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LANDSCAPE. GRANADA and ALHAMBRA

INTRODUCTION

Located in the south-east corner of the Iberian Peninsula, Granada belongs to what is now the autonomous region of Andalusia, and since the times of Islamic dominion has been the political centre of the eastern half of this region, known in Roman Antiquity as Baetica.

Its success as a capital stems largely from its remarkable location at the foot of the highest mountain peaks in the Iberian Peninsula, snow-covered for half the year, while around it is a fertile plain, La Vega, where farming was centred in Roman times on large numbers of outlying villas. Novel irrigation systems were introduced during the period of Islamic rule, with the creation of a network of channels that remains in use today. This agricultural land conditioned the city's urban growth, with neighbourhoods spilling outside the city walls to form a transition zone between the urban centre and the rural surroundings. Such a peculiar combination has always drawn the attention of European travellers, especially the Romantics, who saw Granada as evoking the great oriental cities like Damascus or Istanbul. Within the city itself, it is largely the course of the River Darro that articulates the urban landscape connecting the Alhambra with some of the stops on this itinerary.

Added to the picturesque natural landscape, with its orientalist features, was the strong impression made by an equally picturesque mediaeval city, half Islamic and half Christian, dominated by a palace and fortress that still preserved its oriental air, counterpointed by outstanding modern additions such as military bastions and a Renaissance palace that is unique in the history of Spanish architecture. In the city itself, the superb Renaissance rotunda of the cathedral likewise stood alongside the remains of the high mosque and the former Nasrid madrasa, or Koranic school. It was a city where the aristocratic and international court of Charles V had to lodge in uncomfortable houses and walk through a maze of narrow streets where squares were still being cleared and roads widened. It was then still possible to come across the residual Moorish population in their distinctive costumes, as drawn by the German artist Christoph Weiditz or by J. Hoefnagel for his celebrated *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*. In the Granada of the 16th century, these people still signed their names on notarial documents in Arabic characters. It was a Granada and an Alhambra where Moorish music and dances shared the scene with Christian processions against a horizon formed by the peaks of Sierra Nevada.

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1. PALACE OF CHARLES V

In June 1526, after their marriage in Seville, the future Emperor Charles V and his wife, Isabella of Portugal, arrived in Granada with their whole court and lodged at the Alhambra, which was immediately seen to be insufficient to house such a vast number of people. Although Charles V took great pleasure in living in the heart of the Islamic palac, as his grandparents had before him, political reasons soon prompted him to construct a new palace intimately connected with the old Nasrid one. The “New Royal House”, as it was known at the time, served as an entrance hall or vestibule to the “Old Royal House”, and the new building was to be above all an “image” of Christian power.

As such an “image”, the most up-to-date architectural language had to be chosen for the new palace. This was the Renaissance classicism produced in Rome by Raphael during the decade from 1520 to 1530, and which was disseminated by the Italian treatise writers of the 16th century, Serlio in particular, in the form of a suburban villa organised around a central courtyard inserted in a square plan. The combination of the square, the circle and other geometrical figures (octagon for the chapel and oval for a vestibule) shows that the design was attuned to those produced in Italy by the followers of Raphael, such as Peruzzi and Giulio Romano. It was certainly a complete novelty for Spain, where no palace like it has been built before or since, but the emperor never lived to see it. The construction, begun in about 1535 under the direction of Pedro Machuca, was interrupted in 1568 by the Moorish uprising and subsequent war, since the work, by one of those ironies of history, was financed almost entirely by a heavy tax paid by the Morisco minority to preserve some of their customs.

Contextual Commentary

The open circular form of the palace courtyard has prompted comparisons with the closed circular form of the high chapel of the Cathedral. While the chapel was to be a dwelling for the afterlife, the palace could be viewed as a complementary dwelling for the living. They thus denote two sides of the same imperial concept, which saw in Granada a significance as the possible centre or seat of the Emperor of the Christian West. Such a notion was truncated by the religious wars in Europe and the rebellion of the Granadine Moors, but was nonetheless to be preserved for posterity by the two monumental constructions of the Cathedral and the palace.



Allegorical figure of Victory in allusion to the Emperor's naval victories against the Turks

South gate or Serlian gate, traditionally known as the Gate of Empress Isabella, wife of Charles V



There are numerous allusions to the imperial concept, ranging from the circular courtyard evoking Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli, a work of Roman Antiquity built by an emperor of Spanish origin, to the octagonal chapel, which recalls Charlemagne's Palatine Chapel in Aachen, and the direct references to Charles V's military victories in reliefs on the west front, with allegories of Peace and War, History and mythological heroes (Hercules) associated with the figure of Emperor Charles. throughout urban development, but the outlying areas were graced with the construction of major monuments like the Clos Lucé and the Château Gaillard. Hoping to distinguish themselves, wealthy local bourgeois responded with the Hôtel Morin and the Hôtel Joyeuse. The town's heritage reflects many influences, the most significant of which was undoubtedly the Italian Renaissance.



Main entrance of the palace, finished in the reign of Philip II to designs by Juan de Herrera

South front of the palace, the first to be built, designed by the architect Pedro Machuca



2. APARTMENTS OF EMPEROR CHARLES V: QUEEN'S ROOMS AND CLOSET

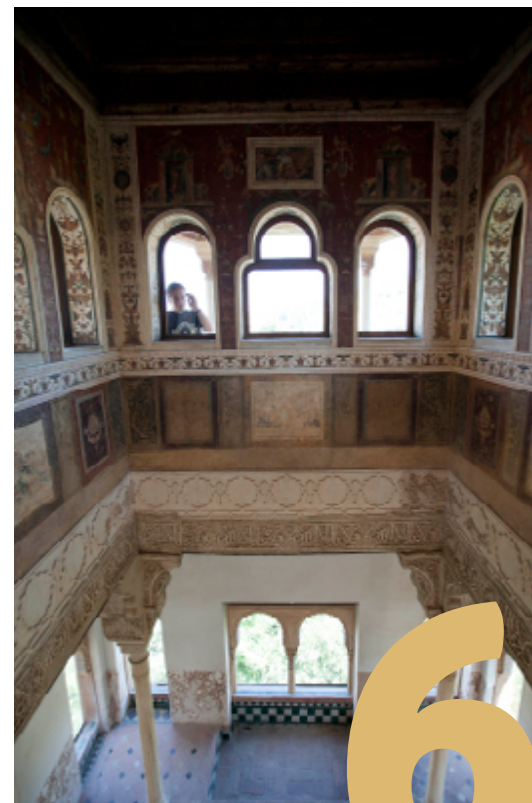
During Emperor Charles V's stay with Isabella of Portugal at the Royal House of the Alhambra in Granada in 1526, it was decided to undertake various rebuilding projects in this sector of the Nasrid palaces, which had already been refurbished in part by Ferdinand and Isabella in order to adapt them to the new Castilian customs. The rebuilding, accomplished between 1528 and 1539, involved the application of a new scale and formal design, with elements alien to Islamic tradition such as fireplaces, decorative features drawn from classical repertoires, and coffered ceilings with Renaissance-style ornamentation. An example is the so-called Emperor's Bureau, which was refurbished in 1532 by Pedro de Machuca, responsible for the design of the Palace of Charles V. The walls must have been decorated with rich tapestries that have not been preserved. The rest of the imperial apartments, designed to house the monarchs' bedchamber and rooms for private rest, were arranged around the Lindaraja garden. The first room is dominated by a great fireplace whose frontispiece is crowned by the imperial coat-of-arms with the recognisable figure of the two-headed eagle upon a globe, a symbol of the spread of the dominions of the Spanish and Portuguese Empire across the Old and New Worlds. Noteworthy too is the ceiling of hexagonal coffers with the initials K and Y (for Charles and Isabella). The next two rooms, known as the "Halls of the Fruits", contain one of the most outstanding iconographic programmes of the Spanish Renaissance. The ceilings were painted by Julio Aquiles and Alejandro Mayner, pupils of Raphael Sanzio and Giovanni da Udine, in about 1537. These works may be considered the earliest set of still lifes to be found in Spain, alternating with the anagrams K and I (believed by some to be the initials of Charles and Isabella, while other specialists see them as referring to the Emperor alone in his attribute of 'KAROLUS IMPERATOR'). Their peculiarity is that they incorporate as motifs the species of fruit from the orchards of the Generalife, and they are stylistically linked with those found in other residences of Italian princes contemporary with these rooms. Regrettably, the Emperor and Empress were never able to occupy these rooms, since the historical and political events which took place after their stay in Granada were to prevent them from doing so.

