



Urban Piety & Camino de Santiago: Impact of Medieval Cities on Pilgrimage Devotion



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Abstract: Pilgrims traveling to Santiago carried with them new forms of saint worship observed along the way, while also maintaining their religious customs from their hometowns. During the Middle Ages, it was often urban dwellers who embarked on these pilgrimages. En route to Compostela, they found support in the cities they passed through, receiving hospital care and accommodations, and participating in city life, particularly during festivities. However, they also faced challenges such as dishonesty, exploitation, and temptation. Additionally, they encountered a distinct urban piety associated with brotherhoods and religious formations, which influenced their approach to pilgrimage. In the paper, while examining the life of medieval cities and their devotional practices, as well as the material evidence of pilgrim presence such as badges, we will explore how this urban experience shaped the mentality of pilgrims. Furthermore, we will investigate the role of cities in the development of the pilgrimage movement to Compostela, with a focus on Toruń and Gdańsk.

Keywords: Camino de Santiago; medieval cult of saints; medieval devotion; spirituality; pilgrimage

ES Piedad urbana y Camino de Santiago: Impacto de las ciudades medievales sobre la devoción al peregrinaje

Resumen: Los peregrinos que viajaban a Santiago llevaban consigo nuevas formas de culto a los santos observadas a lo largo del camino, manteniendo al mismo tiempo las costumbres religiosas de sus lugares de origen. Durante la Edad Media, eran frecuentemente los habitantes de las ciudades los que se embarcaban en estas peregrinaciones. En el camino a Compostela encontraron apoyo en las ciudades por las que pasaron, recibiendo atención hospitalaria, alojamiento, y participando en la vida de la ciudad, especialmente durante las festividades. Sin embargo, también enfrentaron desafíos como la deshonestidad, la explotación y la tentación que les esperaba en las ciudades de paso. Se encontraron también durante su peregrinación con unas formas de la piedad urbana asociada con hermandades religiosas y asociaciones que influyeron en su modo de percibir la peregrinación. En el artículo, al examinar las prácticas devocionales en las ciudades medievales, así como la evidencia material de la presencia de peregrinos, exploraremos cómo esta experiencia urbana moldeaba la mentalidad de los peregrinos. De forma particular el artículo se fijará al papel de las ciudades en el desarrollo de la peregrinación a Compostela, centrándose en Toruń y Gdańsk.

Summario: 1. Pilgrim in medieval city: How did he spend his time passing through cities? 2. Medieval Urban devotion and its manifestations. 2.1. Polish burghers on their way to Compostela. 2.2. Processions and feasts. 2.3. Liturgy. 2.4. Art and its Mystagogical Character. 3. Return from pilgrimage: local tradition enriched. 3.1. Pilgrim's Badges. 3.2. New forms of saint worship. 4. Conclusions. 5. References.

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Introduction

Although medieval pilgrims spent a significant amount of time traveling outside cities, historical sources provide insight into their interactions within urban centers. These interactions included exemptions from taxes and other fees for pilgrims using urban infrastructure such as city gates and bridges, as well as the acquisition of letters of safe-conduct (*salvoconducto*), particularly when pilgrims stayed in specific locations like Zaragoza¹. Communal pilgrimages, whether on a national or familial scale, are also documented². While much attention is given to the practical aspects of traversing cities, such as lodging, medical assistance, access to hostels, and food, viewing cities primarily as repositories of resources essential for continuing the journey, it is important to recognize that this urban experience significantly influenced the pilgrim's mindset and spirituality. Pilgrims carried with them social and cultural practices as well as forms of worship, while also bringing elements of their native culture, thereby imparting their attitudes and traditions onto the cities they visited.

In this paper, we will provide a brief overview of how medieval pilgrims typically stayed in urban areas, the religious practices they encountered and engaged in, and ultimately discuss the cultural elements they carried back to their home communities.

1. Pilgrim in medieval city: How did he spend his time passing through cities?

Medieval pilgrimages constituted a notable phenomenon within cities, where *hospitales de peregrino* were established to offer security and care, serving as endpoints for daily stages of the journey to Santiago. It was common practice for locals to venture out to welcome approaching pilgrims and encourage them to use lodging options within the city. In Oviedo, for instance, a whole street was dedicated to providing accommodations, and historical records reveal the appointment of the first town doctor tasked with caring for pilgrims. Additionally, there were instances of oversight over lodging proprietors, particularly in cases of misconduct or abuse. These challenging and sometimes conflicting situations are depicted in the miracles from the *Codex Calixtinus*. Instances include disputes over pilgrim property, incidents of deception and theft, and falsification of transactions. Tales of dishonest landlords abound, with retribution often sought through legal channels, such as those illustrated in the *Codex Calixtinus*³, where justice is served for the mistreatment of pilgrims, including cases of theft or false accusations made against them. This portrayal of urban pilgrim stays is

further enriched by accounts of legal disputes and administrative interventions, including permits for alms and the appointment of legal guardianships of pilgrims.

Religious brotherhoods played a crucial role in overseeing pilgrims as they traversed cities⁴. Their activities are well-documented in Spain, where they provided assistance to destitute pilgrims with essentials such as shoes, clothing, and meals, as seen in Burgos. Similarly, in Poland, from the 13th century onward, a movement popular in Western Europe developed related to the establishment of various types of religious brotherhoods, whose purpose was to revitalize the religious life of the faithful, as well as to carry out certain religious and social activities, including providing assistance to pilgrims in difficulty. In the diocese of Kamień Pomorski, for instance, there were 45 confraternities for the needy established as early as the 14th century, with varying numbers in other dioceses⁵.

Pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem, Rome, Santiago de Compostela and other holy sites also received medical, material, moral and religious care in municipal hospitals run by religious orders. In the Middle Ages, hospitals were run by the monastic institutions of the Crusader orders (the Canons Regular of the Holy Sepulchre, the Joanites, the Knights Templar and the Teutonic Order), as well as the Benedictines, Dominicans and Franciscans. For example, the Canons Regular of the Holy Sepulchre in Poland ran hospitals at most monasteries in many cities: Gniezno, Krakow, Miechów, Przeworsk, Nysa, Pyzdry, Rypin, Sieradz and Żarnowiec⁶. In monastic hospitals the sick were cared for by all the monks or by a priest assigned exclusively to the care of the hospital⁷.

For the medieval pilgrim, the urban environment represented a sense of being welcomed on the journey, providing safety, physical and spiritual care, and integration into the community, likely facilitated by a shared religious faith. Simultaneously, cities facilitated the rapid establishment of relationships and communication across various levels. While on the road, pilgrims often traveled alone or in small groups, whereas the city offered opportunities to engage with a larger community. However, this also entailed forming connections with locals and navigating the dynamics of being in the minority, as communal living within such contexts had its implications.

¹ Adeline Rucquoi, "Los Años Santos", en: *Sal de tu tierra, el Apóstol te espera* (Santiago de Compostela: Fundación Acogida Cristiana en los Caminos de Santiago, p. 35-59.

² Piotr Roszak, Jesus Tanco, "Family pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago in Spain: Typology and Impact", *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 11, no. 3(2023): 3-9 <https://doi.org/10.21427/9JEK-N534>

³ Klaus Herbers, „*Liber Sancti Jacobi* – Kodeks Kalikstyński: kluczowy dokument dla kultu św. Jakuba oraz pielgrzymek” en: *Camino Polaco Teologia – Sztuka – Historia – Teraźniejszość*, vol. 6 ed. Piotr Roszak, Franciszek Mróz, Marcin Gazda (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2023), 19-43.

⁴ Robert Plötz, "Misericordia, fraternidad y las cofradías de Santiago", *Ad Limina* 10(2019): 153-175.

⁵ Eugeniusz Wiśniowski, "Bractwa religijne na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu", *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 17, no 2(1969): 58.

⁶ Ryszard Skrzyniarz, *Źródła archiwalne w Polsce do dziejów zakonu Bożogrobców*, [w:] *Bożogrobcy w Polsce*. Praca zbiorowa, Miechowskie Towarzystwo 1163 roku i Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, Miechów-Warszawa 1999, s. 214-220; Franciszek Mróz, *Miechowska Droga św. Jakuba w sieci polskich odcinków Camino de Santiago – założenia i perspektywy rozwoju*, [w:] *Dziedzictwo religijne i kulturowe Drogi św. Jakuba – w 30. rocznicę uznania szlaku za pierwszy Europejski Szlak Kulturowy*, red. P. Roszak, F. Mróz, Ł. Mróz, Wydawnictwo „Czuwajmy”, Kraków 2017, s. 179-180.

⁷ Jerzy Flaga, *Działalność duszpasterska Bożogrobców na ziemiach Rzeczypospolitej*, [w:] *Bożogrobcy w Polsce*. Praca zbiorowa, Miechowskie Towarzystwo 1163 roku i Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, Miechów-Warszawa 1999, s. 108.

It is known from Polish sources that pilgrims primarily originated from urban areas, drawn there by various motivations, such as fulfilling a testamentary obligation or as a “composition contract.” This contract, typically an agreement between a murderer and the victim’s family, mandated a pilgrimage as part of the penance for the crime committed. Such arrangements were documented in jury books, serving as an additional form of reparation. In Poland and Germany, pilgrimages often formed part of a penitential ritual, acting as the pilgrimage’s starting point or arising from a vow (*vota*) made⁸. Consequently, pilgrims’ visits to other urban centers were commonplace, providing opportunities for comparisons with their own communities and the devotional practices observed during pilgrimages to local shrines.

For instance, discussing the piety of the Kuyavian region, Z. Zyglewski highlights how individuals frequented locations renowned for miraculous healings, such as Strzelno, while also being drawn to the cults of specific saints. In Chodecz, devotion to St. Valentine flourished, whereas in Izbica Kujawska, St. Florian’s cult attracted pilgrims, leading to the construction of a chapel with indulgence privileges. Additionally, in the 15th century, processions were organized in Kuyavian towns, exemplified by Andrzej Koscielecki’s efforts in the late 15th century to obtain papal legate permission for processions with the Blessed Sacrament in Bydgoszcz, accompanied by a 40-day indulgence associated with this practice. Over time, these processions became integral to patronal feasts in other cities⁹. However, the motivation of seeking places where indulgences could be obtained was an important and shared motivation for European pilgrims of that era. Indulgence, viewed as the remission of punishment for sins, entailed the erasure of guilt through the forgiveness of sins, thus representing a form of restoration of freedom in the broadest sense¹⁰.

2. Medieval Urban devotion and its manifestations

As for the nature of medieval piety, there are debates in the literature regarding the extent to which it was characterized by elite versus popular expressions, thereby contrasting learned faith with popular beliefs¹¹. This perspective does not concern the

object of faith itself, which remains unchanged since it is the same in both cases; rather, the difference lies in the strength and sources of motivation. It would be a mistake to regard “popular piety” as a deviation from its learned counterpart¹². However, it is essential to clarify the meaning of terms such as *devotio* or *pietas* themselves. From a theological standpoint, following Thomas Aquinas, these terms describe human activities that bind individuals to an ultimate goal. On one hand, they encompass acts such as prayer, sacrifice, and adoration, while on the other hand, they include any action directed towards God (*ordo ad Deum*)¹³. Additionally, *pietas* embodies an attitude of gratitude towards those to whom we owe our existence; thus, while it primarily refers to God in an absolute sense, it also extends to parents or homeland. In this sense, it is not surprising that *pietas* served as a motif for pilgrimages to Santiago (the motif of gratitude for rescue or salvation was often highlighted in literature¹⁴). Simultaneously, this explains why manifestations of piety in the Middle Ages can be based on their relationship to the fundamental act of the Eucharist¹⁵. All these liturgical or para-liturgical expressions (e.g., the veneration of saints) conveyed the desire to engage the whole person physically and completely¹⁶.

