

Yuste Galán, Amalia María. *La «señal» del pedrero. Obra y fábrica del claustro de la catedral de Toledo (1383-1485)*. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2022, 360 pp., 84 ilus. [ISBN: 978-84-9096-371-5].

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Amalia María Yuste Galán has published a groundbreaking book on the building history of Toledo cathedral's cloister. She brings together documentary evidence and masons' marks in order to analyse how the cloister structure developed. By focusing on the labour forces at work she revives the rattler of the tools once heard in Toledo. Employing both historical and archaeological approaches, the author reinforces how interdisciplinary research enriches our knowledge of history of art and architecture. Yuste's work covers the period between 1383 and 1485, a singularly prolific span in the cathedral's long construction history. *La «señal» del pedrero* is a culmination of the doctoral research conducted by Yuste, who discloses here her methodology and results.

The book consists of an introduction, three core chapters and the annexes. The annexes contain transcribed documents from the late fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, as well as tables recording the names, salaries, dates, and areas of intervention of individual masons and other workers. They also include plans showing the distribution of marks within the cloister, and an inventory and a catalogue of the most representative types of masons' marks. These annexes are therefore valuable resources in their own right. Yuste provides a novel study of the cloister not only by conducting an in-depth analysis of the cloister masons' marks never done before, but also by combining marks and archival. The author brings a robust data set which opens possibilities for future research. For instance, now that a register of marks from the cloister exists, it can be used for comparative purposes in order to explore the itinerancy of masons in the city, or even the middle peninsular territory.

The introduction of the book discusses the institution called *Obra y Fábrica* ("Work and Construction"), created in the thirteenth century as a response to the organisational demand of the incipient building activity of the cathedral. The *Obra y Fábrica* was responsible for all the organization and administration related to the monetary aspects of construction. This entailed the management of its actual labour forces, as

well as the maintenance of the cathedral buildings, and preparations for liturgical celebrations, among others. The introduction also contains a brief section about the promoters of the cloister's building campaign(s), primarily archbishops and canons.

The first chapter is dedicated to the material resources required by a construction project – stone, transportation gear, tools. The analysis of the quarries where the different varieties of stone were extracted and how the work was organised provide the reader with a more nuanced comprehension of the territorial dimensions of this large-scale building project. Yuste also demonstrates how the urban structural framework could be affected by the constant transportation of material.

As the most visible element of a building, stone is the cloister's protagonist. Yet wood, mortar (sand and lime), water, brick, tiles, esparto grass, hemp, glass, metal, bitumen, etc. are equally important. Moreover, the builders required tools of many types, including instruments for stone carving, scaffoldings, or templates. The employment of each of these elements is described, thus thoroughly covering the complexity of the construction activity. A study of the written sources allows to establish the location of the warehouses and workshops within the cathedral complex, highlighting the importance of having the work site on cathedral grounds.

The second chapter focuses on the human aspect of the construction, especially the masons and their labour. Yuste reconstructs the composition of a medieval workshop from written sources —mainly contracts, leases, payments, or others, all related with the administration of the construction site and its workers. It is precisely thanks to these texts that she identifies a wide range of positions: master builder, masons, master masons, cutters, waiters, servants, labourers, as well as women's roles. Accounting documents also allow us to know the working calendar to which they were subject, with bank days, holidays, and days of work. The book brings to light how workers' wages vary depending on their rank. One of the strongest points of the book is

the information about workers' labour rights and their strikes, a relatively understudied topic. The cathedral of Toledo provided its workers with a retirement salary, compensation for those who suffered accidents at the cathedral site, and even paid days off to attend weddings and funerals (but only for master masons). Yuste's research contributes both to building and social history. This social aspect of architectural history is further uncovered by the discovery of documents in which the stonemasons signed with their individual marks. This suggests that masons' marks may have functioned as signs of identity, perhaps implying status and social differentiation.

In the second part of chapter two, masons' marks are presented as a valuable archaeological source, detailing the cloister's construction activities. Aiming to understand the progression of construction, Yuste employs GIS technology to georeference more than 3500 masons' marks, creating a database and graphic representations of the distribution of marks on a plan. From here, diverse methods of analysis are applied to obtain groups of marks (for example, NEAR), which reveal the way in which masons organised themselves for the construction of the cloister. Additionally, the results make possible the identification of certain groups of marks—and therefore certain groups of people—that likely operated under the direct instruction of the master mason. This information offers a glimpse into the past, allowing us to discover the dynamics of medieval workshops.

The third and final chapter describes the construction history of the cloister and underscores the work of the masons in the chapel of San Blas (whose construction determined the current location of the cathedral cloister), the chapel of San Pedro, and the tower. Here, outstanding personalities of medieval Toledo, such as archbishops Don Pedro Tenorio (1377-1399) or Sancho de Rojas (1415-1422), played crucial roles in the configuration of the cloister, promoting the erection of the aforementioned funerary chapels. Furthermore, the analysis of documents and masons' marks enables Yuste to identify structures discovered in the cloister as part of the hydraulic system that existed in the cathedral. Especially relevant is how the study of the Gothic waterwheel reveals that it was built re-using parts from the pre-existing cistern (*aljibe*) from the *aljama* mosque that once stood on this site. The final section of the chapter is dedicated to the tower, which was also constructed on the base of an earlier tower. This demonstrates the great ability of the workshops to find architectural solutions to suit different situations.

*La «señal» del pedrero* is a fundamental piece of research for understanding the economic, social, and architectural construction of the cathedral's cloister, as well as an essential contribution to the architectural history of the Iberian Peninsula. Yuste is to be praised for her extensive research conducted and the scope of her documentary and archaeological analysis.