

THE CASA FERRAZ (FERRAZ HOUSE) OF VALENCIA AND ITS MURAL COLLECTION

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Our object of study is one of the former buildings of the ancient Plaza del Miguelete of Valencia: the Casa Ferraz. This discrete urban palace was a little over a century old when it was demolished due to city planning requirements for the enlargement of the current Plaza de la Reina.

From the Casa Ferraz, a small number of paintings have been conserved which formed part of its wall decoration, which we include in our study.

An exhaustive search in archives and libraries was combined with the oral testimonies of those persons which had some type of involvement with the expropriation of the dwelling, conservation of the paintings, etc. to reach interesting conclusions with respect to the date of construction of the Casa Ferraz and, consequently, the dating of the paintings.

1. THE FERRAZ FAMILY

The Ferraz family settled in Valencia around 1823. Jose Ferraz y Cornel, born in Aragon, married Ana Power O'Brien, an Irish lady, in Cadiz, and they settled in Valencia "devoted to the business of Trade with the Indies, importing colonial goods such as coffee, cocoa, etc.". (Redón, 1958: 8)

Jose Ferraz became "General, was Parliamentary Deputy for Valencia and Zaragoza, Director General of the Treasury, and Minister of Finance, although for a short period of time" (Pérez de los Cobos, 1991: 136). After the premature death of his only son, Jose Guillermo Ferraz y Power, he had no other descendants. All of his property was passed on to his nephew and niece, Joaquin and Antonia Azcón y Ferraz, and later inherited by Ana Penelas Azcón, as both were single, also leaving no descendants. Ana Penelas married Jose Ferraz Turmo III, Marquis of Amposta. Jose Ferraz Penelas succeeded and inherited the estate. He had two brothers and two sisters, three of which lived in the House in the Plaza del Miguelete. Fernando Ferraz died before the expropriation of the building for the enlargement of the Plaza de la Reina. Felix and Maria Teresa were the last occupants of the dwelling and, following expropriation, they moved with their sister to another house owned by the family in the Plaza de Tetuán of Valencia. Jose Ferraz Penelas IV, Marquis of Amposta, married Josefa Cuadrado Pallás, whose successor and heir was Jose Ferraz Cuadrado V, Marquis, who married Maria Cruz Español de la Plana (Pérez de los Cobos, 1991:137). In 2004, Jose Ferraz Cuadrado passed the title of Marquis of Amposta on to his son, Jose Maria Ferraz Español.

2. THE CASA FERRAZ

The so-called Casa Ferraz was located in the Plaza del Miguelete, in front of the Baroque door of the cathedral. It had a second façade which faced the also no longer existing Puñalería Street; forming

part of the group of houses which concealed the south wall of the cathedral.

It was a palatial home which occupied a plot of more than 300 m², with a ground floor which had a spacious entrance hall and two lateral carports; a main stairway which led to the mezzanine; two high-ceilinged floors (main and second floor) and a top floor as an attic, although perfectly inhabitable, which faced the Plaza del Miguelete. On the other side, the house had a flat roof and a tower. The main and second floors were decorated with numerous murals on the ceilings and walls.

As for the dating of the building, the previous Certificate of Occupancy from the Compulsory Purchase Proceedings states "it is a brickwork building which dates back to the beginning of the XIX century". On the other hand, according to the bibliography consulted, the Casa Ferraz was built in the year 1840 (Redón, 1958: 8; Pérez de los Cobos, 1991: 133). From the search performed in the Valencia Municipal Archives, we can affirm that, at the beginning of the XIX century, the area for the future Casa Ferraz was occupied by several buildings belonging to various owners. Jose Ferraz y Cornel, first member of the Ferraz family in Valencia, acquired several of the buildings and requested the demolition and rebuilding of the houses in November 1844.

Jose Ferraz appeared as owner for the first time on 25 November 1844, date on which the architect Timoteo Calbo requested a permit for the demolition and successive rebuilding of house No. 5 of the Plaza del Miguelete, and the area overlooking Puñalería Street. In the elevations of the façades that accompany the file it can be seen how, while all of the part pertaining to the Plaza del Miguelete was owned by Mr. Ferraz, the parte on Puñalería was divided between several different owners: "as for the part of the building facing Puñalería Street, it should be taken into account that it belongs to another House, which can be observed in straw-coloured India ink, all of which owned by the Honourable Mr. Jose Ferraz. The part of the building shown in light pink India ink is owned by different owners."²

