

LOCAL DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE A Resource for Teaching History and Citizenship Education: The Example of Granada

RAFAEL GUERRERO ELECALDE (RGELECALDE@UGR.ES)¹

¹ University of Granada, Spain.

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ABSTRACT

Local documentary heritage, preserved in Granada's historical archives, represents not only a fundamental component of the region's cultural heritage, but also an essential resource for the teaching of history and citizenship education. This study analyses how Granada's local documentary heritage can be used as a valuable pedagogical tool for citizenship education within the field of social sciences education. Particular emphasis is placed on its capacity to foster critical skills, strengthen collective identity and encourage social participation. Nevertheless, the study also addresses certain limitations, including the difficulties involved in the direct consultation of sources, the need to further advance their digitisation, and the importance of incorporating subaltern perspectives, proposing an inclusive approach that contributes to a more comprehensive education.

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1. Documentary Heritage as Part of Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage may be understood as a set of tangible, intangible and natural assets embedded in social practices and invested with values that transcend particular historical periods and generations. These values are continually reinterpreted within changing historical contexts (Dibam, 2005). As a dynamic process, cultural heritage does not remain static; rather, it is constantly constructed through social appropriation and reinterpretation. In this regard, UNESCO has recommended broadening the traditional definition of heritage in order to adapt it to contemporary social transformations, incorporating categories that had previously remained unrecognised (UNESCO, 2003).

For this reason, the concept has not always held the same meaning, and in recent decades it has undergone profound changes, becoming a more open notion that also encompasses expressions of present-day culture, and not only those of the past. Beyond monuments, it has gradually incorporated new categories such as intangible, ethnographic and industrial heritage, all of which have, in turn, required renewed conceptual efforts (Cuenca, 2023; Fontal, 2022; Fontal e Ibáñez-Etxeberria, 2017).

Cultural heritage is shaped through social and cultural processes in which values, functions and meanings are continually attributed to it. Rather than being a static or fixed set of elements, it is the result of an ongoing and complex process of social construction. The objects and assets that constitute this heritage acquire meaning insofar as they are incorporated into new interpretations and contextualised within contemporary culture, which continuously recreates and resignifies them (Fontal, 2022). In this process, citizens do not act merely as passive recipients, but as active subjects who understand, transform and attribute new meanings to heritage, thereby facilitating the emergence of new interpretations and uses. Thus, citizens participate in the collective construction of memory and in the revitalisation of heritage, strengthening its social relevance and its connection with everyday life (Casanova et al., 2018).

Regardless of its nature, cultural heritage shares a set of fundamental characteristics that confer upon it a profound social significance. Firstly, it possesses a strong social component, since it is not limited solely to cultural traditions rooted in the past, but also survives within the collective imagination, enabling contemporary society to identify with and value it. Secondly, cultural heritage is conceived as a legacy belonging both to present and future generations, encouraging its enjoyment through responsible preservation that guarantees its continuity. Finally, it has an essential pedagogical character, as its study enables a better historical and social understanding of the diverse cultural manifestations that have shaped the identity of human groups, linking them to shared behavioural patterns and common traditions (Arias et al., 2016).

Within cultural heritage, documentary heritage constitutes one of its most significant components, as it reflects the various forms of thought, beliefs and conceptions developed by humanity throughout history. This heritage is dispersed across multiple information units, such as libraries, archives and museums, all of which require specialised physical spaces and specific preservation procedures in order to guarantee the effective transmission of this information to future generations and ensure its long-term conservation (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes de Chile, 2021; Gómez Gómez, 2012).

Documentary heritage encompasses documents distinguished by their relevance as testimony to public or private activity, their value for collective memory and culture, their antiquity and their future usefulness, in accordance with the provisions established in Spanish Historical Heritage Act 16/1985 and specific regional legislation. It includes documents generated, received or collected in the exercise of functions by public bodies and private entities of historical, social, political, religious, cultural, educational or economic significance for the community. It also includes documents over forty years old produced by religious, political, trade union, cultural or educational organisations, as well as private documents over one hundred years old that are valued for their testimonial significance and

need for preservation. Finally, documents possessing historical, artistic, scientific or technical interest, regardless of their age, may be declared documentary heritage through a specific administrative resolution (Act 16/1985, 1985).

For this reason, documentary heritage includes not only manuscripts, printed works and valuable documents, but also audiovisual materials, digital reproductions and oral traditions that hold significant value for understanding the social, political and even scientific history of a community, culture, country or humanity as a whole (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes de Chile, 2021; Unesco, 2021).

Documents, as heritage assets, are primarily preserved in archives and libraries, which act as essential custodians of this cultural legacy. These institutions not only collect, organise and safeguard physical and digital documents, but also apply specialised conservation and preservation techniques to guarantee the integrity, accessibility and durability of information over time (Unesco, 2021; Gómez Gómez, 2012).

