The British discovery of Spanish Gothic architecture

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During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was not uncommon for British artists and architects to travel to France and Italy; very few, however, ventured into Spain, which was considered a decadent and dangerous country.\(^1\) In contrast, the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- centuries witnessed a growing number of British travellers to Spain. Spain was, of course, not part of the British colonial agenda, which, according to Edward Said, had driven British scholars' attention to the lands of Islam from the eighteenth-century onwards.\(^2\) The increase of British interest in Spain was partly due to the Peninsular War (1808-1814), in which British and Spanish soldiers joined forces against Napoleon's occupying army.\(^3\) The British intellectual interest in Spain was tainted by the increasing Romantic fascination with the 'exotic' that swept across Europe in the early nineteenth-century; in this scenario, many were attracted by the monumental heritage of al-Andalus (the Spanish territories under Islam, 711-1492). Spain with its remarkable Islamic artistic heritage, especially in Granada, Cordoba, and Seville, became attractive as the most accessible place for British travellers to get a flavour of the so-called 'Orient'.\(^4\)

Although during most of the nineteenth-century, the British fascination for the Alhambra and an idealised Islamic Spain continued, there also arose a growing curiosity for the buildings erected in territories under the gradually expanding Christian rule. This article will focus on the gradual discovery of Spanish Romanesque and Gothic architecture by British architects and architectural historians in the nineteenth century. It will also explore their attitude towards this architecture, as expressed in the books published on the topic.

I am very grateful to Claudia Hopkins for her invaluable and meticulous comments on an earlier version of this article.


Searching for the origins of Gothic architecture

During the second half of the eighteenth-century, architects and antiquarians became increasingly interested in medieval architecture. Gothic novels, as well as Gothicising garden follies and buildings, appeared in Britain around the time when some British architects and antiquarians were travelling to the continent to study its Gothic architecture. Horace Walpole erected his medievalising residence Strawberry Hill between 1749 and 1776, while the art collector William Thomas Beckford built his residence Fonthill Abbey between 1796 and 1813 after travelling through Spain and Portugal. Notably Fonthill Abbey partly followed the Gothic buildings Beckford had studied in Portugal. The interest in Spanish medieval architecture by many travellers and architects focussed on both Gothic and Islamic architecture. Perhaps the first person to prompt British curiosity for Spanish Islamic and Gothic art was Johann Heinrich Müntz, a Swiss artist who established himself in England as a protégé of Horace Walpole. Before arriving in London in 1755, Müntz travelled through southern Europe and visited Spain in 1748. While there, according to his account, he sketched and studied ‘some remarkable fine and curious Remains of Moresque Fabrics, still existing in the kingdoms of Murcia, Valentià, and the City of Saragossa in Spain.’ According to Richard Gough, Müntz intended to publish these drawings, though this never happened. In his 1780 British Topography, he provided a brief account of the scarce knowledge of Spanish Islamic architecture at the time:

Mr Muntz proposed to publish a course of Gothic architecture, demonstrating its fundamental principles and rules, exemplified in designs and measures taken from the finest fabrics and monuments here and abroad, in upwards of sixty plates. It was to have consisted of four parts. The first containing the theory of this style. (...) The 3d part was to have exhibited designs of some beautiful and curious remains of Moresque buildings in Spain, first drawn by the author in 1748.

The combined interest in ‘Moresque’ and ‘Gothic’ architecture is not entirely surprising: as noted by Matilde Mateo, Sir Christopher Wren’s Parentelia, published posthumously in 1750, and Diderot’s Encyclopédie (1751), spread the theory that

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8 Richard Gough, *British topography or an historical account of what has been done for illustrating the topographical antiquities of Great Britain and Ireland, volume 1*, London: T. Payne and Son, 1780, xxiv
the Gothic derived from the ‘Saracenic’. These two elements often intermingled in British writing about Iberian architecture. After a visit in 1793, Beckford, for example, described the fifteenth-century mausoleum at the monastery of Batalha in Portugal as a mixture of ‘Saxon crincklings and crancklings [...] and the Moorish horse-shoe-like deviation from beautiful curves’. Notably, Beckford’s most successful book, *Vathek*, ingeniously combined elements of the Gothic novel with an ‘oriental’ setting and ‘oriental characters. Tonia Raquejo, Juan Calatrava, and Matilde Mateo have demonstrated that this idea, far from unique, became common in British intellectual circles in the second half of the eighteenth-century; and that some writers even claimed that Gothic architecture derived directly from the Islamic architecture in Spain.

Following Müntz’s arrival in Britain, William Chambers started the design of the Alhambra pavilion at Kew Gardens in 1758. The pavilion had been commissioned by the Prince of Wales as part of an eclectic garden design, which also included other oriental elements, such as a pagoda, and a Turkish mosque. Some scholars have pointed out that the design provided by Chambers could have been inspired by a watercolour of a façade of the Alhambra, attributed to Muntz. Both the watercolour and Chambers’ Alhambra combined oriental-looking and Gothic elements, such as crocketed pinnacles (fig. 1), evidencing how these two styles were associated in the eighteenth century.

In the following decades, British intellectuals became increasingly interested in Hispano-Islamic art and architecture, but it was not until 1779 that a first significant account of it was published in England. Its author, Henry Swinburne, is an early example of a British author writing about Spain’s Islamic heritage. After

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16 Early comments about the Alhambra can be found in British writing from the seventeenth century onwards. See José Manuel Barrio Marco and Héctor Odín Fernández Bahillo, *La imagen de la Alhambra y Generalife en la cultura anglosajona* (1620-1920), Granada: Editorial Comares y La biblioteca de La Alhambra 2014, 9-18.
travelling to Spain in 1775 and 1776, he states in the preface of his book: ‘In my plan of inquiry, an investigation of the soil, cultivation, government, commerce, and manners of that kingdom, was to be the grand primary object; but what I was more confident of my strength in, and what I own I found more suitable to my inclinations, was the study of its antiquities, especially the Moorish.” Although this was the case, Swinburne was still sensitive to Gothic architecture and briefly described some of the main monuments built in this style. When describing the Burgos cathedral, he expressed his doubts about the general assumption made by many of his contemporaries, namely that Gothic architecture derived from “Arabic” architecture:

The foliage-work, arches, pillars and battlements (of Burgos cathedral), are executed in the most elaborate and finished manner of that style which has usually been called Gothic; of late this appellation is exploded, and that of Arabic substituted for it. I confess, I feel some reason to doubt of the propriety of this second epithet. In the buildings I have had opportunities of examining in Spain and in Sicily, which are undoubtedly Saracenic, I have never been able to discover any thing like an original design, from which the Gothic ornaments might be supposed to be copied.

Although conceived as a general book about Spain, without an exclusive focus on architecture, it was the first publication in English to include several views, of ornamental details and plans of the Alhambra and the Mosque at Cordoba. While Swinburne was travelling in Spain and working on the publication of his notes, the Spanish architect José de Hermosilla y Sandoval (1715-76) embarked on a far more ambitious scholarly study of Spanish Arabic past. He and two young architects, Juan Pedro de Arnal and Juan de Villanueva, produced views and

measured drawings of the Cordoba Cathedral as well as of the Alhambra, which were published by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in two volumes entitled *Antigüedades Árabes de España* (1787 and 1804).

