

LEGITIMACY OF MONUMENTAL RECONSTRUCTION. QUESTION OF EPOCHS

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ABSTRACT

Theoretical protection – that derived from the conservationist theories that have nourished, to a large extent, the international recommendations, and conventions on the protection of the historical and cultural heritage – as well as the legal protection of a monument, are as necessary as they are futile if they are not seconded by action. This action, inexorably, is aimed at some of the interventions that, for decades, converged in the concept of "restoration".

Therefore, the object of the proposed work lies in the verification that there is no protection without knowledge or recognition of monumental values, which do not imply a material intervention, and that these are circumscribed both to the current regulations and to the current theoretical criteria.

To this end and given that the Aljafería Palace in Zaragoza is one of the most intervened monuments by the Ministry of Culture between 1954 and 1983, it is proposed to make an extract of the interventions carried out on the complex, after centuries of mutilations, variations, and reconstructions. All for the benefit of the recovery of diminished artistic and historical, architectural, and cultural values.

Likewise, an attempt will be made to demonstrate, through the analysis of the interventions carried out in the monument, how both cultural and legal aspects have been necessary "accomplices" of the application

of conservationist theories. Therefore, it is intended to show how some historical interventions can only be understood through knowledge of the historical context of the time in which they were carried out.

KEYWORDS

Conservation; heritage protection; restoration theories

1. INTRODUCTION¹

The Aljafería Palace in Zaragoza, Spain, is one of the historical-artistic monuments with the most restoration and conservation interventions over the centuries. Since its construction in the 11th century by the rulers of the Taifa of Zaragoza, the palace has undergone significant changes due to all kinds of defacement, modifications, extensions, demolitions, and constructions.

Like much of the defensive architecture, the palace has had - and in some cases, suffered - a certain functional diversity, being a fortified residence, agricultural estate, and ceremonial space, and has been used by both Muslim and Christian monarchs. The 20th-century restorations have revealed successive constructive and destructive stages, carried out by the Taifa kings, Jaime I, Pedro III and IV, as well as the Catholic Monarchs. The works

have included the recovery of damaged areas, the consolidation of historical remains, the reconstruction of walls, and the restoration of architectural and decorative elements such as arches, plasterwork, coffered ceilings, and mosaics.

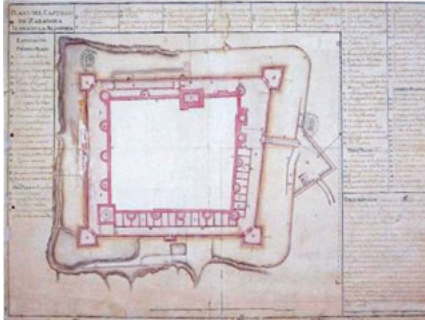


Figure 1. General plan of the Aljafería by Manuel Marín. (1757). Source: www.castillosdearagon.es, Military Historical Service.

Despite the successive transformations, the Aljafería Palace, -or, perhaps because of this- represents one of the most significant examples of the nexus between Muslim and Christian art in Spain. The interventions in the palace involved projects from 1954 to 1998, in various areas, such as the Mosque, the Patio of Santa Isabel, the Royal Hall, and the external walls.

For this reason, the objective of this manuscript attempts to analyze some of the most significant interventions carried out in the Palace, within a certain historical, legal, and theoretical framework, in which the legislative development coincides, reinforcing the idea of the restoration process as a guarantor of all the values contained in the asset, not exempt from controversies in terms of the scope and meaning of the intervention.

In general, the main tasks focused on

the cleaning and restoration of paintings, the repairs of geometric patterns, murals and decorative elements. In these conservation tasks, the projects aimed to respect the original structures applying scientific rigor in decision-making. However, one of the most complex restorations involved the demolition of additions made in the adaptation of the building as a military barracks, as well as the recovery of original elements such as the 16th-century moat.

2. THEORETICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK (legal and restoration theories)

During the thirty years that marked the most active stage of the Aljafería Palace, between 1954 and 1983, several laws and royal decrees that shaped the legal and constructive situation of the monumental heritage of the century were in force in Spain.

In 1954, the year of the return of the Palace to the Ministry of Culture, the Law on Defense, Conservation and Increase of the National Historical Heritage of 13 May 1933, and its Regulation of 16 April 1936, were in force. This law consolidated the concept of heritage as a legacy, intrinsically including connotations such as historical, artistic, or cultural. To such an extent that, at present, we refer to the "patrimonial" value of a good when historical, artistic, or cultural values are combined in it.

