

Camino

Part 2

Pamplona to Santiago de Compostela
& Seville to Astorga



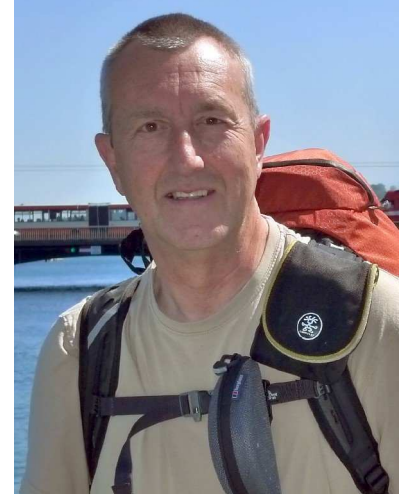
Andrew Lievesley

Camino

Part 2 Pamplona to Santiago de Compostela & Seville to Astorga



This book is dedicated to Joy, who is kind enough to stamp my passbook and allow me to go and play 'All by my own.'



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Pamplona to Santiago de Compostela





















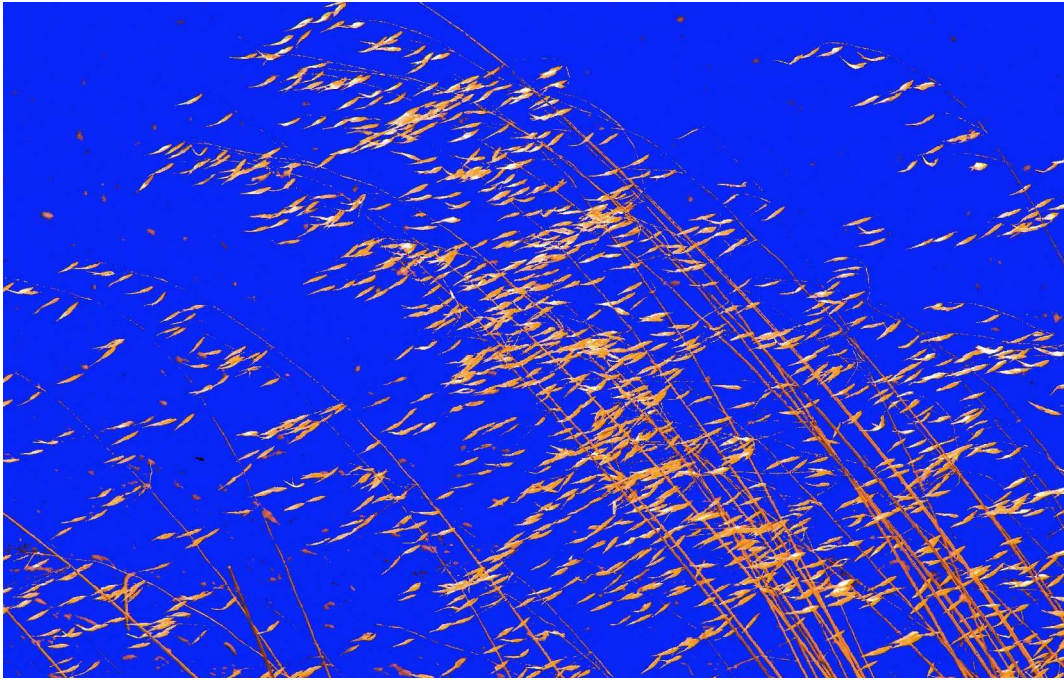






















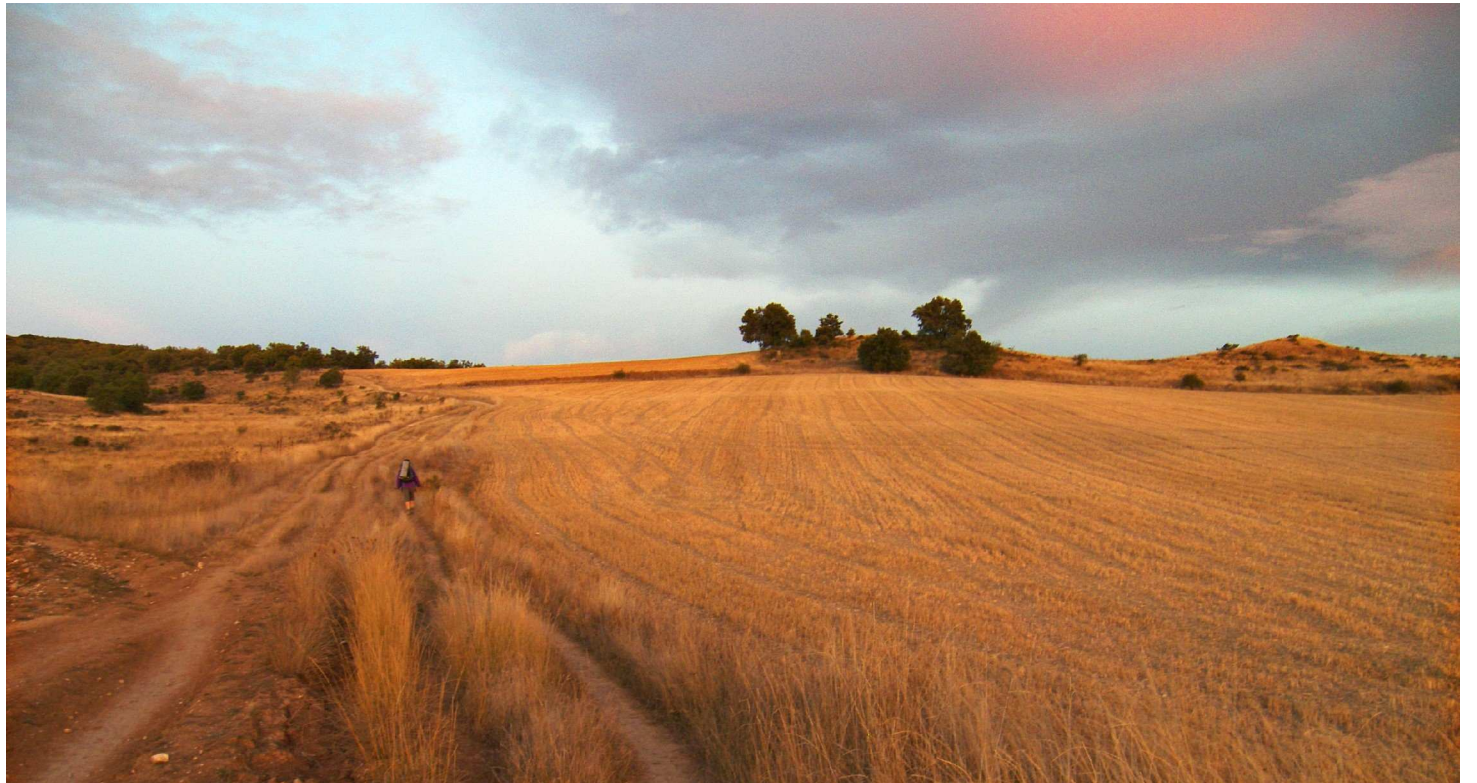














































This is an honest description of what can be best described as not my finest hour as a 'grim. There I was at 8am in the cafe near the municipal Alberge of Sahagún, sitting in the half light having a breakfast CCL + SB (Cafe con Leche + Sticky Bun). I was quietly contemplating what I was going to do to amuse myself for the first few hours until it became warm or the scenery improved, and believe me the scenery was not going to improve for several days. Suddenly two men of my age came past, one wearing a red anorak and matching rucksack, the other in blue; clearly mates. They were heads down not looking right or left and powering themselves along with their walking sticks.I have a plan, which involves a small guillotine, for all people who use metal walking sticks on hard surfaces, without rubber tips.

I thought...'I know; we are going to have a race!' The two gentlemen didn't know it but they had just been entered into the, 'First to the next village bar for a CCL+SB + Z (veterans division) 10Km race'. I had a black top with black and grey rucksack, to match my beard and hair, so I was as well colour-coordinated as the opposition. If we are going to do this right, it is important we all understand the race colours for the TV.

So being a good lad, I gave them a few minutes start while I paid the bill and we were off. I was in for the long haul as they had disappeared from view but I powered along the track beside the road until I was in sight of them. They were on the tarmac road.... clearly this was serious stuff. At the 7Km mark I caught up with the blue man at the rear. He was not pleased to see my shadow and started to accelerate (somehow the details of the race had got out and it was becoming serious). After playing mind games with our shadows for a few moments he eventually fell behind. I then caught up with with the man in red, he looked over his shoulder as I neared him, put on a bit of speed, but pulled over for a pee as I passed him, clearly devastated in defeat.

I celebrated with the full CCL+SB+ Z. (as above with zumo de naranja...or orange juice to the rest of us)

Retelling the story on the phone home that evening, my Leader queried if it was in the spirit of the Camino....Absolutely not, but it was great fun.....and Robert Crampton of the Times would have been proud of me.



While recovering from my race, a Spanish rural activity unfolded in the farm opposite. Two Donkeys suddenly appeared...I suspect Mum + child. They stopped and waited just outside the farmyard. Mum was carrying what looked to be haversacks of supplies.

Then a flock of sheep came to the edge of the yard; they stopped and waited until the farmer appeared with his dogs, who are there to guard the sheep, not guide them.

They then moved off with all the dignity of a Church of England Easter procession out onto the day's pasture. A delightful 10 minutes in my life.





This picture was taken with my damaged camera and although not perfect, shows the Meseta plane through which we walked for ten hot, mind numbing days. It was October, but over 30c in the shade.

The earth suddenly changed red.... it so shocked me that I came home and produced two paintings of the scene.



















