

CHARLES IV OF LUXEMBURG & PEDRO I OF CASTILE (1347-1378). ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM AT THE SER- VICE OF ROYAL POWER.

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RESUMEN:

Entre 1347 y 1378 tanto Carlos IV rey de Bohemia y Sacro Emperador como Pedro I, rey de Castilla, desarrollaron una serie de proyectos arquitectónicos y urbanísticos planteados para ensalzar su autoridad. Estos proyectos responden a estilos artísticos completamente diferentes. Mientras que Pedro I utilizó la arquitectura islámica, fuertemente arraigada en la cultura visual del reino de Castilla, Carlos IV optó por el gótico radiante que venía del sur de Francia. Sin embargo, ambas arquitecturas comparten una serie de recursos comunes que ensalzan el misticismo, la propaganda, el autoritarismo y el poder de sus promotores. En este artículo se van a analizar las ideas políticas comunes y las herramientas utilizadas por ambos monarcas en su arquitectura con la finalidad de ensalzar su imagen política.

ABSTRACT:

Between 1347 and 1378 Charles IV in the Kingdom of Bohemia and the Holy Roman Empire, at the same time as Pedro I in the Kingdom of Castile developed architectonic and urban projects in order to exalt their authority. These projects responded to very different artistic styles. Meanwhile Pedro I used the Islamic architecture deeply rooted in the visual culture of the Castilian Kingdom, Charles IV opted for the avant-garde Rayonnant Gothic style coming from the south of France. However, both architectures share some common resources that boosted the mysticism, propaganda, authority and power of the promoters. We are going to analyze in this paper the common points on their political ideals and the common sources that they will adopt in their architecture in order to extol their political image.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Carlos IV de Luxemburgo; Pedro I de Castilla; Bohemia; Castilla; Praga; Sevilla; Sacro Imperio; arquitectura; fachada.*

KEYWORDS: *Charles IV of Luxembourg; Pedro I of Castile; Bohemia; Castile; Prague; Seville; Holy Roman Empire; architecture; façade.*

1.- INTRODUCTION.

This paper¹ is going to focus on two European Kingdoms that despite being geo-

graphically distanced, they seem to have a common political structure marked by

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the personality of its monarchs. Contemporaneously Charles IV of Luxembourg governed the Kingdom of Bohemia and the Holy Roman Empire between 1346 and 1378, meanwhile Pedro I ruled the Kingdom of Castile between 1350 and 1369. These monarchs could be considered as two of the greatest promoters of art in the XIV century. But as well as the ones which better understood the power that architecture had for the exaltation of the image of the national rulers. Charles IV's and Pedro I's purpose when promoted architectural projects in their kingdoms was to strengthen the monarchy and as well definite more the identity of their nations. Meanwhile Charles IV relied on an image of piety, Pedro I focused on the ruling models of the Muslim rulers that had governed the previous centuries in Al-Andalus. Furthermore, in accordance with the goal of strengthen their nations; they established more permanent capitals for their courts, based in Prague and Seville. These cities developed enormously during their monarchies and they became the scenery where their social and architectural strategies of power took place.

There are a large number of historians that have studied the architectural project of both of these monarchs. Regarding Pedro I we could mention some researchers such as Antonio Almagro²,

² ALMAGRO GORBEA, Antonio: "El Palacio de Pedro I en Tordesillas: realidad e hipótesis", *Reales Sitios*, 163 (2005); "El Alcázar de Sevilla. Un palacio musulmán para un rey cristiano". In *Cristianos y musulmanes en la Península Ibérica: la guerra, la frontera y la convivencia*, (León: Fundación Sánchez Albornoz, 2009); "La portada del palacio de Pedro I. Investigación y restauración", *Apuntes del Alcázar de Sevilla*, 10 (2009).

Rafael Cómez Ramos³ or Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza⁴. In the literature about Charles IV we should mention the works of Vlasta Dvoraková⁵, Milena Bartlová⁶, Klara Benesovska⁷, Paul Crossley⁸, or Iva

³ CÓMEZ RAMOS, Rafael: "El Alcázar de Sevilla en dos ejemplos de dominación cultural. Alfonso X el Sabio y Pedro I el Cruel", *Madrid-der Beiträge*, 24 (1996).

⁴ RUIZ SOUZA, Juan Carlos: "La planta centralizada en la Castilla bajomedieval entre la tradición martirial y la qubba islámica. Un nuevo capítulo de particularismo hispano", *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte (U.A.M.)*, 13, (2001); "Capillas Reales funerarias catedralicias de Castilla y León: Nuevas hipótesis interpretativas de las catedrales de Sevilla, Córdoba y Toledo", *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte (U.A.M.)*, 18, (2006); "El palacio especializado y la génesis del Estado Moderno. Castilla y Al-Andalus en la Baja Edad Media". In *VI jornadas complutenses de arte medieval*. Madrid, November 14 - 16, 2012. (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 2012).

⁵ DVORAKOVÁ, Vlasta: "The ideological design of Karlstejn Castle and its pictorial decoration", in DVORAKOVÁ, Vlasta, et.al. (eds.): *Gothic Mural Painting in Bohemia and Moravia 1300-1378*, London, New York, Bombay and Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1964.

⁶ BARTLOVÁ, Milena: "The Choir Triforium of Prague Cathedral Revisited: The Inscriptions and Beyond", in: OPAČIČ, Zoë (ed.): *Prague and Bohemia. Medieval Art, Architecture and Cultural Exchange in Central Europe*, Leeds: 2009.

