

The *Noticias de los arquitectos*: towards a ‘National’ definition of Spanish architecture¹

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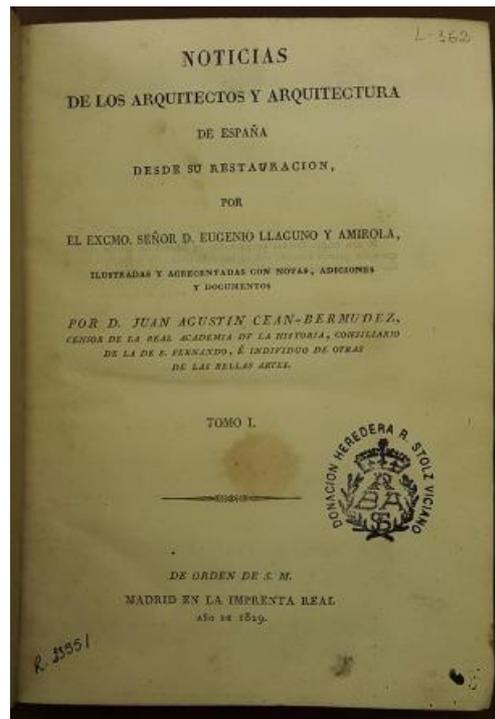


Figure 1 Eugenio Llaguno y Amirola and Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, *Noticias de los Arquitectos y Arquitectura de España desde su Restauración*, Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1829. RABASF. Biblioteca, sign. L-362.

The *Noticias de los arquitectos* is well known to Spanish architectural historians and has been cited often since it was first published. However, its double authorship and wider international context have largely been ignored, even though it was born in direct response to a book on architectural history that was written in Italy, and participates in the broader European architectural debates with its discussion of the origin of the Gothic. This last point is of particular importance, since Ceán Bermúdez used these debates to try to distance the Spanish architectural tradition from the broader European tradition in order to posit a ‘national’ definition of Spanish

¹ The ideas presented in this paper, developed for the Colloquium on the History of Architectural Historiography held in Trondheim in June 2015, evolved thanks to a visiting scholarship at Columbia University under the supervision of Barry Bergdoll, and became an essential part of my PhD dissertation. I owe a debt of gratitude first of all, to professor Bergdoll and to professor Branko Mitrovic, and also to professor Matilde Mateo and my advisor Fernando Marías, for their useful advice.

architecture. As all these points are interrelated, let us look first at the origin of the book. This had a noticeable impact on its content and will be dealt with in the second part of this essay.

An attempt to vindicate Spanish architecture

In 1768 the Italian theorist Francesco Milizia published his well-known *Vite de più celebri architetti d'ogni nazione e d'ogni tempo precedute da un saggio sopra l'architettura*.² This book represents an important achievement in the history of architecture and constitutes an essential source in the field. The declared objectivity of the Enlightenment notwithstanding, this work is known to be biased by the author's thoughts and prejudices. Similar to most other architectural theorists of the period, Milizia viewed the Baroque as 'the enemy of Classicism'.³

In his work, Milizia does not mention any Hispanic architect, with the exception of the ancient builder Julio Lacer.⁴ He does include the Monastery of San Lorenzo del Escorial, without ever having visited it, as he never travelled to Spain. He described it as 'amazing', though only regarding its size,⁵ whereas Spanish intellectuals described it as the Eighth Wonder of the World; furthermore, Milizia wrongly attributed the Escorial to Italian and French architects, saying the plans were by Vignola and its construction by Louis de Foix, and made only a cursory reference to Juan Bautista de Toledo and Juan de Herrera, the true architects of El Escorial.⁶ To be fair, Milizia was neither the first nor the last to make such an erroneous attribution, which seems to date back as far as sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁷

² Francesco Milizia, *Le vite de' più celebri architetti d'ogni nazione e d'ogni tempo precedute da un saggio sopra l'architettura*, Roma: Paolo Giunchi Komarek, 1768.

³ Such critical tone is also noticeable in his short reference to pre-Columbian architecture in America.

⁴ This architect lived in the times of Trajan and was the responsible for the Alcántara Bridge.

⁵ 'Strepitosa', Milizia, *Le vite*, 267.

⁶ Milizia, *Le vite*, 267.

⁷ The French president Jacques-Auguste de Thou (1553-1617) had ascribed it to Louis de Foix in his *Historiarum mei temporis* (1604-1621), probably following information given to him by the architect himself; Fernando Marías, 'El Escorial entre dos Academias: Juicios y Dibujos', *Reales Sitios*, 149, 2001, 2-19. This erroneous and biased attribution was nevertheless accepted by the eminent Claude Perrault, who included it in the preface of his edition of *Les dix livres d'architecture de Vitruve* (1673-1684). At the beginning of eighteenth century, the *Academie française* still proclaimed Foix as the author of the Escorial (and tried to connect it to the House of Bourbon, effectively distancing it from the Habsburg dynasty), as did Voltaire, who included it in his *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756). The attribution to Vignola probably goes back to Egnatio Danti in his biography of the architect published in 1583, and repeated by Filippo Bonanni in his *Numismata Pontificum Romanorum* at the end of the seventeenth century. See Fernando Marías, 'Cuando El Escorial era francés: problemas de interpretación y apropiación de la arquitectura española', *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte*, 17, 2005, 21-32 and Daniel Crespo Delgado, *Un viaje para la Ilustración: El viaje de España (1772-1794) de Antonio Ponz*, Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2012, 258-259. Although Milizia's main source seems to have been Bottari, he probably knew most of these books.



