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THE UNFINISHED PROJECT OF THE CHURCH OF IZNALLOZ: ORIGINS, BUILDING PROCESS, AND GRAPHIC RECONSTRUCTION PROPOSAL

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Abstract

In the mid-sixteenth century, one of the final major projects by Diego Siloé commenced: the Church of Iznalloz (Granada). Following the master's death, the building remained unfinished and subsequently underwent significant modifications, particularly to its main facade, which was not completed until the last century. The objective of this study is the historiographical reconstruction of the church's original design. To achieve this, the various construction phases and potential shifts in architectural criteria from its inception to the present day are identified and outlined.
The findings are twofold: first, a construction sequence that identifies the specific changes made to the main facade over time; and second, a reasoned graphic reconstruction of the temple based on elements attributable to Siloé and his prior architectural experiences.

Keywords

Diego Siloé, Renaissance architecture, History of construction, Graphic Reconstruction, Spain, 16th century

1. *Introcution*

The town of Iznalloz, in the province of Granada, is situated atop a hill overlooking a valley basin; perched on the edge of the escarpment stands the parish church of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, designed by the master Diego Siloé in 1549 (Figure 1). The church departs from the canonical orientation to engage in a dialogue—in an act of profound Renaissance conception—with the urban fabric and seeking a specific visual impact of the church as seen from the valley.

The incomplete facade at the foot of the church opens onto a square in the heart of the town, through which the road connecting to Granada once passed and where the old Town Hall was located (Ampliato y Acosta, 2021). The interior is configured as a generously sized church with three aisles of equal height and four bays, of which only two—those closest to the chancel—were completed during Siloé's lifetime.

The temple was built with the ambition of a cathedral, not only due to its grand dimensions but also because of its material and spatial richness. It is, after all, one of the final major projects of the master Diego Siloé before his death.

Fig. 1: Location map. Own elaboration.

Between the completed and the unfinished sections, a temporary masonry partition was erected in the 16th century to allow religious activity to continue within the parish while construction work proceeded (Figures 2 and 3). These efforts were abandoned in the 17th century for economic reasons following several changes in master builders, leaving half of the nave space uncovered until the last century (Figure 2a). It was then decided to close this section by completing the facade with concrete blocks and installing a roof supported by metal trusses (Figures 2b and 2c).

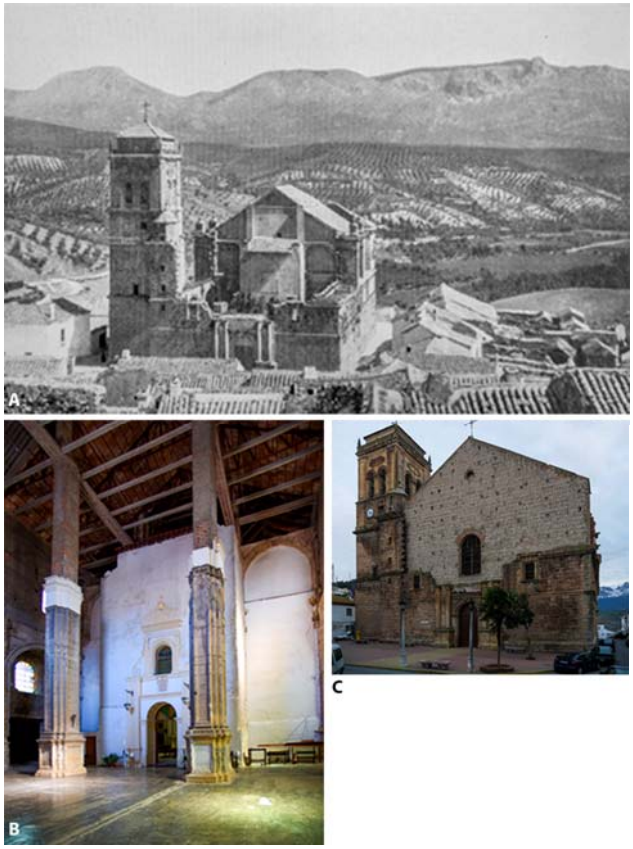

Fig. 2: Entrance section: (a) Early 20th-century photograph by A. Martín (1910), (b) current interior, and (c) current main facade; author's own photographs.

Although the perimeter of the temple is complete at ground level, the unfinished northern half underwent a reformulation in the 17th century; consequently, the image of the church as originally conceived by Siloé is not evident today.

2. *Methodology*

We have consulted the scarce biographical sources concerning this temple, most notably the works of the Gómez-Moreno family and the local chronicler Rodríguez Villegas. In addition to bibliographic sources, this work compiles historical photographs of the church, several documents from the 16th and 17th centuries in which it is mentioned, and an account of the most recent interventions on the building.

For the geometric study, we started from several different graphic bases developed in recent years. The first was published in Acosta 2022a and aimed to recreate the temple according to Diego Siloé's project. However, the data collection was carried out using a total station and scanning partial sections of the building, which is now insufficient for a comprehensive study of the temple's surfaces.

The second graphic base was subsequently created through a laser scan of the entire building (Acosta 2022b). A Riegl VZ-400i terrestrial scanner was used, combined with a Nikon D810 full-frame camera and a Nikkor AF D 14mm f/2.8 lens. The data were processed using the proprietary software RiSCAN PRO. The result was a dense, colorized, and oriented point cloud with a resolution of two centimeters at a range of twenty meters, which is sufficient for taking measurements and performing in-depth studies of the wall surfaces.

In addition to the geometric data, a comprehensive collection of photographs of the current structure was compiled. These photographs were taken with a 20MP CMOS Panasonic GX8 camera, combining ultra wide-angle lenses (Laowa 7.5mm f/2 and Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 12-40mm f/2.8 PRO) for general shots and a telephoto lens (Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 75-300mm f/4.8-6.7 II) for detail shots.

A third data collection was carried out for the specific study of the vaults in the completed sector of the church. For this purpose, photogrammetry of the extrados of the vaults was performed; the specific methodology and study results can be found in a publication in this same journal (Acosta 2023).

For the present work, the second data set has been taken as the starting point. For the post-processing of these data, CloudCompare software was used to improve the visualization of the point cloud, conduct flatness studies, and generate sections. The geometric analyses and final drawings were carried out using Rhinoceros 3D.

