

Article

Marian Devotion on the Camino de Santiago during the Middle Ages

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Abstract: This article presents the theological basis of Marian devotion on the medieval Camino de Santiago and its manifestation in the form of Marian advocacies (Virgen Peregrina, Virgen del Camino). The presence of the cult of the Virgin Mary on the pilgrimage route to Compostela, closely linked to the Jacobean tradition from the very beginning, grows out of the main Mariological trend in the Middle Ages, expressed in the synthesis of Thomas Aquinas. However, a special relationship must be sought in the Mariology of the Hispanic–Mozarabic rite, which created the spiritual climate for the Compostela pilgrimages in the first centuries of their existence.

Keywords: Thomism; Mariology; Camino de Santiago; medieval pilgrimage; cult of saints; Mozarabic rite



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1. Introduction

The notable presence of Marian devotion in the twelve centuries of pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela to venerate the remains of St. James the Great in the *Finis Terrae* of Western Europe is palpable and significant (Rucquoi 2018; Greenia 2018; Mróz and Mróz 2013; Mróz et al. 2022). It has given rise to abundant bibliographies throughout these centuries, to which pilgrims, scholars and also theologians of great prestige have contributed. Some of them, such as Robert Plötz, refer to a curious “competition” between the Mother of Christ and the apostle (Plötz 1997, p. 174). For this German expert, there are two key questions on this subject, summarized as follows: What happened in the Hispanic lands and, above all, along the Way of St. James that caused the competition between the Virgin Mary and the Apostle? How and in what way did they leave traces in the historical testimony?

2. The Presence of the Marian Cult in Medieval Camino

On the Way of St. James, there are numerous temples dedicated to the mother of Jesus, just as—to a lesser extent—others are dedicated to saints and can be visited in that kind of devotional altarpiece that is contemplated by those who walk this spiritual and human journey. It is of vital importance to give value to the intermediate sanctuaries on the Camino; many of them are, in turn, the objects of regional or national veneration, especially when we observe the increase in the number of pilgrimages divided into sections (Tanco Lerga 2010, p. 61; Gonzalez and de la Calle 2020). Some saints—such as Saint Millán, with his life related to Bishop Braulio of Zaragoza and his *Glosas Emilianenses*, completed around 994—are a good example of this (Tanco Lerga 2011, pp. 31–53). It is no coincidence that the first written testimony we have of a pilgrim on the French Way, Bishop Godescalco, left a copy of a book in the monastery of San Martín de Albelda in 950 (La Rioja, then part of the kingdom of Pamplona and near Nájera). It was logically handwritten, and was a Marian treatise written by Saint Ildefonso of Toledo, which he would collect on his return from the cathedral of Compostela the following year on his return to his seeing of Le Puy in France. It also shows that, in the land of Mary, as Spain is known, devotion

to the Mother of Jesus, who, according to the tradition, visited St. James around year 40 in Saragossa, had an influence in the first millennium of Christianity in fostering Marian devotion. The study of the role of the Virgin in the Reconquest—first in Andalusia and then in the Christian kingdoms as the Reconquest progressed—is very interesting, first in Covadonga from 918 onwards and then in so many invocations of victories and spiritual struggle, such as the knightly Santiago, protector of faith, popularly known as Santiago Matamoros after the battle of Clavijo. The Virgin and Saint James the Apostle, although not exclusively—there are San Millán and the Victoria crosses and other signs of protection in the struggle to restore faith—represent the symbols to which the fighters for the Christian faith in reconquering Spain took refuge.

In the second millennium, following the Marian spread promoted by the monasteries, mainly Benedictine and Cistercian—St. Bernard is very emblematic—devotion to Mary is widespread throughout the pilgrimage to Santiago. Pilgrimage centers such as Le Puy, Rocamadour, and Montserrat, and hospitals named after the Mother of God, such as Roncesvalles, are very present along the Camino on the different routes that pilgrims choose from their homes to reach Compostela. In the burials of pilgrims who died with their “boots on”, in addition to the motifs attributed to their *santiaguera* condition, we see insignia of Marian devotion sewn or attached to the tunics and attire proper for their purpose (Pugliese et al. 2013). Those who go on pilgrimages to Galicia have many allusions in medieval Hispanic literature and, to a lesser extent, in the Romance languages that were also incipient in other nations, which justify their popular roots. *Loores de Nuestra Señora*, Gonzalo de Berceo in the background; and the *Cantigas del rey Sabio*, with the *Virgen Blanca* from Villalcázar de Sirga, serve as examples in this respect. It is worthy to underline that the *Cantigas* are a reflection of the oral tradition of the people, so they are of great interest as a source of miracles and legends of the Camino.

