

*Jakobswege: Württemberg—Baden—Frankrich—Schweiz*; von Wolfgang W. Meyer (Silberburg Verlag: Tübingen, 2009) *The Jacob Trail: Württemberg—Baden—France—Switzerland*; by Wolfgang W. Meyer (Silberburg Verlag: Tübingen, 2009). Translation by Hugo W. Schroeder, Jr.

## About this Book

When April with his showers sweet with fruit  
The drought of March has piercéd to the root  
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power  
To generate therein and sire the flower;  
When Zephyr also has, with his sweet breath,  
Quickened again, in every holt and heath,  
The tender shoots and buds, and the young sun  
Into the Ram one half his course has run,  
And many little birds make melody  
That sleep through all the night with open eye  
(So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage),  
Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage,  
And palmers<sup>1</sup> to go seeking out strange strands,  
To distant shrines well known in sundry lands.

So did Geoffrey Chaucer, in his *Canterbury Tales* from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, describe the motivations that drove people to go on pilgrimages and visit distant holy places.

Would you like to discover the Jacob's Trail<sup>2</sup> in the southern part of Germany? No problem.

To enable you to take advantage of modern modes of transportation, the larger divisions of the Trail have been broken down into smaller segments which can be hiked on a short vacation or "time-off." Today, we don't have to make a will and put our things in order to do this, as medieval pilgrims did.

Where it seems practical, this guidebook makes suggestions about inns and other overnight accommodations for pilgrims on the Jacob's Trail.

In addition, it is advisable to leave a note on the author's internet homepage. There you can also book slide lectures in modern blend-over technique covering the Jacob's Trail in South Germany, France and Spain. From time to time you will also find offers for walking tours and pilgrim trips. The internet address is: [www.pilgerweg.de](http://www.pilgerweg.de).

## Foreword

How on earth did Europa Zentrum (The Europe Center)<sup>3</sup> become so interested in this Guide to the Jacob's Trails through Baden-Württemberg, that it decided to make a multi-year project of it? Whatever the reason, Wolfgang W. Meyer spent at least four years on the task, exploring the Jacob's Trails in southwestern Germany and marking them with signposts and informational tablets.

Since the mid-1970's, Europa Zentrum, Baden Württemberg, has been actively pursuing its mission according to its own self-understanding, critically exploring and promoting European unification in the light of German History. A primary objective in this is the eradication of prejudice, so that a peaceful civil society based on shared rights and desires might emerge from Europe's conflicted past. At the very least, the international European community must learn from its history through such means. Ever since

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<sup>1</sup> Pilgrims who wore crossed palm leaves as a sign of the pilgrimage they were making to the Holy Land.

<sup>2</sup> Jacobswege—these were the footpaths that carried pilgrims from all over Europe to Santiago de Compostella in Spain, which was a great center of pilgrimage from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>3</sup> Europa Zentrum, (The Europe Center), Baden Württemberg, was founded in 1976 as an Institute and Academy for the study of European unification. It arose in Tübingen, but since 1999 has operated in Stuttgart at the Europahaus. It is a non-partisan, independent service institution seeking to serve as a mediator in political processes.

Robert Schuman's famous speech on 9 May 1950 (now celebrated as the Day of Europe), the states and nations of (Western) Europe have joined in this effort. And they have achieved magnificent results. Unification proceeds almost inexorably, and for that very reason becomes ever more complex and involved.

However, the unique dynamic of this effort, which led to the formation of the European Common Market, restricted concern mainly to material and economic questions. As a result, discussion in the wider public arena also became one-track, and not just in the later rounds of talks conducted by member states of the European Community. In contrast to this, Europa Zentrum, Baden-Württemberg, in its capacity as an institute and academy that focuses on the question of Europe, sees the continent from a more inclusive viewpoint. As these developments were taking place, and a long time before, in addition to the economic question Europa Zentrum has been considering all the ancillary political questions, such as the environment, social issues, minorities, foreign affairs, national security, domestic policy, and regulatory issues, which are experienced today as ever more painful questions when discussed by the European Union. The demand that the culture of Europe be understood and function as an independent but interconnected entity goes back to the days of "Europe's Father," Jean Monnet. From its beginning, Europa Zentrum has taken this as its mission. In doing this, it would be helpful if we could unlock all of Europe's diversity. The potential of this unique and many faceted continent must be and shall be utilized.

