P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA
A CIVIC INSCRIPTION ON THE FOUNDATIONS MADE TO THE MOSQUE AT CORRIDA, BY ORDER OF THE CALIPH ABULAMAS.
INTRODUCTION.

The Antiquities of the Spanish Arabs have, for many ages, continued unheeded or unknown. The annals of past centuries scarcely deign to mention them; and the descriptions of modern pens but imperfectly supply the place of the pencil. Accurate delineations, so essential to render them intelligible, might have been expected from the enlightened natives of the Peninsula, whose artists and antiquarians have vied with the most celebrated of other countries. The task, however, was supremely deferred, or feebly attempted, while prejudice, the sad inheritance of nations, was actively employed in demolishing the works of infidels, whom it was accounted both pious and popular to deride.

The suffrages of the discerning few, and especially of Bayer and Casiri, at length contributed to remove, or at least to mitigate, this prejudice, and to arrest the progress of destruction. In consequence of the representations made by these profoundly learned and virtuous men, the Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand was commissioned by the Spanish Government to send two architects under the direction of a Captain of Engineers, with instructions to make drawings of the Palace of Alhambra, and of the Mosque of Cordova. After a lapse of several years, the joint labours of the three Academicians were published at Madrid, in the year 1780, in a folio volume entitled Antigüedades Arabes de España, containing about sixteen plates of Arabic designs, together with a few pages of letter-press. Some of the inscriptions in this publication were translated by the accurate Casiri. Such was the greatest progress made, to the end of the eighteenth century, in exploring the antiquities of the polished and enlightened people, who occupied the Peninsula, during a period of nearly eight hundred years.

The success of the imperfect descriptions of the remains of Arabian Art, exhibited in the volumes of some modern travellers, as existing in the once renowned Mohammedan cities of Granada, Cordova, and Seville, excited in the author an ardent desire to visit them. He accordingly embarked for Spain, and arrived at Cadiz early in May, in the year 1802; whence he proceeded to Granada, through lower Andalusia. The Governor of the Alhambra, desirous that the knowledge of its splendid architectural remains should be accurately transmitted to posterity, obligingly facilitated the author’s access to that royal palace, at all hours of the day: while he was employed in the agreeable task of measuring and delineating its interior works. Equal facilities were offered at Cordova, the remains of whose celebrated Mosque and Bridge are delineated in the former part of the present volume. Seven years were unremittingly devoted to these delightful pursuits; and since the author’s return to England in 1809, nearly seven years more have been wholly given to preparing for publication the present work.

The admirers of the Arts are here presented with the result of fourteen years continued labour, executed at an expense of many thousand pounds;—in the hope that, by the union of the graphic art with the descriptions of the engravings annexed, such facilities will be afforded, as shall enable the reader to form an accurate estimate of the very high state of excellence, to which the Spanish Arabs attained in the Fine Arts, while the rest of Europe was overwhelmed with ignorance and barbarism.

* In justice to the memory of an eminent and noble patron of the Arts, the late Earl of Bristol, the author with pleasure records, that his Lordship had it in contemplation to send two Roman artists to Granada, to make designs of the Palace of Alhambra, and to publish them at his own expense. The Earl of Bristol relinquished the idea, only on being informed by the letter of a friend who was visiting that city, that the author had anticipated his manifest intention.
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THE

ARABIAN ANTIQUITIES OF SPAIN.

PART I.

A DESCRIPTION OF ANTIQUITIES AT CORDOVA.

PLATE I.

PLAN OF THE MOSQUE OF CORDOVA, IN ITS ORIGINAL STATE.

This noble specimen of Arabian Architecture was begun by Abd-arrahman I., and finished by his son and successor, Hishām; subsequent khālifs of Cordova enlarged the building as often as the increase of population required, until it assumed the general form in which it now appears.* The mosque is of a quadrangular form, six hundred and twenty feet in length from north to south, and four hundred and forty feet in breadth from east to west; it was originally surrounded by four streets, which were designed to prevent any other building from coming in contact with it. Of the twenty-one doors, which it is said to have originally had, five only are now remaining; they were all covered with brass plates of most delicate workmanship.

