

## The issue of pilgrimage tourism from the point of view of geography

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### **Abstract**

*The study presents selected aspects of pilgrimage and pilgrimage tourism from a spatial point of view. Motivation, as an essential motive for wandering, interactions between God, the pilgrim and the landscape, and current research directions in pilgrimage tourism, complements the topics we have already presented in connection with pilgrimage tourism to try to conceptualize it within the Slovak geographical school. Formulation of basic definitions, description of research methods, identification of the system (object, subject, product) and study of the position of pilgrimage tourism within geographical disciplines, formed the theoretical and methodological basis of its analysis, and our goal is to build on them and extend them by the research of relations between God and pilgrim, wandering and landscape, as well as sacred and profane space. The communist regime suppressed the study of religiosity, pilgrimage and pilgrimage tourism in Central Europe, so we present our contribution to the issue as an effort to fill a gap created for political reasons while relying on the latest scientific findings and field research in pilgrimage centers.*

**Keywords:** *Pilgrimage, Pilgrimage tourism, Religion, Motivation, Landscape, Current research directions*

### **Introduction**

Pilgrimage is a cult practice of most world religions, and therefore a phenomenon that has been studied since time immemorial. Pilgrimage sites are a place of "revelation." Thanks to the number of visitors, they have been transformed into pilgrimage centers. Pilgrimages, as a specific, religiously motivated type of migration, are the subject of pilgrimage research.

We aim to present this issue from the research of individual geographical disciplines, namely the geography of tourism and the geography of religions. However, we will also focus on aspects related to religious tourism, which, incidentally, is often identified with pilgrimage tourism.

Our paper aims to present the theoretical and methodological basis of the pilgrimage tourism concept based on the study and excerpt of scientific works of domestic and foreign provenance and long-term comprehensive field research. Identification of territorial relations between its essential elements (God, the landscape, the pilgrims), as well as the discovery of their functioning patterns, create a space to approach its holistic understanding.

Our previous knowledge synthesis was based on an interdisciplinary perspective emphasis, which allowed us to understand and present the full depth and complexity of pilgrimage tourism and to predict possible directions for further research.

The current paper follows an already published study. At the same time, our effort was to supplement the researched issue with other aspects in the form of research on the motivation of wandering, territorial relations between God and pilgrims, and between the landscape and the sacral, respectively, the profane space.

### **Material and Methods**

As pilgrimage tourism is a spatial phenomenon, its research (as any other phenomenon) represents organized activities including study, prediction, experimentation, testing, verification, and scientific knowledge creation. Information database heuristics based on the classical bibliographic method creates the basis. Classifications and typologies of pilgrims themselves, pilgrimage activities, and even pilgrimage centers in terms of several different criteria were created upon the knowledge gained by analyzing the available literature of domestic and foreign, especially Polish and Anglo-Saxon provenance.

Understanding the territorial laws of the pilgrimage center development, the creation of its model, and the analysis of its functional transformation must necessarily be based on scientific observation. Empirical research allows us to capture specific moments of objective reality as starting points for the identification of universal connections (Benčo, 2001).

Perception itself, the perception of the pilgrimage center by its visitors (pilgrims), is an interactive process between man and the socio-cultural environment, based on the story of the everyday experience. Pilgrims' own "true images" of the pilgrimage center allow us to examine the motives for their attendance, spatial behavior during pilgrimages, and reveal their attendance preferences of the other pilgrimage centers (Silverman, 2009; Korec, Rusnák, 2018; Walmsley, Lewis, 1993).

In general, we could call these methods cabinet, respectively, cameral methods (Ivanička, 1983; Čuka, 2007, 2011a). They are complementary to field research, representing a fundamental method of examining the features, attributes, and characteristics of tourism (including pilgrimage) for the geographer.

