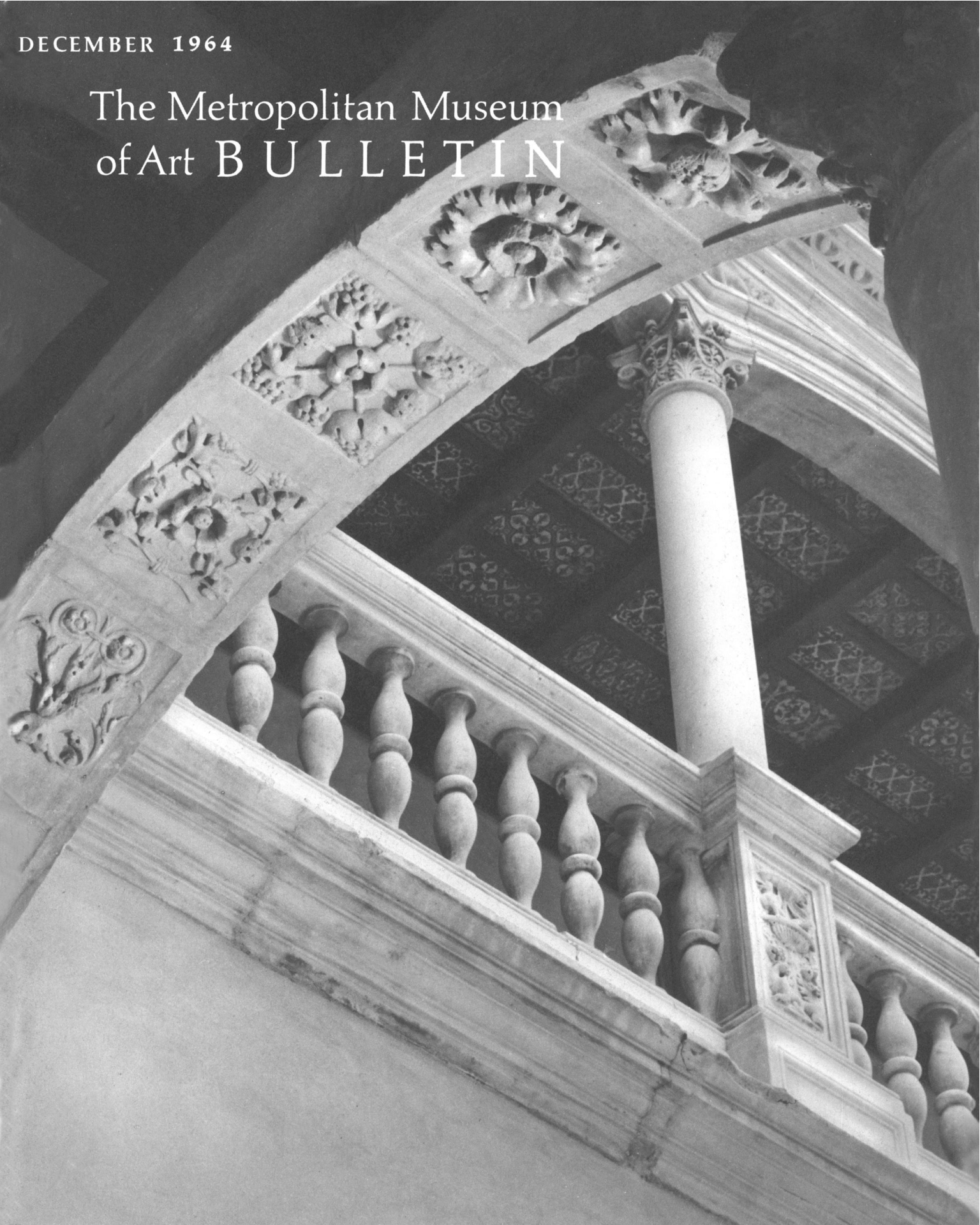


DECEMBER 1964

The Metropolitan Museum
of Art BULLETIN





THE VELEZ BLANCO PATIO

An Italian Renaissance Monument from Spain

OLGA RAGGIO *Associate Research Curator, Western European Arts*

PREFATORY NOTE *The Vélez Blanco Patio will be one of the glories of the Metropolitan Museum. Brought from Spain in the early years of this century, it formed the magnificent inner hall of the George Blumenthal house at Seventieth Street and Park Avenue, which was bequeathed to the Museum by Mr. Blumenthal, president from 1934 to 1941. Rather than leave their house as a separate museum, Mr. and Mrs. Blumenthal had decided that their works of art would be of greater service to the public if they were distributed with like treasures in various parts of the Metropolitan. For the same reason, in 1934 Mr. Blumenthal had allowed us to dismantle the music room of his house in Paris so that its architectural elements, such as the Froville arcade and the Sens windows, might be used in the new Cloisters that was being built in Fort Tryon Park. Thus, Mr. Blumenthal stated in his will: "I now give and devise to The Metropolitan Museum of Art . . . all of my lands and the house thereon . . . for the purpose of (a) having my house dismantled, (b) having such of the structural parts of my house as can be advantageously installed in the present buildings of its Museum or in the buildings hereafter to be erected by it transferred to and installed in such buildings, (c) having the rest of the structural parts of my house disposed of in such manner as it may see fit."*

When the Blumenthal house was torn down, in 1945, the hundreds of marble blocks that composed the patio were carefully numbered and stored in the Museum. In 1955 the architectural firm of Brown, Lawford and Forbes worked with us in preparing plans for a new wing to house the Thomas J. Watson Library, including study rooms and exhibition areas for prints and drawings. With the patio as the central feature, the new building would connect with the galleries of Renaissance art on the first floor and the paintings galleries on the second. Construction of the library wing began in 1962 and by August 1963 was far enough along to permit the erection of the patio. A fund established by Ann and George Blumenthal made it possible to reconstruct the patio as it is seen today—a beautifully proportioned and decorated court, designed to follow as closely as possible its original appearance in the castle of Vélez Blanco, with daylight streaming in through the translucent roof that protects its superb ornament. The history of this masterpiece of Renaissance craftsmanship and the carving of its individual elements are discussed in the article that follows.

JAMES J. RORIMER, *Director*

FRONTISPIECE: *The patio from Vélez Blanco, looking northeast. Bequest of George Blumenthal, 41.190.482. Erected in 1964 with the Ann and George Blumenthal Fund. All photographs of the patio as installed in the Museum were taken by Ezra Stoller*

ON THE COVER: *Detail of the southeast corner*

Vélez Blanco is a small mountain village, not far inland from the port of Almería on the southeastern coast of Spain. Lying between the fertile plain of Murcia and the ancient Moorish kingdom of Granada, it was once the seat of the feudal lords of the region, the powerful Fajardo family, whose sixteenth century castle still dominates the town. Here the Fajardos lived until the end of the seventeenth century, when the family became extinct. Thereafter, the castle was only occasionally inhabited, and in the course of the nineteenth century, after the French invasion and the vast social changes that overtook the country, was almost completely abandoned.

At the beginning of 1904, as has happened with so many great houses no longer used, the owners decided to remove whatever furnishings still remained in the apartments, and to sell the architectural elements of the castle's most prized possession: its richly carved Renaissance patio, a truly unique jewel of Spanish and Italian architecture of the early sixteenth century.

In May of that year, its magnificent ensemble of marble carvings – arcades, columns, and window and door enframements – was removed from the castle by a French interior decorator, J. Goldberg of Rue La Boétie in Paris, and transported by way of sea first to Marseille and then to Paris. Together with the elements of the patio went other large pieces of Renaissance carving from the castle, such as a wooden ceiling, or *artesonado*, that had covered one of the salons, and two doors.

No better moment could have been chosen for the sale of so vast an ensemble. In the United States the fashion for Renaissance architecture, promoted by men such as Stanford White and Charles F. McKim, was then at its peak, and no time was lost in showing the marbles to several prominent American collectors. First they were offered to Archer M. Huntington, whose long-standing interest in things Spanish was to be crowned by the foundation of The Hispanic Society of America in that very year. For a while the Vélez Blanco Patio was considered as a possible purchase for the building that was about to be erected to house the Society and its collection. Then, for several practical reasons, negotiations fell through. But Huntington had been so impressed with the magnificent ensemble that he allowed the richly carved windows of the patio to serve as models for the design of the arcaded terracotta court of his museum.

A few years later, shortly before 1913, George Blumenthal succeeded in acquiring the marbles for the house he was building on Park Avenue. There they were combined

1. *The patio as installed in the Blumenthal house in New York*



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2. *The castle of the Fajardos at Vélez Blanco (1506-1515).
Photograph: Bayo*

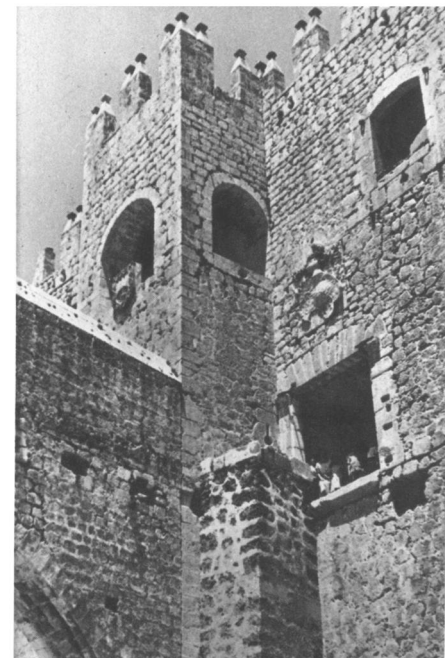
with a number of additions to create a sumptuous inner hall (Figure 1). In this new arrangement, a second-floor gallery ran on three sides of the room, and a coffered ceiling was made from the wooden *artesonado*.

When, after Mr. Blumenthal's death, his house was dismantled, all the elements of the patio—about two thousand marble blocks—were carefully numbered and stored in the Museum. Nearly twenty years passed before new construction made space available for this complex installation, but now, exactly sixty years after the marbles were removed from the castle, one of the earliest monuments of the Renaissance in Spain is here brought to new life.

In re-erecting the Vélez Blanco Patio, the Museum has undertaken to reproduce as faithfully as possible its original aspect. The problems implied in this project were not small. In practically every book on Spanish architecture the castle of Vélez Blanco is described as an important landmark in the history of the Spanish Renaissance, but beyond this general acknowledgment little precise information existed on the appearance of the patio prior to its sale. Built in a remote corner of Spain, the castle escaped the attention of travelers and historians. It was only when news of the sale and export of the marbles broke out, in the spring of 1904, that several articles appeared in Spanish newspapers and journals, deploring the loss of so important a monument and trying to describe, more or less reliably, the former aspect of its interiors. A few photographs of two sides of the patio before its dismantling were then published (Figure 6); these photographs were the only documentary record of its original appearance we had to work with, aside from a water-color sketch showing an ideal reconstruction of the patio (Figure 5), a photograph of which was supplied to Mr. Huntington and Mr. Blumenthal by the dealer Goldberg.

