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Saint James the Greater and Saint Michael Archangel: Historical, Anthropological and Artistic Features in their Routes

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ABSTRACT

The project wants to explicate in a generic way the importance of the two sacred and charismatic medieval characters such as the figure of Saint James of the Greater from Santiago de Compostela from Spain and Saint Michael Archangel from Monte Sant'Angelo in South of Italy, through their main icons, their devotions, their anthropological approaches and their pilgrimages that have called so much people in their own cities.

Santiago de Compostela and Monte Sant'Angelo were two of the most important places in the Middle Age. The representation of the saints and their actions are described in ancient literary texts and it explains not only the origin of their cults, but also the following development of the pilgrimages both through the main routes and through the alternative routes known as “tratturi” or sheep tracks.

There are some aspects that are expressed better than others and icons can be defined as a functional artistic way to communicate to the entire people in the past.

So, what are the main icons of Saint James and Saint Michael? And what are their routes? These are some common questions that can be answered by historical and artistic studies, but also anthropological and literature fields can be considered relevant at the same.

This project is currently a work in progress for the PhD thesis.

Keywords: Routes; Sheep Tracks; Saint James; Saint Michael

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Introduction

The world of pilgrimages was undoubtedly significant in the medieval era and it deeply marked the historical and cultural context of our modern society. The ancient holy routes have been precious witnesses of a large number of pilgrims who began their journey with deep devotion to reach the sacred destination. However, other forms of pilgrimage did exist: for example, the penitential pilgrimage was imposed to men guilty of serious sins as a civil or clerical penalty. Nevertheless, the devotional feeling seemed to be the strongest and the most shared one among the pilgrims, so many believers started their journey in order to reach the shrines in spite of the many difficulties which the itinerary involved (Caucci Von Saucken, 2003)

During the Middle Ages, the discoveries of the tomb of Saint James the Greater in Galicia, the Sacred Cave of Saint Michael in Puglia and of the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul in Rome, in conjunction with those of the Holy Sepulchre and of the other sacred places of the Holy Land gave life to the most important pilgrimage routes. These religious centres have so attracted many devotees from both Western and Eastern countries since the very beginning of Christianity. The pilgrimages reflected the redeeming trinomial *Homo-Angelus-Deus* (D'ariento, 1994). The term *Homo* referred to the Apostles Peter and Paul in Rome, but also it alluded to Saint James in Santiago de Compostela; the term *Angelus* was attributed to Saint Michael in Gargano, while *Deus* concerned Christ and the sacred places connected with His life (SENSI, 2003). Pilgrims, crusaders and merchants have crossed the sacred paths of every country, contributing in this way to the foundation of the most known itineraries; later on, this process would have led to the creation of a real road system. The ways of that age were made up thanks to the pre-Roman and Roman road system, but new routes also arose which favored the origins of the paths. The medieval idea of roads was different from the Roman one because it gave more importance to space than time: the concept of speed was often related to war reasons. Later on, this idea changed in favor of Christian slowness and sacrifice expressed during the journey as a penitential act (Dalena, 2003). With an extreme religious feeling, men ventured into long, difficult and unknown itineraries that put them severely to test; as a consequence, devotion was certainly among the first causes that pushed men to make a pilgrimage. The sacred itinerary represented the symbolic metaphor of life path with its many difficulties: the more obstacles you met, the more you deserved the eternal life.

Jerusalem and Rome have always been the most attractive places for the devotees; then other religious centers emerged such as Santiago de Compostela and Monte Sant'Angelo. The Spanish town has Saint James the Greater as its patron and it preserves the saint's relics. Saint James had a strong charisma with people, since he was one of closest Apostle to Christ together with Saint Peter and Saint John (Caucci Von Saucken, 1984). From the 9th century, with the discovery of Saint James's tomb, the first pilgrimages began initially around the place itself; then, they involved all the Iberian territory up to the final international expansion. The famous *Camino Francés* or *Camino de Santiago* was constituted after some centuries as a consequence of that expansion and it soon became an authentic "natural linkage" which, both symbolically and materially, connected the Northern Christian kingdoms and the southern countries

occupied by Muslims (Caucci Von Saucken, 1984). This was a decisive aspect that originated the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and the most important artistic works concerning the saint and his worship.