It is likely that Swinburne’s *Travels through Spain* and, especially, the *Antigüedades Árabes de España* by Hermosilla et al. stirred up James Cavanah Murphy’s curiosity for Spanish art. This Irish antiquarian had already visited the Peninsula in 1780. On that occasion, he had travelled to Portugal under the protection of William Burton Conyngham, who commissioned him to create detailed drawings and descriptions of the monastery in Batalha. With the information gathered during this travel, Murphy published three books, one of them dedicated to Batalha19 while the other two are general descriptions of Portugal20 including many remarks on art and architecture. After the publication of these books, Murphy decided to travel to Spain at his expense to study the country’s ‘Arab antiquities’. The travel resulted in his book *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain*. The latter was heavily based on the previously published *Antigüedades Árabes de España*, which Murphy mentions in his introduction. This curiosity for Spanish Islamic architecture was not entirely uncommon. According to Murphy’s preface, the antiquarians David Erskine and Frederick August Hervey21 planned archaeological travels to Spain, although such initiatives did not materialise. He also notes that Thomas Pitt of Boconnoc managed to study Hispano-Islamic art during the late 1750s, but did not publish his findings.22 According to Murphy’s introduction:

The interesting but imperfect descriptions of the remains of Arabian art, exhibited in the volumes of some modern travellers, as existing in the once renowned Mohammedan cities of Granada, Cordova and Seville, excited in the author an ardent desire to visit them. He accordingly embarked for Spain, and arrived at Cadiz at early in May, in the year 1802; whence he proceeded to Granada, through lower Andalusia.23

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21 James C. Murphy, *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain*, London: Cadell and Davies, 1815, 1: ‘In justice to the memory of an eminent and noble patron of the arts, the late Earls of Bristol, the author with pleasure records, that his Lordship had it contemplation to send two Roman artists to Granada, to make designs of the Palace of Alhambra, and to publish them at his own expense. The Earl of Bristol relinquished the idea, only on being informed by letter of a friend who was visiting that city, that the author had anticipated his munificent intention.’
23 James C. Murphy, 1815, 1.
It was a curiosity for Spain’s Islamic art, which he discovered through Swinburne’s and Hermosilla’s books, that encouraged him to travel. Although Murphy’s drawings show a Gothicized Alhambra, they are somewhat in contrast with his written comments, in which he did not appear to support the idea of the Saracenic origin of Gothic. In 1795 he wrote that Gothic ‘is allowed by the most competent judges, to have originated with the Norman, towards the conclusion of the twelve century’; similarly three years later, when describing the Portuguese monastery of Batalha, he wrote:

We should then be enabled to make it appear that the conjectures respecting the origin of the Gothic style are not warranted from this edifice, as we find nothing in it that has the most distant resemblances to banners or groves, to Moorish or Saracenic architecture, whence the pointed arch is supposed to be derived.

While the prints published by Swinburne and by Hermosilla et al. attempted to show Spanish buildings objectively, Murphy’s, prints published a few decades later, transformed and manipulated the images to make them fit the aesthetic category of the sublime. This was possibly done to appeal to the taste of his public at home. For example, his drawing of the Court of the Lions at the Alhambra exaggerates the size of the columns making the building look overwhelming, and in his exterior view of the Cordova Mosque all the elements are rendered as to make it look a threatening Moorish fortress. Simultaneously with the rise of Romanticism, the Napoleonic Wars in Europe drew Britain and Spain closer than they had been for centuries.

British intervention in Spain and Portugal against the French, in the so-called Peninsular War, put close to 200,000 British soldiers on Spanish soil. This produced hundreds of travel-books and other publications by British soldiers and travellers. Diego Saglia has recently shown how much of the British mythification of Spain began with this conflict and the burst of publications it produced. After the Peninsular War ended, the political situation in Spain continued resonating in the British press and politics for decades. The two waves of Spanish liberal exiles who fled to London and Bordeaux after the restoration of the absolute monarchy (1814 and 1823) and the British Whig interest in Spain’s short-lived liberal regime (Trienio

24 Tonia Raquejo, 1986, 555-563.
25 James C. Murphy, Plans, elevations, sections and views of the church of Batalha, London: Cadell and Davies, 1795, 54.
26 James C. Murphy, A general view of the state of Portugal containing a topographical description thereof, London: Cadell and Davies, 1798, 91.
The following years were particularly important in the process of popularising an orientalised Spain in Britain. In 1832 Washington Irving published *The Alhambra: a series of tales and sketches of the Moors and Spaniards* in the US and in Britain, which immediately became a bestseller. Also, in 1832 two English painters arrived in Spain, with the intention of making picturesque views of the country and selling them to the British public. One of them was the Edinburgh-born painter David Roberts, who visited Spain for nine months between 1832 and 1833. Many of his views of Spanish architecture and landscapes were subsequently engraved and included in the volumes of Jennings’ *Landscape Annual: Thomas Roscoe’s The Tourist in Spain, Granada* (1835), *The Tourist in Spain, Andalusia* (1836), *The Tourist in Spain, Biscay and the Castiles* (1837), and *The Tourist in Spain, Spain and Morocco* (1838). Roberts also published a volume of lithographs titled *Picturesque Sketches in Spain taken during the years 1832 & 1833* (1837). The other artist was John Frederick Lewis, who travelled around the country from 1832 to 1834, and later published two books of his drawings: *Sketches of the Alhambra* (1835) and *Sketches of Spain and Spanish character* (1836). The scenes depicted by both artists were carefully selected and manipulated to evoke the exotic. At the same time, the celebrated adventurer and gifted writer Richard Ford travelled extensively in Spain in the early 1830s. His pioneering *Hand-book for Travellers in Spain and at Home*, published over a decade later was the first comprehensive and learned guidebook dedicated to Spain. It enjoyed enormous success in Britain and went through many editions. Throughout, Ford insisted on the ‘oriental’ spirit of Spain, stating: ‘Spain, first civilised by Phoenicians and long possessed by the Moors, has indelibly retained the original impressions. Test her, therefore, and her native, by an Oriental standard.’

**Spanish Ecclesiology (1840s and 1850s)**

Together with this burst of interest in an ‘oriental’ Spain, a parallel interest in Spain’s Christian architectural heritage started developing during this time. Intellectual curiosity for Spanish Gothic and Romanesque architecture was awakened by the rise of the Oxford Movement and of Ecclesiology, an important

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30 Diego Saglia, 2000, 24 and 25.
31 David Howarth, *The Invention of Spain: Cultural Relations between Britain and Spain* (1770-1870) (2007), Manchester, p. 226: ‘Artists came to Spain knowing what they were looking for and they extracted a partial view of its cultural heritage. It was one selected on the basis of what British public could make sense of.’
34 For example, Richard Ford, *A Hand-book for Travellers in Spain and Readers at Home*, London, John Murray, 1845, v. 1, page IX: ‘The key to decipher this singular people is scarcely European, since this Berberia Cristiana is at least a neutral ground between the hat and the turban, and many contend that Africa begins even at the Pyrenees. Be that as it may, Spain, first civilised by Phoenicians and long possessed by the Moors, has indelibly retained the original impressions. Test her, therefore, and her native, by an Oriental standard’
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cultural and religious movement that started to develop in Britain in the 1830s and 1840s. From the mid-nineteenth century onward, some British architects and scholars linked to this movement began to look beyond the heritage of Spain’s Islamic inhabitants to study the art produced by their Christian contemporaries in territories under Christian rule.

