
2024 Progress Report

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Camino Ignaciano
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Camiño Ignaciano

I. INTRODUCTION

We could say that 2024 was a year of transition. The Pilgrim's Office experienced less activity than in 2022 and 2023, dropping from 15 pilgrimages in 2022 to 9 in 2024. The number of pilgrims registered in our active database, which collects testimonials from pilgrims arriving in Manresa, indicates fewer than 400 pilgrims in 2024. We are at a standstill, with no noteworthy developments. This could perhaps be a result of the breakdown in the collaboration agreement between the regional governments and the respective tourism departments of La Rioja, the Basque Country, Aragon, Navarre, and Catalonia. Certainly, no promotional activity has been undertaken since the agreement ended in early 2023, not even at the local level. Without public sector support, the private sector also lacks incentives, jeopardizing the consolidation of the Ignatian Way as a future pilgrimage destination. The Ignatian Way still lacks a governance structure to develop a pilgrimage product, similar to the Jacobean Council, and to promote it. What revived and strengthened the Camino de Santiago in the 1980s and 90s? Undoubtedly, it was the collaboration between public and private initiatives and the constant promotion of the Jacobean Way, which fostered a massive influx of pilgrims.

The call to pilgrims issued in early 2023 by the Society of Jesus for the upcoming Jubilee Year of 2029 for the Ignatian Way has led to the creation of the Association of Municipalities of the Ignatian Way (AMCI). This local public administration partnership was created to jointly promote family and local tourism along the Ignatian route, leveraging the Camino Ignaciano brand, which we have been working to consolidate from our office since 2011. It is an excellent initiative, considering the needs for local tourism development in towns and villages that currently lack appeal, but which, with adequate funding and coordination, could benefit from the tourism industry generated by an attraction such as the "Jacobean" or "Camino Ignaciano" brand, for example. We are delighted with this initiative, although we know it doesn't align with the pilgrimage project we promote and wish to consolidate. However, every little helps, and the important thing is that the Camino Ignaciano is being discussed and doesn't disappear from the collective consciousness of Spanish society.

Studying the "success story of the Camino de Santiago," we know that we first need a critical mass of pilgrims annually to consolidate the Camino. We haven't reached that number, and that's why we would like public administration to move in that direction. Without pilgrims, there is no epic story, no narrative, no point in maintaining a route. We must begin by attracting pilgrims, and once the route is well-trodden and established, then other ventures can begin. But first, we must achieve a critical mass of pilgrims. Attracting them, offering affordable accommodation, food, transportation, and everything that has been developed along the Camino de Santiago over the past 45 years. We should focus on specific sections, perhaps not the entire Camino, which is already 700 km and may be too long, but rather on specific sections that could be gradually expanded.

The pilgrim figures we offer in this progress report are limited to the data we collected at the Pilgrim's Office, with the assistance of the Manresa Tourist Office, which provides initial pilgrim welcome. As in previous years, we can only present the pilgrims who complete the written form and provide their information. We remain uncertain about all those who have arrived in Manresa, at the end of the Ignatian Way, with a pilgrim's spirit, but who do not fill out the form. Perhaps we are talking about 200 or 300 more pilgrims to add to the statistics, but how can we know for sure? Of particular note is the group of Eastern Europeans, mostly from Lithuania, linked to Jesuit institutions, who have made a clear difference this year. These Eastern European pilgrims do

not walk the entire route, but rather travel mostly by bus, walking only a little. These are the pilgrims we refer to as using alternative means to complete their pilgrimage.

As the graphs show, the Ignatian Way is predominantly international, and its presence in Spanish society is minimal. It is true that young people and teenagers who come in organized groups from Jesuit schools in Spain do not fill out the forms or collect their pilgrim certificates, so the number of Spanish national pilgrims in our statistics is likely lower than expected. The number of pilgrims would have to be much higher, but we have no written record of it.

