

DISCOURSE AS A TOOL FOR CHANGE AT ALJAFERÍA

A CASE STUDY OF HOW TO DEVELOP THE MEDIATION OF
AN ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE VISITOR ATTRACTION



Author: Catharina Larsson

Master thesis, Spring term 2007

Supervisor: Associate professor Britt-Inger Johansson

Department of Art History and Musicology, Lund University, Sweden



LUND
UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT – MASTER THESIS

Title and subtitle:

Discourse as a tool for change at Aljafería: a case study of how to develop the mediation of an architectural heritage visitor attraction

Author: Catharina Larsson

Supervisor: Associate professor: Britt-Inger Johansson

Pages: 54

Illustrations: 9 (front cover included)

This thesis is a case study of a Spanish castle called Aljafería. The objective of the study was to develop the mediation of this particular castle and to construct a research design that could be used to develop the mediation of other architectural heritage visitor attractions. The research design emerged during the course of the case study, using a grounded method perspective. The most dominant element of the research design is a productive discourse analysis, using discourse analysis as a practical tool while generating ideas of development. After a systematic delineation of the discourse order of Aljafería I could present ideas about what needs to be altered in its organization, how the building should be mediated and which of its qualities should be emphasized in its mediation, considering unique potentials as well as individual limitations.

Key words:

Productive discourse analysis, architectural mediation, architectural tourism, Aljafería, development ideas, architectural heritage visitor attraction, research design, grounded method

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| SUBJECT | 3 |
| THE CASE STUDY | 3 |
| FOCUS & LIMITATIONS | 3 |
| RESEARCH OBJECTIVES | 4 |
| RESEARCH QUESTIONS | 4 |
| METHODS & THEORY | 4 |
| CASE STUDY, RESEARCH METHOD & GROUNDED METHOD | 5 |
| METHODS FOR DATA COLLECTING | 5 |
| Interviews | 6 |
| Observations | 7 |
| DISCOURSE ANALYSIS | 7 |
| VALORIZATION PERSPECTIVE | 8 |
| EARLIER RESEARCH | 9 |
| SOURCES & LITERATURE | 10 |
| EMPIRICAL MATERIAL AND PRIMARY SOURCES | 10 |
| SECONDARY SOURCES | 10 |
| OUTLINE OF THE STUDY | 11 |
| BACKGROUND | 12 |
| A HISTORICAL PREVIEW | 12 |
| ALJAFERÍA: A MOORISH PLEASURE PALACE | 12 |
| ALJAFERÍA BECOMES A CHRISTIAN ROYAL PALACE | 12 |
| LOS REYES CATHÓLICOS: FERNANDO & ISABEL | 13 |
| THE TRIBUNAL OF THE HOLY OFFICE OF THE INQUISITION | 13 |
| FORTIFYING ALJAFERÍA | 13 |
| MILITARY REGIMENT | 14 |
| SAVING THE HERITAGE - RESTORING ALJAFERÍA | 14 |
| LAS CORTES | 15 |
| A VISUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ALJAFERÍA OF TODAY | 15 |
| THE SURROUNDINGS AND THE EXTERIOR OF THE PALACE | 15 |
| THE INTERIOR OF THE PALACE | 16 |
| THE DISCOURSES OF ALJAFERÍA: ITS FUNCTIONS | 21 |
| VISITOR ATTRACTION | 21 |
| LAS CORTES, PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT | 22 |
| EXHIBITION HALL | 23 |
| MUSEUM | 23 |
| SCENE FOR CULTURAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES | 24 |
| HISTORICAL MONUMENT | 24 |
| THE DISCOURSES THAT SURROUND ALJAFERÍA | 26 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| TOURISM & LEISURE DISCOURSE ORDER | 26 |
| MEDIATION DISCOURSE | 27 |
| CULTURAL INSTITUTION DISCOURSE ORDER | 28 |
| POLITICAL DISCOURSE | 29 |
| HISTORICAL DISCOURSE & ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY DISCOURSE | 29 |
| PRESERVATION DISCOURSE & DISCOURSE OF AUTHENTICITY | 31 |
| PATRIMONIAL HERITAGE DISCOURSE & EDUCATION DISCOURSE | 32 |
| | |
| CONFLICTS (& RELATIONSHIPS) BETWEEN DISCOURSES | 34 |
| <hr/> | |
| CONFLICTS - ORGANISING ACTIVITIES & EXHIBITIONS | 34 |
| CONFLICTS & RELATIONSHIPS - THE PARLIAMENT FUNCTION | 35 |
| REFUSING VISITORS | 35 |
| SECURITY | 35 |
| A NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND INDEPENDENCE | 35 |
| “WE ARE UNDERDEVELOPED AND THE ORGANISATION IS BAD” | 36 |
| “IT IS NOT ALL BAD” | 36 |
| “THE BUILDING IS NOT SEEN AS A TOURISTIC MONUMENT” | 37 |
| INSUFFICIENT MEDIATION | 37 |
| | |
| SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO CHANGE THE DISCOURSE ORDER OF ALJAFERÍA | 38 |
| <hr/> | |
| ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES | 38 |
| BECOME MORE LIKE OTHER CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS | 38 |
| ANOTHER ENTRANCE | 38 |
| THINGS NORMALLY PROVIDED AT VISITOR ATTRACTIONS | 39 |
| IMPROVING DIFFERENT FORMS OF MEDIATION | 39 |
| FOREIGNERS, AUDIO GUIDES & SIGNPOSTS | 40 |
| VISITORS WHO GO WITHOUT THE GUIDED TOUR | 40 |
| GUIDED TOURS | 42 |
| THE PERMANENT MUSEUM EXHIBITION | 44 |
| OTHER ACTIVITIES & FUNCTIONS | 45 |
| WHAT TO FOCUS ON | 46 |
| HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL DIVERSITY | 46 |
| PRESERVATION & AUTHENTICITY | 46 |
| COMPARISONS | 47 |
| HERITAGE & PATRIMONY | 47 |
| | |
| CONCLUSIONS | 49 |
| <hr/> | |
| SOURCES & LITERATURE | 53 |
| <hr/> | |
| SOURCES | 53 |
| INTERVIEWS (ANONYMOUS) | 53 |
| DISGUISED INTERVIEW (ANONYMOUS) | 53 |
| PRINTED FOLDERS AND MAPS | 53 |
| WEB SITE | 53 |
| LITERATURE | 53 |

INTRODUCTION

SUBJECT

Mediation is a key word in the discourse of architectural tourism. For people to really enjoy a building it needs to be mediated in one way or the other. Successful mediation requires reflection, systematic research and hard work. This thesis is dedicated to the study of how an individual building, a Spanish castle called Aljafería, can become more successful in its mediation to visitors. The thesis is the result of a synthesis of a practical project and an interdisciplinary qualitative academic study, which can be placed in between the disciplines of art history, museology and tourism studies. My hope is to be able to use the knowledge gained from this study in the field of architectural tourism.

While studying the mediation of the above mentioned castle I have tried to build up a research design that can be used to develop the mediation of other architectural heritage visitor attractions as well. The research design must be general enough to be applicable to different buildings, but at the same time specific enough to bring out the unique in every visitor attraction, considering its individual limitations and opportunities.

THE CASE STUDY

While searching for a suitable case study I had my aim set on a Spanish castle. The building of my choice had to be a heritage attraction that on the one hand is open to visitors and on the other isn't too famous and successful in attracting visitors; many different buildings could subsequently have proved to be suitable.

The final choice fell on a medieval palace, the history and the architecture of which I find particularly interesting. The palace is known as *Aljafería* and is situated in the city of Zaragoza, in the autonomous province of Aragón. It was built for the Moorish ruler Abu Yafar during the second half of the 11th century. During his time the palace was used as a place of recreation, but since then it has had many different functions. The early Christian kings used it as their residence and later it has housed for example the Tribunal of the Inquisition. Today the younger parts of the complex are used to house the provincial parliament of Aragón, while the more ancient parts are accessible for visitors.

FOCUS & LIMITATIONS

While this thesis existed only in the world of ideas I wanted to construct a complete plan of development for Aljafería. This idea was soon discarded since it would have resulted in a too large a project. The fact that the thesis is written mainly from an art historian point of view had

to set up limitations for what could be studied. As a result I limited the study to such factors that are relevant for the mediation of an individual heritage visitor attraction. The main focus lies on the potentials offered by the building and on finding solutions that are specially made for it. While generating ideas on how to mediate Aljafería I examine the discourse order of the castle and map out the discourses that surround it. I discuss what kind of mediation would be appropriate for Aljafería and what subject matter such a mediation should include. The discourse analysis is basically used as a tool for change.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

I have two main research objectives for my study. First, I set out to develop ideas about how the castle Aljafería can become more successful in its mediation to visitors. While generating these ideas I must consider the building's individuality, bring out its unique offerings and strive to harmonize its discourse order. Second, I attempt to delineate a research design that can be used to develop the mediation of individual architectural heritage visitor attractions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The thesis has two principal research questions:

- *How can Aljafería become more successful in its mediation to visitors?*
- *What kind of research design is suitable for the purpose of generating ideas about how an architectural heritage visitor attraction can become more successful in its mediation to visitors?*

These two questions will be answered with the help of the following questions:

- *What does the discourse order of Aljafería look like?*
- *Which exterior discourses influence or constrain the Aljafería as a visitor attraction?*
- *What conflicts exist in the discourse order of Aljafería?*
- *How is the Aljafería mediated today?*

METHODS & THEORY

In this thesis I have worked with triangulation of different methods and theories, i.e. I have employed different methods and theories and fused them into an entity. The most important contributions are made by *the grounded method* and *a productive discourse analysis*, both encompassing method as well as theory. I developed the first of these perspectives from Grounded Theory, whereas the second perspective was developed from different discourse analytical approaches. Along with these I have used many different methods for data collecting and I have integrated the theories of a so called *valorization perspective* with the productive discourse analysis.

CASE STUDY, RESEARCH METHOD & GROUNDED METHOD

The study is first and foremost a *case study* of Aljafería. Besides studying the individual building, the case study is used as a tool in the production of a research design that can be used to develop the mediation of individual heritage visitor attractions. A research design implies a procedure of research involving the collection of data as well as the analysis of data. In order to produce such a research design I have employed the theories of a modified version of Grounded Theory. I call this perspective the *grounded method*.

Grounded Theory (GT) is a research method that includes all phases of the research process and its main focus is generating theories through conceptualisation of collected data.¹ Since I am not generating theory, but ideas of practical development for the mediation of an architectural heritage visitor attraction, Grounded Theory isn't appropriate for my study. However, it has given me great inspiration on subjects like data collecting, purposive sampling, how to be sensitive to the data etc. Above all it is its ideas of emergence that have inspired my research, since I have allowed my methods to develop progressively during the course of my case study. In accordance with the GT perspective, memos and conceptualisation have been a constant part of the working process and very few ideas were preconceived before entering into the field. The grounded method should primarily be seen as a theoretical approach based on ideas of emergence. It is the practical knowledge obtained during the study that is the basis for producing the research design.

METHODS FOR DATA COLLECTING

During three weeks I worked in the field, collecting data and impressions, in order to gain a good picture of the discourse order of Aljafería, and in order to generate ideas of development. The methods for data collecting were developed and modified as the project proceeded, in a way that the collected data were allowed to give me directions where and on what subjects and themes to continue the search for more data.

Qualitative half structured interviews, conversations, field observations and photo documentation were the principle methods used for data collecting. To gain a picture of how Aljafería is presented and mediated, both outside and inside the palace, I collected a wide range of informative material, in oral, visual and written form.

¹ For an overview of grounded theory and the stages of the research process, see first chapter in: Glaser, Barney G., *Theoretical sensitivity: advances in the methodology of grounded theory*, (Mill Valley, Calif.: Sociology Press, 1978), pp. 1-17.

INTERVIEWS

In order to strengthen the reliability of data gained through interviews, I chose to interview informants belonging to different groups that were related to Aljafería as a visitor attraction: the director of the department in charge of the visitor attraction, the office personnel working with questions related to the visitor attraction, the guides and visitors.²

During the field study 22 different interviews were carried out.³ The director and the office personnel were interviewed individually, while the guides were interviewed in groups. Visitors were interviewed individually, in small groups of two, and in one focus group.

More or less all office personnel and all guides were interviewed. However, since new visitors came every day I had to limit the number of interviews carried out with this particular group. While selecting which visitors to interview I tried to include different kinds of visitors. I considered factors as age, gender and place of origin, aiming at an even distribution.

Interviews with visitors were carried out during different times of the day and the week, and they were continued until saturation was obtained, i.e. until the same kind of answers repeated themselves and no new information was added.

The questions asked to visitors especially focused on the mediation of the visitor attraction, the information given at the site and the information about and knowledge of Aljafería outside the site. They were also asked to talk about possible development potentials, problems, elements they liked the most and general opinions about the visit. The other informant groups answered similar questions, but they were also asked to comment the answers I had received from visitors. The interviews, which are considered as discourses or articulations of discourse, have given me a good picture of the importance and the meaning people give to the building.

Besides the interviews mentioned above I also made one *disguised interview* at a local tourist office. I went in and pretended to be a tourist and asked what there was to see in Zaragoza. Through this disguised interview I got first hand information about what tourist offices say about Aljafería.

All interviews were recorded to a digital dictaphone, and then transcribed into a written document. I only transcribed those parts I found relevant for my study. Pauses, laughs or gestures were excluded in the transcription. The transcribed interviews were examined first

² At first I intended to include potential visitors in the groups of informants. This group was discarded for three reasons. Firstly, since the castle is so poorly known I made the conclusion that potential visitors would probably not be able to say much about it. Secondly, since those visitors who had found their way to the castle had a hard time answering questions about expectations and wishes, potential visitors would probably find it even harder. Thirdly, since the study does not have as an objective to develop strategies for promotion and marketing, potential visitors are not that important.

³ 2 interviews with the director, 13 interviews with visitors, 3 interviews with the office personnel and 4 interviews with the guides were carried out between 2006-10-19 and 2006-11-07.

vertically, and then horizontally. The vertical examination included an individual study of each and every interview. While doing the vertical examination I made a summary of the content of each interview and sought out significant quotes and key words, at the same time as I reflected upon the meaning and the context of that which had been said. When studying them horizontally I made thematic and conceptualizing studies, based on the vertical examination results, across all interviews.⁴ When presenting the results the identities of the informants have been treated with confidentiality.