In recent decades, archives have undergone significant transformation, evolving into more plural and accessible cultural spaces explicitly oriented towards the public as a whole. This evolution has sought to distance archives from the traditionally elitist perception that associated them exclusively with scholarly research. Such a conception began to be challenged through the social movements that emerged during the 1960s, which promoted greater inclusion and democratisation in access to culture and historical memory, although the idea that archives are intended only for specialists still persists (Alberch, 1993; García Ruiz y Jiménez Martínez, 2003; Rubio Muñoz, 2020; Smith, 1985).

Within the field of cultural heritage, documentary heritage is unfortunately the sector that receives the least attention and recognition. Despite its incalculable value as written testimony to history, its preservation and dissemination tend to be subordinated to other, more visible forms of heritage, such as artistic or architectural heritage (Álvarez-Coca González, 2018). This lack of recognition results in limited resources, insufficient infrastructure and reduced public visibility, thereby restricting its preservation and hindering access for research, education and public engagement.

This situation urgently requires a reassessment that recognises documentary heritage as an essential cultural asset whose protection and dissemination must be regarded as priorities. Only through adequate investment and active policies of conservation, digitisation and promotion will it be possible to guarantee access to these fundamental sources for understanding our collective identity and historical memory (Cristobo Guerrero et al., 2011).

In this context, and particularly over recent decades, the documentary heritage of many countries has been threatened by various factors, including armed conflicts, lack of awareness, insufficient training of specialised personnel and economic shortcomings. In response to these threats, both public and private initiatives dedicated to the preservation of and universal access to these cultural assets have emerged.

One of the most significant initiatives is the Memory of the World (MoW) Programme, established by UNESCO in 1992 with the aim of preserving the world's documentary heritage held in archives and libraries across the globe. This programme provides effective techniques and tools for preservation, promotes universal access to these documents and raises worldwide awareness of their value for societies. Among its key actions is the maintenance of the Memory of the World International Register, which recognises documents, collections and documentary holdings of outstanding relevance to humanity whose loss would be irreversible.

In Spain, documentary heritage faces significant risks related to its preservation and accessibility. Although there are documentary collections of exceptional value included in the Memory of the World Programme — such as the General Archive of Simancas, the Codex Calixtinus and the Treaty of Tordesillas — many collections are threatened by insufficient resources for their preservation, physical deterioration and inadequate management practices. Furthermore, digitisation is often partial or inconsistent, thereby limiting both access and conservation (UNESCO, 2021).

2. Legislation for the Protection of Documentary Heritage and the Role of the Citizens

The safeguarding of documentary heritage requires not only conservation policies implemented by information institutions, but also a commitment from state institutions to ensure the proper and continuous protection of these assets, which are essential for recording and understanding history and culture.

The protection and management of documentary heritage in Spain is supported by a solid legal framework that originates in the Spanish Constitution of 1978. Article 46 establishes the obligation of public authorities to conserve and promote the historical, cultural and artistic heritage, expressly including documentary heritage, regardless of ownership or legal status (Constitución Española, 1978; Mijangos Fernández et al., 2014).

The cornerstone of the specific legislation is Spanish Historical Heritage Act 16/1985 of 25 June. This law regulates the protection, enhancement and transmission of cultural assets to future generations and establishes a unified general framework, highlighting the obligation to preserve and organise documents and archives, both public and private, that possess historical, cultural or administrative significance.

Prior to this legislation, other relevant regulations should be noted, such as Decree 1930/1969, which created the National Service for the Restoration of Books and Documents in response to the deterioration and destruction of valuable works, and Act 26/1972 for the protection of the Nation's Documentary and Bibliographic Heritage and the regulation of its exportation, aimed at preventing the loss of bibliographic and documentary wealth (Act 16/1985, 1985; Act 26/1972, 1972).

With the establishment of the Autonomous Communities, the state framework was complemented by regional legislation. Andalusia was a pioneer in this regard with Archive Act 3/1984, promoted following the Statute of Autonomy (1981), which was later replaced by Act 7/2011 on Documents, Archives and Documentary Heritage of Andalusia, establishing the principal regional reference framework (Cerdá Díaz, 1997; Ley 7/2011, 2011; Mijangos Fernández et al., 2014). Nevertheless, legislative development and regional management have not been free from difficulties. The concern of the Autonomous Communities regarding the definition of their documentary heritage is reflected in the broad definitions contained in some archive laws concerning the concept of documentary heritage or the archives integrated into regional systems, aspects which have generated various appeals of unconstitutionality (Fernández Ramos, 2015).

