

REFLECTIONS ON THE ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT IN CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

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Abstract: Each building is defined by the balance that exists between its existence and its evolution, which makes it a unique piece that should be interpreted in terms of its uniqueness. Consequently, intervention on historical buildings is a complex activity in which different disciplines work transversally to achieve an interpretive consensus on the key aspects of the formation and ultimate sense of each monument, in relation to its metamorphosis, its material and structural base, and the values that provide it with its monumentality. Architectural intervention projects have regained disciplinary status, and seek to become part of the evolution of monuments in a restrained manner, in harmony with the old but without renouncing their modernity.

Key words: Uniqueness. Transversal. Objective. Formativeness. Metamorphosis.

As a setting in which life takes place, buildings harbour and awaken collective feelings. However, until the 19th century, only architecture associated with the classical world was appreciated, and buildings of all styles were only considered to have value based on their romantic capacity for evoking this world. Since that time, the theoretical approach to interventions on historical buildings has been refined, so that such buildings are being interpreted on the basis of the recognition and understanding of all their values, not only those related to history and art, but also disciplinary values, given that, although many monuments contain works of art, they were almost always designed to be incorporated into a building that would give them their true meaning¹. By acknowledging that a building possesses

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1 This is the case of the mural paintings from the chapterhouse of the Sigüenza Monastery removed in the 20th century and displayed in the National Museum of Art of Catalonia (MNAC) in Barcelona, or the arches from the Moorish courtyard of the Aljafería Palace, removed in the 19th century and exhibited

monumental values, we recognise the public interest it holds, and through this it becomes part of a common heritage that should be preserved. Consequently, by working on these historical structures, we act with the responsibility of managing a common interest, not as creators focusing on current trends or personal preferences².

Until the mid 1970s, the Spanish government made use of the services of architect-restorers organised by geographic regions. They were erudite professionals, experts in the history of architectural styles and traditional techniques, who executed lengthy restoration projects on monuments, often undertaking the historical and archaeological research themselves. They commonly drafted projects making use of little documentation, confident of carrying out work on the site with the support of traditional companies that were greatly familiar with artisanal techniques. They attempted to consolidate an encased image of the monument that was similar to what was during the most significant event in its history; however, the overlapping of historical layers hindered comprehensive intervention, leading them to create connected scenarios as a partial context in which to stage the remains from different periods³. The political transition that took place in Spain with end of the Franco regime brought about a notable conceptual change in the way heritage assets were managed. While strict conservation criteria were imposed on the most outstanding monuments, efforts were made to find the keys to justify interventions that exceeded pure conservation for others, with special emphasis placed on designs that would accentuate the difference between the old and the new. However, everything depended on the personal interpretation that was made, and the results were of a quality that was as irregular as that of the architects involved in the interventions.

We presently understand that working on heritage buildings is a complex activity that requires a combination of different disciplines and that a monument should be given the consideration that corresponds to its uniqueness. Collaboration between specialists in this regard can only be of a transversal nature, given that the desirable outcome of this is to reach consensus on the interpretation of

in the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid. Both works can be valued as separate works of art; however, the paintings attained their true meaning in the chapterhouse of a Romanesque monastery, and the arches as part of the geometric composition of an Islamic-style courtyard in the Umayyad tradition. The same can be said of the sculptural group containing the clock set into the tower of the Cathedral of San Salvador in Zaragoza, whose allegorical message only has meaning as part of the building that acts as its support.

2 This consideration becomes evident in long and complex interventions, such as those involving the cathedrals of Tarazona and Zaragoza, or the Sigena Monastery, which were beset by periods where the works came to a standstill and changes were made to the project leaders. Unified criteria and technical coherence had to be maintained.

3 Among these architects are Yarnoz, who worked on Olite Castle; Chueca, who worked on the cloister of the Sigena Monastery; and Íñiguez, who worked on the Aljafería Palace.

the key aspects and ultimate meaning of each monument, in relation to its particular evolution over time and to the values that provide it with its monumentality.

