

The background of the cover is a dark blue field filled with numerous bright, white-to-light-blue light trails. These trails are mostly vertical, with some horizontal ones near the bottom, creating a sense of dynamic movement and depth, similar to a long-exposure photograph of light or a stylized representation of a celestial or digital space.

Gender, Nation and Religion in European Pilgrimage

Edited by
Willy Jansen and Catrien Notermans

ROUTLEDGE


GENDER, NATION AND RELIGION
IN EUROPEAN PILGRIMAGE

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Gender, Nation and Religion in European Pilgrimage

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Chapter 1

Old Routes, New Journeys: Reshaping Gender, Nation and Religion in European Pilgrimage

Willy Jansen

In present-day Europe pilgrimage is flourishing, despite trends of secularization and a notable decline in church attendance. Journeys to sacred places for religious and other purposes have a long, if sometimes marginalized, history, but now such journeys are taking centre stage, attracting new groups and new meanings. The continued and at times expanding pilgrimages across Europe are part of a revival of pilgrimage in general as noted by several scholars and journalists (Coleman and Eade 2004, Crumrine and Morinis 1991, Derks 2009, Dubisch and Winkelmann 2005, Eade and Sallnow 1991, Hermkens, Jansen and Notermans 2009, Morinis 1992, Reader 2007, Turner and Turner 1978). Each year nearly 300 million people worldwide make religiously inspired travels equivalent to a trade volume of €13 billion (*National Geographic* 2011). Such travel would include Mecca for Muslims, the Kumbh Mela festival for Hindus, or the Shikoku Pilgrimage for Buddhists. The focus of this book, however, is pilgrimage as part of changing structures of society in Europe.

Developments in mass tourism and infrastructure, open borders, the euro, ecological concerns or body and health trends are changing the personal and collective experience of pilgrimage. Literature, too, such as the novels of Paulo Coelho (1987/1995), Dan Brown (2003) and others, is inspiring the exploration of old or new spiritual sites. Meanwhile new media and technologies have made it possible to share one's personal pilgrimage experience with millions of others via websites or blogs or to undertake virtual pilgrimages, complete with videos of the rituals and the ability to post messages to saints or to light a candle. Those in search of alternative spiritual experiences are attracted to spaces such as Glastonbury in the UK, which have become action areas for social groups or political movements (Bowman 2008). Journalistic interest is also reviving, resulting in documentaries such as *Ave Maria* (2006) by Dutch filmmaker Nouchka van Brakel and films such as *Lourdes* (2009) by Austrian Jessica Hausner or *The Way* (2010) by Emilio Estevez. Students and scholars are also participating in this revival: 7 per cent of pilgrims to Santiago state their interest is ethnographic compared to 18 per cent who cite religious motivation (Lois González and Somoza Medina 2010).

Lourdes, Santiago de Compostela and Częstochowa are all impressive meeting points where huge numbers of Europeans from all backgrounds come together to enact their lived religion, but they also function as crossroads of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism, where networks of religious discourses, geographical routes and political preoccupations intersect. The question then arises: what is the sociocultural and politico-strategic meaning of contemporary pilgrimage as expressed at various European Christian pilgrimage sites? This collection answers this important question by engaging three hotly debated issues: the reshaping of sociocultural core values regarding gender and sexuality, the contesting and reformulation of national and other geographical identities, and the shifting religious landscape. We examine how, through pilgrimage, these three crucial sociopolitical issues in contemporary Europe are being discussed, expressed, contested or renewed; we analyze the nature of the social order construed by different stakeholders, and whether this reaffirms or challenges dominant patterns; and we ask how these different positions interact. By so doing, we aim to show that the reconfiguration of gender, nation and religion are crucial elements in the re-emergence of religion as a social force in Europe.

Europe, Religion and Pilgrimage

The first steps on the road to the European Union (EU) were taken with the announcement of the Schuman Plan on 9 May 1950. A driving force behind the plan was Jean Monnet, the chair of the French delegation to negotiate the plan, and later the first chair of the Coal and Steel Union. Monnet's ideal for Europe went beyond securing an agreement on coal and steel production. He wanted lasting peace, to curb the conflicts that had brought Europe twice into war, and to turn national interests into shared European concerns; thus his insistence that peace is a process that requires continuous attention. A transnational European identity, the precondition for lasting peace, would need constant work. It would have to be fed, defended and renewed. Europe is 'a product of political demand rather than social contingency' (Berezin and Schain 2003: 16), a community imagined by politicians rather than by its populations, as the contra-Europe votes in Ireland, England, Netherlands and France or the 2012 euro crisis have shown. But to create an enduring sense of transnational community and overcome the memories of war and conflict, points of shared history would have to be sought or invented (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