⁷ BENESOVSKA, Klára: "The House at the Stone Bell: Royal Representation in Early-Fourteenth-Century Prague". in: OPAČIČ, Zoë (ed.): *Prague and Bohemia. Medieval Art, Architecture and Cultural Exchange in Central Europe*, Leeds: 2009; BENESOVSKA, Klára and OPAČIČ, Zoë: "Wenceslas IV and the Chapel of the Corpus Christi in the New Town of Prague", in: OPAČIČ, Zoë and TIMMERMAN, Achim (eds.): *Architecture, Liturgy and Identity. Studies in Gothic Art*, Brepols, 2011.

⁸ CROSSLEY, Paul: "Our Lady in Nuremberg, All Saints Chapel in Prague and the High Choir of Prague Cathedral". in: OPAČIČ, Zoë (ed.): *Prague and Bohemia. Medieval Art, Architecture and Cultural Exchange in Central Europe*, Leeds: 2009; CROSSLEY, Paul and OPAČIČ, Zoë: "Prague as a new capital", in DRAKE

Rosario⁹. However, any of these authors have put in relation the architecture of both sovereigns trying to make an interpretation that goes beyond the “theory of styles” and focus specifically on the aim of these architectural projects and the goals of its promoters. Although these kings relied on very different architectural styles, Rayonnat Gothic for Charles IV and Islamic for Pedro I, the palaces of both share common resources that aimed at the purpose of exalting the monarch, such as private bridges and passages, monumental façades and balconies, etc.

Therefore, in this paper we will analyze the political programs of those kings and the measures they took to strengthen their position on the throne over the aristocracy that had ruled during the feudal system. Later we will observe how architecture played a fundamental role in this undertaking, and we will illustrate how these monarch’s royal palaces were meant to exalt their prestige and power.

2.- POLITICAL IDEAL OF PEDRO I AND CHARLES IV, DESPOTISM & NATIONALISM

Charles IV and Pedro I represented a political ideal that was to be born in the XIV century. This political ideal gathered the concepts of authoritarianism, royal supremacy and nationalism. This impression was shared by other contemporary monarchs such Edward III in England,

Charles V of France or Pedro IV of Aragon¹⁰.

The Strength of the Monarchy

Both Pedro I in Castile and Charles IV in Bohemia showed from the beginning of their reigns a clear intention of strength the position of the monarchy over the aristocracy¹¹. Charles IV during his Margraviate since 1334 struggled against the powerful nobility that had won privileges and possessions during the government of his father John of Luxembourg. In the words of Iva Rosario: «The young prince (...) began to re-establish the political stability of the country and, as much as possible to reassert the authority of the monarch»¹². Pedro I did the same 15 years later. Meanwhile, Charles IV was influenced by the legislative imperial ideal of Charlemagne, Pedro I was clearly more affected by the despotic model of the Islamic political systems that ruled the Iberian Peninsula only a few decades before his reign.

In 1355 Charles IV took his first legislative measure to consolidate the royal power in Bohemia. He formulated his personal conception of the position of the king within the state in a legal code of more than a hundred articles relating to Bohemia and Moravia that is known as *Majestas Carolina*. By Vlasta Dvoraková

BOHEM, Barbara and FAJT, Jiri (eds.): *Prague, the crown of Bohemia 1347-1437, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, September 20th 2005 – January 3th 2006*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2005.

⁹ ROSARIO, Iva: *Art and Propaganda, Charles IV of Bohemia, 1346 -1378*, Woodbridge Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2000.

¹⁰ LADERO QUESADA, Miguel Ángel: “Algunas reflexiones sobre los orígenes del “Estado Moderno” en Europa, (siglos XIII – XVIII)”. In *III Jornadas Hispano-Portuguesas de Historia Medieval, La península Ibérica en la Era de los Descubrimientos, (1391-1492)*, Sevilla, 1991, p. 484.

¹¹ MERIMÉE, Prosper: *Historia de don Pedro de Castilla*, vol. 2, Madrid: Imprenta de la Biblioteca del Siglo, Calle Cervantes nº6, 1848, p. 78.

¹² ROSARIO, Iva, *Art and...op.cit.*, p. 4.

«The influence of it western European model is reflected in his intention to make an absolute and hereditary monarchy his weapon for holding the growing power of the nobility in Czech»¹³. In 1356, Charles IV presented in Nuremberg the *Bulla Aurea* (Golden Bull). This document was a new regulation system for the Empire that prevailed since 1356 till the XIX century and which strengthened the power of the Emperor and his legislative role. The introduction of the document written by Charles IV himself showed his clear intention of potency the image of the Emperor:

This we have done in our solemn court at Nuremberg, in session with all the electoral princes, ecclesiastical and secular, and amid a numerous multitude of other princes, counts, barons, magnates, nobles and citizens; after mature deliberation, from the fullness of our imperial power; sitting on the throne of our imperial majesty, adorned with the imperial bands, insignia and diadem; in the year of our Lord 1356, in the 9th Indiction, on the 4th day before the Ides of January, in the 10th year of our reign as king, the 1st as emperor¹⁴.

In *Bulla Aurea* Charles IV enacted that the right of electing the emperor belonged fully to the imperial Electors. This negates the influence of the Pope. With the

¹³ DVORAKOVÁ, Vlasta: "Historical and social background in the development of court art under Charles IV, 1350-1378". in DVORAKOVÁ, Vlasta, et.al. (eds.): *Gothic Mural Painting in Bohemia and Moravia 1300-1378*, London, New York, Bombay and Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 47.