In the context of urban piety manifestations during the Middle Ages, according to Polish historiography, it is noteworthy to mention the studies of Witkowska¹⁷ and Rys¹⁸. The latter presents medieval piety from the perspective of religiosity as a societal phenomenon rather than an individual one, focusing on law over conscience, ritual over doctrine, and morality over dogma. However, he also acknowledges the significant evolution of medieval piety, transitioning from external ritualistic practices to an internalized spirituality based on personal experiences and emotions, as exemplified by the *devotio moderna* movement. This shift is evident in the depiction of spiritual themes and Christ Himself, notably in

⁸ Derek A. Rivard, *Blessing the World: Ritual and Lay Piety in Medieval Religion*, (Washington D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 2009).

⁹ Zbigniew Zyglewski, “Religijność w miastach kujawskich późnego średniowiecza”, en: *Ecclesia et civitas. Kościół i życie religijne w mieście średniowiecznym*, ed. Halina Manikowska, Hanna Zaremska, (Warszawa: Wyd. Instytutu Historii PAN, 2002), 327-345, 343

¹⁰ Braulio Valdivielso Ausín, “Rasgos distintivos de la religiosidad popular y de la peregrinación en las diferentes épocas. La causa del apogeo santiaguista en el Medievo y su resurgir actual”, en *Anden los que saben; sepan los que andan*. Asociación de Amigos del Camino de Santiago en Navarra. (Pamplona, 1996).

¹¹ Peter Heath, “Urban Piety in the Later Middle Ages: The Evidence of Hull Wills”. En *The Church, Politics and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century*, ed by Barrie Dobson (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 209-34. See also Keith D. Lilley, *Urban Life in the Middle Ages 1000-1450*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002).

¹² Robert S. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe*, c. 1215-1515 (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 19

¹³ Piotr Roszak, Sławomir Tykarski, “Popular piety and devotion to parish patrons in Poland and Spain, 1948-98”, *Religions* 11, no 12 (2020), 658; <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11120658>

¹⁴ Katharina Ulrike Mersch, “Perforating Urban Boundaries with Processions in the European High and Late Middle Ages”, en: *Religion and Urbanity Online*, edited by Susanne Rau and Jörg Rüpke (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023), where we can read “When in 1400, the Victual Brothers (a group of privateers soon declared as pirates) were defeated, one council man of Hamburg was sent to Santiago de Compostela as the town’s representative to show gratitude. In 1482, the city of Perpignan sent some clerics to Santiago to seek the saint’s aid for the good of the town, in 1456, 1458, 1483, and 1507 Barcelona did the same and Gerona in 1483, 1515 and 1529 (Carlen 1987: 65)”.

¹⁵ Leonard Boyle, “Popular piety in the Middle Ages: What is popular?” *Florilegium* 1, no. 4 (1982): 184-193: „Piety, after all, if one is to use the term with any sensitivity to its basic meaning, is simply a grateful and respectful acknowledgement of one’s relationship, generally of dependence, sometimes of admiration, to someone or something above one, whether mother, father, older brother or sister, church, country, minister, teacher, leader, God. (p. 186).

¹⁶ Cf. Ivan Platovnjak, “Rest in God – The Spirituality of Rest”, *Edinost in dialog* 77, no. 1(2022), 259-277.

¹⁷ Aleksandra Witkowska, *Kulty pątnicze piętnastowiecznego Krakowa. Z badań nad miejską kulturą religijną*, Lublin 1984.

¹⁸ Grzegorz Ryś, *Pobożność ludowa na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu*, Foka, Szczecin 1995.

artworks and songs, where Christ is portrayed not merely as a judge but as a figure of compassion and empathy, encouraging repentance and engaging in a determined struggle against sin¹⁹. While this transformation in piety is often associated with the late Middle Ages, its origins can be traced back to figures like John of Fecamp and his advocacy for “affective piety” in the 11th century as part of the Cluniac reforms, which emphasized the cultivation of emotions and the imitation of Christ²⁰.

As part of this piety, pilgrimage served as a means for medieval individuals to emulate Christ, renounce worldly pursuits, and, with the influence of Iroquoian monks, it evolved into a form of penance for sins. Descriptions of miracles alone cannot fully capture the pilgrimage experience; other sources such as songs and iconography must also be considered²¹. These convey a spiritual message to pilgrims, reflecting their journey and imparting a moral or virtuous message²².

Simultaneously, historiography underscores the symbolic nature of urban life, interpreting the urban landscape in almost mystical terms. The city is seen as mirroring the characteristics of supernatural life, characterized by relationality and organicity, thus functioning as a microcosm in medieval thought. In this context, it is valuable to differentiate and examine lived religion, which coexists alongside formal state religion. Lived religion encompasses daily religious practices, including urban processions to relics of the saints²³. Mircea Eliade, in discussing such piety, highlighted the concept of homology, where everyday objects such as houses, trees, and stones are imbued with sacred significance²⁴. The location of this type of place within urban was also a leading issue because sacred places bond natural light, attractive landscapes and green, emotive areas²⁵. Urban piety also manifested through acts of charity and testamentary bequests, as evidenced, for

instance, in the wills of Krakow's burghers²⁶. These documents often included provisions for establishing communal institutions like hospitals and shelters, as well as spiritual foundations dedicated to praying for the souls of the deceased.

