



Núm. 23 (primavera 2024), 1-22 | ISSN 2014-7023

**A NAŞRID GUARDIAN IN RURAL AREAS:
ABRAHÍM EL BORAQUE ACCORDING
TO ARABIC ROMANISED DOCUMENTS (1475)**

UN GUARDIÀ NASSARITA EN ZONES RURALS: ABRAHÍM
EL BORAQUE SEGONS DOCUMENTACIÓ EN ÀRAB ROMANITZAT (1475)

Carmen Trillo San José
Universidad de Granada
ctrillo@ugr.es
ORCID: 0000-0002-3293-9560

© Carmen Trillo San José, 2024 – CC-BY-NC-SA

Rebut: 5 abril 2023 | Revisat: 10 juny de 2024 | Acceptat: 11 juny 2024
| Publicat: 21 juny 2024 | doi:10.1344/Svmma2024.23.2

Abstract

This study explores the figure of guardian (*alcaide*, del àrab *al-qā'id*), in rural areas, using Abrahím El Boraque as an example, and his patrimony in the Cubillas estate (Granada). Our source for this analysis was a collection of Romanised Arabic and Castilian documents from the 15th century, that refer to the Cubillas river, in the northwest of the Granada capital. Basing ourselves on this character, we created an image of these guardians: how they exercised their power, what their social and family relationships were, and the assets they had. This will help us provide specific data on a fundamental agent who is a link between the State and rural communities with the aim of better understanding this relationship in the Naşrid world.

Keywords

Naşrid kingdom of Granada, guardians, Romanised Arabic documents, rural properties.

Resum

Aquest estudi explora la figura del guardià (*alcaid*, de l'àrab *al-qā'id*), en zones rurals, prenent com a referent Abrahím El Boraque i el seu patrimoni a la finca de Cubillas (Granada). La nostra font per a aquesta anàlisi ha estat una col·lecció de documents en àrab romanitzat i castellà del segle XV, que fan referència al riu Cubillas, situat al nord-oest de la capital de Granada. Basant-nos en aquest personatge, hem creat una imatge d'aquests guardians: com exercien el seu poder, quines eren les seves relacions socials i familiars, i els béns que posseïen. Això ens ajudarà a proporcionar dades específiques sobre un agent fonamental que enllaça l'Estat i les comunitats rurals amb l'objectiu de comprendre millor aquest vincle en el món Naşrid.

Paraules clau

Regne Naşrid de Granada, guardians, documents en àrab romanitzat, propietats rurals.

1. Introduction

This work is part of the study of the final stage of Andalusian society during Naṣrid rule (13th-15th centuries).¹ Al-Andalus was defined as a tributary and commercial state (Amín 1974). It was thus characterised as a non-feudal social formation, with two adjoining contexts: the tributary State, which manifests itself in the city and through its public officials, and its rural communities, where *alquerias* (*qurà*, hamlets, often with mosques) were located. These two contexts interacted superficially, almost exclusively through the taxation that passed from one to the other. Guichard has studied the importance of the tribal environment in al-Andalus and, in particular, in rural areas, which implied a continuous tension and dialogue with State agents (GUICHARD 1976). According to him, the rural areas was given quite a bit of autonomy, without the interference of lords or public officials, except for the collection of taxes (GUICHARD 2001). Barceló insisted on this aspect by supporting the autonomy of peasants' work, ensuring it was not conditioned by the State or by feudal lords (BARCELÓ 1988). However, Manzano noted that these two contexts may not have been, in practice, so independent of each other, and that there could have been an intrusion of public officials on the *alquerias* (MANZANO 1998: 897). In a recent review on the relationship between power and peasant communities in Western Islam (MANZANO 2020), the aforementioned author stated that the *alquerias* were not self-sufficient but were well communicated with the territorial and social environment, especially through taxation. Certainly, the *alquerias* acted within broader political, economic and social relations, which did not prevent certain aspects, such as the arrangement of territory, organisation of agriculture and management of water, among others, from functioning with certain degree of autonomy, as still seen in the Naṣrid period (TRILLO 2010).

For this stage, several authors have warned of the weakness of family ties within rural communities. Seco de Lucena noted that inhabitants of the Naṣrid kingdom of Granada were identified more by their geographic *nisba* than their clan or tribe (SECO 1961: XLI). Acién also noted that there was a lack of correspondence between the tribal place name of the *alqueria* and the name of the residents who lived there; his explanation for this was a growing practice of exogamy and migration, facilitating inheritances of lands over to owners who were no longer residents in that area (ACIÉN 1984: 49). Guichard emphasised how the tribal element in the Naṣrid kingdom seemed very diluted, as it behaved more like a European monarchy with

1. This publication has been co-financed with reference project P18-RT-3588 "The peri-urban area of an Islamic society: La Vega de Granada (14th–16th centuries)", granted by the Ministry of University, Research and Innovation, and FEDER funds, directed by Carmen Trillo. Two doctoral thesis (SÁNCHEZ 2021, SUÁREZ 2022), and several other studies on the subject have been carried out within this project (TRILLO 2020, TRILLO, ESPINAR 2022).

its territorial stability and, despite continuous internal conflicts, due to the permanence of the Banū Naṣr dynasty (GUICHARD 2020).

