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Women's Words About Pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela, 1890 – 1920

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Many scholarly articles claim that the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela was moribund at the turn of the last century based on statistical surveys of the Cathedral and Hospital Real registers, but these numbers only represent a fraction of the persons who devoutly visited Santiago Cathedral. In reality, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century pilgrimage as described by five turn-of-the-nineteenth-century female authors.- Emilia Pardo Bazán, Katherine Lee Bates, Georgiana Goddard King, Annette Meakin, and Catherine Gasquoine Hartley - is itself in a liminal state, between the traditional pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela and the newer tourist-pilgrim. The writings by these women (one Spanish, two British, two American) tell of a pilgrimage that was not dead, nor dying but was more similar to today's Camino than might have been imagined.

Key Words: Nineteenth century, pilgrims, pilgrimage, Santiago de Compostela, travel writing

Introduction

It is often assumed that there were few to no pilgrims to Compostela at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. Vázquez de Parga, citing Alexandre Nicolai's 1891 description of a pilgrim in San Juan de Luz, pronounced the classic pilgrimage dead:

We see represented in this pilgrim the last of a historical breed who traveled along the roads of Europe and who today is reduced to a postcard of the city of Santiago and its environs (1949, I: 118) (Figure 1).^[1]

His assumption that pilgrims were only those persons who matched a medieval model of both appearance (persons wearing a short cape or cloak adorned with shells, a wide-brimmed, upturned hat, carrying a staff with a gourd attached) and motive (as penance, as a vow, or to give thanks) held sway through much of the twentieth century. Pugliese (2003) in her analysis of documentation of pilgrims from 1802 to 1905 counted only those persons who registered at the cathedral or received services at the Hospital Real. Through much of the twentieth century pilgrimage was regarded as a quaint ritual, and pilgrims were envisioned as anachronisms.^[2]

1. *En este peregrino podemos ver representado el final de una estirpe histórica, que circuló por todos los caminos de Europa y que hoy ha quedado reducida a estampa turística de a ciudad de Santiago y sus alrededores.* (English translations throughout are by the author.)

2. For more on the re-creation of the medieval pilgrimage in the twentieth century see Dunn (2016).

Fig 1: Postcard 'Parteluz del pórtico de la Gloria' (c. 1941).



Original photo, c. 1915, *Estampas Compostelanas*, L. Ksado.

The late nineteenth century, however, was not the death knell of pilgrimage to Compostela as purported by the numerical statistics cited, but rather served as a period of renewed interest by tourists and scholars, if not traditional devotees of Saint James.^[3] Santiago Cathedral was brought to greater worldwide attention due to Charles Thurston Thompson's photographic project (Figure 2) and the Portico de la Gloria's subsequent reproduction in the Victoria and Albert castings museum in 1866 (Figure 3). Less international interest seems to have been generated by the miraculous rediscovery of the Saint's bones from their hidden resting place behind the high altar in 1879 by Cardinal Miguel Payá y Rico and the subsequent confirmation of their holiness by Pope Leo XIII in the bull *Deus Omnipotens* in 1884 and the proclamation of 1885 as an extraordinary Jacobean holy year.

Travel writing experienced a boom in the late nineteenth century, and women writers and the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela were a part of this phenomenon. Five turn-of-the-nineteenth-century female authors.- Emilia Pardo Bazán (Spanish), Katherine Lee Bates and Georgiana Goddard King (American), Annette Meakin and Catherine Gasquoine Hartley (British) - wrote works centered wholly or in large part about the Camino and / or Santiago de Compostela. Their works show remarkable similarities in their inclusion of descriptions of and conversations with pilgrims they encountered during their journeys and in Compostela at the end of their trips. Each author in her own way links contemporary pilgrims to their medieval predecessors (a standard comparison) although in such a way that they are not simple types or representations of the past but are seen as active, devout participants in an ageless ritual. In addition, four of them (Pardo Bazán, Bates, Hartley, King) relate tales of others.- locals and tourists.- who participate in pilgrim-related ceremonies in their visits to Compostela. For these writers, medieval-style pilgrims represent a distinct attitude of faith and are not simply holdovers from the past.

Emilia Pardo Bazán (1851–1921), a Galician of noble, affluent lineage, novelist, journalist, professor, and fervent Catholic, wrote extensively of her travels across Europe and her pilgrimage to Rome. In 1891 she published the short story 'El peregrino' ('The Pilgrim'). She opens the story with personal musings about how far away is that time of 'simple faith' (*fe sencilla*), now only a memory brought back by the lichen covered stones of the old churches. Yet she also is reminded of that simple faith when she sees beggars alongside the road wearing short cloaks and rubber rain

