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**The Archaeology of Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago de
Compostela, Spain: A Landscape Perspective**

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Glasgow, January 2007

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Abstract

Theoretical perspectives on landscape and bodily engagement with place inform an approach to the medieval pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Focused primarily, but not exclusively, on the central Middle Ages, this research confronts two core questions: how did transient, mobile groups perceive and experience the diverse terrain of the pilgrim route in northern Spain? And how may their ephemeral presence be traced in the archaeological record? This thesis is underpinned by the conviction that the journey of medieval pilgrims, as opposed to their destination, deserves greater scrutiny. Pilgrimage is envisaged as a sequence of movement *through* landscapes, in which both built “sites” and unaltered aspects of the physical environment, such as rivers, mountains and arid plains, are integral to the experience and meaning of devotional travel.

Three topographically distinct Study Areas along the length of the Camino in Navarre, Burgos and Galicia form the basis for the analysis of localised sets of material culture. Within these areas, historical and geographical information, surviving monuments and structures, and a fieldwork plan designed to engage with the processes of making a linear journey, combine to form data-sets from which to tackle more refined contextual research questions. Significant issues include pilgrim versus local identity, the exertion of control over the flow of traffic, the material expression of religious behaviour and, throughout, the complex meshing of landscape, perception, movement and belief.

The main thrust of my argument is that large numbers of pilgrims were heavily influenced by contemporary medieval narrative tradition in which landscape was a powerful metaphor for religious meaning, experience and deportment. Material culture along the Camino speaks volumes about a powerful “culture of the route”, ritual performances, thresholds, transitions, and social relations across landscapes. The sum of evidence indicates a radical impact on local landscapes with some sectors of the community benefiting from the unfolding movement while others appearing to distance themselves from the perpetual stream of pilgrims.

Simultaneously, this research demonstrates the validity of an archaeological approach to the study of pilgrimage. The landscapes of pilgrimage routes, particularly in western Europe represent a vastly neglected area of enquiry. The research carried out for this thesis represents a positive addition to current debate that scrutinises the role of archaeology in the interrogation of ritual and religion in the past.

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1. Setting out...

Be for them Lord, a defence in emergency, a harbour in shipwreck, a refuge on the journey, shade in the heat, light in the darkness, a staff on the slippery slope, joy amidst suffering, consolation in sadness, safety in adversity, caution in prosperity, so that these, your servants,...may arrive where they are boldly going, and may return unharmed (excerpt from an eleventh century liturgy for departing pilgrims. Quoted in Webb 1999: 46-7).

Throughout Europe, in the early spring of every year during the central Middle Ages, countless ordinary people were waking up in the knowledge that on that day they were going to rise from their beds and start to walk. After the official rites of blessing, and a public ceremony to mark their departure, they were going to walk from their home, their village or town, and keep on walking until all that was familiar was left far behind. At some point on their way, they would join a veritable river of people travelling westwards; a mass movement in fact. They would traverse vast tracts of foreign terrain in a long drawn out ritual conceived to transform body and soul. Their destination? Santiago de Compostela; a city on the western fringes of the known world in north-western Spain. There the cathedral shrine was believed to contain not just a small relic, but the entire body of the Apostle St James.

This PhD thesis is about their journey. It is about inner landscapes forged through the bodily process of travel, the mythic places of medieval theology and the physical contours of the route to Santiago de Compostela. Focused on three Study Areas along the principal route-way across northern Spain in the foothills of the Pyrenees, the Meseta lands of Burgos and the mountains of Galicia, this research is also a practical investigation of how anonymous, fleeting travellers of past landscapes can be traced archaeologically. What is the material imprint of a subject group that was, by definition, transient, mobile and ephemeral? Two questions remain constant: how did the diverse terrain of the route shape the experience of pilgrims? And, conversely, how did they, a perpetual stream of walking human bodies, impact upon the landscape? While I focus primarily on the

central Middle Ages, the nature of the available evidence often prompts an investigation of the pilgrimage in the later medieval period.



Figure 1.1: A 1648 map of roads to Santiago de Compostela (reproduced from www.diocesi.torino.it/immagini/europa/radici_cristiane.jpg).

1.1 Research aims

Personal accounts of pilgrimage, from all epochs, leave us with no doubt about the importance of the journey and the landscape to the overall project of religiously inspired travel. Published veterans of the walk to Santiago speak of views, the changing light, the sounds and smells, the aches and pains. They describe exhausting up-hill climbs, the burning sun, monotonous trudges, profound senses of exhilaration on rain-washed hills, and disorientating city experiences. Participants often interpret such experiences in symbolic terms. Similarly, many medieval narratives dwell on bodily health and the fears associated with traversing high mountains, walking through deserted wastelands and crossing perilous oceans. They emphasise the idea of penitence and associate landscapes with biblical events and stories. Ideas are formed along the way.

I argue here that a traditional archaeological focus on “sites”, and artefactual collections can only consider a mere fraction of the experience of pilgrimage movement. Isolated studies of material culture effectively remove evidence from the wider context of routes so that “implicit stories of movement” (Coleman and Eade 2004: 1) become lost. Meanwhile, anthropological and historical analyses that investigate only the final destinations of pilgrimage travel ignore the complex sequences of bodily movement involved in reaching them and thereby neglect an important and significant area of enquiry.

Long-distance medieval pilgrimage involved a sequential bodily movement through large areas of unknown landscapes. The participants, although by no means a homogenous group of people, were essentially engaged in a choreographed form of ritualised activity and motion that was far more than a simple process of travelling from A to B. Rather than a straightforward act of getting to the “sacred centre”, where the real action could commence, pilgrims, as made clear by their accounts, were heavily involved in a grounded, day-to-day negotiation of terrain that was integral to shaping meaning.

I argue that pilgrims, as they travelled, were essentially immersed in an “evolving sequence and continuation of sensation” (Pellicer Corellano 1993: 79) in which every aspect of the landscape can be seen as playing a part. Furthermore, as they travelled, they interacted with their environment. Over time, endlessly repeating patterns of movement are interpretable as setting in motion processes of more lasting material expression. Others, meanwhile, responded to their presence. Pilgrims did not move in isolation. In this thesis, an archaeological perspective effectively gives a voice to the anonymous groups who were actually confronted with the pilgrimage movement on a daily basis.

Taking the lead from other research, I define “landscape” to include every material component that could be encountered during the pilgrimage journey or was associated with the process of travel. Such material ranges from road-side structures, monuments, settlements, cairns, graffiti and the road itself, to the configuration of physical landforms that determine slope, hydrology, climate and

vegetation, to other groups of human beings in the landscape; both pilgrims and the local communities of the route-ways.

Consequently, in this thesis, I maintain that the journey of medieval pilgrims, and all that it implies, deserves further exploration and investigation and that, furthermore, this investigation must engage with two key challenges. The first, stemming from intensely productive recent debate on landscape archaeology, comprises an analysis of the “total landscape” of the route. The second involves a focus on the sentient, perceiving human body as the nexus through which all experience is mediated. The core aim of this research, which is to seek the complex relationship between the travelling pilgrims and the terrain of the Camino and to trace the constant interchange of influence between them, is thus tackled via a methodology that puts the focus firmly upon issues of “place” and “the body” (chapter 2.3 and 2.4).

In order to keep the project focused and manageable, the core research objective is broken down into a number of interconnected questions, while the chronological focus is geared primarily, but not exclusively, to the central Middle Ages; the peak era of devotional travel to Santiago de Compostela. Crucially, given the potential enormity of the data-set, three, discrete segments of the pilgrimage route to Santiago are presented and analysed (figure 1.2). Within these Study Areas, tailored research questions are defined: what processes are involved in making a linear journey through a given area? Can we trace contemporary attitudes towards specific landscape features contained within these regions? Are different identities manifest in the landscape? How was the geography and infrastructure of the pilgrim movement controlled? And finally, how was more intensively “sacred space” locally produced, maintained and experienced?

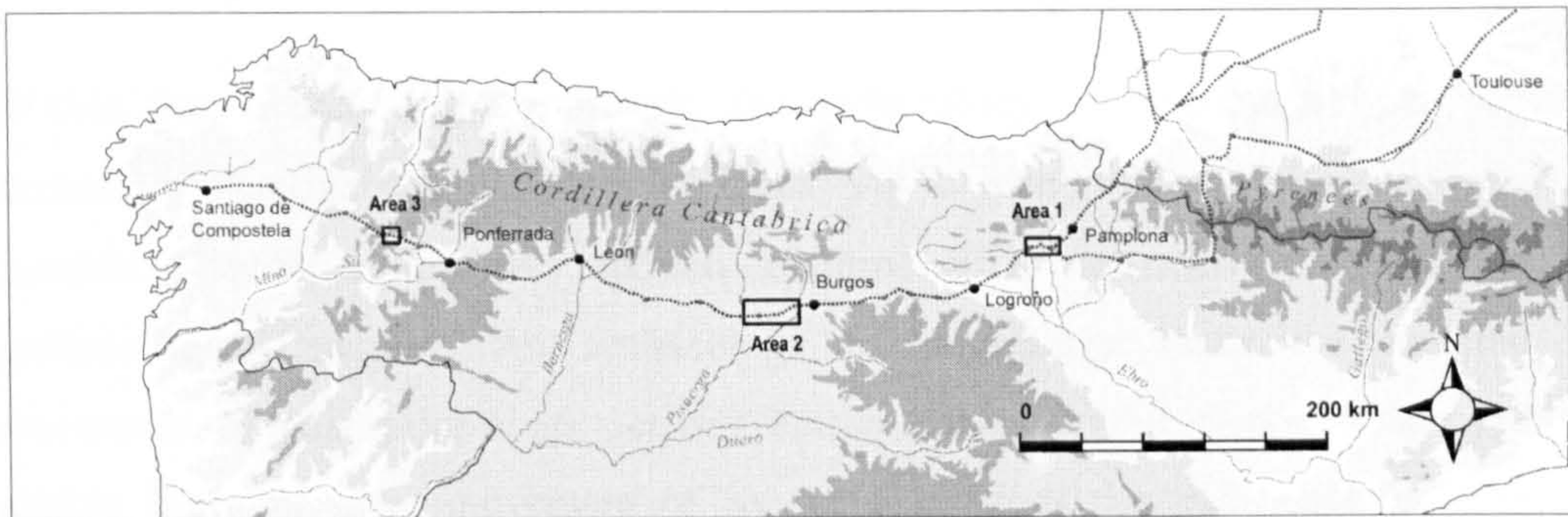


Figure 1. 2: Location of Study Areas on the Camino de Santiago

1.2 What is an archaeology of pilgrimage?

Implicit in this research is a call for a more detailed consideration of an archaeology of pilgrimage. To date, the vast majority of analytical research on this subject has been undertaken by anthropologists who focus on thorny social issues such as pilgrim identity and the expression of fellowship and/or contestation between pilgrims. Problems of theory and methodology take centre-stage and reflexive debate flourishes. Despite the fascinating potential of the material data-sets relating to the massed movement of people, recent archaeological research remains limited to the exploration of a few isolated case studies, the most well-known and sustained of which is the archaeological investigation of the *Hajj* pilgrimage routes through Syria and Iraq (Petersen 1994; 2001). The various traditions of devotional travel in medieval Europe are, on the other hand, almost entirely omitted from archaeological endeavour (see Stopford 1994).

This neglect corresponds to the more general disregard for religion as a whole in archaeology (Insoll 2004). As Insoll argues, religion remains poorly theorised. The term “ritual” persists as a limp explanation for apparently strange and poorly understood data, while religion itself is, at best, conceptualised as just another category of behaviour (2004: 10). Rather than a bounded, and inconsequential category, Insoll makes a convincing case for viewing religion as a much broader framework that, in many circumstances, both past and present, dictates behaviour and underlies the use and meaning of all material culture (2004: 151). The study of religion and ritual is, in other words, “of focal importance for the study of past societies in general, and specific archaeological contexts in detail” (2004: 12).

Within this overarching framework, the archaeology of pilgrimage opens up certain, productive interpretative horizons. As a repetitive, recurring activity associated with a distinct material culture, it is inherently suitable for archaeological enquiry. An archaeology of pilgrimage seeks the material dimension of past pilgrimage activity and interrogates the complex data-sets arising from the mass movement of people. It expands the traditional focus of archaeology away from rigid sites and settlements towards a broader consideration of landscapes, routes and communities in flux. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the “un-altered” places of landscapes can be understood as invested with particular significances. Meanwhile, the study of pilgrimage necessarily considers both individual human agency and broader societal and communal forces.¹ It focuses in on corporeal practice within given contexts, thus leading to sharper ideas on the function and meaning of ritualised activity. It forces us to acknowledge that in reality, there is no basis for separating out “sacred” from “secular” landscapes.

1.3 Medieval pilgrimage and the cult of St James

In the earlier Middle Ages, the act of pilgrimage was associated with theologically inclined pioneers in search of a higher spiritual tension through permanent saintly exile (Plötz 2002: 24-25). They were ascetic wanderers, travelling in the service of Christ: *peregrinatio por Christo* (Plötz 2002: 29). By the tenth, eleventh and twelfth century, long-distance devotional travel had gradually evolved into an increasingly institutionalised phenomenon involving vast numbers of people. They were taking part in much more geographically purposeful journeys: *peregrinatio ad locum sanctum*, or pilgrimage to a fixed holy place (Plötz 2002: 29). Figure 1.3. illustrates the dense sanctuarial network that articulated projects of pilgrimage in western Europe during this time. Rome, Jerusalem and Compostela were acknowledged as the most important long-distance destinations.

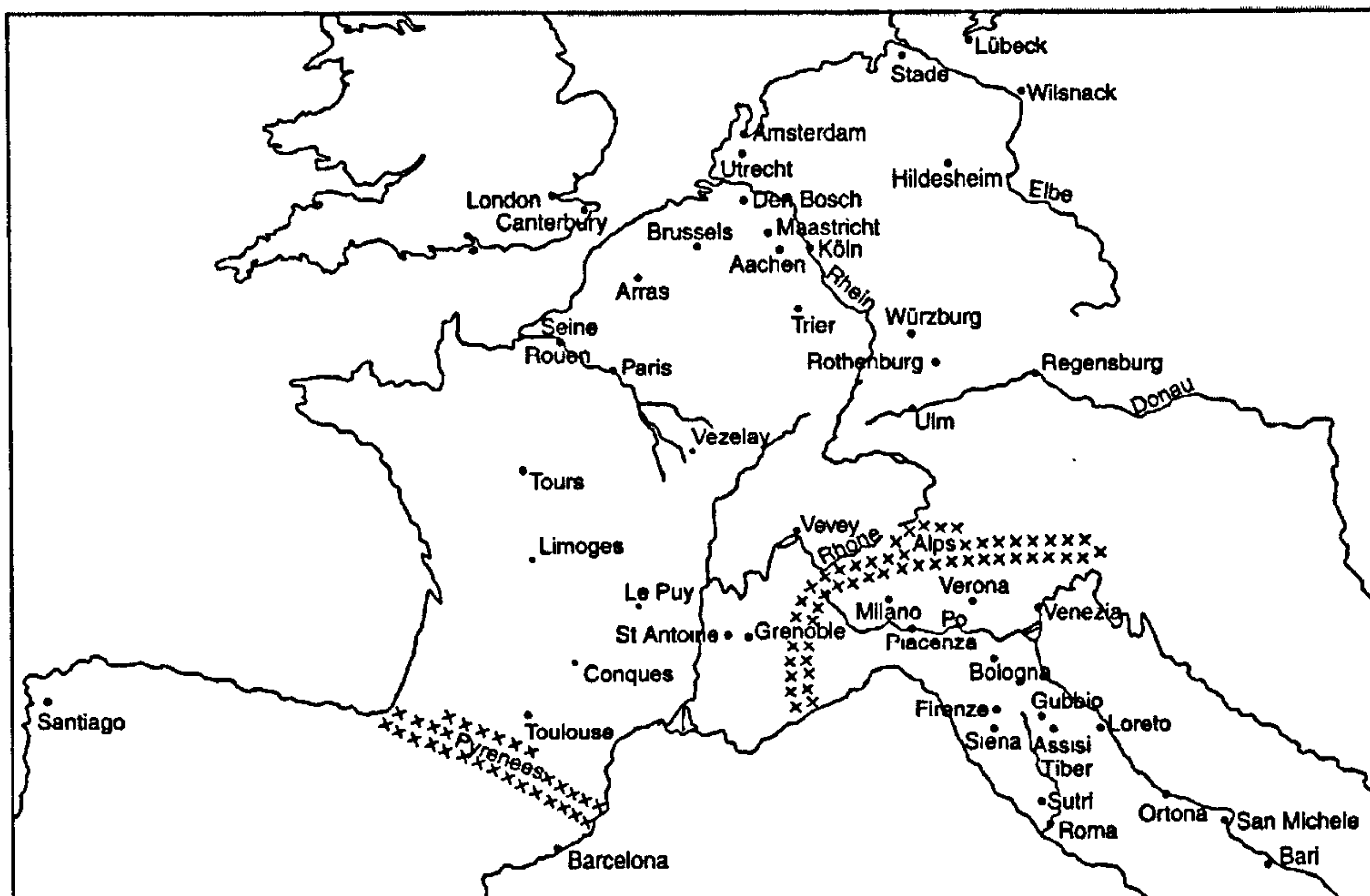


Figure 1.3: Map of medieval pilgrimage sites in western Europe (reproduced from Webb 2002: vii).

What stands out is the sheer scale of devotional mobility. Some later figures are available in documentary sources. Forty thousand pilgrims a day were reported as arriving at the gates of Rome during the special holy year of 1450, for instance, while in Einsiedeln in Switzerland, 130,000 pilgrim badges were sold within the space of fourteen days (Stopford 1994: 57). Sometimes, in heady, ritualised environments, massed crowds could be stirred up into frenzied, ugly mobs by the organisers of cults. A crush in the cathedral of Limoges killed fifty people in 1018, for example (Webb 2002: 31). Similarly, the vast Romanesque cathedral of Santiago de Compostela had to be reconsecrated in 1207, so great was the damage wrought by the press of people to the altar, the chaos and the bloodshed (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 344).

In the eleventh to twelfth century, it is estimated that between 0.5 and 2 million people were making their way to the shrine of St James in Santiago de Compostela every year (Rahtz and Watts 1986: 52). This is an extraordinary number of people neatly illustrated by Stopford who calculates that spread throughout the course of a year, this works out as between 1400 and 5500 pilgrims converging upon the shrine per day (1994: 59). In practice, however, numbers would have been even more concentrated during the summer months as journeys were organised both to

avoid winter travel and for arrival in time for the July vigil in honour of the saint. Stopford also reminds us that, of course, these people travelled both there and back (1994: 59). Accordingly, the implications are huge, not just for thinking about the destination itself, but, and more relevantly here, the axes of communication that led there. A constant living stream of pilgrims flowed across northern Spain during these centuries.

Route-geography and the landscape of northern Spain

Like the other internationally important pilgrimage destinations of Rome and Jerusalem, religious travel to Santiago de Compostela was associated with a specific route-geography in the central Middle Ages. Established sea-crossings connected the British isles to the coastal town of A Coruña, 100 km to the north of Santiago, while named overland itineraries snaked down through France and across into Spain and from other parts of the Iberian Peninsula. In practice, these routes were composed of an assortment of local paths, tracks, surviving Roman roads and newly paved medieval highways. They were, however, generally conceived and named, by the twelfth century, as coherent, unified routes leading to the Apostle's tomb (Ruiz de la Peña 2001: 422-3). Figure 1.4 illustrates how these routes linked up other important towns such as Vézelay and Toulouse, which themselves contained shrines further popularised by incidental pilgrimage along the way.

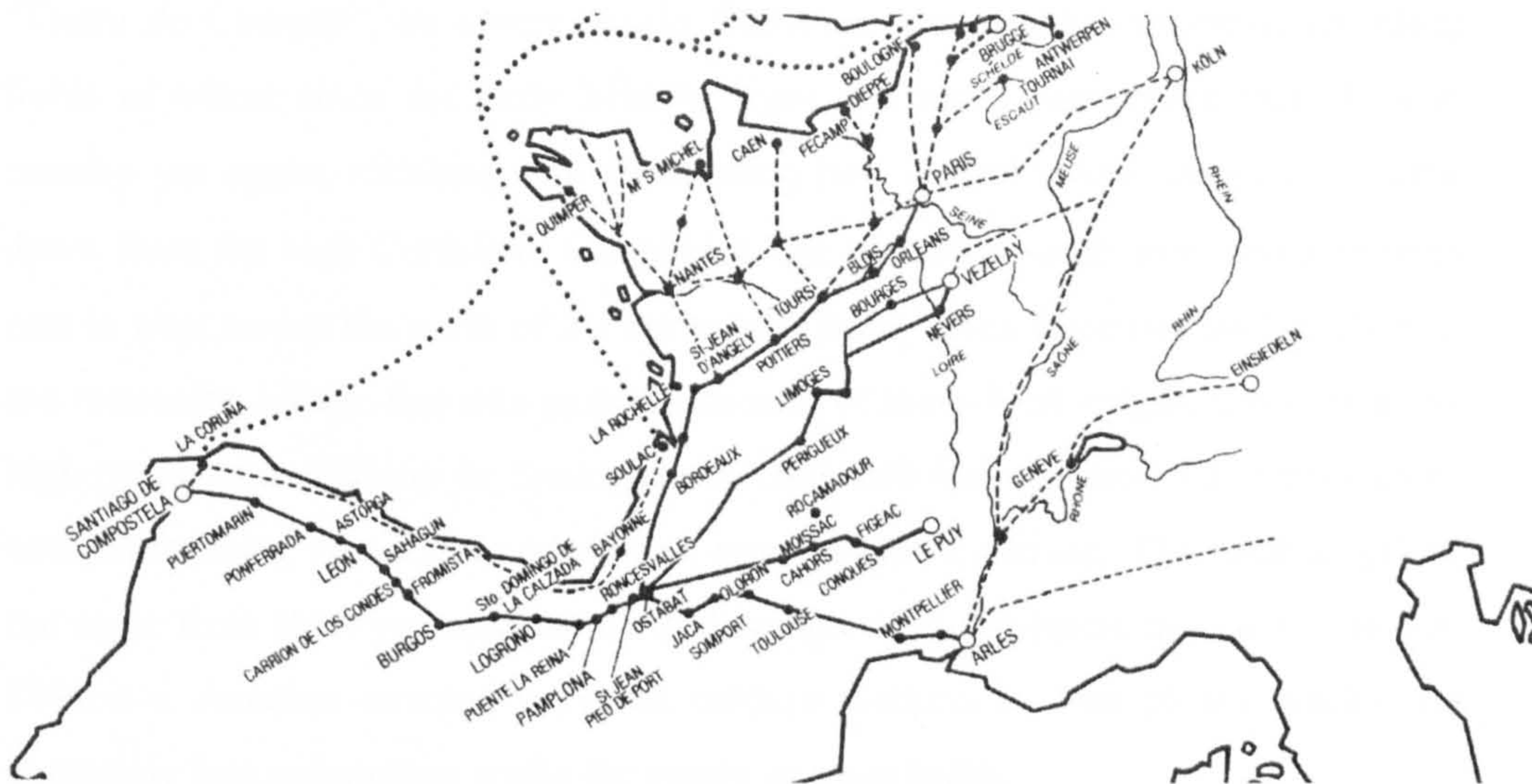


Figure 1. 4: Map of the principal routes to Compostela (reproduced from Melczer 1993: 272).

The part of the route that concerns us here is the long east-west section that carried the combined traffic from Europe across northern Spain. Known as the Camino de Santiago, or the Camino Francés; (the Way, or Road, to Santiago, or the French Way), this was the most densely travelled axis and, in the “reanimated” pilgrimage of the present day, remains the most popular course of travel. In the high medieval legend, in which Charlemagne sleeps and dreams of bright stars, the east-west direction of the road is equated with the celestial orientation of stars that make up the Milky Way (Melczer 1993: 31).

Meanwhile, the less celestial and more physically topographical course of the route traverses a country that is startling in its diversity and quite different in character from more stereotypical Spanish landscapes. From the high passes of the Pyrenees, the route descends into the choppy, green terrain of the northern Ebro drainage system. This is the setting for Study Area 1 in the autonomous community of Navarre. From there, the route crosses into the profitably fertile lands of La Rioja, bordered here and there by dramatic limestone outcrops. Gradually ascending, the route enters the northern Meseta, a distinct geographical and geological zone comprising a vast upland plateau associated with aridity, scorching summers and freezing winters. This is the landscape setting of Study Area 2, located just west of the city of Burgos. After a long stretch through the

“Tierra de Campos”, an unremittingly flat plain associated with great, unending fields of wheat since the early Middle Ages, the route encounters more broken country yet again, climbing and descending two upland sierra ranges that curve down from the high Cordillera Cantabrica, the mountain range that stretches from east to west across the north of the Peninsula. Study Area 3 focuses on O Cebreiro, the mountain village that sits atop the second of these high ridges. Once over the high passes, the Camino de Santiago descends into Galicia, associated with green undulating hills, woodland and a cool, rainy Atlantic climate. The total length of the route from the Pyrenean passes to Santiago de Compostela measures 750 km. This is a distance covered by most modern walkers in four to six weeks. An extremely low percentage walks the return journey today.

The cult of St James and the political context

Devotional travel across this landscape was predicated upon the belief that the city of Santiago de Compostela contained the tomb of St James the Greater. The improbable association of Christ’s fourth apostle, son of Zebedee, brother of John, a fisherman of Galilee and witness to the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor and the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, with the damp, green lands of Galicia was established via a complex meshing of theological tradition, myth and, most of all, political manoeuvring (see Melczer 1993: 7-14 for an in-depth discussion of the development and consolidation of the translation myth).

Reports of the discovery of the Apostle’s tomb in a remote corner of north-western Spain were already in circulation by the mid ninth century. The discovery event and its subsequent active promotion are interpretable in relation to the broader political and ideological context of northern Spain. The invasion of Arab troops and Berber settlers of the previous century, in the year 711, had come to a halt only at the chilly foothills of the Cordillera Cantabrica. Further afield, Charlemagne (768-813) had consolidated an impressively expansive empire. Confined to a narrow Atlantic coastal strip, the northern kings and princes of the eighth century and early ninth century believed themselves to be the true and righteous inheritors of the former Visigothic state and it was in these lands, roughly divided into the territorial units of Asturias, Pamplona, Aragon and the

Frankish March of Catalonia, that hopes for reconquest were forged and preliminary campaigns begun. The discovery of the Apostle's tomb came exactly when a "religious-national figure of apostolic grandeur" (Melczer 1993: 15), was most needed.

The Apostle was found to be an expedient and psychologically compelling figure-head in the armed drive southwards. Via a strategically opportune royal dream in 844, Santiago (deriving from *Santo Iacobus*) was fitted with a fearsome warrior-like persona (figure 1.5). As Gitlitz and Davidson point out, faced with Moslem troops who bore relics of the Prophet Mohammed into battle during the ninth century, Christian forces could now confidently match these holy stakes, boasting a divine presence also to be in their midst (2000: xiv).



Figure 1.5: Statuette of "Santiago Matamoros" (the moor-slayer) (reproduced from www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconquista).

More relevantly here, however, he was also a prize possession in the heavily politicised world of the Catholic church. Cult promotion was a deeply political affair. In the strictly ordered hierarchy of the church, the entire body of one of Christ's Apostles (as opposed to merely a finger, or a shred of his tunic, for example) naturally formed an important and divinely compelling treasure that could easily be promoted via aggressive strategies of exhortation and advertising.

In the decades subsequent to the discovery event, the trickle of pilgrims to his shrine gradually swelled, becoming a flood by the late tenth century. The nascent city of Compostela derived its name either from *campus stellae*, a reference to the "field of stars" of the original discovery site, or *compostium*, meaning burial

ground. This flood of people ran to epic proportions during the eleventh to twelfth centuries, a period by which the Reconquest had gathered momentum.

Pilgrims crossed kingdoms which, having established a more secure territorial footing in the landscape, enjoyed a period of heightened fortune, stability and economic success. Figure 1.6 illustrates the political map of northern Spain during this time. Historians agree that these centuries also represent the apogee of pilgrimage travel not only to Santiago de Compostela, but also to other medieval cult centres.



Figure 1. 6: Political map of the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages (reproduced from McKitterick (ed.) 2003: 55).

The medieval pilgrims: identity and motives

Historians of pilgrimage working with scattered documents such as dispensations, letters, legal documents, miracle collections, personal accounts, liturgical texts and religious hagiographies, have been able to address many questions about these

people, such as who they were and why they travelled (Webb 1999; 2002). Occasional names come down to us, along with tantalising glimpses of life on the roads to the great pilgrimage centres. Some personal first-hand accounts survive, particularly with regards to Holy Land travel. The vast majority of pilgrims, however, remain nameless and unknown.

Long distance pilgrimage was an option, theoretically at least, open to all members of society. Surviving documentary sources naturally favour those from the upper echelons. Hence, starting with Godescalc, Bishop of Le Puy in southern France, who travelled in 950-951, we know of a long list of named and eminent individuals, including kings, queens, princes, nobles and archbishops who completed the journey to Compostela during the Middle Ages (Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1948: 41). They travelled with large retinues of servants, entertainers and companions, people who effectively became *de facto* pilgrims themselves (Melczer 1993: 37). Although professing humility in the face of God, we can assume that such prominent figures and their entourages represented fairly conspicuous types of pilgrim.

At the other, extreme end of the scale, pilgrimage could be meted out as an established form of punishment for the homicidal, the adulterous and criminally insane (Flint 2000). Although descended theologically from the biblical idea of exile as a better punishment than death, compulsory penitential pilgrimage also happened to be an expedient means of removing unwanted individuals from local society for long periods of time and complaints about their presence on the road suggest that these pilgrims too were frequent and conspicuous travellers on the highways of Europe (Flint 2000: 163). Charlemagne's comment belies his exasperation; "It would be a lot better if people found guilty of a capital crime were to stay in one place and do penance for it there" (quoted in Flint 2000: 163).

Between these two extreme poles of the social spectrum were pilgrims drawn from just about every walk of life. Merchants and traders often combined pilgrimage with business; the Italian goldsmith and holy man, Fazio of Cremona is thought to have travelled to Compostela eighteen times, for example (Webb 2002: 84). Long devotional journeys fitted the vocation of eccentric visionaries such as St Brigid of

Sweden and, later, Margery Kempe of England. Members of the clergy and the religious orders also embarked on long pilgrimage expeditions, despite frequently expressed doubt over the merit of the road compared to the stable, more contemplative environment of the parish or the cloister (Adler 2002: 44). Contemporary treatises are also full of misgivings about the suitability of pilgrimage as a vocation for women. Female pilgrims nonetheless formed an integral part of pilgrim movements (Webb 2002: 14). Meanwhile, the peasant classes of Europe also joined the pilgrim ranks. Melczer envisages that for those who laboured within the bonds of the feudal system, long-distance pilgrimage became an option only when age and ill-health rendered them less useful on the land (1993: 38). Certainly in the later Middle Ages, some individuals travelled as “pilgrims by proxy” for the sake of others who, having reneged on vows and keen to escape the otherwise dark repercussions, had nominated a family member or servant to fulfil the task for them (Melczer 1993: 43).

Finally, a significant number of pilgrims harked from the most socially marginal and desolate end of society; vagabonds, outcasts and the destitute for whom life on the road was less a conscious choice than a means of survival. Among this unhappy group were those suffering from serious ill-health and deformity through endemic diseases such as leprosy, tuberculosis and “St Anthony’s fire”, a startling illness associated with hallucinatory symptoms and a painful inflammation of the skin, now known to be caused by the consumption of diseased rye-mould (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 99). Although Santiago de Compostela was a less overtly thaumaturgical shrine than contemporary sites such as Rocamadour and Canterbury, for instance (Ward 1987: 117), elevated numbers of sufferers can still be envisaged on the route-ways given the high background level of disease in society as a whole, the strong likelihood of formerly healthy pilgrims contracting symptoms along the way (Sanchez Dolmingo 2004: 94-5), and the entrenched association of holy shrines with physical cures, miracles and salvation.

From the above, it will be clear that there were many different motivating factors for embarking on pilgrimage travel and that it would be a mistake to conceive of every pilgrim as an intensely devout individual. For the sufferers of disease, the drifters, and the dispossessed, who were often excluded from settled communities

anyway (Goodich 1998: 2), the vague promise of divine intervention mingled with the very real and practical benefits of the road such as free accommodation, charity and health-care in the hospices of the route-ways (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 96). Opportunities for theft and deceit during pilgrimage journeys spawned “false pilgrims” (Arribas Brione 1993: 49). Meanwhile, convicted criminals, the entourages of the rich and the “pilgrims by proxy” travelled more by compulsion than free will. At certain times, religious pilgrimage blurred with militaristic crusade. Commentators also debate the extent to which desire for inner renewal overlapped with the promise of adventure. Some argue that notions of personal freedom and leisure simply do not belong in pre-modern contexts (Tomasi 2002), but, then again, late antique and medieval testimonies that grumble about “unbridled sensual license and material consumption” on the route-ways suggest another story (Adler 2002: 27).

However, broadly speaking, the prime motives of the vast majority can be related in one way or the other to the religious world-view of the age, which was articulated via the cult of relics. In this belief system, present during both the early and central Middle Ages, fragmented corporeal remains of saints, martyrs and confessors were understood to possess an inexhaustible supply of sacred charge, a divine power condensed into a physical essence that was transmittable by touch. Accordingly, sanctity was believed to exude into the immediate surroundings of relics, implanting a distilled holy aura into people, objects and places that had come into their contact. In this way, otherwise innocuous items such as pieces of wood, cloth and even dust were rendered holy themselves and, as “secondary relics”, became the centre-points of new cults (Geary 1994: 191).

The necessarily fixed nature of the relics conditioned the essential mobility of devotion (Melczer 1993: 2). Hence throughout Europe, people embarked on journeys in order to physically participate in the sacred force perceived to reside in the holy items held within the custody of the church. Catholic doctrine fostered a persuasive cult of fear about what lay in store for the sinful soul and if pilgrims were to just reach out and make some form of contact with these objects, salvation could be theirs.

By the twelfth century, the attraction of relics was bolstered by the promise of official indulgence. These grants annulled sin and promised categorically defined reductions of time spent in Purgatory. In so doing, general ideas about forgiveness and release from sin acquired greater precision, and the realm of Purgatory attained more concrete dimensions in contemporary imaginations (Webb 1999: 15). The device of officially declared Holy Years, announced as more intensively holy and spiritually advantageous, also attracted greater numbers to the principal pilgrimage centres.

Varied historical documents testify to pilgrimage undertaken in the spirit of “penitence, expiation, purification and redemption” (Tomasi 2002: 13), in hopefulness for absolution, for the resolution of personal difficulties, and in humble gratitude for sudden and happy changes in fortune (Webb 2002: 85-6). Sickness was a frequent motivating force. In the Catholic belief system, outward symptoms of disease betokened inner, moral wrongfulness, which could be logically cured only through the remission of sins at a holy shrine.

The importance of the journey

Crucially, it was also the spiritual profit of the journey itself, as opposed to just arrival, that acquired particular significance in relation to the Jacobean pilgrimage in the central Middle Ages. The very act of being on a pilgrimage encompassed a set of deeply rooted ideas about exile, sojourns in foreign lands, the metaphor of the road, and the life of Christ himself. The medieval church rested upon an intellectual and spiritual genealogy that cast mankind as fated to live in perpetual exile, an idea expressed in the Holy Scriptures and early Christian teaching via metaphorical components such as the *homo viator* (traveller), *peregrinus* (stranger in a foreign land) and *alienatio* (alienation) (Plötz 2002: 22-4). The righteous were those who persevered on their journey (St Augustine Sermon 14.6) and who chose the correct path through Christ, “For I am the Way, the Truth and Life” (John 14.6). Pilgrimage was, in one sense, an acting out of this theological metaphor.

Biblical narrative and ascetic tradition emphasised the penitential qualities of travel. It was supposed to be hard, as implied the advice:

Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7.13-14).

In landscape terms, this is often reflected by the association of certain pilgrimage destinations with remote and inaccessible locations. Tiny islands off the rocky coasts of Ireland and Scotland contain physical remains of reliquary shrines and oratories (Harbison 1994). Compostela, of course, lay near the physical end of the known medieval world.

Meanwhile, pilgrims were exhorted to adopt a humble attitude in the accomplishment of the journey, encouraged by religious authorities to go by foot and with few possessions. Economic circumstances meant that apart from the high status pilgrims, who judiciously ignored this advice, there was really no other choice for the vast majority. There were also prestigious shrines to visit on the way, such as that of St Saturninus of Toulouse, or San Zoilo in Carrión de los Condes.

The specific value of the road, “the Way” was particularly enhanced with regard to the Jacobean pilgrimage as opposed to any of the other traditions of devotional travel. St James did not confine himself to his cathedral shrine, but as proved by the miracles that he wrought, was apt to divinely assist pilgrims along the route (Ward 1987: 112-13). He also assumed the same humble travelling garb as the masses. Uniquely in medieval iconography, he is repeatedly depicted along the course of the pilgrimage routes as a pilgrim to his own tomb (figure 1.7). The implication is that pilgrimages were not only made *to* St James, but were made *with* St James (Plötz 2002: 34).

The merit of the journey is also clear from the fact that pilgrims unfortunate enough to die on the way to his shrine were awarded full rites of burial and, as confirmed in a thirteenth century document, a posthumous indulgence granting full remission of sin (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 346). Conceptually, the journey was as important as the geographical goal itself.



Figure 1.7: St James as Santiago Peregrino on the iglesia de Santa Marta de Tera, Benavente (reproduced from Melczer 1993: coverpiece)

Personal accounts

A number of personal accounts and journals provide important insight into the practical accomplishment of the journey. I highlight here a couple of the more important texts that are quoted in the course of this thesis.

The earliest is the “Pilgrim’s Guide”, incorporated as the final book in the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, or Book of St James; a mid-twelfth century work of five books that deal, respectively, with liturgy, miracles, the translation from the Holy Land, a version of the epic *Chanson de Roland* and finally the Guide. Its authorship is unknown, although most commentators favour the French monk Aimery Picaud as a strong candidate. Out of eleven unequal chapters, it is the seventh, entitled “The Quality of the Lands and the People along this Road” that forms the most detailed, if strongly prejudiced, description of the landscape and the society of the route. The near contemporary geographical descriptions of the twelfth century Arab

geographer, Muhammad Al Idrisi, form another interesting source for travelling distances and impressions of the landscape.

Out of the many later testimonies, it is hard to beat the impressive work of the tireless Italian priest Domenico Laffi (c.1636-1700) who made the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela no less than three times in the late seventeenth century. After his third expedition, he brushed up an existing diary manuscript and published a revised book in 1681 entitled “A Journey West to St James of Galicia and Finisterre” (figure 1.8). Contained within is a consistently vivid account of his every day experiences and observations of the road, customs and sights (Laffi 1681).



Figure 1.8: Title page of the revised edition of “A Journey West” by Domenico Laffi (reproduced from Laffi 1681: 8).

Excerpts from both “the Pilgrim’s Guide” (as it is referred to throughout this thesis) and from Laffi’s “Diary” are quoted in reference to all three Study Areas. Other important texts worth mentioning include two accounts, both by Germans

and both written in the last decade of the fifteenth century. “Die Walfahrt und Straß zu Sanct Jacob” (The Pilgrimage and Path to St James) by Hermann König von Vach is a short, but entertaining, work. It is in the form of a practical guide of the route from Einsiedeln in Switzerland to Santiago and is memorable by virtue of his constant proffering of advice, “Now you should take more advice...”, “Do not force your pace...”, “If you follow my advice, turn to the right here and you will not have to climb the mountains” (1495: 17-18). Ironically, Durant, the translator, strongly suspects that the author didn’t actually complete his pilgrimage because after a certain point along the way, the guide becomes uncharacteristically vague (Durant 2003: 7-8). The other testimonial that is occasionally referred to in this thesis is that of the German knight Arnold van Harff who not only went to Santiago, but also travelled through Italy, Syria, Egypt, Arabia and France (Bravo Lozano 1993: 7).

Another interesting work is a long English mnemonic-verse of places on the road written in the early fifteenth century and published in Samuel Purchas’ compilation “Purchas his Pilgrimes” (Vazquez 1949b: 122-126). Accounts such as this reveal that when thinking about the journey in its entirety, different locales could be arranged and remembered in list-form, an ordered itinerary of east to west towns and villages that, one by one, had to be crossed, and then crossed off, in order to reach the destination. It is a genre that reflects a wider late medieval tradition of rhyming “*memoria technica*” for voyages (Williamson 1857: viii-ix); a literary rendering of cartographic tradition.

1.4 Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into six chapters. This first one consists of a general introduction to the PhD project as a whole. The second chapter is dedicated to a much more detailed examination of the theoretical and methodological issues involved. Its aim is to situate this research in terms of the broader academic climate, to critically discuss the specific theories used to support this research and to establish a methodological framework for practical archaeological investigation.

The analytical study of pilgrimage is a subject that remains problematic in anthropological circles, and still, very neglected in the field of archaeology. Chapter 2, therefore, traces the developmental history of pilgrimage research and emphasises the importance of a focus on “the body” and “place” in determining an approach. With respect to the section on methodology, the current debate on phenomenology is charted. This controversial approach is problematic in many ways. Certain strands in recent work that discuss senses of place, the importance of “mapping with/in landscapes” (Casey 2005), and strategies of presentation are, however, acknowledged as important and are incorporated in part into my methodology for fieldwork.

The subsequent three chapters present the three Study Areas of this research. They are ordered sequentially, as if to mirror pilgrimage movement towards Santiago de Compostela. Correspondingly, the area located in Navarre is considered first (chapter 3: Area 1), followed by the area in Burgos (chapter 4: Area 2) and lastly, the much smaller, village-focused area on the Monte do Cebreiro just inside the border of Galicia (chapter 5: Area 3).

Broadly speaking they follow the same structural plan. Initial sections introduce in some detail the specific research objectives applied to the Study Area in question and are followed by descriptions of relevant geographical and historical information. The second, more weighty sections present, discuss and analyse the results of fieldwork within these zones. Again, the presentation is designed to mirror sequential movement, so that in the longer Study Areas of Navarre and Burgos, narrative text, analytical text and maps present and scrutinise each portion of the route within the Study Area from east to west. Area 3 represents a much more spatially focused locale and, for this reason, the chapter is structured on a more thematic basis. A lengthy discussion section concludes each of these data chapters and confronts the specific goals defined for each area.

The final chapter, chapter 6, brings discussion together and critically evaluates the overall PhD project. It considers whether the original, founding research aims were viable and whether they were met. The relative merits or otherwise of the methodologies used are also discussed, with a particular focus on the role of

phenomenology. The separate conclusions from each of the Study Areas are considered together in order to explore in more depth recurring patterns and themes in the material record.

With respect to terminology, the spelling of place names follows Spanish conventions. The city name Santiago de Compostela is variously referred to as either Santiago or Compostela, something that reflects common usage in both spoken and written form. The spelling Compostela is used in preference over the occasionally observed form “Compostella”. For place names in Galicia, local *gallegan* spellings are generally used. “O Cebreiro”, for example, is used in preference to “El Cebrero”. Foreign words are italicised. Spanish terms such as *iglesia* (church) or *ermita* (hermitage) are often retained when discussing particular sites. “Iglesia del Santo Sepulcro” for example, is used in preference over an English translation. A glossary at the end of this thesis provides a guide to commonly used Spanish terms.

2. Escaping the “theoretical ghetto”

In 1988, a cross-disciplinary conference was held on the subject of pilgrimage (see Bowman 1988). The occasion was, however, beset by fundamental disagreement on one core question: how do we study pilgrimage? Is it a stand-alone phenomenon that merits its own theoretical agenda or should it simply slot into broader discourses on religion, tourism, and cultures on the move? Is all pilgrimage activity comparable across time, religion and place or should it always be deconstructed and contextualised? More than fifteen years later, this issue continues to dominate and steer the debate on pilgrimage in anthropological circles, so much so that one commentator has referred to it as a “cul-de-sac”, a constricting “theoretical ghetto” and implores researchers to move towards new analytical approaches (Coleman 2002: 363; 2004: 4).

In a way, it seems strange to start this chapter by chronicling a debate that took place completely outside of the archaeological world. However, as I shall describe below, the archaeological study of pilgrimage is a relatively new development and in order to set the scene and the theoretical context for this thesis, it is important to chart the origins and development of the study of pilgrimage. I therefore begin by presenting a brief history and description of the “ghetto” and the current academic climate in which pilgrimage is situated.

Having outlined the background context, my principal aim is to then step aside from this debate, move forward from the recurring questions and dilemmas, and attempt to create a different analytical approach. Although anthropology has produced, and continues to produce, the overwhelming majority of theoretical discussion on pilgrimage, I want to engage with and tease out strands from other theoretical discourses. Ideas not just from archaeology and anthropology, but also from the intellectual genealogy of subjects such as geography, history and philosophy can enrich and widen the gaze. My objective therefore is to avoid disciplinary confinement and to construct a strong and inclusive framework of concepts and ideas that will serve as a platform for the practical investigation of

medieval pilgrimage and the landscape of the route-way to Santiago de Compostela.

As a way of organising and thinking about this material, I assemble the different theoretical threads under two broad thematic headings; “the body” and “place”. The wide scope of each provides an arena that can easily accommodate diverse concepts from various disciplines. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of ideas from different sources infuses dynamism into some of the more traditional questions of medieval pilgrimage.

The outcome of this discussion, presented in the third and final part of this chapter, will be a summary of how a measured theoretical agenda can inform methodological choice. How, in other words, I have selected research methods to tackle the central questions and ideas of this thesis.

2.1 Studying pilgrimage: a brief history

It is difficult, of course, not to become submerged in the enormous tidal wave of literature on pilgrimage that has flourished during the past thirty years. Before the 1970s, this was not a problem. Apart from a few notable exceptions such as Eric Wolf’s study on the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe (Wolf 1958) pilgrimage was a neglected area of interest, largely absent from the books and journals of anthropology and religious study.

The massive sea change from academic silence to hot debate and publishing frenzy can be traced directly to the pioneering work of Victor Turner, first on his own, and then later with his wife Edith Turner (Turner 1974; Turner and Turner 1978). Although an authority on a wide range of issues dealing with ritual and human behaviour such as performance, ceremony and rites of passage, Turner gained a specific reputation as the *pater familias* of pilgrimage. He berated the neglect of pilgrimage by anthropologists more concerned with economic and demographic process and, within the space of a few years, had not only outlined his view of pilgrimage as a coherent system of human behaviour worthy of investigation as a “field” in its own right (Turner 1974: 187), but had apparently infused a number of

scholars with sufficient zeal to keep the pilgrimage torch alight for the foreseeable future.

This agenda can, in part, be situated within the broader movement of religious thought and philosophy initiated by Emile Durkheim and Arnold van Gennep in the early years of the twentieth century and Mircea Eliade during the 1950s and 60s. Turner's approach however draws on these elements in order to focus more exclusively on pilgrimage. Essentially, he aims to define what pilgrimage actually is and how it functions.

To summarise, the three theoretical landmarks of his approach are liminality, *communitas*, and anti-structure, key terms that are rooted in a vision of pilgrimage as an activity that takes place *outside* of society. In other words, to go on a pilgrimage is to find a temporary freedom or disengagement from everyday life and the mundane, so that by embarking on both a physical and spiritual journey, participants are removed from the usual human experience of social structure and normal space and time. They are thus involved in a 'liminal' activity. If the usual day-to-day existence within the boundaries of social norms is described through the term "structure", the stripping of normal patterns and rules of social engagement and activity can be defined as "anti-structure" (Turner 1974: 202)

Furthermore, having entered a liminal phase and transcended societal boundaries, pilgrims become united not through doctrine or interdependence, but through the commonality of feeling and intention that is expressed and experienced through ritual. This commonality of feeling is referred to as *communitas* (Turner and Turner 1978: 12-13). And while Turner admits that *communitas* is not a pure state of harmony or liberation in which social and cultural distinctions are abolished and the predominant religious system avoided, he maintains that the overwhelming tendency during a pilgrimage is towards universalism, the smoothing over of division and the emergence of unity amongst "levelled" and "individuated" human beings (Turner 1974: 205-6).

Having defined the experience of pilgrimage and its place within, or rather outside of, society, the Turners were able to identify recurring features between the

numerous different pilgrimages of the world and create four general groupings according to the epoch of their genesis. In this scheme, the pilgrimages to Rome, Jerusalem, Mecca, Benares and Mount Kailas fall into one group. The Celtic spiritualism manifest in the journey to Glastonbury could be related to the pilgrimage to Pandharpur in the Deccan of India, and the various European shrines of Compostela, Canterbury, Assisi, Einsiedeln, Chartres, Loreto and Czestochowa could all be assembled under the heading “Medieval” (Turner and Turner 1978: 17-18). Furthermore, while the Turners do emphasise the role of individual, localised histories in the development of a pilgrimage “character”, they identify a universal pattern in which a general phased process unfolds over time. The phenomenon of pilgrimage evolves, seemingly naturally, from “vision to routinization” and increasing “institutionalisation”, accompanied by a plethora of sacred and secular events, institutions, processes and material elements (Turner and Turner 1978: 25-6).

By the 1980s, the “Turnerian approach” had become a solid theoretical milestone in the landscape of social and cultural anthropology. It wasn’t long however before dissenting voices began to chip away at what, for some, had materialised into an unwieldy monolith. Postmodernism had arrived at the doorstep of anthropology and it was not going to go away (Woods 1999: 231). This movement, a hard-to-define ripple of defiance against pigeonholing, universalism and grand narratives, spread outwards from the world of art and architecture and influenced all subsequent ideas in the humanities and social sciences. Suddenly, it became acceptable to pick apart big ideas, to acknowledge the infinite possibilities of human existence, and to value the input of diverse ideas and voices of dissent (Woods 1999: 20-1). And so pilgrimage came under fire. For example, was it really an institution that could be defined in such a manner? Are, for example, the Mexican devotees of the Virgin of Guadalupe really engaged in the *same* activity as, let’s say, medieval pilgrims to Iona in Scotland, or Santiago de Compostela? And, importantly, do *all* pilgrims experience, through liminality, *communitas* with fellow travellers?

The most notable critics were John Eade and Michael Sallnow. In the introduction to the volume of papers that accompanied the controversial conference mentioned

above, they argued for the dismantling and deconstruction of the all-embracing paradigm of pilgrimage (Eade and Sallnow 1991). The traditional view, they argued, was over-deterministic and over-prescriptive. A “spurious homogeneity” was being imposed that masked the finer detail and complexity of pilgrimage behaviour in widely differing settings and time-periods (Eade and Sallnow 1991: 5). Moreover, emerging studies were beginning to demonstrate that rather than a quasi-utopian sense of *communitas* flourishing in and around pilgrimage sites, social boundaries were being reinforced and magnified. Local Catholics sneer at Padre Pio “fanatics” in San Giovanni in Italy, for example (McKevitt 1991), while Turkish villagers frequently report disorientating and confrontational experiences on the *Hajj* route to Mecca (Delaney 1990).

Through this critique, Eade and Sallnow were preparing the ground for what they called a “new agenda” for anthropologists (Eade and Sallnow 1991: 2). Put simply, their central manifesto asserted that pilgrimage was not a bounded field of enquiry and was not empirically definable. Rather than an exceptional piece of behaviour, a stand-alone phenomenon, it should be visualised more as an “arena” through which a multitude of diverse and shifting discourses could be identified and explored (Eade and Sallnow 1991: 5).

This, in a nutshell, is the argument that lies at the centre of the theoretical ghetto. Pilgrimage, as a subject, had been born, nurtured and defined, only to be pulled apart by the critics, and researchers felt obliged to identify either with one side or the other. In the meantime, other disciplines were working more or less in isolation and without a clearly defined theoretical approach. Historians frequently retained a descriptive rather than analytical approach (Bowman 1988: 20).

For those present at the conference in 1988, the deconstructive agenda of Eade and Sallnow was unwelcome, an anathema, something to dismiss as ridiculous. “Now that the anthropologists are gone, we can get down to talking about pilgrimage” commented one disgruntled historian towards the end of the final day (Bowman 1988: 20). For some of the theologians present, the issue was not so much the complexities of human behaviour, but the miraculous and irreducible nature of the

divine present at the holy centres and the practical problems surrounding the management of large numbers of people converging on one place (1988: 20).

The auspicious start to the study of pilgrimage, had, it seemed become tarnished.

2.2 The current climate

So where are we today? The negativity of the same old arguments has recently been exposed by anthropologists tired of having to begin their work with a confession of what “side” they’re on. Scholars would do better, in the words of Yamba, to choose to “do their own thing” (1995: 9).

And slowly this seems to be what is happening. Despite the deconstructive trends endorsed by Eade and Sallnow, pilgrimage is being identified as a category that, actually, is quite “good to think with” (Basu 2004: 153). Meanwhile, the dominant metaphors of *communitas* and contestation are being eschewed in favour of different approaches. Slavin, for example, uses the notion of liminality in order to concentrate on the actual practice of walking, movement and inner experience (2003). Similarly, Coleman has recently focused on the idea of movement as a feature of pilgrimage that allows both cross-cultural comparison and the deeper exploration of specific case studies (2004).

In just the last decade, other disciplines have begun to join the “pilgrimage bandwagon” and are employing analytical approaches fostered in the anthropological world. In 2003 for example, a history conference was held in Exeter entitled; “Defining the holy: sacred space in medieval and early modern Europe” in which a host of medieval historians drew on a range of cross-disciplinary approaches in order to direct vivid beams of insight into the interaction between medieval thought, place and the divine. A glance at the conference programme indicates that a significant proportion of the papers dealt specifically with pilgrimage (although this is not reflected in the resulting publication) (www.ex.ac.uk/shipss/history/events/sacredspace.htm 2004; Spicer and Hamilton (eds) 2005).

Archaeologists meanwhile caught up with the study of pilgrimage during the 1980s and 90s. After all, here was an activity that was not only recurring, repetitive and enduring over long periods of time, but also involved distinctive sets of material culture in terms of places and objects like shrines, icons and souvenirs, or more mundane elements such as the accumulation of rubbish resulting from mass food disposal. It became apparent that the archaeologist's eye could lend a new dimension to the study of pilgrimage. Note the terminology in this extract:

I returned to Yauca the next day, Monday, to watch the process of abandonment of the pilgrimage center [sic.], and especially to note the material condition of the site, once abandoned. The shrine was filthy. Refuse, left by the thousands of pilgrims, littered the site surface: food remains, toppled hearths, broken glasses and plates, lots of plastic bags and paper blowing about (Silverman 1994: 11).

This article is just one in a volume dedicated specifically to the archaeology of pilgrimage (Graham-Campbell (ed): 1994). Despite the fact that "a number of authors failed to submit their proposed contributions" (1994: 3) and despite the fact that the most explicit argument for the active role of material culture occurs in a paper by two anthropologists (Coleman and Elsner 1994), the final result is effectively a show-case of articles that herald the arrival of archaeology on the scene and demonstrate how it forms a powerful and fruitful mode of enquiry into patterns of pilgrimage from contexts as diverse as South America, India, Ireland and Syria.

Currently, this archaeological scene, which is dominated by Anglo-American scholars, maintains a continuing bias towards more "exotically" located pilgrimage case studies. One of the more recent examples traces the spiritual journeys of Moslem pilgrims amid the dry rocky hills of Kazakhstan for instance (Lymer 2004). In contrast, apart from some work on pilgrimage in Ireland and Scotland (Harbison 1994; Yeoman 1999), the numerous Christian pilgrimages of western Europe remain largely untouched by archaeologists, regardless of the occasional article that promotes and highlights the potential of this subject to yield new, interesting data-sets and to unite a broad sweep of analytical developments (e.g. Rahtz and Watts 1986; Stopford 1994). In general, there is little discussion on how an archaeology of pilgrimage may be situated with respect to the broader

archaeological climate and current theoretical, interpretative or methodological approaches.

Pilgrimage, of course, is something that does not merely exist within academia and it is noticeable that parallel with the upsurge in intellectual interest is a growing trend, in the west at least, for people either to participate in, or to use the metaphor of, pilgrimages. Social anthropologists have documented and interviewed a broad spectrum of people all of whom perceive themselves as “pilgrims”. A small handful of examples might include Turkish migrant workers returning to their home villages (Delaney 1990), Catholic Americans on a bus tour to the latest Marian apparition site in Kentucky (Martin and Kryst 1998), hopeful Europeans “looking for themselves” on the road to Santiago (Frey 1998), emotional Canadians searching for roots and ancestors amid the ruins of settlements in the Scottish Highlands (Basu 2004) and marginalised war veterans motorcycling across America on pilgrimage to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC (Dubisch 2004).

So, returning to the opening question of this sub-section: “where are we today?”, I would suggest that pilgrimage, as a topic of study, may have come full circle from its inauguration, development and definition during the 1970s, to post-modernist deconstruction in the late 1980s and 1990s and then to a more mature reconsideration in the last five years or so, with more disciplines embracing the topic. The “theoretical ghetto” still exists, but, increasingly, researchers are moving out, “doing their own thing” (Yamba 1995: 9), and, critically, looking beyond the confines of their own disciplines in order to find new questions, new approaches and new debates.

2.3 : The body

We are beings of flesh. We experience our world and our selves primarily through our bodily spatial and temporal orientations, through our physical movements, through our perceptions, and through our culturally-embedded projects (Johnson 1992: 1).

The intellectual ascent of “the body” within sociological circles has been so meteoric that not only is it a thriving field of analysis in its own right, but has influenced the theoretical pathways of virtually all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences; archaeology included. In this second part of this chapter, therefore, I want to address the theme of “the body”. How can it be relevant to the archaeological study of pilgrimage? How can it inform the way in which we think about religion, the medieval world and material culture? And crucially, will it help tackle objectives that seek to identify transient pilgrims moving through the landscape? The following discussion will attempt to answer these questions via an exploration of the roots and rationale that underlie the “body-centred” approach and its role in academic discourse. I hope to demonstrate that conceptually, it provides an indispensable vantage point for accessing a broad array of issues ranging from health and welfare on the road, the performance of ritual, and the construction and expression of identity in foreign lands. Above all, I hope to show that this theme provides a key to the “implicit stories of movement” (Coleman and Eade 2004: 1) otherwise locked into static texts, objects and places.

Archaeologists have, of course, always been concerned with the material traces of the human body. Corporeal and skeletal remains, artistic representations through figurines and rock art, and surviving items of costume and adornment have, right from the early days of archaeological endeavour, formed key sets of evidence in the analysis and reconstruction of past societies. Despite the long established interest in this kind of material though, it is only recently that explicit, overt, theoretical discussion, inspired by sociological research, has filtered through into archaeological circles (Fisher and DiPaolo Loren 2003; Joyce 2005; Rautman and Talalay 2000).

The auspicious journey of ideas on the human body and embodiment can be traced back to the second half of the twentieth century when social movements such as feminism, capitalism and the awareness of an ageing population encouraged a new emphasis on the symbolic power of the individual body (Shilling 2003: 26-33). At the same time, sociologists and philosophers began to challenge and dismantle the rigid dichotomy of mind and body that had influenced thought ever since the Enlightenment (2003: 23). Most famously, the French philosopher, Maurice

Merleau-Ponty railed against intellectualised and overly-analytical theories about how we “know the world”, and instead, asserted that all action and knowledge occurs through, and is grounded in, bodily perception (Merleau-Ponty 1968; 1995). Rather than the individual, the rational subject, viewing an external world, Merleau-Ponty envisaged a much more interconnected process, whereby body and world are not divided, “I become involved in things with my body, they co-exist with me as an incarnate subject” (1995: 185). Consequently, rather than assuming the body to be the mere passive container for the active and dominant mind, researchers worked along new avenues of enquiry in which the body was elevated to a more complex role (eg. B. Turner 1984 and Featherstone *et al.* 1991). Human experience and agency were increasingly regarded as much more embodied phenomena, with our ability to perceive, create and negotiate the world mediated through our bodies via our capacity to see, hear, touch, smell and feel. Many behaviours were increasingly understood to be unconsciously learned and acquired through the body, to be habitualised and routinised. Pierre Bourdieu, working on this notion of habitualisation, used the term *habitus* to define the total ideational environment of an individual. Crossley defines it thus:

An agent’s habitus is an active residue or sediment of their past experiences which functions within their present, shaping their perception, thought and action and thereby shaping social practice in a regular way. It consists in depositions, schemas, forms of know-how and competence (2001: 93).

Such perspectives, filtering through into broader academic disciplines, caused a sea-change in archaeological debate. Gradually, the human body was seen less in terms of a fixed artefact, automatically yielding concrete facts on diet, health, and “social status”, than something much more dynamic, much more interesting, and much more complicated. Now, while still acknowledging the capacity of the human body to be tackled in terms of an artefact, archaeologists increasingly consider the active, contextual processes that shape and construct identity and physicality in society. They show that a wide range of manipulative, bodily techniques, such as posture, gesture, language, clothing, and performance within the socio-political landscape are of equal importance to more traditionally analysed characteristics such as sex, age, status and religion (Fisher and DiPaolo Loren 2003: 226). With subject matter as diverse as the tattooed men and women

of Polynesia (Rainbird 2002) and the bodies of pagans and Christians, dressed for death in early medieval Europe (Bazelmans 2002), archaeologists demonstrate that rather than a legible, “textualised” surface ready for interpretation (Joyce 2005: 143), the exterior manifestation of the human body is complex, shifting, multiply-constructed and, importantly, a strategic tool for expression (Fisher and DiPaolo Loren 2003).

Simultaneously, those archaeologists who criticise the more rigid traditions of viewing the body in archaeology, call for more focused attention to be paid to the “experiencing body” (Meskell 2000). The notion of *habitus* is key in this sense because it stresses how bodily action frames daily praxis, maps out landscapes and is constituted within places and objects. More enduring material culture becomes, in effect, a stage for the “fleeting performativity of living bodies” (Joyce 2005: 143), and can ultimately facilitate more nuanced insight into past behaviours and cultural concerns. Immobile, static remains, familiar to architectural historians and archaeologists, thus inform us about mobile, active, agents because, as demonstrated by Gilchrist in her work on castles, monasteries and nunneries, the spatial arrangement of structures are determined by the *habitus* of its occupants, with accumulated patterns shedding light on ideologies and practices across a broader community of people (1994). In Gilchrist’s example, the interior space of medieval buildings, when considered in terms of lived experience, movement and access, reflect cultural ideas of gender and women’s bodies (1994).

Ultimately then, considerations of the body as a constructed artefact and as a conduit of lived experience broaden the possibilities of archaeological interpretation. Now, with respect to some of the questions presented at the beginning of this section, I propose how general ideas about embodiment can be applied to a more specific archaeology of pilgrimage.

Pilgrim bodies

Pilgrimage is, above all, a physical activity. The pilgrim body walks long distances, ascends and descends hills, suffers heat and cold, bears the weight of belongings, becomes vulnerable to disease, accidents and attack and is tied to

physiological needs; the need to eat, drink, rest, sleep and recover. Perhaps too, the pilgrim body accepts the rhythm of this physicality, encounters and beholds new sights and sounds, and through his or her body, sings, speaks, prays, observes and participates in social and ritual activities. The pilgrim body can be a travelling companion, a familiar type of stranger, a foreigner in unknown territory. In some contexts, the body of the pilgrim becomes the dominant discourse, as at Lourdes, where the presentation of the suffering body forms the central focus of the journey.

The totality of this experience is impossible to capture. For now, I identify three interlocking threads. The first, “physiological bodies” concerns bodily health and sustenance. The second, “ritualised bodies”, deals with physical ritual practices associated with pilgrimage and finally, issues of identity and interaction will be considered under “socialised bodies”.

The exposed skeletons uncovered during the excavation of Christian pilgrim burials remind us that the pilgrim body was a physiological entity, an entity of bones and flesh and blood that demanded, unrelentingly, sustenance and elementary care in the face of what could often be gruelling physical hardship. Threats to and comments upon physical well-being is a recurring theme in pilgrim accounts, both medieval and modern. The twelfth-century author of the “Pilgrims’ Guide” to the Jacobean pilgrimage, dedicates a whole chapter to pointing out the “sweet and bitter waters” of the road to Santiago, and always describes the quality of food for each region (1993). In a more harrowing account of a journey to the Holy Land in the opening years of the twelfth century, Saewulf, travelling from Britain, relates various misfortunes suffered by pilgrim bodies. After a sea-voyage in which he witnessed storm-broken ships and drowned corpses on the shore, he begins the journey from Joppa;

Anyone who has taken that road can see how many human bodies there are in the road and next to the road, and there are countless corpses which have been torn up by wild beasts...Many are killed by the Saracens and many of heat and thirst (quoted in Wilkinson *et al.* 1988: 100-101).

Domenico Laffi meanwhile complains about an uncomfortable night in the Meseta in the 1670s;

Having reached this wretched place by the evening, we ate a little bread with garlic...Then we went to bed on the ground because there was nowhere else (Laffi 1681: 143).

Considering the human body in this way is essential for forming an understanding of the experience of pilgrimage. Moreover, it gives rise to questions such as the extent to which physiological needs shaped the landscape of the pilgrim routes. After all, pilgrim bodies need paths to walk on, water sources to quench thirst, local communities to produce and provide food, and buildings in which to shelter or to seek cures and charitable donations. Mountains, rivers, stretches of ocean or arid plains presented further obstacles for the physiological body while dying pilgrims needed cemeteries and people to bury them. The work of Andrew Petersen on the *Hajj* routes in Syria and Iraq is a valuable illustration of this kind of emphasis as he reveals how facilities such as water cisterns, *khans* (hostels), settlements and cemeteries developed alongside the roads in response to the needs of pilgrims journeying through inhospitable, parched terrain (1994; 2001).

Yet, viewing the body merely as a physiological object, an artefact, presents a danger in that analyses may become oversimplified and functionalist. Direct equations between physical needs and material infrastructure should therefore be tempered by factoring in a consideration of social attitudes to the body, and the complex meanings of bodily experience.

The denial of physiological need, for example, is a recurring theme in some pilgrimages. Here is an excerpt from the web-journal of a pilgrim to Croagh Patrick in Ireland:

At the next large, flat rock, the wrinkled and faded hiking boots on my feet came off. I was moving up the chilly, wet path in bare feet, occasionally muttering a word of blasphemy as I stumbled on shards of rock or slid on mossy earth. With the laces of the boots tied to my backpack, I imagined that I was some sort of celtic warrior, scaling the mountain centuries before -- before patent leather and rubber soles. The wet rock was cold and painful. It took about one hundred feet before my muddied toes started bleeding. The boots went back on (<http://www.anu.ie/reek>: 2004).

Within this characteristically penitential Irish pilgrimage tradition, the author perceives a direct link between discomfort and a more “authentic” (and therefore meaningful) experience. Efficiency, speed and comfort, the typical concerns for secular travellers on their way from A to B, can be, therefore, less of a priority for pilgrims. Similarly, the extent to which medieval travellers dwell on physicality and danger suggests more complicated ideas about pilgrim bodies.

In this respect, the religious context of medieval Christian Europe, becomes very important in its conception of humanity and penitence through the body. Already, in chapter 1, I mentioned how the concept of “the Way” was linked to hardship and that grace was won through toil. Further points that recur in documentary sources include:

- The notion of the weak, sinful and irrational body in need of strict regulation and control by the mind (Farmer 2000).
- A persuasive association between physical adversity and devout piety, with the body forming the locus of spiritual identity (Peyroux 2000: 185).
- Illness and disease constituting the outward manifestation of inner sinfulness and wrongdoing (Brody 1974).

Thus considerations of health and welfare should not be made purely along modern secularised lines, but with a recognition that bodily suffering and need could hold many meanings within medieval society. Martyrdom, epitomised through the story of Christ and the related, recurring themes of bodily repression, and asceticism in Medieval sources, for instance, suggests the link between physiological need and material culture may not always be a direct one, and that in some cases, could be the complete opposite to what one might expect.

Moreover, it becomes impossible to put forward generalised interpretations of pilgrimage infrastructure. Contextual detail becomes more important, with the specific dimensions of material culture lending more nuanced insight into the interplay of pilgrim and non-pilgrim bodies, social attitude and physiological requirements. Take, for example, Gilchrist’s study of pilgrim hospitals and leprosauria in medieval England (1994). It could be assumed for example that hospitals are simple correlates to a certain level of need in medieval society.

However, typically sited alongside town walls, she argues that the location and layout of these buildings not only contributed to the creation of a boundary through “fear of pollution”, but also effectively controlled a stigmatised category of people and emphasised the pious charity of the ecclesiastical authority by strategically displaying unhealthy bodies. Such obvious charity of course was rewarded through an increase in the quantity of alms donated at the institution (Gilchrist 1994: 49). The physiological needs of the inhabitants were being met, but in a way that exploited their condition and reinforced social fear, categorisation and a pattern of financial gain.

Thus, while pilgrim bodies, like all bodies, are physiological artefacts with fundamental requirements, it is important to remember that in many cases complex attitudes surround the control and expression of these needs and that material culture is likely to reflect many layers of meanings rather than pure formulaic correlations between need and fulfilment.

The second category I wish to consider is that of “ritualised bodies”. “Ritual” has traditionally formed a troublesome area for archaeologists (Insoll 2004: 10). The conception of ritual in this thesis follows that set out by Bell in her book, “Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice” (1992). In revising traditional notions and assumptions about ritual behaviour, she proposes that we let go of ingrained ideas, re-orientate the questions that we ask of ritual and approach the data with a completely different mind-set. Rather than trying to define what exactly ritual is, the starting point of research should focus upon the very act of ritual itself, whether sanctioned by doctrine or not. “Ritualisation”, in Bell’s words, is simply, “a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other...activities” (1992: 74).

The spectrum of known ritual activities performed by pilgrims is thus bewildering. From kneeling, touching a sacred item, eyes closing in prayer, singing, bathing, chanting, dancing, moving in procession, holding a candle, presenting an offering, to, even the entire act of walking to a sacred goal, pilgrims engage in multiple forms of ritual activity that, at first glance, seem vastly disparate depending on the cultural context. How can archaeology ever come to terms with the dynamic

experience of ritual and its relationship with the physical environment? The solution lies in the common denominator to all these ritual acts; the ritualised body. In other words, the various ritual performances, associated in some way to pilgrimage, are all expressed, performed and experienced through the body.

Key to this perspective is the habitualised body. Bodily knowledge of ritual acts is acquired through repetition; the rhythm and routine becoming natural and automatic. A Catholic will cross him or herself without having to consciously think about how or when it should be done for example. Such acts become habitualised within the body, and to deliberately try not to perform them is to inflict upon the body a strange and powerful feeling of physical loss (Delaney 1990: 517). In addition to repeated, routine behaviours, “ritualised bodies”, given the right context, may sometimes perform more ad-hoc, extreme or unusual actions. These ritual expressions, such as the violent, involuntary movements of Sufi mystics, or the sensual dramas experienced by medieval Catholic visionaries like St Brigid of Sweden (Almazán 2002; Martin and Kryst 1998; Simons 1994), are unusual yet do not occur outwith the cultural schema. They are explainable with reference to the religious context. In this extract of the *Vita* of Elizabeth of Spalbeck, for instance, written in the 1260s by Philip, the abbot of Clairvaux the author is able to relate precisely the physical embodiment of the doctrine:

It is clear that this virgin, whose entire life is a miracle...with [her] body represents and explains not only Christ and the Crucifixion, but also the mystical body of Christ, that is the Church. For in her observance of the Hours she personifies the rite of the entire Church divinely instituted and personified;...by the stigmata and her penitential exercises she confirms her faith in the Passion; her jubilation and joy afterwards signify the Resurrection; her raptures symbolise the Ascension; her power, revelations, and spirituality exemplify the mission of the Holy Spirit (quoted in Simons 1994; 12).

In essence, what these performances actually do is to localise social logic within the movement and display of the ritual action. Even the most simple of gestures are thus redolent with meaning. So, for instance, Moslem pilgrims who orientate their praying bodies and prayer mats towards their spiritual and eventual geographical goal of Mecca contain and reproduce the sacredness of a distant place within their own physical beings. They build, through the repetition of this

act five times a day, a strongly habitualised pattern that becomes a part of their body. Mecca, “the unseen point on the horizon, comes to exist as a presence in their midst, etching invisible pathways on the geography of the soul” (Delaney 1990: 517). Meanwhile, more complex sets and sequences of ritual activity can be seen to hold even more layers of meaning. During the drama of the Catholic Eucharistic meal, for instance, sets of oppositions emerge such as high versus low. There is a raised altar and elevated host, eyes are lifted and people stand. But also, people lower their eyes, bow their heads and stoop to kneel. Participants feel the meaning of their actions through their bodies rather more than consciously understand or rationalise them in a cognitive sense.

The crucial aspect for archaeologists is that such sequences of ritual activity possess the power to structure and influence the physical environment (Bell 1992: 100). Relationships are forged between patterns of movement and associated material culture, so that the fleeting performances of ritualised bodies, ephemeral and, in themselves, invisible in the archaeological record, become implicitly crystallised in the material props and setting for the action. Ritual can therefore be sought in pilgrimage landscapes, amid the ruins of specific buildings and via the full repertoire of objects and artefacts associated with the journey.

The vast pilgrimage cathedrals of medieval Europe, for instance, were designed specifically to cater for the circumambulation of dense throngs of relic-seeking pilgrims. Subsequent episodes of rebuilding and enlargement suggest the manner by which ritualised bodies could become a force no longer containable within the original, designed parameters. The relics themselves, meanwhile, and the specific way in which they were housed and presented, speak volumes about crowd control, complex systems of signs and ritual, and the guarded re-enactment of mystery and sanctity (Hahn 1997; figure 2.1).

Similarly, although not traditionally seen in ritual terms, the village paths and city streets that periodically formed part of processional routes, can also, be interpreted in the light of ritualised bodies (figure 2.2). Very occasionally, we obtain a glimpse of past individual ritual acts, via material components such as graffiti carved near a sacred place, or illustrations showing pilgrims stopping at a cross, to

add a rock to a cairn (figure 2.3). Those engaging in ritual action in this way (both collectively and individually) comprise part of a landscape just as much as the brick, mortar, caves, grottos and holy rivers of sacred places (Howe 2002).



Figure 2.1: Arm reliquary c.1230 from Binche, Belgium (reproduced from Hahn 1997: 21).



Figure 2.2: An Easter procession transforms the town square of Ponferrada in Spain.

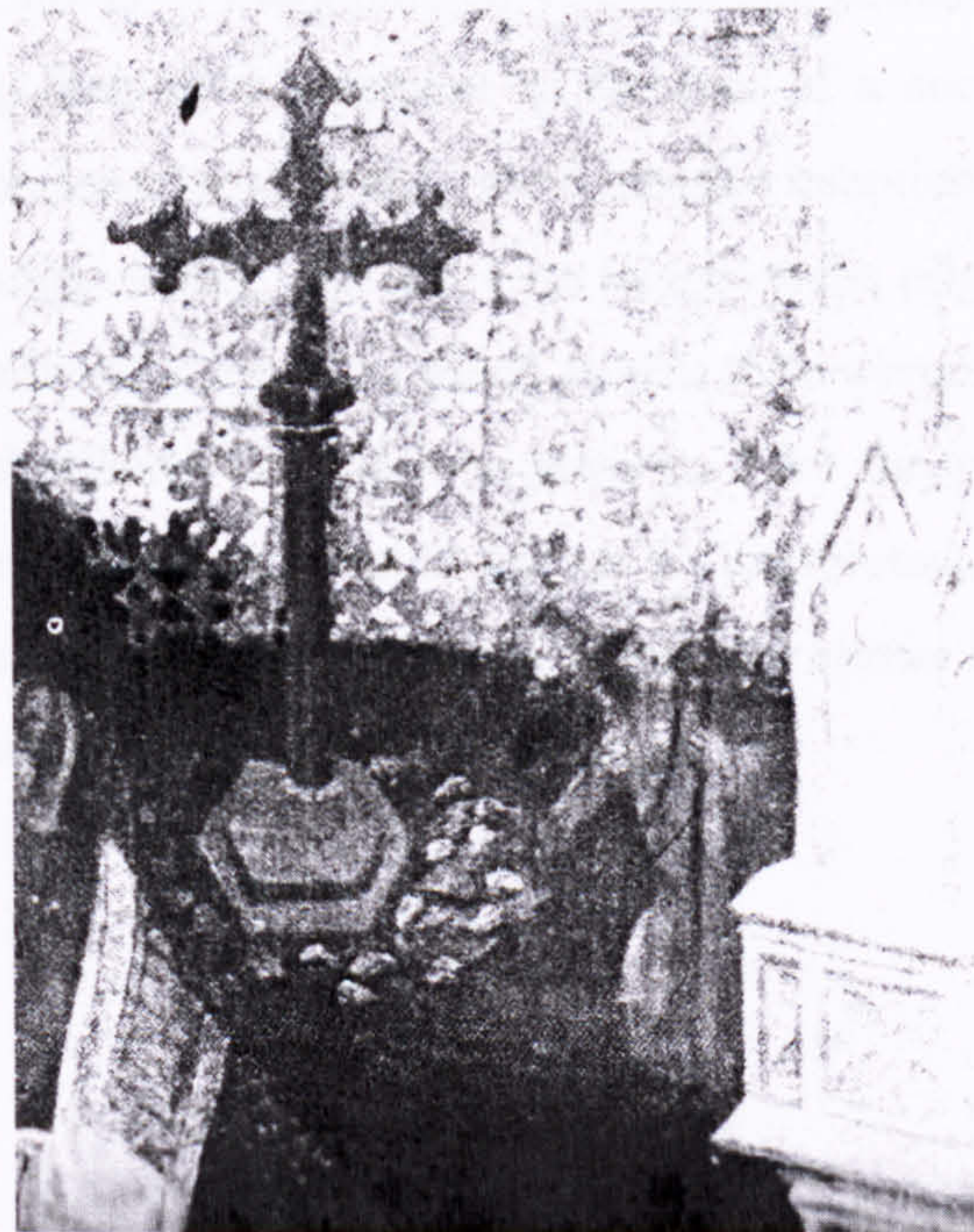


Figure 2.3: An altar-piece in León depicts a pilgrim placing a stone by a cross (reproduced from Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949b: Plate XXXVIII).

Finally, I want to turn to the idea of “socialised bodies”, a theme that raises many questions such as how pilgrims might shape and forge their own identity, particularly in foreign contexts. And how might others regard them? I propose that if we are to look for anonymous pilgrims in the landscape and assess something of their experience, it becomes imperative to try and understand how they visualised themselves and their place within the wider world. This can be achieved via the theoretical route of the body.

Addressing the outward, material adornment of the body suddenly becomes an important interpretative tool. As a way of identifying pilgrim from non-pilgrim it can feed into ideas about possible liminality and commonality of experience. For example, the modern day American “motorcycle pilgrims” who roar along the roads to the Vietnam memorial site in Washington DC, wear an “outlaw” style of biker gear, complete with bandanas and silver chains (Dubisch 2004: 105). By purposefully adopting garb that is associated with “the outsider”, the participants emphasise and reappropriate their status as marginalized veterans and demarcate their own coherent group, making their own statement in the face of a society perceived to exclude them. They become recognisable, their identity intentionally on display. Similarly, the cloak, scrip, or bag, and shiny tin badge of the pilgrim were universally recognised in Medieval Europe, so much so that they were used in sculpture and illustrations as shorthand for religious devotee. Like the plain white ihram worn by male pilgrims to Mecca it could almost be interpreted as a “uniform” that represented your removal from normal life. Figure 2.4 shows how modern pilgrims on the road to Santiago are also easily identifiable.



Figure 2. 4: Modern Jacobean pilgrims (reproduced from www.paradoxplace.com).

However, standard symbols of identity could be abused or manipulated. Bandits and fraudsters of the later Middle Ages disguised themselves in pilgrim gear for criminal purpose and gain. Clearly irritated at the flood of “false pilgrims” on the road to Santiago, the sub-prior of Roncesvalles categorised in a long text the different “types” of “useless enemies of work” who, “with cassocks [and] pilgrim staffs in hand” plagued the route around the year 1600 (Huarte quoted in Vazquez de Parga 1949b: 24-5).

As a way of signalling identity *among* pilgrims, it can inform ideas about subversion, interaction, social status and stigma. Noble pilgrims to Santiago could, for instance, set themselves apart by jet or gold badges. Alternatively, material adornment was a means to conform, to fit in. Found amongst the fine jewellery of Queen Charlotte de Savoi, wife of Louis XI of France were three cheap lead badges of a type worn by the poorest of pilgrims (Spencer 1998: 20). Meanwhile, nobody travelling to Santiago de Compostela today can avoid witnessing the occasional simmer of resentment rippling through dedicated walkers when the lycra clothes, panniers and helmet that signify “cyclist” come into view. For some, these outward signs are immediately associated with a “pilgrim cheat”, someone who doesn’t belong to their group.

Addressing bodily experience, perception and phenomenology can also provide the means with which to explore of identity. The movement and actions of “ritualised bodies”, as discussed above contributes to the formation of identity and the embodiment of negotiation and power relationships for instance. The body of an officiating priest, bishop or visionary is marked out as different and powerful not only by ornate dress and material props, but by his or her central physical location within the immediate landscape, the sight of their sombre aspect and symbolic gesturing, and rhythm and sound of their words. The construction of identity via the body is thus a strategy in the reaffirmation of authority. Meanwhile, specific places where pilgrims and non-pilgrims come into contact, such as settlements, cathedrals and plazas can be examined with an eye to the way in which material culture actively shapes the encounters and experience. Similarly, across the wider pilgrimage landscape, there may be zones or elements specifically associated with, or designated for pilgrims, such as pilgrim hospices. How such places, associated with a much wider movement, fit into local physical and social landscapes can illuminate the articulation of pilgrim identity and relationships.

The identity of the socialised pilgrim body can therefore be forged on various levels and expressed through multiple strategic media that involve adornment, representation and bodily action. Therefore, I propose that pilgrim identity cannot be easily defined and set in stone, but something that needs detailed consideration. Hence the polarised argument between Turner’s *communitas* and social levelling of pilgrims versus Eade and Sallnow’s contestation and reinforcement of social division becomes too rigid. There is room for both. Moreover, breaking free from a prescriptive “frame” of interpretation allows for an exploration of different issues such as conforming, subversion, manipulation and interaction of identities.

To summarise then, the application of theory that situates the human body as a central, focal point of analysis is of great benefit to the archaeological study of pilgrimage. It forces the researcher to acknowledge the nuts and bolts of how pilgrims experience and understand their journey and to consider the meaning behind behaviour that may otherwise be taken for granted or glossed over. By thinking about the body as an artefact and as the means by which to perceive and become involved with the world, it becomes easier to visualise the connection

between people and the material components of the shifting landscapes that they encounter and interact with. Meanwhile, conceiving pilgrim bodies physiologically, ritually and socially helps to organise and establish more precise lines of enquiry for tackling questions and objectives seeking to identify past pilgrimage. Obviously, such themes overlap; rituals may be heaped upon the physiological body for example, while both physiology and ritual feed into ideas about identity. However, ultimately, by means of a consideration of the body, objects, places and the words of texts can be given a fuller, more rounded interpretation that takes into account movement, dynamism and the multiple identities, attitudes and aspirations of people in the past.

2.4 Place

A discussion about place naturally follows on from that of “the body”. As Heidi Nast and Steve Pile so rightly point out:

Very few things are universal. Bumper stickers across the United States of America proclaim only taxes and death...On the brighter side: death presumes life. And, since we are alive, we must have bodies. And, since we have bodies, we must be some place (1998: 1).

In other words, it is a fact of life that we are always *somewhere*. Our bodies are not detached entities, but dwell in locales that are rich with meaning, and to explore these meanings is to explore our experience of “being in the world”. For archaeologists, it is becoming increasingly apparent that without an idea of place, the analysis of the past is somehow flat, lifeless and one-dimensional; it presents human life as strangely isolated from the world. Accordingly, the investigation of the way in which people inhabit, comprehend and create the dimensions of their landscapes is becoming an ever more crucial element of archaeological study. In this section, therefore, I argue that an archaeology of pilgrimage must engage with landscape theory, not only so that we can conceptualise a fuller, more dynamic past, but so we can begin to configure new methods, questions and approaches. Initially, I want to consider the rationale behind the different aspects of landscape theory and review some of the more traditional perspectives on “sacred landscapes”. I shall then go on to address more specifically how ideas about

“place” and “landscape”, once applied to pilgrimage, can determine and sustain a secure theoretical approach.

First of all, it is safe to say that the value of the landscape perspective is now well established. A succession of geographers, philosophers and social anthropologists have, in recent decades, completely transformed our understanding of place, space and human society by simply dispensing with the traditional conceptual divide between the “cultural world of people” and the “surrounding natural environment”. Rather than thinking of the landscape as something passive, a backdrop for action that just exists “out there”, they demonstrate that it is actually part of us, and in so doing, they reveal an infinitely complex world in which society and place are endlessly entangled. In particular, Ingold reminds us that the everyday tasks and routines of labour and life are articulated through the landscape (2000). Meanwhile, eloquent studies, such as Basso’s work on the western Apache, or van de Guchte’s on Inca cognition, clearly indicate that all those things that make us human, such as memory, emotions, social identity, notions of morality and faith, tend to be felt and understood through reference to place (Basso 1996; van de Guchte 1999).

Equipped with this awareness, we begin to grasp how this linking of human life with place is concretely manifested through the contours, forms and textures of the landscape. Places of all kinds, from elaborately constructed monuments to features of the natural landscape devoid of physical embellishment, express and accommodate a plethora of human practices and ideologies. So it follows that the landscape becomes a living record of the very rhythms and nuances of life. A worn path between villages, for example, is testimony to countless familiar journeys, the progressive scarring of the ground recording the repetitive movement of people travelling to work, to trade, to reinforce social bonds (Gibson 2005). Similarly, the modern city articulates in its streets, alleys, skyscrapers and parks a vast array of networks of movement, of associations and of memories (de Certeau 1984). Inherently accommodating and reflecting *all* kinds of human activity, the landscape does not just tell a story, but *is* a story, (Johnston 1998; Ingold 2000: 189), and as Inglis states, it “..is the most solid appearance in which a history can declare itself” (1977: 489).

Archaeologists have seized upon this new way of looking. The techniques and practice of landscape survey, for example, were developed in tandem with theoretical stances on place. The large survey projects initiated in the 1960s and 1970s around the Mediterranean, such as the South Etruria survey (Potter 1979), essentially signified a release from the confined space of the excavation trench and allowed archaeologists to interrogate the past in a new, more extensive way. As a result, the traditional image of static “sites” separated by empty space on a distribution map was exchanged for the refreshing realisation that people lived rich and complex lives that encompassed movement between various localities, via paths and junctions, just like today. Men and women were set free from their farmhouse, town or village and were suddenly perceived as mobile, active agents who worked in fields and terraces, walked out to sheep-pens, or adjacent villages and travelled across regions. Hence, methodologies were increasingly designed to engage with entire landscapes and to deal with the complex factors involved in the make-up of the archaeological record. In the current climate of archaeological survey, diverse sources of evidence, from oral history to geomorphology, are no longer considered eccentric, but are accepted as important tools in gathering as much information as possible on how landscapes were constructed and conceptualised in the past (e.g. Given and Knapp 2003; Rodríguez Díaz (ed.) 2004).

More controversially, archaeologists increasingly draw upon research on bodily consciousness, sensory perception and memory in order to interpret these surveyed landscapes and to enrich our understanding of those who inhabited them. Commentators disagree over the extent to which such seemingly subjective, ephemeral and individual matters can form the focus of rigorous and objective archaeological work, and phenomenology and the “archaeology of memory” stand as two of the most controversial arenas in current theoretical debate (see below, section 2.5 and Herzfeld 2004). Others meanwhile emphasise how vision, hearing, the senses of smell and touch, the rhythm of walking, labour and life and the consistent presence of individual and societal experience, remembrances and understanding all provide a matrix through which we feel, know and ultimately, create, our surroundings (Ingold 2000). Places are felt *through* the body (Nast and

Pile 1998) and consequently, archaeologists believe it is possible to infer experiential meaning from the contours of the landscapes that they document by referring to the perceiving, sentient human body (Tilley 1994). Similarly, when the dimension of time is factored in, past landscapes are no longer confined to simple, static, snap-shots, but can be thought of in terms of long-play narratives or “biographies” in which the role of memory is key (Alcock 2002). Jerris, for instance, in a study of church building, orientation and siting in the Alps, provides an interesting example of how spatial and temporal references in the landscape can persist over very long periods of time (2002). Parcero Oubiño and his co-authors, meanwhile, show how various cultural meanings shifted and were “rewritten” over time in the landscape of Galicia (Parcero Oubiño *et al.* 1998), while Plesch demonstrates how material culture, in this case the inscribing of graffiti, can reflect the desire to fashion enduring places of meaning and memory (2002). The temporal mapping of material change and continuities thus informs us about cultural patterns over time and enriches our sense of landscapes as records of all kinds of human activity, accommodating multiple and shifting concerns and meanings.

Conceptualising pilgrimage landscapes: sacred centres and empty vessels

Turning now to a more specific review of how the landscapes of pilgrimages have been interpreted, it is clear that much traditional study focuses only on the specific sacred places of devotion that form the principal geographical goals of pilgrimage. Moreover, such places are conventionally analysed purely in terms of their “sacredness”, a view that now, considering the arguments set out above, seems narrow and limited. It is worth setting out the main points of this tradition and chronicling some of the ensuing debate.

Probably the most influential body of work to deal with “sacred centres” was that initiated by Mircea Eliade, who proposed that the essence of religion and religious experience is the clear demarcation and division of what is sacred and what is profane (1959). This division, he argues, is expressed via space. Correspondingly, profane space is perceived as a neutral, homogenous and undifferentiated “pool” in which ordinary life is lived. Disrupting this kind of space, though, like an island in

a body of water, is a holy or sacred place which functions as an *axis mundi*, a central and ordered locale that potentially produces awe or dread. Its function is perceived as a point of reference in which the faithful may orientate themselves both physically and spiritually, and in which it is possible to encounter the divine (1959). Eliade, and several others, such as H.W. Turner, provide examples that indicate how sacred places from various contexts are referred to and embellished, thus demonstrating the centeredness of these places and their ultimate separation from the rest of the world. Jerusalem, for instance, is depicted as the centre of the universe on medieval maps and is commonly referred to as the “navel of the earth”, “the point from which all else unfolded at the creation” (H.W. Turner 1979: 21).

Victor Turner similarly follows the tradition of the sacred centre in his work on Christian pilgrimage, pointing out that although holy shrines, relics and cities frequently occupy geographically remote, peripheral locations, they nevertheless tend to function as focal points which, through their sacred power, exert “a magnetic effect on a whole communications system, charging up with such sacredness many of its geographical features and attributes” (1974: 225-6). In other words, as pilgrims near their hallowed destination, a greater number of auspicious localities are encountered, places that act like stepping-stones to the main island of sacred space and divine presence.

These notions of sacred and profane space pervade archaeological conceptions of religious experience and landscape. Even in relatively recent archaeological discussion concerning broader landscape contexts, a simplistic distinction is imposed:

What could be defined as a secular landscape is one concerned with everyday life—home, field and farm—while the sacred would be identifiable as containing special places—for example sites for ceremony and ritual, such as tombs (Cooney 1994: 33).

The long established tradition of “sacred” versus “profane” should not, and, as described below, does not, escape scrutiny and criticism. Perhaps the most obvious inherent weakness in the approach lies in the assumption that a place is only

interpretable in sacred, or ritual terms. It is a feature of much academic work that human experience is categorised into “social”, “economic” or “ritual” themes; categories that, in the end, are divorced from actual contextual experience. The traditional dichotomy that separates out the sacred from the secular is, as recent commentators point out, wholly arbitrary (Bender *et al.* 1997: 149; Insoll 2004: 89) and can be viewed as dependent upon the categorisation of academics “schooled in the built cathedral or mosque” (Insoll 2004: 90).

With regard to pilgrimage, it is easy to flag up multiple spheres of life that coexist and interlock within certain locales and landscapes. What about the economic and political dimensions of catering for large numbers of pilgrims, for example? The flourishing souvenir trade at centres such as Lourdes, to take just one instance, speaks volumes about a thriving industry and economic system. Current landscape theory, as discussed above, clearly demonstrates how places, mirroring the messy reality of life, are redolent of many different facets of human life and that to consider only the sacred aspect of place is to ignore many other important cultural overtones.

Meanwhile, recent commentators from the anthropological world deconstruct and analyse this flaw further. Coleman, in re-examining Eliade’s and Victor Turner’s vision of the sacred centre, highlights the seemingly uncritical acceptance of the “divine presence” as an unquestionable entity, existing independently from the actions of people (Coleman 2002: 361). Eade and Sallnow, the “theoretical iconoclasts” of pilgrimage (Coleman and Elsner 1994: 74) also protest against the value of what they call “rarefied generalization” about sacred places, arguing that instead, the holy destinations of pilgrims are better visualised as “empty vessels” into which the hopes, ideologies and attitudes of that society are “poured” (1991: 15). The papers in their edited volume all testify to the way that different time-frames, political opinions and individual experience and expectation encourage wildly conflicting opinions about the same place. Jerusalem forms an obvious example (Bowman 1991). As such, the power of “sacred centres” cannot be attributed to one single interpretation but to their capacity to accommodate, absorb and reflect “a multiplicity of religious discourses” (Eade and Sallnow 1991: 15) and the strict sacred-profane division thus becomes blurred and ambiguous.

For some however, Eade and Sallnow's analysis goes too far and is too deconstructive. The chief problem, according to Coleman and Elsner, is the implied negation of the active role of material culture present within the holy site:

These authors overemphasise the notion that a sacred centre is merely an empty vessel. If this were the case, much archaeological data on pilgrimage sites would be useless as a means of recovering significance of past pilgrimage practices (1994: 73-4).

Using the example of the sixth century monastery at Sinai, Coleman and Elsner continue by revealing how the various elements of the site were constructed to evoke a particular kind of experience. The architecture delineates a specific path, a controlled descent into interior space during which, at specific points along the way, mosaics and paintings communicate not just revered events of the local, mythic past but remind the viewer of contemporary rulers and benefactors (1994). For the authors, there is a story here "written by theologians and monks" that was designed to advertise and to exhort the pilgrim to behave in a particular way (1994: 85). Their argument states that because the physical dimensions of a place express and communicate precise messages, it cannot be regarded as a "religious void" (Eade and Sallnow 1991: 15). A vessel is not empty if meaning is articulated from within.

While Coleman and Elsner provide a convincing study of Sinai, and criticise the neglect of material culture within anthropology (1994: 74), it seems that they, also, do not fully engage with the way in which archaeology now regards place and landscape. They acknowledge only briefly that the relationship between material elements and "past religious culture" is not "unproblematic" (1994: 74) and they later concede that they can only interpret how the monastery was intended to be viewed, not how, in actual fact it was regarded by the pilgrims who passed through (1994: 85).

Unfortunately, they seem merely to replace Eliade's and Turner's notion of an inherent, residing divine power with that of an inherent, residing material presence that is ready and waiting for interpretation. Yet, if landscape theory tells us

anything, it is that material culture is itself the expression of the various constructions, manipulations and interpretations that the anthropological models discuss, and that the same material culture can be interpreted in different ways by different observers. When Eade and Sallnow use the metaphor of a void, or empty vessel to show how places absorb or refract different discourses, they demonstrate that a sacred centre is not preset, but ambiguous. I would argue that rather than dispensing with this metaphor, we should embrace its meaning and use it as a way of acknowledging variety in the way places of pilgrimage are constructed, and persist in the landscape. We can surmise that “sacred centres” are not rock-solid places of fixed religious sanctity, but multi-dimensional, shifting, ambiguous locales that are much harder, and perhaps impossible to pin down through academic enquiry.

Constructing place: the material element

A growing number of studies are beginning to engage with the active construction of meanings within locations considered to be sacred. Martin and Kryst coin the term “place contagion” in order to describe how elements of the important Marian apparition site at Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina are imitated and effectively re-staged in Kentucky, USA as a means of lending authority to both the place and the rituals played out there (1998). Rocks transported from Medjugorje are conceived to “carry and embody quality of place” and emphasise the bond between the two localities (Martin and Kryst 1998: 211). The view of the natural landforms meanwhile; the ridges, hills, valleys and slopes, are also incorporated into the total religious experience that is offered at the site in question; Our Lady’s Farm, with the oppositions of high and low, near and far, slope and flat being expressly drawn out and included in the official tour (1998: 210).

