained (1993a: 109). But even the name Finisterre is not old, and we don’t know anything about its attraction on people at the time. The name Finisterre is relatively new and is not mentioned in any source before 1199, and, in that year, only in a less precise, plural conjugation: ‘[iglesia de] Finibus Terre’, ‘[the church of/at] the borders of the land.’ The most probable explanation is that the name came into use in relation to the rising fame of Santiago, which attracted pilgrims and travelers who experienced, after a long journey, western Galicia to be a distant, remote region, thereby turning the broader geographical depiction into a proper place name.³⁹

2.5 The Governance Factor

Important actors in the ‘revival’ or construction of the Finisterre trail are the governmental and political institutions: the ‘autonomous community’ Galicia, the province A Coruña, and, at the basic level, the local administrators of the trail-related municipalities. These bodies were and are eager to revalorize and promote the various qualities of Galicia reflected in its landscapes and cultural heritage from a ‘nationalistic’ perspective, especially that which is connected to spirituality, ritual and festivals (Roseman et al. 2008: 79). Their principal goal was the construction and diffusion of a Galician identity on a regional, national, and international level, mainly built on the heritagization of Galicia’s nature and culture (cf. Sánchez-Carretero 2012; vide infra).

As the Camino Francés and its parallel, alternative routes through Spain are usually perceived as one integral pilgrimage system, the shorter part running through Galicia towards Santiago is a track which is less distinctive compared to other parts, because at that point the pilgrimage becomes focused on arriving in Santiago. However, the new Camino Finisterre is distinctive as it is a complete route in itself, running through Galicia’s heartland and ending at one of Galicia’s natural wonders—the *Cabo Fisterra*.⁴⁰ Moreover, because of the presumed Celtic

³⁹In other parts of Europe, remote places—not necessarily the most western situated!—are also named Fin-de-Terres, such as the priory north of Soulac at the Gironde (France).

⁴⁰See www.turgalicia.es/camino-a-fisterra-muxia-camino-de-santiago. The Xunta de Galicia published in 2008 also introduced guides on the basic rights of pilgrims, so ‘that they know their rights and the most effective way to exercise them.’



Fig. 2.4 Symbolic ('Celtic' or 'new agey') construction made of earthly materials fixed to the rocks at the end of the world: branches, feathers, shell and mast apple, kept together with rope and an elastic hair string. *Source* Peter Jan Margry

past of the region it runs through, the path has also acquired spiritual and mythical connotations (Fig. 2.4).

On the one hand, the governmental board and tourist organizations connect this route to the Christian Camino, while on the other they try to position it as an independent feature of Galicia and of human universality—a view that is a reminder of the cosmology with which Finisterre is supposed to be intertwined, for example as expressed in the writings of the above mentioned politician Barreiro Rivas (1997, 1999).

In June 1993 when Alonso Romero's book *Camino de Fisterra* appeared, Valentín Castreje, a representative of the conservative party *Partido Popular* in Finisterre and future mayor, immediately visited the author at the university to discuss possibilities for using its content. For the two successive mayors of Finisterre, Ernesto Insua (1995–1999) and the earlier mentioned Castreje (1999–2002), the book offered ample opportunities to promote their town. The same year, Alonso Romero presented his ideas to an anthropological congress in Santiago where he depicted the new trail as a Jacobean pilgrimage to Finisterre (Alonso Romero 1993a). Both mayors proved to be instrumental in broadly disseminating the idea of a 'new' Camino and in promoting Finisterre as a new, final destination for the modern Camino network at large. The Finisterre municipal website now firmly claims: 'Fin de la Tierra, fin del Camino.' In 1991, with the Xacobeo of 1993—the Santiago jubilee year—in mind, the municipality of Finisterre had already decided to invest money for propaganda

about ‘Fin de la Ruta Jacobea, ‘to restore the old pilgrims’ track within the town limits, and to publish some texts about the Camino Finisterre (Trillo 1991).

Based on the ideas and route description that Alonso Romero worked out in his publications,⁴¹ Insua became convinced of ‘the potential values of this route for the whole region, and he started to promote the track.’⁴² With the help of the *Asociación Galega de Amigos do Camiño*, a collective pilgrimage of about sixty persons was mobilized in 1997. The next year the party had grown to 130 walkers, including mayors, historians, and tourism experts. The group started after a mass with blessing in Santiago’s cathedral; an ironic act perhaps, as the Church actually rejects this pilgrims’ way. By walking this route from 1997 to 2000, Insua and Alonso Romero’s group constituted the route and created a ‘tradition.’ They also started to include Muxía, as a legend had come to light that mentioned another stone boat arrival of James at that location. This story was brought up as a possible argument towards the Church to atone the new pagan track with the existing Christian Camino network. For the Church, this new sacred geography created a complicated situation. In order to reconcile the new reality—Jacobean pilgrims continuing towards the coastal towns—with the teachings of the Church, it was claimed that these were locations where James had preached as well.

The authorities involved did not make a secret about their intentions and professed openly that it was their goal to propagate a prolongation of the Camino (Trillo 1998). It proved to be a turning point in the attitudes and interests of new groups of people. It also mobilized the Galician Xunta and the Neria, the cultural and tourist Association on the Galician Costa da Morte, to help with money, volunteers and publicity to present the region as ‘magical land’, and to guide and map the Celtic pilgrimage (Herrero 2009: 169–171).⁴³ Moreover, in 1999 the municipality financed the re-publication of a trilingual book by Benjamin Trillo Trillo in which Finisterre and Santiago were cross-linked by showing the ‘footprints of Santiago in the [pre-Christian] culture of Finisterre’ (Trillo Trillo 1999). And in this way, in their aim to stimulate international esoteric walking tourism, the secular authorities openly contested the claims of the Church on defining and authorizing pilgrimage in Galicia.

Illustrative of the government’s practice is that the authorities supported signage of the track by means of concrete bollards in 1996. They only indicated the ‘pagan’ East-West direction.⁴⁴ The municipalities also took the initiative to

⁴¹As no specific route or a route description existed before 1993, Alonso Romero based his work mainly on the remaining elements in the landscape as described in Vazques de Parga et al. (1992), see Alonso Romero (1993a: 113–114).

⁴²Alonso Romero, in his email exchange with Margry, 30–31 July 2012; cf. Insua Oliveira and Castiñeira Castro 2001.

⁴³Cf. for the combined promotional campaign of Church and government for the *Xacobeo 99*, in order to attract pilgrims and tourists on an international scale, Tilson (2005, 2006).

⁴⁴On the ‘poorly marked’ routes in the direction of Santiago, cf. L. Vaughan, Step by Step: Marking the Way, at: http://w.icaci.org/files/documents/ICC_proceedings/ICC2011/Oral%20Presentations%20PDF/B4-Graphical%20semiology,%20mental%20map/CO-169.pdf, accessed 31 October 2012.

provide the highly appreciated ‘pilgrimage passports’ that every walker wants to have fully stamped as proof of his or her enterprise, a supplement to the formal *Compostela* of the R.C. Church. The *Fisterra* equivalent has been issued by the municipality of Finisterre since 1997, while the Muxiana, for those who finish in Muxía, is supplied by the local tourist office.

Meanwhile, the public company Xacobeo Galicia, funded by the Xunta de Galicia, had become a key institution in the promotion and institutionalization of the Camino Finisterre. Created in 1991 Xacobeo was intended for promoting cultural tourism and services in relation to the Camino and Santiago. Later it embraced and stimulated the new route to Finisterre. It takes care for route related publications, supply pilgrimage services, manage the network of public hostels and by giving funding to the various municipalities it tries to ‘keep’ their Camino heritage alive.

By supplying information, marking trails, and making walking maps, etc., a demand was created, stimulating the creation of a tourism economy. The interconnection of grassroots and governmental organizations has not worked out very well and, increasingly, tensions have arisen between both: on the one hand, those conveying their identity, heritage, and economic policies and the ‘logic of the market’ and, on the other, associations like the friends of the Camino (AGACS) who oppose the large-scale commoditization of the route (Sánchez-Carretero 2012). This opposing-to-tourism ‘logic’ has produced all kinds of new initiatives, for example, the annual folk festival organized since the beginning of the 21st century by the local Asociación Cultural e Xuvenil Anchoa. This August festival is meant as a ‘folk’ celebration of Finisterre for being the end of the Camino de Santiago ‘since times immemorial.’

An idiosyncratic historical-centralist perspective on the function of ‘Jacobean’ Galicia has been raised by the Galician politician Barreiro Rivas. In a politically biased manner, this former vice-president of the Xunta de Galicia and secretary-general of the *Coalición Galega* tried to reconfigure the overall early religious geography of Europe in a book in which Galicia is given a central position. In 1990, after being sentenced for corruption, Barreiro Rivas was banned from politics and started to work on these ideas regarding the position of Galicia within medieval cosmology (El País 1990). In his view, pilgrimage was an extraordinary sociological phenomenon that had been instrumentalized to replace the existing classical and sacred topography with a Christian one. He equated Santiago and Finisterre as one part of a project of the Catholic Church designed to extend the Christian medieval cosmology to the extremes of the known world at that time, thereby giving Rome primacy over Byzantium. Barreiro Rivas thus claims that Santiago and its pilgrim ways network had been created as part of the idea of expanding Christianity to all the ‘finis terrae’ of medieval civilization (1999: 179–181; 1997: 253–304). Again, an instrumentalisation of the ‘mythologitive’ naming of the End. The author has been criticized for his interpretations and ‘political’ (Galician) stance; his ideas endorse however the present discourse on the connection of Finisterre with the Camino network. After his retreat from politics, Barreiro Rivas accepted a position

at the University of Santiago where he presently teaches ‘The structures of Galician politics.’⁴⁵

Parallel to the regionalist-centralist thesis of Barreiro Rivas, a new transnational interest in the region’s past has been raised within the European realm. This interest was initially constructed by authorities on and institutions involved with the medieval history of the Camino. It resulted in what is now called an ‘authorized heritage discourse’ with effects on a worldwide scale. For Laurajane Smith, this concept ‘takes its cue from the grand narratives of Western national and elite class experiences, and reinforces the idea of innate cultural value tied to time depth, monumentality, expert knowledge and aesthetics’ (Smith 2006: 299). This discourse created a new top down cultural concept on what pilgrimage is about. The heritage discourse was initially materially represented in the more than 1500 monuments of high historical value along the various Camino routes and, later, even more by the symbolic performative representation of stepping in the old footsteps of those who have been participating in the constituting of ‘the greatest medieval pilgrimage in Europe.’ Santiago again became a (Western) template of pilgrimage, of ‘being pilgrim,’ and of the spiritual and esoteric dimensions of walking on historic or newly created foot paths. Within this heritage discourse, the medieval visualization of St. James and the Santiago pilgrims resulted in an iconographic program with fixed attributes like stick, bag, cape, calabash, and shell. The imitative way in which many contemporary Santiago pilgrims also behave—dressing and outfitting themselves in line with the iconic medieval representation of a pilgrim—is the modern individual expression of that program (Fig. 2.5).

Also, the academic world has discovered the theme of pilgrimage, in particular the fascinating worlds of Compostela: historians, archeologists, social scientists, and political and leisure scholars form a part of it, all contributing in their own way to this discourse. This element in the discourse is becoming even stronger due to a ‘caminonization’ of foot ways worldwide.

The heritage discourse on Santiago has become more and more important through Europe’s supranational politics.⁴⁶ An important step in this process was the proclamation in 1987 by the Council of Europe the Camino to Santiago de Compostela as the first European Cultural Itinerary (Fig. 2.6).⁴⁷

In the conclusion of the founding declaration of the ‘Programme of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe’, the political endeavor behind it becomes clear: ‘May the faith which has inspired pilgrims throughout history, uniting them in a common aspiration and transcending national differences and interests, inspire us today, and young people in particular, to travel along these routes

⁴⁵See on him: http://gl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xosé_Lu%C3%ADs_Barreiro_Rivas, accessed 28 October 2012.

⁴⁶In addition to Spain’s national heritage discourse that formally started in 1940 when the city of Santiago received the status as historical-artistic monument and in 1962 when the route became a national patronate, see Pack 2010: 357, 362.

⁴⁷See on the Council’s route program: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=289691&Site=COE>, accessed, 9 November 2012.

Fig. 2.5 Performing heritage? Doing the Camino dressed in 'medieval' pilgrim outfit. Young French pilgrim with stick watches the sunset, 2010. *Source* Peter Jan Margry



Fig. 2.6 Remembrance stone on the Plaza del Obradoiro commemorating the designation by the Council of Europe of the Camino de Santiago as (first) European Cultural Itinerary in 1987. *Source* Peter Jan Margry



in order to build a society founded on tolerance, respect for others, freedom and solidarity.' The special status of the Camino was further enhanced and culturally and legally embedded through its inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list

in 1993 (cf Schrire 2006; Grötsch 2009; Grabow 2010).⁴⁸ The continuation or better the cape reserve in Finisterre profits also from its placing on the European Heritage list in 2007. The cape was acknowledged as a 'legendary site' and considered to be the end of the world, a site that has 'played a crucial role in Europe's shared history.' Spanish authorities explain hence apodictically: 'the symbolic nature of this spot in Galicia made it the last stage in the Way of St. James for many pilgrims coming from Europe. The indisputable fact is that it is a landscape that renders visitors speechless with its impressive views of the sea and the coast.'⁴⁹

Institutional but not governmental are the various active national and regional Camino associations and sodalities.⁵⁰ Nowadays they can be considered as the strongest agents in the creation and change in relation to Camino representations and practices. They have the best means of mobilization by informing their members, and they are able and eager to communicate all information and news available. The Finisterre track has been increasingly presented by them as the continuation ('El Camino de Santiago hasn't finished yet'⁵¹), an epilogue, to complete the Santiago journey. Such finalizing of the Camino is also expressed by describing the 'tradition' of the rites of passage practiced in Finisterre to prepare oneself better to enter one's post-journey life again. For many, doing the Finisterre Way is a rite of passage in itself as it gives the traveler the possibility to accommodate after having arrived in Santiago. With the short, intermediate Finisterre track they can reflect again in an evaluative way on the Camino to Santiago de Compostela and their upcoming return and reintegration in the daily patterns of society. Part of that ritual is the experience of the *nec plus ultra*, the impossibility to go any further: naturally forced to stop there and 'dissolve' in the flow of the water. The daily renewal cycle of the sun and the purgatory aspect of the cleansing sea, have stimulated the introduction of individual rituals of an often esoteric kind that help the walker to change from a long distance walker and pilgrim into, again, a participant of daily life. This is an ending where earth, water, and air come together and where the fourth element of fire is added to execute the purification ritual. The symbolic of purification, renovation, and rebirth are thought to be most appropriate there.

⁴⁸See on the inscription and related documents: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/3357>, accessed, 9 November 2012.

⁴⁹See: <http://marcaespana.es/en/educacion-cultura-sociedad/patrimonio/articulos/251/the-european-heritage-of-spain>, accessed, 9 November 2012.

⁵⁰Under various names, national and local James associations represent tens of thousands of pilgrims. For example the Dutch and Flemish associations have approximately 12,000 and 7,000 members, who receive magazines and can make use of elaborated websites and databases.

⁵¹<http://www.caminosantiagodecompostela.com/camino-de-santiago-finisterre-muxia/>, accessed 30 July 2012.

2.6 Institutionalized?

Not just new folk festivals, but especially the sheer number of walkers point to a successful institutionalization process of the Camino Finisterre. Alison Raju, author of the first Finisterre guide, noticed around 2003 that the number of pilgrims who continued their journey to the coast had started to rise ‘very considerably’ (Raju 2009: 3). The past decade has shown an increasing normalization of the route, which is, among various expressions, also symbolically materialized in the full-color booklets the Xunta de Galicia started to bring out in 2009, as well as the building of new websites (Fernández-Poyatos et al. 2011). These brochures endorse the suggestion that the path has become a ‘mainstream’ part of the Jacobean network. Walkers, associations, boards, and the tourist industry perceive it in this way, in contrast to the Church’s view. Its success is actually contrary to the motivations of the ‘pioneers’ of this track who cherished the unbeaten track and a solitary ‘real’ ending of their personal transformative journey at sunset.

As the Camino Finisterre is created, described, performed, and institutionalized it does not imply that it is immutable. The route is subject to change and interventions by the authorities, due to path and road maintenance, renewals, improvement, paving, or diversion. Despite complaints about the negative influence on the ‘authenticity’ of the trails leading towards the coast, the processes of heritagization and commodification continue to exercise their influence and will attract more people.

The creation of a Camino Finisterre is a relatively recent process. The development was triggered on the one hand by the distribution of a Galician discourse on its pre-Christian past and the rise of new esoteric authors who connected the Christian pilgrims’ way to Santiago with a presumed pre-Christian substrate, and on the other, by the ‘counterproductive’ too big success of the Camino itself. The very idea of an end of the world and a ‘real’ ending of one’s journey, fit the need for the increasing number of walkers on the Camino who do not want to finish their journey within the Churchly context of Compostela, wanting instead a spiritually neutral continuation that as a rite of passage prepares them for an end and a return to daily life at home.⁵²

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⁵²The pilgrim practices on the Camino Finisterre are dealt with in my last chapter of this volume.

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Chapter 3

Analyzing Narratives About the Camino: From Claims in Support of Local Elements to the Success of the Xacobeo

Manuel Vilar

3.1 Introduction

Our aim here is to analyze how the Camino or route to Finisterre and Muxía was constructed, using bibliographic sources on the subject. It is not our intention to hop from source to source, from reference to reference, but rather to base our work on them in determining how the bibliography was constructed and helped to define this pilgrimage route, a route which runs from the city of Santiago de Compostela to the lands of the Costa da Morte region, where Cape Finisterre, the town of the same name and Muxía are located.

There is not enough space here to offer an exhaustive list of the entire bibliography on the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía, nor would there be much sense in doing so. This is especially true of the references in texts written by pilgrims over the past two decades, what has come to be called odeporic or travel literature, as these references are many and varied.

The bibliography on this route experienced a considerable increase which paralleled the increase in the bibliography on the Camino de Santiago (Way of St James) as a whole, particularly over the past two decades. This must be viewed within the context of promotion of the route by the Xunta de Galicia (Government of Galicia) with its policy on *años jacobeos* (jubilee years).¹ Specific bibliographic references

¹Jubilee years in Compostela were established by Pope Callixtus II in 1126. They occur when July 25, the feast of St James the Apostle, falls on a Sunday. This year was traditionally known as an *año santo* (holy year), but since the jubilee year in 1993, the Xunta de Galicia has used

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to the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía increased within general works discussing the entire Camino de Santiago, but there was also an upsurge in references that focus specifically on this route. This reinforced the idea of it as a separate entity, as something specific and not just an appendage to the Camino de Santiago, an additional section that some, but not all, pilgrims did after they reached Compostela.

But the bibliography on the route and pilgrimage to the coast of Finisterre is not a recent phenomenon, something exclusively associated with the success of campaigns promoting the *jacobeo* and the current boom in pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela. The bibliography on this Camino to Finisterre has a definite tradition and historical weight, especially at the local level. However, it has gained renewed strength in the current context of the revitalization of the Camino de Santiago, definitively positioning the route to Finisterre in a more global context. In this regard, we should however note that this current discovery of the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía is in large part due to the success of the Camino de Santiago in the final decade of the 20th century. It also owes much to new ways of understanding the phenomenon of pilgrimage and the hunt for new economic resources in a region traditionally based on agriculture and fishing, at a time when these practices are experiencing a serious crisis, even bringing its historical existence into question. Additionally, there is still an interest in demonstrating a possible relationship and link between these locations on the perimeter at Finisterre with the legend and cult at Santiago.

Within this general context of the revitalized Camino de Santiago, the aims of some of the bibliographic references include ‘promoting’ and ‘establishing’ other routes less trod by pilgrims. For the main path of pilgrimage, the quintessential route, has been and continues to be the so-called *Camino Francés* (French Route). In this regard, some of the texts that deal with the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía are primarily intended to increase awareness of a reality which is today viewed as indisputable, although this was not always the case. This reality is no other than the extension of the pilgrimage route beyond Santiago de Compostela, in other words, the Camino de Santiago to Finisterre and Muxía. This situation exists because until the late 1990s, there were still some questions and doubts at certain institutions, especially ecclesiastical ones,² about the historical and religious importance of this Camino, the only route that extends beyond the city of Santiago de Compostela (Fig. 3.1).

The second half of the 1990s marked the beginning of a true movement to reclaim this Camino to Finisterre and Muxía. Various organizations helped create an atmosphere of greater awareness around the route. It also began to be more common to hear it described as the *extension* of the Camino de

Footnote 1 (continued)

this celebration as a tourist attraction. A public sector firm, known as S.A. de Gestión del Plan Xacobeo, was created for the purpose of tourism development and to provide services along the network of routes to Santiago. The use of the term *jacobeo* or *xacobeo* to refer to holy years became popular at that time. This can be viewed as a decline in the religious image associated with the year, in favour of a cultural focus more acceptable to a secularized society.

²The Oficina del Peregrino (Pilgrim Office) was especially critical of the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía, but the parish priests of some of the parishes along the way opened up their churches to receive pilgrims.



Fig. 3.1 The Finisterre promontory shrouded in fog. *Source* Manuel Vilar

Santiago.³ This movement helped strengthen and promote this route and led it to become definitively associated with the Camino de Santiago. It also brought about an increase in the bibliography on the route.

There are two especially noteworthy organizations among those involved in this movement: the Galician Friends of the Camino de Santiago Association (AGACS) and the Neria Association.⁴ The two instituted an annual pilgrimage to raise awareness of the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía, and promote and recover the old route, largely lost.⁵ These pilgrimages were held between the years 1997 and

³The term ‘extension’ is associated with the idea that the end point of the Camino de Santiago is the city of Santiago de Compostela, where the body of St James the Apostle is believed to be buried. Continuing beyond the city involves extending this pilgrimage route, resulting in the use of the term extension of the Camino de Santiago to Finisterre and Muxía.

⁴The Asociación Galega de Amigos do Camiño de Santiago (AGACS) is a civil association created in 1992. Its aims include protecting the Camino de Santiago and serving pilgrims. This organization played a decisive role in recovering the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía.

⁵The loss of the old path of the route was in large part due to changes in the agricultural landscape that took place in the second half of the 20th century as a result of land consolidation. This land consolidation was a government plan created by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture to group together various plots of farmland with the same owner into the smallest possible number. This would make them a more suitable size for mechanized farming and support capitalist agriculture. There were some positive aspects, along with negative effects for the traditional agricultural landscape, such as the destruction of old paths, dividing walls, archaeological sites and native vegetation, all of which provide support for a collective memory. In the area under study here, the consolidation process began in the early 1960s.



Fig. 3.2 Participants in the 2000 pilgrimage organized by Neria and AGACS posing on Obradoiro Square in Santiago de Compostela. *Source* Manuel Vilar

2004, almost always from Thursday to Sunday of the first weekend in August. Along the way, the pilgrims were received by the mayors of the different towns. And on some occasions, they were offered food, as at the time, the infrastructure in place to serve pilgrims, travelers and tourists in general was very limited, not to say non-existent (Fig. 3.2).⁶

At virtually the same time as this recovery of the Camino, there was a boom in publications on it. This became most apparent in the final decade of the 20th century. We believe that the decade of the 1990s was key, and so we may talk about a before and an after. The before is represented by texts that preceded this period and the after by the references that can be placed within the framework of this contemporary context of the revitalization of the pilgrimage route to Santiago. This division may be significant and marks a change, not only in terms of the quantitative increase in the number of works, but also the appearance of new thematic approaches not previously found. At this point, we might also note that until the late 20th century, the bibliographic references to this extension of the Camino de Santiago were texts by pilgrims in which they recounted their pilgrimage to

⁶For example, on the second stage (Negreira-Olveiroa, 35 km) there was only one bar along the entire route and no place to sleep. In these cases, pilgrims slept on the floor in sports centres. One interesting fact, in the town of Negreira (the end of the first stage), they were welcomed by the sound of a local music group.

these locations. Or they were primarily texts with a historicist view of the route, seeking especially to justify the reasons which link pilgrimage to Finisterre and Muxía with the Camino de Santiago, in other words, mentioning the aspects of these towns which could be said to have a clear connection with pilgrimage to Santiago and highlighting their historical importance to justify extending the pilgrimage route to these locations.

With regard to the contemporary texts, they can be seen to frame or include this extension of the route within the general framework of the Camino de Santiago. The Camino de Santiago is understood as a whole, and the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía forms part of that whole, another of the many elements that make up this pilgrimage route. The Camino to Finisterre and Muxía is now viewed as a natural extension which continues beyond Compostela, not as something tacked on to the end of the first route, something optional and provisional. Rather, it forms a definite part of the historical reality of Jacobean pilgrimage to the edge of Old Europe.

In the 1990s, works began to appear which sought to definitively define the route, as well as texts written from other perspectives. The latter included some from the field of anthropology, as well as works with more experience-based and/or literary content, a first-person narrative, in this case with the pilgrim as the subject. The Camino thus emerges as the space in which this ongoing relationship between the singular and the subjective, compared with the collective and objective, is possible. This route also inspires works of a literary nature.

This variety of themes and objectives seems to be a constant in the bibliography of the Camino de Santiago following this bibliographic growth, themes and objectives which begin to coincide with what Linda Kay Davidson and David M. Gittitz identify as the themes which are central to the study of the universal phenomenon of pilgrimage: ‘consideration of the journey, the holy site, and the pilgrim’ (2002: i–xvii). Until the late 20th century, the pilgrim and the route—with the latter being understood not only as an itinerary to be followed, but also as a road framework that crosses a historical territory and helps to shape it—were not a special focus of attention or study in themselves. Now the pilgrim and his or her motivations play a central role, with less focus on possible connections at the strictly religious or devotional level of the cult of St James.

3.2 Claims from a Local Perspective

Finisterre and Muxía mark the end points of a pilgrimage route that continues beyond Compostela. There were publications from these two towns that discussed the subject of Jacobean pilgrimage to these locations, but we often find that these claims are made to reinforce significant aspects of the town. In the case of Muxía, this is the cult of the Virgin of the Boat (*Virxe da Barca*) at her shrine, located next to the sea. And in the case of Finisterre, there are three elements: the Gothic image of the crucified Christ, the hermitage of St William (*ermida de San Guillermo*),

and the fact that it is the point geographically identified with the classic *finis terrae*, with the edge of the known world. These claims also served to turn into heritage the towns' cultural resources and construct images that would be used as identifying hallmarks.

We may point to Francisco Esmorís Recamán (1893–1967) as a true pioneer, not only on the subject of pilgrimage, but also in making claims on behalf of local history. This scholar, a native of Finisterre and doctor by profession, was an archaeology and history enthusiast, probably from his years as a student in Compostela. He himself informs us that in his free time, he 'was going to visit the Diocese archives, which D. Pablo Pérez Costante [sic] was organizing at the time' (Esmorís Recamán 1957a, b: 111).⁷ His true passion was local history. He sought to take the motto *Nosce te ipsum* as his own and demonstrate that the history of Finisterre consisted of more than just shipwrecks along its coasts (Esmorís Recamán 1923). Because of this interest, we may consider him a pioneer in asserting local pride in being a native of Finisterre. But his claims are not exempt from a certain amount of what we might term Euhemerism. In other words, he tried to find documentary and archaeological evidence that would lend certain legends and myths traditionally associated with the town the status of historical reality.

In an extensive article published in the newspaper *El Ideal Gallego* (Esmorís Recamán 1923), the author discusses various aspects related to the history of his town. Here he asserts the existence of a temple dating from the Roman period, the Ara Solis, and the historical reality of a legendary and mythical city known as Duio. This article contains a brief section titled 'Tradiciones jacobeanas' [Jacobean traditions], in which he delves further than a quick reading of the *Codex Calixtinus*, which was not very well known at the time,⁸ and the work of Castellá Ferrer.⁹ In these texts, Esmorís seeks supporting evidence for a historical connection between Finisterre and the cult of St James. This link would especially be made by the existence of the great city of Dugium and the Ara Solis. When talking about the moving of the body of St James the Apostle from Palestine to Galicia, the *Codex Calixtinus* states that his disciples visited the Roman representative in Galicia to request authorization to bury him. This representative appears to have

⁷Pablo Pérez Costanti (1857–1937) was an archivist who organized the municipal archives of Santiago de Compostela and the cathedral, as well as several houses belonging to the nobility. He is therefore considered a key figure in safeguarding the historical documents, in addition to being the author of numerous research papers and popular texts.

⁸It is worth noting that the first edition of the *Codex Calixtinus* in a Romance language, French, was produced by Jeanne Viellard in 1938. The first Spanish translation appeared in 1951. The first edition for sale, still in Latin and commissioned by the Seminario de Estudos Galegos (School of Galician Studies), was made by Walter Muir Whitehill. However, its release was delayed until 1944 when the Spanish civil war broke out.

⁹Mauro Castellá Ferrer (1567–1615) authored a book titled *Historia del apóstol de Jesús Christo Santiago Zebedeo patrón y capitán general de las Españas* [*History of the Apostle of Christ Saint James, Son of Zebedee, Patron Saint and Captain General of Spain*], published in 1610, in which he maintains that St James preached in various parts of Spain in person.

lived in a city called Dugium or Dugio, which must have been located near Cape Finisterre. The Ara Solis would have been a temple erected by the Romans to worship the sun at this location on the edge of their empire, where it was believed that the sun died each day as it entered the sea depths. The idea of a temple dedicated to the sun on this spot was disseminated by 19th-century historians, but archaeology has not yet yielded any evidence to this effect. With this assessment, the author is attempting to demonstrate that this edge of the world would have been the location for a religious center that was one of ‘the most important pagan sites on the peninsula.’ Following the introduction of Christianity, the pagan images would be replaced by a temple erected ‘in the remote region of the West to the Son of Thunder¹⁰ in honor of the Queen of the Angels.’ The presence of the image of the crucified Christ is also noteworthy as a factor which attracted pilgrims.

The reasons which Esmorís Recamán puts forward to justify the presence of the mythical Dugium do not extend beyond references to Jacobean tradition, a quote from Castellá Ferrer and the latest on some archaeological finds made by farmers working their land. According to these finds, the center of the mythical city would have been in today’s Duio Valley and it would have extended to the vicinity of the seaside town of Finisterre. This magnificent city was said to have later selflessly disappeared into the waters of the sea. For Esmorís Recamán, Duio ‘is not a fiction, but an indisputable reality’ (1957a, b: 101), something about which there is no doubt, yet the proof still remains to be found.

These same arguments are repeated in a later, somewhat shorter, article (Esmorís Recamán 1944), this one written in response to another by Mayán Fernández. In the latter article, this historian, a native of the town of Cee near Finisterre, questions the existence of Duio as a great buried city and argues that the archaeological finds discussed by Esmorís Recamán—a flint arrowhead, for example—do not correspond to the historical period with which the existence of Dugium is associated, which would be the Roman era. However, he states that they do reveal the existence of ‘a history of prehistoric settlement, common to different parts of Galicia’ (Mayán Fernández 1944a, b: 41). The author concludes by saying that he has no interest in rejecting the now ‘famous assertion of the *buried city*,’ and that the best way to confirm it is no other than archaeology. ‘Explorations should be made, methodological excavations which—at least—will result in better knowledge of the prehistory of this district, where there is so much to be done in this regard, so that not one *castro* [pre-Roman walled settlement] or one *mámoa* [burial mound] is left unstudied’ (Mayán Fernández 1944a, b: 41).

Esmorís Recamán also discusses the subject of the Shrine of St William (San Guillerme) and its possible connection to Jacobean pilgrimage. St William appears in some accounts by ancient pilgrims as an isolated spot suitable for retiring from the world and devoting oneself to the hermit’s life. Its location is truly advantageous for a life devoted to contemplation, as the only things that can be seen from the spot are the sky and the immensity of the ocean. In this work (Esmorís

¹⁰Son of Thunder is a name given to St James the Apostle, referring to his supposed impulsive personality.

Recamán 1957a, b), among other stories, he recounts the pilgrimage of George Grisaphan (1355) to find the possible identities of the hermit who lent his name to this hill on Mount Facho in Finisterre, which looks inland toward the ria. He concludes with a question: ‘Is this St William of Finisterre, perhaps, the hermit of this name who lived on this spot and whom the people canonized?’ (Esmorís Recamán 1957a, b: 122).

The author would also explore subjects related to the Camino outside the boundaries of his town. In 1921, he published an article in a Corcubión newspaper about the town’s pilgrim hospital (Esmorís Recamán 1921). This article would be quoted by, among others, Huidobro y Serna,¹¹ a leading author in the Jacobean bibliography, in his progress towards Finisterre.

Another scholar, José Ramón Fernández-Oxea, who is not originally from Finisterre, but rather Ourense in inland Galicia, makes two brief references to Finisterre as a destination for pilgrims linked to the Jacobean pilgrimage. The first is from 1945. It is really no more than a commentary on an article by Belgian priest Etienne van Cauwenbergh about the penitential pilgrimages encouraged by Flanders authorities. In his text, van Cauwenbergh (1922: 145) indicates three places in Galicia to which these pilgrimages were made: Compostela, Ortigueira (assuredly a reference to the shrine at San Andrés de Teixido)¹² and ‘St William in Galicia,’ which is identified as the Shrine of St William, in Finisterre. Ramón Fernández-Oxea believes that this destination became famous in the Middle Ages and attracted pilgrims from various places of origin. However, to support this aspect, like Esmorís Recamán, he only mentions George Grisaphan (Ramón Fernández-Oxea 1945: 394). He concludes that pilgrimage to St William at Finisterre was the complement to the Jacobean pilgrimage.

In another article titled ‘Dos iglesias Finisterranas’ [Two Finisterre churches], Ramón Fernández-Oxea focuses on describing the parish churches of Finisterre and Corcubión. But he also says that St William was undoubtedly the ‘result of the Christianization of a site of pagan worship’ (Ramón Fernández-Oxea 1956: 205), as Phoenicians, Tartessians, Celts, Romans and Normans would have all passed through the location in the past. He again emphasizes that during the Middle Ages, Finisterre was a ‘secondary pilgrimage site and a large number of the pilgrims who travelled to Compostela extended their journey to this point in Europe’ (Ramón Fernández-Oxea 1956: 206). However, he then adds that the goal of this visit was for some St William, but for others it would have been the miraculous image of the Christ ‘of the golden beard,’ which he describes as a ‘famous image’ which had been worshiped in Galicia and beyond since ancient times, with ‘many

¹¹We will return to this author.

¹²San Andrés de Teixido (Cedeira), located on the northern coast of the province of A Coruña, is an exceptional landscape with high mountains dropping down to the sea. It is a major pilgrimage site within Galicia itself. There is a popular saying which states that anyone who does not do the pilgrimage one time while they are alive will go three times when dead. In the historiography of Galicia, it is the most important Galician shrine for the Galicians, more important than Santiago de Compostela.

pilgrims coming from faraway lands to devoutly prostrate themselves at its feet' (Ramón Fernández-Oxea 1956: 209–210). To highlight the importance of this image, he mentions the German-Polish pilgrim Erick von Steblau, who made the pilgrimage in the 16th century while serving as a soldier in the service of King Philip II.

Turning to the other end point, the town of Muxía, the bibliographic references focus on emphasizing the importance of the Virgin of the Boat (*Virxe da Barca*). This importance would be reinforced by the foundation legend, which says that the Virgin Mary herself appeared to St James the Apostle on this spot, comforting him, as he was discouraged by the limited success of his preaching. The legend adds that the Virgin arrived by sea in a stone boat and that its remains can be identified in two unique rocks still found there, known as the *pedra de abalar* (rocking stone) and *pedra dos cadrís* (kidney rock), to which are attributed curative powers.

The bibliography on this shrine began early and flourished in the 17th century with the works of Martínez Abad (1719) and Rioboo y Seijas (1728), devoted solely to praising and highlighting the miracles that have taken place at this shrine. But the miracles of the Virgin of the Boat are also recounted in other more general interest works, such as that by de Villafañe (1726), who tells of the many miracles which the Virgin, in her different incarnations, is believed to have performed in various locations within the Catholic Kingdom of Spain. There are also regular references in works by other authors, including Bartolomé Sagrario de Molina and Castellá Ferrer, and they continue throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. This entire bibliography helped make this incarnation more widely known. It also helped spread and canonize the legend of the Virgin's appearance to St James the Apostle in this westernmost spot, as well as linking these locations to the Jacobean tradition.

Given its location immediately beside the sea in a completely rocky area, this shrine also generated quite a lot of literature on the cult of the stones, which dates back to the Celtic culture. Here it would be supplanted by the cult of the Virgin Mary, something viewed as entirely natural and normal according to the historiography and ethnography of the 19th century, and even today.¹³

In the last quarter of the 20th century, Rivadulla Porta (1974) attempted to assert the importance of Muxía based on historical documents. However, this does not prevent him from mentioning that the *pedra de abalar* is 'located in the most Celtic part of Galicia, where oats are cultivated and the best cylindrical dolmens are found' (Rivadulla Porta 1974: 10). This author's work contains a section titled 'Muxía Ruta Jacobea' [Jacobean Route to Muxía], in which he seeks to demonstrate that the town of Muxía and the shrine of the Virgin of the Boat were 'visited by pilgrims who came to Santiago' (Rivadulla Porta 1974: 17). He attempts to

¹³Exploring this issue—discussed especially by classic Galician ethnographers and historians—here would take us away from the central theme of this chapter, which is not to explain the Christianization of alleged places of pagan worship and the normal, almost unchanging, survival of some rituals throughout history. Castro Fernández (1982) did a critical review of the historiography of the cult of the stones.

show this first by providing a list of various documents. For example, he lists the 1119 donation made by King Alfonso VII to the neighboring Moraime Monastery. There is mention of a pilgrim hospital. He also cites various documents dating from 1595, 1596 and 1670 referring to courts and lawsuits in the area of the town of Muxía, in which the name *Camino Francés* appears. The author sees this as a significant fact and even mentions another document, from 1719, in which this name is placed in the town of Dumbría and in an area which we do not in principle associate with the pilgrimage route because it is not nearby. Following this list of documents, Rivadulla Porta goes on to mention the texts by pilgrims who ‘coming to Compostela have left an account of their time in our land’ (Rivadulla Porta 1974: 18). This list includes an anonymous German (1446–1448), Leo de Rozmítal, Erick Lassota von Steblau and Nicolás Popielovo.

This work was reprinted in 1980, incorporating two new authors, the art critic and historian Antón Castro Fernández and the priest Manuel Canosa, and new subjects related to the Shrine of the Boat, such as a study of the art of the shrine and the iconography of the image of the Virgin, an image of French origin from a late date, no earlier than the 15th century.

Between these two localities we may place the contributions—not precisely from a historical or ethnographic perspective—of Francisco de Ramón y Ballesteros (1970, 1976), a native of the town of Corcubión. This author, better known for his tales associated with life at sea and the many shipwrecks that occurred in this region, leading it to become known as the *Costa da Morte* (Coast of Death), also touches on topics related to the history, mythology and beliefs of the Finisterre district, writing in a style somewhere between literary and journalistic. The topics do not in principle have a very direct connection to the pilgrimage route, but they help create a background for local claims and an image of the *Costa da Morte* which includes a certain degree of mythologization and exotic associations.

Continuing on the subject of these local claims, and more specifically, Finisterre, we have the book by Trillo Trillo (1982) with an evocative title: *Las huellas de Santiago en la cultura de Finisterre. Mitos y leyendas* [*Vestiges of St James in the Culture of Finisterre: myths and legends*]. The topics covered are those customarily associated with these claims, including the existence of the Ara Solis and the mythical city of Duio, the importance of the Shrine of St William, the image of Christ and the stones of Mount Facho, whose legend can be linked to pilgrimage to that spot. Locally, these stones are known as the *pedras santas* (holy stones), *huella de Santiago* (mark of St James) or *pedras del vino* (stones of wine). Trillo believes that behind the legends associated with these stones, legends that speak of a way of interpreting natural events from the perspective of a rationality quite unlike our own, are the true vestiges that enable us to understand the connection between Finisterre and the origins of pilgrimage to this spot.

