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### The Influence of Pilgrimage Routes on Local Culture and Imagination: the "Italian Compostela" as a Case Study

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#### ABSTRACT

In the middle of the 12th century Pistoia achieved an important relic of Saint James the Greater from Santiago de Compostela, becoming in a short time the most important Italian landmark for the worship of the Saint. As a consequence, the Tuscan city, placed near the Francigena route, became also an important center of pilgrimage, as demonstrated by several aspects of its topography and material production. Mostly within the first half of the 16th century, both local culture and popular imagination have been deeply influenced by the worship of the Apostle, especially by his characterization as pilgrimage's patron; this influence can be recognized not only in some artistic works (above all through the representation of scallop shells – the pecten jacobus – or through the representation of biblical figures clearly related to pilgrimage), but also in miracles' tales and in the morphology of the Patron Saint's festival.

Through an iconological and anthropological analysis of some of these material and written sources, the example of Pistoia can demonstrate how pilgrimage, «a kinetic ritual, full of real and "sacred" objects» (Turner-Turner, 1997), influences in a wide sense the culture of the places interested by this important phenomenon.

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**Keywords:** Saint James the Greater; Pilgrimage; Pistoia; Religious Imagination; Cults

A metà del 12° secolo, Pistoia ottenne un'importante reliquia di San Giacomo Maggiore da Santiago de Compostela, diventando in breve tempo il più importante punto di riferimento italiano per il culto del Santo. Di conseguenza, la città toscana, situata vicino alla rotta Francigena, divenne anche un importante oggetti e vari materiali. Soprattutto nella prima metà del 16 ° secolo, si può evidenziare come la cultura locale

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insieme all'immaginario popolare siano state profondamente influenzate dal culto dell'Apostolo, specialmente dalla sua caratterizzazione come mecenate del pellegrinaggio; questa influenza può essere riconosciuta in alcune opere artistiche, soprattutto attraverso la rappresentazione della conchiglia - il *jacobeus pecten* - o attraverso la rappresentazione di figure bibliche chiaramente correlate al pellegrinaggio), ma anche in racconti di miracoli e nella morfologia della festa del Santo Patrono.

Attraverso un'analisi iconologica e antropologica di alcuni di questi materiali e fonti documentarie, l'esempio di Pistoia può dimostrare come il pellegrinaggio, «a kinetic ritual, full of real and "sacred" objects» (Turner-Turner, 1997), influenza da secoli e in senso lato la cultura dei luoghi interessato da questo importante fenomeno.

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**Keywords:** San Giacomo Maggiore; Pellegrinaggio; Pistoia; Immaginario Religioso; Culti

## Introduction

In the late Middle Age Pistoia was «the only Italian city in which was practiced a strong and personally cult to St. James the Greater, so it would be perfectly considered a "second Compostela", or the corresponding "Italian Compostela"» (Mascanzoni, 2000). Leardo Mascanzoni, one the most important experts of St. James cult in Italy, described in this way the situation of the Tuscan city between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The expression "Italian Compostela" can be considered very pregnant: in particular during the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> century, we can found some connections between Santiago de Compostela and Pistoia, concerning relics, architecture, liturgical books and, most of all, pilgrimage. In fact, in a short time after the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (when Pistoia became the most important Italian landmark for the worship of St. James) the Tuscan city became an important stop-over along the route that connected Santiago de Compostela with Rome and, moreover, the Holy Land. Nowadays we can found some records of the multitude of pilgrims that have crossed Pistoia in particular in the Middle Age: these records can be found both in written documents (encyclicals, Cathedral's registers, last will and testaments) and in some local artworks (sculptures, frescos, paintings), that created a strong connection between local culture and imagination.

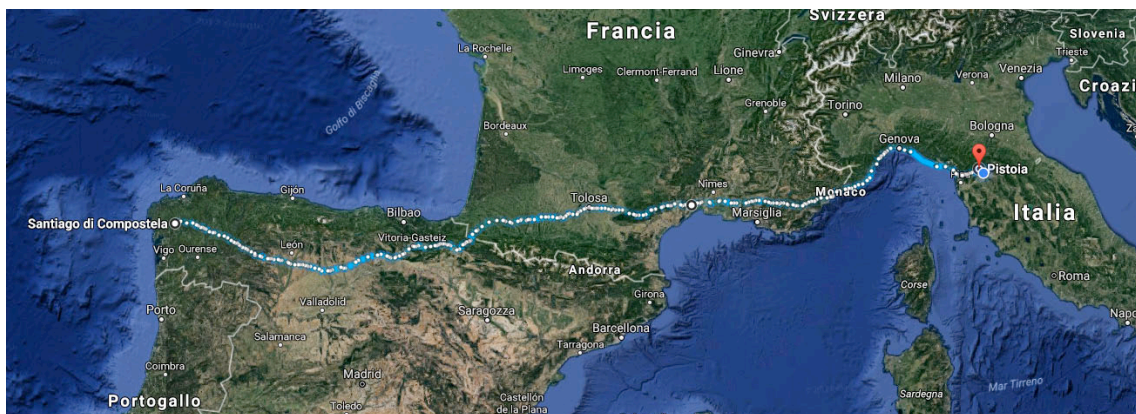
Through an iconological and anthropological analysis of some of these written and material sources, the example of Pistoia can demonstrate how pilgrimage influences in a wide sense the culture of the places interested by this important phenomenon (Gai, 1987; *Eadem*, 1993).

