

that time; the role of children and play in society. They were manufactured to celebrate the new year and other festivals. Some represent highly schematic replicas of animals, whistles and miniature household goods.



Room VI. Ceramic cover (14th – 15th Century)



The Alhambra Museum

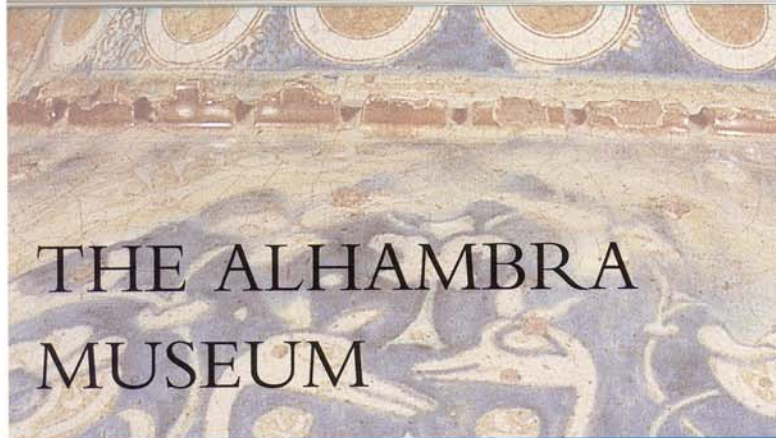
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Alhambra Library:
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THE ALHAMBRA MUSEUM

Museos de Andalucía



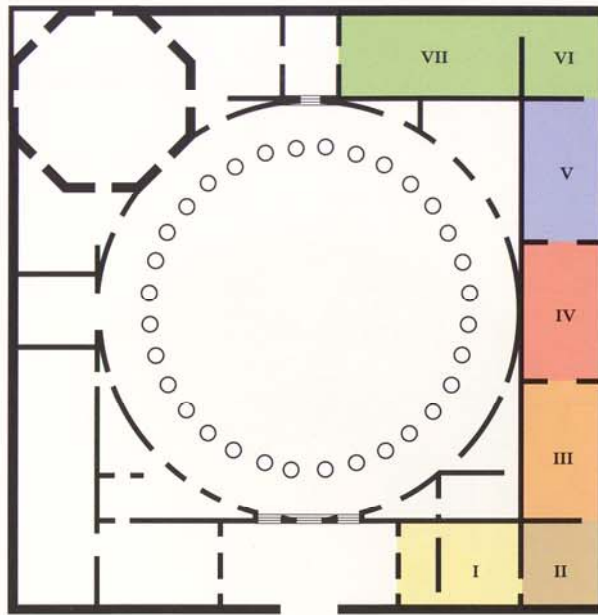


Palace of Charles V

THE BUILDING

Charles V's Palace was built adjacent to the Nasrid palaces as an imperial residence (Charles V had the title of Emperor) and its location in the Alhambra was due to two reasons: after the Christian conquest of Granada, the Alhambra places complex became crown property and the Alhambra was also a symbol of royal power.

The palace is one of the most significant examples of the Italian Renaissance outside Italy. Its ground plan, a circle within a square was a novel form in 16th-Century architecture and also represented the ideals of universal perfection for the period's intellectuals. Even though its facades appear to be the same, they are not. This is due to the different composition of their porticoes, indicating the interior distribution of two separate "houses": one for the Emperor another, dominated by a large south-facing mirador, for the Empress.



PALACE OF CHARLES V. Ground Floor

- Room I:** Faith, Science and Economy
- Room II:** Emirate and Caliphate Art
- Room III:** From Caliphate to Nasrid Art
- Room IV:** Nasrid Art. Public Buildings
- Room V:** Nasrid Art. The Alhambra and Palace Architecture
- Rooms VI - VII:** Nasrid Art. the Alhambra: Material Cultural

THE MUSEUM

The Alhambra Museum occupies the southern wing of the palace and is distributed in seven chronologically-ordered rooms. It is a monographic museum dedicated to Hispano-Muslim art. The museum was created in 1870 to conserve the numerous archaeological samples collected by the Provincial Museums Commission. In 1962 it became the National Museum of Hispano-Muslim Art and in 1994 when it was attached to the Alhambra and Generalife Trust, the museum was transferred to its present location and its collection organised according to the dictates of contemporary museology.

THE COLLECTIONS

The objects on display all come from excavations carried out in the Alhambra itself or in the city of Granada as well as from acquisitions and donations, such as that by Gómez Moreno. They are highly varied both in their use (religious, domestic, scientific etc.) and in their character (utilitarian or decorative). Thanks to this variety, visitors are better able to understand the richness and complexity of Islamic society and culture in the Iberian Peninsula. They are an excellent introduction to the evolution of Hispano-Muslim cultures (something that can be followed in the collection of columns) and the monument itself. Moreover, the ceramics and pieces of furniture enable us to reconstruct mentally the environment in which daily life was lived.

THE HISPANO-MUSLIM CULTURE

The combination of native cultural and artistic elements and those from the Orient as well as the singular Islamic worldview created in the Iberian Peninsula a unique culture: the Hispano-Muslim. Its artistic manifestations had a noticeable influence in both Europe and the Mediterranean countries until the 18th Century through Mudéjar building traditions. Due to its long duration (from the 8th to 15th Centuries) Hispano-Muslim art developed throughout different periods, the last of which was the Nasrid period, taking its name from the reigning dynasty in Granada, the last Islamic kingdom in western Europe and which fell to the Castilian Crown during the reign of the Catholic Kings.



View of Room I.



View of Room II.

