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Cover Page Footnote

Thank you to Deborah Wong for your consistent, insightful feedback, and to the anonymous reviewers for their careful revisions and comments.

The Global Encounter as *Communitas*: Inter-Pilgrim Musicking Along the Contemporary Camino de Santiago

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In an effort to provide new ways of theorising pilgrimages as global encounters (White, 2012) and sites of cosmopolitan interactions, I offer a sound-centred investigation into inter-pilgrim musical events that occurred along the Camino de Santiago (Camino), a historically Catholic pilgrimage in northern Spain. This ethnomusicological perspective on the Camino highlights contemporary pilgrim rituals and artistic practices that are frequently overlooked in other Camino scholarship, which tends to focus on historical musics or the tangible arts. On the Camino, music primarily facilitates cross-cultural encounters for pilgrims, though at varied levels of mis/understandings. This paper explores the ways that participatory musicking (Small, 1998) connects international pilgrims who otherwise would not have come in contact with one another and reinforces the Camino's Catholic heritage, despite the recent rise in non-religious walkers. The study is based on participant observation and autoethnographic engagement with musical rituals that occurred in two religious *albergues* (lodging for pilgrims) during the summer of 2019. Due to increased levels of fleeting global-local interactions between pilgrims, the twenty-first century Camino has become a site for cosmopolitan communal formations, although they are often constructed on the basis of language or nationality. Throughout my research, the religious *albergues* were significant social spaces for interactions across these barriers, as they emphasised communal evenings and activities involving Western popular or Catholically inspired musics after full days of walking alone. I argue that these participatory rituals utilised assumed cosmopolitan musical knowledges and religious backgrounds in order to create idealised senses of heightened community, conceptualised here in terms of Turnerian *communitas*. These encounters heavily relied on Western musical aesthetics in order to be meaningful for the pilgrims, and at the same time, national distinctions were constructed and broken down in order to create the feeling of a global pilgrim community. *Communitas* was only achievable after essentialised difference was first sounded, which it often occurred at the cost of excluding particular groups of pilgrims.

Key Words: Camino de Santiago, music, *communitas*, cosmopolitanism

Introduction

This paper reconceptualises the Camino de Santiago (Way of St. James, hereafter 'Camino') and relations among pilgrims more broadly through musical interactions, specifically analysing how inter-pilgrim musical encounters create the contemporary Camino. Anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have argued for the centrality of music to pilgrimages around the world, especially for music's role to encourage pilgrims (Mendoza, 2017), build community (Ingalls, 2011; Peña, 2011), construct place (Greene, 2003:205), and cross transnational borders (Bohlman, 1996a, 1996b). An ethnomusicological perspective on the Camino highlights contemporary short-lived pilgrim rituals and artistic practices that are frequently overlooked

in other Camino scholarship, which tends to focus on historical musical compositions or the visual arts. Since inter-pilgrim musical engagements and transformations characterise the route, I theorise the Camino not simply as a pilgrimage to practice one's own culture or religion through music and sound, but also as disparate sites for religious tourism that provide the pilgrim with an opportunity to become immersed in and begin to understand others' customs. The pilgrims' practices and spaces are simultaneously intertwined with, rivalled, and sounded in synchrony with lived places grounded in local histories and politics.

This paper's principal aim is to demonstrate how *hospitales* (hosts) at religious *albergues* (lodgings for pilgrims) along the Camino Francés (French Way,

the primary route that first-time pilgrims take) use music as a tool for intercultural negotiation. Religious *albergues* distinguish themselves from the municipal or private ones in that they are often free or by donation, include a shared meal, and involve group activities and Mass. Just one social space of the Camino, these *albergues* are significant sites for pilgrims that emphasise communal evenings after full days of walking alone or in small groups. Throughout my research, *hospitaleros* utilised inter-pilgrim musicking (defined as ‘tak[ing] part, in any capacity, in a musical performance,’ Small, 1998:9) to foster community among pilgrims and bridge relationships across difference while *en route* to Santiago de Compostela. I argue that these instances of musical togetherness were central to creating *communitas*, or ritualised heightened feelings of community (Turner, 1969), across international pilgrim formations, especially in light of the constant global-local interactions that typify the route today. Through an analysis of musical practices at two religious *albergues*, I propose that the global musical encounter uses particular cosmopolitan musical practices so that pilgrims can feel *communitas* and engage with other pilgrims with whom they would not have interacted otherwise, transforming inter-pilgrim relationships along the Camino.