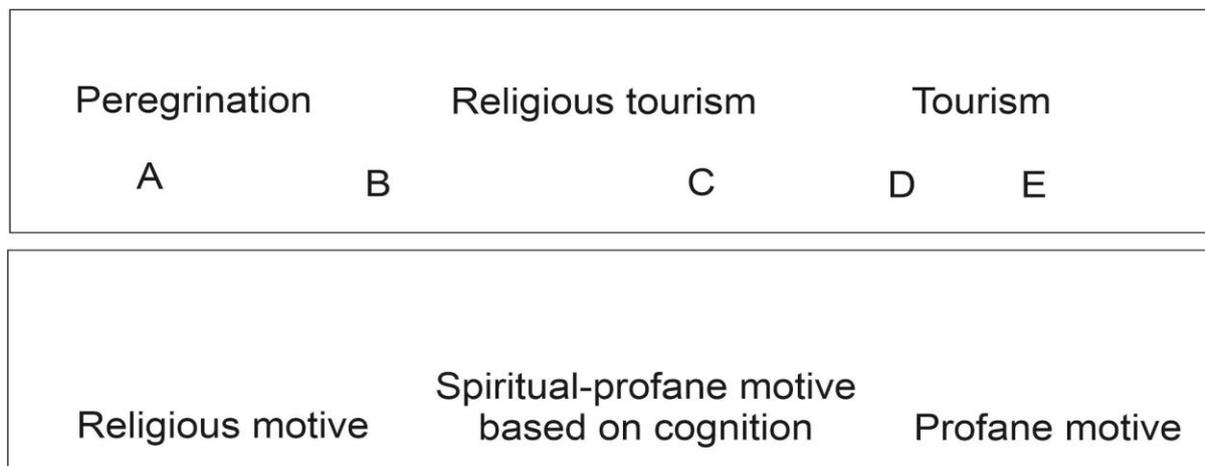
Based on field research, it is possible to reveal the causal context of phenomena affecting tourism development in the pilgrimage center. Materials obtained from the field can have a symbolic, functional, or spatial significance.

An integrated (interdisciplinary) approach to the study of pilgrimage tourism based on historical, sociological, geographical, theological, religious, ethnological, or economic aspects has enabled us to create models and schemes visualizing the studied issue that lead to its holistic understanding.

**Motivation in pilgrimage tourism**

Man has a wide range of needs in everyday life (biological, social, economic, cultural, etc.). Pilgrimage is one of the needs of the faithful. In order for this to happen, believers must be sufficiently motivated. Motivation in tourism is always positive from a psychological or mental point of view (Čuka, 2007). We see it as a set of incentives to stimulate our behavior and actions.

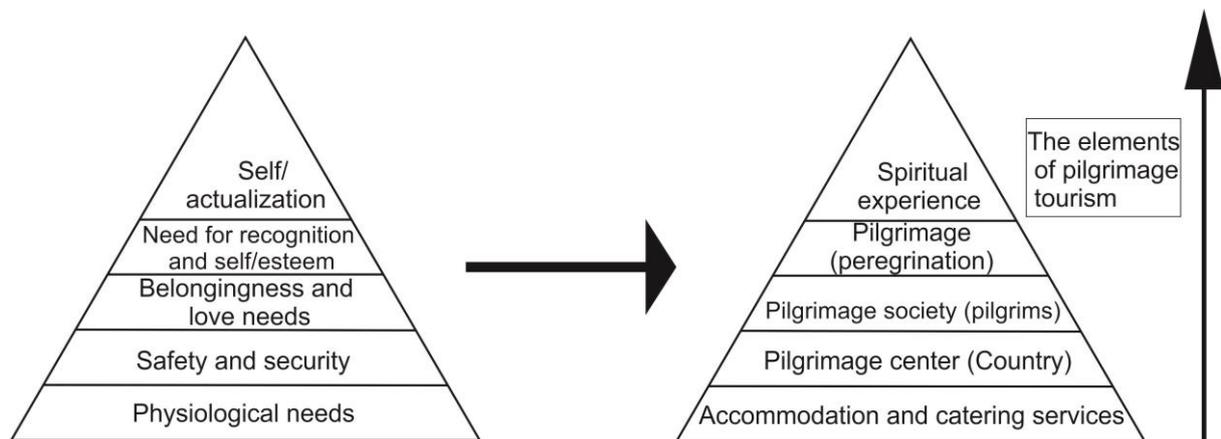
According to the motives we can also typologize the participants of tourism, e.g. cultural holidaymakers, relaxing holidaymakers, adventurous holidaymakers, etc. (Ferner, 1993 In: Gúčík, 2010). In figure 1 are the types of migration, motives, or types of tourism participants placed at the top and the bottom of the figure. Various combinations of spiritual-profane motifs and thus also subjects of tourism are placed in the middle.



