Granada from Plaza Nueva

1 Plaza Nueva

We are here, above part of the Darro.

2 Albaicín

The heart of Muslim Granada in the 11th century, across the Darro River.

3 Sacromonte

The cave-house neighbourhood, known for its flamenco tradition.

4 Centre / Cathedral

The city’s heart, with the cathedral and its main shopping streets.

5 Alhambra

The Nasrid sultans’ palace city, with gardens and a fortress on the hill.

DARRO RIVER

The river runs between the hills. Today it flows under part of the city.



Ambrosio de Vico · copy by Félix Prieto, 1795 · Biblioteca Nacional de España

The Royal Chancillery

1505 · Royal court in Granada

It judged important cases from southern Spain.

1531 · A palace for justice

Work began under Charles V, after the court had moved here.

1587 · The grand façade

Completed in the reign of Philip II.

Today · Still a place of justice

Home to Andalusia’s High Court.



Inside the Royal Chancillery



The courtyard



Arches, columns and the upper gallery

Photos: Junta Granada Informa · CC BY-SA 2.0

San Gil & Santa Ana

1537 · work begins

Work began in 1537 on the site of an earlier mosque.

Built on a former mosque site

The new church changed the religious use of this place.

Mudéjar · two artistic traditions

Brickwork and wooden ceilings draw on Islamic craft traditions.

Mariana Pineda married here

She married here in 1819, before becoming a symbol of freedom.



Inside San Gil & Santa Ana



The nave and chancel



The side chapels and altars

Photos: José Luis Filpo Cabana · CC BY 4.0 / SergioMolesRamos · CC BY-SA 4.0

Gomérez: soldiers and an older gate



Ghomara · a traditional name link

North African soldiers are linked to this street’s traditional name.

A wall crossed the ravine

It linked the Alcazaba to Torres Bermejas through the Gate of the Moat.

AI interpretation · researched wall and access; hypothetical elevations and camp.

An imagined camp

The tents and their layout remain an interpretation.

c.1536 · the Renaissance gate

It replaced the Islamic entrance at today’s access to the enclosure.

Three pomegranates



c.1536 · Renaissance gateway

A monumental entrance replaced an older Islamic gateway.

Three pomegranates

The fruit gives the gate its name and represents Granada.

Pedro Machuca

The architect also designed the palace of Charles V.

Granada · an older name

Known as Garnata in Arabic; its deeper origin is uncertain.

Read the imperial arms

The double-headed eagle

A symbol of Charles V’s imperial authority.

The imperial crown

It connects the gateway with the Holy Roman Empire.

A shield of many kingdoms

The combined arms show the lands inherited by the ruler.

The pomegranate of Granada

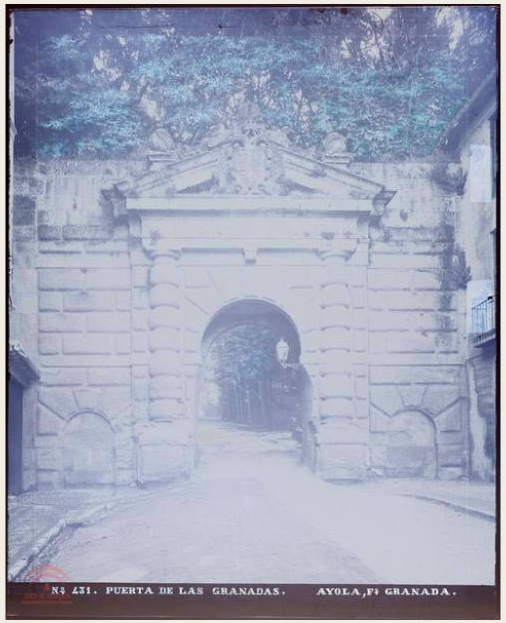
The fruit also appears within royal heraldry after the conquest.



Imperial arms · photographic detail

GrandCelinien · CC BY-SA 3.0

The gate before 1961





The central arch was open

The middle opening carried traffic into the Alhambra.

The side arches were closed

Both side arches are visible, filled with masonry.

1961 · side passages opened

The blocked side arches became pedestrian passages.

An older Islamic gate stood here

The Renaissance gateway replaced an earlier Muslim entrance.

Puerta de las Granadas · García Ayola archive image, catalogued 1863–1900 · Patronato

A gate that moved

Bab al-Ramla · “Gate of the Sand”

Bab means gate; al-ramla refers to sand.

