

of Castile, in 1377. A sentence in Latin worth remembering down the ages surrounds the door arch:
"We pray for Our Lord to visit this enclosure and banish all our enemies' evils".

The great cornice and the Lord Father relief are by the Portuguese architect Sebastián Vidal from 1650. Scholars refer to it as the facade and portico ensemble attached to the tower. Somehow, the image from the Gate of Pardon in Seville must have influenced his project. The inside contains a baroque dome, made in 1740 on the initiative of Bishop Pedro de Salazar y Góngora. The four Evangelists appear on the pendentives.

Manuel Nieto Cumplido



R. ARREDONDO-E. BUJO
 Puerta del Perdón (Gate of Pardon), 1879
 J. & R. Amador de los Ríos, *Monument*



OPENING HOURS

November - February:

Mondays to Saturdays:

9:30 am - 10:00 am - 10:30 am - 11:00 am - 11:30 am - 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm
 - 1:00 pm - 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm - 4:30 pm - 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Sundays and holydays of obligation:

9:30 am - 10:00 am - 10:30 am - 11:00 am - 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm
 4:00 pm - 4:30 pm - 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm

March - October:

Mondays to Saturdays:

9:30 am - 10:00 am - 10:30 am - 11:00 am - 11:30 am - 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm
 1:00 pm - 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm - 4:30 pm - 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm - 6:00 pm - 6:30 pm

Sundays and holydays of obligation:

9:30 am - 10:00 am - 10:30 am - 11:00 am - 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm
 4:00 pm - 4:30 pm - 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm - 6:00 pm - 6:30 pm

These times may change according to the needs of the Cathedral.

TOWER ENTRANCE

Access from the North Gallery of the portico
 (next to Puerta del Perdón)



CORDOBA CATHEDRAL BELL TOWER ENGLISH GUIDE

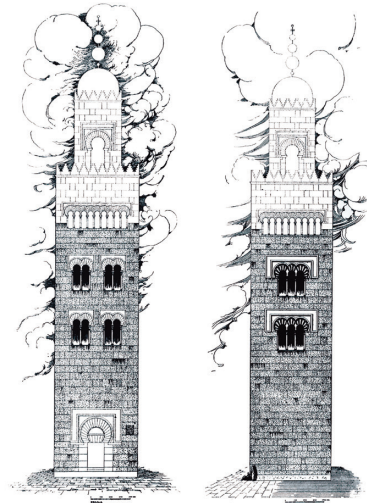




A RELIEF ON THE SANTA CATALINA (ST. CATHERINE) DOOR SHOWING THE ORIGINAL MINARET (1565)

THE MINARET

Originally, our current bell tower was preceded by the minaret erected in the times of Cordoba's first caliph, Abd al-Rahmán III, around 951 A.D. According to al-Maqqari, a chronicler and scribe, "one could use two staircases to climb the tower, separated by masonry in such a way that two people going up at the same time would only meet at the top. It had 107 steps". It was an "impressive piece of work, full of unique artwork and impressive proportions," according to the exceptional description by al-Idrisi (1154 A.D.). This minaret's overall shape was conceived as two bodies with square bases of different width and height, one on top of the other. The lower block was crowned by a row of horseshoe arches resting on columns. The upper block consisted of a room for muezzins, open on



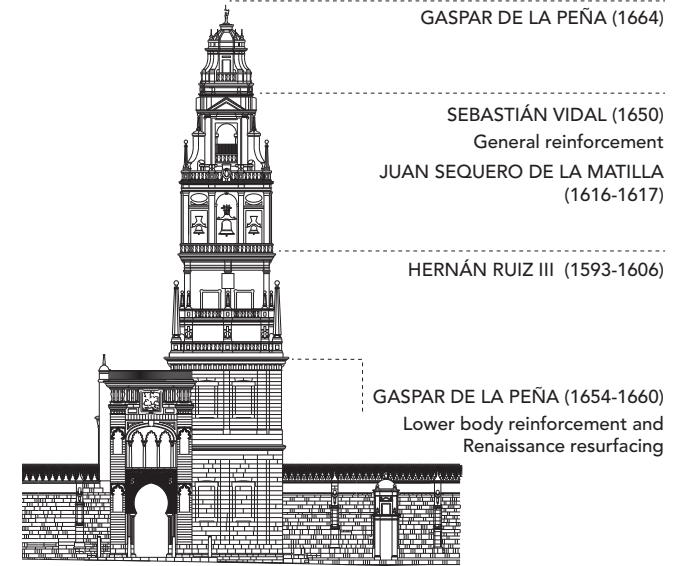
ABD AL-RAHMAN III'S MINARET (951-952)



all four sides. On top of this block there was a dome, topped by an iron spike, the 'ámud', skewering five apples or balls. During your tour, you will be able to recognise parts of the original building on its eastern side, which are the work of the architect Félix Hernández, and you may even be able to get to the top and step on some of its original, eroded steps.

THE CHRISTIAN TOWER

Over a landscape of palm trees, cypresses, olive trees, jacaranda and orange trees, reminiscent of Alexandrian times, one can gaze at the belfry that was built following a capitulary agreement. Work began in 1593 in keeping with the Palladian style sketches by the grand master Hernán Ruiz III in collaboration with Asensio de Maeda, grand master of Seville. Shortly before this, the octagonal spire of the tower, which housed the clock bell, had been severely damaged. On this occasion, a part of the old minaret was demolished and the body for the bells was built. The work was taken over by the master Juan Sequero de Matilla in 1616, creating the second block, "finely forged in brick", that was to contain the clock bell. All of the weight bearing down



BELL TOWER

GASPAR DE LA PEÑA (1664)

SEBASTIÁN VIDAL (1650)
General reinforcement
JUAN SEQUERO DE LA MATILLA
(1616-1617)

HERNÁN RUIZ III (1593-1606)

GASPAR DE LA PEÑA (1654-1660)
Lower body reinforcement and
Renaissance resurfacing

on the old minaret brought about its imminent ruin, which was repaired by Gaspar de la Peña, His Majesty's grand master, who lived in Madrid. What was left of the minaret was sheathed in stone at the same time as the 10th century stairs were reconstructed with stone. This piece of work was crowned by a gigantic golden sculpture of Saint Raphael, the custodian of the city, by Pedro de Paz and Bernabé Gómez del Río in 1664. By then, the tower stood at 54 m tall. The 1755 earthquake in Lisbon wreaked havoc on the building. For centuries, its bells had lent order to life and work in the city, as well as to the prayers of the devoted.

THE GATE OF PARDON (PUERTA DEL PERDÓN)

As it had been for the mosque, this door was always been considered to be the main entrance for the cathedral, and it emulates the atrium door of Roman basilicas. It is used by bishops when they take over the diocese, as well as being the entrance for monarchs and the city's authorities. The facade has been influenced by tastes from different periods. The Mudejar piece that frames the door and displays 14th century inscriptions is from the reign of Henry II