

# Preface

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More than a decade has passed since I conceived the idea of writing a book on architectures of Miguel de Cervantes. The scaffolding of the book always eluded me, along with the ways in which I would approach very unstable buildings. Although I published essays on the subject as far back as 2004 and 2009, I began to write this book in earnest in 2016 when *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* helped me to come up with some new ways of approaching the matter. I spoke on the subject at symposia from Princeton to Tromsø, Norway. Then I expanded my reach to include other works in talks I was asked to give from Calgary to Ohio State University. At one point I abandoned the idea of a coherent book because there were numerous aspects that did not seem to come together. In February of 2020, however, as I looked over some two hundred pages of text that had failed to fully coalesce, the book acquired a new urgency: the University of Chicago started considering teaching online instead of in the classroom because of an unexpected worldwide pandemic. I left Chicago and taught for a while from the relative safety of a small cottage in Fairfield, Iowa. When I returned, I found it difficult to access my office as I kept teaching on Zoom. While many were told to shelter in place, I started to consider again the notion of *place as safety* in Cervantes' novels, further incorporating Yi-Fu Tuan's dichotomy between place (safety) and space (freedom, adventure). I also came to consider *pastoral* as a place cordoned off from danger. Safe spaces, in a different sense, are a topic much talked about at universities, although my institution tends to reject the notion in favour of more vigorous dialogue.<sup>1</sup> Does Cervantes' *La Galatea* echo safe spaces or reject them? In addition, I had already dealt with *touch isolation*, another current notion that touches upon early modern works.<sup>2</sup> Other contemporary terms,

such as *cancel culture*, surface but only briefly because they may resonate with today's readers.

As I looked out the window of my Iowa cabin into a kind of bucolic surroundings, albeit eerily silent since few people were venturing out, I redoubled my efforts to understand the role of open spaces, inner places, and even windows in Cervantes' architectures. I began to rewrite or simply shift the angle in some chapters. In some ways, this study is not so distant from my previous work dealing with ekphrasis. After all, an ekphrasis is a description of a work of art, and here I was looking at the description of buildings, at the art of architecture. However, buildings coalesce with the architecture of the text, and in Cervantes' imagination they acquire the metamorphic qualities that Don Quixote utilizes to turn inn into castle.

Cervantes' narratives go much further than the knight's imagination might visualize. I have come to believe that a kind of shapelessness and a kind of haunting aura pervade many of Cervantes' architectures. Although many of Cervantes' structures are shadowed by his Algerian captivity and by his experiences in jail, his edifices are not just a reflection of the trauma and (paradoxically) of the creative power that was triggered in the "wrong" spaces. His architectures arise at times from the superposition of a series of buildings, one upon another; in the transformation of one structure into a different one; or even in the very absence of solid architectures, in phantom-like buildings and in the sudden appearance of an architectural feature, as if materializing from thin air – a corner, a keyhole, some stairs, a window. At the same time, a number of his structures dialogue with the classical architectures encapsulated in Vitruvius' famous text and his Renaissance followers.

It would be impossible to express my heartfelt gratitude to all who have listened to my lectures on the subject and contributed to the shaping of my thoughts. Let me just thank a very few and let this stand for the many. The list is perhaps as unconstructed as Cervantes' own buildings. My deepest gratitude goes to the following colleagues and friends: Randi L. Davenport and Carlos Cabanillas Cárdenas from UiT Norges Arktiske Universitet, who showed me the North and helped me envision the *Persiles* from Tromsø, Norway; Marina Brownlee and Christina Lee, who led me at a Princeton symposium to refine my view of Rome's architectures in the *Persiles*; Elizabeth Davies, Lisa Voigt, and many others at Ohio State University where I first presented some of my ideas on place in the first part of *Don Quixote*; Elizabeth Amann for inviting me to present these initial ideas at the University of Ghent; and María Chouza-Calo for her warm welcome at Central Michigan