Figure 2: Portico de la Gloria; From the Interior of the Cathedral



C. Thurston Thompson, 1868.

hats, sometimes adorned with pink shells. She links her ideas of medieval pilgrims with 'those that we see today' (*éstos que vemos ahora*) who walk about with their gaunt faces, untidy beards, tired, puffy eyes, backs curved by exhaustion, dried lips, tough skin on the soles of their feet, a bag slung about their shoulders filled with humble offerings from small-town charity.^[4] Her opening pilgrim description speaks to the hardships of the road and the charity of others, but not a word about the pilgrim's clothing. The story of the title character begins when he appears to ask for

3. Vázquez de Parga offers that no more than 30 or 40 pilgrims were present at services on Saint James' Day, and no more than 400 for the year in 1867, and only double that in holy years (I.118). [His information is taken from 'Pèlerinage a Saint-Jaques-de-Compostelle', *Revue Britannique* I (1868):327–44, itself a translation from 'A Pilgrimage to Compostella' by H.F.T., *Fraser's Magazine* 70 (August): 234–44. The original author's travels to Compostela took place in 1863 and his figures are for that year, not 1867.] The number in Pugliese is similar: 44 in 1863, 75 in 1867. Very few 'real' pilgrims attended services, yet beginning in 1844 handbooks with schedules of activities to be held throughout Compostela in conjunction with the week(s) prior to the holy day of July 25 were printed yearly (Tojo Ramallo: 31).

Figure 3: Victoria and Albert Museum, Room 46a.



(By M.Chohan - Photo, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2490961>).

lodging at the home of a wealthy laborer of Rivadas parish on the night of the festival of San Roche. This nameless pilgrim is described in greater detail, based on his suffering and pain; there is no glorifying or idealizing this man, who is not a simple beggar, but rather a lifelong penitential pilgrim who savors his suffering. He wears the regular clothing and accoutrements of a medieval pilgrim, but it is described in a realistic, non-sentimentalized way: a short cape, cracked and old, missing some of its shells with others hanging half-sewn; the staff with a broken gourd; his tunic of coarse cloth with myriad tears and patches.^[5] The man himself is emaciated with long dusty hair falling disheveled around his shoulders. He tells the onlookers that he is on the way to Santiago for the

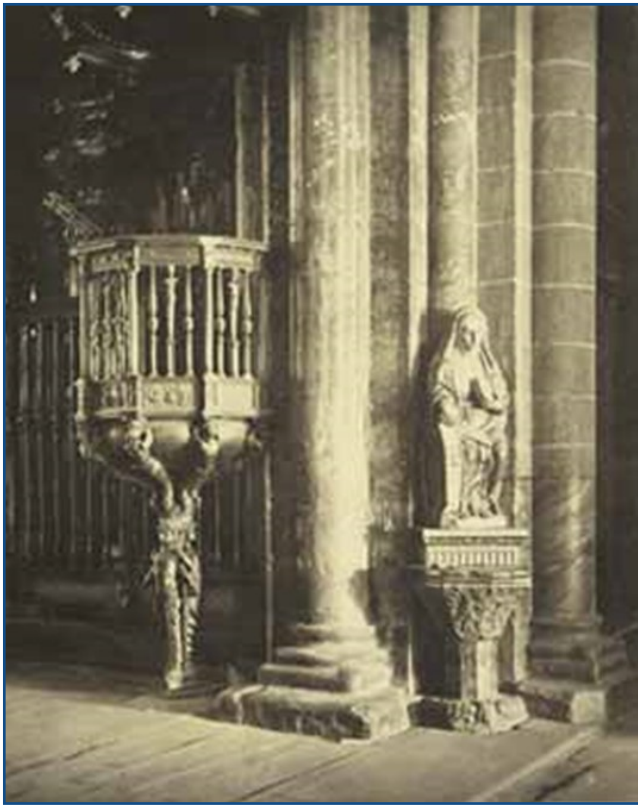
4. *Tendrían el mismo rostro demacrado, la misma barba descuidada y revuelta, los mismos párpados hinchados de sueño, las mismas espaldas encorvadas por el cansancio, los mismos labios secos de fatiga; en la planta de los pies la misma dureza, a las espaldas el mismo zurrón, repleto de humildes ofertas de la caridad aldeana.*

5. *la esclavina agrietada y vieja, donde ya faltaban algunas conchas, y otras se zarandeaban medio descosidas; la calabaza del bordón estaba hecha pedazos; el sayo, de paño burdo, mostraba infinidad de jirones y remiendos*

seventh time, each time approaching on a different road - the longer and worse the better.- as he is fulfilling a vow, an offering of his whole life (*por oferta de toda la vida*).

Twenty-five years later Pardo Bazán revisits the theme of the pilgrim to Santiago in 'Danza del peregrino' ('Dance of the Pilgrim'). In this slice-of-life story, Pardo Bazán begins with a detailed description of the baroque altar and the pomp of the officials filing in to celebrate the ceremony of the national offering (*Ofrenda*) on July 25, but she is distracted by a pilgrim who 'participated with ecstasy in the ceremony' (*asistía a la ceremonia como en éxtasis*) while leaning against the pillar where the statue of St. Mary Salomé sits. (Figures 4 & 5)

As in 'El peregrino' the initial description of the pilgrim is intensely personal. The man is around fifty years old, not very tall, pale, with gray hairs among his reddish beard which covers his whole face. His long hair, falling about his shoulders 'completes the profoundly mystical character of his visage' (*completaban el carácter profundamente*

Figure 4: Saint Mary Salome statue.

