
QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PILGRIMAGE MOVEMENT TO JASNA GÓRA IN 2010-2020

Radosław Wolniak* and Bożena Skotnicka Zasadzień

*Silesian University of Technology, Faculty of Organization and Management, ul. Roosevelta 26,
Zabrze, 41-800, Poland*

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Abstract

Pilgrimage is one of the oldest and most popular forms of travel. A pilgrimage is an individual or group journey to a site regarded as holy by a given religion. In Poland, pilgrimage is highly developed and related to religious traditions. The most popular pilgrimage shrine is the Virgin Mary Sanctuary at Jasna Góra in Częstochowa. Every year, millions of people from Poland and all over the world come to Jasna Góra, driven by the need for a spiritual experience related to prayer and meditation in a holy place. This article attempts to conduct a quantitative analysis of the pilgrimage movement to Jasna Góra in the years 2010-2020. Based on the research, it was found that the pilgrimage movement to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary in the years 2010-2020 was developing rapidly. During the period under study, there was a large, 37.5% increase in the number of pilgrims visiting the sanctuary. The conducted analysis demonstrates that the Jasna Góra Sanctuary remains the largest Polish pilgrimage shrine and its role in this respect has been strengthened.

Keywords: pilgrimage, religious, touristic, Jasna Góra, Częstochowa

1. Introduction

Poland is one of the countries in which the pilgrimage movement is very strongly developed. There are approximately 95 popular pilgrimage sanctuaries in the country, the largest of which, measured by the number of pilgrims visiting it annually, is the Marian Shrine of Jasna Góra in Częstochowa [1-3]. It was an expression of gratitude of the inhabitants for saving the city from the Danish wars during the Thirty Years' War [4]. Nowadays, in the literature there are two terms 'pilgrimage' and 'religious tourism', which are not easy to separate unambiguously. According to Puşcaşu research the two concepts are elated and it is not easy to give the clear distinction between pilgrimage and religious tourism [5]. The two concepts are very flexible and the interpretation depends on the feeling of a particular person going to the sanctuary.

*E-mail: radoslaw.wolniak@polsl.pl, tel.: +48322777351, fax: +4832 2777361

Jasna Góra has been for centuries the largest pilgrimage centre in the Polish lands, playing a very important role in the history of the Polish nation [6, 7]. Since the pilgrimage traffic in Poland is of significant importance both from the point of view of the Polish religious tradition and from the point of view of tourism, it seems interesting in this context to examine how the pilgrimage traffic to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary looks at present in the context of quantitative indicators [8]. The purpose of this publication is to analyse the pilgrimage traffic to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary in Częstochowa in the years 2011-2020.

The following research questions were posed in the publication:

- Have there been any changes in the number of people going on pilgrimage to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary in Częstochowa between 2011 and 2020?
- What is the share and importance of, traditional, walking pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Jasna Góra in Częstochowa and did it change in the years 2011-2020?

2. Literature review

In the contemporary world, pilgrimages are treated not only as a religious phenomenon but also as a cognitive one. The subject literature contains an increasing number of statements that pilgrimages are very important in tourism [9, 10]. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), travelling to religious and pilgrimage destinations is one of the goals of tourism. In the opinion of this organization, pilgrimage tourism, also known as religious tourism, is travelling undertaken for religious or cognitive reasons. The purpose of pilgrimage tourism is to reach a place of religious worship or a shrine and devote oneself to meditation or prayer. The tradition of pilgrimage is currently developing dynamically [10-13]. The UNWTO estimates that the number of people migrating for pilgrimage reasons around the world reaches approximately 220 million people annually. Most of these pilgrimages are regional or local. The tradition of pilgrimage is deeply rooted in Christian culture. According to research, 150 million Christians migrate annually to make pilgrimages. The most important centres of religious worship in the world include: Rome with the Vatican (approximately 8 million pilgrims annually), Lourdes (6 million), Jasna Góra (4-5 million), Fatima (4 million), Guadalupe (2 million) and Santiago de Compostella (0.3-0.5 million) [11-18].

