SOME ASPECTS OF TRADITIONAL ROLES OF MUSLIM WOMEN AS REFLECTED IN ISLAMIC DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

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PREFACE

It has been my good fortune over the past several years to make the acquaintance of people from the Middle East who are part of the Oklahoma State University academic community. In the course of growing friendships and respect, I realized my ignorance of their part of the world and of their religion. So began my fascination with the culture, religion, art, and architecture. My preliminary study of the art and decoration during a trip to England and Egypt in 1978 evolved into this thesis. It has been a labor of love, as well as the fulfillment of an academic requirement, and has opened new worlds intellectually and visually.

There were many who supported my efforts at research and writing. I am most grateful to my adviser, Dr. K. K. Stewart for her encouragement, prodding, and enthusiasm. Special thanks, too, are due my committee member, Mrs. Christine Salmon, who encouraged me throughout my graduate school years and who herself epitomizes courage and persistence. Dr. Azim Nanji, too, was of invaluable help in increasing my understanding and appreciation of the Islamic world.

The staff of the Inter-Library Loan department at Oklahoma State University deserve special thanks for their work in obtaining books and articles without which I could not have done my research. Thanks, also, to Mrs. Caroline Hoffman Williams at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin for her guidance, suggestions, and hospitality.

To friends, relatives, and especially my international friends, my deepest appreciation for their faith in my endeavors and their gift of understanding.

We are the products of our pasts. I wish to acknowledge especially two teachers at Wellesley High School whose special talents helped launch my academic career: Mr. Wilbury Crockett, who taught not only English but Reason and the importance of Independent Thought; and Mr. James Etmekjian, whose rigorous and exacting training in the French language allowed me, after more than twenty years lapse, to read the vital sources in that language. Would that all American children could have such dedicated and competent instruction.

But above all others, I must thank my parents, R.I.P., who taught by example integrity, intellectual curiosity, respect for others, love of beauty, sense of history, and much more. For these precious gifts and their faith in the iron in my soul, I dedicate this thesis with love and appreciation for what they were and what they represented.

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Islamic civilization as it has developed over the last 1400 years is rich in complexity and intricacy. This study of the relationship between some traditional roles of women in the world of Islam and forms of domestic architecture treats but a small part of a vast and multifaceted subject. While scholars may make certain generalizations about historical phenomena, one must always be mindful that any culture has exceptions to a norm and what appears on the surface does not always hold true at a deeper level.

It is important to note that while one might make assumptions to serve the purpose of a working hypothesis, i.e., that there exists a relationship between women's roles and certain architectural forms, one cannot say that the connection is universal in all areas influenced by Islam. Furthermore, some characteristics found in a study of Islamic civilization are neither original to nor exclusive to Islam.

Purpose

It is the purpose of this study to explore the relationship between the traditional status and roles of women in the Islamic world and certain forms of domestic architecture which seem particularly well suited to serve the needs of the culture. The aspects of Islamic culture that are the foci of this endeavor are certain persistent threads in the

fabric of Islamic civilization in the realms of women and architecture.

Historic Context

In order to provide a general context for this study, it is helpful to review briefly some essential facts about Islam which is for its adherents not merely a religion but a total way of life.[1]

Islam as a religion began in Arabia in the Seventh Century, A.D. in the city of Mecca when a merchant and contemplative, named Muhammad, received a revelation from Allah (God). Muhammad thus became the instrument through whom according to tradition, Allah brought this message to a pagan tribal society whose way of life fell short of the divine will.

The revelations to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of time are contained in the Quran (Recitation), the Holy Book of Islam. The Quran, which is divided into Surahs (chapters), contains not only general admonitions but specific prescriptions as to a person's proper relationshp with God and with his fellow human beings.

Islam means "surrender to God's will" and its adherents are Muslims (those who surrender to God's will). Together Muslims form a community called the Ummah united by their shared values, beliefs and practice. This is based on the Quran and traditions based on the model of the Prophet's action and system of community organization, Hadith.

The new community faced challenges from those who wanted to maintain the status quo. Islam is a fiercely monotheistic religion which requires of its adherents: profession of faith (in one God), five prayers daily, acts of charity and sharing of wealth, a month of fasting, Ramadan and, when possible, a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a

lifetime.

In addition to these "five pillars of Islam", there developed a body of religious law, the Shariah, which prescribed and proscribed behavior in both religious and civil spheres. Islam, therefore, reaches intimately and pervasively into the lives of the faithful. Thus, Islam is as much a process as it is a system of beliefs.

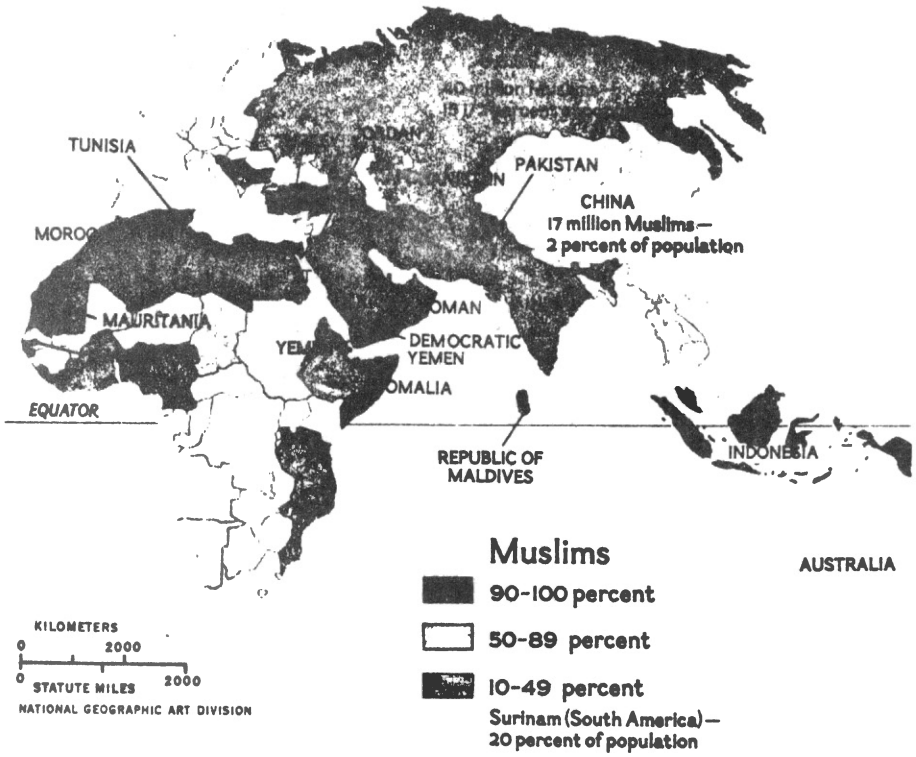
Within one century of its inception, Islam had spread around the southern Mediterranean to Spain in the West and to India in the East. As Islam merged with the already existing cultures of the lands it conquered and won spiritually, it grew as a hybrid. One country may differ from another, and within a country itself there may be differences depending upon historical and religious factors and the socioeconomic configurations of the society as a whole and of the various groups within it. Nonetheless, there remains the spiritual cohesion, and sense of community that results from the shared values, practices and institutions and justifies the term, "Islamic Civilization."