C. Thurston Thompson, 1868.

místico de la faz). She describes his cloak, pilgrim's hat, and staff briefly, comparing him to pilgrims of the Middle Ages 'and even later, who we still see today coming to fulfill a vow, albeit rarely' (*y después, y aun en el día, por raro caso, para cumplir oferta, vemos que viste alguno*). Although Pardo Bazán transports this pilgrim in her daydreams to a romantic vision of the Middle Ages, she soon learns the truth about him from the man standing next to her: the pilgrim arrived to fulfill a vow and has spent six hours on his knees with his arms outstretched before the altar. He has been living as a hermit on the Pico Sacro, fed by the local women who consider him a saint, and he climbs to the mountain's peak each morning in order to see the towers of the Cathedral, leaving the mountain only on Saint James' day. He is, in almost all regards, simply an older version of the protagonist of 'El peregrino' - a nameless, devout, penitential pilgrim, living off the charity of others. At the end of the *Ofrenda* ceremony, when the pompous officials have all filed out, the figures of the *gigantes* and *cabezudos* (Figures 6 & 7) file in to dance inside the cathedral before the altar. Pardo Bazán's pilgrim transforms, his face lighting up with a spontaneous, joyous faith, and, although he does not join outwardly in their dance, Pardo Bazán praises

Figure 5: Statue of Saint Mary Salome. Santiago cathedral.

Photo by the author, 2016.

him for his devotion, and sincere, humble beliefs, reminding her readers:

We do enough (or think we do) by joining (spiritually) to that man's impulse [to dance], who in the silent basilica prostrates himself one more time ... like those who came singing the words of hymns that today are unknown.^[6]

The cathedral is crowded, but for Pardo Bazán pilgrims are set apart through their actions, while others attending the service, however devout they may be, conform to societal norms and are not counted as pilgrims.

6. *Harto hacemos (o lo creemos así) con sumarnos (espiritualmente) a ese impulso del hombre que, silenciosa ya la basilica, se postraba una vez más ante el Señor Santiago, como se postraban 'aquellos' que en otros días andaban tierras, para llegar, un día feliz, a este templo, cantando himnos de palabras que hoy se ignoran...*

Figure 6: Gigantes in Compostela.

Photo postcard by Luis Ksado photography, c. 1920.

Figure 7: Cabezudos in Compostela.

Photo postcard by Luis Ksado photography, c. 1920.

Katharine Lee Bates (1859–1929), Wellesley professor and writer most famous for penning ‘America the Beautiful’, published *Spanish Highways and Byways* in 1905, relating her travels across Spain which began in 1899 from Biarritz, France. The book’s last four chapters (XXIV ‘Pilgrims of Saint James’; XXV ‘The

Building of a Shrine (A historical chapter, which should be skipped)’; XXVI ‘The Son of Thunder’; and XXVII ‘Vigo and Away’) are dedicated to the pilgrimage and to the city of Compostela. A cursory look might make one think that Bates specifically went on pilgrimage to Compostela, but in the last chapter

she explains that because of 'bad food and worse lodging of Galicia, the blazing heat and the incessant, exhausting warfare against vermin' (439) she curtailed her original plans to return via Valladolid and Salamanca to Barcelona from where she had originally intended to set sail for the U.S.

Bates separates 'actual pilgrims' from locals who have come to Compostela for the holy days and are milling about in the various plazas:

Peasants in gala dress, bright as tropic birds, stood in deferential groups about the pilgrims, for there were actual pilgrims on the scene, men and women whose broad hats and round capes were sewn over with scallop-shells, and whose long staffs showed little gourds fastened to the upper end. They wore rosaries and crucifixes in profusion, and their habit was spangled with all manner of charms and amulets, especially the tinsel medals with their favorite device of St. James riding down the Moors (423–24).

Fig. 8: Saint Coloman as pilgrim.



Albrecht Dürer, orig. woodcut, 1513.

Of the five authors, she reports the most specific interactions with individual pilgrims, providing details about several of them. One with whom she talks fits the medieval ideal of an international pilgrim in both looks and devotion:

We fell to chatting with a pilgrim who was shod in genuine sandal shoon. A large gourd was tied to his belt, the rim of his hat was turned up at one side and caught there with a rosy-tinted shell, and his long black ringlets fell loose upon his shoulders, framing a romantic Dürer face (Figure 8). He talked with us in German, saying that he was of Wittemberg, and once a Lutheran, but had been converted to the true faith on a previous visit to Spain. Since then he had footed his penitential way to Jerusalem and other distant shrines (424).

