

CYNTHIA ROBINSON

## MARGINAL ORNAMENT: POETICS, MIMESIS, AND DEVOTION IN THE PALACE OF THE LIONS

Although Oleg Grabar himself has frequently been heard to disparage the importance of his 1978 study of the Alhambra,<sup>1</sup> claiming that al-Andalus really isn't "his area," this work has inspired research for several generations. Following its publication, both American and Spanish scholars began to look past the endless repetitions of ornamental compositions in the pattern books of Owen Jones and to peer beneath the exotic veil woven by Washington Irving's *Tales of the Alhambra*, to discover—thanks to Grabar's study—a complex of palaces that was a key component in the historical trajectory of a category of architecture that scholarship has agreed to designate "Islamic." Particularly compelling were Grabar's "iconographic" readings of both the Palace of Comares and the Palace of the Lions. Though some of the most recent scholarship on the Alhambra has called certain of these readings into question,<sup>2</sup> I believe, as I will argue in the pages to follow, that it is precisely Grabar's concept of an "iconography"—a set of images, both architectural and ornamental, to which both patrons and public attached significance, and which were always understood through the interpretive lens offered by the verses inscribed on the walls—that serves to unlock the multiple layers of meaning in these buildings.

The reflection of the Comares Tower of the Alhambra's Palace of the Myrtles<sup>3</sup> in the still, rectangular pool before it creates a majestic sense of hushed stasis (fig. 1). A visitor is not so much inclined to circumambulate the pool—although the walkways that border it would permit such an action—as to stand in rapt contemplation, both of the imposing square tower and of its shimmering watery image. This sense of stasis is echoed inside the Hall of Comares, the principal throne room for both the initial patron of the palace, Yusuf I (r. 1333–54), and his successor, Muhammad V (r. 1354–91). The walls of the cubical but spacious and lofty hall are "draped" in horizontal swathes of ornamental motifs (fig. 2), each clearly distinguished from the others but all strikingly reminiscent

of the patterns of silk textiles woven in Nasrid workshops.<sup>4</sup> From his throne, placed at the exact center of this space, the sovereign enjoyed an unobstructed view of the pool and garden, situated in perfectly per-

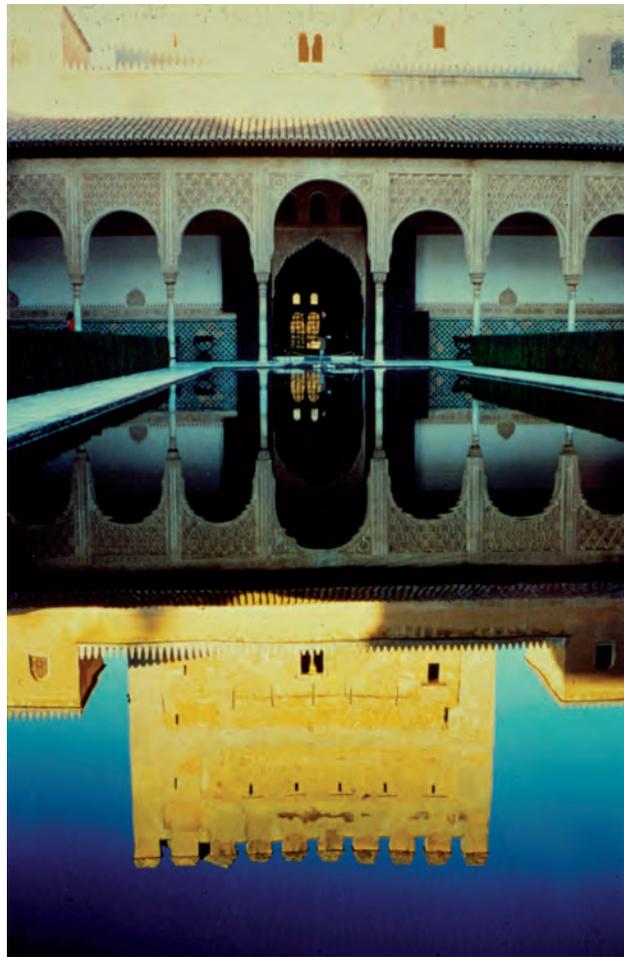


Fig. 1. Reflection of the Tower of Comares in the pool of the Patio of the Myrtles. (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)

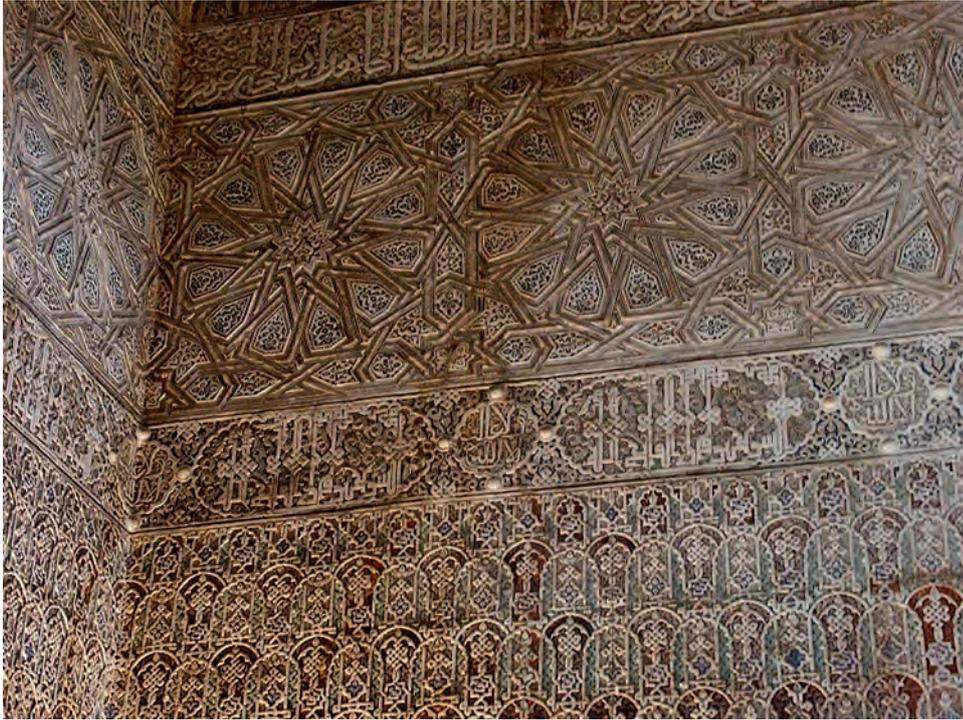


Fig. 2. Hall of Comares, interior (detail). (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)



Fig. 3. Hall of Comares, ceiling (detail). (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)

pendicular juxtaposition to the room he occupied. Through repeated use of celestial imagery and references to the seven heavens, the Qur'anic and poetic content of the inscriptions surrounding him invoked a perfectly ordered cosmos, with Granada's ruler at its center. Above his head, a representation of the starry heavens—among whose celestial bodies, according to Darío Cabanelas, appears the Qur'anic tree upon which Allah's throne rests—assured both continuity and a proper degree of separation between the earthly and heavenly realms of creation (fig. 3).<sup>5</sup>

A visitor to the adjacent Palace of the Lions enters an entirely different world. Its orientation exists in direct contradiction to that of the Palace of the Myrtles (fig. 4); movement, moreover, is not only suggested but practically imposed by the rhythms of the slender, graceful columns placed in groups of two, three, and four around its entire perimeter (fig. 5). On the long sides of the rectangular patio, one glimpses the shaded

interiors of two large, square, heavily ornamented rooms of uncertain purpose.<sup>6</sup> On the short sides, two pavilions jut forward toward a central fountain surrounded by a ring of crouching lions, from which the palace takes its modern name; the ornamental stucco screens that compose the pavilions, consisting primarily of architectural and vegetal motifs, are delicate in appearance, perforated to allow the spaces they both delimit and link to those around them to be dappled by the light of sun or moon. Numerous scholars have observed that, in the Palace of the Lions, the interpenetration between interior and exterior spaces—often considered a characteristic of Islamic palatine and domestic architecture in general and believed by many to be particularly pronounced in the architecture of al-Andalus—reaches such heights that the distinction between the two is almost entirely blurred.<sup>7</sup>

The central patio would have been either occupied by a quadripartite, sunken garden, emphasizing

## THE ROYAL PALACE

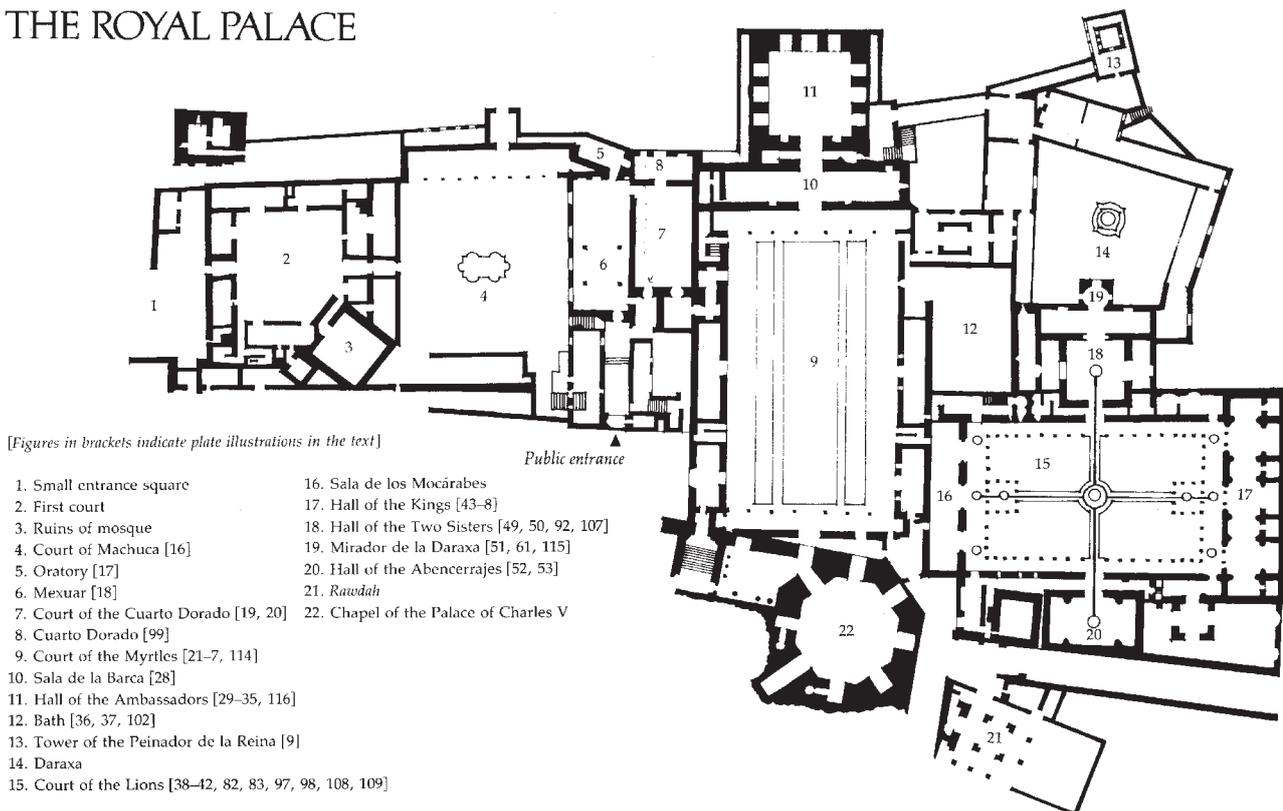


Fig. 4. Plan of the Alhambra (After Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* [London: Alan Lane, 1978], endpaper, used with author's permission)

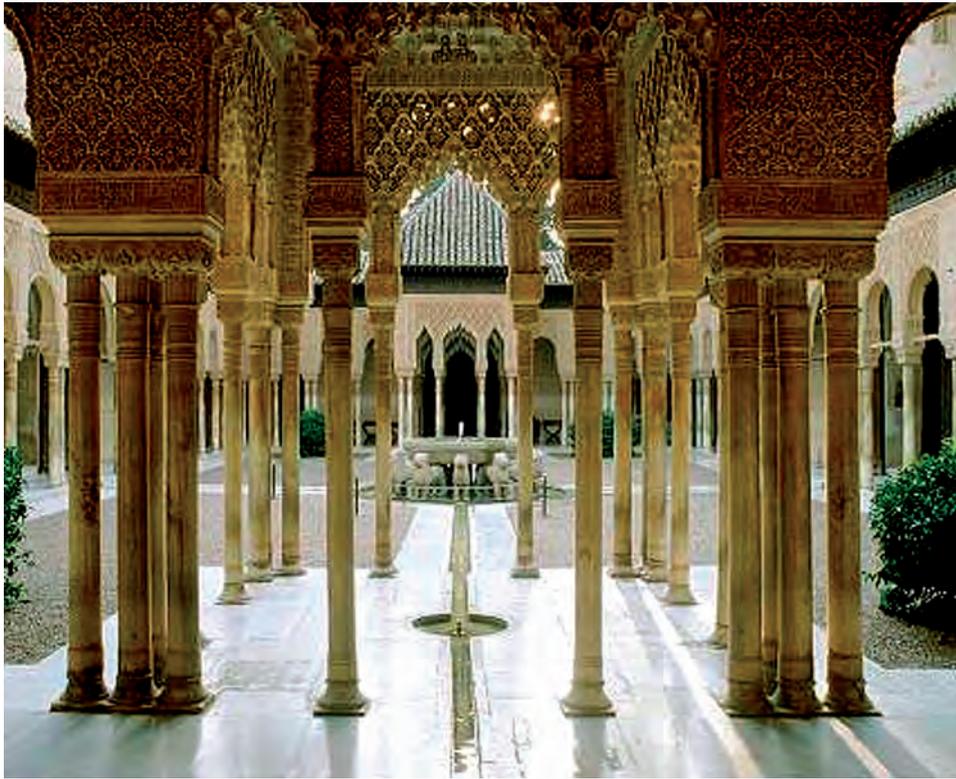


Fig. 5. Palace of the Lions, patio. (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)

ing the four cardinal directions,<sup>8</sup> or paved with white marble,<sup>9</sup> calling to mind, through invocations of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>anic parable concerning the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon (Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>an: 27: 44), its likeness to a shimmering sea.<sup>10</sup> All scholars agree on the splendid beauty and stunning originality of this place, whether they attribute the principal inspiration for the structure to Islamic precedents with roots in the classical past—as does Grabar<sup>11</sup>—or to a combination of interactions of the Nasrid court with that of Pedro “el Cruel” of Castile<sup>12</sup> and impressions formed during visits made by Muhammad V and his minister, Ibn al-Khatib, to Maghrebi madrasas—as does Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa.<sup>13</sup>

