

Salahaddin University
College of Engineering
Department of Architecture

Islamic Architecture

Islamic cities - 1ST Lecture

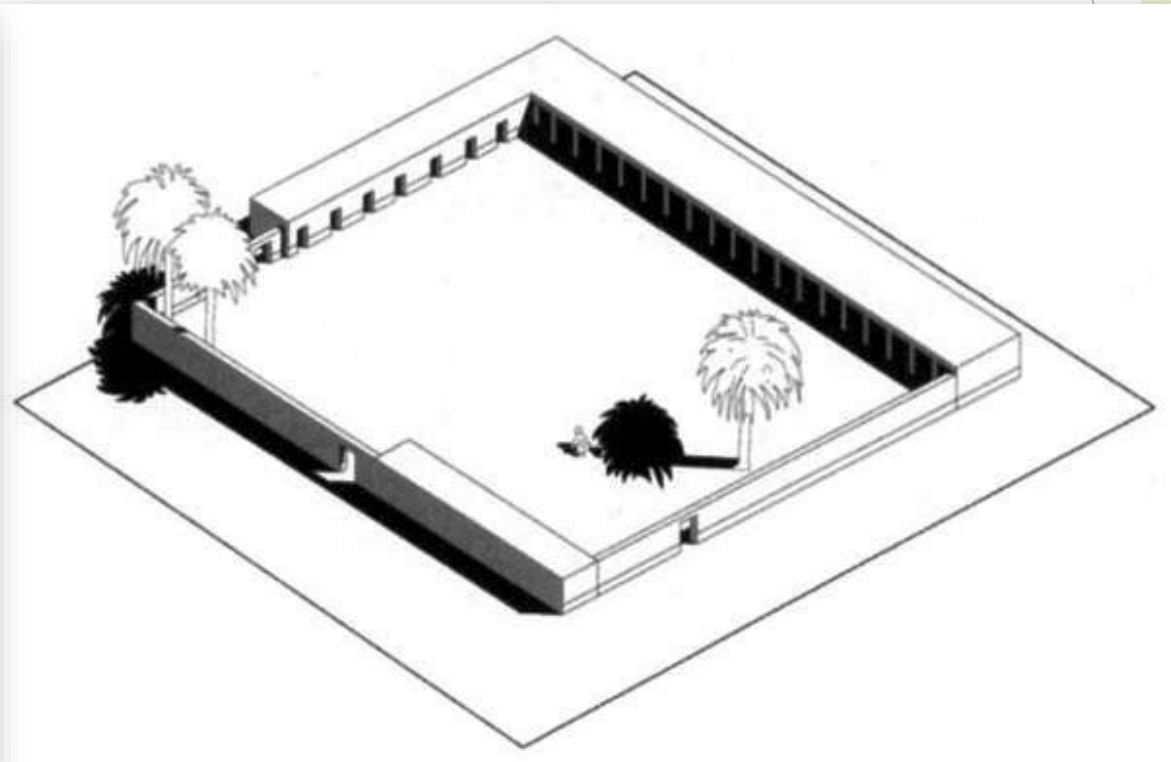
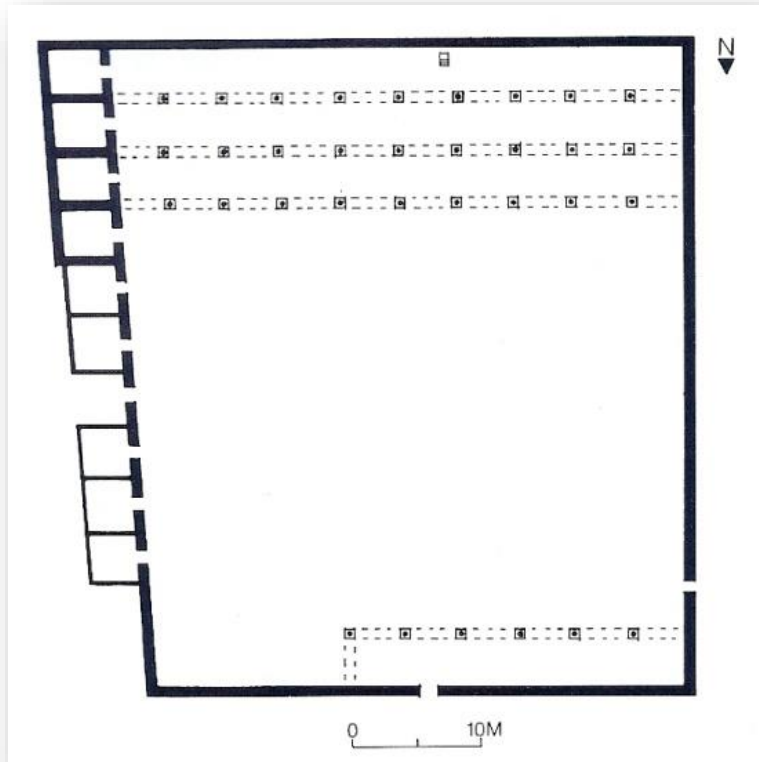
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EVOLUTION OF ISLAMIC CITIES