University. I owe a debt of gratitude to Mercedes Alcalá-Galán and Steven Hutchinson for influential conversations on the subject; Ryan Giles and Steven Wagschal, whose work always inspires me; Thomas Pavel, a mighty thinker, with whom I taught Cervantes' novel; Armando Maggi, with whom I share a passion for the art of memory; and my many friends and colleagues in Spain, Luciano García-Lorenzo, Julio Vélez-Sainz, and so many more. A special thanks goes to Adrián Saez, to whom I still owe a trip to Venice and a lecture on Cervantes. I would also like to express my gratitude to my former graduate students from Penn State University and the University of Chicago, many now tenured faculty members, from whom I always continue to learn. In particular, I would like to express my appreciation to Carmela Mattza for tracking down many of the images and permissions used in this book. My thanks also go to Juan Pablo Gil-Oslé with whom I had many conversations on climate change and the plague in early modern Iberia. These discussions expanded my way of approaching the topic of architecture. Also I want to single out my research assistants at the University of Chicago over the last decade (all of whom are now assistant or associate professors elsewhere), José Estrada, Felipe Rojas, Medardo Rosario, and Manuel Olmedo Gobante. To Daniela Gutiérrez Flores and Matías Spector I offer my heartfelt thanks for their efforts in putting together this book. And my thanks go to my friends Robert Ducasse, Sam Perrone, and Powell Woods: as we spent time meditating and talking in the confines of my place in Iowa, they ended up listening to some of the ideas for this volume and helped me clarify some of my arguments. Finally, my deepest appreciation goes to the two anonymous readers of the manuscript, who provided invaluable suggestions.

Over the years some of this material, now reworked, has been published in journals and book chapters. Selected sections have been reconfigured and revised to focus on buildings and architectures. They appear scattered throughout this book as sections in several chapters. I would like to thank in particular Bruce Burningham, the editor of *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America*, who has allowed me to include portions of an essay from 2004 and a second from 2009 in this volume. I have also used sections of "Hercules and the Statue Garden: Sansón Carrasco's Ekphrastic Contests in *Don Quijote* II.14," in *Signs of Power in Habsburg Spain and the New World*, edited by Ignacio Lopez and Jason McCloskey (Lanham, MD: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 59–76. The last chapter revises and augments "Cervantes' Hermetic Architectures: The Dangers Outside in *Persiles* IV," in *Cervantes' Persiles and the Travails of Romance*, edited by Marina Brownlee (Toronto: University of Toronto

Press, 2019), 17–34. I would like to thank Bucknell University Press and University of Toronto Press for permission to use this material.

A bibliographical note: since all revisions to this work were done during the pandemic and without access to many of my books, or to those at the University of Chicago library, I have had to make some accommodations. I can only provide chapters rather than pages for Pedro de León, and I have used more than one edition of Covarrubias' *Tesoro* and of Pérez de Moya's *Philosophía secreta*. I have cited from the editions of Cervantes' works that I had at hand, but seldom could I consult others. For *La Galatea*, I used the Cátedra edition by Francisco López Estrada and María Teresa López García-Berdoy; for *Don Quixote*, the Castalia edition by Andrés Murillo; for *Novelas ejemplares*, the Penguin edition by José Montero Reguera; and for the *Persiles*, the Cátedra edition by Carlos Romero Muñoz. In this context my thanks go to Juan Montero, whose many insights and erudition in his edition of *La Galatea* I wished I could have used to a greater extent, but his text was locked away, in these perilous times. My efforts were as futile as those of Don Quixote's search for his walled-in library. Most translations are mine, except those of *La Galatea*, *Don Quixote*, and *Persiles*. For the first I use the 1892 edition of the translation of Gordon Willoughby and James Gyll; for the second, the Charles Jarvis translation, edited by E.C. Riley in Oxford World Classics (2008); and for the third, the electronic version created by T.L. Darby and B.W. Ife. If I either change or add to these translations, the words or sentences will be in italics.