



2019

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### Recommended Citation

Mróz, Franciszek; Mróz, Łukasz; and Krogmann, Alfred (2019) "Factors Conditioning the Creation and Development of a Network of Camino de Santiago Routes in Visegrád Group Countries," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*: Vol. 7: Iss. 5, Article 8.

Available at: <https://arrow.dit.ie/ijrtp/vol7/iss5/8>



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# Factors Conditioning the Creation and Development of a Network of *Camino de Santiago* Routes in Visegrád Group Countries

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The aim of the research was to explore the factors conditioning the origin and development of selected sections of the Way of St. James within the territory of Visegrad Group countries.<sup>[1]</sup> The cognitive aim of the research was to determine the correctness of the spatial route of the Way of St. James, as well as to present the phenomenon of dynamic development of Routes of St. James in the said countries.

The creation of the first sections of the Way of St. James in V4 countries was influenced by a number of geographical, historical, religious, economic, political, and socio-cultural factors. In the majority of marked routes of St. James in the studied area, the key factor was the entrepreneurial attitude of people who had completed pilgrimages along the *Camino de Santiago* to Santiago de Compostela or who had come in contact with pilgrims themselves. It was only on further stages of development of the Way of St. James in individual regions that *Camino* projects were backed by regional authorities together with church authorities. The research shows that in the study area, the most intensive development of the Way of St. James and initiatives connected with *Camino de Santiago* can be seen in Poland.

**Key Words:** Way of St. James; pilgrimage; religious tourism; sacral space, Visegrad Group.

## Introduction

The last two decades in Europe have seen a renaissance of travel along the Medieval pilgrimage routes: Jerusalem Way, Way of St. James, *Via Francigena*, Way of St. Olav, the Saint Martin Route (Duda, 2016; Lois, Castro & Lopez, 2015; Maak, 2010; Santos & Lopez 2015; Onorato, Rizzi, 2017). Travelling along themed trails which function as cultural and religious routes has become a leading form of cultural tourism, including religious tourism (Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Rohrscheidt, 2010; Konwecka & Krupa, 2008; Mróz, 2014; Mróz & Mróz, 2010). This process is visible not only in the countries of Western Europe (Spain, France, Germany, Portugal), but also in Central Europe, too. The most popular route has been the Way of St. James – known as the ‘most beautiful way in the world’ or the ‘main street of Europe’ – which leads to

the tomb of St. James in Santiago de Compostela (Jackowski & Sołjan, 2008). In 1987, the Council of Europe recognised the route as the first European Cultural Route, and later on, in 1993 and 2015 in Spain and in 1998 in France, it was entered into the UNESCO list of cultural and natural heritage sites (Gusmán, Lopez, González & Santos, 2017; Gonzáles, 2018).

The impressive development of *Camino de Santiago* and the growing popularity of journeys taken on this path started a process called ‘caminonization’ by Peter Margry:

*the worldwide growth of sacred or spiritual footpaths is primarily stimulated by the success and appropriation of the ‘Camino’ concept. This process . . . encompasses a proliferation of spiritual path which stimulates people all over the world to depart on foot for a spiritual journey or a reflective quest on the meaning of life (Margry, 2015:186).*

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1) The Visegrad Group or “V4” is an alliance of four eastern and central European states: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia

In 2003, the Western European network of *Camino de Santiago* developed as far as the Germany - Poland border in Görlitz/Zgorzelec, becoming a stimulus to mark the route in Poland, and later on in Slovakia (2012) and Ukraine (2015) (Mróz & Bordun, 2016). In 2008, the works began which were aimed at marking the first Czech section of the Way of St. James, followed by Hungary in 2009.

The aim of this research was to explore the factors conditioning the origin and development of selected sections of the Way of St. James in the area of V4 countries, and to determine the correctness of the spatial route of the Route of St. James in these countries. The area under research encompassed individual sections of the Way in Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, and Hungary which were marked at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This paper is the result of field research carried out on selected sections of *Camino de Santiago* between 2006 and 2018. The research (conducted on foot and based on first-hand observations) covered a distance of over 2,900 km of the Way of St. James in V4 countries. During field research, expert interviews with coordinators of individual sections of the Route of St. James were conducted, observations were made and photographic documentation was prepared. In the case of Polish and Slovak sections of the Way of St. James, direct interviews were conducted with all coordinators of Routes of St. James. Consultations with coordinators of routes in Czechia and Hungary were conducted via e-mail and social media communication. For the definition of quantitative properties, mainly the isorhythmic method – isodistant (equidistant) was applied, and a symbol mapping methodology was used for qualitative data.

### **Conditions of the creation and development of the Way of St. James in Czechia, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary**

The creation of first sections of the Way of St. James in Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary was influenced by a number of geographical, historical, religious, economic, political, and socio-cultural factors (Fig. 1). A large number of these factors determined the origin of Routes of St. James in each of the selected countries. There are, however, some factors which have influenced the creation of some sections of the Way of St. James in one of these countries without having an effect on others. Thus, let us first try and present these factors which have had a significant influence on the creation and development

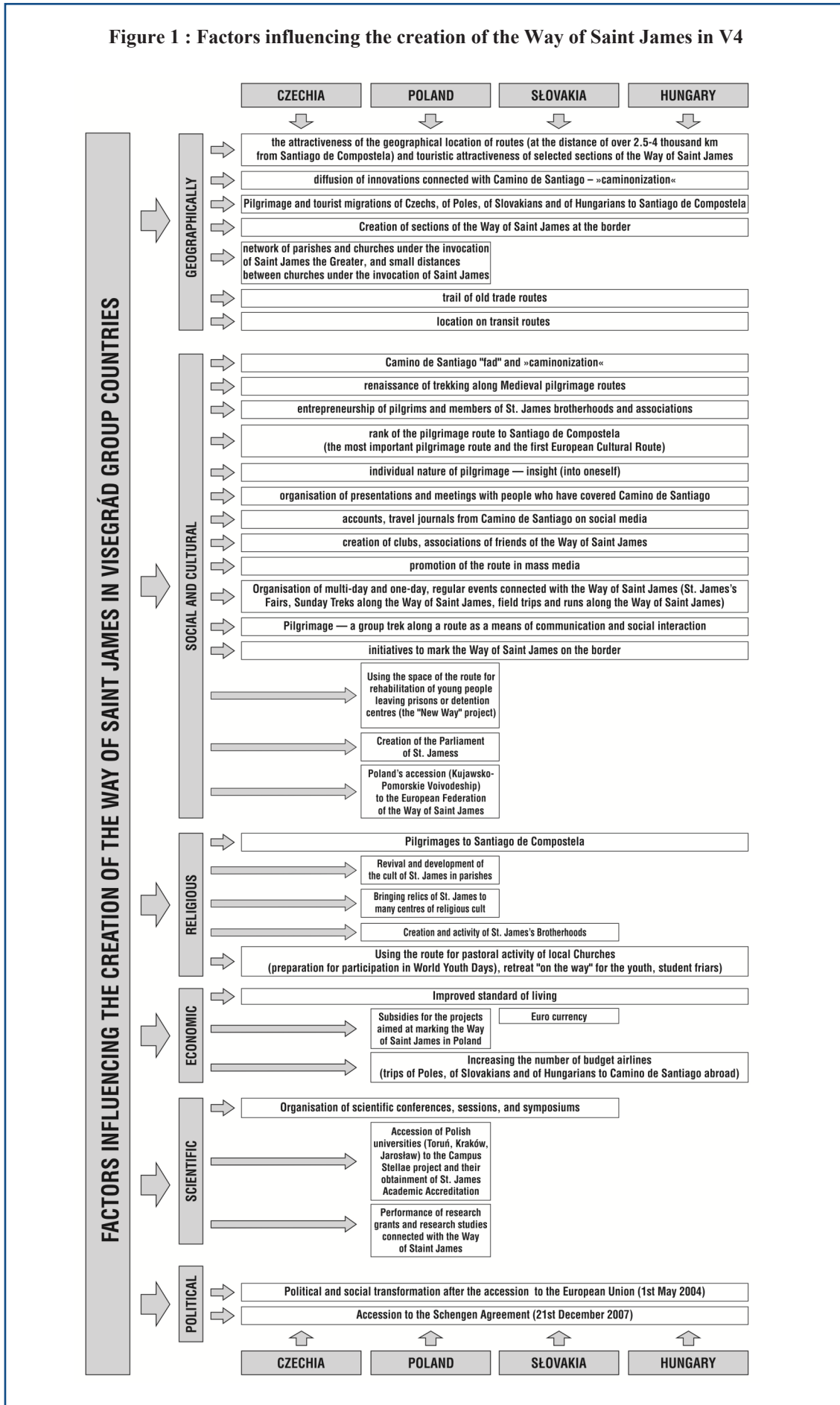
of *Camino de Santiago* in each of the discussed countries.

