

# ART AND THEMES OF FIGURATIVE PAINTING IN AL-ANDALUS

## LA SINGULARIDAD ARTÍSTICA Y TEMÁTICA DE LA FIGURACIÓN PICTÓRICA ANDALUSÍ

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**ABSTRACT** This paper studies the themes and formal characteristics of figurative images in painting in Al-Andalus as seen in ceramics, the book arts and architecture. It examines these images and studies them in relation to other non-painted figurative representation and the classical Arabic texts that provide us with information about the works. The paper analyses anthropomorphic images, with a particular focus on the female figure, and zoomorphic, plant, geometric, meta-architectural and calligraphic motifs that play a role in the iconography of sovereignty and the playful and festive scenes associated with it. It also determines the stylistic and cultural features that give the painting of Al-Andalus its specific characteristics and how form and content from the Christian courts of the time were incorporated into this style of painting, particularly during the Nasrid period.

**KEY WORDS** art of Al-Andalus / ceramics of Al-Andalus / miniatures of Al-Andalus / book arts of Al-Andalus / mural painting of Al-Andalus / Al-Andalus-painting

**RESUMEN** En este trabajo se estudian los temas y características formales de las imágenes figurativas producidas por la pintura andalusí a través de la cerámica, las artes del libro y la arquitectura, en sí mismas y en relación con otras representaciones figurativas no pictóricas y con los textos árabes clásicos que nos informan sobre ellas. Con este fin, analizamos las imágenes antropomorfas, con especial atención a la figura femenina, junto con los motivos zoomorfos, vegetales, geométricos, meta-arquitectónicos y caligráficos que intervienen en la iconografía de la soberanía y en las escenas lúdicas y festivas asociadas a ella. Asimismo, señalamos los rasgos estilísticos y culturales que confieren especificidad a la pintura andalusí y la incorporación a la misma, notoriamente en época nazarí, de formas y contenidos de las cortes cristianas coetáneas.

**PALABRAS CLAVE** arte andalusí / cerámica andalusí / miniatura andalusí / artes del libro andalusíes / pintura mural andalusí / Al-Andalus-pintura

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### CONCEPTS AND USES OF FIGURATIVE PAINTING IN AL-ANDALUS

In Islamic art of the classical period, to which the visual culture of Al-Andalus belongs, figurative representation in the painted arts shares concepts and forms with other forms of artistic expression that use iconographic programmes. However, at the request of the editors of this monograph (whom I would like to thank for inviting me to participate in their journal), this paper focuses on painted images. This is understood to mean two-dimensional images created by drawing and applying pigment to surfaces such as ceramic, leather, wood, wall, parchment and paper. Figures carved in stone, marble, clay, ivory or wood, and in two- or three-dimensional metal casts, and the portrayal of figures in the textile arts, will only be used to complement the iconographic contextualisation of painted representations. However, it should be emphasised that they are all essentially integrated into the same artistic language and that, in the case of Al-Andalus, themes and forms from the East and the Mediterranean were used alongside contributions from the pre-Islamic peoples of the Iberian Peninsula and from the Christian kingdoms of Spain and Europe, especially during the Nasrid period. This initial clarification is important because in classical Arabic culture there is no clear and sharp distinction between the various artistic techniques as was seen in Europe from the Renaissance onwards, and which is still very much in force today. This is directly evidenced by the well-known semantic ‘imprecision’ or ‘ambiguity’ of classical Arabic in designating the plastic and visual arts, which is also linked to an appreciation of the ‘decorative arts’ as high-ranking arts and to the interchangeability of motifs and designs between various art forms, regardless of their size and scale. The term that came closest to our idea of ‘painting’ is probably *ṣūra* (pl. *ṣuwar*) (form, drawn, painted, painted or sculpted image) and its derivatives *taṣwīr* (pl. *taṣāwīr*) (figurative drawn, painted, or sculptural images) and *muṣawwir* (painter, creator or maker of images). This is how manuscript illustrations were designated, although the term often also referred to ‘images’, which could be bas-reliefs, sculptures or figurative representation in textiles or created using other techniques. In Modern Arabic, the semantic field of *ṣūra* is applied more specifically to photography, while *rasm* (pl. *rusūm*) is used for painting. This term that also means ‘drawing’ and in the classical period it had a wide semantic range, encompassing writing and the mark produced by something or someone in addition to drawing and painting. Another root, *maṭṭala* (to represent) and its action name *maṭṭil* (representation), was

applied to artistic images produced by drawing and painting as well as by relief carving and sculpture; *timṭal* (pl. *tamāṭil*) usually refers to ‘statue’ but also to figures depicted using any technique. Similarly, *naqṣ* (pl. *nuqūṣ*) refers interchangeably to painted or sculpted images, calligraphic inscriptions and ornamental work that may or may not include figurative motifs. For example, one of Ibn Zamrak’s poems was engraved on the south portico of the Courtyard of the Myrtles [Patio de Arrayanes] resorts to the cliché of comparing decorative figures (*nuqūṣ*) to flowers in a garden without differentiating between plant, geometric, figurative and calligraphic motifs. Depending on the context, in classical Islam *al-naqqāṣ* (pl. *naqqāṣūn*) was a painter, carver or decorator who could have used various ornamental techniques and may or may not have included figurative representation in his work. *Tazwīq*, another word for painting, changed from describing the art of gilding to decorative painting in general, although this was not necessarily figurative. It is also interesting to note that terminology related to writing and calligraphy was applied indiscriminately to the visual and plastic arts, as in the aforementioned case of *rasm*, and terms such as *ṣakl* (pl. *aṣkāl*) (form, figure, image, vocalisation), and *taṣkīl* (putting dots and diacritical marks in writing and, modern times, the ‘plastic arts’), and also *jaṭṭ* (to draw lines, write, calligraphy), *naqqatṭa*, *tanqīṭ* (to dot, speckle), and *naqṣ* (to decorate, write, put diacritical dots). This last word is used by some contemporary authors to refer to strictly geometrical Arabic decoration in contrast to figurative decoration. *Naḥata* and its derivatives do however move away from the concept of drawing and painting to focus on the work of carving and sculpture, although it is also used in the lexicon related to verbal expression. All these terms and others are encompassed in the more general concepts of *zakhrafa*, *zīna*, *tazwīn*, etc. (decoration, ornamentation), and these in turn are bound up in the idea of *ṣināʿa* (technique or art), which is equivalent to the Greek *techné* or the Latin *ars*. This means that it is sometimes unclear whether allusions to or descriptions of artistic representation in Arabic works and those of Al-Andalus refer to painted techniques or not, or if they are figurative images. In these cases, only the context, and sometimes the actual preserved material remains, reveal the nature of the art form in question. This, and the material aspects of the objects themselves, make it clear that painting and other artistic practices weren’t autonomous art forms in classical Arabic culture and the culture of Al-Andalus, unlike calligraphy, poetry or music, which had their own treatises and whose creators were honoured in Arab bio-bibliographical works. Instead, pain-

ting and artistic techniques were conceived and produced to aesthetically and symbolically enrich other arts. Painting in Al-Andalus was mainly used for ceramics, the book arts and architecture. And while painting in the international Gothic style was admired at the end of classical Arab Islam, and specifically in Nasrid Granada, and some of its attributes were incorporated into mural decoration, throughout the long history of Al-Andalus, painting was subordinate to these other arts and it was through them that it occupied a prominent place in courtly and popular circles.

Another clarification that has been reiterated throughout the historiography since works by Manuel Gómez Moreno and Leopoldo Torres Balbás at the beginning of the 20th century<sup>1</sup> at least, but that should be included here, is the supposed Islamic anathema against images due to the widespread belief, even today, that the Islamic religion comprehensively prohibits, censures or avoids figurative representation. In fact the Qur'an only makes a clear statement against idolatry, and interpreters of the Holy Book, and past and present theologians, clearly distinguish between the use of images as idols and their other symbolic, scientific or decorative uses; the radical animus against figurative representation only appears at specific moments in the long history of Islam, particularly in modern times, attributing certain sayings and traditions to the Prophet. However, with the exception of representing God in anthropomorphic form and using images for worship, figurative representation is common in all other artistic and social fields. It cultivated a multitude of themes and styles across all geographies and historical periods, expanding in modern times to all the plastic arts, obviously including photography and cinema, with the express endorsement of important theologians who are opposed to the iconoclasm championed by extremist groups of recent political Islamism. Experts in the sacred texts, such as al-Fārisī (d. 987), were already expressing this idea in the middle of the classical period: "if someone says that it is stated in the Hadith that those who portray figures (*muṣawwirūn*) will be punished on the Day of Judgement, and in other hadiths it is said that they will be told to give life to their creation, they will reply: that punishing those who portray figures refers to those who represent God anthropomorphically (*ṣawwara Allāh taṣwīr al-aṣṣām*), and the excessive announcements made by some without taking the

science into account does not alter the consensus"<sup>2</sup>. It is true that among the ulema in Al-Andalus, almost all of whom were *māliki*, there was controversy over the legality or otherwise of certain arts such as music, the rich ornamentation of mosques or the manufacture of toys, but all of these practices were performed and had their defenders, such as Ibn al-Arabī al-Ma'āfirī (1076–c.1148), supreme qadi of Seville, and also *māliki* and author of around 140 legal works. Unlike his colleagues, he accepted the use of incense in mosques and music practice (including singing slaves), and approved of toy figurines shaped like giraffes and other animals that were made for children or given as presents on the feast of *nayrūz* at the beginning of spring and at new year, festivities in Al-Andalus. Other contemporary jurists, such as qadi Ayaḍ of Ceuta (d. 1149), also considered dolls for children to be lawful. However, Malik ibn Ānas (716–795), the leading figure of *mālikism*, objected to his daughter being given the gift of a doll for fear of "idolatry". In contrast, Averroes' grandfather, Ibn Ruṣd al-Ḍadd (1058–1126), great qadi of Cordoba under the Almoravids, was stricter in this area and condemned the production of zoomorphic figurines; nevertheless, they continued to be produced profusely, as many museums can attest<sup>3</sup>. In turn, the *falāsifa* (Arab philosophers in the Hellenistic tradition) had Averroes (Ibn Ruṣd 'grandson') (Cordoba, 1126–Marrakech, 1198) at their head; he was a great interpreter of Aristotle as well as a *māliki* jurist and supreme qadi of Cordoba and Seville who always spoke positively, like other Eastern *falāsifa* such as al-Fārabi and Avicenna, about the imitative arts (*al-muhakāt*), i.e. poetry, dance and figurative representation (*taṣwīr*). He valued their pedagogical and playful function, in the same way as the Sufism of

2 Cf. FĀRIS, Biṣr. *Sirr al-zajrafa al-islāmiyya*. Cairo, 1951, pp. 10-11; AL-HAYDARĪ, Baland. "al-Islām wa-tahrīm al-taṣwīr". In *al-Islām wa-l-ḥadāṭa*. London: Dār al-Sāqī, 1990, pp. 39-46; PUERTA VÍLCHEZ, José Miguel. "El problema de la representación figurativa". In *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe*. Madrid: Akal, 1997, pp. 88-102, and "Celebración de la imagen y estética caligráfica en el islam árabe clásico". In ROLDÁN CASTRO, Fátima (ed.). *La imagen y la palabra en el Islam*, Seville: University of Seville, 2016, pp. 13-52.

3 TORRES BALBÁS, "Animales de juguete". *Op. Cit.*, pp. 373-375, cites the *Tuhfa* or *Treatise on Hisba* of al-Uqbānī of Tremecén (15th century) in which sayings are given by Ibn Ruṣd 'grandfather' and Ibn al-Munāṣif (d. 1223), qadi of Valencia and Murcia; al-Uqbānī adds that toys of this type were still made in Tlemcen during his time and he attributes this to Christian influences. On the same issue and the prophylactic, propitiatory and playful uses of these figurines, cf. GÓMEZ MORENO, Manuel. "Instrumentos musicales de barro: silbatos zoomorfos, antropomorfos y otros vestigios musicales." *Música oral del sur*, 2, 1996, pp. 63-84. See the wide-ranging overview of these and other artistic objects by MARINETTO SÁNCHEZ, Purificación, in *La representación figurativa en el mundo musulmán*. Granada: Alhambra and Generalife Board of Trustees, 2020.

1 GÓMEZ MORENO, Manuel. *Pinturas de moros en la Alhambra*. Granada: Ed. Sabatel, 1916. TORRES BALBÁS, Leopoldo. "Animales de juguete", *Al-Andalus*, XXI, 1956, pp. 373-375.

