

# The Protagonists of the “Antigüedades Árabes de España” and the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid

Pedro Navascués

To cite this article: Pedro Navascués (2019) The Protagonists of the “Antigüedades Árabes de España” and the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid, *Art in Translation*, 11:2, 124-147, DOI: [10.1080/17561310.2019.1690292](https://doi.org/10.1080/17561310.2019.1690292)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17561310.2019.1690292>



Published online: 11 Feb 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 7



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



**Pedro Navascués**  
(Real Academia de  
Bellas Artes de San  
Fernando, Madrid)

# The Protagonists of the “Antigüedades Árabes de España” and the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid

**Translated from  
Spanish by Isabel Adey**

## **Abstract**

The first European efforts to scientifically and artistically engage with the art and history of Islamic culture were made at the Real Academia de Historia (Royal Academy of History) and the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (Royal Academy of Fine Arts) in Madrid during the second half of the eighteenth century. The Spanish concept of *antigüedad* [antiquity] in connection to the “Moorish” era comprised the Alhambra in Granada and the Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba, whose architecture, ornaments and inscriptions were studied by various members of the San Fernando Academy, giving rise to the first

illustrated scientific publication on this subject, a corpus of work entitled the *Antigüedades árabes de España* (1789–1804).

**KEYWORDS:** Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, *Antigüedades árabes de España* [Moorish Antiquities of Spain], Alhambra de Granada, Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba, Sánchez Sarabia, Hermosilla brothers, Juan de Villanueva and Juan Pedro Arnal, engravers, drawings, prints, Jovellanos, Ponz, Floridablanca, Casiri, Lozano, books of accounts, academic awards

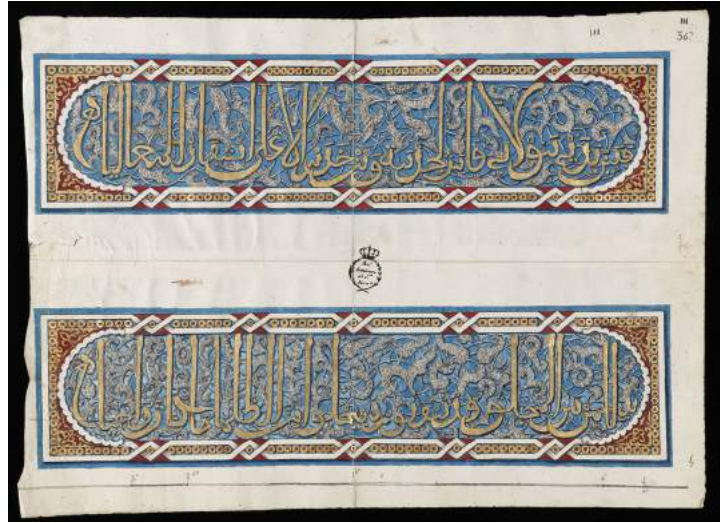
### Introductory Comments

The following quote appears in the Spanish translation of Christian Rieger’s (1714–1780) treatise on civil architecture, *Elementos de toda la arquitectura Civil* (1763): “There is much similarity between Gothic Architecture and the so-called Moorish Architecture of Spain, structures attributed to the Moors or the Arabs. Various monuments that still exist in Toledo, Seville, the Alhambra of Granada may serve as examples of this...”.<sup>1</sup> However, the Viennese Jesuit and scholar does not explicitly mention these monuments in his *Universae Architecturae civilis elementa brevibus recentiorum observationibus illustrata* (1756).<sup>2</sup> In fact, this comment was inserted into the Spanish version by Rieger’s translator and fellow Jesuit Miguel Benavente (d. 1793), a detail which has misled a number of authors given that the “Moorish or Arabic” monuments of Toledo, Seville and Granada are not mentioned in the original. Indeed, Rieger simply makes the following terse statement in relation to Gothic architecture: “Architecturae huic affinis est illa, quam Mauricam vocant, Mauris & Arabibus tributam”.<sup>3</sup> Logically speaking, it is doubtful that Rieger, a man of science<sup>4</sup> and a keen observer of the mathematical and geometrical essence of the classical architecture he systematically set out in his texts and images, was even aware of the existence of the Alhambra or knew of the monuments in Toledo, Seville and Granada. These references would have been included by his translator, Benavente, because the matter of Spain’s Moorish antiquities had caught the attention of the Royal Academy of History and the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid<sup>5</sup> by this time and, like other academics, he must have heard about these new historiographical developments and the growing interest in their study and diffusion (Fig. 1).

When Rieger arrived in Spain, he was engaged as the royal cosmographer to Charles III (King of Spain 1759–1788) and employed as a professor of mathematics at the Imperial College of Madrid. The San Fernando Royal Academy named him *académico de honor* [honorary academician] in 1761 before appointing him as *académico de mérito* [academician of merit] in Architecture in 1762, thus granting him a status reserved for artists of the very highest standing. *Elementos de toda*

**Figure 1**

Sánchez Sarabia, Epigraphic consoles with arabesque motifs in the *Sala de las Dos Hermanas* [Hall of the Two Sisters], Palace of the Alhambra, 1763. Laid paper, 345 × 475 mm. RABASF museum archive ref. MA/490. Photograph: P. Linés



*la architectura Civil* was published in the same year; Benavente dedicated the collection to the Academy, which also earned him the title of honorary academician. Rieger returned to Vienna in 1765, shortly before the Esquilache Riots in 1766. The next year, Charles III expelled the Jesuits from Spain, including Benavente, who had been implicated in the riots.

These dates are worth noting because they coincide with certain events that are relevant to this article and the subject at hand, including the visit to Granada in 1766 by Ahmed al-Ghazzal, the secretary and ambassador to the Sultan Mohammed III (1757–1790), and the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Commerce between Spain and Morocco (1767),<sup>6</sup> events which occurred while the *Antigüedades Árabes de España*<sup>7</sup> project was in its infancy. As I understand, the academic study of these antiquities was not motivated by some kind of fresh, romantic impetus. Instead, it was driven by a more restrained exercise of enlightened reasoning, whereby the Alhambra of Granada and the Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba were approached with the same composure with which the classical antiquities had been studied before them. The term “antiquities,” no longer tied exclusively to the adjective “classical” in the sense of *antiquitas*, was now also used to describe Arab or Moorish architecture for the first time (Fig. 2).