Recognition of the values of a historic work of architecture does not come as a fleeting moment or from a moment of special awareness; it is the result of a disciplinary, objective and scientific process, which adheres to rational rules that eschew any conditioning not related to factual study, regardless of personal preference or style⁴. Monuments are records in the form of buildings and witnesses to past events, and their architectural condition makes them the bearers of specific disciplinary values. Nevertheless, identifying the built matter that embodies those values is no easy task, given that those values are often forgotten or concealed by layers of history, or disfigured by modifications or debilitating conditions, or they are either intangible or present unresolvable incompatibilities.

It is true that an objective approach to a monument requires different specialists, “but we will not gain perspective by placing disciplines in a relationship of simultaneity, because the isolation of interpretive variables of the monument only leads to complacent reductionisms”⁵. It is not that each specialist should carry out pure research; rather, they should interact transversally with others so that their contributions converge on those aspects of the interpretation of the monument that, being of shared interest, require sufficient agreement, or for the purpose of reaching an operational hierarchy between the different values recognised from the monument. The transversal methodology places the emphasis on the connection between the particular aspect with the whole, a whole that can only be understood as the result of consensus over complexity, and not as the reduction of reality, which either creates a mirage as the apparent synthesis of the problem to be resolved or leads us to the simple application of conservation techniques, when technique alone should appear to execute what has been decided after a critical appraisal of the monument⁶.

The nature of architecture harbours a changing destiny, and working on built structures has occupied architects in every age. However, architects are still be-

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- 4 JIMÉNEZ, A., “Enmiendas parciales a la teoría del restauro II. Valor y valores”, in *Loggia* n.º5. Valencia. 1996, pp 12-29. “Isolated recognition of aesthetic values is not enough; genuine social consensus on the existence and relevance of these artistic qualities is essential.” p 26. DALLA NEGRA, R., lecture given during the seminar “Conservando el pasado, proyectando el futuro”, Zaragoza, IFC-UNIZAR 2013: “The architect’s personal taste should only become manifest at the end of the intervention process, and not at the beginning, in order to prevent the presence of conditions that are not supported by the actual monument.”
- 5 GONZÁLEZ MORENO-NAVARRO, J. L., “La comprensión preliminar de la realidad constructiva del monumento”, in *Teorías y criterios de intervención en el patrimonio arquitectónico*. Course held at the Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Aragón (COAA). 2001.
- 6 The pre-eminence of critical appraisal over the pure technique of conservation is exemplified by the consideration of surface treatments on buildings either as sacrificial skins, or as testaments that express the documentary or evocative richness that is bestowed on a building with the passing of time.

lieved to start their work in the way that painters do, over a blank space, when the truth is that their field of intervention is a field of prior conflicts; moreover, all forms of architecture involve a dependence resulting from their necessary materialisation and their suitability for their planned destination. In attempting to bring a certain order to an environment dominated by inaccuracies, paradoxes and incoherence, architecture is conditioned by the reality surrounding it and becomes an “impure, hybrid art”⁷. For this reason, deciphering the meaning of built architecture is mostly understanding its initial formative conditions and the origins of its transformations, and consequently, in order to recognise and coordinate all its historical, architectural or symbolic values, there will have to be critical discussion on the existence and evolution of that building in relation to its material and structural substance.

Creation in art is very often mistaken for the whimsical forms it takes, but almost nothing in good architecture is the result of chance. Form does not emerge from the spontaneous inspiration of the artist, but is the result of a process that evolves based on logical principles. Rafael Moneo pointed out that, in contrast with the concept of randomness, one should speak of the concept of formative-ness⁸ in architecture, in the understanding that this is the quality of those actions that bring about a form and which explain the materialisation of that architecture. While new architecture is revealed from the creative process of a project, historical architecture is explained by the understanding of its evolutionary process and the formative characteristics that have given substance to its architectural identity over time within this process. And while it may seem paradoxical, if successive interventions to a building are based on the understanding of those characteristics, this way of acting will help it to withstand those changes and to maintain the substance of the preceding architecture⁹.

