

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN RELIGION, TRAVEL,  
AND TOURISM

# International Perspectives on Pilgrimage Studies

*Itineraries, Gaps and Obstacles*

Edited by  
Dionigi Albera and John Eade

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN RELIGION, TRAVEL,  
AND TOURISM

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# 5 Pilgrimages in Hungary

## Ethnological and Anthropological Approaches

*Gábor Barna*

### BACKGROUND

The structures, development and specific practices of pilgrimages are a good reflection of the nature of religiosity in a particular age; they also are influenced by the cultural, denominational, social, economic and political conditions of their time. Consequently research on pilgrimages draws on various disciplines. In general, social and political relations determine what researchers are interested in and how they study it. According to the census of 2011, around 40% of the country's population describe themselves as Roman Catholics, while Protestants (Calvinists, Lutherans, Unitarians) represent approximately 14%, and the remaining 46% are divided between the dynamically growing small Christian and non-Christian (Buddhist, Jewish, etc.) churches and nonbelievers (27% of Hungarians did not declare membership of any denomination). The different Roma groups mostly subscribe to Roman Catholicism, but Pentecostal congregations have recently proved a powerful magnet because of their use of music.

As in other parts of Europe the first scholarly descriptions of Hungarian pilgrimage appeared during the second half of the nineteenth century. Scholars mainly adopted a historical perspective, exploring the history of the Catholic Church, its religious orders and artistic production, all of which are still important areas for Hungarian pilgrimage research. The most important study on pilgrimage and Marian devotion is still Ágost Flórián Balogh's magisterial book (1872), a kind of *summa Mariana*. Written in Latin (Hungary's official language at the time), it dealt not only with Hungary but also Croatia and Poland. Because it was written in Latin, it was addressed to the priesthood across the Central European region and to the limited audience of people versed in the language. Balogh concentrated on providing a historical and descriptive portrait of the various Marian cults, which is still useful today because it examines numerous sources that are no longer readily accessible. His work also marked the departure from a devotional or literary tradition, which had served the demands of religious practice from earlier centuries, and the beginning of scholarly research.

Marian devotion in Hungary had been encouraged during the Catholic Counter-Reformation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. An increasing emphasis was placed on the idea that, through the dedication of the country made by the first Hungarian king, Saint Stephen, Hungary was Mary's country. This was also given iconographic expression in the form of the Woman clothed with the Sun (Apocalyptic Woman). This image was transformed into the portrayal of *Patrona Hungariae*, when the so-called Holy Crown used for the coronation of Hungarian kings was placed on Mary's head. During the Counter-Reformation the notion of the *Regnum Marianum* (*Mary's Kingdom*) assisting Catholic restoration and renewal took shape, intertwined with the veneration of Hungarian saints. From then on Hungarian pilgrimages were imbued with a strongly Marian character.

From the seventeenth century up to the mid-nineteenth century a major publication series—the *Atlas Marianus*—commented on this Marian devotional tradition from various disciplinary perspectives. The final book in the series was produced by Elek Jordánszky (1836). It was both devotional and scholarly in its aims and represents a transition between providing sources about pilgrimage and studying it in a scholarly fashion (see Tüskés 1993: 82). Ágost Balogh decided to summarise both these and similar publications and critically evaluate them. He defined the concept of shrines (*loca gratiarum*) and followed the same criteria in describing the different places. He outlined each place's history, presented the main features of the cult and its devotional objects, described the feast days, estimated the number of pilgrims, reported the most significant community pilgrimages to the place and also listed his sources (Balogh 1872: 441–693).

During the second half of the nineteenth century more and more information about the history of different shrines and relics and the various manifestations of pilgrimage appeared in a diverse literature produced by the Church and by those studying the history of the Church, its parishes, religious orders and religious art in various regions across the country. Yet those who were developing ethnology and the study of folklore chose to ignore this literature and concentrate on the reconstruction of archaic religion and Hungarian mythology. Some considered that the task of ethnology was to examine only the autochthonous elements rather than those generated by external influences, i.e., Christianity (see Szendrey 1940: 90).

## ETHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON PILGRIMAGE

After this sporadic publication of data, a systematic ethnological and folkloristic study of pilgrimages began to emerge. The emphasis increasingly shifted away from the earlier historical descriptions of shrines and their votive images towards an analysis of the series of social and cultural activities that constitute the pilgrimage. This approach was pioneered by Sándor

Bálint. He provided the first description of the pilgrimage made by the people of Szeged to Máriaradna (Bálint 1936), which drew mainly on German research, especially the work of Georg Schreiber. (The German influence remains important in Hungarian research on religious ethnology because Hungary is linked by its cult connections mainly to Austrian and Bavarian, as well as Italian regions; see Barna 2001d and Eberhart's chapter in this volume). In this pilgrimage and the customs of the most popular shrines, Bálint saw the expression of the community's demand for 'representation' and the vows of the Baroque age (Bálint 1938: 25–27). The Baroque age brought spectacle and theatricality to its praise of God. People often made a vow to undertake a pilgrimage to a sacred place with the aim of averting natural disasters and epidemics. Bálint was the first to publish the prayers that were said by the walking pilgrims when they departed, along the route, on arrival at the shrine and during their return home (1938: 29–43).

In this first major ethnological study Bálint outlined the prime features of the pilgrimage and revealed its psychological dimensions, its communal nature and regional characteristics. He placed special emphasis on material culture (the pilgrim's staff, souvenirs, small devotional pictures, decorated honey cakes, candles) and the influence of pilgrimages on local economic and cultural traditions—for example, how the so-called sacred wells strengthened the local pottery industry. This approach was very forward looking because it was only taken up by others in the second half of twentieth century (see Hahn 1969, Barna 1986), and Anglophone researchers are only now addressing it seriously in the context of pilgrimage and material religion, more generally (see Reader's chapter earlier).

Bálint was also the first to refer to the special rites, which characterised pilgrimage's devotional practices, in particular. The latter included sleeping in the church, specific prayers, pilgrim baptism where those making a pilgrimage to a shrine for the first time are baptised with water from the sacred well and a bond forged between the novice and the godparent (see Barna 1995).

Recognising the importance of the role of pilgrim leaders, Bálint also published and analysed in 1942 the autobiography of István Orosz of Jászládány, known as a 'holy man', most of which is devoted to a description of the Orosz's pilgrimages in Hungary and abroad. Sándor Bálint saw in the figure of the 'holy man' the successor of the licentiate (Juhász 1921) who, because of the shortage of Catholic priests following the Turkish occupation (1526–1686) and the Reformation, had been allowed to perform pastoral work, except saying mass and hearing confession. From his visits to the different shrines Bálint produced descriptions of their spirituality that are still valid today (Bálint 1944). In these publications he alerted researchers to such novel sources as small devotional pictures and booklets of songs and prayers, which were illustrated with naive engravings.

During the mid-1940s Károly Gaál wrote his doctoral dissertation on the Franciscan place of pilgrimage at Andocs. He analysed the miracle records

kept by the shrine, projected its catchment area on a map, presented the pilgrimage songs and described the patronal festival, placing great emphasis on the shrine's cheap popular literature (Gaál 2009). He later reinterpreted his research in the context of Marian devotion through Loreto chapels across central Europe. He saw in these chapels a mystical line of defence that protected the western part of the Kingdom of Hungary from the danger of the Ottoman Turks (Gaál 1983).

Influenced by Sándor Bálint, a growing number of studies were published on the religious rites and customs performed during pilgrimage, votive objects left at shrines and the role of pilgrimage in folk medicine (Vajkai 1942). Many shrines in Hungary are associated with sacred wells or springs, and people attribute healing power to the water and use it to wash sick parts of their bodies (see Barna 2010a). As a result the study of folk medicine and medical history also began to contribute to pilgrimage research.

