

## Mudéjar of Aragon (Spain)

No 378 bis

### Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	Mudéjar of Aragon (Extension of <i>Mudéjar Architecture of Teruel</i> )
<i>Location</i>	Region of Aragón
<i>State Party</i>	Spain
<i>Date</i>	30 June 2000

### Justification by State Party

In 1986, UNESCO included five monuments from the city of Teruel that represented Mudejar art in the Autonomous Community of Aragon on the World Heritage List. While the works referred to are magnificent examples of this style, subsequent research carried out into this matter, together with the changes brought about in the way of "seeing and understanding" Cultural Heritage, has led to the conclusion that it would be necessary to include in this declaration a limited number of Mudejar monuments with the aim of embracing and including in a more universal way the Mudejar phenomenon in all its complexity.

In our opinion, the extension requested would explain a sociological manifestation of several centuries' duration, which takes place mainly in the former Kingdom of Aragon during the period from the 12th to the 17th century. This phenomenon is none other than the coexistence and interrelation between three cultures, the Muslim, the Christian and the Jewish cultures that coexisted pacifically over all that time, exchanging knowledge and experiences. The greatest testimony of all this today is to be found in architecture and the decorative arts, together with the large number etymologically Arabic words that still exist in the Spanish language.

The material Mudejar culture has survived in space and time thanks to the historical processes of conquest and colonisation of new lands. The building techniques were first passed on to the Canary Islands and eventually to Latin America, where there are numerous examples of buildings constructed in accordance with this architectural tradition. Not only have the traditions overcome geographical barriers but they have done away with time constraints too, since even today the kind of building techniques used are still alive, keeping our roots and cultural identities alive.

In short, the aim of this proposal is not merely to have some more buildings included on the World Heritage List, but, by means of them, silent witnesses of a time gone by, to exemplify a time in the history of Spain during which the Arabic and Christian cultures, and frequently the Jewish culture too, were capable of living peacefully together. The spreading of knowledge of these phenomena may contribute to the development of the universal values of culture and of peace, which are also objectives shared by UNESCO.

### Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of monuments*.

### History and Description

#### History

The Mudéjar art in Aragón is a direct consequence of the singular nature of the Christian Reconquest, in the early 12th century, of territories that had been dominated by the Moors since the 8th century. For various practical and political reasons, the Christians allowed the Moors to remain on the reconquered territories and keep their own culture and religion. On the other hand, Islamic art fascinated the Christians, who continued using its themes for a long time. Because of this cohabitation, many Islamic buildings were preserved, such as the Aljaferia Palace in Zaragoza and other palaces and mosques in Toledo, Córdoba, Seville, and Granada. In this cultural context, there also developed a new expression, Mudéjar art, which represented the fusion of two artistic traditions, Islamic and Christian. The region of Aragón became one of the principal locations for this development. Here the easily available materials were brick, lime, ceramics, and timber, which were also economical in use. Most master builders were Moors, who continued to contribute to the construction. Mudéjar art gradually declined with the interruption of relations with the Islamic world and the introduction of Italian Renaissance concepts in the 16th century.

The history of Mudéjar art in Aragón can be divided into three phases: a) the beginnings from 12th to 13th centuries, b) full development and expansion in the 14th and 15th centuries, and c) survival and extension in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Only few examples of Mudéjar art remain from the period immediately succeeding the Reconquest. The earliest surviving buildings are in Daroca and Teruel. In Daroca these include the tower of St Domingo and the apse of St Juan from the mid 13th century. Both constructions were initiated in stone and completed in brick. In Teruel the earliest examples are the church of St Maria de Mediavilla (cathedral), and the tower of St Pedro, of a slightly later date. Both of these have very similar decorative systems and structures: they are gate towers on a square base, allowing a passage under a pointed vault, reinforced with buttresses. It should be understood that, apart from their religious and military functions, these bell towers also had an important town-planning function in tracing the routes. The ceiling of the cathedral of Teruel, dating from the second half of the

13th century, is the most interesting artistic achievement of Mudéjar art in Aragón.

The full development of Mudéjar art in Aragón in the 14th and early 15th centuries coincides with the introduction of Gothic to the Iberian peninsula. In Aragón, Mudéjar art continued to predominate over Gothic, except in some minor areas in the south. The most common type of church has a single aisle, with a polygonal apse of five or six sides and without any buttresses. The structure presents some characteristics of Gothic architecture, showing the interrelation between these two art forms. Many of these churches were modified in later periods. The churches of Zaragoza (La Magdalena, St Gil, and St Miguel de los Navarros) correspond to this type. Perhaps the most distinguished type of church building in this period is one with a strongly military function, a fortified church with tribunes over the lateral chapels, opening towards the exterior. In fact, the patrons were mainly from military orders.

