

UNIT 8: THE WAY OF SAINT JAMES

1- THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGE:



"The way of St. James is the pilgrimage route to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. It was one of the most important Christian pilgrimages during medieval times. On this route, a plenary indulgence could be earned: all sins were forgiven.

According to legend, the remains of Jesus' apostle, St. James, lies in this part of Galicia.

The route has attracted a growing number of pilgrims from around the world since the Middle Ages to nowadays.

2- THE LEGEND:

After Jesus' crucifixion, James went to the IBERIAN PENINSULA to preach. Then, he returned to JUDEA. After his death, his body was mysteriously transported by an unpowered boat through the Mediterranean Sea, the Strait of Gibraltar to the Northwestern province of GALICIA.

There the body lay, forgotten until the 9th century. At that time, Pelagius, a hermit from Galicia, had a vision in which a star led him to the tomb containing the remains of Santiago.

A small village named Campus de la Stella (Field of Stars) and a monastery were established on the site.

3- THE SYMBOLS:

The SCALLOP SHELL has been the symbol of the "Way of Saint James". It is typically found on the shores in Galicia. Why is it a symbol?

According to the legend, when the body was transported near the coast of Spain, a heavy storm hit the boat, and the body was lost in the ocean. After some time, the body washed ashore undamaged and covered in SCALLOPS.



The scallop shell served practical purposes as well. The shell was the right



size to use for DRINKING or EATING . Also, having the shell, a pilgrim could prove that he had finished the pilgrimage and had seen "the end of the world". Other symbols are the PILGRIM HAT and the WALKING STICK.



4- THE HISTORY:

During the Middle Ages, the "Way of Saint James" was the most important cultural event in Europe. However, the Black Plague and the Protestant Reformation led to its decline.

Since the 1980s the number of modern-day pilgrims has been growing.

A great infrastructure has been developed: BRIDGES to draw pilgrims to certain cities and HOSPICES governed by religious orders. People from many parts of Europe meet along the road to Santiago. It has provided an exchange of cultural influences such as literature, music, art and language.

MAP OF THE WAY OF ST.JAMES



-Historic routes

-Locations where pilgrims begin

-other locations