

An 'Unbecoming' Cohabitation? Reconsidering the narrative of the Cathedral-Mosque of Córdoba

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ABSTRACT

The Cathedral-Mosque of Córdoba is one of the most well-known and visited sacred sites in Western Europe. It is also regarded as possessing one of the most 'unbecoming' cohabitations of interior architectural space. This paper investigates how this unique coupling of spatial types came to earn its infamy, revealing the myth and prejudices involved in its elaboration. Through a review of current research into the space it will be shown that interiors traditionally 'seen' as unbecoming can be reconceived, reread or reheard, allowing for new, alternate and open interpretations.

INTRODUCTION

'This parasitical church, this enormous stone mushroom, this architectural wart on the back of the Arabian edifice ...'¹

Over a century and a half has passed since the renowned French writer and critic Pierre Jules Théophile Gautier pronounced his damning assessment on the cathedral of Córdoba, Spain. Despite the course of time, the abomination of the sixteenth-century intervention – *la Catedral de Santa María* – embedded within the fabric of the tenth-century former-mosque – *la Mezquita* – remains a paradigm. It is vilified for its hulking presence, spatial disruption, and stylistic incongruity. However, the fiercest criticism and resentment is directed at the fact that the insertion of the cathedral has forever compromised the 'authentic' fabric, space and experience of the Hispano-Umayyad mosque. The promoters and designers of the project – and even the whole of the Spanish nation – have been rebuked by generations of historians for permitting this act of wanton spatial vandalism.² The example of the *Cathedral-Mosque of Córdoba* has been inscribed as one of the most unbecoming cohabitations ever. Despite the infamy that shrouds the site in question, the unique and curious collision of epochs, spaces, beliefs and cultures deserves to be reassessed in terms of the potentiality that such 'unbecomingness' provides, rather than dwelling on it as an eternal lament for experiences lost or – more accurately – experiences that never were.

In order to undertake this reassessment, the origins of the negative topoi that surround the space in question must first be interrogated. Firstly, the spatial insertion of the cathedral will be analysed within the contexts of ecclesiastical design in early-modern Spain, demonstrating that the decision to intervene so radically in the extant space was not alien to the design praxis of the time. Secondly, it will be argued that the epic narrative that surrounds the cathedral project is in fact based on myths, historical inaccuracies, and prejudices that are still perpetuated to this day. Lastly, through a critique of the teleology of 'unbecoming',³ one that has been inscribed onto the interior through its historiography, an exploration of the experiential possibilities that this particular 'unbecoming' cohabitation offers – spatial, visual and sonic – will be used to suggest that similar such states and conditions offer designers and experiencers new ways of engaging with conflictive, complex and spatial contexts.

AN UNCOMFORTABLE CO-HABITATION

The age of the cathedral construction in Europe is generally considered to have come to its end by the close of the fifteenth century. The situation in Spain was an exception to this. The process and progress of cathedral construction in the Iberian Peninsula was firstly and fundamentally dictated by the geographic and political advance of the Christian wars against Al-Andalus – starting in the north of Spain in the eighth century and concluding in Granada in 1492 – and later, of no lesser consequence, the colonisation of the Americas from 1492 onwards. As territories and cities were captured and subjugated from north to south, and then westward across the Atlantic, new cathedrals were built as resources became available. This section of the paper will focus on the development of Hispanic cathedral-space in the sixteenth century, the epoch in which the new fabric of the cathedral of Córdoba was conceived and commenced. It will provide the context through which to interpret the reasons and tactics of the symbolic and spatial transformations that occurred at this period, which were viewed by later generations as inappropriate and unbecoming acts of vandalism.

During Emperor Charles V's reign (1519-1556) many large-scale Spanish projects were promoted, commenced or fast-tracked for completion. The majority of these involved the demolition or major reconfiguration of extant spaces of high cultural and political significance, such as the construction of a new royal palace in the Alhambra, Granada, and the re-design of the cathedral of the same city from gothic to *all'antica*. The first of these, built within the heart of the Nasrid Palace, was likened by the architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri to 'a meteor that has accidentally lodged in the Alhambra'.⁴ The cathedral occupies the space of the former congregational mosque – a tactic typically deployed in the re-Christianised cities of southern Spain: Seville, Jaén, Málaga – and in a unique sense – Córdoba. This series of constructions had an explicit theo-political symbolism of Christian and imperial domination.⁵ Any architectural expression within the imperial sphere was designed to be as explicit as possible in the communication of the permanence and authority of the rule of Charles and his faith.

