

**Study regarding the Potential for
Pilgrimage on the Way of St. James in
Winter
(Route between Świnoujście and Rostock)**

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Table of Contents

List of figures	4
1. Background of the study	5
2. Introduction.....	5
3. Methodology	6
4. Climatic frame conditions in the winter season.....	6
5. Locomotive options along the path in winter	11
6. The German route section from Świnoujście to Rostock in detail.....	12
6.1 From Świnoujście to Usedom.....	13
6.2 From Usedom to Pinnow.....	14
6.3 From Pinnow to Hohendorf	15
6.4 From Hohendorf to Kemnitzerhagen	16
6.5 From Kemnitzerhagen to Greifswald	17
6.6 From Greifswald to Hohenwieden	19
6.7 From Hohenwieden to Stremlow	21
6.8 From Stremlow to Kölzow	22
6.9 From Kölzow to Rostock.....	23
7. Conclusions.....	24
8. Recommendations	26
9. Final words	27
10. Bibliography	28

List of figures

Fig. 1 Climate diagram of Usedom (Source: AmbiWeb GmbH n.d.: n.pag.)	6
Fig. 2 Climatological data sheet of Greifswald (Source: WETTERDIENST.DE - WETTER- UND KLIMABERATUNG 2014a: n.pag.).....	7
Fig. 3 Climatological data sheet of Rostock (Source: WETTERDIENST.DE - WETTER- UND KLIMABERATUNG 2014b: n.pag.)	8
Fig. 4 Wind velocities in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Source: GEO n.d.: n.pag.)	9
Fig. 5 Length of days in December 2013 in Świnoujście (Source: EXNATURE n.d.: n.pag.)	10
Fig. 6 Length of days in December 2013 in Greifswald (Source: EXNATURE n.d.: n.pag.)	10
Fig. 7 Length of days in December 2013 in Rostock (Source: EXNATURE n.d.: n.pag.).....	11
Fig. 8 Signpost in Hanshagen (Source: Amrehn/Knuth).....	16
Fig. 9 Route between Hanshagen and Kemnitzerhagen (Source: Amrehn/Knuth)	17
Fig. 10 Passage from Kemnitzerhagen to Kemnitz (Source: Amrehn/Knuth)	18
Fig. 11 Signposts Way of St. James and Hanseatenweg (Source: Amrehn/Knuth)	18
Fig. 12 Signpost in Wieck (Source: Amrehn/Knuth)	19
Fig. 13 Destination Board at Greifswald Harbour (Source: Amrehn/Knuth).....	20
Fig. 14 Direction Board in Grimmen (Source: Amrehn/Knuth)	21

1. Background of the study

As a part of the South Baltic Program the project RECRreate is working on the enhancement of the part of the historical Way of St. James from Lithuania along the Polish coast to Rostock in Germany.

As a subtask the project tries to evaluate the route's potentials of pilgrimage in winter. Each partner of the project is responsible for their route section.

The statements and evaluations in this study refer to the route section between Świnoujście and Rostock under the responsibility of the Institute for Ecological and Social Geography at the University of Greifswald.

2. Introduction

The Way of St. James is a more than thousand years old pilgrimage route leading to the shrine of the apostel St. James the Great at the Western border of Europe in Galicia. Since the Middle Ages religious and non-religious people from all over Europe went down these routes to Santiago de Compostela.

The routes of these pilgrims and wanderers had an influence on Europe, though they faded from prominence after French Revolution. It wasn't until 1987 that these routes were declared to the first European Cultural Route by the European Council for Culture as an act to sustain the European community. The first reactivation of route sections of the Way of St. James particularly took place in Spain.

The Way of St. James is a unique phenomenon amongst all hiking trails around the world as not only faithful people wander along the declared routes. Through pilgrimage people also can get away from their daily routine and sorrows to regain energy. Because of that pilgrimage can be seen as a post-modern phenomenon with a historical background.

One of the routes leads through the Southern part of the Baltic Area, from Lithuania across Kaliningrad and Gdansk in Poland to Szczecin and Rostock.

This study refers to pilgrimage in the winter season, the touristic season is limited to the summer season. Due to the unfavourable climate, a touristic winter season does not exist in this area.

3. Methodology

In this study the winter season is defined as the period between October and March. The route section between Świnoujście and Rostock is defined by the route described in the pilgrimage guidebook published by the project RECRreate.

The main part of the route section was examined and evaluated by fieldwork in February 2014, interviews with local experts and stakeholders complement the evaluations.

Based on the information in the pilgrimage guidebook further information was compiled about possible mobility alternatives, alternative infrastructure as well as interesting alternative activities in case of bad weather. These facts are listed in the respective description of each route section.

The following description of the climatic frame conditions is the result of desktop research.

4. Climatic frame conditions in the winter season

General climatic frame conditions can best be displayed through a standardized climate diagram. In figure 1 the climate of the island Usedom is displayed:

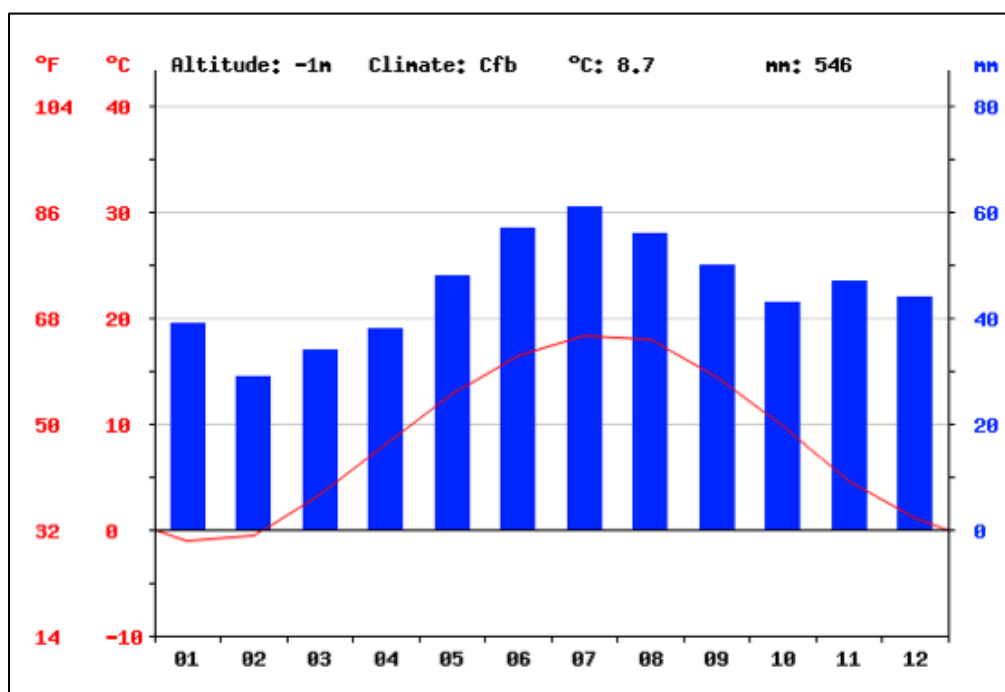


Fig. 1 Climate diagram of Usedom (Source: AmbiWeb GmbH n.d.: n.pag.)