As we can see, then, a significant number of authors emphasise the difference between the Naṣrid period and previous epochs in al-Andalus in terms of the tribal nature of their society. We believe that this loss of tribality in social and family relationships could have been a result of the growing urban development and the continuous Castilian threat on its borders. Both factors could be a manifestation of a State that was doing more to control the rural areas, especially regarding taxes, but also from economic, social and ideological perspectives. On this basis, medium-sized or small cities played an essential role in the State's control of the rural territory, such as Baza, Guadix, Loja, Almuñécar and Alhama in the province of Granada, Purchena and Vera in Almeria, and Antequera, Ronda, Velez Malaga and Marbella in Malaga (MAZZOLI-GUINARD 2000: 337–387). Because most these *mudun* (plural of *madīna*) had been established in the Taifa period (11th century), the emergence of urban characteristics and the pressure on the peri-urban area probably also arises from that moment (WATSON 1998: 276-282, SARR 2010: 199–200). This state presence was personalised by its public officials, such as the qadis² and guardians, in both the urban and rural areas. In Sharq al-Andalus between the 11th and 13th centuries, Guichard noted that they were agents who were characterised by being highly dependent on the central power, as shown by their appointment by the king, their geographical mobility and their seemingly shallow local roots (GUICHARD 2001: 496–501).

In this context, we chose to study La Vega de Granada to explore the relationship between the city and the countryside, and between the State and rural communities. We believe that this association could be different from that seen in more rural areas. Thus, an analysis of peri-urban areas seems necessary to understand the relationship between the central power and the *alquerias* established through the government administration agents, and particularly the guardians. We do not exactly know how they could have influenced the rural area close to the city. One possibility could be through the purchase of land or water in the area where *alquerias* were located, thus fracturing community management systems or having to adapt to them. While we have confirmed that in rural areas, such as the Alpujarra (TRILLO 1994) or El Cenete (MARTÍN 2007), *alquerias* did have a certain degree of autonomy from the State and its public officials in the management of their land, crops and water, it seems that the situation could have been different in peri-urban areas (TRILLO 2017).

2. The peri-urban area of Granada during the Naṣrid period

The areas close to the main Andalusian cities could have been different from other eminently rural areas, not only from a social perspective but also from the perspective

2. *Cadí*, a judge for civil matters, from Arabic *qāḍī*.

of settlements (TORRES 1950, MAZZOLI-GUINTARD 2022). We believe that there could have been a projection of the *madīna* onto their immediate rural territory. This might have been more evident in the case of the area close to the city of Granada, La Vega, both because Madīna Garnāṭa was the capital of the emirate and because we have situated our study during a later period of al-Andalus, with much urban development by the State, and when there were weaker tribal and clan ties (GUICHARD 2020). One factor that might have contributed to an increase in the influence of the *madīna* on the immediate rural territory could have been the need to satisfy a large population, such as the urban population, as that impacted on the surrounding agricultural and livestock production (WATSON 1998: 276–282). Something else that could have generated this influx of the city could have been the pressure exerted by its elites on the adjacent territory through investment in land. In fact, we know that in the second half of the 15th century in the Vega de Granada, a large proportion of agricultural properties belonged to the State, the king, the royal family, government administration agents and the mercantile elites (TRILLO 2014), whose effect on the rural *aljamas* (communities) and *alquerias* we do not know.

Thus, a socioeconomic duality is shaped, which is also manifested in the settlements. Therefore, as mentioned, we have an urban influence on the *madīna* hinterland, and then we have *aljamas*. From the perspective of the habitat, there is a variety of ways the space in the Vega de Granada was occupied. Ya Ibn al-Khaṭīb (14th century) mentioned this variety of farms-residence set-ups, among which were the *almunias* or recreational houses, and two types of rural nuclei, some in which there was a neighbouring community, and others that belonged to one or few owners.

Regarding the *almunias*, he notes the following:

In the northern part of the plain there are some *almunias* [*munā*] of such great value and high quality that to pay their price it would take the fortunes of kings... About thirty of these *almunias* belonged to the private patrimony of the sultan (*mustakhlaṣ al-sultān*) (Ibn AL-KHAṬĪB 1998: 10)

Regarding other rural nuclei, Ibn al-Khaṭīb states the differences between two types of rural nuclei in the Vega de Granada:

alquerias [*qurā*] and settlements [*bilād*] intermingle, which are in the hands of the vassals (*ra'iyya*, subjects) [...] some are extensive and urbanised; in them thousands of creatures gather and buildings multiply; others belong to a single lord [*mālik*] or two, or a few more (Ibn AL-KHAṬĪB 1998:11).

In addition to these, there are *almunias* (leisure or recreational properties) that can be defined as recreational houses for the king and the elites. They are also agro-livestock farms, which have industrial-type infrastructures, such as mills, oil presses, brickyards, etc. They controlled various lands: gardens, orchards, irrigated lands, dry lands, ravines and mountain bush. They are characterised by having an eminent house, hence its name *Dār* (in Arabic, house), sometimes with a tower, although sometimes it is a dovecote or gazebo, and houses for farmers. They usually have

strong urban characteristics, as we find them within the city or in its vicinity (BOLOIX 2018, CAMARERO 2020). However, sometimes there are farms with the name of *Dār* in places far from Granada, such as in the case of Daragedid (Pinos Puente) 25 km to the northwest. Ownership of the *almunias* was especially associated with the royal patrimony, since they had much value, although not exclusivity, since the elites could also dispose of them.

There were also *alquerias* “that are in the hands of the vassals (*ra’iyya*, subjects)” (Ibn AL-KHAṬĪB 1998:11), which “gather thousands of creatures” (Ibn AL-KHAṬĪB 1998:11) and that we could define as *alqueria*-villages (PEINADO 1996–97, TRILLO 2020: 18). These are rural nuclei inhabited by an *aljama*, with a diverse territory from economic and legal perspectives. Thus, it comprises a territory or *ḥaṣṣ*, which could be expanded by reaching agreements with other *alquerias*. The communal space within the territory of the *alqueria* is also called a *ḥaṣṣ*, where wild fruits and firewood were collected, and used for grazing and hunting. A part of the lands inside and outside the term are appropriated by vivification: the *maḥāṭ* (wasteland), which often become dryland. Finally, the lands that are authentically owned are called *mamlūka* and are often irrigated. The *aljama* that occupy these *alqueria*-villages could have evolved from a community united by kinship to one in which neighbourly ties prevailed. It is also probable that socioeconomic inequalities were more appreciable at the end of the Naṣrid period than during other periods as a consequence of the dissolution of blood ties and urban development in the emirate.

