



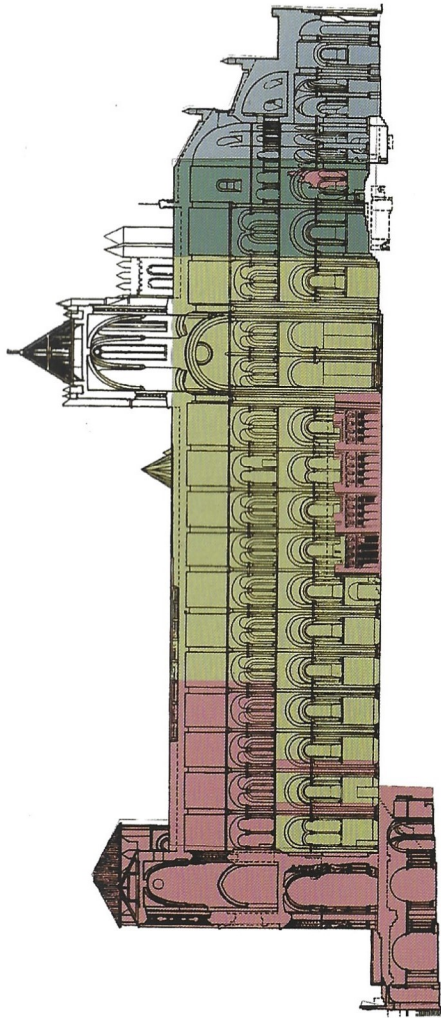
MUSEO  
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DE SANTIAGO

TOUR GUIDE |

PORTICO  
OF **GLORY**

"When the people of Santiago saw for the first time the Portico by Master Mateo illuminated by the sun, they turned their eyes away from that fascinating ensemble, perhaps dazzled by a clarity coated with the colours produced by a crystal glass prism or a drop of dew in the sun or perhaps stunned with the changing effects of light that seemed to bounce off the statues of the apostles and prophets. The Portico of Glory was a magical, dazzling, sparkling ensemble. The embroidered robes, with gold pattern and fleur de lys shapes, revived the blue colour of the blankets, and the matt gold of the mantles prolonged the reverberation of the golden flowers of the green robes (...) the painter of this portico must have had some secret from the Arabs".

(Antonio Neira de Mosquera, 1850)



■ First construction phase of the Romanesque cathedral (Ca. 1075-1088)  
 ■ Second construction phase of the Romanesque cathedral (Ca. 1088-1100)

■ The cathedral of the Archbishop Diego Gelmírez (1100-1140)  
 ■ Master Mateo's project in the cathedral (1168-1211)

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# 01 Master Mateo's cathedral

Between the years 1168 and 1211, Master Mateo directed an ambitious project in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela that involved the conclusion of the construction works, beginning around 1075 by its western closure, and the spatial adaptation of the temple to hold ceremonies. It was at the same time an apostolic sanctuary, a pilgrimage destination, an Episcopal See and a prominent cathedral for the Galaico-Leonese monarchy, that strongly supported the project.

In the first place, Master Mateo carried out the construction of the last sections of the naves and the tribune, as evidenced by the decoration of the capitals. He also saved the slope in the land, in the continuation of the cathedral towards the western side, with the construction of a crypt, on which the Portico of Glory is settled and which is an essential part of it.

Then, he made his best known work, the Portico of Glory. It is today enclosed behind a baroque stone backdrop, the façade of the Plaza del Obradoiro, even though it was originally opened to the outside by the aforementioned façade, whose remains and sculptures are still preserved.

The project concluded, essentially, with the construction of a stone choir, which occupied the first sections of the nave, from which important elements have been recovered and are preserved mainly in the Cathedral Museum. It also concluded with the placement of the seated image of Saint James the Great on the high altar, which, despite being highly modified, remains the main reference in the temple for the faithful and the pilgrims.