Ibn 'Arabī of Murcia (1165–1240) even appreciated Christians' use of images for worship, recognising it as being their way of communicating with divinity. It considered artists of painted figurative representation, together with poets and craftsmen in general, active participants in the cosmic order, and that their work reproduced or brought to life the mysterious and transcendent harmony of Creation through the imagination (*jayāl*) and divine inspiration. However, the triumph in Islam of the strict theology of al-Gazālī (d. 1111), in contrast to the *falsafa* and existential Sufism, led his later followers, such as Ibn Khaldūn (Tunis, 1332–Cairo, 1406)<sup>4</sup> and Moorish al-Ḥaṭṭārī (1571–c. 1648)<sup>5</sup>, who lived when Islam was in a period of political and cultural decline, to explicitly declare a canonical ban against figurative representation. Ibn Khaldūn even considered that this artistic practice in Al-Andalus was a sign of Christian domination over them i.e. proof of the acculturation suffered by the Islam of Al-Andalus. Al-Ḥaṭṭārī argued that representing “living beings” should be anathema on the basis of a few hadiths and the opinions of late theologians; this attitude fits into the well-known Moorish iconoclasm as a form of resistance against the policies of the Christian conquerors, aimed at eradicating their religion, language and customs. Their stance towards painted and artistic figurative representation attests to the collapse of Arab humanism and the strength of Islamic civilisation, and the beginning of what Arab historians themselves call the “age of decadence” (c. 15th–19th c.). During this time orthodox tendencies flourished, which opposed the figurative arts, many other artistic practices (music, cinema, poetry, novels, treatises on classical Islamic eroticism, etc.) and any discourse they went beyond reaffirming rigid religious principles; naturally, this did not succeed in stopping any of them<sup>6</sup>.

4 IBN KHALDŪN. *Al-Muqaddima*. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnāniyya, 1960, p. 464: “The word and eloquence is what most distinguishes and characterises the Arabs' way of being, and images are forbidden by religious law (*ma'a anna l-šar' yanḥā 'anī l-šuwār*),” he comments on the reform of the Islamic numismatic system established by Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik based on Qur'anic expressions and Arabic script.

5 AL-ḤAṬṬARĪ. *Kitāb naṣīr al-dīn 'alā qawm al-kāfirīn* (Book of the defender of religion against the people of unbelievers). Ed. by P. S. van Koningsveld, Q. al-Sāmarra'i and G. A. Wieggers. Madrid: CSIC, 1997, pp. 84, 87–90. Al-Ḥaṭṭārī begins this autobiographical work by recounting his work on the interpretation of the Lead Books during his stay in Granada.

6 There are many written testimonies about the practice and appreciation of all the arts, including painting, in the period of Islamic splendour. Examples include the famous *Rasā'il* of the Brothers of Purity (c. 10th century), which commends a wide variety of craft activities as integral to the divine plan. Furthermore, in Ibn al-Nadīm's famous *Fihrist* (10th century) on the knowledge of his time, the first part of treatise VIII covers debaters and

## FIGURATIVE MOTIFS IN THE CERAMICS OF AL-ANDALUS

Regardless of the differing theological, juridical or philosophical stances on figurative representation, it was practised regularly throughout Al-Andalus in its various forms; the only exception was the anthropomorphic representation of the divinity and the manufacture of devotional images<sup>7</sup>. As with ivory and textiles, figurative subject matter played an important role in ceramics in Al-Andalus from the Emirate to the Nasrid period. The famous ‘green and manganese’ pieces produced in the cities of al-Zahra' and Ilbira during the Caliphate, in which plant, geometric, calligraphic, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic decoration was applied over a white glaze (engobe) with copper oxide (green) and manganese oxide (black) combine motifs of the East and Al-Andalus. These were shared with other arts, and had a strong influence on the visual and pictorial language of Al-Andalus. Together with emblematic

“the painters” (*muṣawwirīn*), although this text has not been passed down to us. Regrettably we also only know of indirect references to a kind of Arabic ‘Vasari’ on the famous painters entitled *Lamplight and solace of the tertullians: news of those who are painters* [*muzawwiqīn*] among humans), as quoted by al-Maqrīzī (14th–15th centuries) in his *Jiṭat*. Written sources also mention a “Painter's Street” (*Šārī' al-muṣawwir*) in Abbasid Baghdad, a “Special Souk of Painters” (*sūq jāṣṣ bi-l-muzawwiqīn*) in Aleppo, and report on specific families of painters and image-makers, whose references often combine the skills of painting, decoration, calligraphy and other related arts. Cf. TAYMŪR BĀŠĀ, Aḥmad. *Al-Taṣwīr 'inda l-'arab* (Painting among the Arabs). Cairo, 1942; ETTINGHAUSEN, Richard. *La peinture arabe*. Geneva, 1962; PAPADOPOULOU, Alexander. “Esthétique de l'art musulman. La peinture,” *Annales*, 3, 1973, and *El Islam y el arte musulmán*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1977. ‘UKĀŠA, Ṭarwat. *Mawsū' at al-taṣwīr al-islāmī* (Encyclopaedia of Islamic figurative representation). Beirut, 2001; MAHDĪ HAMDĪ, Muḥammad. *Amā'ir al-munammat al-islāmīyya* (Architectures of Islamic miniatures). Sharjah, 2010. Names of *naqqāšūn* (carvers) have been passed down from Al-Andalus, especially from the Umayyad period, and of calligraphers (cf. for example, SOUTO, Juan Antonio. “La práctica y la profesión del artista en el islam: arquitectos y constructores en el Al-Andalus omeya”. *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII*, 1997, t. 10, pp. 11–34 and PUERTA VÍLCHEZ. *La aventura del cálamo. Historia, formas y artistas de la caligrafía Árabe*. Granada: Edilux, 2007, subchapters 4.5 and 4.6).

7 In various countries and periods of Islam, pious books on the life of the Prophet Muhammad were produced with illustrations that depicted him with or without a face in different situations (receiving revelations from the archangel Gabriel, preaching, leading his followers to enter Mecca, on a camel with 'Isā [Jesus] on a donkey, etc.). This hagiographic iconography made images of Burāq popular, either with or without the Prophet. Burāq was a mare or fantastical horse with an equine body, wings and the face of a woman, and Muhammad rode her to make his night journeys from Mecca to Jerusalem (*isrā'*) and his ascent from Jerusalem to the seven heavens (*mi'rāq*). There was extensive writing about this in Al-Andalus but graphic examples are unknown, whereas they are abundant in Persian, Turkish and Oriental miniatures. Cf. GRUBER, Christiane. “Entre logos (*kalima*) e luz (*nūr*). Representações do profeta Maomé na pintura islâmica.” *Muqarnas*, 26, 2009, pp. 1–24.



Il. 1. Bottle of the musicians, Madīnat al-Zahrā', c.10th century. Green-manganese ceramic, 24.5 x 17 cm. Museum of Madīnat al-Zahrā'.



Il. 2. Washbasin with a figure of a drinking woman, Benetússer (Valencia), 11th century. Orange earthenware, painted green and manganese, 28.4 cm. diam. National Museum of Ceramics, Valencia.

Il. 3. Fragment of a jug with a figure of a lute player. Murcia (Calle Cadenas), 13th century. Manganese painted and sgraffito ceramic, 8 x 10 cm. Museum of the City of Murcia.

Cordoban pieces featuring Kufic calligraphy from *al-Mulk* (the Sovereignty) belonging to Madīnat al-Zahrā', arabesques, figures in the form of drops or tears and tendrilled flora on ataifors and vases (Archaeological Museum of Cordoba and National Museum of Madrid), other pieces were made with stereotyped figures of people and animals, such as the beautiful 'bottle of the musicians' (10th century, Madīnat al-Zahrā' Museum) (Il. 1), in which figures are painted in profile with beards, turbans, large robes and carry various instruments. Its theme is consistent with the 'capital of the musicians' (lute players), the only capital with anthropomorphic figures known in Caliphate art (Archaeological Museum of Cordoba). A fragment from Madīnat Ilbira has reached the present day featuring a figure of a woman without a veil, carrying a bottle and probably wearing formal dress (10th century), which is part of the Islamic tradition of the *yawāri* and *qiyān* (slave-girl cupbearers and singers), well known in Al-Andalus in both the visual arts and in poetry. This theme, which reached its zenith in literature in the Taifa period, is also found in the "washbasin of the drinker" from Benetússer (Valencia) (11th century) (National Museum of Ceramics, Valencia) (Il. 2), and on the partial atai-for found in the Alcazaba of Málaga<sup>8</sup> (c. 10th–12th century, Museum of Málaga), which was fired in red clay and decorated with the 'dry cord' technique. It has a greenish glaze around the central scene, which depicts the head of a woman with her hair tied back and large eyes outlined in black; she may be a dancer accompanied by a hare which is below positioned as if in movement. This theme found its way into the domestic sphere, as seen in fragments of jars found in Murcia and Cieza (13th century)<sup>9</sup> that are decorated with the sgraffito technique and manganese brush strokes. One depicts a lute player with her hair tied back with a ribbon, a 'moon' face (white and round), curls over her face and large black eyes (all symbolic of beauty) (Murcia) (Il. 3); another has two *yawāri* in profile, also without veils and with their hair tied back, dressed in bathrobes and standing each side of a tree. Other even smaller ones show two women with faces similar to those just described and probably depicting the same subject (Cieza)<sup>10</sup>. It goes without saying that the slave-girl cupbearer and singer subject

8 Part Number (ID. A/CE05434) on the website of the *Digital Network of the Museum Collections of Spain*. Cf. also VARIOUS AUTHORS. *Patrimonio Cultural de Málaga y su Provincia*, vol. I: *Málaga, Patrimonio natural y patrimonio histórico-artístico*. Dir. Teresa Sauret Guerrero. Málaga, 1999, pp. 346-347.

9 NAVARRO PALAZÓN, Julio. *La cerámica islámica en Murcia. Volumen I: catálogo*. Murcia: Murcia Town Council, 1986, p. 213.

10 NAVARRO PALAZÓN. *Ibid.* p. 14.



matter has been seen in Arab painting since the Umayyad palaces in the east and can be found in Abbasid mural painting, Fatimid ceramics, the book arts and mural painting at the Alhambra. Another anthropomorphic motif that is similarly widespread in Islamic art is the representation of warriors. In Al-Andalus this can be seen in the remains of 'green-manganese' pieces, such as the fragments found in Madīnat-al-Zahrā' of a piece with the figure of a warrior wearing a helmet, chain mail, spear and shield, and three fragments painted with an archer, a man's face and a human eye (10th century, Archaeology Museum of Cordoba). As in the previous cases, these warrior figures, also omnipresent in Aulic iconography, are drawn in profile with fine, almost calligraphic lines, and have large eyes, pupils and eyebrows, signs of vitality and beauty.

Ceramics continued to incorporate scenes with human figures during the Nasrid period, such as a series with a Bacchic theme in the Alhambra Museum (14th–15th century); a green and manganese-glazed washbasin with two figures standing in striped tunics and drinking from cups; an *ataifor* with manganese-glazed on white featuring a man in movement holding a cup in one hand and drinking from a long-necked bottle with the other; and another green-manganese-glazed washbasin with two figures dressed in striped tunics tied at the waist and wearing turbans, carrying bottles and raising their cups as if making a toast (Il. 4). These pieces are characterised by having images drawn in a combination of dark, thick and thin strokes on empty backgrounds in which the figures are accompanied by sparse plant decoration. In terms of human elements, mention should be made here of the talismanic or protective figure of the 'hand of Fatima', or *Jamsa* (five), which appears on various 13th century jars, a sgraffito from Cieza with birds facing each other (Cieza Museum), others found in the dungeon of the Gate of Wine [Puerta del Vino] and in the Keep [Torre del Homenaje] painted in green and manganese, or manganese and sgraffito separately (Alhambra Museum)<sup>11</sup>, and in large gilded earthenware vases. One such example is the Carthusian Vase in Jerez (14th century, National Archaeology Museum), which is gilt on a white background; it has the word *al-Mulk* (the Sovereignty) in Kufic script and a painted hand of Fatima with a forearm and pairs of eyes inserted as a sign of protection against the evil eye. The Hermitage Vase also includes a representation of the hand with forearm on its



Il. 4. Washbasin with two figures of people drinking, Alhambra, 14th–15th century. Green and manganese glazed ceramic, 32 cm. diam., 12 cm high. Alhambra Museum.

handles; here the decorator alternated images to break the rigid visual symmetry. The word *Gibṭa* (Joy) was calligraphed on one forearm while the other was filled arabesques in the form of a tree of life. The 'eye' is only painted on one of the hands<sup>12</sup>.

Ceramics naturally included images of the lion, the symbol of sovereignty par excellence that Islamic art made its own from early times and that would appear in every Al-Andalus art form in all kinds of formats, media and literary texts. Lion images from the Umayyad period have been found from at least the 10th century. Examples include two *ataifors* from Cercadilla (Cordoba) in green-manganese with the exterior glazed in green, one with open jaws and a pointed tongue (10th–11th century), later *ataifors* in 'dry cord' ceramic 12th century<sup>13</sup> and the lions depicted on a washbasin with a double blue and gold lion (the latter erased) found in the square in front of the Palace of Charles V, painted in monochrome with an assured, Gothic-influenced line (14th–15th century)<sup>14</sup>. The Nasrid period was particularly brilliant for this emblematic figure: mural poetry, spouts and fountains, heraldry and the mural paintings of the Partal and Hall of the Kings, to be discussed below, made the lion the leading star of the sultanate's iconography. Al-Andalus ceramic painting and zoomorphic iconography naturally also included a wide range of symbolic

11 MARINETTO SANCHEZ. *La representación figurativa en el mundo musulmán*. Op. Cit., pp. 39-40 and 45. Cf. ROSSELLÓ-BORDOY, Guillem. "La cerámica en Al-Andalus". In *Al-Andalus. Las artes islámicas en España*. Madrid: El Viso, 1992, pp. 96-103.

