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The volume contains papers by representatives of some of the most prestigious cathedrals in Europe, who came together in Pisa on 15 and 16 October 2015 for the fifth International Conference on European Cathedrals. They were accompanied on the rostrum by representatives of the top institutes in the field of the conservation of sculptural heritage, the subject of these study days.

The papers appear in the order in which they were given.

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Terracotta works in Seville Cathedral. 
The story of a monumental sculptural complex

Teresa Laguna Paúl

Seville Cathedral covers a total area of 23,457 square metres and stands on the site of what was the main mosque in Ysbilia. This was adapted to Christian use in 1248 when it became the cathedral of Santa Maria, and it was further modified in the following two centuries. In 1433 demolition work began, in order to make way for the present Gothic building, which was only completed between 1506 and 1517 due to the collapse and subsequent reconstruction of the initial lantern. The construction of the royal chapel, the sacristies and the chapter rooms in the second half of the sixteenth century, as well as that of the Sagrario parish church in the seventeenth, added significant elements to the Cathedral in terms of its architecture and monumental Mannerist and Baroque sculpture. A number of historical circumstances meant that the old Almohad building kept its Patio de los Naranjos, covering an area of 5,546 square metres, the tower of the minaret – which was converted into a magnificent Renaissance bell tower – and five of the ten original doors, two of which were walled up while three are still in use.

The great Gothic project took into account the liturgical needs of the cathedral and, when it came to deciding the location of the doors, it mainly maintained that of the ancient entrances. This was mainly due to the layout of the medieval town, and because of the so-called Corral de los Naranjos and Corral de los Olmos, which in the Mudejar building had had the same function as the cloisters in a cathedral. A drawing now in the monastery of the Poor Clares in Bidaurreta (Guipuzcoa) shows the layout of the Gothic Cathedral with nine entrances. There are three main entrances in the west front and two in the east, which lead into the chapter rooms and the services located in the Corral de los Olmos. Then there are two at the ends of the crossing, one giving onto the Alcázar Real and the other to the north, leading to the future cathedral cloister. Here, another two doors in the side galleries gave access to the interior. Lastly, the Corral or Patio de los Naranjos was a special cloister with a monumental entrance. This was the ancient Puerta del Perdon, or Door of Forgiveness, which became a concentration of over nine centuries of history in Seville.
In the Mudejar cathedral, the north façade of the mosque – which was opposite the Alcaicería, the silk market in the commercial heart of the medieval city – was adapted for the functional and liturgical uses of the western façades of Catholic churches. The Puerta del Perdón provided special access for the sovereigns and their representatives and ambassadors but it was mainly used for the ceremonies that took place in the atrium of the churches, such as the reconciliation of penitents on Maundy Thursday, to which the door owes its name, and later the altar dedicated to the Cristo del Perdón. During the reign of Alfonso XI, it was decorated with Mudejar stucco decorations commemorating the Battle of Rio Salado (1340). The figurative images, which were restored in 1468, formed an iconographic precedent for the Renaissance terracotta reliefs and sculptures made by Miguel Perrin in 1519-1520¹ (fig. 1).

Construction work on the Gothic church started in 1434 from the western

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side, and by about 1478 the last of the three western sections and the three bays of the façade were ready for worshippers, all arranged according to the original design. In practice, the nave, the aisles and the chapels in this area were used for most of the functions and to celebrate the liturgical calendar until the main altar was unveiled and consecrated in 1526.

The work in freestone on the west façade started from the Puerta del Baptisterio, or Door of Baptism, where high-reliefs with prophets and angels were sculpted in 1449 on the archivoltls around the tympanum, the poor quality of which was due to the characteristics of the type of stone used. The difficulty in finding the right material for the sculptures, combined with the cost of transport from quarries far from the city, led to the decision to start the figurative work from the side portals of the west front. The terracotta sculptures and reliefs, which are documented from 1464, were to give priority, according to the liturgy, to the imagery used in the atriums and in the Puerta del Baptisterio and the Puerta del Nacimiento (the Door of the Nativity). Partial losses and some gaps in the Cathedral archives mean that we cannot be certain when and why one important technical decision was made. As confirmed by studies in recent decades, it was decided to create all the monumental decorations, both outside and inside the building, in terracotta. In other words, on the doors, at the top of the arms and on the balconies on the crossing, at the entrance to the Royal Chapel, in the lantern and on the walls behind the main altar (fig. 2).

