



# 1 Chapter 4

## 2 Heritagization of the Camino to Finisterre

3 Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

4 This chapter analyzes how heritage policies affect the Camino landscape and the  
5 daily lives of the people living in the towns and villages along the route.<sup>1</sup> I base  
6 my analysis on the idea that some aspects of the heritage regime (Bendix et al.  
7 2012) have been naturalized by the various social agents involved in the Camino to  
8 Finisterre. By ‘naturalization’ I mean the process by which an idea is not ques-  
9 tioned as it represents ‘how things should *naturally* be.’ Different levels of natural-  
10 ization cause heritage conflicts; therefore, understanding these levels of  
11 naturalization will also help to analyze the conflicts concerning the heritagization  
12 of the Camino to Finisterre. In order to do so, I will first outline the ‘heritage  
13 regime’ social map.

14 Throughout the present chapter I will use two terms suggested in this book:  
15 ‘pilgrim landscape’ (Sánchez-Carretero, this chapter and Ballesteros-Arias, Chap. 6)  
16 and ‘caminonization’ (Margry Chap. 2, 8). The expression ‘pilgrim landscape,’  
17 refers to the transformations in the landscape through which the pilgrimage route  
18 passes. It is also used to describe the transformations in terms of heritage manage-  
19 ment and tourist promotion that affect the sites along the Camino. Other authors,  
20 such as Campo (1998), Alderman (2002)-following Campo’s definition of ‘pil-  
21 grim landscape’- had a different meaning in mind, highlighting the relationship

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22 between people and place, in general, and therefore referring to pilgrim landscape  
23 metaphorically. The literal meaning of ‘pilgrim landscape’ is also related to the term  
24 caminonization. Margry describes this term as follows: ‘the worldwide growth of  
25 sacred or spiritual footpaths is primarily stimulated by the success of the Camino.  
26 This process, which I call ‘caminonization,’ encompasses a proliferation of  
27 spiritual paths which stimulates people all over the world to depart on foot for a  
28 spiritual journey or a reflective quest on the meaning of life’ (Margry, Chap. 8, this  
29 volume). I have expanded on the term caminonization to include the style linked  
30 to the Camino: its format, icons and even the pilgrims’ behavior on the Camino  
31 de Santiago have become a model which is now expected of pilgrimage footpaths  
32 worldwide and of the rest of the Caminos too, including the Finisterra-Muxía route.  
33 The Camino is, therefore, creating and reproducing a particular pilgrim landscape  
34 maintained by certain heritage logics.

35 The study of the naturalization of the heritage regime logic is an example of  
36 how the authorized heritage discourse, or AHD (Smith 2006), cannot be linked to  
37 a ‘top-bottom’ dichotomy. The practices and world view of a heritage regime is  
38 being naturalized by some of the actors involved in the Camino as the unquestionable  
39 way of being in the world (Alonso González 2013; Bendix et al. 2012).  
40 That is precisely what I mean when I use the term ‘naturalization’: the process by  
41 which a situation is not questioned and is assumed to have happened ‘naturally.’

## 42 4.1 The Heritage Regime of the Camino

43 In order to understand the heritage regime linked to the Camino Finisterre-Muxía,  
44 it is important to be familiar with three elements: firstly, the measures taken in  
45 order to protect the heritage of the Camino; secondly, the logic behind such regu-  
46 lations; and thirdly, the map of social actors that are involved in the heritagization  
47 of the Camino.

48 When analysing the heritage protection measures, I will include those that  
49 involve the Camino in general, even though some of them are not applied to the  
50 specific route to Finisterre-Muxía. This is because the heritage regime affects all  
51 the routes, and some conclusions can be drawn by looking at the legal status of the  
52 Camino in general. The Camino de Santiago has a long history of both national  
53 and supranational heritage policies. It was first officially recognized as a heritage  
54 element in 1962, during Franco dictatorship,<sup>2</sup> when the Camino Francés<sup>3</sup> was

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<sup>2</sup>For a detailed historic study of the revival of the Camino and the political uses during Franco’s dictatorship see Pack (2010). This article covers the period from 1879 to 1988. For a study of the uses of heritage during Franco’s dictatorship see Afinoguenova (2010).

<sup>3</sup>The term ‘French Camino’ might imply the part of the Camino located in France. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion, I use ‘Camino Francés’ in Spanish to refer to the Spanish part of the main route of the Camino that starts in France.



**Fig. 4.1** Sign and milestone indicating the route. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

55 designated ‘conjunto histórico-artístico’ (historic-artistic heritage) by the regula-  
56 tion 2224/1962, September 5. In 1985, the Spanish National Heritage law automati-  
57 cally designated the Camino Francés a *Bien de Interés Cultural* (BIC), a typology  
58 of protection with restrictive regulations, included in the Spanish heritage register.  
59 Additionally, many sites along the route received the same status. At a suprana-  
60 tional level, in 1987 the Camino was the first route to be declared a European  
61 Cultural Itinerary, as part of the ‘Cultural Routes’ program launched by the  
62 Council of Europe. According to the Council, this program seeks to demonstrate  
63 ‘how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a  
64 shared cultural heritage.’<sup>4</sup> This was the starting point of the icon in the shape of a  
65 shell which currently marks the Camino (see Fig. 4.1). It was designed by Macua  
66 and García-Ramos after an international competition was held by the Council of  
67 Europe in order to waymark the Camino as a European Cultural Itinerary (MOPU  
68 1989).<sup>5</sup> To quote Pack, the opportunity ‘to Europeanize the conch shell emblem

<sup>4</sup><http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/routes>, accessed June 18, 2013.

<sup>5</sup>The priest of O Cebreiro, Elías Valiña Sampedro, was the person who started to mark the Camino with yellow arrows (Herrero 2008: 132). For a complete history of the Camino waymarks, see Harrison (2013). For a newspaper article on the topic see [http://elpais.com/diario/2010/05/15/galicia/1273918702\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2010/05/15/galicia/1273918702_850215.html), accessed June 18, 2013.



69 that the Franco government had placed on road signs; the new markers would  
70 mimic the nascent European flag, bearing a stylized yellow abstraction of a conch  
71 shell against a solid blue background' (Pack 2010: 366). In 1993 the Camino  
72 Francés was included on the UNESCO World Heritage list, and sections of the  
73 routes in France were added in 1999.