Figure 2 Juan Bautista de Toledo and Juan de Herrera, Monasterio de San Lorenzo del Escorial. Picture courtesy of Fernando Marias.

In order to understand how offensive this misattribution was to Spanish intellectuals, it is important to consider the context in which they lived. During the eighteenth century, Spain had fallen behind other European nations. This was the consequence of, on the one hand, its former glory days as an Empire and, on the other, the decadence begun during the second half of the seventeenth century, which, in the words of Jesús Astigarraga, brought 'an endless series of stagnant and retrogressive institutions, social values and public policies'.⁸ To some Enlightenment thinkers, Spain was one of the main negative models of the eighteenth century in Europe.⁹ For instance, Montesquieu identified Spain as a counter-example of the Enlightenment¹⁰ and Nicolas Masson de Morvilliers included a very critical article on Spain in the *Encyclopedie Méthodique*, leading to an intense controversy in which Llaguno himself participated.¹¹

⁸ Jesús Astigarraga, 'Introduction, Jesús Astigarraga (ed.), *The Spanish Enlightenment revisited*, Oxford: Oxford University, 2015, 3.

⁹ Astigarraga, 'Introduction', 3. These critiques also derived from the Black Legend; see Ricardo García Cárcel, *La leyenda negra: historia y opinión*, Madrid: Alianza, 1992.

¹⁰ Some scholars also noted some less frequent yet positive views of Spain expressed by European intellectuals, and the negative judgements of several travellers; García Cárcel, *La leyenda negra*, 130-134 and 158-162.

¹¹ Among the most revealing paragraphs, the following is perhaps the most striking: 'Today, Denmark, Sweden Russia, and even Poland, Germany, Italy, England and France, all these peoples, who are friends, enemies, rivals, burn with generous rivalry to advance the progress of the arts and sciences!. Each reflects on the achievements it must share with other nations; each, up to now, has made some useful discovery that has been to the benefit of humanity! But what does one owe to Spain? And for two centuries, for four, for ten, what has it done for Europe?' ('Aujourd'hui le Danemark, la Suède, la Russie, la Pologne même, l'Allemagne, l'Italie, l'Angleterre et la France, tous ces peuples ennemis, amis, rivaux, tous brûlent d'une généreuse

In this context, and following the change in ruling dynasty, the Spanish Enlightenment constituted an economic, political, scientific and cultural project structured to address the problem of the country's backwardness. As a result, there was an emphasis on cultural progress in the fields of literature, history, science, and architecture, considered 'the most useful and excellent' of the arts. Spanish decorative Baroque¹² was viewed as the culprit that led to the decadence of the arts, and was ultimately associated with the crisis of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹³ This led the major intellectuals of the period to appeal for the 'restoration' of classical architecture, and focus their gaze on the Monastery of San Lorenzo del Escorial. Built by Philip II, this palace was seen as the primary example of the prosperity of the sixteenth century and as evidence of a Spanish classical tradition. In this sense, it was viewed as reconciling 'National' architecture and the classical and Vitruvian tradition, as well as a counterpoint to Baroque architecture.¹⁴ Thus, it became a paradigm for theorists and architects, as the number of books dedicated to it makes clear.

When Milizia showed his *Vite* to his friend José Nicolás de Azara, the Spanish ambassador in Rome,¹⁵ shortly after its publication in 1768, Azara interpreted Milizia's

émulation pour le progrès des sciences et des arts! Chacun médite des conquêtes qu'il doit partager avec les autres nations; chacun d'eux, jusqu'ici, a fait quelque découverte utile, qui a tourné au profit de l'humanité! Mais que doit on à l'Espagne? Et depuis deux siècles, depuis quatre, depuis dix, qu'a-t-elle fait pour l'Europe?). Nicolas Masson de Movilliers, 'Espagne', *L'Encyclopédie méthodique ou par ordre de matières par une société de gens de lettres, de savants et d'artistes; précédée d'un Vocabulaire universel servant de Table pour tout l'Ouvrage, ornée des Portraits de MM. Diderot et d'Alembert, premiers Éditeurs de l'Encyclopédie*, Paris: Charles-Joseph Panckoucke, 1782, I, 554-568. Julián Marías, *La España posible en tiempos de Carlos III*, Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1963. Documents preserved at the Archivo Histórico Nacional of Madrid show the Llaguno's involvement in this debate: AHN, Estado leg. 2.992.

¹² In Enlightenment Spain, this decorative Baroque was known as 'churrigueresco'. This term derives from the surname of the Churriguera family of architects, whose members, José Simón and his sons José Benito, Joaquín and Alberto, were famous for their ornate façades and altarpieces, viewed as excessively so during the period. It was also applied to other architects such as Narciso Tomé or Pedro de Ribera. They were all seen as part of a cult, the 'secta churrigueresca' and slated as 'jerigoncistas' – i.e., 'jibber-jabberists', or those who speak gibberish. However, this tendency coexisted with a more classical option clearly noticeable in structural elements of some of the main Baroque buildings. See Fernando Marías, 'En torno al problema del barroco en la arquitectura española', *Studi in onore di Giulio Carlo Argan*, Rome: Multigrafica Editrice, 1984, II, 83-97.