The search for ethnographic data was carried out not only among the Hungarian population but also by the country's Catholic ethnic minorities. Germans, generally known as *svábok* (Swabians) in Hungarian, constituted the most important of these minorities. They brought many distinctive types of votive images and cults to Hungary, and their religious culture and religiosity was studied by Bonomi (1936, 1969, 1970, 1971). However, Hungarian pilgrimage was not only influenced by cult connections established through these German settlers—Austrian, Italian and Polish ties have been at least as important right up to the present day. Their influence was channelled through both official church institutions and the different religious orders (Barna 2001). Since the 1970s on September 8, the birthday of Mary, the Roma have held a Roma fair at Csátka (north of Lake Balaton). Together with the religious events this offers families an opportunity for representation, for meals held in luxurious circumstances and to make marriage matches for their daughters.

During the 1940s researchers also made use of photography to document religious life (Manga 1946). The processions were spectacular sights at the shrines. The processional crosses and banners of the different groups, as well as the portable statues and the girls and young men carrying them, could be seen in the crowd of thousands or tens of thousands. The so-called Marian girls and young men were and still are a distinctive group in local communities. They stand out even today with their special costumes, and their task is to add to the procession's pomp (Dám 1944).

## PILGRIMAGE IN FICTION AND FILM

The shrine festivals that attracted thousands of people, the mingling of the sacred and the profane and the moving forms of devotional practice also had a great influence on Hungarian writers and poets. Before the Second World War these performances were the subject of many works of fiction. Factually precise novels and poems that described the atmosphere of



the shrines, their festivals and their rites on the basis of personal experience were very popular. To cite just a few emblematic works there were the poems by Gyula Juhász (1883–1937) and the novels written by Ferenc Móra (1879–1934), Zsigmond Móricz (1879–1942) and László Németh (1901–1975).

During the 1940s pilgrimage was also a central theme in two art films. In 1941 István Szóts, the director of *Emberek a havason* [Men on the Mountain], made his film about mountain woodcutters in the Székelyföld region. The wife of the film's main protagonist falls ill, and in the hope of a recovery they make a pilgrimage to the Marian shrine of Csíksomlyó, where the film recorded the original pilgrimage festival. István Szóts was also the director of *Ének a búzamezőkről* [Song of the Wheatfields] (1947), adapted from a novel by Ferenc Móra, in which scenes of the pilgrimage festival at Pálósszentkút, a shrine on the Great Plain, play an important part in the life of a soldier, who has returned home from the First World War.

Besides these two feature films, a number of documentary films were made both before 1990 and after the collapse of the Communist regime. In 1986–1989 Mihály Hoppál and János Tari made a film in colour titled *Búcsújárás Magyarországon* [Pilgrimage in Hungary], while Ágnes Orbán directed *Búcsújárás* [Pilgrimage] in 2001. A series of ethnological films were also produced by József Mester, e.g., *Búcsújárás* [Pilgrimage] (1993) and *A csíksomlyói búcsú* [The Pilgrimage Feast in Csíksomlyó] (1994).

These films also portrayed pilgrimages being made to countries outside of Hungary after 1990. István Szakály's film, *Zarándokút* [Pilgrimage], for example, covered the Hungarian pilgrimage to Aachen in 1993. He shows the pilgrims visiting shrines, which contain Hungarian relics along the Vienna-Regensburg-Mainz-Andernach-Cologne-Aachen route, as well as the pilgrimage festival in Aachen. The increasingly popular walking pilgrimages, partly influenced by the international reputation of the Santiago pilgrimage and growing religious tourism, led József Birinyi to produce his 2010 films *Mária-kegyhelyek* [Marian Shrines] and *Élménylánc: vallási turizmus a dél-alföldi régióban* [Chain of Experience: Religious Tourism in the South of the Great Plain]. He also followed the less well-known Portuguese branch of the Santiago pilgrimage in *Út a csillagok alatt* [Route Under the Stars] (2011). Duna Television pursued similar goals when it made a documentary film with a cultural historical approach on a number of popular shrines in the Carpathian Basin, directed by Tamás Barlay. Most of these films drew on the expertise of Gábor Barna and other researchers as consultants.