In Europe, Jasna Góra in Częstochowa is one of the largest and most important places of religious worship in the world. It is the second, after Lourdes, centre of Marian devotion, as well as the main pilgrimage centre in Poland. The importance of the Jasna Góra Sanctuary as a centre of religious and pilgrimage tourism in Poland results from the scale of the pilgrimage movement and the spatial extent of its influence [11, 13, 14]. The dominant role of the Jasna Góra Sanctuary was established in the 17th century. Currently, the Jasna Góra Sanctuary is located in the area of 50 pilgrimage routes and every year it is visited by approximately 200 000 people who undertake a foot pilgrimage to this place. The tradition of pilgrimage to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary dates back to

around 1382. In the 15th century, pilgrimages began to come to Jasna Góra and indulgence fairs were organized [13-15]. At that time, the image of the Black Madonna in the Jasna Góra Sanctuary was given the title of Queen Patroness of the Nation. In the 17th century, the tradition of regular foot pilgrimages to Jasna Góra began, giving rise to special pilgrimage routes, which are used until present. The Warsaw Pilgrimage has been taking place every year since 1711. The Jasna Góra Sanctuary played a very important role during the partitions of Poland in 1772-1918; it significantly influenced the strengthening of patriotic ties in society [11-14].

In the period of the Second Polish Republic, Jasna Góra, apart from the religious purpose of pilgrimages, was also an important element in the process of integrating Polish society after Poland regained independence. At that time, special pilgrimages for people of certain professions began to be organised and the greatest number of pilgrims came for the feast of Our Lady of Częstochowa. Approximately 1 million pilgrims came to Jasna Góra just before the outbreak of World War II. During the Second World War, the pilgrimage traffic significantly decreased, but did not completely stop. The Warsaw Pilgrimage continued to be held. After World War II, due to political and social reasons, the number of foot pilgrimages considerably dropped; until the mid-1970s only the Warsaw Pilgrimage took place regularly [11-14]. A clear reduction in the number of pilgrimages at that time was caused by the communist authorities' persecutions. In 1976, on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of Jasna Góra, the pilgrimage movement experienced a short revival. The visit of John Paul II at Jasna Góra in the years 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1997 caused a renaissance of the pilgrimage movement. Since the eighties and nineties of the last century, the pilgrimage movement to Jasna Góra has been systematically increasing. In those years, also a significant increase in foreigners visiting the sanctuary every year was observed [13-15]. There are approximately 400,000 foreign pilgrims from almost 80 countries around the world annually.

For many centuries, Jasna Góra has also been an important link between Catholicism and the Orthodox Church. This is proved by numerous visits of the Eastern Church followers who make pilgrimages to visit the Miraculous Image. In Poland, 70% of parishes organise pilgrimages to Jasna Góra. Most pilgrims come to Marian celebrations such as - the feast of Our Lady, the Queen of Poland, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Częstochowa. Based on the literature analysis, it can be concluded that 90% of pilgrims visiting Jasna Góra Sanctuary are guided by purely religious motives. More than 45% of pilgrims coming to Jasna Góra ask Saint Mary for boons and for 15% of them it is a thanksgiving pilgrimage. Another proof of the religious motive of pilgrimages to Jasna Góra is that over 60% of pilgrims visit the Sanctuary many times. For comparison, only 40% of pilgrims come for religious purpose to Fatima and 48% to Lourdes. Apparently, Jasna Góra is a very important centre of religious cult. In conclusion, it can be said that the pilgrimage movement has been playing an important role among societies regardless of religion and culture. On the one hand, pilgrimage allows strengthening religious awareness as

well as having spiritual and religious experiences, and on the other, it provides an opportunity for getting to know a new culture, monuments and various tourist attractions. This approach to pilgrimage fits into pilgrimage tourism, which is ever more frequently described in literature [18-22]. However, the secular aspects should never become more important than the essence of pilgrimage, that is, the spiritual and religious experience.

3. Methods of analysis and data collection

Preparing the research for this paper, we collected data from databases prepared by the Press Office of Jasna Góra. On the web page <http://www.jasnagora.com/> of this office there is a data collection of information about the Pilgrimage Movement to the sanctuary in the years 2001-2020. The data on the mentioned web page and Jasna Góra Press Office databases are not well structured so it was necessary to analyse many subpages and information from the Jasna Góra Press Office in order to find the appropriate ones. The data are presented in tables (especially Table 1 and Table 2). To analyse them we used quantitative methods like data analysis and statistical data analysis.