## 1. The Cult of St. James the Greater in Pistoia

St. James the Greater, Zebedeo's son, was one of the most important apostle: together with St. John the Evangelist, James' brother, and St. Peter he had the privilege to be present at some important events of the life of Christ, such as the raising of Jarius' daughter (Mark 5, 21-43; Matthew 9, 18-26; Luke 8, 40-56), the confession of Christ in

the Gethsemane (Mark 14, 32-42; Matthew 26, 36-46) and, most of all, his Transfiguration (Mark 9, 2-8; Matthew 17, 1-8; Luke 9, 28-36); in addition, his martyrism is the only one described in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 12, 1-2).

During the Middle Age in his hagiography appeared for the first time a connection between his figure and Spain, the country of which he will become the patron saint. Between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century some sources (for example the *Breviarum Apostolorum* or the *De ortu et obitu partum* by Isidore of Seville) reported about his preaching in Spain until his return in Judea, where he died (Vanoli, 2006). Instead of these, some other sources, in particular between 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century, reported about the translation of his body to Galicia after his martyrism (Díaz y Díaz, 1987; Menestò, 2005): in his hagiography this information came after the legendary discovery of his body, happened at the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century in Iria Flavia, near the present Santiago of Compostela, the most important landmark for the worship of the Saint of the entire Christianity. These two different traditions (the preaching in Spain and the translation of the body after the martyrism) were fused together during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, in particular in the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, the most important hagiographic text about St. James cult written in Santiago de Compostela between 1139 and 1173 (Berardi, 2008).



**Figure 1:** Map representing the road from Santiago de Compostela to Pistoia  
Source: Google Maps

The origin of the cult of St. James the Greater in Pistoia has to be researched in the context where also the Liber was written (**Figure 1**). According to some local sources, around 1144 the Bishop Atto received from the Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela Diego Gelmírez a relic of the body of St. James; this prestigious remain of his body was located on an altar dedicated to the Saint in the Cathedral of Pistoia, initiating so the most important worship of the city until today.

Modern studies, led in particular by Lucia Gai (Gai, 1984; Eadem, 1987), have demonstrated how this tradition is probably a legend, invented by the Bishop Atto to solve some problems about the relationships between the diocese and the municipality, in particular about the management of Cathedral properties. In spite of this, St. James cult became in a short time the most important one in Pistoia, exceeding the worship to St. Zeno, the historical patron of the city. However, the connection between the Tuscan city and Santiago de Compostela wasn't limited to the relic: at 1144 came, once again from Galicia, a copy of the Liber Sancti Jacobi (probably

fragmentary), that strongly influenced local saint hagiography (Gai, 1987) and some aspects of the new structure of the Cathedral recalled the Galician one. These changes mainly concerned the St. James chapel, built in 1145 along the first two aisles of the right nave of the Cathedral, and destroyed in 1786. Firstly, the decoration of the chapel contained some references to the Liber Sancti Jacobi: both frescos on the lunette above the entrance door of the chapel (**Figure 2**) and on the columns that separated the chapel from the rest of the church referred to the idea of James and his brother John as columns of the church, as explained in the Liber; the holy water font, that represents St. James, St. John, St. Peter and St. Paul (**Figure 3**), referred to the «teoría compostelana de las tres sedes del mundo» included in the same text (Díaz y Díaz, 1987), which tells us that the ecclesiastical sees of Santiago de Compostela (James), Ephesus (John) and Rome (Peter and Paul) were on a higher level than the other ones; finally, both St. James chapels of Santiago de Compostela and Pistoia contains an altar, in which is kept a relic of the saint, a ciborium above that and a silver antependium, as described in the fifth and last book of the Liber (Gai, 1987). Secondly, going out from the church, the inscription on the door that introduce to the chapel («Adveniens discas quid xpicti cvria dicat / quisquis malvm vites cona fac per secvla») recalls a sermon attributed to Pope Callistus II included in the first book of the Liber (Gai, 1987). Finally, both in Santiago de Compostela and in Pistoia above the St. James chapel was built the episcopal chapel, in both cases dedicated to Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of Bari, the most important harbor to reach the Holy Land (Gai, 1984): has been created so a connection between the western and the eastern limit of Christian pilgrimage, that had in the Tuscan city an important stop-over, as we will see soon.