Seville Cathedral contains one of Europe’s most important series of monumental sculpture in terracotta dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It includes one hundred and thirty sculptures and four monumental reliefs, together with some architectural surfaces and frames that have lost their ancient figures, and incomplete sculptural projects both inside and out. The reason for the loss of these figures is mainly due to the collapse of the original lantern, which happened on 28 November 1511, turning the stunning cover for the crossing, which had been designed by Simon of Cologne, into a pile of rubble. It also destroyed the ambitious Late Gothic series of terracotta statues and groups made between 1505 and 1511. The disaster led to major changes in the priorities given to completion of the Gothic cathedral and to the commissions for monumental sculptures. The contracts for the sculptures for the main entrance on the west front – the new Puerta del Perdón or Asunción – were put off until the late nineteenth century, as were the freestone works for the two portals of the

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Figure 2. Seville Cathedral, Puerta del Baptisterio
crossing, for which the decorations were also naturally postponed. The incident also had consequences for other projects that had been planned for the interior. These included the tree of Jesse around the rose window on the north transept, the images of which had remained unfinished ever since the 1510s. Changes in the criteria and modifications to the layout of the royal chapel put an end to the programme that had already started on both the inside and the outside of the upper part of the façade. This is where, in 1509-1510, Sebastián de Almonacid and Jorge Fernández had created a number of choirs of angels, about 90 cm tall, in polychrome terracotta. The only two of these that have survived – and that were subjected to major restoration in the early twentieth century – are in niches in the corridor of the Reloj. Here, fortunately, there are also three of the apostles that were originally on the internal balcony.

Over 28 metres above the ground, the new lantern designed by Juan Gil de Hontañón was to have a less ambitious iconographic programme than the previous one. This was in the form of a monumental Apostolado, with sixteen polychrome terracotta statues, 1.6 metres tall, sculpted by Miguel Perrin in 1518-1519. With this Renaissance-style work, the artist of French origin won the confidence of the chapter, who commissioned him to make the reliefs and sculptures for the old Puerta del Perdón and those for the two eastern doors – the Puerta de la Adoración de los Reyes and the Entrada en Jerusalén – documented from 1519 to 1522. From 1522 to 1526, Perrin also made half of the fifty-nine sculptures in the niches of the side walls inside the cathedral and in the area behind the high altar. In 1568 the church authorities arranged for the creation of the last statues of this series, which were carved in the Mannerist style by Juan Marín and Diego de Pesquera (fig. 3).

To complete the sculptures on the external portals and on the sculptural complexes in the cathedral in Seville, from the second half of the fifteenth century to the end of the sixteenth, the chapter approved commissions in line with current practices for this type of work both in the Iberian peninsula and in Italy, France and Central Europe. The agreements with the sculptors and their studios involved contracts, deadlines and payments for areas of the portal in

which the works to be carried out were similar in terms of composition and technique. They never referred to the creation of an entire portal or complex. The five contracts signed with Miguel Perrin and the payments made for the three portals mentioned above have made it possible over the past decade to reconstruct the chronological sequence of the artist's works in Seville Cathedral. We can now understand aspects of his compositional models, his mod-
elling and firing techniques and his original colour finishes. The documents have also proved crucial for distinguishing between the various assignments and the periods involved in completing the main façade.7

