

The balcony and the oriel in pre-modern architecture: the case of study of the old *intramoenia* Valencia.

An historical, compositive, and material culture's study.

Abstract:

This thesis is a research about balcony and oriels under an historical and compositive point of view. It analyses these elements as words of the architectural pre-modern lexicon, especially in the architectural dialect of the old intramoenia city of Valencia, with special interest towards the urban minor architecture.

In the first section the balcony has been studied as functional element of the closing features of the pre-modern urban fronts, managing to demonstrate its climatic coherence in the city of Valencia, fact that justifies the profusion of its use in the pre-modern architecture of the southern Mediterranean basin area, considering it like spontaneously sustainable at an energetic level. Concurrently, on the basis of the same analytical process, the oriel has been identified as a climatic incoherent solution, justifying its presence in Valencia as an architectural solution used, on the one hand, to follow an artistic and cultural mode of the 19th century, and, on the other hand, as a compositive remedy against the crushed appearance of Valencian urban fronts, plagued with individual balconies.

The central section goes on the normative system: this study has been necessary in order to understand and determine the social and legal environment that allowed the spread of the balcony as element of the Valencian minor architecture. On the other side, thanks to the analysis of the plans submitted with the historical buildings permits stored in the Historical Municipal Archive of Valencia, clear patterns of use of balconies and oriels in the urban fronts' composition have been identified, attesting the importance of the balcony as bordering element between the private space, the interior of the dwellings, and the public space, the street and the urban landscape.

The last section presents the Valencian balcony as a material architectural element, that is to say, as a constructed feature, studying firstly the specific building materials, their production's methods and supply practice between XVIIth and XIXth centuries, period in which balcony appeared and occupied a relevant position in the vertical urban form of the city of Valencia. Thanks to the analysis of the commercial routes, Spanish and European production sites, that were supplying with iron the city of Valencia, have been identified. This fact projects Valencia's balconies into a firm European dimension, as elements born from historical commercial exchanges across the entire continent. Finally, thanks to a careful catalogue of the contemporary urban architectural heritage, a definition of the constitutive elements of Valencian balconies and oriels has been presented and a chronological characterization of the existing models has been located.