Beside Bib-Rambla square

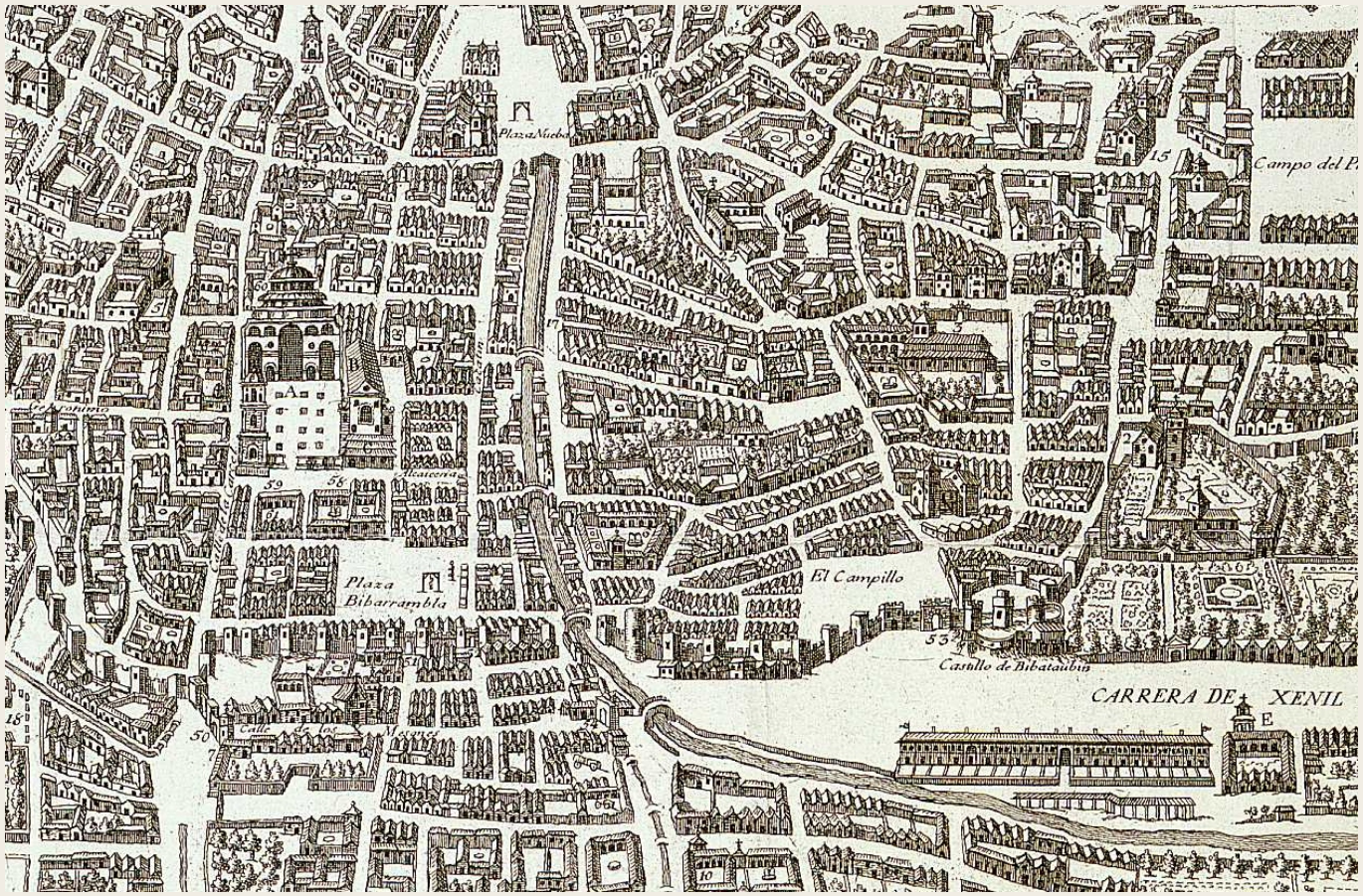
Its original setting was in the lower city, near the market square.

A gate in the city walls

The entrance controlled passage into medieval Granada.

Today · in the Alhambra woods

Its surviving stones were rebuilt far from their first location.



BIB-RAMBLA · ORIGINAL CITY SETTING

Vico / Prieto · 1795 copy · detail of Bib-Rambla square

The “Arch of the Ears”



Market fraud

Officials checked the measures used by market sellers.

Accounts of ear-cutting

Historical accounts describe cutting offenders’ ears as punishment.

Historic view · David Roberts

False weights

Dishonest measures could cheat customers buying flour.

The name remembers the punishment

The gate became known as the Arch of the Ears.

Lost, saved, rebuilt

1884 · demolished in the city

The medieval entrance was dismantled in its original city setting.

Its stones were preserved

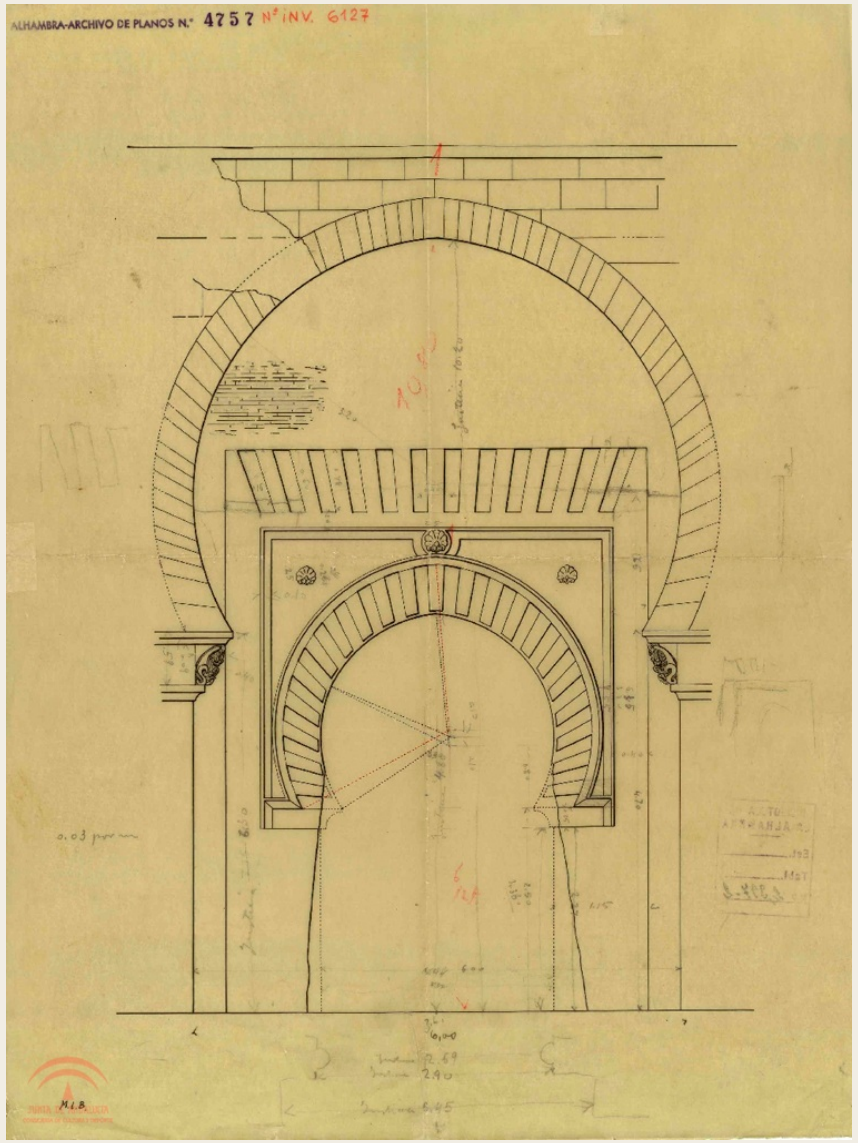
Keeping the fragments allowed the monument to survive.

