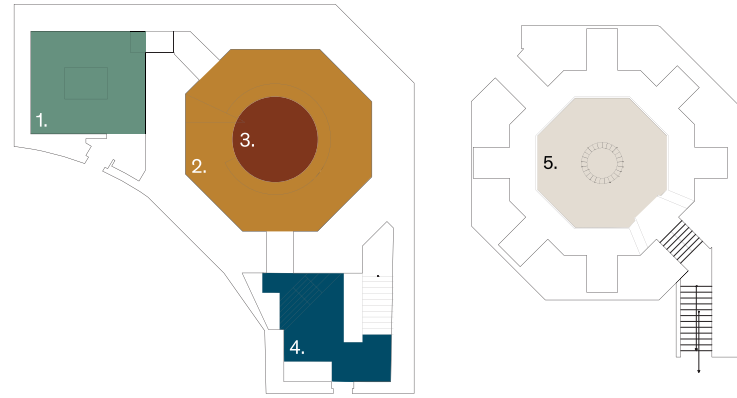


1. BEFORE NASRID CERAMICS
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TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

26 September 2024 to 12 January 2025
 (Closed 25 December and 1 January)
 Chapel and crypt of the Palace of Charles V
 Monumental Complex of the Alhambra and Generalife

Opening hours

Monday–Sunday, 26 September to 14 October 10 am–8 pm,
 15 October to 12 January 10 am–6 pm

Free entry

FREE GUIDED TOURS

Times

26 September to 14 October (SUMMER)

Morning: two tours (11 am and 12 noon)

Afternoon: two tours (6 pm and 7 pm)

15 October 2024 to 12 January 2025 (WINTER)

Morning: two tours (11 am and 12 noon)

Afternoon: weekends ONLY, two tours (4 pm and 5 pm)

BOOKINGS

Places on the guided tour must be booked in advance.

Groups must be no larger than 10 people.

Each tour lasts 45 minutes.

Information and bookings at: <https://www.alhambra-patronato.es/>



Large basin with bird in green. 19th century. Workshop: Granada
 Wheel-thrown clay, glazed inside with white tin-glaze and decorated with cobalt
 oxide, green, fired in an Arabic kiln (single-firing)
 Collection of Hermógenes Ruiz and Agustín Morales

Special spaces are reserved for the ceramics from the sixteenth century, grouped according to archaeological context. These pieces perfectly demonstrate how the types of household items used in medieval homes endured into the early modern period.

Then, a rich selection of functional items mainly from the seventeenth–nineteenth centuries are displayed, categorised according to use (vases, jugs, water jugs, meat pots, jars, bowls, plates, serving bowls, cheese dishes, bread bowls, basins, dishes, chamber pots, bird drinkers and street signs), though many of them were not used solely for the functional purposes we have assigned to them.

The third subsection of this room is devoted to decorative aspects, with a display of an exquisite selection of objects that demonstrate the limited use of colours deriving from the Nasrid period, conditioned by the minerals present in the area.

Meanwhile, we will find decoration structures that also recall the past – thanks to geometric, phytomorphic and bird designs – but display freer strokes, as well as iconographies that were not seen in the Middle Ages, including imperial eagles, Eucharist altars, architecture, dates and inscriptions relating to the object's owner or use. One other generalised characteristic is the continued presence of pomegranates.

IMMERSIVE AUDIOVISUAL EXHIBIT

Finally, the exhibition ends with an immersive audiovisual exhibit in the crypt of the imperial palace, which shows the continuity in the techniques and types of object seen in the workshops in Granada that continue to produce ceramics of the highest aesthetic value: examples of pure tradition and cultural assets that are part of the identity of Granada and the surrounding area.

On top of that, throughout the exhibition, various educational resources will ensure a better understanding of this project and the ways in which Nasrid ceramics represent the technical and aesthetic peak of medieval production. They will also focus on recognising their continuity, despite the adaptations and changes seen after the Surrender of Granada, without losing sight of the past, as works are recovered and new products are redefined for cultural consumption, resulting in widespread admiration of our history.

In parallel, a catalogue brings together research carried out by the most qualified experts on the period, so that those with an interest in the subject can delve deeper into the various aspects of the social history, production, trade and techniques surrounding Granada's workshops, as well as their relationships with other production centres and societies that recognise the aesthetic and functional value of our ceramic culture.



Potter
 Stills from the immersive audiovisual exhibit

JAUME COLL CONESA
 AND RAFAEL LÓPEZ GUZMÁN
 (CURATORS)



26.09.2024 – 12.01.2025

NASRID CERAMICS

CONTEXTS AND DISSEMINATION

NASRID CERAMICS

The aim of this exhibition is to review knowledge of the use of ceramic materials in Nasrid culture and bring it up to date, especially in terms of technical, social, economic and iconographic aspects, in order to build as broad a view as possible of the importance of this ceramic production, which became a model that was disseminated and imitated across the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of the West.

Workshops in the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada occasionally moved elsewhere on the Iberian Peninsula, and relations with North Africa were constant, though some gaps in understanding of the influences in both directions are yet to be filled.