It is certain that architecture sometimes presents appealing randomness, but the form of the architecture is developed at the same time as its usefulness, its incorporation into a site and its construction are resolved, and creative aspects should also appear to be the result of this integration. While adaptation of architectural models to use has created an entire universe of types and mutations, then adaptation to topography, climate and urban settings have caused them to be constantly distorted, depending on the circumstances of each setting. And if we think of how architecture is built, “not even Gaudí’s architecture is random,

7 CAPITEL, A., *La arquitectura como arte impuro*. Barcelona. Fundación Caja de Arquitectos. 2012.

8 MONEO, R., *Sobre el concepto de arbitrariedad en arquitectura*. Speech to mark his membership of the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Madrid. 2005. Regarding the concept of formative-ness, according to Luigi Pareyson: “architecture may be explained by the description of the process that led to its birth”.

9 MONEO, R., “La vida de los edificios. Las ampliaciones de la mezquita de Córdoba”, in *Revista Arquitectura* n.º 256. Madrid, 1985. pp. 26-36.

given that the forms of his architecture emerged from the invention of construction methods¹⁰, or in the case of Utzon, the extraordinary shape of the shells of the Sydney Opera House was not the result of a banal action, it was a geometric design adjusted to a system consisting of prefabricated, connected and post-tensioned pieces, as occurred in Gothic churches, where columns and arches were formed of stone elements dressed on the ground and later joined as sets of ribs¹¹.

Construction, use and place, understood in their noblest and broadest sense, are the basic conditions that “overcoming their particularities, merge in a project with spatial decisions to create the form we call architecture”¹². Or so it was understood to be until recently, when interest has been shown for an architecture whose anaemic fundaments are found in the society of consumption and of mass communications; however, historical buildings do not accept interpretations based on current trends, and the metamorphosis to which they are subjected even less so. Consequently, we cannot limit our approach to monuments as merely epithelial considerations. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) understands intervention in this disciplinary sense¹³, which is why it requires architects whose interventions involve historical architecture to be able to read monuments in their context, to understand their history and the changes they have undergone, the technology used in their construction and in their different modifications, the way they are incorporated into their setting and their relationship with other buildings and landscapes.

In his influential work “Metamorphosis of monuments and restoration theories”, Antón Capitel offers a disciplinary reading of historical architecture as a “rational process of configuring form”, and to exemplify his argument, he analyses different operations where new pieces are inserted into existing architecture, resolving initial problems and adding new value to the buildings. The spatial contrast between the central and orthogonal axes of the Mezquita or Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba, resulting from its construction method, was minimised when the cathedral was inserted transversally by retaining a large part of the earlier structure; the impossibility of reconciling a monastic ideal with the city surrounding the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela was resolved by disregarding the coherence of the earlier plan and seeking a new formal value for the entire area; Villanueva’s design for the chevet of the Cathedral of Burgo de Osma involved the addition of coherent

10 MONEO, R., *Sobre el concepto de arbitrariedad en arquitectura*. op. cit. With regard to Gaudí's work: “behind the forms there is a geometry that dominates the building, and it is when attention is given to the building that form appears as something novel”.

11 FERRER FORÉS, J., *Jorn Utzon. Obras y proyectos*. Paperback. Gustavo Gili. 2008. pp. 149-179. Regarding the Sydney Opera House and Gothic architecture. p. 165.

12 LABARTA, C., *Memoria de proyectos 2009.10* and *Memoria de proyectos 2010.11*. EINA UNIZAR. Zaragoza, 2010 and 2011. pp. 7-10 and 5-8.

13 ICOMOS. International Council on Monuments and Sites. Sri Lanka Meeting. 1993.

pieces that were adapted to follow the layout of the surrounding streets; and, finally, the insertion of an orthodox Renaissance building like that of Machuca's Palace of Charles V inside the Alhambra precinct had to be adapted to changes in topographical elevation in order to organise such a complex site coherently¹⁴.