The development of new sections of the Way of St. James in spatial systems is greatly influenced by the rank of the trail, the individual character of pilgrimages, and promotion of the way. *Camino de Santiago* is currently the best recognised pilgrimage and cultural trail in the world, attracting participants from over 140 countries each year. One significant factor in understanding the *Camino de Santiago* and its travel experience is the importance of meeting with oneself – the travel ‘into oneself’ (Jaworska, 2015; Roszak, 2015). Thousands of people returning from *Camino de Santiago* leave memories on social networks or on pages of diaries, and stress that the *Camino* teaches humility and patience and that you return from the route as a better person and ‘on *Camino*, the old person dies, and a new one is born’ (Oleksowicz 2018). Sections of the Way of St. James in Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary are also a space for meetings, contemplation, prayer, and retreat for youth groups, scouts, and university students (Mróz, 2016; Lopez, González, Fernández, 2017).

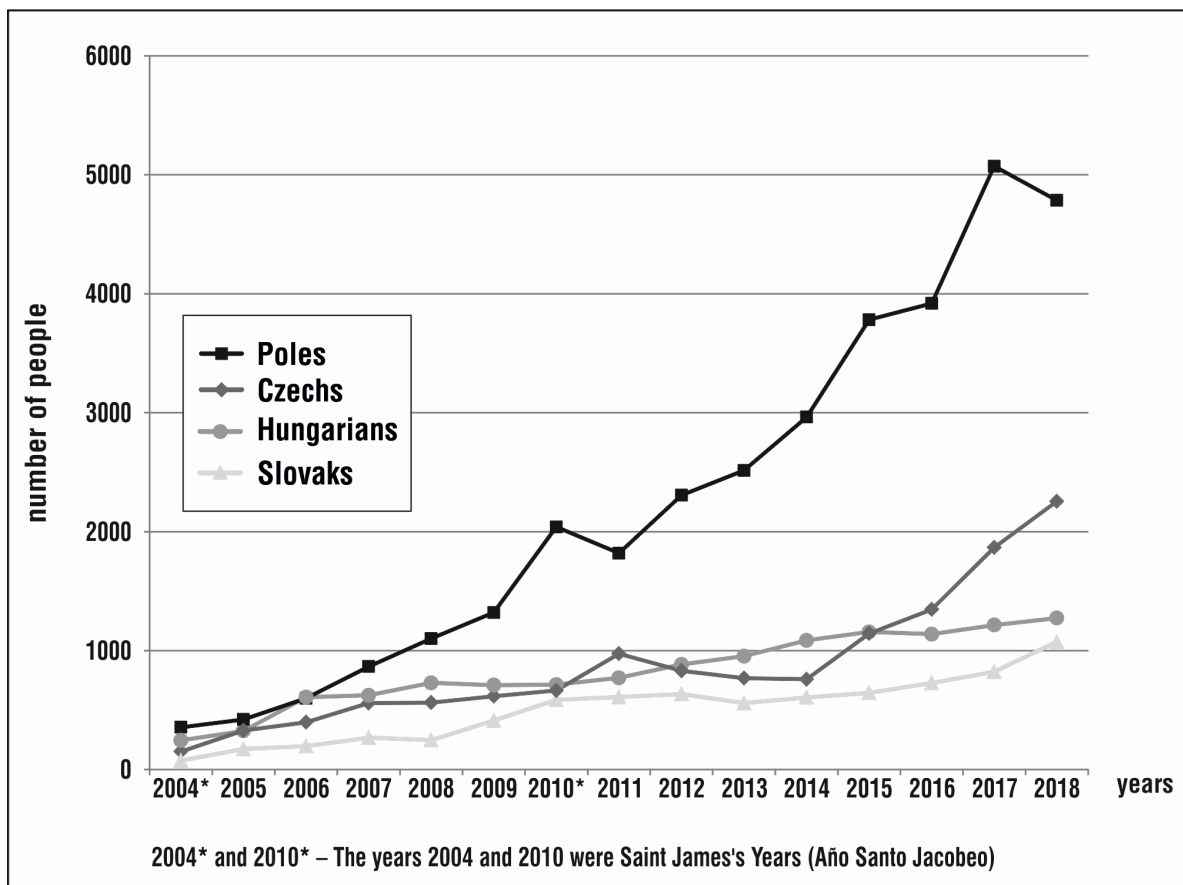
The development of *Camino de Santiago* on the Iberian Peninsula and the growing popularity of treks along the Way of St. James gradually began to stimulate residents of other European countries and countries outside Europe to set out on the ‘most beautiful way in the world’ and to organise St. James projects in local spatial systems.

It is worth noting at the beginning, that the proposal to design and mark the first sections of the Way of St. James in Visegrad Group countries was put forward by people who had completed the *Camino* pilgrimage, i.e. those who had visited the tomb of St. James in Santiago de Compostela at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century or those who had come in contact with *Camino* pilgrims. From 2004 to 2018, the number of people from Poland, Czechia, Hungary and Slovakia who received the so-called *Compostela* (a document certifying the pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James – i.e. travelling on foot the last 100 km of *Camino de Santiago* or riding 100 km on horseback, or 200 km on a bicycle) in Santiago de Compostela has increased considerably (Fig. 2) (Krogmann, Šolcová, Mróz & Mróz, 2013; Ziółkowska-Weiss, Mróz & Mróz, 2014). It is worth noting that in recent years at least a few people from these countries have been setting out on the journey to the tomb of St. James from their own door-steps, thus covering from 2.2 thousand to over 4.0 thousand km.