**Figure 2:** Lapo da Firenze, *Christ between James and John the Evangelist*, Pistoia, Cathedral of St. Zeno, c. 1260

Source: <http://www.fondazionezeri.unibo.it/it/fototeca/fototeca-zeri>

In view of the above the relic, the copy of the Liber, the decoration and the structure of the St. James chapel represent a "pilgrimage" of cultural aspects from Santiago de Compostela to Pistoia, thus paving the way to the multitude of pilgrims who, going

from Galicia to Rome or Jerusalem, decided to stop in the Tuscan city, to pay tribute to their patron.

## 2. Jacobean pilgrimage in Pistoia

«You, traveller, learn what the church of Christ teaches: anyone you are, abstain from evil, do good and you will live forever» (Gai, 1984). As we have already seen, this was the teaching that welcomes pilgrims who was going to arrive in the St. James chapel. This late 12<sup>th</sup> century inscription shows how at that time, few years after the consecration of the altar, there was a strong presence of pilgrims in Pistoia.

First of all it's very important to explain the relationship between Tuscan city and the "Via Francigena", the most important pilgrimage route in Italy, that connected the Alps with Rome. Pistoia wasn't on the main layout of that route: nevertheless, it was connected to that by two secondary routes, one on the north (the "via francesca della sambuca", that connected Pistoia with Bologna and the *via aemilia*) and the other one on the south (that brings to Fucecchio, located on the Francigena). In the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, some lodgings and churches dedicated to St. James were built along both these two secondary routes, according to the will to «put under St. James protection the ancient early-Medieval royal route that connected Pistoia to the south and to the north: in this way it was considered a part of that big European road network that constituted the *iter compostellanum*» (Gai, 1987).



**Figure 3:** Late 13th century sculptor, Holy water font, Pistoia, Cathedral, c. 1280  
Source: peronal picture

The origin and the development of the Jacobean pilgrimage in Pistoia can be reconstructed using many different sources. Two different briefs, written by Pope

Eugene III in 1145, are connected with this development. In the first one, Pope Eugene speaks about some miracles happened «ad sacrum altare [...] in pistoriensi ecclesia» and about an important flow of pilgrims «de diversis et remotis terrarum partibus»; in the same document, the Pope invites Bishops of nearest dioceses to Pistoia (Siena, Volterra, Firenze, Lucca, Luni) to support the ride of believers through their districts. The second one, related with the first, gave a seven days indulgence for every visitor that prays to the altar. With these two briefs, Pope Eugene gave at the same time Atto a strong support for his political plan and pilgrimage a strong promotion (Ferrali, 1979). To understand how pilgrimage had a strong influence on the culture of the city we can analyze also some last wills, that can be divided in two different groups. In the first one we can include testaments written before a pilgrimage: at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century a man called *Urbanus*, before going to Galicia, leaved to his notary provisions about bequest to some hospitals, in case he never came back from Spain. In the second one we can find another type of testament: in two different cases, in 1240 and in 1284, the documents show the will to give some money to another man to make a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela on his behalf after testator death (Gai, 1990).

Onomastics is another important field of study connected to pilgrimage. Until 1145, when the relic came to Pistoia, we can find in the documents only one demonstration of the name *Jacobus* (or similar): in particular, a document of 1126 is the only one that speaks about a man called *Jacobinus*; while, from 1145 to 1510, the same name is present 732 times in the documents. The same consideration can be done about names related to pilgrimage: during 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century we can find a lot of name such as *Peregrinus*, *Romeus*, *Palmerius* and even Marco di Gallizziano, while nothing before the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Ferrali, 1979; Gai, 1990).

Finally, through the so-called «limosine date a chi va a Santo Iacopo di Galicia» (donations given to whom decide to go to Santiago de Compostela) we can calculate that, at the middle of 14<sup>th</sup> century, about 150 pilgrims annually went to Galicia, that means the 2,5% of local population after the Black Death (Cipriani, 1999).

In view of the above, we can affirm that local culture and customs were very influenced by the development of the Jacobean pilgrimage. That being said, it will be not surprising found the same role and importance of pilgrimage on local imagination.