The Queen's Closet, so called because it was later put to this use, originally had a completely different function. The Nasrid tower of Abu-I-Hayyay



Nasrid Tower of Abu-I-Hayyay, which contains the *stuffeta* known as the Queen's Closet, a belvedere overlooking the surrounding countryside

Interior of the *stuffeta* built over the Islamic construction and decorated with Renaissance paintings inspired by Raphael's decorations for the Vatican *Loggia*



(1333-1354), adjacent to the passage along the wall and originally meant as a privileged vantage point for the sultan's exclusive use with views over the surrounding countryside, was converted into a studiolo or stuffeta for the palace's new owner. The space is shared by these two very different cultural traditions, with its original use as a belvedere maintained and, in this case, enriched by an excellent ornamental programme worthy of the greatest Renaissance princes. The stuffeta was a resource employed in the noble residences of Italian princes. It consisted of a large slab of pierced marble through which aromatic vapours entered from a water boiler underneath, producing a luxurious ambience propitious for retirement and meditation.

The frescoes, painted by Aquiles and Mayner between 1539 and 1546, represent mythological scenes like the "Fall of Phaeton" or scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, recalling the Vatican Stanze with their motifs inspired by those of Nero's *Domus Aurea*. Also included are contemporary scenes pertaining to the Emperor's biography such as the Conquest of Tunis, an event which occurred in 1535 with a vast deployment of the imperial fleet. The scenes are based on sketches by the Dutch painter Cornelisz Vermeyen, who accompanied the Emperor himself during the action, and they also show the ports of Cagliari, Sicily and Tripani and the ruins of Carthage. The painted pilasters are decorated with motifs proper to the formal vocabulary of Italian classicism alongside others of a more curious nature, including in particular one of the first pictorial representations of corn cobs, while next to them is the two-headed eagle, the symbol of the Emperor, to identify the person for whom the room was destined. The Queen's Closet is in fact a studiolo designed for a true Renaissance prince incarnated in the figure of Charles V. Not only is it a conception for the new Royal House, but it also incorporates, in the very heart of the Islamic palaces, a set of rooms that express the refinement and taste of the culture of Renaissance classicism, also a symbol of the cultural synthesis represented today by the monumental complex of the Alhambra and the Generalife.

Contextual Commentary

The apartments or rooms of the Emperor form part of the presence of the political power of the monarchy that had conquered the Alhambra, though care was taken not to alter the architecture of the Nasrid palaces, occupying an area that had not been built on by the Muslim kings, and integrating former Nasrid rooms like the tower of Abu-l-Hayyah. In the meantime, imperial anagrams and symbols are deployed on the ceilings and fireplaces, both fully Renaissance in design. The coffered ceilings were inspired by Serlio but made by Morisco carpenters.



Ceiling of the Hall of the Fruits, decorated by the Italian artists Aquiles and Mayner between 1539 and 1546 with images of plants and fruits growing around the Alhambra

This was therefore a practical solution to the need for greater accommodation space for a hypothetical occupation of the palaces by the imperial court, whether permanent or temporary, but at the same time it was an exponent of the image of Christian power that respected and integrated the cultural values of the vanquished through the architecture of the so-called “Old Royal House”.



Detail of a still life on the ceiling showing fruit from the orchards of the Generalife

Lindaraja Court, with apartments around it that were specially prepared for the Emperor's visit in 1526



3. CHURCH OF SANTA MARÍA DE LA ALHAMBRA

The location of the church of Santa María in the centre of what was once the city of the Alhambra, next to some Arab baths between the Nasrid palaces and the town houses, denotes that there must have been a mosque there previously. Nevertheless, the discovery of an ancient inscription from the Visigothic period above the door of the sacristy adds credence to the tradition that a Christian religious building stood there before the Islamic invasion.

Although the current building dates from the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the space had been enclosed since the early 500s. Proof of this was the disagreement between Emperor Charles V and the Archbishop of Granada when the Renaissance palace was constructed, since if this had been built parallel to the Nasrid palaces in order to join onto them perfectly, it would have invaded part of the space of the church, something the archbishop was not prepared to tolerate. The imperial palace was therefore built obliquely to the Islamic palaces.

Apart from its architectural form and volume, the fact that the building was the parish church of all the citizens who lived inside the precinct of the Alhambra made it the most evident sign of the Christian Alhambra. Kept inside it were such venerated images as that of Our Lady of the Anguish, the patroness of the city of Granada, which is carried in procession during Holy Week in one of Granada's most beautiful religious festivities.

Contextual Commentary

The construction of the church of Santa María in the heart of the Alhambra is another example of the process of Christianisation of the territory conquered from Islam, with an added symbolic charge in this case owing to its situation at the centre of the political and military power of the Nasrid kingdom, and to its vindication of a Christian presence on the spot that pre-existed Muslim dominion.

Although its architectural form and type are those characteristic of the Counter-Reformation church (single aisleless nave, large crossing and austere decoration), the materials employed for the walls and roofs belong to the Islamic tradition, as was usual in Granadine churches. The climate of the Counter-Reformation was also responsible for the plaque set up on a column in front of the church in 1590, which alludes to the martyrdom of two Franciscans on that spot in 1397 at the hands of the Muslims.



Exterior of the church of Santa María de la Alhambra, built on the site of the former Royal Mosque of the Alhambra, with a plan and design indebted to Herrera



Memorial plaque to the martyrdom of the Franciscan friars Juan de Cetina and Pedro de Dueñas upon this spot in the times of Al-Andalus



Baroque altarpiece of the church, originally from the
Basílica de las Angustias in Granada

4. CONVENT OF SAN FRANCISCO [NOW PARADOR NACIONAL]

The former convent of San Francisco was established by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1494 on the premises of a Nasrid palace, the Palace of the Infantes. It was built in the 16th century and occupied at first by a community of Clarissine nuns before passing later to monks of the same professed order of St Francis. It is worth noting that the construction of the convent modified the use of the surrounding space, since the end of the Calle Real Alta was adapted to circumvent the convent and the adjoining terrain was turned into kitchen gardens for the community.

After the disentailments of Mendizábal and Madoz, the Franciscans abandoned the monastery in 1835, and it was used in the 19th century as a barracks. The architect Leopoldo Torres Balbás saved it from ruin between 1927 and 1936, converting it into a residence for landscape painters. In 1949 it was excavated by Francisco Prieto Moreno, who found the hammam of the Muslim palace. This was integrated into the new building that houses the Parador de Turismo, a state-run hotel.

The convent is articulated around a two-storey Renaissance cloister with arches supported by marble columns. Preserved in it is part of the earlier Nasrid palace: the so-called Arab Hall and a belvedere with views over the Generalife, in front of which a cupola with stalactite work is preserved. It was beneath this cupola that the provisional tombs of Ferdinand and Isabella were laid, since the Catholic Monarchs were buried in this place until 1521, when they were transferred to the Royal Chapel. This increased the symbolic significance as a burial place of the church of the convent of San Francisco. The Mendoza family, patrons of the convent, used it to bury some of its members.

Owing to the formal similarities of the plasterwork with that found in the Two Sisters and Abencerrajes halls, some scholars have dated this decoration to the time of the monarch Mohammed V. It is in any case one of the most important examples of the survival of Nasrid motifs in 16th century architecture.

Contextual Commentary

The occupation of one of the several Nasrid palaces in the Alhambra by a religious community is palpable proof of the reuse of sumptuous



Atrium, porch and tower of the convent church

residential buildings, sometimes donated by Ferdinand and Isabella for analogous use after the conquest to noblemen who had fought in the war, and sometimes, as in this case, to the Seraphic Order of St Francis, held in special esteem by the Catholic Monarchs, as demonstrated by the fact that Queen Isabella was entombed inside it in 1504. It is highly significant that the religious space where she was buried preserves the decoration, vaulting and arches of what was once a belvedere of the Nasrid palace, just as the Catholic Monarchs installed a chapel in one of the side halls of the Court of the Lions. This shows that Islamic ornamentation was compatible with Christian religious uses, above all because the richness of oriental decoration was appreciated by the Catholic Monarchs, and doubtless by the western mentality in general (as reported by the traveller Jerónimo Münzer), as a symbol of power.

The location of the monastery at the central point of the palatial precinct is likewise a demonstration of the transformation of the old Nasrid town into a new Christian one, where the presence of a mendicant religious order like that of St Francis was virtually a requisite.



Interior of the cloister of the former convent, now a Parador Nacional hotel, with a section of the Royal Water Channel, around which the so-called Infantes' Garden in the old Nasrid palace is laid out

Exterior view of the former Convent of San Francisco, a Franciscan friary that was disentailed in 1835. It was founded inside the Alhambra at the decision of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492



5. GENERALIFE [RENAISSANCE GARDENS]

From the very moment of the Christian conquest, the gardens of the Alhambra were fully appreciated by the conquerors and were therefore carefully preserved and maintained. In his writings, Jerónimo Münzer makes mention of the wish of Ferdinand and Isabella to preserve the palaces and gardens, using Morisco labour for the purpose.

Far from a rejection of the art and culture of the conquered in favour of the values of the vanquishers, what was initiated in Renaissance Spain was a fully-fledged fashion for the Islamic, with the Moorish interpreted as a synonym for refinement. Proof of this is the admiration aroused by the gardens of the Alhambra in the Venetian ambassador to the court of Charles V, Andrea Navaghero.