The world of Islam is like a mosaic; the Quran, the Hadith and the Shariah constitute the mortar binding the whole community into a pattern that contains within its framework, infinite variety and intricacy as does the arabesque, the art form which the civilization produced.

Today Muslims represent almost one quarter of humanity and live in countries all over the globe (Figure 1). They, and we, are the heirs of 1400 years of history that has been rich in thought, art, science and human development.

Methodology

The orientalists of past centuries brought to the western world



Source: National Geographic (November, 1978), p. 587.

Figure 1. Map of Islamic World, 1978

valuable but sometimes distorted or naive information about Islamic countries. A good example was in their use of the terms "Mohammedan" and "Mohammedanism." Muhammad was the Prophet of the religion and as such was respected but not worshipped. Use of the terms "Mohammedanism" and "Mohammedan" betrayed a prejudice and lack of understanding that prevented a full and objective explanation of a valid religion and historical phenomenon.

With respect to the status of women, there were superficial portrayals of their life in the hareems as filled with idleness, license and debauchery. In fact, Islam is very strict as regards proper behavior of and toward women. There was equal misunderstanding about polygamy as wanton and unrestrained. Any society is bound to have some loose behavior, but such is not inherent in Islam. Figures 2 and 3 show a western artist's conception of the hareem. Even translations of the Holy Book, the Quran, have distorted its true meaning. In the verse "men are guardians of women," the Arabic, qawwa mūna, has been also translated as: "a degree above," "in charge of,"[2] or "superior to"[3] women. Certainly the words used in translation can easily change drastically the true intent of the verse.

Until recently, little attention had been given to the topic of women in Islam.[3] Fortunately, now there are several works about and by women that have provided invaluable information and insight into their roles and status. Among the best are those edited by Beck and Keddie, Women in the Muslim World; Fernea and Bezirgan, Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak; and El-Saadawi, Hidden Face of Eve.[3]

As to the study of Islamic architecture, much has been published that deals with public buildings such as mosques, but there is a lack of

Source: Victoria and Albert Museum (London).

Figure 2. The Hareem

Source: Victoria and Albert Museum (London).

Figure 3. Life in the Hareem

any comprehensive reference related to domestic architecture. The research necessitated an examination of many sources: some general works on architecture, some literary, to find bits and pieces which contribute to a fuller knowledge. An invaluble resource was the publications of the Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale du Caire, which contain descriptions of surviving houses and palaces in Cairo, as well as detailed plans and many fine photographs. Other helpful books were Fathy, Housing for the Poor, and a comprehensive work Architecture of the Islamic World edited by Michell.

Many books mention the status of women in Islam, the tradition of seclusion and sometimes the reflection in domestic architecture of this cultural requirement. Because there is no one work dealing directly and comprehensively with the relationship between the role of women and traditional forms of domestic architecture, the research for this study has truly been a voyage of discovery.

In order to explore the status of women, it seemed prudent to begin with the Quran and the Hadith, the roots of the tradition, to discover what were the basic tenets in regard to women. Only then did it seem logical to examine the fruits of the tradition in the works by and about women in Islam to approach a fuller understanding of Islam in actual practice.

In the study of traditional domestic architecture, it was necessary, in addition to examining the general works mentioned above, to look for works by artists, and other books which dealt indirectly with architecture. This search benefited greatly from a visit to England. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London in addition to a fine library possesses many works by Nineteenth Century artists which were most

helpful. The University of Essex in Colchester had books by travelers and orientalists, notably those of Lane and Lane-Poole. It was there, too, that the author first discovered Michell's Architecture of the Islamic World.

The University of Texas at Austin has a center for Middle Eastern studies and a magnificent library system. There it was possible not only to discover other sources, but to see the beautiful work by Prisse d'Avennes which contains colored drawings of architecture and decoration.

In addition to these sources, and books and articles obtained by Inter-Library Loan, interviews with scholars and Muslims of the Oklahoma State University community have been extremely enlightening.

A proper and detailed study of the status of women or domestic architecture in Islam would require many more years of research and travel to tap available resources. This thesis represents the beginning of a search for information and for a deeper and truer understanding of the historical phenomenon that is Islam.

ENDNOTES

[1]'Azim Nanji, "Islam," in Religious Worlds: Communities of Faith, ed. R. W. Weir (New York: Macmillan), in press. The facts of Islamic history are available from many sources. Dr. Nanji's chapter was most helpful in focusing on the essential facts.

[2]Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, trans, The Meaning of the Glorious Koran (New York: Mentor, New American Library, n.d.), IV:34, p. 83, II: 228; J. M. Rodwell, trans, The Koran (New York: Dutton; London: Dent Everyman's Library, 1974) IV:38, p. 415; II:228, p. 362.