But there are unavoidable limitations regarding the diversity of Europe, and they arise both from within and without. If in the interests of peace and prosperity we want to unite Europe, these limitations must be overcome. But how can this be done without endangering its diversity? Discussion is one obvious approach. How much blending of cultures is possible, or necessary, or even desirable for the sake of unification? On the other hand, changing and constantly shifting attitudes of modern society require an open process that adjusts to the reactions of those involved. So Europa Zentrum finds itself under the constant challenge of searching for new political methods and social constructs. As long as concern about Europe is not an existential matter, these methods should appear to be informal.

This brings us back to the question posed at the beginning, about the interest of Europa Zentrum in the publication of a book about the Jacob's Trails. The investigation of Europe's cultural dimension leads back to its roots. Since an understanding of Europe's uniqueness has to do with its position as "the Christian West" one path goes deep into the Middle Ages." Despite the concerns of the Commission for European Union, it is very modern to promote, initiate, and enable contact across national boundaries. That is why there is a persistent demand for our project through INTEREG.

The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella in northern Spain, which continued for a thousand years, is one of the common "roots" of our continent for which we are looking. In the Middle Ages many barriers had already been surmounted—territorial, fiscal, political, language barriers, as well as those grounded in thought processes. Fortunately, in the last few years the Jacob's Trails, which once criss-crossed Europe like a spider's web, have been rediscovered and reopened in many places. At an early date, Switzerland and France, the countries immediately neighboring Baden-Württemberg, engaged in research, exploration, and labeling of the Jacob's Trails.

Then the next thing, according to the plans of the EU Commission, was to mark the Jacob's Trails in neighboring regions east of the Rhine, which had already been well researched by scholars. Thus a visible cultural bridge was thus laid to the western neighbors. "European Studies" had a chance to unite nations, even in a broad, highly secularized population, by bringing together, in a very charming way, pilgrims and hikers across national boundaries. Simply put, we have here before us a political "Pathway of Learning" that embraces all of Europe: The Jacob's Trails are charged with a rich tradition, and are at the same time beautiful relaxing footpaths. They pass on a playful sort of historical knowledge that is adapted to leisure time, passing through fields and by buildings on to Aha-moments. To us, they seem uniquely intimate and old-fashioned. Since they can be divided into segments as you desire, they are easily adapted to personal needs. And after each experience, you are left wanting more.

Again and again, we say, "The trip is the destination." The Jacob's Trail invites one to reflect on the elemental realities—whether he is in the neighborhood on a Sunday stroll or on a great pilgrim journey to far-off Santiago. Boundaries, regions, and nations are surmounted in the interest of understanding; prejudices are overcome; each one goes according to his own tastes, on a walk, as a hiker, or making a pilgrimage—in any event, as a European.

### Walking Sticks and Stones – The Pilgrim Trail through Europe

Santiago de Compostella in Spain is counted, after Jerusalem and Rome as the most important long-distance pilgrimage destination of medieval Christianity. Located in the extreme northwest of the Iberian peninsula, it was visited yearly, in its hey-day, by tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of pilgrims coming to pray at the grave of the apostle James.

### Formation of the Legends

We begin with the legend: in fulfillment of Jesus' Great Commission, the apostle James the Elder preached the Faith in Spain. He returned afterwards to Jerusalem, where he was the first Apostle to suffer martyrdom. Because of their fear of the Jews, James' disciples brought his body by ship to Spain, landing near the coastal city of Iria Flavia (today's El Padrón). Here the saint found his last resting place. The site was eventually forgotten, and not rediscovered until the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century by Bishop Theodomir (†841), who was led to a field (compo) by a shining star (stella). Santiago (St. Jacob=St. James) de Compostella thus received its name.

The saint is supposed to have aided the Christian army to win a victory over the Moors as early as the battle of Clavijo, 844. In the course of time, legends were embellished more and more, spreading over the whole of Europe. In mid-Europe, the first indication of St. James appears in a martyrology of the annals of St. Gall in 896. The entry for July 25 reads: "Birthday of the holy Apostle, St. James, son of Zebedee, brother of the Evangelist John. He was beheaded in Jerusalem at the command of King Herod as the Apostolic History shows. His remains were brought to Spain and buried there at the farthest boundary, i.e. by the British Sea, where they were accorded the utmost veneration by the people. Not without merit, because the people there are supposed to have been converted to the Faith by his spiritual presence and through his preaching and miracles. To confirm their faith, St. Peter also promised to go there. . . ."

