
FROM BIBLE'S WANDERINGS TO SPORT RIVALRY FOR MONEY – IN SEARCH OF THE ORIGIN OF WALKING

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Abstract:

Covering a distance on foot has been a part of human nature since the beginning of humankind. First forms of long walks occurred in prehistory, when primitive people walked thousands of kilometres from Africa to other continents. Mystic and real wanderings accompanied persons from the Bible in every part of the Holy Scriptures. The origins of modern athletics date back to the 18th century, when pedestrianism – a professional movement of walkers – became popular. Long-distance walks, even across continents, are an essential part of physical activity on the border of recreation, tourism, sport and fulfilment of personal ambitions. In the 21st century there are many forms of walking on foot – from Olympic sport, through mountain hikes, to Nordic walking.

In the history of humankind there has always been the need to move from point A to point B. This need often arises from the necessities of everyday life.

The first human wanderings are connected with the population of the Earth by early people, who appeared in Omo Kibish in Ethiopia circa 200,000 years ago. For thousands of years various fractions of humanity and ethnic groups left Africa and reached Europe (40,000-30,000 years ago), Asia and both Americas (20,000-15,000 years ago) on their own legs. These spectacular, centuries-long human walks are the longest form of pedestrian movement in history (Zwoliński 2013).

There is a long road from the history of pre-historic humans, which still remains a mystery to a certain extent, to the Christian tradition of the origin of humankind. However, this space has many common elements in the context of the subject-matter of this work.

Biblical stories provide invaluable information about walks, trips and long journeys of heroes of the then-existing world¹. Already the Book of Genesis contains information about the spreading of humanity to the entire globe. The Holy Scriptures inform: 'God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it"' (Genesis 1:26). The first human wandering was done by Adam and Eve after they had been forced to leave paradise – 'So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken' (Genesis 3:23). The necessity of a long walk became a curse of the first book of the Bible. After killing Abel, Cain made a forced pilgrimage from Eden: 'You will be a restless wanderer on the earth' (Genesis 4:12) and 'So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden' (Genesis 4:16). God's wrath was

¹ English translations of Biblical passages are quoted from the Holy Bible, New International Version (Biblica, Inc. 2011).

the reason of the dispersion of humankind after the failed attempt to build the Babel Tower: 'So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth' (Genesis 11:8). Apart from symbolic wanderings of early people on the earth, the Book of Genesis describes the first huge wandering of humankind – Abraham's journey from Ur to Harran and then to Bethel (near Jerusalem) – Table 1.

Going through from Mesopotamia to Egypt and the return to Hebron is one of the first multi-stage international wanderings of humankind. To avoid his brother's rage and find a wife, Jacob – Abraham's grandson and Isaac's son – sets out to his grandfather's land (to Harran). In the history of the 40-years-long wandering of Hebrews across Sinai, apart from many events of religious importance, the Bible describes the route, diet and everyday life of wanderers (Exodus 16:35).

Books of the New Testament contain also many fragments that are spectacular for experts in religious science and interesting for researchers of long walks. After the annunciation by the angel Gabriel, Mary went to the mountains to visit pregnant Elizabeth (Table 1). After the issue of a decree by the emperor Augustus, the Holy Family (Joseph, Mary and the yet unborn Jesus) set out on a journey from Galilee (Nazareth) to Judea (Bethlehem). They had to walk ca 120 km through Samaria, which was a demanding distance for pregnant Christ's Mother. Much longer was the route taken by Joseph, Mary and Jesus during their escape from King Herod – they walked a distance of ca 1,000 km from Bethlehem through Gaza to the area of Heliopolis and back to Nazareth.

The whole life of Jesus involved movement on foot. Numerous examples of Jesus' wanderings are quoted in all Gospels. They were connected with miraculous events (such as "crossing" the Lake of Gennesareth during the storm), teaching in many places of Galilee, Judea and Samaria and the final tragic walk of Jesus from Bethany to the Mount of Olives, with the final stage of the Way of the Cross.

The mission fulfilled by Jesus was handed down to Apostles. In his last will Jesus gave also some orders related to wandering, which is reflected by the following verses: 'So go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19) and 'you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria' (Acts 1:8). The most concrete fulfilment of Christ's instructions were travels of Saint Paul, which combined walks, journeys by water and other forms of ancient movement (Table 1). Distances of Paul's and Barnabas' wanderings were considerable: 160 km from Pisidia to Antiochia and 130 km from Antiochia to Iconium in Lycaonia.

Traditions of pedestrian religious wanderings are continued in contemporary cultures with various foundations and forms of spirituality.