1933 · reconstruction in the woods

Leopoldo Torres Balbás led its rebuilding in the Alhambra woods.

A monument with a second life

The drawing shows how conservation gave the gate a new setting.



Reconstruction drawing · 1933–1935 · Patronato archive

Yusuf I’s great gate

1348 · Yusuf I’s gate

A great tower-gate guarded the Nasrid palace city.

The foundation inscription

The Arabic text names the sultan and dates the building.

Alhambra · “the red one”

The name comes from Arabic and refers to a red fortress.

c.1500 · Virgin and Child

Added under the Catholic Monarchs: a sign of Christian rule.



1492 · A change of rule



November 1491 · terms agreed

The Capitulations set the conditions for surrender.

2 January 1492 · the handover

Granada passed from Nasrid to Christian rule.

Boabdil, Ferdinand and Isabella

The last Nasrid ruler handed over the city to the monarchs.

Protection promised · then lost

Religion and property were promised protection; later policies broke it.

Francisco Pradilla · The Surrender of Granada, 1882 · Senate collection

The hand and the key

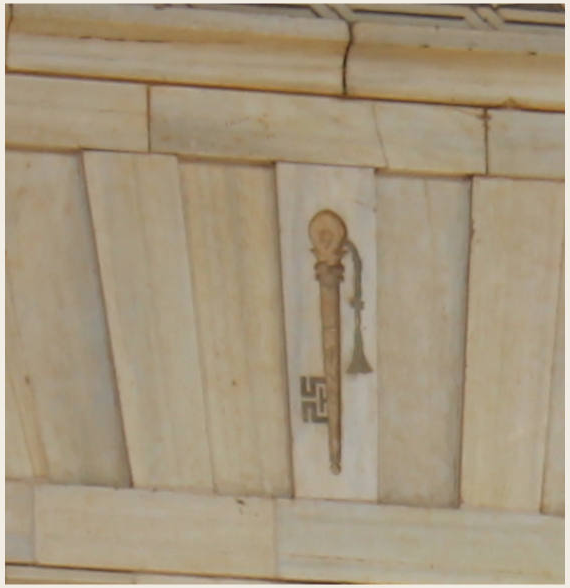
OUTER ARCH · HAND



INNER FAÇADE · KEY IN PLACE



SAME KEY · DETAIL



The hand · on the outer arch

An open hand watches over the entrance.

Protection and the number five

The hand is read as a protective sign; five has symbolic meaning.

Actual gate carvings · Patronato / Merymartin, CC BY-SA 4.0 · photo detail

The key · above the inner arch

Look deeper into the gateway to find the second carving.

Faith, power and access

Several meanings are proposed for the key; none is certain.

The five pillars of Islam

Faith · shahada

One God; Muhammad is his messenger.

Prayer · salat

Praying five times each day.

Charity · zakat

Giving a share of wealth to people in need.

Fasting · sawm

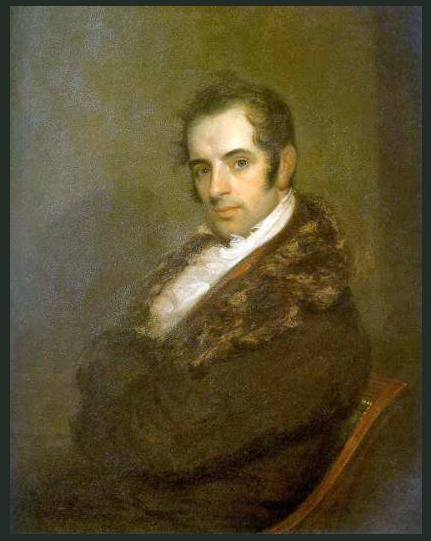
Fasting from dawn to sunset during Ramadan.

Pilgrimage · hajj

Visiting Mecca once, for those who are able.



The hand’s five fingers are sometimes linked to these five pillars



When the hand touches the key…

LEGEND · a story, not a recorded event

1829 · Washington Irving’s stay

He stayed in the palace and collected local stories.

1832 · Tales of the Alhambra

His book shared the Alhambra’s stories widely.

When the hand reaches the key

The spell ends, the fortress falls and hidden treasure is revealed.

Washington Irving · portrait by John Wesley Jarvis, 1809



A gate built for defence

Two bends slow the way in

The bent passage makes a direct attack harder.