When all available information was assembled and sifted, we still lacked some indispensable facts, such as, for instance, the original number of the arches on the long side of the patio. Such questions only a direct inspection of the site could resolve. I was sent, therefore, by the Museum on a field trip to the castle in the spring of 1959, to secure photographs, measurements, and plans necessary to the reconstruction. The success of

3. *Close-up of the exterior walls of the castle. Photograph: Francisco Prieto Moreno*



this trip would not have been possible without the generous and enthusiastic cooperation of the Spanish authorities, especially that of Don Francisco Prieto Moreno, chief architect for the protection of monuments of Andalusia and director general of the division of architecture at the Ministry of the Interior.

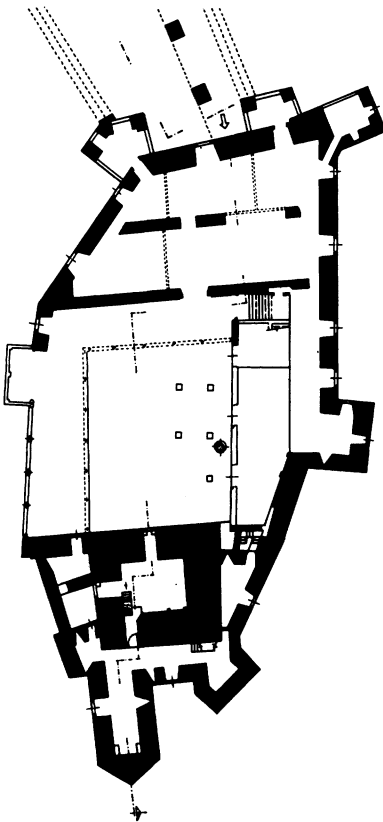
The traveler who, after having admired the beauties of Granada, braves the dusty road winding eastward through the desolate ranges of the Sierra María and reaches the village of Vélez Blanco, discovers the svelte silhouette of the castle of the Fajardos standing upon a rocky spur and dominating a vast plain (Figure 2). The warm yellow glow of its walls proudly rising against the stony gray mountains and the southern blue sky, the whitewashed houses of the village clustering at its foot, and the vast expanse of the valley, dotted with olive trees and vine groves, make a truly unforgettable sight. The castle's lofty walls and towers, extraordinarily well preserved in their original state, form an irregular polygonal enclosure (Figure 4). Directly in front of the main entrance stands a large military fortification, connected by two arches to the walls of the castle proper. A ramp formerly led from this structure to the castle entrance, which opened some thirty feet above the ground. This entrance was once defended by a draw-bridge, which disappeared long ago, and by a heavy bronze door, sold in 1904.

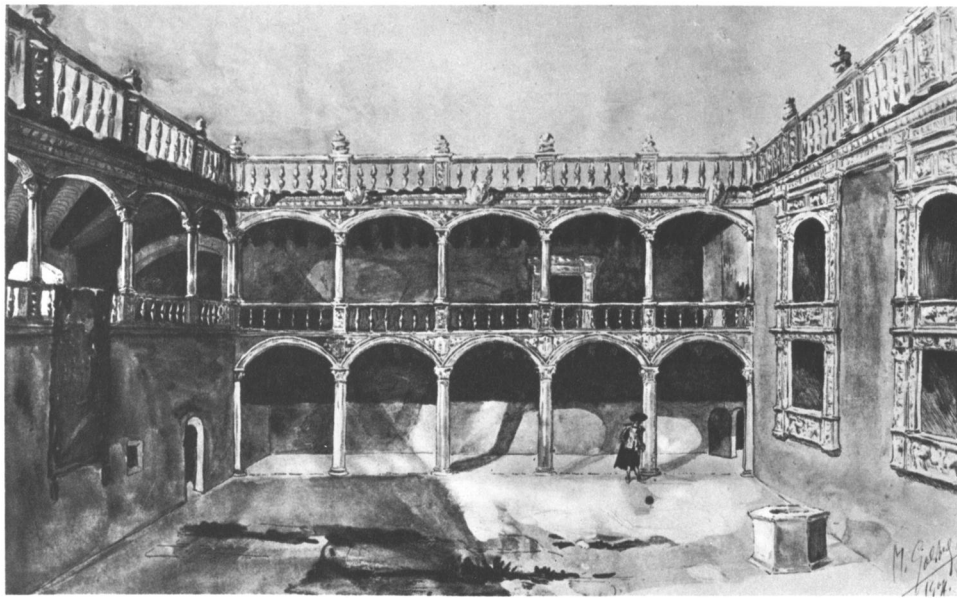
The image evoked by the jagged, prismatic profile of the walled enclosure, with its impressive array of crenelated battlements, is that of a typical Andalusian fortress, or *alcazaba*, such as those at Almería and Guadix, or the castle of Jaén, all built by the Moors in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Yet, upon approaching, we discover a number of less forbidding features that clearly bespeak its more peaceful character. These are the relatively large windows that open here and there, the elaborate armorial shields applied upon the well-cut ashlar, the two spacious round-arched little look-outs, or *miradors*, above the main entrance (Figure 3), and especially the elegant arcade of the high gallery open to the outside – the airy *paseador* so characteristic of late fifteenth or early sixteenth century Spanish castles and palaces.

As one enters the castle, it becomes apparent that the walls do not form the usual military forecourt or place of arms (*patio de armas*), but are rather the outside shell of what can be more properly described as a fortified palace. Today its interior presents a sad picture of dilapidation. The rooms have been stripped bare of furnishings, and floors and ceilings have collapsed, as have some of the dividing walls. Yet the original plan is clearly recognizable: three main wings of irregular layout, once occupied by the apartments and dependencies, and a main tower, all looking into a central courtyard. This was the patio, a slightly asymmetrical rectangular area measuring about fifty-three by forty-six feet (Figure 4).

The old photographs of the patio and the dealer's sketch, combined with a careful inspection of the surviving walls of this courtyard, give us ample and, in general, uncontroversial information upon the original arrangement of the marble fittings. Along the short south side ran a double gallery of five arches. Here, at one end of the ground floor, was the main entrance to the patio. Nearby started a simple marble staircase leading to the second floor, where a sumptuous marble portal led into the castle's great reception halls, the *Salón del Triunfo* and the *Salón de la Mitología*. One can still clearly see the outline of the doorway on the wall, where the marbles were encased in the masonry, as

4. Ground plan of the castle at Vélez Blanco

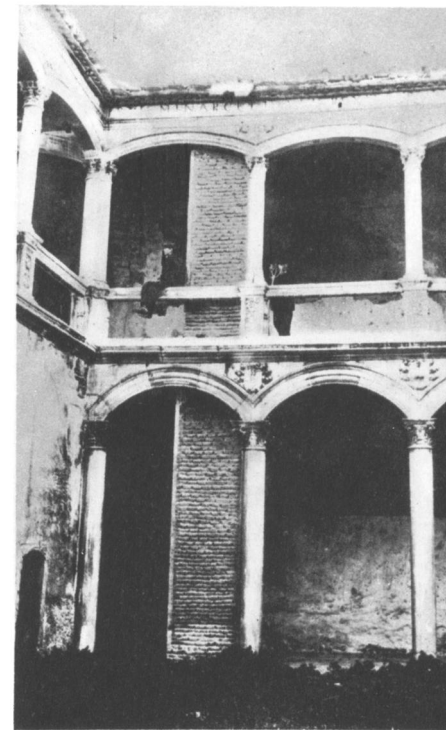




5. Water-color sketch showing an ideal view of the patio prior to its removal from the castle in 1904. Photograph: The Hispanic Society of America

well as the holes left by the beams of the flat, open-timber ceilings (Figure 8). To the east, a plain wall ended in a second-story gallery of six arches that corresponded to the arches on the castle's exterior. Thus they formed not a simple *paseador*, open only to the outside, but a wide covered loggia, whence one could look both into the patio and toward the endless vista of the great valley of Vélez (Figure 7). Across from this wall was a façade with three pairs of superimposed windows with rich marble enframements, which have also left recognizable traces in the masonry. Close to this façade was a very simple hexagonal marble well, used to reach the large water reservoir built, in the Moorish fashion, underneath the courtyard. The fourth, or north, side of the court was closed by the main tower, its severe wall being broken only by a small window placed at considerable height. Below the window and slightly to one side was a large shield encircled by a heavy fruit wreath (Figure 20), with the arms of Don Pedro Fajardo, the powerful Marqués of Vélez for whom the castle was built.

In the present reconstruction, some modifications had to be made in adapting the patio to the available space. The slightly irregular original plan was changed to a perfect rectangle, and the architectural elements of the two long sides were exchanged, so that the three tiers of windows could be placed on a blank wall of the pre-existing Museum building. For similar considerations the orientation of the stairway was changed, and one doorway was transposed from the second to the first floor. On the side once occupied by the tower is displayed another doorway from Vélez Blanco, together with an Italian balcony and an Italian portal, both almost contemporary with the patio. Other changes were necessary because of modern construction requirements; for instance, a course of marble blocks was added between the two stories to allow for the thicker and stronger floors needed in a museum, in place of the wooden floors and ceilings used in the castle. Although these wooden ceilings and the dado of brightly colored luster tiles that once lined the sides of the staircase no longer exist, some of the color effect they provided is happily re-created by the use, on the ceiling of the second-floor gallery, of an extraor-

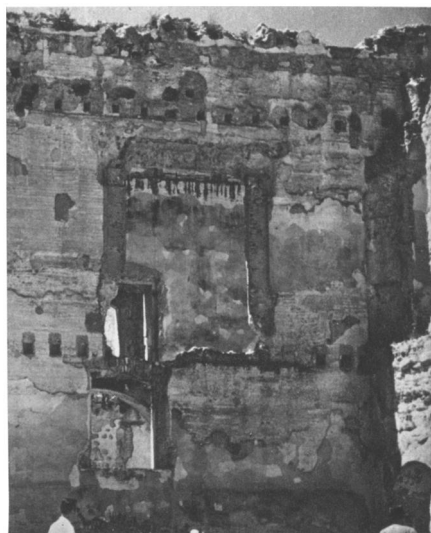


6. A corner of the patio, as it looked about 1881. (From the *Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excursiones*, 1904)



7. *The outside gallery, or paseador, as it now appears in the castle, viewed from inside the patio area.*
Photograph: Bayo

8. *Part of the patio area, showing where the door frames and the beams supporting the upper gallery were inset*



dinary ensemble of sixteenth century enameled Sevillian tiles (Figure 9).

Another, perhaps more regrettable loss is that of a balustraded parapet that once must have run on three sides of the patio above the heavy marble entablature, consisting of an inscribed frieze surmounted by a classical egg-and-dart cornice, from which protrude several large Gothic gargoyles. According to the dealer's drawing, a marble balustrade with carved piers, similar to that of the second-floor gallery, stood on top of this cornice. By the second half of the nineteenth century, when the deserted castle was used as a shelter by some of the village people, both balustrade and cornice seem to have fallen to the ground, for old photographs of the patio in situ – one of them taken as early as 1881 – show a makeshift tile roof resting directly upon the inscription. The evidence of the Goldberg drawing is nonetheless corroborated by Federigo de Motos, a local historian, who described the patio as having originally had a parapet above the cornice. The only elements of it that seem to be still extant are four carved piers that were adapted in the Blumenthal house as decorative pilasters for the staircase, and are still so used in the present installation (Figure 46).

