
PILGRIMAGE



Medieval pilgrims journeyed to the Spanish city of Compostela seeking absolution at the shrine of Santiago.

Eight centuries later, three Sooner filmmakers repeated the quest to study the work of a master sculptor.

By PAULA BAKER
photos by Dave Smeal

The Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

The rhythm of the name creates poetry from stone. But the heel-tap syllables evoke little more than a flash of Spanish imagery.

Sturdy English words like Chaucer and Canterbury and cockleshells infiltrate the remembrance from a long-ago literature class and clarify the Spanish name with the illuminating word — “Pilgrimage!”

Geoffrey Chaucer's motley assemblage of fictional characters whose spring fever led to wanderlust introduced the concept of pilgrimage to generations upon generations of those who studied *The Canterbury Tales*. However, by the time students muddled through enough Middle English to chortle over the Miller's Tale, they usually were more inclined to speculate about the Wife of Bath's knowledge of love charms than her experiences along the numerous pilgrimage trails, which included a trip to the shrine of St. James (Santiago) in the northwestern Spanish city of Compostela.

Now three modern “pilgrims for knowledge” from the University of Oklahoma—Susan Havens Caldwell, associate professor of art history; Eugene J. Enrico, professor of music history, and David W. Smeal, director of OU electronic media and photographic services—are using their expertise and 20th century film techniques to introduce and expand knowledge about the glorious legacies of Santiago de Compostela. They are producers of a Santiago pilgrimage film centering on the Portico de la Gloria (Porch of Glory) on the west side of the cathedral. The portico, carved by Master Mateo and completed in 1188, is considered a masterpiece of 12th-century sculpture in Spain and one of the great art treasures of western Europe.

Caldwell and Enrico wrote, directed and narrated the film, which Smeal shot in France and Spain. As co-editors, all three spent hours fine-

tuning each minute of the production in a video editing facility owned by the OU Foundation and shared by Smeal's electronic media services staff and the staff of athletic films. Some 4,400 feet of motion picture film and more than 50 boxes of slides shot by both Smeal and Caldwell provided the film's raw material.

The scholars and the photographer previously have worked on several music history videos, which have aired on Oklahoma and national educational television. Some 300 videocassettes of the Early Music Television Series have been sold to institutions all across the country. Smeal's work also is known to viewers of his national award-winning film, “Live On, University,” and his 30- and 60-second spots highlighting OU on sports telecasts.

The pilgrimage film for classroom and television use is titled “And They

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Sang a New Song’: Twenty-Four Musical Elders at Santiago de Compostela.” The title refers to Revelation 5:8-9 in the Bible: “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sang a new song . . .”

“A Santiago pilgrim who steps inside the western portico is surrounded by a celestial vision in architecture and sculpture,” Caldwell says. “While apostles and prophets comment to each other ecstatically from the jambs of the three portals, St. James with his pilgrim's staff greets the pilgrim from the trumeau, which supports the

great central tympanum. Here a large and commanding Christ lifts his palms to show the wounds of his Passion, while angels display the instruments of the Passion and choirs of the Elect rejoice. Radiating outward from the great tympanum are animated figures of the Twenty-four Elders. These lively musicians — unusually large for archivolt figures — are tuning up to play the ‘new song’ promised in Revelation.”

According to legend, St. James, or Santiago, was the only one of Christ's apostles buried in the West. In the Middle Ages, a pilgrimage to his burial site gained as much merit or absolution as a pilgrimage to Rome or Jerusalem. Santiago pilgrims were honored for their cockleshell badges, which they wore as reminders of the miracle in which St. James resurrected a drowned man, still covered with cockleshells, from the sea. Dante even restricted the title of “pilgrim” to those who had been to Santiago, calling the others “romers” or “palmers” (for their leafy souvenirs).