Although Catholic Spain had been looked upon with suspicion for centuries, more sympathetic attitudes emerged in the early nineteenth century. A change in attitude towards Catholicism took place in Britain in the first decades of the nineteenth century; reflecting The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, it also affected Anglo-Spanish relations. This change of attitude was reinforced by the birth of the Oxford Movement in the 1830s, a religious movement that intended to restore Catholic traditions in the Church of England. Overall, this new ideological approach toward Catholicism helped to overcome many prejudices that had hitherto existed against Catholic cultures, including the Spanish culture. Crucially, it also allowed British architects to take a fresh look at Spain’s architectural heritage.

As previously discussed by other authors, the attempts by High Church Anglicans, such as John Henry Newman and Edward Bouverie Pusey, to restore Britain’s pre-Reformation doctrine and liturgy had a direct impact on architectural design. The Anglicans who were part of the Oxford Movement put a strong emphasis on liturgy, which led the architects and the clergymen associated with the movement to define the ‘correct’ Anglican architecture for their time. The Cambridge Camden Society, founded in 1839 as a parallel institution to the Oxford Movement, also played a major role in defining the models that High Church Anglican architects were supposed to follow when designing their churches. The dissemination of such principles was promoted by the Society’s journal, called The Ecclesiologist.

At first, the Ecclesiological Society promoted English medieval examples as the most suitable architectural models for new Anglican churches. However, as James Curl noted, the emphasis of the Gothic Revival began to move from the English exemplars to the Continent as early as the late 1840s. According to writings published in The Ecclesiologist, the growing interest in continental architecture was almost invariably focused on French, Italian and, to a lesser extent, German examples. However, some attention was occasionally placed on other countries, such as Spain. As Howarth suggests, developments within the Catholic Church in Britain at that time might have also contributed to a greater awareness of Spanish religious art and architecture. The bishop Nicholas Wiseman, who was born in Spain to an English merchant and his Irish wife, played a central role in the British Catholic Church in the 1840s, when some prominent members of the Oxford Movement, such as John Henry Newman, converted to Catholicism. In 1850

Wiseman was made Cardinal by the Pope and entrusted to lead the recently restored Catholic Hierarchy of England and Wales. His close ties to and his interest in Spain opened a new window in Britain into Spanish religious culture and art.38

The Ecclesiologists had two primary reasons for looking at Spanish architecture. Firstly, Spanish church builders had to respond to the requirements of a southern climate, which was typical of both their home country and their colonies. Secondly, Spain was known to be exceptionally rich in church fittings and furniture. Concerning the first issue, the Ecclesiologists were looking for models of churches suited to the conditions of a hot climate, as most of the new British colonies were in southern latitudes, such as Guyana and Jamaica in the Caribbean, Nigeria in Africa, and India. Additionally, they needed models of church furniture and liturgical instruments for the newly reintroduced rituals and sacramental celebrations both in Britain and in the colonies.

The need for a climatic adaptation of churches arose naturally from the vast colonial expansion of the British Empire during the nineteenth century. In the mid-nineteenth century, the reinvigorated Church of England considered that spreading and supporting the Anglican faith in the new British colonies was crucial to its mission. This was especially the case where other Christian denominations had already been established. The process of Anglican expansion to the colonies and its architectural consequences have been studied in depth by Alex Bremner. As he articulated, church building in the overseas territories was considered so important by High Church Anglicans that even ‘in 1845 it was stated, in the preface to the new series of the Ecclesiologist (when the Camden Society changed its name) that one of its principal aims was to support church building in the colonies.’39 This needed to be done, of course, in the ‘correct’ ecclesiastical style that the Ecclesiological Society promoted, namely Gothic. However, Gothic architecture had developed in northern latitudes and was ill adapted, in its English or Central European varieties, to the southern regions where most British colonies were located.

Benjamin Webb (1819-85), a clergyman and co-founder of the Cambridge Camden Society, was one of the first Ecclesiologists to draw attention to this matter. In February of 1845, he presented his investigations on this issue in a paper read before the Cambridge Camden Society. In his presentation, entitled ‘On the Adaptation of Pointed Architecture to Tropical Climates’, he focussed on the Byzantine style, which he found suitable for colonial buildings but finally rejected for being ‘dead and uncapable of development’.40 He then turned to the first churches built by the Spanish and the Portuguese in America and India, but also found them unworthy of imitation; because ‘it was in so late a stage of Gothic as that of Spanish and Portuguese conquests, that the missionaries of Spain and

40 Benjamin Webb, ‘On the adaptation of Pointed architecture to tropical climates,’ Transactions of the Cambridge Camden Society, Cambridge: John W. Parker, 1841, 203: ‘both in its Christian original, and in the Mohammedan variety, was not only more widely extended than the Romanesque, but was employed in more southern regions, promising, almost, to supply us with what we require, an architecture which could be used from.’
Portugal can scarcely be expected to have done much towards developing the adaptation of Pointed architecture to tropical climates.\textsuperscript{41} According to Bremner, the style of these sixteenth-century buildings was ‘a debased admixture of late Gothic and Renaissance classicism which was totally unpalatable to the modern ecclesiologists.’\textsuperscript{42} Despite these reservations, Webb found the churches built in Madeira and the Canary Islands to be more worthy of attention, because they were the earliest examples of Gothic buildings in subtropical regions. While the admixture of Renaissance architecture made them unsuitable for the Ecclesiologists’ purposes, he noted that these churches still offered some lessons on climatic adaptation, mainly ‘increased area, increased height, increased solidity of walls and increased internal gloom.’\textsuperscript{43}

In February of 1851, \textit{The Ecclesiologist} published an article written by the clergyman William Scott (1825-1917), entitled \textit{Some Notes on the Cathedral of Las Palmas, with a few Thoughts on Tropical Climates}. In the article written after a trip to the Spanish island of Gran Canaria, Scott intended to make a ‘contribution to one of the most important ecclesiological problems of the day, the suitability of Pointed architecture to tropical climates’ because ‘whatever the tropics require, may be expected in the Canary Islands.’ After describing the history and main elements of the Gran Canaria cathedral (fig. 2), Scott used it as an example to defend what he called ‘speluncar’ or ‘cave-like’ architecture. According to his experience, the only architecture to be effective against the southern sunlight was the massive and enclosed architecture of buildings like the cathedrals of Las Palmas and Seville. Other means of cooling, such as increased ventilation, were, according to Scott, useless. In this regard, he wrongly criticised the piercings that had been introduced in the Calcutta cathedral because the cathedrals of Seville and Las Palmas ‘did not

\textsuperscript{41} Benjamin Webb, 1841, 204.
\textsuperscript{43} Benjamin Webb, ‘On the adaptation of Pointed architecture to tropical climates,’ \textit{Transactions of the Cambridge Camden Society}, Cambridge: John W. Parker, 1841, 204.
have a single air-hole in them, and we have seen the former crowded; and yet, as a fact, the church was still cool.’** However, Scott failed to understand that the difference in humidity between south Asia and northern Africa as well as Southern Europe required different climatic solutions.