#### METHODS AND MEANINGS

Interpretations of the “Palace of the Lions” vary from the “pleasure palace” of the Orientalist tradition to “new throne-room” to Hall of Justice to Sufi madrasa.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, despite the vast number of publications that the Nasrid palace has inspired, we still know surprisingly little about how its buildings were used, what they meant to those who used them, and how their messages were communicated. As observed by Ruiz, this is perhaps because we scholars, much like the ever-growing number of tourists who flock to Granada, prefer to catch disjointed glimpses of the palace’s wondrous beauty from beneath the semi-transparent veil of orientalized Romanticism in which it has traditionally been draped;<sup>15</sup> this, according to Ruiz, has resulted in a mistaken perception of the uniqueness of the palace and a general failure to think of it comparatively.<sup>16</sup> The Alhambra is “different” because it reigned over a kingdom that (so the story goes) somehow knew its Islamic days to be numbered. This ability of modern scholars to look forward into history—something, of course, that the Nasrids could not do—has led both to the palace’s reification (indeed, one could argue that it has been thoroughly fetishized) and to its marginalization within the larger context of Islamic art. It

has also fostered assumptions, even among the most innovative and forward-looking members of our field, concerning the backward-looking nature of the vegetal emphasis of its ornament.<sup>17</sup> A sort of lethargic nostalgia is generally presumed to permeate all of Nasrid cultural production. In the words of Robert Irwin, for instance, “Scholars in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Granada were conscious of belonging to a backwoods culture on the perimeter of Islam...”;<sup>18</sup> the author likewise evidences a somewhat disturbing penchant for the gruesome folklore surrounding the Hall of the Abencerrajes.<sup>19</sup>

Yet Irwin also—somewhat contradictorily—appears to be both surprised and frustrated by the interpretive impasse at which scholarship on the Alhambra has arrived, observing that, after all, “the Alhambra was a palace built by and for intellectuals with mystical leanings.”<sup>20</sup> Indeed, primary sources from Nasrid Granada—the study and analysis of which, particularly as relates to the literary and aesthetic aspects of culture, is still in its relative infancy<sup>21</sup>—indicate that we should assume high levels of literacy, cosmopolitan cultural sophistication, and poetic proficiency for the Nasrids and their courtiers. It will be the object of the present study to take Irwin at his word, and to offer an interpretation of the Palace of the Lions as a building that both provided the setting for and embodied the principal elements of Nasrid dynastic self-representation in all of its religious, political, cultural, literary, and intellectual components. Several recent studies of other key medieval Islamic buildings and their contexts have offered illuminating readings of these monuments within the cultural framework intended by patrons for very specific publics;<sup>22</sup> I will adopt similar methodologies in this essay in order to argue, based on an analysis of the poetic and holy texts inscribed into the palace’s densely ornamented walls, as well as texts *about* these texts (principally, the writings of Hazim al-Qartajanni (d. 1285)<sup>23</sup> and Ibn al-Khatib (d. 1375),<sup>24</sup> that Nasrid literary culture was deeply and principally interested in issues of allegory, mimesis, and representation. The spaces and ornament of the Palace of the Lions are embodiments of these concerns and likewise contribute significantly to their formulation, articulation, and communication.

I will suggest that the palace, in its combined architectural, spatial, horticultural, ornamental, and textual elements, constitutes a representation—much in the same way that the Hall of Comares constitutes a cosmological representation, as established by Grabar<sup>25</sup>

—of a Paradise-garden cosmos composed of a group of four smaller gardens, which exist in allegorical relationship both to one another and to the larger, cosmological concept. In other words, this essay, revisiting the iconographic approach adopted by Grabar and the utopian reading offered by Puerta,<sup>26</sup> reclaims both the representative<sup>27</sup> and the paradisiac<sup>28</sup> qualities of the palace disputed in much recent scholarship. I abandon, however, the previously prevalent universalizing approach employed to attribute these qualities to the Palace of the Lions<sup>29</sup> and seek instead to highlight the specifics of the paradisiac claims made by the Nasrid palace, as well as their relevance to a specifically Nasrid public.

As has probably already become apparent, my interpretation owes much to the work of two Spanish scholars, José Miguel Puerta Vilchez and Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa.<sup>30</sup> Puerta’s close readings and penetrating analysis of the verses of Ibn al-Khatib and Ibn Zamrak have resulted in the reconstruction of a Nasrid poetics based in an aesthetic of light and mirroring, with roots in both Sufism and Islamic interpretations of Aristotelian thought. The products of this aesthetic, often touted by the verses themselves as deceptions or optical illusions, were intended to amaze and even stupefy (or, as Ibn al-Khatib would have it, “bewitch”; see below) the senses of their audience. These, in turn, are all qualities and abilities that the frequently personified architecture itself<sup>31</sup>—the subject, as Puerta has shown, of most of the compositions inscribed into its walls<sup>32</sup>—claims to possess in equal measure. In spite of the tendency of past generations of students of Nasrid poetry to characterize it as an encyclopedic compendium of all that has gone before it in the way of Andalusí poetics—as precious, cumbersome, or even pedantic and moribund<sup>33</sup>—it is clear that Nasrid poetry distinguished itself quite definitely from, for example, the poetics of the Taifa period.<sup>34</sup>

Juan Carlos Ruiz’s recent essay in *Al-Qantara*<sup>35</sup> represents an attempt to go beyond a formalistic “history of style” in order to determine the function of the Palace of the Lions. Ruiz has proposed that the structure was originally intended to serve as a madrasa, conceived, among other purposes, for the teaching of Sufism (classified as a science at Granada’s somewhat earlier, more public madrasa),<sup>36</sup> a *zāwiya*, and a burial place for Muhammad V. While the idea of the Hall of the Abencerrajes as a mausoleum for Muhammad V must remain in the realm of conjecture unless further proof comes to light, I accept—with only minimal

reservations concerning our understanding of the institution of the madrasa both in the Maghreb and in al-Andalus, and particularly in Granada<sup>37</sup>—Ruiz’s reading of the palace’s plan as strongly impacted by Maghrebi madrasas such as Bou Inaniya, in Fez, and the Dar al-Makhzan, which Muhammad V most certainly would have seen during his exile; one thinks also of the Sufi shrine to Abu Madyan at Tlemcen.<sup>38</sup> During their period of exile in North Africa, both Muhammad V and his minister, Ibn al-Khatib, himself a practicing Sufi and an authority on the subject,<sup>39</sup> certainly visited such establishments constructed under Marinid royal patronage. While Ruiz’s theory may be revisited and refined through further research and discussion over the coming years, it sheds new and often quite convincing light on a number of the physical features in the Palace of the Lions that have puzzled archaeologists and scholars for decades.<sup>40</sup> If it is difficult for some to accept the palace’s identification as an “official” madrasa, I propose that we at least entertain the possibility of its having been intended to function as a sort of *bayt al-hikma*—a space, or series of spaces, meant to serve (perhaps among other functions) as a setting for education, contemplation, and intellectual and cultural activities, certainly with an audience conceived primarily as an exclusively royal and noble one. Such an interpretation is not necessarily at odds with the readings of those who wish to emphasize the statements of dynasty and power made by the building: as has been made clear in work by Fierro, Wolper, and others,<sup>41</sup> Sufism was intimately connected to the upper echelons of dynastic power throughout the Islamic world during the period in question, and thus the construction of a building or complex to house an institution in which its teachings were propagated would constitute an emphatic statement of royal authority. It is in light of this explanation that the following suggestions are offered.

#### THE GARDEN OF DELIGHTS

One of the most prevalent popular (and, indeed, scholarly) commonplaces concerning the Palace of the Lions is that it is in some way meant to be “Paradise on earth.” As observed above, in recent years several scholars have attempted to replace “Paradise” with “power,” preferring a secularizing reading of the space and its ornament as an expression of Nasrid hegemonic

ambitions.<sup>42</sup> Although this current of interpretation represents a justified reaction against the Orientalist tendency to apply a universalizing “Paradise” reading to almost any Islamic palace or garden, Puerta has recently reminded us of the name by which the structure was known to its original public: *al-Riyād al-saʿīd*, or “Garden of Delights,” a phrase with clear implications for the next life as well as this one.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, the poem that surrounds the so-called Hall of the Two Sisters, in which the sovereign sat and gazed out over the patio, declares:

I am the garden that noble beauty adorns—  
Oh, how many delights does it offer to our gazes!  
The desires and pleasures of the noble are continually  
renewed here...<sup>44</sup>

an affirmation echoed by the inscriptions surrounding the niches at the entrance to the hall—“I am not alone: my garden has worked such wonders that no eye before has ever seen its likeness”;<sup>45</sup> by the frame around the windows that give onto the “Lindaraja,” or “Aisha’s Garden”—“I am the fresh eye of this garden, and its pupil, most certainly, is the sultan Muhammad...”;<sup>46</sup> as well as by the fountain at the center of the patio: “Are there not wonders and marvels in this garden?...”<sup>47</sup> Likewise, the poem surrounding the “Hall of the Two Sisters” closes with another assertion that the palace embodies a lush, green garden: “Never did we see such a pleasingly verdant garden, of sweeter harvest or perfume...”<sup>48</sup> In short, there can be little doubt that this palace intends for its public to perceive it as a garden, and in Islam, of course, Paradise is a flowering, verdant, well-watered, fruit-laden garden.<sup>49</sup>

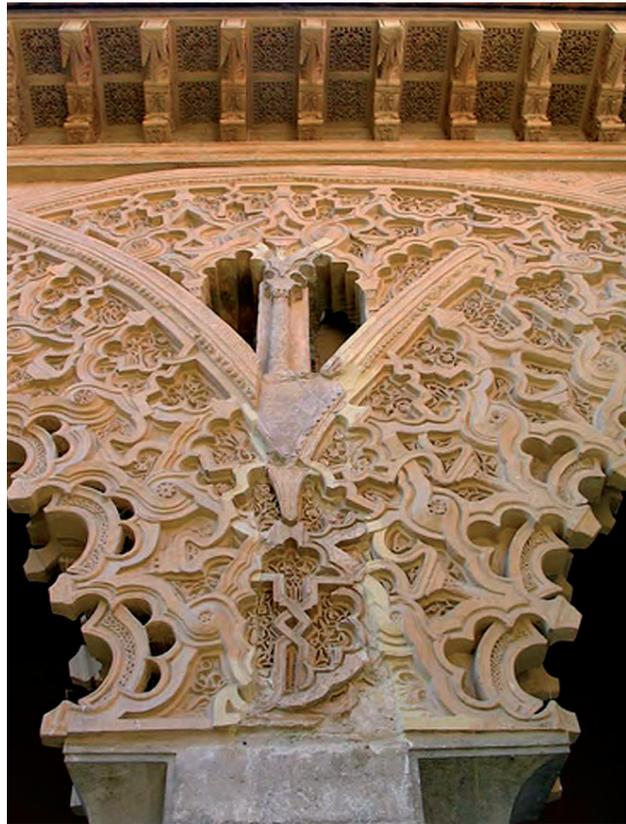
The Paradise-garden identifications that characterize the Riyad al-Saʿid and differentiate it from the Palace of Comares are established by its ornamental program, by the content and intertextual associations of the verses inscribed on its walls, and by the unique disposition of its plan (see fig. 4), all understood through the lens of a poetics of mimesis and allegory. Verses throughout the palace are by three principal poets, Ibn al-Jayyan, Ibn Zamrak, and Ibn al-Khatib, all demonstrably important to the Nasrid court at the moment of the Riyad al-Saʿid’s construction; Ibn al-Khatib was the pupil of Ibn al-Jayyan and the teacher of Ibn Zamrak, who betrayed him and, many believe, occasioned his execution.<sup>50</sup> I will employ excerpts from these verses in order to posit the aesthetic preference of Nasrid culture for description



Fig. 6. Aljafería, Northern Salon. (Photo: María Judith Feliciano)

through the establishment of differences between things and their categorization.

This stands in contrast to the penchant for likeness, homology, and analogy based in transformative metaphor that characterized Andalusí poetics at the courts of the Taifa kings during the eleventh century, as I have explored in detail in an earlier study.<sup>51</sup> An effect of fusion and sameness dominates the various elements that compose the ornamental program at Zaragoza's late-eleventh-century Aljafería Palace (figs. 6 and 7), just as metaphor, in a composition performed there, transformed union with the beloved into a Garden of Paradise and the boon-companion's hands into a halo—creating, in essence, a fusion between the subject and the object of the comparison: “But union with you, if you come, is like the Garden of Paradise...It is as though a full moon carries the wine and breezes, and the two hands of the drinker are a halo...”<sup>52</sup> The Aljafería's ornamental aesthetic may likewise be compared to the clearly distin-



→  
Fig. 7. Aljafería, Southern Salon, screen (detail). (Photo: María Judith Feliciano)

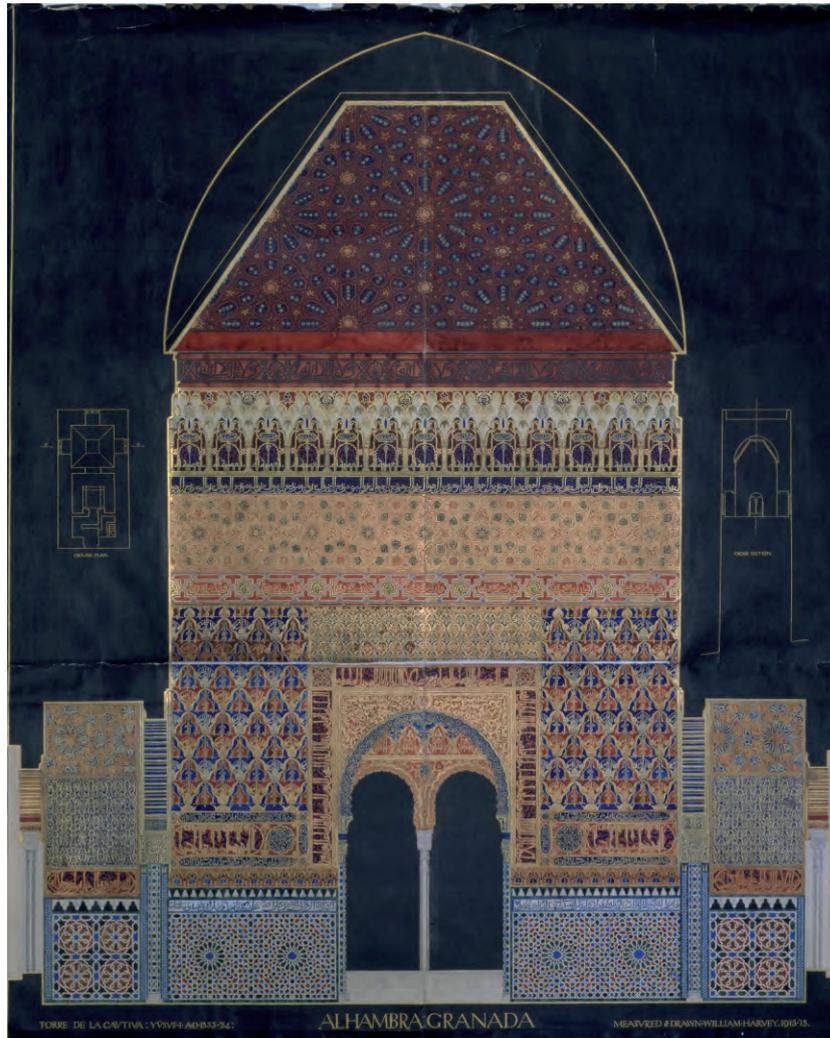


Fig. 8. William Harvey, drawing of the “Tower of the Captive” in the Alhambra. Pen and ink, india ink, watercolor, and pencil. Victoria and Albert Museum, no. E.1274-1963. (Photo: courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum)

gushed cartouches and textile-like bands into which different motifs of parietal ornament are separated at the Alhambra (see fig. 3).

