



Salahaddin University- Erbil  
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# Palace, House, and Bath in Islamic Era

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# What is the Palace Building?

The idea of building palaces dates back to pre-Islamic empires such as the Persian and Roman empires. Through the fall of these empires, Muslims use these palaces as a residence and administrative place of the leader of army or mosque.

History books and literature have mentioned a lot about these palaces focused on describing luxury, decoration and aesthetics. Palaces are the home of princes and rich people.

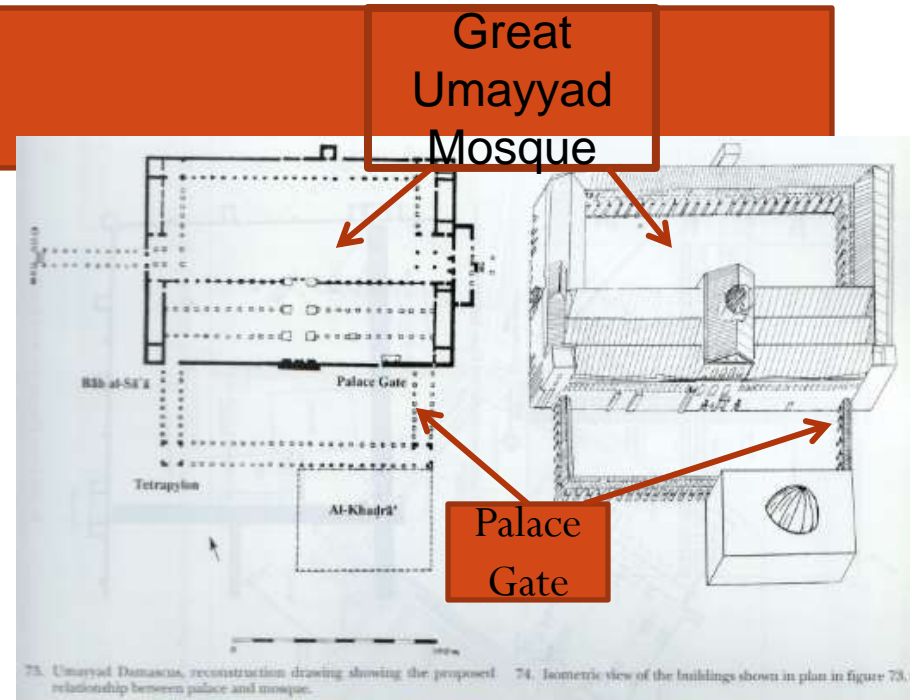


*Taq Kasra in Iraq 540 AD*

## First Palace in Islamic Era

After a period of the advent of Islam, the first Muslim palace was built in the Umayyad era. The palace of Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan (the green palace) is the first Palace built in the Islamic era by Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan during his tenure in Damascus.

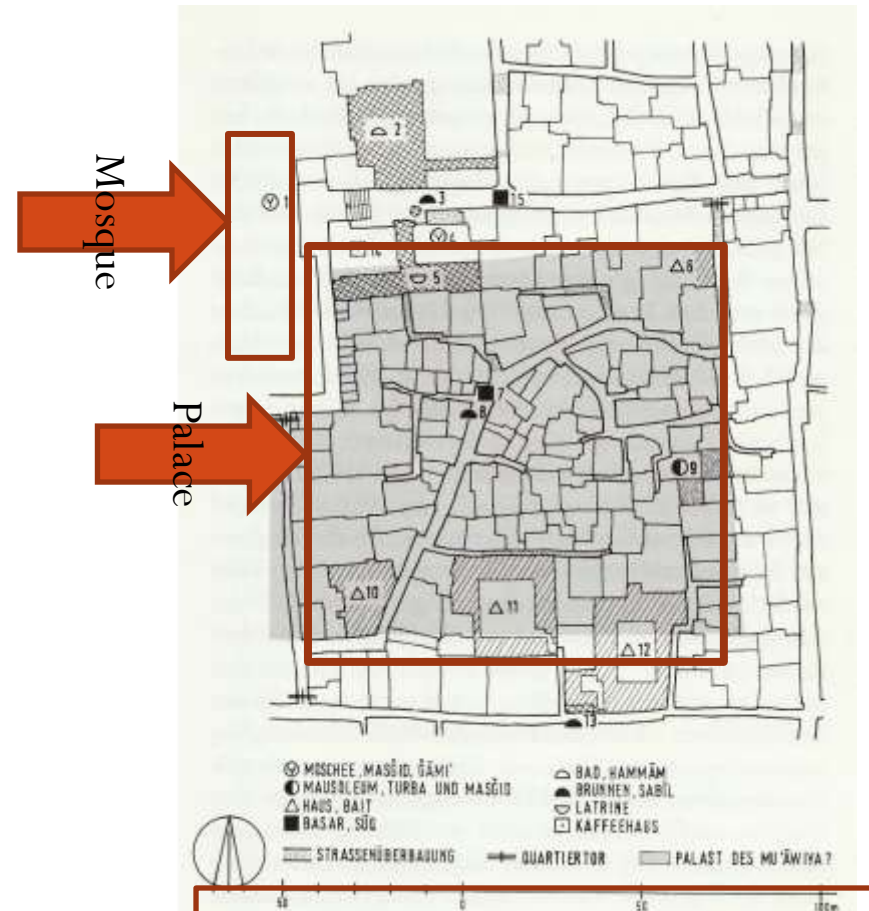
The building is located before the Great Umayyad Mosque, and a green dome was erected on it; At first, it was an office building for administrative purposes, but Muawiyah inhabited it for forty years.



Destroyed Green Palace

## Palace Location

In General, the building of the palace was constructed near the river or on higher terrains. Usually, the building was attached to the main mosque of the city.