The author from Granada also cites another type of rural nucleus that “belongs to a single lord (*mālik*), or two, or a few more” (Ibn AL-KHAṬĪB 1998: 18). This form of settlement suggests more urban owners, especially the king and his family, and we define them as *alqueria*-estates (*alquerías-finca* in Trillo 2020:18, or *alquerías-cortijo*, in Peinado 2008: 18). It could be defined as a farmstead, in which there is a main house and other smaller ones for farmers. It could be a rural nucleus halfway between the *alqueria*-village and the *almunia*. They usually have their own term that includes a variety of types of land, such as tilled, to be tilled, irrigated, dryland, meadows and groves, and they even have their own irrigation or gully channels (TRILLO 2020: 89, 91 and 92). There is a concentration of royal patrimony properties, which could be assimilated to these *alqueria*-estates, in the northwest area of the Vega de Granada, close, therefore, to the border with Castilla. Both due to belonging to the royal crown and their border location, they were equipped with towers (JIMÉNEZ 2002: 395).

These *alqueria*-estates, are described in different ways, so it is sometimes difficult to distinguish them from *alqueria*-villages and especially from *almunias*. However, the more urban character of the *almunias* could mark the difference with *alqueria*-estates, which tend to be residences and farms that are more clearly rural and far from the city. The variety of names they receive can be seen in the example of Alitaje, located in the municipality of Pinos Puente, 22 km northwest of the city of Granada. It is a set of properties and a farmstead that belonged to the royal

patrimony and the State. It is called *Dār al-Liṭāj*, Manhal (watering trough) *Dār al-Liṭāj* and, more exceptionally, an *alqueria*. Thus, the Arabic-Granadian documents quote that: “Alitaje, one of the Vega de Granada *alquerias*” (*al-Liṭāj min qurà marja Garnāṭa*) (SECO 1961: 138, 140).

These different ways of occupying rural space are difficult to distinguish from each other for various reasons. First, because they have not been studied archaeologically and, second, because the name they receive changes, as we have just shown. This can also mean that the reality that these names describe is in the process of transformation. We believe that the *almunias*, and especially the *alqueria*-estates, are a type of elitist farm that evolve from one to the other and even become *alqueria*-villages.

3. The figure of the guardian: from local administrator to steward

The role of the guardian (*alcaide*), in the Nasrid kingdom is well defined, since he is a military chief, tax collector and judge of criminal offences (ARCAS 2021, CALERO 2000, ECHEVARRÍA, FÁBREGAS 2016, RODRÍGUEZ 2016, FÁBREGAS, SABATÉ 2015). In a dispute over territory between the city of Guadix and the *alquerias* of the Marquesado del Cenete in 1543, we see that the Moorish witnesses specify their functions.³ In this case, they are shown in a dual role as tax agent and criminal judge. Exceptionally, a guardian appears who is also called a qadi, although they were generally independent figures, since, as we know, the latter is a judge for civil matters (marriages, orphans, inheritances, *awqāf*, etc.).

The appointment of the guardian depended on the king. In the case of Guadix, he exercised his position from the citadel of the city, which had jurisdiction over a nearby rural territory. Here there are other rural castles and other guardians, which we can call secondary, whose appointment, according to the witnesses of the aforementioned dispute, depended, at least in practice, on the main guardian. Other testimonies also allude to the fact that the king and the guardian of Guadix appointed the qadi and his delegate (TRILLO 2007). All this seems to shed light on the influence of the guardian in certain areas, especially those with a major city. Thus, although there is State control through the appointment of these government administration agents, there is also a development of the local power in the interference they may have in the new appointments of other public officials. It would also be interesting to know whether the delegated guardians in the different rural castles come from a local elite or, conversely, are imposed from the outside. This situation highlights the relationship between the *madīna* and the nearby rural territory through the main guardian and judge, located in the city, and the guardians and qadis who are delegated and dependent on the *madīna* in the territory.

3. Archive of the Royal Chancery of Granada, file 1619.

The aforementioned litigation also mentions the terms between the city of Guadix (Madīna Wādī Āš) and its region of Cenete, stating that the position of the guardian of Guadix, once deceased, would continue to be exercised within the family itself. Although the new appointment is made again by the emir, the existence of a certain endogamy in this function seems frequent in the Naṣrid kingdom. Thus, two collections of Romanised Arab documents from the Vega de Granada; the one corresponding, on one hand, to the properties of Álvaro de Bazán (1457–1494) in the Pinos Puente area (TRILLO 2020), and, on the other, to Hernando de Zafra’s assets in the Cubillas river (1413–1493) (TRILLO, ESPINAR 2022), frequently show this family endogamy in the exercise of position of guardian.

The guardians were paid in many different ways. In Guadix they were paid from the taxes they received. These were paid by the residents of the *alquerias* of the territory that was the jurisdiction of the *madīna*. We have also documented that they were paid with lands that belonged to the royal patrimony in the case of the Vega de Granada. On one occasion, in 1459, the king sold, through his vizier, the guardian Abū ‘Āmir Gālib b. Hilāl, an estate of 200 *marjales*⁴, called del Qayz, in Manhal al-Liṭāj (Abrevadero del Alitaje) in the Vega de Granada. The buyer does not pay the 600 gold dinars that it is worth because the delivery of the plot is made “in compensation for the credit he has for that same amount and quality, in his favour, owed by the King” (SECO 1961: 30). This could indicate a previous loan from the guardian to the king or the provision of services carried out by the guardian. We also see this in another document from 1460 where the emir sells another property in the same place to the gentleman Abū-l-Ḥasan ‘Alī, son of Sheikh Abū Sa‘īd ‘Uṭmān al-Shakūrī. The value of the plot of 50 *marjales* is 200 gold dinars, but the purchaser does not need to pay, since the delivery cancels a previous debt owed by the emir, for services rendered by the purchaser (SECO 1961: 32–33). It could be services for the military, diplomatic core, administrating royal properties, or the remuneration of their position. In the two cases cited, we are referring to land located in Dār al-Liṭāj, “one of the *alquerias* of the Vega de Granada” (SECO 1961: 138,140), which are adjacent to other guardian, judge and State lands and royal patrimony. It is also of note that in the first example, the plot that is delivered is called the Qayz (from Arabic *qā’id*) that is, of the guardian. From this we can deduce that it was land assigned to those who held that position and not necessarily a private property, although at some point it could have become that.