Theoretical Frameworks

Ethnomusicologist Philip Bohlman has argued that music along European pilgrimages embodied ‘histories that [did] not neatly fit the models and categories of modern theory;’ as pilgrims sounded out their crossings, national boundaries became fluid and contested, and alternative Europes were created (1996b; 1996a:377-8). While the Camino is unique to the pilgrimages Bohlman researches in Central Europe, I argue to reinterpret the Camino as a series of sonic encounters across unsettled borders. This is what scholar Elena Biserna calls ‘soundborderscapes’ (2017), particularly as these fleeting interactions between international pilgrims and the locals rapidly circulate to reterritorialise and create translocal spaces through new relationships and sonic cultures (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992:9).

While pilgrims certainly expect these transient intercultural negotiations, the increase in mass media and technology in the twenty-first century has contributed to a rise in globalised musical practices along the Camino today, and the long history of people moving across Spain connects crossings and soundings. Even though

many Spaniards continue to walk to Santiago, over half of the pilgrims are international visitors. In 2019, the pilgrims came from 189 different countries, primarily hailing from Italy, Germany, the United States, Portugal, South Korea, and other European countries (Oficina del Peregrino, 2019:4-6). This globality, created through pilgrims’ active transnational crossings, has both broken down borders and depended upon hegemonic phenomena such as the English language and popular and religious music to enable fleeting global interactions that garner significance for the pilgrims. As the pilgrimage is highly individualised, most pilgrims I encountered did not walk in large groups, limiting many of these one-on-one global interactions to a few hours or a single day. Even groups that formed while walking often dramatically separated, merged with others, or reconnected weeks later. Contact with other nationalities and languages, while constant and transformative, was often short-lived, and interactions were similarly evanescent when music was involved.

One defining trait of the contemporary Camino that pilgrims emphasised to me was the ability to share in a common humanity along the route, ‘a breaking down of regional identity [that created] a community through shared values’ (2020, personal communication). As Philip Bohlman notes, anthropologists use the Turnerian theorisation of *communitas* to describe these feelings of commonality that occur during pilgrimage, even though each person experiences the events through their own backgrounds and understandings (Bohlman, 1996a:398; Turner, 1969). Community formations solidified and deepened over time as pilgrims endured physical suffering, laughed, or even underwent a dangerous experience together. While pilgrims certainly desired an idealised *communitas*, it occurred at varying levels and at different moments throughout the journey.

I theorise these idealised community formations that coalesced throughout the route through what scholars Bob W. White and Katherine In-Young Lee call ‘global encounters’ (Lee, 2018:5; White, 2012:81). White defines global encounters as

situations in which individuals from radically different traditions or worldviews come into contact and interact with one another based on limited information about one another’s values, resources, and intentions (White, 2012:6).

These meetings occur especially within the globalised world today, as movements between cultures have increased in frequency over

the past few decades. Pilgrims constantly found themselves encountering the Other, and they often went through the basic questions of nationality, job, and reasons for walking in order to form initial impressions.

From the perspective of ethnomusicology, these disparate traditions or worldviews can be sung into being, and Lee expands on White's definition to explore how processes of musical cross-cultural exchange can be asymmetrical, revealing localised, personal examples of globalisation in action (Lee, 2018:81-2). I want to further this theorisation to demonstrate how *communitas* was one sentiment that was achieved during these global music encounters on the Camino, even if it occurred at the cost of excluding some groups of pilgrims. As traditions or worldviews were sung into existence, they offered engagement across difference, where one pilgrim was heard by another, while at the same time asserting or re-perpetuating hegemonic musical practices.

Music Along the Camino

As a part of a religious practice over 1,000 years old, more than 300,000 pilgrims from around the world cross Spain each year to arrive at the Catedral de Santiago (St. James Cathedral) in Santiago de Compostela, the location where Catholic traditions purport that the remains of James the disciple rest (Oficina del Peregrino, 2019). This site in northwestern Spain was one of the most popular Christian shrines during the Middle Ages, when individuals would come to venerate the remains and receive plenary indulgences (Dunn & Davidson, 1996:xiii; Sumption, 1975:160). In recent decades, the Camino's multiple routes have regained popularity, simultaneously becoming more secularised as individuals walk for the physical challenge, as a way to see Spain and make friends from around the world, or in response to recent tragedy. In many ways the Camino has become the premier pilgrimage for upper- and middle-class individuals from the United States and Western Europe, while concurrently remaining a central pilgrimage to devout Catholics across social classes around the world (Sánchez y Sánchez & Hesp, 2016:x).

