

# Built on Modernism: The theoretical basis of contemporary heritage preservation in the Spanish architectural scene

## Construído sobre Modernismo: a base teórica de preservação do patrimônio contemporâneo na Espanha

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**ABSTRACT** – Modernity and heritage preservation are sometimes regarded as opposite ideas; however, the two concepts are inseparably linked throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization ICOMOS (founded in 1965) provided an opportunity to revise the connection of monument protection and modern principles, a duality that accompanied the last century of architecture. The general reform of monument preservation movements was triggered by the destruction of the World Wars, followed by the global identity crisis coming from the modernist city reconstructions all over Europe. Due to the ignorance of the desire for historic continuity, late-Modern architecture caused intense social criticism in several European countries. However, the special historic-cultural background of the Iberian Peninsula created a scenario of architectural trends and a development of monument protection that differed from other parts of Europe. This study investigates the history of architectural heritage preservation in Spain, analyses the parallel methodologies and interactions of Modernism and monument protection from a theoretical point of view, reflecting on the specific conditions of the country during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, giving a general view of the strong embeddedness of heritage preservation in Modernism.

**Keywords:** built heritage, contemporary architecture, Modernism, rehabilitation, Spanish architecture, theory of monument preservation.

**RESUMO** – Modernidade e preservação do patrimônio às vezes são considerados como ideias opostas; contudo, os dois conceitos estão inseparavelmente ligados ao longo do século 20. O 50º aniversário da organização ICOMOS (fundada em 1965) proporcionou uma oportunidade para rever a conexão da proteção de monumentos e princípios modernos, uma dualidade que acompanhou o último século da arquitetura. A reforma geral dos movimentos de preservação de monumento foi desencadeada pela destruição das guerras mundiais, seguida pela crise global de identidade desencadeada pelas reconstruções modernistas das cidades em toda a Europa. Devido à ignorância do desejo de continuidade histórica, a arquitetura late-moderno causou intensa crítica social em vários países europeus. Entretanto, o fundo histórico-cultural especial da Península Ibérica criou um cenário de tendências arquitetônicas e um desenvolvimento de proteção ao monumento que diferiam de outras partes da Europa. Este estudo investiga a história da preservação do patrimônio arquitetônico na Espanha, analisa as metodologias paralelas e as interações do Modernismo e de proteção ao monumento do ponto de vista teórico, refletindo sobre as condições específicas do país durante o século XX, dando uma visão geral do forte enraizamento da preservação do patrimônio no Modernismo.

**Palavras-chave:** patrimônio construído, arquitetura contemporânea, modernismo, reabilitação, arquitetura espanhola, teoria da preservação de patrimônio edificado.

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## Research aims

Modernity and heritage preservation can be regarded as opposite ideas; however, the two concepts are inseparably linked throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The general reform of monument preservation movements was triggered by the destruction of the World Wars, followed by the global identity crisis coming from the modernist city reconstructions all over Europe. Due to the ignorance of the desire for historic continuity, late-Modern architecture caused intense social criticism in several European countries. The redefinition of local identity was based on the restoration of the built heritage. Nevertheless, the methods of interventions were not separable from the relationships between society and modernism: the solutions accurately reflect the architectural mentality of the examined period. Architectural rehabilitation, as the instrument of sustainable development, was again brought to the fore by the crisis of 2008, which interrupted the construction boom at the turn of the Millennium. Research into the theoretical background of heritage preservation is especially actual as, currently, rehabilitative interventions dominate the works of European contemporary architecture.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization ICOMOS (founded in 1965) provides an opportunity to revise the connection of monument protection and modern principles. The constant changes of this duality – how monument protection reflected on the current processes of Modernism – characterize the last century of Spanish architecture. The individual character of architectural works can be traced back to the special historic-cultural background of the Iberian Peninsula and to its isolation (in particular as regards the Franco régime). This created the scenario of architectural trends and the development of monument protection that differed from other parts of Europe. This study analyses the parallel methodologies and interactions of Modernism and heritage preservation reflecting the specific conditions of Spain during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and at the turn of the Millennium. It examines the processes from a theoretical point of view (researching both professional literature and architectural practice of the era), presenting how modern architecture (and the heritage preservation of the same approach) became the symbol of resistance due to political pressure, and retained all its fascination contrary to the critical perspective in Europe and America. The paper illustrates how later the international opening of the country contributed to the creative reinterpretation of modern objectives, generating a special architectural language characteristic for Spain, that culminated in the interventions on historic buildings, symbolizing the relation between heritage and contemporary architecture. The main aim is to understand this relationship by examining the evolving approach towards Modernism and its effect on heritage preservation throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Historic background