¹⁴ BERNHEIM, Altmann U.: "The Golden Bull of the Emperor Charles IV 1356 A.D", in HENDERSON, Ernest F. *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, Hawaii, University Press of the Pacific Honolulu, 1912, p. 220.

edit he pretended to free the dependence of the empire to the Papal control. As well with the *Bulla Aurea*, Charles IV attempted to build a strong constitutional relation between the Emperor and the rulers of the different territories of the Empire, which were at the same time the Elector Princes¹⁵. The seven electors were the following: The Archbishop of Cologne, Mainz, and Trier were the members of the Church. On the other hand, the secular represents were the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony, the Margrave of Brandenburg and the King of Bohemia. Including the king of Bohemia as one of the Electors Charles IV solidified the role of his kingdom in the Empire.

Charles IV also sustained the power of the crown in the Church. He presented himself as a pious monarch. He understood that if he played a deep theological part in the ruling of the Empire, this could increase the glory of his imperial majesty, even raising him to equal status with the Pope. Therefore, was the way for Charles IV to mystify the figure of the Holy Roman Emperor¹⁶. He presented himself not only as a pious person, but as well as a devoted collector of holy relics.

Pedro I as well took measurements to strength the power of monarchy. He understood that to robust the crown he needed a large financial support. Thus, he carried out an important refurbishment of the fiscal and economic politics. He boosted the Castilian markets and the exportations, especially regarding to wool. As well he performed a large num-

¹⁵ DVORAKOVÁ, Vlasta: "Historical...", *op.cit.*, p. 45.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

ber of expropriations to the aristocracy helped by his financial minister, the Jewish Samuel Levi¹⁷. In addition, he performed a large number of executions in the context of the nobility revolution. His judicial resolutions, deeply criticized among historiography, were another way to solidify the power of the crown against its enemies.

Pedro I supported the cities of Castile and the bourgeoisie in it. The cities were the best allies of the crown in order to reduce the influence of the landowner aristocracy. The importance of the councils of the cities in Castile had developed from the previous centuries. As long as the conquest of the Islamic territory advanced to the south, the frontier cities were the guaranty of the establishment of the new population and therefore they got important privileges¹⁸. During the reign of Pedro I, metropolises such Sevilla or Valladolid, played a relevant role in the development of the kingdom, as much as Prague did during the reign of Charles IV¹⁹. The more that Prague or Sevilla grew in power the more the authority of the crown developed.

The development of nationalism

¹⁷ GIMENO CASALDUERO, Joaquín: *La imagen del monarca en la castilla del siglo XIV. Pedro el Cruel, Enrique II y Juan I.*, Madrid, Selecta de Revista de Occidente S.A, 1972, p. 87.

¹⁸ CASADO ALONSO, Hilario: "Las relaciones poder real-ciudades en Castilla en la primera mitad del siglo XIV". In RUCQUOI, Adeline, *Génesis Medieval del Estado Moderno: Castilla y Navarra (1250-1370)*, Valladolid, Ámbito Ediciones, 1987.

¹⁹ DÍAZ MARTIN, Luis Vicente: *Itinerario de Pedro I de Castilla. Estudio y Regesta*, Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid. Secretariado de publicaciones, 1975, p. 14.

This authoritarianist ideal was closely linked with a nationalist mentality trending in the XIV century. The old approach of a European identity held by the Empire was highly discredited and now every European kingdom struggle in its own interests. Even the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles IV, showed a great ambition to develop the power of its native kingdom of Bohemia.

Pedro I and Charles IV highly soaked by this nationalist mentality, showed themselves as the head of the country and the public *Rex*. They boosted this national mentality because as much as the national identity grown, more raised the power of the head of the nation. Charles IV, unlike his father, who often traveled abroad from Bohemia, was well aware that the lands of the Bohemian crown formed the finest natural basis for his policy²⁰. As well, the fact of setting the King of Bohemia as the first of the Electors Princes is another example of the interest of Charles IV in promoting the power of his territories. Pedro I by other hand showed a deep interest in reaching an Iberian unity. In his mind the way to reach these proposals as the imposition of a Castilian hegemony by force over the other peninsular kingdoms. This explains the invasion of Aragón. The monarchs of Trastámara Dynasty shared this ideal but they will try to manage it by political marriages instead of by war²¹.

²⁰ DVORAKOVÁ, Vlasta: "Historical...", op.cit., p. 46.

²¹ SUAREZ FERNÁNDEZ, Luis *Monarquía Hispánica y Revolución Trastámara, discurso leído el día 23 de enero de 1994 en el Acto de su Recepción Pública por el Excmo. Sr. D. Luis Suárez Fernández, y contestación por el Excmo. Sr. D. Juan Pérez De Tudela*, Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, 1994, p. 84.

3.- THE ARCHITECTURE AS A LANGUAGE OF POWER IN PEDRO I AND CHARLES IV

The authoritarian political ideas of Pedro I and Charles IV had a direct consequence over the architecture under their promotion. This architecture will act as a language of power, as a propaganda medium that helped them to reach their political goals. Charles IV will choose the avant-garde Rayonnant Gothic coming from France where he spent his childhood, meanwhile Pedro I will opt for the Islamic architecture, deeply rooted in the visual culture of the Castilian kingdom. The theory of styles, predominant during two centuries of history of art research has impeded a comparison between the Gothic and Islamic architecture of the XIV century. However, we consider that there is in both of their architectures a series of common resources disposed to exalt the image of the promoter and therefore on service of their political ideal. Some of these resources are exhibition balconies, monumental fronts, public infrastructures, or figurative representations.