[3]Nada Tomiche, "The Situation of Egyptian Women in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," in Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East, eds. W. R. Polk and R. L. Chambers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 171; Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie, eds., Women in the Muslim World (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 1; Elizabeth Warnock Fernea and Qattan Bassima Bezirgan, eds., Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), Foreword, n.p.; Nawal El-Saadawi, The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World, trans. and ed. Sherif Hetata (London: Zed Press, 1980), p. 1.

CHAPTER II

WOMEN IN ISLAM

In any exploration of the status of women in the Islamic world, it is essential to begin with the roots of the tradition, the ideal as set forth in the Quran and the Hadith (traditions based on the example of the Prophet).

The Quran and the Hadith

"What is special about Islam in regard to women is the degree to which matters relating to women's status have either been legislated by the Quran . . . or by subsequent legislation."[1]

Generally speaking, the Quran urges respect and kind treatment of females and accords women dignity and justice.[2] Surah IV admonishes, ". . . be careful of the wombs that bore you," and asserts that God is aware of how a man treats a woman and guards her from evil.[3] The Quran exhorts acceptance of the birth of a daughter; it would be evil to feel disappointment.[4] Infanticide is forbidden because God has made life sacred.[5]

In fact, the Quran explains that men and their mates were created from a single soul.[6] In short, men and women are considered of equal human status, i.e., in the sight of God.[7] Mankind is reminded of its duty toward God who has given men and women "rights of one another."[8] The Quran proclaims that there is great reward for both men and women

who are believers, obedient, humble, modest and righteous.[9] Further, ". . . and whoso doeth good works, whether of male or female, and he (she) is a believer, such will enter paradise and they will not be wronged the dint in a date-stone."[10] The preceding verses established a principle of equality in God's sight. This equality of status as human beings does not, however, mean absolute equality of roles and duties. Men are guardians of women, but women have rights similar to those of men as to kindness.[11] Women are guaranteed an inheritance, but men receive twice the portion due women.[12] The inheritance portion of women may seem an inequity, but scholars explain that males as guardians have greater familial responsibilities and as family providers must receive more.[13] As leaders, men are exhorted to perform faithfully their duties to others and deal kindly and fairly with the women they are meant to protect. God will know if a man treats a woman well and keeps her from evil.[14] A man may not take a woman's dowry unless she willingly gives it to him.[15] A man must manage a woman's property wisely, but if she is "foolish," he must control it and use it for her benefit.[16] The women of deceased kinsmen cannot be inherited, nor can a man take away their property.[17]

Marriage is a sharing of love and responsibilities and should be entered into by mutual consent or tacit agreement by the bride.[18] One provision of marriage in Islam is much misunderstood in the West: a man may have up to four wives. However, the Quran stipulates that a man must deal fairly with them. As equal treatment is not really possible, fairness and not neglecting one for another is urged.[19] The fact that polygamy is strictly legislated lends social stability. (In the West, illegal extramarital relationships are a destabilizing factor in society

and threaten the fundamental social unit, the nuclear family.) Some Islamic scholars feel the exhortation to fairness obviates multiple marriage, as no man would easily deal fairly with more than one wife.

Just as in the case of marriage, there are specific rules of divorce. Generally, the Quran exhorts against frivolity and haste in divorce and prescribes waiting periods, provides for change of mind, and possible pregnancy. The admonition to kindness, provision for wives, not preventing remarriage all establish attitudes which would tend to be a protection for women.[20]

The rules for marriage, divorce, and inheritance all seek to establish women as other than chattel, and by legislating their status and proper treatment, intend to prevent their being subject to arbitrary treatment. These rules improved the status of women as it existed in the Jahiliyah, the days of "darkness" before Islam. The responsibilities and duties of women are related to making their husbands happy and raising children. A wife owes her husband [and God] obedience and fidelity. Not only must a husband guard a wife against evil, but she must also, by good conduct, modesty, and chastity, preserve the family honor. It is around this aspect of the female role that much of the controversy as to women's status revolves.

A man's duty to ensure his wives (and daughters) chastity and proper behavior requires him to exercise certain controls. A woman's duty to her husband requires that she exercise internal controls upon her behavior and accept such external controls as males and society impose. The Quran sets out principles of proper behavior on the part of women and men as well.

> And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is

> apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or fathers or husbands' fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons or sisters' sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male attendants who lack vigour, or children who know naught of women's nakedness.[21]

Another passage states: "It is no sin for (thy wives) (to converse freely) with their fathers . . . O women! Keep your duty to Allah."[22]

One aim of the "veiling" was to protect the women from harassment. "O Prophet, tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close round them (when they go abroad). That will be better, that so they may be recognized and not annoyed."[23] It is clear that the purpose was to set the Muslim women apart and demand respect for them. "When ye ask of them (wives of the Prophet) anything, ask it of them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts."[24]

That there is a sexual connotation in these verses is revealed in a passage that makes exception for women

> . . . past childbearing, who have no hope of marriage; it is no sin for them to discard their (outer) clothing in such a way as not to show adornment. But to refrain is better for them.[25] Thus, an exception is permissible for women who cannot be regarded as sexual objects.[26]

The seclusion and veiling that occurred among the followers of Muhammad did not originate in Islam but were used by Muslims to place women in a special category.[27] The elevated status brought with it the curious paradox of less liberty.

Inherent in the Hadith as well are the paradox and ambivalence as to the nature of women. Contrast: "The best thing in the world is a good woman," and "The world and all things in it are valuable, but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman," and "I have not

left behind me a trial more injurious to men than women."[28,29] Further, the Prophet is reported to have said, "O assembly of women, give alms although it be of your gold and silver ornaments; for verily you are mostly of Hell in the Day of Resurrection."[30]

What a paradox these statements present. A good and virtuous women is a joy, but most women are in need of controls so as to prevent their becoming a trial to men.

> A Muslim cannot obtain (after righteousness) anything better than a well disposed, beautiful wife: such a wife as, when ordered by her husband to do anything, obeyeth; and if her husband look at her, is happy; and if her husband swear by her to do a thing, she doeth it to make his oath true; and if he be absent from her she wisheth him well in her own person by guarding herself from inchastity; and taketh care of his property.[31]

Islamin Practice

Having looked at passages in the Quran and some Hadith which establish principles of women's status, it is necessary to examine some contemporary writings which describe Islam in practice, the fruits of the tradition. "It is necessary to judge men not according to the letter of their sacred books, but according to what they do in reality."[32] The realities of the Muslim world are clearly diverse.