According to Antonio González, "restoring is nothing more than returning a monument to its condition of architecture", and while the first option may be to preserve, if necessary "to reestablish the sentimental relationship people have with the architectural object", the use of disciplinary resources and restraint should not be ruled out¹⁵. It is not possible to act as a hybrid between architect, archaeologist or historian; each discipline has its own specific field. But at the same time, you need to know how to be a collaborator for others with whom you share a certain instability and the conviction that your work will only find meaning when it is compressed into the whole, which is the architectural object. It is true that scientific recognition of all monumental values requires inputs from different disciplines, but it is also true that in architectural restoration, the field of architecture has natural pre-eminence, and therefore it is the role of the architect to guide the interpretive consensus and influence the synthesis that is the critical base of the intervention criteria in accordance with the objective conditions of each monument. In this regard, the recognition of the evolutionary episodes that had brought about the coherence of the interior space of the cathedral de San Salvador in Zaragoza was the determining factor in setting the limits of the intervention. The 16th century extensions that transformed the three-naved cathedral into one of five naves modified the direction of the chevet and gave it the isotropy of a hall church layout; the stucco finish decorated Roman-style in the imitation of stone, applied to vaults and walls during that century to conceal earlier mural paintings, transformed the medieval space and instilled it with the incipient Renaissance spirit¹⁶; and the Baroque period interventions that transformed the vertical windows into oculi filtered the light entering the building, while the focus was transferred to the side chapels through the creation of lanterns in their vaults. Once this consensus was established with regard to this interpretation, the intervention gave priority to the spatial and perceptive cohesion of the space, and prevented the fragmentation that would have been caused by the progressive uncovering of numerous remnants of decorative features from earlier periods. How-

14 CAPITEL, A., *Metamorfosis de monumentos y teorías de restauración*. Alianza Forma. Alianza Editorial. Madrid. 1988. pp 53-144.

15 GONZÁLEZ MORENO-NAVARRO, A., *La Restauración Objetiva*. Diputación de Barcelona. Barcelona 1999. p. 64.
At ETSAN, on 20 November 2012, in order to exemplify this idea he pointed to the 1919 intervention by Jeroni Martorell on the 16th century gate in the walls of Centelles.

16 CRIADO MAINAR, J. e IBÁÑEZ FERNÁNDEZ, J., *Sobre campo de azul y carmín*. Fundación Teresa de Jesús. Zaragoza 2006. pp. 39-54. On the arrival of the Renaissance in Aragonese architecture and the pictorial decoration of the Cathedral of San Salvador in Zaragoza.

ever, for the intervention on the former Faculty of Medicine and Sciences of the University of Zaragoza, with a style of architecture that followed strict academic rules, a determining factor was the understanding of a hierarchy of “parties” established by the project over the axes of the building, a system of relationships that arranged unique spaces over the central axes and in the corners, while giving neutrality and flexibility of use to the intermediate spaces connecting those of greater importance¹⁷. This layout determined the location of rooms required by the refurbishment of this building in order to house the university’s rectorate, with the result that the new use accommodated the hierarchy and significance of each “party”, and only the intermediate spaces were compartmentalized following the pattern of the existing windows.