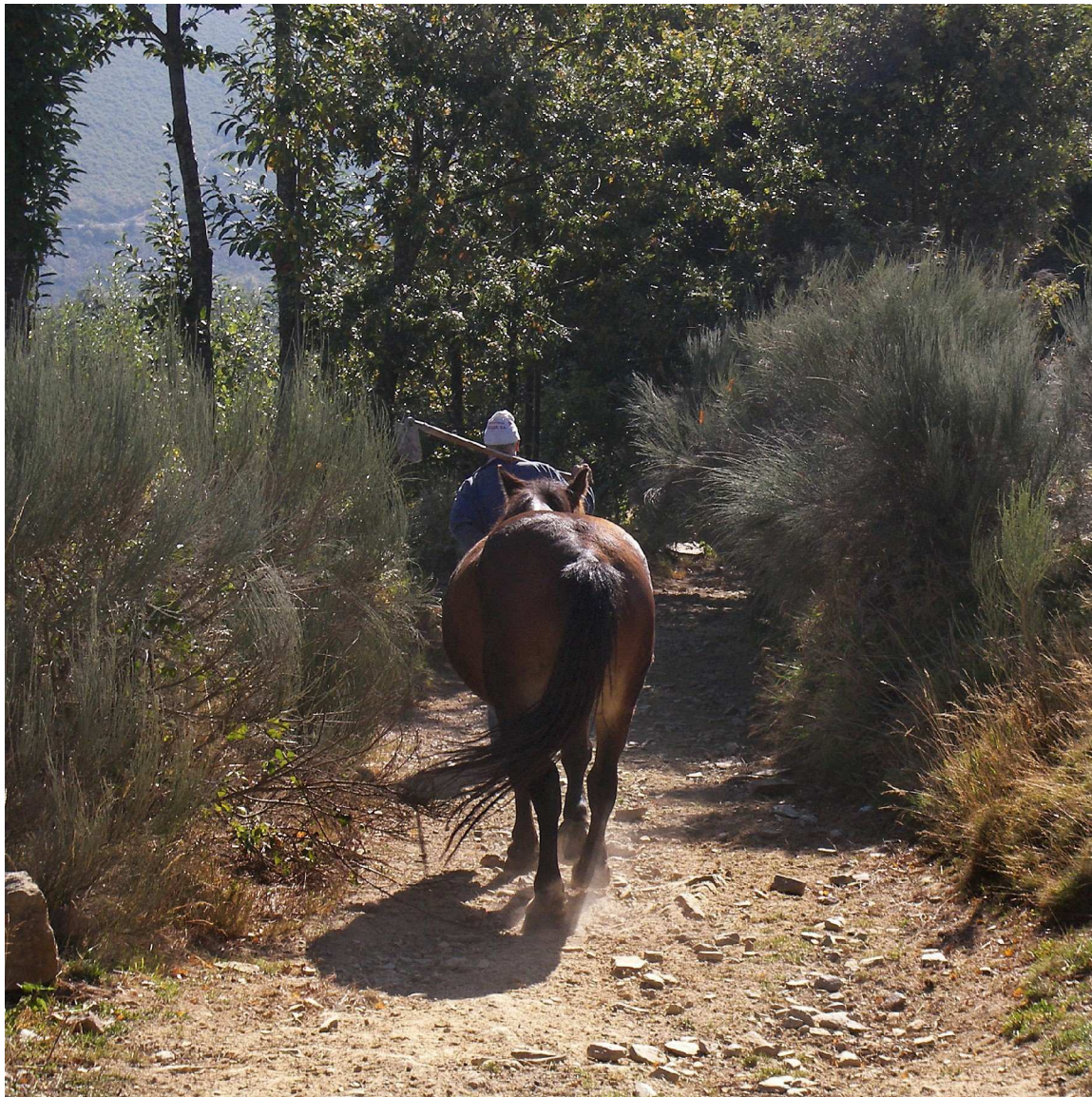




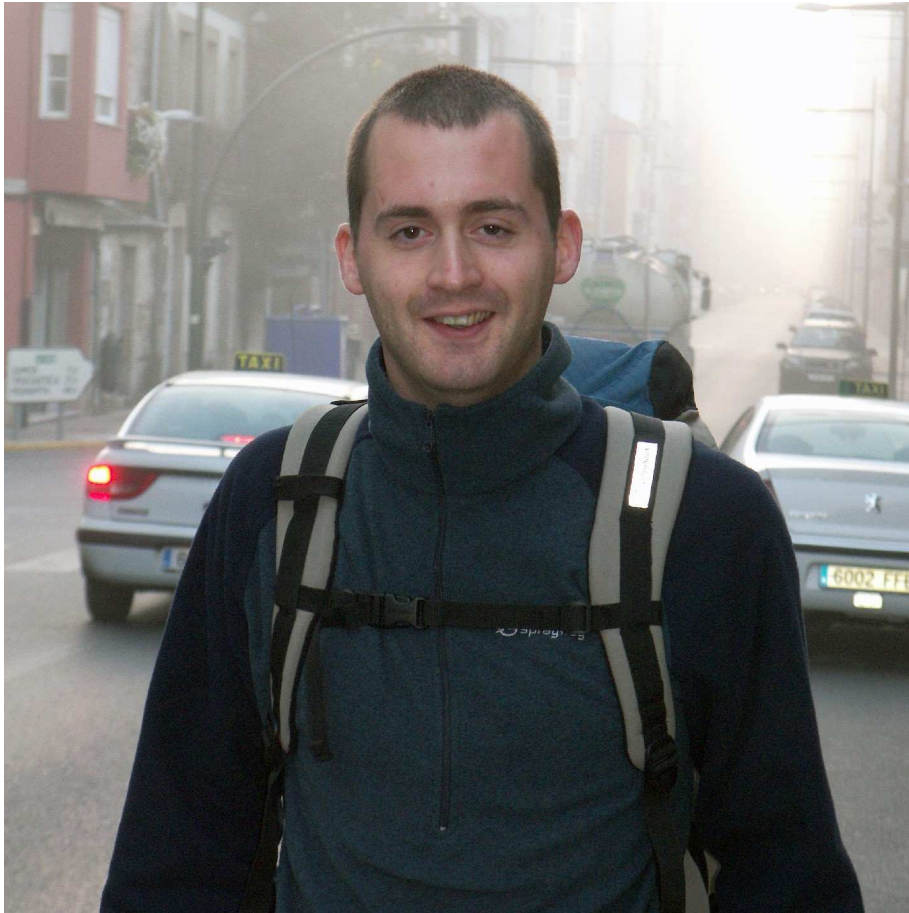










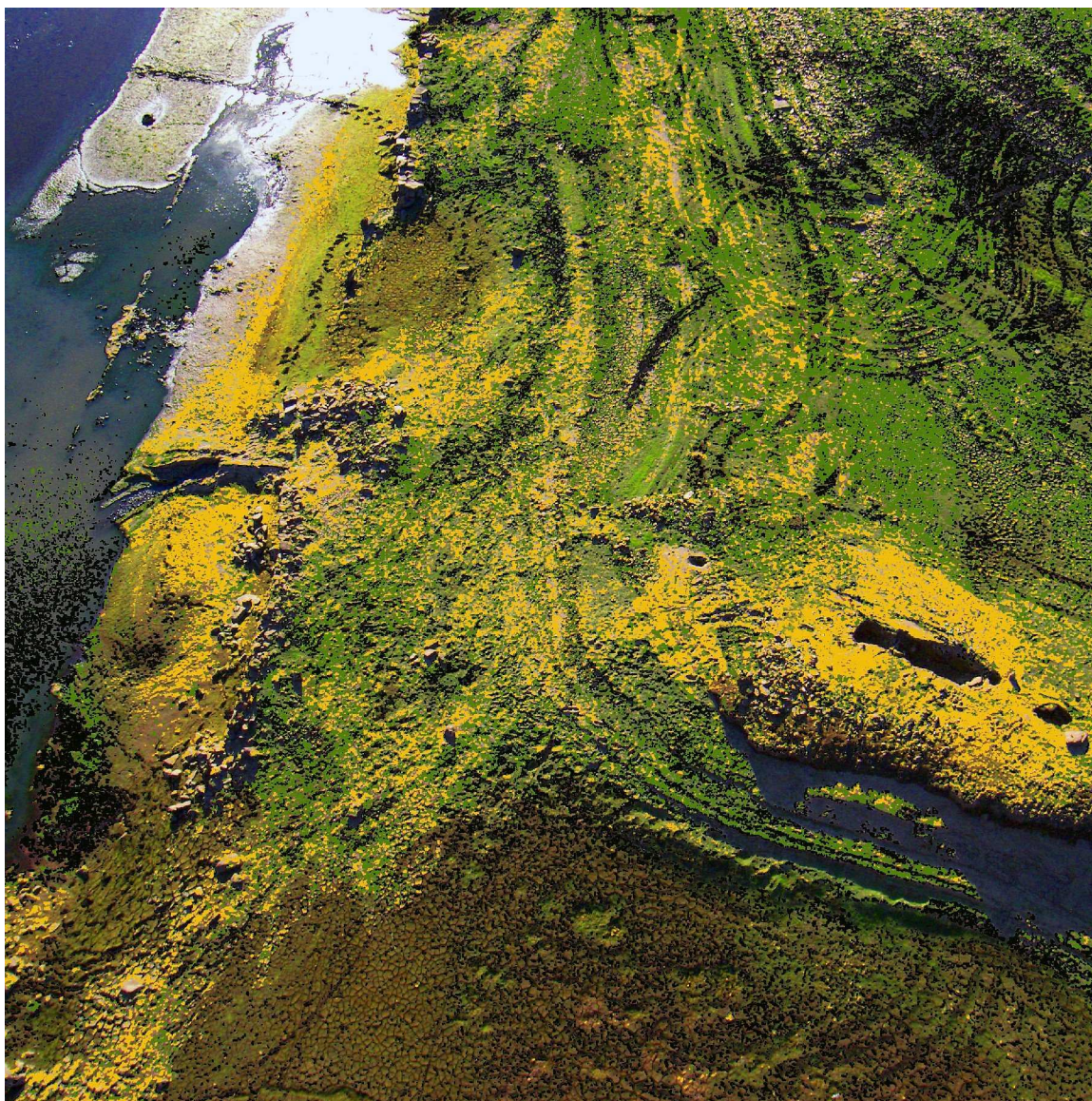


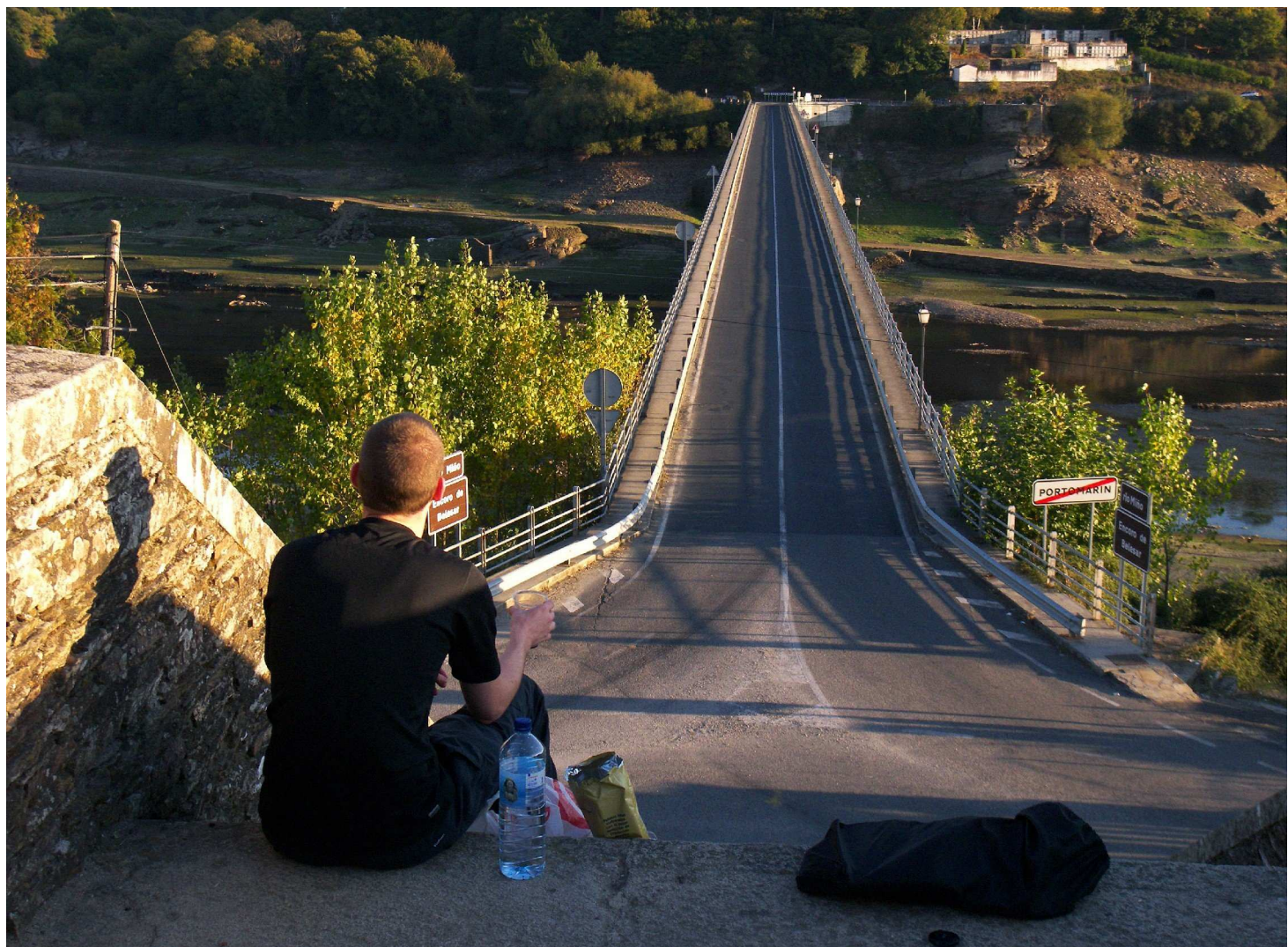
Rob arrives from Ireland to Complete the last 100km with me to Santiago . This was and is the minimum you need to do on foot or horse to get your 'Compostela' , which the church in the middle ages said halved your time in purgatory.

With lateral thinking I am proud of, Rob suggested why don't we sin twice as much and just go for the original time in purgatory.....



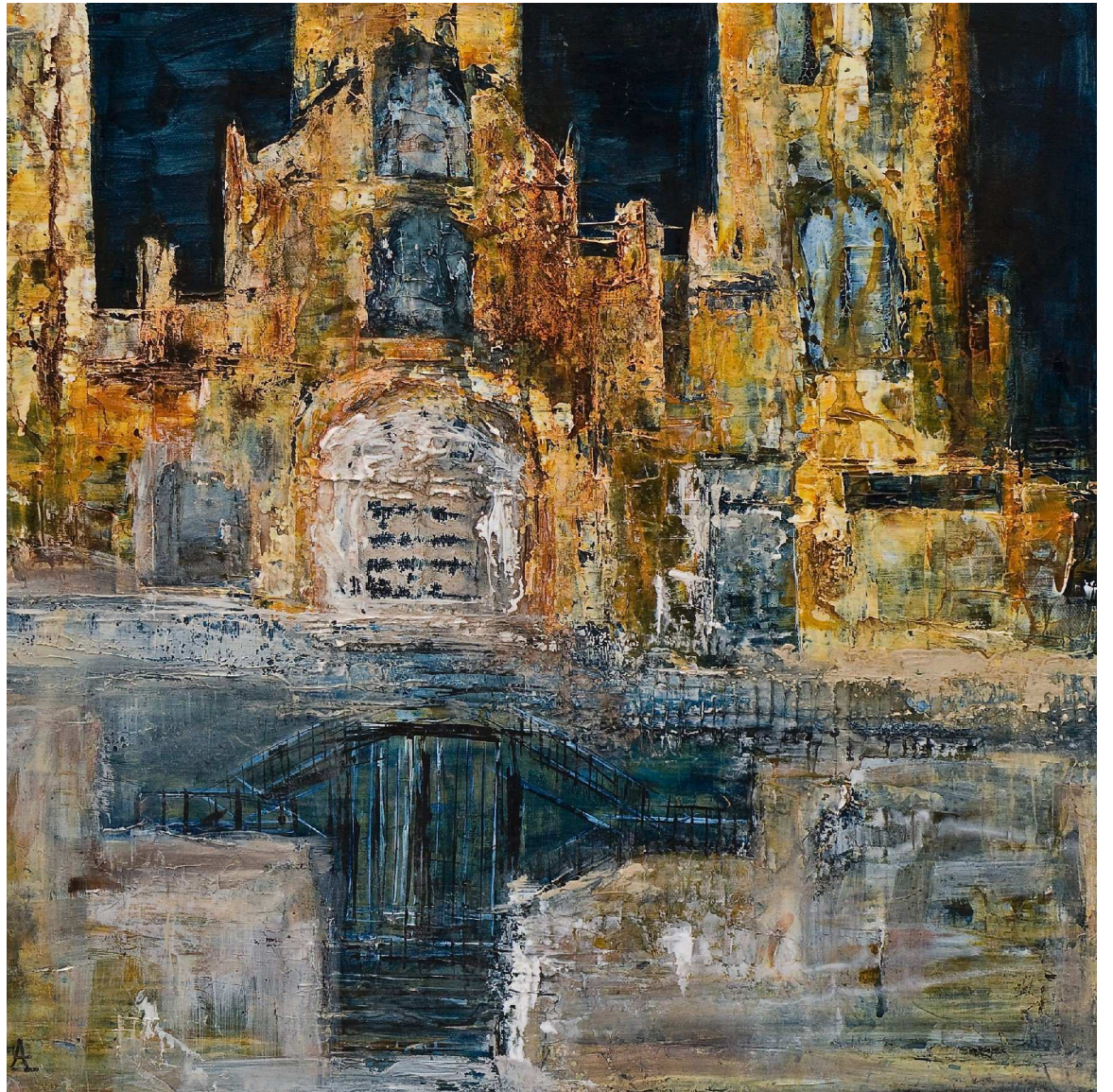
The reservoir at Ponferrada was so low the ruins of the original village and bridge are exposed.











We arrive in Santiago de Compostela, drank
some Cava, got our Compostela, slept
wandered about a bit, took a trip to the sea side.

Great trip, great companionship of Rob and Jim