Trillo sees in all of these elements powerful vestiges of ancient ‘pagan’ cults, in which he believes rituals associated with fertility were very important. All of these cults would later be reinterpreted in the light of Christianity, thus resulting in a logical connection between Finisterre and Jacobean pilgrimage, and linking

the death of the sun with the resurrection which forms part of Christian belief. Therefore, pilgrims did not come to Finisterre to ‘beg forgiveness for their sins,’ which would be one of the reasons for all pilgrimages, but rather to ‘come face to face with physical death by invoking the resurrection of the dead, to sit on the stone seat in order to remember the Transfiguration of Our Lord, to consider the death of the sun and the death of Christ, following the testimony of the Apostle as a guide to their mediations’ (Trillo Trillo 1982: 65).

For Trillo, this is because the Apostle was one of those present at the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor, ‘one of the three who could bear witness to that vision in which the visage of Christ shone like the sun’ and could ‘bear reliable witness to the resurrection of Christ’ (Trillo Trillo 1982: 64). Thus, the current success of the pilgrimage of Christ also owes much to the Christianization of pagan ritual, cults which must have had deep roots in this area, especially those associated with fertility. Consequently, today’s Easter Sunday¹⁴ is nothing short of a reinterpretation, albeit an unconscious one, of the fertility myth.

From another town along the Camino, Dumbría, García Quintáns also discusses this route, which he believes dates from the second century BC. The route, which would have followed the path of a Roman road from Lugo to Duio (García Quintáns 2008:197), would later become a king’s highway in the Middle Ages. Its path would be changed slightly during the reign of Charles III, making the section which ran through Dumbría straighter in order to better serve the royal government, as the road was used by troops and the postal service.

These local claims even take the path northward, proposing other routes outside what would be the area dominated by the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía. And so Lema Suárez (1990) talks about a pilgrimage route through the Terra de Soneira district. Cousillas Rodríguez (2011) makes an argument for a route which would have been followed by English pilgrims bound for Santiago after disembarking at Corme. This author based his arguments in favor of this alleged new *Camino Inglés* (English Route) on a legend which says that the surname Cousillas comes from Ireland. The story goes that it was brought to the area by five brothers on a pilgrimage to Compostela in the 16th century, whose ship was wrecked in the Ria of Corme and Laxe. Having been saved from the wreck, they made the pilgrimage to Compostela. And upon their return, they decided to settle in Corme, where they married. The surname Cousillas spread until it became identified with the town, located in the Terra de Bergantiños district. However, the author does not indicate how the surname evolved, which would help us to verify its supposed origin.

But these claims of ‘English routes’ to the city of Santiago from the coastal ports of the Bergantiños and Soneira districts contradict the theories put forward

¹⁴The pilgrimage to the Christ of Finisterre (*romería del Cristo*) is held in Finisterre on Easter Sunday. It is the town’s most important annual festival, attended by crowds of pilgrims since the late Middle Ages, from when the image of Christ dates (late 14th century). This historical fact is linked to a legend which says that the image arrived by sea. The festival of the Christ of Finisterre has been declared a national tourist attraction. The most important part of the celebration is a staging of the Resurrection by local actors.

by historian Ferreira Priegue (1988a: 54). She maintains that there is no documentary evidence for pilgrims disembarking in these ports and that from them, the routes to Santiago were not easy to walk.

To conclude this section, we will say that these locally-based claims focused especially on highlighting the key aspects which might historically link these places with the Jacobean tradition. Their aim was to situate these aspects and these towns as part of the history and tradition of Jacobean pilgrimage, making them part of a Western tradition which marked a period of European history, especially in medieval times. Consequently, these claims seek to clearly mark the outer boundary of a common territory in an attempt to demonstrate that without reaching that end point, or *fnis terrae*, the existence of that space which made that Western historical consciousness possible would not be feasible. For this historical consciousness is only possible with the symbolic and complete recognition of the territory. And this occurs at another particular historical moment, when we again begin to talk about the idea of a European consciousness.

In addition, these local claims helped to turn into heritage various elements of the culture. And these claims made the later success of the Camino de Santiago to Finisterre and Muxía possible, because there was a basis to support it.

3.3 Towards a Global Connection

By global connection, we mean approaching the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía from a deterritorialized perspective. This no longer refers to specific claims regarding characteristic aspects made in order to reinforce images of local identities, which it also is, but rather primarily reading them from the perspective of new cultural practices created by a society being changed by the globalization process. The Camino is now its own entity, which can be read from a variety of frames of reference and geographies, serving interests which go beyond the strictly local, interests which may also be understood as a response to this globalization.

3.3.1 *The Early Years of This New Period*

The historiography on the Jacobean pilgrimage includes one classic landmark work: *Las peregrinaciones a Santiago de Compostela* [*Pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela*], authored by Vázquez de Parga et al. (1948). This book increased researchers' interest in the topic of the Camino de Santiago and had a decisive influence on later works (López Alsina 1994: 89). It is not an exaggeration to say that this was a pioneering publication. After it appeared, beginning in the mid-20th century, the subject of the Camino de Santiago became increasingly more attractive to the academic and scientific world. This translated into a parallel bibliographic development and slight awakening of interest in the pilgrimage to Compostela.

An equally pioneering and classic work was published by Luciano Huidobro y Serna at around the same time (1949–1951). *Las peregrinaciones jacobeanas* [*Jacobean Pilgrimages*] contributed to this revitalization of publications on the subject, although perhaps not so clearly. Guerra Campos places this revitalization alongside the situation in Europe and Spain at the time: a Europe that had somewhat recovered from its significant wartime upheavals and was once again engaging in normal relations with a Spain that had just broken out of its isolation following the Civil War (Guerra Campos 1971: 576). Another author who discusses the subject of the bibliography on the Camino de Santiago, Acuña (1983: 433), speaks of the ‘rich decades of the sixties and seventies,’ something which we cannot exactly say about the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía.

These two works were celebrated by the Franco dictatorship. This can be understood as an early attempt to use the pilgrimage to Compostela as a necessary medium for constructing the Francoist ideological consciousness. With the excuse of commemorating the 21st century of the martyrdom of St James the Apostle, the Instituto de España (Spanish Institute) organized a contest on the subject of the Jacobean pilgrimages. There were only three submissions and the prize, called the ‘Caudillo’ (a title used to refer to Franco), was awarded to the priest Luciano Huidobro y Serna, although his work would not be published until 1950 and 1951. Another of the submissions, which did not win on this occasion, was the aforementioned *Las peregrinaciones a Santiago de Compostela*, written by three authors: Luis Vázquez de Parga, José María Lacarra and Juan Uría Rúa. That same year, this work would receive another award, known as the ‘Francisco Franco’ (Pugliese 2007: 101–102).

In the bibliography of the Camino de Santiago, these two works are considered classics and must-reads. However, they barely mention the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía. In them, references to the route to Finisterre and Muxía are minimal, and may better be described as simply passing mentions. In *Las peregrinaciones a Santiago de Compostela* the few remarks are all incidental and made when discussing more general topics, such as accounts of pilgrims at Compostela or when talking about the relationship between pilgrimage and literature. In the chapter devoted to the development of the route, they discuss other less-travelled routes than the *Camino Francés*. The references to Finisterre and Muxía only mention the two towns as ports where English pilgrims making the pilgrimage by sea would disembark (Vázquez de Parga et al. 1948: 1137). However, the authors do not provide documentation which confirms the arrival of pilgrims at these two locations by sea. In conclusion: In this work, Finisterre and Muxía are not viewed as places of pilgrimage per se, places to which pilgrims would travel once they had reached Compostela, but rather as starting points from which to set off on the Camino to Compostela.

In the contemporary work by Luciano Huidobro y Serna, the references are also minimal. However, in this case, there is at least a section devoted to the Camino de Santiago to Finisterre.¹⁵ It describes a journey following a possible route from the

¹⁵This is the chapter entitled ‘Caminos Secundarios. De Santiago a Finisterre’ [Secondary routes. From Santiago to Finisterre], included in the third volume, pp. 300–316. There is no reference to Muxía.

city of Santiago de Compostela to Finisterre, in other words, there is a description of an itinerary. However, extremely poor transcription of the place names and confusion among them significantly misrepresents the route described and detracts from its credibility. The author believes that they are following the path of an ancient Roman road to the site of Ponte Oliveira, information which comes from López Ferreiro.¹⁶ They, he speaks in plural, later come to the road which links the city of A Coruña with Finisterre, and they do so ‘crossing the local land by way of Bergantiños’ (Huidobro y Serna 1949–1951: III–307). If they did cross the Bergantiños district, they were somewhat off the path followed by pilgrims to Finisterre, both then and now.

Despite comments loaded with idyllic, exotic or ethnocentric connotations, comments typical of someone who views the rural world with paternalism and urban cultural superiority, we must acknowledge that it is an attempt to tackle the subject of this route at a time when publications on it were limited or non-existent, especially outside a strictly local sphere. We should perhaps note that the author emphasizes the geographical remoteness of the place as a special reason why the disciples of St James the Apostle came here to bury the body of their leader. However, given the poor reception they received, they had to wait for new instructions from ‘Providence.’ And at this edge of the earth was Duio, which López Ferreiro, who we again turn to, conceptualized as a ‘place at the end of the earth’ about which the disciples of St James ‘considered no other to be more suitable for holding the tomb of the intrepid Champion’ (Huidobro y Serna 1949–1951: III–312).

Although we can describe these two works as marking a new beginning in the Jacobean bibliography, it should also be mentioned that there were earlier works, some of which not only preceded them in time, but also in their methodological approach. We refer especially to the magnificent study by American art historian Georgiana Goddard King (1920). In the second decade of the 20th century, this researcher travelled the Camino de Santiago on her own for three years in order to focus specifically on studying the art and history along the route.

The third volume of this work includes the Camino to Muxía and Finisterre. When discussing Muxía, the author mentions the texts of ancient pilgrims such as Erick Lassota and the Italian Buonafede Vanti. But she spends the most time on Moraime Church,¹⁷ being incredibly surprised by its monumental quality, icono-

¹⁶Antonio López Ferreiro (1837–1910) was a canon from Compostela. He authored a lengthy work on the history of Santiago Cathedral and was one of the driving forces behind the excavations carried out beneath the basilica between 1878 and 1879. The aim of these excavations was to locate the relics of St James the Apostle, supposedly hidden around 1589 when Francis Drake attacked the city of A Coruña and it was feared that he might also attack Santiago de Compostela. The supposed relics were ‘lost’ for almost three centuries.

¹⁷Moraime was an important monastery from the eleventh century. It was built on the ruins of a Roman settlement and later occupied by the Germanic tribes. Moraime probably has much to do with the Camino reaching Muxía and Finisterre. All that remains of the old monastery is an imposing Romanesque church with a rich iconographic programme on two of its entrances and the remains of wall paintings dating from around 1500.

graphic program and artistic quality. She gives a description of the main entrance, a work which she believes to have been influenced by the Pórtico de la Gloria (Portico of Glory) at Santiago Cathedral, dating it to the 13th century.¹⁸ She points to similarities in the exterior walls with the churches at Portomarín, also on the Camino de Santiago, Xunqueira de Ambía and Augas Santas. This is undoubtedly one of the first references to the art at Moraime. And she mentions the 1907 work by García de Pruneda, for example, which speaks to her good, up-to-date bibliographic knowledge. In Finisterre, she visits the lighthouse on a day with heavy fog. She notes that the locals, when they refer to this westernmost point, say ‘o Cabo’ (the cape), just as the Americans do when they refer to North Cape.

But the author does not limit herself to providing a description and analysis of certain examples of cultural heritage. She also offers her personal views on the places and experiences, some of them private. She also contributes interesting photographic images. For this author, the Camino de Santiago was a path along which the artistic ideas of medieval Europe both came and went.

Today Georgiana Goddard King’s work is a classic, a mandatory reference for historical studies on the Camino de Santiago. It was also produced with truly refined taste, or as one contemporary critic put it: ‘These three handsome volumes are a labor of love’ (Northup 1922: 109). Nonetheless, the work is not very well known, particularly in Galicia, where it was not easy to find, despite the fact that in her day, the author was acquainted with the Galician intellectuals of the time.

3.3.2 *New Beginnings. The Bibliography in the 1990s*

These scant or minimal references in the classic bibliography would force late 20th-century authors who put forward claims supporting this extension to have to justify or ‘explain what drove the pilgrims of Santiago to continue to these places and what routes they followed’ (Pombo 1990: 38).

At that time, it was necessary to again stress the reasons which linked Finisterre and Muxía to the Camino de Santiago, because many people, especially outside these two towns, were not familiar with them. And what were these reasons? As we mentioned earlier, one of them lies in the existence of the shrines to the Virgin of the Boat and the Holy Christ, located in Muxía and Finisterre, respectively. Following on from Pombo (1990), we can say that both shrines made an ‘early’ entrance on the international circuit of major pilgrimages as a final branch of the pilgrimage route to Compostela. But this ‘early’ appearance cannot date from before the final centuries of the late Middle Ages, which is when these shrines were created. Later, with the decline in Jacobean pilgrimage following Luther’s criticism of the Catholic Church, they lost their leading international position and remained important shrines only at the regional level.

¹⁸Today we can say that it is from the late twelfth century. She was not therefore very far off.

The tradition that St James preached in this area is also a reason why this extension could be described as a ‘complement to visiting the tomb of St James the Apostle,’ something which was ‘essential between the 14th and 16th centuries’ (Pombo 1990: 38–39). This same author tells us that Finisterre and Muxía ‘are not just another Camino, but a common extension of all routes to a point beyond which it was not possible to go further.’ Therefore, it is ‘fully integrated into the legend of the transfer of the Apostle and on a complementary devotional circuit’ (Pombo 1993: 209). Viewed from this perspective, the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía would be seen as a logical epilogue to the Camino de Santiago, following the footsteps of the Apostle himself to the edge of the world.

Pombo is perhaps one of the authors who has done the most to support physical and documentary claims regarding this Camino, as well as its popularization. He points to other reasons which may have influenced pilgrims, both past and present, to continue on to the lands of Finisterre on the Costa da Morte after having reached Santiago de Compostela. The first of these would be curiosity about seeing the end of the world and watching the sun set over the ocean after so many days out of sight of the sea. It is believed that one of the reasons pilgrims would travel to Finisterre would be the seductive lure of distance and a remote territory. In other words, they would have been motivated by a certain *curiositas*; curiosity about seeing the sea, and seeing where it was said *finis terrae* was located, a point historically identified with the end of the known world, beyond which there was only mystery. It was therefore a place charged with symbolism, something which is indicated in the comments of many modern pilgrims. And it must also have been found in the mind of many pilgrims in medieval times.¹⁹

In the traditional rural world, the sea was an element that was considered uncertain and dangerous. For example, Portuguese ethnographer Antonio L. Fontes, speaking about an inland community in neighboring Portugal in the late 20th century, says: ‘The sea was for many a mythic, fearful image, for others [it was] a heroic act to have passed the sea or seen the sea’ (Fontes 1992: 759). Pombo (1993: 212) believes that the pilgrims who followed the path of the *Camino Francés* did not have the opportunity to see the sea along the entire route, walking hundreds of kilometers without smelling it. And many would never have seen it in their life. Reaching Compostela was also an opportunity to go and see the sea, as the city is just a few kilometers from the placid estuary of the Ulla River and the Ría of Arousa. According to Jacobean tradition, this is where the ship from Palestine carrying the body of the Apostle reached land. But it would make a much greater impression on a pilgrim from inland Europe to see the sea from the height of the cliffs that form the promontory of Cape Finisterre, seeing the immensity of the ocean only along the line of the horizon.

¹⁹When we talk about the comments of modern pilgrims, we are referring to the comments and remarks left by them in what is known as the *Libro del peregrino (Pilgrim’s Book)*, a notebook found in each hostel along the Camino de Santiago. In this case, we refer specifically to the first book at Finisterre, which begins in May 1993 (Vilar 2001).

However, even with the sea being a major attraction, it could not have been the determining factor for the pilgrimage to Finisterre and Muxía. There are others in addition to the Marian devotion in Muxía and the cult of Christ in Finisterre. These others would be found in the references which talk of pagan and litholatric cults or what is known as the Shrine of St William in Finisterre (San Guillermo).

These topics would be repeated by different authors without going into a more in-depth analysis, taking as historical truth the words of 19th-century historians, said with more imagination than documentation, with the idea of creating a Celtic foundation for Galician culture, among other things. The regular repetition of these supposed traditions leads to a belief that the ancient cults survived over time, immune to historical and cultural changes. In this regard, Pombo himself speaks of the combination of ‘remote echoes of Neolithic, Celtic and Roman paganism with the ingenious ability to assimilate demonstrated by Christianity in the Middle Ages’ (Pombo 1993: 214).

But in order for pilgrims to return to this Camino, it was necessary to recover the ancient route, both physically and through documentary evidence. One central idea in the work of Pombo (1993: 215) involved ‘reliably and accurately recovering the main itinerary for the new Jacobites, who continue to extend their route with unsatisfactory information.’ And one way to establish the route was to name the locations through which it passes, names which would help indicate and mark a historical itinerary. Pombo (1990) does this following on from historian Ferreira Priegue (1988b: 136–137), author of a work focusing on the study of medieval routes in Galicia. This scholar looks to different documentary sources, such as boundary markings and deeds of sale, as well as references in the texts of ancient pilgrims, in order to draw a map of the historical routes in Galicia. Pombo also refers to a possible Roman road network to *finis terrae*, using the work of Compostela canon López Ferreiro, mentioned earlier, as a source of inspiration. What he tries to demonstrate is that there were Roman roads to the west of Compostela, whose route has not yet been determined (Pombo 1990: 39), in the belief that the pilgrimage route to *finis terrae* would largely follow the path of a Roman road network, as it does in other locations. Behind this lies the idea that the lands of Finisterre were not an unknown and impassable territory in antiquity. They were not a cultural wasteland, but rather a territory fully incorporated into the civilized Roman world, a world in which Christianity grew and spread in its early years.

Another way to establish the itinerary is to indicate the places where there is a historical record of the existence of hospitals (an old word for hostel) to serve pilgrims, as there can be no pilgrimage route without places to take in the pilgrims who walk it, as hospitality has always constituted ‘a distinctive hallmark of pilgrimage routes’ (Pombo 2000: 70). Hostels were so important to the route that when they disappeared after support from the church and nobles which promoted and sustained them decreased, this also had an effect on the decline in popularity for the Camino de Santiago. The author puts forward the idea that the hospitals were an effective propaganda tool for the route, just as they are today.

Pombo (1990) makes a list of places where there is evidence of the existence of hospitals, either based on place names, such as Alberguería,²⁰ or documentary evidence, such as for Bo Xesús, Cee, Corcubión, Finisterre, Hospital (Dumbría) and Muxía. There were others, such as Ponte Olveira, a place mentioned in various itineraries and where there may have been a hospital, as ‘pilgrim hospital were commonly built near bridges (Portomarín, Pontedeume) and in this case it is almost certain that there was an inn or a guesthouse’ (Pombo 1990: 43). The author includes towns such as Noia and Muros on this list. These are off the route of this extension, but also linked to the arrival of pilgrims by sea. The sources he uses come primarily from church archives and the accounts of ancient pilgrims.

In this context of seeking to recover and mark the historic path, it is also necessary to understand the regular references and mentions in the texts of the classic pilgrim which discuss this route. We should understand this constant turning to the texts of pilgrims from the past as proof demonstrating the historical authenticity of the route. However, it is also a way to lend it prestige and in short, to create a suitable environment for its heritagization and acceptance by an increasingly wider audience.

3.4 References to Classic Pilgrims and Travelers as a Resource

References to the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía in odeporic or travel literature, in this case almost exclusively pilgrims’ diaries, are used by today’s international pilgrimage scholars, as well as local scholars, as important documentary evidence of the route and its historical importance. For a long time, pilgrimage was the safest way to travel, and perhaps the only way to travel, to be able to go beyond local reality and expand and enrich one’s perception through other realities. Thus, Adam Kucharski (2010: 104) tells us that the tradition of making a pilgrimage to Compostela was very old and common in Poland, but a pilgrimage to Compostela also represented an opportunity to cross Europe, make contact with other cultures and reach the very edge of the territory in which these cultures and social realities were rooted.

Klaus Herbers and Robert Plötz (1999) compiled a volume with a large portion of the references by ancient pilgrims who travelled to Compostela, and also includes those for Finisterre and Muxía.²¹ References to texts left by pilgrims are

²⁰The name Alberguería may come from the Gothic word *haribairgo*, which means ‘accommodation.’ Alberguería is a village which falls under the town council of Muxía. It is located in the area of the former monastery of Moraime, which would have been the institution that created and maintained this possible hostel.

²¹The accounts which discuss Finisterre and Muxía are by Nompar de Caumont (1417), Peter Rieter (1428), Sebastián Ilsung of Augsburg (1446), George of Ehingen (1457), Leo of Rozmital (1465–1467), Martiros of Arzendjan (1489–1491) and Christoph Gunzinger (1654–1655).

a constant for modern researchers. These testimonies are used not only as proof of the visibility of the route, but also to lend it prestige and boost the presence of new pilgrims, as this type of literature is able to act as an element which encourage future pilgrims and visitors to travel to a place about which there is evidence of earlier visitors. In short, this type of literature helps popularize a destination and turns it into a significant location or one yet more significant than it already is. Today's travel literature can generate or reinforce a certain romantic vision in the reader or the mythologization of the place, seeking the passion and beauty of a location rather than the everyday reality or the truth and meaning of the historical cause. There also remains a certain amount of prestige in the distant and remote, in the uncertain and unknown, something which always envelops reality in an air of mystery and even the imagination. But this fantasy image can also be used to encourage us to travel to that place and leave our everyday reality behind, if only for a moment.

These accounts by pilgrims help create and recreate the identities of these places. As a result, certain images become dominant and identifying hallmarks. This type of literature also helps teach how to be a pilgrim, to know how to act when one is a pilgrim. What one person says they did, another person will want to do and it thus becomes part of a tradition. One example is burning one's clothing in Finisterre, 'part of an old pagan practice that continues with enthusiasm today' (Rudolph 2004: 44).²² Before setting off on the Camino, the future pilgrim seeks information about the route, not only the itinerary, but also 'how life should be practiced on the Camino' (Schrire 2007: 77), in other words, knowledge of the rules in order to know how and be able to behave like a pilgrim (Fig. 3.3).

Perhaps the classic text in Spain on travel literature—because many of the texts by pilgrims, not to say all of them, are also travel literature—is the work of García Mercadal (1917–1920): *España vista por los extranjeros* [Spain Through the Eyes of Foreigners]. However, we believe this magnum opus was not widely available or was not available at all in the area of the Costa da Morte.²³ As a result, other authors referred to them in their work in order to provide another argument in favor of this extension, as well as to stress the importance of being seen and visited by 'others;' 'others' who from the perspective of 'here' are considered more prestigious and lend us prestige by visiting us. This is why since the mid-20th century, the authors who have spent their time studying this section of the Camino consistently make use of quotes from pilgrims and travelers.

In this regard, after citing various references, Mayán Fernández ends one of his articles with: 'And so, in interrupted and pious pilgrimage, the majority of those pilgrims from Santiago, of those simple souls, reached this great promontory that forms 'the division of lands, of seas and of the sky'' (Mayán Fernández 1944a, b: 12). In addition, various authors, including Esmorís Recamán (1957a, b),

²²Pilgrims burning their clothing in Finisterre recently resulted in a number of fires in the cape area. As a result, specific locations have been constructed for this purpose.

²³For example, Cores Trasmonte (1953) quotes this author, talking only 'about foreign travellers'.



Fig. 3.3 *Cruceiro de Marco do Couto*. An old cross on the Camino where pilgrims deposit stones. It is located between the village of Hospital and the hermitage of *Nosa Señora das Neves*.
Source Manuel Vilar

Rivadulla Porta (1974), César Antonio Molina (1991), Castro Fernández (1997), Ferrín González (1997), Pombo (1993), Pombo and Fernández Carrera (2000) and Fernández Carrera (2007), would do the same: name the creators of these classic texts or make brief references to them in order to justify the historical importance of the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía, and the truthfulness or authenticity of their route.

As an introduction to texts by Italian pilgrims, special mention should be made of the work of Caucci (1971, 1983). However, new complete editions of classic texts have appeared in recent years. These include the diary of Domenico Laffi (1993) and more recently, the writings of Buonafede Vanti (2007) and Giacomo Antonio Naia (Pugliese 2012). Despite this increase in publications and studies of Italian texts, we are still waiting for a new edition²⁴ of the chronicle of the knight Guarino Mezquino (or Guerrino Meschino), who travelled the entire world, taking part in a thousand and one adventures, seeking his parents and to determine the facts concerning his noble origins. After an audience with the Pope to request advice regarding his sins, he was told: ‘You should first go to blessed Santiago in Galicia and Santa María de Finisterre. And he took it much in his favor’ (Baranda 1992: 783). He also later went to St Patrick’s Purgatory (Ireland), as did the Magyar knight George Grisaphan in the mid-14th century. In addition to its purely local interest and unlike other tales of chivalry, the chronicle includes a large number of place names and scrupulous attention to detail (Allaire 1998: 183). However, almost all of these place names and details refer to lands very distant from those which are the subject of this work.

In general, the stories of classic travelers and pilgrims all have a number of things in common. They mention the places they pass through. And although these may be difficult to identify today, they usually provide some details of these locations and their inhabitants. The distances between one place and the next, while relative measurements, were a point of reference for future pilgrims. They are written in the first person singular, or plural if the author walked with a group or was a noble accompanied by a retinue. They included some details relating to the customary rituals of pilgrimage or the places they passed through, also making them texts which reflect the act of coming face to face with otherness.

To conclude this section, we will mention a key title in the bibliography of the Camino from the mid-20th century. It was written by Irish Hispanist Walter Starkie, who did the Camino de Santiago some four times. In his work, the references to Finisterre and Muxía go no further than a simple mention that ‘it is said that [St James] preached in the village of Mugía,’ where ‘the inhabitants still proudly display a stone’ which is what remains of the keel of the boat²⁵ on which the Virgin came from Jerusalem, a stone that moves, but these are just the ‘imaginings of the natives who inhabit that ghostly coast’ (Starkie 1958: 31).

²⁴The most recent edition in Spanish is from 1963. It is not easy to find, nor are the texts complete.

²⁵The so-called *pedra de abalar*.

This tradition of travel literature still continues today. And now, more than ever, there is a quantitative abundance of references by pilgrims who follow the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía. Some of these references are no more than a simple record of the fact that ‘I went there’ too, or not even that, as in the case of the Basque writer of Galician origin, Espido Freire (2009), in which the word ‘Finisterre’ appears only in the subtitle of her book. But generally speaking, the majority of these new texts are only an excuse to go off on a tangent about a wide variety of different aspects or to repeat earlier clichés. And so, for Cedric Salter (1975), reaching Finisterre is an opportunity to speak of the battles which the English fleet successfully fought in these waters against the Spanish and the French in 1747 and 1805. These events are regularly mentioned by other English travelers when they refer to Finisterre or the cape. When Robin Hanbury-Tenison (1990) reaches Finisterre, which he describes as ‘Virgil’s Ultima Thule,’ he takes advantage of the occasion to go off on a tangent about Indian tribes and the similarities between the Galician and Cornish landscapes.

These are all first-person accounts, in which the pilgrim narrators are often in search of simple emotions which will take them away from the monotony of the everyday, as well as ‘a different sort of experience’ (Rudolph 2004: 33). It is experiences such as these that Nicholas Crane (1996) and Canadian journalist Taras Grescoe (2004) sought, where the pilgrimage route is not the reason which brought them here, but rather they came across the Camino on their adventure and they had no other choice but to come face to face with its reality in some way.

3.4.1 The Definitive Step Towards Global Roots

In the last decade of the 20th century, numerous texts began to appear which situate the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía within the broader and more global perspective of the Camino de Santiago. In these texts, pilgrimages to these two places no longer represent a minority and they emerge from the local environment, taking on a global context. This is reflected in the varied and global points of origin, both for the pilgrims who reach these two places and for the places which appear in these references. The bibliography not only increases considerably, but also decisively breaks through the local barrier. Now it is no longer just local authors or government initiatives that decide to study the Camino. Interest is no longer primarily focused on demonstrating the connection between these two places and the cult of St James. Instead it is assumed at the outset that the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía is an indisputable part of the Camino de Santiago and a global reality.

The abundance of the bibliography is similar to the success of the Camino in the final years of the 20th century. In the case of the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía, this success specifically dates from the mid-1990s and the early years of the 21st century. It can also be said that this abundance of bibliographic references is both a cause and effect of this success: it contributes to the popularization and success of this Camino, just as the success of the Camino brings with it an increase in bibliographic interest.

This 'rooting' in a global context is to be expected in a socio-economic era in which a new model for the rural and maritime world is being created. In this model, agricultural production and fishing are no longer seen as the principal or only supply-side activities to keep this world based on a traditional economy in employment. Additionally, decisions are no longer made by institutions located near these citizens. Instead they are outside their immediate space, distant and even inaccessible. Within this context of adapting to a global economic framework, the new development policies issuing from the European Union, especially with the expansion of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) guidelines, promote abandoning agriculture and fishing. They encourage taking steps towards diversifying economic activity by strengthening the tertiary sector, especially the tourism industry, in which cultural heritage should play a key role, emerging as a clear alternative to the primary sector. Within this new context,²⁶ the Camino is viewed as an important example of the cultural heritage of the lands that make up the Costa da Morte region. This heritage can be localized as a key and distinctive tourism resource, and even understood as a prestige element which links us to the heart of Old Europe. Thus, the Camino will be used by different government bodies as a symbol which helps legitimize the historical roots of European identity and as an expression of shared or longed-for ideals, ideals of encounter and communication among peoples (Herrero 2009a, b: 169).

This eagerness to turn the Camino into heritage translates into an increase in activities involving the route by various organizations and bodies. In some cases, these go no further than making local and even opportunistic claims, or converting an old section of the route which might have been forgotten, such as a former cart path, into a wide trail which can accommodate motorized vehicles. This is all done without the least concern for or interest in lesser aspects of this heritage which also played a part in creating our collective memory, as they are linked to a way of life which is in danger of extinction (Fig. 3.4).

Specifically regarding the bibliographic aspect, we must mention the increase in guides and brochures published, especially by the Neria Association, as well as by some town councils. Some of these are designed more for internal political consumption than to serve as a useful guide for a pilgrim wanting to follow the route (Fig. 3.5).

In discussing this new period, we might point to the book by Alonso Romero, *O camiño de Finisterre [The Camino to Finisterre]* (1993), as a key work and starting point. It had a certain amount of success and distribution and in some regards, it was a pioneering book, a book that introduced the audience to a reality about which there had previously been very little information and which for many was completely unknown. Some of the issues highlighted in this book were later expanded on or specifically dealt with in other works, emphasizing local

²⁶Here we only make a brief mention to provide context, as the issue of heritage as a resource for local development is discussed in the chapter by Paula Ballesteros. Regarding the abandonment of the primary sector and new customs, we are following on from the theoretical framework proposed by Aguilar Criado (2003).



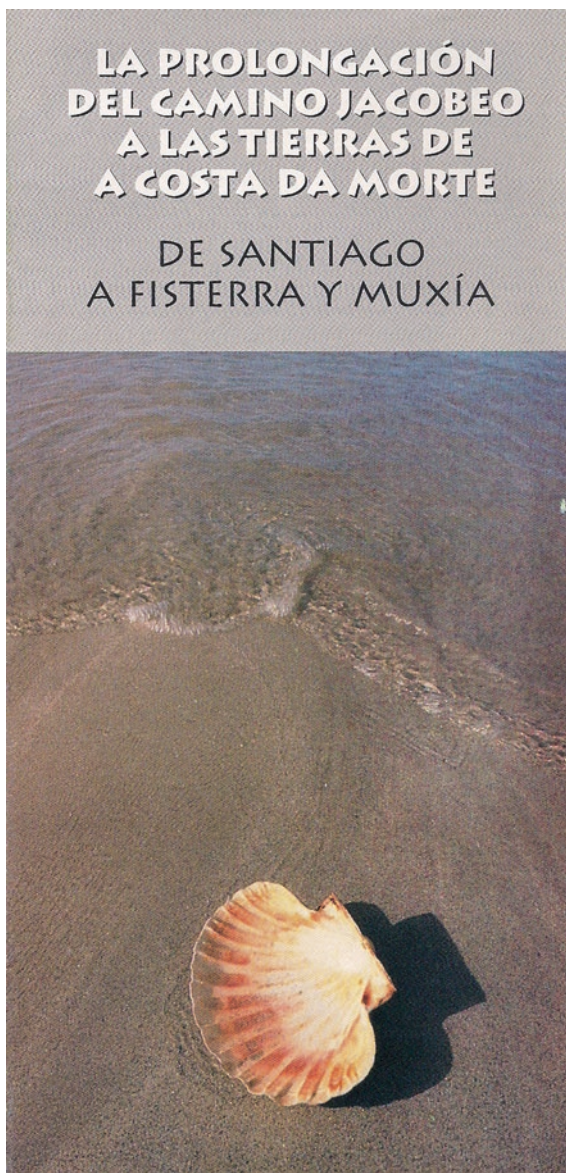
Fig. 3.4 Government activities to ‘improve’ the Camino. The old path is replaced with pavement. *Source* Manuel Vilar

issues, but always trying to establish a global frame of reference, specifically, the North Atlantic. And so, for example, it discusses the case of the legendary city of Duio. The author believes that the city’s houses and beaches disappeared beneath the sand of the dunes on Langosteira Beach, where the Camino enters Finisterre, following the decline of the Roman empire and invasion of the Germanic tribes beginning in the fifth century (Alonso Romero 2004: 147).

The central idea of Alonso Romero’s book can be summarized as follows: Galicia, and more specifically the area around Finisterre, shares a common background with other regions along the western edge of Europe, where the historical Celtic cultures left a significant mark, which the area seems to retain even today. As a result, they continue to determine certain aspects of the life of the people who inhabit the territories that form the western boundary of the old continent. Galicia’s Finisterre is thus part of the same Atlantic, Celtic culture as France’s Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, Ireland, the Isle of Man and Scotland. In this regard, anthropologist Herrero (2009a, b: 56) describes this author as ‘the greatest exponent of the thesis with which the academic world interprets the Jacobean pilgrimage from a Celtic perspective.’ For this author, linked to Celtic mythology, *finis terrae* would be the appropriate place from which to depart for the final great beyond, along the lines of the gateway between human existence and what comes closest to the world of the great beyond.

Alonso Romero’s theories are followed and championed by other authors. Thus, for example, Pena Graña and Erias Martínez (2006) also put forward the

Fig. 3.5 A brochure on the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía published by the Neria Association



idea of an ancient pilgrimage route which followed the path of the sun from east to west, leading to the western edge of Europe, especially Galicia's *finis terrae*, in other words, Finisterre and San Andrés de Teixido.

The references to all of these varied elements, labelled pagan, Celtic, etc., contribute to a theoretical construction of the territory which disassociates itself from Catholic references. This makes these elements more acceptable to a lay,

secularized society, where the sacred is constructed on a foundation of nature and references from the past, a mythologized past, all understood from the perspective of a search for personal identity.

Castro Fernández, an author already mentioned above, returns to the topics discussed by Rivadulla Porta (1974) and asserts the fundamental role of Muxía. For this author, the cult of the stones in the place where the shrine to the Virgin of the Boat would later be erected represents a central theme. This place would be a space suited to the manifestation of the divine spirit, what Mircea Eliade calls a hierophany. The attraction of this place must have been felt since prehistoric times, with the Church taking advantage of it from the sixth century (Castro Fernández 1997: 71). Therefore, the origins of the shrine would have been even earlier than the arrival of the cult of St James in Galicia. And the connection between the two would emerge with the legend of the Virgin's appearance to St James the Apostle in Muxía, which this author places in the late eleventh century. This legend would give Muxía a certain amount of pre-eminence over Finisterre. Today, in a society that is increasingly more secularized, when Christian references are not enough to understand this pilgrimage route, it may no longer be an attraction.

There are also publications which do not champion the continuation of the Camino from Santiago to Finisterre. They do, however, also contribute to constructing this route. In this vein, one example is Barreiro Rivas (2009: 329–357), an author who is quite critical of this extension and doubts the existence of a pilgrimage route beyond Compostela. For this author, *finis terrae* is no more than a cosmological concept which for the Romans meant the perfection of the *urbs* and the empire. Therefore, *finis terrae* is a Roman idea which did not necessarily have to be associated with a specific geographical location, but rather with the west as a point of reference. *Finis terrae* was an idea, a rather imprecise location, which took shape as knowledge increased and the territory was occupied in cosmological terms. After the fall of the Roman empire, this symbolic content was taken up by the Catholic Church and the perfection of the Roman city then became the idea of bringing the gospel to the end of the world. This idea also has its roots in the Book of Genesis and the Acts of the Apostles. The first says that God is the creator of the confines of the Earth, which bring order to the original chaos. In the second, Christ tells his disciples to carry the gospel to the ends of the Earth. Therefore, this is an idea which won followers among the Catholic elite before the new idea that the boundary of the world was on the western coast of Hispania.

In light of the above, the author does not believe in the construction of an idea of *finis terrae* based on a local, pre-Roman sacralizing activity. Instead, he believes that if Christ told his disciples to take their preaching to the end of the world, and if this end of the world was located on the western coast of old Hispania, it stands to reason that one of the apostles—or their remains—would reach that point, thus leading the way for the transformation of a symbolic element into a particular place name, into geographic specificity. Taking the gospel to the lands of Finisterre involved symbolically occupying the space on which the Catholic Church would have to be established.

3.4.2 *Guidebooks for the Camino*

In establishing these global roots, we must talk about guidebooks for the Camino, guides which play a definitive role in making it visible at a global level and situating it within a broader context. It is not our aim here to offer an exhaustive list of existing guidebooks, but rather to discuss them in broad terms in order to see how they have sketched the outlines of the Camino until it became marked with thick strokes, making it highly visible against an old agricultural landscape undergoing a complete transformation and adapting to new economic and social policies.

If we understand a guidebook to mean a text with specific details and information to orientate the reader and prevent them from getting lost on the journey, in this case, to follow the path of the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía, the book published by the English association The Confraternity of Saint James can be considered one of the first modern guidebooks for this route. Written by Alison Raju²⁷ and really designed to be used by pilgrims at a time when the historical route had been lost due to neglect, lack of use and changes in the landscape, especially after 1960, when land consolidation came to rural Galicia, plotting new roads and abandoning old ones. All of the guidebooks for this part of the Camino that we know of correspond to the period of revitalized pilgrimage in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Before this, there are not what could strictly speaking be called guidebooks, but rather slim contributions in works written for another purpose. For example, this is what Huidobro y Serna (1949–1951) does in his monumental, pioneering work, already mentioned earlier.

The Confraternity of Saint James guidebook is a 20-page brochure with instructions on following the Camino, minimal yet precise instructions. It begins with a brief introduction which discusses the reasons supporting this pilgrimage route to Finisterre. This is followed by a series of warnings, such as that people may speak to the pilgrim in Galician; recommendations, such as the need to carry a stick to push aside brambles, shake the wet grass or brandish against the dogs that emerge when going through a village, but not to hit them. It also offers information on where it is possible to spend the night.²⁸ In addition, it gives information about the *Finisterrena* (certificate of having completed the route) and a short Galician glossary of terms that ‘may come in useful,’ such as ‘ollo ó can’, i.e. “beware of dog.”

The first time the author followed this Camino, in 1982 along with other members of the confraternity, they did it with a map in hand and following an itinerary that ran mainly over roads. Various pilgrims would subsequently continue doing the same until the route was definitively marked and signposted in the late 1990s (Fig. 3.6).

²⁷Alison Raju was the first innkeeper, and volunteer, at the pilgrims’ hostel in Olveiroa (Dumbría) when it opened its doors in 2001. We consulted the 2001 edition of the guidebook, which is the sixth. The guide was first published in 1992.

²⁸Extremely necessary information given the almost complete absence of hotel infrastructure along this section of the Camino at that time.