Figure 1 : Factors influencing the creation of the Way of Saint James in V4



**Figure 2 : Pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela among the Czechs, Poles, Slovaks, and Hungarians from 2004-2018**



Source: own study based on data made available by the Pilgrimage Agency of the Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela (<https://oficinadelperegrino.com/estadisticas/> retrieved on 6/05/2019]

The largest factor determining the origin of the first Routes of St. James in this part of Europe was the bottom-up initiative and social entrepreneurship of tens of pilgrims. Over time, informal groups of people began designing and marking sections of the Route of St. James to facilitate *Camino* pilgrims. These fans of *Camino de Santiago* in each region began to formalise their activity by establishing Brotherhoods of St. James, clubs and associations of friends of the Way of Saint James which were religious, religious and secular, or only secular nature. It was only during further stages of development of the Way of St. James in individual regions that *Camino* projects were gradually backed by local governments, church authorities, tourism associations and organisations, as well as residents of the regions located along the route of the Way of St. James. Actions taken by *Camino* pilgrims have been enhanced by numerous publications, guides, websites, blogs, and accounts posted on social media. Interviews in mass media, books, films as well as presentations and accounts from trips along *Camino de Santiago* have become very

good means of promotion of the Way of St. James (Tanco, 2011; González, Lopez & Santos Solla, 2015).

Among the key elements which determined the creation of the first sections of the Way of St. James in V4 countries was also the development of the Way of St. James up to the border of a given country:

- the marking of *Ökumenische Pilgerweg* at the German - Polish border in Görlitz/Zgorzelec was an impulse which led to the creation of the Lower Silesian Way of St. James, the *Via Regia* Way of St. James and the Lubuskie Way of St. James.
- In the case of Slovakia, the Beskidy Way of St. James and the Spiš Way of St. James meet at the peak of Eliášovka summit (Mróz, 2017);
- in Hungary, the Austrian section of the Way of St. James meets the Austrian-Hungarian border in Deutsch Jahrndorf/Rajka;
- in Czechia, the marking of German sections of *Camino de Santiago* up to the German-Czech



border, and Polish sections of the Route of St. James to the Polish-Czech border have influenced the development of the route..

An important criterion taken into account by people and associations designing and marking the first sections of the Way of St. James in V4 countries was reference to the route of historic roads and old trade routes which were used by Medieval merchants, royal processions, knights, scientists, officials, as well as by pilgrims. In Poland, such reference is made to the Lublin Way of St. James, Lesser Poland Way of St. James, Pomorska Way of St. James, Greater Poland and Lower Silesia Way of St. James, and *Via Regia* Way of St. James (Laddach, 2014; Mróz, 2015;

Kuchta, 2017). In all countries, the sections of the Way of St. James were marked in such a way as to link places connected with the cult of St. James (mostly centres with churches or shrines under the invocation of St. James), as well as traces of olden pilgrimages.

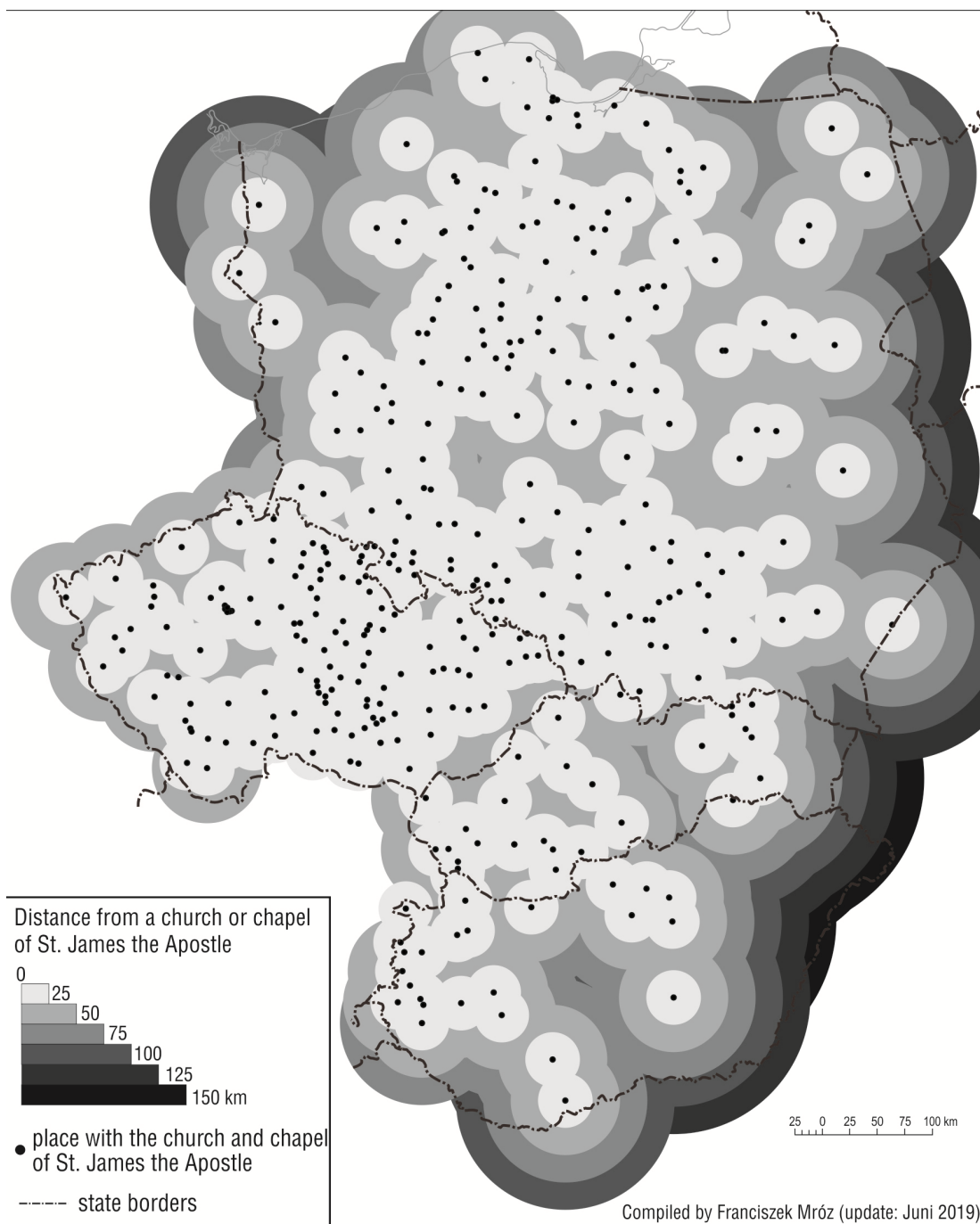
The location of parish, rector and filial churches under the invocation of St. James the Greater Apostle was one of the key factors taken into account while designing new sections of the Way of St. James in Poland. Currently, in Poland, there are over 177 churches and 6 shrines under the invocation of St. James the Greater Apostle (Mróz & Mróz, 2018). The network of Polish sections of the Way of St. James

**Figure 3 : Religious buildings dedicated to St. James the Greater located at the sections of the Way of St. James in Poland**



Compiled by Ł. Mróz and F. Mróz (2019)

**Figure 4: Isodistance from a religious building dedicated to St. James the Greater in Czechia, Poland, the Republic of Slovakia and Hungary**



Compiled by F. Mróz (update: 2019)

currently reaches 86 churches and 4 shrines under the invocation of St. James (Fig. 3). In regions with the greatest concentration of St. James parishes, i.e. in Central Lesser Poland (in Upper Vistula Valley), in Greater Poland, in Kuyavia and Ziemia Łęczycka, and in Upper Oder Valley, distances between churches under the invocation of St. James usually do not exceed 25 km, which is the approximate distance of a daily hike (Mróz, 2017; Csapó & Wetzl, 2016) (Fig. 4).

