

# Pilgrimage as a universal phenomenon

Pilgrimage is an anthropological phenomenon that has been present in all civilizations over the course of history due to its geographical and chronological dispersion and its importance and repercussions for culture and society.



## PILGRIMAGE AS ALLEGORY

In pilgrimage there is a special relationship between the earthly and the holy. The physical effort required to reach the pilgrim's goal is a metaphor for man's spiritual journey through life, full of sacrifices and abnegation in order to achieve renewal of the spirit, glory, paradise or eternal salvation depending on their particular beliefs.

## PILGRIMAGES AROUND THE WORLD

There is evidence of pilgrimages in ancient times in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece. In Hinduism there were frequent pilgrimages to rivers among other places; in Buddhism they are associated with relics of the Buddha himself or events in his life. Shintoism has many places on which worshippers descend because they are thought to be inhabited by kami and the spirits of nature.

The three great monotheist religions have important sites that receive thousands of pilgrims: Jerusalem, Rome, Santiago and Mecca are the best known.

## CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGE

The places related with the life of Jesus, his disciples and the first martyrs soon became centres of worship and a destination for pilgrims, as Christianity took on the Jewish tradition of pilgrimage as part of its own faith.

Freedom of worship and the imposition of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century led to the expansion and multiplication of these sites. The tombs of the Apostles and the Martyrs or their relics became important sites for pilgrimage in the Middle Ages.

In the 16th century the sale of indulgences, the exaggerated veneration of relics and other excesses led to criticism both from within the Catholic Church by Erasmus of Rotterdam and from outside it by Martin Luther.

## THE THREE GREAT CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGES

Jerusalem is in the centre of a large region (the Holy Land) with many interesting places with links to the early days of Christianity, while Rome is the seat of the Papacy and has countless holy sites that have also attracted large numbers of pilgrims since the dawn of Christianity.

Santiago de Compostela became a pilgrimage site after the discovery of the body of St James the Great in the 9th century, attracting since then large numbers of pilgrims.



# Pilgrimage and the Camino de Santiago (I)

The discovery of a tomb with remains attributed to St James the Great (Santiago in Spanish) in the westernmost tip of Europe around 820 A.D. marked the beginning of the cult of the Apostle and the pilgrimage to his tomb.



## ST JAMES. HISTORY, TRADITION AND LEGEND

The historical references about the life and evangelization of St James the Great, and about the events that led to the discovery of his tomb have always been shrouded in tradition and legend. Although the legend regarding the burial of the Apostle in *Gallaecia* predates its discovery by Teodomiro, the Bishop of Iria, the documents that describe the finding and the transporting of the body from Jerusalem were written after the event, often with a particular intention in mind.

From the 6th Century there was a widespread belief that the Apostles were buried where they had been preaching and according to Western tradition Saint James had been preaching in *Hispania* (Roman Spain and Portugal). This explains why prior to the discovery of his relics (*inventio*) there were various writings that described ancient traditions, passed on possibly by the Visigoth Church, that pointed to Finis Terrae as his last resting place.

### History. St James as a disciple of Jesus.

There are few historic details of the life of Saint James the Great. The Gospels state that he was the son of Zebedee and Mary Salome and the brother of fellow Apostle, Saint John the Evangelist, while the Acts of the Apostles tell of his beheading in Jerusalem by order of King Herod Agrippa between the years 42 and 44 AD.

### Tradition. The evangelization of Hispania

As opposed to the Eastern traditions that contend that St James preached in Judea and Samaria, Western tradition credits him with the evangelization of Hispania. This new religion may well have been brought to Iberia by Roman soldiers together with other oriental cults. Rome was aware of the geostrategic value of north-west *Hispania* because of its huge gold resources, essential for the maintenance of its vast empire.

### Legend. The *Translatio*

The legend of the transporting (*translatio*) of St James' body to Galicia recounts that after his beheading, his disciples recovered his body in Jaffa and carried it miraculously by sea to Iria Flavia. There they asked Queen Lupa for a place to bury him and she sent them to the Roman Legate in Duio, who ordered their imprisonment. However an angel came and freed them. Lupa tried to trick them again by sending them to Mount Ilicino in search of oxen to move the body. In fact the oxen were fighting bulls, which by a miracle were tamed. Finally, Lupa converted to Christianity and offered them a place to bury Saint James in Mount Libredón.