Fig. 3.6 In recent years, there have been many advertisements for private hostels on the Finis-terre Camino. *Source* Manuel Vilar

Another English guidebook, this one by John Brierley (2003), author of guidebooks on the other *Caminos de Santiago*, is somewhat more comprehensive. Here we find brief information about Galician history and culture and short texts about the places through which the Camino travels. This guidebook follows the route to Muxía, as stated in the subtitle. It also states that it is ‘a practical and mystical manual for the modern day pilgrim.’ The book was recently (2011) reissued with bilingual text in English and Spanish, and it claims to be ‘definitely the best guidebook from Santiago to Finisterre and Muxía.’

In the work by Castro Fernández (1997) mentioned earlier, there is an appendix titled ‘For the recovery of the historical Santiago-Muxía Camino.’ It is a short guide indicating an itinerary to follow: The author of this section is Luis Pereira.²⁹ It discusses a route between the city of Santiago de Compostela and the village of Muxía, which coincides with the route to Finisterre as far as Hospital³⁰ (Dumbría). This was the first attempt to show a route—from Hospital to Muxía—which had previously been virtually impassable. However, it contains some errors due to

²⁹At the time, Luis Pereira was the town councillor for the conservative *Partido Popular*, which was the political party governing the Muxía town council.

³⁰According to the route indicated by the Xunta de Galicia (Government of Galicia), upon reaching the hamlet of Hospital (Dumbría), the pilgrim has the option of continuing on to Finisterre or Muxía.

attempting to follow a route that is easier to travel, rather than carrying out a document-based ethnographic investigation of the possible historical route.

Not all authors agree on this branch from Hospital to Muxía. Pombo (2004: 315) describes it as ‘a rather ahistorical alternative’ which emerges as an alternative to a route flooded by A Fervenza reservoir. But this does not exactly reflect historical reality, as the dam did not completely flood the route which must have run over the Roman bridge at Brandomil (Zas). We may have to find other reasons, perhaps political, for promoting this branch. There have been recent claims of a direct route from Santiago to Muxía via Brandomil, which would render the previous branch devoid of historical value. But there are no statements from any pilgrims who may have used the route via Brandomil. In any event, it would have been used as a return route to go directly back to Compostela.

The collective work by Pombo et al. (2000) can also be seen as a guidebook, although its format makes it rather difficult for walkers to use. This volume contains a section titled ‘Etapas: El camino paso a paso’ [Stages: the Camino step by step], written by Fernández Carrera, author of several guidebooks on the Costa da Morte region and a participant in several of the pioneering ‘pilgrimages’ to recover this branch. As a result, he proves to be very knowledgeable about the territory through which this route runs. The Hospital-Muxía branch is also included here. We should also mention a guidebook authored by local scholar García Quintáns (2008), which only begins at Ponte Olveira, ending in Finisterre and including the branch from Hospital to Muxía, with some details and remarks about the places it passes through.

As an example more of an initial text or quick introduction to the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía than a guidebook for following the route, we should include *O camino a Finisterre* [*The Camino to Finisterre*], by Vilar (2006), which was published in several languages in an informative collection.

The guidebook by Pombo,³¹ published by Anaya in 2004, represented an important step forward in this process of standardizing the Camino and giving it global roots. The importance of this lies in the fact that Pombo, a well-known author of tourist guidebooks and guides to the Camino de Santiago, included the extension of the pilgrimage to Finisterre and Muxía in a guidebook specifically for the Camino de Santiago. We believe this to be the first time the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía appears as a normal continuation of the route to Santiago and not as an appendage, separate from it. And this is done in a guidebook with a large print run put out by a prestigious publisher in the Spanish-speaking tourist guide market. And so we view this as an event which helps popularize this route among a Spanish audience, while also making it definitive part of tourist circuits.³²

³¹This author had already published a guide in brochure form on the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía through the Galician Friends of the Camino de Santiago Association (AGACS). In 1999, he published another one through the Xunta de Galicia.

³²Regarding the pilgrims’ place of origin, see the chapter by Eva Parga-Dans in this volume. See the chapter by Peter Jan Margry for a discussion of popularity abroad.

In the introduction, which strangely comes at the end of the book, after discussing the history and culture linked to the cult of St James, the author includes a section titled ‘Los caminos de Santiago hoy’ [The Caminos de Santiago today]. In it, he talks about the fact that some enthusiasts, working together as part of Friends of the Camino associations, signposted and recovered the ancient historical pilgrimage routes with their limited resources. Government bodies then came onto the scene with their resources, although not always with the respect and sensitivity called for in order to promote and improve these itineraries (Pombo 2004: 339).³³ Within this context, the reasons put forward by the author for including this extension to Finisterre and Muxía in the guidebook are: its strength and increasing popularity among pilgrims, making it a complement to the Camino Francés. He stresses that it is a historical route ‘and under no circumstances an invention,’ based on the link with the legend of the Apostle, the presence of two minor pilgrimage centers (the Holy Christ at Finisterre and the Virgin of the Boat in Muxía, both mentioned earlier) and the significant attraction of seeing the ancients’ end of the world at the edge of the Atlantic Ocean (Pombo 2004: 340).

Other guidebooks that also put the end of the Camino in Finisterre include those by Fiol Boada (2006) and Grégoire and Pinguet (2010). In the latter case, the Camino to Finisterre is not presented as a normal extension of the Camino Francés, but rather as the final stage, number thirty-nine, of the *Camino del Norte* (Northern Route), the route that runs parallel to the coast of the Bay of Biscay. The fortieth stage, they say, would be in the Americas, because beyond the Church of Santa María das Areas ‘there is only a cliff battered by winds, the swells and the lighthouse.’ This physical end to life’s spaces invites one to ‘ritually burn the pilgrim’s habit and turn back’ (Grégoire and Pinguet 2010: 275).

This guidebook offers information necessary for doing the Camino, but it also adds some facts about the places through which it passes and other historical details, including ethnographic information not usually found in this type of literature, in which the pilgrim seems only to gaze forward along the path and seems not to have time to contemplate the social and cultural reality he is crossing through. These two authors, at least, linger on certain details, such as that in summer, the women who work in the fields wear a type straw hat with basket braiding, and that ‘they have always been a speciality in the area of Xallas’ (Grégoire and Pinguet 2010: 273). Although they report this distinguishing detail, the information is not exactly correct, as the women in this rural region wear the hat to protect themselves from both sun and rain. In other words, the hat is a part of their everyday wardrobe.³⁴

³³On this subject, the Galician Friends of the Camino de Santiago Association criticized the work carried out by the public sector firm Tragsa in 2010 on the section of the *Camino* to Finisterre that passes through Dumbria. This work involved removing the natural road surface and replacing it with gravel.

³⁴The hat mentioned is known as a *sancosmeiro*. This hat, typical of the regions of Mazaricos and Outes (between the Xallas River and the Ria of Noia), is characterized by its thin straw plaiting and because it has a thin black ribbon which runs around the edge of the large brim and another wider ribbon which goes around the low, small crown, hanging down in the back. The name *sancosmeiro* comes from the parish of San Cosme (Outes).

While not exactly a guidebook, but rather a book about the Camino with information on how to follow it and some notes about locations through which it passes, Conrad Rudolph's work also offers some 'ethnographic' details. In this case, he describes how one thickly foggy morning he noted that there are still farmers who cut the grass with a scythe. He was also struck by the old *corredoiras* (cart paths), which he describes as 'footpaths lined with stone walls that go back to pre-Roman times.' He also stops to discuss some rectangular constructions elevated above the ground with crosses at the top, but does not say what their purpose is (Rudolph 2004: 25–26).³⁵

3.4.3 *The Contributions of Anthropology*

Anthropology was slow to take up the subject of the Camino de Santiago and even slower with the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía. It is as if there was no room for it amongst so many studies of history, art history, itineraries, etc. But now anthropology has been incorporated into the pilgrimage route to Compostela as well as the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía. We might even say that while it has already completed a number of stages, it still has a long way to go.

Frey (1998, 2004) is an American anthropologist who did the Camino de Santiago and the corresponding fieldwork. The result was a doctoral thesis in which she analyzes the pilgrim experience. We are not going to explore this author's thesis in detail because it focuses on pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago in general. It does however make specific mentions of the Camino to Finisterre. Therefore, our brief remarks will be limited to providing some context.

For this author, pilgrimage, like tourism, is a modern form of human mobility that 'flourished within a religious worldview.' It has also been the result of the relative peace in Western Europe since the 1940s, which made it possible for the middle class to achieve increased mobility as they sought leisure opportunities. It is also necessary to consider 'the continuous transnational publicity of the Camino,' which 'brought it literally to the front doors of many Europeans' (Frey 1998: 12–14). She stresses the idea of the effect doing the Camino has on the pilgrim and the consequences of returning to everyday life: 'participants are deeply affected by the pilgrimage and that the experience continues to influence their daily lives after their return home' (Frey 2004: 90). Pilgrimage represents a change in the perspective on life of the person who does it. There is therefore a transformation within the lifetime of the pilgrim, with a before and an after. During this interval, the pilgrim lives within a different time. Among other things, this is conducive to forging relationships with other pilgrims. As a background to this view, the author reinterprets the classic theories on pilgrimage laid out by Victor Turner within the context of a critical review of these theories.

³⁵These are *hórreos*, raised granaries used to dry and store corn and now fallen almost completely into disuse.

In her book, *Pilgrim Stories: On and Off the Road to Santiago*, Nancy L. Frey devotes only one chapter to the Camino to Finisterre, which she titles 'To the end of the earth' (Frey 1998: 170–176). Officially, she tells us, the route ends at Compostela. Therefore, the Catholic Church discourages pilgrims who want to continue on to Finisterre, while the government urges people to continue. The author calculates that 10 % of the pilgrims who reach Santiago de Compostela go on to follow the Camino to Finisterre: 'The end of the end. One can go no farther ... [and the pilgrim is] finally confronted with miles and miles of water' (Frey 1998: 174). This 'end of the end' allows her to make a symbolic association between Finisterre and death, resurrection and purification: 'People must symbolically die or cleanse themselves before passing from the Camino to daily life, pilgrims often engage in rites of purification.' The same is true of the past: 'One of the motives for continuing to Finisterre is its believed links to the Celtic past' (Frey 1998: 175).

Another anthropologist who has written various papers on this Camino is Nieves Herrero. Her first contribution (1995) was a more general work without specific references to this *route*. Here she analyzed pilgrimage as a metaphor for life according to Christianity—life is a journey in search of a goal: of real life. Therefore, pilgrimage spreads as a rite of passage and the Camino is the space where this transformation and this encounter with the 'other' occur. The Camino is defined as a realm of encounter in which we as pilgrims seek something at the end, but we actually find this something is along the way and before reaching the goal, where one is resurrected to a renewed life. The Camino takes the form of a 'liminal' space which represents a break with space-time coordinates (Herrero 1995: 469–471). Without losing sight of this global perspective, this author later turned her efforts towards the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía (2008: 123–138). She focused on aspects such as the process of heritagization of this route, the context in which this pilgrimage was recovered, the stakeholders involved in this process, and the construction of Finisterre as a tourist attraction based on a symbolic event. This scholar's central idea is that the current increase in Jacobean pilgrimage runs parallel to the process of heritagization of the route, in which different institutions, motivated by a variety of intentions, are involved. All of this occurs within a framework that is both legal—the declaration of the Camino as the first European Cultural Route (1987) and as a World Heritage Site (1993)—and political, in which development policies and new, rapid forms of interrelation between the local and the global come into play. In this context, certain characteristic values of modernity find a way to express themselves in the Camino de Santiago (Herrero 2003: 358). In the case of the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía, we must also add the idea of Finisterre as an attractive cultural image and an ideal identity. All of this led Finisterre, especially the cape, to be constructed as a 'place-myth,' to use the terminology of Rob Shields (1991), based on a narrative 'invented' by nationalist tradition over the course of the 19th century. This tradition looked resolutely towards the Atlantic to define a Galician identity, in contrast to the Mediterranean world, more closely identified with a Spanish ideology. Therefore, the mythical identity of Finisterre is constructed from the outside and by literary



Fig. 3.7 Pilgrim's book in the shrine at As Neves (Dumbría). *Source* Manuel Vilar

and intellectual traditions largely unknown to the local population before now. According to this author, recognition of this outside identity by the local population involves confirming its symbolic effectiveness; in other words, confirming whether the Camino is useful for overcoming the secular conditions of marginalization experienced by this region (Herrero 2009a, b: 174). The nationalist tradition establishes the origins of the Jacobean pilgrimage to Finisterre as a Celtic cult of the sun practiced on the westernmost edge of the European space (Herrero 2008a, b: 139). The formation of a concrete idea about a certain geographic location, Cape Finisterre, means that the significant cultural capital held by this location is contained in its very name, its toponym.

When the number of pilgrims travelling to Finisterre was still small and there were not even hostels³⁶ to house them, this town had the idea of creating a pilgrim's book, like those found in hostels all along the Camino de Santiago. The book was first kept at the Pilgrim Information Office. When the hostel was opened, it was transferred there. Vilar (2001) examined the comments left by pilgrims in this first book, approaching them from an anthropological perspective, looking at the basic reasons the pilgrims gave for travelling to Finisterre. They included the overcrowding in Compostela or the fact that reaching that city did not have meaning for them (Fig. 3.7).

³⁶The Finisterre pilgrims' hostel, the first one on the *Camino* to Finisterre and Muxía, opened on 9 August 1997.

This same author returned to the subject in a book titled *El Camino al fin de la tierra* [*The Camino to the End of the Earth*] (Vilar 2010). In this work, he takes a journey through the territory through which the Camino passes, with the route being seen not as an isolated element that crosses a landscape, but rather as an integrated body and driving force behind the historical landscape. For the Camino is not only travelled by pilgrims, but also mostly by people in their daily lives. As a result, this landscape is filled with references for the social or collective memory. Here the Camino is only an excuse to, among other things, travel through a cultural landscape that is being transformed by leaps and bounds, with the results being difficult to predict, as the vestiges which served to support a collective memory disappear.

The field of anthropology offers several other contributions. For example, the work by Ballesteros Arias and Sánchez Carretero (2011) in which they study the change or renovation taking place in Olveiroa (Dumbría) since the recovery of the pilgrimage route and the subsequent opening of the pilgrim hostel in 2001. The authors focus their study on the consequences of this transformation for uses of the concept of ‘heritage’ by the various stakeholders involved.³⁷ The present volume is an example of the fact that work is still being done to explore in depth the anthropological knowledge of this pilgrimage route, the consequences of its popularization and its effect on the communities through which it passes.

Anthropologist Manuel Mandianes (1993)³⁸ also studied the Camino, but his book is more properly described as a sort of guide/essay, somewhat sensationalist and with little documentary evidence to support it. We could include it in the section on guidebooks for the route, in which a number of regular clichés are repeated: Finisterre was believed to be where the world of the living ended and that of the dead began; the temple of Ara Solis was near Finisterre, and it would become an international pilgrimage site, where St James said his first mass on Galician soil. As a result, ‘Santiago de Compostela would be no more than the Christianization of that [temple]’ (Mandianes 1993: 154) and amongst the stones beside the Marian shrine at Muxía ‘miraculous images are sometimes seen’ (Mandianes 1993: 154). This does no more than lend credence to old chronicles that saw all of the symbols of the Passion of Christ represented here, something which was already being criticized in the mid-18th century by Enlightenment friar Martín Sarmiento.

³⁷This subject is discussed by Sánchez-Carretero (2012).

³⁸This book includes two brief sections focusing on the *Camino* to Finisterre and Muxía. They are titled ‘Viaje al Finisterre’ [Journey to Finisterre] and ‘La barca de los muertos’ [The ship of the dead], pp.152–160. When it mentions the mythical city of Duio, it says that it must have been a waterfront city and major centre for business and trade between the British Isles and the Asian world. It gives the city the name ‘Dumio.’ Dumio is a Portuguese town near the city of Braga, linked to the figure of St Martin of Braga or St Martin of Dumio (sixth century).

3.5 Concluding Remarks: Esoterism, Literature and Legends

This chapter has discussed the existing bibliography on the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía in order to look at how these publications contributed to establishing this route. Our goal was to provide a broad overview in order to introduce these works to an international audience and to provide readers with enough information to allow them to build up a more complete image of this pilgrimage route. In this overview, we have tried to include the intellectual approach to the topic and the various perspectives from which it has been tackled. However, it must be said that in a work of this type, it is not possible to cover all issues. Therefore, there are areas which we have not discussed, such as esoteric literature, contributions from the field of literature and analysis of the importance of legends in constructing imagery and the process of heritagization of the Camino. There are other subjects to which we will need to return in the future to see how they have evolved, as the bibliography on this route has increased over the past twenty years. As a result, it would be interesting to see whether the trend continues or the pace slows, indicating that it was a response to or result of the boom in pilgrimages to Finisterre and Muxía at the end of the previous and beginning of the current century.

Esoteric literature is without a doubt one field which deserves attention, due to both its abundance and success. It has become something which we might consider a social phenomenon. If we gave it a quick reading, we would see that there is one constant which is repeated: the Camino to Finisterre is an initial route established on top of a pagan route dating from before the discovery of the Apostle's tomb (Agromayor 1999: 232 and Aracil 1991: 125). This 'secrecy' and combination of rituals is discussed in the book *El camino secreto de Santiago [The Secret Camino to Santiago]*, by Rafael Lema. He maintains that the Costa da Morte, where the author is from, was a place filled with sacredness, with stone shrines where worship of the death and resurrection of the sun was practiced, until Christianity successfully associated this route with the figure of St James the Apostle. In this regard, Robert Hodum (2005: 72) also maintains that in the Middle Ages, pilgrims, alchemists, esoterics and Muslims followed the route of the stars to Finisterre, where they found 'the mystical union of water and sky.' But all of these works lack specific documentary sources to provide a solid basis for his theories, which grow stronger as they are regularly repeated.

Especially in recent years, the Camino to Finisterre and Muxía emerges as a source and motif for literary creativity. This subject merits its own section, which we are not going to include here. However, in taking a brief look at this area, we find a wide variety, in terms of both quality and opportunity. If we had to choose just one work to discuss, it would undoubtedly be *O peregrino a Compostela. Diario de um mago [The Pilgrimage]*, by Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho, because the works by this author 'go beyond literary phenomenon to also become a sociological and religious or pseudo-religious object' (Chao Mata 2001: 456).

This ‘quest novel’ helped popularize the Camino to Finisterre and Santiago in the latter part of the 1990s, especially in Brazil, but also among new types of pilgrims, specifically those associated with the New Age movement, in which this author has many followers.

To establish a contrast to the Brazilian author, we will mention three authors from the Spanish-speaking world, Gemma Lierga, Gonzalo Moure and Pitarch Almeda. The first two writers specialize in young adult literature which takes some of their protagonists to the Camino to Finisterre; the third writes in Catalan.³⁹

In addition to esoteric and other types of literature, legends have always been part of this route. In fact, the first mention which associates the lands of the Costa da Morte with the cult of St James is its foundation legend, contained in the *Codex Calixtinus*. Others, such as the legend of the Vakner, are mentioned in texts by pilgrims beginning during the classic age of pilgrimage.⁴⁰

The legends, especially those linked with religious events, were viewed as ‘true belief’ by local scholars, among others (Ramón y Ballesteros 1970). In contrast, there is also the widespread belief that these legends were created to assimilate pagan cults into Christianity and the cult of St James. This makes it possible to justify pilgrimage to the lands of Finisterre based on a strong tradition of earlier pilgrimages. However, the information which would support this has not been found or is not sufficiently illuminating.

To conclude this chapter, we will point out some gaps which have been identified in the bibliography on the Camino to Finisterre–Muxía. In the field of anthropology, there are only a few works which focus specifically on the processes of heritagization and on the stakeholders that promoted the boom in the Camino; one example is the book in which this chapter is included. However, there are still subjects which remain to be discussed or which must be explored in greater depth in order to better understand the phenomenon of pilgrimage to Finisterre and Muxía. Therefore, anthropologists should further explore the global meaning of this Camino, as well as investigating specific subjects. For example, it has not yet been explained how in a short period—fewer than ten years—we have gone from considering pilgrims a curiosity in the towns through which the Camino passes, and in some cases even as something negative, to viewing them as a solution or the only solution to improve the economy of a region with few other possibilities and as an alternative to the traditional economic system. We must also explore in greater depth the apparent contradictions in local policies when they talk about promoting the Camino and when they support economic policies which go against integrated development. This is the case with, for example, wind farms in areas along the route, involving not only certain business interests, but also the land owners—who see in them an economic solution for properties which were at one time essential

³⁹We might also mention some works of poetry such as *Near Finisterre*, by Canadian author John Reibetanz, published in 1996 after he did the *Camino*, ending in Finisterre and Muxía.

⁴⁰The Vakner is mentioned by Armenian pilgrim Martiros of Arzendjan, who did his pilgrimage in the late 15th century.

for maintaining the rural economy, but now lack this value— and the different economic policies have been unable to increase their value. There are also the local governments that view these projects as a way to activate the local economy and thus make it possible to continue maintaining a model of local government created in the 19th century, when Galicia was a land with a predominantly rural, scattered population. But now this paradigm is shifting.

Another issue about which little has been said is an anthropological analysis of the destruction of, or failure to conserve, an ethnographic heritage linked to the old routes, whether or not they were used by pilgrims. When they are not destroyed, these elements of our heritage are altered by the changes taking place in the agricultural landscape in recent years. These changes significantly alter the visual image of the landscape on which the inhabitants constructed cultural meanings. We consider these changes within a space constructed by society as part of a space-time dialectic, in which historical space is destroyed by the acceleration of time. This loss leads us to consider what it is that interests us: the actual heritage elements linked to the Caminos or the memory based on them.

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Part II
Local Impacts of the Pilgrimage
to Finisterre

Chapter 4

Heritagization of the Camino to Finisterre

Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

This chapter analyzes how heritage policies affect the Camino landscape and the daily lives of the people living in the towns and villages along the route.¹ I base my analysis on the idea that some aspects of the heritage regime (Bendix et al. 2012) have been naturalized by the various social agents involved in the Camino to Finisterre. By ‘naturalization’ I mean the process by which an idea is not questioned as it represents ‘how things should *naturally* be.’ Different levels of naturalization cause heritage conflicts; therefore, understanding these levels of naturalization will also help to analyze the conflicts concerning the heritagization of the Camino to Finisterre. In order to do so, I will first outline the ‘heritage regime’ social map.

Throughout the present chapter I will use two terms suggested in this book: ‘pilgrim landscape’ (Sánchez-Carretero, this chapter and Ballesteros-Arias, Chap. 6) and ‘caminonization’ (Margry Chap. 2, 8). The expression ‘pilgrim landscape,’ refers to the transformations in the landscape through which the pilgrimage route passes. It is also used to describe the transformations in terms of heritage management and tourist promotion that affect the sites along the Camino. Other authors, such as Campo (1998), Alderman (2002)—following Campo’s definition of ‘pilgrim landscape’—had a different meaning in mind, highlighting the relationship

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between people and place, in general, and therefore referring to pilgrim landscape metaphorically. The literal meaning of ‘pilgrim landscape’ is also related to the term *caminonization*. Margry describes this term as follows: ‘the worldwide growth of sacred or spiritual footpaths is primarily stimulated by the success of the Camino. This process, which I call ‘*caminonization*,’ encompasses a proliferation of spiritual paths which stimulates people all over the world to depart on foot for a spiritual journey or a reflective quest on the meaning of life’ (Margry, Chap. 8, this volume). I have expanded on the term *caminonization* to include the style linked to the Camino: its format, icons and even the pilgrims’ behavior on the Camino de Santiago have become a model which is now expected of pilgrimage footpaths worldwide and of the rest of the Caminos too, including the Finisterre-Muxía route. The Camino is, therefore, creating and reproducing a particular pilgrim landscape maintained by certain heritage logics.

The study of the naturalization of the heritage regime logic is an example of how the authorized heritage discourse, or AHD (Smith 2006), cannot be linked to a ‘top-bottom’ dichotomy. The practices and world view of a heritage regime is being naturalized by some of the actors involved in the Camino as the unquestionable way of being in the world (Alonso González 2013; Bendix et al. 2012). That is precisely what I mean when I use the term ‘naturalization’: the process by which a situation is not questioned and is assumed to have happened ‘naturally.’

4.1 The Heritage Regime of the Camino

In order to understand the heritage regime linked to the Camino Finisterre-Muxía, it is important to be familiar with three elements: firstly, the measures taken in order to protect the heritage of the Camino; secondly, the logic behind such regulations; and thirdly, the map of social actors that are involved in the heritagization of the Camino.

When analysing the heritage protection measures, I will include those that involve the Camino in general, even though some of them are not applied to the specific route to Finisterre-Muxía. This is because the heritage regime affects all the routes, and some conclusions can be drawn by looking at the legal status of the Camino in general. The Camino de Santiago has a long history of both national and supranational heritage policies. It was first officially recognized as a heritage element in 1962, during Franco dictatorship,² when the Camino Francés³ was

²For a detailed historic study of the revival of the Camino and the political uses during Franco’s dictatorship see Pack (2010). This article covers the period from 1879 to 1988. For a study of the uses of heritage during Franco’s dictatorship see Afinoguenova (2010).

³The term ‘French Camino’ might imply the part of the Camino located in France. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion, I use ‘Camino Francés’ in Spanish to refer to the Spanish part of the main route of the Camino that starts in France.



Fig. 4.1 Sign and milestone indicating the route. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

designated ‘conjunto histórico-artístico’ (historic-artistic heritage) by the regulation 2224/1962, September 5. In 1985, the Spanish National Heritage law automatically designated the Camino Francés a *Bien de Interés Cultural* (BIC), a typology of protection with restrictive regulations, included in the Spanish heritage register. Additionally, many sites along the route received the same status. At a supranational level, in 1987 the Camino was the first route to be declared a European Cultural Itinerary, as part of the ‘Cultural Routes’ program launched by the Council of Europe. According to the Council, this program seeks to demonstrate ‘how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared cultural heritage.’⁴ This was the starting point of the icon in the shape of a shell which currently marks the Camino (see Fig. 4.1). It was designed by Macua and García-Ramos after an international competition was held by the Council of Europe in order to waymark the Camino as a European Cultural Itinerary (MOPU 1989).⁵ To quote Pack, the opportunity ‘to Europeanize the conch shell emblem

⁴<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/routes>, accessed June 18, 2013.

⁵The priest of O Cebreiro, Elías Valiña Sampedro, was the person who started to mark the Camino with yellow arrows (Herrero 2008: 132). For a complete history of the Camino waymarks, see Harrison (2013). For a newspaper article on the topic see http://elpais.com/diario/2010/05/15/galicia/1273918702_850215.html, accessed June 18, 2013.

that the Franco government had placed on road signs; the new markers would mimic the nascent European flag, bearing a stylized yellow abstraction of a conch shell against a solid blue background' (Pack 2010: 366). In 1993 the Camino Francés was included on the UNESCO World Heritage list, and sections of the routes in France were added in 1999.

Various regional heritage legislations and policies have also been applied to the Caminos and these vary depending on the area the route passes through. In 1996 in Galicia, a regional law was passed specifically for the Camino. It included a series of steps to protect the Camino, the delimitation of the actual route being one of the first. The Xunta (Galician government) developed various measures regarding the protection of the Camino heritage; primarily the delimitation of the Caminos in Galician territory, which has not yet been finished.⁶ The delimitation of the Camino Francés in Galicia was approved in 2012⁷; the Camino del Norte (coastal and interior routes) was approved in 2013, and the Camino Inglés, in September 2014.⁸ Two measures were taken to protect the heritage of the Camino Francés: one consisted of keeping a strip of land 3–30 m wide alongside the Camino due to its 1985 heritage protection; and a damping zone that is related to the UNESCO protection. The Galician government recently published a guide giving a detailed description of what measures need to be taken (Xunta de Galicia 2012). However they have still to be fully implemented, showing that the conflict these rules arouse still needs to be evaluated. As to the specific case of the Camino to Finisterre-Muxía, this route still lacks an official delimitation, except for the section that goes through the municipality of Santiago de Compostela that was established in September 2013.⁹ The Cape of Finisterre also has a designation: it was included on the European Heritage List in 2007 and continues to be listed after having been reassessed in 2011.

Each designation focuses on different aspects, as argued by Schrire (2006) and Murray (2014): the Council of Europe aims to protect the route's intangible heritage; and the UNESCO designation of the Camino Francés attaches 'more weight to the tangible heritage of material related to places, structures and art along the Camino Francés' (Murray 2014: 25). As for the Cape Finisterre, the European Heritage List of the European Commission seeks 'to raise awareness of sites which have played a significant role in the history, culture and development of the European Union.'¹⁰

Even though the Council of Europe heritage policies for the Camino as a European Cultural Itinerary emphasizes intangible elements, protection measures

⁶For updates on the delimitations of the caminos see <http://cultura.xunta.es/es/caminos-santiago>.

⁷Regulation 227/2011, December 2 2011; Regulation 144/2012, June 29 2012; Regulation 247/2012, November 22, 2012 and Regulation 144/2012, June 29 2012 (<http://cultura.xunta.es/es/delimitacion-Camino-frances> accessed May 12, 2014).

⁸Regulation 110/2014, September 4 2014.

⁹Regulation 154/2013, September 5, 2013.

¹⁰http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/2014/20140314-label_en.htm accessed February 17, 2014.

actually rely on a architectural and materialist basis; they target the preservation and restoration of the monuments along the Camino, the walkability of the route, and, in the case of Galicia, the protection of structures linked to popular architecture, such as *hórreos* (traditional and monumental elevated stone granaries) or *cruceiros* (stone crosses).

These legal processes of heritage protection cannot be understood without looking at two intertwined forces and the social actors that implement them: market logic, which focuses on developing the Camino as an economic resource; and the logic of identity politics, which focuses on various elements depending on the timeframe. Obviously, for instance, the interest in promoting the Camino during Franco's dictatorship was different from current interests.

Regarding the third element, the map of social actors, I will concentrate on the actors from the 1990s to the present, such as politicians, Catholic Church representatives, associations, owners of businesses in the hospitality sector, and local residents, including pilgrims who decided to remain in Finisterre upon their arrival. As explained in the introduction, in the 20th century, the recuperation of the Caminos began as an initiative of the Associations of the Camino de Santiago and, later, various administrations contributed to the project. In 1993, the year of the Camino's inclusion on the World Heritage List and a 'holy year' or 'xacobeo',¹¹ the Government of Galicia initiated the 'Xacobeo' program. The Finisterre-Muxía Route was then included as one of the Caminos de Santiago (Vilar 2010). Between 1997 and 2004, the Galician Association of Friends of the Camino (AGACS) and the association Neria organized annual pilgrimages to Finisterra and Muxía. In 1992 the association Neria was founded to promote and coordinate rural development and it was linked to EU LEADER funds for the development of rural areas.¹² The main objective of Neria was to 'promote and coordinate rural development, improve life conditions and to help end rural depopulation.'¹³

In 1991, in order to promote the Camino, the Galician Government (Xunta) created the S.A. de Xestión do Plan Xacobeo (Management Society of the Xacobeo Plan), commonly known as 'Xacobeo.' Its goal is clearly explained on the Xacobeo webpage: '[Xacobeo] is a public company of the Xunta de Galicia (Galician Government), whose goals are the tourist and cultural promotion as well as the provision of services on the Ways of St. James. It was created in 1991 on the occasion of the 1993 Holy Year (Xacobeo 93), later integrating within the organization of the Galician Ministry of Culture and Tourism.'¹⁴

¹¹A Xacobeo, jacobeo or holy year is a jubilee year that occurs when July 25th, the day of St. James, falls on a Sunday. For more information on this topic, see Vilar, this volume.

¹²LEADER is an acronym in French for a series of European Union programs dedicated to the development of rural areas. It means 'Links between actions for the development of the rural economy.'

¹³www.neria.es/quienes-somos.aspx, accessed July 23, 2014. See also Asociación Neria (2011: 4).

¹⁴<http://institucional.xacobeo.es/en> accessed February 19, 2014.

4.2 Fieldwork in Vilaserio, Olveiroa and Finisterre

Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero are the anthropologists on the team and, for this part of the project, were in charge of the ethnography studies conducted on the Camino (Sánchez-Carretero 2012; Ballesteros-Arias and Sánchez-Carretero 2011). The ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in various stages. We first carried out an exploratory fieldtrip consisting of walking the Finisterre-Muxía Camino so as to choose the towns and villages in which to conduct participant observation and other techniques. At this point we walked all the Finisterre-Muxía related routes: Santiago-Finisterre; Santiago-Muxía and also that of Finisterre-Muxía route.

The second phase was the actual fieldwork in the selected places: Olveiroa, Vilaserío and Finisterre. The selection was based on size and pilgrim facilities. We wanted to conduct the fieldwork in small villages as well as medium size towns. According to these criteria, Vilaserío and Olveiroa were selected because they both have hostel facilities for pilgrims, they are commonly chosen by pilgrims to finish a stage or day of walking (see Fig. 1.1 in Chap. 1) and have a population of less than 100. We also chose Finisterre because it is one of the ending points of the Camino.¹⁵ During this phase, a variety of actors were included: institutional representatives, such as mayors, councilwomen and men, board members of various associations, Catholic Church representatives; owners of restaurants, bars and hotels as well as local residents, with or without a connection to the pilgrimage route. The third stage consisted in group discussion techniques in each of the locations concerning the two main themes of the project: their own ideas in relation to heritage and how the Camino affects the lives of these different actors.

The experience was different in all three places: in Finisterre, a town of almost 3,000 inhabitants, tourism has transformed the landscape in the last decades. Vilaserío and Olveiroa are small rural villages without a town hall of their own. Olveiroa, in the municipality of Dumbría, has a clear policy regarding tourism, heritage and development, whereas Vilaserío, in the municipality of Negreira, does not.

Olveiroa, Vilaserío and Finisterre went through a depopulation process similar to that of many other Galician towns and villages in the last few decades. Many inhabitants migrated to Northern Europe, particularly Switzerland, and also to large Spanish cities, mainly in the Basque Country, where a growing industry needed workers (Río Barja 2009).

¹⁵Due to time and resource constraints, we could not conduct long-term ethnographic fieldwork in Muxía, although we did interview with the mayor in relation to the Camino and carried out three exploratory visits.



Fig. 4.2 An aerial photograph of Vilaserío that decorates the bar in this village. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

4.2.1 *Vilaserío*

There are approximately twenty inhabited houses in Vilaserío. The villagers used to depend on dairy farming, but now only three households keep cows. Vilaserío has 66 inhabitants according to the 2014 municipal census.¹⁶ It belongs to the parish of San Pedro de Bugallido in the municipality of Negreira, region of Barcala, province of A Coruña. It is a small village but used to be larger. In Eugenio Carré Aldao's work on the area—conducted between 1928 and 1936—Vilaserío is mentioned as the village with the largest population (135) of the parish of San Pedro Bugallido and he also pointed out that the village had its own public school. Up until the 1950s, it hosted a fair the first Wednesday of each month (fieldnotes 11-4-2011; Carré Aldao 1928: 449–450) (Fig. 4.2).

The Finisterre-Muxía Camino passes through Vilaserío. It has a private hostel which opened in 2010 and a bar/restaurant. In addition the old school has been

¹⁶Data provided by the municipality of Negreira. The national census includes data for 2013: 68 people in Vilaserío (29 men and 39 women) and 220 inhabitants (95 men and 125 women) in the whole parish, <http://www.ine.es/nomen2>.

remodeled for pilgrims to sleep there. A village person receives a stipend from the local government to clean the school, as well as voluntary donations from pilgrims. Accommodation in the old school is free of charge. The school is not catalogued as an official pilgrim hostel because it doesn't have the facilities or the legal requirements that a public hostel needs. The hostel caretaker finds this liminal situation problematic for she would like more institutional support. Furthermore, the hostel is not liked by the owners of the private hostel and bar, because they see the other 'sleeping space' as unfair competition. A few years before the hostel opened, Vilar intuitively wrote about the future of Vilaserío and the need for a private hostel, while describing the conditions of the old school one as 'not the most appropriate conditions for a twenty-first century pilgrim, in fact they are almost Medieval. It occupies the old school and is just a place where pilgrims can lay out their sleeping bags and be under cover' (Vilar 2010: 53, my own translation).

4.2.2 *Olveiroa*

Olveiroa is a peculiar place on the Camino. It could be called a 'hostel village.' By that I mean a depopulated village whose center has been remodeled to locate a pilgrim hostel over various buildings. In this particular case, four village houses, including the old school, were bought by the municipality and restored with public funding (regional and European funds). Olveiroa pilgrim hostel opened in 2001, after the municipality restored four stone houses in the middle of the village. The village *hórreos* (granaries raised from the ground by pillars) have also been restored with light spots that lit up from below. The landmark in this transformation of Oliveiroa was the inauguration of the government-run pilgrim hostel. The idea of a 'hostel-village' was a municipal initiative and the local mayor, who is also an architect, controlled the esthetic and architectural decision-making processes, although the funding came from the Galician Government. A bar, a hotel-restaurant and a private hostel have also been built since the opening of the pilgrim hostel.

Prior to the renovation, the village center had been largely abandoned, as new modern houses were built in the 1970s and 1980s next to the main road. Therefore, one of the first impacts of the Camino on Olveiroa was the restoration of the old stone houses, which was, to quote the village mayor, 'the first step forward in valuing our heritage.'¹⁷

On a busy day in the middle of summer, Olveiroa can easily double its population, mainly due to the pilgrims. According to Olveiroa municipal census for 2013,

¹⁷Interview conducted by Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero with the mayor of Dumbria on February 7, 2011 (the project code is GR011).



Fig. 4.3 Public hostel in Olveiroa. The four remodeled hostel houses have blue windows and doors (see also Fig. 6.12). *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

the village has 114 inhabitants, although less than a hundred live there permanently; the whole parish, Santiago de Olveiroa, has a population of 140 (Fig. 4.3).¹⁸

4.2.3 *Finisterre*

The name Finisterre is applied to different places: the Cape of Finisterre, also simply known as ‘the Cape’; the lighthouse at the Cape; the actual town of Finisterre with its 3,000 inhabitants; and the municipality of Finisterre, which includes Finisterre town as well as other towns and has almost 5,000 inhabitants.¹⁹ When I

¹⁸See municipal census at the National Institute of Statistics, <http://www.ine.es/nomen2>. The figures provided by the municipal office vary a little: the number of inhabitants in 2013 is 130 in Olveiroa and 31 in Ponte Olveira (the total parish population is 161; this parish has only two villages, Olveiroa and Ponte Olveira) (personal communication with the secretary of the municipal office).

¹⁹The 2013 municipal census gives a figure of 4907 for the whole municipality and 2934 for the town itself (1504 men and 1430 women), <http://www.ine.es/nomen2>, accessed May 21, 2014.

mention Finisterre in this chapter, I refer to the town and the cape; otherwise, I will specify.

The social dynamics in Finisterre are different from those of the other two places, partly due to its size and tourist industry. In fact, the Cape is one of the most important tourist destinations in Galicia. Therefore, not only does the town and Cape receive pilgrims who arrive on foot or by bus, but also tourists, many of them day visitors. The increasing numbers of pilgrims over the last few years (see Parga-Dans, this volume) has changed the landscape of the town, with more businesses targeting them.

4.3 What Should Be Protected? Naturalization Processes and Heritage Discourses

In this section, I will concentrate on the narratives around the concept of heritage, heritage policies and heritagization processes along the Camino to Finisterre. The narratives on what various social actors in each location consider to be their heritage will allow me to analyze the underlying naturalizations that are taking place. I will concentrate on the discourse of the actors mentioned in the introduction: politicians, Catholic Church representatives, associations that have an institutional representation because they managed European funds, grassroots organizations, hotel and restaurant personnel, and other local residents, including pilgrims who decided to remain in Finisterre upon their arrival.

