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## NEW USES OF CASTLES OWNED BY MUNICIPALITIES IN THE PROVINCE OF ALICANTE (SPAIN) DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE 21ST CENTURY

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**ABSTRACT:** The province of Alicante is an administrative unit belonging to the Valencian Community, one of the 17 autonomous communities that make up Spain, and it is located in the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. Its historical vicissitudes have motivated the existence of many castles. All of them mark the province from north to south and from east to west. After losing their military and/or residential functions, many castles were abandoned and became ruins of reference in their landscape. Their recovery began without a defined use in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the tourist development of the province of Alicante, under the Costa Blanca brand, has turned these castles into a first-rate cultural and tourist resource. In this way, many actions have been carried out on their cultural and tourist use to learn about the history of the places where they are. For this reason, the present work is committed to reflect on the new uses of these castles during the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the remains for their preservation.

**KEY WORDS:** Castles, cultural heritage management, defensive architecture, province of Alicante, Spain

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## 1. Introduction

As has been shown for the Spanish context, the main approaches on the study of castles are based on archaeological, architectural and historical aspects<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, there are currently new knowledge approaches focused on their cultural management, as can be seen in the topics of international conferences such as FORTMED, among other issues. It should not be surprising since the importance of managing defensive architecture is increasingly a fundamental aspect. In this way, documents like the *Spanish National Plan for Defensive Architecture*<sup>2</sup>, developed by the Spanish Cultural Heritage Institute and the Autonomous Communities, or the *ICOMOS Guidelines on Fortifications and Military Heritage*<sup>3</sup> must be highlighted.

Taking as a starting point the research on defensive architecture developed in the province of Alicante since 2013, which is focused on knowing how castles owned by municipalities are managed<sup>4</sup>, the present work will analyse their new uses after losing the original function and being subjected to different preservation and restoration works.

## 2. Purpose

As indicated in the previous point, the main purpose of this work is to know the new uses of fortifications owned by municipalities in the province of Alicante during the first 25 years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 3. Methodology

Firstly, the qualitative research methodology as well as direct observation techniques were used to fulfil the stated purpose. They consisted of visiting castles *in situ*<sup>5</sup> and consulting municipal technicians (experts), when necessary, to study certain aspects. Secondly, the historiographical methodology was used, specifically the documentary observation technique applied to written-narrative sources<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Mira Rico J. A. (2017). *Management Analysis of Municipal Castles in the Province of Alicante*. Oxford: BAR Publishing.

<sup>2</sup> Carrión Gútiérrez A. (Coord.) (2015). *Plan Nacional de Arquitectura Defensiva*. Secretaria General Técnica, Subdirección General de Documentación y Publicaciones. <https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/planes-nacionales/va/dam/jcr:1c6991a0-aa01-4357-a98a-e788b245a877/03-maquetado-defensiva.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> ICOMOS (2021). *ICOMOS Guidelines on Fortifications and Military Heritage*. <https://www.icofort.org/post/adoption-of-the-icomos-guidelines-on-fortifications-and-military-heritage>

<sup>4</sup> Mira Rico J. A. (2017). *Management Analysis of Municipal Castles in the Province of Alicante*. Oxford: BAR Publishing.

<sup>5</sup> Campos y Covarrubias G., Lule Martínez N. E. (2012). La observación, un método para el estudio de la realidad. *Xihmai*, Vol. 7, N° 13 (pp. 45-60).

<sup>6</sup> Aróstegui Sánchez J. (2001). *La investigación histórica: teoría y método* (p. 402). Barcelona: Crítica.

#### 4. The province of Alicante: a land of castles

This province is located in the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula, on the Mediterranean coast. It makes up the Valencian Community together with the provinces of Castellón and Valencia. This territorial entity is one of the 17 autonomous communities in which Spain was organised after the approval of the Spanish Constitution (1978) and the arrival of democracy. (Fig. 1)