One of the most conspicuous features of the patio is the long inscription carved in handsome Roman capitals that runs immediately beneath the cornice. Its text is fortunately complete. Couched in nobly classical Latin, it proclaims the name and titles of the builder of the castle, and also gives us the precise date of construction of the entire building: PETRUS FAGIARDUS: MARCHIO DE VELIZ PRIMUS: AC REGNI MURCIE QUINTUS PREFECTUS SUE PROSAPIE HANC ARCEM IN ARCE TITULI EREXIT: CEPTUM OPUS ANO AB ORTU CRISTI MILLESSIMO QUINGENTESSIMO SEXTO PERFECTUM ANNO QUINTO-DECIMO SUPRA MILLESSIMUM AC QUINGENTESSIMO (“Pedro Fajardo, first Marqués of Vélez and fifth governor of the kingdom of Murcia of his lineage, erected this castle as the castle of his title. This work was started in the year 1506 after the birth of Christ and finished in the year 1515.”).

The Patron, Pedro Fajardo

No better portrait can be found of the personality, the education, and the tastes of the Marqués of Vélez than that which emerges from the many letters of his teacher and lifelong friend, Pietro Martire d'Anghiera. Thus, in a letter of August 8, 1507, we catch a glimpse of a dashing young man as, with princely pomp and circumstance, he rode to welcome Ferdinand II of Aragon upon his return from the wars in Italy: "As soon as our Pedro Fajardo – the governor of Murcia, commonly called *Adelantado* – heard that the King had arrived at Valencia, a town close to his lands, he rushed to meet him, with a retinue of more than five hundred knights. They tell wonders about his pomp, elegance, and wealth, as well as that of the people who accompany him. The people of Valencia and Oriol are stunned at the great expense made. Nobody talks about anything else than the amiable and liberal magnificence of this young man."

A month later, Fajardo's efforts received official recognition: a decree signed by Queen Joanna of Castile at Medina del Campo on September 12, 1507 elevated the young man to the dignity of first Marqués of Vélez, making him one of the highest-ranking noblemen of the kingdom of Spain.

Don Pedro Fajardo y Chacón, to give him his full name, was no newcomer to the court. His father, Juan Chacón, was comptroller general of Castile, an influential post that secured him the rarely conceded trust and affection of Queen Isabella. As to his mother, she was Doña Luisa Fajardo, lady in waiting to the Queen, and the last of a powerful family who for nearly a century had ruled, as direct representatives of the Crown, one of the richest provinces of Spain: the ancient Moorish kingdom of Murcia. The eldest daughter of the third Governor and Captain General of Murcia, she received the privilege of transmitting the name Fajardo to her first son, together with the title of Governor, or *Adelantado*.

Don Pedro was probably born early in 1478, shortly after Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile had united Christian Spain

and ushered in a new era in its history. During his childhood two of the greatest events of his time had taken place. One was the last great chivalresque venture of medieval Spain: after ten years of struggle, from 1482 to 1492, the kingdom of Granada had been wrested from the Moors. The other was the first great epic of the modern age: the wondrous discoveries of the "western antipodes," which Columbus described after each voyage at the court of the Catholic Kings, in details often vividly reported in Pietro Martire's letters. Fajardo's lifetime thus coincided with the beginning of Spain's most creative period, the time of the country's greatest power and energy.

9. *Southeast corner of the upper gallery, showing the ceramic ceiling tiles given to the Museum in 1959 by the Myron Taylor Foundation*



He was raised and educated in the immediate entourage of the monarchs. As a boy, he had been among the choice group of the sons of Spain's greatest families selected by the Queen to receive a humanistic education, not at the university of Salamanca, but privately, at the hands of Pietro Martire. Martire, a brilliant young Italian scholar, humanist, and historian, had just been brought to the court by the second Count of Tendilla, ambassador extraordinary to the Pope in 1487. In this "Academy for Young Nobles," Fajardo had among his schoolmates the Duke of Braganza, the Duke of Villahermosa (cousin to the King), and Don Luis Hurtado de Mendoza, son of the Count of Tendilla and future Marqués of Mondéjar, with whom he was to share a lifelong friendship. For several years, under Martire's guidance, he learned to read and enjoy the classics and to express himself in fluent and beautiful Latin – a Latin of which he was so proud that in 1500, when he left the academy and withdrew for a time to Murcia, he asked his master to allow him to continue using it in his correspondence, so as not to run the risk of forgetting it.

When, at the death of his father in 1503, Pedro Fajardo was confirmed in the title of fifth *Adelantado*, he left the court and established his residence at Murcia, the capital of his lands. He had just turned twenty-five. From the letters of his teacher we learn that he was a young man of burning ambition and exalted imagination, as well as of unusually

studious inclinations. A brilliant speaker and a brilliant military leader, he was also well-mannered and cultivated, and as fond of reading and writing poetry as of hunting and jousting. To these qualities he added a not indifferent fortune. For, as was noted by Antoine de Lalaing, a nobleman who accompanied Philip the Fair on his first visit to Spain in 1501, the yearly income of the governor of Murcia was 14,000 florins and second only to that of the governor of Andalusia.

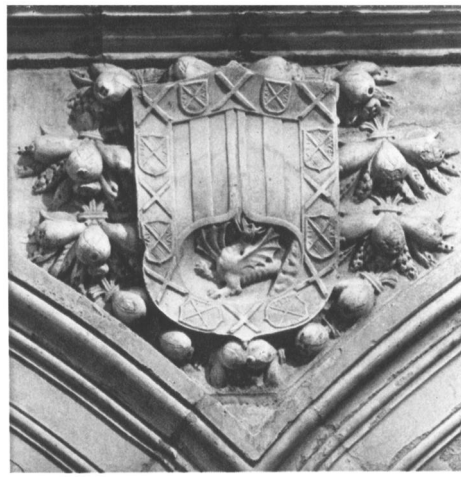
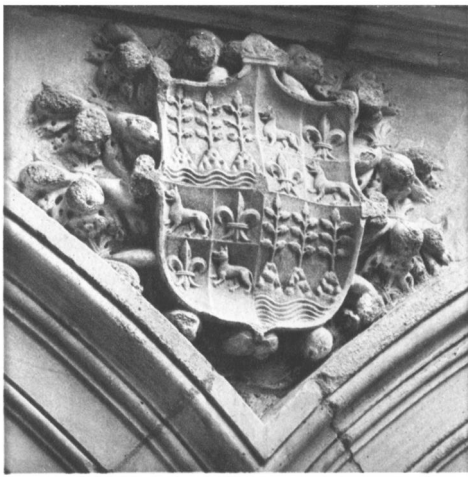
The beginnings of Fajardo's rule as governor were not easy. The region over which he exercised jurisdiction, partly as the representative of the Crown of Castile, and partly as the most powerful feudal lord of the province, had been for centuries a frontier land, often raided by the Moors entrenched in the kingdom of Granada. Even ten years after their surrender of Granada, skirmishes and rebellions were still frequent, especially along the coasts of Almería and Cartagena and in the mountain passes. The last rebellion, in 1500, had been suppressed with the help of Fajardo himself, who in a quick move attacked the Moors from the rear and saved the King from falling into the hands of the rebels.

Yet, in spite of this distinguished conduct, Don Pedro's greatest difficulties were in his relations with the royal authority. Ever since their marriage in 1469, the monarchs had exercised firm and severe restraint against the ambitions of an unruly feudal nobility. From the very first days of his governorship, Fajardo experienced all the weight of Isabella's hand. Less than three weeks after the death of his father he had to agree, quite reluctantly, to return to the Crown the most treasured of his possessions: the strategically important port of Cartagena, which his grandfather had received as a personal appanage from King Henry IV of Castile in 1466. In exchange, Fajardo was given a group of Moorish towns in the valley of Vélez, together with some surrounding lands. The most important of these was the fortified town of Veled-Albiad, or Vélez Blanco, the seat of an important Moorish stronghold that had surrendered to the King in 1488.

The forced exchange of Cartagena was not

10. *The castle of Manzanares el Real (completed about 1480).
Photograph: Mas*





11, 12. The coats of arms of Don Pedro Fajardo y Chacón (left) and his wife Doña Mencía de la Cueva (right), carved on the first-floor spandrels

young Fajardo's only disappointment. Six months later his honor suffered an even more humiliating episode, when the Queen let him know that, as punishment for his rather high-handed conduct of military affairs in Murcia, he was suspended from his governorship and would have to live five miles from the court, following its continuous changes of residence. His exile and suspension, however, did not last long. On November 26, 1504 Isabella died, and less than a month later Don Pedro had the sentence revoked by Queen Joanna.

Local historians record that he arrived at Vélez Blanco at the beginning of 1505, to take formal possession of his new lands. Clearly this was the moment when he decided to make it his home and to erect his own family castle upon the foundations of the old Moorish fortress. The building he probably envisaged was a castle-palace similar to those that some of the greatest Spanish nobles had built one generation earlier in Castile – the castle of Manzanares el Real near Madrid (Figure 10), the seat of the Duke of el Infantado, or that of Cuéllar near Segovia, the seat of the Duke of Albuquerque. In 1506 construction started, in proud defiance of repeated royal orders against the building of such castles, and surely as a gesture of independence and personal power, more than as a defense against the ever-diminishing danger of Moorish uprisings.

Nor was his ambitious program limited to this. Two years later, he divorced his first wife, who had given him no offspring, and on February 14, 1508 married Doña Mencía de la Cueva y Toledo, a direct relation of three of the most powerful nobles of Spain: daughter

of the Duke of Albuquerque, a Mendoza de la Vega through her grandmother, and sister-in-law of the Duke of Alba. Now the Fajardo arms – three bunches of nettle leaves over three rocks in the sea – could be proudly displayed next to those of the dukes of Albuquerque, carrying a dragon issuant from a cave and a border of shields with the Mendoza de la Vega motto, *Ave Maria* (Figures 11, 12).