¹³ Several Royal Academies, such as the Real Academia Española and the one of Bellas Artes de San Fernando, were founded to support, but more importantly to control, culture. The Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando created a rigid system to control artistic and architectural production. The Comisión de Arquitectura, for instance, was in charge of overseeing all public works; Carlos Sambricio, *La arquitectura española de la Ilustración*, Madrid: Consejo Superior de los Colegios de Arquitectos de España, Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local, 1986.

¹⁴ Delfín Rodríguez Ruiz, 'La sombra de un edificio. El Escorial en la cultura arquitectónica española durante la época de los primeros borbones (1700-1770)', *Quintana*, 2, 2003, 59; Daniel Crespo Delgado, *Un viaje para la Ilustración*, 243-271.

¹⁵ José Nicolás de Azara worked at the Secretaría de Estado as an Oficial beginning in 1760. In 1766 he moved to Rome as an Agente de Preces and was named ambassador in 1784. He later

omission of Spanish architects and his negative opinions of El Escorial almost as an affront. He wrote immediately to his closest friend in Madrid, the scholar and politician Eugenio Llaguno,¹⁶ to whom he sent three copies of the book, asking him for information on Spanish architects that he could give to Milizia, who was preparing the third edition of his work. Llaguno's letters to Azara are quite eloquent, as they express not only his annoyance but also his criticism that Milizia had based his work on information taken from scattered materials and barely made any new contributions.¹⁷ However, Azara did acknowledge that Spain lacked a literature on art in any way comparable to that existing in other European countries. This was a frequent complaint among Spanish intellectuals of the period, who found it essential to have a historiography that was equal to Spain's artistic – i.e., architectural – heritage, as a means to defend this heritage both in Spain and outside of borders, and as a way to contribute to the instruction of the contemporary architects, just as the prints of El Escorial by Juan de Herrera did.¹⁸

In addition, these letters show the difficulties Llaguno faced in his work as well as some frictions that arose between the two friends. Azara seems to have pressed

was sent to Paris as Spanish ambassador, resigning his post in 1799 only to resume it by express desire of Napoleon. He was known throughout his life for his patronage of the arts, and edited the writings of Anton Raphael Mengs. Javier Jordán de Urríes, 'El diplomático José Nicolás de Azara, protector de las bellas artes y las letras', *Boletín del Museo e Instituto Camón Aznar*, 81, 2000, 61-88; María Dolores Gimeno Puyol (ed.), *José Nicolás de Azara. Epistolario (1784-1804)*, Madrid: Castalia, 2010.

¹⁶ Born into a Basque family of architects and politicians, Eugenio Llaguno moved to the Court in Madrid during the 1740s where he held the positions of *Primer Oficial de la Secretaría de Estado* and minister of Grace and Justice. He was also a member of the *Academia de la Historia* and *Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando* and participated actively in the artistic debates of the time. In his position at court, he would accompany the royal family in their stays at different palaces and often supervised architectural works. Deeply concerned about the history of Spanish culture, he edited literature, wrote historical works, edited medieval chronicles and translated some French works into Spanish, such as Racine's *Athalie* (Madrid, 1754), and a treatise on the education of children. Finally, he collaborated with Azara on several projects, such as the afore mentioned edition of Mengs's works. On Llaguno, see Ricardo de Apráiz, 'El ilustre alavés D. Eugenio de Llaguno y Amírola. Su vida, su obra, sus relaciones con la Real Academia de la Historia y con la Real Sociedad Vascongada de amigos del País', *Boletín de la Real Sociedad Vascongada de Amigos del País*, V, 1948, pp. 53-95; Emilio Palacios Fernández, 'Llaguno y Amírola, o la Ilustración como labor de Estado', *Boletín de la Real Sociedad Bascongada de Amigos del País*, San Sebastián, XL, cuadernos 1º y 2º, 1984, 203-225; Alberto Angulo Morales, *Eugenio de Llaguno y Amírola (1724-1799), una figura emblemática en la difusión y patrocinio de lo vasco y la cultura ilustrada*. Vitoria: Diputación Foral de Álava, 1994 and Juan Luis Blanco Mozo, *Orígenes y desarrollo de la Ilustración vasca en Madrid*, Madrid: Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País, 2011, 219-223.

¹⁷ These letters were published by Xavier de Salas Bosch, 'Cuatro cartas de Azara a Llaguno y una respuesta de éste', *Revista de Ideas Estéticas*, IV: 13, 1946, 99-104.

¹⁸ Juan de Herrera, *Sumario y Breve Declaracion delos diseños y estampas de la Fabrica de San Lorenzo el Real del Escorial*, Madrid: Viuda de Alonso Gómez, 1585. Herrera presented himself as the sole architect of the building, omitting the name of Juan Bautista de Toledo; Catherine Wilkinson, *Juan de Herrera: architect to Philip II of Spain*, New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1993, 114-116.

Llaguno and, after a first delivery, asked him for a more exhaustive text. Meanwhile, Llaguno complained about Milizia's method and explained that what he must do required 'days, trips, to be an expert and to have good taste'.¹⁹ Llaguno's political and intellectual career was undoubtedly a big advantage, as he could easily access major libraries and documents preserved in different archives and benefit from the assistance of other intellectuals.²⁰

As a result, the third edition of Milizia's *Vite*, entitled *Memorie degli architetti antichi e moderni*, published in Parma in 1781, was dedicated to Azara and his 'select library', cited by Milizia as the source for the additions to this new edition. In addition to an important number of biographies of Spanish architects, it included a thorough revision of his earlier text on El Escorial.²¹ Not only did he withdraw his earlier false attribution and assign the building to Juan Bautista de Toledo, he showed much greater interest in it, as well as a certain disdain for those 'fables' that he himself had once spread.²²

¹⁹ Xavier de Salas, 'Cuatro cartas de Azara a Llaguno', 102.