The network of churches, shrines or old hospitals under the invocation of St. James the Greater Apostle was also among criteria taken into account while designing the concept of the route of the Way of St. James in Czechia, and Slovakia. Currently, in the Republic of Slovakia, churches under the invocation of St. James the Greater can be found in 31 cities (Judák & Poláčik, 2009). The largest concentration of temples under the invocation of St. James can be seen in south-

western Slovakia. This contributes to the development of the Way of St. James in this part of the country (Fig. 4) (Krogmann, Šolcová, Nemčíková, Mróz & Ambrosio, 2016).

In Czechia, the network of temples under the invocation of St. James is very well developed (Fig. 4). Along Czech sections of the Way of St. James or in their close vicinity, St. James churches are located in the following cities, among others: Brno, Drahanovice, Frýdek-Místek, Hostouň, Hradec nad Moravicí, Kasajovice, Kladruby, Libhošť, Mikulov, Mnichovo Hradiště, Nepomuk, Nosilav, Olomouc, Prague – Old Town, Prague – Zbraslav, Příbram and Telč.

It is worth noting that the number of churches under the invocation of St. James in Hungary is the lowest (26) among the four analysed countries, and their concentration is present in the western part of the country (next to the border with Austria), in western Transdanubia. It is in this region of Hungary that the only existing (so far) two sections of the Way of St. James have been marked. In eastern and south-eastern regions of Hungary, the traces of the cult of St. James are almost absent (one church under the invocation of St. James in the southern Great Plain and one in the northern Great Plain (Fig. 4).

According to historians, the small distances between cities and towns with parish churches under the invocation of St. James confirm that the process of creation of pilgrim trails to the tomb of St. James the Apostle in Santiago de Compostela began in the Middle Ages, in selected regions of Central Europe, and temples under the invocation of St. James, located along a clear continuous line in the direction of Compostela, could play the role of station churches (Witkowska, 2002). However, it needs to be noted that contrary to Poland, the cult of St. James the Apostle in Slovakia, Czechia, and Hungary is currently very weak, with only a very small number of residents of parishes with churches under the invocation of St. James.

One significant historical factor in the designing of selected sections of the Way of St. James were archaeological discoveries of the scallop shell in the place of origin of Medieval Compostela pilgrims (Jackowski, Sołjan, 2008; Wilska, 1995). As a result of specialist malacological analyses, among discoveries made in Poland, it was possible to determine nine scallop shells: 5 specimens of *Pecten maximus* L. (in Cieszyn, Elbląg, Kołobrzeg, Poznań & Racibórz) and 3 specimens of *Pecten jacobaeus* L. (in Lublin, Ostrów

Lednicki & Wrocław), and one shell in Łowicz, which, however, cannot be clearly determined due to its deteriorated condition (Wiesiołowski, 2002; Wyrwa, 2015). The discovery of scallop shells in the above-mentioned centres is not incidental: these towns used to be conveniently connected through a network of trade routes with the countries of Western Europe, which were the starting points for pilgrimages to the tomb of St. James in Santiago de Compostela (Mróz, 2017).

The first recording about pilgrimage to Compostela from Czechia is dated 1124, and from Hungary is 1140 (Rónai, 1996; Anderle, 1997; Štěpánek, 2008). The first historical document containing information about Polish and Slovakian pilgrims arriving at the tomb of St. James in Compostela also comes from the 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century (Polaczkówna, 1937; Vielliard, 1936; Ciesielska-Borkowska, 1939; Herbers & Plötz, 1996; Wilska, 1995; Mieck, 2002; Taracha, 2012; Jackowski & Sołjan, 2015; Marszałek, 2017). In 2017, Camino pilgrims in Slovakia celebrated the 710<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first pilgrimage from Slovakia to Santiago de Compostela. The original was a penitential pilgrimage of a nobleman from Spiš in 1307 (Sedlák, 1980). The most largest groups of Medieval Compostela pilgrims from Central Europe were knights linked with royal houses, and townfolk (Wilamowski, 2015). It needs to be noted, however, that Poland was Europe's most eastern country from which pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela started (Wiesiołowski, 2002). The pilgrim starting out on a journey to the tomb of Saint James from Poland was negotiating the longest section of the way on the East-West axis. Mieck stresses that Russia, neighbouring Poland to the east, has never been a country from where pilgrimages to Compostela set off (Mieck 2002: 188).

When marking the new sections of *Camino de Santiago*, designers took into account the deployment of shrines and other pilgrim centres and centres of religious cult important for local Churches.

- Polish sections of the *Camino de Santiago* go through most of the shrines of international renown (Jasna Góra, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Cracow-Łagiewniki, Wadowice, Góra Św. Anny, Niepokalanów, Warszawa) (Mróz, 2016);
- Slovakian sections of *Camino de Santiago* go through the Marian Shrine of Mariánska hora in Levoča, the Greek Catholic shrine in Litmanowa, pilgrimage centres in Nitra, Trnava, Banská Bystrica and Hronský Beňadik;



- Czech sections of *Camino de Santiago* connect with shrines in Prague (Pražské Jezulátko shrine), in Olomouc (Svatý Kopeček) and Velehrad (shrine of St. Cyril and Methodius).
- In Hungary, religious tourism focuses on sacred places (churches and monasteries) in Budapest, Pannonhalma, Lébény and Tihany.

It is worth highlighting that all sections of the Way of St. James in V4 countries are connected with the existing networks of *Camino de Santiago* in neighbouring countries, and thus a resident of a given country has the opportunity to walk, ride on a bicycle or on a horse along the marked route of St. James all the way to Santiago de Compostela starting at their own door-step.

Another factor influencing the creation of the Way of St. James was topography and natural and cultural assets of regions through which the trails pass (Doburzyński, 2014). The landscape and natural attractiveness of studied sections of the Way of St. James is often of very high quality, which is best demonstrated by the fact that the Routes of St. James pass through the areas of biosphere reserves (in Poland: Kampinos Forest Biosphere Reserve, Słowiński Biosphere Reserve; in Czechia: Dolna Morava Biosphere Reserve, Šumava Biosphere Reserve, and Třeboňsko Biosphere Reserve ); national parks (8 parks in Poland; 2 national parks in Hungary; 1 national park in the Czech Republic; 1 national park in Slovakia). The tourist attraction of the Way of St. James in the countries of the V4, is enhanced by the objects located next to *Camino de Santiago* which are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List – these objects are: in Czech Republic – 6 objects (Český Krumlov, Prague, Telč, Olomouc, Třebíč, Brno); in Poland 8 objects (Cracow, Wieliczka, Bochnia, Warsaw, Toruń, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Wrocław and Tarnowskie Góry; in Slovakia – 5 objects (3 entries) (Levoča, Spišský Hrad, Spišska Kapitula, Zehra; Kežmarok, Banská Štiavnica) and in Hungary – 2 objects (Budapest and Pannonhalma).