74 Various regional heritage legislations and policies have also been applied to the  
75 Caminos and these vary depending on the area the route passes through. In 1996 in  
76 Galicia, a regional law was passed specifically for the Camino. It included a series  
77 of steps to protect the Camino, the delimitation of the actual route being one of the  
78 first. The Xunta (Galician government) developed various measures regarding the  
79 protection of the Camino heritage; primarily the delimitation of the Caminos in  
80 Galician territory, which has not yet been finished.<sup>6</sup> The delimitation of the  
81 Camino Francés in Galicia was approved in 2012<sup>7</sup>; the Camino del Norte (coastal  
82 and interior routes) was approved in 2013, and the Camino Inglés, in September  
83 2014.<sup>8</sup> Two measures were taken to protect the heritage of the Camino Francés:  
84 one consisted of keeping a strip of land 3–30 m wide alongside the Camino due to  
85 its 1985 heritage protection; and a damping zone that is related to the UNESCO  
86 protection. The Galician government recently published a guide giving a detailed  
87 description of what measures need to be taken (Xunta de Galicia 2012). However  
88 they have still to be fully implemented, showing that the conflict these rules arouse  
89 still needs to be evaluated.

90 As to the specific case of the Camino to Finisterre-Muxía, this route still lacks  
91 an official delimitation, except for the section that goes through the municipality  
92 of Santiago de Compostela that was established in September 2013.<sup>9</sup> The Cape of  
93 Finisterre also has a designation: it was included on the European Heritage List in  
94 2007 and continues to be listed after having been reassessed in 2011.

95 Each designation focuses on different aspects, as argued by Schrire (2006) and  
96 Murray (2014): the Council of Europe aims to protect the route's intangible herit-  
97 age; and the UNESCO designation of the Camino Francés attaches 'more weight  
98 to the tangible heritage of material related to places, structures and art along the  
99 Camino Francés' (Murray 2014: 25). As for the Cape Finisterre, the European  
100 Heritage List of the European Commission seeks 'to raise awareness of sites  
101 which have played a significant role in the history, culture and development of the  
102 European Union.'<sup>10</sup>

103 Even though the Council of Europe heritage policies for the Camino as a  
104 European Cultural Itinerary emphasizes intangible elements, protection measures

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<sup>6</sup>For updates on the delimitations of the caminos see <http://cultura.xunta.es/es/caminos-santiago>.

<sup>7</sup>Regulation 227/2011, December 2 2011; Regulation 144/2012, June 29 2012; Regulation 247/2012, November 22, 2012 and Regulation 144/2012, June 29 2012 (<http://cultura.xunta.es/es/delimitacion-camino-frances> accessed May 12, 2014).

<sup>8</sup>Regulation 110/2014, September 4 2014.

<sup>9</sup>Regulation 154/2013, September 5, 2013.

<sup>10</sup>[http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/2014/20140314-label\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/2014/20140314-label_en.htm) accessed February 17, 2014.



105 actually rely on a architectural and materialist basis; they target the preservation  
106 and restoration of the monuments along the Camino, the walkability of the route,  
107 and, in the case of Galicia, the protection of structures linked to popular archi-  
108 tecture, such as *hórreos* (traditional and monumental elevated stone granaries) or  
109 *cruceiros* (stone crosses).

110 These legal processes of heritage protection cannot be understood without  
111 looking at two intertwined forces and the social actors that implement them: mar-  
112 ket logic, which focuses on developing the Camino as an economic resource; and  
113 the logic of identity politics, which focuses on various elements depending on the  
114 timeframe. Obviously, for instance, the interest in promoting the Camino during  
115 Franco's dictatorship was different from current interests.

116 Regarding the third element, the map of social actors, I will concentrate on the  
117 actors from the 1990s to the present, such as politicians, Catholic Church repre-  
118 sentatives, associations, owners of businesses in the hospitality sector, and local  
119 residents, including pilgrims who decided to remain in Finisterre upon their  
120 arrival. As explained in the introduction, in the 20th century, the recuperation of  
121 the Caminos began as an initiative of the Associations of the Camino de Santiago  
122 and, later, various administrations contributed to the project. In 1993, the year of  
123 the Camino's inclusion on the World Heritage List and a 'holy year' or 'xacobeo',<sup>11</sup>  
124 the Government of Galicia initiated the 'Xacobeo' program. The Finisterre-  
125 Muxía Route was then included as one of the Caminos de Santiago (Vilar 2010).  
126 Between 1997 and 2004, the Galician Association of Friends of the Camino  
127 (AGACS) and the association Neria organized annual pilgrimages to Finisterra  
128 and Muxía. In 1992 the association Neria was founded to promote and coordinate  
129 rural development and it was linked to EU LEADER funds for the development of  
130 rural areas.<sup>12</sup> The main objective of Neria was to 'promote and coordinate rural  
131 development, improve life conditions and to help end rural depopulation.'<sup>13</sup>

132 In 1991, in order to promote the Camino, the Galician Government (Xunta) cre-  
133 ated the S.A. de Xestión do Plan Xacobeo (Management Society of the Xacobeo  
134 Plan), commonly known as 'Xacobeo.' Its goal is clearly explained on the  
135 Xacobeo webpage: '[Xacobeo] is a public company of the Xunta de Galicia  
136 (Galician Government), whose goals are the tourist and cultural promotion as well  
137 as the provision of services on the Ways of St. James. It was created in 1991 on the  
138 occasion of the 1993 Holy Year (Xacobeo 93), later integrating within the organi-  
139 gram of the Galician Ministry of Culture and Tourism.'<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>A Xacobeo, jacobeo or holy year is a jubilee year that occurs when July 25th, the day of St. James, falls on a Sunday. For more information on this topic, see Vilar, this volume.

<sup>12</sup>LEADER is an acronym in French for a series of European Union programs dedicated to the development of rural areas. It means 'Links between actions for the development of the rural economy.'

<sup>13</sup>[www.neria.es/quienes-somos.aspx](http://www.neria.es/quienes-somos.aspx), accessed July 23, 2014. See also Asociación Neria (2011: 4).

<sup>14</sup><http://institucional.xacobeo.es/en> accessed February 19, 2014.



## 140 4.2 Fieldwork in Vilaserio, Olveiroa and Finisterre

141 Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero are the anthropologists  
142 on the team and, for this part of the project, were in charge of the ethnography  
143 studies conducted on the Camino (Sánchez-Carretero 2012; Ballesteros-Arias  
144 and Sánchez-Carretero 2011). The ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in vari-  
145 ous stages. We first carried out an exploratory fieldtrip consisting of walking the  
146 Finisterre-Muxía Camino so as to choose the towns and villages in which to con-  
147 duct participant observation and other techniques. At this point we walked all the  
148 Finisterre-Muxía related routes: Santiago-Finisterre; Santiago-Muxía and also that  
149 of Finisterre-Muxía route.