From this Law, the extensive approaches of Cultural Heritage are verified, as an aggregator of all the variables that define man and his activity, and that Alois Riegl (Riegl, A. 1903) had defined at the beginning of the 20th century.

In the specific field of administrative competences, the 1933 Law consecrated the General Directorate of Fine Arts with the responsibility of overseeing the state of conservation of heritage assets. And, in this company, one of the most complex companies of the century continues to

be forged, such as the elaboration of the Monumental Catalogue, which Gómez Moreno would start in 1901, and which for decades was nourished by fundamental information about the Spanish heritage ensemble.

Following the promulgation of the 1933 Law, some normative attempts followed, marked by the effects of the Civil War, such as the Decree of 22 April 1938, on the reorganization of the Service for the Recovery of the National Artistic Heritage.

But, one of these regulations, approved in 1955, is the Law of December 22 on the conservation of historical-artistic heritage, according to which article 26 of the Law of 1933 is modified, which in 26 words explained the complex situation of the monuments subjected to all types of mutilations derived from the change of function, to go on to expose the limitations that could be applied derived from being considered in "danger of destruction or deterioration" or uses incompatible with their "artistic or historical value and significance.". This modification of the 1933 rule is directly related to the works carried out in the Aljafería Palace, between the 18th century and 1954, with its adaptation to military use and the destruction of a large part of the decorative, defensive and functional elements of the Muslim palace.

Although numerous Royal Decrees were promulgated in various fields (urban planning, artistic, etc.) during those thirty years, some directly affected the typology of the Palace. Notably, the Decree of April 22, 1949, on the Protection of Spanish Castles, that was one of the largest declarations of generic Monuments. Despite its ambiguity and, regardless of aspects such as dating, state of conservation or geographical location of the properties, it was one of the most instrumentalized.

Its application resulted in the gradual declaration of approximately three thousand and fifty-five defensive constructions, mainly castles and defensive remains.

3. SITUATION OF RESTORATION THEORIES BETWEEN 1954 AND 1983

The prevailing restoration theories between 1954 and 1983 show a lack of consensus on the ideal perspective from which to undertake the intervention process. This diversity, as well as critical positions, influenced the generation of a legal doctrine as well as the practice of restoration at an international level.

Under the wake of historical restoration, represented by Luca Beltrami (1854-1933) who, although influenced by Viollet le Duc, adopt other considerations more linked to the moment as a container of all the constructive phases, which influence its transformation, and which, therefore, must be respected in the intervention and, at the same time, by some of the ideas of John Ruskin, the idea of preserving historical authenticity is imposed, against creative positions.

However, as the 20th century progressed, scientific restoration or "modern restoration" began to take hold, driven by the imprint of Camilo Boito and Gustavo Giovannoni, manifesting itself in the Athens Charter of 1931. In this period, emphasis is placed on the importance of applying a scientific approach that would lead, years later, to modern restoration. After World War II, the remnants of these theories enter crisis, and what would be known as the theory of critical restoration represented by Cesare Brandi (Theory of Restoration, 1963) and Roberto Pane (participates in the drafting of the Venice Charter, 1964) would begin to be glimpsed. Artistic restoration is a reflective activity that arises in times of cultural crisis, at times when institutional, political, ideological, social and cultural structures are being reconsidered. In summary, the period from 1954 to 1983 was a time of change and evolution in restoration theories. From historical restoration to scientific restoration and Brandi's restoration theory, these theories have influenced how restoration is approached at an international level.

Some of the images that illustrate the evolution of restoration theories for much of the 20th century correspond to the most illustrious monuments of Spanish Cultural Heritage. One of them corresponds to the planimetry carried out by Ricardo Velázquez Bosco of the façade of the Villaviciosa Chapel of the Mosque of Cordoba, which invites the reading the Spanish translated version of the book "Theory of Restoration" by Cesare Brandi (Brandi, C. 1988).

The works carried out in the Aljafería of Zaragoza focused, fundamentally, on the recovery of the areas covered and/or damaged by the multiple works carried out for the adaptation of the palace into a barracks. Therefore, the tasks and efforts were directed towards the exploration, consolidation and repair of the vestiges of the old Muslim Palace-Castle in several of the halls and in the Patio of Santa Isabel. Likewise, huge reconstruction works were carried out on the walls in the area bordering the castle gardens.