Musicological scholarship has addressed the music performed along the Camino in past centuries, particularly focusing on the music enacted at festivals during the Middle Ages (Dunn & Davidson, 1996). The *Codex Calixtinus*, a twelfth-century manuscript documenting information about the Camino, is particularly important because it contains liturgies and

melodies which pilgrims likely sang during rituals in Compostela (Corrigan, 1996:43; Feinberg, 1985:174; Medrano del Pozo, 2004). The *Cantigas de Santa María*, associated with King Alfonso X in Burgos during the thirteenth century, as well as liturgies and architecture in the Catedral de Santiago, also contain musical references to the pilgrimage, marking the route as a site of devotion and miracles (Grégorio, 2007; López-Calo, 2011; Scarborough, 1996; Villanueva, 2005). The multi-disciplinary approach towards studying pilgrimage, which began in the 1990s, further reveals how English-language scholars have addressed the Camino from a wide range of angles. This literature, in addition to the plethora of blogs, guidebooks, memoirs, and movies, has reinterpreted the Camino such that it has a defining role in the Western imagination of pilgrimage, though often portraying an idealised version of the journey.

Throughout my research, pilgrims musicked as active listeners to the music and sounds around them, both during walking and at periods of rest. These sounds were part of a broader sensorial soaking that created a highly corporeal, embodied experience for those who walked. The physical rhythms of walk, rest, and sleep, as well as the necessary attention to fatigue and injury, greatly impacted listening practices and decisions. Conversations with pilgrims throughout the route consistently demonstrated the significance of music during the day-to-day ritual of walking. They used music in specific ways that aided their physical and spiritual needs and, through the insertion of earbuds, reflected their individualised, culturally specific musical practices. Most pilgrims who listened to music, ranging from Rachmaninoff piano concertos to the Red Hot Chili Peppers, through their earbuds stated that it provided moments of solitude or relief from the searing pain that accompanied each step (2019, personal communication). Conversation or long periods of silence were the other preferred aural experiences, as several pilgrims told me they came to get away from the noise of normal life. For example, one pilgrim from London noted to me that she was walking to get away from all the noise at home and instead enter into quiet spaces; it was the sonic way to 'slow down' from the rapid pace of modern life and have space to process emotions (2019, personal communication).

While those walking primarily self-identified as pilgrims, the music throughout the Camino demonstrated how pilgrims became tourists to Spanish cultural and

musical practices that heightened the authenticity of the experience, as they ascribed varied levels of mis/understanding and significance to places along the way. Music in cathedrals, albergues, and museums engendered sentiments of the sacred by calling forth memories of an infrastructure historically constructed to support Catholic pilgrims and maintaining a desire to remember the route's religious roots and heritage. Religious festivals in various cities during the summer provided pilgrims the opportunity to walk past local cultural heritage performances and, at times, linger to listen. These moments greatly contrasted with the rest of the pilgrimage and resulted in two primary reactions, irritation and curiosity, which prompted pilgrims to either disengage from the local culture or explore further (2019, personal communication). When the pilgrims decided to engage as tourists with musical events, it was during moments of rest, such as during days off along the route or at the end in Santiago, where many stayed for several days after their pilgrimage to participate in the Feast of St. James celebrations.

Pilgrims became music-makers predominantly during instances when they were called upon to do so, especially at rituals in religious *albergues*. These moments will be explored further below, as they offered the most salient examples of global encounters creating *communitas*.

Methodology

The research findings in this paper result from ethnographic fieldwork conducted from June 19 to July 27, 2019. I completed the ethnography, which was a larger project to examine sonic productions across multiple social spaces of the pilgrimage, by physically walking the Camino Francés to Santiago, going through both small towns and well-known cities in northern Spain such as Pamplona, Burgos, and León. This route has the best developed hospitality infrastructure for walkers in regard to hostels, Masses and restaurants, and provides increased interactions with other pilgrims and opportunities to experience rituals designed for them. I began in St. Jean Pied de Port, a small French border town on the eastern side of the Pyrenees that international pilgrim narratives claim to be the 'official' starting point of the Camino Francés today. Daily patterns were rather simple, in that I walked with one or more people about twenty-five kilometres, settled into the next hostel, maybe attended Mass, and relaxed or explored the city with other pilgrims for the rest of the day.