# The Pilgrimage and the Camino de Santiago (II)

The different accounts of the discovery of the sepulchre of Saint James date the finding to the period when Alfonso II was King of Asturias (791-842) and Teodomiro was Bishop of Iria (819-847). This discovery gave rise to the pilgrimage and the network of routes known as the Camino de Santiago.



## DISCOVERY AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE BODY

The appearance of the apostle's body was part of the mediaeval tradition of miraculous discoveries of relics, the most sacred of all objects for Christians. It was an event of enormous consequence in both political and religious terms, offering an additional incentive for King Alfonso II in the consolidation of the Kingdom of Asturias and an opportunity for the remotest diocese in *Hispania* to claim apostolic origin.

### La inventio Aparece una nueva reliquia

The appearance of a new relic Prior to the discovery of the sepulchre there were many stories about its location and veneration in *Gallaecia*. Legend has it that Pelayo, the Hermit saw some mysterious lights in the nearby wood (*Libredón*) about which he informed Teodomiro, the Bishop of Iria, who, after fasting and praying, discovered the sepulchre said to be that of St James. King Alfonso II confirmed the finding and built a modest church on the site in 834, the origin of what is today Santiago Cathedral.

### A Roman Mausoleum For whom?

The sepulchre identified as the tomb of St James is a mausoleum dating from the 1st and 2nd century A.D. It has been severely altered and allegedly christianized to house the bodies of St James and his disciples Athanasius and Theodore. Other hypotheses consider it to be the tomb of Priscilian, a heretic bishop executed in Trier (Germany) in the 4th century.



## THE DIFFERENT ROUTES TO SANTIAGO

The southward shift in the frontiers with Moorish Iberia in the 11th century made the Camino safer, enabling the consolidation of the pilgrimage, which arose out of the need to integrate northern Hispania into the rest of Europe both spiritually and politically. The Camino Francés or French Way enjoyed the support of the Church, the Monarchy and the Nobility and quickly became the most important route.

### The birth of the Camino de Santiago

In symbolic terms, the Camino de Santiago is sometimes viewed as a reflection on earth of the trail marked out in the firmament by the Milky Way on its journey towards the ends of the Earth (*Finis Terrae*). Ancient traditions regard Charlemagne as the true creator of the Camino. St James (Santiago) appeared to him in a dream and asked him to liberate the lands occupied by the 'Saracens' and open a way to his tomb



## The routes in the Iberian Peninsula. European routes

The different pilgrimage routes inevitably converge the closer they come to Santiago. Seven different *caminos* reach the city, namely the French, Primitive, Northern, English, Portuguese, Finisterre-Muxía and Silver Ways; there is also a route called Mar de Arousa y Ulla which commemorates the *Traslatio*. Most of them extend far beyond Galicia, branching out towards important sites in the St James tradition in the Iberian peninsula and beyond into Europe



## THE PILGRIM TO SANTIAGO

The pilgrim is the leading actor of the pilgrimage to Compostela. The act of pilgrimage led to the birth of the Camino, the different infrastructures along the way, the rules protecting the walkers, and an immense set of tangible and intangible elements that have made this pilgrimage special.

### Motivations Travel books Means of transport Clothing

The pilgrimage to Santiago was inspired by religious conviction. It is interpreted as a “way of perfection” and is walked for various reasons: religious devotion, to ask for the grace of God, humanist or chivalrous values, or even forced pilgrimages imposed as a punishment.

Today meditation, escapism and diverse cultural, ecological, sporting and esoteric reasons are among the many cited for making the pilgrimage to Compostela.

*The Pilgrim's Guide* (Book V of the Codex Calixtinus) is an exceptional 12th Century guide book offering information of interest to those on pilgrimage to Compostela. Other books (itineraries, guides and chronicles) also provide important sources for research into the pilgrimage. Right from the beginning, most pilgrims made the journey on foot. The use of animals or carriages was a privilege.