The fact that the complex housed a barracks of the Ministry of the Army led to the good maintenance of the roofs and the poor conservation of the historical vestiges, due to the reforms carried out for its adaptation to the new function.

The Aljafería Palace was declared a Historical-Artistic Monument by the joint declaration decree of 3 June 1931 and, since then, it has been the subject of numerous studies, from various perspectives, historical, artistic, pictorial, or archaeological (Cabañero Subiza, B. 2004).

In its multiple processes of adaptation, from its construction by the rulers of the Taifa of Zaragoza, in the 11th century, this monumental complex, comes to our days after centuries of mutilations, modifications, extensions, demolitions and construction, which disfigured many of the artistic values embodied by the Muslim craftsmen.

Surely, for this reason, among other issues, and as we have mentioned previously with respect to the selection of monuments, the Aljafería Palace in Zaragoza is among the one

hundred and four most intervened monuments until 1985 by the Ministry of Culture, with twenty-four intervention projects between the years 1954 and 1983. This implies that it is among the first fifty most restored goods until that date, after monuments as emblematic as the Monastery of Yuste in Cuacos (Cáceres), the Alcazaba of Mérida (Badajoz) or the Walls of Ávila.

The multiple restoration and consolidation campaigns, carried out during the 20th century in the Muslim Palace, would reveal large successive constructive and destructive stages, carried out by the Taifa kings, by King Jaime I, by Pedro III and Pedro IV, up to those carried out by the Catholic Monarchs, from the construction of this complex on another Caliphal Palace in the 11th century.

The structure of the palace, dominated by a square plan, around the Patio of Santa Isabel, with monumental walls and semi-circular towers, refers to the Umayyad and Maghreb castles (Juez Juarros, F. 1998). From the 11th century, only the main central dependencies are preserved, among which are the ceremonial, residential and leisure halls, whose multiplicity of uses is characteristic of Islamic palace architecture. The northern hall was intended for the throne room, and the adjoining spaces (alhanías) were auxiliary rooms, raised and separated by curtains. Next to the hall was the polygonal plan oratory, which was for the private use of the monarch's family, and in whose decoration the Cordovan influence was reflected. On the longitudinal sides of the patio were the service rooms, such as kitchen and secondary rooms.

The halls opened onto the central courtyard through polylobulated and interlaced arches, preceded by a rectangular pool, in symmetry with the axis of the courtyard, connected by a canal.

The Tower is composed of a hall per floor, with a barrel vault the first, and by edge vaults the rest, supported on two exent cruciform pillars and six attached to the walls. Above the first three primitive floors, there are four of

rammed earth, masonry and brick, which could be earlier than the 16th century.

The manuscript presented only covers the first two blocks, which demonstrate, in Spain, the application of intermediate trends between stylistic restoration and historical authenticity. These types of interventions, established in the mid-20th century, would be tested with the interventions that make up the third block, which are not included in this communication.

4. RESTORATIONS AND DECODING OF THE CASTLE-PALACE

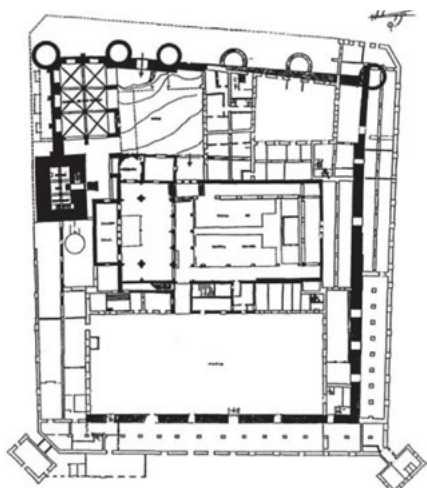


Figure 2. Ground Floor of the Aljafería Palace-Castle by Architect Francisco Iñíguez Almech. Sources: Iñíguez Almech.

In 1954, the Aljafería Palace, which had been reused as a military barracks since 1866, is partially and progressively handed over to the Aljafería Board of Trustees. The first spaces handed over were the Throne Room, anteroom and royal offices, anteroom and bedroom where Santa Isabel was born, a room adjacent to the anteroom, the staircase leading to the

gallery of the Throne Room and the corridor that serves as a link with the mosque.

This first handover coincides with cleaning and restoration tasks of coffered ceilings, doors, walls, floors and the main staircase, carried out by the provincial architect, under the supervision of the Commissariat for the Defence of the National Artistic Heritage, and with funds derived from a grant from the Ministry of National Education.