150 The second phase was the actual fieldwork in the selected places: Olveiroa,  
151 Vilaserío and Finisterre. The selection was based on size and pilgrim facilities.  
152 We wanted to conduct the fieldwork in small villages as well as medium size  
153 towns. According to these criteria, Vilaserío and Olveiroa were selected because  
154 they both have hostel facilities for pilgrims, they are commonly chosen by pil-  
155 grims to finish a stage or day of walking (see Fig. 1.1 in Chap. 1) and have a pop-  
156 ulation of less than 100. We also chose Finisterre because it is one of the ending  
157 points of the Camino.<sup>15</sup> During this phase, a variety of actors were included:  
158 institutional representatives, such as mayors, councilwomen and men, board  
159 members of various associations, Catholic Church representatives; owners of res-  
160 taurants, bars and hotels as well as local residents, with or without a connection to  
161 the pilgrimage route. The third stage consisted in group discussion techniques in  
162 each of the locations concerning the two main themes of the project: their own  
163 ideas in relation to heritage and how the Camino affects the lives of these differ-  
164 ent actors.

165 The experience was different in all three places: in Finisterre, a town of almost  
166 3,000 inhabitants, tourism has transformed the landscape in the last decades.  
167 Vilaserío and Olveiroa are small rural villages without a town hall of their own.  
168 Olveiroa, in the municipality of Dumbría, has a clear policy regarding tourism,  
169 heritage and development, whereas Vilaserío, in the municipality of Negreira, does  
170 not.

171 Olveiroa, Vilaserío and Finisterre went through a depopulation process similar  
172 to that of many other Galician towns and villages in the last few decades. Many  
173 inhabitants migrated to Northern Europe, particularly Switzerland, and also to  
174 large Spanish cities, mainly in the Basque Country, where a growing industry  
175 needed workers (Río Barja 2009).

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<sup>15</sup>Due to time and resource constrains, we could not conduct long-term ethnographic fieldwork in Muxía, although we did interview with the mayor in relation to the Camino and carried out three exploratory visits.



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**Fig. 4.2** An aerial photograph of Vilaserío that decorates the bar in this village. *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

#### 176 **4.2.1 Vilaserío**

177 There are approximately twenty inhabited houses in Vilaserío. The villagers used  
178 to depend on dairy farming, but now only three households keep cows. Vilaserío  
179 has 66 inhabitants according to the 2014 municipal census.<sup>16</sup> It belongs to the par-  
180 ish of San Pedro de Bugallido in the municipality of Negreira, region of Barcala,  
181 province of A Coruña. It is a small village but used to be larger. In Eugenio Carré  
182 Aldao's work on the area—conducted between 1928 and 1936—Vilaserío is men-  
183 tioned as the village with the largest population (135) of the parish of San Pedro  
184 Bugallido and he also pointed out that the village had its own public school. Up  
185 until the 1950s, it hosted a fair the first Wednesday of each month (fieldnotes 11-4-  
186 2011; Carré Aldao 1928: 449–450) (Fig. 4.2).

187 The Finisterre-Muxía Camino passes through Vilaserío. It has a private hostel  
188 which opened in 2010 and a bar/restaurant. In addition the old school has been

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<sup>16</sup>Data provided by the municipality of Negreira. The national census includes data for 2013: 68 people in Vilaserío (29 men and 39 women) and 220 inhabitants (95 men and 125 women) in the whole parish, <http://www.ine.es/nomen2>.



189 remodeled for pilgrims to sleep there. A village person receives a stipend from  
190 the local government to clean the school, as well as voluntary donations from  
191 pilgrims. Accommodation in the old school is free of charge. The school is not  
192 catalogued as an official pilgrim hostel because it doesn't have the facilities or  
193 the legal requirements that a public hostel needs. The hostel caretaker finds this  
194 liminal situation problematic for she would like more institutional support.  
195 Furthermore, the hostel is not liked by the owners of the private hostel and bar,  
196 because they see the other 'sleeping space' as unfair competition. A few years  
197 before the hostel opened, Vilar intuitively wrote about the future of Vilaserío and  
198 the need for a private hostel, while describing the conditions of the old school one  
199 as 'not the most appropriate conditions for a twenty-first century pilgrim, in fact  
200 they are almost Medieval. It occupies the old school and is just a place where pil-  
201 grims can lay out their sleeping bags and be under cover' (Vilar 2010: 53, my own  
202 translation).

#### 203 4.2.2 *Olveiroa*

204 Olveiroa is a peculiar place on the Camino. It could be called a 'hostel village.'  
205 By that I mean a depopulated village whose center has been remodeled to locate  
206 a pilgrim hostel over various buildings. In this particular case, four village houses,  
207 including the old school, were bought by the municipality and restored with public  
208 funding (regional and European funds). Olveiroa pilgrim hostel opened in 2001,  
209 after the municipality restored four stone houses in the middle of the village.  
210 The village *hórreos* (granaries raised from the ground by pillars) have also been  
211 restored with light spots that lit up from below. The landmark in this transforma-  
212 tion of Oliveiroa was the inauguration of the government-run pilgrim hostel. The  
213 idea of a 'hostel-village' was a municipal initiative and the local mayor, who is  
214 also an architect, controlled the esthetic and architectural decision-making pro-  
215 cesses, although the funding came from the Galician Government. A bar, a hotel-  
216 restaurant and a private hostel have also been built since the opening of the pilgrim  
217 hostel.

218 Prior to the renovation, the village center had been largely abandoned, as new  
219 modern houses were built in the 1970s and 1980s next to the main road. Therefore,  
220 one of the first impacts of the Camino on Olveiroa was the restoration of the old  
221 stone houses, which was, to quote the village mayor, 'the first step forward in val-  
222 uing our heritage.'<sup>17</sup>

223 On a busy day in the middle of summer, Olveiroa can easily double its popula-  
224 tion, mainly due to the pilgrims. According to Olveiroa municipal census for 2013,

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<sup>17</sup>Interview conducted by Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero with the mayor of Dumbria on February 7, 2011 (the project code is GR011).





**Fig. 4.3** Public hostel in Olveiroa. The four remodeled hostel houses have blue windows and doors (see also Fig. 6.12). *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

225 the village has 114 inhabitants, although less than a hundred live there perma-  
226 nently; the whole parish, Santiago de Olveiroa, has a population of 140  
227 (Fig. 4.3).<sup>18</sup>

### 228 4.2.3 *Finisterre*

229 The name Finisterre is applied to different places: the Cape of Finisterre, also sim-  
230 ply known as ‘the Cape’; the lighthouse at the Cape; the actual town of Finisterre  
231 with its 3,000 inhabitants; and the municipality of Finisterre, which includes  
232 Finisterre town as well as other towns and has almost 5,000 inhabitants.<sup>19</sup> When I

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<sup>18</sup>See municipal census at the National Institute of Statistics, <http://www.ine.es/nomen2>. The figures provided by the municipal office vary a little: the number of inhabitants in 2013 is 130 in Olveiroa and 31 in Ponte Olveira (the total parish population is 161; this parish has only two villages, Olveiroa and Ponte Olveira) (personal communication with the secretary of the municipal office).