To take a starting reference to this mutual relationship between the Marian and the Jacobean, we can turn to the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, a masterpiece relating to the pilgrimage with its five books, not all by the same author, but which do highlight the overall movement of the Jacobean pilgrimage at a time of splendor, such as the first third of the 12th century (Moralejo et al. 1993, p. 634). As is well known, between 1120 and 1124, the first archbishop of Santiago, Diego Gelmirez, asked a group of theologians and intellectuals of his time for a compilation of texts, completed by contributions from different pens until their definitive writing, which we have to place around 1160. The aim of the group of authors was to show that it was the Cluniac pope Calixtus II (1119–1124) who wrote the text in his own hand and has given the five books of the work the name *Codex Calixtinus*.

Already in Book I, the author emphasizes the preponderant role of Mary in the history of Salvation: “The clouds rained down on the Just One when the apostles preached him to the world. He opened the earth when the Virgin Mary received Him. The earth bore the fruit of the Saviour when the Virgin Mother of God gave birth to Christ who saved the world from the ruin of sin” (Moralejo et al. 1993, p. 33). In the Miracles attributed to St. James, the Book refers on several occasions to Mary’s salvific role, as in the case of the man who committed suicide at the instigation of the devil and was resurrected with the help of Mary. Book II of the *Codex* describes twenty-two miracles, including the one mentioned above and the one worked by the Apostle who punished—in an exemplary manner—an innkeeper from Pamplona who swindled a French pilgrim from Poitou who was making the pilgrimage to Compostela with his wife who had died in the capital of Navarre and their two children. The author calls some of the miracles as examples, because their aim is to exemplify or teach good behavior on the pilgrimage.

In the great miracle of St. James—number XVII of Book II of the *Codex Calixtinus*, which is attributed to the pen of St. Anselm of Canterbury—the pilgrim narrator, who has been made to change his journey from the Way to Santiago to that of Rome, has a vision of the Virgin narrated in these words: “Thus”, says the narrator, “compelled by him we came to Rome, where by the church of St. Peter the Apostle there was a green and spacious place in the plain of the air, to which innumerable multitudes of saints had come for an assembly.

The Venerable Lady Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary presided over it, and many great men were seated to the right and left of them. I stood gazing at her with a heavy heart, for I had never seen such a beautiful creature in my life. She was not tall, but of medium height, with a beautiful face and a delightful appearance. The holy Apostle, my most pious advocate, immediately appeared before her, and before all, he cried out how the fallacy of Satan had defeated me. And she immediately turned to the demons and said: Ah, you wretches, what were you looking for in a pilgrim of my Lord and Son, and of James his loyal one?" (Moralejo et al. 1993, own translation).

Book V of *Codex Calixtinus* describes the routes and stages of the pilgrims in the era of splendor, the 11th and 12th centuries of the Romanesque and Cluny, the Gregorian reform that replaced the Hispanic rites in many aspects, and in which Sancho III the Great of Navarre (1004–1035) played a preponderant role in orchestrating the Reconquest and uniting of the Christian peninsular kingdoms. The author of Book V declares in the first person: "I have limited myself to enumerating these towns and the aforementioned journeys so that pilgrims on their way to Santiago may foresee, with this information, the necessary expenses for their journey" (Moralejo et al. 1993, p. 507). Further on, after describing the rivers, he says: "I have described these rivers so that pilgrims on their way to Santiago may avoid drinking in unhealthy ones and may choose the good ones for themselves and their horses". The author of the book—according to many authors, the French cleric and priest of Parthenay, Aymeric Picaud—when speaking of the Navarrese, especially in the northern pilgrimage area, quotes a list of Basque words used by the natives of that mountainous area near Roncesvalles, which brought back such bad memories of Charlemagne's defeat in 778, including the name of the Virgin: "God is called Urcia; the Mother of God, Andrea Maria; the bread, orgui; the wine, arдум; the meat, aragui; the house, echea; the owner of the house, iaona; the lady, andrea; the church, elicera; the presbyter, belaterra; the wheat, gari; the water, uric; the king, ereguía; Santiago, Iaona domne Iacue".