OBSERVATIONS

With the purpose of gaining additional information that could add to, support, problematize and/or question the interview results I made a lot of observations during my field study. I did an inventory of the rooms in the historic parts of the castle, followed approximately 10 different guided tours and repeatedly walked through the castle observing how Aljafería functioned and how it was organised. Photo documentation and small video clips were part of these observations, as well as informal conversations with the personnel, this time including also the security guards of the visitor attraction.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

A discourse analysis takes interest in language and social construction of meaning. In *Diskursanalys som teori och metod* Marianne Winter Jørgensen and Louise Phillips describe discourse as being a certain way of talking about and understanding the world.⁵ A discourse can be understood as an analytical concept that the researcher constructs in order to be able to discuss a certain subject. As such, the boundaries between distinct discourses will be set strategically in relation to the objectives of the specific research situation.⁶

Many different approaches to discourse analysis exist and the method can be used for different purposes. A discourse analysis most often studies speech or text, but it has also been employed to study pictures or other social phenomena. It can for example be used to look at certain views of the world taken for granted and considered true in society. When identifying the discourses, and when mapping out their consequences, it is much easier to criticize them and to present alternative realities.⁷ In a way the result of this thesis is a presentation of an alternative reality to the Aljafería of today. Supporting the post-structuralist belief that truth is constructed, I believe that there is no one true way of presenting and mediating Aljafería. Even so, there must

⁴ See Thomsson, Heléne, *Reflexiva intervjuer*, (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2002), pp. 153-160, for further reading on vertical and horizontal examination of interviews.

⁵ Winther Jørgensen, Marianne and Phillips, Louise, translated by Torhell, Sven-Erik, *Diskursanalys som teori och metod*, (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2000), p. 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

be a certain balance and conviviality between the discourses dwelling in the same terrain for the castle to become a successful visitor attraction.

According to several discourse analytic approaches different discourses compete for domination in the same terrain.⁸ In my analysis I try to detect the discourses that compete inside the discourse order of Aljafería, and determine how these discourses relate to each other. However, my use of discourse analysis does not stop there. I believe that a study of the relationships between different discourses can give useful recipes for creating ideas of development for a heritage attraction. Conflicts may for example show us what needs to be corrected or altered and give information about what possible creative changes might or might not be done.

The limitations for how Aljafería can and cannot be presented and mediated are dependent on the discourses existing in closely related fields, such as tourism and cultural institutions. Changes can be made but they must either draw upon or question earlier established discourses. According to some theories of Critical discourse analysis, developed by the linguist Norman Fairclough, a text or an act of speech plays an active part in reproducing, transforming and questioning already existing discourses.⁹ I share this perspective and use the concrete discursive practices, which reproduce and question earlier discourses, as a tool for generating ideas of development. The informants have had the opportunity to give their view of Aljafería as a visitor attraction and describe it as it would be in its utopian form. It is in these articulations, which draw upon discourses in nearby fields, that ideas of a reformed and successful Aljafería are born.

In summary I use the discourse analysis to identify different discourses and examine their relationships, while concrete articulations of discourse are used to generate ideas about the future Aljafería. I have integrated different discourse analytical ideas and use discourse analysis as a productive tool for change. I therefore call it *productive discourse analysis*.

VALORIZATION PERSPECTIVE

Apart from discourse analysis, valorization perspective is the theory that is most important for my case study. The concept *valorization* is borrowed from the book *The invention of the historic monument* by Françoise Choay.¹⁰ Choay does not explain the meaning of the concept in detail, but in summary it can be described as the phenomena of giving values to a historical monument.

In her study Choay delineates the history of the historical monument through an examination of the concept itself and of the meanings and different values that mankind has attributed to it. Her work is greatly inspired by *The modern cult of monuments: its character and its origin*,

⁸ Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2000, pp. 13, and 20.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 13, 24, and 133.

¹⁰ Choay, Françoise, *The invention of the historic monument*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2001), p. 143.

written in 1903 by Alois Riegl. In this article Riegl distinguishes between intentional and unintentional monuments. The intentional monument has an original commemorative value while the value of the unintentional one, the historical monument, is defined by present day people.¹¹ Aljafería is such an unintentional monument and it receives its attributed values by for example the public, its visitors, its staff and its management.

Riegl presents a number of values that that can be attributed to historical monuments: historical value, age-value, use-value, art-value etc. Choay occasionally uses the values of Riegl and introduce a new type of value, the economic value. Nonetheless, there are many other values being mentioned during the course of her study. Her valorization perspective is not schematic like Riegl's. Instead she uses values as an integrated part in her discourse analytical study.

Like Choay, I integrate the valorization perspective with the discourse analysis. Also, in a similar way to Choay I do not use the perspective in a schematic manner. I see values as the core of every discourse. Just like articulations of discourse, the values attributed to an historical monument are dependent on previous discourses. Certain values can be given to a building and others can not. Values are elements of discourse and must, like the discourses to which they belong, be considered as analytical concepts formulated in accordance with each research situation. Since the objectives of my study are different from the objectives of Choay and Riegl, who were interested in how the monument is conserved as a consequence of its attributed values, their categories of values can not be adopted without modifications. I therefore only use certain values, reinterpret them and add new ones.

EARLIER RESEARCH

Cultural tourism is today an ever expanding market and heritage visitor attractions play an important part. Research on cultural tourism or visits to heritage attractions rarely focus on individual architectural sites. They more often take a general interest in the tourism phenomena and in heritage attractions, including discussions about historic towns, complete destinations, theme parks, national parks, the negative consequences of tourism on our heritage assets, the relationship between tourism development and sustainable heritage, tourist/visitor types and behaviour, tourist experience, and service management strategies.¹² A general discussion about interpretation and mediation of heritage sites and museums is included in some of these studies,

¹¹ Riegl, Alois, "The modern cult of monuments: its character and its origin", translation by Forster, Kurt W. and Ghirardo, Diane, in *Oppositions: a journal for ideas and criticism in architecture*, 25 Fall, (New York: Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, 1982 (1903)), p. 23.

¹² See for example Wiendu Nuryanti (ed.), *Tourism and heritage management*, (Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1997).

but they do not contain systematic and holistic research on individual buildings.¹³ Studies dealing with the visit to an individual cultural attraction are often done as commercial surveys and therefore remain confidential.¹⁴ The field of study subsequently lacks academic research in this particular domain.

Books on architecture and tourism, exemplified by *Architecture and tourism: perception, performance and place* by the editors D. Medina Lasansky and Brian McLaren¹⁵, tend to take a historical and critical perspective and do not show an interest in how to generate ideas of development.

The building Aljafería, is well suited for my case study since it has never been part of any research on cultural tourism and architectural mediation. The study therefore has the potential not only to contribute to academic research on architectural tourism, but also to provide the managers of Aljafería with development ideas that could be implemented at the site.

SOURCES & LITERATURE

EMPIRICAL MATERIAL AND PRIMARY SOURCES

Data triangulation, i.e. the use of a wide range of different data, enabled me to study the discourse order of Aljafería from various angles and from different point of view. The final choice of data was made while in the field and it was conditioned by the offerings of the case study.

The empirical data consist of interviews and conversations with visitors at Aljafería, as well as with guides, guards, office personnel and management. It also contains observations and photo documentation of the palace, as well as oral information from the tourist office. The primary sources contain different kinds of written material such as informative leaflets, signposts and panels.

SECONDARY SOURCES

My secondary sources consist of literature and articles dealing with earlier research on subjects relevant to my study. Most of this literature is used for its theoretical and methodological perspective: *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun* by Steinar Kvale¹⁶, *Reflexiva intervjuer* by Heléne Thomsson¹⁷, *Diskursanalys som teori och metod* av Marianne Winther Jørgensen och Louise Phillips¹⁸,

¹³ See for example Harrison, Richard (Ed.), *Manual of heritage management*, (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann in association with the Association of Independent Museums, 1994)

¹⁴ Richards, Greg, "The market for cultural attractions", In: Richards, Greg (Ed), *Cultural attractions and European tourism*, (Wallingford: CABI Pub, 2001), p. 32.

¹⁵ Lasansky, D. Medina and McLaren, Brian (Eds.), *Architecture and tourism: perception, performance and place*, (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

¹⁶ Kvale, Steinar, translated by Torhell, Sven-Erik, *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun*, (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1997).

¹⁷ Thomsson 2002.

¹⁸ Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2000.

Theoretical sensitivity: advances in the methodology of grounded theory by Barney G. Glaser¹⁹, *The words between the spaces: buildings and language* by Thomas A. Markus and Deborah Cameron²⁰, *The invention of the historical monument* by Françoise Choay²¹, and *The modern cult of monuments: its character and its origin* by Alois Riegl²².

While working with the analysis I have used different articles and books dealing with the interpretation and mediation of heritage. Since their contributions are limited the individual books will not be mentioned here. However, they are included in the list of sources and literature at the end of the study.

To gain information about Aljafería and its history I have used mostly two books: *Medieval castles of Spain* by Luis Montreal y Tejada²³ and *The Aljafería of Zaragoza: a historical, artistic, and literary guide* by Manuel Expósito Sebastián, José Luis Pano Gracia and Maria Isabel Sepúlveda Sauras²⁴.

OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Since many of my readers are unfamiliar with Aljafería, the analysis will be preceded by a historic and visual overview.

The analysis is divided into four chapters, arranged in such a way that the reader step by step receives more information about the discourse order of Aljafería. In the first chapter I identify the discourses that dwell in the building's discourse order. The second chapter is dedicated to a presentation of the discourses that influence or constrain Aljafería and in the third I discuss conflicts between some of the discourses. In the analysis' fourth chapter I present ideas about how Aljafería can become more successful as a visitor attraction. These ideas draw upon or question the discourses that were described in earlier chapters, and offer solutions to conflicts.

After finalizing the analysis I present the conclusions that I have drawn from the study.

¹⁹ Glaser 1978.

²⁰ Markus, Thomas A. and Cameron, Deborah, *The words between the spaces: buildings and language*, (London: Routledge, 2002).

²¹ Choay 2001.

²² Riegl 1982 (1903).

²³ Montreal y Tejada, Luis, *Medieval castles of Spain*, (Cologne: Könemann, 1999).

²⁴ Expósito Sebastián, Manuel, Pano Gracia, José Luis and Sepúlveda Sauras, M.^a Isabel, *The Aljafería of Zaragoza: a historical, artistic, and literary guide*, fifth edition, (Zaragoza: Cortes de Aragón, 1999).

BACKGROUND

Before I examine the discourse order of Aljafería I want to provide the reader with some basic knowledge about the palace and its history. The first part of this chapter contains a historic orientation to the castle and the second part includes a guided description of the Aljafería of today. After finishing the chapter the reader will have gained an overview of what the heritage attraction has to offer, historically and visually.

A HISTORICAL PREVIEW

ALJAFERÍA: A MOORISH PLEASURE PALACE

The Islamic Palace of the Aljafería was built during the time when Saraqusta, today's Zaragoza, was ruled by *Moors*.²⁵ The building's first patron was called *Abu Yafar Ahmad al-Muqtadir bi-llab*.²⁶ He was the second king of the Muslim Banu-Hud dynasty that ruled the *taifa* of Saraqusta.²⁷ The name Aljafería is the result of a phonetic and linguistic evolution of a part of the very large and complicated name of its first patron. The palace did not, however, receive the name Aljafería until the 15th century. During the time of Abu Yafar it was referred to as *Palace of Joy*.²⁸

The palace was built outside the roman walls, to the west of the city, close to the Ebro river. The castle was not used for warfare, but was built for recreation.²⁹ It was nonetheless properly fortified. The square complex was enclosed by a high wall that had sixteen small projecting towers. Furthermore, the northern wall incorporated a large rectangular tower, which already stood on the site. This tower is believed to date from the Cordoban caliphate in the 9th or 10th century.³⁰

Within the walls there was a beautiful palace, of which we can still see some arched spaces around a courtyard, a small mosque, and a big hall.

ALJAFERÍA BECOMES A CHRISTIAN ROYAL PALACE

Saraqusta had been under seven months of siege, when Alfonso I, the Battler, conquered it in 1118. From that moment Aljafería became a royal palace of the Christian kings of Aragón.³¹

²⁵ *Moors* were Muslims living in the Iberian Peninsula, Maghreb, and Africa during medieval times.

²⁶ Abu Yafar ruled between 1046/7 and 1081/2.

²⁷ Moorish Spain was for a long time ruled by the Cordoban caliphate. In the beginning of the 11th century the caliphate was divided into taifa kingdoms. See Montreal y Tejada 1999, p. 61.

²⁸ Expósito Sebastián, Pano Gracia and Sepúlveda Sauras 1999, p. 33.

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 19 and 33.

³⁰ Montreal y Tejada, p. 60.

³¹ Ibid., p. 61. The castle was only one of several temporary residences for the king and his travelling court.

Having new patrons of course meant changes and refurbishments for the castle. Some of these changes are not left today, since later patrons have made their own additional changes. Many alterations can be attributed to Pedro IV el Ceremonioso, who ruled between 1336 and 1387. He is believed to have built the *Chapel of St Martín* and the *Chapel of St Jorge*, and a couple of rooms in the so called *Mudejar palace*.³² A couple of rooms with Mudejar³³ wood ceilings are left for us to admire, as well as the Chapel of St Martín.

LOS REYES CATHÓLICOS: FERNANDO & ISABEL

In order to unite two great kingdoms, Fernando of Aragón and Isabel of Castile got married in 1469. The two of them are usually known under the Spanish name *los Reyes Cathólicos*, signifying the Catholic Monarchs.³⁴ As patrons they made many alterations to Aljafería during the late 15th century. Between 1488 and 1495 they built a complete second floor over the northern wing of the Islamic complex.³⁵ The rooms in this wing have in many parts been preserved, especially their ceilings. The *Noble Staircase*, the *Upper Passage*, the *Throne Room* and four other small rooms are elements dating from the period of los Reyes Cathólicos.

THE TRIBUNAL OF THE HOLY OFFICE OF THE INQUISITION

In the year of 1486 the *Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition* was installed at Aljafería. The rectangular tower in the northern wall henceforth became the prison of the Inquisition. The Inquisition remained at Aljafería until 1706.³⁶ Interestingly the rectangular tower continued to be used as a prison, also after this date.

FORTIFYING ALJAFERÍA

After a riot in 1591, a fortification project was initiated for Aljafería. This project was designed by the Italian engineer Tiburcio Spanochi. The project was based on modern style defensive systems. A rampart walk, with crenellated walls and four bulwarks in the corners, was built around the complex. Furthermore a 20 meter deep moat with sloping walls was added to prevent

³² Expósito Sebastián, Pano Gracia and Sepúlveda Sauras 1999, p. 59.