Damascus City plan, The location of Green place

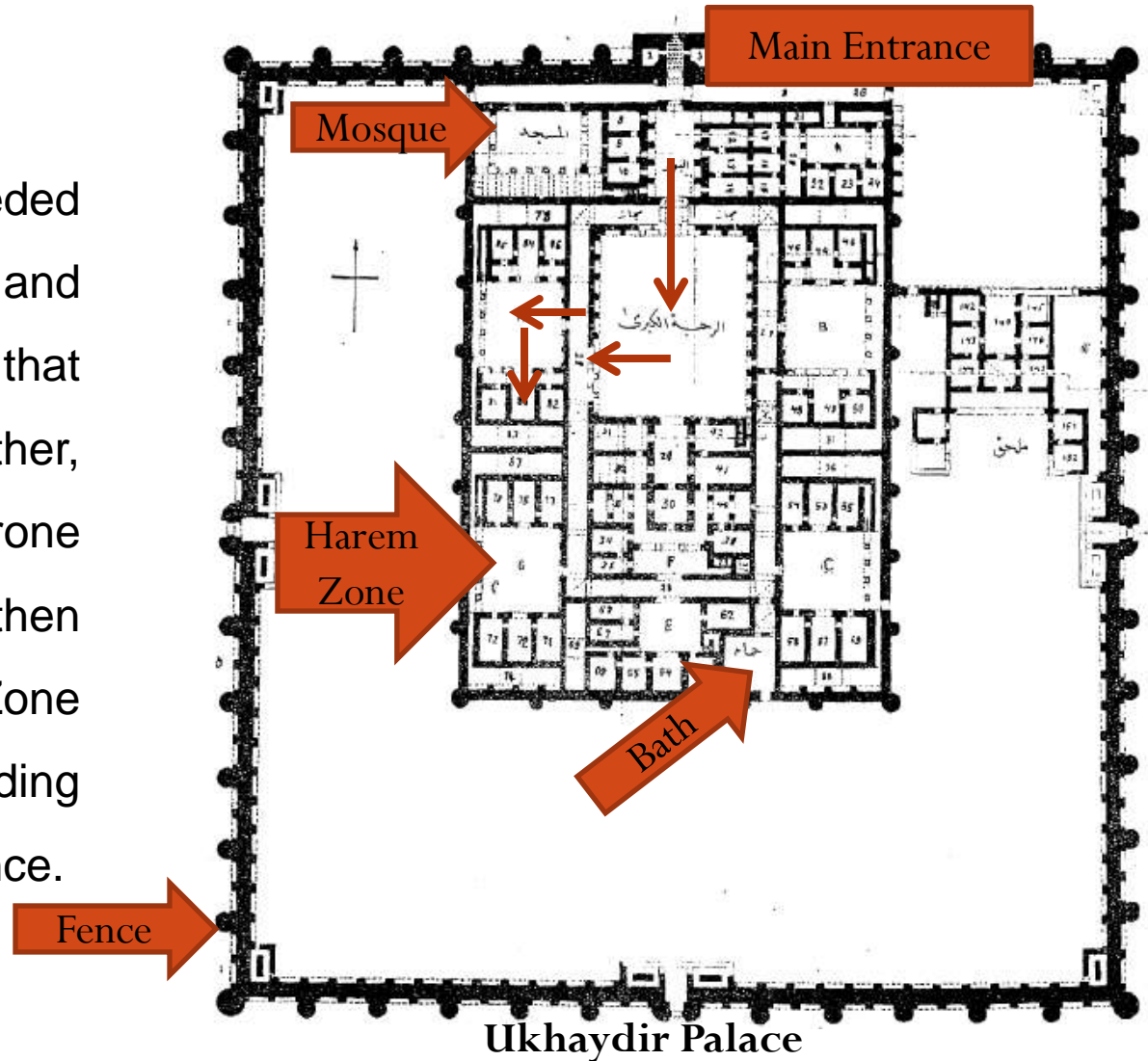
## Functions and main spaces in the Palace

The building of Palaces included some different functions such as:

- Residence area (Harem)
- Mosque (Masjid)
- Bath
- Kitchen
- Guesthouse
- Administrative part
- Pavilion

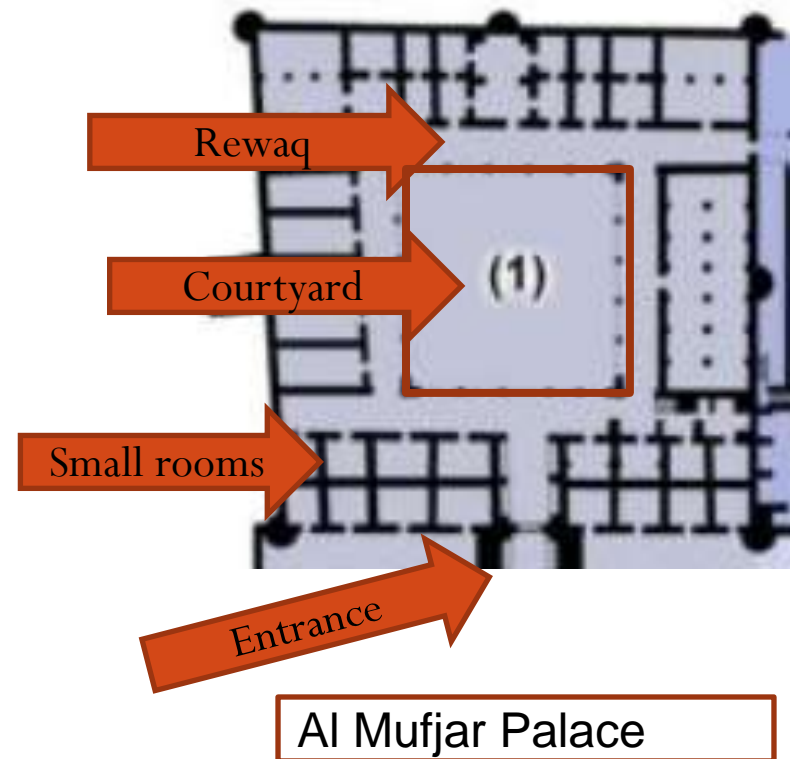
# Functions and main spaces in the Palace

The palace is preceded by huge high doors and wide courtyards that follow one another, followed by the Throne and Reception halls, then by the Residence Zone (Harem); And the building was fortified with a fence.



# Design of Residence area (Harem)

In general, the building of Harem had a central open courtyard in the form of a rectangular or square; The courtyard was surrounded by a covered arcade path (Rewaq), and this path led to the small rooms that those rooms were the residence place of the prince's wives.