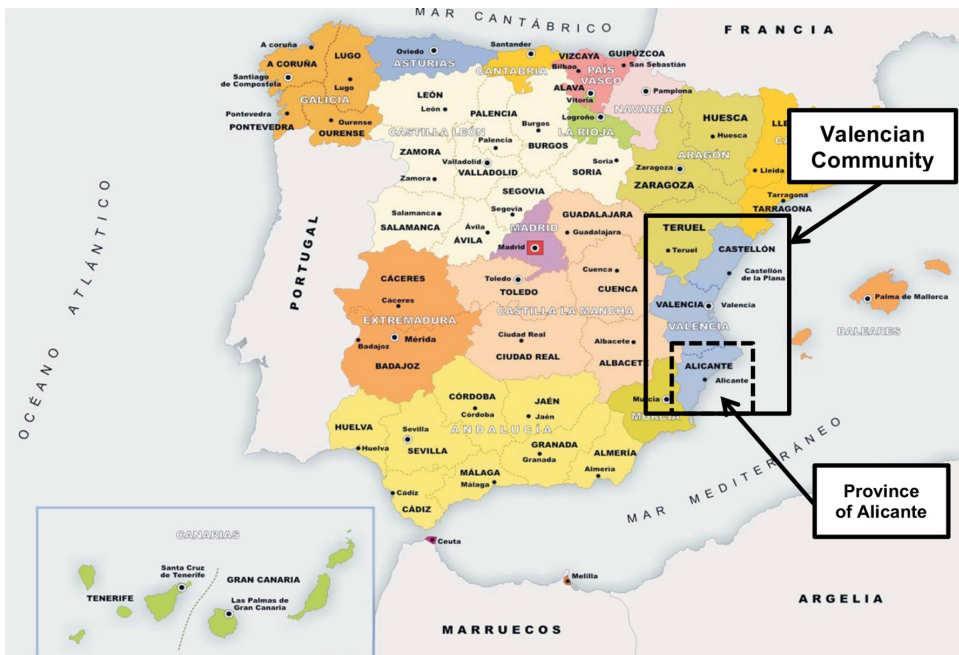


Fig. 1 Spanish autonomous communities. Source: Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

On the other hand, the province of Alicante is a land of fortifications due to some historical reasons<sup>7</sup>. During the Middle Ages, this province was the border between *Šarq al-Andalus* and the Christian kingdoms, first, and the crowns of Aragon and Castile, later. For this reason, many castles were built, especially during the Andalusian domination (8<sup>th</sup> century-middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century). After the Christian conquest of the territory, some Muslim fortifications were abandoned but others were reused to defend the new borders of the Kingdom of Valencia. Actually, Dénia Castle and Santa Bárbara Castle (Alicante) were used until the Contemporary Age (19<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>8</sup>. (Fig. 2)

<sup>7</sup> Mira Rico J. A. (2016). Castles or cultural and natural landscapes? A new approach to the management of fortifications in the south of the Valencian Community (Spain). Examples of Castilla and Sax [in:] P. Kolodziejczyk, B. Kwiatkowska-Kopka (Eds.). *Cracow Landscape Monographs*, Vol. 3 (pp. 37-50). Institute of Archaeology, Jagiellonian University in Kraków & Institute of Landscape Architecture, Cracow University of Technology.

<sup>8</sup> Gisbert Santonja J. A. (2014). *Castell de Dénia*. Dénia: Ajuntament de Dénia; <https://www.alicante.es/es/patrimonio-cultural/castillo-santa-barbara>