²⁰ Among them, the priest, intellectual and traveller Antonio Ponz stands out. He sent Llaguno a great number of notes on the Spanish heritage he had gathered for his *Viage de España, o Cartas en que se da noticia de las cosas mas apreciables y dignas de saberse, que hay en ella*, Madrid: Joachin Ibarra, 1772-1794. See Daniel Crespo Delgado, *Un viaje para la Ilustración*.

²¹ Francesco Milizia, *Memorie degli architetti*, I, 246-247.

²² Llaguno's notes were also included in the dictionary of architects contained in the manuscripts *Apuntamientos por orden alfabético* by the Mexican Jesuit Pedro José Márquez. Working mainly in Rome, Márquez acknowledged having taken information from Milizia, which could only have come from Llaguno; Pedro José Márquez, *Apuntamientos por orden alfabético pertenecientes a la Arquitectura donde se exponen varias doctrinas de M. Vitruvio Polion*. There are three known copies of this manuscript: one at the Biblioteca Cervantina of the ITESM in Monterrey, México (Ms. 108 and 109), a second at the Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de México de la Compañía de Jesús (Sección VIII, Colocación: Márquez) and a third in the Biblioteca Nacional de España (MSS/2456-59). Delfín Rodríguez discovered the copy preserved at the BNE, and transcribed it in his PhD dissertation; Delfín Rodríguez, *Pedro José Márquez y el debate arquitectónico a finales del siglo XVIII. Estudio de un tratado inédito*, PhD diss., Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 1985. On the three versions, see Hilda Julieta Valdés, *Vitruvio en la obra arqueológica inédita del jesuita mexicano Pedro José Márquez (1741-1820). Un estudio de fuentes*, PhD diss., Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2012, 134-154.



Figure 3 Pablo Bausac Ávila, *Retrato de don Eugenio Llaguno y Amírola* (ca. 1864). Oil on canvas, 119 x 85,5 cm. Museo de Bellas Artes de Álava.

From Llaguno to Ceán Bermúdez

After Llaguno sent his manuscript to Milizia, the next reference we have to this work comes from a major figure of the Spanish Enlightenment, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos,²³ in 1788. Jovellanos, who was also interested in writing a history of architecture, mentioned in his praise of the architect Ventura Rodríguez how anxious he was to see the publication of Llaguno's work.²⁴ Unfortunately, when its 'wise and

²³ The most current biography of Jovellanos to deal with his artistic commitment is Daniel Crespo Delgado and Joan Domenge i Mesquida, *Memorias histórico-artísticas de arquitectura (1805-1808)*, Madrid: 2013, 13-55.

²⁴ 'The public will someday have much more than could be expected regarding this issue and the rest that involves our architecture in the periods of its restoration and decadence, when the wise and modest author of the work entitled *Noticias de los arquitectos y arquitectura en España*

modest author' – as Jovellanos referred to Llaguno – passed away in 1799, it had not been published yet, probably due to Llaguno's intense political and cultural activities, which kept him from concluding several projects.

The manuscript was then given to Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez,²⁵ the so-called 'father' of the Spanish art historiography, for his dictionary of Spanish painters and sculptors.²⁶ Llaguno offered Ceán Bermúdez the manuscript in 1798 so he could add these architects to his *Diccionario*, an idea possibly shared by Jovellanos. In any case, as Ceán would explain in the foreword to his book, he did not take Llaguno up on his offer, mainly because he thought that text deserved an independent edition, but also because it was organized chronologically rather than alphabetically, and thus out of step with his *Diccionario*.

Though we cannot know for sure how far Llaguno had progressed on his manuscript for the *Noticias de los Arquitectos* while he was working with Milizia, it seems likely that the text that Ceán Bermúdez received was very similar to the one Llaguno had delivered to Milizia. As early as 1770, the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando considered using Llaguno's manuscript as a preface to a major work it was preparing on the Hispano-Arabic heritage in Córdoba and Granada which, for reasons unknown, never came to fruition.²⁷

desde su restauración showed them the precious treasure it encloses'. ('El público tendrá algún día acerca de este punto y de los demás relativos á nuestra arquitectura en las épocas de su restauración y decadencia mucho más de lo que puede esperar, quando el sabio y modesto autor de la obra intitulada: *Noticias de los arquitectos y arquitectura en España desde su restauración*, le haga participante del riquísimo tesoro que encierra'). Melchor Gaspar de Jovellanos, *Elogio de D. Ventura Rodríguez leído en la Real Sociedad de Madrid*, Madrid: Imprenta de la viuda de Ibarra, 1790, 160-161.

²⁵ Born 25 years later than Llaguno, Ceán had a completely different profile. He lived most of his life in the shadow of his protector, Melchor Gaspar de Jovellanos, and his career depended entirely on Jovellanos' luck and misadventures. Although he worked in several institutions, unlike Llaguno, he was mainly interested in the arts, as his many books and unpublished manuscripts show. José Clissón Aldama, *Juan Agustín Ceán-Bermúdez, escritor y crítico de Bellas Artes*, Oviedo: Instituto de Estudios Asturianos, 1982; Elena Santiago Páez (ed.), *Ceán Bermúdez, historiador del arte y coleccionista ilustrado*, exh. cat., Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional de España, forthcoming (May 2016).