Spanish architectural historiography connects the appearance of Modern architecture – in contrast to the general European approach – to the turn of the century. The world-renowned Catalan artistic movement of the 1900s (“modernisme”) can be considered as a variant of Art Nouveau, though it represents the expression of identity of both the upper-middle class and the working class. The style is characterized by the mixture of constructive Rationalism and Medieval Moorish ornamentation, breaking with the traditional forms and materials used by the internationally spread Revivalist styles. The need for renewal can be traced back to deep-rooted social causes: the delayed scientific and cultural development of Spain generated an intense desire for modernity for the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The strengths of the reforms are shown by the evolvment of Noucentisme, a counterpoint that idealized the art of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The “awareness of Spain’s retarded scientific development, and the resulting frustration that dominated Spanish culture from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, generated an intense, passionate appetite for modernity” (Cabrero, 2001, p. 9).

The work of the world-renowned *Antoni Gaudí* (1852-1926) reformed the contemporary architectural vocabulary by adopting new elements, both in structure and in details, transmitting the synthetic approach of Mudéjar architecture (Figure 1). *Puig i Cadafalch* (1867-1956) mixed Gothic Revivalist elements with industrial forms – Walter Gropius confessed to be inspired by him (Lampugnani, 1986, p. 313). Following the general reformation of architecture and the reevaluation of the built heritage,



**Figure 1.** A. Gaudí: Casa Batlló, Barcelona (1904-1906).

monument protection institutionalised in Spain after the turn of the century. The evolution of judicial conditions<sup>2</sup> was similar to the development in France and England; however, the related ideological-conceptual debates hardly reached the country. The schools of restoration (“restauradores”) and conservation (“anti-restauradores”) were separated and heavily delayed compared to Europe (Musso, 2010, p. 87-109); the effort to fit into the two main trends restricted the development of monument protection since it is a field requiring unique solutions for each different context (Benavides Solís, 1997, p. 20).

*Vicente Lampérez y Romea* (1861-1923), the committed follower of Viollet-le-Duc and the school of restoration, became known for his purist interventions. He did not support the appearance of contemporary architectural character on monuments; stating, that the task of an architect on a monument is “not to write but to follow its dictation commenting its language” (Gallego Aguilera, 2009, p. 263-279). The architects of the period attempted to define Spanish identity by searching the national style, and selecting the unique Mudéjar art that symbolized the era of the Reconquista, the genesis of national culture. The theoretical work of Lampérez that simplified the Arabic influence on the adaptation of ornamentation has been repeatedly criticized ever since for its schematizing approach (Borrás Gualis, 1994, p. 203.).

The trend of conservation (following the concepts of John Ruskin and William Morris) appeared in Spain via Italy; this emphasised the preservation of traces of different building periods, the elapsed time and maintaining the usage of the structure— objectives approaching modernity. A spectacular example was the development of rural monuments for unique hotels that revived the hotel trade of the underdeveloped provinces (Rivera Blanco, 1992). *Don Benigno de la Vega Inclán* (1858-1942) was the driving force behind the thoroughly modern concept of the national tourist network of state-owned hotels, the so-called “Paradors”. The aim of these interventions was to integrate contemporary functions besides preserving the historic character of monuments. The first hotel of this kind, the Parador El Rey Alfonso XIII, named after the political patron of the movement, was inaugurated in 1928.

### Appearance of Modernism

The appearance of Modern architecture in the classical sense is connected in Spain to Catalonia. The main milestones of architectural historiography are the death of Gaudí (1926), the visit of Le Corbusier (1928), the Barcelona Pavilion of Mies van der Rohe (1929) (Costa,

2014, p. 226) and the first works of Josep Lluís Sert (Casa Duclós, Sevilla, 1929) (Riley, 2006, p. 28). The characteristics of Spanish Modern are the preservation of traditional academic elements and their mixture with rationalist, expressionist approach – at that time the development of architecture in Spain was synchronized with the processes of Europe. The pre-draft of the Athens Charter was drawn up at a Barcelonan meeting of CIRPAC demonstrating this strong European connection – the affirmation of GATEPAC in the international ambit (Mumford, 2000, p. 66-72). As modern technologies, contrast and respect for the material were emphasised in architectural design; the practice of monument protection applied the same methods following the “zeitgeist”. The interests of users and the need for continuity of use also came to the fore among architectural and social principles. The Modern Movement, marked by the concept of “tabula rasa” and the respect to “ex novo” creations, attributed special value to the monuments; however, it considered other parts of the built heritage as the past to be necessarily replaced. The importance of site examination and urban context was already introduced to Spain by *Jeroni Martorell i Terrats* (1876-1951) who emphasized the comprehensive management of the monument environment. The Catalan specialist developed the theoretical background of scientific restoration in Spain in the 1910s. Its main points – minimising the intervention, the respect to the different building periods and continuity of use – reappeared among the principles of the Charter of Athens (Lacuesta, 2000, p. 255).