Whether or not the Apostle James really proclaimed the Faith in Spain cannot be confirmed in the Bible or ancient Christian sources. The first mention of it is found in the *Breviarium Apostolorum* (end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century), which has circulated, especially in Galicia, since the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

Written sources for legends of the discovery of the grave can be safely traced back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The discovery under Bishop Theodomir has been dated to 813. Since the 9<sup>th</sup> century there has been a cult center, first local nature, then regional. Excavations revealed a Roman mausoleum of the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century used as a burial place into the 5<sup>th</sup> century, which does have indications of early Christian funerary rites. It is entirely probable that at the time of Theodomir, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, a grave from early Christian times was found and interpreted as the grave of the Apostle.

"Legends are sometimes more influential than history," wrote Yve Botineau. Reality and fiction were woven into a seamless reality as motivation for St. James pilgrimage. And so "Pseudo-Turpin," the fourth book of the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, describes how St. James once appeared in a dream to Charlemagne, the Christian hero who ruled the western Empire, an indefatigable warrior and great statesman, revealing to him the Milky Way. With the Saint's help, Charlemagne was able to find the Apostle's grave in Galicia, liberate it, and snatch Spain from Islamic control, returning it to the western cultural sphere.

By the 10<sup>th</sup> century the veneration of St. Jacob and the resultant pilgrimages to his burial place had won widespread acceptance. The first pilgrim known by name is Bishop Godeschalk of Le Puy, who went to Santiago de Compostella in 951. In the high Middle Ages, the city ranked next Jerusalem and Rome as a pilgrimage destination. St. James "Matamorosa," annihilator of the Moors, became the spiritual symbol of the *Reconquista*, the reconquest of Spain by Christians, and was soon after associated with the Crusades too. The growing mobility of society after the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the veneration of relics, and the belief of medieval people in miracles, led to an enormous growth in the stream of pilgrims, especially from France, Germany and England. Since nearby France supplied the greatest number of pilgrims, the Spanish portion of the Pilgrim way soon came to be known as "camino frances."

One indication of the impression conveyed by the imposing numbers of pilgrims traveling to the grave of the Saint comes from the Mohammedan Almoravide-Emir Ali Ben Yusuf (1106-1143). In 1121 he sent an Embassy from southern Spain to the Christian Queen Urraca. In Navarre they were astonished to see great masses of Christian pilgrims jamming the roads to Santiago de Compostella. When they inquired about the cause of this, they were told that these were pilgrims who had come from this side of the Pyrenees and beyond to visit the grave of St. James.

### The Origin of the Cult of St. James

It is not possible to answer completely questions about the origin of the cult of St. James. Apparently knowledge of an early apostolic mission in the area led in the 9<sup>th</sup> century to the search at Compostella for the Martyr's grave; and when a tomb was found with skeletal remains, they were identified as the body of the Apostle. But the question remains, why, in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, did such sudden interest arise in Spain about Saint James? To answer that, let's look at the history of those times. In 711, at the battle of Guadalete, the advance of the Moors into the kingdom of the West Goths was brought to a standstill. Christianity survived only in the mountains of Asturia and Galicia. After the time of King Alphonse II (791-842) the Kingdom of Asturia developed into the protector of Spanish traditions. In the defensive struggle against Islam, the Asturians came gradually to a sense of mission about saving the Christian church and the re-establishment of its hegemony on the Iberian Peninsula. After the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the *Reconquista* became the same kind of spiritual and military outlet as the march to Jerusalem. The *Reconquista* became a sort of Crusade for the Holy Grave.

### Pilgrim Trails

Huge numbers of people took up the pilgrim's staff: poor and rich, clerics and farmers, Kings and as well as scholars, men, women and children. Social standing, family origins and level of education made no difference. It is clear from this that nearly everyone in the High- and Late-Middle Ages undertook a pilgrimage to some shrine, near or far, at least once in his lifetime, each one according to his social position and financial means.

