



# "Pórtico de la Gloria"

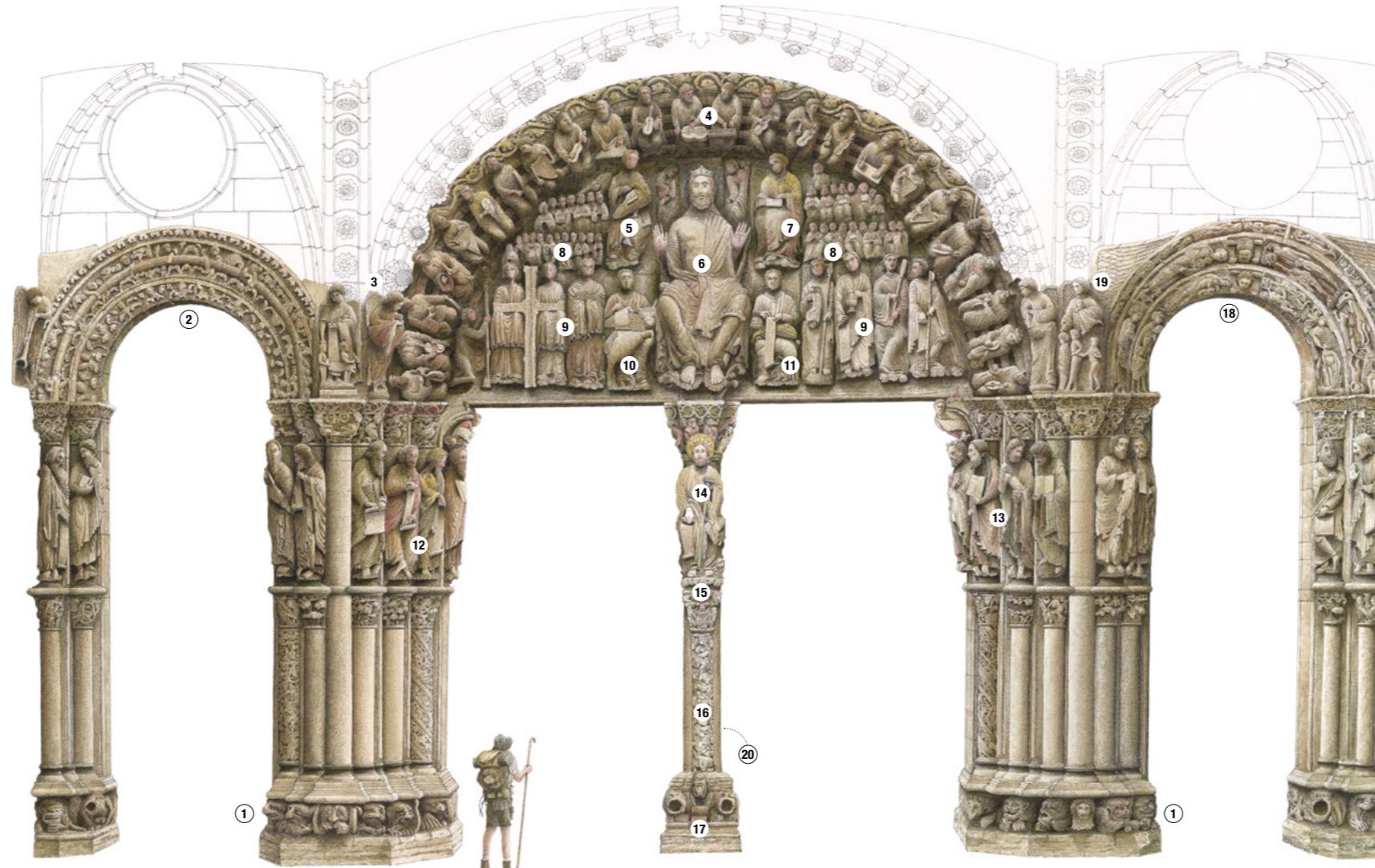
1168 - 1188. Maestro Mateo

The "Pórtico de la Gloria" is the masterpiece of Romanesque sculpture, with more than 200 brilliantly made figures. This prodigy of medieval iconography makes up a theological message that medieval believers could easily decipher. However, today we can only theorise about its meaning. Researchers believe that it represents the story of Man's Salvation and Christ's Resurrection after the Apocalypse. The central arch would depict Glory, presided by the Resurrected Jesus; the left arch, the people of Israel, and the right one the Final Judgment. What is certain is that the left half is devoted to the Old Testament and the right to the New Testament, with St. James in the centre to welcome pilgrims into the House of God.