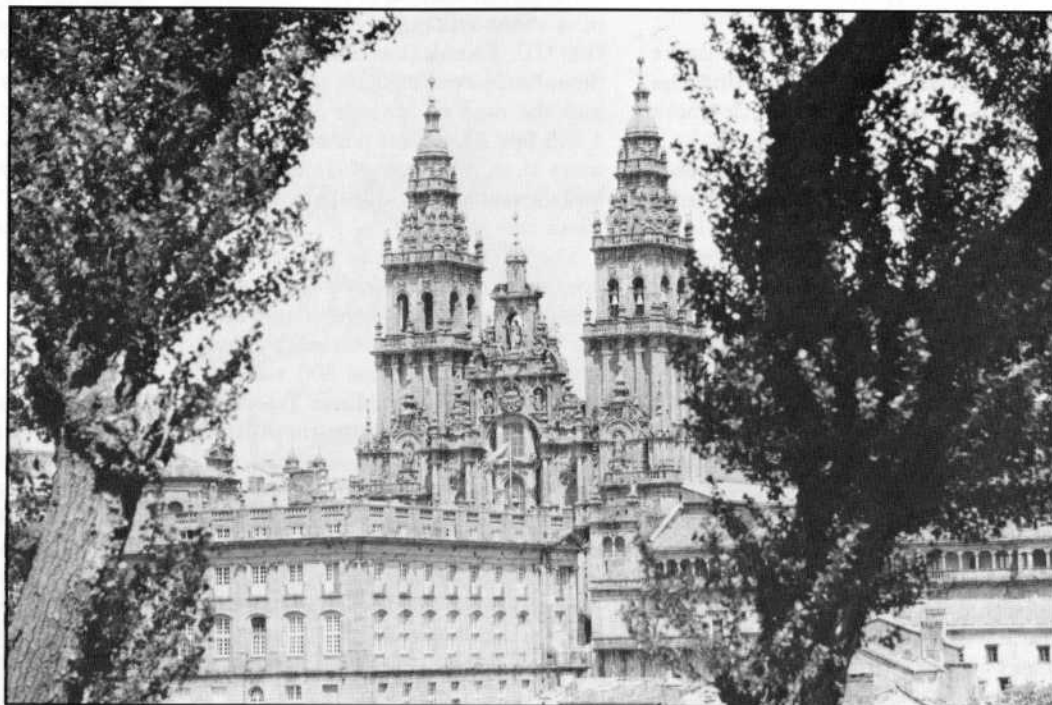
Pilgrims traveled for both religious and secular reasons. They exchanged ideas along the way, creating results as imposing as the new international style of art and music called Romanesque and as homey as the French method of preparing scallops, “coquilles St. Jacques.”

The OU color film includes location footage, still photographs of sculpture and illuminations, and medieval music from the “Book of St. James” (the “Liber Sancti Jacobi”) kept in the library of Santiago. The performers are singers from OU's Collegium Musicum, an early music performance ensemble directed by Enrico, and instrumentalists from the University of Indiana, who play on reproductions of medieval instruments. Caldwell and Enrico narrate their script.

Conveying knowledge through the visual and aural imagery of modern film technique is especially appropriate when dealing with Santiago de

The photo at right presents a distant view of the baroque facade of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

Below, the Sooner three, Eugene Enrico, left, Susan Caldwell and Dave Smeal, conclude the editing of the 4,400 feet of film and more than 50 boxes of slides that became their video.



Betsy Baker



At left, Eugene Enrico and Susan Caldwell consult their notes at the Portico de la Gloria. Detailed in the photo above, St. James with his pilgrim's staff is shown on the trumeau which supports the tympanum on which appear Master Mateo's sculpted representations of Christ and the semicircle of the 24 Musical Elders.

Compostela. The art and music associated with the cathedral were created for instruction and inspiration when few could read and write.

The University already has saluted the importance of the Santiago pilgrimage site in Vol. 35 of *The Centers of Civilization Series* published by the University of Oklahoma Press. In *Santiago De Compostela: In The Age of Great Pilgrimages*, author Marilyn Stokstad wrote:

"As the goal of thousands of pilgrims, it (Compostela) was an important focal point for the development of medieval culture . . . men from all nations could rub shoulders and exchange ideas. Some of the art and learning of the Moors, and with it the classical and Byzantine heritage, could be also imparted to the Western Christians while they were in Spain. Moorish art, architecture, engineer-

ing, science, mathematics, literature, music and love of a better physical life spread back across the Pyrenees.