A - Pilgrim, B -Pilgrim > Tourist, C- Pilgrim = Tourist, D- Pilgrim < Tourist, E-Tourist,  
Source: Smith, 1992

*Fig. 1 Sacral-profane continuum of pilgrimage*

The hierarchy of needs theory in relation to motivation was discussed by A. Maslow. He believed that every person had the potential to achieve life satisfaction, he just has to overcome several obstacles in meeting lower needs. Maslow therefore arranged them into an imaginary pyramid according to how intense they affect us. At the base of the pyramid there are needs that are important for our individual and social survival. The upper parts are not necessary for survival, but contribute to long-term satisfaction and develop our personal potential (Maslow, 2014). In an application for pilgrimage tourism, we could transform these needs reflected in the pilgrim's motivation to participate in the pilgrimage as follows (Fig. 2).



Source: Modified Maslow based scheme, 2014  
 Fig. 2 Pyramid of pilgrimage tourism needs

Physiological needs fulfill basic vital functions and ensure homeostasis of the organism, so they are represented by accommodation and catering services in case of pilgrimage tourism. Safety and security materialize in the sense of avoiding danger and threat. Stability and security represents therefore a pilgrimage center (*locus sacer*) with religious monuments set in the landscape. Social contacts reflecting the need to love and be loved always take place in a certain society, in the community, i.e. between the pilgrims themselves. The need for recognition and self-esteem is relatively difficult to achieve and, moreover, it is a long-term process. It is precisely the pilgrimage that creates the space to acquire the self-esteem in front of oneself and his surroundings, as participation in the pilgrimage brings some renunciation, sacrifice and asceticism. At the top of the pyramid is self-actualization, that is, a spiritual need, in the context of pilgrimage tourism it is a spiritual experience that we have gained through pilgrimage.

In the case of research on religious motives, it is also necessary to distinguish believers who practice religion, and thus their main motive is to approach God, from a number of tourists who visit *sacrum* for other reasons - cultural, cognitive tourism, etc. (Čuka, 2011a).

In this sense, Gúčík (2000) sets out five main motives characteristic for a tourist:

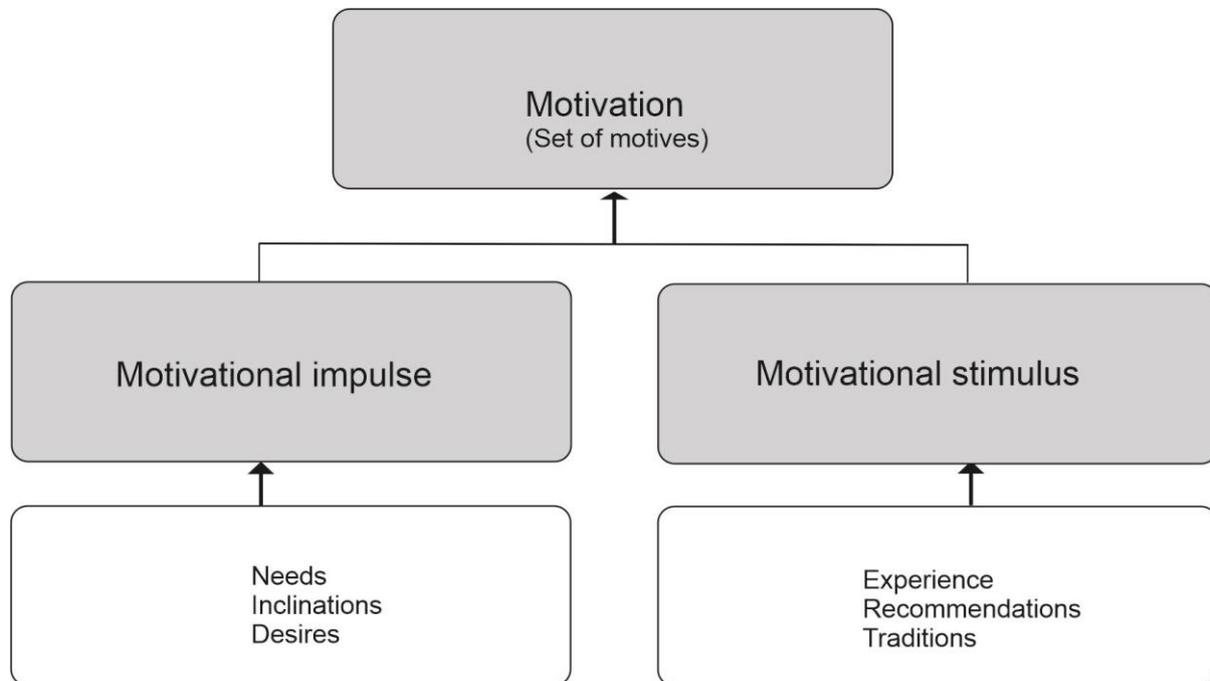
- a) experience - change and learning something new,
- b) spontaneity - not being tied up, paying attention to what I want at the moment,
- c) release - from everyday tension, turn off and do nothing,
- d) activity - to be active, to do something alone or with others,
- e) nature - enjoy the proximity of nature, enjoy the countryside in an undisturbed natural environment.

Przeclawski (1996) talks about the importance of tourism to tourists when, among other things, tourism creates an opportunity for reflection, a chance to get to know, to better understand the world and himself and gives him a feeling of liberty and freedom. According to Gúčík (2000), internal motivation impulses and external motivation incentives contribute to the motivation of a tourism participant. Internal motivational impulses are understood as needs, inclinations and desires. For believers, the decisive motivating impulse is the need for extraordinary action in an attempt to favor God and the Saints, in the hope that the believer will then be protected, cured, that his personal problems will be resolved, and so on. If this has been achieved, the believer has a need to thank God and the Saints at the holy place of the pilgrimage center for the achievements of his benefit. The external incentive is understood as experience, recommendation of others or tradition. The need to go to a pilgrimage site is often supported by a recommendation from the believer's surroundings, or the own experience of similar pilgrimage sites can be also an incentive. Tradition as an external incentive is usually applied to pilgrims, for whom visiting the same pilgrimage site becomes a stereotype of their spiritual life (Fig. 3). The majority of pilgrims are led to pilgrimage only by spiritual motives, in some cases these are complemented by non-religious motives (tourist, business motives etc.). Spiritual motives can be divided in terms of Gavenda (2004) into the following:

1. to see - the main motivation of the pilgrim is only to visually identify the site and have a personal experience of it. This motive is spiritually beneficial if the pilgrim creates the inner space at the pilgrimage places and can present the events in a tangible way;
2. to pray, adore - thanks to this motive, the pilgrim is better aware that he is in the place where the power of God worked. His goal is to pray because he realizes that he is in the place of God's presence;

3. to fulfill a promise - a pilgrim on a pilgrimage fulfills the promise he has given to God for a specific hearing of pleas (healing, help in life, etc.);
4. to hear the prayers - the pilgrim on the pilgrimage asks God for different graces.

From the point of view of our knowledge, we would complement the category of spiritual (primary) motives with the opportunity to thank. Non-religious motives lead to the pilgrimage of those who act as company of the believer. Their motives are usually associated with cognition.