Before being covered by the baroque Obradoiro curtain, the "Pórtico" appeared on the cathedral's west side and completed the iconographic programme of the other two façades, the Azabachería entrance (north) and the Platerías entrance (south), which represented the Fall into Sin and Redemption respectively.

## Main images:

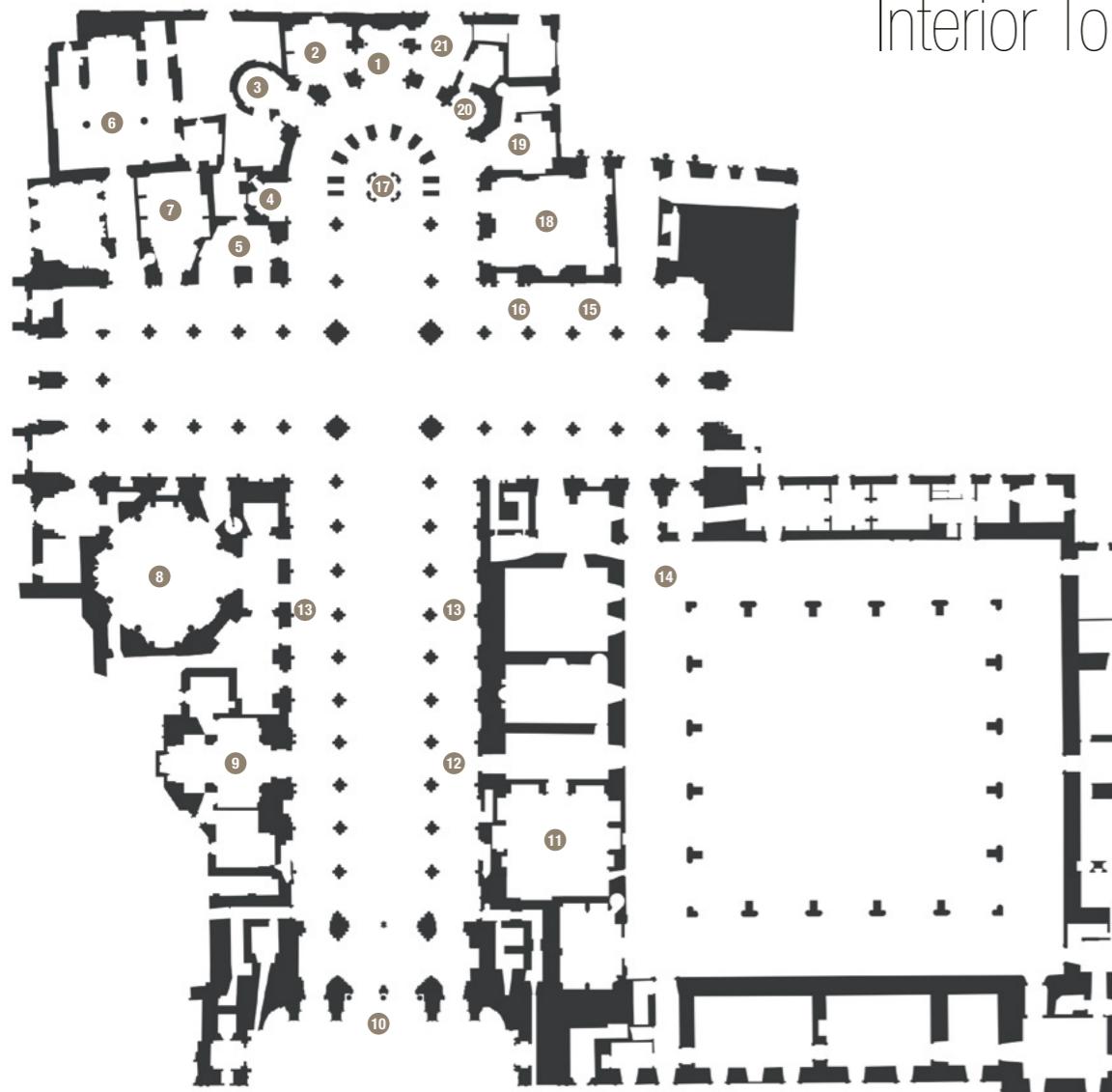
- 1 **Base** with human and animal figures. They could represent the forces of evil or ancient idols conquered by the Church.
- 2 **Jewish people**, Limbo of the Righteous or Old Testament. Includes Jesus, Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and Solomon, as well as Old Testament kings and patriarchs.
- 3 **Angels** lead the Righteous, represented by children, from Limbo to Glory.
- 4 **Central arch**. The 24 elders of the Apocalypse tuning their instruments.
- 5 **The evangelist St. John** with his symbol, the eagle.
- 6 **Pantocrator**: Resurrected Jesus, surrounded by the Four Evangelists.
- 7 **St. Matthew** with the angel and an abacus.
- 8 **The Righteous**.
- 9 **Angels** with the attributes of Christ's Passion: column, cross, crown of thorns, nails and spear, Pilate's sentence and jug of war, whip and INRI sign.
- 10 **The evangelist St. Luke** with his symbol, the winged bull.
- 11 **The evangelist St. Mark** with his symbol, the lion.
- 12 **Old Testament prophets**. From left to right, Jeremiah, Daniel, Isaiah and Moses. Daniel's smile is famous, unique in the Middle Ages.
- 13 **New Testament apostles**. From left to right, Peter, Paul, James and John, also smiling.