The majority of the pilgrims she describes seem to have been local peasants from Galicia or Portugal. One of them seems to be as devout as the one described by Pardo Bazán in 'Danza':

. . . a middle-aged, sun-browned, stubby little man, whom during the ensuing week we saw again and again in the cathedral, but never begging, with the most of the pilgrims, at the portals, nor taking his ease in the cloisters . . . This humble worshipper seemed to pass all the days of the festival in enraptured adoration, on his knees now before one shrine, now before another. We found him first facing the supreme architectural feature of the cathedral, that sublime and yet most lovely Portico de la Gloria. He was gazing up at its paradise of sculptured saints and angels, whose plumes and flowing robes still show traces of azure, rose, and gold, with an expression of naïve ecstasy (427).

He too seems to be a perpetual pilgrim, but one who travels out of devotion, not for penance or to fulfill a vow:

He told us that he came from Astorga, and had been nine days on the way. He spent most of his time upon the road, he added, visiting especially the shrines of the Virgin. 'Greatly it pleases me to worship God,' he said, with sparkling eyes, and ran on eagerly, as long as we would listen, about the riches and splendors of different cathedrals, and especially the robes and jewels of the Virgen del Pilar (428).

Not all of the pilgrims encountered by Bates were male, nor were they all particularly devout:

In the cloisters we encountered an old woman in the pilgrim dress, her staff wound with gay

ribbons, limping from her long jaunt. She told us frankly that she was 'only a beggar' in her own village, and had come for the outing as well as to please the priest, who, objecting to certain misdemeanors which she had the discretion not to specify, had prescribed this excursion as penance. She was a lively old soul (428).

These individuals are linked to the medieval ideals (or in the case of the woman, realities) of pilgrimage. They stand out from others in the cathedral area not only because of their dress, but because their behavior sets them apart from the general throng. The woman, although a beggar, was assigned to the role of penitential pilgrim by her priest and does not seem particularly devout.

Bates reminisces about the medieval pilgrims who came to the shrine in throngs, in days when fourteen doors were opened to accommodate the numbers of pilgrims, while at that time (1899) only three were open. Still, she suggests that pilgrimages in general are on the upswing 'with the new flood of faith that has set toward Lourdes,^[7] pilgrimages to Santiago, as to other Latin shrines, are beginning to revive' (428). Based on Bates' words one must wonder if the demise of pilgrimage in the nineteenth century sounded by later scholars such as Vázquez de Parga is really just the tail end of older, traditional pilgrimage customs which are being replaced by newer, holiday-style devotional trips. The statistics gathered by Pugliese (2003) are based primarily on lists of names of those pilgrims who have registered in the Hospital Real or in the Cathedral while in Santiago - 17,000 between January of 1802 and December of 1905; she suggests that many more were present but their names were not included in extant lists. Descriptions of the throngs of people attending services and events sponsored by the Church provided by Bates support this theory. She captures the combination of these two worlds - the traditional, lone pilgrim and the throngs of local and holiday pilgrims - worshipping together within the cathedral:

Every day of that festal week the cathedral services were attended by devout throngs, yet there was something blithe and social, well-nigh domestic, in the atmosphere of the scene even at the most impressive moments. Kneeling

groups of peasant women caught the sunshine on their orange kerchiefs and scarlet-broidered shawls. Here a praying father would gather his little boy, sobbing with weariness, up against his breast; there a tired pilgrim woman slumbered in a corner, her broad hat with its cockle-shells lying on her knees. Rows of kneeling figures waited at the wooden confessionals which were thick set along both aisles and ambulatory . . . Pilgrims, standing outside the door to gather alms, vied with one another in stories of their travels and the marvels they had seen (434).

These participants are in contrast to the traditional, penitential pilgrims, suffering as they make their way to the altar:

. . . arduously climbing the long stone flights of that quadruple stairway upon their knees. These, too, were but shadows of those medieval penitents who of old staggered after this procession, bowed under the weight of crosses, or scourging themselves until they fainted in their own trail of blood. Yet it is still strange and touching to see, long after the inner spaces of the cathedral are dim with evening, those kneeling figures making their painful progress about aisles and ambulatory, sobbing as they go, and falling forward on their faces to kiss the pavement that is bruising them (438).

These scenes are not so different from those described in the 'Veneranda dies' sermon of the twelfth century Codex Calixtinus:

Some keep vigil by singing to the various kinds of music; some lament their sins; some read psalms; and some give alms to the blind . . . A solemn feast is always being celebrated there without cease . . . to this place go the poor, the happy, the ferocious, the knights, the infantrymen, the satraps, the blind, the crippled, the aristocrats, the nobles, the heroes, the princes, the church leaders, and the abbots. Some go with bare feet, some without their own goods, some bound in irons for the sake of penitence. Some bear the emblem of the cross in their hands . . . some give their things to the poor . . . some doing penance and bewailing their transgressions' (Coffey, Davidson, and Dunn, 1996: 19).