## 02 Master Mateo

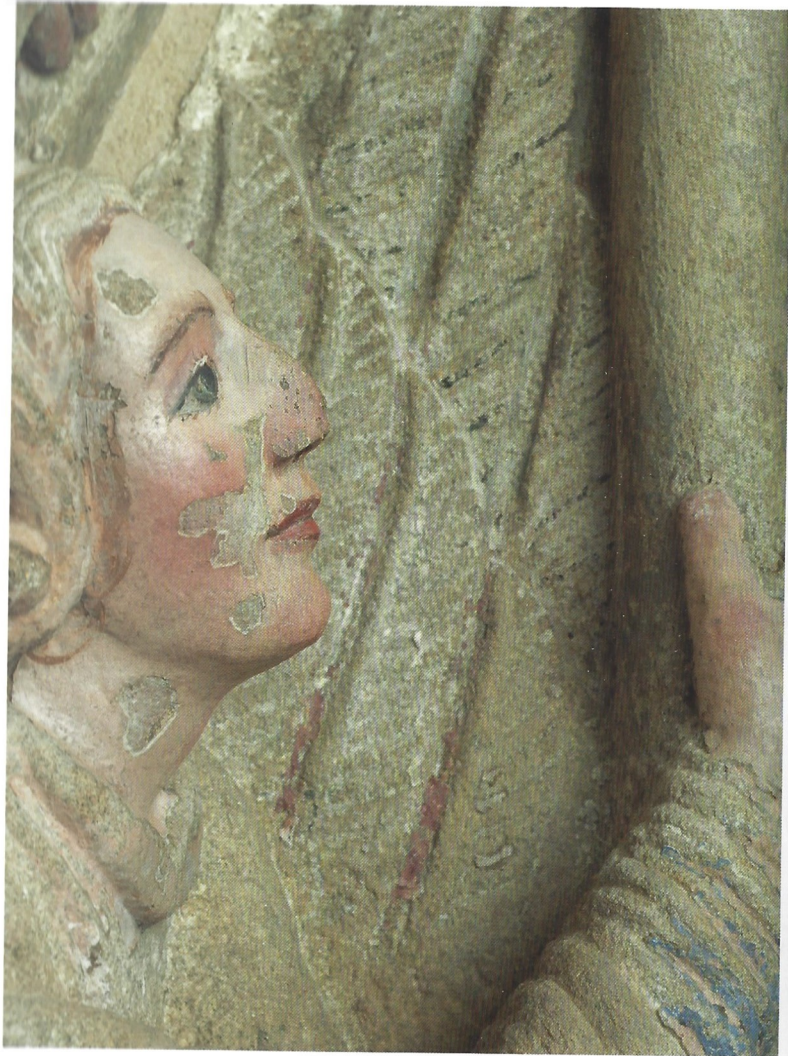
Despite his artistic relevance and his special significance for the cathedral of Santiago and for the art of Galicia, Master Mateo's origin, background and training are largely unknown.

Only two contemporary direct references of Master Mateo are preserved. The first one indicates his presence in the cathedral and it is a privilege signed by King Ferdinand II, granting him a lifetime pension for the direction of the works in the cathedral. This document, dated February 23, 1168, is currently kept in the Archive of the Cathedral of Santiago.

The second reference can be found in the commemorative inscription of the placement of the lintels on which the central tympanum of the Portico of Glory is settled, dated April 1, 1188. Mateo's name is the only one mentioned, something that was truly unique in the Middle Ages and that is proof of the importance of his work as an artist. In this inscription it is stated that Mateo "directed the portico from the foundations".

Master Mateo's role in the project of the cathedral has been considered, throughout history, in a different way, sometimes as an architect, sometimes as a sculptor or both. Nowadays experts agree in pointing him out as a great artist at the head of an important workshop that, under his responsibility, carried out a key project for the cathedral of Santiago, with it is associated exclusively with his work and figure.

Ferdinand II grants Master Mateo a lifetime pension. Santiago, 23 February, 1168. Archive of the Cathedral of Santiago.  
© Fundación Catedral de Santiago. Photographer: Margen



Angel carrying the column of flagellation. Detail. Portico of Glory.  
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## 13 Mateo's myth

The lack of biographical information about Master Mateo and the importance of his project, which, on one hand, began to be valued in the mid-nineteenth century within romantic and regionalist currents and, also, with reviews of foreign visitors, British travelers mainly, created a kind of legend about his origins, background and training. Not in vain, Mateo's figure appears somewhere in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, introducing constructive and stylistic solutions typical of the most avant-garde places of the moment, as it is the case of Burgundy, the Parisian area or Italy, adding other artistic influences, even from the Muslim world.

Aware of the importance of his work and considering there were hardly any precedents at the time, Mateo added a representation of himself in the Portico of Glory. This is what the tradition says and what has been collected by the first authors who studied his work since the mid-nineteenth century. All this, together with the absence or loss of data about his biography and the influence of his work capable of creating art with its own identity, made him become a myth for the Galician people, who have granted him the title of "saint".



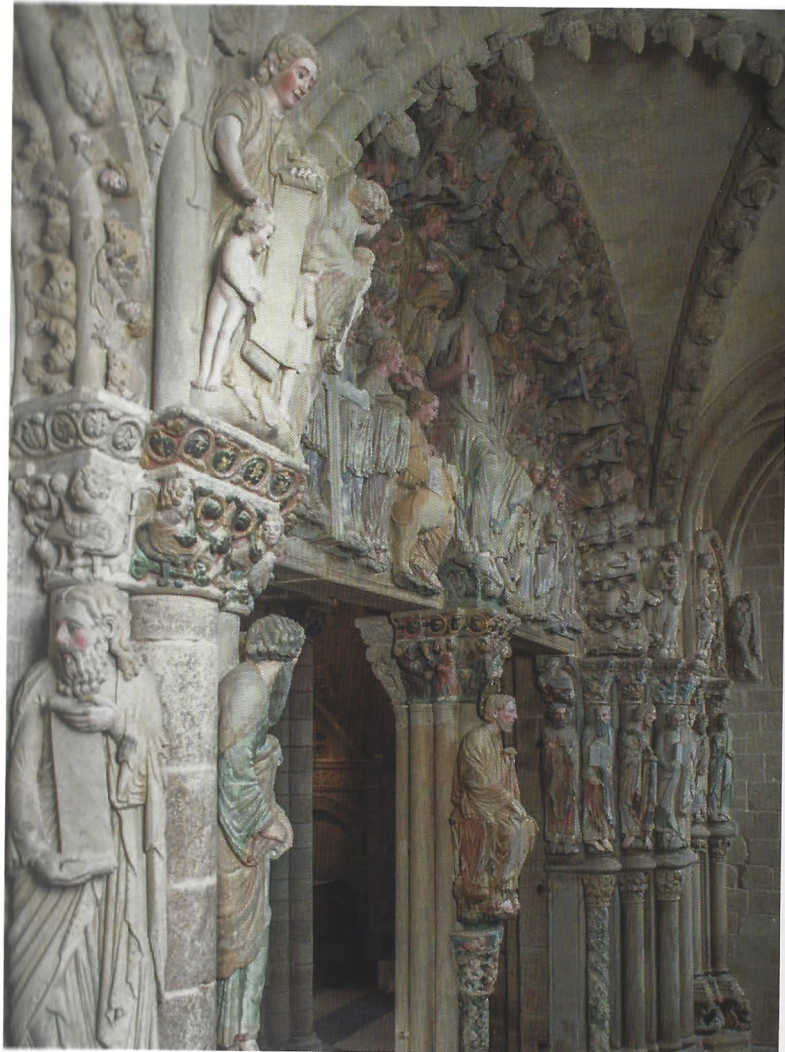
Santo dos Croques. Portico of Glory.  
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## 4 Santo dos croques