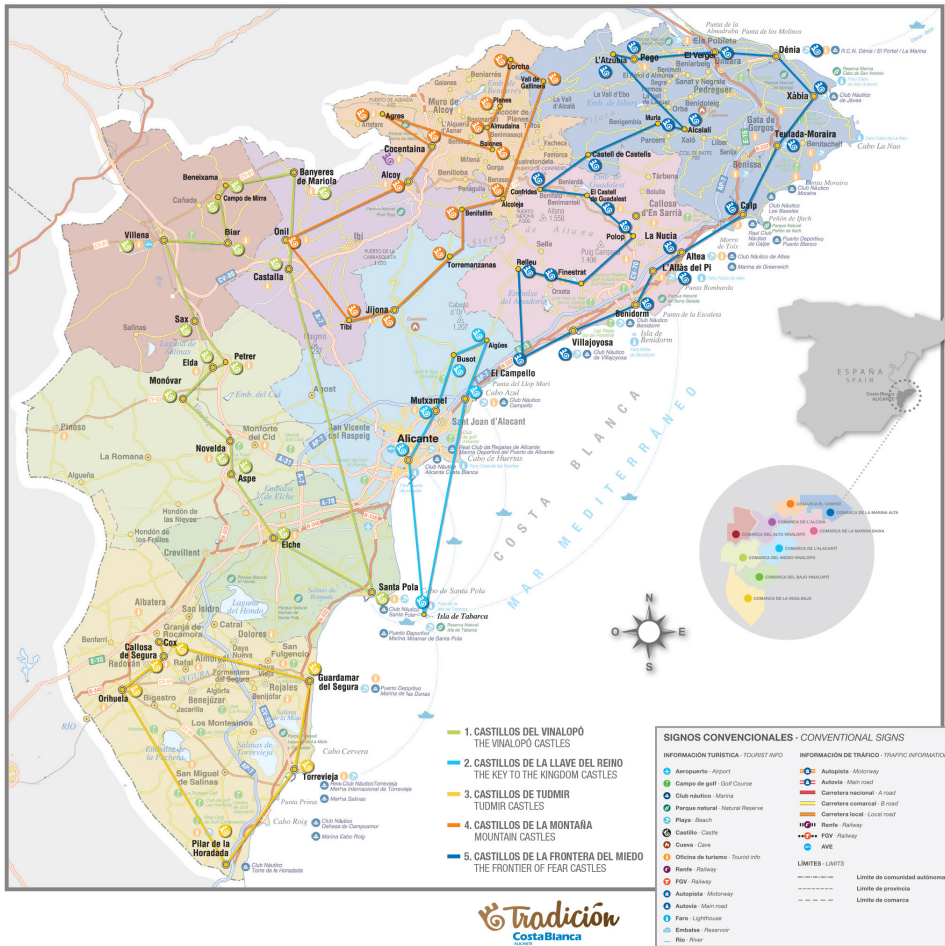


Fig. 2 Defensive architecture in the province of Alicante. Source: Costa Blanca Tourism Board

According to the work on Andalusian castles<sup>9</sup> and the work on Christian fortifications<sup>10</sup>, castles can be divided into the following groups (Tab. 1):

<sup>9</sup> Azuar Ruiz R. (2018). Castell del Xarq al-Àndalus: evolució tipològica i funcionalitat [in:] P. García Borja, E. Palmer Broch (Eds.), *El Castell Vell de Castell de la Plana. Recuperant el patrimoni, reconstruint la història* (pp. 28-42). Castell de la Plana: Ajuntament de Castell de la Plana.

<sup>10</sup> Torró i Abad J., Segura Martí J. M<sup>a</sup>. (1991). Asentamientos cristianos fortificados (siglos XIII-XIV): una aproximación tipológica para el sur del País Valenciano [in:] R. Azuar Ruiz (Comp.), *Fortificaciones y castillos de Alicante* (pp. 147-181). Alicante: Caja de Ahorros Provincial de Alicante.

Tab. 1 Typologies of fortifications in the province of Alicante

TYPOLOGIES							
ANDALUSIAN					CHRISTIAN		
State	Taifa	Rural	Almohad	War and fear	New	Reused Andalusian	
					With an upper castle	Castral	Semicastral

***Andalusian typology***

- State fortifications to control the caliphal state (10<sup>th</sup> century). They have a rectangular or pseudo-rectangular plan and cubes around the walled perimeter. There are several examples such as Guadalest Castle (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Guadalest Castle. Author: Juan Antonio Mira Rico

- Taifa fortifications to control the new kingdoms that emerged after the fall of the caliphate (11<sup>th</sup> century). They are distinguished by a tripartite configuration made up of an upper enclosure or fortress for military purposes, a shared-use bailey for people and/or animals and as a place of refuge in times of danger, and a population enclosure. Dénia Castle (Fig. 4) can be found in this group (Alicante).



Fig. 4 Dénia Castle. Author: Juan Antonio Mira Rico

- Rural fortifications (12<sup>th</sup> century) formed by the continuous settlement of population inside the fortified enclosures. This typology is characterised by new constructions with an orthogonal plan, large walled perimeters and complex defensive access systems. Río Castle (Aspe) (Fig. 5) make up this group, among others.



Fig. 5 Río Castle. Author: José Ramón Ortega Pérez

- Almohad castles (end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century-first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century) built by the North African conquerors after the consolidation of their power in the Iberian Peninsula. They have large rammed-earth towers. Biar Castle (Fig. 6) is in this group.