> Although one can talk theoretically in the abstract of 'women in Islam' and refer to the passages in the Quran and in the Sharia that spell out the rights and obligations of women in an Islamic society, the practice in one Muslim country differs from that in another, since local societies have chosen to accentuate that element of religion that was most congenial to their way of life.[33]

The ambivalence and ambiguities, in the views of women and their status and roles, are evident in the practice of Islam in various communities within the Muslim world.

The traditional role of women has been confined generally to that

of daughter, wife, mother, the Islamic equivalent of "Kuche, Kirche, Kinder", or "barefoot and pregnant", as was long true also in other traditional societies. A woman's place was "in the home," and women's roles were defined in terms of her part in the family or tribe rather than as an individual in her own rights despite Quranic prescriptions as to her rights within the system.

'Abd al-Raziq's study gives some enlightenment about the life of women during the Mamluk epoch, 1250-1517, in Egypt. The institution of marriage was the basis of home life for the nuclear family as in other times. Among the military caste, the Mamluks, marriages were within the group often primarily governed by political and economic reasons.[34] Betrothal was handled through intermediaries and, contrary to Quranic rules, the obtaining of bridal consent was hardly observed at the time.[35] Polygamy was widespread though not universal.[36] Repudiation of wives by their husbands was frequent and there even developed foundations, ribats, to shelter the women while they remained unmarried.[37] Women alone were considered a threat without a man to protect them against seduction and debauchery.[38] For the most part, women were subject to male authority, sometimes well treated, sometimes abused.[39]

Among the military caste there was little family life because of the military duties of men, polygamy, and widespread homosexuality.[40] While life in the hareem was busy, women led a circumscribed existence. There were attempts to legislate restrictions; at times edicts were issued as to proper dress.[41] Women were veiled in varying degrees according to their status in society; women of the people were veiled only to the eyes whereas noblewomen covered the entire face (Figures 3 and 4).[42] This lack of real family life, with exceptions of course,

A. — Femme voilée.

B. — Femme voilée suivie d'un ânier.

(d'après Arnold von Harff, *Pilgerfahrt*).

Source: Ahmad 'Abd al-Raziq, La Femme au Temps des Mamlouks en Egypte (Cairo, 1973), Pl. VII.

Figure 4. A. Veiled Woman B. Veiled Women Followed by a Donkey Driver

Source: Ahmad 'Abd al-Raziq, LaFemme au Temps des Mamlouks en Egypte (Cairo, 1973), Pl. IX.

Figure 5. Drawing of Two Women by Carpaccio, 1450-1525

relegated women to the roles of bearing, raising, and educating children.

Although the women did spend most of their time in the hareem and were limited by custom, some still played an important role in social, intellectual, and religious life.[43] Women engaged in activities as professors, poets, and in careers corresponding to those of men.[44] Some women, too, played important political and economic roles behind the scenes.[45] However, women had no official positions and the occupations open to them were either religious, home and family oriented, or of questionable propriety.[46]

The picture drawn by 'Abd al-Raziq of women in Mamluk times is not entirely clear. Women of the military class were often neglected and restricted to a life within the walls of the home with children and other women, performing their roles as guarded women, bearing and raising children. They existed as objects for the pleasure of men. But, as mothers they were often revered and treated with respect and given titles of honor. While, according to 'Abd al-Raziq, they may have indeed had a thinking and speaking existence it must have been in many instances hollow and unidimensional defined by their maternal and domestic functions.[47] The verses of the Quran regarding women imply a partnership between men and women, a just exchange of duties, responsibilities, and privileges with closeness and rapport between the spouses. It seems few women of Mamluk times enjoyed such a full relationship.

The Egypt that greeted the French invaders in the latter years of the Eighteenth Century had changed little.[48] Contrary to the spirit of Islam,

> . . . everywhere, women were treated as property; their masters varied only in accordance with social class. Bedouin

> women were under the supervision of their clan. They were less fiercely guarded since their maintenance within the tribe was the responsibility of a large group.[49]

Under a family group, peasant women were less free and performed the usual tasks of caring for their families, as well as field work and other tasks which contributed to the family economy. Women in the city were the most highly restricted under the nuclear family head. These women rarely left home and were veiled when they did. Though they owned property, they could not administer it themselves.[50] In short, they were largely confined to their homes, illiterate, and occupied with childbearing and rearing, domestic chores, and activities such as needlework.[51] Their social life was in the company of other women.

As in the Mamluk era, the toilette occupied much time at home. When women left home, always veiled and accompanied by a servant, it was to visit relations and friends or to go to the public bath where once again, women concerned themselves with beautification (Figure 5). The visits to friends and the bath were not all frivolity, however. The women could request and arrange to grant favors for their husbands, arrange marriages, and plot their intrigues.[52] "The city woman was not as cloistered as one tends to believe . . . ." As long as she went out under the "pretext" of visiting the baths or friends she was freer than she would be later when Egyptians retreated into more traditional mores when challenged by foreign intrusion.[53] Actually the submissiveness of women was sometimes feigned to conform to the prevailing culture and once there was even outright rebellion in a hareem.[54] It is not in traditional Muslim society alone, that members of the "weaker sex" in fact used feminine wiles to accomplish their will. It appears then that the life of the Nineteenth Century woman was like that of her Mamluk

Source: Mathaf Gallery (London), Sales Brochure, 1979.

Figure 6. La Toilette by Rudolph Ernst, 1854-1935

forebears though the impact of the French conquest and the regime of Mohamed'Ali caused the first stirrings that would later reappear in the movement to alter the traditional restrictions and seclusion of women.[55]

Nawal El-Saadawi is a contemporary Egyptian savante whose writings are too lengthy and intense to be dealt with in any great detail here. Suffice it to say, in summary, that in her book, The Hidden Face of Eve, she discusses at length the inferior status forced upon women and the external and psychological controls exercised by society. As El-Saadawi sees it, the subjugation of women does not result from original Islam but is an inherent element of a patriarchal capitalist society which exploits the majority of humankind.[56] Islam at its origin was a "primitive form of socialism," which by the Eighth Century had been subverted.[57] The Arab-Islamic peoples were then to endure "a long night" of oppression under feudalism and imperialism.