The most important modifications to the gardens of the Alhambra were carried out inside the Nasrid palaces with the creation of the gardens of the Court of the Grated Window and the Court of the Lindaraja. This resulted in a superb combination of the design of a Muslim courtyard with the new architectural tastes of the Spanish Renaissance.

In the early 17th century, the Garden of Los Adarves (the Rampart Walks) was laid out in the Alhambra over the southern moat of the Alcazaba citadel, which had been filled in. Don Íñigo López de Mendoza y Mendoza, fourth Count of Tendilla and third Marquess of Mondéjar, was responsible for the transformation of this area, which is structured around two Renaissance fountains, one at each end, with marine genii on dolphins, and vegetation in between. The garden seen today, with its arrangements of hedges, shrubs and flower beds and its fountains with stone basins against the walls, is the result of further work in the second half of the 19th century in a sober classicist style.

Contextual Commentary

The Generalife, a suburban villa of the Nasrid court surrounded by gardens and orchards, retained its use under the dominion of the Spanish kings. Charles V had a special predilection for the place, since its estate included a large hunting reserve, and an area for recreational ball games was cleared next to the new gardens, the upper part of which was stepped. Once again, western aesthetic concepts were thus integrated into those of the Orient.



Fountain of the Dolphins in the Garden of Los Adarves, made in grey stone from the quarries of Sierra Elvira

It seems that it was in these gardens that the meeting took place between the Venetian ambassador and poet Andrea Navagbero and the Spanish poet and courtier Juan Boscán, whereby the Italian metre of the sonnet was introduced to Spain. This was adopted both by Boscán and by Garcilaso de la Vega, the greatest poet of the Spanish Renaissance, who was also a poet and man of arms. into a new Christian one, where the presence of a mendicant religious order like that of St Francis was virtually a requisite.



Lindaraja Court, a Renaissance garden that evolved from the former belvedere of the Nasrid period



The so-called Court of the Sultana's Cypress, with gardens laid out in the Castilian period

6. WALLED PRECINCT [BASTIONS - TENDILLA CISTERN - GATE OF THE SEVEN FLOORS AND GATE OF JUSTICE]

After conquering Granada in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella turned the Alhambra into a Royal Fortress, expressing a wish to occupy it and beginning a gradual transformation with changes in its use. Of the four main gates of the walled precinct, the ones to the north face the city and are visually integrated in it. The other two in the south, whose names in the late 15th century were Bibalfarax (Seven Floors) and Principal (Justice), acted as a strategic external façade, an original function that was retained after the conquest by constructing defensive bastions in front of them for protection from artillery. An intermediate bastion, known as the Bastion of the Olive, was also built in front of the Tower of the Heads. Unlike the other two, which were circular, this one was polygonal.

The Gate of the Seven Floors, dating from the mid-15th century, had a ceremonial function during the Nasrid period, since jousts and military parades were held in front of it. The monumental Gate of Justice, built in 1348, displayed prominent Islamic cultural references such as the symbols of the hand and the key, which prompted a Christian reply in the form of a statue of the Virgin and a votive altar in the interior.

Preserved inside the bastion of the first of these gates are the outer walks on two storeys with half-barrel vaults and embrasures, while the second gate today lacks its floors and roof. This reinforcement of the defensive system with circular bastions effective against artillery, the feared military innovation of the time, was a consequence of the Alhambra's new functions as a military headquarters with its own jurisdiction. For nearly a quarter of a century, the key figure in this respect was Don Íñigo López de Mendoza (1442?-1515), second Count of Tendilla. An ambassador in Rome, he distinguished himself during the conquest of Granada and was present when Boabdil surrendered the keys to the fortress. King Ferdinand appointed him as Governor of the Alhambra and Captain-General of Granada, whereupon he undertook to direct the transformation of the fortress's defences for protection against artillery in accordance with the plans of the great Renaissance builder Ramiro López. He was also responsible for the construction of a cistern to supply the precinct with water. Rectangular in structure, this consisted of two parallel and inter-connecting aisles with barrel vaults on which there were as many as six



Tendilla Cistern, built for the storage and supply of water at the orders of the Governor of the Alhambra immediately after the departure of the Nasrids

well curbs. One of these can be discerned in the esplanade that was laid out on top, now known as the Plaza of the Cisterns.

Contextual Commentary

The conquest of Granada by Ferdinand and Isabella meant, among other things, innovations in armament and military defence. Of particular importance was the development of artillery and that of poliorcetics, or defensive architecture. The latter, which changed the appearance of military enclosures, was intimately linked with the first, and it was precisely the development of artillery that most affected the Alhambra, with the construction in the years immediately after the conquest of bastions, ravelins and inclined walls to reinforce the most vulnerable points or those most in need of protection, such as the main gates (Justice, Seven Floors) and the vertex of the Alcazaba (citadel). These forms and construction techniques resembled the experiments carried out in Italy, whose military engineers played a dominant role throughout the 16th century, but which their Spanish counterparts knew and put into practice owing to the military campaigns in the Kingdom of Naples, a dominion of the Crown of Aragon. Complementary to these new defences was the construction of the monumental underground cistern between the Alcazaba and the palaces.

At a later stage, in mid-century, the precinct of the Alcazaba was reinforced on the eastern side with a new inclined wall built by Luis Machuca. He had worked with the Italian military engineer Calvi, possibly the designer of this construction.



Some of the rebuilding carried out by the Castilians shortly after their arrival consisted of constructing new defences and bastions adapted to technological advances in weaponry, especially artillery



Most of the old gates and defensive towers had their bastions rebuilt with curved walls

7. BASIN OF CHARLES V

Located near the Gate of Justice, this fountain was made in 1545 to a design by the Italianised Pedro Machuca. With the exception of the added Tendilla arms and some other adornments, it was fashioned by the Genoese Nicolao da Corte, who was working on the reliefs of the Renaissance palace. This offers further proof of the constant cultural exchange between Italy and Spain that characterises the Renaissance in Granada.

Its construction was financed by Don Luis Hurtado de Mendoza, third Count of Tendilla and second Marquess of Mondéjar. Mendoza was Captain-General of the Alhambra from 1515 to 1539.

The three masks on the first tier are decorated with ears of corn, flowers and fruits, and have been interpreted as allegories either of Granada's three rivers, the Darro, the Genil and the Beiro, or of the three productive seasons of the year. At the ends are the Tendilla arms.

The second tier and the semicircular pediment are dedicated to the emperor. The inscription on the second tier reads: "IMPERATORI CAESARI / KAROLO QUINTO / HISPANIARUM REGI" (Emperor Caesar Charles V King of Spain), while the semicircular pediment contains the imperial coat-of-arms with the two-headed eagle and the motto "PLUS OULTRA". The pedestals flanking the inscription contain emblems alluding to the Emperor. On one side are two pillars on the sea enclosing a globe and bearing the motto "Non Plus Oultra", and on the other the linked chain and the flint symbolising the Order of the Golden Fleece, of which he was the sovereign.

The fountain is crowned by the imperial arms and the two-headed eagle, evidencing the hierarchy of power. The governor of the Alhambra, the Count of Tendilla, is at the base, but above him is the King of Spain, who is also the Emperor.

On the stretch of wall against which the basin of the fountain rests are four carved medallions with mythological scenes: Hercules killing the Lernaean Hydra, the twins Phrixus and Helle crossing the Hellespont astride a ram (as an allusion to the Order of the Golden Fleece), Daphne pursued by Apollo, and finally Alexander the Great.



Emblem of Emperor Charles V, with the pillars of Hercules flanking the new orb surmounted by the eagle and the imperial crown with the motto *PLVS ULTRA*

Contextual Commentary

This type of fountain with a basin built against a wall, derived from the trough for watering horses known in Spain as a pilar or pilón, denotes a domestic and/or public use given its strategic location next to the Gate of Justice, one of the main entrances to the precinct of the Alhambra. However, this is surpassed by the cultured discourse deployed across its front, where the rigorous classical order of the architecture is accompanied by allegories in the purest classical tradition to signify the city's three rivers, mythological scenes of a heroic nature in direct allusion to the figure of Emperor Charles V, and the crowning imperial emblem of the two-headed eagle. Together with this are two other emblems specific to the Emperor: the golden fleece, traditional to the House of Burgundy, and the device created for him as the lord of the New World, the "Plus Ultra", associated with the figure of Hercules as the fleece was with the hero Jason.



