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Women in Arts, Architecture and Literature

Heritage, Legacy and Digital Perspectives

CONSUELO LOLLOBRIGIDA & ADELINA MODESTI (EDS)

BREPOLS

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From the Palace to the House*

Women and Architecture in Sixteenth-Century Spain

▾ **ABSTRACT** This text analyses and visualizes the agency of women in the architecture of the sixteenth century, whether by acquiring property, developing new building projects, or participating in the actual on-site construction process. This objective forces us to rethink the history of architecture. To this end, I focused on a case study such as the city of Granada in the sixteenth century. Undoubtedly, recovering this historical experience contributes to a fairer society, capable of recognizing the active role of women in architecture, including them as actors in the cartographic memory of our cities.

Recovering the Architectural Practices of Women

When we look at studies on the Renaissance, we find names of male architects, many of them great geniuses. We also find great patrons: monarchs and great nobles, mostly men, who appear as patrons of architecture. At first glance this is not surprising, since we are used to associating architecture with an eminently masculine facet.

Traditionally, the active participation of women in architecture throughout history has not been acknowledged. There are very important studies of some of the most important buildings and spaces of the sixteenth century in which the analysis of patronage and the uses of spaces have always been present, but in which the gender perspective has hardly been applied. This is not only true for the sixteenth century but also for the entire history of architecture, as I have already shown for large palace complexes such as Madinat al Zahara or the Alhambra, both from the period of al-Andalus.[1] This situation also occurs in contemporary architecture, albeit with

* *Vestir la casa: espacios, objetos y emociones en los siglos XV y XVI* (Project PGC2018–093835-B-100, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation — National Research Agency and the ERDF — 'A Way to Build Europe'), 2019–2022. *Las Mujeres y los Discursos de Paz. Orígenes y Transformaciones en las Sociedades Occidentales* (R+D+I project B-HUM-058-UGR18, ERDF Andalusia Operational Program), 2020–2022. Translated by Wendy Caroline Byrnes.

1 Díez, 'Women and the Architecture of al-Andalus'.

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From the Palace to the House
Women and Architecture in Sixteenth-Century Spain*

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Abstract: This text analyses and visualizes the agency of women in the architecture of the sixteenth century, whether by acquiring property, developing new building projects, or participating in the actual on-site construction process. This objective forces us to rethink the history of architecture. To this end, I focused on a case study such as the city of Granada in the sixteenth century. Undoubtedly, recovering this historical experience contributes to a fairer society, capable of recognizing the active role of women in architecture, including them as actors in the cartographic memory of our cities.

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Applying the gender perspective to the historical analysis of buildings makes it possible to visualize the rooms occupied by women, to reflect on the cooperation and patronage shared between men and women, and simply to compare the strategies and areas that men and women developed in architectural patronage. The absence of women from historiography makes it necessary to visualize them and to recover their historical experience, that is, to rethink the history of architecture.[2]

Despite the above, I must clarify that, in the following pages, although the main point of interest is to make women visible, I do not wish nor intend to build a partial history that focuses only on the female subject. The role of women in architecture can only be understood

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[1] Díez, 'Women and the Architecture of al-Andalus'.

[2] Díez, *Women and Architecture*. Díez, ed., *Arquitectura y mujeres en la historia*; Roff, 'Did Women Design or Build Before the Industrial Age?'.

by establishing connections with the roles played by and assigned to men. I have only been able to understand the reflections made on women in architecture and construction in this way: the different or similar artistic developments of women and men; the different salaries that women and men may have received in construction; and the different approach and design of the spaces reserved for women. In this regard, I apply the gender perspective in its full dimension and also relate it to other categories of historical analysis, such as social status, ethnicity, and religion. In other words, I introduce intersectionality in order to approach the study in a more comprehensive way that better reflects the complexity of societies.

Although both are closely related, a distinction must be made between studies on women — which do not always deconstruct patriarchal narratives — and those that introduce the gender perspective in an effort to deconstruct these discourses. However, while it is true that gender studies should not be based solely on including 'illustrious women' in a general history, it is undeniable that visualizing them represents a separation from patriarchal academicism. My motivation is not the desire to find women architects, which I have not found to date in sixteenth-century Spain, but the fact of raising questions about architecture including the gender perspective.

I am aware of the need to recover the role played by women as actors, but without falling into the trap of looking only for 'female geniuses of architecture' and avoiding a critique of patriarchal ideology. It is a bonus if along the way and in the searches we find names and news of women architects such as Plautilla Bricci in Baroque Rome.[3]

It is not a question of obsessively tracking down possible names of female authors, who in the case of architecture in certain periods had to overcome social difficulties to study, learn and perform that profession, but of reflecting on the capacity of patronage, of doing, creating, and building of both women and men. To recover these practices of women in architecture, all possible facets must be analysed. This involves both the artistic promotion made by the powerful classes and the interventions of the less wealthy classes, without forgetting the analysis of the participation of women in construction as foundry workers, stonemasons, whitewashers or tile makers, among others. This area of women's agency in architecture is the focus of the following pages.