<sup>19</sup>The 2013 municipal census gives a figure of 4907 for the whole municipality and 2934 for the town itself (1504 men and 1430 women), <http://www.ine.es/nomen2>, accessed May 21, 2014.



233 mention Finisterre in this chapter, I refer to the town and the cape; otherwise, I  
234 will specify.

235 The social dynamics in Finisterre are different from those of the other two  
236 places, partly due to its size and tourist industry. In fact, the Cape is one of the  
237 most important tourist destinations in Galicia. Therefore, not only does the town  
238 and Cape receive pilgrims who arrive on foot or by bus, but also tourists, many of  
239 them day visitors. The increasing numbers of pilgrims over the last few years (see  
240 Parga-Dans, this volume) has changed the landscape of the town, with more busi-  
241 nesses targeting them.

### 242 4.3 What Should Be Protected? Naturalization Processes 243 and Heritage Discourses

244 In this section, I will concentrate on the narratives around the concept of heritage,  
245 heritage policies and heritagization processes along the Camino to Finisterre. The  
246 narratives on what various social actors in each location consider to be their herit-  
247 age will allow me to analyze the underlying naturalizations that are taking place.  
248 I will concentrate on the discourse of the actors mentioned in the introduction:  
249 politicians, Catholic Church representatives, associations that have an institutional  
250 representation because they managed European funds, grassroots organizations,  
251 hotel and restaurant personnel, and other local residents, including pilgrims who  
252 decided to remain in Finisterre upon their arrival.

253 Regarding the heritage narratives linked to public institutions representatives,  
254 the main conclusion is that there is not one unifying discourse in relation to her-  
255 itage and pilgrimage. For this part, councilmen and mayors were interviewed in  
256 each of the municipalities. The mayors of the three municipalities do not share  
257 a common strategy. The mayors of Finisterre and Negreira—the municipality  
258 Vilaserío belongs to—lack a heritage policy discourse. Both of them belong to the  
259 conservative party *partido popular*. While the mayor of Dumbría—the municipality  
260 where Olveiroa is located—has an elaborate narrative on the importance of heritage  
261 for the promotion of his municipality. The promotional work of Dumbría is con-  
262 centrated along three lines, and two of them are related to heritage: the promotion  
263 of their cultural heritage through the promotion of the Camino de Santiago in their  
264 territory; and the promotion of their natural heritage through the promotion of the  
265 activities at the river Xallas. In addition, the municipal employment plan is linked  
266 to their heritage sites. The political strategy of the municipality is to promote cul-  
267 tural tourism as their most important economic strength (Sánchez-Carretero 2012:  
268 149). The mayor of Dumbría, member of the socialist party, does not question that  
269 heritage is one of the main economic resources and therefore, the market logic  
270 linked to heritage is being naturalized and reproduced.

271 However, the narratives of the other two mayors do not follow the same ration-  
272 ale. The policies developed in the municipality of Negreira, run by a conservative



273 mayor from the Partido Popular, do not include any mention of heritage; whilst  
274 the mayor of Finisterre mentions heritage but only as ‘regulations that should be  
275 passed by the Xunta; for instance, the delimitation of the caminos. We need clear  
276 regulations so we can apply them to protect the old houses of our town’ (fieldnotes  
277 20-7-2011). These two mayors regard the Camino as something that ‘happens  
278 to be there.’ Pablo Alonso González, in his dissertation about the Maragatería, a  
279 region crossed by the Camino, describes a similar situation: ‘the Mayor does not  
280 construct his discourse on the Camino as a metacultural reality, as a product for  
281 tourist consumption, or as heritage broadly. For him, as for most inhabitants of  
282 Maragatería, it is something that ‘happens to be there,’ and whose relevance has  
283 increased significantly in recent years’ (Alonso González 2013: 298).

284 This ‘happen to be there’ perspective is exemplified by the mayor of Negreira.  
285 His political program doesn’t include the Camino, or heritage; but he politely  
286 invited us to collaborate with him. ‘If you have suggestions on what to do about  
287 the Camino, just tell us. I’m sure you know a lot about it’ (fieldnotes 5-4-2012). In  
288 his discourse, there is a complete absence of both the term heritage and the idea to  
289 what this term refers to. This contrasts with the discourse of local residents, who  
290 do refer often to the *idea* of heritage, although not to the term per se.

291 The mayor of Muxía follows a similar pattern to Dumbría’s. He is also part of  
292 the socialist party. His political program for municipal policies includes an elabo-  
293 rate discourse on the importance of the Camino heritage. In addition, at the inter-  
294 view I conducted with this mayor, he asked politicians at the regional and national  
295 level for two important commitments: (1) more investment in the Camino, in terms  
296 of infrastructure, cleaning and maintenance of the Camino; and (2) improved coord-  
297 ination between the various administrations: municipal, regional, national and  
298 supranational. Along these lines he considers it important to improve the Camino  
299 waymarking. He explains that ‘...in the case of Muxía, it is more difficult because  
300 we have to indicate two directions. The pilgrim is the one who chooses. The route  
301 is a triangle. When pilgrims reach Dumbría, they have to choose between going to  
302 Fisterra or to Muxía’ (fieldnotes 3-5-2012).

303 Interviews with the respective mayors make it clear that the municipal pol-  
304 icy regarding the Camino, tourism and heritage and, consequently, applying for  
305 regional, national and European grants, depend on personal initiatives. That is the  
306 case behind the application to the LEADER European funded program, linked to  
307 the mayor of Dumbría and the creation of the Asociación Nería. This organiza-  
308 tion obtained and managed various LEADER programs for their area, the Coast of  
309 Death.

310 On the contrary, the non-institutional actors lack an explicit heritage discourse—  
311 implicitly they do—but all of them have clear ideas about what are the most valua-  
312 ble aspects of their ‘culture.’ For instance, in Finisterre, the most commonly  
313 occurring aspects are: the landscape, the sea, the beaches, the actual name of  
314 Finisterre (‘a name is also heritage’<sup>20</sup>; fieldnotes 15-6-2011), the sunset, the Holy

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<sup>20</sup>For more details on place names, heritage and namebranding strategies see Jiménez-Esquinas and Sánchez Carretero (forthcoming).