Regarding the heritage narratives linked to public institutions representatives, the main conclusion is that there is not one unifying discourse in relation to heritage and pilgrimage. For this part, councilmen and mayors were interviewed in each of the municipalities. The mayors of the three municipalities do not share a common strategy. The mayors of Finisterre and Negreira—the municipality Vilaserío belongs to—lack a heritage policy discourse. Both of them belong to the conservative party *partido popular*. While the mayor of Dumbría—the municipality where Olveiroa is located—has an elaborate narrative on the importance of heritage for the promotion of his municipality. The promotional work of Dumbría is concentrated along three lines, and two of them are related to heritage: the promotion of their cultural heritage through the promotion of the Camino de Santiago in their territory; and the promotion of their natural heritage through the promotion of the activities at the river Xallas. In addition, the municipal employment plan is linked to their heritage sites. The political strategy of the municipality is to promote cultural tourism as their most important economic strength (Sánchez-Carretero 2012: 149). The mayor of Dumbría, member of the socialist party, does not question that heritage is one of the main economic resources and therefore, the market logic linked to heritage is being naturalized and reproduced.

However, the narratives of the other two mayors do not follow the same rationale. The policies developed in the municipality of Negreira, run by a conservative

mayor from the Partido Popular, do not include any mention of heritage; whilst the mayor of Finisterre mentions heritage but only as ‘regulations that should be passed by the Xunta; for instance, the delimitation of the caminos. We need clear regulations so we can apply them to protect the old houses of our town’ (fieldnotes 20-7-2011). These two mayors regard the Camino as something that ‘happens to be there.’ Pablo Alonso González, in his dissertation about the Maragatería, a region crossed by the Camino, describes a similar situation: ‘the Mayor does not construct his discourse on the Camino as a metacultural reality, as a product for tourist consumption, or as heritage broadly. For him, as for most inhabitants of Maragatería, it is something that ‘happens to be there,’ and whose relevance has increased significantly in recent years’ (Alonso González 2013: 298).

This ‘happen to be there’ perspective is exemplified by the mayor of Negreira. His political program doesn’t include the Camino, or heritage; but he politely invited us to collaborate with him. ‘If you have suggestions on what to do about the Camino, just tell us. I’m sure you know a lot about it’ (fieldnotes 5-4-2012). In his discourse, there is a complete absence of both the term heritage and the idea to what this term refers to. This contrasts with the discourse of local residents, who do refer often to the *idea* of heritage, although not to the term per se.

The mayor of Muxía follows a similar pattern to Dumbría’s. He is also part of the socialist party. His political program for municipal policies includes an elaborate discourse on the importance of the Camino heritage. In addition, at the interview I conducted with this mayor, he asked politicians at the regional and national level for two important commitments: (1) more investment in the Camino, in terms of infrastructure, cleaning and maintenance of the Camino; and (2) improved coordination between the various administrations: municipal, regional, national and supranational. Along these lines he considers it important to improve the Camino waymarking. He explains that ‘...in the case of Muxía, it is more difficult because we have to indicate two directions. The pilgrim is the one who chooses. The route is a triangle. When pilgrims reach Dumbría, they have to choose between going to Fisterra or to Muxía’ (fieldnotes 3-5-2012).

Interviews with the respective mayors make it clear that the municipal policy regarding the Camino, tourism and heritage and, consequently, applying for regional, national and European grants, depend on personal initiatives. That is the case behind the application to the LEADER European funded program, linked to the mayor of Dumbría and the creation of the Asociación Nería. This organization obtained and managed various LEADER programs for their area, the Coast of Death.

On the contrary, the non-institutional actors lack an explicit heritage discourse—implicitly they do—but all of them have clear ideas about what are the most valuable aspects of their ‘culture.’ For instance, in Finisterre, the most commonly occurring aspects are: the landscape, the sea, the beaches, the actual name of Finisterre (‘a name is also heritage’²⁰; fieldnotes 15-6-2011), the sunset, the Holy

²⁰For more details on place names, heritage and namebranding strategies see Jiménez-Esquinas and Sánchez Carretero (forthcoming).

Christ of Finisterre, the Holy Week celebrations, San Guillerme, and the lighthouse. These elements are also repeated by institutional actors. For instance, at the mayor's office, the councilor for culture explained to us that their most important heritage is the landscape, *cruceiros*, the church of Santa María das Areas, the hermitage of San Guillerme, the holy stones and the chapel of Buen Suceso. According to a priest from Finisterre, important heritage elements of this town include the Parish church, the Hermitage of San Guillerme, the holy stones, the lighthouse, the Holy Week celebrations, Finisterre festivities—Virxen das Arenas, del Carmen and San Roque—, and ‘of course, the most important thing is our Christ of Fisterra. There are only three images like this one in Spain: Burgos, Ourense and Fisterra’ (fieldnotes 21-7-2011).²¹

In Finisterre, the most important difference between local perceptions of heritage when comparing the different sites is the lack of references to rural activities, including fishing. Whilst ‘working the land’ was a common reply in Vilaserío and Olveiroa, it did not, however, appear in Finisterre. In the former two villages, their landscape and the possibility of maintaining agricultural and farming activities were the most common responses. In a group discussion activity conducted in Vilaserío, we asked participants to select an element, or something that symbolizes a practice that they considered important for the village and that should be maintained. Most of the people selected elements related to the landscape, their water-rivers, springs, fountains—, dairy farms, and ‘working the land (Fig. 4.4):²²

Finally, I would like to consider another group of people who live on the Camino and who have different perspectives to those presented up till now. In Finisterre's low season, they stand out among the Fisterrians; they are pilgrims who upon their arrival decide to remain in Finisterre: owners of bars, hostels, or restaurants; people who work part of the year in their countries of origin and return each year to Finisterre; and many others. In one of the bar/restaurants in the middle of Finisterre owned by a Fisterrian²³ and a 52 year-old German former pilgrim, whom we will call Anna,²⁴ we organized a group discussion among seven people who decided to stay in Finisterre upon ending their Camino. Anna has lived in Finisterre since 2007, when she finished her pilgrimage, and decided to stay. She gave a new business direction to her partner's bar, including a wide variety of vegetarian dishes, German food, ‘hippie style’ clothes and jewelry. The group was asked to discuss two topics:

²¹Another peculiar element that was mentioned by one person is *futbolín* (table football), invented by Alejandro Finisterre, pseudonym of Alexandre Campos Ramírez, poet, inventor and publisher from Finisterre, who died in 2007, and who was according to a newsletter from Finisterre ‘probably the most important character in our history’ (KMO 2010: 9).

²²For a complete description of the group discussion and the photographs that were selected by the participants for the activity see Sánchez-Carretero and Ballesteros-Arias (2014). This visual book was prepared as a report for stakeholders as it included heritage policy recommendations made by residents from Vilaserío.

²³Fisterrian refers to those who are born in Finisterre.

²⁴As explained in Chap. 1, we are using pseudonyms for the people who collaborated during fieldwork, except for those who explicitly asked for the opposite.

Fig. 4.4 María selected 'water' as their most important heritage element.
Source Pastor Fábrega-Álvarez



perception of heritage and the effects of pilgrimage on local inhabitants. Among the aspects of Finisterre that are most valued there are big differences with the rest of the interviews we did in Finisterre. In this group, the term 'energy' is used repeatedly in relation to Finisterre. When asked about the heritage of the site, about what they consider to be the most valuable aspects of the place, the following expressions were used: 'the energy of the Cape, the hills' (Emilia); 'the energy of the site,' 'the lack of stress,' 'the beaches,' 'the possibility to start over again,' 'food' (everybody laughs).

All of them agreed that the local population do not value what they have, particularly nature, 'Greenpeace is needed here!,' one of them exclaims and the discussion turned to the dark side of Finisterre, its inhabitants and the many complaints that these former pilgrims have about, what they perceive as the greediness of the locals, and the treatment they receive by them: 'Money, money, money...it kills the good energy,' 'there's garbage everywhere, and they [Fisterrans] mistreat animals, and dolphins!,' 'a horse was killed because of envy.'

A second group discussion with another five ex-pilgrims was organized and the results were similar. In the second group, the heritage elements that were mentioned include: the sea, the landscape, and the way of life.²⁵

In addition to this broad description of heritage elements, I have included some information specific to some particularly relevant elements in terms of the

²⁵Regarding the expression 'way of life,' the person who was talking explained that 'here, people live the moment, without thinking about the future. In Switzerland, we live in the future or in the past, but skip the present' (group discussion 2, 20-7-2011).

conflicts with pilgrims and/or in terms of the naturalization processes that I will be mentioning in the following sections. The goal of these brief accounts is to present a series of snapshots of the daily-life of these sites.

4.3.1 From Homeless to Pilgrims: Pilgrims as Heritage

The current pilgrim landscape that reflects and, at the same time, creates the Camino to Finisterre/Muxía has an important element: the actual pilgrims. Without them, the pilgrim landscape would not exist. Even though the image of the pilgrim has a long history in written sources, it has been constructed just recently among the local population. Puri, the pilgrim hostel keeper in Olveiroa, describes the changes in this way: ‘The first pilgrims started to arrive around twenty years ago. People were not used to it and they used to say ‘Look, here comes the bogeyman!’ or ‘that person must be poor or homeless,’ but they were pilgrims... although they were called homeless. The locals were afraid of them’ (fieldnotes 20-10-2010). The hostel keeper in Finisterre also mentions the story of the bogeyman related to pilgrims in a time prior to the wave of pilgrims that started in the late 1990s. The keeper is in her early forties and remembers how, when she was a child, she was told stories of the bogeyman who appeared with the pilgrims: Imagine a man with long and heavy beard... instead of bogeymen, we have pilgrims’ (fieldnotes 19-7-2011).

Both of these testimonies reflect the changing nature of the images associated with pilgrims. Puri also explains that, in the past, they did not dress as today and that nowadays many pilgrims dress ‘as hikers, as if they just came out of a sports-store²⁶’

Pilgrimage itself is also considered by some as heritage: ‘we should not forget that pilgrims are also part of our culture’ (Hostel keeper in Finisterre, fieldnotes 19-7-2011). I only heard this on a couple of occasions, however. The other time was in Vilaserío, when the owner of the private hostel and newly remodeled restaurant, referred to pilgrimage as an important part of their heritage (Fig. 4.5).

4.3.2 Hospitality as Heritage: From Hospitality to Business

The rhetoric of hospitality versus business is a common narrative element in the three locations. Finisterre’s pilgrim hostel keeper stresses the idea of hospitality as the key identity factor in the Camino: ‘Solidarity and hospitality in the 1990s was enormous, but it is changing... The huge number of pilgrims walking the Camino has affected hospitality... now we hardly talk to pilgrims because there are so many of them. I continue seeing hospitality as it was amongst our elders. Now business is part of daily life... but

²⁶These hygienic and normative customs associated to pilgrims can be called ‘Decathlonization’ of pilgrimage. For a detailed study of the material culture associated to pilgrimage, see Sánchez-Carretero and Ballesteros-Arias (2010) that includes the results of an experiment in which they asked their collaborators to empty their backpacks and explain the stories linked to each object.



Fig. 4.5 The owner of the hostel and restaurant in Vilaserío selected pilgrimage as one of their most important heritage elements. *Source* Pastor Fábrega-Álvarez

we try not to lose hospitality in the hostel... hospitality makes the Camino and you cannot pay for it... welcoming pilgrims with a smile; we have a box for tips which are used to benefit other pilgrims. Small details make hospitality. Other private hostels have similar ideas, but hospitality is becoming less and less common' (fieldnotes 19-7-2011). In the narrative about what pilgrimage used to be, hospitality appears as the key element that needs to be preserved, and therefore is part of the Camino's heritage.

4.3.3 *The End of the World as Heritage*

The idea of 'the end of the world' is also commonly mentioned in Fisterra in relation to what is unique about their town. 'A legacy that we should take care of,' as Sergio, the owner of a famous bar among pilgrims, says. It was mainly in Finisterre that we found narratives about the end of the world linked to pre-Christian pilgrimages. This is how a Finisterre resident explains the relationship with Christianity: 'Before Christianity, the Milky Way or 'way of the stars' already existed' (Angel, 18-7-2011). The president of the *Asociación Fisterra Verdadero Fin do Camiño* (Association Finisterre the True End of the Camino) clearly explains that the main goal of their group was to claim that the Camino to Finisterre 'is not a prolongation. It is indeed the origin and end of the Camino' (Audio recording GR032, 22-7-2011). As explained in the introduction, the association was dissolved in late 2011, in part because they were accused of having a negative attitude towards Muxía.

4.4 On Related Concepts and Links

In this section, I will describe a series of concepts that have been coupled up by local residents along the Camino to Finisterre, resulting in three pairs. The first pair of concepts is *milking* and *heritage*. It is linked to criticisms concerning heritage policies that tend to fossilize traditional culture in order to promote tourism. Camila del Mármol found a similar phenomenon during her research into the heritagization processes in the Pyrenees: 'criticism on behalf of many informants—specially from the elderly who never migrated and suffered the consequences of the closure of dairy farms or the end of subsistence agriculture—is aimed at celebrating the past, leaving aside the search for solutions [for those activities] in the present' (Del Mármol 2012: 240). Heritage-related projects are not considered to meet current needs, both in the case analyzed by Del Mármol and in the case of the Camino to Finisterre.

The second pair of concepts is the *sinking of the Prestige* and *constructing prestige*. Another significant event for Finisterre was the sinking of the Prestige oil tanker, which contaminated the sea and coastal area of the Costa da Morte, in November 2002. According to local inhabitants' narratives, there is a direct relation between the disaster of the Prestige and the increase in tourism and pilgrimage to the area. The standard narrative is that the Prestige made the area more visible and well-known, encouraging many tourists and pilgrims to visit the Coast of Death.

The third pair of concepts is *art* and *pilgrim landscape*. Among the group of pilgrims who remain in Finisterre, one particular case deserves special attention due to the impact it had on the Finisterre landscape. From 2009 to 2012, a French artist lived in a concrete transmission tower (2 × 2 m) which stood at the bottom of the road that climbs up to the lighthouse, and painted its walls with religious images (see Fig. 4.6).



Fig. 4.6 Transmission tower in Finisterre occupied by a French painter from 2009 to 2012. Source Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

This pilgrim remained silent for over a year. He was called ‘the hermit’ and was helped by Fisterrans, who fed him. In 2011, Paula and I were invited to have dinner at his four square meter transmission tower: ‘The walls are overwhelmingly full of pieces of paper with written notes and drawings. A wooden structure covered by a green piece of plastic, improvises a leaky ceiling to make the 7 meter high tower more habitable and thus avoiding the chimney effect of the disproportionate structure. There are no windows in the tower and the only light comes from the main—and only—entrance, where I sit, trying to breathe deeply due to my allergy to dogs. Philippe and his partner Lynn share the tower with Bobby, their dog. In the right-hand corner, there is a shelf/table where they prepare dinner using a tuna-can-without-tuna full of methylated spirit. Philippe had already prepared an herbal tea for us—‘very good for your lungs, Cristina.’ The hospitality received at the tower reached the highest levels of hospitality we encountered in our fieldwork: pasta soup to heat our bodies, bread to give us strength, and herbal tea to calm my lungs. Surrounding the tower, Philippe has made a garden which he uses to grow medicinal herbs for himself and for the pilgrims ‘who cannot pay for a pharmacist’ (fieldnotes 20-7-2011).

Philippe remained in Finisterre, on and off, until 2013. In 2014, the entrances to the tower had been walled off with red bricks. According to Philippe, the Catholic Church consciously rejects this Camino: ‘The church doesn’t want Finisterre to be the end of the Camino’ (Audiorecording GR033, 20-7-2011). Conspiracy theories explain what is seen as a plot against Finisterre as the true end of the Camino. For those who defend conspiracy theories, the Catholic Church is considered to be part of the hegemonic power that is minimizing Finisterre. The tensions with the Catholic Church directly brings me to the following section, which will be dedicated to conflicts and social fractures.

4.5 On Conflicts, Protection, Destruction and Materiality

What remains of this chapter ties up the main themes concerning heritage policies on the Camino with the conflicts present in the narratives about heritage. They focus on various levels of conflict around heritage and the Camino. Heritage and pilgrimage may not only be regarded as an economic resource but also as a current resource for conflict, as sustained by Poria and Ashworth (2009). According to anthropologist Luis Silva ‘the making of heritage may give rise to two opposing impacts simultaneously—increased social cohesion and place pride, on the one hand, and envy and competition (and, thus, social atomization), on the other hand—and residents are totally cognizant of the tension between the two’ (Silva 2013: 14). The relation between host and guests has been analyzed for more than three decades in the anthropology of tourism (Urry 1990; Cohen 1979), but the effects of tourism and pilgrimage on host-host relations has not been equally analyzed (Silva 2013: 13). In Finisterre, the troubled relationship among neighbors and the fights among hostel owners, even at the bus stop, competing for clients, have reached media coverage in the *Voz de Galicia* regional newspaper. Graham, Ashworth and

Tunbridge (2000, 134–138) use what they called ‘neighbor’s dilemma’ to illustrate the complex nature and the frequent failure of the relationship between the costs of heritage investment and its return (quoted after Silva 2013: 14).

4.5.1 Protection as Destruction: ‘Don’t protect me, leave me alone!’

Surprisingly enough, the idea that the protection of the Camino is causing its destruction came up in the different locations where we conducted ethnography. Figure 4.7 shows a section of the Camino in Dumbría. It exemplifies the complaints presented by The Galician Friends of the Camino de Santiago Association (AGACS), to protest against the widening of the trails with gravel so as to accommodate motorized vehicles and criticized the work carried out by the state-owned company Tragsa in 2010, which involved replacing the natural surface with gravel.

As explored by Vilar in Chap. 3, the eagerness to turn the Camino into heritage translates into an increase in activities involving the route on behalf of various organizations and bodies. The destructive power of these actions has been analyzed by Alonso González in relation to Maragatería and the different ontologies at work in relation to heritage (Alonso González 2013: 297).



Fig. 4.7 Work being done by the state-owned company Tragsa in 2010 on the section of the Camino to Finisterre that passes through Dumbría. *Source* Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

The second conflict is related to the businesses along the route. Firstly, the recurrent clash between the hospitality sector and economic profit was mentioned in many of the local residents' narratives. Various government-funded hostel keepers told us that they stopped giving meals to avoid competing with local businesses: both in Olveiroa and in Finisterre the *hospitaleras* gave meals when they started working at the hostel and after a while, they stopped doing it (fieldnotes 20-10-2010 for Olveiroa and 11-4-2011 for Finisterre).

Secondly, stories of illegal hostels were described as piracy and poaching. The owner of a coffee bar in Finisterre, born in 1961, explains how 'we are not prepared for this kind of tourism, there is a lot of poaching. Here there are people who have apartments and put pilgrims in them... There is this woman who has two apartments and she sits every day in front of the city hall to catch pilgrims. For me, it is a privilege to receive people from all over the world; the fact is that there is a huge black economy (...). Now the town is full of restaurants, everybody is competing; people go to the bus stop and it's a shame; some people are shameless. They register their houses as 'holiday apartments' and then they take pilgrims every night'²⁷ (fieldnotes 15-6-2011). Taxi drivers are also angry in Finisterre, because 'there is this German who has a van and takes pilgrims and tourists to the lighthouse' (fieldnotes 15-6-2011).

The poaching metaphor gives an idea of the 'hunt' for tourists and pilgrims. The owner of a restaurant, a hotel and a pilgrim hostel, explains the situation as follows: 'There is a lot of unfair competition between bars and restaurants... There could be 10 people working here, but only three of us are because of the illegal businesses. The system itself is killing us. They should sit down to discuss and analyze this. I used to have nine employees four, five years ago. But now, everywhere, without permits, you can get grilled food, seafood, or a steak with potatoes' (fieldnotes 15-6-2011).

The expression 'piso-patera' (illegal apartment) is frequently used when talking about this issue. A *patera* is a small boat used by immigrants to illegally cross the strait of Gibraltar. They become overcrowded and the double reference to illegality and overpopulation are both included in the expression 'piso-patera.' Beatriz, keeper of the government-run hostel in Finisterre used this expression repeatedly to emphasize how 'business owners are desperate because of the pisos-patera' (fieldnotes 19-7-2011).

The last conflict I am about to describe is related to fires and the act of burning clothes as a closure ritual. Paula and José, the owners of a pilgrim hostel in Finisterre, consider that forbidding fires at the Cape is one of the most important measures for heritage protection: 'Clothes should stop being burned. Many people come here just to make a big fire; a *gran Cremá*' (fieldnotes 21-7-2011). One person, who explicitly asked me not to identify him although he gave me permission to include his words, described the conflict as follows: 'There is something I don't like about pilgrims: fire. Last year I was left alone in the middle of the fire... surrounded by fire, and there was a gas tank next to me... I was supposed to remain here but I was left alone... it was a Tuesday afternoon and the following

²⁷To be accredited as a 'casa vacacional' is less costly than having a hostel. In addition, it requires less safety and facility regulations. It is illegal to rent out a 'casa vacacional' as a hostel, to different hosts.



Fig. 4.8 Mast at the Cape with a painted sign saying ‘No Fire’ and an official sign that says ‘No objects on the mast.’ *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

day another fire was lit... and everything was on fire and here vegetation takes a long time to grow... According to some people, it is a new tradition, like the clothes hanging ...they stink! Socks and trousers really stink !’ (Figs. 4.8 and 4.9).

However, fire rituals are one of the most well-known practices to be performed in Finisterre. Fire is part of the caminonization of this route and it is also part of ‘how a pilgrim should behave.’ Although immaterial, fire is also part of the materiality of the Camino to Finisterre. My argument is that there is a materiality linked to the Camino: hostels, bars, heritagization practices (remodeling of *hórreos*, chapels, houses), the actual pilgrims and the ex-pilgrims who are now residents. That materiality is creating a pilgrim landscape, or caminonization, that is perceived differently by different social actors. The transforming process of this landscape has been naturalized as an unquestioned authorized heritage discourse (Smith 2006). Discussion about the alternative ways in which pilgrims act in the world, or alternative pilgrim landscapes, did arise; but the fact that there is a pilgrim landscape shaping and creating contemporary Galicia was not rejected or questioned by any of our informants. The naturalization of this pilgrim landscape is linked to pilgrimage as a economic resource in one of the poorest areas in Galicia.

Scarcity of resources is of the fundamental basis for the inhabitants who consider their rural landscape their more valuable heritage. In fact, the same characteristics that made people migrate in previous decades—for instance,

Fig. 4.9 Detail of Fig. 4.8.
Source Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero



inaccessibility—is what preserved their landscape and rural life (Aguilar 2003; Herrero 2005). Now it has turned into a commodity to be consumed by pilgrims and tourists. As explored by Del Mármol in the Pyrenees, ‘The reference to the past is related to attempts to promote an economic model geared to tourism and is an alternative that has been supported in broader levels exceeding the territory in question’ (Del Mármol 2012: 239). This economic model includes heritage regimes as the *modus operandi* to promote tourism. Margry’s conclusions from the questionnaires to pilgrims are clear regarding heritage ‘this route has also come under the influence of governmental and supra-nation state actors, and the pressure of new heritage and leisure regimes’ (Margry, Chap. 8, this volumen). Bell and Dale point out the existence of a pilgrim market since the eleventh century onwards and how the prosperity of certain towns along the Camino Francés are linked to this (Bell and Dale 2011). As Pack looked into, the promotion of pilgrimage and tourism in Santiago was consolidated in the nineteenth century after the ‘allegedly accreditation of the remains of St. James by the pope Leo XIII in 1884’: ‘The conflation of pilgrim and tourist was considered not a problematic mixture of sacred and profane but rather proof of a renewed dynamism at this historic seat of Spanish Catholicism. Numbers benefited business and aggrandized the archdiocese, though commerce and consumption did not yet register on the scale experienced at pilgrimage centers such as Lourdes’ (Pack 2010: 349–350).

4.6 Concluding Remarks: ‘Working the Land Is also Our Heritage’

When comparing regional and municipal heritage policies with the idea that other local actors have about their heritage, a significant gap can be observed. This disparity has two aspects. The first one has already been explored: some politicians construct a sophisticated discourse on heritage in relation to the Camino

de Santiago; while this use of heritage contrasts with the lack of a term to name it at a local level. The second aspect is related to the concept of heritage itself. Politicians and heritage managers have a limited concept of what heritage is, and they dedicate their heritage policies and funding to the restoration of buildings and the maintenance of the route itself. Local inhabitants, however, see more possibilities, adding cultural practices such as festivals and religious celebrations; they also include other elements of heritage that are more difficult to catalogue, such as 'continuing to work the land,' 'the rural landscape,' or 'our local water supplies.'

Institutional discourse and practice have naturalized the notion of heritage as objects; this naturalization process, however, has not permeated the discourse of the Olveiroa, Finisterre and Vilaserio inhabitants, who have a more holistic vision, adding not only buildings such as *hórreos* or houses, but also practices such as festivals, as well as the most frequent comment in Vilaserío and Olveiroa: working the land.

The possibility of having an agricultural economic model as 'their heritage' is linked to the second naturalization process: the naturalization of the idea that the only way heritage can be a resource is via tourism. Aguilar et al. (2003) studied the impact of the LEADER program in encouraging tourism in Spanish rural areas and used the expression 'tourist monoculture' to refer to the change from agricultural monoculture to the promotion of rural areas exclusively via tourism.

My line of reasoning follows the idea that heritage can also be 'to keep on working the land or to keep farming.' Of course, this idea is rooted in nostalgia for a past that no longer exists (Abrahams 1994: 79; Jameson 1989); nostalgia for a rural past felt by local residents and outsiders; nostalgia seen from today's neo-rurality with blurred boundaries, thus making the very concept of rurality questionable. However, in these areas (Dumbría and Negreira) the primary sector is still the main source of income (Río Barja 2009). Behind the phrase 'our heritage is to keep on working the land' lies the fact that heritage is also a social practice. These people do not want to be musealized as bearers of traditional knowledge. They want to stress the fact that their heritage (in this case, agricultural work) can also involve an economic benefit by developing the primary sector, mainly through milk-derived products (provided that such work can be further developed). Or, at least, by developing a daily life environment that involves economic benefit for subsistence. Beyond the question of whether or not this is possible, I want to emphasize the non-naturalized link between heritage and tourism made by these informants. However, informants belonging to the field of municipal and regional politics reproduced the naturalization process that considers heritage as a resource exclusive to tourism. As explored above, those who do not use the term 'heritage,' and are not part of the authorized heritage discourse, do not reproduce this naturalization. Therefore, a plausible explanation could be that the heritage regime and its institutionalization negate certain options; for instance, that heritage as a resource can help develop the primary sector. I do not aim to criticize the consequential links between tourism and heritage, but rather the naturalization process that considers the touristic agency to be the only viable alternative to make heritage an economic resource.

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Chapter 5

Socio-Economic Impacts of the Camino to Finisterre

Eva Parga-Dans

5.1 Introduction

The project *Procesos de Patrimonialización no Camiño de Santiago: Tramo Santiago-Fisterra-Muxía* (Heritagization Processes on the Camino de Santiago: The Santiago-Finisterre-Muxía Section) included a study of the socio-economic impact of these processes on local communities, an analysis that is approached from a sociological perspective. The incorporation of this sociological approach to the object of study contributed to the interdisciplinary focus of the project.

The nature and complexity of scientific, technological and social problems often mean that interdisciplinary solutions are required. The possibility of integrating various methodologies, sources of information, data, techniques, teams, etc. contributes to developing our basic understanding of various problems and their solutions. The coordination of various different academic disciplines is therefore becoming increasingly common with the aim of furthering knowledge (Jacobs and Frickel 2009; Braun and Schubert 2003).

Specifically, studies on heritage are a good example of this trend, becoming the object of study not just in fields related to history, art, architecture and archaeology, but also for sociologists, anthropologists, geographers, ethnographers, economists, etc. Exploring interdisciplinary approaches and methods in the field of heritage can be a useful tool for understanding, identifying and analyzing the consequences of heritagization processes and to interpret these complex social phenomena.

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An analysis was conducted from a sociological perspective on the socio-economic impact that the phenomenon of pilgrimage is having on the local communities of the Camino to Finisterre, as a result of a number of dynamic processes through which certain cultural and heritage-related practices are evaluated; this is what is understood by heritagization in this project. Understanding these phenomena, their value and the effects they have on local communities expands our knowledge of the fundamentals of one of the most powerful industries in our country: culture (Rausell and Marco 2011). The socio-economic impact of heritagization processes on the Camino to Finisterre is therefore closely related to the value, in the broadest sense of the word, which is generated by heritage in the territory.

5.2 Background and Rationale of the Study

In general terms, cultural industries are activities that promote culture and ‘cultural products,’ defined as “nonmaterial’ goods directed at a public of consumers, for whom they generally serve an esthetic or expressive, rather than a clearly utilitarian function’ (Hirsch 1972: 641). The growing interest in this object of study leads to the formulation of new research questions and to the advent of a culture-and-heritage-orientated critical perspective (Prats 2005).

The rising importance of the heritage phenomenon is explained by factors relating to the growth of cultural demand and the creation of a prosperous and dynamic industry that generates revenue and employment (Baumol and Bowen 1965; Thorsby 2001; Frey 2000; Towse 2003; Goodwin 2006; Greffe 1990; Cooke and Lazzarotti 2008). The cultural industry is on the agenda as an alternative to the traditional sectors in crisis and as a producer of social content. These activities emerge in a closer association with the territory, they are more difficult to relocate, they contribute to creating learning communities that favor innovation and they play an increasingly important role in employment and value creation (Florida 2005).

Spain is among the world’s foremost exporters and importers of cultural assets (Rausell and Marco 2011: 84). According to figures of the *Anuario de Estadísticas Culturales* (the ‘Cultural Statistics Yearbook’), 488,700 people were employed in the cultural industry in 2011; that is, activities related to cultural assets, cultural tourism, books and periodicals, heritage, museums, visual arts, performing arts and music, and audiovisual activities (*Anuario de Estadísticas Culturales* 2012: 24, 31). These figures represent 2.7 % of total employment in Spain in 2011, a figure that has been growing since 2000 when it was 2.6 %. The cultural industry contributed 2.8 % to GDP in 2009, a figure that fell from 3.1 % in 2000. But the strategic importance of the cultural sector is in the indirect employment it generates, since the supply of such services revitalizes other industries (from agriculture and fisheries to other related services). Cultural activity is therefore viewed as a potential source of wealth and social well-being, as long as it meets sustainability objectives in relation to the territory and the local population.

In this project, a method is designed to collect microdata that provide information on social and economic implications depending on the heritage and heritagization processes. Specifically, the study centers on the phenomenon of pilgrimage and its effect on local communities. Due to the absence of data sources, the field-work focuses on collecting information on the number and profile of pilgrims (as an indicator of the demand for heritage) and the number and profile of establishments existing on the Camino Santiago-Finisterre route and in the population center of Finisterre (as an indicator of the heritage-related supply).

The main results of this work demonstrate a growing number of pilgrims on this section of the Camino, which has been modifying the productive system of these local communities, where an increase in the tertiarization of their activity has been recorded, primarily geared towards services related to the phenomenon of pilgrimage. The results also show that this productive activity is creating employment for families who live in local population centers and revitalizing other activities providing goods and services.

Through this work the ‘goodness’ of the service/cultural productive transformation process was quantified. However, it will be necessary to deepen the impact and sustainability of these processes in light of the ethnographic results, contributing to this academic debate.

5.3 Methods

5.3.1 *Research Design*

As explained above, this project aims to analyze heritagization processes from a holistic perspective. The use of various disciplines (history, archaeology, ethnography, anthropology and sociology) has contributed to the triangulation of various methods and techniques, providing a variety of perspectives and sources of information for the sociological study.

Triangulation is defined generically as the combining of methodologies for the study of a single phenomenon (Denzin 1978). Applying more than one method in the research process, the convergence between the various methods validates and ensures the reliability of the results, providing a more complete, comprehensive and contextual picture of them (Jick 1979; Eisenhardt 1989; Guion et al. 2011; Denzin and Norman 2012).

The effectiveness of triangulation is based on the premise that the weaknesses of each individual method are offset by the use of different methods (Jick 1979). Using various different disciplines and methodologies to study a single phenomenon adds consistency and convergence to the results (Eisenhardt 1989; Jick 1979).

Specifically, the sociological research conducted on the Camino to Finisterre was a collaborative project between various disciplines and involved various methods, which made the results robust and led to a better understanding of the implications of the phenomenon, while favoring the application of an interdisciplinary method for the analysis of these processes.

Table 5.1 Work plan for the study on the socio-economic impact of heritagization processes on the Camino to Finisterre

Discipline	Objective	Method/technique	Activity/results
Sociology	Identification of the literature on the object of study	Study of secondary sources	Trawling of data sources Archival data collection Interviews with experts
Sociology and Anthropology	Identification of the study's target population	Creation of an identification map (demand/supply)	Consultation of local agents Production of a roadmap
Sociology and Anthropology	Collection of information on the context	Qualitative interviews	Interview script design Personal interviews with experts on the subject Conducting personal interviews with different local agents
Sociology	Creation of a database on the supply of pilgrim services	Quantitative survey	Questionnaire design 60 personal interviews Cleansing and debugging database Analysis of results

5.3.1.1 Data Collection and Analysis

As explained in the previous section, the data collection centered on documenting the phenomenon of pilgrimage and its effect on the local communities through a dual strategy. First, information was trawled on the number and profile of pilgrims, as an indicator of the demand for heritage, and second, the volume and profile of establishments existing on the route of the Camino Santiago-Finisterre and the population center of Finisterre were analyzed, as an indicator of the heritage-related supply.

The data collection stage took place in 2011, recording information for the previous years. The information-recording strategy comprised a combination of different methods and activities. Table 5.1 sets out the study plan that was followed.

The tasks were performed successively, following the order presented below.

5.3.1.2 Study of Secondary Sources

To do this, previous studies related to the object of study were found and compiled. Various studies were incorporated into this analysis, including several publications on the profile of the pilgrims and on the supply of accommodation (conducted by the Camino de Santiago Observatory), and the official statistics of the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim's Office.

5.3.1.3 Identification of the Study's Target Population

Having established the context, and because there are no previous studies that meet the objectives of this research, an identification map was created on the target population for the study: volume and profile of pilgrimage and establishments offering services related to the phenomenon of pilgrimage on the Santiago-Finisterre route and in the population center of Finisterre.

The number and profile of the pilgrims on the Santiago-Finisterre route was identified through a study of the database of the *Fisterranas* issued (certificates for walkers who have completed the route), maintained at the Finisterre Municipal Shelter. Through this resource, the number of pilgrims who arrived in Finisterre from 1998 to the present day was counted. This data was used in the study of the influx of pilgrims, covering a wide time span (over a decade) and also including information for the three Holy or Jacobean years (1999, 2004 and 2010). Furthermore, this database also includes information on the place of origin of the pilgrims and disaggregated temporal information in relation to the month of arrival in Finisterre, which enables the seasonality of the pilgrimage to be studied.

Equally, a phase was carried out to identify which public and private establishments offered services in 2010 aimed at pilgrims or used by them. The establishments were categorized into the following types: establishments located on the route itself and those located in the population center of Finisterre.

- Establishments located on the route. For this task, all the establishments located on the Camino Santiago-Finisterre section of the route in 2010 were documented. This itinerary includes Quintáns, Portela, Lombao, Aguapesada, Trasmonte, Ponte Maceira, Negreira, Camiño Real, A Pena, Vilaserío, Lamelas, A Picota, Ponte Olveira, Olveiroa, Logoso, Hospital, Cee, Corcubión, Estorde, Sardiñeiro, Langosteira and Finisterre. On this trail public and private establishments were identified: *mesones* (traditional-style restaurants), bars, supermarkets, restaurants, tobacconists, clubs, hotels, hostels, guest houses and pilgrim shelters. A total of 42 establishments were documented. The cases identified in this list were taken as a basic unit of analysis and became part of the target population for the study during the next phase: the survey.
- Establishments located in the population center of Finisterre. The ethnographic work revealed that the population center of Finisterre is particularly important for pilgrims. Finisterre is considered, by the majority of pilgrims, the ending point of this route, which is why people who make the pilgrimage often stay in this town and do some kind of activity that requires accommodation, restaurant, food, shopping services, etc. This situation makes this context slightly different, so there is good reason to analyze its supply of services separately. However, since we are dealing with a population center which had 4995 recorded inhabitants in 2010, the number of establishments offering services increases considerably, with 114 identified. In this context it was decided that the methodological criteria for the analysis of the supply of establishments would be modified,

taking only a selection of the target establishments for the study. The selection criteria were that the services offered by these establishments should be aimed at pilgrims, or that pilgrims accounted for a significant proportion of the demand for the services offered by these establishments. In other words, the influx of pilgrims had an impact on the turnover of these establishments. The establishments that made up the list, and that were subsequently surveyed, were selected through an ethnographic fieldwork phase that identified the types of establishment where pilgrims account for a significant proportion of demand for their services, a situation that in turn generates a direct impact on the revitalization of these establishments, as the analysis of the data obtained demonstrates. The selection included:

- Accommodation services (shelters, hotels, guest houses, etc.).
- Restaurant services (bars, cafés, mesones, restaurants, etc.).
- Food services (supermarkets, bakeries, sweet shops, etc.).
- Communication and souvenir services (Internet, tobacconists, gift shops, general stores, galleries, kiosks, etc.).

Finally, the list of establishments related to the supply of services for pilgrims was made up of a total of 63 cases.

5.3.1.4 Semi-structured Interviews

In parallel, contextual information was collected by conducting and participating in various interviews with local agents (administrators, business owners, employees, businesses) and pilgrims to understand the implications of the phenomenon of pilgrimage.

5.3.1.5 Survey of Establishments

Later, a survey of the target establishments for the study was designed and implemented. The survey technique was selected as a system for collecting information that would subsequently enable its description and analysis given the absence of data sources that meet the objectives of this study.

The survey was designed on the basis of two criteria: First, the questions included in the questionnaire had to be in line with the project objectives. And second, the questionnaire encompassed a number of dimensions or variables common to the study conducted by the Camino de Santiago Observatory entitled *Informe sobre el Camiño de Fisterra-Muxía. Oferta de aloxamento* (2007) (Report on the Camino to Finisterre-Muxía. Supply of accommodation), enabling the data to be homogenized and comparative analyses to be carried out.

The questionnaire was structured around four thematic areas, formulated through various blocks of questions on general characteristics of the establishment, the impact of pilgrimage, relations with other local agents and, where

applicable, hotel occupancy rates. The majority of the questions included closed reply categories, with the aim of limiting the response possibilities and facilitating subsequent analysis, except in some cases where open questions were asked, in which the respondents could create their own replies.

The surveys were carried out in person, or in other words, with an interviewer present, and they were conducted in various stages. First we completed a pilot phase of interviews in order to verify the effectiveness of the survey design. Once the appropriate changes were made and with the questionnaire model finalized, the rest of the fieldwork was carried out. Finally, unfinished surveys or those displaying some kind of anomaly were completed in a third phase.

In parallel to the process of conducting surveys, a variety of information was recorded through participant observation practices and ethnographic methods. Using this technique, information was collected for the purpose of interpreting the results of the survey, thereby contextualizing the data collection process.

Once the collection stage was complete, the success of the initiative was evaluated. In the case of the establishments on the route, of the 42 documented businesses, 28 responded to the survey, a very high response rate at 67 %. Much of the target population for the study (over half) participated in this initiative, which ensured the representativeness of the data. Finally, of the 63 businesses under analysis in the population center of Finisterre (i.e. those whose activity is aimed at pilgrims or whose main customers are this kind of user), 32 organizations responded to the survey, thus achieving a response rate of 50.8 % and ensuring the representativeness of the data.

This significant information-gathering undertaking has produced an original database on the state of supply of services and the number of jobs in this territory in 2011, which in conjunction with the pilgrimage data for the area has enabled analysis of the social and economic impact of pilgrims on the Camino to Finisterre. A descriptive analysis of the most significant results of this study is conducted below.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 *The Impact of Heritagization Processes: The Pilgrimage to Finisterre*

The phenomenon of pilgrimage is nothing new if we think of the Camino de Santiago on any of its routes. However, the Camino Santiago-Finisterre has attracted a great deal of interest in recent years and this can be seen in the growing number of pilgrims travelling this route. The number of *Fisterranas* awarded during the 1998–2010 period has grown exponentially, from 1312 certificates to 17,983 awarded in 2010, as shown in Fig. 5.1.

