Relics, Shrines and Pilgrimages

Sanctity in Europe from Late Antiquity

Edited by Antón M. Pazos

[Routledge, London-New York, 2020, ISBN: 978-0-367-18867-2 (hbk) ISBN: 978-0-429-19890-8 (ebk)]

Chapter 2 (pp. 41-62)

Relics and Pilgrimages of St. James the Greater in France

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Abstract

Until the end of the 18th century, devotion to Saint James the Greater was widespread in France. Churches, chapels and altars dedicated to the apostle should have a relic of the apostle, often a contact relic. As a consequence of the spread of the story of Charlemagne's discovery of the apostolic tomb (*Codex Calixtinus*, book V), several churches claimed to possess either the entire body or the skull of Zebedee's son. These relics aroused a temporary interest, manifested by local pilgrimages and processions, but never supplanted the shrine of Compostella.

Relations between the sanctuary of St James of Compostella and France date back to the first decades after the discovery of the apostolic tomb. However, before addressing this subject I would like to make it clear that I am going to discuss "France" as it exists today; if I were to confine myself to the territories gradually dominated by the king of Île-de-France, this study would doubtless be more accurate from a historical point of view, but it would be extremely brief. I therefore propose to include Flanders and the county of Toulouse, as well as Provence and Brittany, under the term "France".

In the second half of the ninth century, some twenty or thirty years after the apostle's sepulchre was discovered at Compostela, various authors of martyrologies, notably Ado of Vienne, followed by Usuard of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, point out that 25 July was the

feast of St James, son of Zebedee and brother of John (the Evangelist), martyred under Herod, and that his "very holy bones" rested at the *finis terrae* of Spain.¹

While the story of the return of Bishop Geylo of Langres from Compostela in 841 and his theft of the body of Prudentius is certainly apocryphal,² at the beginning of the next century the canons of St Martin of Tours, writing to Alfonso III of Oviedo to offer him a crown, enquired about the apostolic tomb. In the answer he sent in 906, the king commented on the many miracles recorded at the sanctuary and its distance from the ocean.³ By this time, "Franks", such as a certain Bretenaldus, had already settled in Compostela, and in the middle of the century Bishop Godescalc of Le Puy left a record of the pilgrimage he made with a large entourage.⁴ Shortly afterwards the excommunicated bishop of Reims, Hugh of Vermandois, travelled to Compostela, and around the year 1000 the chroniclers recall that Duke William of Aquitaine used to visit St James in Galicia in the years when he did not make his annual journey to Rome.⁵

Between the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth the episcopal or cathedral school of Compostela produced a series of texts which were later collected, between 1140 and 1160, in the *Codex Calixtinus*. France is again in the spotlight, both in Book IV, the *Historia Turpini*, which recounts Charlemagne's campaigns in Spain to "deliver the tomb of St James", and in Book V, which establishes a terrestrial itinerary for pilgrims and locates its origins in four major sanctuaries in France: St Martin of Tours, the Madeleine of Vézelay, Our Lady of Le Puy and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard.⁶ As early as the first half of the twelfth century the documents refer to the route from Puente la Reina to Compostela as the "Frankish way" (*iter francigenum*).

In the *Historia Turpini* Charlemagne is both a pilgrim and a crusader to Compostela. A century earlier, a certain Benedict, a monk from St Andrew of Mount Soratte, north of Rome, had already presented him as a pilgrim to Jerusalem who had acquired precious relics on passing through Byzantium on his return.⁷ Close study reveals that the Fifth Book of the *Codex Calixtinus*, which recalls the itinerary and evokes the high points of

¹ Usuardus, "Martyrologium", col. 295.

² Teobaudo, "Acta, translationes et miracula", quoted by Geary, Furta Sacra, 154.

³ López, *Historia*, vol. 2, App. 57-60.

⁴ *Tumbos*, 137-9: "In Compostella, corte que fuit de Bretenaldo franco cum suis ortalibus". Jacomet, "Gotescalc". Díaz, *Libros*, 279-81.

⁵ Vázquez de Parga, Lacarra, and Uría, *Las peregrinaciones*, 44-5. Ademarus, "Historiarum": "Dux vero Aquitanorum, comes Pictavinus, jam dictus Willelmus gloriosissimus et potentissimus (...) a juventute consuetudo fuit, ut semper omni anno ad limina apostolorum Romam properaret, et eo quo Romam non properabat anno, ad Sanctum Jacobum Galliciae reconpensaret iter devotum".

⁶ Liber Sancti Jacobi.

⁷ Benedicti, "Chronicon", 708-11.

Charlemagne's epic history, is not a "guide" for pilgrims but a symbolic text intended to attract pilgrims to the terrestrial route; the four sanctuaries marking the points of departure are of course the four cardinal points from which pilgrims leave for Compostela, ways which become a single path in Spain from east to west as far as the *finis terrae*, which is also *finis vitae*.⁸

Nevertheless, St James, the Apostle of Galicia, remained associated with France, and even more so from the canonisation of Charlemagne in 1165, since the emperor was to become the founder of the French dynasty in the thirteenth century, and the *Historia Turpini* found its place amongst the *Great Chronicles of France*. Louis VII (1137-80) made the pilgrimage to Compostela; Louis IX (1226-70), like his mother, Blanche of Castile, wanted to do so; Charles V (1364-80) assumed the patronage of the Chapel of the Holy Saviour in the Compostellan cathedral in 1372, and Louis XI (1461-83), whose mother, Marie of Anjou, went to Santiago, had many presents sent there. ¹⁰

The texts collected in the *Codex Calixtinus* in the mid-twelfth century are at the origin of an unprecedented expansion of devotion to the Apostle James, son of Zebedee and brother of John the Evangelist. Such devotion is attested only from the discovery of the tomb in Galicia around the year 830 onwards and the spread of this news through the *Epistola Leonis* (Pope Leo's Epistle) in the middle of the century.¹¹

Churches, chapels and altars dedicated to the son of Zebedee, allegedly possessing relics of the saint, appeared in France over the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries and multiplied from the twelfth century onwards. In Elne, seat of the *mater omnium ecclesiarum Rossilionensium et Confluentium*, a document from April 938 reveals the presence of a church dedicated to St James.¹² In Paris, a church in his honour was erected at the end of the eleventh century on the right bank of the Seine, at the exit of the Pont au Change; its founder donated it to the Cluniac monastery of Saint-Martin-des-Champs, which owned it in 1119, as attested by the confirmation of the properties of the monastery given by Pope Calixtus II on November 17 that year.¹³ In Aix-en-Provence, Archbishop Pierre Gaufridi restored his see in 1092 and granted it, among other properties, the church

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⁸ Rucquoi, "Le 'chemin français'".

