

# GUIA BREVE DE LA MEZQUITA CATEDRAL

Y MUSEO DIOCESANO  
DE BELLAS ARTES  
DE CORDOBA

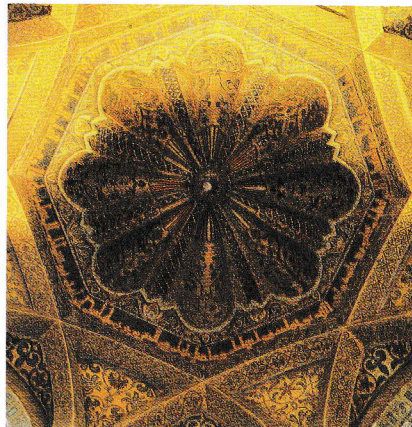
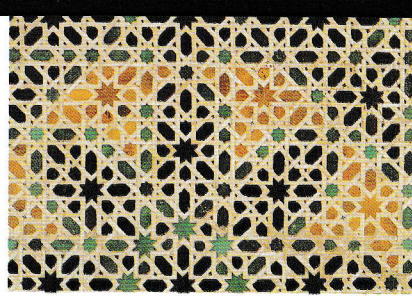
BRIEF GUIDE TO  
THE MOSQUE  
CATHEDRAL  
OF CORDOBA AND  
DIOCESAN MUSEUM  
OF FINE ARTS




OBSEQUIO DE:  
WITH COMPLEMENTS OF:

MONTE DE PIEDAD Y  
CAJA DE AHORROS DE CORDOBA

 Cajasur



 **Brief guide to the Mosque Cathedral of Córdoba**

**T**he Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba —according to F. Chueca—, is the first monument of all western Islam and one of the most impressive in the world. It sums up in its archeological history the complete evolution of the Omeya style in Spain, i. e., the Spanish-Moslem style at the time of its highest splendor. Its influence in all the arabized West was vital and its developments became law in a vast artistic area.

The building, as it is today, is the result of an initial Mosque built by Abderraman I on the site and with the materials of the Catholic Basilica of Saint Vincent, enlarged later on by Abderraman II, Alhaken II and Almanzor. The Cathedral Transept was built in XVI century over parts of enlargements by Abderraman II and Almanzor. The main parts of the building are the old alminar or the tower, the patio and the prayers hall.

**The Alminar and the Tower.** The alminar of the original Mosque is actually inside the current tower. It was built by Abderraman III, substituting the one built by Hixem I in 931, after demolishing the old one and enlarging the patio. The current tower construction began at the end of XVI century and was finished in the following century.

**The Orange-tree Patio.** The original patio was enlarged by both Abderraman III and Almanzor in the X century. The current cloisters are the result of a total remodelling carried out in the first decades of the XVI century by Bishop Martín Fernández de Angulo under the direction of architect Hernán Ruiz I. Underneath the orange-trees patio there is a water-

which provided the necessary water for Moslim ablutions. There were palm-trees in the patio as early as the XIII century and we know of the existence of orange-trees there since XV century. Olive-trees and cypresses were added during XVIII century.

**The Prayers Hall.** Possibly in year 780, Abderraman I (756-788) began the building of the first Mosque on the site of the Christian Basilica of Saint Vincent and using quite a lot of its materials, ending it about seven years later. His son Hixem I built the alminar (788-796). This first Mosque, of eleven aisles, due to the origins of its materials, keeps the spirit of the old Hellenistic Mediterranean culture. We must point out the variety of its columns and capitals, good example of all the Greek-Roman, Egyptian and Visigothic styles. A plaster was set up over the columns to achieve the desired height with the superposed arcade with dovels of stone and brick. Springing off from the west aisle there are some Christian chapels among which stands out the chapel dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, of XVII century. The wood-carved ceiling of the central aisle was restored in 1919 and the balance of wood-carved ceilings were restored in 1975-79 with pinewood from Canada.