One of the earliest instantiations of the aesthetic principles of differentiation and categorization at the Nasrid palace is found in a series of couplets by Ibn al-Jayyab originally inscribed on the walls of the early-fourteenth-century “Tower of the Captive” (fig. 8):

Her beauties are evenly distributed among her four walls,  
her ceiling, and her floor.  
Marvels and wonders she holds in stucco and tile; more  
astonishing still is her beautiful wooden dome...

Just as in *badīʿ*,<sup>53</sup> there is paronomasia (*mujannas*, from *jīns/ajnās*, variety, sort) Classifications (*muṭabbaq*), caesura (*mughāṣṣan*), and interlace (*muraṣṣaʿ*)...<sup>54</sup>

Correspondences between the ornamental aesthetic exhibited there and the significations of the words *muṭabbaq* (composed or arranged in levels), *mujannas* (classifications, correspondences, puns or the use of one word or element to communicate various meanings), *mughāṣṣan*, evoking a disposition or arrangement similar to the branches of a tree, and *muraṣṣaʿ* (gem- or stone-studded; heavily ornamented)<sup>55</sup> are

striking. Although these terms usually refer to poetic concepts (note the phrase, “just as in *badī*”), here they are explicitly related to the differentiation and organization of the various ornamental themes, materials, and techniques of the “Tower of the Captive,” allowing the establishment and exploration of *mujannas*, or classifications and correspondences. Two bands of stylized and highly abstracted arch motifs intertwined with vegetation and bordered by cartouches filled with inscriptions are juxtaposed with interlaced, geometric star forms (again strikingly reminiscent of patterns commonly found in textiles produced in Nasrid workshops);<sup>56</sup> viewers, I suggest, were intended to appreciate and savor these differences—indeed, to perform a sort of exercise in “compare and contrast.”

Nasrid literary theory further articulates these aesthetic principles. The primary preoccupation of the Andalusí émigré to Tunisia Hazim al-Qartajanni, the late-thirteenth-century author of a *poetica* entitled *Minhāj al-bulaghā’ wa sirāj al-udabā’* (Method of the Eloquent and Lamp of the Literary),<sup>57</sup> was that poetry should serve not to articulate similarities between the subject and object of a metaphoric comparison in order that their identities be melded and fused, as had been the case at the Taifa courts of the eleventh century, but rather to clarify the characteristics and essence of the things it describes—the *aḥwāl al-ashyā’*—in the most beautiful poetic image (*aḥsan al-ṣūra*) possible.<sup>58</sup> The term *taṣāwīr* (sing. *taṣwīr*) is also employed to refer to the specific poetic vehicles that were to communicate these images to listeners; among its possible translations are “representations,” “depictions,” “illustrations,” and even “paintings,” “drawings,” and “photographs.”

Al-Qartajanni, in other words, in disagreement with his Taifa forebears, was of the opinion that poetry should create not comparisons or metaphors but images. The use of the words *ṣūra* and *taṣāwīr* is certainly deliberate: earlier critics of poetry had preferred much more abstract language, based on the idea that comprehension should be assisted by comparison rather than straight description, and that the further apart their object and subject and the more abstruse their meanings (sing. *ma’na*), the more noble such comparisons would be.<sup>59</sup> Al-Qartajanni also believed that the most felicitous objects of extended description for the poet—those that would best display his *imitative* capacities—included images (*taṣāwīr*) of the glittering of “stars, candles, and incandescent lamps on the pure, still surfaces of the waters of brooks, rivers,

canals, and small bays or coves.” Similarly appropriate were full, leafy trees laden with fruits, and particularly their reflections, “for the union achieved between a stream’s banks and the leaves reflected in its crystalline water is among the most marvelous (*a’jab*) and pleasurable (*abhaj*) sights to behold.”<sup>60</sup>

The Nasrid palace clearly manifests al-Qartajanni’s preference for images (to be interpreted in the most literal way possible) of light, water, and gardens. Likewise, it embodies the aesthetic principle of sustained auto-articulation and description in the subject matter and the self-referential nature of the verses inscribed on its walls, niches, and fountains: reference throughout each composition is exclusively to the subject itself. Ruggles notes the importance—and, indeed, the uniqueness—of the use of personification in the Alhambra’s poems;<sup>61</sup> though there are Islamic precedents for this technique in verses applied both to precious objects and to architecture, the insistence on the device throughout the Alhambra’s poetic corpus is significant. Indeed, I propose that the repeated and extended use of personification in the palace’s project of communication is entirely consistent with the poetics preferred by al-Qartajanni: what better way to communicate the “essence” of an object through poetic images than to allow this object to speak on its own behalf?

Just as the verses allow the individual components or elements of the building to describe their singular beauties in the first person, the palace’s architectural and ornamental programs, rather than hiding or blurring the identity of their individual elements through overlapping or inverting, as at the Aljafería in Zaragoza,<sup>62</sup> affirm and declare these identities. Columns are doubled and ornamented with colonnettes, so that viewers, while recognizing them as part of a larger architectural structure, fully realize their identity as elements. Similarly, walls are visually identified as walls, affirming themselves to be—as I have already observed—draped with the woven silks for which Nasrid workshops were famous throughout the Mediterranean; domes are clearly just that, and are often visually “supported” by diminutive columns that serve to underline their separate identities and functions (figs. 9, 10, and 11).

Through both its texts and its “images,” then, the palace affirms its identity as a palace. Thus, the Riyad al-Sa’id’s is a poetics, both verbal and visual, of the sort of sustained self-description advocated by al-Qartajanni, which leads, as affirmed by the first line of



Fig. 9. "Hall of the Two Sisters," squinch. (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)



Fig. 10. Palace of the Lions, columns (detail). (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)

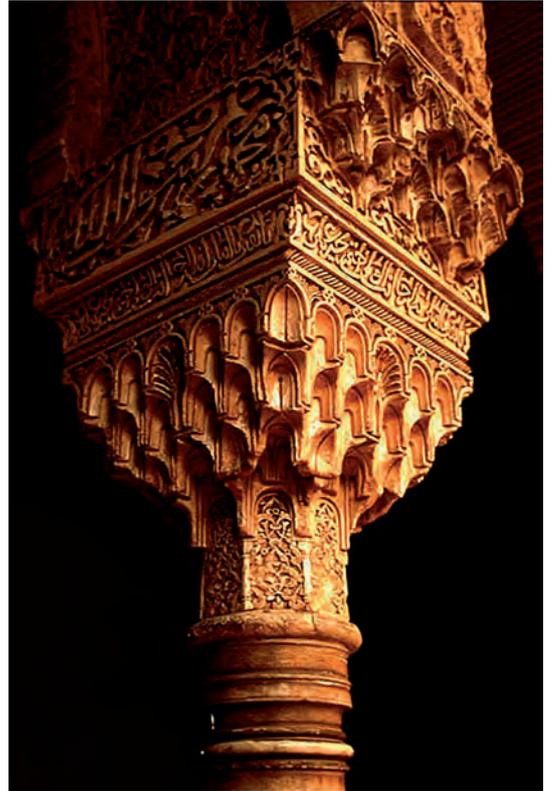


Fig. 11. Palace of the Lions, capital. (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)

the verses from the Fountain of Lindaraja, to a comprehension of the building's "essence." Indeed, the Riyad al-Sa'id's articulation of al-Qartajanni's aesthetics would appear to be self-conscious even in its most minute details. Puerta has noted a mirroring aesthetic that dominates the disposition of ornamental elements at the Alhambra, and this is particularly apparent in the Riyad al-Sa'id. Intricate compositions placed within the dense "tapestries" of parietal ornament are frequently revealed, upon close examination, to be short, emblematic inscriptions, symmetrically mirrored and "woven" into the fabric of the walls.<sup>63</sup> These aesthetic decisions were almost certainly made in response to the preferences articulated by al-Qartajanni for the above-mentioned phrases that "imitate" the reflections of light and leafy branches in water. As we shall see, Irwin's qualification of this palace as a building constructed by intellectuals for intellectuals is extremely *à propos*, and this is not the last time we will witness a literary trope or device being pushed to its furthest visual limits within the Riyad al-Sa'id's confines.

By the second half of the fourteenth century a new element has been added to al-Qartajanni's theory of poetic mimesis. In a treatise entitled *al-Sihr wa 'l shi'r* ("Magic and Poetry," or "Witchcraft and Poetry"),<sup>64</sup> Ibn al-Khatib declares that description, while faithfully reproducing the qualities of its object, should do this in poetic terms so wondrous as to also result in the "enchantment" or "bewitchment" of the senses—an aesthetic experience that propels the reader or listener beyond the "real" or the "natural" or their mimetic evocation. This experience is predicated on the cultivation of amazement and surprise, which in turn produce pleasure and delight—experiences of perception that had been relegated to the lower rungs of the aesthetic ladder during the Taifa period, when astonishment was for women, children, and the not-so-intelligent.<sup>65</sup>

It seems that the palace's designers paid equally close heed to Ibn al-Khatib's suggestions: the first-person statements and commands of the verses ("I am a garden"; "Contemplate my beauty") may appear to stake claims to the mimetic, but these same verses simultaneously push their own interpretation, and that of the surfaces and structures they adorn, toward bewitchment, or *sihr*. Puerta has catalogued the numerous evocations of the startling, wondrous, marvelous, and even illusionistic qualities of the palace present in the verses inscribed into its walls, niches, and fountains.<sup>66</sup> As noted above, the "Hall of the Two Sisters" repeat-

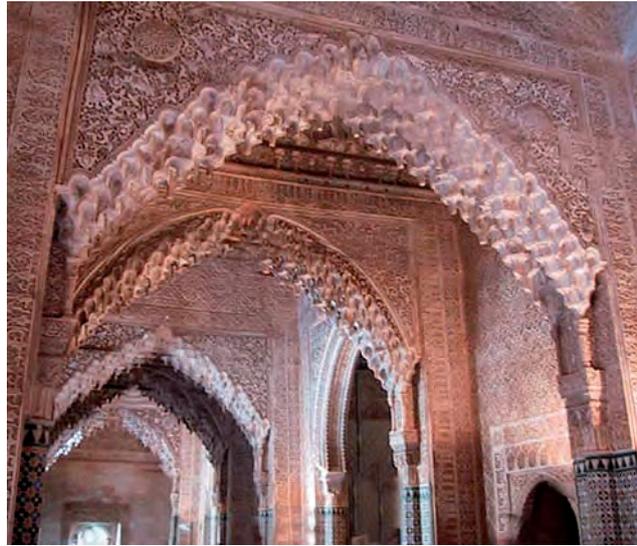


Fig. 12. Palace of the Lions, "Hall of Justice." (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)

edly affirms the palace's identity as a garden, but it also makes clear that this is a wondrous garden, one composed of silks from Yemen, of arches and columns, of marble smooth and diaphanous as pearls:

Oh, what raiment of embroidered stuff have you thrown about it! It makes one forget the tulle of Yemen!... Her columns are so beautiful in every aspect that word of their fame has reached far and wide! Her smooth, diaphanous marble brightens the farthest corners darkened by shadow...<sup>67</sup>

Once they are examined closely, the elements of the Riyad al-Sa'id's ornamental program make similar, seemingly conflicting claims, proposing the identification of trunks with columns (see figs. 5 and 10), leafy boughs with arcades (fig. 12), and flowering plants with domes (fig. 13).

I suggest that this practice of extended elucidation, both mimetic and "bewitching," of the thing and its qualities was intended by the designers of the palace to precede the establishment between them of correspondences (*mujannas*), and that these correspondences, in their turn, predicate the establishment of relationships not metaphorical but allegorical. Allegory, as is well known, is similar but not identical to analogy, which is principally concerned with specific similarities inherent in two things, or in certain of their



Fig. 13. Palace of the Lions, Hall of the Abencerrajes, muqarnas dome. (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)

characteristics; in the case of allegory, however, correspondences between things are established through saying one thing, or telling one story, by means of another. In the preceding paragraphs, the centrality to the Alhambra, and particularly to the *Riyad al-Sa'id*, of a visual and verbal aesthetic of representation, imitation, and mimesis was argued on the basis of intertextuality between the compositions inscribed on its walls and the poetics articulated by Hazim Qartajanni. We may now note the presence of the Arabic word for “allegory”—*mithāl*—in the earliest corpus of writings that articulate the function of the Alhambra’s verses. It appears in the introductory comments with which the Nasrid sultan and poet Yusuf III (r. 1408–17), grandson of Muhammad V, precedes his rendition of the verses of a *qasida* by Ibn Zamrak chosen to ornament the border of the basin of the Fountain of the

Lions. Yusuf asserts that the verses were placed there as an “allegory” (*mithāl*) of the “bravery” (*ba’s*) and “generosity” (*jūd*) of its patron.<sup>68</sup> In addition to “allegory,” possible translations of *mithāl* include “equal,” “similar,” “simile,” “parable,” “example,” “standard,” “model,” “image,” and “picture.” The concept, therefore, was clearly current among the analytical parlance that educated and literary members of the Nasrid court would be inclined to apply to poetic compositions. The term also contains numerous possible meanings that resonate richly with the aesthetics of mimesis and representation articulated by al-Qartajanni, and an aesthetic that, as I have argued, is likewise dominant in both the verbal and the visual components of the *Riyad al-Sa'id*.