Fig. 6 Biar Castle. Author: Juan Antonio Mira Rico

- War and fear castles (1233-1250), so named because they were built as a temporary refuge for farmers who lived in hamlets during the conquest of *Šarq al-Andalus* by the crowns of Aragon and Castile, like Ambra Castle (Pego). (Fig.7)



Fig. 7 Ambra Castle (Pego). Author: Juan Antonio Mira Rico

### ***Christian typology***

This typology emerged after the Christian conquest of the current province of Alicante and the establishment of the new prevailing economic and social system: feudalism. It is made up of:

- New castles with an upper fortification located in estate places. They are small-sized castles with a larger tower that could be used as occasional defensive strongholds. The missing Callosa d'en Sarrià Castle would be a good example.
- Reused Islamic castral fortifications including Andalusian castles with an inner inhabited settlement, which were inhabited by the new Christian settlers. They are placed in rural sites that are difficult to access and far from agricultural land. Mola Castle (Fig. 8) is part of this typology.



Fig. 8 Mola Castle (Novelda). Author: José Ramón Ortega Pérez

- Reused Islamic semicastral castles with ancient towns that exceeded “the superficial possibilities of castles aimed to serve as support”. They are important fortifications close to flat agricultural land. Biar Castle (see Fig. 6) and Dénia Castle (see Fig. 4) are within this category.



## **5. New uses of castles owned by municipalities in the province of Alicante during the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

### **5.1. Determinants**

The new uses of castles owned by municipalities in the province of Alicante are subject to three factors:

- Their geographical location, mostly on hills that are difficult to access. (see Fig. 3)
- Their small and medium size, except in the cases of Dénia Castle, Santa Bárbara Castle (Alicante) and Orihuela Castle. (see Fig. 4, Fig. 9)
- The architectural actions on preservation and restoration carried out.



Fig. 9 Santa Bárbara Castle (Alicante). Author: Màrius Bevià i Garcia

Due to the number of fortifications and interventions developed over time by professionals with different criteria and approaches, it is impossible to offer a detailed vision in this work. For this reason, an example of an intervened castle in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been selected, whose results have been published in order to have a general overview of the preservation and restoration actions. As will be seen, these criteria are different from those developed by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture during the first five years of the seventies (20<sup>th</sup> century), for example

in Biar Castle. These actions consisted of achieving an ideal image of the fortification (with towers, merlons and crenels), although some parts were reconstructed without any information, inappropriate materials were used, such as cement mortar, and all the inner part of the castle was emptied without any archaeological control<sup>11</sup>. (Fig.10)



Fig. 10 Lower wall cement coating of Biar Castle with its reconstructed crenels and merlons.  
Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=Castillo+de+Biar&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image&fileres=%3E1000&haslicense=unrestricted>

The selected fortification is Castalla Castle, whose intervention took place between 2003 and 2006. As has already been exposed in previous works<sup>12</sup>, it is located in the homonymous municipality, and was built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and transformed until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There are two fundamental stages (Andalusian, 11<sup>th</sup> century-1244, and Christian, 1244-16<sup>th</sup> century) that make up three main parts: Palace, Lower Ward and Large Tower.

<sup>11</sup> Segura Herrero G., Simón García J. L. (2001). El Castillo de Biar (Alto Vinalopó) [in:] G. Segura Herrero, J. L. Simón García (Coords.), *Castillos y torres en el Vinalopó* (pp. 55-56). Petrer: Mancomunidad Valle del Vinalopó. Centre d'Estudis Locals del Vinalopó.

<sup>12</sup> Bevià i García M., Mira Rico J. A., Ortega Pérez J. R. (2022). El Castell de Castalla (Alicante, España) y su proceso de recuperación social (1984-2017) [in:] J. L. Menéndez Fueyo, R. Pérez Jimenez (Eds.), *Los castillos de Alicante ante sus proyectos de intervención. Actas del I seminario de fortificaciones* (pp. 187-196). Museo Arqueológico de Alicante.

Its recovery process began in 1984, but its comprehensive architectural intervention was developed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It entailed a great transformation since the consolidation action developed during the eighties (20<sup>th</sup> century) led to an "analogue restoration, where the contrasting traditional concepts in restoration come together: the complementarity between new and old and the clear differentiation of architectures using a modern language for the intervention, building a new work together with the existing one and forming a new unit between the two parts"<sup>13</sup>.