Even medieval pilgrims were of all sorts, traveling to Compostela for a variety of reasons, and multiple levels of devotion. The defining factor of pilgrimage was not what the pilgrim looked like, but the fact that they had made the effort to arrive and to worship.

7. In 1858 Bernadette Soubirous had several miraculous visions of a woman in a grotto outside of Lourdes, France; by 1862 the local bishop declared the visions to be of the Virgin Mary, and by 1864 a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes was dedicated in the area where the visions took place.

The band of pilgrims Bates describes in her children's book, *In Sunny Spain with Pilarica and Rafael* (1913), is much more colorful and festive. Men and women alike wear the traditional short cape and up-turned pilgrim hat over their regular garb. Although one of them is traveling barefoot as an act of devotion, they are anything but a solemn group:

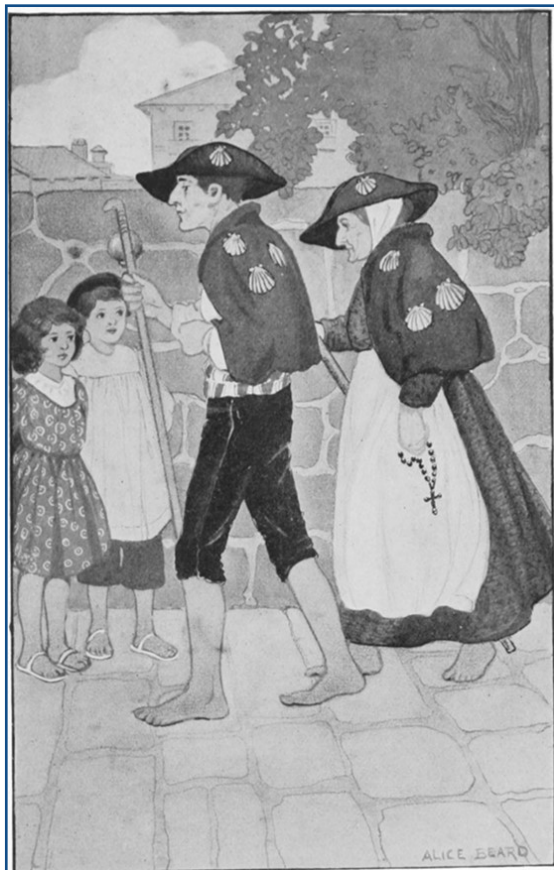
But pilgrims behave no better than gypsies', he [Rafael] declared hotly to Uncle Manuel . . .

These jolly peasants will make their offerings and do their penances piously enough at Santiago, even though they frolic on the trip. It is their holiday. There were wild doings along these roads in the old times, I'll be bound (225–26) (Figure 9).

Sure enough, when the children encounter the same band of pilgrims in Compostela:

They were all conducting themselves most decorously now . . . and even the wild peasant woman was doing a weary penance, dragging herself on her bruised knees up the long flight of stone steps to the great west doors and on over the worn pavement of the nave (257).

Fig. 9: 'Pilgrims on the Way to Santiago'.



K. Bates, *In Sunny Spain*, p. 220.

By their actions in worship they show their status as pilgrims.

Annette Meakin (1867–1959) was a British travel writer. Her inclusion in this list is tangential, but important. Her work, *Galicia: The Switzerland of Spain* (1909) is permeated with references to the history of the pilgrimage to Compostela but contains no descriptions of contemporary pilgrims. Meakin was quite taken with the spectacle of the *Botafumeiro* as she saw it swing during Candlemas services in February 1907 and she devotes four pages to its history and use (73–76). Her only firsthand account relating to Compostela and the pilgrimage is to relate a story told to her by a shopkeeper about the giant censer breaking its rope and flying out of the window onto Platerias, but without injuring anyone ‘in ages past’. She includes this as a notable example of the continuity of the folkloric history of pilgrimage in Compostela, pointing out that Villaamil’s work (1907) in which he attests to this event of 1499 had not yet been published.

Catherine Gasquoine Hartley (1866 or 67–1928) was a British writer who specialized in studies of Spanish art, and later wrote about women’s issues. After publishing a successful travel guide to Seville and another about artists of the Prado museum, she became more interested in Galicia after traveling there in 1910. In 1912 she published *The Story of Santiago* for which she was sued for plagiarism by Annette Meakin, who stated it contained too many similarities to her book about Galicia. Meakin won the suit and as a consequence *The Story of Santiago* was to be removed from public libraries; fortunately, however, it was not completely destroyed. While one can see many parallels in the historical and literary descriptions and references between the two books, Hartley’s book portrays a more vibrant and modern city and circumstances.