1. The cults of Saint James the Greater and Saint Michael the Archangel: a confrontation

The Galician saint was represented mainly in three ways: as an Apostle, as a pilgrim and as *Miles Christi*. The latter image, known as *Santiago Matamoros* (literally “killer of Moors”), found its highest expression particularly in Spain, while the others were common in all countries (Bango Torviso, 1993). The image of Saint James as a pilgrim was surely among the most known and portrayed, since his attributes referring to the pilgrims and pilgrimages were iconic; on the other hand, the symbol that most strongly permeated the veneration of Saint James was the popular *concha* or shell, quintessential *signum Peregrinationis* of the Camino de Santiago (Caucci Von Saucken J., 2010) (fig. n.1).



Figure 1: Statue of San Giacomo Pellegrino, Santiago de Compostela Cathedral

Source: photo by author

In addition to the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, the other holy path that marked the history of itineraries was the one dedicated to the prince of heavenly armies, San Michele (Saint Michael) sul Monte Gargano in Puglia. The cult of the Angel is deeply rooted in the Greek-Byzantine tradition and the first information relating to its appearance in the Western countries dates back to the 5th century (Otranto – Carletti, 1995). The *Miles Dei* was venerated especially for his *thaumaturgical* power but besides this *medical* function, he had other characteristics such as the role of *psychagogue* (Ragonese, 2011), *psychopomp*, *weigher* of souls, celebrant and God's warrior against the Devil (fig. n.2).



Figure 2: San Michele Arcangelo, Guido Reni, olio su tela, 1635, Museo dei Cappuccini, Rome

Source: <http://www1.interno.gov.it>

Due to the martial feature of the Archangel, the Lombard dynasty was among the main promoters of Saint Michael's worship in the Western world (Otranto – Carletti, 1995). The itinerary leading to Saint Michael's cave coincided approximately with the *Via*

Francigena, which was an authentic road artery developed thanks to both the ancient Roman road system and the various human groups that occupied the Italian peninsula during the centuries (Infante, 2009). This path was one of the most important communication roads that connected main shrines such as Rome and Monte Sant'Angelo and that reached the ports of Puglia, where many devoted wayfarers set sail for the Holy Land. The Camino Francés and the *Via Francigena* could be considered as an only route where a large number of devotees travelled to the sacred destinations, especially during the Middle Ages.

The cults of Saint James and Saint Michael have some aspects in common, including the role of psychopomp and the task of weighing the souls, known as *psychostasia*; these characteristics were present in both the cults which show common traits despite the differences (Palumbo, 2013). In fact, both the Galician saint and the Archangel of Gargano undertook the task of being a psychopomp.

The IV miracle, known as *The miracle of solidarity between pilgrims* and which is contained in the II book of the *Liber Sancti Jacobi* (Caucci Von Saucken, 2010; Oursel, 1980), refers clearly to the Apostle's role of psychopomp. The miracle tells the story of the journey of thirty knights going from Lorraine to the Galician tomb; during that journey, a knight became suddenly ill and only one companion gave him support. The ill knight got worse and then died; his friend remained alone and prayed to the saint who miraculously appeared to him as a knight. Saint James took both the alive knight and the deceased one with him and brought them near the town of Compostela. At the end of the story, the Apostle reveals himself and tells to the others knights, through the surviving companion, to return to their homes since they had not assisted their ill friend. This story shows the image of Saint James as a psychopomp since he takes not only the living knight, but also the dead one with him and carries them to his tomb (fig. n.3).



Figure 3: Miracolo della Solidarietà tra pellegrini or di San Giacomo e dei due pellegrini
Miniature from the book *Società di San Giacomo del Ponte*, Palatina Library, Parma
Source: Paolo Caucci von Saucken (Ed.) "Santiago. La Europa del peregrinaje",

Another reference can also be traced in the famous “*Letter of Saint James*” where the role of the Galician saint as conductor of souls is more detailed. In fact, the story is inspired by the episode of Charlemagne’s death narrated in the *Historia Turpini* (the Book IV of *Liber Sancti Jacobi*) in which the Apostle leads the emperor’s soul in the glory of heaven. As a consequence, there is an image of the saint both as psychopomp and protector since he welcomes the souls at death’s door and guides them along the Milky Way to the paradise. That is why many cemetery areas, funereal chapels or burials with the garments of the pilgrim are dedicated to the saint or refer to him. Devotees used to recommend themselves to the saint for the afterlife (Péricard-Méa, 2004).