My ethnographic methodologies followed in the footsteps of Elena Peña (2011) and her performative anthropological approaches to studying pilgrimage. Recognising that fieldwork itself is a performance, Peña uses the term 'co-performative witnessing' to explain her role as researcher. She imagines 'culture as a matrix of boundaries, borders, intersections, turning points, and thresholds,' the field site a complex, dynamic environment whose cultural boundaries shift as quickly as the people walking past (Peña, 2011:15). Because of the multi-sited nature of pilgrimage and my goal to understand the Camino from the perspective of other pilgrims, most of them also walking for the first time, co-performatively witnessing by physically walking the Camino with others was the best way for me to understand contemporary pilgrims' sonic experiences and contextualise them within the pilgrimage (Emerson *et al.*, 2011:3; Frey, 1996:12).

Primary interlocutors comprised a small cohort of about fifteen English and Spanish speaking pilgrims with whom I journeyed through the walk. This paper attends to events in which I partook with two of these primary interlocutors, Ángela, from Spain, and Sadhbh, from Ireland. I drew this research approach from anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod's 'ethnographies of the particular,' which critiques generalisable objectivity as a language of power and argues that 'actual circumstances' are 'crucial to the constitution of experience' (1991:152-3). The pilgrims' particular actions and discourses demonstrated how broader processes of religious tourism, Western conceptions of pilgrimage, and musicking, manifested themselves in individual lives. While I daily engaged with local Spaniards, making inquiries into musical and cultural practices, my focus was on the pilgrims.

Autoethnography was an additional primary methodology for my fieldwork, as becoming a pilgrim served as a point of entry into ethnographic inquiry. Recognising both the benefits and 'limitations of autoethnography' in ethnomusicological writing (Wong, 2019:10), I strive to, as anthropologist Brent Luvaas (2017:6) states, connect my situated, embodied experiences to 'larger social, cultural, and historical processes.' My acts of becoming unfolded simultaneously with the other pilgrims' becomings, as with each step and interaction our identities transformed (Luvaas, 2017:8). Other Camino scholars have frequently employed autoethnography for their research, as they demonstrate that knowing the pilgrimage through completing it is central to being able

to write about it (Feinberg, 1985:13). While I similarly generate knowledge through analysing my own actions and emotions, I connect these experiences and reactions to other pilgrims' perspectives in order to demonstrate the multiplicity of sonic interpretations and ways of pilgriming that can occur along the Camino.

Encountering Globalised Musics, Creating *Communitas*

Musical encounters contextualised within fleeting global-local interactions and pilgrimage rituals create a framework for how *hospitaleros* in parochial *albergues* invite pilgrims to perform music as a form of religious tourism to heighten spiritual experiences and instil ephemeral feelings of inter-pilgrim *communitas*. *Hospitaleros* sang to build community, selecting works they believed would be easy to learn or already known by pilgrims, and offered written lyrics. Facilitators reinforced the Camino's religious heritage through connecting these participatory musics directly to Catholic theologies. While an individual pilgrim did not experience exactly the same ritual twice, the *hospitaleros* repeated them so that hundreds could have experienced a similar event, made meaningful through specific aesthetic expectations and common tropes. Within the confines of the *albergue*, the global musical encounter articulated varying levels of sameness or difference to connect pilgrims within communal spaces, impacting their future inter-pilgrim social formations.

Two rituals in which I participated with my pilgrim cohort best demonstrated these ideas: Mass and a subsequent reflection time in the Hospital de Peregrinos San Juan Bautista in Grañón, a village between Logroño and Burgos, and a sing-along hosted by the 'singing nuns' at the Albergue Santa María in Carrión de los Condes, a small town between Burgos and León. The events will be analysed, with attention given to the particularities of the days that principal pilgrim interlocutors and I participated in the rituals.

Grañón

The *hospitaleros*' and priests' wishes for pilgrims to perform religiously significant music resonated at the Hospital de Peregrinos San Juan Bautista in Grañón, where my first walking partner, Ángela, and I stayed on June 28, 2019. Pilgrims in the *albergue* that night were all Catholic or spiritually seeking (besides myself), and they