According to *Mały Słownik Języka Polskiego* (PWN, 1995, p. 617), pilgrimage ('pielgrzymka') means a journey to sacred places and making a pilgrimage ('pielgrzymowanie') means wandering. In encyclopaedic data we can additionally read that pilgrimages are individual or group visits to sacred places, which can be rivers (e.g. the Ganges in India), mountains (e.g. Mount Fuji in Japan) or, most frequently, mystic religious places connected with holy scriptures, miracles or historical events (*Nowa Encyklopedia Powszechna*, PWN, 1996, p. 862).

Representatives of various religious associations are also perfectly aware of the need of travelling on foot for religious purposes. Pilgrimages to Mecca, the main religious centre of Islam, are a primary part of Muslim religious practice. A 'hajj' – a pilgrimage to the Sacred House, a cube-shaped building covered with a black silk curtain – is a duty and an honour for hundreds of thousands of Muslims. Similar importance and magical power is attached to destinations of pilgrimages for the Hindu (Waranasi) and for Zen Buddhists (Lhasa in Tibet) (Zwoliński, pp. 31-32).

Table 1. Selected fragments of the Bible describing wanderings of heroes of various books of the Holy Scriptures.

Biblical wandering	Book	Quotation
1. First wanderings of Abraham (Ur-Harran-Bethel-Egypt-Hebron)	Genesis 12:1-9	‘The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you”’ (1) ‘So Abram went, as the Lord had told him...’ (4) ‘...and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.’ (5) ‘Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem...’ (6) ‘Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt...’ (10)
Jacob’s wanderings (Habron-Harran)	Genesis 28:10-11 Genesis 29:1	‘Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set’ ‘Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples’ [Mesopotamia]
Big wanderings of Moses across Sinai (Leading the Israelites out of Egypt-Red Sea-Mount Horeb-Kadesh)	Exodus 12:51 Exodus 13:18 Numbers 33:8 Isaiah 43:16 Exodus 16:1 Exodus 16:35	‘And on that very day the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt by their divisions’ ‘So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle’ ‘They left Pi Hahiroth and passed through the sea into the desert, and when they had traveled for three days in the Desert of Etham, they camped at Marah’ ‘This is what the Lord says he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters’ ‘The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt’ ‘The Israelites ate manna forty years... until they reached the border of Canaan’
Wanderings of the Holy Family	Luke 1:39-40 Luke 2:3-4 Matthew 2:13 Matthew 2:19-20	At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea’ ‘And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea’ ‘When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the Child and his Mother and escape to Egypt”’ ‘After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said: “Get up,” he said, “Get up, take the Child and his Mother and go to the land of Israel”’
Wanderings of Jesus	Matthew 9:35 Luke 8:1 John 5:1 Mark 14:16-17	‘Jesus went through all the towns and villages...’ ‘After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God’ ‘Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals’ ‘The disciples left, went into the city... . When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve’
Travels of St. Paul	Acts 13:13-14 Acts 13:51	‘From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem’ From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch’ ‘So they [Paul and Barnabas] shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium’

The Catholic part of the Polish society has a wide choice of routes for physical effort and religious meditation. Most destinations of pilgrimages are places of worship of Mary.

The most popular destinations of Polish pilgrims' journeys include Częstochowa/Jasna Góra, Kraków/Łagiewniki, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Licheń, Saint Anne's Mountain and Piekary Śląskie. The number of people making annual pilgrimages to Częstochowa, often from remote parts of the country, reaches 5 million. Apart from that, the media inform about spontaneous walks inspired by the will to have a deep religious experience. On 24 March 2013, on the initiative of Rev. Jacek Stryczek – the president of the Wiosna Association, a night Way of the Cross was organised on the route from Kraków to Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. Some of the participants walked even 12 hours during the frosty weather (TVP, 24 March 2013).

The most popular pilgrimage route in Europe is the road to Santiago de Compostela in north-western Spain. Due to the fame of this place and different fates of pilgrims, there is a number of ways leading to St. James' shrine in Santiago de Compostela. The Way of St. James has a 1000-year tradition and is destined for individual pilgrims and small groups. One of the longest routes leads from Vilnius through Poland, Germany, Belgium, France to Spain. Via Regina is also a challenge for pedestrian pilgrims. Polish traditions of kilometre-long intermediary walks encompass many "ways of St. James". The Wielkopolska route is 235 km long (between Gniezno and Głogów), the Małopolska route is 205 km long (Sandomierz-Kraków) and the branch of Via Regina (Korczowa-Kraków-Sosnowiec-Zgorzelec) is as much as 918 km long. Solitary walks on such long distances combine religious purposes with a test of physical condition of pilgrims, who are often not prepared for efforts.