Table 1. Basic data on pilgrimage traffic to Częstochowa Sanctuary in 2011-2020.

Year	Number of pilgrims (thousands)	Number of pilgrimages	Participants of organised pilgrimages (thousands)	Number of walking pilgrimages	Participants of walking pilgrimages (thousands)
2020	1000	120	No data available	160	No data available
2019	4400	190	752.3	300	133.0
2018	4300	200	834.0	255	124.0
2017	4000	216	811.3	263	123.0
2016	4500	233	1325.0	246	122.0
2015	3700	204	982.0	267	122.0
2014	3600	196	927.3	266	128.8
2013	3500	200	805.2	260	133.3
2012	3300	203	780.0	278	140.9
2011	3200	228	832.8	285	143.0

Source: own analysis based on data from [*Biuro prasowe Jasnej Góry*, 2020, <http://www.jasnagora.com/>]

4. Results and discussion

Table 1 gives the basic data on the pilgrimage traffic to Jasna Góra in the years 2011-2020. The number of pilgrims means the total number of pilgrims coming both in organised pilgrimages and individually. The number of pilgrimages and participants in organised pilgrimages refers to organised, collective, large national pilgrimages. Walking pilgrimages are the most ‘classical’ form of pilgrimage to Czestochowa, which is deeply rooted in Polish

tradition and consists of a group walking pilgrims from a given parish to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary.

In 2011, 3.2 million pilgrims took part in the pilgrimages to Jasna Góra. In total, 228 large, nationwide pilgrimages were organised with 832 thousand pilgrims participating. 285 walking pilgrimages with 143 thousand pilgrims arrived in Częstochowa.

In the following year, 2012, 3.3 million pilgrims came to Częstochowa. A total of 203 large pilgrimages with 780 thousand pilgrims were organised. 140.9 thousand pilgrims participated in 278 walking pilgrimages. In this year we could observe the increase in the number of pilgrims arriving to sanctuary. But the increase in the total number of pilgrims was connected with the decrease of big walking pilgrimage. In this year, we can first observe the phenomenon of decrease of big walking pilgrimage and increase in individual pilgrimage.

In next year - 2013, 3.5 million people went on pilgrimage to the Sanctuary. 805.2 thousand participated in 200 group pilgrimages, while the walking pilgrimage traffic consisted of 260 pilgrimages in which 133.3 thousand people participated. The year 2013 was the next year of increasing in the total pilgrimage number and decreasing in the walking big pilgrimage. The cause of this phenomenon was connected with individualization of the society. People tends more to engaging in individual activities and this trend is also visible in the religious touristic.

Year 2014 saw a further increase in the number of pilgrims to 3.6 million. A total of 927.3 thousand people took part in 196 large, nationwide pilgrimages. The walking pilgrimage movement was represented by 128.8 thousands pilgrims organised in a total of 266 pilgrimages. In this year we observed the continuation of the trend from last years. The pilgrimage movement was continuously shifting towards individual pilgrimage. Those pilgrims arrived in Jasna Góra not only individually but also in small groups - families and small bunches of people - friends, pilgrimage groups from plants, schools, pensioners groups, etc.

According to the data, 3.7 million pilgrims visited the Jasna Góra Sanctuary in 2015. Among them 982 thousand came organised in 204 large national pilgrimages. In the case of the walking pilgrimage movement, it consisted of 267 pilgrimages grouping a total of 122 thousand participants. This year we observe the continuation of the trends from years 2011-2014. The total number of pilgrims arriving to the Sanctuary was biggest in the history but the number of walking pilgrims was on the lowest level.