Access to historical documentation in archives is a fundamental right in democratic states, supported by the Spanish Constitution of 1978, whose Article 105.b establishes that the law shall regulate citizens' access to archives and administrative records, except where this affects state security and defence, criminal investigations or personal privacy. Furthermore, Articles 20.1 and 44.2 reinforce this framework by guaranteeing freedom of expression, access to information and the promotion of science and research (Spain, 1978). This constitutional framework was subsequently developed through legislation such as Spanish Historical Heritage Act 16/1985 and Act 19/2013 on Transparency, Access to Public Information and Good Governance, which regulate and promote the preservation of and access to public documents (Act 16/1985, 1985; Act 19/2013, 2013).

For this reason, all citizens may consult historical documents in archives, provided that their disclosure does not generate legal or social risks. Such consultation allows for the obtaining of copies and certifications of documents, thereby promoting public knowledge, administrative oversight and the exercise of scientific, historical and cultural research. Consequently, all citizens should possess sufficient training to engage with documents and understand that they preserve the living memory of their locality. As Julio Cerdá Díaz (2004) points out, this constitutes one of the principal challenges of citizenship education: ensuring that people recognise the value and social function of historical and archival documents as guarantors of collective identity and as fundamental elements for the exercise of critical and informed citizenship.

In recent decades, archives have acquired an essential role in the recovery of historical memory and in the promotion of fundamental values such as democratic principles, good governance, transparency, citizen participation and justice. This recognition has been reinforced following key historical events such as the end of the Second World War, the fall of military dictatorships in Europe and Latin America, and the armed conflicts in the Balkans and Colombia. In this context, archives are considered to have the primary function of guaranteeing the social right to information, education and culture, facilitating access to knowledge of the shared past through documents that benefit the community (Alberch i Fugueras, 2018; García Ruiz y Jiménez Martínez, 2003).

Opening archives to society contributes to strengthening collective historical knowledge and fostering democratic development. Archival professionals and institutions have the duty to facilitate such access while respecting current regulations, privacy rights, intellectual property and possible legal restrictions. Free access promotes an informed and critical citizenry capable of exercising its rights and responsibilities in relation to public administration and historical memory. Historical archives, present in many cities yet frequently overlooked, are fundamental to society because they safeguard citizens' rights and protect one of the most complex forms of heritage to preserve: documentary heritage.

Furthermore, archives constitute a fundamental tool for the proper functioning of public administrations, as they guarantee transparency and the capacity to provide effective responses to citizens' everyday needs. Proper records management within these environments is indispensable for ensuring the traceability of public actions, facilitating access to information and strengthening trust in institutions through compliance with the principles of openness and accountability (Alberch i Fugueras, 2018; Fernández Ramos, 2015; García y Jiménez, 2003).

This approach consolidates the archive not merely as a repository of documents, but as a dynamic actor in social, political and cultural life, contributing to the formation of a critical citizenry committed to respect for human rights and collective memory, while ensuring that the cultural and social legacy remains alive and accessible for future generations (Cerdá Díaz, 2000; Gómez Gómez, 2012).

Moreover, as public spaces, archives encourage citizen participation and equal access to culture and historical information, both of which are essential elements for the development of a democratic and pluralistic society (Cerdá Díaz, 2000). The documentation preserved in archival records not only documents past events, reflecting both individual and collective daily realities and behaviours, but also plays a fundamental role in the construction of societies' collective memory (Cerdá Díaz, 2004; Guerrero Elecalde, 2024; Ortega Cervigón, 2021).

In this context, archives are unfortunately often perceived as cultural assets of minority interest, primarily associated with research and documentary preservation (García Ruiz & Jiménez Martínez, 2003). However, historical collections preserved in archives offer citizens a valuable space for personal and cultural development that has thus far been insufficiently explored. These documentary sources possess multiple values — including identity-related, literary, recreational and educational values — which intertwine to form a multifaceted value with a rich cultural and intellectual background (Cagigal Montalbán, 2022). Consequently, it has been proposed that archives should receive the same consideration as museums within education, as they provide not only preservation but also a plural and meaningful educational experience. To improve in this regard, and as Jesús Cuadros (2015) points out, collaboration between archivists and teachers is fundamental for designing educational activities adapted to different educational levels and curricula, thereby facilitating the appropriate and meaningful use of these documentary resources in the classroom.

Knowledge, dissemination and education concerning documentary heritage are fundamental for valuing and legitimising cultural assets in accordance with the interests and historical contexts of each period (Cerdá Díaz, 2004; Ortega Cervigón, 2021; Fernández Paradas, et al., 2022). The incorporation of the Internet has significantly transformed access

to archives, allowing many institutions to take advantage of new means of bringing their collections closer to society. Digitisation not only facilitates the management and preservation of documentation but also improves dissemination and broadens access while minimising the direct handling of original materials. Furthermore, it makes it possible to generate backup copies of fragile documents and encourages interinstitutional collaboration through exchange and cooperation with other entities. Digitised collections are presented as valuable educational tools accessible in school and academic contexts, facilitating direct contact with primary sources for the teaching of history and related fields (Prol Castro, 2011; Rojo Cagigal et al., 2011). This approach to documentary heritage is fundamental for promoting educational initiatives that encourage citizen participation from a socio-critical, symbolic-identity and participatory perspective (Peinado Rodríguez, 2020; Reverté Vidal, 2017). Digitisation not only broadens access and dissemination but also enhances learning by integrating authentic sources into the classroom, thereby enriching the educational experience with direct historical resources (Fernández Valencia & González Marzo, 2003).