We believe that the life of a monument ends when we acknowledge it as such, but Ruskin had already explained to us that architecture without life ceases to be architecture and becomes a different sort of object; and while we believe that “utilitas” is a basic condition of architecture, we will have to accept that, at times, it will be necessary to resort to new pieces in order to design for a new use. This is the case of the Aljafería Palace, a building without a specific use until it became the seat of the Parliament of Aragon in 1985. That year the site was in a state of inconclusive transformation, as the demolitions undertaken to salvage the former Aljafería from under the 19th century barracks built over the palace had been halted. That “rescue”, carried out by Francisco Íñiguez, had made it evident that it was impossible to compatibilise the two fundamental stages of the monument’s history: the palace dating from the independent Moorish kingdom, and the Renaissance Christian palace built above it in the 16th century. As it was found at the start of our intervention that there were no more archaeological finds under the barrack buildings, the demolitions were considered complete, and it was assumed that the palace we had inherited was a contradictory and fragmented reality. Nevertheless, as it housed important material testaments to the history of Aragon, it took on meaning as a historic site, as did the conservation of the totality of the collage of overlying pieces, including those dating from the 19th century and from the reconstruction made during Íñiguez’s restoration. The intervention to house the parliament could be considered the last link in a chain of events in the evolution of the palace. This approach would have to give critical consideration to the value of the stretch of wall that Íñiguez rebuilt in the 1960s over scant remnants of the Moorish structure, based on drawings made by Tiburcio Spanocchi in the 16th century. This recreation would be impossible to carry out today; it did not correspond faithfully to any of the historical stages of the building. However,

17 DURAND, J. N. L., *Compendio de lecciones de arquitectura*. Pronaos. Madrid. 1981. The preface by Rafael Moneo clearly explains this design methodology for combining parts and elements as simple geometric arrangements.

its presence was able to revive the emotional relationship of the city with a lost and forgotten castle. Owing to the inclusion of other features of great artistic value such as the Santa Isabel Courtyard and the halls of the Catholic Monarchs, it can even be said to have achieved its particular monumental status as the result of social consensus¹⁸. The consideration of the Aljafería Palace as a historical collage, aside from the value of each part and the need for improvement of its material authenticity on the basis of science, opened the site to an interpretation that included respect for each of the recreations which were shown to be just that, and accepted new architecture as a resource with which to design for the continuity or connection between older, previously unconnected parts, but with adjustments to the formative design of the site, and with attention given to the impacts brought about by the old architecture, to its spatiality, its proportion, colour and material texture, so that its destiny would be integrated respectfully into the life of the building.

Monuments speak for themselves; and while their masonry offers conflicting information, this is only the consequence of their complex accumulative nature. Until the modern movement brought separation between the design elements forming the structure and walls of buildings, the dialectic relationship between construction and form provided architecture with material unity, in such a way that the walls, pillars and vaults of a monument recorded their behaviour within a construction and a structure, offering precise information that cannot be completely replaced by mathematical analyses that idealise architecture¹⁹. Photogrammetric surveys faithfully reflect the reality and behaviour of buildings, and are an objective, scientific and transversal instrument that is essential for the archaeology of buildings and the study of conditions affecting them. A planimetric survey is a map of a monument and the first method for becoming acquainted with its reality. If we continue to survey the current state of monuments as if they were idealised architecture, we will ignore the information offered by the imperfections and inaccuracies present in their real form²⁰. The archaeology of buildings uses photogrammetry to create a stratigraphic reading and detect stages in its construction. This interpretation is not based on the canons of style or written sources, but on the reality of the building. Each piece of data or stratum is not considered sepa-

18 JIMÉNEZ, A., "Enmiendas parciales a la teoría del restauro II. Valor y valores", in *op. cit.*, pp 12-29. This article accurately analyses the scope and influence of the concept of value in historical architecture.

19 GONZÁLEZ, J. L. "El método científico aplicado al conocimiento de los edificios históricos", in *Teorías y criterios de intervención en el patrimonio arquitectónico*. Course held at COAA. 2001. "We should not make the mistake of believing that computer-generated models, no matter how advanced, and more so if they are not, are reality.

20 CÁMARA, L. y LATORRE, P. "El modelo analítico tridimensional obtenido por fotogrametría. Descomposición, manipulación y aplicaciones en el campo de la restauración arquitectónica" in *Arqueología de la Arquitectura* n.º2. Madrid. 2003. pp. 87-96.

rately, but as part of a context that enables chronological and structural interpretations to be made that can be contrasted with the information provided by other documentary sources²¹. Photogrammetry reflects heterogeneity; it gives an image of the different bonds, locates joins, identifies deformations, fractures and fissures in the masonry, and consequently contributes information to a common planimetric database so that specialists can recognise a series of techniques and moments in a building's construction that indicate a chronological order —a before and after—. By ordering the construction processes and comparing them to the maps of cracks and failures, specialists are also enabled to deduce the building's structural behaviour and come to a valid diagnosis of structural problems²².

