Defence by Demolition? Preserving and Relocating the Cloister of Segovia Cathedral

Short Title: Defence by Demolition?

Author Details:

Costanza Beltrami, costanza.beltrami@history.ox.ac.uk

Department of History of Art

University of Oxford

Suite 9, Littlegate House,

St Ebbe's Street, Oxford OX1 1PT

Summary

In 1520, Segovia's rebel city council besieged the impregnable royal fortress located on a narrow stone outcrop at the far west of the city. The cathedral stood just in front of the fortress, and the rebels demolished part of the church's structure to use it as a secure stronghold. Beyond the physical damage, the revolt demonstrated the peril posed by the proximity of cathedral and castle. Unsurprisingly, it was soon decided that the cathedral would relocate to the city's main square. Deserted by its canons and chaplains, the old church was a ruin by 1562, while its younger counterpart was slowly reaching completion. Neglect coexisted with preservation: the first step in the construction of a new cathedral was the decision to move the building's cloister—stone by stone—from the old to the new site. This paper discusses the relocation, exploring its dénouement and contextualising it within premodern perspectives on heritage and architecture.

Keywords

Segovia; cathedral; cloister; memory; architectural preservation; relocation

Manuscript

In the early sixteenth century, the cathedral of the Castilian city of Segovia was relocated from the edge of the city to its main square. A new church was begun in 1525. Construction continued well into the seventeenth century, as the old building decayed and was eventually dismantled. Exceptionally, the cloister of the old cathedral was disassembled stone by stone and carefully—but not exactly—re-erected at the new site. This article explores the cloister's destruction and reconstruction from the perspective of architectural preservation and architectural history.

Can a building remain the same when it is moved to a different location? From the perspective of architectural preservation, the answer seems to be 'no'. Article 7 of the Venice Charter, an influential set of conservation and restoration guidelines established in 1964, only admits relocation as a last-resort intervention, explaining: 'A monument is inseparable from the history to which it bears witness and from the setting in which it occurs'.[1] It seems difficult to disagree that relocation, as a form of displacement, risks erasing contextual information and the cultural and material histories which turn 'space' into 'place'.[2] However, attempts to forestall change rely on the perception of buildings as no longer under

[1] Jukka Jokilehto, 'The context of the Venice Charter (1964)', *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*, **2**, 229–233 (1998), at p. 232, article 7. (https://doi.org/10.1179/135050398793138762). For a broader critique of the Charter's view of change, Nigel Walter, *Narrative theory in conservation: change and living buildings* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2020), p. 3. Available from: Taylor and Francis eBooks (accessed 11 September 2021).

[2] For an analysis of these terms: Phil Hubbard, 'Space/Place', in *Cultural geography: a critical dictionary of key concepts* (ed. David Sibley, Peter Jackson, David Atkinson and Neil Washbourne), pp. 41–48 (I.B. Tauris, London, 2005).

construction and therefore complete. In this view, natural or human modifications ultimately constitute decay and defacement rather than development.

This paradigm is well suited to conceptualise buildings erected in what has been defined as the 'chronicidal' regime of modernity: an architectural world in which authorial intentions and preliminary projects control construction, and where technological and economic capital minimises the duration of building.[3] In contrast, recent studies reveal that pre-modern architecture embraced change and adaptability, relying on time as a positive rather than destructive force.[4] Transformation is thus (re)placed at the heart of architecture.[5] However, relocation is a strange type of transformation, since it is aims at re-siting a building with minimal change to its appearance and material features. Thus, both the present-day understanding of architectural conservation and the current understanding of pre-modern construction practices marginalise relocation.[6]

---

[3] Marvin Trachtenberg, *Building-in-time: from Giotto to Alberti and modern oblivion* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2010), pp. 1–13.
[4] Trachtenberg, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 69.
[5] See various recent studies: Nicola Camerlenghi, 'The *longue durée* and the life of buildings' in *New approaches to medieval architecture* (ed. Robert Bork, William W. Clark, and Abby McGehee), pp. 11–20 (Ashgate, Farnham, 2011); Lisa A. Reilly, 'Change over time: Neatline and the study of architectural history', *Artl@s Bulletin*, **4**(1), 7–19 (2015); Nadja Aksamija and Clark Maines, *Palimpsests: building, sites, time* (Brepols, Turnhout, 2017); Elizabeth Merrill and Stylianos Giamarelos, 'From the Parthenon to the Anthropocene: introducing resilience in architectural history', *Architectural Histories*, **7**(1), 1–11 (2019) (https://doi.org/10.5334/ah.406); Jennifer M. Feltman and Sarah Thompson (eds), *The Long Lives of Medieval Art and Architecture* (Routledge, London, 2019). Available from: Taylor and Francis eBooks (accessed 11 September 2021).
[6] The design of new movable buildings is also discussed in architectural practice: Robert Kronenburg, *Architecture in motion: the history and development of portable building* (London, Routledge, 2014). In medieval studies, relocation and reuse are at the core of the concept of *spolia*. The literature on this topic is vast, and many definitions have been proposed, from the etymological to the metaphoric. Here I have chosen to avoid the term since it is mostly associated to the reuse of single architectural elements, often from Roman antiquity, frequently many centuries after their original production. As the following pages will illustrate, these resonances are not appropriate to the cloister of Segovia. For an introduction to the multiple resonances of the concept and its historiography, Dale Kinney, 'The Concept of *spolia*', in *A companion to Medieval art: Romanesque and Gothic in*

In the following pages, I will analyse the sixteenth-century relocation of the cloister of Segovia cathedral as a crossroads—or perhaps a flashpoint—between conceptions of architecture, heritage, and identity. Since the episode analysed here has never been explored extensively in English, the first section of this article will narrate the cloister's construction, desecration, deconstruction, and repositioning. Nuancing the conclusions of Antonio Ruíz Hernando and Miguel Ángel López Trujillo, who describe the cloister's relocation an early instance of architectural preservation, the second section will triangulate change and continuity to argue that the cloister is a place of living memory rather than a relic of the past.[7] Texts by Segovian canons and scholars will provide essential evidence for both sections: the 'memorial' on the old cathedral's destruction written by the canon Juan de Pantigoso in 1523, before the cathedral reconstruction began; the report on the construction process penned by the administrator Juan Rodríguez in 1562; and the two earliest histories of the city, by Garci Ruiz de Castro (1551) and Diego de Colmenares (1637).[8]