The movement of professional (in the first period) and amateur walkers was formed at the turn of the 19th century. According to some sport historians, pedestrianism – the original form of race walking – was the first organised form of modern athletics. Originally, pedestrianism was identified with movement on foot, irrespective of its manner (walking, walking & running, running). In the years 1910-1930 news about runners' feats were published in Australian magazines in the 'Pedestrianism' column. For instance, the Saturday issue of *Barrier Miner* from Melbourne dated 26 April 1930 informs on page 1: 'Pedestrianism: Nurmi for Australia if the crowds are good' (www.nla.gov.au, dated 10 January 2013). Only the establishment of the "fair heel and toe" formula led to the acceptance of the rules of race walking, which definitely forbids the flight phase. The races that lasted many hours or even days and wagered sums of money (50-4,000 \$) thrilled the audience and increased the popularity of dailies, such as *The New York Clipper* or *The Sprint of the Times*. In the middle of the 19th century, pedestrian races were as popular as boxing, baseball, cricket, rowing, horse-racing, rooster and dog fights, and... rat-catching (Cumming 1981, pp. 37-44).

According to some sport historians, pedestrianism was the first athletic event in which rules of training and competition were determined in a fully professional manner. McNabb et al. (2001, p. xxxi) even say that 'pedestrianism anticipated amateur athletics by nearly 200 years.' Kinds of competition included match-racing, time- and distance-based competitions, handicap-racing or scratch-racing in the context of festivities and rural sport.

Pedestrianism, a book by the Scottish writer Walter Thom (1813), was a cult publication on the subject of pedestrianism. This book is regarded as the first athletics manual. Thom (1813), Cumming (1981), Sears (2001) and many others emphasise the pioneer role of Foster Powell – an 18th-century race walker promoting long forms of walks. In 1764 Powell walked 50 miles (80.5 km) within 7 hours and 20 years later it took him 24 hours to walk a distance of 112 miles (180 km). However, Powell's most spectacular feat was his walk from London to York and back, which he completed within 5 days, 15 hours and 15 minutes at the age of 57 (Sears 2001).

Long-term walking efforts became popular among women, too. With a view to effort potential, sport and university organisations in the USA created their own model of women's walks. In 1837, a daily 1-mile walk was recommended to women at Mount Holyoke College. Further initiatives of university centres increased this amount of effort to 30 minutes a day (1860 – Northwestern University, 1862 – Elmira College) – Tricard (1996). The first women's walking clubs were established in the USA in 1891 (University of Nebraska). The problems dealt with by these clubs concerned not only rules and forms of preparation, but also the costume of a 19th-century woman practicing walks. At that time, women's walking competitions began to be organised, too; as in the case of men, there were large sums of money to win.

The decade of the 1870s was called „walking mania” in the USA (Walder 1976). The first recorded achievement of an American woman walker was a 700-miles walk of Lulu Loomer at the East Coast, but the most famous achievements were walking races won by Ada Anderson and Bertha Von Berg. In 1878, in Brooklyn's Mozart Hall, Ada Anderson walked 28 days at a pace of 0.25 miles for every 15 minutes. Altogether, she walked 2700 x 440 m (=1,188 km) and won 10,000 \$, which was quite a large sum at that time (Tricard 1996, p. 5).

One of the biggest events of women's extreme pedestrianism in the 19th century was a walking “match” that took place for 6 days at Gilmore's Garden in the “go as you please” system. On 26 March 1879, at 11 p.m., in the atmosphere of contemporary boxing fights, a race for the champion belt and the prize of 1000 \$ began, in which 18 women walkers took part. The six-days walking event attracted women representing various nationalities, professions and levels of preparation.

In *The National Police Gazette* of 12 April 1879 there is an extensive coverage of this event, including descriptions of most participants. We can read, for example, about Miss Lola working as a trapeze circus artist and Rosie Von Klamasch, an Austrian woman speaking several languages, a mother of 6 children (5 of whom died very early) abandoned by her husband, who had squandered her fortune. Von Klamasch walked 296 miles within 6 days, whereas the winner Bertha Von Berg (whose real name was Maggie Von Gross) walked a total of 372 miles (Tricard 1996).