The Architect of the Castle

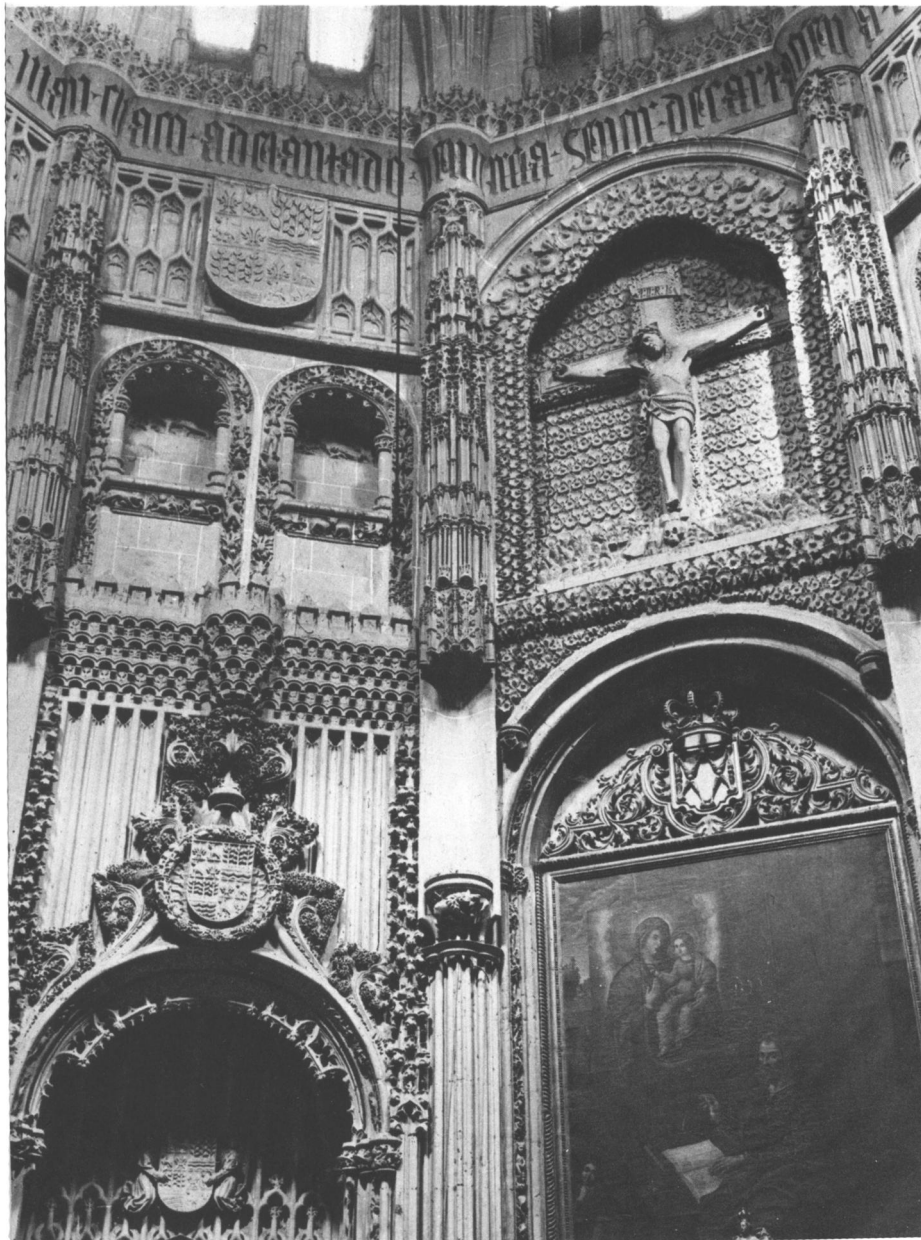
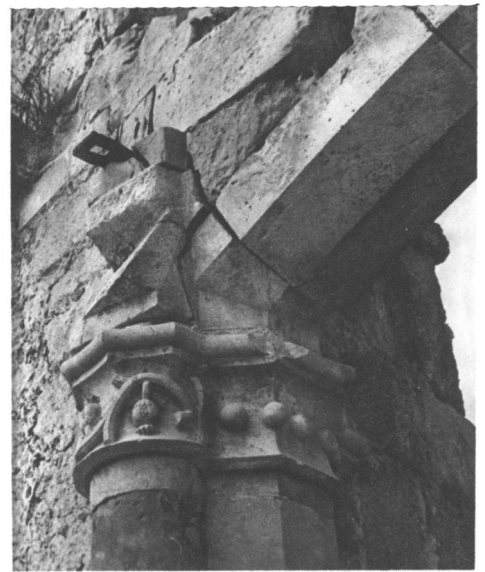
We do not know the name of the architect to whom Pedro Fajardo turned for the erection of the castle of Vélez Blanco, but his name alone would not tell us much more than we are able to learn by studying his building. Typically Spanish decorative motifs, such as the many coats of arms liberally applied to the castle's façade, and a number of structural details, such as the hexagonal pilasters of the *paseador* with their decorative bands of pellets (Figure 13) and the use of segmental arches and flat timber ceilings with exposed beams in the patio galleries, clearly show that we have here a Spanish master trained in the tradition of late Gothic architecture. The patio itself, so intimately related to the rest of the castle, was certainly planned by this Spanish architect, and its structure can be understood only if we consider it within its architectural context.

A clue to the architect's identity may perhaps be found in another Fajardo building still in progress in 1506, the year the castle was started. This is the sumptuous family chapel in the Cathedral of Murcia (Figure 14),

13. *Isabelline capitals of the paseador. Photograph: Alfonso Martínez Gásquez*

14. *The chapel of Los Vélez in the Cathedral of Murcia (completed in 1507). Photograph: Mas*

which had been begun a few years earlier by Pedro's father and was completed, according to the inscription running under its cupola, by Pedro himself on October 14, 1507. Although this work too is anonymous, its style tells us a great deal. A splendid example of Gothic architecture, its polygonal ground plan imitates the famous sepulchral chapels of Alvaro de Luna at Toledo and of the Condestable de Castilla at Burgos, both of the second half of the preceding century. Its decoration displays the favorite elements of that extraordinary mixture of Gothic and Moorish forms characteristic of Spanish buildings of the time of Queen Isabella. In



the wealth of ornament lavished upon its inner walls we notice the luscious fronds, the elaborate Gothic pinnacles, the segmental arches, the rows and clusters of pellets, and the great armorials, sometimes enclosed in heavy fruit wreaths, that were also used in the Palacio del Infantado at Guadalajara and at the Colegio de San Gregorio at Valladolid. Certainly, judging from these details, it would seem that the architect of the Vélez chapel was a master trained in the schools of Burgos and Toledo and must have been in direct contact with such leading Isabelline masters as Simón de Colonia and Juan Guas. Yet his own version of the late Gothic Spanish style is more than usually tinged with Moorish influences, obviously due to the survival of strong local traditions in this southern region, at the very border of Andalusia. Thus, intertwined with the Gothic details, we notice Hispano-Moresque forms such as the leafy bed surrounding the crucifix on the central wall, the use of Moorish decorative motifs like the little merlons and machicolations, and, most striking, the outright Moorish – not Gothic – rhythm with which the walls are covered with motifs built up in strongly horizontal tiers.

It would be tempting to recognize the master who drew the plans for the castle of Vélez Blanco in the architect of the Fajardo chapel. For in spite of the basic structural differences between the two buildings their architectural style reveals a very similar, original combination of late Gothic with His-

pano-Moresque traits. This is especially apparent in the plan of the patio. Its irregular arrangement is entirely at variance not only with the Renaissance style of its marbles, but also with the usual design of the patios of contemporary Castilian palaces. These, whether late Gothic or Renaissance in decorative treatment, normally are nearly square in plan and consist of two stories of arcades on all four sides, with a centrally located doorway that connects the patio directly with the outside of the building. At Vélez Blanco, by contrast, the elongated shape of the ground plan, the windowed wall, the arcaded portico at one short end, and the side entrance are structural features that can be consistently explained only if we compare them to the typical layout of the Moorish patios of Andalusia. These, like the Patio de los Arrayanes at the Alhambra, for instance, are usually rectangular, with windowed walls, arcades at either one short end or both, and always a side entrance, to avoid a direct view of the patio from the vestibule, in keeping with the Arab desire for privacy.

According to the architectural practice of the day, the architect need not have been continuously present throughout the nine years of the castle's construction. He probably worked out only the *traza*, or design of the structure, and left the building supervision to a local master. In all probability the masons themselves were recruited from the Moorish population of the region. This is indicated by several peculiarities of construction: the backs of some of the carved marble blocks, for example, have been carefully finished before they were encased in the masonry—a specifically Moorish technique.

The completely unclassical plan of the patio suggests that at the outset the decoration of marble carvings was envisaged in the Isabelline style, with Gothic and Hispano-Moresque motifs, such as we see in the patios of the Palacio del Infantado at Guadalajara or of the Casa de las Conchas at Salamanca (Figure 15), and not in the pure Renaissance style so conspicuously proclaimed by its graceful capitals, balustrades, and pilasters. Since nothing, moreover, in the rest of the

castle seems to justify the Italian character of the carvings, one is left with the impression that they were not planned by Fajardo's architect, but were rather the result of a sudden change of heart on the part of the Marqués himself. They speak of a definite intellectual desire to surround himself with an architectural environment evocative of the antique world and of the splendors of the great Italian palaces of the day. But if, as it seems, Don Pedro Fajardo had never been to Italy, what were the circumstances that led him to this decision, where did he find the Italian workers able to carry out his wishes, and what designs or models did they follow? The answers must be sought, I believe, in a

15. *The patio of the Casa de las Conchas at Salamanca (finished about 1512). Photograph: Mas*



contemporary event of crucial importance: the construction of the castle-palace of La Calahorra, on the road between Vélez Blanco and Granada, for Don Rodrigo de Vivar y Mendoza, first Marqués of el Cenete. Its story is well known and may prove to be an interesting and startlingly direct parallel to that, still unknown, of the Vélez Blanco Patio.

The Castle-Palace of La Calahorra

Don Rodrigo de Vivar y Mendoza, related to Fajardo's wife through her grandmother, was the eldest of the two legitimized sons of Don Pedro González de Mendoza, the "Great

Cardinal," Primate of Spain. Cardinal Mendoza had given Spain its first Renaissance building, the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Valladolid, erected between 1487 and 1491; for its façade his personal architect, Lorenzo Vázquez of Segovia, had used elements of design borrowed directly from Tuscan and Bolognese palaces. Like his father and other members of the Mendoza family, Don Rodrigo was an enthusiastic patron of the newly imported Italian forms, which contemporaries described as *a la antigua* ("in the manner of the ancients"), to distinguish them from the modern, or Gothic, style. In 1509, three years after construction at Vélez Blanco had started, he asked Vázquez to build him a castle at La Calahorra. On the outside, La Calahorra has the aspect of a square fortress surrounded by round towers and machicolations (Figure 18), but inside this austere Castilian structure, Don Rodrigo, who had spent several years in Italy, wished to have a true Italian palace, with an arcaded courtyard in the Lombard style and a profusion of carved marbles (Figure 16).

For such a Renaissance interior, the precarious knowledge of Lorenzo Vázquez was not sufficient, nor were the uncertain skills of the local stone carvers. Thus the role of the Spanish architect was confined to constructing the fortified shell of the castle and some of the dependencies, while a contract was signed with an Italian architect and sculptor (*magister et sculptor marmorum*) to come down to La Calahorra to complete its interior. This was Michele Carlone, one of the best masters among the many Lombard architect-sculptors established in Genoa and active along the whole of the Ligurian coast, from Savona to Carrara.

A number of documents inform us about the history of the construction of the courtyard in great detail. Carlone arrived around December 1509. A few weeks later he was forwarding several orders with drawings and measurements to his Lombard correspondents in Genoa, for carving a portal enframement, balusters, and capitals and pedestals for twenty-four columns out of "good, fine, and white" Carrara marble. In the spring of 1510

16. *The courtyard of La Calahorra (1509-1512). Photograph: Mas*



these and other consignments were delivered to La Calahorra, and can still be recognized as the elements used on the second floor of the courtyard.

