

## “Pilgrimages and religious tourism of Poles and Czech. Following St. James’s steps to Santiago de Compostela”

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### Abstract

*The Way of St. James, which has existed for over 1000 years, is constantly being developed. Since the beginning of the 21st century there were over 5 thousand kilometers of St. James’s Way marked in Poland and Czech only. There are 22 sections of the pilgrim’s way marked with James’s shell in Poland and several more are currently being prepared. In the Czech Republic there are 10 sections available, two of which start in Poland. The cooperation of societies and brotherhoods of St. James from the Czech Republic and Poland is showing great perspectives for the creation of new sections of the Way in the future located in the Poland-Czech border area.*

*The last twenty years have shown an increase and development of the pilgrimage movement via St. James’s Way - the longest and most widely known pilgrimage and culture trail in Europe. It is estimated that the sanctuary of St. James in Santiago de Compostela is being visited by over 5 million people each year. Among the pilgrims from the Central-Eastern Europe, the Polish and Czech deserve attention as their participation in international pilgrimage movement to Compostela is increasing each year. In 2013–2515 pilgrims from Poland and 769 pilgrims from the Czech Republic received the so called ‘Compostela’ - a memorial diploma.*

**Keywords:** cultural tourism; European Cultural Trails; pilgrimage; religious tourism; St. James’s way - Camino de Santiago

**Paper Type:** Scientific paper

### Introduction

In 2013 it was 1200 years passed since the hermit Pelayo (Pelagius) found the relics of St. James the Apostle on a hill called Liberum Donum. When the rain of stars fell on the hill, he discovered a marble sarcophagus with the relics of St. James the Apostle. A village called *Como postolo* – which means “James the Apostle”, or *Campus Stellae* – “Field of Stars”, was founded around this place. Later the settlement was renamed Compostela. (Jackowski, Sołtan, 2000, 17–19).

The discovery of the relics of St. James the Apostle in 813, had the direct impact on the initiation of the pilgrimage movement to the tomb of St. James. A particular development of the cult of St. James and the pilgrimage to his tomb falls on the Middle Ages. Among other things numerous papal privileges contributed to this situation. In the 13th century, by the papal act, the sanctuary of Santiago de Compostela was declared one out of three most important pilgrimage centers in Christianity (along with Jerusalem and Rome). In the Middle Ages, over 500 thousand pilgrims each year traveled through almost entire Europe on the way to Santiago de Compostela or on the way back. (Jackowski, Sołtan, 2000, 17–19).

In the 16th and 17th century, the rank of pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela significantly decreased. The direct

reasons were ongoing religious wars in Europe, many epidemics and natural disasters. In the following centuries, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, caused that the Ways of St. James became gradually forgotten. Another revival of the pilgrimage movement to the tomb of St. James took place in the 80s of the 20th century. Today, among researchers studying the phenomenon of St. James’ route, there is a clear consensus that ‘The European Act’ of holy Pope John Paul II, began a new stage in the history of the pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James. (Muszyński, 2010, 118). To the appeal of the Polish Pope responded i.a. the Council of Europe, which in 1987 declared the Way of St. James the first cultural route in Europe and encourage local authorities to recreate former pilgrimage routes. The next year first pilgrims from Spain and France set out their journeys to the tomb of St. James. Initially, signposts with the motif of the scallop shell of St. James appeared just in Spain. Over the following years they appeared also in France, Germany, Italy, Austria and Switzerland. In 1993, the pilgrimage route to Santiago in Spain, and in 1998 the route in France, were inscribed by UNESCO on the World Cultural Heritage List. In 2003, the European network of *Camino de Santiago* reached the German-Polish border in Görlitz/Zgorzelec. The next year, Polish pilgrims making their journey to the tomb of St. James

started many activities on marking out Polish sections of the Way of St. James. The first section of the Way of St. James in Czech Republic, was *Zytawa Way of St. James*, opened in May 2008. The route was established thanks to Tripartite Agreement between Czech Republic, Poland and Germany. The paper includes an analysis of the pilgrimage and tourist movement of the Polish and Czech travelers to Santiago de Compostela in the last ten years, namely in 2004–2013. Presented study is an attempt to summarize the activities related to the creation and development of sectors of the Way of St. James in Poland and Czech Republic. On the basis of field research and interviews with foreign associations taking care of St. James' routes, the authors of this study made an attempt to present the main issues and challenges related to the further development of *Camino Santiago* in those countries.

### The way of St. James in Poland

The Way of St. James in The Republic of Poland is currently the longest, marked pilgrimage route and also the longest cultural and thematic route in Poland. At present, routes of St. James in Poland connects Eastern borders of the country (the Polish-Lithuanian border and Polish-Ukrainian border) with the Polish-German and Polish-Czech border.

The project of delineation the first section of Camino de Santiago in Poland was created in 2004 by the group of people who made a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James the Apostle in Santiago de Compostela. Pilgrimages of Polish people to the tomb of St. James, re-development of the cult of the Apostle in many Polish parishes of St. James and re-creation process of St. James' routes in eastern Germany, undoubtedly, had an impact on creation of the Way of St. James in Poland. (Mróz, Mróz, 2012, 133).

Currently on territory of Poland, there are the following sections of Camino de Santiago: 1. *Dolnośląska Way of St. James*, 2. *Wielkopolska Way of St. James*, 3. *The Polish Route (Camino Polaco)*, 4. *The Way of St. James "Szlak Piastowski"*, 5. *The Way of St. James "Via Regia"* (Korczowa – Zgorzelec), 6. *Lubuska Way of St. James*, 7. *Leborska Way of St. James*, 8. *Sudeckie Way of St. James*, 9. *Małopolska Way of St. James*, 10. *Slezaska Way of St. James*, 11. *Miedziana Way of St. James*, 12. *Nyska Way of St. James*, 13. *Beskidzka Way of St. James*, 14. *Lubelska Way of St. James*, 15. *Warszawska Way of St. James*, 16. *Nadwarciańska Way of St. James*, 17. *Mazowiecka Way of St. James*, 18. *The Way of St. James of Northern Mazowasze and Podlasie*, 19. St. James's way of Pomerania, 20. St. James's way of Szczecin, 21. St. James's way of Tarnobrzeg, and 22. St. James's way of Klodzko (Fig. 1).