The extraordinary quality of the terracotta works of Seville Cathedral was already being pointed out by historians and travellers in the seventeenth century. Pablo Espinosa de los Monteros and José de Sandlier talked of the golden robes of the statues and of the colours of the relief showing the expulsion of the traders from the temple, which decorates the Puerta del Perdón.8 The markedly Italian-style work led to its attribution, first in a publication by Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez of 1804, to a certain master Miguel Florentín, who never actually worked in the cathedral. This error meant that the true identity of Miguel Perrin was not discovered and it confused most historians until the early 2000s.9 The attributions concerning the sculptures on the main façade also include fundamental historiographical stages, starting with Ceán Bermúdez, who attributed them to Lope Marín, a sculptor active in the first half of the sixteenth century. This hypothesis was shared by later historians until Francisco Tubino was the first to observe, in 1877, the similarities with Lorenzo Mercadante of Brittany, an artist trained in the workshops of the Duke of Burgundy, which attest to his presence in Seville from 1453 to 146810 (fig. 4). Also in the late nineteenth century, during work directed by the architect Adolfo Fernández Casanova, José Gestoso found the name of Pedro Millán written on the phylacteries of the prophets on the Puerta del Baptisterio and he attributed all the sculptures on the two side entrances of the west front to this artist. This was rejected by Manuel Gómez Moreno, who in 1911 conclusively pointed to the Flemish characteristics of the works and to the similarities with the tomb of Cardinal Juan de Cervantes, which was made by Mercadante in 1458.11 His certain attribution was accepted by Diego Angulo and by later historians who,

8 P. Espinosa de los Monteros, Teatro de la santa iglesia catedral de Sevilla [...] noticias contenidas en las “Adiciones” que a dicha obra dejó escritas D. José Sandlier y Peña [...] publicado por José Gestoso y Pérez, Seville 1884, pp. 63, 94-99.
9 J.A. Ceán Bermúdez, Descripción artística de la catedral de Sevilla, Seville 1804, pp. 28-29.
after further studies of Pedro Millán, distinguished the work of the two artists in these portals, even though this has led to only partial readings of visual narratives and original iconographic series, which are thus hard to reconstruct. According to the surviving documents, Lorenzo Mercadante of Brittany created the relief of the Nativity and the sculptures on the jambs of both entrances between 1464 and 1468, while Pedro Millán (who was active between 1487 and 1508) sculpted, at some unspecified time, the two prophets at the sides of the architrave of the Puerta del Baptisterio. The two prophets on the Puerta del Nacimiento and the angels that surround the tympanum were the work of a different artist or studio and the three statues of the baptism in the Jordan are to be attributed to another sculptor active towards the end of the fifteenth century.12

The implicit value of the monumental complex of Seville Cathedral, as well as the material characteristics of the stone and terracotta sculptures on the portals, led to conservation operations that are documented already in the late fifteenth century and in the sixteenth. In 1565, for example, Juan Marín repaired

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hands, fingers and figured parts on these portals.\textsuperscript{13} There was also frequent maintenance work on the "old" Puerta del Perdón, and in particular with regard to other operations on the north façade carried out in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, an age when temporary installations were often made for the ceremonies and processions that were held in the Calle Alemanes.\textsuperscript{14} Enlightenment historians criticised some of these works and, as Antonio Ponz did in 1789, they deplored the clumsiness with which some statues were repaired and the ochre-coloured oil paints, which were used to cover reliefs and sculptures.\textsuperscript{15}

By the end of the nineteenth century, the gradual deterioration of Seville Cathedral had affected the structure, the monumental sculptures and virtually the whole building and its contents. This is clear to see in the calotypes and in the first photographs by Francisco de Leygonier y Haubert (1843), Auguste Beignier (1865), Jean Laurent (1868 and 1872), León Levy (1890), Hauser y Menet (1893) and Rafael Garzón (1898), as well as in the reports drafted by Juan Talavera and Adolfo Fernández Casanova. Casanova was commissioned by the Spanish state to carry out the first emergency works, and he held the