²⁶ Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, *Diccionario histórico de los mas ilustres profesores de las bellas artes en España*, Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, 1800.

²⁷ 'To include in this work a historiographical catalogue of the architects who flourished in Spain by Eugenio Llaguno, written with acumen, good sense and diligence (...) this catalogue is at this moment in my possession' ('Y que también se imprima con esta obra un catálogo historiado de los Arquitectos que han florecido en España con mucha crítica, juicio y diligencia por D. Eugenio Llaguno, (...) cuyo Catálogo está actualmente en mi poder'). *Actas*, Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Juntas Particulares, 1770-1775, 3/122. Delfín Rodríguez and Carlos Sambricio, 'El Conde de Aranda y la arquitectura española de la Ilustración', *El Conde de Aranda*, Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1998, 149-171. Ms. HC 380/666 at the Hispanic Society of America is a non-autograph manuscript of Llaguno's text. Its advanced stage of composition suggests that it was written before the publication of the third edition of Milizia's work and it could correspond to the copy which belonged to the Academy as of 1770; identified by Fernando Marías, 'Cuando el Escorial era Francés', 32.



Figure 4 Francisco de Goya, *Retrato de Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez*, 1783-85. Oil on canvas, 84 x 62 cm. Private collection.

Although Ceán planned to work on Llaguno's manuscript with the help of Jovellanos for around a year, difficulties in organizing such a large and unwieldy document and, more importantly, the political instability in Spain at the turn of the century complicated matters. Around 1801 Ceán was sent into exile in Seville, while Jovellanos was imprisoned in Bellver Castle in Palma de Mallorca. In Seville, Ceán started to edit the manuscript and, instead of one year as he had planned, it took him almost thirty. In addition to the immense effort of reorganizing the text he had inherited, Ceán added a great deal of information that had been gathered by him and by a well-structured net of correspondents who, like Jovellanos, sent him notes from all over the country.

The Napoleonic invasion and ensuing War of Independence (1808-14) only made matters worse.²⁸ In his draft of the foreword to the *Noticias*, preserved at the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid (significantly shortened in the print

²⁸ The war against the French had a notable impact on the Spanish population and mentality, and confronted the supporters of the old regime and those on the side of the French who later called for a liberal State; José Álvarez Junco, *Spanish identity in the age of nations*, Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2011.

version),²⁹ Ceán complained about the 'unfair' treatment he suffered during that time, and as a result he seems to have developed conservative and anti-French attitudes which are reflected in his written works. The *Noticias de los arquitectos y arquitectura de España desde su Restauración* was published in four volumes between September and December of 1829; sadly, Ceán passed away before he could see the fourth volume printed.

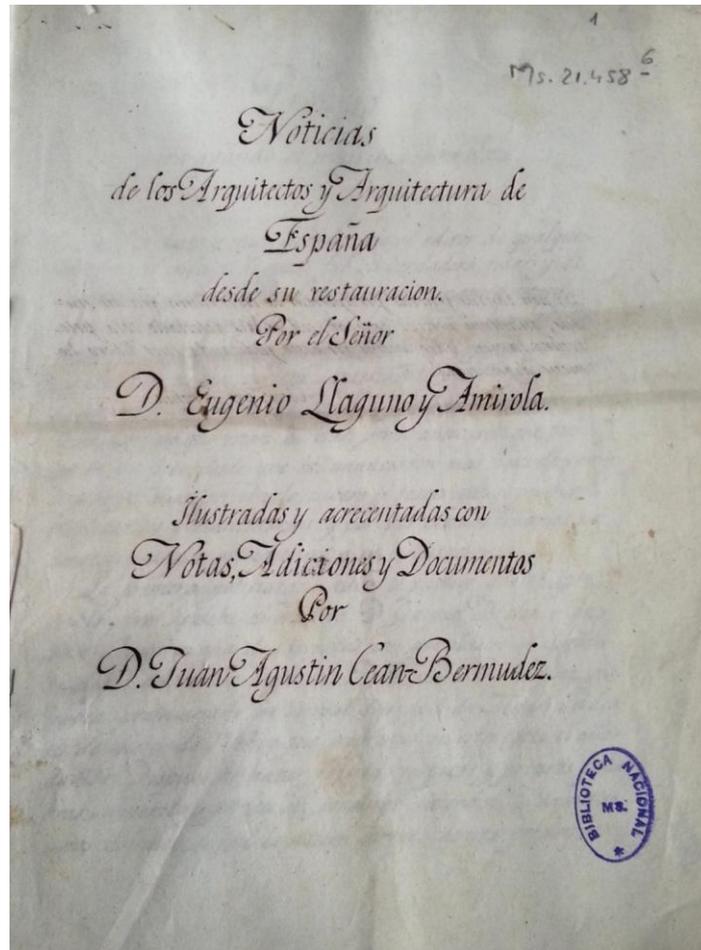


Figure 5 Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, *Noticias de los arquitectos y arquitectura de España desde su Restauración* (draft of the introduction and foreword). Manuscript, Biblioteca Nacional de España (MSS/21458/6).

