

MIDDLE AGE

THE WORKSHOP OF THE BUILDER'S GUILD FOR THE CATHEDRAL

Lugo medieval town, called Burgo Viejo, evolved around the Cathedral, located in the Southwest corner of the Roman Wall.

During the 11th century, under King Alfonso VI, Lugo underwent development which involved the settlement of new Guilds and the organization of markets and fairs. This process reactivated commerce routes using the previous Roman roads, which at that time were being used as pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela.

In the Middle Age, this plot of land had become a workshop used by the Builder's Guild which had constructed the Cathedral. In fact, during the archaeological excavations, archaeologists found carved chaplets and decorated stones with the mason's marks.

The marks and carvings were made on the stones before they were sent to the workshop and they seem to have different purposes. Some marks were used as signatures, others identified the source of a stone and some were instructions to ensure the correct installation of the pieces.

The study of these marks give us information about the builders and their activity, their techniques and the buildings they worked on.



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THE CATHEDRAL AND ITS GRAVEYARD

The Cathedral workshop was a vital for Lugo in the medieval period. The building of the Romanesque Cathedral began in 1129 and continued until the 15th Century. After consecrating the Cathedral, the bishop allowed burials in and around the temple. There were tombs in the Chapel of the Kings, in the chapel of San Froilán and in the cloister. Some other graveyards were found on the outskirts of this temple: there were anthropomorphic graves linked to the Magdalena church in Recatelo area, some tombs in the Plaza de Santa María and some other graves in Montenegro's house.

In the 12th to 14th Century there was a graveyard underneath this building. It was excavated, moved and studied during the restoration of this building.

Due to the restoration work we know tombs typology. Graves were mainly made of slabs with a trapezoidal, rectangular or fusiform shape. Each tomb was adapted to the size and shape of the corpse. Therefore we can determine which graves were made for adults and which ones were made for children. We also know that some tombs were reused, a fact that suggests that several members of the same family would have been buried in the same grave.

We can also determine things about the people who were buried here because the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Santiago carried out an anthropological study of the human remains found. Thanks to these surveys we know that the average life expectancy was about 45 years old and that infant and female mortality was very high. Moreover they have discovered that the main traceable pathologies during the middle ages in Lugo were degenerative wear of the spine and oral problems.



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MODERN AGE

URBAN DEVELOPMENT. MUREGA TOWER

An urban development characterized the transition into the Modern Age of Lugo. The town expanded outside the Wall and grew in the area taht the the Santiago gate is and where we are located now. Santiago's gate was and has always been the exit for the pilgrims who walk to Compostela.

It was during this period that the old medieval town lost its importance due to the creation of a new area called Burgo Novo. Until then, the old town used to be the core of the village because it contains the most important political and religious buildings.

The archaeological excavation in this plot of land revealed remains of a Modern Age road. According to the car ruts found in its pavement we know that it was busy and it linked two gates of the Wall: Puerta de Santiago and Puerta Miñá. Moreover archaeological work brought to light remains of a stone platform and the foundations of the tower called Murega or Muriega. This tower was built using the 27th battlement of the Roman Wall and it held public councils in which Lugo citizens took decisions about public issues such as the election of important political positions or the leasing of the butcher shops.

There are also other archaeological remains of the tower under the pavement of the Wall walkway: the tower's foundations, its entrance door and its drainage system.



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CONTEMPORARY AGE

MONTENEGRO'S HOUSE

From the 18th Century this area of Lugo underwent many changes, including the renovation of the square in front of our museum. This modification caused disputes between the City Council and the Montenegro family, who were the original owners of this building.

The Montenegro family built their manor here between 1770 and 1785 and it is a good example of Neoclassical civil architecture because of the predominance of straight lines, the three floors separated by a granite cornice and the three symmetrical windows on each floor, including the loft.

The building stands out for the ornamental use of the splits and triglyphs which protect the windows and doors from the rain. In the main façade there is a relief representing the coat of arms of the Montenegro family.

A shallow building with no architectural value was attached to the manor, it has been used as a house, a sawmill, a shoe shop and a grocery store.

Different war episodes affected the area of the museum and the Wall behind it. Those episodes were related to the French invasion in 1809, to the first Carlist War, between 1833 and 1839, and to the uprising of Colonel Miguel Solís, in 1846.

In 1870 a new access ramp to the Wall replaced the old one, which was found by the archaeologists during the excavation of this site.



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PRESENT AND FUTURE

SANTIAGO'S UNIVERSITY VICE CHANCELLOR OFFICE

At the end of the 20th Century, the University of Santiago de Compostela wanted to increase the scientific and cultural awareness in Lugo, so they installed their Lugo headquarters in the Montenegro's house.

The University chose to buy this building because of its historical value and the location. It is indeed in the heart of the Medieval Town and it is surrounded by three UNESCO World Heritage elements: The Cathedral, the Santiago's Pilgrimage Path and the Roman Wall.

The University entrusted the refurbishing of the old Montenegro's manor to the architects Felipe Peña and Francisco Novoa. They designed a complex structure that had a notable impact on the Wall and respected the urban history of Lugo. The current building integrates contemporary forms and materials respecting local heritage and stonework.

The old house is now used by the University as offices, cultural centre and museum. Therefore the University has given new life to the Old Town contributing to its sustainable development.



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