The safeguarding and protection of heritage is a shared social responsibility that requires educational programmes aimed at fostering an ethic and culture of heritage care, linking identity, conservation and the formation of a critical and participatory citizenry (Domínguez Domínguez y Cuenca López, 2005; Estepa Giménez, 2009; Martín Cáceres, et al., 2012).

3. Teaching Documentary Heritage: New Realities

In recent years, there has been a transformation in educational foundations and methodologies that particularly favours constructivist approaches. Within this framework, heritage is recognised as a key tool for learning temporal concepts, developing critical thinking and fostering civic and democratic awareness (Cristobo Guerrero et al., 2011; Peinado Rodríguez, 2020; Prol Castro, 2011). This approach seeks to educate individuals capable of acting locally, with a global outlook and the motivation to transform their reality (Estepa Giménez, 2019).

Local heritage plays a vital role in shaping collective identity and territorial rootedness within communities. According to Gillate et al. (2021), it encompasses both material assets with historically and artistically recognised value and those symbolic, social and cultural elements that are meaningful only to the community itself, even when they are not included in official catalogues.

Education plays a highly significant role in promoting the value of local heritage as a teaching resource. Various studies highlight its potential to encourage active participation, collaborative learning and student motivation through contextualised and locally grounded knowledge. The incorporation of heritage-related content into educational programmes promotes appreciation and respect for cultural assets, enabling new generations to understand their importance and the need for their preservation (Fontal et al., 2017, cited in Gillate et al., 2021). Likewise, recent research emphasises that local heritage can become a key element in the social revitalisation of a territory, as well as in strengthening cohesion and the sense of belonging within a community (Portolés & Safont, 2023).

From an educational perspective, the study of local heritage and the analysis of the surrounding environment constitute an ideal space for interdisciplinary work, facilitating the development of instrumental competences that improve communication skills. Gómez Carrasco and García González (2018) emphasise that the active involvement of students in constructing their own history provides them with essential tools both for shaping their identity and for understanding the past in a profound and critical manner. This interdisciplinary methodology not only integrates historical, geographical and cultural content, but also enhances communicative and reflective skills that are fundamental to comprehensive and meaningful learning.

The use of heritage in the teaching and learning of social sciences situates students within their social context and surrounding environment, making it an essential resource for developing critical and reflective attitudes towards the past and the present, while encouraging students to participate actively and constructively in their social, cultural and political reality. Furthermore, this approach promotes respect for different ways of life, forms of thought and feelings, consolidating human rights as a key educational reference point. In this way, heritage ceases to be merely a means of transmitting knowledge and becomes the basis for a plural and committed form of citizenship education (González-Monfort, 2019).

Its importance therefore lies in its community dimension, since it serves as a basis for identity, cohesion and social dialogue. It becomes a favourable space for encounter, critical reflection and educational action, where not only knowledge of the past is encouraged, but also active commitment to the present and to the construction of a shared future.

In this regard, citizens have the responsibility to know, value and protect local heritage as a shared legacy that connects us with the past and defines our identity in the present. To achieve this, it is essential for institutions to promote initiatives aimed at fostering an ethical and social commitment to heritage, enabling society to appreciate it appropriately and participate actively in its preservation (Casanova et al., 2018).

Traditionally, local heritage education has received little attention in schools, despite the ease with which children connect with their surroundings. This traditional perspective prevailed until relatively recently, when cultural heritage was viewed merely as an illustrative complement rather than as a central tool for the development of knowledge and competences within education. However, in recent years, it has gained recognition as a fundamental tool in teaching and learning processes within the field of social sciences, both nationally and internationally (Fontal & Ibáñez-Etxeberria, 2017).

The National Heritage Education Plan (2024) provides a reference framework for education professionals, highlighting the importance of heritage within the school curriculum. Although the plan includes regulations establishing objectives, competences and content related to heritage, its implementation in classrooms remains limited. This is particularly concerning given that the classroom is a key space for fostering critical, participatory and committed attitudes among students towards cultural assets.

Local heritage education is therefore reinforced as an ideal means of fostering an active, committed and critically aware citizenry. Peinado Rodríguez (2020) states that teachers today recognise the importance of heritage education as the basis for educational initiatives that promote citizen participation from a symbolic-identity and socio-critical perspective. Furthermore, the inclusion of this form of education facilitates the introduction of metaconcepts such as time and space from an early age, contributing to a deeper understanding of the sociocultural environment (Casanova et al., 2018).