One of the most charismatic 19th-century pedestrians was Captain Robert Barclay Allardice (the 6th Laird of Ury). Born on 25 August 1779 as a descendant of the line of earls, Allardice was the son of Sarah Anne Allardice – a descendant of John Allardice, the first 14th-century earl, and Robert Barclay, 5th of Ury. Robert Barclay was an extremely active man. He was noted for exceptional strength – already at the age of 20 he could lift a man weighing 110 kg and put him on the table only with one hand. At the same age, he could lift a weight of 0.5 tons (Radford 2012). However, it was Captain Barclay's feats in multi-hour walks that brought him the biggest fame. His nickname “The Celebrated Pedestrian” was fully deserved – during 50 years he walked thousands of kilometres, won much money and prepared methodological rules of professional foot-racing (acc. to McNobb et al., 2001).

The sport career of the descendent of the Allardice family began in August 1796, when the 15-year-old Robert took part in a classic (toe-and-heel) walking competition on Croydon Road. The wager for walking 6 miles within 1 hour was the amount of 100 guineas. Two years later the 17-year-old Barclay defeated a racer named Ferguson by walking a distance of 70 miles within 14 hours. In November 1800 Captain Barclay competed with Mr Fletch in a 90-mile race for a wager of 500 guineas. Barclay walked this distance within 21 hours. Selected achievements of one of the earls from the Allardice family after 1800 are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Selected long-distance walks of Robert Barclay

Date	Route	Time
1801	110 miles in a muddy park	19 hrs 27 min.
1801	90 miles	20 hrs 22 min. 4 sec.
1802	64 miles	10 hrs
1805	72 miles	between breakfast and supper
1806	100 miles over bad roads	19 hrs
1807	78 miles on a hilly road	14 hrs
1808	A multi-stage walk: - 30 miles for grouse hunting - 60 miles: return home in Ury 16 miles from Ury to Laurence Kirk for business purposes - dancing at a party - 16 miles: return to Ury next for partridge hunting Total: 130 miles; 2 nights and 3 days without sleep	From 5 a.m. till 5 p.m. (dinner) 11 hours At 7 a.m.
1809 1.06-12.07	Walking 1 mile in each of successive 1000 hours (Newmarket)	Average: from 14 min. 54 sec. to 21 min. 4 sec.
1810-1811	Walk twice a week 51 min. for hunting and return by night	
1812	Walk 3 times a week 33 miles (in both directions) for hunting	

Today, in the age of football and professional boxing fights, it is hard to believe that pedestrianism was the most popular sport in the 18th century. One of the persons who contributed to the popularisation of professional walking races was Edward Payson Weston (born 1839). In 1860, during the presidential campaign and election of Abraham Lincoln, Weston decided to take a walk from Boston to Washington. He walked 50 miles every day (altogether 478 miles). Weston did not believe in Lincoln's victory; he made a wager... and he lost. The walk for the inauguration of Lincoln's presidency brought Weston much popularity and started his "walking" career, which lasted till very old age. Even at the age of 71 he walked through the United States at the pace of 47 miles per diem for 77 days (Marshall 2008; Harris and et al. 2012).

The need to travel long distances on foot is reflected by the history of continental walks. In 1890, John Ennis walked from New York to San Francisco within 80 days. Over a period of more than 100 years, dozens of American enthusiasts of solitary long-distance walks have travelled on foot from eastern to western America and vice versa. They are representatives of various professions and age groups, both men and women. W 1984, the American woman Annabel Marsh walked 3,200 miles from San Francisco to Washington within 126 days (www.ultrawalking.es; 21.02.21). The ranking available at the Wikipedia website (as on 10 February 2013) includes 62 persons whose history of walking across the United States was published online. It is worth quoting two histories. In 2007 Joe Casamassina (musician and teacher) walked 10 states within 3 months to collect money for the treatment of multiple sclerosis. Even more impressive is the feat of Helga Estby and his daughter Clara, who walked across America for seven months from May 1896, shortly after the inauguration of the Olympic Games in Athens, and finished their journey in Washington on Christmas Eve. The women were equipped with a compass, a pepper spray and a gun (for defence purposes).

The reasons for undertaking an effort that lasts many weeks are different. The walk of Peter Jenkins and his wife Barbara, which lasted from 5 July 1976 till 18 January 1999, was their way of life. Within 3 years they visited successive states, got married and took an active part in local people's life. Their rich factographic materials and numerous photographs were presented, among others, in *National Geographic* (Jenkins P., Jenkins B., 1979).

Continental walks are not specific to the United States only. In 1999, Serge Girard walked 4,000 km from Perth to Sydney. It took him 46 days to travel across Australia. Jacques Martin walked a shorter distance (3,300 km) across the Sahara within 55 days. The biggest challenge was H. Telford's walk from Anchorage in Alaska to Halifax in Canada. It took him 106 days, 18 hours and 45 minutes to walk a distance of 8,224 km (www.ultrawalking.es).