The Ecclesiologists’ climatic approach to Spanish architecture is apparent in some other mid-nineteenth century articles published in *The Ecclesiologist*. For example, the article by John Frederick Bourne, dated December 1848 and titled *Colonial Architecture. Guiana and the Spanish Churches in Central America and Yucatan*, was intended to ‘solve some of the practical difficulties in tropical church building’ in Guyana. In this regard, Spanish churches in Central America were found to be poor examples for British architects, as they were ‘Italian in style (...), ill ventilated and ill adapted to resist the shocks of violent earthquakes.’** Another article published in October 1855 favourably assessed Juan Bautista Peyronet’s restoration of Mallorca’s cathedral. The author also added that there does not seem to be a single window in the whole church, except in the clerestory. What Mr Scott calls the speluncaar idea, is thus fully carried out; and the effect of subdued light in this sunny climate must be delicious.’** In its description of Spanish early Gothic architecture, even James Fergusson’s popular *A History of Architecture in all Countries* (1865) explained that ‘they had very frequently in their churches adopted a form of external portico which was singularly suited to the climate and produced very original and pleasing effects’. As an example of this model, Fergusson provided the illustration of the church of San Millán, Segovia (fig. 3). Later on in the *History*, he also suggested that ‘these external porticoes would be admirably adapted for imitation in the climate of India’.**

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44 William Scott, ‘Some notes on the cathedral of Las Palmas, with a few thoughts on tropical climates,’ *The Ecclesiologist* 12, no. 82, February 1851, 29-44.
46 ‘The Paris exhibition of 1855,’ *The Ecclesiologist* 16, no. 110, October 1855, 294.
Despite these premisses, the pragmatic approach of British Ecclesiologists to Spanish architecture was not constrained to their investigations of Pointed Tropical. English clergymen and Anglican architects were also travelling through the entire continent looking for models for the dignified scenarios that the new Anglo-Catholic liturgy required. Comparatively few of these High Church Anglicans visited Spain. Those who did were particularly interested in church plans, the adaptation of architecture to liturgy, and the use of furniture and fittings. In October 1848, *The Ecclesiologist* published an anonymous article on ‘Spanish Ecclesiology’. Despite its ambitious heading, it was merely a brief account of the Spanish cathedrals visited by the unidentified author while touring the country (i.e. Santiago, Toledo, Granada, Seville, and Cadiz). While the anonymous author of ‘Spanish Ecclesiology’ made some remarks on the religious art in the country, his overall opinion of Spanish religious architecture was not favourable. He considered Spanish architecture to be stylistically ‘impure’. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that at that early stage in the development of Gothic Revival, purity of style was something much valued and looked for, and Spanish architecture was generally regarded as miscellaneous and impure. On the one hand, especially in the Ebro Valley, in southern Spain and around Toledo, Spanish architecture had maintained over many centuries the influence of Islamic craftsmanship and decoration, which has become known as Mudéjar style, a term coined by José Amador de los Ríos in 1859. On the other hand, Gothic architecture remained popular in Spain for longer than in other countries; many of its Gothic buildings, therefore, are late Gothic or include Renaissance features, such as the Seville and Segovia cathedrals.

One of the High Church Anglicans who studied Spanish architecture in more depth was John Mason Neale (1818-66). Neale had been one of the founders of the Cambridge Camden Society in 1839, and, as most of the Society’s members, was a devout clergyman and an architecture connoisseur. Although he remained faithful to the Anglican Communion for his entire life, he was very close in his convictions to the Catholic Church. As such, he became one of the most enthusiastic tractarians working on the reintroduction of Catholic rituals into the Anglican Church. This personal attitude made him receptive to the Catholic traditions of Portugal and Spain, two countries that he visited on several occasions. Neal’s first visit to Spain was in 1843, when he was only 25; in the same year, he spent winter on the Portuguese Island of Madeira on his doctor’s advice, as he suffered from a serious lung disease. After his stay, he wrote an article ‘On the Ecclesiology of Madeira’, which was published in the transactions of the Cambridge Camden Society. On his way back to England he visited Spain; his letters from this time, which unfortunately have not survived, were ‘full of descriptions of its cathedrals and

48 ‘Spanish Ecclesiology,’ *The Ecclesiologist* 9, no. 68, October 1848, 53: ‘There is always an immense reredos or retablo behind the high altar, often gaudy and ugly, but sometimes, as at Seville and Toledo, of rich and beautiful wood carving.’

49 ‘Spanish Ecclesiology,’ *The Ecclesiologist* 9, no. 68, October 1848, 54.

50 See Antonio Urquízar Herrera, ’La caracterización política del concepto mudéjar en España durante el siglo XIX’, *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII. Historia del Arte* 22-23 (2009-10), 201-216.
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churches’.

In Seville, for example, he visited twenty churches and was greatly impressed by the cathedral, which had a lasting impression on him; as late as 1854, he still mentioned it as being one of ‘those seven or eight prodigies of Christian art’.

After travelling to Denmark and Belgium for liturgical research in 1852, Neale decided to visit Portugal again in order to study the country’s little known religious architecture. In 1853, he set out for the Iberian Peninsula with three friends and entered Spain from France through the Basque country. Instead of sailing directly to Porto or Lisbon, Neale decided to make a longer overland journey to Portugal, probably in order to visit some of northern Spain’s medieval monuments. As Neale himself noted, ‘there are fifty-five actually existing Spanish cathedrals of which only three, Seville, Burgos and Cordova, can be said to be tolerably known to us.’ His detailed account of this trip through Portugal and northern Spain was published in *The Ecclesiologist* in a series of articles entitled *An Ecclesiological Tour in Portugal*. In the first of these articles, he described his journey through the Basque country, where he was surprised by the richness of the churches in some villages.

From the Basque country, Neale and his friends travelled to Burgos. There, Neale was delighted by the cathedral, which he claimed to be ‘on the whole, the finest in the world’. In Burgos, he also studied carefully the rituals and religious ceremonies held inside the cathedral and praised this building’s architecture, especially the central lantern, for its ‘very great effect’. After Burgos, the small group decided to visit Palencia to see its cathedral, which, according to Neal, ‘almost rivals that of Burgos’. Despite Neal’s admiration for this building, they found that Palencia’s churches were ‘most excessively dark, the windows few, high and small; wonderfully effective and religious, but exceedingly gloomy; a sort of Philip II style of religion.’ After Palencia, they travelled to Valladolid, Toro, and Zamora, which were on the way to the west, before finally entering Portugal. As they wanted to arrive in Portugal as soon as possible, this last part of their journey through Spain was made in a hurry. Nonetheless, they took some time to visit Toro’s collegiate church, of which Neale especially liked the central tower, and the cathedral in

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52 John Mason Neale, ‘An Ecclesiological Tour in Portugal in the Ecclesiologist,’ *The Ecclesiologist* 14, no. 103, August 1853, 143: ‘Has been less visited (the church in Batalha) than any other of those seven or eight prodigies of Christian art among which it claims a distinguished place: Cologne, and Amiens, and Milan, and St. Stephen’s at Vienna, and Westminster, and Seville.’
57 John Mason Neale, ‘An Ecclesiological Tour in Portugal in the Ecclesiologist,’ *The Ecclesiologist* 14, no. 103, August 1853, 142.
Zamora, which he found ‘particularly interesting’. Both buildings were of that variety of early Gothic that George Edmund Street was to praise a few years later. Neale could have known them through Ford’s *Handbook for Travellers in Spain* (1845), which describes both, or through Jenaro Pérez Villaamil *España artística y monumental*, which includes a lengthy description and an illustration of Toro’s collegiate church. Pérez Villaamil’s ambitious work comprised three volumes with numerous lithographs and historical texts by the writer Patricio de la Escosura; it was published in Paris in both Spanish and French, and could have contributed to a foreign discovery of Spanish Gothic. As Hopkins has pointed out, the volumes deliberately avoided most of the monuments in Southern Spain, to focus on lesser-known buildings, many of them Gothic, in the centre and the north of the country.