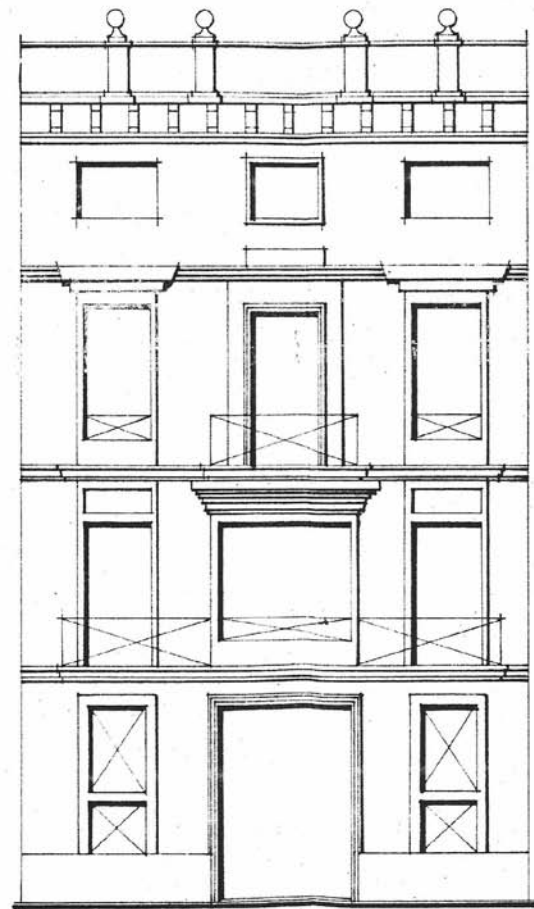
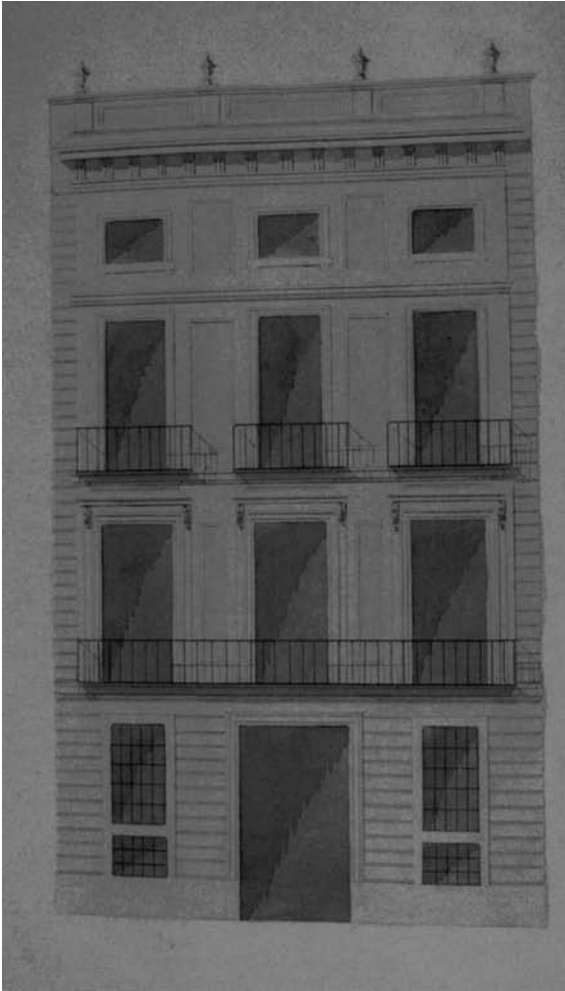


Imagen 1. Casa Ferraz. Alzado de la Plaza del Miguelete de 1844 y 1962 respectivamente (AMV. Serie Policía Urbana, 1844, Exp. 77, Caja 71 y Ayuntamiento de Valencia. Exp. de expropiación forzosa n^o 98/63).

Almost seven years later, in August 1851, Mr. Ferraz seems to have acquired all of the houses overlooking Puñalería Street that correspond to house No. 5 of the Plaza del Miguelete. At this time he requested a permit for the demolition of the façade of newly acquired house No. 9 on Puñalería Street, for the purpose of rebuilding it to the same height as the other two parts³.

For over 80 years from this date, no further files could be found in the Valencia Municipal Archives with regard to this building owned by the Ferraz family. In 1932, a new file was opened for the execution of minor works on the side on Puñalería Street. A different distribution of the façade on Puñalería Street can be seen on the attached plan with regard to that presented in 1844⁴.

In the expropriation file, we find the plans developed in August 1962, which include the plans for both façades, and the floors at each height. Here we can confirm how virtually no significant changes were made to either of the two plans.

3. REFORM OF THE PLAZA DE LA REINA

Initially, the Plaza de la Reina (Queen's Square) arose from of the joining of the part of the old Plaza de Santa Catalina (Saint Catherine Square) and an area from the demolition of the old Convent of Saint Thecla. This area was known as the Plaza de Santa Catalina and also as Horno de la Ceca. It received the name of Plaza de la Reina on 14 January 1878, in honour of Queen Maria de la Mercedes, first

wife of Alfonso XII. During the Republican era, it was known as the Plaza de la Región (Corbín, 1998: 171).