In 1954, Manuel Lorente Junquera, conservator architect of Monuments of the Third Zone, since 1940, carries out the partial restoration of the palace (Lorente Junquera, M. 1954), in which the works of chipping and whitewashing with white plaster of the walls of the vestibule, the gallery and the staircase of the Catholic Monarchs on the Ground Floor, and on the first floor in the Throne Room and the Rooms of Santa Isabel would be undertaken. Likewise, the proposal included the renovation of floors and the restoration of the coffered ceilings, the plasterwork of two doors of the Throne Room and the walling up of the backs of two others, in addition to other complementary tasks.

From then on, from 1955, it will be Francisco Iñíguez Almech, who will draft and direct the various restoration projects. And it is this stage, which will last until 1987, as recognised by Gonzalo Borrás (Sobradie, P.I. 1997, p.6), the one of greatest documentary significance of the restorations in the Palace. Iñíguez will have the collaboration of Ángel Peropadre Muniesa from 1976, and it will be him who will culminate this stage of almost thirty years of restorations.

The first project of Iñíguez Almech (Iñíguez Almech, F. 1955) in the Aljafería, carried out in 1955, focused on the restoration of the Troubadour Tower, the oldest element of the Aljafería, dated between the 9th and 10th centuries.

After this first handover from the Ministry of the Army, arches and plasterwork from the reconstruction carried out by Abu Chafar in the 11th century are discovered. This discovery led

to a new restoration project (Iñíguez Almech, F. 1957) that contemplated the exploration, consolidation, and replacement of deteriorated decorative elements, so it was a delicate task.

The intervention continues, in 1958, with the tasks of exploration, consolidation and restoration (Iñíguez Almech, F. 1958) on one side of the Patio of Santa Isabel, under the Palace of the Catholic Monarchs. This action required the carrying out of underpinning tasks in the areas at risk, to later open the walled arches, replace the added elements and restore the arches broken by the opening of windows and doors.

The following projects, from 1962 and 1963 (Iñíguez Almech, F. 1962 and 1963), focused on the exploration, consolidation and restorations in the mosque, particularly on the entrance portal to the great throne room of the Muslim palace, and the four arches on the lateral front of the Patio of Santa Isabel, built for the 13th-century palace, and whose heads appeared at the top of the current brick

arches, as well as interventions in the Christian area, next to the Royal Hall and the Troubadour Tower.

The works programmed in this project would be the reconstruction of the Muslim Door of passage between the entrance patio and the patio of the Muslim Palace of the 11th century, with a simple decoration. It is a triple door, unique at that time, "of three lintelled openings, defined by the jambs the pillars that act as mullions and the wooden ceiling" (Iñíguez Almech, F. 1963).

The works were completed with the reconstruction of the door of the Catholic Monarchs, according to a drawing from the 18th century preserved in the Simancas Archive; and the explorations in the rear of the Troubadour Tower, due to the existence of a conduit and a well - it would be a cistern with a communication gallery -, and some windows and a chimney, as well as a door identical to the one found in the room where Santa Isabel was born.

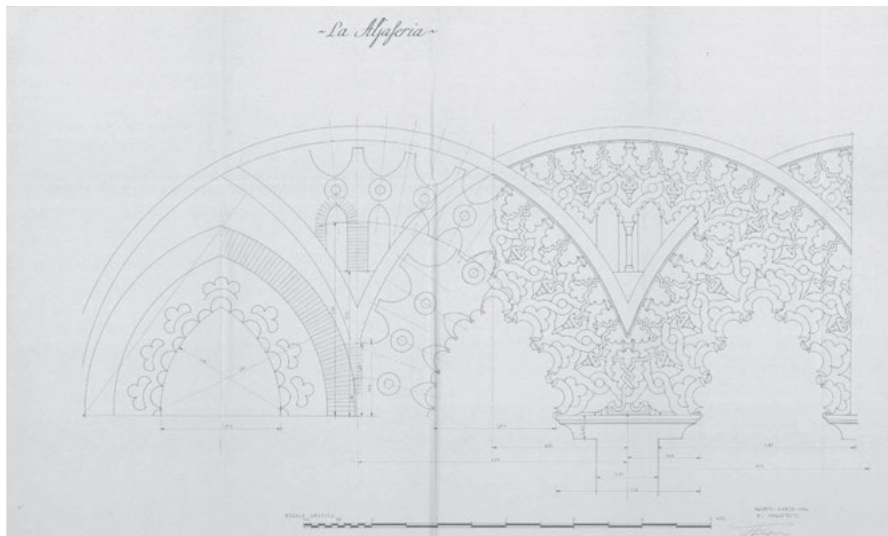


Figure 3. Layout of the Back Door of the Patio de Santa Isabel. Source: Iñíguez Almech, F. Restoration works project (1964). Database of Digitised Plans, Archive of the IPCE. MECD.