Of the six hundred and twenty feet, which compose the length of the mosque, two hundred and ten were appropriated on the north side, to the formation of a court, communicating by means of a gate of modern erection, and known by the appellation of the Gate of Pardon. Nineteen aisles, each of about three hundred and fifty feet in length, by fourteen feet in breadth, run parallel from north to south through the interior of the edifice; and a similar number, not so quite so broad, extends from east to west. These aisles are formed by an immense number of columns, the arrangement of which produces a most striking effect, that must have been still more magnificent, before the building underwent any alterations.

Explanation of the References in the Plan.

A. The Madrasah, or sanctuary, that is, the principal apartment in which the Koran was deposited. At present it is a chapel belonging to the Conde de Orgaz, and is usually called the Raxadensa.
B. The place where the pulpit stood, from which the Mutfi explained the law to the Madrasah. The pulpit itself, during the time when the mosque was in its splendor, was composed of chiny, sandal, aloes, and other most precious woods.
C. The lodgings of the priests, and other attendants belonging to the mosque. They are now converted into chapels.
D. The Mutfi, or chancel, which was entered only by the Imams or priests, and other persons engaged in the sacred office.
E. The part which separated the great men from the rest of the people.
F. Four pillars, in the centre of which the Khalif took their seats.
G. The place appropriated to the people.
H. Additions subsequently made to the edifice.
I. Doorways or entrances, originally twenty-one in number, according to some Arabian authors; though others assert that there were not more than nine. All the doors, however, were covered with the choicest Andalusian brass, in the richest profusion.
J. The space allotted for the performance of oblations, previously to entering the edifice.
K. The Portico, where the Arabs left their umbrellas or alabes, when they entered the mosque.
L. The Garden of the mosque.
M. Foundation.
N. Cisterns or reservoirs of water.

The faint line, which goes round the whole plan, exhibits its outer wall or boundary,—a low and massive structure, crowned with crenated battlements.

PLATE II.

PLAN OF THE MOSQUE OF CORDOVA IN ITS PRESENT STATE.

After the conquest of Cordova in 1236, St. Ferdinand converted this mosque into a cathedral; and it preserved its ancient plan until the time of the Emperor Charles V. In the year 1588, the Spaniards began to disfigure its symmetry by modern erections, which continued to be made in succeeding reigns, in order to convert it more effectually into a temple for celebrating the solemnities of the Christian religion; by which injudicious scheme both the Moorish and Christian architectures are deprived of everything like unity of design. In vain have remonstrances been repeatedly made at different times, by the lovers of the arts, nay, even by royalty itself, against these misplaced and tasteless alterations. Regardless of these representations, the Chapter of the cathedral have, to the present time, persisted in retrenching from the details of the interior, or in adding others executed in a totally different style. Of this description is the choir, erected in the centre of the whole
edifice; and which, as Mr. Swinburne has justly remarked, were it in any other church, would deserve great praise for the Gothic grandeur of the plan, the loftiness of its dome, the exquisite carving of the stalls, and the elegance and high finishing of the arches and ornaments. But, placed as it is in the middle of the Arabian structure, it destroys all unity of design; darkens the rest; and renders confused every idea of the original general effect of the building.

Many are the chapels, erected in various parts between the pillars; which indeed form so many distinct churches in the midst of the old cathedral, interrupt the enfilade, and block up the passage. In one place, columns have been removed, in order to adorn these same chapels; in another, we are credibly informed, pieces of the beautiful timber-work, that supports the roof, have been taken away for the purpose of making musical instruments, especially guitars, for which use this kind of wood has been recommended, as being peculiarly proper!!! It may readily be conceived, how such vile spoliations as these, repeated too for successive centuries, must have altered the original simplicity of the mosque; yet, notwithstanding all these impediments, the spectator cannot fail to be struck with admiration, on beholding the interior of this magnificent structure, in which the oriental style is every where the prevailing characteristic. "No coup-d’œil, it has justly been remarked, can be more extraordinary than that taken in by the eye, when placed in such parts of the church as afford a clear view down the aisles at right angles, uninterrupted by chapels and modern erections. Equally wonderful is the appearance, when the spectator looks from the points, which present to him all the rows of columns and arches in an oblique line.