"As a city, Compostela in the 12th century held a position it would never regain. It was a leader in architecture, literature and music, and also in the economic, religious and political life of the peninsula. It was the shrine of the patron of the Spanish people, a unifying force in a land divided into many kingdoms, a leader in the struggle for civil rights and political liberty and a profound educational force."

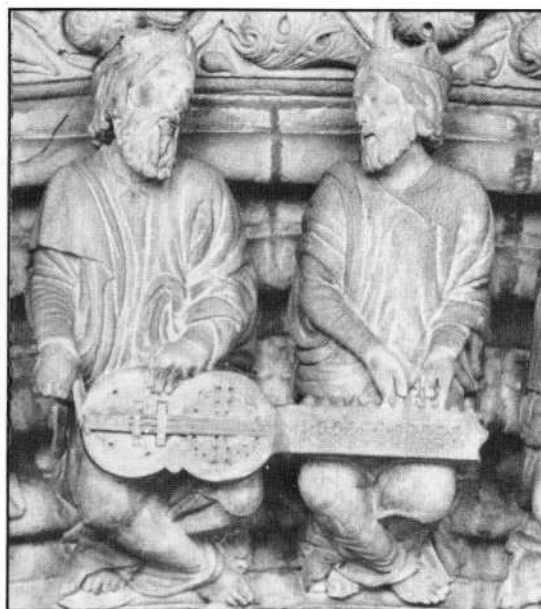
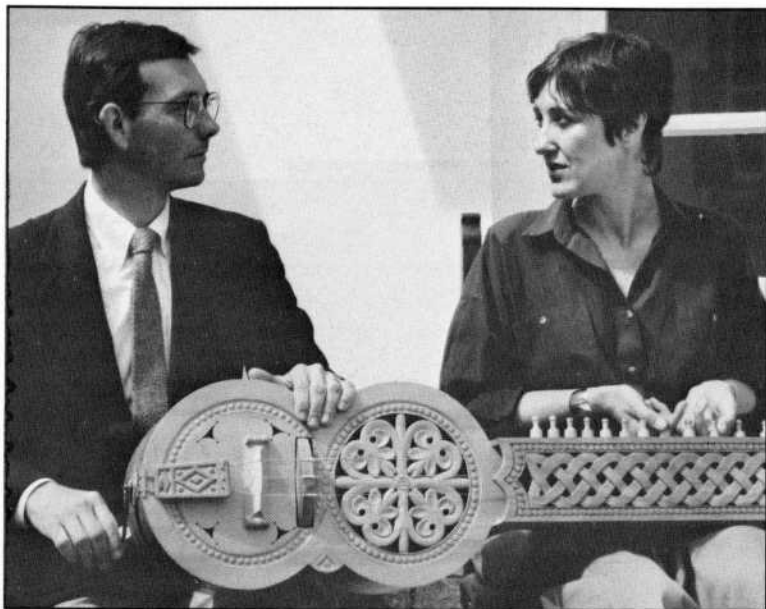
The route from Paris to Santiago was 900 miles, and many pilgrims journeyed from farther locales — Scotland, Hungary, Greece and even Persia. Among those who made the pilgrimage through the centuries were Alfonso II of Spain, El Cid Campeador, St. Francis of Assisi and Giovanni Roncalli, later Pope John XXIII. Santiago

continues to be a pilgrimage site, especially on July 25 Feast of St. James.

Caldwell cherishes the memory of an aged woman, called the "Santiago Pilgrim," who became her self-appointed guide.

"She was very old and very small," Caldwell says. "Her layers of clothing and many religious medals were protected by a curious covering of clear plastic. I was told that she had arrived there as a young girl without family and had simply stayed on. When I told her I was studying the cathedral, she took me by the hand to all her favorite chapels, pulling me through the church (though I was twice her height) and explaining all her beloved sculptures as the friends they were to this woman who had lived with them for so many years."