Pilgrimage routes to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary on foot avoid main roads and are usually led alongside roads, forest tracks and country lanes. This choice is dictated by the desire to avoid contact with car traffic, greater ease of walking, closer contact with nature and greater ease of concentration. This type of hiking also offers greater opportunities for rest. Only in the area of Czestochowa groups of pilgrims wander along public roads of higher categories. One of the reasons for the decrease in the number of walking pilgrimages may be the development of roads in Poland and a very big increase in road traffic. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find side roads that can be used to move large

groups of pilgrims comfortably. These problems cause that more and more pilgrims prefer to come to the Sanctuary at Jasna Góra by cars, coaches or other means of transport. In addition, the fast pace of life in the modern world makes it difficult to find time for a long walking pilgrimage, sometimes lasting several weeks. It is much easier to find time for a 1-3 day pilgrimage organised by modern means of transport.

The year 2016 was a special year due to the fact that the Sanctuary of Jasna Góra hosted the World Youth Day and the meeting with Pope Francis. These events resulted in a particularly large number of pilgrims of 4.5 million people, the highest over the years under study. A total of 1.32 million people took part in 233 major pilgrimages - also the highest number in the years under study. The number of participants in walking pilgrimages did not change. As in the previous year, 122 thousand of people grouped in 246 pilgrimages took part in them. The cause of an especially big number of pilgrims in the year 2016 was connected with the mentioned event - the Pope Francis visit to the Sanctuary. But it is worst to mention that the visit of Pope Francis did not contribute to an increase in the number of walking pilgrims coming to the Sanctuary. The events related to the World Youth Day organised at Jasna Góra only contributed to stopping the downward trend, as the number of incoming walking pilgrims remained at the same level compared to the previous year.

In 2017, a total of 4 million people went on pilgrimage to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary. A total number 811.3 thousand people participated in 216 large pilgrimages. The pilgrims on foot came in 263 pilgrimages with a total number of 123 thousands. The year 2017 was interesting because this was the first year in which we can observe breaking the trend in the case of walking pilgrimages. In this year there were about 1000 more walking pilgrimages comparing to 2016 and 2015. The increase was very small but it was the first year when we can observe the rise in this number after many years of decrease. This year we also observe the increase of pilgrimage number comparing to 2015 (2016 was special because of mentioned event and can be considered as a normal year).

The following year, 2018, resulted in a further increase in the number of pilgrims visiting the Jasna Góra Sanctuary. The total number of pilgrims there amounted to 4.3 million people. A total of 834 thousand participants took part in 200 large pilgrimages. The walking pilgrimage movement was represented by 255 pilgrimages with a total of 124 thousand people. In this year, we observe also a slight increase in the total pilgrimage number and this was a second continuous year with the increase of walking pilgrimage.

In 2019, the surveyed Jasna Góra Sanctuary was visited by 4.4 million pilgrims. Large nationwide pilgrimages included 752 thousand participants grouped in 190 pilgrimages. The walking pilgrimage movement included 300 pilgrimages with 133 thousand pilgrims. In the year 2019 the total number of pilgrims arriving to the sanctuary continuously rise. We also observe a big increase in the number of waling pilgrimages. This was the third continuous year of the increase of the walking pilgrimage movement, but the first year when this increase was big - about 9000 pilgrims more comparing to 2018.

Based on the data about the total number of pilgrims and reversing a decreasing trend in the food pilgrimage movement we can observe that contrary to the general worldwide tendency towards secularisation, the pilgrimage movement to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary is developing dynamically. The number of walking pilgrims returned in 2019 to the level of 2013. Based on this data we can say, that a clear revival of this form of pilgrimage could be observed. This was due to the increasingly better preparation of pilgrimages and the creation of new routes by which they could arrive at the Sanctuary, avoiding the main, busy car roads. Whether the upward trend will be maintained will become clear in future years. Unfortunately, it is not possible to know exactly at present, because the Covid-19 pandemic that occurred the following year inhibited all pilgrimage traffic because of the lockdowns. The data are therefore not comparable. Only when the Covid-19 pandemic has completely passed it will be necessary to analyse the data on pilgrimage traffic to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary and see if the upward trend is confirmed.