Hungary's Jewish minority has also attracted filmmakers. Over a period of years János Tari has documented how Jews, originally from Makó, continue to maintain ties with their native town (*Távoli templom* [Distant Temple] 2002). Each year during the Festival of Weeks (*shavuot*) they come to the tomb of the Rabbi of Makó, Mózes Vorhad (1862–1944), to remember their rabbi. Vorhad had operated an influential Talmudic school,

and on his deathbed he promised to intercede in heaven for his community, most of whom survived the Holocaust.

## HISTORICAL, CULTURAL HISTORICAL AND HISTORICAL ETHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Historians continued to show a great interest in pilgrimage during the first half of the twentieth century. Their interest was stimulated by the Hungarian national jubilees of the 1930s, and they paid increasing attention to the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age through the study of the emergence and functioning of shrines as well as pilgrimages to places outside the country. In his still unsurpassed monograph, Lajos Pásztor (1940) discussed the religiosity of the Jagiellonian period (between the early fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) and explored pilgrimage in terms of motivations, destinations and forms.

After the conversion of the Hungarians between the ninth and eleventh centuries and the establishment of Church institutions, the country was joined to an already existing international pilgrimage network, where the main destinations were the Holy Land, Rome and Santiago de Compostela. This network expanded during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to include the shrines of Saint Patrick's Purgatory in Ireland (Posonyi 1942), Mariazell, Aachen, Cologne, Loreto and Częstochowa, as well as pilgrimages to Rome during the holy years. Lajos Pásztor revealed the substitutional and penitentiary forms of pilgrimage,<sup>1</sup> as well as the accommodation provided for Hungarian pilgrims and their customs (Pásztor 1940: 94–133).

Between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries the pilgrimage to Aachen was especially important for Hungarians (see Thoemmes 1937). The generous patronage of the Hungarian Angevin king, Louis the Great (1326–1382), in support of the dynastic cult of saints, encouraged these strong links with Aachen. Louis had a Hungarian chapel erected beside the Aachen cathedral, which had been founded in 800 by Charlemagne, and donated relics of the Hungarian royal saints to both Aachen and Cologne, where a pilgrim house and poorhouse cared for Hungarians, who made the pilgrimage there every seventh year (Thoemmes 1937). Louis's patronage also extended to Mariazell and Częstochowa closer to home.

Shrines also emerged in Hungarian territories around the graves and relics of royal saints (Stephen, Ladislas, Emmerich) and other saints, such as Saint Gerard, Saint Margaret of Hungary and Saint John Capistran (Pásztor 1940: 133–135). The graves of Saint Stephen at Székesfehérvár and Saint Ladislas at Nagyvárad (now Oradea, Romania) emerged as sacred centres in the Kingdom of Hungary. With the increasing veneration, which surrounded Margaret of Hungary during the first half of the twentieth century when her canonisation process was under way, the legends concerning her

were published and these contain numerous references to the practice of pilgrimages in her lifetime. Art historians also contributed to the study of her cult, with Jajczay (1944) producing an analysis of the seven hundred years of iconography surrounding her. In the fifteenth century Eucharistic shrines in Hungary were also very important, and the most renowned shrine was located at Bába beside the Danube where a bleeding host was the focus of the cult (Kónyi, Holub, Csalog and Dercsényi 1940, Pásztor 1940: 135–138).

The Communist takeover in 1948 set back research on the history of Hungarian pilgrimages for decades. It was not until the end of the twentieth century that Enikő Csukovits brought the scattered data on medieval pilgrimage together. She presented the sources for mediaeval pilgrimages, the destinations, the motivations for pilgrimages and their different types. On the basis of these sources she traced the structure of the pilgrimages from the departure through the journey and to the arrival back home, and she analysed the social composition of the pilgrims and the role pilgrimages played in religiosity (Csukovits 2003). It is only recently, too, that research has turned to other phenomena related to mediaeval pilgrimages, such as pilgrim badges (Benkő 2002).

In the first half of the twentieth century the disciplines of history, art history, cultural history and historical ethnology also turned their attention towards pilgrimage after the Middle Ages, especially the Baroque period. Lajos Pásztor again produced an outstanding study of the most important



Figure 5.1 Map of important pilgrimage sites in Hungary in the eighteenth through twentieth centuries.