The data collection process yielded two sets of new graphic materials: the church in its current

state (Figure 3), used as the basis for the analyses discussed in the following chapters, and the church in its proposed original state, supplemented by a three-dimensional model.

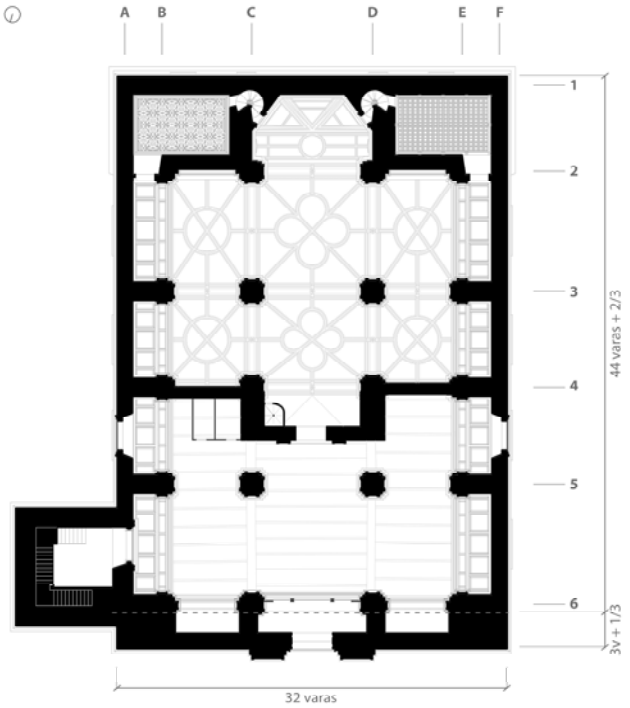

Fig. 3: Current floor plan dimensioned according to historical metrology, and local coordinate system. Own elaboration.

3. *The context of the work*

The town of Iznalloz gained particular significance within the Diocese of Granada during the first half of the 16th century, after being designated by the Catholic Monarchs as one of the Seven Villas responsible for supplying the city of Granada with grain. Such must have been the number of day laborers who gathered in Iznalloz during the sowing and harvesting seasons (Ferre, 1974) that the Catholic Monarchs founded a hospital and a church in the town. The latter was consecrated in the year 1501 (Suberviola, 1985).

At the beginning of the century, Iznalloz would have had a small church, possibly the former mosque consecrated by the Catholic Monarchs, which had undergone several remodelings during the first half of the 16th century (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1989). In 1549, the Archbishopric of Granada decided to provide the town with a new parish building, as it was the religious and administrative center of the northern region, as well as one of the most populated hubs due to its excellent communications (Marín Ocete, 1934).[1]

Three elements made the renovation of the former church possible: first, the intention of an archbishop, Pedro Guerrero (1546–1576), who from the beginning of his prelacy focused on regulating the religious organization of the diocese and on evangelizing the rural territories, which until then had been largely underserved.

Second, Guerrero enacted a series of changes in the revenue system to allow parishes to update their building structures. From then on, the churches of the Seven Villas began either renovations or new-build projects (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1989).

At the time the Iznalloz project was conceived, another fundamental factor also arose. Between 1546 and 1549, the archbishopric lent money to the Crown to finance the Emperor's military campaigns: the total amount of the repayment plus interest represented double the annual income of the archdiocese (Acosta, 2022b).

Perhaps due to this income, and the aforementioned conditions, in 1549, major construction projects were commissioned from Diego Siloé, the general overseer of the archbishopric: the church of the Villa of Montefrío, the renovation of Guadix Cathedral, and the construction of the parish church of Iznalloz.

4. *Construction phases*

Based on the study of the building fabric and an important historical document that we will present now, we have identified several construction stages through which the Granadan temple has passed.

In the second half of the 16th century, a regulation issued by Archbishop Guerrero for the construction of religious buildings (Marín López, 1996-1997) codified standard construction practice. The rule was likely devised by Juan de Maeda, the general overseer of the archbishopric following the death of his master, Siloé, who had already prepared several reports on the state of the diocese's churches. This regulation covered, among other aspects: the procedures prior to construction, and defined deadlines, stages of work monitoring, and inspection site visits.

[1] Of particular note is the Camino Real, the main north-south axis connecting the northern half of the peninsula with the city of Granada.

According to this regulation, the first step in the construction of a religious building was to execute all the foundations. The excavated trenches had to "mark out in its presence the entire body of the church and chapels" (Pérez de Heredia, 1990). This information is fundamental for establishing the authorship of the current building fabric. We believe—and will demonstrate later—that, with the exception of a specific change detected in the façade's footing, Siloé's entire project would have started as a single, continuous foundation (*en alberca*).

4.1 First construction stage (c. 1549–1558)

The first record of its construction is found in 1549, when the carpenter Gabriel Martínez testified that he had traveled with Siloé to "trace the church of Aznalloz" (Gómez-Moreno Martínez, 1983). The work would have begun that same year, or at the latest, in 1550. In charge of the works was Juan de Arredondo, a master of great technical competence, as we shall see below.

Fig. 4: Transverse section with the triumphal front highlighted, marking the cartouche dated 1558 and the coats of arms of Archbishop Pedro Guerrero. Own elaboration.

As previously mentioned, the church must have risen from its foundations in a short time; however, the building fabric was not completed uniformly, as the chancel and the two adjacent bays were enclosed first.

The archbishopric had made a similar decision regarding the construction of Granada Cathedral, which allowed the first mass to be celebrated in 1561 even though the main body of the aisles remained unfinished (Rosenthal, 1990).

Although there are no clear historiographical hypotheses regarding the progress of the work in Iznalloz, several pieces of data suggest that the chancel and the two adjacent bays were completed in 1558:

1. In the vault of the main chapel, there are three large cartouches that together read "ANO DE IHS NAZ 1558" (Figure 4). This could indicate the completion date of this sector which, along with the large coats of arms of Pedro Guerrero on both sides of the chancel arch, seem to form part of a celebratory message intended to be visible from the aisles.
2. The building fabric is continuous and homogeneous in this sector, both internally and externally. We have verified a geometric accuracy in the setting out and verticality of elements that lead us to consider this area as a unit executed at the same time.
3. In the year 1559, Juan de Arredondo appears as the resident master of another of Siloé's works, Guadix Cathedral (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1989), which points to an interruption of the work around this date.
4. Furthermore, between the years 1559 and 1565, we have no records of construction activity, with the exception of a minor detail: the execution of the fountain in the square in front of the church, carried out by the "craftsmen of the works" in 1563 (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1989).
5. Finally, a 1565 report on the archbishopric's construction projects written by Juan de Maeda recorded the state of the church up to that moment: "The church of the town of Iznalloz which is half-done..." (Marín López, 1996-1997).