In the beginning the pilgrims wore typical walking clothes. A cape that was not too long, a cloak, a pellegrina, a broad rimmed hat and strong shoes. Over time clothing became standardized making it

## Urban development and infrastructures

In the 11th century the Camino attracted craftsmen and traders from all over Europe to settle in Santiago. The Camino had a decisive influence on the areas it traversed, with new towns being created and various infrastructures that made the pilgrimage easier.

easier to identify pilgrims: the staff (*baculus*), the basket (*esportilla*), and the sporran (*escarcela*), all became distinctive items used by pilgrims, often accompanied by a gourd in which to carry water or wine. These were decorated with the scallop shells and miniature staffs typical of the Camino.

For their return journey home, pilgrims would often take souvenirs made in Compostela, including scallop shells, crucifixes, amulets, necklaces, rosary beads, sculptures of St James, liturgical objects and medals with the image of St James.

### Protection and assistance of pilgrims The Order of Santiago

Rules were gradually established to protect the pilgrims and institutions arose to help them on their way to Santiago. Health care has always been an essential part of the Camino and from the 9th century onwards hospitals were founded all along the route.

The Order of Santiago founded by King Ferdinand II in 1170 provided an essential service to the pilgrims guaranteeing their security along the different routes. In the 13th century it was the richest military order with countless possessions in the Iberian Peninsula.

# The Pilgrimage and the Camino de Santiago (III)

The objects and rituals related with the pilgrimage to Santiago; the links between the Camino and music, literature and art; the varied iconography of the Apostle, and the worldwide spread of the cult of St James are the main themes on this floor.



## SYMBOLS, RITUALS AND DOCUMENTS OF THE PILGRIMAGE

### Scallop shells, staffs and crosses of Santiago

The symbol par excellence of the Camino de Santiago pilgrim is the **scallop shell** just as the True Cross or the crossed keys are symbols for Rome and the palm leaf for Jerusalem and the Holy Land. The shell was sold at the Northern entrance to the Cathedral under strict ecclesiastic control. Hanging from or sewn into their clothes it confirmed their status as a pilgrim. It has a healing power and its resemblance to a hand symbolizes good deeds as explained in the sermon *Veneranda dies* from the Codex Calixtino. The shells were made of metal so enhancing the church-controlled monopoly.

Other features such as the staffs (crossed or not under the shell) or the **Cross of Santiago** are exclusive symbols of the Camino pilgrimage. The Cross is the insignia of the Order of Knights of

Santiago. Its shape represents the defence of the Christian faith and the sword, the weapon used in this defence. Other symbols include: the sporran, the hat, the cape and a picture of the saint or the basilica.

### Rituals and documents

The pilgrimage is full of rituals from start to finish. The pilgrim prepares himself before leaving home. He may make a will and receive the traditional attributes of the pilgrim (blessing of the staffs and sporrans). On the way he visits shrines and often performs rituals sometimes with pagan roots in rivers or fountains. He may even carry a stone as a form of penance, which he later throws into a *milladoiro* or heap of stones. Completion of the pilgrimage can be accredited in a written document. From the 15th century onwards pilgrims were given certificates known as “compostelas”.



## THE LITERATURE AND MUSIC OF THE PILGRIMAGE

Literature and music are important features of all pilgrimages, a fact most evident in the pilgrimage to Santiago. The *Codex Calixtinus* contains examples of the first Western music for various voices: with music for prayer and for the liturgy of St James; the cathedrals, monasteries and libraries along the Camino also have prayer music and music for religious festivities. In all countries of Christian tradition there are songs that refer to the pilgrimage to Santiago. *La Grande Chanson* and the *Jakobslied* are well-known examples of guides that were sung for centuries. Classical music, theatre and literature are full of references to the Pilgrimage.



## SYMBOLS, RITUALS AND DOCUMENTS OF THE PILGRIMAGE

The Apostle St James the Great is one of the most diversely represented figures in Christian iconography. The expansion of his cult across Europe and since the 16th Century across America led to his image being adapted to suit the different devotional and political needs of the time.

### St James: Apostle and martyr

In the oldest images he is depicted with the typical attributes of all the Apostles: tunic and cloak, holy book and bare feet. Often his name or a brief phrase about him would appear in a scroll or sign.