In the “Golden Age” of Spanish monument protection, the practice was similar to the processes in Italy. Specifically, the “third way” connected to Camillo Boito and Ambrogio Annoni who, for the first time, phrased the concept of “case to case” and the “negotiation of the method” as an alternative to universal solutions.<sup>3</sup> According to them, the only intertemporal principle beyond the strict academic theories was the method attentive to the peculiarities of each case to avoid the risk of generalization. This methodology was introduced in Spain by *Leopoldo Torres Balbás* (1888-1960), the successor of Lampérez, through the restoration of Alhambra (Figure 2). Here the romantic approach of the former decades was replaced by scientific restoration that defined the contemporary appearance of the palace to a great extent. The new principles of monument protection accentuated the artistic value of the result; however, the knowledge derived from research was essential. Consequently, the restored monument had to affect the visitor both subjectively (aesthetics) and objectively (science). The extensive, synthetic professional

<sup>2</sup> The first comprehensive monument catalogues were created from 1880 on, the law of 1911 strengthened the scientific approach by ordering archaeological research, and the law of 1915 established the concept of monumental protection. The laws of 1926 and 1933 globally regulated the area of monument protection and its levels, by integrating the principles of Modern architecture (Becerra García, 1999, p. 17).

<sup>3</sup> “In front of the monument, it is the master; and all work of restoration is determined, in every particular case, from it” (Annoni, 1946, p. 76).





**Figure 2.** L. Torres Balbás: Restoration of Alhambra, Granada (1923-1936).

work of Torres Balbás was interrupted by the dictatorship after the Civil War.

### Civil War and Dictatorship

The Spanish Civil War (1937-1939) meant a determinant break in the progress of architecture. While the

Spanish Pavilion at the Parisian EXPO, the work of *José Lluís Sert* (1902-1983), represented pure Corbusian principles with its prefabricated structure, the interior already served as an exhibition for the wartime propaganda of the Second Republic. The improving professional career of the modern-minded Sert was restrained in the following years until he finally went into exile by the end of the war. The damage of the wars created a new value system all over Europe, the destruction of building stock furthered comprehensive reforms according the social changes. Following the reinterpretation of the concept of memory, it slowly became the basis not only for retrospection but for advancement as well. Nevertheless, the changes in political conditions in Spain led to another direction.

The first period of the dictatorship of Francisco Franco (primarily until the 1950s) targeted the establishment of a national architecture, requiring the application of its official language. The Francoist architecture (“franquismo”), like other autocracies, reached back to the design vocabulary of a defined era and culture. In Spain, this defined era was the Renaissance, evolving after the Reconquista, represented by the royal complex El Escorial (1563-1584). Its characteristics: the ashlar masonry filled with brick surfaces was associated with an ideology: the framing stone represented the Catholic culture based on Roman fundamentals while the framed brick symbolized the local traditions. The architecture of the period featured pure Classicist forms, symmetrical layouts, facades and hierarchical volume compositions (Figure 3).

The political leadership used the construction of public buildings for propaganda purposes and considered



**Figure 3.** J.B. de Toledo, J. de Herrera: El Escorial, San Lorenzo de El Escorial (1563-1584), and following its pattern: L. Gutiérrez Soto: Air Ministry, Madrid (1943-1958).

architecture as “the alphabet of kings” (Riley, 2006, p. 20), the primal instrument for indirect communication towards people (Figure 4). The technological and formal reforms of the period remained irrelevant despite the significant number and dimension of contemporary buildings – latter research regards this era as the period of crisis in Spanish architecture (Fernández Alba, 1974, p. 114-117). The application of some innovations of the previous decades, like the reinforced concrete frame structure behind the Classicist exterior, led to further contradictions. The expression “Modernism” became a reactionary phrase, the GATEPAC was banned, and the typical solutions of Avant-garde were considered as a phenomenon endangering the Spanish national identity.