⁹ Rucquoi, "Charlemagne".

¹⁰ Paris, Archives de l'Assistance Publique - Hôpitaux de Paris, Fonds Hôpital Saint-Jacques-aux-Pèlerins. Chartrier. Liasse 6, no. 43 (1372). Jacomet, "Notes sur les pèlerinages", 21-56.

¹¹ Díaz, "La Epistola Leonis".

¹² Lacvivier, "Inventaire sommaire", 321.

¹³ Calixtus II, "Epistolæ et Privilegia": "In suburbio Parisiacae urbis, ecclesiam Sancti Jacobi cum parochia". *Recueil de chartes*, 245-50.

of St James in Lignane, as well as donating the church of St James in Esparron to the monastery of St Victor in Marseille in 1093.¹⁴ Around 1103, the Monastery of Saint-Honorat in the Lérins islands received the church of St James of Beldisnar Castle (now Baudinard-sur-Verdon) from Bishop Augier of Riez.¹⁵ In Melgueil (now Mauguio, near Montpellier), a church of St James, affiliated to Saint-Ruf d'Avignon, is attested before 1116.¹⁶

The founding of churches, chapels, altars and hospitals dedicated to the Apostle of Galicia continued thereafter. There are at least twenty in the ecclesiastical province of Bourges, thirty in the dioceses and archdioceses of Provence, fifteen in the ecclesiastical province of Tours, which included Brittany, about ten in Rouen, 17 and further north there were churches of St James in Metz, Verdun, Châlons-en-Champagne, Vitry-le-François, Abbeville, Amiens and many other places. If it is true that these altars, chapels, and churches had to possess a relic of the saint whose invocation they bore, these could be contact relics. Thus the Dictionnaire critique des reliques et des images miraculeuses, published by Jacques A. S. Collin de Plancy in 1821, made fun of the Apostle's various bodies: "This great Apostle has a fourth body in Verona; this body was found on Mount Grigiano. He has a fifth body in Toulouse, a sixth in Rome in the Church of the Holy Apostles, a seventh in Pistoia, where he is so revered that he is called the first of the Apostles in public prayers. There is yet an eighth head of St James in Venice, a ninth in the Abbey of Saint-Vaast in Arras [...], a seventeenth arm in the Abbey of Saint-Benoîtsur-Loire, an eighteenth in Amiens and many other relics in Paris, Troyes, Bologna, etc.".18

The inventories of the treasuries of churches in France reveal here and there the presence of relics of the Apostle, but rarely indicate their provenance. There is nothing similar to those carefully preserved in the Abbey of St James in Liège, a monastery founded around 1020 under the invocation of St James the Less, whose monks went to Compostela in 1056 to obtain relics. The delegation from Liège arrived in Compostela on 3 April, went

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¹⁴ Albanés, *Gallia christiana*, Instrumenta Ecclesiae Aquensis, cols. 3-5. *Cartulaire*, Guérard, 337-8.

¹⁵ Cartulaire, Moris and Blanc, 223.

¹⁶ Jacomet, "Toulouse et Compostelle".

¹⁷ *Pouillés*, Prou, Perrin and Font-Réaulx, 808; *Pouillés*, Prou and Clouzot, 502-3; *Pouillés* [Rouen], Longnon, 535; *Pouillés* [Tours], Longnon, 535.

¹⁸ Collin, *Dictionnaire critique*, 6: "Ce grand apôtre a un quatrième corps à Vérone; ce corps fut trouvé sur le mont Grigiano. Il a un cinquième corps à Toulouse, un sixième à Rome dans l'église des Saints-Apôtres, un septième à Pistoie où l'on a une si grande vénération pour lui que l'on l'appelle le premier des apôtres dans les prières publiques. On a encore une huitième tête de saint Jacques à Venise, une neuvième à l'abbaye Saint-Waast d'Arras (...), un dix-septième bras à l'abbaye de Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire, un dix-huitième à Amiens et beaucoup d'autres reliques à Paris, à Troyes, à Bologne, etc.".

to pray in "the sanctuary where the precious bones of the holy Apostle rest", and asked King García of Galicia for relics of the Apostle. On Easter Day, after mass and the singing of a sequence, the king, against the advice of Bishop Cresconius, donated an important (*haut ineximia*) relic of the Apostle's body to these "illustrious pilgrims from the court of the Emperor of the Romans", as well as one of St Bartholomew and others of St Sebastian and St Pancratius. On 13 May the relics solemnly arrived in Liège. ¹⁹ In 1114 a canon of Compostela reportedly brought new relics to Liège, and as early as the thirteenth century an arm of St James was documented in the abbey's treasure. ²⁰ Nor is there anything in France comparable to the relic of St James's hand brought to England in 1125 by the Empress Matilda and donated to Reading Abbey. ²¹ Above all, none of the relics in France ever gave rise to any specific veneration, nor to any pilgrimage whatsoever.

However, three places in France claimed possession of important relics of the Apostle in the Middle Ages: Arras (Flanders), in the Abbey of Saint-Vaast, Toulouse, in the Basilica of Saint-Sernin and the church of St James, and Angers, in the church of Saint-Maurille (St Maurilius).

The head of St James in Saint-Vaast and Aire-sur-la-Lys

The oldest claim to an important relic of the Apostle James in the north of present-day France dates back to the twelfth century. The text that mentions it was written shortly after an account of the translation of the relics of Oviedo and of a miracle of St James in favour of a possessed woman who had taken the road to Compostela and whom the Apostle delivered from the devil in Oviedo Cathedral, an account preserved in the Abbey of the Holy Sepulchre in Cambrai and at Saint-Ghislain near Mons.²² There were close relations between Flanders and north-western Spain at that time, culminating in the marriage of the Count of Flanders and Teresa of Portugal in 1185.