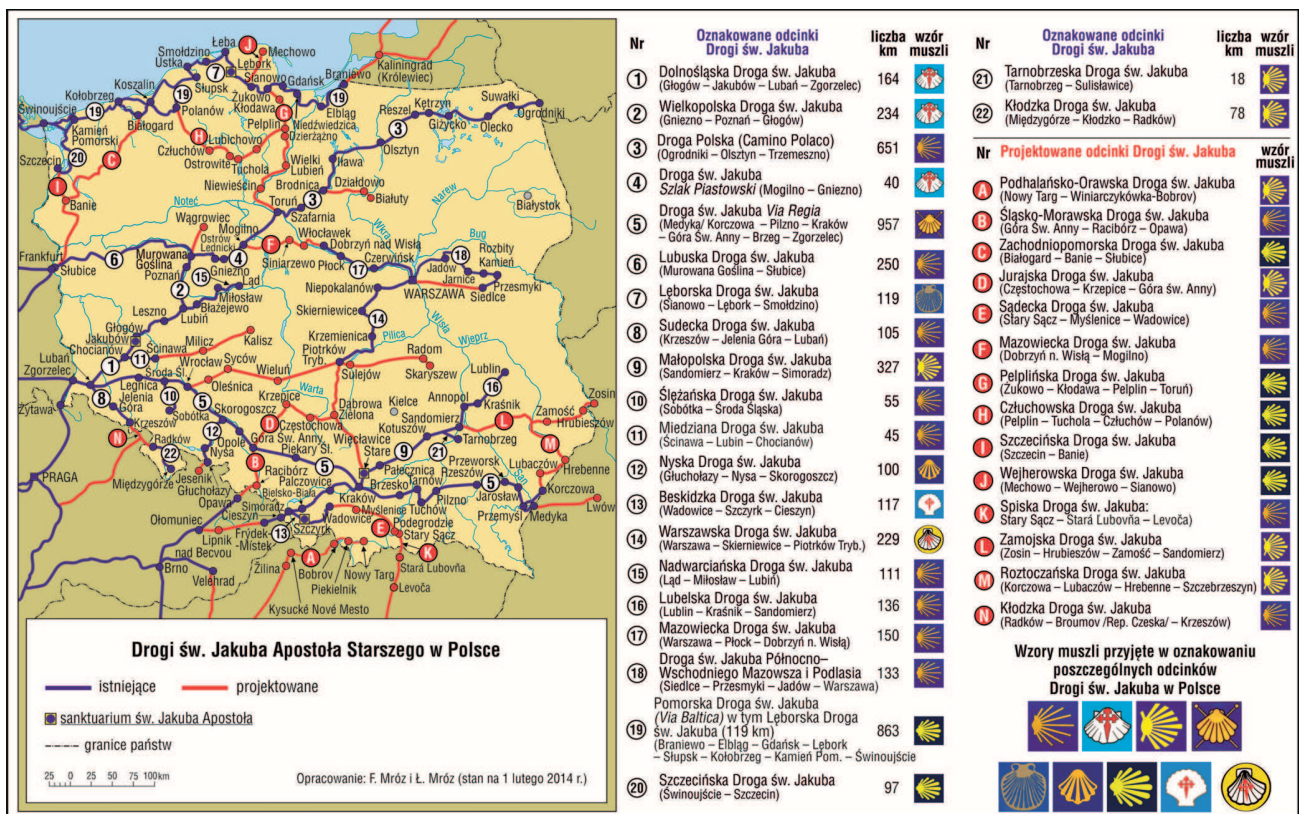


Figure 1. The Ways of St. James in Poland (existing and planned sections – on 1th February 2014 r.)

Source: personal analysis F. Mróz, Ł. Mróz

It is worth noting, that from July 2005 till the end 2013 thanks to the involvement of the Church, local authorities and numerous enthusiasts of the Way of St. James, more than 5000 km divided into 22 sectors with the motive of Jacobean

shell have been marked and opened in Poland (cf. Tab. 1). Even today, we can say that Polish sections of the Way of St. James permanently entered the European network of *Camino de Santiago*.

Table I. The Ways of St. James in Poland (existing sections – on February 2014)