Pedro I was the promoter of four palaces in his kingdom and one private chapel where he was going to be buried in the Cathedral of Sevilla. These four palaces are distributed among Castile. The most modest of them is placed in Astudillo (Palencia), the second in Tordesillas (Valladolid), the third one in Carmona (Sevilla), finally the most sumptuous in his Capital, the *Alcazar* of Sevilla. Charles IV was the sponsor of quite a large number of projects. Among them we must emphasize the new bridge of Prague, now known as *Karlův most*, the Cathedral of St.

Vitus (together with his first bishop Ernest of Pardubice), the great refurbishment of Prague Castle, and his private fortress: *Karlstejn*. As well he is the promoter of the new urban plan for Prague, known as *Nove Mesto*, including some church and monasteries in there, and the foundation of the *Studium Generale Pragense*²², now Karlovi University.



Fig. 1:
Ambassadors Hall.
Alcazar of
Sevilla.
Spain.
(Gu-

²², now Karlovi University.

Upraising, mysticism and occultism in the architecture

As we said, in both architectures we find a range of architectural elements disposed in order to enhance the promotor figure. One of the first functions of these resources were the uprising of the royal image, but as well the creation of a mystic

²² CHALOUPECKÝ, Václav *The Caroline University of Prague: Its Foundation, Character and Development in the Fourteenth century*, Prague, 1948, p. 7.

halo around their personality, and even function as a way to occult and evanesce the rulers in order to boost the mysticism around them.

In the palaces of Pedro I these resources are coming from the Andalusian tradi-

halo²⁴. The first example of *qubba* in the Islamic world is the Dome of the Rock, inspired in turn by the Anastasis of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem. From there to the XIV century we have a long list of examples in Cairo, Maghreb, and Al-Andalus²⁵.

Meanwhile Pedro I accomplished his



Fig. 2: Karlštejn, general panorama. Czech Republic. (GumielCampos ©)

tion. The first of them is the *qubba*, a domed space with a religious character that was used by the Castilian king as the throne room. Some examples of *qubba* in the palaces of Pedro I were the Justice Room in the *Alcazar* of Sevilla, the Ambassadors Hall in the same palace (Fig. 1), or probably the throne room that might have been built in the Palace of Tordesillas²³. The mix of its polygonal first space and the dome crowning the room, represented an allegory between the earthly and celestial worlds, and therefore the *qubba* imbued the sovereign with a mystical

mystical presence by the references to the Islamic tradition, Charles IV achieved it by means of his position as a pious sovereign. The emperor was a great collector of relics; he brought so many relics from France that he received as a present from the Valois's kings. This idea of collecting relics had a strong function in the politics of the sovereign. With this behavior Charles IV emulated the attitude of some

²³ ALMAGRO GORBEA, Antonio: "El Palacio de Pedro I...", op.cit, p. 8.

²⁴ RUIZ SOUZA, Juan Carlos: "El palacio especializado...", op.cit., p. 112.

²⁵ RUIZ SOUZA, Juan Carlos: "La planta centralizada...", op.cit., p. 11.

other kings such as the canonised king of France Louis IX²⁶.

Charles IV built a great container for those relics as well as the imperial regalia and treasure. This was his private fortress-palace, a few kilometers from Prague (Fig. 2). *Karlstejn* castle was founded by Charles IV in 1348 right after he was crowned king of the Romans in 1346 and King of Bohemia in 1347 and it was irrevocably associated with the dignity of Holy Roman Emperor²⁷. *Karlstejn* was organized with a composition according to the placement of those relics. It was composed by three principal shrines and the main one was the Holy Cross Chapel (Dvoraková 1964b, p. 52). *Karlstejn* as well contained a large number of portraits of the Emperor, placed exactly coordinated within its architecture topography. As Iva Rosario Pointed: «Every image of the emperor had a special meaning intimately associated with the purpose and iconographic program of the space in which it was depicted»²⁸.

Karlstejn Castle often was the meeting place of Charles IV with distinguished representatives of the Empire and Bohemia. Moreover, because of the Passion relics, the Castle became a place of pilgrimage.

Karlstejn Castle was therefore an ideal vehicle for self-advertisement, aggrandizement and “self-fashioning” reflecting both sides of Charles IV’s com-

plex personality which was on the one hand deeply pious, even mystical, and on the other hand shrewdly pragmatic and calculating²⁹.

We can understand consequently *Karlstejn* castle as the place where Charles IV fostered his imperial dignity and image through relics and treasure.

This mystic halo of both sovereigns was also boosted by a few evanescence and concealment methods that could be performed thanks to other architectural resources. Pedro I built his palaces with a scenography specifically prepared to sur-



Fig. 3: Bridge linking the royal palace with St. Vitus Cathedral. Prague. (GumielCam)

prise and impress his visitors. This also came from the Islamic tradition. In *Madinat al-Zabra*, the caliphal court of Abd al-Rahaman III (929-961) and his son al-Hakam (961-976), the ambassadors had to go across a long path before they could contemplate the Caliph. In this way an expectation was created which generated impatience and necessity in the guest. In the Alcazar of Sevilla, Pedro I developed a similar system. It was based in a double staircase which banned the visitor of accessing the private area of the palace (Patio de las Doncellas) heading him directly into a room that preceded a *qubba*, which acted as a throne room. Thus, the

²⁶ DRAKE BOHEM, Barbara: “Charles IV: The Realm of Faith”, in DRAKE BOHEM, Barbara and FAJT, Jiri (eds.): *Prague, the crown of Bohemia 1347-1437, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, September 20th 2005 – January 3th 2006*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2005, p. 30.

²⁷ ROSARIO, Iva, *Art and...op.cit.*, p. 20.