12 I discussed the 'hand of Fatima' in Nasrid architecture in in PUERTA VÍLCHEZ. "Formas y valores simbólicos de las puertas en el islam. La Bāb al-Šarī'a de la Alhambra". In LÓPEZ-GUZMÁN, Rafael (ed.). *Bāb al-Šarī'a. Welcome to the Alhambra*. Granada: Alhambra and Generalife Board of Trustees, 2017, 39-40.

13 Provincial Archaeology Museum of Cordoba and private collections (FUERTES SANTOS, M<sup>a</sup> del Camino. "Representaciones de leones en cerámica andalusí de Córdoba". *Romula*, 1, 2002, pp. 225-251).

14 MARINETTO SANCHEZ. *La representación figurativa en el mundo musulmán*. Op. Cit., p. 86.

animals: those of the air, such as the eagle and the falcon, birds of prey that were equal in status to the lion and felines on earth, the peacock, the dove and other birds of paradise; land animals, such as the gazelle, deer and other herbivores, paradigms of heaven, fertility and beauty; the horse, the animal of choice in Islam as the mount of the Prophet<sup>15</sup> and for many other aesthetic and practical reasons; other small herbivores such as hares and rabbits; and aquatic animals (ducks and various kinds of fish). Splendid examples of 10th century Umayyad 'green-manganese' ceramic fauna have reached the present day, including a washbasin with a gazelle from Madīnat al-Zahrā' (National Museum of Ceramics in Valencia), the 'ataifor of the deer of Jerez', depicting the four-legged animal with large, cheerful eyes living in the centre of the dish with a long branch in its mouth, the bowl with four faintly sketched symmetrical ducks on the empty surface as if it were water, various fragments of dishes with peacocks and doves, some painted with a branch in their beaks (a theme known in Byzantine art), the beautiful hare flask from Madīnat Ilbira (Archaeological Museum of Granada) and the attractive 'washbasin of the horse' (10th century) (Il. 5), also from the Umayyad city of Granada, in which a bird rides a magnificent harnessed horse with oriental features and holds it by the reins. This symbolism can be traced back to ancient Indo-European peoples with the possible meaning of the bird as the spirit of the warrior; from an Islamic perspective, this could be identified with the soul of the Muslim knight on his way to paradise, since this is one of the meanings attributed to the horse in Arab mythology and culture<sup>16</sup>. This same theme of the bird holding the reins of a horse was reproduced inside a circle on the aljuba [traditional Moorish clothing] of Oña (Burgos) by the royal workshop (*ṭirāz*) of 10th-century Qurtuba. The figure of the gazelle was more common, a paradigm of beauty in Arab poetry, literature and art, frequently seen in the visual arts since the beginning of Islam. Sometimes it is attacked by felines and sometimes wandering freely among fallen leaves, as is the case with the Vase of the Gazelles and the Albayzin Vase, both from Nasrid Granada. The first of these (Alhambra Museum (14th century) (Il. 6) integrates zoomorphic figures with calligraphic and plant motifs in a harmonious and subtle manner, depicting two pairs



Il. 5. Ataiifor of the horse with bird, Madīnat Ilbira, 10th century. Manganese-green ceramic, 35 cm. diam., 8 cm. high. Archaeological Museum of Granada.

of stylised gazelles with wide eyes at a leisurely trot in front of a central tree of life. One pair have white bodies and are set inside a plant border, the other pair have blue bodies, are outside another plant border and set further apart. The festive image of the gazelles suggests, in keeping with the main inscription on the piece, *al-Yumn wa-l-iqbāl* (adventure and prosperity), the notions of beauty, well-being, peace, fertility and femininity of heaven. In turn, the Albayzin Vase, preserved in the Freer Gallery (probably 15th century) (Il. 7), is decorated with gazelles facing each other. They are seemingly painted with a single brush stroke and have the word "*al-ʿĀfiya*" (Health) on their bodies in calligraphy, just as other pieces of Al-Andalus art bear propitiatory epigraphs on their bodies, one such example being the 'lion of Monzón'. The poem on the Albayzin Vase is painted in a beautiful cursive script interspersed with arabesques inside a wide border that runs around the central part of the piece and speaks in the first person feminine, like several poems from the Alhambra, drawing the viewer's attention to the noble and idyllic nature of the object: "(...) Look at my form today and behold: you will see my excellence. / For I seem to be made of silver and my clothes of flowers (*min al-zahr*). / My happiness rests in the hands of the one who owns me, under the canopy."<sup>17</sup>

15 IBN ʿUZAYY AL-KALBĪ. *Maṭlaʿ al-yumn wa-l-iqbāl*. Beirut: Dār al-Garb al-Islāmī, 1986, pp. 22-32.

16 FRESNEDA PADILLA, Eduardo. "Ataifor del caballo". In *Arte islámico en Granada. Propuesta para un Museo de la Alhambra*. Granada: Alhambra and Generalife Board of Trustees, 1995, 238-239.

17 Translation by A. R. Nykl. Catalogue of the exhibition *Los Jarrones de la Alhambra. Simbología y poder*. Granada: Alhambra and Generalife Board of Trustees, 2006, p.166.





Il. 6. Vase of the Gazelles, Alhambra, 14th century. Gilt earthenware, 135.2 cm. high, 68.7 cm. diam. Alhambra Museum.



Il. 7. Vase from the Albayzin, Granada, 14th century. Gilt earthenware, 77.2 cm. high x 68.2 cm. diam. Freer Gallery, Washington.



Il. 8. Washbasin with fish, 14th century. Green-glazed ceramic with manganese designs, 22.5 cm. diam. Alhambra Museum.

The Alhambra Museum also has further ceramic remains from this last period of Al-Andalus in the 14th–15th centuries. They are in blue on white with drawings of splendid trees with spiral-shaped branches, and figures of eagles or falcons (birds frequently featured in ivory work from Cordoba, textiles and mural painting.) There is also a fragment with the head of a cockerel in gilded ceramic and a green plate with a bird singing on a branch, set off-centre and drawn with broad black strokes and precise curved and straight lines. Other Nasrid pieces also depicted elegant and original zoomorphic figures, and highlights include two beautiful 14th-century washbasins with fish, one in green glazed ceramic and the other in white, blue and gold (Il. 8). The first has ten small aquatic figures and the second twice as many, all reproduced schematically like calligraphy brush strokes and swimming in concentric circles (Alhambra Museum). There were also pieces depicting boats, a highly popular theme in the ceramics of Islam and Al-Andalus; examples include a Nasrid gilded earthenware bowl in the Archaeology Museum of Jerez 16th century) and another

in the Alhambra Museum with a square-sailed boat glazed in blue on a white background (14th–15th century)<sup>18</sup>. This Nasrid ceramic painting is notable for its sketch-like or calligraphic figures; just a few brush strokes succeed in giving the figures a dynamism and expressiveness very close to modern tastes.

18 MARINETTO SÁNCHEZ. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 58-59 and 64. ROSELLÓ BORDOY. "Ataifor de la nave", in *Al-Andalus. Las Artes Islámicas en España. Op. Cit.*, p. 361; BERTÍ, G. et al. *Naves Andaluses en Cerámicas Mallorquinas*, Palma de Mallorca. General Directorate of Culture, 1993; MARTÍNEZ ENAMORADO, Virgilio. "Ataifor con nave." In *Ibn Khaldun. El Mediterráneo en el siglo XIV (Cat. piezas)*, Granada: Fundación El Legado Andalusi, 2006, p. 172.

## BOOK ARTS AND MINIATURES IN AL-ANDALUS

The promotion of book arts and the formation of libraries in Al-Andalus dates at least as far back as the library of emir Muḥammad I (reigned 852-886). The library was later expanded by his successors, particularly ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III (reigned as emir, 912-929, and caliph 929-961) and especially al-Ḥakam II (reigned 961-976), who drew together magnificent amanuensis, illustrators and bookbinders from Al-Andalus, as well as others from Sicily and Baghdad. Similarly to ceramics and textiles, illustrated books travelled and, along with ideas and science, helped to transmit forms and motifs between areas under Islamic and Christian rule. According to the Arab chronicles, the Byzantine emperor presented ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III with a copy of the famous medical work of Dioscorides with beautiful drawings of medicinal plants and calligraphy in Greek in gold and silver letters on parchment<sup>19</sup>. Most of the illustrated books from Al-Andalus that have been preserved are *maṣāḥif*-s (editions of the Qur’an); some have painted filigree endpapers with geometric latticework and arabesque motifs, such as the Qur’an dated in Cordoba in 1143 (Istanbul University Library) that has an exquisite endpaper with a central eight-pointed star enclosing a golden octagon with blue inner latticework creating a line with eight circles<sup>20</sup>. From later periods, mention should be made of the preserved 13th-century Qur’an kept in Ibn Yūsuf Library in Marrakesh with calligraphy on the famous paper of Játiva, where the first paper mill was established on European soil in the mid-12th century. Also of note are Qur’ans by Ibn Gaṭṭūs of Valencia (d. 1213/4), the most famous specialist in this art in Al-Andalus. His fame reached as far as the East and, in addition to his precise miniaturist calligraphy with an Al-Andalus-style reed pen, he was also a gifted illustrator, as shown by two of his preserved endpapers with latticework (one dated 1161, Cairo, General Organisation of the Egyptian Book, and the other dated 1182/3). Ibn Gaṭṭūs’ style of pictorial/calligraphic decoration was described by ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥāyṣ of Fez 13th–14th century) as follows: “I saw one or more editions of the Qur’an with his [Ibn Gaṭṭūs] calligraphy, and it was unusual due to the beauty of the composition and the care taken with the strokes;

each vowel was always of a well-chosen colour: lapis lazuli for the *šadda* and *yāsm*, the colour of resin for the *ḍamma*, *fathā* and *kasra*, green for the *hamza* of *kasra*, yellow for the *hamza* of *fathā*, and all executed flawlessly; there was not a *wāw*, nor an *alif*, nor a single letter, nor word, in the margin, nor out of place; it was as if when he spoiled something, he removed it.”<sup>21</sup> The ‘Seville Qur’an’, dated in Seville in December 1226 (Bavarian State Library, Munich), has a similar style and belongs to what Ibn al-Khaṭīb called ‘Sevillian calligraphy’. It has an highly creative endpaper and refined latticework with an inset lobed circle, a masterpiece that combines the arts of *al-jatṭ* (calligraphy) and *al-tajṭīṭ* or *al-raḡṣ* (artistic delineation or geometry) (Il. 9). During this period, when book art in Al-Andalus was its height of splendour, Sevillian scholar Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Iṣbīlī (d. Seville, c. 1230-1232) wrote an interesting treatise on bookbinding entitled *Kitāb al-Taysīr fī ṣinā’at al-tasfīr* (Book to aid learning, on the art of bookbinding)<sup>22</sup>, which is divided into twenty short chapters and sections that teach the apprentice of the craft about book manufacture, types of glue, stitching, the grouping of booklets, levelling, weaving, making covers, preparing leather, fitting it to the binding and other technical details. He also covers restoring manuscripts, firing red dye (*al-baqam*) and decorative figures (*naqṣ*) and gilding with hot-iron seals on leather. Similar treatises written in Al-Andalus that specifically focus on the painted arts are unknown but Ibn al-Idris al-Qalālūs (Estepona, 1210/1–1308) wrote on inks applied to the manufacture of books in a treatise entitled *Tuhfat al-jawāṣṣ fī ṣinā’at al-amidda wa-l-aṣḥāg wa-l-adhān* (Gift of scholars, on the manufacture of inks and dyes)<sup>23</sup>, which he dedicated to Nasrid vizier Ibn al-Ḥakīm of Ronda and has three chapters: 1) on the manufacture of ink, 2) on methods of removing ink from notebooks and parchment, and also from clothes, and 3) on the use of ink in writing, using solid metals such as gold, silver and iron. Qur’ans from the Almohad and Nasrid periods have passed down to the present day with beautiful calligraphy and magnificent endpapers, covers and decoration, such as those on vellum in the Library

19 AL-MAQQARĪ. *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*. Ed. by Iḥsān ‘Abbās. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1988, vol I, p.367. RIBERA, Julián. “Bibliófilos y bibliotecas en la España musulmana”. In *Disertaciones y opúsculos*, I. Madrid, 1928, p.191. Sobre las artes del libro en Al-Andalus, cf. PUERTA VÍLCHEZ. *La aventura del cálamo*, Op. Cit., pp.139-194 and 199-203.