It would be pretentious to address the multiple situations that occurred in sixteenth-century Spain; therefore, I will focus on a case study that can also be applied to other Spanish cities, given their similar situations. Specifically, I will deal with the city of Granada, which was in the hands of the Nasrid sultanate until 1492 and was conquered by the Christian kingdoms. An interesting architectural aspect developed there during the sixteenth century, ranging from the reuse and transformation of old buildings from the period of al-Andalus — the case of the Alhambra — to the construction of new and iconic buildings such as the palace of Charles V (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Anton van der Wyngaerde, View of Granada, 1567, Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. Photo courtesy of the Nationalbibliothek

[3] Lollobrigida, *Plautilla Bricci*.

The Imprint of Women in Urban Planning

In Granada and other sixteenth-century municipal councils, municipal decisions were taken mainly by men. Women were excluded from this process and had no power or decision-making capacity in matters that involved the whole city and ultimately affected them as well. For example, the position of city worker fell exclusively to men — Mudejares, Old Christians or New Christians — with ethnic-religious considerations being more flexible in this case than gender: a Morisco could be a city builder, but a woman never could.[4]

The government of the city fell to the so-called *caballeros veinticuatro* (knights twenty-four); these were aldermen who belonged to a middle nobility and attained great power. The decisions made by the men were implemented both in the urban planning of the city and in public buildings, even those that were intended for women. This was the case of the women's quarters in the jail, whose location and adaptation corresponded to the municipal officials (all male, specifically: Hernando Sánchez de Zafra, Juan de Contreras, and the jurors Diego de Lezana and Francisco de Molina, together with the mayor, had to decide if the women's quarters in the public jail should be on the mezzanine floor or in the corridor, and they ordered that they be built where they thought best).[5]

Despite this, it cannot be denied that women must have found ways of defending their interests. For example, it is not implausible to think that the mothers or wives of the *caballeros venticuatro* could have pressured them in municipal decisions on more than one occasion to obtain some benefit.

There is more documentation on women in the case of private properties. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, some private houses began to be demolished in the city of Granada to widen the squares and streets, thus adapting to the new norms of urban aesthetics of the sixteenth century. The documentation of the minutes of the city council records agreements with private individuals, especially men, although women also appear. They were generally widows or women whose husbands were absent. However, there were cases in which they were not widows and others in which their status was not specified. An example is the deal that the city council made with the newly converted (i.e., Morisco) Leonor, daughter of Bexin Agebiz, for a property that had been expropriated from her; it was a storage facility that the city took from her for the construction of the courthouse next to the city hall and for which the council owed her 8000 maravedis; the price was paid to her and everything indicates that it must have been negotiated with her as well.[6] Another example is the payment to Angelina de la Plata of 19,100 maravedis, their estimated value, for the purchase of some possessions of hers in Bibarrambla square that the city council demolished to enlarge one of the main squares of the city.[7] The council must also have had dealings with Juana Hernández, glove maker, for a store that was demolished to enlarge Hatabín square and for which it paid her 25,000 maravedis in several annual instalments.[8] The demolition of a shed was negotiated with María Jibira; she was paid 666 maravedis and a half, of which one third was paid by the council for

[4] *Ordenanzas que los muy ilustres y muy magníficos señores Granada mandaron guardar para la buena governación de su Republica, impresas año de 1552.*

[5] AMG, Libro de las Actas del Cabildo, II, fol. 301^{r}, 1515, 10 July.

[6] AMG, Libro de las Actas del Cabildo, I, fol. 259^{r}, 1502, 10 May.

[7] AMG, Libro de las Actas del Cabildo, IV, fol. 109^{v}, 1519, 11 October.

[8] AMG, Libro de las Actas del Cabildo, II, fol. 179^{v} (1514, 1 August) and fol. 301^{r} (1515, 10 July). AMG, Libro de las Actas del Cabildo, III, fols 40^{r} (1516), 107^{v} (1517), 235^{r} and 267^{r} (1518).

'the general benefit that the town receives' and the other two thirds by the neighbours 'for the benefit that their houses received from the demolition of the shed'.[9] In one of the minutes, several men were sent to talk to Catalina de Moncada and see the *ajimez* (balcony, box window) that she owned in order to: 'settle with her as they see fit on the wall that goes out to the street'.[10] These were women mentioned with their names and surnames with whom for various reasons the city council negotiated and dealt directly about their properties. Such was their position, dealing with the council not only about matters that affected their properties, but also the decorum and aesthetics of the streets.