+ the many people I met on the way.

What more could a 'grim want.





Seville to Astorga - The Via de la Plata



I arrived in Seville at the start of Holy week. (*Semana Santa de Seville*)

This is a very big deal and consists of a lot of people dressed up in stuff the Klu Klux clan would be proud of, following very heavy floats carried aloft by fit young people.

Needles to say it has been going on a long time and they seem to enjoy it. I discovered it goes on in various forms in all the villages and towns in this part of Spain.









The girl in red on the balcony is giving her all and singing to the float. Clearly a local celebrity, the crowd listen in silence, then break into a big roar when she finishes.



















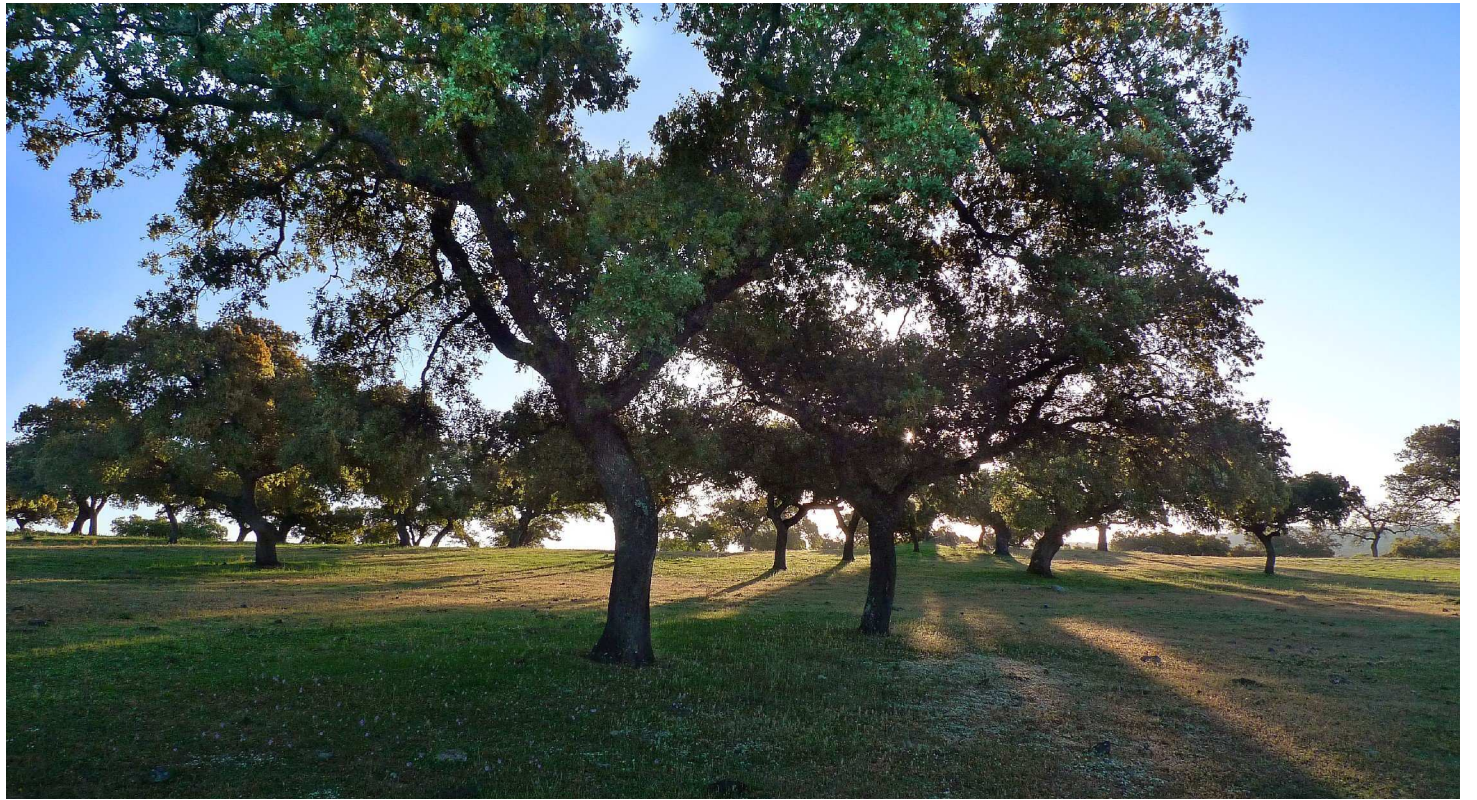






Good Friday.... Another village, another parade.