The Plaza de la Reina of Valencia, as we know it, is quite recent. Until its remodelling, only the small Plaza del Miguelete existed in front of the cathedral's façade. The Miguelete Tower, the large Baroque doorway and the Chapter House (currently better known as the Chapel of the Holy Grail) stand out on this façade. The Miguelete Tower and Chapter House were physically separated from the cathedral until 1426 when they were connected to the temple by a new stretch designed by the architect Pere Compte.

Later, at the beginning of the XVIII century Conrad Rudolf, German sculptor, drew up a plan for the doorway which would be completed, faithful to the original design, by the architects Father Tosca and Andrés Robles and the sculptors Stolf and Vergara (Corbín, 1998: 46). "This is how the Baroque main entrance of the Cathedral of Valencia arose, adjacent to the Gothic tower. A discordant collection of buildings, as a result of its different styles, but which create a certain harmony" (Corbín, 1998: 47).

In subsequent periods "an unadorned wall was built, blocking some Gothic oculi and part of a rose window of the Chapter House. With this, it seemed to try to achieve a unity which would give accordance to the then Plaza del Miguelete" (Corbín, 1998: 47).

Halfway through the XIX century, the Convent of Saint Thecla was demolished. This freed up space at the intersection of San Vicente

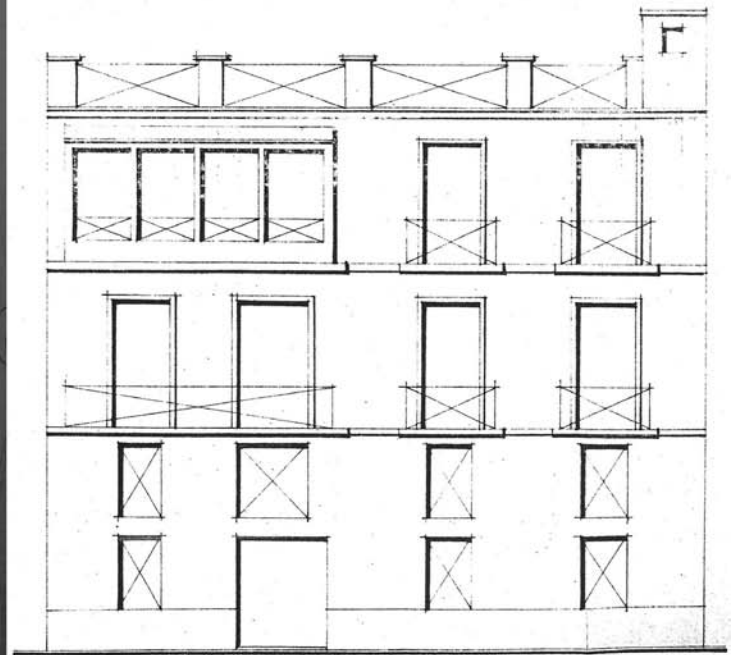


Imagen 2. Casa Ferraz. Alzado de la Calle Puñalera de 1844 y 1962 respectivamente. (AMV. Serie Policía Urbana, 1844, Exp. 77, Caja 71 y Ayuntamiento de Valencia. Exp. de expropiación forzosa nº 98/63).

Street and the Plaza de Santa Catalina and the commercial Zaragoza Street. Since then, more than 100 years passed until the present look of the square was achieved.⁵

A precedent to the interior reform of the city of Valencia, is the elimination of the “fossars” (graveyard) at the end of the XVIII century, with the corresponding construction of cemeteries which freed up space within the city used to carry out small urban remodellings.

Nevertheless, these small adjustments made to the urban network were not nearly sufficient. According to Llopis (2000: 167):

“The overcrowding, unhealthiness and poor living conditions in a large majority of the city dwellings were evident at the end of the first half of the XIX century, just as described in the pages of the Report for the first Expansion Project (Valencia City Hall, 1859: 14 and 15): ‘a multitude of low, four and five-story houses and stairways, built on extremely small pieces of land, set within one another, preventing their poorly distributed rooms from receiving additional ventilation, or light other than that provided by the façades, perhaps overlooking gloomy and dirty streets, never lit by sunlight. In addition, old, damp and half-ruined houses could be observed, whose aspects alone revealed everything that was or that could have occurred in their interior’”.

Valencia is not an exception in this sense as,

“...during the second half of the XIX century, the worsening of the conditions of urban life in the principal Spanish cities makes the following evident: hardships, overcrowding, congestion and their derivatives, epidemics, infections, etc., creating an environment leading to the reform of the city. A regenerative reform that will attempt to give back the city’s lost dignity, opening new spaces in its interior which allow an improvement in the ventilation and sun exposure, wide streets and spacious gardens, and constructing, in short, new and spacious buildings, giving rise to what would be known by the generic name of “Interior Reform””. (Taberner, 2000: 205)

In Valencia, the disentailment of 1836 did not involve a significant urban change. “Only three of the twenty-seven convents within the walls would be demolished. (...) the limited economic capacity of its City Hall would not have even allowed it to preserve the properties initially attributed to it (Llopis and Benito, 2000: 170).