- ▶ The Islamic era began with the formation of Islam under the leadership of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in early 7th-century Arabia. The first mosque was a structure built by prophet in Medina in 622, right after his *hegira* (migration) from Mecca, which corresponds to the site of the present-day Mosque of the Prophet (*al-Masjid an-Nabawi*).
- ▶ It is usually described as his house, but may have been designed to serve as a community center from the beginning. It consisted of a simple courtyard structure built in unbaked brick, with a rectangular, almost square, floor plan measuring about 53 by 56 meters. A shaded portico supported by palm trunks stood on the north side of the courtyard, in the direction of prayer (the *qibla*), which was initially towards Jerusalem. When the *qibla* was changed to face towards Mecca in 624, a similar portico was added on the south side, facing towards that city.

- Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his family lived in separate rooms attached to the mosque, and prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself was buried in one of these rooms upon his death in 632.
- Over the rest of the 7th century and in the 8th century the mosque was repeatedly expanded to include a large flat-roofed prayer hall supported by columns (a hypostyle hall) with a central courtyard. It became one of the main models for the early mosques built elsewhere.



What is a city or Islamic city:

- ❑ The city is the base and the space for people to come together. The space in which human interaction and social affairs occur and is identified in terms of epistemic and ontological support. So that we can talk about beautiful city, industrial city, western city and Islamic city.
- ❑ Islamic city, which resulted in two nuclear categories, "the link between Islam and the city," and "explaining the centrality of the Islamic city to the definition and the theory of its centrality."
- ❑ Islamic city has several, sometimes conflicting, definitions, each of which is critically evaluated in its own right, therefore, it should be explained in terms of definition and theorizing.
- ❑ It can be said that the Islamic city is backed up with Islamic identity and its symbols, and this city is different from non-Islamic cities.

Features of Islamic city :

- ❑ The Islamic city is the representation of the spatial form and the social structure which has been based on Islamic ideals, forms of communication and its ornamental elements.
- ❑ Urbanization in the Islamic era was the continuation and transformation of Sasanian urban life. In this period, the political (administrative and military) status of the city's economic and social situation continued to persist and became widespread due to the extent of the Islamic Empire and the expansion of the exchange market in the third and fourth centuries of urbanization, and the city's image changed.

Features of Islamic city :

- ❑ In the Islamic era, religious organizations also became important in the foundation of urban life, and the mosque adina or mosque became one of the main components of the city's social system. During this period, the towns and villages surrounding them in the regional systems were linked together and created a solidarity formation.
- ❑ The basis of this link was the inseparable solidarity of crafts and commerce with agricultural activities. This means that the division of labor between the city and the village, as seen in the medieval European cities, did not take shape in urban areas.
- ❑ In cases where each neighborhood was a follower of one of the Islamic religions, the solidarity of each of the neighborhoods of the city with the surrounding villages, which was in line with it, was more than the solidarity of the neighborhoods. Many neighborhoods had rural characteristics, and many villages went to industrial production. Nevertheless, the city and the village also had significant differences.

- ❑ Most residential, commercial and service buildings in the historic cities of the country were one or two floors, and as a result, the city had a fairly smooth and smooth sky line, and only mosques and other large religious buildings had a higher altitude than their adjacent buildings.
- ❑ In this way, they are considered as indicators of the city's image. Particularly monastery and dome in this type of buildings (mosques, schools, and graves) were very elevated and were the main elements of the city's image. As seen from outside the city and from many parts of the city.

One of the main differences between Islamic cities and former cities is the following:

- ❑ The simplicity of the new system of culture, whose content (referred to in the Muslim celestial script), led to a decline in social activity. Therefore, the Arab cities did not have the complexity of the Hellenistic and Roman cities.
- ❑ Contrary to the mentioned cities, these cities consisted of farms, courthouses, theaters, amphitheaters, stadiums and indoor stadiums, and only two types of public buildings: baths and mosques.
- ❑ The rule and order that was prevalent in Hellenistic and Roman cities was widespread in these cities ... Islam emphasized the well-being of family life.