Thick walls and controlled access

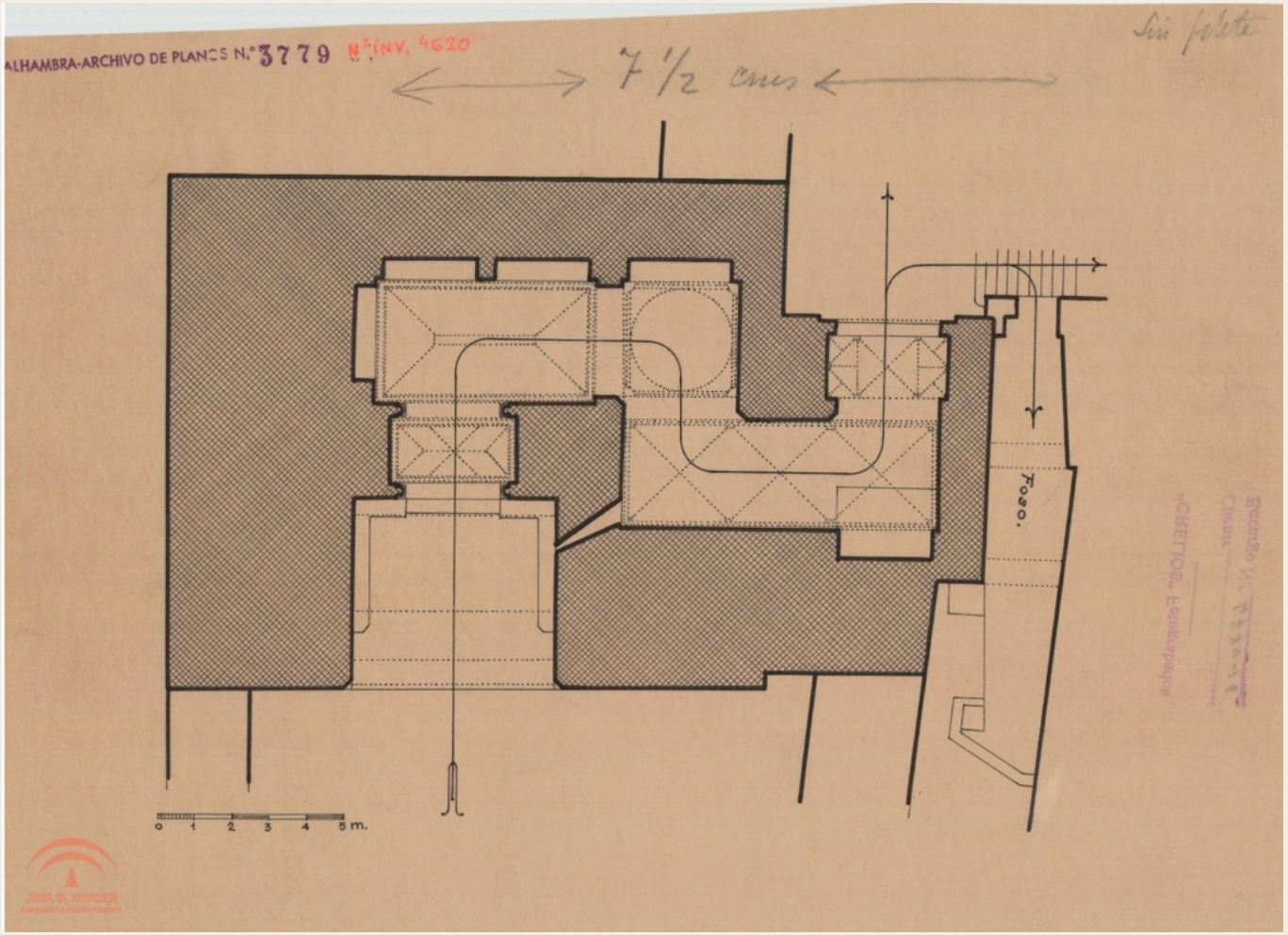
Defenders could watch and control people entering.

Look at the ground plan

Trace the two turns through this tower-gate.

1588 · the Christian altar

An altar to Our Lady of the Antigua was added inside.



Ground plan · Patronato archive · before 1982

The fortress inside the city



Alhambra · the red fortress

An Arabic name linked to the fortress on the Sabika hill.

13th century · Muhammad I

He enlarged the older fortress and built its great towers.

Earlier walls · before the Nasrids

Fortifications existed here before the 13th century.

A home for the garrison

Soldiers lived here, guarding the palace city and its approaches.

Napoleon’s war and the Alhambra

1808 · Joseph Bonaparte

Napoleon placed his brother on the Spanish throne.

1810–1812 · French occupation

The Alhambra became a military base, prison and stores.

1812 · explosives on retreat

Retreating troops damaged defensive walls and towers.

José García · remembered saviour

Tradition says he cut the fuses and saved the Alhambra.



French troops entering Granada · painting supplied by the user

Read the city from the tower



City centre · the cathedral

The large church marks the Christian city centre.

San Miguel Alto · above the hill

The church stands higher than the main Albaicín streets.

Albaicín · San Nicolás

This old neighbourhood faces the Alhambra across the valley.

Sacromonte · along the valley

The neighbourhood follows the valley beyond the Albaicín.

A Renaissance palace

1526 · Charles visits Granada

He came to Granada after marrying Isabella of Portugal.

A new palace beside the old one

His residence changed the layout of the Alhambra.

Pedro Machuca · architect

The design follows the classical style of the Renaissance.

1533 · building work begins

The project would take centuries to complete.



Charles V's family · chart supplied by the user

The idea of a new Caesar

Charles I of Spain · Charles V

The same ruler held different royal and imperial titles.

Inherited lands across Europe

His family passed several different territories to him.

Emperor from 1519

He was elected ruler of the Holy Roman Empire.

Catholic faith and Roman ideals

His public image presented a great Christian imperial mission.