Basin of Charles V, built on the orders of the Count of Tendilla, whose emblems appear alongside those of the Emperor. Its decoration is indicative of the culture of the day



Curved pediment crowning the basin with the Emperor's arms

8. GATE OF THE POMEGRANATES - RUSSET TOWERS AND RAVELIN

On the hill of Mauror, opposite that of Sabika where the Alhambra stands, an important defensive complex was built consisting of three interconnected towers. The Torres Bermejas (Russet Towers) were the principal defensive redoubt to the south of the Alcazaba (citadel) of the Alhambra, and were joined onto the Nasrid complex, forming a continuation of the city wall. At the point where the two fortifications meet was one of the gates of the Nasrid precinct, rebuilt in the 16th century as the famous Gate of the Pomegranates. The interior of the Russet Towers forms a small bailey of an approximately rectangular shape.

Various phases of construction can be distinguished throughout the towers' history. The earliest remains belong to the late 8th and early 9th centuries. After the Christian conquest, constant rebuilding work was carried out, beginning with the reconstruction of the central tower on the basis of the existing Islamic structures, and continuing with a series of enlargements and restoration projects.

The extent of this rebuilding was in consonance with the new ideas and interests of the government of Granada. Retaining the three towers, a new artillery bastion was erected at the west end, facing the city, as part of the programme of fortifications overseen by the Count of Tendilla, the first governor of the Alhambra. This meant a change in the orientation of the defences. Whereas the Nasrids had focused their protection on the hill of Mauror, the Christians built artillery platforms oriented towards the city in order to contain a possible urban revolt.

A large number of Muslim tombstones are to be seen set into the inner walls, showing that the towers were also reinforced by the Christians. The reuse of funerary masonry for rebuilding projects was common at the time, and occurred also in other parts of the Alhambra, such as the enclosing wall which runs from the Gate of Justice to the outworks of the Alcazaba.

In the 18th century, further work was carried out on the surface of the defensive wall and the lime wash of the outer surface of the central tower. In the first half of the 19th century, the Russet Towers were in a state of abandonment and decay. New interior and exterior refurbishment was carried out in the year 1854. The towers have fulfilled various functions



The Gate of the Pomegranates closes off the stretch of wall that links the defences of the Alcazaba Citadel with the so-called Russet Towers

since then. From 1769 to 1875 they were used as dwellings, and in 1876 they were converted once more into a military prison.

In 1962, the towers came under the ownership of the Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife. Various projects were then initiated with the aim of preserving and adapting all the outlying areas of the Alhambra.

Contextual Commentary

The outer walls of the Alhambra linking the Alcazaba (citadel) with the Russet Towers, another defensive enclave on the opposite hill, are interrupted at the natural passage of the Gomérez Hill by a monumental Renaissance gate, a replacement for the earlier Muslim gate which had fulfilled the same function. The purpose of the replacement was to construct an image of the newly established power, a foretaste of further images culminating in the Alhambra with the Palace of Charles V and, at an intermediate point on this access road to the heart of the old Muslim fortress-city, with the Renaissance fountain of the Basin of Charles V.

The design strongly recalls that drawn up for another exterior wall, that of the Palazzo Te in Mantua, by Giulio Romano, and other drawings by the same artist, though less well executed in this case. Even so, it perfectly fulfils its function of “sealing off” the precinct – it should be remembered that it is dressed only on the exterior – while clearly proclaiming its new master through its architectural classicism and its ornamental motifs of the imperial coat-of-arms and a prominent set of pomegranates. This fruit is not only an allusion to the city (pomegranate is *granada* in Spanish) but also a classic royal emblem that had already been adopted as a personal device by the Emperor’s paternal grandfather, Maximilian, and had been incorporated by his maternal grandparents into the coat-of-arms of the Spanish monarchy.



Coat-of-arms of the Emperor above the Gate of the Pomegranates, so named for the large decorative features that appear on it



Gate of the Pomegranates, the main access from the city to the precinct of the Alhambra, designed by Pedro Machuca and inspired by the work of Giulio Romano for the Palazzo Te in Mantua. It stands on the site of a former Islamic gate.

9. PLAZA NUEVA - CHANCELLERY

The current Plaza Nueva (New Plaza) is the result of various phases in the development of the city from the Islamic period until the start of the 20th century.

In the Islamic period, the River Darro flowed in the open through this part of the city. To link the two banks, there were two bridges which ended on each side in the labyrinth of alleyways habitual in the urban layouts of the period. After the arrival of Ferdinand and Isabella, the local city council proposed that the city should be provided with a representative open space in the Castilian manner. For this purpose, the River Darro was first to be covered over, and large numbers of dwellings were to be expropriated and demolished to ensure ample room for the new plaza.

In the 19th century, the area occupied by today's Plaza Nueva was configured as three different plazas, but the flooding of the Darro in 1835 and the demolition of the church of San Gil made it possible to extend it to its current size and form.

The plaza had many different uses: a market place, a parade ground, a place of execution, and a setting for processions and bonfire festivals.

The construction of the Royal Chancellery originated in Ferdinand and Isabella's idea of turning Granada into the capital of the kingdom by transferring there one of the two Chancelleries then in existence, that of Ciudad Real. The Tribunal was initially housed in the Alcazaba Cadi-ma in the Albaicín district, in the street known for that reason as Calle de Oidores (Street of the Magistrates). It was subsequently moved to the more central location where it now stands, and the new building became one of the most important public edifices constructed in Granada in the first half of the 16th century, during the reign of Charles V. Its construction began in 1531.

It is built on a square plan with a porticoed courtyard in the centre, reached from the vestibule by flights of stairs. Distributed around this are the various rooms of the building.



Main entrance to the Royal Chancellery of Granada, a late 16th century Mannerist work by Francisco del Castillo

Contextual Commentary

The configuration of the Plaza Nueva forms part of the new urban concept of ample public spaces initiated by Ferdinand and Isabella after the conquest in order to transform the Islamic city, and it represents a considerable feat of engineering. Subsequently, it was here that Charles V transferred the High Court of Justice, or Chancellery, created by his grandparents for judicial litigation in the southern half of the country, constituting a crucial instrument for the modernisation of the state. By locating it in Granada, the role the recently conquered city was to play in the administration of the new State was clearly emphasised. The very large building acquired its full representative and symbolic value with the façade constructed at the order of Philip II in about 1586 to a design by Francisco del Castillo “the younger”, an architect and sculptor who had trained in Rome with Ammanati and Vignola, who brought the style of the Italian “Terza Maniera” initiated by Michelangelo to this edifice.

Justice, a theme and allegory which dominates this building, is inseparable from the notion of Peace, cultivated by the dispensation and regulation of Justice, and all the more given that the façade was constructed after the bloody war that followed the Moorish uprising of 1568.



Current appearance of the ‘New Plaza’ that resulted from urban restructuring in the 16th and 19th centuries



Royal Chancellery of Granada, established by the Catholic Monarchs in 1494 as the principal seat of justice in the south of the Iberian Peninsula

10. CHURCH OF SANTA ANA

After the conquest of the kingdom of Granada, it became necessary to provide the city with the infrastructure required by a place that was now Christian. This led to the creation of parish churches. That of Santa Ana is an example of the Mudéjar style of ecclesiastical construction in 16th century Granada.

These churches combine Hispano-Muslim construction techniques, especially the use of materials like brick for the fabric, wood for the ceilings and glazed ceramics for the decoration, with specifically Castilian types of building and ornamentation, though these were normally limited to the portal, made of stone and decorated with Renaissance-style motifs. This tendency was adopted for reasons of economy and versatility, since the use of very inexpensive and abundant materials meant that the churches could be built quickly.

Located on the former site of the “Al-hama Almanzora” mosque, the construction of Santa Ana began in 1537 to plans by Diego de Siloé. It has a rectangular plan with a single aisleless nave, five side chapels on each side, and a raised high chapel. The single nave is covered by a double-hipped timber framework, and the high chapel by an eight-sided wooden ceiling.

The portal, designed by Sebastián de Alcántara in 1542, consists of a round arch flanked by fluted Corinthian columns with the arms of Archbishop Niño de Guevara in the spandrels. Over the entablature is a tondo with images of the Virgin and Child.

The tower has round-arched openings framed by alfiz mouldings with white and blue tiles, which also cover the pyramidal roof that crowns it.

A great many masters took part in the construction of the church, constituting an example of a collective guild project of a type going back to the Middle Ages. Special attention is merited by the production of glazed roof and wall tiles under the direction of a woman, María de Robles.



Exterior of the church of Santa Ana, built in a Mudéjar style that combines the construction techniques of Al-Andalus with Castilian decorative repertoires

Contextual Commentary

One fundamental aspect of the social and urban transformation of the Islamic city of Granada into Christian Granada was the assimilation of the Moorish population who did not leave the city, and at the same time the administrative organisation of the urban area into districts or “col-laciones” along the lines of mediaeval Christian cities, with each district governed by its parish church. This involved the construction ex novo of a fair number of churches. While these retained the functional type of an aisleless church with a high altar at the east end, Moorish techniques, materials and labour were combined in their construction, from the third decade of the 16th century onwards, with significant elements from the classicism then dominant, especially prominent in the portals. One fine example is this church of Santa Ana, whose stylised tower clearly evokes Islamic minarets. Apart from the decoration of glazed ceramic, other features with Muslim roots include the roofing of the nave and presbytery with Nasrid-style carpentry, whereas the portal displays a simple but correct classical composition.