This change of attitude was also reflected in monument protection. Reconstructions based on a selected architectural style came to the fore during the Franco régime since the management of built heritage played an important role as ideological ground for the newly evolving state. Beyond the building practice, publications (like the “*Revista Nacional de Arquitectura o Reconstrucción*”) also show this propagandistic nature of architecture. The replacement of some previous restorations show the same attitude; *Camil Pallàs Arisa* (1918-1982) who followed Martorell as head of the Catalan office of historic preservation repeatedly revised the work of his predecessor. In the case of the church of the Catalan village Cervelló, he

deconstructed the Gothic bell tower restored by Martorell to reveal the Romanesque silhouette. The ignorance of independent theoretical studies hindered the development of the area, predominantly leading to stereotypical solutions. The settlements that had suffered considerable damage during the war were symbolically adopted by Franco, which reinforced the political involvement<sup>4</sup>. The same propagandistic aim is shown by other symbolic restorations of the state, like the El Escorial in Madrid or the Palace of Charles V in Granada that were hardly damaged during the war (Esteban-Chapapria, 2008, p. 46.).

The restorations of ecclesiastical buildings played a leading role, which can be seen during the renovation of the Cathedral of Santiago. *Luis Menéndez-Pidal* (1896-1975), a prominent monument specialist of the era removed previous interventions to reveal Medieval remains, for example the Baroque choir, to emphasize Romanesque characteristics. The conversion met the need for large coherent liturgical spaces suitable for a broader audience according to the current political will (Pardo Fernández, 2013, p. 811-827). The architecture of the Galician restorer *Francisco Pons-Sorolla* (1917-2011) may be considered as Facadism since the preservation of stylistic coherence and the reconstruction of original façade profiles implied the reinforcement of the bearing structure and therefore the thinning of the façade itself<sup>5</sup>. While the reconstruction of the façade (like in



**Figure 4.** P. Muguruza, D. Méndez: Valle de los Caídos, San Lorenzo de El Escorial (1940-1958).

<sup>4</sup> The concerning decree (Decreto de Adopción, 1939) ordered the reconstruction of more than 300 settlements under governmental control (López Díaz, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> A phenomenon called “diradamento edilizio” (Castro Fernández, 2007, p. 241).



case of Casa de Ahorros, A Coruña, 1955) strengthens the coherence of the city structure, the building loses all traces of former interventions and the concrete structures irreversibly damage the original masonry.

### The Rediscovery of Modernism

The rediscovery of Modernism can be traced to the second half of the 1950s, in conjunction with the emergence to the international scene, the development of tourism and the optimistic public sentiment based on the economic growth. Barcelona (as counterpoint of the centralizing state power) was at the forefront of the renewal: the “Grup R” established in 1952 aimed to vivify the early Avant-garde principles (inspired by the architecture of Italy, Alvar Aalto or Richard Neutra) and the objectives of GATEPAC (Lampugnani, 1986, p. 310). The influence of Mies van der Rohe is undeniable in the architecture of Alejandro de la Sota (1913-1996); his dynamic screen-like walls evoke the effect of “paradoxical weightless masonry planes” (Frampton, 2007, p. 355) applied in the Barcelona Pavilion. The initial social debates also took part in the consolidation of Modern architecture. The Alhambra’s Manifesto, released in 1953, formulated the objectives of contemporary architecture following a long workshop involving several architects. The programme provided an alternative to the imitation of historical styles, an architecture linked to the site, integrated into different architectures of previous periods (Henares Cuéllar, 2006, p. 71-88). Although the publication triggered serious professional debate, the need for the reform of contemporary architecture had become clear.

The break-through is associated with the Spanish Pavilion at Brussels Expo in 1958 (Solà-Morales Rubió and Capitel, 1986). While the Structuralist setup and the reusability of its units fitted the main trend of contemporary European architecture, the hexagonal arrangement evoked Mudéjar antecedents (Fisac Serna, 1956, p. 5-13). The architectural competition announced for the Pavilion, won by José Antonio Corrales and Ramón Vázquez Molezún, anticipated the loosening rules of strict official architecture; the first architectural-theoretical studies reflecting on Modernism were published in the same period. The pioneering theoretical summary about the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Arquitectura Española Contemporánea) written by Carlos Flores López (1928-) formulated the main objectives that still define the analyses of Modernism in Spain (Flores López, 1961). The study was followed by further comprehensive works (Girbau, 1968; Bohigas Guardiola, 1970). According to them, Spanish Modernism appeared peripherally compared to the international models. It was also marked by

free experiencing in both theory and practice; the evolved heterogenic architecture can barely be classified into any global trend.