Material in architecture is of a fundamentally instrumental nature. Comparisons cannot be made between the craft of an artisan building a wall and the brushstroke of an artist leaving his imprint on a canvas. However, the marks left by construction process very often give a monument other values, at times as an example of the technique used, and at others owing to the qualities expressed by the style of construction. It is common to find interventions that compatibilise the experience of history with contemporary artistic sensibilities, for which the marks left in the building are preserved, or evidence is shown of its stratigraphy through the preservation of repairs or completions, in an endeavour to reconcile the veracity of the material with the abstract expressiveness of the textures present in the building's walls. This is the case of the latest, suspended intervention carried out on the naves of the Sijena monastery, a monument which fire, neglect and ruin had reduced to its simple foundational typology, leaving only a number of basic elements of its structural system: wall footings, sections of stone nave arcades and parts of the rammed earth walls. The intervention gave special value to the formative nature of the cloister for the monastery and the clarity of the construction method, which led to interest being shown for the recovery of this central space and original layout. Work to consolidate and repair the walls of the naves placed emphasis on the geometry of the basic elements of their construction —the footings and diaphragm arches— and we continued with the practice of using brick to repair the outer walls, given that this improved the unity of a building that had undergone many previous repairs. However, in order to complete the walls that had collapsed, and to emphasise that these repairs were to fill in gaps, an interpretation was made of the formwork system for the rammed earth that was originally used to enclose the naves. The final result shows that in a bare building, this material filling and the preservation of evidence of its past respects the documentary value of the walls

21 AZCÁRATE, A., "Intereses cognoscitivos y praxis social en arqueología de la arquitectura", in *Arqueología de la Arquitectura*, n.^o1. Madrid. 2002. pp. 55-60, and "La arqueología de la arquitectura en el siglo XXI", in. *Arqueología de la Arquitectura*, n.^o5. Madrid. 2008. pp. 11-13.

22 CABALLERO ZOREDA, L., "Edificio histórico y arqueología: un compromiso entre exigencias, responsabilidad y formación", in *Arqueología de la Arquitectura*, n.^o6. Madrid. 2009. pp. 11-18. On the need for a stratigraphic reading of a monument and on the responsibilities this places on architects and archaeologists.

and brings its expressive tone closer to the simplicity and austerity of the original monastery and its spirit, while reflecting a contemporary aesthetic.

“Contradictions are the original sin of restoration”²³. While some advocate keeping a monument in the state it is received, although this comes at a cost of the appearance of modern elements destined to preserving what has been inherited, recommending the strict preservation of original floor and wall surfaces with each of their markings and their patina, without making distinctions between their age and origin, others advocate that degraded parts should be repaired by following strict intervention handbooks that only allow artisanal techniques to be employed and pieces copied from the traditional catalogue. Consequently, they consider the stucco on façades as sacrificial skins that should be constantly renewed with original techniques so that they will continue to fulfil their protective role for the interior masonry²⁴. Contradictions commonly arise with regard to the use of concealed structural prostheses, given that the general theory stipulates that additions should be incorporated into a monument with modern visibility, a contrast that shows a distancing from the concepts of pictorial restoration. While Brandi conceptually separated structure and appearance, he did so thinking of the stretcher and painted canvas. In this case, it is logical to accept the replacement of the stretcher in order to maintain a canvas in good condition. However, in architecture, the structure and the construction practically form a whole, to the point that the appearance and spatial layout are derived from them. Brandi stated that only “the material of a work of art must be restored, not its soul”, and that one would have to prevent the restorer from supplanting the artist’s hand²⁵, which, applied directly to architecture, would mean denying the architectural nature of the restoration and advocating a style of absolute conservation. Nonetheless, any intervention on a monument, regardless of the scale, means the unavoidable alteration of its previous state. This leads to the consideration of an intervention project not only as a problem of conservation, but also one of architectural creation with regard to the historical work. In keeping with reinterpretations of the city and architecture that see buildings as a palimpsest, the intervention project is regaining its acceptance as a discipline and is seeking meaning in a critical approach to the evolutionary metamorphosis of architecture²⁶. “Old architecture is a huge record

23 CAPITEL, A., “El tapiz de Penélope” in *Arquitectura* n.º 244. Madrid. 1983. pp. 24-34. Seminal article for understanding the contemporary Spanish approach to the interpretation of monuments.