This hybrid of oriental and western aesthetics in the construction is a result of the strategy initiated by Fray Hernando de Talavera, the first archbishop of Granada, who introduced various elements of Moorish culture into liturgies and preaching as an aid to the Christianisation of the Moriscos.

Interior of the church, which forms part of a network of parish churches built by the Catholic Monarchs after the papal edict of 1501, of key importance for the evangelisation of the inhabitants of Muslim Granada



11. CASTRIL HOUSE

This house on Carrera del Darro is laid out on a plan complete with an entrance hall, a staircase leading to a raised courtyard with columned porticoes, a main staircase in one corner of the courtyard with a Mudejar timber framework ceiling of considerable quality, and a garden behind. The house belonged to the Castril family, the heirs to the influential secretary of the Catholic Monarchs, Hernando de Zafra, and its construction dates from 1539. Emblazoned on the sandstone façade is their coat-of-arms with the image of the Comares Tower in the Alhambra, a device granted to Hernando de Zafra by Ferdinand and Isabella in recognition of his leading role in the capitulations which put an end to the war of Granada, and which were negotiated in that tower. The rest of the rich decorative programme on the façade is related to original designs by Diego de Siloé, an artist trained in Italy who also designed the High Chapel of Granada Cathedral, although it was probably executed by masons who were less well versed in the decorative arts than the master from Burgos. At the north-east corner is a false balcony crowned by a frieze with the enigmatic inscription “Esperándola del cielo” (“Waiting for her from heaven”), which has given rise to various interpretations that have more to do with legend than reality. The ornamentation is arranged in a series of horizontal strips with lateral pilasters marking each storey, and consists of forms and motifs taken from classical repertoires, laden with symbolism and heraldic connotations. The building is a fine example of the mixture of tradition and classicism in 16th century Granadine architecture, which equipped the former capital of the Nasrid kingdom with a new artistic language expressing a new age and a new culture. It now houses the Archaeological Museum of Granada.



Courtyard of the Castril House, which currently houses the Archaeological Museum of Granada. The Alhambra can be seen beyond it



Detail of the main door of the house with Plateresque decoration and classical ornamental repertoires

Contextual Commentary

The Castril House is a perfect example of the synthesis of diverse cultural influences that come together in the city of Granada during the first third of the 16th century. On the one hand, its architectural type is that of a Castilian mansion, with a fully decorated façade and a characteristic corner balcony, while on the other hand it adapts ornamental forms and motifs of an unorthodox Renaissance classicism to make room for figurative elements from the Islamic world, such as the Nasrid war shield alongside the Roman arms common in the classical repertoire. The principal emblematic motif, emblazoned on the keystone of the entrance arch, is meanwhile the Comares Tower, the most important tower of the Alhambra, and the origin of the noble title granted to the Marquess of Comares, the descendant of the builder and original owner of the house. Significantly, the house stands on Carrera del Darro beneath that very tower. This interplay of references indicates the esteem in which the Islamic monument was held by the conquering Christian aristocracy.



Decorative repertoire of the door jambs mixing Greco-Latin arms and Islamic Andalusian shields, highly appreciated by the Christian warriors

Main façade of the Castril House, built by Don Hernando de Zafra, grandson of the Secretary to the Catholic Monarchs, in the Axares district



12. MONASTERY OF SANTA ISABEL LA REAL - PALACE OF DAR AL-HORRA

Founded in the first years of the 16th century by Queen Isabella the Catholic, this monastery in Granada's Albaicín district then occupied the Nasrid palace of Dar Al-Horra, which had been adapted for the purpose. Beginning with the palace, the whole monastic complex, including the church, choirs, cloister, refectory and chapter house, then developed through the acquisition of adjoining properties, and was essentially completed by the 17th century. The area chosen for the building of the monastery was made up of kitchen gardens and orchards attached to dwellings belonging to members of the Nasrid court. It lay in the western sector of the Quadima Casbah, which was superimposed on the Visigothic Christian city of Iliberri (Elvira), itself a continuation of the Roman Municipium Florentinum Eliberritanum (1st century A.D.).

Owing to the monastery's process of construction, the elements to be found there range from parts of the Nasrid palace of Dar Al-Horra to examples of Flamboyant Gothic (the façade of the church), Mudéjar (the structure of the church and choirs), Early Renaissance (the high altar), Mature Classicism (the cloister) and Baroque (the altarpiece of the Immaculate Conception and various images).

From its foundation to the present day, this monastery has been home to a contemplative community of the nuns of St Clare.

Contextual Commentary

The early foundation of this convent by Queen Isabella next to the Nasrid palace of Dar al-Horra in a heavily Islamised part of the city, the Albayzín district, demonstrates a manifest interest in cultural fusion through art from the very moment of the conquest. This is especially true of religious buildings, an evident result of the determination to bring the residual Moorish population within the Christian pale that led similarly to the building of the parish churches. The Islamic influence is perceptible in the tower of the church, whose form and decoration recall the minaret of a mosque, and in the rich and diverse types of wooden roofing in the nave and cloister of the convent, constructed with the traditional techniques of Muslim Granada. By contrast with the survival of these Islamic features, which are found throughout the 16th century and even the next, their conjunction with Christian architecture illustrates the various stylistic



Outer gate of the monastery consecrated to Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, for whom Queen Isabella the Catholic felt special devotion

changes that took place in Spain and Granada during the first third of the century. Flamboyant Gothic, identified with the Catholic Monarchs, is therefore found alongside an early Renaissance style inside the church and a mature classicism in the cloister.



Renaissance cloister of the convent, inhabited by a closed order of Franciscan nuns ever since it was first founded by Queen Isabella the Catholic

High Chapel of the convent church covered with exceptionally fine Mudejar woodwork



13. HOSPITAL OF SAN JUAN DE DIOS

This hospital founded in the 16th century has retained its function uninterrupted since then. The germ of the building was a small hospital for pilgrims and paupers, who were cared for by the Hieronymite monks of the monastery opposite it. The Order of Hospitallers of St John of God moved into the hospital in 1551, several years after the death of their founder, who had started to prepare the move after carrying out hospital work in the city since 1539 in various buildings that always proved unsuitable.

It has two courtyards. The main one, dating from the 16th century, has two storeys connected by an interesting staircase with a Mudejar wooden ceiling. Like the rest of the building, it underwent considerable reconstruction under Fray Alonso de Jesús y Ortega, the general of the Order from 1733 to 1759. It was then that the second courtyard was built, the staircase was redecorated by José de Bada, and the iconographic programme of the first courtyard was commissioned from the artists Diego Sánchez de Sarabia and Tomás Ferrer. This was also when the Baroque basilica containing the saint's remains was built, leading to the conversion of the hospital church into an infirmary and a new entrance hall. The mannerist portal constructed in 1609 by the mason Cristóbal de Vilchez now became the main entry of the hospital.

Contextual Commentary

One of the most important innovations of the modern state from its beginnings is charitable health care. Ferdinand and Isabella took the initiative by creating a number of Royal Hospitals along the lines of the Ospedale Maggiore in Milan or the Hospital of Sancti Spiriti in Sassia (Rome), and one of these was built in Granada. The problem of poverty and disease, much more acute in the second half of the 16th century, incentivated Philip II to resume his ancestors' initiative. However, religious implication also played a major role in this field, and in Granada very especially in the figure of John of God, the founder of an order made up exclusively of hospitallers which was to spread around the world. This hospital in Granada, built alongside the convent, is therefore of special significance owing to its size and organisation. Its architectural type, different from that of the Royal Hospitals, follows the rules of a mature classicism, although the interior also displays the traditional Moorish carpentry ceilings.



Main front of the Hospital of San Juan de Dios, with the former porch of the hospital church



Main staircase communicating the different floors of the hospital, redecorated in the 18th century, and still preserving its original Mudejar ceiling



Main cloister of the hospital

14. ROYAL MONASTERY OF SAN JERÓNIMO

Founded in 1492 by Ferdinand and Isabella in the town of Santa Fe, the monastery was subsequently moved to an area of Arab orchards in Granada called Dar Aben Murdi. It became a focal point for the city's urban development after the Christian conquest when Emperor Charles V granted the High Chapel of the church to the Duchess of Sessa, the wife of the Great Captain Don Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, as a family mausoleum in exchange for financing the building work. The duchess and her entourage of friends and relatives established their residences near the monastery, forming the new district of La Duquesa. This was to prove crucial in the evolution of the construction project, initially begun in the Gothic style, towards the Renaissance model with which it was concluded in 1543. The church, designed on a basilica plan by Jacobo Florentino and Diego de Siloé, has a richly ornamented interior. Especially outstanding are the High Chapel, with its magnificent Romanist altarpiece, and the choir stalls. On the exterior, the octagonal chancel with its heavy buttresses is decorated with reliefs alluding to the exploits of the legendary warrior. The monastery's two cloisters combine Mudejar and Gothic decorative elements with others in the Roman style. The larger of them contains portals leading into seven funerary chapels for great Granadine families, whose decorative programme was completed by Siloé, one of the foremost artists of the Spanish Renaissance.