An interdisciplinary class on medieval art and music, team-taught



In the photo at left, Eugene Enrico and Susan Caldwell use a modern reproduction of a medieval instrument to duplicate the pose of the two organistrum players at right, used by Master Mateo to link the Elders to sing the "new song" from Revelation.

by Caldwell and Enrico, gave the OU faculty members the idea for their filmed research project. As they projected slides for the class of Santiago's carved Elders holding various stringed instruments of the time, the professors realized that while Santiago's "Musical Elders" were well-known to art historians, they had not been closely scrutinized by musicologists. A specialized study of the musical instruments would, in turn, reveal to art historians a careful and direct observation unsuspected of artists in the 12th century.

Such a lack of attention to the Elders was ironic because the cathedral is the repository of one of the great treasures of medieval music, the "Liber Sancti Jacobi" ("Book of Saint James"). Because the manuscript was (perhaps erroneously) attributed to Pope Calixtus, the Santiago copy is called the "Codex Calixtinus."

The "Book of Saint James" is actually five books, the first of which contains hymns, sermons and liturgical offerings, including the oldest surviving piece of three-part polyphony, "Congaudeant Catholici." The book also contains a section on St. James, a 12th-century history of the church, an account of the French epic hero Roland and a guidebook for pilgrims.

Aimery Picard's guide in the Codex, written in the first half of the 12th century, is generally regarded as the world's first guidebook. It lists shrines to be visited along the trail and cautions pilgrims about contaminated water, bad food, brigands in ambush and thieving toll-keepers. At one crossing near the village of Saint-Jean de Sorde, the Guide cautions:

"Several times, having taken the money, the ferrymen let such a large number of pilgrims on that the boat turns over and the pilgrims are drowned; and then the boatmen rejoice wickedly, after recuperating the corpses."

The hazards of OU's pilgrimage had more to do with modern traffic in medieval cities than "wicked boatmen." Nevertheless, preparations for the expedition were elaborate and time-consuming. The colleagues had had their "moment of illumination" about the research waiting to be done on the Portico in the fall of 1984. Two-and-a-half years and several grant applications later, they bundled up their funding package and headed for France and Spain.

They offered an impressive array of credentials as a guarantee of success in their mission.

Caldwell, a specialist in medieval

art history, received her doctorate from Cornell University in 1974 and joined the OU faculty in 1976. She has published articles on medieval and contemporary art and has received four teaching awards including the OU Regents' Award for Superior Teaching.

Enrico is the founder and director of the Oklahoma Collegium Musicum. He earned a doctor of philosophy degree in musicology from the University of Michigan and was a postdoctoral research associate in the division of musical instruments at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Smeal earned a bachelor of science degree in journalism from the University of Tulsa. He is the winner of numerous district and national awards from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education.

The filmmakers received assistance from the Oklahoma Foundation for the Humanities; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the United States-Spanish Joint Committee for Cultural and Educational Cooperation; a special program for interdisciplinary research administered by Kenneth L. Hoving, OU vice provost for research administration; the OU President's Partners program; and a special fine arts endowment administered by the OU Foundation.

For consultants, the colleagues recruited Paul Ruggiers, David Ross Boyd and George Lynn Cross Research Professor emeritus of English at OU and former head of the Variorum Chaucer project; Thomas Binkley, director of the Early Music Institute at the University of Indiana; and Serafin Moralejo, professor of ancient and medieval art history at the University of Santiago de Compostela.

Assistance from the Spanish Film Office was invaluable but initially difficult to obtain because of the logistics of calling into a time zone that was so many hours ahead of Oklahoma. Once Enrico and Smeal set their alarms in time to arrive on campus to place a 6 a.m. call to Madrid — only to realize that no one takes calls on Good Friday in Spain!