The first two important works in the interior of the city would be the New Market and Plaza Redonda; both intended to improve the commercial centre (Llopis and Benito, 2000 170). No important works for the interior reform would be executed until the eighties of the XIX century. These, in any case, aimed, above all, to relieve traffic in the most transited areas.

The second Disentailment of Pascual Madoz (1854) would not improve the City Hall’s situation, newly forced to sell its properties and renounce a transformation of the city which seemed increasingly necessary. “In the city of Valencia, the only urban services carried out by the city would be the paving of some streets in the centre of the city (Zaragoza, San Vicente, San Fernando,...), while the rest would be executed in a private manner”. (Llopis and Benito, 2000: 172).

In 1855, the architect Antonio Sancho drafted his “General Reform Plan”. However, a year later the City Hall had to renounce, once again, its plans for reform in view of the impossibility of beginning the demolition work on the city walls. They were faced with a series of legal limitations which prevented them from carrying out a true reform in the areas within the city walls. Faced with this situation, the Municipal Corporation opted to momentarily renounce the interior reform, to focus on the expansion of the exterior. It was the year 1857 and the expansion plans of Madrid and Barcelona were used as a stimulus for that of Valencia (Llopis and Benito, 2000: 176).

“The project would not receive the necessary approval from the Ministry of the Interior, which would return it in 1862, deeming the area planned for growth insufficient, so that the City Hall would solve the existing legal problems, adopt geometric planning models coherent with the necessary repeatability of the building types and

incorporate a preliminary plan for the interior reform” (Llopis and Benito, 2000: 177).

Once again, at the same starting point as in 1855, the City Hall decided to deal with the

“reuse of the walled area which ran parallel to the Turia River parapet. (...) The work required to begin this new project would boost the start, in 1865, of the demolition of the medieval walls at the stretch next to the Puerta del Real (Royal Gate). This project, as many others, would be abandoned, in this case as a consequence of the economic difficulties which arose when attempting to confront the necessary expropriations and in view of the conflict unleashed with the neighbours resulting from the modifications that the design of the promenade would bring to their properties (Llopis and Benito, 2000: 177).

“The evident failure of all of these proposals would return attention towards the interior reform, supported by the new urban impulse provided in 1868 by the Revolutionary Council upon the start of the demolition of the convents of Saint Thecla, Saint Christopher and Saint Ann” (Llopis and Benito, 2000: 177). These demolitions initiated the Reform process which would give rise to De la Paz Street (Calle de la Paz) and Plaza de la Reina. In 1869, architects Sorní and Mercader designed a plaza at the junction of Del Mar (Calle del Mar), San Vicente and Zaragoza streets. (V.V.A.A., 2000b: 29)

While the Project for the Plaza de la Reina moved forward, the project for De la Paz Street was never very clear. Nonetheless, the demolition of the Convents of Saint Christopher and Saint Thecla enabled the partial opening up of the street, which was gradually configured as such.

The City Hall, in session on 20 June 1874, agreed to proceed with the subdivision and sale of the sites of the former Convent of Saint Thecla and former of block No. 5 for the expansion of the Plaza de la Reina (Taberner, 2000: 208).

“Block number five (...) was triangular and included the right side -from San Vicente Street, whose entrance was narrow then-, between the Callejón de la Seca (De la Seca Street)—this being the name of the Mint of Valencia, in years past installed there-, which had to give way to the present De la Paz and Del Mar Streets, with the former Convent of Saint Thecla demolished” (Vidal, 1979).

We have two dates for the demolition of block No. 5: the publication of the Official Architect’s Association of the Community of Valencia on the “Tender for urban projects for the Plaza de la Reina” held in 1999 (V.V.A.A., 2000b: 17) states that in 1874, “as a consequence of the permanent opening of De la Paz Street, the demolition of the block between Del Mar and Del Horno de la Ceca Streets was carried out, freeing up a triangular space which constituted the origin of the present plaza.” However, according to Vidal (1979) in January 1878:

“(...) King Alfonso XII married his cousin, Infanta Maria de las Mercedes de Orleans (...), and on the occasion of the royal wedding, the Valencia City Hall organised solemn festivals, with a program which began with the “inauguration of the demolition of the houses which constituted block number five of Del Mar Street, to build the new plaza, which shall be named the Plaza de la Reina, and De la Paz Street”.

Regardless, the truth is that, at first, the demolition was carried out with the sole intention of widening the Plaza de la Reina, seeing as the project for De la Paz Street fell into oblivion until when, in May 1878 “the City Police Commission, commissioned District Architect Jose Quinzá to ‘draw up the plan (of De la Paz Street), taking the buildings on the sites of Saint Thecla and Saint Christopher into account and giving the street the same width of fourteen metres’. (...) Completely opening the street increased its significance considerably: new and

sumptuous buildings were built, an important commercial activity was generated and it was converted into a road with dense traffic” (Taberner, 2000: 208-209).