For the architects of the time, and the courtiers who managed them, the appropriate and efficacious language for these projects gradually shifted away from the particular of the Gothic to the universal, imperial and Roman Catholic one of the Classical. There was also an accompanying shift in the spatial conception and expression of these important sites that marked a clear rupture between the fractious past and the new unified Hapsburg world-view. In relation to the configuration of cathedral-space in the sphere of the Spanish realm, the celebration of the Roman Catholic rite in all its pomp and splendour – with the incessant celebration of Mass, music, processions and ephemeral monuments – rendered the low-ceilinged, dimly-lit, column-cluttered spaces of extant former-mosques, or temples in the case of the Americas, as indecorous and spatially inadequate, and from the eyes of sixteenth-century bishops and chapters, wholly unbecoming.

For the two centuries before the emergence of the Spanish Empire – and the wealth, prestige and influence that accompanied it – the model of spatial appropriation and modification of mosque-spaces had sufficed. The occupation and conversion of the principal mosque into a cathedral had on the one hand an economic rationale, especially in times of war when finances were limited, and on the other an important symbolic one. The cost of erecting a new building to house large numbers of people was a costly act even in prosperous times; as such, when the victorious authorities found well-built spaces, designed to house large congregations, located strategically in the centre of the city, there seemed little sense in demolishing and rebuilding. A few readjustments would be adequate, at least in the short to medium term. In terms of symbolism, the occupation of the most important building in a city and its subsequent conversion into a temple of the victorious faith had very strong symbolic significance for the authorities as well as the vanquished inhabitants.⁶

When the *Great Mosque of Córdoba* was claimed by King Ferdinand III in 1236, it was purified and consecrated according to rite in the Pontifical Ceremonial for such transformations, and dedicated under the avocation of the Virgin Mary.⁷ As was

practice at the time, one of the primary acts of transforming the space into one suitable for Christian liturgy was reorientation of the internal space. The orientation of the internal space according to Islamic practice was that the focus of worship, the *mihrab*, was placed in the *quiblah* wall. This meant that the focus of worship was on the long-axis wall. The internal configuration was subsequently changed to east west, with the chancel located at the east, which meant that the focus of worship was reoriented to the short-axis wall (see Figure 1). Despite the appearance to a contemporary observer on plan, this did not necessarily impart the feeling of a stepped basilical section, as all the ceilings within the mosque space would have generally been at the same height. The internal space, with its hypostyle columnated configuration would have also been isotropic (Figure 2). The task of converting this type of space, inherently alien to Christian worship, into one which would firstly function for the Christian liturgy, and secondly convey some symbolic sense of a Christian space, would have been a challenge for the thirteenth-century chapter of Córdoba.

This condition was unique in Europe; whereas the cathedral builders of France and England were conceiving of spaces and structures for an already-existing Christian culture and congregation, Spain's cathedral had to operate beyond this and serve the additional programme of mass conversion. This same challenge repeated on the peninsula and later in the Americas, can be seen as the underlying theme that shaped the development of cathedral-space in the Spanish realm.

One manner in which to delineate space in an otherwise isotropic configuration is to construct visual barriers, either solid as in the form of walls, or with some degree of visual permeability such as screens (Figure 4). The construction of a segregated clerical reserve that contained the main altar (sanctuary) in the eastern half of the space, as well as an enclosed choir in the western half of the space, not only took advantage of the ample available floor space but also allowed the spaces near the perimeter walls to be dedicated to private chapels, and the space between the liturgical nucleus and the ring of outer chapels to be used for general circulation and processions. What was configured was in many respects a prototypical spatial distribution for all

Hispanic cathedrals and collegiate churches to be built until the nineteenth century.

Whilst the cathedral-mosque was by its very hybrid nature a unique spatial typology, it did pose major inconveniences for the developing liturgy of the Roman Catholic rite. One major problem that the hypostyle structure of mosques bequeathed to new Christianised spaces was the narrowness of the naves and aisles, and the density of the columnation that was wholly unsuited to liturgical needs. The beginning of the sixteenth century saw Seville's gargantuan new cathedral completed, and those in rival Andalusian cities of Granada, Jaén, Málaga and Almería were also, like Seville's, rising up from the sites of the cities' former congregational mosques. However, Córdoba had the challenging task of creating its mark in the new century encumbered by the overwhelming scale of the Umayyad fabric within which it had to operate. Unlike Seville, which had become the international hub of the global Empire and hence merited the largest cathedral in Christendom, Córdoba did not have the resources to simply efface the mosque and rebuild anew. The new cathedral of Seville occupied to the nearest square metre the entire footprint of the mosque that it replaced; the *Great Mosque of Córdoba* was considerably larger still.⁸ Instead, radical reconfiguration with maximum experiential contrast was used as a tactic of spatial and symbolic confrontation.