There is an image of Saint Michael accompanying the souls in a passage of Luke the Evangelist (16, 22), where angels escorts dead Lazarus in the afterlife; furthermore, this particular role of the Archangel sent by God to pick up and lead devoted souls before the throne of Christ emerges in other apocryphal texts as well (Otranto, 2003; Moraldi, 1985). As for the *Miles Christi*, the psychopomp role of the Archangel is relevant in the antique texts too: the dying prayed the Archangel to take the souls that were about to leave the Earth in his custody and to accompany them to the afterlife (Infante, 1997).

In addition to the task of leading souls to the afterlife, the psychostasia is another important characteristic that the Apostle and the Archangel have in common. Both the saints can weigh the souls and judge them worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven, but they perform the task in a different manner; in fact, it could happen that the two saints were depicted together, as in the known *The Last Judgment* fresco in Santa Maria di Loreto Aprutino (Abruzzo, Italy) (Lofoco, 2010) (fig. n.4).



Figure 4: Particolare del Giudizio Universale XV sec. Santa Maria in Piano Church, Loreto Aprutino (PE) Source: photo by author

This art work is greatly important because shows both Saint James and Saint Michael who fulfill their task, starting precisely with the souls crossing the bridge known as Saint James' bridge (Di Nola, 1991). The name of the bridge not only reminds of the Apostle, but also connects him clearly with the psychostasia: in fact, the souls should cross the bridge so that the righteous could reach the afterlife without any obstacle, while the ones guilty of serious sins fell in the infernal river below (Lofoco, 2010). Along with the bridge, in the fresco is also depicted Saint Michael in the act of weighing the souls with the help of a scale given by the Almighty; this characteristic can be found in the origins of the cult itself that sees Saint Michael as the Angel of judgment and executor of divine decisions (Infante, 1997; Sensi, 2011). It should also be noted that the psychostasia is ascribable to the classic context where the Greek god Hermes carries out this task; the prince of the angels inherits this role due to the very origin of his cult in the Greek-Byzantine context (Ragonese, 2011). The weighing of souls is often associated with their journey to the afterlife; according to the liturgical prayers, the Archangel weighs the souls and can intercede on their behalf during the divine judgment and he can attenuate the sins of those who were devoted to him during their life (Infante, 1997). Similarly to the prince of the angels, Saint James weighing the souls can be found in written references, precisely in the 4th book of the *Liber*, in the already cited passage of the death of Charlemagne. In this important episode, both the psychostasia and the status of psychopomp of the Apostle are highlighted: he weighs the good actions of the emperor on a scale in order to make him deserve the Kingdom of Heaven (Moralejo, Torres, Feo, 1999).

The representation of the bridge as a passage for the afterlife can be found in many cultures so finding the same representation in the Christian world is not surprising (De Gubernatis, 1971). In some Italian regional areas such as Abruzzo and Sicily, the bridge represents an atonement journey or even a place where the souls passed before arriving in the afterlife; in fact, still today it is believed that who has not made the journey to Galicia to homage to the saint in life would have done it in death (Finamore, 1981).

According to Lombardi Satriani and Meligrana, who refer to the writings by the ethno-anthropologist Pitrè, the widespread belief of crossing Saint James' bridge or walking along the road to Santiago could date back to the real pilgrimage that the devotees made to go to the Galician sanctuary with many difficulties: indeed, the bridge has been represented sometimes with blades, swords, knives and nails and sometimes is simply described as "thin as a hair" (Lombardi Satriani, Meligrana, 1982; Arlotta, 2005 e 2008). Lombardi and Meligrana have conducted researches in Sicily, Calabria and Basilicata and they have found situations and popular traditions similar to those in Abruzzo and Molise, where the path to the afterlife coincides with the Milky Way and it is presented as an arduous and painful itinerary that souls have to face after death. The journey to the afterlife represented symbolically an atonement way for those who had not observed the Christians rules in life and therefore they were not worthy of entering the Kingdom of Heaven (Di Nola, 1991). To favor the remission of sins,

penitents had to face many difficulties along the afterlife path, exactly like on the earthy one; on the contrary, for those guilty of serious sins the only destiny was the eternal damnation (Di Nola, 1991). The custom of going to Galicia is determined by the fact that the town of Compostela has always attracted many devotees. St James had an enormous charisma on the crowds of devotees and this aspect contributed to the spread of the cult and to the constitution of his sanctuary in the remote land of Galicia, which became one of the most important religious centers and one of the most difficult to reach at the same time.