315 Christ of Finisterre, the Holy Week celebrations, San Guillerme, and the light-  
316 house. These elements are also repeated by institutional actors. For instance, at the  
317 mayor's office, the councilor for culture explained to us that their most important  
318 heritage is the landscape, *cruceiros*, the church of Santa María das Areas, the her-  
319 mitage of San Guillerme, the holy stones and the chapel of Buen Suceso.  
320 According to a priest from Finisterre, important heritage elements of this town  
321 include the Parish church, the Hermitage of San Guillerme, the holy stones, the  
322 lighthouse, the Holy Week celebrations, Finisterre festivities –Virxen das Arenas,  
323 del Carmen and San Roque–, and ‘of course, the most important thing is our  
324 Christ of Fisterra. There are only three images like this one in Spain: Burgos,  
325 Ourense and Fisterra’ (fieldnotes 21-7-2011).<sup>21</sup>

326 In Finisterre, the most important difference between local perceptions of herit-  
327 age when comparing the different sites is the lack of references to rural activities,  
328 including fishing. Whilst ‘working the land’ was a common reply in Vilaserío and  
329 Olveiroa, it did not, however, appear in Finisterre. In the former two villages, their  
330 landscape and the possibility of maintaining agricultural and farming activities  
331 were the most common responses. In a group discussion activity conducted in  
332 Vilaserío, we asked participants to select an element, or something that symbolizes  
333 a practice that they considered important for the village and that should be main-  
334 tained. Most of the people selected elements related to the landscape, their water-  
335 rivers, springs, fountains–, dairy farms, and ‘working the land’ (Fig. 4.4).<sup>22</sup>

336 Finally, I would like to consider another group of people who live on the Camino  
337 and who have different perspectives to those presented up till now. In Finisterre's  
338 low season, they stand out among the Fisterrans; they are pilgrims who upon their  
339 arrival decide to remain in Finisterre: owners of bars, hostels, or restaurants; people  
340 who work part of the year in their countries of origin and return each year to  
341 Finisterre; and many others. In one of the bar/restaurants in the middle of Finisterre  
342 owned by a Fisterran<sup>23</sup> and a 52 year-old German former pilgrim, whom we will call  
343 Anna,<sup>24</sup> we organized a group discussion among seven people who decided to stay  
344 in Finisterre upon ending their Camino. Anna has lived in Finisterre since 2007,  
345 when she finished her pilgrimage, and decided to stay. She gave a new business  
346 direction to her partner's bar, including a wide variety of vegetarian dishes, German  
347 food, ‘hippie style’ clothes and jewelry. The group was asked to discuss two topics:

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<sup>21</sup>Another peculiar element that was mentioned by one person is *futbolín* (table football). Alejandro Finisterre, pseudonym of Alexandre Campos Ramírez, poet, inventor and publisher from Finisterre, who died in 2007, and who was according to a newsletter from Finisterre ‘probably the most important character in our history’ (KMO 2010: 9).

<sup>22</sup>For a complete description of the group discussion and the photographs that were selected by the participants for the activity see Sánchez-Carretero and Ballesteros-Arias (2014). This visual book was prepared as a report for stakeholders as it included heritage policy recommendations made by residents from Vilaserío.

<sup>23</sup>Fisterran refers to those who are born in Finisterre.

<sup>24</sup>As explained in Chap. 1, we are using pseudonyms for the people who collaborated during fieldwork, except for those who explicitly asked for the opposite.



**Fig. 4.4** María selected ‘water’ as their most important heritage element.  
*Source* Pastor Fábrega-Álvarez



348 perception of heritage and the effects of pilgrimage on local inhabitants. Among the  
349 aspects of Finisterre that are most valued there are big differences with the rest of the  
350 interviews we did in Finisterre. In this group, the term ‘energy’ is used repeatedly in  
351 relation to Finisterre. When asked about the heritage of the site, about what they  
352 consider to be the most valuable aspects of the place, the following expressions were  
353 used: ‘the energy of the Cape, the hills’ (Emilia); ‘the energy of the site,’ ‘the lack of  
354 stress,’ ‘the beaches,’ ‘the possibility to start over again,’ ‘food’ (everybody laughs).

355 All of them agreed that the local population do not value what they have,  
356 particularly nature, ‘Greenpeace is needed here!’, one of them exclaims and the  
357 discussion turned to the dark side of Finisterre, its inhabitants and the many com-  
358 plaints that these former pilgrims have about the greediness of the locals and the  
359 treatment they receive by them: ‘Money, money, money...it kills the good energy,’  
360 ‘there’s garbage everywhere, and they [Fisterrans] mistreat animals, and dol-  
361 phins!’, ‘a horse was killed because of envy.’

362 A second group discussion with another five ex-pilgrims was organized and the  
363 results were similar. In the second group, the heritage elements that were men-  
364 tioned include: the sea, the landscape, and the way of life.<sup>25</sup>

365 In addition to this broad description of heritage elements, I have included  
366 some information specific to some particularly relevant elements in terms of the

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<sup>25</sup>Regarding the expression ‘way of life,’ the person who was talking explained that ‘here, people live the moment, without thinking about the future. In Switzerland, we live in the future or in the past, but skip the present’ (group discussion 2, 20-7-2011).



367 conflicts with pilgrims and/or in terms of the naturalization processes that I will be  
368 mentioning in the following sections. The goal of these brief accounts is to present  
369 a series of snapshots of the daily-life of these sites.

### 370 ***4.3.1 From Homeless to Pilgrims: Pilgrims as Heritage***

371 The current pilgrim landscape that reflects and, at the same time, creates the Camino  
372 to Finisterre/Muxía has an important element: the actual pilgrims. Without them,  
373 the pilgrim landscape would not exist. Even though the image of the pilgrim has  
374 a long history in written sources, it has been constructed just recently among the  
375 local population. Puri, the pilgrim hostel keeper in Olveiroa, describes the changes  
376 in this way: ‘The first pilgrims started to arrive around twenty years ago. People  
377 were not used to it and they used to say ‘Look, here comes the bogeyman!’ or ‘that  
378 person must be poor or homeless,’ but they were pilgrims... although they were  
379 called homeless. The locals were afraid of them’ (fieldnotes 20-10-2010). The hostel  
380 keeper in Finisterre also mentions the story of the bogeyman related to pilgrims in  
381 a time prior to the wave of pilgrims that started in the late 1990s. The keeper is in  
382 her early forties and remembers how, when she was a child, she was told stories of  
383 the bogeyman who appeared with the pilgrims: Imagine a man with long and heavy  
384 beard... instead of bogeymen, we have pilgrims’ (fieldnotes 19-7-2011).

385 Both of these testimonies reflect the changing nature of the images associated  
386 with pilgrims. Puri also explains that, in the past, they did not dress as today and that  
387 nowadays many pilgrims dress ‘as hikers, as if they just came out of a sports-store<sup>26</sup>

388 Pilgrimage itself is also considered by some as heritage: ‘we should not forget  
389 that pilgrims are also part of our culture’ (Hostel keeper in Finisterre, fieldnotes  
390 19-7-2011). I only heard this on a couple of occasions, however. The other time  
391 was in Vilaserío, when the owner of the private hostel and newly remodeled res-  
392 taurant, referred to pilgrimage as an important part of their heritage.