The climate of Usedom is moderate but warm. Through the whole year there is precipitation. Even in February, the driest month of the year, there still is an average precipitation up to 29 mm, in July precipitation peaks at 61 mm. In general most precipitation is during the summer months but during the winter the climate is not dry either as the average amount of precipitation is 546 mm. Especially in November and December with about 45 mm there is a high amount of precipitation.

The annual average temperature is 8,7°C as can be seen in figure 2. July is the warmest month throughout the year with an average temperature of 18,2°C, with -1,1°C the average temperature is lowest in January. During the winter months the temperature is mostly sub-zero or around the freezing point.

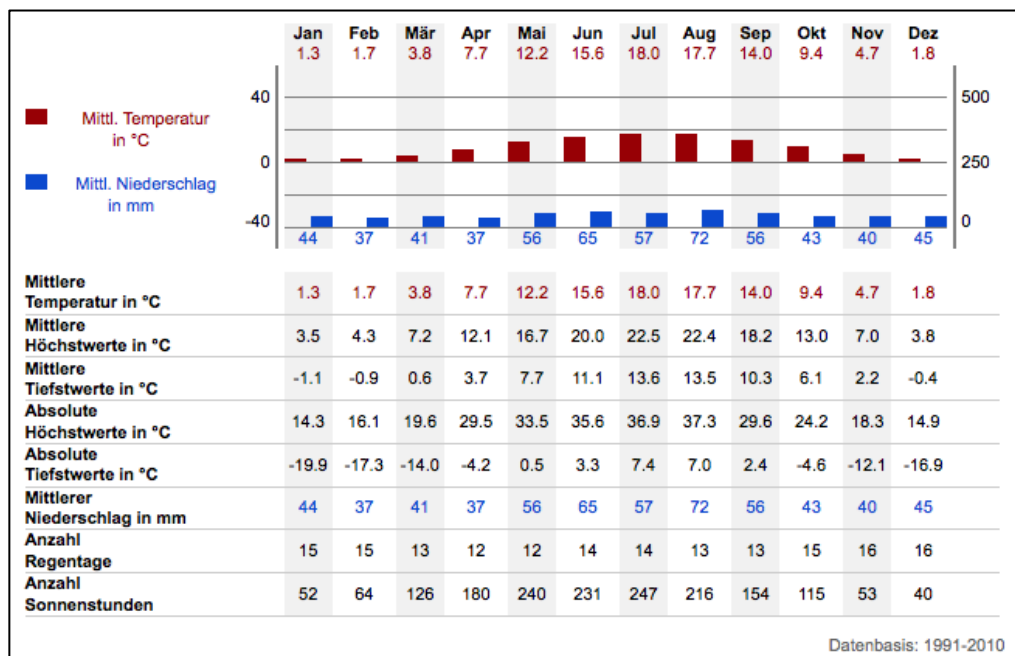


Fig. 2 Climatological data sheet of Greifswald (Source: WETTERDIENST.DE - WETTER-UND KLIMABERATUNG 2014a: n.pag.)

In Greifswald, not far west from Usedom, the average precipitation is also very high. With 72 mm August is the month with the most average precipitation, but even in the winter months there is an average amount of precipitation between 40 and 45 mm which also influences the amount of rainy days.

With up to 16 both November and December are the months with the most rainy days. The average temperature peaks at 18°C in July and is lowest at 1,3°C in January. With 247 July is also the month with the highest amount of sunny hours, during the winter months the sun only shines between 40 and 64 hours per month.

Figure 3 illustrates the climatological data of Rostock which is also the most western location of the route section. With an average precipitation of 73 mm August is the rainiest month there, although November and January have the most rain days (16). From November to March the average precipitation rate is between 40 and 49 mm.

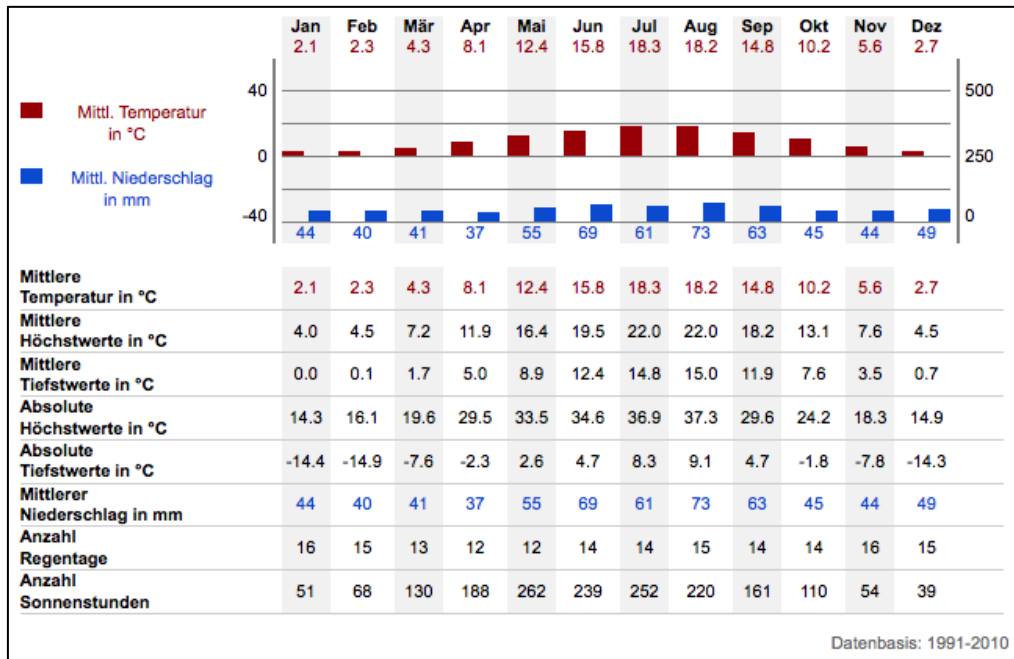


Fig. 3 Climatological data sheet of Rostock (Source: WETTERDIENST.DE - WETTER- UND KLIMABERATUNG 2014b: n.pag.)