20 Cf. KHEMIR, Sabiha. “Las artes del Libro”. In *Al-Andalus. Las artes islámicas en España*. Op. Cit., pp. 115-125 and 310.

21 AL-ṢAFADĪ. *Al-Waḥī bi-l-wafayāt*. Wiesbaden, 1962, III, p. 351, no. 1431.

22 Ms. Public Library of Tetouan (copy dated 26 August 1634). Translation into Spanish by MUJTAR AL-ABBADĪ, Hossam, in *Las artes del libro en el Magreb y Al-Andalus*. Madrid: El Viso, 2005.

23 Ms. from the National Library of France in Paris (no. 6844) and ms. from al-Khizāna al-Āmma of Rabat (no. 8998). The Paris ms. was studied by SAUSAN, Yvette. “Un traité à l’usage des scribes à l’époque nasride.” In DÉROCHE, F. (ed.). *Les manuscrits du Moyen-Orient*. Istanbul-Paris, 1989, pp. 49-50, and AL-MANŪNĪ studied the Rabat ms. in *Qabas*, I, pp. 333-339.



Il. 9. "Qur'an of Seville", 1226. Flyleaf, paper, 26 x 22 cm. Bavarian State Library, Munich.

of Catalonia, editions in the Dawed Collection in Tetouan, or the pages of a splendid Qur'an with outlined, interlaced and interlocking letters in the National Library of Paris along with a complete Qur'an dated 703 H: (1304 AD) from the reign of Muhammad III with latticework endpapers reminiscent of tiles from the Alhambra. A further edition from 14th-century Granada is in the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin; it has sebka borders in red, blue and ochre that are surprisingly close in form to plasterwork panels in the Hall of Comares, and ahah headings in cursive Al-Andalus script that follow similar patterns to mural calligraphy at the Alhambra.

In terms of illustrations with figures, there are very few examples of books from Al-Andalus with images (*ṣuwar*); everything seems to indicate that, although more were produced than are known today, production was scarce and proportionally less than in the East. It is clear that the forms and aesthetics of the classical 'Arabic school of painting' appeared in Al-Andalus at the end of Almohad rule in the Iberian Peninsula<sup>24</sup>. Its greatest exponent was al-Wāsiṭī, the Iraqi

amanuensis, miniaturist and author of the 99 pictorial scenes of the *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī* (National Library of France), who signed the work in the colophon as its calligrapher and painter (*bi-jatṭī-hiwa-ṣuwari-hi*) on Saturday 3 May 1237. The moment that this painting style appeared is proven by the famous manuscript of the *Ḥadīṭ Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ* (Tale of Bayāḍ and Riyāḍ) (unicum of the Vatican Apostolic Library in Rome, Vat. Ar. 368), which narrates a love story in prose accompanied by poems. Its action takes place in a manor house by the river Tartār (Iraq), and seems to have been part of some compilations of the *Thousand and One Nights*. Despite the fact that the authorship of the manuscript is unknown because its initial and final pages have been lost, all the analyses carried out by specialists in art (calligraphy of Al-Andalus, clothing of the characters, painted architecture, ornamental details), language (Arabic localisms) and materials (type of paper, glues, stitching, etc.), conclude that it was made in Almohad Seville in the first half or first quarter of the 13th century<sup>25</sup>. The codex preserves fourteen of the nineteen illustrations it must have had, which reproduce many of the elements of painting and other arts with figurative representation from Al-Andalus and the East, and adds formal innovations, such as the careful integration of text and image. The story brings together the characters *Bayāḍ* (Whiteness), a young merchant, musician and poet from Damascus, and *Riyāḍ* (Orchard), a beautiful maiden from a stately home with whom he falls in love, along with the Lady, the servants and the Old Woman, a gossip from Babylon. The young Bayāḍ comes to charm Riyāḍ with "a fine lute" and a handful of romantic qasidas, but the relationship is initially hindered because the *ḥāyib*, the lord of the city, is also enamoured of the maiden. The Iraqi plot is transplanted to Almohad Seville, specifically to a mansion on the banks of the river that is depicted like an Al-Andalus estate; it has a garden with a pool, trees, statues of water-spouting animals, a waterwheel, turrets, verandas with arched windows and latticework, gates and a protective wall of ashlar. The plot and illustrations also feature a chorus of maidservants (*waṣā'if*), whose symbolic names speak of the intoxication and sickness of profane love: *Šamūl* (Refreshed wine), *Mudām* (Wine), *Uqār* (Remedies), *ʿItāb* (Reproach). Gold gleams on the sleeve cuffs and collars of

24 Many Arabic books on secular subjects with miniatures have been preserved in the Islamic East. These miniatures are found in books such as *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī*, *Kalīla wa-l-Dimna* and other literary works, and in books on botany, medicine, wit, and many, many more. Two examples are Arabic codex no. 898 *Manāfi' al-ḥayawān* (Book of the utilities of animals) in the Library of El Escorial, a work by Ibn al-Durayhim of Mosul dated 1354 (edited and translated by Carmen Bravo-Villasante, Madrid: Edilan, 1981; Madrid: Kaydeda, reed. 1990), and Aḥmad al-Maṣrī al-Adamī's treatise on chivalry (*furūsiyya*) with paintings and horse scenes produced in Mamluk Egypt in 1371 and kept in the British Library in London.

25 On the last restoration carried out by Ángela Núñez Gaitán and Arianna D'Ottone, cf. D'OTTONE, Arianna. *La Storia di Bayāḍ e Riyāḍ* (Vat. ar. 368). *Una nuova edizione e traduzione*. Vatican City: Vatican Apostolic Library, 2013. For a detailed analysis of these illustrations, cf. ROBINSON, Cynthia. *Medieval Andalusian Courtly Culture in the Mediterranean. Ḥadīṭ Bayāḍ wa Riyāḍ*, London-New York: Brill, 2007.





Il. 10. "Image of the Old Woman admonishing Bayād." *Ḥadīṭ Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ*. Paper, 28.3 x 21 x 17 cm. Vatican Apostolic Library, Rome, Codex Ar. 368.



Il. 11. "Image of Riyāḍ who has fainted..." *Ḥadīṭ Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ*. Paper, 28.3 x 21 x 17 cm. Vatican Apostolic Library, Rome, Codex Ar. 368.



Il. 12. "Image of Bayād singing with the lute before the Lady and her harem." *Ḥadīṭ Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ*. Paper, 28.3 x 21 x 17 cm. Vatican Apostolic Library, Rome, Codex Ar. 368.

the maidservants and Lady's luxurious tunics. Each image, which includes aspects beyond the story and the poems, is introduced by a title highlighted with a thicker reed pen ("šūra..."): "Image of..." that clearly explains the scene depicted. After the first, very damaged image that was perhaps intended to illustrate the first *maʿyālīs* or gathering enlivened by music, poetry and drink, is the "Image (šūra) of the Old Woman (ʾayūz) advising and warning Bayād". This matches illustration 8 ("Image of the Old Woman admonishing Bayād") in which the two figures are portrayed in formal dress on a carpet and cushions, without architectural surroundings, to emphasise the dramatic intensity of the scene (Il. 10). In all the illustrations, the Old Woman and gossip is depicted in dark clothing that covers her head. She has an ugly face in profile, a large, all-seeing eye, gesticulates with her hands and sometimes carries a flask to serve the wine of love. Characters' hands are painted in different positions to indicate an exchange of ideas and dialogue. The depictions of architecture are of particular interest; they are painted with different details from Eastern Arabic miniatures. "Image (šūra) of Riyāḍ who has fainted, [the women of the] harem sprinkling rosewater and camphor on her face, and the Old Woman with them; and image of the palace (*wa-šūrat al-qasr*)" (3) (Il. 11), shows extremely well-realised architecture: a closed doorway with an *tummid* arch and very well-drawn geometric decoration reminiscent of the leaves of the Gate to Forgiveness [Puerta del Perdón] at the Mezquita of Seville, with green marble columns and white capitals, repeated at a larger size in the interior. An arch with *alfiz* forming leaves on both sides frames the central scene. The image includes viewpoints with horseshoe arches and delicate glass

panes, as well as an arcade with inlaid latticework. The highest turret has an open doorway, alluding to the possibility of admiring the landscape and the interior orchards from the upper storey. Here the artist shows off his decorative-geometrical drawing skills and architectural observation, both in his depiction of the buildings and their decorative elements. Image 4, (Il.13) which begins the *maʿyālīs* organised by the Lady in her mansion, shows the manicured lawn of the garden, a cypress tree and a large tree; the Lady is 'enthroned' on a dais with latticework decoration and wears an orange *aljuba*, a bluish-green tunic, golden ornaments and a large crown. The architecture is always on a smaller scale than the characters in the scene, as in manuscripts by the Eastern Arabic school of painting. It has correctly depicted exterior stonework and the viewer always sees its external face but is permitted to observe the dramatic interior scenes, the attractive and dangerous game of love. This idyllic, profane paradise, as solemn a place as the court but with a human touch, is the chosen place for the exchange of songs, verses, feelings and the heartache of love. The artist depicts consecutive actions in the same space (images 3 and 4 of the manuscript) but inverts the viewpoints and varies the poses of the figures. In picture 5, Bayād sings his romantic verses, the Lady is still in an admonishing pose and Riyāḍ appears, on the opposite side, next to the Old Woman, who has a glass of wine in her hand. The companion image (6) depicts the Old Woman, in profile, with a bottle of wine in her hand looking at the Lady, who listens to Bayād and Riyāḍ while a maidservant holds a glass with the liquor that fuels the pleasure and sins of love (Il. 12). The Lady, next to whom Riyāḍ shelters herself, is richly attired on her dais and admonishes



Il. 13. "Image of the Lady speaking to the Old Woman about the matter of Riyāḍ..." *Ḥadīṭ Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ*. Paper, 28.3 x 21 x 17 cm. Vatican Apostolic Library, Rome, Codex Ar. 368.



Il. 14. "Image of Bayāḍ fainting." *Ḥadīṭ Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ*. Paper, 28.3 x 21 x 17 cm. Vatican Apostolic Library, Rome, Codex Ar. 368.



Il. 15. "Image of the snake in its burrow..." *Sulwān al-muṭā' fi 'udwān al-atbā'*. 16th century Paper, 21 x 16.5 cm. Library of El Escorial, ms. Arab 528.

Bayāḍ for his lyrical-amorous excesses; the lute-player from Damascus confronts her as he sings in his best clothes, his left hand and lute set in front of the turret that he stands next to. The Lady and her maidservants' complexions are white with a lock of hair across their moon faces. They have large, dark eyebrows and eyes, small mouths and reddish tones on the cheeks as a sign of the freshness and beauty that the text attributes to them. The servants are bare-headed and have abundant black hair. In this part of the story tears dominate the action and poetic content, and Riyāḍ plays the lute and sings melancholic verses about the sickness and death to which the drunkenness of love leads<sup>26</sup>. The *maylis* is about to bring about the separation of Bayāḍ from his Lady, which is depicted in picture 7, one of the most interesting plates in the manuscript; this scene takes place in another part of the gardens, with a pool, flowerbeds, pavilions, plants and garden animals (Il. 13). The composition centres around the pool, which has a pair of swimming ducks, a fish and other water animals swimming in the water. The pool water and the nearby river are depicted two-dimensionally, and the garden lawn and a cypress tree lie above, dividing the scene into two parts. Two deer heads, similar to the metal fawns found at Madinat al-Zahrā', spout water over the pool. Two staircases on either side of the pool connect it with sunken flowerbeds with plants; on the left, a vine climbs up to the dome of the small pavilion that contains Riyāḍ. The Lady is seated on the other side of the pool under a semicircular arch supported by columns with capitals, one of

her hands resting on an inlaid wooden railing. The Old Woman, clutching one of the columns, asks the Lady to reconcile with Riyāḍ. A rabbit happily climbs the steps of the pavilion where the Lady and the Old Woman are standing. It is reminiscent of those found in ceramics and other arts forms produced in Al-Andalus and is a symbol of fortune and fertility. The pleasant setting and Riyāḍ's splendid clothing, a red and orange striped tunic with gold collar and sleeves, and a beautiful red and white striped shawl, do not conceal her suffering. The calligraphic caption to the image emphasises her pain, noting that blood is running down her face, something she herself repeats in the narrative: "My tears are mixed with blood". In another image (10), Bayāḍ lies dejected by the river while being gazed at by "the young man, relative of the Old Woman", who believes him dead and recites an elegy. Bayāḍ lies on the grass with one hand and part of his turban in the water; his face isn't visible, a further sign of the drama and theatricality of the work (Il. 14). The scene is completed with an excellent drawing of a waterwheel in the foreground with the wall of the two turrets, one with typical Almohad arches. Again, the way the calligraphy is carefully integrated into the illustration both physically and thematically is of particular note: words cross architectural elements, empty spaces are filled by writing and the text box is balanced with the image, which occupies the entire width of the sheet.