In other words, the designers of the *Riyad al-Sa'id* intended it, as a cosmos-garden whole and as four component gardens, to be comprehended in its various essences in the fashion advocated by al-Qartajanni and then compared and contemplated allegorically in the manner suggested by the possible meanings of the term *mithāl*. Likewise, as I will suggest below, individual architectural and ornamental elements—through the mimetic qualities “conceded” to them by their interpretation in conformity with al-Qartajanni’s theories, through the ability to astound and bewitch accorded them by Ibn al-Khatib’s, through their juxtaposition with the verses, and, finally, through a Nasrid public’s understanding of all of these principles—become elements that “represent” gardens in different keys or idioms that viewers are encouraged to understand and study, one in terms of the others—in short, to allegorize. When taken together, these elements compose, as Ibn al-Khatib states in the rhymed-prose introduction to his treatise on poetry and bewitchment, a “world garden,” which he also associates with the creation of poetry.<sup>69</sup>

The first and third of the *Riyad al-Sa'id*’s four gardens, disposed along the shorter of the two intersecting axes of the patio (see fig. 4), are “real” ones consisting of green plants and fountains, flowers and water. These are the *Rawda*, to the south of the palace (figs. 14 and 15), where the Nasrid sovereigns were buried, and the small garden onto which opens the window, or *mirador*, of Lindaraja (fig. 16). The axis marked by these two gardens is a metaphysical one, embodying such concepts as divinely granted sovereignty and the afterlife. While it is true that from his vantage point in the *Mirador de Lindaraja* the sultan looked out toward the medina of Granada, as Rug-



Fig. 14. Rawda, or Nasrid burial garden. (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)



Fig. 15. Rawda. (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)



Fig. 16. Garden of the Lindaraja, fountain. (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)

gles has observed,<sup>70</sup> I believe that it is just as significant that he did so across the “garden (or *dār*, place, dwelling) of ‘A’isha,” as the etymology of “Lindaraja” indicates. This may constitute an allusion to Muhammad V’s namesake, the Prophet, whose favorite wife was named ‘A’isha.<sup>71</sup> It also links the Rawda, to the palace’s south, to well-known hadiths of the Prophet that ‘A’isha herself transmitted, which are analyzed by Puerta.<sup>72</sup> One such hadith states, “What is between my dwelling [some versions have “chamber” rather than “dwelling”] and my pulpit is one of the gardens of Paradise.”<sup>73</sup> Rather than *rawd* or *rawdā*, the word for “garden” that appears in the hadith is *hawḍ*, defined as a place where water flows and vegetation grows. As Puerta observes, the root clearly exists in close lexical

association with *rawd*, adding to it rich semantic dimensions that those who conceived the palace knew how to exploit creatively. In medieval lexical texts, *hawḍ* is associated with an indentation, basin, or receptacle and with the variety of plants that compose an irrigated garden.<sup>74</sup> It also carries the meaning of “sepulcher.” One hadith speaks specifically of the sepulcher as being “...one of the gardens of Paradise, or one of the abysses of Hell.”<sup>75</sup> The chamber referred to here, situated immediately behind the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, belonged to ‘A’isha and served as the Prophet’s burial place. As observed by Puerta, similarities between the spatial disposition of the Prophet’s tomb and mosque in Medina and that of the Nasrid palace and the Rawda, originally situated between the Riyad al-Sa’id and the Alhambra Mosque built by Muhammad III around 1305, can hardly be accidental.<sup>76</sup>

The Riyad al-Sa’id’s claims to such a lofty and highly charged lineage are made even stronger when recent research by Maribel Fierro into frequent uses in al-Andalus of the *nisba* “al-Ansari” is taken into account.<sup>77</sup> The *nisba* was common in al-Andalus as early as the caliphal period and may initially have referred to the actual *anṣār* (helpers) of the Prophet—members of the southern Yemeni tribes of the Aws and the Khazraj, who traveled with him from Mecca to Medina and settled there, providing him with valuable assistance. For this they were rewarded with the *nisba*, which distinguished them from the northern tribe of the Quraysh. “Al-Ansari” could also be adopted by or applied to those who assisted the Prophet at any moment in history.<sup>78</sup> In addition, it was commonly linked to Sufism, which “probably added to its appeal at a time when Sufis had become a crucial factor in the legitimization of political power.”<sup>79</sup> The Nasrids’ deployment of the prestigious *nisba*, however, appears to have been particularly deliberate. Fierro states that they “not only abundantly used the root *n-ṣ-r* in inscriptions, coins, and poetry”<sup>80</sup> but also specifically claimed an Ansari lineage, presenting themselves as descendants of Sa’d b. ‘Ubada al-Khazrajsari.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, direct allusion to this lineage is made in line 24 of the composition by Ibn Zamrak that surrounds the “Hall of the Two Sisters,” and the stucco “textiles” in which the palace is draped, mentioned in line 13 of the same composition, are explicitly identified as Yemeni. The Ansar are specifically praised in Qur’an 9:100: “And the outstrippers...the first of the emigrants and the helpers (*al-anṣār*), and those who followed them in good

deeds—God will be well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him; and He has prepared for them gardens underneath which rivers flow, therein to dwell forever and ever; that is the mighty triumph.”<sup>82</sup> The Nasrids would appear to have taken this verse particularly to heart.

Just as the first and third gardens are located outside the actual architectural confines of the Riyad al-Sa‘id, their referents are primarily found, as we have seen, not in the verses of Nasrid poets, but in the Qur’an and Hadith. They might thus be conceived as a frame of reference for the second garden, constituted by the patio at the center of the palace and its surrounding pavilions and columns. One of the feminized niches describes the patio before it:

I am not alone: my garden has worked such wonders,  
That no eye before has ever seen its likeness:  
A pavement all of crystal (*ṣarḥ zujāj*), such that he who  
sees it  
Believes it the formidable sea, and is overwhelmed by  
it!<sup>83</sup>

As has been noted, several scholars believe that the patio was originally covered by a white marble pavement,<sup>84</sup> an allusion to the famous shimmering crystal floors of King Solomon’s court (Qur’an 27:44), capable of deceiving—or, as Ibn al-Khatib would doubtless have put it, “bewitching”—the Queen of Sheba into believing she was seeing a smooth pond, and consequently lifting her skirts so as not to soak them as she crossed it. Even if the patio was originally occupied by a quadripartite garden, as the opposing school of thought would have it, the verses urge the viewer toward the realm of astonishment and optical illusion, suggesting that what is perceived to be there—regardless of what actually is there—is a pavement of crystal that quickly transforms itself, before the viewer’s astonished gaze, into a boundless sea.

The Qur’anic associations of this “sea of crystal” suggest comparison with those embodied by the gardens along the north–south axis: while those associations encouraged meditation on the hereafter, these appear to grant license to the “bewitching” power of poetic language by establishing Qur’anic precedent. The “crystal” (or white marble) patio is thus “enabled” by the poem surrounding the “Hall of the Two Sisters” and the Qur’anic “licensing” of its powers to represent a garden—or, alternatively, the quadripartite garden is “licensed” to represent a crystal pavement.

Whichever was the case, both palace and verses play on the idea of the classic Andalusí quadripartite<sup>85</sup> patio divided into sunken gardens with a fountain or pavilion at the center, a typology that, as we now know, was central to late-thirteenth- and fourteenth-century palace architecture, and that may owe much to the inventiveness of Christian architects who adopted and adapted Islamic models.

The fourth garden is found along the east–west axis of the Riyad al-Sa‘id, in the so-called Hall of Justice or Hall of the Kings (see figs. 4 and 12). It is the garden, or embodiment, of earthly knowledge: Ruiz, to whose interpretation of this structure as a madrasa I largely subscribe, has determined that this area of the palace was composed of small rooms for private study; he has also identified spaces that would originally have housed shelves for book storage.<sup>86</sup> Among the principal referents of this interpretation are the many medieval Islamic texts whose titles, and sometimes contents, equate gardens with knowledge. These texts are too numerous to list here, but one of the most relevant is Ibn al-Khatib’s *Rawḍat al-ta‘rīf bi’l-ḥubb al-sharīf* (Garden of Knowledge of Noble Love), which was certainly known to most if not all of those who frequented the Riyad al-Sa‘id.<sup>87</sup>

In addition to its literary and devotional connotations, this area of the palace, in fact, introduces other visual representations certainly intended to be perceived as both images (*taṣāwīr*) and allegories (*mithāl*) of gardens. The first are the famous “Gothic” or “Western-looking” paintings on leather found atop two of the three alcoves that constitute this wing of the palace (figs. 17, a–c and 18, a and b).<sup>88</sup> Against a lush backdrop of tree-filled gardens and white palaces appear scenes of trysts, chess, hunting, jousting, and tribute, featuring a blonde lady in a white dress who fends off the advances of a “Wild Man” while a placid lion on a leash naps peacefully at her feet (fig. 18b). Visual manifestations of poetic tropes culled from the repertoire of verses (stars, fountains, crouching lions, palaces, ladies, etc.), alluded to in a much more abstract visual language elsewhere in the palace’s ornamental program, are present in these “gardens on the ceiling.” It appears that these images—and, indeed, the entire Riyad al-Sa‘id—consciously play with concepts of mimesis and representation.

At the center of the second scene (fig. 17c), for example, is a marble fountain adorned with sculpted (and quite lifelike) figures of nude women, who sustain the upper basin with their raised arms. It pres-



Fig. 17a. “Gothic-style” painting on northern alcove ceiling of the “Hall of Justice,” Palace of the Lions. Tempera on leather. (After Jesús Bermúdez Pareja, *Pinturas sobre piel en la Alhambra de Granada* [Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 1987], 74, pl. 6)



Fig. 17b. “Hall of Justice,” northern alcove ceiling painting (detail of fig. 17a).

ents a striking and deliberate contrast both to the fountain at the center of the patio, adorned by much more abstract lions (see fig. 5), and to that of the Dar ‘A’isha, (onto which one can look from the Mirador de Lindaraja), from which figural sculpture, whether animal or human, lifelike or abstract, is altogether absent (see fig. 16). Though it might easily be assumed that such sculptures as those that adorn the fountain in the painting belonged to the “Western” aesthetic most scholars have chosen to see represented in these images, it would seem that they have a long tradition in the ornamentation of Andalusí gardens. They are, however, associated with the distinctly earthly (and certainly at times earthy) pleasures afforded to patrons and their poets or boon companions in the setting of

a *majlis al-uns* (a social gathering often accompanied by drinking and other forms of pleasure) rather than with the lofty themes articulated along the opposing axis of the Riyad al-Sa‘id.

In an anecdote from the late twelfth century recorded by al-Maqqari, the poet Abu Ja‘far ibn Sa‘id met in a *majlis* with three of his friends, also poets, in one of the gardens of La Zubia, near Granada.<sup>89</sup> Abu Ja‘far was the first to display his poetic dexterity by engaging in the improvised description, or *wasf*, of a fountain placed beside a pond in the midst of the garden’s lush greenery. It featured a sculpture of a dancer, who twirled in the spurting jets of water that, thanks to a marble plate or disk above her head, formed a sort of tent around her.



Fig. 17c. “Hall of Justice,” northern alcove ceiling painting (detail showing fountain). (After Bermúdez Pareja, *Pinturas sobre piel en la Alhambra*, 75, pl. 7)

The movements and actions of the dancer amid the jets of water shot forth by the fountain, characterized first as unsheathed swords, then as abundant rain, are described with great precision.<sup>90</sup> The result is an exercise in poetic mimesis or representation that constitutes a clear predecessor to the sort of description advocated some decades later by al-Qartajanni. It is a far cry from the metaphorical blurring of qualities and identities prized by Taifa poets and patrons, but it evokes an image strikingly similar to the fountain depicted on the ceiling of the “Hall of Justice”: though the surface of the pool is rendered as still, should water be pumped through the upper fountain it would form a crystalline, ceaselessly moving tent around the seductive caryatid figures, just as around Abu Ja‘far’s dancer. Indeed, rather than representing something foreign and visually incomprehensible to a Nasrid audience, these paintings quite

probably contain portrait-like representations of elements of Nasrid gardens—strikingly realistic visual manifestations of poetic likenesses communicated, as al-Qartajanni would put it, in the “most beautiful image” (*aḥsan al-ṣūra*) possible.

In the “Hall of Justice,” these painted ceiling portraits of gardens are alternated—and, if we understand them in terms of the verses from the Tower of the Captive, also juxtaposed, so that correspondences may be established—with muqarnas-vaulted areas, all framed, in the preceding hall-like passageway, by arcades ornamented with naturalistic vegetation (fig. 19, and see fig. 12). This juxtaposition of muqarnas and unmistakably mimetic images participates in the dialogue between the abstract north–south axis and the decidedly more earthy east–west axis.

The strikingly realistic and literal depictions of gardens found on the ceilings of two of the three alcoves of the “Hall of Justice” are also, I would argue, intended to be juxtaposed with other garden representations, also found on ceilings and located along the highly charged north–south axis of the Riyadh al-Sa‘id. These are the stunning muqarnas domes topping the “Hall of the Two Sisters” (fig. 20) and the Hall of the Abencerajes (see fig. 13). While the identification of the subjects of the paintings on leather above the “Hall of Justice” as “gardens on the ceiling” is unmistakable, I realize some may find it difficult to accept that Nasrid poets, kings, and courtiers would actually have seen gardens reflected in muqarnas domes.

They would not have been the first to do so, however. The metaphorical equation of gardens with skies and domes has a long tradition in Andalusī poetry, beginning at least as early as the eleventh century. There is mention, in a mid-eleventh-century *poetica* composed by the Sevillan poet al-Himyari, of an especially dexterous metaphorical comparison that resulted in the “lending” (*isti‘āra*) to the sky of the colors of the garden.<sup>91</sup> Shortly thereafter, in a composition of praise to the ruler of Bougie, in North Africa, by the eleventh-century poet Ibn Hamdis, the suggestion of such a possibility is carried even further, and viewers are assured that as they look upward into the dome of the patron’s palace they “see” trees and birds:

When you gaze at the wonders of its celestial roof,  
You will see a verdant garden.  
You will be astonished by the golden birds that adorn it,  
Circling about, eager to build their nests.<sup>92</sup>



Fig. 18a. “Gothic-style” painting on the southern alcove ceiling of the “Hall of Justice.” Tempera on leather. (After Bermúdez Pareja, *Pinturas sobre piel en la Alhambra*, 80, pl. 13)



Fig. 18b. “Hall of Justice,” southern alcove ceiling painting (detail showing the Lady with the Lion). (After Bermúdez Pareja, *Pinturas sobre piel en la Alhambra*, 81, pl. 15)

While celestial themes have dominated the scholarly readings of these structures,<sup>93</sup> it should be pointed out that diminutive flowers and plants are represented on each of the thousands of facets that compose the domes above the Riyad al-Sa’id’s two principal cham-

bers, hinting at their representative—indeed, their mimetic—potential. As will be remembered, Hazim al-Qartajanni privileged the reflections of both vegetation and starlight in the smooth surface of a body of water as the sights most pleasurable to human eyes,



Fig. 19. Muqarnas covering of the area between alcoves, “Hall of Justice.” (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)



Fig. 20. Muqarnas dome, “Hall of the Two Sisters,” Palace of the Lions. (Photo: courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Sousa)

and it is not a far step from this coupling to their conflation. This would certainly have appealed to the consummate poetic sensibilities of such an audience as the Nasrid court.