Baroque shrine in Hungary—Máriavölgy, which was close to Pozsony, the capital of the country at that time (now Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia) and called today Marianka. Drawing on contemporary sources he analyses the shrine's foundation legend, the history of the Pauline order, its rebuilding in the Baroque age, the pilgrimages to the shrine, its catchment area, the records of miraculous healings and the votive objects offered for answered prayers (Pásztor 1943).

The dynamic religiosity of the Baroque age favoured the emergence of local and regional shrines. Pilgrimages abroad declined and only those to Rome, Mariazell, Aachen, and, for a while, to the Holy Land and Częstochowa retained their importance. Throughout the Early Modern Age the holy years were the most important magnet for pilgrimages to Rome. Monks, priests and well-travelled aristocrats also journeyed on official business. Numerous pilgrim passports have survived in our archives (Barna 2001), while many pilgrim badges have also been preserved (Gohl 1912) as well as *vera icon* prints. These visits inspired the introduction of Holy Stairs to Hungary,<sup>2</sup> e.g., Malacka, Selmecebánya, Kassa (after 1920 these three settlements became part of Czechoslovakia and are now called Malacky, Banská Štiavnica and Košice), and various forms of Marian devotion were strengthened, such as Our Lady of Snows, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Mother of Good Counsel and the Bleeding Virgin Mother shrines (Bálint and Barna 1994: 120–122, Barna 2001a).

The Benedictine abbey at Mariazell deeply influenced not only Hungarian religious devotion between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but also cults elsewhere across Europe. Historians have examined the festivals held at the abbey from the perspectives of art, architecture, music and literature, and ethnologists have also contributed to this research (Barna 1996, Farbaky and Serfözö 2004). The Franciscans were the most important leaders of these festivals and included Hungarians, who had travelled to the Holy Land (see Kiss 1958). The Pauline order also contributed to this development of Marian devotion. Although the order's presence in the country had been destroyed by the Reformation and the Turkish occupation, it returned during the mid-seventeenth century and brought copies of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa's miraculous image and spread its cult (Barna 2004, Szilárdfy 2003).

With the end of the Turkish occupation in 1686 and the reorganisation of the Catholic Church, many shrines with roots going back to the Middle Ages were revived, and a large number of new ones emerged. Under the leadership of the Jesuits the Roman Catholic Church won over many Orthodox believers in the eastern part of the country, especially in northern Transylvania. This development led to the establishment of the Greek Catholic Church, which retained the Eastern rite but acknowledged papal authority. As the beginning of the eighteenth century approached, Catholic evangelisation and the spread of union between Latin and Greek Catholic communities was strengthened by the flourishing of many miraculous

apparitions and the emergence of shrines where cult images were seen to weep, bleed, or perspire, or were wounded and bleeding (Bálint and Barna 1994: 108–114, Barna 2001e). Máriapócs in today's eastern Hungary became the most famous of these shrines, although its original weeping votive image is now displayed in Vienna's St Stephen's Cathedral. Máriapócs is still the biggest place of pilgrimage in the Greek Catholic world (Manga 1996) and has important offshoots abroad (Méhes 1963).

To understand these seventeenth- and eighteenth-century developments, scholars drew on the concept of sacred landscape (*Sakrallandschaft*), devised by the German scholar Georg Schreiber (1937). Jánosi (1939) applied the concept to the churches, chapels, Ways of the Cross, etc., erected under the influence of the shrines within a local and micro-region catchment area, while Mária Lantosné followed suit in her study of holy wells in the Pécs diocese (Lantosné 1995). Recent research has interpreted the concept more broadly, however, so that it can be deployed to analyse the interaction between religion and the spatial landscape, including pilgrimage (Bartha 1992).