### 393 ***4.3.2 Hospitality as Heritage: From Hospitality to Business***

394 The rhetoric of hospitality versus business is a common narrative element in the three  
395 locations. Finisterre’s pilgrim hostel keeper stresses the idea of hospitality as the key  
396 identity factor in the Camino: ‘Solidarity and hospitality in the 1990s was enormous,  
397 but it is changing... The huge number of pilgrims walking the Camino has affected hos-  
398 pitality... now we hardly talk to pilgrims because there are so many of them. I continue  
399 seeing hospitality as it was amongst our elders. Now business is part of daily life... but

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<sup>26</sup>These hygienic and normative customs associated to pilgrims can be called ‘Decathlonization’ of pilgrimage. For a detailed study of the material culture associated to pilgrimage, see Sánchez-Carretero and Ballesteros-Arias (2010) that includes the results of an experiment in which they asked their collaborators to empty their backpacks and explain the stories linked to each object (Fig. 4.5).



**Fig. 4.5** The owner of the hostel and restaurant in Vilaserío selected pilgrimage as one of their most important heritage elements. *Source* Pastor Fábrega-Álvarez



400 we try not to lose hospitality in the hostel... hospitality makes the Camino and you can-  
402 not pay for it... welcoming pilgrims with a smile; we have a box for tips which are  
403 used to benefit other pilgrims. Small details make hospitality. Other private hostels have  
404 similar ideas, but hospitality is becoming less and less common' (fieldnotes 19-7-2011).  
405 In the narrative about what pilgrimage used to be, hospitality appears as the key element  
406 that needs to be preserved, and therefore is part of the Camino's heritage.

### 407 4.3.3 *The End of the World as Heritage*

408 The idea of 'the end of the world' is also commonly mentioned in Fisterra in rela-  
409 tion to what is unique about their town. 'A legacy that we should take care of,' as  
410 Sergio, the owner of a famous bar among pilgrims, says. It was mainly in Finisterre  
411 that we found narratives about the end of the world linked to pre-Christian pilgrim-  
412 ages. This is how a Finisterre resident explains the relationship with Christianity:  
413 'Before Christianity, the Milky Way or 'way of the stars' already existed' (Angel,  
414 18-7-2011). The president of the *Asociación Fisterra Verdadero Fin do Camiño*  
415 (Association Finisterre the True End of the Camino) clearly explains that the main  
416 goal of their group was to claim that the Camino to Finisterre 'is not a prolongation.  
417 It is indeed the origin and end of the Camino' (Audio recording GR032, 22-7-2011).  
418 As explained in the introduction, the association was dissolved in late 2011, in part  
419 because they were accused of having a negative attitude towards Muxía.

## 420 4.4 On Related Concepts and Links

421 In this section, I will describe a series of concepts that have been coupled up by local  
422 residents along the Camino to Finisterre, resulting in three pairs. The first pair of  
423 concepts is **milking** and **heritage**. It is linked to criticisms concerning heritage poli-  
424 cies that tend to fossilize traditional culture in order to promote tourism. Camila del  
425 Mármol found a similar phenomenon during her research into the heritagization pro-  
426 cesses in the Pyrenees: 'criticism on behalf of many informants –specially from the  
427 elderly who never migrated and suffered the consequences of the closure of dairy  
428 farms or the end of subsistence agriculture– is aimed at celebrating the past, leaving  
429 aside the search for solutions [for those activities] in the present' (Del Mármol 2012:  
430 240). Heritage-related projects are not considered to meet current needs, both in the  
431 case analyzed by Del Mármol and in the case of the Camino to Finisterre.

432 The second pair of concepts is the **sinking of the Prestige** and **constructing**  
433 **prestige**. Another significant event for Finisterre was the sinking of the Prestige  
434 oil tanker, which contaminated the sea and coastal area of the Costa da Morte, in  
435 November 2002. According to local inhabitants' narratives, there is a direct relation  
436 between the disaster of the Prestige and the increase in tourism and pilgrimage to  
437 the area. The standard narrative is that the Prestige made the area more visible and  
438 well-known, encouraging many tourists and pilgrims to visit the Coast of Death.



439 The third pair of concepts is **art** and **pilgrim landscape**. Among the group of pil-  
440 grims who remain in Finisterre, one particular case deserves special attention due to the  
441 impact it had on the Finisterre landscape. From 2009 to 2012, a French artist lived in  
442 a concrete transmission tower (2 × 2 m) which stood at the bottom of the road that  
443 climbs up to the lighthouse, and painted its walls with religious images (see Fig. 4.6).



B & W IN PRINT

**Fig. 4.6** Transmission tower in Finisterre occupied by a French painter from 2009 to 2012.  
*Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero



444 This pilgrim remained silent for over a year. He was called ‘the hermit’ and was helped  
445 by Fisterrans, who fed him. In 2011, Paula and I were invited to have dinner at his four  
446 square meter transmission tower: ‘The walls are overwhelmingly full of pieces of paper  
447 with written notes and drawings. A wooden structure covered by a green piece of plas-  
448 tic, improvises a leaky ceiling to make the 7 meter high tower more habitable and thus  
449 avoiding the chimney effect of the disproportionate structure. There are no windows in  
450 the tower and the only light comes from the main –and only– entrance, where I sit, try-  
451 ing to breathe deeply due to my allergy to dogs. Philippe and his partner Lynn share  
452 the tower with Bobby, their dog. In the right-hand corner, there is a shelf/table where  
453 they prepare dinner using a tuna-can-without-tuna full of methylated spirit. Philippe had  
454 already prepared an herbal tea for us –‘very good for your lungs, Cristina.’ The hospital-  
455 ity received at the tower reached the highest levels of hospitality we encountered in our  
456 fieldwork: pasta soup to heat our bodies, bread to give us strength, and herbal tea to  
457 calm my lungs. Surrounding the tower, Philippe has made a garden which he uses to  
458 grow medicinal herbs for himself and for the pilgrims ‘who cannot pay for a pharmas-  
459 tist’ (fieldnotes 20-7-2011).

460 Philippe remained in Finisterre, on and off, until 2013. In 2014, the entrances to  
461 the tower had been walled off with red bricks. According to Philippe, the Catholic  
462 Church consciously rejects this Camino: ‘The church doesn’t want Finisterre to be  
463 the end of the Camino’ (Audiorecording GR033, 20-7-2011). Conspiracy theories  
464 explain what is seen as a plot against Finisterre as the true end of the Camino.  
465 For those who defend conspiracy theories, the Catholic Church is considered to be  
466 part of the hegemonic power that is minimizing Finisterre. The tensions with the  
467 Catholic Church directly brings me to the following section, which will be dedi-  
468 cated to conflicts and social fractures.