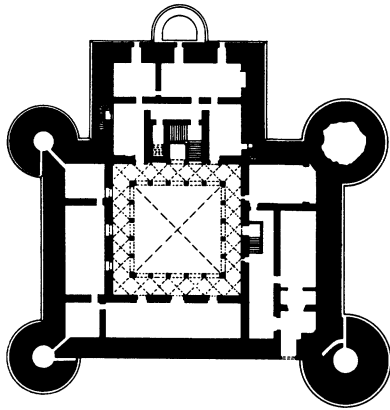
Although Carlone's orders had been filled with considerable speed, the Marqués, anxious to have his castle completed without delay, decided to import a whole group of Italian carvers as well. On June 6, 1510 a contract was drawn with seven expert marble carvers to travel to Spain and work under Carlone's direction. The time limit set for the job was one year. Four were Lombard and three were Ligurian. The Ligurians were called simply *laboratores* ("workers") and came from around Porto Maurizio, near Genoa. The Lombards, on the other hand,

seem to have been also skilled in design and construction, for they were called *magistri de muro* ("architects") and *magistri antelami* ("sculptors"). Three of them were originally from Gandria, a village on the eastern shore of Lake Lugano: Egidio and Giovanni da Gandria de la Verda, and Baldassare da Gandria de Pedraccis; the last one, Pietro Antonio de Curto, came from Carona, a village south of Lugano in the mountains overlooking the lake. The Ligurians were paid three ducats a month; the Lombards, seven and a half, while Egidio da Gandria, who acted as foreman for the entire group, received eight ducats.

The parts due to this group of Italian workers are clearly recognizable at La Cala-

17. *The east side of the patio from Vélez Blanco*





18. *Ground plan of the castle of La Calahorra. (From V. Lampérez y Romea, *Arquitectura Civil Española*)*

horra, for they are made not of Carrara marble but of local sandstone. Some are door and window frames with figural elements; these must have been carved after designs by Carlone, for they closely resemble a marble doorway, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, that he executed in 1503 for the Palazzo Pallavicino in Genoa. Other sandstone door enframements are different in design and ornament, and probably reflect motifs peculiar to Egidio da Gandria and his men.

Spurred by the arrival of the men from Italy, work proceeded now with all necessary speed, even though Carlone seems to have left by the middle of 1511. On September 1, 1512 a beautiful Italian marble fountain was placed in the middle of the courtyard, indicating the castle was probably finished by that time.

We need but little imagination to understand the deep impression that the sight of La Calahorra must have made on Pedro Fajardo, who certainly had occasion to visit this nearby house of his wife's kinsman. Fajardo may or may not have fully understood the beauty of the spatial relationships of Carlone's Italian Renaissance architecture. But he certainly must have admired and envied the magnificence of the doorways and windows, with all the ordered richness of their classical decoration, lending an aura of foreign and refined elegance to Don Rodrigo's palace.

Perhaps, indeed, his reactions went further than simple admiration; La Calahorra might well have directly influenced the decoration of Vélez Blanco. This possibility is made clear by a comparison of the inner courts of the two castle-palaces. The courtyard of La Calahorra, serene and dignified, looks like that of an early Renaissance palace in northern Italy. It is perfectly regular, with a square ground plan and identically treated sides: all consist of a double gallery of five Italian round arches, with the arms of the Mendoza and Fonseca families, encircled by fruit wreaths, in the spandrels; an inscription in Latin runs continuously around the second-floor gallery; over the inscription, in turn, is placed a marble cornice set with classical

lion masks. The galleries are roofed with typically Italian cross vaults springing from carved brackets, and the upper gallery has a simple, classic balustrade. There are also some specifically Genoese touches, such as the black-and-white stripes of the facing of the upper gallery, and the monumental treatment of the stairway springing from the center of one of the courtyard's sides.

In contrast to this, the fundamental structure of Don Pedro's courtyard (Figure 17) is certainly more traditional, reflecting the strongly Spanish, conservative taste of its architect in the asymmetrical layout, the use of Gothic gargoyles, the flat-timbered ceilings of the galleries, and the low, segmental arches. Yet many decorative details are significantly close to La Calahorra: here also appears a frieze with a Latin inscription; coats of arms are also used decoratively in the spandrels of the arches; there is a similar balustrade with carved dividing piers along the second-floor gallery, and, most important, there is also a profusion of carved ornament – especially the similarly emphasized door and window frames – composed of Italian Renaissance decorative motifs. This decoration, however, unlike the work at La Calahorra, which was made of Carrara marble or local sandstone, is carved from the white marble quarried at Macael in the nearby Filabres mountains, just north of Almería. In the choice of this material, Don Pedro or his architect exploited a deep knowledge of local Moorish traditions, for the fine Macael marble, of only slightly thicker grain than that of Carrara, had often been used by the Moors for the columns and carved capitals, floors, and fountains of their palaces in Granada.

The idea of arraying the patio's Spanish framework in the splendid new fashion from Italy almost surely came from Don Rodrigo's palace. But where did Don Pedro find the Italian sculptors? Could the carvers as well as the idea have come from La Calahorra? In the absence of documents like those we have for La Calahorra, the only evidence for or against such a theory is the evidence of style. We must look at the carvings themselves.

The Carvings of the Vélez Blanco Patio

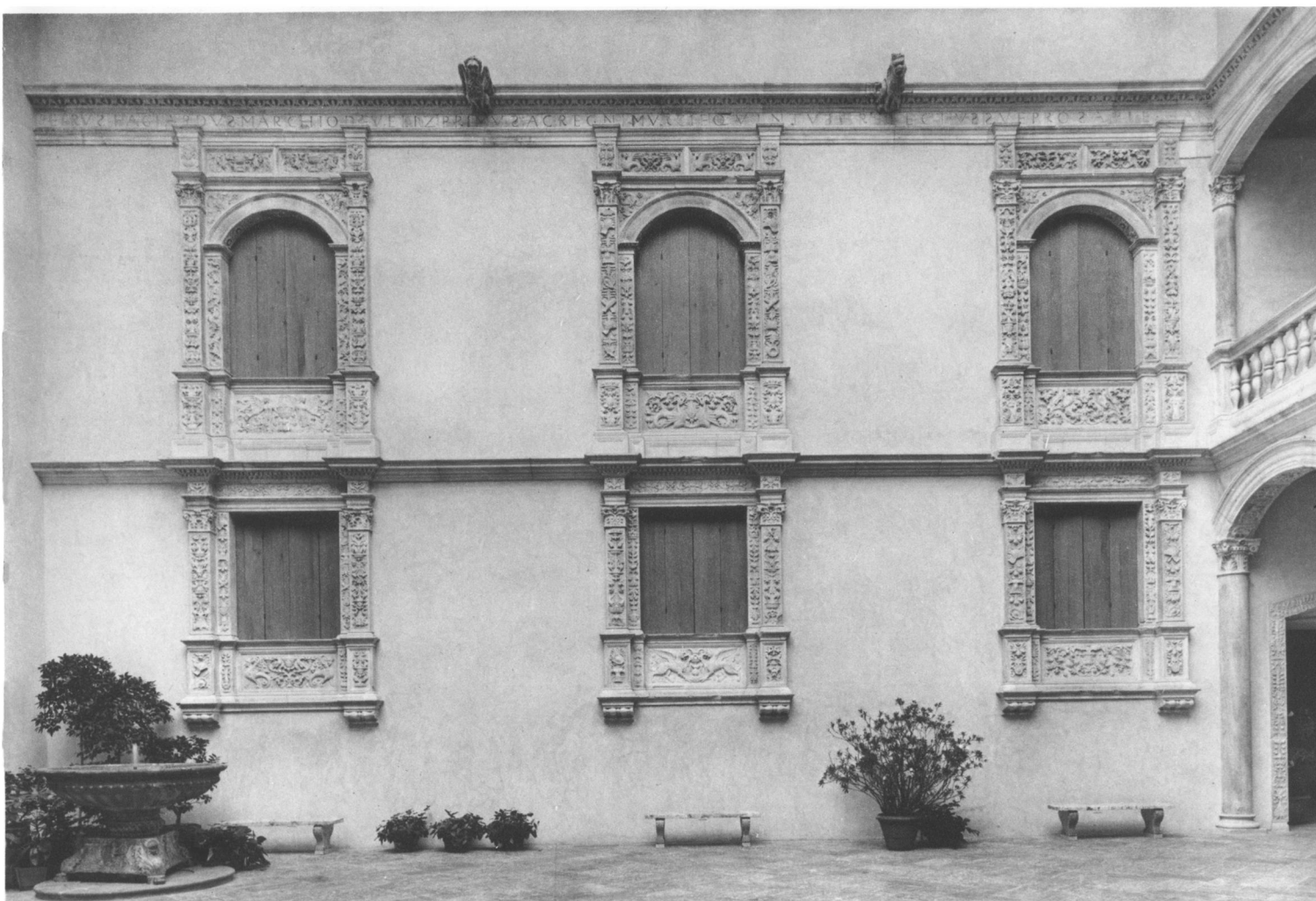
As we enter the Vélez Blanco Patio, we must for a moment imagine the sparkling effect of these gleaming white carvings when they were set off by the yellow sandstone ashlar of the tower. To this the different treatment of each side added a note of gay variety, and gave the patio the festive air of a court of honor set out for the display of medieval pageantry, tournaments, and games, rather than the restrained dignity of a palatial courtyard.

But the main decorative effect came then, as now, from the richness of the sculptural ornament. The eye is provoked and amused by the seemingly endless array of fanciful flora and fauna lavished upon the spandrels and intrados of the arches, on the piers of the balustrade, and especially around the doors

and windows. The lively profiles of the capitals and the deep undercutting of the reliefs create strong effects of light and shade, a pleasant contrast to the plain surfaces of the columns, the balusters, and the arches with their strong, simple moldings. Everywhere the decoration is entirely suited to the architectural part to which it is applied, showing discrimination and taste in the choice of ornament and in its organization and spacing.

The architectural and sculptural motifs employed throughout the patio reflect the most refined and capricious phase of Italian early Renaissance style, which flourished in the last two decades of the fifteenth century and in the years immediately following 1500. In this period the calm sobriety and elegant restraint of Florentine ornament, created by Brunelleschi, Donatello, and Michelozzo, gave way to the exuberant and varied decoration developed by younger masters, such as the Siense Francesco di Giorgio and the Floren-

19. *The six windows along the north wall of the patio*



OPPOSITE:

20. Doorway leading into the patio, under the first-floor arcade. Beside it is mounted the coat of arms of Fajardo y Chacón, formerly on the wall of the castle tower

21. The patio looking southwest. The doorways at left center and upper right come from Vélez Blanco



tine Giuliano da Sangallo. It was an analytical style, composed of motifs either invented or, more often, borrowed from ancient monuments, combined with naturalistic and antiquarian details—foliage, birds, monsters, medals, vases, and the like—popular among the north Italian, especially Lombard, artists, such as the Milanese Ambrogio Barocci or Giovanni Antonio Amadeo.

The taste for this rich type of decoration, often called *alla Lombarda*, spread all over Italy, as far south as Rome and Naples, but reached its most accomplished expression in some of the most famous north Italian buildings of the time: first in the palace of the Duke of Montefeltro at Urbino, where both Tuscan and Lombard craftsmen worked; later in the Lombardesque churches and palaces of Venice and of the towns of the Venetian territory, like Verona and Vicenza; and still later in the palaces of Ferrara.