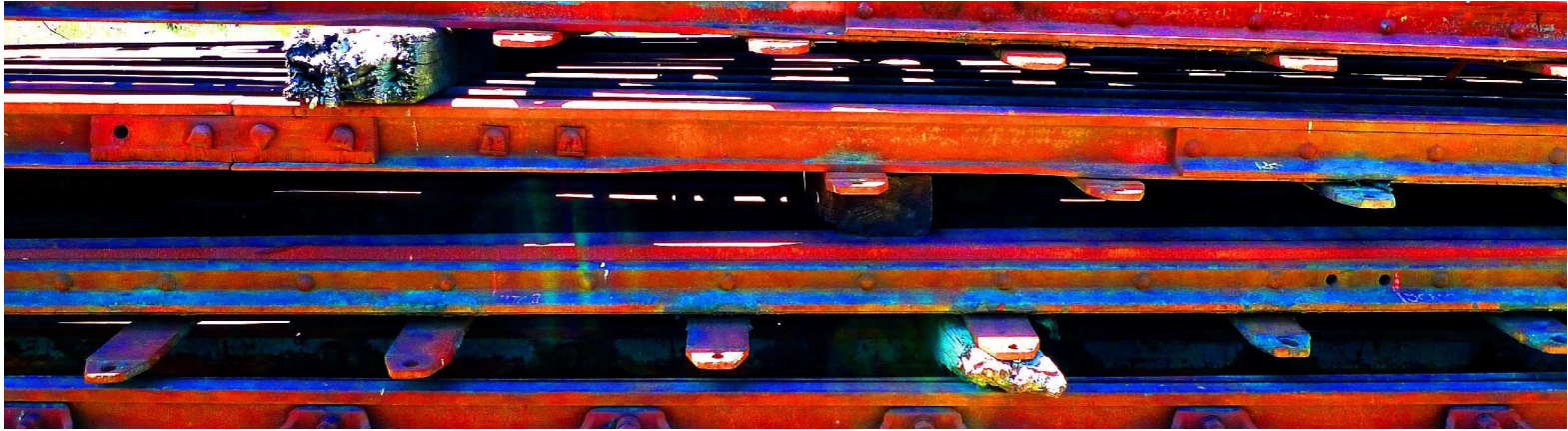






Easter Sunday in another village. You had to be impressed how all the young people were drawn into the affair and proud to be involved

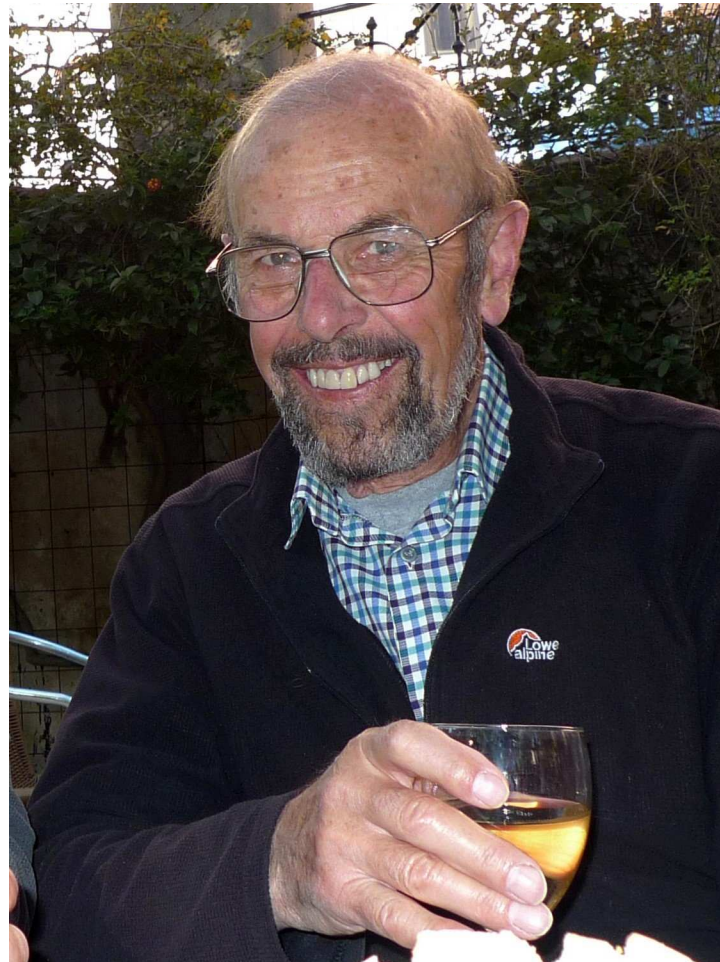
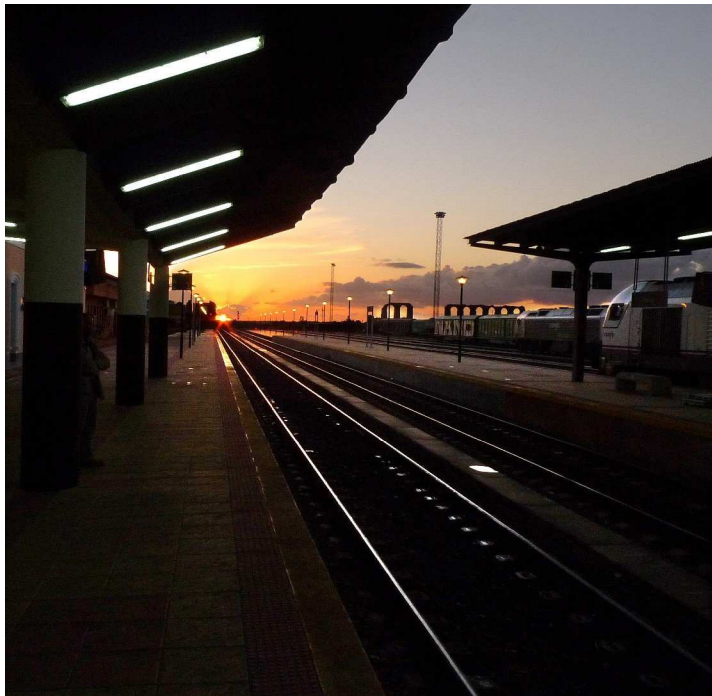


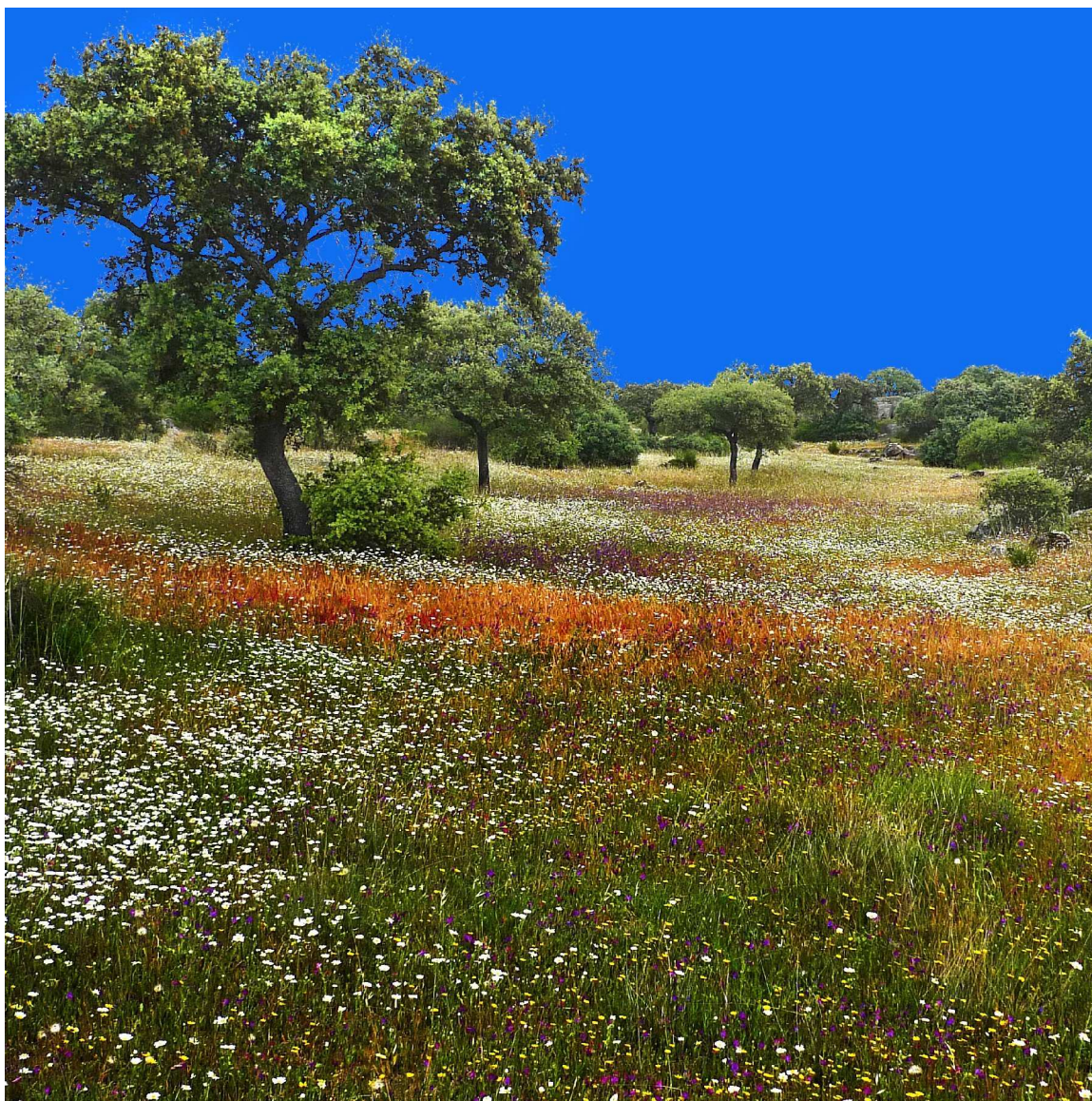




Jimmy arrives on a late night train to join me for what I did not know at the time was going to be four days of very boring scenery. I was glad to have the company.

From Jim's point of view you win some and lose some.