Shortly after Neale’s articles in *The Ecclesiologist*, a popular new book brought to England for the first time a considerable number of images of Spanish medieval buildings. The name of the book was *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture*. While its author, James Fergusson, never visited Spain, it is unavoidable to mention him in this study because of his impact on the field. Fergusson’s ambitious aim was to gather in a single book all the important architectural monuments of the world, from ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia to Medieval Europe; in addition, he also aimed to provide images of the buildings he described. In doing so, he was the first English author to attempt a global architecture, including a survey of the medieval architecture of the Iberian Peninsula, while also trying to offer a coherent account of the global development of architectural styles. This was, however, an impossible task. Regarding Spanish architecture, he found that the literature was extremely poor and imprecise. In the preface of his *Handbook*, Fergusson stated:

> The monuments of Gothic architecture in Spain are known to be numerous and splendid, and its history would be of surpassing interest, but beyond this the subject is almost unknown. With few exceptions we have no means of obtaining even the most elementary notions regarding the dates and styles of the noble medieval cathedrals of this land.

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60 Jenaro Pérez Villaamil y Patricio de la Escosura, *España Artística y Monumental*, Paris: Veith & Hauser, 1842-44, v. 2, 81. [the second volume was published in 1844. In total there were three: 1842, 1844, 1850]
62 James Fergusson, *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture*, London: John Murray, 1855, X: ‘One object that has been steadily kept in view in this work has been to show that architecture may be efficiently illustrated by plates on a small scale, yet sufficiently clear to convey.’
63 James Fergusson, 1855, 817.
His description of the sources available to him gives us a good idea of the poor information that existed in Britain regarding Spanish medieval architecture. He mentioned the Spanish publications by Antonio Ponz,64 Enrique Flórez65 and Ceán Bermúdez, 66 which unfortunately were ‘unaccompanied with drawings’, as well as Pérez Villaamil’s España Artística y Monumental (3 vols., Paris, 1842-50). He also criticised David Roberts’ work67 for being ‘far too incorrect a sketcher’, Ford’s Hand-Book for Travellers in Spain and Readers at Home 68 for being ‘without illustrations’, and the work by ‘other recent tourists ... of most unsatisfactory class’. In addition, Fergusson was surprised that ‘even the splendid work of Laborde adds very little to our subject, being almost confined to the Roman antiquities, while the Gothic were either despised or misunderstood.’69

Bearing these issues in mind, Fergusson’s essay on Spanish medieval architecture was limited. Based on the few books about Spanish architecture that he had consulted, he concluded that regarding the Gothic style, Spain was ‘divided into several architectural provinces’, which were the northeast of the country, Leon and Galicia, the Castilles and the south where ‘the Moorish element predominates’. After describing the pre-Romanesque churches in Asturias, he briefly described the collegiate church at the Toro and Zamora cathedral, and the church of La Vera Cruz in Segovia. From there, he jumped directly to the ‘Pointed Style’. Regarding its origins, he repeated the two main theories used to explain the origins of the style, namely that the Saracens had used the pointed arch in Spain and that the pointed vault of Southern France had also been used south of the Pyrenees. Later in his essay, he described a number of Spanish Gothic cathedrals. He dedicated a few paragraphs to the Burgos cathedral, repeating earlier ideas concerning the ‘Oriental’ influence in Spanish architecture and its ‘impurity’. He wrote: ‘The long range of dates causes some incongruities of style’ and the west façade ‘from its late date has some impurities of style; but to compensate for this, there is a richness of fancy and a half Oriental exuberance of design that more than redeem it...’. He seemed impressed by the richness of the decoration in the interiors of the Burgos and Toledo cathedrals, claiming that ‘only in Spain that perfect abandon as regards expense and finish is to be found’. This even led him to speculate that the design of the Rosslyn Chapel (founded as a Catholic collegiate in the fifteenth-century), near Edinburgh, had been imported from Spain. Insisting on the topic of the oriental influence, he observed in the Toledo cathedral ‘a tendency to depart from the sober constructive

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64 Antonio Ponz y Piquer, Viage de España, Madrid: Joaquín Ibarra, 1772-94
66 Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez (ed.), Noticias de los Arquitectos y Arquitectura de España desde su Restauración, Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1829.
67 David Roberts, Picturesque Sketches in Spain, taken during the years 1832 & 1833, London: Hogdson & Graves, 1837.
rules of the pure Gothic, and to give rein to an Oriental exuberance of fancy’; he also thought that the Seville cathedral must have been the work of ‘a German, as no Spaniard, especially in the south, could have restrained his fancy to the comparative purity of its forms’. Although inaccurate, incomplete and relying on topical ideas, Fergusson’s *Handbook* was the first scholarly attempt in Britain at studying Spanish Gothic architecture systematically, classifying it chronologically and connecting it with developments in architecture taking place around Europe. It also contributed to disseminating almost twenty images of Spanish architecture, based on the work by other authors.

Figure 4 James Fergusson, front-page of *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture* (London, 1855), with an illustration showing the church of Humanejos, Spain.

Fergusson was also the first British author to appreciate Mudéjar architecture not as an extravagant deviation from "pure" Gothic forms, but as a distinct style in its own right, full of potential and beauty. He seemed so impressed by the few Mudéjar buildings shown in Pérez Villaamil’s *España Artística y Monumental* that he even chose one of its images for the front cover of his book (fig. 4). The ambivalence of Fergusson’s descriptions of Mudéjar architecture reveal both his passion for this style and his limited knowledge of its origins:

The History of the Moresco or Mozarabic style is quickly told and easily understood. It was impossible that a rude, half-civilized people like the Goths or Iberians of the north of Spain could come in contact with the polished and highly-civilized occupants of the southern portion of the

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70 James Fergusson, 1855, 817-831
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Peninsula without being captivated, as modern architects have been, with the elegant and beautiful style of architecture used by that people. A little bit later he also added:

A strong religious antipathy to the works of the infidels led them, in preference, to borrow from their northern neighbours a style not peculiarly suited to their climate, and which they never perfectly understood (Gothic). In some few and comparatively insignificant instances they adopted the native style (Mudéjar), with only such slight modifications as were required for their purposes, and made out of it a mixture so picturesque, and so evidently capable of better things, that we cannot but regret the limited extent to which this adaptation was carried, productive as it was of much novelty and beauty.\textsuperscript{71}

George Edmund Street in Spain (1860s)

In the preface to his book, Fergusson wrote ‘even at this time such a country as Spain is almost terra incognita to architects. Now, however, that the people are getting satiated with the plaster prettiness of the Alhambra, we may hope that attention will be turned to the grander and simpler works of the Christians in that country and that this chapter will not remain the blank it has hitherto been.’\textsuperscript{72} This desire was not satisfied until a few years later when the Ecclesiologist and English architect George Edmund Street (1824-89) decided to visit and study the medieval monuments of northern Spain. Street had become involved in the Ecclesiological Society when he was in his 20s, and he frequently contributed with articles to The Ecclesiologist. He was a deeply religious High Church Anglican and a fervent defender of Gothic Revival architecture. Unlike many other members of the Ecclesiological Society, Street was especially keen on early Gothic and Romanesque architecture. His curiosity for new models of medieval architecture was significant at a time when the Ecclesiologists were already looking towards the continent for medieval architectural models. His interests led him to visit the most untrodden regions of northern Italy, where he travelled in 1854. This journey was also motivated by his conviction that the more variations of Gothic architecture he knew, the better architect he would become.\textsuperscript{73} A year later, he published Brick and Marble in the Middle Ages,\textsuperscript{74} based on the material gathered during his Italian journey.