- ❑ Houses were almost always on a level, and the city consisted of a set of houses whose external appearance did not indicate the shape of the interior or their significance.
- ❑ The streets were tight and narrow, forming a spiral of loose and often covered areas. Another aspect was that the shops did not fit into the field, but rather along one or more soldiers or indoor streets, forming the market.
- ❑ This insanity, in contrast to the highly geometric order of the mosque courtyard, emphasized the importance of mosques.
- ❑ The cities were compact, enclosed in walls that divided them into different areas, and was called the central region of "Medina". Each ethnic and religious group had a special neighborhood and the ruler remained in the city's fringe area, the "reservoir", in order to remain immune from riots and unrest.
- ❑ The gate of the city was often a huge building complex with a foreign gate and one or more inner courtyards and an inner gate that was the venue for the gathering of those who entered or exited the city.

- ❑ Islamic hadiths have forbidden the representation of Pyjer and human imagery, and as a result, visual arts in the classical sense of it have survived, instead of that, a system of abstract decoration evolved based on geometric combinations and an Arabic line, and it was perfectly in harmony with their architecture.

Ehlers (1373) also presented a model of the Islamic city in his studies, which include:

- The hierarchy of functions with Adina Mosque (religious function) and market (the economic function and heart of traditional business activities) as the core of each Islamic city.
- The existence of a hierarchy of business and orientation within the market.
- The existence of residential neighborhoods within the city (residential function), appropriate and consistent with the social, ethnic, religious and ... social differences of the people of the city.
- The existence of defensive military installations and defenses, such as fences, towers, gates and gates of neighborhoods;
- Other specific features, such as cemeteries and outlets outside the city.

Design Principles of the Muslim City

A number of factors played decisive roles in ordering and shaping the plan and form of the Muslim City. In addition to the influence of local topography, and morphological features of pre-existing towns, the Muslim City reflected the general socio-cultural, political, and economic structures of the newly created society. In general this involved the following:

1. Natural laws:

The first principle that defined much of the character of the Muslim city is the adaptation of the built form and plan of the city to natural circumstances expressed through weather conditions and topography. These were expressed in the adoption of concepts such as courtyard, terrace, narrow covered streets and gardens. Such elements were designed for coping with hot weather conditions dominating the Muslim environment.



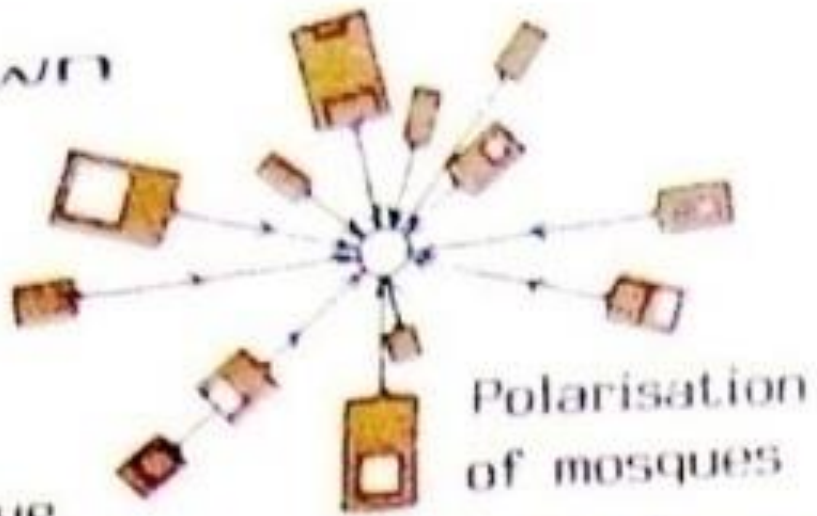
2. Religious and cultural beliefs:

The religious beliefs and practices formed the centre of cultural life for these populations, thus giving the mosque the central position in spatial and institutional hierarchies.

The cultural beliefs separating public and private lives regulated the spatial order between uses and areas. Thus, the town plan consisted of narrow streets and cul-de-sacs separating private and public domains, while the land use emphasised the separation of male and female users.