Of course, women from the elites were permanently acting on the buildings that they owned, enlarging and transforming their houses and palaces, and influencing the image of the city, as I have already pointed out in other studies.[11]

The properties of these women of the elite were affected by municipal decisions and therefore they negotiated with the crown or the municipal authorities, especially if the women were widowed. For example, Beatriz Galindo, Spanish writer and humanist, wife of Francisco Ramírez de Madrid, the secretary of the Catholic Monarchs, mentioned in her will as a widow the houses she owned in Granada and that King Ferdinand the Catholic took to build the public jail; she was compensated with 200,000 maravedis, which she invested by building some properties outside Granada, mainly in Madrid. She also obtained the not inconsiderable amount of 50,000 maravedis for a small house that she owned in Granada and that was bought to build the Royal Chapel.[12] Beatriz Galindo's ability to manage rents and properties was evident, so it is not far-fetched to think of her involvement in the deals for these urban development actions that affected her assets. The competence and ability that this woman showed to defend her interests are noteworthy, as happened with the lawsuits she filed against her husband's will, of which she finally managed to be the main beneficiary.[13]

All these women, of diverse social status, defended their interests to obtain the best benefit from these expropriations of real estate that the city council recognized as their property; the council negotiated directly with them and paid them.

But there was a more active agency, with proposals made by some women to the municipal council. These were enterprising women, who applied for licenses to build mills and to create new hydraulic infrastructures, among other projects. An example of these enterprising women who managed properties such as mills can be found in María de Peñalosa. She must have been the wife of Francisco de Bobadilla, head butler and captain with the Catholic Monarchs, who died in 1496. Her will, in the first years of the sixteenth century, lists several real estate properties in Granada: a number of houses, two stores, an inn and a complex formed by a mill, an orchard, and some houses on the banks of the Darro River. She also had nineteen contracts that generated significant income.[14] In documentation of the sixteenth century, it is quite common to find women defending and managing works and distributions of water from irrigation ditches and branches of the city for their houses by even going to court if necessary.[15] A very evident case of an entrepreneur and developer of this type of infrastructure was that of Ana de Gutiérrez, or Ana de Contreras after her husband's surname, who in the early seventeenth century applied for a license from the council of Motril, in Granada province, to build a bread mill and carry out works to divert an irrigation ditch that would power the mill.[16]

[9] AMG, Libro de las Actas del Cabildo, II, fol. 374^{r}, 1516, 11 March.

[10] AMG, Libro de las Actas del Cabildo, III, fol. 255^{v}, 1518, 27 April.

[11] Díez and Hernández, 'Construyendo la ciudad'.

[12] Beatriz Galindo's will of 1534 in Serrano, *Escritoras españolas*, pp. 431–40.

[13] Arroyal and others, 'Beatriz Galindo'.

[14] Peinado, *Aristócratas nazaríes y principales castellanos*, p. 115.

[15] See various examples in Quesada, 'Infraestructuras domésticas', specifically the chapter 'Hombres y mujeres en la gestión del agua para sus casas'.

[16] Hernández, 'De piedra, harina y papel'.

Other important infrastructures for the city because of the service they provided were convents, of which women were great developers in Spain. Women from the well-positioned noble classes focused their efforts on sponsoring and founding convents, most of which were intended for women; rarely did they erect one for men. Yet, there are some cases such as that of Leonor de Herrera in Guadix (Granada province), possibly a convert of Jewish origin, who left money and instructions in her will to build a convent of Discalced Carmelites for men.[17] But this was not usual: men founded convents for men and women. The data we currently have hardly suggests that the foundation of women's convents by women was a matter of protectionism among them or for them, although it is worth noting that a significant number of religious foundations were established by widowed women who became part of the congregation.

Undoubtedly, the foundation of convents for women by women reveals a social role of appropriateness, as opposed to the peculiar nature of a male convent being founded by a woman. It is enough to check the enumeration made by Francisco Henríquez de Jorquera in a seventeenth-century manuscript he wrote about the city of Granada, which remained unpublished at the time.[18] We are interested in seeing what this scholar of Granada emphasized and what memory he constructed of the city. In his enumeration he mentioned eighteen convents for men[19] and nineteen for women.[20] In these female convents, almost all of them founded after the Christian conquest in the period between the late fifteenth century and the early seventeenth century, the patronage of women was predominant. Reference was made to the agency of these patrons, recording for posterity the memory of their imprint on the city. He cited two convents founded by a married couple, four by men, three unspecified and ten exclusively by women, although in reality there were more, such as the Convent of Sancti Spiritus, which the author attributed to Alvaro de Bazán but was actually founded by his wife, María de Manuel.[21]