“The Plaza de la Reina, expanded in 1878, was small and triangular, surrounded by the most elegant buildings. It was centred around its monumental clock and in addition to the open space in front of Saint Catherine, De la Paz and San Vicente streets converged there, which were then the best streets of the city” (Llopis and Benito, 2000: 185).

In November 1882, the City Police Commission entrusted municipal architect Vicente Marzo with a study for the regularisation of the Plaza de la Reina (Corbín, 1998: 150).

In 1891, the architect Luis Ferreres presented, upon request of the Valencia City Hall, a “Project for the Opening of a large road between the former gates of Ruzafa and Saint Joseph”. It was the opening of a 30 m wide avenue that extended between the Ruzafa Gate (Puerta de Ruzafa) and the Saint Joseph Bridge. The “New Expansion of the Plaza de la Reina” was included in this project. It was an extremely radical plan which was never approved (Corbín, 1998: 174; Gaja, 2001: 175). In 1910, Rafael Alfaro presented his project. (V.V.A.A., 2000b: 29).

From 1912, year in which municipal architect Federico Aymami’s project was approved for the interior reform of Valencia, numerous projects were drafted by both the City Hall and independent architects (Corbín, 1998: 175). Aymami’s project aimed to “achieve fluid intracity mobility, the creation of open public spaces and the provision of services such as markets and schools in the neighbourhoods, albeit in exchange for a new appearance in the historic city. The project was only partially executed in some openings such as Del Oeste Avenue (Avenida del Oeste)” (Gaja, 2001: 175). The Interior Reform Plan of 1928 by architect Javier Goerlich, approved by the City Hall, established a line of continuity with previous projects, however, with a more modest approach (Gaja, 2001: 175-176).

Meanwhile, the importance of the Plaza de la Reina increased throughout the years, “to the point of converting it into a centre for official ceremonies, the reception of important individuals, an especially appropriate place for festivities, the passing of processions, whether they be religious, civic or carnival parades, as well as the preferred arena for the plantà ceremony of the typical Fallas of San José (Feast of Saint Joseph)” (Corbín, 1998: 171).

“The new projects and demolitions started in 1931, began defining, little by little, a widening in the area which connects with De la Paz Street, always conserving the building lines of the blocks behind it, especially those overlooking the former Zaragoza Street which had been used by the Austrian architect and sculptor, Conrad Rudolf, to design and build, between 1701 and 1741, one of the most modern and revolutionary projects of the city, the curved façade of the Baroque door of the previously mentioned Cathedral” (V.V.A.A., 2000a: 69). “In 1935, a new project for the expansion of the Plaza de la Reina is considered -then called the Plaza de la Región-including the extension of De la Paz Street, with the consequent demolition of Saint Catalina Church. This project was met with the direct opposition of the Architects Association of Valencia, which proposed some alternatives to the municipal technicians’ proposal” (V.V.A.A., 1986: 74).

“At the end of the eighties of this century, successive expansions were made to this first square, which did not reflect any of the proposals of Federico Aymami (1908 and 1910), Rafael Alfaro (1910), Carlos Carbonell (1921) or the subsequent proposals of Javier Goerlich (1929⁶, 1935, 1942, 1950)” (V.V.A.A., 2000b: 17-18).

“(...) the proposals from these years, (...) conserved a small square, the Plaza del Micalet⁷, next to the cathedral and a main square, the

Plaza de la Reina, with a rectangular, almost square shape, both separated by one of the still-standing blocks, or a new body of buildings which would take their place. Also appearing as a constant is the maintenance of the final stretch of Zaragoza Street, conserving its building lines or modifying them according to the proposals, with the intention of framing the Baroque Hierros Doorway or widening the angle of view to reach the Miguelete" (V.V.A.A., 2000b: 18).

Mr. Goerlich⁸ in his 1950 speech at the Valencia Cultural Centre on "The Expansion of the Plaza de la Reina", stated that the Plaza del Miguelete offered a strong historical-artistic character, and unless there were any very justifiable urban planning reasons, he did not recommend its demolition.

Nevertheless, the possibility of enlarging the square as far as the cathedral or conserving the Plaza del Miguelete seem to have been the source of continuous debate. Mailboxes were even placed in the City Hall to gather the citizens' ideas. On this occasion, the idea of a Plaza Grande (Great Square) won, reaching as far as the cathedral (Corbín, 1998: 176).

"In the year 1950, the entire city was excited about the 'square's theme and there is a considerable diversity of opinions', according to the newspaper *Las Provincias*, in one of its headlines during the month of February. For this reason, and looking to relaunch the recurrent theme of a great square for the citizens, already baptised as the Plaza de la Reina, the City Hall called a national tender for ideas to define its development and buildings (...) The eighteen proposals presented 'demolished' the building lines and historic buildings and led to the creation of a large rectangular square, divided, or not, into different environments". (V.V.A.A., 2000b: 69)

The tender winner was Vicente Figuerola, however the City Hall decided not to carry out the proposal chosen, (V.V.A.A., 2000b: 18).