Titian · Charles V with a Dog, 1533 · Museo del Prado

Three shields, shared symbols

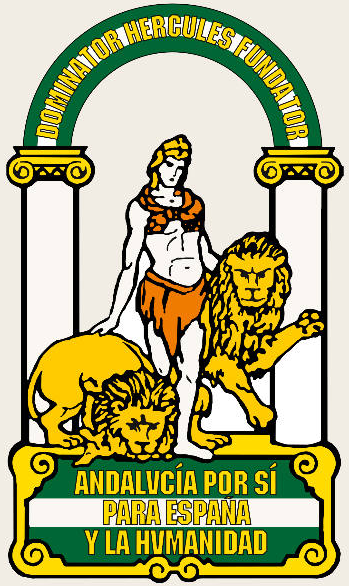
CHARLES V · 1530–1556



PILLARS OF HERCULES

Two columns: the Strait of Gibraltar. Charles V’s motto: “Plus Ultra”.

ANDALUSIA · TODAY



HERCULES + TWO LIONS

Andalusia uses the classical hero between two columns.

SPAIN · TODAY



GRANADA · THE FRUIT

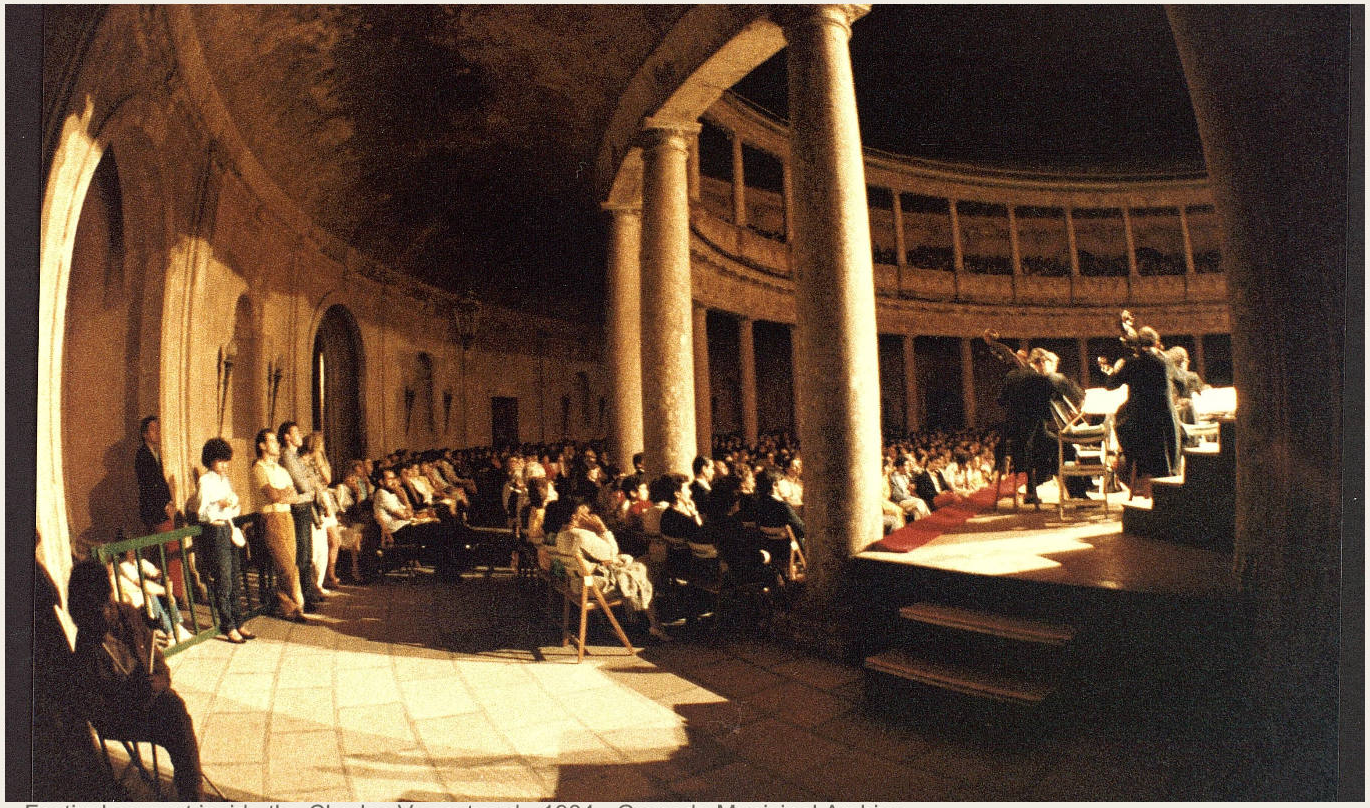
The pomegranate appears in Spain’s and Charles V’s shields, not Andalusia’s.

Heraldic drawings: Heralder · CC BY-SA 3.0 / MiguelAngel fotografo · public domain

A palace built over centuries

A circle inside a square

Doric columns below.
Ionic columns above.



Festival concert inside the Charles V courtyard · 1984 · Granada Municipal Archive

1526 — Charles visits Granada.

1533 — Machuca directs construction.

1568 — The Morisco revolt stops work.

1637 — Work is abandoned, without a roof.

1923–1958 — Restoration turns it into a museum.

A palace left unfinished

Morisco taxes helped pay for it

Moriscos were baptised Muslims and their descendants.