Let us give names and surnames to these women: Luisa de Torres, widow of Constable Miguel Lucas de Iranzo, founder of the Convent of Santa Isabel la Real; María de San Sebastián, founder of the Convent of Nuestra Señora del Carmen; the nun known as 'la madre de San Francisco', founder of the Convent of la Concepción; Sister Ana de Jesús, companion of Santa Teresa de Jesús, founder of the Convent of San José de las Descalzas; the Duchess of Sesa, founder of the Monastery of the Virgen de la Piedad; two 'venerable and devout pious ladies', who founded the Convent of Santa Clara; María de Córdoba y Centurión, daughter of the Marquis of Estepa, who founded the Convent of Santo Angel Custodio; Ana de Mendoza, founder of the Monastery or Colegio de las Doncellas; Mother Potenciana de Jesús, founder of the nunnery known as Beaterio de las Potencianas; and two noble daughters of the city, who founded the Beaterio de las Melchoras.

[17] Hernández, 'El matronazgo y la fundación de Leonor de Herrera en Guadix'.
[18] Henríquez, *Anales de Granada*.
[19] Henríquez, *Anales de Granada*, chapter 34.
[20] Henríquez, *Anales de Granada*, chapter 35.
[21] López, 'Los Bazanes de Granada'.

Fig. 2. Ambrosio de Vico's platform of the city of Granada made at the end of the sixteenth century. Engraving by Francisco Heylan in 1613. Courtesy of Archivo Municipal de Granada, reference number 05.001.01. Edited by the author to highlight the women's convents drawn by Ambrosio de Vico in sixteenth-century Granada

I have taken the map drawn by Ambrosio de Vico at the end of the sixteenth century, known as the Vico platform, and marked the female convents included in it. As can be seen, they are scattered all over the urban fabric of the city (Fig. 2). Of the sixteen convents for women, at least eight were founded by a woman; others were founded by married couples, and others still were erected by men. The female convents founded exclusively by women and that are represented on the Vico platform are: Sancti Spiritus, La Piedad, Santa Isabel la Real, Colegio de Doncellas, Nuestra Señora del Carmen, Carmelitas Descalzas (mentioned by Henríquez de Jorquera as San José de las Descalzas), Capuchinas (Henríquez de Jorquera identified it as the Convent of Santa Clara), and la Concepción (founded by Leonor Ramírez). We should not think that the pious foundations were limited exclusively to economic donations; on more than one occasion they also implied orders by these women on the organization of the convent and on the building process. All this gives us an idea of the cartography of women in the city and of the importance and imprint of their architectural development work.

With this I do not intend to construct a partial history, since it is obvious that both men and women participated in the conventual landscape of the city at the time. In some cases, they did this as married couples and in others men were the visible heads of these foundations, but, as I pointed out, the proportion of women involved was not negligible. The imprint of women in the architecture of the city is recognized in the cartography of the city of the time: they are mentioned as sponsors and founders, thus achieving great social prestige.

The Agency of Women in Palace Architecture

Let us continue the tour of Granada, shifting the focus now from the city to the royal household. The conquest of Granada was used politically at the time as the definitive victory of Christianity over Islam in the Iberian Peninsula, enhancing this triumph with the idea of the 'recovery' of the territory of ancient Hispania. However, it seems that the goal of Queen Isabella was not so

much this unity of 'Spain', which perhaps responds more to a historiographic cliché, but rather an alliance between different kingdoms, especially Castile and Aragon. The Christian conquest of Granada represented this desired unity or alliance.

In all the interventions carried out by the Catholic Monarchs, we must consider the greater or lesser involvement that King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella may have had separately. According to the documentation that has reached us, it seems that Queen Isabella of Castile played a stronger role in the promotion of the arts in Granada, although this hypothesis needs to be further explored.

Isabella I (1451–1504) was very aware of the symbolic potential of the Alhambra in Granada, where the Catholic Monarchs lived intermittently from 1492 to 1501. Hence, some of her architectural actions and developments are not surprising. In addition to maintaining the Islamic legacy, some of her wishes can be translated into an attempt to enhance the symbolic power of the Alhambra, such as her initial attempt to establish the Convent of Santa Isabel la Real, although this could not be implemented.[22] Along the same lines, it is worth mentioning the desire that the Queen expressed to create a hospital in the Alhambra, and for which she left 20,000 maravedis to Iñigo López de Mendoza, Count of Tendilla, as documented in a letter written on 9 December 1500; we must not forget that with the Queen came the Hospital de la Concepción or Hospital of the Poor, which had a fixed and a mobile part. This hospital led to the emergence later on of the hospitals of Toledo and Granada and especially of the Hospital de la Reina to care for the wounded in combat during the war of Granada.[23] Finally, the Royal Hospital was built on the outskirts of the city of Granada.[24]