CONTENTS OF THE ROOMS

ROOM I: FAITH, SCIENCE AND ECONOMY

This room contains representative objects dealing with religion, science and economy, three fundamental aspects of the Islamic civilisation. Faith is represented by two beautiful Korans. The Koran is the sacred text of Islam which contains God's revelations to his prophet Mohammed and a body of precepts that spans all aspects of social life, from codes of conduct to legal principles. The importance of the Book as the vehicle for the Holy Word explains the treatment given to calligraphy which in Islamic culture became an art form through epigraphs or inscriptions. This singular art form was combined with other ornamental motifs in the decoration of buildings and objects.

Islamic science inherited the knowledge of the ancient Mediterranean cultures and it transmitted this knowledge to the Christian west. As an example of scientific instruments, there is a horizontal sundial for calculating the time, an important factor in Muslim life due to the importance of prayer times throughout the day. Finally, the economy is represented with a selection of the museum's coins. The importance of

coins in archaeology is enormous due to the fact that their dates are of great use in tracing the chronology of historical development.



Room I. Korans (14th – 15th Centuries)

ROOM II: EMIRATE AND CALIPHATE ART

This room displays diverse objects from the first years of the Muslim presence in the Iberian Peninsula (8th to 10th Centuries). This initial stage can be divided into two large periods, the Emirate and the Caliphate. The Emirate period is so called because due to the fact that Al-Andalus was dependant upon the Caliphate of Damascus until Abd al-Rahman I (755 – 822) lay the foundations of an independent state. The Caliphate period began when Abd al-Rahman III (891 – 916) installed an independent Caliphate with its capital in Córdoba. The Caliphate period was the high point of Hispano-Muslim art, science and culture.



Room II. Font (10th Century)

The Caliphate period font of *Dar al-Naura* demonstrates the high degree of both technical and stylistic development reached in Caliphate art which had its own figurative system based on classical themes. It is also a notable testament to the importance of water as a symbolic and ritual element in Islamic culture.



Sala III. Ivory chest lid (11th Century)

ROOM III: FROM CALIPHATE TO NASRID ART

This period spans from the 10th to the 13th Centuries, to the start of the Nasrid period. The disintegration of the Caliphate of Córdoba produced numerous Taifas, or independent states, followed by attempts to restore the Caliphate after the arrival of the Almoravids and Almohads. Simultaneously the Christian kingdoms were advancing until the only Islamic state that remained was the kingdom of Granada whose governing dynasty, the Nasrids, gave their name to the period. It was during the Nasrid period that the Hispano-Muslim art achieved its own identity, the happy result of several figurative traditions, Oriental, Muslim, Western and Christian.

This room follows the evolution of form during these periods with outstanding pieces such as Al-Manсур's font and other architectural and ceramic elements. There is also a collection of bronze objects (mortar, perfume spray and brazier) which give us a good idea of the domestic environment, even though their manufacture is not vernacular. The brazier for example tells us how the problem of heating rooms in a climate like that of Granada's was overcome.

ROOM IV: NASRID ART. PUBLIC BUILDINGS

This room contains architectural elements, the majority from buildings in Granada contemporary with the Alhambra buildings such as the hinges from Casa del Chapiz. During the Nasrid period, many of the buildings or foundations in Granada belonged to the Sultan, forming a network of public services: the university, corn exchange, customs house for silk products, mosques, etc. one of these buildings was the Maristán or hospital located at the foot of the Albaicín and whose foundation stone, made of white marble and in the shape of a horseshoe arch, (1365 – 1367, during the reign of Mohammed V) is on display here as well as the two lion fountains which spouted water into the pond in the centre of the hospital.

Animal-shaped spouts, especially lions, occurred frequently in Hispano-Muslim art. They were even praised by poets in their works. Ibn Hamdis wrote these lines after seeing the stone lions in a North African palace: *Valiant lions inhabit their master's lairs; the falling water, their roar.*



View of Room IV

ROOM V: NASRID ART. THE ALHAMBRA AND PALACE ARCHITECTURE

This room contains a complete repertoire of decorative elements from the Alhambra itself. Muslim palace architecture cannot be properly understood in the absence of the decorative elements which formed the appropriate décor for palace life. As the verses in one of the niches in the Comares palace says: "on this earth, the Sultan is the sun who shines in splendour and beauty". The sovereign was the centre of a universe of dazzling riches, and his palace the universe.

Therefore, all of the goods and objects which adorned their rooms were the product of highly refined techniques, as the different examples of carpentry and ceramics displayed here demonstrate. Among the objects exhibited in this room is the famous Jarrón de las Gacelas, or Gazelle Jar. This is one of the high points of Nasrid ceramics, decorated with inscriptions (a poem) floral and figurative motifs with two stylised gazelles, symbols of grace and beauty.

ROOM VI: NASRID ART. THE ALHAMBRA: MATERIAL CULTURE

This room contains objects directly related to the Alhambra, covering from architectural elements and furniture from its palaces to gravestones from the Rauda, or royal cemetery. There is also a replica of Muhammad III's lamp whose two rows of arms held glass bowls and lit the palace rooms. Different showcases display a sample of the rich crockery used in the palace.



View of Room V



Room V. Gazelle Jar

All of these examples, such as the piece of pottery representing a man drinking, tell us of the Nasrid court's material culture, indispensable to our understanding of what life was like in the palaces, whose empty rooms are all that remain to us.

ROOM VII: THE ALHAMBRA'S MATERIAL CULTURE

The exhibition of Nasrid material culture continues in this room. Here we can see moulded plaster panels which were used to decorate walls, examples of carpentry, both for ceilings and screens, vernacular domestic crockery and toys. In spite of their simplicity, the toys document an important aspect of social life at