Contextual Commentary

The religious order of the Hieronymites was one of the first to be established in the newly conquered Granada. Fray Hernando de Talavera, the first Archbishop of Granada and confessor of Queen Isabella, was a member of the order, and it was he who inspired and created the strategies and instruments for the Christianisation of the Moriscos. Another Hieronymite monk, Fray Pedro Ramírez de Alba, also became the archbishop. Under his mandate it was decided, with the agreement and support of Charles V, to transform the Gothic Cathedral into a Renaissance building. In 1526, it was precisely the Emperor who granted the church of the monastery then under construction to the widow of Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, the Great Captain, as a mausoleum for this military hero, celebrated for his victories in the war waged by the Catholic Monarchs to recover the Kingdom of Naples.



Main façade of the monastery church, designed by Diego de Siloé, and financed as a burial place for Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba by his widow, the Duchess of Sessa

This mausoleum is an early work of Renaissance architecture in whose construction Jacopo Florentino and Diego de Siloé were involved, the latter before his work on the Cathedral. Both on the exterior and the interior, strictly classicist allegories and images of heroic figures form a humanist programme extolling the fame of the Great Captain and his military exploits.

Text: Legend on the exterior of the chancel: “*Gonsalo Ferdinando a Corduba, magno hispanorum duci gallorum ac turcarum terrori*” (Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, great general of the Spaniards, terror of the Gauls and the Turks).



Inscription held by allegorical figures extolling the virtues of the Great Captain



Interior of the church of San Jerónimo, whose principal feature is its high altar, a great laboratory of Andalusian sculptural naturalism, beneath which the Great Captain was interred

15. CATHEDRAL

Following the tradition of the Spanish cities reconquered from Islam, Ferdinand and Isabella ordered the Cathedral to be built on the site of the Great Mosque of Muslim Granada. At first it was to conform to the type of Gothic church inspired by the model of Toledo Cathedral, and it was to adjoin the Royal Chapel, a funerary edifice destined to hold the Royal Mausoleum, whose situation determined the plan of the Cathedral. Designed by the Gothic master Enrique Egas, only the polygonal wall of the east end had risen above the foundations when construction was interrupted until 1528. It was resumed in that year, now under the reign of Charles V, with a new project and a new classical Renaissance style under the direction of Diego de Siloé, trained in Italy.

Until his death in 1563, Siloé transformed the Gothic east end into a classical interior by constructing a circular space that evokes both the Pantheon in Rome and the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Both references are highly significant, since it was apparently intended at one point by Charles V to become a Royal Pantheon (i.e. mausoleum), and also because it may have symbolised the Christian triumph over the infidel in the West, as represented by the eucharistic monstrance beneath the baldachin shown in a print engraved upon the completion of the circular High Chapel. Another very significant feature designed by Siloé is the Portal of Forgiveness on the exterior of the transept.

The body of the Cathedral, on a basilica plan with five aisles, was finished two centuries later, and established a type of construction that was followed in the new cathedrals built in neighbouring parts of Andalusia and in America.

Contextual Commentary

Added to the symbolic value of a Cathedral built over its equivalent, the Great Mosque or 'Alhama', was that of the innovative circular plan of the High Chapel, a true "templum" in the classical sense. This was introduced under the reign of Charles V, either with the idea of creating a new Royal Pantheon more fitting in his view for an emperor than the mausoleum built by his grandparents, Ferdinand and Isabella, in the adjacent Royal Chapel, or else as an evocation of the Holy Sepulchre and by extension Jerusalem, the holiest place in Christendom, of which his grandfather Ferdinand held the title of king. Whether the reference is to the Pantheon or the Holy Sepulchre, Rome or Jerusalem, Granada Cathedral could well have reflected the Emperor's cherished desire to establish a "Universitas Christiana" under his dominion.



High Chapel with a circular groundplan, intended by Emperor Charles V as a mausoleum for the Kings of Spain



Basilica-plan section of the cathedral designed by Diego de Siloé, an architect from Burgos who drew inspiration from High Renaissance models

Apse of the High Chapel seen from the Albayzín. This view was drawn by Diego Velázquez on a visit to Granada



16. THE MADRASA

The building known as the Palace of La Madraza, or the Yusufiya Madrasa, was founded by the Nasrid sultan Yusuf I in the year 1349. A place of higher education in theology, jurisprudence and philosophy, along the same lines as the Merinid madrasas in North Africa, it is the only state centre of this type known in al-Andalus. In 1501, after the arrival of Ferdinand and Isabella, the building underwent major reconstruction and was converted into the Casa del Cabildo, the seat of the municipal government, where the city's notables would gather to carry out the administrative tasks for which they were then responsible. The greatest modifications to the building were made in the 18th century, and it was used until 1858 as the City Hall, which was transferred in that year to its current location in Plaza del Carmen.

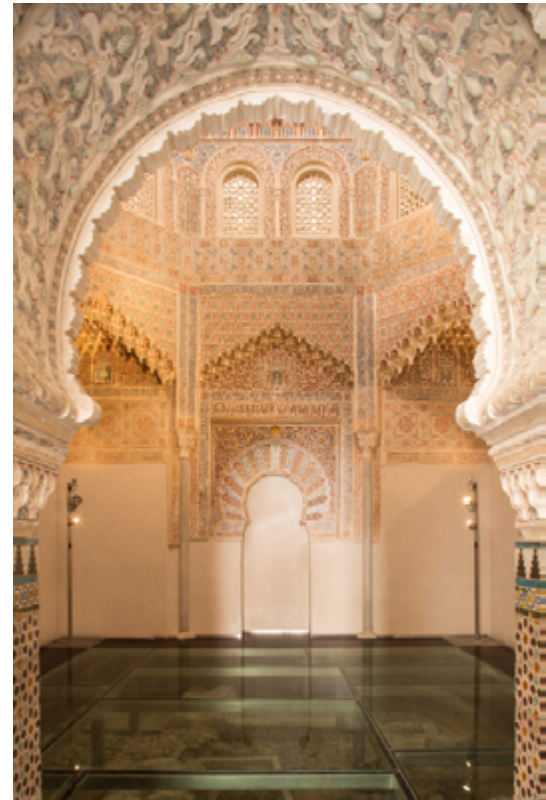
In the centre of the building is a courtyard with lateral rooms around it, some originally containing the sleeping quarters of the teachers and students and others destined for teaching (iwan) and collective prayer. All that is preserved of this is an oratory, partially rebuilt in the 19th century, on a square plan with an octagonal cupola.

The Baroque façade is the result of the 18th century interventions, as is the current structure of the courtyard and the staircase to the main floor. Preserved on the latter, however, is an exceptional Mudejar timber ceiling over the Great Hall, known as the Hall of the Twenty-Four Knights.

Today, the building houses the cultural activities of the University of Granada and of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Granada.

Contextual Commentary

The Madrasa, a building of Islamic origin that was devoted to religious higher education, is a clear example of the appropriation of edifices for public use by the Catholic Monarchs, who donated it to the city as the seat of local power in the form of the Cabildo or City Council. Located opposite the Royal Chapel and the Cathedral, the former religious nerve centre of Nasrid Granada remained in the hands of the civil and religious powers of the new State. Although the Madrasa was refurbished to adapt it to its administrative function, it nevertheless retained its structural nucleus around its central courtyard, even preserving the Islamic oratory of the iwan type characteristic of madrasas from the 14th century onwards,



Oratory of the original madrasa, or Koranic school, founded by Yusuf I

though hidden or masked by its transformation into a chapel in a process of conversion that was habitual with religious buildings. The Great Hall on the main floor was roofed with a timber framework of traditional Moorish carpentry, though decorated with ornamental Renaissance paintings in another of the “classic” combinations of cultures so common in Granada, and with a significant legend alluding to the Christian conquerors. Subsequent rebuilding hid the external appearance of the building under a Baroque ornamental “mask”.

Text: Inscription On The Roof Of The Council Chamber:

“The most high, magnificent and most powerful lords Don Ferdinand and Doña Isabella, our king and queen, won this most noble and great city of Granada and its kingdom by force of arms in two days of the month of January in the year of the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ fourteen hundred and ninety-two.”