A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF UNBECOMING

'Had I wotted of what ye were doing, you should have laid no finger on this ancient pile. You have built something, such as is to be found anywhere, and you have destroyed a wonder of the world.'⁹

When Tafuri cautioned on the difficulties of studying sixteenth-century Spanish architectural history, especially the risk of 'simplifying a system of figurative and cultural relationships of exceptional complexity'¹⁰ he was referring, in particular, to the involvement of the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, Charles V, with the architectural projects of the time. The phrases that preface this section are perhaps the most famous words

of architectural comment issued by a European monarch. The Emperor purportedly uttered them during his visit to Córdoba in 1526. His alleged admonishment of the cathedral chapter for the spatial intervention taking place in the heart of the mosque forms the basis of the unbecoming legacy that would define the cathedral-mosque and its history for the next four hundred years. The following section of this paper will trace how this myth developed into a series of negative topoi relating to the space in question and the design culture that produced it.

As outlined in the previous section, the initial impetus for the new cathedral project in the sixteenth century emerged from a desire for a more becoming space in which to enact the liturgical rites befitting an important and ancient diocese such as Córdoba. The means for this came with the financial resources afforded by the new wealth that the American colonisation was bringing to Spain. However, the new cathedral that was to emerge from the centre of the former mosque was not the first intervention in the extant fabric. As was the habit, the first consecrated cathedral existed within the space without significant modification.¹¹ It was not until the fifteenth century that the first main intervention occurred, with the construction of a vaulted space to the west of the current cathedral. This action firmly established a longitudinal axis within the isotropic space through the amalgamation of bays, the removal of columns and the addition of a clerestory. Whilst this intervention is generally considered to have been more sensitive in its location, stylistic language and modest scale, it did nonetheless profoundly alter the manner in which the space was utilised and experienced, both by the clergy enacting the liturgy and the laity who looked on. This space, in principle, satisfied the need for axiality required for the celebration of the Christian rite, yet its location – away from the geometric centre of the entire space – caused much consternation to the chapter, a condition that Heather Ecker cites as one of the main drivers for the construction of a new centrally-located cathedral space that was not tucked away 'in the corner of the church.'¹²

When the Bishop of Córdoba, Alonso Manrique de Lara (r. 1516-1523), commenced work on the new structure in 1523,

which involved the removal of the central section of the ancient structure, a dispute arose between the city council and the cathedral chapter (Figure 3). The nineteenth-century British historian William Stirling Maxwell penned of the polemic that 'the citizens of Cordoba had vainly sought to arrest the cruel improvements commenced by the Chapter; and appealed against that Vandalic body to the Emperor.'¹³ Whereas the majority of histories written over this act – even up to the current day – depict the citizens and council in uproar against the destruction of the mosque,¹⁴ recent research has brought to light the cause of the actual dispute. The problems arose over the effect the works would have on private aristocratic chapels and tombs that were to be displaced.¹⁵ It was in essence a demarcation dispute between the city's nobility, with its ancient connection to place, civic and family identity, and a prelate with no ties to the city apart from a stop-over placement between his previous posting in Badajoz, and his proximate promotion (immediately after construction started) as Archbishop of Seville and Inquisitor General. Bishop Manrique, with his close connection to the Emperor, was operating at the international level of imperial politics – both state and church – and it could be read that he saw the spatial configuration of the extant cathedral-mosque as completely unsatisfactory for contemporary church practices and not befitting a statesman and cleric of his rank and ambition. The parochial concerns of local aristocrats and counsellors were not to stand in the way of Bishop Manrique's vision of modern and globalised Spain.

Disputes between competing authorities, such as civic and church, often required the intervention of the monarch to rule on the case. The Emperor Charles ruled in favour of the chapter and work continued. At this point it could be assumed that the decision of Charles signified the end of the story and, for better or worse, the stylistic *mélange* of the cathedral would forever be embedded in the mosque. However, as Tafuri cautioned, this is only the start of the complex distortions of the tale, as shall now be explored.