The best overview in Hungary of pilgrimage during the Baroque period has been produced by Gábor Tüskés, drawing on the records of miracles taking place at the shrines (Tüskés 1993). In his analysis he explored the characteristics of the roads leading to the shrines, the practices pursued by shrine custodians and the pilgrims and the influence of pilgrimage on everyday life. He analysed thirty-six shrines, showing their legends of origin, the historical and social motivations for visiting the shrines, their ethnic and denominational links, the intensity of the pilgrimages and changes in their catchment areas. In numerous studies written jointly with Éva Knapp, he has summarised the complex material and written source material for pilgrimages, the sacred spatial structures and the Austrian-Hungarian inter-ethnic connections in the area of pilgrimage (Tüskés and Knapp 2001, 2002, Barna 2009). They have also shown how the printed miracle books, devotional pictures and engravings of miracle stories were utilised as effective tools of religious propaganda (Tüskés and Knapp 2004). This research has been deepened by the contribution of art historians who have studied relics, cult objects and copies made of them, the portrayals in small prints and other cult objects (Szilárdfy, Tüskés and Knapp 1987, Szilárdfy 1995, 1997, 2008).

## ETHNOLOGICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

After the pioneering research during the first half of the twentieth century on Hungarian places of pilgrimage by those trained in ethnology, folkloristics and history, a long hiatus followed during the decades of Communism.

From 1948 up to the 1980s researchers had no hope of publishing their findings. This hiatus is particularly regrettable because it was during this period that the traditional forms of pilgrimage were undergoing change, partly due to modernisation and the spread of technical civilisation and partly as a result of ideological influences. The few sporadic studies, which were undertaken were imbued with harsh criticism of pilgrimage activity from the perspective of historical materialism (Mihályfi 1962, Manga 1962, Nyárády 1966). Studies that appeared from the 1970s dealt only with particular aspects of material culture, such as small graphic prints, small devotional pictures, pilgrim songs, pilgrim's bags, wax votive objects, copies of votive objects and convent work. Yet they deepened our knowledge in specific areas and research because art historians also began to examine the cult and the people behind the cult rather than just analysing the artefact.

Outstanding among the few publications, which sought a comprehensive approach was the theoretical overview and periodisation published by the ethnologist Ferenc Schram in a theological journal (Schram 1968). At the same time new research was produced by Hungarians, who had emigrated to the West, while the Hungarian Institute of Religious Sociology, based in Vienna, also played an important role here. Its bilingual parallel series, *UKI Berichte über Ungarn/UKI Reports about Hungary*, included several volumes on pilgrimage. The most important of these was Jenő Bangó's book, *Pilgrimage in Hungary*, which undertook a sociological analysis of fifty pilgrimage shrines (Bangó 1978), while Maria-Kornelia Fasching also produced a historical ethnological examination of shrines in southern Pannonia (Fasching 1991). Furthermore, during the 1980s the study of the history of pilgrimage to Mariazell was deepened by articles published in *Katolikus Szemle*, a journal produced in Rome (Szamosi 1987).

Within Hungary, during the 1970s Sándor Bálint was preparing to write a national history of pilgrimage and its ethnology, and after his sudden death this task was completed by Gábor Barna during the 1980s. The monograph, *Búcsújáró magyarok* [Hungarians on Pilgrimage], constituted the first ethnological synthesis of pre-1949 Hungarian pilgrimage traditions (Bálint and Barna 1994). Ethnological research strove to pick up the threads that had been dropped in the 1940s, but real progress only came around the time of the change in the political system.

The first results of this transformation were seen in the 1990s. By this time research was beginning to reflect not only German influence but also the impact of Anglo-Saxon and French ethnology and cultural anthropology. Special courses in religious ethnology were launched at the University of Szeged, which had been the cradle of ethnological research during the 1930s and 1940s. A research programme was developed through conferences, research initiatives and publications, and this still operates through the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology. Applying new methods, researchers began to investigate modern forms and functions of pilgrimage. The inscription books in votive churches (and churches, in

general) provided a new source for the study of written communication with the sacred (see Frauhammer 1999, 2012, Barna 2000, István 2003).