The examination of popular architecture was politically supported because of its role in Spanish identity, but at the same time, it provided guidance for modern-minded architects. Miguel Fisac Serna (1913-2006) wrote an influential essay about the potential benefits of vernacular architecture, emphasizing the characteristics that could be utilised in contemporary architecture (Fisac Serna, 1952, p. 17-20). Josep Antoni Coderch (1913-1984), whose work was firmly linked to the Modern Movement, created his unique artistic vocabulary by the reinterpretation of Mediterranean vernacular architecture mixed with Rationalist elements (Figure 5). He stated that “national and regional impacts played a crucial role in the development of Modern Spanish architecture, because Spain was isolated from practically all external impulses; consequently, regionalist architecture inspired architects to do what was later classified as Modern” (in Hernández de León and Llimargas i Casas, 2007, p. 6-36) (Figure 6).

The modern principles could be deduced from both external (international Avant-garde) and internal (regional) sources as was shown by the new settlements built by the state in the 1960s<sup>6</sup>, following the concept of Neo-Ruralism. Fernández del Amo (1914-1995) designed his villages in reference to Spanish cultural roots, creating historic continuity by approaching Modern forms through Mediterranean vernacular architecture. His abstract aesthetic



Figure 5. J. A. Coderch: Edificio Girasol, Madrid (1966).

<sup>6</sup> Instituto Nacional de Colonización (1947-1967).



**Figure 6.** Vernacular architecture of Andalusia, Ronda.

and ethical approach is comparable to the non-figurative works of Piet Mondrian and Theo Van Doesburg and to the houses of Adolf Loos (Centellas Soler, 2010). The new villages built within the national settlement plan were guided by three key words (rationalist, vernacular and organic) that materialized in the definitely Modernist work of del Amo in a special way: he subordinated the spaces to the function, adopted elements from anonymous regional architecture and adjusted the buildings to the topography. The textures of the facades respond to the centuries-old building culture of the region, like the whitewashed stone (Cañada de Agra) or brick (Vegaviana) masonries.

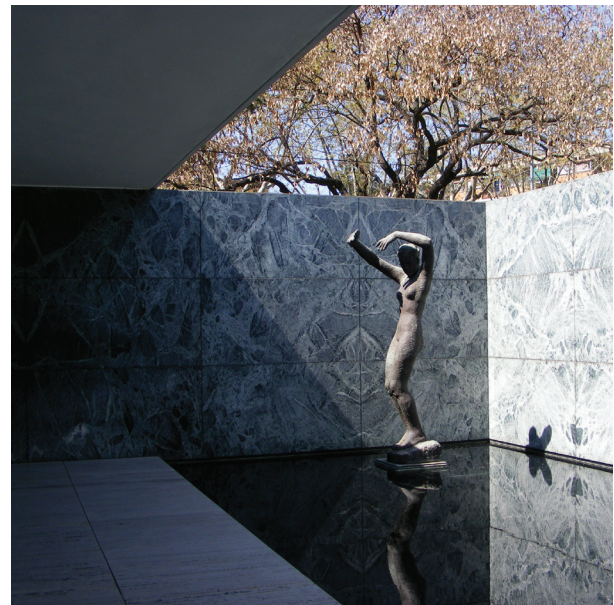
The “Parador Movement”, originating prior to the Civil War, revived following Spain’s international emergence in the 1960s when it became a political preference to increase the number of foreign visitors and state revenue from the hotel trade. This commercial reutilisation offered an alternative for museum use and became a special point of focus in Spanish monument protection. Maintaining usage as method of preservation increased significantly in importance following the energy crisis (and economic recession) of 1973. The specific architectural vocabulary of interventions slowly evolved replacing the classical Revivalist reconstructions, approaching the trends of contemporary architecture (“parador innovador” in Rodríguez Pérez, 2013, p. 655). While at the Parador of Tortosa (1976), the castle was extended with a wing mimicking all the Gothic details, conservation and interior decoration of historical buildings that had become typical since the 1980s (Parador of Trujillo, 1984). The hotel network was privatised in 1991 and has become a prominent self-sustaining brand of cultural tourism (Garcés Desmaison,

2013, p. 189-198) – highlighting individual contemporary architecture (Parador of Alcalá de Henares, 2007).

### After the Change of the Regime

Although the dictatorship ended with the death of Franco in 1975, the alteration of the economic-social structure including monument protection (especially its legislation) required more time. The statutory authority was assigned to the autonomous communities by the Ministry of Culture in 1979, strengthening the individual approach of regions. The law concerning heritage preservation, proclaimed in 1985, targeted the realization of the 1933 law and the synchronization of the principles and methods of monument protection with the practice of international organizations (UNESCO) (Becerra García, 1999, p. 17). The international media began to focus on Spanish architecture following the international emergence of the 1980s – while Europe was dominated by Postmodern and other critical movements, in Spain, the Modernist approach was revived (it was earlier neglected for cultural-political reasons). Kenneth Frampton explained the exceptional level of Spanish architectural culture with three factors: the profound city-state culture nurturing a deep sense of local identity; the devolution of political power after the Franco regime; and the continuity of the aspiration for Modernism below the reactionary surface (Frampton, 2008, p. 15-17).