The Benedictine abbey of Saint-Vaast was founded near Arras in 667. Endowed with a new church consecrated in 1030, possessing a beautiful library and an active *scriptorium*,²³ it had been largely destroyed by a fire in 1136. Many conflicts had arisen

¹⁹ Aegidii, "Gesta Episcoporum", 82-6. Stiennon, "Le voyage".

²⁰ George, *Reliques*, 107-8.

²¹ See the chapter of Simon Yarrow in this same book.

²² Rucquoi, "Un milagro".

²³ Arras, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 112: Saint-Vaast owned, among its books, a *Passio sanctorum Apostolorum* of the 11th century, which included the *passio* of Saint James, just after those of Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

between the abbey and the bishop of Arras during the first half of the twelfth century.²⁴ Abbot Martin (1155-84) restored it and commissioned the monk Guimann to draw up the cartulary. This was executed in around 1180-90, and mentions, in the second book, the presence of the body of St Vaast (Vedast, † 540) in the treasury of the abbey church, together with relics of two Holy Innocents and twelve Apostles; it then refers to the *caput beati Jacobi apostoli fratris sancti Joannis*, the head of St Nicaise (Nicasius), Bishop of Reims, the head of St Leodegaire (Leodegar), Bishop of Autun, the bodies of St Radulphe and St Hadulphe, and many other Christic and Marian relics and those of various other saints.²⁵

Immediately after the inventory of the items kept in the treasury, a few pages are devoted to the history of the head of St James, that *desideratum atque desiderabilem thesaurum* in which the monks were to rejoice (*Gaudeamus in Domino, fratres charissimi*). These pages were undoubtedly the work of Guimann's brother, Lambert, and were presumably interpolated in around 1193-94.²⁶ After recalling the vocation of St James and his brother John, their familiarity with the Lord and the martyrdom of James by order of Herod, the text adds, quoting the martyrologists, that "his very holy bones were transferred from Jerusalem to Spain and buried in the ultimate confines of the latter, where they are the object of great veneration". The author then evokes the munificence of the Frankish kings towards the abbey – by the Treaty of Arras of 1191 the city had passed under the dominion of the king of France – and recounts the story according to which Abbot Léduin or Luthduin (1020-40) had stolen the apostolic relic in order to give it to the monastery of Berclau, which he had founded in 1025.

One hundred and forty years later, around 1165, Abbot Martin and his brothers from Saint-Vaast went to Berclau with the bishop of Arras to obtain the restitution of the Apostle's head. After many adventures and a revolt by the inhabitants of the place, the abbot, who had appealed to the Count of Flanders, almost succeeded in taking the relic to Arras. However, the Count of Flanders, Philip of Alsace, then demanded the head of St James for himself – *Caput illud meum est, et in mea terra inventum, meo erit arbitrio disponendum* – and he confiscated it from the monks in May 1166 in order to install it in the collegiate church of Saint-Pierre in Aire-sur-la-Lys. Abbot Martin of Saint-Vaast appealed to the pope and the archbishop of Reims, but it was not until 1173, either shortly

²⁴ Cardevacque and Terninck, L'Abbaye de Saint-Vaast, 124-35.

²⁵ Guimann, Cartulaire, 105-10.

²⁶ Gerzaguet, "Tempête".

before or after his journey to Compostela, that Count Philip capitulated, although he still kept part of the relic in Aire.²⁷ The account of the relic's adventures continues by pointing out that the Count then made a pilgrimage to Compostela and inquired about the presence in Galicia of the head of St James; he was told that the head preserved in a silver reliquary was not that "of the same James, brother of John, but that of James the Less", because "it had formerly been transported to Flanders", which greatly pleased the Count.²⁸

The Saint-Vaast text indicates that the Count had reserved only a *modicam partem* of the relic for himself; it also gives, after the story of the relic, a list of the miracles it had performed at the abbey, detailing four of them: the healing of a paralytic, that of a canon of Notre-Dame of Arras, the appearance of intense light and frosts on the day of the translation of the relic, and the dream of a mother who saw in advance "the monastery of Saint-Vaast entirely decorated with its banners, with the lord abbot seated on a high seat showing the population a column of extraordinary splendour which he held in his hands".²⁹

Whether it had actually belonged to Saint-Vaast before 1025 or this was merely an artifice to endow a prestigious relic that the abbey coveted with antiquity, it seems that the head of St James, once installed in Arras, engendered pilgrimage. Abbot Martin instituted a feast day on 3 January to commemorate the date on which the relic was recovered, and wrote a letter stating that the head of St James had been given to the abbey by Charles the Bald, together with the bodies of two of the Holy Innocents and the relics of the twelve Apostles.³⁰ On 20 April 1175 the legate of Alexander III, Peter of Pavia, placed the Apostle's skull in a new reliquary in the presence of Bishop Frumaud.³¹ This reliquary was carefully preserved. It was still listed in the inventory of the *revestiaire* (sacristy) of the abbey of 2 March 1416, as one of the most outstanding of the relics.³² And the inventory of the abbey church's treasury, of 24 April 1544, drawn up by order of the prior in the absence of the abbot, offers a description of it: "a reliquary of gilded silver wherein lies the head of the lord St James with two angels and a gilded base which supports the

²⁷ Guimann, *Cartulaire*, 112-27.

²⁸ Ibid.,140: "Facta inquisitione, quoddam argenteum ei allatum est, in quo a quibusdam esse dicebatur caput (a quibusdam), non ipsius Jacobi fratris Johannis, sed Jacobi minoris ibi repositum ferebatur. Verum cum comes illud sibi aperire summopere postulasset, nec ullo modo impetrare potuisset, a senioribus quibusdam omnino illic non haberi, sed olim in Flandrias translatum fuisse ipsi intimatum est. Quod audiens cum gaudio repatriavit...".

²⁹ Ibid., 127-30.

³⁰ Inventaire sommaire, Loriquet and Chavanon, 33: H. 2 [Registre], f. 165.

³¹ Guimann, *Cartulaire*, 140.