Northern Europe (ed. Conrad Rudolph), 2nd edn, chapter 14 (Wiley Blackwell, Malden, 2019). Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed 13 June 2021). While a comprehensive study of pre-modern relocation is lacking, there are several medieval and early-modern examples. The relocation of portals from one side of a church to another seems to have been particularly common, for example at Ávila cathedral, Saint Martin in Freiburg, and various sites in France. See Manuel Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo monumental de la provincia de Ávila* (Institución Gran Duque de Alba, Ávila, 1983), pp. 85–86; Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, replica, fiction: temporalities of German Renaissance art* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2008), p. 146; Fabienne Joubert, 'Le remploi de portails sculptés dans les monuments de la France gothique', *Hortus Artium Medievalium* **17,** 201–208 (2011). An entire chapel may have been relocated at the Palau de la Generalitat in Barcelona in the early sixteenth century: Marià Carbonell Buades, 'L'insòlit trasllat de la capella de Sant Jordi del Palau de la Generalitat de Barcelona a mitjan segle XVI', *Butlletí del Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya* **6,** 97–107 (2003).

[7] José Antonio Ruiz Hernando, 'El respeto a la tradición: la conservación del claustro de la catedral de Segovia', in *Tratado de rehabilitación*, 5 vols, vol. 1, pp. 41–48 (Editorial Munilla-Lería, Madrid, 1999); Miguel Ángel López Trujillo, *Patrimonio. La lucha por los bienes culturales españoles (1500–1939)* (Trea, Cenero, 2006), pp. 37–39.

[8] Carlos de Lecea, 'Memorial histórico de Segovia, escrito por don Juan de Pantigoso en 1523', *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, **14**, 214–261 (1889). Available from: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes (accessed 13 June 2021); María Dolores Díaz-

The Cloister Between Two Cathedrals

Segovia's prodigious royal fortress, the Alcázar, stands on a rocky outcrop overlooking deep valleys at the north-eastern edge of the city. In the early twelfth century, a cathedral was established in front of the fortress. Its entrance faced the castle and its apse was turned towards the expanding city (Fig. 1).[9] The cathedral was initially served by a group of canons regular, but from around 1161 the chapter became secular.[10] No longer obliged to live as a community, the canons nevertheless continued to inhabit an enclosed quarter located between the Alcázar and the city centre, an area which they owned and where they enjoyed a range of privileges, including a separate juridical regime and the right of asylum.[11]

Miguel, 'Relación de Juan Rodríguez, fabriquero mayor de la Catedral de Segovia, 1523 [sic]', *Estudios segovianos*, **20**(59–60), 215–229 (1968); Garci Ruiz de Castro, *Comentario sobre la primera y segunda población de Segovia* (ed. José Antonio Ruiz Hernando) (Excma. Diputación Provincial de Segovia, Segovia, 1988; first published 1551); Diego de Colmenares, *Historia de la insigne ciudad de Segovia y compendio de las historias de Castilla* (Academia de Historia y Arte de San Quirce, Segovia, 1982; first published 1637). Available from: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes (accessed 13 June 2021).

[9] José Antonio Ruiz Hernando, *Historia del urbanismo en la ciudad de Segovia del siglo XII al XIX*, 2 vols (Excma. Diputación Provincial de Segovia, Segovia, 1982), vol. 1, pp. 28–29. Essential studies of the cathedral's architectural history (with extensive further bibliography) are: María Teresa Cortón de las Heras, *La construcción de la catedral de Segovia (1525–1607)* (Caja Segovia, Segovia, 1997); María López Díez, *Los Trastámara en Segovia: Juan Guas, maestro de obras reales* (Caja Segovia, Segovia, 2006); Begoña Alonso Ruiz, 'The construction of the cathedral of Segovia from Juan Guas to Juan Gil de Hontañón', in *Proceedings of the third international congress on construction history* (ed. Karl–Eugen Kurrer, Werner Lorenz, and Volker Wetzk), pp. 39–46 (Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus, 2009); Begoña Alonso Ruiz, 'El "normal entretenimiento" de la catedral de Segovia entre 1491 y 1509', in *Actas del noveno congreso nacional y primero congreso internacional hispanoamericano de historia de la construcción* (ed. Santiago Huertas and Paula Fuentes), pp. 75–84 (Instituto Juan de Herrera, Madrid, 2015).

[10] Eduardo Carrero Santamaría, 'Una clausura entre los muros de la ciudad—Las canonjías de Segovia', in *Centre, region, periphery: medieval Europe Basel 2002*, 2 vols (ed. Guido Helmig, Barbara Scholkmann, and Matthias Untermann), vol. 2, pp. 66–73 (Folio-Verlag Wesselkamp, Hertingen, 2002), at p. 67.

[11] Ruiz Hernando, *op. cit*, (note 9), vol. 1, pp. 32–33. Segovia's canons' quarter is exceptional in Spain: Eduardo Carrero Santamaría, *La catedral habitada: historia viva de un espacio arquitectónico* (Edicions UAB, Bellaterra, 2019), 367–376.