> Thus it was also, that women were condemned to toil, to hide behind the veil, to quiver in the prison of the Harem fenced in by high walls, iron bars, windowless rooms, and the ever present eunuchs on guard with their swords.[58]

Figure 7 shows an artist's rendition of a hareem guard.

El-Saadawi cites the efforts at reform made by Mohammad Abduh and others who justified changes as a return to a truer interpretation of the original Islam.[59] Because it was agreed that the women played the most important role in the family, the essential unit of society, true societal reform must start with the woman. Education for women would mean better performance of their "natural tasks." At that time, women's concerns and nationalism marked the confines of feminism; women did not enter or compete in the male sphere. Still, the entry of women into universities in 1928 stirred controversy.[60]

Now women, especially of the urban upper middle class, freely enter

Source: Mathaf Gallery (London), Sales Brochure, 1979.

Figure 7. The Harem Guard by Rudolph Ernst, 1954-1935

public life.[61] The universities are not sexually segregated. By law, a minimum of 10% of the seats in parliament are reserved for women. Although there are those such as the Muslim Brotherhood who are conservative in their interpretation of Islam, most women in Egyptian society participate fully in public as well as private spheres.[62] However, El-Saadawi sees even now a perpetuation of traditional exploitative practices and suppressive controls.[63]

Elsewhere, the pressure for retention of traditional ways has remained strong, even where reforms were proclaimed. In Turkey, Ataturk's official policy of modernization met with resistance, though today, women are educated and participate in the work force. In Tunisia, Bourguiba saw a necessity to put modernization in "perspective" and urged that the new freedoms be coupled with religious and moral education so as not to jeopardize respect for women with the removal of the veil.[64]

The turmoil in Iran's "Islamic" revolution is further evidence of resentment of change. There is the attempt by Ayatollah Khomeini to reverse the changes made by the Pahlavis which he defined and perceived as western imperialist. Conservative forces are not new to Iran. In 1905-1911, "the sight of girls and women teachers walking to school aroused hostile public male reaction which daily expressed itself with gross insults, obscene gestures and spitting."[65] The mullahs even declared that the schools were contrary to Islamic law and a cleric saw in women's rights the downfall of Islam. There too, the issue of women's judgemental powers was raised. The ambivalence toward women was reflected in the classical poetry which had been derogatory of women.

> When they [poets] did not refer to them as beautiful playthings for love games, they compare them to 'dragons,' 'snakes,'

> and 'devils' pointing out that they were created out of the 'left side' and hence unable to tell the truth.[66]

Despite Quranic injunction, male children are favored. Women are seen as having value as "producers of producers" whose prestige is attained through their fecundity. "Sterility is a broken contract."[67] As in other societies, women's sexuality is seen to require external controls; only the man should show desire and evoke a wife's latent sexuality.[68]

This conclusion about women is not peculiar to Iran (or to Islamic societies for that matter). The idea that women are "lustful and deceitful and that they lack rational control necessary to restrain their sexual desires if faced by opportunity" is seen in the Thousand and One Nights and was reported by Lane-Poole in his studies in Egypt in the Nineteenth Century.[69] Even today in Morocco, men think women need a man to "tell them what's what."[70]

The institution of Purdah, seclusion of women in a hareem which took on a religious association with Quranic justification, is an important factor in any study of Muslim women.

> Purdah among Muslims is obviously related to the broad lines of the status of women in Islam, but it is an illusion to believe that this status can be fully explained in terms of the Quran and the commentaries. The Quranic passages themselves form only the barest definition of the status of women which have evolved within Islam . . . . The particular use of Quranic prescriptions depends on a complex set of legal, philosophical, social, and political choices.[71]

The presumption that female safety, good behavior, and obedience require external controls has a long history in the Muslim world as elsewhere and in some areas persists today. The traditional Muslim attitude about men's and women's respective roles, the importance of family honor, concern with lines of inheritance of property, and the

stability of the family as an essential unit of the social order all have bearing on the controls exercised by a society. In North African urban society, adherence to the Islamic laws of inheritance corresponds to the practice of veiling.[72] Where there is a fear of alienation of land there is, in some societies, no free choice in marriage. Many widows do not remarry and spinsters are highly regarded.[73]

Seclusion, sexual segregation, and veiling persist in Saudi Arabia today. Women are not allowed to drive automobiles, education for females is relatively new and strictly segregated, as is participation in the work force. The power of the religious conservative Wahabi, long allied with the ruling Saud family, and the fact that Saudi Arabia had not been colonized and exposed to European influences, may help account for the continuation of the practices.

In Kuwait, by contrast, the religious class has much less influence. Modernization in Kuwait has brought a discarding of the veil and women participate in the work force.[74] Education is emphasized, though not as much for women as men. There is still prejudice against integration at work so women are employed in fields deemed natural and proper for them. Women do not serve in the diplomatic service or national assembly and do not vote.[75]

One control which has been exercised by some societies to enforce women's good behavior is worthy of note here because it is now the subject of increasing controversy in the international women's movement--that is the practice of female "circumcision" or clitoridectomy. While not exclusive to Muslims, the continuation of the practice in some parts of the Muslim world is significant. "Because the woman has a powerful sexuality, the male-class society must enforce monogamy with powerful

measures--physically, psychologically, morally, and legally."[76]

So called "'Sunna circumcision' was supposedly recommended by the Prophet Muhammad, who is said to have counseled, 'Reduce but don't destroy,' thus reforming and legitimizing the ritual." [77] This Sunna variant is still practiced in Egypt, North and South Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and Southern Algeria.[78]

Whether or not the practice of clitoridectomy, and those of veiling and seclusion, have any justification in original Islam is questionable. That these practices are not in keeping with modern times seems agreed by contemporary thinkers in the Muslim world.