1568 · revolt interrupts work

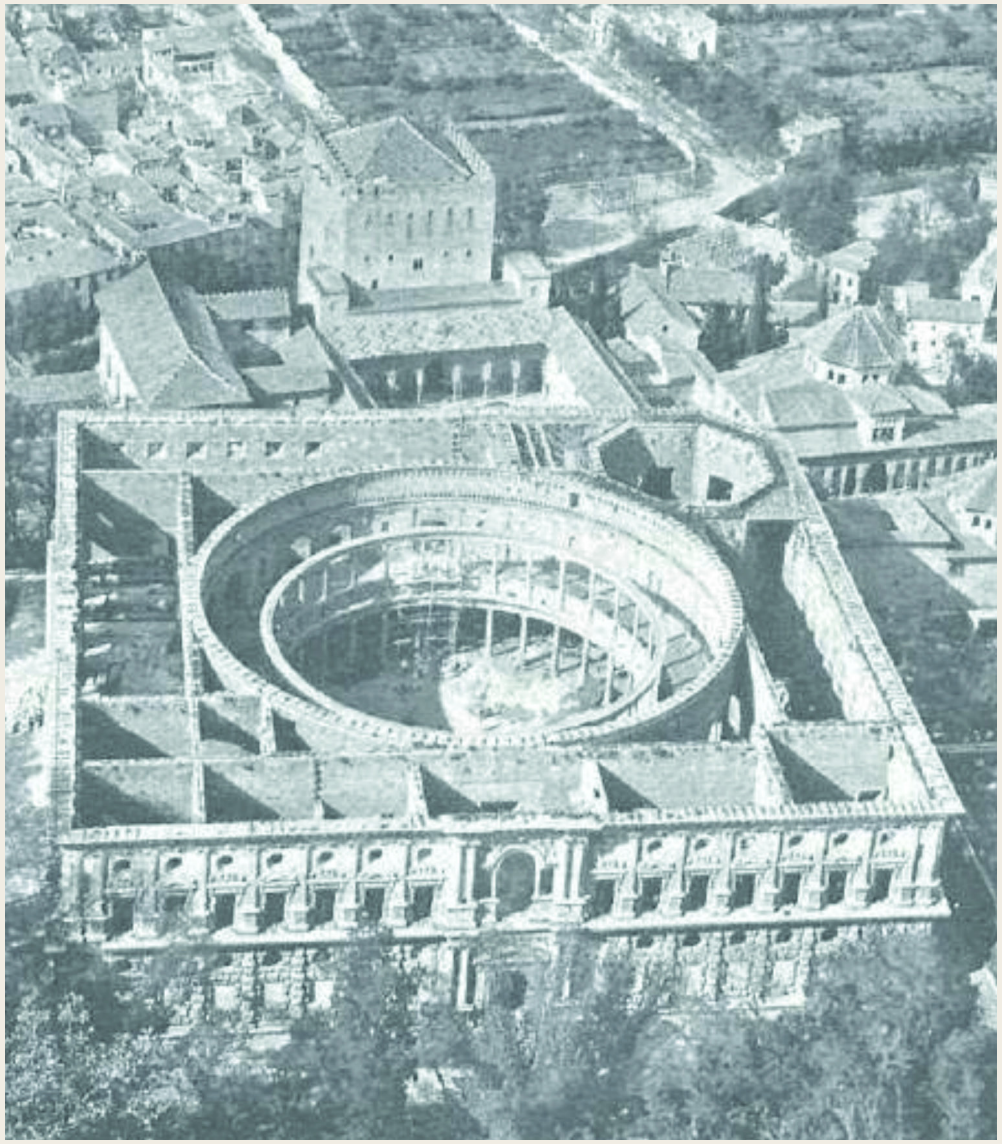
The Morisco revolt stopped construction for a period.

Long periods of unfinished work

Work resumed, then the project was abandoned again in 1637.

20th-century roof · two museums

Later restoration made space for art and Alhambra collections.



Historic aerial view · roofless Charles V Palace · date not stated in the source

Pause and find our next stop

Take a short break

Enjoy a pause before the final part of the walk.

Check the meeting point

The guide will confirm where and when to meet.

Next · the Partal

We continue towards the early Nasrid palace and its pool.

Then · the Generalife

After the palace gardens, we reach the country residence.



Official site map · original Patronato PDF · 2020

Three places, three stories



Abencerrajes Palace

Palace ruins: courtyards and rooms of a lost residence.



Santa María church

Built on the site of the Alhambra’s Great Mosque.



The Mosque Bathhouse

Warm rooms, washing and social life in the palace city.

Photographs: Patronato / Roberto Chamoso G · CC BY-SA 3.0 ES (bathhouse)

The Partal



Muhammad III · 1302–1309

The palace is associated with this Nasrid ruler.

A portico reflected in water

The name Partal refers to its open-fronted portico.

An early surviving Nasrid palace

It is one of the oldest palace buildings still standing.

Gardens shaped over time

The present setting also reflects later restoration.

Before restoration





The palace became a private house

Later residents adapted the old palace for daily life.

1891 · passed to the Spanish state

The building became part of the public monument.

Later additions hid parts of it

Walls and windows changed the open medieval portico.

Restoration changed its appearance

Removing additions helped reveal the earlier palace structure.

Historic Partal · Torres Molina · date unknown · Patronato archive

A small private mosque

14th century · Yusuf I

The oratory is associated with the sultan’s reign.

A private place for prayer

A small prayer room beside the Partal palace.

Mihrab · the prayer direction

The niche marks the prayer wall, facing towards Mecca.