Reminiscent of Venice, for instance, is the most sumptuous part of the patio: the three tiers of window frames that, laid out like precious embroidered hangings, are tied together by a plain horizontal molding (Figure 19). As far as I know, there is no precedent for this dramatic arrangement in Spanish Gothic architecture; it is very similar, however, to the way in which the façades of late fifteenth century Venetian palaces, like the Palazzo Manzoni-Angaran and the Palazzo Piovene, are divided vertically by windows, while the unity and flatness of the wall is emphasized by the horizontal line of the marble moldings.

Arched windows are a typical feature of Lombard architecture in general, but this combination of rounded windows on the top floor with square ones below also occurs especially often in Venice; it goes on there even as late as the first quarter of the sixteenth century, though usually the windows are less elaborately framed. Parallels to the ornate windowsill panels and pilasters may be found both in the rich, symmetrical compositions carved in 1495 by Tommaso da Lugano and Bernardino da Como for the Loggia del Vescovado at Vicenza, and in the parts of the extraordinarily elaborate carv-

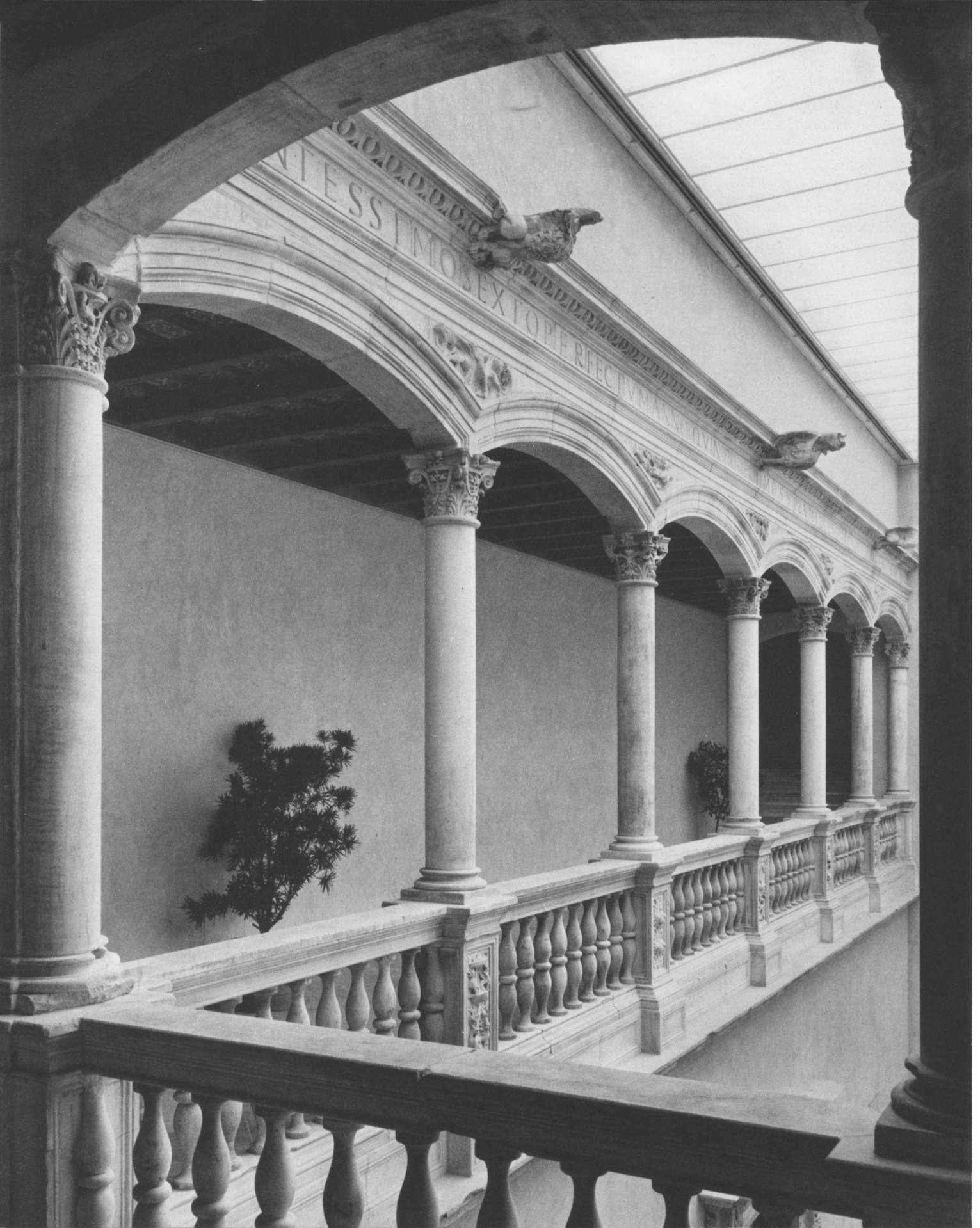


ings of the ducal palace at Venice that were completed immediately before and after 1500. Here we also find examples of the same effective use of plain arches over the windows as a contrast to the carvings surrounding them—a purely pictorial, rather than structural, way of treating the frame. Other north Italian examples are recalled by the high lintels with paired decorative panels that surmount the arched windows at Véléz Blanco: in details and proportions they re-





The upper gallery of the patio



semble contemporary Genoese doorways, like that of the Palazzo Cattaneo del Grillo, carved about 1504-1508 by the Lombard Antonio della Porta.

The different shapes of the windows are echoed by those of the doors (Figure 21): the rectangular line of the lower windows is repeated in the patio's main doorway, now the principal entrance to the Thomas J. Watson Library, while the line of the upper ones is reflected in the round-arched portal now displayed on the second story of the west wall. Both doors have north Italian forebears: the arched one is like some dating from the early sixteenth century in Bergamo, while the entablature of the other can be compared to the main doorway of the Palazzo Prosperi at Ferrara, built shortly after 1500. The balcony of the Palazzo Prosperi, incidentally, is almost identical to the balustrade of the patio, while precedent for the use of such a balustrade as an overall crowning motif can be found in other precisely contemporary Lombard buildings, such as the Church of the Incoronata at Lodi, completed by Amadeo in 1513. A third doorway of the patio has still a different shape, repeating the segmental curve of the Spanish arches (Figure 20); now a side entrance to the first-floor arcade, it was probably once inside the *Salón del Triunfo*, and its extraordinarily deep jambs testify to the thickness of the castle's fortress-like walls.

No Renaissance architectural element seems to embody the full measure of the classic ideal more perfectly than the carved capital. To fifteenth century eyes, still used to Gothic intricacies, the sight of a splendid array of crisp and graceful capitals (Figures 22-24, 26-27) must have seemed as captivating as it does to ours, weary of the debased lines of neo-Renaissance ornament and of the rigor of contemporary architecture. The capitals at Vélez Blanco are exquisite examples of the delightful variety and classical discipline achieved by the Italian architect-sculptors of the late *quattrocento*. Some are the elegant but sober variations on the Roman Corinthian and composite types that we find from Brunelleschi down to Giuliano da Sangallo, equally often in Renaissance



OPPOSITE:

22. *South arcade of the upper gallery*

23, 24. *Capitals of the first-floor arcade*





monuments of Florence, Rome, and north Italy. But more frequent and more characteristic are, instead, the kind that Lombard designers delighted in—capitals on which playful, unclassical elements are introduced. In one case, the normal volutes are replaced by rams' heads and human faces (Figure 27), like capitals of the portal of the Palazzo Thiene at Vicenza, of about 1500; in another, by paired dolphins drinking out of a vase (Figure 23), like those at Venice (San Stefano), at Vicenza (San Bartolomeo), and at Verona (Loggia del Vescovado); and, in still others, by serpent-tailed leopards. Elsewhere the traditional acanthus leaves are enlivened by grinning, big-eared masks (Figure 26) or fluttering birds or tiny shields with the Fajardo arms (Figure 24), all treated with the cheerful, unconventional imagination that presided over the capitals of many north Italian buildings, especially in Ferrara, like the Palazzo dei Diamanti (Figure 25).

Such a variety of precedents may seem confusing at first, but it can be easily explained. For in all of the monuments mentioned, the ornamental parts were carved by Lombard artisans who specialized in this particular repertory of decorative forms—a tradition handed on from father to son. Most of these stonemasons came from the mountain villages near the lakes of Como and Lugano; they first found work, often in groups or families, in the great architectural enterprises of the late fifteenth century: the façade of the Certosa of Pavia, the ducal palace in Venice, or the Cathedral of Como. The style of their designs and the motifs they most frequently employed can often be traced back to the influence of the leading masters they worked under, such as Giovanni Antonio Amadeo, who directed work at the Certosa from 1481 to about 1499, Pietro Lombardo and his sons, Tullio and Antonio, who were active in Venice from 1479 until about 1510, and the Rodari brothers at Como, from 1487 to 1513. In many instances we can distinguish the more Gothicizing and angular style of the craftsmen trained at Pavia and Como from the more classically balanced and fluid language of those who worked in the Venetian area.



25. *Capitals in the courtyard (1492-1493) of the Palazzo dei Diamanti in Ferrara.*
Photograph: Alinari

26 (opposite), 27 (below). *Capitals of the first-floor arcade of the patio*



28.



29.



30.



31.



OPPOSITE:

28-31. *Pilasters of the windows*

32. *The frieze of the main doorway*



If we examine the motifs at Vélez Blanco more closely, we notice that, for all their elaboration, they always preserve the controlled clarity of form and organization, the vivid naturalism, and the bold, three-dimensional quality characteristic of the *quattrocento* tradition. Strongly symmetrical as the compositions are, they are vigorous and interesting, with certain basic motifs—scrolling foliage, dolphins, birds, vases, cornucopias—worked into countless variations (Figure 32). The triumph of the designer’s skill is the treatment of the pilasters, with their narrow, difficult proportions. The compositions that fill these spaces are arranged either as ascending designs or as hanging garlands. Of the first type, called “candelabra,” some are conceived as an imaginary plant rising from a vase or tuft of acanthus, with the central stem occasionally interrupted by a pair of dolphins with intertwined tails, or a bird pecking at clusters of berries (Figure 28). Others exploit the decorative effect of mirror-images of various animals and objects; they are even more properly named candelabra, for their basic structure is that of a succession of *tazzas* rising along a thin shaft from a triangular candelabrum base (Figure 29). As for the hanging garlands, they are made of bunches of fruit and military trophies, which are shown strung along a ribbon and convincingly attached to a peg or to a ring held by an animal mask (Figure 30).

The pilasters with such trophies and with musical instruments are among the most attractive of the carvings. Helmets, suits of armor, panoplies of shields, swords, and daggers, trumpets, flutes, cymbals, and drums

are arranged as arresting still lifes of great charm for the eye (Figure 31). These are motifs frequently used in north Italian and Tuscan monuments of the time; like the pilasters so impeccably carved by Gian Cristoforo Romano on the Porta della Guerra at Urbino and on the tomb of Galeazzo Visconti at the Certosa di Pavia, they were often adapted from a set of immensely popular Roman trophy reliefs now in the Uffizi. But at Vélez Blanco the combination of contemporary with antique shapes, the finely stippled details (perhaps once touched up with gold), the delicate *stiacciato* relief that imitates the embossed surface of contemporary parade armor, and the simple, *quattrocento*-like vertical sequence of the work immediately bring to mind carvings at Venice. There, in the pilasters by the school of Pietro Lombardo in Santa Maria dei Miracoli (Figure 33) and on the Vendramin tomb in Santi Giovanni e Paolo, we encounter similar reminiscences of antique motifs, interpreted not with antiquarian pedantry but with the refinement and liveliness that are the peculiar charm of the Venetian Renaissance.