This last project was continued with another one the following year (Iñíguez Almech, F. 1964), in which the works in the Royal Hall, the Portico and the Mosque, and the Patio of Santa Isabel would be resumed.

As for the portico on the South side of the patio, this was the one that constituted the greatest complication, as it had not been investigated enough. During the works prior to this project, vestiges of arches and links had been discovered, so their reconstruction was possible, limiting it to a sketch.

The complementary works continue in 1965, through the project of repairs (Iñíguez Almech, F. 1965) in the Royal Hall and adjoining areas, the secondary staircase, the Mosque, and the Patio of Santa Isabel.

The 1968 project covered various sectors of the Palace, as it continued the tasks of exploration and discovery of the Wall, and the conclusion of the restoration of various halls and rooms, started in previous projects.



Figure 4. Patio de Santa Isabel. South Side Door. Source: Iñíguez Almech, F. 1968. AGA (General Administration Archive), Signature 26/00214.

Concerning the Patio of Santa Isabel, as we have seen, the restoration tasks had been going on for several campaigns since 1958, but, in this case, the opening and restoration of the Door on the South side was proposed, completing the layout according to plans and photographs, and replacing its eight marble columns in the way described for the columns of the Mosque. The placement of this door would give the level of the ceiling, and therefore, of the floor of the gallery.

As for the South Elevation, the restoration of the plasterwork of the perpendicular walls and the interior of the south portico will continue, using original molds that were deposited in the National and Provincial Archaeological Museums of Zaragoza. In the rest of the elevations, East and West, the stucco and exposed brick finishes will be completed, as well as the upper carpentry.

The interventions would continue from 1980 onwards, finishing the restoration tasks in the Patio of Santa Isabel, and facing new interventions projected by Peropadre

Muniesa (Iñíguez Almech, F. and Peropadre Muniesa, A. 1981), and Iñíguez Almech, which envisaged the paving and landscaping of the Patio, and the enhancement of the Muslim archery. From previous excavations, Iñíguez had discovered the original levels of the patio, so the material recovery of elements of the parterres and pools could be undertaken.

Undoubtedly, the most committed intervention consisted of the restoration of the Muslim arches, which was based on the survey conducted by Professor Christian Ewert. This allowed for graphic restitution from the original remains while consolidating the previous interventions carried out by Iñíguez.

The restitution of plaster mouldings, which outlined the geometric layout, aimed to achieve an overall view of the arches, in line with those carried out by Velázquez Bosco in the Villaviciosa Chapel in the Mosque Cathedral of Cordoba, where the original layouts coexist with modern restitutions, differentiated but harmonious.

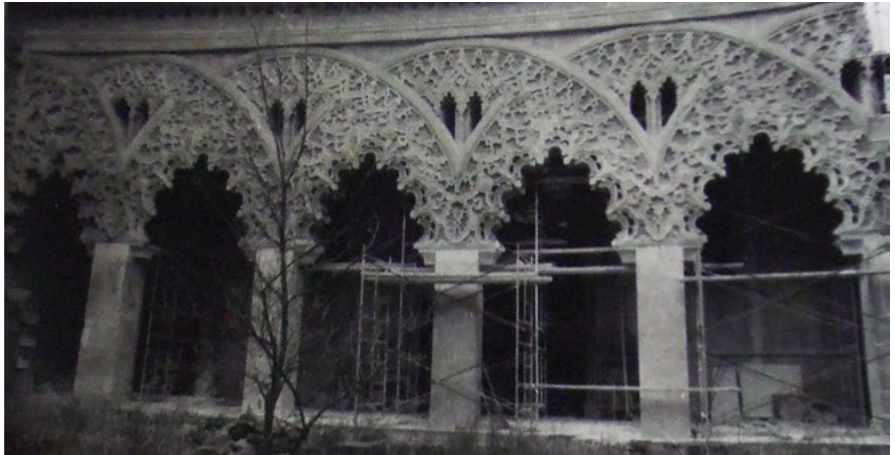


Figure 5. Patio de Santa Isabel. Front of the back facade (South gallery). Source: Iñíguez Almech, F. 1976. Restoration project of the Patio de Santa Isabel (1976). IPCE Archive. MECD.