> In Muslim society modernity is often a struggle to incorporate higher female education and occupational emancipation within traditional boundaries that define roles in terms of marriage and motherhood, rather than attempt to restructure relationships between the sexes in relation to society.[79]

As a more radical thinker, El-Saadawi sees the need to break with the traditional structure of society as a whole. Revolutionary change in society will bring with it the emancipation of women. It is not religious change alone that is required. "The oppression of women is not essentially due to religious ideologies."[80] Political and economic reforms are the core of the struggle for human freedom.

ENDNOTES

[1]Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie, eds., Women in the Muslim World (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 25.

[2]Gamal A. Badawi, "Women in Islam," in Islam Its Meaning and Message, ed. Khurshid Ahmad (London: Islamic Council of Europe, 1976), p. 135.

[3]Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, trans. The Meaning of the Glorious Koran (New York: Mentor, New American Library, n.d.) IV:1.

[4]Ibid., XVI:55-59.

[5]Ibid., XVII:31; 6:152.

[6]Ibid., IV:1.

[7]Ibid., footnote, 82.

[8]Ibid., IV:1.

[9]Ibid., XXXIII:35.

[10]Ibid., IV:124.

[11]Ibid., II:228.

[12]Ibid., IV:7, 11, 177.

[13]Ibid., IV:34.

[14]Ibid., IV:128.

[15]Ibid., IV:4.

[16]Ibid., IV:2, 5.

[17]Ibid., IV:19.

[18]Badawi, "Women in Islam" [cites Ibn Hanbal: 2469, Ibn Majah: 1873], p. 138.

[19]Pickthall, Koran, IV:3.

[20]Ibid., II:226ff, 241; LVIII:2ff; LXV:1ff.

[21]Ibid., XXIV:31.

[22]Ibid., XXIII:55.

[23]Ibid., XXXIII:59.

[24]Ibid., XXXIII:53.

[25]Ibid., XXIV:60

[26]Carroll M. C. Pastner, "The Status of Women and Property on a Baluchistan Oasis in Pakistan," in Women in the Muslim World, eds. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 437.

[27]Elizabeth Fernea and Robert Fernea, "A Look Behind the Veil," Human Nature II (January 1979), pp. 69-70.

[28]Stanley Lane-Poole, trans., Speeches and Table-Talk of the Prophet Mohammad (London: Macmillan and Co., 1882), p. 163.

[29]Al Khatib al Tabrizi, Miskat al-Masabih, Vol. VI (Lahore: Kashmiri Bazar, 1975), p. 658.

[30]Lane-Poole, Speeches, p. 163.

[31]Ibid., p. 161.

[32]"Il faut juger les hommes non d'apres la lettre de leurs livres sacres, mais d'apres ce qu'ils font en realite." Alexandre Raymond, L'Art Islamique en Orient, Vol. II (Prague: M. Schulz, n.d.) quotes Ismail Ahmet, plate 32-33.

[33]Afaf Lutfi al Sayyid Marsot "The Revolutionary Gentlewomen in Egypt," in Women in the Muslim World, eds. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 261.

[34]Ahmad 'Abd al-Raziq, La femme au Temps des Mamlouks en Egypte (Cairo: Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale du Caire, 1973), p. 129.

[35]Ibid., p. 123.

[36]Ibid., p. 164.

[37]Ibid., p. 174.

[38]Ibid., p. 171.

[39]Ibid., p. 1-16, 192.

[40]Ibid., pp. 181ff.

[41]Ibid., p. 236-239.

[42]Ibid., p. 244.

[43]Ibid., p. 33.

[44]Ibid., p. 34.

[45]ibid., p. p. 253.

[46]Ibid., p. 254.

[47]Ibid., 253.

[48]Tomiche, "Situation," p. 172.

[49]Ibid., p. 173.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid., p. 174.

[52]Ibid., p. 175.

[53]Ibid., pp. 175-176.

[54]Ibid., p. 178.

[55]Ibid, pp. 179-183.

[56]Nawal El-Saadawi, The Hidden Face of Eve Women in the Arab World, trans. and ed. Sherif Hetata (London: Zed Press, 1980) pp. i, 77, 211.

[57]Ibid., p. iii.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid., p. 170.

[60]Thomas Philipp, "Feminism and Nationalist Politics in Egypt," in Women in the Muslim World, eds. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 290.

[61]Nadia H. Youssef, "The Status and Fertility Patterns of Muslim Women," in Women in the Muslim World, eds. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 94.

[62]Interview with Hamed K. Eldin, Stillwater, Oklahoma, December 1980.

[63]El-Saadawi, Hidden Face of Eve, pp. i, 169 ff, 184 ff.

[64]Mark A. Tessler with Janet Rogers and Daniel Schneider, "Women's Emancipation in Tunisia," in Women in the Muslim World, eds. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 147.

[65]Mangol Bayat-Philipp, "Women and Revolution in Iran, 1905-1911," in Women in the Muslim World, eds. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 301.

[66]Ibid., p. 304.

[67]Paul Vielle, "Iranian Women in Family Alliance and Sexual Politics," in Women in the Muslim World, ed. Lois Beck and ed. and trans. Nikki Keddie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 456-457.

[68]Ibid, p. 462.

[69]Beck and Keddie, Women in the Muslim World, p. 23. Lane-Poole also found disparagement of women's self-restraint. In the Thousand and One Nights, women cavorted with paramours in their husband's absence.

[70]Elizabeth Fernea, A Street in Marrakech (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1975), p. 338.

[71]Hanna Papanek, "Purdah: Separate Worlds and Symbolic Shelters," In Comparative Studies in History vol. 15 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 305.

[72]E. Fernea and R. Fernea, "Veil," p. 73.

[73]Emrys L. Peters, "The Status of Women in Four Middle Eastern Communities," in Women in the Muslim World, eds. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 337.

[74]Kamla Nath, "Education and Employment Among Kuwaiti Women," in Women in the Muslim World, eds. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 176.

[75]Ibid., pp. 182-183.

[76]Nawal El-Saadawi, "The Question No One Would Answer," Ms., March 1980, p. 69.