Although Hartley appropriated some of Meakin’s research without citation, the basis for much of Hartley’s scholarship is *Guía de Santiago y sus alrededores* (1885) by José M. Fernández Sánchez (incorrectly cited as ‘Sánchez’ throughout), a work not included in Meakin’s bibliography. Her use of this source may explain why, of the five writers included in this article, only she tells the story of the rediscovery of the body of Saint James when

once again new life was brought to Compostela; faith was kindled anew when Cardinal-Archbishop, Payá y Rico, after diligent search and not less expense, discovered

just behind the main altar the precious urn with the body of St. James (70).

She cites Fernández Sánchez directly: ‘in another passage Sánchez declares: “To-day we feel the fervour and enthusiasm of bygone days is once more growing” (70). She also alludes to the energetic quality of Compostela, especially during the 1909 holy year:

The shrine of the Apostle is still one of the most frequented pilgrim resorts in Christendom. The year 1909 witnessed the great English Catholic pilgrimage . . . Santiago is still the most living centre of worship of the Catholic Spanish Church . . . Nowhere have I met men who have more fully joined with the religious life the life of action (71).

Hartley offers witness to a new age and type of pilgrimage model where the importance is the site and the journey to it, not the specific, penitential devotion of individuals to Saint James himself. Sasha Pack (2010) concurs that it was the rediscovery of the Saint James’ bones that set in motion the transformation of Compostela into a major Catholic heritage site; increasing numbers of pilgrims of various social classes coupled with the conflation of other touristic activities promoted by the city officials during the weeks prior to the July 25 holy day proved ‘a renewed dynamism at this historic seat of Spanish Catholicism’ (349). This type of touristic pilgrimage was alluded to by Pardo Bazán in ‘El peregrino’ in 1891:

Today we have well perfected the system of pilgrimages and we go to Santiago in stagecoach and to Rome in train, stopping in hotels and inns, sleeping on soft beds, and eating at tables decorated with artificial flowers and gas lighting.^[8]

Hartley is even more specific:

Today the path of the pilgrim is far different. He will journey from England to Vigo in one of the fine vessels of the excellent Booth Line, and will enjoy three days of most comfortable travelling. At Vigo, ‘The Golden Gate of Galicia’, he will see together with much beauty and much that is old, many evidences of modern progress. He will then journey by train to the old seaport of Pontevedra, where the past still lingers, and where a stay of a few days may profitably be

made. From Pontevedra the West Galician Railway carries the pilgrim to Compostela, and, perhaps, nothing brings home to the mind more sharply the movement of change than this modern approach (73).

Hartley is not wholly won over to the modern conveniences of travel, however, and she suggests there is a connection to the past that is felt by walking in order to fully appreciate the beauty, joy, and inspiration of the past:

The heart returns instinctively to the beliefs of former days, and finds something at least of the old inspiration in this valley of hills, where faith lives enfolded in a mantle of multitudinous tradition (74).

Her recommendations for those considering a visit to Compostela are surprisingly modern and similar to those one might read in twenty-first century blogs and social media about walking the Camino. She urges the traveler to:

cultivate deliberately the spirit of pilgrimage. Though almost every vestige of the piety of the medieval pilgrim may have disappeared, still the spirit of places and the association of the past influences, which made Compostela famous as a shrine of worship, may so possess us that, even if the way of our approach is by means of the utilitarian train, we may do so reverently (74).

While it is true that the journey may be made swiftly, this will not result in the true benefit of making a pilgrimage:

To the visitor to Compostela who desires a more rapid transit, nothing can be said, except to advise him to give up the enterprise. Let him wait in some one of the villages in this delightful valley, until he comes to understand the real unimportance of time (77).

This advice is followed by fifteen pages of places of interest for those wishing to walk from Pontevedra, via Padrón, into Santiago de Compostela. Although Hartley encourages a contemplative focus she acknowledges the new more festive behavior of those present:

there is nothing in its ordinary life to equal the romance of the yearly festival which perpetuates the memory of St. James. All Galicia gathers in Compostela to participate in the feast . . . Thousands arrive from Vigo and La Coruna, and form other towns more distant (310).

8. Hoy hemos perfeccionado mucho el sistema de las peregrinaciones, y nos vamos a Santiago en diligencia y a Roma en tren, parando en hoteles y fondas, durmiendo en cama blanda y comiendo en mesas que adornan ramos de flores artificiales y candelabros de gas.

Tourists, townspeople, and locals all join together in the festivities:

The black dresses and mantillas of the women mingle with the bright colours of the peasants who have come in from the country districts. There is a social element in the scene, for in the intervals between their prayers the people talk with one another. The Compostelanos are wholly at home in their church (312),

although clearly Hartley refers to two types of pilgrims who attend the services - those tourists and locals who are of the upper class and other rural, local visitors of the lower class who don their best (albeit not necessarily most solemn) clothes to attend the ceremonies. Pilgrims are not set apart by their clothing, but by their reverent attitude and extra effort in preparing to visit Compostela.