The average temperature has its peak at July with 18.3°C and in August with 18.2°C, the lowest average temperature is in January with 2.1°C and February with 2.3°C. The amount of sunshine hours is the highest in May with about 262, from November to February there are only between 39 and 68 sunshine hours per month. In general, temperatures in Rostock seem to be milder than on Usedom are in Greifswald.

In the coastal areas it is always airy, a truism that also fits for the region of Western Pomerania. Mainly the wind goes eastwards because of the outer tropic west wind drift. This west wind drift not only causes strong winds but also contrary weather.

Figure 4 shows that the average wind velocity is higher in winter than in summer, which can be seen especially in November, January and February. A difference of less than one meter per second at first seems to be marginal in the monthly average but one has to notice that these are monthly averaged data and that strong storms can occur in winter. Through westerly breezes intensive low-pressure areas can move from the North Atlantic to the mainland of Europe and cause extreme wind velocity.

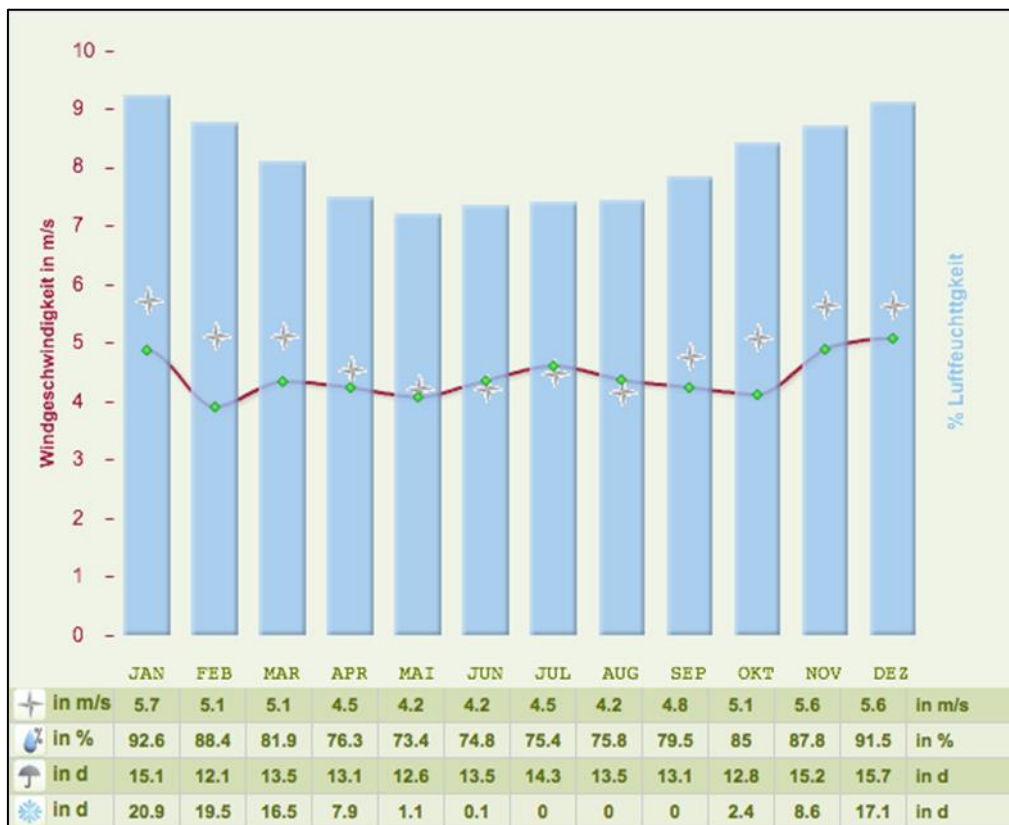


Fig. 4 Wind velocities in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Source: GEO n.d.: n.pag.)

Occasionally the wind is coming from the East. These westward winds bring dry and very cold aerals. Very low sub-zero temperature is as exhausting as the previously mentioned winter storms (GEBHARDT et al. 2007: 235f).

Another significant factor for pilgrimage in winter is the length of day which is defined as the time between sunrise and sunset. This factor is not a climatic determining factor but a consequence of the geographical location on the Earth's surface (about latitude 53° to 54° north). The weather situation can also have a significant impact on the length of day.

The monthly sunshine hours illustrated in figures 2 and 3 show that the length of day in winter is considerably shorter than in summer which definitely also has negative effects on the possibilities of pilgrimage. For certain route sections there is considerably less time to walk them.

By looking at the daily data instead of the monthly averaged data the information gets more practical in matters of hiking:

The shortest days of the year between the 21st and 27th of December only have a length of day for about 7.5 hours. This means that, for example, a route section with 30 km length can barely be walked within the time of the day. If a pilgrim walks with about 3

to 4 km/h it would at least take him 7.5 hours without a stop, but rest during such a long walk is indispensable.

Figures 5,6 and 7 illustrate the precise length of day in three parts of the investigation area: Świnoujście as the easternmost location (figure 5), Greifswald in the middle (figure 6) and Rostock as the western end of the route section (figure 6).

Sonnenauf- und Sonnenuntergang - December 2013						
Sa	So	Mo	Di	Mi	Do	Fr
	1. A: 07:55 U: 15:45 S: 07:50	2. A: 07:57 U: 15:45 S: 07:47	3. A: 07:58 U: 15:44 S: 07:45	4. A: 08:00 U: 15:43 S: 07:43	5. A: 08:01 U: 15:43 S: 07:41	6. A: 08:03 U: 15:42 S: 07:39
7. A: 08:04 U: 15:42 S: 07:37	8. A: 08:05 U: 15:41 S: 07:36	9. A: 08:07 U: 15:41 S: 07:34	10. A: 08:08 U: 15:41 S: 07:32	11. A: 08:09 U: 15:41 S: 07:31	12. A: 08:10 U: 15:41 S: 07:30	13. A: 08:11 U: 15:40 S: 07:29
14. A: 08:12 U: 15:40 S: 07:28	15. A: 08:13 U: 15:41 S: 07:27	16. A: 08:14 U: 15:41 S: 07:26	17. A: 08:15 U: 15:41 S: 07:25	18. A: 08:16 U: 15:41 S: 07:25	19. A: 08:17 U: 15:41 S: 07:24	20. A: 08:18 U: 15:42 S: 07:24
21. A: 08:18 U: 15:42 S: 07:24	22. A: 08:19 U: 15:43 S: 07:23	23. A: 08:19 U: 15:43 S: 07:23	24. A: 08:20 U: 15:44 S: 07:24	25. A: 08:20 U: 15:45 S: 07:24	26. A: 08:20 U: 15:45 S: 07:24	27. A: 08:21 U: 15:46 S: 07:25
28. A: 08:21 U: 15:47 S: 07:25	29. A: 08:21 U: 15:48 S: 07:26	30. A: 08:21 U: 15:49 S: 07:27	31. A: 08:21 U: 15:50 S: 07:28			