It is also worth noting the role given to the Franciscan order with the foundation by the Queen of the Convent of San Francisco in 1495 on an old Nasrid palace of the Alhambra. Undoubtedly, this convent must have been an important reference point for Isabella I. Her grandson, Prince Miguel, who died in the Alhambra on 20 July 1500, was buried there, and she also left the order that she wished to be buried provisionally there herself. In a clause of her will she left a record of how she wanted to be buried; the tomb should be low and without any bulk except for a low flat slab on the ground with her letters carved in it.[25] In the subsequent orders given by the Count of Tendilla, he maintained these wishes, although he gave specifications for other details such as the grille and especially the chapel with the muqarnas vault and the carved and gilded wood ceilings[26] (Fig. 3).

[22] Liss, *Isabel la Católica*, p. 250.

[23] Fernández de Córdova, *La Corte de Isabel I*, p. 153. Regarding the hospital for the war of Granada, it is worth mentioning the Hospital in Santa Fe, on which there is documentation in the *Cuentas de Gonzalo de Baeza*.

[24] Cambil, *Los Hospitales de Granada*.

[25] *El testamento de Isabel la Católica*.

[26] The document of the Count of Tendilla, dated 1504, is recorded in Szmolka and others, *Epistolario del Conde de Tendilla*, vol. I, p. 218.

Fig. 3. Chapel of the convent of San Francisco, Alhambra (Granada). Queen Isabella I ordered the construction of this convent in the palatine city of the Alhambra and asked to be buried in its chapel. Photograph by the author

The project of the tomb itself was relatively simple, without any images or decoration, but symbolically very relevant. However, the ultimate idea was to build the tombs in the cathedral, a project that led to the current Capilla Real or Royal Chapel. Ferdinand II of Aragon was clear that he should be buried next to his first wife, Isabella I of Castile, and in Granada, thus leaving a record of his participation in the conquest of the Kingdom of Granada.

Everything was surrounded by symbolism, since the occupation of the Alhambra as the royal dwelling of the Christian monarchs was a symbol of the surrender of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada to the Christian kingdoms of Castile and Aragon and also of the projected alliance between the two Christian kingdoms. However, in this alliance, the roles assigned to and executed by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella were different, as corresponded to their origins

in different courts and kingdoms, because of their different characters, and also because what was expected of each of them was preconceived and designed by gender differences. Symbolically, the military aspect was monopolized by King Ferdinand, while the consolidation of the faith and conversion seems to have corresponded more to the role expected of Isabella I. However, I do not believe that gender played a major role in the greater involvement that Isabella I seems to have had in the Alhambra interventions; rather, this is likely to have been a matter of political strategy skilfully understood by her.

However, not only queens had agency in court: another very diverse form of agency was that of women who were directly present on construction sites. Much remains to be explored on this subject, although I have already conducted some research on it.[27] I have examined much documentation from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries about the Alhambra, both that included in the archives of the Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife (Alhambra and Generalife Trust) and the Archivo General de Simancas (General Archive of Simancas). Not many women were actually recorded as being present on the building site, but there were some.

In these pages I would like to focus on their participation as potters, providing materials for the royal dwelling, for these palaces of the Alhambra that passed into Christian hands. They usually appeared in the documentation when they were widowed and their sons were not of age; it is in these circumstances that the records mention the names of these widowed women who knew the trade, who worked daily in the family pottery workshop and, in short, who contributed in this case to the architectural decoration of the Alhambra.

In this regard, I have already written several texts on one of the women who supplied glazed pieces to cover the architecture of the Christian Alhambra during the sixteenth century; I am referring to Isabel de Robles.[28] I have pointed out that she was married to Alonso Hernández, a Morisco potter, and that she started appearing in the documentation of payroll and payments when she must have been widowed. There are records of the payments made to her from 1537 to 1546, according to the documentation found to date in the Archive of the Alhambra; however, the General Archive of Simancas has information up to 1553.[29] When the record mentions a male tile maker such as Pedro Tenorio, his skills as a potter are not questioned. However, as Isabel de Robles predictably cannot appear as a tile maker, from a historiographical point of view it could be questioned whether she actually knew about pottery techniques, or if her skills rather applied to running a business. The fact that she ran the workshop well indicates that she must have known the trade; besides, why would she not have knowledge about pottery if she had been married to a potter and lived in a potter's environment? It is worth noting that the Robles saga of potters was related to the Tenorio and Hernández families. There is no reason to deny her knowledge of the trade: the fact that women were not master potters, or that there were very few of them, was not due to any lack of ability on their part but rather to an administrative issue that hindered their access to the master's examination (Fig. 4).