As the work continued on the new cathedral, history remained silent on the matter apart from the original documents surrounding the initial dispute. It was not until 1637 that the thread of the

story re-emerges. King Phillip IV was considering reconstructing the Royal Chapel, located between the old cathedral and the choir of the new structure (Figure 5). The cathedral canon and historian, Bernardo José de Alderete was charged with writing to the king on the current state of the chapel whilst also providing an assessment of the proposed plan of works and the impact it may have on the adjoining spaces. In his letter Alderete stated to Phillip IV that the king's grandfather (Phillip II) and great-grandfather (Charles V) had wished that the cathedral 'had never been built in the vastness of this most spacious temple.'¹⁶ Alderete went on to dissuade Phillip from reconstructing the Royal Chapel as he argued that this would seriously compromise the structure of the new cathedral due to its proximity and disrupt the usual liturgical functioning of the newly-configured cathedral space, returning it once again to a work-zone only thirty years after a century and a half of continuous construction. He also raised the ever-contentious issue of ownership and privileges pertaining to the numerous private chapels that would be affected, the cause of initial dispute in the sixteenth century. Alderete does not cite the source of Charles and Phillip's displeasure in regards to the spatial interventions, and it is difficult to determine whether Alderete posited this comment as a means of furthering his own stance on the Royal Chapel works.

The legend of the unbecoming cathedral does not resurface for another century: 1778 is the first instance that the famous reprimand of Charles V is found in text. Juan Gómez Bravo's late-eighteenth-century history of the bishops of Córdoba recounts the events of the intervention of Bishop Manrique. Peppering the sequence of documented and dated events, Gómez, a canon of Córdoba Cathedral like his predecessor Alderete, introduced new elements to the story, stating that the city council wished to 'preserve the unique and ancient structure, which was not to be found anywhere else.'¹⁷ He noted that there were always going to be differing opinions in any type of large-scale building project, but it was only when the emperor finally came to Córdoba and saw the impact of the new construction on the mosque that he uttered his famous lines of regret. Gómez did not pass judgment on the architectural merit, merely stating the design was done by the most renowned architect of the time, Hernán

Ruíz (the elder). It is from this point onwards, just as the nascent discipline of architectural history becomes institutionalised in Spain, that Charles V's rebuke begins to form a central and unquestioned part of its narrative. *Viage de España* (1772-1794) is an eighteen-volume encyclopaedic account of the artistic and architectural patrimony of Spain. Written by Antonio Ponz, who was to become the secretary of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes, it acted, and still acts as the primary reference source for researchers. Ponz's section on the cathedral of Córdoba cites Gómez Bravo and replicates Charles V's rebuke verbatim.¹⁸ The proceeding generations of historians transcribed the statement in nearly every text written on the subject.

Outside of Spain, these texts served as sources and guides for non-Spanish travellers and writers of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Spain had become popular for the more adventurous traveller tired of the predictability of the grand tour destinations. Spain offered the 'rare opportunity to see cathedral and Moorish remains, side by side, and sometimes, even more surprisingly, mixed together.'¹⁹ The rebuke is to be found in direct translation, or in spirit. James C. Murphy's 1815 *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain* stated: 'The Spaniards began to disfigure its symmetry by modern erections ... In vain have remonstrances been repeatedly made at different times, by the lovers of the arts, nay even by royalty itself, against these misplaced and tasteless alterations,'²⁰ where Charles V is portrayed as the wise and sensitive aesthete, deceived by the vainglorious cathedral chapter. In Richard Ford's widely influential 1845 *A Hand-Book for Travellers in Spain*, he too is obliged to repeat the quote. His critique of Charles V's contradictory position on new insertions in ancient fabric highlights the problematic nature of the supposed statement. Ford noted that it seemed inconsistent, even ingenuous, stating of the monarch, 'And yet this man, who could see so clearly the moles in clerical eyes, disfigured the *Alcazar of Seville*, and tore down portions of the *Alhambra*, to commence a palace which he never finished, and whose performance shames mighty promise.'²¹ William Stirling Maxwell in his 1848 *Annals of the Artists of Spain* spins the legend into an almost purple-like shade now rendering the Emperor as a contrite Caesar as the allusion is made clear:

The Cordobese historians have chronicled his vain regrets on visiting the famous mosque of Abderahaman, which had become the Cathedral of their city, for the havoc made in its forest of fairy columns by the erection of the Christian choir, to which, when at a distance, he had himself in an evil hour consented. ... Charles, however, as yet knowing little of the Moors and their works, sided with the churchmen, and an ample clearing was forthwith made in the midst of the long continuities of the aisles. But he came, he saw, and confessed his error; shifting the blame, however, as was natural and not unjust, upon the broad shoulders of the Chapter.²²

Generations of critics and commentators have created a teleology of unbecoming. For the late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century historians the statement of Charles V served as the perfect evidence for their assessment and condemnation of the cathedral space and those responsible for it. Spanish historians and writers of the time were, like their counterparts north of the Pyrenees, swept up in the tides of Romantic historicism. In addition to the Gothic heritage it shared with the rest of Europe, Spain uniquely had Islamic architecture as a distinct national trait. The spaces from both of these traditions became the focus of revived and scholarly interest.²³ Following the philosophies of Viollet-le-Duc, Spanish architects removed the later accretions to Gothic spaces, such as the Baroque organ cases, screens and retables. The temporal proximity of the Baroque rendered it as monstrous and incomprehensible to the eyes and minds of Enlightenment thinkers and architects.²⁴ Likewise, the interest in Islamic architecture as an archaeological artefact, rather than part of an uninterrupted spatial continuum, meant that the interventions over the centuries were seen as inauthentic and intrusive and where possible should be removed.