The alignment of all these disparate yet convergent data leads us to assume that the first construction stage took place between 1549 and 1558, and that it encompassed the execution of all the foundations, along with the completion of the chancel and the first two bays of the aisles (Figure 5).

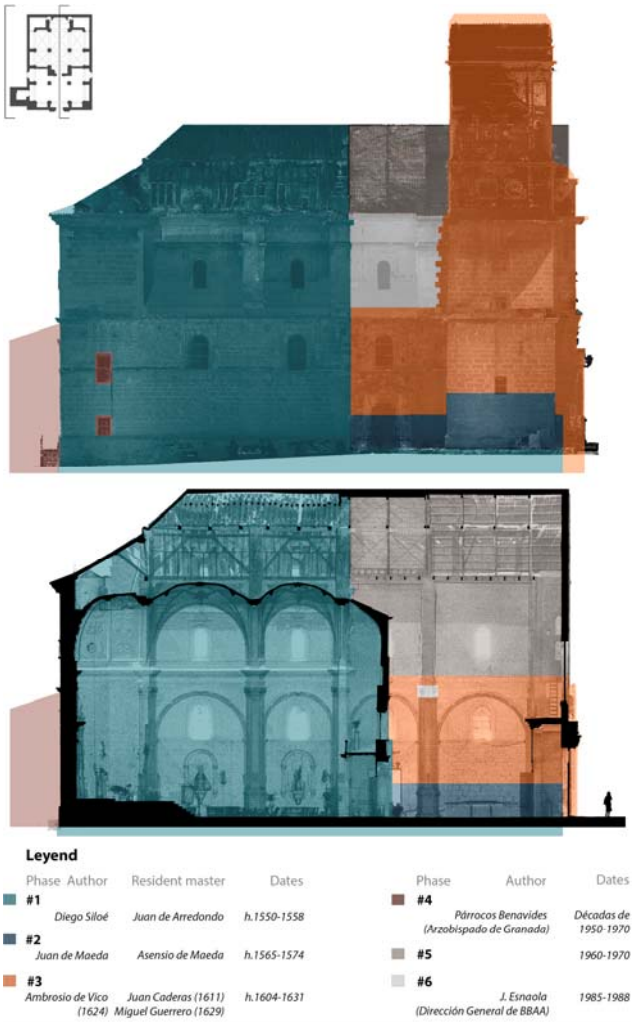

Fig. 5: Construction stages and chronology. Own elaboration.

4.2. Second construction phase (c. 1565–1574)

Following the death of Siloé (1563), Juan de Maeda succeeded him in the direction of his projects, with his son Asensio as the resident master of the Iznalloz works (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1987a). The work must have been resumed in late 1565 or early 1566, as in November of the latter year, a substantial payment to Juan de Maeda is recorded for the Iznalloz project (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1989). During this stage, the work focused on the west end, but only a few courses of stone were raised, as evidenced by another report that we will discuss below.

The slowness of the works may have been due to the social and economic instability that Granada was experiencing at this time. At the end of the 1560s, a series of Morisco uprisings took place, which were met with thousands of expulsions (Cortés and Vincent, 1986; Lovett, 1989), affecting the archbishopric's construction projects underway at that moment. On the other hand, the fiscal pressure on the region worsened when the Emperor Charles V limited the financial resources available to the church fabric accounts (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1987a). For these reasons, many religious works came to a standstill, as was the case with the parish church of Iznalloz or Guadix Cathedral (Asenjo, 1977), and were not resumed until the end of the century.

In 1574, the final payment to Juan de Maeda was recorded; shortly thereafter, he and his son sold the houses they owned in Iznalloz and moved to Seville (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1992a). We take this date as the conclusion of the second construction phase.

In November 1591, the then-archbishop Pedro de Castro (1589–1609) traveled to Iznalloz as part of a series of general visits to assess the state of his diocese. Among his retinue were individuals tasked with recording the condition of the churches (Rodríguez, 2023). This document is of great interest, as it describes what had been executed to date in the works, the movable assets it housed, the religious personnel providing service, etc.

From this report, we know that in 1591 the foot of the church was practically “en alberca”:

The part of the church yet to be covered is not raised more than the foundations and about two or three "varas", but what has been raised is also of ashlar masonry, as has been said of the covered part. (Rodríguez, 2023)

Two to three *varas castellanas* are equivalent to 1.67–2.50 meters in height (Figure 5); that is to say, very little progress was made at the foot of the church during this construction phase, the state of which at that time is reconstructed in Figure 6.

4.3. Third construction phase (early 17th century–1631)

We do not know the exact date on which the works in Iznalloz were resumed, but the following indications lead us to believe that it must have been at the beginning of the 17th century.

The works of Guadix Cathedral are related to the parish church of Iznalloz, not only because of the probable intervention of Siloé, but also because there was a transfer of master builders between the two, such as the previously mentioned Juan de Arredondo. The study of the cathedral allows us to propose the hypothesis that the next construction phase in Iznalloz began