³² Inventaire sommaire, Loriquet and Chavanon, 381: H. 738 [Registre].

said reliquary, on the reverse of which there is an image of St James with a golden staff". The treasury also possessed at the time "a book containing the legends of St Vaast and St James". In 1550 the treasury's inventory mentions a repair of the reliquary by a goldsmith, and in 1562, the purchase of a new ornament for the procession.³³ In May 1602, Abbot Peter declared that he had given a fragment of the head of St James, kept in the treasury of Saint-Vaast, to St Martin's abbey in Tournai.³⁴ In 1675, the Ritual of Saint Vaast reveals that the feast of the Apostle was still celebrated: *Relation S. Jacobi*, one of the feasts called *duplicia in capis*.

In 1858 the reliquary was opened, revealing "the following parts: the frontal bone minus the brow bones, the two parietals, the occipital bone, most of the temporal bones, most of the sphenoid bone. The head is that of a man still young, and quite different from that of St Nicaise, martyred in an old age". Four years after the relic was exhibited, the bishop of Arras donated a small part of the head to the church of St James in Douai; this relic, recovered in 2012, was solemnly reinstalled in the church.

Among the plays performed in the city of Arras in the thirteenth century, the *Jeu du Pèlerin* was used as an introduction to the *Jeu de Robin et Marion*, both attributed to Adam de la Halle, known as Adam of Arras.³⁷ Around 1467-70, a master glassmaker was commissioned to lay "glass pedestals" over the choir, in particular "where O is the image of St James and colour around the aforesaid image at 6 c. per pedestal", while the painter Gillot Barbet received 6 *sous* for drawing an image of St James on paper.³⁸

Although the head of St James was well preserved and honoured in Saint-Vaast, the abbey archives do not mention any procession or pilgrimage specific to Arras in honour of the Apostle. The reliquary was probably brought out at the same time as the others, either for the feast of St Vaast or that of Mary Magdalene or during rogations. In the *Annales* he wrote between 1475 and 1502, the monk Gérard Robert mentions innumerable processions and ostentations of reliquaries, but only refers to the presence of the head of

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³³ Ibid., 303-6: H. 426 [Liasse]. In 1544: "ung relicquiaire d'argent doré où est le chief Mgr Saint Jacques ayant deux angeles et le pied doré qui porte ledit relicquiaire au couplet duquel a une imaige de Saint Jacques a bourdon doré". In 1550: "a été délivré à Noel, orfevre de l'église Saint Vaast une pierre nommée doublet avecque ung chatton d'argent dorez auquel y a ung saphyrs dedans, pour reparer le chief de Mgr Saint Jacques", and in 1562: "deux pendans qu'on met aux chivières de Saint Jacques et Saint Martin qu'on porte aux processions".

³⁴ Ibid., 307: H. 428 [Liasse], pièce 4.

³⁵ Van Drival, *Histoire*.

³⁶ Translation à Douai.

³⁷ Dufournet, "Le théâtre arrageois".

³⁸ *Inventaire sommaire*, Tison, 68: H. 1118 [Registre]: "auquel O est l'ymage de Saint Jacques et de couleur autour dudit ymage a 6 s. le piet."

St James in March 1476 and June 1493; the bodies of St Vaast, St Arnulphe and St Radulphe and the head of St Nicaise were undoubtedly the object of much greater devotion.39

In Aire-sur-la-Lys, on the other hand, the relic, so aggressively acquired by Philip of Alsace, does not seem to have aroused the same interest at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The collegiate church of Saint-Pierre was founded there by Count Baudoin V of Flanders († 1067), as recalled in a diploma of Philip I of France dated 1075, 40 and consecrated in 1166.

In 1272, a century after the conflict and the division of the relic, Guiard des Moulins, canon of Aire-sur-la-Lys, wrote the story of the Apostle's head solemnly "discovered" at Aire for the pilgrims who visited his abbey. He repeated, with some modifications, the account found in Saint-Vaast by a fellow cleric of his collegiate church, but specified that Count Philip had divided the relic into two equivalent parts and that the collegiate church of Aire-sur-la-Lys possessed the face, the *vultus* of the Apostle, Saint-Vaast having only the occiput.⁴¹ The name of the Apostle appears for the first time in an act of the chapter dated "the year of grace one thousand two hundred and ninety-five on the feast of St James and St Christopher". 42 It was not until 1318 that the relic was installed in a new reliquary, as described in 1475: "the head of the lord St James the Greater in a fine silver vessel weighing approximately 60 marcs, on a base with images around it on which there are four angels, each with two wings and a gilt and jewelled diadem, enamelled behind in the centre with a small silver chain in front, and the whole is supported on four silver leopards", bearing the inscription Beati Jacobi majoris, fratris beati Joannis Evangelistae, cognatique germani domini nostri Jesu Christi. 43 An office for St James is listed in a Ritual of the church of Saint-Pierre in Aire in the fifteenth century, and processions are still documented in the following century, when a chapel of St James was built and decorated in 1594 with fifteen murals depicting the history of the relic and the miracles attributed to it in Aire.⁴⁴

³⁹ Robert, *Journal*, 123 (1493), 160 (1476).

⁴⁰ Feuchère, "La question".

⁴¹ Morand, "Un opuscule".

⁴² Wailly, "Recueil de chartes".

⁴³ Morand, "Un opuscule", 510, n. 1: "le chief de Monseigneur sainct Jacques le Grand en ung vaissel de fin argent pesant 60 mars ou environ, parmy l'entablement quy est ymaginé autour sur lequel a 4 anges, chacun 2 œules et ung diademe doré et pierroriet, esmaillet deriere en le moienne et eune chainette d'argent pardevant. et est tout soustenu sur 4 liepars d'argent."

⁴⁴ Péricard-Méa, "Les tribulations".