Name of the Way	Towns on the route	Opening date	Length km	Logo
<i>Dolnośląska Way of St. James</i>	Głogów – Jakubów – Grodowiec – Polkowice – Chocianów – Bolesławiec – Lubań – Zgorzelec	24 July 2005	164	
<i>The Polish Route (Camino Polaco)</i>	Olsztyn – Gietrzwałd	July 2006	17	
<i>The Way of St. James Via Regia</i>	Brzeg – Olawa – Wrocław – Środa Śl. – Lubiąż – Legnica – Złotoryja – Lubań – Zgorzelec	6 October 2006	235	
<i>Wielkopolska Way of St. James</i>	Gniezno – Poznań – Lubiń – Leszno – Głogów	6 November 2006	234	
<i>The Polish Route (Camino Polaco)</i>	Gietrzwałd – Ilawa – Brodnica – Toruń	April 2007	209	
<i>The Way of St. James „Szlak Piastowski”</i>	Mogilno – Trzemeszno – Niechanowo – Gniezno	20 April 2007	40	
<i>Lęborska Way of St. James</i>	Sianowo – Lębork – Łeba – Smołdzino	8 September 2007	119	
<i>Lubuska Way of St. James</i>	Murwana Goślina – Oborniki – Szamotły – Wronki – Ośno Lubuskie – Stubice	1 July 2008	250	
<i>Sudecka Way of St. James</i>	Jelenia Góra – Radomice – Gryfów Śl. – Lubań	7 September 2008	55	
<i>The Way of St. James Via Regia</i>	Góra Św. Anny – Kamień Śl. – Opole – Skorogoszcz – Brzeg	15 September 2008	83	
<i>Małopolska Way of St. James (sector in małopolskie province)</i>	Pałacznica – Zielonice – Niegardów – Więctawice Stare – Bosutów – Kraków	25 October 2008	76	
<i>Małopolska Way of St. James (sector in świętokrzyskie province)</i>	Sandomierz – Katuszów – Szczaworyż – Probołowice – Pałacznica	25-27 July 2009	130	
<i>Ślężańska Way of St. James</i>	Ślęża – Sobótka – Środa Śl.	25-27 July 2009	55	
<i>Miedziana Way of St. James</i>	Ścinawa – Lubin – Chocianów	1 August 2009	45	
<i>The Polish Route (Camino Polaco)</i>	Toruń – Mogilno – Trzemeszno	November 2009	108	
<i>Nyska Droga św. Jakuba</i>	Głucholazy – Nysa – Lewin Brzeski – Skorogoszcz	25 July 2010	100	
<i>The Way of St. James Via Regia</i>	Pilzno – Tuchów – Tarnów – Brzesko – Kraków	25 July 2010	165	
<i>The Way of St. James Via Regia in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie</i>	Kraków – Piekary Śląskie – Góra Św. Anny	8 August 2010	233	
<i>Sudecka Way of St. James</i>	Krzyszów – Jelenia Góra	22 August 2010	50	
<i>Małopolska Way of St. James</i>	Kraków – Tyniec – Sanka – Palczowice	November 2010	55	
<i>The Polish Route (Camino Polaco)</i>	Ogrodniki – Suwałki – Olsztyn	25 July 2011	317	
<i>Beskidzka Way of St. James</i>	Wadowice – Szczyrk – Simoradz – Cieszyn	8 October 2011	117	
<i>The Way of St. James Via Regia</i>	Korczowa – Przemyśl – Jarosław – Przeworsk – Łańcut – Rzeszów – Ropczyce – Pilzno	5 January 2012	219	
<i>Nadwarciańska Way of St. James</i>	Łąd – Miłosław – Lubiń	22 July 2012	111	
<i>Warszawska Way of St. James</i>	Warszawa – Ożarów – Niepokalanów	25 July 2012	53	
<i>Małopolska Way of St. James</i>	Palczowice – Zator – Osiek – Bielany k. Kęt	November 2012	24	
<i>The Way of St. James Północno-Wschodnie Mazowsze and Podlasie</i>	Siedlce – Przesmyki – Jarnice	6 February 2013	115	
<i>Mazowiecka Way of St. James</i>	Warszawa – Modlin – Płock – Włocławek	10 February 2013	167	
<i>Warszawska Way of St. James</i>	Niepokalanów – Skierniewice – Piotrków Tryb.	15 July 2013	176	
<i>Lubelska Way of St. James</i>	Lublin – Kraśnik – Annopol – Sandomierz	28 July 2013	136	
<i>The Way of St. James Północno-Wschodnie Mazowsze and Podlasie</i>	Jarnice – Jadów	28 July 2013	18	
<i>Pomorska Way of St. James Via Baltica including Lęborska Way of St. James (119 km)</i>	Braniewo – Elbląg – Gdańsk – Lębork – Słupsk – Kołobrzeg – Kamień Pom. – Świnoujście	28 July 2013	863	
<i>Szczecińska Way of St. James</i>	Świnoujście – Szczecin	28 July 2013	97	
<i>The Way of St. James Via Regia</i>	Medyka – Przemyśl	27 October 2013	22	
<i>Tarnobrzeska Way of St. James</i>	Tarnobrzeg – Sulisławice	8 November 2013	18	
<i>Kłodzka Way of St. James</i>	Międzygórze – Kłodzko – Radków	November 2013	78	
<i>Małopolska Way of St. James</i>	Bielany k. Kęt – Bielsko Biała – Simoradz	1 February 2014	42	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>4996 km</b>	

Source: personal analysis F. Mróz, Ł. Mróz (February 2014r.)

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During the next two years, next sections of St. James's way are being planned for opening in Poland, and most of them is currently under development, *Beskidzka Droga św. Jakuba*, *Jurajska Droga św. Jakuba*, *Człuchowska Droga św. Jakuba*, *Pelplińska Droga św. Jakuba*, *Podhalańsko-Orawska Droga św. Jakuba*, *Śląsko-Morawska Droga św. Jakuba* oraz *Spiska Droga św. Jakuba* (located in the regions of the Beskids, Krakow-Czestochowa Upland, Czulchow, Peplin, Podhale-Orawa, Silesia and Spisk).

It should be noted, that in many Polish parishes of St. James, fraternities and associations of St. James and among the worshipers of St. James, new initiatives related to the cult of the Apostle and creation of new sections of St. James' Way has arisen. Currently, 10 new routes are already in progress – i.a. *Jurajska Way of St. James*, *Człuchowska Way of St. James*, *Pelplińska Way of St. James*, *Podhalańsko-Orawska Way of St. James*, *Silesian-Moravian Way of St. James* and *Spiska Way of St. James*.

The development of the new parts of St. James's Way and the pilgrim movement via these routes is connected with the growth of the cult of the Apostle both in the areas of St. James's parishes and in other centers of religious cult. During the last decade four St. James's Churches in Poland: in Jakubow, Szczyrk, Lebork and Weclawice Stare, have been raised to the rank of sanctuaries of St. James the Elder the Apostle. Each year, new projects are being realized, and their purpose is to further promote the cult of the Apostle and develop *Camino de Santiago* in the local communities and the general areas - for example: 'Biesiady Jakubowe' (James's Feasts), 'Jarmarki Jakubowe' (James's Fairs), 'Festyny Jakubowe' (James's Galas), 'Dni Jakubowe' (James's Days), 'Miedzynarodowe Zloty Jakubow' (International James's Jamborees) and various runs via the Way of St. James.

The new initiatives of journeying via the Way of St. James are particularly noteworthy, as their instigators are not only the members of St. James's brotherhoods or St. James's Way's lovers, but also students, scouts and school children. More frequently the way of St. James's shell is a place for retreat en-route organized by parishes and various priestly groups. The best example of these are the, so called, 'Niedzielne Pielgrzymowania Droga sw. Jakuba' (Sunday Pilgrimages via the Way of St. James) taking place on various parts of the Way in Poland.

Numerous initiatives taken in many regions of Poland, which aims the revival of the cult of St. James and promotion of the Ways of St. James gives a great optimism. In the implementation of many projects and tasks an important role play Fraternities of St. James and established in October 2012 in Czestochowa "Congregation of Camino Polonia," which gath-

ers parishes, associations and individuals promoting the cult of the Apostle and taking care of newly created routes of St. James within the country. Certainly, more frequent visits of pilgrims from abroad give a chance for development and opportunity to enter *Camino de Santiago* in Poland, into a European network of St. James' routes. Leading St. James' routes to the border areas of eastern neighbouring countries may become a directly impulse to the renaissance of *Camino de Santiago* in Lithuania, Ukraine and Slovakia. Establishing broader contacts with associations and fraternities of St. James is a good sign for creation a new European initiative.

The above brief presentation of success related to the creation of St. James routes network in Poland would be incomplete without mentioning many problems associated with the functioning of *Camino de Santiago* in Poland. Those problems are mainly related to the lack of adequate infrastructure at the pilgrimage route. The greatest shortcomings in this range concern the lack of accommodation (no small pilgrim houses, hostels, guest houses, guest rooms and tourist farms), especially in small towns and rural districts. A serious problem is also the lack of signposting on selected sections of the route or marking, which does not correspond with the description in the guide books. On most Polish sections of the Way of St. James the rest stops and places protecting against bad weather conditions are missing. There is also lack of places equipped with bicycle racks and boxes. Pilgrims travelling along St. James route in Poland also complain about the lack of adequate pastoral care in many sacral objects and the lack of information and knowledge on the Way of St. James among local communities.