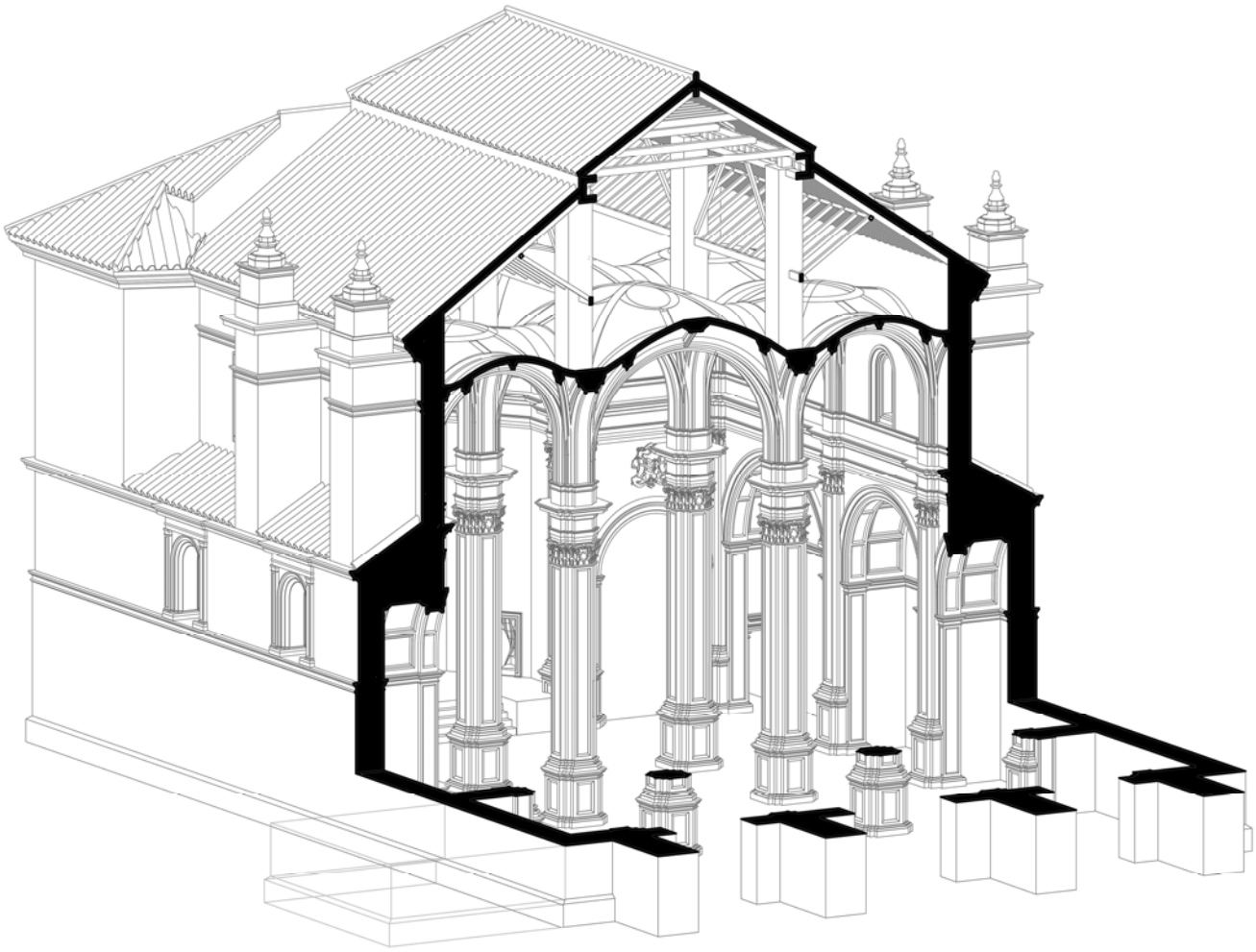

Fig. 6: Reconstruction of the state of the works at the end of the first phase. The elements necessary for the temporary partition of the temple are not shown. Own elaboration.

around 1604 under the direction of Juan Caderas de Riaño.

At the head of the cathedral works was Ambrosio de Vico, who had been the "veedor general" (general overseer) of the archbishopric since 1593. His tenure was characterized by the sobriety and austerity of the projects, both new and already underway, in keeping with the delicate monetary situation being experienced by the Granadan dioceses (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1992b).

Guadix Cathedral partially resumed its activity around 1598 amidst economic difficulties; proof of this is that in 1602 its Chapter considered whether: "the work, at the point it is at, would be more conveniently finished in stone or brick" (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1987b). Working on the project was the stonemason Juan Caderas de Riaño "the Elder",[2] whose activity is recorded until the year 1600, perhaps a little longer (Asenjo, 1977).

In 1604, work on the project was suspended again and was not definitively resumed until 1622 (Ibáñez, 2007). Earlier, in 1611, Caderas de Riaño had died, and through his will we know that he passed away in Iznalloz while serving as the master builder of its church (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1989).

That is to say, at the beginning of the 17th century, and probably from 1604 onwards, Caderas de Riaño would have assumed the master buildershop of the temple of Iznalloz, a moment we date as the possible restart of its works.

[2] He should not be confused with his homonymous son, who also worked on the project.

In this climate of readjustment for construction projects, we believe that Ambrosio de Vico may have produced new plans for Iznalloz with partial but significant modifications. These fundamentally affected the main facade and differed from what Siloé had proposed. The solution by the master from Burgos must have been a more costly undertaking, as it would have featured visible buttresses, three portals, and an extensive decorative program in the style of the great religious commissions of the time, as we shall see further on.

Fifty years after the start of the works and within a different economic climate, De Vico would have decided to simplify the original idea. To do so, he brought the facade forward to embed the buttresses within it and create a single, flat surface, while at the same time the two minor doors were eliminated. He also changed the layout of the choir from the floor of the central nave to a raised gallery at the foot of the church. These important modifications will be discussed at length in the next section.

After the death of Caderas de Riaño, the stonemason Miguel Guerrero took over the position (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1989). In 1612, the side portals of the church were finished (Gómez-Moreno Martínez, 1983) (Figure 7). Later, in 1616, the construction of the tower was completed according to the new plans provided by De Vico (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1992b).

Ambrosio de Vico died in 1624 (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1992b), and in 1629 Miguel Guerrero was recorded working on the Guadix Cathedral project (Ibáñez, 2007). We do not know why Miguel Guerrero left his post, but we may be facing a new halt in the works at Iznalloz. The date of 1631, which appeared on the incomplete main portal (Figure 8), seems to point to this fact (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1989). It is possible that the architectural work had stopped years earlier and that activity on the site had been reduced to the assembly of the portal which, judging by the discontinuities in the fabric, was erected after the facade wall.