The difficult route, "the Labyrinth" in the metaphorical sense—brutally hot by summer, over icy mountains in Spring and Fall—was made dangerous not only by the rigors of nature but also by men, who did not shrink from double-dealing and even murder. The term "Labyrinth" is used of the complex geometrical motif one often encounters on the grounds of gothic cathedrals, such as those at Amiens and Chartres, where it is a symbol of the Christian pilgrim's path to redemption.

The pilgrimage to Santiago thus required the highest degree of discipline and asceticism, of grit and perseverance and most of all, of a readiness to repent and steadfastness in faith, something to which medieval people were accustomed by their religion, but which is foreign to us today. On the other hand, we cannot not hide the fact that often such things as a lust for adventure or the flight to avoid prosecution provided the incentive for a journey of many months to far-away places. Pilgrims went from every corner of Europe to "the end of the earth," as Cape Finisterre,<sup>4</sup> only 60 kilometers west of Santiago, was known.

To be precise, the actual Jacob's Trail is found only in Spain. At Puente la Reina the four main routes merged, which had gone through France and crossed the Pyrenees to get to the Apostle's grave,. The trail then led through Logrono, Burgos, Sahagún, León and Villafranca—still cities of some size—to Santiago de Compostella.

In the fifth book of the *Liber St. Jacobi*, written about 1140 by the monk Aimery Picaud to describe the journey<sup>5</sup> the main routes are discussed: the *Via Turonensis* of Tours, going through Poitiers and Bordeaux; the *Via Lemoviscensis* of Limoges; the *Via Podiensis* of Le Puy, going through Moissac; and the *Via Tolosana* of Toulouse. The three western routes merged at Ostabat, going through St. Jean-de-Pied-de-Port to cross the Pyrenees at the pass of Roncevalles. The route from Arles through Toulouse went further to the east, over the pass at Somport, then through Jaca and Monreal to Puente la Reina. That pilgrims from all over Europe actually traveled to the Apostle's grave can be seen from the fact that the last named place in France served not just as a place of embarkation, but rather as a collection center to continue the arduous penitential journey. The easternmost known European place of embarkation for the pilgrimage was Riga in Lettland. Believers from Cologne and Aachen may have preferred the western route, while those from Trier or probably went through Vézelay or Le Puy.

A very special Role fell to the German southwest. For areas in the middle and east of the Empire, the Rhine River, with its well-developed trade and military routes, constituted a door into France and Switzerland. Pilgrims walked along the streets and roads between the Black Forest and the Swabian Alps, joined together at Rottweil and Villingen, and went on to Constance, then to Schaffhausen or Basel. Those from the east followed the old military road from Ulm to Lake Constance, then to Friedrichshaven, Meersburg and Überlingen, going from there to Einsiedeln, an important Swiss holy place. So it is

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<sup>4</sup> The name literally means "earth's end."

<sup>5</sup> cf. *Europäisch Wege der Santiago Pilgerfahrt*, pub. by Robert Plötz

possible to travel on a total of more than 8,000 km. of streets, roads and footpaths, on each of which there lives a common memory in the collective consciousness of Europe.

### Searching for Traces of the Path

The farther one gets from Santiago, the greater the number and more labyrinthine the Jacob's Trails became. No longer was it high Cathedrals that served as landmarks for the pilgrims. Those who would follow and reconstruct the pilgrim paths have to look very closely. Nowadays one must look for churches, monasteries, chapels, endowed cloisters, Hospitaller institutions, and hostels; these may reveal the cult of St. James in many different ways. Maybe there is a hidden clamshell to reveal the presence of the path. Many times carved or stone statues show a saint with a hat, walking stick, water flask and the ever-present clamshell. Scenes from the life of the Apostle, or depictions of the miracles experienced by pilgrims on the arduous journey may be found in pictures on altars or panels. Other saints may even appear in the clothes of a pilgrim, such as Rochus, (who only made one pilgrimage to Rome and never saw Santiago). Statues, road markers and wells of more recent times may contain prominent signs of the unbroken veneration St. James, or show the identifying marks of St. James. Like St. George ("Georgi-"), St. James (Jakobi-) is associated with popular markets and festivals. The harvest season, which in the agricultural society of medieval times was so significant, began on July 25, St. Jacob's Day.