The history of the Arras relic dates back to the second half of the twelfth century, when the monks of Saint-Vaast abbey became aware of the "theft" of the precious relic 140 years earlier by Abbot Léduin of Berclau. This period is characterised by the spread of legends about the preaching and translation of St James, the popularity of the pilgrimage to Compostela, and Charlemagne's association with the tomb of the Apostle, which he "discovered" or "delivered", according to the *Historia Turpini*. Chapter V of Book IV of the Codex Calixtinus, compiled in around 1140-60, attributes to the Emperor the foundation of churches dedicated to St James in Aachen, Béziers, Toulouse and Paris, and a basilica "in Gascony, between the city commonly called Aix [Dax] and Saint-Jean de Sorde on the way to Santiago". 45 Two of the paintings in Aire-sur-la-Lys represent Charlemagne receiving the head of St James in Compostela and then offering it to the abbey of Saint-Vaast. It is difficult not to see a link between the sudden interest of the monks of Saint-Vaast in the head of St James in 1165 and the spreading of Codex Calixtinus texts which accompanied the canonisation of Emperor Charlemagne in Cologne on 29 December 1165 (that is, at the end of 1164, according to the modern calendar). As for the claim of the authenticity of the relic, it must be related to the gift from Queen Urraca of Castile to Archbishop Diego Gelmírez, in 1116, of the caput beati *Iacobi*, allegedly stolen from Jerusalem by Bishop Maurice of Coimbra; gradually, the skull brought back from the Holy Land was attributed in Compostela to St James the Less.46

The body and head of St James in Toulouse

Thus the church of St James in Toulouse, in the south of France, could trace its origins back to the Emperor on his return from Compostela, since it was attested by the *Historia Turpini*; an act of Charles the Bald, copied in a charter of Louis VII of France, actually gives the date of 844 for the foundation of the churches of St Stephen and St James. As for the collegiate church of Saint-Sernin in the same city, it also claimed to date back to the *gloriosissimus rex Karolus Magnus*, according to the text of a charter of 1154, by which Louis VII, *rediens a S. Jacobo et per Tolosani transiens*, confirmed the privileges granted to Saint-Sernin by its founder, the Emperor Charlemagne; at the same time, this document of 1154 mentions the churches of St Stephen, located outside the city like Saint-

⁴⁵ Liber Sancti Jacobi, 203.

⁴⁶ Historia Compostellana, 194-7: "Quando regina dedit caput beati Iacobi episcopo". Moralejo, "Busto-relicario".

Sernin, and of St Mary *infra muros*.⁴⁷ By that time, the Fifth Book of the *Codex Calixtinus* had already spread the idea that one of the routes to Compostela was bound to pass through Toulouse.

In the church of St James, which was closely dependent on the Cathedral of St Stephen, separated from it only by the cloister of the latter, ⁴⁸ the "invention" of apostolic relics took place as late as 1491. The record attesting to this begins by recalling Charlemagne's exploits against the Saracens, and then states that "after his victories, he made the journey and pilgrimage to Galicia; coming into this city in the year of our salvation eight hundred and fifteen, he ordered the erection of the church of St James, and as a devout pilgrim he carried there many relics and the head of this venerable saint". 49 The inquiry then deals with the pillar in the church, on the right, near the altar dedicated to St Quiteria, and whether "the said St Charles the Great secretly ordered that the head of the lord St James the Apostle or part of it be put and hidden under the said pillar in many and separate parts"; and furthermore, whether, on the marble stone at the top of the pillar, he had had "the figure of the head of the lord St James painted, and above it he also had a scallop shell painted with a machoaire (a molar?) on either side of the said shell", and whether ex-votos around the pillar bore witness to the belief and devotion to the Apostle in this place; and moreover whether a knight coming from Lombardy or Italy in great company "expressed his faith by documents and legitimate and authentic acts that in the said pillar is the genuine head of the lord St James the Great or at least some part of it".50

The text of the survey, which includes a copy of a record of the knight's visit, before 1428 (the date of the death of the witness) and perhaps around 1371, ends with an account of the discovery of the relics and the miracles that followed. Relying on oral tradition, it seems that a cult had already been practised before the discovery of the relics, and at the end of the fifteenth century witnesses testified that they had seen pilgrims "dressed in the manner of pilgrims of St James, who went to visit the church in honour of St James". As soon as the discovery was revealed, miracles occurred, and an inquiry in 1547 reported thirty-one miracles, mostly therapeutic, in favour of thirty people. The relics found in 1491 at the foot of the pillar in St James's church apparently consisted of a jaw bone, a bone from the front of a head, a canine, a molar, a piece of rib, a bone of a hand or foot,

⁴⁷ Caussé, "Charte de Charles".

⁴⁸ Cazes, *Le quartier canonial*.

⁴⁹ Lamarque, "Reliques et miracles".

⁵⁰ Lamarque, "L'invention".

a half-bone of a finger and a broken glass vial. The "golden legend" created around the discovery aroused local devotion, unrelated to Compostela.⁵¹

The abbey church of Saint-Sernin, situated in the borough of the same name, also owed its wealth to the Emperor Charlemagne, as indicated in a note added to an eleventh-century original by a hand writing a century later (*cujus ecclesie Charolus Magnus multa donaria dedit*).⁵² But it was only in the second half of the fourteenth century that the church announced that it possessed the entire bodies of six Apostles, St James the Greater, St Simon and St Jude, St Philip and St James the Less, and St Barnabas, as well as the head of St Bartholomew;⁵³ indeed, a Confraternity of the Holy Bodies, attached to the basilica, is attested in the 1380s.⁵⁴

Whilst relics of St James were supposedly attested in the church as early as 1354,55 the most important moment in their history at Saint-Sernin is undoubtedly that of their translation in October 1385, in the presence of Jean, Duke of Berry (1340-1416), brother of the king of France Charles V the Wise. 56 The record of the ceremony, as it appears in the accounts of the Confraternity of the Holy Bodies, states that the duke wanted to be present when the head and body of the Apostle were transferred to the new reliquary ordered by the Brothers. In the church, the duke allegedly had the head of St James removed from its old reliquary for kissing and gave money and precious stones to complete the new shrine. On 15 October the duke carried the ancient casket to the high altar, where he was awaited by the Archbishop of Toulouse, who put the Apostle's head and bones into a cypress box inside the silver shrine, before closing the whole with a key.⁵⁷ The reliquary of St James was a large (1.56 m x 0.67 m) silver-gilt casket in the shape of a church surmounted by a bell tower, surrounded by twenty-two silver statuettes arranged under arches; on the front face, in the centre, St James was depicted as a pilgrim with his staff, surrounded by small figures, including three pilgrims, and on the roof the four evangelists were surrounded by shells. The arms of the Duke of Berry were engraved on the base.⁵⁸ But the Apostle was also honoured with a splendid silver reliquary-bust,

⁵¹ Ibid., 246, n. 32. The article by Péricard-Méa, "Les reliques", although well documented, is full of errors.