[27] Díez, *Women and Architecture*, especially Section III, 'Women as Subjects: Crafstwomen in Construction'. For the Italian case I would like to highlight Nicoletta Marconi's work on women who worked in construction: Marconi, 'Carrettiere, fornitrici e "mastre muratore"'; Marconi, 'Giovanna Jafrate "vetrara"'.

[28] Díez, 'La mujer y su participación en el ámbito artesanal'. Díez, 'Mujeres en la Alhambra'. I am preparing a revision of what was then proposed, on the basis of new data that I have collected about the Hernández, Robles and Tenorio families, especially with regard to kinship and family ties between them.

[29] Payments to Isabel de Robles are recorded in the years 1552 and 1553, according to the Archivo General de Simancas, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, leg. 1120, in Casares, 'La ciudad palatina de la Alhambra'.

Fig. 4. Baño de Comares, Alhambra (Granada). In this Nasrid bath, numerous tiled surfaces were laid throughout the sixteenth century, some of them commissioned to the potter Isabel de Robles. Photograph by the author

Based on the Alhambra documentation, it is evident that there were a significant number of male potters throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Regarding female potters, a common trait among many of them is that they were widows. For example, in the sixteenth century, the aforementioned Isabel de Robles, who was married to Alonso Hernández; in the seventeenth century, and probably with good knowledge of the trade, María Romera, widow of Antonio Tenorio, potter and master tile maker, and who also lived in the Alhambra.[30] The same applies to Mariana Contreras, widow of the potter Pedro Tenorio; it might be thought at first that she left the business when she was widowed, but on examining the accounts of the Alhambra we see that she supplied pieces to the Alhambra from the time her husband died in 1637 until October 1645.[31]

From queens to potters, women acted and had agency, although in very different ways, since the capacity of a queen to promote and manage these projects was not the same as that of a craftswoman.

Building the House: Women and Domestic Architecture

In domestic architecture, a large number of women had a considerable agency in the field of architecture. I will address some reflections about aspects linked to ownership and sponsorship.

[30] APAG, Libro de Protocolos, nº 4, 1613, 12 June. This is a letter of contract acknowledgement dated 12 June 1613.

[31] Díez, *Hecha de barro y vestida de color,* pp. 66–71.

In the sixteenth century, in the case of entailed estates, the main houses passed preferentially to the sons, normally the first-born male; however, the other houses were transmitted to the rest of the sons and also as dowry to the daughters. It was not infrequent for real estate to be left to wives or daughters in the wills, so that these women became owners of these properties. This was the case not only for the great families of the noblest birth, but also for other lineages of the middle nobility and for a municipal oligarchy that had numerous properties and profitable prebends in the city. The dowry of Catalina Méndez, daughter of Esteban Muñoz and Juana Méndez, of the Salazar lineage, is a good example of this: her husband, Francisco Quiñones, had stipulated that he did not want to receive movable goods as dowry, but that the entire dowry should be in real estate: a part of a farmhouse, tax income from the main houses of her parents, half of a vineyard, and a house in the town of Colomera, among others.[32] In the same vein, the dowry of María de Medrano, when she married Diego de la Fuente, included not only some movable goods but also a vineyard with a house on the grounds and some trees.[33]

Another way for women to own property was through grants. After the conquest of Granada, the monarchs gave grants, awarding various properties to their supporters and to those who had participated in an outstanding way in the war against the Muslims. These properties were normally granted to men, although some women were also honoured in this way. I must insist on the fact that these grants were not given to their husbands, but directly to them for their diverse services to the crown. For example, María de Medina, the Queen's maid, was given houses in the Alhambra. This grant was awarded directly to her, without being a widow as in the other cases, and therefore became part of her patrimony earned through her services. This was one of the possessions of María de Medina, but it was not the only one, as she received other grants and properties for her own position in the Queen's royal chamber.[34]

A third way to own properties was to buy them. It is true that, in early sixteenth-century Granada, men had a dominant presence in the transactions concerning houses, as they were the ones expected to make agreements and deals of leases, purchases, and sales, and had the freedom to sign these deals. However, women were also present in these transactions: although I have documented women appearing as agents in about one third of the documentation of that time, heading the acquisition or sale of a house, women were present in half of the agreements, as they appeared both alone and jointly with their husbands. Whether widowed or married, they participated actively, although they were more visible when they were widows, as the request had to be made in their own name.[35]