were walking for a variety of reasons, including religious purposes, tourism, and for the physical challenge. Most did not speak English; while I had seen many on the trail, we had not interacted until then because of language and age differences. The *albergue*'s main room had a piano and guitar, which greatly excited me because it had been over a week since I had played any music. As I sat down to play the piano, the *hospitalera* from Argentina told me they sometimes ask pilgrims to sing at mass. Another pilgrim I had just met, a priest from Colombia, was overjoyed at this idea, and he shared with me that the Psalm for the day was Psalm 23. I actually knew one song called 'Psalm 23' from the Contemporary Christian Music genre, so I tuned up the guitar and began to play. The *hospitaleras* and priest immediately pulled out their phones and began to record, insisting that I sing at Mass that night in place of the Psalm reading, to which I obliged. This song, which I performed in English as a Protestant outsider to Mass, along with another contemporary worship song 'Calvario' ('Calvary'), played during the Eucharist, became musical moments that spiritually affected both the pilgrims and locals, who commented to me about how much the music impacted them, despite the fact that it was sonically unfamiliar. Based on the listeners' positive reactions, 'Psalm 23' and 'Calvario' met their aesthetic expectations to connect them together in ritual and encounter other cultures, despite the differences within their lived religious practices.

The evening spiritual ritual afterwards was designed for reflecting on the day and connecting to one another through prayer. Our reflection's sonic backdrop was Charles Gounod's arrangement of 'Ave Maria' for cello and piano, set to J.S. Bach's 'Invention in C Major.' After the period of reflection, we each responded with statements in our native language. Since together we represented nine different countries, I understood only a few of the reflections. For Ángela and me, it turned into a moment of reconciliation and forgiveness, as a difficult misunderstanding earlier in the day had caused frustration between us. Gounod's work, both simple and a sonic reinforcement of the Catholic origins of the pilgrimage, effectively brought Ángela and me into the repentant mindset needed to heal our relationship.

The song choices that night, including my own, were significant for several reasons. All of them related back to a generalised style of Christian ritual in order to create a spiritually fulfilling experience for the

pilgrims. Even though ‘Psalm 23’ and ‘Calvario’ are sung primarily in English-speaking Protestant churches, the lyrics directly reflected the Catholic Psalm of the day and the main themes of Eucharist. I brought my own background with Christian music into a Spanish Catholic space, imbuing the songs with alternative meanings influenced by the pilgrims and new contexts. They were pieces that individuals familiar with Western musical aesthetics would easily recognise or could learn with little to no effort. At the same time, the difference evoked in the pieces turned my performances into a form of religious tourism, through which pilgrims and local worshippers could encounter other Christian musical practices. While ‘Ave Maria’ evoked Catholic Marian veneration, it is today also a well-known solo work in Western culture, containing meaning beyond its religious contexts. Both locals’ and pilgrims’ compliments after I played at Mass demonstrated the songs’ overall aesthetic palatability, despite language barriers.

Carrión de los Condes

The following is an ethnographic account of my evening at the Albergue Santa María in Carrión de los Condes, on July 4, 2019:

While I did not spend the night at Albergue Santa María, the nuns were gracious enough to let Sadhbh, the university student from Dublin I had befriended that morning, and me join their sing-along time in the early evening. This event was one often mentioned in blogs and Facebook pages as a moving experience, when pilgrims perceived the world to come together through music (Born, 2016; John, 2014; Kelly, 2020). The four Spanish and German Augustinian nuns made this assertion as well, stating, ‘la música es un lenguaje universal’ (music is a universal language). About fifty pilgrims sat on metal folding chairs in a circle in the *albergue*’s back courtyard, and since Sadhbh and I arrived a little late, we sat by some tables along a wall.

The nuns handed out pages with song lyrics in English, Spanish, and French, and they instructed us in both Spanish and English in order to make the sing-along as accessible as possible to a range of nationalities. They led the first tune, ‘Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee,’ both with the words and what the *hospitaleras* called ‘everybody’s language,’ otherwise known as the vocable ‘la.’ After a few other songs, the nuns requested that people from various countries come to the centre and perform something that represented their culture.

The nuns convinced Myori, a pilgrim from Japan studying abroad in Spain who I had befriended in Grañón, and a friend of hers to perform, and they appeared nervous as they sang in unison an *a cappella* song they both knew. The other tunes were familiar to me, and I sat humming along as the young Mexican training to be a priest grabbed the guitar and sang ‘Cielito Lindo’ with his brother and sister-in-law, and a few Korean pilgrims hesitantly vocalised the folk song ‘Arirang.’ The nuns did not ask anyone from the United States or other countries in Europe to perform. Sadhbh was moved, and afterwards she told me we found Jesus better there than we would have at Mass. One song in particular that we sang together that night, ‘Ultreia,’ exemplified the *hospitaleras*’ desires to connect the event to the religious and historical elements of the pilgrimage. ‘Ultreia’ (‘onward’ or ‘upward’), although nominally based on a work found in the *Codex Calixtinus*, was originally written by the French pilgrim and professor of Spanish Jean-Claude Benazet in 1989 (Benazet & Rojas, 2019). While the event in Carrión de los Condes was the only time I personally sang the song, other pilgrims mentioned it to me, citing it as the ‘official anthem of the Camino,’ which they sang at other religious *albergues* in which I had not stayed. This single hymn draws international community formations together, represents a particular cultural heritage, and calls pilgrims to proclaim the Camino’s sacred origins through asking God for help. The French lyrics break down regional and national boundaries, offering an alternative history and geography of this part of Europe. Saving it for the end of the sing-along, this was the piece and musical apex that identified us as pilgrims and marked our unity on the journey, despite the differences that pilgrims had musically articulated just moments earlier.