We can investigate the construction and manipulation of past localities in a similar way, especially when we consider that notions of place were paramount in the medieval fashioning of holiness. Pilgrims to the Holy Land from late antiquity into the later Middle ages, for instance, had particularly strong expectations of witnessing the “visible proofs” of the bible and the demand for personal, physical encounters led to the establishment of not only set itineraries, but also of many

new, and sometimes competing, landmarks (Coleman and Elsner 1995: 83). An excerpt from the personal account of a fourth-century female traveller indicates something of this process:

I remembered that according to the Bible it was near Salem that holy John baptised at Aenon. So I asked if it was far away. "There it is" the Presbyter said, "two hundred yards away. If you like we can walk over there" (quoted in Coleman and Elsner 1995: 84).

As Coleman and Elsner point out, "all one had to do was to think of a text, and the authentic spot could be provided" (1995: 84-5). Gradually, Jerusalem and its hinterland became littered with named sites where holy people had variously sat, been imprisoned, died, been buried or witnessed a divine occurrence (Wilkinson *et al.* 1988). Scriptural events were thus directly mapped onto the landscape and a holy topography was created.

Likewise, in hagiography, the art of writing a saint's story, enchantment was forged through reference to place, the setting and topography giving resonance and emotional depth to the miraculous tales. Giuliana Bruno defines it thus:

The life of a saint is a composition of places, marked by a predominance of space over time. The history of the saint is popularly rendered as geography, one rich in changes of scene (1998: 387).

Recently, a conference speaker used the term "ha-geography", to describe this meshing of saintly life with place (Denzel 2004).

John Howe focuses on the formation of 'holy places' in the Middle Ages. He shows how motifs of the "imagined landscapes" of medieval literature that denote either a *locus amoenus* (lovely place) or a spiritually auspicious wilderness, the *locus horribilis*, were incorporated into shrines and sanctuaries, again to pursue and replicate a sacred tradition (2002). Influenced by literary images and popular associations, holy places could be created by the presence or non-presence of specific elements, and in terms of relationships between meaningful features such as winding paths, springs, meadows or caves (2002: 209,214).

In a similar vein, John Arnold demonstrates how the “rhetoric of landscape” can be employed to reconfigure a place, to make it holy. Using the example of the shrine of the Archangel Michael at Monte Gargano in Italy, he claims that allusions to history and legend were encoded in the various elements of the shrine, thus imbuing it with a power irresistible to pilgrims and visitors:

The grotto with its ‘walls built not by means of human workmanship’, the rocks, the healing waters, and the forest invited and welcomed those worshippers who sought Michael’s intercession (2000: 583).

These examples show that important sites of pilgrimage or religious encounter are manipulated through strategies such as imitation and via recourse to motifs and symbols associated with contemporary traditions. These strategies are enacted through material culture, through the management of the actual physical dimensions of place.

The landscape of the journey

Nonetheless, on the whole, it remains noticeable that many studies continue to focus on just the important destinations that are configured as the geographical “goal” of the pilgrim or visitor. What about the landscape of the journey? By ignoring this aspect, it is almost as if we are still following the old “sacred centre” models in which we accept that pilgrims are just travelling through “neutral, homogenous and undifferentiated” space on their way to the important place.

For a start, it is well known that many pilgrimage routes, both past and present, involve far more than a simple journey to and from one important site. Activities carried out during the journey, such as singing, movement on the knees, or carrying a penitential object demonstrate how elements of religious activity are applied across entire routes and landscapes. Souvenirs carried back from the pilgrim centres may symbolically transform the journey home. Cheap tin pilgrim badges worn by returning medieval pilgrims were, for example, visible and inherently mobile tokens of saintly magic (figure 2.5).



Figure 2.5: Three medieval pilgrim badges in the collection of the Museum of London (reproduced from www.museumoflondon.org.uk).

Moreover, just as the Catholic tradition of the Stations of the Cross is not a simple processional movement, but a punctuated journey that involves certain procedures at given intervals, a pilgrimage may incorporate a great number of activities and a great range of places that are considered important to visit, see and participate in. Some of these places can be securely placed within official religious schemata, such as the great cathedral shrines that dotted the pilgrimage routes of Medieval Europe, while others might seem to have acquired a significance through less official avenues with popular custom and sometimes personal choice dictating specific detours or stop-offs along the way. Of this latter variety, it is possible to observe how the places that were frequented by Padre Pio, the stigmatised twentieth century Italian priest, are becoming crystallised and commemorated within an unofficial pilgrim itinerary that is somewhat at odds with the official Catholic position (McKevitt 1991). The curiosity of the tourist helps delineate pilgrim geographies that are far from purely sacred. An online interactive map of Pietrelcina in Italy, the village of Pio's birth, combines religious Padre Pio sites with practical tourist resources such as the post office or information office for example (figure 2.6).



Figure 2. 6: A map of Pietrelcina depicting elements of a Padre Pio religious itinerary and local facilities www.pietrelcinanet.com/pietrelcina/piantina.htm).

Another point to consider is that a pilgrimage landscape may be constantly in flux, with routes and landmarks becoming subject to change through measures such as official decree or evolving traditions and fashions. This was especially the case in medieval Europe where stolen body parts and secondary relics changed hands fast, every parish church and city cathedral clamouring for their own portion of sacredness (Geary 1978; 1994). Whole villages, towns and cities instantly gained an auspicious air and attracted visitors and pilgrims in this way. Likewise, with the loss of relics, the appeal of place disappeared into thin air. We can note such a transformation in Spain when the town of León, not long declared as the new royal capital, acquired the relics of San Isidore in the eleventh century. Gradually, the geography of the existing route-way to Compostela changed to accommodate this holy stop-off point, while the fame of Oviedo gradually waned (Soria y Puig 1993; figure 2.7).

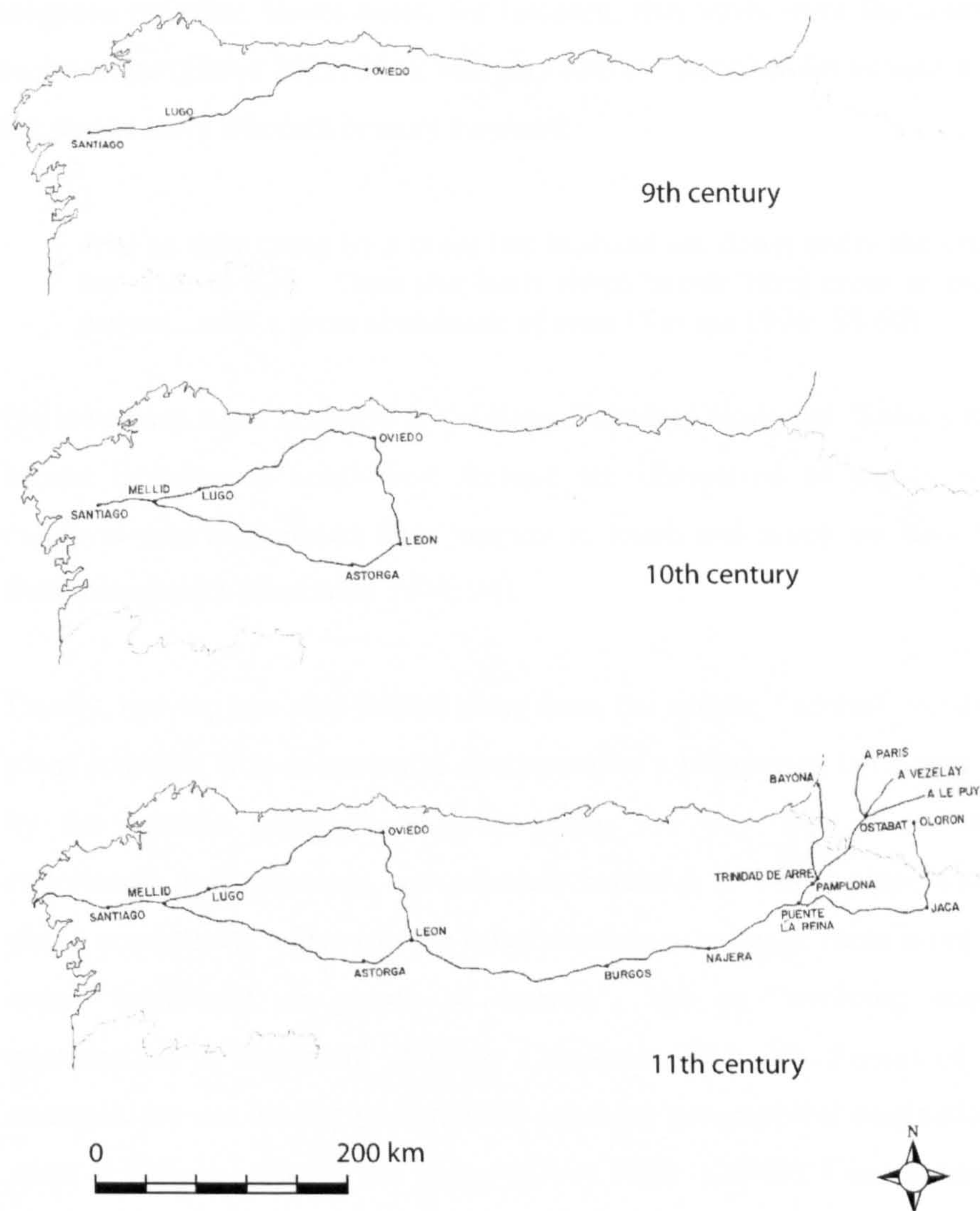


Figure 2.7: Routes of pilgrimage in relation to Oviedo and León (reproduced from Ruiz de la Peña Solar 1993: 241).

Furthermore, places encountered along a pilgrimage route do not have to be of a certain size or proportion or to be in possession of specific defined characteristics to make it meaningful for those passing through. The accounts of medieval travellers to the Holy land make mention of simple piles of stone, or views from hills, for example, as well as the numerous, more well known, holy sites (Wilkinson 1988: 58; 61). In Europe, simple wayside crosses in the medieval landscape were also significant points for those travelling through. Not merely passive memorials, such monuments were powerful “in the construction of community and the struggle with the devil” (Moreland 1999: 199). Marking the spot where a miracle had occurred, such crosses continued to shape the journey of

religious traveller. Howe notes, for instance, that vows were frequently made at such locales (Howe 2002: 216). Margery Kempe describes for us such a scene on a hot day in early fifteenth century England:

And as they came by a cross her husband sat down under the cross, calling his wife to him....Then she knelt down beside [the] cross in the field and prayed...with a great abundance of tears (Kempe 1994: 58-60).

Hollowed out stone boulders or “bullauns” situated along the “Saint’s Road” up to Mount Brandon in south-west Ireland are interpreted as places where early medieval pilgrims paused their journey to touch and scoop up holy water from these receptacles (Harbison 1994: 94).

Finally, moving one step further away from the simple, “neutral” versus “special” place scenario, it is necessary to conceptualise a pilgrimage landscape not merely by the specific geographical spots along the way, but as a continuum of experiences and meanings, an unbroken narrative in which place and landscape play a consistently active role. In other words, a pilgrimage route is not a “line that unites landmarks or points of interest”, but an “evolving sequence and continuation of sensation” (Pellicer Corellano 1993: 79). Senses of arrival, for example, are not limited to physically reaching geographical destinations, but can erupt at various points in the journey (Frey 1998: 139-40). I would like to expand on this scenario by outlining the way in which such a conceptualisation becomes possible and leads to a more dynamic idea of a pilgrimage landscape.

The key ingredient to this reconceptualisation is movement. It is all too easy to visualise landscape in a way influenced by modern cartography, that is, through a birds-eye view, where we are simultaneously “everywhere at once and nowhere in particular” (Ingold 2000: 191), and where sensory input is denied. A more valid perception arises when we consider what pilgrims are doing. They are moving through the landscape. Walking becomes a narrative in which “vistas” unfold, past experiences are remembered, stories are recalled and ideas surface (Ingold 2000: 238; Tilley 1994: 31-33). The experience of the landscape flows and is subject to an infinite number of internal and external influences. Hence the process of journeying through landscapes and townscapes, crossing mountains and arid

plains, passing by monuments and entering buildings, and treading on paths, metalled roads and bridges is accompanied by the unfolding of memories, perceptions and socially conditioned responses or interpretations. *Hajj* murals, painted large on house walls, sometimes convey the process of recollection (figure 2.8).

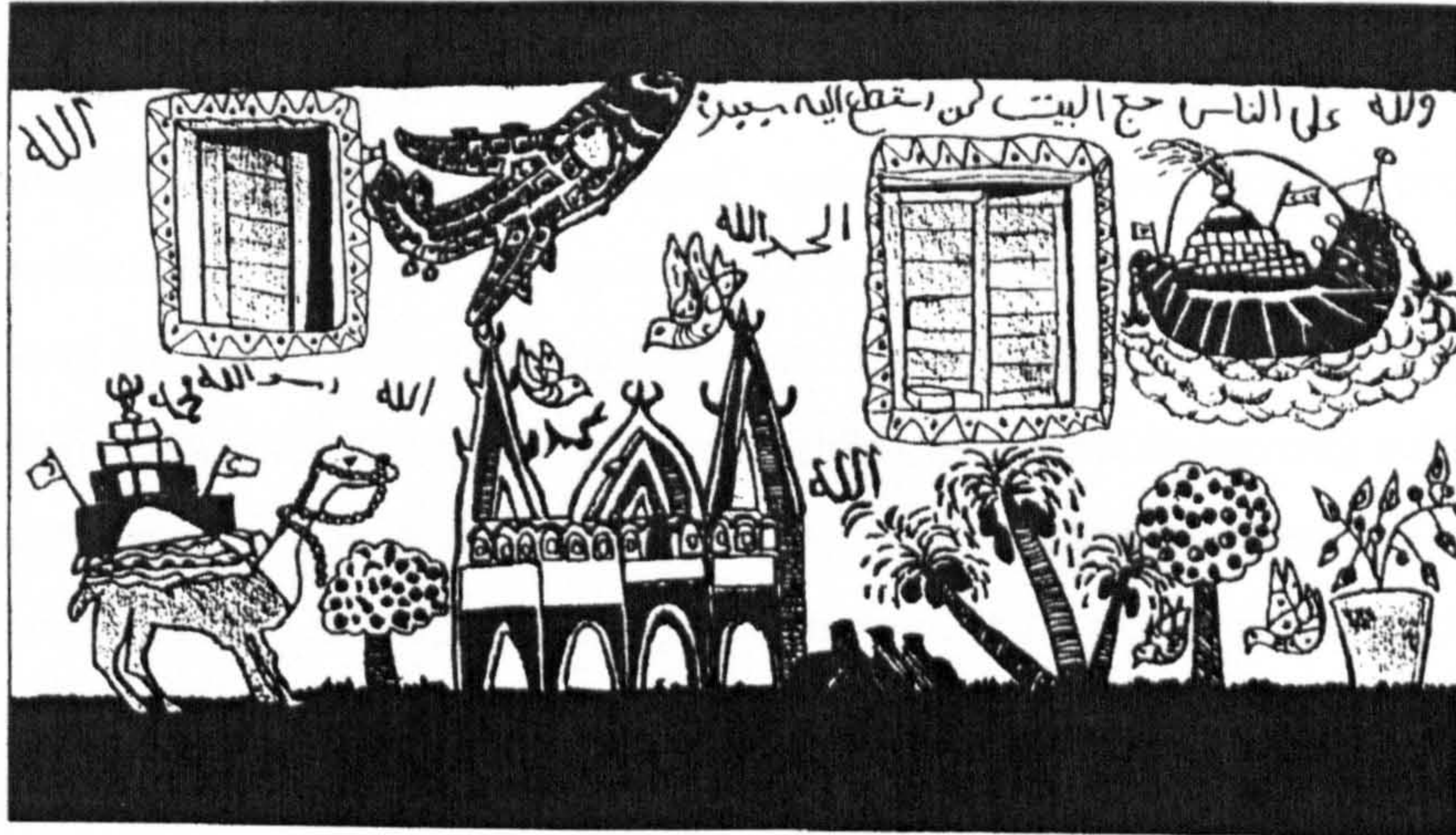


Figure 2. 8: A *Hajj* mural on a house wall in Imbaba, Cairo depicts the journey (reproduced from Tapper 1990: 243)

Moreover, those walking are creating a pattern and inscribing their movement in the landscape. With their steps, they “write” a network of paths, detours and temporary residences (de Certeau 1984: 91-110). Walking can be perceived as the spatial acting out of place, a kind of rhetoric, that can never be accurately recreated solely by a route-map, a mere “relic-set” of movement (de Certeau 1984: 97-8).

Sean Slavin, after several years of anthropological fieldwork walking the Camino de Santiago, concludes that the walking body is the nexus through which many of the experiences of pilgrimage are mediated (2003). One informant tells him, “Yes, you walk across the earth, but the earth walks itself across you” (2003: 8). From both his own journey, and the reports of others, he discovers that the rhythm of walking becomes a conscious meditative act that allows pilgrims to cope with the terrain and the enormity of the task (2003: 9-11). They begin to know and comprehend the landscape by mapping it via the process of walking.

For Coleman, movement is the key to finding a point of comparison between different pilgrimage traditions (2004). It provides a “frame” for the whole field of study, and takes us to a point of overlap between considerations of “the body” and “place”. By contemplating the active engagement of both, we arrive at a much more dynamic sense of how a pilgrimage landscape works.

In sum, then, the ideas, models and scenarios discussed above represent a clear movement away from the limiting tradition in which pilgrimage is conceived only through the dichotomy of sacred, special places and neutral profane space. Landscape theory, and the input of phenomenology, reveal a much more complex world in which little is static, fixed or set in stone. Similarly, the journey of a pilgrim becomes an infinitely more complex and more interesting subject when no longer regarded as a mere line on a map and reconceptualised from a landscape perspective. It can be thought of as continuum of movement and experience in which meaning is simultaneously gathered from the landscape, recreated in the landscape, and inscribed in the landscape.

In terms of dictating an archaeological approach, this perspective not only helps us to visualise a much more dynamic past, but also is imperative for determining a methodology. Clearly, though, it should be acknowledged that some meanings in the landscape have been lost forever. Unlike Sean Slavin’s larger than life, twenty-first-century pilgrims, the subject group here has long since gone, taking their associations, experiences and memories with them. Yet, the results described and set out by researchers of medieval landscapes show that careful attention to place, combined with a focus on contemporary traditions, fears and imaginations, can reveal much more about pilgrim landscapes than we might expect.

2.5 From theory to methodology

The challenge, then, is to devise a methodology that accommodates the theoretical views discussed above. Simply defined, a methodology should comprise a set of procedures that facilitate the forward and progressive movement of a project, or thesis, from research questions to conclusions. It should generate data from a specifically defined collection of material culture, and, ideally, be shown to be

standardised, objective and repeatable. Most crucially, the methodological approach needs to be closely aligned to the theoretical stance of the overall project. Turning theory into method is, however, frequently one of the most contentious and problematic aspects of any archaeological project, a process subject to many pitfalls and disagreement. In the following pages, therefore, I would like to expand upon some of the current debate regarding methodological approach in landscape archaeology before outlining the specific tools and devices utilised in this thesis.

Most archaeologists will agree that defining a methodology is never an easy task. Fortunately, though, methodology is now a subject of lively debate as those engaged in landscape archaeology emphasise the extent to which methodological choice influences results. Publications now contain a much more detailed discussion of the logic and reasoning behind strategies used, their consequences, and even the frank admission of methods that did not work. Meanwhile, many researchers, in true post-modernist fashion, see the processes used by the archaeologist as a subject of enquiry as illuminating and inherently crucial to the project as the archaeological material that they are studying (Bender *et al.* 2005). So in this way, methodology itself becomes an artefact, constantly under scrutiny throughout the project and beyond. Reflexive trends are, meanwhile, frequently aligned with approaches borrowed from other disciplines such as geomorphology and oral history. In short, methodological endeavour in archaeology is a constantly evolving and exciting field; there has been no better time to observe the models and methods of others.

One of the most controversial aspects of current debate, mentioned above briefly, (section 2.4) has been the application of phenomenology in archaeology. In the main, this has been a topic most hotly debated by prehistorians since the landmark publication in 1994 of Christopher Tilley's "Phenomenology of Landscape" in which theoretical perspectives on landscape and human modes of perception are applied to British Neolithic monuments (Tilley 1994). Although directed specifically at prehistoric landscapes, the arguments, models and methods are extremely relevant for this thesis and therefore, deserve some elaboration.

To summarise, Tilley envisions megaliths, and other forms of monuments, as belonging, seamlessly, to a more widely conceived landscape, a landscape “invested with powers and significances” (1994: 35) interpretable only via reference to the sentient, involved participant. Correspondingly, he records elements such as sightlines, views, and orientations between tombs and natural landmarks in Wales in order to map out possible Neolithic conceptions of the landscape. Another key strategy discussed and put into practice is the conversion of observations and fieldwork into detailed sequential narratives (1994: 173-200). Narrative, Tilley argues in his opening chapter, is an important tool for the archaeologist because it serves to structure, describe, and recreate a “spatial story”, effectively mimicking the active way in which the world is experienced (1994: 32). Hence, in order to reveal a landscape understandable only via the dynamic of movement, he physically enacts a “spatial story”, walking the length of the Dorset cursus and documenting the manner in which the landscape unfolds and governs the entire experience. Then, having been transformed into a narrative, the resulting linear text is intended as a framework for understanding the mental and physical processes implicit in a procession along the cursus. The journey is echoed by the flow of words, which demonstrate how the landscape simultaneously animates, and can be animated by, the ritualised practice of procession.

The usefulness of Tilley’s arguments for refreshing archaeological approaches to past landscapes has been commonly acknowledged and put to use in research elsewhere on the British Neolithic (see Harding 1999; Johnston 1999 and Loveday 1999). Similarly, his practical observation of sight lines and the recording of movement through landscape narratives present an enticing model for formulating an approach to landscapes encountered and experienced by medieval pilgrims. However, several commentators, while expressing a tacit regard for the validity of the theoretical perspectives, have observed serious flaws in the application of phenomenology as proposed by Tilley. Fleming, in response to the section on Welsh megaliths, highlights a pitfall common to archaeology; the sacrifice of some aspects of the data to allow for the elevation of a more favoured overall interpretation. He contends that a phenomenological gaze is pursued not only in spite of the contextual details of the data set, but also at the expense of other interpretational routes (Fleming 1999). A more serious critique, however, is put

forward by Brück who disputes the viability of phenomenological methodology itself (1998). The simple but ultimately, devastating flaw of Tilley's methods and narratives is, she argues, the extrapolation of his unique, twentieth century experiences onto a distant, past population. Numerous factors determine engagement with place, such as the naturally varying physiological make-up of individual human beings, culturally-specific rules and meanings that govern how the body is conceived, and the specific social construction of landscapes via memories and particular meaning. Citing these, Brück points out that although Tilley might be literally "following in the footsteps" of Neolithic, ritualised participants, it is unlikely, in the extreme, that his experiences can be related to those vastly removed in time and culture (Brück 1998: 18).

Could it be the case then that phenomenology cannot deliver in terms of practical archaeological work? Yet, the fact remains, in order to tackle the research aims of this thesis, it is imperative that issues such as sensory experience and perceptual landscapes are taken into account. The growing popularity of these themes in archaeology has meant that in the last ten years researchers have been working hard at the question of how exactly such seemingly ephemeral concerns can be practically investigated. Three interrelated approaches may be identified from reviewing a selection of research from the last decade.

The first relates to the more detailed consideration of how the nuts and bolts of perception work, how they intermesh with the specific cultural context, and how they are manifested in material culture. Jones, in a volume dedicated to the "Archaeology of Perception and the Senses" argues that archaeologists should focus on what he terms the "perceptual framework" in order to build a more rigorous approach (Jones 1998: 7). In itself, the proposal of an extra layer of interaction between perception and thought resembles a step backwards towards the old mind-body dichotomy, but his detailed exploration of how perception may be traced into the archaeological record through elements of intentional design, physical associations, segregations and boundaries, is useful in that it helps to define methodological avenues for recording and interpreting patterns in the landscape. Similarly, although Houston and Taube confess to having embarked "on a difficult path" (2000: 290) by attempting to trace an "archaeology of the

senses” in ancient Mesoamerica, they nevertheless go a considerable way in bringing a new and more dynamic understanding of that culture. “Individual acts of perception” and the “sensations of the past” are irretrievable (2000: 263), but are found to be referenced and repeatedly encoded within objects such as petroglyphs and decorated vessels, musical instruments and censers (2000).

Another strand of enquiry relates to sense of place. Outside of the archaeological world, Joan Nogué i Font confronts the problem of whether a phenomenology of landscape can exist in its own right, apart from the perception of certain individuals (1993). Through numerous interviews, he compares the points of view and experiences of a group of farmers and a group of artists of Garrotxa, a region of Catalonia located in the foothills of the Pyrenees. He finds that although the groups tend to emphasise different characteristics, there is enough common ground to argue that a regional character, a “sense of place”, can be located there. Thus, while acknowledging the potential for dissimilarity of encounter (Brück 1998), it is possible to see in some contexts how different individuals may respond in a broadly similar way to a landscape. This is important for attempting to consider medieval responses and associations to certain types of topographical features and landscapes encountered during the journey to Compostela.

Finally, the third strand relates to representation. Environmental psychology reveals the importance of considering different sensory pathways when representing landscape. By factoring in aspects such as sound and motion, subjects apparently respond in a more involved way, are able to glean more information, and make more considered judgements of the scene before them (Hetherington *et al.* 1993). Very recently, Casey has also emphasised the importance of mapping not just the traditional cartographic elements of a landscape, but of mapping “with” or “in” a landscape, of “showing how it feels and looks to be on or in the land” (2005: xvi) and of creating a “re-presentation in some specific medium of what it is like to be there in a bodily, concrete way” (2005: xxi). Again, although stemming from outside the archaeological sphere, these arguments highlight how methods of mapping and presentation are integral to processes of interpretation and comprehension as they impart information regarding sense of place. Like Tilley’s argument for narrative, Casey’s work suggests that a methodology for

investigating landscape should be formulated with regard to the realistic way in which places are experienced by both a subject group and by the reader or viewer of the work.

These examples of how perception is materially traceable, the definability of senses of place and methods of mapping and presentation through narrative help to redress the balance and restore a certain amount of faith in the potential of phenomenology to orientate projects and determine practical approaches to exploring human engagement with place. Having noted the various trends, pitfalls and possibilities of previous research, I will proceed by outlining the methods considered appropriate for this thesis, demonstrating, where applicable, how some of the topics discussed above have influenced methodological choice.

2.6 Methods

The methods used for investigating the medieval pilgrimage landscape of the Camino de Santiago can be summarised with reference to the four components of the methodological process; overall planning; sources consulted; fieldwork methods and data presentation.

Planning

One of the chief problems in terms of overall planning concerned the sheer scale of the potential data set. As described above, the route of the Camino Francés covers just over 750km in Spain alone (chapter 1.3). And while a huge amount of archaeological material is associated with the route, there has been very little academic synthesis of this material from a modern, archaeological point of view. Therefore, questions of sampling were considered vital for keeping the scope of the project appropriate and manageable. It was decided that discrete, well-defined Study Areas along the route could form the basis for this research for several reasons, namely, that more refined, contextualised research objectives could be applied to localised data-sets; achievable, geographic parameters could be set for fieldwork, and finally, comparison between different Study Areas would allow for the identification of broader, or repeating patterns.

The process of selecting Study Areas was very much determined by the desire to be representative. Medieval pilgrims traversed mountains, fertile hill country and arid plains and encountered a range of settlements from burgeoning urban centres to small hamlets. In order to consider the full experience of the journey, and potential attitudes to different kinds of terrain, each landscape type needed to be considered. Similarly, it was felt that rather than being clustered in one area of northern Spain, the Study Areas should be spaced out along the route so that different stages of the pilgrimage journey could be considered against the specific political and social contexts of particular regions. Such broad criteria were further narrowed down by considering the kind of question that could be asked of particular localities and whether there existed sufficient material evidence to tackle such objectives within these zones.

A phase of initial background reading and research prompted the selection of four Study Areas in Navarre, Burgos, León and Galicia, and their suitability for further investigation was assessed during a preliminary two-week visit in March and April 2004. Of the four areas, those in Navarre and Burgos (Areas 1 and 2) were considered worthy of continued research and inclusion in the more rigorous fieldwork phase planned for spring 2005. The third and fourth areas were, meanwhile, more problematic. Both had been chosen with respect to research objectives that sought the expression of diverse or “popular” religion in the landscape of the route. Subsequent to the preliminary visit, however, it was decided the first, centred on a monument known as “El Cruz de Ferro” in the Montes de León, did not present sufficient archaeological potential to warrant further investigation in this PhD project. The monument, comprising an enormous stone cairn surmounted by an iron cross is, nonetheless, theoretically interesting and will be referred to within a case-study on the modern Camino experience presented in the final chapter of this thesis. Time constraints, meanwhile, impeded a preliminary visit to the fourth area, focused on the village of O Cebreiro in Galicia. Two visits to this area in 2005, however, verified that it could form a significant part of this thesis and it is referred to throughout as Area 3.

The full fieldwork phase of the research was carried out between March and June 2005 and involved trips to all three remaining Study Areas. For reasons of general

data-gathering and comparative work, several other locations along the route were also visited, such as the monastery of San Millán de Suso, located in the province of La Rioja, approximately halfway between Areas 1 and 2, the area east of Carrión de los Condes in Palencia, and many of the major cities of the route such as Pamplona, Logroño, Burgos, León and, of course, Santiago de Compostela itself.

Sources

Of the broad variety of sources necessary for the preparation of this thesis, I have already mentioned in chapter 1.3 the first-hand voices that survive, yielding important insights into the personal experiences of medieval travellers and pilgrims to Santiago, while earlier in this chapter, the wider arena of anthropological debate and theoretical archaeology has been discussed in some detail regarding its relevance to formulating a theoretical and methodological framework. Here, I would like to outline just those sources that were utilised with respect to the practical and contextual research on the Study Areas.

Relevant primary sources, such as royal charters and *fueros*, (privileges or exemptions) which provide important information on chronology and the status of settlements on the route, were, for the most part, accessed through direct quotations in later compiled volumes and guides to the route. The immense thematic work, *La España Sagrada*, written over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth century and assembled into fifty-one volumes, is a good source for some excerpts (Florez 1754-1879), as is the three-volume, exhaustive gazetteer and historical work published in the late 1940s by Vazquez de Parga, Lacarra and Uria Riu (Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1948; 1949a; 1949b). Although wholly descriptive, this publication is still considered to be the definitive scholarly guide to the pilgrimage route. With regard to Area 2, an important source is the *Libro Bercerro de las Behetrias*, a collection of mid fourteenth century manuscripts that document the legal status of all towns and villages in Castile (Martínez Diez 1981).

Most contextual information, however, was derived from valuable secondary written sources, and in particular, detailed local historical and archaeological

works, published either in journals or book-form. Equally valuable were gazetteers of the entire route, the route within specific provinces, or works on particular themes, such as settlements or the architecture of the Camino (Jacobs 1992; Passini 1993). Meanwhile, several of the popular guides which cater for the increasing volume of people following the Jacobean trail proved to be convenient sources for quickly accessing general details about the route (e.g. Bravo Lozano 1993; Gitlitz and Davidson 2000). Some of the personal accounts, although deeply subjective and very variable in style and quality, turned out to be surprisingly interesting for several reasons (e.g. Mullins 1974; Selby 1994). They demonstrate, for instance, a clear model of how senses of place are being constructed in the modern day and how certain locations along the route can rapidly gain specific meanings and associations as descriptions of each leg of the journey are replicated and elaborated upon in these accounts. Furthermore, these accounts and the accompanying photographs, even those published as recently as the early 1990s, impart information about landscapes, monuments and parts of the route that have subsequently been changed or altered due to modern construction projects or interventions designed to cope with the steadily rising influx of people. On occasion they also record snippets of conversations with local inhabitants, recording anecdotes and knowledge that would otherwise be lost.

Various cartographic sources were utilised depending on the methodological stage. In terms of planning, atlases and small-scale maps of northern Spain were most appropriate for assessing landscapes in context. 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 map sheets from the *Mapa Topográfico Nacional de España* were the most easily accessible formats for gathering detailed topographical and toponymic information within the Study Areas, while themed cartographic works, such as those on Roman roads (Moreno Gallo 2001), or provincial physical atlases provided useful background data. The lavish publication of the entire route in aerial photographs, reproduced at a scale of 1:25,000, by the *Centro Cartográfico y Fotográfico del Ejército del Aire* (cartographic and photographic division of the Spanish Air Force.) (Lombo López 1999) vividly depicts the landscapes of the Camino de Santiago and allows for an immediate approximation of the terrain, distribution of settlements, current land-use and road networks. Much larger-scale aerial photographs were, for the most part, accessed through online initiatives carried out by local governments to

present cadastral information to the public. In Navarre, the extensive cartographic and toponymic studies undertaken by the late José Maria Jimeno Jurío and presented through multiple volumes of 1:10,000 line-drawn maps (Jimeno Jurío 1992) are an important source for seeking place-name evidence and the intricacies of local tracks, paths and boundaries between village territories.

Finally, museum displays, conversations with local inhabitants, and the perusal of web-based photographic archives and diaries all supplemented the acquisition of local details and added to the overall sense of the geographic, ethnographic and historic make-up of the Study Areas.

Fieldwork methods

The practical investigation of the Study Areas commenced with an initial, short study trip undertaken in the spring of 2004. As a preliminary visit designed for exploration and data collection, the methodologies used were pragmatic and dependent upon local circumstances, rather than a pre-determined strategy. As a general rule, I walked the demarcated Camino route in each area from east to west, observing, taking notes, sketches and photographs, and, in general, adopting the lifestyle of modern walkers on the trail, so that each night was spent in a different location in pilgrim refuges. Whenever possible, the walking was supplemented by trips to public libraries, museums and archives. Enough data was gathered during this time to be able to assess the potential of the selected areas, in terms of both research objectives and archaeological survival (see above), and to write a preliminary report on the results and observations of this trip.

For the second trip, undertaken over a total of ten weeks between March and June 2005, more thoroughly defined approaches were put into practice. In each area, fieldwork methods were designed to tackle the specific research objectives established for that particular zone and to generate data in such a manner as to be consistent with the theoretical perspectives elaborated earlier concerning landscape and bodily engagement with place.


My intention, therefore, was to factor in the idea of movement and sensory processes associated with walking through the landscape. Hence, Study Areas

were explored by foot and, for the main part, considered from the perspective of east to west movement, although it is acknowledged that unlike today, the medieval route was as much a path for returning home as one for journeying out. Whilst walking, questions about my personal experience of the landscape informed the process of recording particular points and segments of terrain along the route. Questions that led to this kind of “sensory mapping” included: What is the view ahead? Can the next village be seen? How well does sound carry? And; how many uphill slopes have to be tackled in any given distance? Similarly, villages and towns were considered in terms of movement through a series of variously constructed spaces and the crossing-over of different boundaries or zones of transition. Wary, though, of falling into the trap of extrapolating personal experience onto the medieval subjects of this research, this admittedly subjective approach was intended not as a device for direct interpretation of the past, but as a way of comprehending the landscape and building a greater sense of place, thinking about the realities of the terrain in a way not possible by relying solely on the abstract perspective of modern maps, and of creating new questions and directing contextual research.

In addition to regarding sensory aspects of the terrain, attention was paid to the more concretely evident archaeological features present along the route. Hence, the road itself was obviously an important focus, so that observations concerning the authenticity of current trajectories and the presence or absence of metalling, erosion, and recent interventions were incorporated into the recording process. Similarly, more detailed notes were made about local topographies and land-use. Settlements and, whenever possible, *despoblados* (abandoned medieval villages) were considered in terms of their spatial arrangement, their relationship with the road and surviving medieval components, while monuments and structures such as crosses, churches, monastic buildings and bridges were recorded with particular reference to their spatial relation with other aspects of the landscape and the presence of architectural styles or decorative motifs. Additionally, occasional transects were walked in order to check for the presence of surface material that could relate to medieval or later activity. In the main, this was undertaken on an ad-hoc basis depending on local circumstances with notes being made on the density of material, the extent of any pottery or tile, and occasionally a sketch of

particular sherds. Finally, similarly ad-hoc diversions were frequently made away from the demarcated pilgrim route into neighbouring areas and along other trackways in order to appreciate the wider landscape context, to investigate other possible routes in the landscape and for reasons of comparison.

Recording the varying aspects of the pilgrimage landscape entailed the logging of notes onto pre-prepared forms in which space was allocated for the description of the nature and location of whatever was being recorded (whether monument, view, settlement, or “journey segment”) and aspects such as local topography and land-use (figure 2.9). Each record was given a separate number in order to better organise and manage the growing collection of data and to be able to cross-reference photographs and GPS points. Photographs were taken both to accompany and help illustrate each record and to assemble a visual archive of the general terrain of the Study Area. Waymark points, logged with a handheld Garmin GPS, served to geographically reference recorded sites, aspects of material culture not represented on the 1:25,000 maps, and to note the approximate position of any surface material spreads. Finally, sketch maps and plans, usually rendered on the reverse of the record sheets, were drawn to highlight and record details and dimensions less easily representable in written or photographic form. Lists of records, photographs and GPS points were stored in simple computer spreadsheet files, which provided a convenient means of quickly accessing specific details of the Study Areas.

STUDY AREA	2	RECORD NO.	217	DATE	14.3.5
PHOTO REFS	1-5 25 - View of landscape + building 14 1 - 15 days + 16 miles 35 - 42 74 + 33 - 6 miles				
RECORD OF: eg stretch of road or railway, view, monument, village, bridge etc.					
Puente Fitero					
LOCATION: area, grid ref, map-sheet?					
Despoblado to immediate E of R. Pisuegra					
ENVIRONMENT:					
Topography: Flat river terrace. Gentle ascent to E					
Land-use: Cereal fields, other side of river, tree plantation					
Position in landscape: Trees + shrubs to SW Strategic river crossing site.					
DESCRIPTION					
Bridge - 4.5m wide. The camino path descends gradually to Puente Fitero. The embula has different phases of building, it is positioned immediately adjacent to the road which is raised slightly from field to S.W. This field contains a lot of tile. The + pot were also noted in the field to S. + extending to the road junction to the E. View					
HISTORICAL DETAILS AND REFERENCES (fill in later)					
WP 95 = First view of Puente + broad view of Palencia (from C) Church tower of 1100 vis + castle to NW Pico de la Vega also vis. - Clear view of valley to SSE					
WT 97 - 107 base approx 5m Also to N  Run, cross approx 10m					

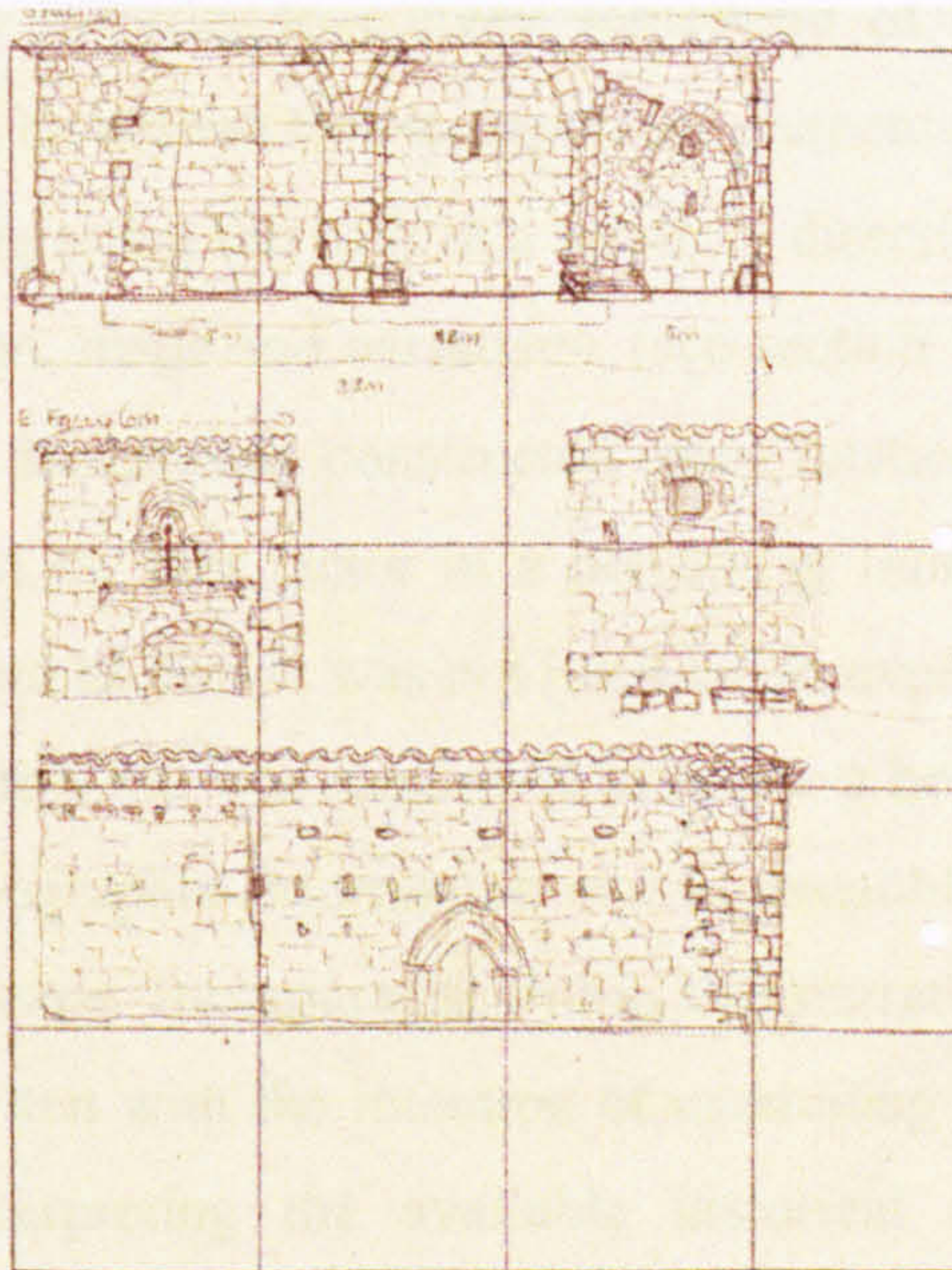


Figure 2. 9: Sample of record form used during fieldwork

Oral information was not collected systematically except in the case of O Cebreiro (Study Area 3) where a more formal interview was conducted with José Maria Nuñez Perez, a local resident and keen amateur historian of the village. In general, whenever the opportunity arose, I chatted with local residents or farmers, and made note of comments and opinions later. An all-purpose diary was maintained during the whole fieldwork period, a device that allowed space for recording general impressions, ideas, questions and personal memories of the days in the field, an exercise that was useful not only for processing the observations of the day, but for providing an additional mnemonic aid during the later writing up phase.

Presentation of data

The final stage of the methodological process involved converting the data collected during fieldwork and library-based research into written and visual formats appropriate for this thesis. In terms of presenting each Study Area, I decided that the same theoretical perspectives that dictated the formulation of research aims and methodological approach should also define the parameters of

presentation. Hence, it was decided that in order to convey something of the perceptual journey, short narratives would be written that incorporated elements of sensory experience associated with moving along the path in a westerly direction. Bearing in mind recent work on navigation, maps and narratives, (see section 2.2 above) the phrasing of this narrative was deliberately constructed using relational terms such as left and right and near and far that factor in a perceiving human being. It is worth stating again that this kind of device was not intended to express the nuances of a medieval pilgrim's journey, but was employed to create a better sense of place, convey more detailed topographic information and to assemble a different kind of data-set about the landscape. Incorporated within this narrative, longer, more analytical sections were written with the intention of examining the medieval pilgrimage landscape and interpreting the available historical and archaeological evidence.

The reproduction of photographs and aerial photographs provide the clearest means of illustrating the colour, aspect and landforms of the landscapes. However, mindful of the capacity for maps to convey important facets of the pilgrimage landscape, a significant period of time was spent considering the best way of depicting the route, the topography and recorded sites of each Study Area. A review of currently published pilgrim guides show a range of different styles of map that have over the years been used to guide and orientate walkers with regard to the journey in front of them. Typically, these maps represent an average day's journey over the space of one page and details of orientation, topography and scale are often omitted in order to stress only those components considered relevant or necessary. The series of maps that accompany Bravo Lozano's written guide are typical of this simplified and stylised format (1993; figure 2.10). Another format frequently encountered in guides, and in particular those designed for cyclists, is the presentation of the route through section profiles. Detailing the uphill and downhill course of the paths and roads, these maps give an altogether different sense of the route.



Figure 2. 10: A typical map format - Belorado to San Juan de Ortega in Burgos (reproduced from Bravo Lozano 1993: 113).

By far the most striking impression of the Camino, however, was observed in a beautifully crafted large format volume now conserved in the *Museo de Peregrinaciones* (Museum of Pilgrimage) in Santiago de Compostela. Created by the Chinese artist Ikedo Munehiro during his pilgrimage in the 1980s, this work comprises large, vertically orientated watercolour and ink paintings that compress and manipulate space so as to present the landscape through the combined perspectives of aerial and ground-based viewpoints. The painterly devices used are

both schematised and representational and seem to be related to the Buddhist and Chinese tradition of narrative landscape painting in which stories and the idea of a journey are often implicit (Barris 2005). Detailed notes fan out into the margins and record views, facts about the terrain, personal experiences and encounters with other pilgrims. During all the research undertaken for this thesis, I have not seen a better representation of the pilgrimage route, a representation that encapsulates most vividly Casey's remarks about "mapping with" and "in" a landscape (2005: xvi).

Sadly, without the skills necessary to construct a similarly artistic impression, I adopted a more conventional approach to mapping the Study Areas! Correspondingly, I decided to use traditional topographic maps to show the landscapes in context, while certain elements of the guide maps provided models for the creation of more stylised, large-scale maps in which more data could be presented. Section profiles were also drawn in order to efficiently convey the slopes involved in traversing the route through each Study Area.

To summarise then, the purpose of this chapter has been to establish a framework for interpreting the pilgrimage landscape of northern Spain and for answering the research questions set out in chapter 1. The preliminary discussion considered where pilgrimage is situated in terms of current anthropological and archaeological debate while the subsequent two sections outlined how theoretical perspectives on bodily engagement with place and landscape can inform an approach to the medieval pilgrimage to Santiago. Here, in section 2.3, after discussing the ways in which theoretical perspectives are interpreted and applied to archaeological material, I argue that although phenomenological approaches are not unproblematic, certain threads can be usefully employed. The manifestation of human perception, the creation of senses of place, and devices used for comprehending and representing a landscape are, in my view, indispensable for establishing an applied methodological strategy. The following three chapters are dedicated to the presentation of the three Study Areas.

3. Study Area 1 (Navarre)

There are four roads which, leading to Santiago, converge to form a single road at Puente la Reina (The Pilgrim's Guide: 85).

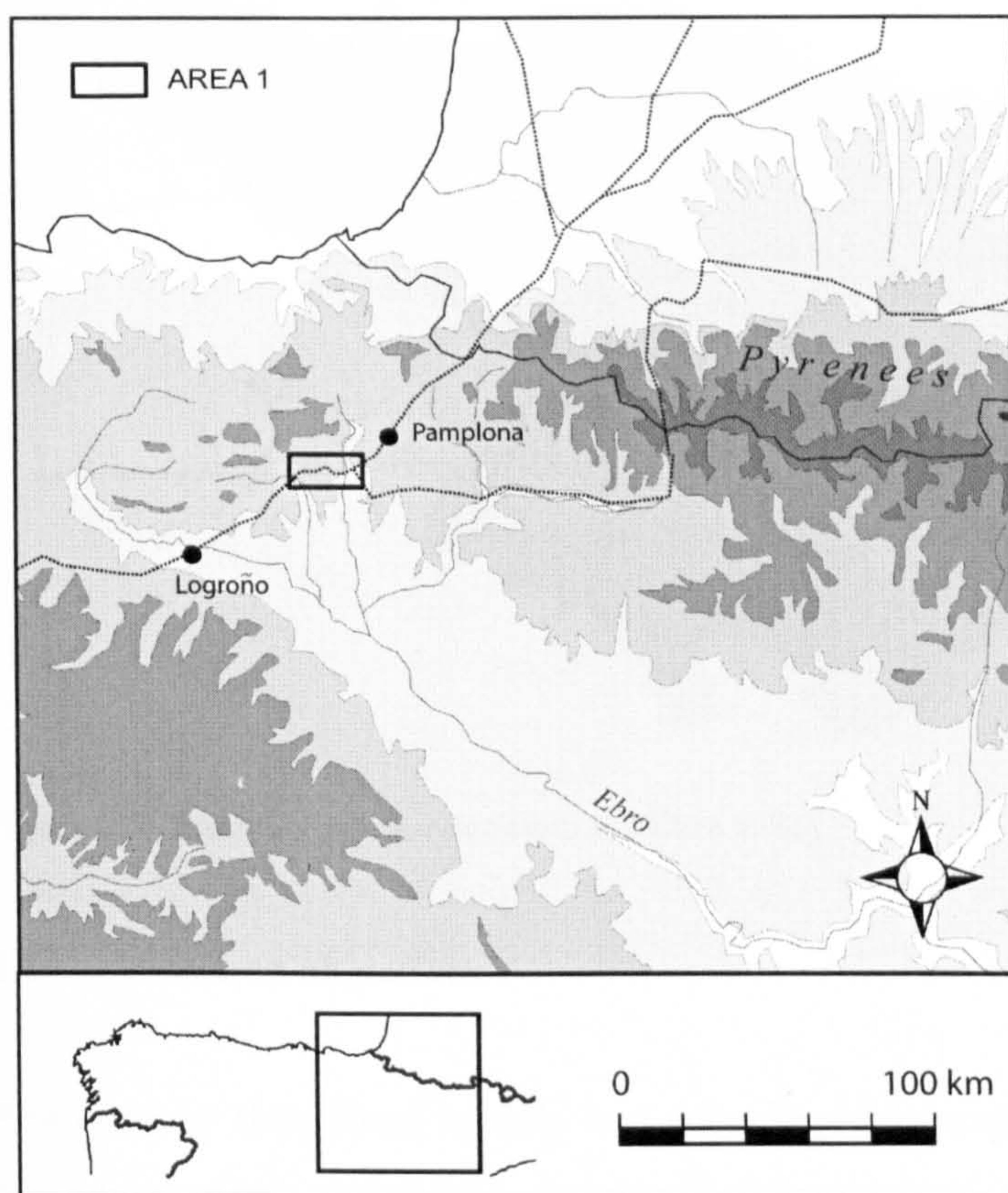


Figure 3. 1: Location of Study Area 1

Located in the north-east of Spain, the first of the three Study Areas encompasses a stretch of the pilgrim route just west of the Pyrenean foothills where pilgrims, travelling from different parts of Europe in the central Middle Ages, would have converged upon a single principal route-way across the north of Spain to Santiago de Compostela for the first time (figure 3.1). From here they faced another 600km of the journey. The rationale for selecting this area and the research objectives formulated for this part of the Camino landscape will be set out below and followed by a description of relevant geographical and historical characteristics. The second section presents and analyses the results of fieldwork undertaken in

March 2004 and April 2005 while the subsequent discussion confronts themes and questions raised in the following section.

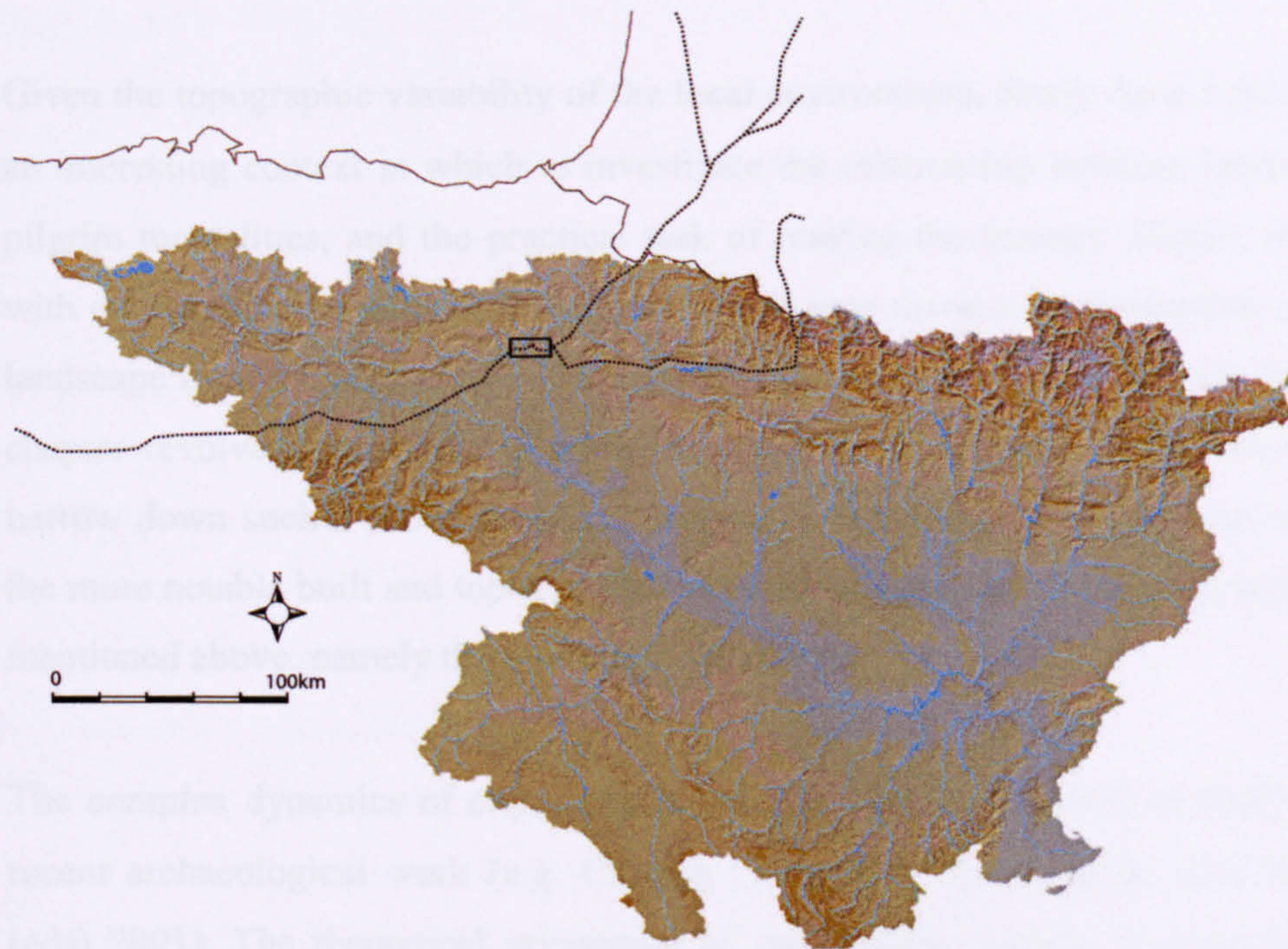


Figure 3. 2: Study Area 1 in relation to the Ebro valley

3.1 Research objectives

Prompted by theoretical models that encourage landscape to be visualised as a continuum of encounters and experience via movement (chapter 2.4), the criteria laid down for the selection of this Study Area were first; that the trajectory followed by medieval pilgrims should be both well-defined historically and clearly identifiable today, and secondly; that the route traverses a range of diverse landscape features. The segment chosen and defined as Area 1, situated along the Camino path between Obanos and Estella in the green hilly region of west central Navarre, fulfils both these criteria. Key nodal points such as the confluence of the trans-Pyrenean pilgrim routes, the busy urban centres of Puente la Reina and Estella, and a series of fixed bridging points over streams and rivers suggest that large numbers were effectively concentrated along a precise corridor of movement during the central Middle Ages. Journeying within the defined parameters of this

Study Area, pilgrims encountered open undulating terrain, steep hills, thriving towns, small settlements and fast-flowing watercourses.

Given the topographic variability of the local environment, Study Area 1 provides an interesting context in which to investigate the relationship between landscape, pilgrim mentalities, and the practical task of making the journey. Hence, in line with one of the core aims of this thesis, which is to discuss the perception of the landscape from the perspective of medieval pilgrims, a key area of enquiry for this chapter revolves around the pilgrims' response to this section of the route. To narrow down such a broad subject, I propose to concentrate primarily on two of the more notable built and topographic components contained within this sector as mentioned above: namely the towns and the rivers.

The complex dynamics of cityscapes is a thought-provoking field of analysis in recent archaeological work (e.g. Camille 2000; Hall 2006; Mayne and Murray (eds) 2001). The theoretical orientation of such studies suggest new productive lines of enquiry in the assessment of urban space along the Camino, so that while the burgeoning development of towns in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and their manifest connection to the pilgrimage is a well-rehearsed topic in historical analyses of the Jacobean route (Lacarra 1950), an alternative approach factors in bodily engagement with the material dimensions of city and pays closer attention to the production and use of medieval space. Correspondingly, one objective for this zone is to consider how pilgrims might have perceived the populous towns along the route. In what way did the physical contours of such environments, as expressed through art, architecture and overall town morphology, shape the experience of the pilgrims as they journeyed through the urban spaces?

Rivers, meanwhile, are considered significant mainly due to the fact that they are a recurring motif in pilgrim tales and popular religious stories of the day. Religious archetypes, from Moses to St Christopher and St Julian, gained potency from amazing events played out on, over, (or even in) these watery settings. Meanwhile, the frequency with which they appear in written sources, and their alliance with bandits, toll-gatherers, murderers, disastrous accidents and drownings, or, on occasion, miraculous events, leads to the hypothesis that they,

along with fording points, ferry-men and bridges, occupied a special place in medieval imaginations and that various fears and associations were attached to such locales. Later medieval and early modern art corroborates this view. The fourteenth-century painter, Francesco Traini, conveys not only the angelic calm of St. Dominic as he rescues drowning Jacobean pilgrims, but also the raging water, ominous rocky peak and chaotic throng of terrified pilgrims who are clearly overcome with awe. A mid-sixteenth century altar-piece from a village close to the Camino, just west of Pamplona, similarly captures both the manifestation of the divine in the story of St Julian and the dark depths of the river, cut by the boat's oar (figures 3.3 and 3.4).

This cultural tradition combined with the presence of a significant number of streams and rivers in the zone of Study Area 1 prompts two key questions. How did medieval pilgrims practically experience such places in the landscape? And does the associated material culture reflect some of the meanings apparent from other literary and artistic sources?



Figure 3. 3: Painting by F.Traini. St Dominic rescues a boat-load of drowning pilgrims from the river Garonne (reproduced from Hall 1997: 84).



Figure 3. 4: St Julian and the pilgrim. Detail from an altarpiece in the church of Ororbia, Navarre c. 1550 (reproduced in Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949b: Plate XII).

While the objectives outlined above are mainly restricted to the perspective of the pilgrims, the second area of investigation takes a broader approach and considers the wider regional and political significance of the Camino route-way. Therefore, the second motive for the selection of this area stems from the close relationship between the pilgrimage, political policy and urban development in this area. Both Puente la Reina and Estella owe their origins and success to the support and benefaction of the Navarrese royalty during the eleventh and twelfth centuries and much of the development of the pilgrim infrastructure and the overall structuring and coalescence of the Camino route derive from the deliberate strategies of those in authority. With this in mind, another objective formulated for this Study Area considers the role of the pilgrimage as a political and economic tool. To what extent do the road and related material culture express the integration and inseparability of sacred and political ideologies? In particular, the consolidation of this particular itinerary in favour of other pre-existing lines of communication in this region of Navarre is considered a significant issue. How was the flow of

pilgrims controlled and directed? What was the overall impact on local landscapes?

A number of practical objectives were formulated in order to create a usable set of data from background research and fieldwork. They include points such as:

- A review of former pilgrim routes in Navarre, as discussed in historical studies and to establish the chronological framework for the high medieval pilgrimage through this area.
- To check that the current route set out for modern walkers in this zone follows the likely trajectory followed by medieval pilgrims and to consider the impact of modern development on the landscape and route.
- To record a variety of sites, ranging from “journey segments” (see chapter 2.3), to specific monuments, with particular attention being paid to components associated with the towns and rivers.
- To consider various different dimensions of the landscape, such as the visual processes that accompany journeying from east to west or, for instance, the auditory landscape of the area.

The rationale for these aims is to construct a fuller picture of how the Camino emerged in this area and the kind of landscape that medieval pilgrims would have encountered in this zone.

3.2 Physical setting and background

The wider physical context for Study Area 1 is the northern fluvial fan of the Ebro basin. In this region, swift-flowing, perennial rivers drain the high Pyrenean and Basque-Cantabrian mountain ranges to the north, cutting deep gorges into limestone deposits before descending onto the flat expanse of the great Ebro plain (figure 3.2). On the northern fringes of the depression, the land belongs, structurally and climatically, to the mountainous zone where cool winters, frequent rainfall and forests of pine, beech and oak characterise the steep slopes of the sierras. As the turbulent rivers broaden and descend onto the floor of the Ebro valley, the climate and vegetation changes so that increasingly, upland terrain

gives way to a semi-arid steppe-land in which warmer, drier Mediterranean conditions predominate.



Figure 3. 5: View of the landscape just east of Study Area 1 (reproduced from www.turismoyfotos.net).

Cutting diagonally across the north-western quadrant of the Ebro basin, the Camino de Santiago from Pamplona to Logroño effectively bisects the different landscape zones described above. Imposing hills and mountains ascend to the north; alluvial plains open out to the south. For this reason, the landscape along this corridor of communication encompasses qualities of both these geographic zones. Escarpments of limestone sierras jut out from sedimentary deposits of clays, gypsum and alluvial sands and distant swathes of forest are visible from encroaching stubbly patches of parched matorral (scrub vegetation). Similarly, the distinctive climates of both the northern and southern regimes impinge upon this landscape. On occasion, the sheets of rain that routinely drench the Basque country penetrate southwards, while the arid summer droughts of the Ebro lands sometimes extend northwards to the undulating foothills of the mountains. In general however, the climate of this zone remains relatively temperate. In Estella, for example, the mean temperatures of the coldest and hottest months of the year stand at 4.8° and 22.5° C respectively (Bosque Maurel *et al.* 1990: 266) while annual rainfall averages at about 950mm (Batalla *et al.* 2004: 120). The mixed

topography and relief, the constant presence of water and the non-extreme climate in this part of north-eastern Spain combine to form prime terrain for settlement and agricultural production.

The landscape of Study Area 1 is, in many ways, typical of this choppy, meridonal zone in Navarre. Covering twenty-two kilometres of the Camino path from Obanos to the town of Estella, modern walkers encounter a route that traverses verdant farmland, ascends rugged slopes, crosses rivers and streams and winds its way through valleys flanked by steep matorral and pine slopes. Although current land use along the lowlands is mostly agricultural with irrigated river margins and terraced hillsides providing fertile ground for the cultivation of vegetables, cereals, vines, olives and almonds, there is an increasingly suburban feel to this zone. Puente la Reina and Estella are busy urban centres and the population of the latter has more than doubled in the past seventy years (Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE): www.ine.es 2006). The population levels in the villages, meanwhile, having dropped at an alarmingly steady rate throughout the twentieth century, have stabilised in the last decade or so (www.ine.es 2006), so that in contrast to the more remote, mountainous zones to the north, there is a well-heeled, affluent feel to the settlements in this area. Place names recall the fact that until the mid-nineteenth century, Basque was the principal language (Jimeno Jurío 2004b: 71). It is now unusual to hear anything but Castilian in this part of Navarre.

Other developments have transformed the terrain in a more radical way. A large industrial estate now occupies the broad flats between Villatuerta and the river Ega, for instance, whilst more dramatically, the construction of the new Autovía del Camino, designed to supplement the older N111 highway to Logroño, has altered whole hillsides, cut through the former trajectory of the Camino path and now brings a steady hum of commuter traffic through this area (figure 3.6). Service roads and drainage schemes associated with the motorway have also infringed upon former areas of farmland. Less immediately apparent, but of still considerable significance to the physical structure of this region, has been the construction of dams and reservoirs further to the north such as the Embalse de Alloz (Reservoir of Alloz) four kilometres north of Lorca in Study Area 1. Installations such as these have significantly altered the flow regimes and flood

patterns of rivers right across the Ebro basin and, in general, have served to lessen the frequency and magnitude of flooding, and to diminish the daily and seasonal flow rates of major rivers such as the Arga (Batalla *et al.* 2004). Prior to these interventions, the rivers in this region were characterised by more unpredictable fast-flowing torrents and, in the past, probably constituted much more formidable barriers to east-west communication. The impact of such projects is clearly visible in this Study Area where, in some places, bridges span relatively broad, deep channels in which, even after March rains, there is only a minimal flow.



Figure 3. 6: Road construction between Cirauqui and Lorca

Today, most of route defined within this Study Area represents an easy day's walk for modern, unhurried pilgrims. Puente la Reina and Estella are both attractive towns in which to spend the night, so many enjoy a comparatively restful day walking the twenty odd kilometres between the towns, enjoying the architectural riches of the monuments and the ambience of the picturesque villages. Medieval itineraries are more difficult to estimate, and must, in any case, be seen as dependent upon individual capabilities and health. Al Idrisi, the twelfth century Arab geographer, like modern guides, states the two towns to be a day's journey apart (Garcia Mercadal 1999: 197). In the chapter entitled "The days' journey on the apostle's road", the twelfth-century Guide recommends a typically more laborious stretch, asserting the journey from Pamplona to Estella to form a single

stage, or day's walk; a total distance of forty kilometres (The Pilgrim's Guide: 85). Domenico Laffi, the Italian priest who undertook the pilgrimage in the summer of 1670, like many modern walkers, spent the night in Puente la Reina having set out from Pamplona, although the next day, he walked on through Estella and as far as Los Arcos; a lengthy trek of just over forty-two kilometres (Hogarth in Laffi 1681: 187). Whatever the precise distances travelled by pilgrims throughout the Middle Ages, the towns of Puente la Reina and Estella presented obvious settlements in which to pause the journey.

3.3 Historical background

The landscape of the route during the Middle Ages must be assessed via recourse to a number of related historical processes that were unfolding from the early medieval epoch onwards and well into the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Key themes include territorial reconquest and expansion in this part of Spain, the consolidation of the high medieval route, the possible "dismantling" of previous itineraries (Orella Unzué 1995), and, in the local landscape, the appearance of new social, cultural and demographic horizons prompted by the influence and acceleration of long-distance movement and exchange.

The broader framework for these themes is the emergence of the kingdom of Pamplona as a powerful and independent polity at the beginning of the tenth century. During the preceding two centuries, the region had languished at the geographical and political margins of Moslem territory and had suffered the instability of alternating phases of peace and conflict. Hispano-Christian communities, inhabiting the valleys of the northern Ebro tributaries, were dismissed by one contemporary Moslem author as, "occupying unfavourable land, poor..., speakers of incomprehensible Basque and dedicated to banditry" (quoted in Lacarra 1976: 48). In contrast to the developing urban environments of Al-Andalus to the south, the terrain of Navarre presented an exclusively rural aspect where, judging from place-name and archaeological evidence, village territories followed age-old patterns established during the late antique period (Fortún Perez de Ciriza and Jusué Simonena 1993: 59; Jusué Simonena 1988: 291; Orella Unzué

1995: 586-596). Even Pamplona, during this period, comprised little more than a single quarter around the cathedral (Lacarra 1976: 93).

This was a landscape where pioneering pilgrims, responding to the growing fame of Compostela in the ninth, tenth and early eleventh centuries, encountered little infrastructure to assist their journeys. Historians, in attempting to track their footsteps through this region, rely mostly on circumstantial evidence to hypothesise about their possible itineraries. Predictably, there is little agreement about the routes taken (see Orella Unzué 1995: 580-1 for a historiographical summary). In light of the complex debate about early routes and the recent assertion that the Pyrenees never presented an insurmountable barrier to movement (Utrilla Utrilla 2001: 365), the wisest option might be to envisage a number of different available choices for early pilgrims over the mountains and onwards through Navarre. Consequently, prior to the development of the high medieval itinerary (composed of upland religious way-stations at Roncesvalles and Somport, well-established roads, new bridges, urban centres and hospices), the accomplishment of the journey was most probably dictated by factors such as the availability of pre-existing roads, the presence of volatile zones that were best avoided and the location of monastic and devotional havens that could provide both physical and spiritual support.

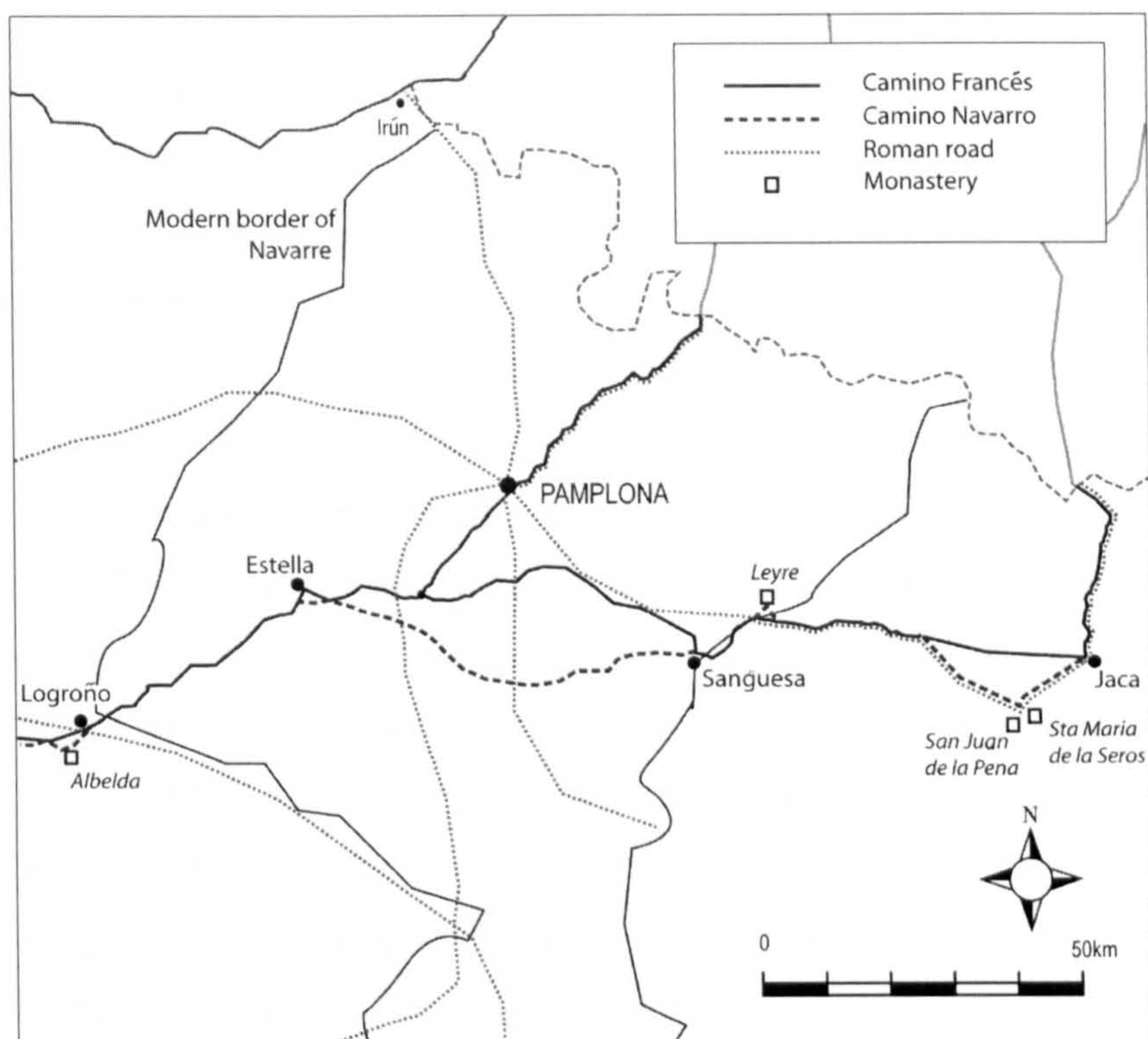


Figure 3. 7: Routes through Navarre

Thus, one option, traditionally favoured in the Jacobean literature suggests that pilgrims followed the old Burdeos to Astorga Roman highway from the Pyrenees to Pamplona (formerly Pompaelo), north-west along the corridor of the river Araquil and then south-west towards Burgos (Barrena Osoro 1994: 43; Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1948: 12-13). This route, protected in part by the imposing Sierra de Urbasa to the south, kept pilgrims well clear of the hazardous frontier zone. Orella Unzué, however, has more recently suggested an alternative, and perhaps more likely hypothesis for an early pilgrimage route through this region (1995). Defined as the “Camino Navarro”, this itinerary not only takes advantage of segments of another pre-existing Roman road from Jaca onwards, but also unites the pivotal monastic and devotional centres of Santa Maria de los Seros, San Juan de la Peña, Leyre, Irache, Albelda and San Millán de la Cogolla near Najera (Orella Unzué 1995; figure 3.7). Some of these institutions boasted Visigothic origins; all of them were prominent in the social, cultural, economic and religious networks of north-eastern Spain during the tenth and eleventh centuries. A handful of clues attest to the transient presence of early pilgrims at these monasteries; Gotescalco, Bishop of

Puy in southern France and the first documented foreign pilgrim to Santiago in 951, is reported to have broken his journey in Albelda, for instance (Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949b: 41). These monastic centres presented obvious nodal points for pilgrims and holy men seeking spiritual contact, religious experience, and safe havens in a foreign land.

As Gotescalco and other anonymous pilgrims were traversing this zone, the small polity of Pamplona was commencing its transformation from volatile borderland to powerful kingdom. Subsequent to the initial rupture of uneasy alliances with Moslem dynasties in the latter half of the ninth century, the succeeding Christian kings, “of various political weight, from ephemeral to substantial to heavy” (Melczer 1993: 16) sought to consolidate their position and expand their frontiers. They fomented collaborative ties with other fledgling Christian states to the west and garnered the active involvement of the French kingdoms in military, dynastic and religious matters. Gradually, frontiers were pushed southwards and westwards so as to include, by the opening decades of the tenth century, all of the valley terrain of the Arga, the Ega and the Aragón (the region of Study Area 1) and the profitable lands of La Rioja. Despite occasional setbacks such as the sacking of Pamplona in 924 by Abd al-Rahman III, the piecemeal process of reconquest was well underway and by the mid-eleventh century the entire north-east quadrant of Spain comprised Pamplonan territory (figure 3.8). Although some western terrain was subsequently lost to Castile and León, a profitable union with the Aragonese in 1076 and the securement of lands beyond the Pyrenees, brought other benefits to the kingdom. The political and economic resurgence of the kingdom of Pamplona generated the circumstances necessary for the new medieval configuration of the pilgrimage route and infrastructure through Puente la Reina, Estella and on towards Los Arcos and Logroño.



Figure 3.8: Territorial extent of the kingdom of Pamplona by the mid twelfth century (adapted from Fortún Pérez de Cereza and Jusue Simonena 1993: 143)

Key players in this context include the charismatic rulers Sancho III el Mayor (1004-1035), Garcia III Sanchez (1035-54), Sancho Ramírez (1076-94), and the influential bishop of Pamplona, Pedro de Roda (1083-1115). These individuals, gravitating politically towards France and Rome and mindful of the economic benefits of a kingdom situated between Europe and the other realms (both Christian and Moslem) of the Iberian Peninsula, initiated strategies that optimised the accessibility and profitability of Navarrase terrain. French settlement was actively encouraged by granting foreign merchants and craftsmen preferential mercantile and juridical freedoms. By bestowing *fueros*, or royal privileges, the Pamplonan kings effectively founded new urban nuclei, small hubs in the landscape composed of individuals professionally, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically distinct from the other, rural, Basque-speaking inhabitants of Navarre (Lacarra 1976: 94). Meanwhile, they shored-up the routes of access and communication into and around Navarre by founding hospices on the mountain passes of Somport and Roncesvalles and initiating civil projects such as bridge-building on major rivers such as the Arga and the Ebro. The flow of pilgrims into Spain rose in tandem with settlers, merchants, and artisans, attracted by the opening up of trade and the commencement of flamboyant architectural projects in

the region. Gradually, movement was articulated not by surviving traces of Roman roads, sheltered from the infidels by high sierras, or the traditional monastic centres, but by new, supported routes and urban centres in reconquered lands where pilgrims and merchants alike could find shelter, provisions, health care and markets.

The diversification of the narrowly structured feudal society of ninth and tenth century Navarre was accompanied by demographic growth and a squeeze on resources in the central Middle Ages. Settlement and agricultural production spread onto even the most marginal lands and inaccessible slopes as a result of the demand created by immigration and a naturally rising rural population (Martín Duque 2002: 729; Ramírez Vaquero 1993: 14). Within this picture of social and demographic change, three sets of surviving twelfth century Navarrase bosses and altar fronts that depict the twelve months of the agricultural year (Rodríguez López



Figure 3. 9: A ceiling-boss from Pamplona cathedral: the summer harvest (reproduced from Fortún Pérez de Ciriza and Jusué Simonena 1993: 127).

and Pérez Suescun 1998; figure 3.9) serve as a reminder that, in the main, the rural poor continued along established ways of life based on the medieval agricultural cycle. Regimes of stock-rearing and cereal production predominated and were complemented especially by viticulture and, depending on local topographical and environmental factors, the exploitation of forest resources or fruit-tree and vegetable cultivation (Ramírez Vaquero 1993:

14-15). Historical accounts describe both Puente la Reina and Estella as surrounded by vines (Ramírez Vaquero 1993: 14). After peaking around 1275, it seems population levels began the decline that culminated with the great plague epidemic of 1348 (Ramírez Vaquero 1993: 14).

Just before concluding this general historical overview and commencing the analysis of Study Area 1, it is worth pointing out the key chronological milestones

that determined pilgrim travel along this particular route. First, there was the construction of a royally-sponsored seven-arched bridge across the Arga in the early to mid-eleventh century. From this moment onwards, pilgrims abandoned other routes through Navarre in favour of travel via this new, fixed bridging point in the landscape. A community of mixed nationalities residing by the bridge by the end of the eleventh century formed the kernel of population necessary for Alfonso I to grant the “puentesinos” (bridge-dwellers) a tract of “good, wide and spacious” land between the bridge and Obanos in 1122 (quoted in Uranga 1984: 476), and the new town of Puente la Reina (Bridge of the Queen) emerged as a crucial new stopping-place on the pilgrim itinerary. Further west, in the village of Villatuerta, the “new” pilgrim itinerary converged with a leg of the old “Camino Navarro” (figure 3.10). From here, up until the late eleventh century, pilgrims continued along the older route via the monastic outpost of Zarapuz and then onwards towards the large monastery of Irache. The royal foundation of the new town of Estella in the 1070s was instrumental in the subsequent re-routing of the pilgrim traffic to the north-west of Villatuerta into the new city and then across to Irache. Of the two urban centres of Puente la Reina and Estella, it was Estella that really assumed the role of a large medieval city, its population equal to that of Pamplona in the mid-thirteenth century (Ramírez Vaquero 1993: 14). The current itinerary set out for modern walkers, therefore, is one that replicates a route consolidated by the opening decade of the twelfth century.

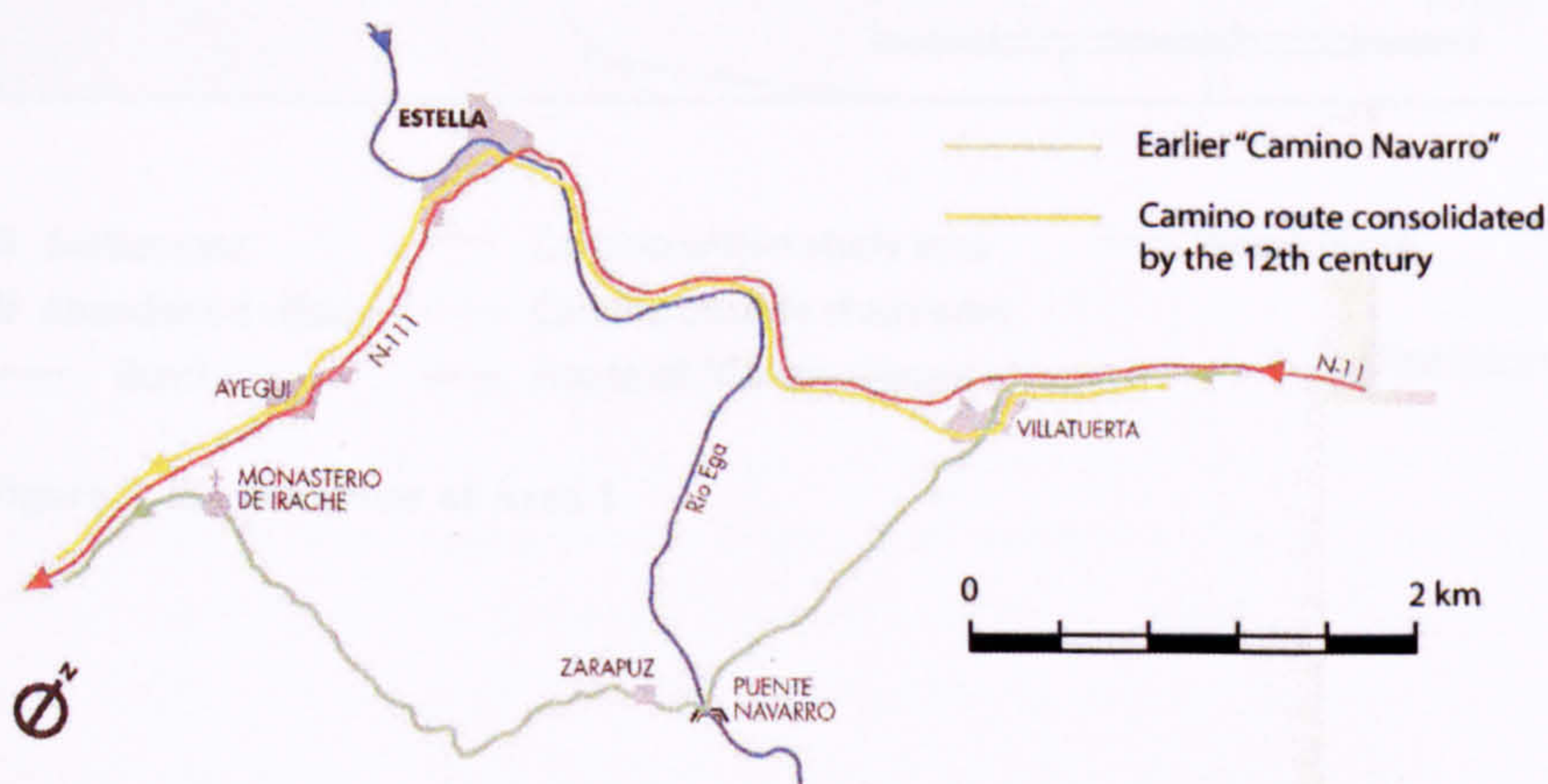


Figure 3. 10: The shift of the Camino route west of Villatuerta. (Reproduced from Itúrbide Díaz 1993: 25).

3.4 The Route

In line with the objectives set out for data presentation in chapter 2.6, the format of the subsequent pages will incorporate both “journey narratives” and more analytical text. The former, comprising shorter portions of text in “Arial” font, describes the local environment and attempts to convey aspects of my experience of travelling the route while the latter text then returns to consider archaeological and historical features introduced in the narrative section. The division of the route into five parts is designed to aid structure and presentation and is not intended to imply any particular kind of break in the landscape of the Study Area. Finally, this section will conclude with a discussion that relates the data and information below to the initial research objectives proposed at the beginning of this chapter.

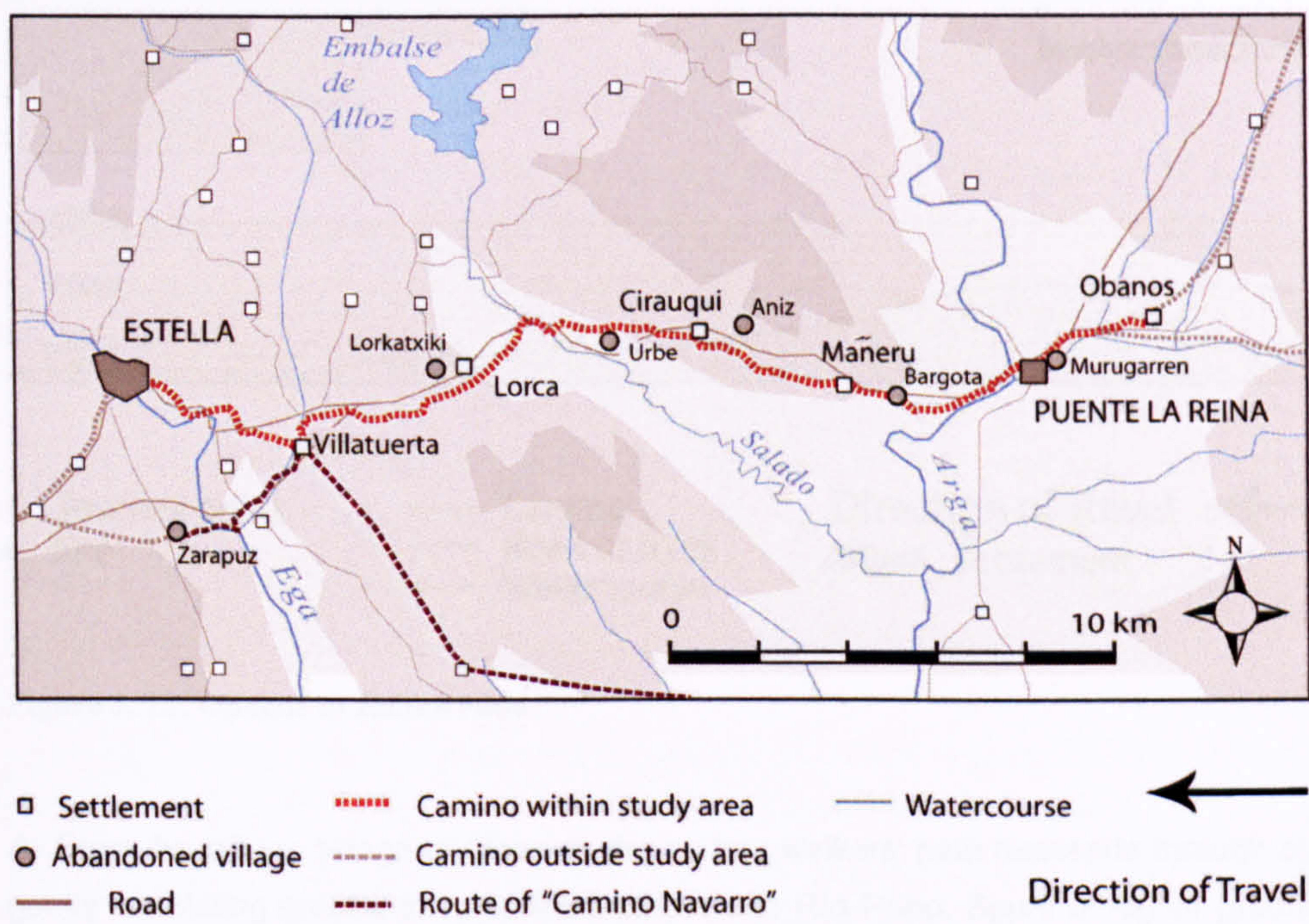


Figure 3. 11: Overview of Area 1

1.Obanos to Zubiurrutia

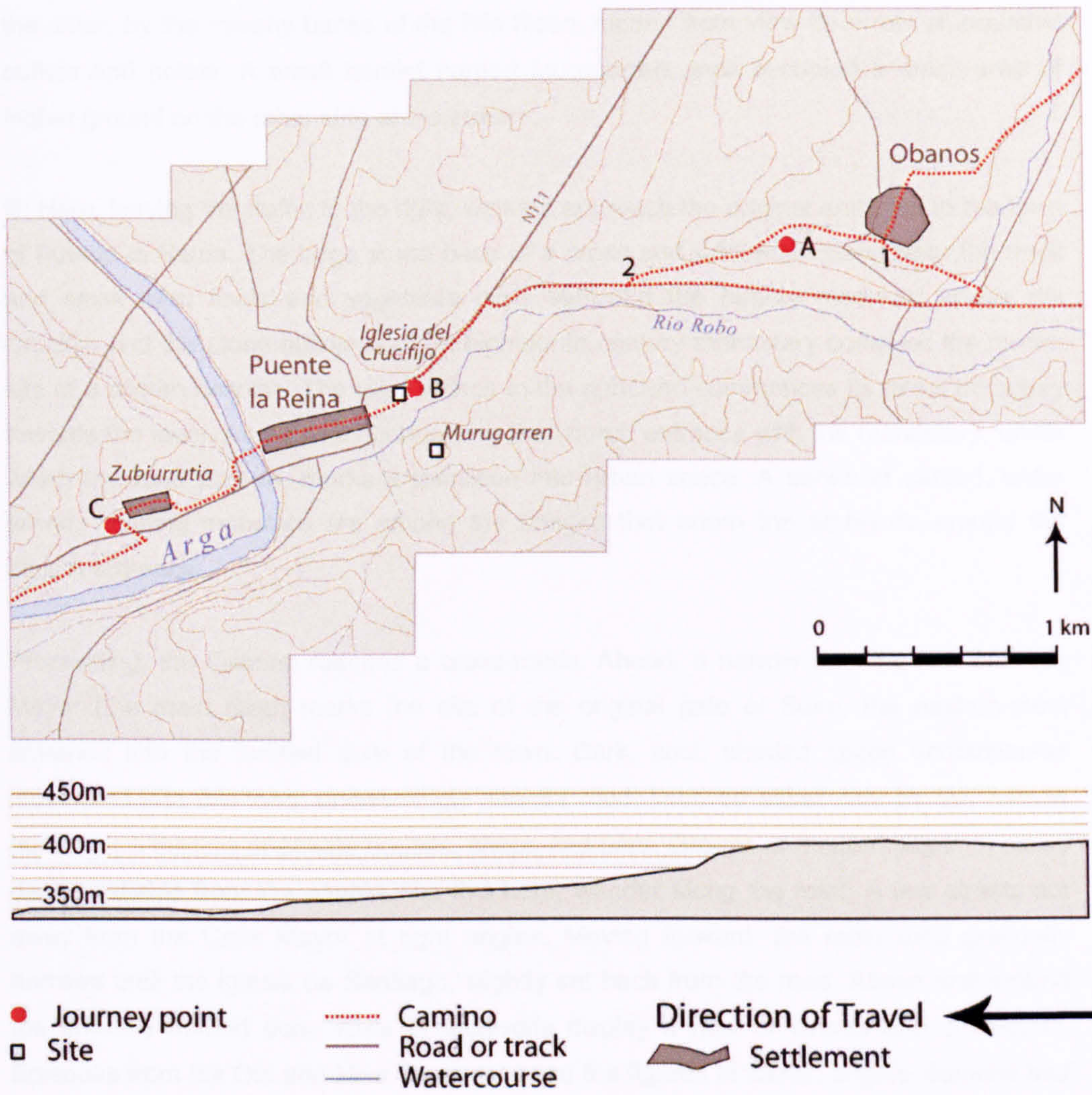


Figure 3. 12: Obanos to Zubiurrutia

A: From the hill-top village of Obanos, the narrow walkers' path descends through open, gently undulating ground towards the valley of the Río Robo. Spurs of higher ground to the left and right and distant views of bluish-green pine-covered sierras suggest more inhospitable terrain beyond the immediate environment of the pilgrim route. A view of a church tower ahead accompanies the gentle descent towards Puente la Reina and the Arga valley. By one tradition, the small hermitage of San Salvador, on the suburban outskirts of Obanos marks the point of convergence of the two medieval trans-Pyrenean roads (1). A modern statue at the junction with the N111 commemorates an alternative meeting point (2).

Continuing, the route aligns with the busy flow traffic on the N111 highway and traverses a corridor of low ground enclosed on one side by steeply rising terraces of fruit trees and, on the other, by the marshy banks of the Río Robo, hidden from view by a row of industrial outlets and hotels. A small hamlet named Murugarren once occupied a small area of higher ground on the other side of the stream.

B: Here, leaving the traffic to the right, walkers approach the original entrance to the town of Puente la Reina. The large stone base of a cross and a fountain stand near the track and small tilled fields and vegetable plots surround the nearby medieval iglesia del Crucifijo and the stone buildings of an eighteenth century monastery complex; the former site of a pilgrim hospice. The road swings to the right and commences its direct trajectory towards the town. An archway connecting the church entrance with the monastery, under which the road passes, marks a transition into urban space. A series of carved, wide-jawed, grinning monsters are among the images that adorn the archivolts around the church entrance.

Proceeding, the Camino reaches a cross-roads. Ahead, a narrow opening into the Rua Mayor (the main road) marks the site of the original gate of Suso, the eastern-most entrance into the fortified core of the town. Dark, cool, shaded space accompanies movement into this long, unswervingly straight road, lined on either side by tall, narrow buildings; a mixture of private houses, shops and bars. Groups of modern pilgrims, easily distinguishable from the people who live here, wander along the road. A few streets cut away from the Calle Mayor at right angles. Moving forward, the main road gradually narrows until the iglesia de Santiago, slightly set back from the road. Above and around the ornately framed door, rows of archivolts display a host of events and characters. Episodes from the Old and New Testament and the figures of saints, angels, demons and monsters can still be made out amongst the rows of worn figures.

From here, the main street continues its onward trajectory until finally, with a slight left turn, it ends abruptly at a tower and archway, the partially reconstructed site of the former medieval western gate. The rushing sound of water comes from the river ahead. Passing under the arch, a worn carving asking for charitable donations can be made out on the left, placed above a small ledge and money slot. Once through the archway, the Rua Mayor leads up and out onto the famous Puente de Peregrinos (Bridge of Pilgrims) where the shaded and enclosed space of the street is suddenly exchanged for breezy views up and down the river valley. Ascending the arched bridge, its central point suspended high above the Arga, the view ahead reveals a hilly, green landscape. Below, the dark water of the river flows swiftly. Looking back, the former walled space of the medieval town is obvious from the configuration of buildings, lined up either side of the entrance to the bridge. A small chapel once stood at this central point on the bridge.

Having descended down onto the other side of the river, where another tower and a stone cross once stood, the Camino road skirts the steep slope ahead, and after swinging to the left, straightens and enters the district of Zubiurrutia. Large, stone ecclesiastical buildings front the street while behind, high walls contain and seal the buildings and gardens. **C**: an iron cross has been erected on what is possibly an older, stone cross base, a point that effectively marks the end of urban space.

Analysis

Archaeologically, it is possible to distinguish between elements of the landscape within this segment that have been lost completely, features that retain some echo in later structures or alignments, and components that have endured since the Middle Ages. To the east of Puente la Reina, the much-disputed junction point of the two different trans-Pyrenean routes falls within the first category. Having personally witnessed villagers of Obanos bang their fists on tables in demonstration of their passion to secure the “spot” within their local territory, it seems obvious that the renown of a pilgrim road junction is not something to be dismissed lightly! Despite the fervour of the debate, the fact that the point of convergence is now commemorated in two different locations reflects the disappearance of a landscape in which such places are evident, with later roads and suburban development eclipsing the medieval configuration of the landscape. (figures 3.13 and 3.14). The lack of consensus may also suggest that there was more than one defined place where pilgrims converged.



Figure 3. 13: Possible junction point in Obanos



Figure 3. 14: A modern statue of St James commemorates another possible junction point.

Nevertheless, it is not difficult to imagine an elevated number of foreign pilgrims approaching the town of Puente la Reina. Whatever the precise path taken, the descent, slopes, views and the alignment of the Robo valley, (more stable and enduring elements in the landscape), give rise to the sensation of forward movement through a low-lying, well-watered corridor of land bordered by more difficult, perhaps even forbidding, terrain. This may have fostered a sense of navigational confidence for pilgrims traversing this zone, still weary after the upland, Pyrenean stages behind them and perhaps fearful of mountain and forest lands (Fumagalli 1994).