The continuity of Modernism is well symbolised by the reconstruction of two demolished relics of Modernism at the end of the 1980s; the EXPO pavilions of



**Figure 7.** M. van der Rohe: Barcelona Pavilion, Barcelona (1929-1986).



Barcelona by Mies (1929) and the one of Paris by Sert (1937). The rebuilding of the Barcelona Pavilion, which was built as a temporary structure for the exhibition but became iconic in a short time (Figure 7), raised questions about the replaceability of architectural works – opposing the autographic (irreproducible) and allographic (interpretable) approaches of a building<sup>7</sup>. The problem is connected to the concept of authenticity and justification of total reconstructions, a question partially discussed in the Venice Charter (1964) and the ICOMOS Declaration of Dresden (1982). Nevertheless, the self-referenciability and the independent interpretability of the works of art is supported by the Neo-Platonist philosophy of Mies (Colquhoun, 2002, p. 179), and the reconstruction of the Barcelona Pavilion resulted from the openness of Spanish architects not just towards the Modern Movement but also towards the creative reinterpretation of its objectives (Jodidio, 2007, p. 8-10).

*Ignaci de Solà-Morales* (1942-2001), who played the main role in the reconstruction of the Barcelona Pavilion, pointed out that “although Modernist architecture is based on an independent formal language, the new elements placed in historic city structure unintentionally reinterpret the built heritage by the instrument of contrast” (Solà-Morales, 1986, p. 38-39). He criticized the fundamentalist Neo-Modern idea in his essay in 1987 and urged a complex architectural answer instead of one-sided views; however, his objectives (“weak architecture”) are

undeniably based on Modernism<sup>8</sup>. The appearance of analogy in the methodology of interventions following Italian patterns (Carlos Scarpa and Giorgio Grassi) became more accentuated in the period (Figure 8).

The reformed Spanish architecture was less affected by the stigmatisation of Modernism than other parts of Europe, which helped the adoption of Critical Modernism. In the period when the fundamental doctrines of Modern Movement were questioned and needed to be revised all over Europe, in Spain – after decades of negligence – it became the symbol of progress and political change untinged by negative associations (Cohn, 2000, p. 7-19). The Postmodern and Neo-Rationalist ideas of the “generation of 1992” (the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of Spanish Modernism, Rafael Moneo and Juan Navarro among others) (Kóródy and Vukoszávlyev, 2011) represent rather the continuity of modern tradition than the rupture with it, creating unique Eclecticism by superposition of historic layers (Curtis, 1996, p. 632) like Ricardo Bofill (1939-) reinterpreting the Catalan Modernisme. *Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra* (1945-), a designer of several monument preservations, created historic and physical continuity by balancing the methods of opposition (Modernist contrast) and imitation (Revivalist mimesis) (Figure 9). According to his opinion, preservation and renovation are not opposite but related concepts and the contemporary vocabulary of rehabilitations is to be deducted from the characteristics of the historic building (Vázquez Consuegra, 2005, p. 4-5).



**Figure 8.** G. Grassi, M. Portaceli: Restoration of the Roman Theatre, Sagunto (1985-1993).



**Figure 9.** G.V. Consuegra: Restoration of La Cartuja, Sevilla (1987-1995).

<sup>7</sup> Nelson Goodman considers architectural works as a transition between the two types (Capdevila Werning, 2007, p. 21).