### 3. The Influence of Jacobean Pilgrimage on Pistoia Imagination

Local artistic production, in particular between 13<sup>th</sup> and the middle of 16<sup>th</sup> century, shows some elements connected with Jacobean pilgrimage. At the same time this phenomenon had an important impact, as well as on religious practices, also on political signs and local tales (Gai, 1984; *Eadem*, 1987; *Eadem*, 1993). For these reasons, to understand the influence of pilgrimage on the culture of Pistoia a strictly iconographical approach isn't enough: what we need is an anthropological approach, that might consider iconological aspects, but examining pilgrimage as «a kinetic ritual, full of real and "sacred" objects» (Turner-Turner, 1997) that involve religion and politics, artworks and tales, Saints and common people.

To explain this relationship between pilgrimage and imagination in the specific context

of Pistoia, this section will be divided in three parts: in the first one, we will look at some iconic representation of St. James as a pilgrim; in the second one, we will analyze some figurative contexts related and influenced by pilgrimage, without the "physical" presence of the Saint; finally, we will focus on a legendary tale that involve pilgrimage, St. James cult and Carolingian epic.

### 3.1 St. James as a Pilgrim

The characterization as a pilgrim is the most frequent in St. James iconography. Elements such as *bordone* (a curved walking stick), *scarsella* (a small leather bag), *schivavina* (the typical pilgrims overcoat), *gallerio* (a hat with stretched brims) and the scallop are his most common attributes. This feature of St. James iconography is not usual: in fact our Saint represents «the only example in all Christian world of a total identification between a Saint and his worshippers, to the extent that he was represented with their attributes» (Mascanzoni, 2000).

For these reasons there are a lot of representations of the Saint as a pilgrim also in Pistoia; here will be analyzed only some of them, chosen their relevance and their iconic character.

The earliest representation of St. James as a pilgrim is stored in the courtyard of local Town Hall: it's a stone sculpture, done at the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century probably by an artist from Northern Italy (**Figure 4**). It represents a pilgrim, with some elements we have already seen (hat, overcoat, scallops), and a book in the left hand: this attribute lets us to identify him as St. James, and not as a common pilgrim. This is the first example of this representation of the Saint in the city, paving the way to some other that were realized during following centuries.



**Figure 4:** Late 13th century sculptor, *St. James*, Pistoia, Town Hall, c. 1280

Source: personal picture

Over time, the image of St. James as a pilgrim took on an "official" role. We know two different municipal seals of the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century: in the elder one there was an armed knight («in dicto sigillo uno milite ad equum cum uno vexillo in manu, consignato et sculpito»); the image represented on the other one, adopted by the *Pars Populi* (the new born classes that represented towns people) in 1272, was instead described in this way: «ymago beati Jacobi apostoli ad mmodum pelegriini, cum duobus nicchiis, unu ex parte anteriori et alium ex parte posteriori, et cum bordone in manu et scarsella suspensa ad latum». As can be seen, the image represented St. James as a pilgrim, with all his typical attributes, such as *nicchiis* (scallop), *bordone* (walking sticks) and *scarsella* (leather bag). Over time, this last image (**Figure 5**) has become the official one: «since 14<sup>th</sup> century the official municipal seal of Pistoia would have both the heraldic emblem with a red and white checkerboard pattern (the historical emblem of the municipality, *editor's note*) and the image of St. James, standing or seated on the throne, often accompanied or even substituted, in lesser seals, by scallops» (Gai, 1985).





**Figure 5:** Recreation of the seals of the *Pars Populi* of 1272

Source: Mazzei, 1980

The passage from the seal with the armed knight to the one with St. James symbolized the transition from the older feudal world to the newest one, dominated by mercantile and artisan classes. In this way, the image of St. James as a pilgrim became a witness: it showed an important change about social and political relationship inside municipalities that concerned not only Pistoia, but some different political contexts since the early 14<sup>th</sup> century (Gai, 1985). During the 14<sup>th</sup> century was made also the most iconic image of this kind. About at the middle of the century sculptor Giglio Pisano made a silver statue of the Saint (**Figure 6**), described in an inventory of 1353 in this way: «unam ymaginem sancti iacobi que stat ad sedendum super sede de argento, magnam, cum bordone et scersella et gallerio in capite de arge[n]to, in parte deauratam» (Gai, 1984). St. James was seated on a throne wearing typical pilgrims attributess, as we can see in other examples. The specific importance of this image is connected with two different aspects. First of all, its position: initially made as an anthropomorphic reliquary, it was then positioned in the central part of the silver altar made in St. James chapel in the Cathedral from 1287 to 1456, that represent the most important artwork dedicated to the Saint in Pistoia; thanks to its position, it represents the mainly focus of this structure, that contains both images of Christ and Saints and some narrative scenes, dedicated to Christ and St. James. The iconic role of this image can be found also during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the Jacobean Holy years (or Jubilees), during which some special stamps was coined. In 1971 was coined 21 stamps, 15 of them dedicated to monuments situated along the Route of Santiago de Compostela and the other dedicated to Jacobean places in Europe: all of these last ones were connected with pilgrimage, and the image of St. James we are talking about was choose as the emblem of the entire Itaas the emblem of the entire Italian pilgrimage (Arlotta, 2010) (**Figure 7**).