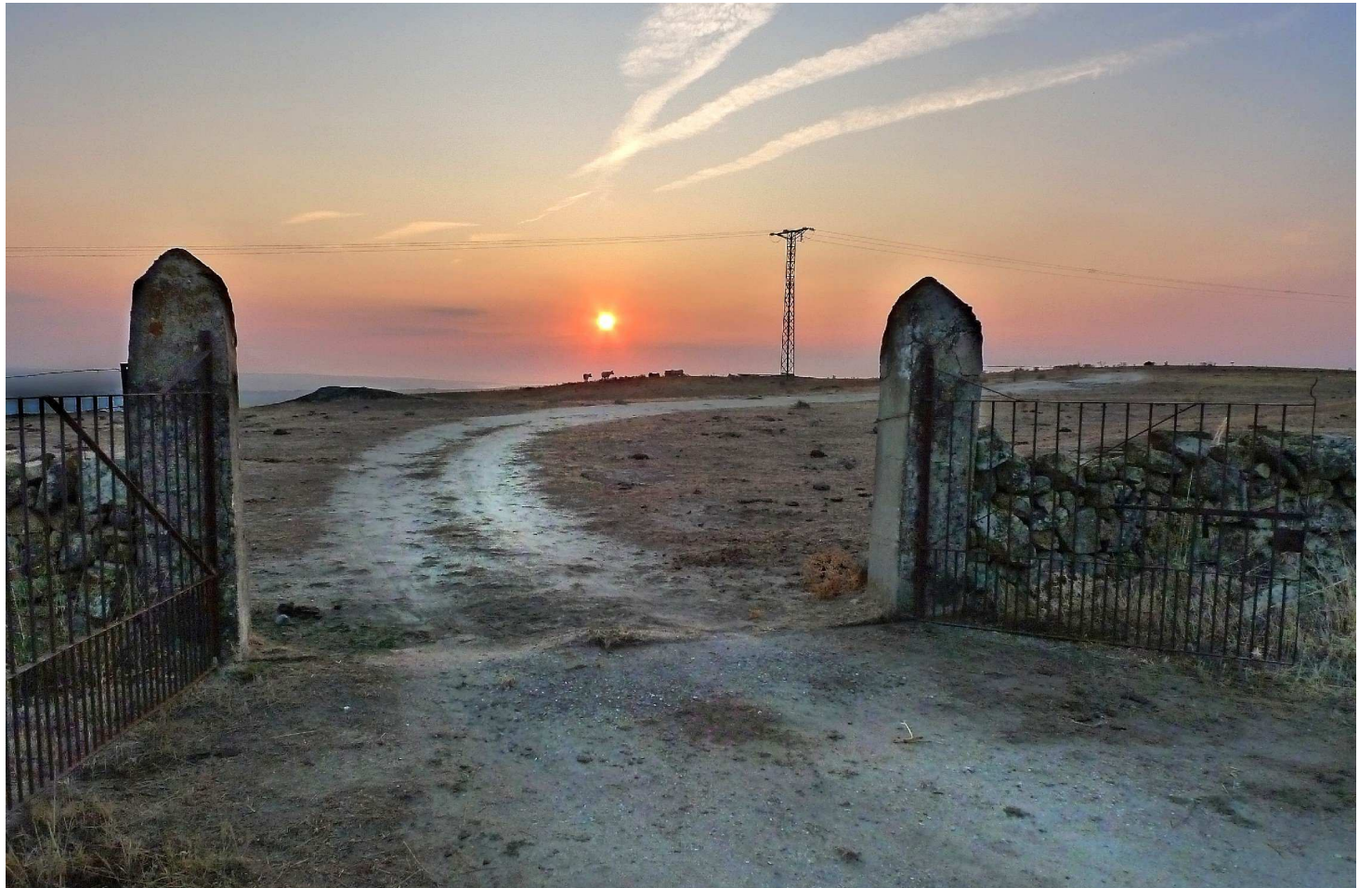






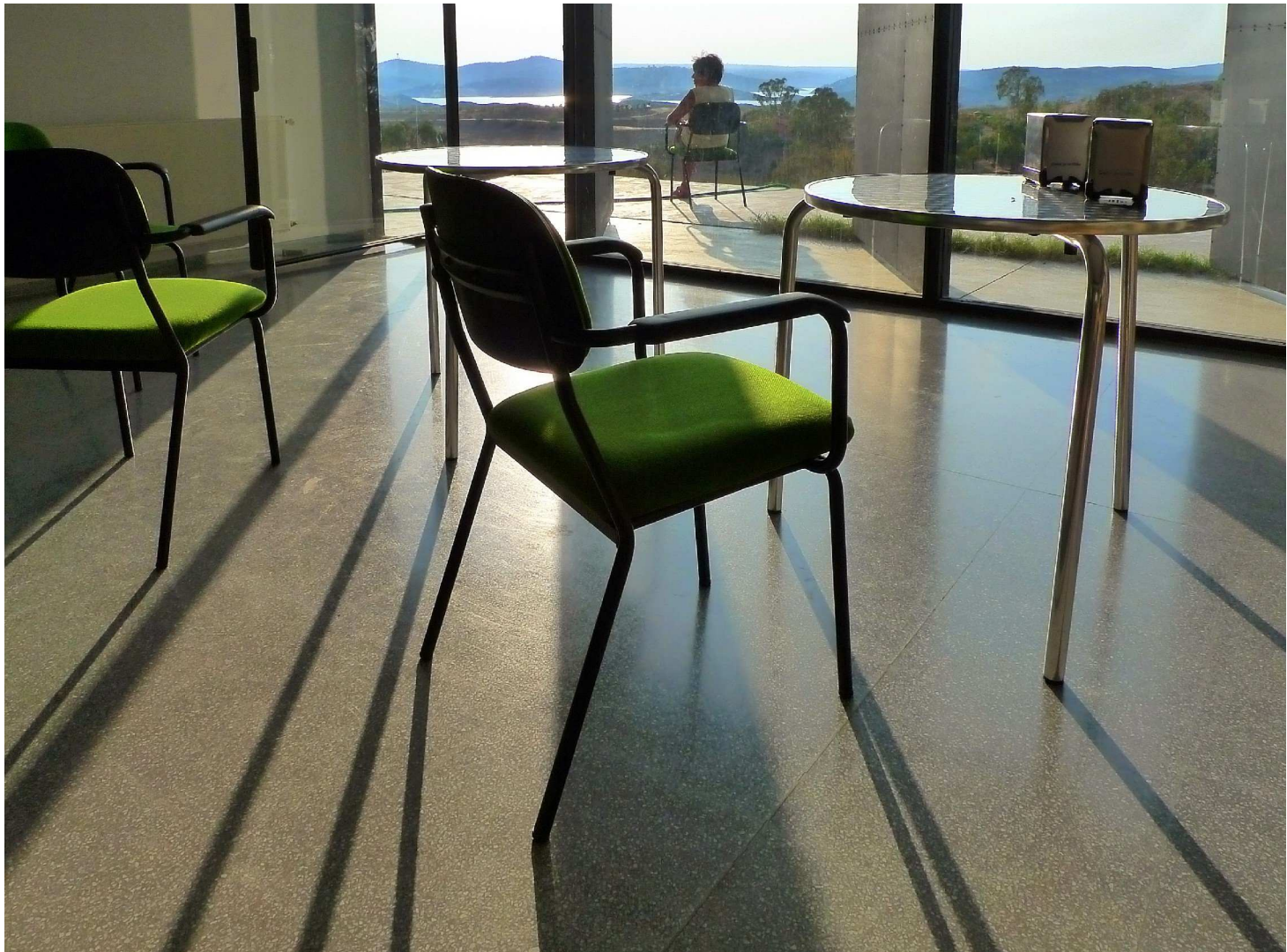


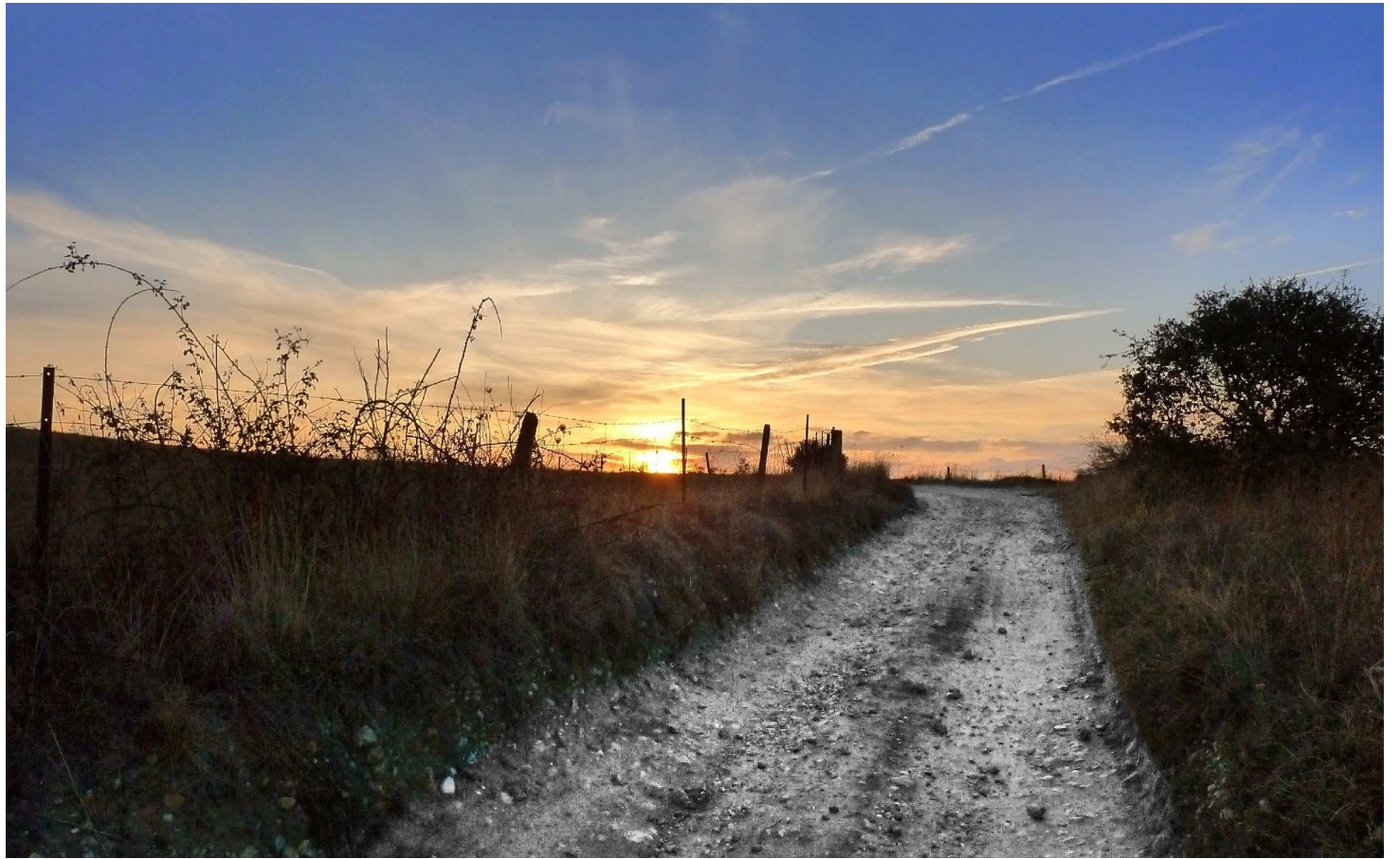
On this part of my trip I caught some great sun rises. The downside it could be very cold for the first couple of hours.... but worth it. The next series of three pictures were taken within 10 minutes of each other.