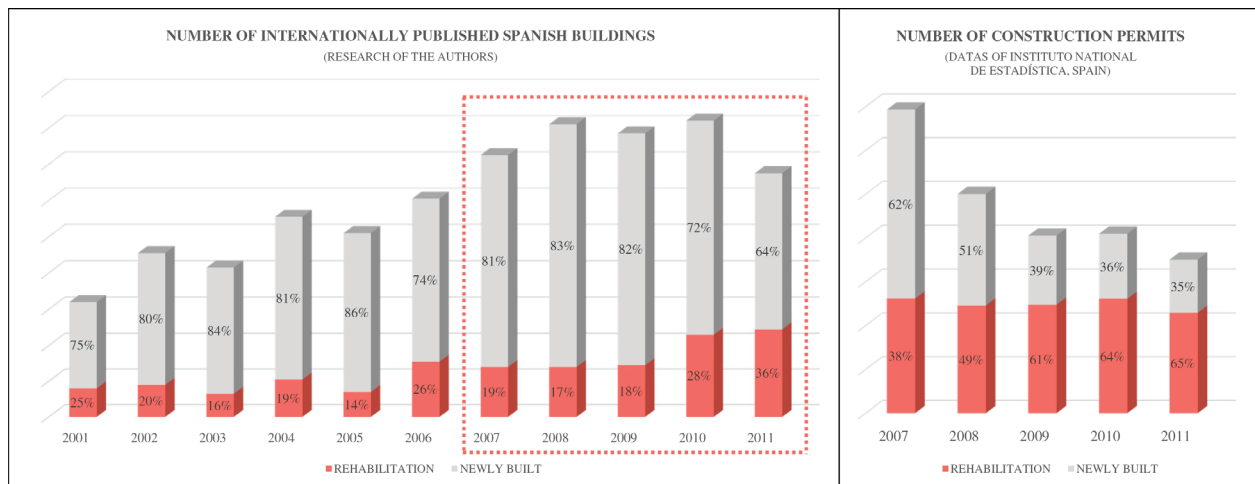
<sup>8</sup> The theory approaches the objectives of Critical Regionalism (Solà-Morales, 1996 [1987], p. 65).



The reinterpretation of Modern also influenced the architectural approach of rehabilitative interventions. “The primary task of our architectural culture is to re-evolve the continuity of the Pre-modern architectural logic in the new Modernism of today” (Panella, 1993, p. 13). However, the decades of deficiency of professional debates and social feedback hindered the reformation, both in theory, regulation and practice. The lack of routine solutions had advantages as well: the hyperactivity in restoration projects strengthened the creative character of interventions leading to an interdisciplinary approach. Antoni *González Moreno-Navarro* (1943-), the reformer of monument pro-

tection in theory and practice, developed his theses based on the doctrines of Alois Riegl. His concept of “objective restoration” that balances the three aspects of a monument (instrumental, documental and significative) during the recognition (research), reflection (design) and intervention (building), drawing attention to the risk of overvaluation of the method (Trias Hernández, 2014, p. 20).

In the reviewed period, the emphasis on heritage protection shifted from the problem of preservation of historic buildings towards the importance of the reuse of existing spaces. This change of approach was also reflected in the architectural vocabulary of interventions:



**Figure 10.** Change of the ratio of rehabilitations and new constructions over the last decade.



**Figure 11.** D. Hernández Gil, J.M. Sánchez García: Roman Temple of Diana, Mérida (1986-1992/2011).

beside the authentic restorations the creative architectural solutions became increasingly emphasized, considering the buildings as a product of social-economic processes. The phenomenon was strengthened by the problem of social-economic sustainability becoming a focus around the turn of the millennium, further intensified over the last decade following the expansion of the 2008 crisis. The ratio between rehabilitations and new constructions significantly changed, further emphasizing the interventions on historic buildings (Figure 10). Moreno-Navarro emphasized the role of scientific researches becoming more sophisticated, and the accentuation of maintenance to reconstruction due to the limited budget after the crisis.

The widening concept of built heritage and its globalization inevitably implied the subjective restructuration of monuments, revalorizing the relics of recent past as well. A new challenge of the era is the reintegration of stigmatized buildings back into the life of society (“reutilización simbólica”) given the difficulty based on the connotations attached to the former function of the building. The new phenomenon, also known as “New Romanticism” (Mozas, 2012), is related to the Arte Povera movement of the 1960s, evaluating built heritage based on anti-dogmatic aestheticism. It aims to ignore all preconceptions about a space, accentuating its values and preserve the individual character arising from the confrontation of old and new