Under Abderraman II (821-852) the town enjoyed peace and prosperity, becoming the great town which is described in the Moslim chronicles. In the year 833 he added seven more sections to the Mosque of Abderraman I, enlarging it considerably towards the South. Old columns, mostly Visigothic, were placed with no base. The first Arab capitals made in the workshops of those days, following Corinthian models can be seen here.

Alhaken II (961-976) enlarged again very quickly his ancestors' Mosque. This enlargement consisted by lengthening the prayers hall in twelve sections. The Abderraman I style of arcades was used in this enlargement. The dome of the old chapel of Villaviciosa as well as the one preceding the Mihrab stand out as they are covered with rich mosaics. Columns and capitals were specially elaborated for this work. Corinthian and mixed

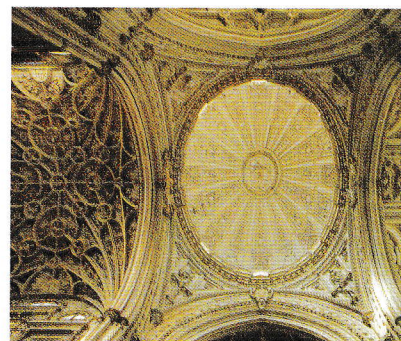
capitals as well as blue and pink marble fusts into a luxurious decoration is concentrated in the Mihrab. The relevant mosaics on the walls. The inside of the Mihrab is covered with an enormous shell of gypsum plaster of decorative value. Inscriptions, praising the caliph, date to 965.

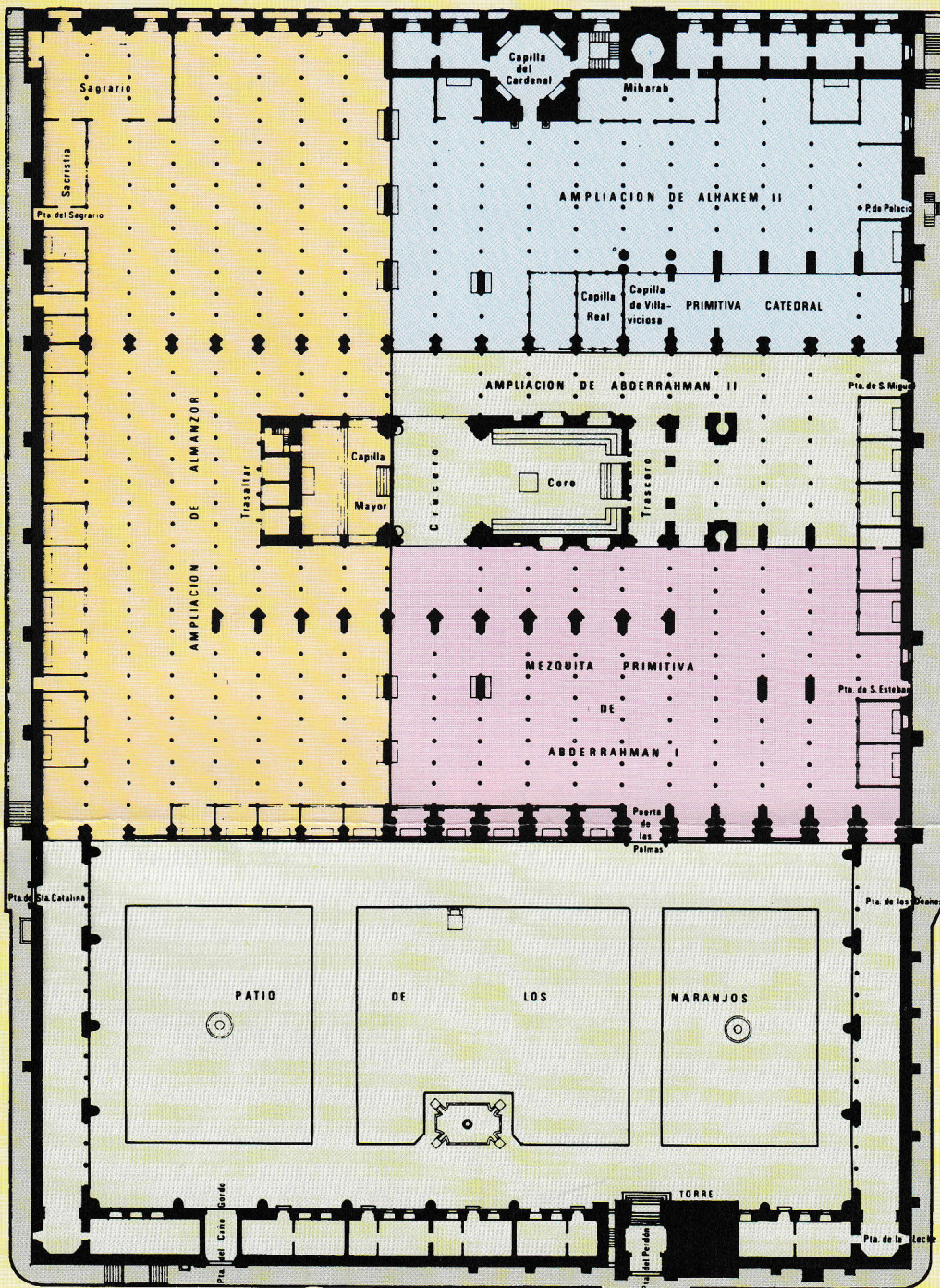
The enlargement of Almanzor, carried out between 980 and 990, was the last and biggest of all, not adding to any architectural novelty. Due to the proximity of the city of Alquivir, it was made towards the East and because the Mihrab lost its centered position. The enlargement of Almanzor (as it was written) was above all an ostentation, made for political purposes in order to strengthen his personal power. In the S.E. corner we can see the parish church of Santa Catalina with murals by the Italian Cesar Arbasia of the XV century.