Source: Bublány, 2012

Fig. 3 Aspects of motivation formation in tourism

In addition to the four basic motives of the believer, other motives are recognized as well. Novodvorská (2007) states as a motive e.g. to thank for the graces received, the motive is also the manifestation of faith, the strengthening of faith, the gaining of indulgences, trying to visit new places, to meet new people and so on. The fulfillment of the pilgrim's motivation is beneficial for him not only directly (fulfilling the spiritual motive he has set forth), but also indirectly. The indirect effect of pilgrimage tourism is a satisfied and balanced person who after the pilgrimage can concentrate more on his work and performing better (Elišáková, 2004).

### Geographical aspects of pilgrimage, pilgrimage centers and pilgrimage tourism

Pilgrimage is a cult practice of many religions of the world (Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, Shinto, Buddhism, Christianity). It is based on the specific relationship between the religious nature and the geographical environment that began to form in the past when humanity practiced only primary religions (Matlovič, 2001b). The environment was also a base for cult practices in later monotheistic or polytheistic religions.

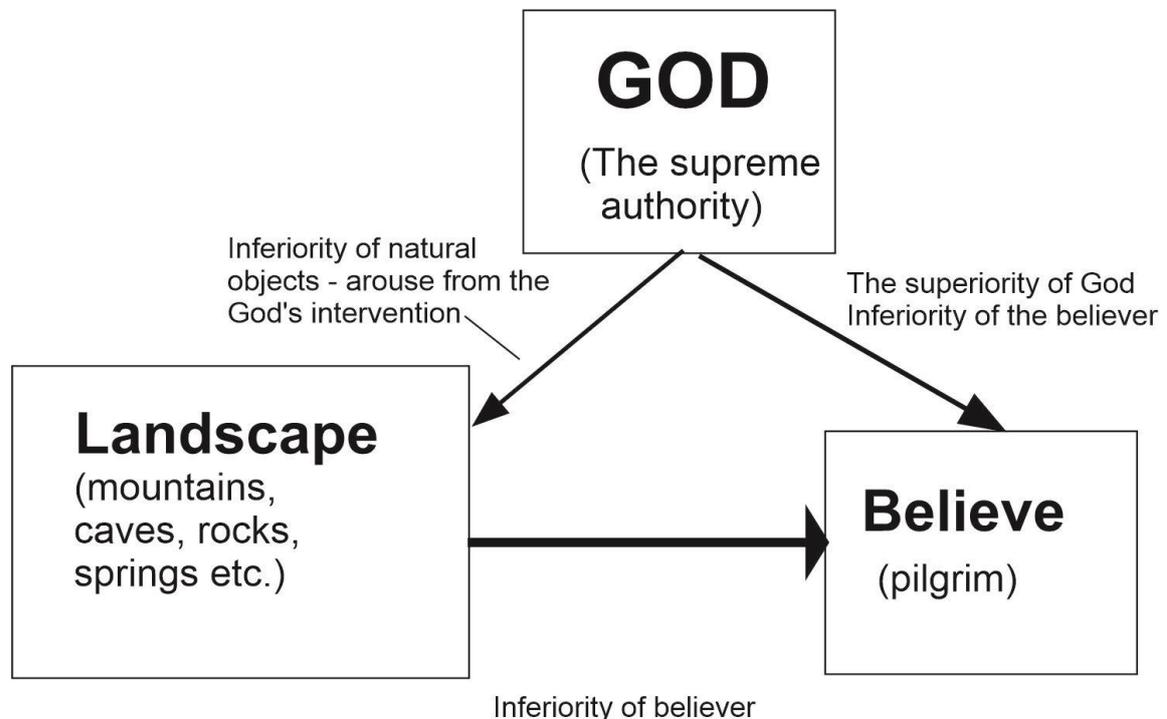
Pilgrimages are one of the public manifestations of piety, and we see them as a journey to any loca sancta, which is organized because of religious motives. Sacred places are tied to biblical characters or to the Old and New Testament events, the cult place of saints or the cult of relics (Jackowski, 2003).