The ability of classical Islamic art to assimilate new ideas was renowned, and an exceptional codex preserved in El Escorial Library (Arabic 528) of *Sulwān al-muṭā' fi 'udwān al-atbā'* (The consolation of the ruler, on the hostility of vassalage) applies the same practice of linking text in Al-Andalus script

26 NYKL. *Historia de los amores de Bayāḍ y Riyāḍ*. Ed. and tr. by A. R. Nykl. New York, 1941, pp. 18-19, 28 and 31; Arabic text: pp. 19, 29 and 31.





Il. 16. "Image of the baker informing his wife of what he saw in his dreams." *Sulwān al-muṭā' fi 'udwān al-atbā'*. 16th century Paper, 21 x 16.5 cm. Library of El Escorial, ms. Arab 528.



Il. 17. "Image of the servant girl asking the sorcerer to remove the spell." *Sulwān al-muṭā' fi 'udwān al-atbā'*. 16th century Paper, 21 x 16.5 cm. Library of El Escorial, ms. Arab 528.



Il. 18. "Image of al-Ma'mūn reading the writing to his ministers." *Sulwān al-muṭā' fi 'udwān al-atbā'*. 16th century Paper, 21 x 16.5 cm. Library of El Escorial, ms. Arab 528.

with images. This is an anonymous copy with illustrations of a well-known treatise on political theory and the education of princes, considered a predecessor of Machiavelli's *The Prince*; the original was written in 1159 by author Ibn Ẓafar al-Šiqillī, who was born in Sicily in 1104, visited Al-Andalus and died in Cairo in 1170. Various details of the characters and scenes depicted, as well as their perspectives, have led scholars to date it from the 16th century, although it is not known by whom the codex was made or for which patron or sovereign. It is significant that while the Al-Andalus or Maghrebi style of calligraphy and the red-ink captions explaining each image are exactly the same as in the codex of *Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ*, made three hundred years earlier, in the *Sulwān al-muṭā'* manuscript the illustrations are framed with a triple line that is sometimes crossed by calligraphy or a figure. The person who painted these images must have been trained in a modern workshop because he used perspective and shading, applying European knowledge of painting that had been disseminated through engraving and printmaking. From the beginning, scholars have noted that it features clothing and other Hispanic motifs from the time of Philip II, so the leading hypothesis is that the author was a Moorish emigrant to the Maghreb<sup>27</sup>. If this

were the case, it would be plausible that he was one of the many Moors who joined the ranks of the Sa'dies sovereigns. In particular, Aḥmad al-Manšūr (ruled 1578-1603), the celebrated monarch scholar, poet and architect, sought to emulate Philip II and the European courts and was a great patron of the arts and letters, as well as the founder of an important library in his palace of Badi Palace in Marrakesh. Either way, the codex contains 47 illustrations that are genuine paintings with perspective and the composition applies the subjective gaze of someone who contemplates the world through a window i.e. from a viewpoint that, according to Hans Belting, developed in Europe by applying the theories and scientific experiences of the *Optics or Perspective* of Ḥasan Ibn al-Haytham [Alhazen] of Basra (965-1004). His work was well known to Europeans through Vitello's Latin version, produced at the end of the 13th century. This new representation of a subjective view of the world, constructed by the European Renaissance, would eventually, according to Belting, spread beyond the boundaries of the old continent on a universal scale<sup>28</sup>. This copy of *Sulwān al-muṭā'* is an example of how the Renaissance way of seeing spread to Islamic soil. Animals appear alone in five landscape plates (Il. 15), and in eight others with people; human figures are featured alone in thirty-four plates, and the exteriors and interiors of buildings and objects are depicted. Everything is painted in a fully naturalistic style using shading, bright colours, broad brush strokes and perspective techniques, although there are often distortions of scale, especially between

27 Cf. ARIÉ, Rachel. *Al-Munannamāt fi Isbāniyā al-islāmiyya. Naẓrāt fi ma-jitūta 'arabiyya muzajrafa fi Maktabat al-Iskuriyāl* (Miniatures in Islamic Spain. Examination of an illustrated Arabic manuscript from the El Escorial Library). Riyadh, 2002. For the situation regarding issues related to the art of this manuscript and other interesting aspects, cf. MAZZOLI-GUINTARD, Christine and VIGUERA MOLINS, M<sup>o</sup> Jesús. "La casa en las miniaturas de *Sulwān al-muṭā'* (Manuscript at El Escorial no. 528. 16th century). In DÍEZ JORGE, M<sup>o</sup> Elena (ed.). *De puertas para adentro. La casa en los siglos XV-XVI*. Granada: Comares, 2019, pp. 341-364.

28 BELTING, Hans. *Florenzia y Bagdad. Una historia de la mirada entre Oriente y Occidente*. Madrid: Akal, 2012.

the human figures and the buildings. When a comparison is made between the waterwheel in *Sulwān al-muṭā* and the one in *Bayād wa-Riyād*, and also how water is represented (Il. 16) and the composition of scenes and characters, obvious differences can be seen in the sense of volume and three-dimensionality in the former, in contrast to the two-dimensionality and schematic drawing in the latter. Also of note is the flooring in some panels, and the shadows thrown by people on the ground, which are drawn with cavalier perspective (Il. 17), plus the rough way human anatomy is often reproduced. Even so, the colourful characters in this work – kings, princesses, concubines, soldiers, counsellors, a spy, a monk with a bishop, the hunter with the merchant, a new *ʿayūz* (old woman), a sorceress, etc. – are depicted with European features and in European settings in most cases. However, there is no lack of well-characterised Muslim characters, which shows that the illustrator was familiar with both the Christian and Islamic worlds (Il. 18). Finally, the text of the work includes *exempla* taken from *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, the famous fables translated into Arabic by logician, philosopher and translator Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (Iraq, 8th century), who, in the introduction he wrote for the illustrated manuscript containing his translation, extols the pedagogical and playful value of the images contained in the books. And, as throughout history, the images and ideas were transferred, adapted and renewed; centuries after the translated and illustrated copy of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was produced, Arab princes and leaders at the far ends of Islam continued to delight in the powerful seductive and perceptive capacity of the image, combined with the concepts, teachings and secrets held by writing. As Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ himself said, at the dawn of Arab humanism, “the painter (*al-muṣawwir*) and the copyist (*al-nāsij*) will always be of benefit (*yantafiʿ abadan*).”<sup>29</sup>

#### THEMES AND PROGRAMMES WITH FIGURES IN MURAL PAINTING IN AL-ANDALUS

Painting was an essential component of the architecture of Al-Andalus throughout the centuries and was used to decorate plinths, polychrome stone, marble, plaster and wood surfaces, and also to create specific iconographic programmes of great complexity<sup>30</sup>. Although only a fragment of wall

decoration with figures from Madinat al-Zahrāʾ is known (a stone plaque signed ‘work of Raṣīq’, with a bas-relief of two pairs of gazelles facing each other and two pairs of peacocks with entwined necks, both centred by two trees of life (Madinat al-Zahrāʾ Museum)), it is likely that Umayyad palaces in Cordoba, like their Umayyad predecessors in the East, had figurative wall paintings. This is corroborated by the head of a warrior that Torres Balbas found painted on the *chemin de ronde* of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s palatial city, which was later erased<sup>31</sup>. A few years ago, figurative mural paintings were even discovered on the wall of the qibla that leads to the prayer hall of al-Ḥakam II in the Mezquita of Cordoba. They were discovered when restoration work was carried out in St Bartholemew’s chapel, on the wall that supports a column with a black shaft (Il. 19). What is particularly striking is that, alongside the geometric decoration with floral motifs (on the left of the column), a series of vertical painted cartouches was discovered (on the right). These square-based vignettes with trefoil arches are created by a string of pearls linking them with loops. Each encloses a stylised animal figure with artistically-recreated features similar to the zoomorphic figures of the ‘green and manganese’ ceramics and other Caliphate works of art. Figures include a trotting gazelle (top), an open-winged bird (centre) and a quadruped, perhaps another gazelle or a deer (this last figure has suffered more damage)<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, two symbolic animals are depicted that are typical to the Islamic iconography of heaven and the idyllic afterlife.

Thanks to written sources and some material remains, there is also evidence of how figurative representation in painting expanded in the courtly architecture of the 11th century Taifa kingdoms. According to Ibn Bassām, the “hall of al-Mukarram” in a palace of al-Maʾmūn in Toledo, had “splendid decoration (*zujruf*)” with a white marble frieze containing carved (*khurimat*) figures (*ṣuwar*, *tamāʾil muṣawwara*) of animals, birds and trees with fruit, joined together so that “whoever looked at them seemed to be approached or pointed at”. A calligraphic inscription (*kitāb naqṣ*) ran above the frieze “car-

29 IBN AL-MUQAFFAʿ. *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Beirut: Dār al-ʿAwda, 1986 (2nd ed.), p. 62.

30 Cf. TORRES BALBÁS. “Zócalos pintados en la arquitectura hispanomusulmana”. *Al-Andalus*, VII, 1942), pp. 121-149; GARCÍA BUENO, Ana and MEDINA FLÓREZ, Víctor. “Algunos datos sobre los inicios de la pintura mural hispanomusulmana”. *Al-Qanṭara*, XXIII, 1, 2002, pp. 213-222; RALLO

GRUSS, Carmen. “La pintura mural hispano-musulmana. ¿Tradición o innovación?” *Al-Qanṭara*, XXIV, 1, 2003, pp. 109-137; GARCÍA GRANADOS, Juan Antonio. “Zócalos pintados en fincas murcianas: Dār as-Ṣuḡrā y Qasr Ibn Saʿd (Castillejo de Monteagudo)”. In NAVARRO PALAZÓN, Julio and TRILLO SAN JOSÉ, Carmen (eds.). *Almunias. Las fincas de las élites en el Occidente islámico: poder, solaz y producción*. Granada: CSIC [et. al.], 2018, pp. 153-191.

31 TORRES BALBÁS. *Historia de España*, 725, quoted by RALLO GRUSS, “La pintura mural hispanomusulmana”. *Op. Cit.*, p. 127.

32 NIETO CUMPLIDO, Manuel. *La Mezquita Catedral de Córdoba. Patrimonio de la Humanidad*. Granada: Edilux, 2005, pp. 104-105.

ved with a stylus (*minqār*) more eloquent than the reed pen”, displaying beautiful, upright letters that allowed verses to be read from a distance in honour of al-Ma’mūn. There were “cartouches (*buhūr*) of coloured glass covered with pure gold, which included images (*aškāl*, *ṣuwar*) of animals, birds, cattle and trees” above the inscription, and more “images (*tamāṭil muṣawwara*) on the floor of magnificently devised and depicted animals and trees (*taṣwīr*).”<sup>33</sup> This description has been linked to the polychrome reliefs with inlaid glass that survive in a portico with three horseshoe arches in the Museum of Santa Clara in Toledo; the exact chronology of this portico is uncertain. On the south side these reliefs depict scenes of falconry and hunting (falconers, felines and birds of prey attacking herbivores) and on the north, peacocks, eagles, felines and fantastical animals from oriental tradition (sphinxes, winged goats, harpies)<sup>34</sup>. Other wall plaques with arabesque motifs and carved birds are also preserved from these palaces, and Ibn Bassām informs us that another room in al-Ma’mūn was upholstered with Tustar brocade, colourful curtains with attractive images (*ṣuwar*) and shining gilt<sup>35</sup>, all of which were displayed to guests at his famous banquets. In turn, al-Uḍrī refers in *Tarṣī’ al-ajbār* to the wall and floor decoration that adorned the palace of Ibn Ṣumādīḥ in the Alcazaba of Almería 11th century), with a central garden and “a large reception hall (*ma’līs*) to which there is access through doors with addufls carved in the Eastern tradition, but more valuable than those of the East because of the perfection of their ornamentation. This hall is paved with white marble flagstones; the dados are clad with the same material.” He also mentions another *ma’līs*

33 IBN BASSĀM. *Al-Dajira*. Ed. by Ihsān ‘Abbās. Beirut: Dār al-Garb al-Is-lāmī, Beirut, 2000, vol. 4, p. 96. RUBIERA MATA, M<sup>a</sup> Jesús. *La arquitectura en la literatura árabe. Datos para una estética del placer*. Madrid: Hipérion, 1988, pp. 169.

34 Along with polychrome and shiny glass, the plasterwork was painted with “costly raw materials such as lapis lazuli, cinnabar, gold and minium” (GONZÁLEZ PASCUAL, Margarita. “La puesta en valor de un conjunto de fragmentos de arco decorados con yeserías islámicas hallado en el antiguo convento de Santa Fe de Toledo”. *Informes y Trabajos*, 10, 2014, pp. 195-226. A possible link between Ibn Bassām’s text and this arcade is suggested by DE JUAN ARES, Jorge and SCHIBILLE, Nadine, in “El vidrio en la taifa de Toledo: reflexiones a partir de Ciudad de Vascos y el convento de Santa Fe” (Glass in the Taifa of Toledo: reflections based on Ciudad de Vascos and the convent of Santa Fe). In SARR, Bilal (ed.). *Tawāṭif. Historia y Arqueología de los reinos taifa*, Granada: Alhulā, 2018, pp. 474-487.