Early pilgrims traversing this route soon after the bridge was finished passed close to Murugarren, a small settlement that, as Puente la Reina increased in size and importance, declined steadily until its complete abandonment by around 1300 (Pavón Benito 2001: 230). Unsurprisingly, no visible surface trace remains today. The abandonment of Murugarren, and a number of other small rural settlements in this corner of the Valdizarbe can be related to the radical transformations and social reorganisation of space set in motion by the triple phenomenon of the bridge, the town and the pilgrimage.

Built elements also influenced the journey towards the town. Modern suburban expansion reduces the impact of the formerly isolated, extra-mural religious

complex centred on the eleventh to twelfth century iglesia del Crucifijo (formerly “de Santa María de los Huertos”), 150m east of the entrance of Puente la Reina. However, this church almost certainly served as an important point of reference for approaching medieval travellers. Later records reveal that those administering the hospice on this site sounded the bells forty times every evening, directing pilgrims still on the road as dusk approached (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 23). Hence, even if the church tower was less visually prominent than today, the uppermost part being a post-medieval addition, auditory elements of the landscape contributed towards the practical accomplishment of the journey, guiding and orientating pilgrims (figure 3.15). Was such a device intended to reassure pilgrims or was it a method of directing and controlling the traffic towards the hospice? The granting of a license to this establishment in the twelfth century, permitting the sale of bread and wine to pilgrims (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 84), suggests a vested economic interest in persuading travellers to pause their journey at this site. The role of bells in demarcating and communicating territory is also a pertinent analytical issue here and will be discussed in more length in the following chapter.



Figure 3. 15: The tower of the iglesia del Crucifijo in 1916 (reproduced from Jimeno Jurío 1999: 73).

Although the archway at this site is modern, the surviving elements of the road-side cross, orientated towards approaching walkers (figure 3.16), the fountain (marking, at least, the spot of an earlier spring) and the Romanesque façade of the

church are interpretable as familiar medieval signals denoting the transition into “civilised”, religious space. Far from being insignificant, these reference points in the landscape were instantly recognisable to travellers and were most likely accompanied by small ritual acts that helped to define the process of arrival. At the spring, for instance, pilgrims washed prior to entering the hospice or church (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 23), the exercise of physical cleansing anticipating that of spiritual rejuvenation. Convoys of medieval pilgrims could expect to find here bodily care and assistance (the hospice flourished from the twelfth century until the early modern period) and religious encounter. Fourteenth century projects of adornment and enlargement to the church, connected with the acquisition of an innovative image of the Crucifixion, are interpretable as the result of the ongoing prosperity and popularity of this site, strategically located on the final stage of the route towards Puente la Reina.



Figure 3. 16: Cross-base near the iglesia del Crucifijo (scale measures 40cm)

The doorway of the church is particularly interesting (figure 3.17). As Camille reminds us, Romanesque art is “one of entrances, doorways, westworks, narthexes, porches” (1992: 56). Entrance and exit ways articulate boundaries in space and, in the monastic sphere, stress the crucial point of interchange between purity within and worldly chaos without. The psychological importance of the doorway explains the attention paid to this example on the iglesia del Crucifijo where the

arrangement of the archivolt, like elsewhere, mirror the medieval Christian world view of space and sanctity (Camille 1992: 67-8). Close around the door, nearest to the sanctified, Godly places within, are orderly, calm and symmetrical geometric motifs. In contrast, the outer band of archivolt recalls the outer limits of the world itself and is inhabited by a motley crew of monstrous “others”. Strange hybrid animals strut and bite while grimacing faces howl or brandish devilish tongues (figure 3.18). The open mouth of one face near the top evokes the sounds of hell mimicked by actors in public medieval plays (shrieks and braying in hell as opposed to the harmony and music of heaven (Higgs Strickland 2003: 68)). Essentially, order gives way to animalistic chaos in a composition that reminds the viewer, and possibly the pilgrims, of the “enemy always lurking in the shadows”, always trying to invade sacred interior spaces (Camille 1992: 72).

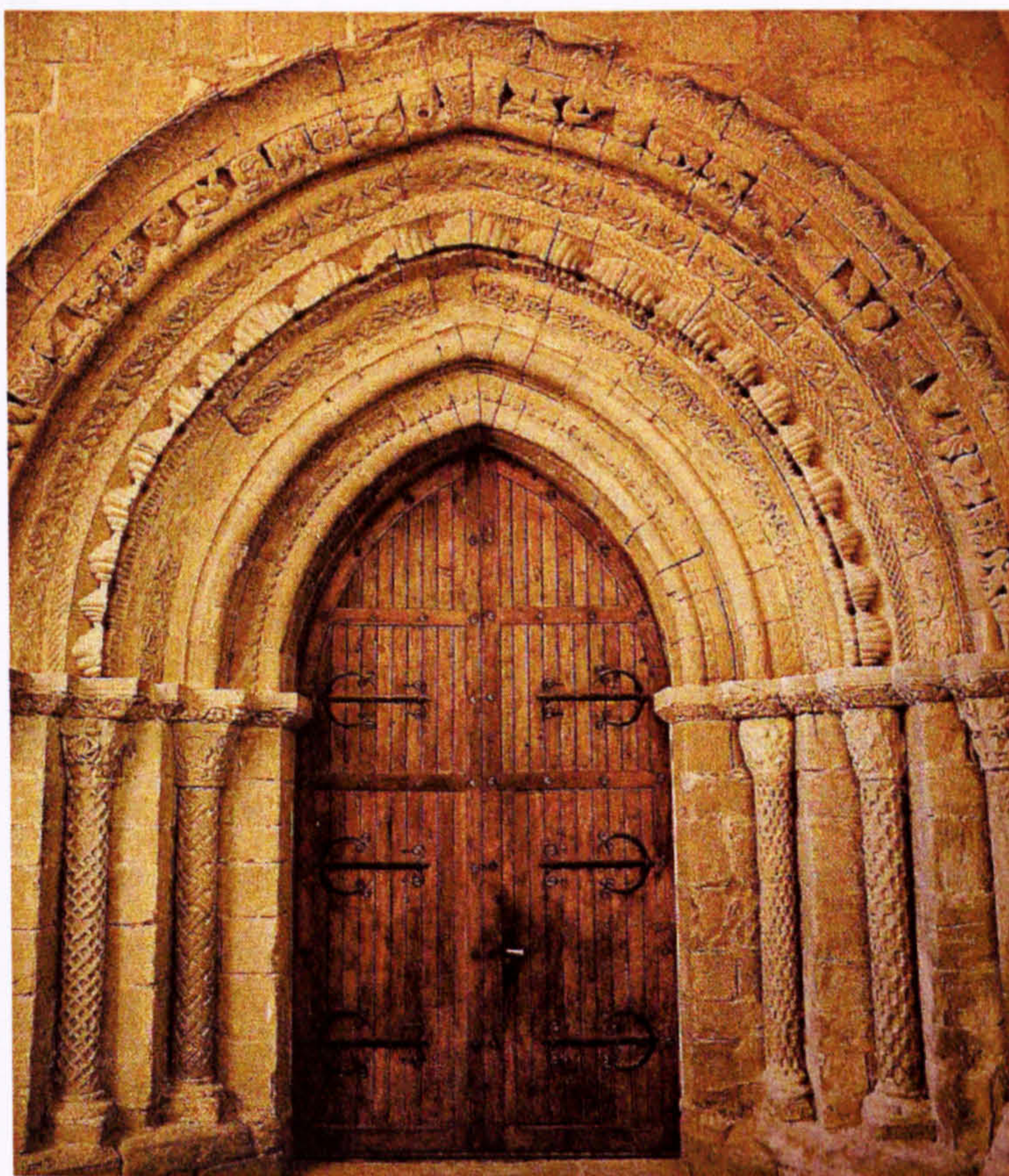


Figure 3. 17: Entrance to the iglesia del Crucifijo (reproduced from Jimeno Jurío 1999: 63).



Figure 3. 18: Details from the archivolt of the iglesia del Crucifijo (reproduced from Jimeno Jurío 1999: 62-3).

A number of urban components confronted the pilgrim upon his or her arrival at the town itself. During the twelfth century, they would have encountered a noisy, dusty building site, bustling with artisans, builders and newly arrived town-dwellers of French, Navarrese and Jewish origin (Jimeno Jurío 1999: 26). By the early thirteenth century, however, it seems that the ambitious urban project, evidently stemming from a single, pre-determined design was already virtually complete. Figure 3.19 demonstrates that subsequent to the completion of the urban walled precinct, pilgrims faced a complete, organised and defended, rectangular block aligned with the principal axis of the Camino. Within, a near-continuous façade of buildings, constructed either side of the Rua Mayor, served to direct, reinforce and control the flow of pilgrim traffic. Entering via the gate of Suso at the eastern end, pilgrims were channelled along the central artery of a rigidly-defined urban zone from which they could only escape by turning back to the eastern gate, or by continuing the full length of the town, and exiting by one of the three gates available at this western boundary.

Studies undertaken elsewhere reveal how urban architecture that encloses and constrains a given area prescribes the behaviour of those occupying the space within and those passing through (Hanawalt and Kobińska 1999: x). From the

perspective of movement through such a confined environment, the defensive components of Puente la Reina, i.e. the perimeter ditch, wall and gates, can be hypothesised as serving to define and reinforce the impact of arriving and leaving. For pilgrims entering the town, the monumental gateway served to sharply differentiate the rural landscape behind them from the densely populated urban zone ahead, estimated at numbering around 300 family units or hearths in the 1250s (Martín Duque 2002: 741). Sensory triggers of changing light and noise accompanied movement through the archway of an architecturally robust and imposing tower that also highlighted the status and royal connections of the town. Interestingly, Bartosiewicz’s case study of smell in medieval settlement reminds us that this too was a powerful sensory marker of arrival (2003). Simultaneously, the logistics of such a restricted point of entry implies surveillance and monitoring as pilgrims arrived, and it is entirely credible to think that frequently the passage of undesirable wayfarers (such as lepers) was blocked.

Once inside the gate, pilgrims moved along an elongated, enclosed space that, measuring five metres in width by around 450 in length, dictated their experience of this urban zone. A document of 1235 describes this thoroughfare as “*poblada de los romeos*” (populated with pilgrims) (quoted in Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 83).

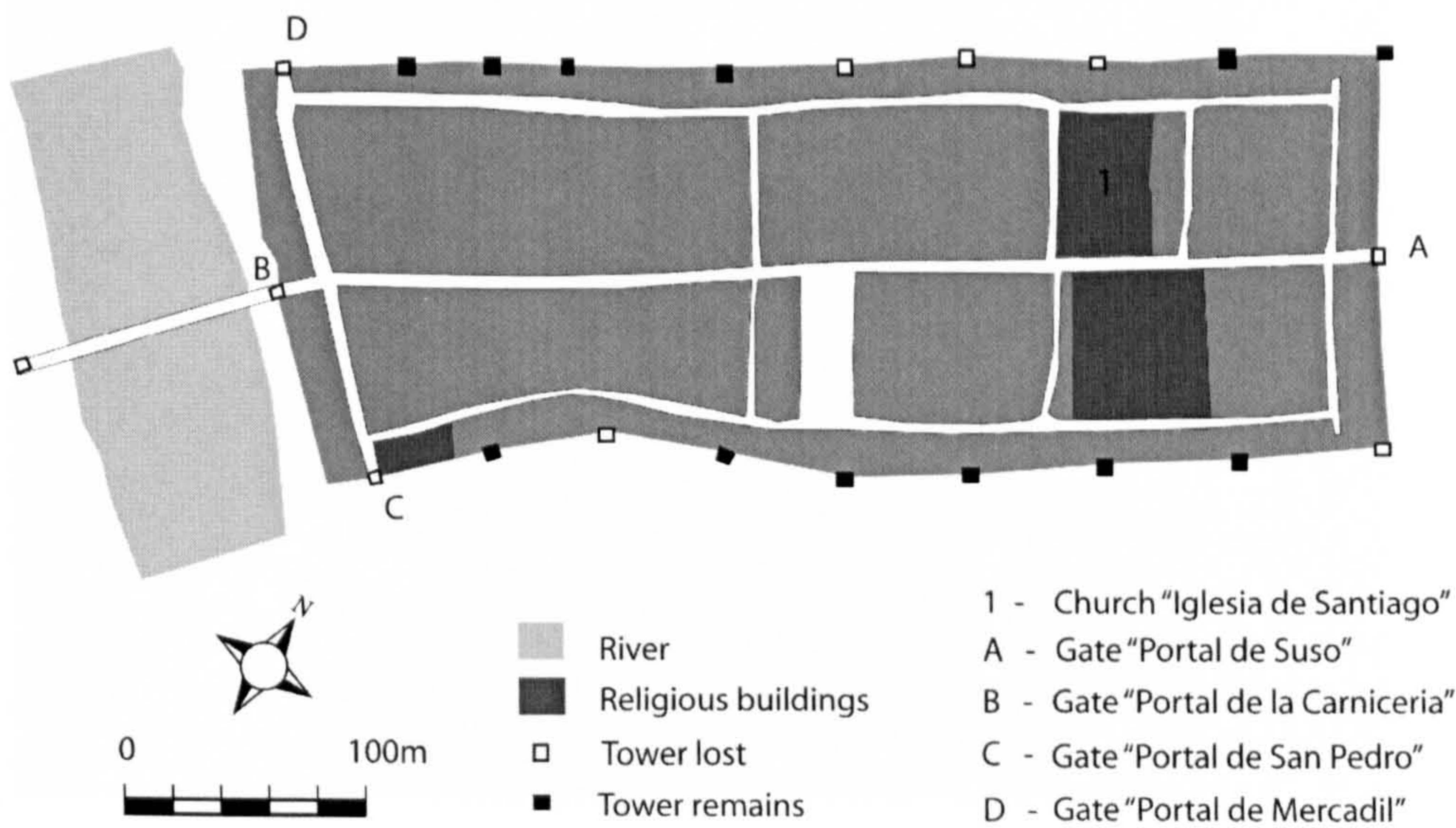


Figure 3. 19: Plan of Puente la Reina showing gates and surviving towers (adapted from Armendariz Martija 2002: 181).



Figure 3. 20: Entrance into Puente la Reina



Figure 3. 21: Aerial view of Puente la Reina (reproduced from Jimeno Jurío 1999: 7).



Figure 3. 22: The Rua Mayor c.1915-20 (reproduced from Jimeno Jurío 1999: 12).

Punctuating the linear space of the main road, the iglesia de Santiago, complete by 1142, and the plaza in front represented a core hub of activity within the town. Alterations to the church structure in the sixteenth century have encroached upon what, in the central Middle Ages, was a square that functioned simultaneously as cemetery, council meeting place and weekly market (Passini 1979: 61; figure 3.23). It can also be envisaged as the gathering place for the church congregation entering and exiting the church. As a nexus for socialising, economic transaction, religious duty and political machinations, this was a crucial point in the local urban environment. The church, sited on the principal Camino, its dedication to St James himself, and the presence of a thirteenth century hospice opposite, run by the Trinitarian order, indicates that this was also a highly significant site for pilgrims. Here, pilgrims and the resident town-dwellers shared a common urban space.

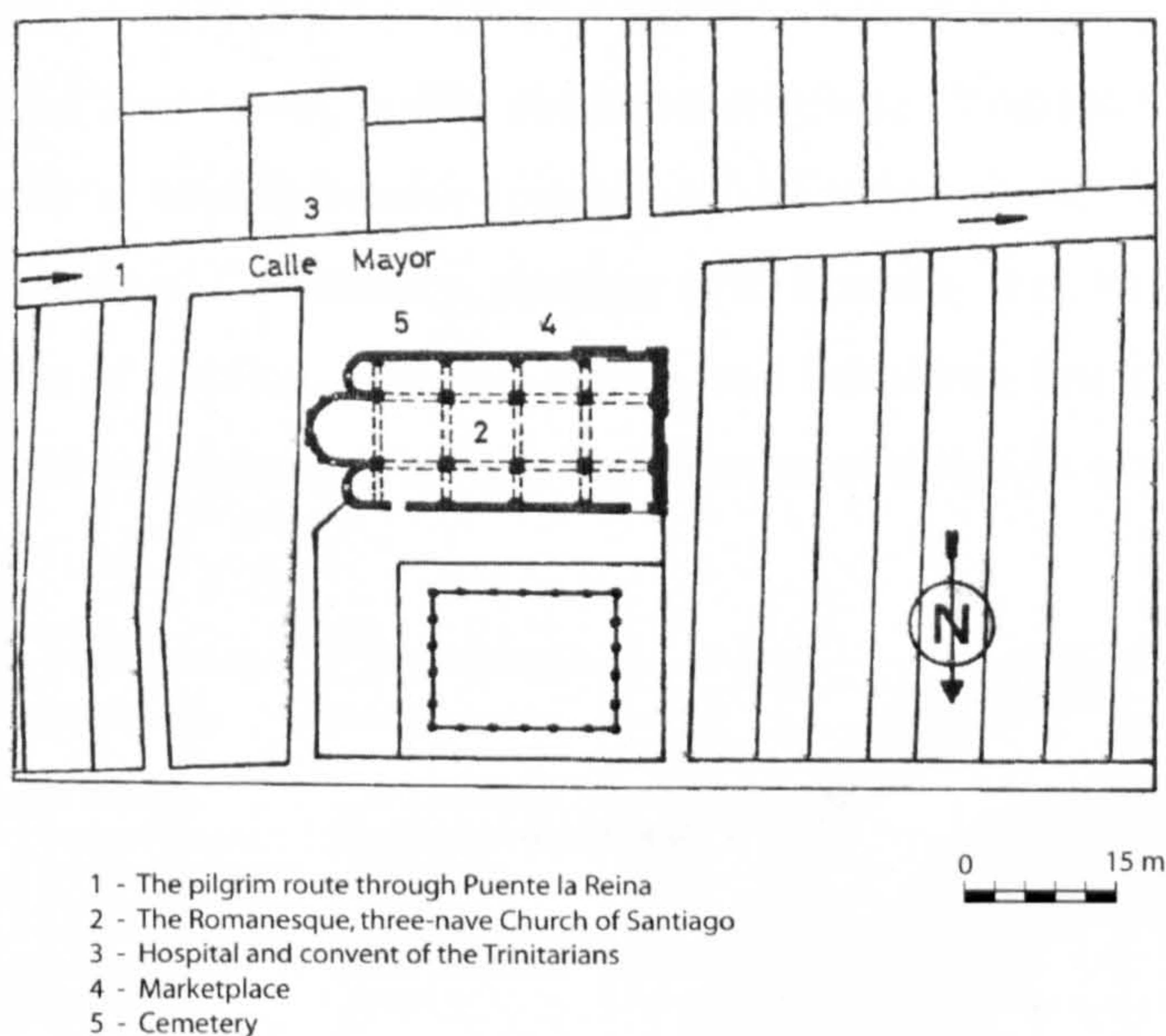


Figure 3. 23: The Church of Santiago and surroundings in the thirteenth century (adapted from Passini 1979: 63).

The decorative scheme of the early thirteenth century church doorway, unique for this period in Navarre for the range and breadth of the themes displayed, presents a panorama of the cosmic order from the beginning of creation to the infancy of Christ through to scenes of knightly combat (Aragonés Estella 1998; figures 3.24 and 3.25). As with the case of the iglesia del Crucifijo to the east, scenes of monsters, infernal hybrid beasts and epic struggles against demons occupy some of the most visually prominent locations from the perspective of the observer.

Redolent of major economic investment in the monument and town, the ambitious doorway demands comment on its function in this townscape. Again, it was a vital threshold into differently charged space. Thirteenth century testimonies, as by Humbert of Romans, complain of the “chatter” and “carnal pleasures” that take place in church environs (Murray 1974: 304). Other commentators explicitly associate external walls of edifices with sin (Camille 1992: 91). Here, in Puente la Reina, the doorway truly marks a point of entrance from one world to another and, through the ferocious hellish scenes, simultaneously warns against the dangers of worldly sin. The potential didactic quality of this façade seems assured when we take into account the willingness of influential writers such as St Bernard to discuss encounters with stone sculptures in terms of “reading marble” (quoted in

Davis-Weyer 1971: 70). Did pilgrims learn from this elaborate and detailed “text”? Did their visual, bodily encounter reinforce Christian message? The design is, after all, a comprehensive visual embodiment of the hierarchy and genealogy of medieval Christianity, startling in its breadth. It is, in fact, easy to believe that the act of arriving, standing before, and beholding this doorway was intended to be, and was experienced as, a key moment of religious experience and indoctrination.

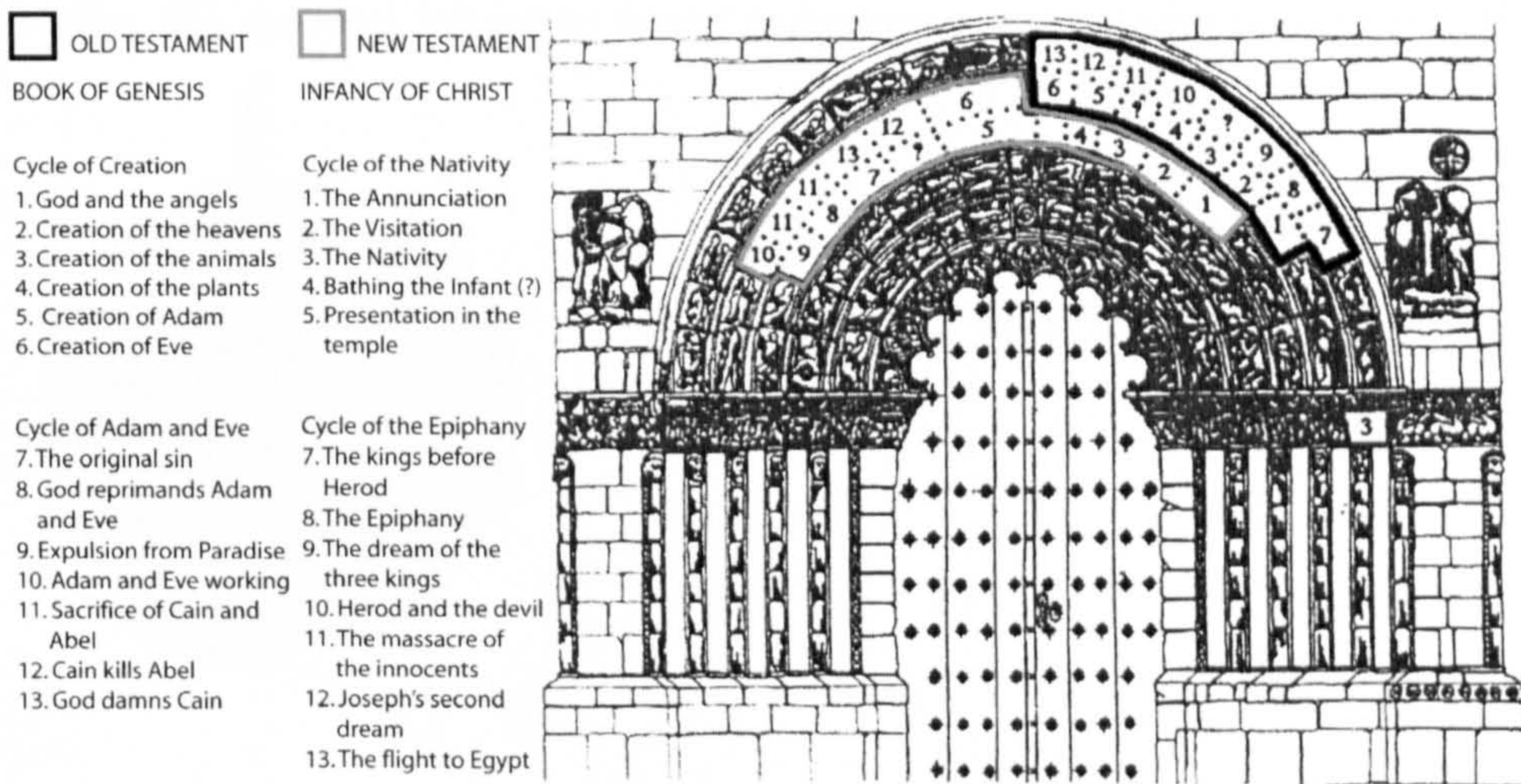


Figure 3. 24: Plan of the entrance of the iglesia de Santiago showing some of the decorative cycles (adapted from Aragonés Estella 1998: 106)

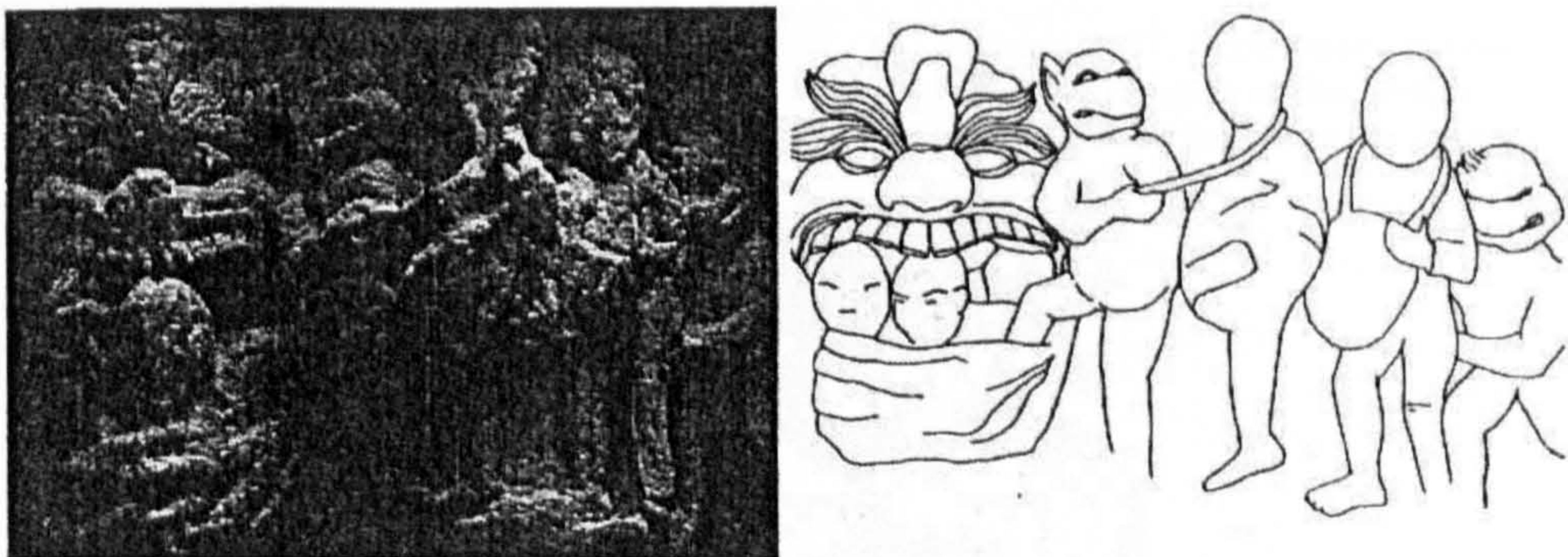


Figure 3. 25: Detail of an infernal scene located at the height of the observer on one of the door jambs (Reproduced from Aragonés Estella 1998: 135).

Reaching the western limit of Puente la Reina, pilgrims finally exited the long town, the gate, as before, heightening the drama of spatial transition. A seal used in the late thirteenth century gives a rough impression of the bridge and towers suddenly revealed before pilgrims (figure 3.26). Recent excavations, meanwhile, of the extreme eastern segment of the bridge, buried early on during the medieval

fortification of the town, reveal not only the formerly lost seventh arch, but also the original width and paving of the bridge (Armendáriz Martija 2003; figure 3.27). Ascending a walk-way measuring 2.7m wide, pilgrims again found themselves confined again along a linear space that, given the towers, may have been under surveillance. This space was reduced further in the centre of the bridge where the archway of the central tower funnelled traffic through a gap that measured just two metres in width (Armendáriz Martija 2003: 196). Essentially the bridge, like the road, helped to funnel and choreograph pilgrim movement.



Figure 3. 26: A thirteenth century seal showing the bridge of Puente la Reina (reproduced from Jimeno Jurío 1999:21).

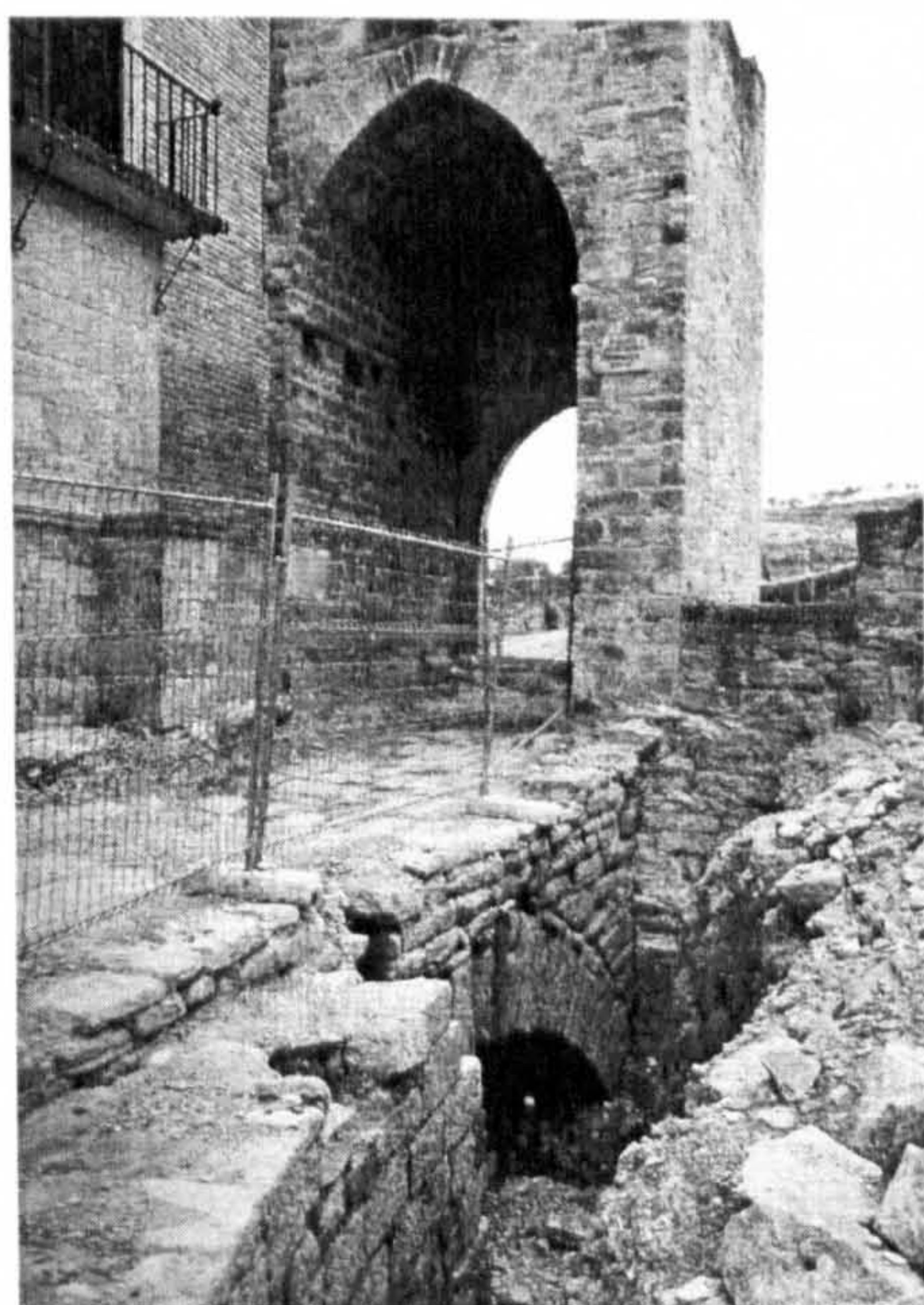


Figure 3. 27: Excavations reveal the seventh arch of the bridge (reproduced from Jimeno Jurío 1999: 94).

If the pilgrims' departure from the town was indeed monitored, it may have been a small price to pay for the security of such a bridging point. Before, the only option for crossing the Arga, a river too deep and swift-flowing to ford, was to take a

chance with one of the small ferries that “served and exploited” travellers (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 84). The association of bridge construction with piety may have been reinforced here by the gracefulness and symmetry of the structure; its aesthetic harmony, encountered immediately after the impressive regularity of the town symbolising “a larger cosmic order”, an “earthly perfection that had meaning beyond itself” (Tracy 2000: 5; figure 3.28). The intimate connection of medieval piety with bridges found material expression here, like elsewhere along the route, by the use of the central tower as a chapel. An anonymous nineteenth century account describes the interior space, “open to the sky” and the walls and corners adorned with numerous images of saints “to arouse the devotion of passers-by” (quoted in Jimeno Jurío 1999: 8). The chapel also housed an icon of the Virgin of Le Puy, an image thought by the anonymous author to be as old as the bridge itself, but actually, a work of the early sixteenth century (1999: 8). The denomination of Le Puy however, a southern French town also located on one of the branches of the Jacobean pilgrimage route, suggests an association dating back to the prime years of the medieval pilgrimage.

The passion with which the villagers defended the chapel from its imminent demolition in the 1840s and their invocation of a miracle involving the appearance of a mysterious black bird on the bridge recalls popular religious traditions established in a much earlier period that connected bridges to devotion. Similarly, the post-medieval inscription and alms-box alcove, surviving on the southern interior wall of the eastern gate (figure 3.29) was not only placed at a strategically shrewd location, but are perhaps interpretable via a collective memory that linked charity and piety to this important bridging point. Finally, if in place during the medieval period, a stone cross described by the same anonymous nineteenth century author as “of considerable antiquity” located on the far bank of the Arga, can be interpreted as yet another material signifier of religiously important space.



Figure 3. 28: The Puente de Peregrinos in Puente la Reina



Figure 3. 29: Former site of alms box

Setting out from the Arga, pilgrims entered the extra-mural zone of Zubiurrutia. A small settlement here, established sometime after the construction of the bridge (“Zubi” meaning bridge), and almost certainly aligned along the Camino road, possessed a hospital in the 1270s run by the Order of the Holy Spirit. Abandoned by the early fifteenth century (Pavón Benito 2001: 233), it appears that the current eighteenth century church (built on the site of the former hospice), and associated structures and gardens of the monastery obscure most surviving remains. The

presence of yet another medieval hospital in Zubiurrutia, located immediately after the various institutions of Puente la Reina, indicates something of the sheer numbers of needy pilgrims converging in this part of the Navarrase landscape. (Simultaneously, for pilgrims on the return journey, it formed an extra-mural enclave for those too ill to either carry on or deemed too threatening to enter the town itself).

2. Zubiurrutia to Cirauqui

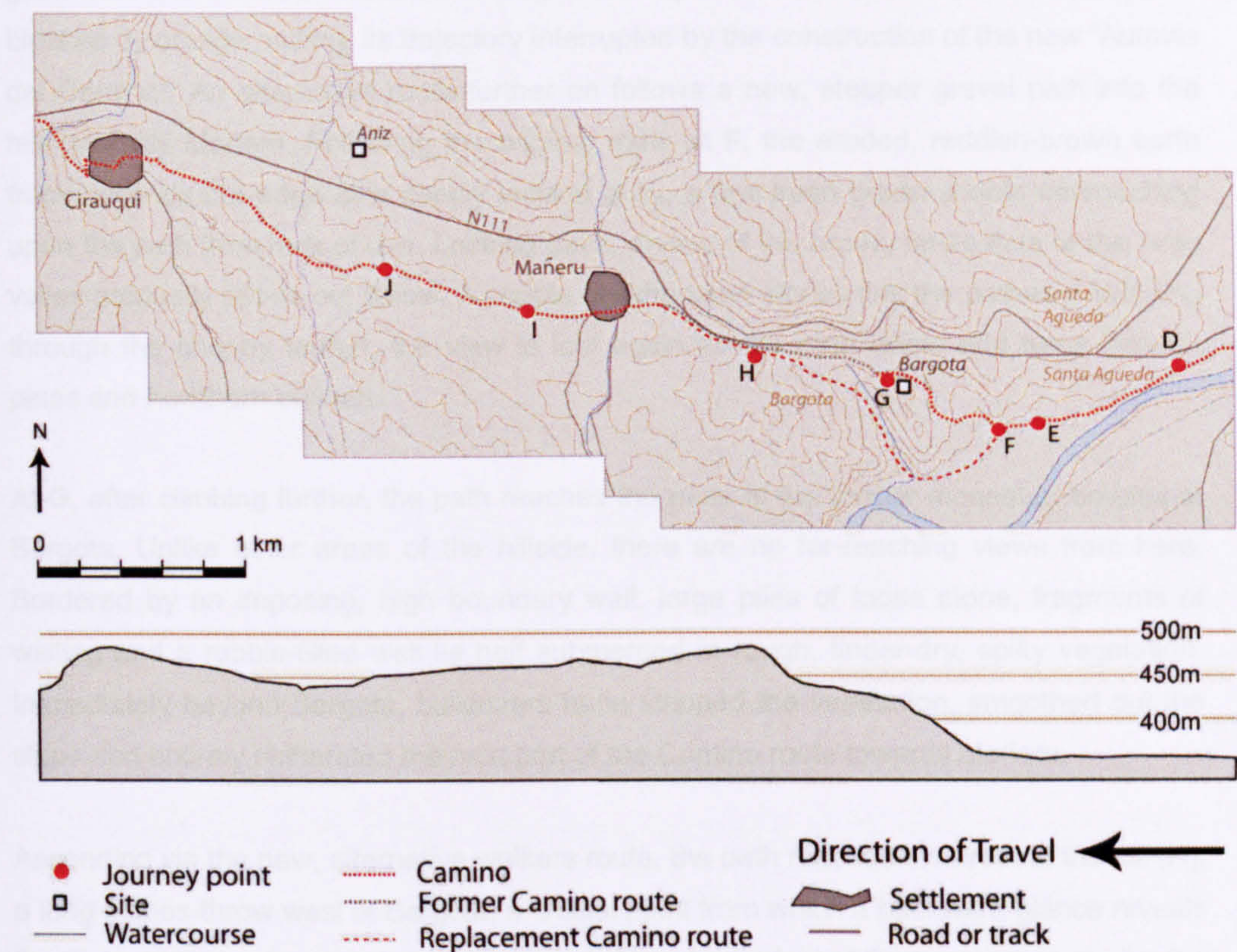


Figure 3. 30: Zubiurrutia to Cirauqui

Leaving the district of Zubiurrutia, the path follows the low, green corridor of the Arga valley. The river flows between tree-lined banks to the left, while on the right, reinforced terrace walls rise steeply. Traffic roars from an overhead fly-over bridge, but, upon moving forward, soon recedes into the distance.

D: A small stone cross stands to the right, set back slightly from the path. Some modern walkers notice it and place small pebbles onto or alongside the cross; others pass by, concentrating on the track in front of them. From here, as the path curves towards the river, walkers tread a narrow strip of ground between the terrace walls and the thickly vegetated river bank. Soon, the terraces of fruit trees give way to more gently rising slopes and the river turns southwards. Green fields and a modern water-treatment works now occupy the space between the path and the river. Ahead, pine-covered slopes and rocky outcrops seem to bar the way westwards.

E and F: A raised line of stone protrudes from the gravel-dirt surface of the current track between these points. Worn slabs and loose rubble blocks are also visible in the course grass to the left. At F: there is a turning to the right. This path, which heads upslope, is blocked by orange netting, its trajectory interrupted by the construction of the new "Autovia del Camino". An alternative route further on follows a new, steeper gravel path into the hills towards Mañeru. Following the original route at F, the eroded, reddish-brown earth track ascends the edge of a deeply incised gully, a few fresh green shoots encroaching upon the path from lack of use. Looking back, a view of the broad, fertile flats of the Arga valley gradually opens out below. A couple of lichenated stones line the pathway. Winding through the choppy terrain, the view is lost again as the path twists and turns through pines and hawthorn bushes.

At G, after climbing further, the path reaches the ruins of the former monastic complex at Bargota. Unlike other areas of the hillside, there are no far-reaching views from here. Bordered by an imposing, high boundary wall, large piles of loose stone, fragments of walling and a rubble-filled well lie half submerged in rough, tinder-dry, spiky vegetation. Immediately beyond Bargota, bulldozers have stripped the vegetation, smoothed out the slope and entirely obliterated the next part of the Camino route towards Mañeru.

Ascending via the new, alternative walkers route, the path reaches the crest of the hill (H), a long stones-throw west of Bargota, a crucial point from which a backward glance reveals the distant hilly landscape already traversed. Ahead is a view of the terrain that awaits: the nearby village of Mañeru, perched on a small bluff, and beyond, the hill-top village of Cirauqui; a cluster of white buildings against the blue sky, and, in the far distance, a faintly-visible ribbon of limestone cliffs.

The modern Camino route leads into the heart of Mañeru via a small bridge over a minor, trickling stream. Several principal streets are closed for repair and reconstruction. The medieval route, however, skirts the centre of Mañeru and heads directly westward, past the cemetery. Several courses of stone walling raise this track up from the fields to the left. At I, Cirauqui appears again, distinctly visible in the near distance.

Continuing onwards through this band of green, fertile terrain, still bordered by high hills to the right, the path reaches a junction of tracks at J. The church bells of Cirauqui are clearly audible from here. One path ascends towards the Ermita de la Virgen de Aniz, the only surviving structure of the medieval village of Aniz. Heading straight on, the path dips below the level of two stone terraced olive fields and Cirauqui is briefly out of sight. A few minutes on, and suddenly, regaining the view, the disparity in height is pronounced – the upward slope of the hill presenting a steep climb through a small, but densely nucleated urban zone.

The road, now flanked by buildings, makes a direct ascent towards the centre of the town and an archway through a stone tower marks a transition into the fortified core. Upon entering this space, where buildings shade the road, narrow streets appear to lead in all directions and the central iglesia de San Román, so obvious from the distance, is momentarily lost, hidden behind the curving rows of houses. Eventually steps leading up to the church signal arrival at the centre of the village. Carved in a reddish stone, swirls of plants, stars, geometric patterns, animals and seated figures adorn the lobed doorway to the church.

Analysis

The isolated stone cross, situated more than half a kilometre west of Zubiurrutia, receives no comment in modern guides to this part of the route. Its form and appearance, combined with the fact that there are no known pre-fourteenth century wayside crosses surviving *in-situ* in Spain (Martínez Garcia 2002: 56; Perez Gil and Valderas Alonso 1999: 117) suggest that this is a much later, post-medieval piece, possibly deriving from a cemetery or hermitage in the area. The place name Santa Águeda immediately to the north, for instance, is a sign that ecclesiastical lands extended very close to this part of the Camino. It is interesting, nonetheless, to observe how this small roadside feature attracts attention and small ritual acts among the current pilgrim population, a reminder that even the most simple or modest object serves to punctuate a long-distance journey.



Figure 3. 31: Small stone cross to right of track

To the west of this site, the length of stone metalling apparent immediately below and to the left of the current track represents the survival of a stretch of paved road of uncertain date (figure 3.32). Better preserved segments to the west of Cirauqui, and remnants of paving on the subsequent uphill leg to Mañeru (documented as surviving up until the 1980s and now only detectable by the odd, pathside block of stone), are generally considered to be of Roman date (Castiello Rodriguez 2003: 228-9; Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 89-90;). Consequently, it is possible that this short section preserves some Roman metalling although medieval and post-medieval repair and maintenance work should not be discounted.



Figure 3. 32: Outer edge of paved road in undergrowth (scale measures 1m).

Together, the cross and, in particular, the paving, indicate the long-term use and probable authenticity of this part of the route west of Zubiurrutia into the Val de Mañeru. Also observable in this portion of the journey are a number of important topographical changes that can be hypothesised as influencing the medieval pilgrim response to the landscape. By the river, the terrain again promotes a sense of movement through a restricted corridor of access, while subsequently, a number of oppositions and contrasts accompany the journey westward: lowland gives way to upland, lush river banks are replaced by drier, more arid slopes, and the

recently-experienced gridded geometry of Puente la Reina, just a kilometre behind, is exchanged for a winding track cutting through rugged terrain.

Navigating this landscape, pilgrims encountered the sizeable monastic complex and hospital of Bargota, first documented at the beginning of the thirteenth century (Passini 1993: 63). Although not actually very far in terms of distance from either Puente la Reina or Mañeru, the rugged topography and lack of far-reaching views that characterises the approach and immediate environment of the site may have served to emphasise a sense of its isolation, both physical and spiritual, from the rest of the world. In this respect, the climb to the monastery complemented the medieval idea of sacred travel; a difficult journey to a seemingly peripheral, remote location, and may have recalled the more momentous ascents to the upland hospices on the high Pyrenean passes either at Roncesvalles and Somport. As was the case there, the reward for pilgrims here was not only heightened spiritual merit, but also the opportunity for rest and renewal.

The physical isolation of the monastery also reflects the theological, social and economic distancing of the monastic community from other sectors of the local population. Affiliated to the Order of St John of Jerusalem, the monks, and later, both monks and nuns, occupied this site until the fifteenth century, after which a small, modest hospice for pilgrims remained in use until the early eighteenth century (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 89). The sheer quantity of rubble piled up at this site indicates that the walls and buildings of the complex were once fairly substantial and, that like elsewhere, different spaces were well defined and controlled (figure 3.33). The well suggests the self-sufficient management of water, and it seems probable that gardens and orchards once surrounded the monastic buildings. Now languishing at the end of a closed path, covered in vegetation and dismissed in guides as a site of “minor” or “insignificant” ruins (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 89; Passini 1993: 64), more intensive archaeological analysis would almost certainly prove fruitful here and might illuminate monastic concerns with marshalling and negotiating the pilgrim movement through and around their estate.

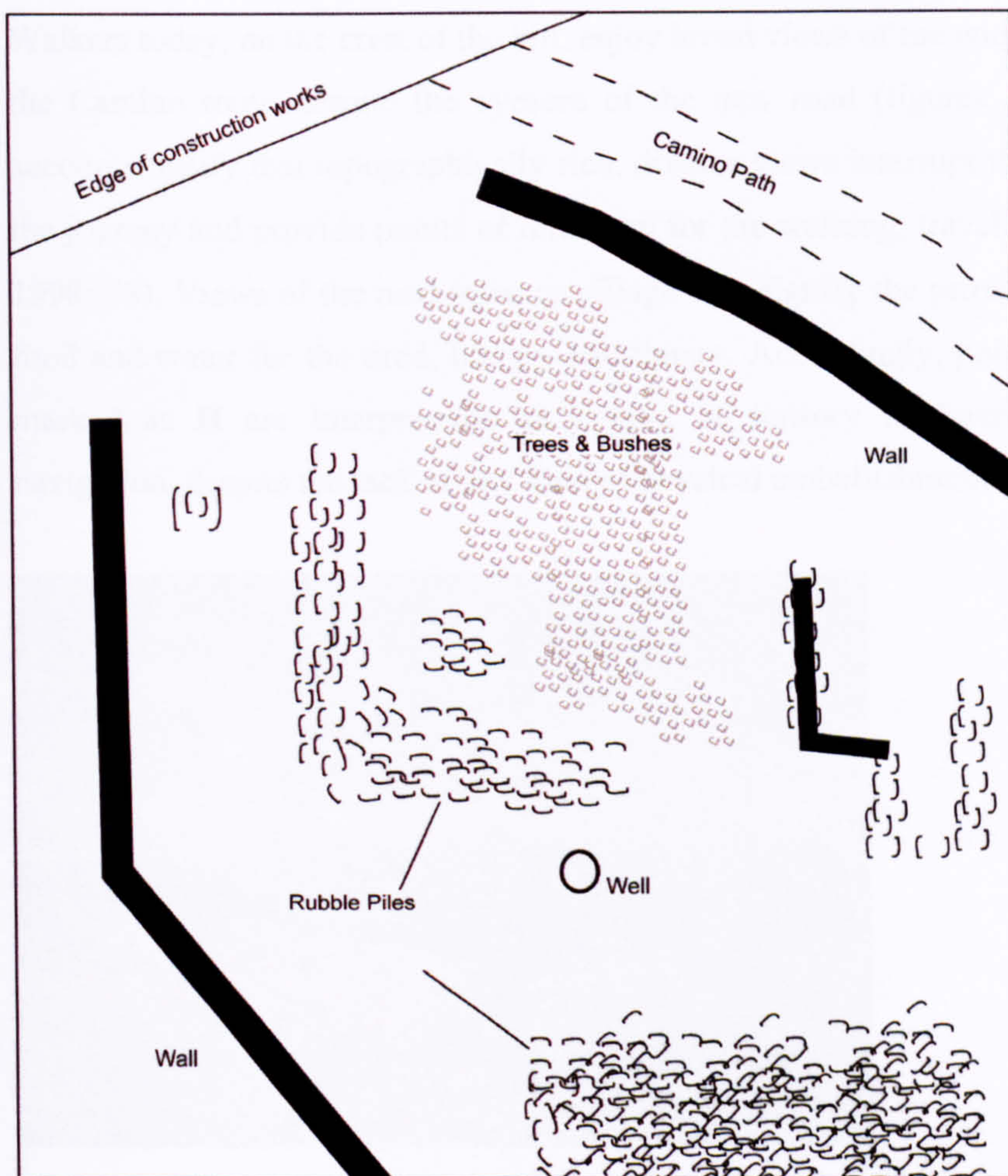


Figure 3. 33: Sketch plan of surviving archaeological features at Bargota (not to scale).



Figure 3. 34: Ruins of Bargota

Walkers today, on the crest of the hill, enjoy broad views of the wider landscape of the Camino route despite the eyesore of the new road (figures 3.35). Personal accounts testify that topographically rich, diverse views interrupt the monotony of the journey and provide points of reference for the walking, travelling body (Frey 1998: 78). Views of the next town or village also signify the proximity of respite, food and water for the tired, hungry and thirsty. Accordingly, points such as that marked as **H** are interpretable as a kind of sensory landmark or a key to navigation, despite the lack of any kind of physical embellishment to the site itself.



Figure 3. 35: The view from point H, looking east.

Over the subsequent three kilometres of the route, medieval pilgrims passed close to, or through, three villages; Mañeru, Aniz and Cirauqui. What was the pilgrim experience of this part of the journey in the central Middle Ages? From an archaeological perspective, this question can be approached by looking at the spatial relationship of the pilgrim road and the settlements, the morphological structure of the villages themselves and surviving medieval components.

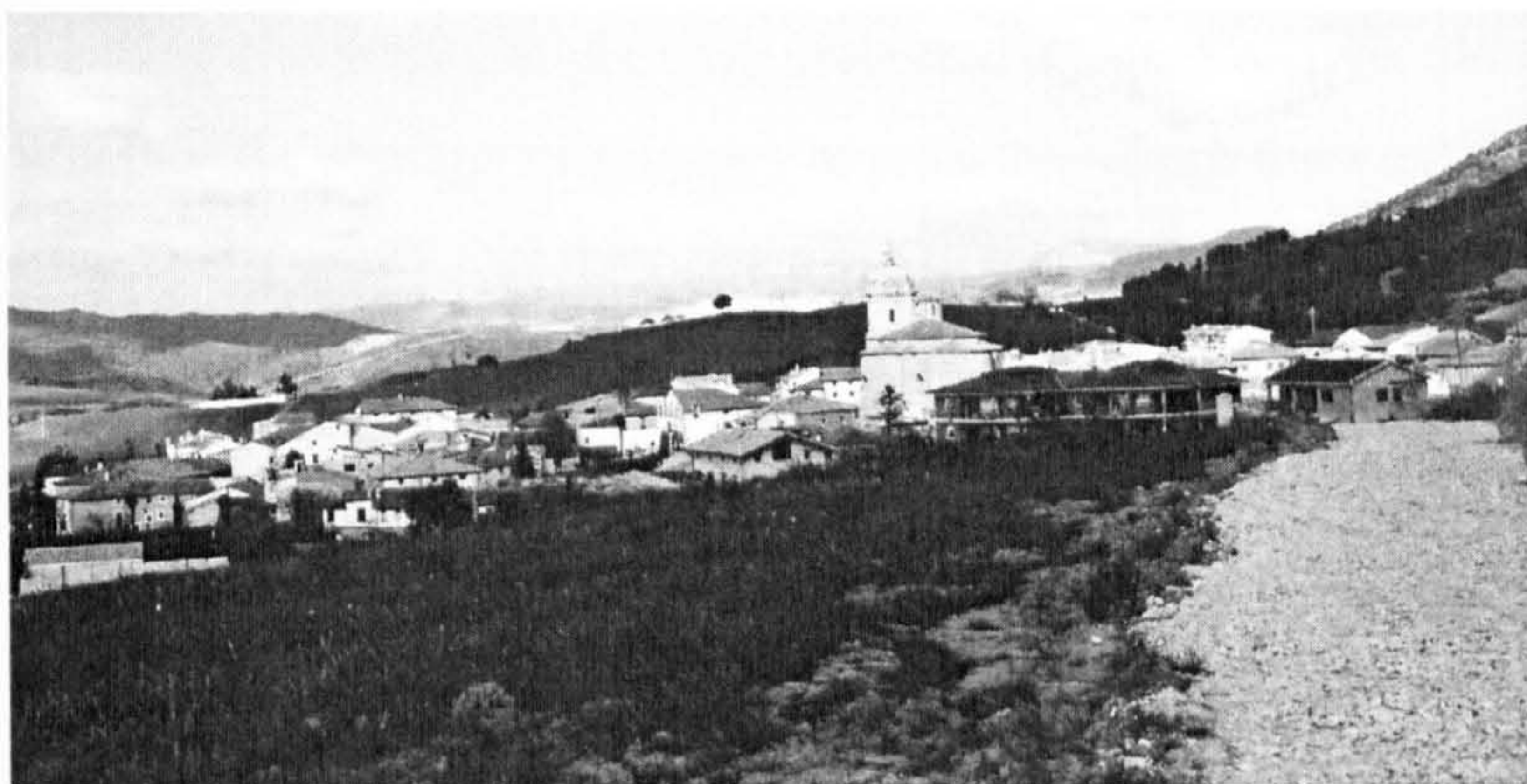


Figure 3. 36: Approaching Mañeru. Cirauqui is visible in the distance in the centre of the photo.

In his analysis of Camino settlements, Jean Passini poses an intriguing scenario for the route of the pilgrim road in relation to Mañeru (1993: 64). As shown in figure 3.37, the path effectively skirts the southern edge of the village, which, during the central Middle Ages, comprised a roughly circular, nucleated zone centred around a church, and enclosed by a circuit of walls. No mention is made of a hospice for pilgrims in Mañeru, nor is the village referred to in historical Jacobean accounts and itineraries (although this is actually not unusual for a smaller-sized settlement). Only Hermann König von Vach, travelling in the late fifteenth century, mentions, “passing a village” a mile on from Puente la Reina (1495: 16). Why did pilgrims only “pass” Mañeru? Unlike the bustling new pilgrim towns, populated with French immigrants, and built up along the main artery of the Camino road, Mañeru was an older settlement, well established in the Navarrese landscape. When the first pilgrims crossed this region in the eleventh century, taking advantage of the brand new bridge over the Arga, Mañeru already possessed a colourful history of Arab conquest and tenth century Christian reconquest. Accordingly, the organic layout, circular structure and enclosing circuit of walls correspond to pre-Camino origins and historical events (figure 3.37). Given the increasingly pronounced social divisions unfolding in the Navarrese landscape of the twelfth century, described in section 3.1 above, it is possible that many pilgrims, many of them French themselves, identified more closely, and were more readily received, in the new, mercantile, pilgrimage towns where they could hear French spoken on the streets. Mañeru, perhaps retaining a remnant Moorish population, or perhaps inhabited predominantly by Basque-

speaking Navarrese, might have presented a less attractive, more “foreign” option. Whether the streams of pilgrims approaching from the west were actually barred from entry, or whether they chose not to stop here is unknown. Whatever the case, the layout of the town and the road, suggests a scenario of mutual avoidance and may perhaps recall the overt anti-Navarrese prejudice so explicitly and dramatically elaborated in the Francophile twelfth century guide:

After this valley [west of Roncesvalles] lies the land of the Navarrese...They dress most poorly and eat and drink disgustingly...If you saw them eating, you would take them for dogs or pigs...; if you heard them speaking, you would be reminded of the barking of dogs. Their language is, in fact, completely barbarous...This is a barbarous nation, distinct from all other nations in habits and way of being, full of all kinds of malice...Their face is ugly, and they are debauched, perverse, perfidious, disloyal and corrupt, libidinous, drunken, given to all kinds of violence...If they could, the Navarrese or the Basque would kill a Frenchman for no more than a coin. [And so it goes on for another four or five paragraphs] (The Pilgrim’s Guide: 94-95).

Interestingly, figure 3.37 also clearly demonstrates how the later expansion of Mañeru southwards assimilates the formerly peripheral, extra-mural road, so that it becomes a new, almost central axis within the village territory, a material sign of how the increasingly successful pilgrimage, with time, influenced local patterns in the landscape.

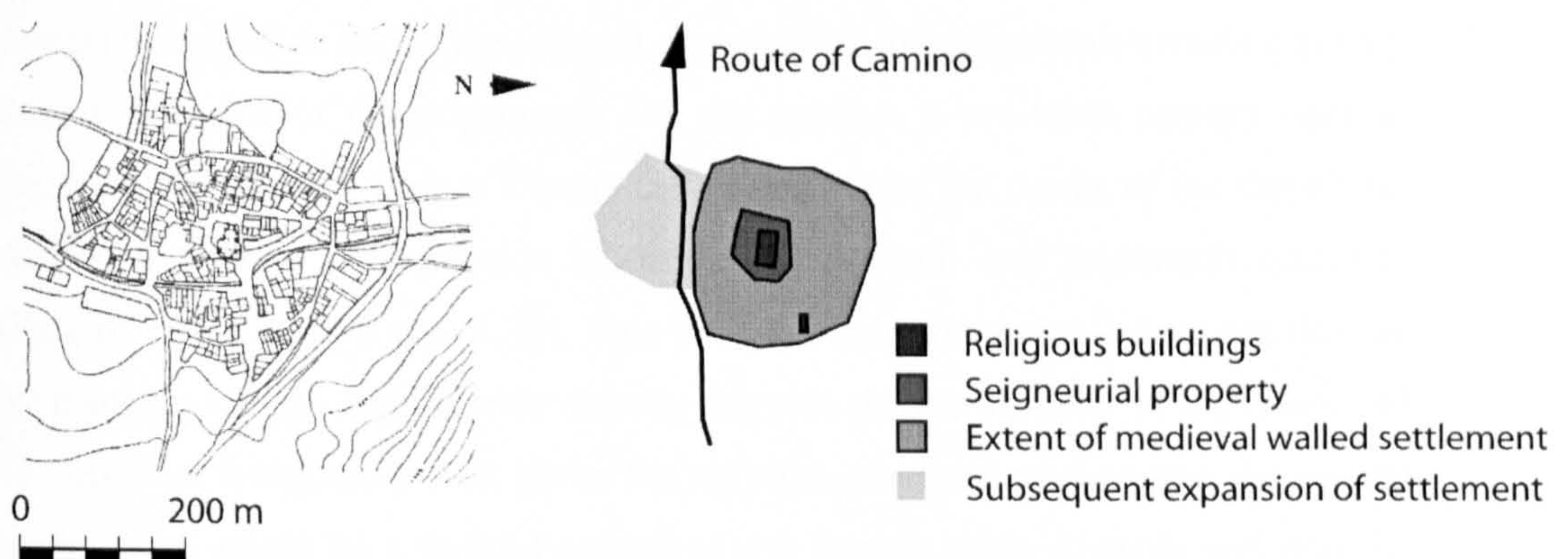


Figure 3. 37: Plan of Mañeru (adapted from Passini 1993: 64)

Aniz, lying some distance from the Camino route, and now, cut off by the wide, new road, was arguably of marginal importance to the convoys of pilgrimage. Other than the patchily restored church ruin, which remains a minor landmark in the local landscape (figure 3.38), surface archaeological remains of the medieval settlement are limited to a uniform, light scatter of tile and occasional pot fragments in the ploughsoil around the church. The settlement was abandoned during the fifteenth century (Passini 1993: 64; Pavón Benito 2001: 237).



Figure 3. 38: The church at Aniz

Much more visually and audibly dominant in this landscape is the hill-top town of Cirauqui. The current acoustic range of the church bells again suggest that oral signals as helped to define the journey. Once more, the urban plan reveals a history longer than that of the pilgrimage. On the summit, a pre-tenth century nucleus occupies the site of a former Roman settlement, while the flanks of the slope bear witness to waves of expansion in the tenth, eleventh and fourteenth centuries (Passini 1993: 64-5; figure 3.39). This time, the pilgrimage road does not skirt or by-pass the village, but ascends directly towards the summit site of the church of San Román, a trajectory that, given the survival of paved road exiting the village to the west, might be a faithful tracing of the Roman route towards and into the settlement. In any case, the surviving configuration of the medieval road demonstrates that Cirauqui was most certainly a pilgrim settlement.

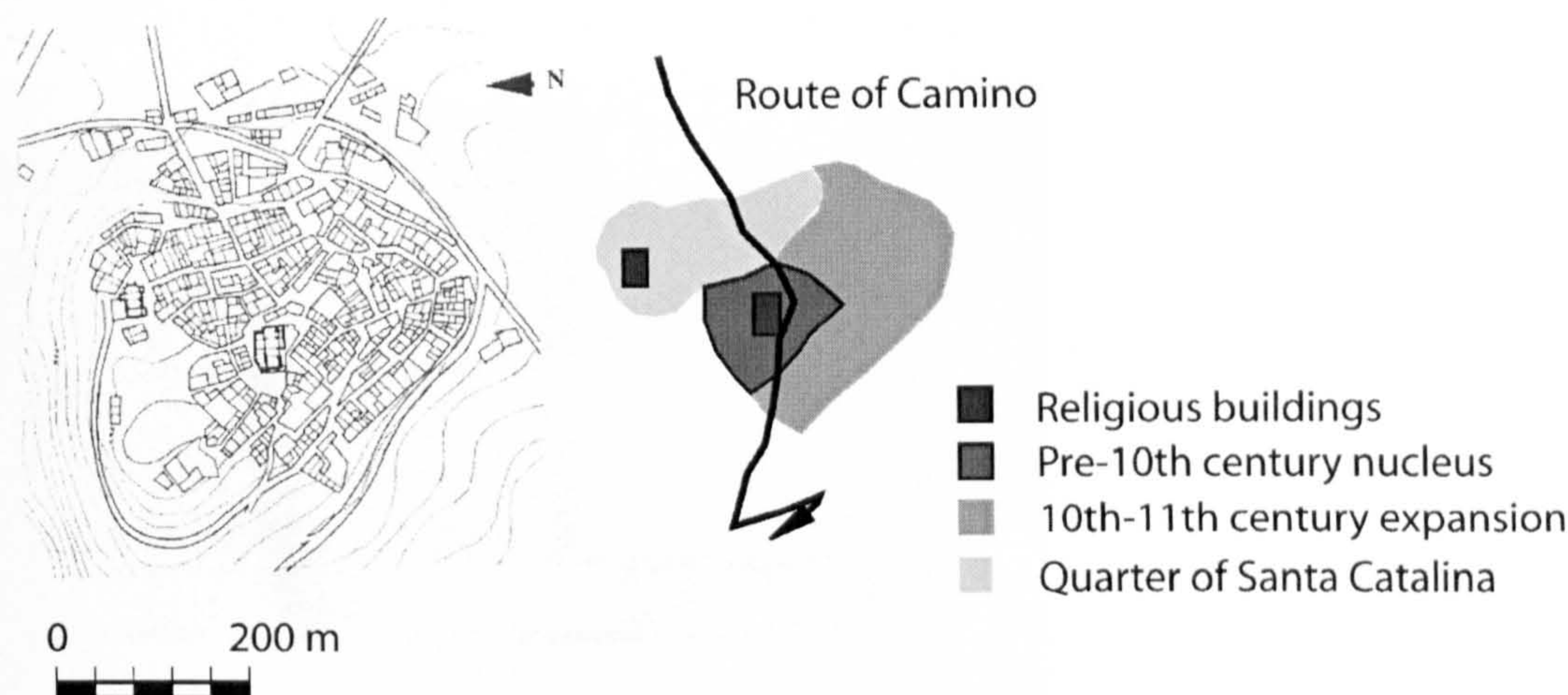


Figure 3.39: Plan of Cirauqui (adapted from Passini 1993: 65).

As with other villages and towns, material signals, some of which are still apparent today, accompanied the journey into the town and no doubt shaped the experience of medieval pilgrims. The partially rebuilt gothic archway, marking the transition into the oldest, central core, preserves large door hinges, and again indicates explicit control over space and movement (figures 3.40 and 3.41). Changes of light, noise and smell accompanied progress into the village, while the street plan, more labyrinthine and complex than the new, linear pilgrim towns, may have complicated the pilgrim experience. A higher number of side-streets, alleys and dead-end roads indicate differing levels of inhabited urban space and patterns of activity, for example. Certainly, in the Moslem cities of Spain, prime roads of communication, secondary lanes and blind alleys had both different names (*Shāri*, *Durub* and *Azikka* respectively) and different functions. On a scale of privacy, they represented public, “semi-private” and exclusively private space (Arízaga Bolumburu 1993: 19). Janet Abu-Lughod, noting a comparable urban pattern in modern Arabic cities, observes how this form of demarcation tends to be reinforced by material strategies such as makeshift gates and the allocation of villagers to “stand guard” over more private, urban corners (1987: 169). Although on a much smaller scale, parallel forms of differentiation between the public, “pilgrim” road and the more private spaces of Cirauqui possibly influenced pilgrim navigation and perception in this arena.



Figure 3. 40: Approaching the gate to the medieval core of Cirauqui



Figure 3. 41: Gate fixture at Cirauqui

Eventually arriving at the monumental church of San Román, (where a seventeenth-century rebuild conceals the dimensions of the twelfth century structure) pilgrims faced another elaborately carved portal. It is distinctly similar to that of the iglesia de Santiago in Puente la Reina. Did the recurrence of stylistic motifs help foster the idea of the pilgrim road as a unified cultural entity in itself, somehow greater than the sum of its parts? Repeating motifs and material components may have contributed to the awareness of a route, a unified itinerary that traversed a mixture of otherwise contrasting local landscapes.

The well-preserved portal, probably carved in the opening decades of the thirteenth century (Martinez de Aguirre Aldaz and de Orbe Sivatte 1987; figures 3.42 and 3.43), again represents an expensive and artistically daring project. Nine archivolts display nine different geometric designs, five principal Christian symbols adorn the keys, (the hand of God, an angel bearing a cross, the Lamb of God signifying the Eucharist, a star, and the chi-rho rosette or *crismón*), while the capitals, constituting a continuous frieze and exhibiting an array of human figures and animals, bestow a flowing artistic unity to the entire scheme (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 90). A striking and efficient visual summary of the Christian faith, this portal is interpretable as marking a key moment of arrival as pilgrims approached and transition as they entered.

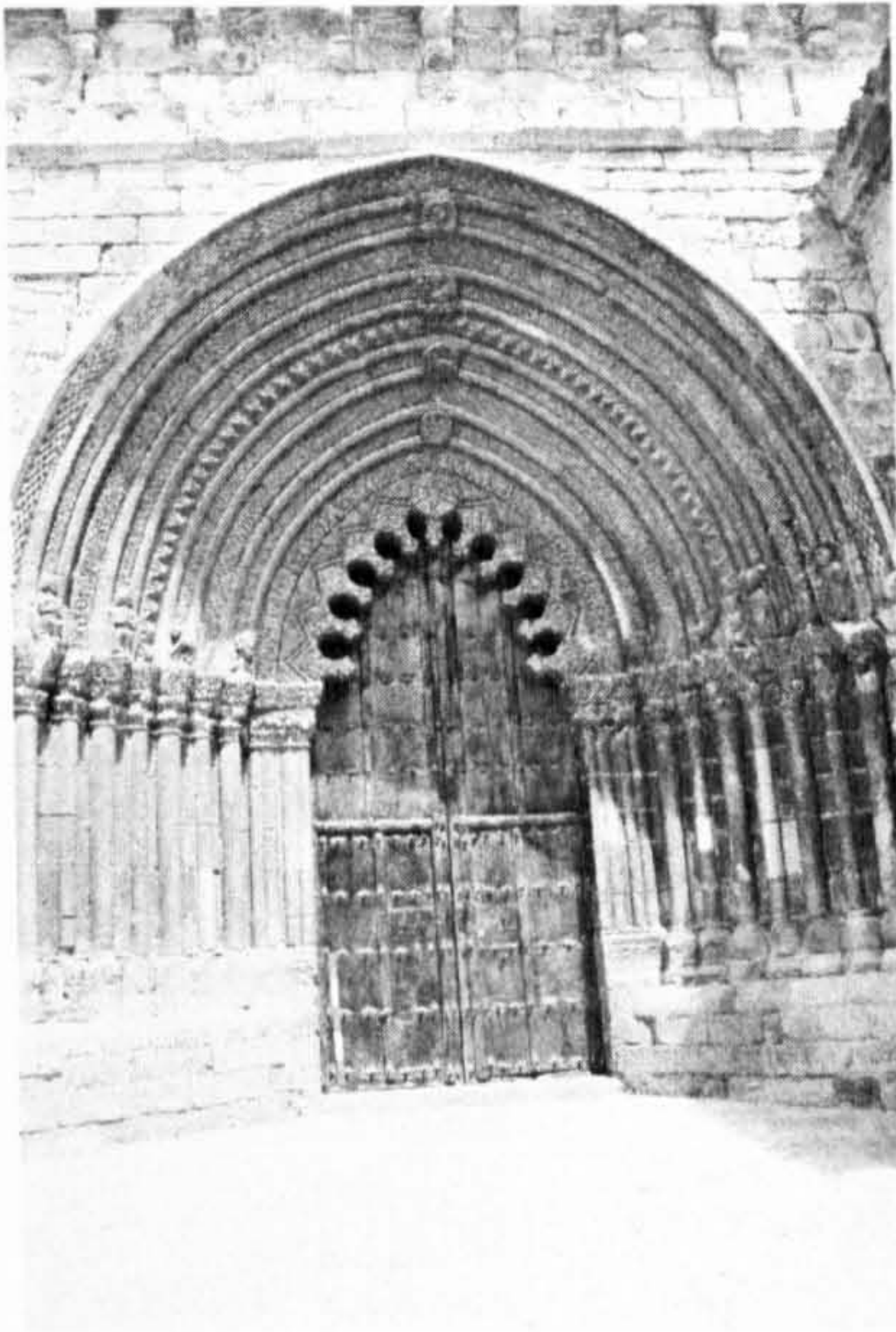


Figure 3. 42: Entrance to the iglesia de San Roman, Cirauqui

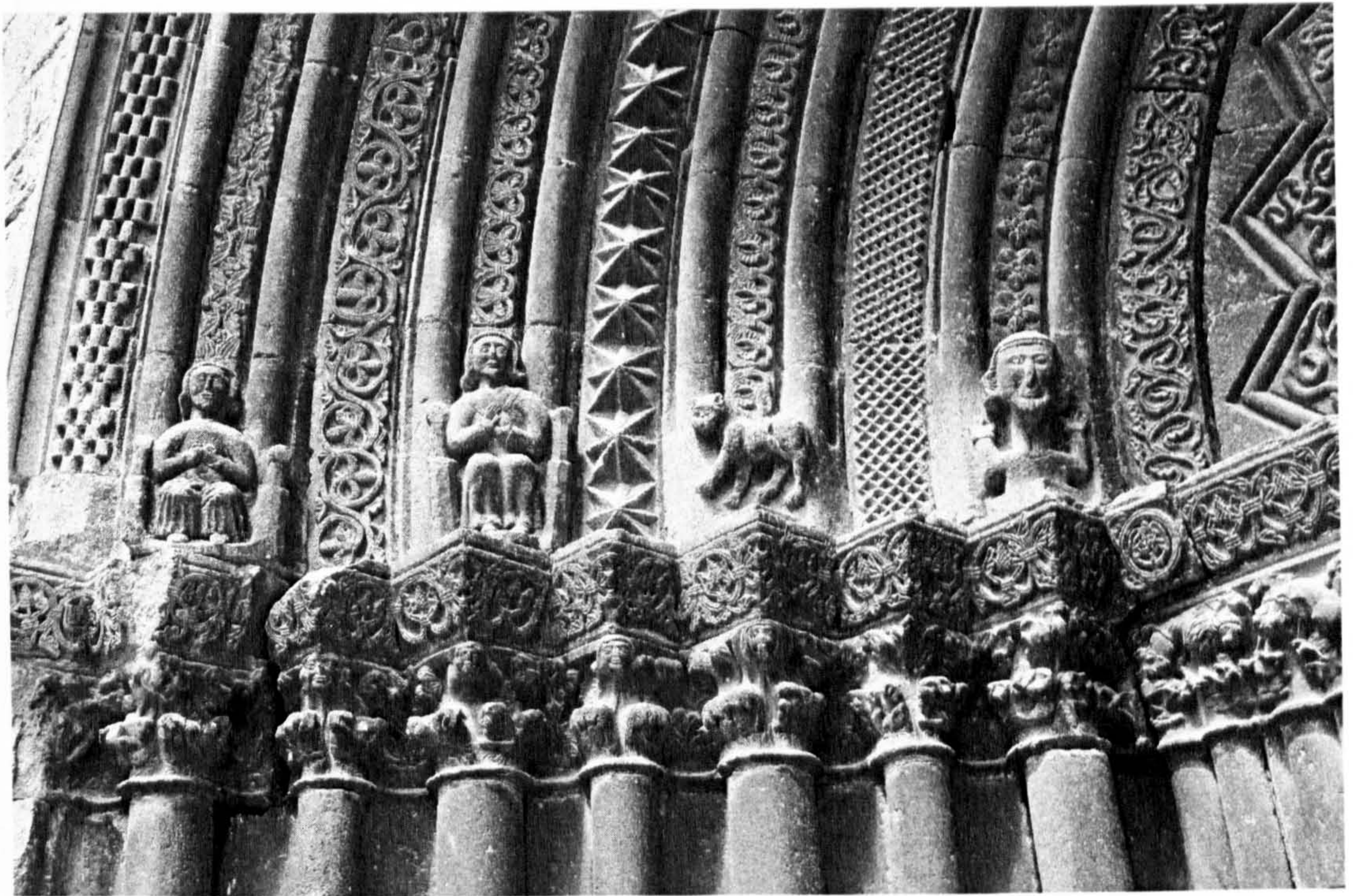


Figure 3. 43: The iglesia de San Roman, Cirauqui; detail of archivolt

3. Cirauqui to Lorkatziki

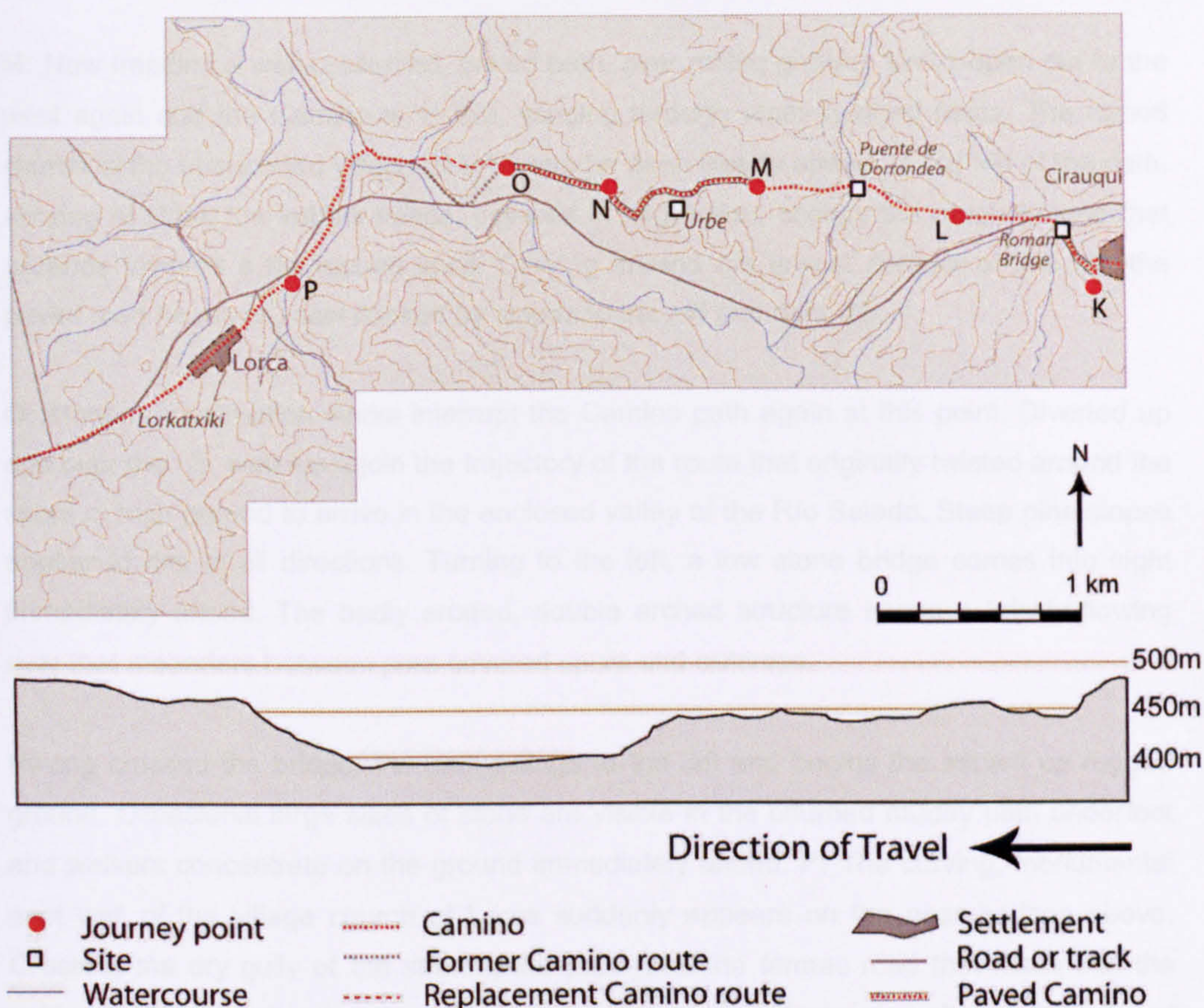


Figure 3. 44: Cirauqui to Lorkatziki

K: Heading west once again, walkers turn and leave the high village of Cirauqui via a long, broad, straight section of Roman road that descends steeply towards a bridge, visible ahead as a jumble of surface blocks and erosion scars. The tall, single-arched bridge, repaired in places, and of the same large reddish-cream slabs of stone as the road, raises walkers high above an overgrown and marshy stream gully.

Beyond the dusty construction works, the Camino path ascends gently through a mixed landscape of fields and vineyards. **L:** Turning around from here, Cirauqui remains a striking landmark behind while to the west is a blue-green panorama of undulating hilly terrain. The ribbon of limestone cliffs, glimpsed previously before, now appears as an imposing line of rock in the distance. Descending into the small valley of the Regacho (Stream) de Dorrondea and now sheltered from the blustery wind, walkers cross a dry streambed over a low stone, single-arched, stone bridge. Other tracks can be seen

heading to the left and right. Proceeding, traces of paving begin to appear in the earth path.

M: Now treading a well-preserved, paved path, over rolling ground, views open out to the west again and the Camino is visible, winding through small hedged fields. The ruined church of the abandoned village of Urbe can be seen clearly ahead, to the left of the path. Arriving at Urbe, low rubble heaps, covered in vegetation, occupy the rough ground that ascends towards a flat-topped knoll. Curving around the lowest contour of this hill, the paved road heads on, now flanked by slopes to the left and right (**N**).

O: Modern construction works interrupt the Camino path again at this point. Diverted up and over the hill, walkers rejoin the trajectory of the route that originally twisted around the spurs of high ground to arrive in the enclosed valley of the Río Salado. Steep pine slopes appear to rise in all directions. Turning to the left, a low stone bridge comes into sight immediately ahead. The badly eroded, double arched structure spans a briskly flowing river that meanders between pine-covered spurs and outcrops.

Having crossed the bridge, the path swings to the left and begins the ascent up rugged ground. Occasional large slabs of stone are visible in the churned muddy path underfoot and walkers concentrate on the ground immediately ahead. **P:** The curving, monumental east wall of the village church of Lorca suddenly appears on the near horizon above. Crossing the dry gully of the stream, the path joins the tarmac road that leads into the settlement, passes the church on the right and the site of a former hospital on the left and then heads in a straight line, rows of buildings on either side. Leaving Lorca, the path follows the main N111 road. Looking back, the village is set against a view of dark pine-covered hills. The busy road and the construction of a service area cut into the hillside here.



Figure 3. 45: Descending the paved road from Cirauqui



Figure 3. 46: Looking ahead from point L. Note the limestone cliffs in the distance

Analysis

In an otherwise changing landscape, the outstanding survival of stone paving and bridging points along this five-kilometre stretch serves to pinpoint the exact trajectory followed by medieval pilgrims through the hilly, choppy terrain west of

Cirauqui. Particularly impressive is the recently restored segment that descends the hill from the Cirauqui. Although at first glance, the path further west appears to be of a less monumental scale, the central line of longitudinally-set stones, raised above horizontally-bedded slabs, and the occasional, diagonally-orientated double line of stones (figure 3.47), indicate cambering and the provision of drainage; features of a carefully and professionally constructed road. The image on the right shows more randomly embedded stones and might indicate a subsequent phase of repair and maintenance.



Figure 3. 47: Paved road. *Right*-possible signs of repair.

These stretches of paving are significant as they clearly indicate the local re-use and endurance of a network of communication established in the Roman period. Demarcating a topographically-efficient route through an otherwise confusing jumble of knolls, spurs, narrow river valleys, and rocky slopes, this road was no doubt a key factor in the fixing of the consolidated medieval route between Puente la Reina and Estella.

Complementing the paved highway, the three bridges further aided the accomplishment of the journey, rendering this section as the most viable east-west corridor of movement in this region of Navarre and concentrating the pilgrim

traffic along fixed nodal points in the local landscape. The first bridge, on the exit-route from Cirauqui, comprises a typically robust, Roman structure some twelve metres in height (figure 3.48 and 3.49). The small, restored Puente de Dorrondea, is medieval, but arguably rests on Roman foundations (Castiello Rodriguez 2003: 229; figure 3.50). Although both span what seem to be dry, or almost dry gullies, wear, large boulders in the riverbeds, and the smoothing of the corners on the lower courses of the Roman bridge at Cirauqui indicate that deeper torrents have, in the past, flowed underneath. The third, badly eroded bridge over the Río Salado can, meanwhile, be tentatively ascribed to a post-Romanesque period given the early Gothic, ogival shape of the arches (Aramburu-Zabala Higuera 1992: 14; figure 3.51). By coincidence, this is the setting for one of the more dramatic incidents of the twelfth century guide in which the author lets his rarely heard first person voice dictate the story:

At a place called Lorca, to the east, there flows a stream known as the Salt River. Beware of drinking from it or of watering your horse in it, for this river brings death. On its banks, while we were going to St James, we found two Navarrese sitting there sharpening their knives; for they are accustomed to flay pilgrims' horses which die after drinking the water. In answer to our question they lied, saying the water was good...Accordingly we watered our horses...and at once two of them died and were forthwith skinned by the two men (Hogarth (trans.) 1992: 13).

Another deliberate slur on the Navarrese, the description here essentially forms a variation on the "river as dangerous and inauspicious locale" theme, evidenced elsewhere in medieval and post-medieval literature and accounts.



Figure 3.48: The bridge at Cirauqui.

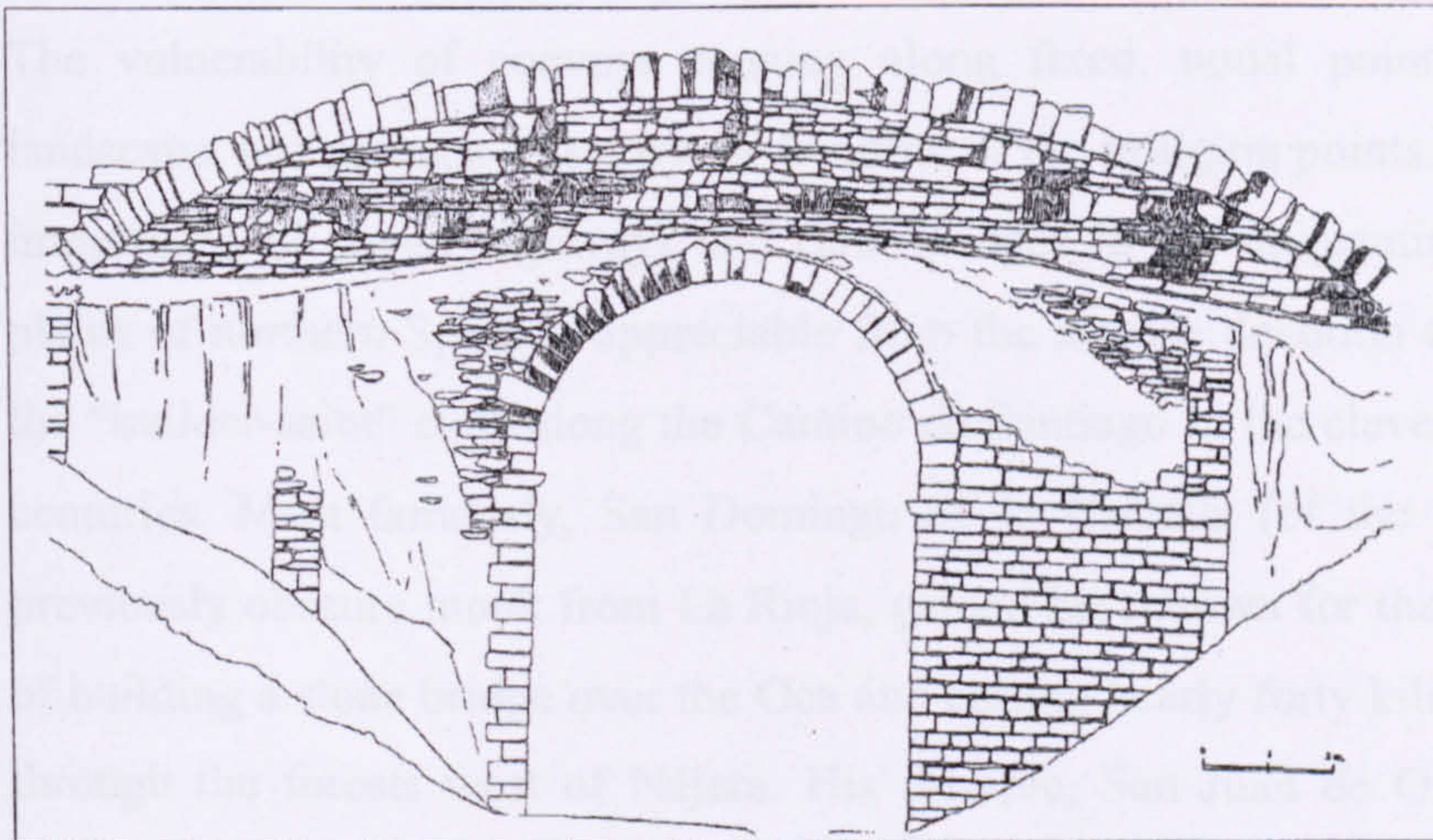


Figure 3. 49: Drawing reproduced from Castiello Rodriguez 2003: 160).



Figure 3. 50: The Puente de Dorronda

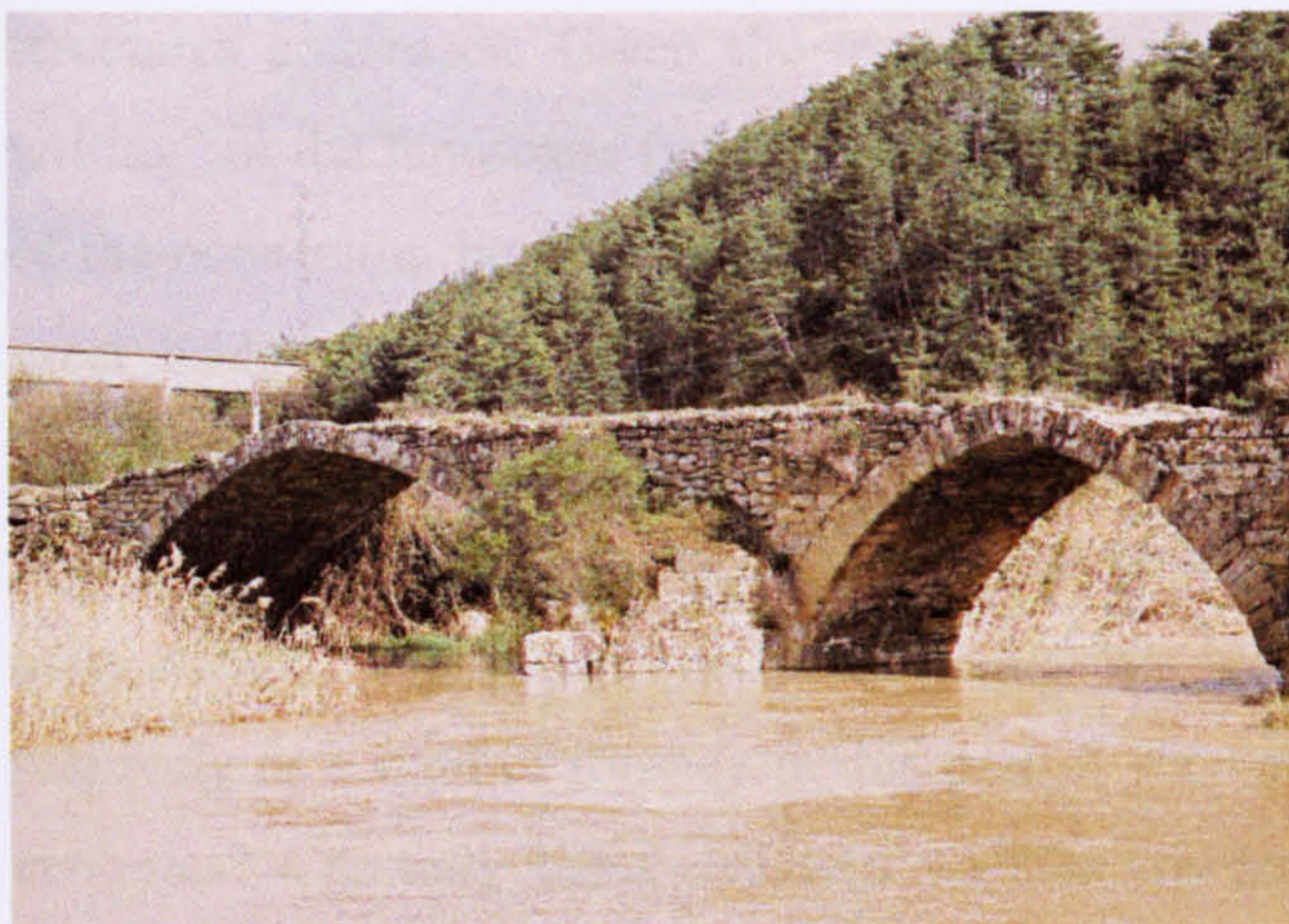


Figure 3. 51: The bridge over the Rio Salado

The vulnerability of convoys moving along fixed, nodal points in the local landscape was perhaps offset by the benefits of the bridging points. The value and importance of paved highways and rural bridges in the unquantifiable hills and plains of northern Spain is appreciable from the intense devotion that surrounded the “builder-saint” cults along the Camino de Santiago in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Most famously, San Domingo de la Calzada (of the paved road), a previously obscure monk from La Rioja, gained his renown for the pious exercise of building a stone bridge over the Oca and cutting nearly forty kilometres of road through the forests west of Nájera. His disciple, San Juan de Ortega, similarly dedicated himself to such labours. Meanwhile, a verse penned by the most famous Spanish poet of the thirteenth century, Gonzalo de Berceo, artfully makes the equation between bridge-building and good deeds in a neat rhyming couplet:

*Había un ladrón malo / que prefería hurtar
A ir a las iglesias / o a puentes levantar*

There was a bad thief who preferred to steal
than to go to church or to raise bridges.
(quoted in Aramburu-Zabal Higuera 1992: 18)

Were the worn, paved highways and bridges in this part of the Study Area, mostly constructed long before the materialisation of the Jacobean pilgrimage, also conceptualised as the result of some divinely-inspired labour? In line with the currently prominent archaeological theme of “the past in the past” (Alcock 2002), it is interesting to reflect on how medieval pilgrims perceived visibly ancient

structures and roads. Given the tendency observed elsewhere for “cultural re-writing” in the landscape (Parcero Oubiño et al. 1998), and the apparent strength of the connection between piety and pilgrim infrastructure, it is possible that the great bridges and worn paved highways of the Roman Imperial period were somehow assimilated into a distinctly medieval scheme and interpreted within the mythico-historical framework of the cult of St James. Did these roads somehow offer ancient, saintly legitimisation for pilgrims undertaking what was actually a relatively new kind of journey in this part of Navarre in the central Middle Ages centuries? Certainly today, modern walkers treading these worn tracks gain a profound sense of following in the footsteps of past pilgrims so that the monuments effectively become incorporated into their sense of place and purpose (Frey 1998: 38-41).

Medieval pilgrims encountered two settlements in this section. The first, Urbe, located down-slope from a pre-Roman *castrum* site (figure 3.52 and 3.53) and populated between the eleventh and eighteenth centuries, contained just four or five *fuegos* or hearths in the later Middle Ages (Passini 1993: 66; Pavón Benito 2001: 237; Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 130). As such it may have been of minimal importance to pilgrim convoys. The church nevertheless comprises a landmark on the approach to this site. Vegetation and the recent disturbance of collapsed rubble hinder a clear idea of the former spatial layout of the settlement, although it seems that the bulk of remains stand to the left of the Camino path.

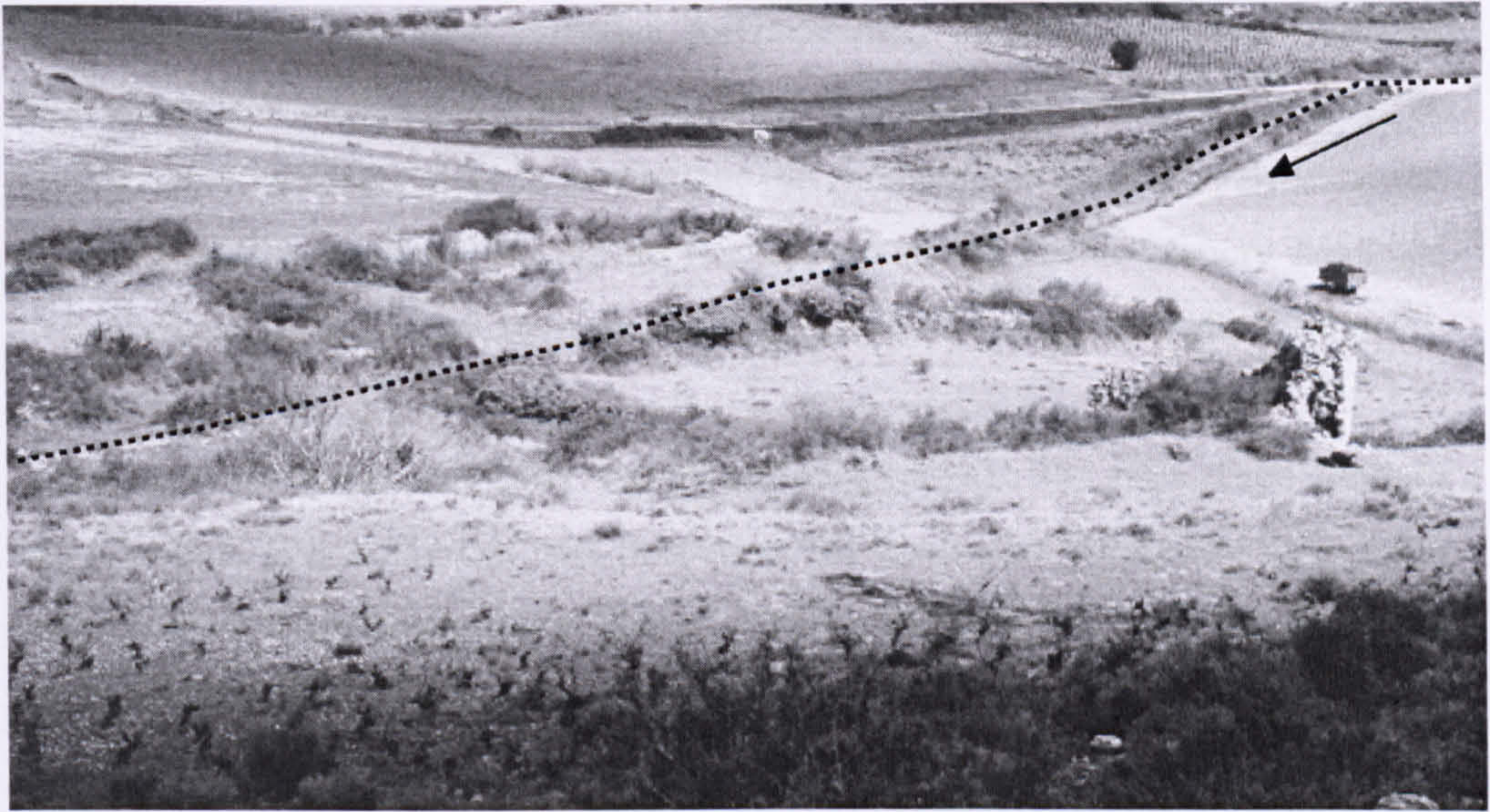


Figure 3.52: The former site of Urbe showing the route of the Camino. Note the ruins of the church to the right



Figure 3.53: Pottery sherd on the *castrum* of Urbe (scale measures 20cm).