Based on the objective and motivation criteria, pilgrimages can be divided into 5 basic types:

- pilgrimages to the Holy Land,
- pilgrimages connected with the cult of the martyrdom of Jesus Christ and the cult of his relics or miraculous images,
- pilgrimages connected to the cult of hermits and the evolving monastic life,
- pilgrimages connected with the cult of martyrs and their relics,
- pilgrimages connected with the Marian cult and worship of miraculous statues and images of the Virgin Mary (Matlovič, 2001b).

According to Rinschede (1999) in the sense of the Judeo-Christian tradition, man is subordinate to God, but superior to nature. In the pilgrim's mind, this concept does not apply if the objects of pilgrimage are natural

objects in the environment that are related to miracle, healing, apparitions etc. The believer has a positive relationship with them, respects them because they have divine origin. Religious elements in the pilgrimage site influence the pilgrim's behaviour (act in peace) and create a spiritual experience in a person who has come here to recover physical or mental strength, to be healed, to be forgiven, etc. The relationship between man, God, and the elements of natural environment is shown in figure 4.



Source: Bubeliny, 2012

Fig. 4 The relationship between God, landscape and pilgrim

Natural objects having the status of sacredness are described as sacred objects. Pilgrimage sites are now equipped with other religious objects, which have no direct connection to miracle, healing or apparition given that they were built in a later period of time. These include churches, chapels, Stations of the Cross, road crosses, interior or exterior sculptures, etc. On the other hand, it is not excluded that miraculous phenomena are also happening in these locations, so these objects are also considered as sacred in believers' mind and for whole pilgrimage area are only confirming the God's presence. Therefore, the natural and also artificial (cultural-historical) objects located in the geographical area, are presented within the pilgrimage activities as sacrum. This represents a typically religious value that cannot be precisely defined and is considered to have the highest sense, decisive for the destiny of man and the real world (Matlovič, 2001b). Sacrum is hardly identifiable in the pilgrimage space; it is highly subjective in the pilgrim's mind.

Pilgrims, mostly religiously motivated, come to the pilgrimage and other than religious objects and activities are less interesting for them. Cultural and natural attractions are relevant as long as they have a religious significance. Otherwise, they are perceived as complementary.

We divide them into (Bubeliny, 2012):

1. Natural attractions - in pilgrimage centers they can be of primary or secondary importance.
  - a) of primary importance are the natural religious objects mentioned above (sacrum). They are e.g. water springs having medical, healing effects;
  - b) of secondary importance - other natural attractions, e.g. tourist peaks, pilgrimage routes.
2. Cultural-historical attractions - religious cultural monuments are also of primary and secondary importance:
  - a) of the primary importance are religious significant elements in terms of miracle phenomena or healing phenomena. This is where the pilgrimage traditions are based
  - b) of secondary importance are mainly churches (basilicas, minor basilicas), but also in the wider environment of the pilgrimage center there are other religious objects (chapels, cross roads).

Pilgrimage centers can generally be categorized and hierarchized according to different criteria into different type groups. Jackowski (2003) distinguished the following types of pilgrimage centers based on their impact on the socio-economic structure:

- large, specialized pilgrimage centers with all the infrastructure linked to the pilgrim's visits, typical examples are Lourdes, Jerusalem, Fatima, etc.,
- large, partly specialized pilgrimage centers in which a religious function is one of the equivalent functions, e.g. industrial, tourist function, function of the university, etc. (Czestochowa, Mariazell, Mont-Saint-Michel, Krakow),
- pilgrimage centers of usually marginal importance, where the religious function is a complementary function to the commercial (Montreal, Kiev),
- small pilgrimage centers of national and regional importance with a complementary religious function.

In Slovakia, Matlovič (2001b) divides pilgrimage sites into two categories:

- a) pilgrimage sites linked to the worship of the Lord's Torment,
- b) pilgrimage sites associated with the cult of the Virgin Mary.