Just as the distinct and differentiated bands of ornament that drape the walls of the “Tower of the Captive” demand comparison, the viewer is here urged to compare and consider the relationships between two or even three *ajnās* of visual languages used to represent “gardens on the ceiling.” The allegorical juxtaposition of these two manifestations or images—one astonishingly literal and the other abstract and legible only through the lens of poetic convention—suggests that both embody a single poetic trope. The “Gothic”

paintings follow al-Qartajanni’s dictates, manifesting the concept of a garden in the “most beautiful image” (*aḥsan al-ṣūra*) possible; the muqarnas domes, on the other hand, like the pavement of crystal described in the niche just below them, would require a dose of Ibn al-Khatib’s *ṣihr* for full achievement of perception. In each of these images of “gardens on the ceiling,” this trope is pushed to its furthest possible extent, with both images claiming the mimetic privilege offered by the verses *Ana rawḍun...* “I am a garden...”

To accept this reading, of course, we must assume a great deal of literary knowledge on the part of Nasrid patrons, poets, and members of the public, and I believe that such an assumption is not misplaced. In addition to the striking correspondences between al-Qartajanni’s and Ibn al-Khatib’s theories of poetics and the visual and textual components of the *Riyad al-Sa‘id* explored thus far, the historical nature of the literary consciousness of Nasrid poets is clearly exemplified by Ibn al-Khatib’s reference, in the erudite introduction to his treatise “Witchcraft and Poetry,” to al-Fath ibn al-Khaqan’s twelfth-century compilation of verse, the *Qalā‘id al-‘iqyān* (*Necklaces of Purest Gold*).<sup>94</sup> Indeed, Ibn al-Khatib states that this compilation of verse was held in the highest esteem in fourteenth-century Granada. Thus, Nasrid literatis’ awareness of the trope used by al-Himyari and embellished upon by Ibn Hamdis is practically assured. Likewise, the juxtaposition proposed by these two representations of “gardens on the ceiling” invites viewers to consider the larger question of abstract and literal images or representations (*tasāwīr*).

## SCHOOL OF ETHICS

One of Muhammad V’s most important allies was King Pedro I “el Cruel” of Castile, who was a frequent visitor to the Nasrid court. Muhammad V, during his political troubles, had also spent time at the Christian king’s court in Seville.<sup>95</sup> It is likely that both sovereigns were members of the “Orden de la Banda,” or Order of the Band,<sup>96</sup> founded by Pedro’s father, Alfonso XI of Castile (d. 1351). This was a chivalric order to which, in its earliest days, only Alfonso’s closest noble companions were admitted. According to surviving versions of its statutes, the order attempted to instill in its members the precepts and principles of chivalry—military prowess, expert horsemanship, proper treatment of ladies, generosity, humility, etc. Therefore, we might pose

the question: how much of the signification of the Palace of the Lions would the Nasrid's Christian allies have understood? Not all of it, certainly, but, as I have argued elsewhere, they would have grasped the "Hall of Justice" paintings perfectly.<sup>97</sup> Though medievalists have dismissed these paintings as incomprehensible and hopelessly confused misreadings of "French" Arthurian narratives,<sup>98</sup> while Islamic art historians have deemed them completely irrelevant to the palace's ornamental program because of their "Christian" style,<sup>99</sup> I consider them central to that program.

Two stories drive the narrative of these "gardens on the ceiling": the Castilian versions of *Floire et Blanchefleur* (*Flores y Blancaflor*) and *Tristan and Isolde* (*Tristán de Leonís*).<sup>100</sup> An ornate golden cup is shown perched atop the roof of the palace that serves as the setting for what I have identified as the first scene of these narratives (fig. 17, a and b). In exchange for this object, poor Blanchefleur, the daughter of a captive Christian countess, will be sold into slavery by her beloved's father, the king of Almería, in order to prevent his son from marrying her. The young male protagonist holds a twig that he will drop into the burbling brook at his feet so that his beloved will tryst with him beneath a tree in her husband's garden (a tryst shown on the opposite side of the ceiling), signaling that we may also identify him as Tristán.

On the second ceiling, however, these tales are given endings consonant with their importation into the Nasrid court and adaptation to the tastes of their new patrons (see fig. 18, a and b). Flores (already Muslim) rescues the Christian Blancaflor from the sultan of Egypt but, according to the Castilian version of the tale, is pardoned by the sultan because of the frontier alliance that binds the two men together: Flores has once rescued the sultan from the clutches of his enemies, and this brave deed is not forgotten. In the final scene, a Muslim Tristán triumphs over the "infidel" (in this case, Christian) knight Palomades (as opposed to the more usual French and English spelling of his name, "Palomedes.") Palomades's shield (fig. 21) is thus decorated with three doves (*palomas*), an identifying device also used in contemporary Castilian illustrations of the story (fig. 22). Tristán then rescues Isolde from the tower where the "pagan" Palomades, victim of his own lovesickness and uncontrollable desire, has sequestered her. Even though the Muslims clearly "win," the paintings also address themes of equal interest to the Nasrids and their Christian allies.

Chivalry, horsemanship, and courtly ethics were all written about by Nasrid literati such as Ibn Hudhayl (ca. 1329–99), as well as by Christian writers including Ramon Llull (d. 1315), Alfonso X (b. 1221, r. 1252–84), and Don Juan Manuel (1282–1348).<sup>101</sup> In the series of dense green gardens that form the backdrop to the romances, these themes serve as allegories of frontier alliances between potential enemies and of triumphant if earthly love. Through the telling and retelling of these themes, Nasrid princes and courtiers, and perhaps their allies, might be educated in topics of frontier ethics and courtliness. In addition, these images may be read as manifestations of the first stages of initiation into the Sufi concept of *futuwwa* (chivalry), strikingly similar to the chivalric code to which the Nasrids' Christian allies aspired to adhere.<sup>102</sup> In a treatise on Sufi brotherhoods, al-Suhrawardi<sup>103</sup> lists the virtues expected to characterize their members: mercy, tolerance, putting the interests of others first, humanity, and artistic sensibility. Practicing these virtues, al-Suhrawardi writes, will aid the Sufi in girding his soul for battle against the forces of evil. Sayyid Hossein Nasr notes that initiation into these fraternities took place in stages, with the first phase (known as *muruwwa*) placing great emphasis on the postulant's demonstration of the qualities of repentance, humility, generosity, love of peace, truthfulness, wisdom, ability to give and honor wise counsel, and loyalty.<sup>142</sup> The initiation ceremony involved the ritual dressing of all postulants in belts, and it is to be noted that all figures represented in the ceiling paintings—even the "Wild Man"—wear identical belts.<sup>105</sup> Further bolstering this interpretation, Jennifer Borland, in a forthcoming essay, posits Sufi significance in many of the animals that occupy the paintings' vegetation, suggesting that for both Christians and Muslims these creatures comment on such basic tenets of chivalry as chastity.<sup>106</sup>

Christian articulations of these themes may also have affected their representation on the Nasrid ceilings. Very similar guidelines for the practice of chivalry—identified as the seven Christian virtues—are given by Ramon Llull, who opines that the *cabelle-ro*'s belt represents his chastity; Llull is seconded by Alfonso X and Don Juan Manuel, all of whose writings would have been known to the Nasrids' Castilian Christian allies.<sup>107</sup> Similar but not identical discussions of the chivalric meaning of the noble's hunting and jousting attire and of the caparison of his horse are undertaken by the Nasrid courtier Ibn Hudhayl.<sup>108</sup>



Fig. 21. "Hall of Justice," southern alcove ceiling painting (detail showing Palomades besting the "Wild Man"). (After Bermúdez Pareja, *Pinturas sobre piel en la Alhambra*, 82, pl. 16)

The mimetic "gardens on the ceiling," then, tell stories that would have given the Nasrids and their allies much to discuss and debate in the way of courtly and frontier propriety and etiquette. (Indeed, just such a discussion would appear to be taking place among the group of assembled nobles depicted in the central ceiling painting in the "Hall of Justice.")<sup>109</sup> These images also contain representations of tribute, hunting, man-and-beast combat, and jousting that, according to both Llull and the Castilian version of the Tristan legend, represent the successive honing of the hero's prowess along his path to chivalric and courtly perfection.<sup>110</sup> Functioning as both "representations" (*taṣāwīr*) of well-known personages and scenes from familiar courtly narratives and "allegories" (*mithāl*) of chivalric virtues, the paintings would have been meaningful on a number of levels to all members of the Order of the Scarf, regardless of confessional persuasion. Like-



Fig. 22. Depiction of Palomades, from a fragmentary copy of *Tristán de Leonís*, fifteenth century. Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, ms. 22.644, fols. 353–54, 1, XII. (Photo: courtesy of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid)

wise, in light of Ruiz' suggestions concerning the use for which these spaces were intended, they would have served to indoctrinate younger courtiers in the basic tenets of *cortesía* or *muruwā*.

#### THE FEMINE DIVINE?

One of the least studied and most poorly understood aspects of Nasrid culture is its devotional life.<sup>111</sup> We know that the Nasrids were supporters of the Maliki school of law and interpretation, and that they were assiduous patrons of Sufism, sponsoring large public

celebrations featuring performances of dhikr by local mystics on the *mawlid*, or day of the Prophet's birth.<sup>112</sup> But we do not know what schools of Sufi thought were most popular, what sermons were preached, what books were owned, or what prayers were prayed, nor are we able to say in specific terms how these might have been similar to or different from those preferred by the Marinids of Morocco, the Hafsunids of Tunisia, the Mamluks of Egypt, the principalities of Anatolia, or the Ilkhanids of Iran.

One thing that can be affirmed with a fair amount of certainty, however, is that if mimesis was an intellectual game in the secular realm of Nasrid culture (one that Ibn al-Khatib and other court poets clearly enjoyed playing), it was something else entirely in the religious one, for reasons that had everything to do with the close and continuous contact with Christians and Christianity in which the Nasrids, and Ibn al-Khatib, existed.<sup>113</sup> Key for this discussion is Ibn al-Khatib's often-mentioned but little-studied *Rawdat al-ta'rif*, an encyclopedic and didactic treatise on Sufism. Composed around 1362,<sup>114</sup> it was presented to the Nasrid court during the years that coincided with or immediately preceded the construction of the Riyad al-Sa'id and prior to its author's falling out of favor with Muhammad V and leaving Granada definitively for the Marinid court in 1371. Ibn al-Khatib was proud of his treatise and shared a copy of it with his friend Ibn Khaldun. Though its purported "heresy" later formed a cornerstone of the case against him, most scholars agree that the work presents very little affront to Muslim orthodoxy, and that the charges of heretical content were probably trumped up by Ibn al-Khatib's enemies in order to secure his conviction.<sup>115</sup>

A full analysis of all that Ibn al-Khatib's treatise has to tell us about Sufism in Granada in the fourteenth century is still pending;<sup>116</sup> of particular importance here is his attitude toward images, both poetic and visual. The *Rawdat al-ta'rif* is centered on an ascent by the mystic's soul to the topmost branches of the *shajarat al-hubb* (Tree of Love). This tree is based in the Qur'anic concept<sup>117</sup> of the Universal Tree (*shajarat al-kawn*) and is thus inverted, its roots spreading up into the sky (*Rawdat al-ta'rif*, 1:90).<sup>118</sup> Ibn al-Khatib's tree must sprout from a seed planted in the fertile soil of the devotee's soul (1:42), where it will flourish and grow if its owner is among those who love God (1:101); here the author cites key Qur'anic suras referencing the Virgin (1:102). The soul's voyage is also presented as a journey to both the interior and the top of the

tree (1:116–17), for which it must be transformed into a bird (1:44).<sup>119</sup> Like the turtledove perched on the branch of a banyan tree in a well-known poem by the earlier Andalusí mystic Ibn 'Arabi (1165–1240),<sup>120</sup> Ibn al-Khatib's birds "teach men's souls how to love" (1:365). Individual branches of the tree contain spiritual exercises represented by the harvesting of the tree's fruit (2:454–55, 457), or verses of love poetry filled with lost hearts, burning entrails, and swollen, burning eyelids.<sup>121</sup> Leaves with names like the Leaf of Fear and Reverence (2:652) are likened to the stations or places (*maqām*, *maqāmāt*) that lovers of God must visit as they undertake their voyage toward union with Him (1:153).<sup>122</sup>

The image of the Tree of Love is also important to the process of attaining union proposed by Ibn al-Khatib. In the introductory pages of the treatise he suggests that readers make of this tree a mental *tashbīh*, or similitude (1:101), and the original manuscript was accompanied by sketches of it, probably drawn by Ibn al-Khatib himself.<sup>123</sup> At a later, more advanced stage of the process, however, he admonishes his readers to divest themselves of any attachment to images (*ṣuwār*) in order to pass through the station (*maqām*) of darkness, after which Allah, the Divine Beloved, will be their *jalīs* (boon companion) at a paradisiac soirée of wine and song in a garden shaded by trees (2:500).

For Ibn al-Khatib, in other words, lovers of God, in order to be in His presence, must renounce any visible manifestation of Him and, indeed, all images. At first glance, this might not appear worthy of much comment, but two thirteenth-century Andalusí mystics and poets, Ibn 'Arabi and al-Shushtari, expressed considerable ambivalence concerning the issue. Both Puerta and 'Abd el-Wahab Meddeb have explored Ibn 'Arabi's discussion of the desired creation by the mystic of a mental image designed to serve as a devotional one.<sup>124</sup> Such an image oscillates between likeness (*tashbīh*) and abstraction (*tanzīh*); in the context of an extended analysis of the much-discussed Qur'anic passage, "...there is nothing like Him" / "...nothing is like Him," (Qur'an 42:11), Ibn 'Arabi cautions against adhering too firmly to either immanence or transcendence. He recognizes and respects the importance of images to Christians but firmly advocates this more interiorized, private process of image use in Muslim devotions.<sup>125</sup> Al-Shushtari appears to demonstrate a similarly ambivalent attitude toward representations or images, warning against believing

“everything you see” and counseling would-be lovers of God to beware the deceptive powers of images; nonetheless, both men ultimately affirm the joy brought to the lover’s soul by the sight of the Divine Beloved’s face, when the beloved chooses to manifest Himself in the Garden of Love.