Burdened with hundreds of pounds of motion picture equipment and several still cameras, the trio welcomed the Spanish Film Office's help to get through customs, obtain film permits and locate an American aide. Chris Sterba of Bucknell University, who was studying Spanish literature in Madrid, helped drive, interpret, carry equipment and trouble-shoot.

"He didn't know much about production," Smeal recalls, "but he was into dialects and loved to get into conversations with the people. He learned about local politics and the modes of operation we needed to deal with to get into various churches.

"We were treated to the flavor of Spain on the first day we arrived," Smeal says. "It was the feast day of Saint Isidore, patron saint of Madrid, and the Plaza was filled with Spanish dancing. In fact, we enjoyed festivals in Spain and southern France all month long."

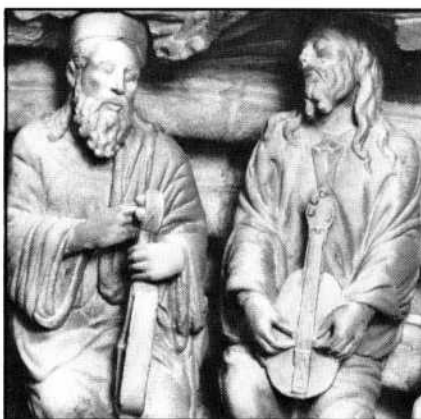
As soon as they arrived in Spain, the filmmakers purchased electrical supplies, tall ladders and planks to make scaffolding for close inspection of the sculptures they were to photograph. The scaffolding was strapped to the top of the stick-shift Peugeot they acquired after a smelly Renault had exhausted their patience.

"We were very conscious of taking care of the equipment," Smeal says. "Every night we unloaded hundreds



At left, the Oklahoma visitors, Enrico, left, and Caldwell, are shown the *Book of St. James* by their colleague, Serafin Moralejo.

Below left, two of the Santiago Elders tune and adjust the bridge on their fiddles. Below right, an Elder plucks a perfect fourth on the psaltery.



of pounds of film equipment, camera lights, tripods, ladders and boards and hauled them up to our hotel rooms for safety. It didn't take long to figure out the routine as to where the pieces would fit in the car the next morning."

"Unfortunately, the ladder-and-board scaffolding, which we seldom actually used, was my idea," Caldwell recalls. "Hauling it in every night came to be like shouldering the burdens described in *Pilgrim's Progress*.

"The word 'pilgrimage' applies to the trip in many ways," she continues, "especially in the sense of uprooting oneself to receive new insights and returning to share them.

"I have studied the phenomenon of pilgrimage for a long time," she says. "I read a lot of medieval Spanish and French epics and romances, which traveled up and down the pilgrimage routes, as part of my minor in medieval literature for the doctorate. Further-

more, my dissertation was about the development of Romanesque sculpted portals along these same roads to Santiago de Compostela.

"As a person with a lot of studio art in my background, I found it fascinating to be involved in this film project," Caldwell adds. "I had developed a facility with still photography for my work as an art historian and knew how to look at structures to get information. Working with Dave opened my eyes to the possibility of film as an art form and a way of communicating information about visual art. I'm interested in learning to make short films.

"Focusing on the Master Mateo's sculpture and trying to make it come alive in film through the rhythm of music and narration has been a wonderful experience," she says. "As an art historian, my high point on the trip was spending a day on the scaffolding up with the sculpture itself. It is

remarkable that Master Mateo seems to have spent his entire adult career working on a sculpted ensemble that is as complex for its age as the Sistine Chapel is for the 16th century. There are aspects of facial expression and communication in Master Mateo's work that we call 'amazing' in Gothic sculptures at Chartres Cathedral, which were carved some 30 years later.

"On the scaffold, I came to know Master Mateo as a distinct art history personality and could see the sculpture as he saw it and worked with it in a studio situation," Caldwell says. "I could see where he 'corrected' the proportions of figures for the sake of the spectators below so that they would seem perfect when seen from the floor. Donatello was capable of doing that in the early Renaissance, but we art historians have not been aware of such a concern for the viewer among medieval artists.