In addition to administrators of the territory of the emirate, especially from cities, other functions the guardians carried out included managing the royal patrimony. In the Castilian documentation they received the name of stewards (*mayordomos*) and, sometimes, we know that they were guardians (*alcaldes*). Sometimes they acted

4. In La Vega de Granada, a “marjal” is equivalent to approximately 528.42 square meters.

through other delegates of theirs, probably also guardians, called *nadirs*⁵ or also stewards. In the *Probança of the Infantes of Granada* (1506) the domestic functions of these agents are mentioned several times in relation to real estate. Thus, for example, in the Mieres *alqueria*, in Quempe, the lands of Queen Soraya (Isabel de Solís), second wife of the emir Muley Hacén (1464–1482), were run by the guardian Çoror, steward and servant.⁶ They were in charge of collecting the fruits and income from that estate and taking them to the queen and the princes' house in the Albayzín, called Dār Alcotón. In another case, the management of the royal patrimony is carried out by a marshal (*wazīr*, *alguacil*). This is how the witness Bartolome El Calay, a resident of Pulianas, saw it, who says he was steward of the king's lands in Cubillas and collected income from them, taking it on mules and camels to the king's house, by order of the king and the marshal Benegas (LÓPEZ DE COCA 1998)⁷.

Another recent analysis, carried out through Romanised Arabic documents from the Daragedid (Pinos Puente) and Asquerosa (TRILLO 2020) area, sheds light on the guardians' socioeconomic situation. Of the total of 61 Romanised Arabic writings (1457–1494), the guardians make transactions in 20 of them (32.78%). In 13 they do so in their own name, in five in the name of the princesses, sisters of King Şa'd (1454–55/1455–62/1463–64), and in two documents the sons of guardians carry out the economic operations. In four cases they are shown as buyers, in others they carry out bartering, in three they are declarants of property and heirs, and in two sellers. In principle, this means guardians play a leading role in rural property transactions in the Vega, some of which are specified as belonging to the royal patrimony. This could have happened because of the purchasing power of the guardians or perhaps, in the case of the assets of the royal treasury, because of their proximity to the emir. These sales and barter were carried out between guardians or between guardians and individuals, and we know that the individuals were occasionally merchants. Thus, in 1477 an exchange took place between the guardian, Abulcazín Alid, son of the guardian Abulxaxe Yucaf Vencomixa, and the merchant Abuljafar Amette, son of Farax Adamasquí. The merchant offered houses in Daragedid, with threshing floors, meadows, groves, cultivated and uncultivated lands “and that everything that had been of the royal household” (TRILLO 2020: 99). In exchange, the guardian gives him five estates, with a total extension of 398 *marjales*, plus a house and a half and an orchard, in the Huécar farm property, which could also have belonged to the royal patrimony.

Regarding the Romanised Arabic documents of the Cubillas river, which came to belong to Hernando de Zafra and his descendants, we also found a very significant presence of guardians in addition to our protagonist, Abrahím El Boraque. These appear as a rural elite who own a good number of properties, although we have not

5. From Arabic *nāzīr*, an overseer.

6. General Archive of Simancas, Royal Houses and Sites, file 10, page 200.

7. General Archive of Simancas, Royal Houses and Sites, file 10, page 200.

yet carried out a comparative study allowing us to specify their level of wealth compared to other residents. There is also a strong endogamy of postings and marriages between the families of guardians and marshals with properties in this same *alqueria*.

4. The properties of the guardian El Boraque in Cubillas.

To understand the patrimony of the guardian Abi Yçhac Abrahím El Boraque, resident of the Cubillas *alqueria*, we will use one essential source: the collection of Romanised Arabic documents written about the assets that Hernando de Zafra, secretary of the Catholic Monarchs, and his family had in the aforementioned rural area (TRILLO, ESPINAR 2022). These are acquisitions made of properties of former Muslims, which will continue to be owned by that same family throughout the widow of Zafra, his son, grandson and great-grandson's life.

In the year 880 of the Hegira, in the month of Jumādā al-Thānī, on the 14th (24 October 1475) an inventory and appraisal of the assets owned by the guardian Abrahím El Boraque was made due to his death. The title of this document, written in the margin of the Manuscript, perfectly summarises the type of assets that it comprised: “Ymbent[*ario*] [inventory] of irrigated and dryland, mountain bush, house and tower” (TRILLO, ESPINAR 2020: 231–240). In the first part of this deed there is a list of the properties with their boundaries, and the second part is a valuation of said assets.

El Boraque's properties comprised a residential area with a house and tower, an orchard and a threshing floor. There are also a series of parcels made up of 78 plots of which 43 fields are irrigated, nine are classified as simultaneously irrigated and dryland, 23 specified as only rainfed, two that are to be tilled and to be cleared, and one that is not described. The value of these estates is expressed in gold ducats. Irrigated fields account for almost 61.51% of the total value of his estate. There are also parcels that have both dryland and irrigated areas, whose value is 20,51% of the whole. The irrigated plots constitute, therefore, almost the entire value of his assets in the Cubillas *alqueria*. The dryland represents 11.61% of the total, while uncultivated land and land to be cleared only 0.18% (Table 1).