**Figure 6:** Giglio Pisano, *St. James*, Pistoia, Cathedral, detail of the St. James altar, 1353  
Source: <https://www.diocesipistoia.it/san-giacomo-apostolo>



**Figure 7:** Stamp coined in 1971 for the Jacobean Holy Year  
Source: Arlotta, 2010

The last image analyzed in this paragraph is a panel painted by Bernardino di Antonio Detti in 1523. The painting represents *The Virgin and Child with the infant St. John the Baptist, St. James the Greater and St. Bartholomew*, and it was commissioned for a chapel of a hospital near Pistoia, at Ponte alla Pergola, and it's so called *Madonna della Pergola* (Mazzi, 1982) (**Figure 8**).

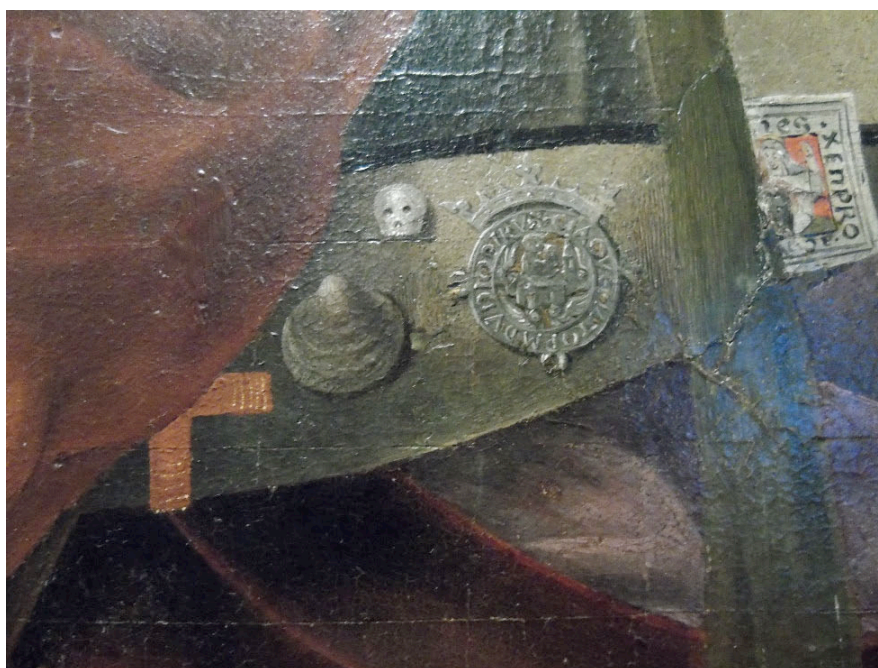


**Figure 8:** Bernardino di Antonio Detti, *Madonna della Pergola*, Pistoia, Civic museum, 1523

Source: <http://www.discoverpistoia.it>

The painting has a very unusual iconography: in the foreground there are the Virgin, seated, with the Child between Bartholomew and, on the other side, the infant John and James; behind the Virgin there is a young woman, probably connected with benefactor; in the background there are a child with his nanny and, behind them, a representation of *The judgment of Salomon*. The importance given to childhood in this painting (through the representation of three children, two young women, *The judgment of Salomon* and some toys) can be related with Bartholomew: in fact his figure is considered in Pistoia a childhood patron, and during his feast children are anointed in the church dedicated to him. Another important aspect of this panel, the most important for us, is St. James iconography; at least three different implications of the Saint are evoked in the panel: apostle, *matamoros* and, mainly, pilgrimage patron. The first connotation is exemplified by the book, typical attribute of Saints; however on its cover we can see the sign "Epistole", that refers to the Epistle of James of the New Testament, now attributed to St. James the Less or to St. James "brother" of Christ, but during Middle Age often related to the Greater. His characterization as *matamoros* (Moor-slayer) is maybe evoked by a Moor painted in the higher part of the right side of the panel. However, the majority of St. James attributes are related to pilgrimage. First of all, he holds a walking stick with a scallop with his right hand, he wears an overcoat and he keeps a hat with stretched brims under his left arm. This last attribute is the most interesting for us: on it there are some objects, not often represented, related to pilgrims and pilgrimage in general (**Figure 9**). First of all, in the inner part of the hat is inserted a porcupine quill: according to some scholars this object were kept by pilgrims because it could be used for some different purposes (for example for security, or for