Paradoxically, considering Europe's level of secularism, it was Christian heritage that came to serve this function, in particular, the opposition to Islam. Sameness and shared identity were sought in Europe's religious, material, geographical, ethical and ritual heritage (Margry 2008), and while religion was not the sole element used to forge a pan-European identity, nevertheless the shared religious cultural heritage and in particular the network of traditional pilgrimage routes and shrines provided a host of useful identity markers. In addition, from

a purely analytical perspective, the inclusion of religion provided an alternative approach to international relations (Katzenstein and Byrnes 2006: 680).

A telling example of the use of religious symbolism in constructing this new European identity, and its contestation by other groups, is the discussion of the European flag. The circle of 12 gold stars on a light blue background, according to some Catholic protagonists, is traditional Marian symbolism: heavenly blue is the colour of Mary, while the 12 stars refer to the biblical Apocalypse (Book of Revelations 12: 1): ‘After that there appeared a great sign in heaven, a woman robed with the sun, beneath her feet the moon, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.’ The designer of the flag, Marian devotee Arsène Heitz, once said that he had indeed been inspired by the image of Mary in the Rue du Bac in Paris where the Virgin Mary appeared to Catherine Labouré in 1830. In this image, Mary’s head is circled by 12 stars. The Miraculous Medal commemorating this event, in circulation all over the world, is emblazoned with the same circle of 12 stars. Indeed, the halo of stars reappears on the euro coin of the Vatican and on or near Marian images connected in name with Europe, such as the statue of Our Beloved Lady, Ruler of Europe, erected in 1958 on Mount Serenissima, Italy, and the Madonna of Strasbourg in the large stained-glass window designed by Max Ingrand, the ‘Window of Europe’, in the cathedral of Strasbourg, the city that, together with Brussels, is the seat of the European parliament. Iconography that identifies Europe with Mary is recurring in several key sites. ‘In 1996, Pope John Paul II designated the shrine of Our Lady of Europe (set up in Gibraltar in 1309 by King Ferdinand IV of Spain) as a “potent symbol” for the unification of Europe and “a place where, under the patronage of Mary, the human family will be drawn ever more closely into fraternal unity and peaceful coexistence”’ (Winnail 2003: 28). In the new chapel dedicated to Mary, Mother of Europe, in Gnadenweiler, Germany, the number 12 is repeated in the beams, in decorative structures, in 12 flags (referring to those countries associated with the site) and in the European flag. Internet discussions of the Marian link with the flag are debunked by some as a myth, while others advocate for a flag untainted by connections, presumed or not, to a specific religious group. The secular explanation of the flag’s imagery is that the stars symbolize the peoples of Europe, but 12 is also a numerical symbol of cosmic order, as in 12 hours on a clock or 12 months of the year; indeed, the number 12 stands for perfection, plenitude or completion, just as the circle represents union. The 12 stars do not correspond to the number of countries in the European Union, and the entry of new member states into the European Union has no impact on the number of stars on the flag. Regardless of these diverse claims and perspectives, the notion that the European flag is a Catholic symbol is officially denied for political reasons, and in 2003 it was decided that no reference to God or Christianity should be made in the European Constitution.

Regardless of the European Union’s official secular stance, Christian values continue to be forwarded as elements of its cultural heritage that could unite old and potentially new European countries. The Christian Democratic parties that initiated the EU pointed out: ‘Pope John Paul II has made it a personal ...

“crusade” to persuade Europe to acknowledge its debt to Christianity by referring in the constitution to Europe’s Christian heritage as a source of the values that unite the continent’ (Nelsen and Guth 2003: 2). This has led some to speak of Europe as the result of ‘a Catholic conspiracy of conservatives’ and to see the EU as divided along confessional lines, with Catholics supporting, and Protestants rejecting, the Integration Project (Katzenstein and Byrnes 2006: 682).