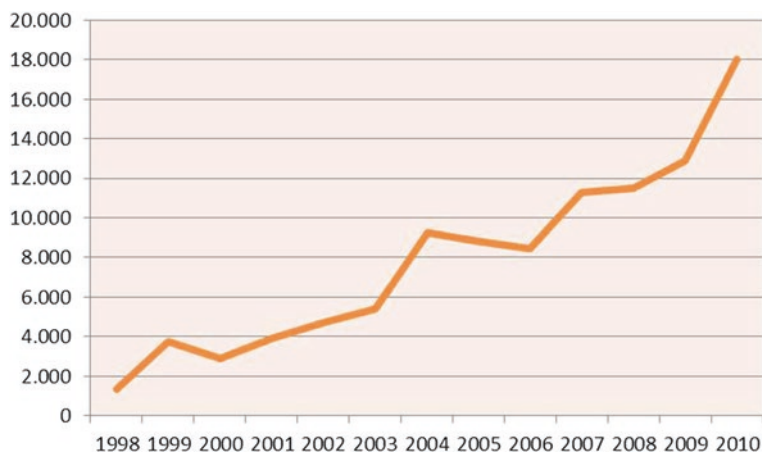


Fig. 5.1 Number of pilgrims travelling from Santiago to Finisterre (1998–2010). *Source* Compiled by author using data from register of *Fisterranas*

This graph, in addition to confirming the progressive increase in the number of pilgrims, illustrates four moments that stand out in relation to the general propensity for growth, three of them coinciding with the Holy Years of 1999, 2004 and 2010. Likewise, the years preceding the holy periods display a larger influx of pilgrims, reaching a peak at these moments and a slight decline in the following years.

Note that, according to the *Informe del perfil del peregrino* (2009) (Report on the profile of the pilgrim) produced by the Institute of Tourism Studies, despite the fact that the Finisterre-Muxía route is not recognized by the Pilgrim's Office as it is not considered religious, it is the second most important section after the French one in terms of pilgrim numbers. Almost 30 % of the pilgrims who arrive in Santiago de Compostela say they intend to continue to Finisterre and/or Muxía. Although this figure is notably large there is a slight reduction in the percentage of pilgrims who state that this is their intention in the 2007–2009 period.

But in general terms, the number of pilgrims travelling to Finisterre continues to grow, and this in spite of the European economic downturn. Moreover, this itinerary, in addition to being chosen by pilgrims who arrive in Santiago de Compostela, is also chosen by another kind of pilgrim—one that does not complete the major route.

In turn, the profile of the pilgrims on this route varies depending on the period studied. During the 2004–2009 period, when the number of pilgrims grew by 94 %, foreign pilgrims accounted for 60–70 % of the total. The trend changes in 2010, as it does in the other Holy Years (1999 and 2004), when Spanish pilgrims account for around 50 % of the total. Taking the example of 2010, 47.8 %

of pilgrims were of Spanish origin, while 52.2 % came from abroad. The most frequent foreign countries of origin were Germany (14 %), Italy (7.5 %) and France (6.6 %). The cumulative frequency of these three nationalities accounts for 28 % of the foreign population. They are followed by Austria (2.2 %), Portugal (1.9 %), Holland (1.8 %), South Korea (1.7 %), the United States (1.5 %) and Canada (1.4 %).

Notably, the majority of foreign pilgrims come from European countries. Canadian and US pilgrims (albeit in lower and declining numbers) are a constant on the various itineraries. Finally, the increase in the number of pilgrims (and therefore their presence in the 2010 ranking) from Brazil (2.5 %) on the Camino de Santiago and from South Korea (1.7 %) on the Camino to Finisterre is striking.

The greatest influx of pilgrims is recorded in the spring and summer months, indicating a strong seasonal component to this activity, as shown in Fig. 5.2. In the winter months (December, January and February), the influx of pilgrims is not significant. This situation begins to change with the onset of spring: March–April sees around 5 % of the total number of pilgrims. This trend gradually climbs, exceeding 10 % in May–June; it continues to grow in July (15 %) and reaches the maximum number recorded in August, of around 20 %. From this moment on the influx falls, although the number of people in September is similar to July (15 %); in October the percentage is around 10 % and in November it drops to 5 %; this falling trend continues until spring of the next year.

The characterization of the pilgrimage on the Santiago-Finisterre section reveals a growing volume of this activity and the formation of a demand for heritage that has been increasing in recent years. So how does this phenomenon affect the local communities it passes through?

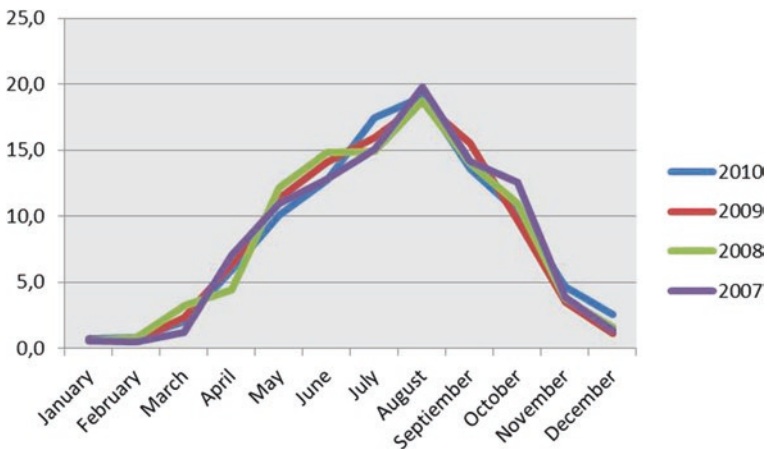


Fig. 5.2 Monthly influx of pilgrims to Finisterre. Values expressed in percentages (2007–2010). *Source* Compiled by author using data from register of Fisterranas

5.4.2 The Impact of Pilgrimage: Creating a Supply of Services

There are many ways to analyze the effect of pilgrimage on local communities. This study attempts to explain a particular aspect: the direct socio-economic impact of this phenomenon, to which end the direct consequences of it in terms of job creation and business turnover in the area are studied.

To explore this, first, the age of the establishments identified was analyzed. According to the survey results, fewer than half of the establishments identified (46.6 % on the route and 28.3 % in Finisterre) were open prior to 1993, a Jacobean Year of great significance since it marks the beginning of the promotion of this route and was when the Xacobeo public enterprise was created.

Over the next ten years (1994–2004), 10.7 % of the establishments identified on the route and 31 % of those in Finisterre were set up; or in other words, an increase in the supply of services was recorded in both cases, and to a much greater extent in the population center of Finisterre. However, the most notable period in both analyses is between the following Jacobean Years, from 2005 to 2010, when 46 % of the organizations identified on the route were set up (and, more specifically, 28.6 % of the establishments were created in 2010) and 41 % of those in Finisterre were established, as shown in Fig. 5.3.

This data shows a revitalization of the supply of services in the local communities that the Camino passes through. This revitalization has had a particularly acute impact in recent years, coinciding with the mass influx of pilgrims in the area. But is pilgrimage really what caused the volume of establishments opening in recent years in these areas?

No fewer than 71 % of the establishments surveyed on the route state that at least 10 % of their annual turnover is the result of pilgrimage. This assertion is shared by 84 % of all cases analyzed in Finisterre. These figures demonstrate that consumption by pilgrims has a positive effect (exceeding 10 % annually) on their turnover.

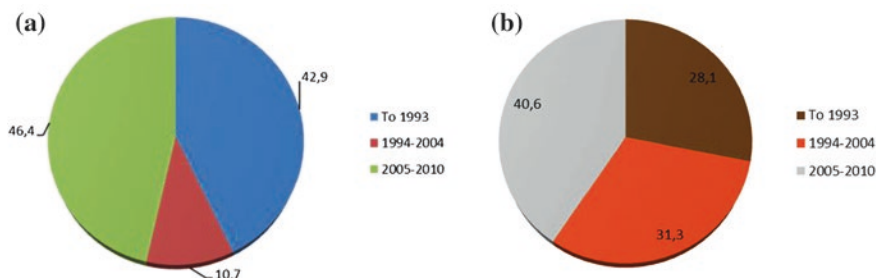


Fig. 5.3 Age of the establishments identified on the route and in the population center of Finisterre. *Source* Compiled by author from the results of the surveys conducted in these establishments

But, in addition, for 32 % of the establishments on the route, the impact of this consumption on turnover levels is much higher, accounting for 90 % of annual turnover. A proportion of turnover exceeding 10 % annually due to demand from pilgrims was recorded in 50 % of the Finisterre businesses.

This means that a large number of establishments, mainly small shops, tourism and hospitality businesses, which are also newly formed, are aimed at pilgrims and thrive on the demand for services among pilgrims, having an impact on the turnover of the establishments analyzed.

The effect of pilgrimage on the supply of services in the local communities is also analyzed through the identification of the main customers of the establishments. According to the results of the survey, 43 % of establishments on the route state that their primary customers are pilgrims. This is also the case for 28 % of the establishments surveyed in the population center of Finisterre, who stated that their services are aimed at pilgrims; but there were also 37.5 % that said that both pilgrims and tourists are the primary users of their establishments.

These figures demonstrate that pilgrimage is an important source of income in these establishments, a fact that also illustrates the positive impact of pilgrims on the business activity of the local community.

Pilgrimage not only has a positive impact on the volume of activity in the local community, but is also a factor that creates jobs in this area. While the size of the establishments surveyed is small, they are a source of work for family units, who usually run these businesses and even employ other people in high season, particularly in the case of the establishments on the route.

These establishments tend to be micro-enterprises that offer accommodation, hospitality and small shop services that enable the family to make a living. This explains the low variability of employment in these services, which only appears to increase in high season when additional staff is taken on.

Similarly, the establishments located in the population center of Finisterre are also typically small in size, but the profile of the people who work in these organizations varies somewhat. Generally, the size of these businesses is an average of two people who work on an indefinite basis, normally one person in charge of the business and one employee. However, temporary employment in this context is higher, with an average of two people employed on a casual basis in high season. All of this reveals that pilgrimage is a determining factor in the creation and maintenance of establishments and jobs.

Besides generating a direct impact on the activities that are in direct contact with the pilgrims, it has also been observed that, in turn, these establishments require other goods or services, such as food, drinks, cleaning products and services, etc.

Information was collected not just on the type of goods and services needed by the establishments, but also on the location of their main suppliers and links to the local community. From 70 to 100 % of cases identified their main suppliers of

goods and services as agents belonging to the local community and/or the nearest geographical areas. The most frequently mentioned areas include: Finisterre, Cee, Carballo, Santa Comba, Mazaricos, Coruña, and Costa da Morte in general.¹

5.5 Conclusions

The absence of a clearly defined method for studying the socio-economic impact of the heritagization processes in local communities and the absence of data sources for the Camino to Finisterre has motivated the triangulation of various methods in order to understand these processes. The aim was therefore to build a method and an analytical model. To do so, an initial examination of the object of study was performed, applying various perspectives and techniques in order to collect information, validate and ensure the reliability of the results and interpret the problem in a more complete and converging way from various perspectives. Although the results of the study are essentially descriptive and represent an overview of the object of study, it has been possible to evaluate, with a small number of sources of information on the subject, the boost provided by heritagization processes to the activity of the local community, and this is analyzed through the phenomenon of pilgrimage.

The main conclusion that emerges from this study is therefore that there is a clear relationship between the increase in pilgrimage on the Camino Santiago-Finisterre and the transformation of the productive model of these local communities, which in recent years has gradually been channeled towards offering services related to the phenomenon of pilgrimage, and furthermore this activity provides a social and economic boost for the local communities that the pilgrims pass through.

Moreover, it has been observed that this productive activity is creating employment for families who live in local population centers and revitalizing other activities supplying goods and services. This effect is therefore direct, and it can be observed in the setting-up of businesses, their turnover and the creation of jobs in the area. Furthermore, it has been possible to characterize the pilgrimage process as a source of income for local families, which are working in these establishments steadily throughout the year and, in the case of the Finisterre establishments, as a source of jobs in the local community. But equally, an indirect effect has been identified in the boost provided to other productive activities in the area, which supply other goods and services to these establishments, thereby generating a value chain that affects the entire productive network of the local communities and others nearby.

¹The detailed reports are accessible via Digital. CSIC: Parga-Dans 2012. The profile of the pilgrims on the Camino Santiago-Finisterre (<https://digital.csic.es/handle/10261/45922>), Parga-Dans 2012. *The offer of services on the way of St. James between Santiago and Fisterra* (<https://digital.csic.es/handle/10261/45780>).

Finally, it is worth noting that, although the figures reflect growth and revitalization in the local communities through the intensification of this phenomenon, the application of qualitative techniques to the study and ethnographic methodology (as observed in other chapters of this book), leads to the conclusion that, in addition to all of these effects that the figures reflect, this productive boost means that the local communities are facing other challenges such as the black economy, overcrowding in population centers at certain times of the year, interpersonal conflict, the management of resources by institutional agents, etc.

For all of these reasons, the challenge for the future and for future research on the effect of heritagization on local communities is to systematize a method of work that favors the furtherance of knowledge in this subject, in which a gap in the scientific literature has been detected.

Exploring interdisciplinary approaches and methods in the field of heritage can be a useful tool for understanding the consequences of the heritagization processes and for interpreting complex social phenomena. One future line of research that emerges from this study is to develop an interdisciplinary approach for the critical analysis of heritage formation processes and their socio-economic effects on local communities.

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Chapter 6

Processes of Change in Olveiroa, A Hostel Village

Paula Ballesteros-Arias

6.1 Introduction

The village of Olveiroa underwent a process of abandonment and neglect very similar to that of many of Galicia's small villages in recent decades, or in other words, we are dealing with a global process, not just in the Spanish state but also in other parts of the world (Agudo Torrico 1999; Hernández and Pezo 2009). Thus, although the abandonment of the village and its social and economic practices was first noted in the early twentieth century, it was from the 1960s that this started to become obvious, before the village fell into total decline in the '80s and '90s. But Olveiroa, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, has been a clear example of the construction of a 'pilgrim landscape' through its transformation in 2005 into a 'hostel village.'

In the final decades of the twentieth century, the majority of Olveiroa's inhabitants emigrated and the village was left virtually empty. Over the years and as these emigrants improved their financial situation, the village was repopulated, either seasonally or permanently, and these people wanted a different kind of home, in a space that was also different. The memories of past poverty and misery in their place of origin contrasted with the places that received them: cities and buildings that were associated with wealth. Living in the old village, without services, far from the main road, from communication, from progress itself, no longer made sense. The 'modern' concept was introduced into the villages, or rather, outside of them. The new perception of what is modern resulted in the construction of new

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houses on the main road, far from the traditional center of the village: new construction materials, new aesthetics, new organization both inside and outside the home.

In the late twentieth century, Olveiroa's village center was therefore in a semi-abandoned state, almost depopulated and relocated to the main road to Dumbría, as the main road link, associated with progress. But later it would be precisely the recovery of a historic route that passes through the village of Olveiroa, the Camino to Finisterre-Muxía, that would become the main factor that stimulated the recovery and enhancement of the old village of Olveiroa in the late twentieth century, encouraging a return to 'traditional Galician' aesthetics (Ballesteros-Arias and Sánchez-Carretero 2011: 1584).

The aim of this article is to analyze the transformations that have taken place in the Olveiroa landscape and how these revolve around the transit routes. The improvement of the paths and roads (along with other factors) has fundamentally changed the landscape through the reactivation of the pilgrimage route from Santiago to Finisterre-Muxía. Through the evolution of the landscape in a microcosm like the village of Olveiroa, this article presents the concept of 'pilgrim landscape,' following Sánchez-Carretero (Chap. 4, this volume), in order to understand a landscape that has been remodeled due to the transit route/tourism resource *par excellence* in Galicia, which is the Camino. Alderman (2002) and Campo (1998) used the term "pilgrimage landscape" with another meaning, to highlight the relationships between people and place, referring to landscape in a metaphorical sense. Here, the term pilgrimage landscape refers literally to the transformations in the landscape due to pilgrimage.

After presenting Olveiroa's geographical, demographic and economic context, the study will initially seek to detect the changes that have taken place in the village of Olveiroa associated with the agricultural and livestock-farming structure. The primary sector, the main source of income until now, is in crisis. This, along with the emigration and exodus to the cities, led to the abandonment of the village and its disintegration as a physical 'population entity.' Through a collation map we will see how, at this moment, a road is being built away from the village, boxing it in. In the process of repopulation associated with the return of emigrants, the spaces on the sides of the new main road were colonized, which accentuated the process of abandonment that had already been started. Over time, the implementation of new economic policies, along with the promotion of the Jacobean Caminos as tourist attractions, and more specifically the promotion of the Camino from Santiago to Finisterre, resources are channeled to activate the tertiary sector, in which tourism will be the driving force of the future economy. The recovery of the old Camino impacts on this process and therefore on the revitalization of the village of Olveiroa, where new forms of rurality are emerging.

From a methodological point of view, an important part of the study involved ethnographic fieldwork, conducting various interviews with the inhabitants of the village and its administrators. These interviews not only documented an idealized perception of the past ('perhaps we were happier,' Gloria, fieldnotes, 22/10/2010) or a gloomy one ('we suffered a great deal of misery, life in Olveiroa was very bleak' (Marina, GR006S001), but also the perception of the present and a desire

for heritagization going forward. In parallel, the various documentary sources and cartographic and photographic collections were gathered together (the latter provided by the respondents) and studied; all of this was then collated in order to build a picture of the structural and economic changes that both the village and its agricultural surroundings have undergone.

6.2 Olveiroa and the Costa Da Morte

The village of Olveiroa is located in the municipality of Dumbía, province of A Coruña, within the *comarca* of Finisterre.¹ In turn, this *comarca* is located within the large territory called the Costa da Morte. This name was chosen and used in the late 1990s as a designation for the large coastal area from Cape Finisterre to the Sisargas Islands in Malpica, gradually extending inland, as we will explain later. In that decade, a time when it became apparent that the economic situation in the area had deteriorated considerably and population numbers were in continual decline, on the initiative of a group of local mayors, the Asociación Neria was founded. Its mission was to ‘promote and coordinate rural development, improve living conditions and help prevent the depopulation of rural areas’ (Asociación Neria 2011) with the intention of making use of the financial subsidies provided at that time by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In this context, Costa da Morte was a brand that defined not just a large territory from a physical, geographical and legendary point of view, but also a social and territorial brand that has now been recognized by the political institutions.

This name, despite initial resistance due to potential negative connotations² (*Morte* means ‘death’), was such a success that the community now identifies itself as ‘*ser da Costa da Morte*’ (being from the Costa da Morte) and it also ‘provides a label with which others, tourists, foreigners, can identify it from outside’ (Freire Paz 2009: 131). In the words of X. García, the Neria secretary:

¹The term *comarca* refers to a local territory division or region. This *comarca*, besides Dumbía, contains the municipalities of Cee, Corcubión, Finisterre and Muxía. The territorial division into *comarcas* is relatively recent. It was implemented in 1991 by the regional government through the *Plan de Comarcalización de Galicia*. In this new division, the *comarca* is defined as: an intermediate territory, made up of a group of neighboring municipalities that have an internal cohesion between them based on geographical, historic, economic and functional factors (GALICIA: LAW 7/1996 of 10 July, on *comarca* development, D.O.G., N. 142, 19 July). The aim was to strengthen the identity of the *comarcas* and promote internal cohesive instruments in development areas that were remote from most of the population (Freire 2009, 127).

²According to some authors, the territory is called *Costa da Morte* because it is the coast of Finisterre, the place where land ends and the sun dips into the dark sea, where some went and never returned, and nobody knew what there was beyond. According to others, the name is due to the many shipwrecks that have taken place on this beautiful and wild coast (http://www.turismocostadamorte.com/ca/upload/des/59-a-guia_xeral_costa_morte_cast.pdf).

The debate over the *Costa da Morte* as a brand that would identify us was a battle that took a lot to win and now everyone wants to be part of *Costa da Morte*; now in Laracha, or in Carballo, they want to be part of *Costa da Morte*³(GR014S001).⁴

The *Costa da Morte* is located in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula, in the westernmost part of Galicia. It is a very rugged coastline of successive cliffs and peninsulas, along with coves that provide shelter for the small towns and villages, where the lack of transport links has accentuated its isolation from the rest of Galicia.

On this coast, granite formations create a variety of shapes, where very sheer cliffs are interspersed with large sandy areas. Capes Finisterre, Touriñán, Vilán and Roncudo alternate with the beaches of Carnota, Mar da Fora, Rostro, Nemiña, Trece and Traba, to name just a few. On this coastal stretch, inlets were also formed that gave rise to small tidal inlets such as the Rias of Corme-Laxe, Muxía-Camariñas, Lires and Cee-Corcubión, and coves such as Sardiñeiro, Camelle and Ézaro, among others. Between this coastline and the large inland areas, there are some notable elevations such as O Monte Castelo, Os Penedos de Traba and O Monte Pindo, and other lower ones like Montes da Ruña and Montes de Buxantes, which border the Olveiroa area featured in this study. The varied and extensive hydrographic network formed by the Rivers Anllóns, Grande, Castro and Xallas gradually degraded the broad plains of the interior over time. The River Xallas crosses the plateau called the Meseta del Xallas (Fernández Carrera 1998: 17–20) where the Olveiroa Valley is located and flows into the Ézaro Cove, at the foot of Mount Pindo, forming a spectacular waterfall over the cove. This is the only river in Europe forming a waterfall over 100 meters high that flows into the sea, although its water was channeled for power production,⁵ which led to its virtual disappearance.

Olveiroa lies in this softly undulating landscape of abundant streams, gentle slopes and small and very fertile valleys, used as arable land and for feed crops for cattle, currently in a process of abandonment. It is located in the east of the municipal area and in the center of the parish (Santiago de Olveiroa). It is a population center with 130 inhabitants, according to figures from the 2007 census. It is near the River Xallas and its tributary, the River Santa Lucía, which are dammed at the reservoirs of Ponte Olveiroa and Castrelo (Río 2009: 180) (Fig. 6.1).

³Currently the *Costa da Morte* comprises the municipalities of Cabana de Bergantiños, Camariñas, Carnota, Cee, Corcubión, Coristanco, Dumbriá, Finisterre, Laxe, Malpica de Bergantiños, Mazaricos, Muros, Muxía, Ponteceso, Santa Comba, Vimianzo and Zas (see Fig. 1 of Chap. 1).

⁴After the text quotations from the interviewees, the code for the corresponding recording or the date when the fieldnote was taken is indicated. Names of people have been maintained when they wished to do so, while in the rest of the cases pseudonyms were used.

⁵Since 2001 it has been one of the comarca's tourist attractions and this waterfall can be seen every day. Since that date, the dam that feeds it is opened allowing some of the water to fall down.



Fig. 6.1 The clustered center of Olveiroa. Houses and other domestic buildings and vegetable gardens among them, as well as the church dedicated to St. James. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

6.2.1 On Concentric Shapes and Circular Organization: The Importance of Transport Links

Olveiroa can be said to have an agricultural landscape featuring smallholdings for self-use, whose limited surpluses were occasionally sold in the local markets. Corn, potatoes, beans and other products from the vegetable garden are the most typical crops. Until recently, an important source of income was cattle rearing, with dairy farms being set up, but this is now in continual decline due to the serious crisis affecting this industry.⁶ The *montes*, or highlands, where the cattle were formerly taken to graze, where they harvested the *toxó* (gorse) and cultivated using *estivadas* (areas where the scrub is cleared by burning), have been repopulated with foreign species, like eucalyptus, as part of a forestry industry that is past its peak.

⁶The issue of the milk quota is a hot topic that affects a large number of small producers. The economics imposed by the European Common Market prevents the growth of these farms and their production levels (Freire Paz 2009: 121). In fact, only two dairy farms remain in the village.



Fig. 6.2 An *hórreo* (a typical Galician granary) in the foreground with wind turbines in the background, installed on the highlands near the village. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

There are several quarries in the area that supply the construction industry. In industry, there is a chemical and metal processing factory that exploits silica. In Dumbría, there are also four hydroelectric dams that harness the flow of the River Xallas and wind power installations on the Buxantes highlands. However, their profits have a limited impact in the municipality and they do not create jobs (Fig. 6.2).

In general terms, the municipality of Dumbría shares its economic characteristics with Olveiroa, but the aggravating factor in the latter is that it is one of the least populated parishes. According to Francisco Ríó (2009), since 1960 there has been a sharp and continual loss of population in the area. The waves of emigration, first to the Americas, then to other European countries, along with the exodus from the countryside to Spanish cities, eventually depopulated the villages. In the 1980s, in addition to this migratory flow there was also the factor of an ageing population, which compounded the problem of a low birth rate and high mortality rate. Per capita income in 1970 was 20,000–25,000 pesetas,⁷ which explains, in part, the heavy emigration and, consequently, the dwindling and ageing

⁷120.20 euros and 150.25 euros respectively.

population, with a negative rate recorded in those years, at 13, or 90 % (Silverio Cañada 1974: 48).

In this context, the evolution of the early years of the twenty-first century is significant. From 2000 to 2007, Dumbría lost 639 inhabitants; for each 100 people under 20 years old there were 159.5 over-65s. The population density is 31.2 inhabitants per km², a figure below the provincial and regional average (Río 2009: 108). As for the distribution of the population, it is concentrated in the river valleys and small strip of coast, in Ézaro, where the majority of inhabitants live. In fact, the center with the highest population is Ézaro, with 736 inhabitants, followed by the villages of Oliveira, with 233, Regoelle, with 172, and Olveiroa, with 169 inhabitants. The capital, the village of Dumbría, had just 4 inhabitants in 1993 (Fariña Jamardo 1993: 111).

In terms of the morphology of the landscape, the organization of space, the uses of the land and transport links, the Olveiroa valley has a circular organization, of concentric forms, in which the village homes are the core from which a certain agricultural landscape took shape over time.⁸ Around the homes located in the center of this micro-landscape are the vegetable gardens. In their vicinity, expanding this circle, are the arable or intensive cultivation lands, the *agras*, which, as the population pressure increased, gradually spread, with new land on the highlands being ploughed. This circular morphology is radially traversed by various axes, which act as the roads that connect the village to the main road, the farmland, the highlands and the other communal spaces. The main road (CP-3404 from Serra de Outes to Dumbría) reinforces this concentric structure and is currently the main transit route that organizes the territory and skirts the village in a semi-circle.

Historically, a road ran through this village and, in addition to dividing it into two neighborhoods, O Rueiro d'Arriba and O Rueiro d'Abaixo, it connected the interior of the territory to the Finisterre coast, which also made the area important from an ecclesiastical,⁹ economic and population point of view, as noted by Carré Aldao (1928: 234), who stated that the need for accommodation, eating houses and mills was met. The road begins in the Santiago area, before passing through A Picota (municipality of Mazaricos), Ponte Oliveira, Olveiroa and Hospital (municipality of Dumbría), where there is a crossroads from which various parts of the

⁸In this regard, I agree with the definition of Shanin (1976) in which the village is a peasant unit of production and the communities are the true architects and protagonists of how the space is shaped. In other words, peasant communities are the main players in the creation, formation and organization of an agricultural landscape. These communities have modified the land over time by cultivating it, ploughing the highlands, introducing crops, building agricultural terraces and plots, irrigation and water drainage systems, roads and paths, etc. within the various political, economic, social and symbolic periods that have occurred through history.

⁹This could be linked to the fact that, as the archives show, in this parish, in 1334 the wife of a Ruy Soga, bequeathed 'CC *soldos* for the restoration of the church' to the area (Carré Aldao 1928–1936). This quotation is included as one of just a few documentary references found from the fourteenth century.

interior or the coast can be reached, such as Ézaro, Cee, Muxía and Finisterre. The latter two are the final destinations of the pilgrimage route from Santiago to Finisterre-Muxía, a path that was and is used by walkers on their pilgrimage towards Finisterre (Vilar 2010). This ancient transit route disappeared into obscurity with the construction of the main road (the CP-3404) that bypassed the village, and was used only by animals and the few people remaining in the village, since it was also a time of major emigration.

While the primary sector was the main occupation of the population, not just in Olveiroa but in all of Galicia, given the poor development of the secondary sector, the tertiary sector has recently become the solution for the future of this village, following the recovery of the Santiago-Finisterre-Muxía pilgrimage route which, alongside the opening of a municipal hostel in 2001, would favor the recovery and enhancement of the village, encouraging local people to open other accommodation establishments.

6.3 Analyzing the Olveiroa Landscape

6.3.1 *The Landscape of an Agricultural Past*

In order to investigate the transformations that have taken place in a given landscape over time, and specifically in Olveiroa, certain information is required so that the analysis of the factors that may have had an impact on the processes of change is tailored as closely as possible to the part of the reality that we wish to render an account of. We will begin by analyzing the agricultural space. What we find in Olveiroa is an agricultural landscape whose formative and structural processes share a past with the rest of the agricultural landscapes of the north-west. From medieval times until virtually the mid twentieth century, Galicia's agricultural landscape was characterized by the maintenance of an active rural space that preserved the traditional ways and modes of community life. In terms of the landscape and the ecology of the landscape, despite the over-exploitation of the land through intensive cultivation, it was an economic system that worked (Cardesín Díaz 1992; Pérez Pintos 2009). This is demonstrated, among other factors, by its longevity, with balanced exploitation sustained between the various ecological spaces offered by the landscape.¹⁰

The Galician agricultural landscape is made up of two different and specialized kinds of productive space: the highlands and the arable land (*monte* and *agro* in Galician). Each of these spaces has particular geographical conditions and, in simple terms, the *agro* is the valley areas and the *monte* is the slopes and higher

¹⁰Evidently we are talking about a balance in terms of the ecology of the landscape and not in social terms, because it is important to remember the subjugation of peasant society by the feudal lords, the aristocracy and the church, who owned the land.



Fig. 6.3 Large areas of meadow formerly used as arable land. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

reaches of the elevations. But these spaces are also shaped by human actions, utilizing the characteristics of the environment according to a singular economic and social rationality spanning a long period of time, starting in the first centuries of the Early Middle Ages.¹¹ This varied utilization of the land took into account the whole range of possibilities that the ecological environment could offer, applying a model of ecological rationality based on humanizing the natural chain of terrains and vegetation characteristic of the Galician territory, in order to adapt the uses of the land and take advantage of the environmental conditions (Ballesteros-Arias 2002: 13–14) (see Fig. 6.3). Manuela, an Olveiroa resident born in 1935, expresses this sentiment with categorical statements such as ‘We are masters of the land’ or ‘Each terrain has its use’ (Manuela, fieldnotes, 22/10/2010) (Fig. 6.4).

An example of this variety of uses and productivity is provided by the *monte* space. Here there are at least four significant uses: pasture for livestock, as a source of timber and firewood, cereal cultivation with a system of cleared lands, and

¹¹The data we are using, taken from various archaeological studies, shows that the organization of the agricultural space, the artificiality of the arable spaces and intensive cultivation through the construction of complex agricultural property and the use of the highlands, takes place in medieval times, before the onset of the Late Middle Ages. For more information on the subject see Ballesteros-Arias et al. (2006, 2011).

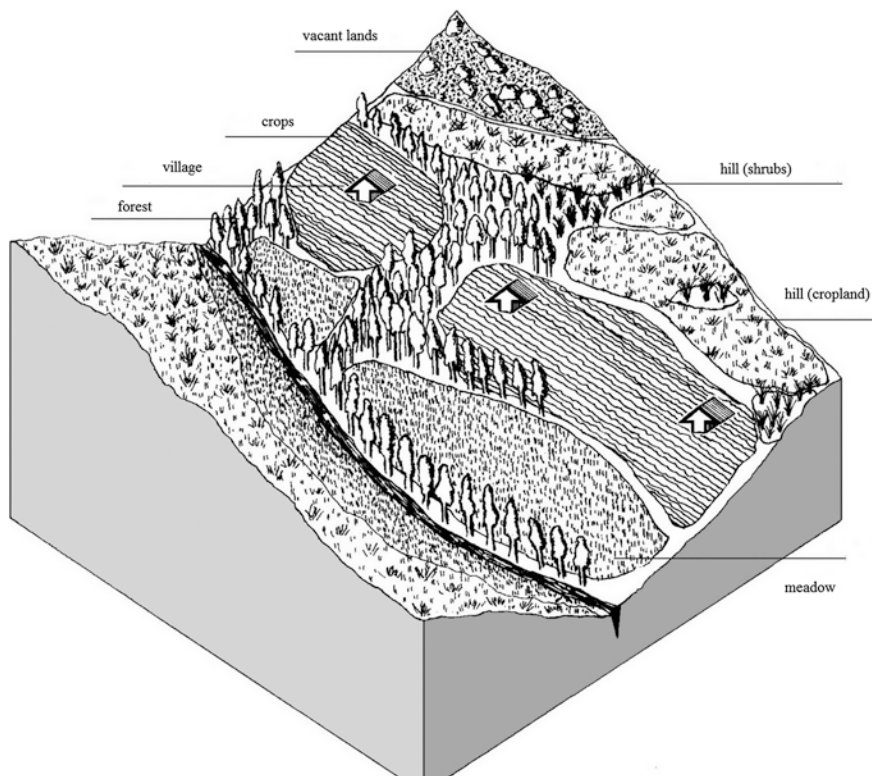


Fig. 6.4 Theoretical model of the traditional farmer landscape of Galician (Dabezies and Ballesteros-Arias 2013: 45). *Source* Anxo Rodríguez Paz

production of *toxó* (gorse). This leguminous plant (*Ulex europaeus*), in addition to fixing nitrogen in the soil, is the base of the fertilizer that made the arable land, the *agro*, fertile. The *monte* was therefore an integral part of the system, enabling the intensive cultivation of the agricultural space (Ballesteros-Arias et al. 2011: 88). This complementary structure, which reaches its maturity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has been observed until recent times from a historical (Bloch 2002) and anthropological (Fernández de Rota 1984; Cardesín Díaz 1992) perspective in Galicia, and even now, despite the post-industrial transformations of the Galician countryside, it can be seen. This is precisely the case of Olveiroa 70 years ago.

In addition to bearing in mind this common past for the Galician countryside, focusing on Olveiroa in order to conduct a closer analysis of its agricultural space, other factors should be taken into account, such as the form and structure of the old and current plot division, the uses of the land, the road network, place names, etc. In this process we believe that an important part of this study lies in the ethnographic fieldwork, in which the individual or group interviews, along with visits and tours of the target area, help us understand the organization of the landscape and tap into the knowledge of the people who have maintained it, transformed it and also abandoned it.

6.3.2 *The Agricultural Landscape Through Historical Documentary Sources*

Consultation of historical documentary sources has also been a key part of this study. This collation of sources is a reflection of the social and economic life of the parish of Santiago de Olveiroa from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, and using it enables us to be more objective when it comes to analyzing the changes that occurred here. Besides taking into account the written documentation, various series of maps and aerial photographs of the area available have been compiled, since, as we will see, they offer a very visual overview of the everyday life of the most recent past of this place.

We start with a moment rescued from the recent historical documentation (seventeenth to twentieth century), which reflects a landscape where the intensive exploitation of the environment and autarky were the driving forces of the economy of the *Ancien Régime*.

The *Catastro del Marqués de la Ensenada* (the Land Registry of the Marquis of the Ensenada, 1750), in reference to the parish of Santiago de Olveiroa, made up of the villages of Olveiroa and Ponte Olveira, states that a large quantity of agricultural products, particularly wheat¹² but also rye, were collected as tribute from the parish.

The Tithes of the parish of Santiago de Olveiroa are received in their entirety by its priest, and those of the church property, by the Archdeacon of Trastamara. (f. 145 r., p. 10).

The tithes of the parish of Santiago de Olveiroa came to nine hundred Reals a year, not counting the first fruit which amounts to thirty-six ferrados of wheat, and the vows of the Holy Apostle amount to sixteen ferrados of rye a year and the tithes of the church property come to fifty Reals a year. (f. 150 v., p. 10).

This document also describes the ownership and use of several mills located on various streams that flow into the River Xallas. They all operated with the local black stones,¹³ used to grind corn and sometimes also rye:

In the parish of Santiago de Olveiroa there are five mills, all with flumes and black stones, and all five of them mill for six months of the year, the one called 'do rego' belongs to Agustín de Rantos (?) and partners of that place: another, which they call //(f. 160 v.) 'do crego' belongs to the priest of this parish, another called 'molino da Agra' belongs to XXX, a thresher resident in San Mamed de Suebos and other partners of this parish of

¹²Although the documentation says that wheat was produced, this was for tribute only, not for the consumption of the peasant community, and it was handed over as storable grain.

¹³Depending on the type of cereal that the mill was used for, the millstone, the *moa*, varied: the black stones, *negreiras*, or local stones were used to grind corn and were made of granite from various parts of Galicia; their hue and grain varied from one area to another. The *albeiras* or white stones were rarer and were especially designed to grind wheat and rye, recognizable by their whiter color and originating from quartzite rocks from the south of the Peninsula (Barros 1997, 43). In the past these must have been more common, but the progressive introduction of corn as the primary crop meant they were gradually relegated in favor of the proliferation of the local stones.

Olveira (sic): and of them the primary stakeholder is Domingo Maceiras: another called 'da Pereira,' belongs to Gregorio Antonio Senrra, and partners from Lacin, parish of San Martin de Olveira, and the other, also called 'da Pedreira,' belongs to Isabel Gonzalez and partners from Olveiroa; and they manage these mills which designate thirty Reales de Vellón from their annual production. (f. 160 r., p. 10).

Curiously, these mills remained active until recently and heritage restoration interventions on them are precisely one of the most frequent requests by the people of Olveiroa.

The most common asset here is what can be seen, for instance the water mills, those forgotten buildings that sustained so many families, with the flour, the granaries, we know they are valuable now as people are restoring them (Puri, GR005S001).

A century later, Pascual Madoz (1847) describes a land 'of fertile plains and wooded hills (...), producing wheat, rye, corn, potatoes, beans, vegetables and fruit. Cattle and sheep breeding; there is hunting and some fishing.'

Indeed, like in most areas, the continual growth of the population here in the eighteenth century led to the expansion of the cultivated surface, the introduction and integration of corn, the eradication of fallowing across large areas and the spread of increasingly intensive crop rotations, very clear changes in the productive and commercial structures (Alonso Álvarez 2005). Trade was limited purely to what was necessary for the internal needs of the community, with a monthly fair held in Olveira (Carré Aldao 1928: 234).

6.3.3 The Landscape Through Cartographic and Photographic Documentation: From 'Fish Bone' to Quadrangular Structures

Through the collation of photographic and cartographic documentation, despite the short time lapses between these series, the changes detected are clear. It has been possible to detect certain transformations that affect the forms that make up the agricultural landscape and the uses of the land, as well as the distribution of homes in the village and the road networks. The transformation of the landscape therefore depends on the interaction between the changes taking place on the farmland and highlands and the changes occurring to the road links. The material used for this study was compiled using aerial photography from an American flight in 1956 and from 2005, along with cartography from 1945, 1950, 1985 (which was produced using aerial photography from 1974) and 2010 (aerial photography from 2005), as well as the land parceling, also from 2010.

So, for instance, with regard to the analysis of the agricultural space, in the aerial photography of 1956, arable land predominates over highland spaces, with land parceling that displays a predominance of extremely elongated forms arranged into a fish bone, perpendicular to the rights of way between the plots. These are grouped into small farming units surrounded, in turn, by traditional transit routes



Fig. 6.5 Photograph from the American flight of 1956 corresponding to the Olveiroa area and its agricultural surroundings. Compared to Fig. 6.6, it has a larger number of agricultural elements and forms related to land use and management

and a number of streams of various sizes. It is the image of the traditional way of life that emerges from the interviews conducted in the fieldwork, part of the memory of an immediate past. Puri, the *hospitalera* (hostel worker) at the Olveiroa pilgrim hostel, born in the village in 1965, recalls:

As kids we helped a lot in the home. They farmed here and raised livestock for their own consumption. (...) We youngsters, when we got back from school, would make furrows for potatoes, help gather the corn... the children and mothers were the ones responsible for production at home. It was the men who went away to work (Puri, GR005S001).