"There are realistic details in the carving of the Elders that I might not have seen if I had not been accompanied by a musicologist," Caldwell says. "The fact that the Elders hold their instruments correctly and are ready to pluck a perfect fourth are the kinds of things that musicians see. Master Mateo had to have been commissioned to do a particular study of particular instruments, which makes me think differently about medieval art. Most art historians would not have considered the musical instruments to be historically accurate and would not have thought that sculptors would have taken such pains in 1188 to depict things accurately."

Enrico experienced a similar enlightenment. "Studying the importance of sculpture in the history of musical instruments was one of the most exciting aspects of the class in medieval art and music that Susan and I taught," Enrico says. (The professors worked together and taught each other in preparation for their course for advanced art and music students.)

"Our class learned that the sculptures at Santiago provide the most detailed information for the construction of musical instruments to be found in the entire Middle Ages. However, they are just one of the many sets

of 24 Elders found in Spain and France. Before the trip we identified 30 important sets of sculpture and were able to visit and photograph most of these when we worked on the film." (Enrico and his wife Sherry returned to Spain in the summer of 1988 to complete the photography.)

"The Santiago sculptures not only provide evidence for the construction of instruments but also for performance practice," Enrico says. "The way the instruments are held, the way sound is produced and the way the instruments are tuned, provide valuable information for the performance of medieval music.

"For example, one psalter player is holding long feather quills in each hand showing the way strings were plucked," Enrico explains. "A harp player is plucking a perfect fourth and has a tuning wrench in his left hand so we can see the way strings are pulled into tune.

"There are fiddles in a variety of designs. Their sound holes had many different configurations, and they came in three-string and five-string models. The details of these fiddles corroborate some literary evidence from the 13th century that describes the way a five-string fiddle was tuned with a grouping of two pairs of strings and a single string.

"One of the most fascinating aspects of the sculpture is that one of the fiddles has a sound post carved in stone. The sound post would not have been essential for keeping the sculpture intact but would have been essential for a real fiddle. It was surprising to find this detail in a sculpture."

Master Mateo's accuracy in depiction allows craftsmen at Santiago to construct replicas of the instruments for present-day performance. Similar instruments were used by musicians from the Early Music Institute at the University of Indiana when they came to Norman to record the film's music.

The dramatic and realistic way in which the musical instruments are depicted on the Portico de la Gloria gave Enrico courage to try a controversial arrangement of the processional music, "Congaudeant Catholici," which opens the film. The earliest pre-

served piece with three-part harmony is first sung and later performed with voices and instruments.

"Most scholars doubt that musical instruments of the type that were depicted on the portal were used in liturgical music," Enrico says. "However, the 'Book of St. James' says that pilgrims brought instruments into the church at Santiago to accompany singing. A confluence of evidence and intuition gave me the courage to see what 'Congaudeant' would sound like accompanied by instruments."

Groups of peers are beginning to evaluate the success of this "confluence." The film was shown at an international conference on art, music and literature centered on the Codex Calixtinus at the University of Pittsburgh in November and was enthusiastically received. In December it will be shown at the Federation of State Humanities Councils in Washington, D.C. In May, Enrico will present a paper on "Iconography of Musical Instruments Held by the 24 Elders of the Portico de la Gloria" at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

The film was shown at the 1988 OU School of Art faculty show at the OU Museum of Art and is scheduled for broadcast by Oklahoma Educational Television in February.

At the very top of the semicircle of Elders at Santiago de Compostela are two musicians who play an organistrum, a semi-automatic instrument resembling a large cranked guitar. The organistrum players link the Elders at either side, who are thought to symbolize the 12 Tribes of Israel and the 12 New Tribes. Thus united, they sing a "new song," a synthesis of the Old and New Testaments, the "New Jerusalem" of the Book of Revelation.

The joining of musicians to play a single instrument is an appropriate symbol for one of OU's first specially funded interdisciplinary research projects — one that is building prestige among scholars, stimulating entertainment for art and music enthusiasts and providing mutual enrichment for the producers themselves. 