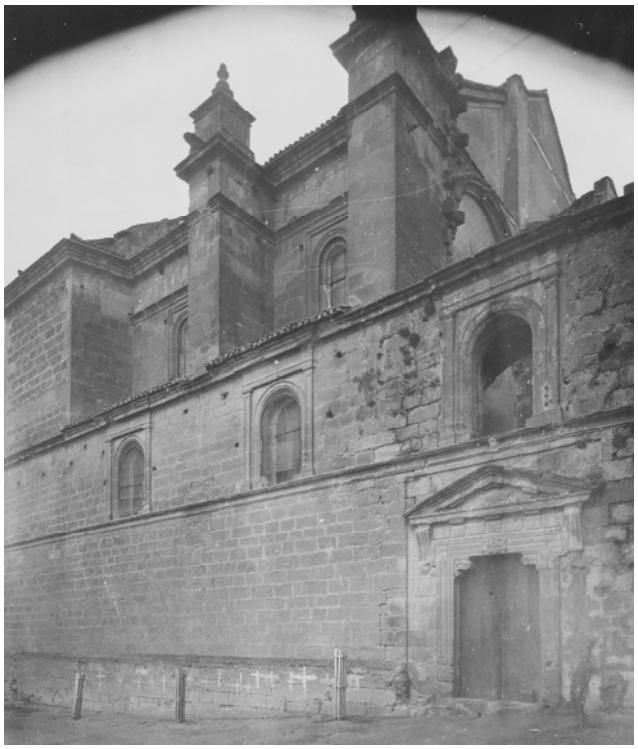

Fig. 7: East elevation in 1939. Instituto Gómez-Moreno. Note the toothing stones for the vaults and the discontinuity in the masonry between the second and third bay.

Around these dates, work also came to a halt at Guadix Cathedral (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1987b). Although specific payments appear for the works in Iznalloz in 1640–1641 and 1668, such as for the completion of the tower's spire (Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1989).

Therefore, we take the date of 1631 as the end of the third construction phase, as the bulk of Ambrosio de Vico's new plans had been executed.

At this point, the works would have reached the height of the first cornice level, about ten meters (Figure 5).

This includes the enclosure of the side chapels, the current facade, and the vaulted spaces attached to the main entrance wall (Figure 3).

A simple choir was raised above these latter spaces.[3]

[3] An inventory of the church from 1785, kindly provided by Rodríguez Villegas, mentions some benches located in the choir.

Fig. 8: Main portal: (a) 1939 photograph. Instituto Gómez-Moreno. (b) Current photograph. Author's own photograph.

4.4. Other construction phases

We have no news regarding the construction of the church until well into the 20th century. Little or nothing had been done in the parish until this point: between 1780 and 1783, we have records of some designs being made to finish the work (Llaguno and Ceán-Bermúdez, 1977; Gómez-Moreno Calera, 1989), though we do not know their content or if anything was actually executed. This is attested by the description of the church made by the Gómez-Morenos during their visit in 1886 and by some historical photographs we have been able to collect (Figures 2a, 7, and 8a).

The fourth period once again brought about a major change to Siloé's project. In the 1950s, the parish priests, the Benavides brothers, attached a multi-story dwelling to the south facade (Figure 9). To connect this volume with the church, they opened new openings on the ground floor and converted the windows into doors, blurring the original elevation.

In the 1960s and 1970s, major changes took place that altered the structure and image of the church: the steps of the high altar were extended into the nave (Robles 1998), the current block wall was erected on the facade, and the space at the foot of the church was enclosed with a metal roof (Figures 2b, 2c and 5). Furthermore, the additions to the south facade were demolished for the declaration as a historical-artistic monument, granted in 1973 (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1973).

Fig. 9: Volume attached to the south facade: (a) photograph circa 1950 by an unknown author and (b) floor plan drawn around 1970 (Robles, 1998). Red highlighting is the author's own.

The final changes occurred during the fifth construction period, from 1985 onwards, with specific interventions: for example, the current resin capitals were made and the stone cladding next to the tower was erected (Figure 5). Furthermore, the replacement of the block wall and a new roof—intended to evoke the vaulted structure of the completed section—were planned, but never came to fruition (Acosta, 2022b).

5. Ambrosio de Vico's modifications to Siloé's project

Throughout the construction process described thus far, the potential modifications to the facade wall introduced by Ambrosio de Vico in the 17th century constitute a key issue in determining the configuration of Diego Siloé's complete project for Iznalloz. We shall attempt to reason which elements were foreign to the project of the master from Burgos.

5.1. Main modifications to the floor plan

Once again, we turn to the 1591 report, which provides the crucial data for understanding the scale of the changes undertaken during the 17th century. The document describes the following:

The Church of this place is built entirely of ashlar and is partitioned; its total length, including the partition, is $44\frac{2}{3}$ *varas, and its width is barely 32 varas* [4] (Rodríguez, 2023)

The church currently maintains the aforementioned width, but its length is $3\frac{1}{3}$ *varas*

[4] The term "atajo" (partition) refers to the temporary wall that was built to enclose the completed section and isolate it from the works at the foot of the church.

longer than what was indicated in 1591 (Figure 3). Knowing that the only thing left to excavate from the foundations was one pillar in the section at the foot of the church (Rodríguez, 2023), we can infer that the length of the church was measured from the outer face of the facade walls, excluding the buttresses. These must have existed—we do not know to what extent they were built—since counterrests were needed along lines B, C, D, and E to support the thrust of the vaults.