The cathedral at the centre of this ecclesiastical 'city-within-a-city' was probably a simple brick-and-rubble building covered by a wooden roof.[12] The original building was altered in a piecemeal fashion as time progressed. In the late medieval period, the Alcázar became a favoured residence of the Castilian monarchs, whose presence generated donations and income for the cathedral. When Henry II's infant son Pedro died falling from a castle window in 1366, a richly endowed burial was established in the cathedral choir.[13] Yet an expanded royal presence also meant more visitors, guards, and noise in the canons' quarter. In the 1470s, the episcopal palace was rebuilt in a quieter location, further away from the castle.[14] In turn, Henry IV encouraged the cathedral's relocation to the city's main square, promising money for its reconstruction. The canons opposed the idea and the proposal failed.[15] In 1474, the king donated a significant amount of money for the rebuilding of the cloister, signalling a new phase of architectural expansion.[16]

Overlapping material, political, and religious factors likely encouraged new construction. As early as 1436, the cloister was 'very old...and very dangerous and cracked in many parts'.[17] Yet works did not start immediately. A new bishop, Juan Arias Dávila, was nominated in 1461 with the support of Henry IV.[18] Arias Dávila launched important projects, including the

[12] López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 21.
[13] Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 16; Lecea, *op. cit.* (note 8), at ch. 3.
[14] Ruiz Hernando, *op. cit.* (note 9), vol. 1, p. 83.
[15] María Soto Cano, 'El traslado de la catedral de Segovia. Propuestas y actuaciones entre la segunda mitad del siglo XV y 1523', in *Catedral y ciudad medieval en la península ibérica* (ed. Eduardo Carrero Santamaría and Daniel Rico Camps), pp. 215–42 (Murcia, Nausícaä Edición Electrónica, 2005), at p. 218–219.
[16] López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 112.
[17] 'muy vieja e…mui peligrosa et fendida por muchas partes', Archivo Catedral de Segovia (hereafter ACS), Estatutos, n. 21, fol. 53, cited in Ruiz Hernando, *op. cit.* (note 9), vol. 2, p. 271.
[18] López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 30.

reconstruction of the episcopal palace, mentioned above, and a successful search for the long-lost bones of Fructus, the city's patron saint. It was in this favourable context that the construction of the new cloister was launched.

The first act in the reconstruction is documented on 8 May 1465, when the stonemason Juan de Toro—the person who had located Saint Fructus' bones—was paid 500 maravedís 'to go and see the presentation drawings of the cloisters of Oviedo, León and Burgos because the king wishes to build the cloister'.[19]A master mason was eventually found in nearby Ávila: in 1471 the cathedral engaged Juan Guas, perhaps the most important figure of late-Gothic Spanish architecture. Guas had been an apprentice at Toledo, Castile's most splendid cathedral and wealthiest archbishopric, before being nominated master mason at Ávila cathedral in 1461.[20] By this point, he was already a landowner and a rising star in the architectural world.[21] For example, a year after his appointment at Segovia in 1471, he travelled to the royal court to discuss architectural matters concerning Ávila with Queen Isabella.[22] This relationship would result in Guas' appointment as royal master mason by 1480.[23]

---

[19] 'En viii del dicho mes de mayo di a Juan de Toro por mandado de los señores quinyentos mrs para ir a ver las muestras de las claustras de Oviedo e Leon e Burgos porque el señor Rey quiere faser la claostra', ACS, Libro de Fábrica, C-201, 8 May 1465, transcribed in López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 112. For a detailed analysis of the trip, Costanza Beltrami, 'Juan Guas and Gothic architecture in late medieval Spain: collaborations, networks, and geographies', PhD thesis, The Courtauld Institute of Art (2020), pp. 169–178.
[20] José María Martínez Frías, *La huella de Juan Guas en la Catedral de Ávila* (Fundación Cultural Santa Teresa, Ávila, 1998), pp. 3–4; María Ángeles Benito Pradillo, *Historia crono-constructiva de la catedral de Ávila* (Diputación de Ávila, Ávila, 2016), pp. 107–113, 240–241. See also Beltrami, *op. cit.* (note 19), pp. 49–84.
[21] José María de Azcárate, 'La obra toledana de Juan Guas', *Archivo Español de Arte*, **29**(113), 9–42 (1956), at p. 9.
[22] Martínez Frías, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 4.
[23] 'maestro mayor de las obras del Rey e Reyna', ACS, Libro de Fabrica, C-205, 7 August 1480, transcribed in López Díez (note 9), pp. 303–4.

The cloister built under Guas' direction is a rich but restrained ashlar structure with elaborate tracery, innovative corner vaults, and foliate and geometrical mouldings breaking the monotony of the walls (Fig. 2). The architectural shell was completed in May 1479.[24] In the following years work focused on the portal leading from the cathedral nave to the cloister (Figs 3, 4). Its figurative sculpture—including the deposition of Christ and the Veronica in the interior and exterior tympanum, and the coat of arms of the Monarchs Ferdinand II and Isabella I—were completed in 1487.[25] While the cloister project had reached completion, other areas of the cathedral remained under construction, notably the western doorway with its rose window, and various cathedral dependencies.[26] As new construction gave way to routine repairs, Guas' attention returned to Toledo, where he died in 1496.

A new library and a chapel to host the increasingly popular relics of Saint Fructus were under discussion at the turn of the sixteenth century and would be commissioned from a new master mason, Juan Gil de Hontañón, in 1510.[27] Nevertheless, in 1510 King Ferdinand recommended a plan to move the cathedral to a site on the city's main square, where the convent of Santa Clara and the parish church of San Miguel were then situated.[28] The convent had remained empty following a reorganisation of the city's conventual communities.[29] In 1511 the cathedral purchased its buildings, including the church, two-

[24] López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 128.
[25] López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 132–139.
[26] López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 61–62, 139–148.
[27] López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 70–73; María Dolores Teijeira Pablos, 'La librería de la catedral de Segovia', in *Librerías catedralicias. Un espacio de saber en la Edad Media y Moderna* (ed. María Dolores Campos Sánchez-Bordona and others), pp. 273–282 (Universidad de León, León, 2013).
[28] Soto Cano, *op. cit.* (note 15), at p. 221. The plan was probably conceived by the bishop and chapter.
[29] López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 10), pp. 185–186.