²⁸ ROSARIO, Iva, *Art and...op.cit.*, p. 19.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

Castilian monarch could get into the room from his private chambers showing himself in the highest dignity from the beginning³⁰.

Charles IV as well showed some interest in being hidden among his subjects. Matthews of Arras designed for him a private royal oratory in the cathedral that was, and it still is, linked to the royal palace by a bridge³¹. (Fig. 3). These passages were used by the Caliphs of Cordoba in the X century to walk between the mosque and the *Alcazar*, without contacting the folk³². Also, these structures were developed in early medieval times: First in the palatine chapel of Charlemagne in Aachen³³ but as well in Bohemia connecting the seat of the dukes to the churches. Finally, the same resource was used by the Medici a few decades later to reach the *Palazzo della Signoria* from *Palazzo Pitti*.

Self-promotion and propaganda in the architecture

Charles IV and Pedro I, as authoritarian monarchs were interested in foster their

identity as rulers, and in getting a mystic halo around them, but as well they will search for a way to let their subjects feel their power and authority. In their projects, for that matter, they made use of other resources such as monumental façades and exhibition balconies, so many times related with the judicial power.

Fig. 4:
Façade of the Palace of Pedro I in the Alcazar of Sevilla. (GumielCampos©)



All the palaces of Pedro were concluded by a monumental façade that was open to a public space in the urban environment. These fronts were public showcases which the promotor showed his magnificence upon his subjects. In front of this monumental façades were placed diaphanous spaces where the population could congregate in order to contemplate the king. The three preserved façades of the four palaces of Pedro I present an evolution in the grandiloquence of the promotor. The first one, the Palace of Astudillo, lacks of ostentation, due to the necessities in the villa of Astudillo were not the same ones as in the capital.

³⁰ ALMAGRO GORBEA, Antonio: "El Alcázar de Sevilla...", op.cit., p. 351.

³¹ CHOTĚBOR, Petr, KYZOUROVÁ, Ivana and MĚCHURA, Petr: *Charles IV and Prague Castle. In the footsteps of Charles IV at Prague Castle*, Prague: Prague Castle Administration, 2016, p. 27.

³² PIZARRO BERENGENA, Guadalupe: "Los Pasadizos Elevados entre la Mezquita y el Alcázar Omeya de Córdoba. Estudio arqueológico de los sabatá", *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 86 (2013), p. 223.

³³ CONANT, Kenneth John: *Carolingian and Romanesque architecture 800 to 1200*, The Pelican History of Art, Harmondworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1959, p. 15.

However, the one of Sevilla is the live symbol of the grandiloquence of Pedro I

DE MILL ET QUATROCIENTOS ET EOS (dos)³⁴. (Fig. 5).



Fig. 6: East façade of the Tower Bridge in Charles Bridge, and detail. Prague. (GumielCampos ©)

(Fig. 4). First of all we can mention the architectural design in three horizontal bands emulating the roman triumph arcs; as well the Islamic language of its decoration deeply rooted in the Castilian tradition as a symbol of power and the monarchy; not to talk about its size and the visibility from the area of the cathedral, where all the citizens from Seville could glance at it; but furthermore, encumbering the façade we have an epigraphic inscription in honor of the promotor which reads as follows:

EL MUY ALTO ET MUY NOBLE ET MUI PODEROSO ET MUY CONQUERIDOR DON PEDRO POR LA GRACIA DE DIOS REY DE CASTIELLA ET DE LEON MANEO (mando) FACER ESTOS ALCAÇARES ET ESTOS PALACIOS ET ESTAS PORTADAS QUE FUE FECHO EN LA ERA



Fig. 5: Detail of the inscription and the exhibition balcony. (GumielCampos ©)

Intimately bound up with the monumental façades are the exhibition balconies. In the upper floors of the façades we could find a chamber open to the exterior by a large bay to the floor where the king showed himself in front of his subjects. This architectural resource as well was original from the Islamic tradition. The

³⁴ “The very great, noble, powerful and conquest Pedro for the grace of God King of Castile and Leon, ordered to build these alcazars and these palaces and these façades done in the age of one thousand fourth hundred and two”.1402=1364 in the Hispanic calendar used during the Castilian middle ages.

Bab-al-Sudda, from *Madinat al-Zabara* or the gates of Bagdad city, had these balconies.

Charles IV as well was well aware about the propaganda power of the monumental façades and its impact over his citizens. There are two powerful fronts in Prague that are used as a way of self-promotion: the façades of the tower of Charles Bridge, and the southern front of the Cathedral of St. Vitus. In the words of Iva Rosario «The images of Charles IV on the east façade of the Prague Old Town Bridge Gate and above the south Portal of St. Vitus Cathedral may be regarded as the most politically didactic of

iconographic program in both of its façades. In the east façade of the tower we have an iconographic program suggested in order to legitimate the authority of Charles IV and his son (Fig. 6). Charles IV is represented as an aged ruler, clothed in all of his imperial regalia. In contrast, Wenceslas IV is depicted as a young man crowned as king of the Romans, the position that he achieved in 1376³⁶. They are flanked by the shields of Prague, the Empire, Bohemia and Moravia. Between them appears St. Vitus, and above them are represented three of the Bohemian patron saints: St. Vitus, St. Adalbert and St. Sigismund³⁷.

The other important monumental façade



Fig. 7: South façade of St. Vitus Cathedral. Prague. (GumielCampos ©)

all extant depictions of the emperor»³⁵.

The Tower Bridge in the Staroměstská bank of the river contained a complex

was placed in the south front of Prague Cathedral (Fig. 7). This front, known as

³⁵ ROSARIO, Iva, *Art and...op.cit.*, p. 77.