According to Estepa Giménez (2001), there are three types of obstacles that hinder the effective incorporation of cultural heritage into education: epistemological, ideological and methodological. Epistemological obstacles are related to a restricted view of heritage that focuses almost exclusively on monumental elements, excluding other relevant forms such as ethnological, technological or industrial heritage. This limitation is largely due to insufficient teacher training, which fails to adopt a comprehensive perspective on heritage and consequently limits its effective educational application. This fragmented vision also hinders the understanding and appreciation of heritage diversity within the classroom.

Ideological obstacles refer to the potential manipulation of heritage in order to justify exclusionary discourses or economic interests, often resulting in stereotyped and biased representations of cultural heritage. Methodological obstacles, meanwhile, are associated with the difficulties involved in organising activities outside the classroom, such as educational visits, which require greater planning and curricular flexibility on the part of teachers. These barriers affect the pedagogical use of heritage and highlight the need for appropriate training and resources for educators.

Within the classroom, heritage should be approached not only as conceptual content, but also from procedural and attitudinal dimensions. A problem-based approach is proposed, enabling students to develop critical thinking skills through the analysis of heritage elements, the formulation of questions, the development of hypotheses and reflection on processes of patrimonialisation and depatrimonialisation (Chaparro Sainz & Felices de la Fuente, 2019; González-Monfort, 2019).

Jesús Estepa (2004) highlights the significant value of archival documents for work in the social sciences, particularly their usefulness from a didactic perspective in encouraging active research and inquiry-based learning. These documents enable students to develop research competences through direct work with primary sources, which also promotes a profound and critical understanding of content. Furthermore, Alberto Moríña Macías and Jorge Pérez Cañete (2009) emphasise that archives contribute to the development of multiple student skills, especially in cultural and artistic expression, and recommend that educational services design integrative activities encompassing areas such as Geography and Art History in order to enrich the educational process and encourage interdisciplinary learning.

For this reason, it is essential that future teachers become familiar with the heritage of their surroundings, including documentary heritage, and are trained to use it as an educational resource. This involves developing competences related to understanding heritage as a source of historical information, as a cultural reference point and as an instrument for fostering critical and reflective thinking among students (Peinado Rodríguez, 2020).

However, the current situation is rather discouraging. According to existing research, the vast majority of future primary education teachers are unaware both of the existence of archives and of their function and social value. Although they are aware that archives exist and are able to identify them within their country or the cities in which they live, this reality appears so distant to them that they are unable to recognise their essence and the role they play (Guerrero Elecalde, 2024). Particularly significant is their frequent inability to answer questions related to archives, which reveals a profound lack of knowledge and understanding regarding these fundamental resources for society (Gómez Gómez, 2012).

4. Local Documentary Heritage: The Example of the City of Granada

The documentary heritage of the city of Granada constitutes an irreplaceable testimony to its rich historical value, reflecting centuries of political, social, economic and cultural transformation that have shaped its identity.

Historical documents, photographs and records preserved in the historical archives of the city's institutions provide a detailed and rigorous account of Granada's urban, artistic and administrative evolution, extending far beyond its emblematic monuments. However, documentary heritage is not only valuable for academic study; it is also fundamental for citizenship education, cultural planning and the preservation of Granada's identity.

The situation of Granada's historical archives varies according to the institution responsible for their management (City Council, Provincial Council, Regional Government of Andalusia, etc.), which directly affects the ways in which their collections may be accessed and consulted. This diversity in management means that consultation procedures, service availability and digitisation policies may differ considerably between institutions. Furthermore, differences in infrastructure and staffing affect both preservation capacity and access to collections, making coordinated efforts essential to improve Granada's archival system and broaden access to documentary heritage for researchers, students and the wider community.

The dissemination policies of Granada's historical archives aim to make documentary heritage more accessible and visible to the public. In addition to digitisation and online access, dissemination policies include the organisation of physical and virtual exhibitions, guided visits, educational activities, conferences, congresses and other cultural initiatives

that bring documents and their historical context closer to different audiences. All of this is published on the websites of the various institutions and through their social media platforms, which are also used as interactive spaces providing information and consultation tools.

In this context, significant work is being carried out in the digitisation of documents, the creation of catalogues and online-accessible databases, and the incorporation of digitised images that facilitate consultation and downloading from any location. Examples include the independent search engines provided by the Municipal Archive, the General Historical Archive of the Provincial Council and the Archive of the University of Granada (known as Archero), as well as the search engine offering access to digitised images within the network of archives managed by the Regional Government of Andalusia, known as @rchivAWeb.