## 469 4.5 On Conflicts, Protection, Destruction and Materiality

470 What remains of this chapter ties up the main themes concerning heritage poli-  
471 cies on the Camino with the conflicts present in the narratives about heritage. They  
472 focus on various levels of conflict around heritage and the Camino. Heritage and  
473 pilgrimage may not only be regarded as an economic resource but also as a cur-  
474 rent resource for conflict, as sustained by Poria and Ashworth (2009). According  
475 to anthropologist Luis Silva ‘the making of heritage may give rise to two oppos-  
476 ing impacts simultaneously—increased social cohesion and place pride, on the one  
477 hand, and envy and competition (and, thus, social atomization), on the other hand—  
478 and residents are totally cognizant of the tension between the two’ (Silva 2013: 14).  
479 The relation between host and guests has been analyzed for more than three dec-  
480 ades in the anthropology of tourism (Urry 1990; Cohen 1979), but the effects of  
481 tourism and pilgrimage on host-host relations has not been equally analyzed (Silva  
482 2013: 13). In Finisterre, the troubled relationship among neighbors and the fights  
483 among hostel owners, even at the bus stop, competing for clients, have reached  
484 media coverage in the *Voz de Galicia* regional newspaper. Graham, Ashworth and



B & W IN PRINT

**Fig. 4.7** Work being done by the state-owned company Tragsa in 2010 on the section of the Camino to Finisterre that passes through Dumbría. *Source* Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

485 Tunbridge (2000, 134–138) use what they called ‘neighbor’s dilemma’ to illustrate  
486 the complex nature and the frequent failure of the relationship between the costs of  
487 heritage investment and its return (quoted after Silva 2013: 14).

488 *‘Don’t protect me, leave me alone!’*

489 Surprisingly enough, the idea that the protection of the Camino is causing its  
490 destruction came up in the different locations where we conducted ethnography.  
491 Figure 4.7 shows a section of the Camino in Dumbría. It exemplifies the complaints  
492 presented by The Galician Friends of the Camino de Santiago Association  
493 (AGACS), to protest against the widening of the trails with gravel so as to accom-  
494 modate motorized vehicles and criticized the work carried out by the state-owned  
495 company Tragsa in 2010, which involved replacing the natural surface with gravel.

496 As explored by Vilar in Chap. 3, the eagerness to turn the Camino into heritage  
497 translates into an increase in activities involving the route on behalf of various  
498 organizations and bodies. The destructive power of these actions has been ana-  
499 lyzed by Alonso González in relation to Maragatería and the different ontologies  
500 at work in relation to heritage (Alonso González 2013: 297).

501 The second conflict is related to the businesses along the route. Firstly, the  
502 recurrent clash between the hospitality sector and economic profit was men-  
503 tioned in many of the local residents’ narratives. Various government-funded hos-  
504 tel keepers told us that they stopped giving meals to avoid competing with local



505 businesses: both in Olveiroa and in Finisterre the *hospitaleras* gave meals when  
506 they started working at the hostel and after a while, they stopped doing it (field-  
507 notes 20-10-2010 for Olveiroa and 11-4-2011 for Finisterre).

508 Secondly, stories of illegal hostels were described as piracy and poaching. The  
509 owner of a coffee bar in Finisterre, born in 1961, explains how ‘we are not pre-  
510 pared for this kind of tourism, there is a lot of poaching. Here there are people  
511 who have apartments and put pilgrims in them... There is this woman who has  
512 two apartments and she sits every day in front of the city hall to catch pilgrims.  
513 For me, it is a privilege to receive people from all over the world; the fact is that  
514 there is a huge black economy (...). Now the town is full of restaurants, everybody  
515 is competing; people go to the bus stop and it’s a shame; some people are shame-  
516 less. They register their houses as ‘holiday apartments’ and then they take pilgrims  
517 every night’<sup>27</sup> (fieldnotes 15-6-2011). Taxi drivers are also angry in Finisterre,  
518 because ‘there is this German who has a van and takes pilgrims and tourists to the  
519 lighthouse’ (fieldnotes 15-6-2011).

520 The poaching metaphor gives an idea of the ‘hunt’ for tourists and pilgrims.  
521 The owner of a restaurant, a hotel and a pilgrim hostel, explains the situation as  
522 follows: ‘There is a lot of unfair competition between bars and restaurants... There  
523 could be 10 people working here, but only three of us are because of the illegal  
524 businesses. The system itself is killing us. They should sit down to discuss and  
525 analyze this. I used to have nine employees four, five years ago. But now, every-  
526 where, without permits, you can get grilled food, seafood, or a steak with potatoes’  
527 (fieldnotes 15-6-2011).

528 The expression ‘*pisopatera*’ (illegal apartment) is frequently used when talking  
529 about this issue. A *patera* is a small boat used by immigrants to illegally cross the  
530 strait of Gíbraltar. They become overcrowded and the double reference to illegal-  
531 ity and overpopulation are both included in the expression ‘*pisopatera*.’ Beatriz,  
532 keeper of the government-run hostel in Finisterre used this expression repeatedly  
533 to emphasize how ‘business owners are desperate because of the *pisos-patera*’  
534 (fieldnotes 19-7-2011).

535 The last conflict I am about to describe is related to fires and the act of burn-  
536 ing clothes as a closure ritual. Paula and José, the owners of a pilgrim hostel in  
537 Finisterre, consider that forbidding fires at the Cape is one of the most important  
538 measures for heritage protection: ‘Clothes should stop being burned. Many peo-  
539 ple come here just to make a big fire; a *gran Cremá*’ (fieldnotes 21-7-2011). One  
540 person, who explicitly asked me not to identify him although he gave me permis-  
541 sion to include his words, described the conflict as follows: ‘There is something  
542 I don’t like about pilgrims: fire. Last year I was left alone in the middle of the  
543 fire... surrounded by fire, and there was a gas tank next to me... I was supposed  
544 to remain here but I was left alone... it was a Tuesday afternoon and the follow-  
545 ing day another fire was lit... and everything was on fire and here vegetation takes

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<sup>27</sup>To be accredited as a ‘*casa vacacional*’ is less costly than having a hostel. In addition, it requires less safety and facility regulations. It is illegal to rent out a ‘*casa vacacional*’ as a hostel, to different hosts.



**Fig. 4.8** Mast at the Cape with a painted sign saying ‘No Fire’ and an official sign that says ‘No objects on the mast.’ *Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero

546 a long time to grow... According to some people, it is a new tradition, like the  
547 clothes hanging ...they stink! Socks and trousers really stink !’ (Fig. 4.8).