The image with curly hair that is portrayed kneeling and bringing his right hand to the chest located on the back of the base of the mullion column of the Portico of Glory, looking towards the altar and offering the Apostle Saint James his masterpiece, is popularly known as Santo dos croques -head bump in Galician-. In his left hand, he unfolds a long cartouche, now erased and in which, according to tradition, the word "architectus" can be read, which was completed with the word "fec (it)" that can still be seen on one side of the base.

The tradition -and recent studies- coincide in pointing out that this figure would correspond to Master Mateo's idealized self-portrait, represented as a paradigm of the "intellectual artist", leading the way towards a change in the social consideration of the artist that was consolidated since the Italian Renaissance.

Traditionally, even though the rite had to be suspended recently due to conservation reasons, the people of Compostela took their children to see Master Mateo's image so that, by rubbing their head against his, he could transfer his wisdom to them; hence the name "Santo dos croques".



View of the ensemble of the Portico of Glory. Cathedral of Santiago.  
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## 05 The Portico of Glory

A major work of the history of medieval art, the Portico of Glory is the best-known and most important work of Master Mateo's project in the Cathedral of Compostela. It implied the western closure of the temple, a subject that has stirred some debate among experts. One possibility is that Mateo replaced, with the construction of the Portico, a hypothetical former façade of the time of the Archbishop Gelmírez. The other possibility is that he may have replaced it because it seems more feasible, in view of the historical and archaeological data and the logic of the history of art, that this façade had not gone beyond an initial project phase and remained pending, until the arrival of Master Mateo, who undertook the works "from the foundations", as it appears in the inscription of the lintels of the Portico.

The Portico of Glory is usually thought to be only a cover with three arcades that, at present, is enclosed behind the baroque façade of the Plaza del Obradoiro; however, it is much more, both from an architectural and an iconographic point of view. The speech developed, focused on the apocalyptic story of the second coming of Jesus Christ and the celestial Jerusalem, begins in the crypt, -the innovative architectural structure on which the Portico is settled-, takes up the narthex of the cathedral, structured in three arches plus the counter façade and presided by the central tympanum with the image of Christ in Majesty, accompanied by the Evangelists and the blessed. It is finished with the Lamb of God in the keystone of the central vault of the tribune.

In the Portico of Glory, as Serafín Moralejo has pointed out, "we are witnessing the redemption of the errors committed in the Old Covenant and the creation of a new one, which is carried out in the Last Judgment, evoked in the right arch and in the Glory of the central arch".



Rose window. From the outer façade of the Portico of Glory. Santiago Cathedral. Museum.  
© Fundación Catedral de Santiago. Photographer: Margen

## 07 The outer façade

The ensemble of the Portico of Glory was completed with a façade that was opened to the outside, to the current Plaza del Obradoiro, through a large central arch that had the same measures of the tympanum of the portico that, in this way, could be seen from the outside, but protected by the space of the narthex, behind the aforementioned cover.

Master Mateo's façade underwent a first modification in the years 1520-1521, after the Cabildo's decision to place exterior doors that could close the cathedral, which until then remained always open. This intervention affected, mainly, the lower body of the cover, from which its sculptural ensemble was removed. This ensemble consisted of a series of statue columns and figures in relief of biblical characters, probably related to the genealogy of Christ, thus complementing the speech of the Portico and announcing in the inside what was about to come: the second coming of Christ. In these years, the large central arch that opened the portico to the outside, which was replaced by a double door with a curved façade on top, also disappeared. This way we can see the façade, with some later additions, in a drawing made by the canon José Vega y Verdugo, in the year 1656-1657, which is conserved in the Archive of the cathedral.

Later on, between 1738 and 1750, the Baroque façade that replaced Mateo's was carried out. However, as evidenced somehow on the back of the latter and visible from the roofs of the cathedral, Fernando de Casas, author of façade of the Plaza del Obradoiro, took advantage of the medieval structure, on which the current and famous façade of the cathedral was settled, as if it was a baroque backdrop. Then, it could be said, as Yzquierdo Perrín has pointed out, that "the façade of the Plaza del Obradoiro is the fruit of wisdom and good work of two genius of art: the structure belongs to Master Mateo; his baroque remodeling belongs to Fernando de Casas".