The reflection of a double authorship

Llaguno organised his text into three sections. The first one deals with the architecture of the early Reconquest, from the year 720 to the eleventh century, or what is known today as pre-Romanesque or Asturian art (though other territories are mentioned as well). The second section covers the period from the twelfth century to the first decades of the sixteenth century, and the third one reaches into the eighteenth century. The structure of the text follows the evolutionary model of Vasari's *Vite*, as indicated

²⁹ Biblioteca Nacional de España, Ms. 21458/6.

by the word 'restoration' in the title.³⁰ Compared to the first and second sections, the much longer length of the third and last section is noticeable. This imbalance can also be explained by the lack of information available to the authors on the periods covered in sections one and two and, more generally, to their own particular interests. What is more striking is the manner in which both authors draw a contrast between the later styles. Llaguno and Ceán considered the Baroque as responsible for the 'corruption' of architecture; as a result, they developed a discourse based on the contrast between restoration and decadence which was not uncommon at the time.³¹

Céan extended the period covered in the last section from 1735 to 1825 to include 'contemporary' architects. He also added a large number of footnotes, addenda to each volume, as well as chronological and geographical indexes. Lastly, he wrote a historical discourse on architecture, from its very beginnings to the eighteenth century, as an introduction or, as he called it, a 'preliminary discourse'. This introduction is divided into ten periods or 'ages', beginning with the origins of architecture, whereas Llaguno had taken the year 729 as his starting point. This introduction reveals Ceán's thoughts and opinions without the restrictions he faced in the main text, originally written by Llaguno.³²

The first five periods included by Ceán follow the traditional conception of the development of architecture, from its Biblical origins to the Roman period. Classical Antiquity and Greek art in particular was, for Ceán and his contemporaries, the highpoint of architecture. They emphasised among other qualities its decorative perfection, based on simplicity. In this regard, Roman architecture, heir to Greek architecture, constituted the most glorious moment in the Iberian Peninsula, which Ceán attributed to the capacity of the Spanish to equalize their predecessors in mastery and perfection.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the fall of the Roman Empire was viewed as a period of ruin and underdevelopment, blamed on the warring nature of the Goths, which brought on the extinction of classical forms and initiated a period of total decline in the arts. Ceán was no exception and, although he does mention some examples, he makes clear his feelings that lack of skill characterised the architecture of this period.³³

³⁰ On the Vasarian structure see Zygmunt Wazbinski, 'L'idée de l'histoire dans la première et la seconde édition des Vies de Vasari', *Il Vasari storiografo e artista*, Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1976, 1-25.

³¹ Ignacio Henares Cuéllar, *La teoría de las artes plásticas en España en la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII*, Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1977, 13.

³² This preliminary discourse is preserved together with the draft of the foreword.

³³ Although in his draft Ceán distinguished between 'godos católicos' and 'godos arrianos', he referred to both in the same negative terms, describing their architecture as 'without taste or art'. Therefore, he did not share the opinion of those who viewed the Goths in a positive light, because they identified with their gothic ancestry, an attitude that, as Matilde Mateo emphasized, had no parallel in other European countries. Wayne Dynes, 'Concept of Gothic', *Dictionary of the History of Ideas, Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas*, New York: Philip P. Wiener, 1973, II, 368-370; Ramón Menéndez Pidal, *Los Godos y la epopeya española*, Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 55-56. Matilde Mateo, *Medieval art in the Neoclassical age of Spain. Sources and ideas of Spanish criticism of Medieval art (1759-1808)*, MA diss., University of Essex, 2003, 42-43.

Completely different was Ceán's attitude towards Hispano-Muslim architecture.³⁴ In this regard, he differed from his contemporaries, including Llaguno, who made no reference to this architecture. In fact, Ceán had already described Hispano-Muslim architecture in his *Descripción artística de la Catedral de Sevilla*.³⁵ What's more, he included several Arabic inscriptions and a glossary of Spanish architectural terms of Arabic origin in the appendix to the first volume of the *Noticias*.³⁶

Ceán's opinion of Muslim forms was certainly contradictory. He referred to Hispano-Muslim architecture as a 'new genre of architecture' that combined Greek and Egyptian forms, though adorned with a 'costume' of random decorations that bore no relation to the Greek tradition. These decorations were, to his mind, responsible for the 'peculiar' character of this architecture, which he described as 'curious'.³⁷ Moreover, his odd theories betray his lack of knowledge of Hispano-Muslim architecture. For instance, he thought that the horseshoe arch was based on how Muslims saw the Moon; he explained that the shortage of windows was due to their strict treatment of wives and concubines, and he argued that the use of primarily one floor was because they preferred not to use stairs, or wished to remain closer to the baths. He defined this architecture more generally as 'rough and crude in houses and rooms, firm and durable in aqueducts and cisterns, heavy and strong in castles and watchtowers and rich and sumptuous in temples and mosques'.³⁸ So, even though his concept of 'good architecture' kept him from fully understanding Arabic forms, Ceán did show some interest in it, considering the various examples he included in his text.

Llaguno understood the architecture of the Pre-Romanesque kingdoms as a return to the Roman tradition after centuries of 'darkness'. This may explain why he started his text with this period instead of a previous one, and tried to establish a discursive thread in which Goth and Arab forms did not belong. Though Ceán may have been more accurate, he had a lesser appreciation for this architecture than Llaguno who, basing his information on earlier chronicles, at least admired its antiquity, firmness and strength. As for Romanesque architecture, which had not reached its modern definition³⁹ and was included either in the first stage or in the Gothic period, Llaguno showed moderate admiration, whereas Ceán preferred to contrast it with the Gothic architecture, which developed in Spain in all its splendour in the thirteenth century. Llaguno linked the Gothic in Spain to French origins and

³⁴ Although here the term 'Hispano-Muslim' is used, it is important to note that Ceán referred to it as the architecture of the Arabs (árabes) or Moors (moros). He also applied most of its characteristics to the Mozarabic architecture (cristianos mozárabes).

