

SECTION 1. PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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PILGRIMAGE IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL CULTURE: MEDIA TOOLS AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

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Media pilgrimage can be defined as a modern form of pilgrimage that is implemented and supported through digital and communication tools. It includes official websites of pilgrimage centres and tourist organisations, interactive maps, online booking, virtual tours, mobile applications, and QR codes. Social networks (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), influencers, and digital marketing (SEO, targeted advertising) allow pilgrims to share their experiences, create individual itineraries, interact with like-minded people, and attract new audiences. Analytical tools (Google Analytics, Big Data) help to understand the behavioural patterns of tourists [5, p. 220; 7]. Thanks to digital platforms, pilgrimage has become more accessible and interactive, expanding the boundaries from traditional religious practices to mass spiritual and cultural travel. Thus, media pilgrimage emerges as a socio-communicative Institution that connects tradition and digital culture [9; 10].

The use of social media has significantly influenced the popularity of pilgrimages to the Camino de Santiago (St. James' Way to Santiago de Compostela). With hashtags like #caminodesantiago, #pilgrimlife, and #caminofrances, blogs, websites, and mobile apps, potential pilgrims can find info, plan their route, and connect with like-minded people. Thanks to more than 120,000 posts on Instagram, pilgrimage has become recognisable and attractive to the younger generation, who actively use social media to plan their travels [12]. At the same time, there are possible negative effects, such as overcrowding of the route and distraction from the spiritual experience due to the focus on documenting the journey and promoting one's own activities [4].

The term «Caminoisation» has appeared in scientific discourse, tracing the process of reproduction and adaptation of the experience of the Way of St. James by other countries and regions. Key elements include walking, prioritising the journey over the destination, the use of material attributes (pilgrim passports, certificates) and ritual practices (for example, blessings at the start of the journey). Caminoisation contributes to the revival of old routes and the emergence of new ones in countries without established pilgrimage traditions, transforming the Camino into a «prototype» of pilgrimage adapted to different cultural contexts [1].

There are about 15 different routes along the Camino, but the most popular are: the French Way (800 km through the Pyrenees and central Spain), the Primitivo (315 km, the oldest and most difficult route from Oviedo), Northern (860 km along the northern coast of Spain) and Portuguese (400 km from Lisbon or 240 km from Porto along the ocean). These routes have been protected by UNESCO since 1998 [11].

In Scotland, for example, modern pilgrimage is being reimagined under the influence of «Caminoisation» and the revival of traditions. The development of the «Fife Pilgrim Way» (officially opened in 2019) demonstrates how history, religion and heritage interact with contemporary pilgrimage practices, contributing to the «rehabilitation» of pilgrimage in the context of Protestant culture [2]. In England, Caminoisation is evident through the localisation of Camino practices in Canterbury Cathedral, York Minster and Durham Cathedral. This combination of traditional religious practices with contemporary cultural and tourist initiatives has increased pilgrimage activities and redefined the role of cathedrals as spiritual and cultural heritage sites [3]. In Norway, the new Fjord route demonstrates how caminoisation can stimulate a revival of pilgrimage in a contemporary Protestant context, connecting medieval heritage with innovative practices that involve state, church and tourism structures [6].

In Ukraine, the first example of caminoisation is the Camino Podolico: Podilsk Road of St. James project, which was started in Kyiv on 5 July 2021 and presented in Vinnytsia [12]. The Camino model can be adapted for Transcarpathia by creating a virtual tour called «Camino Transcarpathia», which connects local ancient routes, monasteries, and shrines with modern digital technologies. The main points of the route are: Boronyavsky Monastery, Dzhublyk, Holy Spirit Church in Kolochava, wooden churches in Kolodne, Uzhok and Yasyňa (protected by UNESCO).

Practical case: «Camino Transcarpathia»

Objective: to create a local pilgrimage route based on historical, religious and cultural sites in Transcarpathia, integrating elements of digitalisation and media pilgrimage through a virtual tour.

Tour route (example order with key points):

1. **The Boroniava Monastery (1716)** – a historical shrine, the centre of spiritual life in the region, and the starting point of the tour [13].

2. **Dzhublyk (pilgrimage centre) (2002)** – a modern centre of spiritual education and culture, which offers organisational support for the trip [14].

3. **Church of the Holy Spirit in Kolochava village (1795)** – an 18th-century wooden church, preserved as an element of local cultural heritage [15].

4. **The Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in Kolodne village (1470)** – an architectural monument that preserves authentic religious practices [16].

5. **The Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Uzhok village (1745)** (included in the UNESCO World Heritage List) – a world cultural heritage site, a symbol of the integration of global and local contexts [17].

6. **The Church of the Ascension of the Lord, Strukivska Church in Yasinya village (1824)** (included in the UNESCO World Heritage List) – the final point of the route, where traditional rituals and blessings of pilgrims take place [18].

The concept of a virtual tour:

- **Interactive maps:** the route is displayed as an interactive map where users can select a point and receive detailed information about the site.

- **Audio and video guides:** each point on the route has audio tours with historical facts, legends, and descriptions of rituals.

- **Multimedia effects:** photos and 3D tours of sites, videos of pilgrimage events, integration of chronology and route animations.

- **Digital tools:** QR codes at locations for access to online pilgrimage passports, the ability to register as a virtual pilgrim.

- **Social media:** integration with Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube platforms for content distribution, discussion, and attracting new users.

Scientific and practical significance:

- Demonstrates how the principles of «Caminoisation» (emphasis on walking, priority of the route over the destination, material attributes) can be integrated into the Ukrainian context at the regional level.

- As a media pilgrimage tool, the virtual tour makes pilgrimage accessible to people with disabilities, young people, the elderly, and foreign tourists.

- Increases the visibility of local religious and cultural heritage at the national and international levels, especially during wartime.

Conclusion of the case study: «Camino Transcarpathia» could become the first integrated digital pilgrimage route in Ukraine, connecting historical, cultural and religious sites with modern digital technologies, creating an

innovative model for the development of pilgrimage and religious tourism at the local level in the context of Institutionalization.



**Photo 1. The Church of the Ascension of the Lord,
Strukivska Church [18]**

From our personal archive

The virtual tour includes interactive maps, audio guides, multimedia effects, mobile applications, QR codes, and online pilgrim passports. Social networks allow users to share experiences, discuss routes, and attract new audiences, including people with disabilities and the elderly. This approach connects traditional pilgrimage, mediatisation, and caminoisation, promotes the region as a cultural and pilgrimage centre, and creates an innovative tool for the development of local tourism [8].

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