The actual situation is more complex. In fact, Catholics and Protestants are divided internally about the issue. Catholics do not necessarily conceive of themselves as Europeans because of a shared religious identity, and some conservative Catholics oppose the EU project altogether, because they see new European laws as moral degeneration and symptomatic of the EU being an anti-Christian dictatorship (Samson, Jansen and Notermans 2011, Samson, this volume). These groups make reference to religion to contest, not support, the evolving European identity. Furthermore, most Europeans identify themselves as secular. The idea of Europe as secular, however, needs clarification. It does not necessarily mean that the so-called secularization theory is valid (see Berger, Davie and Fokas 2008). According to Dungaciu (2004) the notion of a strictly secular Europe was developed within a Western European framework in which modernization was equated with the disappearance of religion from the public domain, and the relegation of religious activities to the private sphere. In this view, modernization was incompatible with religion. Only later was it realized that Western European secularization was not the standard but the exception. Davie (2000, 2001a, 2001b), for instance, argues that, compared to America, Western Europe shows ‘relatively low levels of religious activity and institutional commitment’ (2001a: 270). Furthermore, European secularization was less general and stable than had been suggested: descriptions of religious patterns, for instance, left out religious activities in Central and Eastern Europe as well as data indicating continued or alternative forms of religiosity (Dungaciu 2004: 4). By focusing strictly on church membership or participation and by adhering to narrowly prescribed definitions of religion, many other spiritual searches or practices were routinely excluded from or overlooked in the social study of religion. Nevertheless, Europe’s atypical pattern of religion and its self-perception as secular remain important aspects of contemporary European identity (Davie 2001a: 273).

Whatever European religious self-perception, there is a pervasive religious memory materialized in innumerable sacred sites that dot Europe’s varied landscape, a sacred topography that provides a transnational religious tradition of connecting people and nations (Katzenstein and Byrnes 2006: 679, Faltn and Wright 2007: 1). By moving as pilgrims across the European landscape and performing various rituals together, pilgrims enact basic spatial and moral connectedness and actively contribute to ‘the development of transnational networks’ and ‘cosmopolitan sociability’ (Halemba 2011). Just so, route metaphors figure in the search for one’s roots and in the rewriting of the personal or collective self (Basu 2004). Not surprisingly, then, as Margry points out, European heritage creation emerged around significant pilgrimage routes, in particular the Camino to Santiago (2008:

17), which the Council of Europe declared a 'European Cultural Itinerary' in 1987, making it a de facto symbol of European unity. This case alone underscores the fact that pilgrimages, sacred places and structures are not just memorials to Europe's past but cornerstones in the construction of its future. People who visit pilgrimage sites, whether profound believers or agnostic tourists, eco-wanderers or concerned religious conservatives, all contribute to the collective memory of a place and thus participate in the construction of particular identities within this European context. The synchronic action of the pilgrimage ritual is thus a multi-tool: its repetitiveness and use of traditional images and practices link pilgrims to the past while remaining an active factor in social change and in creating a means by which the identification of people takes place (Mach 1993: 90). Together, pilgrims lay out the 'moral geography' of Europe (Taylor 2007). Not only do political leaders borrow freely from the symbols, routes or values in Europe's Christian cultural heritage, so too do all those who come together at these international junctions to express, transmit, accept or challenge ideas on gender, (supra)nation and religion.

Approach and Central Concepts

Following the practical turn in anthropology, the focus of this book is on 'lived religion', on what people actually believe and do, and on how this constitutes various identities. Consequently, we abstain from defining religion but rather invite our respondents to formulate their own ideas about pilgrimage. In our studies we have encountered non-believing tourists who light candles for a saint, Muslims who invite Christian pilgrims to eat in their mosque, and women who bring their menstrual blood to a Catholic altar in a cave. We describe such cases to show the wide variety of pilgrims and of meanings and motivations for religious practices without making any judgements as to whether these visitors are 'real' pilgrims, or whether menstrual rituals performed for Mother Earth are 'real' religious practices. Whether such practices conform to orthodox or conventional notions of religion are immaterial to our enquiry, as are theological distinctions between Church-approved and folk beliefs. If anything, the case studies in this volume show that all such practices closely overlap, and that there is a great deal of disagreement and negotiation about what constitutes proper practices and interpretations (Bax 1995, Eade and Sallnow 1991). This focus on lived religion also means we can work from in-depth descriptions of a few examples that reveal how iconic the pilgrimage idiom is with respect to gender, nation or religion, rather than strive for a systematic overview of all European sites or a systematic count of the changing numbers of pilgrims over time (for such studies see Nolan 1983, Nolan and Nolan 1989, Margry and Caspers 1997–2004, or the statistical work done by the Pilgrim's Office in Santiago de Compostela).