# What is Riwaq?

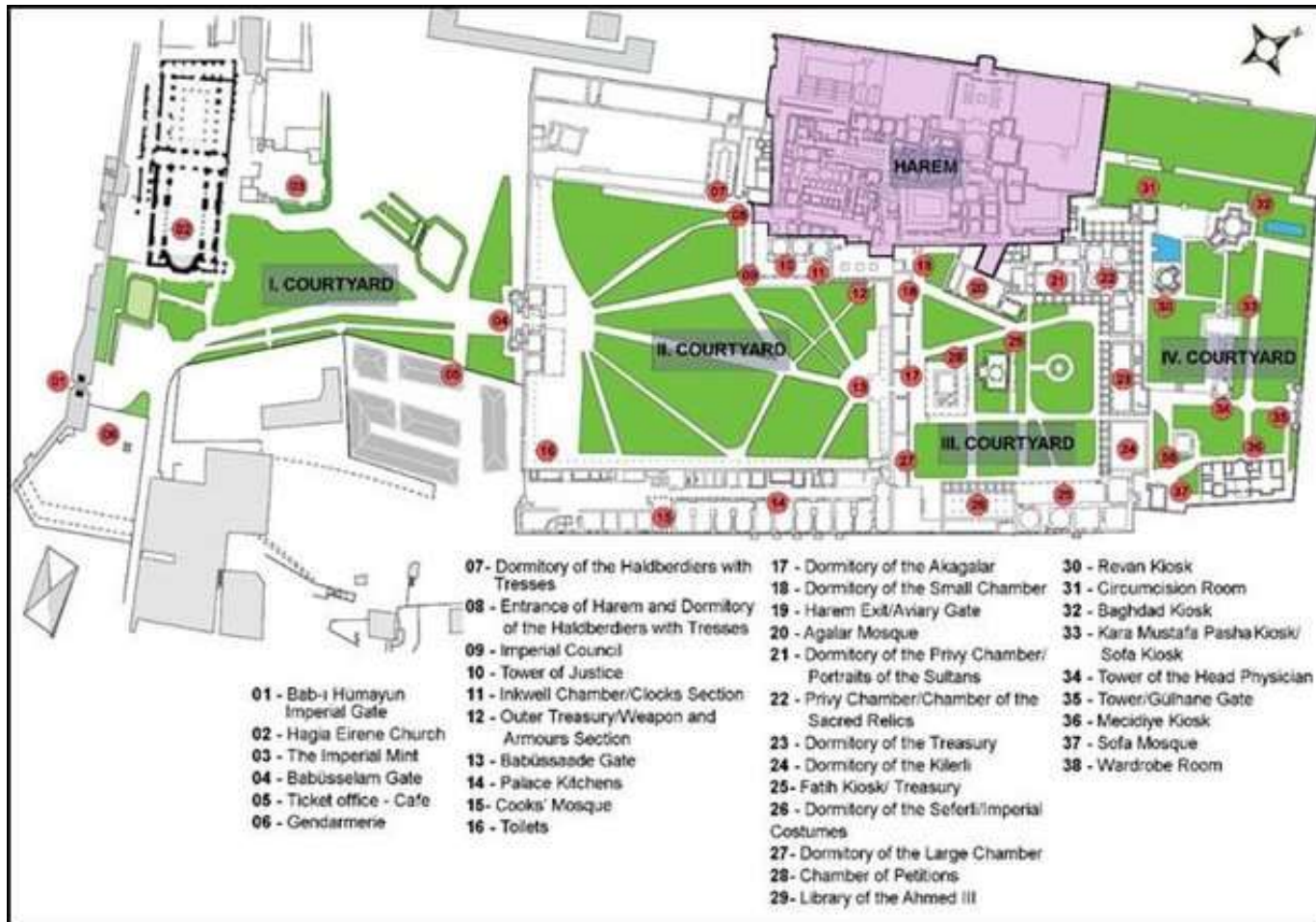
Is an arcade or portico open on at least one side. It is an architectural design element in Islamic architecture and Islamic garden design. A riwaq often serves as the transition space between interior and outdoor spaces.



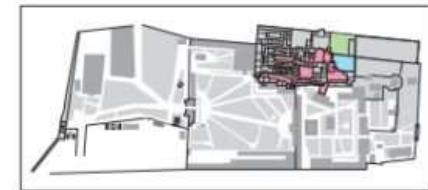
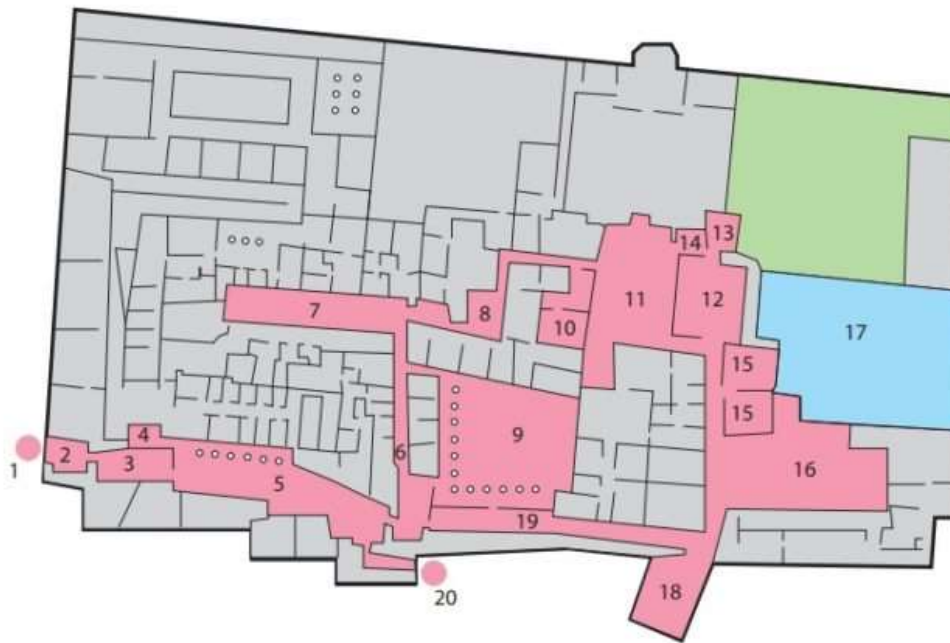
**The Alhambra Palace in Andalusia**