**The Cathedral transept.** The works began in 1519, under the direction of Bishop Alonso Manrique, with the opposition of the Council and the whole town. This is a work in which the styles of XVI and XVII centuries are united: Spanish Gothic arches and vaults, Renaissance dome, Choir dome and a dome of a proto-baroque style. It was finished at the beginning of the XVII century, and was made under the direction of Hernán Ruiz I, Hernán Ruiz II, Hernán Ruiz III and Juan de Ochoa. The choir stalls in mahogany were made by the Sevillian wood carver Duque Cornejo in the XVIII century. The paintings of the altar are by A. Palomino.

**The Cathedral Treasure.** It exhibits works made during the XVI and XVII centuries, most of them by craftsmen from Córdoba. Some magnificent Italian pieces of art stand out as well. The chapel of Saint Teresa also known as the Chapel of the Cardinal, built by the great Baroque architect Juan de Hurtado Izquierdo. The most impressive and magnificent work is the monstrance for the processions in the Corpus Christi, made by a German goldsmith, Enrique de Arfe, purchased by Bishop Martín Fernández de Angulo between 1510-1519. It was carried out for the first time in Procession in 1519. Professor Cantón stated that this is perhaps, the most beautiful monstrance in Spain. It was restored and enlarged in 1616, 1730 and 1967. You can also see two reliquaries of XV century: the one called of Saint Bartolomé, with a natural Gothic motif, and the other one of Santa Ursula, which represents the head of the Saint, given to the Cathedral by Bishop Fernando González Deza at the beginning of XV century. It is an important chiseled silver holy-waterpot befittingly placed in a cratera shape with episcopal shields and the date 1562.

Finally you can stop before the processional cross of the XV century, attributed to Enrique de Arfe, and before the ivory crucified Christ, splendid work of the Spanish





## Mosque Cathedral plan

PATIO OF THE ORANGES

EXTENSION BY ABDERRAMAN II

ORIGINAL MOSQUE BY ABDERRAMAN I

EXTENSION BY ALHAKEN II

EXTENSION BY ALMANZOR



CERCA DE TODOS. CERCA DE TI.