storey cloister, dependencies, and some nearby houses.[30] Over time, the chapter had also been expanding its real estate by buying houses in the Jewish neighbourhood, which bordered the main square and had been partly emptied by the Edict of Expulsion of 1492.[31] While the houses were initially let out, the purchases had the potential to liberate land for new construction.[32] These purchases took place at a time of increasing friction between on one hand, the chapter and city, exasperated by the erosion of long-standing privileges, and on the other the royal government, personified by Andrés de Cabrera, the overbearing *alcaide* (fortress governor) of the Alcázar.[33]

The revolt of the *Comunidades* was the traumatic event which finally precipitated the cathedral's relocation. The *Comunidades* (literally 'communities') were some Castilian towns that, in 1520–1, joined together in a rebellion against Charles, king of Aragón and Castile from 1516, and Holy Roman emperor from 1519.[34] Unlike previous monarchs, Charles had not been born or educated in Spain, and did not respect the privileges traditionally enjoyed by urban élites. In A Coruña in April 1520, the royal government pressured the *Cortes*, the assembly of municipalities, to vote for new taxes. A revolt started in Toledo, soon expanding to other cities. In Segovia, on 30 May 1520 a mob entered the church of Saint Miguel,

[30] Manuela Villalpando Martínez, 'Noticia sobre casas que se derribaron para construir la Catedral', *Estudios segovianos*, **20**(59–60), 183–193 (1968), at pp. 186–187.
[31] Soto Cano, *op. cit.* (note 15), at pp. 222–223. For a description of the area, Ruiz Hernando, *op. cit.* (note 9), vol. 1, pp. 101, 120.
[32] Soto Cano, *op. cit.* (note 15), at p. 223.
[33] The chapter had initially sought Cabrera's support in contrasts with the bishop, but later sided with the city against the *alcaide*. Stephen Haliczer, 'Political opposition and collective violence in Segovia, 1475–1520', *The Journal of Modern History*, **48**(4), 1–35 (1976), at p. 19.
[34] The literature on the revolt is vast. This summary is based on Henry Kamen, *Spain, 1469–1714: a society of conflict* (Routledge, London, 2014), pp. 70–75; Teofilo F. Ruiz, *Spanish society, 1400–1600* (Longman, Harlow, 2001), p. 194; Stephen Haliczer, *The Comuneros of Castile: the forging of a revolution, 1475–1521* (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1981), pp. 4–6.

interrupting a session of the city council and executing Rodrigo de Tordesillas, a councillor who was outlining the new royal impositions. Violence continued until the rebels' defeat at the Battle of Villalar on 23 April 1521.

For almost one year, Segovia cathedral was in the eye of the storm, trapped between the fortress governor and its supporters defending the fortress on the one hand, and the revolting populace on the other.[35] According to the 1523 memorial of canon Juan de Pantigoso, the chapter was soon forced to leave, relocating to Santa Clara with only a few of their liturgical furnishings and choir books.[36] The extensive reconstruction of the battle published by Diego de Colmenares in 1637 recounts how the cathedral itself became a battleground. Protected by barriers made of tombstones, stalls and screens, the rebels held the cathedral for six months, while decaying corpses accumulated in the no man's land between church and fortress.[37] Pantigoso powerfully described the state of the cathedral at the end of the revolt as 'demolished and broken open; in many places roofless and devastated, dissipated and destroyed'.[38] Altars had been damaged and profaned, sculptures torn apart, organs riddled with bullets.[39]

The desecrated building could not easily be repaired. While peace returned to the city, the canons and chaplains had no choice but to remain at Santa Clara, which was adapted with furnishing from the old cathedral but remained overcrowded and inadequately decorated.[40] In

[35] For a critical analysis of attacks on the cathedral, see Claudio César Rizzuto, 'Los lugares sagrados en la revuelta de las comunidades de Castilla (1520–1521): el ataque a las iglesias', *Hispania Sacra*, **71**(144), 427–437 (2019) (https://doi.org/10.3989/hs.2019.030).
[36] Lecea, *op. cit.* (note 8), at ch. 9.
[37] Colmenares, *op. cit*. (note 8), ch. 10, par. 38.
[38] 'derribada y aportillada, y por muchas partes destechada y desolada, disipada y destroida', Lecea, *op. cit.* (note 8), at ch. 10.
[39] Lecea, *op. cit.* (note 8), at ch. 10.
[40] Lecea, *op. cit.* (note 8), at ch. 9.

October 1522 a solemn procession relocated the relics of Saint Fructus from the Alcázar to the convent-turned-cathedral.[41] In February 1523 the church of San Miguel collapsed, conveniently emptying the area around Santa Clara.[42] In August Charles I ratified the cathedral's relocation, encouraging the acquisition and clearing of further lots.[43]

Surprisingly, the first step in the construction of a new cathedral was the decision to move the existing cloister to the new site. On 3 May 1524, the cathedral chapter signed a contract to this effect with master Juan Campero.[44] This was right at the start of building activity: four days before Juan Gil de Hontañón was officially nominated to lead the new construction, and a whole year before its foundation stone was laid.[45] Campero's contract imposed very specific conditions for the relocation of the cloister. As stated in the first clause, the master had promised to 'make and complete [the cloister] in the said location in the same manner in which it is now and with the same height and width'.[46] Such assurances were renewed for the cloister's vaults, ribs and bosses: not only should they be moved according to the 'manner and form (*forma e manera*)' of the original, but also 'placed very gently' and re-carved and repainted if necessary.[47] The decoration of the cloister walks—arches, window tracery, pilasters and ornamental finishes—should also to be transferred and repaired. Any stone lost would be substituted with its equivalent, extracted from the same quarries and carved to