Erklärung: A: Sonnenaufgang, U: Sonnenuntergang, S: Sonnenlicht in Stunden
 = Vollmond,  = letztes Viertel,  = Neumond,  = erstes Viertel

Fig. 5 Length of days in December 2013 in Świnoujście (Source: EXNATURE n.d.: n.pag.)

Sonnenauf- und Sonnenuntergang - December 2013						
Sa	So	Mo	Di	Mi	Do	Fr
	1. A: 08:00 U: 15:48 S: 07:48	2. A: 08:01 U: 15:47 S: 07:45	3. A: 08:03 U: 15:46 S: 07:43	4. A: 08:04 U: 15:46 S: 07:41	5. A: 08:06 U: 15:45 S: 07:39	6. A: 08:07 U: 15:45 S: 07:37
7. A: 08:09 U: 15:44 S: 07:35	8. A: 08:10 U: 15:44 S: 07:34	9. A: 08:11 U: 15:44 S: 07:32	10. A: 08:12 U: 15:43 S: 07:30	11. A: 08:14 U: 15:43 S: 07:29	12. A: 08:15 U: 15:43 S: 07:28	13. A: 08:16 U: 15:43 S: 07:27
14. A: 08:17 U: 15:43 S: 07:25	15. A: 08:18 U: 15:43 S: 07:25	16. A: 08:19 U: 15:43 S: 07:24	17. A: 08:20 U: 15:43 S: 07:23	18. A: 08:21 U: 15:43 S: 07:22	19. A: 08:21 U: 15:44 S: 07:22	20. A: 08:22 U: 15:44 S: 07:22
21. A: 08:23 U: 15:45 S: 07:21	22. A: 08:23 U: 15:45 S: 07:21	23. A: 08:24 U: 15:46 S: 07:21	24. A: 08:24 U: 15:46 S: 07:22	25. A: 08:25 U: 15:47 S: 07:22	26. A: 08:25 U: 15:48 S: 07:22	27. A: 08:25 U: 15:48 S: 07:23
28. A: 08:25 U: 15:49 S: 07:23	29. A: 08:26 U: 15:50 S: 07:24	30. A: 08:26 U: 15:51 S: 07:25	31. A: 08:26 U: 15:53 S: 07:26			





Erklärung: A: Sonnenaufgang, U: Sonnenuntergang, S: Sonnenlicht in Stunden
 = Vollmond,  = letztes Viertel,  = Neumond,  = erstes Viertel

Fig. 6 Length of days in December 2013 in Greifswald (Source: EXNATURE n.d.: n.pag.)

Sonnenauf- und Sonnenuntergang - December 2013						
Sa	So	Mo	Di	Mi	Do	Fr
	1. A: 08:05 U: 15:53 S: 07:48	2. A: 08:06 U: 15:52 S: 07:45	3. A: 08:08 U: 15:52 S: 07:43	4. A: 08:09 U: 15:51 S: 07:41	5. A: 08:11 U: 15:50 S: 07:39	6. A: 08:12 U: 15:50 S: 07:37
7. A: 08:14 U: 15:49 S: 07:35	8. A: 08:15 U: 15:49 S: 07:34	9. A: 08:16 U: 15:49 S: 07:32	10. A: 08:18 U: 15:48 S: 07:30	11. A: 08:19 U: 15:48 S: 07:29	12. A: 08:20 U: 15:48 S: 07:28	13. A: 08:21 U: 15:48 S: 07:27
14. A: 08:22 U: 15:48 S: 07:26	15. A: 08:23 U: 15:48 S: 07:25	16. A: 08:24 U: 15:48 S: 07:24	17. A: 08:25 U: 15:48 S: 07:23	18. A: 08:26 U: 15:49 S: 07:22	19. A: 08:26 U: 15:49 S: 07:22	20. A: 08:27 U: 15:49 S: 07:22
21. A: 08:28 U: 15:50 S: 07:21	22. A: 08:28 U: 15:50 S: 07:21	23. A: 08:29 U: 15:51 S: 07:21	24. A: 08:29 U: 15:51 S: 07:22	25. A: 08:30 U: 15:52 S: 07:22	26. A: 08:30 U: 15:53 S: 07:22	27. A: 08:30 U: 15:54 S: 07:23
28. A: 08:31 U: 15:55 S: 07:23	29. A: 08:31 U: 15:55 S: 07:24	30. A: 08:31 U: 15:56 S: 07:25	31. A: 08:31 U: 15:58 S: 07:26			





Erklärung: A: Sonnenaufgang, U: Sonnenuntergang, S: Sonnenlicht in Stunden
 = Vollmond,  = letztes Viertel,  = Neumond,  = erstes Viertel

Fig. 7 Length of days in December 2013 in Rostock (Source: EXNATURE n.d.: n.pag.)

The conclusion to the climatic frame conditions:

In this route section of the Way of St. James winter is cold with oftentimes sub-zero temperatures and a lot of rain, also strong winds can occur on short term.

These weather conditions not only have to be considered by the pilgrims in the planning of their equipment but also the precipitation can lead to adverse conditions on some route sections. Furthermore the short length of day definitely has to be considered in the planning of the daily route.

One must also keep in mind that snowfall can only be predicted on short term (AMBIWEB GMBH n. d.: n. pag.).

The short length of day is a very limiting factor for pilgrimage. If the very few hours of daylight are furthermore reduced by bad weather conditions like heavy rain clouds there is not enough time left to walk the intended daily route sections.

5. Locomotive options along the path in winter

Pilgrims traditionally make the path by walking. A few of the pilgrims also ride a small segment at the end of the Jakobsweg on a horse. Nowadays people use various means of travel along the pilgrim paths. Cycling can be seen as a device to get along faster,

anyway the cyclists mostly stay on the predetermined routes. The same can be said for the use of skis.