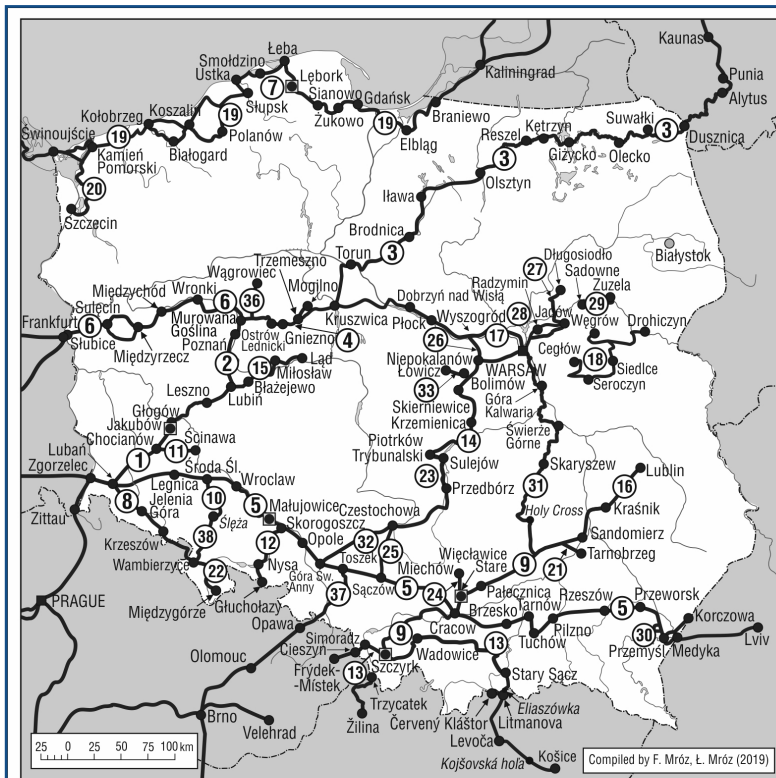
It is also worth highlighting that the designers of selected sections of the Way of St. James also took into account heraldic sources and the patronage of St. James the Greater Apostle over a town or commune. The figure of St. James (wearing a long robe, with a hat on his head, holding a pilgrim's staff in one hand and a shell in the other), attributes connected with the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela (scallop shell), the figure of a Compostela pilgrim have been included in the crests of 11 communes in Slovakia

(Bobrov, Hronské Kosihy, Smolinské, Tužina, Veľký Šariš, Dolné Vestenice, Lechnica, Záhorská Ves, Jakubov, Jakubovany and Volkovce), 7 in Hungary (Hegyhátszentjakab, Fülöpjakab, Jakabszállás, Lendvajakabfa, Nagykutas, Nézsa, Zalaszentjakab). In Poland, St. James-related elements can be found in the crests of the following cities: Jakubowa, Olsztyn, Opatowiec, Pakość, Sobótka, Morąg, Bolimów; and the following communes: Pałecznicza, Czarna, Waganiec. Thirty-five crests of Czech cities feature the scallop shell, and one crest depicts the figure of St. James himself. It is worth noting that St. James the Greater Apostle is the patron of the following Polish cities: Brzesko, Człuchów, Lębork, and Olsztyn.

An important factor in the development of pilgrimages of Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, and Hungarians along *Camino de Santiago* over the last decade can also be attributed to socio-political changes after the accession of Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary to the European Union (1<sup>st</sup> May 2004) and to the Schengen Agreement (21<sup>st</sup> December 2007). Improved living standards of residents of Central Europe, the *Camino* fad, and the growing number of budget airlines are the reasons why an ever increasing number of people have been trekking along *Camino de Santiago* in Spain. Thanks to subsidies from local governments and EU projects, it has also been possible to fund the design, marking, and promotion of the route. It is worth highlighting that in all studied countries, stakeholders undertake and complete further projects connected with the designing and marking of new sections of the Way of St. James. The research shows that sections of the Way of St. James within the territory of V4 countries can constitute a significant counter-balance to the most popular and increasingly commercialised sections of *Camino de Santiago* in Spain, promoted by dozens of tour operators globally solely as a tourist product, as more and more often, on eastern sections of the Route of St. James, one can encounter pilgrims from abroad who wish to walk their *Camino* in silence and solitude.

An important factor has also been the research concerning historical conditions determining the Way of St. James, and the cult of St. James in the studied countries. This research has resulted in scientific conferences and symposiums organised mostly in Poland (Cracow, Toruń, Opole), but also in Czechia (Olomouc) and Slovakia (Levoča, Nitra). In 2013, the Theological Department of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń opened the Way of St. James Lab, which actively participates in the promotion of the *Camino Polaco* section and organises scientific,

Figure 5 : The Way of St. James in Poland (as at 1 Juni 2019)



The Way of St. James in Poland

No	Existing sectors of the Way of St. James	length km	shell pattern	No	Existing sectors of the Way of St. James	length km	shell pattern
1	Lower Silesian Way of St. James (Głogów – Jakubów – Lubań – Zgorzelec)	164		20	Szczecin Way of St. James (Swinoujście – Szczecin)	97	
2	Greater Polish Way of St. James (Gniezno – Poznań – Głogów)	234		21	Tarnobrzeg Way of St. James (Tarnobrzeg – Sulistawice)	21	
3	Polish Way (Camino Polaco) (Ogrodniki – Olsztyn – Toruń – Trzemeszno)	651		22	Kłodzko Way of St. James (Międzygórze – Kłodzko – Radków)	69	
4	Way of St. James „Szlak Piastowski” (Mogilno – Gniezno)	47		23	Staropolska Way of St. James (Piotrków Trybunalski – Częstochowa)	155	
5	Way of St. James Via Regia (Medyka/Korcowa – Pilzno – Cracow – Góra Św. Anny – Brzeg – Zgorzelec)	957		24	Miechów Way of St. James (Miechów – Więclawice Stare – Cracow)	35	
6	Lubuska Way of St. James (Murowana Goślina – Słubice)	279		25	Jasna Góra Way of St. James (Częstochowa – Lubsza – Sączów)	56	
7	Łębork’s Way of St. James (Sianowo – Łębork – Smołdzino)	122		26	The Chopin Way of St. James (Wyszogród – Niepokalanów)	35	
8	Sudetic Way of St. James (Krzeszów – Jelenia Góra – Lubań)	105		27	Independence Road of St. James (I. Sadowne – Loretto – Jadów – Ossów) (II. Długosiodło – Wyszków – Jadów – Ossów)	168	
9	The Lesser Polish Way of St. James (Sandomierz – Cracow – Szczyrk)	317		28	Way of St. James „Miracle on the Vistula” (Radzymin – Kobyłka – Ossów – Warsaw)	40	
10	Śląska Way of St. James (Ślęza – Sobótka – Środa Śląska)	55		29	Primate’s Way of St. James (Zuzela – Prostyń – Sadowne)	52	
11	The Copper Way of St. James (Scinawa – Lubin – Chocianów)	45		30	Tuligłowy Way of St. James (Wola Rokietnica – Tuligłowy – Rokietnica)	13	
12	Nysa Way of St. James (Gluchołazy – Nysa – Skorogoszcz)	100		31	Holy Cross Way of St. James (Warsaw – Holy Cross – Kotuszów)	294	
13	Beskid Way of St. James (Eliaszówka – Stary Sącz – Podegrodzie – Myslenice – Wadowice – Szczyrk – Cieszyn)	316		32	Częstochowa Way of St. James (Częstochowa – Lubecko – Góra Św. Anny)	103	
14	Warsaw Way of St. James (Warsaw – Skierniewice – Piotrków Tryb.)	230		33	Łowicz Way of St. James (Bolimów – Łowicz – Kalisz)	236	
15	Nadwarciańska Way of St. James (Łąd – Miłostaw – Lubin)	111		34	Dobrzyńsko-Kujawska Way of St. James (Dobrzyń nad Wisłą – Kruszwica)	33,5	
16	Lublin Way of St. James (Lublin – Kraśnik – Sandomierz)	136		35	Kalisz Way of St. James (Kalisz – Milicz – Scinawa)	172	
17	Mazowsze Way of St. James (Warsaw – Plock – Dobrzyń nad Wisłą)	175		36	Wągrowiec – Dąbrówka Kościelna	39	
18	North-East Mazowsze and Podlasie Way of St. James (Drohiczyn – Przesmyki – Rozbity Kamień – Węgrów – Siedlce – Seroczyn – Cegłów)	227		37	Śląsko-Morawska Way of St. James (Toszek – Sośnicowice – Racibórz – Strahowice)	120	
19	Pomeranian Way of St. James (Via Baltica) (Braniewo – Elbląg – Gdańsk – Łębork – Słupsk – Kolobrzeg – Kamień Pom. – Swinoujście)	722		38	Sowiogóra Way of St. James (Góra Ślęza – Wambierzyce)	75	

state borders  
 Eliaszówka mountain peaks  
 shrine of St. James the Apostle

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teaching, in addition to religious and cultural events connected with the Route of St. James.