### The way of St. James in Czech Republic

Ways of St. James in Czech Republic were created thanks to the involvement and work of members of the Association of Friends of St. James "Ultreia" (Občanské sdružení Ultreia). This organization was established in 2008 and concentrates in its ranks 20 members acting as volunteers. The main tasks of the association include helping those who want to make a pilgrimage along Jacobean routes, issuing official credentials, promoting pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, creating opportunities for pilgrims meetings, marking and promoting the Ways of St. James in the Czech Republic. Thanks to the activity of members of the Association "Ultreia" on the territory of Czech Republic, up to now, they managed to mark out ten sections of the Way of St. James – with a length of about 1500 km (cf. Fig. 2).



Figure 2. The Ways of St. James in Czech Republic (existing and planned sections – on 25th February 2013 r.)

Source: personal analysis Ľ. Mróz

The next three sections are now being designed and ready for implementation. Among other organizations, associations and groups working on favour of renewing Ways of St. James in Czech Republic we need to mention: Czech Tourist Club, Cesta Hvězdy, AgAkcent and Association for Rural Development Support (PORES). Many associations related to Ways of St. James from Poland, Germany and Austria also offer their help.

For people who have worked on the concept of delineating Jacobean route in Czech Republic an important aspect was the

siting of existing churches, chapels or former hospitals of St. James the Apostle (cf. Fig. 2).

One of the first Jacobean routes re-created in Czech Republic is *Žytawa Way of St. James (Zittau Way of St. James)*, opened in May 2008. The route was created thanks to the efforts of the International Association of the Way of St. James Gniezno – Zgorzelec – Prague and trilateral cooperation of: Polish – Franciscan Village Foundation, German – International Meetings Centre (IBZ) and Czech – Association for Rural Development Support

(PORES).([www.zittauer-jakobsweg.de](http://www.zittauer-jakobsweg.de)). *Żytawa Way of St. James* is one of the three sections of Jacobean trail leading from Gniezno to Prague (603 km). The first sector, as already mentioned, is *Wielkopolska Way of St. James* (Gniezno – Głogów: 224 km), the second – *Dolnośląska Way* (Głogów – Zgorzelec: 170 km), and the third one – *Żytawa Way* (Görlitz – Prague: 209 km, the length of the route in Czech Republic, leading from Hrádek nad Nisou to Prague is 147 km) (Żytowska Droga, 2010, 8–9).

In Czech Republic a part of the route was delineated using existing trails marked by the Czech Tourist Club. On the sector Hrádek nad Nisou – Prague, *Żytawa Way of St. James* was marked in parallel with the international hiking route I-24. Historical significance of the medieval trade route and, at the same time, the pilgrimage route goes back to the 10th century. According to the tradition, in 995, Bishop Adalbert walked from Czech Republic to Poland. First activities aiming recreation of the route marked with the Jacobean shell started in 2005.

On the *Żytawa Way* there are many relics of ancient pilgrims, medieval churches built in memorial of the St. James the Apostle (Zittau, Letařovice (The church of St. James, 2010) and Mnichovo Hradiště), former hospitals, which served pilgrims and wanderers, and commanderies of St. John, who, in accordance with its canon took care of pilgrims. The route runs along the picturesque areas near the Lusatian Neisse and Jizera River.

*Żytawa Way of St. James* has two alternative variants available on the start-up stage of the trail – the first variant leads from Hrádek nad Nisou to Václavice – where the church of St. James the Apostle is located.

An important section of *Camino de Santiago* in the Czech Republic is a route leading from Prague to *Železná*, called *the Northern Way of St. James*. It is a part of the route leading to Santiago de Compostela via Nuremberg, Geneva and Le Puy-en-Velay. The route coincide largely with the international long-distance hiking trails I-10 and I-24.

*The Northern Way of St. James* in Czech Republic runs from Zbraslav, town situated to the south of Prague, through Karlštejn, Beroun, Nižbor, Kralovice, Plasy, Horní Břízu, Stříbro to Kladruby, where the church of St. James is located. Then, the trail runs along the Úhlavka River to Prostiboř, Darmyšl to Hostouně – also with the church of St. James. The last section leads through Bělá nad Radbuzou to *Železná*, then crosses the Czech-German border and connects the route to Nuremberg. The route runs mainly along already existing and marked walking trails. The length of the route from Prague to *Železná* is 245 km (238 km from Zbraslav).

The youngest section of the Way of St. James in Czech Republic is *the Way of St. James* from Prague to *Všeruby*, marked in July 2011. A part of the trail coincides with routes marked by the Czech Tourist Club and signed as an international hiking trail I-24 Svatojakubská cesta (the Way of St. James). The Way of St. James from Prague to *Všeruby* was created as a continuation of the German Ways of St. James – *Jakobsweg* from Regensburg, Eichstätt to Donauwörth. Running through Regensburg, Geneva, Lyon and Le Puy to Santiago de Compostela it forms a part of the Way of St. James. Historically, the trade route from Prague to Regensburg has existed at least since the 14th century.

Another part of St. James' route from Prague to *Český Krumlov*: *the Way of St. James Prague – Český Krumlov* was opened in 2009. The length of this section is 228 km. Thereby, it became a connector – between *Żytawa Way*, and the ways in Austria. ([www.ultreia.cz](http://www.ultreia.cz)). Its extension is 49 km long *the Way of St. James Český Krumlov – Koranda*. The route leads through Vítkův Kámen to the border with Austria and further to Sankt Oswald in Austria.

In *Český Krumlov* the way connects with the trail from Moravia – which runs from Brno through Třebíč: *the Way of St. James Brno – Český Krumlov*. This part is 293 km long. Along the route there are churches of St. James in Ivančice and Jindřichův Hradec.

There are three other sectors of the Way St. James marked in Moravia. One of them leads from *Brno* to *Olomouc*. On the distance of 87 km the route runs through Náměšť on Hané, Přemyslovice, Stražisko, Male Hradisko, Sloup and Jedovnice.

The Way of St. James from Olomouc, connects in Brno with the way that leads south to the town of *Mikulov* (55 km) and the trail leading east from *Velehrad* (71 km).

