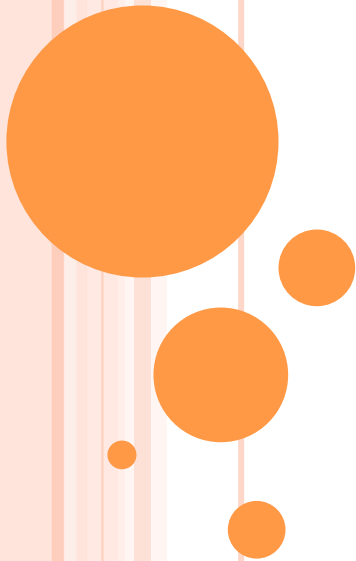


Ponta Delgada
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Pilgrims' Road



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Summary

- Lent Pilgrimages;
- Future Pilgrims' Road;
- Achieved Goals;
- Goals to achieve.



- **Abstract:** The island of San Miguel in the Azores is renowned in terms of religious belief. The best known of these is the Feast of Senhor Santo Cristo dos Milagres (Ecce Homo) which culminates with a procession on the Sunday before the Ascension.

Although internationally less known, the Lenten pilgrimages are an example of spirituality of men of all ages and social status. These men get together in groups of pilgrims and walk around the island for eight days. Along the way they recite the rosary, chant prayers and stop in churches and chapels.

The focus of this paper is on the pilgrim's itinerary. Aspects at the level of regional planning and land management will be emphasized with recommendations on: more security for the groups of pilgrims; the enjoyment of new tracks among the local population; increase the tourists' possibilities to interact with the natural and built heritage; increase of tourists' number in the hotels and rural houses.





- **Preparing for the pilgrimage**

Before leaving, it was necessary to acquire the essential articles of pilgrimage: shawl, scarf, staff, cevadeira (cloth bag/backpack beneath the shawl) and rosaries.

The elements that make up the outfit for this became over time mystical/religious symbols of the Passion of Christ. The shawl symbolizes the garment the Romans placed on the shoulders of Christ; the staff, the wand/cane; the scarf, the crown of thorns and the cevadeira, the cross of Christ.

In addition to the acquired elements, the brothers (as the pilgrims are called) must also forsake items that are not part of the pilgrimage. Brothers are not allowed to hold mobile phones, cameras or sunglasses.

In order to keep the traditions pilgrims do not shave during the eight days (it is said that in the past shaving blades were prohibited to prevent bloody fights).



- **Structure of the pilgrimage**

Each group of pilgrims has a formal structure with individuals undertaking specific tasks, and a strict code of practice directing their activities.

The most notable individual in each pilgrim group is the *master*, who directs the march. He chairs the processional acts, leads the pilgrim's in singing their prayers and cares for the fulfillment of the prayers requested by the local population.



The *foreman* assists the master and performs his duties in his absence.

The *prosecutor of the souls* receives the prayers sought by the islanders and requests the Master to have them prayed when he finds it more convenient.



The *reminder of the souls* requests and announces special prayers when, for example, passing by a cemetery. On those occasions pilgrims pray for the souls of those who are buried there.

The *guides* choose the paths, ensuring that the group visits the churches and chapels in which there is a statue of the Virgin; they also set the pace in order that the group will meet their schedule.

The youngest member of the pilgrims group is the *cross bearer*; he holds the crucifix and walks between the two Guides in the middle of the two *wings* or columns of men.



The groups of pilgrims are entirely made up of males and there is no minimum age for becoming a pilgrim (brother), the only condition is that the participant has to have made their first communion. For many children, going on pilgrimage is to enter the world of the elder ones, i.e., the transition to adolescence or adulthood, depending on the boy's age. On the other hand, no longer having the energy to go on pilgrimage is felt by many as the start of the third age.

In the pilgrimage around the island the brothers venerate the saints, the Virgin and worship God, especially in the temples in which there is an image of Our Lady.