"Five years later, with the City Hall already decided on one large square (...) the magazine *Architecture*, at the time called *National Architecture Magazine* (*Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*) dedicated one of its very interesting, enlightening and monographic critic sessions on this square's architecture. In it, around twenty professionals from Madrid and Valencia (...) attempted to define the optimal size of the single square or two squares, circulation and monumental, (...) in the April 1956 issue" (V.V.A.A., 2000b: 69-70).

The City Hall continued studying a definitive solution for the square. Thus, it arrived at the building lines presented for approval from the Central Local Healthcare Commission, preserving the idea of plaza grande (Corbín, 1998: 176).

During all of these years, although at an extraordinarily slow rhythm, the different streets and squares began to disappear, giving rise to a new vision of the buildings that survived the reform. The Ferraz family, in its appraisal document (1963), stated that the house overlooked the Plaza de la Reina for more than 10 years.

In view of the slowness of the expropriations, it was decided that some partial development work be executed. At first, a rectangular pond, gardens and trees were placed and later the area was finished off with a circular fountain (Corbín, 1998: 177). "The inauguration of the luminous fountain of the Plaza de la Reina took place during the great Fallas Week on 16 March 1959" (Corbín, 1998: 180).

During these years and until "1979, the interventions in Ciutat Vella are governed by the determinations in the Partial Plans –significantly called 'Partial Sheets'– approved in 1956 and 1958" (Gaja, 2001: 176). In fact, the expropriation and demolition of the block of houses closest to the cathedral is not agreed on until the approval of Partial Plan number 1-3-4 (development of the General Plan for Urban Development of 1946) in December of 1956. The expropriation of the Casa Ferraz began in March of 1957.

According to the appraisal document included by the Ferraz family in Compulsory Purchase Proceedings No. 98/63 of Valencia City Hall,

"on 5 January 1962, an agreement was made to initiate the proceedings for an urgent expropriation of the properties at No. 30 of Zaragoza Street and No. 2 of the Plaza del Miguelete. (...) By decree No. 1,727 of 5 July 1962, published in the Official State Gazette on the 20th of that same month, the urgency of the occupation of the two aforementioned buildings was declared, mentioning in its statement of reasons, approval by the Central Local Healthcare Commission of the Reform Project of the Plaza de la Reina, and the inability to expropriate the two aforementioned buildings, which represented a considerable delay for the work. (...) By proclamation of the Mayor on 18 August 1962, the tenth of September was chosen for the drawing up of the proceedings prior to occupation".

Finally, during the year 1963, the expropriation and demolition of the two last buildings was carried out for the expansion of the Plaza de la Reina. The Casa Ferraz (building No. 2 of the Plaza del Miguelete and 5 of Puñalería), was the last expropriation: the expropriation began in March of 1957, was declared urgent by decree of 5 July 1962, and the delivery of the key to the main door was carried out on 12 March 1963.

In spite of the urgency of the expropriation for the reform of the Plaza de la Reina, the proceedings for the fencing and enclosure of the site located between Campaneros Street, the Plaza del Miguelete, Zaragoza Street and the former Puñalería Street were instituted in January of 1966⁹. We are certain that in July 1963 the building had already been demolished.¹⁰ This makes us think of an abandoned piece of land in the middle of the urban centre for, at least, two and a half years.

After the disappearance of last stretch of Zaragoza Street, which framed the cathedral's Baroque door, this door was moved laterally and reduced in the mass of the south wall of the cathedral. The façades of the old Zaragoza (during most of the XIX century) and Campaneros Streets, went from looking out onto narrow streets, where they were barely noticed, to becoming the principal façades in a large open space, and, as a result, had also seemed to have gotten smaller.

In 1968, the construction of an underground car park was approved in the Plaza de la Reina. The fountain installed in 1959 had to be dismantled for its construction and it was decided that it be transported to the Royal Gardens, where it still remains. "The inauguration of the underground car park took place during the festival of Saint Joseph in the year 1970" (Corbín, 1998: 181).

The development of the square was finished in 1973, just as we see it today (V.V.A.A., 2000b: 70). However, the present solution does not work when it comes to holding ceremonies and festivities. The Plaza de la Reina is actually a large space practically invaded by traffic.

"(...) this Plaza de la Reina originally designed for the relaxation and recreation of the citizens with elements of a main square, is a completely different reality: the traffic, especially that of the city buses and the intense vehicular circulation throughout the entire area, with the exception of the area next to the walls of the Cathedral, has completely transformed its current urban landscape with regards to what was previously intended (Corbín, 1998: 204).

Between 1998 and 1999, the Official Architects Association of the Community of Valencia (C.O.A.C.V.) called a new

"Tender for urban projects for the Plaza de la Reina. (...) by the COACV, aimed to 'offer the city of Valencia, cap i casal (capital) of the Community, a proposal for urban intervention that organises and gives form to the Plaza de la Reina enabling the recovery of the

urban space as an emblematic part of the city and which puts an end to a long process of unsatisfactory reforms” (V.V.A.A., 2000b: 16).