A few years later, ‘seeing, then, how complete is the ignorance which up to the present time we have laboured under, as to the true history and nature of Gothic architecture in Spain’,\textsuperscript{75} he decided to do for this country what he had already done for northern Italy. According to his son Arthur Edmund, Street spent all his ‘leisure moments’ during the years of 1861, 1862 and 1863, which were very busy for his architectural practice, travelling through Spain and preparing the publication of his

\textsuperscript{71} James Fergusson, 1855, 840.
\textsuperscript{72} James Fergusson, 1855, preface.
\textsuperscript{73} George E. Street, Some Account of Gothic Architecture in Spain, London: John Murray, 1865, I.
\textsuperscript{74} George E. Street, Brick and marble in the Middle Ages, London: John Murray, 1855.
\textsuperscript{75} George E. Street, 1865, I.
drawings and notes. This commitment shows that he was truly interested in the subject. During his three journeys, which amounted to just twelve weeks in total, he visited the main towns of northern Castile, Catalonia, Aragon, and Navarre as well as León, Santiago, and Lugo. In northern Italy, he mostly studied buildings from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Despite this specific interest, he did not totally exclude architecture from other periods and considered some Renaissance examples. Like other British architects, Street was very impressed by the richness of these churches’ interior decorations and furniture, which he addressed in the following:

Their fittings and furniture are unsurpassed by in interest by those of any other land. First among them is the furniture. No country is perhaps so rich in this respect as Spain. (...) The great glory of this country in this respect are such retablos as those in Toledo cathedral or the carthusian church of Miraflores. The choir stalls, again are often magnificent. Nowhere shall we see such magnificent choir lecterns, in brass as that of Toledo, or in wood as that of Zamora.

His notebooks contain not only interior views and measured plans but also many detailed drawings of church furniture and ornaments. Street was also surprised by the ‘early-Pointed’ cathedrals of Tarragona (fig. 5), Tudela, Salamanca, and Lérida; writing about these buildings, he said that he knew;

none whose interiors are more solid, truly noble, or impressive. (...) By the boldness of their design, the simplicity of their section, the extreme solidity of their construction, and the remarkable contrast between these characteristics and the delicacy of their sculptural decoration, they seem to me to be among the most valuable examples for the study on artistic grounds that I have ever seen anywhere.

Street also took good notice of some other early Gothic constructions, such as the central lanterns of the cathedrals at Toro, Zamora, and Salamanca (fig. 6). He especially liked the Salamanca lantern, which was granted two full-page pictures in his book. He commented ‘I have seldom seen any central lantern more thoroughly good and effective from every point of view than this. It seems to solve, better than the lantern of any church I have yet seen elsewhere, the question of introduction of the dome to Gothic churches.’ In his praise of the Salamanca lantern, he also encouraged other architects to take it as a model.

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76 Arthur E. Street, Memoir of George Edmund Street, London: John Murray, 1888, 44.  
78 George E. Street, travel sketchbooks SKB336/1 (1862), SKB335/2 (1861) and SKB335/4 (1861), RIBA Drawings Collection, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.  
79 George E. Street, 1865, 420.  
80 George E. Street, 1865, 80.  
81 George E. Street, 1865, 82.
The quality of Spanish architecture that Street appeared to appreciate most was its picturesque effect. In his opinion, these picturesque effects could be experienced at their most inside the churches, with their lavish decoration, the sometimes extravagant disposition of furniture, and the strong contrast between light and shadow. Street found in Spain something that he particularly appreciated, namely richly coloured and texturized architectural surfaces. John Ruskin’s works *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) and *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53) had a strong influence on Street’s generation: both books recommended enlivening wall surfaces by allowing a certain irregularity, and by the ‘truthful’ use of materials of different colours.

In conclusion, Street ‘was more than satisfied with the purity and beauty of the Christian architecture in Spain’. He even showed sympathy for Mudéjar architecture and explained how ‘Mohamedan architects … wrought under the direction to a considerable extension of their Christian masters, and in some respects

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82 Of the las Huelgas monastery, he wrote ‘It has in a large degree that picturesqueness which we seldom see in French Gothic interiors.’ (George E. Street, 1865, 37); of Tarragona’s cathedral: ‘though the picturesque furniture of later times, the screens and the pulpits, the organs and other furniture are in great contrast with the glorious solidity of the old work, the combination of this with them makes a singularly beautiful picture.’ (George E. Street, 1865, 280).

83 George E. Street, 1865, 37: ‘This is an almost universal arrangement in Spanish organs, and is always very picturesque in effect.’

84 George E. Street, 1865, 32: ‘There is one point in which for picturesque effect few countries can vie with Spain, and this is the admission of light.’
with very happy results. Street’s achievement was filling the historiographical gap in Spanish architecture, and the book he published was commercially successful and widely circulated. His influence on other publications is apparent, in James Fergusson’s *A History of Architecture in all Countries*, also published in 1865. In this regard, we can note that Fergusson reorganized and expanded his *Illustrated Handbook*, previously mentioned, and published it under a new title. The new volume included the findings concerning architectural history that had taken place in the previous decade. The section on Spain’s Christian architecture was restructured and expanded by taking into consideration the most recent studies on the subject. According to Fergusson, “the publication of the great national work on Spanish antiquities, of Parcerisa’s ‘ Beauties, &c., of Spain’ and, above all, Mr. Street’s work, have rendered Spanish architecture as intelligible as that of any other country, though ten years ago it was a mystery and a puzzle.” Fergusson greatly contributed to the dissemination of Street’s drawings on Spanish architecture, as he borrowed twenty of them for his own book, which became a great success. A *History of Architecture* was also important to the dissemination of Spanish medieval architecture in English-speaking countries. However, the Spanish influence on British Gothic Revival design remained very limited.

The impact of Street’s travels to Spain (1861-63) on his own architecture can be seen in the final design for the Crimea Memorial Church in Istanbul. His 1857 competition design already contained some elements intended to adapt the planned building to a southern climate. These elements included a scarcity of openings and a plan for an external cloister to surround the church. The style of the building, with its rich structural polychromy, was an Italianized English Gothic. Street’s original design was second to William Burge’s. However, due to problems that arose between Burge and the project sponsor, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the commission was finally given to Street in the summer of 1863. By December, Street had produced a more economic design for the church. The new plan was not only a simplification of the competition design but, as Mark Crinson pointed out, “it represented instead an entirely different and original solution to the

85 George E. Street, 1865, 224.
86 The book was re-edited in 1869 (London: John Murray) and in 1914 (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co.).
90 The book was re-edited in 1869 (London) and in 1914 (New York).
92 The details of this project and competition are addressed in Mark Crinson, *Empire Building, Orientalism & Victorian Architecture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996.
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structural and climatic problem of a Gothic church in the Mediterranean (fig. 7).