There are even more precise parallels between candelabra at Vélez Blanco and at Santa Maria dei Miracoli: both the shape and the fine tooling of the triangular bases with lions’ feet on two of the patio’s doors (Figure 34) are surprisingly close to details on the Venetian pilasters (Figure 35). Also typically Venetian are a number of monstrous creatures—lions and leopards with curling serpent tails, long-necked basilisks, and dolphins with curious whiskered human faces—that are the direct and undoubted

33. *Detail of the balustrade of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Venice (1481-1489). Photograph: Böhm*





offspring of an earlier generation of similar monsters that had appeared some twenty-five years before in the main doorway of the Scuola di San Marco (Figure 36).

In fact, the abundance of animal monsters is one of the most striking features of the carvings at Vélez Blanco. Almost everywhere appear the wild, fantastic animals of the north Italian repertory – the *mostri e miscugli* (“monsters and crossbreeds”) mentioned in contracts of the time. Next to rams and dogs we see mountain goats with leafy bodies and serpent tails, griffins, dragons, and sphinxes, all treated with lively, playful, almost aggressive imagination. Some of them are really the harbingers of the new taste for grotesque decoration (Figure 37), and remind us of the creatures jotted down in the sketchbook of Giuliano da Sangallo after the recently discovered frescoes of Nero’s Golden House in Rome (Figure 38). Others, like the sphinxes on one of the spandrels (Figure 40), are traditional, having been frequently used not only in Venice and its neighboring towns, but also on the pilasters of the door and win-

34. Detail of a pilaster of the main doorway

35. Detail of a pilaster of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Venice. Photograph: Böhm



dow frames of the Cathedral of Como (Figure 39).

In contrast to such exuberant animal life, it is baffling to find so little use of the human figure. While, at La Calahorra, two of the portals designed by Michele Carbone display gods, tritons, and nymphs adapted from Roman sarcophagi, at Vélez Blanco there only appear a few timid putti, in the spandrels of the upper-floor gallery (Figure 41), and two winged half-women, on a window panel (Figure 42). And, for all the decorative fluency of these winged creatures’ leafy bodies, they are really quite conservative in appearance, more similar to the figures found, not in Venice, but in the more provincial work of the Cathedral of Como or in some of the doorways of Genoa.

In the Vélez Blanco marbles there are definite variations in the quality of execution, due to the participation of different hands. The most sensitive carving occurs in the capitals, in the coats of arms of the spandrels, in the main doorway, in some of the window panels – the two griffins or the paired dragons (Figure 44) – and in the pilasters with military trophies. All these were probably the work of one or two of the very best sculptors. In their excellent design and their accomplished technique they come closest to the pilaster decorations of Venice.

Less distinguished are the parts due to craftsmen of more provincial and uncertain abilities. These are, for instance, the pilasters of the round-arched doorway with their somewhat clumsy and generalized rendering of vases and tripods, much of the upper right window with the motif of two cornucopias on its front panel (Figure 43), and, in general, all the elements with less finely executed foliage.

Still another workman was probably responsible for the carving of the gargoyles and some of the stylized floral motifs and animal monsters in the intrados of the arches and in the pilasters of the balustrade and stairway (Figures 45-46). His seems to be a strangely *retardataire* manner, still redolent of Gothic sharpness and unbridled imagination, and comes closest in style to some of the carvings of Como cathedral.

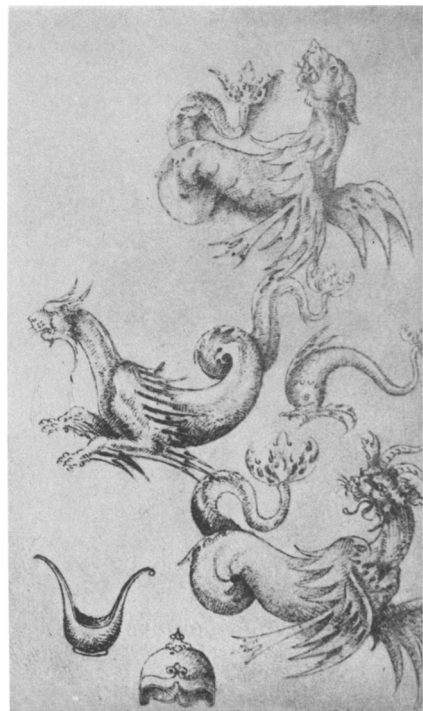


36. Detail of a pilaster of the main portal of the Scuola di San Marco in Venice (about 1490). (From Pietro Paoletti di Osvaldo, *L'Architettura e la Scultura del Rinascimento in Venezia*)

37. Detail of the central upper window of the patio

Thus the entire complex of marbles of the Vélez Blanco Patio is probably the work of a group of four or five marble carvers. All of them, judging from the motifs employed, seem to have been Lombards, with a gamut of previous experience that ranged from the distinctly Venetian background of the leader of the group, to the more provincial manner of those men who might have learned their craft at the Rodari workshop at Como. The presence of craftsmen with a Como background is also supported by the fact that there was once in the castle a relief that, judging from a photograph (Figure 47), was extremely close in style to some of the reliefs on the façade of the Cathedral of Como.

For all their richness of effect, the Vélez Blanco carvings are based on relatively few motifs and compositions. This remarkable unity of design clearly indicates that the decorative elements were derived from one major source. This was probably a sketchbook or pattern book containing a repertory of isolated elements—details of classical armor, candelabra compositions, designs for friezes and capitals—which, following the practice of the day, could be combined and adapted in endless individual variations. A few of these sketches, such as may have been used for the entablature and some of the capitals, might have been details of classical monuments in Rome, perhaps drawn directly from the originals or, as was more often the case, copied from earlier drawings. Others, like



38. Detail from the sketchbook of Giuliano da Sangallo in the Biblioteca Comunale of Siena (S IV.8, f. 41). (From R. Falb, *Il Taccuino Senese di Giuliano da San Gallo*)



the candelabra arrangements, probably were taken from specific Renaissance monuments; they could also have been workshop notes, copies ultimately derived from original designs of leading Italian masters. An instance of a contemporary sketchbook is the well-known *Codex Escorialensis* (Figure 48), composed around 1491, possibly by an artist of the shop of Domenico Ghirlandaio. It is a particularly good example, since this manuscript, which came to the Escorial from the library of Cardinal Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1503-1575) – a close relative of Don Rodrigo – was used by Michele Carbone for one of the doorways at La Calahorra. Although it is impossible to connect it directly with Vélez Blanco, it shows us clearly what the source book used in the patio might have looked like, and helps us to understand the complex interplay of ancient and Renaissance elements that is at the root of the Vélez Blanco ensemble.

It is possible that an all-purpose Italian sketchbook served as the source of decoration not only in the patio but in other rooms of the castle, too. The same basic motifs have been adapted to the design of the friezes and wooden doors and ceilings that used to be elsewhere at Vélez Blanco but that are today, unfortunately, dispersed. The photographs of some of these parts are quite significant in this respect. For we recognize the same Italian repertory of symmetrically treated Renaissance elements – candelabra with urns and paired monsters, or birds picking and fluttering amidst the foliage – in the coffers of the wooden ceiling from one of the great halls of the castle (Figure 49) or in a door otherwise purely Gothic and Moorish in design (Figure 50). Here, of course, we no longer see the work of Italian hands, but probably that of skilled local wood carvers, who may have had access to the same pattern book used for the carvings of the patio.

39. *Tympanum of a portal on the south side of the Cathedral of Como (about 1491). Photograph: Alinari*



40, 41. *Confronted sphinxes and a putto on second-floor spandrels of the patio*

The Sculptors

At this point we may well ask ourselves if there is any evidence of the identity of the Italian, or rather Lombard, marble sculptors who worked on the Vélez Blanco Patio. Did Don Pedro follow the example of Don Rodrigo and import them directly from Italy, or did he avail himself of Italian hands already in the region, working on some other commission? Could they, finally, have been the same men who had worked at La Calahorra? I would be inclined to support the last suggestion.

There are, indeed, significant resemblances between some of the pilasters at Vélez Blanco and those at La Calahorra, where we often see the same consistently high relief as well as the same ornamental motifs. On the doorway to the Salón del Occidente in Don Rodrigo's castle we encounter a candelabra base with two feet in the shape of wolves' heads, paired dolphins with whiskered human faces, and serpent-tailed griffins—all seen again at Vélez Blanco. And on the portal that once led to the chapel of La Calahorra (Figure 52) we find a candelabra composition with two serpent-tailed winged sphinxes at the base, paired griffins and other monsters, and two helmets suspended from a vase, each almost identical to those on one of the windows of the patio (Figure 51). Such parallels reveal, in my opinion, not only a common source of design, but possibly even the work of the same marble carvers.

This suggestion is fully borne out by the sequence of events. The Latin inscription in the patio states that the castle was begun in 1506 and completed in 1515. Since, obviously, the marbles must have been carved during the last three or four years, after all the struc-



42. *Windowsill panel with winged half-women*



43. Upper right window of the patio

44. Windowsill panel with two dragons





45. Gargoyle on the north wall

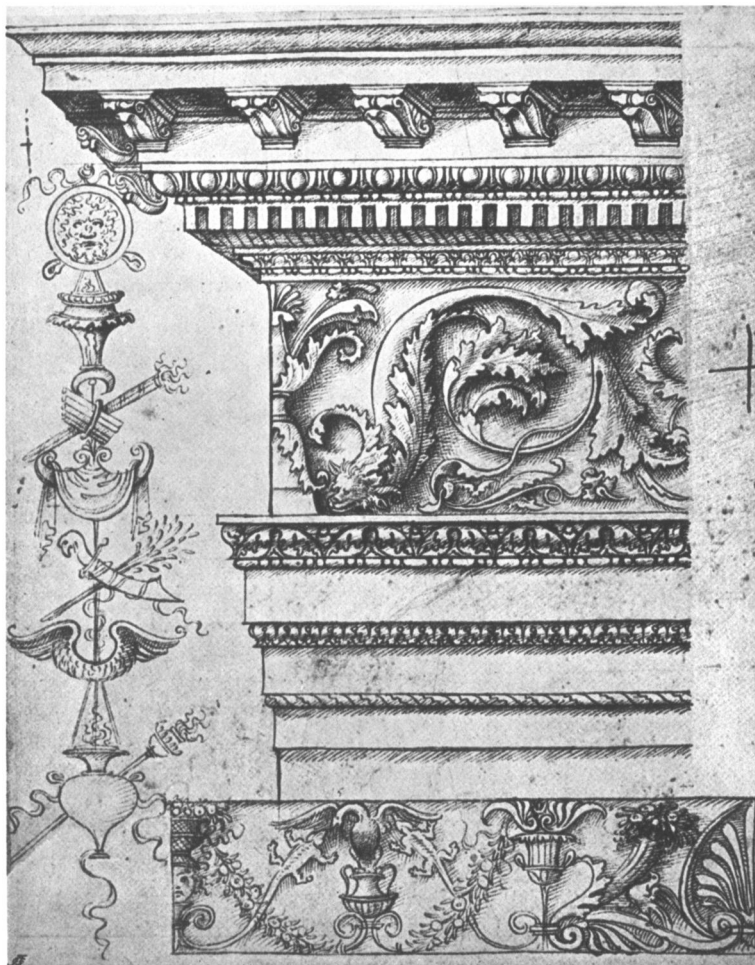


46. Carved pilaster installed on the stairway, but probably one of the piers of the former balustrade on top of the patio



47. Relief said to have been once in the Salón del Triunfo of Vélez Blanco. (From V. Lampérez y Romea, *Arquitectura Civil Española*)

48. Page of the *Codex Escorialensis* (f. 21 v.). (From the facsimile edition of H. Egger)



tural parts were completed, we may reasonably surmise that they were started about 1512. Such a date would coincide exactly with the end of the work at La Calahorra, for we know that this had been finished by September 1512. It is perfectly plausible, and even probable, that the sculptors whom Don Pedro Fajardo employed were no others than the Lombards from La Calahorra – the foreman Egidio da Gandria and his three companions, Giovanni and Baldassare da Gandria and Pietro Antonio de Curto of Carona. A documented parallel to this hypothesis is the fact that, when confronted with the problem of building a water reservoir underneath the castle, Fajardo turned to the same master mason who had built the cistern at La Calahorra.