Georgiana Goddard King (1874–1939), an American architectural historian and founder and professor of the Department of Art at Bryn Mawr, is the only one of our writers to document the entire Camino Francés with eyewitness accounts and personal conversations. Her three-volume work, *The Way of Saint James* (1920), is the outcome of three years of traveling along the route prior to 1917 (the year in which she finished the work). She states that its primary purpose was to record and explain the influences and relationships of architectural monuments along the route, but that goal evolved:

The intention, as the reader will see, has grown long since from a mere pedantic exercise in architecture, to a very pilgrimage, to following ardently along the ancient way where all the centuries have gone (I: 22).

She admits that she has followed Aymery Picaud, (*Book V, Pilgrims' Guide of the Codex Calixtinus*) as her guide for much of her journey, as she begins in Roncesvalles. Her conversations and descriptions of pilgrims are concentrated in Volume III, where she describes her arrival into Compostela.

Although King pronounces that she has entered into Compostela by foot from all directions:

I went in to Santiago that day by motor, being very weary, yet I have from time to time walked in the last few miles by all the roads, from Padrón, from Corunna and this way, from the east [Arzúa] (II: 491),

she portrays in detail her arrival as a pilgrim by train:

At the junction the men had got down to walk upon the platform . . . and as the long train

began to get up speed the end carriage door was snatched open and a man belated, leaped in. There in the third-class carriage, dim, close, dingy, full of sleeping children stretched out on the seats, and tired men who stood in the aisle to let them sleep, dropped down a member of the Spanish nobility and looked as surprised as I. Reckoning that in half an hour we should reach Palencia and he would go back to his first-class seat, I opened conversation in French:

'Are all these people going to Compostella, to the Apostle?'

'I dare say,' he answered, 'I am. I always go.'

So we talked . . . till the glare of the station broke in at the windows. . . At last I said: 'Aren't you going to your own carriage?' and he, - 'Aren't you?'

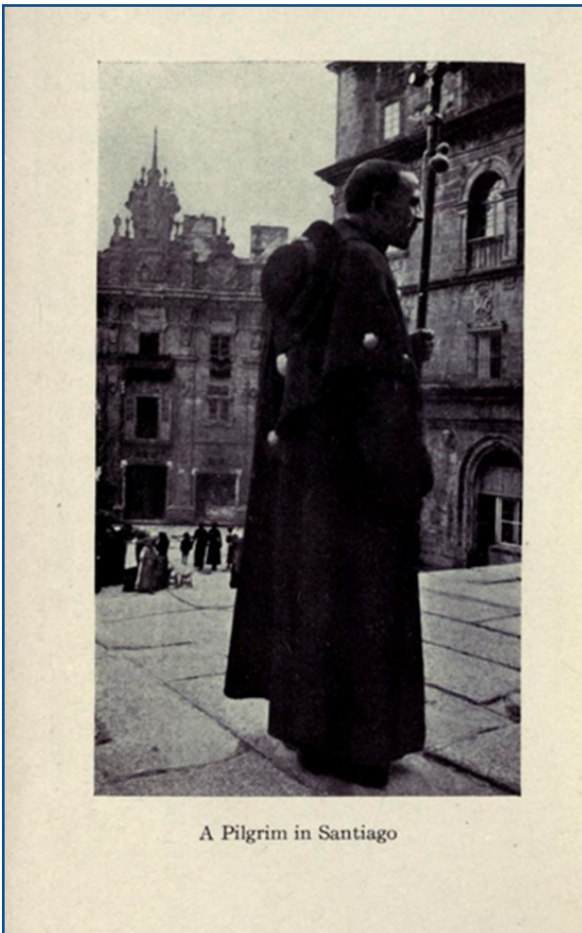
'This is mine. I am making the pilgrimage.' It was evidently unintelligible. Then the member of the Spanish nobility took off his hat and went to his own place (III: 4–5).

The implication is there: those poor and those suffering are more closely related to pilgrims than the wealthy, first class travelers. King delineates their differences: she is traveling in third class because she is a pilgrim while the Spanish nobleman does not believe such a sacrifice is required. This sentiment is similar to one expressed by Pardo Bazán ('A Roma') in an article written about her pilgrimage to Rome to celebrate Pope Leo XIII's 50th anniversary of ordination in 1887:

This primitive soul moved me, I must confess. She is right: blessed are the poor in spirit . . . We want to make a pilgrimage as one makes a summer trip to the seashore [but] we must resolve to unite, as is right, in body and in spirit to this demonstration of Catholic faith; we must act like heroes, and hear these compassionate words that prophesy the sufferings that await us! . . . and it almost irritates me to think that in our trip the train will be divided, as always, in

9. *Esta alma primitiva me conmovió, he de confesarlo. Ella tiene razón: bienaventurados los pobres de espíritu. . . . queremos hacer una romería como se hace un viaje de veraneo a baños de mar; hasta el extremo de que los que nos resolvemos a unirnos, como es justo, en cuerpo y espíritu a esta manifestación católica, pasamos por unos héroes, y oímos palabras compasivas vaticinando los sufrimientos que nos aguardan . . . y casi me irrita pensar que en el próximo viaje se dividirá el tren, como siempre, en coches de primera, segunda y tercera, pues desearía que fuésemos iguales todos, como hermanos.*

It should be noted that Pardo Bazán did not give up her first class accommodations in spite of her resolve.