³³ Mudejar is a name for a Muslim living in one of the medieval Christian kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula. Mudejares were important for the economy, since many of them were craftsmen and architects, and they made a very large contribution to art and architecture in Aragón. This architecture and art received the name of their makers; *Mudejar*. Mudejar architecture can be found all over Zaragoza, and in more or less every town or village in Aragón. The Mudejar period of Aragón reaches from 1096 to the 1520s. The alterations to Aljafería during the kings of Aragón were all made by Mudejares. Even after the excommunication of the Moors in 1492 los Reyes Cathólicos continued to use Mudejar craftsmen.

³⁴ Expósito Sebastián, Pano Gracia and Sepúlveda Sauras 1999, p. 73. Fernando and Isabel had a great importance in the history of Spain and are remembered as the patrons of Christopher Columbus, but also as the ones who excommunicated the Moors and the Jews and united the kingdom of Granada under the Crown of Castile.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 73.

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 26, 95 and 97.

intruders. The only part remaining from this period is the moat, which was re-excavated in 1982. The modern visitor can still discern some original fragments in the moat wall.³⁷

MILITARY REGIMENT

From the 18th century and onwards to the second half of the 20th century the palace was used as a military regiment. During the reign of Carlos III, in the last third of the 18th century, the palace experienced a lot of changes in its appearance. Barrack blocks were constructed around a large parade ground, *el Patio de Armas*, and the entire facade of the palace was altered.³⁸ The semicircular towers disappeared, but the rectangular tower still made part of the complex. In conclusion, the palace lost its appearance as a castle and now had a strictly military function.

During the Peninsular War³⁹, Aljafería became part of Zaragoza's system of defence and suffered from many attacks. After the French had withdrawn from Spain the building experienced some changes and the bulwarks were demolished.⁴⁰ The western wall, large parts of the southern wall and *el Patio de Armas*, remain from the time Aljafería was used as regiment.

In 1862 Aljafería was no longer a part of the Spanish Royal Estates, but passed into the hands of the Ministry of War. Projects of construction were carried out by various military engineers, and it was during this time the castle received its neo-Gothic towers in its corners, two of which still stand today.⁴¹

SAVING THE HERITAGE - RESTORING ALJAFERÍA

When the Ministry of War took over the ownership of Aljafería, the Zaragoza Monuments Commission feared for the artistic remains of the *Muslim palace*. Fragments like capitals, arches and plasterwork were sent to the Provincial Museum of Zaragoza and the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid.⁴² Some of Aljafería's finest pieces of artwork then left the castle. Many of the fragments sent to the Zaragoza Provincial Museum can today be found at Aljafería, but none of the parts sent to Madrid have been returned.

After being declared a *National Monument of Historical and Artistic Interest* in 1931, restorations started in 1947. The restorations were made under the supervision of the architect Francisco Iñiguez Almech. When he died in 1982, his collaborator Àngel Peropadre Muniesa took over the

³⁷ Expósito Sebastián, Pano Gracia and Sepúlveda Sauras 1999, pp. 99-101.

³⁸ Ibid, pp. 101-102.

³⁹ The Peninsular War is the famous war against the troops of Napoleon, depicted in the paintings of Goya. It took place between 1808 and 1814.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 103.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 105.

⁴² Ibid, pp. 105-106.

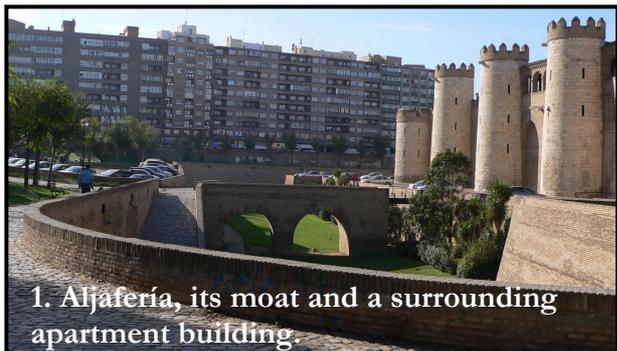
supervision of the restorations.⁴³ The building we see today is to a great extent the reconstruction, made in the 20th century by Iñiguez Almech.⁴⁴

LAS CORTES

Today Aljafería is the permanent seat of the provincial parliament of Aragón. In 1986 the construction, that enabled the Parliament to take its residence inside the palace, began. Luis Franco Lahoz and Mariano Pemán Gavín were the architects in charge of the construction. The inauguration took place in 1987, and on the 6th of July the first plenary session took place.⁴⁵ Extension works of the Official Seat of Las Cortes de Aragón were carried out between 1993 and 1995. Today the Parliament and its officials occupy the complex's west and south wings, and parts of the north western wing.

A VISUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ALJAFERÍA OF TODAY⁴⁶

THE SURROUNDINGS AND THE EXTERIOR OF THE PALACE



1. Aljafería, its moat and a surrounding apartment building

Today you find the palace of Aljafería as an unexpected oasis in a part of town⁴⁷ where there isn't really much else for the visitor to see. Apart from the park that surrounds the palace, apartment blocks and busy traffic dominate the scenery. The palace is situated quite a bit from the other historic visitor

attractions of Zaragoza, such as the cathedrals *el Pilar* and *la Seo*. This peripheral location can be explained by the fact that the palace once was situated outside the city walls.

Visitors enter the grounds of the castle through a small gate, and almost immediately stumble on the ticket shop, where they are obliged to buy their tickets. Then they walk past a small parking area, before crossing a gateway stretched across the moat that surrounds the castle. The moat, which actually never was filled with water, is today an integrated part of the park that surrounds the castle. The spaces between the castle and the walls of the moat are utilized as parking areas by the people who work at Aljafería.

⁴³ Expósito Sebastián, Pano Gracia and Sepúlveda Sauras 1999, p. 113.

⁴⁴ The castle we see today is heavily reconstructed and contains elements from the building's different historical periods. For the reconstructions of the Aljafería Iñiguez Almech used the original bases that were still standing, archaeological remains and some of the works made by Tiburcio Spanochi in 1593.

⁴⁵ Expósito Sebastián, Pano Gracia and Sepúlveda Sauras 1999, pp. 113-117.

⁴⁶ While giving the visual description I have provided the reader with a couple of photographs, depicting some of the castles most significant elements. All photographs were taken by the author of this thesis during the field study:

2006-10-19 — 2006-11-07.

⁴⁷ The Aljafería is situated close to the districts *La Almozara* and *Las Delicias*.

Visitors walking towards the entrance of the castle are welcomed by its eastern façade. It gives a very medieval appearance even though this monumental form is the result of a reconstruction dating from the 20th century. A chain of six crenellated towers dominate this façade, and parts of the wall, reinforced with pointed arches, support a gallery of rounded arches. The gallery continues around the north eastern corner, and stops when facing a tall rectangular crenellated tower that projects out of the wall. The tower is known as *el Torre del Trovador*.

The entrance gate of the building, which has the form of a horseshoe arch, is asymmetrically situated between the second and third tower from the north. Prior to entering the castle visitors must walk through a metal detector and their belongings must be scanned. Before turning my attention to the spaces inside the visitor attraction, I will take a brief stop at the remaining parts of the exterior.

While taking the turn around the castle the visitor meets up for a surprise. The southern and the western walls, and parts of the northern wall are not medieval in their appearance and do not quite fit into the romantic picture of a castle. Most parts of the walls simply consist of an earthen yellow brick wall, elaborated with regularly placed pilasters and windows with white frames. These façades give quite a stern impression, reminding the visitor of the time when the building was used for military purposes. When visitors have taken half a turn around the castle they will be able to see the two neo-Gothic towers, with their pointed windows and crowning battlements, in the North western and South western corners. These towers may be the only really monumental contribution to the western and southern parts of the castle.

THE INTERIOR OF THE PALACE

Turning my attention to the interior parts of the castle, I concentrate on the historical spaces open for visitors. The parts of the palace are described more or less in the same order as they are visited.

When visitors have passed the security control they enter into a square shaped courtyard called *el Patio de St Martín*. Just to the left upon entering, the visitor can observe some alabaster fragments, originating from the entrance of the Muslim palace. On the left side of the courtyard they find the quite modern looking quarters of the provincial parliament, and to the right they encounter the Chapel of St Martín. The chapel has suffered many alterations since the 14th century. Only a few fragments of the original decoration⁴⁸ remain. Today it is quite hard to get an overview of the interior of the chapel since a modern screen wall has been installed inside. The pointed arches of the exterior chapel walls reveal some traces of wall paintings, and the entrance offer a beautifully decorated Mudejar frame and tympanum. One pointed arch reach beyond the

⁴⁸ Expósito Sebastián, Pano Gracia and Sepúlveda Sauras 1999, p. 60.

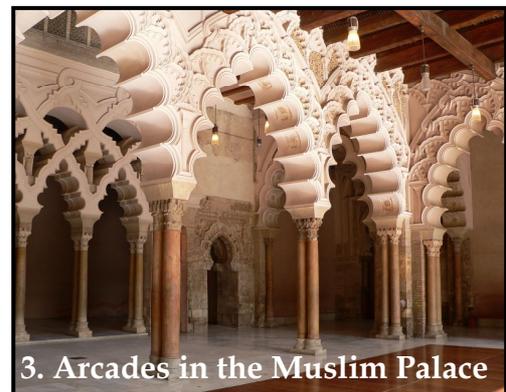
body of the chapel, and through it visitors can observe the southern wall of el Torre del Trovador.

Looking straight forward, while entering, the visitor is confronted with a wall belonging to the *Palace of Los Reyes Católicos* and a part of a completely reconstructed wall belonging to the Muslim palace. Crossing the courtyard visitors continue through an opening in the wall. Inside the passage, visitors who feel like buying a book or a souvenir can turn right to visit the gift shop.

Carrying on through the passage visitors enter into the remains of the Muslim Palace. A beautiful open garden, with a planned system of grooves and a deep pool, lay in the centre. This garden or courtyard, today known as *el Patio de la Santa Isabel*, is surrounded by arcades, dating from different periods of the palace's history. Especially noteworthy are the Muslim arches to the south of the courtyard, using a *multilobed* and *mixtilinear* style.⁴⁹ Heading north, or right just after walking out of the passage, visitors find the rest of the Muslim palace. Also here they come across some remarkable arcades using both



mixtilinear and multilobulate intersected arches. These beautiful arcades enclose two open spaces in the centre. The ceiling, covering one of them, was added during the time of los Reyes Católicos. The other arched space, only in part covered with a ceiling, has an air shaft that opens up to the sky above. In this room visitors can spot some fragments of wall painting dating from the Christian period.



East of these two open spaces there is a very well preserved mosque. Visitors can look at it through a beautifully decorated archway. Inside they see a richly decorated and painted vaulted octagonal space of small dimensions. The eyes of the beholder are drawn to a niche in the wall, a so called *mibrab*, facing towards Mecca. Turning the eyes upwards the visitor can see an upper gallery supported by intersected lobed arches. Light is flowing into the mosque through two windows facing towards el Patio de St Martín.



⁴⁹ Multilobed and mixtilinear refer to two different kinds of Muslim arches. Both kinds can be seen in picture nr. 3.

Visitors can then move on to the last room of the Muslim Palace, situated north of the two open spaces mentioned above. It is a large room richly decorated with plasterwork. The visitors enter either through a couple of intersected mixtilinear arches, or through one of the two decorated portals, placed on each side of the arcade. While inside, they see a decorated frieze just under the ceiling. In some parts of the south section the frieze transforms into an open gallery. In each one of the further ends of the room they can admire a portal decorated with plaster. This large room goes under three different names; *la sala del trono*, *el salon dorado*, and *la sala de mármol*. In English it is usually called the throne room or the hall of marbles.

Visitors can walk back through the open spaces enclosed by the arcades, towards el Patio de Santa Isabel, and cross over to the south side of the patio. From this side they observe the garden in its full splendour, and when they turn their eyes slightly upwards to the floors added by los Reyes Cathólicos, they distinguish an upper gallery decorated with spiral shafted columns. On the west side of the patio, behind an arcade, they encounter a wall with a number of plaster window frames, belonging to the hall of the Noble Staircase of los Reyes Cathólicos.

Walking past these windows visitors arrive at an opening in the wall. They enter, while ascending three small steps, and see the large Noble staircase on the left and a narrow rectangular room to the right, just after passing a hardly noticeable narrow and modern staircase leading upwards. Straight ahead they can see the courtyard called el Patio de Armas, through a moveable wall of glass. The visit then continues into a rectangular room that is used to exhibit some original architectural fragments from the Muslim Palace and some photos depicting restorations works and excavations at the palace. Walking out of this room visitors enter into the parts of the building known as the Palace of Pedro IV, containing a couple of rooms, on different levels, grouped around the northern parts of the Muslim Palace. In these rooms they can contemplate some carved and partly painted Mudejar ceilings, called *alfarjes*.⁵⁰ The first room has a more to offer than the rest. Visitors will there find a deep well dating from the time when the Torre del Trovador was the one thing standing on site. The exterior walls of the tower are built into the room and a small passage way leads from the tower into the well.



5. Alfarje ceiling

Walking one floor up and passing a big room in the *Palace of Pedro IV*, visitors find themselves on the third floor in el Torre del Trovador. Pedro IV used it as a library, and in later years it was used as a prison. The ceilings in this vaulted room still offer some wall paintings from

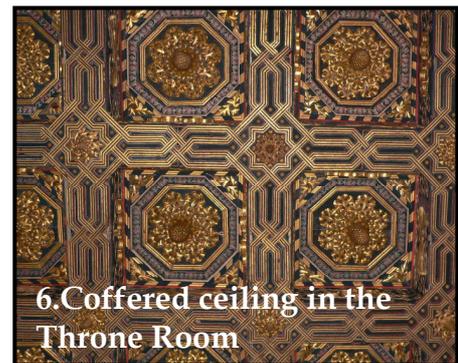
⁵⁰ The paintings were added during the 15th century.

the time of Pedro IV, and on parts of the walls visitors can distinguish inscriptions, carvings and painted letters made by prisoners during different times of the palace's history.

Walking back to the room from which the visitors came and turning their eyes toward the ceiling, just above the entrance to the tower, they see some hardly distinguishable fragments of Christian wall painting. After visiting this room, there still remain two additional rooms attributed to Pedro IV. Arriving to the last one, visitors who have done their homework would probably get a little bit confused when they look at the ceiling. The ceiling is not an alfarje, but originates from the time of los Reyes Cathólicos. It was moved from another room to this small chamber when the vault of the Mosque was restored. The ceiling is made of wood and carries the emblems of los Reyes Cathólicos.

