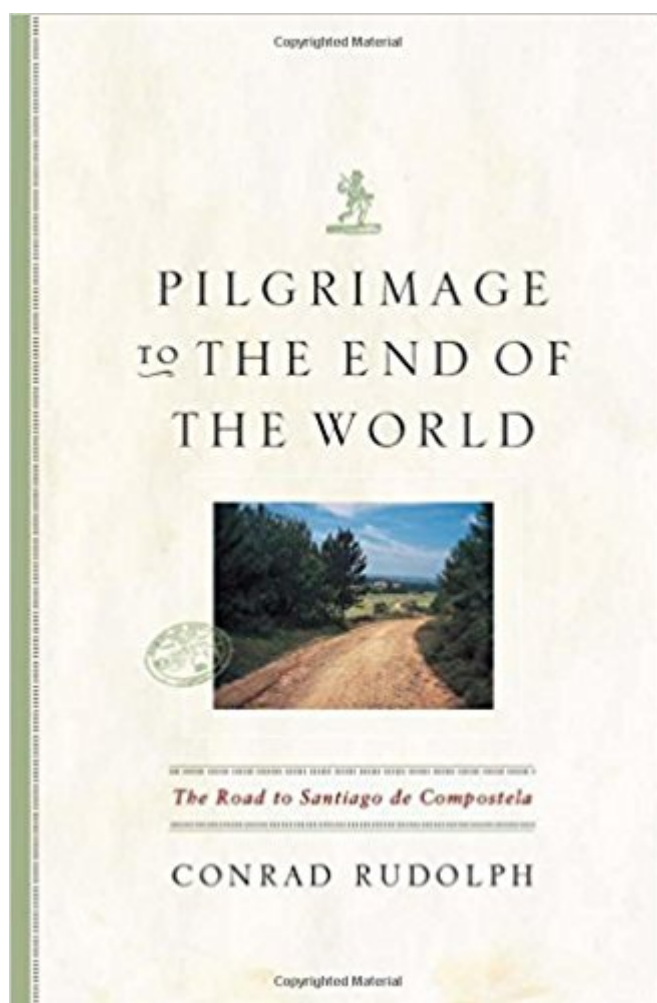


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Pilgrimage To The End Of The World: The Road To Santiago De Compostela (Culture Trails: Adventures In Travel)



Synopsis

Traveling two and a half months and one thousand miles along the ancient route through southern France and northern Spain, Conrad Rudolph made the passage to the holy site of Santiago de Compostela, one of the most important modern-day pilgrimage destinations for Westerners. In this chronicle of his travels to this captivating place, Rudolph melds the ancient and the contemporary, the spiritual and the physical, in a book that is at once travel guide, literary work, historical study, and memoir.

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Customer Reviews

Traveling two and a half months and one thousand miles along the ancient route through southern France and northern Spain, Conrad Rudolph made the passage to the holy site of Santiago de Compostela, one of the most important modern-day pilgrimage destinations for Westerners. In this chronicle of his travels to this captivating place, Rudolph melds the ancient and the contemporary, the spiritual and the physical, in a book that is at once travel guide, literary work, historical study, and memoir.

Conrad Rudolph is a professor of medieval art and chair of the art history department at the University of California, Riverside. This is his fourth book.

This was the book that inspired me to tackle the walk through France from Le Puy-en-Velay to the

Pyrenees and beyond into Spain in 2010, and I have not stopped walking since. It is not a current, and much has changed on all the caminos since this book was published in 2004, but for readers looking for inspiration, and a reason to go, this book is excellent, and Rudolph is a spare, wise, and eloquent writer. His background as a professor of medieval art, while never obtrusive, inevitably grounds his perspective. The language is often beautiful, "Along the road, they [pilgrims] meet and then part, sometimes to meet up again, sometimes not, like raindrops slowly running down a windowpane, now joining, now parting, now just missing each other, now going their own way, to paraphrase a Danish pilgrim I met along the road." (p. 27) Among many other passages I marked, "Yours is the experience of a fully reconciled alienation: the pilgrim at once the complete insider, the total outsider." (p. 34) These passages come from the second section of the book, "a series of reflections on what is, ultimately, the internal experience for many." This is where Rudolph excels, although all of the parts of the book are interesting and fascinating. The section on pilgrimage in the middle ages, provides an enriching perspective that most guidebooks lack, while the section of views of the journey is almost quaint from the perspective on the wealth of images available on the internet, yet the text accompanying these black and white photographs contains wonderful insights. The final section on practical aspects of the pilgrimage is still good reading, but should obviously be supplemented with more up-to-date information and recommendations. Just skimming through the book to write this review (I don't know why I didn't review it 5 years ago -- too busy walking -- I guess) makes me want to read it once more, cover to cover. It is that good.

I've enjoyed this book very much. The author did not dwell on the strength it takes to walk the Camino, but you got a feel for it when you see pictures of him in his knee braces. The book was about the journey through cultures. Mr. Rudolph did not undertake this as a religious journey but as an interesting walk through history. I enjoyed the fact that he made no judgements on any of the other pilgrims, or their reasons for walking the Camino. He held fast to the ancient route starting in France and ending in Finisterre (world's end) which is a 3 day journey beyond Santiago. I recommend this book highly.

This is a very personal account of the Pilgrimage. Totally enjoyed "walking along" with the author.

I wonder if Conrad Rudolph is a man of few words. He has certainly managed to convey the essence of his 2-1/2 month pilgrimage in only 131 pages. Rudolph describes himself as a man with virtually no belief in "miracles or the otherworldly", yet experiences a deep, life altering sense of

spirituality on his physically punishing trek. Simultaneously a travel guide, with practical information and sensible advice, a brief history of Santiago and the medieval religious psyche, and an insightful, first hand memoir evoking the texture and trials of the place and the journey. The photos in the second half of the book do much to bring Rudolph's eloquent words to life. I don't keep all of the books I read in my home library, but this one has found a permanent spot.

I've read my share of Camino books and this one ranks very high on my list of favorites. The author walked 1000 miles of the Camino starting in Le Puy France. He walked in 1996 and this book was published in 2004. When you read these books you need to keep in mind that time changes somethings but not all things. It is a very well written account of his experiences. It is concise at approximately 150 pages yet conveys enough information to pull the reader into the story. I am re-reading this book as I prepare to walk the Camino myself. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in learning a bit more of the history of the Camino, and anyone interested in embarking on a pilgrimage of their own.

Good book to learn what this is all about. The trip has a magical effect on people.

helpful guide on the camino

I enjoyed this book, though it was really three separate articles. A history of the Camino that isn't just the standard legend. Some good advice on preparation, not all of which I completely agree with, but I think the disagreements are mostly a matter of taste: he likes external frame packs; I like internal. The middle section convinced me: next time I'm starting from Le Puy.

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