This change was motivated by the services of the Valencian Community that, whenever possible, opted for the volumetric reintegration and functional recovery of the monuments with the aim of seeking a better social use. Therefore, taking into account the previous paragraph, its state of preservation and the influence of the architect Carlo Scarpa and his work in the Castelvecchio Museum (Verona, Italy), the intervention consisted of the following actions: structural consolidation of the existing elements, volumetric reintegration, functional recovery of the building and formal restitution of those elements with sufficient detailed information to make it possible<sup>14</sup>. (Figs. 11, 12)



Fig. 11 Castalla Castle nowadays. Palace, Lower Ward and Large Tower from right to left. Author: Andrés Ruiz Sánchez

<sup>13</sup> Bevià i Garcia M. (2010). La intervención arquitectónica en el Castillo de Castalla (2003-2006) [in:] J. L. Menéndez Fueyo, M. Bevià i Garcia, J. A. Mira Rico, J. R. Ortega Pérez (Eds.), *El Castell de Castalla. Arqueología, arquitectura e historia de una fortificación de frontera* (p. 19). Alicante: Museo Arqueológico de Alicante.

<sup>14</sup> Bevià i Garcia M., Mira Rico J. A., Ortega Pérez J. R. (2022). El Castell de Castalla (Alicante, España) y su proceso de recuperación social (1984-2017) [in:] J. L. Menéndez Fueyo, R. Pérez Jimenez (Eds.), *Los castillos de Alicante ante sus proyectos de intervención. Actas del I seminario de fortificaciones* (p. 192). Museo Arqueológico de Alicante.



Fig. 12 Castalla Castle in 1984. Author: Màrius Bevià i Garcia

## 5.2. Management

A research has been carried out on defensive architecture focusing on castles managed by municipalities in the province of Alicante since 2013. It has allowed to document 47 municipal fortifications between 2003-2013. Of 43 studied castles, 12 (27.91%) were not managed, 19 (44.18%) were occasionally managed and 12 (27.91%) were continuously managed<sup>15</sup>.

On the one hand, similarities and differences were identified between these castles at management level. In the first group, it can be noted that fortifications continuously and/or occasionally managed had a public, simple and decentralised management model<sup>16</sup>, like that one of Santa Bàrbara Castle (Alicante):

<sup>15</sup> Mira Rico J. A. (2017). *Management Analysis of Municipal Castles in the Province of Alicante*. Oxford: BAR Publishing.

<sup>16</sup> Martinell Sempere A. (2014). Los agentes de la cultura [in:] S. Catalán Romero, A. J. González Rueda, L. Ben Andrés, V. Rivas Serrano, C. Ojeda Gómez (Eds.). *Manual Atalaya de Apoyo a la Gestión Cultural*. Universidad de Cádiz. <http://atalayagestioncultural.es/capitulo/gestion-cultural/agentes-cultura>

- It is decentralised and complex due to the existence of two cultural agents: the City Council, which is public, and a private company that manages the castle together with it.
- The private company carries out different initiatives (establishment of a continuous schedule, creation of a website, guided tours, etc.) aimed at obtaining an economic benefit.
- This is a partial privatisation of castles, which becomes an unprecedented situation in the province of Alicante, and its medium/long-term results are unknown.

On the other hand, the first difference is that some research, preservation, restoration, didactics and dissemination actions were documented but not all of them have been carried out equally or have had the same impact on castles<sup>17</sup>. The second difference is reflected in the existence of castles with management plans along with others that lack them. This is an unusual situation, especially when compared to the management carried out in other countries, such as Canada, where each fortification has its own management plan.

Nevertheless, there is a similarity since their management is focused on the context of study. This pattern contrasts, for example, with Canada (Castle Hill National Historic Site), where management encompasses both fortifications and cultural and natural heritage in their locations. In this sense, the management of the Castalla Castle Heritage Site is an exception in the province of Alicante<sup>18</sup>.

### **5.3. New uses**

This research also helped to discover the new uses of many fortifications that were linked to the tourist role of the province. It must be highlighted that the province of Alicante, under the Costa Blanca brand, is one of the main tourist destinations in Spain that received 6,000,000 foreign tourists in the summer of 2022<sup>19</sup>. In this sense, its main tourist product is based on the offer of sun and sand thanks to the good weather<sup>20</sup>. The proposal based on cultural heritage, specifically on defensive architecture and castles, is complementary to the main one<sup>21</sup>. Thus, the main uses of castles continuously or occasionally managed with an optimal state of preservation are related to tourism and culture. There are two categories. The first one has the following characteristics:

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<sup>17</sup> Mira Rico J. A. (2017). *Management Analysis of Municipal Castles in the Province of Alicante*. Oxford: BAR Publishing.