This gives us a better understanding of how the drawings and prints in the *Antigüedades árabes de España* collection are to be interpreted. The vast majority of the exemplars in the corpus (excluding those by Sánchez Sarabia) display the kind of objectivity that served to depersonalise the artists. Exposed to the tyranny of the ruler and the compass,

**Figure 2**

Sánchez Sarabia, Nasrid capital from the *Salón de Comares* [Hall of Ambassadors], Palace of the Alhambra, 1762. Black ink; gold leaf; blue, red, green and purple tempera; grey gouache. Laid paper, 470 × 347 mm. RABASF museum archive ref. MA/470. Photograph: P. Linés



the subjects—drawn so many times in the architectural halls of the Academy—were all approached with the precision and exactitude that can only be expected of an academic exercise in the eighteenth century. At this point, it should be noted that the drawings and prints in the *Antigüedades árabes de España* corpus, conceived with the utmost aesthetic restraint and attention to accuracy, were commissioned and reproduced primarily on the basis of their historical importance. The formally accurate nature of the project surpasses the more basic drawings by Henry Swinburne (1743–1803), as illustrated in his *Travels through Spain, in the years 1775 and 1776: in which several monuments of Roman and Moorish architecture ...* (1779),<sup>8</sup> which were a real cause of

concern for Jovellanos, because they were published ahead of the Academy's own drawings.

Given the important role of the secretary of the San Fernando Academy in the initial stages of this long process of research and publication, there were two key protagonists in the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project between 1756 and 1804: Ignacio de Hermosilla y Sandoval (1718–1794),<sup>9</sup> as the project's main advisor, and Tiburcio de Aguirre y Ayanz (1707–1767), the Vice Protector of the Academy,<sup>10</sup> both of whom played key roles in the major milestones of the endeavour.

### **Sánchez Sarabia and the First Images of the Alhambra**

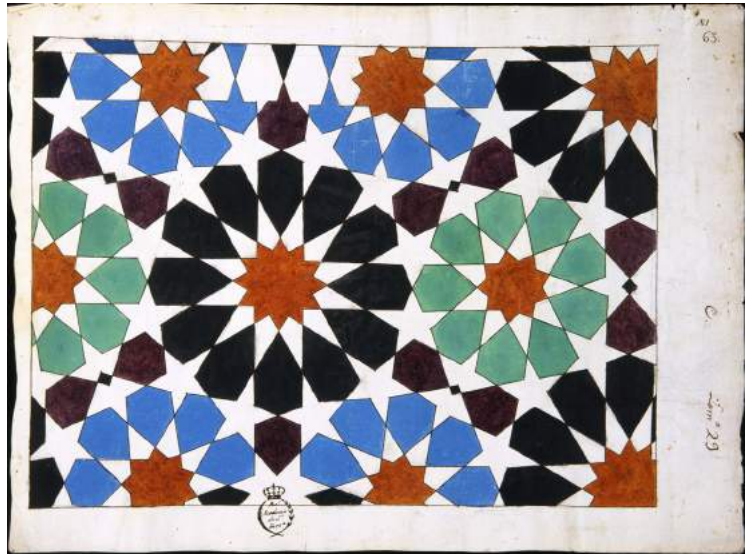
The *Antigüedades árabes de España* project all began with the Academy's resolution (on 14 October 1756)<sup>11</sup> “to conserve and spread the word of our Antiquities and Monuments, particularly those which are more vulnerable to deterioration and likely to perish over time: And since I [Ignacio de Hermosilla] have highlighted that this applies to various fresco Portraits of Granada's Moorish Monarchs painted on certain ceilings of the Alhambra Castle, wearing the typical dress of the time.”<sup>12</sup> the President of the Chancery of Granada was called upon to engage the artist Manuel Sánchez Jiménez to reproduce high-precision paper copies of the portraits of Moorish monarchs referred to above. When this assignment failed to materialise, the Vice Protector wrote to the governor of the Alhambra in 1760 to tell him to find another artist in Granada who would be able to take on the task. Painter and architect Diego Sánchez Sarabia (1704–1779)<sup>13</sup> was chosen to produce copies of the paintings of the Hall of Kings in oil on canvas, and these paintings are now kept in the Academy's museum. Sánchez Sarabia, who played an indisputable role in the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project and was subsequently mistreated by the same Academy, sent his first three canvases of the Granada monarchs on 1 December 1760. Upon receiving the work, the Academy expanded the assignment and asked Sarabia to complete plans and drawings of the “architectural monuments” of the Alhambra (Fig. 3), along with the corresponding descriptions, as well as copies of the Arabic inscriptions located at various points in the Alhambra, all drawn on the same paper so that they could be bound for convenience and ease of use, i.e. without any intention for them to be published at that time.

The Academy's objective and satisfaction with the work completed by Sánchez Sarabia is reflected in the following excerpt from the *Summary* of the Academy's minutes from 1763:

The Arabian Palace, which remains in the Alhambra of Granada, and the palace commissioned by Emperor Charles V of Spain in the Alhambra have also been the focus of the Academy. Both

**Figure 3**

Sánchez Sarabia, Tiled panel in the *Mirador de Lindaraja*, Palace of the Alhambra 1762. Black ink and brown, blue and green tempera. Laid paper, 350 × 475 mm. RABASF museum archive ref. MA/497. Photograph: P. Linés



buildings are notable, and the Arabian palace, despite suffering the ravages of time, is one of a kind: for the uniqueness of its ornaments, which deviate entirely from the established conventions of Architecture, for its age, the skill and delicate nature of its work, and finally for the distribution of its parts. Keen to prevent the impending ruin of the building from erasing memories so worthy of being preserved, the Academy commissioned a number of oil paintings of the ancient paintings of its vaults, along with extremely precise floor plans of all its levels: extremely detailed elevations of all its courtyards, parts and façades: large-scale designs of its adornments and inscriptions, showing their colours and all the other remnants of the antiquities still to be found in the building. The same exacting approach was employed to the commissioning of the plans, sections and elevations of the Palace of Charles V and its admirable bas-reliefs, all of which were completed by Diego Sánchez Saravia, academician of merit, who executed his task to the full satisfaction of the Academy and presented this great work in two bound volumes, with an additional volume explaining in very precise and attentive detail the substance, preparation, construction of the Arabian Palace, as well as other details. In praise of this work, suffice to say that the King was so delighted with the images that he ordered the Academy to preserve them, requesting that copies of two large Vessels, decorated in the Arab style and full of inscriptions in the language, be sent to His Majesty (as indeed was done).<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 4**

Sánchez Sarabia, Epigraphic decoration in the Court of the Lions, Palace of the Alhambra, 1763. Gold leaf with blue, green and red tempera. Laid paper, 473 × 347 mm. RABASF, Museum archive ref. MA/510. Photograph: P. Linés