A gradual change of terrain occurs west of Urbe, so that the broad views and sense of space noticeable at points **A** and **B** are exchanged for confined valley territory that culminates in the low bridging point over the Río Salado. The narrowing of the visual range, both behind to the east and ahead, to the west, prompts questions about the relationship of movement, sight, landmarks and perception. Which was more unsettling and disorientating; confined valley space, or broad views of seemingly unending hills?. In the sequential flow of landscape, there were both abrupt changes and more gradual shifting of views. The distant band of limestone cliffs, for example, coming into and out of view throughout this Study Area may

have presented a long-term yardstick for measuring progress over the course of long distances. Incidentally, the name of this sierra; the Sierra de Loquiz de Santiago invites speculation as to whether the reference to Santiago relates to the proximity of the Camino route. As the fertile lands of the Val de Mañeru slip from view, the road begins its ascent into a different territorial unit; the Valle de Yerri.

Lorca occupies the strategically significant pass through the hills. Like Mañeru and Cirauqui, this settlement was present in the landscape before the early tenth century when it appears to have formed a battle-site between Arab and Christian forces. Unlike these other settlements, however, it has a completely different form. Its starkly linear configuration along the axis of the road indicates perhaps the antiquity of this route-way, and the enduring importance of the flow of traffic to this settlement during the central Middle Ages. Contemporary documents and many modern historical accounts tend to summarise the experience of Navarrese village dwellers, sometimes referred to as *mezquinos*, a term derived from the arab *mizkin* meaning lacking in goods, poor, indigenous and humble. The varying village plans of the Camino route in this Study area however indicate that each settlement may have had a starkly different relationship with the pilgrimage phenomenon.

The most obvious surviving medieval structure is the monumental twelfth century church; its location and appearance suggesting that it doubled as a fortification (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 93); an interesting meshing of sacred and defensive architecture. No trace remains of the hospital opposite. If approximating roughly to a medieval arrangement, the central modern plaza and stone fountain indicate that pilgrims congregating here may have had access to markets and water.

Further west, the place-name Lorkatxiki is seemingly the only vestige of a small medieval settlement abandoned by the early sixteenth century. Archaeological scatters associated with “Little Lorca” may either be identified via more extensive survey or, alternatively, could have been destroyed by the large swathes of land cut through by the construction of the “Autovía del Camino”.

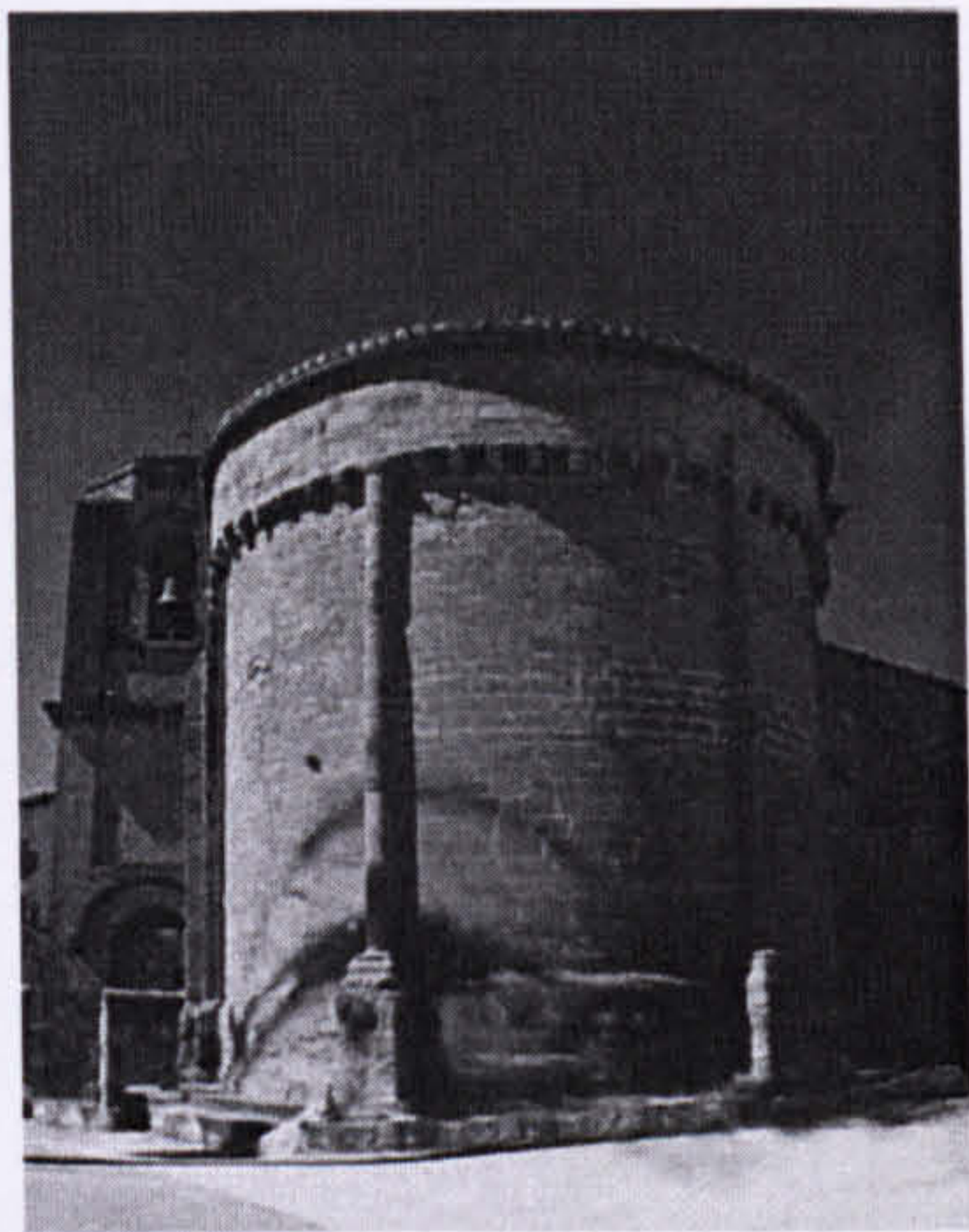


Figure 3. 54: The monumental apse of the church at Lorca



Figure 3. 55: Lorca comes into view



Figure 3. 56: Looking back to Lorca from the west

4. Lorkatxiki to Estella

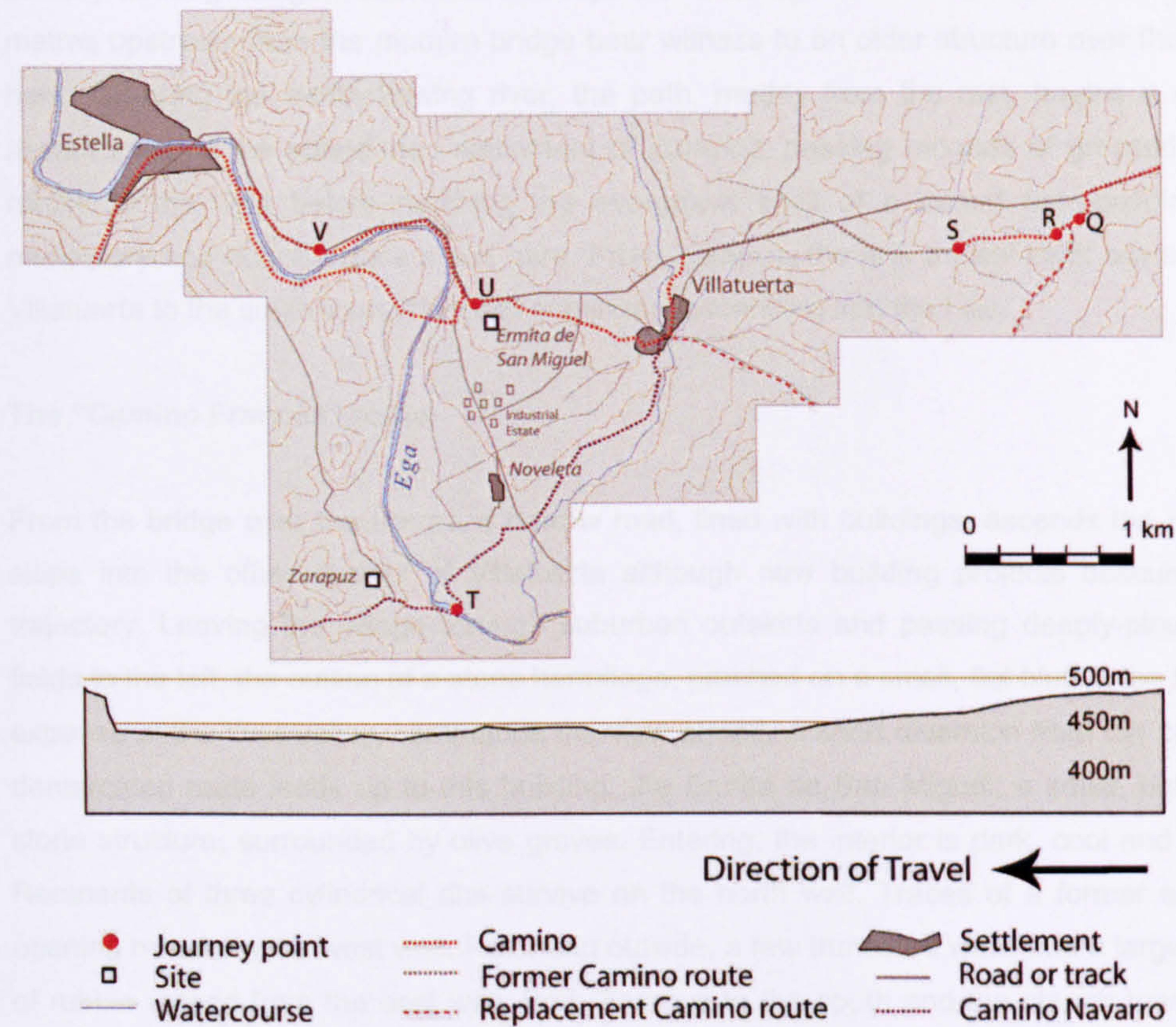


Figure 3. 57: Lorkatxiki to Estella

Q: Beyond the barricade of orange netting (this segment is now closed to walkers), the worn, hollowed path clings to a field terrace to the right, while underfoot, faint vestiges of paving are visible. **R:** From here, the dark shape of the church tower of Villatuerta appears, outlined against the hills and standing much higher than the rest of the low spread of the village. Heading through lush, rolling green fields, the path descends gradually. No trace remains of the medieval roadside hospital that used to stand in this area. **S:** It is not possible to continue due to the construction works.

Villatuerta, with two medieval centres, straddles the river Irazzu. Suburban outskirts give way to the old river-bank quarter. The road crosses the narrow Irazzu over a small, double arched stone bridge. From here there are two options for westward travel:

The “Camino Navarro” route

Turning left from the bridge, skirting the upper quarter and passing the monumental iglesia de la Ascunción, a narrow path descends through small, freshly dug allotments and fields

that bear the name “Debajo la iglesia” (below the church). Near Noveleta, an eighteenth century farming village, roadworks interrupt the route again. **T:** Stone abutments a few metres upstream from the modern bridge bear witness to an older structure over the Ega here. Crossing the swiftly-flowing river, the path, muddy from the rain, begins a direct ascent towards the abandoned settlement of Zarapuz, passing mounds of grassed-over rubble to the right before reaching the overgrown shell of a ruined farm-building. A monastery and hospice once stood here. From Zarapuz, there is a view back out across Villatuerta to the south-east. The path continues, ascending into the hills.

The “Camino Francés” route

From the bridge over the Iranzu, a narrow road, lined with buildings, ascends the gentle slope into the other quarter of Villatuerta although new building projects obscure the trajectory. Leaving the village through suburban outskirts and passing deeply-ploughed fields to the left, the outline of a stone hermitage, perched on a small, flat bluff in the broad expanse of the river valley, commands the view ahead. A short diversion from the current demarcated route leads up to this building; the Ermita de San Miguel; a small, but high stone structure, surrounded by olive groves. Entering, the interior is dark, cool and bare. Remnants of three cylindrical ribs survive on the north wall. Traces of a former arched opening remain in the west wall. Returning outside, a few truncated walls and a large area of rubble extend from the east wall. Both Zarapuz to the south and the church towers of Estella to the north-west are visible from this high point in the landscape.

U: Descending now, the church bells of Estella can be heard in the distance, although the town remains out of sight from this point onwards. A new route for walkers avoids the highway and heads west through wooded, broken ground and across a new bridge over the Ega. The N111 retraces the older route and snakes between the river on the left and steep hills and rocky outcrops on the right. **V:** The line of the old road from Pamplona, fronted by crumbling, forgotten buildings, meets the new, busy highway into the city. Estella, flanked and shaded by rocky spurs and steep slopes, remains largely hidden.



Figure 3. 58: From point R: the iglesia de Ascuncion in Villatuerta appears on the horizon.



Figure 3. 59: From point F: the old road meets the N111 from Pamplona

Analysis

West of Lorkatziki, Vazquez de Parga and his colleagues found “scarcely a sign” of the medieval route in the 1940s (1949a:131). The task of securely identifying pre-modern routes in this landscape is further complicated today by building projects, urban sprawl and long, round about diversions on farm-tracks.

The section between **Q** and **R**, however, running below a field terrace and exhibiting occasional paving stones, is a possible survival of the medieval trajectory. The pilgrim hospital documented in this area, *in camino Sancti Iacobi*,

inter Lorca et illo ponte de Villatorta (on the Camino de Santiago between Lorca and the bridge of Villatuerta) (quoted in Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 131) was founded by Gaston de Murillo and his wife in the twelfth century, and, as such, is interpretable as a private act of charity, a deed repayable in contemporary mindsets by the purging of the sinful soul (Gilchrist 1995: 9). Here pilgrims were received every day and at all hours (Jimeno Jurío 2004a: 157). Unfortunately, no material scatters were evident in the immediate environs of the path, indicating perhaps an originally ephemeral structure, the removal of deposits via later agricultural practice, or the need for more extensive work to locate the precise location of this institution. A rock outcrop close to the path suggest a likely source of building material.

Accompanied by the pealing of bells, the fourteenth century church of La Ascunción forms an impressive landmark for travellers approaching from the east, a visual and auditory beacon signalling imminent arrival. Historically, Villatuerta plays an interesting role in the wider organisation of the Camino route. Already in existence by the tenth century, and as mentioned above in section 3.1, it formed a nodal bridging point for early pilgrims following the “Camino Navarro” as well as the masses who later trod the “Camino Francés” (Orella Unzue 1995: 590-1).

To what extent did the changing orientation of pilgrim movement influence the morphological development of the village? The fact that medieval Villatuerta consisted of two quarters might indicate that the two centres developed in accordance with the two axes of the different route-ways. Upon closer examination, however, it appears that virtually all of the village plan relates to the axis of the Camino Francés, extending down to the river from the north and then running westwards, in the direction of San Miguel. It is conceivable that the road that stretches from the bridge to the iglesia de la Ascunción formed the original axis of movement south-west promoted by pilgrims journeying on to Zarapuz before the close of the eleventh century. It is just as likely, though, that this road acquired its importance subsequent to the fourteenth century raising of the iglesia de la Ascunción, the location of which was clearly determined by the higher ground of this site. The lack of in-depth study or analysis of this settlement precludes definitive answers about spatial configuration and meaning in

Villatuerta, suffice it to say that the main period of construction and expansion can be correlated with the emergence and coalescence of the Camino Francés from the twelfth century onwards.



Figure 3. 60: The bridge at Villatuerta

Similarly, continual changes and modifications to the landscape have concealed any single, coherent route to Zarapuz. Only the general orientation of the path as it heads from Villatuerta, and possibly the bridge abutments of the old Puente Navarro, (figure 3.61), suggest a route-way across the low, fertile ground here. Zarapuz, transferred from crown property to the Order of San Juan de la Peña in 989 offered pilgrims modest care in a small monastery hospital during the eleventh century (Passini 1993: 68). That the monks enjoyed a considerable passing trade is clear from protests issued upon realising that Sancho Ramírez, in the full swing of his role as patron of Frankish commercial settlement, had decided to found a new *burgo* not in the environs of Zarapuz, but some four kilometres or so up-river close to the small village of Lizarra (Satrústegui 1990: 15).



Figure 3. 61: Bridge abutment near Zarapuz

The foundation of Estella at the expense of Zarapuz and the subsequent re-routing of the Camino away from the old settlement on the hill-side is a subject always mentioned, but less frequently analysed in historical accounts (see Martín Duque 1990 for the most detailed summary). What, though, were the precise mechanics involved in altering a route-way of some antiquity? Supporting a picture for rapid abandonment and change is the wealth of evidence that shows Estella to have been a veritable hot-house of immigration, commercial enterprise, pilgrim support and architectural investment in the decades immediately following the arrival of the first settlers, present from 1076 at the earliest (Martín Duque 2002: 737).

Zarapuz, meanwhile lingered until the fifteenth century. It seems that from early on, a deal was brokered with the Order of San Juan de la Peña, so that rather than losing out, the monks became complicit in the new turn of events. Records reveal that by the late 1070s, they had already acquired land in the new *burgo* and when Sancho Ramírez issued a *fuero* to Estella in 1090, included within the statement was a concession of not only a tenth of all rents deriving from the town's royal rents, but the full proprietorship of all future town churches to the Aragonese monastery (Rodríguez González 1973: 7-8). Interpretable as generous compensation for the marginalisation of Zarapuz, such machinations reveal the vested economic interests tied up with the pilgrimage phenomenon and indicate that the shifting of the pilgrimage route was a foreseen and deliberate manoeuvre, not merely a consequence of the subsequent prosperity of the new town. In this case, it is possible that a range of practical and material strategies were put in place to divert the flow of pilgrims in Villatuerta away from Zarapuz. In the account of his pilgrimage journeys of the 1670s, Domenico Laffi mentions elsewhere encountering stone piles, wooden crosses and signs that indicated the correct path (Laffi 1681: 142). Such ephemeral, but nevertheless important material signs, were perhaps implemented in and around Villatuerta during the central Middle Ages in order to assist in the deliberate promotion of new axes of movement.

Of the site of Zarapuz itself, in addition to the rubble spreads and wall segments (and possibly portions of wall incorporated into the later farm building), a recent phase of tree planting has unearthed tile and pot sherds, one of which, a flat-

bottomed base sherd, is consistent with twelfth and thirteenth century jug and pot forms excavated in the Urraul Bajo zone of Navarre (Jusue Simonena 1988: 115, 327; figures 3.62-3.64).



Figure 3. 62: Ruins at Zarapuz



Figure 3. 63: Base sherd from Zarapuz

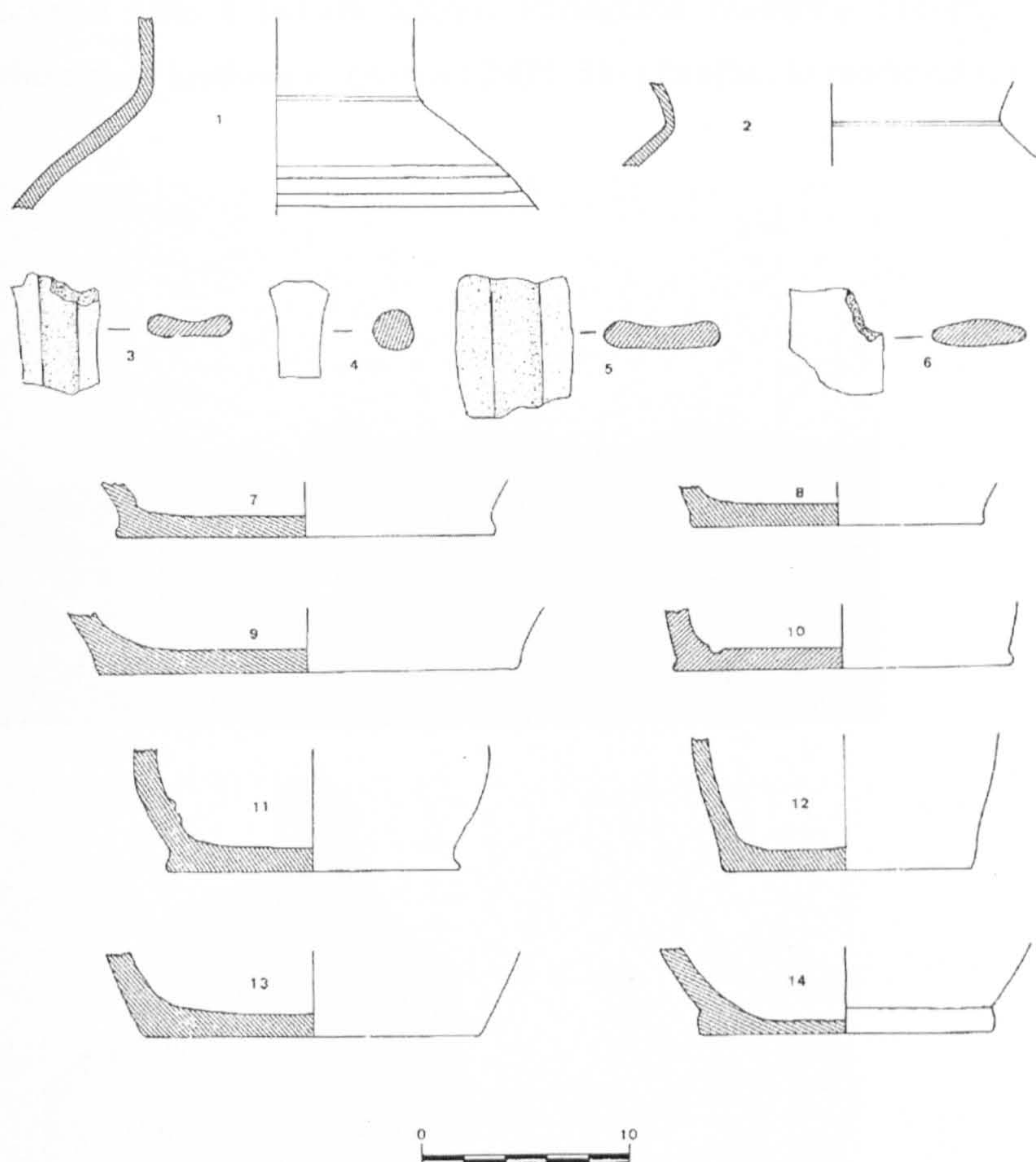


Figure 3. 64: Pottery forms from the abandoned medieval village of Apardues, Navarre (reproduced from Jusue Simonena 1988:115)

Pilgrims setting forth on the new route from Villatuerta to Estella had before them a view dominated by the church of San Miguel, jutting above the fields and visible from most angles in this landscape (figure 3.65). The small bell-tower indicates such visual prominence was accompanied by acoustic messages in the landscape. Built sometime between 971 and 978, the original church was, along with an associated monastery, transferred from royal hands to the powerful monastery of Leyre in 1062 (Germán de Pamplona 1954: 223; Orella Unzue 1995: 591). Spatially removed from Villatuerta, this site necessitated a detour for those travelling on to Zarapuz; a physical distance that, perhaps like elsewhere, reinforced the theological separation of the occupants of this site and their role in society. Meanwhile the twinning of the denomination to St Michael with an

elevated site, a pattern known throughout medieval Europe, conforms to a “rhetoric of landscape” (Arnold 2000: 583) familiar to medieval travellers.

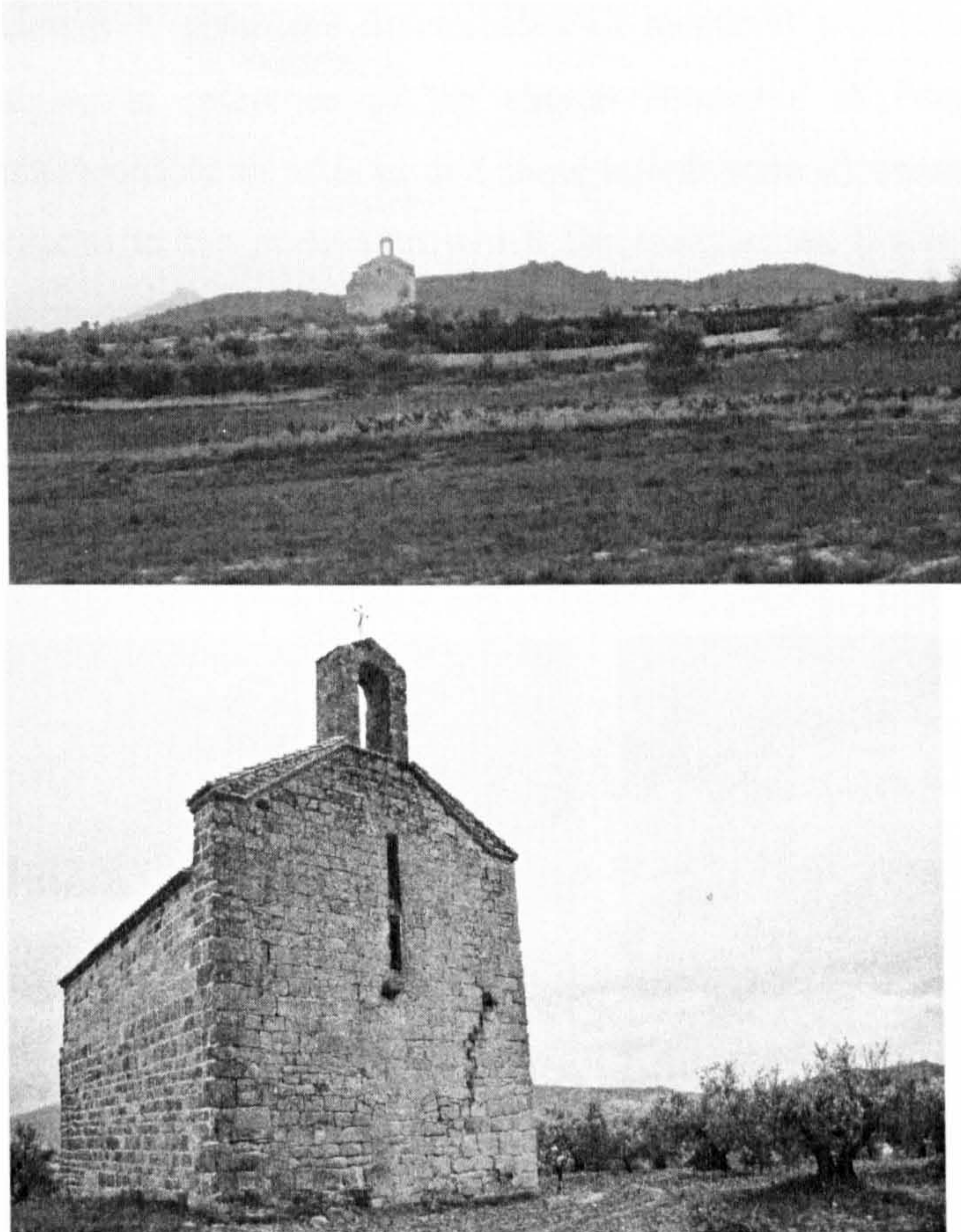


Figure 3. 65: The ermita de San Miguel

Key features at this site include a series of early stone reliefs, now housed in the Museum of Navarre in Pamplona, architectural elements retained within the present fabric of the structure, and a dense scatter of pottery sherds and tile in the olive groves surrounding the church building. The reliefs, dating to the last third of the tenth century are unique for their period in style, expression and content and thus impart a privileged glimpse at the kind of religious decorative schemes contemporary with early pilgrim travel through Navarre (Germán de Pamplona 1954: 225; figure 3.66). A pertinent issue is their precise locational context. Were they easily visible to visiting pilgrims? The irregular placement of the reliefs on the north and south walls of the church building prior to their transferral to the

museum indicate displacement from their original site during episodes of structural modification (Germán de Pamplona 1954: 224).

However, given the functionality of medieval architectural sculpture, discussed above in reference to the church doorways in Puente la Reina, it is not unreasonable to assume that these reliefs were a) intended to be viewed and b) crucial to the manner in which the structure as a whole was experienced. The animated positions of the figures serve to animate the building and remind us that both architecture and dynamic images corresponded to the very real, embodied performances of ritual and liturgy undertaken by the medieval viewers (Zanker 1988: 114).



Figure 3. 66: Sculpted reliefs from Villatuerta. Clockwise from top left-The Crucifixion; a commemorative inscription dated to the final third of the tenth century; a liturgical scene (possibly a baptism) and animated figure. (Photos taken with kind permission from the Museum of Navarre, Pamplona)

The traces of arched openings and truncated walls to the east indicate a once, much more sizeable complex, as does the extent of rubble across the whole area (figure 3.67 and 3.68). The sherds visible within the turned-over soil indicate a zone in which systematic collection and study would prove fruitful. There is little readily available information regarding the role of this institution regarding the Jacobean pilgrimage, both during the years of the “Camino Navarro” and later, when the pilgrim traffic passed close by on the way to Estella. One question revolves around the relationship between this monastery and that of Zarapuz, the site of which is visible from this knoll. Did the two contemporary institutions, outposts of two of the most politically and economically important monasteries in the tenth and eleventh centuries, compete for pilgrim trade? Was the community at San Miguel instrumental in the diversion of travellers away from Zarapuz and on towards Estella? San Miguel is the only point along this part of the route where the city is just about visible.

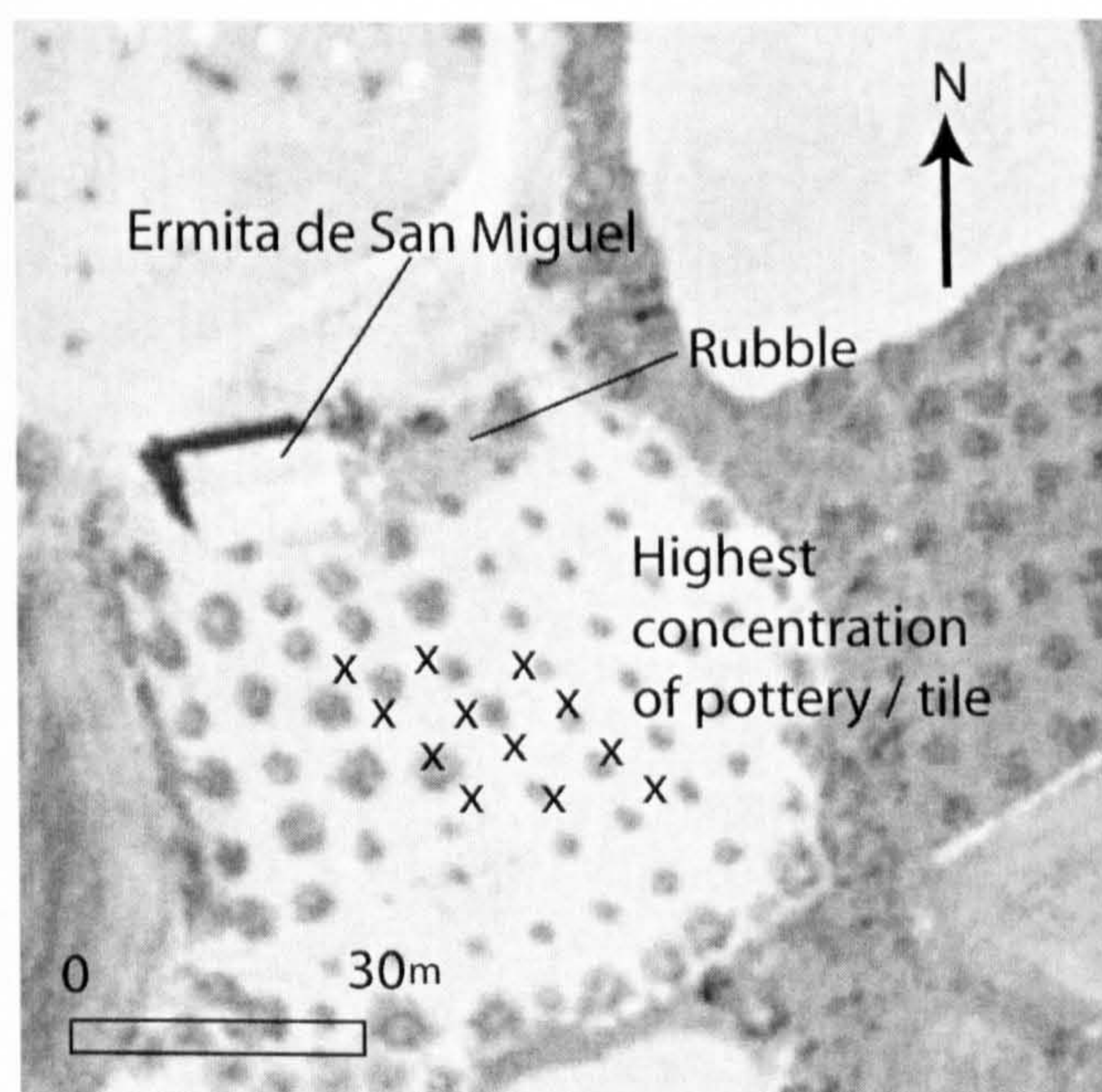


Figure 3. 67: Plan showing the highest concentration of pottery and tile in the olive grove to the south of the Ermita de San Miguel.

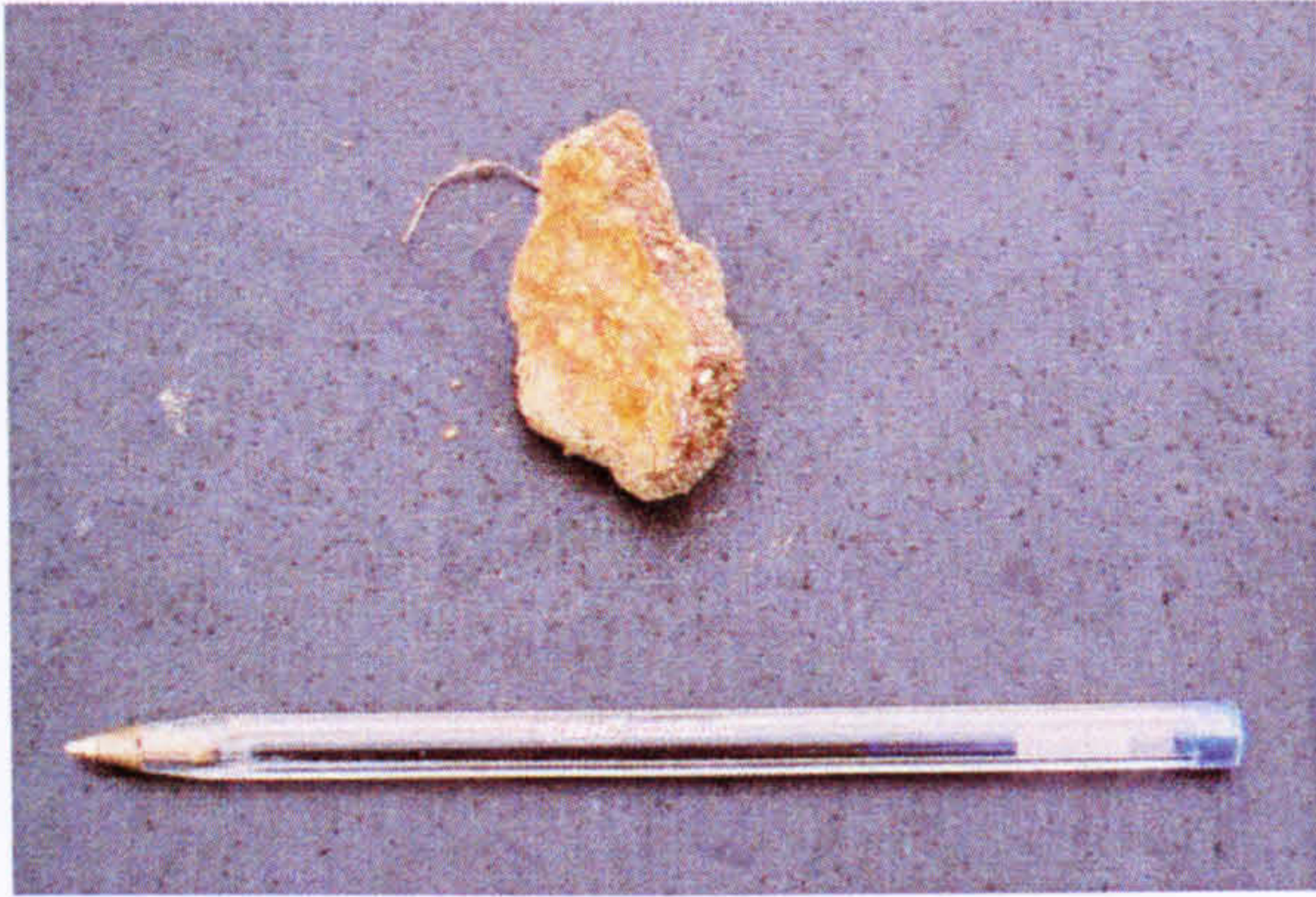


Figure 3. 68: Sherd found in the vicinity of the Ermita de San Miguel

Although the nature of the local environment has been altered in the elaboration of the modern road network from San Miguel onwards, the more enduring topographical elements of the river and the rocky slopes indicate that pilgrims descended into a narrow route of access towards the new settlement. Within this enclosed terrain, the sound of church bells may have been the most apparent manifestation of the settlement ahead.

5. Estella

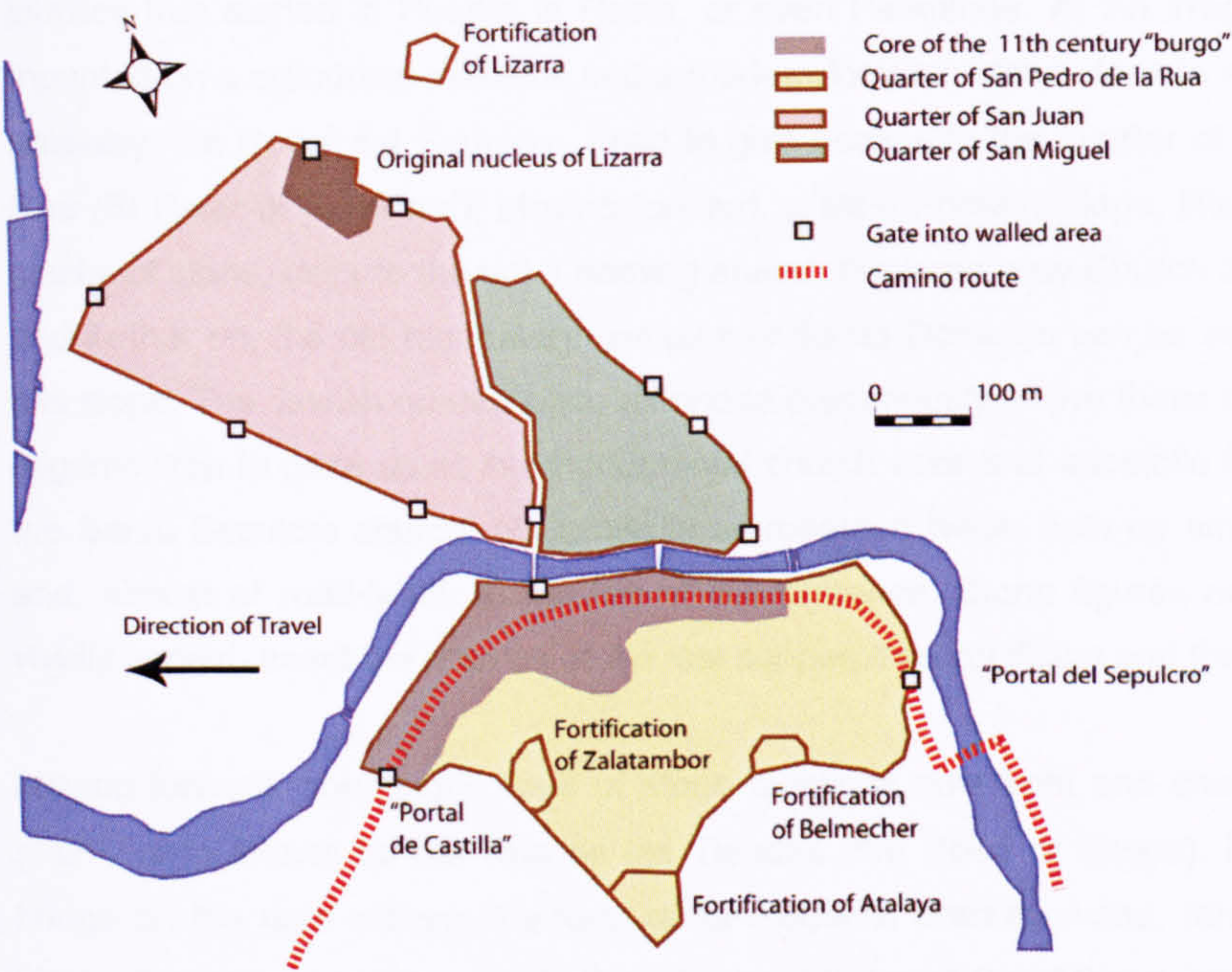


Figure 3. 69: The city of Estella: the Camino, gates, castles and walled quarters. (Adapted from Iturbide Díaz 1993: 30 and Passini 1993: 70).

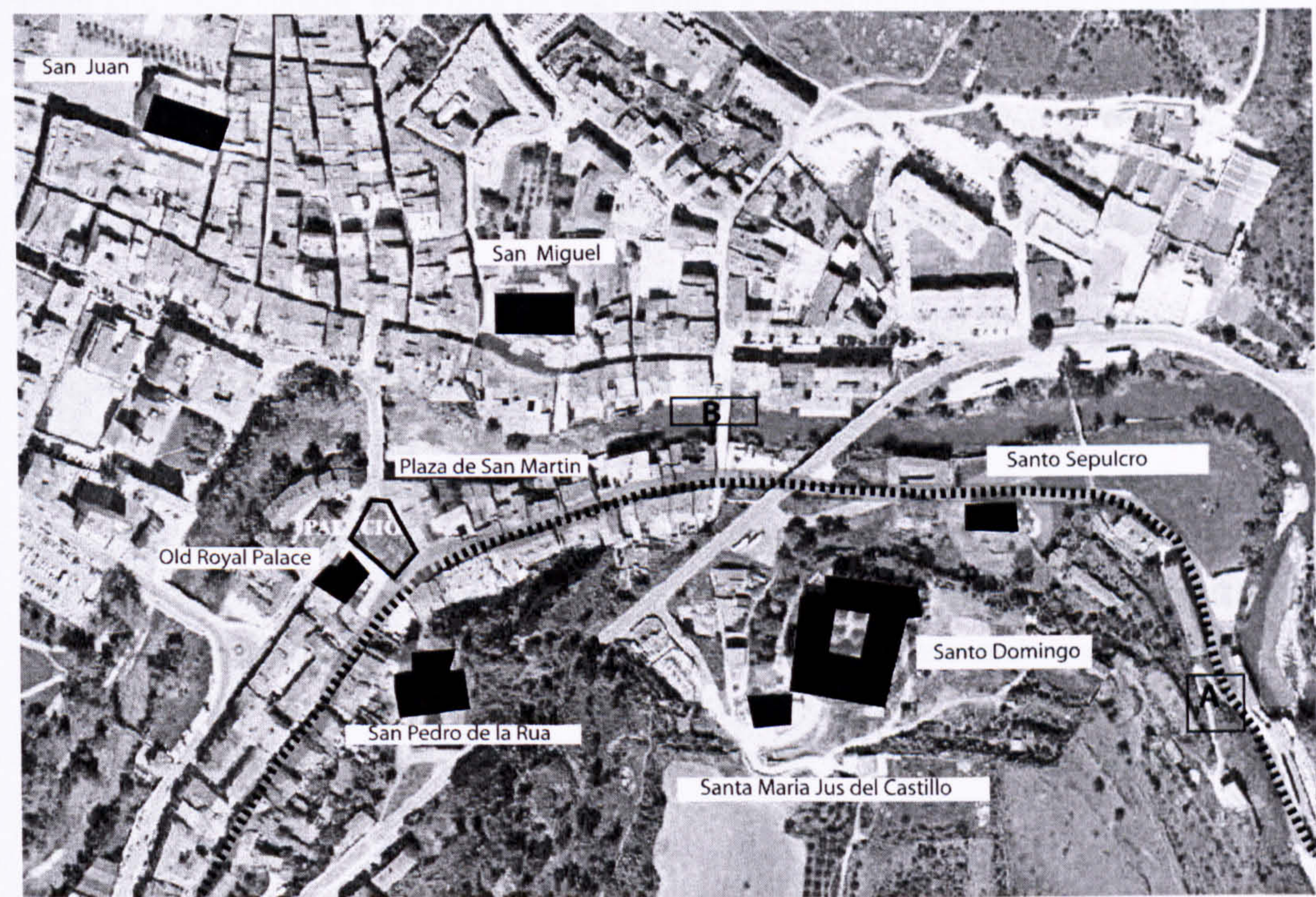


Figure 3. 70: The Camino, points A and B, and principal surviving ecclesiastical structures in Estella (adapted from www.arquivoltas.com)

Proceeding, pilgrims once crossed the river via a long-vanished bridge and passed close to a leper hospital before entering Estella. Modern walkers approach the city tired from a journey that started in Puente la Reina, or even Pamplona. **A:** An irregular stone cross mounted on a cylindrical pedestal and a modern fountain stand close to where a medieval gateway, the Portal del Sepulcro, used to give access to the quarter of San Pedro de la Rua (St Peter of the Road). Moving forward, a steep, grassy slope, littered with jumbled blocks of stone, rises to the left. Looming ahead, the large grey Church of Santo Sepulcro and further on, the old monastery complex of Santo Domingo can be seen, terraced into this slope. The Jewish quarter once extended precariously above these buildings. Modern pilgrims stop to gaze up at the monumental church door and apostolic figures that adorn the Santo Sepulcro church. St James is represented twice, both up among the apostles and, almost at road-level, to the left of the entrance. Stone figures on the tympanum, vividly carved, enact the dramas of the last supper, the crucifixion and the tortures of hell.

Moving forward, continuous lines of stone buildings now front and shade the darkening street, once known as the Rua de las Tiendas (the Road of Shops). **B:** A narrow high bridge on the right echoes the form of its medieval precursor and, raising walkers high above the narrowing river, leads them to the quarter of San Miguel, where a continuous façade of jagged walling and houses line the river bank and draw the eye up to a hill-top church. Heading straight on, past enormous stone archways, walkers follow the curving street to a small square, the Plaza de San Martin, a gathering place bordered by the old royal palace and the town hall, where the medieval council used to meet and where a few remnants of the old medieval chapel of San Martin lie hidden inside, concealed by the later building. From this square, another bridge extends away to the right, and, like its medieval predecessor, leads traffic over the river into the large quarter of San Juan.

Dominating the view from this square is the enormous, fortified church of San Pedro de la Rua, whose walls, like the rock outcrops that surround the city, ascend high above the pilgrims, the street and the houses. Steps lead up to the church entrance. No trace remains of another medieval church constructed in this area. The street ends with grey walling and an archway known as the Portal de Castilla. A ledge adorned with crosses and an icon sits atop the arch. Leaving the Barrio of San Pedro, modern pilgrims suddenly emerge into the suburbs and a tarmac road. Looking back, the archway displays the emblem of a star and walkers photograph the moment of their departure of the city. A minute or two further on and they pass the final church of this trajectory – the iglesia de Rocamadour where a hospice also once attended to pilgrims.

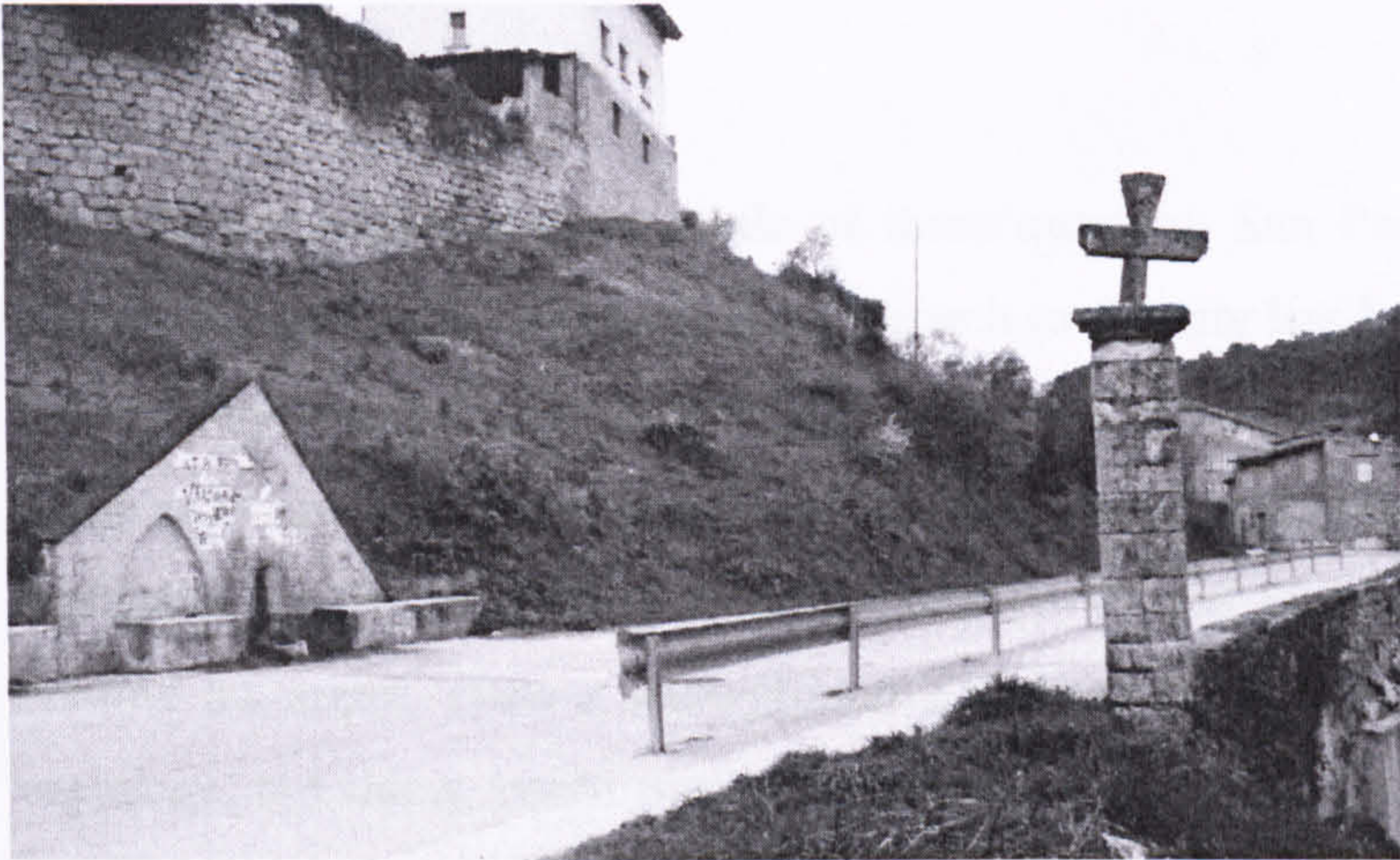


Figure 3. 71: Point A: Approach to Estella



Figure 3. 72: Pilgrims gaze up at the iglesia del Santo Sepulcro



Figure 3. 73: The rebuilt bridge that leads to the quarter of San Miguel

Analysis

Estella's urban plan reveals a tale of three quarters; San Pedro de la Rua, San Miguel and San Juan. Although the approach to the city has been altered, the path followed by modern walkers still leads into the first and earliest of these, Sancho Ramírez's new and privileged *burgo* of the south bank; San Pedro de la Rua. Populated by French settlers from the late 1070s and 80s onwards, this quarter became an arena, even a showground for those who, free from all bonds of vassalage and tithes, could pursue lucrative enterprises and urban projects along the pilgrim road. This *burgo* was planted just over half a kilometre away from the older hillside village of Lizarra to the north of the river. It was a world apart from the original rural, feudal settlement, which served only as geographical reference point for documents describing the location of the new town, and, it is thought, the etymological root for the name Estella; a Romance corruption of the poorly understood Basque name (González Ollé 1990: 344).

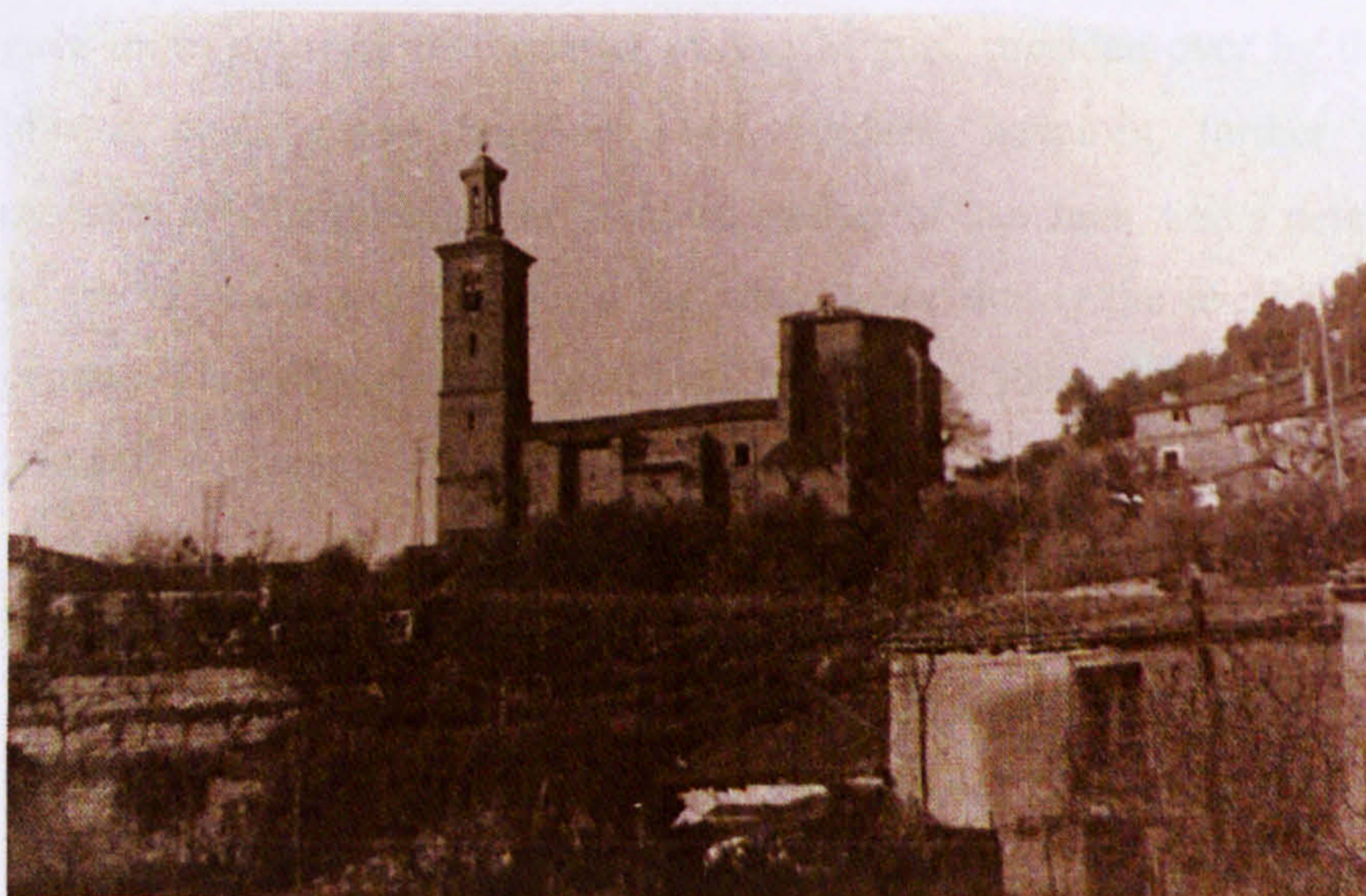


Figure 3. 74: Although the area of Lizarra came to be understood as part of the city, it remained physically separate until urban developments of the 1970s filled in the fields that separated this nucleus from the rest of the city, still visible in this early photograph (reproduced from Itúrbide Díaz 1993).

Extra-mural installations, flanking the approach to Estella, are interpretable as influencing initial impressions. Leprosauria will be discussed further in the next chapter, suffice it to say here that the twelfth century structure and its occupants

potentially helped define the city limit, betokening a marginal zone of transition (see chapter 4.4 and 4.5). Punctuating the present landscape, the broken and rather unshapely cross, of unknown date and provenance and the modern fountain echo medieval signs frequently utilised to demarcate the border of a town. For walkers today, they clearly announce arrival. Within moments of passing them, the monumental churches of Santo Sepulcro and Santo Domingo come into view.

Like in Puente la Reina, given the rapid pace of urban construction, we can envisage the floods of pilgrims arriving in the *nova populatio* (new population) in the early twelfth century witnessing a scene full of the noise, spectacle and optimism of new building projects. With the square of San Martin comprising the initial nucleus, the new town extended in waves up and down the road, tracking the east-west trajectory of the pilgrims and traders who came and went. The riverside Camino path rapidly became an urban street, and by 1145 the four principal churches of Santo Sepulcro, Santa Maria Jus del Castillo, San Pedro de la Rua and San Nicolas had been built. Across the river, the weekly market place gave impetus to the new quarter of San Miguel, presided over by the ambitious hill-top church, also built in 1145. Bridges, hospices, further chapels and monasteries, the founding of the third quarter of San Juan, and a defensive circuit of castles, walls and completed the urban scene during the twelfth and thirteenth century. Housed within the total area, by the mid fourteenth century, was a large population of some 7100 *fuegos* or hearths.

The pilgrim experience of Estella can be interpreted as being influenced by a number of material and cultural aspects, architectural forms and codes, interactions, encounters and sensory perceptions. The process of arrival was strongly defined by the gateway into the city, the Portal del Santo Sepulcro, which was just one element within an elaborate system of twelfth to thirteenth century walls, ditches, gates and bastions that delimited the city quarters and controlled movement into and around the urban districts. Figure 3.76 illustrates something of the impressive monumentality of this system. Like elsewhere, in addition to serving purely defensive ends, such edifices of stone and unified systems of closure, surveillance and control can be analysed from the perspective of travelling through and social meaning. Reinforcing the drama of entrance and exit as in

Puente la Reina and expressing power, identity and status, these iconic architectural forms complemented the local, enclosing terrain of the Ega valley and lent themselves as symbols for the formidable city as a whole. Closed at night, guarded in times of disease, and used as check-points for the influx of merchandise (Itúrbide Díaz 1993: 32), the gates also functioned as potentially serious obstacles for onward travel, particularly given that the adjacent river and steep slope permits few immediate alternatives.

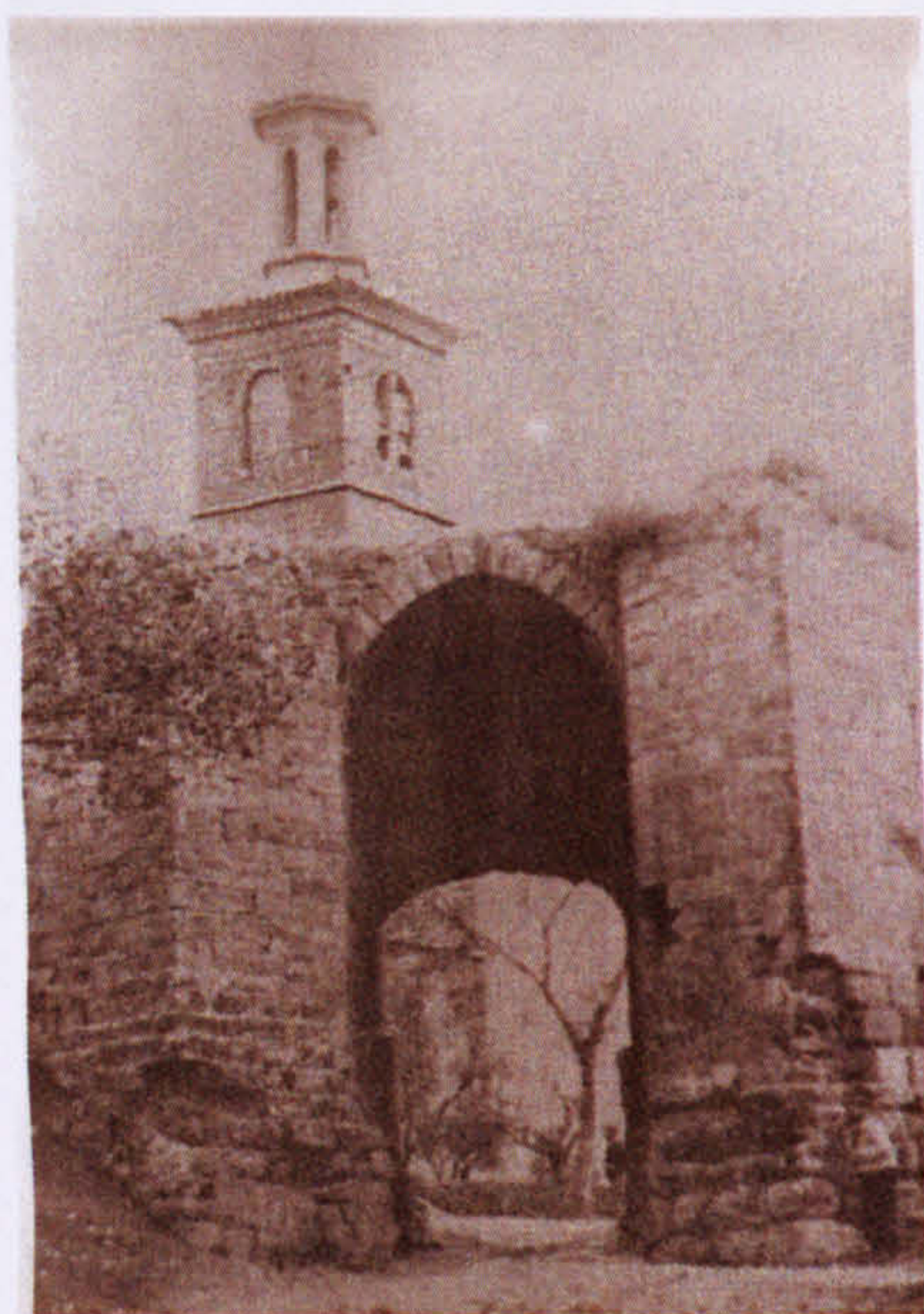


Figure 3. 75: A medieval gate into the quarter of San Juan; demolished in 1905. For scale, note the figure to the right (reproduced from Itúrbide Díaz 1993: 31).

Upon entering the town, the iglesia del Santo Sepulcro is easily the most immediately prominent of the ecclesiastical structures. Funded by the new merchant residents and, in design, more redolent of Toulouse workshops than Iberian traditions (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000; 103; Ramírez Vazquez 1993: 28), the church is a powerful statement of identity, independent investment and socio-economic wherewithal. Given the proximity of the large Jewish quarter just up the slope, this church and its prominent religious scenes may also have gained currency as demarcating and reinforcing Christian spaces. Interestingly, in the middle band of the tympanum the spatial proximity of calm, modestly dressed figures, their mouths closed in apparent serene contemplation, with the fearsome, gaping and frantically devouring monster, constitutes an extraordinary

juxtaposition (figure 3.77). Like in other decorative schema, it reinforces ideas about the permanent imminence of chaos, conflict and damnation (Camille 1992: 74); a significant reminder for the possibly morally doubtful pilgrim.



Figure 3. 76: Scene from the tympanum from Santo Sepulcro

The double depiction of St James in the slightly later façade is a clear nod to the international cult being played out in the local landscape. Could the image of Santiago Peregrino (St James the pilgrim) have motivated weary pilgrims to pursue their journey? The arrangement of the figures seems to confirm that here was a major saint hierarchically and literally beyond reach, up in the apostolic realm, and correspondingly, positioned at a suitably lofty position on the building wall. But simultaneously, as suggested by the position of the second statue, here also was a saint who was down among the pilgrims and dressed in similar garb, as if in empathy with their task (figure 3.79 and 3.80).



Figure 3. 77: Church of Santo Sepulcro. Note the apostles higher up the façade and the two stone figures flanking the entrance. St James stands to the left of the enormous portal.



Figure 3. 78: Detail of the sculpture of St James (reproduced from Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949: Plate XXIII).

The bridges were narrow points of access into quarters which were demographically, socially and juristically quite distinct from the most privileged pilgrim route district of San Pedro de la Rua. These bridges, were, quite possibly, perceivable by pilgrims as tempting paths into other exciting parts of the city (each quarter evolved its own centre of mercantile and religious activity), or may have been feared as routes into the unknown. Given the recorded history of quarrelsomeness and resentment between the three quarters (Itúrbide Díaz 1995:

21-22; Ramírez Vazquez 1993: 15) the river, walls and connecting bridges may well have assumed quite symbolic roles within local perceptions of the city (or rather cities).

Pilgrims were otherwise confined along the main road; simultaneously the Camino leading to Santiago and the main artery of commerce. The nature of the Rua de las Tiendas is implicated not only by name (Street of shops), but also by the later

medieval stone archways (figure 3.80). As alcoves for trade, these spaces along the main thoroughfare are interpretable as miniature stages for the bodily “performative signs” of working artisans and traders producing and vending their wares at street level (Camille 2000: 20). Visual signs, combined with sensory triggers such as smell and sounds of goods, foodstuffs and services produced a long, linear space of opportunity, purchase and cosmopolitan encounter for the pilgrim. Satrústegui envisages a positive effect;



Figure 3. 79: Coins commissioned by Sancho Ramírez. (Reproduced from Fortún Pérez de Ciriza and Jusué Simonena 1993: 108)

...a multitude of money-traffickers, stalls run by Jews, schemes managed by hawkers of all races, the song of the troubadour, phrases in Occitan, Romance, Basque, Arabic and Hebrew triggered a marvellous impression of life and relief for the walking pilgrim after suffering the cold of the Pyrenees and the heat of the hard journey to the “Rua de las Tiendas”. (Satrústegui 1990: 241; my translation).

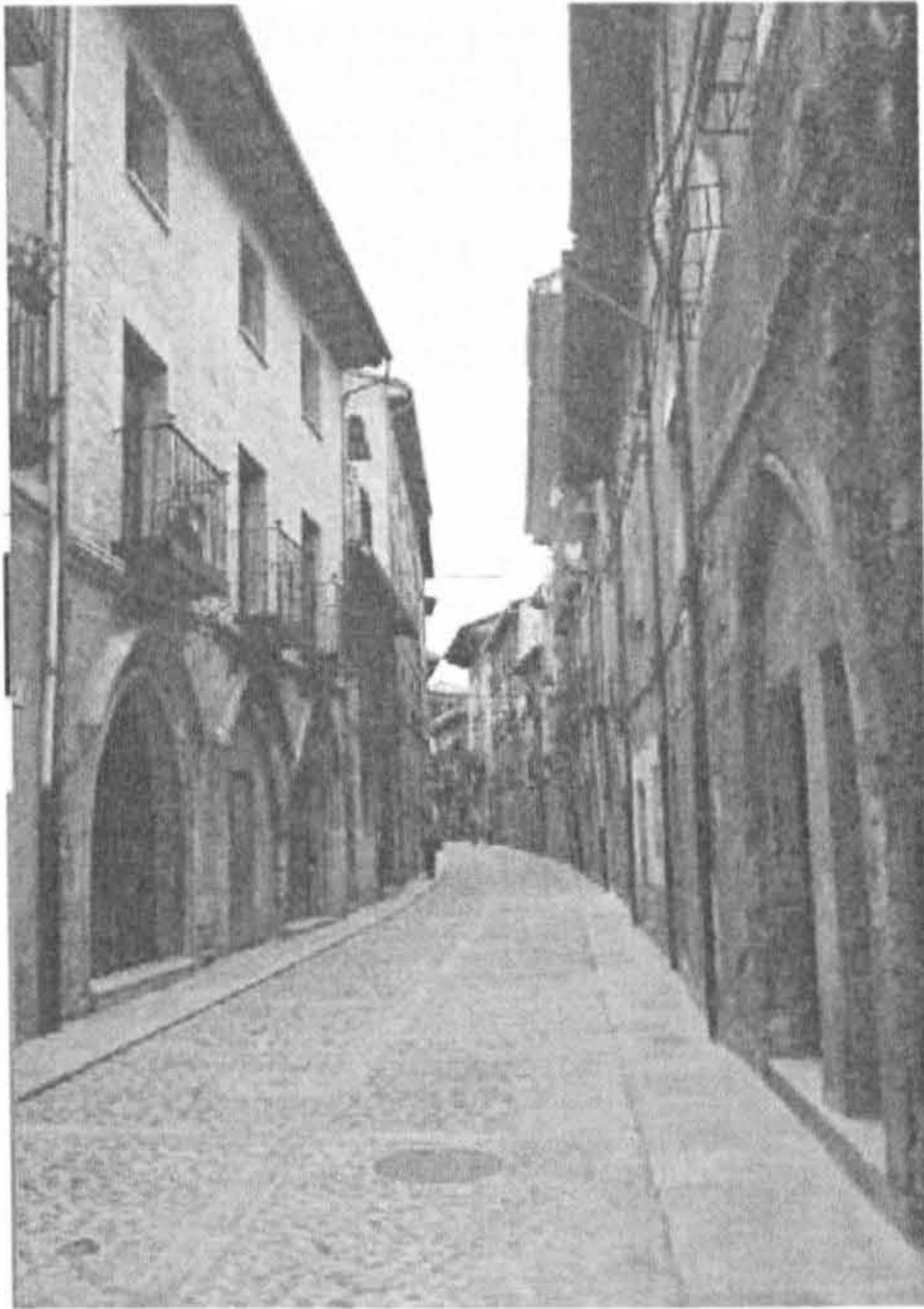


Figure 3. 80: The Rua de las Tiendas in Estella

Although for pilgrims the contrast with the rugged paths of rural Navarre may indeed have been a welcome one, the especially high proportion of money-changers recorded as operating in the city (Ramírez Vaquero 1993: 16), indicates that profitability was sometimes achieved only through exploitation at their expense. “False bankers” and their swindles were particularly targeted in the sermon “Veneranda Dies” of the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, indicating that they were a common problem of the Camino route. With different sets of weights, balances, and pincers for clipping coins, they are described as performing every kind of deceit for financial gain (Arribas Brione 1993: 267). Also, it could be assumed that throughout the medieval city, other sensory signals were emitted from broiling tanning pits, rivulets of raw sewage and large congregations of unwashed bodies; smells perhaps unnoticed by those living and working among them, but surely felt and noted by the incoming outsiders (Bartosiewicz 2003: 190)!

Commerce was, of course, just one dimension within the rich, overlapping texture of the urban landscape. The city of Estella also met expectations for religious encounter. Within a century and a half of its foundation, the skyline was dominated by the ascending towers of churches built on the high places of the city, church bells signalled masses and rumours abounded of divine apparitions

(Arraiza 1990) and the miraculous arrival of St Andrew's relics, hidden in the cloak of a Greek bishop disguised as a pilgrim (Itúrdibe Díaz 1993: 27). French saints monopolised the ecclesiastical landscape (St Martin, St Nicolas, patron of Lorraine, advocations to Rocamadour and Le Puy etc) and again, clearly signalled the collective social and ethnic identity of the early city. By 1354, five hospitals attended to the sick (Itúrdibe Díaz 1993: 25). On church facades, ambitious carvings by the best sculptors of the day again reinforced biblical messages, holy scenes and warnings. Over the river, the Church of San Miguel, perched up high, again makes the connection with height and the realm of the warrior arch-angel.

Interrupting the curving, linear space of the main road, is the Plaza de San Martin. Its role as gathering place and social, religious, economic and political interchange is indicated by first, the important and monumental structures fronting the square, secondly, its geographic significance as an access point for crossing the river and going to San Juan, and thirdly, its amplified dimensions compared to the much narrower Rua de las Tiendas. Moreover, as the primitive heart of the city this square might have been associated with prestigious royal favour, foundation and the arrival of intrepid French settlers from areas such as the Auvergne and Limousin (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 94). Smaller elements in the urban fabric also project this identity. Among a set of capitals, gorily illustrating the seven mortal sins on the royal palace façade, is one that captures the decisive moment of a battle between two figures on horseback. They are, as spelt out by the accompanied engraving, the hero Roland and the Moslem giant, Ferragut, engaged in one of the dramatic high points of the French medieval epic, the *Chanson de Roland*. The inscription reads; *Pheragut, Rollan, Martinus de Logronio me fecit*, (Ferragut, Roland, Martin of Logroño made me) (Itúrbide Díaz 1993: 69; figure 3.81). Resonant of noble enterprise, Christian valour against the infidel, and the French lyrical tradition of the educated, this scene is a clear marker of social and ethnic class and captures in a nutshell the desired collective identity of the French settlers in the twelfth century.

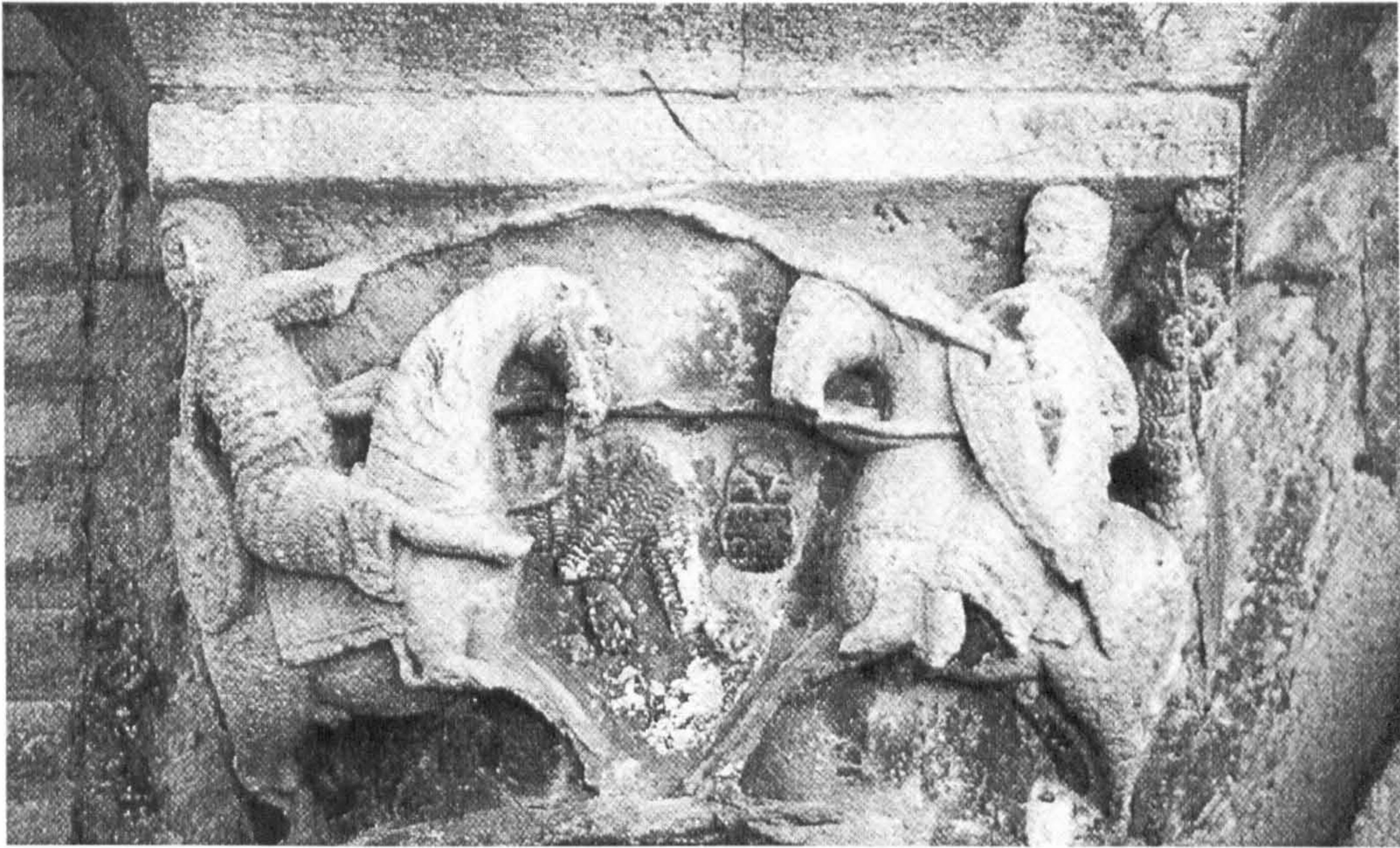


Figure 3. 81: Roland on the left spears Ferragut on a capital on the Royal Palace, Estella. (Reproduced from Itúrdibe Díaz 1993: 69)

Emphasising the vertical dimension, so apparent in Estella from both built and topographic elements, the church of San Pedro de la Rua, requires an ascent to reach its doorway (figure 3.82). In a city otherwise full of coded references, in both name and design, to lands beyond the Pyrenees, pilgrims encountered another lobed arch here, almost identical to those in Puente la Reina and Cirauqui (Martinez de Aguirre and de Orbe Sivatte 1987). Whether or not pilgrims recognised the associations with Moslem design, they may have at least been aware that here was a repeating pattern on their journey. As suggested before, like the statues of St James along the route, recurring motifs associated with the Camino possibly gave impetus to a unified identity of the road



Figure 3.82: The iglesia de San Pedro



Figure 3. 83: Lobed arches in top to bottom; Puente la Reina, Cirauqui and Estella (reproduced from Martinez de Aguirre and de Orbe Sivatte 1987: 54, 55, 58).



The surviving western gate, the Puerta de Castilla, now seems small against the modern blocks of flat and wide tarmac street beyond. Its current appearance may owe more to early sixteenth century renovation than the original medieval construction (Itúrbide Díaz 1993: 32). The religious items, located in the upper niche reflect a continuing and widespread tradition of investing crucial points of entry and exit with visual statements of piety (figure 3.84, *left*). Talismanic and redolent of an association of earthly protection with the higher plane, such religious installations also characterised the medieval system of fortifications. The bastions of Zalator and Belmecher both possessed chapels, while a Marian shrine was raised on the peak above the five metre long tunnel-gate of San Juan (demolished in 1905) (Itúrbide Díaz 1993: 31-32). Thresholds were not only important for churches and cathedrals. In a way, actively sacred space also began and ended with the city gates.

The importance of the gateway in defining the moment of departure persists in the modern experience of the pilgrimage, even though walkers today still have a good distance of urban, or rather suburban, space to negotiate. The photograph of a pilgrim striding through the gate is indicative of the desire to appropriate the memory of the act, something that Bourdieu recognises as preserving the “visible proof” of a personal encounter of the pilgrim with a resonant place (1990; figure 3.85).

In the medieval landscape, where pilgrims set forth on the journey towards La Rioja and, beyond, Castile, the gate defined a moment of transition. Beyond the extramural church and hospice, like the leprosaorium on the eastern outskirts, demarcated a more liminal zone outside the city, a space that people passed through or stayed only a while.



Figure 3. 84: The Puerta de Castilla, Estella. *Left*-note ledge for religious paraphernalia. *Right*-note the emblem of the star (*estrella*).



Figure 3. 85: A pilgrim leaves Estella (reproduced from www.terra.es/personal7/gloria.mg/camino.html)

3.5 Discussion

Two principal research themes were defined at the start of this chapter. The first concerns pilgrim attitudes to the landscape and, in particular, questions the role of urban environments, rivers and bridges in shaping the experience of the medieval journey. The second, in addressing the functional significance of a consolidated pilgrimage route-way asks; how was the movement harnessed and controlled in this area? And what was the role and impact of the road as a political device? Fieldwork in Study Area 1 reveals that despite the changes wrought by modern development, large sections of the medieval route remain identifiable today and are accompanied by material data relevant to these research topics.

Pilgrims in the city

The authors of a study on pilgrim graffiti at San Millán de Suso, west of Study Area 1 in La Rioja, believe that among the stars, names, crosses and animal motifs carved on the ancient monastery church wall, there is a small clue to the contemporary vision and impact of the new kind of urban landscape emerging in northern Spain in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Two intriguing graffiti, comprising tear-drop shaped borders enclosing tight grids of intersecting lines, are, they argue, representations of the towns that punctuate the pilgrimage itinerary (Ibañez Rodríguez and Lejarraga Nieto 1998: figure 3.86); vivid testimonials to the encounter with and response to, the planted medieval city.

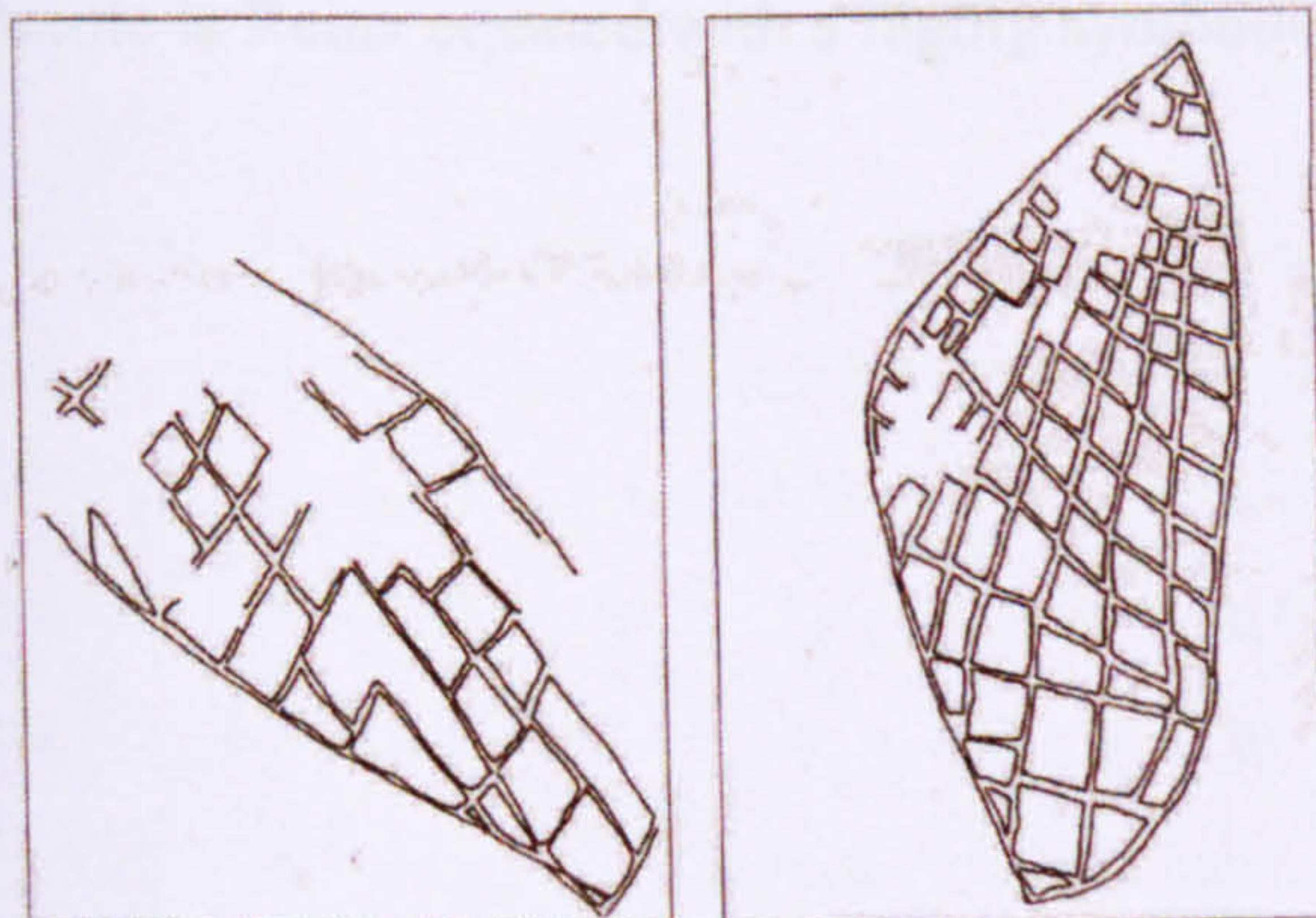


Figure 3. 86: Medieval Graffiti from the Monastery of San Millán de Suso that is claimed to represent stylised urban plans. (Reproduced from Ibañez Rodríguez and Lejarraga Nieto 1998: 115)

On the one hand, it is reasonable to believe that the new urban centres, such as Puente la Reina and Estella in this Study Area, presented strange and novel environments for both local inhabitants and pilgrims who did not come from regions of long and continued urban traditions. The excavated plans of contemporary Navarran villages, for instance, indicate the extent to which the rapidly constructed walls, gates, right-angled plazas, streets and lofty church towers contrasted with rural realms, especially in the earlier central Middle ages (figure 3.87). Although Estella was the larger of the two towns, it was Puente la Reina that presented the most orderly and symmetrical design, an urban template that is also observable in other contemporary pilgrim towns such as Redecilla del Camino (Passini 1994: 250).

On the other hand, however, is it conceivable that a pilgrim, impressed at such a pattern, would render it in stone in this precise manner at San Millan? This argument is perhaps only valid via the perspective of sacred cartographic convention in which cities such as Jerusalem and Bethlehem are depicted in *mappa mundi* as perfectly symmetrical and regular; reflections of a higher, celestial order. Correspondingly, familiarity with this form of symbolic portrayal could have prompted a pilgrim-monk, for example, to employ this device to inscribe aspects of his own marvel-filled itinerary on the road to Compostela. In such a case we would then have an interesting meshing of geographical and imaginary realities; the real gridded, symmetrical dimensions of towns such as Puente la Reina equated with a highly symbolic, representational form of space.



Figure 3. 87: The excavated medieval village of Apardues, Navarre (reproduced from Jusué Simonena 1998: 97).

Without further evidence on this matter, though, the medieval pilgrim perception of urban spaces is better framed in terms set out in the previous chapter; i.e., that places were felt and understood through movement and via the sensory pathways of the body. Regular urban designs, therefore, were not appreciable from the birds-eye view so easily available to us today, but from the views, changing horizons, memories and ideas that accompanied transitions from place to place. Perception was formed on the approach, entrance and subsequent performance of the urban itinerary. From this angle, a number of observable and recurring patterns raise significant ideas about the urban environment and pilgrim experience.

The first is that a town has many spatial registers. There is the moment when buildings, or perhaps the rising smoke from chimneys first appear on the horizon and there is the moment when sounds, probably dominated by church bells, are audible for the first time. Estella in this respect is particularly visually elusive, coming into and out of view, while, at least currently, the audible range of the church bells remains constant. Then there is the zone, much closer to the settlement, where stone crosses, fountains and extra-mural hospices or leprosuria indicate the performance of minor rituals prior to entry and a concern with cleansing, purity and the removal of the sick and marginal from the urban precinct.

Visual and auditory triggers on the approach to settlements and liminal zones of transition and their associated material signs is a subject discussed further in the next chapter with regard to the villages of Area 2, so here, I shall turn straight away to the form and features of the towns themselves.

Architecture, layout, motifs and images are, of course, all significant. City walls, now liberated from solely defensive interpretations, are interpretable from many different analytical routes, such as their role in terms of local psyches, strategies and identities (Reyerson 2000; Samson 1992). Particularly interesting in Estella might be an analysis of how the walls and gates of the different quarters (complementing the river as a dividing feature), might have reinforced differences and symbolised the character of local populations by defining differently-charged spaces and determining the flow of movement around the city. With particular respect to pilgrim movement, both in the cases of Puente la Reina and Estella, these circuits of stone can be interpreted as formidable symbols of the town as a whole, not-so-subtle statements of power and the means to constrain, filter, control and monitor pilgrim bodies as they entered. Although of a later epoch, Domenico Laffi, describes the stages of movement through the walls of Avignon during which he meets a toll-gatherer, a sentry, a corporal and finally, fortunately for him, a Bolognese soldier whom he recognised; “..a man with whom I had travelled in Spain on other occasions. He embraced us warmly...he took us to an inn” (Laffi 1681: 51). Material components such as gate hinges (as at Cirauqui) and observation points (such as the towers of Puente la Reina) are the archaeological correlates of otherwise transient encounters between the masses of medieval pilgrims and those who surveyed the comings and goings of the town.



Figure 3. 88: Surviving crenellation of medieval tower at Puente la Reina (reproduced from Jimeno Jurío 1999: 47).

Spatial practices which scrutinise movement then give way to urban forms that channel movement. Although the road and its traffic may have prompted the original configuration of the towns, the dimensions of the town then actively configure the road-space, so that as pilgrims underwent the transition from mixed rural landscapes, to dark, shaded linear streets that were, in all likelihood, smelly, noisy and possibly chaotic, they found themselves on a long urbanised Camino de Santiago that offered a multi-faceted world of encounters, too complex to explore in full and exhaustive detail.

Although the journey narratives and analyses above consider commercial activity and religious experience separately, these categories, easily separable for academic purposes, are less so when considering the actual horizons of urban experience in medieval towns. Although mercantile transaction and the rise of minted currency were viewed with distrust by the church and tainted by the suggestion of blasphemy (Le Goff 1980: 29), a number of sources reveal how spheres of commerce and spiritual encounter interconnected. Camille gives a persuasive demonstration of how saintly iconography was put to work as a device for attracting trade in medieval Paris, for example (Camille 2000). In a painting of a contemporary street scene, the mounted cross does not stand apart from the rest of

the action; “The cross here has become just another marker among a multiplicity of signs...It marks a site where a vender of chickens and onions can present her wares for sale and is overshadowed by both the bustle of the stalls and shops and the circular sign representing a tavern or cabaret on the right” (Camille 2000: 20; figure 3.90). Other documents related to the Jacobean towns also reveal how hawkers frequently traded on church steps, peddling religious souvenirs as tokens of genuine sanctity. In Estella, the stone archways, the linear space of the road and the documented professions of traders operating in the fourteenth century city, all suggest the hum and commotion of professional marketeering taking place in the shadow of the large religious structures.



Figure 3. 89: Thomas de Saluces Le Chevalier errant Paris 1400-1405 (reproduced from www.classes.bnf.fr/ema/grands).

A fascinating area of concern lies with the array of diverse images that confronted pilgrims on the walls and doorways of the soaring churches within the city environments of Puente la Reina and Estella. Two crucial issues that generally do not feature in date and genre-focused, descriptive art-historical accounts (eg. Aragonés Estella 1998; Martínez de Aguirre Aldaz and de Orbe Sivatte 1987), are a) the intentions behind the creation of these diverse carved forms, and b), the responses, impressions and behaviours that they generated.

Scholarship on the “power of images” in other contexts helps define clear avenues of interpretation within this Study Area (Elsner 2005; Zanker 1988). In general terms, such works of art, like the monumental gates, are obviously a kind of demonstration in stone of investment, status and money flooding into these pilgrim towns. They signal identity and wealth and can be read as ambitious declarations of piety and conformity to the wider scene of religious and cultural hierarchy. In the case of the iglesia del Santo Sepulcro in Estella, the structure also reinforces a Christian space in clear opposition to the adjacent, marginalised Jewish quarter.

Additionally, we might emphasise the didactic role of the imagery. The biblical scenes and creatures provided both a schooling for the unlettered masses in key doctrinal themes and Christian narrative and also a warning of the perils that lay in store should they forget them. Monsters and demons represented chaos lurking. For viewers, these creatures were not always fantastical, but represented beings believed, to some extent, to be real. The study of their precise locations on friezes demonstrates where, in the medieval imagination, such terrors were physically conceived to be; on the outskirts, but also threatening to invade.

“Audience-response” (Elsner 2005: 424) is obviously a pertinent, if also a difficult and controversial issue. The impact of images on pilgrims can sometimes be inferred through historical comment. That they were “read” is beyond doubt (Camille 1992: 62). A thirteenth century treatise urges the actual bodily replication of saintliness depicted in such schemes; “Regard as models of deportment the graven images of the churches which you should carry in your mind as living and indelible pictures” (Jean de Galande quoted in Camille 2000: 26). Taking the lead from other research, it is also entirely plausible to believe that these images were powerful in their sensory embodiment of rituals and liturgy, their demarcation of a symbolically potent threshold, their affirmation of the pilgrim relationship with St James and their evocation of the scenes and sounds of heaven and hell.

Crossing rivers

Turning now to the second focal point in this analysis of pilgrim attitudes and responses to the landscapes in which they journeyed, I would like to address the compelling culture of rivers in medieval travel. In addition to the fields, vineyards and tracks, the villages and the upwardly-mobile centres of commercial freedom, pilgrims encountered a comparatively high number of water-courses in this stretch of the route. Dissecting their path, they were confronted with swift-flowing streams and overgrown boggy rivulets, the apparently truly salty Río Salado (Vazquez de Parga *et al* 1949a: 130), and the broad, deep and dark waterways of the Arga and the Ega.

In the Navarran landscape of the Middle Ages, unpredictable torrents and floods characterised the flow regimes of the northern Ebro tributaries (Batalla *et al.* 2004). Does the material culture associated with the rivers of Study Area 1 in any way reflect contemporary attitudes and responses? Contained within this Study Area is a good mix of built archaeological features. There is at least one, if not two, Roman structures (at Cirauqui and possibly, the Puente de Dorrondea) and a couple of smaller Romanesque bridges span the Río Salado and the Iranzu at Villatuerta. Most prominently, there is the renowned feat of eleventh century civic engineering; the Puente de Peregrinos over the Arga at Puente la Reina, and, at Estella, two modern reconstructions, which, if nothing else, show the location and something of the form of their medieval forebears. Short of a full archival search on these structures, the muteness of the surviving stone forms is abated by a consideration of contemporary medieval attitudes to rivers and bridges, local landscape settings, archaeological and surviving documentary evidence (in the case of the Puente de Peregrinos) and comparative information from river crossings elsewhere on the Camino route that preserve interesting associated material elements.

In rational terms, it is not clear exactly what the medieval population at large thought rivers were. Contemporary writers influenced by ancient philosophy conceived of them as circulatory systems, flowing from a single, vast subterranean abyss before reaching the ocean (Commander 1998: 440), while later, in the

seventeenth century, a Spanish monk believed the different hydrological forms (springs, wells, rivers etc.) to be isolated phenomena; substantially different from each other in terms of origins and semi-divine properties (Sánchez Dommingo 2004: 131-2). What seems more certain, however, is that rivers occupied a special place in both down-to-earth fears and dreadful, otherworldly imaginations, arguably influencing and unsettling the pilgrim journey across northern Spain.

