

El Tapial...

Rammed earth is a construction system similar to modern concrete, built on a foundation or plinth that can be made of stone or brick, which provides insulation from damp. A kind of box is built, made out of wooden planks that are held in place by transversely placed beams and that are filled with a mixture of lime mortar, sand and ceramic fragments, which is then compressed. Once this mixture has set, the planks are removed (and can be reused again), and the protruding heads of the beams are cut off in order to begin a new course. The completion of several courses results in a monolithic work that is plastered in order to give its exterior a regular finish, and which was sometimes painted to imitate ashlar. It is a very durable, resistant and economical construction system. This system was used to build most of the Gibralfaro Castle, and it can be seen in some areas of the Alcazaba, such as in the Torre del Homenaje (Keep). On other occasions, the rammed earth was covered by a masonry veneer, although this use is restricted to the interior of the walls. On the south side of the Torre del Homenaje, you can clearly see the rammed earth and the holes left by the beams once they rotted away. Some conserved stretches of the city's Islamic wall are also made of rammed earth.