³⁵ Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, *Descripción artística de la Catedral de Sevilla*, Madrid: Viuda de Hidalgo y Sobrino, 1804.

³⁶ Llaguno and Ceán, *Noticias de los arquitectos*, I, 238-251. These had been gathered by his friend José Cornide, also a member of the Academy of History.

³⁷ Ceán, *Descripción artística*, 4-5.

³⁸ 'Tosca y grosera en las casas y comunes habitaciones, firme y duradera en los acueductos y aljibes, pesada y robusta en los castillos y atalayas, rica y ostentosa en los templos o mezquitas'. Llaguno and Ceán, *Noticias de los arquitectos*, XXV. He referred to it in similar terms in his *Descripción artística de la Catedral de Sevilla*. Ceán, *Descripción artística*, 5.

³⁹ Nieves Panadero Peropadre, 'La definición del estilo románico en la historiografía española del Romanticismo', *Anales de historia del arte*, 7, 1997, 245-256.

related it to French literary and religious culture, but Ceán at first limited these origins in the main text of the *Noticias*, stating only that 'The Gothic-Germanic architecture was undoubtedly introduced in Spain through the Pyrenees'.⁴⁰ However, in his introduction to the *Noticias*, obviously written at a later date, Ceán changed his discourse by explaining that Gothic architecture 'was brought from Palestine and Syria by the Crusaders [...] it would be more accurate to call it *ultramarina* architecture'.⁴¹ The *ultramarino* or 'overseas' origin of Gothic architecture had been previously suggested by Jovellanos, who based his ideas on the orientalist theories of that style, which were widespread during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England and France.⁴²

To Ceán, therefore, the Gothic would have appeared at the same time throughout Europe. To demonstrate its origins, he, for example, likened the form of Gothic vaults to the palm trees of Palestine. Ultimately he denied the European origin of Gothic architecture and, in particular, the dependence of Spanish architecture on French forms.⁴³ Indeed, regarding Spanish structures, he said that they had nothing to envy the European ones. Throughout Europe, as Jacques Ignace Hittorff explained at

⁴⁰ 'No hay duda de que por los Pirineos entró en España la arquitectura gótico-germánica', Llaguno and Ceán, *Noticias de los arquitectos*, I, 26, n. 2.

⁴¹ 'Trajéronla de la Palestina y de la Siria los Cruzados de la Tierra Santa [...] pudiera llamarse con más propiedad arquitectura ultramarina'. Llaguno and Ceán, *Noticias de los arquitectos*, I, XXXI.

⁴² While French authors such as Fénelon and Blondel used this theory to emphasize the 'barbaric' character of this architecture, in England, other authors such as Evelyn and especially Wren had a slightly higher regard for it. In fact, Wren related it to the Crusades. Nieves Panadero Peropadre, 'Teorías sobre el origen de la arquitectura gótica en la historiografía ilustrada y romántica española', *Anales de Historia del Arte*, 4, 1993-1994, 203-205. On the other hand, Matilde Mateo pointed out that Jovellanos's positive view of the Middle Ages and the Crusades as agents of progress was borrowed from the influential work by the Scottish historian William Robertson, *A View of the State of Society in the Middle Ages*, published as the introductory chapter to his *History of the reign of the Emperor Charles V*, London: W. Straham, 1769. In his *Carta de philo ultramarino sobre la arquitectura inglesa y la llamada gótica*, Jovellanos proposed the term *ultramarina* to designate Gothic architecture based on a Spanish medieval chronicle of the Crusades compiled by order of Alfonso X, which referred to the Crusades as the *Guerra de Ultramar*. Mateo-Sevilla, *Medieval art in the Neoclassical age*, 44-45. In 1804 Ceán Bermúdez included the Orientalist theory of the origins of Gothic in his *Descripción histórica de la Catedral de Sevilla*, though he did not yet use the term *ultramarina*. Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, *Descripción artística del Hospital de la Sangre de Sevilla*, Valencia: Benito Monfort, 1804. In his *Disertacion sobre el estilo que llaman gótico en las obras de arquitectura* (1787) Isidoro Bosarte also ascribed to the Oriental origins of Gothic, but not to its relation with the Crusades. This text is included in Isidoro de Bosarte, *Gabinete de lectura española, ó Coleccion de muchos papeles curiosos de escritores antiguos y modernos de la nacion*, Madrid: viuda de Ibarra, Hijos y Compañía, 1798, 3. On the different theories of the origins of Gothic in France, England and Germany the best source is still Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: literary sources and interpretations through eight centuries*, New Jersey: Princeton, 1960. On the architecture of the Crusaders see Harry W. Hazard, *A History of the Crusades: The Art and Architecture of the Crusader States*, Madison: the University of Wisconsin Press, 1977, IV and Jaroslav Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land*, Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

⁴³ Marías, 'Cuando el Escorial era francés', 30.

the time, the learned of every nation were discussing the origin of the Gothic to claim it as their 'national glory'.⁴⁴ So, even though Spain could not claim it as its own, the issue was used on a smaller scale to heighten its own cultural prestige.