[41] Rizzuto, *op. cit.* (note 35), at p. 434.
[42] The site was initially purchased by the city; San Miguel was later reconstructed on a different location from 1536. Castro, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 5.
[43] Ruiz Hernando, *op. cit.* (note 9), vol. 2, p. 272.
[44] Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 248–50, doc. 3.
[45] For Hontañón's nomination, Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 247–48, doc. 2.
[46] 'Primeramente, digo que mudaré e pasaré la dicha claustra y con ayuda de Nuestro Señor habré fecha y cabada en el dicho sitio de la misma manera que agora está y del mesmo alto y ancho', ACS, G61, 3 May 1524, transcribed in Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 248, doc. 3.
[47] 'Y también fechas y mejor y muy dulçemente asentadas de su cruzería y pendientes, y revocada y retundida toda la piedra y pinzelado…', ACS, G61, 3 May 1524, transcribed in Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 249, doc. 3.

match.[48] The same clause was repeated in a contract of 1526, when Campero agreed to move the cloister's doorway to the new site.[49] This time, the master was allowed to alter the doorway to adapt it to the space of the chapel in which it was to open. Nevertheless, the precision of his work would be assessed by two judges armed with a description of the doorway sculpture written by Juan Rodríguez, a canon who was also an expert and discerning building administrator.[50]

Beyond these clauses, little is known about the process of relocation. Campero must have begun disassembling and repositioning the cloister walks located farther away from the cathedral nave, explaining why the decorated vaults in the cloister's corners are not in the locations described by the late fifteenth-century construction accounts.[51] Moreover, it seems likely that Campero marked the stones with a system of numbers and symbols, as used elsewhere in the late-Gothic trade in prefabricated architectural elements, although no assembly marks are visible today.[52] The relocation was complete by 1529, but as late as 1532 and 1536, the chapter asked the visiting master masons Enrique Egas and Francisco de Colonia to confirm that it had been executed well.[53]

In the meantime, a new Gothic cathedral was being erected around the old cloister. In 1558, mass could be said in the half-finished building. Santa Clara was abandoned and destroyed to

[48] Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 249, doc. 3.
[49] María Teresa Cortón de las Heras, 'La construcción de la catedral de Segovia: (1525–1607)', PhD thesis, Universidad Complutense (1990), p. 1100, doc. 438.
[50] Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 1172, doc. 445.
[51] López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 119.
[52] Isidoro Bosarte, *Viage artístico á varios pueblos de España* (Imprenta Real, Madrid, 1804), p. 69; Gabri van Tussenbroek, *The Architectural Network of the Van Neurenberg Family in the Low Countries (1480–1640)* (Brepols, Turnhout, 2006), pp. 25–33.
[53] 'Informe del Maestro Enrique sobre la marcha de las obras de la catedral de Segovia' and 'Informe de la visita de Francisco de Colonia a las obras de la catedral de Segovia', AGS, G61, transcribed in Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 251–255, docs 6, 8.

make way for the new construction.[54] The old cathedral was also nearing the end of its life. Some of its spaces had been enclosed and used as storage. Others became an open-air quarry of materials for reuse.[55] A drawing of 1562, the only surviving visual representation of the building, portrays it as a ruin (Fig. 5). In 1570 the grounds near the Alcázar were cleared of rubble to celebrate the royal entry of Philip II and Anne of Austria.[56]

Thus, the cloister is the only architectural element of the old cathedral to survive. Emphasis on precision, care, and material continuity in the contracts for its relocation evokes the concerns of contemporary conservators. The cloister's survival appears even more striking considering that this was a relatively recent building, and not, for example, a Greco-Roman ruin which could be reconfigured through nascent humanist discourses.[57] As a Gothic structure, it was part of a building tradition which remained current in sixteenth century Iberia.[58] The relocation has been described as 'one of the most exceptional precursors of the rigorous preservation of the architecture of the past in Spain'.[59] Yet the current concept of preservation draws on ideas of national heritage and cultural value which only coalesced in the late eighteenth century.[60] As explored in the next section, sources contemporary to the

[54] Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 159.
[55] Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 49), pp. 243–66, docs 104–106.
[56] Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 173.
[57] For the Renaissance understanding of the past, Françoise Choay, *The invention of the historic monument* (trans. Lauren M. O'Connell), (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001), p. 17. For continuity and change in the conceptualisation of medieval buildings in early modern Spain, Alicia Cámara Muñoz, *Arquitectura y sociedad en el Siglo de Oro* (El Arquero, Madrid, 1990), p. 23.
[58] Notable examples are the new cathedral of Salamanca and Segovia cathedral itself; Robert Bork, *Late Gothic architecture: its evolution, extinction, and reception* (Brepols, Turnhout, 2018), p. 379.
[59] 'uno de los antecedents más exceptionales de rigurosa preservación de arquitecturas del pasado en España', López Trujillo, *op. cit.* (note 7), p. 37.
[60] Miles Glendinning, *The conservation movement: a history of architectural preservation* (Routledge, London, 2013), p. 2.

relocation evoke a range of interconnected aims and motivations, without ever explicitly mentioning historical or aesthetic importance as a reason for the cloister's relocation.

'An action deserving of memory'

Segovia's oldest and most striking monument is the Roman aqueduct. Late medieval and early modern travellers invariably marvelled at the structure, whose construction was attributed to Hercules and which was often taken as material evidence of the city's ancient foundation.[61] In the late fifteenth century, Juan Guas and other masters were involved in large-scale repairs to the building, which remained in use into the modern period.[62] These repairs were motivated by the need to ensure a water supply to the high areas of the city. Thus, while the aqueduct's maintenance has been described as an early example of preservation, it has also been considered as less 'modern' than the cloister's relocation, supposedly motivated by aesthetic pleasure rather than necessity.[63] Yet in the cloister necessity, economy, aesthetics, reuse, and memory are intertwined in a more complex tapestry than has been noted before.

