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# IMAGINA ATLANTICA: CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE TERRITORIES

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ACTION WP4.2.: TOUR  
ENHANCEMENT OF ATLANTIC  
HERITAGE: SANTIAGO DE  
COMPOSTELA

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## IMAGINA ATLANTICA: ATLANTIC SPACE, CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE TERRITORIES

### ACTION WP4.2: TOUR ENHANCEMENT OF ATLANTIC HERITAGE: SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Santiago de Compostela was declared a World Heritage City by UNESCO in 1985, in view of its urban beauty and monumental integrity, as well as the profound echoes of its spiritual significance as an apostolic sanctuary and the destination of the Middle Ages' most important religious and cultural movement:

#### ***The Way of St James pilgrimage.***

In the last two decades Santiago has become one of the most important tourist destinations in Spain, seeing that tourists who visit the city, not only come because of religious motivation, but also because they look for cultural activities, gastronomy, architecture, contemporary art exhibitions, among other events.

Taking into account the tourist attractive of Santiago de Compostela, the charisma of the city itself (not only in the international tourist circuit, but also in the Galician one), paying attention to the sign of the growing actions and taking advantage of millions of Spanish and foreign tourists, we consider that the environment of the monumental area in Santiago would be the ideal setting to develop action WP4.2 activities with the aim of presenting:

- ✚ AN ALTERNATIVE TOURIST TOUR IN THE CITY.
- ✚ THE POSSIBILITY OF REVEALING THE IDEOSYNCRASY OF THE ATLANTIC EUROPE, ITS CULTURES, ITS CITIES AND ITS UNKNOWN ASPECTS.
- ✚ A PRESENTATION OF THE MOST PECULIAR ASPECTS OF GALICIAN CULTURE.
- ✚ TO PROMOTE THE EXCHANGE OF NEW CREATORS SO THAT SQUARES AND HIDDEN PLACES IN THE CITY COULD BE RECOVERED WITH THEIR ACTIVITIES OR WORKS, EVEN FOR THE OWN COMPOSTELA PEOPLE.

## HISTORY

During the early 9th century (the year 813 is the most probable), the bishop of Iria Flavia, Teodomiro, was taken by a hermit called Pelagio to examine the mausoleum, which he recognised as that of the Apostle James; he based his opinion on the oral tradition according to which St. James had preached in Spain's "finis terrae".

The Asturian king Alfonso II travelled from Oviedo with all of his court and recognised the existence of the Apostle James' tomb. At that very moment, he made James the patron saint of his kingdom, turning the place into a centre of worship capable of uniting Western Christendom against the Moors' expansion.

The city's foundation dates from the year 830. Santiago's first church was also built –a simple construction housing the mausoleum from Roman times.

Construction of the large Romanesque cathedral began in the year 1075. In 1099 Diego Xelmírez, the great promoter of the Compostela see and transformer of the city, was appointed as Santiago's bishop.

In the 13th century the cathedral acquired its full splendour, attracting an increasing number of worshippers from all over Christendom and consolidating the pilgrimage to the city. By then, the French Way, the most important of the roads leading to Compostela, had been defined. The pilgrimages gave rise to a decisive phenomenon in the city's life: the establishing of the mendicant orders' convents in the city, generally at the city gates. Convents such as San Francisco, Santo Domingo, Santa Clara or Belvís created new quarters, which determined the old town's structure beyond the city walls.

The year 1657 can be considered the starting point of Compostela's baroque period. The urban transformation began with the remodelling of

the cathedral. Convents, churches and civil buildings participated in this process. In the meantime, work continued on the project to make the cathedral the new standard-bearer of Compostela's baroque style, culminating in the construction of the Obradoiro façade.

Santiago de Compostela's dimension as a cultural and university city, and as a meeting place for people from all over the world, has resulted in different urban interventions. Due to their quality and singularity, such projects play an active role in the global dialogue of this new century's architectural and urban avant-garde. This is the case of the Auditorium of Galicia, the Galician Contemporary Art Centre (CGAC), the Journalism Faculty, the remodelling of Avenida Xoán XXIII –with a large, inclining shelter and a coach terminus as the main features, and the Public Library under construction- the Congress and Exhibition Hall, San Domingos de Bonaval Park, the City of Culture... These, along with numerous, elegant green spaces, the opening of new public spaces, sculptures scattered throughout the cityscape, etc, make Compostela a city in which past and future –TRADITION AND MODERNITY- coexist in a unique way.