<sup>18</sup> Mira Rico J. A. (2016). Castles or cultural and natural landscapes? A new approach to the management of fortifications in the south of the Valencian Community (Spain). Examples of Castalla and Sax [in:] P. Kolodziejczyk, B. Kwiatkowska-Kopka (Eds.). *Cracow Landscape Monographs*, vol. 3 (pp. 37-50). Institute of Archaeology, Jagiellonian University in Kraków & Institute of Landscape Architecture, Cracow University of Technology.

<sup>19</sup> Benito F. J. (2022, October 4). *Mas de la mitad de los turistas que han visitado la Costa Blanca este verano volverán en 2023*. <https://www.informacion.es/alicante/2022/10/04/mitad-turistas-han-visitado-costa-76755643.html>

<sup>20</sup> Olcina Cantos J., Miró Pérez, J. J. (2016). El clima, recurso básico del turismo alicantino. De la valoración del clima invernal al aprovechamiento intensivo del clima festiwal. *Canelobre*, 66 (pp. 19-37).

<sup>21</sup> Rico Cánovas E., Navalón García R. (2016). El patrimonio cultural: recursos y potencialidades para su desarrollo turístico. *Canelobre*, 66 (pp. 108-123).

- Small, medium or large fortifications whose recovery has not been completed yet, but it is sufficiently advanced to be visited.
- Limited cultural and tourist use consisting of self-guided, guided and dramatised tours, either occasionally or continuously, with basic heritage equipment.
- They do not usually have a fixed visiting schedule.

A small fortification like Orba Castle (Figs. 13, 14) and Torre Grossa Castle (Fig. 15) are included in this category.



Fig. 13, 14 Orba Castle. Heritage signposting based on explanatory panels and guided tours. Author: Abydos Arqueológica S.L.



Fig. 15 Heritage signposting of Torre Grossa Castle (Xixona) with an explanatory panel. Author: José Ramón Ortega Pérez

The second category is characterised by:

- Medium and large fortifications whose recovery has been completed or is about to be completed.
- An extensive cultural and tourist use with guided or self-guided tours, as well as occasionally dramatised tours together with other types of uses, which are not exclusive and can be found in the same fortification:
  - Castles used as exhibition spaces. Castalla Castle is a musealised fortification whose contents explain its history.
  - Castles turned into museums. Dénia Castle and Santa Bárbara Castle, the largest ones in the province of Alicante, house respectively the Archaeological Museum of Dénia and the Museum of the City of Alicante, known as MUSA. This museum is located in four spaces of the fortification –the engineers’ hall, the former hospital, the long room and the counter-mines– which were restored and conditioned for museum purposes<sup>22</sup>. Thus, the engineers’ hall is used as a visitor centre where a selection of archaeological objects is exhibited and audiovisual presentations are projected to explain the history of Alicante (Fig. 16). In the former hospital, Alicante crossed over the Mediterranean is displayed with objects and panels to explain the history of the city from antiquity to the present day and reveals various thematic aspects (city-port, commerce, religion, spirituality and shipwreck). The long room, which was the old connection point between the castle and the city, has an exhibition of the coat of arms in the fortification. Finally, the counter-mines are narrow spaces turned into museums to explain the sieges of the city during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714).
  - Castles for local festivities (Banyeres de Mariola Castle), weddings (Atalaya Castle, Villena), talks (Castalla Castle) (Fig. 17) and music concerts (Santa Bárbara Castle, Alicante, and Dénia Castle).
  - Castles for gastronomic experiences (Santa Bárbara Castle) such as tasting local beers and wines.
  - Castles for educational purposes (Castalla Castle) where educational activities are carried out.
- They have an established visiting schedule.

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<sup>22</sup> Bevià i Garcia M., Giner Martínez J. M., Ortega Pérez J. R., Pérez Burgos J. M. (2022). El Castillo de Santa Bárbara de Alicante (España). Una década incompleta de proyectos y actuaciones: 2009-2019 [in:] J. L. Menéndez Fueyo, R. Pérez Jimenez (Eds.), *Los castillos de Alicante ante sus proyectos de intervención. Actas del I seminario de fortificaciones* (pp. 184, 185). Museo Arqueológico de Alicante.