Llaguno and Ceán's views of Gothic architecture aside, the 'restoration' of classical architecture did not take place until the Renaissance. To Llaguno, Florence of the fifteenth century was the 'Athens of these last centuries'. However, the particularly long lifespan of gothic forms in Spain, where they were preferred by Queen Isabella of Castile, caused the delay in the introduction of the Renaissance. Llaguno explained this delay, among other things, as a consequence of the lack of study of the Roman ruins. Even though both authors acknowledge some previous architects,⁴⁵ the true restoration of architecture came only for them with the building of the Monastery of El Escorial. Llaguno dedicated several pages to defending its authorship and Ceán went even further in that sense and developed the so-called myth of Juan de Herrera. This architect, who was responsible for the completion of the monastery, was already seen at the end of the eighteenth century as a kind of hero of the arts in Spain. However, Ceán took this cause even further and, by consecrating a brief and independent work to Herrera in which he emphasised his qualities as an architect and mathematician and as a soldier in the army of Phillip II, he turned Herrera into a sort of national hero. Perhaps echoing his own dismay at the lack of support he had received, Ceán deploras King Philip II for his insufficient recognition of such a talented architect, who was so 'honestly dedicated to the cultivation of the arts'.⁴⁶ Secondly, as a way of defending Herrera's authorship of the Escorial, he attacked Italians and especially the French. Ceán argued that even though they had produced exceptional artists, the Italians were too arrogant in this regard, while the French never had a single reason to believe they were among the best:

[El Escorial is] One of the most sumptuous buildings in its shape, its gravity and simplicity, thanks to its magnificence, its construction and the ensemble and harmony of its different parts. This is well known by foreigners and that is why Italians try to steal the glory of its invention, pretentious of being the only ones in the fine arts. However it is even more astonishing that the French try to do as well, for they never had a single reason for it.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ 'Aujourd'hui les savans de toutes les nations discutent le lieu de son origine pour y trouver un titre de gloire nationale', Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, *Architecture moderne de la Sicile, ou Recueil des plus beaux monumens religieux et de édifices publics et particuliers les plus remarquables*, Paris: Paul Renouard, 1826-35, 2.

⁴⁵ Llaguno, who followed a more traditional paradigm, mentioned Alonso de Covarrubias and Diego de Siloe, whereas Ceán acknowledged Enrique Egas the younger and Pedro Machuca for Ceán,

⁴⁶ This 'insufficient' recognition was not true at all. Catherine Wilkinson, *Juan de Herrera: architect to Philip II of Spain*, New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993.

⁴⁷ 'Uno de los más suntuosos edificios del mundo, por su forma, por su gravedad y sencillez, por su magnificencia, por su construcción y por el conjunto, propiedad y armonía de las diferentes partes que le componen. Bien lo conocen los extranjeros, y por esto pretenden los italianos la gloria de su invencion, presuntuosos de ser los únicos en las nobles arte; pero aún es más extraño que los franceses lo intenten, no habiendo tenido jamás motivo para ello, ni para

The speech Ceán pronounced when he presented this biography, together with the introduction to the *Noticias*, help us to understand his exasperation. In both works, he bewails the sufferings he went through during the first decades of the nineteenth century, which he blames on Napoleonic France.

Conclusions

Céan's anti-French sentiments serve to explain his whole architectural discourse.⁴⁸ He clearly wanted to distance the Spanish architectural tradition from the wider European tradition in order to develop a national definition of the Spanish architecture. He was not only one of the first to include Hispano-Muslim architecture in the Spanish tradition, he also used the *ultramarina* theory of the Gothic to deny that Spanish Gothic was a 'copy' of its French counterpart. In contrast, Llaguno, due to his background and death at the end of the eighteenth century (i.e., before the French invasion) was conscious of Spain's delay in comparison to the rest of Europe, but held the French monarchy, and by extension its culture, as a role model. In addition, he attributed greater importance to the Roman tradition in Spanish architecture, and did not include Hispano-Muslim architecture, preferring instead to highlight the pre-Romanesque period.

The Napoleonic invasion was a watershed for Spanish society that brought crisis but also the beginning of Modernity. This ideological conflict is clearly present in the *Noticias* and is essential to our understanding of Spanish architectural history. The *Noticias* has been used as an important source of information for over two centuries, but it is necessary to bear in mind the generational gap between its authors, who wrote at completely different moments for Spain, and the context of European relations. Consequently, the *Noticias de los arquitectos* must be seen to reflect thought at two different moments and became part of the discussion on architecture. As Giuseppe Ricuperati underlined, 'the past [in this case, the architectural past] is always a space where it is possible to conduct the ideological wars of the present'.⁴⁹

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tal presunción'. Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, *Vida de Juan de Herrera*, Madrid, 1818. The draft of this work is at the Real Academia de la Historia (11/8.234), while the Biblioteca Nacional de España preserves a reduced version of it MSS/21.454/2.

⁴⁸ Regardless of the authenticity of these feelings, since it seems Ceán was accused of collaboration with the French government. Daniel Crespo Delgado, "Sin Título" in Elena Santiago Páez (ed.), *Céan Bermúdez, historiador del arte y coleccionista ilustrado*, forthcoming (May 2016).

⁴⁹ 'Le passé est toujours un espace dans lequel il est possible de conduire les guerres idéologiques du présent', Giuseppe Ricuperati [ed.], *Historiographie et usages des Lumières*, Berlin: Verlag, 2002, X.

Miriam Cera

The *Noticias de los arquitectos*: towards a 'National'
definition of Spanish architecture

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