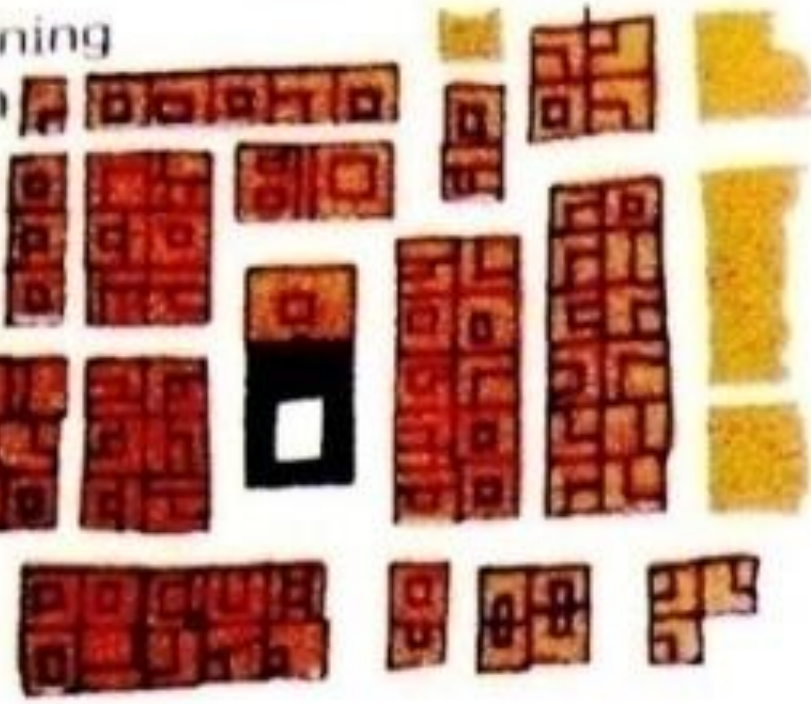
Consequently, economic activity that involved exchange and public presence was separated from residential (private dwellings) use and concentrated in public areas and in the main streets.

Town

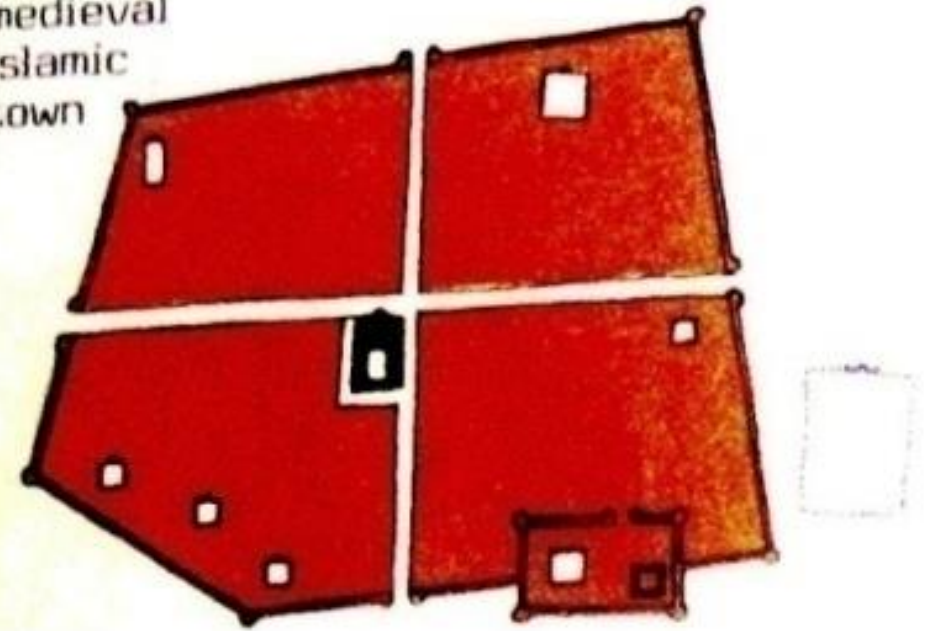


Polarisation of mosques

Mosque functioning as town centre



Structure of medieval Islamic town



Islamic town in 19th Century



3. Design principles stemmed from Sharia Law:

The Muslim city also reflected the rules of Sharia (Islamic Law) in terms of physical and social relations between public and private realms, and between neighbours and social groups.

The privacy principle was made into a law which sets the height of the wall above the height of a camel rider.

4. Social principles:

The social organisation of the urban society was based on social groupings sharing the same blood, ethnic origin and cultural perspectives.

Development was therefore directed towards meeting these social needs especially in terms of kinship solidarity, defence, social order and religious Practices.



Factors such as extended-family structures, privacy, sex separation and strong community interaction were clearly translated in the dense built form of the courtyard houses.

The social organization of the urban society was based on social groupings sharing the same blood, ethnic origin and cultural perspectives. Social and legal issues were taken over by religious scholars who lived in central places close to the main mosque (the main public institution) and the public life where disputes mostly arose.

*THANKS FOR YOUR
ATTENTION*