

GYPSUM VESTIGES

The present study discloses the main research results on historical facade renderings in Valencia (Spain) within the former city walls, particularly in El Carme, Sant Francesc-Universitat, El Mercat, la Seu-Xerea and Velluters neighbourhoods. In this area, almost every residential building from the late 18th century until the early 20th century presents renderings in that protect and decorate their masonries. Therefore, those coatings become a distinctive feature of the historical city and the local building technique, especially when it was possible to discover its true materiality, which is based on the gypsum usage.

Consequently, this doctoral thesis expects to contribute to the enhancement of the city renderings on the basis of its historical knowledge, its material and technique characterization, and the necessary conservation of the vestiges that still endure. They are considered vestiges, because they are not simply traces of something material, but also evidences of a forgotten building memory. Therefore, the main goal of the research was to delve in the knowledge of their features, peculiarities, uniqueness and particularities to evince their multiples values: historical, architectonic, cultural, material, technological, structural, etc.

In this sense, the study is divided in three temporal dimensions to make possible the knowledge of this building element in the past, present and future. A multidisciplinary perspective was applied taking into account the basis, knowledge and key contents provided by the History of Architecture and Construction, the Architectural Conservation, the Geography, and, especially, the Geology.

In this way, the first part tries to discover and explore the historical renderings in from a historical and building technique viewpoint through the analysis of bibliographic and archival resources, and paying special attention to gypsum as Valencian material tradition. The second part expects to analyse and interpret renderings that cover historical buildings facades on the basis of chemical and mineralogical characterization of samples collected from archaeological excavations and historical buildings of the city. Likewise, this analysis made possible an analytical reinterpretation of all the collected information by the systematization on data sheets, as well as the definition of a possible chronological evolution of the city renderings chronological evolution. Finally, the third part addresses how to intervene and preserve this building element, and proposes guidelines and materials more compatible with its nature as well as mechanisms to avoid the continuous loss.