2.1. Marian Shrines on the Way of St. James

Book V of the *Codex Calixtinus* lists places of religious tradition and devotion to the saints exposed along the way, with the relics that are essential for Eucharistic celebrations and the object of great popular veneration as well as social and cultural references. Many of these milestones along the route had temples, sanctuaries and hermitages related to Mary.

One example is the dedication of large cathedrals on pilgrimage routes. To stick to the French Route in Spain, we can observe the dedication of the cathedrals of Pamplona (*Santa María la Real*); Logroño (*Santa María de la Redonda*); Burgos (with the same Marian title); *Santa María la Blanca* in León—another of the great Spanish cathedrals—and many other Marian shrines. A specialist and promoter of pilgrimage initiatives, Jesús Arraiza, wrote an enlightening book on the Marian presence on the Way of St. James, entitled *Por la ruta jacobea con Santa María* (Arraiza Frauca 1993).

The author lists nearly two hundred temples, sanctuaries and hermitages on the French Route in Spain and on the route from Oviedo to Santiago via Lugo that have the Virgin Mary as their main patron saint (Roszak 2018). In the pages of this book, we find, among many others: *Santa María de Roncesvalles*, *Santa María del Perdón* in Astráin, *Santa María de Eunate*, *Santa María la Real* (Rocamador) in Sangüesa, *Santa María de Los Arcos*, and in the short space of four kilometers—Estella and Ayegui—three images of great importance: El Puy, Rocamador and Irache of medieval origin and with a clear Jacobean connotation. In La Rioja, *Santa María la Real* de Nájera stands out. The lands of Burgos, such as *Santa María de la Calle* in Redecilla; *Santa María* de Oca; and *Santa María del Manzano* in Castrojeriz; are very rich in these dedications to the Virgin. In the Palencia area, there are *La Blanca* de Villalcaázar de Sirga; *Santa María* del Castillo in Frómista; the *Virgen del Camino* in Carrión de los Condes. Jesús Arraiza continues with other devotions, such as in León—in addition to the cathedral dedicated to the aforementioned *Virgen Blanca*, the *Virgen Peregrina* in Sahagún; *Nuestra Señora del Camino* in the village of La Virgen del Camino; *Nuestra Señora*

de la Majestad, which presides over the cathedral of Astorga; the *Virgen de la Encina*—a Jacobean enclave in Ponferrada if ever there was one; and the great chapel of the *Quinta Angustia* in Molinaseca; Galicia welcomes the pilgrim with the Marian temple of *Santa María la Real* in Cebreiro and continues with *La Merced* in Sarria, *Virgen de las Victorias* in Portomarín; and many others to culminate in Santiago with several venerated images, such as *La Peregrina*, *Virgen del Portal*, *la Corticela* and *Virgen del Camino*.

On the way to Oviedo and Lugo, we can see *Santa María de Arbas*, *Virgen de las Nieves* in the Pajares pass; *Virgen del Carmen* in Mieres del Camino; *la Balesquida*, *Virgen del Rey Casto* and *Virgen del Socorro* in Oviedo; *Nuestra Señora del Fresno* in Grado, *Virgen del Viso* in Salas and *Santa María la Real* in Obona. In Cangas de Narcea there is *Virgen del Acebo*; in Pola de Allande, *Virgen del Avellano*; in Fonsagrada, *Virgen de la Fuente* and in Lugo, *Virgen de los Ojos Grandes*. Jesús Arraiza, with photographs and descriptions included, describes two hundred sanctuaries, churches and hermitages on the Camino Frances. Many of these milestones, as on other routes, have devotional brotherhoods attached to them that provide help and collaboration to the ecclesiastical leaders of these enclaves. Many of them offer a Christian welcome and generous hospitality to pilgrims.