The first plan produced of the cathedral-mosque (1741) depicts the space in its contemporary usage. As this plan was commissioned by the cathedral chapter, it served to document the actual spatial configuration. The ring of chapels that hugs the perimeter is shown, as are the intermediary altars scattered throughout the remnant hypostyle space as well as the sanctuary

and choir at the centre. In contrast, later plans, contained within the travel books of the nineteenth century and history books of the twentieth, omit the cathedral and chapels completely, presenting a hypothetical reconstruction of the mosque space. The scholar Heather Ecker noted this erasing of the present, stating: 'The often-reproduced plans that subtract its "Christian elements" miss the point that the "original" building is not attainable, even by the most careful draftsman ... The Great Mosque has been subjected to limitless campaigns of extensions, transformation and restoration since its murky birth.'²⁵

The reality of a complex and conflictive history and a millennium of continual usage denied the spatial integrity and unity so desired by the commentators and designers of the time. This sentiment is made evident in Henry Swinburne's 1787 *Travels Through Spain* in which he stated '... people walking through this chaos of pillars seem to answer the romantic ideas of magic, enchanted [sic] knights, or discontented wandering spirits.'²⁶ Some seventy-five years later Gautier wrote in a similar vein recounting how he had felt in the Cathedral-Mosque when he saw Spaniards dressed in contemporary clothing, akin to that he saw in Paris, rather than in Moorish garb. This sight of real-life intrusions disturbed him greatly and 'involuntarily' produced 'a disagreeable effect', whilst the people appeared 'more ridiculous than they really are.'²⁷ Was not the presence of a cathedral in the middle of the space one such intrusion to the nostalgic antiquarians? The architectural historian William Whyte noted the influence that this attitude has had on the way in which the stories of spaces, and the assumptions underlying these narratives, have been written and disseminated. He stated of the assumptions made by the eighteenth-century antiquarian tradition that these 'have remained remarkably influential throughout the evolution of the discipline.'²⁸ We need only look at the way in which the cathedral is described in contemporary texts in which we continue to see the pervasiveness of these attitudes. Silvia Zuffi's 2006 text on sixteenth-century European art stated 'one of the wonders of Muslim sacred architecture, was "profaned" with the insertion of a mediocre Christian church in the heart of the dense web of aisles,'²⁹ whilst the renowned historian Richard Fletcher proclaimed 'posterity has unhesitatingly endorsed the

king's opinion: the harmony of the mosque is wrecked by the horrible architectural pustule inserted by the bishop and chapter in the sixteenth century.'³⁰ The negative topoi that have come to condition our understanding, interpretation and experience of the space of the cathedral and the cathedral-mosque as a whole must be reviewed and critiqued in order to extract any benefit from the 'unbecoming' cohabitation. Instead of trying to uncouple the two spaces in futile acts of 'addition and subtraction'³¹ the following section of the paper will address the possibilities that this rare spatial type can provide for:

NEW READINGS OF UNBECOMING STORIES

'... how can we accept a perspective that interprets both documents and architecture in light of predetermined conclusions?'³²

When a space, such as the cathedral-mosque, does not permit or satisfy, or completely rejects, our conventional understanding of a 'becoming' interior – decorous, considered, polite, integral, homogenous and non-confrontational – what tactics can we deploy to negotiate this territory?³³ Firstly we need to extract from the debate the notion that there was ever an 'original' interior which can be restituted, and with this the unachievable desires associated with such a longing. The scholar Dede Fairchild Ruggles stated in regards to the contemporary conflicts surrounding the cathedral-mosque and its interior spaces '... the concept of originality is a convenient invention because it is always a matter of selecting a layer in the history of the built environment that we wish to remember.'³⁴ For the nineteenth and early-twentieth-century scholars this layer sat between the tenth to thirteenth centuries, the rest was worthless topsoil to be cleared away. The interior needs to be recast not as an artefact, but as an actual and current space. Whether this space is viewed as a functioning Roman Catholic cathedral, a mosque to be reclaimed in the name of Islam or little more than a fixture on the globalised museo-theme park tourist trail, authenticity no longer has any claim.