# Topkapi Palace in Istanbul



# Harem Zone in Topkapi Palace in Istanbul



- |                             |                                       |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1- Entrance                 | 9- Queen Mother Courtyard             | 17- Pool            |
| 2- Domed room               | 10- Bathroom (Hamam)                  | 18- Harem Mosque    |
| 3- Hall with fountain       | 11- Imperial Hall                     | 19- Golden Road     |
| 4- Mosque                   | 12- The privacy chamber of Muirad III | 20- Harem Exit Gate |
| 5- Courtyard                | 13- The private chamber of Ahmed I    |                     |
| 6- Corridor                 | 14- The Private Chamber of Ahmed III  |                     |
| 7- Sultan's Wives Courtyard | 15- The Twin Kiosk                    |                     |
| 8- Queen Mother Apartment   | 16- Sultan's Favorite Courtyard       |                     |

## Ornament in Islamic Architecture

Surface decoration has always played a fundamental role in Islamic architecture. As human and animal representation is forbidden in Islamic religious monuments, designers employed mosaics, stucco, brickwork and ceramics, and the vigorous use of brilliant color to reach unparalleled heights of expression. It is this ornamental dimension of Islamic architecture that is explored in this magnificent volume.

# Elements of Decoration

## 1- Calligraphy:

Because of its role in recording the word of God, calligraphy is considered one of the most important of the Islamic arts. Nearly all Islamic buildings have some type of surface inscription in the stone, stucco, marble, mosaic and/or painting. The inscription might be a verse from the Qur'an, lines of poetry, or names and dates.



# Elements of Decoration

## 2- Geometry:

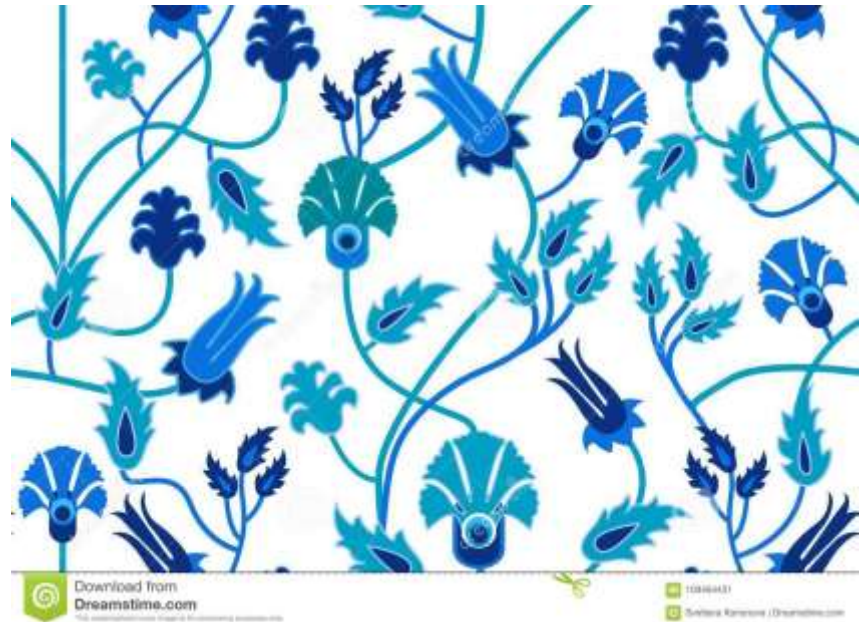
Islamic artists developed geometric patterns to a degree of complexity and sophistication previously unknown. These patterns exemplify the Islamic interest in repetition, symmetry and continuous generation of pattern.



# Elements of Decoration

## 3- Floral patterns :

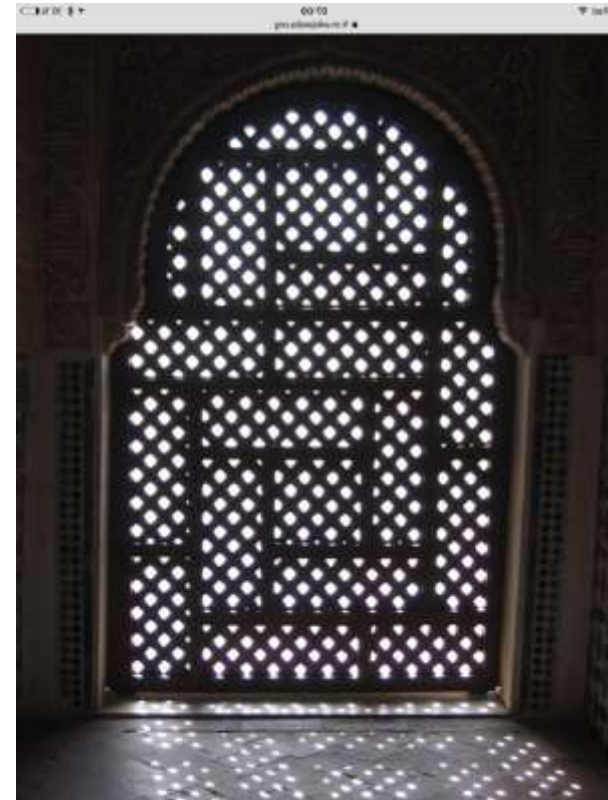
Islamic artists reproduced nature with a great deal of accuracy. Flowers and trees might be used as the motifs for the decoration of textiles, objects and buildings.



# Elements of Decoration

## 4- Light:

For many Muslims (and non-Muslims), light is the symbol of divine unity. In Islamic architecture, light functions decoratively by modifying other elements or by originating patterns. Light can add a dynamic quality to architecture, extending patterns, forms and designs into the dimensions of time. And the combination of light and shade creates strong contrasts of planes and gives texture to sculpted stone, as well as stocked or brick surfaces.



# Elements of Decoration

## 5- Water :

In hot Islamic climates, the water from courtyard pools and fountains cools as it decorates. Water can not only reflect architecture and multiply the decorative themes, it can also serve as a means of emphasizing the visual axes.