In the Santiago Cathedral Museum, in other museums and in private collections, important vestiges of the vanished outer façade of the Portico of Glory are preserved, of its architectural elements and the sculptural ensemble that made it up. Some of the main pieces are exhibited in the Cathedral Museum, as part of the Master Mateo Space, located in the Palacio de Gelmírez.





Balaam?. Detail. Counter façade of the Portico of Glory.  
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## 18 The counter façade

The Portico of Glory is a hierotopy, a sacred space, inside another, with its own personality and, originally, with specific uses that conditioned its interior iconographic program, its access, the communication with the rest of the temple, etc. The counter façade, which has the same structure of the Portico, thus allowing the configuration of that sacred space, with a series of column statues and angels and seraphim, was altered with the disappearance of Mateo's façade and the construction of the baroque one. However, it still maintains a special connection, regarding the looks, gestures and poses of the characters, with the main scene that takes place in front of it, in the three arches of the Portico and, in particular, with the central tympanum.

As in the case of the column statues of the pillars of the Portico, except for the apostles and prophets that flank the central arch, which preserve their attributes and, in some cases, their cartouches, the identification of the characters of the counter façade is complex, since the epigraphs have been deleted, giving rise to several hypotheses gathered by researchers. In this section, the connection established by Serafín Moralejo between the characters represented in the Portico of Glory and the medieval liturgical dramas is especially relevant, primarily the *Ordo Prophetarum* of the cathedral of Limoges, with which the sequence of the images of Compostela coincides.

The identification of John the Baptist is clear considering the Agnus Dei that he carries in his hands, and, probably, regarding the aforementioned hypothesis of the *Ordo Prophetarum*, on the other side, flanking the main portal, he is accompanied by the Queen of Saba, that appears in the Gospel of Saint Matthew and that would be connected to the image of Solomon that used to be in the outer façade. On the other side of the Baptist, on one of the sides of the southern portal, we can see the poet Virgilio, whose presence is justified, like the Erythraean Sibyl on the side of the northern portal, -just after the Queen of Saba-, since both characters had announced the coming of the Messiah. There are two images left at each end that could be Balaam, on the north side, and, in the South, the apostle Jude Thaddaeus.

On the other hand, at the top level, at the stem of the arches, we can see the aforementioned angels and seraphim. The first ones are different because they have a pair of wings, while the others have three pairs. All of them carry long cartouches that fall, getting unrolled, over their legs; and they can be seen with a pose of adoration, clasping their hands or taking their right hand to their chest, towards the image of Christ in Majesty that presides the tympanum of the Portico of Glory.



Base of the mullion. Detail. Portico of Glory.  
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## 09 The foundations

In the Portico of Glory, Master Mateo modified the architectural unit used in the rest of the Romanesque cathedral, something that is evident from the very foundations of the ensemble. He added, between the plinth and the bases of the pillars, an intermediate body populated by real and fantastic animals, extracted from the medieval bestiary, in which each of them can have different meanings, as many experts have pointed out when dealing with this part of the ensemble. The most common interpretation that has been given is that they would symbolize negative aspects of the earthly world, oppressed by the Glory of God.

Among the animals represented, we can distinguish lions, bears, griffins and other fantastic beasts, in some cases, with their jaws open, functioning as a link with the crypt of the Portico, probably with a functional meaning related to the ventilation of this space but, also, with a symbolic meaning, following what it has been written about the connection between the figures of the foundations and the crypt with the earthly world.

The scene depicted in the base of the mullion is outstanding because we can see a male figure with a bushy beard, straddling two lions that he holds tightly with his arms. Both animals have their mouths fully open, while the character, who has been identified in different ways, mainly as Samson, Adam or Gilgamesh, raises his head trying to see his own representation, resting his bust in a volute. Similar scenes, such as the one of a character with a long beard fighting a lion with its mouth open, are represented in each end of the bases. Perhaps, the three characters aforementioned are really represented, being two on the sides and one under the mullion.

Finally, in relation to the characters of the Ordo Prophetarum, Manuel Castiñeiras has pointed out the presence of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, among the beasts, located in this case on the right base of the central arch of the Portico.



Mullion. Detail. Portico of Glory.

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## 10 The pillars and the columns

As it happened in the foundations, the architectural unit followed in the rest of the Romanesque cathedral was modified in the Portico of Glory, in its pillars and columns, using, except in the mullion, a double order. In the upper order, new column statues were introduced.

The pillars of the central arch are formed by sequences of three columns on each side, while, in the lateral arches, the columns are arranged in pairs. The columns present smooth shafts of granite on one side. The columns located next to the jambs of the central arch, on the left, are marble columns and have a helical shaped decorated with plant motifs and scenes in relief related, in each case, with the theme of the adjacent lateral arches. Thus, for instance, the sacrifice of Isaac is represented in the left shaft, and the resurrection of the dead is represented in the right one. On the other hand, the marble column on the right side of the left arch has notable differences compared to the others, such as the type of marble, more greyish, and the decorative style and the scenes represented in relief, showing a different moment in time and authorship.

Worthy of special mention is the block that forms the mullion, formed by a group of columns in a single piece of granite of enormous dimensions to which a new marble column has been attached, on its front, in this case representing in its shaft, for the first time in the Iberian Peninsula, the Tree of Jesse - the human genealogy of Christ - and, in its capital, the Trinity - the divine genealogy of Christ -.