The value of these properties are expressed in gold ducats as follows:

Table 1. Value in gold ducats of the guardian Alboraque's properties.

House, tower and orchard	Irrigated fields	Irrigated and dryland fields	Dryland fields and threshing floor	Fields to clear or till	TOTAL
147 gold ducats	1,467.5 gold ducats	489.5 gold ducats	277 gold ducats	4.5 gold ducats	2,385.5 gold ducats
6.16%	61.51%	20.51%	11.61%	0.18%	100%

The fact of having a house with a tower gives this property a particular relevance, similar to the country residences of the Naşrid elite. It could be an *almunia* or one of those *alquerias* defined as *alqueria*-estates that have a residential area, with a main house, and other smaller ones for farmers, and another area of land. We do not know the character of this tower, as it could be a lookout tower or dovecote, or something more important, perhaps of military significance.

Furthermore, the existence of a mill on one of the plots is also significant, the Riha field; the etymology of the place name *rahà* is the Arabic term for watermill. This fact is repeated often in the royal and aristocratic estates in Granada and its Vega. This is not strange: from what we know, the mills, together with the baths, ovens and shops, were a royal monopoly.⁸

With regard to the other properties, we can note, on one hand, the existence of uncultivated and even uncleared plots. Likewise, we find a significant part of them, 15 of the total, which are adjacent to the mountain bush, called *xara*, from Arabic *sha'ārà*, meaning jaral, region of scrubland, mountain bush, so the meaning attributed to it in the document as *jara* is correct. This connection of the guardian's properties with the mountain bush is not surprising, considering that these State agents have often been associated with *mawāt* land and dryland, as payment of their salary. Likewise, they have been associated with the livestock as an activity compatible with the mobility of their position, all of which would justify the proximity of their assets to the mountain bush areas.

However, most of El Boraque's land was irrigated. It is interesting that in the description of this list, the plots are often adjacent to the mountain bush, so it seems that there is no transition between that area and the irrigated crops. This arrangement of agricultural area is not rare in the Emirate, where the dryland, especially in mountainous areas, can be scarce, giving preference to irrigation. The existence of certain hydraulic and productive infrastructures between the guardians' lands, such as ditches, pools, mills, lime kiln, etc., is also noted. Regarding the dryland, we can see that it appears to be the only one in certain plots or unused lands, but also coexists with irrigated land.

We can see more information provided by this inventory of El Boraque's properties: the location of the plots, boundaries, characteristics (dryland, irrigated, etc.) and their prices. However, there is no information regarding their size, which is common in these types of Romanised Arabic documents. We can make an approximate guess of the value of some of the assets from the information of other writings, within this same Manuscript, and from approximate dates. Thus, for example, in a document dated eight years prior to this one, a property of 85 irrigated *marjales* is sold for six ducats of gold per *marjal* (TRILLO, ESPINAR 2022: 227). This allows us to make an approximate calculation that this guardian's irrigated land totalled approximately 244 *marjales*, which is a considerable size, also considering he owned other assets. As a comparative

8. General Archive of Simancas, Royal Council, 651–9.

example, at the end of the Naṣrid period in Almuñécar, the more affluent proprietors did not own more than 60 irrigated *marjales* (TRILLO 2004: 207).

Other guardian plots border 21 of the total number of plots El Boraque owns on the Cubillas river, particularly the Tahir, and sometimes Abengarron, among others. In some way, then, a good part of El Boraque's lands border others belonging to other guardians. Could this indicate that there was a specific zone of agricultural areas owned by these agents of the government administration? This zone would often be close to the mountain bush. These could thus be *mawāt* lands, revitalised by the State for payment to officials, although we do not have sufficient data to confirm that idea.

In addition to the exhaustive information provided by the appraisal and inventory of El Boraque's properties, other Romanised Arabic documents from the Cubillas river also provide further information in this matter. Thus, we know that at some point in his life, the aforementioned guardian gave his maid Lufuna, as dowry and wedding coins, a field of 12 *marjales amelies*, with a value of 12 Castilian reales, in the Cubillas *alqueria*. The meaning of *ameli*, from Arabic 'amaī, is unclear. It might be related to the noun 'amal, which means "the ordinary, legal measure" (DOZY 1967), which in the context of the document could be translated as the "legally established standard measure".⁹

This donation from the guardian to his maid indicates a close relationship with this woman in his service, as well as a certain generosity in the delivery of a property of this type. She sold it on 25 July 1492 to the secretary of the Catholic Monarchs (TRILLO, ESPINAR 2022: 177–179). The presence of maids and slaves is also found in the case of Fátima, daughter of the guardian Abengarrón, who also gives various assets to the women who serve her and provide domestic services (TRILLO 2022: 658). Likewise, a servant associated with the guardian Abi Abdilehí Muhamad Aben Tahir (TRILLO, ESPINAR 2022: 179). Thus, the elites of the administration and the people that surround them seem to enjoy an economic privilege that allows them to have services at their expense. The transfer of assets to these domestic servants seems to place them on a level close to the family.

In another document from 1420, a bordering property is sold a *carmen* of El Boraque (TRILLO, ESPINAR 2022: 187). Again, in another document in the same year, a vineyard belonging to the aforementioned guardian is mentioned on another

9. Thank you Inmaculada Camarero and Julia Carabaza for your translation. However, the noun 'amal also appears as associated with "an office of government administration, and particularly the office of a province governor; and the office of collector of the poor-rates, and the like: and an agency of any kind; the management of the affairs and property" (LANE, 1968, vol. 5: 2159). It also has a more precise meaning that could associate it with the administration of a territory on behalf of the emir or perhaps to the royal patrimony: "territory under a governor appointed by a sovereign"; and as a present participle 'āmil: "An administrator of public affairs; and particularly a governor of a province; a collector of the poor-rates and an agent who manages the affairs and property of another" (LANE, 1968, vol. 5: 2159).

border, which could have been a translation of the etymological Arabic word *carmen* (*karma*) (TRILLO, ESPINAR 2022: 200) (Table 2).