[77]Robin Morgan and Gloria Steinem, "The International Crime of Genital Mutilation," Ms., March 1980, p. 67.

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[79]Youssef, "Status and Fertility," p. 79.

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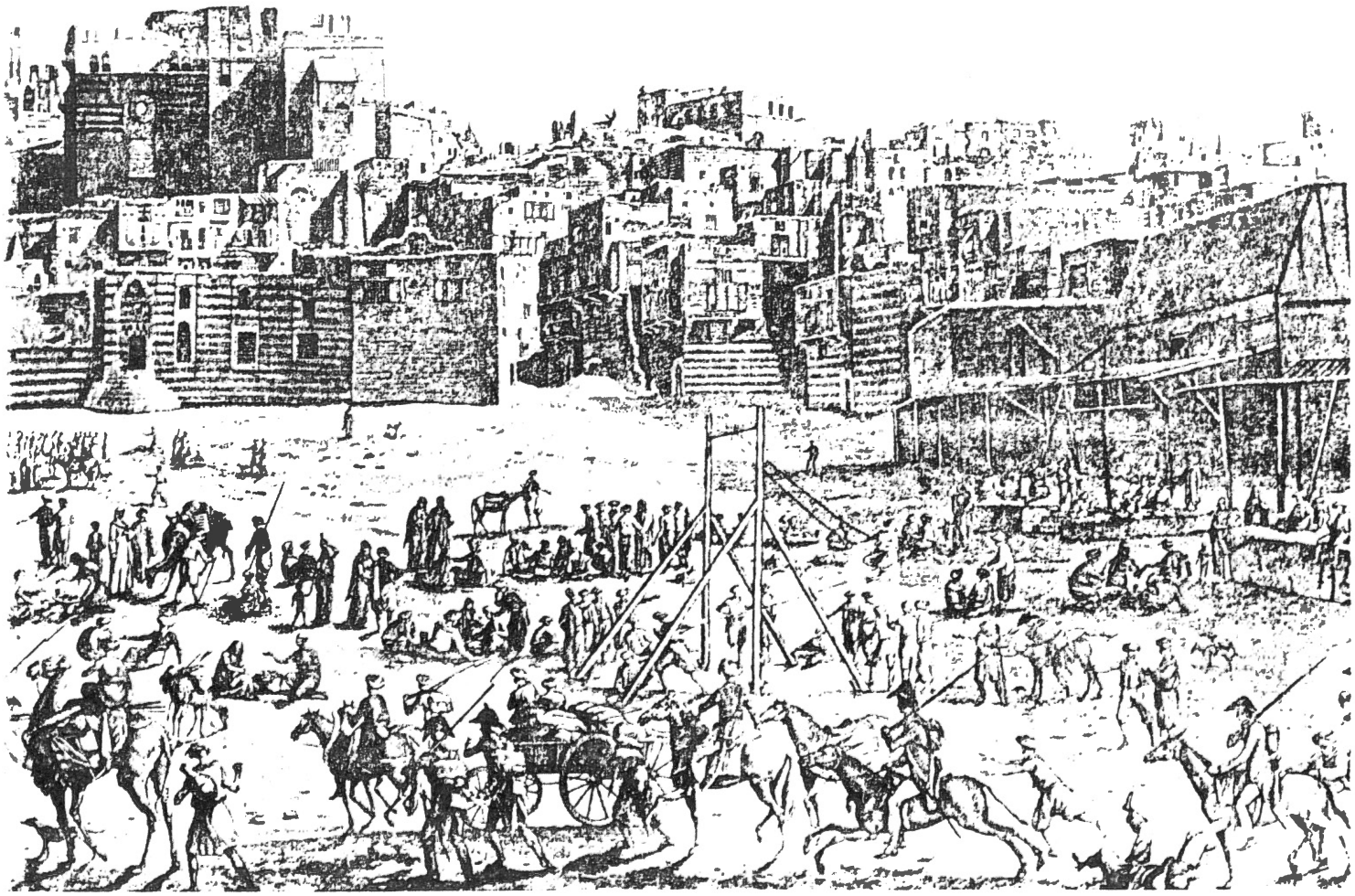
CHAPTER III

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE IN ISLAM

In the Muslim world, the emphasis upon separate spheres of public and private family life seen in the traditional status and roles of women, is reflected in both city planning and in residential architecture. The traditional Islamic city is divided into public, semi-public, and private areas.[1] Large public squares and broad streets merge into narrower streets in a quarter and thence into still narrower lanes or culs-de-sac of the residences (Figures 8, 9, 10). So it is with the traditional Muslim house. There is a physical and psychological transition from the public street to the semi-private and private areas within the house itself. As with the city, the three areas are marked with planning and architectural devices which in physical form state symbolic messages as to the permissibility of entry.