The image of Saint James seated on the mullion. Detail. Portico of Glory.  
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## 12 The mullion

Serving as a seat of the lintels of the central tympanum of the Portico, in a place of special prominence within the ensemble, we can see the mullion, formed by a large granite block from which a beam of stylized columns emerges, which rests on the base that has a bearded figure between two lions with curly fur and, on the back, the image of the so-called Santo dos Croques, which is more likely to be Master Mateo's self-portrait.

In the central body of the aforementioned block, a marble column has been attached, originally polychromed like the rest of the ensemble, in which the Tree of Jesse is represented, the human genealogy of Christ. The aforementioned Jesse appears leaning on the lower part, initiating the speech, bottom-up, that includes other characters of the aforementioned genealogy: David, Solomon and, in the upper part, the Virgin Mary. The capital on top of the column represents the divine genealogy of Jesus. He is portrayed as a child on the Father's lap, while the dove of the Holy Spirit is on the top and, on the sides, we can see angels with incense burners.

Under David's relief, who can be seen on the outer façade of the Portico playing a rotta, there is great wear on the marble surface, caused by the popular rite of laying the five fingers of the right hand, a tradition that, like the "croques", that had to be interrupted for fragility reasons and the preservation requirements of the Portico of Glory.

The seated image of Saint James the Great is settled on the column, immediately below, pointing out the pre-eminence of the Christ in Majesty that presides the tympanum. It is an iconographic model that was initiated at that moment by Master Mateo and that has had, from that moment on, a special relevance and continuity. Undoubtedly, together with the seated image of the high altar, which is also a work within Mateo's project, they constitute the quintessential representations of Saint James in his cathedral and form a longitudinal axis, inside the temple, which must also appear in Master Mateo's contribution. Saint James can be seen seated on a throne, with lions at his feet, carrying, in his left hand, a tau-shaped crozier, typical of the Compostela prelates and, in his right hand, displaying a cartouche in which it could be read, originally, "Misit me Dominus" (the Lord sent me), in reference to his apostolic mission in Hispania and, thus, justifying the Jacobean tradition.

On top of the ensemble of the mullion, above the image of Saint James, there is a large capital on which the temptations of Christ are represented, which stands triumphantly in the central part of the tympanum, right after this capital.

angles carrying incense burners:

the tympanum, the bison that represents the Holy Spirit descends steeply, and on both sides, there are in his left hand, a closed book and with the right hand he makes the gesture of blessing. Above them, at occupies the central part of the capitals, welcoming the Christ in his lab, who has his arms open and holds, within is crowned by a capital of the same material, in which the Trinity is represented. God the Father program that takes place in the ensemble of the Portico of Glory. For instance, the marble column of the There are also some particularly significant narrative examples that complement the iconographic

that follow a moralizing discourse:

extent, have evident similarities with the type of scenes represented in the canopies of Master's stone choir animals, of the medieval bestiary, which tend to be confronted, have negative connotations and, to a large in most cases, the capitals have plants and zoomorphic motifs, especially based on real and fantastic

appreciate important elements related to Master Mateo's style and his workshop.

noticed in the eyes of the viewer. However, when contemplating the work in detail, visitors can in general, considering the magnitude of the ensemble of the Portico of Glory, the capitals usually do

# 13 The capitals

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The capital with the punishment for the blasphemy. Detail, Counter facade of the Portico of Glory



are kneeling on the sides:

Christ, a seated and crowned figure located in the central part, in a pose of blessing, with two angels who On the other side, we can see the representation of a scene that has been considered the adoration of

to give the central character by the neck and try to tear out his tongue.

seventy in the scenes, in this case, two persons figures are striking, respectively, with a rope and judge exploited in the Museum that would belong to this same side of the outer facade, implemented with high punishments for sins of the right end of the right arch - and also, as it can be seen in the two keystones located towards the south, the punishment of the blasphemy is represented, in the row of the On the counter facade, the two capitals located on each side of the central door stand out. In the one

the central part of the tympanum of the Portico of Glory:

temptations of the devil and, thus, sin and death. He is portrayed as a triumph, immediately above, in reverse, the only part that has completely lost the iconologically of the piece. Christ has overcome the represented, following the story of the Gospels with a reading order from left to right that ends on the side to the shape of the set of columns that make up the wall, in which the temptations of Christ are and immediately below the insets, a capital of large dimensions is located, carved by its four sides, which On a higher level than the one of the previous piece, on top of the seated image of Saint James the Great

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The capital with the temptations of Christ. Detail, Wall of the Portico of Glory





Left arch. Portico of Glory.

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## L4 The left arch

The lateral arches of the Portico of Glory lack a tympanum and, above them, two separate oculi are opened, very unique at the time, which, in line with the rose windows on the minor covers of the former outer façade, would both the side naves of the cathedral in light.

In the left arch, less polychromy has been preserved compared to other parts of the ensemble, although, structurally, it is in better conditions of conservation than the right arch. This is due to an intentional withdrawal of the polychromy from this area, as it has been proved in the restoration process of the ensemble.