This tender proposed the pedestrianisation of the square, with the corresponding solutions for traffic, public transport and parking. It identified the intense vehicular traffic as one of the conflicts which affects the entire historical centre and especially the Plaza de la Reina.

The ruling of the jury took place on 21 May 1999 during Architecture Week. The project that won first place was formalised as a proposal by the C.O.A.C.V. and official notification was granted to the City Hall on 17 September of the same year.

As of today, the Plaza de la Reina is a large open space to which the people of Valencia have already become accustomed. Perhaps, for this reason, they do not notice the obvious irregularity of the square, legacy of the “design” of the former Zaragoza and Campaneros streets. “(...) once again, I ask whether our sensitivity has not radically changed during the last fifty years, in which the scale of the city and of the territory, has rocketed, changing our norms of proportion to a great extent” (V.V.A.A., 2000b: 19).

4. THE PAINTINGS: DATING AND AUTHORSHIP

The authorship of the collection of paintings from the Casa Ferraz is, to date, unknown; nevertheless, they have been attributed to students of the School of Vicente Lopez.

According to Manuel Diago Benlloch¹¹, full professor of Drawing, the majority of the paintings are the work of Vicente Lopez and those directed by him.

Architect Manuel Peris Vallbona, in the appraisal document presented by the Ferraz family to the Valencia City Hall, affirms that they are “extremely valuable distemper paintings, by Vicente López, which were adhered to several rooms on the main floors, whose conservation was attended to by the Directorate General of Fine Arts, having been transported using an appropriate technique, to be transferred to the Provincial Museum”.

In professor Roig d’Alos’s opinion¹², based on the execution technique, they would be the paintings of Vicente Lopez and some of the collaborators from his school.

According to Díez (1999: 360 Vol. 2), author of the most comprehensive monograph about Vicente Lopez published thus far,

“the human models, compositional resources and aesthetic language come from the master; however their mediocre quality only allows them to be attributed to one of his less skilful disciples, without it being possible to determine his identity at this time. Carelessness in the drawing and a certain exaggeration of features and limbs somewhat resemble the style of Vicente Castelló, although his quality is –even in his worst compositions- quite superior to that of these paintings, otherwise conventional and extraordinarily mistreated”.

In fact, the only direct link between these paintings and Vicente López found thus far is a drawing¹³ which served as a model for the main figures in the composition on one of the ceilings. We owe the attribution and dating of this drawing to Jose Luís Díez, who claims that the drawing may be attributable to López, who would have provided the design as a model to the author of the paintings, and possibly dating this drawing around the frescos of the Royal Palace of Madrid. That is, around 1827-1830 (Díez, 1999: 360 Vol.2).

“Taking into account that the first member of the Ferraz family in Valencia was Mr. Jose Ferraz y Cornel; and who, according to the documents found in the Municipal Archives of the city,

acquired and rebuilt the house in the Plaza del Miguelete and its area corresponding to Puñalería Street halfway through the XIX century, the paintings must be dated after this date” (del Valle and Roig, 2006: 1488).

Mr. Ferraz requested the demolition and rebuilding of the houses in 1844, and we have evidence that the work continued in 1851¹⁴. Vicente López died in Madrid in 1850 at the age of 77, this being the reason why we are able to rule out an active collaboration in the execution of the paintings.

Nonetheless, the drawing also may have been provided by his son Bernardo. We must not forget that Bernardo, Vicente López’s oldest son, was married to a Valencian and inherited the family home located on the neighbouring Del Mar Street in the city of Valencia. This house belonged to the group of buildings on this street which were replaced around 1900 (Corbin, 1992: 246).

The fact that Vicente López himself did two portraits for Mr. Jose Ferraz in the years 1840 and 1845 (Díez, 1999: 761 and 779 Vol.2) tells us of a possible relation between the Ferraz family and the López family. The Ferraz family has in its possession documents (invoices) which verify the authorship of these portraits but, unfortunately, the same is not true for the wall decorations.

It is perhaps more feasible that the authorship (probably shared with less skilful collaborators) can be attributed to Vicente Castelló i Amat (1787-1860), disciple and collaborator from López’s first studio in Valencia. This painter worked his entire life in the regions of Valencia and Murcia and did prolific work.

5. PRESENTLY CONSERVED DECORATIONS.

There are currently nine paintings from the Casa Ferraz in the Museum of Fine Arts. It is collection of five ceilings and four fragments extracted from the walls. There is no doubt regarding the origin of the nine paintings as all of them have been located in the photographs of the interior of the house provided by the Ferraz family and the Valencia City Hall.