However, the recent aerial photograph (2010) reveals that these elongated shapes have been replaced by quadrangular forms, due to the concentration of plots, now arranged perpendicular to a new network of transit routes that organize and distribute the space on the basis of various parameters and enable both access for machinery to the various properties and links to other population centers (Fig. 6.5).



Fig. 6.6 Aerial photograph of 2010 of the same area. It shows the Camino from Santiago to Finisterre on its way through the middle of the village and the location of the municipal hostel.
 Source <http://www.sigpac.jcyl.es/visor>

Notably, in the 1956 photograph, the highland area is divided into many plots, demarcated with long stone walls. These are known as *tenzas*, plots where cereals were formerly cultivated using the scrub-clearing system, whose remains can still be seen today:

Wheat was taken from *estivadas* [cleared scrubland] on the highlands. And every day we took the cows up into the hills, whether summer or winter (Manuela, fieldnotes 22/10/2010).

As we move forward in time, the abandonment of the highlands becomes more apparent, as do the new uses and attributes that this land acquires. The recent aerial photograph reveals that this land is now used for forestry through its repopulation with foreign species, of pine and eucalyptus,¹⁴ the increase in meadows and coppice, and gorse, now as a sign of abandonment.¹⁵ as well as an ideal place for installing wind turbines.

¹⁴This farming system, in which the highlands were an essential space for the sustenance of the village community and maintained for centuries, fell into decline from 1955 when the Franco regime, subjected to international isolation, opted for an autarkic economy in which the forestry industry came to the fore. The highland commons were expropriated by the state and repopulated with pine, replacing the previous agricultural uses (Pérez Pintos 2009: 9).

¹⁵The colloquial expression *estar a monte* ('to be on the highland') is used to this day as a synonym for abandonment.

What happened in Olveiroa is in fact what happened in other parts of the Spanish state. It is a global phenomenon wherein a traditional economy in which the primary sector took precedence passes straight to a tertiary-sector economy. It is the result of entry into the Common Agricultural Policy. In Europe, a new model was designed for the rural world that had nothing to do with the Galician model, incentivizing agricultural specialization in areas considered high-yield, and in other areas discouraging the continuance of traditional agriculture that was ‘uncompetitive’ in the marketplace, seeking solutions in the tertiary sector. As Aguilar Criado (2002: 3) points out, this model seeks to convert the rural world to a tertiary economy and design spaces with new uses. This situation is reflected in the words of Moncho, an Olveiroa resident: ‘Living here off the land is very difficult... the best thing to do, perhaps, is something related to tourism. The Costa da Morte was a bit neglected...’ (Moncho, fieldnotes 21/10/2010).

6.3.3.1 Aerial Photos, Maps and Road Links

Another factor that comes to the fore in this comparative analysis is the creation of new road links to the area around the village, which becomes an essential factor that leads to the construction of new homes on the sides of the roads, favoring relocation and therefore the abandonment of the original village center.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Pascual Madoz (1847) described how the roads that led to Corcubión and to Santiago, as well as the local roads, were in a poor state of repair: ‘They are bridleways and they are dreadful due to the effect of the rough and broken surface and the neglect that this branch of the administration was intent on.’

The cartography from 1945 shows how, at that moment, the main road links were limited to a network of secondary transit routes, one of which passes through the village of Olveiroa from east to west, the route which has now been established as part of the pilgrim’s way from Santiago to Finisterre, both as a historic path and as an equally well documented pilgrimage route (Pombo et al. 2000).

The network of roads at the time was not too different from what appears to have existed in the eighteenth century. In Galicia, according to the *Itinerario Español o Guía de Caminos* (‘Spanish Itinerary or Route Guide’) by Escribano, in 1758 there was an absence of roads for wheeled vehicles or carts, since the road from Madrid ended in Astorga (wheeled isolation of Galicia in the mid-eighteenth century). Goods could only be transported using pack animals. The bridleways were used for wheeled traffic, but long journeys continued to be made on horseback or foot until the mid-eighteenth century. At that time, funding for road building came from taxes on consumption, which were scarce in Galicia due to the low level of commercialization of products and the high level of self-sufficiency of the population (Lindoso Tato and Vilar Rodríguez 2009).

A few years later (see Fig. 6.7, Army map from 1950), the comarca road that circumvents Olveiroa to the north is marked, and since it is marked in red with dashed lines we can assume that it is a project underway. It is the CP-3404 (a so-called tertiary road), a provincial route that runs from Outes to Dumbría, crossing

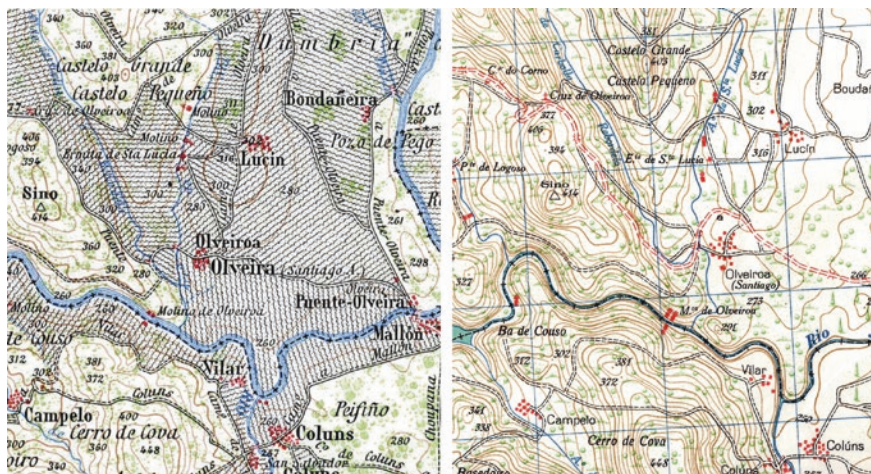


Fig. 6.7 Two clippings from topographical maps of the *Centro Geográfico del Ejército* (the Army Geographical Centre), 1:50.000. The one on the left is from the year 1945. The clipping on the right is from the year 1950

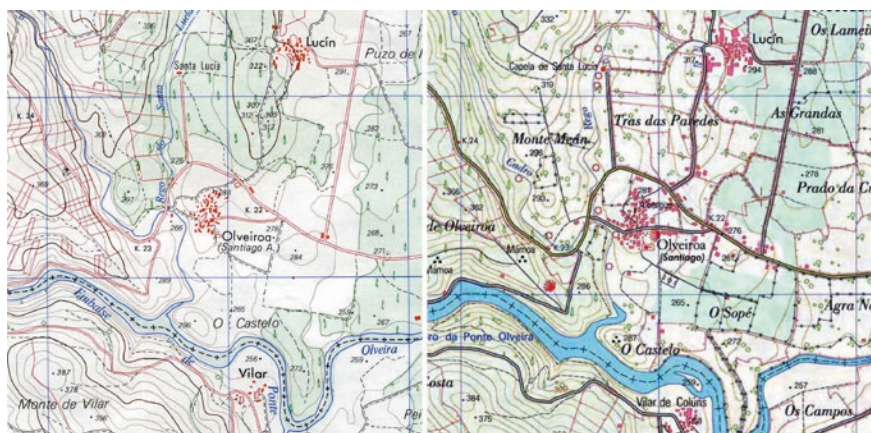


Fig. 6.8 The image on the *right* is a cutting from a map of the *Instituto Geográfico Nacional* (ING, the National Geographic Institute), 1:25.000, published in 1985 but based on 1974 cartography. The one on the *left* is a 2005 cutting taken from <http://www.sigpac.jcyl.es/visor>

part of the municipality of Mazaricos. The road was designed to avoid passing through the village, bypassing it to enable the new motor vehicles to travel on it. This favored the abandonment of the old narrow dirt road that was used by carts, people and animals. In fact, in the aerial photograph from 1956 (see Fig. 6.5), this road is under construction. The image also shows the many routes that pass through this territory in multiple directions, adapted to the sinuous shape of the land.

In the cartography from later years, from 1975 (see Fig. 6.8), the comarca road has been completed, along with others that pass through the population centers of

some significance. The A Fervenza reservoir was constructed on the River Xallas in the 1960s, which in turn led to more roads and tracks being opened in the highland areas. And in 1975 the Dumbría Hydrocarbon Factory was opened as part of the industrial complex located in the comarca of Costa da Morte, owned by the FerroAtlántica Group,¹⁶ which accentuated and justified the increase in terrestrial transport links. At any rate, this comarca was one of Galicia's most backward, as demonstrated by the fact that the main road link, comarca road C-552, was not completed until the late '90s. Marina, one of the oldest people from the village, born in 1916, recalls:

There were roads that you had to wear boots to walk on because you couldn't walk on them with shoes (...) then they paved them, now there are roads everywhere... since they did the land consolidation (...) Before there was nowhere to put your feet that wasn't mud... (Marina, GR009S001).

In fact, despite the improvements that have gradually been introduced, the state of the roads within the village is still terrible. José recounts this memory from the 1980s:

When the land consolidation program came, they didn't let the road come through here... we were badly affected (...) the second car that came in here was mine, around 23 years ago, and we had to plug the potholes with stone. Later, the Agraria added concrete and stones (José GR006S001).

The cartography shows that it was at this time that the returning emigrants built the first homes on the sides of this new comarca road, with construction increasing in subsequent years: 'When the emigrants came back here they built houses outside the village; they built them in brick and painted them' (fieldnotes, 21/10/2010). It was in the '80s when most of the houses were built on the road: 'The miller was one of the first to leave. It was when the stables made of blocks were also built, in the '80s they paid 800 pesetas per kilo of calf' (Moncho, fieldnotes 21/10/2010) (Fig. 6.9).

6.4 A Landscape Shaped by a Globalized Process

As we have seen, the cartographic collection used in this case study reflects in a very visual way the global process (Aguilar Criado 2002; Freire Paz 2009; Roseman 2008), in which the 1960s are the time when, in Galicia and other parts of the Spanish state, the decline of this 'traditional' system took place, with the emergence of another system of economic capitalism and the promotion and development of new ways of life, in which rural labor and community life, as it was conceived until that moment, no longer make sense. The countryside was abandoned, the cities were populated and the territory was coordinated through a new road network (Fig. 6.10).

¹⁶<http://www.ferroatlantica.es/index.php/es/fabricas-fa/fabricas/dumbria/empresa-cv-2>.



Fig. 6.9 The first cars in Olveiroa. *Photo shown by Marisol*



Fig. 6.10 A testament to emigration on a wall inside a storehouse. *Source Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero*

The economic structure changed, with part of the population going from working in the fields to joining the salaried working class. The monetary economy was activated, a process that had been emerging since the early twentieth century with the first waves of emigrants to the Americas. In the mid twentieth century, the destination of emigrants changed to European countries, primarily Germany and Switzerland, with the population employed in the construction industry, while the rural exodus to cities within the Spanish state also increased, particularly in the Basque Country and Catalonia, at a time when the need for labor was created by an emerging urban and industrial economy (Basque Country, Catalonia, etc.) and service sector. In the 1990s (Fariña Jamardo 1993: 111), the population density of the municipality of Dumbría had fallen to 32.8 inhabitants per km², notably lower than the average across Galician municipalities of 95.16 and the average in the province of A Coruña, of 139 inhabitants per km².

Within this contemporary process of abandonment of the village, later there was also a return to the village, or in other words, the space is reused by returning emigrants, holiday homes, etc. The family's improved financial situation enables them, at the least, to carry out 'improvements' to the old houses. But, above all, this economic prosperity translates into a new house being built, adapted to the changing times, which will be associated with wealth and progress, since it will replace the old one, synonymous with poverty and a past in ruins, giving rise to a detachment from everything from the past and an admiration for the new. An Olveiroa inhabitant confirms this attitude: 'The emigrant returning from Switzerland would build another house, abandoning the village house' (GR005S002).

The old village, the old houses, the roads and paths, the fields and hills, they are all part of a past of misery, hardship and hard work. Some houses are neglected because the new idea of progress comes with another aesthetic, the use of other materials, another way of rationalizing what is modern and what is not through a change in outward appearance. The old homes are made of stone, with earth floors, timber divisions, no bathroom or running water. The roads are narrow, muddy, unpaved, unsuitable for the new cars that have been bought: 'There was nowhere to put your feet that wasn't in the mud' (Marina, GR009001).

Modernity is now seen as something separate from the village, as if the world was divided into two, two memories, two economies, the two views of the past and the present, the old and the new, the antiquated and the modern, poverty and wealth, backwardness and development. The houses and the village as a whole therefore lost all the value they had acquired over their long life.¹⁷ For them there

¹⁷We should not forget that, for many communities, this kind of architecture remains a symbol of their poverty, hence we should not be surprised at the aggressiveness with which the homes have been transformed or continue to be destroyed; changing the house, even if just its outward appearance, is to show a change of status favored by a higher income. This explains the use that was made of the first income from emigration and the current widespread state of disrepair observable in farming communities when other sources of income enabled them to build extravagant homes that could take several years to complete (Agudo Torrico 1999, 192).



Fig. 6.11 One of the homes built in the late 1980s, on the side of the main road. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

was no point in fitting out or restoring the old home; rather, they felt they needed to build a new one, away from the village center, on the side of the main road. Two different areas emerged: the old area (abandoned, neglected and aged) and the new area, more dynamic and with new houses: ‘There used to be an old area (...) and a new area, they said: isn’t it much more fashionable living on the road than in the old area that was here? Now it’s the other way round’ (GR005S001) (Fig. 6.11).

In other words, from the ’60s to the ’80s, the old home, located in the village center, was left to go to rack and ruin. Instead, a new one was built on the main transit route: a new conception of space and the home, new relationships between humans and their environment. With the village center now abandoned, isolated houses began to appear around the main road. As the mayor of Dumbría, José Manuel Pequeño, explains:

In the 1960s, when people emigrated and needed to build homes, they didn’t have access to the old village; cattle carts could travel down the paths but cars couldn’t. They wanted comfort and they all moved to the main road because it was a major route, and the same thing happened in Olveiroa, everyone moved to the road and the village center was left to ruin (GR011S001).

In the design and construction of these new houses, the local stone is no longer the basic construction material and insulating and breathable materials such as timber are no longer used; new construction materials are introduced such as

concrete blocks and tiles, cold materials with no porosity that favor damp inside the home, creating cold and unhealthy environments. In most cases, the use of these new materials, regardless of their quality and comfort, carried with it a certain prestige, the good taste of a social class that has improved its economic situation through emigration, because this prestige or distinction also depends on social class (Bourdieu 1998).

Nonetheless, a new awareness of home comfort is generated. In general terms, the traditional peasant home has the following distribution: on the ground floor there are stables and the kitchen, so that the heat that the animals produce and the heat from the *lareira* (the fireplace) warms the rooms on the floor above; the partitioning is made of timber, which allows the heat to be easily distributed and keeps the house aired. In the new home, there are no longer any stables underneath it; these are in an adjoining building. The disappearance of the old *lareiras* is an important factor. They were a space that was designed to be the heart of the home, a communal place in which to cook, eat, warm up and come together, and they were replaced by new modern kitchens that, sometimes, were no longer used as living areas. In this process, a curious phenomenon occurs: a stable is adapted into a space where the old gas cooker is positioned so that the cooking can be done there while the new kitchen is being built. Curiously, this temporary kitchen often becomes permanent, and the new one is never used. This new space becomes the place where the family comes together, like the *lareira*, giving rise to an internal redistribution of the home.

Another consequence of the abandonment of the countryside, one which also involves structures adjoining homes, is the abandonment and disappearance of the *iras de mallar* (the threshing floors) and *hórreos* (granaries), structures that were later taken into consideration when it came to improving the village, and which acted as valuable heritage assets: ‘We removed the threshing floor, the stone was removed, and it was used for something else, and some was left lying around (...) we built the storehouse 10 years ago’ (Mariluz, fieldnotes, 19/10/2010).

6.5 The Reoccupation of the Village: The Formation of a ‘Hostel Village’

In around the 1980s, 1990s and even the 2000s, the comarca of Finisterre had the second lowest average family income in Galicia.¹⁸ But the abandonment of this village appears to halt in the late twentieth century, when the Camino from Santiago to Finisterre was promoted. In the 1980s José Manuel Pequeño took office as mayor of a depopulated and deprived municipality, despite the presence of the hydrocarbon factory and several reservoirs, which in theory should have generated some degree of economic dynamism. In the words of the mayor:

¹⁸http://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/carballo/2009/11/14/0003_8106204.htm.

We watched as the population deserted the area, the population pyramid was ageing... it was a population that was emigrating, then we said: We must do something. (...) The villages were totally inaccessible, there was no way to get vehicles there, the land parceling was wrong... You have to surface roads, you need lighting... it was impossible to build livestock farms because there was no power... It made no sense that Dumbria, with 4/5 reservoirs, should have no power... these were needs that had to be met (GR011S001).

Thus, having assessed the state of total decline that the municipality was in, a number of studies were conducted to explore what strategies might be used to generate growth and stimulate the local economy. One of the many proposals put forward was to activate the tourist industry, and therefore the service sector, as a way forward, with the aim of creating jobs and so that the population would stop leaving and settle permanently in the village:

Much of the population is in the primary sector, but there was a downward trend and the service sector, tourism, was very low. The population moved from the primary sector to the tertiary sector, hence the decision to create jobs (GR011S001).

In this context the Asociación Neria was created. This association was founded primarily in order to promote and coordinate the rural space, improve living conditions and contribute to curbing the depopulation of rural areas through the planning, implementation and management of the European Leader+ scheme and other EC programs (Asociación Neria 2010: 4). The geographical scope of the initiative extended to the majority of the municipalities of the Costa da Morte (Ballesteros-Arias and Sánchez-Carretero 2011: 1588).

The starting point was the potential as a tourist destination of this area, taking advantage of the promotional work that was being done at the time for the Camino from Santiago to Finisterre, as a tourist attraction, since much of the municipality was traversed by this route. The mayor explained their strategy: 'We did fieldwork and built a strategy, part of which was the Camino de Santiago' (GR011S001).

One factor to consider in these processes of change that we are examining is that the recovery of this historic section of the Camino is very recent. Its route was agreed and it was first promoted in the late '90s (Vilar 2010: 12), like the rest of the Caminos, coinciding with the Jacobean Year of 1993, when the Xacobeo public enterprise was founded. Within this process of developing the Camino, the village of Olveiroa was chosen for a pilot scheme, for several reasons: because it was on the Camino route, due to its state of conservation and because of the expertise and initiative of its mayor.

Precisely because of the neglect it had suffered, the village was fossilized, ideal for a pilot recovery scheme, since virtually the entire old village center was free from irreversible modifications; the architectural changes had taken place outside of the village. Domingo, an inhabitant of Olveiroa, said, 'The heritage we have is almost intact, which is why it's ideal for tourism' (fieldnotes, 20/10/2010). The municipal council bought four houses, one of them the old school, in order to set up a pilgrim hostel in them (it was also a strategic location, since at that time there



Fig. 6.12 Group of houses restored for the municipal hostel. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

were none between Negreira and Cee¹⁹). Obviously, these homes lost their original function when they were given a different use and value to the one they were built for. But the main aim of this project was to maintain the architecture and improve it, both due to its age and its ‘authenticity’ as a traditional house. In 2005 the hostel and the recreational area around it were opened, a project developed by Dumbría Municipal Council with subsidies from the Galician Regional Government and the European Social Fund. In the words of the mayor of Dumbría, José Pequeño Castro:

We managed to buy the four houses that were in ruins for 420,000 pesetas of that time; it was a gift. My idea, at an architectural level, was to convert rural buildings, for it to be a renovation rather than a new building (...) and made people realize that they can live in the old houses as comfortably as they can in the new ones they were building... the local people, seeing how it was possible to make those houses so nice and so comfortable... that’s how the recovery of the village of Olveiroa began... (GR011S001).

¹⁹Later an old school in Vilaserío was converted into a hostel, another public one was built in Negreira, while recently a private one opened in Vilaserío and another public one opened in Dumbría. For more information on the opening of accommodation, see the study by Eva Parga in this volume.

In fact, this initial step towards restoring the old homes was not just the beginning of a process of revitalizing the tourist industry that involved opening accommodation; it also established a taste for reclaiming ‘the old,’ for valuing the past. A change occurred in the spaces and architectural elements, from the negative connotations of ‘old’ to the positive ones of ‘antique,’ which has led to many of these elements being reconsidered as examples of the effective rationality of the architecture of the past. As Puri, the hostel’s *hospitalera*, explains: ‘Now everyone wants a stone house, even if it’s small, because people would say (referring to brick-built houses) that in summer they are very hot and in winter very cold’ (GR005S001) (Fig. 6.12).

There is a change in attitude and focus clearly explained by José ‘O Goriñán,’ born in the village in 1942, who played an active part in the process of recovering Olveiroa: ‘I think it’s wonderful (...) how they restored the house here because they like the village... There was nothing here before’ (GR006S001).

Or, in the words of Puri, who believes this process is giving people back their sense of belonging: ‘People feel prouder to be from Olveiroa... People feel prouder of what they have’ (GR005S001).

6.6 Conclusions

Rural depopulation is a historical reality that was accentuated from the 1950s, as people stopped laboring in the fields and started working in the tertiary sector. But in recent years we have witnessed a structural and cultural change in certain rural population centers that have rebuilt a space through a new economic and cultural approach that reshaped it.

Through this study conducted in the village of Olveiroa, where ethnographic fieldwork was conducted alongside the use and analysis of written documentation, cartographic maps and aerial photography from various years, an overview has been provided of what happened in this area over time, albeit with a particular focus on its recent past. The study was based on a spatial analysis in which the elements of the landscape, conceived in the Middle Ages, allude to traditional ways of life maintained, to a certain extent and with the changes that are to be expected, until the mid-twentieth century. Starting in the past, we have attempted to arrive at the present in a fairly graphic way, through a collation of the sources used, which show how transit routes play an essential role in abandonment and recovery processes in inhabited areas. An inhabited center around the transit route that passed through it turned into a virtually uninhabited place because new houses were built around the main road that circumvents the village, yet pilgrimage has now led to the old route becoming the primary artery again. Thus a ‘pilgrim landscape’ is formed, in a hostel village, with the restoration of the houses in the center of Olveiroa, four of which are the municipal hostel itself.

At a time of economic transition, from the old regime to economic modernization, the village, as the primary entity that organizes the space, loses meaning,

while the traditional main road and sole transit route at the time is abandoned to build a new road to suit the times, and it no longer links us to the village but distances us from it. However, over time, and with new policies prompted by Europe but implemented by the municipal council and the Asociación Neria, and in view of the need to revitalize this deprived area, the old road is recovered as a historic pilgrimage route, which brings traffic back to this Camino and, consequently, the village, where a pilgrim hostel is opened in several formerly ruined buildings located in the center. This initiative led to the opening of several establishments providing accommodation and, in theory, it is driving the revitalization through tourism of a place destined to oblivion.

On the basis of the assessment by municipal officials of the problems that were present throughout the municipality and specifically the village of Olveiroa (neglect, depopulation, unemployment, etc.), the authorized heritage discourse (Smith 2006) has assumed that engaging in the primary sector has no future, that it is not a means for development, and that this will come by incentivizing the service sector through tourism revolving around local heritage, with the Camino acting as the artery from which other heritage assets in the area can be reached. In other words, taking advantage of the fact that the Camino passes through the village, a pilgrim hostel was built there under building criteria in keeping with the traditional local architecture. Like a shock wave, this affected the improvement of other immovable assets such as the Camino itself, the beautification of the characteristic structures of ‘Galician culture’ such as the ‘hórreos’ and, at a private level, the renovation of some of the houses in the village to recover the ‘traditional’ aesthetics.

In this regard, we wish to make a number of reflections. First, the Camino de Santiago has been adopted as a fundamental heritage asset used as the basis for generating economic dynamism in this deprived area. With this in mind, in parallel, the traditional architecture, the homes and other ruined structures built by former inhabitants, have been taken into consideration and valued. These houses and buildings are of ethnological value as testaments to the recent past of the village. The more modest traditional architecture has therefore been taken into account and its restoration has called attention to the variety of nuances and expressiveness of this architecture, which is now appreciated by its inhabitants to the point that it has had an impact on their own conception of the village and their homes. The beautification and new *mise en scène* of the village has led to a shift in certain opinions and collective patterns of behavior concerning its cultural heritage, which was considered for decades as non-existent and negative. But what is happening could come to an end soon, essentially for two reasons: First, if we take stock, it is clear that all of this is going in just one direction: promoting the tertiary sector and discouraging other kinds of initiative that are considered obsolete. I am referring to those related to the primary sector. Perhaps assistance related to the promotion of this sector would send the shock wave that we mentioned above towards other parts of the village, towards its surroundings, towards its landscape, stimulating an interest in the countryside and revitalizing the rural landscape through new forms of rurality and consumption of the traditional, which is also in fashion.

And second, protection sometimes also brings with it the destruction of the things that are intended to be protected. In relation to the restoration and improvement of population centers, not to mention the Camino de Santiago itself, sometimes the opposite effect occurs, because they fall within a logic that obeys economic policies and trends in which the effects of this style are not questioned (Bourdieu 1998): overuse of construction materials, excessive lighting, impossible street lights, road expansion and surfacing, landscaping and planters not in keeping with local tastes or, for instance, the destruction of narrow unsurfaced paths to replace them with wide gravel tracks (see Chap. 4).

We should not forget that this process of ‘beautification,’ improvement and adaptation builds a new landscape, under the criteria that someone considers to be appropriate for whatever reason. But these interventions, intended to please pilgrims, tourists and the general public, often cause mixed feelings. As one pilgrim said: ‘I did the Camino seven years ago... you can see that civilization has arrived... it has changed a lot... a lot of asphalt’ (fieldnotes 22/10/2010). The material culture of the pilgrimage routes has gravitated towards stone, but also towards gravel and asphalt, creating a new landscape, a pilgrim landscape.

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Chapter 7

Archaeological Heritage Management Along the Camino

Carlos Otero-Vilariño

7.1 Introduction

In the Camino to Finisterre-Muxía area there are a number of archaeological sites. Some existed before the route was used, with a density and attributes that are to be expected in any other part of Galicia and even in other parts of Atlantic Europe, but the presence of others is clearly linked to the existence of the Camino. The research question guiding this study is: What is the nature of the relationship of mutual influence between the Camino and these sites and what can we expect from this relationship?

Within the general framework of “Heritagization processes on the Camino de Santiago”, the contribution from archaeology has been exploratory. We use the adjective “exploratory” in the sense that, depending on the results obtained in a study of archaeological heritage and an ethnographic study, specific actions to take on the archaeological heritage would be considered. In other words, in a first stage, the study looked at what ‘heritagization’ processes are being carried out on the archaeological heritage; then, if heritage elements that are especially valuable to local populations or particularly relevant to pilgrimage itself were detected, in a second stage a continuation of the project would be planned, focusing on these archaeological elements. Although this interest among the local populations was not detected, so the second phase was never implemented, we did consider it important to put forward some proposals on how to make the archaeological heritage along the route more visible.

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Landscape and archaeological sites do not have their full meaning as isolated phenomena. This landscape, this Camino, was built by communities for whom these sites were their greatest monumental expression. The present of the Camino cannot be fully understood without looking to its past. This is the purpose of the study: to investigate what the material remains of the past can contribute to the Camino's present. With this in mind, we set ourselves three objectives: First, to document the current state of preservation of the main archaeological assets located in the area of the pilgrimage route, as well as its recent evolution and its level of vulnerability, particularly in relation to the use of the route. Second, we wanted to document the presence of conservation activities and promotion of the assets, and/or the continued effect of actions of this kind carried out in the past. Finally we wanted to take an initial look at the potential of the sites in terms of their promotion.

To achieve these objectives, we prepared a specific database. We then added all the information available on these sites to the database. Finally, we checked the current state of preservation and visiting of the sites, looking for significant changes in the recent past and therefore changing trends in their heritage status and/or management. We also wanted these trends to be expressed numerically so that their situation could be understood more accurately.

The scope of this study was limited to the sites that can be visited or seen by pilgrims and it included all the archaeological sites of a visible nature within a transect of 500 m on each side of the Camino. We discarded the sites that have already been destroyed or are inaccessible (and therefore not visible), given that we cannot assess what we do not know or only know through references or inferences. Initially, we also wanted to include the sites that, located beyond this transept, were mentioned as visitable sites in the literature associated with the use of the route (guides and leaflets), but we did not find any examples of this; rather, the sites mentioned were too far away and unrelated to the route.

7.2 Types of Sites

Before analyzing the management as heritage of the archaeological sites along the Camino, the types of site found will be described in general terms. In practice, not all types are equally assimilable into the experience of the Camino. Logically, the most visible and monumental will be the most attractive and those that have the greatest explanatory power. Thus, there are three types of site that are particularly significant and meaningful both for Galician society and for pilgrims, to which a fourth type can be added:

1. Burial mounds mainly ascribed to the Neolithic Period (5000–2500 BC). Varying in size, with or without a stone chamber, and popularly known as *mámoas*, *medorras*, *medoñas* and other terms, they are the earliest intentionally built monuments in Galicia, and they have survived as such to the present

day. Their appearance is that of a hillock, where parts of a stone chamber are sometimes visible, depending on whether one originally existed or has been subsequently altered. They are abundant and well known by the local populations, who integrate them as territorial markers and refer to them in legends with magical themes. Their distribution around the region is not random and their presence affects our reading of a landscape that was exploited by the semi-nomadic communities that built them. We can also observe the relationship between these monuments and the natural transit routes that would have been used by these communities for their movements. The continued validity of these routes or critical points of transit to this day increases the significance to pilgrims of these mounds. Ramil Rego (1996) and Rodríguez Casal (1990) have published reference works summarizing the burial mound phenomenon and Villoch Vázquez (2000) explains the relationships between mounds, movement of people and landscape.

2. A second type of site comprises what is known as Galician rock art, carved into stone, mostly granite outcrops, with a meaning that to this day has not been fully explained. It is not a phenomenon ascribable to a particular period; rather, in Galicia it has been present from Neolithic times to this day. However, the richest and most renowned carvings were made during the Galician Bronze Age (2500–1000 BC), of which they are the greatest monumental expression, and a good part of the Iron Age (1000 BC to 2nd century AD). Frequently, on a single surface it is possible to see carvings from different historical periods. Their relationship with the landscape is also significant, located in relation to the boundaries of the territories occupied by communities, access and transit points to living or hunting spaces, or sacred places. For a closer look at Galician rock art, there are reference works on the phenomenon as a whole (García Alén and Peña Santos 1981; Vázquez Rozas 1997) or synthetic examinations of the relationships between carvings and the landscape such as in Criado Boado et al. (2001).
3. Finally there are fortified Iron Age settlements (1000 BC to 2nd century AD), known in Galicia as *castros*. They are the earliest example of fortified settlements built in our territory, and their structures—especially their walls and ditches—are visible to this day. Their presence and distribution tells us that there were stable communities, permanently attached to a territory and with a certain degree of political organization. They are perhaps the primary prehistoric archaeological feature in Galicia, both due to their monumentality and the rich material culture they contain, as well as the wealth of legends and mythological beings associated with them. González-Ruibal (2006) provides an exhaustive account of the Galician Iron Age, making it an indispensable reference work.
4. In addition to these, shall we say, ‘protagonists’ of Galician archaeological heritage, there are also other types of site, including the early medieval fortified settlements, which have not yet been studied a great deal in Galicia and which constitute a valuable testament, not just to the community’s permanent need for protection and the manifestation of the effective power of the elite, but also, first and foremost, to the importance of controlling the critical and strategic points of transit for movement around the territory.

7.3 Heritage Status and Management of the Sites in the Camino Area

Before going on to consider the situation and potential of the sites studied as a group, it should be noted that, of the 78 sites initially included in the study, 25 (32 %), could not be located, whether because they are covered by dense vegetation, because they are inaccessible or because they have recently been destroyed. It is difficult to determine the proportion of each of these possibilities, since our work did not involve an intensive archaeological survey of the transect in question. In any case, it is significant that such a high percentage of sites could not be located, a clear indicator of the complex conditions of accessibility and visibility and the high level of activity, possibly agroforestry-related, that may have caused their destruction.

Of the 53 sites that we could visit, we found that eight (15 %) clearly suffered deterioration, to varying degrees, some to the point of disappearance. This suggests a slight trend towards deterioration in the state of preservation of the sites in the last 10 years. We can also assert that the Finisterre Camino is not a significant agent for change; its existence and use have only led to alterations of very limited scope to two sites (with milestones installed on them to signal the Camino).

To assess the management as heritage of the archaeological assets of the Camino area, in addition to examining their state of preservation, we also looked at four simple indicators:

- Asset accessibility: Whether or not there are suitable conditions for accessing the asset on foot and exploring it to such an extent that it can be understood.
- Asset visibility: Whether the asset is visible to the extent that it can be identified and understood.
- On-site illustration: Whether there are any valid devices to explain the asset on-site.
- The existence of other channels of illustration for the asset.

The assessment is made on the basis of whether these circumstances occur or not, without evaluating their validity or scope. Remember that our intention is to carry out an initial quantifiable approximation to provide an overview of the management of these archaeological assets. Of a total of 78 sites evaluated:

- Eight sites (less than 10 %) are accessible, but they are not visible and do not have any illustrative devices.
- Four sites (5 %) are visible to the extent that a visitor could see them and understand them with minimal illustration, but they are not accessible and do not have any illustrative devices.
- Only two sites (just under 3 %) are accessible and visible, but do not have any explanatory devices.
- And only one site (just over 1 %), the Hermitage of San Guillerme at Cape Finisterre, is accessible, visible and has an explanatory device on site.



Fig. 7.1 Hermitage of San Guillermo behind the explanatory panel (August 2014). *Source* Carlos Otero

To conclude, 70 sites (almost 90 %) are inaccessible, 74 (95 %) are not visible, and 76 (97 %) are neither accessible nor visible. In other words, only one site, the Hermitage of Guillermo, has the conditions needed to be understood and visited by pilgrims. We can therefore surmise that there is no conscious management of the archaeological heritage of the Camino area, with the exception of the interventions at the Hermitage of San Guillermo. Moreover, in our opinion, the San Guillermo intervention has more to do with its location at Cape Finisterre, since it indicates, for instance, its location at a distance from the Camino that does not facilitate visiting on foot (Fig. 7.1).

7.4 Potential of the Sites and Proposed Intervention

As explained in the introduction, initially the idea was to use the information from the ethnographic part of the study to continue with a second stage in the archaeological research closer to public archaeology, completing a small project at the archaeological sites that are particularly significant for the local populations. However, since this link between archaeological sites along the Camino was not detected, the second phase was never carried out. Nonetheless, it seems

appropriate to publish the methodology used in the selection of the sites that could be the object of future interventions, as well as a proposed intervention on a small selection of sites. The selection comprises those that offer the best potential for promotion, discarding the sites that have characteristics that deviate from the criteria explained below. These criteria, inspired by much more comprehensive evaluative models (that can be consulted, for instance, in González Méndez 2000) are simple, in keeping with the prospective nature of this study:

- Ownership of the land: We discard any sites located on enclosed private property, or those that involve crossing private property in order to be enjoyed. Some of the selected sites may be located on private property if they can be seen without entering the property.
- Accessibility: We evaluate the possibility of accessing the locations and access within them.
- Location: The proximity of the sites to the Camino is assessed, on the basis that this selection is aimed at pilgrims.
- Explanatory potential: To what extent a site has the conditions needed to be understood and/or to enable the potential links between the site and the Camino to be perceived. These conditions may be material (visibility and the explanatory potential of the remains), or immaterial (the potential for explaining phenomena of interest based on the site).
- Cost of the intervention: Both the exploitation and preservation work, as well as maintenance of the site, must have a minimal cost and, in all cases, the authorities involved must be able to assume this cost.

In an initial assessment, we concluded that, within the list of known archaeological sites, 11 have the potential to be exploited at low cost and would be easy to maintain. The aim would be to apply a limited promotional model, without considering difficult or costly interventions and instead looking at minor interventions centered on clearing, accessibility and basic illustration of the sites. Within these 11, it would be particularly worthwhile to make visible three of the sites from the Camino:

- Pedra Longa/Pedra Ancha petroglyph (Dumbría). This is one of the most famous Galician petroglyphs. The carvings are located on the wall of a large granite outcrop, the only one of its size in the area. These carvings are clearly visible in the mid-afternoon, when the sunlight falls obliquely on the surface where they are located. At other times of the day they are more difficult to see. It is considered to be of great interest because of its wide range of motifs, in particular the depictions of weapons, which are unusual in the northern part of Galicia. The motifs include a dagger, several halberds and possible depictions of carts. The state of preservation of the carvings is very good. Although the petroglyph can be accessed, the vegetation that currently surrounds it makes it difficult to see and constitutes a significant fire hazard. It is located just 10 m from the Camino. Simply clearing the area around the site and signposting it would have a significant impact on the preservation of the asset and its viewing conditions (Fig. 7.2).



Fig. 7.2 Petroglyph of *Pedra Ancha* (Dumbría). Source Carlos Otero

- Castelo/Castelo de Logoso (Dumbría). Medieval settlement with general characteristics similar to those of a *castro*; it has a small oval upper part, or *croa*, with an interior where there are visible remains of huts and other stone structures. The most visible remains today belong to a masonry wall around 2 m wide and partially collapsed. To the south, east and west of the main enclosure, there are what appear to be two small terraces, covered in vegetation. The site is located 200 m from the Camino, at the top of a steep slope. Four circumstances are conducive to intervention here: The significance of the site as a possible remnant of an early medieval method of controlling land insufficiently understood and disseminated in Galicia, its good state of preservation, and its more than likely relationship with the Finisterre Camino, controlling this route at one of its critical transit points (near a crossing of the River Xallas). Finally, the place is an excellent viewpoint. Intervention here could be limited to clearing the vegetation and access from the Camino, and signposting both the site and the scenery that can be viewed from this vantage point.
- Castro de Lourido (Muxía): This site has an oval-shaped *croa* approximately 100 m across at its longest axis, gently sloping towards the coast. The rampart that demarcates the *croa* barely stands out from its interior, while towards the exterior it creates an embankment 2–3 m high. Bordering the *croa*, at a distance of around 10 m, there is a second defensive rampart that creates a terraced



Fig. 7.3 Lourido beach. On the *upper side*, the Castro of Lourido, and, on the *right*, the construction of the Parador of Muxía (August 2014). *Source*: Carlos Otero

surface. The south side of the site appears to have been affected by the removal of material after the settlement was abandoned. The site is currently covered in sand that the wind has brought in from Lourido Beach, located to the north of the site. The vegetation that covers it is low, so its topography is visible. The location of the site does not, perhaps, lend itself to visiting, since it is some way from the Finisterre Camino. However, there is an exceptional view of it from the Camino. Hence we would recommend signposting it, so that it can be identified and understood from the route. In addition, it is located above Lourido Beach, a very attractive natural space and tourist attraction, where a National Tourism Parador is being built (Fig. 7.3).

Anyone who knows about Galician archaeological heritage will notice the absence of megalithism in this selection. Of course, there is an abundance of mounds along the side of the route. But it is precisely their abundance, dispersion and diversity that make a different approach advisable, one that is not based on specific interventions. We propose a treatment of these monuments that focuses more on showing the location and dispersion of the sites, giving an account of the relationship between the mounds and the landscape and the movement of people around the territory. One possibility would be to include several groups of these sites on a map platform at a variable scale that is compatible with mobile devices, accompanied by a brief explanation.

Depending on the target audience, in the event that it is decided that it should be directed specifically at pilgrims, the main channels of communication used to plan and travel the Camino (guides, cartographic applications for mobile devices, etc.) could be used.

7.5 Conclusions

The main conclusion of this study is that there is an absence of heritagization processes associated with the archaeological heritage along the Camino, with the exception of the Hermitage of San Guillermo. In addition to detecting this absence, the archaeological component of the study has yielded some pieces of evidence that, together, provide an overview of the treatment received by the visible archaeological assets on the Finisterre Camino, as well as the opportunities these offer.