Within the classroom, access to digitised documents offers the opportunity to work with authentic primary sources, thereby fostering digital competences, the development of critical thinking, analytical skills and a deeper understanding of historical content through a variety of educational activities, ranging from the analysis of original texts to the interpretation of images, maps and other documentary materials.

Nevertheless, digital access to documents cannot be compared with the possibility of consulting them physically. For this reason, it is advisable to organise educational visits to historical archives so that students may gain an understanding of the role these institutions play in preserving documentary heritage, as well as of their own rights and responsibilities as citizens, particularly in their future role as teachers.

In general, guided visits to Granada's historical archives provide opportunities to tour the institution's facilities, including exhibition rooms, storage repositories where documents are preserved and, in some cases, restoration and digitisation laboratories. During the visit, a specialist professional usually explains the functions of the archive, the history of the building and the importance of preserving documentary heritage. Likewise, original significant documents are displayed, such as manuscripts, notarial records, royal documents, historical photographs and other materials illustrating the social, political and cultural evolution preserved within these institutions. However, although these visits are highly valuable for students, Cavanzzana (2002) argues that they often oblige students to adopt a passive role, limited mainly to observation without interaction; that they usually focus on more or less well-known singular documents within the restrictive framework of the "original document syndrome"; and that they sometimes propose excessively broad research tasks that may become entirely disorientating for students.

Among the most representative archives in the city of Granada are the Municipal Historical Archive, the Provincial Historical Archive, the Historical Archive of the University of Granada, the Archive of the Royal Chancery of Granada and the Provincial Archive of the Provincial Council. This diversity of archives offers a broad and varied panorama of Granada's past and of its different spheres of documentary management (Torres Ibáñez & Espejo Arias, 2004).

The Municipal Historical Archive of Granada is located in the Palacio de los Córdova, on Cuesta del Chapiz in the Albaicín district. This archive brings together all the documents preserved, produced or received by Granada City Council from its foundation in 1492 to the present day. In addition, the Municipal Archive also includes documentation incorporated over the years through purchases, donations and deposits.

Several collections are of particular interest because of their heritage and educational value. On the one hand, the series of Capitular Acts Books (1497–1992) and population registers stand out. In the classroom, working with capitular acts enables students to understand first-hand the functioning of municipal governing bodies and the ways in which decisions affecting daily life in the city were taken over the centuries. Population registers, meanwhile, provide essential information regarding the city's social composition, migration movements, family structures and demographic transformation (Moreno Garzón & Lara García, 2002).

On the other hand, in 1501 the Catholic Monarchs established the Water Court of Granada to administer water resources and settle disputes arising from their use in Granada, the Vega and the surrounding towns under its jurisdiction. It was the only specialised water court in Spain alongside the Water Tribunal of Valencia and the Council of Wise Men of Murcia. The court preserves an extraordinarily rich documentary collection that makes it possible to explore how access to water, both in terms of quality and quantity, constituted a determining factor in people's lives during the Early Modern period. Its availability and appropriate use had a significant impact on health, hygiene and ways of life in general, which also encourages reflection on current problems related to water consumption and access.

The archive's Photographic Collection is also of particular interest, and many of its images may be consulted digitally through the online repository. Most of the photographs were produced through the administrative activity of various City Council departments, particularly in relation to urban redevelopment projects and civic and religious events held in the city, while others come from donations and acquisitions.

Historical photographs possess considerable educational value, as they constitute visual sources that complement and enrich the teaching of history. As graphic documents, they reflect political, social, cultural and everyday moments, enabling students to access a visual memory that provides additional and diverse information about the past. Working with these images promotes visual literacy, understood as the ability to read and interpret images within their sociohistorical context, while also contributing to the formation of citizens aware of the importance of preserving and valuing documentary heritage as an essential component of collective cultural identity.

The Provincial Historical Archive of Granada was established in 1994 in order to gather, preserve and disseminate the documentation generated by state bodies in the province of Granada as part of the Spanish Documentary Heritage. It is currently governed by the Collaboration Agreement between the Ministry of Culture and the Regional Government of Andalusia of 21 May 1994, through which the Provincial Historical Archives became fully integrated into the Andalusian Archival System.

Likewise, the Provincial Historical Archive of Granada safeguards a broad range of documentary collections spanning from the Early Modern period to the present day, making it a key reference point for the study of heritage, local history and the urban and administrative evolution of the province. Among its most notable holdings are those produced by state bodies operating in Granada, as well as notarial, judicial and land registry documentation, ecclesiastical protocols, administrative records and graphic collections, including historical photographs documenting the city and its transformation (Martín López, 2004).