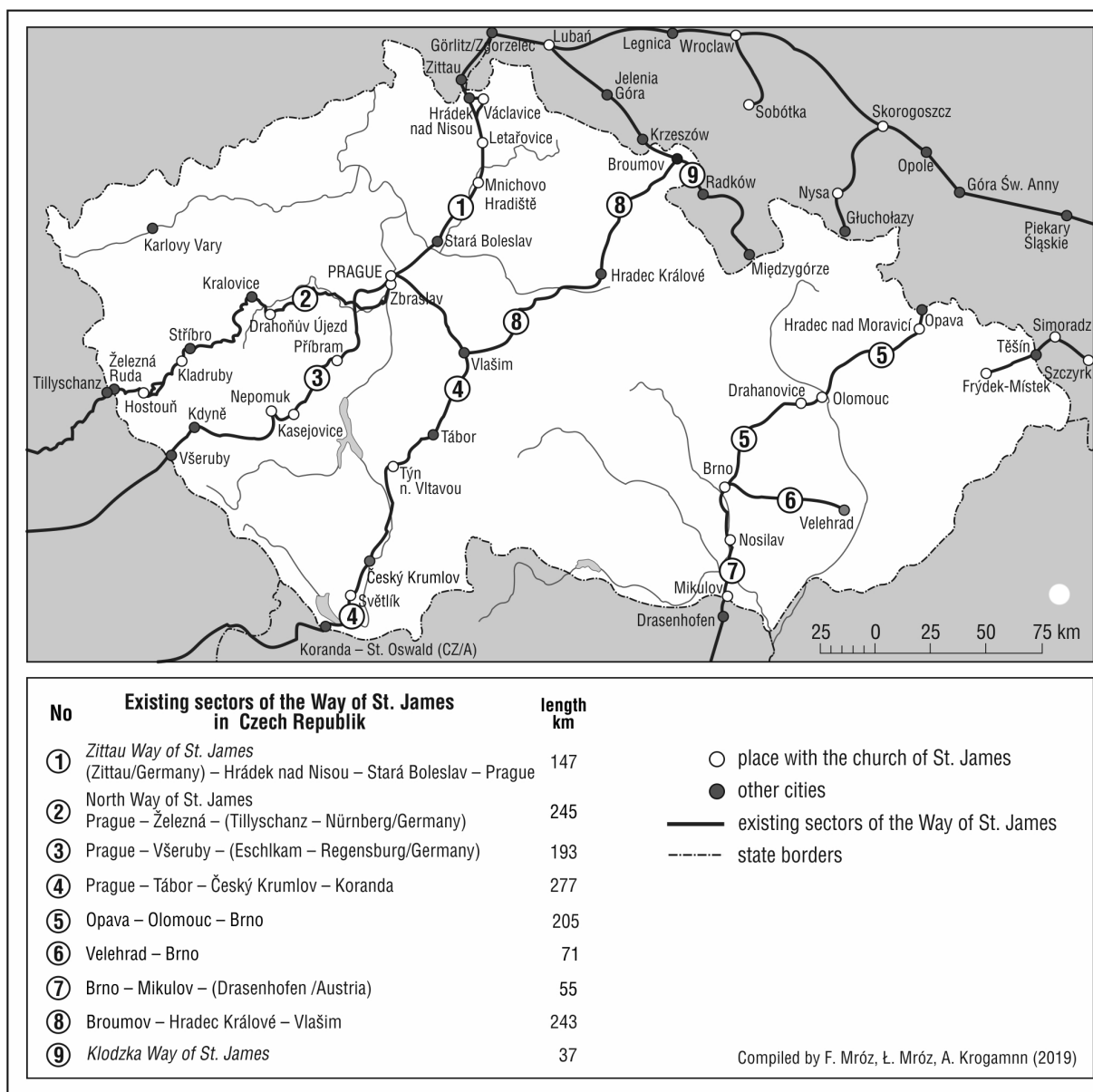
### Today's network of Camino de Santiago in V4 countries

Polish sections of the Way of St. James comprise the longest pilgrimage and cultural trail in Poland. The first Route of St. James – Lower Silesian Way of St. James – was opened on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2005. Currently (as at 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2019), there are 38 marked Polish sections of the Way of St. James, which together create a 6,891 km long *Camino de Santiago* network. This network is connected with the European network of trails leading to the tomb of St. James in Santiago de Compostela.

The Way of St. James in Poland is connected with sections of *Camino de Santiago*: in Russia – Kaliningrad Oblast (Pomorskie Way of St. James); in Lithuania, Ukraine, Slovakia, Czechia, and Germany (Fig. 5).

An important contribution to the creation and development of many initiatives connected with pilgrimages along Polish sections of *Camino de Santiago*, and consequently to the creation of the Route of St. James in Poland, should be attributed to social entrepreneurship, i.e. actions taken by the members of Brotherhoods of St. James, clubs and associations of friends of the Way of Saint James, and other religious and secular or only secular associations. Currently,

Figure 6 : The Way of St. James in Czech Republic



Compiled by F. Mróz, Ł. Mróz and A. Krogmann (2019)



over 800 people in Poland are members of such religious and social associations and non-governmental organisations. The coordination in the scope of the functioning and development of Polish sections of the Way of St. James is supported by the Parliament of St. James. It consists of Brotherhoods of St. James, clubs of friends of *Camino de Santiago*, non-governmental organisations, scientific and research institutions, and informal groups.