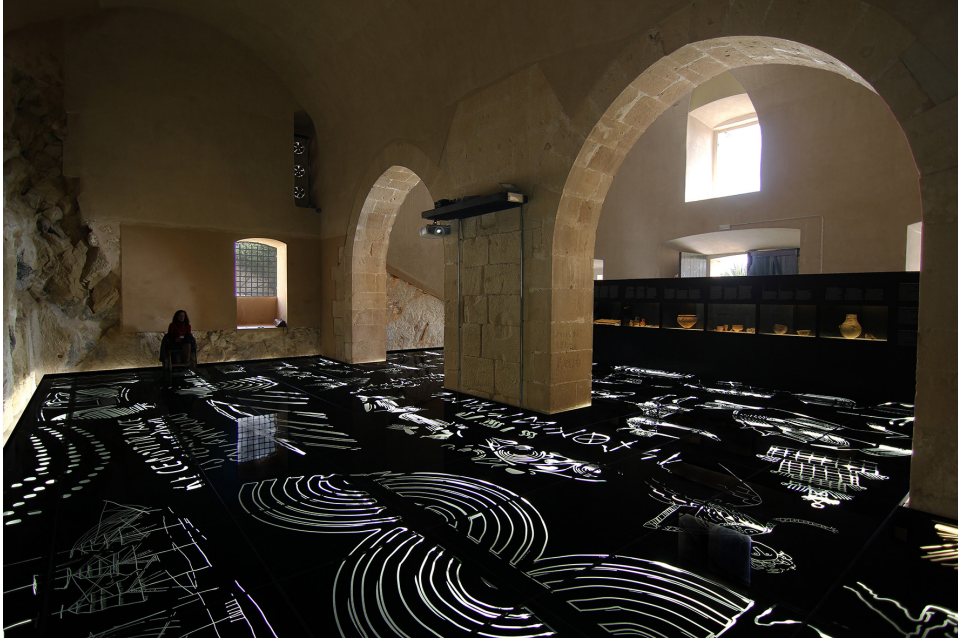


Fig. 16 Santa Bárbara Castle. Engineers' hall Author: Jaime Manuel Giner Martínez



Fig. 17 A talk carried out in Castalla Castle. Author: Centre Cultural Castellut

On the other hand, these uses are developed in accordance with different national technical documents, like the Spanish *National Plan for Defensive Architecture*, and international documents, such as the *ICOMOS Guidelines on Fortifications and Military Heritage*, establishing that castles must be used for new cultural uses respecting their integrity.

The Spanish *National Plan for Defensive Architecture* is a management instrument drafted by the Spanish Cultural Heritage Institute for “the development of shared criteria and methods and a coordinated activity schedule based on the heritage needs, which includes actions for protection, preservation, restoration, research, documentation, training and dissemination”<sup>23</sup>.

It includes five lines of work –*study and diagnosis, study and research, programmes, conservation and maintenance, and training and dissemination*– encompassing many aspects on defensive architecture<sup>24</sup>. The *interventions programme* sets out the general criteria that should be followed regarding a cultural asset. Its commitment to the practical utility of the action stands out, that is, the cultural asset can have a new use without any danger. This fact represents an important advance for the sociocultural use of defensive architecture since it provides important contents that many cultural assets lack to date, especially castles.

For their part, the *ICOMOS Guidelines on Fortifications and Military Heritage* are justified because fortifications and their heritage show problems different from those in other types of heritage. Therefore, they deserve specific attention to eliminate or minimise the negative impact of the problems and enhance their attractions. On the other hand, its purposes are to establish basic principles for interventions and specific research methods for preserving, protecting and valuing castles and the surrounding military cultural landscapes<sup>25</sup>.

This document also supports a sustainable and adequate reuse of castles to avoid the destruction of their integrity and authenticity, to turn them into landmarks for local communities, and to convert them into places of knowledge for the interpretation of military heritage and the transmission of a message of peace, inclusion and acceptance.

## 6. Conclusions

The province of Alicante is an administrative territory belonging to the Valencian Community, one of the 17 autonomous communities that make up Spain. It is a land of castles due to its historical dynamics during the Middle Ages, which has led to 47 castles owned by municipalities that are continuously and occasionally managed, as well as unmanaged<sup>26</sup>. This management

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/planes-nacionales/que-son.html>

<sup>24</sup> Carrión Gútiérrez A. (Coord.) (2015). *Plan Nacional de Arquitectura Defensiva*. *Secretaría General Técnica*, Subdirección General de Documentación y Publicaciones. <https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/planes-nacionales/va/dam/jcr:1c6991a0-aa01-4357-a98a-e788b245a877/03-maquetado-defensiva.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> ICOMOS (2021). *ICOMOS Guidelines on Fortifications and Military Heritage*. <https://www.icofort.org/post/adoption-of-the-icomos-guidelines-on-fortifications-and-military-heritage>