### The Clamshell as a Pilgrim Symbol

A clamshell was the symbol of the Santiago pilgrim. This was not only an emblem of the pilgrimage, but it was also endowed with magical powers in the minds of pilgrims. It healed illnesses and brought good luck; a pilgrim purchased a real St. James clamshell either at Santiago or at one of the holy places on the James' Trails.

Yve Bottineau wrote: "Medieval pilgrims felt compelled to go and venerate relics, especially the bodies of saints. They went to the grave of a martyr, an apostle, or even that of Christ." Since the 4<sup>th</sup> century miraculous powers had been ascribed to saints' relics. Pilgrimage symbols appeared in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, about the time of the first boom in the Santiago pilgrimage. Up to the 14<sup>th</sup> century these were a sort of flat, cast-metal badge, often made of tin, lead or bitumen, which was mined around Santiago.

A legend explains the origin of St. James' association with the clamshell. It is reported that in the neighborhood of El Padron a mounted knight was at the landing place when the ship that brought St. James to Spain arrived. When the knight's horse saw the wondrous bright light of a star that was shining on the Apostle, it became so upset that it jumped into the water, carrying the knight into the depths. The knight was rescued and pulled on board, where he was amazed to see that his body was encrusted with clams. There are other legends, too, surrounding the clamshell of St. James. All are about the same theme: people who were miraculously rescued by St. James.

The St. James-clamshells were not taken from the sea by the pilgrims themselves. Souvenir traders had them for sale in Santiago. The badges were sewn onto necklaces, hats and "Goldcats."<sup>6</sup> Pilgrims were buried with these remembrances of their journey. Excavations in cemeteries and graves in many parts of Europe have brought the clamshells to light, showing how widespread the trip to Santiago was.

### Legal Protections for the Pilgrims

According to medieval law, pilgrims were aliens, separated from their legal home jurisdiction, and like other travelers needed the special protection of the Church. Church efforts to protect pilgrims goes deep into history, but it was intensified about the year 1000. Under Pope Nicholas II, a Roman synod in 1059 placed pilgrims under papal protection. In 1123, the Church protected the lives and possessions of pilgrims with a punishment of excommunication. By in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century there was a virtual international recognition of Pilgrim rights. Pilgrims were freed from tolls; taxes and debts could be deferred during their absence from home. Again and again Spanish laws of the 13<sup>th</sup> century affirmed general protection for pilgrims, safeguarding their belongings were they died without a will while on

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<sup>6</sup> I do not know the meaning of this term, "Geldkatzen," but assume that it some piece of clothing.

pilgrimage. Similar measures threatened innkeepers with high penalties if they falsified measures or enticed pilgrims fraudulently. Local city ordinances extended Pilgrim Rights still further.

But despite these multifaceted efforts to provide protection and safeguard the pilgrims legally, they remained vulnerable as they passed through foreign lands. The famous 12<sup>th</sup> century pilgrim guidebook, the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, or *Codex Calixtinus*, has many accounts of cheating innkeepers, thieving clerics, deceitful money changers, unethical toll collectors, muggers and highwaymen. On the pilgrim paths to Vézeley, Santiago, Rome and St. Giles there were hoards of false priests who heard pilgrim's confessions, then as penance required twenty Masses. That the pilgrims, who wanted to confess their sins, were fleeced by paying the alleged father confessor to say the Masses, hardly requires explanation.

### Accommodations for the Pilgrims

Mass tourism like this required its own infrastructure. The old western-Christian tradition of hospitality faced a new challenge and was compelled to make requisite changes.

The surging numbers of pilgrims and the increased mobility of the High Middle Ages required new efforts on the part of organizations. While the lodging of pilgrims was at first the concern of monasteries, and they were often put up for the night in churches or church narthexes, at the turn of the 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries there emerged a groundswell of hospitals and hospices, which were attached for the most part to monasteries. Along the entire distance of the pilgrim/trade routes to Italy and Spain there was a continuous growth in the number of these institutions. In the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries nearly every city in Europe was provided with such a place.

Hospitality to pilgrims and strangers has biblical roots. Again and again the admonition was cited: "Do not neglect hospitality, for through it, some have provided for angels without sensing it."

The Rule of St. Benedict states: "Every guest who comes to the monastery is to be admitted as if he were Christ, for he once said, 'I was a stranger and you took me in.' Anyone may be someone deserving honor, especially fellow believers and pilgrims."