⁵² Documents, 14 and XXXVII.

⁵³ Davdé, L'histoire, 82-5.

⁵⁴ Fantuzzo and Saint-Martin, "La confrérie".

⁵⁵ There is no mention of relics of Saint James in Toulouse in the *Légendier* written by Bernard Gui in 1324. See Dubreil-Arcin, "Saint Saturnin". Actually, the opening of the reliquary in 2018 revealed that the date written on the "authentic" is in 1385, not 1354.

⁵⁶ Julien, "L'organisation".

⁵⁷ *Documents*, 78-85.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 75-91.

also made in 1385; the bust rested on a griffin, under whose legs was a reliquary containing a tooth and a piece of the Apostle's finger.⁵⁹ The reliquary and the shrine were repaired and maintained throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.⁶⁰

Tradition has it that the body of the Apostle James, as well as most of the relics preserved in the Toulouse abbey, had been brought by the Emperor Charlemagne from Spain, and indeed Louis XI recalled in June 1463 that the bodies of the six Apostles had been given by Charlemagne to the abbey he had founded.⁶¹ Pilgrims who passed through Toulouse in the second half of the fifteenth century were offered a visit to the Holy Bodies, which Jehan de Tournai scrupulously noted when he visited in 1488:

In the said church beside the choir, on the right-hand side at the top of a small stone staircase, is the body of St George the Martyr in a casket. We then descend five steps, and just at that point there is a very splendid chapel [...]. From there we descend five more steps, where there is a very beautiful chapel and several beautiful altars where the following blessed Apostles lie: first the body of St James the Greater in a silver shrine; in another shrine, the bodies of St Simon and St Jude; in another shrine the bodies of St Philip and St James the Less [...]. 62

A text from 1509 explains that the relics and shrines kept in the crypts were usually exhibited at the end of the canonical office, when the sound of the bell called the *romieus et pelerins estranger* to gather and go down together to visit the holy bodies; the text also states that this ritual was observed, among other places, at *sant Jacmes de Compostelle en Galicia*, Saint-Antoine [en-Viennois], the Madeleine [Vézelay], the Three Maries [Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer], the Holy Shroud, and other *romieratges*.⁶³ The relics were also carried in procession at Pentecost, with the relics of St James immediately following those of St Saturnin (Sernin) himself.

As well as Jehan de Tournai, and Arnold von Harff ten years later, other pilgrims had serious doubts when they arrived in Compostela after passing through Saint-Sernin. The inability of the canons of Santiago to present the body of the Apostle to pilgrims

⁵⁹ Julien, "L'organisation", 66.

⁶⁰ Saint-Martin, "Des saints".

⁶¹ Péricard-Méa, "Les reliques".

⁶² "En ladicte eglise de costé le cœur, a la bonne main droict deseure une petitte montee de pierre, en une casse, la est le corpz de sainct George le martir. Apres nous descendismes par V degres, et la endroict y a une fort triomphante cappelle [...]. Depuis ladicte place, on descend encoires plus bas V degres auquel lieu y a tres belle capelle et plusieurs beaux autelz ou reposent les benoistz apostles dont les noms s'enssuivent: premier le corpz sainct Jacques le Grand en une fiertre d'argent; en une aultre fiertre, les corpz de sainct Symon et sainct Jude; en une aultre fiertre les corpz de sainct Philipe et sainct Jacques le Mineur [...]". Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 493, fs. 281v-282r-v. *Le récit des voyages*.

⁶³ Julien, "L'organisation", 60-4.

diminished the reputation of the Galician sanctuary at the end of the fifteenth century. In 1557, Félix Patter from Basel, visiting Toulouse, referred to the fact that Compostela pilgrims were there to see the body of the Apostle, of whom only the head was in Galicia.⁶⁴ From the beginning of the sixteenth century, however, belief in the presence of the body and head of the Apostle in Toulouse seems to have declined sharply.

Two more bodies of St James: Angers and Échirolles

Other cities in France also boasted of owning the body of the son of Zebedee. One of these was Angers, where the collegiate church of Saint-Maurille, destroyed in 1791, also prided itself on possessing the entire body of the Galician apostle. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the inhabitants of Angers were reportedly convinced that the two tombs under the old oratory were those of St Maurilius (Maurille), bishop of the city, and St James the Greater. The relics of St James would have remained in the crypt, while those of St Maurilius would have been taken out, "because this saint bishop, as a planet further away from the proximity of the infinite, did not want to dazzle its lights in the vicinity of this great sun". 65 The accounts of the chapel, dating from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, reveal the existence of a pilgrimage from which the Angers chapter received income, and a miracle proved the presence of the Apostle's body when a workman, by order of the chapter, tried to open the tomb and was struck blind by the first blow of the hammer. The chronicler Jacques Bruneau of Tartifume (1574-1636), who mentions this miracle, adds that, in the chapel, "the pilgrims returning from Galicia bring their staffs, offer their vows, make their prayers, celebrate Mass, and some of them tell us that the Spaniards, making fun of their pious journeys, criticised them for the fact that they do not need to cross the harsh Pyrenees from so far away to see what they own at home, what they have in their own lands". 66 Although we cannot date the origin of this belief, the fact is that at the beginning of the Early Modern era Angers was added to the list of places possessing important relics of the Apostle of Galicia.⁶⁷

In Échirolles, in the diocese of Grenoble, the chapel of St James in Échirolles, destroyed in the nineteenth century, was established in a former Templar commandery. It was said to have possessed relics of St James, whose entire body was supposedly buried in front

⁶⁴ Gorsse, "Toulouse", 90-1, 116-25.

⁶⁵ Ménard, Recherche, 109.

⁶⁶ Bruneau, *Angers*, 102, 116-17.