### St James the Pilgrim

From the 12th century onwards St James was normally portrayed as a pilgrim both because he was sent by Jesus to embark on a long journey to evangelize Hispania and because he was identified with the pilgrims who walk towards his tomb. He is represented with a large staff (bordón), a sporran (escarcela), a gourd, hat, cape and scallop shells, accompanied at times by miniature staffs that adorned his clothes.

### St James the Knight

The image of St James as a soldier on horseback supporting the Christian troops is documented for the first time in the mid-12th Century. Tradition relates this with earlier events (Battle of Clavijo in 844, Conquest of Coimbra in 1064 and others). St James is shown mounted on a white horse, with a sword, shield and/or standard with “infidels” at his feet or leading the Christian troops.

## SAINT JAMES IN THE WORLD: SPAIN, EUROPE AND AMERICA

The incredibly wide dispersion of the cult of St James is due to different factors amongst others his being one of Jesus’ closest disciples. The discovery of his body at the remote end of Europe led many Christians to make the pilgrimage to his tomb, at a time (the Middle Ages) when pilgrimages and the worship of relics were in vogue.

In Spain, the cult of St James has ancient roots and was manifested in the construction of churches, chapels and places to shelter in his honour. The news of the discovery of the tomb of the Apostle and the attempt to link it with Charlemagne led to the spread of the cult across Europe.

The international expansion of Hispanic traditions and culture that came with the overseas discoveries made by Castile and Portugal took the cult of St James to all five continents. Many of the colonial settlements were established under the protection of the Apostle Santiago.

The figure of St James, which the monarchy had been using as a symbol of the political and religious unity of Spain, would also play an important role in the conquest and colonization of America after its discovery in 1492. Both the conquistadors and the missionaries that accompanied them used the figure of St James the Knight as an ally in their quest.

# The city of Santiago de Compostela

## Santiago Cathedral

This room describes the origins of the city of Santiago. The place where the remains of the Apostle were discovered gradually became a place of worship. Here you can see how the building progressed from a shrine to a basilica and later to a cathedral.



### A PLACE OF WORSHIP. THE EVOLUTION OF THE SHRINE

In origin Santiago de Compostela may have been a place of pre-Christian worship. The remains identified as the tomb of the Apostle St James appear to be a mausoleum built during the High Roman Empire (1st-2nd centuries AD) in a necropolis in which among other remains, various funeral inscriptions have been found.

The attribution of the tomb to St James was the beginning or perhaps the continuation of profound transformations in its structure and in the surrounding area, in which a small rural hamlet known as Locus Sancti Iacobi emerged. An early church was soon replaced by a larger one, which together with other religious and defensive constructions gave the place an urban dimension by the tenth century.

From the 11th Century onwards with the increase in pilgrimages and the support of the monarchy and the papacy, the Church in Compostela embarked on a grand project to build a shrine in keeping with its status as the last resting place of an Apostle. The Romanesque Church became the seat of the diocese and was transformed into the “Holy Apostolic Metropolitan Cathedral of Saint James”.

#### The mausoleum as the origin of the city

The surviving remains of the mausoleum are open to varied interpretations. It is a square plan construction that may once have had two floors. The lower floor is divided into two rooms: one with the remains of a late-Roman mosaic and another with brick tombs along the walls. Tradition has it that the remains of St James were in the first room, while those of his disciples Athanasius and Theodore were in the second. It is thought that on the upper floor there was a primitive altar for the worship of the Apostle. This upper part was removed in the Romanesque restructuring of the basilica. Christian burials from the 5th Century have also been documented, although it seems that the site was abandoned in the 7th Century.

#### The shrine

The shrine we see today is the result of the transformation of the tomb into a place of worship. Various building works were carried out immediately after the discovery to protect the relics and organize their worship. In the 9th Century Kings Alfonso II and Alfonso III of Asturias promoted the construction of successive shrines above the burial site, which became known as the “first and second basilica”. Towards the end of the 11th century the ever-increasing number of pilgrims meant that a new church had to be designed to replace the previous one. It had to be big enough to combine the different rituals of the cult of the Saint and the pilgrimage. Built in the Romanesque style, with slight modifications it survives today.