As the preceding Plate exhibited a view of the mosque, such as it was planned by Abdurrahman I., who was fortunate enough to meet with an architect capable of carrying his sublime ideas into execution, it may not be displeasing to the lovers of the Arts, to have another plan of the same edifice, in which its various additions and alterations are delineated.

Explanation of the References to Plate II.

A. The Dean’s gate.
B. Another gate.
C. The Hall of Ecclesiastical Audience.
D. The Gate of Pardon.
E. The Inspector’s chamber.
F. A room (or hall), belonging to the Chapter.
G. The Gate of the great drain.
H. The Hall of the Kibla.
I. The Gate of the round drain.
K. St. Catherine’s gate.
L. Outer line of the chapels.
M. A spacious passage.
N. Outer line of the old building.
O. The Tower of the mosque, which contained the Zecarron, or sanctuary of the Koran.
PPQ. The Garden of the Mezquita, or mosque, of which a partial view is given in Plate IV.

The subjoined figures refer to the other parts of the edifice, including the Chapels:

1. The Chapel of Christ in an agony.
2. The Chapel of Saint Ambrose.
3. The Chapel of Saint Augustin.
4. The Gate of Saint Stephen.
5. The Chapel of our Lady of the Snow (Capilla de Nuestra Señora Neva).
6. The Chapel of Saint Simeon and Saint Jude.
7. The Chapel of our Lady of the Conception.
8. The Chapel of Saint Anthony, abbot.
10. The Chapel of Saint Acacius.
11. The Door of Saint Michael.
12. The concealed Door.
13. The Chapel of Saint Lawrence.
14. Door belonging to the Bishop’s palace.
15. The Chapel of Saint Eleazar.
16. The Chapel of Saint Bartholomew.
17. The Chapel of Saint Phillip and Saint James.
18. The Chapel of Saint Peter, usually called del Zecarron.
19. The Chapel of the Eucharist.
20. The Chapel of Cardinal Salazar, as present the Great Sacristy.
21. The Chapel of Santa Iglesia.
22. The Chapel of Saint Antony.
23. The Sacristy of the Pala.
25. The Chapel of Saint Clement, now used as a Chapter-house.
26. A parochial Chapel, with its Sacristy.
27. The Chapel of Saint Helena.
28. The Chapel of the Patron Saints, Arcedias and Victor.
29. The Chapel of the Resurrection.
30. A parish door.
31. The Chapel of the Assumption.
32. The Chapel of the Nativity.
33. The concealed Door.
34. The Chapel of Saint Joseph.
35. The Chapel of the Conception.
36. The Bishop’s Chapel.
37. The Chapel of the Annunciation.
38. A Door.
39. The Chapel of Saint Nicholas, bishop.
40. The Chapel of Baptism.
41. The Chapel of Saint John the Baptist.
42. The Chapel of the Conception.
43. Door to the Haram.
44. The Chapel of St. Anne.
45. The Chapel of Saint Antony of Padua.
46. The principal Parish door.
47. The Chapel of the Descend from the Cross.
48. The Chapel of Saint Ursula.
49. The Chapel founded by the Inca, Guarecillo de la Vega, whose remains are interred therein.
50. The Chapel of our Lady of the Rosary.
51. The Chapel of the Epiphany.
52. The Chapel of Saint Michael.
53. The Chapel of our Lady of Antigua.
54. The Chapel of the Magdalen.
55. The Chapel of Saint Stephen.
56. The Chapel of Saint Eulogius.
57. The Gate of Blessing.
59. The Altar of Saint Christopher.
60. The Altar of Saint Barbara.
61. * * * * * * *
63. The Altar of Saint Phillip and Saint James.
64. The Altar of Saint Mary.
65. The Altar of Saint Lucia.
67. The Altar of Saint Anthony of Padua.
68. The Altar of the Incarnation.
69. The Altar of Saint Andrew.
70. The Altar of the Conception.

PLATE III.

ELLEVATION OF THE MOSQUE AT CORDOVA.

Each of the four fronts of this beautiful edifice, exhibits low walls, remarkable for their solidity, all of which are crowned with crenated battlements. Each of these fronts, however,