Pilgrimage centers in relation to the object of peregrination are divided into pilgrimages (Dancák, 2005):

- to the grave of saints (mainly the graves of martyrs, e.g. St. Peter and Paul, St. James),
- to relics (remains stored in reliquaries),
- to places of Eucharistic miracles (for example, miracles of healing),
- to gracious statues and paintings (in particular respect for miraculous statues, images and icons, mostly of the Virgin Mary),
- to the places of heavenly apparitions (especially the apparitions of the Virgin Mary).

An interesting view is presented by ethnologist Zajicová-Nádaská (2004), who sets out:

- a) places of official Marian cult accepted by the Catholic Church,
- b) places of Marian apparitions and wonders not officially accepted by the Catholic Church.

The hierarchical structuring of pilgrimage centers in terms of their importance, like the typological structuring, differs according to various authors. Jackowski (2003) hierarchized pilgrimage sites as follows:

1. pilgrimage sites of world importance (eg Jerusalem, Rome, Lourdes),
2. pilgrimage sites of international importance (eg Santiago de Compostela, Montserrat, Mariazell),
3. pilgrimage sites of national importance,
4. pilgrimage sites of trans-regional importance,
5. pilgrimage sites of regional importance.

The author considers Levoča and Nitra to be the most important pilgrimage sites in Slovakia. An attempt to further categorization of pilgrimage sites in Slovakia was presented by Matlovič (2001a). Hierarchically on the same level in their importance as Nitra are Šaštín and Staré Hory, of regional importance are Gaboltov, Ľutina, Marianka, Rajecká Lesná, Trnava and Zvolen, other pilgrimage sites are of local importance.

From the ethnological point of view, the significance of pilgrimage centers was defined by Zajicová (1998). Marian pilgrimage sites were divided as follows: central pilgrimage sites (250 - 500 thousand pilgrims annually), regional pilgrimage sites (160 - 200 thousand pilgrims annually) and local pilgrimage sites (15 - 20 thousand pilgrims annually). The central pilgrimage sites included Levoča, Šaštín and Marianka. Dubnica nad Váhom, Gaboltov, Hronský Beňadik, Ľutina, Nitra, Radvaň, Rajecká Lesná, Staré Hory, Topoľčany, Topoľčianky, Trnava, Višňové a Živčáková.

### The relationship between pilgrimage tourism and wandering the landscape

We understand the pilgrimage as a movement to sacred places with a spiritual purpose. It has a religious and, therefore, timeless and supra-confessional character linked to the cult. As it has higher goals than religious tourism, it cannot be identified with that form from a religious point of view. Instead, it is a sign of universal value, in which everyone who directs to God participates (Dancák, 2005). The motive for pilgrimage in its religious and spatial context is to visit the holy place (*locus sacer*), where God's presence is most noticeable (Krogmann et al., 2017).

If the pilgrimage is a specific type of migration, religiously motivated, and has accompanied humanity since ancient times, it must have a significant impact on the landscape and local communities. These three aspects of pilgrimage tourism, environmental, social, and economic (Donohoe, 2011), are also characteristic of the ecotourism. It is a form of tourism associated with wandering the landscape ("natural" and cultural) and its observation while gaining an authentic experience of learning about nature, local communities, and their culture. Ecotourism develops sustainably and, therefore, minimizes negative impacts on the natural, social, and cultural environment to preserve the natural and cultural diversity and identity of the landscape.

It is the identity of the landscape, the *genius loci*, that distinguishes pilgrimage centers from each other. The place's spirit imprints a distinctive, unmistakable atmosphere of the pilgrimage center, which is created by the coexistence of "*genia regionis*" (spirit of the landscape) and "*genia populi*" (spirit of people or society) (e.g. figs. 5, 6, 7).



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*Fig. 5 Pilgrimage Center Živčáková at the time of the main church consecration in 2014*



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*Fig. 6 Pilgrimage center Mariánska hora in Levoča, the largest Roman Catholic center in Slovakia*



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*Fig. 7 Pilgrimage Center Lutina, the largest Greek Catholic center in Slovakia*

There are currently 151 pilgrimage centers and towns in Slovakia. Most of them are in the Prešov region - 26, then in the Nitra region - 22, then in the Banská Bystrica region - 21. In the Košice and Trenčín regions, both 19, Žilina region 18, and the regions of Trnava and Bratislava 13 (Matlovičová et al., 2015).