Inspired by the architecture Street admired in Spain, the new design was more compact and simple in its massing and much more austere in its decoration. Even the exterior colour bands had been completely removed. The cloisters found in the first design had also changed noticeably. In Spain, Street became interested in some of the local external cloisters, which he considered a native feature for climatic adaptation. In his opinion,

The church [San Esteban, Fig. 8] is remarkable for the remains of an external cloister against the walls of the nave. There are several churches here which have the same feature, and in other parts of the book I have mentioned similar cases at las Huelgas, Burgos, and la Antigua, Valladolid. It looks like an arrangement for keeping the building cool, and is as good in its effect as in so hot a climate it must be convenient.94

Notably, he visited the churches in Valladolid and Burgos in the autumn of 1861, and those in Avila and Segovia in the autumn of 1863, just a few weeks before

93 Mark Crinson, 1996, 163.
94 George E. Street, Some Account of Gothic Architecture in Spain, London: John Murray, 1865, 266.
completing his final design for the Crimean Memorial Church. One of the churches with an external cloister that Street liked most was San Millán in Segovia, which Fergusson himself recommended as an architectural model for India. Street’s new plan for the Crimea Memorial church moved away from the original conventional Gothic model to resemble more closely that of San Millán. At the same time, the cloister was transformed into a more autonomous element, which was confidently projected out of the façade.

In nineteenth-century Britain, the architectural discovery of medieval Spain was a phenomenon linked to the rise of Anglo-Catholicism. As noted above, the Anglicans came across Spain’s heritage in their search for models for their re-established liturgical practices, which they planned to promote both at home and in their colonies. In the earlier decades of the nineteenth-century, a Romantic thirst for the ‘Oriental’ prompted the British discovery of Spain’s Islamic heritage. Later, the practical needs of some British religious groups led to a gradual knowledge and appreciation of Spanish medieval Christian architecture, a development mostly dated to the mid-nineteenth century. However, it was not be until the first decades of the twentieth-century that this influence was felt in British architectural production.

‘Florid’ Gothic and beyond

Although the architectural discovery of Spanish Gothic was mediated by an attraction to the ‘oriental’, as well as by the rise of Anglo-Catholicism, some British architects unrelated to Gothic Revivalism or High-Churchmanship also played an important role in studying and disseminating Spanish Gothic architecture in Britain. These were experts in architectural ornament, whose interest in Spanish Gothic was entwined with the rise of ornamental eclecticism in Britain.

Historians, such as James Fergusson, thought that Gothic was ‘an anachronism, as little suited to our wants and as little expressive of our feelings as the armour or the weapons of the same age.’ In opposition to the moralistic view of Pugin, Ruskin, and the ecclesiologists, who thought that style and morality were linked, other architects approached architectural styles more playfully. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was a celebration of this eclectic view, which, together with scientific innovations, offered for the first time the possibility to produce art and architecture of any style cheaply. The Exhibition was the great moment for the decorative arts. The architects who were involved in this event were imbued with ornamental eclecticism and were always looking for new decorative motifs. Some of these architects, such as Owen Jones and Matthew Digby Wyatt, became interested in Spain’s rich ornamental tradition of Spain. Jones was attracted to the Alhambra and its chromatic decoration, which he had studied on site in 1834. His research and

95 George E. Street, 1865, 266: ‘The cloister is a very rich composition, the shafts being coupled, with finely sculptured capitals and the arches enriched with billet mouldings.’
the subsequent publication of his drawings of the Alhambra⁹⁷ made Jones an authority, in Britain, on Islamic architecture, colour on architecture, and chromolithography, a technique that he developed to publish the colour plates.⁹⁸ The Alhambra had a lasting influence on both his later publications⁹⁹ and his architectural production.¹⁰⁰ Yet, Jones’ enthusiasm for Hispano-Islamic architecture and design did not prevent other architects from turning their attention to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spanish decoration.

John Burley Waring was one such architect. Waring was a lover of the decorative arts and was probably the first British architect to travel to Spain, not looking exclusively for Moorish or ecclesiastical architecture, but focusing instead on late Gothic and early Renaissance ornamentation. Waring, although a deeply religious man, was not a member of the Ecclesiological Society, or even an Anglican. Instead, he was a dissenter, radically opposed to any kind of clergy, organised religious institutions and rituals¹⁰¹. As far as his taste for architecture was concerned, he disliked both classicism¹⁰² and Gothic Revival¹⁰³ and was especially keen on the less scholarly styles. This might explain his attraction to late Spanish Gothic and early Renaissance styles. Waring travelled to Spain for the first time in 1847, as part of a longer trip through southern Europe with his friend, the architect T. B. Macquoid. He later published a book based on his travel notes entitled Examples of architectural art in Italy and Spain, chiefly of the 13th and 16th centuries (London: McLean, 1850). In Spain, they visited the monumental cities in the centre (Burgos, Valladolid, Segovia, and Toledo) and in the south of the country (Granada, Cordoba, Seville). His architectural research was extensive. He studied both domestic and ecclesiastic buildings as well as the cathedrals, focussed particularly on early Renaissance ornamental style. He thought that such style was bad as architecture, in contrast to the ‘little Norman churches’ of Segovia,¹⁰⁴ but felt, nevertheless, attracted to its picturesqueness and invention.¹⁰⁵ It is striking to compare Street’s and Waring’s

⁹⁸ Katherine Ferry, ‘Printing the Alhambra: Owen Jones and Chromolithography’, Architectural History 46, January 2003, 175-188.
⁹⁹ See, for example, Owen Jones, The Grammar of Ornament, London: Day & Son, 1856, 66.
¹⁰³ John Burley Waring, 1873, 193: ‘The men became thoroughly antiquaries and possessed with a blind admiration of the Middle Ages: seeking only to reproduce its art in every point.’
¹⁰⁴ John Burley Waring, 1873, 123.
¹⁰⁵ John Burley Waring, 1873, 113: ‘The Great cinquecento or Plateresque chapel behind the high altar is florid and bad, as this style usually is in Spain. When I say bad-not in design or execution had a painter done it- but as architecture. There is a great deal of fancy, invention and spirit, but it is all of a pictorical, fantastic nature, and has nothing of the neatness,
perceptions of Spanish architecture, which were influenced by their own personal preferences. If Street liked the ‘noble solidity and solid massiveness’ of Spanish medieval architecture, for Waring, ‘in Spanish architecture, sculpture takes almost the lead.’ While Street had been impressed mainly by the austere and forceful style of the cathedrals of Tudela and Salamanca, Waring felt attracted to the richly ornamental style of the last stages of Gothic.

In the winter of 1850, Waring went to Paris to spend some time as a student in a painting atelier. Notably, it seems that his first visit to Spain had not fully satisfied his curiosity. According to his autobiography, he had ‘in view a work on the Miraflores monuments, near Burgos; so early in the spring left Paris, and soon found myself settled down at a muleteer’s inn, or venta, in the outskirts of that picturesque old Castilian town, being most of the time hard at work at Miraflores.’

His aim in studying and publishing detailed drawings of the Miraflores was ‘to enlarge the sphere of our ideas, to impress certain combinations and forms upon the mind’, that would help British design to move forward from mainstream Classical and Gothic styles. Indeed, he considered Spanish florid Gothic to be ‘full of fancy’ and, ‘though perhaps not very commendable as architecture, is most useful for ornamental instruction.’ The Carthusian convent at Miraflores is very rich in this late Gothic decoration and, especially the sepulchres of King Juan II and Queen Isabel of Portugal are superb examples of this style. Richard Ford considered them to be ‘unequalled in Spain or elsewhere’ and Waring described them as ‘the richest and most delicately worked specimens of that florid and picturesque Gothic, which flourished so significantly in Spain. (...) Two examples of architectural sculpture, perhaps the finest specimens of decorative art in the world.’