Table 2. Properties El Boraque (1475)

PROPERTIES	CHARACTERISTICS	BOUNDARIES	VALUE
House and tower	In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: assets from this inheritance	117 gold ducats
Fetín Albolota Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: with the Camar North: the river	25 gold ducats
Fetín Aljorf Field	Irrigated and dry-land In Cubillas farmstead	South: with Azra North: the river	8.5 gold ducats
Fetín Aljir Field	Irrigated and dry-land In Cubillas farmstead	South: the xara, which is mountain bush North: the river	30 gold ducats
Fornaljir Field	Irrigated and dry In Cubillas farmstead	South: with Tahir North: -	50 gold ducats
Aguali Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: irrigation canal	4 gold ducats
Razalguít Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: irrigation canal	10 gold ducats
Raçalguíd Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: the xara, which is mountain bush	7 gold ducats
Field next to the oak tree	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: the xara, which is mountain bush	64 gold ducats
Xamiz Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: with Tahir	4 gold ducats
Jemiz Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: a scarp North: with Tahir	9 gold ducats
Jemiz Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: the path	7 gold ducats
Hofra Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: Other possessions from this inheritance	10 gold ducats

Azeytuna Field	Irrigated. Has olive trees In Cubillas farmstead	South: a field North: with the Çamar	11 gold ducats
Metuet Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: a cliff North: with Avenesda	5 gold ducats
Canate Aljebil Field	Irrigated and dry-land In Cubillas farmstead	South: the xara, which is mountain bush North: same	30 gold ducats
Maznoa Field	Dryland. It has oak trees In Cubillas farmstead	South: with Canate Aljebil North: Avengarrón's wife's assets	15 gold ducats
Mohamaza Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: irrigation canal	12 gold ducats
Mohachara Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: a cliff North: with Avenesda	3 gold ducats
Jina Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the orchard North: irrigation canal	13 gold ducats
Orchard	With trees In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: a field	30 gold ducats
Jaraguil Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: with the Mandarí North: with Tahir	60 gold ducats
Fetín El Caydun Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: with the Çamar North: with Tahir	28 gold ducats
Dirdala Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: with Tahir North: with Naçurula	87 gold ducats
Hondo de la peña Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the rock North: the river	2 gold ducats
Hamem Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: with Naçurula North: with Azra	13 gold ducats
Mohajara Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: with habsices North: the road	100 gold ducats
Hamem Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: with Naçurula North: with the Mohachera	7.5 gold ducats
Mohachera Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: a field North: the road	3.5 gold ducats
Fetín Alcachope Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: the river	70 gold ducats

Cohayla Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: the river	38.5 gold ducats
Canate Alhixar Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: with Tahir North: assets from this inheritance	4 gold ducats
Pago del Marje Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: with Tahir	30 gold ducats
Marje Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: with the Marge	12 gold ducats
Fetin Almahçel the Little Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: with Tahir	74 gold ducats
Fetín Almahquih Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the mountains North: the road	9 gold ducats
Mahçel Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: irrigation canal North: the river	300 gold ducats
Mahçel Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: irrigation canal	10 gold ducats
Handac Alçiba Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the xara, which is mountain bush North: the road	11 gold ducats
Field in Handacaçiba	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the valley North: with Avengarrón	5 gold ducats
Gualeja del Canar Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the xara, which is mountain bush North: with Azra	17 gold ducats
Gueleja Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the mountains North: the road	4 gold ducats
Gueleja Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the xara, which is mountain bush North: the road	4 gold ducats
Guelejat Albogal Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the xara, which is mountain bush North: with Avengarrón	3 gold ducats
Field in Guelejat Albogal	In Cubillas farmstead	South: the mountains North: the Jibeq river	2 gold ducats
Gueleja Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: the river	37 gold ducats

Guelejat Alalcaní Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: the rock	43 gold ducats
Field in Gara Al-hamem	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: the rock	17 gold ducats
Hofra en Gara Al-hemem Field	In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: the rock	6 gold ducats
Field in Garalhemem	Irrigated and dry-land In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: the rock	230 gold ducats
Manhaz Field	Irrigated and dry-land In Cubillas farmstead	-	50 gold ducats
Riha Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: irrigation canal	70 gold ducats
Fedín Abihanzir Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: the road	20 gold ducats
Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: with the Javfí	30 gold ducats
Fetín Almohamaha Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: with the Mandarí North: with the Malaquí	42 gold ducats
Mohamaza Field	In Cubillas farmstead	South and North: with the Mandarí	17 gold ducats
Andar Field	Dryland With a threshing floor and oak trees In Cubillas farmstead	-	10 gold ducats
Motaymera Field	Dryland With a yard in the house In Cubillas farmstead	South: with Motar North: the house	12 gold ducats
Field	To be tilled In Cubillas farmstead	South: the xara, which is mountain bush North: with Avengarrón	1.5 gold ducats
Land in the Tabola del Alberca	In Cubillas farmstead	-	3 gold ducats
<i>Era</i>	In Cubillas farmstead	North: the pit	2 gold ducats
Fedín Alcana Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: with the Çamar North: with Azra and with Tahir	13 gold ducats