The last delineated sector of the pilgrimage route of St. James in Czech Republic is a part of *the Silesian-Moravian Way St. James*. It runs from Opava through Hradec nad Moravicí to Olomouc. The trail will begin in Opole on the sector of the Way of St. James Via Regia and then through Racibórz will lead across the border to Opava. The sector is mostly leading along the existing trails – walking and biking. At the stage of Opava – Hradec nad Moravicí the route is not marked yet. The pilgrimage along the *Silesian-Moravian Way of St. James* in the territory of Czech Republic, you can start from the Polish-Czech border in the town of Vávrovice and continue along the green trail to reach Opava. An important step in building a common section of Camino – leading from Opole through Racibórz, Opava to Olomouc was signing the cooperation agreement in order to revive the pilgrimage movement. This was accomplished in June 2012 by authorities of the dioceses of Olomouc and Opole.

Currently, 3 sections of the Way of St. James in Czech Republic being designed and are at the stage of delineating and marking. Two of them are designed as connectors with routes leading from Poland. The first one runs from the Polish-Czech border near Krzeszów – it's as an extension of *Sudety Way of St. James* and leads through Hradec Králové, Pardubice to the town Kácov where it connects with *the Way of St. James Prague – Český Krumlov*. The first designed section of the route runs from Cieszyn to Olomouc leading via Frýdek-Místek, Libhost, Lipník nad Bečvou and Velký Újezd, towns with churches of St. James. It is also noteworthy that on the 3rd of July 2013 the members of the St. James Brotherhood in Szczyrk, together with Kazimierz Plachta - the parish priest of the Ropice parish, marked the 56 km long section of the track - from Simoradz, through Cieszyn and Ropice, to Frýdek-Místek.

The second designed route leads from the Czech border to Krzeszów - as an extension of the *Sudecka Droga sw. Jakuba* and *Kłodzka Droga sw. Jakuba* (the *Sudety* and *Kłodzko* parts of St. James's Way).

The *Kłodzko* part of St. James's Way is the youngest section of the trail in Poland. It was officially made available on the

11th of April 2014 in Bystrzyca Klodzka. The missing piece of the trail to connect the Sudety and Klodzko parts of St. James's Way would need to go through the cities of Chvaleč i Ruprechtice which both have St. James's Churches.

This route will be an extension of the sector that runs from Poland – *Beskidy Way of St. James*. The last sector is scheduled south from Velehrad – through Trnava to Bratislava in Slovak Republic. It is also worth noting a short connector of *Nysa Way of St. James* leading from Jasenik to Głuchołazy.

An increased awareness of local authorities and parishes on the rank of routes leading to Santiago de Compostela, undoubtedly, instills the optimism and creates opportunities for further development.

### The pilgrimage movement of Polish and Czech people to Santiago de Compostela

The sanctuary of St. James in Santiago de Compostela is currently one the most important Christian pilgrimage centres in

the world visited by over 5 million people every year. (Wójtowicz, 2011, 317). Since 2004, the Pilgrims' Office of Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela (*Oficina del Peregrino de Santiago de Compostela*) collects detailed statistics on people who came to Santiago de Compostela on foot, on horseback, on a bicycle or in a wheelchair and received so-called "*Compostela*" (the document confirming making a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James – the last 100 km of *Camino de Santiago* made on foot, on horseback or in a wheelchair, or 200 km, if travelling by bicycle).

Basing on the data of the Pilgrims' Office of Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela, we may conclude that from the mid-80s of the 20th century, there has been a steady growth in the number of pilgrims arriving to the tomb of St. James. In the early 80s of the 20th century, only several hundred visitors a year has received the "*Compostela*", whilst just as far back as in the mid-90s of the 20th century this number reached over 20 thousand people. A record number of pilgrims who visited the sanctuary of St. James in a modern history was reported in 2010 – it was 272 135 visitors.

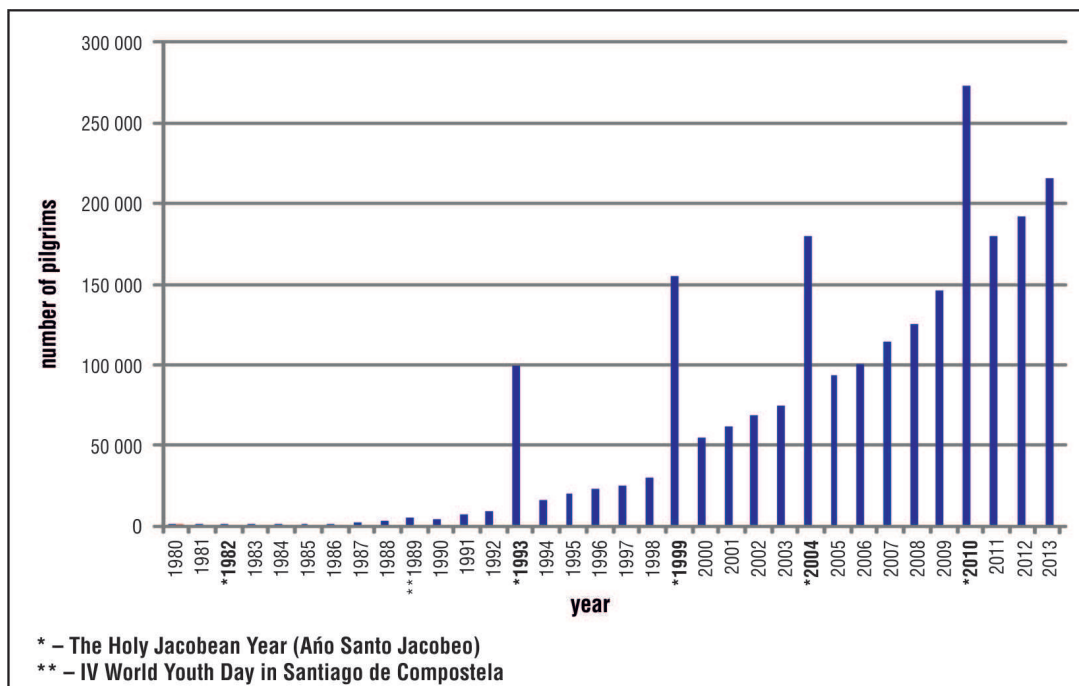


Figure 3. Pilgrimage movement to the sanctuary of Saint James in Santiago de Compostela in 1980–2013.

Source: personal analysis based on the data of Pilgrims' Office of Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela.