### Current directions of pilgrimage tourism research

We want to outline the current directions of research in this area based on the excerpt of sources of domestic and foreign provenance related to pilgrimage activities and pilgrimage tourism, and predict possible areas of further research at the same time. In this case, however, it is no longer possible to limit oneself to pilgrimage traditions in Christianity, but it is necessary to extend the study of pilgrimage en bloc, i.e., in all religions.

This issue was not given much attention in scientific circles; only 84 articles were published in prestigious periodicals during 1983-2018, concerning the religious, respectively pilgrimage tourism and pilgrimage activities (Table 1). This number began to grow relatively rapidly at the turn of the millennium (Durán-Sánchez et al., 2018).

*Table 1 Number of contributions related to religious resp. pilgrimage tourism published in significant periodicals*

<b>Title of the scientific periodical</b>	<b>Number of published papers</b>
Annals of Tourism Research	23
Tourism Management	10
Journal of Travel Research	3
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	4
International Journal of Tourism Research	15
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	5
Tourism Economics	4
Tourism Geographies	3
Current Issues in Tourism	9
International Journal of Hospitality Management	2
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	1
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	5

Source: Kim, King, 2019

Most of the attention that is evident in the tourism literature lies in identifying the dichotomy between saints and secular pilgrimage motifs (Collins-Kreiner, Gatrell, 2006; Damari, Mansfeld, 2014; Devereux, Carnegie, 2006; Jackowski, Smith, 1992; Svoboda et al., 2013; Vukonić, 1992).

The relationship between the concepts of religion and tourism has been examined from different perspectives (Collins-Kreiner 2010a, 2018). Bremer (2005) points to three approaches in which scientists create intersections between religion and tourism: a spatial approach (pilgrims and tourists who occupy the same space in different ways of behaving), a historical approach (the relationship between religious forms of travel and tourism) and a cultural approach (pilgrimage and tourism as modern practices in the postmodern world).

One of the most discussed issues among the authors is the difference between tourists and pilgrims, both actors in religious tourism. The pilgrimage is often defined as "a journey of religious causes, externally to the holy place and internally for spiritual purposes and inner understanding", which presupposes the traveling of a religious devotee to a sacred religious place (Turner and Turner 1978). Others, such as Collins-Kreiner (2010b) and Morinis (1992), define a pilgrimage as a journey to a place that embodies a highly valued, deeply meaningful, or the source of the traveler's primary identity.

A lot of secular people travel to places of deep personal significance in the secular world. Thus, secular pilgrimages include paths to graves and monuments of famous personalities, famous sports fields, or places of political importance (Digance 2003; Morinis 1992). In short, Hyde and Harman (Hyde – Harman, 2011) argue that the pilgrimage is not just a religious phenomenon and that the old pilgrimage paradigm based on religious elements is no longer valid (Collins-Kreiner 2010a, 2010b). Instead, two alternative forms of pilgrimage need to be recognized: religious and secular.

### Conclusion

Our ambition was to present theoretical and methodological basis of pilgrimage tourism research. The elements of which it is formed and the spatial bonds that apply between them were judged on a historical, empirical and philosophical basis.

In the new millennium, there has been an increase in the interest of experts, not only geographers, in research into issues related to religious or pilgrimage tourism. The first more relevant work (WoS) of this kind

was published in 1968 and since then there has been a constant increase in scientific contributions on several aspects of religiosity and pilgrimage (Durán-Sánchez et al., 2018).

The most important include:

- relationship between the concepts of religion and tourism,
- difference between tourists and pilgrims,
- dichotomy between saints and secular pilgrimage motifs.

We consider these three topics as possible directions of pilgrimage tourism research in the future.

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