The most recent "invention" of people who enjoy travelling on foot is Nordic walking. The 1970s were a "boom" of amateur running, and its original English name 'jogging' has had no equivalent terms in other languages so far.

The turn of the century seems to be dominated by another type of physical effort "on two legs" – Nordic walking. As in the case of jogging, marches and increasingly faster walks with the use of sticks have retained their original name.

Nordic walking is one of many forms of strolls, marches and walks being practiced at the beginning of the 21st century. The popular website for walkers – www.eracewalk.com – distinguishes as many as 12 types of walkers, including pleasure walkers, hikers, long walkers (20-50 km) and ultra-distance walkers (from 50 miles to multiday walks).

Walkers from the Nordic walking group are the most prevalent and most recreational group moving on foot without the flight phase. However, if we regard Nordic walking as a typically recreational form of activity, we are wrong. Nordic walking has its own supreme sports association that organises championships, including world championships, and certifies records. As in the case of athletic race walking, these records encompass many distances. For example, the record in „walking with sticks" on a distance of 100 km on the athletic track is 13 hours, 19 minutes and 9 seconds and was achieved in Ibiza in 2011 by the Spanish walker Bernabe Rodriguez (www.worldrankingnordicwalking.weebly.com: 10 January 2013). He walked 175 km within 24 hours in accordance with the rules of the foundation, whereas the best result among women is 140 km.

As a result of the evolution (or maybe sophistication) of walks with sticks, the technique of walking is subject to changes; in the 1980s the dominant form was 'exerstrider' (the American version), then the time of the Finnish method 'sauvakävely' came, and the currently prevalent technique is 'fittrek' developed by the American Dan Barret. The description of methods of walking would be incomplete without an interference of sport.

Because of the development of professional sport and the subsequent acceptance of the Olympic Idea, walks regulated by rules have become an important part of athletics. The first results recognised as "records of the world" were noted in the 1840s.

On 21 June 1848 in Hounslow, the British walker Samuel East walked 30 miles on the track within 4 hours and 58 minutes. It is the first registered record in walking (Rasmussen and Lassen, 1985). The choice of distances for record achievements in race walking from before 150 years was huge – from a 0.25-mile walk (=440 yards, i.e. ca 40 m) to a 24-hour distance. Just for the sake of facts, the result achieved by the professional walker William Perkins on a distance of 440 yards in 1874 is 1 min. 22 sec., and the achievement of the same athlete in a 3-month walking race (1877) amounted to 35 km and 605 m.

The first Olympic Games in Athens (1896) opened new possibilities of sport rivalry. Although initially race walking was not accepted as an Olympic event, after 10 years during the "Interolympic Games" in 1906 2 short-distance walking races took place, which started an over 100-years-old history of race walking at the Olympic Games.

In the first Olympic walking race (30 April 1906), Richard Wilkinson from England and Eugen Spiegler from Austria were the first to reach the finishing line. However, their technique was not approved by referees and, after their disqualification, the American George Bonhag became the winner. Such a situation occurred frequently in the 19th century, but Bonhag was a runner who had learned the technique of walking only a few days before the

competition. His teacher was the Canadian Donald Linden, who finished the first Olympic walking race at the 2nd place (Wallechinsky and Loucky, 2012).

Olympic Games abounded in interesting events not only from the historical sport perspective. Here it is worth mentioning the huge Polish contribution to the development of walking. Originally a student of the Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Robert Korzeniowski is a 4-time Olympic gold medalist. Korzeniowski is also on the list of world record holders in a 50 km walk due to the result achieved at the European Championships in Munich in 2002 – 3:36,39 (Butler 2012).

However, the Polish race walker gained biggest recognition for three gold medals won at the Summer Olympics (2000, 2004, 2008) in a 50 km walk. Robert Korzeniowski is an exceptional person in the history of walks and races. He devoted his young life only to one goal – be the best walker in the world. In his manual for ‘being a professional’, he writes: ‘I must focus on my own emotions and reach the most important conclusions for the next year. Only this helps me go farther, even for the next seven days’ (Korzeniowski and Barton-Smoczyńska 2011:113).

Robert Korzeniowski’s outlook on a sports career, successes and philosophy of life allow us to compare him to Robert Barclay. Two hundred years of rivalry in walks are bound together by basic elements of successes in sport: aptitudes, work and passion (Iskra 2005).

Irrespective of the complexities of evolution and the variety of walks and strolls, one thing is certain. The first step of a small child and the last step of Robert Korzeniowski in Olympic race walking arouse similar emotions (Iskra and et al. 2008).

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