The belief of the journey to the afterlife is attested in another ancient example provided by one of the most important and widespread text during the medieval era, the *Visio Pauli* (Seppilli, 1977). In the text, the image of the bridge appears again and it is highlighted the role of Saint Michael as the interpreter and conductor of Saint Paul during his short journey into the afterlife. The *Miles Dei* takes with him and protects Saint Paul alive; before arriving in Paradise, the angel accompanies Paul to visit Hell and its pains, including a "bridge thin as a hair" where the souls of the honest crossed it successfully, while the souls of sinners fell downwards, swallowed by a black river and devoured by an infernal beast (Villari, 1974).

The bridge as a step toward the afterlife and Saint Michael's psychostasia (Di Nola, 1991; Moraldi, 2001), were significant aspects of the two saints which could be traced both in the sacred liturgy and in popular idea in medieval times. Saint James accompanied and protected men during the pilgrimage of life as well as Saint Michael watched and guarded those who journeyed and both the saints had the task of guiding the souls toward the afterlife.

2. The pilgrimage to Compostela and the one to San Michele: a comparison

The bond between the two cults is also highlighted by the respective pilgrimages to the many chapels, sacred buildings and places dedicated to the saints. Along the *Camino de Santiago* there were often churches or shelters for pilgrims dedicated to the Archangel, as well as many sacred buildings dedicated to the Apostle could be met along the last stretch of road that from Benevento led to Saint Michael's shrine.

For example, along the itinerary of Saint James there was the well-known church of *San Miguel de Escalada* which dates back to the 8th century and whose remains have been recently restored (Puente, 1997). Another important building was the ancient *Hospital de San Miguel* (Barreiro Mallón, 2004), which was then located near one of the main doors of the city of Santiago, the *Puerta del Camino*; while continuing toward the cathedral, there was one of the oldest buildings of the city, the church of *San Miguel dos Agros* (Singul, Fernández Castiñeiras, 2001) (fig. n.5), whose origins go back to the 10th century. The presence of the above-mentioned buildings witnessed the strong devotion to the Archangel which is also put into even sharper focus inside the cathedral of Compostela itself. The church of Santiago de Compostela is carefully described in the *Guide of the pilgrim*, fifth book of the *Liber*; considering the narration, the church had an altar dedicated to Saint Michael inside which was located high on

the stands of the apse and faced the West, towards the Western gate (Caucci Von Saucken, 2010).



Figure 5: San Miguel dos Agros Church, Santiago de Compostela
Source: photo by author

Always considering the *Guide*, there were also nine towers in the medieval era, one of which was dedicated to the *Miles Dei*. Researchers are still debating on the latter tower since its ancient location is still difficult to determine (Vázquez Castro, 2007). The custom of consecrating altars or towers to Saint Michael toward the West was not a coincidence, but dated back to an ancient Carolingian habit that stressed the role of the warrior saint against the Devil, emphasising the aspect of protector and guardian of humanity (Otranto, 2007). We must not forget that the prince of the heavenly armies was the patron of many Germanic peoples, such as the Lombards, that widespread his worship greatly, and he was also very venerated by the Franks. In fact, the architecture location reminds the Carolingian habit to consecrate one or more altars or chapels to the Archangels inside the churches, as in the case of the cathedral of Compostela and of the church of *Santa Maria das Areas* in Finisterre: they both show the consecration to Saint Michael in the architectural part or even only the western direction (Ragonese, 2011). The small church is seen as the natural extension

of the journey due to its position behind the ocean; in fact, Finisterre literally means "the end of the world" (Caucci Von Saucken, 2001-2002). The church has five chapels inside and the one that points the western end is consecrated to Saint Michael; here we find again the architectural symbolism and in this singular case it emerges the image of the saint as a protector and guardian of men against the demonic forces represented by depths of the Atlantic Ocean, a figurative point of no return. However, inside the ecclesiastical space there was always an altar or a chapel that pointed the aforementioned direction, even if it was not located at the entrance (Ragonese, 2011). If there are references to the cult of Saint Michael in the pilgrimage of Saint James and in the town of Compostela, there are also deep traces of the cult of the Apostle in the city of Gargano and in the relative paths. In addition the mountain town itself, many signs can be found in other places and locations interconnected with the roads that lead to the shrine, such as the port cities of Puglia (Bianco, 2014), the villages along the via Francigena and other inner places close to the central-southern Apennines (Corsi, 1999; Lofoco, 2011). The main paths that led to Saint Michael's sanctuary were the *Via Sacra Langobardorum* and the *Strata Peregrinorum*.