Now the visitors enter into the Palace of los Reyes Cathólicos. Just as in the Palace of Pedro IV, the most spectacular to see are the wooden ceilings. They first descend some stairs and enter into a small room called *la sala de Deliberaciones*. The ceiling differs in technique from the ceiling mentioned above, but the emblems are the same.

From this room visitors enter into a large rectangular room known as *the Throne room*. The spectacular thing to observe here is the coffered, richly decorated and painted wood ceiling. Also here the emblems of Isabel of Castille and Fernando of Aragón are repeated. Below the ceiling there is an open gallery, and just under it there is a golden frieze

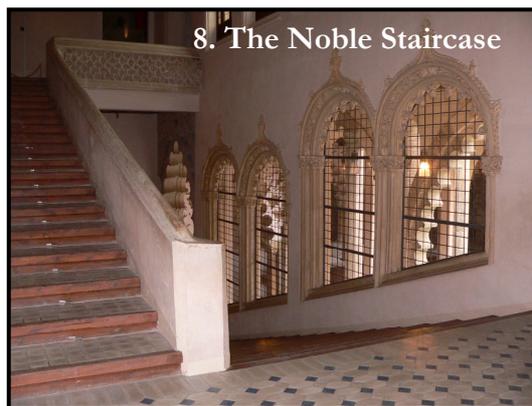
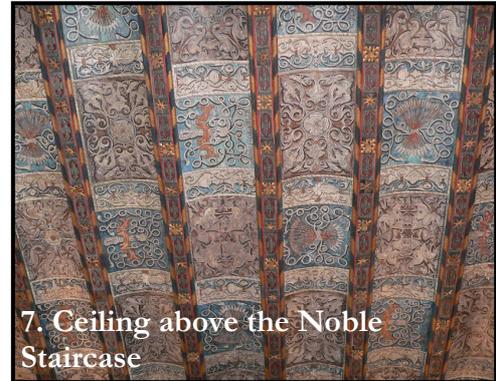


6. Coffered ceiling in the Throne Room

with decorations and inscriptions that go around the whole room. The walls of the Throne room are plain, just like in the rooms in the rest of the palace, but portals and windows are surrounded by plaster decorations. In one corner of the room, traces of the original floor can be admired. Visitors who closely study the rest of the reconstructed floor may be able to detect that the pattern of the floor is a geometrical reflection of the ceiling.

On the north side of the Throne room there is a small room called *la Sala de Santa Isabel*. Walking out from the eastern corner of the Throne room, the visit continues with two rooms recognized as *las Salas de los Pasos Perdidos*, in English referred to as the *Pacing rooms*. Each of the three above mentioned rooms is decorated with a unique wood ceiling, each of which repeats the emblems of Isabel and Fernando. La Sala de Santa Isabel doesn't have anything else to offer besides its ceiling, but in one of the Pacing rooms parts of the original floor can be contemplated, and in the other Pacing room parts of the plaster decoration of a door frame is preserved.

After visiting the Pacing rooms, only little of the Palace of los Reyes Cathólicos remains. Visitors enter a narrow passage, which actually is the same gallery they saw from the Patio de Santa Isabel. In this passage they find the main door to the Throne room, decorated with two lions holding the coat of arms of los Reyes Cathólicos, and a couple of windows that make sure some light enters the room. If visitors turn their eyes towards the ceiling they only detect some reconstructed traces of the original paintings. This type of ceiling they also find in the hall of the Noble Staircase. Arriving at the end of the passage visitors find themselves at the top of the grand staircase. It consists of two wide flights, with low and wide steps. The ceiling is very different from the ones seen in the Throne Room, the Pacing Rooms, la Sala de Santa Isabel and la Sala de Deliberaciones. However, much of the iconography is nonetheless the same. Visitors also find this same type of ceiling just under the Noble staircase, in some of the spaces surrounding el Patio de Santa Isabel, and in the gallery



belonging to the exterior façade. The ceiling above the Noble Staircase is the only one completely restored. Walking down the noble stairs, almost feeling like kings themselves, visitors have ended their visit. They once again walk past the beautiful Patio de Santa Isabel, cross el Patio of St Martín, and walk through the security control and take their leave of the castle.

THE DISCOURSES OF ALJAFERÍA: ITS FUNCTIONS

One of the subordinate objectives of this thesis is to describe what the discourse order of Aljafería looks like. An examination of the interview results showed that many different discourses are drawn upon when Aljafería is being discussed. In order to make sense of this multitude of discourses, I have chosen to consider only the present day functions of Aljafería as the discourses dwelling inside the building's discourse order. Nonetheless, these discourses also belong to discourse orders existing outside Aljafería and therefore include elements from sister discourses, dwelling in these exterior discursive fields.

A building's function can be put in relation to the *use value* identified by Alois Riegl in *The modern cult of monuments: its character and its origin*. The use value is that which impede a building from becoming a ruin. A practical use requires constant maintenance if the users are not to endanger their life or health.⁵¹

On the basis of information gained through interviews, observations and informal conversations I have been able to identify a number of functions in the discourse order of Aljafería. In this chapter I will present them one by one and explain why they have been pointed out and how they differ from each other. The identified functions are the following:

- VISITOR ATTRACTION
- LAS CORTES, PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT
- EXHIBITION HALL
- MUSEUM
- LOCATION FOR CULTURAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES
- HISTORICAL MONUMENT

VISITOR ATTRACTION

Aljafería is open to the public six days a week and guided tours are given five or six times each day, depending on season. Only the "historic parts" are open for visitors, since large parts of the palace are used by Las Cortes and its officials. There are historic spaces that are not available for visitors, since access is very complicated. This is quite common for visitor attractions since they must consider the safety of the visitors, as well as be accessible to people with disabilities.⁵²

⁵¹ Riegl 1982 (1903), p. 34.

⁵² There are spaces in el Torre del Trovador that can't be accessed with an elevator, and the tower contains a couple of narrow passages.

A lot of different people visit Aljafería: tourists from different places in Spain and from abroad, locals who want to spend some of their spare time at the palace, school classes, organised buss tours, associations, people on conferences, politicians visiting Las Cortes etcetera. During the summer Aljafería receives the highest amount of its visitors, and the number increases every year. In the year of 2005 the palace had almost 149 000 visitors.⁵³

Visits to the palace are important to the use value. People come to see the Muslim courtyard and arcades, the ceilings in the Christian palaces, *el Torre del Trovador* etc. In this thesis I am especially interested in Aljafería as a visitor attraction and it is the mediation related to this particular function or discourse that I try to develop. The visitor attraction function has a lot in common with the building's functions as exhibition hall, museum and as a location for cultural events. All of these discourses are directed towards the public and attract visitors. They often exist side by side and melt into an entity, which can make it hard to separate them from each other. However, as a visitor attraction Aljafería differs from the three above mentioned functions on one important point; when you pay a visit to a visitor attraction you come to see the building itself, and not exhibitions or cultural events held inside the palace walls.

The visitor attraction discourse can be put in relation with the economic value discussed by Choay. She states that this value was born together with the cultural industry. In this industry a historical monument is no longer seen just as a heritage or a beautiful object, but also as a source of income in an expanding tourism market.⁵⁴

LAS CORTES, PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

During five days a week Aljafería is the scene for the political and administrative work of about 100 officials working at the provincial parliament, Las Cortes de Aragón. Every other Thursday and some Friday mornings the provincial assembly, with its 67 members of parliament, meet inside the building.

Las Cortes can be seen as one of the building's more traditional use values; the walls of the building offer a shelter for people who work inside the building and for the political activities that are held there. This function is completely independent of the other identified functions. Even if the building had not been a visitor attraction, a historical monument, a museum, or a location for exhibitions and cultural events the activities held at the Parliament would have been more or less the same as they are today. On the other hand, the other functions are dependent on Las Cortes, since it is the Parliament that makes the decisions and provides money for the building, and since

⁵³ I received these numbers from Servicio Gestor, the administrative department that manages the visitor attraction.

⁵⁴ Choay 2001, pp. 143-144.

it is one of its administrative departments, *Servicio Gestor*, that organizes visits to the palace as well as exhibitions and cultural program.⁵⁵

EXHIBITION HALL

Aljafería does not only attract visitors for the building's sake, but also because it offers a continuous program of exhibitions. Normally it is only the Chapel of St Martin that is used as an exhibition hall, displaying mostly modern and Avante garde artists. However, the rooms in the historical parts of Aljafería have been used to house big exhibitions on at least two different occasions. While I was doing my field study there was a big exhibition about Fernando el Cathólico on display. The exhibition was on display for three months, and when it finished the castle went back to its normal state.

Although *Servicio Gestor* organizes the contemporary exhibition program, all major decisions and planning have to go through the body that manages the Parliament, *la Mesa de Las Cortes*. Sometimes exhibitions are made in collaboration with other institutions, for example the one about Fernando el Cathólico. At other times exhibitions, organized solely by Las Cortes, have been brought to other places. Since Las Cortes and its officials are the ones in charge of the exhibition hall this function is dependent on the parliament function.

MUSEUM

In the palace there is a narrow hall, referred to as *Sala de maquinas*, situated just after the Muslim courtyard. In this hall some capitals, and a few other original decorative fragments from the Muslim palace, are put on display in showcases. These artefacts forms the palace's permanent museum exhibition. It is quite small, but it is nonetheless a museum exhibition. Besides the fragments, the permanent exhibition includes approximately 20 photographs depicting the excavations at Aljafería and its succeeding reconstruction work. The museum exhibition can be seen as a part of the visitor attraction since it helps to interpret it and give better understanding to its architecture. It is nonetheless a separate function, since Aljafería still would be a visitor attraction if these objects were moved to another building.

Aljafería is also a Museum institution that keeps a collection of about 400 paintings in its possession. The *Servicio Gestor* manages the lending of these pieces to other institutions and organisations.

⁵⁵ *Servicio Gestor* organizes and reserve visits, attends phone calls, writes material for the contemporary exhibitions etcetera. Its work is mainly administrative. The actual guiding of the palace is managed by a special company outside of the palace, but although the guides work for another company they have their working place at the Aljafería.

SCENE FOR CULTURAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The palace is and has been used to host different cultural activities, such as concerts, presentations of books and conversations with important cultural personages.⁵⁶ This also gives the building a use value. The historical spaces of the castle provide a beautiful frame to these events, but there is no direct connection between the content of the events and the theme of the palace. Just like the visitor attraction, the exhibition hall and the museum, this function is dependent on Las Cortes at the point that it is Servicio Gestor that organizes the activities, and Las Cortes that offers the budget.

HISTORICAL MONUMENT

An examination of transcribed interviews, informative material and a visit to the local tourist office revealed that the public attribute certain values and meanings to Aljafería. Some of these values are independent of the other functions of Aljafería since they would have been attributed to the palace even if Las Cortes had not been located there or even if Aljafería had not been open to the public.

It would be unwise to discard these values since they are important in public discourse and opinion. The sum of attributed values can be considered as a function, which is not physical like the other functions, but cognitive. This function can be called *the historical monument*, which is the unintentional monument discussed by Alois Riegl. In his article he discerned the use value as one of several values attributed to the historical monument. However, he did not see the historical monument as a function or a use value for a building, as I suggest we do. Buildings can have many different uses and I propose we consider the sum of immaterial values as a kind of function, just as offering shelter is one. Riegl saw the use value as subordinate to the historic monument, while I place the use value in a superior position. Every building needs a function if it is to avoid becoming a ruin, but not every building is a historical monument.

The essence of an historic monument is the values attributed to it. These values give the building great importance and it will consequently be in the interest of the public to conserve the building and give it an additional physical function. Due to the attraction of the values attributed to historic monuments, many of them become visitor attractions. The visitor attraction discourse is consequently dependent on the historic monument discourse, but not the other way around.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ The cultural event referred to as *conversaciones* is held in the modern parts of the palace.

⁵⁷ However, there are architectural visitor attractions that are not historical monuments and it is not impossible to think that such buildings might receive a historical monument function in the future. The architecture in Disneyland may be an example.

According to Riegl the values of an unintentional monument is defined by the people living in the present.⁵⁸ The words of David Uzzell, professor in psychology, demonstrate quite clearly how values attributed to the past are conditioned by today's society;

Despite sincere attempts at authenticity, neither those who provide interpretations of the past nor those who receive them can avoid loading them with their own twentieth century perspectives. We cannot recreate the past or provide a 'truly authentic experience', since visitors' perceptions of the past will be influenced by their present-day attitudes and values.⁵⁹

The discourse of the historical monument is consequently time limited, continually changing as new articulations of discourse are being uttered and as the society we live in changes. The amount of immaterial values that could be given to a building is probably unlimited and they can consequently not be seen as elements existing only inside this discourse, but also in other discourses and discourse orders. The historical monument function is a discourse with a very high degree of interdiscursiveness, meaning that it draws upon a large amount of different discourses.

⁵⁸ Riegl 1982 (1903), p. 23.

⁵⁹ Uzzell, David, "Heritage interpretation in Britain four decades after Tilden", in Harrison, Richard (Ed.), *Manual of heritage management*, (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann in association with the Association of Independent Museums, 1994), p. 295.

THE DISCOURSES THAT SURROUND ALJAFERÍA

Now that the discourses (functions) that inhabit the discourse order of Aljafería have been mapped out it is time to present the surrounding discourses that influence or constrain it.

TOURISM & LEISURE DISCOURSE ORDER

Aljafería is again and again put in relation with a tourism discourse order. The building is repeatedly mentioned on a top three list of architectural attractions in Zaragoza.⁶⁰ All visitor attractions can be placed in a tourism discourse order and comparisons between one and the other are often done. Visitors to the palace repeatedly compared Aljafería with the famous Alhambra in Granada, and sometimes also with Moorish palaces in general.⁶¹ The comparisons with Alhambra gave a certain value to Aljafería. It seems like it received some of the positive values of the famous object it was being compared to.

Promotion is often mentioned together with tourism and it can consequently be seen as a discourse belonging to the tourism discourse order. To reach tourists a town, a place or a building must be promoted. The same rule applies for Aljafería. Some of the visitors and also several members of the staff mentioned that they did not think that the palace was promoted enough. It is a fact that most of the foreigners who visited the castle were not familiar with it, and that they did not know of its existence prior to their visit to the local tourist office.

It is not only on an international level that Aljafería is poorly known, but also nationally and regionally. An interviewed couple from Barcelona did not know of its existence prior to their visit and some young people I met in Zaragoza were surprised to hear that such a building existed in their town.⁶² The fact that Aljafería does not have its own website⁶³ is one example of the insufficient promotion of the palace.