The testimony provided by Richard Twiss reveals how zealously Sánchez Sarabia guarded his drawings of the Alhambra. In his *Travels through Portugal and Spain, in 1772–1773*, Twiss describes in detail the task that the Academy assigned to Diego Sánchez and his encounter with him in Granada, when he requested “to purchase copies of all finished drawings, but Don Diego had positive orders from his majesty not to part with them, and it was with much difficulty, that I persuaded him to consent to my copying the general view of the Alhambra”.<sup>15</sup> At any rate, it is more than likely that the general view of the Alhambra, which was reproduced by Twiss, redrawn by Samuel Hieronymus Grimm, and engraved by Victor Marie Picot is based on the original by Sánchez Sarabia.<sup>16</sup> May Sánchez Sarabia have been in possession of other works or copies, which he failed to send to the Academy at this later point in time? There are many questions yet to be answered regarding the Academy’s rupture with the Granada painter.

Of all the pictures drawn by Sánchez Sarabia, all that remain are the magnificent drawings of the two vases mentioned earlier (one depicting shields, another with gazelles), of which Charles III was so fond, along with the odd capital and a number of drawings relating to the inscriptions (Fig. 4). This is because the architectural drawings themselves were used as mere drafts, and they would be later revised and ultimately destroyed by the committee that travelled to Granada in 1766 in order to “rectify the designs by the painter Sarabia.”<sup>17</sup>

#### **Military Engineer José de Hermosilla: A New Plan**

The Academy began to question the accuracy of the drawings by Sánchez Sarabia, acting on misgivings provoked by Vicente Pignatelli (d.



1770),<sup>18</sup> an extremely influential ordained priest who played a major role in the internal life of the San Fernando Academy, of which he was appointed to the role of Vice Protector. The news was documented by Jovellanos (1744–1811)<sup>19</sup> in a well-known report (1786) published at a later date. Here, Jovellanos provides a summary of the difficulties encountered in the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project, noting that Vicente Pignatelli, who was entrusted with reviewing the work sent by Sarabia, "opened the Academy's eyes, helping the Academy to realise that a work of art in which its reputation is compromised should not be published unless it is finished and perfect."<sup>20</sup> He also makes reference to Pignatelli's comments at the *Junta Particular* of 14 March 1764: "[he alleged that] the Arab Palace was drawn without intelligence of perspective, and thus it was not suitable for publication unless it was corrected or unless another amended view was produced by an astute person: he said that it was missing another [architectural] view of the main façade of the Palace of Charles V, and, finally, that all the drawings lacked taste and grace [...]."<sup>21</sup>

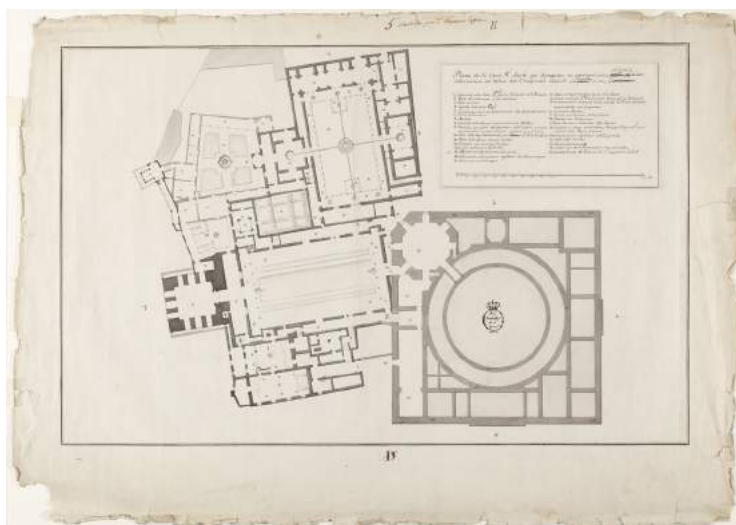
With the Granada artist losing the confidence of the Academy in spite of the public pronouncements to the contrary, and with plans to publish projects about a number of Spanish monuments that detracted from the continuity of their Moorish counterparts, these concerns halted the publication of the work approved in 1762 with Sarabia's drawings. Years passed and, in 1766, the Academy instructed a committee led by José de Hermosilla y Sandoval (1715–1776),<sup>22</sup> the brother of the Academy's secretary, to travel to Granada to revise Sarabia's drawings of the Moorish monuments there. He was to be accompanied by Juan de Villanueva (1739–1811)<sup>23</sup> and Juan Pedro Arnal (1735–1805),<sup>24</sup> two young architects who had been engaged as draftsmen (Figs. 5–8). The trip was subsequently extended to Cordoba and took place between October 1766 and April 1767.

### The World of the Engravers

With the assignment complete and the committee back in Madrid, the new drawings were submitted to the Academy in October 1767, where they were distributed among various engravers in order to commence preparations for work on the plates and the engravings. This marked the start of another slow and not entirely well-managed stage of the project, since although the engravers were more or less connected to the Academy, there was no established structure in place to ensure the smooth running of the project. This would continue to be the case until 1789, with the founding of the *Real Calcografía* [Royal Chalcography]. Juan Bernabé Palomino served as the Academy's master copperplate engraver from 1752 and supervised certain pieces of work-in-progress, checking that the drawings had been reduced in size to fit the plates. This partial supervision was supplemented by expert reports by engraver

**Figure 5**

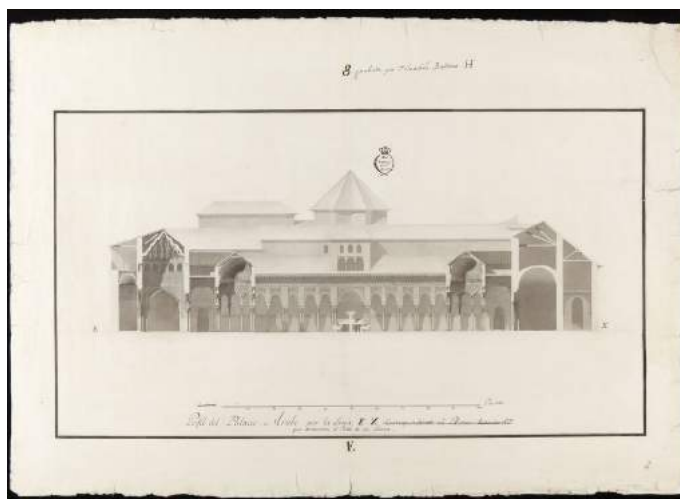
José de Hermosilla, Floor plan of the Nasrid Palace and the Palace of Charles V, Palace of the Alhambra, 1766-1767. Black ink and grey gouache. Laid paper, 530 × 760 mm. RABASF, museum archive ref. MA/542. Photograph: P. Linés