The researchers at Szeged also examined the custom of donating votive images, which still survives at Máriaradna (from 1920 it became part of Romania) through an inventory of around two thousand such images (Barna 2002). Furthermore, they have documented the religious and secular components of the Szeged-Alsóváros feast day (August 5, Our Lady of the Snows) (Pusztai 1999) and published bilingual monographs on the history and folklore of the shrines (Tóth 2002, Barna 2003). János Hetény's book on the Karancs-hegy feast day is not only methodologically a fine example of participant observation but is also our most detailed description so far of this pilgrimage feast day (Hetény 2000). Szeged researchers have also studied pilgrimage songs and published some of them, as well as the first catalogue of small prints, most of which are associated with pilgrimage shrines (Szabó and Zombori 2010). Last but not least, Barna produced the first overview of Hungarian pilgrimage in English (Barna 2001).

## JEWISH PILGRIMAGE

In the Jewish tradition pilgrimages were made to the 'Holy Land'. Elderly Orthodox and Hasidic Jews had long moved to spend their last years in Jerusalem. Members of Hungarian Reform and Orthodox communities also joined organised trips by Western European middle-class Jews to spend part of the feasts, prescribed in scripture, in Jerusalem, but this involved only a tiny fraction of the population. More significant in terms of numbers were the pilgrimages by rural Orthodox and Hasidic Jews, who joined the festivals held by the followers of the Hasidic 'rebbe's in Galicia. During the early twentieth century these pilgrimages were very similar to Catholic pilgrimages in Hungary, with pilgrims arriving not only in carts but also by train and bus.

During the late nineteenth century those involved in the study of Jewish communities (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*) were also attracted to the pilgrimages made by pious Eastern European Jews to the shrines of Jewish holy men (Gleszer 2006). However, their research remained within the earlier conceptual frame of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and focussed mainly on legends (Dobos 1990). This approach was deeply influenced by ghetto nostalgia and the secularisation perspective (Schön 1997, Glässer 2014a).

During the 2000s, however, Norbert Glässer provided an analysis of the history of 'Jewish pilgrimage', focussing initially on the rites and written communication with the sacred (Gleszer 2010). Through the study of the pilgrimage infrastructure and the tombs of holy men, he moved towards an exploration of the social context within which the veneration of *tsadiks* (spiritual master) took place (Gleszer 2008). Historical evidence revealed that people not only came to the shrines of rabbis and rebbes during

individual crises and community visits but also to perform the anniversary rites of rebbe dynasties and attend meetings of the Talmudic schools of Ashkenazi Hasidic rebbes. In the communal memory of Orthodox Jews, who emigrated from Hungary, these places of pilgrimage became important spaces of memory and points of attachment to the homeland they had left behind (Glässer 2013). Following the collapse of Communism, researchers were able to investigate how intense pilgrimage practices were intertwined with heritage tourism. The question of visits to tombs has led to questions about the communal strengthening of religious authority and the communal engagement with modernity and secularisation (Glässer 2014b).

As we have seen, ethnological research on Hungarian pilgrimage has been dominated by a historical perspective. The contribution by art historians has been particularly rich because an image, statue, relic, holy well, or spring is usually the centre of veneration at sacred places. Many historical analyses have been written about these places, the answers to prayers said there and miraculous recoveries. Research in Hungary today always examines the historical territory of the country, despite the dramatic border changes during the twentieth century.

## NEW CONSIDERATIONS IN RESEARCH— RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Systematic research on pilgrimages, the veneration of saints and religious communities became very difficult in the period from the 1950s to the 1980s, when the authorities pursued an anticlerical and antireligious policy. However, the study of contemporary pilgrimage was stimulated by the collapse of the regime and the resurgence of pilgrimage in diverse forms. The network of pilgrimage places in the Carpathian Basin was completely restructured together with the organisation of pilgrimage. The tradition of pilgrimage by parish communities had already largely disappeared and the dominance of the shrine network had also changed. This process had been set in motion by the Treaty of Trianon (4 June 1920), where two-thirds of Hungary's territory was allocated to the neighbouring countries (Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia and Austria). Millions of Hungarians found themselves in new nation-states where the borders cut across pilgrimage routes, and it became impossible to go on pilgrimage for decades. Hence, visiting such places as Măriaradna in Romania and Doroszló in Serbia is today also an expression of religious and Hungarian national identity because the Romanians and Serbs belong to the Orthodox Church, while Hungarians are Roman Catholics and Protestants.