The *Via Sacra Langobardorum* was both a sacred path and an important interregional route which led through central and southern Italian areas as Abruzzo, Molise and Lazio; the name of the route refers to the domination of ancient Langobard people in these territories.

The route itinerary approximately coincided with the path of *Valle di Stignano* which included the villages of *Santa Maria di Stignano*, *San Marco in Lamis*, *San Giovanni Rotondo*, *Casale di Sant'Egidio* and *San Nicola al Pantano*. Pilgrims used to pass through these ancient religious centres because there were other sacred places as the monastery of San Matteo (which still has a very ancient library); then pilgrims continued through the *Vallone* ("big valley") *della Fratta* and up to the valley of Carbonara in order to reach Saint Michael's cave. There are some evidences which are related to the cult of Saint James; according to Lofoco's historical studies, there were some places with references to the Apostle along the path: for example, it is sure that there was a church in San Giovanni Rotondo dedicated to Saint James which dated back to the 14th century with also an ancient *hospitium* for the poor close to it (Russi, 1979). Nearby the ancient centre of *Fiorentino* there was also a road named *Sancti Iacobi in Quartula* (which probably was a church before); the second centre was *Dragonara*, where there was a church dedicated to Saint James while in Torremaggiore there was another church dedicated to the Apostle with a hospital for the pilgrims and the poor (Lofoco, 2005-2006).

The *Strata Peregrinorum* almost coincided with the ancient *via Traiana* and it touched important centres like Benevento and Troia; other villages were Sant'Eleuterio, *Aequum Tuticum* (near to Ariano Irpino), the ancient *Aecae* (Troia), Lucera, *Arpi* (near to Foggia) and Siponto. The route continued toward Lucera, where there was a branch that led to the valley of Stignano and another one that went to Foggia; then the route proceeded to the monastic cell of San Leonardo and after that it arrived to the ancient port of Siponto to finally reach the sanctuary through the known valleys (Russi, 1979). According to many scholars, the *Strata Peregrinorum* can be considered the official *Cammino Micaelico* (Stopani, 1992) because there are many documents and pilgrims'

memories which confirm that; moreover, a 1201 document called this path “*strata magnam que pergit ad Sanctum Michaellem*” (Donofrio Del Vecchio, 2000).

Some traces of Saint James have been found in Benevento, in Troia and in Lucera. In Benevento, according to the scholar Luisa Lofoco there was a church dedicated to the Saints Philip and James which dates back to the 11th century and which was then called *De Mascambronibus* from the name of the family who had the patronage (Lofoco, 2005-2006). From *Aecae* – Troia departed a branch which led to Ordona and went to the coast, corresponding to the ancient road *Traiana*; there was also the path to michaelic shrine which passed through Lucera. In the city of Troia there was a church dedicated to the saints James and Philip (Corsi, 1999); in Lucera there was a church dedicated to Saint James with a small *piazza* which still exists while in the past there was also a Benedictine monastery dedicated to the saint (Lofoco, 2005-2006) (fig. n. 6).



Figure 6: San Giacomo Church, Lucera (FG)

Source: photo by author

Leaving Lucera, the path led on to the ancient village of Arpi, now disappeared, and finally reached Siponto the last place before the michaelic cave.

However, these were not the only traces of Saint James on the roads taking to the sacred cave; in fact, in addition to the above mentioned routes, there were other roads that led to Saint Michael's shrine such as the famous *vie d'erba* (tracks of grass) or *tratturi* (sheep tracks). The long "ways of grass" have very ancient origins and they have always been linked to pastoral world. They crossed the territories of the Apennines the center-south of Abruzzo and Molise and arrived to more temperate areas as the Tavoliere of Puglia, but also in some parts of Campania, Calabria and small areas of Basilicata (Otranto, 2007).