A handful of examples set the scene. Illustrating the very real dangers are, for instance, a papal register of 1330 giving Matilda de Brionie of London dispensation to enter a convent rather than complete her vow of pilgrimage after surviving an accident on the Rhône in which her fellow travellers were all drowned (quoted in Webb 2002: 174). The collapse of the overcrowded Ponte Sant'Angelo in Rome in 1450 resulted in numerous pilgrim deaths; the bodies apparently filling eighteen cart-loads (Webb 2002: 121-2), while less morbidly, a popular verse records a notorious “trembling bridge” on the Spanish coastal pilgrim path; the kind of rudimentary wooden structure put together with “more hope than science” (Braulio Valdivieso 1999: 93).

*Quand vînmes au pont qui tremble
Nous étions bien trente ensemble
Tant de Wallons que d'Allemands
Et nous disions, s'il vous semble
Compagnon, marchez devant!*

(When we arrived at the bridge that trembled; We were about thirty all assembled; Both Walloons and Germans; we all said; Companion – you go first!) (quoted in Arribas Briones 1993: 250).

The fear of violent death without the chance to confess sins mingled with worldly threats epitomised by bandits, toll-gatherers and unscrupulous ferry men; three categories of rogue berated by the author of the twelfth-century Guide as common plagues befalling wayfarers to Compostela (The Pilgrim's Guide 1993: 88, 92 and 91 respectively). An Italian contemporary, a holy man who attended a road-side hospital, similarly discovered that in order to build a bridge and thus spare pilgrims from the dangers of the nearby river, he had to seek permission not from the Bishop of Florence, but from a veritable mafia of boatmen who controlled and exploited pilgrim crossings (Webb 2002: 88). Fording points and bridges

comprised fixed points in local landscapes where the constant tread of pilgrim convoys proved irresistible for those seeking to make their living by illicit gain.

Meanwhile, in medieval otherworld journey narratives the river and the bridge assume darker, more liminal associations (Zaleski 2006). They recur as motifs in sermons and “vision literature” from the early to central Middle Ages and follow a repeating conventional format. Typically, wayfarers negotiating a purgatorial landscape encounter a hellish river of death over which there may be a “test-bridge” that divides the righteous from the sinful and irredeemably lost (Zaleski 2006). The archetype comes from Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues*:

On the bridge there was a test. If any unjust person wished to cross, he slipped and fell into the dark and stinking water. But the just, who were not blocked by guilt, freely and easily made their way across to the region of delight (quoted in Zaleski 2006).

Memories of church sermons, hearsay and stories of real events thus fuelled medieval imaginations prior to setting off on their long journeys to distant shrines. Fears may have been provoked further by accounts that dwelt melodramatically on the dangers of the road in order to emphasise the penitential aspects of journeys and prove the spiritual mettle of the raconteur (both Margery Kempe and later, Dominico Laffi fall into this category).

Within this culture, therefore, it becomes logical to explain; a) the importance of sturdy stone bridges along the route and their role in determining pilgrim movement, and b) the emergence of popular cults, piety and active strategies that served to ritualise river crossing. In modern academic terms, it is tempting to consider these two strands as separate: infrastructure, feats of engineering and route-geography on the one hand and the theme of sacred space on the other. However, when dealing with medieval society, this is clearly not appropriate. The inseparability of “engineering” and “practicality” from ingrained cultural perceptions might be best illustrated by Cosgrove’s impressive case study on sixteenth century Venice, where the pragmatic hydraulic plans designed to curb riverine and maritime threats to the city, and enacted by the new professionals (cartographers, surveyors and engineers), were actually underpinned by very deep

cosmological assumptions about water and land (1990). Ultimately, it was God's original separation of the water from the earth during Creation that set the benchmark for the perfection and worldly order of the project goals (Cosgrove 1990: 44).

Correspondingly, rather than isolating out infrastructure from piety, a discussion on bridges must engage with both strands. We can interpret medieval bridges, both as constructed and as experienced, as infused with ideas about piety in the Middle Ages. After all, San Lesme de Burgos, San Domingo de la Calzada, and San Juan de Ortega, three very popular pilgrimage saints, all derived their sainthood and fame in the twelfth and thirteenth century not from outlandish miraculous performance but from draining marshes and bridge construction along the Camino de Santiago. As noted nearer the start of this chapter, stories of transformation could be visually referred to in church altar-pieces (above section 3.1).

Material culture (or at least descriptions of lost features) potentially enriches this view by revealing, in a more detailed way, the intersection of sacred association, landscape, bodily movement and ritual. The embellishment of the long bridge at Puente la Reina with a chapel, statuettes and icons, for instance, is not only indicative of a popular need to witness a clear divine presence in such a critical place but also the performance of ritualised procedures along the bridge. The cross that once stood at the far end, in this respect, suggests the marking out of sacredly-charged space.

Other bridges on the pilgrimage route show further patterns and associations. In the twelfth century, a chapel on St Benezet's bridge over the Rhône in Avignon actually housed the body of its saintly builder while a hospital stood on the adjacent bank (Laffi 1681: 52-53). Figure 3.90 also shows a cross punctuating the linear space of the walk-way. Closer to Study Area 1, the bridge at Zubiri (Basque for "town of the bridge"), in Navarre, also contained saintly relics interred in one of its abutments which, correspondingly, were conceived to bestow the structure as a whole with a protective, thaumaturgic function in the local landscape. A leprosarium also stood close by (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 66).

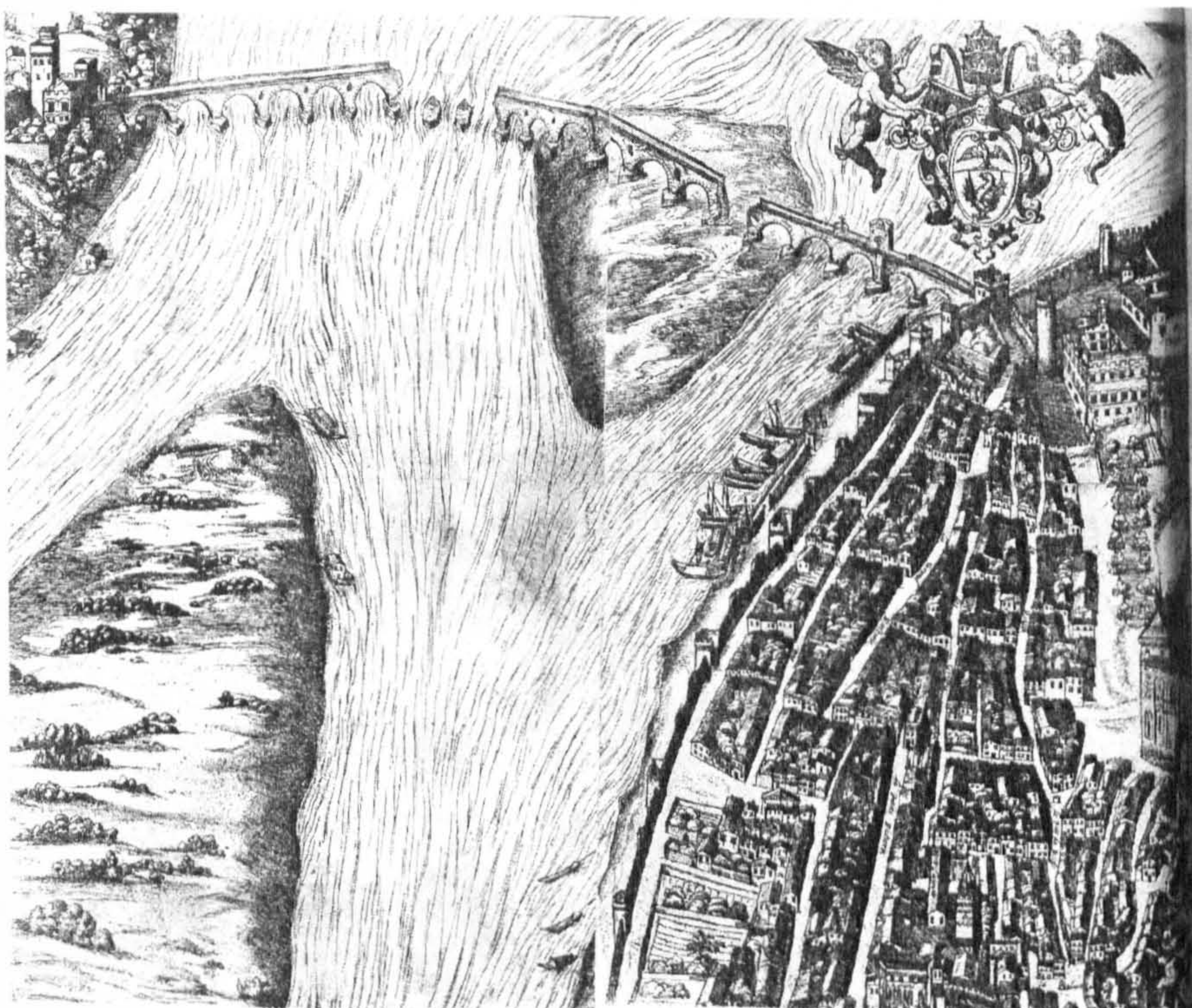


Figure 3. 90: The bridge at Avignon. (Reproduced from Hall 1997: 52)

The cult of saints and the miraculous properties of relics were thus not confined to the interior spaces of medieval churches but were transported to and invested in these nodal points in the landscape. Bridge-side hospitals and leprosauria, apart from reflecting common sense logistics in the provision for travellers, and gaining currency from the link between water and notions of spiritual and physical cleansing, death, rebirth and baptism (Gilchrist 1995: 43), are interpretable as tapping into these associations. Sainthood was materially constructed and conceived as permeating local landscapes.

The sum of evidence points to the clear association of rivers with liminality and different dimensions of experience. Although comparable material culture is absent in this Study Area, these examples indicate some possible perceptions and associations with the numerous river-crossings within this landscape and suggest that adjacent features of the terrain may have gained potency in this way. Although impossible to prove, the enclosing, steep hill-sides that border the Río Salado for instance, may have added to the trepidation of the pilgrim. Certainly in Domenico Laffi's account of yet another bridge-related drama, the topography is either

interpreted as complicit in the events or carefully employed as a device to lend drama to the scene. With respect to the Zubiri bridge discussed above, he writes:

I think of it as the Bridge of Hell...It spans a big, deep river that runs between two hills. It is shaded by dense trees so that the water, though it is clear, in fact looks black. It is so fast-flowing that it fills the traveller with fear and trembling. The bridge is guarded by soldiers, better described as thieves and murderers...Persons of high rank are made to pay, that is, made to give them a 'tip'. They will break open your head with their sticks and will sometimes get rid of people by making the river their grave (1681: 113-14).

Consolidation and impact of the route

Finally, it will be clear from the pages above, that by the twelfth century in this region of Navarre, pilgrims were no longer making their own way across a landscape but were following a fixed itinerary that was beginning to have a discernable culture of its own. Fragmented stretches of local paths and roads were increasingly perceived as belonging to a much greater long-distance route, evidenced by the application of terminology such as “the public highway leading to St James” in village documents of the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Ruiz de la Peña Solar 2001: 422-3). Material emblems gained currency in the definition of pilgrim identity along the route. Sculptures of St James, as at Estella, validated accomplished stages on the itinerary, while recurring motifs, such as the lobed arch pattern on church doorways (encountered three times within this Study Area) may have bolstered the impression of a coherent, unified itinerary that made sense. Given the predisposition for honouring road and bridge builders, the stretches of pre-existing Roman paving were possibly appropriated within this pilgrimage culture and perceived not as long-established components of early communication networks, but as part of a divinely and royally sanctioned route.

The evidence from this Study Area, meanwhile, backs up a picture of deliberate control over the fixing of the new route. In particular, the case-study of Zarapuz versus Estella affords the chance at looking in detail at the machinations involved in planting a new itinerary. Rather than the almost accidental consequence of the rise of the new city, it is clear that in the brokering between Sancho Ramírez and

the Order of San Juan de la Peña, the course of the pilgrimage was paramount and that the flow of the masses was something to be purposefully controlled and directed. Just as walkers are today diverted around the construction works on new round-about paths (figure 3.91), it is possible that a range of ephemeral strategies were employed to make sure pilgrims (and their purses), arrived in the fledgling town, hidden by the hills of the Ega valley.



Figure 3. 91: Modern diversion signs along the Camino in Study Area 1

For both royalty and the powerful religious orders, it was a winning situation. By affirming and consolidating and making safe a highway for pilgrims, royal Christians achieved both political and economic success and were able to cash in on a certain spiritual kudos via the active encouragement of a holy movement. Just as the Castilian king Alfonso VI secured his pious merit by claiming to have repaired all the bridges between Logroño and Santiago de Compostela, the queen responsible for the great Puente de Peregrinos (either Doña Mayor, wife of Sancho III (1000-1035) or her daughter in law, Doña Estefania (Shaver-Crandell and Gerson 1995: 287) achieved an immeasurably successful *fait accompli*. The bridge is possibly the ultimate symbol of integrated political, economic and religious ideologies.

To say that the impact on local landscapes was dramatic is something of an understatement. Localised networks of movement, market patterns and small

settlements such as Zarapuz and Murugarren were displaced and marginalised (Uranga 1984: 480-3). Half of all the settlements along the Río Robo became depopulated (Pavon Benito 2001: 230) and the new bridges and towns articulated, it can be assumed, not just pilgrim movement, but local currents of travel and trade.

Most notably however, the new urban centres can be seen as having a profound effect on social and demographic make-up. Estella, in particular, would make an excellent case study for the almost colonial nature of pilgrim towns in local landscapes and the material strategies enacted to assert difference and status. In brief, the French identity of the initial settlers was made obvious and apparent in the toponyms, architectural style and images that dotted the facades of key buildings. The material culture of stone, can, moreover, be envisaged as accompanied by other, more ephemeral methods of strategic display such as jargon, language, gestures, clothing and food-stuffs (excavation could potentially reveal material correlates such as ceramic assemblages that relate to particular methods and styles of food preparation and consumption). It is no wonder that the author of the twelfth century guide, normally so venomous about the Navarrese, makes an exception for Estella, “where the bread is good, wine excellent, meat and fish are abundant, and which overflows with delights” (The Pilgrim’s Guide 1993: 86). This was a city which, during his lifetime, had little to do with the local Navarrese, and everything to do with links to the French regions (Itúrbide Díaz 1993: 18).

Hence, the rise of the pilgrimage runs parallel with the marginalisation of the Navarrese. Census’ and law-suits use the terms “Franco” and “Navarro” not so much for ethnic origin than social class, the latter being associated with manual labour, rural life, the payment of taxes and tithes, and a native tongue; the *lingua rusticorum* or *vulgaris* (Jimeno Jurío 1990: 349). This was a situation unfolding not only in this Study Area, but along the whole new pilgrim route in Navarre, already referred to as the “Camino Francés” by the twelfth century. Like Estella, Pamplona and Sangüesa to the north-east developed adjacent but opposing quarters composed of very distinct populations in which laws to segregate the new French merchants from the Navarrese were even more rigorous (Orella Unzué

1995: 599). A statute in Pamplona, for instance, which authorised only the Franks to sell bread and wine to pilgrims, was just one component of a very unequal set of relations that frequently erupted into armed skirmishes between the city quarters (Orella Unzué 1995: 599)

Native responses to the pilgrimage is therefore an interesting question, and one which will be considered further in the next chapter. The extremely, polarised scene suggested by both the documents and the archaeology is likely to be a simplification of the complex dynamics at work. The spatial analysis of the route through or past other settlements such as Mañeru, Cirauqui and Lorca, for instance, indicates various possibilities of pilgrim and local encounter. On balance though, it seems Puente la Reina and Estella were indeed the natural staging posts of the pilgrimage. In these cities, like the author of the twelfth century pilgrim guide, large numbers would have found, in familiar dialects, cuisine, customs, laws, art, religion and architecture, some temporary respite from their foreignness in Estella. These were places where they were meant to be.

4. Study Area 2 (the Meseta)

Here is no water but only rock,
Rock and no water and the sandy road
(TS Eliot, *The Wasteland*, lines 331-2).

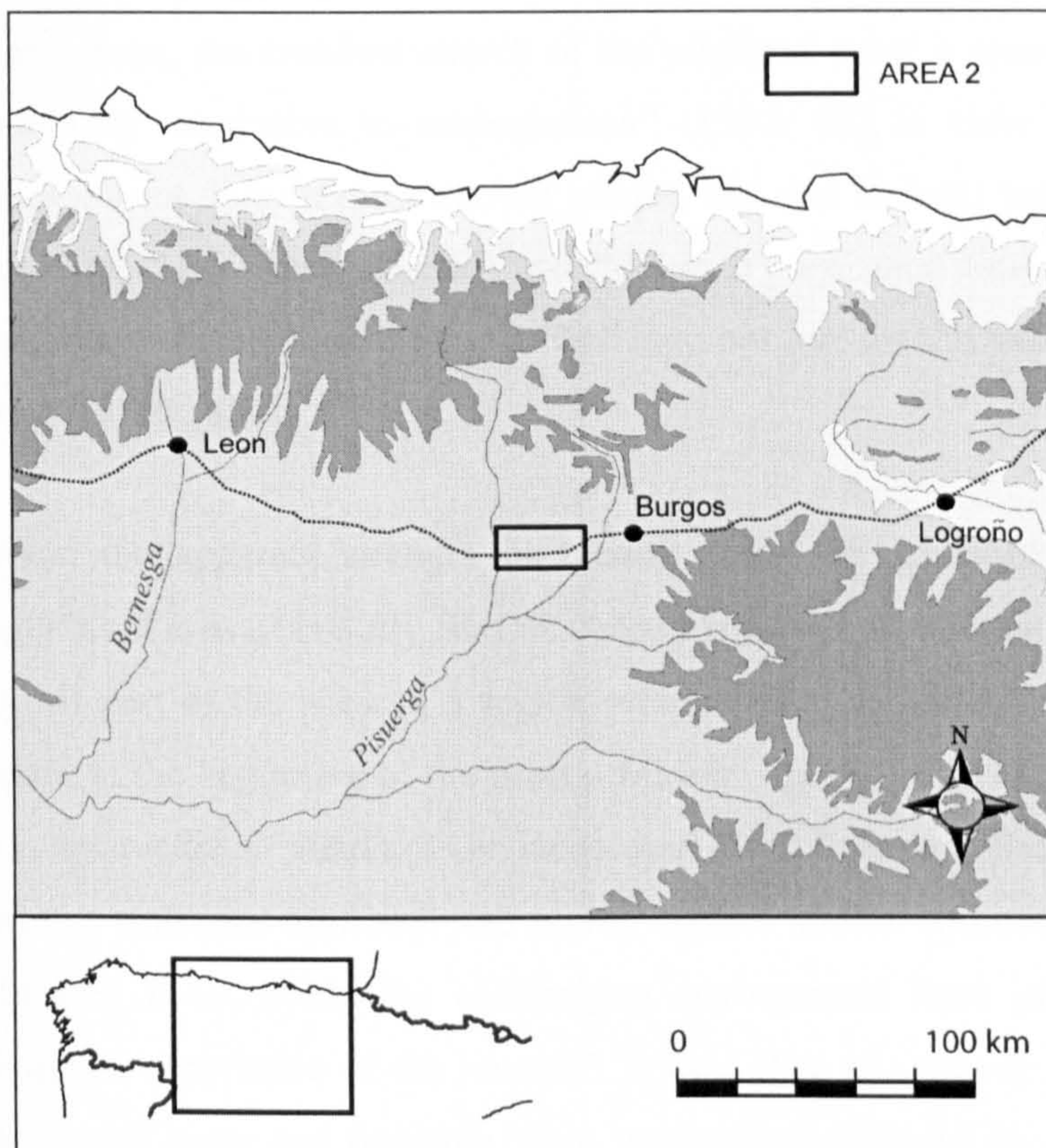


Figure 4. 1: Location of Study Area 2

Located on the high Meseta plains, approximately half-way between the Pyrenees and Santiago de Compostela, this Study Area offers a complete contrast from Area 1, not only in terms of physical terrain and aspect, but also historical background and material culture. It lies some 190km west of Estella. As in the preceding chapter, the text will be divided into two parts. The first section outlines the research objectives and reasoning that motivated the selection of this area and describes the principal geographical features and historical processes that have given it shape, while the second section presents the results of fieldwork undertaken in March 2004 and March 2005. The subsequent discussion will be guided and structured by themes and questions identified in part one.

4.1 Research objectives

The rationale for choosing Study Area 2 derives largely from the nature of the physical landscape in this region and, more specifically, its reputation as a kind of malevolent purgatory. Jacobs writes, “After Burgos, the pilgrim faces what is in many ways, the cruellest stretch of the pilgrims’ way, a scene of often numbing monotony conducive to introspection” (1991: 68), a view that can be found repeated not only in most current guides, but also in local folklore and historical accounts. The words “bleak” and “desolate” are used time and time again to describe a region perceived as a challenge not just for the walking body, but also the mind and spirit.

Given the apparent strength of feeling about the landscape of this region, a significant area of enquiry for this chapter revolves around tracing earlier attitudes to this part of the Meseta, a region referred to by historians as a semi-populated desert at the beginning of the central Middle Ages (e.g. de Moxo 1979: 40). What was the medieval vision of the landscape? Did pilgrims in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries approach the region with a similar attitude to the terrain and climate? If so, could the challenging environment have played a part in the religious experience of the journey? It has, after all, already been noted that the themes of piety and hardship were intimately connected in medieval metaphor, myth and ritual and that pilgrimage provided the practical expression of both themes by offering a route to purity and salvation by means of suffering and penance. Is it possible therefore, that the semi-arid conditions of the Meseta recalled ideas about “the desert wilderness”, a common literary and artistic motif that was based upon the archetypes of John the Baptist and the Temptation of Christ and which was used in the construction of the ascetic tradition during the early and central Middle Ages (Goehring 2003; Howe 2002)?

Following on from these questions, a second research objective focuses on the human impact upon this landscape, this “wilderness”, and how it came to be shaped by an increasingly busy channel of movement during the central Middle Ages. Study Area 2 contains a range of settlements and ecclesiastical sites, many

in good states of preservation, and can therefore be deemed a potentially interesting zone in which to reflect on the way growing numbers of people through this area provoked the florescence of various institutions and settlements. Hence we may ask what range of facilities developed in response to the pilgrimage? And were they designed primarily to assist, or to profit from, the weight of pilgrimage traffic? Moreover, specific elements of the surviving material culture such as distribution, form, spatial arrangement and position in the landscape may lend insight into issues such as the pilgrim body and its status as, for example, a religious object, or perhaps unwelcome, and/or diseased, “polluted” object.

Continuing along these lines, a further aim is to use the material culture and any other available data-source to try and distinguish the different identities present during the medieval period and to assess how each one influenced the emerging “pilgrimage landscape” in this part of the Northern Meseta. Three generalised groups can, in theory, be identified; first, the pilgrims, transient, foreign inhabitants of the landscape travelling both westward towards Santiago and returning home; secondly, the inhabitants, living out their lives on the Meseta; and thirdly the ecclesiastical communities of the monasteries and hospitals. With respect to these groups, an interesting objective for this Study Area is to investigate the articulation of relationships between the different population sectors. How did the pilgrims interact with the villagers for example and how did the ecclesiastical brethren maintain their identity and purpose, somehow caught between the “permanent” communities of the settlements and the “transient” pilgrims?

The questions outlined above go right to the heart of the core aims of this thesis by attempting to locate the intersection of medieval imaginations, experience, landscape and material culture. As elaborated in the Methodology section, my approach to tackling them involves using data from as many relevant sources as possible. In order to create a usable data-source from my fieldwork in this area, the practical objectives formulated for this area included:

- An assessment of the authenticity of the current “official” Camino route in this area.

- To establish the chronological framework of the settlements and other archaeological sites.
- To record a variety of sites, ranging from “journey segments” to specific monuments.
- To visit areas outwith the immediate vicinity of the route to appreciate the wider context of the landscape.
- To consider various different dimensions of the landscape, such as the visual processes that accompany journeying from east to west or, for instance, the auditory landscape of the area.

The purpose of these aims is to build up an idea of what a medieval pilgrim may have seen or experienced on this section of the journey, something that is perhaps more achievable in this part of the Camino due to the marginality of the area today. The region has suffered a continued depletion of people to the cities over the last century, and as such, there has been little new development or expansion in the villages (Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), www.ine.es, 2005). Instead, nearly every settlement features the crumbling ruins of houses on their outskirts (figure 4.2). Furthermore, in contrast to many parts of the route, no modern road has replaced, or followed the trajectory of the medieval pilgrimage route in this area. The main highway through this region is located some distance to the north, while the majority of the roads that dissect at least the eastern zone of Study Area 2 tend to be orientated north-south, leaving the Camino path to be the only significant east-west artery in the immediate area. In effect, the lack of substantial modern intrusions or modifications of the route means the potential for tracing something of the earlier aspect of the landscape is greatly enhanced.



Figure 4. 2: Ruined structures in Castellanos del Castro

4.2 Physical setting and location

So what does this area look like? What is the reasoning behind some of the negative attitudes toward this landscape? Physically, the context for Study Area 2 is the northern Meseta, a region of high plateaux bordered by mountain ranges to the north, south and east. Structurally and climatically, this zone is typical of the Spanish Mesetas, the great, central tablelands that account for approximately a third of the whole Iberian Peninsula (Franco Múgica *et al.* 2001: 343). The topography is distinctive; horizontally layered Tertiary and Quaternary sediments eroded by scouring winds and the action of rivers, both past and present, have given rise to broad panoramas of mesas, alternating high, and low, flat plains separated by knife-sharp *cuestas* or slopes, and “buttes”, flat-topped hills that protrude from the surrounding plateau (Way 1962: 12, 273). Of the overall Meseta area, the northern sector, divided from the southern submeseta by the mountain ranges of the central system, is the highest, with an average altitude of 800-850m above sea-level (Lloyd 2005).

The stark aspect of the high plains and endless horizons is compounded by a harsh climate of violent extremes, encapsulated by the popular saying; *Nueve meses de invierno y tres meses de infierno* (nine months of winter and three months of hell)

(Way 1962: 295). Cut off from any moderating maritime influence by the mountain chains to the north, the average maximum of the warmest month reaches between 28.8° and 30.2° C, while in winter, the mean minimum of the coldest month falls between 0 and -1.8° C (Franco Múgica *et al.* 2001). June to September are months of dust-blown haze and drought, while in winter, freezing air stagnates above the lower plains and torrential rainstorms cause extensive floods and turn mud tracks to mire (Way 1962: 274). Burgos, just to the east of Study area 2 is traditionally known to be the coldest city of Spain during the winter. The diurnal extremes are also considerable. "By day, the ground cracks in the heat and plants wither; in the evening the lurid colours of the sunset cast a deep vermilion glow over ground which is already becoming cold...This is a land which gives no quarter" (Way 1962: 295).

It is possible that past climatic trends exacerbated such extremes. The so-called "Roman and Medieval Warm period" (Martinez-Cortizas *et al.* 2005), for instance, could have been a causative factor in a series of devastating droughts during the seventh and eighth centuries. While some debate surrounds the manifestation of the subsequent late medieval "Little Ice Age" in Spain (Lloyd 2006), any deterioration in temperature would have given rise, like elsewhere in Europe, to even more severe extremes and poorer harvests.

The establishment of today's almost exclusively open landscape in this part of Spain, in which vast fields of wheat, uninterrupted by fences or walls, stretch for miles across the high plateaux, or *páramos*, seems to have commenced around the fifth century AD. Pollen cores taken from a valley just forty kilometres to the south of Study Area 2 demonstrate that up until this period, the vegetational history of the region was surprisingly stable, with pine woodland continuing to dominate the landscape despite several episodes of human interference and clearance from the third millennium BC onwards (Franco Múgica *et al.* 2001). The fifth century levels of the pollen cores however exhibit a dramatic increase in shrubs, cereals and fallow-land indicator species at the expense of the forest pines (Franco Múgica *et al.* 2001: 355). There was no chance for the woodland to recover. By the ninth century, the more fertile clay zone in the northern part of this region was already named for its fields with the Albelda Chronicle referring to it

as the *Campi Gothorum*, or fields of the Goths (Bravo Lozano 1993: 134), while in the twelfth century, the author of the “Pilgrim’s Guide” remarks upon the scarcity of trees in the landscape (The Pilgrim’s Guide: 96). Today, save for a few poplar plantations in the valleys and pine plantation zones on the higher ground, very few patches of woodland survive in the northern Meseta (Franco Múgica *et al.* 2001: 345).



Figure 4. 3: The Meseta landscape within Study Area 2

Without the implementation of modern agricultural techniques, the productive yield of the plains is relatively small, with the highest of the rocky *páramos* proving effectively barren and elsewhere, the combined problems of erosion, past over-exploitation, abrupt temperature change and irregular rainfall serving to limit the potential output of the land (Way 1962: 275). By far the most fertile tracts are those associated with the flat alluvial plains or *campiñas* of the river valleys where a greater variety of crops can be grown on a more intensive basis. Apart from cereal cultivation, the northern Meseta has traditionally supported pastoral regimes. Until recent decades, flocks of sheep and goats were a common feature of this landscape, either surviving on the sparse matorral (scrubland comprising spiny, inflammable, evergreen species) of the uplands during the summer, or being driven in large herds over long distances to overwinter in the pastures of Andalucía

or Extremadura to the south (Way 1962: 275). Of the varied fauna of this region, probably the Iberian wolf has been the most notorious inhabitant. Hunted to near extinction by the 1970s, the northern Meseta is one of the few areas in Spain where a small wolf population is gradually recovering (Lloyd 2005).

The Camino de Santiago bisects the northern third of the northern Meseta. Crossing the region from east to west, it traverses numerous south-flowing tributaries of the Duero, Spain's third longest river. For many walkers today, the region presents a disheartening aspect. The experience of travelling east to west is one of having to continually ascend and descend the plateaux associated with the river valley systems and the plains offer little in the way of shelter from the unforgiving climate or landmarks with which to set a goal for walking. A recent entry in a pilgrim's web-journal muses, "I am not used to having the horizon so far away. At times the land seems like the ocean" (www.harbour.sfu.ca/~hayward/bike/camino, 2005). Other walkers, however, find that they agree with the saying "the landscape of Castile is in her sky" (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 223) and enjoy the mesmerising effect of the light, the vast desolate spaces or the patterns and waves in the crops as the wind passes through them (Martínez pers. comm). The famous Spanish poet, Antonio Machado drew enough inspiration from the Meseta landscape to be able to dedicate a whole corpus of poems to the windswept plateaux of old Castile (Machado 1997). Undoubtedly different from medieval perspectives, this verse from "Campos de Soria" (Fields of Soria) nevertheless offers a kaleidoscopic vision of the open views and undulating terrain:

Rolling country, and the roads
hide travellers there who ride
the small brown donkeys,
and then in glowing evening depths
rise again, humble figures
on a golden sunset canvas.
But if you climb a hill and view the land
from heights where eagles live
there are steel and crimson gleams,
leaden plains, and silvered hills,
ringed round by violet mountains,
with caps of rose-tinted snow

Machado, "Fields of Soria" verse 3 (trans. Kline 2004).

Although Machado is describing the rural landscape of Soria nearly 100 km to the south-east, these lines could apply equally to the eastern zone of the northern Meseta, the setting for Study Area 2. This Study Area covers just over thirty kilometres of the Camino de Santiago route from a high plain fifteen kilometres to the west of the city of Burgos until the river Pisuerga, the provincial boundary between Burgos and Palencia. For many walkers today, this is a stretch that is covered over two days. Having set out from the city of Burgos in the morning, most spend the night in Hornillos del Camino, Hontanas or Castrojeriz. The next morning, they cross the Pisuerga and carry on into the province of Palencia. Medieval itineraries are more difficult to gauge. The roughly contemporary twelfth century Guide and the Arabic geographer Al Idrisi both give optimistic journey times, suggesting, respectively, Burgos to Fromista as being a complete "stage", or day's journey (The Pilgrim's Guide: 86), (a distance of 63 km); or, Burgos to Carrión de los Condes as representing two days of travelling, (a total distance of 83 km) (Ruiz de la Peña Solar 2001: 417). Domenico Laffi, in the seventeenth century, like many walkers today, set out from Burgos and spent a night in Hontanas before continuing on to Fromista (Laffi 1681: 141-145). Undoubtedly a range of factors such as individual health, strength, weather conditions and available accommodation determined the length of time taken to travel this section.

The landscape here is in many ways typical of the Meseta model outlined above; there are high mesas, isolated buttes and on a clear day, the high peaks of the Cordillera Cantábrica range are visible to the north west. In this zone, limestone deposits, gypsum marls and clays give rise to a grey-white colouration and are easily eroded by surface drainage on the slopes (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 190). A fair number of small rivers and watercourses criss-cross the area but as the annual precipitation is characteristically low, averaging at around 422mm per year, the majority run dry in the summer months (Martínez García 2002: 20). Current land-use, meanwhile, is typically *meseteño* (of the Meseta); cereal crops cover swathes of the more fertile plains and are interrupted only by large piles of stone, or *mojónes*, testimony to the work of generations to clear the fields of rock and demarcate ownership. Elsewhere, the underlying fragility of this habitat; eroded,

over-exploited, slow to recuperate, and prone to desertification, is more evident. A few of the steeper, more inaccessible slopes are given over to pine plantation or, more commonly, are covered with sparse matorral vegetation. Further west, regular plots of poplar trees line the river Pisuerga. Perhaps the only difference between this sector of the northern Meseta and other areas is that the terrain here is much more broken and hilly. Fifty kilometres to the west, between Carrión de los Condes and Sahagún for instance, the Camino traverses many kilometres of ground that is unremittingly flat.

Contained within this Study Area are a number of small villages and the town of Castrojeriz, while place names, archaeological remains and documentary sources testify to the presence of more settlements that were abandoned over the course of the Middle Ages. Current populations levels are small. Just under a thousand people live in Castrojeriz for example, and in the village of Hontanas the population has dropped by 65% since 1940 (INE, www.ine.es, 2005). The elderly people of these villages bemoan the fact that very few young people now stay in the region, choosing instead to leave the open spaces of the northern Meseta for the chance of employment in the cities. The modern reanimation of the Camino walk must surely be one of the only factors preventing the complete decline of some of these settlements.

4.3 Historical background

If the landscape in this part of the northern Meseta seems deserted today, it no doubt appeared even more so in the centuries leading up to the emergence of the Jacobean pilgrimage in the central Middle Ages. The Muslim invasion and conquest of the early eighth century had, in this region, effectively heralded a break in what had gone before and what was to follow, and had transformed the area into a precarious frontier zone. The demographic consequences of the political turbulence during the early medieval period and the location, function and eventual alteration of the routes of communication in this area provide the historical context for understanding this landscape at the start of the central Middle Ages, while the trajectory of the *Repoblación* informs the development of social,

political and economic patterns that were encountered by pilgrims over the course of the subsequent centuries.

Population levels are, of course, notoriously difficult to gauge, especially given the conflicting opinions of historians over the scale of the impact made by the Muslim incursion. On balance, though, it seems probable that this specific region, in common with much of the Duero valley, experienced fairly radical population loss over the course of the eighth and early ninth century. The droughts and bad harvests that had afflicted much of the Iberian Peninsula up until the 750s were apparently felt most severely in the northern Meseta, so that remnant Romano-Visigothic communities may well have already been induced to migrate to the north during this early period (Glick 1979: 43-44).

Meanwhile, the escalating problem of guerrilla warfare, skirmishes and raids destabilised the region and prompted further abandonment. The “ready made grid” of Roman roads that criss-crossed the lands around Burgos and Castrojeriz (Glick 1979: 29; Moreno Gallo 2005) meant the frequent presence in this landscape of both Muslim and Christian garrisons, travelling on raiding missions or journeying to reach their latest stronghold within the frontier zone, and the threat posed by these troops to property and human life was born out repeatedly, not only in the decades following the first wave of Muslim success, but for a considerable period afterwards. The hilltop stronghold of Castrojeriz, for example, one of the few settlements in the immediate area to have retained a small population, continued to be the focus for a sustained and bloody struggle between the warring factions throughout the late ninth century, even after the official line of the Asturian reconquest had been pushed much further south (Gitlitz and Davidson 1998: 203). Similarly, even as late as the tenth century, this part of the northern Meseta remained a target for opportunistic military ventures; a raid in 922 for example, laid waste to the lands around Burgos (Gitlitz and Davidson 1998: 174).

The result of these circumstances was a landscape that, by the beginning of the tenth century, resembled a besieged frontier zone. Castles and fortifications on defensible sites such as Burgos, Itero del Castillo, and Carrión de los Condes watched over terrain largely deserted by its former inhabitants (figure 4.4), while

remaining areas of the northern Meseta woodland were destroyed either through wanton burning or for the construction of stockades (Vassberg 1984: 152). This was a social, economic and administrative “no-man’s land” (MacKay 1977: 10).

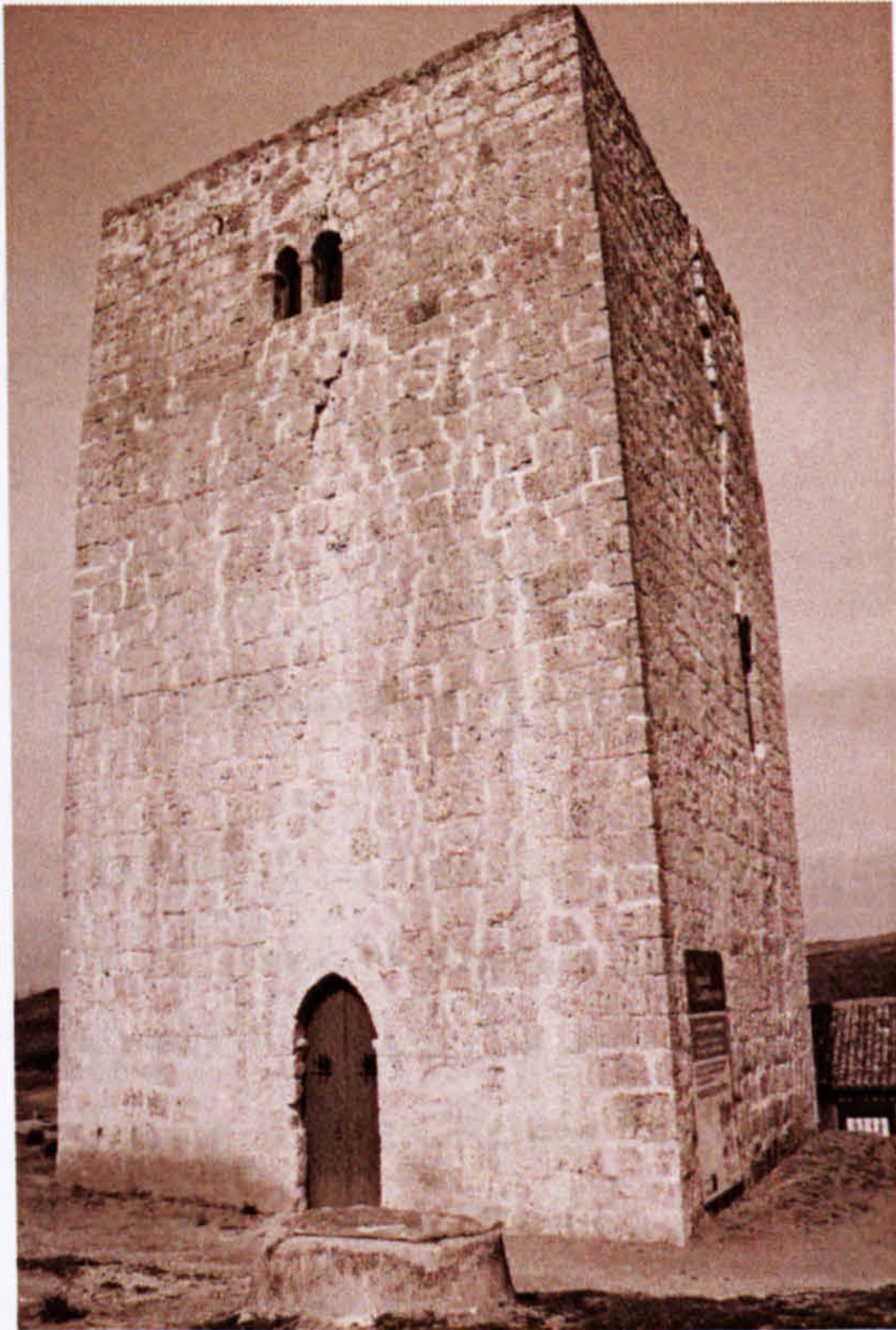


Figure 4. 4: The castle at Itero del Camino

However, this was precisely the time that pioneering pilgrims were beginning to make their way, in growing numbers, across this zone on their way westwards to Santiago. The general assumption is, that until the mid-twelfth century, the main axis of movement for these pilgrims was the worn remains of the great long distance Roman highway, the Via Aquitania (Martínez García 2002: 150). From Burgos, it ran north west towards the Roman settlement of Segisamone (present-day Sasamón) and from there it crossed the river Pisuerga at Melgar de la Fermental before running south west towards Carrión de los Condes. Further secondary routes extending northwards and southwards connected former Roman settlements to this main east-west channel. A handful of isolated pieces of evidence indicate its use by pilgrims; from Melgar as far as Carrión, for example, the road is called *Camino Francés* or *Carrera Francesa*, terminology usually

applied to the medieval route, while the occurrence of the place name Santiago, meaning Santiago's stone, may refer to a milestone along a route associated with St James and the distant Galician city (Moreno Gallo 2005).

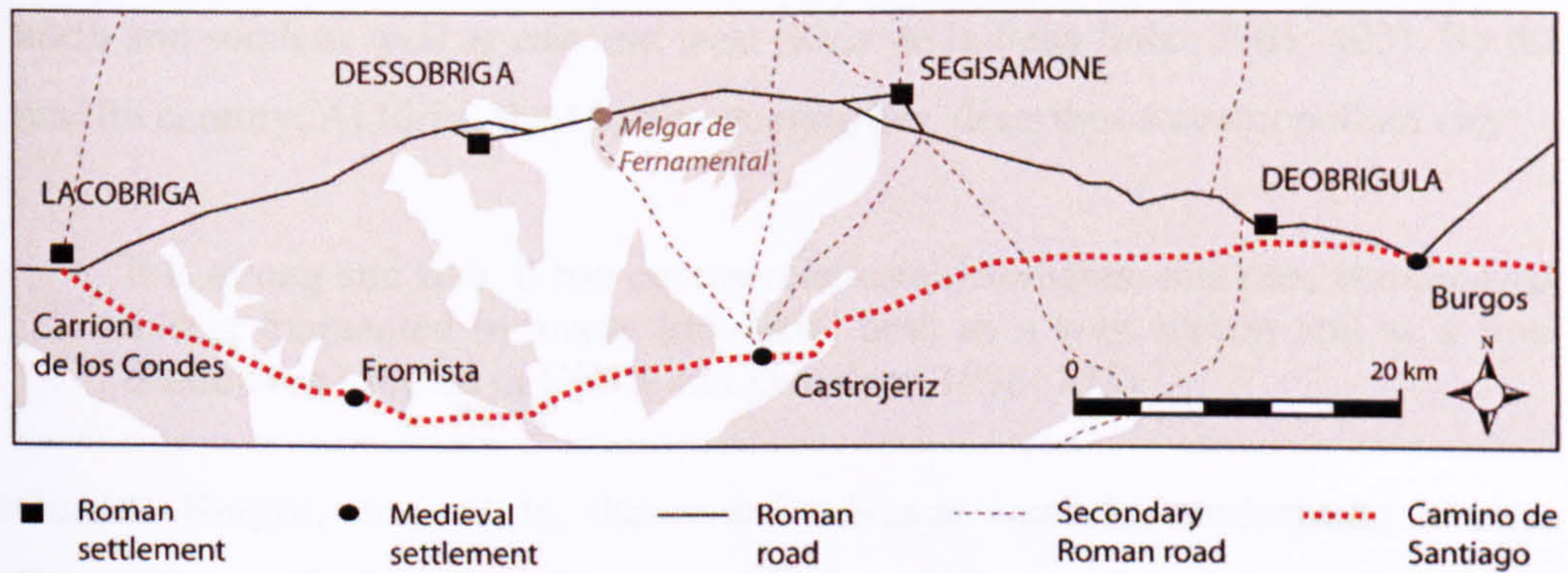


Figure 4.5: Roman and medieval routes in the Meseta (information from Moreno Gallo 2005).

Other indications, however, suggest that even prior to the twelfth century, pilgrims were beginning to abandon this route. Moreno Gallo points out that during this time, the Via Aquitania would have crossed an empty landscape, devoid of settlement between Burgos and Carrión (2005). García Martínez suggests that pilgrims may have deviated from the main highway and taken one of the secondary roads of the Roman network in order to travel via Castrojeriz (2002: 150); a plausible theory given the recorded presence, in the tenth century at least, of a significant Jewish and French population in the town (Gitlitz and Davidson 1998: 203), a good indication of a certain level of passing trade.

Whichever route these early pilgrims may have followed, the itinerary of the Pilgrim's Guide makes clear that by the early twelfth century the Roman road had been completely superseded in this area by a route that, from Burgos, headed almost due west towards the river Pisuerga and beyond, running against the grain of the north-south orientated river valleys and plateaux. In the main, this is the trajectory followed by walkers today, and which forms the focus of this Study Area.

The origins of this new channel of movement and the emergent settlement and land-use patterns can be clearly traced to the context of the repopulation and the

period of consolidation, expansion and heightened fortune that followed in the wake of the Christian reconquest. From the eleventh century, Burgos, as capital of the increasingly powerful kingdom of Castile was rapidly becoming one of the prime centres of trade in the north, with roads converging on the settlement from north and south as well as east and west (Ruiz de la Peña Solar 2001: 403). By the twelfth century, Al Idrisi, the Muslim geographer, describes a cosmopolitan city:

It is strong and rich, it has commercial establishments, markets, warehouses, and is frequented by many travellers, both as a way station and as a final destination (quoted in Gitlitz and Davidson 1998: 175).

Outside Burgos, meanwhile, the rural landscape was also undergoing change. Concurrent with the great European diffusion of monastic houses during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, branches of the principal religious orders began to appear throughout Castile, encouraged by royal privileges. Most notable within this Study Area was the foundation of the Spanish headquarters of the Order of San Anton in the mid twelfth century. On a smaller scale, anchorites took up residence in small hermitages dotted along the hills and valleys of the region (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 127). Simultaneously, like elsewhere in the expansive and underpopulated Duero valley, proactive strategies, in which the reward of the *fuero* (privilege or exemption) was the principal tool, were encouraging people back into this zone and small hamlets and villages began to appear both along the river valleys and close to emerging foci of power (Castellanos and Martín Viso 2005: 36). Despite a growing interest in the material culture of such settlements (Riu Riu 1992: 17), there remains a lack of detailed archaeological information. With a few notable exceptions, such as the excavation of the medieval village of Fuenteungrillo in the province of Valladolid (Valdeón and Sáez 1982), much of the information regarding medieval demography, economy and society is still derived from documentary sources.

What such sources indicate is that the economic backbone of the new settlements was originally stock-rearing, with herds representing a safer investment than immobile crops in the context of guerrilla warfare (Sánchez Albornoz 1966: 375). With time, however, the availability of surplus land, the diminishing threat of raids, the slow but progressive rise in population level, and the arrival of monastic

institutions, keen to secure lands for themselves, meant that the previous pastoral emphasis shifted towards the steady expansion of cereal cultivation (Alfonso 1982; Vassberg 1984). Tenth century charters document the appearance of mills throughout Castile, for instance, including the area around Burgos (Glick 1979: 92), while the rising trend of transhumant herding during the central Middle Ages can be related to the growing quantity of land to be put under the plough (Glick 1979: 93).

Nevertheless, in all probability, the population level remained pitifully small despite the progress of the reconquest and the efforts of repopulation. Little internal growth could be generated and it seems that feudal lords constantly risked losing inhabitants to newer settlements further south, which offered more attractive inducements to prospective colonists (Glick 1979: 90). Only in the thirteenth century did the population of this region reach a small peak, before the arrival of new threats led to the abandonment of whole villages. The repercussions of the "Little Ice Age" in Europe may have effected a general period of depression while a particularly severe epidemic of the plague in 1348 devastated Castile. The expulsion of the Jews, a century later, in 1492 led to another drop in the population. Even during the "Golden Age" of Castilian economic and political supremacy in the sixteenth century, villages in this area remained vulnerable. Another episode of plague, spreading west from France more or less along the line of the Camino Francés in the 1560s resulted in an average population loss of between 30-40% in the villages around Burgos (Vassberg 1996: 166).

In summary, then, when the very first pilgrims began to make their way across the hot plains of the northern Meseta on their way to Santiago in the late ninth and early part of the tenth century, it is likely that they encountered a region even more empty and deserted than today, a landscape scarred from nearly two centuries of emigration and conflict. Such an environment, referred to in the Albelda chronicle as a *yermo*, a desert, would have formed an appropriate environment and setting for pilgrims envisioning themselves within the saintly tradition of exiled travellers in a desert wilderness. As the Christian polities of the north coalesced into more stable political entities, the fortune of this region improved, so that small settlements and monasteries dotted the landscape. Increasingly, pilgrims were

much less isolated on the Meseta plains. Instead, they were traversing a mixed landscape in which remaining areas of *monte*, (upland scrub) and uncultivated zones were interspersed with villages, tracks, tended fields, and large areas of pasture, so that rather than lonesome “desert wanderers”, they were travelling through a landscape in which a growing local population was rapidly establishing its own roots, way of life, and experience of the Meseta.

4.4 The Route

Having outlined the general physical and historical contexts for this region, this section is dedicated to a more detailed analysis of the Study Area. Following the same pattern as the preceding chapter, short portions of “Arial” font text will describe the local topography and aspects of my experience of travelling through the landscape during March 2004 and 2005. These descriptive sections will be followed by more analytical text that considers the archaeological data presented by each segment of the journey. Again, the division of the route into six parts is merely to aid the structure and presentation of the chapter and is not intended to imply any actual breaks in the Study Area.

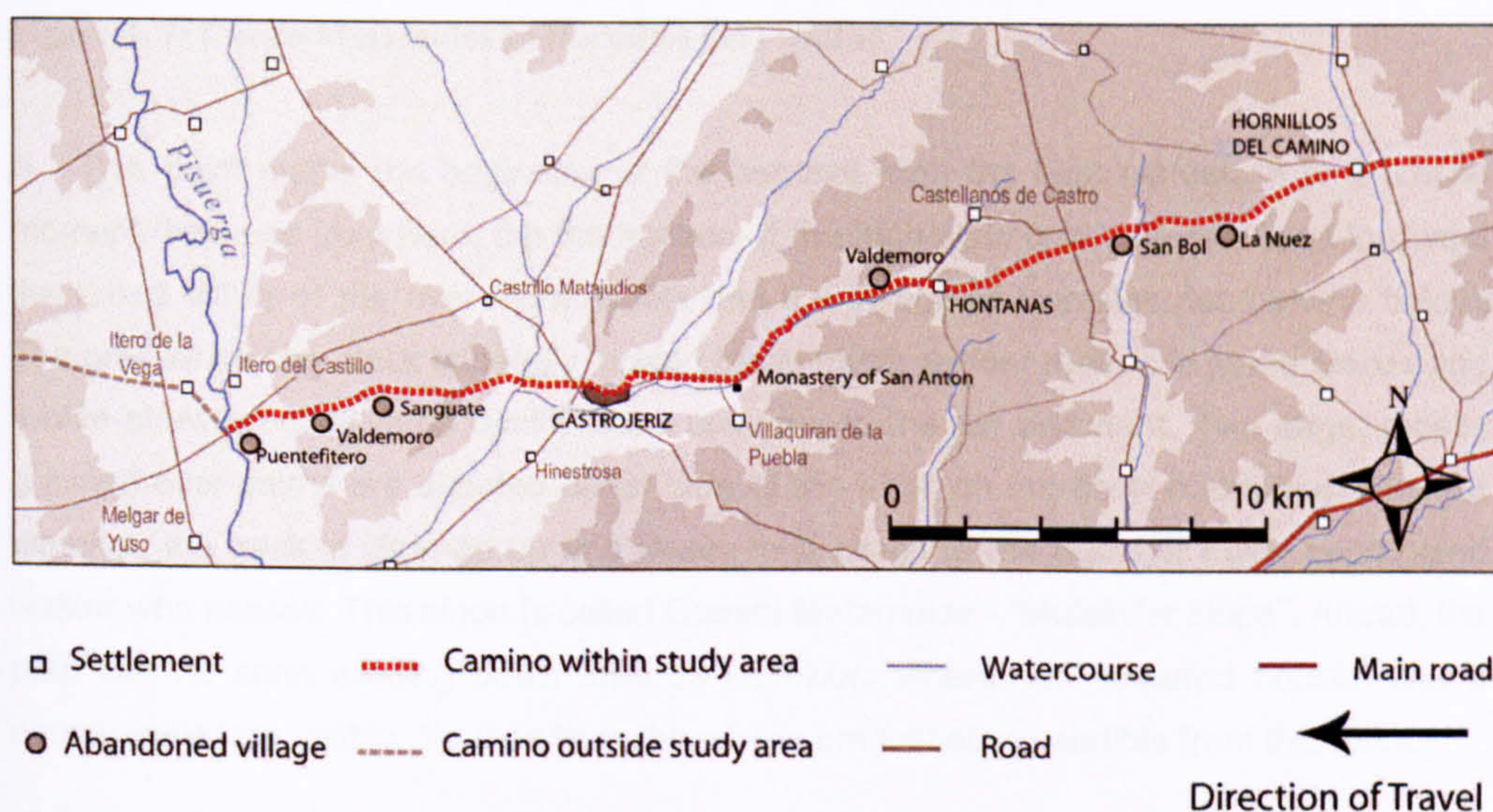


Figure 4. 6: Overview of Study Area 2

1. Cuesta Matamulos to Hornillos del Camino

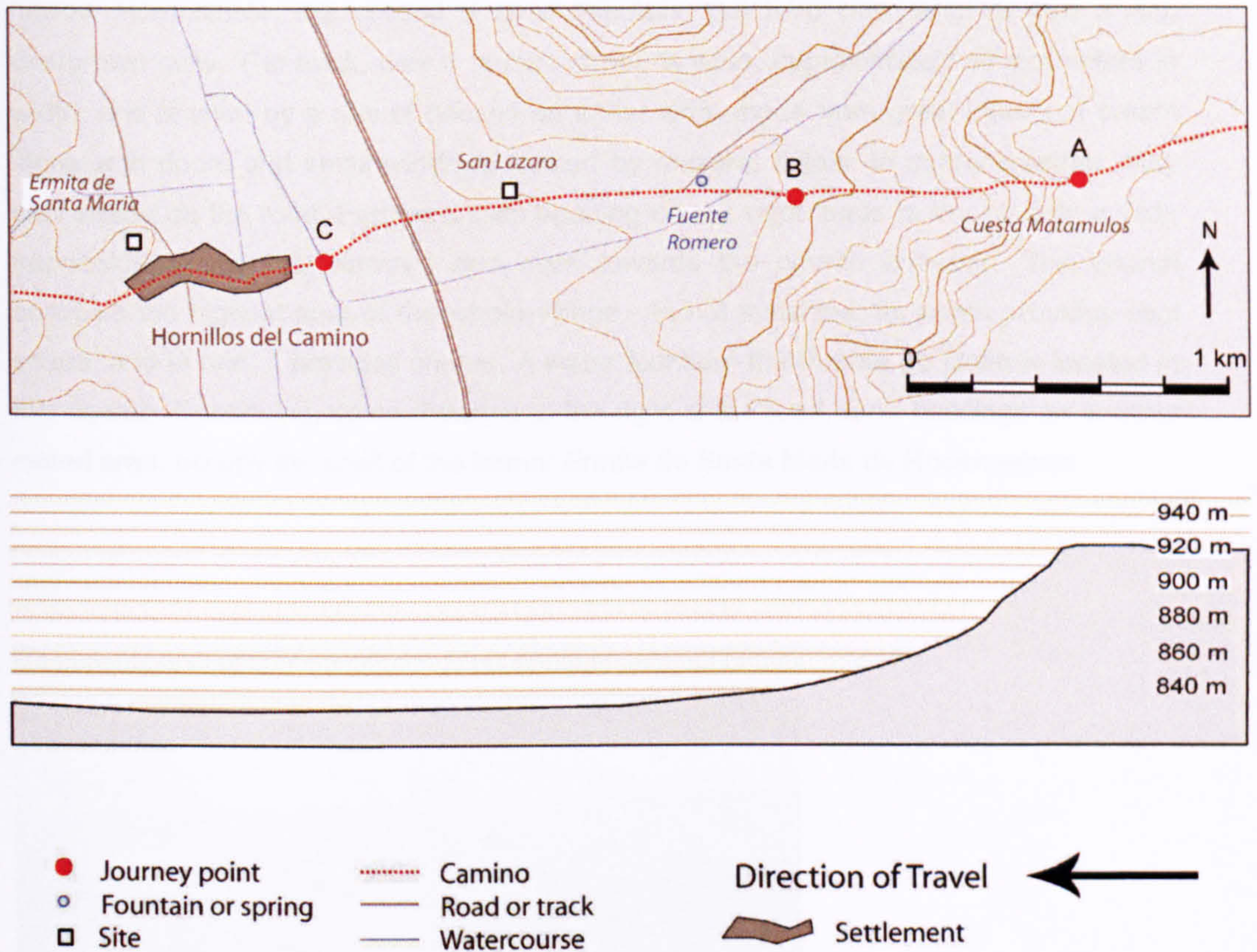


Figure 4. 7: Cuesta Matamulos to Hornillos del Camino

A : This point marks the beginning of the descent from the high plateau. It is a crucial moment, because from here, the flat horizon of the high plain finally breaks open to reveal the broad valley of the river Hormazuela and the village of Hornillos del Camino below. The grey-white clay track is deeply incised by as much as four metres in some places and rubble strewn, uncultivated banks slope upwards to the left and right. Two large, mostly grassed over cairns are situated either side of the track on the crest of the slope. In wet weather, the track is churned up and heavy mud clings to the boots of every bedraggled walker who passes. This slope is called Cuesta Matamulos - "Mulekiller slope". Ahead, the path can be seen winding down towards Hornillos, where buff coloured houses and a church tower are visible. Sounds from the village are just about audible from this point.

B: After the descent from the *páramo*, the church bells of the village can be heard clearly. The path heads straight through green, brown and silvery ploughed fields and past a trickle of water channelled by a modern concrete culvert. Further on, the leper hospital of San Lázaro once stood to the right of the path.

C : Three low bridges mark the entrance to Hornillos del Camino. The first crosses the narrow Hormazuela, the second a small tributary, the third over what is now a dry, overgrown gully. The track, now a tarmac street, is wide, approximately seven metres in width, and is lined by a row of houses on either side, made from great blocks of cream stone with doors and small windows framed by massive lintels. In sunny weather, they cast shade on the road. Further on, an opening on the right leads to the church; a wide trapezoidal space that narrows and rises towards the church entrance. The church occupies the highest spot of the whole village - in hot sunshine, its porch provides cool shade, and in rain, it provides shelter. A water fountain, the Fuente de Gallo is located in this square. Continuing, some distance to the right of the road, farm buildings on another raised area, occupy the shell of the former Ermita de Santa Maria de Rocamadour.



Figure 4. 8: From point A: Looking down towards Hornillos from Cuesta Matamulos.



Figure 4.9: Looking back towards Cuesta Matamulos from the west. The cairns are visible on the crest of the slope.

Analysis

Journeying west from the large medieval city of Burgos, this flat, high plateau, devoid of settlement, may have been experienced as a desolate wilderness that contrasted greatly with the sights and splendours of the city. A traveller in the 1460s praises the beauty of Burgos but has little good to say about the surrounding *desiertos* (deserts) where he complains about gypsum reflecting the sun and hurting the eyes (quoted in Garcia Mercadal 1999: 247-8). The descent from this plateau and the view of the town below signals the end of this particular phase of the journey west, although the name of this slope (suggesting a traditionally punishing stretch of ground) and the nature of the sub-soil in wet weather, indicate a potentially difficult stretch for travellers. The appearance of this track in 2004; deeply eroded, uneven and a muddy scar in the hillside, suggests that large numbers of medieval pilgrims may well have caused similar, or even more extreme patterns in the landscape; a highly visible marker of their transient presence in the landscape.

The two large cairns sited alongside the road suggest the authenticity of this part of the route (figure 4.10). Most likely to be associated with the plough zone of the *páramo*, the road constituted an enduring line in the landscape against which rocks could be piled. Such clearance cairns are a common sight elsewhere in this Study Area. Given the unusual size of these cairns, an alternative, but less likely theory, is that they are related to the wider tradition of road-side cairns, sporadically encountered on long-distance routes and known elsewhere in pilgrimage landscapes both in Spain (Künig von Vach 1495: 19; figure 4.11) and from medieval accounts of the Holy Land pilgrimage (Wilkinson *et al* 1988: 58). The fifteenth century mnemonic verse published by Samuel Purchas includes a reference to the famous pile of stones on the Monte de Gozo (mountain of joy) where pilgrims could gaze down on the city of Compostela for the first time:

By a Chapell schalt thout go:
Upon a hull hit stoneez on hee
Wher Sent Jamez ferst schalt thou see,
A Mount Joie, mony stonez there ate,
And iiii. Pilerez of ston of gret astate

(quoted in Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949b: 125).

Whatever the precise function of these two examples in this Study Area, their critical location on the approach to Hornillos, and their size, (the northern-most measures 11 by 6m, and stands to a height of 2m), means that they are highly visible points in the landscape.



Figure 4. 10: The northern-most cairn from the north-east.

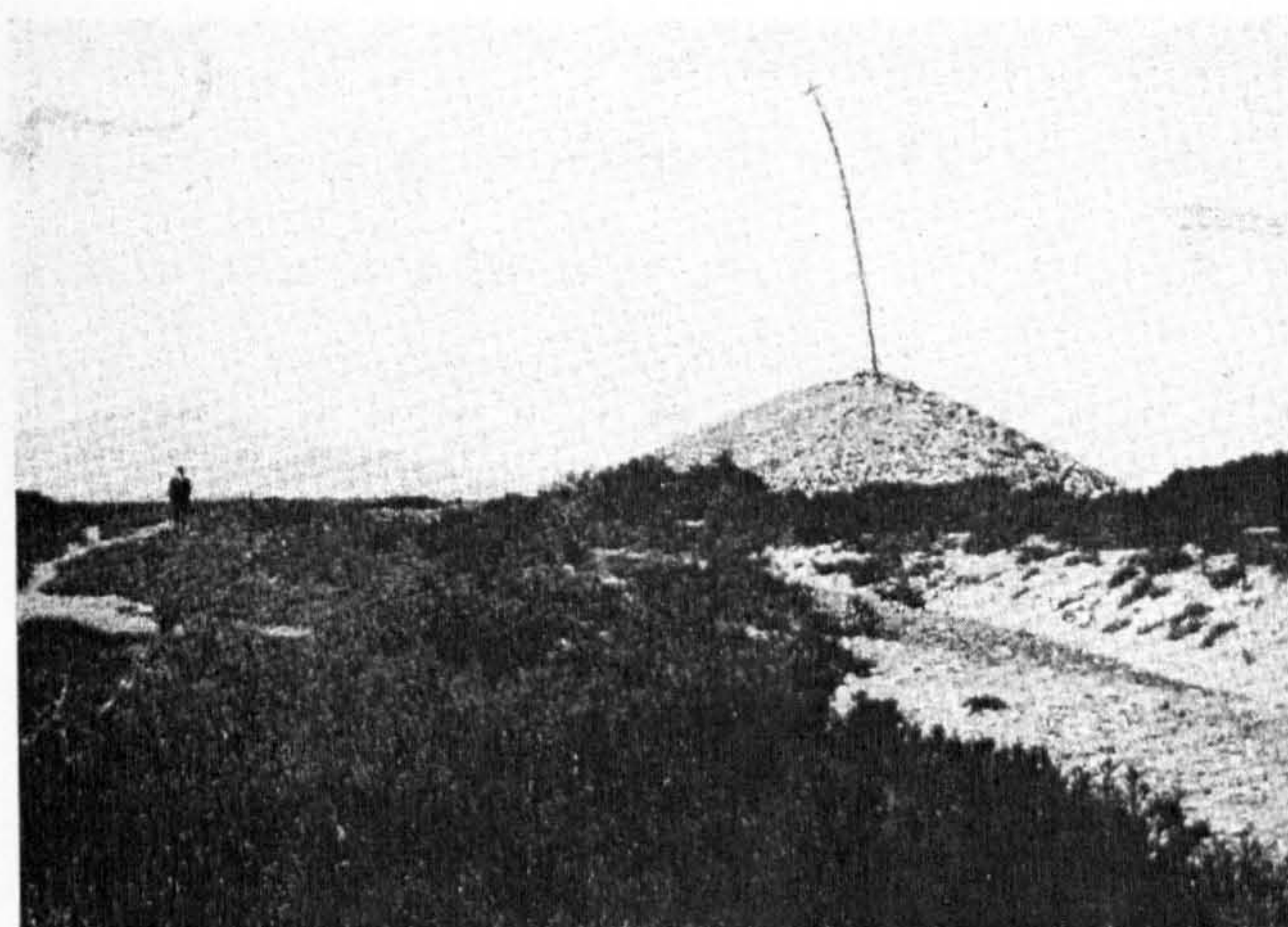


Figure 4. 11: El Cruz de Ferro, León in the 1940s (reproduced from Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949b, plate XCVIII).

In pre-modern Europe, the loudest sounds of the rural landscape were thunderclaps and the peal of bells from parish churches (Corbin 1998: 100). The bells currently in use in Hornillos clearly date from a period later than the Middle Ages, and no doubt possess a much greater acoustic range than their medieval pre-cursors, but the hypothesised presence of a geographical zone in which church bells can be heard raises many questions about the auditory pilgrim landscape, and the transition into a social and religious territory defined by sound (Corbain 1998: 101-103).

The water source adjacent to this track retains the name Fuente Romero (pilgrims' fountain), and thus denotes a specific association with pilgrims descending into the valley, although it should be noted that the alternative meaning of *romero* as rosemary, might indicate a different derivation. Nonetheless, after the dry expanse of the *páramo* to the east, this perhaps constituted a welcome spot in the landscape, and its location, some distance before the entrance to Hornillos is interesting. Was this roadside fountain a practical resource specifically for pilgrims, perceived as functionally and symbolically distinct from the water supply within the village for instance? Or, is it possible that the town and the ecclesiastical sites in this valley may have warranted some form of physical cleansing in advance of anticipated spiritual rejuvenation? Medieval pilgrims are, elsewhere, recorded as washing prior to arriving at a destination considered sacred,

such as at Lavacolla, a few kilometres before Compostela itself. Similarly, in her memoirs, Margery Kempe disdainfully describes how her fellow pilgrims travelling back from Wilsnack in 1433 attempted to rid themselves of parasites prior to entering a town:

When they were outside towns, her fellowship took off their clothes and, sitting naked, picked themselves [of lice]. Need compelled her to stay with them...(Kempe 1994: 113).

The granting of 40 days of indulgences in Hornillos after an Episcopal decree in 1360 (Florez 1754-1879 vol. 26: 356) may, for example, have conferred some regional, religious significance upon this location.

The now vanished hospital of San Lázaro, probably administered by Benedictine monks present in Hornillos from the late twelfth century onwards, provided accommodation and care for those gravely ill with leprosy (Gitlitz and Davidson 1998: 200; Martínez Díez 1998: 215; Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 202). Despite walking several transects, no material spread was encountered in the fields at this location (figure 4.12), nor are any traces visible from an aerial view, indicating either a structure built using impermanent materials, the removal and recycling of usable building materials, the wholesale destruction of archaeological material through ploughing, or the need for more extensive field survey. The physical isolation of the leprosarium from Hornillos is typical, as is the denomination of San Lázaro. The legal status and virtual social death of those unfortunate enough to suffer from this disease was reinforced by their clear spatial exclusion from local inhabitants, while the unknown, foreign identity of diseased pilgrims may have further exacerbated fears among villagers of contagion and other such menaces from the wider world.



Figure 4. 12: The fields in the foreground retain the name San Lázaro, after a medieval leprosarium close to this spot. Hornillos is visible in the distance.

Hornillos enters the historical record for the first time in the early eleventh century as a donation to the monastery of San Millán in La Rioja (Passini 1993: 110), its strategic position in the valley possibly accounting for its status as *villa realenga* (royal town), and bargaining tool. Later donations grant the village; initially, in 1156, to the Abbey of St. Denis in Paris, and then, in 1181, under the direction of Alfonso VIII, to Rocamadour (Crandall and Gerson 1995: 200; Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 202). Both charters explicitly cite its location on a long-distance route, referring, respectively, to *Fornellos in Via publica peregrinorum que ducit ad Sanctum Jacobum* (Fornellos on the public pilgrim highway that leads to St James, quoted in Martínez Díez 1998: 216) and *Fornellos, que est in itinere Sancti Jacobi* (Fornellos, that is on the road to St. James, quoted in Passini 1993: 110). The early rendition of the name “Fornellos” hints at the presence of a kiln or smelting furnace (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 200).

Archaeologically, Hornillos is most striking for its stark linear morphology and the revealing spatial setting of the medieval elements. Strung out along the medieval road for more than 450 m, this is a settlement intimately connected to the east-west axis of movement that was gathering pace in the central Middle Ages. Figure 4.10 illustrates the chronological development of the village, with the twelfth century core of the village occupying an area of approximately 30 hectares. The extent of this zone demonstrates that the river and its smaller tributaries were, in fact,

boundaries that had to be crossed prior to entering this settlement, perhaps reinforcing a sense of transition from village territory into the village itself and thus promoting a more sharply defined perception of “inside” and “outside” Hornillos.

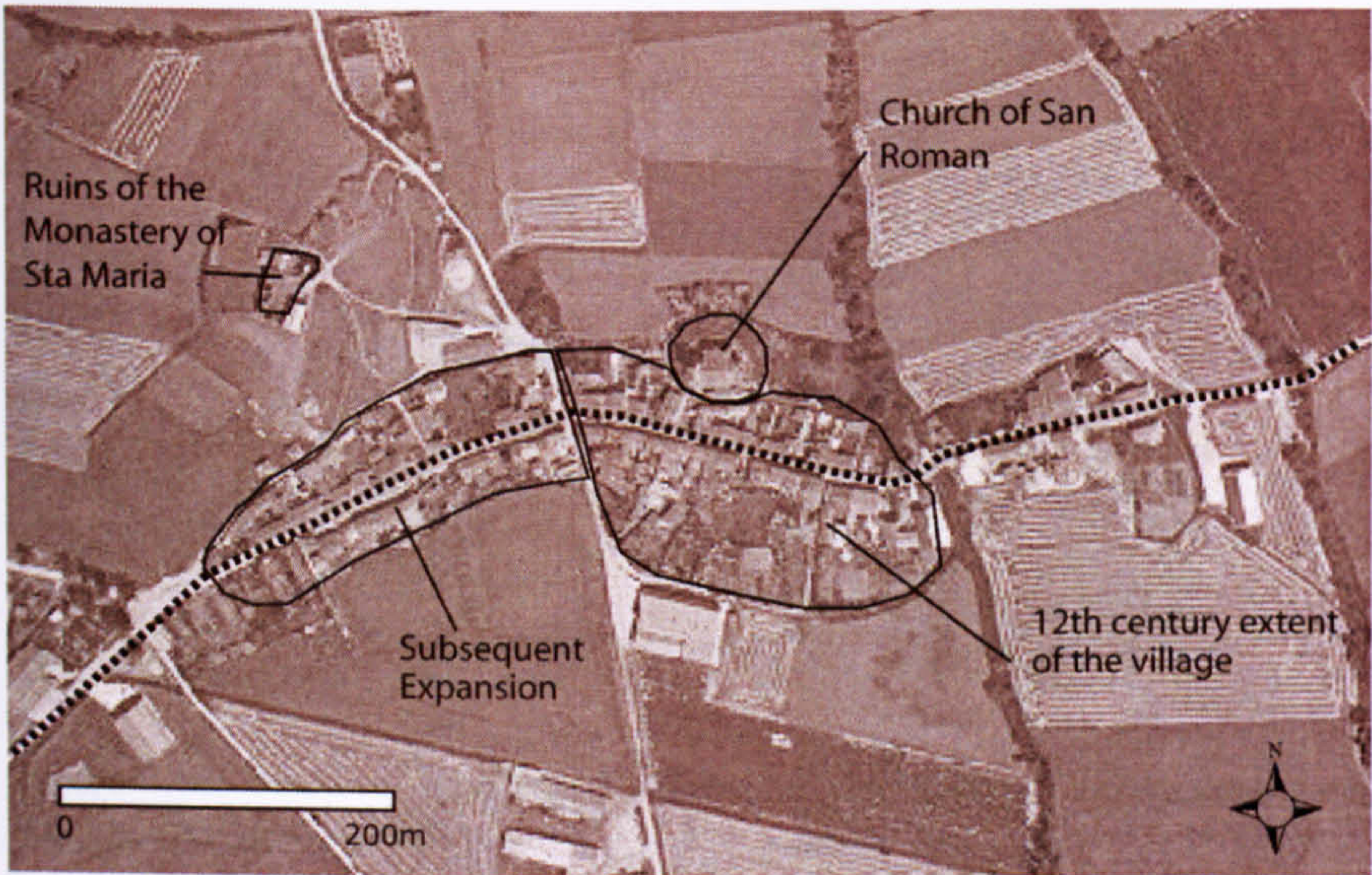


Figure 4.13: Linear development of Hornillos del Camino (adapted from Passini 1993: 111); background image reproduced from www.sigpac.jcyl.es)

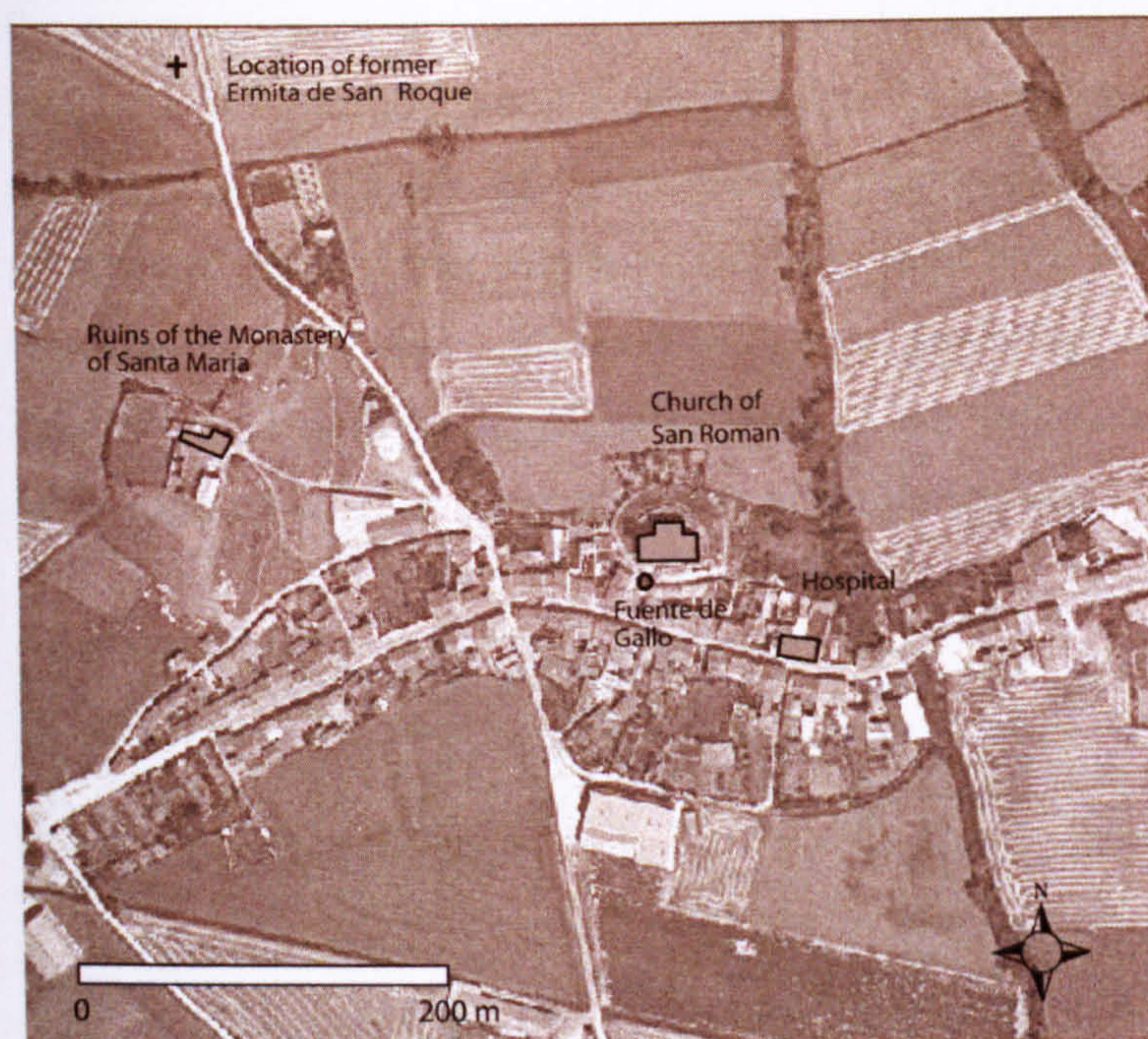


Figure 4.14: Medieval buildings in Hornillos del Camino (background image reproduced from www.sigpac.jcyl.es).

Within this medieval nucleus, the Hospital of the Cofradia de Sancti Spiritus, or Order of the Holy Spirit occupies a key site. On the main street and close to the medieval entrance to the town, the stone building is still differentiated by the emblems of a cross and crossed-keys and its sizeable dimensions (figure 4.15). A hospital by the entrance, visible to those arriving, could, as illustrated by Gilchrist and as mentioned in chapter 2.3, display the benevolence of the town and attract alms, while simultaneously reinforcing the boundary and stigmatising the poor and sick inside (1994).

Another, more central, focal point is represented by the key site of the church of San Román, prominently located on a small hill on the site of a pre-Roman *castro*, and the associated square and fountain. Taken together, these elements represent a space that, as a religious and social hub, constituted a locale of importance to both villagers and pilgrims, and was thus a space of potential contact between the two groups. Theoretically, pilgrims could find here a market for provisions, shelter in the church, and, if in place in the central Middle Ages, water from the fountain. (Evidence for an earlier fountain is limited to a few remnants encountered during

the construction of the present fountain in 1901 (Martínez García 2002: 50)). However, it is equally possible that pilgrims faced a certain opposition to their presence. In the scenario of a particularly dry summer, for instance, the vital, and presumably finite, water source of the town may have been a closely observed resource, guarded and controlled by locals unwilling to share ‘their’ water. Pilgrims were perhaps supposed to keep to the road-side springs, like that of Fuente Romero, some distance outside of the settlement.



Figure 4. 15: *Top*-Main street, looking west with the Hospital on the right. *Bottom*- Façade of the Hospital de Sancti Spiritu.



Figure 4. 16: Iglesia de San Román and the Fuente de Gallo in the foreground

Contrasting with these key, central spaces are two medieval sites located a short distance from the twelfth century settlement. The fragmentary, altered remains of the twelfth century Benedictine convent and hospice of Santa Maria de Rocamadour have been incorporated into farm buildings on a low-rise to the north-west of the village (figure 4.10). As an outpost of the French pilgrimage town of Rocamadour, this may have been a place culturally recognisable to pilgrims journeying from France and its attraction may also have continued into the fourteenth century when 40 days of indulgence were proffered to pilgrims who visited the church here (Florez 1754-1879, vol.26: 356). Its location, perhaps also determined by the higher ground, suggests a deliberate distancing between the ecclesiastical community and the villagers, reflecting their contrasting roles in the village and the more general medieval concept of spatial segregation of clergy and laity. Given the axis of the settlement nucleus, the buildings seem to lie at a point that reflects a natural extension of the road from the village, indicating perhaps the presence of a formerly busy path connecting Hornillos with the church and hospice here. The westward expansion of the village, however, diverts and veers away to the south-west, relentlessly following the line of the Camino and leaving this site somewhat isolated, reinforcing perhaps the continued differentiation between villagers and monks or alternatively, suggesting the gradual waning in importance of this site.

Similarly, the former medieval hermitage, of which only the place name ‘San Roque’ remains (Martínez Díez 1998: 215), can, from its geographical location alone, be surmised as fulfilling a role that had less to do with the pilgrimage traffic than the religious landscape of the local residents.



Figure 4. 17: Ruins of the former Monastery of Santa Maria de Rocamadour

2. Hornillos del Camino to San Bol

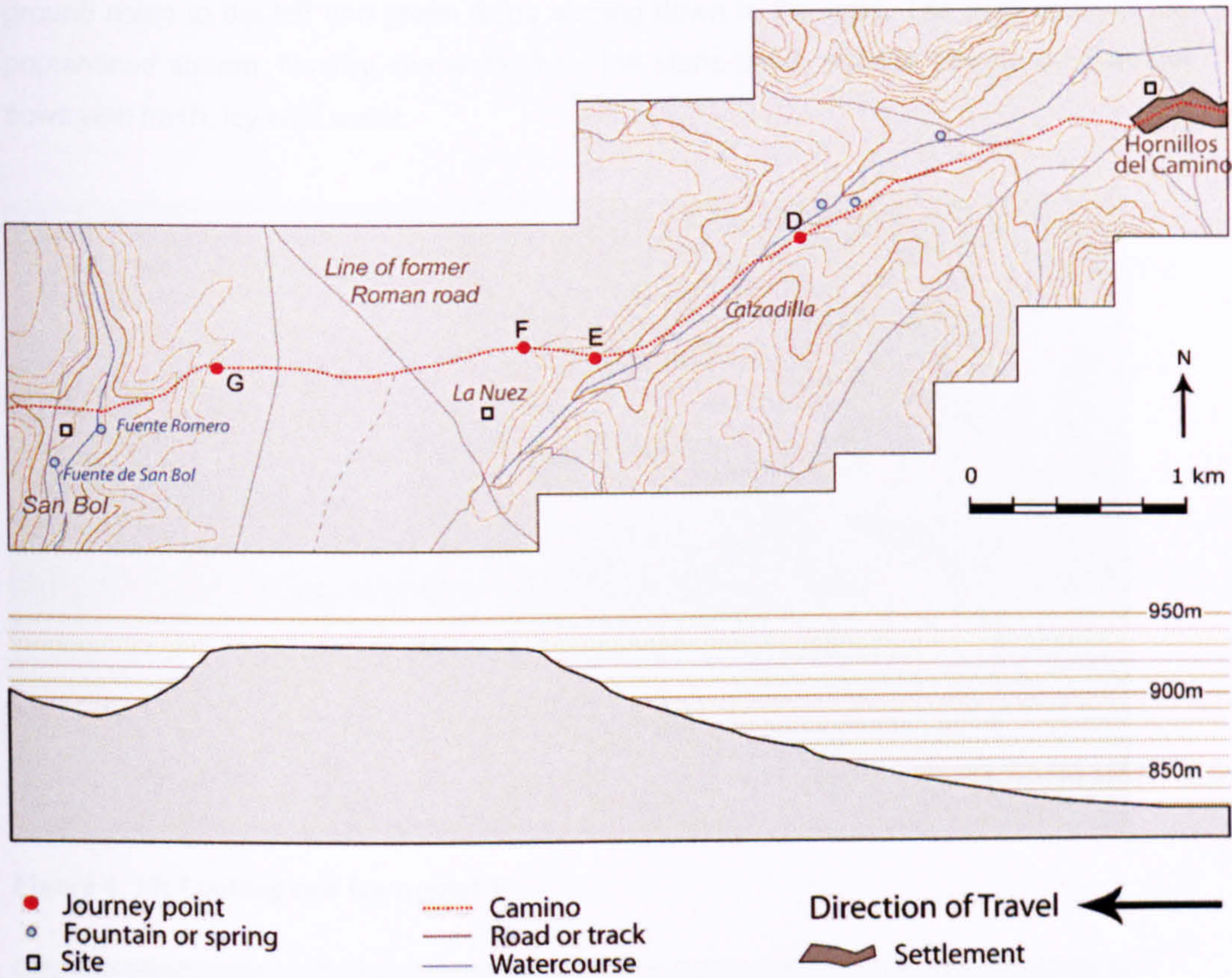


Figure 4. 18: Hornillos del Camino to San Bol

D: Having left the village, the church bells of Hornillos can still be heard faintly from here. Proceeding, the track follows a small stream, trickling with water in March. **E:** From here, a gentle ascent continues away from the village and the fertile grounds of the valley. Uncultivated ground ascends to the left. At **F**, on the crest of the slope, the far view ahead is of an utterly flat plateau, enormous yellow-brown fields and empty horizon. Turning around and looking back eastwards, is a wide, distant, blue-tinged view out over the *páramos*, back towards Burgos. This is a windy, unsheltered spot and it is difficult to hide in this landscape; other figures on this track are visible over long distances. To the left, large cairns and carefully balanced piles of stones mark the junction of this path with other tracks. Further on, the ruins of stone walling of La Nuez lie amidst copses of trees and thicket downslope, to the left, and mostly out of sight from the path. Out of the wind, this place traps the heat.

G: At this point, the path curves over the crest of the *páramo* and the valley of the Arroyo de San Bol suddenly appears, narrower than the valley before. A few minutes further on

and the scant remains of the *despoblado* come into view, a short distance to the left of the Camino. From here, the path descends along the contour of the slope with uncultivated ground rising to the left and green fields sloping down to the right. The path crosses the poplar-lined stream. Nearby, the water from the stone lined, shaded Fuente de San Bol flows with fresh, icy-cold water.



Figure 4. 19: Looking east from point F



Figure 4. 20: Looking west towards San Bol

Analysis

The sound of bells again on the track west of Hornillos suggests the presence of auditory zones and territories, with fading sounds emphasising movement away from the village. The ascent, meanwhile, may have signalled a return to the perceived empty barren wastes of the high plateau, as commented upon by Laffi, travelling in mid June 1670: “From here [Hornillos] onwards, it is very easy to lose one’s way because one sees nothing but empty, sandy plain” (Laffi 1681: 142).

The views are such that travellers in this landscape would have been able to clearly observe other groups up ahead or those approaching from the west, on the journey home from Santiago. Encounters and the exchange of news and information on such highways contribute to the creation of a mobile oral tradition, constantly in flux.

Today, one of the most noticeable features of the route over the plateaux is the immense quantity of loose stone and boulders either lined up along the road, stacked into cairns or, on occasion piled into elaborately balanced shapes by recent passing walkers (figure 4.21). Mostly freshly ploughed up, the stone is testimony to the ongoing scouring of the fields through deep-ploughing, yet the simultaneous presence of more lichenated, grassed over rocks serves as a reminder that in addition to being a road for pilgrims, this track has also, for centuries, constituted a line in the landscape, a boundary for local land use and a reference for the demarcation of land. The presence of deliberately constructed cairns at road junctions, of whatever period, belie an interest in “mark-making” in the landscape, a concern with guiding other pilgrims, and the preservation of individual actions along the route. Laffi indicates such a function in his commentary:

For the benefit of poor pilgrims, I shall give directions...On first arriving in this sandy waste – or any others of the same kind – when you come to two or three roads and want to know which is the right one, you will find pilgrims have made two or three heaps of stones by the side of whichever road is the right one (Laffi 1681: 142).



Figure 4. 21: Carefully balanced stone cairns

One of the tracks that crosses the Camino here replicates the route of a minor Roman road that stretched from Sasamón to Villavieja de Muño to the south east. It is one of a number of routes that, unlike the Camino, run *with* the grain of the plateaux and valleys rather than against it, connecting settlements from the north with those that lie to the south. The pilgrim road is, in fact, conspicuous as being virtually the only east-west line of communication in this particular area. Judging by the configuration of the topography and road network alone, it is arguable that local communities in the valleys may have had many more connections with those living and working to the north and south, than with those across the *páramos* to the east and west. Hornillos and, further west, Hontanas, may, in this case, be viewed as nodal points of connection serving to link the different geographical units.

La Nuez del Páramo, one of two abandoned settlements along this segment, predates the last quarter of the eleventh century (Passini 1993: 111). Originally part of the territory of Castrojeriz, the mid fourteenth century *Libro Becerro de las Behetrías* cites it as an *abadengo* (settlement under ecclesiastical jurisdiction) belonging to the Order of St John of Acre (Martínez Díez 1981: 325). The substantial archaeological remains cover approximately two hectares, but are, unfortunately, difficult to interpret given the extent of overgrown vegetation and obvious interference to the structures (figure 4.22). Small enclosures and corrals

have been constructed from rubble remains while elsewhere, stone from collapsed building has been collected together in giant heaps.

It is possible that the current trajectory of the pilgrim route post-dates the abandonment of the settlement, and that a former version of the route made a diversion south towards La Nuez. Alternatively, the distance between the road and the settlement, combined with the absence of La Nuez in any pilgrim itinerary, indicates that this small village was of marginal importance to pilgrims, and not a usual stopping point en-route.



Figure 4. 22: Jumbled stone remains of La Nuez

San Bol, rendered variously as Sambol or San Boal after Saint Baudilio, and in existence prior to the last quarter of the eleventh century (Passini 1992: 111), may also, like Hornillos, originally have been a dependency of Rocamadour (Shaver-Crandall and Gerson 1995: 327). Later it came within the jurisdiction of the order of San Anton of Castrojeriz, when a leprosarium was established here. During the fourteenth century, San Bol was transferred to the rival monastery of Cardena, while by the beginning of the sixteenth, the settlement was abandoned (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 177).

San Bol is significant for several reasons. First, for a traveller with little local knowledge, this minor valley, sited exactly halfway between Hornillos del Camino and Hontanas, may have been experienced as an oasis between two arid, featureless plateaux, appearing suddenly and unexpectedly after the monotony of the plain. Another important factor is the water resources here. Fuente Romero, like the example east of Hornillos, denotes an association with pilgrims while Fuente de San Bol, judging from its name and more elaborate stone-work, may have been part of the ecclesiastical compound here, more closely controlled and regulated (figure 4.23). The dedication to San Baudilio, a fourth century martyr frequently associated with healing and health, suggests a perceived curative aspect to this spring, and indeed the pairing of a leprosaorium with a spring or holy well recalls a pattern noted elsewhere in medieval Europe, as discussed in the previous chapter. This is interpretable against the more general belief in the medicinal and spiritual properties of water and ideas of rebirth and cleansing through the rite of baptism (Gilchrist 1995: 43).

Little remains of the original configuration of the medieval settlement. The ruins of a couple of structures, incorporated into a modern square enclosure, are located just upslope from the current track that leads southwards from the Camino (figure 4.23). Four transects walked close to the Camino path in order to check for surface materials in the vicinity of the pilgrimage road revealed nothing, while over two longer lines, walked northwards from the area of the modern refuge and Fuente de San Bol, only a few pieces of tile of indeterminate date and one possible Roman rim sherd were observed. As in other parts of the survey areas, it is likely that a more extensive survey would produce further results, but judging from this brief walk-over alone, and the location of the ruined structures and water sources, it seems that the settlement was not immediately adjacent to the current route of the Camino. If this route reflects the original medieval trajectory, as claimed by Martínez Díez (1998: 220-1), San Bol was a place that required a detour from the path, the distance reflecting a physical segregation of the leper community or, for weary pilgrims, perhaps enhancing its oasis-like quality after the dusty road of the *páramos*.



Figure 4. 23: Fuente de San Bol



Figure 4. 24: Ruined structure at San Bol

3. San Bol to Hontanas

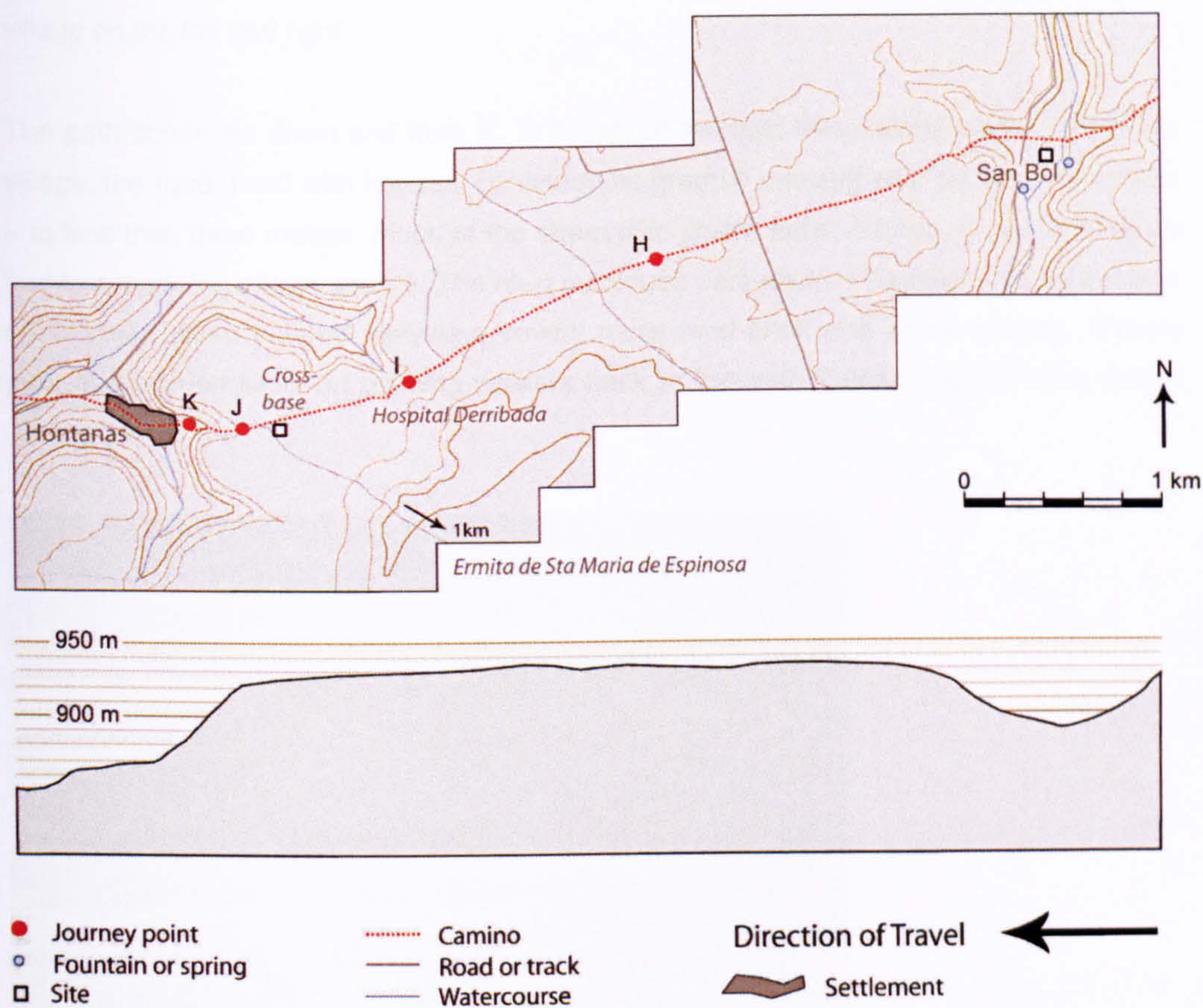


Figure 4. 25: San Bol to Hontanas

After passing the crossroads, the path climbs gradually back onto the plateau and the horizon is again flat and empty. **H** marks the highest point on this stretch of trackway from where brown fields can be seen extending for miles and large piles of stone line the track. Some fragmentary stretches of regularly sized, rectangular stones are visible in the path.

From **I**, a view opens up to the right down along the small valley of the Arroyo de la Arroyada. Around here, outcrops of rock, heaped up with clearance, and a few stone corrals differentiate this part of the plateau. Patches of rough, uncultivable land are visible, rising up like stony islands amidst the cereal fields. A medieval hospital may have once stood on this part of the plateau. The path continues, descending gradually from the plateau and passing junctions with other tracks. At one of these junctions, the base of a wayside cross can be seen jutting out amidst a pile of rubble.

J: From here, on the descent from the plateau, the rooftops and church tower of Hontanas just come into view, clustered together in the valley bottom. A few paces on, they

disappear out of view once more, hidden by the flank of the slope. They reappear again as the path descends steeply. Steep valley sides, cut into terraces, converge down onto the village on the left and right.