## What is Islamic House?

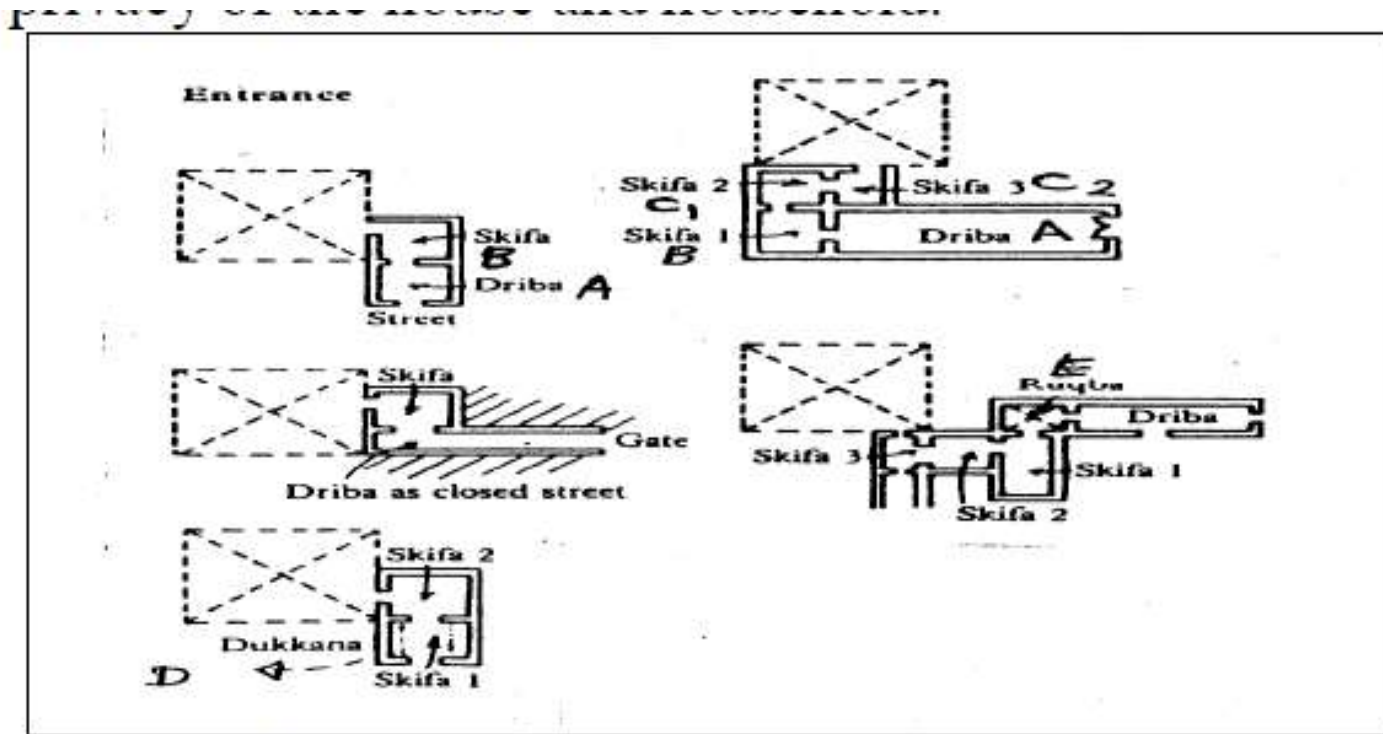
The term “house” means “the habitable and comfortable place to live in harmony without any problems”. The term “Islamic house” means “a house with the values of Islam which is started from good intentions, a clear philosophy and a conception that reaches the completion of the construction of the building according to Islamic teachings. The nature and behaviors of the Islamic family and its social role has created the typical Islamic attitudes regarding the function of the house.

There are some basic principles or guidelines for Islamic housing related to the verses of Al-Qur’an such as privacy, comfort, peace, safety, cleanliness, modesty, and many others.

# MAIN FEATURES OF AN “ISLAMIC HOUSE”

- 1- Privacy
- 2- Courtyard Concept
- 3- Relationships & Classification of the Spaces

# 1- Privacy: Entrance of the House



**Fig. 8 Details for many types of house entrances in traditional Muslims house in Tunisia showing different design approaches for getting enough visual protection for the family during the use of the courtyard Source:Hakim;1979**

# 1- Privacy: Mashrabiya and Shanasheel

**Mashrabiya** is a spiritual, decorative, and functional architectural element that merges the form and function of the Islamic window screen with a conventional jalousie, taking on the materiality of local culture.



**Fig. 3 (left)** Grilled external windows mashrabiya is one of the distinguished elements used for privacy and penetration of solar radiation, picture for traditional house in Basra-Iraq