- 14 **Seated St. James**, with a pilgrim's staff.
- 15 Capital of Jesus' divine nature: **the Trinity**.
- 16 Column representing Jesus' genealogy in the so-called **Tree of Jesse**. The marble shows the handprints of thousands of pilgrims.
- 17 Mythical hero, commonly identified with **Hercules** overcoming two lions.
- 18 Possible representation of the **Final Judgment**. In the upper archivolt, Jesus, and in the lower one, the archangel St. Michael. On the right, sinners seized by demons (with allegories of sins), and on the left, the Righteous, protected by angels.
- 19 **The Righteous** taken to Paradise by angels.
- 20 Behind the mullion, **Maestro Mateo**, the "Pórtico's" creator, kneeling in front of the altar.



## Interior Tour



- 1 **Chapel of the Saviour or Chapel of the King of France**. Romanesque. The starting point of the cathedral's construction in 1075. Granite altarpiece by Juan de Álava: 16<sup>th</sup> c.
- 2 **Chapel of St. Mary the White or of Los Españoles**. 13<sup>th</sup> c. Gothic. Baroque renovations.
- 3 **Chapel of St. John the Evangelist or of St. Susana**. Romanesque, altered in 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> c.
- 4 **Chapel of Santa Fe or of St. Bartholomew**. Romanesque with plateresque motifs.
- 5 **Chapel of the Conception or of Prima**. 16<sup>th</sup> c. Burial place of Domingo de Andrade. Altarpiece by Simón Rodríguez.
- 6 **Chapel of La Corticela**. Pre-Romanesque church, 9<sup>th</sup> c. Altered by Maestro Mateo in the 13<sup>th</sup> c. Although joined to the cathedral in the 16<sup>th</sup> c., it is still considered an independent parish "for pilgrims, foreigners and Basques."
- 7 **Chapel of the Holy Spirit**. Gothic. 13<sup>th</sup> c. Pantheon of the Moscoso family.
- 8 **Communion Chapel**. Neoclassical: Miguel Ferro Caaveiro, 18<sup>th</sup> c. Exhibits the Blessed Sacrament.
- 9 **Chapel of Christ of Burgos**. Baroque: Melchor de Velasco, 17<sup>th</sup> c.
- 10 **"Pórtico de la Gloria."** Transitional Romanesque: Maestro Mateo, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c.
- 11 **Royal Pantheon**. Tombs: Fernando II, Alfonso IX, Raymond of Burgundy, Doña Berenguela, Juana de Castro.
- 12 **Entrance to Cathedral Museum**. Founded in 1930, it highlights the extraordinary history of the Apostle's sanctuary. A single ticket provides access to the cloister and its rooms, the Chapel of Relics, Royal