Every visitor attraction has a general image that circulates in public touristic discourse. Many different discourses surround Aljafería and different values are being attributed to it, but what does its general touristic image look like? When I visited the local tourist office the woman who attended me did not give a lot of information about Aljafería. She simply said it was a very

⁶⁰ Visitors and personnel at the Aljafería as well as the tourist office mentioned the same trio: Aljafería, el Pilar and la Seo.

⁶¹ One visitor said that her guide book mentioned Aljafería as the best Moorish palace in Spain outside Andalucía. She had been to Andalucía, so she liked the fact that she could compare the Aljafería with the Muslim architecture there.

⁶² The palace poor reputation was confirmed also during a visit to Madrid. Even people having once visited Zaragoza were ignorant of the palace.

⁶³ The Aljafería as a visitor attraction receives only a small part of the website of Las Cortes. When searching for the Aljafería on a search engine like Google other websites discussing the palace were primarily found. The official web site of Las Cortes (www.cortesaragon.es) turned up as number 9 on a Google search carried out on the 11th of November 2006.

beautiful Muslim palace that dated from the 11th century and that it was worth a visit. The informants that had gone to the tourist office also told me the same story. According to one of the Spanish visitors the fact that the palace is an Arabic heritage also predominates in books from Aragón. People who have some knowledge about the palace tend to know that it is Muslim, but few are familiar with the palace of Los Reyes Cathólicos or with the Palace of Pedro IV. It is also quite unknown that Las Cortes has its seat inside the palace, even amongst people living in Zaragoza.⁶⁴

In the introduction of the book *Experiencescapes: tourism, culture and economy* Tom O'Dell problematize the definition of tourism. He widens the perspective including spheres belonging to daily life, stating that it can be hard to distinguish what is tourism and what is not. He erases the distinction between tourism and leisure.⁶⁵ We can consequently identify a joined tourism and leisure discourse order. In this discourse order we also find museums, exhibition halls and cultural events, together with their visitors/tourists. These discourses all include elements of a mediation discourse. However each and every one of them uses mediation in different ways. Since my interest lies mostly with Aljafería as a visitor attraction I will only discuss the mediation of this function and the function that can be seen as integrated with it, the museum exhibition.

MEDIATION DISCOURSE

Visitors that come to Aljafería can choose to join a guided tour that takes approximately 50 minutes. The tour follows a chronological order, beginning with the Muslim spaces and ending with the Palace of Los Reyes Cathólicos. When no political activities are being held, the parliament assembly hall is also included in the guided tour. In the guided tour the guides give basic information about the different spaces of the palace, mentions and explains parts of its iconography and resumes some of its history. Since the history of the palace is very rich and the rooms to visit many in numbers a lot of information has to be excluded. There are no regulations on what the guides have to say and what they should exclude.⁶⁶

Some visitors prefer to see the palace without a tour guide. Such visits follow the same chronological route as the guided tour. The visitors⁶⁷ who enter the building without a guide can attain information through blue signposts that identify different spaces and provide a short explanation about them. The number of these signposts is limited and some spaces lack

⁶⁴ Few but some of the visitors mention the Parliament in the interviews.

⁶⁵ O'Dell, Tom, "Experiencescapes: blurring borders and testing connections", in *Experiencescapes: tourism, culture and economy*, (Copenhagen: Copenhagen business school, 2005), pp. 11-33.

⁶⁶ This results in great differences between the tours of different guides. The quality of the guided tours are nonetheless high, thanks to the knowledge and experience of the guides. During my discussions with visitors it became clear that the things being visited and accentuated vary between different tours. Each guide gives her own version of the palace.

⁶⁷ Since the signposts only provide information in Spanish the visitors referred to here are the ones speaking Spanish.

identification. In addition to the signposts there also exist three panels placed on table boxes. The three panels provide visitors with a schematic plan and a description of the three different palaces contained inside Aljafería: the Muslim palace, the Christian palace and the Modern palace.

In the first room of the Palace of Pedro IV, visitors can contemplate reproduced panels that visualise parts of the alfarje ceilings. They are supplemented by a small identification label. These reproductions are placed there with the objective of giving the visitor a better visual understanding of the ceilings.

A wooden model of the castle gives visitors a comprehension of the buildings' size and shape. Apart from the previously mentioned plans and this model, which is included in the permanent presentation of the castle, there are no photos, drawings or other pictures of the castle, that demonstrate how it looks today or what it has looked like during different periods.

In la Sala de maquinas the original Muslim fragments are put in showcases and visitors gain basic information about them by reading small identification labels⁶⁸ and contemplating reconstructed drawings that show where these objects had their original place. Also the photographs in this hall are identified by small labels. Besides this information, visitors can read an informative folder, available in Spanish, English, French, German and Italian.

CULTURAL INSTITUTION DISCOURSE ORDER

The director of the Servicio Gestor said that one of their objectives is to enrich visitors with culture while they visit Aljafería. Besides the actual building and its museum exhibition Servicio Gestor organise exhibitions and offer presentations of books and conversations with cultural personages. Aljafería is consequently a cultural institution of a sort. A wide range of institutions can be referred to as cultural institutions and different rules apply to different groups of institutions. I therefore suggest we see the whole group of cultural institutions as a discourse order. When Aljafería was discussed visitors and office personnel mentioned other museums and exhibitions frequently.⁶⁹ They saw Aljafería as a museum and expected things similar to other museums and other cultural institutions.

⁶⁸ Information is only provided in Spanish.

⁶⁹ Prado, Tate Modern, The Louvre, British Museum, museums in Zaragoza, and a group of exhibitions in different cathedrals in Castile, called *Las edades del hombre*, were mentioned.

POLITICAL DISCOURSE

The last two elections in Aragón have been preceded by big exhibitions held at Aljafería.⁷⁰ Considering that the provincial parliament is placed inside its walls it is not surprising that there might be political motives behind cultural activities that take place there. The building is evidently part of a political discourse, and it is being used as a political tool.

While doing my interviews it became clear that there is a strong regionalism, sometimes transforming into patriotism, in Aragón. People, at least the older generations, are proud of whom they are and that they come from Aragón. Factors of regionalism are in particular discernable in the objectives of Las Cortes. In a discussion with the director of Servicio Gestor it became clear that the visitors from Aragón are of special importance to Las Cortes, and that they found it important that the Parliament is presented to these visitors during guided tour. The director declared that they want to transmit what Las Cortes is, how it functions, and that Aljafería is a parliament and a place where laws are being written. He particularly mentioned that it is important that the visitors know that the Parliament, Las Cortes, represents the people of Aragón. He saw Aljafería as synonymous with the Parliament. The fact that the new logotype of Las Cortes is used also for the historic monument demonstrates how the parliament is trying to make Aljafería and Las Cortes into one entity.⁷¹ Another proof of this is that the building doesn't have its own official website, but is restricted to some spaces at the website of Las Cortes.

During medieval times the meetings that the kings held with the people of Aragón, was called Las Cortes. The fact that these meetings were held inside Aljafería gives Las Cortes of Aragón a historical connection to the building, and it strengthens its authority.

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE & ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY DISCOURSE

In *The modern cult of monuments: its character and its origin* Riegl identifies a historical value that can be attributed to historical monuments. As such the building is a testimony of human events or activities. Not only buildings can be given a historical value, but also objects and art.⁷² The historical value of Aljafería is important since people in Aragón see it as a central testimony to the

⁷⁰ I received this information from one of the guards. The director of the Servicio Gestor confirmed that there had been another big exhibition four years ago. The last - *Ferdinandus Rex Hispaniarum- principe del renacimiento* - had Fernando el Cathólico as a subject and the earlier one held in 2002 - *Aragón - el reino de la comunidad* - treated the history of Aragón.

⁷¹ In February or March 2006 the Parliament of Aragón changed logotype. Now the palace and the Parliament have the same logotype called *punto de recuentro*, which means *meeting place*. It contains a couple of open circles symbolising the openness in the Parliament. Earlier Aljafería had the Mudéjar star as its logotype, while the Parliament had the coat of arms of Aragón as its logotype.

⁷² Riegl, 1982 (1903), pp. 21-22.

province's past. Some of the visitors even went as far as to say that the building offers a summary of the complete history of Aragón.

The structure of meanings associated with the historical value is in fact a discourse, the historical discourse. Although Riegl didn't know it he was approaching a discourse analysis, and when he explained what the historical value implies he gave a very good description of the essentials of the historical discourse:

Everything that has been and is no longer we call historical, in accordance with the modern notion that what has been can never be again, and that everything that has been constitutes an irreplaceable and removable link in a chain of development. In other words: each successive step implies its predecessor and could not have happened as it did without that earlier step. The essence of every modern perception of history is the idea of development.⁷³

The informants repeatedly placed Aljafería in this historical discourse. The building's succeeding periods were pointed out and they were put in chronological relation to each other. Personnel and visitors accentuated the diversity offered by the building, historical as well as artistic. Many of the Spanish visitors who had been to Aljafería several times before stated that the palace is nice to visit, since visitors always discover something new that they did not notice before.

As a piece of architecture Aljafería belongs to architectural history. It is appreciated as an important contribution to the Moorish architecture of Spain, dating before the times of Alhambra. The informants compared it to other buildings and they placed the different architectural styles of the castle on an architectural time line. The historical discourse can consequently be put in close relation to an art history/architectural history discourse. Also the latter is characterized by ideas of development and the historical chain. But it is nonetheless a discourse in itself, including ideas about how the architecture has developed and which pieces are significant and which are not. Riegl wrote that the historical value and the art historical value require knowledge to be appreciated.⁷⁴ This knowledge is the result of the research of scholars in the past and the present. The historical and architectural history discourses are consequently related to an academic or scholar discourse. As a historical monument with historic and artistic value Aljafería take part in this discourse.

Some visitors gave special importance to visible changes, dating from different periods, in the appearance of Aljafería. These changes belong to a historical discourse and an architectural history discourse but they can also be put in relation to the *age value* of Riegl. Visible traces of age, decay, wear and tear are the basis of this value. In contrast to the historical value and the art

⁷³ Riegl, 1982 (1903), p. 21.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 1982 (1903), p. 33.

value, the age value doesn't require knowledge to be appreciated. It makes itself known to everybody and is universal.⁷⁵ The age value of Aljafería is not prominent since the palace is heavily reconstructed, but occasionally original fragments can be discerned. Visitors without enough knowledge might get confused contemplating the castle, since so little appears old.

The age value is closely related to the discourses that are discussed below, those of preservation and authenticity. A building with a prominent age value also has high authenticity value. However, all attempts to restore a building diminish its age value, resulting in a conflict between the age value and values of preservation.

PRESERVATION DISCOURSE & DISCOURSE OF AUTHENTICITY

The anthropologist Edward M. Bruner has stated that there are different ways to use the concept *authentic*. In his article "Abraham Lincoln as authentic reproduction: a critique of Postmodernism" he distinguishes between authenticity based on verisimilitude, genuineness, originality and authority.⁷⁶ Most of the visitors at Aljafería used the word authentic according to Bruner's third definition. They talked about what was original or false, and discussed authenticity in relation to the restoration of the palace. Some of them took interest in reasons to why certain things had been preserved until today's date and in how certain things had been destroyed during different times in the palace's past. The informants were here drawing upon discourses of authenticity as well as preservation. Both visitors and guides gave credit value to that which was authentic (original) and well preserved.

The fact that Aljafería in great part is a reconstruction caused some of the visitors to discuss the original Muslim arches that are exhibited at the Archaeological Museum in Madrid. These visitors and one member of the staff found it very sad that the fragments still are kept there and implored they should be returned.

Interestingly the preservation discourse seems to be underdeveloped in the mediation of Aljafería. One visitor said she did not really know where people got the idea that the building actually is a reconstruction.

As Bruner pointed out, different meanings are placed on the word authentic. Besides referring to things that are original, authenticity can also stand for something that gives an authentic feeling, i.e. something that create verisimilitude or that gives a feeling of genuineness. Visitors who already had visited the palace said they were fond of how one room had been clothed with tapestries and furniture during the exhibition of Fernando el Cathólico. They

⁷⁵ Riegl 1982 (1903), p. 31-32.

⁷⁶ Bruner, Edward M., "Abraham Lincoln as authentic reproduction: a critique of Postmodernism", in *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 96, No. 2, (American Anthropological Association, 1994), p. 401.

thought the tapestries and furniture made the palace become alive and that they gave an impression of what it really might have been like back then. Even visitors who had never visited the palace were particularly fond of this room.

PATRIMONIAL HERITAGE DISCOURSE & EDUCATION DISCOURSE

The word heritage was mentioned frequently by the informants while discussing Aljafería.⁷⁷ Heritage is a commonly used word, especially in relation to historical monuments, but what does it really mean? It is often mentioned with the verb inherit and then refers to something we have attained from earlier generations. In his book *The heritage crusade and the spoils of history* David Lowenthal writes that heritage is a celebration of the past, and that it is a past tailored for present day purposes.⁷⁸

The Society we live in decides which past is to be celebrated as heritage. Aljafería is seen as something valuable to the people of Aragón and they have given it a status as heritage. The fact that Aljafería encompasses more or less the complete history of Aragón makes it an important historic building for the locals. It is seen as an important part of their cultural identity and its *patrimonial value* is prominent. In fact, Aragón and its people were mentioned repeatedly by the informants, revealing a value of regionalism embedded in the heritage discourse. The patrimonial heritage discourse is closely connected with the building's function as a historical monument. As an important heritage asset with a patrimonial, historical and artistic value Aljafería becomes a historical monument.

Visitors and staff particularly mentioned the Mudejar heritage and seemed to be proud of it. While interviewing some visitors in a focus group the informants started to discuss the Moorish influence on Spanish culture. One woman said that they can not renounce it. Her contribution to the discussion seems to indicate that the Mudejar culture is appreciated but that people despite this fact really do not think of the Muslims as ancestors to Spanish culture.

Aljafería has an official status as a heritage asset, both at a national level and at an international level. In 1931 Aljafería was declared a national monument of artistic and historic interest and in 2001 it was declared a UNESCO world heritage site together with all Mudejar architecture in Aragón. The director of the Servicio Gestor emphasized that this information has to be transmitted to the visitor. In the Muslim palace there is a panel which demonstrates the World heritage status of the building, and on the big panel discussing the Modern palace the national monument status is confirmed. The building is also protected by law, in a way that the

⁷⁷ In Spanish the word *patrimonio* is used for the word heritage.

⁷⁸ Lowenthal, David, *The heritage crusade and the spoils of history*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1998), p. x.

elements of the building have to be conserved without any harm or alterations. Legislation sets the conditions for what can be done with the building.⁷⁹

Visitors belonging to the older generations living in Aragón often had a personal and sometimes nostalgic connection with the building. Some of them had relatives who had been stationed at the military regiment and others had played both outside and inside the palace as children. One visitor remembered when Aljafería received its new façade, and put that moment in relation with the fall of the dictatorship. To her the reconstructed Aljafería became a symbol of a New Spain.