\textsuperscript{13} Archivo General del Arzobispado de Sevilla: Fondo Catedral, Sec. IV, Libro 09614 (274), fol. 96.
\textsuperscript{14} Alv. Recio Mir, "La reforma y restauración de la puerta del Perdón de la catedral de Sevilla de 1578 a 1580", in Laboratorio de Arte 9, 1996, pp. 75-87. Alí Jiménez Martín, "Restauración de dos fachadas de la catedral de Sevilla", in La catedral entre 1434 y 1517. XX Aula Hernán Ruiz, Seville, pp. 77-121.
post of conservator-architect of the Cathedral from 1881 to 1888.\textsuperscript{16} His appointment and the first large-scale works marked the beginning of the monumental restoration of the Cathedral which continued until about 1925. The collapse of the pillar on the southeast corner of the crossing on 1 August 1888, which was photographed by Emilio Beaufy, destroyed the four vaults it had supported and put an end to Fernández Casanova’s position as the director of works, but it did not stop the restoration work. Conservation work continued in the following decades thanks to the joint efforts of the chapter, the Junta de Obras, the head architects and some private donors who helped complete the repairs that were still under way and carry out other absolutely essential work and restoration operations. Joaquín Fernández Ayarragaray, who directed the works until 1900, completed the reconstruction of the lantern and commissioned the sculptor Adolfo López Rodriguez to replace four apostles that had been destroyed in the collapse. Joaquín de la Concha Alcalde, the director from 1900 to 1910, commissioned the same sculptor to create the works in moulded stone and to restore the terracotta works as part of work on the doors of the Adoración de los Reyes (Palos), the Entrada de Jerusalén (Campanilla), the Bapizzerio, the Nacimiento (San Miguel) and the old Perdón. The work lasted from the second half of 1912 to July 1916.\textsuperscript{17} The importance and scope of the restoration, the photographic documentation of which, by González Nandin (1928), is preserved in the Laboratorio de Arte of the Universidad de Sevilla and in the Archivo Mas (1920 and 1931), saved the complex from neglect and from the awful state it had been in. It was also decisive for the preservation of the moulded stone parts and other decorations. Similarly, other historic operations, each in its own time and with varying results, have helped preserve this cultural asset, which is constantly at the mercy of the elements.

The 1980s were a crucial decade for the conservation and management of the heritage of Seville Cathedral for it brought the drafting and gradual development of a management system that was designed to create a “living monument” in terms of both worship and culture. After the architectural complex was included in the list of World Heritage sites in 1986, together with the Alcázar Real and the Archive of the Indies, the state and regional administrations joined forces to work on some huge operations, to which also a number of private institutions contributed financially.\textsuperscript{18} The monograph on the Cathedral, which had


\textsuperscript{17} Mª V. Gómez de Terreros Guardiola, “Obras de Joaquín de la Concha Alcaide en la catedral de Sevil-\textsuperscript{la}”, in Laboratorio de Arte 9, 1996, pp. 209-237.

been published two years previously and awarded a prize as the best book of the year, proved to be of crucial importance in this case. This is because it had given an extremely meticulous analysis of the damage and of the need for conservation and restoration of all the movable and immovable assets.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the state of conservation of the cathedral portals gradually worsened, due to a number of environmental factors. These included the effects of particulate matter and exhaust from combustion engines in the traffic around it, as well as other pollutants from domestic heating systems, which led to a marked deterioration of the stone and of the terracotta statues. The precarious conditions, which had been highlighted by the press since 1981, led to real social alarm, because in addition to the very thick black coating on the Cathedral, there was also a risk of detachments, and the terracotta works showed signs of peeling and cracks. Some experts suggested taking the originals inside the building, where they would be perfectly preserved, and replacing them with copies, thus adopting a solution that had already been used elsewhere. In 1994, the Junta de Andalucía put up wire mesh to protect the niches, reliefs and statues on the doors of the Baptisterio and the Nacimiento. The chapter then also extended the measure to the doors on the front and to the Puerta del Perdón. However, the protection, which was designed to prevent pigeons from nesting, damaged the colony of lesser kestrels that had its habitat in the Cathedral and in the Giralda bell tower. Together with the Consejería de Medio Ambiente, it was then decided to adopt measures so that the falcons could nest in scaffolding holes and in other parts of the complex (fig. 6).