### Decline of the Cult of St. James

By Peter Kirchmann

The heyday of pilgrimage to Santiago came in the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the first signs of crisis did not appear until the 15<sup>th</sup> century. By then, humanism and the Reformation were contributing to its decline. The Reformation especially reduced the flow of pilgrims. Protestants were critical of the pilgrims' faith in legends and relics and on Martin Luther's advice encouraged them to stay at home rather than undertake such a strenuous journey.

Now we know nothing certain about him:  
some say that he is France, at Thalosa,  
but they are not sure of their information.  
So we should let it lie, and not go there,  
for one doesn't know if Saint James lies there,  
or a dead dog or a dead horse.

The break of Henry VII [sic]<sup>7</sup> with Rome put an end to the Anglo-Saxon love of pilgrimage. Increasing numbers of people began to doubt the authenticity of James' tomb. The English physician, Andrew Boorde, for example, making the pilgrimage in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, completely lost his already wavering faith when a priest at the cathedral told him that no one had either "an earlobe or a knuckle of the saint" in their possession. The Spanish themselves, afraid that Reformation thinking would spill over into their Camino,<sup>8</sup> put pilgrims under the control of the Inquisition from the time they crossed into Spain. They were spied on, interrogated and searched. Louis XIV also forbade his subjects to go to Santiago under penalty of being sold into life-long slavery on the galleys. In France, those who broke the law were

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<sup>7</sup> It was actually Henry VIII.

<sup>8</sup> I.e., the area around Santiago de Compostella.

called “Coquillards”—*coquille* means clam. Empress Maria Louisa, like many other noble sovereigns, tried to direct pilgrims to regional holy places.

And indeed, a new religious tide was washing ashore in Spain too. In 1492, with the conquest of Granada, the last bastion of the Moors, everything expected of St. James had been accomplished. Spaniards were soon turning more toward the mystic, St. Therese of Avila (1515-1582). Those who supported St. James had a difficult struggle just to keep the Apostle from being replaced as the patron saint of Spain.

Indeed, St. James himself went on a trip. In the same year as the conquest of the last Moorish kingdom on the Iberian peninsula, Columbus discovered America. Under Charles V (Carlos I of Spain) the Hapsburg era began in Spain, and St. James undertook a migration around the globe. Everywhere Spain held sway Christianity was spread by the sword, and the battle cry “Santiago ultraea” was heard, as once Santiago Matamoros (i.e., Moor-killer) had helped drive the Moors from Spain.

Conquistadors used his name further in their bloody Christianizing of the New World. In Chile, Cuba, and numerous other lands of Latin America there are many places named in his honor: Santiago de Chile, Santiago de Cuba, Santiago de Estero, and San Diego.

One year after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, in 1589, the relics of St. James were hidden for fear of an English invasion; and after the danger was over, no one knew where they had been concealed. All that remained was the tradition that St. James’ grave had been located in the crypt of the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela.

A complete end came with the French Revolution. After that social cataclysm pilgrimages came almost completely to an end. Not until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was new life breathed into the burial place of St. James. In 1879 the remains of the relics were discovered in the apse behind the high altar. In 1884 Pope Leo XIII declared the remains to be genuine.

In 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, Franco restored the long forgotten warrior to his position as Spain’s Patron and Protector against the “godless Republicans.”

## [The Pilgrimage Today](#)

By Peter Kirschman

For over a thousand years believers hiked the pilgrim paths to the tomb of St. James the Elder. It is safe to say that today those who set out on these ancient pilgrim paths to Santiago will not always do so with the unquestioning piety in which our forefathers accepted risks and privations all sorts. Today they are more likely to be driven to pilgrimage in the interest of tourism, or by the sports enthusiast’s intoxicating hope of setting a new record.

1999 was a holy year, when the Patron’s name-day falls on a Sunday, so there was talk of 13 million visitors, of whom only a tiny fraction—about 44,000—came to Santiago de Compostela by foot. Intensive advance planning is required to do this. Without booking rooms in advance it is impossible to move on to the next day’s hike. But there are accommodations for every taste and at every price-level. Infrastructure along the way has been greatly improved so daily walks of up to 40 kilometers are no longer necessary. Obviously, the Jacob’s Trail has contributed to the growth of the region, though not always for the better. From time to time pilgrims have reported that crime is increasing along the way.