³⁶ CROSSLEY, Paul and OPAČIĆ, Zoë, “Prague...”, *op.cit.*, p. 59.

³⁷ ROSARIO, Iva, *Art and...op.cit.*, p. 79.

Porta Aurea, was meant to be the main entrance into the Cathedral. In this face of the Church, Charles IV commissioned a mosaic. The representation of the mosaic is the subject of the Last Judgement or the Second Coming of Christ. Charles IV and his fourth wife are represented as benefactors in the mosaic. Its presence can be interpreted as a proclamation of their triumph as rulers of Bohemia. The idea of triumphal rule was closely identified with the subject of the Last Judgement. It is probably therefore not coincidence that Charles chose the space in front of the mosaic as the place to hold judicial proceedings and trials³⁸.

This idea of public judgment space in front of monumental façades was shared as well by Pedro I. In the Alcazar of Sevilla, between the entrance (*Puerta del Leon*) and the front of his palace, we find another gate (Fig. 8), whose structure is preserved today and which represented some sort of triumphal arch before the main façade. This gate had not only an operating function but as well a judicial one³⁹. Pedro I presented himself before his subjects, gathered in the previous courtyard, as a Solomonic king administrating public justice on the gates of his palace. This



Fig. 8: "Puerta de la Montería" in the Alcazar of Sevilla. (GumielCampos ©)

idea of public courts of justice comes from the Islamic world and it is transmitted to the Cristian tradition through the door of Forgiveness in Spanish cathedrals.

Promotion and development of the capitals

The Nationalism and the authoritarian political models of Pedro I and Charles IV required a solid centralist system, and therefore a physical place to represent the power. Prague, on times of Charles IV, became *Caput Rei Publicae* (as it is still recorded in the shield of the city). Paul Crosley pointed: «Charles IV recognized the potential of Prague, and of Bohemia, as the dynasty power base from which to secure the fortunes of Luxembourgs and launch his claims to the imperial throne»⁴⁰. The same happened in Castile: by tradition, the Castilian royal court was nomad and travelling, however, on times of Pedro I, we attend to a sedentariness of the court focused on⁴¹. Both capitals, Prague and Sevilla, experienced a huge development on time of these sovereigns.

The main depiction of the power of the sovereigns inside of these cities was the palaces and castles built by them. Therefore, Prague Castle and the Alcazar of Sevilla were the highest representation of the sovereign authoritarian appearance. Both of them were placed in a very stra-

⁴⁰ CROSSLEY, Paul and OPAČIĆ, Zoë, "Prague...", op.cit., p. 60.

⁴¹ LADERO QUESADA, Miguel Ángel: "Los Alcázares Reales en la Baja Edad Media Castellana: Política y Sociedad". In: CASTILLO OREJA, Miguel Ángel: *Los alcázares reales: vigencia de los modelos tradicionales en la arquitectura áulica cristiana*. Sevilla, 2001, p. 18.

tegic point of view for the population. The Alcazar of Pedro I was situated close by the cathedral (before the *Albama* mosque) in a territory where the Islamic sovereigns had built all the power structures during the previous centuries. Consequently, this location legitimized the prestige of Pedro I among the traditional rulers of Sevilla. Pedro I as well demolished in the *Alcazar* area part of the old buildings from Almohad period in order to create a new project organized in a visual axis that started up in *Puerta del León* till the main façade of his palace. With this axis Pedro I made his palace visible from the exterior, but at the same time controlled by different walls and gates which were consequently inaccessible⁴².

Premyslids. First was a wooden castle and in the twelve century it turned to a stone construction. A significant fire during the reign of Wenceslas II (1278-1305) destroyed most of the structure. That king started the reconstruction, however it was abandoned. When Charles came back to bohemia in 1333 he described in his own autobiography the situation of the palaces of the city in this way: «*Quod regnum invenimus ita desolatum, quod nec unum castrum invenimus liberum, quod non esset obligatum cum omnibus bonis regalibus, ita quod non habebamus ubi manere, nisi in domibus civitatum sicut alter civis*»⁴³. We must agree then that it is in 1333 when he began his rebuild program. The Prague Castle was therefore the first act of patronage from Charles



Fig. 9: Prague Castle over *Hradcany*. Prague. (Photo of the autor ©)

Prague Castle on the other hand was placed crowning *Hradcany* mount, very visible from every side of the city (Fig. 9). The *Hrad* (Prague Castle) was the residence of the first dynasty of Prague, the

⁴² ALMAGRO GORBEA, Antonio: "El Alcázar de Sevilla...", op.cit., p. 399.

⁴³ We found the kingdom so forsaken that there was not one castle which was free and not mortgaged together with all its royal property, so that we did not have anywhere to stay except in houses in the cities just like any other citizen (CHARLES IV, *Autobiography of Emperor Charles IV; And, His Legend of St. Wenceslas*, Prague, Central European University Press, 2001, p. 69.

IV.

The Prague Castle rebuilt was clearly influenced by French royal architecture. For example, the castle contained an enlarged *aula* with generous windows decorated with 120 panel paintings of Charles's Imperial ancestors. This room was very influenced by the Grand Sale of the Cite Palace which was painted with a great genealogy of French kings⁴⁴. The complex of the palace was surrounded by a fortified wall whose last remnants were preserved. The fortified perimeter was flanked by two golden towers, which were covered with lead and richly gilded⁴⁵. These towers shone over Prague remaining the population the wealth and power of their monarch.