The year 2020 was a special year due to the occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic situation, typical large pilgrimages were abandoned. Pilgrims individually or in smaller groups came to the sanctuary. However, this traffic, due to the emerging lockdowns and the epidemiological situation, was at a much lower level compared to previous years. The number of pilgrims visiting the shrine decreased more than four times to the level of 1 million. There were 120 national pilgrimages and about 160 walking pilgrimages to the sanctuary, but due to the situation, there is no accurate data on the number of people attending.

Table 2. Large pilgrimages coming to the Czestochowa Sanctuary between 2010 and 2020.

Year	Number of pilgrimages	Number of pilgrims (thousand people)	The most numerous large pilgrimages	New major pilgrimages
1	2	3	4	5
2020	-	-	Not available	Not available
2019	190	752	Radio Maryja Family, Motorcyclists, Holy Spirit Renewal, Anonymous Alcoholics, Farmers, Working People, Living Rosary Circles, John Paul II Schools, Amazons, Pilgrimage of the Faithful of the Arch, The Pilgrimage of the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamieński, Electricians and Electricians, Railway Workers, Foresters, Teachers, Football Supporters,	Pilgrimage of the Order of the Knights of Saint John Paul II, Pilgrimage of Entrepreneurs, Pilgrimage of Singles and Pilgrimage of the Polish Reserve Officers' Association

1	2	3	4	5
			Health Service, Miners, Bankers, Legion of Mary, Pilgrimage of Married Couples and Families, Beekeepers, Secular Franciscan Order	
2018	255	124	Radio Maryja Family, Farmers, Motorcyclists, Renewal in the Holy Spirit, Alcoholics Anonymous, Working People, Circles of the Living Rosary, John Paul II Schools, Amazons, Teachers, Football fans, Foresters, Power engineers, Railwaymen, Health Service, Miners, Men's Pilgrimage, Faithful of the Arch. Wrocław, Backyard Rosary Circles, Catholic School Friends' Association, Bankers, Movement of Nazareth Families, Secular Franciscan Order	Pilgrimage of the Veterans of the Anti-Communist Underground - the Soldiers of the Classified, the Pilgrimage of People Fighting Cystic Fibrosis, the Pilgrimage of Polish Geographers, Pilgrimage of evangelizers from 'Przystanek Jesus' and the National Senior Pilgrimage
2017	263	123	Radio Maryja Family, Renewal in the Holy Spirit, Farmers, Alcoholics Anonymous, Working People, Motorcyclists, Circles of the Living Rosary, Schools named after John Paul II, Foresters, Teachers, Amazons, Railway workers, Power engineers, Legion of Mary, Married couples and families, Miners, Catholic Action, Health Association, Friends of the Earth, Association of the Friends of the Earth. John Paul II Schools, Foresters, Teachers, Amazons, Railwaymen, Energetics, Legion of Mary, Couples and Families, Miners, Catholic Action, Health Service, Catholic School Friends Association, Bankers, Water	Pilgrimage of the Order of Knights and Hospitallers of Saint Lazarus from Jerusalem, 1 st National Pilgrimage for the Spiritual Adoption of a Child conceived

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1	2	3	4	5
			Supply Workers, Craftsmen, Archbrotherhood of the Guard of Honour, Beekeepers	
2016	222	118	Radio Maryja Family, Great Penance, Renewal in the Holy Spirit, Motorcyclists, Farmers, Alcoholics Anonymous, Working People, Schools John Paul II, Confraternity of the Living Rosary, Amazons, Energetics, Foresters, Teachers, Legion of Mary, Couples and Families, Railway Workers, Miners, Catholic Action, Football Supporters, Secular Franciscan Order, Archconfraternity of the Guard of Honour, Health Service, Craftsmen, Association of Catholic School Friends, Marian Apostolate	During the July meeting with Pope Francis, around 400,000 pilgrims gathered at Jasna Góra. On the occasion of World Youth Day, Jasna Góra was visited by around 300,000 young people from all over the world in around 2,500 groups
2015	255	120	Radio Maryja Family, Fire Brigades, Renewal in the Holy Spirit, Farmers, Motorcyclists, Alcoholics Anonymous, Schools. John Paul II, Living Rosary Circles, Working People, Secular Franciscan Order, Power Engineers, Amazons, Foresters, Salesian Schools, Railway Workers, Teachers, Legion of Mary, Marriages and Families, Archbishop of Honor Guard, Catholic Action, Supporters and Bankers	Pilgrimage of Salesian Schools - it was a thanksgiving meeting organized at the end of the celebration of the 200 th anniversary of the birth of Saint John Bosco
2014	169	91	Radio Maryja Family, Farmers, Renewal in the Holy Spirit, two Motorcycle Pilgrimages, Alcoholics Anonymous, Family of Schools. John Paul II, Pilgrimage of Living Rosary Circles, Working People, Children's Backyard Rosary Rings, Amazons, Postmen, Railwaymen, Teachers, Legion of Mary, Foresters, Franciscan Order of the Laity, Young	National Pilgrimage of Hussars, Pilgrimage of National Youth, Pilgrimage of Historical and Reconstruction Groups, Pilgrimage of Third Age Universities