Fig. 10: 'A Pilgrim in Santiago'.

A Pilgrim in Santiago

G. King. *The Way of St. James*, II: 483.

first, second, and third-class cars, rather I would desire that we were all equal, like brothers.^[9]

The class distinction expresses itself in modes of travel with the poor seen as more devout for their suffering, and the wealthy appreciative but unwilling to participate at such a level.

King follows the travails of a group of Boy Scouts who have arrived in pilgrimage to Compostela, who had planned to have a troop review and then march to the cathedral for a special mass, but a downpour caused that:

. . . everyone who could, took refuge in the Cathedral and swelled the congregation for the great Mass of the Vigil . . . They stood close, cheek by jowl: motor-folk and labourers, mendicants and parsons on a holiday,

10. Although King does not mention the year, she does say that the rainstorm happened on a Saturday, which was the vigil of the saint's day; this suggests that this event happened in either the 1909 or 1915 Holy Year.

Fig. 11: 'A Pilgrim in Santiago'.

Photo by Robert Dunn, 2011.

professional pilgrims and substantial farmers. The beggars, tricked out in calico capes sewn over with scallop shells, and staffs on which the gourd is reduced to a symbolic knob, or in coats like Joseph's for patches, are as consciously unreal as the Roman soldiers in a play, embarrassed at showing their knees (III: 23).^[10]

This jumble of social classes suggests a multifaceted motivation for visiting Santiago. Interestingly, she mentions two separate sorts of pilgrims - professional (the assumption is they are wearing the full medieval style cape with shells and medallions, upturned hat, staff with gourd) and beggars who are 'tricked out' and 'consciously unreal'. Even this evidence of fake pilgrims who use the pilgrimage to beg recalls the historical Camino when royal decrees against vagabonds and fake pilgrims were promulgated. King details an interchange with a (presumably) professional pilgrim:

One pilgrim I found, with an ecstatic face, who looked a little like S. Francis. His head was the

same shape, and his brown frock helped the illusion. For a long time I watched him praying, and when he got up and went out I ran after and asked leave to photograph, readily yielded: then he asked an alms. Why not? Give and take is fair (III: 23) (Figure 10).

Nearly 100 years later, one may still see a pilgrim much like this one wandering the streets of Compostela (Figure 11).

Of all these authors, King offers the least romanticized medieval commentary about the religious status of the pilgrimage and Saint James:

Through all these days I saw gravity, but on the whole little devotion, except sometimes in the case of women: young women, who are afraid of life and take precautions: or elder ones who have suffered in life and look for anodyne. At the shrine you see men kneeling a little awe-struck, at the gold, or at the age? You find a group of women saying litanies. But S. James means nothing to them, he is only the means of making magic. You say a rosary or a litany because, presumably, Something wants it; or you get indulgences or you help some souls in purgatory, for these is something you want. Give and take is fair (III: 23–24).

Her observations about the crowds during services using the *Botafumeiro* could apply to today's services:

Botafumeiro, it must be admitted, divides the interest with S. James in the public programme and the visiting crowd: indeed, in the competition Botafumeiro usually led (III: 26).

Also,

As the Mass wore on, good old ladies settled down on their knees to say prayers, and I saw three well-dressed girls kneeling for the Office, but the crowd came and went, laughed and talked, and fanned . . . The crowd which had come for Botafumeiro and was fairly stable till after this performance, then broke up and walked and rustled (III, 31).

This could be the description of the crowds within the Cathedral during recent years, when the transept and naves are packed - at least at services when the *Botafumeiro* is to be used - with official pilgrims who had walked the last 100 kilometers and attained their *Compostelas* alongside pilgrims who had walked the same route but collected a Certificate of Pilgrimage; with intentional tourists for whom the Cathedral was the goal, and with casual tourists for whom Compostela was just one stop on a tour.

Were there still pilgrims at the turn of the nineteenth century? Indeed there were - penitential, devout, touristic and false, beggars and aristocrats, scholars and peasants - a microcosm of the world around them, just as the pilgrims who visit Compostela are today. Emilia Pardo Bazán, Katharine Lee Bates, Annette Meakin, Catherine Gasquoin Hartley, and Georgiana Goddard King imagined them as medieval recreations, saw them for who they were, romanticized their motives, and criticized their lack of solemnity. Their descriptions bring them to life, reminding us that the pilgrimage to Compostela has always been more than just statistics in the record book, and that today's pilgrims may not be so different after all.

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