## The basilicas of Alfonso II and Alfonso III

Around the year 830 Alfonso II built a small church above the sepulchre about which we have very little information. It probably had a single rectangular nave and a separate baptistery to the North. When Alfonso III replaced this building with a new one, he explained that this was because the previous church was small and of poor quality. The new basilica was consecrated in the year 899 and was built in the particular style of pre-Romanesque constructions in Asturias. It was bigger and as well as a broad apse that was large enough to house several altars and the sepulchre, it had three naves and a portico in the main western entrance. Its decoration included late Roman and Visigoth elements from al-Andalus. After being razed to the ground by Almanzor in the year 997, this basilica was reconstructed by Bishop Pedro de Mezonzo.

## The Romanesque basilica

In 1075 work began on the Romanesque apse according to the model for a “church of pilgrimage” which would allow the simultaneous celebration of the cult above the sepulchre and the flow of pilgrims taking part in other rituals. The first phase was completed around 1088. The second phase took place during the mandate of Bishop Diego Gelmírez (1093-1140): the apse was finished, they organized the *Capilla Mayor* and the crossing with its facades, and progress was made with the main arm. The last Romanesque phase coincided with the arrival of the master-builder Maestro Mateo in 1168 during which time the final stages, including the *Pórtico de la Gloria*, were constructed and the problem with the sloping terrain under the west façade was solved. The Romanesque Cathedral was consecrated in 1211.

## The Gothic project

Archbishop Juan Arias (1238-1266) commissioned important building works in the Cathedral including a cloister in keeping with the rest of the church and with the refined ceremony used in the religious celebrations of the time. It had a complex decorative system with motifs taken from the master-builder Maestro Mateo. For its part the unfinished project of the Gothic apse provided the basilica with a large ceremonial space on its east side, although various social problems prevented them from continuing the building work. The northern side was only partially executed and today lies under the stairs in the Plaza de la Quintana. The crossing tower we see today and the foundations of the clock tower were built between the end of the 14th and 15th centuries, so reinforcing the Cathedral's defensive appearance.

## The Renaissance and Baroque Cathedral

The most important building project in the 16th century was the replacement of the mediaeval cloister with a new one in Renaissance style. The work of Juan de Álava and Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, it involved substantial changes to the southern part of the Cathedral. In the 17th century work began to transform the exterior of the basilica lending it the eminently Baroque appearance it has today. This job was done by architects and master-builders such as Vega y Verdugo, Juan Peña de Toro, Domingo de Andrade, Fernando de Casas y Novoa, Lucas Ferro Caaveiro, Clemente Fernández Sarela, Domingo Luis Monteagudo, Ventura Rodríguez and others. Other important works were also carried out inside the cathedral with the building of new chapels (Cristo de Burgos, Pilar...), while other spaces were refitted, such as the Capilla Mayor with its baldachin canopy, etc.



# The city of Santiago de Compostela

From the year 1000 onwards Santiago became a city of great religious, political, economic and cultural importance. Religious, political, educational and health care institutions were established which would leave their mark on the city, its society and economy.



## ECONOMIC AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

From the Middle Ages onwards, Santiago was the best known city in Galicia at an international level. A large proportion of the population earned their living as craftsmen or traders or lived on income from capital. In the Early Modern Age, Santiago became an important centre for the sale of its craft products and the redistribution of goods from other regions.

### The surrounding area

Santiago de Compostela is built on stepped land between the Sar and Sarela river valleys, at the eastern end of the Maia Valley. The gentle terrain made it easy to construct important communication routes, which have facilitated settlement in the area since ancient times.

In the 9th century there were important roads to Iria Flavia, Ourense, Lugo, A Coruña and Fisterra, most of which were originally laid in Roman times.

### The mediaeval city

Santiago expanded fast between the 11th and 13th centuries with important buildings commissioned by the Church. The building works on the Cathedral complex and the second defensive system changed the layout and future development of the city.

Numerous churches, convents, monasteries and houses were built to house a population made up of large numbers of clergy and an expanding bourgeoisie of craftsmen and traders.