The quantity of visible archaeological sites located in the vicinity of the Camino does not go beyond what can be expected as an average in Galicia: under one site per square kilometer. In a transect of around 120 km², the presence of 78 visible archaeological sites was documented.

The trend in the situation of the heritage status of the assets is, in terms of the sites that we were able to observe, slightly negative. But considering the high percentage that the sites that have disappeared would probably represent within the group of sites not located, the trend is even more negative and accelerated. And considering that most of the sites are located in unpopulated, cultivated and forestry areas, we believe it would be difficult to reverse this process. We can also assert that, to date, the existence and use of the Finisterre Camino is not a cause of significant alteration to this set of sites.

With the exception of the Hermitage of San Guillermo, there is no conscious management of the archaeological heritage of the Finisterre Camino area, beyond making an inventory of it. Nonetheless, we believe there are some sites, fewer than a dozen, where it would be worthwhile to carry out promotional interventions. None of them a priori are exceptional, and only the Pedra Ancha petroglyph and the Hermitage of San Guillermo deserve special status within the Galician context. This is not a bad thing in itself; work on exceptional sites also demands exceptional investments, which are not expected here. Our proposal is aimed more at performing simple actions on equally simple sites, albeit ones that can explain to pilgrims the major prehistoric and protohistoric milestones that have shaped the land traversed by the Camino.

The Finisterre Camino runs along successive routes, some of them undoubtedly very ancient. We know about the relationship between the layout of these routes and the presence of monuments (burial mounds, petroglyphs) and settlements (*castros*, *castelos*) from various periods. To enrich the pilgrimage experience with discourse that recounts the historical significance of the Camino, the archaeological heritage of the surroundings must be incorporated, and this must be done in a way that gives meaning to the relationship between this heritage and the route, offering something more than just the possibility of contemplating ruins from the past.

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Part III
Spirituality, Motives and the End
of the World

Chapter 8

To Be or not to Be... a Pilgrim. Spiritual Pluralism Along the Camino Finisterre and the Urge for the End

Peter Jan Margry

8.1 Introduction

At least until approximately the 1970s, pilgrimage was commonly regarded as a belief-specific ritualistic Catholic phenomenon.¹ It was then also rather obvious who was actually a true pilgrim: devotees going to Lourdes, Padre Pio voteries in San Giovanni Rotondo, Marianists in Fatima and Our Lady of Guadalupe, or worshippers visiting one of the thousands of other shrines all over the world (Nolan and Nolan 1989). Alone or in groups, they were regarded as performing a rite of passage in order to reach a goal, a shrine where they hoped they would find salvation or deepening of faith.² Since then, especially in the Western world, things began to shift. In a post-modern manner—with blurred boundaries and bricolated

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¹Phrased in this way, only for this section, I position pilgrimage in a Christian context, not taking the phenomenon in other religions into account.

²The rite of passage refers to pilgrimage as a liminoid activity for which it is necessary to undergo a process twice in order to perform the ritual: to consciously extricate oneself from everyday life at the start of the pilgrimage, and return to the ordinary course of life again at the end. See Turner and Turner (1978: 7).

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concepts of religiosity and spirituality—leisurely walking, thirst for history and mysticism as well as performing a (cultural) pilgrimage became interconnected to one another. The immense popularity of walking the Camino to Santiago de Compostela and many other spiritual and cultural routes in today's world is a result of that development. It does appear to have obscured the clear traditional concepts of pilgrimage or of being a pilgrim (cf. Reader and Walter 1993; Coleman and Eade 2004; Margry 2008a). Although pilgrimage was and still is basically an individual endeavor which does not generate inherent bonding among the traveling pilgrims,³ pilgrimage can also generate strong manifestations of sociability which influence the pilgrimage experience.

But nowadays travelers on these spiritual routes are quite puzzled about what they are, what they are searching for and what they are actually performing, and how this act relates to the traditional Christian conception of pilgrimage. Pilgrimage has also become a commodifiable product, which has led politicians and administrators to be increasingly inclined to declare pilgrimage routes as cultural heritage (Fladmark 1998; Roseman 2004; Margry 2008b; Roseman et al. 2008; Sánchez-Carretero 2012). In the meantime, the leisure business exploits pilgrimage in a commercial way (Fernández-Poyatos et al. 2011), while the R.C. Church is actively trying to re-appropriate 'their' hijacked ritual for new evangelization purposes (Wojtyła 1989, 2004). Meanwhile scholars have started to focus their research on the parallels and differences with modern (mass) tourism (Fladmark 1998; Badone and Roseman 2004; Norman 2011; Margry 2014) or backpack traveling (Mendel 2010).⁴ Thus, by drifting away from the traditional pilgrimage paradigm⁵ the Camino (and *a fortiori* also the other new spiritual footpaths recently created) generated a new genre in the global pilgrimage culture (Margry 2008a: 23–26).

Next to the spiritual or religious endeavors these changes brought the notion of pilgrimage in connection to various phenomena, ranging from heritage experience, ecology and nature, meditative walking, healing, sportive venturing, *curiositas*, touristic or recreational activity. As a consequence it has become less clear what arouses people to do this, the tentatively begun structured research into motive repertoires needs therefore to be expanded (cf. Post et al. 1998; Webb 2008). I present here an investigation into the motives of walkers on a recently created post-Santiago pilgrimage track in the North-West of Spain.

³This idea of a specific 'communitas' (Turner and Turner 1978) as an inherent effect of pilgrimage is rejected, cf. Eade and Sallnow (2000: 4–5); Coleman and Eade (2004: 3); for pilgrimage being considered as primarily individual see Margry (2008a: 324).

⁴This research perspective is strongly evoked by the loose postulate of the Turners: 'a tourist is half a pilgrim, *if* a pilgrim is half a tourist,' (Turner and Turner 1978: 20), italics added.

⁵Although this new genre still echoes the early medieval practice of *peregrinatio*, the individual wandering outside one's homeland, in reflection and for the praise of God; cf. Claussen (1991).

8.2 A New Route

While in the mid-1990s the revitalized, famous Camino Francés—the part of the route in Spain, from the Pyrenees to Santiago—was already a success, the route to Finisterre, connecting Santiago with the Atlantic coast was not yet really established.⁶ Since then this route's position has changed: the wish not to end one's pilgrimage at saint James Shrine in Santiago but to continue for Finisterre and Muxía became likewise popular. A new Camino branch subsequently came into being. In a few years the annual number of walkers deciding to continue to Finisterre rose from a negligible amount to more than 20,000 in 2010.⁷ Who are these walkers, and what motivates them?

In order to answer these basic questions, I analyze in this chapter the motives of those who 'deviate' from the traditional terminus in Santiago and choose for a continuation to the coast. I examine the religious and spiritual paradigms which cause them to head for the 'pagan' *Cabo Fisterra*, and relate those to their ritual practices. Finally, I ask whether their behavior can be regarded as pilgrimage, or should their wanderings be considered more as a recreational venture with pinches of heritage, spirituality and reflection?

Although generally not in an intentional, preconceived way, for walkers the practice of the Santiago journey often turns out to be an enterprise confronting them with existential aspects of life. While they hike and journey through foreign landscapes and the heritage sites of Europe, being brought back to themselves, many of them become perplexed by 'unavoidable' self-reflection on their behavior and experiences, and hence on their status: to be or not to be a pilgrim, to paraphrase the line from Hamlet used in the title of this article. Do they consider themselves as pilgrims or as secular hikers? Of course, this issue is not to be applied in a binary way, a more gradual or partly (un-)conscious transformation from the one condition to the other is often the case while walking, as both Camino diarists and scholars attest (Haab 1998, 2000; Post et al. 1998: 217–219; Slavin 2003). Or in the words of the then chair of the English Confraternity of Saint James, 'People with no particular spiritual orientation, attracted by the publicity surrounding the Camino and deciding to walk or cycle for purely recreational reasons, often undergo a transformation of personal values that has a lasting effect on their lives.' (Dennett 1997). And so the motives for departure may well be very different from what they undergo and decide during their journey.

⁶A Camino route, actually the same track, but in the other direction, towards Santiago, has older roots; see on this issue my other article in this volume.

⁷This is nearly eight percent of those who arrive as 'official' pilgrims in Santiago (during the Xacobeo jubilee 2010 more than 270,000; in 2012 192,500), see Parga-Dans (2012: 4), figures based on issued Compostelanas and Fisterranas, numbers that are lower than the actual figure of people who went along the trails, let alone of all those who visited (also by other means) Santiago or Finisterre. There are no figures available for the number of walkers to Finisterre or Muxía after 2010.

Recent research already pointed to the usually blurred motive repertoires, but also to the difficulty in drawing conclusive lines regarding the intentions and behavior of those going along the European Camino network (Slavin 2003; Frey 2004; Egan 2012). As the Finisterre route is an upcoming but pivotal new branch to the main Camino system, having a more open religious/spiritual profile, it is important to research this development and evaluate how this relatively new route relates to the existing Camino network and its practices.

8.3 Questionnaires

For my data for this project I traveled along the Finisterre route, did fieldwork, employed guidebooks, pilgrim diaries and literature, but above all I relied on an on-line multilingual questionnaire with open questions.⁸ This questionnaire was set up to fill out after having finished the peregrination and having returned home. Although the longevity of a pilgrimage and the regular moments of rest and reflection might seem to be ideal for questioning pilgrims under way, the opposite proved to be more true. One of the reasons is that the internalized state of movement and, at rest, the apartness or socializing behavior of the walkers make it difficult in practice to find persons who wanted to spend the time and had the peace of mind to deal with a comprehensive questionnaire. Another reason is that for properly completing the questionnaire it is necessary to have the Finisterre route fully completed. But when that is actually achieved, the euphoria of having arrived at Finisterre and the necessity of meditating and practicing rituals proves even less the right moment for bestowing attention on academic research and questionnaires which demand a high level of concentration and formulation. Therefore, being at ease at home with the full journey accomplished and a computer at hand is the better situation for completing a questionnaire.

For alerting the walkers to the existence of the online questionnaire I approached various international Santiago associations.⁹ As thousands of walkers become members before or after their Camino journey, and because those associations usually are strong informational intermediaries, I hoped to reach a representative group of Finisterre walkers. Ultimately just two national societies were able to communicate the questionnaire in an effective way to their membership. This

⁸I explored the route from 8 to 13 September, 2010, and returned there for additional fieldwork in October, 2012. The questionnaire was placed online in June, 2011, while in 2012 an additional paper requesting the filling out the questionnaire was distributed in hostels in Olveiroa and Finisterre. The questionnaire can be found at <http://www.meertens.knaw.nl/santiago>.

⁹The questionnaire (<http://www.meertens.knaw.nl/santiago>) is set up in two languages (English and Dutch); the Spanish version went online later and due to a lack of respondents could not be used for this contribution.

resulted in 115 responses, mostly from the Swiss and Dutch Jacobean societies.¹⁰ The largest part of this group performed their hike in the period after 2005. Only eight made it before the year 2000, and there were two pioneers in 1991-1992. Others, most from the UK and Germany, were represented by merely incidental responses.¹¹ Remarkably—although earlier research had already pointed in that direction—most of the respondents—3 out of 5 males and 2 out of 5 females—were highly educated and earn a considerable salary.¹²

A remark must also be made on the age of the respondents. Most of them were above 45, and a large majority even older than 60. This contrasted with my fieldwork experience where on the route Finisterre the presence of younger people was more obvious than 50+ walkers. One may conclude at least that younger (<40) walkers do not relate very much to Jacobean associations, or do not need institutional support.¹³ Older walkers more eagerly connect to such organizations and like to contact others and exchange information and experiences before and after their journey. Younger walkers however are not opposed to filling out questionnaires, as proved by an additional call for completing the questionnaire among them.¹⁴

Another issue that came up during my fieldwork was the experience that walkers, above all the younger, do not want their journey to be related to religion. On being asked, the people I encountered usually denied that their journey had anything to do with religion or spirituality. Conversations going in that direction caused embarrassment, and intruded on the tabooed personal domain of the walkers. For many, even the word 'pilgrim' proved a problematic label (cf. Sepp 2014). 'Blunt' queries on whether one is a pilgrim, and if in some way a religious or spiritual motivation was involved in the undertaking of the journey, often created suspicion, led to denials, and a diminished inclination to continue to talk. So there was all the more reason to deal with such sensitive queries by using a questionnaire that could be filled out anonymously. Moreover as, next to the religious issue, Camino walkers find it in general difficult enough at the time to formulate articulate answers for what impels them on their journey. Denial of spiritual

¹⁰In 2011 these countries were respectively numbers 9 (2398 persons) and 18 (1226 persons) on the list of largest nationalities of walkers on the Camino Francés; see <http://www.peregrino.santiago.es/esp/wp-content/uploads/informes/peregrinaciones2011.pdf>. Overall I received more than 300 filled out questionnaires, but of those only 115 (71 men, 44 women) actually continued beyond Santiago to Finisterre and/or Muxía.

¹¹Due to the language barrier there was hardly any response from Spanish walkers.

¹²Of the Swiss/international respondents 40 % were academics and nearly 90 % earned more than € 3000 a month, while of the Dutch 20 % were academics and their salary ranged for most of them from € 1300 to 3000 and over.

¹³The posting of the questionnaire on Facebook, did not lead to a substantial response.

¹⁴In addition in October, 2012, I posted paper flyers at hostels in Olveiroa and Finisterre, inviting younger walkers/pilgrims to complete the questionnaire. This does not compensate fully for the fact that the overall character of the acquired data still has bias along the line of age; but that does not affect this article as the used data and examples are taken more or less representatively from the questionnaire.

inspiration and articulative weakness on motives has been previously signaled for walkers on the Camino Francés (Vuijsje 1991: 163, 222; Slavin 2003: 4; Frey 2004: 91; Norman 2011: 175; Sepp 2012: 38).

As a quantitative approach would not do justice to the variety of motivations and rationalizations of the walkers, the questionnaire consisted mainly of open-questions. Hence most of the answers have subsequently been evaluated below in a qualitative manner.

8.4 Camino and Communication

Thousands of publications on the hiking and pilgrim practices along the European Camino network have already appeared. This involves not only scholars or authors on its history, mythology or touristic aspects, many walkers and pilgrims entrust their thoughts about their Camino experiences to paper as well. They do that in the form of a diary for more private use, or as a weblog or book publication for a larger audience. This last group of authors has grown so large that in some of the world's language communities it has created the genre of the published Camino pilgrimage diary or pilgrim's account (Post 1994; Norman 2011: 170–178).¹⁵ The (upper) middle class status in combination with a high educational level of many of the foreign walkers made the genesis of a specific genre possible. The main reason that this genre came into being is that, as the various accounts show, the journey often is perceived as a positive life-transforming experience, necessitating personal reflection. This is an experience they quite often want to share and disseminate.

The appreciative power of the pilgrim diary genre comes especially to the fore through the published accounts of well-known persons. These realized major increases in the popularity and positive perception of the pilgrimage trail or of a part of it. For example, the fame of the Camino picked up speed outside Europe after the heavily mediatized account of the spiritual journey of the famed actress and spiritual seeker Shirley MacLaine in 2000.¹⁶ Her book helped to bring the spiritual and esoteric dimensions of the Camino to the attention of a wider audience. In Germany, where since 2006 the popular entertainer and TV personality Hape Kerkeling has sold more than four million copies of his book *Ich bin dann mal weg. Meine Reise auf dem Jakobsweg*, the mass success of the book contributed strongly to Germans outnumbering all other foreign nationalities on the route to Santiago. His views on the Camino positioned the route in a less catholic, more neutral life paradigm for the readers. Walking the Camino Kerkeling avoided

¹⁵For a selection of English accounts, see: http://www.csj.org.uk/acatalog/The_CSJ_Bookshop_Contemporary_Accounts_including_Devotional_Material_4.html, accessed 7 March 2013.

¹⁶There are, of course, more books that strongly nurtured the popularity of the Camino, as for example earlier Paolo Coelho's *The Pilgrimage* of 1995.

‘classic’ Christian pilgrims and did the route in a ‘non-Christian way,’ in order to understand himself better as a ‘Buddhist mit christlichem Überbau’ by ‘reflecting on the meaning of life.’¹⁷

For our topic it is relevant to mention that after the year 2000 there was a large increase in the number of Camino guidebooks and published diaries focusing on spiritual travel, including stimulating additional route descriptions for going all the way to Finisterre.¹⁸ In Australia, with his popular book *Unholy Pilgrims*, Tom Trumble motivated his fellow countrymen to follow in his steps beyond Santiago to the Atlantic. A similar account by the South Korean journalist Suh Myung Sook in 2006 inspired many other Koreans to follow her and go for experiencing the end of the world at the Spanish ocean shore.

It is clear, as many respondents point out, that for the average walker the accounts of previous travelers have become quite important as a means of acquiring information on what to do and where to go, specifically aimed at their personal needs. Before setting off they scrutinized various diaries for practical information and inspiration. In this way the idea that one does not stop in Santiago has been rapidly proliferating, as respondents note. The desire of Saint James associations and confraternities to bring as much varied information to their large memberships has also been an effective avenue for the dissemination of an essential Finisterre-continuation after destination ‘Santiago.’ In 1992 the English Confraternity even helped set up the route by preparing and publishing a flyer with ‘hints’ on how to go on to Finisterre (Raju 1992). Guidebook authors are also creators or mediums for new narratives on the Finisterre route. The ‘mystical manual’ of John Brierley, the only English language guidebook for the Finisterre-Muxía track, is mentioned by several respondents as their inspirational source (cf. Brierley 2009) (Fig. 8.1).

As this ‘final’ part of the whole Camino network is relatively new, hardly any scholarly research had been done on it until the start of the CSIC/Meertens

¹⁷<http://www.zeit.de/2008/03/KA-Kerkeling>; cf. Knoblauch (2009: 175–178), shows that Kerkeling was not so much in search of himself, but more of the things one can find with others or in the world (178).

¹⁸For example: Stephan Meister. 2000. *Auf dem Jakobsweg ans Ende der Welt. Reise-Gedicht mit Zeichnungen; in zehn Wochen 2160 Kilometer zu Fuss von Zürich nach Cabo Fisterra (Santiago)*. Zürich: private; Antón Pombo, Xan Fernandez Carrera and Xosé Manuel Yáñez. 2000. *O camiño dos peregrinos á fin do mundo. A prolongación Xacobe a Fisterra e Muxia*. A Coruña: Diputación Provincial da Coruña; Vicent Pitarch. 2005. *La vía de la plata. De Sevilla a Fisterra passant per Sant Jaume de Compostella*. Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat; Joseph Taniaux. 2006. *Un chemin d'or et de lumière. Du Puy-en-Velay à Compostelle, de Compostelle à Fisterra et à Muxia*. S.l.: J. Taniaux. 2008. *Le chemin de Compostelle. De Irún à Santiago et Fisterra par le chemin de Intérieur*. Montrouge; Christian Champion and Carola Hansen. 2008. *Schlafen—essen, spanischer Jakobsweg Camino Francés 2008–2009. Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port/Roncevalles/Pamplona/Logroño/Burgos, León/Astorga/Sarria/Santiago de Compostela/Fisterra*. München CADESA; Gérard Rousse. 2009. *Le Chemin de Compostelle de Irun à Santiago et Fisterra (par le chemin intérieur)*. Montrouge: Gérard du Camino. José Maria Anguita Jaén. 2010. *The way of Saint James. The pilgrims practical guide*. León: Editorial Everest.



Fig. 8.1 Despite the Church's rejection of a Camino towards Finisterre the Finisterre guidebook of John Brierley is for sale at the east entrance of Santiago's cathedral. *Source* Peter Jan Margry, 2014

Finisterre-project. However, as early as the mid-1990s the attentive American anthropologist Nancy Frey, during her fieldwork on the Camino Francés, undertaken from 1993 through 1995, recorded her observation that in those years pilgrims were already aware of the possibility of continuing to Finisterre. In her

thorough study on the Camino practices she included a short chapter on the few who were then already aiming for the Atlantic (Frey 1998: 170–176). Frey writes about an increasing ‘need’ among pilgrims to ‘continue.’ There was however still not a really mapped and signed route. Hence most did not walk that track at all, but took in Santiago a direct bus to Finisterre for a single day visit. Frey cites people for whom the major incentive to go was the Celtic past of Cape Finisterre and the desire to connect with these pre-Christian roots (Frey 1998: 175). Her observations are a first indication of the surge of importance in the religious and spiritual values and qualities of the ocean and the cape that would come in the mid-1990s.

8.5 Spiritual Pluralism

An elderly male walker from Leighton (UK) who went all the way to Finisterre in 2008 summarized his spiritual notions as follows:

It is a path to the end of the world—to the end and the beginning of things; it is as old as humanity, way older than the Celts or the Christians; it connects with a deep longing to be close to the end and beginning of things.¹⁹

His phrasing is quite different from the traditional Christian Jacobean connotations of the pilgrimage. His description alludes to aspects of mysticism which can be applied to the behavior of many Camino walkers, although they never used that word. It does relate however finely to such expressions as the Turners’ characteristic postulate, ‘If mysticism is an interior pilgrimage, pilgrimage is exteriorized mysticism’ (Turner and Tuner 1978: 7). ‘Doing’ the Camino as a ritualized pursuit for spiritual experience and knowledge and/or the contemplative quest for one’s inner self is a recurrent refrain in the related literature. A comprehensible celebrity example can also be taken from Shirley MacLaine. In 2000 she explained her quest motive during an interview with the CNN anchor Larry King as follows: ‘Well, to really find one’s deepest spiritual meaning. That’s why so many generals took it [= the Camino], and kings and queens.’ In response to his question of why she did not go to spiritual San Francisco instead, MacLaine responded, ‘They claim that the energy underneath the ground of the Camino is in direct ratio to the energy of the Milky Way, and therefore, when you walk, you are feeling the energy of the stars in that configuration of the Milky Way.’²⁰ The mediatization of these words endorses then the discourses on the mythological or spiritual aspects of the route, which are subsequently instrumentalized by the walkers and appropriated in the various individual ways. It is difficult to establish how individualized perceptions on the spiritual or religious dimensions of the route have come into being and what those then represent. Hence, the ‘spiritual pluralism’ of my title refers to the broad

¹⁹English questionnaire, DB, 185.

²⁰See <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0005/24/lk1.00.html>, accessed 6 March 2013.

diversity of conceptions of ‘spirituality’ found among Camino walkers (cf. Van der Veer 2008, 2011).

Scholars like Frey (1998, 2004), Slavin (2003) and Norman (2011: 52–53) have already worked on the spiritual dimensions and practices of walking on the Camino (*Francés*). They came to the conclusion that because of its variety of users and goals it is very difficult to arrive at generalizations. It could even be said that there are as many spiritualities as pilgrims. The ambiguity related to the concept allows the word spirituality to be interpreted in many ways, among scholars as well as believers. Often older, practicing Christian walkers do consider themselves religious rather than (or more than) ‘spiritual,’ while ‘secular’ walkers, when asked about the matter, do not (or do not want to) recognize or acknowledge their ritual and meditative behavior or reflective musings as having any spiritual meaning, and prefer not to discuss the issue, as I pointed out above.

My goal therefore is to evaluate the discernible variations and pluralisms along the Camino Finisterre as given in the answers of the respondents. For practical reasons I take the spiritual as a broad portmanteau concept, one that comprises all expressions, in words or behavior, which relate in a transcendent way to one’s existence and to the search for meaning in life. This can include all the varieties of what was understood by spirituality or religiosity among the walkers.²¹ As a British respondent, raised a Presbyterian and now affiliated to shamanism and Celticism (1946) wrote, ‘Spiritual implies a link with the transcendent, and a meaningful relationship with it. The ‘it’ may be variously described by one of the many names of or for god. Spirit is present in every aspect of life.’

However, I do not choose to introduce qualifying categories of the secular (like Jespers, Kleijbeuker, Schattevoet 2012 do), as the traditional domain of the practicing congregant and the holistic milieu merge in a hybrid manner along the routes, the former being definitely in secondary position. This practice is contrary to the separate worlds of the two categories—(new) spirituality and congregational religion—other scholars of spirituality encountered (Heelas and Woodhead 2005: 31–32; Berghuijs et al. 2013). As nearly all Finisterre walkers express open and pluralist world-views which relate to their search for meaning of life, in this context it is possible to share them under the general denominator of ‘spirituality’ or spiritual pluralism, which then includes the often eviscerated participation in ‘traditional,’ institutionalized religions (Knoblauch 2009: 121–130; Margry 2012: 278; cf Jespers 2011). I do not follow Norman who views all those walking the Camino as tourists with a possible additional spiritual motive (Norman 2011: 17–21). In that view traditional then Catholic pilgrims would be even extracted from belonging to a religious framework. My present (and previous) research however makes it clear that such divisions cannot be made among those heading for Santiago or Finisterre.

²¹For this section see the answers in the questionnaires, sections AD/AF (English) and AF/AH (Dutch).

The ethnography reveals that on the Finisterre route the majority of the walkers maintain an eclectic practice, showing religious and spiritual crossovers in many ways which are often difficult to grasp. For example, a Canadian woman wrote that spirituality is to be understood as 'emotional and unexplainable' (E235), while a Catholic British woman (1966), practicing Neo-paganism/Wicca and on her long travel north to the 'masonic' Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland, defined religiosity and spirituality as follows: 'Having a firm sense of the sacredness of life and the belief that there is an entity/energy/god behind the existence of everything. Believing that there is more than just what is perceived by the five senses' (E193). A Russian esoteric woman (43), who believes in herself and the universe, says the Camino and the freedom it gives play a major role in her life: 'it is my life motivation' (E230).

By opening up the concept of spirituality in a generic sense the different expressions of spirituality (and religiosity) can be better evaluated. Moreover, in practice the Camino generates a convergence which brings religious and spiritual views closer to one another: an interaction that the Dutch sociologist Vuijsje already noted at an early stage of the revived pilgrimage (Vuijsje 1991: 222). This can be attributed to the desire on the part of new generations of pilgrims to do their journey in the 'right way.' They are influenced by the mediatized discourses which they more or less treat as a template for themselves.

A central focus for the Finisterre route may be found in its polyvalent 'spiritual magnetism' (Preston 1992: 33), which is capable of attracting people with their individual paradigms of spirituality, based on personally attributed concepts and values. Such a pluralism in pilgrimage also clearly comes to the fore in the mixed pagan-Christian 'spiritual subculture' of Glastonbury which has been explored by Marion Bowman (2008: 276–277). In her case, the focus of the people involved was on the sacred space at the destination and not so much in the way towards it. Paradoxically this seems to count as much for Finisterre.

The worldwide growth of sacred or spiritual footpaths is primarily stimulated by the success and appropriation of the 'Camino' concept. This process, which I call 'caminonization,' encompasses a proliferation of spiritual paths which stimulates people all over the world to depart on foot for a spiritual journey or a reflective quest on the meaning of life.²² As various religions have metaphorically described the life of man as an earthly pilgrimage one has to undergo,²³ and given

²²The formalized routes that came into being in the slipstream of the success of the Camino make implicitly or explicitly clear that they are tributary to the Camino; some examples are the route of the Relics (Italy–Spain); Via Francigena (France–Italy); Saint Thomas Route (Italy); Saint Martin Route (France); Saint Olav (Sweden); Saint Olofsroute (Oslo-Trondheim, Norway); Sultan's Trail (Wenen-Istanbul); Pilgerweg Schola Dei (Germany, Ostfriesland); Pilgrimspath (Netherlands). Other routes even more or less copied the Spanish Camino format, like the Brazilian Camino, the Camino del Norte in the USA or Camino on the South Korean island of Jeju.

²³For example as reflected in the allegorical book of John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come* (1678, 1684).

the fact that humans always have to deal with their problems and anxieties, this process represents again, as in the past, a universal format. The metaphor connects modern pilgrimage again with the early medieval idea of peregrination.

Caminonization cannot simply be equated with what is nowadays called ‘spiritual tourism,’ which usually implies more a mixed program on the part of regional administrators and organizations, stimulated by policies on heritage and tourism, with a stronger focus on tourism than spirituality. Dallen and Olsen define this kind of tourism as the ‘visitation of sites that are sacrosanct and ritually separated from the profane space of everyday life’ (Dallen and Olsen 2006). The behavior and motives of the visitors are then decisive for determining if they are tourists or spiritually motivated. However, definitely, on the Camino Francés but also beginning on the way to Finisterre, one can see the growing influence of this kind of tourism and an initial convergence with caminonization. The recent touristic enterprises of various Galician organizations and boards are evidence for that.

8.6 An Urge for Continuation

The formal stance regarding the Camino Finisterre or Finisterre trail is that—according to the definitions of the Church—it is not a part of the Catholic Camino pilgrimage network. However, in the perception of an increasing number of people it simply is part of the network, and therefore in their eyes rightly bears the name of Camino Finisterre, as one of the many Camino branches. The guidebook by Raju simply states that Finisterre is ‘the real end of the journey, both in the physical and in the religious and historical one’ (Raju 2009: iv). The question of whether that is true, and how that idea is instrumentalized, is addressed in my opening essay in this volume. There I analyzed how the footpaths to Finisterre and Muxía and their endings became mythologized and inscribed on the modern pilgrims’ mental map, were connected to the international Camino network, and brought into direct relation to various spiritualities and a ‘Celtic’ landscape in which it is supposed to be embedded.

The Finisterre route seems to represent a new quest for the primal and the non-Christian, as an alternative to the Christian. Whatever the case, partly as a result of this situation, that path became increasingly popular as a destination for those who were initially only heading for Santiago. The questionnaires present a well-delineated set of arguments for not ending the pilgrimage in Santiago.²⁴ Various walkers stated, ‘this track belongs to it [the Camino Francés].’ After having arrived in Santiago they felt that what they had achieved was ‘unfinished,’ or that being in Santiago did not feel ‘like the end.’ Some argued with logic from a subjectified perspective that Santiago simply could not be a formal end ‘as we are not religious’ or ‘not [being] Christian or Catholic, it made sense to me to walk past

²⁴For this section see the answers in the questionnaires, sections CM (English) and CO (Dutch).

Santiago, as it never felt like my final destination' (D 109; 2 227). Indeed, many regarded the Finisterre route as 'belonging to the Camino' and considered it as the 'real,' 'original' or 'natural' end of the Camino.²⁵ Finisterre is a 'real end' that is based on 'tradition' or the route 'as it used to be' and thus not just an extension, but seen as an integral historic part of it.²⁶ One woman (62) made the enlightened remark that the idea of the end of the world 'does not count anymore as we now know that the world is round' and therefore stopped in Santiago (D95). Others would not stop, as they found the route too short or too beautiful to stop, or could not say goodbye, just as one person mentioned that he continued for sportive reasons.

The idea that the whole way forms one single route, and therefore there is no obvious reason to stop, was usually rationalized in three ways: (1) because of a presumed existence of a prehistoric or pre-Christian pilgrims' route, of which only the part to Santiago was supposed to be later transformed by Christian culture (D37; E224);²⁷ (2) as a completely new creation, a new ecumenical path, which unites the old and the new religions (D44); (3) or as one (Christian) Camino on which one wanted to walk as long as possible (D28). Respondents state that legends and history connected to the region were commonly known to them, and 'pushed me to do the same' (going to the cape and perform rituals, specially the burning of clothes) (E224). Or, for an esoteric believer, the reputation of the Finisterre trail as being 'very spiritual' was the reason to continue (E230).

But as various written accounts also point out, the comparatively short distance between Santiago and Finisterre actually 'dissolves' for those who start walking from greater distances away: from the Spanish border, France, Holland, or even farther away. For some walkers the personal perception of distance is also related to the motivation for continuation. It has stimulated authors to equate or merge the two geographical locations, as in the study by Rudolph (2004), where the end of world is also taken as a metaphor for Santiago. One respondent wrote, 'when you come all along from Holland, then this makes part of it anyhow' (D31). He meant to say that after so many kilometers you do not leave this short part out of your journey, or risk the feeling of leaving your task unfinished, or incompleteness.

The international St. James associations may be the strongest agents in the creation and change of Camino practices. They have maybe the best means of mobilization by the communication channels to their members. They are anyhow eager to communicate all information and news available. So the Finisterre way is also increasingly presented as the continuation—'El Camino de Santiago isn't finished yet'²⁸—an epilogue, to make the journey complete.

²⁵See D30, 98, 101, 106, 109, 111, 135, 138, 139.

²⁶See D109, 31, 139.

²⁷See D98; some argue that the Finisterre trail is a Christian route as well, as they believe St. James first set foot on Spanish soil at Finisterre.

²⁸<http://www.caminosantiagodecompostela.com/camino-de-santiago-finisterre-muxia/>, accessed 30 July 2012.

‘Completion’ is also expressed in the description of the ‘tradition’ of the rites of passage practiced in Finisterre to prepare oneself to enter post-journey life again, finding a climactic and ritualistic ending of the personal journey, and better facilitating a return to society. The ‘end point’ is seen as a ‘turning point’ or ‘zurück zur realen Welt’ (back into the real world). For many doing the Finisterre way is a rite of passage in itself, as it gives the traveler the possibility of accommodating after having arrived in busy Santiago, and during a relatively short and ‘intermediate’ track, experiencing the quiet again, reflecting on or evaluating their way on the Camino, Santiago, and the return and reintegration into the patterns of daily life. Part of that ritualistic idea is the experience of the *nec plus ultra*, the impossibility to walk any farther, where one is naturally forced to stop and, so to say, ‘dissolve’ one’s motion in the flow of the water. The encouraging idea to proceed and finish at the final bollard along the whole Camino, the ‘point zero’ sign, positioned near the light tower, was also regularly brought up.

The rising popularity of the Finisterre continuation stresses again the element of destination, of ending, of finalizing (the ritual), while before for many walkers on the Camino the idea of being under way was more important than arriving. This new focus could be partly related to the literal meaning of the destination, but it seems more important to me that people still have a need for wrapping up their long walk, preferably in a ritualistic way, as a rite of passage. The questionnaire brings up that the Catholic shrine of St. James might never have been the appropriate site to connect with an ending for all those who have walked the Camino in a more neutral and spiritual way. Finisterre is the symbolic ending of their actual life as a walker or pilgrim, and provides a bridge to the start of new life afterwards.

While the idea of one single ongoing route to Finisterre has often taken root at the start of someone’s journey, many get their inspiration when they are approaching their initial goal, Santiago de Compostela. Today’s global and mass popularity of the Camino Francés increasingly hinders its intrinsic quality as a spiritual track. The effect of the walking masses and the disillusioning arrival in the hustle and bustle of Santiago is a turn-off for many. These walkers are often disgusted by the fact that during the last hundred kilometers of the Camino, the road gets overcrowded by *Compostela*-hunters. Many of those, often Spanish, just walk this relatively last short track to get Camino experience, and because it is the minimal distance one has to travel to obtain the sought-after official pilgrim certificate, the *Compostela*.²⁹ Then, with the finish line in sight, the long distance pilgrim also has to pass a disenchanting industrial zone on the outskirts of Santiago. And lastly, there is the busy town itself, with all its mundane businesses and tourism that often provides them with a final disappointment. Through the visible commercialization of the pilgrimage in town pilgrims and walkers feel themselves turned into

²⁹In 2007, 55 % of the official pilgrims arriving in Santiago were Spanish and 45 % foreign; *Informe do perfil do peregrinos 2007*. This has changed slightly, as in 2012 it was 50/50 %; for the statistics on the Camino see: <http://peregrinosantiago.es/eng/pilgrims-office/statistics> and the 2012 *Informe*: <http://www.peregrinosantiago.es/esp/wp-content/uploads/informes/peregrinacion2012.pdf>.

‘captive consumers’ (Roseman et al. 2008). This last stage of the Camino Francés is thus often perceived as an anticlimax after a long stretch of reflection in more or less solitary traveling through inspirational natural landscapes. Some people prefer therefore to finish their journey on Monte do Gozo (Hill of Joy) just a few kilometers east of the city, an elevated point that gives a first glimpse of the town. Nonetheless, for many stopping before or in Santiago proves to be the wrong location for completing their journey.

Thus the down side of the success of the Camino began to favor an initially obscure and rudimentary track leading to Finisterre. The possibility of prolonging the journey to a relatively nearby ‘ultimate’ or ‘real’ end proved to be tempting. This ‘quiet’ and ‘primal’ route gave walkers time to acclimatize and prepare for their return home in a more peaceful way. Moreover, the idea of preparing for a return to society in a less ‘Catholic’ and more generic spiritual way also found fertile soil in many of the walkers. The crowdedness of Santiago had already been noted as a ‘problem’ for the pilgrims for years, as a plus for continuing to Finisterre. Frey heard pilgrims express their dislike of tourists and (Spanish) group pilgrimages by bus (Frey 1998: 172) as their direct motivation to continue on. The relative peacefulness and silence walkers find after the bustle of Santiago is however a perception not shared in the same way by all. Some of the respondents subsequently experienced the *Cabo Fisterra*, a ‘supposedly important spiritual site,’ but where loads of tourists and pilgrims similarly mingle and souvenir shops have taken over, equally as an ‘anticlimax’ (D36; D49). A man from The Hague therefore viewed Muxía as the only ‘real ending’ of the Camino, where—unlike ‘busy’ Finisterre—one could ‘still’ undergo a spiritual experience (D49).

Former mayor Ernesto Insua of Finisterre was convinced that the real meaning for the success of this route lies in the desire of people to know what is behind the end, and that Finisterre would be emblematic in that regard.³⁰ Such a motive however was never brought up by any of the respondents, perhaps because having arrived at the Atlantic one still cannot grasp what is behind. Above all, it is more the lure of the infinite ocean and the holistic symbolism of a continuous *fluidum vivum* which pushes the walkers beyond Santiago. An elderly Swiss man (1939) summarized the qualities pointedly: in comparison to the whole Camino ‘this is the best part of the way, there are less pilgrims, you find more time to reflect, the nature is fantastic...’ (E107).

8.7 Walkers and Pilgrims

Standing behind the bar of the *Mesón o Cruceiro* in the hamlet of Ames, not far west of the town of Santiago, the owner, Manuel, relates that here the Finisterre track is popularly called ‘the way of the atheists.’ The local population regards the

³⁰During an interview in his hotel in Finisterre (Dugium) on 12 September 2010.

travelers on this part of the Camino not as Christian pilgrims any more, but as walkers without a religious motivation, or at most as seekers for its pagan history. That concurs with the image that exists of the Finisterre route. However, the walkers I encountered along the route were not rabidly anti-Christian. The epithet agnostic did not seem appropriate either. When asked at random, walkers usually were defensive or vague about their motives for their journey, but usually did either not emphatically deny a religious motive or context. One of the more specific answers in that regard was that the journey was made for ‘personal growth’ or to reflect on one’s life. Walking alone, in silence, in nature was for many respondents a prerequisite for promoting reflection, contemplation and thought, and constituted a quest into oneself, akin to what Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote about movement and contemplation: ‘I am unable to reflect when I am not walking.’³¹ For a neo-pagan English woman walking in nature made her experience ‘sacred.’ But in general meditation in the strict sense was rarely practiced, not even in front of the ocean, as has also been established for other parts of the Camino (cf. Norman 2011: 55–57).

The outcome of the questionnaire however makes it clear that the Camino Finisterre is not quite an atheist track. While offering a broad variation in their characterizations of the route, the majority (60 %) of the walkers perceived their traveling towards the sea more as a religious or spiritual inspired pilgrimage, while 40 % perceived it as a mere secular walking journey. Among women the idea of a pilgrimage was relatively more strongly represented (for nearly 80 % of them).³² None of this of course implies that for the ‘pilgrims’ their journey was not a pilgrimage in the Christian tradition.

What then can be said more specifically about the background and motivations of the pilgrims and walkers towards Finisterre? Regarding their religious background or philosophy of life there is no great difference from those who stop in Santiago. An overwhelming majority of the walkers, including the younger ones, have still been brought up in the (cultural) context of Christianity. Apart from the five percent without a religious upbringing, the rest are divided among Catholics and Protestants, in a ratio of approximately 2–1. Half of them still pray at home, while a near equal number practice meditation. Nearly 60 % considers themselves, alongside their formal religious affiliation, as spiritually inspired persons.³³ This implies these respondents represent ‘crossovers’ who are at least nominally Christian, but are also committed to other religious or spiritual views like Humanism, Buddhism, Shamanism, and to a lesser extent Hinduism, Zen, Gnosis

³¹Jean Jacques Rousseau (1782). *The Confessions* at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3913/3913-h/3913-h.htm>, accessed 6 March 2013.