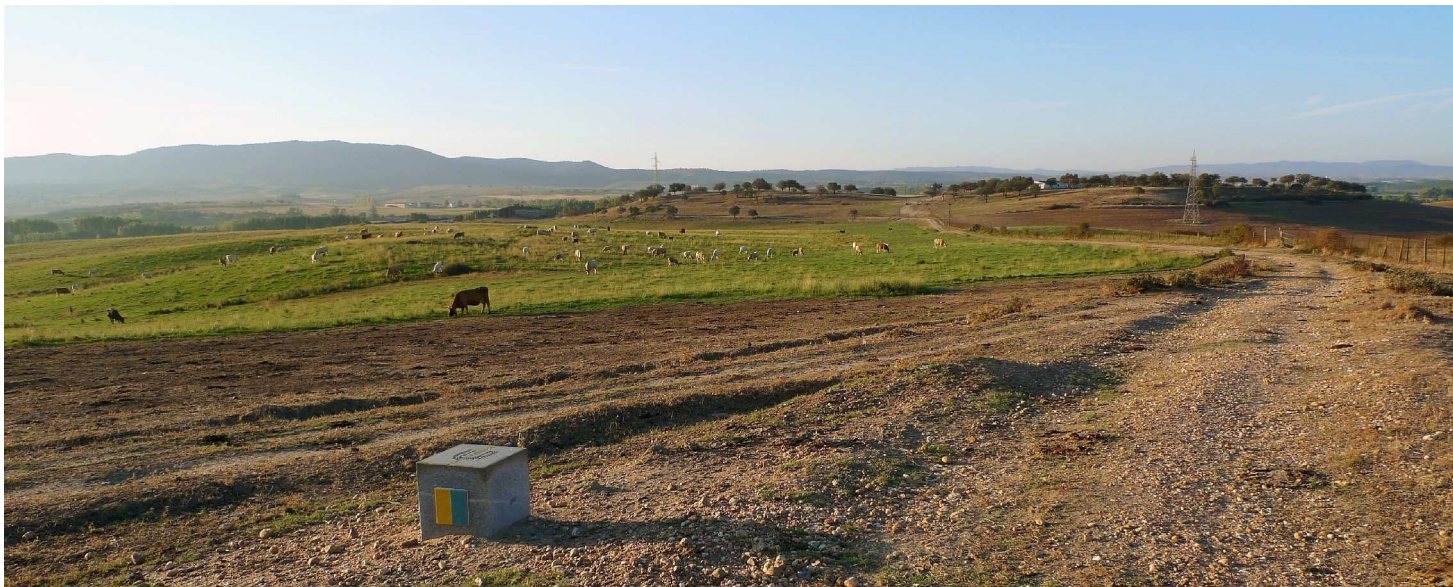












In Extramadura they had yellow and green markers to signify the way. The yellow was the current route, the green the original Roman Via de la Plata.

Occasionally you would come across bits of the original Roman road....it always gave me pause for thought and a great sense of history.





Capara, where the original Roman triumphal arch still stands. They are excavating the village, but the whole affair is in the middle of nowhere.

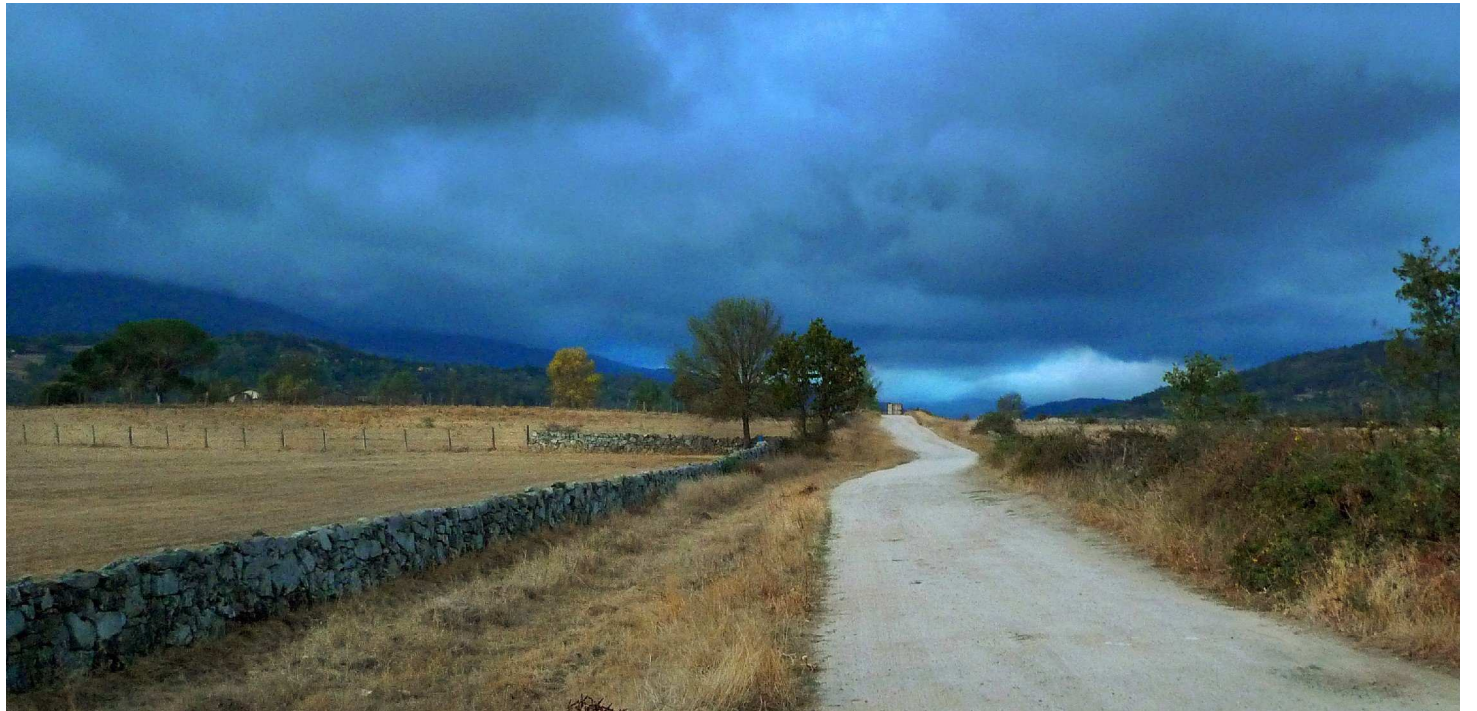
A pilgrim meal...As good as it gets in Spain..... all for six euros. black pig pork (Tastes just like it did when I were a lad) followed by flan (baked custard) washed down by as much wine as you could cope with. I found I became quite fond of cheap Spanish white. Unfortunately my head did not share my opinion the following day.













Over the total of 1,600 miles I never had any problems with dogs, except this bundle of fun. Fortunately I had my stick in use that day. After various unsuccessful skirmishes on both sides, we decided to leave each other alone.