The interpretation of the two archivolt that make up the arch, completed by a superior profile with plant motifs, has given rise to several hypotheses, always related to the People of Israel and, therefore, to the Old Testament and the future of the chosen people prior to the birth of Jesus. Thus, in the major archivolt, the tribes of Israel are represented, subject to the Mosaic Law, represented in the wide torus that runs through the center of it. On the other hand, the lower archivolt, with leafy leaves, is presided by an image of Christ, the beardless and crowned figure that is located in the center, blessing with his right hand and with a closed book in the left hand, accompanied, in the lateral, by different figures, most of them crowned, possibly representing the anastasis, the descent of Christ into Limbo, before his resurrection, to save those who live right in accordance with the Messianic promise.

In the pillar that connects the left arch with the central one, we can see an angel helping the blessed to pass towards the Glory, giving them, in their way, a crown that identifies them as such.



Right arch. Portico of Glory.

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## 15 The right arch

The right arch is also organized in two archivolts, with a third semicircle on top, in this case, full of figures of angels that adapt to its form and dimensions.

The Final Judgment is represented with images in the keystones of both archivolts. The large one shows the head of Christ, bearded, while the lower one shows Saint Michael, beardless. Both appear holding partially unrolled cartouches in their hands, which have lost their epigraphs and serve to frame their heads and separate them from the scenes that are represented on the sides.

On the left side of the arch, we can find the blessed connected to the central arch and represented as naked children, who, as in the case of the arch on the north side, are helped by angels to reach the Glory.

On the other hand, the condemned are represented with high severity, since they are suppressed by demons of heinous traits to harsh punishments. Depending on the damage that is being caused to each of them, Master Mateo refers to a specific sin, which symbolizes the cause of the character's sentence; all with an evident moralizing and exemplary meaning for the medieval viewer.



## 17 The angels with the instruments of the Passion

A cortege of angels carrying the instruments of the Passion of Christ is represented in a number of figures aligned at the bottom of the tympanum, on the lintels; probably, from an artistic point of view, this is the part that presents less innovative features in the plastic conception of the images within the Portico of Glory.

The disposition, gestures -for instance, the hands of those angels that carry elements that touched Jesus' body covered by a veil- and the placement of the images, are related to processions, and are integrated into the stone scenery of the Portico.



Central tympanum. Angels carrying the instruments of the Passion of Christ. Details. Portico of Glory.  
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On the left end we can see the figure of the angel, kneeling, holding the column of the Flagellation, a piece that has a special personality in the ensemble and which, according to tradition, was collected by Antonio Neira de Mosquera in the mid-nineteenth century and could be Master Mateo's self-portrait, something somehow improbable but, undoubtedly, intriguing. Then, before Saint Luke, a pair of angels grab the crosspiece of the cross, and another angel wears the crown of thorns.

On the right, after the figure of Saint Mark, an angel carries four nails in his right hand and a spear in his left hand; finishing the procession with the angels that carry, respectively, the amphora for the vinegar, the whips that were used to scourge Christ and the cane and the sponge used to give him vinegar to drink.





Maiestas Domini. Central tympanum. Detail. Portico of Glory.  
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## 18 Christ in Majesty and the four Evangelists

Inside the tympanum there is a representation of Saint John's apocalyptic vision -fourth chapter-: "I saw that there was a throne in heaven, and One seated on the throne... and around the throne, four Beings... The first Being is like a Lion; the second Being, like a bull; the third Being has a face as a man; the fourth being is like an eagle".

The first part of the aforementioned text clearly alludes to the Christ in Majesty that presides the tympanum. He appears represented in a size considerably larger than that of the other images, due to the use of the usual hierarchical perspective in the Middle Ages, and is seated on a throne, which is settled, on each side, on two lions, in reference to the throne of Solomon. It is an image characterized by frontal takes, which encircles his head with a crown and presents a serene face, with careful attention to detail, and a full beard and long hair. On each side of the head, we can see angels holding incense burners.

Christ extends his hands showing the wounds caused by the nails of the crucifixion in his palms and shows the right half of his torso and the wound caused by the spear in his side. Also, on his feet, bare, resting on large leafy leaves of apocalyptic symbolism, we can see the wounds caused by the nails stand out, showing, with all this, as indicated by certain spiritual trends of the time, the suffering of Jesus, as Man, on the cross. Undoubtedly, this piece constitutes the conclusion and the main point of the message developed by Master Mateo in the Portico of Glory.

The second part of the selected text of the Apocalypse refers to the images and symbols of the four evangelists surrounding the Maiestas Domini. In the upper part, on the left, Saint John is represented, writing about the eagle he holds on his lap; on the right, we can see the delicate sculpture of Saint Matthew, with a calamus pen in his left hand, with which he writes on a small desk resting on his knees. In the lower part, on the left, we can see Saint Luke, with a bull on his lap and, on the other side, Saint Marcus, with the lion at his feet. These four are the most exquisite images of the ensemble of the Portico of Glory.



The choir of the blessed on the central tympanum. Detail, Portico of Glory.  
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## 19 The blessed

The blessed complete the interior of the tympanum, organized in two choirs, one on each side. They represent the Holy People who, as the Apocalypse of Saint John points out, "sing a new song before the throne and the four Beings and the Elders (...) These are the ones who come from the great tribulation and washed their clothes and bleached them in the blood of the Lamb. That is why they stand before the throne of God and worship him day and night in his temple".

The innocence of the blessed is the reason they are portrayed as children, all of them in a prayerful posture and crowned. They correspond to those that have been arriving from the lateral arches, helped by angels; and that are now ready to sing along with the music that the twenty-four elders of the archivolt play.