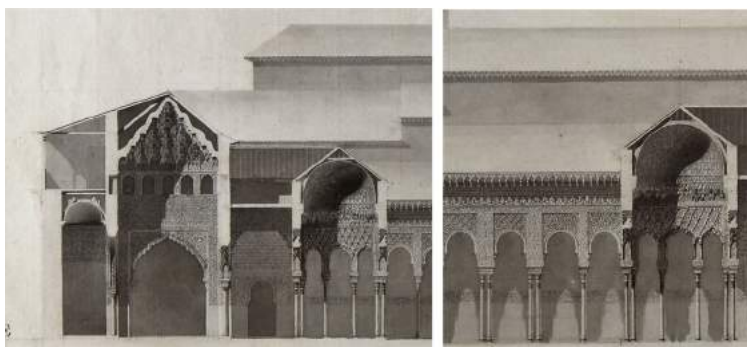
Jerónimo Antonio Gil, one of the *hijos de la Academia* [sons of the Academy], i.e. a professional trained in the Academy, as opposed to those who had been trained elsewhere and were involved in the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project, among them the exceptional Manuel Salvador Carmona, who trained in Paris and succeeded Juan Bernabé Palomino as Director of Copperplate Engraving. There were also contributions from other excellent engravers such as Tomás Francisco Prieto, who also served as Master Engraver at the Academy from 1752 and bore the titles “Sculptor of Medals, Chief Engraver of the Royal Seals of His Majesty and the Royal Palace, Chief Engraver of the Spanish Mint.” Tomás Francisco Prieto was also responsible for the delicate engraving of two beautiful Nasrid vases drawn by Sánchez Sarabia, for which the Academy paid him 12,000 *reales* in 1777, acknowledging the “care” taken in producing this piece of work. Now, although the engraving is excellent, the original colour versions by Sánchez Sarabia are more beautiful than the engraved work, and the inclusion of pedestals in the latter detracts a certain grace from the vases (Figs. 9–11). Again, it must be said Sánchez Sarabia’s original drawings of the ceramic tiles, capitals, inscriptions and vases had a truly remarkable force, colour and light, an effect that is dampened somewhat in the engravings (Figs. 12 and 13). It is a shame that we cannot see his architectural drawings, which—despite lacking the more precise, scientific approach of those produced by Hermosilla—we can only assume were very beautiful. Going by the geometrical drawings we have seen by Sánchez Sarabia, it is not difficult to imagine something similar and proportionate to their asymmetry of form and colour in his architectural drawings.

**Figure 6**

Juan de Villanueva, Longitudinal section of the *Patio de los Leones* [Court of the Lions], Palace of the Alhambra, 1766–1767. Black ink and grey gouache. Laid paper, 540 × 765 mm, RABASF museum archive ref. MA/540. Photograph: P. Linés

**Figures 7 and 8**

Juan de Villanueva, Details of the longitudinal section of the Court of the Lions, Palace of the Alhambra, 1766–1767. Photograph: P. Linés



The engravers proceeded to submit their work on different dates, preparing the plates, copying the originals and reducing the scale of the drawings, such that each drawing, plate, sample and engraving has its own story, date and price. The story of the project’s execution is laden with intriguing pieces of information, including an account of the Academy paying Mariano Sánchez 600 *reales* in June 1771 for “the work and cost of scaffolding he erected to draw one of the painted vaults of the Alhambra of Granada.”<sup>25</sup> Does this suggest that the Academy intended to revise or produce new drawings of the vaults in the *Sala de los Reyes* after the paintings had been completed by Sánchez Sarabia and the drawings by Hermosilla?

**Figure 9**

Sánchez Sarabia, Drawing of the Nasrid Vase of the Shields, Palace of the Alhambra, 1762-1763. Black ink; grey gouache; blue, ochre, yellow and red tempera. Laid paper, 475 × 348 mm. RABASF museum archive ref. MA/523. Photograph: P. Linés



Certain pieces in the collection remained unfinished for years in the period between 1767, when the first plates were engraved, and 1775, by which time the bulk of the work was complete. These unfinished plates included the “Site Map of Generalife,” which was unlabelled despite the fact that the original drawing kept in the Academy had been prepared with a legend and letters identifying the names of different areas (Figs. 14 and 15). The labels were all the work of the engraver Nemesio López, a student of Juan Bernabé Palomino, who contributed various engravings, including the floor plan of the cathedral in Granada. Ignacio de Hermosilla, the sole protagonist to give a sense of continuity to the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project, stepped down from his role as secretary of the Academy in 1776, having been accompanied from the start by engraver and San Fernando Academy custodian Juan Moreno.

**Figure 10**

Copper-clad steel plate, intaglio, engraved by Tomás Francisco Prieto with the *Jarrón Nazarí de los Escudos* [Nasrid Vase of the Shields] (1775-1777), 486 × 339 mm. RABASF, Chalcography, ref. 2589. Photograph: P. Linés



We will dedicate a few lines to Juan Moreno in the following, since it is thanks to his books of accounts that we have gained valuable day-to-day information about the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project.

**The Accounts of Juan Moreno**

One of the most important (albeit lesser known) figures involved in the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project was the engraver Juan Moreno y Sánchez (1715–1795).<sup>26</sup> As custodian of the San Fernando academy, he was the right-hand man and confidant to various secretaries, from Ignacio de Hermosilla to Isidoro Bosarte, as well as being responsible for managing the Academy's accounts.<sup>27</sup> Curiously, this facilitating role was one of the legally stipulated aspects of his work as the Academy custodian, i.e. as the person responsible for the Royal Academy building and its functioning. Bédat<sup>28</sup> highlights this detail, but without ever mentioning Moreno's training and career as an engraver, just as those who talk about his work as an engraver fail to link him to the important administrative role he played at the Academy. Indeed, Juan Moreno was much more than one would expect of a simple custodian, first in the Casa de la Panadería municipal building in Plaza Mayor, and then in what is now the building of the Palace of Goyeneche, on Calle de Alcalá in Madrid.