2.2. Studies on Marian Devotion on the Camino de Santiago

The Marian bibliography on the Pilgrim's Way is very varied and extensive. I would like to highlight the work of the couple María Cuende and Darío Izquierdo, who have several titles on the subject under the title *La Virgen María en las rutas jacobeanas* (The Virgin Mary on the Jacobean Routes). One of them, which I know was very well received, was on the presence of the Virgin Mary in Portugal during the pilgrimage (Izquierdo and Cuende 2005). The series began with a study of the French Way (Cuende and Izquierdo 1997) and has served, as in the case of Jesús Arraiza's book, to awaken scientific and informative interest in the subject. Juan José Cebrián collected a repertoire in Galicia. The pairing of Mary and the Pilgrim's Way to Santiago has given rise to initiatives of great significance in recent years of the revival of the pilgrimage. By way of example, the Castilian–Leonese exhibitions of the "Ages of Man" have always offered samples of Marian images along the way. On other occasions, specific exhibitions have been held with great success, which have served to publicize and enhance the value of images, both in Spain and abroad. Various national studies, the treatment of which goes beyond the scope of this article, serve as a reference for those who wish to look into this extraordinary world of Marian devotion on pilgrimages and especially on the Pilgrim's Way to the apostolic tomb in Compostela.

Special mention should be made of the Marian invocation of the *Virgen Peregrina*, who is venerated in different places. The Galician city of Pontevedra has her as its patron saint with a basilica that is much frequented by her devotees, but also by the pilgrims who pass through this part of the Portuguese Way. In Sahagún, there has been a special cult of the Pilgrim Virgin who have occupied a place of honor in the Benedictine monastery, which is now in a sacred museum. La Rioja, in the town of Leiva, also has an image with the attire of a pilgrim, a large hat, a staff and a sash. In Zúñiga (Navarre), the Pilgrim Virgin is also prayed to in a similar way.

The holy Dominican founder, Domingo de Guzmán (13th century) and pilgrim to Santiago, a Spaniard from Burgos and a great promoter of the Holy Rosary, would be very happy if the litany of the Rosary included the protection of pilgrims to the Virgin, that is, Holy Mary, Queen of pilgrims, pray for us.

3. Theological Background of Camino Piety: Medieval Mariology in Its Two Characteristics

The manifestations of devotion and veneration in a particular epoch of history find their justification in the Mariology prevalent at the time. The way in which the mystery of Mary's life was presented and the attention paid to certain themes became the motif for many manifestations of art, imagery and prayers, which were also created on the Way of St. James and formed the identity of the pilgrim (Huzarek 2014, 2021; Roszak and

Seryczyńska 2020). The medieval pilgrim and his imagination and his way of experiencing the pilgrimage route to Compostela may have been influenced by two main theological currents associated with the Way of St. James. On the one hand, it was the synthesis of Thomas Aquinas, which, over time, became a classic study and reached many of the faithful through sermons. On the other hand, due to the peculiarities of the Spanish context, one can try to discern theological influences going back to the Hispanic–Mozarabic rite in pilgrims walking to Santiago.

3.1. Thomistic Mariology in the Christocentric Perspective

St. Thomas presents his reflection on the Blessed Virgin Mary not in isolation from Christology, but as a kind of preparation for it, contemplating Her as *via Christi*—as a path to Christ. Therefore, all theological justifications concerning Mary have a Christological background in Aquinas (Mróz and Roszak 2011, p. 202).

The main Mariological theme in the Thomistic view is the motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which Thomas presents in the spirit of the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon, which emphasizes the belief in the singularity of the person of Christ: the human and divine natures exist in the one hypostasis of the Word. This means that there is only one divine act of Christ's being, and thus Mary's motherhood is *vere et naturalis*, not merely symbolic (Dabrowski 2002; Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium Theologiae*, cap. 222). Aquinas advocates a way of doing Mariology in which the person of Mary and her true divine parentage become the center of gravity of all the other mysteries of her life, and thus in their relation to Christ as the Savior (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q.29. a2c). He therefore considers her motherhood in the context of a proper grasp of the mystery of the Incarnation (Stancati 2009, p. 26), hence recalling his birth from the Father before the ages and his birth in time.