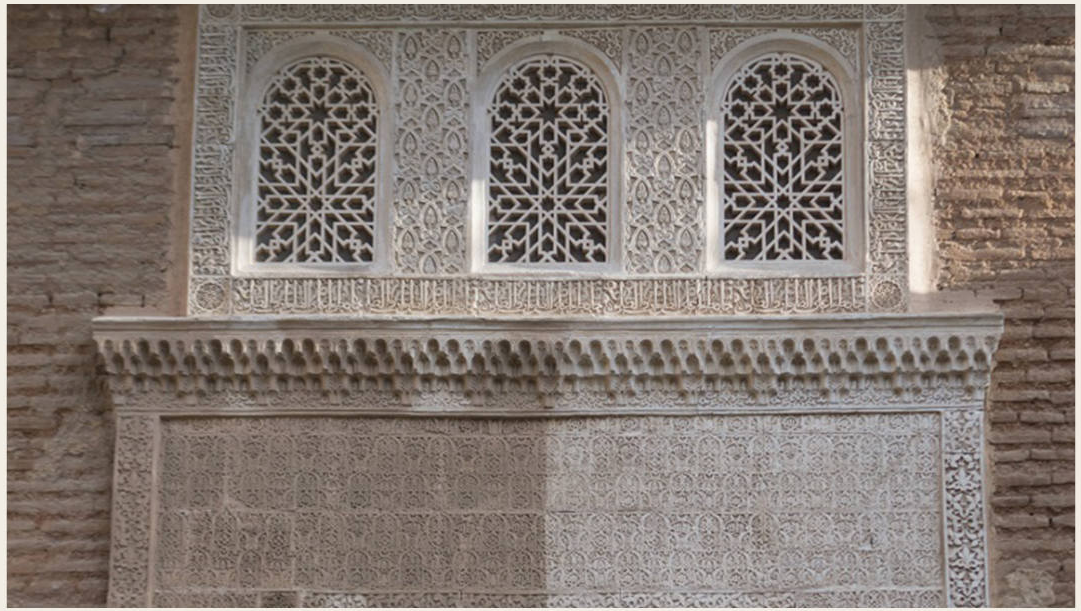
Colour, pattern and calligraphy

Paint once enriched the plasterwork and wooden roof.



AI interpretation · proposed Nasrid colours · not an exact restoration

One screen, two purposes





RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

A private prayer room
The screen filters views and creates
a quiet, intimate place for prayer.

CLIMATIC FUNCTION

Shade, light and ventilation
The openings soften direct sunlight
and allow air to pass through.

Partal oratory · actual plaster lattices · Patronato photographs

Water makes this place possible

1 · Take water from the Darro

The intake is upstream, higher than the palace gardens.

2 · Follow the Acequia Real

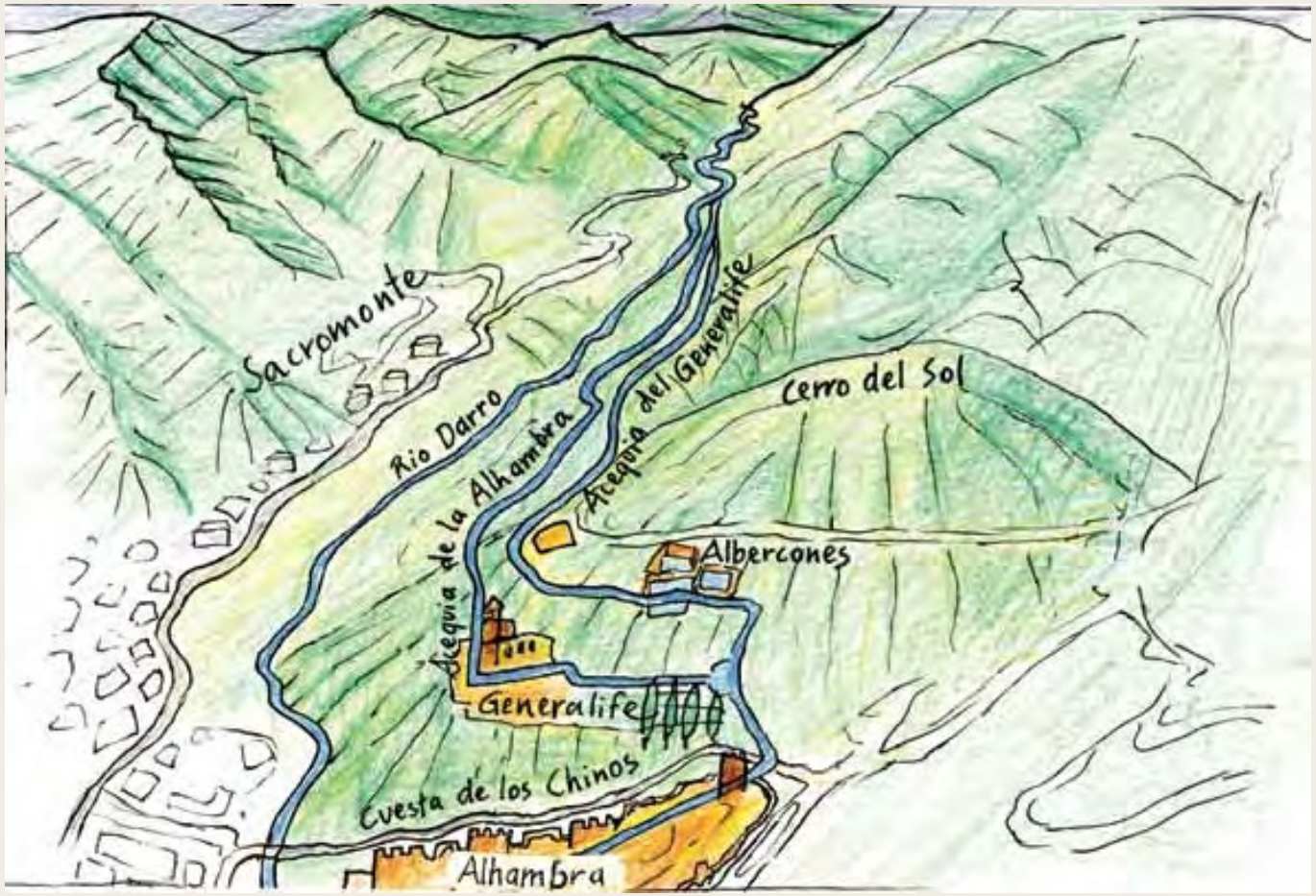
A channel carries water along the hillside.