35 RUBIERA MATA. *Ibid.* p. 167. Zoomorphic statues were also found in the Taifa palaces of Seville; a well-known poem by Ibn Wahbūn describes an elephant fountain located in a pool in the al-Zākī palace of al-Mu’tamid in Seville 11th century) (IBN BASSĀM. *Al-Dajira*. Op. Cit., IV, p. 519). This poem reminds us of the elephant-fountain found in the pool of a 10th-century Cordoban estate, now kept in the Diocesan Museum of Cordoba.



Il. 19. Mosque of Cordoba, mural paintings on the wall of the qibla of al-Hakam II, 10th century. Chapel of San Bartolomé, Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba.

paved with carved flagstones and white and gilded marble dados<sup>36</sup>. This decoration probably included images of figures, at least something similar to the birds that have survived in reliefs at the Aljafería. At this monument, mural painting played a key role, as seen by the “great variety”, in Christian Ewert’s words, of geometric and plant paintings. The Oratory of this palace in Zaragoza also has calligraphy and pointed arcades surrounded by borders with arabesque motifs, painted in a bright red, white, blue and orange palette with black lines. Il. 20)<sup>37</sup>.

Judging by historical and poetic sources, sculptural and painted images were used in many public and private baths houses in Al-Andalus for decorative, symbolic and erotic purposes<sup>38</sup>, although in the *ḥammāmāt* of Al-Andalus only remains of non-figurative wall decoration have survived, unlike the many and varied images that have endured from Umayyad palace baths in the East<sup>39</sup>. Al-Maqqarī emphasised the use of erotic

36 SECO DE LUCENA, Luis, “Los palacios del taifa almeriense al-Mu’taṣim”. *Cuadernos de la Alhambra*, 3 1967 pp. 15-20.

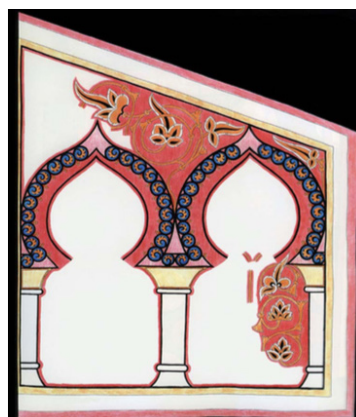
37 EWERT, Christian. “La mezquita de la Aljafería y sus pinturas”. In BORRÁS GUALIS, Gonzalo and CABAÑERO SUBIZA, Bernabé. *La Aljafería y el Arte del Islam Occidental en el siglo XI. Actas del Seminario Internacional celebrado en Zaragoza los días 1, 2 y 3 de diciembre de 2004*. Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2012, pp. 97-131.

38 PÉRÈS, Henri. “Los baños”, in *Esplendor de Al-Andalus. La poesía andaluza en árabe clásico en el siglo XI*. Madrid: Hipérion, 1983, p. 341. RUBIERA MATA. “Los baños”, in *La arquitectura en la literatura árabe*. Op. Cit., pp. 97-103.

39 I am referring to the frescoes in the baths at Qusayr ‘Amra (Jordan) and the female statues of Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi (Syria) and Khirbat al-Mafjar (Palestine) (8th century).

images (*ṣuwar*) painted in a bath house in Abbasid Baghdad<sup>40</sup>, just as Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba (994-1064) refers to homologous paintings in bath houses in Al-Andalus, mentioning, in *The Necklace of the Dove*, “the images of the bath (*ṣuwar al-ḥammām*) (...)”<sup>41</sup>, which enchant the beholder. A poem by Ibn Zaydūn (1003-1071) refers to a thermal baths (*ḥamma*) with a relaxation building owned by king al-Muṭamid of Seville where there was a statue of a woman (*dumya*). The poet describes the statue with the Arabic clichés of feminine beauty: white skin, soft cheeks, glowing face, oval cheekbones, tender gaze, straight waist like the trunk of a moringa tree in fertile soil, and a broad, insinuating smile<sup>42</sup>. Another anonymous poem mentions the female image (*ṣūra*, *dumiya*) with a child in her arms in the “Ḥammām al-Ṣaṭāra” of Seville, which could be, as Rubiera Mata explained, a Venus brought there from neighbouring Italica. And in Nasrid Granada, Ibn al-Khaṭīb (1313-1374) again mentions the erotic images included in certain buildings when he lists, in a medical treatise, elements that encourage the practice of coitus: “well-being, the loveliness of luxury, images of private chambers and entrance halls (*tamāṭil al-maqāṣir wa-l-abḥā*) with full breasts and groomed cheeks”, but no examples from Al-Andalus have been preserved<sup>43</sup>.

Moving on from texts to archaeology, the discovery of the remains of the *muqarnas* dome that Arabic sources confirm belonged to the north reception hall of the Small Palace (al-Dār al-Ṣuḡrā) of Ibn Mardaniš (ruled 1124/5-1172), lord of Murcia, it is possible to appreciate good pre-Nasrid mural painting. The Wolf King, as the Christians called him, was a patron of the arts and in his palaces he brought together poets, musicians, dancers and jugglers. Ibn al-Khaṭīb recounts that he organised parties on Mondays and Thursdays to display his power and generosity to his generals, dignitaries and troops, distributing meat among the soldiers and serving banquets enlivened by slave flute and lute



Il. 20. Oratory of La Alfajería in Zaragoza, 11th century. Mural painting. Drawing by Christian Ewert.

players<sup>44</sup>. Fragments of painted *muqarnas* have been found in this room; the paintings were covered up by the Almohads and it was later converted into the Convent of Santa Clara during the Christian period. These fragments include a *muqarna* block with the round face of a flautist in profile with large black eyes and a straight nose, holding a *mizmar* (reed flute) (Il. 21). Her white skin and two red dots on her cheeks, matching the red ochre of her clothing and contrasting with the sky blue background to the scene, make this figure a symbol of the refined artistry achieved by mural painting in Al-Andalus in the middle of the 11th century. Companion fragments to this *muqarna* block with miniatures of a similar size and characteristics, preserve traces of a turbaned head and a seated, bearded figure who is perhaps holding a staff or a cane of plenty, the typical signs of sovereignty.

This background, and the information provided by written sources, make it clear that the Alhambra in Granada preserves two of the richest and most complex figurative mural painting programmes that existed in Al-Andalus. The aesthetic arts of *jaṭṭ*, *raqṣ*, *taṣwīr*, *rasm* and *tazwīq* (calligraphy, non-figurative decoration, drawing, figurative images, gilding and painting) join forces to impressive effect in the mural paintings that have survived in the Partal House. Since the time of Manuel Gómez Moreno, they have been accurately compared

40 AL-MAQQARĪ. *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*. Op. Cit., vol. I, p. 348-350.

41 IBN ḤAZM. *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* (*The necklace of the dove*). In *Rasā'il Ibn Ḥazm Al-Andalusī*. Ed. by Iḥsān 'Abbās. Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiyya li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Naṣr, 1980, vol. I, pp. 115-116.

42 *Dīwān Ibn Zaydūn*. Ed. de Yūsuf Farḥāt: Beirut, 1994 (2nd ed.), pp. 152-153. PÉRÈS. *Esplendor*. Op. Cit., p. 341; RUBIERA MATA, “Los baños”. Op. Cit., p. 101. On images of the *ḥammām* in Al-Andalus, cf. PUERTA VÍLCHEZ, José Miguel. “Poesía, estética y placer en el *hammam* andalusí.” In Various Authors. *Los Baños en Al-Andalus*. Granada: Fundación El Legado Andalusi, 2019, pp. 66-68.

43 IBN AL-KHATIB. *Kitāb al-wuṣūl li-ḥifẓ al-ṣaḥḥa fī l-fuṣūl* (Book on caring for health during the seasons of the year). Ed. and tr. by M<sup>o</sup> C. Vázquez de Benito. Salamanca: University of Salamanca, 1984, p. 154, Arabic text: p. 70.

44 IBN AL-KHAṬĪB. *Al-Iḥāṭa*. Ed. de 'A. A. 'Inān. Cairo, 1973, vol. II, p. 122. Cf. GARCÍA AVILÉS, Alejandro. “Arte y poder en Murcia en la época de Ibn Mardaniš (1147-1172)”. In *El Mediterráneo y el arte español*, Valencia, 1998, pp. 31-37; NAVARRO PALAZÓN, Julio and JIMÉNEZ CASTILLO, Pedro. “La arquitectura de Ibn Mardaniš: revisión y nuevas aportaciones”, in BORRÁS GUALIS and CABAÑERO SUBIZA (coords.): *La Aljafería y el Arte del Islam Occidental en el siglo XI*. Op. Cit., pp. 307-309, ills. pp. 321-323 (the landscape by Ibn al-Khatib is quoted on p. 308 in a translation by Alfonso Carmona).





Il. 21. Muqarna block with a painting of a woman flute-player, al-Dār al-Sugrā in Murcia, 12th century. Muqarna block 12 x 4 x 9 cm. Museum of the Convent of Santa Clara, Murcia.



Il. 22. Reproduction of the paintings of the Partal House by Manuel López Vázquez (undated). Alhambra Museum.

with Arab miniatures with the suggestion that the artist or artists who produced them had worked in the field of illuminated manuscripts, such as the codex of *Hadīṭ Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ* mentioned above. When the incomplete, deteriorated Partal paintings were discovered in 1908, Gómez Moreno made them public in 1909 with a press release and photographs<sup>45</sup>; Isidoro Martín Garcés made a watercolour copy in 1921-22, Manuel López Vázquez a second copy in oil in the 1980s (Il. 22) and, later, Manuel López Reche made a further copy in black ink for Fernández Puertas's work on Muhammad V's Alhambra<sup>46</sup>. Thanks to these reproductions it is possible to have a fairly close idea of the original and analyse its form and content. Viewed as the transferral of the miniature form to the wall, the paintings are made on traditional plaster covered with a fine layer of white stucco. The figures were traced with tiny holes that could be used as a guide and drawn in red and black ink using a pen or extremely fine paintbrushes. They were then coloured, leaving the background empty so that the figures stand out, just like Arab miniatures. The size of the figures

varies between eleven and thirteen centimetres, while the riders measure between eighteen and nineteen centimetres. Their lively and harmonious colour scheme consists of white, minium, vermillion, carmine, rust brown, dark red, two tones of green, dark ochre, sepia, deep black, cobalt blue, some purple and gold, which has lasted better than the other pigments and can still be appreciated in the soldiers' helmets and calligraphic friezes in the composition<sup>47</sup>. In addition to the elegant, well-proportioned human figures, who have three-quarter, forward-facing oval faces (except for a few in profile) with large, black eyes, moustaches and trimmed black beards, giving them a sense of expressiveness and dignity. They wear schematic but colourful clothing, and great virtuosity is visible in the depiction of animals, especially in the dozens of painted horses, which also display tack with a wide range of geometric decorative motifs. Although a good part of these paintings are missing, and despite their deterioration, what has been preserved should be included among the pinnacles of classical Arabic painting; the number of scenes and artistic quality is comparable to the miniatures of the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī illustrated by al-Wasīṭī. The still-visible part of the painted programme in the Partal House is located on the east and west walls, while some remains can also be seen on the north wall. It forms a continuous visual narrative divided into four strips

45 In *El Defensor de Granada* of 13/06/1909.

46 GÓMEZ MORENO. "Pinturas de moros en la Alhambra", *Op. Cit.* MEHREZ, Gamal. *Al-Rusūm al-ḥidāriyya al-islāmiyya fī "l-Partāl" bi-l-Ḥamrā'* (The Islamic wall paintings of the Partal in the Alhambra), Madrid: Maestre, 1951 (monograph in Arabic with an extensive summary in Spanish). FERNÁNDEZ-PUERTAS, Antonio. *Alhambra. Muḥammad V. El mawlid de 764/1362*. Granada: Almed, 2018, pp. 143-145.