On this point, an important aspect to take into account in the context of sixteenth-century Spain is the *Leyes de Toro* (Laws of Toro), drafted in 1505; specifically, laws 54 to 61, which regulated what married women could or could not do. These laws dealt with issues such as the acceptance or repudiation of an inheritance and the fact that married women could not enter into contracts or terminate them without marital license, nor could they appear in court without marital license. These restrictions could be lifted by virtue of Law 56 which, for the first time in Castilian law, allowed married women to have a general marital license: 'We command that the husband may give general license to his wife to contract, and to do everything that she could not do without his license: And if the husband gives it to her, everything that the wife does by virtue of the said license shall be valid'. Other favourable measures were Law 60, which admitted that if the wife renounced the community of property

[32] AHPNG, G-30, fols 179^{v}–181^{r}, 1528, 11 December.
[33] AHPNG, G-30, fols 815^{v}–817^{r}, 1530, 15 October.
[34] AGS, CCA, CED, 5, grant from 1500.
[35] Díez, 'El género en la arquitectura doméstica'.

system, then she could not be obliged to assume her husband's debts, and Law 61, which stated that a wife should not be obliged to be her husband's guarantor.[36]

A last way to achieve ownership was through construction projects, as sponsors of new buildings. It has been possible to thoroughly explore the initiatives of certain noble women, for example in the Bazán family in Granada, in which María Manuel, widow of Alvaro de Bazán, began to rearrange and group several small properties in 1500 to build some main houses in Granada. Nearby, María Manuel also founded the Church of Sancti Spiritus, blessed in 1504 as the burial place of the lineage, placing the body of her deceased husband in the main chapel. She also commissioned the construction of a convent for Dominican nuns. This enterprising woman lived in that house with her granddaughters; one of them, also named María Manuel, was the one who later kept part of that house, perpetuating the prestige and lineage of the Bazán family.[37]

The concern that men and women had for main houses as an image of their lineages is evident. This aspect was not neglected by women: on the contrary, whether married or widowed, they were involved in leaving the mark of their lineage and in ensuring their houses were inherited following the rules for entailed estates, although once again the condition of widow makes their names more visible in the documentation. These were women who were visible in the society of their time and who left their mark in the sponsorship of architectural works, contributing to the expansion and fame of their lineage, which they felt responsible for and proud of[38].

These were the four ways for women to become property owners: four ways of having very diverse agency and social projection, with both purchase and sponsorship showing the entrepreneurial aspect of women, as active subjects who were clearly aware that architecture was a means of achieving social prestige.

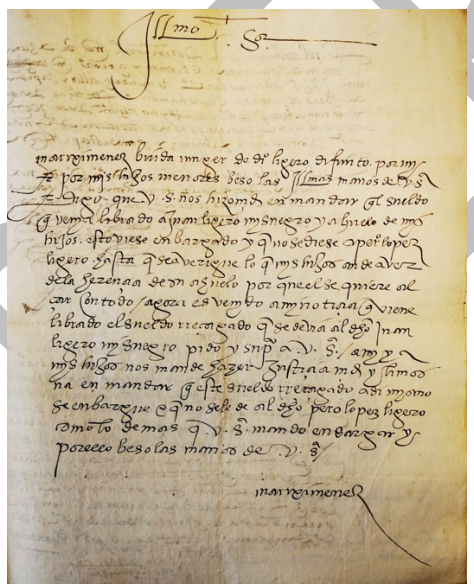

Fig. 5. Detail of a document showing the signature of a woman, María Jiménez, in the lawsuit she filed to defend the property of a house that her children were entitled to by inheritance. In fact, a comparison with all the signatures that appear in this long lawsuit shows that it was not written by her but by the scribe who drafted the petitions made by her in 1565. Her name and

[36] Muñoz, 'Limitaciones a la capacidad de obrar de la mujer casada'.
[37] López, 'Los Bazanes de Granada'.
[38] Díez, 'Power and Motherhood'

surname were written as a signature as she was probably illiterate. Courtesy of the Archivo del Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, L-221-13, fol. 50r, year 1565

I do not wish to focus only on women of a certain social status, who had possessions and were important architectural patrons in some cases: ordinary women were also actors and property owners. María Jiménez, a widow, went to court to defend the inheritance that her children were entitled to from their paternal grandparents, which included a house (Fig. 5). Her brother-in-law had entered the house and taken possession of it, along with a large amount of movable assets inside. María Jiménez filed a lawsuit in 1565 and won it. She took possession of the house: in the presence of the notary and witnesses, the bailiff took the hand of María Jiménez and led her inside the house; she walked through all the rooms, opening and closing doors, grabbing some stones and clods of earth, and throwing out the people who were occupying it. She did this in exactly the same way as was the custom with men, by being bodily led into the property by the bailiff as the person who was to take possession.[39] In this way, it was made clear to all that she was the owner (Figs 6a and 6b).