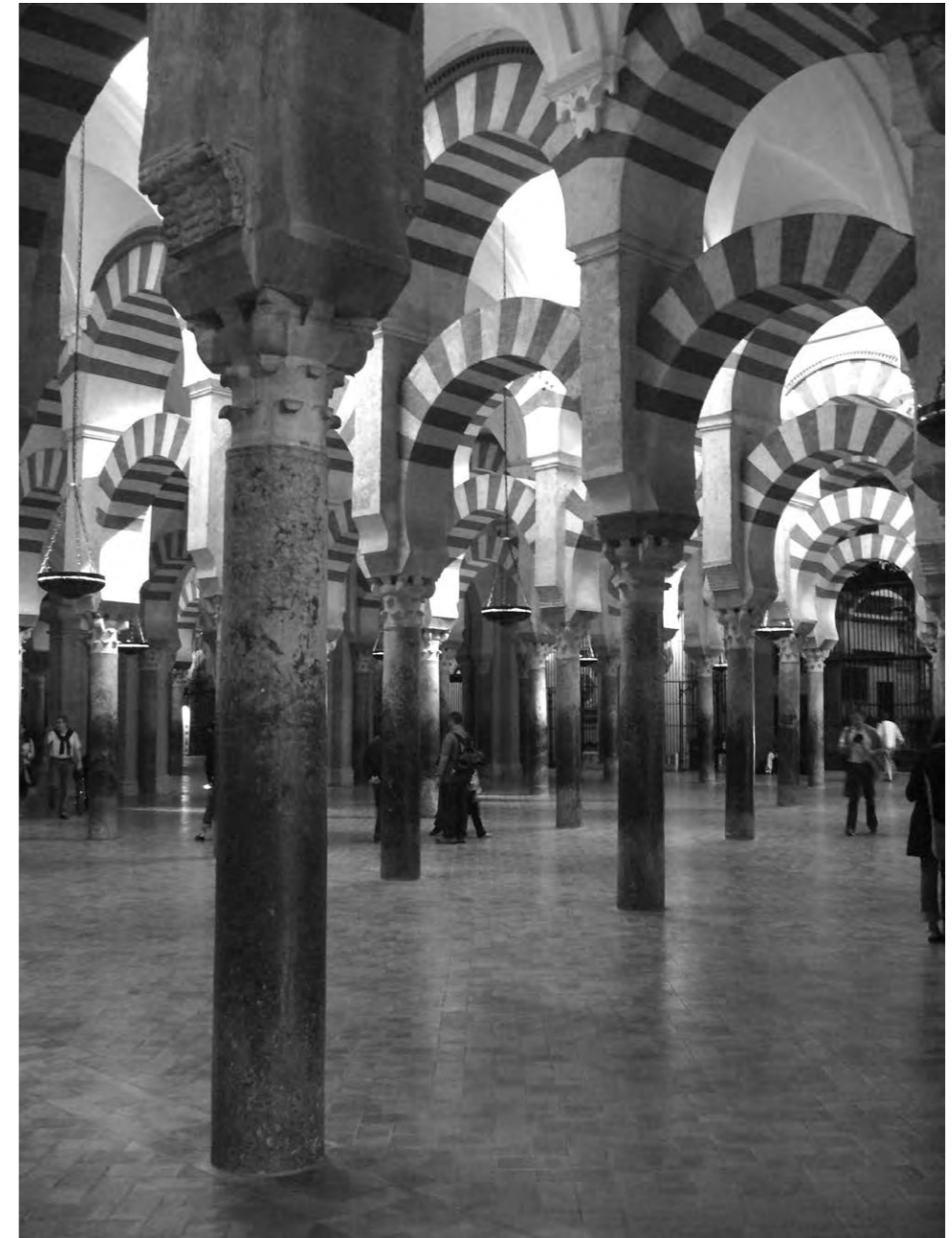
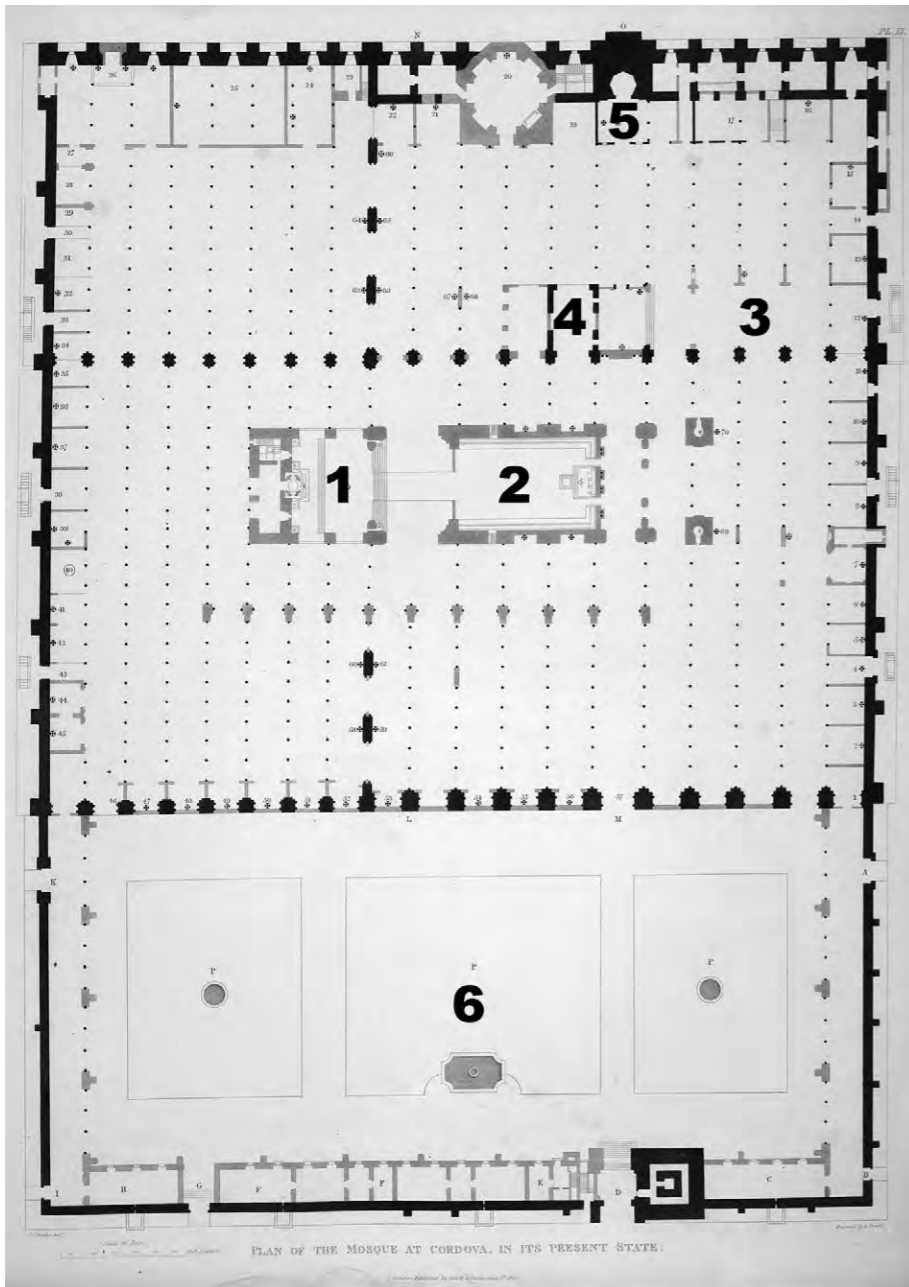
Once spared from the debate of the authentic and its limiting dualism, the interior opens itself to new ways of interpretation.