47 GÓMEZ MORENO. "Pinturas de moros en la Alhambra". *Op. Cit.*, p. 157.



just over 20 cm high; the two central ones are separated from each other by an almost imperceptible straight line, and each of these sections is separated from the upper and lower strips by a 1 cm border of tiny intertwined braiding. Calligraphy is also present; the upper border of the composition consists of a wide strip of geometric arabesque motifs while the lower one has a series of small cartouches with the expressions *al-'Izz al-qā'im*, *al-Yumn al-dā'im*, *Baraka* (Everlasting glory, Eternal Good Fortune) in gold on a lapis lazuli background. Underneath, between the arches of the meta-architecture that looks like a palace gallery and runs along the whole lower strip of the paintings (the most deteriorated part), architectural micro-calligrams of *Yumn* (Good Fortune) in Kufic script are mirrored to the left and form a central lattice in each spandrel. Flags carried by several riders may have also had inscriptions, but only fine black script can be seen next to one of the Nasrid horsemen: *al-ʿĀfiya al-dāʾima* (Eternal health). On the north wall, the paintings are set around the present doorway, which must have originally been a window, which has wide eight-pointed lattice border. The door lintel also conserves two written inscriptions that are larger in scale than the paintings and are modelled in plaster and painted in gold on a blue background: "My success depends only on God. In Him I trust and to Him I turn in repentance" (Qur'an 11:88) and "Victory comes only from God, the Mighty, the Wise" (Qur'an 3:126; 9:10). The layer of plaster that the works were painted onto was applied to a wall decorated with rust brown imitation bricks and white mortar work. At the height of the dado, below the paintings, there is a white strip with the beginning of the surah of victory (Qur'an 38, 1-3) painted in white with beautiful cursive calligraphy typical of Al-Andalus on a rust brown background filled with arabesque motifs. Following the reading of the scenes proposed by Fernández-Puertas, from right to left (like Arabic writing, illuminated books, scenes on ivory work, textiles and other pieces) and from top to bottom, the upper band has scenes of hunting, fights and galloping soldiers, some in opposite directions. This upper band with bearded, well-dressed and well-equipped horsemen accompanied by dogs and falconry birds, and separate clashes between horsemen and four lions, have been understood to be preparatory exercises by the troops before battle. However, they could also be interpreted as scenes of hunting and falconry by noble knights, some of whom converse in pairs; it is interesting to note that in some scenes the horsemen are positioned in groups of four in false perspective, i.e. the figures are superimposed on each other from front to back, but the horses' legs are placed

on the same horizontal line. Two riders, one with a lance and the other with a bow and arrow, ride on the backs of four-legged animals that look like antelopes or imaginary animals; amid the horses are running hunting dogs, flying birds of prey, or birds released by a knight, and plants and trees that recreate a wood, as in book miniatures. The two middle bands depict rows of soldiers, mostly on horseback but one on a camel, perhaps a Merinid warlord, and scenes of Muslim prisoners on foot with their leader captured on horseback, as well as the spoils of war consisting of two herds of sheep and goats led by two pairs of soldiers. The two herds are very well depicted, as are most of the group scenes, and skill can be seen in the outline of the animals' bodies; they all have large eyes and move their heads in different directions, just like in the best Islamic miniatures from the East. The retinues of soldiers make their way towards six luxurious tents. Four are already assembled (one has traces of calligraphic decoration), and the other two being set up by soldiers. Male figures sit in the centre of three of the tents; the central figure is joined by other male figures with lowered heads who gesture towards him in respect, similarly to the painting in the central dome of the Hall of the Kings, meaning it may be the sovereign in the central tent and his lieutenants in the other two. Next to the main tent is another tent with a woman lying down with her arms crossed and head covered. She appears to be gazing out at the scene, and probably depicts the sultan's wife (*sayyida*, *ḥurra*, *suṭāna*). In the centre of the eastern wall, a camel heads towards the camp bearing a palanquin that probably has a lady inside. The troops display their weapons (spearmen, crossbowmen, etc.) and war equipment as if they were returning from battle. According to Fernández-Puertas, the Nasrid soldiers wear golden metal helmets and the Maghrebi soldiers wear turbans. This suggests that it is the army of Granada, which had Merinid contingents, or that the latter came to their aid. Since Gómez Moreno's analyses, it has been noted that two banners carried by horsemen in these paintings are similar to those captured by Christian troops from the Marinids at the Battle of Salado in 1340, which are preserved in Toledo Cathedral. This has led Fernández-Puertas and Gómez Moreno to date the Partial House paintings to a time close to that battle. Other historians, such as Gamal Mehrez, have stated that the composition dates from a later period, the time of Muḥammad V, though without conclusive evidence. The fourth, lowest band is formed by an arcade with raised curtains and with the aforementioned calligram of *Yumn* (Good Fortune) on the spandrels of the arches; the few surviving images of this interesting

representation of a large painted courtly space (west wall) are musical scenes. Three are visible to the right of the doorway, one with a group of people (women and/or men) seated in conversation and/or singing, another with a female group with a lute player and a percussionist, and another with men and musicians (the gender of some figures is uncertain); together this has been interpreted as a celebration of a war victory. Following the logic of this iconography, the missing pictorial spaces must have contained representations of the clamour of battle (the battle of Salado, as Fernández-Puertas supposes<sup>48</sup>), or another real or fictitious battle. The style of painting shows that whoever produced these paintings was well acquainted with the 'Arab school' of manuscript illumination. The techniques and forms of this school had been established in Al-Andalus some time before, as demonstrated by ceramics and sketches by craftsmen with zoomorphic/anthropomorphic figures and calligraphy that have been discovered on the reverse side of the woodwork used in various roofs at the Alhambra. They have also recently been found among the sebkas of the minaret of the Great Mosque of Seville (La Giralda), where precisely drawn practice calligraphy of the *basmala* and other votive expressions have been discovered alongside attempts at geometric composition, arabesque motifs and a horse with a rider outlined with the precise lines, oval shapes and enlarged eye typical of eastern Arab aesthetics. The sketches on the wooden pieces of some roofs at the Alhambra depict figures of dogs, a monster, and a sphinx with its head in profile with a white beard and orange turban. A standing figure with a black beard, turban, *adorra* [type of clothing] and sword was discovered on the reverse side of a wooden piece of the ceiling in the eastern room of the Hall of Two Sisters [Sala de Dos Hermanas]; Fernández-Puertas believes it may be how the artist from Al-Andalus who worked on this wooden ceiling interpreted what the Gothically-trained Christian artists were painting in the vaults of the neighbouring Hall of the Kings [Sala de los Reyes]<sup>49</sup>.

In fact, the paintings on leather that cover the three vaulted ceilings of the Hall of the Kings (the recent, comprehensive restoration of these paintings inspired this monographic issue of *Cuadernos de la Alhambra*) are in the European Gothic style as harnessed by the Nasrid court, although there are still questions about the authorship and iconography of the paintings<sup>50</sup>.

Either way, they are a pinnacle of painting from Al-Andalus, and one of the finest examples of the artistic exchange held between the Muslim and Christian Hispanic courts. The Hall of the Kings closes the palace of al-Riyād al-Sa'īd (the Happy Garden) (Palace of the Lions) to the east. This palace was built on the orders, and probably under the supervision of, Muhammad V in around 1380. He decided to decorate the vaulted ceiling of this remarkable room, and quite possibly that of the neighbouring Hall of the *Muqarnas* Sala de los Mocárabes with an eye-catching painted programme composed with figures on a much larger scale than those of the Partal and the Arab miniature, that drew on both traditional cultural and literary European and Islamic motifs, raising mural painting to the status of a monument within a building in Al-Andalus. The central vault (Il. 23) is entered by walking in a straight line from the Fountain of the Lions through the eastern pavilion and houses the famous painting of ten male figures seated on large cushions in a golden room. Its ceiling is crossed horizontally by a line of eight-pointed stars that end, from right to left, in red shields with a gold band with dragon heads; both are held by forward-facing, seated lions. Four of the characters wear plain-coloured formal Islamic costumes in bright white, red, green and blue, while four have two-tone clothing, a feature that is also linked to the international Gothic style<sup>51</sup>. All ten wear turbans and jineta swords, symbols of dignity, and have red or white beards, except for one clean-shaven man; this may differentiate them by age and status. They all have one hand resting on their sword and the other raised in a gesture of dialogue or deference, except for two (the central figure and the third to his left) who hold their typical Nasrid swords with both hands. Since the 16th century they have been believed to represent ten Nasrid kings, and this gave the hall its name. They have also been seen as judges, which is why it

48 FERNÁNDEZ-PUERTAS, *Alhambra. Muḥammad V. Op. Cit.*, p. 141.

49 Quoted by MARINETTO SÁNCHEZ. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-71.

50 BERMÚDEZ PAREJA, Jesús. *Pinturas sobre piel en la Alhambra*. Granada:

Alhambra and Generalife Board of Trustees, 1987. FERNÁNDEZ-PUERTAS (*ibid.*, pp. 386-397), when describing the ten characters, suggests that the artist who painted them may have been sent by Juan I of Trastámara (reigned 1379-1390) at the beginning of his reign, when Muhammad V was building the Happy Garden. However, Basilio Pavón Maldonado, gives the paintings an earlier date and attributes the paintings to Toledo artists sent to Granada by Pedro I (reigned 1350-1369) (PAVÓN MALDONADO, B. *Arte toledano: islámico y mudéjar*. Madrid: IHAC, 1973, pp. 261-266). In the *al-Iḥāṭa*, Ibn al-Khatib describes Christian builders working at the Alhambra and states that they transported the body of prince 'don Juan' to Castille; the prince died at the Battle of La Vega in 1319 (*opud.* TORRES BALBÁS. *La Alhambra y el Generalife*. Madrid, 1953, p. 124.). This article is limited to artistic reflections on these paintings without discussing their iconographic details in depth, as these are covered by other works in this monograph and several of the bibliographical references included here.

51 FERNÁNDEZ-PUERTAS. *Alhambra. Muḥammad V. Op. Cit.*, p. 386.



II. 23. Painting of the central vault of the Hall of the Kings. Alhambra, time of Muḥammad V. Photograph by Agustín Núñez.

is also known as the Hall of Justice. However, many authors rule out the idea that these are the ten Nasrid monarchs up to Muḥammad V, since Ismā'il II and Muḥammad VI seized the throne from him and, earlier, Muhammad III was condemned for ordering the assassination of his father Muḥammad II, and as a consequence was buried in a separate burial place. Palace inscriptions by the builder of the Palace of the Lions only mentions Ismā'il I and Yūsuf I in the ruling lineage of Muḥammad V, so if these paintings were to have dynastic symbolism, these two sultans would have probably been depicted together with the heir or heirs of Muḥammad V; this would be in keeping with other courtly representations and protocols found in Al-Andalus. In the absence of data and details that permit the figures to be definitively identified, other scholars have suggested that the figures evoke ten generic, not specifically Nasrid, monarchs in an idealised way and that the number ten was used for reasons of symmetry and due to the available space. It is true that "the assembly or gallery of kings" has precursors in Islamic mural painting, such as the mural of the Six Kings at Qusayr 'Amra from the time of al-Walid I (Jordan, 8th century), although each character had his or her name written next to him or her in that particular work. A parallel idea is also alluded to in the adjoining Hall of the Abencerrajes [Sala de los Abencerrajes] in verse six of Ibn Zamrak's poem that was engraved in this room in honour of Muhammad V: "Head of the Banū Naṣr, his lord Muḥammad, is, in all glory, the most worthy of existence. / The world is proud of him [Muḥammad V] before the kings of his time (*mulūk zamāni-hi*)

for his supreme good sense and greater intellect"<sup>52</sup>. Although doubts remain, there does seem to be a more general consensus that one of the two central figures in the painting represents Muhammad V. This could be either the central figure in a red adorra, the only one without a cloth band that fixes his turban to his neck, as Fernández-Puertas points out, (who believes he is not accompanied by kings but by "the high dignitaries of the kingdom"), or the figure in front of him 'looking' towards the Courtyard and Fountain of the Lions. This second figure has two-tone clothing, a white beard and is seated in a listening posture, holding his sword in both hands as a sign of power<sup>53</sup>. If it were a portrayal of the dynasty, it would be fair to assume that the heir, or heirs, of Muḥammad V, are included.

52 *Diwān Ibn Zamrak*. Ed. M. T. al-Najjar. Beirut: Dār al-Garb al-Islāmī, 1997, p. 127; PUERTA VÍLCHEZ. *Leer la Alhambra*. Granada: Edilux-Alhambra and Generalife Board of Trustees, 2010 (reed. 2015), p. 207. A gallery of the Spanish kings, painted by Diego de Esquivel in 1599, was added underneath the *qubba* in the Hall of Ambassadors at the Alcazar o Seville.

53 In turn, Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza believed that the painting recreated a *maǧlis* "of sages" and that this theme, and the "literary" subject matter of the paintings in the side alcoves, could be explained by the hypothetical location of the Nasrid royal library in the Hall of the Kings (RUIZ SOUZA. "El Palacio de los Leones de la Alhambra: ¿madrasa, zāwiya y tumba de Muḥammad V. Estudio para un debate." *Al-Qantara*, XXII, 2001, pp. 95-98). However, this interpretation is only based on conjecture, especially when the basis of its justification is considering the Happy Garden (*al-Riyād al-Sa'ida*) a *madrasa* founded by Muḥammad V. This cannot be confirmed by either epigraphy que denomina «palacio» a este ámbito, or direct sources such as the *Diwān* of Ibn Zamrak, compiled and annotated by Yūsuf III, while the diwans of Yūsuf III himself and Ibn Furkūn, whose references to the Happy Garden are described below, concern courtly feasts and banquets.