Ibn ‘Arabi also composed a “tree treatise,” entitled *Shajarat al-kawn* (The Tree of Creation), based, like Ibn al-Khatib’s, in the Qur’anic topos of the Universal Tree.<sup>126</sup> While Ibn al-Khatib scrupulously skirts the issue of the tree as a potential incarnation of the divine, Ibn ‘Arabi confronts it directly: his tree functions as a sort of palimpsest, placed within and over the body of the Prophet Muhammad, whose generation from the Universal Tree’s roots represents the seminal moment in the creation of the universe. Muhammad is the *insān al-kāmil*, the perfect man, and the universe takes on the form of his body, which is at the same time that of a beautiful and perfect tree. As observed earlier, Cabanelas has linked Ibn ‘Arabi’s tree to the visual evocations of the theme that he has identified in the wooden ceiling of the Hall of Comares.<sup>127</sup>

Putatively linked to the Iberian “tree texts” discussed above is the cult formed in Nasrid Granada during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries around a shrine dedicated to the tenth-century Sufi martyr, Hallaj.<sup>128</sup> Because of his daring poems and exclamations celebrating the ecstatic union he had achieved through mutual love with his beloved, Allah, Hallaj was mutilated and then hung on a gibbet in Baghdad. Tradition has it that he was crucified; his cross is often referred to as a *jidh*, or stump. In striking contrast to contemporary Persian culture, however,<sup>129</sup> Nasrid Granada did not to my knowledge produce a single image, whether devotional or narrative, of Hallaj or his martyrdom.

While, as I have noted, most of the primary-source research concerning Nasrid devotional life has yet to be done, it seems that the “tree focus” (also shared by Ibn ‘Arabi) is particularly noticeable in al-Andalus. Al-Maqqari, a sixteenth-century historian of the Maghreb, certainly thought so: he describes Ibn al-Khatib’s treatise as “curious” and “unique.” The treatise does, however, have a great deal in common with late medieval Iberian devotional texts and images, both Christian and Jewish, produced during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; these are characterized by the consistent importance of tree and garden motifs, with the trees frequently functioning as embodiments or stand-

ins for divine concepts or personages.<sup>130</sup> For Castilian Christians, as well as for Iberian Muslims and Jews, the figure of the crucified Christ was an intensely problematic one, even if his body was subsumed into the symbolic tree-discourse of holy texts.<sup>131</sup>

The figure of the Virgin, on the other hand, was a much more conciliatory one, at least for Muslims, and the idea of Christ’s mother as a potentially successful conversion tool dates back at least as far as the reign of Alfonso X.<sup>132</sup> This is certainly due at least in part to the inclusion of Jesus among the most revered prophets of Islam and the veneration accorded his mother.<sup>133</sup> Nonetheless, it does seem that the Virgin’s place in the devotional lives of Andalusī Muslims was a particular one. For Ibn ‘Arabi, the Divine Beloved might well choose to represent, or embody, Himself as a female guardian of a woodland sanctuary. Also present among Ibn ‘Arabi’s sacred love lyrics is a female bishop (*usqafa*), as are references to “the pure virgin” (*al-adhrā’, al-batūl*) in a composition thickly sprinkled with words derived from the root *m-s-h*, from which is also derived the Arabic word for “Messiah,” *masīh*.<sup>134</sup> It seems to me that Iberian Christianity and Islam engaged, throughout the late medieval period, in continuous dialogue concerning feminine manifestations of the divine.

Neither of the courtly stories I believe to be represented in the paintings on the ceilings of the Riyad al-Sa‘id’s so-called Hall of Justice fully accounts for the scale and prominence of the Lady, who in the final image clearly has full dominion over the lion at the end of the tether she holds (fig. 18b). Indeed, it is she who might almost be seen as defending the lion, rather than the reverse, from the base and lustful urges of the “Wild Man.” She is representative (or, to state it another way, she is a *mithāl*, or allegory) of something so good and noble that the Nasrid sultans and their courtiers, embodied in the lion (as is made clear by one of the verses inscribed around the basin of the Fountain of the Lions), are content to lie napping gratefully and blissfully at her feet.

Ibn ‘Arabi would have had no trouble whatsoever with this: he equated his Nizam, the Muslim counterpart to Dante’s slightly later Beatrice, with divine light, divine love (from which he does not appear to have exiled the physical), and—as implied by her name—the very order of the universe. Indeed, the *shaykh al-akbar* of Murcia advocated the contemplation by mystics of Woman, given that she represents the most perfect

of all God's creations and is therefore the closest of all of them to divinity:

...And His true witness in Woman is the most perfect and the most complete, for in her is witness to His truth both active (*fā'il*) and passive (*munfa'il*)...the fullness of contemplation of the truth in her, for the truth is not visible in simple, naked material...the vision of Him found in Woman is the most perfect perception that the human being may have of Him...<sup>135</sup>

Ibn 'Arabi claimed, moreover, to have experienced a theophany (*tajallī*) in feminine form.<sup>136</sup> I would suggest that the Lady with the Lion is both a *taṣwīr*, or representation, of a courtly heroine (perhaps Blancaflor or Isolde, or perhaps known to the Nasrids by some other name) and a *mithāl*, or allegory, of the sum total of the courtly virtues whose cultivation is advocated by the ceiling paintings. Their possession, through her taming of the lion, is attributed to the Nasrid dynasty. Her insistent association with palaces, likewise, may represent yet another way of proclaiming Nasrid nobility, given their frequent feminization in Arabic poetry and particularly in the poetic corpus inscribed on the walls, fountains, and niches of the Alhambra.<sup>137</sup> I believe that she is also a *taṣwīr* of, as Ibn 'Arabi would have worded it, "the vision of Him found in Woman...the most perfect perception that the human being may have of Him." It is logical that her mimetic representation is confined to the mundane, east-west axis of the Riyad al-Sa'id, and to an image system connected, not to the highest stations, or *maqāmāt*, of Sufi enlightenment (the attainment of which required, as Ibn al-Khatib stipulated, that all images must be abandoned and the state of darkness traversed), but to its earliest phases of initiation.

If the fourteenth century is problematic with regard to the specifics of Nasrid religious preferences and practices, the fifteenth century is even more of an unknown. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that it was impacted by the devotional life of the Christian kingdom of Castile, which, until the monastic reforms carried out by Queen Isabel (r. 1474–1504) and such formidable ecclesiastical counselors as Cardinal Cisneros (d. 1517), was heavily weighted toward the Virgin in her most regal aspects and reticent before the image of her suffering son.<sup>138</sup> Even when more "traditional" Passion devotions began, in the final quarter of the fifteenth century, to make their way into the lives of Castilian Christians, it was always through the eyes of the Virgin that devotees approached these themes,

and the triumph of the Resurrection—or of the Virgin's crowning—often overshadowed the suffering. It can be no accident that mass-produced plaster statues of the standing Virgin, crowned as the Queen of Heaven and holding her infant son in her arms, were destined, in the early sixteenth century, for all of the parishes of Granada's Albaicín, a formerly Muslim *barrio* now full of recent or potential converts to Christianity.<sup>139</sup> Just such an image would have occupied the niche on the upper part of the façade of the Alhambra's post-conquest church, dedicated to the Virgin. Ecclesiastics appear to have had great confidence in the efficacy of these standing Virgins, as opposed to images of Christ, which did not serve them well as conversionary tools. Indeed, the son and daughter of the last Muslim sultan of Granada, favorite protégées of Queen Isabel once their father had been deposed and they had been converted to Christianity, chose the Capilla Mayor of the Jeronymite convent church of Santa María del Prado (Holy Mary of the Fields), in Valladolid, as their final resting place, where they would sleep for all eternity in the protection of a miraculous image of the Virgin housed in the monastery.<sup>140</sup> One wonders if the *taṣwīr* of the regal Lady with the Lion might have had something to do with this.

*Department of History of Art and Visual Studies  
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY*

## NOTES

*Author's note:* This essay is dedicated to Oleg Grabar in gratitude for his scholarship, mentorship, and friendship. Though we have managed to visit the Aljafería in Zaragoza together, we have yet to make it to the Alhambra *ensemble—un de ces jours, in shā' Allāh.*

1. Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).
2. See below, nn. 26–28.
3. The Palace of the Myrtles was built during the first decades of the fourteenth century, while the Palace of the Lions was constructed between 1365 and 1390. In the interest of saving space, I will not be rehearsing the basic history of the Alhambra, given that it has been succinctly summarized, in English, in Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978; rev. ed. Sabastopol, CA: Solipsist Press, 1992), and, in Spanish, in José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, *Los códigos de utopía de la Alhambra de Granada* (Granada: Diputación Provincial de Granada, 1990). I will often be referring to the Spanish translation of Grabar's book, *La Alhambra: Iconografía, formas y valores*, trans. José Luís López Muñoz (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1980; 7th repr., 1996). As almost all of the authors I will be citing have observed, the names currently used to refer to the various spaces that

- make up the Alhambra complex originated in the nineteenth century, rather than in the thirteenth or fourteenth; I make use of some of them here merely for convenience.
4. Indeed, the textile industry was closely linked to Nasrid royal identity and agenda; it is logical that it should be incorporated into an architectural statement about dynastic power: see Carmen Trillo San José, "Las actividades económicas y las estructuras sociales," in *Historia del Reino de Granada*, ed. Rafael G. Peinado Santaella, 3 vols. (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2002), 1:323–30.
  5. A cosmological reading has been proposed for this space, based in what most see as a representation of the seven heavens found on the ceiling. Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 118–19; idem, *La Alhambra*, 142–43), cites Bargebuhr and Nykl as predecessors for the idea that the sura *al-Mulk* (Qur'an 67) is integral to the inscription program of the Hall of Comares. Darío Cabanelas, *El techo del Salón de Comares en la Alhambra: Decoración, policromía, simbolismo y etimología* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 1988), identifies, among the celestial bodies represented on the Comares ceiling, the Qur'anic Lotus Tree of the Boundary (Qur'an 53:14), from beneath which flow the four rivers of Paradise. Valérie Gonzales has vigorously challenged the "representational" qualities that previous scholars have seen in this ceiling; see her *Beauty and Islam: Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2001), esp. 45–50. I am in agreement with the interpretations of both Grabar and Cabanelas and believe that Gonzales's difficulties with these theories lie principally in her implicitly Western understanding of terms such as "image," "representation," and "likeness." As I will elucidate below, the Arabic equivalents of these terms (*ṣūra*, *taṣwīr*, *taṣawwūr* and *mithāl*) are precisely those that educated members of the Alhambra's public during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries would have used when discussing the poems inscribed on the palace walls. It is my contention that they would have considered these terms applicable to the visual realm of analysis as well. See also my review of Gonzales's book in *Ars Orientalis* 32 (2003), 266–70.
  6. These rooms have received a dizzying variety of interpretations of their intended function: see Grabar, *The Alhambra*; Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, "El Palacio de los Leones de la Alhambra: ¿Madrasa, zawiya y tumba de Muhammad V? Estudio para un debate," *Al-Qantara* 22, 1 (2001): 77–120; Robert Irwin, *The Alhambra* (London: Profile, 2004).
  7. Grabar, *The Alhambra*; D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); D. Fairchild Ruggles, "The Eye of Sovereignty: Poetry and Vision in the Alhambra's Lindaraja Mirador," *Gesta* 36, 2 (1997): 180–89.
  8. Ruggles, "Eye of Sovereignty," 180–81, citing Manuel Gómez Moreno, as reported by James Dickie, "The Islamic Garden in Spain," in *The Islamic Garden*, ed. E. MacDougall and R. Ettinghausen (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1979), 100.
  9. This possibility is revisited—convincingly, in my opinion—by Ruiz, "El Palacio de los Leones," citing Enrique Nuere Matauco, "Sobre el pavimento del Patio de los Leones," *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 22 (1986): 87–93.
  10. Indeed, this association might have been made regardless of the original appearance of the central patio. As José Miguel Puerta has observed (José Miguel Puerta Vílchez, "El vocabulario estético de los poemas de la Alhambra," in *Pensar la Alhambra*, ed. J. A. González Alcantud and A. Malpica Cuello [Granada, 2001], 69–87), the verses inscribed in the niches that precede the Mirador de Lindaraja include direct reference to Solomon's wondrous crystal palace (*ṣarḥ al-zujāj*). Puerta notes that the same observation was made in 1859 by Lafuente Alcantara.
  11. Grabar, *La Alhambra*, 159–66.
  12. The Nasrids were in close and continued interaction with this court. See Rachel Arié, *El reino nasrī de Granada (1232–1492)*, trans. Jesús Cantero (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992), 44–45, and María Jesús Viguera Molins, *El reino nazarī de Granada (1232–1492): Historia de España* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 2000), 50–55.
  13. Ruiz, "El Palacio de los Leones"; Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, "El Patio del Vergel del Real Monasterio de Santa Clara de Tordesillas y la Alhambra de Granada: Reflexiones para su estudio," *Al-Qantara* 20 (1998): 61–81.
  14. Both Irwin, *Alhambra*, and Ruiz, "El Palacio de los Leones," give comprehensive historical and historiographical summaries with bibliography.
  15. Much interesting work has been done on this issue in the relatively recent past. See, among many possibilities, Tonia Raquejo, *El palacio encantado* (Madrid: Taurus Humanidades, 1989); Delfin Rodríguez Ruiz, *La memoria fragil: Jose de Hermsilla y "Las antigüedades árabes de España"* (Madrid: Fundación Cultural COAM and Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Madrid, 1992); and John Sweetman, "Introduction," in Girault de Prangey, *Impressions of Granada and the Alhambra* (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing Limited, 1996); many thanks to Anne-Marie Hallal for sharing these citations with me.
  16. Ruiz, "El Palacio de los Leones," 77–79; see also my review of Irwin, *Alhambra*, in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 125, 3 (2005): 457–60.
  17. See, for example, comments made by Gülru Necipoğlu in *The Topkapı Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture: Topkapı Palace Museum Library MS H. 1956* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995), 102, 172. I do not mean to single out Necipoğlu here; similar comments are made by other scholars too numerous to mention. I merely wish to draw attention to the striking contrast between the general tenor of her publication—interdisciplinary, questioning, probing, thoughtful—and the seemingly automatic characterization of the Alhambra as irrelevant to the cutting edge of Islamic aesthetics and culture in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which, in my opinion, exemplifies such assumptions in our field.
  18. Irwin, *Alhambra*, 71.
  19. Irwin, *Alhambra*, chap. 2, "Poisoned Paradise," 69–99.
  20. Irwin, *Alhambra*, 99.
  21. For monographic works on the poems inscribed on the palace's walls see Emilio García Gómez, *Poemas árabes en los muros y fuentes de la Alhambra* (Madrid: Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid, 1985; 2nd ed., 1996); Emilio García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz sobre la Alhambra: Desde*