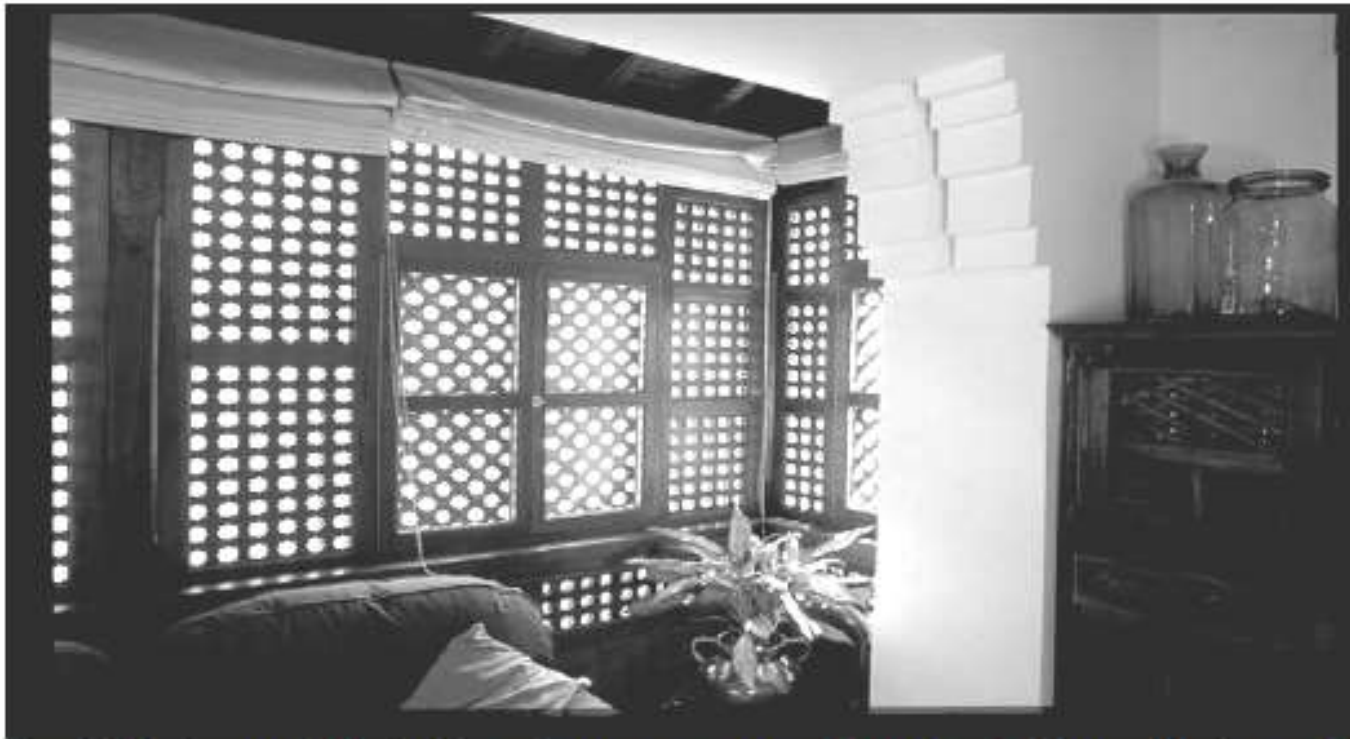
## Privacy: Mashrabiya (Shanashil)

**Aim:** One of the major purposes of the Mashrabiya is privacy. A good view of the street can be obtained by the occupants without being seen, preserving the private interior without depriving the occupants from a vista of the public outside.

There is no point in history that can be dated as the first time they appeared; however, the earliest evidence on use of the Mashrabiya as it currently is dates back to the 12th century in [Baghdad](#) during the [Abbasid](#) period.

It is said that Mashrabiya are the ornaments of the rich as it costs a lot of time and finance to produce them.

## Privacy: Mashrabia (Shanashil)



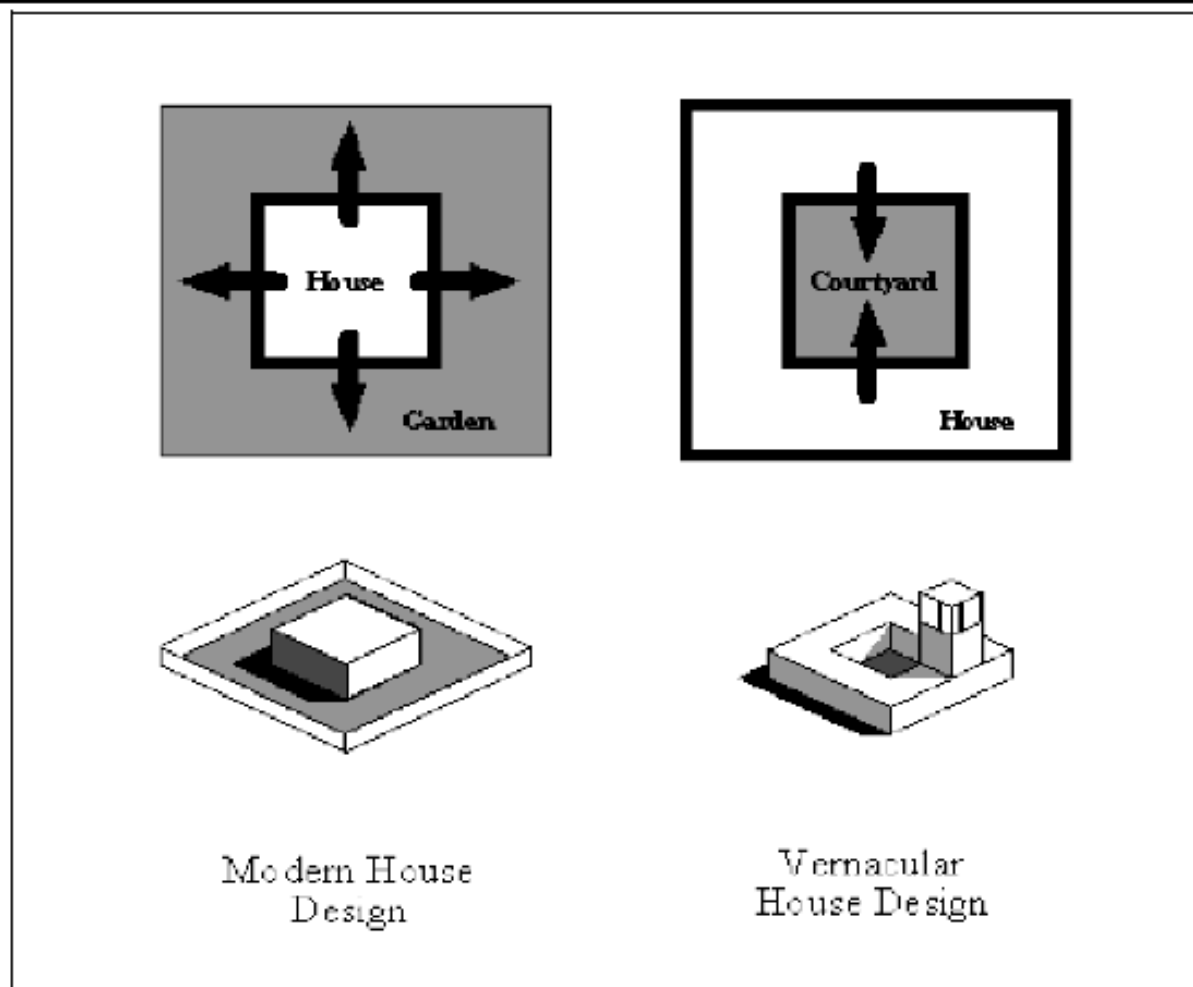
**Fig. 7 Internal details of one room n the first floor facing the alleyway through the mashrabia Source: Author;1994**

## 2- Courtyard Concept

The main feature of Islamic architecture is the focus on interior space as opposed to the outside or facade.