The change to motorised vehicles is a different case. Both public transport and individual car- and bike travel use different route sections along the path. This mean of transport mainly is used by tourists to avoid certain route sections or to get along faster. This group of pilgrimage tourists is not bound to a certain mean of transport.

Because this analysis deals with a route section of the Way of St. James and not with the pilgrims as such all means of transport are considered here.

Cross country skiing is not relevant for this route section mainly because there is no guaranty for snow during the winter season in this region. Snowfall is limited to a very small period and does not occur every year. In case of heavy snowfall pilgrims are likely to not proceed on their path because of bad weather.

The option of riding particular route sections on a horse is not given for the winter season. There are indeed several horse farms in this region specialized on tourism, but it is not possible to rent the horses for a longer route as they have to be returned to the farms.

Basically there are options to ride certain route sections on a bike because snow storms only occur rarely and on short-term. A bigger problem seems to be the fact that it is very rainy during the winter season and that it may be very complicated to ride along unmade roads by bike.

The use of skateboards seems like an amusing idea but it is no option due to the not continuously maintained trails along the path.

In case of the possibility to use busses of public transport this option will be considered in the following particular daily route sections.

6. The German route section from Świnoujście to Rostock in detail

The 206.7 km long path of the Via Baltica between Świnoujście and Rostock consists of 9 pilgrimage route sections which will be described in particular in this chapter. The main subject will be the pilgrimage during the winter month between November and March. As mentioned before pilgrimage during the off-season has to be regarded differently to pilgrimage during the summer months due to the strongly differing weather conditions. It is of interest if the paths can be passed on bad weather conditions and if other means of transportation can be used to pass the paths.

This report also discusses alternative means of travel in case the pilgrimage by foot is not possible anymore. Furthermore, options of leisure time activities along the route sections will be outlined because bad weather might keep a certain amount of hikers

from pilgrimage who don't want to spend time on certain locations without doing anything.

The 9 route sections are:

- Świnoujście – Usedom (29,2 km)
- Usedom – Pinnow (17,6 km)
- Pinnow – Hohendorf (24 km)
- Hohendorf – Kemnitzerhagen (20 km)
- Kemnitzerhagen – Greifswald (13,3 km)
- Greifswald – Hohenwieden (29,8 km)
- Hohenwieden – Stremlow (15,8 km)
- Stremlow – Kölzow (25,8 km)
- Kölzow – Rostock (35,7 km)

These 9 route sections contain several stations between their starting and arrival points. It is noticeable that there are great differences between the lengths of the sections, but there is no need to stick to the starting and arrival points but rather the possibility to walk a greater section by dividing it into smaller sections. Due to worse path conditions caused by bad weather the walking speed can be reduced so that longer sections will take more time to pass them. Furthermore the short length of days is significant for the choice of route sections.

6.1 From Świnoujście to Usedom

- Distance: 29.2 km
- Gastronomy alongside of this section offers catering and shelter from bad weather in Zirchow, Dargen, Stolpe and Usedom

The landscape of this comparatively long route section is characterized by the great natural diversity of Usedom Island and offers both in winter and summer special attributes on the Stettiner Haff.

The weather conditions in winter are characterized by oceanic influences as mentioned in chapter 4. The precipitations are spread relatively equably, the temperature is rarely sub-zero at this time of year, only in January and February the temperature can occasionally be influenced to sub-zero by continental effects from the east, but due to this continental influence there is almost no precipitation at this time.

It is questionable if the pilgrimage path is well traversable in winter. On one hand the paths are hard to cross in case of mild temperature and high precipitation, on the other hand it is not healthy to walk the path in case of cold temperature and high wind

velocity due to continental influences. This route section is indeed passable by bicycle, but bad conditions of the path with possible sleekness are no good conditions for a bike tour.

Sights and places to stay during good and bad weather:

- There are several churches along the path that can be visited. The village Zirchow is the oldest one on Usedom island. Its main attraction is St. Jacobi church which was built in gothic style in the 13th century and still has mural paintings from the Middle Ages inside.
- In the town of Usedom the Marienkirche (Church of Mary) is the arrival point of this route section. It was built in the 15th century and is the centerpiece of this town.
- In case of bad weather one can visit the Technik- und Zweiradmuseum (technology and two-wheeler museum) in Dargen where motorcycles and vehicles made in GDR are exhibited.
- Alternative options of locomotion:
- If hiking really is not possible anymore due to bad weather there are bus connections from each Świnoujście and Usedom. In Świnoujście there is also a train connection.

6.2 From Usedom to Pinnow

- Distance: 17.6 km
- No accommodation alongside of the path
- Gastronomy in Karnin

During this route section one leaves Usedom island and reaches mainland in the duchy of Pomerania-Wolgast. The most important stopover is Karnin, five more villages will be passed along the path. The first half of the path is an easy way along the river Peene, afterwards the route leads along the Bundesstraße 110 (A-road 110). The weather conditions are mostly influenced by oceanic influences and infrequently continental.

Alternative options of locomotion:

- Because the first half of the route section leads along quiet and easy paths it is possible to ride this section on a horse, but the horses have to be returned to the place where they were rented. This kind of locomotion only makes sense if one wants to explore particular places and should especially in winter only be used by experienced horsemen.
- It is also questionable if the earth roads along the Peene are appropriate for bike tours

- If one wants to skip parts of the route section it is only possible between Usedom and Pinnow because the rest of the route section does not offer a service for public transport.

Attractions:

This route section mainly is characterized by natural environment so there are very few sights that are not dependent on good weather, mostly there are churches that can be visited in case of bad weather. Other interesting sites are the remains of an old lift bridge in Karnin and the Peene bridge that connects Usedom island with the mainland. In Mönchow there also is a gothic church from the 15th century that can be visited, but it is not open every day. At the end of this route section one reaches Pinnow where an old village church marks the arrival point of this route section.

6.3 From Pinnow to Hohendorf

- Distance: 24km
- No facilities for food and beverage
- No facilities for overnight stays

During this stage the pilgrims leave the small town of Pinnow turning North East towards Lüssow. The final destination for the day will be Hohendorf which is North West of Lüssow. During their journey the pilgrims will be passing five stops, the most important of which is Lüssow as its size and sights make it an impressive spot. The path the pilgrims use, takes them along stunning nature with no traffic. Between the first two parts they will walk 8,5 km.

Lüssow, situated directly next to the river Peene has much to offer and invites its visitors to stay for a while. The townscape is characterized by its medieval architecture and in the heart of the town there is another Gothic church, that, if opened, can offer shelter from bad weather. During good weather the remaining parts of the city wall are worth a visit as well.