24 These extremes range between the strict and pure conservation of A. Bellini and his protective prostheses, and the stylistic intervention by P. Marconi and his strict handbooks on restoration adapted to the architecture of each historic urban area.

25 JIMÉNEZ, A., “Enmiendas parciales a la teoría del restauro II. Valor y valores”, in *op. cit.*, pp 12-29.

26 Rossi, A., *La arquitectura de la ciudad* (Marsilio Ed. 1966). Gustavo Gili. Barcelona 1986, y VENTURI, R., *Complejidad y contradicción en la arquitectura* (MOMA. 1966). Gustavo Gili. Barcelona 1978. (Introduction and notes in this edition by Vicent Scully). Coetaneous contributions by Rosi and Venturi to the critical reading of the city and its transformations.

of fundaments and forms, and the field of historical reference offers sufficient material with which to undertake an intervention project" without history exerting titanic strength; and if it seems that scientific objectivity is lost in this way, we should not understand that the intervention has become random as a result. On the contrary, the intervention project that bases its substance on interpretive consensus regarding the meaning and values of a monument minimises their limits and intensity, seeks an encounter with the built, historic and spatial essence of the historical building and tends to establish in each case a prudent balance between conservation and creativity²⁷.

Architecture is a controlled art that is based to a large degree on memory, a quality that "far from limiting the imagination, awakens it, and they become mutually intensified"²⁸. We are children of the modern culture, and it seems that in order to intervene in historic architecture, we should be wary of this awareness that is part of us and which provides us with the necessary distance with which to avoid dogmatic worship of the old. But between historicist mimeticism and extreme diachrony, there is a margin with which the intervention, provided that care is taken on a historical and architectural level, can interpret the echo of the old, avoid historical equivocation without the need to emphasise the differences, and seek a logical and harmonious coherence with what came before it by resorting to compound disciplinary instruments such as analogy, the underlying set of proportions and geometries in the monument in question, light, empty spaces and shade, chromatic or material synchronicity, the expressive consideration of the construction or of the marks and textures in the material²⁹.

Leopoldo Torres Balbas, following along the lines of Boito, said that whenever the conservation of a monument required new building in order that it should not disappear, modern materials needed to be used in a modern style, as had been done until then. When he had to save the Partal Palace in the Alhambra and found that he could not conserve the integrity and authenticity of that building on the verge of collapse, he resorted to arches, spandrels and decorative panels of a matching "diachrony" or dialogue between old and new materials in order to resolve the gaps left by the removal of spurious additions. And while this circumstance is evident on close inspection, they seem to be integrated into the original work when viewed from a distance³⁰. While Torres Balbas applied eclectic dia-

27 TRACHANA, A., "El proyecto de articulación de lo nuevo y lo antiguo", in *Cuadernos de apoyo a la docencia-Cuadernos de restauración I*". Instituto Juan de Herrera. ETSAM. 1988. pp. 32-37.

28 CAMPO BAEZA, A., "Mnemosine frente a Mímesis", in *Hispania Nostra* n.º 9. Madrid 2012. pp. 30-35.

29 CAPITEL, A., "El tapiz de Penélope". in *op. it.*, pp. 28. Regarding the changes taking place in the relationship between contemporary architectural sensibility and history.