2.1. Polish burghers on their way to Compostela

It is noteworthy to observe the phenomenon of pilgrimage undertaken by the burghers of Gdansk to Compostela, which are documented in various sources including testamentary records and chronicles. Records indicate instances of pilgrimages to Spain by individuals from Gdansk, such as an unidentified sailor who returned to his hometown in 1379 after journeying to Compostela. Towards the end of the same century, the pilgrimage of Herman von Ruden is mentioned, indicating a growing trend of such expeditions by the 15th century. Accounts include references to pilgrimages to Compostela by individuals like Jakub Lubbe of Lichnow and the Gdansk chronicler Christopher Beyer. Additionally, there are records of ‘substitute’ pilgrimages stipulated in wills, as seen in the case of Detmers Reynecke who, in 1473, left 30 fines for someone to undertake a pilgrimage to Compostela on his behalf, a gesture mirrored by Martin Dudeschenrop of Gdańsk²⁷.

Analyzing the wills of Elbląg residents from the 15th and 16th centuries, out of the 145 extant wills, 30 were designated for the testator's intention, with only 3 suggesting the testator's own pilgrimage for personal intentions. The destination of Compostela is mentioned five times in descriptions of these pilgrimages (in 1477, 1484, 1495, 1498, 1511)²⁸. Kubicki attributes the popularity of Compostela to St. James patronage of merchants and protection of safe sea travel, given that Polish pilgrims often embarked on their journey by sea, thus experiencing port cities. As summarized by H. Samsonowicz²⁹, the land route from Gdansk to Compostela in the Middle Ages took approximately 70 days, while the sea route took about 15 days. These were extensive journeys, costing up to five times more than equivalent trips to Aachen.

Perhaps the reasons for townspeople from Pomerania undertaking journeys to Compostela should be sought in the growing prestige of the so-called ‘knightly’ journeys during the 14th and 15th

¹⁹ Grzegorz Ryś, „Dwa oblicza polskiej religijności ludowej w średniowieczu”, *Saeculum Christianum* 3, no. 1 (1996), 33-48.

²⁰ Mancía, Lauren. *Emotional Monasticism: Affective Piety in the Eleventh-Century Monastery of John of Fécamp*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).

²¹ Luana Stan, *Le pèlerinage musical du chemin de Santiago de Compostelle*, *Anastasis* 2, no. 2(2015): 118-132.

²² Arkadiusz Gudaniec, “Personal Experience of Suffering: Reflections Inspired by Elements of Karol Wojtyła's Philosophical Anthropology”. *Scientia et Fides* 12, no. 1 (2024): 215-229 <https://doi.org/10.12775/SetF.2024.001>. See also: Saša Horvat, Richard Pavlič. “Teološka antropologija pred izazovom (evolutivne) kognitivne znanosti o religiji”. *Diacovensia* 28, no. 3, 2020, 303-317, <https://doi.org/10.31823/d.28.3.1>

²³ Keith D. Lilley, “Cities of God? Medieval Urban Forms and Their Christian Symbolism”. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* 29, No. 3 (2004): 296-313.

²⁴ Mircea Eliade, *The sacred and the profane. The nature of religion* (New York: Harcourt, 1959). See also Goodnow, J., Bloom, K.S., “When is a journey sacred? Exploring twelve properties of the sacred”, *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 5, no. 2(2017): 10-16.

²⁵ Avril Maddrell, Veronica della Dora, Alessandro Scafi, Heather Walton, „Christian Pilgrimage, Landscape and Heritage Journeying to the Sacred”. Routledge Studies in Religion, Travel, and Tourism. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group (2015); Luz Nimrod, „ReligioCity: Towards a Theory of Urban Religion and Religion in Urbanity”. In: Rau S, Rüpke J (ed.) *Religion and Urbanity Online*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter; 2023

²⁶ Maria Asenjo Gonzalez, “Fiestas y celebraciones en las ciudades castellanas de la Baja Edad Media”. *Edad Media. Revista de Historia* 14 (2013): 35- 61. See also: Filipe Themudo Barata, “Organizar a procissão nos finais do século XV. O lugar de cada um e do grupo na cidade”, en *Categorias sociais e mobilidade urbana na Baixa Idade Média. Entre o Islão e a Cristandade*, ed. Herminia Vasconcelos Villar; Maria Filomena Lopes de Barros (Évora: Edições Colibri e CIDEHUS-UE, 2012), 187-194.

²⁷ Janusz Tandecki, “Wallfahrten der Bürger aus den großen preußischen Städten im Mittelalter und an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit”. *Biuletyn Polskiej Misji Historycznej* 10, (2015):95-118. <https://doi.org/10.12775/BPMH.2015.003>

²⁸ Rafał Kubicki, “Pielgrzymki w testamentach mieszczan elbląskich w XV- początkach XVI wieku / The Pilgrimages in the wills of Elbląg citizens in the 15th-early 16th century”, en: *Z dziejów średniowiecza. Pamięci profesora Jana Powierskiego (1940-1999)*, ed. W. Długokęcki, Gdańsk 2010, 179-188.

²⁹ Henryk Samsonowicz, „Kult św. Jakuba i szlaki Jakubowe w Polsce”, [w:] *Kult św. Jakuba...*, 127-128.

centuries, still influenced by the Teutonic Knights. It is worth noting the analogies between 'knights' and 'pilgrims', both in terms of attire and code of behavior. The status of the pilgrim was esteemed, comparable to that of the clergy in the 13th/14th century³⁰.

However, analyses of pilgrimage accounts to Compostela, along with reconstructed lists of pilgrims based on information found in the Hospital de Reyes Catolicos in Compostela, conducted by K. Orzechowska³¹ and J. Marszałek³², demonstrate that the pilgrimage movement involved towns from across Poland.

2.2. Processions and feasts

Insights into the religious life of pilgrims on the road can be gleaned from descriptions of celebrations honoring St. James (or other saints), documented in Italy and Spain. During such festivities, parties, dedicated markets, and processions to honor the saints were organized. Like all festivals in the Middle Ages, these events were oriented toward renewal and often included organized games with a competitive aspect. An important component of these festivals was the feasts of brotherhoods, which aimed to foster a sense of unity among members³³. Participants were obligated to attend vespers (often holding candles), participate in Mass, and share a meal together. St. Nicholas Day was a significant holiday, especially in university towns, and may provide insights into similar manner of honoring the Apostle. St. James. According to sources from Valladolid, on St. Nicholas Day, students would block a bridge, making themselves visible to the urban community and engaging in playful activities³⁴. Much is known about how such religious-civic events were organized and their significance, including celebrations honoring other saints (such as St. Roch in Montpellier), which may have later influenced pilgrims to recreate similar feasts in honor of their patron saints upon their return to their hometowns³⁵. Initiating and embedding religious celebrations and customs derived from experiences gathered during pilgrimages and integrating local society is an expression of building social capital and relationships with the place³⁶.