A highlight of 2024 is the expansion of the Ignatian Way in the Mediterranean: at this time, the Ignatian Way includes not only the stages in Spain, but also those that lead us to Italy, following Ignatius of Loyola in his final years, reaching Rome on foot as Ignatius did, and the place where the Society of Jesus was founded, as well as the place where Saint Ignatius of Loyola rests. All the stages are described and consolidated on our website, so that pilgrims can now reach this goal as well. There are plans to offer future pilgrims additional stages that will complete the Ignatian Way project in Europe, including Ignatius's years of study in France, linking Paris to the entire Ignatian route.

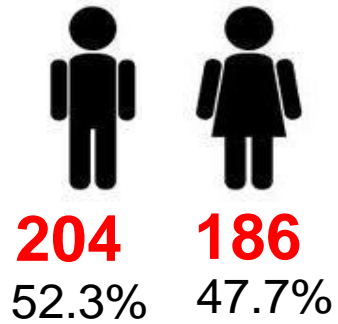
And now we can only hope that one day the public authorities will begin to believe in the future of the Ignatian Way and provide the resources to raise awareness, so that the services so necessary for pilgrims can be developed. 2029 is the next milestone to achieve successfully. Pilgrims come every year, even if only a few: how will we welcome them in 2029 along the more than 700 km of the Ignatian Way?

P. Josep Lluís Iriberry, sj. – Director de la Obra Apostólica Camino Ignaciano (OACI) – Oficina del Peregrino del Camino Ignaciano.