Among the documentary collections of greatest heritage value are the records related to ecclesiastical disentailment processes, together with inventories of conventual properties and charitable institutions. The archive also contains important graphic collections, including photographs and plans documenting Granada's urban and architectural development since the nineteenth century. It also preserves the documentary holdings of the Ensenada Cadastre in Granada, deriving from the books and files generated by the Single Tax Accounting Office in the province (Fernández Izquierdo, 1989), including the well-known *General Responses* and specific documents from numerous municipalities such as Otura and Padul.

Working with the *General Responses* of the Cadastre possesses considerable educational value. On the one hand, it connects history with students' immediate environment, making learning more meaningful and motivating. Moreover, these records hold notable value in relation to documentary heritage, since they constitute a rich and detailed primary source regarding the social, economic and territorial structure of eighteenth-century Spain, reflecting demographic, economic and patrimonial aspects of the territory and facilitating an understanding of social and urban evolution, as well as of the relationship between tangible and intangible heritage.

The General Historical Archive of the Provincial Council of Granada, meanwhile, has been located since 1995 in the Palace of the Counts of Gabia, in Granada's Realejo district. The collections it preserves are principally related to the activity and competences of the Provincial Council since 1813, hence the importance of the documentation held there. It also preserves collections originating from different institutions, produced by various provincial bodies that, for different reasons, eventually became incorporated into the archive. One example is the documentary legacy deriving from ecclesiastical and private charitable foundations originating in the Ancien Régime, which came under the authority of the Provincial Council during the nineteenth century following the disentailment processes, when the Council assumed responsibility for managing these welfare institutions and continuing traditional charitable functions.

Between 1923 and 1934, the Provincial Council of Granada carried out various photographic reports on the charitable institutions under its administration. These photographs include views of buildings and interior spaces of the Royal Hospice, Royal Hospital, Hospital of San Juan de Dios, San Lázaro, the Provincial Institute of Hygiene and the Maritime Colony of Almuñécar. They constitute a valuable visual testimony to these institutions, most of which had been founded almost four hundred years earlier (Parra Arcas, 2004).

As a teaching resource, it appears particularly valuable to work with records of sessions held by the Provincial Council from different historical periods, which may easily be consulted online, as they have been digitised from April 1813 onwards. Likewise, the historical collection of the Official Bulletin of the Provincial Council of Granada may also be consulted digitally through the institution's website for the years 1833 to 2002.

These documents allow students to approach the real functioning of public institutions, showing how important decisions affecting the province were made, how projects and policies were debated and approved, and which events shaped local and provincial social and political life. By working with original records, students may analyse aspects ranging from administrative organisation and official language to the evolution of problems, debates and solutions adopted over time.

Established on different administrative foundations, the Archive of the Royal Chancery, founded in 1904 and located in Plaza del Padre Suárez 1 in the heart of Granada, was transferred to the regional administration through Royal Decree 864/1984 of 29 February, whereby the Regional Government of Andalusia assumed responsibility for its management through the Ministry of Culture. It thus became integrated into the Andalusian Archival System within the subsystem of state-owned archives managed by the regional administration. Act 7/2011 of 3 November on Documents, Archives and Documentary Heritage of Andalusia designates the Archive of the Royal Chancery of Granada as the historical archive of the High Court of Justice of Andalusia (Act 7/2011, 2011).

The Archive of the Royal Chancery of Granada preserves an exceptional documentary corpus originating from the Royal Court and Chancery, a superior judicial institution operating in the southern territories of the Crown of Castile from the fifteenth century onwards. Among its holdings, notarial protocols, judicial records and documents relating to territorial organisation and the administration of justice stand out, offering profound and detailed insight into the legal and social evolution of Granada and its surrounding region. In addition to its principal documentation, the archive possesses a specialised library and preserves additional collections originating from courts and various judicial bodies, reflecting the complex administrative and legal structure of the province throughout its history (Torres Ibáñez, 2004).

In this case, an interesting educational possibility would be to work with students using examples from the parchment collection of the Archive of the Royal Chancery of Granada, which forms part of its figurative document collection within the textual documents collection of paper and parchment materials. This documentary corpus has been assembled through the extraction of parchment documents originally inserted into judicial proceedings. Their unusual formats, uniqueness and significance, together with the

validation elements they contain, motivated their independent preservation separate from the civil processes for which they once served as documentary evidence, standing out for their legal, artistic and historical value.

These parchments, carefully produced between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, mainly consist of *cartas ejecutorias de hidalguía* — judicial certificates recognising noble lineage following complex and costly legal proceedings. These certificates were individually prepared by scribes, illuminators and painters of local and national renown, employing high-quality parchment, miniatures, vegetal borders, gilded initials and realistic portraits of monarchs and petitioners. For these reasons, these documents not only illustrate the recognition of privileges and rights within Ancien Régime society but also facilitate understanding of pre-modern society in different historical periods. Their artistic and calligraphic richness encourages the analysis of art and documentary aesthetics, fostering interest in interdisciplinary study between history and art (Torres Ibáñez, et al., 2009).