These are essential features of a viable society capable of co-deciding and building responsibility for the place of residence³⁷.

It was also an opportunity for pilgrims to participate in community celebrations during feast, although often the doors to the shrines closed immediately after the celebration. According to an unnamed monk from Limoges, as mentioned in the account of St. Gregory the Great, he arrived for the feast of St. Julian but he couldn't enter the church as everyone quickly dispersed. Historical sources also document special processions with reliquaries organized in pilgrimage towns, and the Camino de Santiago was dotted with intermediate shrines (as detailed in the *Codex Calixtinus*). This underscores the significance of saints' relics, which lent credence to their cult. An expression of urban piety was the inclination to make *vota*, oaths, and pledges to the saint, as well as the persistent quest for descriptions of miracles, which were collected and pondered upon³⁸.

2.3. Liturgy

It is also important to note how cities changed because of pilgrims. Many scholars emphasize changes in the architecture of temples³⁹, as well as the organization of public acts of worship, such as processions, designed to impress pilgrims staying overnight in the city and encourage them to make offerings. It is known that many temples established standard donations, but in a size manageable for visitors. This may have been the case, for example, with liturgical stations in pilgrim cities, with Rome serving as a prime example.

However, the pilgrim's stay at the destination or intermediate shrine – within an urban environment – was not limited to visiting a holy place. It is significant that descriptions of pilgrims' stay in Santiago clearly indicate the celebration of the Eucharist in other churches of the old city of Compostela before proceeding to the cathedral, where pilgrims prayed at the tomb but did not enter the crypt, as is common practice today. From analogous descriptions of other shrines in England, for example, it is known that there was limited access to relics and places of worship, which led to the emergence of other forms of piety around shrines, such as chapels outside city walls and holy wells⁴⁰. In this vein, one can also discern a changing trend in the Middle Ages related to shifts in the concept of holiness, which was previously confined to martyrs and confessors. This shift was reflected in the proliferation of shrines throughout

³⁰ Mieczysław Paczkowski, *lex peregrinorum: obowiązki, prawa, i przywileje na pielgrzymim szlaku*. en: Piotr Roszak, Waldemar Rozyński (eds) *Camino Polaco: teologia, sztuka, historia, teraźniejszość*, vol. 1. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 13–41.

³¹ Kazimiera Orzechowska, „Pielgrzymi polscy w Santiago de Compostela w latach 1631-1716”, *Folia Turistica* 27, (2012): 109-131

³² Jagoda Marszałek, “Polish Pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in the Light of Spanish Archival Resources”

en: *The Way of St. James. Renewing insights*, ed. Piotr Roszak, Enrique Alarcon (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2017), 29-58.

³³ María Luz Rodrigo Estevan, “Lo lúdico y lo festivo en el Aragón medieval: fuentes documentales para su estudio” *Aragón en la Edad Media* vol. 20 (2008): 661-676. See also: Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Las fiestas en la Europa medieval*, (Madrid, Dykinson S.L., 2016).

³⁴ María Asenjo Gonzalez, *Fiestas y celebraciones*, 46.

³⁵ Richard Kieckhefer “Convention and Conversion: Patterns in Late Medieval Piety.” *Church History* 67, no. 1 (1998): 32–51. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3170770>

³⁶ Devindi Geekiyanage, Terrence Fernando, Kaushal Keraminiyage. Assessing the state of the art in community engagement for participatory decision-making in disaster

risk-sensitive urban development. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020(51): 101847. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2020.101847>

³⁷ Agata Lewandowska, Justyna Chodkowska-Miszczuk. “The role of participation in the development of the smart city idea: frameworks, opportunities, mechanisms.” *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, 2022(57): 93-111. <http://doi.org/10.12775/bgss-2022-002>

³⁸ Ian Wood, “How Popular Was Early Medieval Devotion?” *Essays in Medieval Studies* (Chicago, 1997).

³⁹ Emma J. Wells, “Making ‘Sense’ of the Pilgrimage Experience of the Medieval Church.” *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* 3, no. 2 (2011): 122-146.

⁴⁰ Anne E. Baile, “Reconsidering the medieval experience at the shrine in high medieval England”, *Journal of Medieval History* 47, no. 2(2021): 203 – 229, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03044181.2021.1895874>

medieval Europe. The dynamic development of holy places (*loca sacra*) began during the Carolingian period, and ecclesiastical authority exerted control over the cult of saints, as evidenced by processes of canonization, forms of worship, and the modernization of the *sanctoral*⁴¹.

2.4. Art and its Mystagogical Character

The paintings found in the churches scattered along the Camino exhibited a diversity of styles in relation to the archetype, yet a bond and belief in the power of intercession and patronage were evident. Scholars have already noted similarities between Santiago and the churches located along the route, including common themes, artistic motifs, and even iconographic programs. Pilgrims perceived themselves as traversing a spiritual path across the continent, with these temples serving as significant waypoints. This interconnectedness of the spiritual and material realms was a hallmark of medieval culture⁴².