1	2	3	4	5
			Listeners of Radio Maryja, Beekeepers, Bankers, Academic, Catholic Action, Fans, Marian Apostolate, Society of Friends of Catholic Schools, Electricians, Gardeners.	
2013	242	129	Family of Radio Maryja, Renewal in the Holy Spirit, Farmers, Working People, Alcoholics Anonymous, Family of Schools John Paul II, Polish Pilgrimage of the Living Rosary Wheels, two Pilgrimages of Motorcyclists, Railwaymen, Children's Backyard Rosary Rings, Teachers, Foresters, Amazons, Legion of Mary, Postmen, Marian Apostolate, Marriages and Families, Young Listeners of Radio Maryja, Beekeepers, Bankers, Health Service, Association of Friends of Catholic Schools, Archconfraternity of the Guard of Honour of the Holy Sacred Heart of Jesus, Electricians, Secular Franciscan Order and Catholic Action	Knights of Columbus Pilgrimage, Caravanning Pilgrimage, Anglers' Pilgrimage, Living Rosary Pilgrimage, Moto-Paragliding Pilgrimage, National Catechist Pilgrimage
2012	255	138	Radio Maryja Family, Renewal in the Holy Spirit, Farmers, Working People, Alcoholics Anonymous, Family of Schools John Paul II, Railwaymen, Children's Backyard Rosary Rings, Amazons, Teachers, Foresters, Legion of Mary, Postmen, Marian Apostolate, Marriage and Family, Young Listeners of Radio Maryja, Electricians, Franciscan Order of the Laity, Catholic Action, Beekeepers	Pilgrimage of Journalists and Pilgrimage of the Riflemen's Association
2011	168	104	Family of Radio Maryja, Renewal in the Holy Spirit, Motorcyclists, Working People, Alcoholics Anonymous,	Pilgrimage of the Pieniny Raftsmen, Pilgrimage of

1	2	3	4	5
			Farmers, John Paul II, Marriages and Families, Children's Backyard Rosary Rings, Electricians, Foresters, Amazons, Railroad workers, Postmen, Teachers, Legion of Mary, Franciscan Order of the Laity, Treasurers, Beekeepers	Quads

Source: own analysis based on data from [Biuro prasowe Jasnej Góry, 2020, <http://www.jasnagora.com/>]

Table 2 presents data on large, nationwide pilgrimages to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary in the years 2011-2020. The table lists the most numerous large pilgrimages arriving at the sanctuary and provides information on new pilgrimages that arrived only in a particular year. The analysis of the data allows us to conclude that among the large pilgrimages there are many that repeat themselves every year. Among the very important pilgrimages, which come to Jasna Góra every year and are among the largest, one can include the pilgrimages organized by organizations such as: 'Radio Maryja' Family (about 100,000 pilgrims in particular years), Motorcyclists, Farmers, Anonymous Alcoholics, etc. Considering the years 2011-2020, pilgrimages were made by a wide variety of organisations representing a wide cross-section of Polish society. The data confirm that the pilgrimage movement in Poland has a very wide quantitative range as well as a very wide social spectrum of professions and organisations that participate in it.

A special place among the pilgrimages that took place over the years under study was occupied by the World Youth Day in 2016, which attracted around 300 thousand pilgrims. It also included a meeting with Pope Francis, which was attended by around 400,000 people. Pope Francis was the third pope after John Paul II and Benedict XVI to visit the Sanctuary of Jasna Góra.