While the pilgrims walk they constantly pray and sing. The intensity of prayer and chant is increased upon entering any town or village. The people, who come to a door or window, listen in silence touched by the pilgrims' prayers and chants. Many make the sign of the cross when the pilgrims' group walks by and tourists take photographs, usually from afar, so as not to disturb the religiosity of the moment.



During the week of pilgrimage, as evidenced by Coutinho et al. (2006), p.53 “The brothers support one another in the moments of greatest stress, provide a positive energy to each other ... when one brother suffers, all suffer with him.

The sacrifice unifies them and makes them sympathetic ... One pilgrim is the incarnation and the mirror of all, makes brotherhood with all representing the whole community and the parish.”



Meals are either offered by the pilgrims' families or as the result of popular initiatives, are served in parochial centers, in local associations or in picnic parks.

For many pilgrims and for the families that receive them the overnight stay is the highlight of a day's hike which may have taken 15 or 16 hours. Night time represents a well-deserved rest, a reinvigorating bath, a comforting supper in the stomach and the promise of a few hours of sleep.

“Whoever receives these pilgrims of peace does not hide a huge pleasure in the hospitality, in its noblest sense. They share their home – and in most cases, offering the pilgrims their own bedroom – with those men who trudge hundreds of kilometers carrying on their shoulders the sins of the community.” [Coutinho et al., (2006), p.85]



○ **Lessons learned – routes used**

Although the conceptualization of the Lent pilgrimages is important as the basis of the present study, let us not forget its main objective which is regional planning in terms of land management in order to create conditions for:

- more security for the groups of pilgrims
- the enjoyment of new tracks among the local population
- increase the tourists' to contact with the natural and built heritage
- increase of tourists' number in the hotels and rural houses.

In the observation made during the eight days of pilgrimage, walking around the island, often along by the sea, stopping at isolated shrines or visiting the churches in the towns, it was found that various types of paths and roads are used, namely:

urban streets

- a) pedestrian areas or wide sidewalks
- b) narrow sidewalks or no sidewalks

paved roads

- a) rural roads with little traffic
- b) main roads with moderate to intense traffic

unpaved ways

- a) rural paths
- b) forest paths.



Regarding the present study, it is noted that participant observation allowed a clear experience of the physical realities of *the way* and allowed the observer an insight into the pilgrims (brothers) experience of walking on the different types of ways.







CARTOGRAPHY



DESCRIPTION

Percurso	Nat./Urb.	Actualidade	Perigo	Solução
Igreja das Clarissas (Calhetas)/Igreja N. S.ª Rosário (Rabo de Peixe)	Urbano/ Semi-urbano/ Natureza	Passeios estreitos e Canada	Médio/ Reduzido	Alargar um dos passeios existentes para 1,5 a 2 metros e repensar o sentido do tráfego. Não alterar o tipo de pavimento na Canada e monitorizar o seu estado de conservação. Criar Caminho junto à falésia após negociar com o proprietário da casa rosa.
Igreja das Clarissas (Calhetas)/Igreja N. S.ª Rosário (Rabo de Peixe)	Semi-urbano	Passeios estreitos ou inexistentes	Médio/ Elevado	Após implementar a proposta anterior deixa de ser necessário utilizar este troço do Caminho (ER 1).
Igreja das Clarissas (Calhetas)/Igreja N. S.ª Rosário (Rabo de Peixe)	Urbano	Casas destruídas com imagem degradante e baixas condições de higiene. Rua de Rabo de Peixe com passeios relativamente largos; após este, estreitos ou inexistentes	Médio/ Reduzido	Limpar a zona de casas destruídas/ em ruínas e criar caminho ajardinado. Alargar um dos passeios existentes para 1,5 a 2 metros. Alargar um dos passeios existentes para 1,5 a 2 metros e repensar o sentido do tráfego.















Thanks for
your
attention.