Aquinas therefore sees in Mary's motherhood the key to understanding her role also in relation to the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church. For she is not limited to a single event, but becomes a model for Christians (and the Church) of how Christ is born in the life of faith. Certainly, this theme is present in the multiple manifestations of art on the Way of St. James, where reverence towards Mary is linked to her divine motherhood: it reminds us that the pilgrim life is also the formation of Christ in each of the faithful. She gives birth to the Son who is the Light of the World, but by extension Mary is also *lux* in her attitude towards God—as resounds in the sermon of Thomas' *Lux orta*, full of Old Testament allusions and delivered on the occasion of the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

A second strand of Thomistic Mariology is the emphasis placed on Mary as a 'dialogical woman', which Thomas Aquinas considers in the context of the scene of the Annunciation (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q.30, a.4c). For Mary, dialogue with God is the foundation of her witness: she carries it out in order to become a more confident witness to this mystery. Mary's dialogue does not stop at an exchange with the divine messenger; it is a commitment made in a spirit of obedience (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q.30, a.1c). The Mother of God's spoken fiat is an indication of the importance of the cooperation of a free creature in the work of redemption, and comes from a rational consideration of the word received. Mary as a free person, as Aquinas depicts her, points to the path that God proposes to man. The mystery of the Annunciation shows that Mary first becomes a disciple of the Lord and a person of faith, and only then, as a consequence, the physical Mother of Christ: He must be "conceived" by faith first in her heart rather than in her body.

What draws attention—also in the context of other scholastic mariologies—is the Trinitarian context. It is expressed, among other things, by Aquinas' commentary on Psalm 17, in which he calls the Virgin Mary 'the way to Jesus Christ' (*via Christi est Virgo Beata*) because her Son himself is the way to God (*via Dei est ipse Christus*). It is through Mary that Christ 'came' to humanity, and this is where her special ministry (*ministerium*) lies. For the Christian, it is an indication to take the path like Mary, for she is the *dux itinerantium*—the guide towards Christ. It is thus a journey of grace, during which man can count not only

on natural light, but on all the colors of the light of grace, as indicated by the Marian title *mater gratuita colorum*. It involves her accepting the will of the Father, which she fulfills in the spirit of her own mediation in the work of salvation, which is obviously incomparable to the mediation of Christ.

This spiritual mediation is analyzed by Thomas in the light of the miracle at the wedding at Cana, which, in his view, reveals two characteristics of Mary: piety (*pietas*) and mercy (*miser cordia*). It is her ability to see those in need and to identify with them, and this is due to her identification with Christ (Thomas Aquinas, *In Ioannem*, cap. II, lect.1). Mary helps to find a solution for those people who do not see where to look. Mary presents their requests in a simple, simpliciter way, without unnecessary complexity. She begins to act, not at the last minute, but by being close to other people, she initiates action at the right moment. She shows herself to be caring and preventive when it comes to the welfare of other people by helping especially those who often try to hide their shortcomings and do not acknowledge them. Such mediation of Mary's mercy is possible because she is 'as close to Christ' as possible—which is what piety is supposed to lead towards. All these qualities are undoubtedly revealed in the worship of Mary on the pilgrimage routes: she teaches a mercy and piety that manifests itself not in spiritual closure, but in openness to fellow pilgrims and to the key issue of closeness to Christ through the sacraments.

It is still worth highlighting the theme of 'Mary's holiness', which Thomas discusses in detail, especially in a negative way—that is, by pointing out what Mary was free from. Undoubtedly, Thomas adopts the perspective of St. Paul, who speaks of the sin that has cast a shadow over all humanity. Nevertheless, in the case of Mary, he wishes to emphasize that her motherhood does not mean giving up her daily life—her vocation as a woman, wife and mother—in order to become God's chosen instrument. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit are in her—through which the greatness of the human being who follows the will of God and accepts his grace is shown. It is freedom from sin and the ability to act deservedly, freely responding to the good that is set before man.

By that means, the term 'full of grace' has a twofold sense for Aquinas—being linked to her participation in the grace of Christ as the Head. First, it is 'immunity from sin' and perfection of the virtues; second—redundancy of grace and being a *mediatrix* of grace for other people (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, q.27, a.5, ad 1), but always in relation to the source of grace, which is Christ.

3.2. Virgin Mary in Medieval Mozarabic Tradition

For a study of the Mariology evident on the Camino de Santiago in the form of works of art and euchology, it is worth noting the Marian devotion witnessed in the Hispanic–Mozarabic rite (Ibañez and Mendoza 1990; Roszak 2015; Ihnat 2019). It is about celebrating the liturgy according to the original custom that developed in the Iberian Peninsula from the first days of the evangelization of that country (Ihnat 2016). Despite the Arabization that began in 711, with the crossing of Gibraltar by Arab troops, the rite developed during the Visigothic period remained present and was a source of identity for Christians living in a culture increasingly distant from their faith (Pinell 1998). Many Christians from the south, particularly from Andalusia, migrated towards the northern kingdoms of Spain, bringing their piety, growing out of the Hispanic rite and the theology of the Visigothic period, especially St. Isidore, St. Leander or St. Ildefonso of Toledo (Ferrer Grenesche 2008; Porosło 2021), by maintaining the cult of St. James, who in time became the patron saint of the Reconquista. Nevertheless, it is important to note the very presence of a number of Marian feasts, which only later found their way into the Roman liturgy.