- Pantheon and Treasury**. The upper floors feature the **Library**, where the "Botafumeiro" censer is exhibited; the **Chapterhouse** and the important tapestry collection with cartoons by Goya and Rubens in the long balcony.
- 13 **Organs** by Miguel de Romay and Antonio Alfonsín. 18<sup>th</sup> c. In perfect working order.
- 14 **Gothic-Renaissance cloister**: Juan de Álava and Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, 16<sup>th</sup> c. Star-shaped vault and plateresque cresting. Houses the museum's collections.
- 15 **Pre-Romanesque font**. According to tradition, Almanzor's horse drank from it (with fatal results) during the assault on the basilica in the year 997.
- 16 **Tombstone of Teodomiro**, bishop of Iria when the Apostle's tomb was discovered (9<sup>th</sup> c.).
- 17 **High Altar**. Baroque ensemble. Rococo baldachin: Vega y Verdugo and Domingo de Andrade, 17<sup>th</sup> c. Silver altarpiece: 17<sup>th</sup> c. Statue of St. James that is embraced by pilgrims: 13<sup>th</sup> c. Below the altar, Roman crypt (1<sup>st</sup> c.) and tomb of the Apostle and his two disciples: 19<sup>th</sup>-century silver chest.
- 18 **Chapel of Our Lady of the Pillar or of Monroy**. 18<sup>th</sup> c. Altarpiece by Miguel de Romay. Archbishop Monroy's tomb. Beautiful Jacobean ornamentation.
- 19 **Chapel of Mondragón or of La Piedad or of the Holy Cross**. Altarpiece: 16<sup>th</sup> c.
- 20 **Chapel of La Azucena or of St. Peter or of Doña Mencía de Andrade or of El Magistral**. Romanesque. Altarpiece: Fernando de Casas, 18<sup>th</sup> c.
- 21 **Holy Entrance**. 16<sup>th</sup> c. Only opened in Holy Years. Bronze door by Suso León (2004).

## The "Botafumeiro"

The "Botafumeiro" is a giant censer, used since the Middle Ages to purify the air in a cathedral that was full of crowds. Today it continues to marvel those present when, after communion, it begins its amazing pendular swing facing the high altar, rising up to almost touch the transept vault.

Eight men are required to set it in motion; these so-called "tiraboleiros" bring it out of the Library. It weighs around 62 kg. After tying it with three large knots to a rope, they pump the censer by pulling with strength and precision. In this way, in only a minute and a half, and a total of 17 cycles, the "Botafumeiro" reaches a speed of 68 kilometres per hour and forms an angle of 82 degrees with the vertical, tracing a 65-metre amplitude arc along the transept.

## Brief History

The "Botafumeiro" appears in the *Codex Calixtinus*, mentioned as *Turibulum Magnum*. In the 12th century it was hung from a series of wooden beams crossing the dome. The present-day mechanism, based on movement by pulleys, was designed during the Renaissance by the master Celma.

In the 15th c., King Louis XI of France financed the manufacture of a silver censer, but it was removed by the Napoleonic troops camped in the cathedral cloister. Today, there are two censers, which are kept in the Chapter Library: the oldest is from 1851, is made of silver-plated brass and is 160 cm high. The second is a silver replica of the aforementioned one, being a gift from the Acting Officers to the Cathedral in 1971.