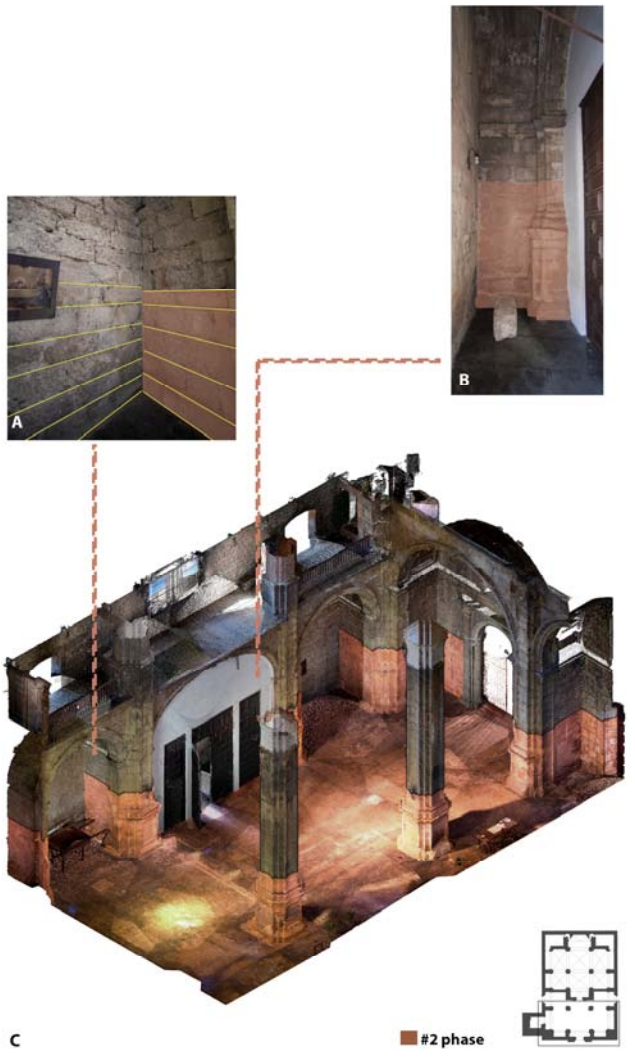

Fig. 10: Foot of the church: (a) lack of bonding between the buttresses and the facade wall; (b) distorted order; (c) perspective view highlighting the 16th-century construction. Author's own.

A masonry study reveals that the first courses of the walls dividing the chapels at the foot of the church are bonded with the pillars of line 6, but not with the facade wall (Figure 10a). From the seventh course onwards, the fabric is linked. These disconnected courses coincide with what was built up to 1591—between two and three *varas*—and provide evidence that the facade wall does not belong to the same construction unit as the pillars and their transverse walls.

The study of the architectural order that structures the church's space also provides data regarding the original project. The pillars are cruciform, and their faces correspond to the space they open onto. For example, the isolated pillars have a principal order on all four faces that supports the transverse ribs of the vaults. In contrast, the pillars on either side of the chancel arch have only two faces where the principal order is developed, while the wall pillars present this order on only one face (Figure 4).

These engaged pillars present an order of smaller scale. Along lines B and E, an intermediate order appears for the chapel openings, while along line 2, a smaller order emerges to support the altar niches (Figure 11a).

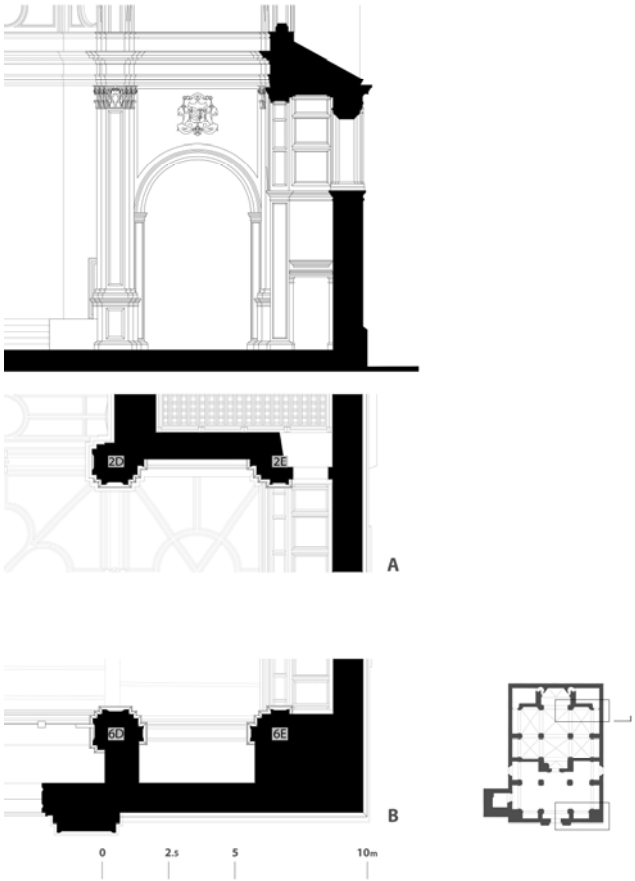

Fig. 11: Architectural orders: (a) elevation and floor plan of the chancel section and (b) section at the foot of the church. Author's own.

When Ambrosio de Vico arrived at the site, the pillars had already risen from the foundations and were symmetrical to the head of the church; that

is, the principal order is developed between supports 6C and 6D, while the smallest order is developed between 6D and 6E (and its symmetrical counterparts 6B and 6C) (Figure 11b). The springing of these pillars reveals that in the central section of the foot of the church, Siloé had planned a principal order reaching the height of the cornice, which De Vico interrupted with a basket-handle arch and a distorted shaft (Figure 10b). On either side, two smaller openings appear, which today also do not correspond to the original syntax (Figure 10c).

Another point in favor of this hypothesis lies in the church's choir. Siloé's Granadan churches that feature an elevated choir are single-nave temples, as indicated by the regulations mentioned earlier, which only considered elevated choirs when there was a lack of space:

We command that in the parishes of this our Archbishopric and province, choirs shall not be placed in the body of the churches but rather in the gallery or in some chapel or in a part of the high altar, if the narrowness of the church so permits; and our visitors shall enforce this through penalties. (Pérez de Heredia, 1990)

This is the case with other churches by Diego Siloé, such as San Jerónimo in Granada, the Sacra Capilla de El Salvador in Úbeda, or the parish church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción in Alfacar. Within this list, we could include the church of the Villa de Montefrío, which lacks a choir but features a balcony for chants (Ampliato and Acosta, 2020).

Therefore, the presence of a gallery in the church of Iznalloz does not seem justifiable given the church's spaciousness, and it contradicted the standard practice in Granada.

Lastly, in the incomplete section, the capitals of the minor order, the moldings of the entrance arches, and the cornice marking the level of the gallery are different from the rest of the church. Here, the main cornice is abruptly interrupted in the presence of the principal order (Figure 10c), a fact that does not occur in the chancel, where it merges with the order's entablature (Figure 11a).

These data suggest that the current main facade wall is positioned further forward than the facade originally planned by Siloé. We believe that the changes introduced by Ambrosio de Vico sought to simplify and, therefore, accelerate the work at Iznalloz, which had already been drawn out for more than half a century.