The next part of their journey takes the pilgrims 15.5 km further. This part is generally rather long and during the winter months not necessarily achievable during one day within daylight. There are small villages on the way but they do not offer accommodation to pilgrims. The final stop for the day is Hohendorf, where they will find accommodation and that again has an impressive gothic church.

Alternative means of transportation:

- Between Pinnow, Lüssow and Hohendorf there is a **bus connection**, which gives the opportunity to skip one or another section of the way, which is especially useful during bad weather periods.

- **Cycling or riding on horseback** are rather problematic, because this section of the journey mostly leads through nature. The paths through the forests and fields are in mostly bad shape and should they choose one of the means above are therefore rather a danger to the pilgrim than improve his speed.

6.4 From Hohendorf to Kemnitzerhagen

- Distance: 20km
- Restaurant in Wrangelsburg; no facilities for overnight stays

The starting point of this passage is Hohendorf, followed by Lühmannsdorf, Wrangelsburg, Hanshagen and Kemnitzerhagen where it terminates. The first part of this section runs along the edge of the forest until we cross it to find Lühmannsdorf on its other side. This first stop is a small ribbon-built-village which was founded to accommodate the forestry workers



Fig. 8 Signpost in Hanshagen (Source: Amrehn/Knuth)

then. Continuing their journey, the pilgrims have to cross the federal highway B111 where there is a lot of traffic. People must be careful as crossing for pedestrians is not too easy. The next stop, Wrangelsburg is home to a castle of the 14th century which had to be rebuild several times already due to wars and fires. Nowadays it is surrounded by an English landscape garden and shows neo-Gothic characteristics. There are no more sights in this village but an inn invites the pilgrims to stay and relax for a bit.

After having gained new strength in the inn the next section of their journey leads the pilgrims to Hanshagen. As can be seen in figure 8, within the village the Way of St. James is signposted quite well. Following the yellow shells on blue ground the pilgrims cannot miss their way.

Hanshagen is a rather large village that was founded in the mediaeval times. In its centre there is a Gothic church which is a highlight for many pilgrims. However, it is not always open to the public. Another sight is a water mill in the village which can easily be found following the signposts. Leaving Hanshagen the pilgrims follow a field path leading them to Kemnitzerhagen. On their way the pilgrims will be passing a paddock and the way they are walking on is also designated for horse riding. However, in order

for the pilgrims to use horses, it is necessary to establish facilities where they can give back the horses and therefore, cooperation between several farms would be useful.

Besides the above mentioned there is not much to see between Hanshagen and Kemnitzerhagen, except for two benches (see figure 9). If it is raining much during the winter months the earthy way can get very muddy and slippery, which makes it rather difficult for the pilgrims to use it, no matter if on foot, by bike or by horse. At least in the area there is cell reception, which guarantees the possibility to call for help in case of an emergency.



Fig. 9 Route between Hanshagen and Kemnitzerhagen (Source: Amrehn/Knuth)

6.5 From Kemnitzerhagen to Greifswald

- Distance: 13,3 km
- Restaurant in Wrangelsburg
- Overnight stay facilities in Kemnitzerhagen

The fifth passage of the examined route starts in Kemnitzerhagen, runs through Kemnitz, Greifswald-Eldena as well as Greifswald-Wieck and terminates in the Hanseatic City of Greifswald.

Kemnitzerhagen is a small and modest village that the pilgrims cross quickly. Nevertheless there are only a few signposts to show the way and the ones existing are often found in rather hidden places. One is placed at the signboard for the town exit but a signpost for the Hanseatenwanderweg right above the one for the pilgrims is likely to lead to confusion (see figure 11).



Fig. 10 Passage from Kemnitzerhagen to Kemnitz
(Source: Amrehn/Knuth)



Fig. 11 Signposts Way of St. James and
Hanseatenweg (Source: Amrehn/Knuth)

Crossing the bridge in Kemnitzerhagen, a sign at a tree on the right side indicates the way to accommodation facilities at the Kurowski farm. This shelter is also mentioned in the guide. The farm is located off the road and gives an idyllic impression. Besides it accommodates guests throughout the entire winter. It is a private accommodation and its owners live on the farm as well, which means that someone can be reached at all times. This is true for almost all privately managed accommodations but between the owners there are no agreements and nobody knows anything about the situation of the other businesses. Figure 10 shows the route along the road from Kemnitzerhagen to Kemnitz. As this section lacks a pedestrian way, the pilgrims are forced to walk on the street, which can be quite dangerous due to traffic. Especially during the winter months this is a disadvantage, because pilgrims walking there cannot be seen in the dark. In Kemnitz the way is signposted better than before. In the Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche (Holy Cross Church) can catch their breath and relax a bit, before they continue on their journey. This section is generally suited for walking and cycling.

After Kemnitz the pilgrims reach Greifswald-Eldena. This place is a district of Greifswald and worth seeing. Following, the way continues to the river Ryck and to Greifswald-Wieck. Here several signposts for the Way of St. James can be found (figure



Fig. 12 Signpost in Wieck (Source: Amrehn/Knuth)

12). In the map of the district the way is also included and it is therefore useful for orientation.

Attractions:

In Eldena pilgrims have the opportunity to visit the ruins of a **Cistercian Monastery**. This medieval monastery is regarded as the founding spot of Greifswald. It was destroyed during the Thirty Years' War and never rebuilt. Nowadays the ruin is a place to go for people from all over the world and especially painters and photographers.

Wieck, a former fishing village, is now a district of Greifswald. It is idyllically located at the Bay of Greifswald (Greifswalder Bodden). The greatest point of interest in this district is a bascule bridge that is mainly used by pedestrians and rarely by cars as well.

Several times a day it will be tilted up in order to let boats and (sailing) ships pass. Along the pier the pilgrims will find several cafes and restaurants, most of which serve fish, where the pilgrims can rest and relax before continuing on their journey.

6.6 From Greifswald to Hohenwieden

- Distance: 13,3 km

Along the river Ryck the pilgrims reach Greifswald. This town is an important stop on their journey that has several sights to offer. The entire passage from Greifswald to Hohenwieden is 29,8 km long and includes four stop-overs.

Next to the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt

University, one of the oldest universities in Europe, Greifswald has to offer three imposing churches. The Cathedral of St. Nikolai, the Church of St. James and the Church of Mary all differ in style but are all worth a visit. They

also offer shelter from bad weather. The

most impressive is St. Nikolai, whose tower shapes the townscape. The other two churches, though a bit smaller than the cathedral are also very interesting. There are many additional things to see and do in Greifswald. When the weather is bad pilgrims could also visit the Pomeranian State Museum (Pommersches Landesmuseum) or the town hall. In Greifswald the Way of St. James is signposted quite well. Many street signs show the way and the streets are paved, which makes walking much easier.