Mozarabic Mariology developed three fundamental themes related to Mary's role in the work of salvation, which became the main lines of Mariological systematization in the Middle Ages. On the one hand is the theme of Mary's virgin motherhood.

In the Hispanic liturgy, the designation of Mary as 'always Virgin', as well as her Immaculate Conception, appear in many Mass forms (Aldazabal 1990). At the same time, the need to place Marian reflection in the context of Christ's mission is emphasized (Garrido

1962). This, in turn, translates into reading Mary through the lens of her mission in the work of redemption. She is the advocate of inclusion in the church; she becomes the mediatrix leading to Christ, and so it is per Mariam that the Christian vocation is realized. It is noteworthy that the Mariology of the Hispanic Rite focuses on the notion of ‘mission’ and ‘vocation’, introducing a significant dynamic reflected in the forms of following Mary in the lives of Christians.

A distinctive feature of Hispanic prayers is the conviction that Mary’s faith is a ‘resting place’ for Christ, who wishes to meet humanity in this way. This means that Visigothic or Mozarabic Mariology seeks to combine two traditions: both the Western one, with its emphasis on the physicality of motherhood (focus on the ‘body’); and the Greek one, preferring to speak of Mary’s spiritual quality (focus on the ‘soul’) (Girones 1970, p. 464). The idea was to emphasize that *mente et ventre concepit, virgo spiritualiter et corporaliter*. Mary is not only the mother of the ‘physical’ Christ, but also of his Mystical Body, and therefore the mother of the Church (Ibáñez 1974).

What is noteworthy is that it was important for the Hispanic theologians creating the euchology of the Mozarabic rite to see in Mary the way in which God accomplishes his saving intentions (Janini 1987). This is done not ‘in spite of’ human choices, but through the free decisions of creatures. The key remains her consent and commitment (Ibáñez 1975).

4. Conclusions

The two-pronged analysis undertaken—of the presence of forms of Marian devotion in the contemporary Camino de Santiago, but also of the theological origins of these foundations—has shown the influence of many theological themes debated in the Middle Ages on the concrete manifestations of Marian devotion among pilgrims to Compostela. The influence of both Western and Eastern Mariology can be seen, which is not surprising given that the Camino became a route for the exchange of many theological ideas, manifesting forms of piety brought from their own countries. In the future, it would be worthwhile to reach out for research that could show how local traditions from many European countries formed Marian devotion on the Camino de Santiago.

In the representations of the Virgen del Camino or Virgen Peregrina, it is not so much the divine motherhood of Mary that is revealed, as her role in the history of salvation. It is to point to Mary as the way to Christ, and as a model of responding to God’s call in the midst of life’s journey. Marian statues on the Way of St. James make not only the condition of *homo viator* or *homo peregrinus* visible, but Mary’s mediation of mercy towards the Church to bring about an encounter with Christ—the meaning of every pilgrimage in Christian theology (Roszak 2022). Apart from that, what is emphasized in the mystery of the Virgin is the gifts of grace (*gratia plena*) with which God has adorned her (Ferrer Grenesche 2019). In this way, her obedience of faith that brings Christ to the people seems to be the central Mariological truth on the Way of St. James (Ferrer Grenesche 2012).

Marian devotion on the Way of St. James is therefore not a ‘foreign body’ but a logical consequence, not only of the history of the apostolic mission of St. James—as evidenced by the cult of the Virgen del Pilar—but of the sense of pilgrimage (Mróz et al. 2019). Seeing Mary on the road, the pilgrim becomes aware of his or her vocation and call (Seryczyńska 2019), and at the same time that he or she is not going alone but is accompanied by the intercession of the Mother of God. Being on the road ceases to be a mere description of a physical condition and begins the perspective of a soteriological interpretation of the pilgrimage experience (Roszak 2019; Doburzyński 2021; Oviedo 2022).

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