New shrines, routes and catchment areas emerged with Csíksomlyó on the eastern edge of Transylvania, annexed by Romania, becoming the symbolic expression of religious and national survival. Csíksomlyó/Şumuleu had long been a regional shrine, but it has now become a transnational





Figure 5.2 New state borders after the Trianon Peace Treaty, 4 June 1920. Map of the Central Statistical Office of Hungary, Census 1920 VI.

shrine because it attracts those from Hungary as well as members of Romania's Hungarian minority. This has created a special situation: a Hungarian national shrine in the territory of another state. Tamás Mohay has critically reinterpreted the historical sources concerning the shrine, pointing out the possibilities and limitations of mythification (Mohay 2009). Others have drawn on Victor Turner's work to examine pilgrimage as ritual drama in the context of both Roman Catholics and the Romanian Orthodox communities (Vass 2009). Walking pilgrimages have reappeared involving small groups or individuals; some of these can also be interpreted as religious and cultural tourism. The pilgrimages by particular status groups, which had been forbidden earlier, began again and the youth pilgrimages on foot have become particularly attractive.

Nevertheless, the most striking change has been the appearance of tourism offices organising pilgrimages, and researchers began to explore this change, drawing on Anglophone publications by anthropologists and other social scientists (Bhardwaj and Rinschede 1988, Eade and Sallnow 1991, Post 1994). From the 1990s a number of researchers have analysed the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism and have drawn on the concept of religious tourism. Within this interpretative frame they have analysed pilgrimages organised by travel offices (Korpics 2000, Pustai 1999, 2004) and extended their interest to secular pilgrimages, as well as national religion and neo-pagan (syncretic) religions (Povedák 2008, 2011, 2012).

After 1990 pilgrimage to Compostela also became popular and pilgrimages were organised in Hungary on the Compostela model. Individual and group pilgrimages were developed by various associations along various routes, e.g., the Saint James, Saint Martin and Saint Elizabeth routes; the *Via Margaritarum* or Route of Pearls; the route of Saint Mary; the Hungarian Pilgrimage Route; and the Saint Stephen Route. The promoters of these various routes seek to attract people by developing their own websites.

Significant changes have also taken place in other modes of travel. Since 2000 pilgrimage trips by special train were also revived to Csíksomlyó, Częstochowa and Mariazell, for example, recalling the heyday of pilgrimages by train between 1870 and 1940 to popular European destinations such as Rome and Lourdes. Trips by bus were organised more from the end of the 1960s. Researchers are just beginning to analyse these changes through the study of travel reports concerning pilgrimages abroad.

Pilgrimages were and still are occasions and places for meetings and interactions. Pilgrims meet other people, other languages, cultures, nature, themselves and, at the end of the journey, the venerated saint. The encounter with others can awaken pilgrims to differences in language, customs and other things, as well as encourage them to reflect on their own life worlds. Their identity is thereby strengthened. The shrines and the pilgrimage routes leading to them can be said to contain in condensed form the history and everyday life of the place and the region. Writers and poets have described the special atmosphere of different shrines. The pilgrimage can result in getting to know the other person, the environment, the past and present; it can bring persons, peoples, languages and cultures closer together. The pilgrim routes are sacred routes (*via sacra*) marked with small structures (crosses, statues, chapels). Visiting shrines can foster ties within the traditional (parish, settlement) community or the tourist office group, functioning religious societies established at the shrines and pilgrimage societies organising pilgrimages.

## NOTES

1. In the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age many people were unable to fulfil their vows to make a pilgrimage. They hired someone to visit the shrine in their place. Secular courts often sentenced persons found guilty to make visits to distant sacred places—thereby removing them from the community for years and forcing them to do penance.
2. These were copies of the stairs in the Scala Sancta church in Rome, originally from Jerusalem, which were believed to have been used by Jesus when he was tried.

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