II. 24. Painting of the south vault of the Hall of the Kings. Alhambra, time of Muhammad V. Photograph by Agustín Núñez.

He had five when the Happy Garden was built, as stated in the *qasida* that shares verses with poems in the Hall of Two Sisters and the Fountain of the Lions. This *qasida* was composed and recited by Ibn Zamrak at a feast held to celebrate the circumcision of the monarch's youngest son, Abū 'Abd Allāh. Whatever the answer, this painting presides over the east–west axis of an exceptional palace that its constructor, Muhammad V, used to display the most powerful symbols of sovereignty. This is observed through both its architecture and the poetry on the north–south axis composed by Ibn Zamrak; the Lindajara Viewpoint [Mirador de Lindajara] heads this axis and housed the monarch's "caliphal throne". The throne is also described as "caliphal" in the poem found on the Fountain of the Lions that was constructed as an "allegory of the sovereign's power and magnanimity", in the words of his grandson, king and poet Yūsuf III<sup>54</sup>. It is significant that this poet–king, who admired his grandfather Muḥammad V, used the Happy Garden for important feasts and parties, such as two of his weddings. The first took place in 1408, when he regained the throne and married Eleanor 'the Foreigner', daughter of qadi Abū Yazid Khalid, a Christian prisoner who converted to Islam and who, like other Christians, rose to the highest echelons of the Nasrid court and served Muḥammad V. The second wedding was celebrated by Yūsuf III shortly afterwards with another banquet in the same setting; he married "the daughter

of eminent commander Abū l-Surūr Mufarriyy". The first wedding was attended by "the nobles of Al-Andalus" (*aṣrāf ahl Al-Andalus*) and the second by "delegations from all over the Nasrid country"<sup>55</sup>. Yūsuf III also organised a "feast for jurists" (*walīma ṣar'iyya*) "at al-Riyād, one of our palaces", to entertain the "council of ulema of our city" (*ma'yīs 'ulamā' ḥaḍrati-nā*). On this special occasion the poet–king sent one of his own poems expressing his appreciation and support for the members of the council for their work as custodians of religion and the kingdom<sup>56</sup>. These celebrations meant that the beautiful architecture and paintings of the Happy Garden were exhibited to a large yet select group of guests.

Turning to the upper paintings in the side alcoves, the south alcove (II. 24) contains scenes of jousting and hunting on both sides of two differently constructed citadels placed one in front of the other dividing the ensemble in half. Under one, two maidens lean out of two towers, a lady and a knight play chess under a large tree, and around them are scenes of a Nasrid knight hunting a deer, one killing a lion, another a bear, and a Christian knight freeing a Christian maiden from a savage. In another scene, a Nasrid knight with lance and leather shield fights a Christian knight while a lady looks on from

54 PUERTA VÍLCHEZ. *Leer la Alhambra. Op. Cit.* p. 230 (Lindaraja Viewpoint, verse 7) and p. 169 (Fountain of the Lions, verse 9).

55 At both weddings Ibn Furkūn recited two long self-composed eulogistic poems with 108 and 69 verses (*Diwān Ibn Furkūn*. Ed. and est. by Muḥammad Bencherifa. Rabat, Akāḍimiyat al-Mamlaka al-Magribiyya, 1987, p. 115 and p. 133).

56 *Diwān Malik Garnāṭa Yūsuf al-Jālīṭ*. Ed. by 'Abd Allāh Kannūn. Tangier: Al-Maktaba al-Aṣriyya, 1965 (2nd ed.), p. 148.



II. 25. Painting of the north vault of the Hall of the Kings. Alhambra, time of Muhammad V. Photograph by Agustín Núñez. Photograph by Agustín Núñez.

a castle tower with hands pressed together, imploring. This scene evokes the border jousts and romances between residents of Granada and Castille; here the Muslim triumphs due to the patron of the work. The painting on the north vault (II. 25) also sets its scenes around two architectural elements that function as a central axis. One is the 'fountain of life or youth', composed of two superimposed bowls, lion head spouts and a figure of a dog on top; next to it, a man and a woman in Christian attire are seated facing each other in conversation. On the opposite side of this fountain, the 'castle of love' is depicted with two noble couples of a man and woman at the windows and another similar large fountain with swimming ducks and a dog figure also at the top, this time spouting abundant water. On either side of this axis are six hunting scenes with a bear, a lion and a wild boar featuring a young Nasrid knight from the Barbilampiño area, and a scene that sees a Christian lady and her servants being offered a hunted boar under a tree with beautiful birds and two apes picking fruit, probably an allusion to the vanity or disorder that threatens courtly love. Both vaults give the overall impression of a place used for hunting but also of a large garden connected to noble buildings with numerous trees, water, birds and animals in motion. The buildings are depicted with Gothic architectural forms on a smaller scale than the people and animals. However, the naturalism of the figures stands out in these paintings, both in their faces and hands. The shading and workmanship is similar to the ten figures in the central vault, and is also seen in the animals, which make up a varied menagerie. They are mainly rela-

ted to hunting (hares, foxes, dogs, deer, bears, lions, wild boar), and also feature poultry, birds of prey, waterfowl and others species such as the vulture, magpie, turtle dove and goldfinch. The horse is most notable of all; this animal is inseparable from the knight and his heroic deeds, and here five harnessed horses painted with magnificent foreshortening gallop across each of the south and north vaults. The lions make their presence known once again, either as spouts in the fountain, directly linking them to the Fountain of the Lions at the centre of the Happy Garden, or being hunted by spear or sword. In contrast to traditional iconography in Al-Andalus, lions also features chained by the lady who is being abducted by the savage and freed by a knight, or lying docile at the feet of the maiden playing chess, a sign of the high status and nobility of both characters. The presence of lions with Gothic forms in heraldic devices in these and other works by Muhammad V is underscored in the poem of the Fountain of the Lions in which they are alluded to in two verses as "lions of war" (*usd al-ḡihād*) who defend, crouching and submissive, the exalted lineage and power of their lord, from whose "caliphal hand" they receive their mercies (verse 9). Although scenes of large and small game hunting can also be seen in ceramics and miniatures of Al-Andalus, these paintings add the boar and bear which are more typical to Gothic painting. There is also an overwhelming presence of birds and in addition to the usual falconry and hunting scenes, or the Islamic paradise, in the north vault there is a cockerel (lordship) and three magpies (ambiguity) next to damsels in the south vault. There are also singing



nightingales next to ladies; one witnesses the duel to the death between a Nasrid and Christian knight, and the other looks out from the castle to watch the chess game, an allegory of the dialogue of love<sup>57</sup>. Female figures, more specifically the lady or ladies, are all Christian. They do not feature in musical scenes like those typical to art found in Islam and Al-Andalus but are central to the subject matter of the north and south vaults of the Hall of the Kings. Here they are placed inside or next to the buildings and they contemplate the surrounding scenes or take part in them, and are honoured by the chivalric heroes. Jerrylinn Doods and Cynthia Robinson have linked the importance of the feminine in both side vaults to legends derived from Arthurian tales, such as *Tristan and Isolde*<sup>58</sup>, which spread throughout the Iberian Peninsula in the early 14th century. These legends have been reinterpreted for the Nasrid Muslim gaze, and the subject matter is related to *ʿudrī*, the literature of love: the couple *Maʿnūn* and *Laylā* are the paradigm of these works and represent the platonic and self-sacrificing love of a knight for his lady. Cynthia Robinson has also reflected on the possible Sufi symbolism of this lady, drawing on the importance of courtly Sufism in the time of Yūsuf I and on the *mawlid* festival of 1362 held by Muḥammad V to celebrate the recovery of his throne. In Sufism, and some Arabic literature, the lady is identified with the tree, as the 'tree of love' and 'of knowledge', so that the figure of the knight assumes the mission of overcoming worldly challenges and ascending, like a bird, along the path of virtue<sup>59</sup>. Since these suggested interpreta-

tions lack definitive iconographic links, other analysts consider the paintings to be generic representations of the courtly world (fountain of life, castle of love, knightly virtue, triumph of the Muslim, etc.) as an integral part of the paradisiacal, earthly and eternal symbolism used through the entire palace of the Happy Garden<sup>60</sup>. In fact, a combination of specific literary and/or spiritual themes and abstract virtues and values intended to work together to extol the centrality and high dignity of Muḥammad V<sup>61</sup> before both Muslims and Christians is plausible. What is evident is that inserting Arabic calligraphy into the design of these paintings, and other features of the visual language seen in ceramics, miniatures and mural painting of Al-Andalus, has disappeared. Instead, the artistic fashions of the Christian courts of Spain and Europe<sup>62</sup> were incorporated in a solemn and official manner into the palace of Muḥammad V. Ibn Khaldūn, who resided in the Alhambra between late 1362 and early 1365, considered this to be an unmistakable sign of the subjugation and decadence of Islam in Al-Andalus, as he noted in this well-known passage from *al-Muqaddima*: "is what is happening in Al-Andalus today with respect to the Castilians (*al-Yālāliqa*), for you find them imitating them in their clothes and emblems (*šārāt*) while copying their customs and habits, even painting images on walls, monuments and houses (*ḥattā fī rasm al-tamāṭil fī l-ʿudrān wa-l-mašānī wa-l-buyūt*); the discerning observer will notice signs of domination"<sup>63</sup>. Rightly enough, in addition to these paintings in the Hall of the Kings, rampant lions were also painted on the dados of other rooms, human figures, wading birds and quadrupeds in the Gothic tradition were included in tiles and Italian paintings were even hung on the walls of the Alhambra. A fragment of a Siense panel with a scene of a duel between

57 RALLO GRAUS, Carmen. *Aportaciones a la técnica y estilística de la Pintura Mural en Castilla a final de la Edad Media. Tradición e influencia islámica* (doctoral thesis). Madrid: Complutense University, 1999, vol. I, pp. 339-359. It includes a detailed and analytical description of this iconography.

58 DOODS, Jerrylinn. "The paintings in the Sala de la Justicia of the Alhambra: Iconography and Iconology". *Art Bulletin*, LXI, 2, 1979, pp. 186-197. ROBINSON, Cynthia. "Arthur in the Alhambra?". In *Narrative and Nasrid Courtly self-fashioning in the Hall of Justice ceiling paintings. Cross disciplinary approaches to the Hall of Justice ceilings*. Leiden: Brill, 2008, pp. 12-46.

59 ROBINSON, Cynthia. "The Alhambra: an Islamic palace." *Annals of Art History*, 23, 2013, pp. 287-304. This article also suggests that the 'ideal lady' may be connected to the figure of Fatima, the revered daughter of the Prophet, with whom various rulers, including the Nasrids, sought to link their lineage. Cf. also: ROBINSON, Cynthia and PINET, Simone (eds.). *Courting the Alhambra: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches to the Hall of Justice Ceilings*, a monograph in *Medieval Encounters* 14, no. 2-3 2008. Ibn al-Khatib fell out of favour with Muḥammad V and was condemned to death by the ruler's judges, while ideas contained in his mystical treatise *Rawḍat al-taʿrīf bi-l-ḥubb al-šarīf* (Garden of the Definition of Supreme Love) were condemned as "heretical". In light of this, Cynthia Robinson uses this work as a reference point for interpreting the paintings; furthermore, in this author's opinion, the descriptive and Gothic style of the paintings means they should be considered as belonging to the heroic iconography of chi-

valry rather than courtly Sufism.

60 CAYO GRAUS, Carmen. "El jardín pintado: las pinturas de la Sala de los Reyes en el Cuarto de los Leones". *Cuadernos de la Alhambra*, 49 2020 pp. 131-147.

61 See the interesting analysis by VALLEJO NARANJO, Carmen. "Consideraciones iconográficas sobre las pinturas de la Sala de los Reyes de la Alhambra de Granada". *Eikón / Imago*, 5, 2014 / 1, pp. 29-74.

62 For example, the floor and jamb tiles with human figures, quadrupeds and birds dating from the time of Muhammad V found in the Tower of the Queen's Dressing Room [Torre del Peinador de la Reina] and in the ruins of the Alijares; cf. MARINETTO SÁNCHEZ, "Influencia gótica". In *La representación figurativa en el mundo musulmán*. Op. Cit., pp. 80-86.

63 IBN KHALDŪN. *Al-Muqaddima*, Op. Cit., p. 259. Gómez Moreno (*Pinturas de moros*, Op. Cit., p. 156) has already alluded to this passage from Ibn al-Khaldūn on the Partial paintings; Tunisian-born Ibn al-Khaldūn originated from Seville and may well have seen the paintings during his stay in Granada.

knights has survived; its calligraphic border, now in Latin Gothic script, states the Nasrid motto “God is Victor”. This piece was discovered in 1864, being reused in the palace of the Happy Garden, and may have been commissioned for Granada through Nasrid trade with Italy, or have been a gift from a Christian king<sup>64</sup>. And the presence of European artistic fashions in Islamic art had only just begun. It is suffice to mention the *Sulwān al-muṭāʿ* codex in El Escorial Library referred to above, and the paintings by Gentile Bellini for Mehmed II during his stay at the Ottoman court between 1479 and 1481 (including the famous portrait of Mehmed II, conqueror of Byzantium, in the National Gallery in London), which transmitted the techniques and tastes of Venetian painting to the new lords of Islam.

64 FERNÁNDEZ-PUERTAS. “La tabla sienesa”. In *Alhambra. Muḥammad V. Op. Cit.*, p. 197.