- un texto de Ibn al-Jatib en 1362 (Madrid: Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid, 1988); María Jesús Rubiera Mata, *Ibn al-Jayyāb, el otro poeta de la Alhambra* (Granada: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de cultura y medio ambiente: Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 1984); María Jesús Rubiera Mata, "Los poemas epigráficos en Ibn Yāyyāb en la Alhambra," *Al-Andalus* 25 (1970): 453–73; María Jesús Rubiera Mata, "De nuevo sobre los poemas epigráficos de la Alhambra," *Al-Andalus* 41 (1976): 207–11. On literature at the Nasrid court see Celia del Moral, "La literatura en el periodo nazarí," in *Estudios Nazaríes*, ed. Concepción Castillo Castillo (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1997), 29–83, an extremely useful overview and the starting point for further research into the theme. A slightly more interpretive approach is adopted in Rubiera Mata, *Ibn al-Jayyāb*. See also Jorge Lirola, "Ibn al-Jatib," in *Diccionario de autores y obras andalusíes*, ed. J. Lirola Delgado and J. M. Puerta Vilchez (Granada: El Legado Andalusi, 2002), 643–98, for an exhaustive discussion of the career and literary production of that prolific minister, poet, historian, and Sufi. Only a tiny percentage of Ibn al-Khatib's oeuvre has been translated into any European language; what translations do exist are almost all in Spanish. Puerta is by far the most prolific author in terms of careful analysis of these themes; he is, however, primarily a literary historian rather than an art historian. See Puerta, *Los códigos de utopía*; José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe: Al-Andalus y la estética árabe clásica* (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1997); José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, "La cultura y la creación artística," in *Historia del Reino de Granada*, 1:349–413; Puerta, "El vocabulario estético."
22. This issue was brought to the forefront of the discourse on Islamic art by Oleg Grabar in *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), where Grabar's discomfort with the idea of an association between specific ornamental motifs and specific referents was apparent. Nevertheless, concern with context and cultural factors in the interpretation of Islamic ornamental languages characterizes such subsequent works as Necipoğlu, *Topkapı Scroll*, and Yasser Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art during the Sunni Revival* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001); the introductory chapters of both Necipoğlu's and Tabbaa's studies offer concise and incisive observations on the historiography of the problem. On the other hand, Gonzalez, in *Beauty and Islam*, takes a universalizing approach emblematic of much earlier scholarship: written sources are taken into account, but their criteria of selection do not include a demonstrable relevance to cultural life at the Nasrid court during the mid-fourteenth century. Also key to any discussion of aesthetics in medieval Islamic culture in al-Andalus is Puerta, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe*. Finally, Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song: The Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005–1135 A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), offers an extensive contextual interpretation of the ornamental program of Zaragoza's Aljafería as it existed under the Banu Hud.
  23. Ḥāzīm ibn Muḥammad al-Qartajānī, *Minhāj al-bulaghā' wa sirāj al-udabā'*, ed. Ibn al-Jūja (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1986).
  24. Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Rawḍat al-ta'rif bi'l-ḥubb al-sharīf*, 2 vols., ed. M. Kattānī (Casablanca: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1970); idem, *al-Sihr wa 'l-shī'r*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl Chabana and Ibrāhīm Muḥammad Hasan Jamāl (Cairo: Dār al-Faḍīla, 1999); see also Lirola, "Ibn al-Jatib."
  25. Grabar, *La Alhambra*, 142–44.
  26. Puerta, *Los códigos de utopía*.
  27. Principally disputed by Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam*, 49–60; Gonzalez also discounts the importance of the actual content of the verses inscribed on the palace's walls, an importance clearly demonstrated by Puerta: see esp. his *Los códigos de utopía; Historia del pensamiento estético árabe*; and "El vocabulario estético."
  28. Such allusions are present in most scholarship on the palace prior to the publications of Ruggles (*Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*; "Eye of Sovereignty") and are reclaimed by Puerta in primarily literary terms in "El vocabulario estético."
  29. See Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on an Unwieldy Field," *Art Bulletin* 85, 1 (2003): 152–84, and Tabbaa, *Sunni Revival*, introduction.
  30. Puerta, *Los códigos de utopía; Historia del pensamiento estético árabe*; "La cultura"; and "El vocabulario estético"; Ruiz, "El Palacio de los Leones."
  31. On personification see also Ruggles, "Eye of Sovereignty."
  32. Puerta, *Los códigos de utopía*.
  33. Such negative "quality judgments" are frequent, for example, in the short introductory remarks with which García Gómez precedes his edition and Spanish translation of each of the Alhambra's poems: see García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*.
  34. On Taifa poetics see Robinson, *In Praise of Song*. It is a bit more difficult to compare Nasrid poetics to those that typified the Almoravid and Almohad periods, given the lack of interpretive studies on their literature carried out to date.
  35. Ruiz, "El Palacio de los Leones."
  36. On the importance of Sufism in Nasrid culture see Puerta, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe*, 720–37 and 744–806, and idem, "La cultura." See also Maribel Fierro, "Opposition to Sufism in al-Andalus," in *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, ed. Frederick de Jong and Bernd Radtke (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999), 174–206, esp. 197–205; and idem, "The Ansāris, Nasr al-Dīn and the Naṣrīds in al-Andalus," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 31 (2006): 232–49.
  37. On this issue see Darío Cabanelas, "La Madraza árabe de Granada y su suerte en época cristiana," *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 24 (1988): 29–54; idem, *Universidad y ciudad: La universidad en la historia y la cultura de Granada* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1994); Virgilio Martínez Enamorado, *Epigrafía y Poder: Inscripciones árabes de la Madrasa al-Yadīda de Ceuta* (Ceuta: Museo de Ceuta, 1998); George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981); Luis Seco de Lucena Paredes, "El hayib Ridwan, la madraza de Granada y las murallas de Albayzín," *Al-Andalus* 21 (1956): 285–96.
  38. Ruiz, "El Palacio de los Leones," 86–89, esp. 87; on the shrine of Abu Madyan see Sheila S. Blair, "Sufi Saints and Shrine Architecture in the Early Fourteenth Century," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990): 35–49. Ruiz's arguments are principally formal, suggesting that the Maghrebi madrasas he mentions served as *physical* prototypes (and, possibly, of course, as inspiration

- in the larger sense) for the Palace of the Lions, also noting the extensive and numerous opportunities that Muhammad V and his minister Ibn al-Khatib would have had, during the period they spent as guests of or refugees at the Marinid court, to visit such structures.
39. Earlier scholarship did its best to downplay this aspect of the minister's personality. See Lirola, "Ibn al-Jaṭīb," and also Emilio García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz*, and Santiago Simón, *El polígrafo granadino*. Lirola and Santiago Simón offer extensive further bibliography on the debate over Ibn al-Khatib's "sincerity" as a Sufi.
  40. Ruiz, "El Palacio de los Leones."
  41. See Fierro, "The Ansāris," and idem, "Opposition to Sufism"; see also Ethel Sara Wolper, *Cities and Saints: Sufism and the Transformation of Urban Space in Medieval Anatolia* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).
  42. Argued particularly by Ruggles in "Eye of Sovereignty" and *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*.
  43. Puerta, "El vocabulario estético," 8 n. 12. The title was used by Yusuf III in his diwan of Ibn Zamrak; see Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf Ibn Zamrak, *Dīwān Ibn Zamrak al-Andalusī*, ed. Muḥammad Tawfiq Nayfar (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1997), 124 (citation from Puerta, "El vocabulario estético"). Puerta also notes that the term *rawḍa* was used interchangeably with its plural, *riyād*, in al-Andalus and particularly in Granada: see García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 51 (citation in Puerta, "El vocabulario estético").
  44. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, no. 14, 115–19; my English translation, with consultation of García Gómez's and Puerta's Spanish translations. This also applies to all other translations here, unless otherwise noted.
  45. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, no. 17, 124ff.
  46. Ibid.
  47. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, no. 13, 111–13.
  48. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, no. 14, 115–19.
  49. The Qur'anic evocations of Paradise as a garden are numerous. Among them are Qur'an 9:81, 26:85, 56:11, 56:89, 70:36, and 76:20. Puerta ("El vocabulario estético," 8 n. 11) also notes that Qur'an 36:34 appears in the northwest corner of the Generalife's Patio de la Acequia.
  50. Lirola, "Ibn al-Jaṭīb."
  51. Robinson, *In Praise of Song*.
  52. Ibn Hasday, late eleventh century, in al-Faṭḥ b. Muḥammad Ibn Khāqān, *Qalā'id al-'iḡyān wa maḥāsin al-a'yān*, ed. Muḥammad al-Tāhīr Ibn 'Ashūr (Tunis: al-Dār al Tūnisiyya lil-Nashr bi 'l-ta'awun ma'a Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa 'l-'lām, 1990), 442; translation in Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, 173–74.
  53. *Badī'* refers to a particular poetics based in metaphor that was coined in Baghdad during the late Abbasid period; for its initial reception in al-Andalus see Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, pt. 1, where ample bibliography is offered. The use of the term here might refer specifically to the poetics or, more generally, to metaphor.
  54. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, no. 24, 141–42.
  55. Originally, of course, the stucco ornament would have been painted and its jewellike qualities therefore heightened.
  56. On Nasrid textiles see Jerrilyn Dodds, ed., *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), nos. 99 and 100, 338–41; Florence Lewis May, *Silk Textiles of Spain: Eighth to Fifteenth Century* (New York: Hispanic Society of America, 1957); Cristina Partearroyo Lacaba, *La seda en España: Leyenda, poder y realidad* (Tarrasa: Museo Textil de Tarrasa, 1991); Cristina Partearroyo Lacaba, "Spanish-Moslem Textile," *Bulletin de liaison du Centre international d'étude des textiles anciens* 45, 1 (1977): 78–85; Anne E. Wardwell, "Panni tartarici: Eastern Islamic Silks Woven with Gold and Silver (13th and 14th Centuries)," *Islamic Art* 3 (1988–89): 95–173; Anne E. Wardwell, "A Fifteenth-Century Silk Curtain from Muslim Spain," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 70, 2 (1983): 58–72.
  57. Hāzīm b. Muḥammad al-Qartājannī, *Minhāj al-bulaghā' wa sirāj al-udabā'* (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1986).
  58. Puerta, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe*, 360–406, esp. 396, dedicates an extremely useful chapter to al-Qartājannī; he revisits the theme in "El vocabulario estético," 77.
  59. See Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, 146–66.
  60. *Minhāj al-bulaghā'*, 127–28; citation in Puerta, "El vocabulario estético," 77.
  61. Ruggles, "Eye of Sovereignty."
  62. Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, 48–53; 64–87; 176–226.
  63. Personal communication with José Miguel Puerta Vilchez.
  64. Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Sihr wa 'l-shi'r*, 49–55.
  65. Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, 53–64.
  66. Puerta, "El vocabulario estético," 70–72; 74.
  67. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, no. 14, 115–19.
  68. Puerta, "El vocabulario estético," 71 n. 3, citing Ibn Zamrak, *Dīwān*, 129.
  69. Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Sihr wa 'l-shi'r*, 49–55.
  70. Ruggles, "Eye of Sovereignty."
  71. The comparison is further cemented by lines from a qasida by Ibn Zamrak originally inscribed on the walls of the southern complex bordering the central pool in the Palace of the Myrtles (but now lost, due to the significant alterations in the structure over the centuries): "This dwelling is a garden of immortality, where we find, joined to such delights / an array of moist foliage amidst shade, along with springs of sweet, fresh water" (Ibn Zumruk, *Dīwān*, 156; verses 1 and 2, cited in Puerta, "El vocabulario estético," 78); and "Here is the garden of delight, radiant with splendor that no host would leave / My arabesques mirror the roses of my garden, and my whiteness matches the countenance of dawn" (Ibn Zumruk, *Dīwān*, 157; verses 1 and 2, cited in Puerta, "El vocabulario estético," 78).
  72. Puerta, "El vocabulario estético," 78–80.
  73. Muslim b. al-Hajjāj, *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, 2 vols. in 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Jil; Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadida, n.d.), 4:123, s.v. *al-hayy*; citation in Puerta, "El vocabulario estético," 80–81.
  74. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 6 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1981), s.v. *rud*.
  75. Muḥammad b. 'Īsā Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, in *Mawsū'at al-Ḥadīth al-sharīf: al-Kutub al-tis'a* (2nd version) (Kuwait, Cairo, Riyadh: Sajr, 1991–97), no. 2384; "My throne stands near one of the gates of Paradise, and what lies between my throne and my chamber is one of the gardens of Paradise": Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, in *Mawsū'at al-Ḥadīth*, no. 8970.
  76. Interestingly, a similar interpretation of the Great Mosque of Cordoba during the tenth century has been offered; thus,