As outlined above, the decision to relocate the cloister was taken at the very start of the cathedral's reconstruction, yet that architectural structure was not, in fact, strictly necessary to the devotional life of a cathedral with secular canons. Historically, cloisters had offered

[61] Travellers' accounts are collected in Cesáreo Pérez González and Luis Antonio Arroyo Rodríguez (eds), *El Acueducto de Segovia. Viajes, viajeros y algo de arqueología* (Instituto de Estudios Pisoraca, Segovia, 2011).
[62] Works are documented in 1483 and 1484, Andrés Gómez de Somorrostro, *El acueducto y otras antigüedades de Segovia* (D. Miguel de Burgos, Madrid, 1820), pp. 183–185; more broadly, Aurelio Ramírez Gallardo, *Supervivencia de una obra hidráulica: el Acueducto de Segovia* (Servicio de Publicaciones, Segovia, 1975).
[63] López Trujillo, *op. cit.* (note 7), p. 37.

ways to articulate the dependencies essential to the life of a regular chapter. As chapters became secular from the twelfth century onwards, cloisters took on different functions, fundamentally as spaces of burials and processions.[64] Architectural tradition and institutional competition likely turned a cloister into a necessary accessory for a well-respecting cathedral. In Granada in 1509, the absence of a cloister in the newly established cathedral seemed 'an intolerable defect' to Iñigo Lopez de Mendoza y Quiñones, Count of Tendilla, who acted as royal advisor and mediator during the initial stages of the cathedral's fraught construction.[65] Later in 1549, Blas Ortiz, canon and scholar of Toledo cathedral, noted that the cloister of his cathedral was 'so wide, magnificent and superb…that this element alone enables our cathedral to compete in greatness and beauty with the temples of other cities'.[66] Segovia competed with Toledo on other grounds: the historian Garci Ruiz de Castro recorded in 1551 that the canons of the former city enjoyed greater privileges than those of the latter.[67]

While *a* cloister was likely a competitive necessity, why the need to relocate the *same* cloister? On a general level, countless examples demonstrate that reuse was the norm in pre-

[64] Carrero Santamaría, *op. cit.* (note 11), pp. 204–209.
[65] 'es verdad que el altar mayor de la dicha Iglesia…[estará] mas cerca del norte que del oriente; pero este defecto se a avido por tolerable en comparación de perderse la claustra…' Letter from Count of Tendilla to King Ferdinand, 12 September 1509, Registro de cartas de D. Iñigo López de Mendoza, MSS/10230, fol. 136v, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, transcribed in Earl E. Rosenthal, *La catedral de Granada. Un estudio sobre el Renacimiento español* (Universidad de Granada, Granada, 1990), p. 195, doc. 4. The construction of a cloister remained a priority throughout the 16th century, although it was eventually abandoned. On the count as advisor, María Cristina Hernández Castelló, *Poder y promoción artística: el Conde de Tendilla: un Mendoza en tiempos de los Reyes Católicos* (Universidad de Valladolid, Valladolid, 2016).
[66] 'Claustrum…adeo amplum mangificum, sublime, atque superbum est,…ut hoc unum per se ecclesiae nostrae membrum cum aliarum urbium templis de magnitudine et elegantia possit contendere', Blas Ortiz, *La Catedral de Toledo, 1549. Según El Dr. Blas Ortiz. Descripción Graphica y Elegantissima de La S. Iglesia de Toledo* (trans. Ramón Gonzálvez and Felipe Pereda), (Antonio Pareja, Toledo, 1999), p. 262.
[67] Castro, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 22. Nevertheless, Toledo cathedral—seat of an archdiocese—was incomparably richer and more important.

modern construction.[68] Accounts from Ávila cathedral contain various lists detailing the sale of wood beams salvaged from the reconstruction of part of the choir in 1465.[69] Eighteenth-century repairs to the cloister at Segovia entailed the melting and repurposing of iron masonry joins and the sale of damaged paving stones.[70] Reuse also had religious overtones. Sermons on local Sunday and feast days would encourage the city's inhabitants to carry materials from the old to the new building in hand barrows, thus making amends for their role in the sinful destruction of the old cathedral.[71] In this context, it is less surprising that the cloister was reused, and more that it was not broken down further into raw building materials.

Intriguingly, the relocation saved neither money nor time. The income of Segovia cathedral's *fabrica* was highly variable and generally limited during the early sixteenth century.[72] Despite generous donations from the citizenry, the project was so underfunded in its initial stages that the chapter decided to erect a cheaper rubblework building, before being admonished from the master masons that such a structure would be unworthy of a city like Segovia.[73] In this context, moving rather than reconstructing a cloister that had been

---

[68] Donald Woodward, '"Swords into ploughshares": recycling in pre-industrial England', *The Economic History Review*, **38**(2), 175–191 (1985), at p. 18. See also the useful typology of reuse in Michael Greenhalgh, 'Spolia: a definition in ruins', in *Reuse value: spolia and appropriation in art and architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine* (ed. Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney), pp. 75–96 (Ashgate, Farnham, 2011), at 83–84.
[69] Archivo Histórico Nacional, Libro de Fábrica (Catedral de Ávila), L.411, 8 May 1465, fol. 23.
[70] José Miguel Merino de Cáceres, 'El claustro de la catedral de Segovia', *Estudios segovianos*, **94**, 475–508 (1996), at p. 480.
[71] Castro, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 20. This evokes 'Cult of Carts' miracles recorded in France in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.
[72] Financial instability was noted by traveller Enrique Cock in 1592: Enrique Cock, *Jornada de Tarazona, hecha por Felipe II en 1592, pasando por Segovia, Valladolid, Logroño, Pamplona y Tudela* (ed. Alfredo Morel Fatio and Antonio Rodríguez Villa), (M. Tello, Madrid, 1879), pp. 10–11. See also Miguel Ángel Cillanueva de Santos, 'Ofrendas para la edificación de la catedral de Segovia', *Pecunia*, **8**, 97–120 (2009); Wim Vroom, *Financing cathedral building in the Middle Ages: the generosity of the faithful* (trans. Elizabeth Manton), (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2010), pp. 445–450.
[73] Díaz-Miguel, *op. cit.* (note 8), at p. 222.