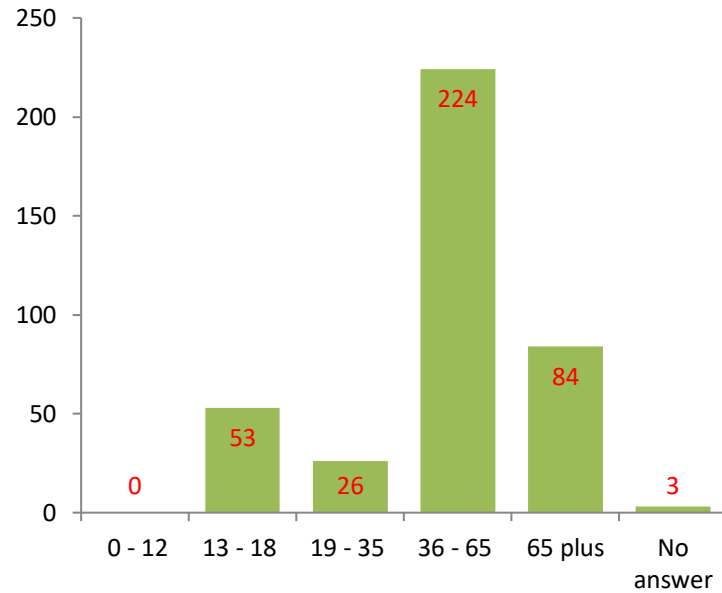
II. GENERAL DATA ON PILGRIMAGES BETWEEN JANUARY AND DECEMBER 2024

Number of pilgrims registered in the pilgrim's office database

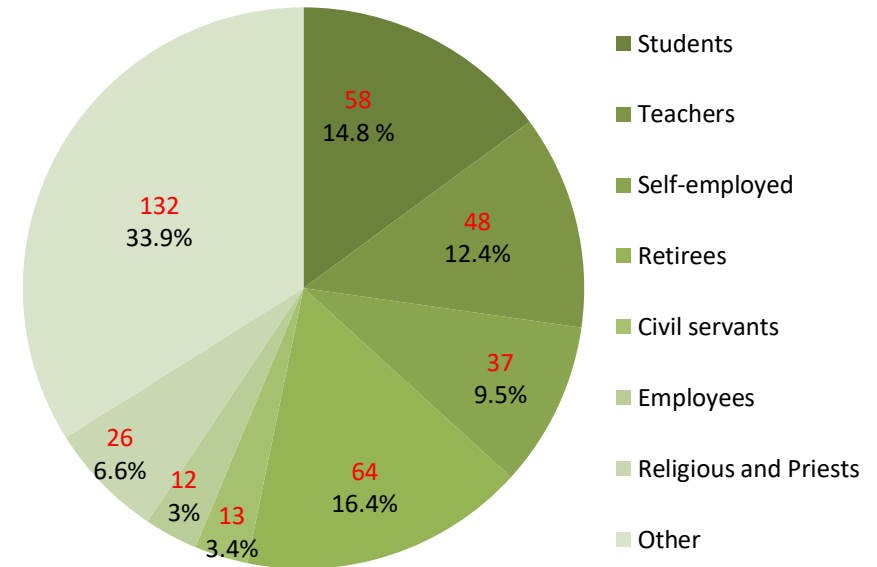
By gender



By age group