This is evident in the context of paintings adorning Gothic churches, exemplified by the Church of St. James in Toruń, which served as a gathering point for pilgrims en route to Santiago, often traveling by sea via Gdańsk. It is assumed that after meeting in Toruń, they proceeded to the Baltic coast using the Vistula River. The arrangement of paintings on the church walls, positioned at different levels and read from west to east, with the central focus on the Last Judgment, aimed to illustrate the Christian's journey from the militant Church, through pilgrimage in time, to the triumphant Church in heaven. This path traverses sacraments and sacrifice, symbolized by the altar, with the ultimate destination being the glory of God accessed through the final judgment⁴³. One cannot overlook certain parallels with the theological program embodied in the Portico of Glory in Santiago de Compostela. Master Matthew, the creator of the Portico, conveyed similar spiritual and theological themes, encapsulating the significance of pilgrimage to the Apostle's tomb. In churches along the Way of St. James, as demonstrated by the example of Toruń, this thematic thread persisted, albeit adapted to architectural constraints. This underscored a characteristic aspect of urban piety, which emphasized the significance of every virtuous act, sacrifice, and renunciation, ultimately drawing one closer to the attainment of heavenly glory⁴⁴.

At times, the manifestation of this 'awareness of the camino' in both horizontal and vertical dimensions was evidenced by graffiti and traces of pilgrims' presence left in sacred structures. In the context of pilgrimages to the Holy Land, there were even inscriptions on walls (e.g., in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre), along with other locations adorned with pilgrim symbols, serving as expressions of their piety⁴⁵. This is suggested by findings made by Professor Enrique Alarcon, such as anagrams discovered in the crypt of Saint James' tomb dating back to the early period of pilgrimages to Compostela⁴⁶. Today, street art also engages recipients and is a form of communication that uses urban spaces to express experiences, including reactions to a current event. It is the practice of domestication of public spaces and new elements of urban infrastructure⁴⁷.

3. Return from pilgrimage: local tradition enriched

Sources such as the sermons of Robert de Sorbonne document the return from pilgrimages of individuals from various walks of life, who were welcomed by the residents of their hometowns⁴⁸. A similar scenario could have occurred in Poland, although accounting for the disparity in the scale of pilgrimage traffic. Upon their return, pilgrims brought not only material goods (though this also occurred) but also knowledge of new customs, solutions, ideas, and forms of piety⁴⁹.

In the case of Polish knights from Mazovia, we have information that demonstrates, on one hand, strictly religious motivations linked to the Christian ideal of chivalry and the defense of faith. For knights like Jan Piliik, returning to their homeland meant participating in Prince Witold's crusade against the Tatars, indicating profound religious motivations. In the case of others, such as Paweł from Radzanów, who traveled with an entourage of up to eight people, the spiritual experiences of all participants were recalled by listeners. This is evident, as Małgorzata Wilska emphasizes⁵⁰, in the recounting of knightly legends heard during stops on the way to Compostela in 1380 (a year after a similar expedition

⁴¹ Andre Vauchez, "Saints and pilgrimages: new and old" en: Rubin M, Simons W, (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2009): 324-339.

⁴² Cf. Ivan Platovnjak, Vinko Zovko, "Human Bodily Movement and Spirituality", *Nova prisutnost* 21, no. 3(2023), 541-556.

⁴³ Elżbieta Pilecka, *Nowo odkryte gotyckie malowidła ściennie w kościele p.w. św. Jakuba Apostoła w Toruniu: pytania o interpretację*, en: A. Błażejewska, E. Pilecka, A. Saar-Kozłowska (red.), *Dzieje i skarby kościoła św. Jakuba w Toruniu*, (Toruń: Oddział Toruński Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki i Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu, 2023), 117-155.

⁴⁴ James Hofmann, "The Evolving Taxonomy of Progressive Creation". *Scientia et Fides* 11, no. 1(2023): 199-214. <https://doi.org/10.12775/SetF.2023.002>; Marcin Zieliński, Grzech i cnota w Księdze Mądrości jako konsekwencja fundamentalnego wyboru między śmiercią a Mądrością". *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia* 16, nr 4(2023): 437-452. <https://doi.org/10.12775/BPTh.2023.025>

⁴⁵ Eva-Maria Butz, Alfons Zettler, "Pilgrim's devotion? Christian graffiti from Antiquity to the Middle Ages", en: *Travel, Pilgrimage and Social Interaction from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, edited By Jenni Kuuliala, Jussi Rantala (Abington, New York: Routledge, 2020), 141-164.

⁴⁶ Enrique Alarcon, "Paleo-Christian Inscriptions Dedicated to Mary in the Apostolic Tomb of Santiago de Compostela", en Piotr Roszak, Enrique Alarcon, *The Way of St. James. Renewing insights* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2017), 9-28.

⁴⁷ Jonas Larsen, "Domesticating a redesigned public square: an ethnography of Enghave Plads, Copenhagen". *Urban Geography*, 2024 (1-24). <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2024.2313403>

⁴⁸ Nicole Bériou, "Le pèlerinage de Saint-Jacques vu par les prédicateurs au XIIIe siècle", en: Adeline Rucquoi (ed), *Saint Jacques et la France* (Paris, Le Cerf, 2003), 349-368.

⁴⁹ Sarah Blick, "Bringing Pilgrimage Home: The Production, Iconography, and Domestic Use of Late-Medieval Devotional Objects by Ordinary People", *Religions* 2019, 10(6), 392; <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10060392>

⁵⁰ M. Wilska, *Pielgrzymim szlakiem z Mazowsza do Composteli* en: Halina Manikowska, Hanna Zaremska (ed.), *Peregrinationes. Pielgrzymki w kulturze dawnej Europy* (Warszawa: Wyd. Instytutu Historii PAN) 165-169.

involving several Polish knights from Lesser Poland), as well as in songs later performed at the prince's court. Additionally, there is the adoption of customs observed in the countries through which the pilgrimage passed. This is corroborated by research on literary motifs in Masovia during that period (J. Wiesiołowski).