Prague and Sevilla, as Capitals of the kingdom as well were the burial sites of both sovereigns. In 1362, in his own testament, dated the 8th of November of 1362, Pedro I, ordered to bury his mortal remains in the new Chapel that he was building in the Cathedral of Sevilla: «*Mando que el mi cuerpo que sea traído a Sevilla, e que sea enterrado en la capiella nueva que yo agora mando facer; e que pongan la Reyna Doña Maria mi mujer del un cabo a la mano derecha*»⁴⁶. This Chapel was destroyed during

the construction of the new cathedral in the XV century; however, we can tell from the documents that Sevilla was the burial site that Pedro I preferred. From the conquest of Sevilla during the reign of Fernando III the Saint (1217-1252), most of Castilian Kings were inhumed in the Mosque and after the Cathedral of the city. Pedro I, in his will, followed this tradition as well as a way to legitimize himself among his ancestress.

Charles IV went further, he not only built a Chapel to be buried, but he built the whole cathedral (Fig. 10). Whether Charles IV was who took the main responsibility of the building it is still a debatable topic. The Metropolitan Chapter probably played an important role in this project⁴⁷. However, by his deep interest in the creation of the new archbishopric in Prague shown by Charles IV, we believe that he was the main financial sponsor of the church. The Cathedral of St. Vitus was founded in 1344 as the successor to an older basilica from the XI century dated on times of Spytihnev II which itself had replaced St. Wenceslas own rotunda of the year 925. The foundation of the church as well was possible after the turning of Prague into an independence archbishopric in the same year of 1344⁴⁸. Above all, the new building had to

⁴⁴ CROSSLEY, Paul and OPAČIĆ, Zoë, "Prague...", op.cit., p. 61.

⁴⁵ PLUDEK, Alexej: *Qarolus Quartus, König von Böhmen. Charles IV, Empereur Romain et Roi de Boheme*, Prague, Orbis Press Agency, 1978, p. 70.

⁴⁶ It is my will that my body will be brought to Sevilla and buried in the new chapel that I ordered to build, and that they bury by my right side the Queen Maria de Padilla" (LOPEZ DE AYALA, Pero "Crónica del rey don Pedro I con las enmiendas del Secretario Gerónimo Zurita y las correcciones y notas añadidas por Don Eugenio de Llaguno y Amirola, caballero de la Orden de Santiago, de la real academia de la

Historia", in ROSELL, Cayetano, *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla desde don Alfonso el sabio, hasta los católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel. Vol. 1*, Madrid, M. Rivadeneyra editor, 1875, p. 593.

⁴⁷ BARTLOVÁ, Milena: "The Choir Triforium...", op.cit.

⁴⁸ In the spring of 1340, at the age of 24 years old, Charles and his father traveled to Avignon. In the Pope Court, Charles met again his boyhood friend and tutor Pierre de Rosiers, who had been elevated to the cardinalate in 1338. In this meeting between Pierre de Rosiers and the

respect the burial site of St. Wenceslas which had remained undisturbed since 936⁴⁹. There is in that respectful measurement an intention of absorbing the tradition of the old Premyslid basilica into the new Luxembourg building. Charles IV knew his identity as the Holy Roman Emperor, but as well he wanted to remark his legitimation to the throne of the Kingdom of Bohemia as a descendant of Saint Wenceslas⁵⁰.

The cathedral of St Vitus in Prague became the spiritual and political heart of the Bohemian kingdom. St. Vitus Cathedral had the same political significance for the kingdom as the basilica of Saint-Denis had for the ruling house of France. In both cases, it was the tomb of the chief patron saints, the coronation cathedral⁵¹ as well as a necropolis for deceased rulers⁵². The Choir of the Cathedral had a very well-planned distribution in order to create an iconography program at the

service of Charles IV. It was divided in two parts; the East side was consecrated to St. Vitus meanwhile the central section had an altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary. In the radiating chapels were placed the tombs of the old Premyslid rulers, while in the Marian Choir was the sepultures of the Luxembourg family. This symbolic location made Charles IV lie in the crossroads of Bohemian history and under the protection of the Virgin⁵³.

In the triforium one could find 21 portrait busts of some important members of the Premyslid family, Luxembourg family, the architects of the cathedral and of course Charles IV and his wives⁵⁴. Next to the bust of Charles IV we can read the following inscription exalting his skills as sponsor: *«Karolus IIII. Imperator Romanorum et/ Boemie rex hic fundavit novam Pragensem ecclesiam/ de sumptuoso opere ut ap[er]aret ac sumptibus/ propriis laboravit [...] instituit et dotavit studium Praguense/ instituit, pontem*



Fig. 10: Apse of the Cathedral of St. Vitus in Prague. (GumielCampos ©)

*novum per Multaniam laborare/ precepit*⁵⁵. We must be careful however reading these inscriptions due to the restoration that experienced in the XVIII century, which includes some mistakes from the originals⁵⁶. The Cathedral of St. Vitus was indeed the major contribution of Charles IV to the development of Prague towards becoming a great European metropolis, however, as well it was the best showcase

before his subjects. St. Vitus worked as much as the cathedral of Bohemia as much as the symbolic private Chapel of the king, inside of his own private palace⁵⁷.

Finally, Pedro I and especially Charles IV showed a deep interest in the urban development of their capitals. The turbulent life of Pedro I did not allow him to invest in the urban progress of the cities



Fig. 11: Panorama of Charles IV urban projects in Prague: Charles Bridge, Prague Castle and St. Vitus Cathedral. (GumielCampos ©)

⁵⁵ Charles IV, Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia, founded the new Prague Church, an expensive work, as is apparent and at this expense [...] a university in Prague was instituted by him and the building of a new bridge across the Vltava was ordered by him. Extracted from the catalogue: DRAKE BOHEM, Barbara and FAJT, Jirí (eds.): *Prague, the crown of Bohemia 1347-1437, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, September 20th 2005 – January 3th 2006*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2005, p. 3.