At this global encounter in Carrión de los Condes, the nuns’ repertoire relied on assumptions of Western cosmopolitanism – that the pilgrims were of a particular cultural group and ‘epistemic community’ existing across national boundaries and socialised through globalised musical practices, abilities, and aesthetics. The sisters hoped to create a sense of *communitas*, a feeling experienced by Sadhbh that day as an encounter with Jesus (Harrison, 2012:506; Turino, 2003:61). In this way, assumptions of a shared cultural repertoire and aesthetic convergences induced *communitas* as a presumed spiritual experience, a moment that extended beyond other identity markers such as race, nationality, or even religion.

At the same time, this global encounter asked pilgrims to perform national difference in order to show that even though they came from a variety of cultural backgrounds and musical practices, they were still one and together on this pilgrimage, united in the goal of arriving to Santiago. Even though I was familiar with the songs ‘Arirang’ and ‘Cielito Lindo,’ other pilgrims told me that they did not know them but greatly enjoyed them. Borders first existed and were constructed through previously unheard yet aesthetically palatable melodies in order to articulate distinctions elided in the global pilgrim community; *communitas* was only achievable when difference was first sounded.

I additionally questioned the motivations behind which nationalities the nuns chose to highlight, as the pilgrims from the United States and Europe remained unmarked and were not asked to perform a piece, while those from East Asia and Mexico were asked to perform their difference by singing on their own. Was this a re-perpetuation of Otherness and the tourist gaze, an asymmetrical cross-cultural exchange based on the belief that Europeans and those from the United States would like to listen to music more exotic and unfamiliar than music from their own countries (Lee, 2018:81)? Was it simply an innocent oversight for that day only? Or did the nuns assume that there were too many Americans or Europeans to include all or to come to a consensus for a song to perform? Understood through the lens of the global encounter, it could have been a little bit of all three, as global encounters are power-laden and contain certain levels of misunderstanding, despite the best of attempts to perform a *communitas* that stripped individuals of their identity markers (White, 2012:6-7).

Conclusion

I have focused on the particularities of two musical encounters in parochial *albergues* along the Camino Francés in order to demonstrate how pilgrims encounter one another along the route. Global musical encounters in *albergues* shape the social space for pilgrims who would not have otherwise met, as they propose a cosmopolitan *communitas* that contrasts greatly with other moments along the pilgrimage. They form the Camino so that pilgrims interact more across international lines than just the walking and unstructured time in municipal or private *albergues* allowed. For most of the trip, groups are otherwise heavily demarcated by age, language, or nationality, and initial overheard conversations determine long-term social interactions. Further research could aid in understanding the range of impacts these sonic experiences have on international pilgrims and how *albergues* can best organise these rituals in the future. Other research methods, including surveys and in-depth interviews with pilgrims and *hospitaleros*, could provide additional data about the motivations to participate in musical encounters and their spiritual significance.

This study further reveals that musical encounters along the Camino Francés appeal to pilgrims’ desires to engage with other cultures and communal activities. When autoethnographically reflecting on my own pilgrimage, the individuals with whom I sang at Carrión de los Condes and Grañón were ones with whom I continued to talk throughout the walk, even if they were not part of my core group of pilgrims and despite the significant language barriers among us. Some daily influenced my pilgriming, such as a group of three French-speaking men in their sixties who I had met in Grañón, and others reappeared at the end of the pilgrimage, for instance when I saw Myori and Ángela in Santiago and Finisterre after weeks of separation. Single occurrences of musicking can construct relationships across difference, even if they at times exclude as much as they connect. As global musical encounters create *communitas* incongruent with other instances on the pilgrimage, they aid in community formations across linguistic and national barriers and heighten pilgrims’ spiritual experiences across various religious backgrounds, reconstructing the Camino through sound.

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