its pointy form); according to others it was one of the "mirabilia" that pilgrims picked up during their path as a souvenir of the pilgrimage (Cipriani, 1999). But the most interesting objects attached on the hat are five pilgrim badges on the outer part of a brim: from left to right, we can see a red cross, a scallop, a skull, a metal badge and a decorated piece of cloth or paper (Mazzi, 1982). The red cross is probably a reference to the Holy Land, Eastern limit of Christian pilgrimage; the scallop is obviously related with Santiago de Compostela, the Western one; the skull is the most difficult to decode: it can be a reference to St. Thomas Becket shrine in Canterbury, the Northern limit of Christian pilgrimage, or it can be a *memento mori*, related to the difficult of pilgrimage in particular during Middle Age; the metal badge, on which is represented the Virgin with the Child over a church carried by angels, is related to the Basilica of the Holy House of Loreto (one of the most important Marian pilgrimage destination) and to its origin myth; on the piece of cloth or paper is represented St. Veronica with the Holy Face of Jesus, one of the most important pilgrimage souvenir related to Rome. In this way the representation of these pilgrimage badges refers to an idea of universal pilgrimage, that connected all the most important destinations in the entire Christian world.



**Figure 9:** Bernardino di Antonio Detti, *Madonna della Pergola* (detail), Pistoia, Civic museum, 1523

Source: personal picture

### 3.2. Pilgrimage Images

In the previous paragraph we have seen some specific examples in which St. James has been represented as a pilgrim. The following pages will be dedicated to some other images related to pilgrimage, but without the presence of the Saint. These images let us assert that the influence of pilgrimage on local figurative imagination isn't necessarily related to the "physical" presence of the Saint, but it's too strong to show itself also in some different contexts apparently not related with pilgrimage. These

images will be divided in two different groups: in the first one we will analyze some representations of pilgrims; in the second one we will see other images that can be related with the development of the Jacobean pilgrimage in the city.

One of the most interesting image represented pilgrims in Pistoia is an early 15<sup>th</sup> century fresco in the Old Episcopal Palace, near the Cathedral. The fresco (**Figure 10**), very damaged, has an important historical and documentary value: in fact it represents the moment of the departure of pilgrims, normally on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord Jesus (Cipriani, 2007). In this day, also called Candlemas, pilgrims received in St. James chapel a burning candle (symbolizing Faith), and the blessing, by the Bishop, of their walking sticks and bags. In the fresco we can see this last moment: pilgrims standing or kneeled in front of the Bishop waiting for the blessing (Gai, 1984; Cipriani, 2007).



**Figure 10:** Sano di Giorgio, *Pilgrim's departure*, Pistoia, Old episcopal palace, early 15th century

Source: Gai, 1984

In the church of St. Francis there are two different frescos that are very clear about the relationship between pilgrimage and images. First of all, during centuries it has been testified a strong and durable relationship between Jacobean pilgrimage and Franciscans (Cardini, 1995; Mascanzoni, 2000). St. Francis, the founder of the Order, made a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela around 1215, and during his way he made a miracle and founded a cloister. Other than that some churches and hospitals situated along pilgrimage routes were founded by Franciscans, and another important exponent of the Order, St. Anthony of Padua, was very devoted to St. James

(Mascanzoni, 2000). After this necessary introduction, we can return to our images. Both in Pazzaglia chapel (near the main one) and in the Chapter Room we can notice the presence of Jacobean pilgrims in figurative contexts in which their presence is unusual.

Pazzaglia chapel was painted by Giovanni di Bartolomeo Cristiani around 1370 with stories of St. Anthony of Padua and St. Louis of Tolouse (Gai, 1993). Frescos are very damaged, but we can still see a short part of the episode with *St. Louis giving alms to poors*: in front of the kneeling Saint there are some men, one of those wears a pilgrim hat with a scallop (**Figure 11**).

The Chapter Room was painted at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century by Antonio Vite (Gai, 1993). One of the episode represented is the *Miracle of the miser's heart*, one of the most famous occurrence of St. Anthony life: on the right part of the scene, two men wear the typical pilgrim hat, with a scallop attached on their front (**Figure 12**).