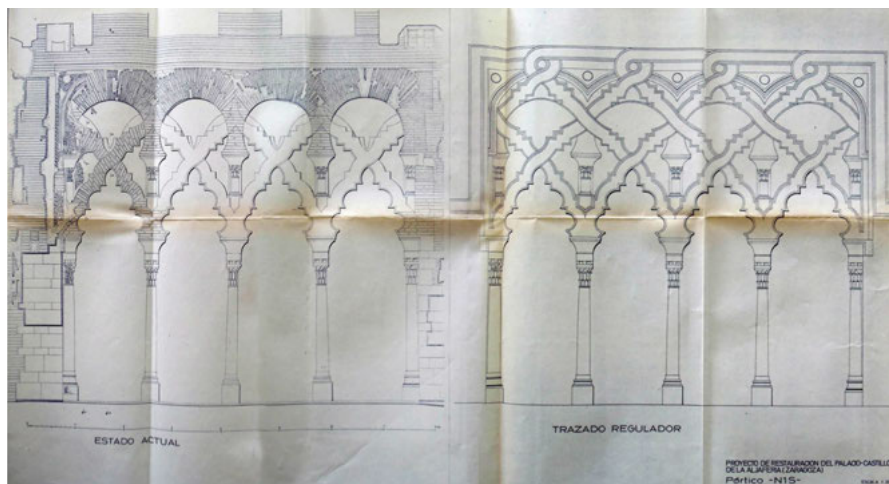


Figure 6. Elevation of the North Portico. Previous state and regulatory layout. Source of the plans: Iñíguez Almech and Peropadre Muniesa. *Aljafería restoration project* (1980). IPCE Archive, Leg.: 258/1

The restitution of plasterwork, based on the layouts surveyed by Ewert (Ewert, Ch. 2012) and the investigations of Iñíguez, was carried out with the intention that it would be reversible and identifiable with respect to the originals.

CONCLUSION

The Spanish historical context during the works discussed in this manuscript cannot be ignored. The works begun by Lorente Junquera in 1954 coincide with the second half of the imprint of the colonization towns built by the National Colonization Institute between 1940 and 1970, the promulgation of the Land Law (1956), the beginning of the urban expansion and demographic change in industrialized cities, the administrative decentralization through the Autonomous Communities. These changes formed some of the links in the chain of events leading towards Spanish modernity.

At a conceptual and theoretical level regarding heritage conservation, this period was marked by the influence of the Athens Charter of 1931 and the reaffirmation of its guidelines through the Venice Charter of 1964. . These charters established the limits of restoration based on conjectures (or assumptions) and the identification of the modern origin of reintegrations, as seen in almost all the interventions mentioned in this work, such as the treatment of the Back Door of the Patio of Santa Isabel by Iñíguez Almech.

In line with the consensus of the time, and in many of the works carried out in the Aljafería Palace, the intention was to restore the image and identity of the complex after years of military use and the consequent deterioration of most of the rooms.

The transformation of the Palace, summarized in three blocks, is defined by areas of intervention. The Patio of Santa Isabel focuses on the restitution of lost elements based on historical drawings and archaeological, wall, and floor evidence, with

the intention of recovering the original unitary image of arches and arcades.

The second block of actions focuses on the reconstruction of marble columns, restoration of paintings, carpentry, and decorative motifs, all restored with scientific rigor.

The third block represents a structural and functional block, through the reconstruction of the moat from the time of Felipe II, the design of gardens, and the adaptation of the palace for the installation of the Parliament of Aragon, ensuring compatibility between the new use and access to the monumental area.

In these last interventions, consensus could be disrupted by the elimination of volumes and the reconstruction of towers based on the vestiges found.

These restoration projects reflect a commitment to the preservation of cultural heritage and the importance of respecting historical elements. The restoration was meticulous, with an emphasis on the use of reversible solutions for hypothetical reconstructions.

The Aljafería Palace is a testimony to Muslim and Christian art, and its conservation reflects the commitment to the preservation of cultural heritage throughout the 20th century.

NOTES

¹This manuscript incorporates aspects developed in the research carried out for the preparation of the Doctoral Thesis entitled "History of the protection of architectural heritage in Spain. 1933-1985", presented in 2016, under the direction of Professor José Luis García Grinda and Professor Jesús Prieto de Pedro, in the Department of Architectural Composition. Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura (ETSAM). Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. Spain.

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