completed just fifty years earlier may initially have seemed economical, especially since its original construction had indeed been extremely expensive.[74] Yet Campero eventually received 2,529,249 maravedís, rather than the 1,612,500 maravedís of the initial estimate.[75] This was a high price for a project for which no significant amount of stone needed to be quarried or carved. In 1562 the administrator Juan Rodríguez prepared a report on the construction to counter accusations of mismanagement. He noted that spiralling costs were due to unexpected problems in resituating the structure on the new cathedral's sloping site, and to requests to embellish the cloister's original design.[76] While it may have been convenient to blame unexpected external factors in a document of this kind, simply appropriating the cloister's materials would have been cheaper than relocating the structure.[77]

Antonio Ruiz Hernando suggests that beyond economic concerns, care in the relocation of the cloister must have been motivated by an appreciation of the cloister's beauty and aesthetic qualities.[78] Evidence is found in Pantigoso's memorial, where the building is described as 'one of the best of these kingdoms' [*una de las buenas de estos reinos*]'. Yet Pantigoso also used a similar expression for the old cathedral's bells and organs, suggesting that the adjective 'bueno' indicated fitness for purpose rather than aesthetic appreciation.[79]

---

[74] For the cost of the cloister's construction in various years, López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 112–115.
[75] Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 72. In comparison, construction of the old cathedral's library cost 287500 *maravedís*. López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 71. However, comparisons have limited value as the *maravedí* fluctuated. Ricardo Izquierdo Benito, *Precios y salarios en Toledo en el siglo XV (1400–1475)* (Caja de ahorro provincial de Toledo, Toledo, 1982), p. 12.
[76] Díaz-Miguel, *op. cit.* (note 8), at p. 224.
[77] A similar idea in Ruiz Hernando, *op. cit.* (note 7), at p. 44.
[78] Ruiz Hernando, *op. cit.* (note 7), at p. 44.
[79] Lecea, *op. cit.* (note 8), at p. 219. The bells were moved from the old cathedral to Santa Clara, Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 47. Fitness for purpose should not be interpreted in strictly materialistic terms, since decorum and functionality were evidently interlinked.

Overall, Pantigoso's descriptive language is formulaic rather than precise. Aesthetic appreciation, therefore, remains a moot point. Expanding on Hernando's argument, one may ask if the cloister was held in high regard because it was the work of the celebrity master mason Juan Guas. The design of another structure directed by Guas, the Toledan convent of San Juan de los Reyes, was emulated in three sixteenth-century foundations.[80] Guas' name was also remembered long after his death: in his capacity as royal master mason, he was mentioned repeatedly by the witnesses of a lawsuit which involved the convents of San Antonio el Real and San Francisco in Segovia in 1515.[81] Yet his name never recurs in sixteenth-century construction documents or descriptions of the cathedral.[82] This suggests that beauty or fame were not the main reasons behind the cloister's relocation.

Similarly open to question is whether the cloister was, in fact, reconstructed precisely as it had been in the old cathedral. For example, when discussing the process of relocation Juan Rodríguez did not dwell on celebrating its appearance, but rather focused on the changes he had commissioned. As he noted, 'many adornments' were made for the cloister out of granite and timber.[83] Other modifications to the cloister focused on proportions. During the reconstruction Rodríguez realised that the old cloister would appear too low next to the new church and asked Campero to raise it slightly.[84] The 1526 contract for the transportation of

[80] The convent of Santa María de Jesús in Torrijos; the parish church of San Andrés in Toledo; and the church of the Hospital of Tavera, also in Toledo. Costanza Beltrami, 'Imitating a Model, Creating an Identity: Copying San Juan de Los Reyes at San Andrés, Toledo', in *Gothic architecture in Spain: invention and imitation* (ed. Tom Nickson and Nicola Jennings), pp. 157–176 (London, Courtauld Books Online, 2020); Alfonso Rodríguez Gutiérrez de Ceballos, *Bartolomé de Bustamante y los orígines de la arquitectura jesuítica en* España (Institutum Historicum, Rome, 1967), pp. 337–338, doc. VII.
[81] AGS, CSR, leg. 46, ff. 258–70. A summary in López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 192–193.
[82] See the texts collected in José Garcia Mercadal (ed.), *Viajes de extranjeros por España y Portugal*, 3 vols. (Aguilar, Madrid, 1959), vols 2 and 3.
[83] 'otras muchas añadiduras…haciendo muchas cosas de piedra berroqueña y otras de silleria', Díaz-Miguel, *op. cit.* (note 8), at pp. 224–5.
[84] Díaz-Miguel, *op. cit.* (note 8), at pp. 224–5.

the cloister portal already suggested that Campero might reduce it 'proportionally' if he felt it did not 'fit' its new location.[85] More specifically, the wording of Campero's contracts can be reinterpreted in ways which do not proscribe change. The text of the first agreement required the master mason to relocate elements 'in the manner and form' of the original. The clause evokes the Latin 'modo et forma', a legal expression indicating the specific matter and form of an allegation, and not just its general subject. The phrase appears frequently in medieval and Renaissance contracts to indicate that a project should copy a given model closely.[86] Yet surviving examples reveal that adherence to such clauses varied widely, and that it could correspond to no more than a loose 'familial resemblance' rather than exact copying.[87]

Furthermore, momentous change is evoked by the earliest known project drawing for the new cathedral (Fig. 6).[88] Only a very limited indication of the position of the cloister is included in this drawing, recalling the separation between the new construction, directed by Hontañón, and the cloister relocation, entrusted to Campero. In the barely sketched area to the right, the smaller footprints of the cloister's seven bays have been traced over larger enclosed areas which must correspond to the cloister chapels recorded in the old cathedral.[89] The plan may therefore visualise a change of intention, from a planned relocation of the cloister with its chapels to simply the cloister walks.