The word *knowledge* was accentuated and mentioned many times by both staff and visitors. Several visitors mentioned that they visited Aljafería because they wanted to gain more knowledge about for example culture and buildings. One Spanish visitor especially pointed out that the castle is well suited for the purpose of informing visitors of the history, art and architecture of Aragón. Another visitor accentuated the need for people to know their history and art. Also the director of the Servicio Gestor found it important that visitors who come to Aljafería are informed that they are in contact with many centuries of architectural history. An educational discourse is thus closely connected to the heritage discourse. During the semesters Aljafería receives frequent visits by school classes. It is also shown to foreign politicians and businessmen for the purpose of teaching them a little bit of the Spanish culture and about the history of Aragón. By learning something about the history of Aragón they also learn something about the people living there. In other words, the educational discourse also has a political importance.

⁷⁹ If something is to be done with the building they have to ask permission at the *Comisión provincial de patrimonio*.

CONFLICTS (& RELATIONSHIPS) BETWEEN DISCOURSES

In this chapter I will discuss different conflicts that I have identified between the discourses (functions) in the discourse order of Aljafería. In the introduction I mentioned that a discourse analysis enables the scholar to bring that which is taken for granted to the surface. Doing that, structures of meaning can be criticized and change can eventually be obtained. Identifying conflicts between discourses is a powerful instrument in itself. By acknowledging conflicts a step towards change is taken. Some conflicts may not be solvable, setting limitations for the visitor attraction, while others can and must be solved for the visitor attraction to function properly.

CONFLICTS - ORGANISING ACTIVITIES & EXHIBITIONS

Both personnel and visitors looked positively on using the building as a scene for different events. One visitor thought that the palace offers marvellous spaces and suggested that there should always be something to do. However, some members of the staff asked themselves what the modern exhibitions held at the Chapel of St Martín had to do with a medieval castle like Aljafería, suggesting that the exhibitions were in conflict with the theme of the monument. But some informants didn't find this a problem at all. One member of the staff stated that she liked the exhibitions they had done in the Chapel of St Martín. She found them suitable in size, but was not fond of having an exhibition with a magnitude like the one about Fernando el Cathólico occupying the historical spaces. She preferred to see just the palace rather than an exhibition held in it. There were different opinions about this relationship. Some visitors liked to see the structure of the building, thinking exhibitions would ruin the gaze of the visitors, while others liked to be able to contemplate something additional to just the aesthetic and the architecture.

It might be good to have exhibitions, but some visitor's opinion was that not all rooms are suited for this. Since the walls belonging to the Palace of Pedro IV and the Palace of los Reyes Cathólicos are plain it might be a good idea to add some elements to these rooms. However, even the director of the Servicio Gestor admitted that the montages of the exhibition of Fernando el Cathólico had made it hard to see what the Upper passage in the Palace of los Reyes Cathólicos had to offer. Normally it is a *clean zone*, he said. One visitor also complained that the montages in the Throne room divided the room and therefore prevented visitors from getting an impression of its size and construction. Caution has to be taken in order to not let the exhibition take over and prevent visitors from contemplating the building.

CONFLICTS & RELATIONSHIPS - THE PARLIAMENT FUNCTION

REFUSING VISITORS

The majority of the members of staff thought that the relationship between Las Cortes and Aljafería was problematic. One informant even described Las Cortes as a *predator* in this unequal relationship. Visits to the palace are conditioned by the activities of Las Cortes. Sometimes visitors that have booked guided visits months in advance have to be annulled in the last minute if there is a special assembly in the Parliament. Moreover, when the palace is shown to politicians or other important people entire rooms are closed for normal visitors without notice. Political goals are considered more important than the needs of the visitors.

SECURITY

Since the provincial parliament is placed inside Aljafería great consideration is taken to maintain a high security level. The director of Servicio Gestor several times emphasized security as a factor of constraint. For security reasons the visitors couldn't go everywhere. Even I weren't allowed to go wherever I pleased without escort. Security can explain the closing down of the visitor attraction when assemblies are held, but I have reason to believe that the manager sometimes blamed security when in fact the only thing lacking was will. One of the members of staff did not think that security had to put up such big limitations for what could be done. The place is under surveillance by video cameras. If somebody leaves the historic areas two guards would appear immediately. The informant didn't think it has to be more complicated than that.

A NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND INDEPENDENCE

The cultural institution of Aljafería is administrated by officials, not by professionals in tourism, history or art history. This stands in conflict with how cultural institutions normally are managed. Also the fact that it is La Mesa de Las Cortes that provides the budget and makes all big decisions prevents Aljafería from developing freely as a visitor attraction.⁸⁰ The members of the staff repeatedly asked for more *independence* in part of the visitor attraction and less interference from Las Cortes. Some guides even said they would like the parliament to move out. This is unrealistic, but nonetheless illustrative of the problematic situation. It is hard to separate Las Cortes completely from the visitor attraction, since the building is housing the Parliament, and it will not move. And obviously you can not move the palace. However there is no harmony in the relationship between the visitor attraction discourse and the parliament discourse. Las Cortes is

⁸⁰ Servicio Gestor receives a budget of about 300 000 € a year. This money is to be spent on exhibitions, cultural program, visits to the palace, salaries to the guides, the gift shop etc. Exhibition programs and all other big decisions have to be presented to the body *La Mesa de as Las Cortes*, which manages the Parliament. Servicio Gestor suggests a program and Las Cortes provide the means.

given much more importance than the palace. The staff thought that Aljafería needed to be treated like other monuments, like for example Alhambra.

“WE ARE UNDERDEVELOPED AND THE ORGANISATION IS BAD”

The imbalance between the visitor attraction discourse and the parliament discourse results in many different problems. Several members of the staff thought that the planning and organisation of visits to Aljafería are unsatisfactory and that their way of working is heavily underdeveloped.⁸¹ Examples of how other museums work were mentioned along with different media for interpretation and mediation. Several of the informants belonging to the staff called for a need to modernize and change things. They thought the palace needed audiovisuals, audio guides, benches etc – “things they have at other museums”.

A lack of interest in innovation, development and real thought in relation to the visitor attraction was identified by the staff. One informant said that everything functions well in the aspect of them having many visitors, but she thought things could be done much better. Another informant thought there might not be an interest to give a service of interpretation of the monument, like for example specialized visits, something for children, or a centre where you could see more things and more content. She thought that they do what they have to do and nothing more and that they just work by the clock.

Observations and interviews repeatedly showed that Aljafería is poorly organized as a cultural institution and that it is run from the top without much consultation with or consideration to office staff, guides, guards and visitors. The guides are contracted by an external company, which manage all communication with the director of Servicio Gestor.

“IT IS NOT ALL BAD”

The relationship between Las Cortes and the building is not all bad. The director of Servicio Gestor and some members of the staff were of the opinion that the parliament function and the historical monument function enrich each other. Having the Parliament as a part of the guided visit enables visitor to learn something additional besides history. They also found it positive for Aljafería to have a representational function. They thought it makes the building a living historical monument.

Many members of the staff were aware of the fact that it is Las Cortes that provides the means to maintain the building and that it in great part was restored due to the fact that the Parliament was placed inside it.

⁸¹ Many members of staff supplicated a long time cultural program for the palace. Aside from a one year in advance planning for contemporary exhibits, there does not exist any strategic plan for exhibitions or visits to the palace. Visitor satisfaction is not evaluated and visitors are not asked to leave suggestions or complaints.

“THE BUILDING IS NOT SEEN AS A TOURISTIC MONUMENT”

Many members of the staff had the impression that Las Cortes did not really see Aljafería as an important touristic monument. Things that are taken into consideration at other visitor attractions and cultural institutions were discarded; there are lockers for backpacks and other belongings, there are not enough benches for the visitors to sit down on and contemplate the splendour of the architecture,⁸² they do not sell enough souvenirs in the gift shop, and few books in the gift shop are available in other languages than Spanish. Instead, there seemed to be a need to expose Las Cortes and “sell it” to visitors. In the gift shop legislative literature is available. Members of the staff consider this a problem, since such books have no place at a visitor attraction.

INSUFFICIENT MEDIATION

Almost all informants (the director excluded) identified faults in the mediation of the palace. They only have scheduled tours in other languages than Spanish during the summer, despite there being tourists also during the rest of the year. Also, labels and signpost exist only in Spanish.⁸³ This makes it hard for foreign visitors to comprehend what they are contemplating. Many of them said they would have liked more knowledge.

However, visitors and personnel did not even find the written Spanish information sufficient. The information provided on blue signposts and table panels were brief and signposts and panels were of limited numbers. The guides said that there is an unwillingness to put up signposts in the monument. “They put up very little signing, because people do not read it anyway and it affects the aesthetic.”

El Torre del Trovador lacks a signpost. This caused visitors, who were about to leave the castle, to think they had missed it. The guides thought that they probably had made the visit to the tower, but since it lacks an identification signpost they didn’t identify it as such. It can not be emphasized enough that visitors need to get information about what they contemplate. Without that knowledge the importance of the rooms are taken away and the historical value is lost. Unfortunately the aesthetic and the architecture of the palace are often left to speak for themselves.

⁸² In some pinacotecas they have square shaped benches. One guide thought they could have such benches in the rooms of Pedro IV and the Throne room. It would make it easier for visitors to contemplate the ceilings.

⁸³ The guides and the office personnel mostly identified a need for written information in English, French and Italian, but sometimes also in German.

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO CHANGE THE DISCOURSE ORDER OF ALJAFERÍA

Making Aljafería more successful as a visitor attraction requires hard work. The changes and suggestions presented below are to be considered as articulations of discourse. Some articulations draw upon the discourses that have been presented in the earlier chapters, while others offer alterations to these discourses. Yet some articulations question a discourse and offer an alternative reality or propose a solution to a conflict. Members of the staff and visitors alike have offered many contributions.

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES

For Aljafería to become a more successful visitor attraction, great changes have to be made concerning organisation and management. The visitor attraction and cultural institution of Aljafería needs its own management independent in relation to Las Cortes. It needs to have complete freedom when making decisions about cultural program and budget. I propose that the Servicio Gestor contracts a person with experience in the museum or tourism industry. All decisions must be prepared by such a person if the visitor attraction is to develop and become more successful. The Servicio Gestor also has to work towards a more open environment, where staff with a visitor contact is allowed to discuss ideas directly with the management. Furthermore, it would be easier if the guides worked directly under the Servicio Gestor, and not for an external company, since the guided tour should be looked upon as an integrated part in the interpretation and the organisation of the historical monument.

BECOME MORE LIKE OTHER CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

ANOTHER ENTRANCE

The informants frequently mentioned other museums and other cultural institutions during the interviews. The staff wanted Aljafería to work in a similar way as the institutions they referred to. Implementing the organisational changes presented above would of course be a big step towards change, but a great deal also has to do with a change of mentality. Aljafería must be seen as the tourist attraction it is. Las Cortes has to pay attention to the tourist and find solutions to sudden close downs of the castle at times when there are special assemblies at the Parliament. One member of the staff proposed separate entrances for the visitor attraction and the Parliament. Today Las Cortes is physically separated from the visitor attraction on all levels except this one. By making another entrance the two functions would be further separated and consideration

could be taken to the normal visitor, who today is heavily neglected. Separate entrances would also provide a possible solution to security problems.

THINGS NORMALLY PROVIDED AT VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

In the chapter discussing conflicts between discourses I mentioned that there are certain things, today lacking at Aljafería that visitors expect from museums or visitor attractions. I will in the subsequent text discuss three things that actually would be possible to introduce at the palace.

Souvenirs play an important part in the Tourism discourse. In the forward of the book *Architecture and tourism: perception, performance and place* Davydd J. Greenwood writes that souvenirs can be “[...] understood as an essential element in the sustainability of touristic practices.” According to him the souvenirs, brought home by visitors, are proofs of the existence of the tourist attraction and of the tourist’s visit to it.⁸⁴ The souvenir is in all something that legitimize the trip. It is consequently a matter of self preservation to offer enough souvenirs in the gift shop of Aljafería. Spreading posters, puzzles, calendars, postcards and souvenirs depicting Aljafería would help to make it better known. It would cost some money at the start, but visitors would buy them, and they would be good promotion.

Many members of the staff were quite irritated about the fact that there were no lockers at the visitor attraction. If Las Cortes, because of security reasons, doesn’t want to have them inside the building they could easily be put up in connection with the ticket shop.

Since cafeterías have become quite usual at other museums and visitor attractions, visitors start to expect possibilities to sit down and eat. For Aljafería it would imply great changes and investment, but it would indeed be possible to organize. The Chapel of St Martín could be a potential location.

The changes enumerated above are all related to a change of mentality. When acknowledging Aljafería as a visitor attraction, it becomes very evident that there are certain elements belonging to the tourism discourse order that are missing.

IMPROVING DIFFERENT FORMS OF MEDIATION

Besides changing the organisation and basic mentality at Aljafería the mediation of the palace also needs to improve on different points. If the Servicio Gestor wants to have happy and contented visitors, who get something out of their visit, they have to manage the experiences of the visitors and not leave the interpretation completely up to the visitors themselves. Signs, signposts, labels, guided tours, audiovisuals and audio guides are some useful tools for managing the attention of

⁸⁴ Greenwood, Davydd J., “Foreword”, in Lasansky, D. Medina and McLaren, Brian (Eds.), *Architecture and tourism: perception, performance and place*, (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p xvii.

visitors. Since visitors are different they need to be offered alternatives and the information needs to be directed towards people in different ages and towards people with different frames of reference. In the subsequent discussion I will discuss how the different forms of mediation at Aljafería can be improved.

FOREIGNERS, AUDIO GUIDES & SIGNPOSTS

First of all the mediation directed to foreigners needs to be improved. During the off season scheduled guided tours are only given in Spanish. Guided tours in other languages require a booking. Many of the informants mention that audio guides could be an alternative. With audio guides visitors can watch and listen at the same time and they make the tour as fast or slow as they please. Audio guides are an alternative to signposts, having the advantage they don't affect the aesthetic. But on the other hand, in his article "From museum to morgue? Electronic guides in Roman bath", the sociologist Tony Walter states that electronic guides (audio guides) prevent visitors from discussing things amongst each other and that they have made the museums as quiet as morgues. He writes as follows:

Visitors became absorbed in their electronic guides, interacting less with their companions and less with the objects on display. They participated less than before in the optional human-guided tours. The electronic guides may succeed in communicating more information to more people, but the tourist experience becomes more private, less sociable and less friendly to children.⁸⁵

Caution must therefore be taken with audio guides, and they can not be considered to give the whole solution. They must rather be seen as an alternative to guided tours offered in foreign languages. Even if audio guides are provided, the basic signing and information needs to be available in other languages than Spanish. The personnel suggested especially English, French, Italian and German. Also folders need to be available in more languages than today. One guide mentioned that they receive an increasing number of visitors from the east of Europe and that they therefore should have folders available in Eastern European languages. She also suggested Arabic, since the castle in fact is of Muslim origin.