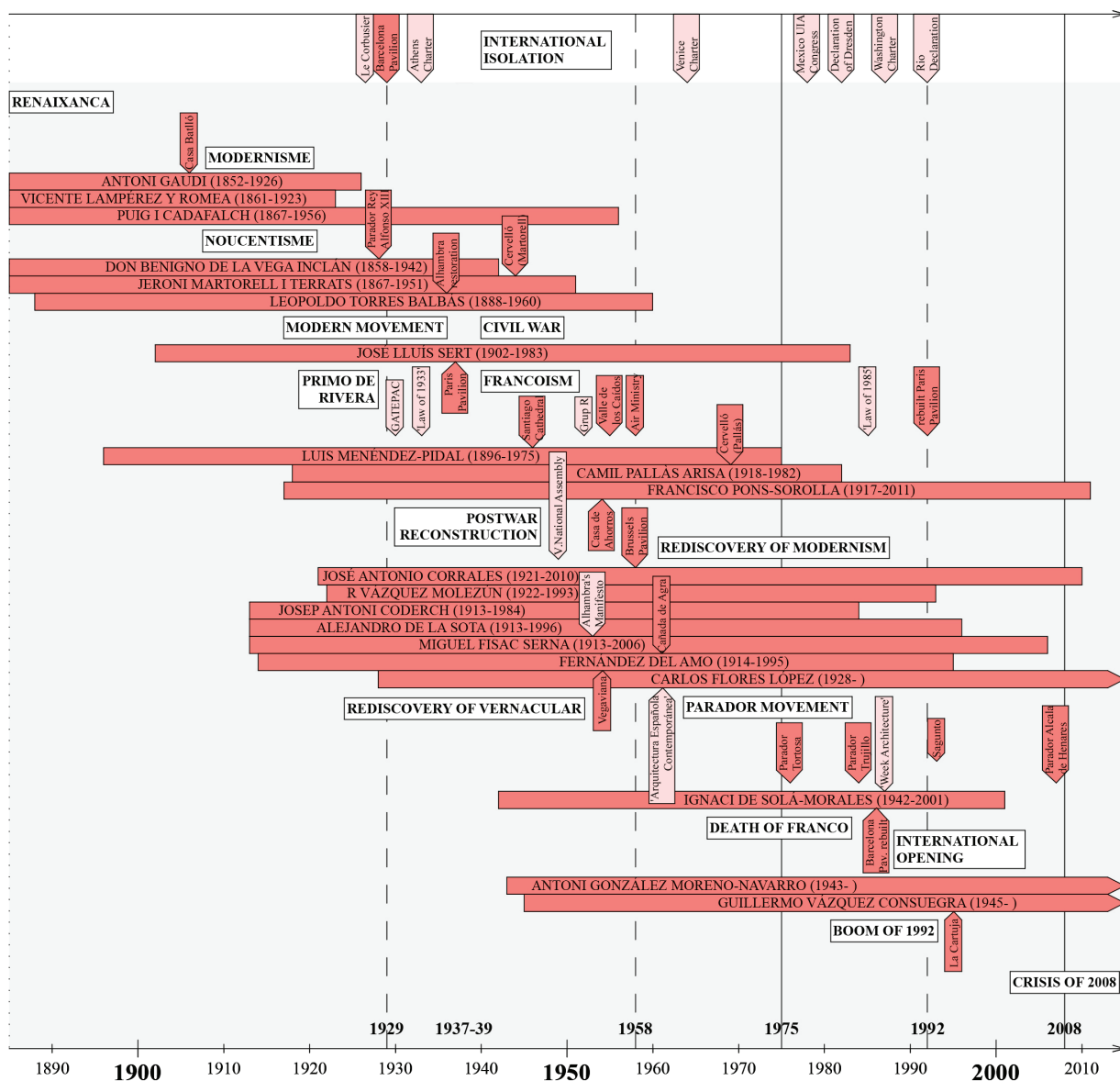


Figure 12. Timeline of modern architecture and historic preservation in Spain.



elements. The rehabilitations since the turn of the millennium can be characterized by the perception of urban structure as palimpsest (Fernández-Galiano, 2014, p. 3). The consecutive constructions are superposed, and the interventions are organically, inseparably integrated into the city, reusing its existing lines and materials. The division of architectural awards also demonstrates the dominant trends: it shows the increasing frequency of rehabilitations; the preference for works consciously formed and fitted to the context replacing iconic individual large-scale architecture often highlighted before – as in the case of the FAD awards<sup>9</sup> (Figure 11).

## Conclusions

Due to the unique cultural-historical background, the intersections of rehabilitation and modernism form one of the most interesting fields of contemporary Spanish architecture, based on local conditions but also reflecting on global processes. Although urban rehabilitation processes appeared in Spain relatively late compared to other European countries (Troitino Vinuesa, 1996), the preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings and city structure became a dominant type of intervention following the slow alteration of building and heritage regulation.

“Fluctuating between the compliance of the conservationist laws [...] and the experimentation of dialog with history, which had been forgotten until then by the modern architecture, it is not incorrect to suggest that some of the most interesting works carried out during the last years in our country have been generated paradoxically as a consequence of this new situation” (Sobejano, 2005, p. 4-5).

The unique history and architectural past gives a special fundament and frame for the Spanish architecture of today, and its best examples – new buildings and rehabilitations both – are inspired by this cultural complexity. Contemporary Spanish architecture can not be separated from Modernism, and its particular, world-renowned architectural solutions in heritage preservation are based on this unique relationship between built heritage and re-interpreted modern principles – a relationship that evolved under special historic-cultural conditions (Figure 12).

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<sup>9</sup> About FAD rewards in 2013 (Llopis, 2013, p. 47).

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