³²For this section see the answers in the questionnaires, sections CI (English) and CK (Dutch).

³³For this section see the answers in the questionnaires, sections AE (English) and AG (Dutch).

or Celticism (as religion).³⁴ The relatively large category of Protestants can be explained, as they often profess to be attracted to Catholicism as part of their denominational, Christian roots.

8.8 Differentiation Camino Francés–Camino Finisterre³⁵

The questionnaire also addressed the question of why people wanted to go beyond Santiago at all, and, if so, what they experienced differently. The answers to that question were generally addressed in relation to an urge to go to Finisterre, which was usually connected to the ending of the way or their journey. The difference that they experienced between the two routes deals in part with the performative and sensory practice of hiking. The Camino Finisterre was found more difficult to walk, while the landscape was perceived as more enchanting, beautiful and ‘more authentic,’ being free from the masses and ‘big business’ in Santiago. For the rest, the route is regarded as ‘quiet,’ which more often resulted in a desirable experience of walking alone, or an occasional, unintentional feeling of loneliness. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents experienced the Finisterre track differently from the pre-Santiago parts of the Camino. They were however not very articulate in identifying that difference.³⁶ Reactions were generally brief, in terms of ‘more solitary’ or ‘an epilogue.’ The most common observation was the silence and the calm, in comparison to the hectic Camino Francés. This prompted awareness and stimulated reflection on oneself and on the whole journey: ‘it brings you nearer to your soul.’ For many Dutch walkers the continuation reminded them of the pilgrim ways in France, which were, before arriving in St Jean Pied de Port, where the pilgrimage becomes massive, similarly experienced peaceful and quiet and, in a way, more ‘authentic.’

The idea of a promising prolongation of the journey did not always work out. A 26-year-old German woman found it ‘more free, but also not so motivating,’ after having achieved her arrival in Santiago. The less commercial character of the route also gave rise to complaints about poorly developed infrastructure, as in the case of the woman who enjoyed the fact that it was not overcrowded, but was—‘ironically’ as she writes—disappointed by the lack of dense structure of facilities that now characterizes the Camino Francés. Ultimately she gained a sense of a

³⁴For this section see the answers in the questionnaires, sections X-AB (English) and Y-AD (Dutch), for example: Catholicism (D 5, 37, 50, 71); Humanism (D, 36, 38, 70, 80, 76, 88, 93, 118, 137); Buddhism (D 30, 53, 58, 68, 80, 88, 98, 106, 108, 111, 112, 134, 137); Hinduism (D54, 94); Zen (D37); Gnosis (D28); Celticism (D17). .

³⁵For this section see the answers in the questionnaires, sections CM/CN and CO/CP (English) or CO/CP and CQ/CR (Dutch).

³⁶The use of an extensive qualitative questionnaire brings the danger, that the answers tend to become shorter and less reflected on, which for some analyses limits the quality of the data.

transformative achievement in Finisterre, as ‘I felt like I was renewing or making a decision about something.’

Another German woman, the rest of whose pilgrim group stopped in Santiago, regarded this last part as a preparation for returning home, and getting used to being apart from her fellow walkers (E228). An older English man, spiritually into shamanism, explained the difference as follows: ‘There was a more ‘natural’ feel to it, the religion was taken out of it and the land came into its own. Walking created a connection with the land and things non-religious, but not non-spiritual. Achieving a *Compostela* brevet became less important. For that man it was a recognition of going ‘to the ends of the earth.’ A younger British woman shared his view: ‘It was a particularly magical part of our 3000-km pilgrimage. We met incredibly good people and learned much. The actual journey and destination were amazing. We indeed felt ‘at the end of the world’ despite the modernity of the town etc. there is something ancient and deep about the place.’

Notwithstanding such quotes and taking all answers to the questionnaires into account and despite the often mediatized discourse, one can conclude that the idea of an esoteric or ‘New-Agey’ route towards Finisterre as part of the Camino system was not dominantly present in the experience of the continuation. The quiet and ‘authenticity’ of the route were more often mentioned as main experiential characterizations.

8.9 Pagan Versus Christian³⁷

A specific aspect of the spiritual pluralism to be found is the perception of the Finisterre trail itself. The appreciation of this route can be categorized by one of the subsequent questions, about how they would describe this path. The idea that this part was also a Christian route was endorsed by only 14 %, and as a pagan Celtic route by 23 %; the majority regarded it as a religiously neutral footpath (32 %) and still another 25 % had other ideas about its character, often of a touristic or commercialized kind.

It is ‘a Christian track building upon a Celtic tradition,’ wrote a young German woman, raised as a Catholic but nowadays more attracted to Buddhism, combining those two options into a more often mentioned pagan-Christian relationship. A Catholic man attracted to Celticism (1953) from the Dutch town of Almere saw the present Camino as missionary Church politics, to substitute for the previous Celtic trail, like ‘Salisbury had to overshadow Stonehenge.’ The route was also related to legends of St. James, in which James initially would have set foot on land at Finisterre, and to the idea of Finisterre as one of the main spiritual centers, and to Druid teachings, which was mentioned by a holistic orientated man (64) from the UK.

³⁷For this section see the answers in the questionnaires, sections DA/DB (English) and DC/DD (Dutch).

A man (49) from the Netherlands was disenchanted by the ways that the government of Galicia tries to commodify the Finisterre trail by labeling it ‘Celtic.’ He presumed that this was only done because nowadays a pagan origin would evoke less resistance or reluctance, especially among presumed ‘secularized’ visitors from Northern Europe, than a track with a dominant Catholic or Christian character. Stories about the different possible historical-religious roots of the route are often heard under way from other walkers, but are also picked up from written accounts and diaries of pilgrims and in Camino (guide-) books by popular authors. The possibility of choosing for oneself a preferred pagan or Christian background or myth for this route was appreciated as a ‘freedom’ for walkers, although this manner of dissemination of information does increase confusion about the past and the variation in the interpretation of its meanings. There is ongoing discussion among walkers, especially about the assumed Celtic cultural heritage along the route. For some the ‘the presence of nature’ along the route was in itself an indication for a Celtic environment.

However, the ‘pagan stones’ of St. William, at some distance from the cape itself, seem to be rarely visited. Just one woman pointed to their importance for her: ‘My real experience came when I visited the Pagan stones of St. Guillaume. I felt like my purpose for my journey was revealed to me here.’ The Dutch walker who started his journey in ‘Celtic’ Stonehenge found the proof of the Celticness of the route in the fact that the last distance sign at the lighthouse mentions 0 km and not +89 km, the continuation distance after Santiago bringing him to the end.

Whatever such ideas may imply, in the meantime, while more and more traditional Christian pilgrims choose to continue after Santiago, the Church has begun to make changes to its stance of negation. It ‘Christianizes’ the new route by paying more attention to its Christian history. Moreover, it creates new mythologies on how to connect the ‘pagan’ way and seashore destinations to the Catholic and devotional history of the region, to assumed missionary activities of the Apostle James in Finisterre and Muxía and to the existing Camino system at large. Flyers on the extension are no longer removed from Church buildings or information desks.

8.10 The End

Indeed, the above mentioned way of counting distance on the concrete bollards is confusing and open for interpretation. The signage along the route, which was placed in 1996 by the Galician government, was not supposed to refer to the distance to the Church’s Camino. Nevertheless these signs, in a way similar to the arrival in Santiago, ultimately with no more kilometers to go, suggest strongly that the zero sign signifies a ‘real final ending.’

The questionnaire makes clear that the main incentive for the majority of the respondents for taking the Finisterre/Muxía connection was finishing the Camino, marking an end of their personal journey. Much more than those who did stop in

Santiago, they would have had a feeling of ‘unfinishedness,’ if they had stopped there. The most frequent given answer is that they wanted to ‘complete’ the journey for themselves.³⁸ The combination of landscape, ocean, sunset, rituals and simply being there aroused various emotions and spiritual experiences.³⁹ Their feelings were often expressed in simple words: ‘feelings of peace,’ ‘satisfied,’ ‘release,’ ‘deep rest,’ ‘emotional,’ ‘done,’ ‘great happiness,’ ‘freedom,’ ‘absolute joy,’ ‘getting insights.’

The idea of a ‘real’ ending is influenced by what they experience on the spot itself. The arrival at the proper cape often created a feeling of insight and change: ‘There I felt like I was renewing.’ A male walker from Alaska found the Cape the symbolic time and place ‘to start a new journey.’ Or, as a man from Switzerland wrote, ‘the sea can also be understood as being the pre-creational chaos in which everything ends and everything starts anew. Symbolism of water and baptism.’ And thus the idea of ending and starting anew found expression in the desire to preserve a more spiritual attitude and in the hope not to adapt again to materialistically oriented behavior. The power of the spiritual was present there, because it was for him a ‘metaphorical place where the physical world of matter meets the metaphysical spiritual plane.’

Not only did respondents find it important to arrive there for a present-day ending, but also because of a fascination about how the then real end of the world was perceived in the past. In medieval times that ‘great unknown’ was understood as where there was ‘no beyond.’ But in the same way, as for this site, a ‘beyond’ ultimately proved to exist, for the respondents ‘in life you often get to an end, but life continues and you have to continue.’ Therefore presence at the cape is part of the end rite of passage they have to go through. They have to stop consciously and start over again, at home. As one wrote, this point represents ‘the beginning of the new world, the dawn of a new era or life, an after-life—as this life here is quite transitory, ephemeral.’

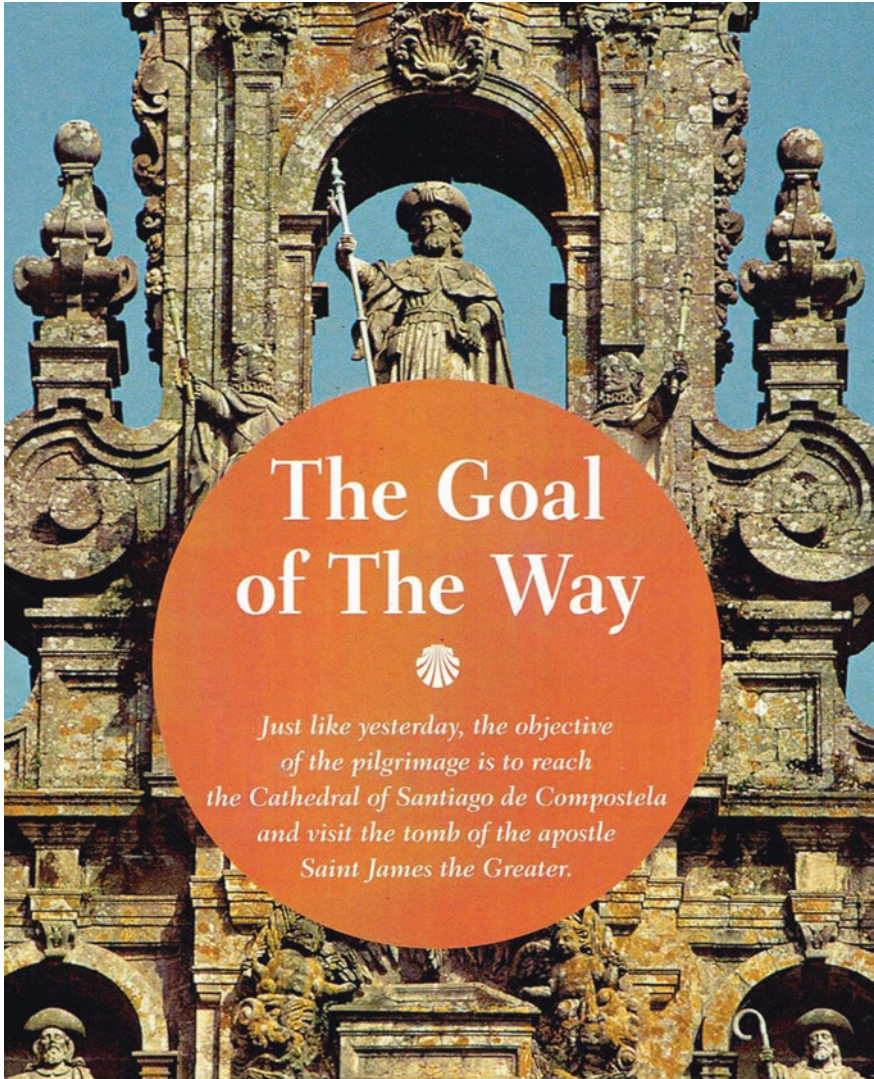
One can conclude that the importance of the site is strongly connected to the idea of the Celtic past which is related to or derived from that specific spot, and that in a certain way the route towards the cape is less important than actually being there at the end (Fig. 8.2).

8.11 Symbol, Ritual and Spiritual

For most of the respondents the continuation has a different meaning and a different symbolic and ritual value than the previous part (i.e., before Santiago). The route is felt as giving new value to the inflated meaning about what was

³⁸For this section see the answers in the questionnaires, sections CM/CN (English) and CO/CP (Dutch), some examples: E 143, 185, 194, 227; D 84, 92, 118, 119, 130.

³⁹For this section see the answers in the questionnaires, sections CV (English) and CX (Dutch).



The Goal of The Way



*Just like yesterday, the objective
of the pilgrimage is to reach
the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela
and visit the tomb of the apostle
Saint James the Greater.*

Fig. 8.2 The Archdiocese of Santiago spreads flyers to remember the walkers and pilgrims of what, just like in the past, the goal of the Way of Saint James is all about: reaching the cathedral and visiting the tomb of Saint James; hence, not the walking in itself

considered the ‘real’ final destination for the journey. For them the traditional destination—which for Catholics and tourists is still the Cathedral of Santiago—is exchanged for *Cabo Fisterra*. The continuation, and particularly the experience at the cape, is seen as a supplementary ritual in itself. This is endorsed by various answers. An American woman (1964) saw this part as one ritual:

The whole experience seemed to be its own ritual. There was no need to add anything else, except that the tiny sack in which I held all of my tiny objects blew away in the wind at Finisterre, when I had taken the items out to assess their meanings.⁴⁰

Some respondents found that things have changed within the Camino practices and that a new and seemingly obvious destination also has to (or needed to) be created. The following idea, expressed by a Dutch man, can be found in various alternative formulations: ‘I have a stronger feeling of an ending of the Camino leading in the sea, thus more like the Celts: to experience the ending of the visible world. From the moment I saw the sea and had rinsed me in the water I felt definitely more ‘completed,’ than when I arrived in Santiago.’⁴¹

The ritual practices performed at the cape are also an important incentive to continue for Finisterre. At the start of their journey most walkers have an initial intention to engage in some sort of ritual practice, whether they go for Santiago or Finisterre. The most common ritual (about 50 % of the respondents) was the now traditional carrying of a stone, with or without a text in addition, to leave it long before Santiago at the Cruz del Ferro as a symbolic action leaving—for oneself or for others—problems or burdens behind. But those who continued to Finisterre also brought other objects along as tokens.⁴² Their journey sometimes also had a secondary motive as a bereavement ritual for commemorating relatives, usually a parent.⁴³ Then they brought a special object (stones, necklace, amulet, sand of the grave) related to them, to leave behind in Finisterre, not mentioning if it was thrown in the water or not. A Belgian walker carried the ashes of his father to scatter into the Atlantic.⁴⁴

The presumed former presence of Celts and the mention by classical authors of a sanctuary of the sun near Finisterre has been the incentive for the invention of the present practice of incineration. The practice of such ‘Celtic’ rituals is already mentioned by some walkers in the mid-1990s (Frey 1998: 172). Finisterre-related rituals are now performed by approximately half of the respondents. One third of those arriving in Finisterre carried out a fire ritual. For most of them it consisted of a purificatory burning of some of their dirty clothes—sometimes not more than their ‘stinking socks,’ shoes, or a handkerchief that collected one’s sweat and emotions (Figs. 8.3 and 8.4).

When it was not possible to execute the fire ritual, as it sometimes simply proved too wet to do it, the result was an ‘unfinished’ feeling. That was similarly the feeling for those impacted by the formal prohibition against open fires on the rock. That ban prevented the burning of clothes, but caused people to burn smaller, less detectable things like maps, notes with thoughts, or incense before a

⁴⁰Questionnaire English, respondent 8.

⁴¹Questionnaire Dutch, respondent 63.

⁴²They carried a great variety of objects, sometimes pictures of the family, scallop shells, poetry and sayings, letters of encouragement from family members, letters from ill people; often a Bible, rosaries and images of Christopher, Mary, Buddha, angels, etc.

⁴³Respondents D48; D75; E224; E227; E230.

⁴⁴www.tevoetnaarsantiago.blogspot.com/ 23–27 September 2006.



Fig. 8.3 The burning of clothes after arrival at Cape Finisterre: a rite of passage and purification, 2010. *Source* Peter Jan Margry



Fig. 8.4 Collective burning of clothes after sunset. A few seconds after this picture was taken they were caught by the guards of the Cape for violating the fire ban, 2010. *Source* Peter Jan Margry

portable Buddha statue. Instead of a fire ritual one just placed his socks and shoes on top of the rock for a moment, taking a picture and putting them on again. At times when the fire ban was more strictly enforced, as a substitute for the burning walkers started to hang clothes on the radio mast on the cape and leave them behind. Clothing and shoes could easily be attached to its metal structure, but for the authorities it turned into a laundry memorial. As the view of that *bricolage* was found disturbing, and it became dangerous as people started climbing higher and higher on the mast, this practice was also prohibited (Fig. 8.5).

The burning ritual can be interpreted as a rite of passage marking the end of the journey and facilitating the transition from the life as pilgrim or walker to daily life again. While fire is one form of purification and renewal, going there into the sea and cleansing oneself is an akin practice walkers are familiar with.⁴⁵ Another way of dealing with the wish for a ritual cleansing is ‘entrusting’ personal belongings to the ocean. As the ocean is not very accessible from that point, only some walkers throw clothes, boots, walking sticks or messages in bottles into the water. Others returned their St. James scallop shell—attached to their clothes during their journey—to the sea. Another searched the beach for a new shell to take back home.

The importance of the daily cycle of renewal of dawn and sunset, and the purgatory aspect of the washing sea within the esoteric milieu so present on this route, has stimulated the introduction of individual practices that help the walker transform again from long distance walker or pilgrim into, again, a participant in everyday life. It is a farewell to the trek, the relevant ‘turning point’ before stepping back into normal life.⁴⁶ At the cape earth, water and air come together, while the fourth element—fire—is artificially added by performing the burn ritual. The symbolic repertoire of purification, renewal and rebirth are thought to align appropriately with the historical and mythical cape.

Surprisingly, only two persons mentioned prayer and meditation as rituals to help finish their journey, while many mentioned the sharing of food and drinks and collectively watching the sun set over the ocean (Fig. 8.6). This often has the appearance of meditation, although apparently it was not perceived in that way by the participants themselves. An older traveler summed up the rituals he practiced at the close of his journey: ‘Sharing a celebratory drink and ritual meal on the shore; burning some clothes; returning the symbols of my friends and supporters to nature; sleeping under the stars; washing in the sea.’ As an accidental missionary offensive in ‘pagan’ territory, once an improvised Mass was celebrated by a young priest on the rocks (Fig. 8.7).

The questionnaire also inquired about the positive effects (including healing) of the walking, about the walkers’ major experience under way, and about the possible changes in themselves.⁴⁷ Nearly all the respondents claimed walking had a

⁴⁵D53, 63; E161, 185, 201, 203.

⁴⁶For example the answers of respondents E 143, 185, 194; D84, 92, 118, 119, 130, D132 (Farewell), D111 (turning point).

⁴⁷For this section see the answers in the questionnaires, sections BZ-CF (English) and CB-CJ (Dutch).



Fig. 8.5 For the protection of the environment a fire ban was enforced on Cape Finisterre in 2010. Instead of burning their walking clothes pilgrims started to attach clothing to the radio mast in order to leave them behind. *Source* Peter Jan Margry

stimulating or healing effect on their mind or body, and some said they were cured of physical problems. Walking encouraged most of them to think about themselves and 'life' in general. The variety of their responses is wide, so I cite here the most



Fig. 8.6 A group of walkers enjoys joint ‘arrival’ drink while having the shared experience of seeing the sun set ‘in the water’, 2010. *Source* Peter Jan Margry

common answers: the spiritual effect of walking in silence, the connectedness to nature and god, the deepening of thought, new insights, self-reflection, the quest into the inner-self, beauty, happiness, emotional. Again, the spiritual was often present: ‘spiritual healing, make order in my life,’ ‘spiritual contact,’ ‘getting nearer to my inner (spiritual) roots,’ ‘spiritual encourage’ ‘feeling that being alive is... meaningful.’ About one third did not have a spiritual or religious experience, despite often regarding their journey more as a pilgrimage than a secular walking trek. One person who had just mainly dealt with practical things on the journey, regretted this for not giving enough time for the spiritual. The relevance of the route for the idea of ‘freedom,’ ‘feeling so free’ and getting ‘more confidence,’ the importance of love, happiness and gratitude, the rejection of materialism and gaining insight about making renewal or changes in life were all regularly mentioned (Fig. 8.8).

The esotericism or alternative spiritualities practiced by respondents could not be related in a one-to-one manner with the answers given. This indicates that such spiritual predispositions open up people for ‘spiritual’ experiences in general. Although for some the esoteric or Celtic connotations of the route and cape were important, it is not obvious that in general the respondents were motivated to perform the continuation by the ‘New Age’ fame of the Camino Finisterre (cf Attix 2002). It would seem to be more a background element for the healing that



Fig. 8.7 After arriving at Cape Finisterre one of the walkers of an accidental German group of pilgrims, proved to be a priest. With the religious vestments and portable sacramental objects that popped up out of his rucksack, he started an improvised mass on the edge of the cape, 2010. *Source* Peter Jan Margry

is popularly assumed to be part of going to Santiago and Finisterre. For them spirituality means the existence of more dimensions, meditation, cosmological connectedness with each other and indeed with everything beyond rational reality, the issues of life and the quest through life.

8.12 Pilgrim Strivings: Individual or Collective?

One encounters various paradoxes along the Camino, and also on the Camino Finisterre people are confronted with small skirmishes. For some time an ongoing ‘culture war’ has been taking place between the ‘consumers’ of the Camino and its cultural heritage. Although respondents profess to have broken with everyday consumer society in many ways, they become consumers in another way by trying to ‘colonize’ the pilgrimage in opposition to the traditional Catholic pilgrims. This is seen best when they express their aversion of the classic Saint James pilgrim, who goes by car or bus, or those who just might join in walking *en groupe* during the last hundred kilometers. Particularly Northern European walkers see the appearance



Fig. 8.8 Poster in one of the *refugio*'s along the Finisterre trail about a new book narrating the transformative power of the Camino. The German author describes how he found his big love on the trail and decided to start a new life in Ireland. *Source* Peter Jan Margry

of groups (often Spanish) entering the Camino as disturbing to their nostalgic dream of re-enacting an ancient pilgrimage. This is to a large extent a clash between Catholic Spanish pilgrimage practice and 'foreigners' who hold an idealistic, traditionalist

concept of pilgrimage related to a quest for the meaning of life. According to a Danish walker, the Finisterre continuation then represents for them a necessary sort of ‘purification’ as a reaction to the perceived ‘degenerated’ termination of the Camino Francés.

This difference of attitude is not the only controversial issue. Everyone in fact appropriates his or her Camino and claims exclusive ‘rights.’ The English confraternity of St. James tries thus to influence the behavior of the walkers. It acknowledges the increase of ‘recreational’ walkers and cyclists, but asks the walkers not to ‘complain’ that they ‘do not approach the pilgrimage in the right way’ (Dennett 1997). Everyday experience however shows that the approach does matter for ‘new’ walkers. In the pecking order, the long distance walker is on top: the farther away the departure point, the more prestige it brings. Those who join in at the Spanish border are already rated lower. The *Compostela*-hunters are simply despised. Then there is a category who indeed walk, but have their luggage transported separately and sleep in hotels. They are also lower on the ladder, etc.

Bicycling pilgrims are much lower in ranking, as they go the ‘easy’ way and with their mechanized movement disturb the peacefulness of the walking paths. They are not regarded as pilgrims, as it is thought not possible to reflect or contemplate properly while riding a bike (Slavin 2003: 4).⁴⁸ Those who go by even faster means are not taken seriously at all. Then you are a ‘poor’ tourist and you are supposed to have no business on the route, as you only impact on the idealized concept of pilgrimage. Oddly enough, many (Spanish) Catholic pilgrims do not care if they go on foot or not; they use motorized transport, often in groups, to go to Saint James’ shrine to pray or implore his help, just as they have done for so long. Making a real pilgrimage is indeed not dependable on the manner how you reach the shrine. They are, at any rate, detested by foreign walkers who make the journey in what they regard as the ‘right’ and ‘traditional’ way, and ignorantly categorize these actual, ‘real’ pilgrims as tourists. The answers and the diaries of pilgrims are full of remarks about disruption caused by ‘tourists’ simply by their presence, a camera around their neck, or talking too loudly. Interestingly, their self-depiction conflicts with Norman’s categorization of them as tourists themselves (Norman 2011). Contrary to this way of thinking, walkers taking the bus to Finisterre is much less considered an infraction of the traditional idea of pilgrimage. This is probably due to the fact that those continuing consider the cape as an intrinsic ending point, with a specific symbolic and ritual value which is less connected to walking the intermediate track from Santiago.

But this is not the only paradox. While most walkers generally do not claim to have spiritual or religious motives, and more often say that they are historically or culturally inspired, they reject characterizations as *turigrinos*, as they have become known. Although these touristic pilgrims do walk, they are considered to have simply touristic aims, without ‘higher motives,’ which contradicts their own denial of a spiritual motivation, as that would turn them also in touristic hikers. A young German woman brings that up in her somewhat contradictory answer:

⁴⁸In 2012, 85 % of the 192,500 travelers went on foot, and 14 % by bicycle.

While I did not like walking in crowds, I understand the Camino belongs to everyone and I would be very happy if everybody did it. I would instead try and reduce the encroachment of tourists and ‘turigrinos,’ who often e.g. take up space in *albergues* after riding [in] taxis to the destination.⁴⁹

The modern but pseudo-traditionalist walker ultimately also becomes his own enemy. While going on foot is by far the most popular way to experience the Camino, the exponential growth of this practice consequently undermines the qualities of the walking, the ways and the environment, and the quest for the personal experiences for which it all started. The consequence of that development is the new predilection for the Camino Finisterre, which in turn is now threatened by its own ‘success.’

Sooner or later, research on pilgrimage brings up the question on the existence of *communitas* among pilgrims (Turner and Turner 1978). In other words, to what extent is the Turnerian idea of a shared practice a pre-condition for the pilgrimage? In general the concept of community is not in line with the Finisterre practice, as most travelers claim to go for themselves: the Camino is what they are, a pilgrim(age) to one’s self, and to ‘have the freedom to walk my own Camino,’ as a 27-year-old woman said. Nevertheless, her most important experience was ‘the interaction with other pilgrims and the deep friendships.’ What they seek to experience is acquiring the deeper knowledge of the metaphor of life itself as a pilgrimage, the knowledge of a lifetime generated by the wandering like a ‘pilgrim.’ The deeper life-transforming result of doing the Camino is embedded in the whole experience which is built up from various elements. Nevertheless, what is stressed in many of the answers is the personal and the inner changes: ‘I felt I needed to accomplish something on my own and it was a personal journey,’ a woman (39) wrote. In this line, a Dutchman wrote, ‘The Camino, that’s what you are yourself,’ a phrase one can encounter in variations in many accounts, because it has become a commonplace through appearance in guidebooks. Walkers on the Camino network do not like the idea that others on the road are actually doing the same ‘unique’ thing.

The presence of hierarchies, structures and conflicts is evident along the Camino, and thus an ‘anti-structural’ sense of community is not discernible. An example of that comes to the fore in an answer of a female pilgrim with sympathies for Buddhism and shamanism. She relates how she was shocked by the low esteem for humanistic and Christian values among the people on the Camino:

One of the things I actually found quite frustrating about the Camino and other pilgrims was their LACK of values, especially when it came to considering the needs of others/ other pilgrims. I found the overwhelming majority of pilgrims to be incredibly selfish and inconsiderate and unable to look past their own needs. It surprised me given that it is a religious practice and I would think empathy and consideration for others would be basic values upon which any religion would be based.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Questionnaire English, respondent 224.

⁵⁰Questionnaire English, respondent 227.

Another aspect of neglect of the Camino community and the public is the way walkers treat the route and its environment. In their urge for relic-like souvenirs and rituality they have damaged all the bollards which indicate the directions and distances. Attempts to break out nearly all the tiles have been made—in vain—leaving them all damaged and in part dysfunctional for others. A nearly universal desire of most travelers is their wish to acquire a pilgrimage-related object. The most important one is the *Compostela*, *Finisterre* or *Muxía* certificate, which for many walkers of the first would seem to negate their professed secular stance.

The circumvention of the ban on fire at the cape raises another difficulty. Due to the desire of the walkers to perform a final fire ritual, the area around ‘el faro’ is blackened and covered with melted synthetic materials. This might not in itself be that problematic, were it not that the landscape of the cape has been set on fire several times, as the strong winds make fires uncontrollable, and all the vegetation has been set on fire. The dedicated concrete fireplace constructed by the authorities lies neglected as an authoritarian intervention, and thus not an ‘authentic’ or proper individual place for the ritual.

Although individual trekking on this route is generally highly esteemed by most of the walkers, various accounts do emphatically express the experiences of friendship and camaraderie along the continuation. A Dutch Protestant woman (27) wrote, ‘the walking gave me a strong sense of destiny. You meet a lot of people and soon you realize that they play an important role for the whole experience.’ Many claim stronger, more meaningful social contacts and more solidarity than the track to Santiago: ‘how daring and friendly the pilgrims are to each other and how helpful everybody is.’ The exclusivity of the route after Santiago and the deviative character of the route seem to be the elements that create stronger bonds.

8.13 Heritagization

A process of heritage formation (or ‘heritagization’) has already been a common phenomenon along the Camino network for decades, and since the 1990s has also spread to the Camino Finisterre (cf. Sánchez-Carretero 2012; infra this volume). Asked if the Camino and its continuation are to be considered as important cultural heritage that needs protection, many respondents do think so, although older walkers more unconditionally than younger ones.⁵¹ The latter find it indeed important to have the route protected, but are also hesitant about top-down involvement by government and (international) organizations. Some respondents referred to a more secure protection of material heritage, as so many objects along the way have been lost or are in decay. They saw also a need to raise the level of cultural and historical knowledge about the Camino.

Due to the measures taken and the protective conventions applied, one says, ‘I think the whole experience [of the journey] is already changing as a result of

⁵¹Quotations and data derive from the questions DI-DI (English) and DJ-DN (Dutch).

growing tourism.’ For the walkers, the route is too often overcrowded: ‘there are already enough pilgrims on the way.’ Therefore the route ‘is becoming quite commercial in nature,’ which runs counter to the idea of spiritual quest; thus ‘turning it into a tourist commodity will ruin the values.’⁵² What respondents prefer is sustainable management of the route, which means more preservation instead of exploitation; otherwise the qualities that initially attracted the walkers will be lost. This is also related to the degradation of the landscape and the path itself. The physical integrity is a problem as increasing numbers and economics lead authorities to want to make the route more accessible and safer. Not only has placing many concrete markers altered the landscape, but the destruction of the scenery by leveling out historical and natural pathways into foot ‘motorways’ is more radical.⁵³

Paradoxically, however, the promotion of the way as an ancient pilgrimage road, and thus having it turned into acknowledged cultural heritage, with more tourism and pilgrims, was in general actually not objected to by the respondents. The basic reasoning is that the pilgrimage network is regarded a common heritage, which everyone eventually should be able to make use of. An implicitly shared thought is that this heritage is ‘a unique culture that positively affects humans deeply.’ This idea relates directly to the religious dimensions of the route. This universal wording implies also that this heritage is considered not just Christian. Many also added idealistic arguments. The simplicity and basicness expressed by the pilgrimage was seen as a necessary example for modern society. It should induce people, in a manner of speaking, ‘not just to lie on the beach.’ Especially because the pilgrimage unites all kind of beliefs on the road, it is regarded as good to encourage the ‘humble’ pilgrims’ practice because of its peaceful and reconciliatory qualities.

To conclude this section, I cite a 38-year-old female Australian pilgrim, working in ecotourism, who sums up different issues of the heritagization process around the tangible and intangible Camino culture:

I do think that the Camino should be proclaimed an ancient pilgrimage road and a form of Cultural heritage—however I think that heritage title should do more for PROTECTING the heritage of the Camino and what is special about it. I do not think that the Camino should be used to stimulate Tourism. I think the whole experience is already changing as a result of growing tourism, and the Camino is becoming quite commercial in nature which is not necessarily aligned with religious or spiritual quest objectives. I also think that the carrying capacity of the Camino is beginning to be exceeded and with the growing number of pilgrims that experience is changing—including acculturation of the Spanish communities through which it passes with the expectations of Western tourists. I believe the Spanish government/country needs to think very carefully about how it SUSTAINABLY manages this precious road and experience into the future. Simply turning it into a tourist commodity will ruin the values which attract pilgrims to the location in the first place. In much the same fashion as tourism development that is insensitive in natural areas (like

⁵²Questionnaire English, respondents 227 and 235.

⁵³There is a long track record of ‘embarrassment’ about destruction along the Camino, see Sanchez-Carretero 2012.

Thailand/Vietnam/Nepal—many other places) tends to ruin the beauty of the place that attracted the visitors initially.⁵⁴

This statement reflects clearly the basic opposition of mass popularity versus individuality and uniqueness in which the Camino Finisterre, and *a fortiori* the whole Camino network, finds itself.

8.14 As a Conclusion: The Impact of the Finisterre Route

While in the last two decades the ‘new’ Finisterre route has been growing rapidly in popularity, it is evident that the interaction between the foot travelers and the environment and its inhabitants of this western part of Galicia has intensified and will continue to be stronger. It is therefore relevant to understand why the urge among walkers and pilgrims on the Camino to continue for Finisterre has picked up speed.

Trekking along the European Camino network can be described in one way as the practice, inspired by history and tradition, of creating a religiously open ritual format for oneself for reflecting on one’s life, and possibly, depending on a variety of spiritual values, to experience transcendence in a certain manner. The pluralist views and personal perceptions in that regard are ‘endlessly’ diverse, as each individual trek is a personally constructed journey.

The construction and mediatization of a mythical pre-Christian pilgrimage route towards the Atlantic and an increasing heritagization of the Camino network and Santiago itself, and the subsequent commodification of both, has urged walkers on beyond Compostela, driven by a repertoire of motives nearly as varied, multi-layered and multifunctional as the number of persons on the route. Especially the rising normativity and crowdedness on the ‘regular’ tracks east of Santiago inspires more and more people to continue. Also, the arrival in Santiago is a disappointment for many and ‘not a right way to sort things out’ at the intended end of their journey. Hence, the quest for the farther west is a substitution process that in the future will only continue to gain importance. The result however is that this route also has come under the influence of governmental and supra-nation state actors, and the pressure of new heritage and leisure regimes. This process likewise influences the character of the continuation by attracting new categories of walkers who again bring with them crowdedness and commercialization. In the words of Hall, a once peripheral ‘unspoiled’ ‘pagan’ landscape is being ‘consumed’ by the desire to discover new regions, a landscape that gets mobilized and modified to meet the needs of (spiritual) consumers (cf. Hall et al. 2013). This development is reflected in a major concern among the walkers, fearing that the Camino system is reaching its limits, implying that the qualities for

⁵⁴English questionnaire DI/DJ, 227.

which it is appreciated are directly undermined by its massive and increasing popularity.

Despite various Celtic and esoteric connotations of the Finisterre continuation and the omnipresent affiliation of walkers to alternative spiritualities, the cultural-religious representation of Christianity overall expressed by walkers and pilgrims increases and outweighs yet the 'New Age profile' of the route. Although walkers are not inclined to elaborate deeply on possible religious motives, the outcome shows that spiritual or religious incentives are actually present among those who travel along the route, although usually in an implicit way. The self-reflective, introspective way of journeying, often as a result of personal issues and problems, turn this 'final' track and its ritual ending into a desired closure for the self-searching quest for meaning in life. The route is in the present practice not a secularized version of the Jacobean pilgrimage (cf. Herrero 2008: 139), as Christian walkers and pilgrims and 'New-Agey' spirituality seekers are dominantly present. The route (still) represents a more or less self-standing ritual and mythologized track that appeals to a universal spirituality which helps people in their search for solutions to their existential questions and anxieties.

The paradox of the Camino Finisterre comes to the fore in the process by which interest in it was initially raised through its mythological and pagan past, stimulated by esoterically inspired persons and organizations, but its fast growing popularity is bringing it into concurrence with the traditional, Christian Camino. Namely, more and more 'regular' Santiago pilgrims decide to continue to the coast. This 'normalization' process is ultimately bringing the route in line with the mainstream Camino network and its broader Christian paradigm. This development is stimulated because for more and more walkers and pilgrims the continuation is increasingly understood as an essential element in the whole Camino experience. To that end the Church is lessening its initial objections and develops new Christian mythologies about how these 'pagan' trajectories can be integrated into the Catholic history of Santiago and the missionary activities of Saint James himself.⁵⁵

The result of this is that the differences between the two routes, the tracks before and after Santiago, are fading. Many of the notions about walking and pilgrimage on the Camino network to Santiago are being heard in similar wording as those about going on towards Finisterre. My findings are in that way to a large extent in line with results of researchers who focused only on the main, traditional route, the Camino Francés (cf. Frey 1995; Norman 2011). The fame of the Camino network and the many publications on it, and also the fact that in practice a relatively large number of anthropologists and scholars of religion themselves walk the Camino, creates a kind of academic echoing, addressing corresponding questions and results in their publications, but also a resounding of an enormous

⁵⁵For example, Finisterre and Muxía are newly inserted into the Church's discourse on Saint James as places where James has been active during his presumed stay in Galicia. Both places can hence be regarded as valid additional destinations for Santiago pilgrims.

variety of experiential and motivational phrases and expressions among pilgrims and walkers.

The outcome here also differs in the fact that, unlike the Camino Francés, the walking or physical performance for the Finisterre track proves less important, as the primary discourse there is mainly about the goal: the end of the world and bringing an end to one's journey. While the renewed, modern pilgrimage to Santiago changed the idea of pilgrimage from reaching a goal (the shrine) to being under way, the Finisterre continuation is reintroducing the goal.

An increasing number of walkers do not find the Santiago of the formal Catholic Church and the disturbing hassles at the end of the Camino Francés a suitable end point for their personal quest. By continuing they create a short intermediate stage which functions as rite of passage for the closure of their personal quest. The symbolism of and rituality at the cape is to a certain extent the ('New-Agey') substitute for the Catholic saint's shrine in Compostela. The continuation represents also a personal 'healing,' the renewal of life acquired through the journey. Spiritual wandering has its social aspects, but above all it is an individual endeavor often related to existential aspects of life, as the backgrounds and motives of modern walkers show us. These compare with Shakespeare's character Hamlet: they have personal problems, depressive moods, or are searching for the meaning of life. The question of being a 'true' pilgrim might even count more strongly for the 'final' part of the Camino west of Compostela, as it still disregards the Church and connects to a range of myths and discourses of spirituality, to which anyone can relate with subjectified meanings as he or she pleases.

And so, in sum, the Camino Francés (and *a fortiori* the other *caminos* towards Santiago) and the Camino Finisterre are inversely connected and 'condemned' to one another. Because the former is a generic vehicle for searching oneself without an emphatic focus on the endpoint (the cathedral), the Camino Finisterre offers walkers the open symbolic and ritual ending many are actually longing for: not within the institutionalized and commodified Catholic space of Santiago, but at the postponed and open 'final' ending, where walkers and pilgrims ritually bring their temporary out-of-daily-life quest for themselves to a satisfactory close.

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