30 GONZÁLEZ MORENO-NAVARRO, A. *La Restauración Objetiva*. op. ct. Lessons by Torres Balbas, the architect leading restoration work on the Alhambra between 1923 and 1936. pp. 65. The system used by Torres Balbas in the Partal Palace was later used by Íñiguez in some of the series of arches that were reconstructed in the Aljafería Palace.

chrony with wise flexibility, Carlo Scarpa taught us to use harmonious diachrony in order to allow different historical periods to co-exist by accepting their heterogeneous and fragmented nature and the juxtapositions typical of the evolution of a monument. Scarpa did not judge the preceding architecture; he limited himself to providing didactic evidence of the different stage of a building, and made use of the need to combine fragments as an opportunity to develop his expressive creativity. He used empty spaces and shade as a form of union that created distance with respect to the old, extending wall and floor surface treatments as a carpet-like overlay for the original surfaces in order to accompany the historical architecture, creating a new stratum that expressed a lack of emotional attachment to the material authenticity of the monument.

Any intervention awakens the latent tension between a monument's existence, a reference to the inherent merits of its original architecture, and its evolution, with the richness and decadence the events of its history have contributed to it. The first of these conditions, that of a monument as an existing building, offers us a cyclical view of time that accepts the constant remaking of the building in order to maintain the understanding of it as a work of art. This is an idealistic and Violletian attitude which gives preference to the recovery of the ideal form of the monument, and which requires the removal of all additions in order to understand it as it was designed. The second condition, that of a monument as an evolved entity, offers us a linear view of time that flows, transforming the monument and making it a testament to a process that is recorded in the masonry that should be preserved. This is a romantic, Ruskinian posture, which gives preference to the authenticity of the material as evidence of the events that have transpired, and which requires the preservation of the documentary deposit that is the monument, even with the contradictions that the passing of time may have left in it. Each building that reaches us is defined by the particular balance between its existence and its evolution, and this makes it a unique piece that should be interpreted in terms of its uniqueness. Consequently, the recognition and interpretation of the formative keys that have made each building into what it turns out to be the most solid base on which the intervention can become a part of its evolution in a restrained manner, and in harmony with the old.

All interventions share a dual and unavoidable condition: that of being imperatively conservative, because their destiny is to convey a monument with all its values. However, as any intervention, regardless of the scope, always alters the previous state of the building, this adds the inevitable condition of being creative. We are faced with a way of intervening that seeks to preserve an architectural legacy, but which does not shy away from the need to insert its designs naturally into the evolution of the monument. It is about carrying out a minimal intervention that is based on the meaning and metamorphosis of the historical building on which the intervention is taking place, but which is also attentive to a modern visibility

that is a reference to the time in which such action takes place³¹. This manner of acting gives priority to an architectural project which is in harmony with the “formative” events behind each building, which seeks the prudent balance between conservation and creation, which brings contemporary language in tune with the experience of heritage so that diachronies are expressed serenely and the difference between new and old is achieved without drama. All monuments offer opportunities for intervention without altering the meaning of the new and of the old, and the architectural intervention will be more beautiful and harmonious as long as it responds to the truth of the monument and avoids unnecessary designs that detract from the essential. In the words of the architect leading restoration work on the cathedral of Seville, “there are only two explanations for a restoration project that emerges purely from the head of a “divine” [architect]: it is either a masterpiece of the purest prophetic methodology; or it is a document certifying the desecration of a monument in order to adapt it to his design”³².

31 CAPITEL A., *Metamorfosis de monumentos y teorías de restauración*. op. cit., pp.26-28. Boito's ideas were the base for the principle he developed of minimal action and modern visibility in response to the conditions resulting from modern and contemporary awareness.

32 JIMÉNEZ, A., “Enmiendas parciales a la teoría del restauro I. Imágenes y palabras”, in *Loggia* n.º4. Valencia. 1996, pp 10-19. “My axiom for restoration is that the project should not be likened to Minerva, who was born from the head of her divine father already an adult, even armed and with a helmet, but that it should be a repetitive and open process of patient searching, with plenty of silences and stops, regrets and indecisions.” p. 14.