Luis José García-Pulido, Jonathan Ruiz Jaramillo y Mª. Isabel Alba Dorado. “Heritage Survey and Scientific Analysis of the Watchtowers that Defended the Last Islamic Kingdom in the Iberian Peninsula (Thirteenth to Fifteenth Century).” This contribution has been peer-reviewed and received the “Best Poster Award for a very significant contribution to Digital Workflows for Heritage Conservation” at the 26th International CIPA Symposium 2017, 28 August–01 September 2017, Ottawa, Canada.

The Islamic Nasrid kingdom of Granada occupied the mountainous areas of the southeastern area of the Iberian Peninsula, topographically protected by the Betic mountain range. There, a natural border was established between the Nasrid kingdom and the Christian kingdom of Castile that lasted more than 250 years, from 1222 to 1492. To control this frontier and establish visual communication between it and the Nasrid centre at the Alhambra citadel, an extensive network of watchtowers and defensive towers was constructed. Many of them are still standing, scattered among the provinces of Granada, Malaga, Almeria and the eastern parts of Jaen, Cordoba and Cadiz.

There exist studies of individual towers, but no comparative analysis has been undertaken of all of them from the perspective of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada itself. Graphic, homogenous and exhaustive planimetric documentation would bring together existing information on the majority of these examples and enable a deeper research. For this reason, this work conduct massive and systematic architectural surveys of all these military structures, using photogrammetry.

In addition to studying the construction typology and techniques, the structural capacity of these towers is being analysed. It examines how they have been affected by human and natural destructive forces, especially earthquakes, so common in eastern Andalusia. Although all the military architecture is protected by the Spanish Heritage law, many of these medieval towers and their cultural landscapes are in severe risk.

The towers are studied as individual exemplars (emphasizing their differences) and as a unit in a typological group (looking for similarities and unifying characteristics). New technologies for information and Communication are being used in order to disseminate the results among specialists and to make them available to the general public. Guidelines for restoration projects are also being formulated from the cases analyzed.
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