The stories told by the knights who travelled to Compostela, spread among the knights throughout Western and Central Europe and prompted a succession of pilgrims to set out for the "end of the world" to pray in the Cathedral of Compostela and obtain the venerable title of *miles Hispanicus*⁵¹. In 1414, there was a pilgrimage to Compostela by the Polish knight Mszczuj from Skrzyńsko (Mściwoj of Skrzyńsko; d. 1446), who, according to accounts, dealt a fatal blow to the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights Ulryk von Jungingen during the Battle of Grunwald in 1410. The expedition to Compostela of the knight Mszczuj was probably undertaken under the influence of the stories of the three knights making the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in 1404, namely Paul (Paszek) called Thief, Andrew Ciołek and Gniewosz of Dalewice⁵².

3.1. Pilgrim's Badges

A characteristic element brought by pilgrims from the sanctuaries they visited were various types of objects related to the local cult. Sometimes these were ampoules for carrying holy water or oils, which were known in many sanctuaries, especially in Canterbury, Rome, or Compostela⁵³.

Other items included small pilgrim bells, as well as emblems or plaques later affixed to city bells, which serve as valuable testimony and remnants of the devotion brought by pilgrims. Among these emblems, one may also encounter shells that adorned Mass chalices, potentially indicating that the priest or the chalice's donor undertook a pilgrimage to Compostela. Pilgrims returning from the Holy Land took back to their hometowns the olive oil that had been touched on the ampoules of olive oil in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, as well as casts of Christ's fingers imprinted on the marble pillar during the scourging and the traces of His feet from the stone on which He stood in the Praetorium⁵⁴.

These "pilgrim signs" were typically crafted from a tin and lead alloy, with their peak usage occurring in the 13th and 14th centuries. Nowadays, they are often unearthed in town squares during excavations (such as in Koszalin and Stargard) or discovered during river dredging, having been discarded by the townsfolk

over time⁵⁵. As observed by Marcin Majewski, Marian Rębkowski, and Rafał Simiński:

„Initially, they were in the shape of badges with ears for fastening. Later, in the 14th century, openwork signs emerged, and by the end of the Middle Ages, medieval medallions with ears became prevalent. Pilgrims obtained these items at the conclusion of their sacred journey, and upon their return, they would sew them onto headgear, pouches, or garments, signifying and legitimizing their status as pilgrims. Subsequently, these emblems were employed in various expressions of popular piety, often acquiring apotropaic qualities”⁵⁶.

Certainly, the prototype for all these emblems and signs was the shell of St. James (*Pecten maximus* L), which was brought from Compostela as early as the 10th century. In Poland, it has been found, among other places, in Kołobrzeg (with holes), as well as in skeletal graves discovered in various parts of the country. Additionally, there is known information dating from the late Middle Ages about shells cast in bronze.

It is worth mentioning that pilgrim emblems have been discovered, among other locations, on Mill Island in Gdańsk, but they also originate from other excavations, possibly associated with sea voyages. Consequently, the collection of the Archaeological Museum in Gdańsk contains nearly nine items directly related to the cult of St. James and are souvenirs brought by Polish pilgrims. Among them are

„one Atlantic shell of the *Pecten Maximus* species, two one-sided lead figures, six miniature shells made of metal, and two whole and one fragmentarily preserved pilgrim badge with a depiction of the figure of Saint James the Elder, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ.”⁵⁷.

Among the pilgrims, the most prestigious of the attributes was the 140 cm long T-shaped wooden anklet-*baston* (sharpened with metal) that was found in Grzebsko, and shells that were found in skeletal graves in, among others, Ostrów Tumski as late as 1935 (dated to before the 13th century, with two holes)⁵⁸. The location of the shell in the grave is a valuable clue to the way the shell was worn, which was attached to a bag, coat, and later a hat.

Pilgrim badges, as noted by Stefan Kuczynski⁵⁹, were increasingly used from the mid-12th century, referring to openwork badges (the so-called early medieval eulogies), resembling discs made of clay and dust taken from a revered holy site. They often depicted a saint venerated at a particular shrine and were believed to have the power to attract goodness

⁵¹ Franciszek Mróz, "Poles travelling to Compostela in time and space". *Journal of Cultural Geography* 38, no.2 (2021): 206-234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873631.2020.1864086>

⁵² Jagoda Marszałek, "Polish Pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in the Light of Spanish Archival Resources"

en *The Way of St. James. Renewing insights*, ed. Piotr Roszak, Enrique Alarcon (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2017), 53.

⁵³ Marcin Majewski, Marian Rębkowski, Rafał Simiński, "Pielgrzymki pomorskie w średniowieczu. Stan i perspektywy badań", *Przegląd Zachodniopomorski* 1 (2016): 129-138.

⁵⁴ Por. Anonim z Piacenzy, *Opis pielgrzymki do Ziemi Świętej*, en: P. Iwaszkiewicz, *Do Ziemi Świętej: najstarsze opisy pielgrzymek do Ziemi Świętej (IV-VIII w.)* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 1996), 253, 255.

⁵⁵ Grażyna Nawrońska, "Dokąd pielgrzymowali elblążanie w średniowieczu?: Znaki pielgrzymie świadectwem pobożnych wędrowców", en: *Archaeologia et historia urbana*, ed. Roman Czaja et al., Elbląg 2004, 517-527.

⁵⁶ P. 135

⁵⁷ Henryk Paner, *Gdańsk na pielgrzymkowych szlakach średniowiecznej Europy* (Gdańsk: Muzeum Archeologiczne w Gdańsku, 2016), 68.

⁵⁸ Teresa Dunin-Wąsowicz, "Średniowieczne znaki pielgrzymie w Polsce", en: *Peregrinationes...*, 328-331.