The Archive of the University of Granada is a support service for the university community whose principal mission consists of collecting, preserving, organising and disseminating the university's documentary heritage. Located within the Scientific Documentation Centre, the University Archive preserves all documents produced by the University's different bodies and services, regardless of their nature, date or format, together with materials later incorporated into the archive (Jiménez Vela et al., 2019). Consequently, together with the principal collection generated by the University of Granada itself, it also preserves others acquired through purchase, such as the collection of the Royal College of Santa Cruz de la Fe and Santa Catalina Mártir, or through donation, such as the personal archives of Paul Fallot, José Palanco, Juan José Santa Cruz, the Burgos Family and Elena Martín Vivaldi.

The Photographic Collection of the University of Granada has also been created, consisting of photographs gathered from diverse sources and preserved, catalogued and digitised within a database. In addition, other audiovisual collections are currently being catalogued and incorporated, including videos and sound recordings, together with graphic materials such as cinema posters, thereby expanding the available documentary heritage (Martínez Osorio, 2021).

Given the long history of the University of Granada, this archive preserves important documents of great historical and heritage value, such as the founding papal bull issued by Pope Clement VII on 14 July 1531, as well as the Books of Claustal Acts, which contain the resolutions of all meetings held by the University since 1532. Likewise, throughout its history, the university has educated numerous individuals who later became prominent figures in Spanish and international culture, education and politics, including Federico García Lorca, Antonio Machado, Luis Rosales, José Martínez Ruiz (Azorín), Ángel Ganivet García, Francisco Giner de los Ríos, Pedro Antonio de Alarcón y Ariza, Antonio Muñoz Molina, the modernist writer Isaac Muñoz, the designer Antonio Cánovas del Castillo Rey, the journalist Carmen de Burgos Seguí, Antonio Gallego Burín, art historian and politician, Jorge Guillén, Andrés Manjón Manjón and Joaquina Eguarás.

Their time as students at the university left behind academic records containing the documentation required for obtaining bachelor's, licentiate and doctoral degrees. In educational contexts, the analysis of these records encourages reflection on the importance of academic education in the construction of leadership and social change, motivating students to value education as a tool for progress.

Furthermore, these materials promote respect for documentary preservation by demonstrating that documentary heritage preserves not only historical or legal facts, but also individual memory that contributes to the collective legacy. This fosters a comprehensive vision of cultural heritage that includes both official and biographical documents, helping to develop a critical awareness committed to history and education.

5. Conclusions

The study conducted on local documentary heritage highlights its fundamental value as a historical, cultural and educational resource, particularly in territorial contexts such as the city of Granada. It has been shown that these archives and collections not only preserve collective memory, but also provide an invaluable platform for citizenship education, the critical analysis of history and the formation of a dynamic collective identity.

This heritage not only enables local history to be understood in depth and detail, but also promotes essential critical skills, such as documentary analysis, source interpretation and reflection on complex historical processes. The educational use of authentic documents fosters the construction of a collective identity and strengthens the sense of belonging to the community by connecting the present with its tangible and intangible historical legacy. Moreover, it contributes to the development of democratic competences by enabling students to engage with diverse narratives and recognise the multiple voices and experiences that form part of social memory.

Nevertheless, its effective incorporation into educational processes faces significant challenges. On the one hand, teachers need to be trained to use documentary heritage not merely as an illustrative resource, but as a tool for developing critical thinking, research and debate. In this regard, it is particularly important to establish lasting links between education professionals, historians and archive specialists, creating mutually beneficial partnerships that make it possible to design specific, well-planned, realistic proposals, contextualised within the curriculum and accessible to students.

In another respect, access to these collections must be strengthened through digitisation, cataloguing and dissemination strategies that respond to current pedagogical needs and to different educational levels. Indeed, institutional fragmentation and heterogeneity in records management limit effective access to these resources and their educational use. Administrative dispersion across municipal, provincial and university archives, as well as other bodies, creates inequalities in availability, digitisation and dissemination, thereby hindering their full potential. In addition, the shortage of human and technological resources, together with teachers' limited knowledge and training regarding the pedagogical use of documentary heritage, represents an obstacle to its increasing integration into educational plans.

Finally, it is necessary to reflect critically on the traditional conception of heritage that still prevails in many institutions and educational programmes, which tends to privilege an elitist, historical and monumental approach while overlooking the social, intercultural and critical dimensions that documentary heritage can offer. In this regard, it is essential to promote an inclusive, plural and critical approach that incorporates subaltern perspectives and considers the identity-related and social complexities that this documentation may reveal. It should not be forgotten that local documentary heritage, far from being a static vestige, is a living and transformative resource that requires integrated management, innovative education and committed social participation. Only in this way will it be able to fully perform its function as a vehicle for memory, identity and democratic construction in contemporary society.

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