5.2. Keys to the original facade in the atajo dividing the church

A series of details in the *atajo*—the partition wall that divides the parish church into two halves—could provide us with some clues regarding the original configuration of Siloé's facade.

This division was built with *tapias y rafas de ladrillo* (rammed earth and brick reinforcements) (Rodríguez, 2023) at the end of the first construction phase to allow for religious activity. In the side aisles, this brick enclosure follows line 4; however, in the central nave, it widens and shifts a few meters (Figures 2b and 12a). In sections C and D, this increased thickness corresponds to two buttresses that were temporarily installed when the church was closed around 1558 to receive the thrust of the transverse arches from the chancel.

On the other hand, we know that there were three doors in this partition wall: the main one on the church's axis and two others, which are now bricked up (Rodríguez, 2023). Above the central door, there is a window (Figure 2b) whose moldings match those of the high windows in the completed section.

These elements seem to suggest that the *atajo* assumed the functions of a main facade when construction halted in 1558. Two further pieces of evidence support this assumption. On one hand, it was customary in Granada—and consistently seen in churches built by Siloé—for the baptismal chapel to be located near the entrance at the foot of the temple, symbolically marking the beginning of the journey toward God. The font currently seen next to the steps of the main chapel was originally located in the epistle chapel closest to the temporary enclosure (Acosta, 2022b). On the other hand, while the tower was being completed, a bell gable was temporarily erected atop this partition wall (Rodríguez, 2023).

In other words, the elements intended for the main facade, or its vicinity, were relocated to the partition wall when construction came to a halt. This was not a mere closing operation; rather, it involved a translation of the design originally planned for the foot of the church toward the completed section. To a certain extent, the partition wall assumed the programmatic conditions of the main facade—halted *sine die*—which differs from the facade eventually begun by Ambrosio de Vico.

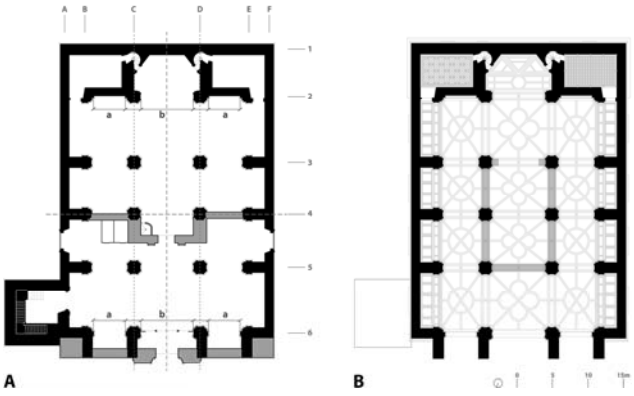

Fig. 12: (a) Current floor plan with pillar axes and symmetry axes. Provisional or non-original elements are shown in gray. (b) Reconstructed floor plan of the original project. Possible choir shown in gray. Author's own.

5.3. Modulation and double symmetry in the nave space

Another aspect that has allowed us to envision Siloé's potential original design is the strict symmetry that governs the church's interior. We have already noted how the pillars are structured according to the grid that organizes the interior space, in which two axes of symmetry stand out: one coinciding with the main nave and another perpendicular to it (Figure 12a).

The elements comprising line 6 at ground level exhibit homologous characteristics to the symmetrical line—line 2 at the chancel. Thus, the buttresses of lines C and D are offset from the pillar axis, both at the chancel and at the foot of the church (Figure 11). In the case of the chancel, this decision allows for a main chapel that acts as an extension of the central nave.

In the same way, the pilastered orders and the spans they cover are identical on lines 6 and 2 (Figure 12a): on both fronts, the central opening is flanked by the principal order, while the lateral openings are supported by the same minor order. This seems to indicate that in Siloé's proposal, openings the size of the altar niches—rather than the size of the current spaces—would have been placed at the front of the side aisles at the foot of the church. At ground level, this symmetrical vocation dominates the entire church's compositional structure and, together with the elevations, seems aimed at creating a certain centrality within the nave space.

In summary, if we disregard those elements outside this marked compositional syntax—introduced in the 17th century—the original facade must have coincided with the line of forty-four and two-thirds *varas*, featured three entrances, and its internal face would have presented a clear symmetry with the elevation of the chancel. Finally, the perpendicular walls dividing the vaulted spaces at the foot of the church, which show constructive continuity with the pillars, would actually be the buttresses for the planned vaults; in Siloé's design, these might have remained on the exterior.

6. Graphic reconstruction of the original project

Based on the above, we have translated these changes into a new proposal for the section at the foot of the church, updating the previous findings regarding this sector (Acosta 2022a). This is a theoretical reconstruction that seeks to represent only the main architectural elements linked to the structure in an approximate manner, while maintaining the architect's original intentions. The plans avoid entering into the debate regarding the authorship of the tower.[5]

By establishing a thickness of three feet for the facade wall—the same as the rest of the elevations—its exterior face would be located at the forty-four and two-thirds *varas* indicated in the report. Its axis would coincide with line 6, thus allowing for the development of half-pilasters toward the interior (Figure 12b).

With this new position, the gallery and the spaces beneath it would disappear, producing three immediate effects: first, the bilateral symmetry is restored, and consequently, the centrality of the nave space. Second, the buttresses of line 6 remain visible on the exterior, forcing the designer to turn these supports into a compositional element of the exterior image (Figure 13). And third, the openings in the side aisles would become entrances to the church,

[5] The 1591 report describes the tower as having stairs made of "steps and a spiral" (*gradas y caracol*). The work was left at a height of about four meters when the Maeda family departed, yet the current spiral begins at a height of six and a half meters. This leads to two hypotheses: first, that the Maedas prioritized finishing the tower, leaving its construction at a higher level than the rest of the fabric; and second, that Ambrosio de Vico altered the interior of the tower in a way we do not know—a fact that seems to be supported by the off-center and skewed construction of the tower's access portal. Be that as it may, we lack the data to prove the first hypothesis, so we establish the completion height of the second stage according to what is described in the 1591 report.