While these emergency operations were under way, reports, analyses and studies were started to find out about and document the causes of the deterioration, in order to draft the necessary preparatory documentation for new restoration work. For the restoration of the Puerta del Perdón, carried out by the Junta of Andalucía in 1991, it was absolutely necessary to remove the four terracotta sculptures (2.30 and 1.50 metres) and put them back in place when the work was done. In 1998, the then Instituto del Patrimonio Histórico E-
Figure 6. Seville Cathedral, Porta de Campanillas. Sculptures and reliefs by Miguel Perrin 1521 -1523
pañol (IPHE), under the Ministry of Culture, drafted a proposal for work on the Puerta del Nacimiento, taking into account, among other things, the study on the two western portals that had been commissioned by the Junta de Andalucía in 1993, with analyses carried out in its laboratories. A full understanding of the environmental context, the composition of the materials and their state of conservation led to the decision to leave the sculpture in its original place. This was in compliance with the directives of the Ley de Patrimonio Histórico Español (Law 16/85 of 25 June of the Patrimonio Histórico Español, Arts. 14 and 18) and of the Athens Charter (Arts. 7 and 8), which consider monumental sculptures as an integral part of the building, from which they must be removed “only insofar as this is essential for their conservation”. The restoration of the Puerta del Nacimiento followed the guidelines of the Restoration Charter, according to which the operation was the first phase, and the first treatment, in a much broader conservation programme. This was designed to ensure the overall preservation of the complex, and included the necessary measures to prevent further deterioration, with scheduled maintenance that was planned and performed taking into account its exposure to the elements.\textsuperscript{21}

In order to ensure the preservation of these items when this restoration was completed in 1999, the IPHE launched a monitoring and maintenance programme, which started two years later while work was under way on the Puerta del Baptisterio. It proved to be an effective alternative for protecting the complex from further deterioration and a preventive conservation plan involving annual campaigns was thus started. Seville Cathedral took on this commitment and later included the eastern portals restored by the Ministry of Culture. In 2006 it completed an operation on the Puerta del Perdón, which, fifteen years after the previous restoration, had accumulated thick deposits of grime and some damage to the terracotta works. The operation involved installing an electrostatic system (already applied to the other four entrances) to prevent birds nesting, and it was followed by restoration of the west and north fronts (2006-2014).\textsuperscript{22} The elimination of traffic and the pedestrianisation of the Avenida de la Constitución (from 2007) had a positive impact on the conservation of the western portals, which nevertheless appear darker than the western entrances, on which the IPHE had also intervened in 2002 and 2004 (fig. 7).

Generally speaking, the stone and terracotta sculptures of the Cathedral are currently in good condition. In-depth knowledge of these elements, the identification of vulnerable zones and constant monitoring of the evolution of deterioration on a monthly and annual basis, all coupled with preventive conservation work, normally carried out for five or six weeks in June and July, make

\textsuperscript{21} C. Cirujano, “Proceso de intervención de las portadas del Nacimiento y del Bautismo de la catedral de Sevilla”, in Bienes Culturales 1, Madrid 2001, pp. 101-120.

\textsuperscript{22} Alf. Jiménez Martín, Restauración de dos fachadas, cit., pp 77-121.
it possible to assess the needs and draft a budget for the following year, thus ensuring the preservation of the building. Seville Cathedral sets aside a certain amount of its annual budget for this programme, independently of other work on the building to reduce damage from infiltrations of water, or to keep the roofs and upper parts in good repair. The Instituto de Patrimonio Cultural de España (IPCE) works directly with the monitoring and maintenance plan, for its technicians are part of the Dirección Técnica, and it carries out analyses in its own laboratories and monitors the operations as they are carried out.

This system of preventive, sustainable and continuous conservation is part of the contemporary history of the monumental complex of terracotta sculptures. The works are still of great relevance because the entrances and vestibule have maintained all their liturgical, educational, pastoral and cultural value and functions and they are fully part of the life of the city, as can be seen in the use of this setting for ceremonies of great importance.

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