548 However, fire rituals are one of the most well-known practices to be per-  
549 formed in Finisterre. Fire is part of the caminization of this route and it is also  
550 part of ‘how a pilgrim should behave.’ Although immaterial, fire is also part of  
551 the materiality of the Camino to Finisterre. My argument is that there is a mate-  
552 riality linked to the Camino: hostels, bars, heritagization practices (remodeling of  
553 *hórreos*, chapels, houses), the actual pilgrims and the ex-pilgrims who are now  
554 residents. That materiality is creating a pilgrim landscape, or caminization,  
555 that is perceived differently by different social actors. The transforming process  
556 of this landscape has been naturalized as an unquestioned authorized heritage dis-  
557 course (Smith 2006). Discussion about the alternative ways in which pilgrims act  
558 in the world, or alternative pilgrim landscapes, did arise; but the fact that there is  
559 a pilgrim landscape shaping and creating contemporary Galicia was not rejected  
560 or questioned by any of our informants. The naturalization of this pilgrim land-  
561 scape is linked to pilgrimage as a economic resource in one of the poorest areas in  
562 Galicia (Fig. 4.9).

563 Scarcity of resources is of the fundamental basis for the inhabitants who  
564 consider their rural landscape their more valuable heritage. In fact, the same  
565 characteristics that made people migrate in previous decades—for instance,



**Fig. 4.9** Detail of Fig. 4.8.  
*Source* Paula Ballesteros-Arias and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero



566 inaccessibility—is what preserved their landscape and rural life (Aguilar 2003;  
567 Herrero 2005). Now it has turned into a commodity to be consumed by pilgrims  
568 and tourists. As explored by Del Mármol in the Pyrenees, ‘The reference to the  
569 past is related to attempts to promote an economic model geared to tourism and  
570 is an alternative that has been supported in broader levels exceeding the territory  
571 in question’ (Del Mármol 2012: 239). This economic model includes heritage  
572 regimes as the modus operandi to promote tourism. Margry’s conclusions from the  
573 questionnaires to pilgrims are clear regarding heritage ‘this route has also come  
574 under the influence of governmental and supra-nation state actors, and the pres-  
575 sure of new heritage and leisure regimes’ (Margry, Chap. 8, this volumen). Bell  
576 and Dale point out the existence of a pilgrim market since the eleventh century  
577 onwards and how the prosperity of certain towns along the Camino Francés are  
578 linked to this (Bell and Dale 2011). As Pack looked into, the promotion of pilgrim-  
579 age and tourism in Santiago was consolidated in the nineteenth century after the  
580 ‘allegedly accreditation of the remains of St. James by the pope Leo XIII in 1884’:  
581 ‘The conflation of pilgrim and tourist was considered not a problematic mixture  
582 of sacred and profane but rather proof of a renewed dynamism at this historic seat  
583 of Spanish Catholicism. Numbers benefited business and aggrandized the archdio-  
584 cese, though commerce and consumption did not yet register on the scale experi-  
585 enced at pilgrimage centers such as Lourdes’ (Pack 2010: 349–350).

#### 586 **4.6 Concluding Remarks: ‘Working the Land** 587 **Is also Our Heritage’**

588 When comparing regional and municipal heritage policies with the idea that other  
589 local actors have about their heritage, a significant gap can be observed. This  
590 disparity has two aspects. The first one has already been explored: some politi-  
591 cians construct a sophisticated discourse on heritage in relation to the Camino



592 de Santiago; while this use of heritage contrasts with the lack of a term to name  
593 it at a local level. The second aspect is related to the concept of heritage itself.  
594 Politicians and heritage managers have a limited concept of what heritage is, and  
595 they dedicate their heritage policies and funding to the restoration of buildings and  
596 the maintenance of the route itself. Local inhabitants, however, see more possi-  
597 bilities, adding cultural practices such as festivals and religious celebrations; they  
598 also include other elements of heritage that are more difficult to catalogue, such as  
599 ‘continuing to work the land,’ ‘the rural landscape,’ or ‘our local water supplies.’

600 Institutional discourse and practice have naturalized the notion of heritage as  
601 objects; this naturalization process, however, has not permeated the discourse of  
602 the Olveiroa, Finisterre and Vilaserio inhabitants, who have a more holistic vision,  
603 adding not only buildings such as *hórreos* or houses, but also practices such as  
604 festivals, as well as the most frequent comment in Vilaserío and Olveiroa: working  
605 the land.

606 The possibility of having an agricultural economic model as ‘their heritage’ is  
607 linked to the second naturalization process: the naturalization of the idea that the  
608 only way heritage can be a resource is via tourism. Aguilar et al. (2003) studied  
609 the impact of the LEADER program in encouraging tourism in Spanish rural areas  
610 and used the expression ‘tourist monoculture’ to refer to the change from agricul-  
611 tural monoculture to the promotion of rural areas exclusively via tourism.

612 My line of reasoning follows the idea that heritage can also be ‘to keep on  
613 working the land or to keep farming.’ Of course, this idea is rooted in nostalgia  
614 for a past that no longer exists (Abrahams 1994: 79; Jameson 1989); nostalgia for  
615 a rural past felt by local residents and outsiders; nostalgia seen from today’s neo-  
616 rurality with blurred boundaries, thus making the very concept of rurality ques-  
617 tionable. However, in these areas (Dumbría and Negreira) the primary sector is  
618 still the main source of income (Río Barja 2009). Behind the phrase ‘our heritage  
619 is to keep on working the land’ lies the fact that heritage is also a social practice.  
620 These people do not want to be musealized as bearers of traditional knowledge.  
621 They want to stress the fact that their heritage (in this case, agricultural work) can  
622 also involve an economic benefit by developing the primary sector, mainly through  
623 milk-derived products (provided that such work can be further developed). Or, at  
624 least, by developing a daily life environment that involves economic benefit for  
625 subsistence. Beyond the question of whether or not this is possible, I want to  
626 emphasize the non-naturalized link between heritage and tourism made by these  
627 informants. However, informants belonging to the field of municipal and regional  
628 politics reproduced the naturalization process that considers heritage as a resource  
629 exclusive to tourism. As explored above, those who do not use the term ‘heritage,’  
630 and are not part of the authorized heritage discourse, do not reproduce this natural-  
631 ization. Therefore, a plausible explanation could be that the heritage regime and its  
632 institutionalization negate certain options; for instance, that heritage as a resource  
633 can help develop the primary sector. I do not aim to criticize the consequential  
634 links between tourism and heritage, but rather the naturalization process that con-  
635 siders the touristic agency to be the only viable alternative to make heritage an  
636 economic resource.



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