In the last period, starting from the beginning of the 16th century (1502–26), the Mudéjars were forced to convert to Christianity, becoming "new Christians" or "*moriscos*". This is followed by a period of intolerance, resulting in the expulsion of these new Christians in 1609–10. This is also the period of the decline and extinction of Mudéjar art, though there are still some interesting achievements, of which there are examples in Zaragoza, Muniesa, Mara, Tierga, Alcubierre, Utebo, Villamayor, and Ricla.

#### Description

The sites representing Mudéjar art in Aragón proposed for inscription were 157 in the first nomination proposal. This number was subsequently reduced by the State Party to 64, and then, after further negotiations with ICOMOS, to 6 sites. These sites are proposed to be added to the four sites of Teruel which are already on the List, making the total of 10.

The State Party has provided a fairly complete inventory of the most important Mudéjar sites, which can be classified on the basis of their characteristics. The monuments include churches characterized in three groups: churches with one nave, churches with three aisles, and fortress churches. Another category is represented by the bell towers, perhaps the most visible element of Mudéjar architecture, which are characterized by great richness in their decoration: a variety of geometric patterns of brick reliefs, different patterns of coloured ceramics, elements in gypsum, as well as various architectural forms, niches, windows, buttresses. The towers can have different forms in plan: octagonal base, or square base. Several towers have Christian influence, and have either a square or an octagonal plan, or a mixture of both forms. Their internal structure differs from the *Almohades* model (with one tower inside another), and the stairs are additional feature. Some churches have a ciborium over the nave, in the form of tower with a square plan, which then becomes octagonal and is crowned with a bell tower. Another typical feature of Mudéjar architecture is found in the painted and decorated ceilings in wood, of which the best known example is in *St Maria de Mediavilla* (13th c.) of Teruel, already inscribed on the World Heritage List. Mudéjar architecture is also found in monasteries, castles, and in residential buildings.

The proposal includes the following six monuments, all in the Province of Zaragoza:

- The Palace of La Aljafería, Zaragoza, dating from the 14th to 15th centuries. This was initially a royal Islamic palace in the 11th century, becoming then the seat of Christian monarchs. The chapel of San Martín, built to the order of Pedro IV in the 14th century, has a fine gate in open brickwork, framed with Alfiz decorated with rhombuses and a tympanum. In various parts of the palace, there are carved and painted ceilings built at the time of Pedro IV and the Catholic Kings (15th century). The palace complex has a rich plaster decoration in floral patterns and its doors, windows and balustrades have geometric decoration. Some changes were introduced in the 18th century with the addition of a baroque tower, and the 14th-century chapel of San Jorge was removed in the 19th century.

- The Cathedral of La Seo del Salvador, Zaragoza, 14th to 16th centuries, was built on top of a former Moorish mosque and includes various Mudéjar elements. The funeral chapel, *La Parroquieta de San Miguel*, built at the end of the 14th century, conserves beautiful canvases of Mudéjar decoration, merging Aragonese and Sevillian influences. It also shelters a spectacular wooden structure in so-called *moamar* technique. The apses of the building are decorated in brick and ceramic using geometric motifs and crowned with battlements, typical of Almohade art. The octagonal dome has large tracery windows and the lateral elevations are richly decorated; the lower parts remain from the initial construction, while the upper part dates from the 16th century always in Mudéjar style, serving as an example for other cathedrals.

- The Church of San Pablo, Zaragoza, 13th to 14th centuries. The base of the tower of the church has an octagonal form, and its Almohade-type minaret remains mostly intact though with some Renaissance additions and a baroque spire. Several chapels were built between the 15th and 18th centuries, and the building was given a neo-classical façade on the south side.

- The Collegiate Church of Santa María, Calatayud, 14th to 16th centuries, has replaced a former Moorish mosque. The 14th-century cloister on the north side is the largest of such Mudéjar constructions. It has an upper gallery built in the 17th century. The church has a polygonal apse decorated in brick, which was extended in the 16th century. The finest part is the octagonal tower with an Almohade minaret structure, dating from the end of the 15th century. A chapel was added to the lower part in the 17th century, and a baroque spire was built on top in the 18th century. Nevertheless, the building has well preserved its Mudéjar characteristics.