<sup>26</sup> Mira Rico J. A. (2017). *Management Analysis of Municipal Castles in the Province of Alicante*. Oxford: BAR Publishing.

on research, preservation, restoration, didactics and dissemination responds to a public, decentralised and simple model. It is public because the agents that develop and finance it are basically public (municipalities). It is considered decentralised because it is not carried out by the General State Administration, but by the Local Administration (city councils). It is believed to be simple because only a cultural agent is involved (city councils). This model, which is similar to that of other Mediterranean European countries like Italy<sup>27</sup>, coexists with a private model that is partially developed in Santa Bárbara Castle (Alicante). This is the beginning of a new model of public and private management whose medium and short-term results are still unknown. Nevertheless, it has led to the private management of public assets in other contexts like the Fort Ticonderoga Foundation, which manages the Fort Ticonderoga State Park (New York, United States of America)<sup>28</sup>. (Fig. 18).



Fig. 18 Fort Ticonderoga general view. Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Fort\\_Ticonderoga#/media/File:Fort\\_Ticonderoga,\\_Ticonderoga,\\_NY.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Fort_Ticonderoga#/media/File:Fort_Ticonderoga,_Ticonderoga,_NY.jpg)

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<sup>27</sup> Landriani L., Pozzoli M. (2014). *Management and Valuation of Heritage Assets. A Comparative Analysis Between Italy and USA*. Heidelberg: Springer.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.fortticonderoga.org>

Therefore, the fortification is musealised and includes an exhibition programme that explains various topics about the castle and its historical context<sup>29</sup>. On the other hand, it has a powerful living history programme embodied in demonstrations of historical trades, soldiers' life, etc.<sup>30</sup>.

As already indicated, municipal fortifications which are completely and/or partially managed in the province of Alicante have become a cultural and tourist use complementing and diversifying the traditional offer based on sun and sand. However, there is no castle with an offer as diverse as those offered by the above examples. It is due to several reasons: their geographical location in areas that are not physically accessible and their size. In many cases, they already limit the equipment or activities that go beyond heritage signposting and guided or self-guided tours. In addition, it must not be forgotten that many architectural actions have been carried out in castles without thinking about their later use, as recommended by the Spanish *National Plan for Defensive Architecture*. These documents must be committed to the cultural, economic and social profitability of the cultural asset –taking into account the dangers of tourist overexploitation– and may be included in broader documents such as master plans. They will be based on the study of all aspects of human activity regarding the asset<sup>31</sup>: analysis of human, tourist, economic, cultural and geographical resources; sociocultural landscape, topographic studies and relationships with the natural environment; context and historical connection of the territory; relationships with other heritage resources; and legal framework and protection tools. Finally, they will also encourage the participation of the local community.

For this reason, many fortifications must be adapted to a new use which has not been foreseen in the original restoration projects entailing some technical difficulties and an economic investment. For example, Castalla Castle restoration did not include its use as an exhibition space. (see Fig. 11)

Therefore, it is necessary to implement a global strategy at regional level<sup>32</sup> to improve the management of castles in the province of Alicante creating a powerful cultural and tourist offer, and not only a complement. Nowadays there is a paradox since castles are publicised as cultural and tourist products, like Almirza Castle. However, they cannot be publicised because their restoration has not finished and they do not have the right heritage equipment to publicise their configuration and history, among other reasons. (Fig. 19)

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.forticonderoga.org/experience/museum-exhibitions/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.forticonderoga.org/experience/explore-adirondacks/living-history>

<sup>31</sup> Carrión Gútiéz A. (Coord.) (2015). *Plan Nacional de Arquitectura Defensiva*. *Secretaría General Técnica* (p. 36), Subdirección General de Documentación y Publicaciones. <https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/planes-nacionales/va/dam/jcr:1c6991a0-aa01-4357-a98a-e788b245a877/03-maquetado-defensiva.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Mira Rico J. A. (2018). Por un plan autonómico para la gestión de los castillos en la Comunidad Valenciana (España) [in:] A. Marotta, R. Spallone (Eds.). *Defensive Architecture of the Mediterranean*, vol. IX, *Proceedings of the International Conference on Modern Age Fortification of the Mediterranean Coast FORTMED 2018* (pp. 1301-1308). Politecnico di Torino.



Fig. 19 Almizra Castle. Author: Juan Antonio Mira Rico

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