⁶⁷ Matz, "Les miracles", 47-8, quoted in Kerbastard, "Saint-Jacques".

of the main door of the chapel under his patronage. An annual procession is attested there as early as the fourteenth century, and the city councillors of Grenoble went there every 25 July in procession, barefoot, and deposited an offering of walnuts to protect themselves against the damage that the River Drac could cause to their city. According to Aurélia Bully, Bishop Aymon de Chissé accompanied the councillors during the annual procession in Échirolles in 1407. In the fifteenth century the parish priest of Échirolles, Aimon de Chalancon, was said to have placed railings around the venerated tomb, as well as planks to cover it. During a visit by Bishop Laurent Ier Allemand in July 1488, the body was described as "of uncommon size, lying on the earth with a terracotta jar between its thighs". The bishop affirmed that it was not the body of the Apostle, but the veneration continued, with a statue of St James, built in 1500, taking over the function of the relic. The procession of the Grenoble councillors is attested until 1721.⁶⁸

In short, claims to possess the skull or the entire body of the Apostle James in France were made after the second half of the twelfth century, and on the basis of the *Historia Turpini* they made Charlemagne not only the discoverer of the tomb but also the one who had brought the precious relics back to France.

Undefined relics of St James

In Paris, the Hôpital Saint-Jacques-aux-Pèlerins was built between 1319 and 1323 by the confraternity of the same name, which had already existed for more than two decades; this hospice was said to have accommodated more than 16,690 pilgrims in 1368.⁶⁹ In 1326, Jeanne of Évreux, wife of Charles IV the Fair, donated a bone from the arm of St James to the confraternity and its hospice; it was kept in a reliquary described in an inventory of 1666.⁷⁰ The confraternity then received another relic of St James in 1392, originating from those preserved in the Basilica of Saint-Sernin in Toulouse and obtained twelve years earlier by the King's counsellor Philippe Giffart: "a small bone of the breast of the blessed Apostle the lord St James, by letters of the lord Abbot of St Cerny on this matter".⁷¹ A year earlier, in 1391, the confraternity had added to its treasury a "tooth and part of the rib of St James of Toulouse", the gift of a stonecutter.⁷²

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⁶⁸ Bully, "Saint-Jacques-d'Échirolles".

⁶⁹ Bordier, "La confrérie des Pèlerins". Armogathe, "La confrérie parisienne".

⁷⁰ Bordier, "La confrérie de Saint-Jacques", 386-7.

⁷¹ Paris, Archives de l'Assistance Publique - Hôpitaux de Paris, Fonds Hôpital Saint-Jacques-aux-Pèlerins. Comptes de l'année 1392.

⁷² Paris, Archives de l'Assistance Publique - Hôpitaux de Paris, Fonds Hôpital Saint-Jacques-aux-Pèlerins. Liasse 319, no. 232, quoted by Péricard-Méa, "Les reliques".

Also in Paris, the Sainte-Chapelle, which had various parts of the head of St James the Less in its treasury, does not seem to have possessed relics of the Galician Apostle in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, although a chapel was dedicated to him there, mentioned in the inventory of 1341. Not until July 1480, when another inventory was drawn up, was a "small ivory chest containing relics of the Apostle St James the Greater, with authentic letters written on parchment and sealed with two pendant seals", found in the "lower treasury of the said Holy Chapel". 73 The reliquary was still in the treasury in 1536, when a new inventory was made, whose authors specified that "the said relics are on a small cushion of red taffeta, with a sign reading 'SANCTI JACOBI APOSTOLI MAJORIS', and below, 'PRO REGE'". 74 The relic was perhaps sent to Louis XI when, in 1447, while he was still the dauphin, he donated a precious silver object to Santiago de Compostela, perhaps a censer, estimated at 1000 ducats, or when he offered the sanctuary the twelve lamps described by Antoine de Lalaing in 1502; another possibility is that it had been brought back to him by his mother, Marie of Anjou, who made a pilgrimage to Compostela in January 1463, or by her sister, Yolande, who was said to have been a pilgrim to Santiago in 1427.⁷⁵

The Abbey of Saint-Denis, not far from Paris, also possessed relics of St James, notably in a "rich panel of gilded silver seated on a pedestal supported by four lions", which was reportedly donated by Philip II Augustus and in which there were many relics, including one "from the shoulder of St James". The abbey also kept relics of several saints, including St James, in a "very beautiful silver shrine of medium size, modelled on the church of Notre-Dame of Paris", which had also been granted by Louis XI.⁷⁶

According to the inventory drawn up in 1741 by Abbot Charles Lalore, the Abbey of Clairvaux also owned relics of St James scattered in various panels, one of which would have been part of the *Tabula Apostolorum* given to the abbey by Count Philip I of Flanders († 1191).⁷⁷

⁷³ Vidier, *Le trésor*, 30, no. 227 (1341), 122 (1377): "543: Item unum parvum coffretum de ebore in quo reponuntur reliquie Sancti Jacobi Majoris apostoli cum litteris certifficatoriis in pergameno scriptis, duobus sigillis in pendenti sigillatis".

⁷⁴ Ibid., 173, no. 89.

⁷⁵ Vázquez, "La Berenguela". Jacomet, "Notes sur les pèlerinages", 39-77. In July 1483, just one month before his death, Louis XI gave two big bells to the Galician sanctuary "pour la singuliere devocion que avons a Monsir saint Jaques", and by his will he bequeathed the church 338 "couronnes". López, *Historia*, vol. 7, 415-18, App. 150-1.

⁷⁶ Millet, *Le Trésor sacré*, 91-2, 96-8.

⁷⁷ Lalore, *Le trésor de Clairvaux*, 19, 23, 29, 58, 61, 66, 151.