- The Parish Church of Santa Tecla, Cervera de la Cañada, was built on top of an old castle from the end of the 14th to the beginning of the 15th centuries. The church has carved and painted ceilings in the choir, large windows and oculi with plasterwork, as well as mural paintings with trimmed bricks and geometric motifs. While there have been some changes and additions in later periods, the essential parts of the Mudéjar structure have been preserved.

- The Parish Church of Santa Maria (La Virgen), Tobed, second half of the 14th century, has been well preserved and has fine interiors with carved and painted ceilings, built to the order of Pope Benedict XIII under the patronage of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. The Town Hall that had been built against the west side of the church was demolished in

1984, and the wall was restored, opening the windows that had remained blocked earlier.

## Management and Protection

### *Legal status*

There are two basic legal instruments that concern cultural heritage in the province of Aragón: the national law of 25 June, 1985, on *Patrimonio Histórico Español*, and the regional law no. 3-99 of 10 March, 1999, on *Patrimonio Cultural Aragonés*. The latter law identifies three different categories of properties for protection: the *Bienes de Interés Cultural* (BIC), the *Bienes Catalogados* (CAT), and the *Bienes Inventariados*. The properties proposed to the List are fully protected under the first category (BIC).

The *Departamento de Cultura y Turismo*, instituted in 1999, includes in its responsibilities issues related to the protection and conservation of cultural heritage.

### *Management*

After negotiations with ICOMOS, the State Party has made an effort to reformulate the nomination in terms of the selection of sites. This new formulation includes a commitment for the finalization and implementation of a management plan, involving the establishment of a global vision of Mudéjar art in Aragon, the introduction of mechanisms for the protection of the heritage, the development of systems of presentation and interpretation, as well as the development of a sustainable plan for tourism. The institutions involved in the management of this heritage will include the Department of Culture and Tourism of Aragon, the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage, the Mudéjar Art in Aragon Foundation, the World Heritage Management Unit, as well as the relevant municipalities, bishoprics, ICOMOS Spain, and representatives of civic institutions of the areas concerned. Furthermore, the information will be introduced into a GIS system as a means for improved management.

On the basis of the law no. 3-1999 'Patrimonio Cultural Aragonés', the article 78 requests the preparation of '*Plan de Promoción y Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural*', and the article 83 asks for '*Planes Territoriales del Patrimonio Cultural Aragonés*'. Fundamentally, the responsibility for the management of the properties is with the respective municipal authorities and the owners. The Department of Culture and Tourism has formed a group of civil servants with the specific responsibility for World Heritage sites. The proposed Aragonese Mudéjar Art Foundation is expected to act as a coordinating unit for the institutions and groups to be involved in the management. Finances can come from different sources, including the yearly budgets of the responsible authorities, but also from private sources, and in some cases from the European Union. There exist different promotional activities for cultural tourism, such as the organization of selected itineraries to improve the knowledge and diffusion of information of the Mudéjar culture.

Each of the six sites being proposed consist of the entire building (monument) concerned. A small buffer zone is mostly limited to the open area surrounding the building. It is appreciated that the monuments are all placed within areas that are subject to conservation policies. There is thus expected to be no immediate risk. Nevertheless, ICOMOS

wishes to draw the attention of the authorities to the need to guarantee the overall protection of each site within its urban context. It is important that this issue be given due consideration in the Management Plan.

## Conservation and Authenticity

### *Conservation history*

Generally speaking, Mudéjar architecture is particularly vulnerable to various causes of deterioration, including climatic factors, earthquakes, floods, but also damages caused by man and animals. In the past, these have included, eg., the Civil War of 1936-39, which destroyed several properties. The continuity of use has favoured their maintenance, but also caused problems related to uncontrolled changes and alterations. The exposed brick decorations and ceramics are fragile in terms of wind erosion, temperature changes, and frost. Many roofs and ceilings have been lost due to fires and other disasters. Nevertheless, all the six nominated properties are reported to be in a good state of conservation.

### *Authenticity and integrity*

Mudéjar architecture was created in a specific period in time, ranging from the moment when the Mudéjars were allowed to stay in Aragón, in the 12th century until their final expulsion at the beginning of the 17th century. This art drew its inspiration from two sources: Islamic connections in North Africa and European Gothic as this evolved in the same period. The question up to what point such traditions can be seen as having continued beyond those limits can be raised, but it would be logical to limit the consideration to the preservation of the historic monuments that have survived. In terms of restoration, therefore, the question is to guarantee that the historic authenticity of the material be guaranteed, and that any restoration and changes be carried out respecting internationally accepted principles. The monuments included in the current proposal are considered to pass the test of authenticity, and ICOMOS is satisfied with the outcome of the nomination proposal in this regard.