Between 2011 and 2020, the pilgrimage movement to Jasna Góra experienced a period of development (Figure 1). Over the years under study, a slow increase in the number of pilgrims could be observed from a level of 3.2 million in 2011 to 4.4 million in 2019. Two years were special: one was 2016 - World Youth Days and Pope Francis' visit to Jasna Góra and the other was 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the organisation of Youth Days in 2016, a very large increase of around 50% can be observed in large organised pilgrimages. In contrast, the difficult pandemic situation in 2020 led to a huge crisis in pilgrimage traffic due to the restrictions in place and the risk of pilgrims becoming ill. It is interesting to note that excluding these two particular years from the analysis, we observe a small increase in the number of pilgrims by 100-300 thousand each year. There was also no decrease in the number of pilgrims during the period under study (excluding the cases of 2016 and 2020, which due to their unusual nature make trend analysis difficult).

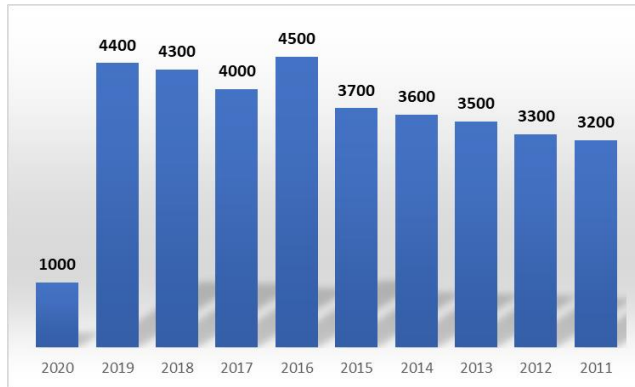


Figure 1. Total number of pilgrims to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary in Częstochowa in the years 2011-2020 (in thousands). Source: own analysis based on data from [Biuro prasowe Jasnej Góry, 2020, <http://www.jasnagora.com/>].

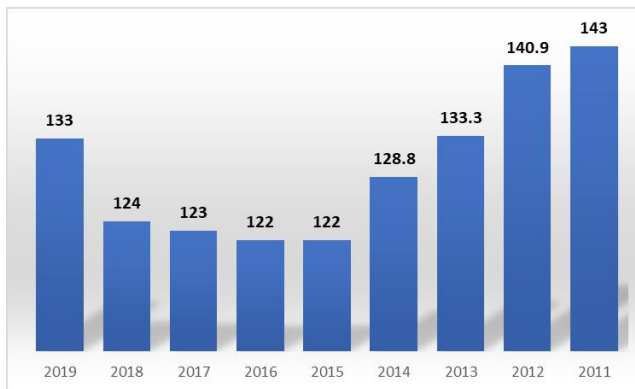


Figure 2. Total number of participants of walking pilgrimages to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary in Częstochowa in the years 2011-2019 (in thousands). Source: own analysis based on data from [Biuro prasowe Jasnej Góry, 2020, <http://www.jasnagora.com/>].

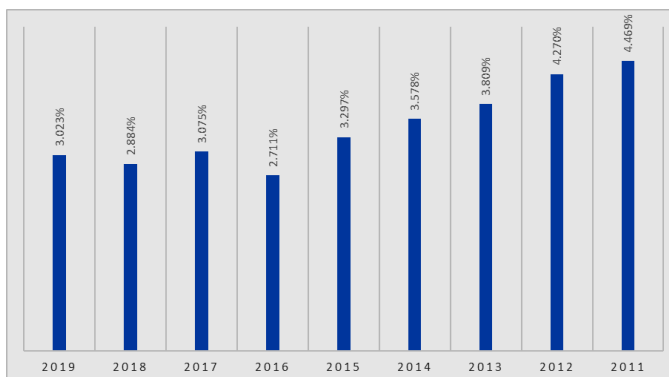


Figure 3. The percentage share of walking pilgrims in the total number of pilgrims to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary in Częstochowa in the years 2011-2019. Source: own analysis based on data from [Biuro prasowe Jasnej Góry, 2020, <http://www.jasnagora.com/>].