The complicity, dialogues, looks and gestures that are established between the figures are remarkable, another proof of the naturalism of Master Mateo's work.

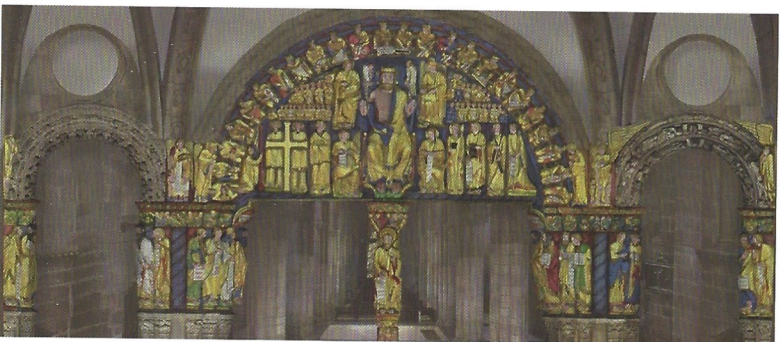
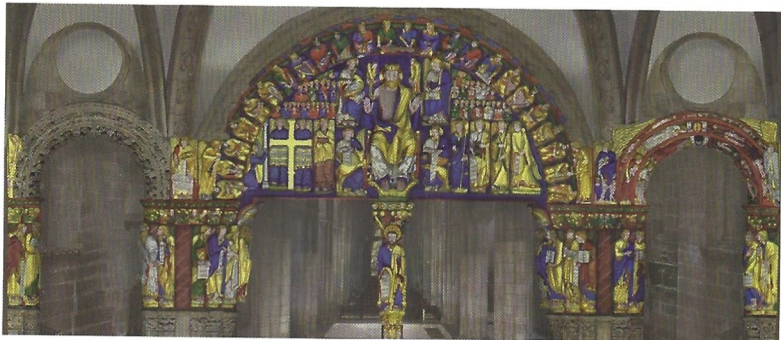


## 20 The elders holding instruments

The great archivolt framing the tympanum is characterized by the presence of the figures of the twenty-four elders, also present in the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse: "I saw twenty-four thrones around the main throne, and twenty-four Elders with white robes and gold crowns on their heads sitting on the thrones." It is a theme introduced, in Galicia, by Master Mateo and will have a special continuation, in later decades, in other places.

Grouped in pairs, from the two central figures that hold the organistrum in their laps, dialogues and glances are established between them in the moments before the start of their celestial concert, with glass flasks and some instruments: psalteries, violas, zithers, harps, lutes, etc. sculpted in such a careful and realistic way that their reconstruction has been possible, as well as the recovery of the music associated with the era of the Portico of Glory.

Elderly musicians. Detail. Portico of Glory.  
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Virtual reconstruction of the three main layers of polychromy in the Portico of Glory: upside down:  
 1. Original layer. Ca. 1200 | 2. Second layer. Ca. 1520 | 3. Third layer. Ca. 1610  
 © Fundación Barrié/Fundación Catedral de Santiago. Produced by Petra S. Coop.



Detail of the image of Isaiah, before (left) and after (right) the restoration. Portico of Glory.  
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## 22 The restoration of the Portico of Glory

Between 2008 and 2018, the Portico of Glory underwent a deep and complex restoration, sponsored by the Fundación Barrié. After a phase of previous studies on the state of conservation and causes of the deterioration of the work, some interventions on the ensemble were carried out, focusing, mainly, on two aspects: the damp by filtrations repair and the problems of condensation in the Portico of Glory and the recovery of the polychrome that was preserved under dust and dirt. In this way, a masterpiece of medieval art that has recovered part of its splendour has been preserved.

Remains of up to three layers of complete polychrome can be seen; the first of these would be the original painting applied by Master Mateo's workshop staff, with a predominance of gold and lapis lazuli. It is followed by a second layer, made in the first decades of the sixteenth century, possibly at the time the façade was remodeled to place doors to the outside, which stands out for the use of the brocade technique applied to the characters clothing. Finally, in the Baroque era, the Portico was repainted, simulating an altarpiece of that period in the stone images. Likewise, other partial actions can be noticed, fundamentally in the flesh-coloured hands and faces of the figures.

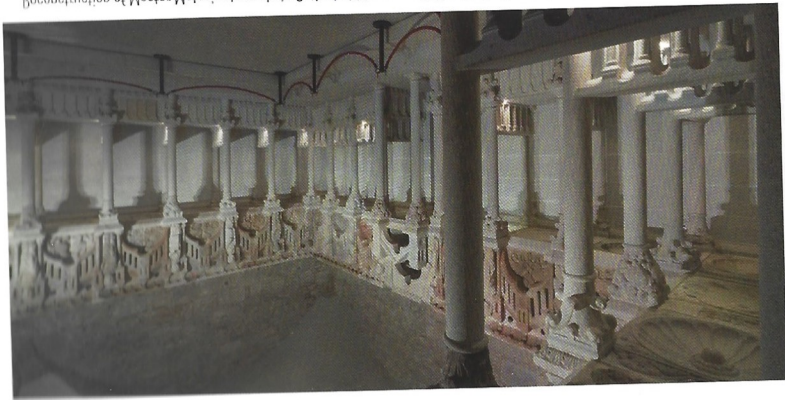
The delicate nature of the work and the need to preserve it in the best possible way require the application of preventive conservation measures that can stop further deterioration of the Portico of Glory, which is why it is necessary to maintain stable conditions of humidity and temperature, as well as limit the number of people who can be, at the same time, within the area of the ensemble.