Fetín Alcaçaba Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: with Tahir North: with Avengar-rón	3 gold ducats
Field in Cañada del Campillo	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: the xara, which is mountain bush	2 gold ducats
Unused lands	Located between a path. Uncultivated In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: the road	1 gold ducat
Field in Cuesta del Molino	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the road North: with the Çamar	1 gold ducat
Alcaçaba Alçogra Field	In Cubillas farmstead	South: with assets from Taheremy North: the road	11 gold ducats
Alcaçaba Grande Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the house North: the road	54 gold ducats
Mehguax Field	Irrigated and dry-land Located between a path In Cubillas farmstead	South: with the Duvilí	11 gold ducats
Alacaba Field	Irrigated and dry-land Called the Requica In Cubillas farmstead	South: with Tahir North: irrigation canal	36 gold ducats
Fohayaz Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: irrigation canal North: the river In the middle: with Mandarí and Cahdolí	70 gold ducats
Requica Pequeña Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the xara, which is mountain bush North: irrigation canal	2 gold ducats
Field in Campillo	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: irrigation canal North: with the Malacqui	4 gold ducats
Campillo Field	Irrigated. It has oak trees In Cubillas farmstead	South: the xara, which is mountain bush North: with the Çamar, the Duvilí and the river	55 gold ducats

Campillo Field	Irrigated and dry-land In Cubillas farmstead	South: the xara, which is mountain bush North: with Tahir	44 gold ducats
Campillo Field	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: irrigation canal North: the river	94 gold ducats
Merra Field	Dryland In Cubillas farmstead	South: the river North: the xara	17 gold ducats
Cortina Field, irrigated	Irrigated In Cubillas farmstead	South: with the Javfí North: the river	27 gold ducats
Field	Dryland. Mountain bush Located between the roads In Cubillas farmstead	-	2 gold ducats

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the data on the Naşrid guardians, generally present in the Arabic and Romanised Arabic documentation on the emirate, provide important information regarding this essential figure and the relationship between the State and rural communities. This study has attempted to reflect on this agent, their functions, salary, wealth, social relations, etc. We know that they are a fairly endogamous class both in the exercise of their position, which is often linked to members of the family, and in the marital relationship they establish among themselves and with other agents of the administration, such as marshals and sometimes *al-fuqahā*. In this particular case, we provide new information about the patrimony of a Naşrid guardian, Abrahím El Boraque, in the Cubillas *alqueria*, near Granada. We confirm that he owned a significant number of lands, of different quality, as well as some emblematic properties, such as a house with a tower, which could be an *almunia*. It is of note that many of his assets were adjacent to other guardians and that some land bordered the mountain bush, perhaps *mawāt* land. We do not know the origin of his wealth, but it could have grown as his position developed, through payments in State lands or royal patrimony, although that has not been explicitly stated. We must continue to research this social group, its family origin, its social relations, the dependency or autonomy of the king, as well as its patrimony, to better understand its role in the functioning of the Naşrid society.

Bibliography

ACIÉN ALMANSA, Manuel, 1984. *Reino de Granada, Historia de los Pueblos de España*. M. Barceló (dir.). Barcelona, Argos-Vergara, p. 47-55.

AMÍN, Samir, 1974. *Sobre el desarrollo desigual de las formaciones sociales*. Barcelona, Anagrama.

ARCAS CAMPOY, María, 2021. “Poder, rango y economía de las autoridades y hombres principales de la Taha de Vera en el Reino Nazarí (s. XV)”, *Al-Andalus Magreb: Estudios árabes e islámicos*, 28, p. 1-14.

BARCELÓ, MIQUEL, 1988. “Vísperas de feudales. La sociedad de Sharq al-Andalus justo antes de la conquista catalana”, *España. Al-Andalus. Sefarad. Síntesis y nuevas perspectivas*. F. Maíllo Salgado (coord.). Salamanca, Universidad de Salamanca, p. 99-112.

BOLOIX GALLARDO, Bárbara, 2018. “Las almunias nazaríes a través de las fuentes árabes”, *Almunias: Las fincas de las élites en el Occidente islámico: poder, solaz y producción*. J. Navarro Palazón y C. Trillo San José (eds.). Granada, Universidad de Granada, p. 463-486.

CALERO SECALL, Isabel, 2000. “Naturaleza de la institución judicial en el reino nazarí”, *El reino nazarí de Granada (1232-1492), Política, instituciones, espacio y economía*. J. Viguera Molins (ed), *Historia de España de Menéndez Pidal*, J. M^a. Jover Zamora (dir.). Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, VIII-III, p. 367-427.

CAMARERO CASTELLANO, Inmaculada, 2020. “Nuevos datos sobre la almunia nazarí: revisión de la descripción de Granada de Ibn al-Jaṭīb”, *Estudios sobre patrimonio, cultura y ciencias medievales*, 22, p. 87-138.

DOZY, Reinhart, 1967. *Suppléments aux dictionnaires arabes*. Leiden, Brill, vol 2^o.

FÁBREGAS GARCÍA, Adela, 2016. “Presencia del estado en el mundo rural nazarí: el papel de los alcaides. Una primera aproximación”, *De la alquería a la Aljama*, A. Echevarría Arsuaga y A. Fábregas García (eds.). Madrid, UNED, p. 339-370.

FÁBREGAS, A., SABATÉ, F. (eds.), 2015. *Power and Rural Communities in Al-Andalus. Ideological and Material Representations*. Turnhout, Brepols.

GUICHARD, Pierre, 1976. *Al-Andalus. Estructura antropológica de una sociedad islámica en Occidente*. Barcelona. Barral.

—2001. *Al-Andalus frente a la conquista cristiana. Los musulmanes de Valencia (ss. XI-XIII)*. Valencia. Publicaciones de la Universidad de Valencia.

—2020. «Introduction. The Naṣrid Kingdom in the History of al-Andalus», *The Naṣrid Kingdom of Granada between East and West (Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries)*. F. García (coord.). Leiden, Brill, 2020, p. 1-36.

Ibn AL-KHAṬĪB, 1998. *Historia de los Reyes de la Alhambra. El resplandor de la luna llena (Al-Lamḥa al-badriya)*. José María Casciaro (trad.). Granada, Universidad de Granada.