The façade of La Madraza preserves the false architectural decoration it acquired in the 18th century

Zenithal view of the oratory with ceiling added during 19th century refurbishment



17. ECCLESIASTICAL CURIA

In 1526, Emperor Charles V instituted the prestigious Imperial College of Santa Cruz de la Fe and the so-called ‘Literary University’, the origin of today’s University of Granada and one of the first universities in Europe. For both of them, a new building was planned with a large number of lecture halls for the teaching of theology, philosophy, logic, rhetoric and grammar, law and jurisprudence, and medicine. It was during the reign of Charles III, in 1769, that the building’s function was changed. The University was moved to other buildings in the city, such as today’s Faculty of Law, and the edifice was then occupied by the Ecclesiastical Curia. Built between 1527 and 1545, its external appearance retains Plateresque influences owing to Sebastián de Alcántara, the designer of its beautiful windows with composite columns, and to Juan de Marquina, responsible for the portal. Inside, the rooms are distributed around a large central courtyard with three storeys rising above it. The first two have galleries supported on white marble Doric columns, with circles in the spandrels and the arms of the Archbishop of Ávalos on the springers. On the lower third storey are segmental arches on Tuscan columns and a cornice with gargoyles in the form of monsters. The main staircase rises on rampant vaults with wooden ceilings. Opposite the entrance to the courtyard was the main lecture theatre, and on its left was the chapel, with a timber ceiling and a frieze of grotesques. Besides its intrinsic value, the Ecclesiastical Curia has a painting collection, archive and library of great importance.



At the command of Charles V, the University of Granada was built in 1526, when Don Gaspar de Ávalos was the city’s archbishop

Contextual Commentary

This was once the University, founded with the same faculties and prerogatives as those of Bologna and Salamanca. Created alongside it were two Colleges for the instruction of young Moriscos, Santa Cruz and San Miguel, as a further means of assimilating the native social minority, in this case through education. The University itself was in fact built with the intention of “dispelling the darkness of the infidels”, as can be read on its façade. Its strategic location and the Renaissance classicism of its architectural forms, even though the Moorish carpentry typical of the city was used for ceilings in the interior, denote a firm intention to equip the city with the most modern architecture and institutions. This was henceforth to make Granada into one of the country’s leading university cities, whose effects on the intellectual development of the non-Castilian social minorities bore outstanding fruit in the 16th century in the University’s celebrated professor of Latin, Juan Latino, originally a black slave, and the Morisco Miguel de Castillo, the author of the controversial Lead Books of Sacromonte.

Texts: Legends over the windows of the façade: “Ad fugandas infidelium tenebras hec domus literaria fundata est. Christianissimi Karoli Semper augusti Hispaniarum regis mandato. Labore et industria Ill. Dni. Gasparis davalos ar. Granate. Anno a natali Dni. Ntri. Ihu.Xpi. MDXXXII” (“To dispel the darkness of the infidels, this University was founded by order of the most Christian Charles, always august, king of the realms of Spain, and with the work and industry of the most illustrious and reverend Señor Don Gaspar Dávalos, Archbishop of Granada, in the year 1532 since the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ”) GÓMEZ MORENO GONZÁLEZ, Manuel, *Guía de Granada*, 1892.



Portal attributed to Juan de Marquina, a follower of Siloé



Main front of the Ecclesiastical Curia, formerly the University of Granada

18. PLAZA DE BIBARRAMBLA, ALCAICERÍA AND ZACATÍN

The Plaza de Bibarrambla (or Bib-Rambla) and its surrounding area were a fundamental target of the Christian urban reforms that quickly transformed the Muslim city. The intricate mediaeval district of El Arenal was demolished and turned into an open space for entertainments, celebrations, festivities and major public events of all kinds, such as livestock fairs, equestrian and taurine spectacles, autos-da-fé and religious processions like that of Corpus Christi. The plaza's central importance was consolidated by such momentous occurrences as the burning of eighty thousand Arabic manuscripts from the Muslim university of Granada at the orders of Cardinal Cisneros in a bid to do away with every vestige of Muslim culture. In 1583 it became a mercantile and commercial centre with the construction of the Casa de los Miradores (House of the Belvederes), which housed the offices of the Cabildo (city council) and the Royal Customs House for the inspection of cloths, canvases and rugs. On one side of the square is the entrance to the Alcaicería, a merchants' quarter founded by Sultan Yusuf I in 1318 for the trade in exotic and luxury goods like silk. Only a small part of the original district is preserved, since it had more than two hundred shops and ten entrance gates that were closed at night and heavily guarded. The adjacent Calle Zacatín was the main street of the Alcaicería. Besides silk, other goods on sale included silver, gold and perfume. Today's Plaza de Bibirrambla has a special charm, with its typical flower stalls and its crowded bars and cafés. Created as a main square, it still preserves the flavour of one.

Contextual Commentary

The urban space of the Plaza de Bibirrambla and the adjacent Calle Zacatín and Alcaicería quarter formed the civic nucleus of commercial activity in Nasrid Granada next to the Great Mosque or Alhama, in accordance with the traditional structure of the Islamic city. This pattern was maintained after the Christian conquest, although it was subjected to a rationalist urban and architectural replanning in line with the western thought of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The Plaza de Bibirrambla even retained its name, but was given the regular form of a closed quadrilateral where the orthodox superimposition of architectural orders was essayed for the first time in Spain in a public building representative of local power, the Balcony of the City Hall (no longer extant) designed



Plaza de Bibrambla, one of the areas of the city modified after the conquest and transformed into an emblematic public space

by Diego de Siloé as a tribune for the city councillors during the major festivities that took place in the square. The Alcaicería or silk market, the principal economic activity of Muslim Granada, retained its structure of narrow streets filled entirely with shops until it was destroyed by a fire in 1843. Its current appearance is the result of its subsequent reconstruction, which altered its architecture but maintained its commercial function. The same is true of Calle Zacatín, which borders the quarter and ends at Bibirrambla.



Detail of the Plan of Granada drawn up by Ambrosio de Vico and engraved by Francisco Heylan in the late 16th century, where the importance of the plaza as a new space for public events is appreciable.

Plaza de Bib-rambla, one of the areas of the city modified after the conquest and transformed into an emblematic public space



19. IMPERIAL CHURCH OF SAN MATÍAS

In 1501, the original parish church of San Matías was set up inside a small mosque known as “Gima Abraham”. However, when Emperor Charles V was honeymooning in Granada in 1526 after his marriage to Isabella of Portugal, he visited the church, which still occupied the old mosque, and found it poor and undignified. He therefore immediately ordered the construction of a new church which received the title of the “Imperial Church of Saint Matthew”.

The church was built on a platform of ashlar blocks that raise it above the street of the same name, located in the historic centre of Granada and now the main thoroughfare of today’s San Matías neighbourhood.

The designer of the church was Master Rodrigo Hernández. It consists of a single aisleless rectangular nave with pointed transverse arches. It has eight side chapels, and the high chapel is differentiated by height and covered by a polygonal timber framework. The arch leading into the high chapel preserves the arms of Charles V and of Archbishop Gaspar de Ávalos, under whose administration the church was begun.

On the exterior, the church has three portals, two of them fashioned in stone in the style of Siloé. The one opening onto Plaza Ábside de San Matías displays a fully Plateresque decorative repertoire with monstrous creatures, masks, putti or winged angels’ heads, condelieri and, in particular, grotesques.

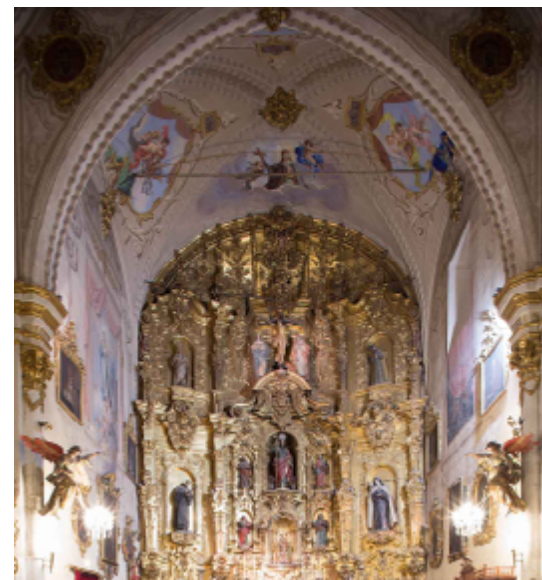
The five-storey tower rises on the line of the main façade, with decoration on twin windows that alternate brick with glazed ceramics.

Contextual Commentary

Charles V was ready to follow the plans adopted in the time of his grandparents, the Catholic Monarchs, for the conversion and integration of the Moorish population remaining in the city. In this respect, the construction of parish churches was the most significant development for the urban fabric. That of San Matías, built during his reign, is the only one which bears the imperial emblem of the double-headed eagle on its façade and in its interior, along with the arms of Archbishop Dávalos, but its type, construction technique, materials and decoration adhere to the regular pattern of these churches, in which the Moorish craft traditions and the new classical Renaissance style converge with harmonious originality in such visible features as the portals, with their combination of the architectural orders with classicist artistry.