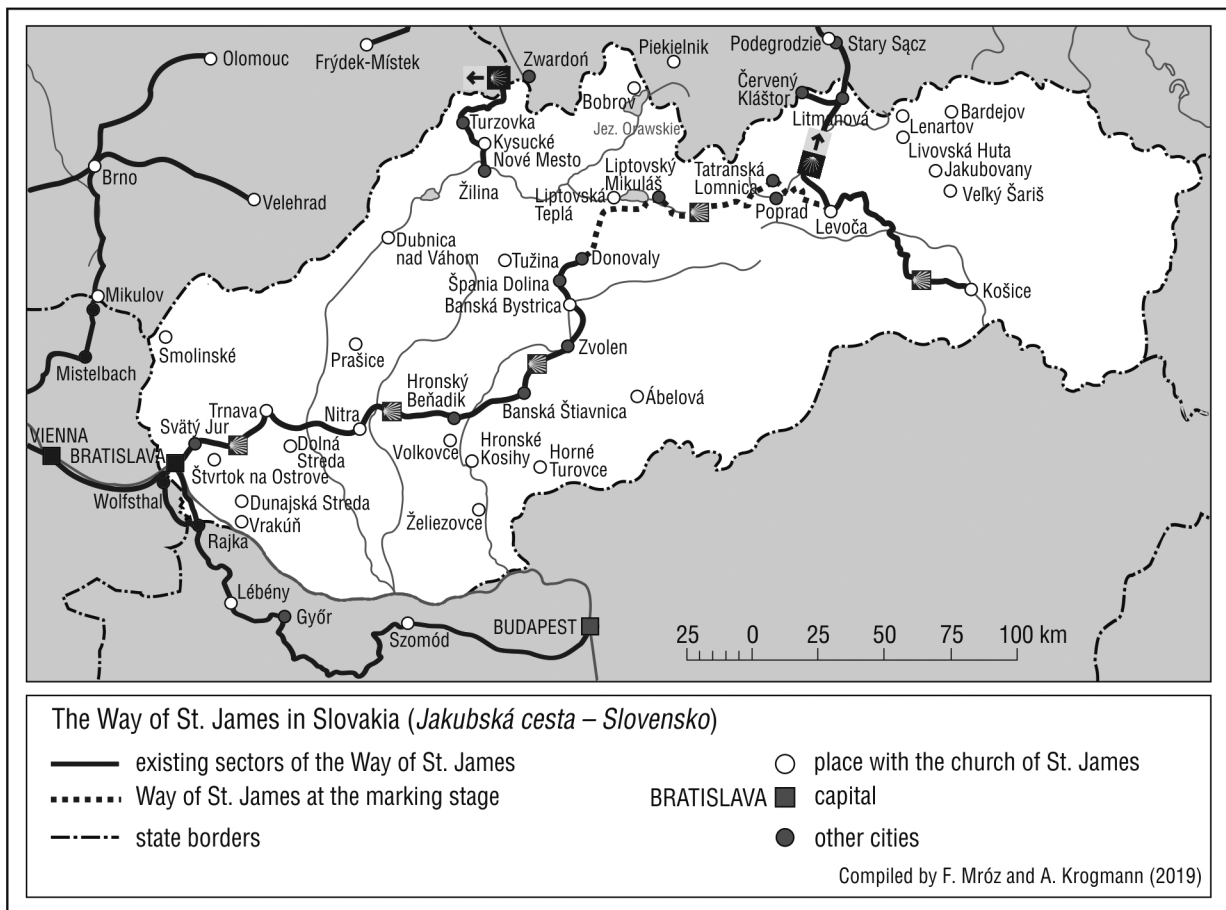
**The Ways of St. James in the Czech Republic**

Ways of St. James in the territory of Czechia have been created thanks to the commitment and work of members of the Association of Friends of Ways of St. James ‘Ultreia’ (Občanské sdružení *ULTREIA*). This organisation was established in 2008 and operates on a voluntary work basis. Thanks to the activity of the members of the ‘Ultreia’ Association, it has been possible to design seven Routes of St. James, with a total length of c.1450 km (Fig. 6). Cesta hvězdy (Way of the Star) is another organisation supporting pilgrimage.

**The Way of St. James in Slovakia**

The tradition of pilgrimage in Slovakia has been documented since 1307. On its foundations, routes of St. James are being labelled. The expansion of the network of roads is handled by the civic association Friends of the Routes of St. James in Slovakia – Camino de Santiago. This organisation is a member of the Association of Pilgrimage Tourists and it has the support of the Conference of Bishops of Slovakia in the construction of pilgrimage routes. Therefore, we will pay attention to their activities. Their goal is to create a major axis that will connect East and West Slovakia with connections to Austria. The existence of attractive points of interest and the available infrastructure were the basis for creating the route. The network runs largely on a network of existing hiking trails, and based on agreement with the Club of Slovak Tourists, the logo of the Routes of St. James is placed on the tourist signposts that the club is responsible for. Part of this route, which is based on Košice and ends in Levoča, was marked in 2016 (Fig. 7). It will be followed by a route that will target Donovaly. This

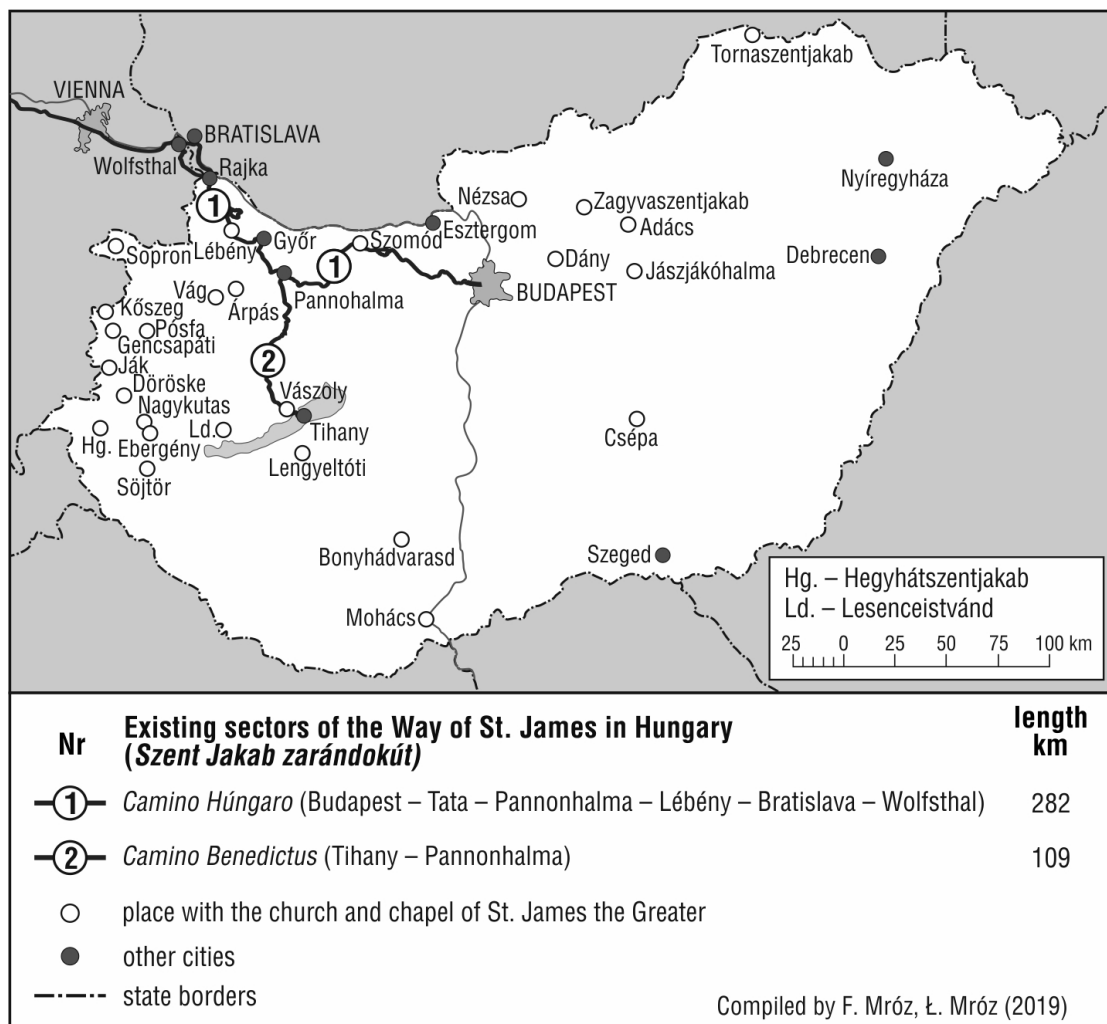
**Figure 7 : The Way of St. James in Slovakia (as of 1 June 2019)**



Compiled by F. Mróz and A. Krogmann (2019)



Figure 8 : The Way of St. James in Hungary (as at 1 Juni 2019)



Compiled by F. Mróz, Ł. Mróz (2019)

section will be marked in 2020. Donovaly is the starting point of another part that leads to Hronský Beňadik. This section was marked in 2017. From Hronský Beňadik, the route leads to Nitra, where the marking ends. Marking should be done on the Nitra – Trnava route. From this point the Camino continues to Bratislava.