Next to the above mentioned and for pilgrims most relevant sights, Greifswald has much more to offer such as an indoor swimmingpool, many shops and restaurants as well as a cinema, a good option, when the weather is bad, which is often the case in winter.

Another important aspect are medical treatment facilities. Villages, if at all, often only have a general practitioner, but in Greifswald pilgrims will find a broad range of doctors that can treat them, should something have happened on the way. Besides, infrastructure in regard to public transportation is quite developed. There is a trainstation and a bus terminal in Greifswald from which short- as well as long-distance travel can be undertaken.

The following section covers many kilometers to Grimmen and Hohenwieden. These places are located close to each other and both offer accommodation as well as restaurants and public transportation. The section to Grimmen runs along remote hiking trails away from major roads.

The journey from Greifswald to Grimmen or Hohenwieden is nearly 30 km which is hardly manageable in one day, considering the short time with daylight. At least in



Fig. 13 Destination Board at Greifswald Harbour (Source: Amrehn/Knuth)

Horst there is a restaurant that offers shelter from bad weather and gives pilgrims the opportunity to regain their strengths.

Grimmen is another interesting stop on the Way of St. James in Pomerania. The medieval structure of the town is well-preserved with the Church of St. Mary in its centre. Next to the church there are other sights in Grimmen as well as Restaurants. In the town the Way of St. James is signposted rather well (as in Greifswald) and is also easily recognisable during winter. Moreover the streets and pathways are paved which makes walking comfortable even in the winter months.



Fig. 14 Direction Board in Grimmen (Source: Amrehn/Knuth)

6.7 From Hohenwieden to Stremlow

- Distance: 15,8 km

In the following section the pilgrims will hike 15,8 km and pass six villages on the way: Hohenwieden, Grellenberg, Bassin, Kirch-Baggendorf, Zarrentin and Stremlow. On this route there are hardly any historical sights, however the natural landscape with broad fields and forests as well as small rivers is one of the most beautiful parts of the Way of St. James in the German part of Pomerania. As daylight in winter is rather limited and usually only available between 09.00 am and 04.00 pm it is questionable, if pilgrimage at this time of year is worth it at all. The different sections are definitely not all manageable in this short timeframe. Adding to this are the many rainy days between November and March. As was shown in figure 3, temperatures only seldom fall beneath zero degrees, which means that most of what is coming down is rain rather than snow. Moreover it is quite stormy at that time of year which results in pilgrims not hiking at that time.

This section can be covered by foot, by bike and by horse, however, due to the volatile weather conditions none of them are ideal. There are no alternative options to spend the

time in bad weather. Apart from a few restaurants in Hohenwieden, Kirch-Baggendorf and Stremlow, where pilgrims can find shelter from the rain and wind, there are no sights that could be visited. Besides, accommodation is only available at the starting and ending point of this 15,8 km long section. In Kirch-Baggendorf there is at least one protestant church that the pilgrims can visit. In case the route is not accessible, there is public transportation between Hohenwieden and Stremlow.

6.8 From Stremlow to Kőlzow

- Distance: 25,8 km

This 25,8 km long section starts in Stremlow and then leads through the villages Tribsees, Langsdorf, Bad Sőlze and Dettmannsdorf and terminates in Kőlzow. Tribsees was the former border town between Pomerania and Mecklenburg and after passing through the pilgrims will leave Pomerania and enter Mecklenburg. Through farmlands and villages the route slowly leads to Rostock. Many roads in this section are unpaved and tend to get muddy quickly in winter, which means that the pilgrims will progress only slowly. This will be a problem, because it is likely that with those conditions they will not be able to cover the 25,8 km in daylight. To avoid walking in the dark, pilgrims can take public transportation between Stremlow and Kőlzow.

The most interesting stops on this route are Tribsees, Bad Sőlze and Kőlzow. Tribsees is a quiet and picturesque village with a few remains from medieval times. As a border town it had to protect the western border of Pomerania and because of its strategically beneficial location between Greifswald and Rostock it was considered an important trade road for many years. Unfortunately it was destroyed during the Thirty Years' War which put an end to its importance. Still standing is St. Thomas Church, which is the most precious building in Tribsees. Inside pilgrims can admire the main altar, several wood carvings and the neo-Gothic organ from 1831. Other sights worth seeing are the potatoemuseum and the mill- and stone gate.

Bad Sőlze, the next interesting stop on the journey is a spa town in which salt springs were found already in the 13. Century. Many historic buildings are abandoned or neglected, because of destruction during wars and the general neglect of the place itself. However, the church in its red brick gothic style will be a great experience.

Kőlzow, the final stop for the day has quite a bit to offer. Its stone church impresses with its amazing interior fittings, the most remarkable of which are several wall paintings. In addition there is a castle in the village, that was restored a few years back and nowadays functions as a cultural centre. Accommodation can be found in the vicarage. It is not certain however, if heated rooms are rented in winter.

6.9 From Kölzow to Rostock

- Distance: 35,7 km

The last section of this route starts in Kölzow and passes Stubbendorf, Barkvieren, Stormstorf, Sanitz, Steinfeld, Fienstorf, Pastof and Neuendorf before it terminates in the Hanseatic Town of Rostock. Rostock is also the last stop of the Way of St. James in Pomerania. From the beginning to this town the pilgrims covered more than 1100 km. This last section is 35,7 km long, a distance that is hardly possible in one day, especially with bad weather conditions and a limited time of daylight. There is public transportation between the starting and the ending point of this day's trip though, that the pilgrims can use if they do not feel comfortable with such a long walk.

The first interesting stop is Sanitz. It has an impressive stone church from 1290 with an uncommonly stocky tower. In the church several styles are represented from Classicism to Baroque. The other important stop is obviously Rostock. This town is famous for its harbour, shipbuilding industry and beer breweries. Besides, one of the oldest universities of Northern Europe was founded there. For pilgrims the Church of St. Mary and St. Peter's Church are noteworthy. The church of St. Mary was built in the red brick Gothic style and is well preserved. In addition it provides the richest features from the early Middle Ages. The altar, the pulpit and the baptismal font are the highlights of this church. St. Peter's Church is the oldest and highest church in Rostock. Its tower reaches a height of 117 meters. This church is also built in red brick Gothic, an architectural style, typical for this region. From Rostock pilgrims have the opportunity to continue their journey by bus or by train.