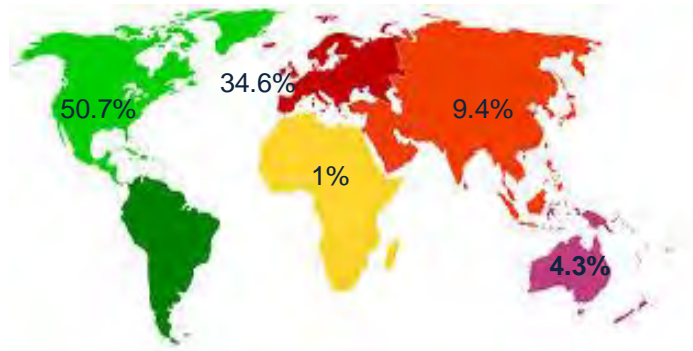


By profession



Origin of the pilgrims

America	Europe	Asia	Oceanian	Africa
200	133	37	17	3



Spain

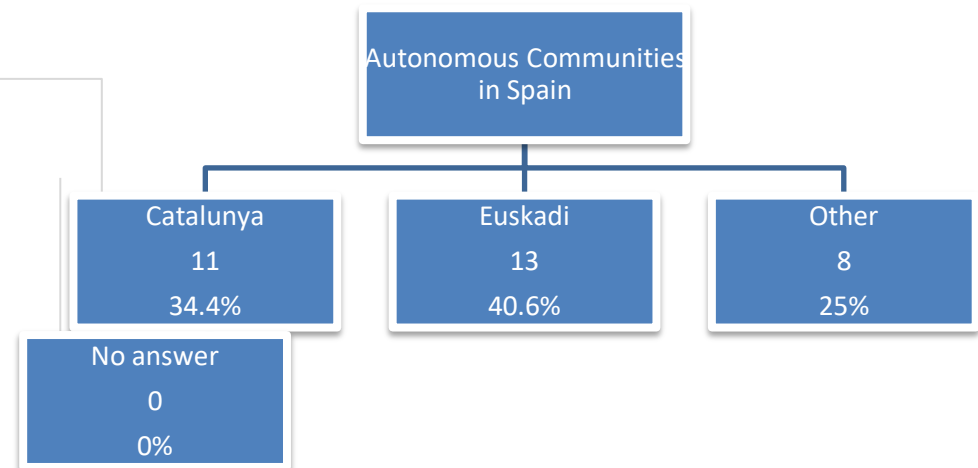
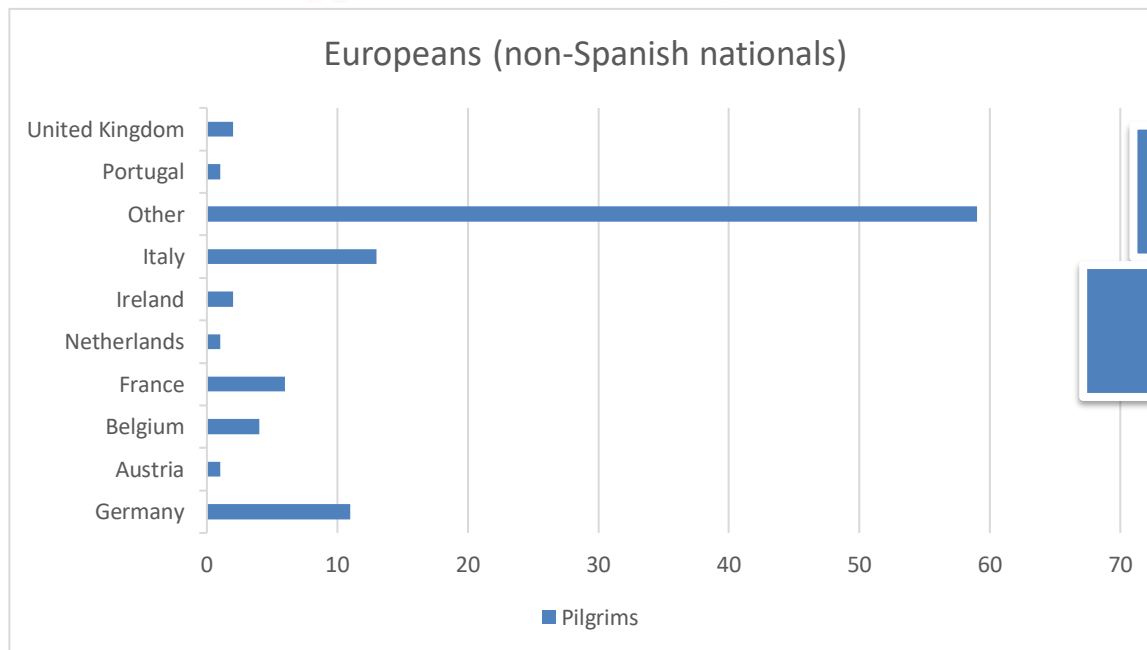
32