Bratislava has become a crossroads of the Routes of St. James (Slovak and Hungarian). From this point it is possible to connect to the Austrian network of Routes of St. James. The connection of Bratislava with Austrian Berg was marked in 2018. In total, over 350 km of Camino de Santiago are marked in Slovakia.

The Association of Friends of St. James and the Routes of St. James is also striving to build its own network of Routes of St. James with different labelling.

### *The Way of St. James in Hungary*

The Way of St. James in Hungary is designed and marked by a group called *Szent Jakab Baráti Kör* (the Hungarian Confraternity of St. James). The first concept to create the Way of St. James from Budapest to Lébény (with a Romanesque church under an invocation of St. James from the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century) came into being in 2009. The Hungarian network of *Camino de Santiago* includes two routes, which connect with *Jakobsweg* in Burgenland – an Austrian Province: *Camino Húngaro* and *Camino Benedictus* – a total of 391 km (Fig. 8).

## Model of the origin and development of sections of *Camino de Santiago* in Central Europe

This research allows for formulating a number of conclusions and designing a model of the origin and development of sections of *Camino de Santiago* shared by the countries in Central Europe (Mróz, 2017). In developing this model, reference was made to the Tourist Area Lifecycle devised by R.W. Butler, which is commonly applied in tourism and geographic literature (Butler, 1980). In his model, Butler describes changes occurring in the evolution of a tourist region through six stages, each demonstrating different dynamics: the stages of exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and decline or rejuvenation. The short period of functioning of the network of the Way of St. James in V4 countries (12 years in the case of Poland) does not allow for an identification of all stages of Butler's cycle; therefore, the proposal for the model and development of *Camino de Santiago* has been modified (Mróz, 2017).

The first stage of 'contact' should be considered in the context of learning about the issues connected with the Way of St. James and the figure of St. James by local community, representatives of local governmental authorities, local entrepreneurs, and priests in the region in which the trail is to be created. This stage is the first contact in the geographical space with a section of the Route of St. James being designed (Roszak, 2017). The key role in this process should be attributed to the group of fans of the Way of St. James, particularly those who have completed the *Camino* journey to Compostela.

The stage of 'exploration' – designing and marking a route – comprises the search for traces of the cult of St. James in a given area (sacred sites under the invocation of St. James, archaeological discoveries of the scallop shell, references to St. James in heraldry), discovering the course of old trade routes and other issues connected with the pilgrimage trail to Santiago de Compostela. This is the basis for designing and marking sections of the Way of St. James in a given region, followed by their official opening.

In the 'involvement' stage, concerns the network of the Way of St. James in a given region visibly growing and so does the number of pilgrims / tourists on the trail. New projects come to life, aimed at popularising pilgrimage along the Way and the development of the cult of St. James in spatial units. New elements of

tourism infrastructure emerge – mainly, the information base, spots at which one can obtain a St. James stamp, and find accommodation and food.

The 'development' stage assumes further development of a route: expansion of the tourism base (new accommodation centres for *Camino* pilgrims, shelters and sheds along the route), promotion of the route, development of the cult of St. James in sacral sites on the route, and growing tourist traffic on the route. Initiatives connected with the Way of St. James receive more and more support from fans of the Way of St. James, as well as from local communities.

The stagnation stage means a clear drop in tourist traffic on the route and a gradual decrease in the rank of the route in a given region. It is caused by a lack of further interest in the route among people who contributed to its creation. The lack of support from local residents and businesses, local government authorities and fans of the Way of St. James as well as lack of development of the tourism facilities on the route results in the route being gradually forgotten.

The sixth stage may take the form of either decline or rejuvenation of the route, depending on whether actions aimed at supporting the functioning and promotion of the route are taken again (Mróz, 2017).

## Conclusions

The designing and marking of sections of the Way of St. James in V4 countries originated from the social entrepreneurship of people who had had direct contact with *Camino de Santiago* (those who had travelled to Santiago de Compostela) or who had come in contact with *Camino* pilgrims. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, all countries of the V4 saw a significant increase in the number of people travelling to Compostela and receiving the *Compostela* document. The attitude of such pilgrims, fascinated by the unique nature of *Camino de Santiago*, translates into the creation of various *Camino* initiatives in local, regional communities.

The most prominent reception of the cult of St. James and initiatives connected with the Way of St. James has been in Poland, with 36 sections forming over 6611 km of *Camino de Santiago* marked trail; and in Czechia, with 1450 km of the Route of St. James divided into 9 sections. The network of the Way of St. James in Slovakia and Hungary is much more modest.

The creation of sections of the Way of St. James in Czechia and Poland has been influenced by historical conditions – reference to the trail of Medieval trade routes, network of churches under the invocation of St. James, archaeological discoveries of the scallop shell. An analysis of the deployment of parishes and churches under the invocation of St. James as well as of the traces of St. James in heraldry suggests that the cult of St. James spread from Santiago de Compostela to the north eastern countries of Central and Eastern Europe; its reception, however, stopped in central Poland, central Slovakia, and central Hungary. It is worth highlighting that the cult of St. James to the east of the Danube and Vistula Rivers, and to the east from the bend of the Carpathians is almost non-existent, which is a serious obstacle in carrying out *Camino de Santiago* projects there.

The creation and development of the Way of St. James in V4 countries is a reaction to an all-European trend of travelling along the *Camino de Santiago* trail. The marking of trans-border sections of the trail in the studied countries has been possible thanks to socio-political changes after the accession of Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary to the European Union and to the Schengen Agreement.

The further development of the Way of St. James in V4 countries requires an entrepreneurial attitude and innovativeness of people / associations coordinating the functioning of the route in individual regions. In order for the Route of St. James in each region to be an authentic and live one, it must be present and well-known among local communities and must be properly promoted and popularised. A friendly attitude of local governmental and church authorities (on the diocesan and parish level), care of priests in the facilities along the route, involvement of young people in the ideas of Camino and the search for and implementation of new ideas, solutions and projects are also necessary. For the Route of St. James in a given region to be genuine and alive, it must be present and known in the local community as well as appropriately promoted and popularised. The organisation of cyclical meetings with St. James pilgrims, initiation of one-day excursions along the route, establishment of local associations of Friends of Camino de Santiago, promotion of sections of the Way of St. James with the use of mass media and social media, promotion at tourism and religious fairs, and regular cooperation of route coordinators with journalists from local, regional and national newspapers are all necessary (Tanco, 2011).

The main problems connected with the functioning and further development of individual sections of *Camino de Santiago* in the studied countries include: lack of appropriate tourism facilities on the route (apart from the information base), lack of continuity in the marking of the route, and little or no knowledge among residents of areas around the route connected with the figure of St. James the Greater Apostle, and about the tradition of pilgrimages to Compostela and *Camino de Santiago*.

### Acknowledgment

This paper has been produced under the scientific project VEGA 1/0040/18 Medieval Historical Roads in Southwestern Slovakia in the Context of the Central European Transport Network.

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