3 · Let gravity do the work

A gentle slope keeps the water moving downhill.

4 · Supply a whole estate

Branches feed gardens, crops, baths and palace pools.



Institutional water-system diagram · the Albercones lifted water to higher land

A working landscape





Spinach and artichokes
Vegetables known in the Andalusi orchards.

Pomegranates, figs and grapes
Fruit trees and vines were part of the estate.

Melons and watermelons
Summer fruit grown with irrigation.

Almonds and mulberries
Crops provided food and other useful products.

Historical crops · photographs of the present-day orchards

Summer nights on this stage



Ballet and contemporary dance

Granada Festival · annual season, usually June–July.

Lorca-inspired performances

Lorca y Granada · annual programme, usually July–August.

Typical annual seasons · consult the current programme before booking

Spanish dance and flamenco

Dance programmes appear in the annual summer season.

When? · programmed summer nights

Dates and times vary: this is not a daily, year-round show.

From horseback to a royal garden

A country house for the sultans

A quieter retreat outside the main Alhambra palace enclosure.

Dismount before entering

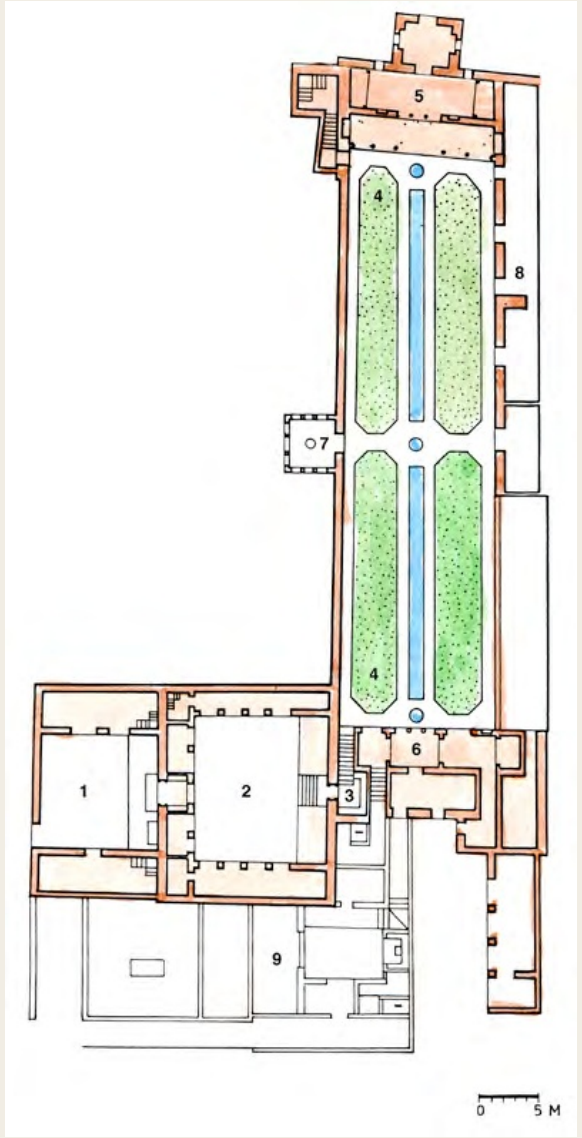
Stone supports helped riders get down from their horses.

Climb past the guards

A narrow stair and successive courts controlled the approach.

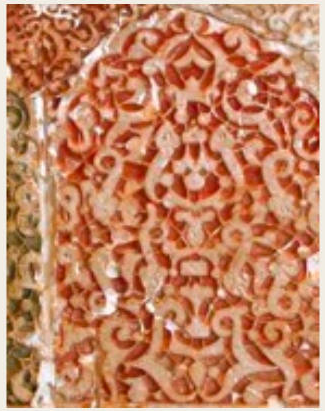
Water and productive gardens

The estate combined royal leisure with irrigated cultivation.



Generalife palace plan · Patronato educational guide

Read the terrace decoration







Plants · ataurique

Leaves and stems become flowing designs.

Geometry · patterns

Stars and interlaced lines create rhythm.

Writing · calligraphy

Inscriptions praise God and the Nasrid rulers.

THE NASRID MOTTO

Wa-la ghalib illa Allah

“Only God is the victor”

Arabic: right to left ← Latin: left to right →

Two paths from the Phoenician alphabet

Aramaic → Nabataean → Arabic
Greek → Etruscan → Latin

Original Generalife mirador panels · now in the Alhambra Museum · Patronato photographs

The Sultana’s cypress

LEGEND

The tale belongs to the literary memory of the gardens.

A secret meeting in the garden

A hidden meeting beneath a cypress is central to the story.

A sultana and an Abencerraje

Versions tell of love, jealousy and the Abencerrajes.

A story — not a proven event

The courtyard’s name does not prove the affair happened.



The Oleander Walk



A garden walk from the 19th century

The Patronato dates this walk to the mid-nineteenth century.

Oleander · a beautiful toxic plant

Do not eat any part of an oleander.

Shade and seasonal flowers

Its plants create a sheltered final stretch of the visit.

Enjoy the final view

The gardens form a later layer of Alhambra history.

Thank you for walking with us

A city of many layers

Different rulers and communities shaped the places we visited.

Water, gardens and daily life

The Alhambra was a lived-in city and a productive landscape.

History — and stories

We have separated recorded events from famous legends.

Take one last look

Keep a final image of Granada before we say goodbye.