Another concept relevant to the discussion of framing identities through religious discourse is that of 'performativity'. Judith Butler's concept of the performativity of gender, by which narratives, gestures, movements and images

not merely express but constitute gender identity, suggests that identity is continuously created and recreated or 'done'. By way of analogy, the same can be said for geographical or religious identities, which, in the case of pilgrimages, may be interpreted as sets of acts, movements, images, narratives and material artefacts by which identities are constituted. In other words, by undertaking pilgrimage, travellers also 'do' gender, nationality and spirituality in the sense that meaning is produced and identities are lived out as intrinsic parts of the journey. Meaning, then, is constituted at the moment of production and is not pre-existent. In Butler's own words: 'So what I'm trying to do is think about performativity as *that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names*' (Butler 1994, italics in original). Moreover, 'identities are discursively created through citational practice', through 'regulated processes of repetition' (Butler 1990: 145). Pilgrimages are exactly such processes of repetition. When the co-editor of this volume, Catrien Notermans, took her young daughters with her to Lourdes during fieldwork, she discovered them immediately copying the praying poses of visiting adults, and asking for baptism. Long-distance walkers to Santiago take the same paths as those of their predecessors in the Middle Ages, add their little stone to the piles along the road, offer money to feed the pilgrims coming after them, admire the same artworks, and often end their journey by putting their arms around the neck of the saint (Peelen and Jansen 2007); through such citational practices the walkers assume the identity of pilgrim, become pilgrim. This is true regardless of whether or not one is conventionally religious. Throughout our fieldwork we often heard the claim, 'I am not a believer, but when you are there it does something to you.' What this 'something' was could hardly be defined. Yet this is not to say that the repetition is unilinear, that the modern pilgrim is devoid of agency to change the meaning of the old routes. As Vasterling says, 'the possibility of agency is consistently, and correctly, located in the process of reiteration: recitations can be resignifications' (1999: 28). This collection is designed specifically to offer richly varied examples of how modern pilgrims creatively resignify what is repeated, thereby recycling, and renewing, cultural heritage for their own purposes.

Pilgrimage, though, is not a practice simply based on words; it is a multisensory, embodied activity in which the whole body participates in expression and production (Fedele and Llera Blanes 2011). In anthropological terms this means attending to the embodiment of religion or what Marcel Mauss calls 'the body techniques' that form that basis of all mystical states (1979: 122). Embodiment of ostensibly spiritual emotions, attitudes or dispositions takes place in the repetition of steps, gestures, smells, feelings of exhaustion or pain, or hearing of sounds. Victor Turner showed the importance of repetitive bodily movements during rituals in constructing identities (1974: 312). The following chapters describe these repetitive and multisensory experiences of pilgrims as ways by which various identities and relations with others are embodied.

Pilgrimage has often been studied in the context of the search for healing of the body (Dubisch and Winkelmann 2005, Notermans 2007, 2009, Notermans and Jansen 2011). The psychological healing powers of walking, in particular, have

been studied (Albers 2007, Peelen and Jansen 2007, Egan 2010), but people may also feel fortified by drinking blessed water, walking barefoot up St Patrick's mountain, or holding hands with fellow travellers (see the photographs of Hickey, this volume). What concerns us more here is how present-day pilgrimages provide a space and a language to express or challenge dominant notions of the sexual and gendered body, or to tie in with political issues concerning the body, in particular the sexual body currently contested in the European public domain.

A final concept that bears some explanation is identity. In this volume identity, even at the level of the individual, is conceived as a social identity: that is, not fixed in the individual but continuously produced in sociality. For many participants, making a pilgrimage is a way to search for their real self, for the person they were, away from the hectic pace of everyday life, sad events and broken relationships. But they do so in relation to others. The African women studied by Notermans express their togetherness by dressing in a similar way when they visit Lourdes together. Even individual hikers to Santiago seldom walk alone. On the way, they regularly meet up with others, are inspired by the accounts of pilgrims before them, and are welcomed in the evenings by hosts whose own rituals add to the richness and the meaning of the overall experience. Moving in unison for hours and hours on small country lanes and suffering together the pains of blisters and muscle aches not only helps pilgrims to (re)find their own selves but also to connect with others in that concrete, limited space as well as globally. Not surprisingly, pilgrims profess to have gained more insight into themselves and into humankind as they come to appreciate the kindness of other humans as expressed on the journey (Peelen and Jansen 2007). Not only personal identities are at stake here but also social or collective ones. In fact most pilgrimages are collective trips, whether arranged by church authorities, pilgrim organizations or tourist-oriented businesses, and saints' days (the dates around which most people plan their journeys to a specific site), especially, are often important to the reaffirmation of collective identities.