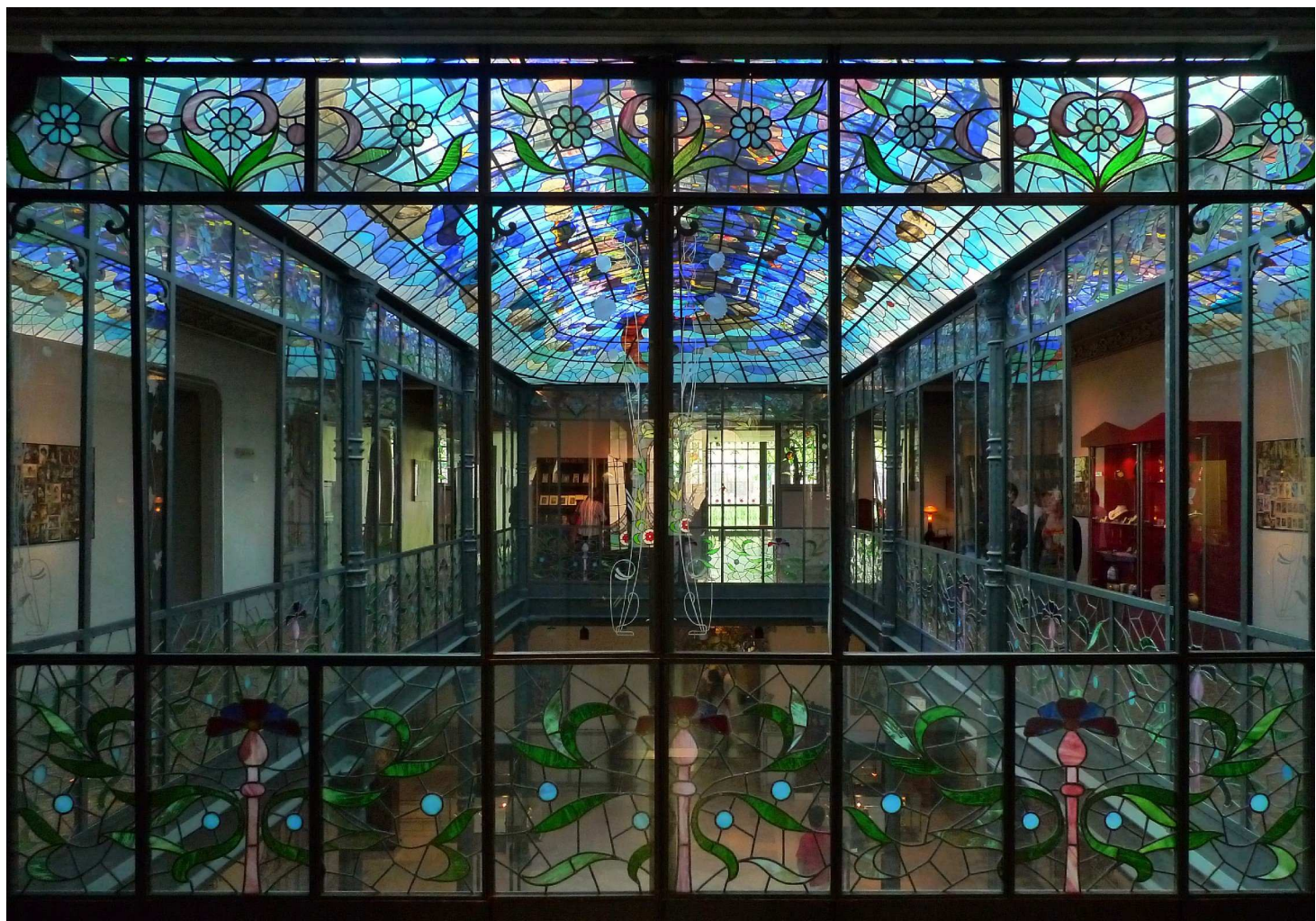




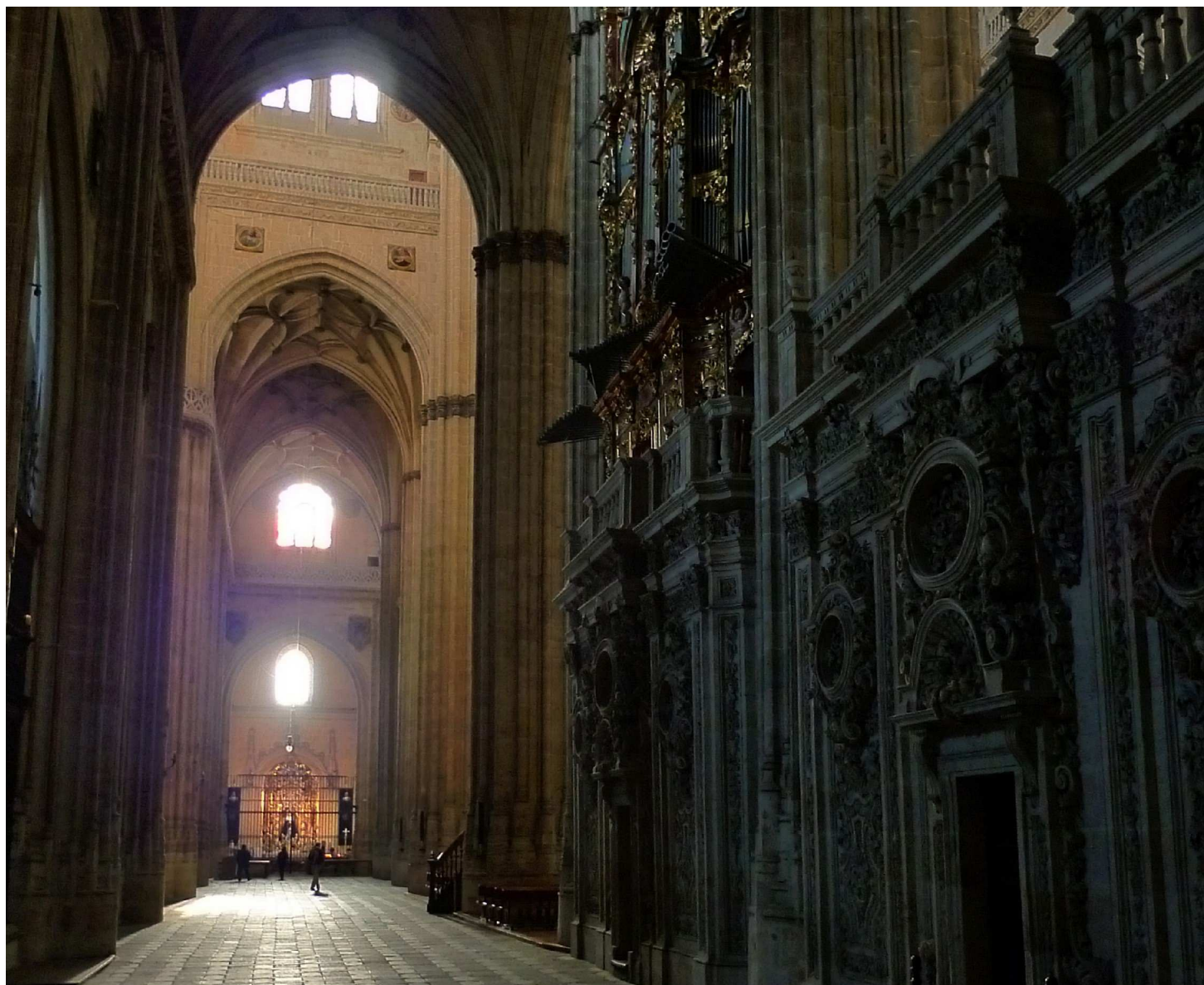










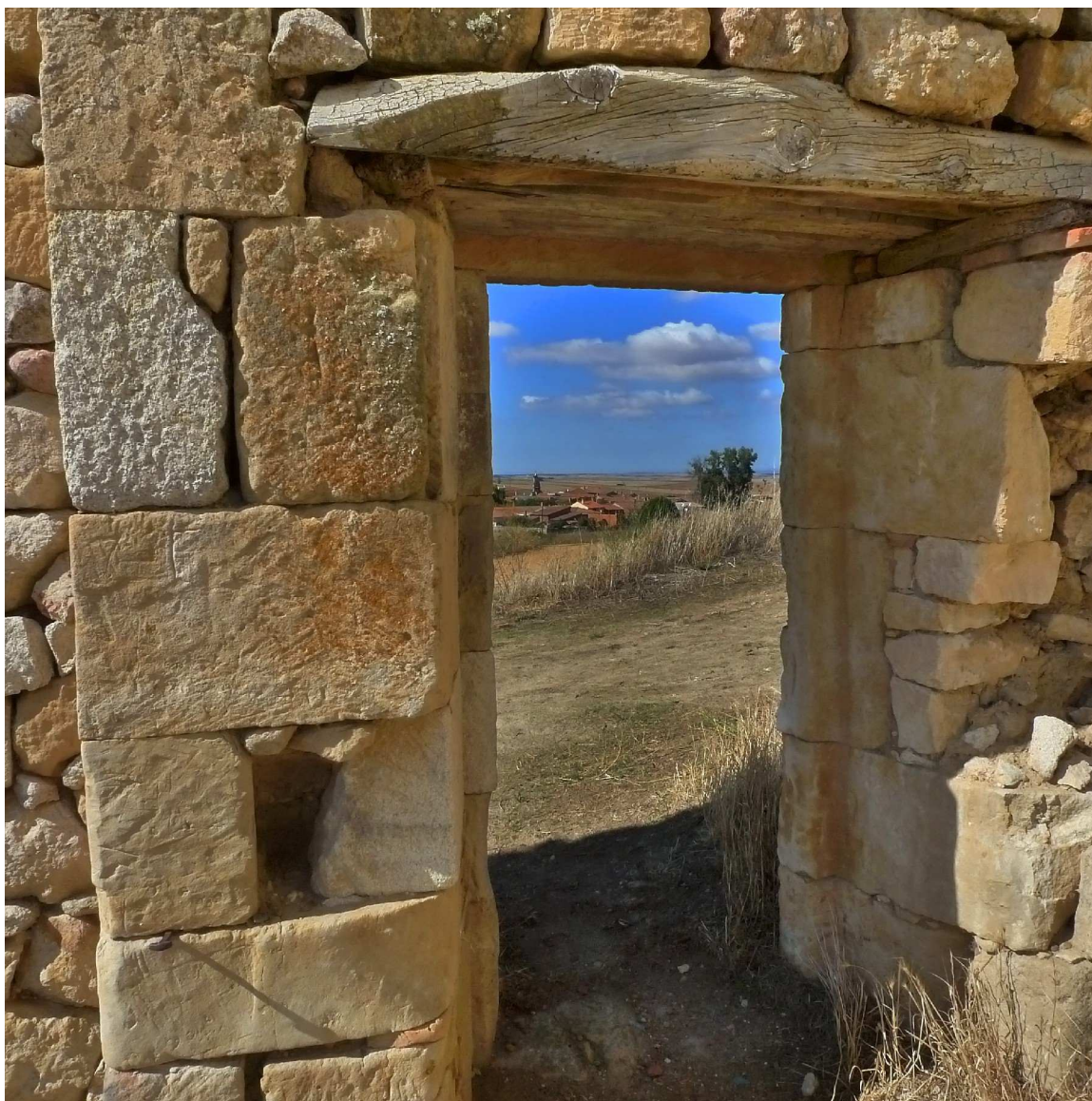






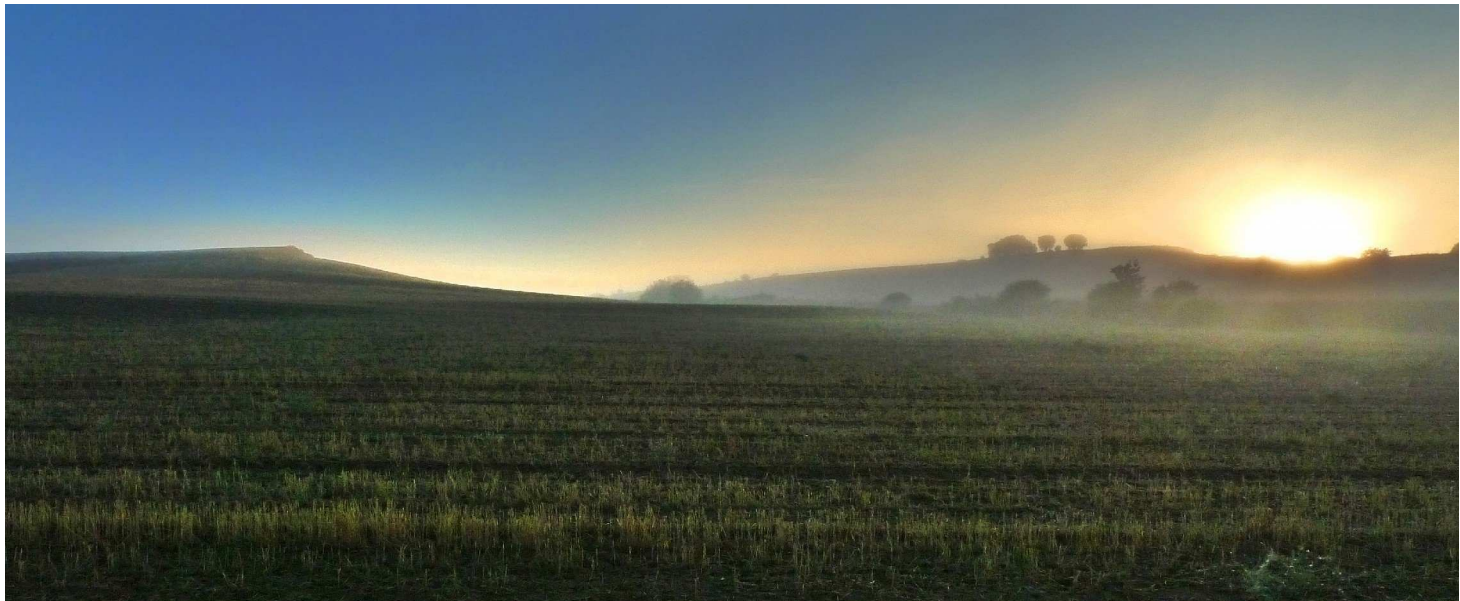
















I managed to get to Zamora in time for the Spanish lunch, I was booked into a hotel on the main square..... As there was no more walking that day I got stuck into a leisurely lunch with a carafe of wine for twowhich I turned into a carafe of wine for one.