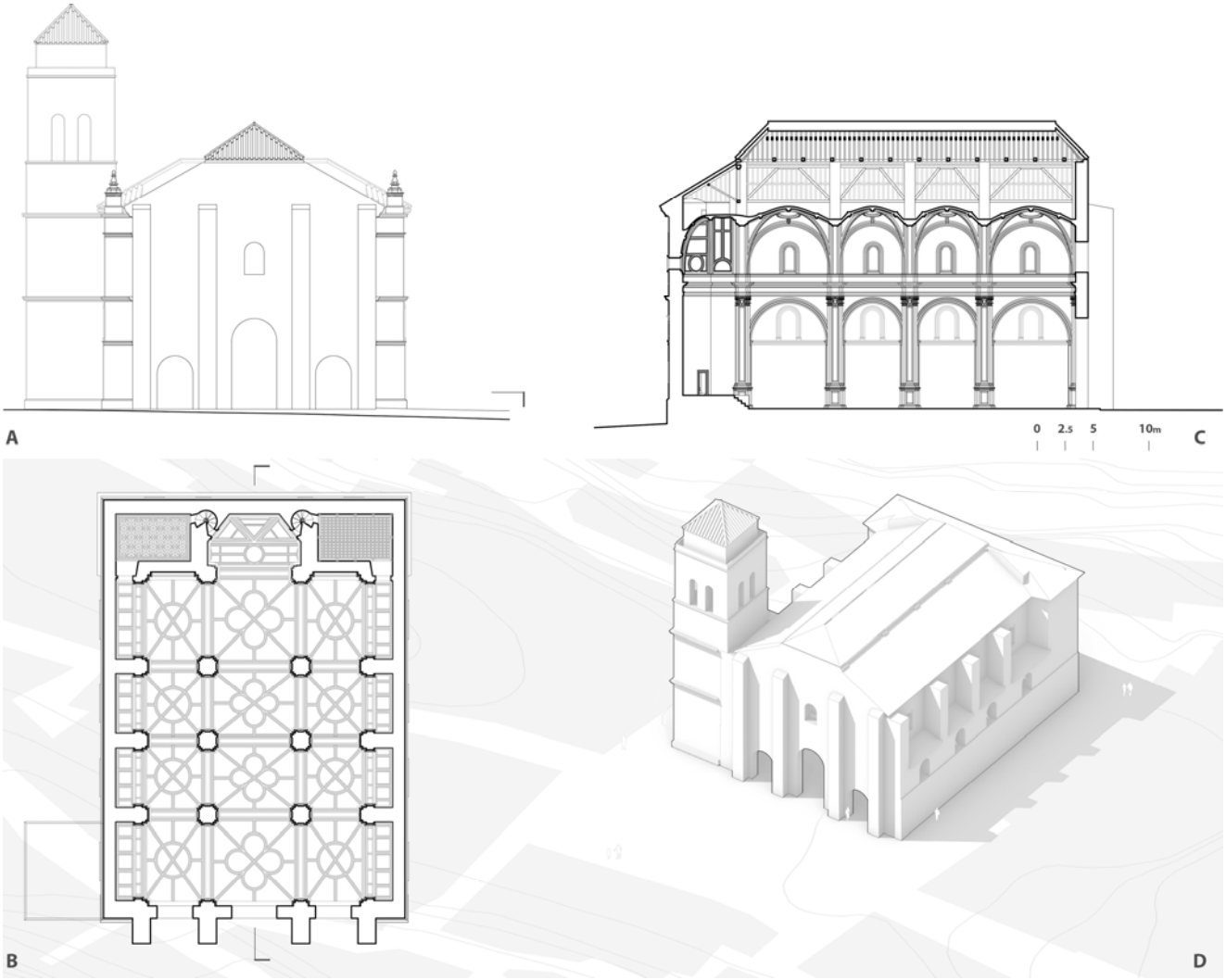

Fig. 13: Digital reconstruction of the original project: (a) North elevation, (b) floor plan, (c) longitudinal section and (d) perspective rendering. Author's own.

emulating those that are now bricked up in the temporary partition.

On the other hand, with the disappearance of the vaulted spaces at the foot of the church, the choir would be moved to the floor of the central nave, perhaps between the second and third sections, which is more in line with the customary layout for temples of this size (Figure 12b).

Other religious buildings by Siloé also feature supports on their facades which, in turn, form part of an image integrated into the urban fabric. Such is the case with: Granada Cathedral (1528), the Sacra Capilla de El Salvador in Úbeda (1536), and the small church of La Villa in Montefrío (1549) (Figure 14). On the exteriors of these examples, the wall surface is composed of secondary orders that frame portals, windows, and decorative motifs, creating a facade that engages in a dialogue with its immediate surroundings. In contrast, Ambrosio de Vico's proposal appears unornamented and lacks any relationship with the square.

Fig. 14: Diego Siloé: (a) Granada Cathedral, (b) Sacra Capilla de El Salvador in Úbeda, and (c) La Villa in Montefrío. Author's own photographs.

7. *Conclusions*

This study provides a comprehensive and reasoned account of the building's chronology in the church of Iznalloz, from its origins to the present day, identifying those elements that deviated from the initial project. The temple's

inception was profoundly shaped by an environment aligned with the interests of the Archdiocese and by its two key figures: Archbishop Pedro Guerrero and Diego Siloé.

Through the analysis of the building's fabric, historical documentation, and the design intentions present in the completed sections, we demonstrate that Ambrosio de Vico shifted the facade wall, added vaulted spaces at the foot of the church, and elevated the choir above them. These modifications were a pragmatic response to the economic scarcity of the early 17th century and the urgent need to complete a project that had been stalled for over half a century.

These changes resulted in a significant reduction of the facade's ornamental program, as well as a loss of internal articulation—effectively breaking Siloé's proportional system at the temple's entrance. Furthermore, the building's relationship with the urban fabric was diminished; Siloé's original facade, consistent with his other masterpieces, would have established a more profound dialogue with the city, serving as an active interface between the temple and the square. Consequently, the interior space would have been conceptually more unified, in contrast to De Vico's partial and less organic intervention.

Finally, we have translated these findings into a reasoned graphic reconstruction of the original project. This reveals the church of Iznalloz as a cohesive and unitary ensemble, originally conceived to be a major religious landmark in the northern region of Granada, designed to exert a modern and direct influence on the town's urban fabric.

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