New neighbourhoods began to develop round the city centre along the main roads leading out of the town, in which small farmers produced the food required for the everyday needs of the townspeople.

### The feudal estate

When the King officially confirmed the finding of the body of the apostle, he decided to grant lands to the Bishop, which together formed a large feudal estate known as the “Tierra de Santiago”. As the feudal lord, the Bishop had military, fiscal and judicial privileges over his vassals, which he exercised in the name of ‘el Señor Santiago’. Soon the King also granted him the privilege of minting his own coins.

The Castle of A Rocha Forte was together with the cathedral, the most important symbol of the archbishop’s earthly power. Built as the archbishop’s residence around 1250 and later converted into an impregnable castle, it controlled the entrances to the city from the sea. The castle was destroyed during the Irmandiña Revolt (1467-1469).

### Jet carvers

Jet, a gemstone produced by the fossilization of trees that died 65 million years ago is known for its black colour, its hardness and its fragility. The first workshops in Compostela were established in the Azabachería (jet-carving district) and date from the 13th century, with close links with the concheiros and under strict control of the church. In the 14th century they set up a guild and in the 15th century established what became one of the city’s most influential brotherhoods, under the protection of



St Sebastian. After a period of decline, production recovered in the 20th century with many important carvers and a high demand for the precious objects they produced.

Their most popular products included “fig sign” amulets in the form of a closed hand (generally the left) with the thumb sticking out between the middle and index fingers. Although this was considered an insulting gesture, the amulet was thought to have healing and protective powers against gossip, curses and the evil eye.

In the Middle Ages they were used throughout the Christian Kingdoms especially in the 16th century. Fig-sign amulets were decorated with many symbolic and talismanic features such as hearts, suns, moons and stars. These features were later simplified to the point of becoming almost unrecognizable probably because of their prohibition by the Inquisition in 1526.

## Silversmiths

There are records of silversmiths working for the Cathedral in the 11th century. The first ordinances of the Guild of Silversmiths date from 1431, but the Brotherhood which granted many privileges to the silversmiths was not created until the 16th century. The workshops were situated near the south gate of the Cathedral (known today as the Puerta de Platerías), and like the jet carvers, were under ecclesiastical control. The first hallmarks (St James the Pilgrim, apostle’s chest, chalice) appeared in the 14th century to guarantee the quality of the silver. These would evolve over time.

## Engravers

Engraving in Galicia flourished above all in Santiago in the 18th century in line with the expansion of the pilgrimage. Engravings with a variety of pilgrimage-related themes were used to illustrate printed materials such as Compostelas, pilgrimage certificates, summaries of indulgences, relic lists and holy cards, as well as books and leaflets.

Some engravers were also silversmiths, such as the Piedra family, or architects and sculptors such as Miguel de Romay and Melchor de Prado. This allowed for great diversity and perfection in the design of ornamental motifs and even the discovery of a new technique of “engraving across the grain”.

## Guilds and Brotherhoods

Different trades emerged with the growth of the city and the number of pilgrims. The moneychangers bought and sold foreign currency, while the innkeepers, taverners and hoteliers provided board and lodging for visitors. The many building works in the city attracted workers such as stonemasons, builders, carpenters and blacksmiths. In order to defend their rights and organize their trades, many of these craftsmen decided to group together in guilds and brotherhoods with ordinances that regulated entrance to the profession and participation in the life of the city. The most prestigious of all these were the jet carvers, silversmiths and engravers.



## THE REINVENTIO: THE SURVIVAL OF THE PILGRIMAGE

In 1589, fearing a possible attack by Sir Francis Drake, Archbishop Juan de San Clemente ordered that the Apostle’s remains be hidden. Almost 300 years later in 1879, they were rediscovered by Cardinal Payá with the help of the canon and historian Antonio López Ferreiro. The authentication of these relics led to the start of the modern pilgrimages and the revitalization of the city. The history of the pilgrimage in the 20th century was marked to a large extent by political events, such as the low attendance of foreign pilgrims during the World Wars, the use of the Camino by the Franco dictatorship as a symbol of Spanish national pride or the definitive boost to the pilgrimage brought by the creation of the Xacobeo 93 in the modern democratic era.