The rather revolting looking ham and lentil soup was absolutely fantastic. After my three courses I managed to stagger the 10yards to my room for a traditional Spanish siesta..... When in Rome etc.



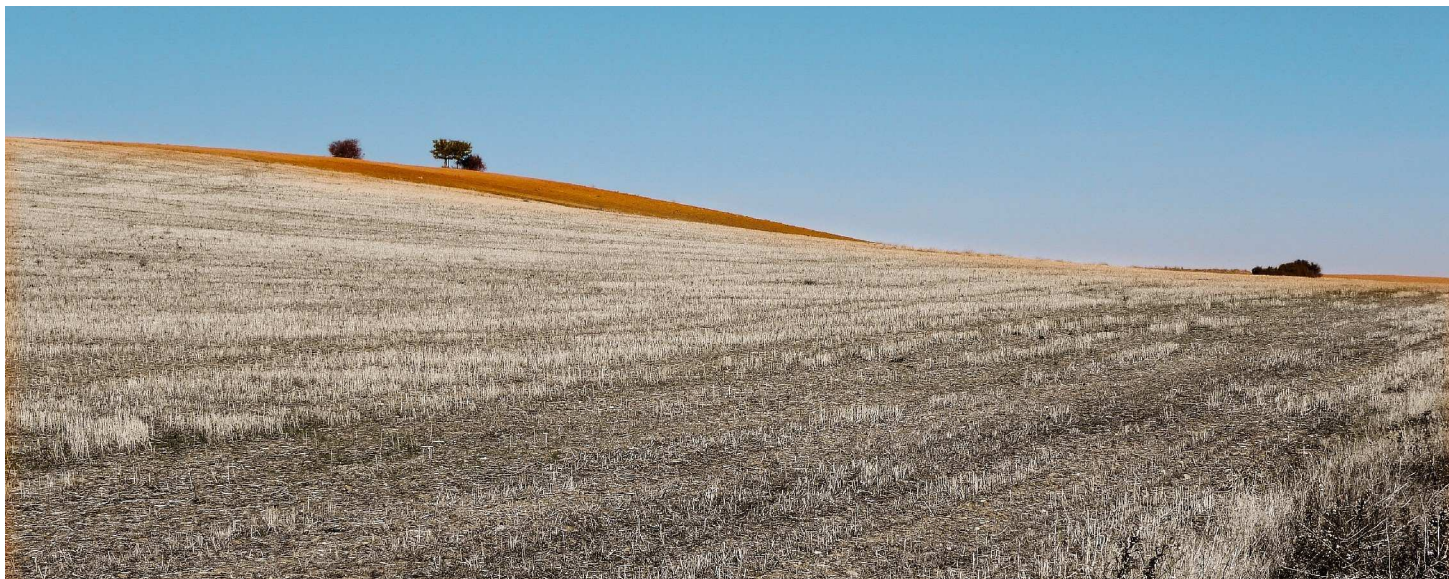






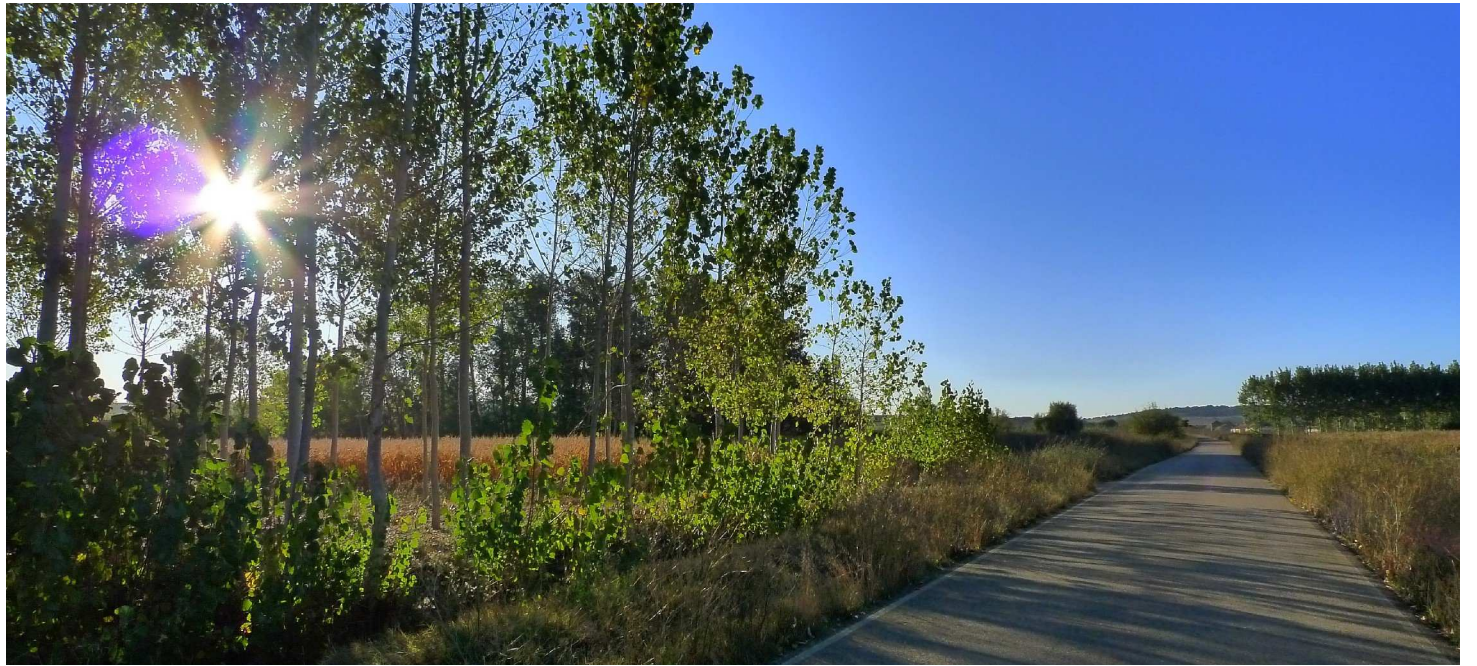
The answer to the question is it is dried mud





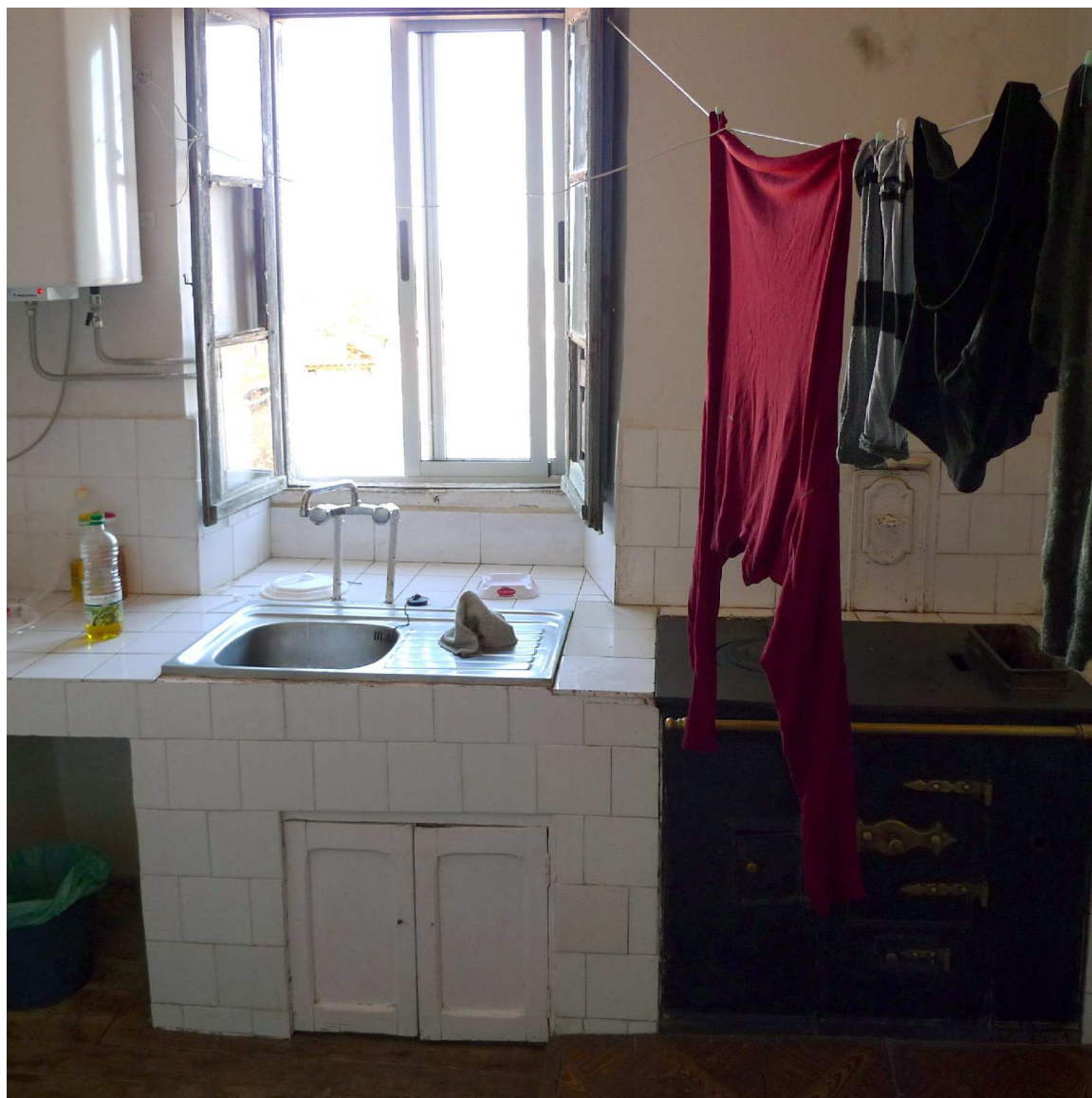








Drying washing, probably the biggest daily challenge.





















The End..... Now for the Alps.