JIMÉNEZ PUERTAS, Miguel, 2002: “Asentamientos rurales y frontera: las torres de alquería de la tierra de Loja en época nazarí”, C. Trillo (ed.): *Asentamientos rurales y territorio en el Mediterráneo medieval*. Granada, Athos-Pérgamos, p. 390-421.

LANE, Edward William, 1863-1893. *Arabic- English Lexicon*, Londres, vol. 5.

LÓPEZ DE COCA CASTAÑER, José Enrique, 1988. “Granada en el siglo XV: las postrimerías nazaríes a la luz de la probanza de los infantes don Fernando y don Juan”, *Actas del V Coloquio Internacional de Historia Medieval de Andalucía*. E. Cabrera Muñoz (ed.). Córdoba, p. 599- 641.

MANZANO MORENO, Eduardo, 1998. “Relaciones sociales en sociedades precapitalistas: una crítica al concepto de ‘modo de producción’ tributario”, *Hispania*, LVIII/3, nº 200, p. 881-913.

—2020. “¿Existieron comunidades rurales autosuficientes en al-Andalus?”, *Poder y comunidades en el Islam occidental (siglos XII-XV)*, A. García Porras y A. Fábregas García (eds.). Granada, Universidad de Granada.

MARTÍN CIVANTOS, José M^a, 2007. *Poblamiento y territorio medieval en el Zenete (Granada)*. Granada, Universidad de Granada.

MAZZOLI-GUINTARD, Christine, 2000. *Ciudades de al-Andalus: España y Portugal en la época musulmana (s. VIII-XV)*. Granada, Almed.

—2022. “Organización del territorio en al-Andalus: mundo rural y mundo urbano”. *HAL open science*. HAL Id: hal-03632148 <https://hal.science/hal-03632148>

PEINADO SANTAELLA, Rafael G., 1996-97. “Una aportación documental sobre el poblamiento y el paisaje agrario y la propiedad de la tierra de dos alquerías de la Vega de Granada: Chauchina y el Jau a finales del periodo nazarí”, *Revista del Centro de Estudios Históricos de Granada y su Reino*, 10-1, p. 19-92.

—2008. “Un espacio aristocrático: propiedad, formas de explotación de la tierra y poblamiento en el sector occidental de la Vega de Granada al final de la Edad Media”, *Aristócratas nazaríes y principales castellanos*. Málaga, Diputación Provincial de Málaga, p. 15-35.

RODRÍGUEZ GÓMEZ, M^a Dolores, 2016. “Emires, linajes y colaboradores, el traspaso de la tierra en la Vega de Granada (Alitaje, s. XV)”, *De la alquería a la Aljama*. A. Echevarría Arsuaga y A. Fábregas García, Adela (eds.). Madrid, UNED, p. 37-70.

SÁNCHEZ CARRASCO, Juan José, 2021. *La vega de Granada en el tránsito del Reino Nazarí al Reino de Granada: cambios políticos, económicos y sociales*. Granada, tesis doctoral dirigida por Carmen Trillo San José.

SARR MARROCO, Bilal, 2010. “De las transformaciones del paisaje urbano y rural más inmediato de Granada en el siglo XI”, *El paisaje y su dimensión arqueológica. Estudios sobre el sur de la Península Ibérica en la Edad Media*. M. Jiménez Puertas y L. Mattei (eds.). Granada, Alhulia, p. 183-205.

SECO DE LUCENA PAREDES, Luis, 1961. *Documentos arábigo granadinos*. Madrid, Instituto Islámico Egipcio.

SUÁREZ GARCÍA, Sandra, 2018. “El heredamiento de Daralgazi: una propiedad aristocrática en la Vega de Granada”, *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval*, 36-2: p. 149-170.
—2022. *La propiedad aristocrática en el Reino de Granada (Siglos XIII-XVI): la Vega y el entorno periurbano de la capital*. Granada, tesis doctoral dirigida por Carmen Trillo San José.

TORRES BALBÁS, Leopoldo, 1950. “Los contornos de las ciudades hispanomusulmanas”, *Al-Andalus*, XV, p. 293-344.

TRILLO SAN JOSÉ, Carmen, 1994. *La Alpujarra antes y después de la conquista castellana*. Granada. Universidad de Granada.

—2004. *Agua, tierra y hombres la dimensión agrícola del mundo nazarí*. Granada, Ajbar.

—2010. “Comunidades rurales en el reino nazarí”, *Historia de Andalucía: VII Coloquio ¿Qué es Andalucía? Una revisión histórica desde el Medievalismo*, A. Malpica Cuello, R. G. Peinado Santaella y A. Fábregas García (eds.). Granada, Universidad de Granada, p. 103-118.

—2014. “Les *munya-s* et le patrimoine royal à l’époque naşride (XIIIe-XVe siècles). Entre le souverain et les élites”, *Annales Islamologiques*, 48-2, p. 167-190.

—2017. “La Vega de Granada al final de la Edad Media (siglos XIV-XVI): almunias versus alquerías”, *Reti Medievali*, 18-2, p. 123-148.

—2020. *La Vega de Granada a partir de documentación árabe romanceada inédita (1457-1494)*. Estudio, edición e índices. Helsinki, Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae.

—2022. “Fátima, hija del alcaide Avengarrón: sus propiedades en Cubillas y Granada, según documentos árabes romanceados inéditos (1465-1466)”, *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, serie III, Historia Medieval* 35, p. 651-678.

TRILLO SAN JOSÉ, C., ESPINAR MORENO, M., 2022. *Hernando de Zafra, secretario de los Reyes Católicos: sus propiedades en Cubillas (Granada), según documentos árabes romanceados (1413-1493)*. Granada, Alhulia.

WATSON, Andrew M., 1998: *Innovaciones en la agricultura en los primeros tiempos del mundo islámico. Difusión de los distintos cultivos y técnicas agrícolas, del año 700 al 1100*. Granada, Universidad de Granada.