The following chapters make clear that pilgrimage not only has consequences for the pilgrims' perceptions of their own identity and their link with others, but that the renewed use of old religious routes and the fluid and constantly changing pilgrimage community create opportunities to use pilgrimage as an identity strategy within, between and beyond genders, localities and religions.

Gender and Sexuality

Gender is related to pilgrimage in a variety of ways, from the saints associated with any given site to the visiting pilgrims to gendered power relations and the struggle over dominant gender notions. Research indicates there are gender differences in objects of devotion – the primary subject of devotion of Catholic pilgrims, for instance, is nearly three times more likely to be Mary or a female saint than Christ or a male saint (Nolan 1983: 428) – and that the interpretation of these subjects is gendered (Jansen and Dresen, in press). Also, the pilgrim, the mobile subject,

is gendered (Gemzöe, this volume). Although gender rates among visitors may vary significantly from time to time or place to place, and despite mobility being seen as a masculine trait, we see at the average European site and especially at the local sites far more women than men among the rank-and-file pilgrims (Dubisch 1995). A similar predominance of women visiting shrines has been noted for other religions such as Islam (Mernissi 1977, Tapper 1990). This is not to say that men are absent, but they take up different functions and characteristics, such as that of priests, confessors, brancardiers, drivers, carriers of the saint's float, or fighters in mock battles. Moreover, they are present more prominently in pilgrimage forms that demand great physical exertion.

These gender differences, or predominance of women, have been theorized in various ways. Scholarship with a focus on discrimination examines ways in which women are excluded from dominant church positions, or the exaltation of female saints as unattainable ideals of femininity. The Virgin Mary, especially, is often analyzed as a patriarchal ideal, held up to women as the ultimate model of womanhood – chaste, modest, pure, obedient and fertile (Warner 1978). From this vantage point, pilgrimage is regarded as one of many ways the Church reinforces traditional gender norms. Large shrines, for instance, are seen as nodal points in extensive European networks that enable conservative groups to spread their call for a restoration of the Catholic faith by rejecting abortion, gay marriage or extramarital sex. Another discriminatory aspect of the relation between women and pilgrimage is the disregard for pilgrimage in general, its wholesale demotion to a 'lesser' form of popular religion – a trend that has important implications for the study of religion as a whole. The tensions between forms of official and popular religion have been a major concern in anthropological research on religion in Europe (Badone 1990). Women's predominance in popular religion and the marginalization of popular practices such as pilgrimage by many mainstream theologians and scholars of religion mutually affect each other: pilgrimage is often not taken seriously because it is dominated by women and other socially 'weak' persons, or, vice versa, women's religious practice is not taken seriously because it is 'only popular practice'.

On the other hand, there is scholarship focused on the empowering nature of feminization and pilgrimage, for example on women's attraction to certain saints and especially Mary, the mother of Jesus, whom some theologians consider woman's advocate or true sister (Beattie 2002, Johnson 2003). Rather than represent such women as mere victims of conventional ideals, they are presented as active agents in attributing power to Mary. From this vantage point, the power dynamics are inverted: the women who see in Mary a powerful, independent woman perceive her as a different role model from that which is imposed by a Mariology stressing her obedience and passivity (see Notermans, this volume).

This volume suggests an intermediate way between these analytical positions. Power analysis is not shunned but combined with close attention to actual meanings attributed or suggested by participating women and men. We regard pilgrimages as loci where notions of gender and sexuality are expressed, discussed, reconfirmed

or contested, and therefore study the agency of pilgrims in construing gender norms and practices within the power constellations that hinder or encourage that same agency. Visits to sacred places and figures can simultaneously reinforce conservative values of gender and sexuality and create a space for alternative interpretations and interactions with the supernatural, a space in which pilgrims themselves reformulate and subvert dominant meanings (Derks 2009, Gemzöe 2000). For instance, women may reiterate the traditional adoration of the Virgin Mary while resignifying her as a female goddess or Mother Earth, the ultimate symbol of female power, rather than merely asking her to intervene with Christ, as Catholic doctrine prescribes. Other pilgrims discover powerful female role models, such as St Mary Magdalene, or other spiritual powers as new symbols of power (Fedele 2009, Fedele, this volume, Gemzöe, this volume). Regardless, the practice of pilgrimage is coloured by a strong presence of female religious themes, forms of expression and strivings for religious authority (Gemzöe 2009).