Concerning the question of integrity, the nomination makes practically no reference to the built environment of which the monument is part. Even the buffer zone is mostly limited to the open area around the monument, and does not include any of the historic fabric of the town. Considering the prominent role of the Mudéjar towers and buildings in their historic setting, it will certainly be of great interest to maintain this relationship intact and to keep any changes in the setting under strict control.

## Evaluation

### *Action by ICOMOS*

Four Mudéjar sites situated in the town of Teruel were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1986 on the basis of criterion iv. The area of the present extension was visited by an ICOMOS expert in January–February 2001. Following the mission and further discussions with ICOMOS, the State Party has reviewed the initial nomination dossier, selecting six of the most representative sites. Together with already

inscribed sites in Teruel, the total would therefore be ten monuments.

#### *Qualities*

The development of Mudéjar art was the result of particular political, social, and cultural conditions in Spain after the Reconquest, a coexistence of Islamic and Christian societies. This art contains influences from the Islamic world as well as from European Gothic and is characterized by the extremely refined and inventive use of brick and glazed ceramics in architecture, particularly marked in the bell towers. Other elements include painted coffered ceilings made in wood. The outstanding universal value of Mudéjar art has already been recognized by the World Heritage Committee at the time of the first nomination of the monuments of Teruel in 1986.

A characteristic feature of Mudéjar buildings is that they are often built on an existing building site. The same buildings has generally also been subject to later changes and additions. While the principal attention of the present nomination is the Mudéjar phase of construction, it is noted that such features should be seen as an integral part of the historic context where they belong. The nominated sites are considered a fair representation of the different qualities of Mudéjar art and architecture, both in terms of types of structures and the historical development.

#### *Comparative analysis*

Mudéjar art developed mainly in Spain, though it was also diffused into a broader context, including even Latin America. In this context, the region of Aragón has been recognized as the area where this art reached its most outstanding achievements. The initial proposal of the current nomination was to identify everything that exists in Aragón as World Heritage. This proposal has been subsequently redefined selecting six of the most representative examples, and assuring the necessary management plans and strategies for the whole. Together with the already inscribed sites in Teruel, the monuments now give a fair coverage of the different types of structures and historical periods of Mudéjar art and architecture. The nomination thus includes different types of churches with bell towers, and decorative features as well as a castle. The nomination covers the periods from the 12th and 13th centuries, through the full development of the style in the 14th and 15th centuries, to the later interventions in the 16th century. The sites represent different situations, including constructions built over earlier Islamic buildings, or where the Mudéjar construction has been integrated with later interventions.

#### *ICOMOS recommendations for future action*

Recognizing the serious effort made by the State Party to meet the requirements of the World Heritage nomination, ICOMOS wishes to express its satisfaction with the current proposal. Taking note of the commitment of the State Party to prepare a comprehensive management plan, including a GIS documentation system, ICOMOS recommends that the World Heritage Committee be duly informed about progress and the results. ICOMOS further recommends that, in the management plan, particular attention be given to the urban context of the monuments and that appropriate measures be

taken to guarantee that the relationship with the urban setting be maintained as sympathetic.

#### **Brief description**

The development of Mudéjar art in Aragón was the result of particular political, social, and cultural conditions in Spain after the Reconquest, a coexistence of Islamic and Christian societies from the 12th to 17th centuries. This art contains influences from the Islamic world and reflects the various European trends that developed in parallel, particularly Gothic. It is characterized by an extremely refined and inventive use of brick and glazed ceramics in architecture, particularly marked in the bell towers.

#### **ICOMOS Recommendation**

That the proposed sites be accepted as an extension to the existing World Heritage site, Mudéjar Architecture of Teruel, inscribed in 1986, and that the extension should be referred to criterion iv, the same as the original. The State Party is urged to complete and implement the required management plan as soon as possible, and to take the necessary measures to guarantee that the relationship of the monuments with their historic setting be maintained.

It is further recommended that the name of the nomination be revised as "Mudéjar Architecture of Aragón."

#### **Bureau Recommendation**

That this nomination be *referred back* to allow ICOMOS an opportunity to examine the revised version of the nomination recently submitted by the State Party. Assuming that the ICOMOS review panel gives a favourable opinion on the nomination, the Bureau would recommend to the Committee that the extension be approved under the existing criterion iv. It is further recommended that, with the agreement of the State Party, the name of the site be revised as *Mudéjar of Aragón*.

ICOMOS, September 2001