VISITORS WHO GO WITHOUT THE GUIDED TOUR

One member of the staff thought that a visitor, with no previous knowledge of the castle, who goes without the guided tour must be quite lost because of lack of available information. If this

⁸⁵ Walter, Tony, "From museum to morgue? Electronic guides in roman Bath", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 17, No. 4,, (Elsevier Science Ltd, 1996), pp. 241-245.

kind of visitor really is to enjoy the visit, enough information must be put at his/her disposal. Unfortunately the informants did not think that this was the case at Aljafería. Information directed towards foreigners as well as nationals was considered insufficient.

There are several possible alternatives how to improve the mediation towards visitors who do not follow the guided tour. Audio guides offer one alternative and panels offer another. Panels would be bigger than the small blue signposts and therefore easier to detect. Due to their size they can include more information than is available today. One guide thought such panels should contain an identification of the room, explain its relation to and situation in the palace, and tell something about its basic content. Many of the guides suggested that these panels not only should provide information in Spanish, but also in other languages like French and English.

Putting up panels would unfortunately require a kind of screen wall, since no wholes can be made in the walls. The guides identified an unwillingness to put up signposts and panels, since they are thought to have a negative effect on the aesthetic. In some rooms panels and screen walls might distract the gaze of the beholder, but I don't think they would ruin the aesthetic in rooms where the walls are plain. In those cases the negative effects on the aesthetic is just a pretext to avoid putting up more information.

Laminated leaflets placed in boxes in every room are an alternative to additional signposts and panels. Such boxes would not take up a lot of space and would affect the aesthetic even less than the panels. The leaflets should be available in different languages and they should offer more information than a panel or a signpost.

Some of the staff called for a need to modernize things. Modernization costs money and since the budget of Servicio Gestor is quite low it can only be implemented bit by bit. Moreover, I would like to emphasise that much can be done with plain and simple creativity. Modern media is not always the solution to problems.

When talking about how the visitor attraction could be modernized the staff frequently mentioned audio visuals. They thought this media could give the visitor an idea about how the castle was restored and what it looked like before and after the reconstruction. They also thought audio visuals could be used in order to show how scientists think the castle looked like during different times of its history, or to recreate historic events. Many different things can be done with this media, but I think it will take a while before Las Cortes is ready to take a big step and investigate the amount of money that is required. They also have to consider the risk that such modern media take over, putting less attention on the building and the actual experience it offers.

GUIDED TOURS

Many visitors appreciated the guided tour and said that it gave a good orientation to the castle especially for those who did not have a lot of previous knowledge about it. This orientating guided tour is consequently something they should provide in the future. Today there is no control of the content of the guided tour. This results in great differences between different guided tours, depending on who is guiding you through the castle. Unfortunately some parts of the castle are not shown in all visits. A group of Erasmus students had not seen the mosque during their visit. The reason for this was probably that the palace was very crowded at the time, and that the mosque therefore was occupied with other visitors. Even so, I think that there should be a minimum of content in the guided tours. There are some elements that the visitors can not miss, like the mosque, the well and el Torre del Trovador, and there are some aspects of the palace history that must be included. There are also certain details and things visitors tend to find interesting or laugh at. To demonstrate what kind of things I refer to I have made a small list containing four interesting details that caught the special attention of both me and some of the visitors.

- **The Gordian knot is one of the emblems of Los Reyes Cathólicos.** This knot had a symbolic significance during the time of Alexander the Great. It was said that he who could untie the knot would conquer the whole of Asia. Alexander took his sword and cut it through the knot, saying that the end justifies the means; *Tanta Monta*. This saying soon became the slogan of Fernando and Isabel, and their politics repeatedly showed that they lived as they preached. The words *Tanta Monta*, as well as representations of the Gordian knot, are repeated in the ceiling decorations of their palace.
- **How *el Torre del Trovador* got its name.** During some guided tours the guides told the story about how the rectangular tower got its name. Giuseppe Verdi based his opera *Il Trovatore* (1853) on the piece *El Trovador* (1836), a true Romeo and Juliette story, by Antonio García Gutiérrez. El Torre del Trovador, meaning the Troubadour's tower, got its name because the main character in the story, Manrico de Biscaya - the troubadour - was held prisoner there.
- **The Noble Staircase.** The Noble Staircase has a special appearance. The steps are very low and wide. This made it possible to walk down the staircase, head facing forward with a straight back, looking like a king. It also enabled ladies to walk elegantly although they had long gowns. The staircase was constructed this way exactly because it had a representational purpose. Most often visitors do the "noble walk" down the staircase after having listened to this curiosity.
- **The floor in the Throne room in the Palace of los Reyes Cathólicos is a geometrical reflection of the ceiling.** Such a detail makes the visitors look around and scrutinize the art work more closely.

Details like the ones enumerated above should be taken into consideration while developing the content of the guided tours. The content of the guided tours should all in all be systematically studied in order to provide a manuscript presenting a minimum of factors and perspectives that need to be transmitted to visitors.

Since the building has so much to offer a lot of interesting information has to be left out in the basic tour. In view of this fact it would be sad not to offer thematic tours once in a while. Spaces excluded during normal visits could for example be included and further aspects of the palace's history, iconography and construction could be integrated. Since many people living in Aragón already have visited the castle thematic tours could be a good way of bringing them back again. The variety of the building offers a unique potential for such specialized tours and I think it could be something that they specialized in at Aljafería. I also think some guided tours could involve physical activity: walking around the moat observing the exterior of the castle, climbing up the narrow staircases in el Torre del Trovador, or walking up to the small crenellated towers to look at the view.

During the interviews the informants left many different suggestions on what subjects to stress in the mediation of Aljafería. These suggestions, together with an analysis of transcribed interviews and observations have given me ideas about a couple of themes that could be stressed in specialized guided tours.

- **Visits to the whole *Torre del Trovador*.** Such a visit should not just include the third floor but also the rest of the tower where visitors normally are not allowed. The guide could take a small group of visitors to see all the inscriptions, carvings and painted letters made by the prisoners of the past. They could also go down to the first floor and walk through the passage that connects the tower to the well.⁸⁶
- **Las Cortes.** A visit about the Parliament, its function and its political work could include information about the reconstructions that made it possible for Las Cortes to move in to the palace.
- **The palace's military history**
- **Architectural and art historical guided tours.** Such tours could include a walk around the exterior in the moat. Attention could be put on artistic details and the building's construction.
- **The Arabic period** and the importance, meaning and function the building had during the Banu-Hud Dynasty.
- **Nocturnal visits to the castle**

⁸⁶ El Torre del Trovador has great potential, but in the current moment it is not used to its fullest. Only the third floor is included in the visit, although the rest floors contain interesting architecture and curious carvings in the walls, made by prisoners in the past. Stories about the prisoners that were being held there would make good contributions to a guided tour.

Members of the working staff, both office personnel and guides, proposed that guided tours and activities also should be specialized for different groups.⁸⁷ The language and the content of the guided tour should be adapted to the visitor type. Didactic tours and activities for children were particularly mentioned.⁸⁸

THE PERMANENT MUSEUM EXHIBITION

Since the permanent exhibition is quite small it could benefit from an enlargement. A good permanent exhibition helps to interpret the building. It would provide more information about the building's context, general history and architecture. Such exhibitions should draw upon a scholar and academic discourse. The university as well as the National museum of archaeology could be consulted for knowledge while developing the permanent exhibition. The architects that restored the palace could also provide material and facts.

One visitor found the drawings in Sala de máquinas, that explained where the original pieces once belonged, very pedagogical. He thought an object in a showcase has a pedagogical function, since you can look at the piece more closely. If enough comparative material is available visitors could be able to see how for example capitals have changed gradually. Cultural institutions like the Archaeological Museum in Madrid, where the arcades that had been moved from Aljafería are exhibited, provide a good example of how a permanent exhibition could be planned. Placing the arches together with pieces from Cordoba and Granada they become part of a greater context. The pieces really fit into the context of the museum in Madrid, but one would ask oneself if it is not more fair to return the pieces to their original location. If Aljafería is to fight for the return of those arches I think they have to be able to contextualize and explain the architectural fragments in a similar way. Although the Servicio Gestor could not attain capitals from Cordoba and Granada reproductions or copies might be able to give the same effect.

The photos that today are exhibited in Sala de máquinas were considered as unrepresentative and ugly by one informant. Some informants thought they should provide a permanent exhibition about the restoration. Many members of the staff thought such an exhibition should include a better photographic reportage, depicting photos of the restoration as well as photos of Aljafería before the restorations, from the time it was a regiment. One informant also thought explanations and drawings on panels should be used to interpret the restoration.

⁸⁷ At this moment there is only one kind of guided tour, but the guides try to adapt a little. One member of staff proposed specialized visits for families.

⁸⁸ Educational games and tours with more didactic elements were discussed. One guide suggested they could sit down with the children and have them draw something Muslim and Jew, for example the vegetal motives in the decoration of the Moorish palace.

In order for visitors to attain a better visual understanding of the palace the permanent exhibition could also contain recreated pictures of what scientists believe Aljafería looked like during different periods. Drawings, paintings, engravings and other representations depicting the Aljafería of earlier periods could be included as well.⁸⁹

In the exhibition on Fernando el Cathólico I found one object that definitely should be included in the permanent exhibition. During the restorations of the ceiling in the Throne room reconstruction workers found a Koran hidden between the beams of the ceiling. This Koran is thought to have been a hidden signature of the Muslim craftsman.

OTHER ACTIVITIES & FUNCTIONS

The functions as exhibition hall, museum and location for cultural events can be used in order to support Aljafería as a visitor attraction, but they can also be used in the opposite manner. If too much attention is put on those functions the building might disappear in the multitude of distractions. In short, the management needs to be careful so that activities and exhibitions do not take over. It is important that Aljafería does not limit itself to become a stage for other functions.

Only imagination sets the limits for what activities might be held at Aljafería. Since a lot of people from Aragón return to the castle once in a while, it may be important that it offers something more than just the building. One of the guides in particular mentioned workshops, where people could come and discuss historical subjects.

I think it is easier for activities and exhibitions to support Aljafería as a visitor attraction (where it is visited because of its values as a historical monument) if they are put in relation with the theme of the building. In such a case they would help to interpret the building and mediate it towards a larger group of the public. Putting up the Verdi opera *Il Trovatore* would probably bring some new faces to Aljafería, and it would be an event with connection to the monument. The tower would be interpreted in the opera and the environment of the tower would give credit value to the opera.

Exhibitions with a connection to the history of the building, or to its different periods would probably be more effective than the contemporary ones, since the building then not only would be a frame but also a part of the exhibitions. While organising exhibitions attention must be taken not to ruin the gaze of those visitors who want to contemplate the construction of the building. Montages that divide up rooms should be avoided. The management also has to consider the fact that all rooms might not be suited for exhibitions.

⁸⁹ There exists for example a drawing of the castle by the Italian engineer Spanochi and the exhibition of Fernando el Cathólico contained one interesting engraving depicting the Throne room in the Palace of los Reyes Cathólicos.

WHAT TO FOCUS ON

I have now discussed how different forms of mediation can be improved at Aljafería and what activities or exhibitions might be suitable to organize. Having done this, I turn my attention to the subject matter which I think should be emphasized in the mediation no matter what mediators are employed.

HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL DIVERSITY

Aljafería is a mixture of elements from different periods and of different architectural styles. Books, the tourist office and informative material most often mention that Aljafería as is a Muslim medieval castle. Considering this, it is not surprising that visitors are amazed by the architectural and historical diversity offered at the site. A visit to Aljafería is like a travel through time. The journey starts in the 10th century and ends in the 21st. Historical, architectural and artistic diversity is something that makes Aljafería special and it is something that should be mediated to visitors and potential visitors alike.

PRESERVATION & AUTHENTICITY

Many visitors showed an interest in discourses of preservation and authenticity. One informant was particularly fond of the mosque because it was used as a kitchen during the time Aljafería was a regiment. The fire place in the kitchen made the plaster brown, but at the same time it became harder. The fire therefore helped to preserve the plaster work. Such stories fascinate visitors and provide an interesting addition to the guided tour.

However one visitor said she did not quite know how people get the impression that much of the palace is a reconstruction. Guided tours and signposts contain very little information about what is original and what is not. I think that while mediating the castle, through permanent exhibitions, panels, signposts and other mediators the preservation discourse and the discourse of authenticity should be included. It is more fair to the visitor if all cards are put on the table. If they later find out something was not original they might feel deceived.

Many visitors mentioned that they would have liked some of the rooms in the palace to be decorated with furniture and tapestries, like the Kings study in the exhibition about Fernando el Cathólico. They thought furnished spaces might give an impression of how it was in the past. Some informants used the term *clothed* to describe the furnished castle, in contrast to its normal appearance, which they described as *naked*. One staff member suggested they could buy, rent or borrow some furniture from the period to achieve this feeling of authenticity, since visitors tend to appreciate it. A female visitor said she would have liked some pieces of music, not very loud, in the background. The visitors urged for the authentic (the genuine) even if it would be a lie.

I think some rooms could be furnished but not all, since furniture, like exhibitions and activities, might take over the show making the architecture disappear in the background.