**Figure 11**

Plate XIX from the *Antigüedades Árabes de España* (Part I). Engraved by Tomás Francisco Prieto and printed by Hipólito Ricarte. Photograph: P. Linés

**Figure 12**

Sánchez Sarabia, Tiled plinth from the *Salón de Comares*, in the Palace of the Alhambra, 1763. Black ink with blue, green and ochre tempera. Laid paper, 475 × 347 mm. *RABASF* museum archive ref. MA/485. Photograph: P. Linés



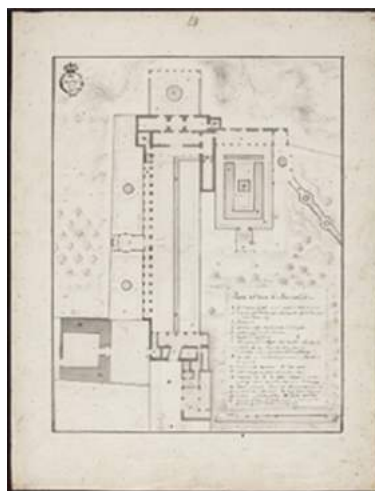
Moreno was involved in this project from the outset, for obvious reasons: he was entrusted with managing the “expenses and payments for the work on the Arab Antiquities of the cities of Granada and Cordoba, which the Academy has decided to have printed ...,”<sup>29</sup> as he explained in a note accompanying the balance sheet, which he presented to the

**Figure 13**

Detailed view of plate XXII from the *Antigüedades Árabes de España* (Part II). Engraved by Juan Antonio Salvador Carmona (1767). Photograph: P. Linés

**Figure 14**

José de Hermosilla, “Plano del Sitio de Generalife” [Map of the site of the Generalife], 1766-1767. Black ink and grey gouache. Laid paper, 472 x 361 mm. Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando [RABASF], Museum archive ref. MA/535. Photograph: P. Linés

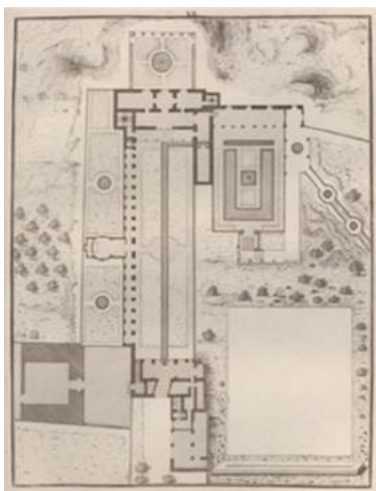


Academy in February 1768 (even though the first payments were made prior to that date, on 22 September 1766, and the last payments were made on 20 April 1767). These expenses rose to 65,632 *reales de vellón* and 16 *maravedies*. They included the trip from Madrid to Granada to Cordoba and back to Madrid, as expenses for José de Hermosilla, Arnal and Villanueva (12,000 *reales*), petty costs for Hermosilla (1,400 *reales*), and the bonus paid to Villanueva and Arnal for their work (12,000 *reales*). They also covered expenses for labourers and work required in order to lift the drawings, measuring rods, boards, paper and pencils, and the cost of the first copper plates distributed among various engravers, who received an advance for their work.

One particular transaction that stands out is Moreno’s “payment of 30 *reales* to Antonio Hidalgo, for carrying a marble capital from Granada for the Academy,”<sup>30</sup> specifically the “tasteless Corinthian capital found in Granada’s Generalife by Joseph de Hermosilla,”<sup>31</sup> which is

**Figure 15**

Plate XX from Part I of the *Antigüedades Árabes de España*, with the "Plano del Sitio de Generalife" [Map of the site of the Generalife], "unlabelled, drawn by José de Hermosilla and engraved by Juan Minguet (1771). Photograph: P. Linés



mentioned in the old Inventories of the Academy and appears on plate XVII of the *Antigüedades árabes de España* corpus, and was featured in the Academy's sculpture collections.

### **The Count of Floridablanca and Issues with the Edition**

When Ignacio de Hermosilla was appointed to the role of First Officer of the Universal Board of the Indies in 1776, he had to step down as the secretary of the San Fernando academy. He was succeeded as secretary by Antonio Ponz, almost contiguous to the appointment of the Academy's new Protector, the Count of Floridablanca (1728–1808),<sup>32</sup> who had been an honorary academican since 1773 but stepped into this new role when he was named first secretary of state in 1777. However, almost another ten years passed before Floridablanca instructed the Academy to publish the existing corpus of the *Antigüedades árabes de España* in 1786. The Academy responded to this request, citing the aforementioned report by Jovellanos and arguing that it would be inappropriate to publish the plates in their present condition. Instead, the Academy insisted that it was important to explain the content and historical importance of the collection and sought to document "the principles and good taste with which the Arabs crafted the architecture and developed the scientific analysis of these monuments...."<sup>33</sup> The Academy proposed that the project be completed with a new trip "to Granada, to take new measurements, and to make other completely crucial observations that are currently lacking; indeed, we do not know the size, the purpose, the location, or even the subject matter of a large number of the monuments [...] It would take a



skilled, active, young architect a matter of months to execute this assignment.”<sup>34</sup> The report by Jovellanos was of little or no use, so under pressure from Floridablanca, the new secretary Antonio Ponz (1725–1792)<sup>35</sup> wrote a brief, detached, anonymous introduction to an initial group of plates printed by engraver and printer Hipólito Ricarte,<sup>36</sup> who contributed to the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project and had been on a scholarship in Paris from the Academy between 1763 and 1766 to “learn the craft of printing.”<sup>37</sup> Ricarte’s print run of two hundred exemplars from the *Antigüedades árabes de España* corpus was completed in 1788, and on 16 January 1789, the *Gaceta de Madrid* [Madrid Gazette] advertised the collection being released by the *Imprenta Real* [Royal Printing House], which retained four per cent of the sale price. By the end of the first half of the year, twenty-four sets of prints had been sold for 320 *reales* each, after which time sales slowed down until Part II of the collection was published in 1804, with most of the prints accompanied by copies of the Arabic inscriptions along with their translations into Latin and Spanish.