## OUR PROPOSAL

We would like to suggest our visitors and inhabitants an alternative tour around the most unknown parts of the old city monumental area.

We already know that most visitors reduce their visit to the cathedral, adjoining squares and the streets converging there.

However, there is another part of the city, perhaps more historical, which is hidden for tourists and even residents. This part is full of traditional shops, narrow streets and mysterious squares waiting to be rediscovered and have a role in the history of Santiago.

Our intention is to transform those small squares and streets into different theatres, where by means of activities with light and sound for approximately an hour, the night visitor can enjoy the most particular aspect of Galician culture (music, history, civil and religious architecture, gastronomy, etc) and of other parts of the Atlantic Europe, so similar to us but so strange for Galician people.

We propose 7 squares as 7 stages or theme theatres, and the adjoining streets as settings for young artists who show participants of the light tour those aspects of the old and new Atlantic Europe using XXI century means. Everything with only one aim: to promote the exchange of artists, companies and cities of the Atlantic Europe.

## THE TOUR

The tour that we propose would start in **San Felix Square (THEATRE 1)**; the reason why starting here is not casual. According to a legend, in 813 this square was the setting of the hermitage where Pelagio the hermit saw how stars and noises from *Libredom Wood* to announce where the Apostle St. James and his two disciples were buried. Centuries before, near this place, there was a fort which could probably have lodged the first inhabitants of the area. Nowadays, in this square we can admire one of the emblematic buildings of The University of Santiago: The Faculty of Geography and History. The historical relevance of the square and the place is very important when it comes to explain not only the origins of the city and the way of St. James, but also of one of the main economical and cultural engines: The University of Santiago de Compostela.

The tour would continue bordering Praza de Abastos or Market, which is a particular collection from 1936 that summarizes inhabitants' everyday life and gastronomy, until arriving in **Praza da Oliveira/ Sal de Podes (THEATRE 2)**.

The Light Tour would continue along Rúa Entremuros that reminds us that the city was walled and its 7 doors were used as access not only for pilgrims, but also for monks living out of walls and even for those residents who used to bring supplies and cattle to trade. Once in **Algalia de Abaixo (THEATRE 3)** we get to the yard Algalia de Abaixo where the Jew colony and Synagogue were set.

Afterwards and walking along Calexa dos Truques (one of the alleys recently recovered for public use) we would access to Algalia de Arriba arriving in **Praza de San Roque (THEATRE 4)** entrance door for pilgrims from England, Ireland and Brittany who travelled by boat to the ports of the north of Galicia and walked to the city. In this square we have a wonderful view of the convents beyond the city walls (San Domingos de Bonaval and Santa Clara) and also of the old San Roque Hospital, where people and pilgrims trying to get into the city were seen if they had any infectious illnesses.

Immediately after and passing Rua Santa Cristina and San Martin Square (old Benedictine convent) we would arrive in the **Rúa de Xerusalem (THEATRE 5)**: A small square which reminds us that Santiago as well as Rome or Jerusalem is a Holy City for catholic people. Its small olive tree also reminds that until XVI century Galicia produced and traded with olive oil.

Later, we would find Troia's House one of the most famous hall of residence in the city, arriving then in **Campanas de San Xoan (THEATRE 6)** considered the Cathedral's anteroom.

To finish the tour we would arrive at the foot of the cathedral which will held its 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011. In front of Puerta de Azabacheria (north door and historical access for pilgrims) we can see the main entrance of **St. Martin Pinario Monastery (THEATRE 7)** and the third biggest religious building in Spain. From its staircase we have a particular view of the cathedral, with its granite walls full of moss that show our Atlantic climate that is the best example to explain why in Santiago "the rain is an art". In this square, where jet craftsmen made souvenirs and amulets for pilgrims to take as a memory, we finish our Tour of the Light: Theatres of Stone.

The tour does not have any architectural barriers to make possible everybody's participation.