Main front of the Mudéjar church built by the Emperor after his visit to the previous church consecrated to Saint Matthew



Interior of the church, whose appearance was greatly modified in the 18th century with the new Baroque altarpiece and the decoration covering the original Mudéjar woodwork

20. CASA DE LOS TIROS

This building is one of the most expressive examples of the palatial domestic architecture of 16th century Granada, combining the formal features of the Islamic vernacular tradition with the new decorative and structural repertoires derived from the imported Italian Renaissance style. It owes its name, the 'House of the Shots', to the guns which can be seen pointing through the crenellations at the top of the façade, which reinforce the defensive character of the building. Dating from 1530, it probably has links with the Nasrid wall which ran through this part of the city. The decorative programme on the façade is based on the motto of the Granada Venegas family, who were originally related to the Nasrid royal family but were converted to Christianity after the conquest of 1492. The motto, "the (heart) commands", is reinforced with reliefs of a heart and a sword. Completing the decoration are five sculpture groups representing the classical heroes Hercules, Theseus, Jason and Hector dressed in the Roman fashion, and Mercury in the costume of a herald with the arms of the noble house on his dalmatic. The images are related to other symbolic elements such as the three bronze door knockers in the forms of a triangle, a square and an octagon, which are fixed to hearts on the wall and bear the following legends: "The (heart) commands, People of war exercise your arms", "The (heart) breaks, made into a door knocker calling us to battle", and "Door knockers they are, sounded by God and felt by the (heart)". On the main floor is the principal room, the Cuadra Dorada or 'Golden Square', a name alluding to its square shape and the abundant use of gold colouring in its decoration. The ceiling of the room presents a full decorative programme that represents kings and knights of the Spanish nobility, prominent among whom are the Catholic Monarchs and Charles V, the Great Captain and the Count of Tendilla, the first Captain-General of Granada. This pointed and emphatic iconography seeks to exalt the deeds and values of these figures, the representatives of a new period in history, together with a group of female figures located on four tondos with the busts of Queen Penthesilea, Lucretia of Rome, Queen Semiramis and Iudic (Judith), Queen of Jerusalem, chosen for their exemplary and symbolic lives. In the Casa de los Tiros, myth and history are linked in a decorative programme that exalts the noble caste of the knight in his dual role as a man of arms and of letters, in consonance with the humanist spirit of a period in constant transformation. Since 1929, it has housed the Museum of the same name, with an important library, archive and periodicals library that are essential for our knowledge of the art and history of Granada.



Motto on the façade [THE HEART COMMANDS] which reveals the high level of humanism attained by the new nobility of Islamic Andalusian origin

Contextual Commentary

The Casa de los Tiros is the most genuine example of the process of social integration of certain Muslim social groups after their conversion to Christianity. In this case, a noble Nasrid family, relatives of the sultans, were captured by the Catholic Monarchs and collaborated actively in the war against their own kin. Re baptised under the name of Granada Venegas, they later held Castilian noble titles (the Marquesses of Campotéjar). One decisive step for the beginning of this process was the marriage of the first Granada Venegas to the daughter of Rengifo, the Governor of the Generalife and a great Castilian hero, which brought him both the governorship of the Generalife in perpetuity and also this residence, known popularly as the “House of the Shots”. Architecturally, the mansion is an original variant of the tower-house, with a strongly military and warlike appearance reinforced by the heroic iconography of Greek myths on its façade. The knightly mottoes and the gallery of portraits of *uomini illustri* also point to the humanism of the second member of the dynasty, who founded a Literary Academy in this mansion.



Front of the so-called ‘Casa de los Tiros’, or ‘House of the Shots’, in allusion to the guns positioned between its crenellations



Interior of the ‘Golden Square’, the main room in the house, with decoration extolling its inhabitants, the Granada Venegas family, nobles of Nasrid origin who converted to Christianity

21. ROYAL CHAPEL AND MERCHANTS' EXCHANGE

In 1504, Ferdinand and Isabella decided to found a funerary chapel for themselves and their descendants in the capital of the last territory reconquered from the infidel. Located in part on the former site of the Great Mosque, its construction was begun by Master Egas and continued with other projects, though always in the Flamboyant Gothic style and on the basis of the type of funerary chapel that had already been established for other members of the royal family: a single aisleless nave, a polygonal chancel, a choir loft at the west end and a raised high altar reached by steps. Finished in about 1515, its interior contains the remains of the Catholic Monarchs and of their daughter, Joan, and her husband, Philip of Burgundy. They lie in a crypt beneath two superb catafalques of Carrara marble carved in a refined classical Renaissance style by Domenico Fancelli (1515) in the case of Ferdinand and Isabella, and by Bartolomé Ordóñez, a Spaniard who had worked in Italy, in that of Joan and Philip.

The Chapel is enriched with Flemish panel paintings from Queen Isabella's collection and painted altarpieces by the Florentine Jacopo Torni and by Pedro Machuca, who had trained with Raphael. The altarpiece in the high chapel, the first of its kind in the Spanish Renaissance, was the work of Felipe Bigarny, while the wrought iron grille that separates the crossing from the nave is a genuine work of the Spanish Renaissance by Master Bartolomé.

Adjoining the Chapel and perpendicular to it is a two-storey building with a rectangular plan. This is the old Merchants' Exchange, built on land belonging to the Chapel, which led to litigation between the two institutions. It was finally agreed in 1518 that the Exchange would occupy the lower floor and the Chapel the upper. Its style is a hybrid of Gothic and a very early Renaissance. Today it belongs entirely to the Royal Chapel.

Contextual Commentary

The choice of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs for their eternal rest is a clear manifestation of the symbolic value for the modern State they had established in Spain of the conquest of the last Islamic stronghold in Europe. This image of power was reinforced by the fact that a Christian religious building had been erected over an Islamic one. Another identifying feature of royal power is the architectural style, the late 'Flamboyant' or 'Isabelline' Gothic, as it is called in reference to its systematic use in the



Interior of the church, with the tombs of the Catholic Monarchs and of their daughter Joan 'the Mad' and her husband Philip 'the Handsome', carved in Carrara marble in a Michelangelesque manner

constructions of the Catholic Monarchs. The presence of works by Italian and Flemish artists meanwhile demonstrates the convergence of artistic tastes in the early 1500s, and in this very building.

The presence of the Merchants' Exchange and the determination not to move it, which led to a conflict even with the Church, is a result of the location of both buildings in the heart of the old souk or silk market of Islamic Granada, the Alcaicería. Since mediaeval times, this trade and its market had drawn a great many merchants, mainly Genoese.



The main altarpiece constructed by Felipe Bigarny contains a complex iconographic programme that exalts the achievements of the Catholic Monarchs as governors



The Merchants' Exchange, annexed to the Royal Chapel, was originally a commercial venue set up by the city's municipal authorities

22. ROYAL HOSPITAL

After the Catholic Monarchs entered Granada, one of the first measures they took was to found a great hospital for attending to the sick and the poor as a substitute for the field hospital that had been provisionally set up in the Alhambra. The initial idea was to locate it in the very centre of the city, but building finally began outside the walls on the site of the old Muslim cemetery opposite the Gate of Elvira, one of the main entrances to the Arab city.

Work began in 1511, but was halted after the death of King Ferdinand the Catholic. It was resumed during the reign of Charles V.

The design of the hospital is attributed to Enrique de Egas, the architect of the Catholic Monarchs, although the building, and especially the courtyards, subsequently evolved towards a Renaissance style with the intervention of Diego de Siloé. A Mudejar influence is also especially noticeable in the ceilings, which were renovated after a fire in 1549.

The only decorative features that stand out on the sober exterior are some Plateresque features on the windows and main entrance, the work of Alonso de Mena in the 17th century.

The building currently houses the Rectorate and General Library of the University of Granada.

Commentary

The hospital repeats the pattern of the Hospital of Santa Cruz in Toledo and the Royal Hospital of Santiago de Compostela. All were designed by Enrique de Egas, whose model was Filarete's Ospedale Maggiore in Milan, with a plan consisting of a cross inscribed within a square, resulting in four large courtyards.

These buildings mark the beginning of a new concept of hospital care, leaving behind the mediaeval notion of 'hospitality' as equivalent to 'beneficence', normally associated with religious orders. From this point on, health care was considered an obligation of the state, and the Catholic Monarchs therefore patronised the construction of these new institutions.

La fundación del más destacado de ellos, el de San Juan de Dios, estuvo relacionada con el Hospital Real, ya que en este hospital estuvo internado durante un tiempo San Juan de Dios, precisamente fueron esta estancia y su papel durante el incendio de 1549 los que le empujaron a tomar la determinación de crear un nuevo hospital para la atención a los más desvalidos.



Main entrance of the Royal Hospital, designed by Alonso de Mena in about 1640

Court of the Marbles, with the arms and emblems of Emperor Charles V and Empress Isabella



INSTITUCIONES

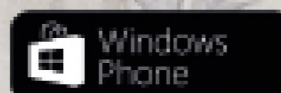
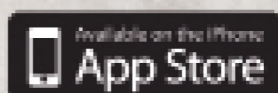


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