- the concept and desire for such associations would already have been present in al-Andalus. See Nuha N. Khoury, "The Meaning of the Great Mosque of Cordoba in the Tenth Century," *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 80–98.
77. Fierro, "The Anṣārīs, Naṣr al-Dīn and the Naṣrīds"; I would like to thank Professor Fierro for sharing an offprint of her article with me.
  78. *Ibid.*, 241.
  79. *Ibid.*, 247, and Fierro, "Opposition to Sufism," 197–205.
  80. *Ibid.*, 245 and n. 61.
  81. *Ibid.* and nn. 59 and 62.
  82. *Ibid.*, 237 and n. 32.
  83. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, no. 16, 122–23.
  84. See above, n. 7.
  85. On the quadripartite garden in al-Andalus see Antonio Almagro Gorbea, "El Patio del Crucero de los Reales Alcázares de Sevilla," *Al-Qantara* 20, 2 (1999): 331–76; he also posits the importance of Castilian Christian, or Mudejar, prototypes in its development: *idem*, "Los Palacios de tradición andalusí en la Corona de Castilla," in *Actas del Simposio Internacional "El Legado de al-Andalus: El arte andalusí en los reinos de León y Castilla durante la Edad Media"*, coord. and ed. Manuel Valdés Fernández (Valladolid: Fundación del Patrimonio Histórico de Castilla y León, 2007), 243–82.
  86. Ruiz, "El Palacio de los Leones."
  87. Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Rawdat*; Lirola, "Ibn al-Jaṭīb."
  88. On these paintings see Jerrilynn D. Dodds, "Paintings in the Sala de Justicia of the Alhambra: Iconography and Iconology," *The Art Bulletin* 61 (June 1979): 186–97; Gonzales, *Beauty and Islam*, 47; Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 80–83; and Cynthia Robinson, "Narrative and Nasrid Courtly Self-Fashioning in the Sala de Justicia Ceiling Paintings," in *Arthur in the Alhambra*, ed. Cynthia Robinson and Simone Pinet, special edition of *Medieval Encounters* 14, 2–3 (Nov.–Dec. 2008: 175–98).
  89. This anecdote was brought to my attention in a presentation entitled "Jardines y fuentes a través de la poesía andalusí," given by Celia del Moral as part of "La Ciudad en el Occidente Islámico Medieval: Nuevas aportaciones de la arqueología y relectura de fuentes," in the conference "Jardines de al-Andalus," held in Granada April 27–30, 2005, and directed by Julio Navarro Palazón. The anecdote is found in Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭīb min ghusn al-Andalus al-raṭīb*, ed., Iḥsān ʿAbbās, 8 vols. (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1968), 3:497–99, and is translated into Spanish in Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn Saʿīd, *Abū Yāʿfar ibn Saʿīd: Un poeta granadino del siglo XII*, ed. Celia del Moral (Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 1997), 40–41.
  90. *Ibid.*
  91. Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, 97.
  92. *Ibid.*, 200–202 for translation; Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, *Analectes sur l'histoire et la littérature des Arabes d'Espagne*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Reinhart Pieter Anne Dozy (Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1967), 1:322–23.
  93. See Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 144–54.
  94. Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Al-Siḥr wa ʿl-shiʿr*, 65–66.
  95. See Lirola, "Ibn al-Jaṭīb."
  96. See the essay by Ana Echevarria, "Muhammad V, Peter I and the Order of the Scarf," in Robinson and Pinet, *Arthur in the Alhambra*. According to this author's recent findings, in "Painting Politics in the Alhambra," *Medieval Encounters* 14, 2–3: 199–218, "Orden de la Banda" should be translated as "Order of the Band."
  97. Robinson, "Narrative and Nasrid Courtly Self-Fashioning."
  98. Dodds, "Paintings in the Sala de Justicia."
  99. Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam*, 47.
  100. The following paragraph is a summary of some of the arguments developed in much greater detail in Robinson, "Narrative and Nasrid Courtly Self-Fashioning."
  101. ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Hudhayl, *Maqālāt al-udabāʾ wa munāzarāt al-nujabāʾ* ed. Muḥammad Adīb al-Jādir (Damascus: Dār al-Bashāʿir, 2002); *idem*, *Tuḥfat al-anfus wa shiʿr sukkān al-Andalus = La parure des cavaliers et l'insigne des preux [par] ʿAlī ben ʿAbderrahman ben Hodeil el Andalusy. Traduction française précédée d'une étude sur les sources des hippocrates arabes et accompagnée d'appendices critiques sur l'histoire du pur-sang, de l'équitation et des sports hippiques arabes, en Maghreb et en Orient, par Louis Mercier* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1924); *idem*, *Tuḥfat al-anfus wa shiʿr sukkān al-Andalus*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad Nabḥān, Muḥammad Fāṭih Sāliḥ Zaghāl (Al-ʿAyn: Markaz Zāyid lil-Turāth wa ʿl-Tārīkh, 2004); *idem*, *Hilyat al-fursān wa shiʿr al-shujʿān*; comp. and ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ghanī Ḥasan (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif lil-Ṭibāʾa wa ʿl-Naṣhr, 1951); Ramon Llull, *Libro de la orden de caballería, nota preliminar y traducción de Luis Alberto de Cuenca* (Madrid: Alianza, 2000); Luís Alberto de Cuenca, ed., *Floresta Española de varia caballería: Raimondo Lutio, Alfonso X, Don Juan Manuel* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1975).
  102. This idea was first suggested to me by Jessica Streit in a seminar paper titled "Knights, Ladies, and Mystics: The Paintings in the Alhambra's Sala de Justicia," written for a class I taught at the University of New Mexico in the spring semester of 2003. I am grateful to her for allowing me to cite it here.
  103. Excerpts from Shihāb al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad Suhrawardī, "Treatise on *Futuwwat*," in *Windows on the House of Islam: Muslim Sources on Spirituality and Religious Life*, ed. John Renard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), esp. 235–40. While Ibn al-Khaṭīb, fearing for the orthodoxy of his treatise, did not specifically cite al-Suhrawardī in the *Rawdat al-taʿrīf*, numerous scholars have identified al-Suhrawardī's writings as among its most likely sources. See Lirola, "Ibn al-Jaṭīb," 688.
  104. Sayyid Hossein Nasr, ed., *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations* (New York: Crossword, 1991), 309.
  105. Again, I am grateful to Jessica Streit for this observation.
  106. See Jennifer Borland, "Marginal Realms, Peripheral Visions: The "Outer Space" of the Alhambra Ceilings," in Pinet and Robinson, *Arthur in the Alhambra*, 303–40.
  107. Llull, *Libro de la orden de caballería*; Luís Alberto de Cuenca, *Floresta Española de varia caballería*.
  108. Ibn Hudhayl, *Tuḥfat al-anfus wa shiʿr sukkān al-Andalus = La parure des cavaliers et l'insigne des preux*.
  109. These figures have frequently (albeit incorrectly, I believe) been interpreted as a Nasrid dynastic group portrait: see Pinet and Robinson, *Arthur in the Alhambra*, 175–98.
  110. See Robinson, "Arthur in the Alhambra? Narrative and Nasrid Courtly Self-Fashioning."
  111. Virtually no mention is made of the Nasrid kingdom's religious life, for example, by Rachel Arié, *España musulmana* (sig-

- los VIII–XV), 1st ed., 16th printing (Barcelona: Labor, 1994); Cabanelas, *El techo del Salón de Comares*; Darío Cabanelas, *Literatura, arte y religión en los palacios de la Alhambra* (Granada: Academia Universo de Granada, 1984); Lirola, "Ibn al-Jatīb"; Angus Mackay, "Religion, Culture, and Ideology in Late Medieval Castilian-Granadan Frontier Societies," in *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Puerta, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe*, or Puerta, "La cultura"; a comprehensive study on the subject is still lacking.
112. García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz*, introduction.
113. Cynthia Robinson, "Trees of Love, Trees of Knowledge: Toward the Definition of a Cross-Confessional Current in Late Medieval Iberian Spirituality," in *Interrogating Iberian Frontiers: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach to Mudéjar History, Religion, Art and Literature*, ed. María Feliciano, Cynthia Robinson, and Leyla Rouhi, special edition of *Medieval Encounters* 12, 3 (Dec. 2006): 388–435.
114. Lirola, "Ibn al-Jatīb," 652.
115. *Ibid.*, 654.
116. In the meantime, consult M. Kattani's introduction to *Rawdat al-ta'rif*; Cynthia Robinson, "Les Lieux de la Lyrique: L'incarnationisme dans la lyrique mystique andalouse," in *L'Éspace lyrique méditerranéen au Moyen Âge: Nouvelles approches*, ed. Dominique Billy, François Clément, and Annie Combes (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2006), 157–86; Robinson, "Trees of Love"; and Santiago Simón, *El polígrafo granadino*.
117. Ibn al-Khatīb, *Rawdat*, 1:125; further specific citations in this section will be given in parentheses in the main text, with volume number preceding page number.
118. Its branches, however, also reach and fill the sky.
119. This concept finds numerous resonances in contemporary Jewish and Christian devotional images and thought: see Robinson, "Trees of Love."
120. For example, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī, *Tarjumān al-ashwāq* (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1998), 171.
121. See Ibn al-Khatīb, *El polígrafo granadino*, for a thorough discussion of the treatise's organization; see Robinson, "Lieux de la Lyrique," for a discussion of some of the verses.
122. 2:662; leaves are placed along branches such as the one called "From Knowledge to the Manifestation of the Beloved."
123. The drawings of a "sacred tree" are mentioned in M. Kattani's introduction to Ibn al-Khatīb, *Rawdat*, as being present in manuscript copies of the *Rawdat* housed today in Istanbul; I have not yet been able to view them.
124. Puerta, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe*, 744–805, esp. 797–99; ʿAbdelwahab Meddeb, "La imagen y lo invisible: Ibn ʿArabī, Estéticas," in *Los dos horizontes: Textos sobre Ibn al-ʿArabī* (Murcia: Editora Regional, 1992), 259–69.
125. For some of Ibn ʿArabī's views on the question of images in a Christian context see Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, 4 vols., ed. Ahmad Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999), 1:337–43.
126. Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī, *Shajarat al-kawn = L'arbre du monde*, ed. and trans. M. Gloton (Paris: Les Deux Océans, 1998).
127. Cabanelas, *Salón de Comares*, and above, nn. 5, 37, and 111.
128. For Hallaj in general see Herbert Mason, "Hallaj: A Martyr for Truth," *Boston University Journal* 21, 3 (1971); Husayn ibn Mansūr al-Hallāj, *Akhbār al-Hallāj: Recueil d'oraisons et d'exhortations du martyr mystique de l'Islam*, annot. and trans. Louis Massignon, 3rd ed. (Paris: Libr. philosophique Vrin, 1957); Louis Massignon, *La Passion de Husayn ibn Mansur Hallāj: Martyre mystique de l'Islam, exécuté à Bagdad le 26 mars 922: Étude d'histoire religieuse*, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); Samah Selim, "Mansur al-Hallaj and the Poetry of Ecstasy," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 21, 1 (1990): 26–42. For the cult of Hallaj in Granada and in al-Andalus in general see Massignon, *La Passion de Hallāj*, 2:324–52; Ibn al-Khatīb, *El polígrafo granadino*, esp. 24–32. He is mentioned and quoted on several occasions in Ibn al-Khatīb's *Rawdat*, as well as numerous times by Ibn ʿArabī throughout his oeuvre.
129. See Massignon, *La Passion de Hallāj*, 1: pls. XIIIa and XIIIb for representations of Hallaj's martyrdom in manuscripts of Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-āthār al-bāqīyya*, in Edinburgh University Library (ms. OR 161, dated 707 [1307], fol. 113r), and in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (ms. arabe 1489, dated to the seventeenth century, fol. 113r).
130. Robinson, "Les Lieux de la Lyrique"; *idem*, "Trees of Love"; *idem*, "Mudéjar Revisited: A Prologomena to the Reconstruction of Perception, Devotion, and Experience at the Mudéjar Convent of Clarisas, Tordesillas, Spain (Fourteenth Century A.D.)," *RES* 43 (2003): 51–77.
131. Robinson, "Trees of Love," and *idem*, "Preaching to the Converted: Valladolid's 'Cristianos Nuevos' and the 'Retablo de Don Sancho de Rojas' (1415 A.D.)," *Speculum* 83, 1 (2008): 112–63.
132. This has been shown by Francisco Prado-Vilar, "The Anamorphic Gaze: Regarding the Worth of Others," in *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Iberia*, ed. Cynthia Robinson and Leyla Rouhi (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 66–100.
133. On the Virgin as well as themes of female sanctity in Islam consult M. Chodkiewicz, "La sainteté féminine dans l'hagiographie islamique," in Denise Aigle, ed., *Saints Orientaux* (Paris: De Boccard, 1995), 99–115; Fernando de la Granja, "Fiestas cristianas en al-Andalus (Materiales para su estudio), II," *Al-Andalus* 35 (1970): 119–42; Louis Massignon, *La mubāhala de Médine et l'hyperdulie de Fatīma* (Paris: Librairie orientale et américaine, 1955); Jane I. Smith, "The Virgin Mary in Islamic Tradition," *The Muslim World* 79 (1989): 161–87; Neal Robinson, "Jesus and Mary in the Qurʾan: Some Neglected Affinities," in *The Qurʾan: Style and Contents*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 21–36; Aliah Schleifer, *Mary, Blessed Virgin of Islam* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 1997); Denise A. Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past: The Legacy of ʿAʿisha bint Abu Bakr* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), esp. chap. 5; A. M. Turki, "Femmes privilégiées et privilégiées féminines dans le système théologique et juridique d'Ibn Hazm," *Studia Islamica* 47 (1978): 25–82. Maribel Fierro, "Women as Prophets in Islam," in *Writing the Feminine: Women in Arab sources*, ed. Manuela Marín and Randi Deguilhem (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2002), 183–99, specifically discusses the controversy among Muslim exegetes concerning Mary's possible status as a prophet. Though Fierro notes that after the thirteenth century this was certainly minority opinion, it was frequently espoused by Sufis, including Ibn ʿArabī. It is interesting, therefore, to note that Mary is accorded prophet-like sta-

- tus by the early-fifteenth-century Valencian Francesc Eiximenis, whose writings concerning the life of Christ were translated into Castilian by the 1430s, if not earlier, and had widespread repercussions in Castilian devotional life through the end of the fifteenth century and beyond. See Robinson, "Preaching to the Converted" and Cynthia Robinson, *Imag(in)ing the Passion in a Multi-Confessional Castile: The Virgin, Christ, Devotions and Images in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (monograph in preparation).
134. Ibn 'Arabī, *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, 9.
  135. Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom), ed. 'Abd Allāh 'Afif (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1980), 217; cited in Puerta, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe*, 760–61.
  136. Fierro, "Women as Prophets," 186; Fierro cites Chodkiewicz, "La sainteté féminine," 109 and 111.
  137. This association is also characteristic of Castilian frontier ballads, and the concept may therefore have been comprehensible to the Nasrids' Christian allies: see Angus Mackay, "The Ballad and the Frontier in Late Medieval Spain," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 53 (1976), 15–33.
  138. See Cynthia Robinson, "El Retablo de Miraflores *romanizado*, o ¿qué significa ser un Van der Weyden en Castilla?" in *Gótico y frontera: En busca de nuevos paradigmas para el estudio del gótico hispano*, ed. Rocío Sánchez Ameijeira (Murcia: Nausícaa, col. Medievalia, Murcia, forthcoming 2009), and Robinson, *Imag(in)ing the Passion*.
  139. As reconstructed by Felipe Pereda, *Las imágenes de la discordia: Política y poética de la imagen sagrada en la España del cuatrocientos* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2007).
  140. On Santa María del Prado see Luis Fernández, *La Real Imprenta del Monasterio de Nuestra Señora de Prado (1481–1835)* (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Cultura y Turismo, 1992); Luis Resines, *Hernando de Talavera, prior del Monasterio de Prado* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Cultura y Turismo, 1993); Eloisa Wattenberg García, A. García Simón, and Melquiades Andrés Martín, *El Monasterio de Nuestra Señora del Prado* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Cultura y Turismo, 1995).