In 2013, the Pilgrims' Office registered 215 880 pilgrims – 188 191 people in this group (87.17% of the total) came to Santiago de Compostela on foot, 26 646 (12.34% of the total) arrived by bicycle, 977 people arrived on horseback, while 66 pilgrims came in a wheelchair (cf. Fig. 3).

The Spanish make up the majority of the pilgrim group, nationality-wise (c.a. 50%), they are followed by the Germans, Italians, Portuguese and Americans. In 2013 the Czech were classified as 25th (769 participants, 0.36% of the total visitors), the Polish as 13th among all the nations making pilgrimages to the grave of St. James, after the Spanish (105 891 pilgrims), Germans (16 203), Italians (15 621), Portuguese (10 698),

Americans (10 125), the French (8 305), the Irish (5 012), the British (4 207), Canadians (3 373), Australians (3 098), the Dutch (2 888) and Koreans (2 774).

It needs to be pointed out that the journey - a pilgrimage following the steps of St. James, is definitely different from mass pilgrimages to destinations in Europe such as the Polish St. Mary's Sanctuaries in Jasna Gora, Gora Swietej Anny (St. Anna's Mountain) or Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. People taking the trail of St. James usually do this alone or in small groups (of less than 20 participants). Basically, each of the pilgrims is free to choose the time of the journey and the length of the trail they want to go. People who have reached Santiago de Compos-

tela emphasize that at *camino* an old man dies and a new one is born, that at *Camino de Santiago* each step has a life-changing power. The European parts of St. James's way are attended more frequently by non-believers or people of creeds other than Christian, as well as people who admit taking the journey for cognitive - non-religious reasons.

Having analyzed the tourist and pilgrimage movement of the Poles and Czech to Santiago de Compostela in 2004–2010 one can notice the increase of the Polish and Czech pilgrims who received the 'Compostela' (cf. Fig. 4).

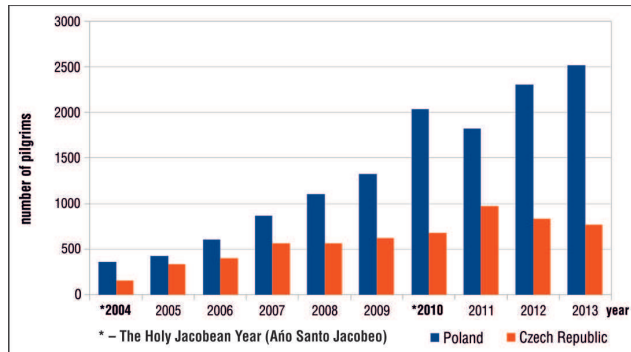


Figure 4. Pilgrimage movement of Polish and Czech people to Santiago de Compostela in 2004–2013.

Source: personal analysis based on the data of Pilgrims' Office of Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela

In case of travelers from Poland the number increased fivefold (the largest increase was noted in the period of 2009–2010 - 55.8%), whereas in case of the Czech, over fourfold (the largest increase was noted in the period of 2004 and 2005 - 215.7%). Only in 2011 the number of pilgrims from Poland was smaller than the year before. It needs to be noted that 2010 was celebrated in Santiago de Compostela as the Holy Year of St. James and, as a result, the number of pilgrims was the highest noted: 272 135, with 2040 Poles (0.75% of the total number). In 2013 the *Oficina del Peregrino de Santiago de Compostela* registered 2515 Poles, and the percentage of Polish pilgrims climbed to 1.16%. On the other hand, the decrease in numbers of Czech pilgrims (by over 20%) in the period of 2011–2013 (from 975 participants in 2011 to 769 in 2013) was a surprise. The most probable reason for that was the recession of the Czech economy in 2013, which resulted in less interest of the Czech in tourism and travel.

The development of tourist and pilgrimage movement of the Poles and Czech was influenced by a number of factors. The deciding ones were undoubtedly a redevelopment of the cult of St. James in many parishes and pilgrimage centers, the creation of new (Polish and Czech) parts of *Camino de Santiago*, the increasing amount of information about St. James's way in mass media, individual promotion - *Camino de Santiago* pilgrimages made by people who reached the Compostela and received the memorial diploma - 'Compostela'. Another important factor is the increase of the number of destinations of the low budget airlines, thanks to which a plane trip to Galicia in a faraway Spain became available to a wider group of clients interested in taking the St. James's way.

Analyzing the demographics of the Polish and Czech pilgrims registered in the Pilgrimage Office of Santiago de Compostela

during the most part of the researched period (apart from 2004 in the case of Czech pilgrims), one can notice that the majority of visitors were women. Their participation percentage in the years 2004–2013 - both for Czech and Poles - was 53%.

Among the Czech who in the period of 2004–2009 receive their memorial diplomas there is a noticeable percentage of young people - below 30. Their participation in the researched period reached from 46% (in 2009) to 66.6% (in 2004). A distinct dominance of older pilgrims (aged 30–60) began in 2010. In the whole of the analyzed period, the participation of pilgrims below 30 was as high as 44.7%. The participation of pilgrims aged 30–60 was not much lower as it reached 43.6%, and people older than 60 comprised 11.6% of the participants. It is worth to notice that each year the number of participants over 60 seems to increase - in 2004 they made up as much as 2% of the total number of Czech pilgrims, whereas in 2012 it went as high as 13.6% (cf. Fig. 5).

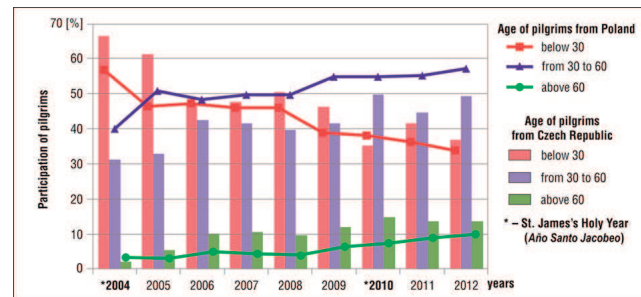


Figure 5. Changes in the age structure of the pilgrims at large and the Czech traveling to Santiago de Compostela during the period of 2004–2012.

Source: own research based on the data of the Pilgrimage Office by the Archbishopsric of Santiago de Compostela

Analyzing the demographic structure of Polish pilgrims, one can notice the dominance of persons aged 30–60. This age group made up 54.3% of all the Polish pilgrims in the period of 2004–2013 and seems to be constantly increasing, reaching 58% in 2013 (for comparison, in 2004 it was just 40%). Similarly to the Czech pilgrims, the Polish participants present an increase in the age group of '60+' (2004 - 3%, 2013 - 9.7%) and a constant decrease of the young group of less than 30 - in 2004 this group made up 57% of the total number of Polish pilgrims whereas in 2013 it decreased to 31% (cf. Fig. 5).