3. The "tratturi" road system and the case of Castel di Sangro – Lucera

One of the main characteristics of the pilgrimage of Saint Michael is the road network itself that highlighted and connected numerous places in the territory of the Apennines and that acted as a proper way of communication accessible to the pilgrims as well. The idea of the *via Francigena* can be extended to this vibrant road system, as can be read in this passage by the scholar Giorgio Otranto:

[...] I believe that no other reality road, as for the Francigena, Are valid observations of Giuseppe Sergi, [...] that no large road medieval be inconceivable as a single path and defined, but rather in dynamic sense as a "road axis" which is enriched in turn trails, tracks, secondary roads, fittings, alternative routes or parallel: definitive as "road area" or "beam of roads", which can have a the prevailing path and convey toward a determined place [...] (Otranto, 2008; Sergi, 1996)

This "stack of roads" was at the origin of the thick road system that existed since old times in the territories from the Apennines to the Apulian *Tavoliere*. The long grassy paths were born due to the old phenomenon of *transhumance*: since many flocks and herds passed along these tracks, many refreshment points appeared, as well as shelters for the animals, *tavernas*, churches and niches (Di Cicco, 1992; Paone, 1990; Russo, 2008). Moreover, since many *tratturi* and *tratturelli* largely flew into today's Capitanata, many places or mountain caves were dedicated to Saint Michael (Gandolfi, 1999). According to Maria Antonietta Gorga, devotional places dedicated to a pastoral divinity like these were normal since this kind of cult was very much felt by the transhumant (Gorga, 1991). In fact, shepherds asked for divinity protection against dangers that they might encounter during the journey. As a consequence, there were many buildings such as churches and niches along the sheep tracks where people could rest. However, the same places where were sheperds rested often become themselves objects of worship like gorges, caves with water and uplands; therefore, it is not surprising that shepherds were particularly sensitive to the cult of Saint Michael (Sensi, 2007; Campione, 2007; Otranto, 2016).

According to the anthropologist Giovanni Battista Bronzini «the tratturi have created the body of the transhumance» (Bronzini, 1991) but, above all, they were important

ways of communication as well. Many pilgrims used the network of *tratturi* to reach the sacred centers indeed, in particular to the Gargano; like the same scholar points out:

[...] the tracks of the shepherds have constituted the first tracks of the pilgrims. It is established a direct relationship between transhumance and pilgrimages, a report hinge, but also the functions, which are the common element in the "journey" indeed in the "journey harsh and difficult". The religion of the pilgrims is a religion in the path that is formed with the journey and during the journey [...] (Bronzini, 1991)

With this words, Bronzini emphasized the strong connection between the tracks of transhumance and the sacred routes. Along the tracks early arose villages too; moreover, the number of existing buildings such as taverns, churches and post offices confirmed definitively both the socio-economic and the urban-religious development of inhabited centers spread along the *tratturi* (Paone, 1987).

The road system consisting in *tratturi*, *tratturelli* and smaller roads was very extensive and it roughly coincided with Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Puglia and Lucania territories. Even if there were many *tratturi* (Paone, 1987) (fig. n.7), it is possible to identify four tracks for importance and length which went from Abruzzo to Puglia: l'Aquila – Foggia, Pescasseroli – Candela, Celano – Foggia and Castel di Sangro – Lucera (Totani, 2008). The latter was 127.4 km long and was functional to the tracks of Celano – Foggia and Pescasseroli – Candela because it allowed a deeper inroad into the inner territories of Molise to better exploit their pastures. These were called *regi* (royal) because were under the royal jurisdiction which periodically controlled their boundaries, in order to prevent landowners to take advantage of them.

