



that were being practised at that time. However, Muxía's main claim to fame and the reason why it is so intimately connected to the Santiago story is to be found in the legend of the **Our Lady of the Boat *Nosa Señora da Barca*** and the Sanctuary at the headland *Santuario da Virxe da Barca*. A popular pilgrimage site in its own right and associated with the Virgin Mary who, the legend claims, came here in a boat made of stone to help St. James in his ministry. St. James, feeling that he had failed in his mission to convert the population of Finisterre from their worship of the sun, travelled to this remote place for rest and succour. As he prayed he saw a boat with the Virgin Mary aboard, 'full of mystery and majesty', approaching the headland. The Virgin assured him that his ministry had in fact been successful and that his work here was done and he should return to Jerusalem.

The boat in which she travelled is petrified in the stones we see here on the headland. The most obvious is the stone sail *Pedra dos Cadris* (see photo previous page) which reputedly has miraculous powers of healing – pass under the stone 9 times to be cured of rheumatism and associated ailments. The rudder stone *Pedra do Timón* and rocking hull *Pedra da Abalar* are nearby. This latter stone moves on its axis and was used to prove innocence or guilt of any accused brought before it. It was cracked during a storm in 1978 but its powers of attraction remain undiminished. Nearby is the lovers' stone *Pedra dos Namorados* where couples come to pledge their love.

Watching over all this activity is the austere 18th century sanctuary dedicated to the Virgin. You can approach it either by a pedestrian way that skirts around the small conical hillock *Monte Corpiño* and known as the Way of the Skin *Camiño da Pel* so called because a fountain here was used by pilgrims to wash and purify themselves before entering the sanctuary. Just above the sanctuary by the stone monument is another smaller paved path that goes to the top of the conical hill 81 metres high and a 400m climb to the top where there is a fine 360° view of the village and coastline and harbour. To return to the town centre take the Rua Virxe da Barca that connects the sanctuary with the harbour area. Along this way is the 14th century parish church of Saint Mary *Iglesia de Santa Maria* built in what is known as the coastal-Gothic style *gótica-marinero*.