No relics of the Apostle James the Greater are mentioned in the collections of the church of Auxerre in 1531.⁷⁸ Nor do any appear in the inventory of precious items of Saint-Martin in Tours, compiled in 1493 and published by Nicolas Gervaise after the looting of the treasury by Huguenots in April 1562.⁷⁹ And although Eudes of Sully, Bishop of Paris, made a rich donation of relics to Bourges Cathedral at the end of the twelfth century, including relics of St James the Less, no relics of the son of Zebedee were to be found in the treasury. Only in the inventory of 1537 is there mention of a cypress casket "in which are enshrined reliquaries containing bones of the lord Apostles St James and St Philip".⁸⁰ On the other hand, Laon Cathedral, which recorded possession of many reliquaries in 1525, seems to have kept various relics of a St James the "Apostle" and a St James the "Martyr", of the "beard and hair of the Apostles John and James", and of "St James the Greater and St James, son of Alphaeus, the Less"; these few relics, whose origin and nature are unknown, were mixed with many others in reliquaries, shrines or silk pouches, but the church also had a special reliquary for those of "St Mary [Salome], mother of Saints John the Evangelist and James the Greater".⁸¹

In the diocese of Angers, the church of St James in Grez-Neuville had apparently owned a relic of the body of the Apostle since 1122, when Nicolas de Neuville authorised his vassal, Raoul de Grez, to build a chapel dedicated to St James near his house, on the left bank of the River Mayenne. In 1125 he gave this chapel to the monks of Saint-Serge in Angers, who turned it into a priory.⁸²

The inventory of Sens Cathedral, published in 1897 by Eugène Chartraire, focuses only on describing precious items, such as "relic pouches", and does not give an exact inventory of their contents, even though the church traced the origin of its treasury back to Charlemagne. On the other hand, the list drawn up in 1293 by the treasurer of the Abbey of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif in Sens mentions, among other things, a *capsa apostolorum* with relics of all the apostles, including *de sanctis Jacobo et Johanno fratribus*. We have no information on the relics of the Apostle that would have led Guillaume, lord of

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⁷⁸ Inventaire du trésor, Quantin, 4-13.

⁷⁹ Gervaise, La Vie de Saint Martin, 424-32.

⁸⁰ Girardot, Histoire et inventaire, 2, 24, no. 58.

⁸¹ Inventaire du trésor, Fleury, 9-10, 20-1, 24, 36.

⁸² Kerbastard, "Saint-Jacques".

⁸³ Inventaire du trésor, Chartraire, 29-32.

⁸⁴ Courlon, Le livre des reliques, 9.

Montfort in Brittany, to establish an abbey under this invocation in Montfort-la-Canne, in the diocese of Saint-Malo, in May 1152.⁸⁵

In the south of France, in Catllar in the former diocese of Elne, the chapel of Saint-Jacques de Calahons claimed to have possessed a reliquary containing a relic of the Apostle since 1225. ⁸⁶ In Charmensac, in the diocese of Saint-Flour, is the church of Saint-Jacques-du-Bru, which seems to have been founded in 1389 by Jacques de Mercoeur and his wife and which owned a reliquary with a relic of the saint. ⁸⁷ The Abbey of Saint-Pierre de Moissac also apparently possessed a relic of the body of the Apostle. ⁸⁸

Devotion to the relics

Among other reliquaries and sacred items Charles V the Wise kept in the oratory of his small chapel in the Louvre was "a [...] golden image of St James, all in gold, without pearls, weighing one *marc* seventeen *esterlins* of gold". When the king's brother, Louis I, Duke of Anjou (1339-84), future king of Naples, drew up an inventory of the very many jewels he possessed "in Angers and elsewhere, in France and Languedoc", the scribes charged with the task divided the precious items into specific categories and indicated their weight. In the chapter concerning the "images" belonging to Louis, there is an "image of St James in gilded silver, on a base on which is written with enamelled letters: *Ceste ymage de saint Jaques porte un os de lui mesmes*; and in his left hand he carries a small round reliquiary of crystal embellished with gilded silver, and in his right hand he holds his staff and he has his hat on his head. And it weighs VIII *marcs* V ounces XII *deniers*". 90

Jean, Duke of Berry, brother of Charles V and Louis of Anjou, also collected relics and was presumably given those of St James by the abbot of Saint-Sernin in Toulouse in 1385, on the occasion of the solemn translation of the Apostle's body at Saint-Sernin. In fact, in the inventories of his possessions drawn up in 1401-02, in addition to a richly decorated "golden image of St James holding a book in one hand and a staff in the other", encrusted with precious stones, as well as a "small wooden statue of St James", Jean possessed various relics of the son of Zebedee, which he gave to the bishop of Luçon, the church of

⁸⁵ Tresvaux, L'Église de Bretagne, 510-15.

⁸⁶ Marquié, "En Catalogne".

⁸⁷ Beaufrère, "La Haute-Auvergne".

⁸⁸ Daux, Le Pèlerinage, 303-5.

⁸⁹ Inventaire du mobilier, 264, no. 2464.

⁹⁰ Inventaire de l'orfèvrerie, 175, no. 429.

Bourges and Notre-Dame of Boulogne.⁹¹ Notre-Dame of Boulogne had already received a relic of St James in 1389, offered by the duke on the occasion of his marriage to Jeanne of Boulogne, and twenty years later the duke's "keeper of the jewels", in turn, received one of these precious relics. In 1405, the Sainte-Chapelle in Bourges, which the duke had had built, proudly displayed the "great head of St James", weighing 87 *marcs* and six ounces, as well as a monstrance with a bone of St James. Nevertheless, the inventory of relics drawn up in 1537 focuses mainly on the description of the goldsmith's artefacts and does not mention the relic of the saint of Galicia.⁹²

In conclusion, the presence of relics of St James in the present-day territory of France is related to the spread of pilgrimage from the eleventh century onwards and to the particular devotion of certain prominent figures. The appearance of important relics, such as the Apostle's skull or his whole body, occurs later – towards the end of the twelfth century – because they are linked to the popular story of the pilgrimage or crusade of Charlemagne to Compostela in the *Codex Calixtinus*, with which Charles the Bald and Count Philip of Flanders were associated. However, the pilgrimages prompted by the presence of these relics were local, as in the cases of Arras, Aire-sur-la-Lys, Angers and Échirolles, or of extremely limited duration, as in Toulouse, and never supplanted that of Compostela, nor the pilgrimages to other local saints and centres of devotion, such as Saint-Nicaise in Arras or Saint-Sernin in Toulouse.

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⁹¹ Inventaires de Jean, 15, 78 ("deux noez de reliques, en chascun desquelz a un escriptal de saint Jaques le grant"), 84 ("un os de saint Jaques le maiour garni d'or aus deux boutz"), 93 ("un reliquiaire rond ou il a des reliques de saint Jaques"), 115-16.

⁹² Claverie, "Les acteurs", who quotes Péricard-Méa, "Les reliques". Girardot, *Histoire et inventaire*, 10-34.

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