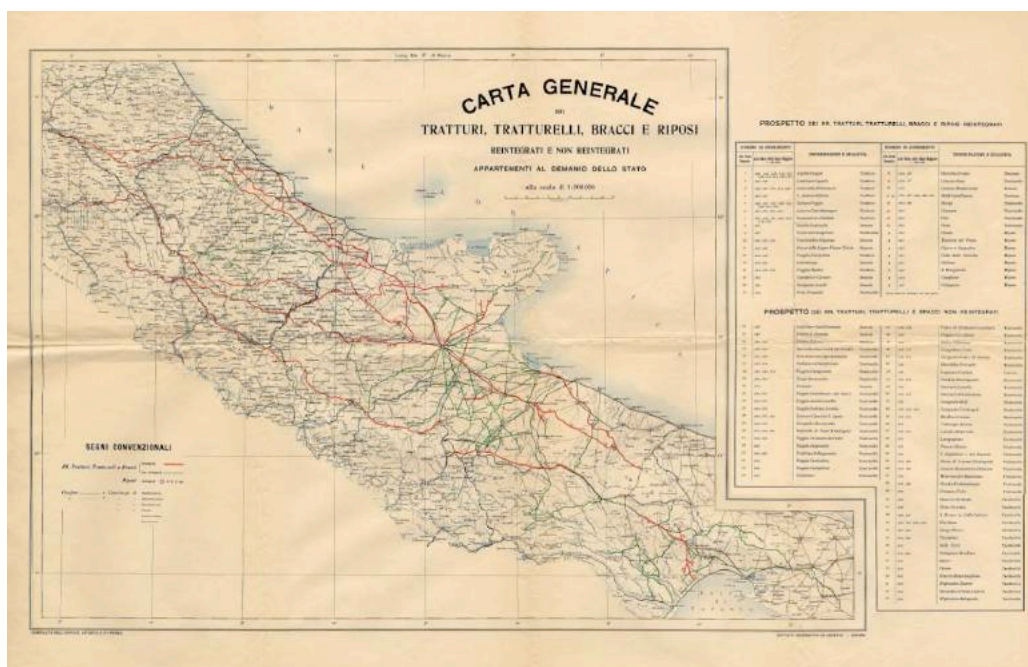


Figure 7: Edited by the *Commissariato per la reintegra dei tratturi* of Foggia in 1959
Source: <http://molisebwineblog.blogspot.it>

The centres along the *tratturo* were: Castel di Sangro, Rionero Sannitico, Forlì del Sannio, Roccasicura, Carovilli, Pescolanciano, Chiauci, Civitanova del Sannio, Duronia, Molise, Torella del Sannio, Casrtopignano, Oratino, Santo Stefano di Campobasso, Ripamolisan, Campobasso, San Giovanni in Galdo, Campodipietra, Toro, Riccia, Pietracatella, Gambatesa, Tufara, Celenza Valfortore, San Marco la Catola, San Bartolomeo in Galdo, Volturara Appula, Motta Montecorvino, Volturino, Alberona, Tertiveri e Lucera (Di Cicco, 1984).

After a more detailed research on the above mentioned *tratturo*, it can be said that not only there were other devotions such as the cult of Saint Michael and the Virgin Mary (Bronzini, 1991), but there also were many signs of the presence of Saint James in the centers touched by the grassy track or those one connected with it or existing on the path itself. In particular, the signs of a deeply devotion to Saint James have been noticed in the final part of the path which corresponded to the ancient region of Capitanata; many centres show traces of the cult of Saint James in this territory (Bianco, 2005; Lofoco, 2011).

Actually, in the region of Capitanata there was one of the major joints roads that led both to Apulian ports and to the shrines of Saint Michael and San Nicola (Caucci Von Saucken, 1999; GAI, 1987). Moreover, according to Giovanni Cherubini, the spread of the cult of Saint James in villages and along the extensive European road network was so great despite the distance from the Galician sanctuary that each reference in toponomy or every sign of an old hospital entitled to the Apostle became more and more numerous (Cherubini, 2000). Indeed, this happened even for the *tratturi* and for the *tratturo* Castel di Sangro – Lucera; many traces of Saint James concerning the villages of *tratturo*, but I would refer to more insights to my Phd thesis which at the moment is in the final stage of drafting (figures n. 8-11).