Recent shifts in the manner in which the cathedral-mosque has been analysed have attempted to engage with the very spatial disruptions that earlier generations found so unbecoming. Particular attention is now paid to the manner in which the multiple layers of built-environment history interact, and the potentialities that arise from this. These researchers, discussed below, have looked at the sites of maximum tension, collision and complexity as new ways of interpreting the interior; visually, spatially and sonically. Antón Capitel draws our attention to the multiple spatial experiences available within the complex. He noted the surprise that results from impossibility to perceive the new cathedral's interior space until one is suddenly inside it, simultaneously losing contact with the Islamic space outside its walls (Figure 6). Capitel also highlighted the sophistication and interest when the two spatial envelopes inevitably meet, either in considered dialogue or sharp juxtaposition.³⁵ Jesús Rivas Carmona studied the particularities of the new cathedral's presence within the extant space, especially the use of interior façades. This tactic enacts a spatial inversion whereby the hypostyle hall is transformed into a covered forecourt for the new cathedral space, enched within, complete with four façades addressing the horizontal mosque space, as if it were architecture in an urban setting.³⁶ The interior becomes a scenographic assemblage of elements sited within an isotropic field of stone.

One of the most interesting ways in which the unbecoming cohabitation has been reinterpreted is by reading the space through sound, bypassing altogether the much-criticised visual affront. It was frequent for eighteenth and nineteenth-century historians and critics, ingrained within the traditions discussed above, to fail to reconcile what they saw and what they heard. Antonio Ponz lauded the organs of Córdoba cathedral – and those in the rest of Spain – for the magnificent sound they produced and the ingenuity of their mechanism, yet deplored their visual presence in the interior; labelling many of the Baroque organ cases as 'despicable confused piles of timber' or 'precious diamonds [the musical component] mounted in deformed chunks of cork.'³⁷ He concluded his remarks on the instruments of Córdoba saying that it was best that the 'delight of the ear' was not ruined by the 'disorder and confusion' confronted by

the eye. What Ponz lays bare, in many regards, is at the crux of the 'unbecoming' debate presented here. Rafael Suárez and Juan José Sendra et al subverted the optic dominance of the cathedral-mosque and analysed its unique sonic qualities. They saw the collision and cohabitation of the three cathedral spaces – horizontal mosque, first cathedral and second cathedral – as frontiers that act as 'energetic elements which feed the tension provoked by their differences.'³⁸ The multitude of spaces 'coupled' in relationships with their neighbours create a rich network of resonant experiences with individual acoustic identities.³⁹

By critiquing the narrative that surrounds the spatial interventions I hope to have revealed that behind every story of unbecoming is generally a series of preconceptions and assumptions that form an *a priori* scaffold with which to reach a predetermined conclusion. An engagement with vilified spaces through alternate analysis, or simply with a set of fresh eyes or ears, can permit a reassessment of qualities and opportunities otherwise dismissed in the rhetorical storm.



Opposite

Figure 1: Key to the Cathedral-Mosque of Córdoba: 1. The altar and sanctuary. 2. The choir. 3. The old cathedral. 4. The Royal Chapel. 5. The mihrab. 6. Courtyard. Key prepared by author. The base plan titled 'Plan of the Mosque at Cordova, in its present state' is taken from James C. Murphy, *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain* (London: Cadell & Davies, 1815), plate II.

Above

Figure 2: The hypostyle hall of the Hispano-Umayyad mosque. ©Photo: L. Zamberlan. Reproduced with permission.



Opposite
Figure 3: The vault above the choir of the new cathedral. ©Photo: L. Zamberlan. Reproduced with permission.

Above
Figure 4: The sanctuary of the new cathedral. Note the mosque space visible through the bay arches. ©Photo: L. Zamberlan. Reproduced with permission.



Opposite

*Figure 5: The vaulting of the Royal Chapel.
©Photo: L. Zamberlan. Reproduced with permission.*

Above

*Figure 6: One of the interesting fusion points between the two fabrics.
©Photo: author.*

NOTES

All translations from original Spanish texts are by the author unless noted.

1. Pierre Jules Théophile Gautier, *Wanderings in Spain* (London: Ingram, Cooke and Co., 1853), 252.
2. William Stirling Maxwell, *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, vol. I (London: John Ollivier, 1848), 103-104.
3. David Ringrose, *Spain, Europe and the "Spanish Miracle," 1700-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 23-24.
4. *Ibid.*, 206.
5. Cammy Brothers, "The Renaissance Reception of the Alhambra: The Letters of Andrea Navagero and the Palace of Charles V," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994): 79, accessed August 6, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1523211>
6. Antonio Almagro Gorbea, "De mezquita a catedral. Una adaptación imposible," in *La piedra postrera. Simposium internacional sobre la Catedral de Sevilla en contexto del gótico final*, ed. Alfonso Jiménez Martín (Sevilla: Tvrris Fortíssima, 2007), 25. For a less architectural and more socio-political analysis see Julie A. Harris, "Mosque to Church Conversions in the Spanish Reconquest," *Medieval Encounters* 3, no. 2 (1997), accessed August 6, 2013, <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/10.1163/157006797x001116>
7. Almagro Gorbea, "De mezquita a catedral," and María José Lop Otín, "Los 'espacios' de la Catedral de Toledo y su funcionalidad," in *Sacra Loca Toletana: los espacios sagrados en Toledo*, eds. José Carlos Vizuete Mendoza and Julio Martín Sánchez (Cuenca: Ediciones Universidad de Castilla La Mancha, 2008), 25, 229.
8. Gorbea, "De mezquita a catedral", 15.
9. Stirling Maxwell, *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, 104.
10. Manfredo Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance: Princes, Cities Architects*, trans. Daniel Sherer (New Haven, Cambridge (MA): Yale University Press/Harvard GSD Publications, 2006), 183.
11. Heather Ecker, "The Great Mosque of Córdoba in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *Muqarnas*, 20 (2003), accessed August 6, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1523329>
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13. Stirling Maxwell, *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, 103.
14. Richard A. Fletcher, *Moorish Spain* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 3.
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