During his stay in Burgos, Waring worked hard on measuring and making the most detailed drawings to date of the monuments in Miraflores, which were published in London in 1852 in the volume *Architectural, Sculptural & Picturesque Studies in Burgos and its Neighbourhood* (figs 9 and 10). Despite the accuracy and quality of this work, it was very poorly disseminated, possibly due to its high selling price. It is surprising that not even Fergusson mentioned it as a source in any of his architectural publications.

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106 George E. Street, *Some account of Gothic architecture in Spain*, 1865, London: John Murray, 244.
107 John Burley Waring, 1873, 116
108 John Burley Waring, 1873, 190
109 John Burley Waring, 1873, 126
110 John Burley Waring, 1873, 195
113 John Burley Waring, 1873, 192.
114 Jenaro Pérez Villaamil was the only author, before Waring to have published some drawings of Miraflores in *España Artística y Monumental* (Paris, 1842-50), and these were just general views of the monuments.
It was probably through his relationship with Waring and Owen Jones, with whom he had worked in the Great Exhibition of 1851, that James Digby Wyatt (1820-77) became interested in Spain and decided to visit in 1869. He was an architect and writer on history of art and had become an expert in architectural decoration early in his career. Soon after completing his education, he travelled through Europe, studying and sketching mosaic decoration. He later published his notes in a book entitled *The Geometric Mosaics of the Middle Ages* (London, 1848).

Wyatt was well aware of the existing publications on Spanish art and decided to focus his work on the monuments that had been disregarded by previous travellers. He understood his work as complementary to Street’s for, ‘while he has turned towards, the Plateresque and later styles of Spain, and while he has apparently sought especially for what might be useful for church-builders, my aim has been rather to collect hints for house-builders.’ Wyatt was, however, truly eclectic in his tastes, and in the publication which followed his journey, *An Architect’s Note-book in Spain, Principally Illustrating the Domestic Architecture in that Country*, London: Autotype Fine Art Company, 1872, preface: ‘To the interest and grandeur of its Northern Gothic buildings, Mr Street has already done a justice long denied to them; while Girault de Prangey, and above all Owen Jones, have helped us to a right appreciation of the works of those masterly artificers, the Moors, who seem to have possessed an intuitive love for the beautiful in structure.’

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Matthew Digby Wyatt, 1872, preface.
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Architecture in that Country (London, 1872), he also included several sketches of medieval churches. He avoided the examples of medieval churches that were included in Street’s book. Instead of ‘pure’ early Gothic examples, he described a few Mudéjar churches, such as San Pedro Mártir in Toledo (fig. 11) and the church of San Marcos in Seville, in which the Gothic structure had been combined with elements of Moorish influence such as lobulated arches and sebka. Wyatt was, in fact, the first English speaking author who used the term Mudéjar in a book, a style that he defined as ‘neither Gothic nor Moorish strictly, but a compound of both’.

Although featuring only brief descriptions, this publication certainly helped to improve British knowledge of Spanish medieval monuments, as it depicted, apart from the aforementioned Mudéjar churches, the churches of Santiago in Toledo and of San Lorenzo in Lerida, as well as the Royal Chapel of Granada.

Spanish Gothic in Britain

The travels and publications of these British architects finally opened up Spanish Gothic and Romanesque architecture to British architects and scholars. By the end of

the nineteenth-century, British architects were not only familiar with Hispano-Islamic monuments built in the territories under Muslim rule (al-Andalus), but also with Christian architecture built in Christian kingdoms. These publications had some impact on British architectural practice, if not by providing models to be directly imitated by architects, at least by shifting the attention of the British cultural elite to Spain and her architectural heritage. This growing awareness of Spain’s medieval heritage also meant that some of the country’s buildings could be used as models by British architects. In 1899 Aston Webb designed the building of the newly established Victoria & Albert Museum. Its main entrance, which combines late Gothic and early Renaissance features, a composition that some critics have identified as Spanish. The tower above the entrance hall was inspired by the Burgos cathedral’s lantern. Also in the 1890s the Scottish architect Robert Rowand Anderson designed a chapel for the Marquess of Bute at Mount Stuart that was partly modelled on Zaragoza’s cathedral, which he had visited twenty years earlier.

The development of a British historiography of Spanish architecture during the nineteenth-century, which included Spain’s Gothic and Romanesque architecture, led to growing awareness among British architects of Spanish Gothic heritage. This development was also favoured by an improvement of Anglo-Spanish relations under Alfonso XIII’s reign. After winning the design competition for Liverpool’s Anglican cathedral, the young Giles Gilbert Scott travelled to Spain several times between 1902 and 1910 to study the country’s medieval architecture. Scott’s notebooks, kept in the RIBA, contain sketches referring to the several travels that he presumably made to France and Italy. Unfortunately, the sketches he might have made in Spain are lost and, therefore, we are unable to identify the places and monuments he visited. Both Kennerly and Scott’s son remarked on the influence that Spain had on Scott’s work. This was especially apparent in his favouring of rich furniture and decoration against plain backgrounds, a typical feature of Scott’s architecture throughout his entire career. The main reredos of the Liverpool Cathedral (fig. 12) is clearly based on Spanish models, mainly the reredos of Saint Gregorio in Valladolid and Saint Nicholas in Burgos.

123 Giles G. Scott, sketchbook, SKB 302/5 and SKB 304/2, Victoria & Albert Museum, RIBA Drawings Collection, London.
Two of the last Gothic Revivalists, Sir Walter Tapper (1861-1935) and Sir John Ninian Comper (1864-1960), borrowed even more directly from Spanish models. For example, when designing Guilford Grammar School chapel (Western Australia, 1912), Tapper projected a retable inspired by a Spanish model, namely the Retable of Saint George in Valencia (c. 1400),\(^\text{125}\) which he had studied at the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig. 13).\(^\text{126}\) Ninian Comper visited Spain on several occasions and built a collection of photographs that included many images of Spanish architecture. Comper’s design method, which he called ‘unity by inclusion’, consisted of combining picturesque elements of various styles. It allowed him to introduce in his work some of the architectural elements he had photographed in Spain. According to Comper, it was the concentration of effect, namely the profusion of ornament contrasting with unornamented areas, and the use of light and colour what made Spanish churches stand out for their religious atmosphere.\(^\text{127}\)

Comper used this ‘concentration of effect’ in several of his own projects. An

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125 Acquired by the V&A Museum in 1864.
126 One of Walter Tapper’s sketchbooks (1909, SKB 342/4, Victoria & Albert Museum, RIBA Drawings Collection, London) shows a detailed drawing of a Spanish retable that had been acquired by the museum in 1864 (Master of the Centenar (attributed), Retable of Saint George, Valencia, c. 1400, no. 1217-1864, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.), and which he copied for the Guilford Grammar School chapel.
outstanding example is his intervention in Wymondham Abbey, dated to the early 1920s, where he attained a striking effect by introducing a large and richly carved gilded reredos in a sober Norman nave (fig. 14).

Figure 14 John Ninian Comper, Wymondham Abbey, Norfolk, England, interior view (photograph by John Salmon).

Although the influence of Spanish Gothic on British architecture remained limited, the publications that appeared in Britain during the nineteenth-century filled a substantial gap in knowledge, leading to a fuller understanding of Spanish architecture in Britain. It was by no means only the ‘Moorish’ architecture or the ‘oriental’ that attracted British interests to Spain. Rather, the heritage of Christian and Catholic Spain also offered inspiration and solutions to the diverse concerns occupying British architects and patrons at the time.

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