The path continues down and from **K**, is funnelled through steep stone walls. Within the village, the road, lined with houses, continues its gradual descent and becomes narrower – to less than three metres. Much of the street is in shade here. A large church and stone fountain mark the village square. The road continues past another fountain. To the left and right, views down shaded alleyways reveal more mud-brick and stone houses. Elderly men and women insist on pointing walkers back to the main Camino path if they take a “wrong turn”.



Figure 4. 26: Hontanas from the east

Analysis

Most extant pilgrim journals concentrate on the settlements of the route, so it is interesting here to find a vivid description of the plateau to the east of Hontanas in Laffi's journal:

[We walked] together the whole day across the great plain. It was scorched, not only by the sun, but by swarms of locusts, which had destroyed everything. One could see neither tree nor grass of any kind...everything is sand. There were so many of these accursed locusts that one could walk only with difficulty. At every step they rose in the air in clouds so dense that you could hardly see the sky...With God's help we crossed this deserted waste land (Laffi 1681: 143).

He clearly records a negative impression and the melodramatic style contributes to the creation of a particular sense of place; that of an arid, uncivilised landscape; a "dangerous wilderness", in which the pilgrim needs God.

The remnants of paving, nonetheless, indicate that at some point in the past, this was a maintained route-way. Obviously, dating is problematic, but the occurrence of the place name "Calzadilla", meaning "little paved road" just to the north-east of La Nuez suggests that there was enough paved road in this area, at a sufficiently early date, for it to have entered the local toponymia. Meanwhile, photographs of other locations along the route from Cuesta Matamulos to Hontanas taken in the 1980s show a stony rubble metalling that has only very recently been lost through gravel resurfacing (Passini 1993: 110). Important questions surround the construction and maintenance of such a facility, such as who paid for and organised its undertaking? Was this piece-meal work or a single, planned operation? Certainly, elsewhere, as mentioned in the previous chapter (3.4), road building along the Camino is associated with saintly individuals undertaking God's work through practically assisting pilgrims (Martinez Sopena 1992: 172), such as San Aleaume of Burgos (Arambu-Zabala Higuera 1992: 11) or, more famously, San Domingo de la Calzada (of the paved road).



Figure 4. 27: Traces of paving on the path to Hontanas

Amidst the outcrops and corrals, the name Hospital Derribada, meaning demolished hospital, records the former presence of another medieval hospice of which nothing is known. Isolated, and some distance from the settlements, this represents the only known plateau hospice within the Study Area. Although no conclusive surface trace of the hospital was observed on the ground, it is possible that some of the quantity of stone piled up on the rock outcrops or used for corrals may relate to the dispersal and re-use of rubble from a demolished building.

The corrals, which in all probability relate to stock herding during the recent past, call to mind another infrastructural element of the pilgrimage landscape of which there is now little trace. Corrals and yards were indispensable for itinerant communities to lodge horses and pack animals. Some may have been the most rudimentary and ephemeral of structures. An eighth century text, for instance, documents how the missionary Sturm dutifully built his own corral every night for the duration of his journey (Ferreira Priegue 1994: 63). Over time, and along busy route-ways, improvised corrals could well have been replaced with more substantial constructions.

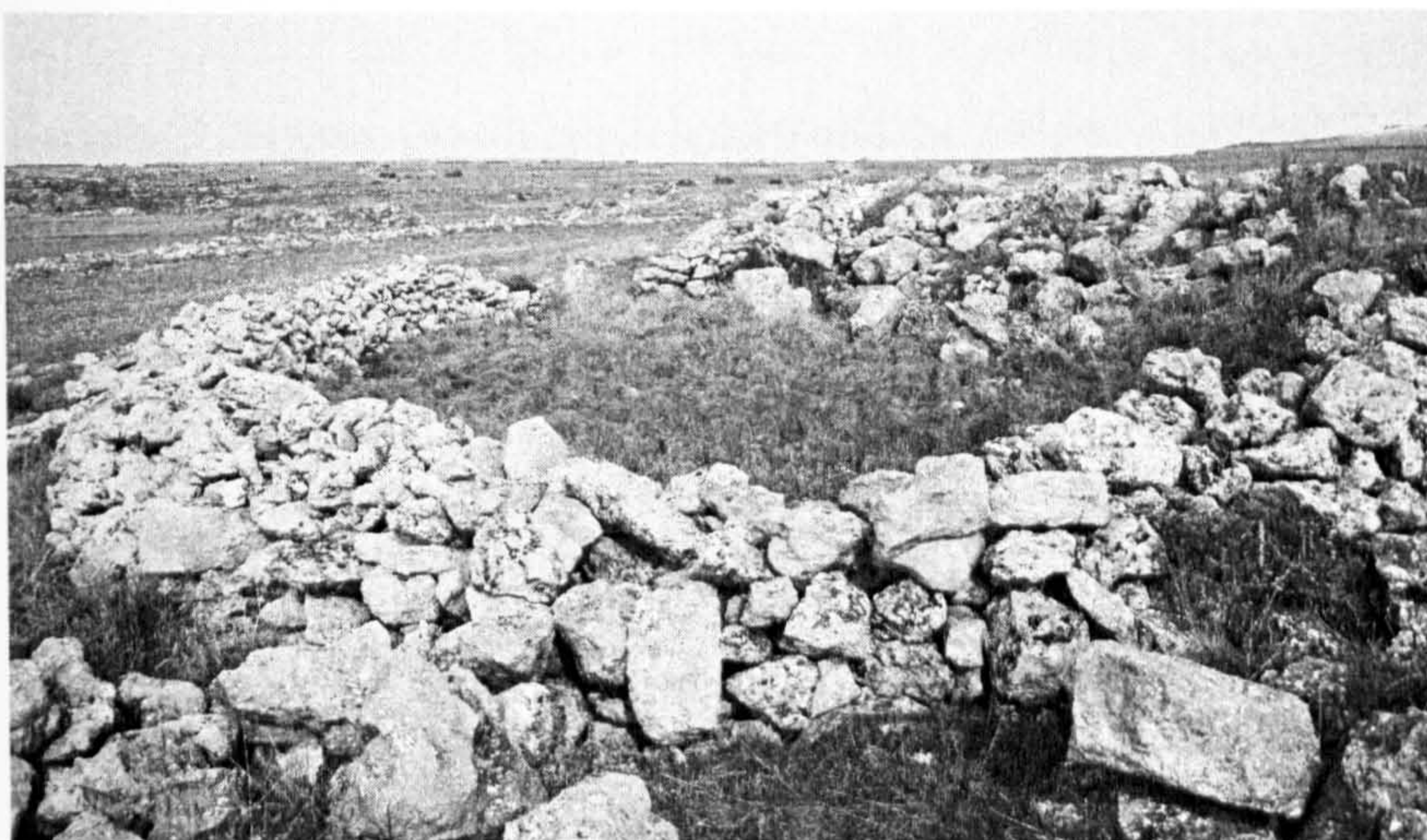


Figure 4. 28: Stone enclosure by the road

Further west, the base of a way-side cross, lichenated and embedded in the bank, deserves detailed comment. Squarely cut, it stands to a height of 0.4m, and measures 0.54 by 0.54m at the top. The base is broader and apparently more roughly hewn, suggesting production from an *in-situ* boulder. A square cut hole, just left of centre, indicates that the cross would have been orientated with respect to the east-west course of the Camino, and thus intended to be viewed by those travelling on this principal highway. Its position at a junction is significant. The Camino from here leads on towards Hontanas, while the track that ascends the slope to the south-east leads to the Hermitage of Nuestra Señora de la Espinosa, or Our Lady of the Thorns. Until recently, this track was part of a processional itinerary for villagers from Hontanas, in which, at least in recent times, the women of the village would carry the statuette of the Virgin to this hermitage (Martínez pers. comm. 2005).

As mentioned in chapter 2.4, such monuments are increasingly understood to be “active forces” in the construction and conception of the medieval landscape (e.g. Moreland 1999: 199; Howe 2002: 215-16) and the example here makes clear that such monuments also presented different meanings to different people. For those travelling to Santiago, this cross signalled the presence of God in a scorched landscape, the proximity of the next village, or simply the correct path. For those living in Hontanas meanwhile, it accommodated numerous local associations and memories unknown to outsiders, marking a processional route integral to the

village identity and religious calendar, while perhaps also creating a perceptual boundary between the village territory and the *páramos* beyond.



Figure 4. 29: Top-Base of way-side cross (scale measures 30cm). Bottom-Base of way-side cross from the east



Originally known as Fontanas on account of its springs, or fountains, the village of Hontanas is first documented in 1203 in a donation made by Alfonso VIII, with the defining words *in publico itinere beati Iacobi sitam*; “situated on the public road to St James”, (Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 203). Later in the thirteenth century, the settlement became part of the wider territory of Castrojeriz (Passini 1993: 112). Laffi describes his vision of the settlement in the seventeenth century; “..we came to the town of Hontanas, which is hidden at the bottom of a little valley so you hardly see it”. He fears wolves in this landscape:

They have a strong palisade round the huts to guard against wolves, which come at night to attack them. These creatures are so famished they even eat one another...you see them in packs, like flocks of sheep, both in the daytime and at night. So whenever you want to cross this desert you must do

it in the middle of the day when the shepherds are out with their huge dogs
(Laffi 1681: 143)

The local topography, which contrasts greatly with the open space of the *páramos*, emphasises both the sense of transition *into* the village, and then, the sense of enclosure *within* the village. The current area of small terraced fields through which the original route of the Camino descends is reminiscent of the later medieval *ejidos* of Castilian villages and towns. Literally meaning “exit” these areas of common pasture lay just outside the settlement zone and were used variously as threshing floors, rubbish dumps, for penning stray animals, or for general “loafing” (Vassberg 1984: 26). While these *ejidos* were freely available for all *vecinos* (citizens) of the village, those not granted this status, or considered to be outsiders, were excluded from these spaces and could even be penalised with a fine for violating this rule (Vassberg 1984: 26). If in place during the central Middle Ages, such spatial tensions could have been very apparent to pilgrims who were by definition outsiders. Their descent into the village may well have been monitored in a fashion similar to this example, cited by Roberts:

In the Alto Minho area of north-west Portugal the *caminhos*, old paths giving access to the settlements, were watched and controlled by the local community, effectively preventing the entrance of undesirable strangers (1996: 65).

The main street into Hontanas was in theory a “public” space, but may have been perceived differently by those living there, and those arriving. Even today it is difficult not to feel conspicuous when descending the hill into Hontanas and it is very noticeable that any attempts to deviate from the main street in order to explore other parts of the village are met with the sudden appearance of locals keen, and sometimes insistent upon, redirecting you back to the “correct way”. Venturing onto side roads and lanes that are apparently public feels very much like an intrusion into the private world of the village away from its role as a pilgrimage settlement. Faced with similar experiences in guarded, dead-end quarters in Muslim cities that function neither as strictly private nor, public space, Abu-Lughod defines such areas as “semi-private” zones (1987: 168).

Any palisade set up around the village, as described by Laffi above, although ostensibly to protect against wolves, could also form a physical boundary that perhaps exacerbated tensions. A certain degree of real danger may have precipitated Laffi's preoccupation with wolves, yet the near hysteria of his account recalls the "daunting mythology" that surrounded these creatures during the Middle Ages (Fumagalli 1994: 127). It is likely that medieval pilgrims had very similar fears about crossing such regions known to be populated with wolves

The configuration of the settlement itself displays a familiar, if slightly less pronounced, east-west alignment along the route, while key elements within the medieval core include the church of Santa Maria, the ruins of a medieval house, and the remodelled former hospital of San Juan (Passini 1993: 112; figure 4.30). Two operational fountains may recall earlier installations, and again, it is interesting to note that one occupies a very central position within the village, while the other is situated just outside the medieval nucleus, indicating perhaps different functions and associations.

Again, it seems entirely possible that while pilgrims could theoretically find comfort and provisions in Hontanas, they may also have found a certain resistance to their presence.

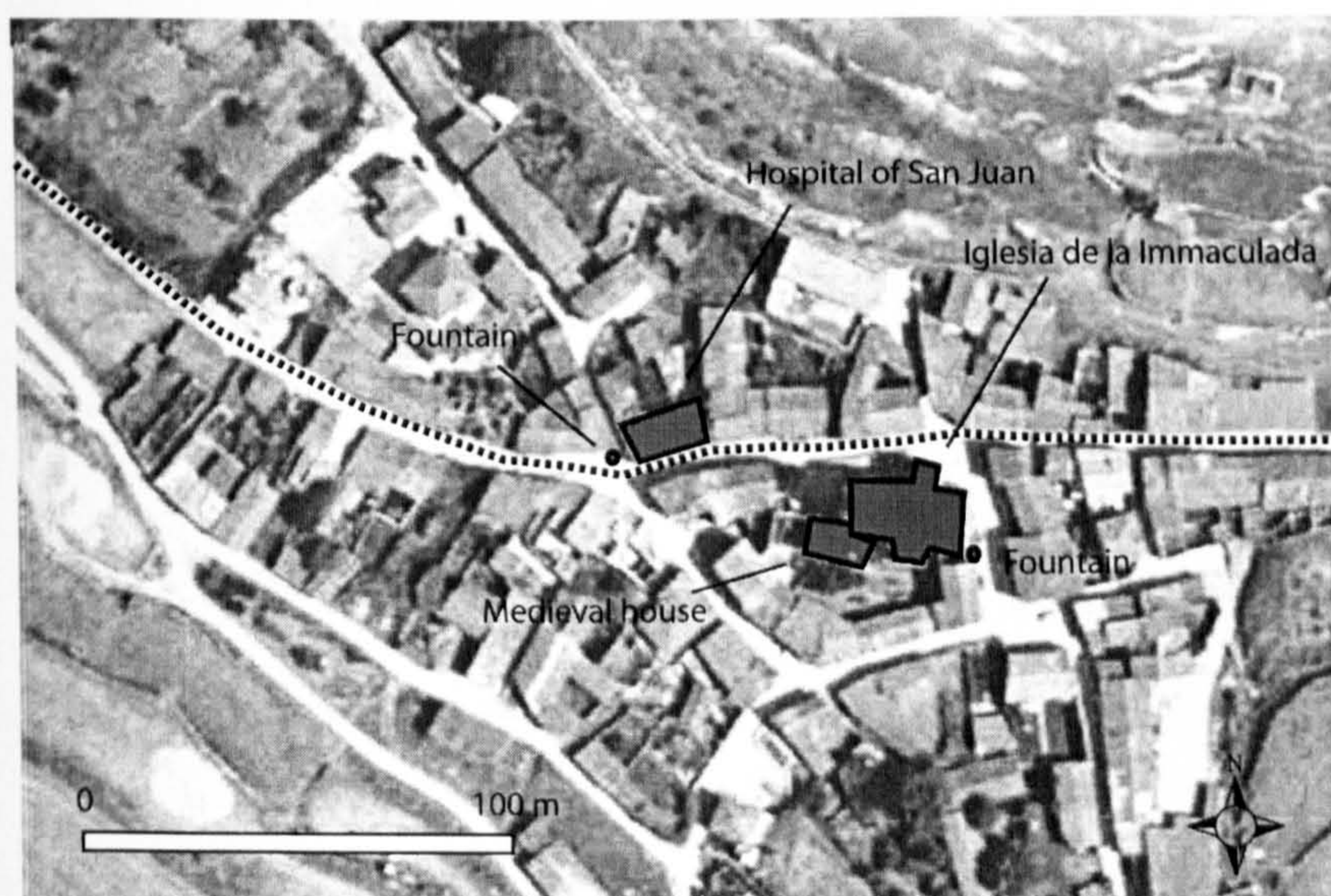


Figure 4.30: The Camino and surviving medieval elements in Hontanas (information from Martínez Díez (1998: 225); background image from www.sigpac.mapa.es/feqa/visor).



**Figure 4. 31: Views of
Hontanas**

4. Hontanas to San Anton

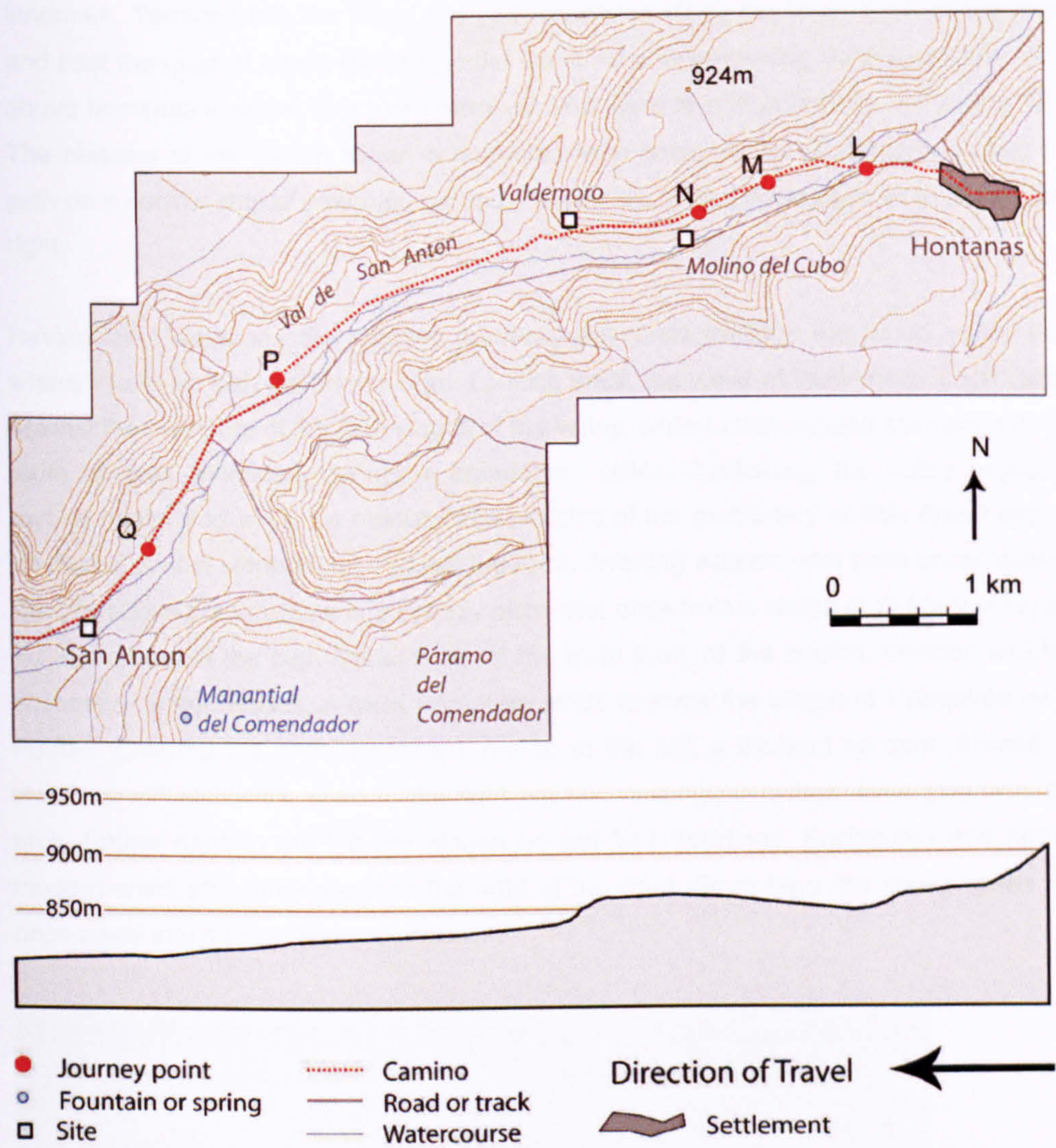


Figure 4. 32: Hontanas to San Anton

L: After the ascents and descents of the route from Cuesta Matamulos and the high plateau stretches, this point marks a general topographic change. Looking back, Hontanas can no longer be seen while to the left and right there is a clear view along the whole length of the valley of San Anton. It is now possible to see the next part of the journey opening out. After crossing the stream; the Arroyo de Garbanzuelo, the path turns to run through the valley, crossing green fields that contrast with the barren, scrub slopes of the higher ground. From point **M**, the church bells of Hontanas can still be heard.

Reaching the spot marked as **N**, the tall narrow corner of the old church tower of Valdemoro appears in the distance. Like the needle of a giant sundial, it is a striking landmark. Terraced into the slope, the path continues along the lower flank of the valley and past the ruins of a mill; the Molino del Cubo. Now approaching Valdemoro, the slope above becomes steeper, with more terraces, and there is a high terrace wall to the right. The remains of the church tower, constructed from large blocks of stone, lie above the path on a narrow strip of ploughed ground. Further on, a few rubble piles lie to the left and right.

Having left Valdemoro, the Camino gradually descends towards the broad valley floor where it joins up with the tarmac road. Looking back, the tower of Valdemoro is still visible against the backdrop of the high slopes of the valley, while looking ahead from point **P**, the route is clear, extending through a broadening valley. Continuing, the valley begins to narrow again, and at **Q**, the monumental remains of the monastery of San Anton appear up ahead. A vast stone arch straddles the road, dwarfing walkers who pass underneath it. Directly above the keystone is an empty niche that once held a statue of St Mary of Egypt. To the left stand the high gothic walls of the main body of the church, besides which a channel of water trickles. A track from here leads towards the village of Villaquirán de la Puebla. Entering the arched space, there is, to the left, a blocked up door, framed by worn, carved archivolts, while to the right are two rectangular niches. Emerging from the arch, further ruins to the left are hidden behind farm buildings. Enclosures and further modern small structures stand to the right of the road. From here the valley opens out once again into a broad lowland plain.



Figure 4. 33: Looking ahead from point L.

Analysis

Significant changes in terrain impact upon those travelling through a landscape (Díaz Ruiz 2001; Pellicer Corellano 1993). Here, it is possible to envisage that the enhanced line of sight westwards fostered greater navigational security while the temporary end of the high plateaus and the break in the repetitive, and physically demanding, valley–plateau–valley pattern signalled forward progress. Also, the constant presence of a watercourse for the next five or six kilometres suggests a greater freedom in terms of choosing when and where to stop than in previous stretches where streams and springs were more briefly encountered. Physiologically at least, the change in terrain indicates a welcome respite from the slopes.

Meanwhile, the current acoustic range of the church bell in Hontanas again raises the idea of a landscape not only experienced visually, but via a range of sensory pathways. Although Hontanas is out of sight here, sounds from the village permeate a wider area; a reminder that the traveller remained within village territory.

A settlement in this area, located between Hontanas and Valdemoro, called Quintanilla de Valdemoro is mentioned in a twelfth century document, but its absence from the fourteenth century *Libro Becerro de las Behetrías*, indicates that it had already become effectively abandoned by this point, and certainly its precise location is not obvious today (Martínez Díez 1998: 228).

Valdemoro, first documented in the twelfth century, and part of the territory of Castrojeriz, is confirmed as a settlement of the Camino with the words *in strata Sancti Iacobi*; “on St James’ road” (Passini 1993: 113). The dearth of surface material and the tower’s position, perched on a small island of soil, suggests that intensive ploughing has removed the bulk of archaeological deposits (figure 4.34). Much of the original stone may have been removed and used elsewhere, perhaps in the construction of the impressive mill to the south east (4.35), or in the reinforcement of the terraces alongside the track. (Unfortunately I could find no

information regarding the history of the mill). The rubble piles further west may indicate the collapsed remains of earlier structures.

Located on a spur of high ground at the intersection of two valleys, this village held a strategically interesting location, and, judging from the distribution of current trackways, is at the confluence of a localised network of communications connecting upland terrain with the valleys. The church tower, in particular, is a landmark visible from the Camino over several kilometres, a presence that is again a marked change from the previous part of the route where settlements come into, and then out of, view quite rapidly. The siting and the robust appearance of the tower corner hint that this structure may also have played a defensive role, as was the case with other churches such as in Lorca, Navarre in the previous Study Area.



Figure 4. 34: Valdemoro. The church tower from the north-east



Figure 4. 35: The Molino del Cubo

The monastery site of San Anton is one of the most distinctive examples of architectural ambition of the entire route and is pivotal in terms of the medieval configuration and experience of the landscape (figure 4.36). Founded in 1149 by Alfonso VII on what may have been the site of a Visigothic church or hermitage (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 23) and substantially rebuilt over the course of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, this institution represented the headquarters of the Order of St Anthony in Spain, and, as such, contained all the typical components of an important monastic complex (figure 4.37). Its topographic setting, its role in terms of the pilgrimage, medieval perception and imaginations, and its relationship within local political and economic structures suggest a highly complex and symbolic place along the Camino.



Figure 4.36: The monastery of San Anton from the west

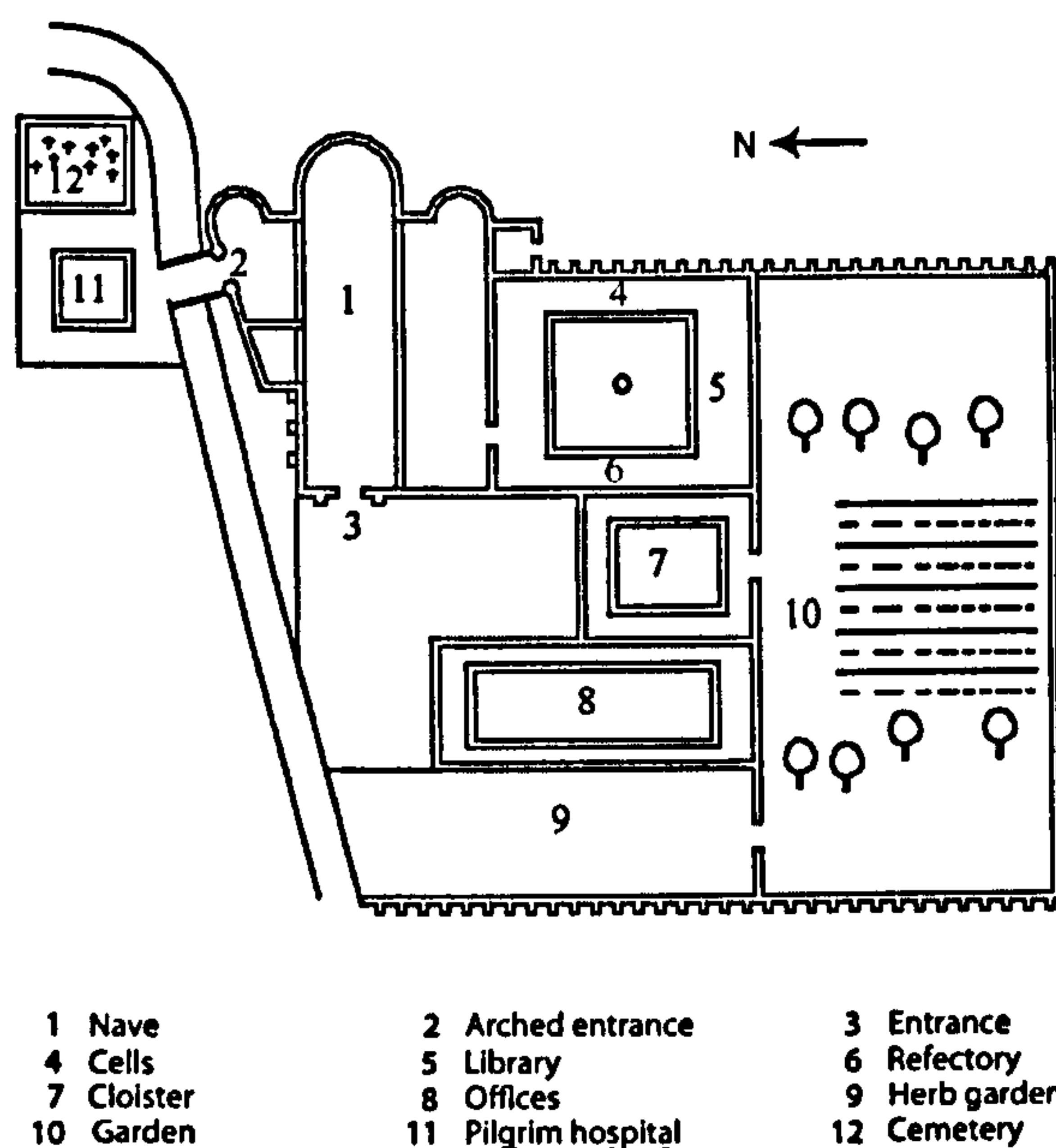


Figure 4. 37: Plan of the monastic estate of San Anton (adapted from Sánchez Domingo 2004: 162).

In addition to fulfilling the contemporary political need for asserting kingship, securing the prime axis of communication and reappropriating new territory (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 23), the twelfth century foundation on this site initiated a process of what could almost be described as stage management that propagated a very particular vision of sanctity, religious authority and society. Erected in an environment that, in general, could be considered hostile and barren, and well outside the city of Castrojeriz, the placement of the monastery not only followed the Order's statutes that decreed every abbey must be outside a settlement, but, it could be argued, replicated and transmitted ideas about the ascetic desert life of the Order's patron; St Anthony himself. Despite the general poverty of the surrounding land, a subterranean stream, sometimes referred to as miraculous in written accounts, ran within the precinct walls and assured a steady water supply for the monastery (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 131). The oasis-like quality that this afforded would have been accentuated (certainly by the end of the thirteenth century, if not earlier) by the presence of a herb garden, fruit trees, and, although strictly segregated from the outside world, a trickling fountain within the cloister. The contrast between the dry plains outside and the watered, shady interior of the monastery seems almost to be a topographic reenactment from the hagiography of St. Anthony. By tradition, his final dwelling place in the desert wilderness was an oasis spring in the Red Sea Mountains, a spot that subsequently became the site of the great fortress-like Coptic monastery of St Anthony the Great. Those familiar

with the story of this saint found a landscape that fulfilled certain elements of the tradition. The presence of the statue of St Mary of Egypt, presiding over the main archway, reinforced the symbolic association with Christianity in the desert, while the strange figures of satyrs, centaurs and lions, difficult to make out now on the worn archivolt (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 164; figure 4.38), recalled the dangerous, monstrous creatures that roamed the imagined geographical periphery of the world. One lion, depicted as in the process of devouring a head, conserves remains of red paint. A red lion is a key motif pertaining to hermits and the life of St Anthony (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 164).

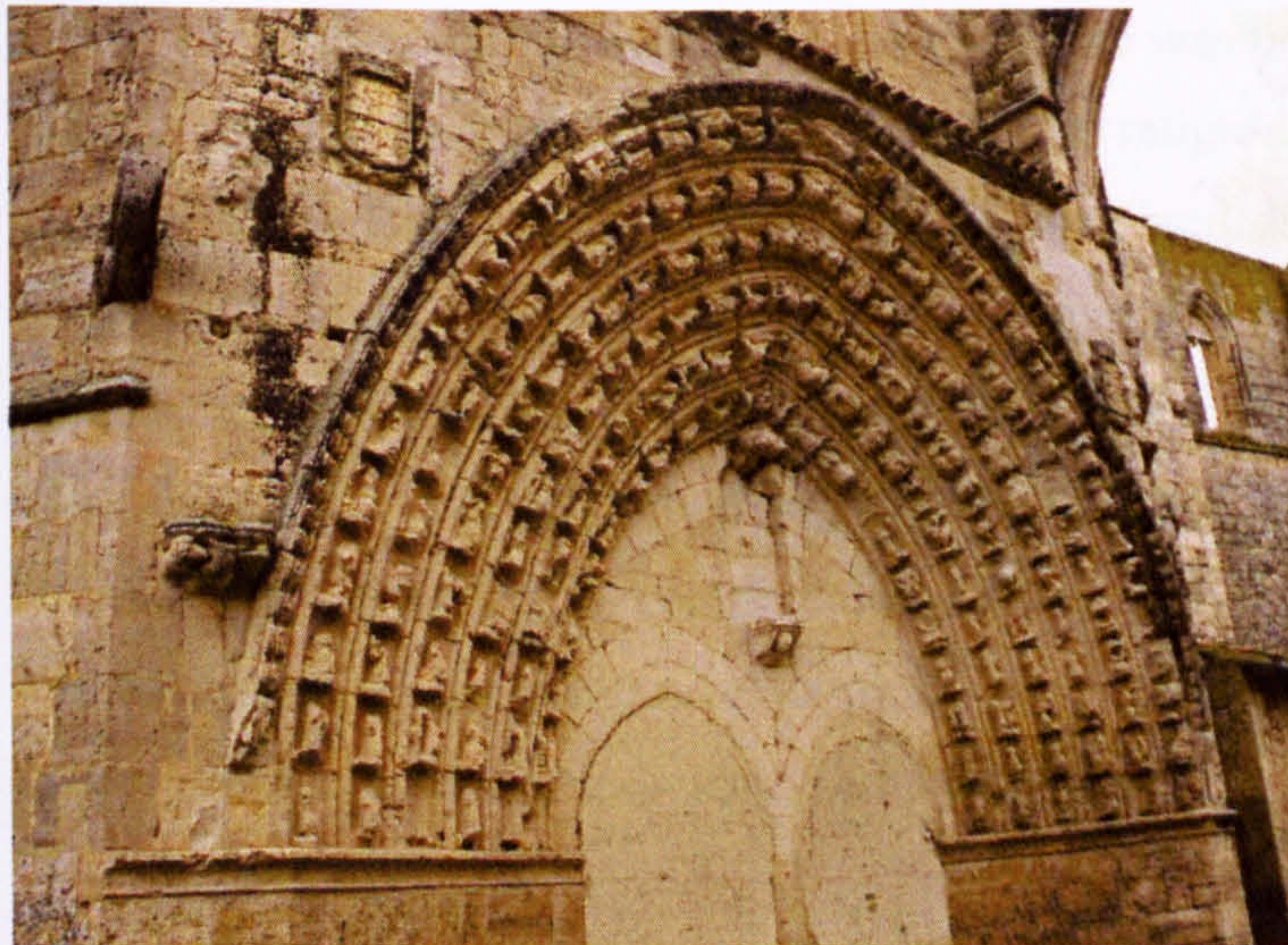


Figure 4. 38: Elaborate archivolt on the entrance to the monastery

In addition to these topographic components, the material dimensions of the monastery and the rituals described in historical records provide evidence regarding the medieval configuration of this site. Both reveal close attention to the structuring of space and social attitudes towards the pilgrim body. The Antonines, although originally a military foundation, had, by the eleventh century, acquired a reputation for hospital care and, more specifically, for the cure of ergotism, or “St Anthony’s fire” (see chapter 1.3). Hence, with the hospital sited here, to the north of the road, the monks could fulfil their religious duty by ministering to the poor and sick and accommodating suffering pilgrims, especially those returning from Galicia where there existed a higher incidence of ergot poisoning (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 99). This duty of care was orchestrated in a very specific way;

pilgrims exhibiting the tell-tale gangrenous or hallucinatory symptoms were obliged to signal their approach by sounding a rattle or bell, while in response, the monastery rang a large bell to mark their arrival (2004: 98-100). The diseased body, and its anticipated contact with, and entry into, sanctified space, was therefore ritualised through sound. Visually, meanwhile, the elaborate thresholds of the monumental arch and the doorways, framed with coloured and carved scenes from the life of Christ and St Mary, emphasised the transition of 'unclean', secular bodies into this enclave of care by the road. The inclusion of strange creatures within the decorative scheme possibly reinforced the polarisation of the sacred inner world of the monastery with the unstable and unpredictable outside world. The subsequent aid administered to pilgrims was both bodily and spiritual; those within the hospital, if able, participated in religious duties and prayer for instance, while a traditional Antonine remedy involved dispensing wine that had been poured over a holy relic and mixed with holy water (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 97). The suffering bodies of individual pilgrims were thus framed as entities in need of spiritual intervention. However, the ultimate, irreconcilable distancing between the ecclesiastical communities and the pilgrims is reflected by the inviolability of the monastic precinct to the south of the road. The cloister was a space in which no secular individual could pass.

Pilgrims were thus coming into contact with a highly orchestrated and controlled space, in which their identity was constructed in a very particular way. Despite this, it seems they could find physiological comfort and assistance here; the white bread received counteracting the symptoms of ergotism, while those on the brink of death were comforted by some spiritual peace; a royal decree of 1304 exempted from sin all who died there (Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 203). For those in good health who passed by, bread and wine were left in the niches below the arch, a gesture that recalled the rite of the Eucharist and provided encouragement for body and soul (figure 4.39). König von Vach enthused in the late fifteenth century, “..they will give you as much bread as you need” (quoted in Bravo-Lozano 1993: 130).



Figure 4. 39: Niches under the arch of the monastery

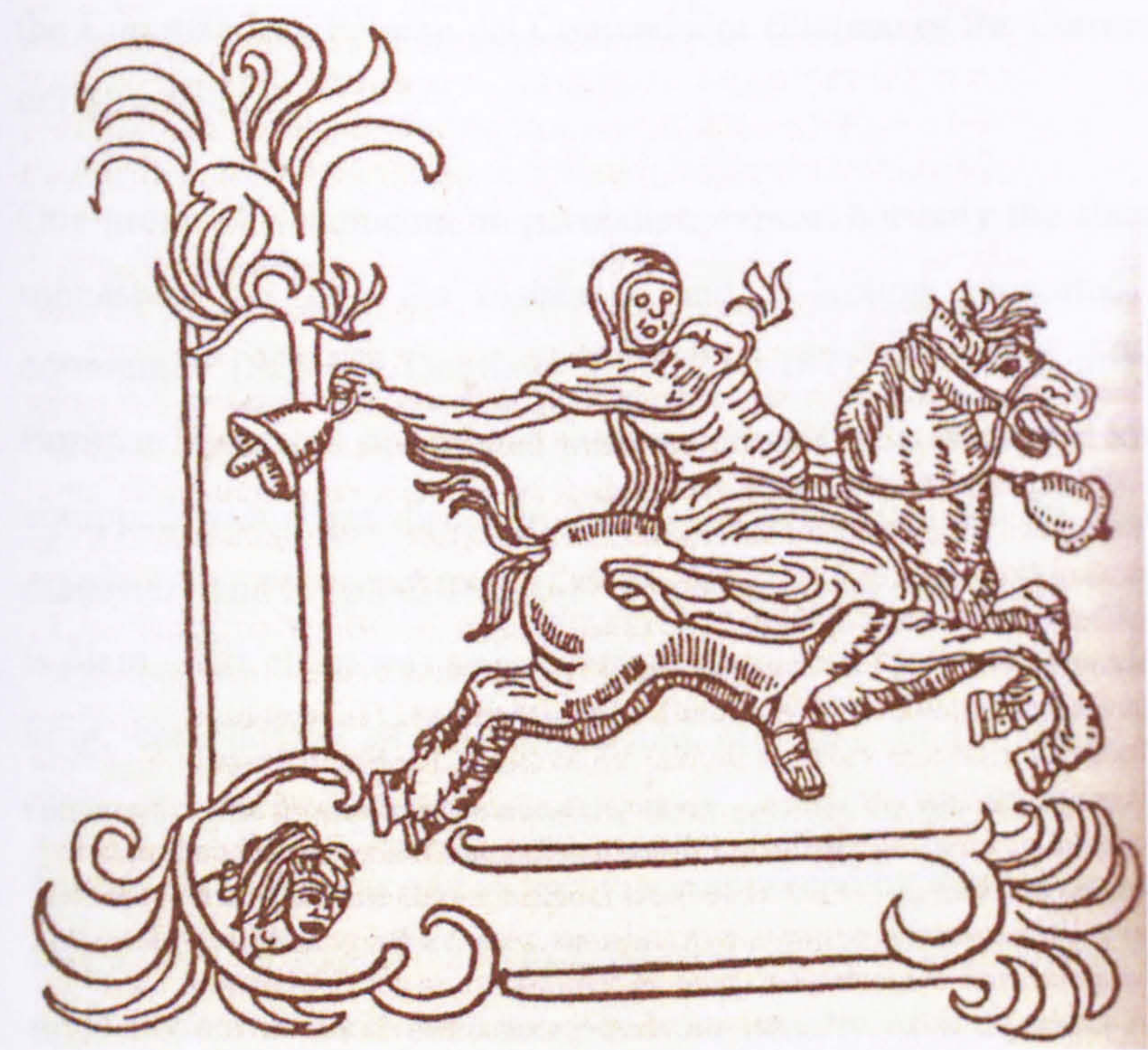


Figure 4. 40: Manuscript initial of the thirteenth century representing an Antonine on horseback. Note the bell and the cross on his chest, warning of the danger of disease (reproduced from Sánchez Domingo 2004 : 52).

If, for pilgrims, the monastery of San Anton represented an oasis of benevolence and charity in a foreign land, this site may have had very different connotations for those who lived and worked within this landscape. Feudal contracts obviously favoured such powerful institutions and the economic buoyancy enjoyed by San

Anton during the central Middle Ages is attributable to both royal privileges and the labour and rents drawn from local inhabitants, such as those of San Bol who owed tithes of wheat and barley to the ecclesiastical community (Martínez Díez 1981: 270).

The inequality of power inherent in such contracts was clearly expressed in material terms. The fortress architecture of crenellated walls, watch tower and the arrogant monumental arch spanning the highway signalled power and authority while the sizeable estate, spreading outwards from the precinct walls (Sánchez Domingo 2004), represented a spatial and economic dominion still reflected by place names such as Valle de San Anton, Manantial del Comendador (Spring of the Commander), Páramo del Comendador (Plateau of the Commander) and Corral del Monasterio.

One group of documents, in particular, expose not only the status enjoyed by the monastery but also the resistance and ill-feeling generated across the local community (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 180-187). In 1369 a privilege awarded by Enrique II granted the monks permission to freely roam the kingdom of Castile equipped with silver dishes in order to acquire alms for the maintenance of their monastery and hospital. That such a privilege was met with considerable resistance is plain. First, there was a series of protests, sent by the *Comendador Mayor* to the king, complaining of grievances and offences. In response, the privilege was reissued a number of times over the next century or so, guaranteeing the monks the right to demand alms and to travel accompanied by their “pigs, bells, silver dishes and drums”; a custom they had enjoyed “since time immemorial”. Eventually, a royal decree in 1490 recommended the penalty of a monetary fine for anybody who “for hatred, animosity or dislike for them [the monks], ...injure and kill and order harm and death and maim and capture them or capture and take and occupy their goods against reason and law, like they should not” (quoted in Sánchez Domingo 2004: 186; my translation). It seems that the spectacle of these monks, demanding money for their already comparatively opulent headquarters continued to spark acts of violence and non-compliance among the local community.

5. San Anton to Castrojeriz

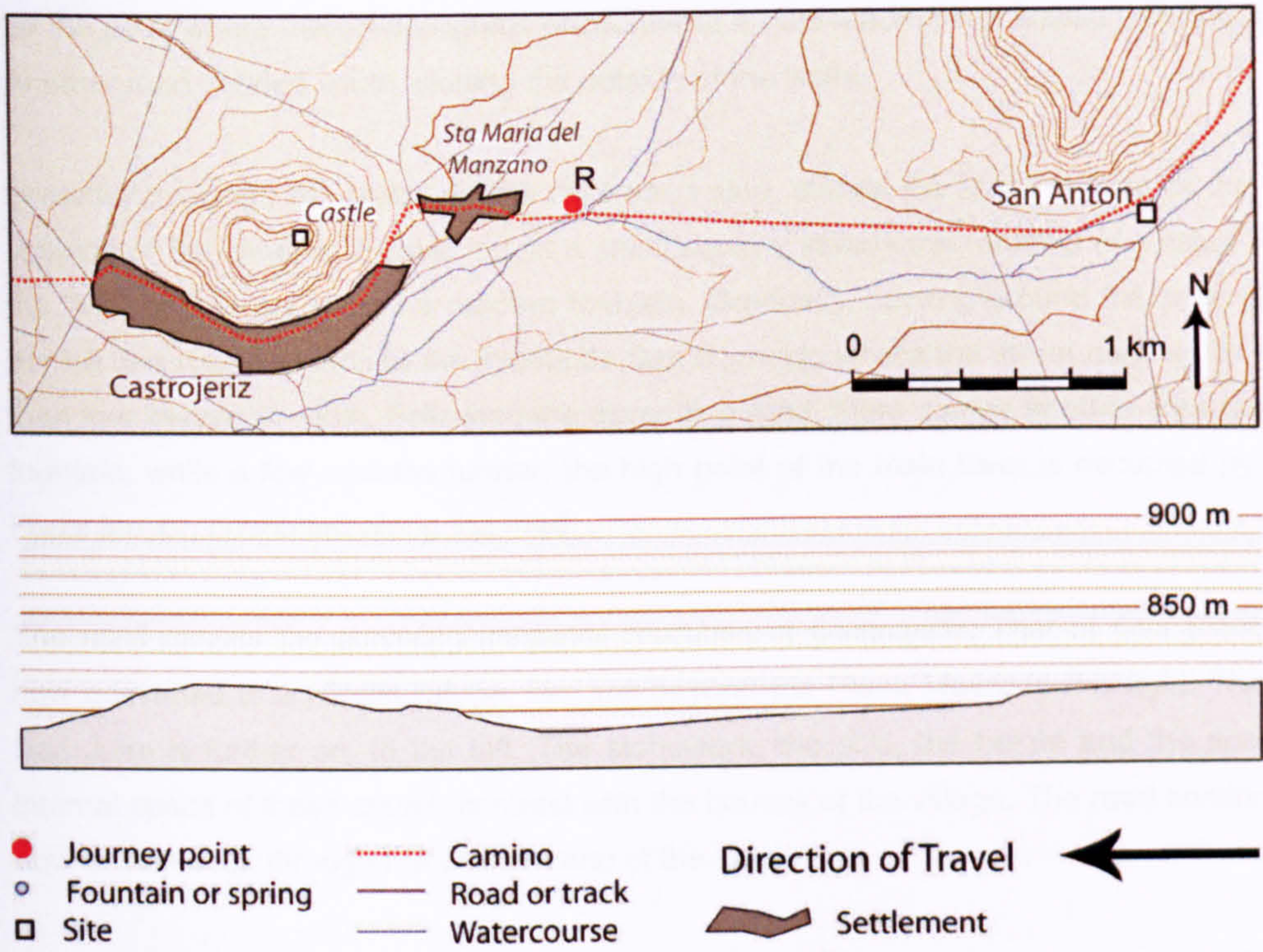


Figure 4. 41: San Anton to Castrojeriz

From San Anton, the tarmac road continues due west towards the town of Castrojeriz, the high ground to the left and right receding and giving way to the wide, flat space of the green *llanura* (low plain). Interrupting the plain, and starkly prominent ahead, is the large, isolated, flat-topped hill of Castrojeriz, which dominates the horizon for the next two kilometres.

Moving forward, the hill fills the skyline. A large church comes into view to the right. The outline of a castle on the summit emerges, and further away, the buildings of the town, strung out along the base and lower slopes of the hill, can be seen. From point **R**, where a broken cross marks the turning towards the town, and tile and rubble in the fields indicate the former presence of structures lining the road into Castrojeriz, the Camino passes through two kilometres of semi-urban and urban space.

The quarter of Sta Maria del Manzano is reached first. Now largely derelict, an enormous church casts shade on one side of a grassed over square. Next to the church, there used to be a hospital. Bordering the square on its other sides are collapsing adobe houses. By the road, a small stone water trough trickles with water. The road continues westward and

is lined with houses. A cross signals the end of the quarter of Santa Maria. Continuing, scrub and cultivated fields lie to the left and right. At the foot of the steep hill, the path curves to the left, and, after another 200m, reaches the entrance of the town. This used to be the point where medieval pilgrims encountered a gate leading into walled urban space. Another road headed south, skirting the outside of the walls.

Immediately inside the walls, on the right hand side, stands the stone façade of the old hospital of San Andrés. Further on, in a small square, stands the remains of a cross with the “tau” of San Anton and a modern fountain. Gradually, curving around the contour of the hill, the road ascends to the iglesia de San Domingo where the street narrows to less than four metres in width. Following the ascending road, there comes another square and fountain, while a few minutes further, the high point of the main town is occupied by the Plaza Mayor, orientated along the road.

The road passes the surviving medieval churches of Castrojeriz. That of San Esteban, now converted to a pilgrim refuge, lies just beyond the Plaza Mayor to the right. That of San Juan is further on, to the left. The stonework, the size, the height and the soaring internal space of these church contrast with the houses of the village. The road continues, now descending, through the western end of the town.



Figure 4. 42: The Camino leading towards Castrojeriz

The Camino road from San Antonio represents a slight sideways turn from the earlier route which, until the 1920s, would be expected to the adjacent fields (Martinez Diaz 1995: 234). From whichever angle, though, the visual impact of the town ahead, the largest since Burgos, governs the experience of this part of the journey. The emergence of arrival and the possibility of spiritual and ideological comfort and rejuvenation may have been inspired by the fear of the unknown.



Figure 4. 43: Entrance to Castrojeriz and the quarter of Santa Maria del Manzano to the right. Note later cross base on left.



Figure 4. 44: Standing cross in Castrojeriz

Analysis

The current road from San Anton represents a slight shift away from the earlier route, which, until the 1920s could be observed in the adjacent fields (Martínez Díez 1998: 231). From whichever angle, though, the visual impact of the town ahead, the largest since Burgos, governs the experience of this part of the journey. The anticipation of arrival and the possibility of spiritual and physiological comfort and rejuvenation may have been tempered by the fear of the unknown.

Laffi's account here, though, is a reminder that arrival was no longer an option for some:

We came upon a poor French pilgrim lying in the road. He was dying, and was all covered with locusts. It seems God must have sent us to help his soul, since hardly had we confessed him than he died (Laffi 1681: 144).

Confusion about the name of the town ahead abounds in Pilgrim accounts. French pilgrims recorded it as “Quatre Souris” meaning “four mice” and König von Vach gave it a German slant with the name “Castle Fritz” (Shaver Crandall and Gerson 1995: 164). Both von Vach and Arnold von Harff, meanwhile report that pilgrims called it the “long.city” (Bravo Lozano 1991: 130). Problems with the transcription of town and village names are endemic in most Jacobean pilgrim accounts, reflecting the pre-modern paucity of standardisation and literacy. It also raises questions about medieval pilgrim encounters with foreign places and languages. A distinct pilgrim name for the city is indicative of a mobile oral tradition constructed very much from the point of view of the traveller and separate from the verbal traditions of the resident population. It was a “long city” because pilgrims had to traverse the town from end to end in order to continue on their way. Other renditions of the name suggest a Chinese whisper effect, or perhaps difficulty in remembering the numerous settlements passed over the course of the entire pilgrimage.

Distinct from the main town, and most clearly visible from the pilgrim road, the quarter of Santa María del Manzano lay outside the circuit of the medieval walls (figure 4.45). Two crosses, (of unknown date), nonetheless, clearly demarcate the entrance and exit points of this small nucleus, suggesting clear spatial reference points for those living there and travelling through (figure 4.46). Perhaps too, they served to emphasise the special sanctity of this location, which although shifting in nature over time, nevertheless endured throughout the Middle Ages. The original foundation of the church sometime in the ninth century was apparently prompted by a miracle involving St James himself, something likely to bestow a special meaning for pilgrims. Later, Alfonso X, as in other locations such as Villasirga to the west, seems to have deliberately promoted the role of the Virgin over and above that of St James. In no less than four of the king's *cantigas* or songs, she is revealed, through a series of miraculous interventions, to be the key divine

presence in the thirteenth century rebuilding of this church (Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 206).

The importance of this quarter as a stop-off before the town of Castrojeriz is illustrated by the route of the Camino by the church, the form of the square (if preserving an earlier spatial pattern), and the presence of a water source. Together these suggest a place of assembly and congregation for pilgrims. The mid-fourteenth century hospital, run by the Cofradia de Nuestra Señora del Manzano (Martínez Díez 1998: 233-4), was an additional resource that, in the light of spreads of rubble and low sections of walling, may have been located immediately to the north-east of the church.

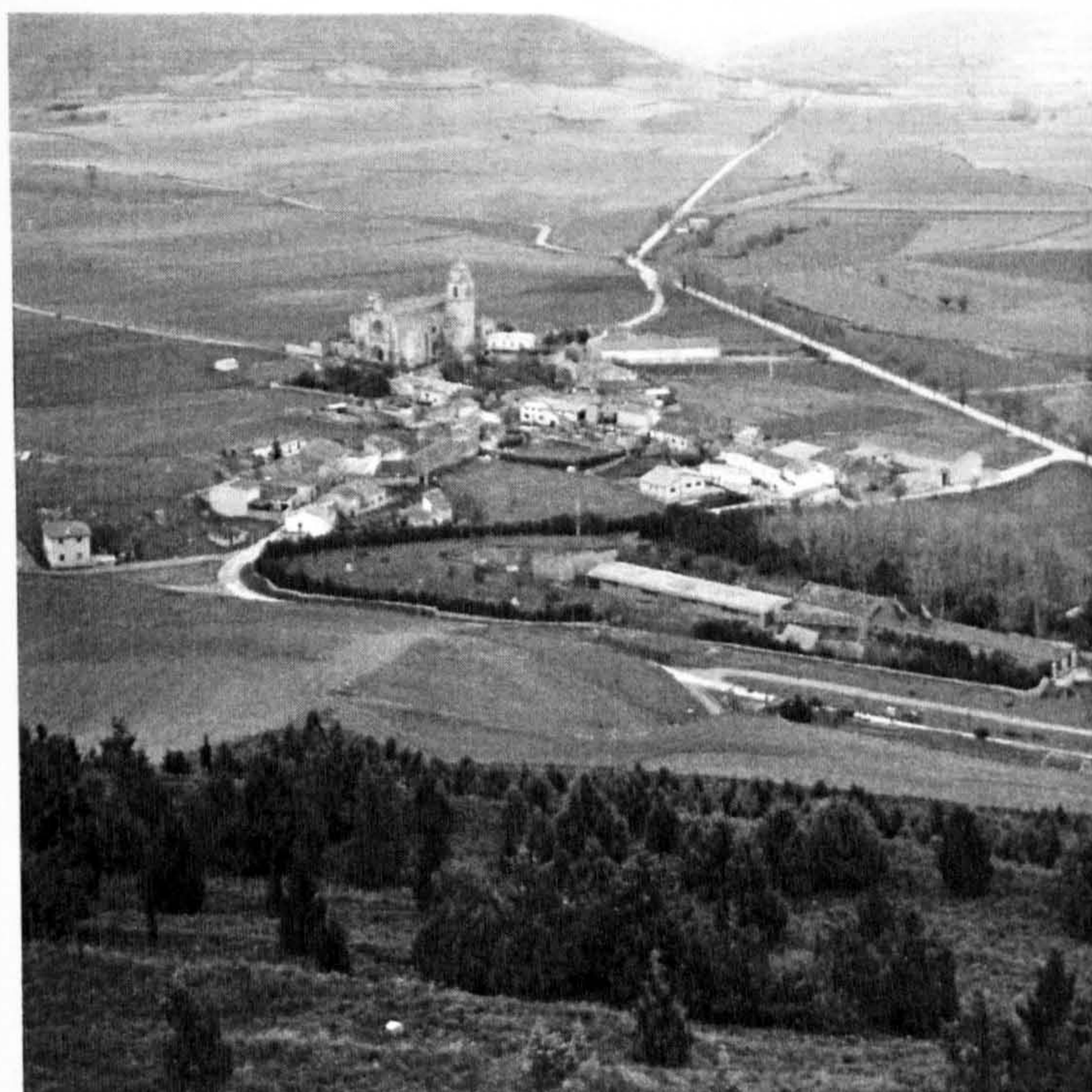


Figure 4.45: Quarter of Santa Maria del Manzano from above. The Camino is visible running from the top right of the photo (from the valley of San Anton) cutting diagonally across and then turning sharply at the base of the hill.

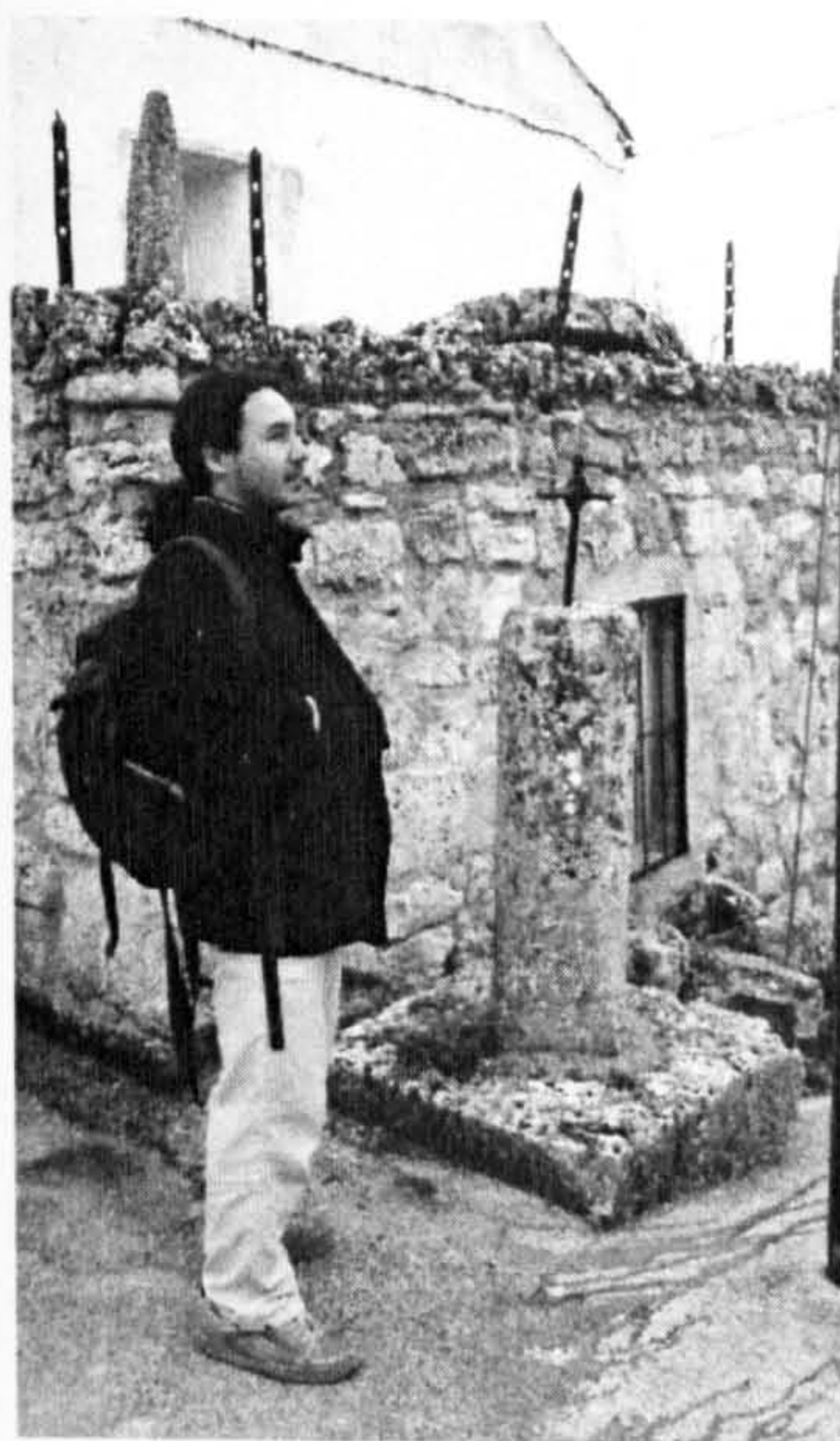


Figure 4. 46: A cross-base of unknown date marks the end of the quarter of Santa Maria

The earliest pilgrims journeying through Castrojeriz in the late ninth and early tenth century would have found a small settlement recovering from Muslim attack and abandonment. Expansion, population growth and building projects between the tenth and thirteenth century and the role of the city as a royal residence in the later eleventh century, put Castrojeriz almost on a par with Burgos in terms of scale and status. By the opening decades of the thirteenth century, eight churches had been built and a circuit of walls enclosing thirty hectares had been constructed (Martínez Díez 1998: 234; figure 4.47). The masses of pilgrims passing through Castrojeriz during the central Middle Ages would have found a busy, populous urban scene, noisy with the sounds of construction.

The main street that runs through this walled city was known as the Calle Real, the Calle Francesca or the Camino Real de Peregrinos, the latter two names illustrating its clear association with the Jacobean route. However, the road that turns downhill and skirts the walls to the south, below the “long city”, was also called the Camino de los Francéses. This suggests an alternative route for pilgrims that bypassed the city, skirting the southerly city gates on the right hand side, and, from the mid 1320s onward, passing the convent of San Francisco to the left (Martínez Díez 1998: 232). Pilgrims approaching the Puerta Barlada, the gate into Castrojeriz, thus may have exercised personal choice. Perhaps some did not need the facilities of the town or, perhaps the convent of San Francisco offered alternative assistance.

On the other hand, certain pilgrims may have been barred from entering the town. As discussed previously, walls and city gates imply surveillance and the monitoring of those coming and going. Is it possible that some individuals were prevented access owing to disease or status, particularly given the laws of exclusion applied to lepers? Or could the sheer volume of pilgrims during the summer months have placed strain on the town, forcing some to avoid Castrojeriz and continue on their way?

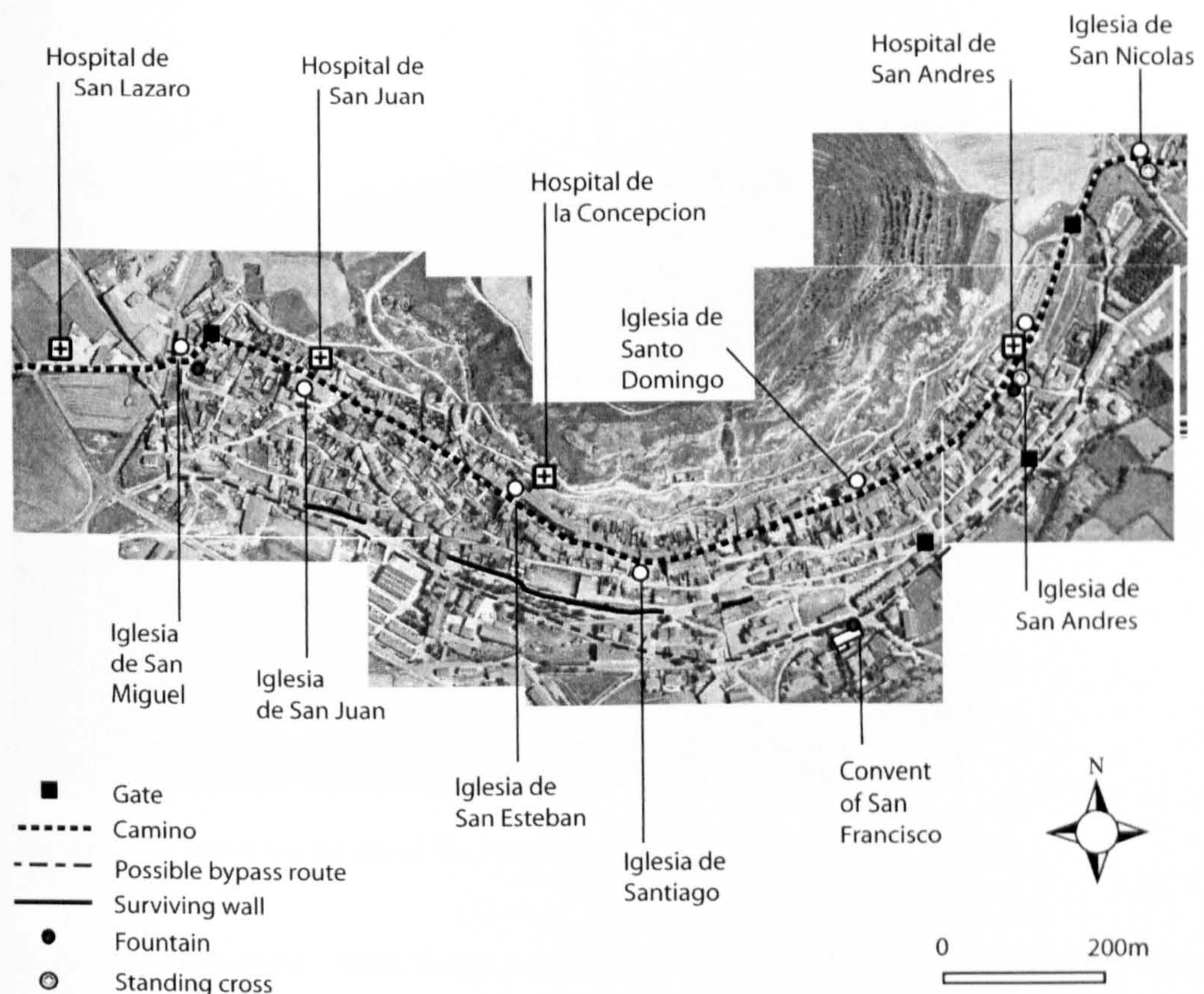


Figure 4.47: Plan of Castrojeriz showing identifiable medieval elements (information from Martínez Díez 1998: 250; background image from www.sigpac.mapa.es/fega/visor).

The hospital of San Andrés, founded sometime before 1500 on the probable site of an earlier church, is one of six urban hospitals that existed in Castrojeriz during the later medieval and early modern period (Martínez Díez 1998: 236). As elsewhere, the siting of such institutions within the urban landscape is intriguing and sheds light on social concerns and attitudes to pilgrims. Like in Hornillos, and indeed other medieval urban contexts (Gilchrist 1994), a hospital by the gate or on the city wall could simultaneously display the charity and piety of the town and attract

alms, while for the residents of the town, its position at the settlement edge may have emphasised the marginality of those taking refuge inside. Other hospitals, however, occupied much more central positions, such as that of San Juan, founded around 1400. In contrast, the city leprosarium of San Lázaro stood well outside the city, 140m beyond the western gate on the road towards Castrillo Matajudios (Martínez Díez 1998: 241), again, a clear physical removal of the shameful presence of this disease.



Figure 4. 48: Surviving facade of the hospital of San Andres

Surviving documents from these hospitals, albeit from a much later period, also suggest attitudes regarding identity. Each institution had very specific roles in terms of whom they cared for with duties of care expressed according to the sex and status of the patient. The hospital of San Juan for instance, by the eighteenth century, admitted men only and had six beds; three designated for *pobres* and *menesterosos* (the poor and those in need), and three for *transeúntes romeros a Santiago* (transient pilgrims to Santiago) (quoted in Martínez Díez 1998: 239). Identity could obviously be fixed according to status as a local or transient, while the need to allocate beds might indicate an element of competition between the different sectors.

6. Castrojeriz to the river Pisuerga

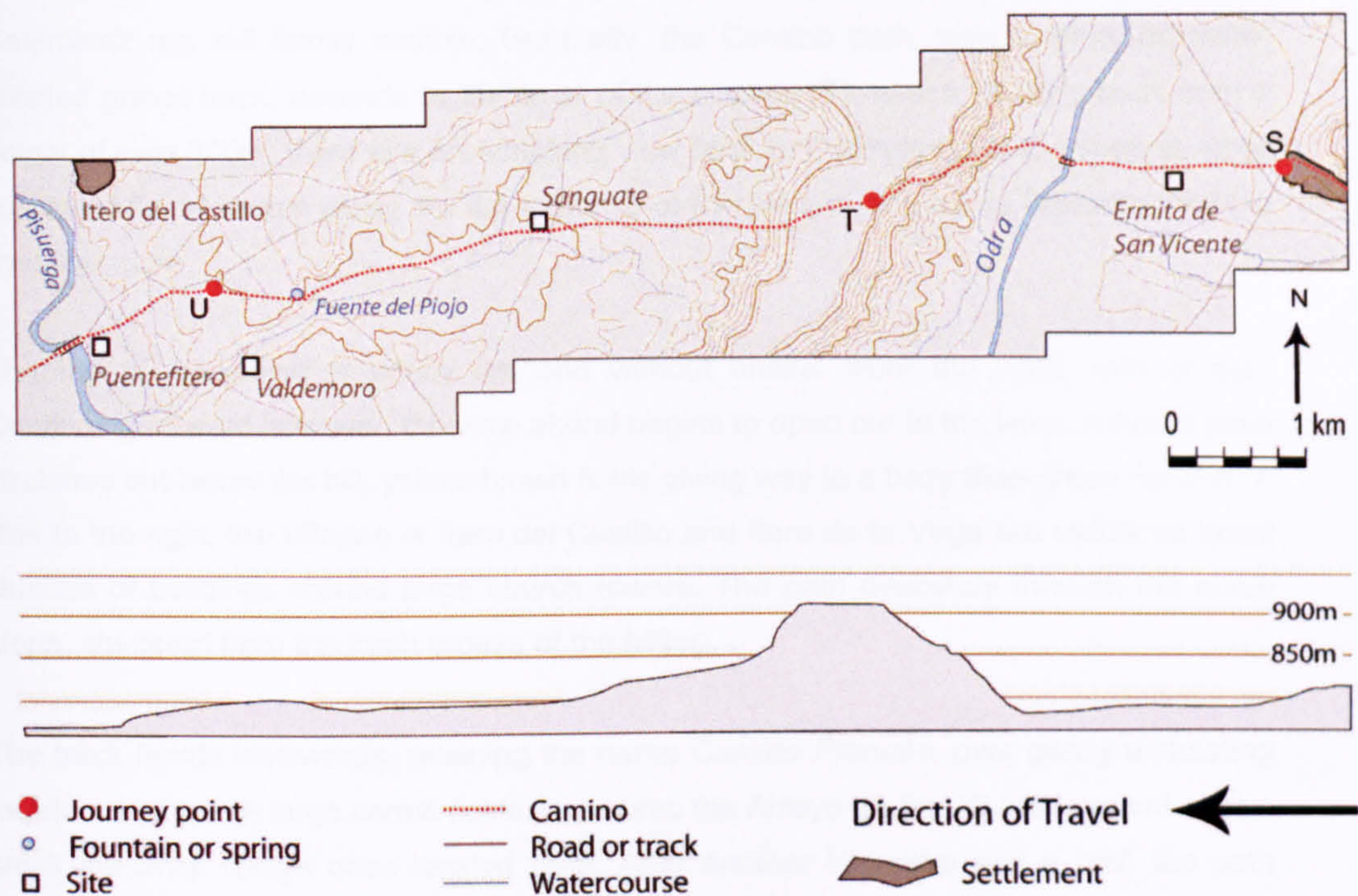


Figure 4. 49: Castrojeriz to the river Pisuerga

S: Here, with a left turn from the Calle Real, the road descends the lower slope, past *bodegas* (wine cellars) and crumbling adobe buildings. Around here, the Puerta de San Miguel formed the western exit from the medieval walled space. A church of this name used to stand just beyond the gate, where now, there is a small triangular plaza. A fountain still stands on the site of an older one. Descending, the path is finally beyond the “long town” of Castrojeriz. Ahead, the route is clearly visible, crossing the fields of the Rio Odra flood plain. The old leprosarium used to stand nearby on the road leading away to the north-west. The medieval Ermita de San Vicente also once stood along the path here. Continuing, the Camino dips below the level of the fields. With open views to the left and right, the deserted hamlet of Taberna and the villages of Castrillo Matajudios and Hinestrosa are visible, while ahead, the view is dominated by the large flat-topped mesa of Mostelares. The Camino track is visible, ascending the steep slope like a bright scar against the dull, green-brown scrub.

Continuing, a wide Roman causeway raises the track above the low river terrace and leads to a bridge that crosses the Rio Odra. The size of the slope ahead becomes more apparent.

The steep slope of Mostelares is marked with deep grooves where rainwater has incised the clay subsoil. The ascent is steep and cyclists dismount. From here the church bells of Castrojeriz are still faintly audible. Gradually, the Camino path, now a wide, machine-levelled gravel track, ascends to the crest of the plateau (T), where, looking back from a height of over 900m, there is a breathtaking view back to Castrojeriz. At the summit, large cultivated fields stretch along the flat expanse of the plateau and some lichenated rubble lines the route.

The top of the mesa is utterly flat and without shelter from the wind, rain or sun. Continuing forward however, the view ahead begins to open out to the west. A broad plain stretches out below the hill, yellow-brown fields giving way to a hazy blue-green horizon. A little to the right, the villages of Itero del Castillo and Itero de la Vega are visible as small clusters of buildings around large church towers. The path descends through the scrub slope, sheltered from the fresh breeze of the hilltop.

The track heads westwards, retaining the name *Camino Francés*, over gently undulating terrain and through large cereal fields. It crosses the Arroyo de San Guate, named after a small medieval village once located here. After another kilometre and a half, the path reaches the modern concrete rest area of Fuente Piojo (fountain of the flea or louse), situated on a small crest to the north of a minor stream. From here there are impressive views to the south east, and of the various tracks crossing the valley. Just another kilometre further, the Camino passes through the site of another former medieval hamlet named Valdemoro.

From Fuente Piojo, the path continues, descending gradually. From point U, the former iglesia de San Nicolas comes into view, to the left of the road. This is the sole surviving structure of the village of Puente Fitero. A long bridge is visible just beyond, crossing the river. Several tracks converge just before the bridging point. A hospital run by the Order of San Juan used to be located in the vicinity, most likely on the other side of the bridge (Martínez Díez 1998: 248).



Figure 4. 50: Looking west on the Camino out of Castrojeriz

Analysis

The city wall, the gate, the presence of extra-mural religious buildings, the fountain and the views ahead present a distinctive “zone of transition” through which the pilgrim had to move in order to resume his or her journey. This area effectively defined the city limits and may have represented something of a liminal area, tarnished with an association with leprosy. The obvious trajectory of the path here, heading due west, may, though, have prompted a degree of navigational security for pilgrims heading out of Castrojeriz. For weary pilgrims today, the appearance of the path, heading relentlessly up the next hill, is a foreboding sight.

No architectural trace remains of the hermitage although some possibly medieval sherds were observed amid the background scatter of Roman material indicating that, as elsewhere, a more detailed collection and analysis would be fruitful here.

This path follows a well established and clearly important Roman route that led from the city, through the fields, over the marshes and river, and to the slopes of Mostelares, where a thick stratum of mica was mined (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 206; figure 4.50-4.52). The use of this route during the medieval period, and its association with the pilgrimage, is apparent by the former presence of the hermitage, the remains of a twelfth-century bridge and the preserved name *Camino*

Francés over the páramo. In the seventeenth century, Domenico Laffi records “..we crossed over a great bridge and climbed up a high mountain” (quoted in Bravo Lozano 1991: 136).



Figure 4. 51: The Roman causeway from the south-east

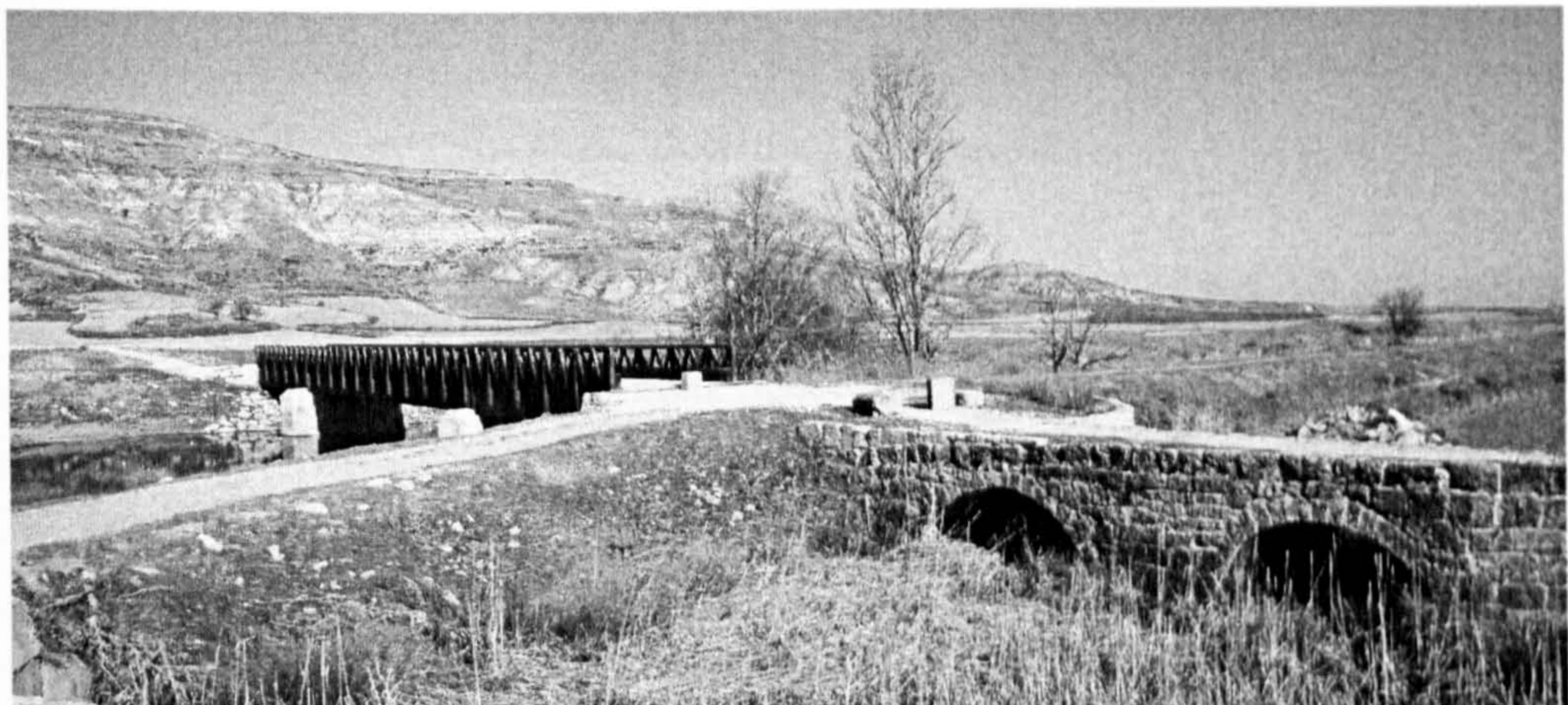


Figure 4. 52: Two surviving twelfth century bridge arches and the modern bridge over the Odra

However, to the modern eye, there is something strange about the relentless westward trajectory of this path, heading straight up the steep slope of the *páramo*. By just a short detour to the north-west via the village of Castrillo Matajudios and the addition of a mere two thousand metres to the journey, the walker can completely avoid any strenuous uphill effort (figure 4.53 and 4.54). Yet, there is no firm evidence to indicate that medieval pilgrims travelled this way. Until 1835, Castrillo Matajudios was regarded as just a district of Castrojeriz, and apparently “attracted neither the attention nor the interest of pilgrims” (Martínez Díez 1998:

245). It does not appear on any of the documented itineraries of pilgrims, nor does it exhibit the classic linear pattern of some other Camino-settlements. In fact, the only possible indication of a link with the Jacobean route is the existence of a former hospital for *transeúntes* (vagrants or travellers) in the village (Martínez Díez 1998: 246), something that, on its own, is not a firm pointer to the presence of the pilgrim route. Another alternative may have been to take a path around the south of Mostelares, although this represents a much longer journey. Perhaps the only hint that one of these paths may have been used by pilgrims is the seemingly detached place name Camino Francés, between two tracks heading from the south of the mesa towards the Pisuerga.

Hence, while it is possible that a few pilgrims may have diverted from the main path in order to seek assistance in other villages such as Castrillo Matajudios, or to follow alternative tracks, it seems that the principal, authentic route was the uphill stretch over Mostelares. The causeway and bridge might have made this a sensible choice in the marshy flats of the flood plain, yet anyone suffering even the most minor ache or pain would find the subsequent slope hard going. This is a puzzle for those contemplating this part of the route today and indeed the ascent is such that walkers climb 800m in little more than one kilometre.



Figure 4. 53: Routes west from Castrojeriz.

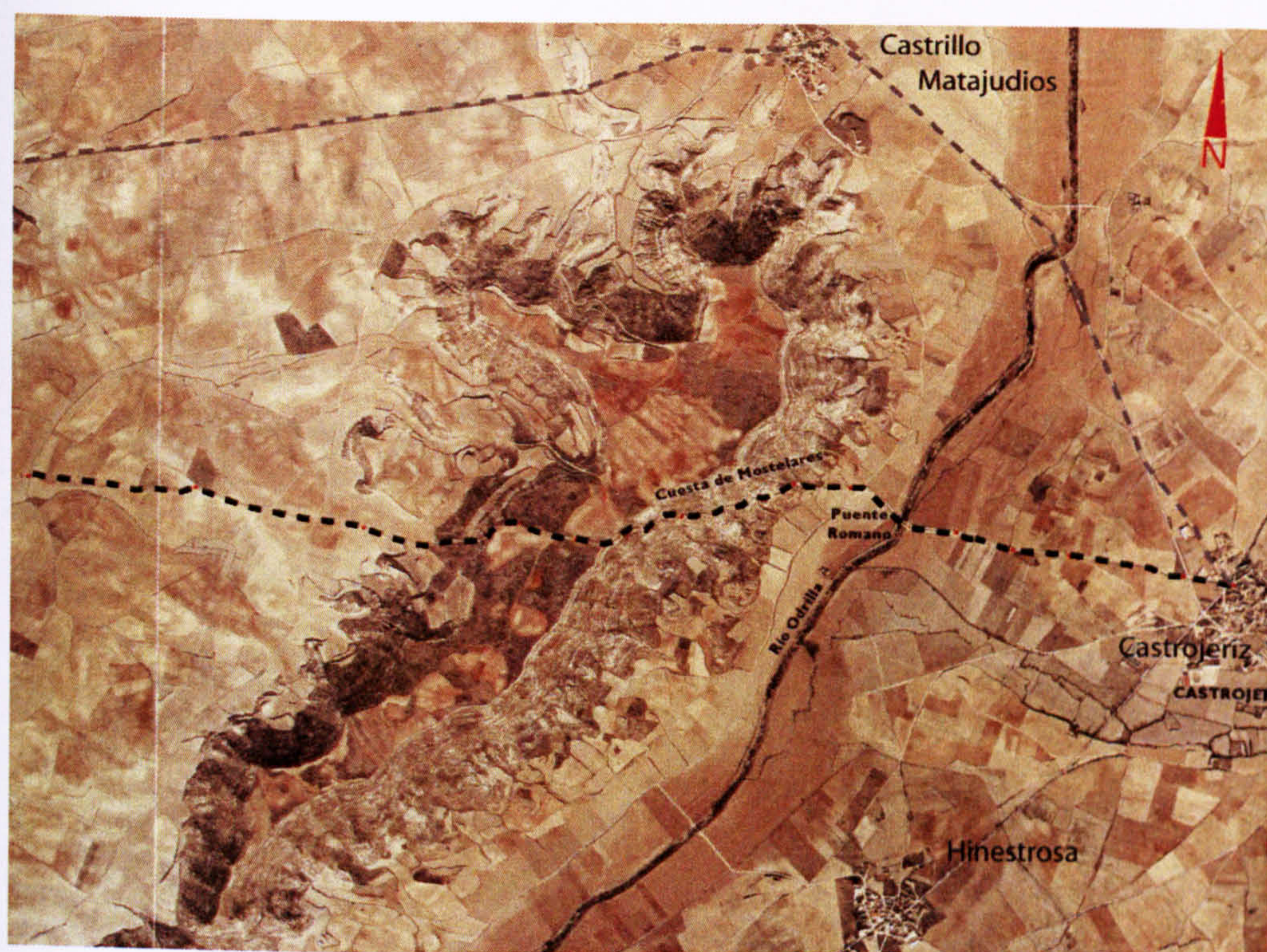


Figure 4. 54: Aerial review of the routes from Castrojeriz (background image reproduced from Lombo López 1999: Plate 22).

The solution to comprehending the local configuration of the route might well rest in considering the medieval conception of pilgrimage. Rather than a simple act of travelling from one place to another, in which efficiency was the priority, pilgrimage, for many, was an act of penance in which the hardship of the journey was conceived as integral to the search for salvation. It was meant to be difficult, to the extent that suffering was to be applauded; Margery Kempe, for instance, repeatedly draws attention to the extent of her misery and affliction during her pilgrimages, aware that her bodily suffering (or at least its presentation to others) enhanced her connection to the divine (Kempe 1994). The difficult slope here thus could have presented the material prop for the enactment of hardship; the archetype of which was Christ ascending Calvary, bearing the weight of the cross.

The view from this hill is a memorable experience for those crossing this region today. The town of Castrojeriz, having been such a striking presence in the landscape for the last five kilometres is visibly and audibly distant from here and, with just a few minutes walk to the west, disappears from view entirely. As in

other crucial parts of the route, this point in the landscape promotes a sensation of forward movement and progression.



Figure 4. 55: Climbing Mostelares and looking back to Castrojeriz

It is likely that the natural aridity of this mesa configured it as a fairly barren, non-productive zone in pre-modern periods. The topographical change as the path descends into the broad valley of the Pisuerga means that again, unlike in other, previous segments of the route, the view ahead is clear. Interrupting the vast horizon, the large church towers of the villages may be interpretable as beacons in the landscape, landmarks that visually accompany the traveller over the next kilometres.

Continued agricultural use of the fertile zone west of Mostelares seems to have eradicated physical traces of past landscapes. Little is known about the hamlets that existed along this part of the route and no surface material was observed in the fields, although, again, this observation derives only from a brief, non-systematic walk-over in the area of the stream; the Arroyo de San Guate. While local paths connecting these settlements may have determined the original configuration of the medieval route, it is likely that by the late Middle Ages, these settlements had already disappeared. Laffi records this area as “a wide open plain [that is] absolutely barren” (Laffi 1681: 144).

The water sources available at the fountain and minor streams in this zone were likely to be useful points for pilgrims after the dry expanse of Mostelares, although again, it is possible that in the arid summer months, water was a limited resource. Anecdotally, the name of the fountain is attributed to the efforts of pilgrims to rid themselves of parasites (Arribas Briones 1995: 53), a tradition that, again, recalls Margery Kempe's observations quoted above about her fellow, flea-ridden travellers.

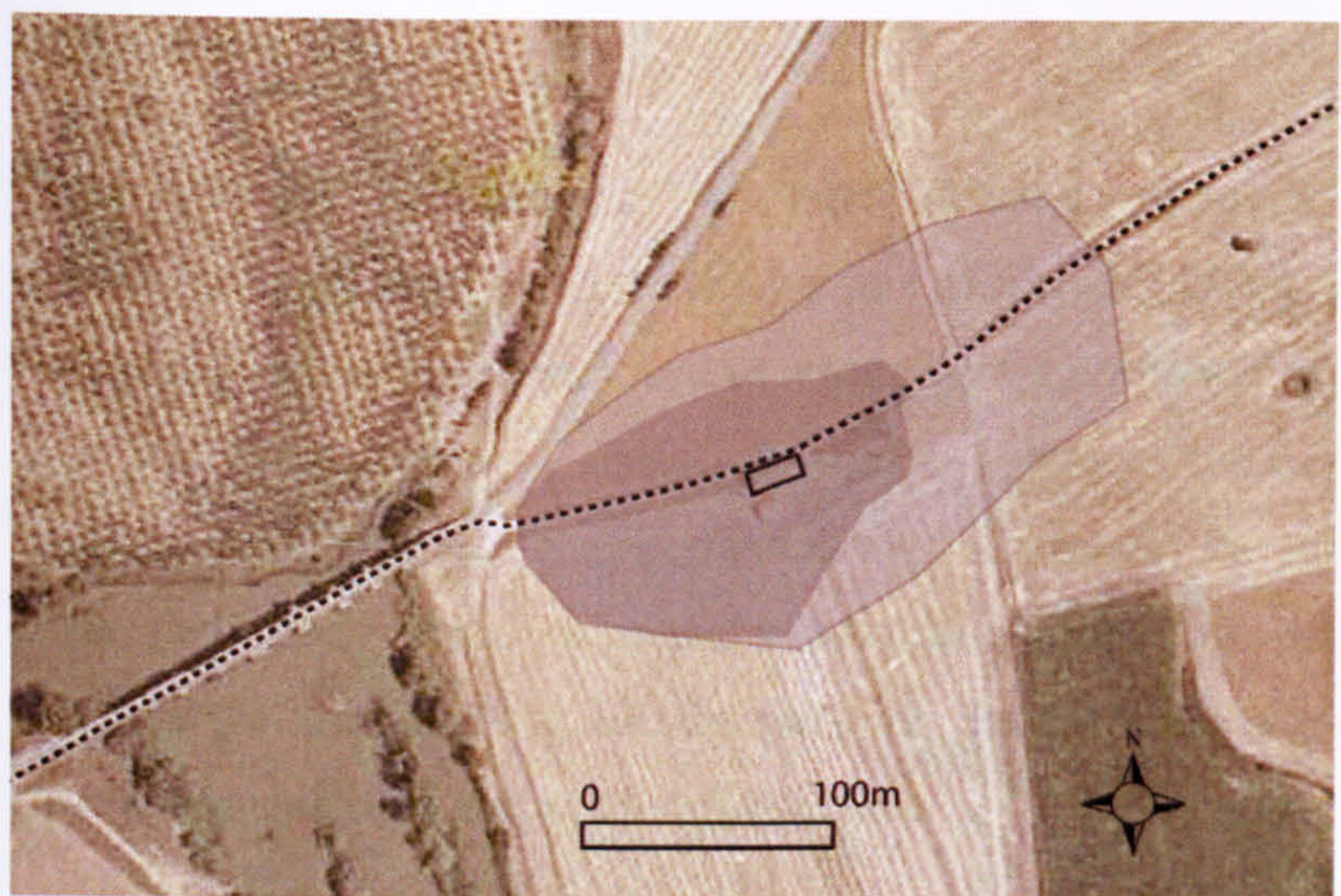
This final part of the Study Area coincides with the last part of the route to be located in the modern province of Burgos, and the old medieval county of Castile. Infrastructural development began here during the latter decades of the eleventh century when Alfonso VI commissioned the long eleven-arched bridge, an ambitious construction that receives comment in all the main historical pilgrimage accounts from the twelfth century Pilgrim's Guide to Laffi's seventeenth century journal. It is difficult to know whether its placement was determined by a pre-existing fording point (owing to a meander to the north, the river is more shallow and slow-moving here) or whether it was a new site; a construction that altered a pre-existing route. It is possible, for instance, that prior to this period, pilgrims journeyed through the town of Itero de Castillo, just a kilometre to the north, first mentioned in the final decades of the tenth century.

Whichever scenario, the bridge funnelled pilgrim traffic through this specific part of the landscape and was presumably the key factor in the development of a village named for the bridge and for its position on the border of Castile; Puentefero (*Puente* meaning bridge, and *Fitero* denoting frontier). First recorded in the early twelfth century, and apparently abandoned during the sixteenth, a dense scatter of tile and pottery extending from the church as far east as the road junction indicates what was likely to have been the settlement's core, straddling the road immediately before the bridge. It seems likely that a settlement here could have put the pilgrimage traffic to its own advantage. The church itself clearly displays a number of different phases within its fabric, the projected height of the arches indicating that, previously, it had been a much more substantial, and ornate building. There is some confusion in the literature regarding the existence of a

medieval hospital in this settlement with many commentaries associating it with the church. Martínez Díez's appraisal of the documents suggests, however, that it was more likely to have been located on the other side of the river, just inside the province of Palencia. Nevertheless, the pairing of a hospice and a bridge is a feature repeated elsewhere along the route such as in León and in Issoudon in France, Zubiri in Navarre (Shaver-Crandall and Gerson 1995: 204-5) and elsewhere in Medieval Europe (Gilchrist 1995: 51-4). As we have already seen, these two elements could complement each other, both catering for the specific needs of pilgrims, and it is probable that, at such a crucial location, the hospital benefited from alms-giving. Together, the bridge, settlement and hospital present a classic example of the pilgrimage to Santiago giving rise to the florescence of infrastructure and determining the course of the local geography.



Figure 4. 56: The Ermita de San Nicolas, the Camino and the bridge



----- Camino Ermita de San Nicolas Most dense zone of pottery/ tile Approximate extent of pottery/ tile

Figure 4. 57: Approximate extent of material associated with the former village of Puenteñitero (background image reproduced from www.sigpac.mapa.es/fega/visor).

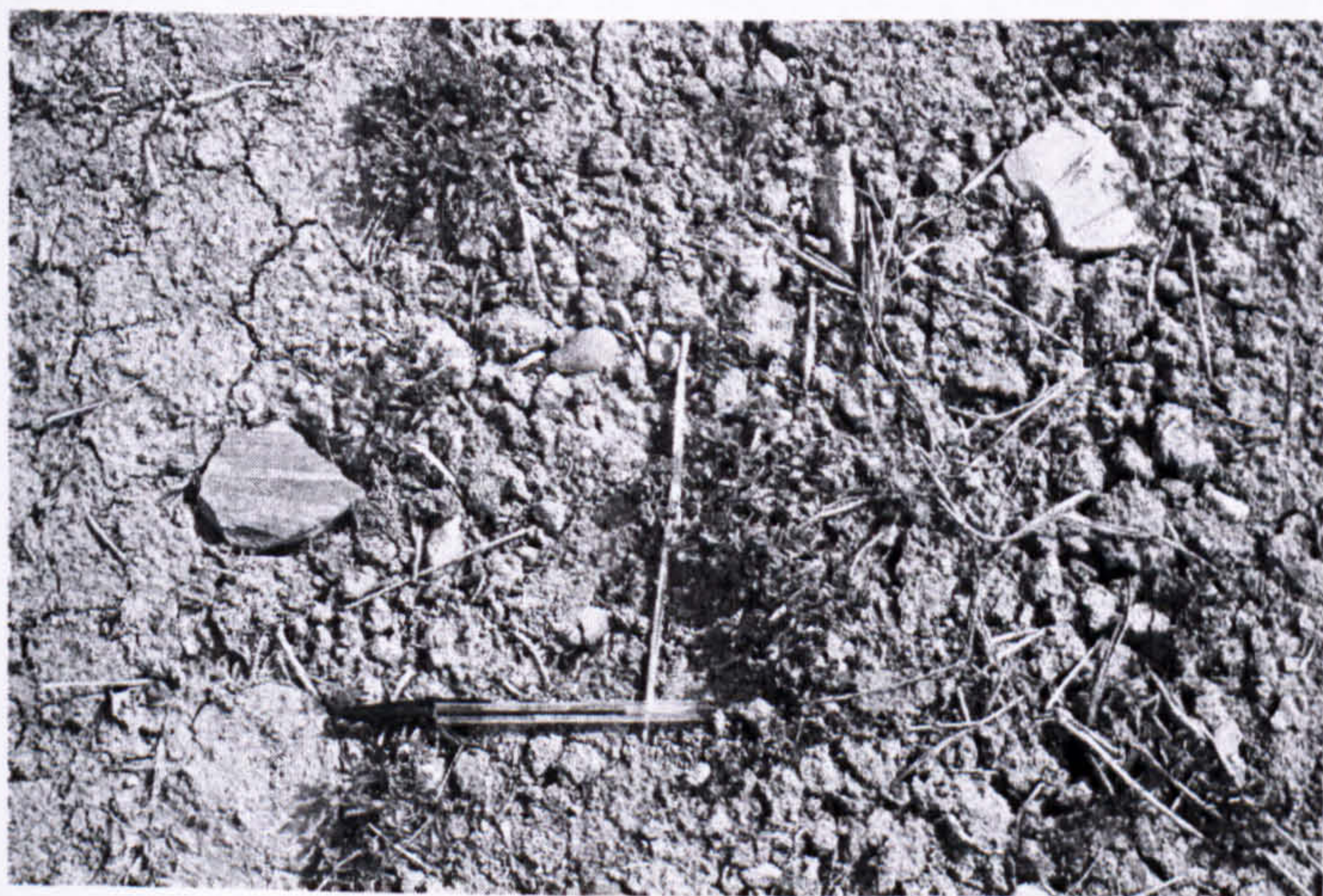


Figure 4. 58: Surface material; Puenteñitero



Figure 4. 59: The bridge over the Pisuerga (reproduced from www.caminosantiago.org/cpperegrino/cppoblaciones/cpburgos/puentefitero.html).

4.5 Discussion

Three main research questions were posed at the beginning of this chapter. How did medieval pilgrims envision the Meseta landscape? What kind of impact did they make on this landscape? And to what extent does surviving material culture in this Study Area expose social dynamics between transient pilgrims, local inhabitants and ecclesiastical communities. Fortunately, the sum of the evidence from this Study Area provides a wealth of data on these questions and demonstrates that, in the main, the route set out for walkers today replicates that travelled by pilgrims during the Middle Ages.