This brings us to the Royal Academy of History, where coins and Arabic inscriptions were also being studied around this time.<sup>38</sup> Lending his expert assistance to this research was Miguel Casiri (1710–1791),<sup>39</sup> who was undoubtedly one of the key contributors to the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project, not only on the strength of his work within the Royal Academy of History, but also because he revised the drawings and plates commissioned by the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. With Casiri taking his time to submit his revisions, Jovellanos proposed that the work should be finished by José Antonio Banqueri, a Franciscan and Arabist from Granada, but in the end, it was assigned to Pablo Lozano (1749–1822),<sup>40</sup> who in turn revised Casiri’s work, studied the inscriptions, and was responsible for the final wording published in Part II of the *Antigüedades árabes de España* (1804), the full title of which is *Antigüedades árabes de España. Parte segunda, que contiene los letreros*

**Figure 16**

Sánchez Sarabia, Tiled panel in the *Mirador de Lindaraja*, Palace of the Alhambra, 1763. Black ink with blue, green and ochre tempera. Laid paper, 345 × 705 mm. RABASF, Museum archive ref. MA/506. Photograph: P. Linés



*arábigos que quedan en el Palacio de la Alhambra de Granada, y algunos de la ciudad de Córdoba.* [Part II, Containing the Arabic Signs Remaining in the Palace of the Alhambra of Granada, and Others from the City of Cordoba.] Lozano, another one of the project's indisputable contributors, included a preliminary note to the 1804 edition published by the *Imprenta Real*, providing an excellent summary of the lengthy process involved in the publication and use of these prints by other authors. Four years later, only forty copies of Part I remained, along forty-nine copies of the Part II, and "four hundred copies of the explanatory notes to Part II," which were never sold (Fig. 16).<sup>41</sup>

Goya owned a full, bound copy of the *Antigüedades árabes de España*, which he gave to the Academy as a gift in 1808. William Morris acquired the complete works for his formidable private library at a later (unknown) date, and the specimen is now kept in the Getty Research Institute.

## Notes

1. Christian Rieger, *Elementos de toda la arquitectura Civil*, trans. Miguel Benavente (Madrid: Joaquín Ibarra, 1763), 13.
2. Christian Rieger, *Universae Architecturae civilis elementa brevibus recentiorum observationibus illustrata* (Vienna: Joannis Thomae Trattner, 1756).
3. *Ibid.*, 10.
4. Stanislav Južnič, "Spanish King's Astronomer Rieger," *Quaderns d'història de l'enginyeria*, (UPC), XI (2010): 199–219.
5. The *Real Academia de la Historia* [Royal Academy of History] was founded by Philip V (1738). The San Fernando academy, known today as the *Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando* [San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts], was established by Ferdinand VI (1752).
6. Manuel C. Fera García, "El Tratado hispano-marroquí de amistad y comercio de 1767 en el punto de mira del traductor (I). Contextualización histórica: encuentro y desencuentros," *Sendebarr* 16 (2005): 3–26.
7. The first project dedicated to the *Antigüedades árabes de España* is attributed to Delfín Rodríguez, *La memoria frágil. José de Herosilla y las Antigüedades árabes de España* (Madrid: Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Madrid, 1992), along with new additions to the catalogue for the exhibition entitled *El legado de al-Ándalus. Las Antigüedades Árabes de España en los dibujos de la Academia*, which explores the paintings attributed to Antonio Almagro, as well as other collaborations: Antonio Almagro, ed., *El legado de al-Ándalus: las antigüedades árabes en los dibujos de la Academia* (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando y Fundación Mapfre, 2015, y Granada, 2016). This

article includes unpublished information from the *Libros de cuentas anuales* (1763–1808), the annual account books stored in the archives of the San Fernando academy.

8. Henry Swinburne, *Travels through Spain, in the years 1775 and 1776: in which several monuments of Roman and Moorish architecture are illustrated by accurate drawings taken on the spot by Henry Swinburne, Esq.* (London: P. Elmsly, 1779).
9. Ignacio de Hermostilla was a presbyter and a student of Granada’s Colegio Imperial de San Miguel, a permanent member of the Royal Academy of History, where he was appointed to the role of censor in 1754, as well as the Royal Spanish Academy (1764), and the San Fernando academy, where he served as secretary between 1753 and 1776. Ignacio de Hermostilla was an educated man who sought to achieve modernity through gaining a better understanding of the past. Passionate about the concept of “antiquity,” as demonstrated by his historical and archaeological studies, he even funded excavation work, such as the Talavera la Vieja project in Cáceres, whose Roman antiquities and inscriptions he read about in a report from the Royal Academy of History (1762). Hermostilla had already come across other similarly “ancient” documentation in the Islamic strand of our medieval history some years earlier, providing a handwritten “Disertación cronológica sobre la Entrada de los Árabes en España” [Chronological Thesis on the Entry of the Moors into Spain] in 1752 and his “Relación de documentos sobre inscripciones árabes que entregó a la Academia Lorenzo Diéguez,” a list of documents about Moorish inscriptions, which he submitted to the Lorenzo Diéguez Academy in 1768. Ignacio de Hermostilla was the main influence behind the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project. He also suggested that the project be relaunched following the crisis of confidence in the drawings produced by Sánchez Sarabia, appointing his brother José to lead a committee on a research trip to Granada and Cordoba (1766–1767).
10. Tiburcio de Aguirre y Ayanz de Navarra, chaplain of the *Convento de las Descalzas Reales* [Convent of the Barefoot Royal nuns], was entrusted with the education of Prince Charles, the future King Charles IV of Spain. He was also a member of the Royal Spanish Academy (Academy of Languages), as well as becoming Councillor (1752) and Vice Protector (1753–1767) of the San Fernando academy.
11. The “Libros de actas de las sesiones particulares, ordinarias, generales, extraordinarias, públicas y solemnes” [Minutes of the individual, ordinary, general, extraordinary, public and formal meetings] of the Academy, which relate to this project and cover the period from 1756 to 1818, can be viewed *online* here [in Spanish]: <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmctx3s6>.

12. Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando [RABASF] archives, *Libros de actas...*, 1756, sig. 3–81, ff. 52 r-52 v.
13. Diego Sánchez Sarabia [Saravia] completed his assignment to the complete satisfaction of the San Fernando Academy, and after submitting his drawings and texts about the Alhambra in 1762, he was appointed *académico de mérito* in painting, a prestigious title reserved for painters of the highest artistic merit. This appointment bolstered the artist's reputation in the Granadian milieu, where he signed his projects "Didacus Sánchez, Sculptor, Pictor et Architectus." He also signed the drawings that Hübner later placed in the Royal Academy of History (1768) in Latin. These drawings depicted the excavations of the Alcazaba led by Flores in Granada, with the discoveries from the city's Roman forum, where Arnal and Villanueva also produced drawings during their sojourn in the city. See: Manuel Sotomayor and Margarita Orfila, "El foro de la Granada romana. Planos, plantas, alzados y dibujos," *Cuadernos de Prehistoria y Arqueología de la Universidad de Granada*, 21 (2011): 349–403: Sánchez Sarabia played a part in the founding of the *Escuela de Dibujo de Granada 1777*, the school of illustration that sowed the seed for what would become the *Academia de Bellas Artes Granada* [Academy of Fine Arts]. For more information on the artists who contributed to the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project, cf. Pedro Navascués: "Los autores: arquitectos, pintores y dibujantes," in *El legado de al-Ándalus*, ed. Almagro (2015), 63–79.
14. "Resumen de las actas de la Academia desde 3 de julio de 1763," in *Distribución de los premios concedidos por el rey N.S. a los discípulos de las Nobles Artes, hecha por la Real Academia de San Fernando en la Junta General de 3 de agosto de 1766* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de Eliseo Sánchez, 1766), 10 and 11.
15. Richard Twiss, *Travels through Portugal and Spain, in 1772–1773* (London: Robinson, 1775), 245–6.
16. In *Alhambra. Imágenes de ciudad y paisaje, hasta 1800* (Granada: Fundación El Legado Andalusi, 2008), 185, Antonio Gámiz writes: "Twiss acknowledges that he plagiarised [the work from] Diego Sánchez Sarabia," whereas in fact he only states that he managed to convince him to let him copy the work.
17. Eugenio Llaguno and Juan Agustín Ceán-Bermúdez, *Noticias de los arquitectos y arquitectura de España...*, vol. IV, (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1829), 266.
18. Vicente Pignatelli continued his military career but was later ordained a priest, achieving the status of Archdeacon of Belchite in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Zaragoza. He was the Elder Chaplain of the *Real convento de la Encarnación*, a convent of the order of Recolet Augustines located in Madrid. He came into contact with the San Fernando academy and attended the *Juntas*

from 1759, where he “voted on all matters, his sole title being that of his intrinsic merit, that of his consummate expertise in the Arts, and that of his refined prudence in matters of administration,” and contributed to the syllabus plans. He was named an honorary academician, then an academician of merit in painting (1768), before finally being appointed Vice Protector of the academy in 1770. He was also a member of the Royal Spanish Academy.

19. Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos was one of the most outstanding figures of the Spanish Enlightenment. A man of letters and a political figure, he moved into the world of law after initially commencing his ecclesiastical training. He relocated from the Criminal Court of Seville to Madrid upon his appointment as Magistrate of the Royal Family and Court (1778). He was infinitely curious about a variety of subjects, and his extensive training led to his appointment as a permanent member of the Royal Academy of San Fernando, the Royal Spanish Academy (1781), and the Royal Academy of History (1787). Goya painted a portrait of Jovellanos (1798), which is held in the Prado Museum.
20. *Obras de Don Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos*, vol. 3 (Madrid: F. de P. Mellado, 1848), 369.
21. This report is preceded by a preamble from 14 May 1786, addressed to the secretary of state, the Count of Floridablanca, who was the official Protector of the Academy at the time. The preamble, written in response to the order issued to the Academy for the antiquities of Granada and Cordoba to be published, provides a brief, intriguing introduction to the contents of the official report. The paragraphs included here are from volume III of the *Obras de Don Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos* (Madrid: F. de P. Mellado, 1845–1846), 369.
22. José (Agustín) de Hermosilla y Sandoval y Rojas abandoned his studies in Theology and Philosophy at the University of Seville in order to join the Royal Corps of Engineers in Madrid. He worked on the new Royal Palace of Madrid under the direction of Sacchetti. He was sent to Rome by royal appointment (1747–1751) and named Director of Architecture upon his return. His brother, Ignacio de Hermosilla y Sandoval, became the secretary of the Academy in 1753, the same year in which José de Hermosilla was appointed as the treasurer of the Academy. Following the strict “Instructions” of the Vice Protector of the San Fernando academy and his brother Ignacio, José de Hermosilla travelled to Granada and Cordoba between 1766 and 1767 in the company of Juan de Villanueva and Juan Pedro Arnal. The assignment only materialised once Hermosilla had renounced his role as Director of Architecture (1756), when he left the Academy to return to the Corps of Engineers with the “degree and occupation of Extraordinary Engineer of the Royal Forces” and

became actively involved in the military service. That same year, the Academy named him an honorary academician and an academician of merit in architecture. José de Hermosilla was responsible for the majority of the work in the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project, completing twenty-nine drawings, from the general views of the Alhambra to the drawings of the capitals and inscriptions found in Granada and Cordoba. His most important architectural accomplishments achieved in two projects in Madrid: the General Hospital (1756) and the Salón del Prado (1768).

23. Juan de Villanueva was the son of sculptor and academic Juan de Villanueva y Barbales, who was one of the first core members of the *Junta preparatoria* [Preparatory Assembly] of the Academy, where he served as Honorary Director of Sculpture from 1752. His son Juan studied at the San Fernando academy and was subsequently awarded an academic scholarship to study in Rome in 1758, where he remained until 1764. Upon his return, he accompanied Juan Pedro Arnal as a mere “draftsman” on the journey to Granada and Cordoba organised by the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, following the strict orders of José de Hermosilla to measure and draw the “Arab antiquities” of those cities. He was granted the status of academician of merit in architecture (1767) in recognition of his work on the preparatory drawings for the *Antigüedades árabes de España*. He designed various buildings, including the Prado Museum in Madrid, and ultimately became the General Director of the San Fernando Royal Academy in 1792.
24. Juan Pedro Arnal was the son of a silversmith who originally came from France and worked in Madrid for Philip V and Ferdinand VI of Spain. He initially studied at the Royal Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Toulouse, France 1762 before completing his education at the San Fernando academy, receiving various awards between 1763 and 1766. In his final year at the Academy, he embarked on a journey to Granada with Hermosilla and Villanueva to work on the drawings for the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project. Then, upon his return to Madrid, Arnal was granted the status of academician of merit (1767) on the strength of these drawings. He maintained close links with the Academy and its business, serving as General Director between 1801 and 1804. One of his projects worth mentioning here is the disappeared *Imprenta Real* (1783), where Part II of the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project was printed (1804).
25. RABASF archives, book of accounts for 1771. Receipt no. 4, p. 25 [17 June 1771]. Sig. 213/3.
26. Juan Moreno y Sánchez was a skilled engraver who began working at the San Fernando academy in 1745 and remained as

