

The Confraternity's Treasurer and Librarian, Stephen Badger, died very suddenly in November 1997. Since he had been associated with the pilgrimages both to Santiago and to Mount Athos, his friends in and beyond the Confraternity commissioned this icon of Santiago Peregrino, painted in the Orthodox style by Sister Petra Clare of the Sancti Angeli Benedictine Skete, Inverness. It now hangs in our refuge at Rabanal del Camino.

The following notes on the design and meaning of the icon were written by Sister Petra Clare, please see contact details for icon workshops, lectures and commissions at the foot of this page.

General

The icon depicts a central image of St James with scenes from his life and subsequent scenes related to the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. The scenes start on the left hand side facing, and move in a counter clockwise direction to culminate at the top, with the tympanum of the Cathedral in Santiago. The icon has a deep rose ground i.e. light red to indicate a life crowned by martyrdom, so this rose light pervades the icon. Where there is a traditional iconic precedent, that form has been used. This applies to the facial features and clothes colouring of St James, and to the Gospel icons.

The Central Icon

St. James walks along the shore of the sea of Galilee. The clothes and scroll are typical of the traditional icon of the Apostle, although the scroll is depicted large, as it is in some Santiago pilgrimage images. The features of St James also conform to the iconic tradition. It is common in icons to attempt to represent the inner spirituality of the person in ways which are sometimes non-realistic, hence certain proportions may be emphasised. Here I have used the dynamic of the pilgrim walk in St James, whose body slopes forward eagerly in a diagonal across the icon, and emphasised the head as a still point - a kind of full-stop - to focus the image on the call to follow him in the pilgrim way. As the image is for the pilgrims it seemed appropriate to add a couple of signs of the context - the staff and the marker stone. Signs like this are used in, for example, the icon of John the Baptist, where one often sees 'the axe laid to the root of the tree' in the background. Staffs are frequently used in icons, and it is an appropriate expansion of the theme of the travelling apostle and the marker stone, which is based on the ones along the Camino Francés.

Scene 1

The call of James and John, who are in the boat with their father Zebedee. John is unbearded. Jesus walks along the sea shore with Peter (younger, in yellow) and Andrew (older, in green).

Christ is always marked out by a halo with a cross in it, on the arms of which are O'WN, Greek for \diamond The Being \diamond (which refers to the name God gave in his vision to Moses in the Old Testament), and by the letters IC XC, an abbreviation of the Greek for Jesus Christ.

Scene 2

The Transfiguration. Jesus is depicted with Moses (right facing) and Elijah (left facing). Below are Peter in yellow looking upwards (a reference to his active response \diamond Let us build tabernacles \diamond), John falling downwards (an indication of his character - being overwhelmed by the vision of God) and James (somewhere between the two, in an attitude of adoration).

Scene 3

The Footwashing. The disciples follow St Peter who points to his head and says "Lord wash not only my feet but my hands and my head." Jesus replies, "He who has his feet washed is clean all over, but not all of you." James is identifiable by his usual clothes colours. Judas is identifiable by his profile (in iconic shorthand, half-a-face shows he is not fully present to the mystery, but alienated in some way)

Scene 4

The Martyrdom of St James. The throne and Herod Agrippa on it follow the type used in icons of the judgment of Christ. The soldier carries out the commands issued from the throne. Prayer to the Lord is indicated by the Saint's outstretched hands towards the heavens in top left-hand (facing) corner.

Scene 5

According to the legend, the followers of the Apostle took his body down to the sea and put it in a stone boat, which was carried by angels and the wind to the shores of Galicia. Three angels are shown, guiding the boat. The boat on the sea pairs with the boat on the sea of Galilee in the call of St James.

Scene 6

The Discovery of the Tomb. A hermit, Pelayo, is led to the long-forgotten site of the tomb by a star (the star is depicted according to the type of the epiphany star on the nativity icon). The Bishop who authenticated the tomb, Theodimir, is shown with him.

Scene 7

The miracle of the *pendu dépendu*. A German family (father, mother, son) stopped at an inn, where the young man spurned the advances of a serving maid. She hid a cup in his bag, and raised the alarm after the family had left the following morning. The lad was duly caught and hanged for theft. His parents continued to Santiago, but were told by St James when they got there that their son was still alive.

Hurrying back they found the Saint holding up the young man's feet. They rushed to the judge who had condemned him, and the judge scoffed that the young man was ♦no more alive than the two chickens roasting in his oven.♦ The birds promptly flew out of the oven, when all rushed back to the scaffold to free the young man. The local saint, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, helped St James to hold up the feet.

The icon shows St James and St Domingo holding up the feet of the young man while the two flying chickens and the judge approach from one side, and the pilgrims from the other.

Scene 8

St James as Santiago Peregrino leads pilgrims to Refugio Gaucelmo, the pilgrim refuge maintained by the Confraternity of St James. The local hermit beckons the approaching pilgrims. It is to be hoped the pilgrims bear some resemblance to the family of Stephen Badger, in whose memory this icon is commissioned, and who was closely associated with this refuge.

Scene 9

Santiago Peregrino leading pilgrims along the pilgrimage route at Le Puy, represented by the chapel of St Michel, on its rocky pinnacle, which reflects the shape of the Mount of Transfiguration, on the other side of the icon.

Scene 10

Santiago Peregrino leading pilgrims at Roncesvalles, symbolised by the distinctive Silo de Carlomagno. I understand the tomb of Roland is also at Roncesvalles, so a figure in armour appears rising from a tomb, with his hands extended in supplication towards St James. There are thus two soldier figures in the icon - one who beheads St James, and one of more Christian disposition. [*The historic Roland is thought to have been buried at Blaye - CSJ*]

The header: Santiago

The pilgrims approach the *Porticó de la Gloria* at Santiago Cathedral. This scene includes pilgrims in both modern and traditional dress. The child (hopefully bearing some resemblance to Stephen's daughter) is putting her hand on the column with the handprint on it, formed by the numberless veneration of the statue of St James surmounting it. The top roundel replicates, as far as I could from photographs, the iconography of the *Porticó de la Gloria*. As I was not sure what filled the side roundels of the cathedral I simply replicated the saints with books theme. The top section is painted on a gold leaf base to give it a little extra warmth.

Additional Notes

Linked Themes. Icons often feature linked themes where the themes 'dialogue' with one another, which is emphasised by similar compositions. The visual repetition helps to make a point and unify the composition. Linked themes here are:

- i) the walking position of St James, in the central and side icons, whether dressed as an Apostle or as Santiago Peregrino.
- ii) the repetition of the walking position in the pilgrims, which helps the composition remain calm, even with the multitude of scenes and figures
- iii) beckoning gestures (9, 11, header) and showing gestures (1, 2, 4, 6, header)
- iv) two boats (call of James and John, stone boat and angels)
- v) the Mount of Transfiguration and the rocky pinnacle at Le Puy
- vi) St James and Roland, each in the tomb.

Architecture. Iconographic architecture is intentionally non-realistic. It usually has bold shapes and non-realistic colours which indicate that it has a primarily spiritual, rather than natural dimension. Objects tend to be representative signs rather than perspective representations. Hence the *Porticó* is a schematic 'map' of the spiritual reality it portrays i.e. Christ in Glory in Heaven.

Sancti Angeli Benedictine Skete,
Marydale, Cannich,
Nr. Beaully,
Inverness-shire IV4 7LT

Tel. 01456 415218.
e-mail: sr.petraclare@btinternet.com