Figs. 6a and 6b. Detail of an Alhambra document by which a woman, María Jiménez, takes bodily possession of a house. Courtesy of the Archivo del Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, L-221-13, fol. 46, year 1565

[39] APAG, L-221-13.

By Way of Conclusion: Architectural Matronage

After all that has been said, it is worth concluding with a reflection on many of these actions that can be included under the term *matronage*. This concept is intended to define the sponsorship exercised by women and that influenced the city, including convents, hydraulic works and mills that improved the infrastructure and services of a city and, by extension, its economic activity. These constructions were of benefit to the city, and it was recognized at the time that they were managed and sponsored by women. This gave them and their lineage prestige and recognition before the rest of the citizens.

Women wanted to act in the same way as men and ensure their memory persisted in the city; they did not want to go unnoticed and exploited architecture as a form of empowerment. To this end, they left their name in the inscription on the facade of buildings, in chapels or through their coat of arms. However, their role was different from that of men and, consequently, so was their impact on the city: it was not a mere patronage, but 'a civic patronage exercised by the women of the city elites that led to changes in gender relations and, therefore, in social and civic relations'.[41]

Some of these women did not hide and knew that they deserved to be remembered. This explains the burial programmed by María Manrique, Duchess of Terranova, who, after the death of her husband, Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, the Gran Capitán, commissioned the construction of the main chapel for her and her husband in the monastery of San Jeronimo in Granada.[42] She left some instructions on how she wanted to be buried. The final result shows us that the purpose of the main chapel was not only to praise her husband for his military exploits, but that she occupied the same place: half of the chapel, her effigy and a whole iconographic cycle of illustrious women with whom to compare her life. It is evident that she was aware of the power of architecture to honour her memory and lineage and to perpetuate her exemplary life. For this reason, she asked the monarchy for permission to have a burial of such beauty and prestige and thus not go unnoticed.

In their own way, other women of less wealthy classes also exerted an agency to perpetuate their memory. Quiteria Ramírez left a house in the Alhambra in 1540 to the beneficiaries of the Church of Santa María de la Alhambra.[43] Undoubtedly, this donation had a devotional connotation as well as a social projection. In exchange, the ecclesiastical beneficiaries were to say mass on the anniversaries of the death of Quiteria Ramírez. We must understand that the house was donated not only with a devotional character, but also with the purpose of perpetuating her memory before the rest of the parishioners on each anniversary of her death; after all, it was a way of being remembered. Both men and women evidently made donations with a devotional character, but women clearly understood that this was a way of perpetuating their memory.

At this point I would like to point out an aspect that is not trivial: the memory of these women in the city. An interesting aspect is to analyse under whose name the dwelling was recognized. To do so, I have analysed the survey of houses in Granada in 1527.[44] This survey listed the properties endowed to mosques and other charitable Muslim institutions that passed to the Crown after the conquest of 1492; the Catholic Monarchs distributed these properties among the city council, the Church and the Crown itself and also donated some of them to

[41] Martínez and Estrella, 'Matronazgo arquitectura y redes de poder', p. 13.

[42] Hernández, *Rescatadas del olvido*.

[43] Transcribed document in García, 'Bienes habices de la iglesia de Santa María de la Alhambra', document 28, year 1540, pp. 222–28.

[44] *Casas, mezquitas y tiendas de los habices*.

private individuals. The survey covered seventeen parts of the city, which gives us a fairly approximate idea of what the situation was like at that time. It included more than four hundred properties, most of which were used as dwellings. Of these, fifty-two were inventoried at the time under the name of a woman. Of these women, twenty were widows and nine were married; there is no specific information about the rest. The differences between the number of men and women heading households were huge, but it is interesting to see that certain properties were associated with women, and that they had a place in the imagination and in the present memory of the city, in the same way as the mill of María Peñalosa was remembered, or some houses in the Alhambra that were mentioned as the houses of 'la Latina', the nickname with which the aforementioned Beatriz Galindo was known.[45]

The image and roles assigned to women in sixteenth century society meant that their actions had a different projection from those of men, and had a different impact on the memory of the city. In this regard, the concept of matronage emphasizes the need to explore this diversity. This diversity is what I wished to visualize in these pages, from the noble palace to the most modest house. In both cases we find a multitude of evidence that women were agents of architecture and contributed to build the city, either by sponsoring the works or with their own on-site labour, thus contributing to create the urban and architectural landscape in such a way that we cannot ignore their actions if we want to be objective with history.

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