The following chapters also reveal processes of negotiation between different stakeholders. European unification has brought together nations and groups with diverse ideas about how to be a woman or man or how to behave sexually. In the European parliament, issues such as gender mainstreaming, abortion, family support, homosexual rights or gay marriage are all under discussion – discussions, pro and con, framed in a religious discourse that itself is replicated in a more complex way at pilgrimage centres (Margry 2004). Conservative forces resisting gender equity developments in Europe, but also feminist groups that aim for a new religious empowerment of women, or homosexual men who want to be respected as believers, find an international audience or an opportunity for personal expression during pilgrimage. This volume examines how pilgrims search for or bring into practice new models of femininity and masculinity and of sexuality. The studies reveal not only the complex forces at work in reformulating gender but also the actors transmitting ideas about gender, the words and images that colour such ideas, and how such messaging is received and processed by the pilgrims themselves.

Certain chapters focusing specifically on gender identify the forces at work in confirming or reconstructing gender norms and practices. Catrien Notermans describes Lourdes as a family meeting point where African women reconfirm their own, and Mary's, transnational motherhood. Lena Gemzöe shows how middle-aged Swedish Protestant or non-believing women who undertake the pilgrimage to Santiago are able to transform familiar notions of middle-aged womanhood into unexpected positives, and are able to define themselves as 'big, strong and happy'. New ideas of female corporeality and sexuality are also formulated by the Spanish pilgrims whom Anna Fedele follows to the shrines of St Mary Magdalene, where they discover new spiritualities that are in turn critical of conventional Christian beliefs about women. Judith Samson analyzes two transnational pro-life pilgrimages centred around the Marian pilgrimage sites of the Queen of Roses in Heroldsbach, Germany and the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, Poland, where social political protests are launched against the EU's perceived 'liberal' gender

paradigm in its stance on abortion. Eric Venbrux examines similar conservative forces in the Netherlands that seek to save Europe from liberal secularism and want to re-Christianize the old continent by spreading the Miraculous Medal. Other chapters, while not centralizing gender, refer to its intersection with other issues. Eduardo Chemin introduces various ‘producers of meaning’ on the road to Santiago de Compostela who help pilgrims not only to create space for new perceptions of femininity but also for alternative masculinities, including homosexuality. In Ellen Badone’s chapter, women assume a pivotal role in doing the identity work at patron saints’ day festivals in Brittany.

Nation and Transnationalism

That nation building is at stake at pilgrimage sites is affirmed in the origin legends of several shrines, including Lourdes and Fatima (Christian 1996), in the rise and fall of interest in Medjugorje during the ethnic conflict in Bosnia–Herzegovina (Bax 1995, Claverie 2003), and in the support of pro-Ukrainian aspirations (Halemba 2011: 458). Research shows how the rise and expansion of religious pilgrimage centres is often directly connected to the perception and structuring of territory, as is the case with the Dutch–German border (Nissen 2000) as well as the Spanish–Moroccan border (Driessen 1991, 1992). Our Lady of Częstochowa, also called the Queen of Poland, whose shrine was won over from Protestant Swedes by Catholic Poles in the 1655 Battle of Częstochowa, has become an enduring symbol of Polish nationalism (De Busser and Niedźwiedz 2009, Samson, this volume). At the same time, pilgrimages to the nearby death camp of Auschwitz have similar nationalist effects on visiting Israeli youth, making collective memories more real (Feldman 2008). Pilgrimage shrines function frequently as national cultural heritage sites, as products of nationalism and as expressions of the value of nationalism.

At present, with the European Integration Project still underway, we wanted to ask pointed questions about pilgrimage, nation and transnationalism: Now, which borders and identities are at stake? Which local, regional, national or transnational groups use shrines as materializations of geographical identity, and what trends are likely to develop (or fade away) in a changing Europe? What characteristics of shrines enable them to generate, stimulate or revitalize both geographic and collective identities?

At the same time that pilgrimages serve the constitution of segmented geographical or ethnic identities, they also serve the need to overcome these same identities, to break the boundaries and reconcile antagonistic cultural groups, or to create space for transnational groups. This raises the question of how, in the restructuring of Europe and the dislocation of many of its inhabitants, pilgrimage may constitute new identities, and how moving across Europe changes pilgrims’ perceptions of local and national community as well as that of European and global connections. What is the function of pilgrimage in reconfiguring dislocated