There is also other stylistic support for the suggestion: the doorways of La Calahorra that offer the closest similarities with ornamental motifs found at Vélez Blanco are consistently not those designed by Michele Carbone, but rather those where both design and execution may be attributed to Egidio da Gandria and his people. Nor would the strongly Venetian character of the ornament of Vélez Blanco be out of keeping with the hypothesis, for we know that most of the artists who had been engaged in the work-

shops of Pietro and Tullio Lombardo and in related building enterprises in Venice and its surroundings, even as late as 1500, came from the Lombard villages around the Lake of Lugano – especially Carona.

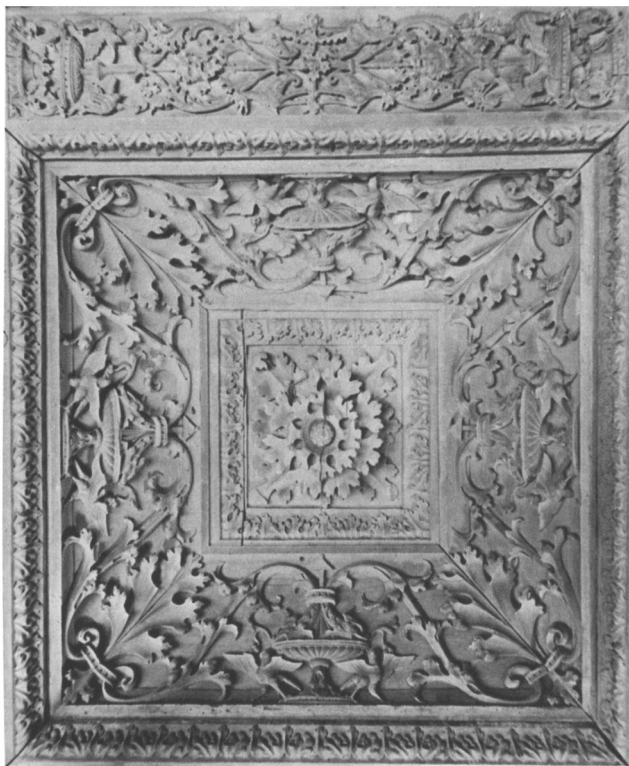
Some day, we hope, the discovery of documents concerning the castle of Vélez Blanco will confirm these suggestions and conclusions. In the meantime, what counts is that the Museum has been able to reconstruct an extraordinary monument that represents the essence of the early Renaissance in Italy equally well as in Spain. For its historical and aesthetic significance transcends the boundaries of nationalities, to remind us of the universal character of the classical dream that presided over it. Certainly to Pedro Fajardo, who once fancied himself a Roman general marching in the triumphal procession of a victorious emperor, the marble patio of his castle must have seemed to recreate nothing less than the lost beauty of the architecture of ancient Rome.

Acknowledgments and References

I should like to express here my warmest appreciation to the various scholars who, with unfailing kindness, have helped me to solve many problems that arose in the course of this study: Don Diego Angulo Iniguez, Edoardo Arslan, Don Jesús Bermúdez y Pareja, the late Walter W. S. Cook, Don Manuel Gómez-Moreno, Father José Angel Tapia, and the late Don Leopoldo Torres Balbás. A. Hyatt Mayor and Beatrice Gilman Proske made available to me the records concerning the sale of the patio in the archives of The Hispanic Society of America. The measured drawings of the castle were prepared by the architect Francisco Prieto Moreno and his assistant, Don Alfonso Martínez Gásquez, and most graciously presented to the Museum, together with most of the photographs of the castle reproduced in this article.

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49, 50. *Detail of a Renaissance wooden ceiling (above) and a wooden door (below), formerly at Vélez Blanco*



OPPOSITE:

51. Upper left window of the patio

52. Doorway from the chapel of the castle of La Calahorra, now in a private collection in Seville.

Photograph: University of Seville



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J. A. Tapia, *Vélez Blanco* (1959) pp. 186-191, ills.

G. Marañón, *Los Tres Vélez* (1960) pp. 42-44, ills.

J. A. Gaya Nuño, *La Arquitectura Española en Sus Monumentos Desaparecidos* (1961) pp. 29,

31.

PEDRO FAJARDO

The main source of information on the life of Pedro Fajardo are some two hundred letters addressed to him by Pietro Martire (1455-1526) between 1494 and 1525. They were published for the first time in the original Latin at Alcalá de Henares in 1530 and recently translated into Spanish by José López de Toro in the series "Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España," IX-XII (1953-1957). Other details may be found in an excellent monograph by J. A. Tapia, *Vélez Blanco* (1959), based on material found in local archives and historical sources, in a book of Gregorio Marañón, posthumously published, *Los Tres Vélez* (1960), and in J. García Mercadal, *Viajes de Extranjeros por España y Portugal I* (1952) p. 491.

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THE CHAPEL OF THE FAJARDOS
AT MURCIA

See E. Tormo, "La Capilla de los Vélez en la Catedral de Murcia" in *Boletín de la Real Academia* XC (1927) pp. 263-278, and L. Torres Balbás, *Arquitectura Gótica* ("Ars Hispaniae," VII) (1962) p. 301.

THE HISTORY OF LA CALAHORRA

The documents on La Calahorra were published by K. Justi, "Anfänge der Renaissance in Granada" in *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* XII (1891) pp. 174-180, and "Der Baumeister des Schlosses La Calahorra," *ibidem*, pp. 224-226. Subsequently, relevant studies upon the castle were written by V. Lampérez y Romea, "El Castillo de La Calahorra" in *Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excursiones* XXII (1914) pp. 1-28; M. Gómez-Moreno, "Sobre el Renacimiento en Castilla" in *Archivo Español de Arte* I (1925) pp. 32-40; and Santiago Sebastián, "Antikisierende Motive der Dekoration des Schlosses La Calahorra bei Granada" in *Spanische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft* XVI (1960) pp. 185-188.

For the identification of Michele Carbone as the sculptor of the Victoria and Albert doorway, see R. W. Lightbown, "Three Genoese Doorways" in *The Burlington Magazine* CIII (1961) p. 142, ill.

FIFTEENTH CENTURY LOMBARD
ARCHITECTS AND SCULPTORS

For the latest assessment of the role played by the migratory movement of architects and sculptors coming from the region of the lakes of Como and Lugano, see the papers of the II Convegno sugli Artisti del Lario e del Ceresio (held in 1957 at Varenna under the auspices of the Società Archeologica Comense), edited by E. Arslan as *Architetti e Scultori del Quattrocento* ("Arte e Artisti dei Laghi Lombardi," I) (1959).

A basic distinction between the fully Renaissance character of the ornament carried out by artists coming from the western shore of the Lake of Lugano and chiefly active in Venetian territory, and the more conservative manner of those who originated from the villages on the eastern shore of the same lake, like the Rodari brothers, has recently been emphasized by E. Arslan in his review of F. Frigerio, *Il Duomo di Como e il Broletto* (1950) in *Rendiconti dell' Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere* LXXXVI (1953) pp. 46-47, and *Vicenza, I: Le Chiese* ("Catalogo delle Cose d'Arte e di Antichità d'Italia") (1956) pp. 11-12.

THE CODEx ESCURIALENSIS

The sketchbook was published in full by H. Egger, *Codex Escorialensis* (1905-1906). For an analysis of its ornament sketches and their relationship to

ancient and Renaissance monuments and to fifteenth century pattern books, see especially pp. 54-56.

THE IDENTITY OF THE SCULPTORS
AT VELEZ BLANCO

Nearly forty years ago, Don Manuel Gómez-Moreno, who knew the Vélez Blanco carvings only from photographs, offered a different suggestion in the course of a study of the Royal Chapel at Granada (*Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología* I [1925] pp. 76-77), a theory that has been unanimously accepted by all subsequent Spanish art historians, such as J. Camón Aznar, *La Arquitectura Plateresca* (1945) pp. 31 and 124, and F. Chueca Goitia, *Arquitectura del Siglo XVI* ("Ars Hispaniae," XI) (1953) pp. 38-40. According to Don Manuel Gómez-Moreno, these carvings might have been the work of two Italian marble carvers mentioned between 1520 and 1522 in account books referring to the Royal Chapel as *maestre* Martín Milanés and *maestre* Francisco Florentín. As neither these documents, nor others referring to their activity in the region, connect their work directly to the patio of Vélez Blanco, the only evidence at hand is that offered by their two surviving works: the marble baptismal font of the Cathedral of Granada—a joint production of 1520, and the carved parapet panels of the stairs in front of the main altar in the Royal Chapel, carved by Francisco alone in 1521. The first, it seems to me, has only a general affinity of style with the carvings of Vélez Blanco. As to the second, the panels indeed show motifs of decoration closely resembling some of the pilasters of Vélez Blanco. But the execution—very low relief, with great uncertainty of design—is quite different from the bold and crisp workmanship that is so characteristic of the patio's carvings. Possibly Francisco Florentín, who for the main panels of the Granada staircase followed designs by Felipe Vigarny, was acquainted with the Vélez Blanco ensemble and used sketches of ornament of the patio for the side pilasters. Or, possibly, seven years earlier, he had really been connected in some minor capacity with the castle of Vélez Blanco, and his pilasters at Granada are a reminiscence of that work. However this may be, his work appears to be distinctly derivative in quality and offers, I would say, no decisive clue to the authorship of the Vélez Blanco carvings.

On the other hand, some parallels and analogies between the Vélez Blanco marbles and the carvings at La Calahorra have been already pointed out by Stella Rubinstein Bloch (*Catalogue of the Collection of George and Florence Blumenthal* II [1926] plates LXIX-LXXII and text), as well as B. Gilman Proske (*Castilian Sculpture* [1951] pp. 309-311), who suggested therefore that the two monuments stemmed from the same source.

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