The Nasrid Kingdom also maintained cultural bridges with Egypt, the Middle East and Asian routes, thus fuelling the prestige of Granada's production in Muslim areas far away from al-Andalus.

Nasrid ceramics shed light on social contexts in the Emirate of Granada, as their functional uses provide an insight into all sorts of groups, covering everything from the humblest dwellings to spaces of power.

From a technical viewpoint, this production context represents the peak of medieval ceramics, as previously developed techniques were perfected by Nasrid craftspeople. No one would improve on this expertise for centuries after.

This production also tells us a lot about the ornamental grammar of Nasrid ceramics, with iconographic models that are shared with other techniques and media (textiles, ivory carvings, wood and plasterwork), but that take on a specific quality in these pieces, exhibiting a varied selection of zoomorphic, phytomorphic and geometric themes and inscriptions.

Particularly noteworthy examples of Nasrid production are the Alhambra Vases; as well as furnishing palace interiors, they were exported as precious objects that projected an image of the splendour of the Emirate of Granada through embassies and courtly gifts.

This luxury ware was a key characteristic of the Granada aesthetic, which was widely recognised at the time and spread to other geographical areas during the early modern period. In the nineteenth century, it started to be coveted for its exotic nature in the period of orientalist historicism, thus becoming one of the fundamental factors in the construction of the legend of the Alhambra.

Furthermore, workshops in the city of Granada that inherited the techniques, uses and types of object associated with Nasrid ceramics produced functional and beautiful pieces over the years. Once the use of industrialised household items became generalised, these pieces became icons that, today, represent part of the charm of Nasrid culture and act as tourist souvenirs of excellent technical and aesthetic quality.

These are the parameters in which we have situated this exhibition, held in the rooms of the Palace of Charles V corresponding to the chapel and the crypt. The four spaces are divided into the following sections.

BEFORE NASRID CERAMICS

The first room, the sacristy of the chapel, serves to provide us with the territorial and historical context around the aim of our exhibition. This initial section attempts to analyse the changes that occurred from the creation of al-Andalus, by looking at the community values and uses associated with ceramic objects and the technical mastery achieved up to that time.



Horse dish. Second half 10th century – first half 11th century
Provenance: Madīnat Ilbīra, Atarfe (Granada)
Tin-glazed ware decorated in green and black
Museo de la Alhambra. Photo: Lucía Rivas

The pieces on display include domestic items and wellheads, liquid containers and vases, not to mention small objects with zoomorphic forms, alongside pieces of a more lavish nature with very specific iconographies, including courtly and religious references, culminating in lustreware items: a pillar of the excellence, commercial dissemination and luxury reputation of Nasrid ceramics.

Ultimately, these are objects that demonstrate the precise value Islamic society assigned to ceramics, which would also become a commercial product.

In fact, the 'Background' section includes a significant repertoire of pre-Nasrid ceramics, which displays the types of object from which the different uses and social values derived. At the same time, the technical processes introduced to the Iberian Peninsula by the Muslims are examined, as well as how they influenced the production chain and use protocols in the Christian kingdoms of the north.

NASRID CERAMICS

The main space in the exhibition is the chapel, which contains the sections 'Background. Technical, typological and aesthetic inheritance' and 'Nasrid ceramics' and is laid out in concentric circles to provide an optimal visitor route and encourage linear, integrated understanding of the cultural processes described in the two sections.

The middle part of the chapel is occupied by the section dedicated to Nasrid ceramics, which this exhibition aims to evaluate as a whole. The route concludes with one of the key masterpieces made in the kilns of the Alhambra – the Gazelle Vase – but before that, the circle around it exhibits a major repertoire of works that illuminates themes like ceramic workshops' technical and organisational characteristics, the geographical distribution of pieces based on demand, and the prestige and diversity of decorative themes and iconographies, as well as domestic functions and uses related to power and palatial spaces.

INFLUENCES AND RELATIONSHIPS

The institutions where these objects come from, detailed in the third section, indicate current recognition of the historical and aesthetic value of these pieces. They have arrived here from cultural centres and institutions in Valencia, Madrid, Palma de Mallorca, Alcochete, Ourense, Almería, Málaga and, of course, the Museum of the Alhambra itself, which has provided a significant number of ceramic objects from the Alhambra complex and other spaces that were part of the Nasrid Kingdom.

GRANADA CERAMICS. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The third room, a space of transition towards the crypt and the exit to the east hallway, is dedicated to the evolution of ceramics from 1492 onwards, with a focus on the obvious technical, formal and typological connections with Nasrid production and the associated prestige.

In fact, on a visual level, this section starts off with a path that connects the Gazelle Vase, the pinnacle of Nasrid ceramic production at the heart of the chapel, with imitations made between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that tell us a lot about recognition and technical imitation in a different cultural context. This room is organised around the cultural periods between the Nasrid masterpiece and these historicist works.



Dish/bowl decorated with radial leaves in blue and black. 14th or 15th century
Workshop: Granada. Tin-glazed ware decorated with cobalt and manganese oxides
Museum of the Alhambra. Photo: Lucía Rivas



Turquoise dish with blue fish. 14th century
Workshop: Granada. Tin- and copper-glazed ware decorated in cobalt
Museum of the Alhambra. Photo: Lucía Rivas