7. Conclusions

In general, pilgrimage between Świnoujście and Rostock in the winter months is not much different from pilgrimage in summer, as snow is rather an exception on this part of the Way of St. James.

Nevertheless several aspects need to be taken into consideration for pilgrimages between October and March. However, not all of them are negative ones but can rather be considered as an advantage.

Regarding the **climatic circumstances** it needs to be registered that the weather in the winter months is rather inconsistent but mostly influenced by maritime climate. This results in somewhat mild and wet days. While late autumn can be fairly windy, January and February are usually unpleasantly cold. At times continental influences from Eastern Europe can lead to low temperatures and dry air, which is rather uncomfortable for pilgrimage. In Vorpommern it rarely snows, but when it does, it can easily lead to disorientation especially on remote farm roads, which can be dangerous. Therefore it can be concluded, that the climatic circumstances in the winter months are not suitable for long hikes.

In general the Way of St. James in Pommern is well constructed, but in good weather conditions easily manageable. However in the winter months those good weather conditions are hardly met. The **unpaved sections** on the passage can be **muddy, icy and slippery** and are therefore not walkable without any risk.

For sportive people who are looking for a challenge the Way of St. James can also be covered by **bicycle**. Under normal circumstances this would result in faster progress of the way. However, muddy and slippery roads can be an additional risk for the pilgrims. Nevertheless, this can also be seen as an advantage when considering it as a personal challenge. This gives the winter season a special experiential value.

Regarding other means of transportation, there is **public transportation** along a few daily stages.

One important difference to the situation in summer are the comparatively short days. Late sunrise and early sunset shorten the time in which the pilgrims could walk in daylight considerably. This means, that a distance of 30 km a day would need to be completed in approximately 8 hours. This is only possible for trained hikers, especially considering the condition of the roads that are often unpaved and if it was raining also muddy. However, the daily sections are planned in a way that there are no accommodation possibilities between the starting and the ending point. Hiking in the dark is less attractive and can also be risky, as orientation can be quite problematic.

During the summer months the different accommodation options along the way are all open. In winter however, several accommodations are closed and the ones that are open do not necessarily have warm water and heating. Many establishments are run by private owners, which are mostly there to host the pilgrims. Nevertheless, they might have to tend to other commitments that require them to shut their business down for some time. Therefore it is always necessary to check beforehand if the accommodation is available. As some of the offered accommodations are without warm water and/or heating they are not useful for the winter months, which complicates several passages even more.

Should the weather be too bad for the pilgrims to continue their journey, it causes problems as well, because the accommodations are originally organized in a way that they are only used for one night and more nights are only accepted in case of sickness. Weather conditions collide with the traditions of pilgrimage. This is also a problem regarding alternative sights in some towns, because visiting those disagrees with the principals of Pilgrimage which solely focus on churches and the way itself.

Another disadvantage especially in rural areas are medical treatment possibilities. In towns this will not be a problem, as a range of doctors can usually be found there but in villages this is seldom the case. One doctor in the rural areas might not be enough and should an accident happen to a pilgrim they will not be able to get far. Although the mobile phone network on the evaluated section is quite good, this cannot be taken for granted. Unpaved and badly visible roads are a high risk for injuries and using a bicycle as means of transportation is even more dangerous.

A positive aspect for Pilgrimage in the winter months is, that at this time of year the Way of St. James is not used by that many people, which gives a greater opportunity for finding oneself, because external influences through other pilgrims are reduced to a minimum. Experiencing the nature that is interesting and appealing on all 206 km of the way makes Pilgrimage even more worth it.

8. Recommendations

How can the negative aspects be dealt with? Several recommendations will be given as to how to improve the journey for pilgrims and how to increase safety for them.

In regard to the arrangement, promotion and management of the Way of St. James between Świnoujście and Rostock the following aspects should be taken into account:

- First of all it would be useful **to reduce the length of each section** to ensure the journey can be completed in daylight, also by those pilgrims who are not that fast. 30 km with bad road conditions in one day is rather a long way. Shortening this to 15 to 20 km would be much more suitable for one day.
- Consequently the **number of accommodations** on the way needs to be adjusted
- In addition, it needs to be taken into account that the accommodations need to be available in the winter months and that next to water supply need to have heating. Furthermore those accommodations should offer a longer stay free of charge, if weather conditions prevent the pilgrims to continue on their journey.
- Besides it would be useful to work in cooperation with **public transportation**, in order to give pilgrims the possibility to shorten or skip long passages in the winter months.
- The signposts for the Way of St. James should not only be clearly visible but also lighted, so they can be seen also in the dark. This is especially important in the winter months, as the hours with daylight are short. This is already implemented quite well in the towns and villages but in between villages and especially on unpaved roads there is usually no street lightning. If pilgrims get into the situation of still being on the way in the dark, for instance because they assumed the time they would need for this section wrong, they will have difficulty finding their way.
- In “emergencies” (change of weather, darkness, accident) it should be possible to call an emergency number with one’s mobile.
- It would also be an advantage to establish medical care on the way, especially for pilgrims. One aspect improving the situation would already be, to have signposts directing the way to doctors in the villages.
- One possibility to unite many of the above mentioned recommendations would be an “App for Pilgrims” for smartphones. This app would show the way based on GPS data, which would prevent the pilgrims from getting lost. Besides this app would show accommodation facilities and shelters on the way, to provide protection from bad weather. As not all accommodations are available during the winter months, this can be shown in the app as well. To do so, the providers

would enter their status in the app and the pilgrims could see right away which one is open. In addition a weather forecast should be integrated in the app. This is especially useful for the winter months to show the pilgrims if another section can be done or if the pilgrims should wait for the next day. Naturally this app can also be used in the summer months, but in the winter months the sections could be adjusted in lengths to make sure they can be finished before nightfall. To be able to use this app pilgrims need a certain understanding of technology but it would be in their own interest to progress save and securely.

9. Final words

This report shows that pilgrimage is possible during the winter months. However, the circumstances are rarely good and complicate the long journey along the Way of St. James significantly. Everyone has to decide on their own, if they trust themselves with this undertaking. If necessary preparations are made, this journey can turn into a once in a lifetime experience. The natural landscape the pilgrims will find on the way is astounding and beautiful also in the winter months and for some people especially appealing during this time of year. Nevertheless, from a rational perspective summer offers much better possibilities and much better weather conditions for the pilgrims. Therefore the final conclusion is that people wanting to follow the Way of St. James should best do it during summer.

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