Perception of the Landscape

Landscape was a powerful tool in the medieval fashioning of sacredness. In paintings, frescoes and illuminations, the juxtaposition of rocky wildernesses framing central images of water, trees, grottos or gardens suggested paradise, completeness and solitary contemplation (Howe 2002: 210; Wamberg 1999: 70). In hagiographical literature, the portrayal of ascetic perfection was accomplished through vivid accounts of barren desert wastelands that served to symbolise Christian withdrawal from the secular and sinful world (Goehring 2003). Meanwhile, the actual physical contours of the terrain of Medieval Europe could be shaped and interpreted so as to accentuate religious authenticity and Christian values. Remote caves, hilltops and forests were exhibited as the tangible evidence of past lives spent in divine contemplation and isolation (Howe 2002: 213; Arnold 2000), while monastic estates were built and described as enclaves of lush fruitfulness and peace; small reenactments of paradise rendered so either by the will of God, or through near-miraculous saintly toil like at Reichenau in southern Germany; “in a short time what was deformed became straight, what was uncultivated became pleasant, what was foul became beautiful” (quoted in Howe 2002: 212-3). Landscape, in other words, was a device integral to the artistic, literary and physical construction of medieval spirituality with specific topographic elements actively signalling particular associations. Both the *locus amoenus* (beautiful place) and its direct opposite, the blighted *locus horribilis*,

constituted “awesome landscapes” in which spiritual merit could be discovered (Howe 2002: 210).

It is logical therefore that the symbolic power attributed to landscape in the medieval world pervaded Christian consciousness so that pilgrims who had set out on long journeys to distant shrines were susceptible to associating the places and vistas that they encountered with certain spiritual messages. I argue here that the landscape of the Meseta supplied the natural ingredients of the imagined, mythic desert and, once conceived in this way, became an arena in which pilgrims could reenact the themes of exile, hardship, suffering and salvation familiar to them through the traditions and stories of the Desert Fathers.

The inauspicious and hostile wilderness was, after all, an especially popular image during the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Gilchrist 1995: 157-8; Howe 2002: 212). It had gained potency from the late antique period onwards when hagiographical authors, wishing to exhort the saintliness of their subjects, borrowed from biblical verse and sent them, in narrative terms, deep into remote and barren wastelands and into truly mythic realms inhabited by obscure anchorites and fabled creatures that signalled proximity to the ends of the earth. Athanasius’ “Life of St Anthony”, Jerome’s “Life of St Paul” and the Coptic “Life of Omnophrius” offer exemplars of the ascetic ideal, securely linking the theme of angelic saintliness with an imagined desert landscape that existed beyond the reach of this world (Goehring 2003: 443-4).

Although a far cry from the vast tracts of Saharan desert that formed the historical reality behind these fantastical accounts, the Meseta landscape during early to mid-summer (when the majority of pilgrims would have been on the road) presents, nonetheless, a physically challenging, arid environment. If travelling east to west along the Camino, the topography promotes a certain bodily encounter with place and it becomes possible to define a more precise “phenomenology of the route”. The path follows a trajectory that involves a series of climbs, descents and, certainly in the eastern half of the Study Area, brief encounters with water sources. Enclosed, nucleated valley settlements rapidly come into, and pass out of, view, and contrast with the empty plains which are flat, featureless, and visually

comparable to desert panoramas, particularly in the scorched summer months. Shelter is hard to come by and, with few landmarks on the horizon, there is a sense of unending space. Although the experience of the terrain also depends upon a range of individual factors such as age and ability, in general terms, the physical, walking body is put to the test.

Conceptually too, this landscape was interpretable as a fearful wilderness. Post-Romantic ideas about “the great outdoors”, leisure pursuits and the picturesque simply did not figure in medieval imaginations. Rather, large swathes of open space beyond village territories were regarded with distrust, or feared as the abode of wolves, bandits, demons or the restless dead (Fumagalli 1994). The unquantifiable plains of the Meseta across which wolves roamed, thus, from the start presented a fearful aspect for those unfamiliar with the land, and elements of traditional fears surface in later accounts. Laffi, whose journal is otherwise rather upbeat, dedicates a disproportionate quantity of space deriding this zone, his abhorrence clear from the repetitive use of vocabulary such as “deserted waste land” (1681: 144).

Both practically and conceptually then, this landscape was mimetic of a particular spiritual model; the *locus horribilis*, and potentially provided the template for pilgrims envisioning themselves on an ascetic desert journey. Clearly, not all shared the same motives for travel, much less a single, common religious purpose (Webb 2002: 44). However, as discussed in chapter 1.3, the very act of being on pilgrimage derived from deeply-rooted notions about exile, sojourns in foreign lands, the metaphor of the road, and the life of Christ himself. Conceptually, the journey was crucial to the sacred project as a whole.

The Meseta forms an environment, therefore, where physical landscape, imaginary landscape, and medieval Christian theology intersect. The complex way in which place is encountered, as discussed above in chapter 2.2, suggests, moreover that medieval pilgrims did not distinguish between the three; a phenomenon also apparent in Martin and Kryst’s work on modern Marian apparition sites in the USA; “In their descriptions pilgrims do not separate the materiality of the site (its vistas, location and topography) from its feeling of holiness or closeness to Mary”

(1998: 210). The Meseta landscape was not compartmentalised into different classes of experience, nor into 'sacred and profane', but inherently contained a network of ideas; precisely the point which landscape theorists insist upon (Johnston 1998). Meanwhile, the pilgrim encounter and experience with landscape served to ritualise their enactment of the journey, so that it became a performance, an acting out of particular ideas. This bodily engagement with place allows the material culture in this zone to be interpreted in a much more specific and dynamic way and in a manner that emphasises the difference between medieval and modern perceptions. Water sources such as at San Bol, or at San Anton were not merely useful nodal points for the physiological body, but could be viewed as God-given oases in a spiritual and physical desert. The monastery of San Anton not only recalled the original desert ascetic in name, but also encoded the idea of sanctity in the wilderness through a variety of built and topographic elements and references. Finally, roads that headed relentlessly up steep slopes, as at Mostelares, may have supplied the physical arena for ritualised pilgrim bodies to equate their suffering with that of perpetually travelling exiles, or even of Christ himself, seeking the path to redemption.

Impact of the pilgrimage: medieval pilgrims and the local landscape

The practical implications of this process on the Meseta landscape forms the subject matter of the second objective for this chapter. Fieldwork makes it abundantly clear that the coalescence of the route through this area had a radical impact on the configuration of the local landscape with the available evidence indicating that a "full pilgrimage landscape" (including a principal routeway, villages, leprosuria, hospitals, bridges etc.) had emerged by the early to mid twelfth century. Of the total ensemble of material and infrastructural elements, little can be attributed directly to the actions of the pilgrims themselves. Other than the physical erosion of the paths, particularly on slopes such as Cuesta Matamulos, and perhaps the piece-meal construction of stone way-marking cairns, as on the *páramo* west of Hornillos, the transformation of this zone occurred via other peoples' response to their presence. For this reason, it is more logical to consider the impact of the pilgrimage on the landscape within a wider discussion on identities and social dynamics below. The third research objective, in seeking a

deeper insight into interactions, encounters and relationships in this landscape, presupposed three broad, (although not homogeneous) identities in this zone during the medieval period; the inhabitants, the pilgrims and the ecclesiastical communities. The following paragraphs will consider the first two groups while the religious orders will be discussed later within a separate section.

Recent historical scholarship paints an interesting picture of rural society in medieval and post-medieval Castile. In line with the current archaeological emphasis on mobility and agency across landscapes, historical research explodes the myth of the inert, rooted and static villager, cut off from and ignorant of the wider world, and demonstrates instead that the Castilian peasantry maintained a host of inter-regional connections. Trade, social networks, labour patterns, itinerant craft work, temporary exiles and “endless currents of migration” prompted by historical factors such as the southward drive of the Reconquest, economic circumstance or epidemics resulted in a surprisingly high degree of geographical mobility amongst the rural population (Vassberg 1996: 68). Hence, rather than imagining those who lived in this area as permanently confined to the villages, it is important to envisage them as mobile agents. The rural inhabitants dwelt not only in Hornillos, La Nuez and Hontanas etc., but traversed the roads and paths, tended the fields, brought livestock up to pastures and, on certain days of the year, made pilgrimages to local shrines. They knew and inhabited the local landscape in a variety of ways and their presence in the landscape is evidenced through material elements, such as the north-south tracks that connected valley settlements and non-Jacobean religious sites, such as the hermitage of Nuestra Señora de la Espinosa, near Hontanas. Pilgrims, meanwhile, were by definition, strangers to this zone, their knowledge and experience geographically limited to the east-west Camino and road-side facilities and perhaps supplemented only through the hearsay garnered from other pilgrims and travellers. They moved through, and inhabited the landscape in a radically different manner. I argue here that complex attitudes surrounded the temporary presence of pilgrims in village territories and that material culture not only reflects the two contrasting realms of the local inhabitants and pilgrims, but was a key instrument in the expression of social attitudes.

Health, the fear of strangers, charity and the definition of village borders is a recurring theme arising from the historical and archaeological evidence from this Study Area. Historically, the medieval horror of disease is well known and the alarming symptoms of leprosy, typhus, smallpox and “St Anthony’s Fire” were visually and terrifyingly apparent amid the stream of east-west pilgrim traffic surging across northern Spain during the Middle Ages (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 94). Travelling communities, such as pilgrims, were responsible for the spread of diseases that were, in turn, interpreted, as the sure sign of the unfortunate individual’s doubtful spiritual status (Brody 1974). At the end of the eleventh century, for instance, Siegebert of Gembloux described the symptoms of ergotism as a “holy fire” consuming the body from within (Mollat 1986: 63).

Pilgrims therefore, constituted morally dangerous “trespassers on the terrain of the healthy” (Peyroux 2000: 177) and were a threat to the bodily and spiritual welfare of the village. Additionally, fear of the diseased traveller was, no doubt, compounded by the more general distrust of the stranger that is exposed time and again both throughout Medieval Europe (Akehurst and Cain van D’Elden (eds) 1997) and, more specifically, in later medieval and early modern documentary sources from Castile (Vassberg 1996: 11-14). Although not cut off from the outside world, villagers maintained a fierce sense of identity, solidarity and territoriality within their own closely connected, nucleated community that was expressed, in material and landscape terms, through a strong symbolic attachment to the local saint, church, the church bells and a keen awareness of village territory (Vassberg 1996: 12; figure 4.60). This, in turn, fostered a powerful exclusionist and xenophobic attitude towards outsiders, even those who lived nearby. For example, In 1575 the Bishop of Burgos, with presumably exhausted patience, ordered that all villages should hold their processions to shrines on different days so as to avoid violent skirmishes with those from neighbouring settlements (Vassberg 1996: 23).

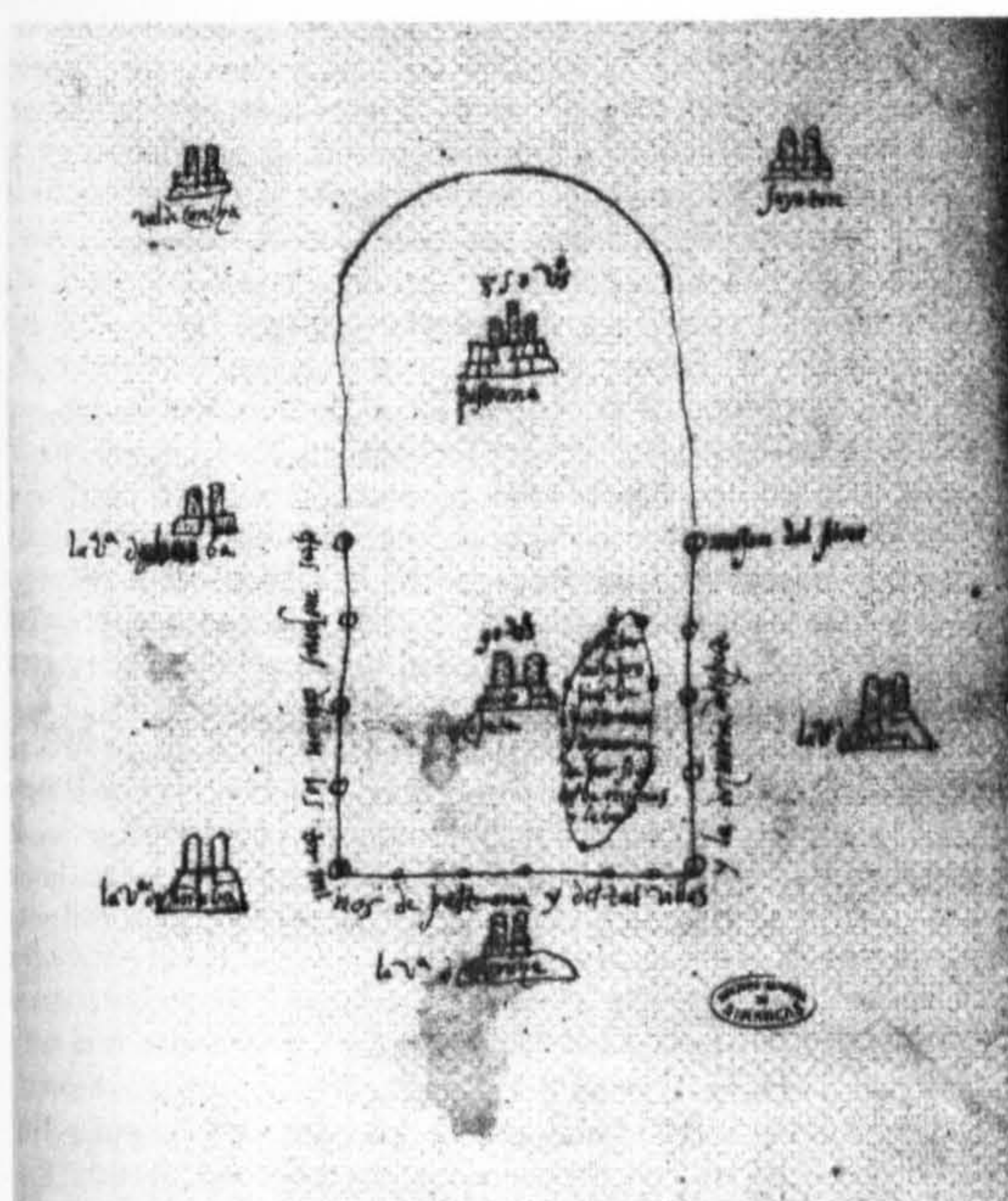


Figure 4. 60: Map of the territorial boundaries of Pastrana (province of Guadalajara) in 1571, showing the clear demarcation of the village in relation to other settlements. The small circular symbols denote mojones – stone boundary cairns (reproduced from Vassberg 1996: 21).

Yet, in spite of this deeply embedded distrust of the foreigner and the horror of the diseased, “polluted” body, the concept of the pauper was integral to medieval ideas of spirituality. Undernourished bodies afflicted with the torments of disease and destitution could be equated with the image of the suffering Christ. Pilgrims frequently cut such figures, and moreover, were attempting to transform body and soul through the long, drawn out ritual of holy travel. Theoretically at least, they were deserving of charity. Charity, in turn, was equated with piety and saintliness. Contemporary popular hagiographic accounts, after all, sealed the holy reputation of saints by recounting in gruesome detail how, in the face of grotesque deformity, they nevertheless, like Christ, stoop to kiss the face of the poor leper (Peyroux 2000; figure 4.61). Paupers and pilgrims alike, therefore, presented an opportunity for the righteous to display fashionable benevolence and to secure their own route to salvation (Vassberg 1996: 163). Suffering bodies were symbolically hijacked as the means to achieve a certain holy kudos.



Figure 4. 61: Christ healing the Leper (reproduced from www.clendening.kumc.edu/dc/rm/major_medieval.htm).

The cultural ambiguity surrounding the perceived status and identity of the pilgrim is expressed by the material culture in this Study Area. Hospitals and leprosaria, for instance, were provided for the sick and needy as the charitable duty of the pious. Located prominently, fronting the Camino, and in some cases, (as in Hornillos and Castrojeriz), lying alongside the town entrance, such institutions clearly displayed the spiritual merit of both the founders and the settlement as a whole. They were conspicuous and their prominence in the local topography no doubt practically aided in the collection of alms and bolstered the number of intercessory prayers offered by those passing through (Gilchrist 1995: 40). Even the leprosaria in this zone, although outside of the settlements, stood along the highway and thus enhanced the image of local charity and devotion.

However the strategic location of these institutions is also indicative of the anxiety felt by local inhabitants in the face of the constant stream of unknown pilgrims and potential harbingers of disease. Anthropologists, archaeologists and historians have noted how fear of the “polluted body” frequently manifests itself in tangible measures to constrain or control the threat and maintain the image of cultural purity within (Gilchrist 1995: 40; Nast and Pile 1998: 5-6; Reyerson 2000). Frequently, the role of boundaries is accentuated both physically and conceptually. In fourteenth century Marseille, for instance, lit candles placed along the length of

the town fortifications were believed to divinely protect against the Black Death (Reyerson 2000: 115).

Within this Study Area, a range of material elements suggest the definition of boundaries that separated the healthy from the unhealthy and the known from the unknown. The hospitals and leprosuria, for instance, located on or beyond the settlement edge emphasised the ultimate marginality of sick pilgrims in terms of local social attitudes. They comprise the tangible signs of a society that sought complete spatial exclusion for the dangerously ill (Brody 1974) and physically denoted the limit of the settlement. Furthermore, from fieldwork in this Study Area, it has been possible to identify clear “zones of transition” in and out of nucleated settlements such as Hornillos del Camino and Hontanas, or more rigidly guarded walled towns such as Castrojeriz. Signalled through a combination of landscape or built elements such as topographical changes, lines of sight, the narrowing of paths, the crossing of bridges, *ejido* (exit) zones, or more obviously, town gates and walls, these material components can be envisaged as being accompanied by techniques of close surveillance from local residents. In such locales, inhabitants may have monitored and possibly prevented the access of pilgrims considered to be a threat. The presence of an alternative road skirting the town of Castrojeriz and the water sources outside of settlements like Hornillos, Sanbol and Hontanas that were explicitly associated with pilgrims may be material correlates of this process.

In the light of the scenario described above, in which there is a clear differentiation between local and pilgrim identities, specific features within the local landscape assume a greater resonance. Hence, prominent landmarks such as the church tower, which encapsulated village identity, were powerful signs of territory, and the otherwise unremarkable spots in the landscape, from where such features either appeared on the horizon, or became audible through the pealing of bells, are therefore similarly important locales. Fieldwork in this zone has identified such possible places, situated at the limits of visual and audible distance of village territories. Additionally, town or village squares may be interpreted as areas of uneasy contact, while hermitages and wayside crosses, like that to the east of

Hontanas, can similarly be assumed as holding quite distinct meanings for local and pilgrim communities.

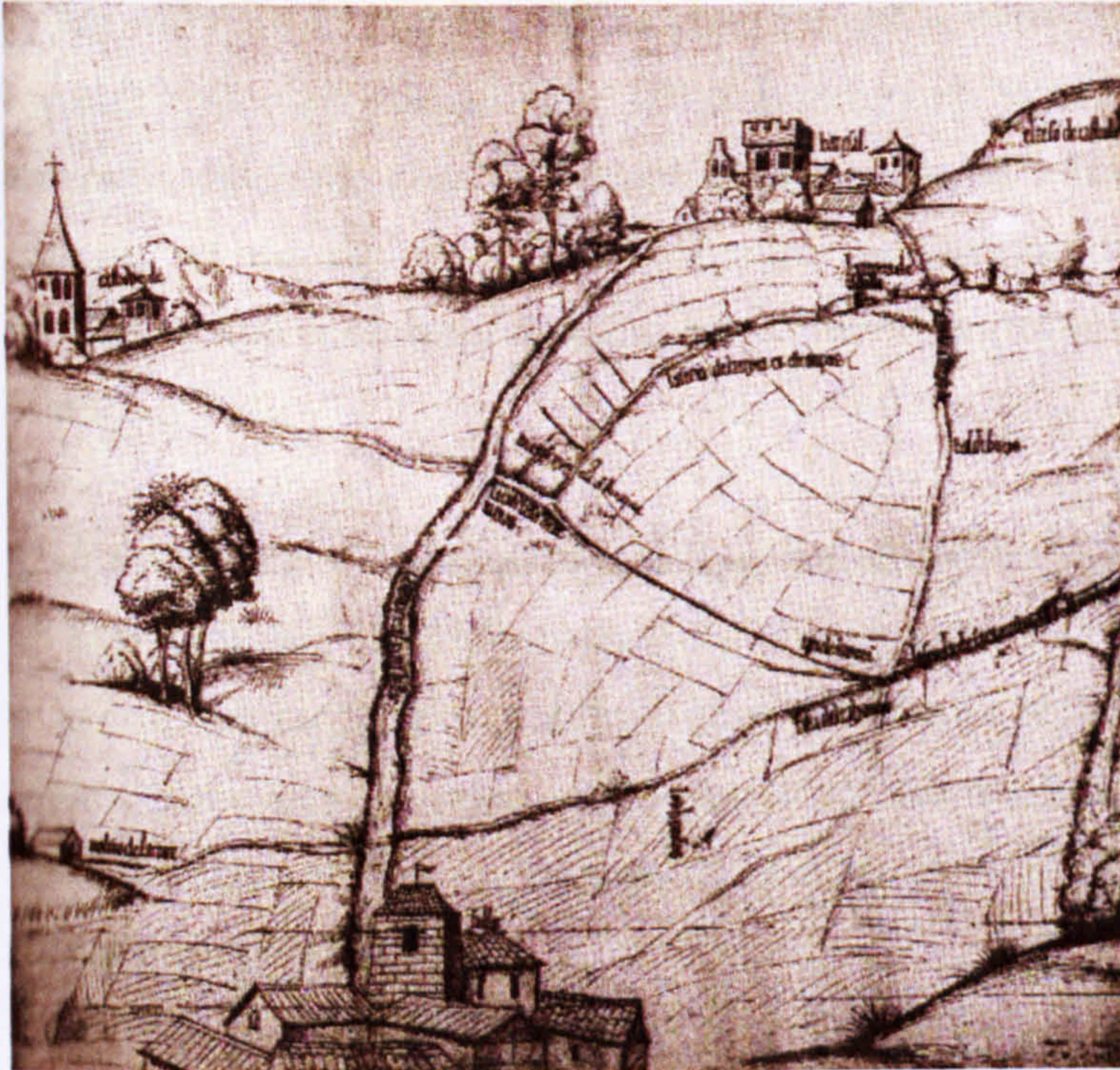


Figure 4. 62: View of the countryside between villages straddling the border of the provinces of Zamora and Valladolid, drawn between 1509 and 1511 (reproduced from Vassberg 1996: 19).

Less apparent in the archaeological record are a range of other possible relationships between villagers and pilgrims. The latter group, for instance, may have been exploited for financial gain. Roads and bridges were often maintained by Castilian citizens who were expected to participate in communal work projects in exchange for a reduction in tax. The spiralling expense of some projects frequently engendered considerable dissatisfaction and prompted some communities to set up road and bridge tolls (Vassberg 1996: 43). Given the excess erosion caused by the ceaseless tramp of pilgrim feet, it is possible that local villagers in this zone, like elsewhere in the region, may have exercised their own judgement in organising impromptu episodes of tax collection. Settlements such as Puenteñero would have been ideally placed for such an enterprise. Likewise, although mobile, pilgrims presented a captive consumer group in that their need for food, water and accommodation was constant. Roadside and village inns

presented local inhabitants with a useful extra income. Traditionally framed as dens of vice, noise, vermin and general squalor (Constable 2003: 15-16; Vassberg 1996: 133), such hostelries probably existed in this Study Area. Arnold von Harff, in his entry for Castrojeriz, makes only the curt remark that “the inns are bad” (quoted in Bravo Lozano 1993: 130). Similarly unquantifiable at this stage is the extent to which the mass movement of people placed a strain on the productive capacity of the region. A potential route in understanding the dynamics of production and consumption might rest in identifying sites of food production in this Study Area.

That said, within this overall negative picture of distrust and exploitation, it might be easy to forget that more happy relations were possible between villagers and pilgrims. Marriage registers at the beginning of the early modern period indicate a higher proportion of marriage to “outsiders” in settlements located on long distance routes such as the Camino de Santiago than in other parts of the region (Vassberg 1996: 99-101).

The ecclesiastical communities

Finally, here, as elsewhere in medieval Spain, the local church and the monastic orders maintained a strong presence in the landscape. The former, represented by lower ranking local clergy were based in the villages and attended to the *cura de las almas*, (curing the soul) and the collection of the *diezmo* (tithe). They were, in a way, part of the fabric of the village society. The monastic orders, parallel institutions to the church, were, however, somewhat removed. In some ways, they can also be seen as a foreign presence in this region, especially those who were ultimately dependent upon distant patrons or motherhouses.

Within this zone, material architectural fragments and brief historical references reveal the presence of a number of different orders during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries such as the Benedictines in Hornillos, the Antonines in San Bol and just outside Castrojeriz, and the Order of St John in Puenteñitro, while isolated place names suggest the presence of more ecclesiastical communities, as at Hospital Derribada near Hontanas. A detailed analysis of these institutions is

beyond the scope of this study and it is likely that they represented a range of roles and functions across the landscape. Most, nonetheless, were connected to the practical assistance of pilgrims en-route to Santiago.

For the brethren, pilgrims assumed the more theological identity mentioned above. They were the poor and sick, whose bodies were sites of spiritual identity, in need of pious intervention. They supplied the *raison d'être* for religious institutions to flourish in this landscape. Pilgrims, in turn, could find a level of care unimaginable had they remained in their own environment. As they journeyed through the Meseta, devices such as gardens, streams, impressive architecture combined with the promise of bodily and spiritual assistance presented by such places converted the monastic hospital into a veritable *locus amoenus*.

However, this harmonious relationship between monastery and pilgrim was only possible by the steely feudal ties that bound local inhabitants to monastic estates. Across Castile, such estates wielded control over fundamental elements such as streams and mills (Álvarez Borge 1996: 65), or, as in Sahagún further to the west, secured loans as modest as a single bushel of wheat by real-estate, so that debtors frequently risked the forfeit of their land and conversion to tenant status (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 229). That similarly exploitative power relations existed here can be surmised from some of the historical data revealed by Rafael Sánchez Domingo on his work on the previously un-studied monastery of San Anton (2004). Aggressive alms collection, bolstered by royal patronage, exacerbated what was already a very unequal set of relations in this landscape. It seems logical, then, that the physical dimensions of the monastic building and estate of San Anton did not convey an oasis of benevolence to locals, but was redolent of the authority and dominion of the Antonines in this landscape, and the absorption of the tenant farming community into a much wider and incomprehensible power network (Álvarez Borge 1996: 70). This association may have tarnished the image of the pilgrims further, rendering them as somehow complicit in the whole affair. The expression of this inequality can perhaps also be appreciated in other regions of this Study Area, where the lofty stone churches and smaller monastic compounds contrasted with the impermanent adobe houses of the villagers.

To conclude this chapter then, it is apparent that the landscape in this Meseta zone is interpretable on a number of different levels. For medieval pilgrims, topographical and environmental factors combined with a conception of landscape drawn from spiritual education and superstitious belief encouraged a vision of the Meseta as a *locus horribilis* in which they had a concrete theological and physical role to play. The landscape was a device that served to ritualise their journey, to render it a holy exile. Meanwhile, the florescence of infrastructure did not happen in a haphazard way, but assumed its character through a variety of processes that were wholly dependent upon the perception and construction of the pilgrim identity. The ecclesiastical communities, in assuming moral and spiritual responsibility for the travelling bodies of pilgrims, could justify their presence in the landscape, the elaboration of large estates, ornate buildings and control over the productive capacity of the land. In the overall network of social dynamics, this acting out of theology and power left local inhabitants at a disadvantage. Although there were ways of exploiting the pilgrimage movement, both financially and spiritually, the material culture is more indicative of attitudes of fear and distrust. Villagers in this landscape felt themselves under seige from this mass movement of people in their territory.

5. Study Area 3 (O Cebreiro)

..the sacred is not a given or something fixed, but must be constantly created and recreated (McKevitt 1991: 79).

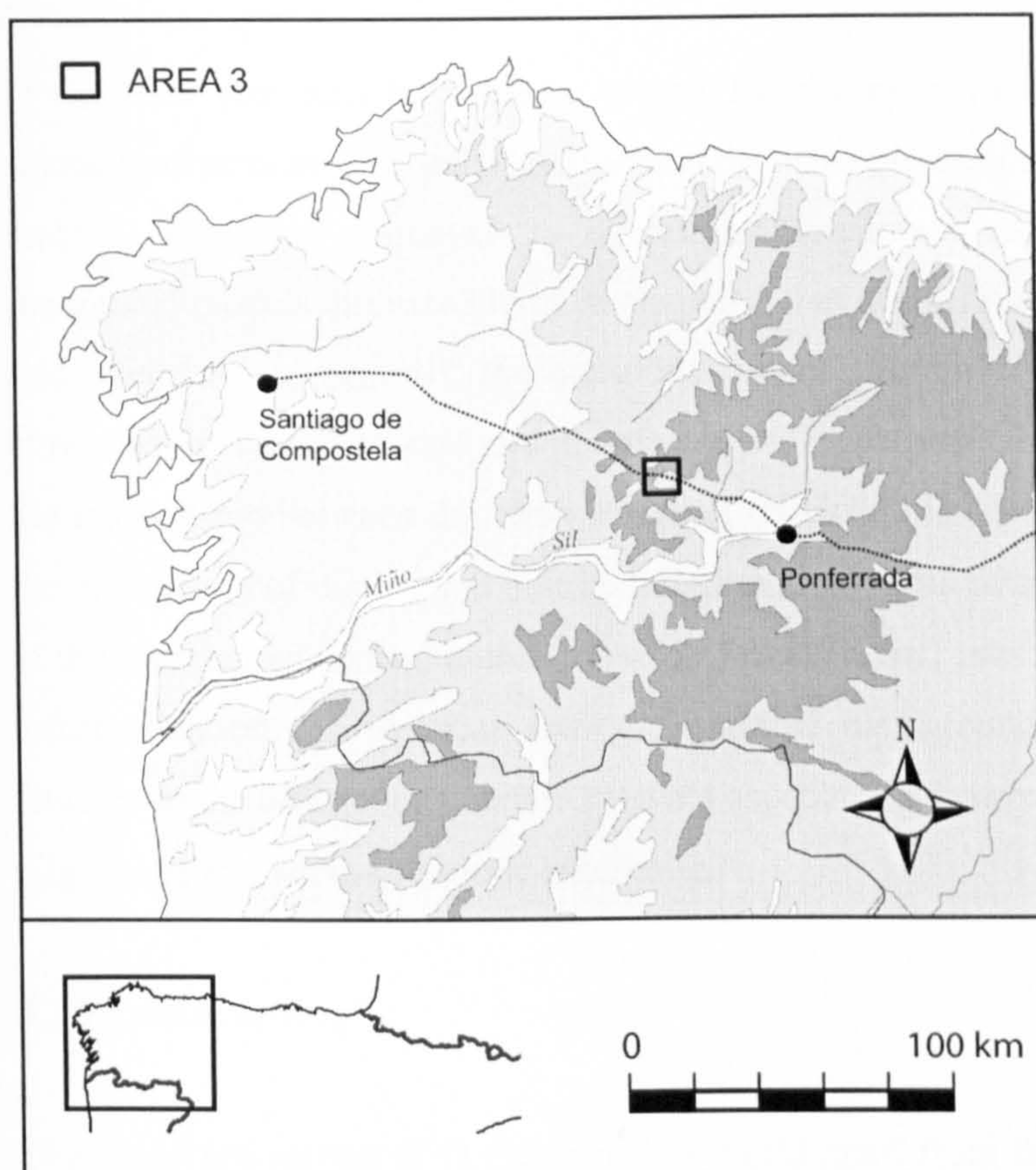


Figure 5. 1: Location of Study Area 3

Both chapters 3 and 4 looked at quite long, linear segments of the route-way in order to explore questions about journeying through a landscape. This chapter takes a slightly different slant. Focused on just one village and its immediate environment, the following pages consider the more localised production and experience of “sacred space”. O Cebreiro is the village in question. Located on a high mountain pass just inside the border of Galicia in north-west Spain, the settlement was not only an important staging post for the medieval pilgrimage towards Santiago, but also, as a result of a miracle in the early fourteenth century, the centre of a strongly-rooted, local Marian cult in which a yearly *romería*; a local

pilgrimage and festival, drew large numbers of devotees from the neighbouring hills and valleys. Both the long distance Jacobean pilgrimage and the native cult of the Virgin lent (and continue to lend) religious identity to the village.

5.1 Research Objectives

O Cebreiro provides, therefore, a setting for the examination of how different sacred traditions may be articulated within the same physical locale and the kind of material strategies employed to express and maintain each one. Inspired by theoretical models discussed back in chapter 2 that deconstruct the notion of preset and fixed “sacred centres”, the questions I would like to address here are these: How was the sacred created and maintained in O Cebreiro? And secondly: What is the relationship between the two coexisting religious identities? Can, for instance, the emergence of the Marian cult be interpreted in terms of a kind of local rivalry to the internationally successful one of St James? I first present some background information on the physical setting, historical background and archaeological features of the village, and certain relevant aspects of its current role in the modern pilgrimage and socio-economic landscape.

5.2 Physical setting

The landscape setting of O Cebreiro is a world apart from the dusty-brown, heat-cracked Meseta plains of the previous chapter. Here, nearly 300km to the west, we are well within a rugged mountainous zone, a sinuous band of upland sierra that, curving down from the great Cantabrian range to the north, marks the border between Castilla y León and Galicia and heralds the damp, cool, climate of the Atlantic north-west (figure 5.1 and 5.2). From the village itself, perched on a green saddle of land some 1300m above sea-level, views of steep slopes, valleys, neighbouring hamlets below and distant blue-green hills are breathtakingly revealed on the occasional sunny day, but are, more often than not, cloaked beneath thick banks of cloud and rolling grey mist. Galicia is known as one of, if not the most, rainy parts of the Iberian Peninsula, and these mountains, with upwards of 2000ml of rainfall per year, receive more than their fair share of drenchings (Estébanez Álvarez *et al.* 1994: 1268). Winters are cold, with an

average January temperature falling between 0 and 4° C while the summer July average usually stands around the 15° C mark (Estébanez Álvarez *et al.* 1994: 1266-7).

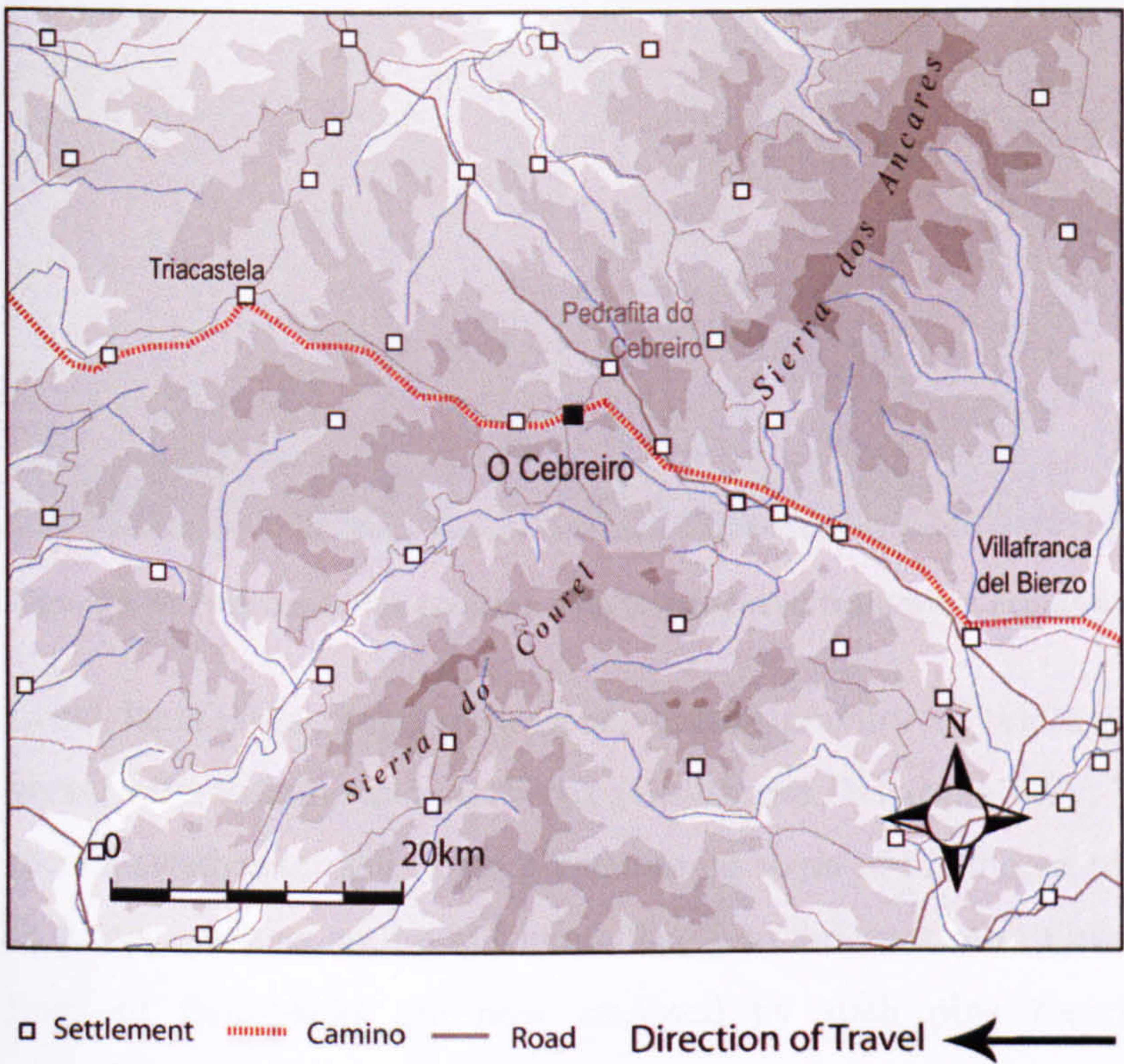


Figure 5. 2: Landscape context of O Cebreiro and the pilgrimage route.



Figure 5. 3: O Cebreiro from the south-west



Figure 5. 4: Pilgrims in the Galician rain (reproduced from www.acmphoto.com).

Local landscapes range from open, brushy country of white broom, laburnum, gorse, wild absinthe and scrub-oak (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 304), to relatively recent, swathes of dense pine plantation on some of the higher terrain (figure 5.5). In places, such as on the hill immediately to the west of O Cebreiro, meandering lines of field-banks are now enclosed by such pine forest, revealing that agricultural land once stretched much higher than it does at present. Around the lower contours and valleys of this zone, farmland, interspersed with copses of deciduous woodland, chestnut groves and tracts of overgrown, abandoned pasture (Gutián Rivera 1996: 127), is watered by countless streams and rivulets that descend from springs further upslope, swollen by the frequent showers of rain. The grey schist, quartzite, granite and slate of the many field walls and older houses, churches and *horreos* (stone corn-cribs) of the villages, meanwhile, reveal the local geological make-up of this region and, in their extreme distinction from the red adobe houses further east, provide yet another contrast in this landscape.

These settlements, apart from the local centre of Pedrafita do Cebreiro, through which most east-west vehicular traffic passes, are frequently isolated, poor, overwhelmingly rural, and house not more than a few dozen inhabitants. They tend to echo a medieval pattern of distribution. (Estébanez Álvarez *et al.* 1994: 1287; Gutián Rivera 1996: 131). Census figures, however, betray a sustained rural

exodus from these sierras, with the population barely reaching a third of what it was at the beginning of the twentieth century (de Torres Luna 1995: 56). Around the hamlets, which are typically strung out along a road, or cluster around the confluence of minor streams, irregular, enclosed yards and fields reflect a specifically Galician pattern of partible inheritance and distribution of land (Fletcher 1984: 15). Unlike other regions of Spain, where demographic overspill spread into easily accessible, adjacent regions; villagers here tended to go on dividing the same quantity of land into smaller and smaller plots with the result that farmers frequently possess a bewildering patch-work of scattered property (Hooper 1995: 423). Other than the cultivation of crops most suited to this damp climate (such as rye, maize and root vegetables), dairy farming has traditionally formed the principal occupation of the dwindling rural population.



Figure 5. 5: A small roadside settlement on the descent from O Cebreiro.

Thirty years ago, O Cebreiro also fitted this description. A handful of villagers remaining in the mountain village tended cows for a living, some continued to live in *pallozas*, the distinctive oval, stone, thatched-roofed houses famed in this part of Galicia, and electricity, brought late to these heights in 1964, remained a novel addition to everyday life (Nuñez Pérez pers. comm. 2005). Today, however, unlike neighbouring Laguna de Castilla, where modern pilgrims trudging up the muddy path are ignored by all except the growling farm dogs, O Cebreiro is currently

“milking the seven fat cows of tourism” (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 305) and embracing its status of “Camino village”. Walkers are greeted by the sound of piped, “Celtic-style” music wafting down the hillside from one of several souvenir shops, they have a choice of bed-and-breakfasts to stay in, and bars in which to take a drink. They may while away half an hour visiting a restored *palloza*. There is no mud in the street, and the houses and simple church have been carefully rebuilt in local stone. As I write, I am able to peer into what is happening in O Cebreiro right now, via a web-cam that updates every two seconds; (www.caminosantiago.com/web/webcams_abajo.htm). The transformation of O Cebreiro from marginal rural hamlet to a consumer-led marketing experience has been complete and is worthy of an anthropological study in its own right.

Recovering an accurate historical or archaeological picture of this village is a task complicated by two things. The first is the paucity of existing modern archaeological research in this area; a problem typical of a wider regional trend that, is, at least, acknowledged (Suarez Otero 2002: 58). Secondly, one must confront the ongoing production of the kind of O Cebreiro tailored to fit the expectations of visitors. While initial restoration work, instigated by the late parish priest and historian, Elías Valiña Sampedro, was undertaken in the attempt to “recover the Santiago pilgrimage for our times” (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 307) and improve the otherwise extremely basic facilities available to walkers, more recent tourist marketing trades on and propagates a select mixture of historical identities and fables. There is the “Celtic” and, therefore, mystical, O Cebreiro, represented by the restored *pallozas*, (often mistakenly believed to be complete, surviving prehistoric houses) (figure 5.6). There is the O Cebreiro of the medieval pilgrimage and the O Cebreiro of the fourteenth-century miracle tale, which in turn prompts associations with the Holy Grail, (some web-diaries categorically state that the church, also believed to be authentically medieval, once housed the Grail). And finally, there is the O Cebreiro as monument to “quaint” and traditional Galician rural life; all in all a tangled mix that goes on shaping impressions, narratives, conceptions of the past and, in turn, the physical dimensions of the increasingly prosperous village.



Figure 5. 6: A snow-covered Palloza in O Cebreiro (reproduced from www.jemolo.com).

5.3 Historical background

For the purposes of historical context, I will sketch out three relevant issues; the medieval period in and around O Cebreiro, the miracle event and beyond, and the celebration of the *romería*, and will finish this introductory section with an appraisal of the archaeological evidence.

The medieval period

Topographically, the pass of O Cebreiro has long enabled east-west movement through an otherwise formidable mountain barrier. The medieval road, which climbs the sierra from Villafranca to the south-east and then descends into Galicia via Triacastela and Sarria, almost certainly traces a much older long-distance route that was utilised in Roman times to access the far north-western outposts of the province (Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 313; Fletcher 1984: 2). On the ascent to O Cebreiro, two small, stone bridges believed to be of Roman date at Herrias and just beyond, over the Arroyo do Boucelo, followed by a zig-zag stretch of paved highway, represent rare archaeological survivals of the road itself (figure 5.7). Until the sixteenth century, this pass was one of the very few access points into Galicia (Frey 1998: 140). Al Idrisi suggests the onward journey from O Cebreiro to the saint's tomb in Compostela to be a mere three day march in the twelfth century (quoted in Garcia Mercadal 1999: 197), while most modern guides normally suggest a more leisurely five days or so (e.g. Bravo Lozano 1993).



Figure 5. 7: Paved path on the ascent to O Cebreiro

The origins of settlement at O Cebreiro itself are usually linked chronologically to the emergence of the Jacobean pilgrimage in the ninth century and the need to adorn this strategic, but exposed point with a religious way-station for assisting the great numbers of pilgrims on the final arduous, upland leg of the journey (Passini 1993: 174). Dating is problematic although some pre-Romanesque foundations discovered during the reconstruction of the church in the 1960s along with the remains of possible pilgrim burials (Nuñez Pérez pers. comm. 2005) do, in fact, corroborate the presence of an early religious structure on the site of the current church building. The earliest historical record for a monastic presence here, meanwhile, comes from a document dated to 1072, which refers to a Benedictine hospice affiliated to the distant French abbey of St Gerard of Aurillac (Passini 1993: 174). Chronologically, this fits with the very beginning of a more widespread appearance of foreign ecclesiastical (and particularly Cluniac) influence in Galicia, encouraged by the religious and political policies of Alfonso VI (Fletcher 1984: 49).

Within the context of the more local landscape, the small roadside, mountain-top ecclesiastical community of O Cebreiro should be envisaged as a focal point in the mediation of social and economic networks that extended outwards from the linear

Camino path during the central middle ages. From the eleventh century onwards, the monks were endowed with generous royal privileges in the form of land, property, cash donations and free mountain grazing rights, affording the small religious institution a significant, if scattered estate by the thirteenth century (Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 305). In-depth historical studies undertaken elsewhere with reference to larger monastic estates in the Galician heartlands further to the west indicate that rather than simple accumulators of wealth, land and power, such estates were often the nexus of a complex myriad of transactions, exchange and relations in local society (Pascua 2002). We can therefore envisage an elaborate web of ties ranging from the centre of O Cebreiro and across the mountains, hills and valleys.

As in more recent times, this was a variegated landscape of different vegetational zones and village territories linked by paths and mud-tracks, in which diverse land-use strategies optimised the productive output of the uneven terrain (Gutián Rivera 1996: 124-125). Local population estimates are, of course, difficult, and few and far between, although evidence showing that some parts of Galicia were attaining demographic saturation between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, suggest that these sierras may well have been experiencing population pressure during the central medieval period (Fletcher 1984: 7-8). In this specific area, it is likely that the presence of the age-old and highly important route into Galicia was also a determining factor in attracting settlement. The general picture for Galicia in the fourteenth century is, like in other parts of the Iberian Peninsula, one of demographic contraction followed by a more prolonged phase of gradual recuperation (Vázquez Varela 1996: 223)

The miracle event and beyond.

The dramatic miraculous event that punctuates the historical trajectory of O Cebreiro, transforming its religious identity and bringing considerable fame and notoriety to the village in the later medieval period, was said to have occurred sometime towards the end of the central medieval period, perhaps around the year 1300 (Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 317). Written accounts tend to vary in minor details, but the gist of the story is this: a priest, stationed up in the village during a

particularly harsh and cold winter was performing mass one morning in the church. Outside, it was snowing heavily and blowing a gale. Nonetheless, a poor, but devout peasant, from the small village of Barxamaior below, not wishing to miss the sermon nor the communion, decided to climb the steep path to O Cebreiro, despite the awful weather. Delayed by the freezing snowstorm, he entered the church just too late to receive mass upon which the priest, incredulous at the poor man's efforts, turned around and berated him for coming all that way for what was, after all, just a bit of bread and wine. At that precise moment, the host and communion wine turned into the true flesh and blood before them. In most versions of the story, the statue of the Virgin then inclines her head so as to have a better view, and in some later accounts of the tale, subsequent attempts to relocate the tangible remains of the famous mass are miraculously foiled, thus verifying the ongoing divine power of the relics.

The O Cebreiro miracle captured the religious spirit of the late medieval age in which veneration of the Virgin, Christ and the Eucharist had overtaken the purely corporeal cult of saints of the earlier Middle Ages (Geary 1994: 174). Eucharistic miracles, in which a real and gory transformation takes place as a response to spiritual doubt or indiscipline, were, in particular, an especially common and popular manifestation of the divine during this period in Europe (Snoek 2004: 55; figure 5.8).

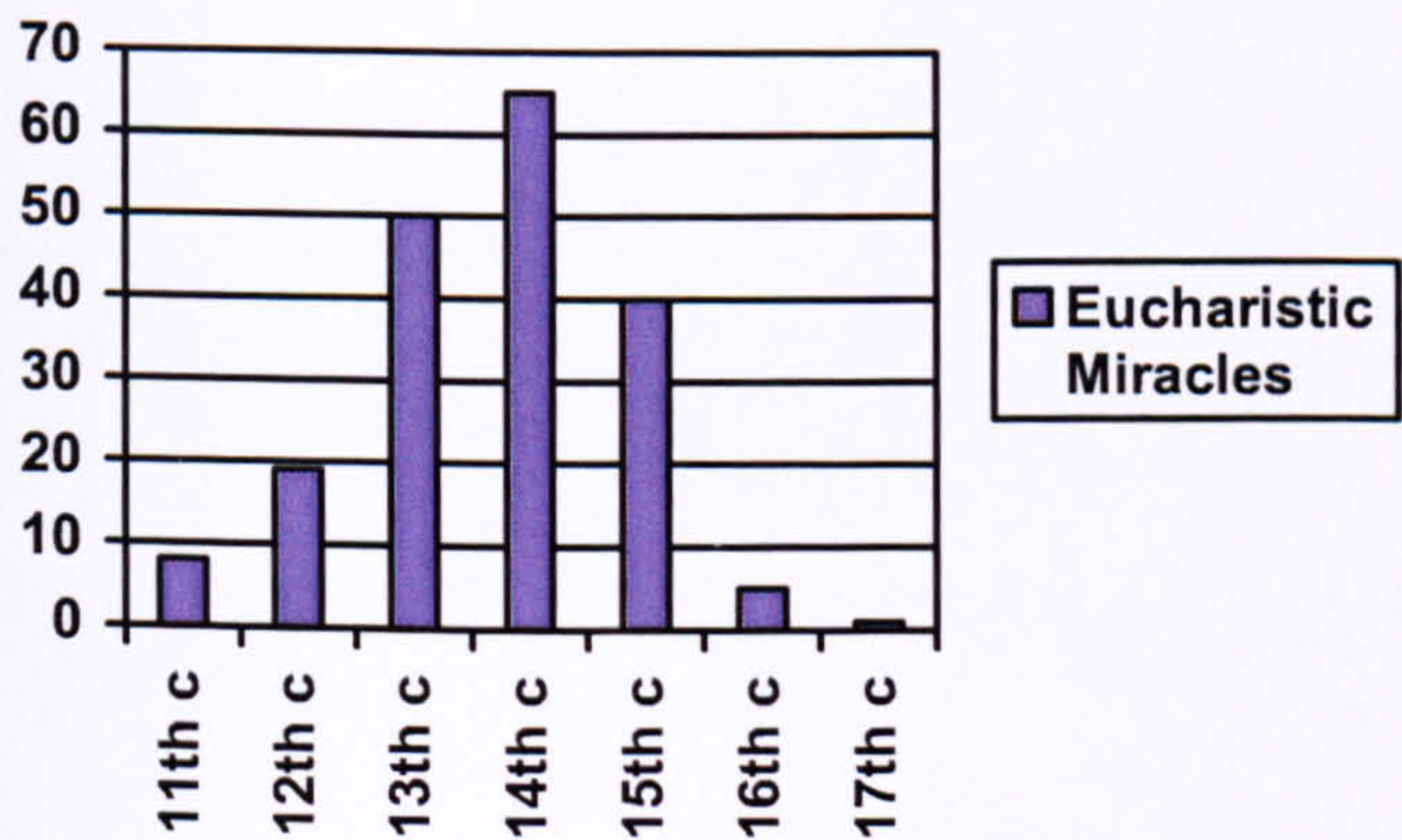


Figure 5. 8: Graph showing number of Eucharist miracles that caused a place of pilgrimage to spring up (information from Snoek 2004: 55).

The later rendition of the event in verse, sculpture and art suggests that it was widely reported, probably with the help of pilgrimage traffic, and it is probable that the visit made by the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, in the autumn of 1486 on their way into Galicia helped to popularise both the story and the place (García Oro 1987: 372). Apparently genuinely moved by the miraculous events, they donated sumptuous reliquaries to house the remains of the famous Eucharist and sought papal permission for the immediate reconstruction of the pilgrim hospice. On their bequest and financial support, the monastery and hospice was transferred away from the French Benedictines and handed over instead to a local priory, ultimately dependent on the church of San Benito in their favoured Castilian city of Valladolid (García Oro 1987: 372). The miracle was given the papal seal of approval in the following year (Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 318). Later, a sixteenth century chronicler of Galician history penned the following verse; one of the earliest surviving written accounts of the miracle tale (Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 316):

*Un caso ynefable – tambien dezir quiero
 Que en una ostia – que fue consecrada
 En carne perfecta – eureys trasformada
 Lo que cubierto – estaua primero
 Que un clerigo idiota – que ensi lo profiero
 Dudando ser cierta – la consagración
 Le fue demostrada – tan santa uisión
 Según oy en día – se esta en el zebrero*

I want to tell you - a miraculous story
 About a host – which was being consecrated
 You will see changed – into perfect flesh
 What at first – was [its] hidden [nature]
 An idiot of a priest – who was offering it
 Doubted the truth - of the consecration
 The holy vision – was demonstrated to him
 As it is today – in O Cebreiro

(Licenciado Molina 1550 quoted and translated in Gitlitz and Davidson 2000: 305-6)



Figure 5. 9: Heavily restored statue of the Virgin and Child statue from O Cebreiro (reproduced from www.ventelcamino.fiestras.com).



Figure 5. 10: Reliquaries of the miraculous Eucharist (reproduced from www.ventelcamino.fiestras.com).



Figure 5. 11: The twelfth century chalice and paten associated with the miracle tale (reproduced from www.ventealcamino.fiestras.com).

The dual identity of O Cebreiro from this time onwards can be appreciated in the account of Domenico Laffi who passed along the pilgrim route in June 1670. He describes the villages and landscape of the linear Jacobean itinerary up towards and through the pass and mentions receiving his *passada*; the ration of bread and wine to which all pilgrims were entitled, and then obviously relishes the opportunity to recount the miracle tale, including further details such as the way in which the peasant beat his heavy cloak once inside the church, trying to rid it of ice and snow (Laffi 1681: 159). He also asserts that he saw the visible remains of the miracle, which for him was proof beyond all doubt of the veracity of the events.

The *romería*.

In contrast to the repeated versions of the miracle tale, the historical sources are, unfortunately, silent on subsequent cult activity at O Cebreiro. In the light of the long-established monastic presence at O Cebreiro, it is probable that the village had already featured strongly on the local map of annual religious fairs and holy days commended to the Spanish population at large ever since the twelfth century (Izquierdo Benito 2004: 188). It is also likely that upon the occurrence and dissemination of the miracle story, the popularity of O Cebreiro increased, attracting a wider circle of the devout, the curious, and the economically astute.

The precise nature and activities associated with the late medieval *romería* remains a tricky issue though. In more recent decades, there has been a surge of historical and anthropological interest in local pilgrimages, religious fairs, and rural piety and belief in Spain (spearheaded mainly by William Christian (1972; 1981) and, more recently, in Martínez-Burgos García and Rodríguez González (eds) 2004, for instance). Yet, the sheer number of different examples and settings countrywide means that tracing the history of any individual one is far from easy. In Galicia alone, some two and a half thousand different *romerías* are currently observed throughout the year, for example (Sueiro and Nieto 1983: 7-9). The task is further complicated by, again, the tendency for romanticised ideals to permeate the literature which seek and value “timelessness” over and above evidence for change or shifting beliefs and practices (see Garcia Garcia 1990 and MacClancy 1990 for the construction of tradition and ideas about marginality in Galicia). While popular credence holds that the *romería* to “Nosa Señora do Santo Milagre no Cebreiro”, or “Santa María la Real” (Saint Mary the Royal), is a religious custom that owes its roots to the Middle Ages and which persists in a fairly authentic form (Nuñez Perez pers. comm. 2005), the lack of hard historical data invites caution in projecting current, or recent practices onto past eras

At present, the hugely popular *romería* to O Cebreiro is celebrated on the 8th and 9th of September; the 8th being the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, and the 9th, the day allocated for the celebration of the miracle. It attracts somewhere in the region of 20-30,000 people, mainly from nearby parts of Galicia or León (Cañada 1974: 65; Bravo Lozano 1993: 203). Older people remember the days when the journey to the village was made on foot (and sometimes barefoot), in the spirit of penitence, so that it was common for devotees to arrive in O Cebreiro at dawn having spent the entire night walking (Nuñez Perez pers. comm 2005). Key communal activities centre on a mass performed on the morning of the first day within the church, followed by a procession around the village fronted by priests bearing the Romanesque Marian statue, the one said to have inclined its head; the “Virgen do Milagre”. Another procession takes place on the second day in which the emphasis is focused upon the miracle tale. The Communion materials, shielded by a canopy, are processed along the same circuit. Participants performing the processional routes on their knees used to be a common sight (Nuñez Perez pers.

comm 2005). A woman bearing a coffin in the photo below moves in this way in hope for the recovery of a desperately ill family member. Still, in O Cebreiro, some individuals may, variously, circumambulate the church, try to touch the processed objects or make offerings of money and candles. As is typical for such affairs, market and food stalls spring up in time for the celebrations and to meet the needs of the sudden, temporary population explosion in the village (Mariño Ferro 2003: 50-52). Music and dancing sometimes take place towards the evening. Within the last forty years, a popular component of the festival has been to climb up to the adjacent hill, the Teso da Cruz, and push coins into the knarled wood of the cross on the summit (Nuñez Perez pers. comm. 2005; figure 5.13). The name of the hill, however, may indicate an earlier association or monument.



Figure 5.12: Penitential performance at the *romería* of Santa Maria de Augas Santas (reproduced from Mariño Ferro 2003: 70).



Figure 5. 13: The wooden cross on Teso da Cruz. Note the coins in the grooves.

Whilst exercising caution in looking for the medieval, or late-medieval in present or recent practice, a number of components described above can be seen as consistent with activities and behaviours known from late medieval contexts; namely the masses, the processions, the bestowal of offerings, the penitential acts, and the associated “profane” elements, i.e. the stalls and dances (Christian 1981; Flynn 1994). Hence, given the paucity of historical detail for local pilgrimage and cult activity centering on O Cebreiro, the following pages will work with the assumption that, like many rural fairs elsewhere in Spain (Izquierdo Benito 2004: 186), some much older traditions may well be preserved within the current, or recent performance of the *romería*. The best, most immediately available data-source for the past ritual, may, in other words be found in the present one.

5.4 Archaeological appraisal

Whilst acknowledging the limited survival of archaeological remains at O Cebreiro, some information can still be gained from the current dimensions and physical contours of the village and, of course, parallels with other

contemporaneous structures and sites elsewhere, such as the monastery and hospital of Santa María de Arbas on the pilgrim route between Oviedo and León. Roughly contemporaneous with O Cebreiro, this isolated mountain-pass refuge is comparable in terms of topographical location and hospitality proffered to wayfarers in need (Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 465-8).

Within the village itself, it is particularly regrettable that so little survives either of the medieval monastic complex, or of the later hospice rebuilt sometime after the late fifteenth century, and that, to my knowledge, there has been no publication of the remains unearthed during the modern reconstruction of the church. The large, twelfth century baptismal font housed within the church, the Marian statue and the Eucharistic regalia are the only directly apparent objects that survive from the Middle Ages. At least the church structure of O Cebreiro, although composed primarily of reconstructed fabric, is more or less a faithful architectural reflection of a typical, ninth century, three-aisled Romanesque construction (Jacobs 1991: 122). Similarly, while the low slate building situated immediately to the south of the church is also a modern construction and presently serves as a hotel and restaurant, some sources state that it was rebuilt using the foundations and ruins of the late medieval hospice (Jacobs 1991: 122), thus giving a very approximate indication of the spatial relationship between the two key elements of the monastic complex.

If the genuine medieval components of the former monastery are now lost (the original church, hospice, monastic house and cemetery), we at least know their setting in relation to the immediate surroundings and the rest of the settlement of O Cebreiro. Occupying a low knoll on the eastern end of the village, the current buildings lie within an oval-shaped plot of about 4600m²; an area interpretable as the immediate environment of the ecclesiastical complex as a whole. Passini views this curving boundary as reflecting the original edge of the ecclesiastical property (1993: 174; figure 5.15), and certainly, the way in which the road to the east, south and west, respects this line, is suggestive of a long-standing territorial division.



Figure 5. 14: The iglesia de Santa Maria in O Cebreiro.

To the west, the rest of the village, although heavily modified in recent years, basically follows a typical medieval plan in that the core is arranged in a linear fashion, along either side of the main, central thoroughfare; the Camino de Santiago (Passini 1990; 1994: figure 5.15-5.17). As for the minor paths that lead away from O Cebreiro and the numerous narrow roads and tracks that connect up neighbouring valley hamlets, it is likely, in the light of the continuity of settlement in this zone (Gutián Rivera 1996), that at least some of these routes will reflect much older corridors of communication and repeated patterns of activity from medieval and late medieval contexts. Fieldwork in this zone, however, demonstrates that a significant number of the more minor paths (those unsuitable for cars and tractors, in other words) have almost entirely fallen out of use and are thus in the process of being swallowed up by vegetation. The landforms that give this region its slopes, contours, views, watercourses and rugged terrain represent, of course, much more enduring elements of the physical record.

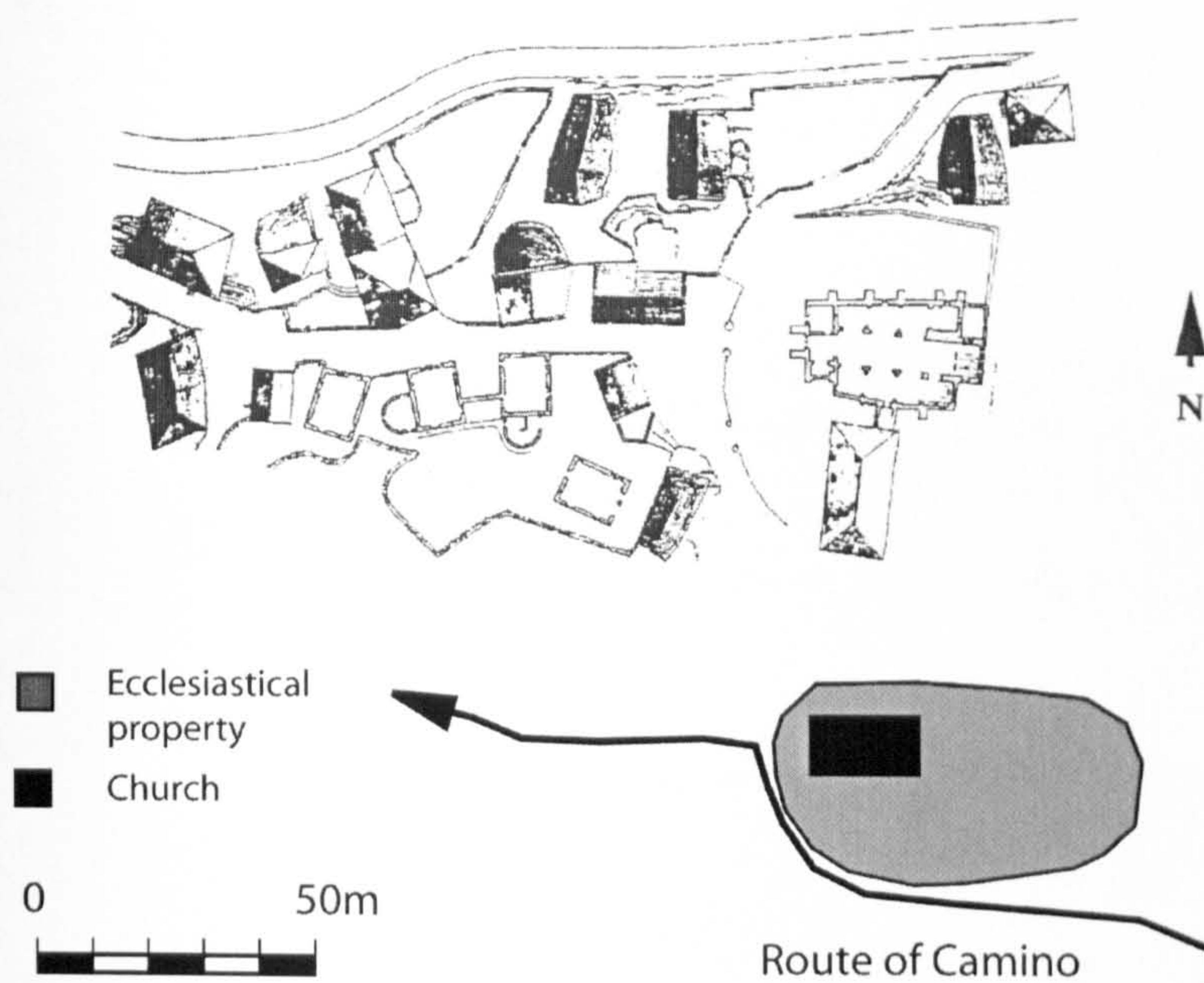


Figure 5. 15: Plan of O Cebreiro (reproduced from Passini 1993: 174).

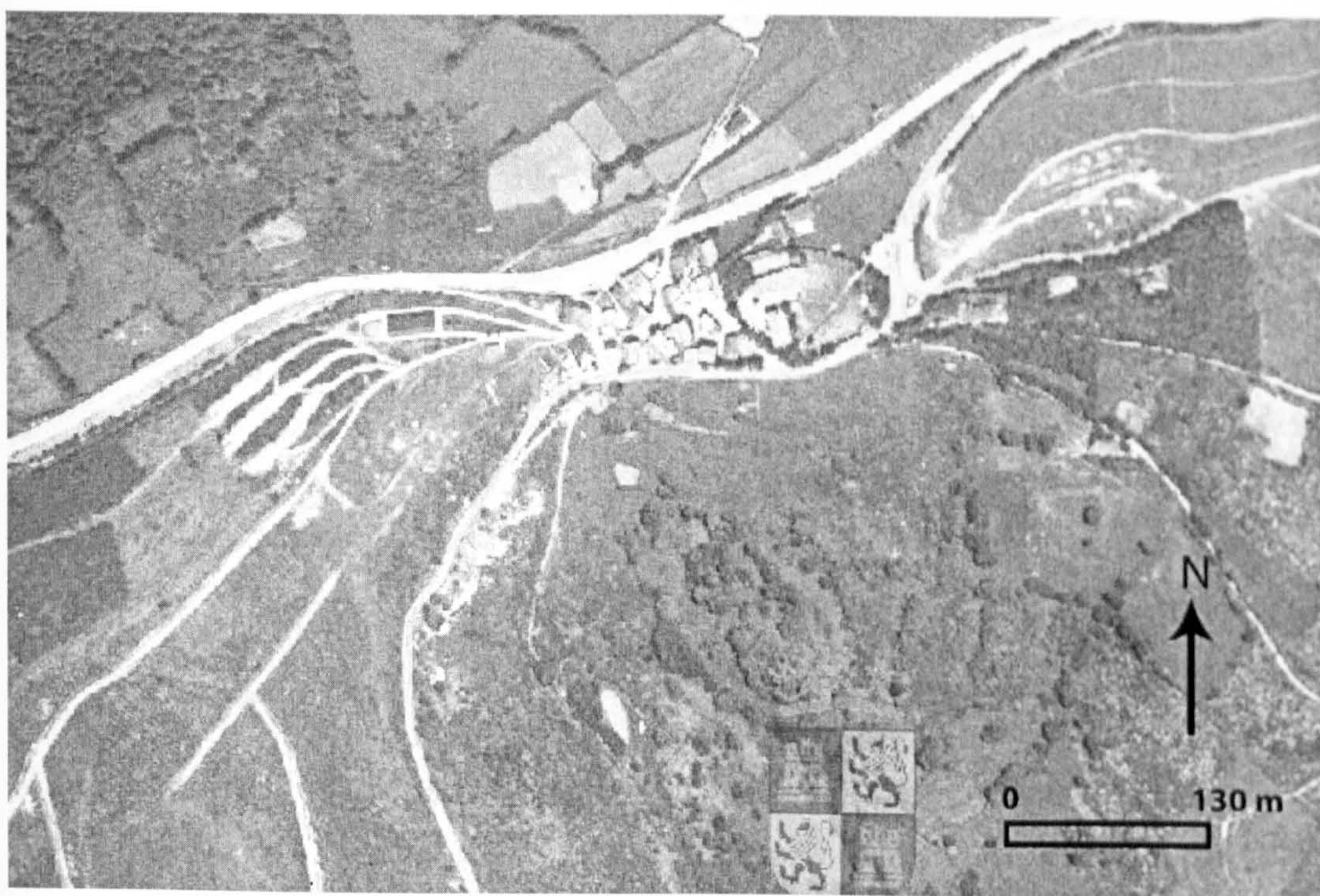


Figure 5. 16: Aerial view of O Cebreiro (reproduced from www.sigpac.jcyl.es/visor/).



Figure 5. 17: O Cebreiro and the central Camino de Santiago from the west

5.5 Analysis and discussion

The dual body/place focus discussed in chapter 2 is indispensable analysing “the sacred” in and around late medieval O Cebreiro and for tackling the questions raised in the opening paragraphs of this chapter. Concepts about sanctity and religious identity were, I argue here, forged, in part, through the way in which groups and individuals physically approached and interacted with the wider mountainous landscape, the routes towards and around the village, the monastery, and the deliberately manipulated spaces of the church. In the following pages, I explore in more detail the territorial and conceptual properties of the different religious traditions of O Cebreiro in order to define more clearly how this terrain was measured, viewed and experienced in markedly different ways by the Jacobean pilgrims on the one hand, and the Marian devotees on the other, and how these different visions of the landscape contributed to notions of sanctity. Further discussion will consider how O Cebreiro compares with other locations along the Camino de Santiago where divergent or ambiguous religious identities are observable.

5.6 O Cebreiro and the Jacobean Pilgrims

Jacobean pilgrims were of course differentiated in many ways from other occupants and travellers in and around O Cebreiro. As they trod the long-distance route towards Galicia, they moved through and beheld the landscapes of their journeys in a manner that was very specific to them, and them alone. Their identity and manner of travel, in all its senses, promoted a particular vision of the landscape and sanctity. Three main, interrelated themes can be identified; ideas about arrival, the significance of the mountain, and spheres of interaction and experience in the village itself.

Ideas about arrival

O Cebreiro, less than a week away from Compostela, is, from the elongated perspective of the long-distance walker, virtually on the doorstep of St James' tomb. After hours, days, and weeks of continual forward motion, the village becomes measurable by the immense distances already travelled, and by the comparatively short number of steps ahead. Modern pilgrims who, in general, put off thinking about the conclusion of their journey and focus instead on the bodily rhythm of the daily walk (Slavin 2002: 7), are nevertheless, acutely aware that their overall journey is nearing an end. Some begin to realise, down to the kilometre in fact, just how far they have come and what is still to be achieved, so that once the ascent has been accomplished, working estimates of schedules and remaining time to Compostela can be fine-tuned with greater precision from O Cebreiro onwards. Although medieval pilgrims could not gauge distances with such geographic accuracy, their relative position on their journey would still be appreciable via reliable informants both on the way, and from encounters with returning pilgrims.

Of all the different components involved in the execution of a pilgrimage journey, that of arrival must be seen as one of the most significant in terms of the momentous changes and transitions it effects upon the religious (and social) status of the pilgrim. Traditional studies on "sacred centres" (see chapter 2), which, as Howe notes, tend to "neglect the phenomenological character of the pilgrims'

goal" (2002: 215), implicitly regard arrival as simply the act of coming into contact with the physical space of the destination. Yet, in spite of this seemingly clear-cut and logical link, ideas about arrival, and all that it entails, can be seen as something more complex, and, more crucially, spatially divorced from the actual "sacred centre" itself. As Nancy Frey persuasively argues in her anthropological study of the modern pilgrimage to Santiago, the concept of arrival is never one of simple geographic space, or physically reaching St James' tomb, but is rather felt in response to a range of emotional, physiological, topographic and perceptual factors along the way (1998: 139; 143-152).

According to her research, O Cebreiro is one of the places that pilgrims most often associate with "the process and realization of the journey's end" (1998: 139-40). Strong and surprising sensations of extreme triumph or painful doubt are reported and the village becomes a point where "stories of vision and insight surface" as pilgrims begin to reflect on the journey as a whole (1998: 141). For many, arrival here can, in fact, be felt more intensely and more emphatically than the overly hyped and disappointingly anti-climactic arrival in Santiago itself (1998: 163-4; Slavin 2003: 13). In Paolo Coelho's fictionalised pilgrimage, his journey comes to an abrupt metaphorical and physical end in O Cebreiro and he completes what's left of the journey by bus (Coelho 1992: 264). Interestingly, leafing through Domenico Laffi's journal, there is also a strong sense that after O Cebreiro, he disengages from the actual process of travelling. The thought of arrival seems to surpass his usual interest in his surroundings and he dedicates a mere four, rushed paragraphs to the 150km or so that separates the village from Santiago de Compostela (Laffi 1681: 159-161). Had there been a bus available in late June 1670, he may well have taken it.

What is it about O Cebreiro that provokes this whirlwind of ideas about the meaning of the journey and arrival itself? Why is it that, for some, the journey comes to some kind of end, when prior to this point, many pilgrims seem to put off thinking about the end of their journey (Slavin 2003: 13)? The answer, it seems, lies largely with the experience and perception of the landscape setting. Pilgrims are heavily involved in a grounded, day-to-day negotiation of terrain that is experienced in a much more complex way than suggested by itinerary lists,

stylised route-maps and guides (both medieval and modern). Yet, even accounting for detours, their mode of travel across northern Spain was by necessity, a chiefly linear course of movement through the landscape along roads and paths conceived as belonging to a coherent, unified highway that led straight to the cathedral tomb of the Apostle (Ruiz de la Peña Solar 2001: 422-3). The course of this road, ascending from the east, as it dips and climbs upward through farmland, woods and open country determines the bodily encounter of pilgrims by a) the sights and sounds available during the course of movement along this way, and b) the physical effort required from lungs and legs in actually accomplishing the walking ascent.

Correspondingly, the stark visual juxtaposition with the flat, brown landscapes that have gone before, crossing the historical border into Galicia; the final province of the journey, the accomplishment of an exhausting, steep climb, often exacerbated by wind, rain or fog, and the sense that it is all down-hill from there on, give rise to a profound sensation of having surmounted a final test, or of having passed a threshold that is both physical and spiritual (Frey 1998: 139-141). Despite being accustomed to the rhythm of the journey, the demands of the terrain call for more, and the increased stress on pilgrim bodies fosters both anxiety and elation. As Frey notes, “the pilgrims’ goal suddenly looms large....Inner ups and downs mirror the physical ones” (1998: 140). The topography thus imprints itself on the inner map of the pilgrim. Simultaneously, accounts and stories about the seemingly mythic qualities of O Cebreiro (the *pallozas*, the miracle, the Holy Grail etc.), increase the sense of awe, so that even in this, largely desacralised age of the Jacobean pilgrimage, a vision of personal sanctity is constructed up among the Galician peaks and a strong sense of a sacredly-charged place is forged.

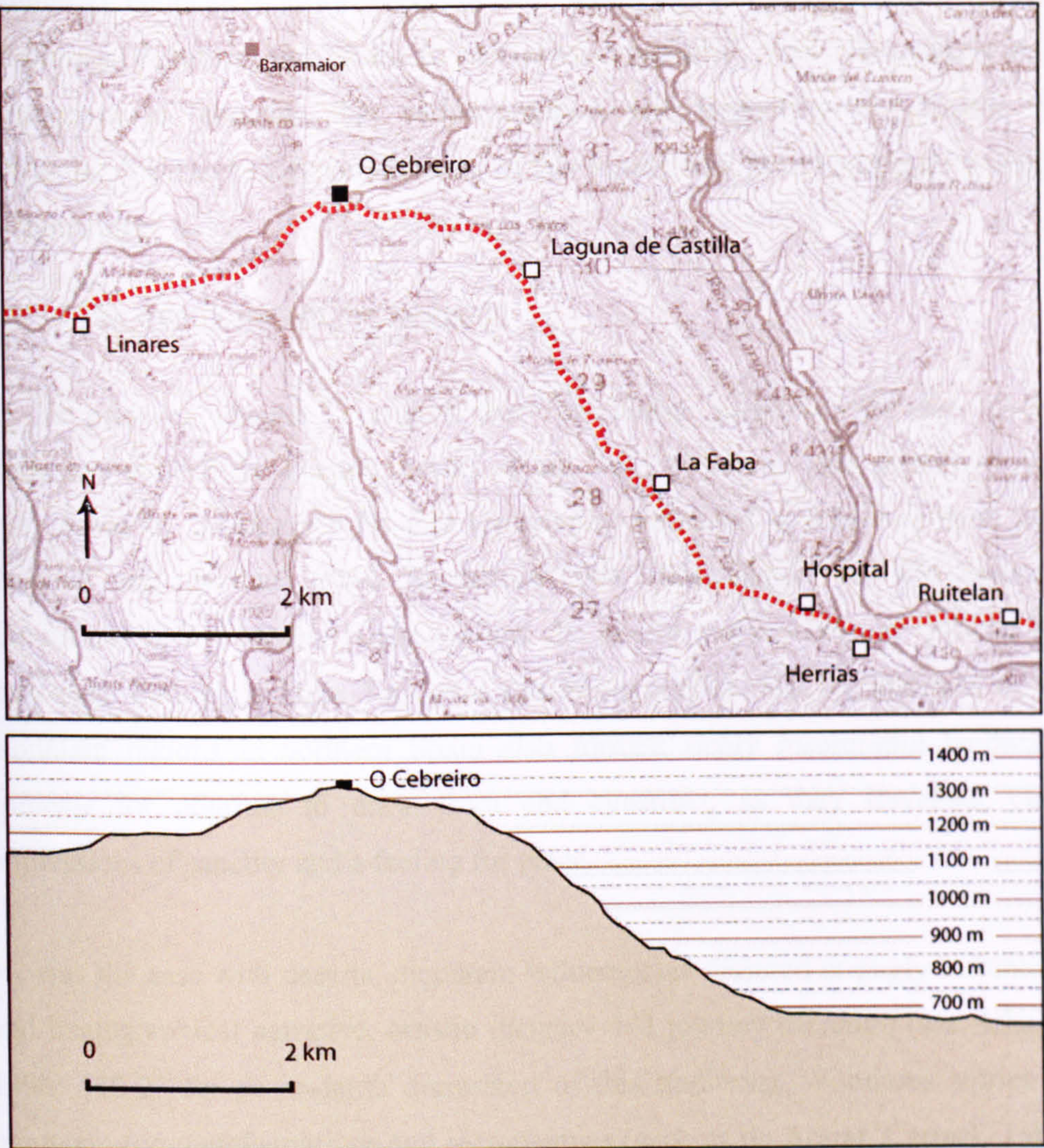


Figure 5. 18: Plan and section profile of the route to the mountain pass (background image reproduced from the *Cartografía Militar de España 1:50,000* series L, sheet 9-8(125).

For modern pilgrims then, landscape, bodily experience and movement, all come together and set in motion quite dramatic ideas and experiences. What about the pilgrims of past eras? I suggest here that the perceptual lens of the late medieval pilgrim almost certainly promoted comparable experiences that were more rigorously linked to the drama of personal salvation. For them, after all, this expedition of epic proportions was usually a once-in-a-lifetime feat; an encounter with foreign places, people, holy sights and landscapes that was imbued with a significance proportionate to their entire life both in this world and the next. As a coherent sacred project, or penance, this journey impacted upon another temporal framework: the otherworldly and fearful concept of time (i.e. perpetual and

unending), believed to await the sinful soul in purgatory or hell. Each stage of the pilgrimage therefore, the ascent to O Cebreiro included, was interpretable as a component in lessening this awful prospect and improving the chance for salvation. A strongly influential factor in this regard was the contemporary vision of mountains.

The significance of the mountain

In the previous chapter, I argued that for foreign pilgrims, the dry Meseta landscape evoked the blasted terrain of the Desert Fathers, and, moreover, that their mode of encounter with this topography bolstered a vision of their own physical and spiritual exile. Sacredness was thus forged via the concrete dimensions of the Meseta landscape and the bodily performance of walking the long route through it. Here, I propose something similar; that the high and rocky mountain regions in northern Spain also formed richly meaningful landscape contexts for pilgrims to draw from and construct, as they travelled, clear impressions of sanctity and a feeling for place.

As was the case with deserts, mountain wildernesses featured strongly in biblical and hagiographical narrative, artistic imagery and journey literature (see Schama 1996: 410-23 for an in-depth discussion of this tradition). Wondrous stories of mountain-top transfigurations and hierophanies (such as on Ararat, Carmel, Tabor and Calvary) permeated medieval Christian imaginations, while remote peaks, rocky ledges and high summits also proved suitably inauspicious locales for the holy solitude and world-denial of ascetics. Mountains came to be regarded as awesome places, liminal and removed from everyday life, where, in numerous stories, forces of good and bad were exteriorised as holy men, kings, knights and saints on the one hand, and fearful demons and dragons on the other (Schama 1996: 412). Earthly dangers such as mountain storms, or prowling highway thieves mingled easily with more otherworldly beings in medieval imaginations

A particularly relevant strand of the tradition in the later medieval period concerns the mountain as “the trial chamber of the spirit” (Schama 1996: 411), a testing ground of individual physical and spiritual mettle. The miracle story of O Cebreiro

itself has the protagonist accomplish a difficult and challenging climb before divine favour is awarded. Travellers through the dramatic pass of Pancorbo on the northerly route from Bayonne to Burgos are depicted as dwarfed by towering and foreboding columns of granite (figure 5.19). In Dante's voyage through Purgatory, a more famous tale, he must scale steep cliffs, his body forced to cling and scramble up fearsome slopes (cantos XVII-XVIII). Finally, nearing the top, he finds he is rewarded for his pains as the sheer crags give way to a lush and verdant landscape, a place of purification and removal from worldly sins and from where a further heavenly ascent may be contemplated. The tale fits a model repeated in other journey narratives of the age in which daunting, physical ascents, accompanied by metaphysical anguish, ultimately serve to exorcise the soul. From the top, the penitent possesses uninhibited vision of both the outward landscape and his inner self – the two really being one and the same (Schama 1996: 417-422).

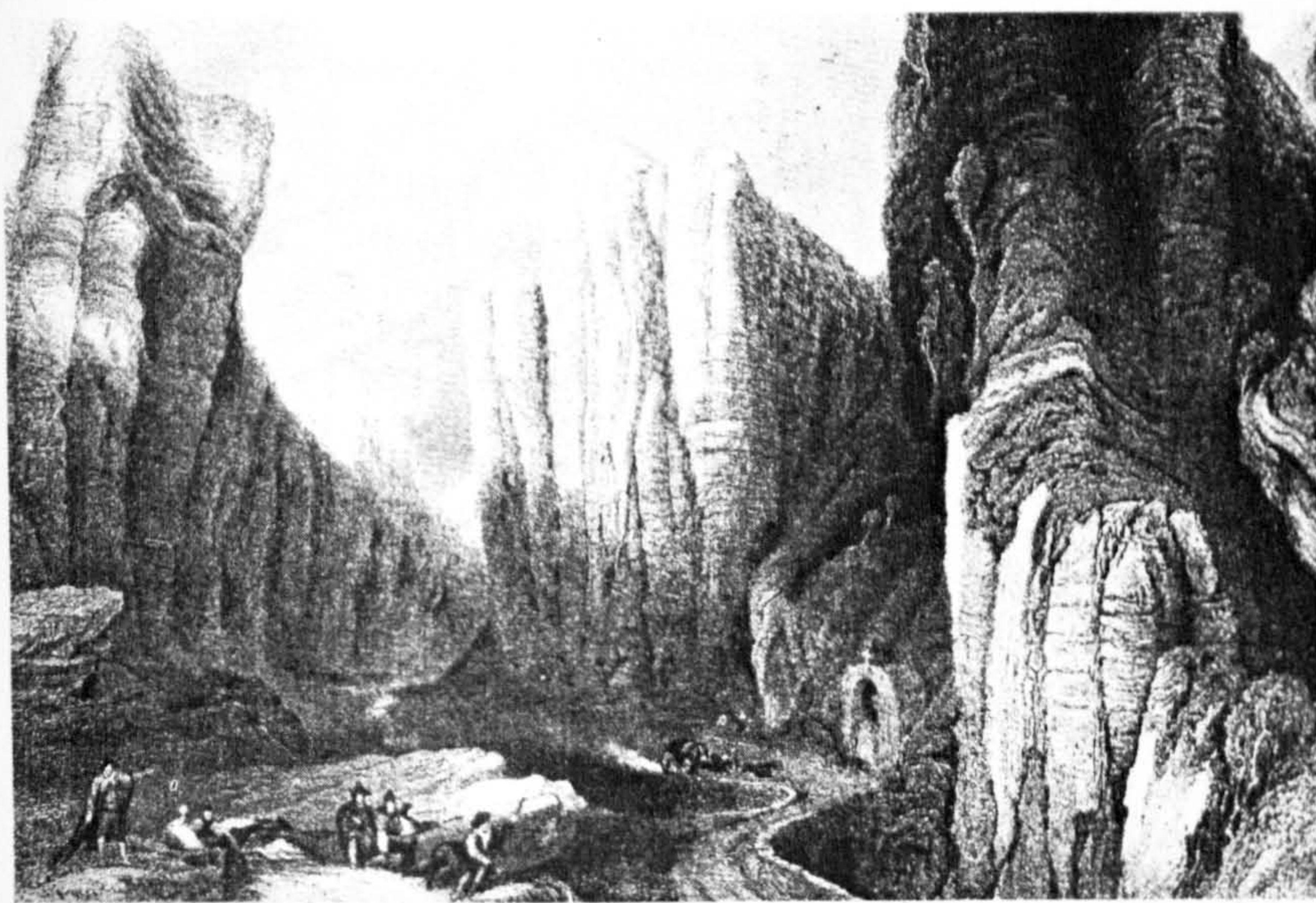


Figure 5. 19: The pass of Pancorbo. Note the small chapel to the right of the path (reproduced from Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949b: Plate CXXXVIII).

Late-medieval pilgrims, therefore, could frame their journey to O Cebreiro in a similarly metaphorical way. As with the dry Meseta environment, the difficult mountain terrain provided an appropriate arena in which to perform their specific sacred exercise. The incline of the path dictated the physical encounter, the “labour of atonement” (Schama 1996: 417), while the views from this route; unfolding

vistas of foreign peaks and glimpses of hidden valleys to both the left and right, may have reinforced a sense of the foreign, the uncharted and the unknown (figure 5.20). Who knew what roamed those slopes and outcrops? As Slavin realised in his journey, “..the radical otherness of the landscape is what impresses itself” (2002: 16).

Further significance may have come from the fact that this was the last prolonged uphill effort required from tired legs and bodies before the descent into “the land of St James”. Certainly, the text of the twelfth-century Guide conjures up “images of a promised land” (Jacobs 1991: 119) in its description of the landscape west from here, implying the pass of O Cebreiro to indeed be the point of access, a threshold, to a fertile and auspicious landscape after the penitential rigours of the mountain:

Thence, having crossed the territory of León and cleared the passes of Mount Irago and Mount Cebrero, one arrives to the land of the Galicians. This country is wooded, provided with excellent rivers, meadows and orchards, and with plenty of good fruits and clear springs...Bread, wheat and wine are scarce, but rye bread and cider abound, as do livestock and beasts of burden, milk and honey (The Pilgrim’s Guide: 96).

Like modern walkers, therefore, late-medieval pilgrims upon cresting the final slope into village territory, may have experienced intense rushes of personal triumph, despondency, exhilaration and insight. From the top, perhaps they too could see, not only the physical landscape beyond, but also the map of their interior journey.



Figure 5. 20: Mountain scenery near O Cebreiro

Village spaces

Finally, this brings us to the more localised setting of the village. If pilgrims were already experiencing a heightened sense of the sacred, how could this have been accentuated further and maintained within the settlement itself? Continuing with an emphasis on body/place dynamics, I suggest that late medieval pilgrims, already susceptible to interpreting their journey in a particular way, were invited to come into close and personal contact with the divine, both via their status as Jacobean pilgrims, and through contact with the miraculous relics, and that the strict orchestration of their spatial practice served to deepen and intensify impressions of sanctity. Senses of the sacred at O Cebreiro were, in other words, reinforced via a range of procedures that effectively mediated, controlled and filtered their bodies through this zone, ritualising their encounters with different places and objects.

The power of anticipation, of course, should not be underestimated. Even before entering village territory, the hearsay of the road may have accelerated the spread of the miracle story, and piqued the interest and curiosity of pilgrims as they approached. Meanwhile, the mere expectation of arriving at a summit hospice was

enough to suggest a holy place of auspicious succour. Topographically and culturally, these institutions fitted an expected template. Harnessing the entrenched symbolic value of the mountain, seemingly remote and windswept religious way-stations on mountain passes were redolent of ideas of liminality and holy fortitude, of God's blessing in the wilderness, and of the dual rigours and blessings of the road;

These hospices, established in places [where] they were very much needed, are holy sites, the house of God for the restoring of saintly pilgrims, the resting of the needy, the consolation of the sick, the salvation of the dead, and the assistance lent to the living (The Pilgrim's Guide: 87).

In more concrete terms, Jacobean pilgrims had ample practical experience to reinforce this connection. For them O Cebreiro recalled other, geographically distant, but perceptually close, places on the route such as the high Pyrenean passes of Somport and Roncesvalles, the Puerta de Mananzal over the Montes de León, and the Puerta de Pajares between León and Oviedo, all of which were similarly furnished with summit religious institutions). A fifteenth century popular German song (reproduced here in Spanish) indicates how the mountain passes, again associated with both hardship and spiritual gain, figured highly in contemporary imaginations:

*Hay cinco montes en tierra extranjera
Que los peregrinos conocemos bien
El primero se llama Runzevalla [Roncesvalles]
A todo hermano que lo pasa
Las mejillas le enflaquecen
El otro se llama monte Chriein [Somport]
Y el Pfostenberk puede que sea su hermano [Puerta de Pajares]
Los dos son casi iguales uno al otro
Y aquel hermano que los pasa
Gana el reino del cielo
El cuarto se llama Rabanel [Rabanal]
Por el pasan los hermanos y hermanas rapidamente
El quinto se llama Alle Fabe [O Cebreiro]
Mas de un hombre honrado sufrio aqui
Y hay alemanes aqui enterrados*

(quoted in Ruiz de la Peña 2001: 43. My translation below.)

There are five mountains in the foreign land
That us pilgrims know well

The first one is called [Roncesvalles]
For every brother who crosses it
His face becomes gaunt
The other one is called [Somport]
And the [Puerta de Pajares] could be his brother
The two are almost the same, one to the other
And that brother who crosses them
Gains the kingdom of heaven
The fourth one is called [Rabanal]
Over this mountain the brothers and sisters cross quickly
The fifth is called [Cebreiro]
More than one honest man has suffered here
And there are Germans buried here

So, as pilgrims arrived from the east, weary and emotional from the climb, the church, monastery and hospice were the first structures that greeted them. The surviving structures of Santa Maria de Arbas on the Puerta de Pajares may give some impression of the likely visual encounter (figure 5.21). Visualising their journey within a typical holy mountain narrative, anticipating the wondrous remains of a divinely-wrought miracle and equipped with the practical experience of the other high places of northern Spain, they knew they had arrived at both a physical and spiritual high-point.

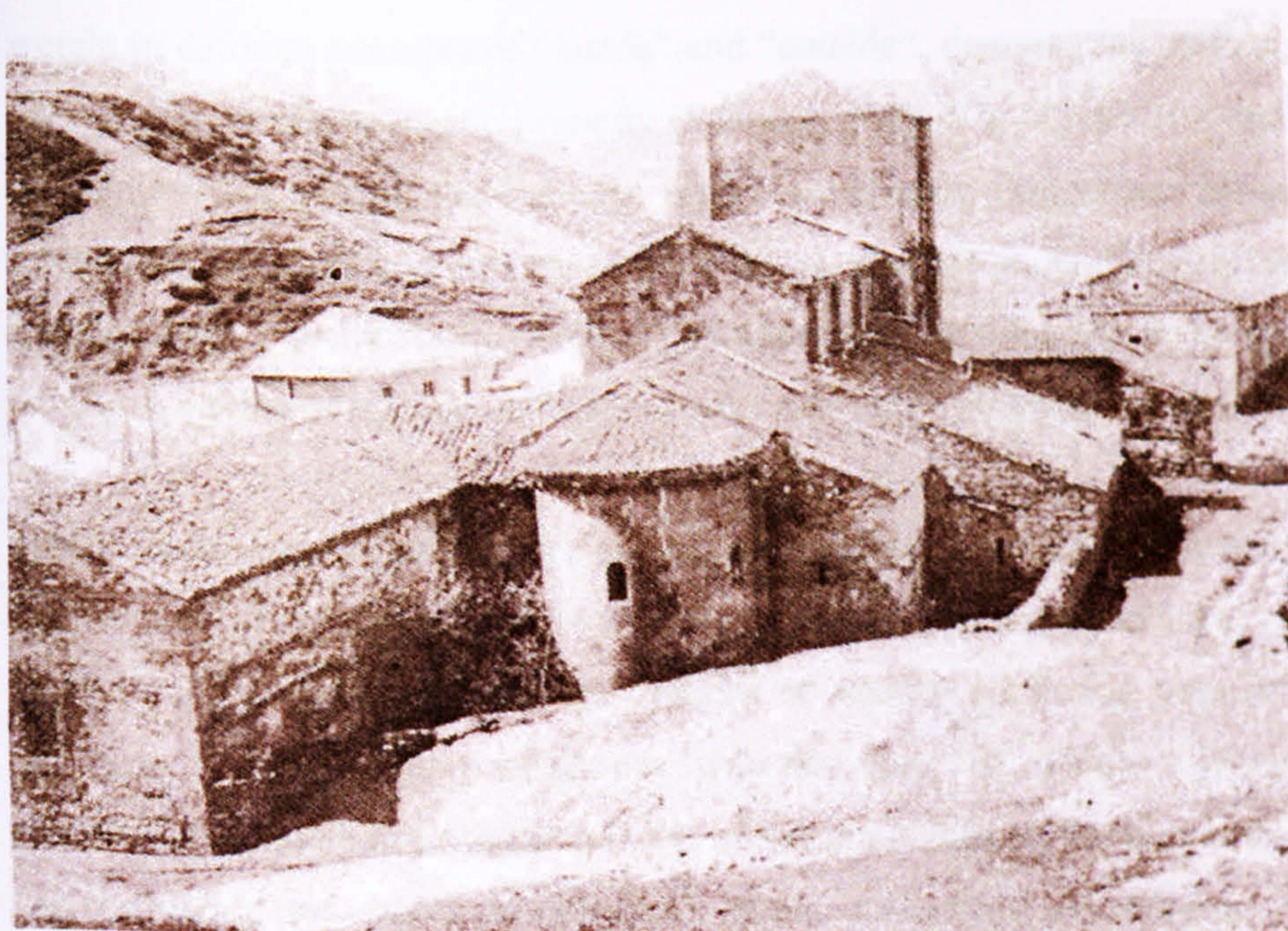


Figure 5.21: The church and monastic estate of Santa Maria de Arbas on the Puerta de Pajares (reproduced from Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949b; Plate CXLI).

However, pre-formed associations are clearly not the whole story. In the last decade, in-depth archaeological and historical studies elsewhere have fruitfully explored in detail the spatial mechanics of both monastic estates and medieval cult centres (see Cassidy-Welch 2001; Gilchrist 1994; 1995 and Rosenwein 1999 for the former and Abou-El-Haj 1991 and Allen Smith 2003 for the latter). In so doing, they reveal how meaning was not only generated but also explicitly broadcast to lay members via a range of practical strategies and formalised ritual procedures.