The typical expression of this focus on inner space is in the house. Muslims dwelling units typically are organized around an inner courtyard. The facade of this house offers high windowless walls interrupted only by a single low door.

## 2- Courtyard Concept



**Figure (2A) Modern and traditional Islamic house design concept, Source: Mahgob, 1997**



## 2- Courtyard Concept

The sahan or Courtyard consists of an open space surrounded by semi-open spaces (veranda) or enclosed spaces (rooms). For social and religious purposes it helps to achieve privacy. It is a place where trees and flowers are planted and fountains are located.



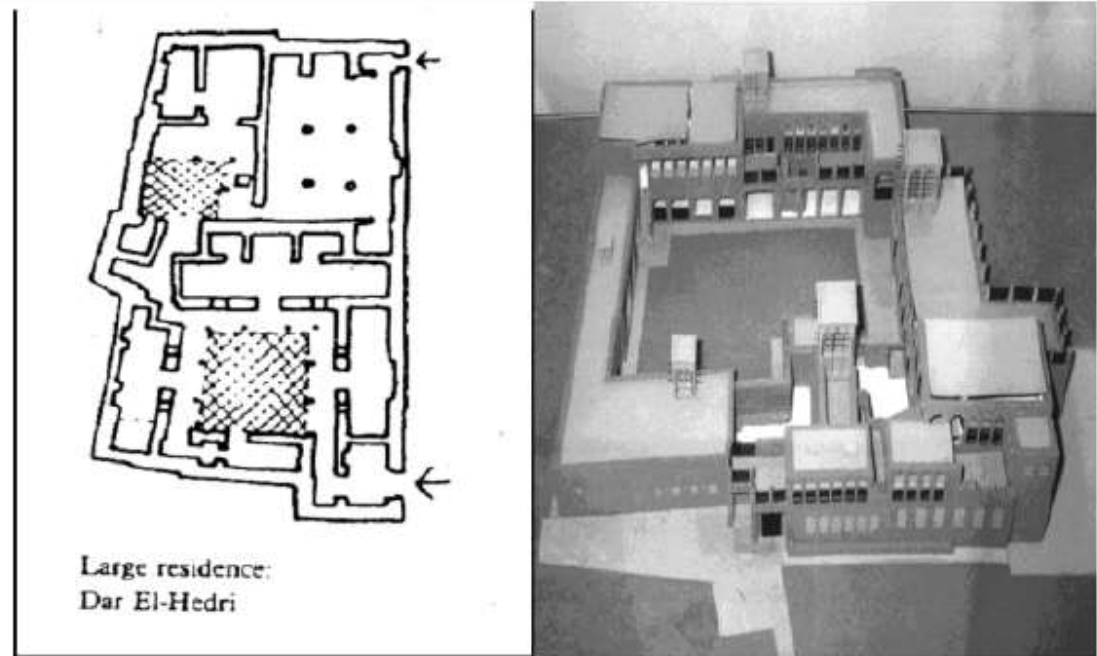
**Fig.1** The courtyard represents the core of the traditional Islamic house; it includes a water element and trees. This picture is a traditional house-courtyard of Andalusia Source: Author, 1999

### 3- Relationships & Classification of the Spaces

Essentially there are four kinds of space found in the traditional “Islamic house”, both internal and

external:

- private,
- semi-private
- semi-public
- public



**Fig. 2 (left) Plan of typical traditional Islamic courtyard house in Tunisia Source: Hakim; 1979 And the model of sheikh saeed house, UAE (right) Source: Mahgob, 1997.**

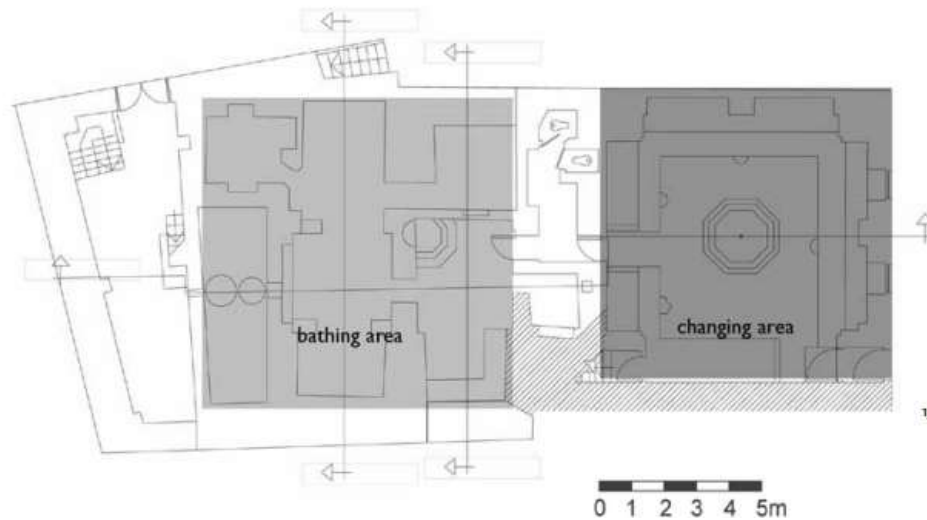
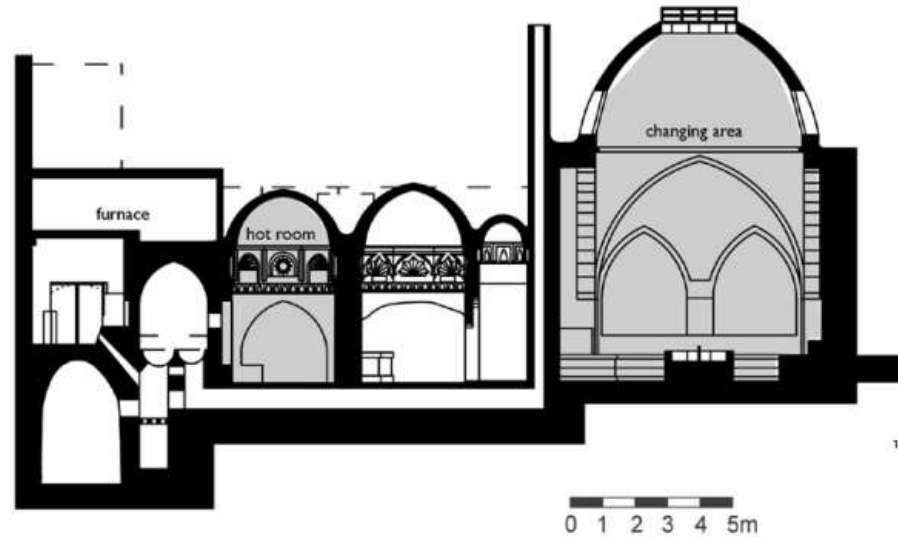
## Bath (Hamam)