Among the Czech and Poles traveling to the grave of St. James the Elder, the Apostle in Santiago de Compostela, the most popular form of travel is on foot, which is chosen by about 90% of pilgrims (90.7% and 86.9% respectively - average values from 2004–2012). Bikers made up 12.94% of Poles and 9.25% of Czech during the researched period. It is worth to notice that there were years when the participation of bikers was much higher, for example 24.33% for Poles in 2006 and 23.6% for the Czech in 2011. During the researched period only 16 Poles and one person from the Czech Republic came to Compostela by horse. It is also noteworthy that in 2012 two people from the Czech Republic travelled at least 100 km to the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela in wheel chairs.

The people who appear in the Pilgrimage Office of the Archbishopsric of Santiago de Compostela to receive their



memorial diplomas fill in a questionnaire where they specify their reasons for visiting the grave of St. James the Apostle, choosing among the available: religious, cultural-religious, and other (non-religious, cultural). Taking into consideration the period of 1989–2013 a decrease in the number of people who declare religious reasons can be observed. While in 1989 as much as 83.5% of pilgrims declared religious reasons, 12.67% - cultural-religious and 1.5% - non-religious, in 2013 a completely different tendency could be noticed - 39.98%, 54.56% and 5.47% respectively.

If we compare the motives of the journey to Santiago de Compostela made by the Czech with the pilgrims from around the world, we will be able to notice similarities. The Czech also mostly give the cultural-religious reason for making the *camino de Santiago* - 47.4%. However, it needs to be noted that in 2004–2006 and in 2010 (the Holy Year of St. James) the majority of Czech declared religious reasons for making the pilgrimage (in 2004 it was as much as 70.6% and in 2010 - 51%). In the researched period, the religious reason was chosen by 43.5% of Czech pilgrims and the non-religious by 9.15% (cf. Fig. 6).

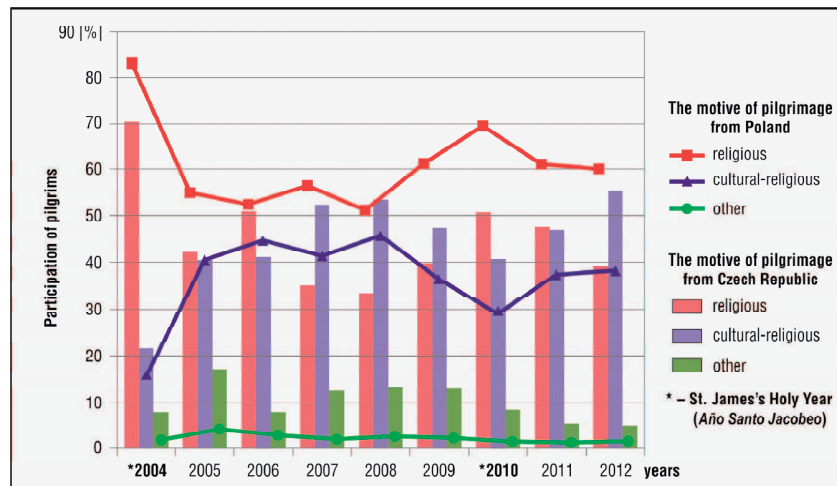


Figure 6. The changes in motives for pilgrimaging to Santiago de Compostela of pilgrims at large and the Czech in particular, during the period of 2004–2012.

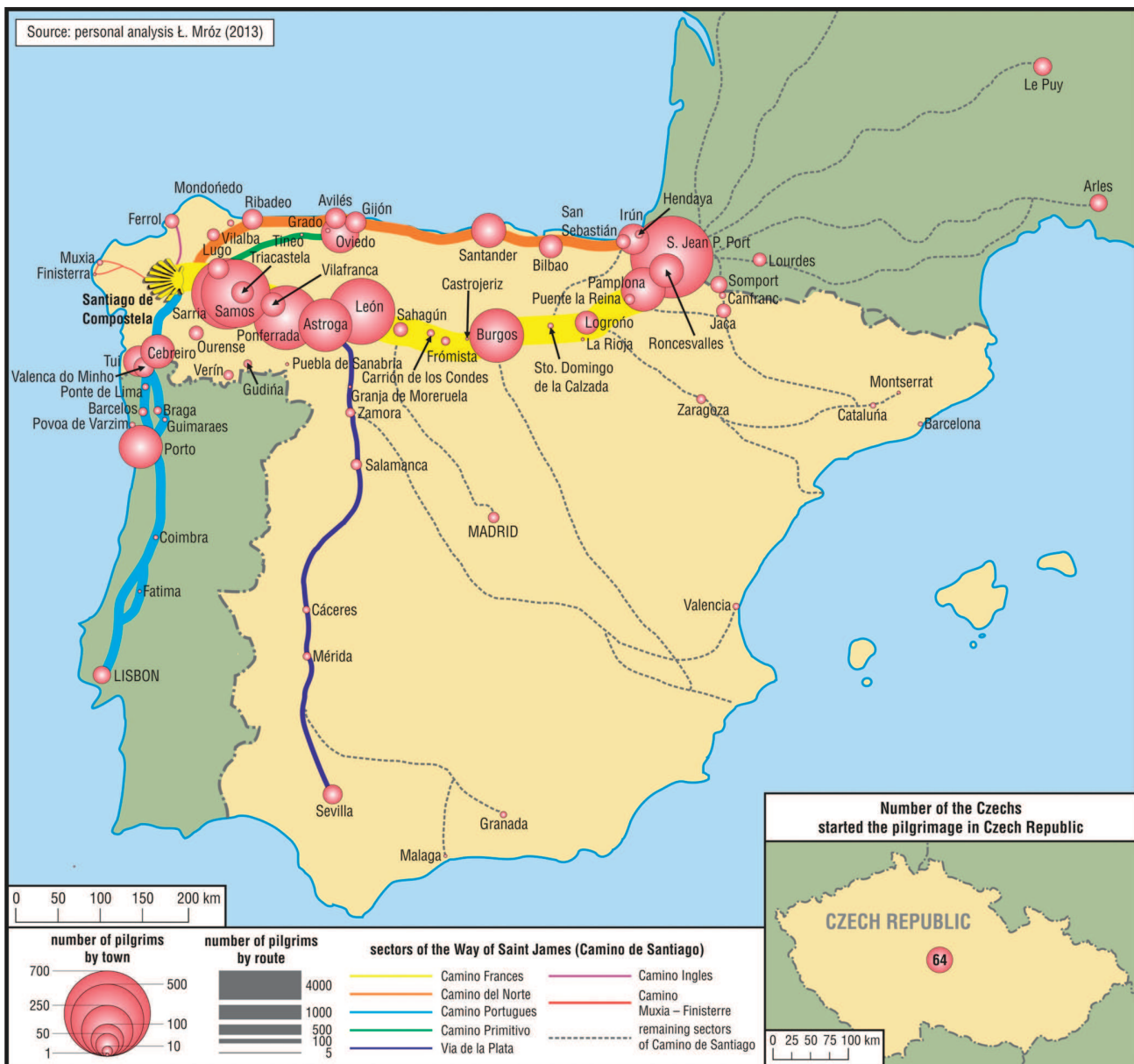
Source: own research based on the data of the Pilgrimage Office by the Archbishopric of Santiago de Compostela.