the academy's *conserje* [custodian] until his death. All of the Academy's payments were made through him, hence there is a wealth of valuable information in his books of accounts, including details of the expenses for the *Antigüedades árabes de España* project. In 1760, Juan Moreno took charge of the first drawings sent by Sánchez Sarabia in Granada, including copies of his paintings of the Moorish monarchs. According to the minutes of the *Junta* of 13 December 1760, these drawings were to be kept by the custodian so that the "scholarly, curious-minded people" could "see and examine" them, granting permission for them to be copied but not to be removed from the Academy (original quote cited in Spanish by Blanca Piquero in "Representaciones de las pinturas de la Sala de los Reyes de la Alhambra de Granada en el siglo XVIII: dos nuevos dibujos para las Antigüedades Árabes de España," *Anales de la Historia del Arte* (UCM) 4 (1994): 649–62). With regard to the plates engraved by José Moreno, we must remember that he is responsible for those relating to the floor plans of the Palace of the Alhambra and the Palace of Charles V, drawn by Arnal, as well as those of the tiled plinths and inscriptions sent by Sánchez Sarabia and then Hermosilla, which are included in Part II (1804). This list of inscriptions ought to include the inscription that José Murguía had started when he died in 1776, but which he never finished and was passed on to Juan Moreno: "Madrid, 7 January 1777. The custodian of the Academy is to be paid one thousand reales de vellón in return for the task of engraving the plate of Arab Inscriptions of Granada, which was left unfinished by José Murguía and has been approved by Jerónimo Gil and the librarian Miguel Casiri." [RABASF archives, book of accounts for 1777, receipt no. 22, p. 132, sig. 218/3].

27. Juan Moreno had a son named José (1748–1792) who was named an academician of merit in architecture and succeeded Antonio Ponz as secretary of the San Fernando academy.
28. Claude Bédat, *La Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (1744–1808)* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1989), 129–35 (1st ed., Toulouse: Universidad de Toulouse, 1974).
29. RABASF archives, book of accounts for 1767 [28 February 1768], p. 350, sig. 209/3.
30. RABASF archives, book of accounts for 1767 [13 March], p. 22, sig. 209/3.
31. "Hojas sueltas con una relación de obras de escultura..." [1804–1808], 2-57-7 f.; "Inventario de las alhajas y muebles existentes en la Real Academia de San Fernando..." [1804–1814], sig. 3-616, f. 121 v. The capital measured "one span and one inch in height."
32. José Moñino y Redondo, the Count of Floridablanca, served as a public prosecutor on the Council of Castile (1766) and Minister

- Plenipotentiary before the Holy See in Rome, where he played a key role in the suppression of the Society of Jesus. Upon his return in 1773, Charles III granted him the title of Count of Floridablanca. He was the first secretary of state (1777–1792), and he is behind a large number of the projects produced under the rule of Charles III. Goya painted a portrait of him which is held at the Banco de España (1783), with another portrait with the same date on display at the Prado Museum. Before becoming a member of the San Fernando academy, he was also a member of the Royal Academy of Jurisprudence and Legislation.
33. *Obras de Don Gaspar ...*, 1848, vol. 3: 364.
  34. *Ibid.*
  35. Antonio Ponz was a famous figure of the Spanish Enlightenment. He was particularly well-known for his *Viaje de España* (1772–1794), his journey to Spain spanning 18 volumes, but he was also a painter with an interest in archaeology, antiquities and art in general. He spent time in Italy between 1751 and 1759. He was named an associate member of the Real Academia de Historia in 1773; three years later, he became secretary of the San Fernando Royal Academy, which still houses the oil paints used for his “Self-portrait.”
  36. This introduction, which takes the form of a prologue and bears the title “Antigüedades Árabes de Granada y Córdoba” is unsigned, and the first few words demonstrate an unjust sense of disdain for Sánchez Sarabia, whose name is intentionally omitted: “A few years ago, a Painter from Granada spent time copying the Arab antiquities which still remain in the City....”
  37. *Distribución de los premios concedidos por el Rey Nuestro Señor a los discípulos de las Nobles Artes ...* (Madrid: Imp. de la Viuda de Ibarra, [1790]), 65.
  38. Fátima Martín Escudero, “El primer proyecto de publicación de un catálogo de moneda andalusí en España: Discurso y Tablas de Medallas Árabes de Miguel de Casiri,” *Documenta & Instrumenta* 8 (2010): 145–80; and *Las monedas de al-Ándalus. De actividad ilustrada a disciplina científica*, (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2011); Antonio Almagro Gorbea and Jorge Maier Allende, “Los inicios de la arqueología islámica,” in *De Pompeya al Nuevo Mundo. La Corona española y la arqueología en el siglo XVIII*, ed. M. Almagro Gorbea and J. Maier (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2012), 228–53. For the inscriptions, cf. José Miguel Puerta, “La epigrafía de la Alhambra y de la mezquita de Córdoba en los trabajos académicos del siglo XVIII,” in *El legado de al-Ándalus*, ed. Almagro (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando y Fundación Mapfre, 2015), 107–25.
  39. Miguel Casiri García (-Mijail Garziah al Ghaziri) was a Maronite priest who was born in Tripoly (Lebanon) and arrived in Spain



under the guardianship of Jesuit and confessor to Ferdinand VI, Francisco Rábago. He was a librarian in the monastery of San Lorenzo of El Escorial, whose collections of Arabic manuscripts he organised and published in his *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis* (1760 y 1770). He was also an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of History (1748) as well as a permanent member from 1767, the year in which he was appointed to the post of Royal Interpreter of Oriental Languages on the strength of his language skills (he spoke and translated formal Arabic and Arabic dialect, as well as Hebrew, Syrian, Chaldean, Latin, Italian and Spanish). Cf.: Manuel C. Ferial García, "El Tratado hispano-marroquí de amistad y comercio de 1767 en el punto de mira del traductor (II). Intervención de traductores e intérpretes: daguerrotipo de la trujamanería dieciochesca," *Sendebarr* 18 (2007): 5–44.

40. Pablo Lozano y Casela started out as a scribe in the Royal Library (1789) and became its chief librarian (1815). An expert in Latin and Arabic, he was appointed to the role of Secretary of Language Interpretation. Cf. Ingrid Cáceres Würsig, "Breve historia de la Secretaría de Interpretación de lenguas," *Meta* XLIX (2004): 610–28. Curiously, Lozano appears in catalogues and libraries as one of the authors of the work contained in the *Antigüedades árabes de España* as the first volume did not have an author or an imprint, proof of its somewhat chaotic management.
41. As well as the paintings by Sánchez Sarabia, the Academy's "Inventory of Objets d'art and Furniture ..." (1804–1814) includes various standalone prints from Granada and Cordoba, and the "Seiscientas veinte y dos portadas de las Antigüedades" [Six hundred and twenty-two Covers of the *Antiquities*]. RABASF archives, sig. 3–616.