apostles. That way the faithful would stand outside the choir and the members of the Capitulo inside  
 gave continuity to the one of the Portico of Glory, which had several levels for reading purposes, adapted to the  
 Museo and the workshop developed an iconographic program of apocryphic and zodiac content that reminded and  
 that was presided by the pynphalan where the Epiphany is represented, and in the interior in the choir stalls. Master  
 in both the outer facades that faced the lateral nave of the cathedral, as is the case of the facade of the retrochoir.

a space where liturgical passages were read aloud to the faithful.  
 tribune that was located above the retrochoir, had different uses, mainly -and hence its name- to serve as  
 which they had by strict hierarchical order, their respective seats assigned. The readito (regitorium), a  
 in 1404, the first four sections of the central nave. The first three sections were dedicated to the choir stalls  
 concluded in 1511 for the ceremony of consecration of the cathedral and that occupied, until its withdrawal  
 After the Portico of Glory, the second great project developed by Mateo was the stone choir, that was  
 transformation of the cathedral's space and adaptation to its liturgical and ceremonial uses.  
 Master Mateo's contribution to the cathedral included other works, all within the same global project of

## 53 Master Mateo in the cathedral other works by

Reconstruction of Master Mateo's stone choir. Cathedral Museum. © Fundación Cathedral de Santiago. Photographer: E. Toimbo



OTHER WORKS BY MASTER MATEO IN THE CATHEDRAL

monarchs to its lateral facades, the 11 and 12th century. In  
 Furthermore in the northern arm of the transept that was to host, among other characters, the two key  
 workshop, such as the remodeling of the facade of the Plaza de Batafeos or the creation of the Royal  
 There are other interventions in the Compuestos Cathedral that are works by Master Mateo and his

interior of the cathedral, thus connecting both great sculptures:  
 opposite Saint James especially relevant and influential, as well as a longitudinal west - east axis in the  
 with the one that tops the column of the window of the Portico, created a new iconographic model of the  
 under the piece in a chamber that was not accessible until the end of the 19th century. This image, together  
 project, since it was considered a benchmark for the faithful, who could be closer to the relics, located  
 although it has been greatly modified in its original appearance. It had a special importance in Mateo's  
 The great image of Saint James the Great located on the high altar is also one of Master Mateo's works,

the Museum, along with other unique pieces of the choir that were not used for the given purpose.  
 Ramón Xapurielto Fernán, the aforementioned remains were used for the reconstruction that is exhibited in  
 carried out in the cathedral. After a long investigation process, made by professors Ramón Otero Luaces and  
 and a large number have disappeared. Important remains were recovered in different archaeological works.  
 Many of the pieces of the choir were reused in different places, while others served as constructive material  
 since then, the main nave of the cathedral open  
 by a new choir stall made of wood, which occupied the same space until its withdrawal in 1942, leaving  
 for many reasons, mainly related to liturgical ceremonies, the choir was demolished in 1404 and replaced

© Fundación Cathedral de Santiago. Photographer: X. Di  
 The image of Saint James seated in the high altar (without the cap). Cathedral of Santiago





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## 24 Who is who in the Portico of Glory

01. Christ the Redeemer showing his wounds as a symbol of triumph over pain and death.
02. Angels holding the instruments of the Passion.
03. Angel carrying the column of the flagellation.
04. The evangelists writing and their symbols.
05. Angels with censers.
06. The blessed in the Glory.
07. The twenty-four elders of the Apocalypse with their instruments and glass flasks. The organistrum is in the keystone of the arch.
08. Angels leading the souls of the blessed to the Glory.
09. Descent of Christ into Limbo to save those who live right that died before his coming to Earth.
10. The Last Judgement with Christ and Saint Michael separating the blessed from the damned.
11. Angels with trumpets announcing the Last Judgement.
12. The pillar of the prophets (from right to left: Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Oseas?, Joel?, Amos?, and Abdias?).
13. The Apostle Saint James sitting on a throne holding the crozier of the archbishops of Compostela.
14. The capital with the Temptations of Jesus.
15. Pillar of the apostles (from left to right: Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint James, Saint John, Andrew?, Thomas?, Saint James, son of Alphaeus?, and Philip?).
16. The Tree of Jesse showing the human genealogy of Christ up to the Virgin Mary.
17. The capital of the Holy Trinity.
18. Bears, wolfs, lions and fantasy animals of the medieval bestiary as potential symbols of the oppressed evil by the Glory of God.
19. Male figure fighting two lions with open jaws, identified as Samson, Adam or Gilgamesh.
20. King Nebuchadnezzar among beasts?
21. Santo dos croques (Master Mateo?).

"The Portico of Glory of the Basilica of Compostela, for the uniqueness of the plan, the life and expression of the figures, the ornamental richness, the august serenity and the harmony of the ensemble, for the delicacy of the execution and the sophrosyne that it can be felt when admiring it, is universally considered one of the first iconographic monuments of the world and one of the wonders of Christian art during the Middle Ages".

(Manuel Vidal Rodríguez, 1926)

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