The most popular part of St. James's way in Europe chosen both by Poles and the Czech is the, so called, *French way* (*Camino Francés*). It is worth to mention that each year the *French way* is losing its popularity, which may mean that the pilgrims from Poland and the Czech Republic who have already travelled there are choosing other ways for their next pilgrimages. Usually, the *French way* is chosen as the first *camino*. For example - in 2004 as much as 96% of Polish pilgrims who received their memorial diplomas have travelled there via the *French way*, whereas in 2013 it was only 51.5%, similarly in the case of the Czech - in 2004 it was 91.5%, but in 2013 it was just 65% of the total Czech pilgrims.

Other ways also enjoy a popularity, both among the Polish as well as among the Czech pilgrims. These include: *the Portugal Way* (*Camino Portugues*) (Poles: 17.9%, the Czech:

15.87%), *the Northern Way* (*Camino Norte*) (Poles: 15.3%, the Czech: 11.54%) and *Camino Primitivo* (Poles: 7.9%, the Czech: 5.53%, all data for 2012).

The vast majority of Poles and the Czech have started their journey to the grave of St. James somewhere in Spain or Portugal. In the period of 2004–2012 almost 20% of pilgrims from Poland (2092 people) and slightly over 15% of pilgrims from the Czech Republic (813 people) started their journeys from the territory of France, especially from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, the most popular starting point for the *French way* (in the period of 2004–2012 1823 Poles and 643 Czech took off from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port) (cf. Fig. 7). Other popular starting points in France are Lourdes, Somport, Arles and Le Puy. More and more people decide to make the pilgrimage from more distant places like Switzerland or Germany.



Picture 7. The start points of the pilgrimages made by the Czechs and the number of pilgrims on particular sectors of the Way of St. James in Spain in 2004–2012.

Source: personal analysis based on the data of Pilgrims' Office of Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela, Ł. Mróz

What is especially worth mentioning is the data from *Oficina del Peregrino de Santiago de Compostela*, which allows to conclude that each year the number of pilgrims who decide to make the pilgrimage in accordance with the Medieval tradition - i.e. from their own doorstep - increases. They embark either from their homes or their parish churches traveling thousands of miles to get to *Camino de Santiago*. in the period of 2005–2012 in the Pilgrimage Office of Santiago de Compostela a total number of 154 Poles and 64 Czech who started their journeys in their home countries have been registered (cf. Fig. 7).

Registered since 2004, the rapid development of pilgrimage movement of Poles and Czech traveling to the grave of St. James has also influenced the increase in popularity of traveling via the Polish and Czech parts of the *Camino de Santiago*. The

registers of pilgrims held in many parishes and other institutions confirm a year-to-year increase in the number of people who decide to make the pilgrimage using the Polish parts of the way on their own or in small groups. New initiatives, which are being particularly enjoyed, include bike or on-foot trips and are being organized not only by the members of St. James's brotherhoods, but also by schoolchildren, students and scouts.

## Conclusion

The way of St. James - *Camino de Santiago* is the longest and most known pilgrimage and culture trail in Europe. The track has existed for over 1000 years and has been enjoying a considerable development during the last decade. Many parts of Europe show initiatives aiming at the development of the cult of

St. James as well as creating new parts of the *Camino de Santiago*. It is noteworthy that since the beginning of 2005 until March 2014 there have been more than 5 thousand kilometers of St. James's trails marked in Poland and the Czech Republic. New parts of the trail are planned to be opened next year and, similarly to the old days, they will allow pilgrims to visit the grave of St. James the Elder, the Apostle, in Santiago de Compostela in order to renew and strengthen their faith and explicitly confirm the spiritual roots of the Old Continent.

The analysis of tourist and pilgrim movement of Poles and the Czech to Santiago de Compostela, undertaken in this study has shown an increase in popularity of pilgrimages via St. James's way among the inhabitants of these countries of Central-East Europe during the last decade. In the period of 2004–2013 the number of Czech and Polish pilgrims has increased over four times and their percentage in the total number of visitors to Santiago de Compostela has also noticeably increased.

The analysis also allowed to notice a large similarity between the ways of traveling and demographic structure of the pilgrims from the Czech Republic and from Poland. Both Poles and the Czech make their pilgrimages mostly on foot. On the other hand, the number of Polish and Czech bikers who travelled to Compostela is different - in the researched period it was 12.9% and 9.25% respectively.

The most frequently chosen part of the route to Compostela both by Polish and Czech pilgrims is still the *French way* (*Camino*

*Francés*). Each year, however, shows the increase of popularity of other parts of St. James's Way in Spain - especially *Camino Portugues* (*the Portugal Way*), *Camino del Norte* (*the Northern Way*) and *Camino Primitivo*.

The organizations, societies and sympathizers of St. James's Way engaged in marking and taking care of the parts of St. James's Way in the Czech Republic and in Poland also have other important tasks connected with preparing the accommodation and food, supplying small-form pilgrim's guides (pocket books) and tourist maps, as well as promoting and informing about the trail, especially in the region it runs through. Little knowledge among the inhabitants of the areas the trails include, both about the character of St. James as well as the pilgrimages and their tradition, and the lack of attempts to engage the local communities, self governments and parishes and include them in the ideas of that pilgrimage are ones of the most noticeable threats to the existence and further functioning of St. James's way. It is of paramount importance that the care of St. James's trail is being taken care of mainly by gathering a large group of "friends" among the local governments, schools, tourist organizations, scout groups, students and other people as well. The coordinating of the works cannot be focused on one small group of people. All the local units need to work together to maintain the development of pilgrimage movement along the routes comprising the Way of St. James.

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