COMPARISONS

Thomas A. Marcus and Deborah Cameron, have written about language, buildings and discourse in their book *The words between the spaces: buildings and language*. They state that “[..] a building’s value can be asserted or denied through a favourable or unfavourable comparison with some other building that is already established canonically as valuable.”⁹⁰ In accordance with this, comparisons with the Alhambra have proven to be advantageous for Aljafería.⁹¹ I suggest that comparisons with other buildings should be included in the mediation of the palace. Besides giving credit value to Aljafería it would put the building in a greater context. Comparing Aljafería with other castles of its period would give the visitors a deeper understanding of the building and its importance. A comparison with the Alhambra is interesting for many different reasons. It can for example give the visitor greater artistic comprehension of the Arabic architecture. The relation between water and architecture is a suitable subject in a comparison between Aljafería and Alhambra.⁹²

Besides giving Aljafería higher credit value and placing it in a wider context, comparisons would have a positive effect on the credibility of the mediation at Aljafería. According to Marcus and Cameron expert knowledge is often displayed comparing a building under discussion with other buildings. The judge thereby demonstrates his or her knowledge about canonical traditions in architecture.⁹³

HERITAGE & PATRIMONY

The mediation of a building should not just focus on glorious presentations of the past but also look at contemporary ideas of and views on the past. The interview results showed that the castle plays an important part in a patrimonial heritage discourse. However the heritage discourse is not always allowed to take part in the mediation of the castle. An inclusion of this discourse would bring the mediation to a higher level, since it involves a critical discussion about the use and meaning of heritage in contemporary society. I think that the values attributed to the building by people in the province could be included as a part of the interpretive program of the building, especially in temporary exhibits. Temporary exhibitions could include true stories about real

⁹⁰ Markus and Cameron 2002, p. 105.

⁹¹ In one interview the palace was compared to the Alcázar of Segovia. The informants said that the ceilings at the Alcázar were nothing compared to the ones at Aljafería. The ceilings of the Alcázar do actually have a lot of characteristics in common with the ceilings in the palace of los Reyes Cathólicos.

⁹² At the Aljafería there used to be a pool that reflected the arches in the Muslim palace, just as there is at the Alhambra.

⁹³ Markus and Cameron 2002, p. 104.

people from Aragón, and illustrate their memories and ideas of the building.⁹⁴ Then the building really would tell the history of the people of Aragón.

An interesting subject related to heritage is how the Mudejar heritage has influenced the culture in Spain and Aragón, and how people in Aragón regard this Mudejar heritage. A group of visitors that I interviewed came to discuss their Arabic heritage. One lady accentuated that the Arabs are not that different from them. Arabic people have been in Spain since the 8th century, which makes it hard to say that they are strange and unfamiliar to the Spanish people. “It is our history and we can’t renounce it.”

The situation of Arabs and Muslims in Spanish history could be explored in temporary exhibitions. How have their role and treatment changed? In 1492 both Jews and Muslims were excommunicated from Spain. This brings forward a question of ethnicity and cultural diversity. What does the society look like today in Aragón? I think it is important to actualize the history of the building in relation to today’s society.

Many informants put the patrimonial discourse in relation with education. Words like children and school classes were uttered repeatedly. It seems the educational discourse should put special focus on the meaning of Aljafería as a heritage asset in today’s society. One informant said that the information directed to children should focus on simple things in the palace history, the meaning of the parliament, etc. She thought things like the fact that the Moors had been there and that they are their heirs should be transmitted.

⁹⁴ This could be done with the help of artists or even schools.

CONCLUSIONS

When I started my field study I knew I would use interviews and observations for data collecting, and I intended to use discourse analysis when examining the interviews, but I did not know I would use the discourse analysis as a practical tool for the production of development ideas. The research design has emerged while working with the empirical material.

The elements of the research design I created were in many part described in the thesis' introductory chapter. All methods and theories described there, except the grounded method, are part of the research design. Still, ideas of emergence, originating from Grounded Theory, must be present when the researcher collects data. Every place has its own limits and ideas of development need to emerge from the data as well as from the empirical observations.

When generating ideas of mediation for a heritage visitor attraction one needs to consider the fact that every place has its own conditions. Aljafería is the residence of the Parliament of Aragón and this makes it different to many other visitor attractions. Since the Parliament must maintain a high security control, visitors are prevented from wandering about as they please on the grounds of the monument.

Today there is disharmony in the relationship between Aljafería as a parliament and as a visitor attraction. The visitor attraction always comes second hand and this results in deficient mediation. However, I think that many of the problems caused by conflicts between these two discourses can be solved. I have identified four basic faults that need to be corrected if Aljafería is to be able to develop as a visitor attraction. Firstly, the visitor attraction is run by officials with no professional knowledge in the field. Aljafería must be managed by people with proper experience in art history, history, museology and tourism. Secondly, the organisation of the visitor attraction needs more independence in relation to Las Cortes. It has to be free to decide over its own budget and cultural program. Thirdly, the environment of the organisation needs to be more open. The members of staff with visitor contact have many ideas about how to develop the visitor attraction, and these ideas must be taken advantage of. Fourthly, the mentality at Aljafería has to change. Aljafería is a touristic monument and a cultural institution, not only a historic building housing a parliament.

Correcting these faults is a prerequisite for further development. With a good organised independent management run by people with expert knowledge, Aljafería has every chance of becoming a successful visitor attraction.

Ideas about how Aljafería should be mediated were drawn upon already existent discourses related to visitor attractions, tourism and cultural institutions. Informants expected signing in

different languages and proper information about the things they contemplated. There are in reality no obstacles that make it impossible to introduce more signpost, panels, electronic guides or audio visuals at Aljafería. If they were provided Aljafería would function more like other visitor attractions, and its status as a visitor attraction would increase. However, modern media like audio visuals are expensive and have the disadvantage their new technology might steal the show and turn the attention from the actual building. As a first step, I think the management of Aljafería should focus on signposts, panels, and folders provided in different languages. Although electronic guides are considered to reduce interaction among visitors, they offer a good alternative to guided tours in foreign languages during the off season. Since there are different types of visitors with different needs a wide range of options have to be available. Visitors must for example be able to choose if they want to do the tour with or without a guide, and such a choice should not affect the quality of the information provided.

A visit is not only mediated through oral or written information, but also through experiences and impressions. Many of the visitors wanted to get a flavour of the past, and it can therefore be a good idea to put old furniture and tapestries in some rooms, and maybe even add some music and incense.

Marcus and Cameron write that texts can shape our experiences, interpretations and judgements of buildings.⁹⁵ It is therefore important that the content of the mediation is thought through. When deciding what is to be mediated certain attention must be taken to the individuality of the building. Aljafería is most often depicted and promoted as a medieval Muslim palace. I don't think this representation do justice to the castle. It is beautiful castle and it is originally Muslim, but it is also so much more. It is a Christian palace, it has been a prison and a tribunal for the Inquisition, a military regiment and today it is the permanent seat of the provincial parliament. It offers diversity in every possible way, historic as well as artistic. Only by marketing and mediating Aljafería as a castle of many faces and stories, it will be able to make itself the name it deserves.

Besides emphasizing the diversity, special attention should be put on a heritage discourse, on discourses of preservation and authenticity, and on presenting comparisons between Aljafería and other buildings.

Comparisons between Aljafería and Alhambra gave a certain status to Aljafería and comparisons with similar buildings in general placed the building in a greater context. I therefore think comparisons with Alhambra and other Moorish architecture should be included in the mediation of the building.

⁹⁵ Markus and Cameron 2000, p. 41.

Through a focus on patrimony and heritage, visitors would become aware of the importance the building has to people living in today's society, and of the values they attribute to the building. Aljafería is considered as a heritage not only for nationals and locals, but also for the whole world, since it has been declared a UNESCO world heritage site. It is considered to tell the whole history of the people of Aragón, past as well as present.

Aljafería is a castle encompassing many different periods and this has been taken into consideration by the architects that reconstructed the palace during the second half of the 20th century. Questions of preservation and authenticity have a natural place in the discourse order of Aljafería. Considering the fact that also visitors found these questions interesting indicates that they successfully could be included in the mediation of the palace. Information about what is an original or a copy should be provided, as well as reasons to why certain things have been preserved or destroyed.

The basic guided tour should continue more or less as it is, but there should be a control of its basic content. Visitors find certain things especially interesting, and certain information is mandatory if visitors are to understand the palace. Thematic guided tours are something they could specialize in at Aljafería since the palace offers such a multitude of different stories and spaces. I also think they could offer a more developed permanent exhibition and once in a while organize temporary exhibitions and activities that are connected with the theme of the building. They do not have to organize all this by themselves, but can cooperate with other cultural institutions, universities and local schools. However caution has to be taken so that exhibitions and activities do not take over the show.

While developing ideas of mediation for this particular building I saw that some of the ideas not only could apply for the mediation of Aljafería, but also for historic buildings in general. There must be a balance between different functions of a historical monument that is used as a visitor attraction. Exhibitions and activities should not be allowed to take over. The actual building must always be the main attraction. This is easier to accomplish if exhibitions and activities that are held in the building have a connection with the theme of the historic monument. The building then becomes a part of the exhibition or the activity, and the exhibition or the activity contributes to the interpretation of the building.

Now that I have presented ideas about how Aljafería could become more successful as a visitor attraction, I would like to finish the study with some reflections on the research design I have created.

In my research design the scholar uses discourse analysis as a creative tool for generating ideas of development. The approach includes a systematic delineation of the discourse order of

an individual building. Such an approach enables the researcher to systematically map out how the building is used, what factors have impact on its role as a visitor attraction, what conflicts exist, and what values people attribute to the building. From all this the researcher can develop ideas about what needs to be altered, how the building could be mediated and which of its qualities should be emphasized. Since the research design focuses on the uniqueness in every building, the scholar shouldn't take too much consideration to how other visitor attractions have been mediated.

I found interviews, conversations, and observations very fruitful to provide information about a building's importance, its organisation, its problems and its potentials. If I were to develop the mediation of another visitor attraction I would probably do more or less as I did while working with this thesis. I think the research design works, and I think it is general enough to be applicable to different buildings. However, if I were to do it again, having the experience of this study, the procedure would be more systematic and less stumbling. If I was to change something, I would let the ideas of emergence lead the way even more than I did in this study. When I started my field study questions directed to different informants were already formulated. However, I soon realized I couldn't ask some of them. Too specific questions might impede the individuality of the building to show its face.

It is important that the researcher stays in the field for a while and almost becomes a part of the visitor attraction during the collection of data. The development ideas are the result of a social interaction between the scholar and different actors at the building, as well as between the scholar and the building itself. All development ideas are consequently rooted in the organisation or the individuality of the building. This might be an advantage when trying to implement them.

It is better if the person generating the development ideas comes from outside the building complex. Such a person can bring new pure views and is not restricted by ties to superiors. It makes it easier to take advantage of ideas offered by different people working at the visitor attraction, not minding if it is the boss, a guard or a guide that has come up with a suggestion. The external researcher will be able to look with distance upon the object of the study and bring out its unique qualities.

SOURCES & LITERATURE

SOURCES

INTERVIEWS (ANONYMOUS)

Director of Servicio Gestor: Cortes de Aragón, Zaragoza, 2006-10-19 and 2007-11-06.

Visitors at Aljafería, Zaragoza, 2006-10-21 — 2006-11-03.

Office personnel at Servicio Gestor: Cortes de Aragón, Zaragoza, 2006-11-06 — 2006-11-07.

Guides at Aljafería, Zaragoza, 2006- 10- 28 — 2006-11-07.

DISGUISED INTERVIEW (ANONYMOUS)

Attendant at the Tourist office at Plaza de Pilar, Zaragoza, 2006- 10-25

PRINTED FOLDERS AND MAPS

Caballú Albiac, Miguel, translated by West, J., *Spain: Zaragoza*, (Turespaña - Secretariade Estado de Comercio y Turismo - Ministerio de Economía, EGRAF, S.A., D.L.: M.408452000).

Aljafería, Cortes de Aragón, (Estudio Camaleón, Tipolinea, D.L.: Z-2.110-06).

Aljafería, (Cortes de Aragón, Octavio & Felez, SA, D.L: Z-1126/98).

Zaragoza: cuatro culturas, un estilo de vida- bus turístico nocturno, (Zaragoza Turismo 2006).

Zaragoza: cuatro culturas, un estilo de vida- bus turístico, informadores en la calle, (Zaragoza Turismo 2006).

Plano de Zaragoza, (Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza).

WEB SITE

The official website of Las Cortes de Aragón: <http://www.cortesaragon.es/>, consulted on 2006-11-11.

LITERATURE

Bruner, Edward M., “Abraham Lincoln as authentic reproduction: a critique of Postmodernism”, in *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 96, No. 2, (American Anthropological Association, 1994), pp. 397-415.

Choay, Françoise, *The invention of the historic monument*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2001)

Expósito Sebastián, Manuel, Pano Gracia, José Luis and Selúlveda Sauras, M.^a Isabel, *The Aljafería of Zaragoza: a historical, artistic, and literary guide*, fifth edition, (Zaragoza: Cortes de Aragón, 1999).

Glaser, Barney G., *Theoretical sensitivity: advances in the methodology of grounded theory*, Mill Valley, (California: Sociology Press, 1978).

- Greenwood, Davydd J., "Foreword", in Lasansky, D. Medina and McLaren, Brian (Eds.), *Architecture and tourism: perception, performance and place*, (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p xv-xx.
- Harrison, Richard (ed), *Manual of heritage management*, (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann in association with the Association of Independent Museums, 1994).
- Kvale, Steinar, translated by Torhell, Sven-Erik, *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun*, (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1997).
- Lasansky, D. Medina and McLaren, Brian (Eds.), *Architecture and tourism: perception, performance and place*, (Oxford: Berg, 2004).
- Lowenthal, David, *The heritage crusade and the spoils of history*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1998).
- Markus, Thomas A. and Cameron, Deborah, *The words between the spaces: buildings and language*, (London: Routledge, 2002).
- Montreal y Tejada, Luis, *Medieval castles of Spain*, (Cologne: Könemann, 1999).
- O'Dell, Tom, "Experiencescapes: blurring borders and testing connections", in *Experiencescapes: tourism, culture and economy*, (Copenhagen: Copenhagen business school, 2005), pp. 11-33.
- Richards, Greg, "The market for cultural attractions", In: Richards, Greg (Ed.), *Cultural attractions and European tourism*, (Wallingford: CABI Pub, 2001), pp 31-54.
- Riegl, Alois, "The modern cult of monuments: its character and its origin", translation by Forster, Kurt W. and Ghirardo, Diane, in *Oppositions: a journal for ideas and criticism in architecture*, 25 Fall, (New York: Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, 1982(1903)), pp. 21-51.
- Thomsson, Heléne, *Reflexiva intervjuer*, (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2002).
- Uzzell, David, "Heritage interpretation in Britain four decades after Tilden", in Harrison, Richard (ed), *Manual of heritage management*, (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann in association with the Association of Independent Museums, 1994), pp. 239-302.
- Walter, Tony, "From museum to morgue? Electronic guides in roman Bath", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 17, No. 4, (Elsevier Science Ltd, 1996), pp. 241-245.
- Wiendu Nuryanti (Ed.), *Tourism and heritage management*, (Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1997).
- Winther Jørgensen, Marianne and Phillips, Louise, translated by Torhell, Sven-Erik, *Diskursanalys som teori och metod*, (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2000).