The trend is upward - the total annual increase in the number of pilgrims to the Częstochowa Sanctuary amounted to 37.5% over the studied decade. This testifies to the strong and growing interest of pilgrims in visiting the Sanctuary. The data indicate its very high potential as a religious cult centre and a place of religious tourism.

It is interesting that while the pilgrimage movement to the Jasna Góra Sanctuary as a whole is experiencing a period of development, at the same time one can speak of a certain decrease in the importance of the walking pilgrimage movement. Figure 2 illustrates data concerning walking pilgrimages to Jasna Góra coming from parishes - the most classic and characteristic way of pilgrimage to Jasna Góra historically. Starting from the year 2011, a slow decrease in the number of participants of walking pilgrimages is visible. In 2011, the number of walking pilgrims was 143,000 and by 2016 it had dropped to 122,000, a decrease of about 15%. It is worth noting that even World Youth Day 2016, which caused a significant increase in the total number of pilgrims, increased in the number of walking pilgrims. Since 2017, we have seen a slow renaissance in the number of walking pilgrims, rising to a level of 133,000 in 2019 (in particular, between 2018 and 2019 there was a significant increase of 9,000 pilgrims). However, the pandemic that occurred in 2020 has meant that it is impossible to say at present how sustainable the upward trend observed in 2017-2019 was.

The crisis of pilgrimage on foot is particularly evident when we try to analyse what percentage of pilgrims arrive at the Jasna Góra Sanctuary on foot. The relevant data are presented in Figure 3. In the first year of analysis - 2011 - pedestrian pilgrims accounted for 4.47% of the total number of pilgrims. By 2016, this ratio had fallen to 2.71%. Then it increased slightly, but in 2018-2019, despite the increase in the number of walking pilgrims, it still amounted to about 3%, i.e. about 1/3 less than in 2011. Thus, the data indicate that while the pilgrimage movement itself in Poland is growing from year to year, in the case of walking pilgrimages one can say, maybe not so much about their crisis, because for that we will have to trace the data from the following years after 2020, but at least about their stagnation. While modern man prefers to use modern means of transport such as cars, coaches and railway, the number of people willing to undertake a long, multi-day walking pilgrimage is not increasing.

5. Conclusions

Based on the conducted research, it was found that the pilgrimage movement to the Marian Sanctuary in Jasna Góra grew rapidly in the years 2011-2020. In the examined period there was a large, 37.5% increase in the number of pilgrims visiting the sanctuary. In 2019, 4.4 million pilgrims visited the Jasna Góra sanctuary. In 2018, there were 4.3 million of them, in 2017, about 4 million. In 2016, the largest number of pilgrims came to Jasna Góra, it was related to the fact that World Youth Day was held in Częstochowa. In the

remaining years 2015-2011, the number of pilgrims ranged from 3,700 in 2015 to 3,200 in 2011. In 2020, only about 1,000 pilgrims visited Jasna Góra in connection with the Covid pandemic. The number of walking pilgrimages in the analysed period of 2011-2019 remained at a similar level, from 122 to 143. In 2011, the largest number of walking pilgrimages was the least in 2015. About 100,000 pilgrims come to the pilgrimage of Radio Maryja each year. The remaining pilgrimages are much smaller around 50,000 pilgrims. The data indicate that the Jasna Góra Sanctuary remains the largest Polish pilgrimage sanctuary and its role in this respect has been strengthened. However, it is worth noting that the increase in pilgrims mainly concerns individual pilgrims, while the number of participants in large organised pilgrimages remained at a similar level in the period under study, except the years in which there were special religious events such as World Youth Day and the visit of Pope Francis in 2016. In the case of traditional walking pilgrimage to the sanctuary, even a slight decrease in the number of pilgrims was observed. In this context, an increase in the importance of individual pilgrimage on the border between pilgrimage and religious tourism can be seen in comparison to classic collective pilgrimage. At the same time, traditional pilgrimage remains at a very high level, which allows us to conclude that the Polish tradition of religious pilgrimage is still an important element of Polish tradition and culture.

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