These two examples are very interesting due to their peculiarity. If we analyze other representations of these two subjects, we can notice that only in few cases pilgrims are present, and there aren't examples with Jacobean ones. Other than that, the representation of Jacobean pilgrim is generally reserved to figurative contexts related to pilgrimage: usually they are represented in groups, or in allegories of Church (for example in a 14<sup>th</sup> century fresco in the Chapter Room of the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence), or in places related to pilgrimage (for example a 15<sup>th</sup> century fresco in Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, originally a hospital dedicated also to pilgrims). For these reasons, the images in Pistoia are quite uncommon: their singularity can be justified thanks to the success that Jacobean cult and pilgrimage achieved in the city, enough to influence the entire local figurative imagination.



**Figure 11:** Giovanni di Bartolomeo Cristiani, *St. Louis of Tolouse giving alms to poors*, Pistoia, church of St. Francis, Pazzaglia chapel, c. 1370

Source: gai, 1993



**Figure 12:** Antonio Vite, *Miracle of the miser's heart* (detail), Pistoia, church of St. Francis, Chapter Room, early 15th century

Source: Gai, 1993

The last image that represents pilgrims have a strong political value. During 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Pistoia increasingly felt under the influence of Florence, and a 16<sup>th</sup> century terracotta frieze shows the political relationship between the two cities at that time. The "Ospedale del Ceppo" was, at that time, the main hospital in the city and from 1501 it was taken over by Florentine hospital of Santa Maria Nuova. During the third decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was realized on its front a terracotta frieze by Santi Buglioni and his atelier: on this were represented the seven Works of Mercy, separated by the representation of Virtues (Guerrieri - Amendola, 1982). The most interesting episode for us is the one representing this verse of Gospel of Matthew: «I was a stranger and you welcomed me» (Matthew 25, 35) (**Figure 13**). The scene is divided in two parts: in the first one there is a group of pilgrims, leading by a Saint represented as one of them; in the second one Leonardo Buonafede, hospital's dean, do the "Washing of the Feet" rite to another Saint. First of all, pilgrims are represented with their typical attires, included scallops and porcupine quills we have already seen in the *Madonna della Pergola*. However the most interesting aspect of the frieze is the identification of the two Saints, already discussed by scholars. According to me the most likely theory is the one that identify the two Saints with James and John the Baptist: the first one for his role of pilgrims' patron, the other one through the camel-skin dress, one of his typical attribute. The representation of these two Saints next to each other has also a political value, because St. James was the patron of Pistoia, and St. John the one of Florence (Guerrieri - Amendola, 1982). The presence of both patrons was necessary to balance the importance of the two cities in a context as important as this one; probably we can suppose that the "Washing of the Feet" of St. John by Leonardo Buonafede can represent a sort of welcome of the Saint in the city, sealing in this way the political control of Florence on Pistoia.



**Figure 13:** Giovanni della Robbia and Santi Buglioni, *To shelter the homeless*, Pistoia, Ospedale del Ceppo, detail of the frieze, 1525-1529  
Source: Guerrieri – Amendola, 1982

After seeing some relevant images representing pilgrims, we will analyze three different images implicitly connected with pilgrimage. The first one is a marble column that a late 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph shows in front of St. Peter church. The column (**Figure 14**), realized during the 12<sup>th</sup> century and actually stored in the courtyard of local Town Hall, was situated along the pilgrimage route that crossed Pistoia. For this reason, Lucia Gai suggested that it was necessary to show the presence of hospital for pilgrims nearby, so it can be considered an important sign of the history of Jacobean pilgrimage in the city (Gai, 1987).

Another important image connected with pilgrimage is on the front of the church of St. Andrew, situated on the same pilgrimage route we have already seen before. In 1166 three sculptors (Gruamonte, Adeodato and Enrico) sculpted on the lintel of the front the episode of the *Adoration of the Magi* (**Figure 15**), apparently not connected with the dedication of the church. The meaning of this choice can be found in the relationship between this church and the pilgrimage route: in fact the biblical Magi are often considered the first pilgrims of the history, because of their travel to the place of the nativity of Jesus (Gai, 1987). For this reason, this subject is often represented in churches situated along the Via Francigena, and the Magi are related more than once with Jacobean cult and pilgrimage in *the Liber Sancti Jacobi*, as we have already seen the most important hagiographic text for St. James cult. In this way, the relief of the church of St. Andrew shows how important was pilgrimage in Pistoia already a few years after relic's coming.