8.2%

Rest of the World

358

91.8%



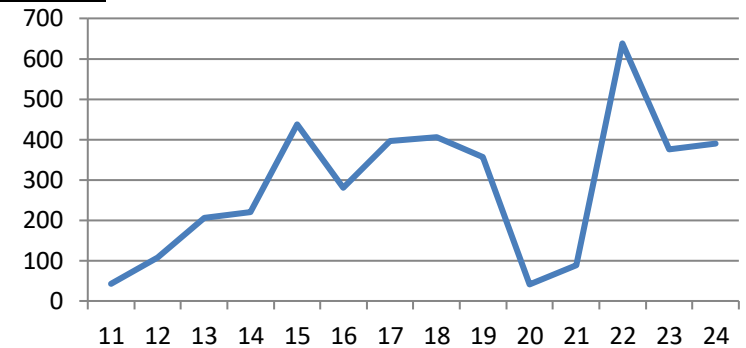
Comparison of pilgrimages

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
42	108	206	221	443	280	396	405	356	41	89	638	375	390

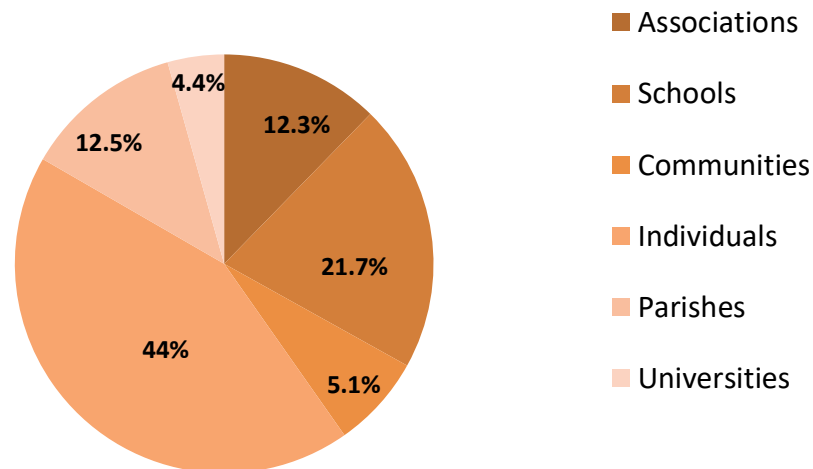
Total accumulated in our office: 3.990

According to data from the Manresa Tourist Office, in just 2022 = 2.079 pilgrims

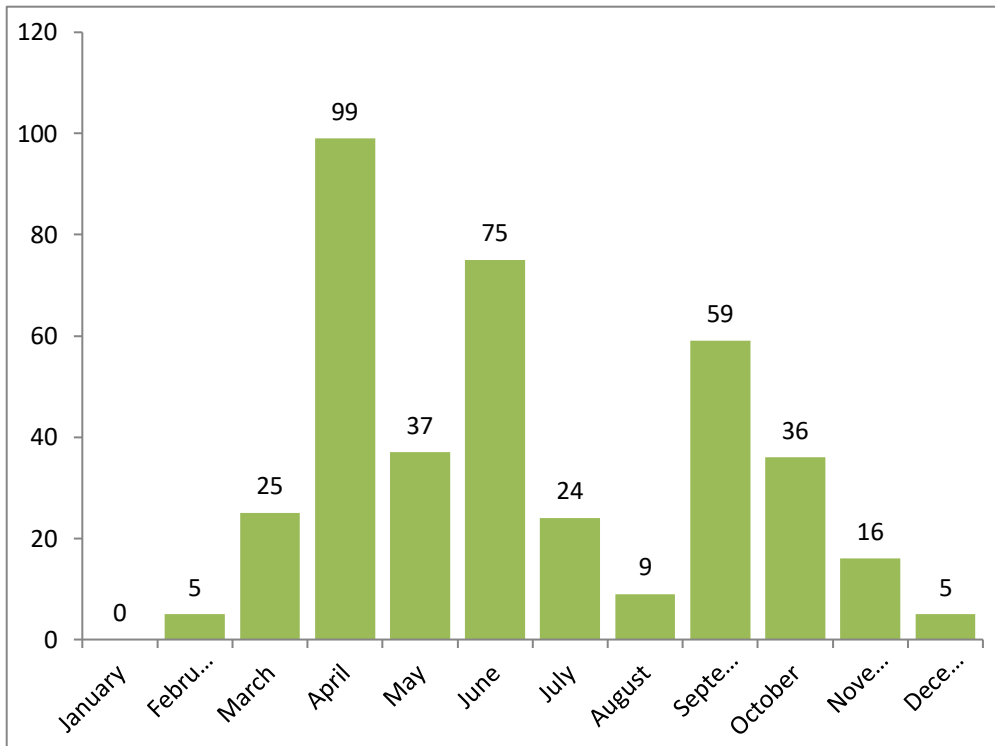
Evolution of pilgrimages by year



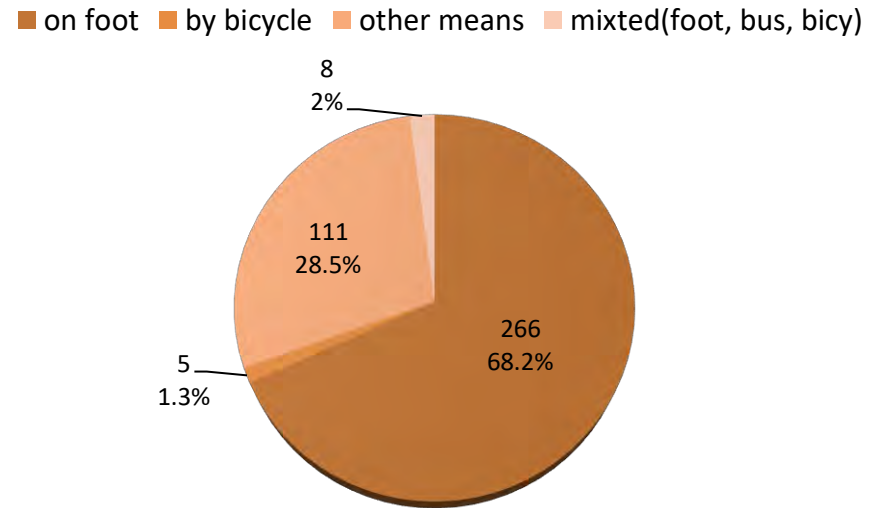
In 2024 the institution that presents the pilgrim



Final month of the pilgrimage



How to make the pilgrimage



Reason for the pilgrimage