With respect to monastic estates, a recurring feature of these analyses is the role of boundaries in drawing attention to, and juxtaposing notions of pollution, purity, redemption and asylum (Gilchrist 2000; Rosenwein 1999). At the enormously powerful house of Cluny, for instance, sacred territory was made physically manifest by not only the precise charting and demarcation of a large chunk of the landscape, but through complex ritual formulae normally reserved for the hallowing of burial ground or for the consecration of altars (Rosenwein 1999: 173-82). Studies elsewhere indicate that even subtle material markers such as low stone cairns, corner stones or faint ditches could carry a potentially heavy symbolic weight in defining concepts of “inside” and “outside”, demarcating and separating out ritually purified monastic property (Samson 1992: 35). Meanwhile, the results of fieldwork in both of the previous Study Areas have flagged up examples of leprosuria, hospitals and monastic estates on the Camino route that emphasise the irreconcilable distance, both physical and symbolic, between the brethren on the one hand and the pilgrims and the sick on the other (see chapters 3.4 and 4.4).

Spatial practice and ritual routines that accentuate this order of things are no less in evidence in the context of medieval cult centres. For the organisers and sponsors of cults, it was in their economic interest to ensure continued popularity and devotion. Careful stage-management was the key; in which everyone and everything became part of the action—the priest, the audience, the props (the relics) and the setting (the church or cathedral). Shrine custodians and religious officials then drew upon a variety of theatrical tactics designed to tap into current seams of devotion and maximise appeal and profitability. Cult items were variously

displayed, guarded, publicised, paraded and/or concealed, depending upon the occasion and the crowd (Abou-El-Haj 1991; Allen Smith 2003; Geary 1994; Walker Bynum 1997). Liturgical practices of space produced environments where pious reflection, awe, curiosity and, sometimes, hysteria were guaranteed.

Correspondingly, in O Cebreiro, despite the paucity of contextual detail, we can define different boundaries and spatial registers and hypothesise about the potential ritual routines that served to highlight and sustain them. Of particular relevance for the case study of O Cebreiro is the orchestration of the perpetual stream of pilgrims with respect to the miraculous relics associated with the fourteenth-century tale.

- The cross at the entry point. Upon arrival, a post-medieval cross announces entry into the village environs (figure 5.22 and 5.23). If reflecting the emplacement of an earlier cross, such a fixed monument is, like in the other Study Areas, interpretable as defining the settlement edge. It signals the end of the mountain and proximity to a holy place. Crucially, it is also a monument that denotes a transition for the ritualised body; it invites the traveller to pause, reflect and perform some small ritual gesture prior to proceeding forward. The emblems recall the miracle tale of O Cebreiro. Significantly, though, the small carved figure of St James on the cross-shaft, is located at sight-level, (as on the iglesia del Santo Sepulcro in Estella, chapter 3.3) and thus reaffirms the identity of O Cebreiro as a pilgrimage village. It reminds the viewer of the wider sacred project of the journey and the continuing presence of the Apostle, in empathy with the task of the pilgrim. Like elsewhere, the depicted staff and gourd directly equates the identity of St James with the pilgrims to his shrine.



Figure 5. 22: The high cross at the eastern end of the village.



Figure 5. 23: Detail of the figure of St James as Santiago Peregrino (reproduced from www.ventealcamino.fiestras.com).

- The ecclesiastical compound. The bounded zone that currently surrounds the church hints at some kind of physical demarcation of the ecclesiastical complex as a whole, defining it as clearly separate from the village territory and mountain landscape beyond. Pilgrims, arriving from the east would need to walk right around the edge of the compound before turning and entering, their bodily movement echoing a ritualised procession and reinforcing the geographical line of the boundary (figure 5.24).

Meanwhile, an early eighteenth century source from the nearby archive of Samos defines the physical limits of the monks' closure within the monastery grounds of O Cebreiro as comprising the façade of the church and convent, the path running to La Faba, the corner of an animal pen in the grounds and from there to the wall of the hospital which faced northwards, "towards Barxamaior" (referred to and quoted in part in Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949a: 318). This narrow containment not only speaks volumes about the monks' lives and spatial practice, but also labels and signals the contained territory as different, special, private, and removed from the rest of the village spaces.

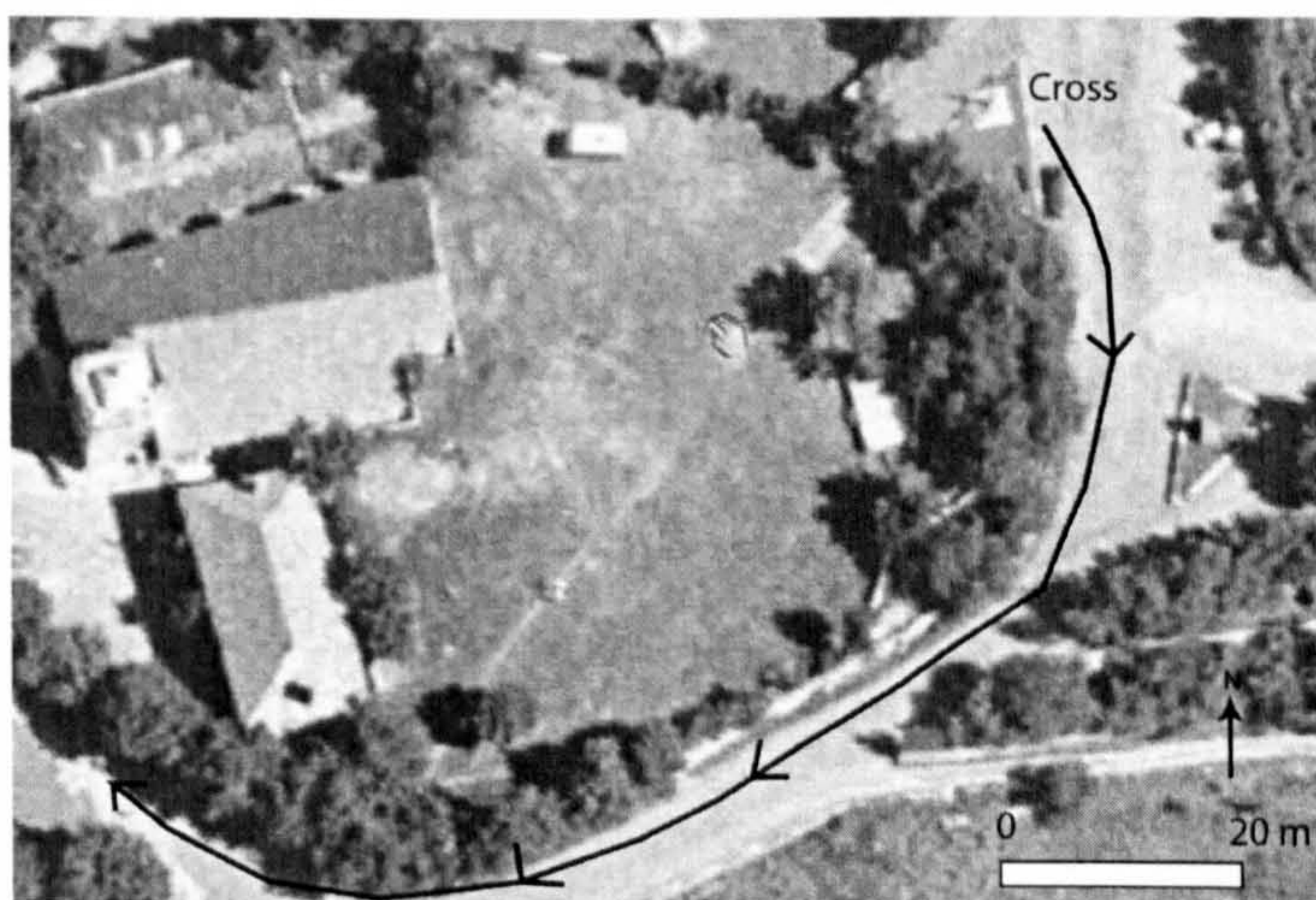


Figure 5. 24: Ecclesiastical compound at O Cebreiro. The arrow represents the hypothesised movement of pilgrims from the cross towards the entrance.

- Within the complex: ritual spaces. Pilgrims, therefore, were likely to be conscious of moving around and passing from one kind of place to another.

Within, potentially accessible places included the hospice, the cemetery and the church. Each of the spaces can be surmised as governed by formalised ritual procedures. For instance, specific rites of entrance normally characterised pilgrim access to the curative realms of hospices. As discussed in the previous chapter, complex sequences of bell-ringing were sometimes considered necessary for sick and leprous pilgrims to herald their arrival and purify the air from the demonic taint of disease (Sánchez Domingo 2004: 98-100). It was also customary for suffering pilgrims to follow the procedural route of confession, receiving communion and composing their final testament prior to admission (Martínez García 2000: 109). Very precise rites, of course, accompanied the death and subsequent interment of a pilgrim, while a whole world of ritual practices accompanied the performance and witnessing of mass in the church.

- The church: It was within the church, in fact, that we can imagine some of the most significant sequences of behaviour taking place, most notably in respect to the Marian statue and relics of the Eucharistic miracles. Unfortunately, historical data on their display to pilgrims is limited. We know that later on Laffi was permitted to see the remains (Laffi 1681: 159) and, given strategies used in other contemporary shrine sites, it is likely that pilgrims were permitted controlled and guarded access as they filed into the church interior. Like elsewhere, the entrance to the church may be interpreted as a crucial threshold. Architecture and ritual routines colluded to promote a sense of the holy (Scott 2003), and we can see that even in the case of a small church structure, as at Santa Maria de Arbas in León, doorways were accentuated (figure 5.25). Meanwhile, in recent years, the chalice, paten and reliquaries of O Cebreiro have been kept in a glass container behind the altar (figure 5.26). The sumptuous materials and their physical association with the most intensely holy zone of the church are also interpretable as tactics in stressing the importance of these objects.

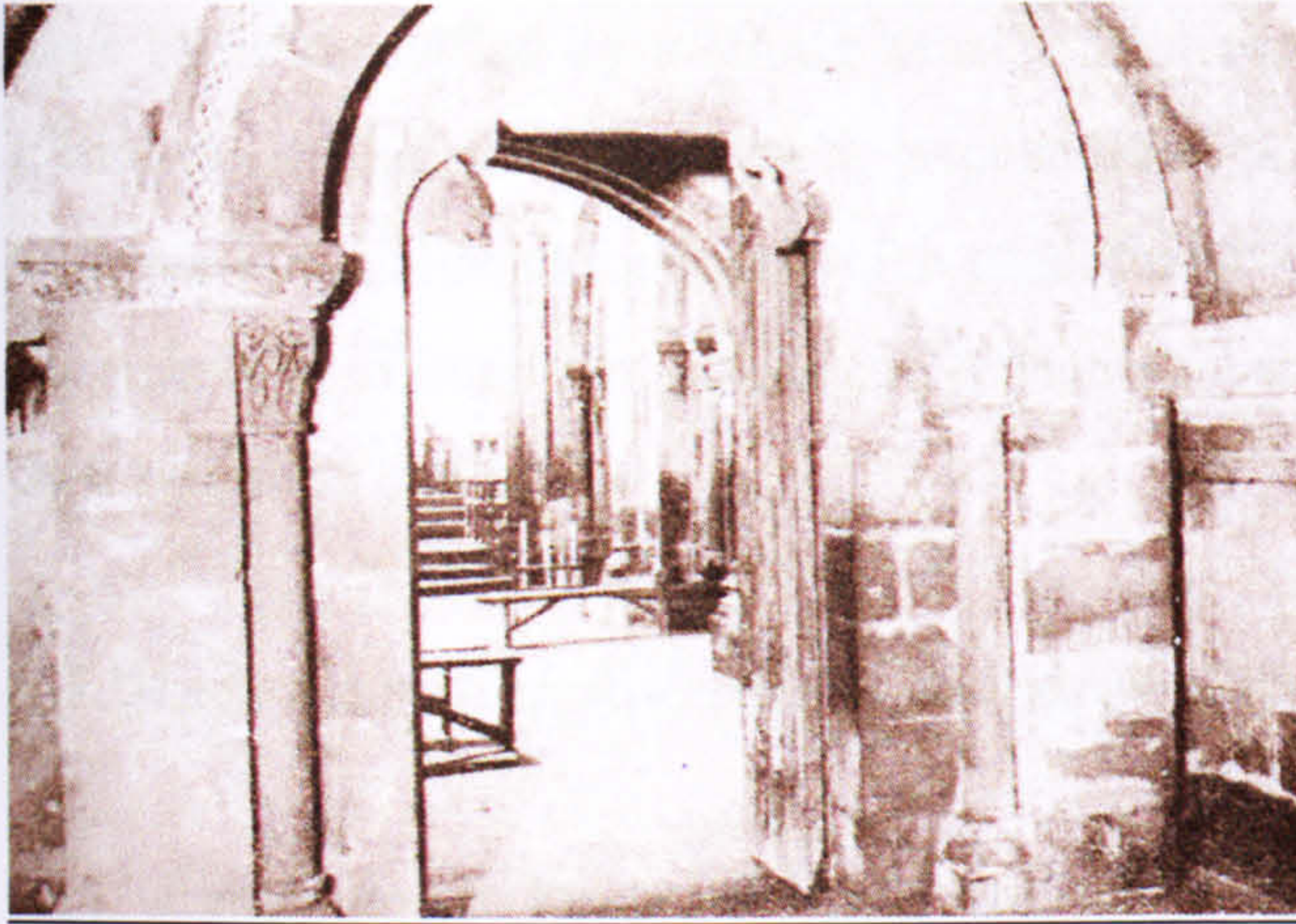


Figure 5. 25: The entrance to the church of Santa Maria de Arbas (reproduced from Vazquez de Parga *et al.* 1949b: Plate CXLI).

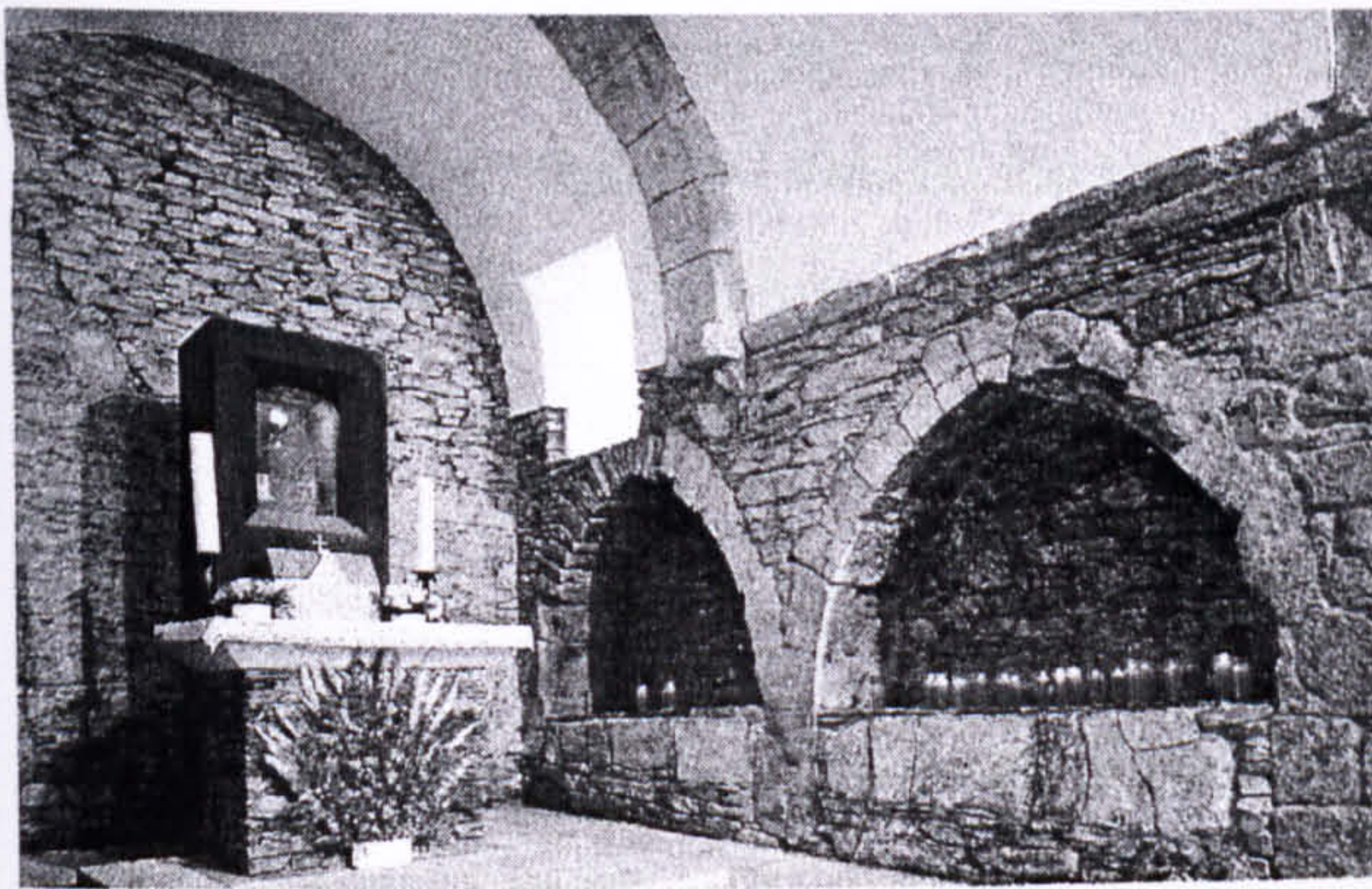


Figure 5. 26: Church interior and the display of the chalice, paten and reliquaries (reproduced from Mariño Ferro 2003: 40)

Repeatable, embodied and culturally ingrained performances were critical in not only constructing a ritualised, sacredly charged environment, but also, in sustaining it (Bell 1992: 98-100). In O Cebreiro, where our knowledge about the precise way in which pilgrims interacted with this zone is limited, it is possible nonetheless to envisage their needs being met (bodily and spiritual) in a way that was strictly controlled by the religious custodians of the monastery and the shrine.

To conclude this section therefore, I hypothesise that as pilgrims made the journey into the sierras that formed the boundary of “the land of St James”, the ritual charge created through the inward-focus of the climb, the potency of the symbol of the holy mountain and the unfolding ideas about proximity to Compostela, may

have been intensified by a strong sense of anticipation for ritual encounter in O Cebreiro. In the settlement itself, expectations were met by the compliance of pilgrims in established routines which accentuated impressions of sanctity not only via reference to important places and objects, but through the involvement of their own ritualised bodies.

5.7. Marian devotees, the *romería* and ideas of rivalry

I explained to the priest that I had not yet decided whether pilgrims or the townspeople were to be the subjects of my research. The priest replied that I ought to decide quickly, since neither group had anything at all to do with the other (McKevitt 1991: 77).

It was McKevitt's anthropological study on the modern shrine of Padre Pio in south-eastern Italy that first alerted me not so much to the possibility of conflicting devotional agendas coexisting within the same shrine site, but to the way in which these agendas were formed via reference to identity and mode of encounter with place.

There, in the town of San Giovanni Rotundo, the physical features of the local shrine landscape mean very different things to the visiting pilgrims and resident devotees on the one hand, and the townspeople, living in the shadow of the complex, on the other. The groups simply inhabit distinct frameworks of time and place, so that those from outside, attracted to the divine significance of the late Capuchin friar, dwell in "the ritual time and space of the pilgrim" (1991: 93) and thus interpret the environs of the shrine in direct relationship to their expectations. The local town-dwellers, while also exhibiting piety towards Pio, feel disenfranchised from the way in which the "fanatical" devotees view and inhabit the site. They interpret the material heritage and emblems of the shrine in a markedly divergent way. Tension simmers among both groups.

Although a very different Study Area in many respects, the ideas raised in this study invite specific questions to be asked of the site of O Cebreiro. Having considered in some detail the construction of the sacred among the Jacobean pilgrims, I now turn to the world of the Marian devotees. What made O Cebreiro

sacred for them? How did their mode of encounter and perception of their pilgrimage encourage a vision of sanctity?

Sanctity in the local landscape

I argue here that the performance of the local pilgrimage fostered an idea of sanctity that was inextricably linked to its local landscape setting. Thus, while the Jacobean pilgrims were always measuring and comprehending the terrain with respect to the scale and route-geography of their long-distance journey, Marian devotees, in undertaking their *romería*, and transforming the environs of the village, were reinforcing a sense of the divine that was rooted to, and inseparable from their own identity.

Their pilgrimage, of course, related to a radically different, and much more normalised and periodic pattern of devotional activity in the landscape in which most members of society participated. In a tiered system of national, regional and local shrines, as defined by William Christian (1972), O Cebreiro is interpretable as functioning as a regional shrine, a site of considerable miraculous significance encircled by a zone of devotion or “territory of grace”; a kind of catchment-area from which active followers were drawn when the specific date for religious celebrations came around (Christian 1972: 44). Quite how far late-medieval devotees would have travelled is not known. In the recent past, the absolute maximum distance did not exceed 150km; a journey on foot of three or four days (Nuñez Pérez pers. comm. 2005). Nor, at this level of enquiry, is it known from where most people would travel. Geographic “territories of grace”, as demonstrated by Christian, tended to fluctuate over the centuries, shifting, expanding or diminishing in tandem with the varying popularity of the regional shrine (Christian 1972: 50, 64-5).

However, the point is, that the *romería* had a scale and route-geography that was very much its own. Quite emphatically, the village was not perceived as a point on a line on the way to somewhere else. It was no staging-post for travellers with their mind’s-eye on some distantly entombed Saint, but was the destination itself, the target of the journey and, the central focus for subsequent ritual activity perceived

as inextricable from the immediate landscape setting itself. This, from the start, directed attention onto O Cebreiro itself, and its divine significance as a shrine site linked with the Virgin, not St James. Also, unlike the Jacobean pilgrims who followed a pre-set and linear sequence, a long moving thread on an internationally organised and named highway, the journeys of the Marian devotees began from their homes; diverse points of origin that radiated outwards from the geographical centre of O Cebreiro. Probably travelling in family and village groups, the shape of their journey was determined by their own personal affiliation to the landscape, something hypothetically reinforcing their perception of the cult as something specifically belonging to them and their locality.

Moreover, this was not a unique life event, but punctuated the annual cycle as routinely as, say, the arrival of spring, the summer harvest, or any of the other holy fairs and religious excursions that defined the passing of time. Rather than a penitential exile, a wandering through foreign lands, this journey was a lengthy excursion in landscapes that, far from representing foreign terrain, were known and familiar via both the annually repeating celebration and a range of deeply rooted kinship and economic ties. While for Jacobean pilgrims, the thought of Santiago de Compostela must have been recurring, and considered to be almost within reach, the city far beyond the mountains had little bearing on the social and economic spheres of most local visitors to O Cebreiro.

Depending upon their point of origin, their practical task of making the journey would probably involve a more complex negotiation of the hill and valley terrain of the sierra system rather than the simple ascent and descent realised by Jacobean pilgrims in traversing the mountain pass from east to west. To be sure, the role of the mountain can also be seen significant, as Marian devotees would nevertheless have needed to perform a significant uphill climb to reach O Cebreiro. In this regard, there is some overlap with the discussion in the previous pages in that “grace must be purchased with toil” (Christian 1972: 75) and that O Cebreiro ranked as especially meritorious in terms of the practical, bodily physical effort necessitated to get there. The journey could be linked to personal projects of penance and purification of the soul via the mortification of the body, a strong

component of many late medieval and even modern devotional events (Flynn 1994; figure 5.27).



Figure 5.27: The painful journey to the sanctuary of Milagros de Amil, Galicia (reproduced from Mariño Ferro 2003: 94).

However, it is also arguable that the mountain landscape represented a much less foreign aspect than for the majority of the long-distance pilgrims. One notably constant factor in Christian's research on regional shrines and their catchment areas seemed to be a preference for those that were located in landscape settings that most resembled those of the shrine-visitor's home-territory (1972: 51). The ascent of the mountain therefore, although being performed under special circumstances, and in a special way, could be interpretable as linked to the identity of those who dwelt in this zone.

Interestingly, the details of the miracle tale may have further bolstered the popular and local appropriation of the sacred in O Cebreiro. The protagonist is not, like in many other miracle tales along the Camino de Santiago, a pilgrim on his way to Compostela, but a local peasant from Barxamaior, a neighbouring valley settlement that is a good distance downslope from O Cebreiro. The path that steeply ascends the mountain from this village is known, at least currently, as the "Ruta do Milagre" (route of the miracle). Significantly, it does not come into any

contact with the Camino road, but enters O Cebreiro from the north (figure 5. 28). It is possible that at least some Marian devotees may have arrived at the village via this route, thus meaning that they could equate themselves with the character and the action of the tale more firmly than any foreign, Jacobean pilgrim.



Figure 5. 28: The Ruta do Milagre from Barxamaior to O Cebreiro (background image reproduced from the *Mapa Topográfico Nacional de España* 1:25,000 sheet 125-II).

Village spaces

As discussed above, once arriving at the summit, the dynamics of the interactions in O Cebreiro itself must also be seen as integral in fostering ideas of the sacred. Here too, ritual routines, the orchestration of movement, and differently charged zones within the village territory helped to cultivate and sustain impressions of a divinely charged locale. Rather than re-examine this in an identical fashion as in the pages above, I point out here some of the divergent, and more ambitious ways in which the late medieval Marian devotees may have inhabited, and perhaps, appropriated the village environs. Unfortunately, most of the hypotheses are again, based on descriptions of the recent and current performance of the *romería*.

Figure 5.29 below is a compilation of the places and objects that can be most associated with the different religious traditions, while figure 5.30 provides a schematised plan. The broad range of activities associated with the September Marian festival reflects its heightened status as a regional shrine.

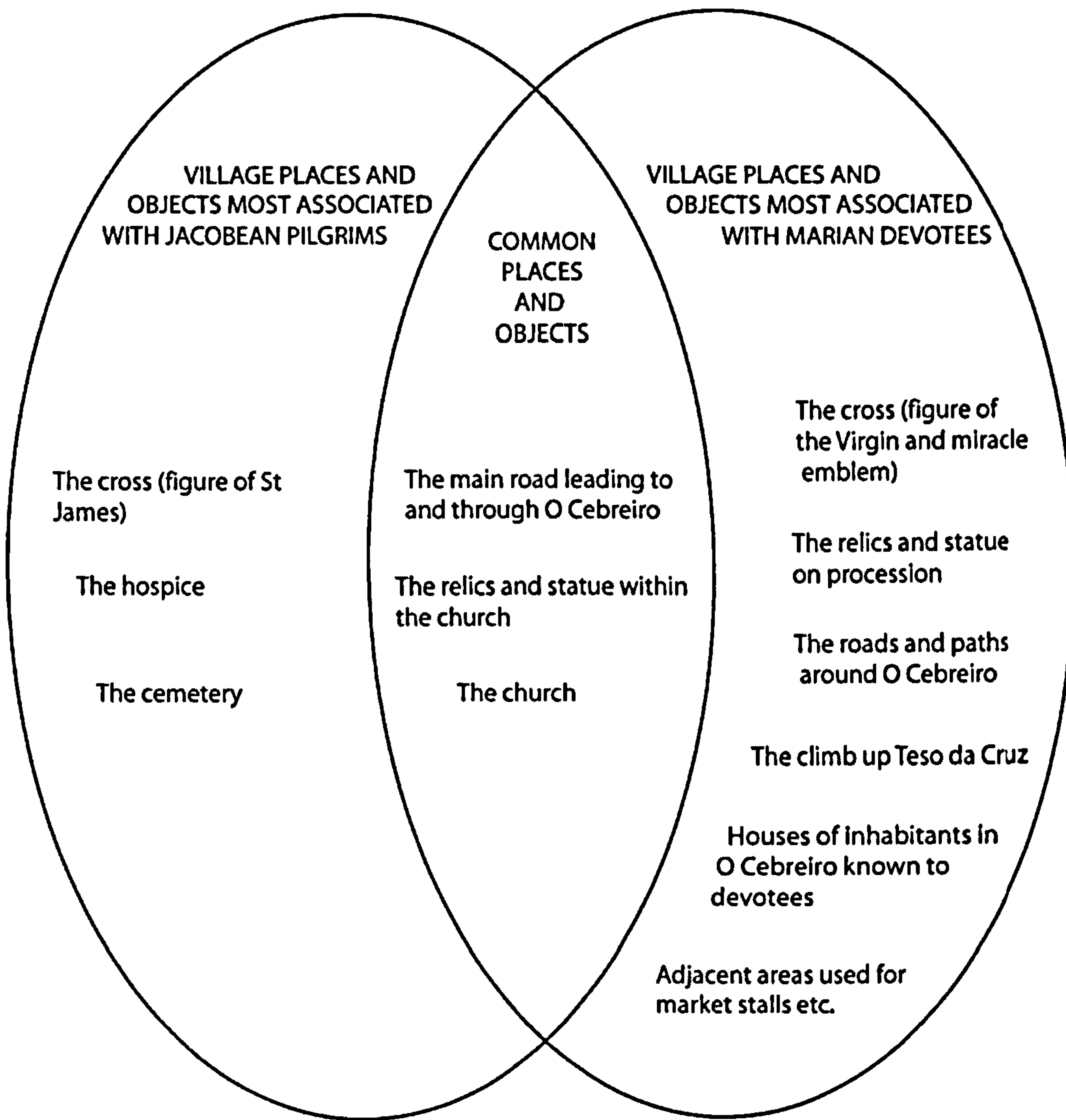


Figure 5. 29: Venn diagram showing activity spaces in O Cebreiro

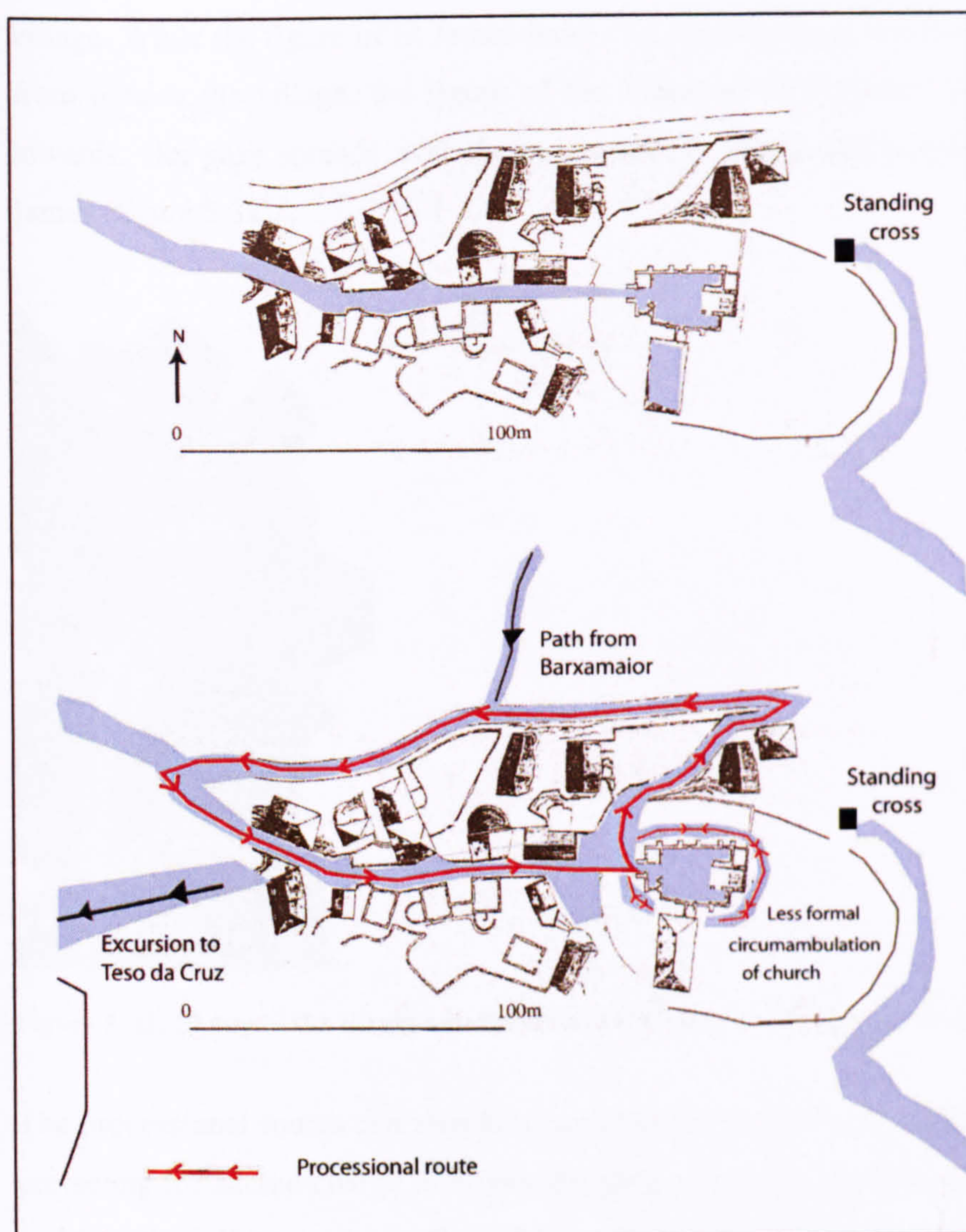


Figure 5.30: Schematised plan of activity spaces in O (base map reproduced from Passini 1993: 174).

During the days of the *romería*, O Cebreiro thus exceeds its identity as a Jacobean pilgrimage staging post with incidental miraculous significance and becomes an outright, important centre in its own right. This is achieved both through material strategies, the orchestration of people and the spatial appropriation of the village.

Certain components deserve further comment. The cross at the entrance is particularly interesting. Although the figure of St James is prominent at sight-level, it is the figure of the Virgin who is placed at the top. Rather than just reflecting a generalised, official ranking of Catholic personages, the Virgin figure on the cross is clearly that of O Cebreiro - a representation of the miraculous statue of the

village. While the figure of St James faces east, as if to greet the arriving pilgrims from outside the village, the figure of the Virgin of O Cebreiro faces west, i.e. inwards. Her gaze spreads over the settlement, in direct opposition to that of St James (figure 5.32).



Figure 5. 31: Figure of the Virgin and Child of O Cebreiro on the cross summit

The processional routes can also be interpreted as an extremely potent strategy in projecting the sacred charge normally guarded within the church interior outwards and into the village territory. Crowds processing through streets and village paths transform the landscape for both observers and participants (figure 5.32). A significant issue also concerns the visual display of the miraculous relics. While Jacobean pilgrims were (hypothetically) permitted to see the famed Communion relics, they were hidden by a canopy during the September procession (see above, section 5.3). This indicates an astute strategy in the cultivation of impressions of the sacred. Long-distant pilgrims could become vehicles for advertising the story and spreading the fame of the village. However, by withholding visual access to groups of people who returned regularly on an annual basis, a strong aura of mystique could be fuelled and maintained during the course of the celebrations. As revealed in the photograph below, heightened impressions of sanctity could be maintained by other strict measures of control over access (figure 5.33).



Figure 5. 32: On procession at O Cebreiro (reproduced from www.ventealcamino.flestras.com).

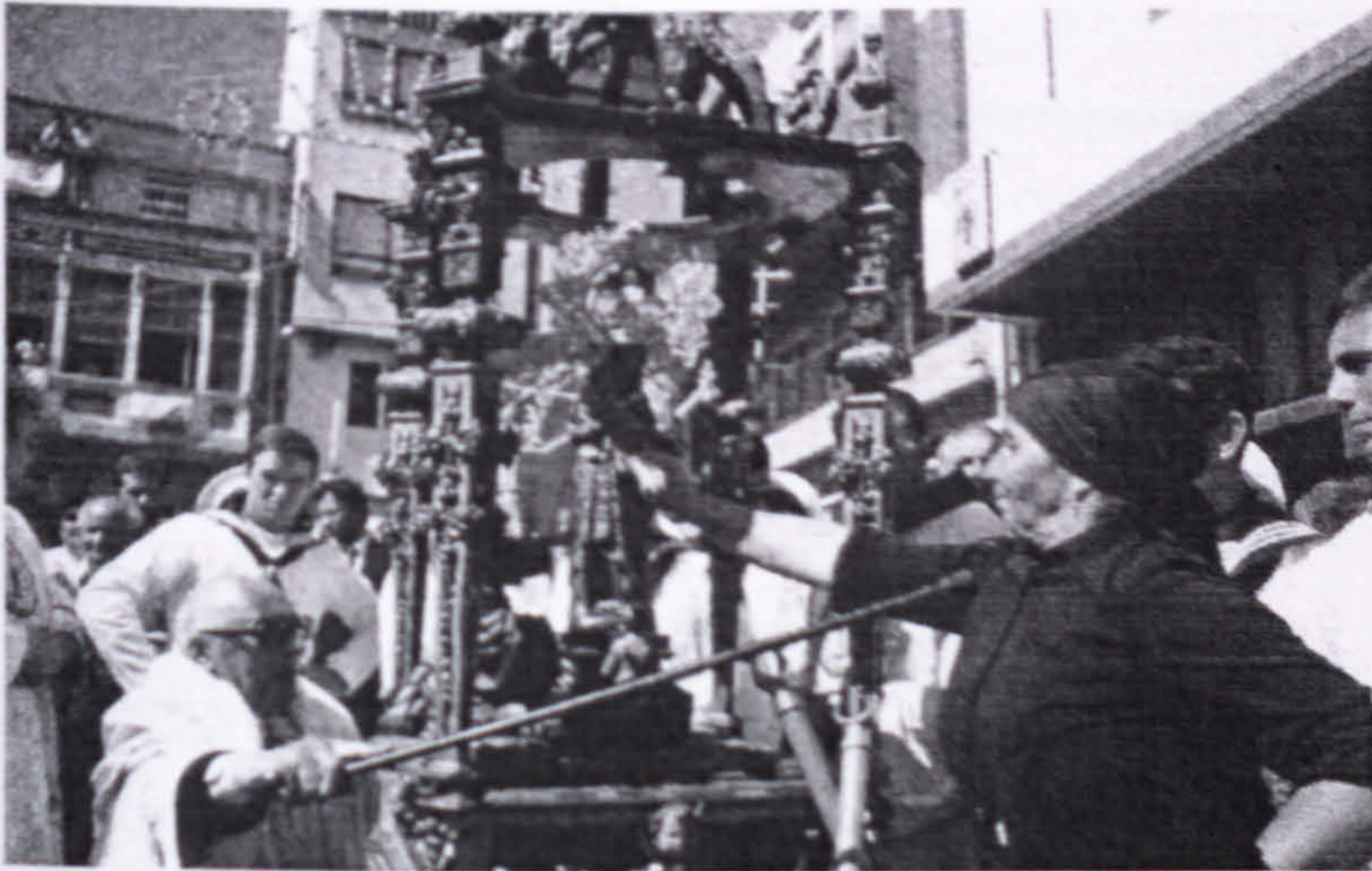


Figure 5. 33: Conflict over who may touch the processed image in the romería to Nuestra Señora de La Barca in A Muxia, Galicia (reproduced from Christian 2004: 25).

Other patterns of movement, further ritualised by strategies of bodily penitence, such as moving on the knees, integrated other parts of the village territory into ritual performances. An excursion to the Teso da Cruz for instance, is interpretable as a mini-*romería* within the local pilgrimage itself. Meanwhile physical patterns of ritual activity and movement can also be seen as complemented by both different patterns of sound (special and more complex sequences of bell-ringing for instance), and other ephemeral material means to adorn the village environs

and the church interior (such as candles, offerings and flowers etc.). Temporary markets stalls briefly extend the main street of the village away from the simple the axis of the Camino de Santiago (figure 5.35).



Figure 5. 34: The bell at O Cebreiro (reproduced from www.ventealcamino.fiestras.com).



Figure 5. 35: Ephemeral signs of the market area to the west of the village and beyond the hill known as the Teso da Cruz

Rivalry?

It is probably safe to say that Jacobean pilgrims traversing the mountain pass of Cebreiro during these days, either on the way to, or more likely, on the way back from Santiago de Compostela, would have encountered a scene in which they felt their identity to be of much less relevance than normal. Their personal journey, and the wider sacred project to which they pertained, was eclipsed by the active way in which the village was functioning and being constructed as an important sacred place in its own right and in a way thoroughly unconnected with the pilgrimage in terms of the components of the miracle story, the locations involved, the divine character who instigated the occurrence, the devotees in attendance, and the manner in which they enacted their celebrations. Laffi, when stumbling upon local festivities in the course of his travels, frequently reports them in a way that makes it apparent that he, as a foreigner and a pilgrim, was somewhat left out and sidelined (Laffi 1681: 44).

For Jacobean pilgrims, the significance of the relics and the miracle, was just another ingredient in the composition of sanctity and a sense of place. Journeying within the “ritual space and time of the pilgrim” (McKevitt 1991: 93), their ideas of sanctity also depended on O Cebreiro’s relative position on the route, the sheer foreignness of the landscape as seen from their path, the contours of their east-west route, and the comparisons that could be made with both imaginary and real landscapes, such as the other mountain hospices and their settings. Their interpretation of sanctity depended upon their role and identity as long-distance pilgrims and their bodily accomplishment of the journey. For Marian devotees, on the other hand, everything about the way in which they interacted with the journey and the village reaffirmed O Cebreiro as a regional shrine, intimately connected to and firmly centred within its “territory of grace”.

This distinction leads us onto the final question posed in this chapter. Was the *romería* and the miracle tale purposefully fostered as a means of reappropriating the local identity of O Cebreiro? Was the miracle tale engineered in specific opposition to the internationally successful cult of St James?

It is, after all, well-known that throughout the Middle Ages, Europe was awash with cult centres, each advertising its own particular relic-set, saintly patron and suite of miraculous narratives, and, that in the name of profitability and survival in an overcrowded market, cult-organisers depended upon overt strategies of self-promotion and aggrandizement. Key strategies included the exhortation of places and saints at the direct expense of others, so that unsubtle “competition miracle stories” (Martinez Sopena 1992: 170; Ward 1987), for instance, became rife. Home-cults were revealed as dynamic and powerful, the real abode of the divine, while doubts were sown about the efficacy and legitimacy of others.

A directly relevant example comes from the “*Cantigas de Santa Maria*”, a remarkable collection of over 400 songs part-written and part-sponsored by Alfonso X in the latter part of the thirteenth century. Overall, there is an unmistakable bias against the cult of St James in favour of the Virgin Mary. For example, a total of twelve songs are dedicated to the miraculous activities of “*La Virgen Blanca*” in Villasirga, near Carrión de los Condes in Palencia. Three of these twelve, moreover, involve pilgrims not only failed by their alliance with St James and Compostela, but also actually hampered in their journey. Needless to say the Virgin came to their aid at her village shrine (Keller 1959; 1979). The success of the propaganda ensured Villasirga (now Villacázar de Sirga) a thriving local pilgrimage trade in its own right. As well as rivalry expressed through place, a more insidious and generalised saintly promotion is detectable within these songs. Stories that had been long associated with St James are retold in which Mary takes over the lead role and, it has to be said, outdoes the Apostle in the wonders that she achieves (Keller 1979).

If these songs indicate a more general late medieval fashion for elevating Mary at the expense of St James, it is possible that the monastery at O Cebreiro was simply following a popular and profitable trend. It is also worth taking into account the slightly diminishing flow of Jacobean pilgrims during the fourteenth century and the interruptions to traffic caused by the Anglo-French wars. Arribas Brione, in his extensive survey of the more shady world of the pilgrimage, for instance, flags up how an archbishop of nearby Lugo in 1345, conscious of decreasing returns as a

result of the conflict and comparatively poor pilgrimage trade, considers options for boosting the church coffers (Arribas Brione 1993: 319).

Correspondingly, the dissemination of a miracle tale during the fourteenth century, may well have been instigated as a viable means of elevating O Cebreiro from a mere staging post for pilgrims to a lucrative and popular cult centre. In support of this idea, the format and components of the miracle tale suggest an astute awareness for what might actively engage a broader spectrum of people in the vicinity. A local audience, either hostile to the perpetual stream of foreign masses, as suggested in the previous two chapters, or in the throes of unequal economic relations with the monastic landlords, or even both, may have been reengaged via a miracle and a *romería* that seemed to mock the church authority (through the disbelief of the priest) and celebrate a local peasant, who, coming from Barxamaior, avoids the main international thoroughfare, and the Virgin Mary.

Whatever the reasons behind the initial promotion of the cult in the late medieval ages, the actual performance of the *romería* in subsequent times may or may not have been infused with the idea that it was undertaken in opposition to the Jacobean cult. It is possible that, as today, it was simply perceived as distinct. Upon asking if those who went on the *romería* were also likely to go on pilgrimage to Compostela, I was answered with a categorical no, that they were simply two traditions apart (Nuñez Perez pers. comm. 2005). The tradition of local *romerías* is very strong in Galicia and they can be simply be interpreted as part of the character of religious observance there.

However, there is also the sensation that the strength of this tradition has something to do with the expression of identity that is removed and separate from St James and the international pilgrim movement unfolding within their midst. There is a faint suggestion that local people, perhaps disenfranchised with hosting what could be interpreted as “the riff-raff of the road” (Keller 1959: 76) tended towards the development of sub-cultures and traditions of their own. One popular tradition, for instance, involves an encounter between St James and St Andrew, where the inequality between the two apostles is explicitly discussed. Resolution comes in the form of divinely ordered positive discrimination in favour of the

latter, so that all Galicians are obliged to visit the coastal shrine of Teixido, which holds a relic of St Andrew, either during life, or, in the form of an animal during death (Valentine and Bervig Valentine 1998). The shrine remains a very popular excursion for Galicians. In O Cebreiro, the physical performance of the rites and the periodical transformation of the village as a cult centre in its own right, with no reference to St James at all, indicates some kind of material demonstration of identity and their own version of sanctity, felt and constructed in a very different way to the Jacobean pilgrims. One of the emblems on the current shield of Galicia is now the chalice and paten of the miracle story (figure 5.36).



Figure 5. 36 : Official shield of Galicia (reproduced from www.tierracelta.com).

6. Arriving: Landscape, movement and interaction

Concluding a book is similar to arriving in Santiago: It's a relief to have made it, it's a bit anticlimactic, and there's disappointment that it has to end (Frey 1998: 217).

The process of completing a journey, be it actual or metaphorical, is never simple. Conflicting emotions surface. Now, like Frey, I also find myself at the final stage of a long process; the PhD journey, as it were. Having arrived at this point, it is time to retrace steps, to weigh up what has been achieved, and to think about what it all means. The journey finishes with an appraisal of the whole.

The fundamental impetus for embarking on this project in the first place was the conviction that the journeys of medieval pilgrims deserved closer scrutiny. Early on, I remember being struck by the apparent "otherness" of long-distance devotional travel. Soon, though, imprecise questions such as "how?", "why?" and "what was it like?" coalesced into more rigorous objectives and research commenced on the relationship between pilgrimage and landscape in northern Spain, focusing on three study areas in Navarre, Burgos and Galicia. Informed by current theoretical argument and envisioning pilgrimage as a continuous "evolving sequence" through landscapes (Pellicer Corellano 1993: 79), I began this project with the dual aim of tracing the effect of the terrain on pilgrims and investigating the material impact of their massed presence. Looking back, I realise that this objective has taken me on a spectacular journey of my own.

In this chapter, I tackle the most important themes to have emerged along the way and engage with the different facets of the research aim. Discussion is organised into sections that explore, respectively, the symbolic power of landscapes, choreographed movement on the pilgrimage, and the implications for local landscapes and communities along the road. Finally, in the concluding section, I situate these findings within the wider field of the archaeological study of ritual, religion and landscape and reflect on what has been gained from the project overall.

6.1 The symbolic power of landscapes

Landscapes as lived entail myths whether these myths are explicitly known or implicitly understood (Hirsch 2006: 151).

This section confronts the compelling question: What did landscapes mean to medieval pilgrims? Up to now, my discussion on this subject has centred only on the particular topographic features contained within the study areas. For each area, I argued that contemporary narrative traditions, rich in senses of place, actively shaped the pilgrim relationship with the landscape. Now, I find myself wishing to explore this theme further.

In the following pages, therefore, I address more precisely how pilgrims, by nature of their activity, can be especially receptive to landscape myths. I argue that they were heavily influenced by them, so that physical and imaginary landscapes merged seamlessly on the route. As a consequence, different features of the landscape acquired a potent symbolic currency that was understood both implicitly and explicitly. Landscapes were thus not passively observed, but were critical in forging meaning and comprehension. An integral part of this discussion is an investigation of how myths and narratives may be constructed, disseminated and materially encoded along route-ways and I ask whether we can begin to talk about the “phenomenology of a route-way”.

Receptivity to myth

The power of landscape myths is, of course, well known. Multi-disciplinary research indicates how in human society, myths that incorporate ideas and traditions about landscape pervade our knowledge and understanding. They reside deep in psyches, accommodate contemporary cultural concerns and affect the way in which we view and inhabit the world (Cosgrove 1990; Hirsch 2006; Schama 1995). Myths shape perception, so that “real” landscapes become indivisible from “imagined” ones (Johnston 1998).

In medieval Western Europe, we know that a strong mythic tradition flourished in which landscape played a central role. “Awesome landscapes” and specific geographical features lent a resonance, a metaphoric forcefulness to hagiographies, miracle tales, sermon literature and otherworld journey literature. Deserts and mountains were shorthand for austerity and the world-denial of spiritual wanderers and ascetics. Spatially located far from God, these mythic environments, by virtue of their extremity, were simultaneously pure and redemptive. Rivers, channels of mysterious, endlessly flowing water, meanwhile, also figured as liminal places, linked, on the one hand, with hell, test-bridges, death and sinfulness, and, on the other, with cleansing, rebirth and the work of saints who saved the drowning, constructed bridges and ferried travellers.

In chapters 3, 4 and 5, I hypothesised that aspects of this tradition influenced the pilgrim perception of the topography along the Camino route. But how exactly would this work? What I am interested in doing here is tracing the circumstances in which landscape narratives and myths filter through and shape pilgrim impressions of the world around them. In considering this question I turn to the case study of the modern Camino de Santiago. The route as it is used and experienced in the modern day was obviously the setting for my fieldwork and as I worked I took an interest in the results of modern anthropological study on the Camino (see Frey 1998 and Slavin 2003, for example) and the attitudes and behaviour of those who undertook the journey. Needless to say, both published and spoken pilgrim “testimonials” form necessarily descriptive and highly subjective sets of data but that said, such evidence nevertheless reveals processes of interchange between myth, tradition and landscape perception.

Case study: The modern Camino de Santiago

On the modern Camino, pilgrims exhibit a surprising receptiveness to stories and ideas that are based on or around landscape. Engagement, and even enchantment, with landscape begins with the decision to make the Camino when participants encounter a number of set readings and interpretations of the route (Frey 1998: 52). Published books, articles and newsletters stimulate the minds-eye to visualise far off places and encourage and foment ideas long before pilgrims arrive at their

starting point. Some texts, such as the esoteric classics by Morín and Cobreros, and Paolo Coelho are especially influential in attributing specific meanings to the landscape (1976; 1992). Before setting off, would-be pilgrims also hear about the experiences of friends whose journeys are rich in geographical description. Those who join Camino Associations settle down to watch slide shows in darkened rooms where stories are vividly recounted alongside images of mountain passes or green fields cut by a winding path. Meanwhile, in the last decade, a thriving Internet culture has also emerged, offering another arena for the exchange of stories, photos, advice and ideas.

Via this process, pilgrims begin to learn about particularly associative locations, such as O Cebreiro, and famous or infamous landscapes, like the Meseta. A practicing Catholic woman categorically states, “The well-informed pilgrim should experience two energy points [on the route]...” (quoted in Frey 1998: 35). New and would-be pilgrims cannot fail to discover shared wisdom about the famous pass over the Montes de León, for instance; one of the “energy points” mentioned above. There, up among the peaks, pilgrims add votive stones to an enormous roadside cairn, believing, or at least acknowledging in some way, a tradition that has become an integral part of the modern Camino experience. By bringing and placing a stone on this monument, the Cruz de Ferro, pilgrims symbolically cast off some kind of internal burden, the weight of the stone equated with the level of inner disquiet borne thus far in life and on the journey to Santiago (Frey 1998: 23; figure 6.1).



Figure 6. 1: Adding stones to the Cruz de Ferro (postcard reproduced from www.mundicamino.com).

Pilgrims also frequently become aware of, and subscribe to, more elaborate narratives that encompass the entire length of the journey. In these narratives, the geography of the route is given an over-arching interpretative framework so that the broader landscape contexts of northern Spain as they are encountered on the Camino become metaphors for the inner journey of the pilgrim, from start to finish. Complex meanings are drawn from the sequence of landscapes witnessed during a month or so of westward walking. Interestingly, both esoteric and more traditional Catholic readings relate the physical contours of the terrain to a similar development of inner spirituality. In the former, the Pyrenees to Burgos evokes “universal spirituality”. Burgos to Astorga (the Meseta) corresponds with “symbolic death”, while the final westerly segment up over the final mountain passes leads participants to “spiritual resurrection” (Morín and Cobrero 1976). Meanwhile, for Catholics, the Camino fulfils the deeper meaning of “the Way” and is construed as a prolonged outdoor liturgy in which ordered segments of the route each represent a biblical theme:

The first [segment], the Pardon, is Navarre and La Rioja with its “juice of mashed grapes” (“to go down to our interior, step on and crush our life far from God, and enjoy the wine of reconciliation with the Father”). The Castilian meseta (the Life of Christ) forms the next portion, where the lessons of austerity, hardness and humility are learned from the environment, which is characterised by the same traits. The third phase is the portion from León to El Bierzo (the Passion of Christ), where the meseta ends and one

climbs several important passes (the Cruz de Ferro and Cebreiro...representing the miracle of transubstantiation) reminding the pilgrim of the Eucharist miracle, solitude and the meaning of the Cross. And finally, the fourth part, Galicia, marks the Joy of Christ, where the ups and downs of the journey are understood in terms of the Resurrection, joy, and ascension of Christ to heaven. (Frey 1998: 76 quoting from Rodríguez Fernández 1995: 22-4).

Pilgrims, as they begin to walk, are clearly predisposed to attach certain ideas to particular places and landscapes and are susceptible to increasingly fixed perceptions of the terrain. Their experiences mirror those which they believe they should have. In other words, the sensory experience of actually being on the road, *inside* the places that they have read or heard about is the catalyst for really feeling the culturally prescribed meaning or ambience of that locale.

Having immersed themselves in the physical and, it seems, metaphorical performance of the journey, modern pilgrims also play an active role in the ongoing development of narratives and traditions. Pilgrims convey experiences orally, through the written word, through songs, sketches and photography. In written and spoken accounts, they repeatedly use exactly the same vocabulary to describe places. Dramatic incidents, moments of insight and narratives about overcoming pain are often linked to the same, specific emblematic places on the route. Certain places, like the remote village of Foncébadon in León (universally described as “eerie”) host an unusual clustering of stories (Frey 1998: 108). Meanwhile, browsing through the many web-archives of Camino journeys, it is apparent that many pilgrims take photographs at very similar points along the way (figure 6.2). Sometimes I have been startled to see images of “general landscape scenes” captured which, apart from the pattern of light and weather conditions, are identical to some of my own. The impulse to create a lasting visual image of a certain part of the landscape suggests that the beholder/participant considers the view before them significant in some way either aesthetically, culturally or personally. The fact that many people share the same impulse indicates, on some level, some commonality of perception, prompted by the rich culture of the route.



Figure 6. 2: Three very similar views of the descent from Mostelares in Study Area 2. Note the stone cairn in the bottom picture (reproduced from www.nacho.cyberdark.net/Contenido/ElCamino/otrasfotos/DescendiendoelParamo.htm and www.amigosdelciclismo.com/vivac/home/vivac2/d23v2.htm).

Crucially, pilgrims also mark their experiences and ideas along the way through physical, interactive strategies. Material correlates of the connection between landscape and narrative tradition are manifest in the carefully constructed stone-piles and graffiti messages that are dotted along certain parts of the route (figure 6.2 and 6.3). Some also use their long wooden staffs as a blank canvas for carving the linear story of their pilgrimage through time and space. Representations of key personal moments and places become etched in the wood (Frey 1998: 59-61). The

Cruz de Ferro with its enormous pile of weighty rocks, each one brought from a different location and symbolising a personal journey, is probably the most dramatic monument to the ritualistic and active propagation of myths on the modern road to Santiago (figure 6.4).



Figure 6. 3: Carefully balanced stone piles by the path on the Meseta

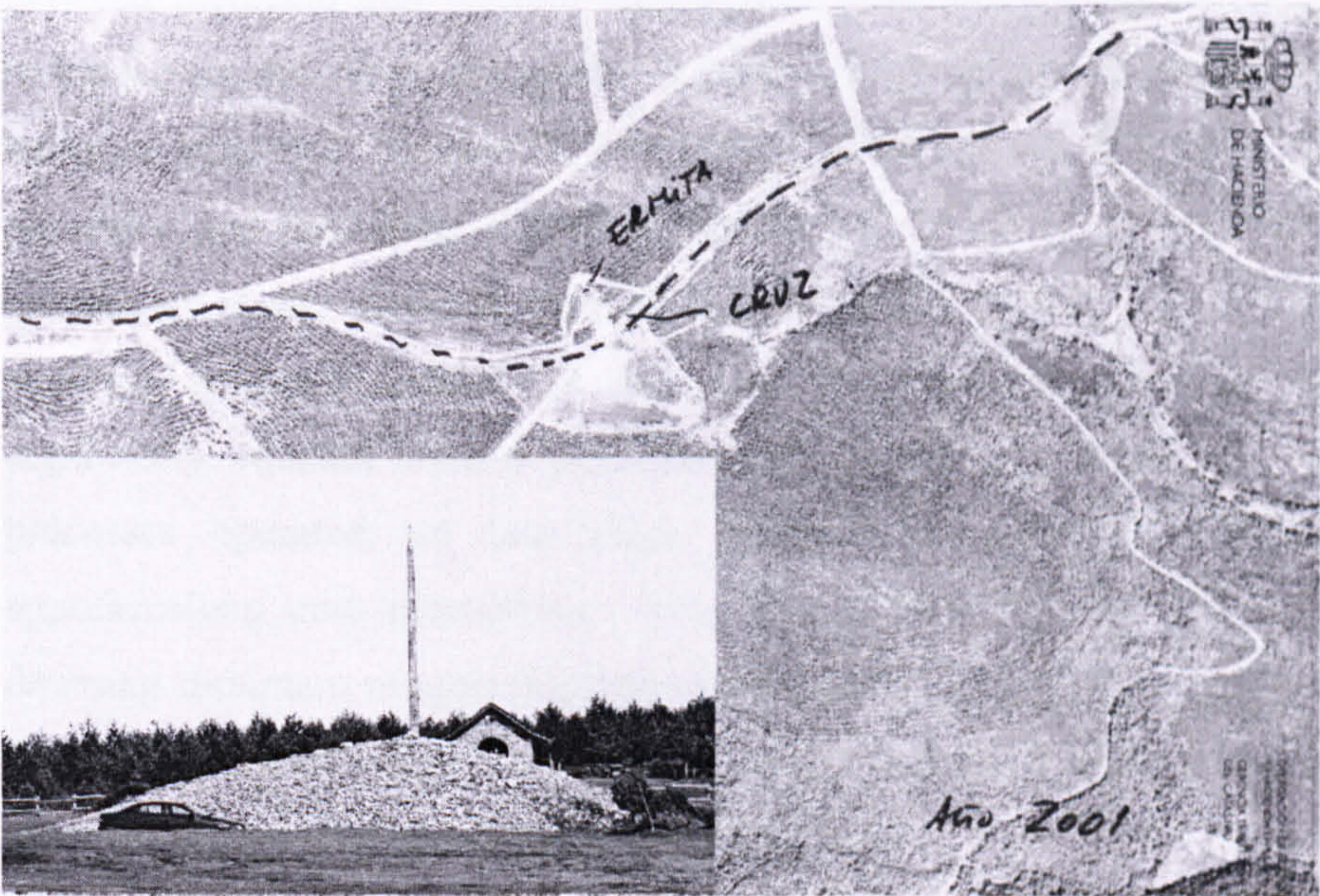


Figure 6. 4: Photo and annotated aerial photography of the Cruz de Ferro, León showing the course of the Camino, the modern hermitage and the monument itself (aerial photograph provided by the Ministerio de Hacienda, León).

Medieval symbolic landscapes

In the last section, this case study was elaborated to demonstrate the way in which pilgrims participate in a dynamic, modern culture of the route; a complex meshing of ideas about place and meaning. Crucially, this is not because they are socially levelled individuals, bound through “communitas” (see chapter 2.1). In fact, participants tend to be characterised by strikingly individual and “privatised” forms of spirituality (Frey 1998: 31-4). It is rather the case that as they negotiate the route, pilgrims are receptive to persuasive modern landscape myths. They actively engage with these ideas. Narratives serve to mould their journey, so that participants describe places in remarkably consistent ways, take photos at very similar points along the way, incorporate sites and landscapes into more complex narrative constructions and physically engage with certain places. The environment becomes inextricably linked to their view of their inner, personal pilgrimage.

What about the medieval journey? Without wanting to make a direct comparison between medieval and modern scenarios, I believe, nonetheless, the process of influence on the modern Camino is revealing. It raises the possibility of there being a medieval “culture of the route”, different in character, but equally pervasive and influential. I believe that concurrent with the east-west stream of movement in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth century was a complex and evolving medieval culture of the route in which the physical terrain was continually equated with a particular set of values. I argue that comparable processes operated, so that large numbers of pilgrims potentially shared apprehensions and perceptions. Over rivers, through arid zones and across daunting mountain ranges, pilgrims charted their way through richly meaningful locales from which they drew specific ideas, fears and associations and gained senses of identity, purpose and personal sanctity.

The medieval culture of the route

Like their modern counterparts, prospective medieval pilgrims entered a situation in which they were assailed with interpretations, set readings of the journey, and a

strong mobile oral tradition. Theology, behavioural ideals and warnings were vigorously communicated through ritual, material culture and the power of the spoken word. Pilgrims commenced their journeys with the words of the departing liturgy still ringing in their ears. Popular miracle tales, garbled place names, stories of calamity and snippets of songs about trembling bridges (chapter 3.5) and the rigours of the five mountain passes (chapter 5.6) are surviving remnants of strong currents of hearsay and persuasive gossip that moved in tandem with the pilgrim movement, influencing the perceptions of medieval participants and reinforcing ideas about landscape and the route.

More specifically, though, it is the evidence of archaeological remains and images along the road that highlights the merging of myth and landscape and the construction of tradition on the Camino de Santiago. The three most striking examples from this thesis comprise the bridge at Puente la Reina, the monastery of San Anton and the mountain hospice of O Cebreiro. The now-vanished chapel and way-side cross on the Puente de Peregrinos (Bridge of Pilgrims) acknowledged the double-edged meanings of rivers, salved real and imagined dangers by the clear physical presence of sanctity and perpetuated the liminal association of flowing water. Antiquarian comments about offerings in the bridge-chapel suggests how, collectively, pilgrims recognised and responded to this critical place, participating in landscape myths as do modern walkers on the Camino. At San Anton, notions of sanctity in the wilderness were deliberately expressed via components such as the ostentatious architecture (recalling a desert fortress), the carved imagery on the archivolts and above the archway, and the managed interior landscape of gardens, a trickling fountain, and a miraculous spring. For medieval pilgrims approaching after a hot dusty journey through the Meseta, the symbolism was quite clear. This was a lush, fertile *locus amoenus* (auspicious place), a spiritual and physical oasis that contrasted with the parched land beyond (the inauspicious *locus horribilis*). By evoking Christianity and charity in the desert, this structure did not merely communicate ideas about this specific site and the Antonines within, but also infused the broader Meseta landscape with concepts of the imagined, mythic desert. Similarly, on the high pass of O Cebreiro some 1300m above sea-level, pilgrims and Marian devotees drew significance from the topographical setting of the hospice, church and monastery. As both a Jacobean staging post and a regional

cult centre, the site acquired an aura of sanctity through the dramatic and highly charged symbolism of the mountain.

Through a combination of topographical setting and architecture, such material culture is interpretable as more immediately expressive than the written or spoken word, accommodating and broadcasting complex, entrenched cultural knowledge and reinforcing senses of place along the route. The patterns revealed in the study areas clearly follow trends noted elsewhere in Medieval Europe (Gilchrist 1995; Howe 2002). However, what stands out here in this thesis is the potential for pilgrims to come into contact *repeatedly* with such meaningful places. The Puente de Peregrinos was one of countless river-crossings that punctuated the route. O Cebreiro was one of a sequence of high mountain passes adorned with a religious way station. Given the dense concentration of material culture on the prime pilgrimage highway across northern Spain, it is entirely plausible to foresee how pilgrims, negotiating their way to and through these places, were continually exposed to clear, recurring patterns in which a strong Catholic culture of the route was affirmed. Just as walkers today perceive a dialectical relationship between the development of the inner and outer journey, (the pilgrimage being “an arduous journey to an inner destination” (Foster 1994)) medieval travellers potentially acquired a sense of the deeper implications of their expedition through the metaphorical charge of landscape.

A phenomenology of the route?

It is this relentless process of encounters with unfamiliar places, meaningful sites and evocative landscapes that leads to the issue of whether we might be able to define a “phenomenology of the route” or not. Such a question refers back to the research of Joan Nogué i Font as discussed in chapter 2.5. Using a discrete region of Catalonia as a test-case for study he discovered through research and detailed interviews that different human subjects repeatedly discerned the same characteristics of place: a surprising consistency that led him to conclude that landscapes not only merited investigation in this way, “from the inside”, so to speak, but also could be conceptualised as intrinsically accommodating “senses of place” distinguishable from the interpretation of individuals (1993). Nogué i Font

was, of course, looking at a bounded geographical zone. Here, the question becomes: can a long linear route-way also contain an associated phenomenology, an essential nature in its own right?

The investigation of the Camino de Santiago “from the inside” reveals a route through a sequence of landscapes. The geographical reality of the line of the path dictates the visual perspective towards those landscapes. Essentially, individuals come together in physical space and, in one sense, following the phenomenological theory of commentators such as Seamon, it is arguable that aspects of colour, light, water, aridity, geology and vegetation heighten a particular feeling for, or sense of, place and promote a commonality of perception (1986).

However, what is key is the role of cultural forces in conditioning attitudes and responses to landscape. It is not the landscape “out there” that determines how pilgrims feel, but their own interpretations and understanding. The conclusion I draw from this discussion is that a linear route-way, such as the Camino de Santiago, may well contain an associated phenomenology that can be detected and experienced from those treading the path, but the key to its interpretation is the culture within which people travel and behold it.

The perception of medieval pilgrims, therefore, depended upon contemporary ideologies that were broadcast through various media. The landscape of the route could thus be equated with fear, danger, sanctity and the places of the mythic past. “Constructed and conceptualised” landscapes promoted dimensions of experience on the Camino de Santiago that were vital to the sacred project as a whole (Ashmore and Knapp 1999).

6.2 Choreographed movement

The perceived subjective reality of landscapes allowed pilgrims to insert themselves into an almost biblical landscape. Cultural forces imbued landscapes with a strong symbolism and a transformative potential. However, up to now the argument has omitted explicit reference to a key concern; the role of movement and the human body in the perception of the landscape and the journey.

This thesis is also founded on the idea that the human body is a fundamental element in the investigation of pilgrimage landscapes (chapter 2.3). Pilgrimage is inevitably about and defined by bodily movement: pilgrims move through the landscape along a set path, negotiating the terrain via the nexus of their walking bodies. Pilgrim bodies are both conduits for knowledge and instruments for communication. Their journeys involve a continuum of encounters, rich in changes of scene and sensation. Medieval relationships with place were thus active, mobile and constantly changing. I argue here that in addition to the culturally-conditioned phenomenology of the route, the physical performance of the pilgrimage and the framework of the body provide a key for understanding the development and awareness of “senses of place”.

The physicality of pilgrimage and the perception of landscapes

“Seeing is believing, but feeling is the truth” (Proverb quoted in Frey 1998: 219).

It is only through the ritual performance of journeying that “disembodied” belief becomes “embodied” and that the transformative potential of landscapes is realised (Coleman and Eade 2004: 19). On the modern Camino de Santiago, for example, it is only via the inevitably physical involvement in walking the path, and engaging in rituals, such as placing the stones on the Cruz de Ferro, that ideas and notions about place and landscape are affirmed and made real. Ritual activity contains and expresses the required social logic (Bell 1992).

Some anthropologists, working with modern subjects, have been fortunate enough to be able to chart exactly how this might operate. “Senses of place” are forged in the very act of movement through them. Both Frey and Slavin, working on the modern Camino experience, detect what happens when pilgrims begin to walk (1998; 2003). They “develop a changing sense of time, a heightening of their senses, and a new awareness of their bodies and the landscape” (Frey 1998: 72). Slavin, focusing more on the physiology of the body, essentially makes the same point. He points out how the process of walking is rhythmical and meditative, how

the pilgrim reaches an aerobic level of activity after about half an hour and notes how the physical performance of the pilgrimage creates its own dimension of experience; walking allows the development of a liminal space for ideas about landscape to surface (Slavin 2003).

Faced with the obvious absence of live, human subjects in this thesis, I have nevertheless attempted to factor in the idea of movement, in terms of both tackling and interpreting the material residues of the medieval Jacobean pilgrimage landscape. Although in themselves static, material remains (roads, bridges, city streets, gates, churches, leprosuria etc.) are still redolent of the repeated activities and *habitus* of past individuals and societies. And, although obviously a far cry from the journey of medieval pilgrims, the experiences of my own journey are still useful for focusing more rigorously on the perceptual and physiological mechanics of negotiating a given landscape from east to west. In accord with the proverb quoted above, poring over inert photos and maps (“seeing”) wasn’t enough; it was only through physically treading the paths of northern Spain (“feeling”) and mapping and narrating my own journey that I was able to think about the broader terrain and confront a number of interpretative issues.

Walking through landscapes: practical journey making

This process of “sensory mapping” was revealing. In each of the study areas, I observed how numerous “sensory landmarks”, comprising visual, auditory, or physiological, muscular encounters, accompany the process of walking along the pilgrim path. They hinge upon geographical landforms such as hills or outcrops, built structures and monuments like towers or gates, or particular activities like bell ringing. Sometimes, the lack of intrusive sensory stimuli reveals other dimensions of experience, as on the broad, flat, quiet, depopulated Meseta *páramos*, where modern pilgrims reflect upon the meditative effect of walking towards a featureless horizon (Frey 1998: 77-8). Effectively, it became clear how the process of walking involves shifting perspectives of distance, foreground, background, panoramic views, soundscapes and sometimes, accumulating and repeating patterns of “sensory landmarks”.

Mapping such observations is undoubtedly problematic. On the ground I recorded the locations where landmarks or sounds could first be seen or heard if approaching from the east. These identified “points” (represented by the labelled red dots on the journey segment maps) were reliant upon my own individual perception and were not regarded as inherently concrete or fixed. I recognise that on a different day, I might well have chosen to record other places in the landscape that seemed significant for other reasons. However, it was only through this methodology that I could begin discussion on the relationship between movement, perception and landscape along given sections of the pilgrimage route-way.

In this thesis, on one level, I interpret such vantage points as communicating essential practical information during the course of a journey, so that sequences of increasing or fading audible signals, and the more sudden coming-into and going-out-of sight of church towers, valleys, villages or rocky spurs can be related to ideas about navigation, forward progress, arrival, departure and local territory. I envisage them as points where travelling bodies can both measure their journeys (over minutes, hours or days) and gain a sense of the broader landscape around them. Recurring patterns, as they unfold, lend character, or “tonality” to place (Johnston 1999: 44). Thus the paucity of far-reaching views combined with frequent steep, enclosing slopes in Study Area 1 promotes an impression of difficult, mixed and complicated terrain through which the Camino itinerary takes the most logical route. In contrast, the perspective from travelling the Meseta exposes a path that flows against rather than with the lie of the land. In all areas, views towards the next village potentially signal hope for sources of food and accommodation.

A procession writ large

Pilgrim movement, needless to say, isn’t just about walking, nor just about the art and technique of travel. It is about a broad spectrum of meaningful individual and communal activities. Therefore, on another level, I also interpret the route with respect to ritualised pilgrim activities and routines. In this way, the pilgrimage to Santiago may be likened to a procession, but writ large. There are expected rituals to follow in which participants, with their bodies, encapsulate the significance of

the devotional project, the event and the place. Material culture links up with the fleeting performative action of mobile pilgrim.

In this sense, arrivals, transitions and thresholds on the pilgrim road emerges as a recurring theme in this thesis. By linking places with performance, I believe that as with small-scale processions, we can see that the pilgrimage to Santiago involved a constant encounter with different kinds of threshold that were connected to symbolic bodily transitions. The staged process of sequential movement on the approach to a town or village, for instance, is represented in the archaeological record by the places on the path where church bells can be heard, where the settlement first comes into view, and the location of extramural medieval elements like a fountain or spring, a cross, a leprosaorium, town gates or the *ejido* (exit) zone of a village. These sites potentially correspond with pausing, listening, looking, washing, drinking, kneeling, praying, assuming a particular gait, or attitude in walking, and serve to indicate that arrival was a significantly ritualised, complex affair. The acts of climbing slopes, crossing bridges and leaving offerings could punctuate the route in a similar way. Meanwhile, the ornate and powerfully sculpted thresholds as at the Church of Santiago in Puente la Reina forcefully underscored the ritually charged act of moving across this potent boundary. Far from mere decoration, the carved figures actually encouraged pilgrims to think about their own deportment and outward expression, the perils of sin, their own place in the medieval world order and, of course, heightened the tension of making a transition from the outside into the ritually purified inner world of the church (chapter 3.4).

Thresholds and transitions are sometimes more difficult to define spatially. In Study Area 2, the otherwise unremarkable path leading up to San Anton may be seen, perhaps in its entirety, as an arena for complex signalling through sound. By ringing bells and responding to the chimes of the monastic bells, lepers and sufferers of ergotism effectively underwent a transition *as they moved*. They demonstrated conformity to the entry rituals demanded by the monastery and, in doing so, began the ritualistic transformation of their disorderly bodies (chapter 4.4).

Other patterns of sound in the landscape, less visible in the archaeological record, derived from pilgrims singing the songs and hymns connected with the pilgrimage route, such as the *Dum Pater Familias*. Words and rhythms that measured the tempo of the walking pace could confer further significance on the act of walking the Camino.

The “performative construction of places through movement” (Coleman and Eade 2004)

This interplay between movement and place is interesting as it links up with current anthropological debate on how bodily action constitutes place (Bell 1992: 100; Coleman and Eade 2004). Movement is not mere physiological process, nor the necessary correlate of practical journeying, but is interpretable as a cultural performance that shapes environments and peoples’ perception. Pilgrims embody and express ritual knowledge along the route

From the examples above, we see that the entire act of pilgrimage involved a constant negotiation of rituals, places and choreographed routines so that westward travel became “performed art” (Adler 1989). Crucially, via movement, and via the rigours of the journey, the powerful symbolism of place, discussed previously, could be made to feel real and to come alive. For pilgrims, immersed in the rhythm and “liminal space” of walking, and already susceptible to certain ideas and opinions, the sequences of encounters could set in motion more complex ideas about topography, the meaning of the pilgrimage, religious experience, mythical landscape, and their role within it. Thresholds and transitions, both actual and symbolic, structured their journey and as they travelled, inner maps were forged that charted their progress towards both a geographic and penitential goal.

I believe that from the perspective of movement, narratives about biblical and saintly pasts could effectively be made present by the physical ritual of pilgrimage. Within the framework of medieval Catholicism, pilgrims participated in something like the modern “prolonged outdoor liturgy” mentioned in the case study above. They “prayed with their feet” (Frey 1998: 120). Accordingly, the physical ups and downs on the journey brought the pilgrim closer to the penitential ideal of

following “The Way” and the purchase of grace through sometimes painful bodily toil. So, in the Meseta, the desert-like environment of “rock, no water and the sandy road” (chapter 4), already mimetic of tales of the Desert Fathers, the Exodus and Christ himself, acquires an even more intense symbolic and metaphoric charge by the order of movement required by pilgrims. Up, then down, and then up again onto feared, dry, shelterless *páramos* where pain and thirst might take on deeper dimensions of experience. Similarly, on the ascent to the O Cebreiro pass, the mountain is no mere representative symbol, but is interpretable as providing a theatre for pilgrims to actually re-enact a hard, knee-jarring, purgatorial climb. After the ascent, their suffering bodies could be rewarded with charitable care and the contemplation of their longed-for arrival. Meanwhile, in Navarre, the setting of the Camino provided an active stage for the pilgrims’ first trials after the Pyrenees. On bridges they approached, crossed and paused at associated chapels and crosses. It is possible that the sight of worn paving and already ancient bridges prompted ideas of the famous “builder-saints” of the road, betokening a saintly pilgrim past that legitimised and bolstered their present sense of purpose and identity.

Essentially, in all the three study areas we might hypothesise that the subjective realities of myths could be born out on the road with the aches, the sweat, the fears, the triumphs and the dust, of actually negotiating, hour by hour, the pilgrim itinerary.

6.4 The pilgrimage in local landscapes and communities

Pilgrims, of course, were not alone in the landscape. Foreign Jacobean pilgrims travelled constantly within the local territories of lay and ecclesiastical inhabitants. Visibly distinct, moving in convoys and using their own language and names for towns (chapter 4.4), these pilgrims moved through and perceived the landscape in a radically different way from those who dwelt in the road-side farms, villages, cities and monasteries. Up to now, discussion in this chapter has focused primarily on the travellers themselves and their pathways of experience on the Camino route. Now, incorporating some of the ideas already raised, and thinking about the control as well as the choreography of movement, I shift the perspective towards

the broader implications of the mass ritual performance with regards to local landscapes and populations along the itinerary.

Social relations in pilgrimage landscapes

Via the notion of *habitus*, enduring material culture along the Camino de Santiago can be understood as directly linked to the ideological interests, attitudes and repeated behaviours of people in the past (chapter 2.3). Throughout this thesis, I have been interested in what this material culture can tell us about the expression of identity and social relations between groups. Archaeological evidence exposes a range of possible scenarios and indeed, the cultural ambiguity of pilgrim identity shines through as we can see that in local situations across the Camino pilgrims were variously guided, monitored, feared, cared for and exploited. While pilgrims were immersed in their meaningful journeys through evocative landscapes, charting their way along a vast east-west highway, their minds-eye on a distant city, the evidence from this thesis simultaneously exposes the constant negotiation of their movement through the landscape by local residents and ecclesiastical inhabitants.

Secular environments

In secular environments, for example, we can see how in larger settlements, unambiguous barriers to movement, such as stone walls at Puente la Reina, Estella, Mañeru, Cirauqui and Castrojeriz, communicate the tensions involved with passing into and out of sizeable settlements. Pilgrim movement determined the original linear morphology of settlements, but local residents took measures to bring the road within their own sphere of control. Along with obvious signs of surveillance and management (observation towers, narrow archways and gate-hinges), these features of the local Camino landscape imparted knowledge about power and authority to both travellers and inhabitants. The association of religious paraphernalia at gateways echoes the embellishment of other symbolically charged entrance and exit-ways, most notably of churches. Actively marking a separation between “inside” and “outside”, and often accompanied by an adjacent leprosaorium, (which confirmed the rightful “on the edge” placement of socially

marginal types) such definite boundaries are interpretable as the practical solution to qualms about the free and unconstrained passage of the unknown wayfarer. Even Compostela itself in the fourteenth century was the epitome of a strongly fortified city (Suarez Otero 2002), reflecting how components usually labelled “sacred” and “profane” interlink.

Even in smaller settlements, particularly in the Meseta, where less formidable bastions constrained movement, it is clear that other elements like *ejido* or exit zones, stone boundary markers and the acoustic range of bells served to demarcate territory. Such material indicators, reinforced with strategies of close observation, potentially created differently charged zones in a manner akin to medieval and early modern Islamic towns where private streets were guarded from the view of the outsider. That local communities on the Camino might have even routinely denied pilgrims entry to the settlement as a whole, or at least the use of key resources within village spaces, is also indicated by the presence of “bypass” roads, at Mañeru and Castrojeriz, for example, or external pilgrim fountains in Area 2.

Yet, simultaneously, material evidence betrays other concerns. The route of the Camino always formed the most visually impressive, prestigious and wealthy thoroughfare through a settlement with the ambitious monuments plainly embodying the wealth brought by pilgrims, accumulated, invested and “turned to stone” (Spufford 1992: 201). The flow of people was a catalyst for economic enrichment across the board from innkeepers, thieves, tin-badge makers and masons working on construction projects through to the new French settlers, licensed to sell bread and wine. The long line of stone shop alcoves in the “Rua de las Tiendas” in Estella is a reminder of high levels of commercial activity, while in Mañeru the gradual shift and expansion of the village to incorporate the formerly marginal Camino path into its centre shows the inevitable social and economic magnetism of the pilgrim movement (chapter 3.4). Like elsewhere in medieval Europe, hospitals such as that at Hornillos del Camino, although on the edge, were nevertheless prominently placed, as if to draw attention to the provision of charity (chapter 4.4); a reminder that the pilgrim traffic also bestowed the opportunity for wealthy local patrons to conspicuously display piety. In a world where good deeds

were increasingly linked to salvation, certain individuals could exploit the pilgrimage for spiritual gain and notch up substantial personal benefit.

The ecclesiastical realm

Places associated with the church were responsible for the administration of accommodation, care and comfort for the legions of tired, needy and sick on the road. The pilgrimage was often the *raison d'être* for numerous monastic communities distributed along the highway and those operating cult attractions, as at O Cebreiro, depended especially on the flow of pilgrims to fill their coffers.

Fieldwork in the Study Areas exposes a considerable density of sites ranging from small, well-preserved stone structures, now converted into homes (as in Hornillos), to monumental remains (San Anton), to crumbling stone vestiges (Bargota and Sta Maria del Manzano), to rebuilt sites (O Cebreiro) to mere place names (e.g. Hospital Derribada). The mere fact of their presence, along with occasional surviving elements, such as the niches for the provision of bread and wine at San Anton, directly expresses the important and much needed monastic vocation of caring for phenomenal numbers of people traversing this route. In such environments, lepers and sufferers of ergotism, stigmatised and excluded elsewhere, found a level of care unimaginable had they remained at home. Mollat pictures them on the approach; "Those who came to the gates of a monastery, we may imagine, felt that they were approaching the frontier between a world of penury and an island of abundance" (1978: 47).

However, this same quote also reminds us of the insurmountable divisions that separated pilgrims from the brethren. In the dispensation of care, such institutions exercised their own strict regimes of control over the pilgrim movement. Removed in every sense from the secular world, ecclesiastical communities operated in environments where space was rarely ambiguous (Cassidy-Welch 2001; Rosenwein 1999). Sometimes, their very topographic location (on mountain passes or at the end of an uphill climb) asserted the theological dictum that charity was really only for those who had earned it by persevering on "the Way" (i.e. for those who had struggled up the hill). Meanwhile, divided up into different functional

spaces, monastic estates were also the product of clear ideas about sealing off, controlling and defining aspects of the unworldly life.

The negotiation of pilgrims through and around these environments could only be achieved by measures of stringent ritualistic incorporation enacted through sequences of movement through spaces, bell-ringing, guarded entry, and specific rites for sick or dying pilgrims. Hence, within the Study Areas, perimeter walls, elaborate doorways, symbolic motifs, bell towers, infirmaries, cemeteries and archways over the pilgrim road express rules, procedures and attitudes regarding filtering these bodies through highly regulated places. Again, carvings of otherworldly creatures on doorways express the differently charged spaces within and outside. Even the niches for the deposition of bread and wine at San Anton tell us that although help was given, pilgrims arriving too late could not breach the exterior walls of the monastery. Pilgrims on the long-distance journey discovered in such estates a whole new world of thresholds, boundaries and concentric “boundaries within boundaries” through which access was strictly guarded and orchestrated (Cassidy-Welch 2001: 33).

Relations across landscapes

Looking up and across from discrete settlements and “sites” on the route, we may detect broader patterns and relationships from the evidence. From this perspective, the pilgrim movement is interpretable as redolent of unequal social and economic relations across entire populations and wider landscapes.

Apart from a highway inextricably linked with St James and religious supplication, the Camino de Santiago was also a means for emergent Christian monarchs to stabilise and demarcate territory, to ally their name with the higher realm and to profit from the trade and influx of wealth that rose in tandem with the east-west current of religious travellers. In Navarre, the impact of royal policy that sought to alter, manipulate and exploit the course of the religious movement is identifiable right across the region. Pilgrims moved through exclusive and wealthy city quarters and were the basis for the prosperity of incoming French settlers. It is no

coincidence that the miracles of St James seem to favour the French above any other group (Ward 1987: 112-13).

For indigenous and increasingly marginalised *Navarros*, the stream of pilgrims along the new Camino Francés could potentially be linked to their own social, cultural, and spatial exclusion from prosperous urban zones, the displacement of older networks and power structures, and their comparative impoverishment. Settlements such as Murugarren and Zarapuz could not compete (chapter 3.4). Material culture was emblematic of new, unequal social and commercial forces. The bridge of Puente la Reina, the suite of urban churches in Estella, the stone carved motifs from epic French legends, the walls dividing quarters and the rigid new morphology of the pilgrim towns were clear signs of complicity between royal and French concerns in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. A source of pride and identity for some, such monuments could be hallmarks of oppression and flare-points of tension for others.

Meanwhile, in the rural sphere, for those inhabitants labouring at the most uncomfortable end of the feudal system, pilgrims may have come to be associated with the unbridled license of prominent and overtly wealthy monastic estates. At San Anton, we might again interpret the tangible material remains as emblematic. The conspicuously arrogant towers and crenellations, archway, and incorporation of paths and springs into their estate were unmistakable signs of ecclesiastical dominion ultimately founded upon the success of the long-distance pilgrimage.

Similarly, in O Cebreiro, the material and legendary ingredients of the local Marian cult are interpretable as formulated in direct opposition to the Jacobean pilgrimage. The focus on the Virgin, the centrality of a local shepherd in the miracle tale, a possible dig at the authority of the church and the yearly appropriation and transformation of the village during the *romería* hint at the overt projection of local identity as a form of resistance to long distance pilgrim identity.

The politics of a pilgrim route

“..a sacred space is not merely discovered, or founded, or constructed, it is claimed, owned and operated by people advancing specific interests” (Frey 1998: 67).

Such material allows us to glimpse the heavily politicised world of an institutionalised pilgrim route. It is inevitable that some of the hypotheses outlined above promote too simplistic or too polarised a view of pilgrims in local landscapes. Just as in the present, questions of identity and social relations between groups in the past can never be simply summed up. Nonetheless, the evidence leads to important conclusions.

The first is that the study of the pilgrim road in northern Spain clearly exceeds the realm of “the spiritual” and “the religious” and thus proves an exemplar for Eade and Sallnow’s argument discussed at the outset of this thesis (chapter 2.1): The physical spaces of the Camino represent an “arena for competing discourses” in which different groups all might stake a claim (1991: 5). Implicit in this assertion is support for those who criticise the traditionally narrow and exclusive archaeological focus on “sacred landscapes” (Bender *et al.* 1997: 149; Insoll 2004: 89). The material culture is equally eloquent on matters of local politics, consumption, economy and the negotiation and construction of power in medieval society. Monuments and landscape, far from “constant and immutable” (Alcock 2002: 16) comprise dynamic sources of evidence for measuring contrasting and competing identities and ideologies in space and time.

The second revolves around the apparent cultural ambiguity of pilgrim identity in the Middle Ages. The unavoidable conclusion from the evidence is that in spite of the spiritual and commercial benefits, unquantifiable, morally dubious pilgrim bodies posed a threat to local populations. The material culture reinforces a dichotomy of visitor versus inhabitant and outsider versus insider. Attempts to wield control over the pilgrim movement tallies with a scenario of wariness and fear about the unchecked activity of large numbers of outsiders and about the physical and spiritual pollution that foreign, criminal and/or disease-marked pilgrims embodied. Evidence regarding the linear spread of disease along route-

ways in later medieval Castile suggests that these fears could have been well founded (Vassberg 1996: 166). Interestingly, this ambiguity of the pilgrim figure corresponds with patterns observed in contemporary literature in which the anonymous wayfarer plays a double-edged role, embodying the road to salvation on the one hand, but also evoking horror and distrust on the other.

6.4 Conclusions

... we continued until we came to a spring, where we thoroughly refreshed ourselves and changed our clothes, for we knew we were near St James. From this spring we climbed for about half a league to the top of a hill called the Monte del Gozo. From here we could discern Santiago, the city we had so much longed to reach, some half a league away. On seeing the city we fell to our knees and, with tears of great joy falling from our eyes, we began to sing the 'Te Deum'...Our hearts were full and our unceasing tears made us give up singing, until finally, having unburdened ourselves and spent our tears, we resumed...Singing as we walked, we carried on down to the outer suburbs of Compostella (Laffi 1681: 161).

So Domenico Laffi, the seventeenth-century diarist and priest quoted throughout this thesis, describes the emotional, final stage of his pilgrimage towards Santiago. Just in this excerpt alone there is a sense of the interplay between place, movement and meaning. There is a refreshing spring, a hill, and a distant, eagerly anticipated view. Laffi and his companion wash, climb, behold the view on the Monte del Gozo (the "mountain of joy", once marked with the piled stones of medieval pilgrims), fall to their knees, and then continue walking towards the city, the rhythm of movement felt and reinforced through the words and melody of song. Strong emotions surface along the way. Laffi's journey, like all pilgrims', was inseparable from both the landscape of the route and the physical, bodily process of walking through it. It was an extraordinarily ritualised performance in which the perception of the landscape was key.

In expressing the trials, tribulations and joys of his expedition in northern Spain, Laffi has been a constantly helpful companion during this PhD project. In a way, his words lend support to what I have tried to do with this thesis. They reveal the human side of the pilgrimage journey; the dynamics, the rigours and the emotional complexity of travel. Although clearly tied to particular cultural and historical

circumstances, his words reinforce the image of travel in general as a performance, an art form, and a medium for bestowing meaning both on the self and the wider world (Adler 1989: 1368). However, Laffi could only accompany this PhD journey so far. Selecting illustrative excerpts from literary accounts is no substitute for the full engagement with the theoretical and methodological issues relevant for looking at the ritual practice of countless anonymous medieval travellers. The quest was, by necessity, an archaeological one.

This thesis may be read on a number of levels. In this chapter, I have assembled and confronted those themes that lie at the heart of the core question of pilgrim relationships with landscape. In so doing, I hope to have contributed to an understanding of the nature of medieval pilgrimage. By deliberately focusing on the landscape of the journey rather than the destination, I expose how the process of travel was integral to the overall sacred project of pilgrimage to Santiago and how culturally conditioned interactions with meaningful landscapes prompted different dimensions of experience. The pilgrimage, inevitably an adventure, was a ritual in itself, a constant negotiation of topographies and thresholds, both built and geographical, that served to metaphorically transport pilgrims towards their physical and spiritual goals. Meanwhile, the material record of the Camino de Santiago communicates well the diverse, and often dramatic, ways in which the pilgrimage impacted upon landscapes and communities. While it is really modern anthropological study in modern settings that exposes the variety of possible relations between pilgrims and communities along route-ways (Frey 1998; McKevitt 1991, for example), it is archaeology that holds the key to such an endeavour in past contexts.

At an empirical level, the results from the Study Areas may also be explored on their own merit for their relevance to both thematic and local study. Put together, the areas investigated in this thesis represent only 6.5% of the prime itinerary in northern Spain. Yet, the wealth of material data contained within them is startling. An analytical focus on the archaeological record within such local contexts addresses any number of topical themes within current academic discourse, (many of which exceed the boundaries of this research), such as the formation and expression of identity, the archaeology of memory (Alcock 2002; 2003), religious

spatial practice (Spicer and Hamilton (eds) 2005), and the role of the stranger in medieval society (Akehurst and Cain Van D'Elden (eds) 1997; Constable 2003). Crucially, such an analytical focus would also shift the balance of existing work on the Camino, particularly in Spain where descriptive, art-historical and church-led agendas continue to dominate scholarship on the pilgrimage routes (Pascua pers.comm. 2006) Ongoing changes to the landscape of northern Spain and the resulting threats to the survival of the material culture, as noted in both Areas 1 and 2, (chapter 3.2 and 4.4) indicate that the systematic study of the archaeological record (rather than the compilation of more gazetteers) deserves a more urgent priority in coming years.

In synchronising current conceptual approaches to landscape, the body and ritual practice with a practical methodology in the field, I also hope to have demonstrated a new approach to the archaeology of pilgrimage. Riegner comments; "To read a landscape, the student must prepare inwardly to be receptive to the whole, to be moved by it, and to approach the details with the attitude that each is a gateway to something more than itself" (1993: 181). The Camino landscape in northern Spain, in its fullest sense, is packed with dynamic stories about pilgrim movement, sensations, beliefs and encounters, and in attempting to "read" these stories I have advocated the adoption of phenomenology in the observation and, most importantly, the presentation of the landscape. Despite the fine dividing line that prevents subjective opinion from overlapping into interpretation, this approach seems most appropriate for attempting to convey something of the "baseline elements" of the travel performance (Adler 1989: 1369); that is the spatial, temporal, sensorial and cultural features of movement that, to a great extent, medieval Jacobean pilgrims shared.

On a more theoretical level, the arguments from this research slot into wider debate on how, as archaeologists, we can study religion and ritual practice in the past. Observers note how, in many ways, the ghost of Hawkes' famous "Ladder of Inference" (1954) still haunts the discipline as a whole with the sphere of the religious still implicitly regarded as way up beyond reach, rarefied and sealed off from other aspects of humanity (Insoll 2004; Nilsson Stutz 2003: 3). It is time to move on. The archaeology of pilgrimage is exactly the kind of work necessary to

exorcise such embedded opinion. Archaeology focuses on action rather than “things” or “thoughts” (Nilsson Stutz 2003: 51). Ritual theorists, meanwhile, are convincing in their advocacy for examining ritual practice, not in the search for something secret, ineffable or deep, but with respect to what that practice itself can tell us about human action, behaviour and society (Bell 1992). Pilgrimage, as a physical, bodily performative practice, incorporates numerous intriguing acts that all possess their own distinct “cultural logic” (Bell 1992: 80). Thus, we can see that the Camino landscape, in its entirety, is the product of the singular and repeated acts of agents in the past who, consciously, or unconsciously, left their imprint in material form (figure 6.5). The study of such a landscape yields unexpected insight into the complicated societies and lifeworlds of those both on and off the road.



Figure 6. 5: Mark-making in a pilgrimage landscape (reproduced from www.pilipalapress.com).

Thus, as I write these conclusions, aware of the strange feelings of “arriving”, I become ever more convinced that the archaeology of pilgrimage is a worthwhile, attainable and important pursuit. This thesis has scratched at the surface of a neglected field of enquiry. As I finish, relief and disappointment surface, but so too does the surety that it is high time for the study of pilgrimage to be liberated from the old “theoretical ghetto” of anthropological debate. Pilgrimage is not just “good to think with” (Basu 2004: 153), but can be embraced by archaeologists

who possess the theoretical and practical tools necessary to uncover more about the realities of this fascinating ritual practice in the past.

Glossary

<i>abadengo</i> :	under ecclesiastical jurisdiction
<i>arroyo</i> :	stream
<i>despoblado</i> :	abandoned settlement
<i>ejido</i> :	exit zone; multi-purpose common plot
<i>encomienda</i> :	grant of jurisdiction made by the crown to individuals and military orders, of lands conquered from the Moslems
<i>ermita</i> :	hermitage
<i>huerta</i> :	land for garden or orchard crops or irrigated land
<i>iglesia</i> :	church
<i>fuelle</i> :	fountain or spring
<i>fuero</i> :	law code; privilege or exemption granted to a certain province
<i>matorral</i> :	scrubland comprising spiny, inflammable, evergreen species.
<i>páramo</i> :	bleak plateau
<i>palloza</i> :	stone-built, thatched house typical of Galicia
<i>peregrino</i> :	pilgrim
<i>realengo</i> :	under the direct authority of the crown.
<i>repoblación</i> :	resettlement of Christian settlers on land conquered from the Muslims
<i>río</i> :	river
<i>romería</i> :	pilgrimage; local outing
<i>señorío</i> :	under seigniorial jurisdiction

N.B. Definitions from Vassberg 1984: xv-xvii and Collins Paperback Spanish Dictionary 1995

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