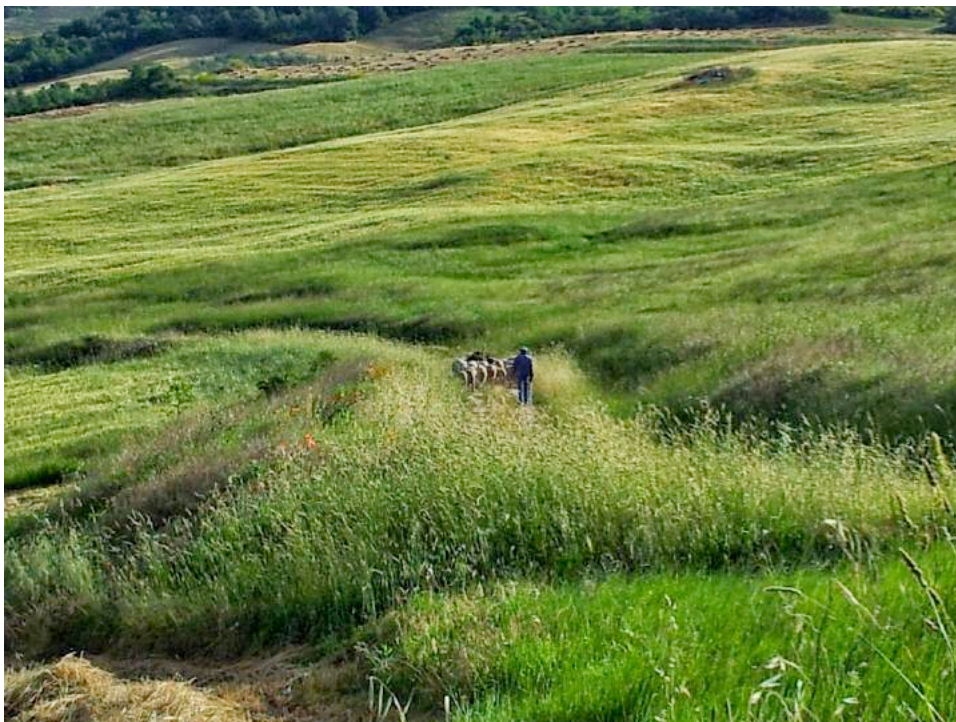


Figure 8: Tratturo Castel di Sangro – Lucera, Campobasso.

Source: photo by Associazione Attraverso il Molise



Figure 9: Tratturo Castel di Sangro – Lucera, “Toro Bridge”, Toro (CB)
Source: photo by Associazione Attraverso il Molise



Figure 10: Tratturo Castel di Sangro – Lucera, Motta Montecorvino landscape (FG)
Source: photo by Associazione attraverso il Molise



Figure 11: Tratturo Castel di Sangro – Lucera, Tavoliere delle Puglie landscape, Lucera (FG)

Source: photo by Associazione Attraverso il Molise

Among the many villages along the track we can cite Alberona (Liebetanz, 1999), which not only celebrates the Galician saint, but it also has Saint James as a patron together with Saints John the Baptist and San Rocco.

The village of Alberona was a really important stop-over for the pilgrims on the *tratturo* of Castel di Sangro – Lucera (Stopani, 2005) (fig. n. 12).



Figure 12: Alberona and Monti Dauni landscape, Foggia

Source: photo by author

In fact, the medieval village is particularly linked to the cult of Saint James since there are several elements which can be connected to the saint of Compostela. For example, there were a church (now disappeared) dedicated to the Galician saint and a church of the priory (Schiraldi, 2008; Palumbo, 2014) which contained a statue of Saint James as a pilgrim, replacing the medieval one, and a statue of the Archangel that confirms the local devotion to Saint Michael.

There are traces of the cult of the Apostle also in the town in Gargano, such as the small church dedicated to the crowned Virgin Mary located in Valle Portella (Infante, 2003; Otranto 2007) (fig. n.13): it shields a statue of the Apostle of recent manufacture and some scholars suppose that this hermitage was formerly entitled to the Galician saint. Currently there are more researches to better comprehend the origin of the structure (Cavallini, 2004).



Figure 13: Incoronata Church, XII Century.

Source: photo by author

Besides the already mentioned church, there is a tangible proof that confirms the cult of the Apostle in the city of the Archangel. In the Sacred Cave is kept a marble slab placed above the entrance of the well-known Cava delle Pietre which shows at the center the image of the Virgin on the throne crowned by the angels, while a side is represented an image of a pilgrim saint who has been identified as Saint James. Indeed the icon has the typical attributes of pilgrimage such as the *bordone* (a pilgrim's walking stick) and the *scarsella* (a kind of purse), but the sign that identifies the image as an apostle is the presence of the book, symbol par excellence of the Apostles (Bianco, 2005) (fig. n.14).



Figure 14: Madonna Incoronata dagli angeli e San Giacomo Apostolo
Cava delle Pietre - Grotta di S. Michele, XIII-XV sec. Monte Sant'Angelo, Foggia
Photo by Pino Miscione

Conclusion

The close bond that highlights as protagonists and links two of the emblematic figures of the world of pilgrimages, Saint James the Greater and Saint Michael the Archangel, is confirmed by the numerous traces marked by history and time. The respective paths and the countless pilgrims who have travelled thousands of kilometers to pay homage to the saints made possible and fortified this connection in time, leaving many fields still unexplored to investigate, such as the network of tratturi that still has much to reveal.

These sacred routes may have declined, but they are not definitely disappeared: that leads us to reconsider a period of great devoutness certainly, but also of commercial and economic recovery that has affected the whole Mediterranean area and a large part of peoples of different cultures. The two religious centers surely remain famous places that, beyond every temporal limit and historical condition, continue to exercise and to preserve their mysticism and their immense charm.

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