⁵⁹ Stefan Kuczynski, "Znaki pielgrzymie", en: *Peregrinationes...*, 321-327.

and transmit holiness (thaumaturgical power). Some of them even had a small compartment for a memento from the holy place (e.g., particles of wax, a cloth rubbed on the saint's reliquary). Later, they were found on bells or baptismal fonts, where they were supposed to ward off evil forces. Subsequent trends are associated with *drapelets*, small triangular flags with images of saints, which were later replaced by medallions, a transition that occurred since the 16th century. But returning to emblems, such pilgrim signs have been found in Poland (in Wrocław - evidence of pilgrimages to Rome and Cologne). There is also a find from Kujawy, from Chelmica near Kruszwica: a chain with 12 medallions depicting a figure holding a staff in his hand, which has been associated with Santiago de Compostela (although such attribution is still doubtful among researchers)⁶⁰.

3.2. New forms of saint worship

The modern assimilation of many forms of piety and their transfer to new contexts, often with inculturation, incorporating native cultural elements⁶¹, allows us to consider a situation similar to that of the Middle Ages, when new forms of saint veneration emerged upon returning from pilgrimage. One such function, promoting the liturgy of Compostela, was fulfilled by a section of the *Codex Calixtinus*, which documented the liturgy celebrated in the Cathedral of Santiago. It included vespers, reliving the eve of the Apostle's feast, hymns composed in honor of St. James, responsories, the Pope's guidelines for observing the octave of the Apostle's feast, along with readings of homilies by the Fathers and the Passionist⁶². Book I of the same codex also contains chants for the procession and Masses composed by the Pope for St. James, both for the octave and for the feast of the Apostle falling on December 30.

In the case of Polish pilgrimages, the funding of chapels and altars was often associated with making a pilgrimage to a certain place and bringing back its cult. The figure of Saint James in St. Mary's Church in Gdańsk, created in the 1430s, may also testify to this⁶³. This is related to the depiction of the Apostle, who is mainly portrayed as a pilgrim, with all his attributes.

Because of its widespread use and its symbolic association with pilgrimage, the shell also became a symbol placed on the images of saints such as Saint Roch or Saint Jodoc. The latter is especially known for two representations: one in Toruń from the mid-14th century and the other in the image in St. Mary's Basilica in Gdańsk 50 years later. He is a holy hermit from Brahice, who made pilgrimages throughout his life, including to Rome, and originated from French and German culture; his cult mainly developed in northern Poland⁶⁴.

Certainly, the result of pilgrimages to Compostela in Poland was the development of various forms of worship, including new prayers, songs, and votive offerings. As we know, following the medieval mentality, candles were brought to Compostela as symbols of desires and requests. There are known stories of their forgery, which confirms the widespread practice in this regard. In the Middle Ages, there was also a custom of making votive offerings in the form and weight of diseased body parts for which healing was sought. However, since pilgrimages to Santiago were primarily penitential and aimed at spiritual rebirth rather than asking for healing or worldly prosperity, it is possible to associate the religious experience of returning pilgrims with tendencies towards restoring true spiritual worship of God⁶⁵. This was emphasized by figures such as Nicholas of Jawor from Silesia (1375-1435) in *De superstitionibus*, who focused mainly on pilgrimages to Aachen.

4. Conclusions

The presence of pilgrims in the cities had its impact not only on the development of infrastructure, thanks to which shelters for them were created, services were established, and they were protected from abuse by those wishing to dishonestly profit from pilgrims. But there was another much more important process taking place in cities: integrating visitors into the life of the community, including the religious one⁶⁶. Therefore, pilgrims are known to take part in church services, city festivals, parish indulgences and processions, thus gaining a chance to learn about the urban piety of the towns they visited. In turn, they themselves were perceived by the locals as "penitents," although this concept should be understood more broadly than mere expiation, since the virtue of penance was directed above all at regaining freedom. Today, such a process of integrating visitors into the life of the city is significantly called citification⁶⁷, by which the importance of the relationship between residents and visitors is emphasized. To some extent, pilgrims prove to be the pioneers of this process abundantly treated in the literature.

Besides, analyses of urban piety in the Middle Ages, especially Polish cities, have shown the unification of theological motifs in the cult of St. James. James, especially the dominance of the image of St. James as pilgrim in the Middle Ages. At the same time, the description of the pilgrims' influence must take into account the tangible and the untouchable, the spiritual and the material. Certainly, tensions between pilgrims and city-dwellers also arose: eloquent testimony to this are the miracles of St. James from *Codex Calixtinus* or other sources,

⁶⁰ Tadeusz Poklewski, "Nowe znaleziska średniowiecznych znaków pielgrzymich z Polski", *Acta Archeologica Lodziensia* 17(1968): 131-136.

⁶¹ Bryan Cones, "Cultural Exchanges: Reflections on a Pilgrimage", *Liturgy* 39, no 1(2024), 38-45.

⁶² ElisardoTemperán, *La liturgia propia de Santiago en el Códice Calixtino* (Santiago de Compostela, 1997).

⁶³ Henryk Paner, *Gdańsk na pielgrzymkowych szlakach* (Gdańsk: Muzeum Archeologiczne w Gdańsku, 2016), 67-73.

⁶⁴ Adam Jeszka, *Święty Jodok*, <https://bazylikamariacka.gdansk.pl/swiety-jodok/> [access 28.03.2024]

⁶⁵ Cf. Ivan Platovnjak, Arto Mutanen, "On Religious Knowledge", *Bogoslovni vestnik* 83, no. 1(2023), 22-31.

⁶⁶ Andrea D'Apruzzo, "The influence of Pilgrimage Routes on Local Culture and Imagination: the 'Italian Compostela' as a Case Study", *Almatourism N.* 16, (2017): 59-79.

⁶⁷ Emiliano Rubens Urciuoli, "Citification of Religion: A Proposal for the Historical Study of Urban Religion". *Religion and Urbanity Online*, ed. by Susanne Rau and Jörg Rüpke (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.1515/urbrel.12124596>; see also Byrne, P. H. (2023). City as Human Good and Epiphany. *International Journal of Public Theology*, 17(3), 393-415. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15697320-20230096>

where the protagonists (unfortunately, often the negative ones) are city-dwellers. This, in turn, means that pilgrims not only interact with city dwellers, but had a strong impact on their social lives.

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