**Figure 14:** Column, Pistoia, Town Hall, late 12th century  
Source: personal picture





**Figure 15:** Gruamonte, Adeodato, Enrico, *Adoration of the Magi*, Pistoia, church of St. Andrew, 1166

Source: <http://www.centroarte.com/>

The last image we analyze in this paragraph was connected with pilgrimage some years ago (Lamberini, 1999). In the church of St. Bartholomew is stored a pulpit realized by Guido da Como from at the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is decorated with some Christological episodes, included the one happened in Emmaus: unusually the scene doesn't concern the supper, but in the tile is represented the meeting between Christ and the two disciples and their following moving towards the village (**Figure 16**).



**Figure 16:** Guido da Como, *Christ and two disciples walking to Emmaus*, Pistoia, church of St. Bartholomew, detail of the pulpit, 1239-1250

Source: Lamberini, 1999

Other than that, Christ wears clothes that are similar to the pilgrim ones, and under the scene there is this inscription: «ISTE PEREGRINUS PERAM POST DORSA LIGATUS / MISSUS DIVINUS IESUS EST DE VIRGINE NATUS». The choice of this particular moment of the episode, the clothes worn by Christ and the inscription suggest us to suppose that this image is related with the enormous development of pilgrimage in Pistoia during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Thanks to the images we have just seen we can affirm that Jacobean pilgrimage has been a very strong influence not only on St. James iconographic, but on the entire local figurative culture, conditioning also episodes and

images usually not related with this phenomenon.

### 3.3. *Pilgrimage in Miracles and Legendary Tales*

In the previous pages we have seen how pilgrimage has influenced local figurative culture. However also local miracles and legendary tales show some connections with pilgrimage, letting us extend its influence from material works of art to the entire local imagination.

In local sources written from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century are described some miracles happened thanks to St. James intercession. One of those is related with this research: a man dying of gout ruined himself to find a cure for his swollen legs; after having gone to the St. James chapel, praying to the Saint, he was cured; after this miracle he «immediately wore pilgrim's clothes and he went to Spain, toward St. James cathedral» (Gai, 1990). This episode, reported in a text written just after the consecration of St. James altar, shows how a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela was immediately felt as the best way to thank St. James for his intercession.

Another important proof of the relationship between Jacobean cult and pilgrimage and local imagination is the so called "Cappel d'Orlando" (Orlando's hat), a place situated between Pian di Novello and Pian degli Ontani, near Pistoia. According to some tales narrated by locals (Buonomini, 1987), raging Orlando (Charlemagne paladin) jumped off with his horse from one of local peaks, losing his hat, and the place on which it fell is the one now called "Cappel d'Orlando"; not long after Orlando landed, and the violent impact left the tracks of the hoofs of the horse on the field. Other than that, there are some other interesting elements: even now some inhabitants of that places know very well Orlando's legend, and some grandparents tell passages from Ariosto's poem to their grandchildren; other than that, in those places some people carry the name of the two main characters of the same poem, Angelica and Orlando. How this legendary tale can be related with pilgrimage? According to some studies, there is a strong relationship between pilgrimage routes and the spread of Carolingian epic (Cardini, 1987; *Idem*, 1995; Mascanzoni, 2000): in some places situated along those routes we can find some proofs of the influence of stories related to Charlemagne and his paladins, and the King himself has a very important role in the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, in particular in the fourth book, entirely dedicated to his conquest of Spain (Cardini, 1995; Berardi, 2008). For these reason, the presence of such a legendary tale in a small mountain place can be justify with the proximity with Pistoia, an important worship for St. James cult and an important pilgrimage site.

## Conclusion

Written documents, artworks, legendary tales. Different kind of proofs have been used to show how pilgrimage has influenced the culture and the imagination of Pistoia. In this essay pilgrimage has been considered as an anthropological phenomenon, able to have a strong and durable impact on places interested by it. For this reason so different traces such as last wills, paintings and legendary tales have contribute at the same level to show the relationship between pilgrimage and Pistoia: analyzing in a wide sense the

culture of a specific context is the only way to demonstrate this relationship, that concern the entire population, with its customs and its imagination.

The example of Pistoia can be considered an important case of study speaking about the relationship between pilgrimage and imagination: the images we have seen wouldn't have the same features without the coming of the relic and the consequent development of pilgrimage. For this reason, we can speak about a two-way relationship between pilgrimage and images: pilgrimage influenced images, images testify the past existence of such an important phenomenon. Using a contemporary terminology, the images we have seen can be considered some different "hardware" that work thanks to the same "software", in this case pilgrimage.

In this way, in spite of some cultural changes and the loss of a lot of elements, Pistoia preserves some objects and records that has been considered "eyewitnesses" (Burke, 2001) of centuries in which the city was a very important stop-over along the main route that connected the entire Christian world.

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