We can read about their incorporation into the museum’s collection in the magazine “Archivo de Arte Valenciano (Archives of Valencian Art) from the year 1964:

“... admission in the Museum, by order of the Directorate General of Fine Arts, of nine murals, transferred to canvas by Mr. Roig d’Alós, from the house of the Ferraz family, demolished as a result of urban demands in the area surrounding the Cathedral. They have been installed in several rooms of the Museum, especially in the rooms dedicated to the academic art to which they belong, in the circle of Vicente López and his sons”.

As for the style to which they belong, we can indeed speak of an academic art in which we discover a late Baroque language. The paintings from the Casa Ferraz belong to this group of works produced by

“painters sometimes difficult to classify, which are generally situated in that somewhat ambiguous area between Baroque tradition and Neoclassicism, both tendencies frequently participating, and which we could label as ‘academic classicism’. (...) With the exception of Vicente López and some other figures of a certain dignity, they are generally unknown painters who were diversely classified in the field of art history”. (Arias, 1999: 180).

López is characterised by his longevity, his extensive work and for having been barely influenced by the neoclassic and romantic trends. This style carries on, at least for some time, alive in his disciples; both in those from his studio in Madrid, and those from the Saint Charles Academy of Valencia.



Imagen 3. Decoración del techo del Salón de Gala de la Casa Ferraz.

As for the subject matter, the paintings which decorated the house were mostly purely decorative motifs with some central scenes in which diverse allegories were represented.¹⁵

At this time, we are working on the iconographic analysis of the fragments from the murals from Casa Ferraz which are presently in the museum. For this, besides one exception, we only have general photographs in black and white. As it can be deduced by the readers, in some cases it is difficult to distinguish the different attributes of the figures.

It is not possible for us to obtain correct documentation for these paintings because documentation for only one of them can be found outside the museum depository. The rest are found in the back of one of the rooms temporarily fit out as a depository during the refurbishment of the Saint Pius V Museum. Given the provisional nature of such storage, in an attempt to make the best use of the space, it will not be possible for us to gain access until all of the pieces occupying this space are transferred to their permanent depository. As an advance, we are publishing a picture of one of the ceilings here, just as it was found in the Casa Ferraz, prior to its removal. [FIGURE 3]

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NOTES

1. Jose Guillermo Ferraz died at the age of 19 when he was in his third year of Law at the University of Madrid. See DIEZ, 1999, p. 141 and ss. Vol.2.

2. File from the City Police Series in the Valencia City Hall (1844) File. 77/Box 71.

3. File from the City Police Series in the Valencia City Hall (1851) File. 309/Box 78.

4. File from the City Police Series in the Valencia City Hall (1932) File. 12169/Box 13.

5. In 1968, the convent of Saint Thecla is demolished and it is only in 1973 that the development work for the present Plaza de la Reina is considered finished.

6. According to Gaja, this project would be from 1928.

7. Or Miguelete.

8. Municipal Architect of Valencia.

9. File from the City Police Series in the Valencia City Hall (1966) File. 119/Box 687.

10. 'The restored murals of Vicente López,' in the newspaper *Las Provincias* (07/16/1963).

11. Manuel Diago performed the expert's report and valuation of the paintings which adorn the house by request of its last owner, Felix Ferraz. Refer to the Certificate conferred by Manuel Diago in Compulsory Purchase Proceedings No. 98/63 of the Valencia City Hall.

12. Professor Roig directed the restoration work for the removal of the paintings by order of the Directorate General of Fine Arts. Refer to the article "Murals by Vicente López, restored" in the newspaper *Las Provincias* from 16 July 1963.

13. The drawing in question is titled "El Tiempo salvaguardando el Conocimiento (Time safeguarding Knowledge)". Pencil/White Paper; 170x108; Madrid. National Library (inventory No: 4065).

14. Files from the City Police Series in the Valencia City Hall. (1844) File. 77/box 71 and (1851) File. 309/box 78.

15. We understand an allegory to be the representation of an abstract idea through the use of figures, attributes or specific characters, for example, the representation of poetry, music or divinatory art through the God Apollo.

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Versión española

TÍTULO: *La Casa Ferraz de Valencia y su conjunto mural*

RESUMEN: *Nuestro objeto de estudio es uno de los desaparecidos inmuebles de la antigua Plaza del Miguelete de Valencia: la Casa Ferraz. Este discreto palacio urbano contaba con poco más de un siglo de vida cuando fue derruido por exigencias urbanísticas para la ampliación de la actual Plaza de la Reina.*

De la Casa Ferraz se conservan un pequeño número de pinturas que formaban parte de su decoración mural, que incluimos en nuestro estudio.

A una exhaustiva búsqueda en archivos y bibliotecas se unen los testimonios orales de quienes tuvieron algún tipo de relación con la expropiación de la vivienda, conservación de las pinturas, etc. para alcanzar interesantes conclusiones acerca de la fecha de edificación de la Casa Ferraz y, en consecuencia, de la datación de las pinturas.

PALABRAS CLAVES: *historia, valencia, ferraz, urbanismo, plaza de la reina, expropiaciones, pintura mural, arranques*