---

[85] Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 1172, doc. 445.
[86] Michelle O'Malley, *The business of art: contracts and the commissioning process in Renaissance Italy* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2005), p. 222; Hannelore Glasser, 'Artists' contracts of the early Renaissance', PhD thesis, Columbia University (1965), pp. 65–70.
[87] Tom Nickson, 'The royal tombs of Santes Creus. Negotiating the royal image in medieval Iberia', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, **72**.1, 1–14 (2009), at p. 7.
[88] José Antonio Ruiz Hernando, *Las trazas de la catedral de Segovia* (Diputación Provincial de Segovia, Segovia, 2003), pp. 12–14. Ruiz Hernando dates the drawing to 1529, after the relocation of the cloister, but this does not explain the changes discussed here.
[89] For these chapels, see the annotated plan in López Díez, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 23.

Viewed in this light, the cloister relocation appears closer to a new construction project grounded in a culture of architectural reuse than to the preservation of an architectural relic. Yet this interpretation should not be taken too far, since the cloister was also a space of memory. As recounted by Colmenares, on 25 August 1558, ten days after the first mass was given in the new cathedral, a solemn ceremony moved important burials from the old to the new cathedral. First was the sepulchre of the Infante Don Pedro. Then a box with the bones of many bishops, which had been removed from their tombs without being identified and were now hopelessly confused. Finally, the corpse of Marisaltos, a thirteenth-century *conversa* and holy woman who was accused of adultery and forced to jump off a cliff, only to be miraculously saved by the Virgin Mary.[90] These burials, which had been in different locations in the old cathedral, were all concentrated in the cloister and its single large chapel. In the meantime, small chapels for new burials were being built at the cloister's corners.[91] New and old burials thus turned the cloister into a space for the commemoration of the dead. The Infante's tomb evoked the cathedral's association to the monarchy, also visualised by the coat of arms of Isabella and Ferdinand over the cloister door. Perhaps the canons hoped that examples of the cathedral's previous royal ties would encourage future monarchs to renew their economic support for the cathedral works. But more subtly, the cloister also acted as the cathedral's religious memory, embodied by the bishops and Marisaltos.

The cloister was about forty years old at the time of the Comuneros' revolt. Its construction was still within living memory, yet perhaps far enough in time to be already part of history.[92] Memory of the longer history of Segovia, as enshrined in the aqueduct, was essential to

[90] Colmenares, *op. cit*. (note 8), ch. 41, par. 9.
[91] Cortón de las Heras, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 73, 170.
[92] For example, Pantigoso describes the library as recently constructed, but not the cloister, Lecea, *op. cit.* (note 8), at ch. 10.

confirm the city's status. In his memorial of 1523, Pantigoso used the aqueduct to argue for the antiquity and pre-eminence of the old cathedral itself, regardless of the destruction it had just experienced.[93] As a new cathedral replaced the old, it was important to ensure that they remained the same. Religiously and institutionally, the new cathedral was the old: Garci Ruiz de Castro notes that they celebrated their dedication on the same day.[94] The flexible approach to the relocation of the cloister may have facilitated this process, since it ensured the survival of the old in a way that was, in fact, mostly invisible, and therefore non-threatening to the unitary identity of the new building.[95] Most traveller accounts between the sixteenth and the nineteenth century completely fail to mention the relocation of the cloister.[96] Even Colmenares, who described the translation of the cathedral at length, only dedicated a few words to the cloister. The most extensive reference reads: 'the cloister (as we said) was moved from the old cathedral, and repositioned again, stone by stone; an action worthy of memory'.[97] Perhaps such a memory could only work when it was forgotten, functioning as an invisible yet powerful demonstration of the cathedral's unbroken life.

Can a building remain the same when it is moved to a different location? The example of sixteenth century Segovia suggests that in the pre-modern world, identity and change could not be neatly separated. The cloister of Segovia cathedral survived the destruction of the old cathedral by being moved to the new. Yet preservation and relocation did not exclude

[93] Lecea, *op. cit.* (note 8), at ch. 6.
[94] Castro, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 22.
[95] The nineteenth-century scholar, architect and restorer George Edmund Street remarked on this 'invisibility': George Edmund Street, *Some account of Gothic architecture in Spain* (John Murray, London, 1865), p. 184.
[96] Few travellers dwelled on Segovia cathedral. Garcia Mercadal, *op. cit.* (note 81), vols 2 and 3; more specifically, Daniel Crespo Delgado, 'El gótico vindicado. Sobre algunos viajeros ingleses y españoles en la Segovia del siglo XVIII', *Oppidum* **2**, 141–168 (2006).
[97] Colmenares, *op. cit*. (note 8), ch. 40, par. 4.

alterations and improvements. The cloister was neither preserved for purely economic or practical reasons, nor as the relic of a bygone age. Rather, it constituted the powerful yet invisible connection between the old and the new building, helping to ensure that they remained one and the same.

Acknowledgements

I thank Morwenna Blewett, Neal Shasore, Emily Burns, and Edward Payne for their comments and encouragement.

Captions

Fig. 1

Map of Segovia, with key locations mentioned in the text. Source: Google; modified by the author.

Fig. 2

North cloister walk, Segovia cathedral. Juan Guas and others, completed *c.* 1479; reconstructed by Juan Campero from 1524; in the background, the funerary chapel of Iñigo López Aguado (d. 1529). Source: the author.

Fig. 3

Tympanum, cloister portal (interior), Segovia cathedral. Juan Guas and others, completed 1487; relocated by Juan Campero from 1526. Source: Miguel Hermoso Cuesta, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=42258521.

Fig. 4

Cloister portal (exterior), Segovia cathedral. Juan Guas and others, completed 1487; relocated by Juan Campero from 1526. Source: the author.

Fig. 5

Anthonis van den Wijngaerde, *Panoramic view of Segovia from the east*, 1562–1570. The ruin of the old cathedral is visible to the right. Pen and brown ink with touches of blue wash over black chalk, sheet 28.4 x 100.1 cm (3 sheets) (height x width), Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, WA.Suth.L.4.100.1. © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

Fig. 6

Juan Gil de Hontañón?, *Plan drawing for Segovia cathedral*, after 1524, silverpoint and black ink on parchment, 797 x 560 mm, Archivo Catedral de Segovia.