The hammams (or Islamic bathhouses), commonly known as ‘Turkish baths’, are one of the key urban facilities in Islamic cities. They evolved from the Roman and Byzantine public baths, as these were assimilated when the Umayyad dynasty conquered Byzantine territories in the Middle East between ad 661 and 750. Early hammams were built in the eighth century by the Umayyad rulers who established their capital in Damascus.



Qusayr 'Amra in Jordan, among the earliest known examples of Islamic bathhouses, dating from the Umayyad period (7th–8th century)

# Bath (Hamam)



## Bath (Hamam)

30- The waterwheel (Courtyard)

31-The corridor leading to the bathroom

32- The first section of the bathroom

33 & 34- The second section of the bathroom

35- Corridor lead to heat room

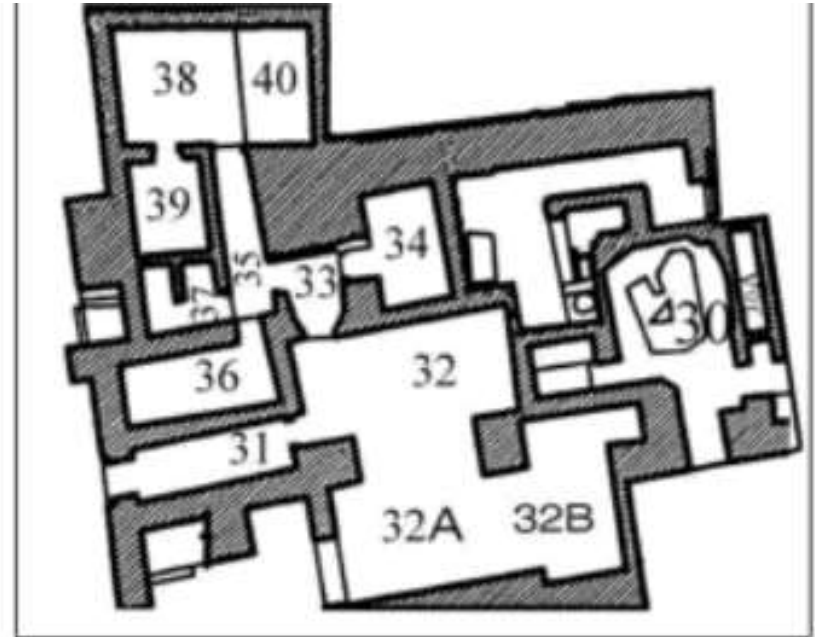
36- annex room

37- Toilet

38- Heat room

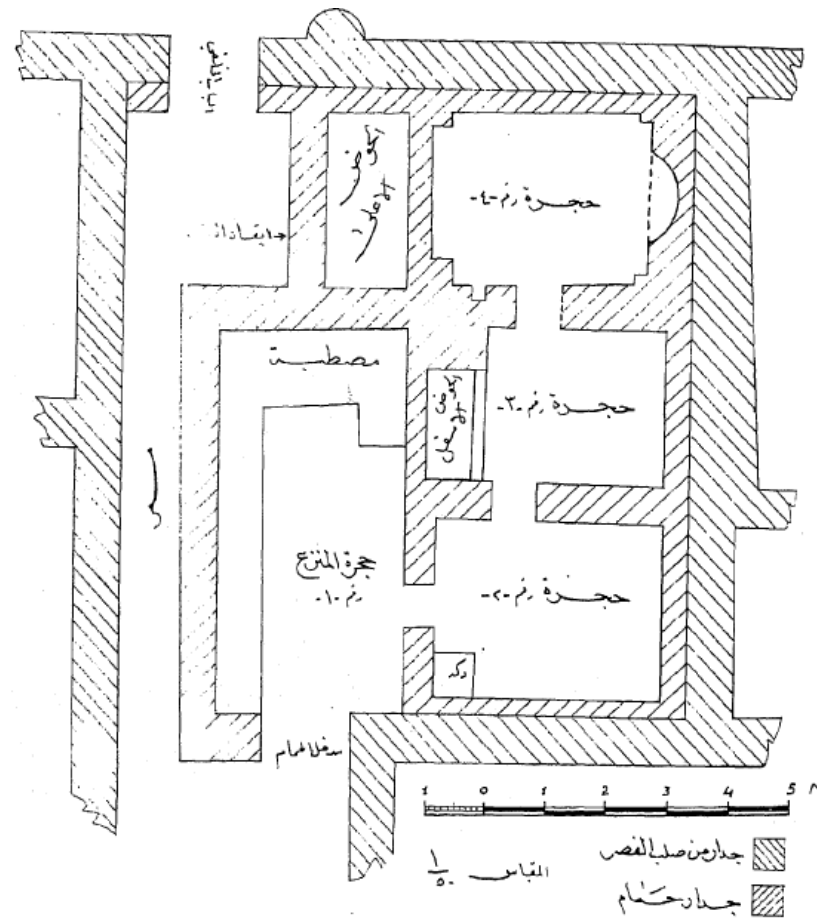
39- North East Iwan

40- North West Iwan



Floor Plan of the bathroom of Prince Taz Palace

# Bath (Hamam)



Floor plan of Bathroom of Ukhaydir Palace