⁵⁶ BARTLOVÁ, Milena: “The Choir Triforium...”, op.cit., p. 88.

of Castile, inversely Charles IV showed a very progressive mentality in this matter.

On the 8th of March of 1348 he settled the foundation charter for *Nove Mesto*, the New Town of Prague, and on March 26th he personally witnessed the laying of the foundation stone⁵⁸. It is possible that the urbanistic plan of *Nove Mesto* was a pro-

⁵⁷ DRAKE BOHEM, Barbara: “Charles IV...”, op.cit., p. 23.

⁵⁸ PLUDEK, Alexej: *Qarolus... op.cit.*, p. 38.

duction of Matthias of Arras, as he was in that time the principal architect of the king⁵⁹. *Nove Mesto* was occupying 360 hectares between Old Town and *Vyšehrad*. It was fortified with a wall of 3.5 km with monumental double towered gates. The New town transformed Prague from the Bohemian regional capital to the imperial metropolis. *Nove Mesto* included as well a large number of churches, the first to be founded and one of the most important, the church of Our Lady of Snows⁶⁰. The New Town was organized around a large unobstructed space, now known as *Karlovo Náměstí*, probably dedicated to trade and religious affairs. Some historians agree that once a year, in the middle of the square the collection of Relics of Charles IV was placed in a wooden stage for the admiral and adoration of all the pilgrims. This stage developed during the reign of his son Wenceslas IV. The first of April 1382 was initiated the erection of the Chapel of Corpus Christi situated in the middle of the square where the relics of the empire were shown every year. As it is written in the foundational charter the chapel was placed «in medio foric novae civitatis Pragensis in loco in quo reliquiae armorum domini Jesu Christi et aliorum plurimorum sanctorum... annuatim ostendi sunt consuevae»⁶¹. One of the main reasons for the foundation of *Nove Mesto* could be the construction of this space where the relics were exposed once per year.

⁵⁹ CROSSLEY, Paul and OPAČIČ, Zoë, "Prague...", op.cit., p. 66.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 63.

⁶¹ BENESOVSKA, Klára and OPAČIČ, Zoë: "Wenceslas IV...", op.cit.

On the 9th of July 1357, Peter Parler laid the foundation stone of Charles Bridge, the other great urbanistic project of the king. Judith Bridge, built in the 12th century, was destroyed in a catastrophic flood on the 3rd of February in 1342⁶². The New Bridge, was located further south than the old one. The explanation of this was the increasing in the importance of *Staroměstské Náměstí* and Tyn's Church. Malá Strana and the new bridge were linked by the Old Town Square in the faster way, through the actual street *Karlova Ulice*⁶³.

As we have analyzed before Charles Bridge was not only an urbanistic investment of Charles IV, but as well the greatest propaganda medium of Prague. Apart from the iconographic program of the East tower façade, the bridge was inserted in an urban landscape that exalted the king of Bohemia. The bridge was placed in a central position of the city with the background of the Prague Castle and St. Vitus Cathedral (Fig. 11). These constructions could follow some kind of processional rite. Indeed it had it in the public events like his coronation and his funeral. During his coronation the king descended from *Vyšehrad* (old castle of the Premyslid dynasty) to *Karlovo Náměstí* in the middle of *Nove Mesto*, and then traversed the old town, crossed Charles Bridge arriving in Mala Strana. Later this procession went up to the hill and arrived into the Castle and S. Vitus Cathedral. This itinerary could have a symbolic meaning. It would be a literal progress

⁶² NOVOTNÝ, Kamil and POCHE, Emanuel: *The Charles Bridge of Prague*, translated by Nora Robinson Hronková, Prague, Prague Publishing House V.Poláček, 1947, p. 30.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 34.

from the Premyslids myths in *Výsehrad* to the triumph of the Luxemburg in *Hradčany*⁶⁴. The opposite procession was done during his funeral⁶⁵.

4.-CONCLUSIONS

We can conclude that in the XIV century the Imperial European Identity is abandoned in favour of a growth of national ideals in the different kingdoms of Europe. These national ideas will boost the identity of the monarchy as the head of these new states. The sovereigns in the XIV century and the following ones would struggle to rise as authoritarian and despotic rulers over the powerful aristocracy that during the Middle Ages had controlled the feudal system.

The European Kings of the middle XIV century used the architecture as a resource to strength their appearance over their subjects. Charles IV, King of Bohemia, and Holy Roman Emperor, as much as Pedro I of Castile, developed architectonic and urban projects in order to exalt their authority. These projects, even responds to very different artistic styles, share some common resources that boost the mysticism, propaganda, authority and power of the promoters. Meanwhile, Charles IV, in the Holy Roman Empire reached his goal, Pedro I's ambitions were frustrated by the nobility revolts and the civil war that overthrew him from the Castilian throne. However, both of them had imprinted his step in the history, appearing today before our eyes as great

and powerful sovereigns through their architecture.

⁶⁴ CROSSLEY, Paul and OPAČIĆ, Zoë, "Prague...", op.cit., p. 71.

⁶⁵ BRAVERMANOVA, Milena, CHOTEBOR, Petr (ed.): *Koruna Království. The Crown of the Kingdom. Charles IV and the Cathedral of St. Vitus*, Praha, Tisk Centrum, 2016, p. 85.