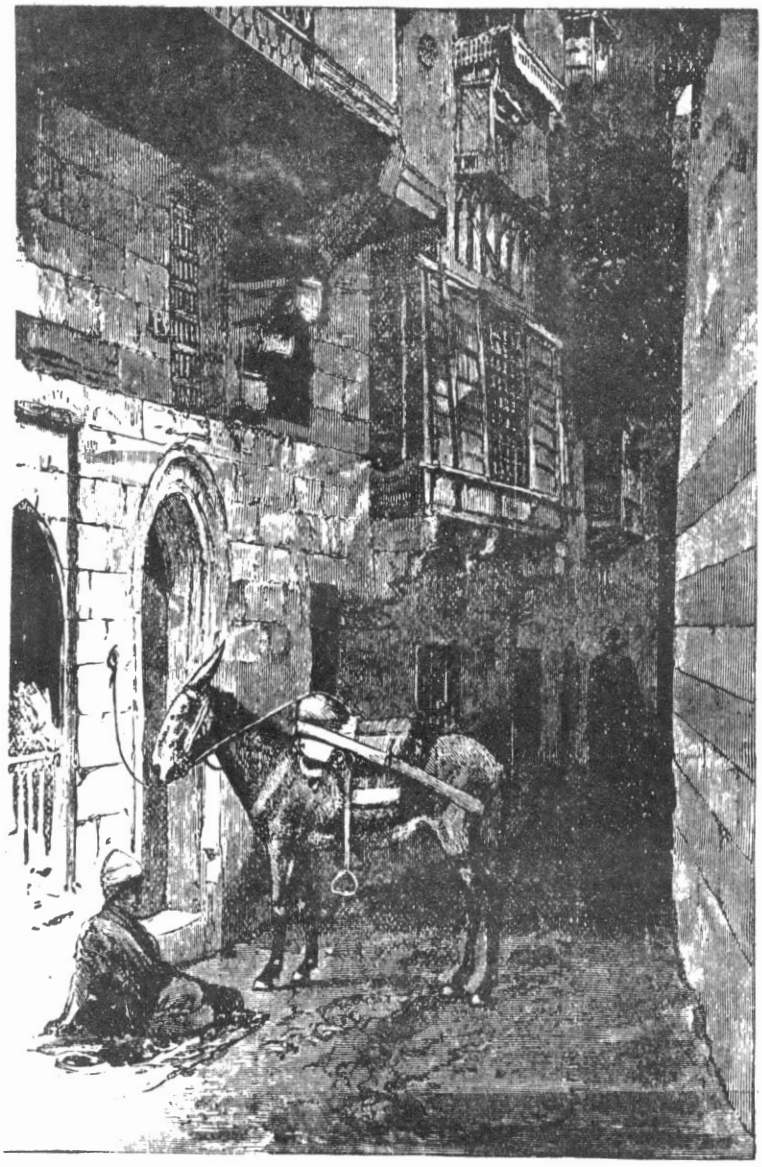
There are several architectural design elements of residential buildings which mark the transitions and denote private space. "Enclosed space, defined by walls, arcades and vaults, is the most important element of Islamic architecture."[2] The use of enclosed forecourts or courtyards within the houses, long a device in other cultures such as the Greek and Roman, were in the Muslim world a common means to that end (Figures 11, 12).[3]

The first element used to define the enclosed space as private was a plain facade at street level. The second architectural feature was to



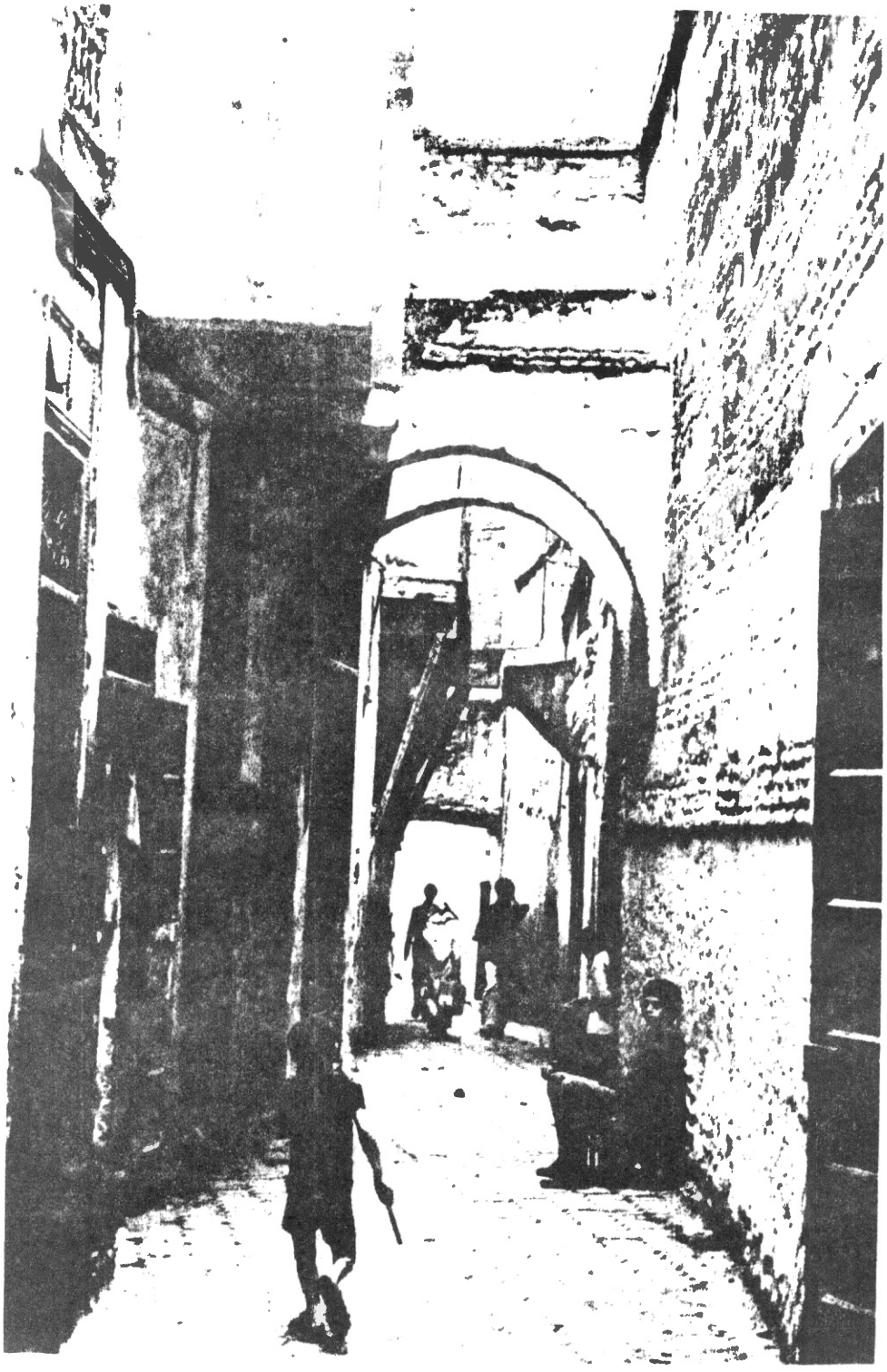
Source: Caire 969-1969 (Cairo, 1969).

Figure 8. View of Cairo: Beginning of Nineteenth Century



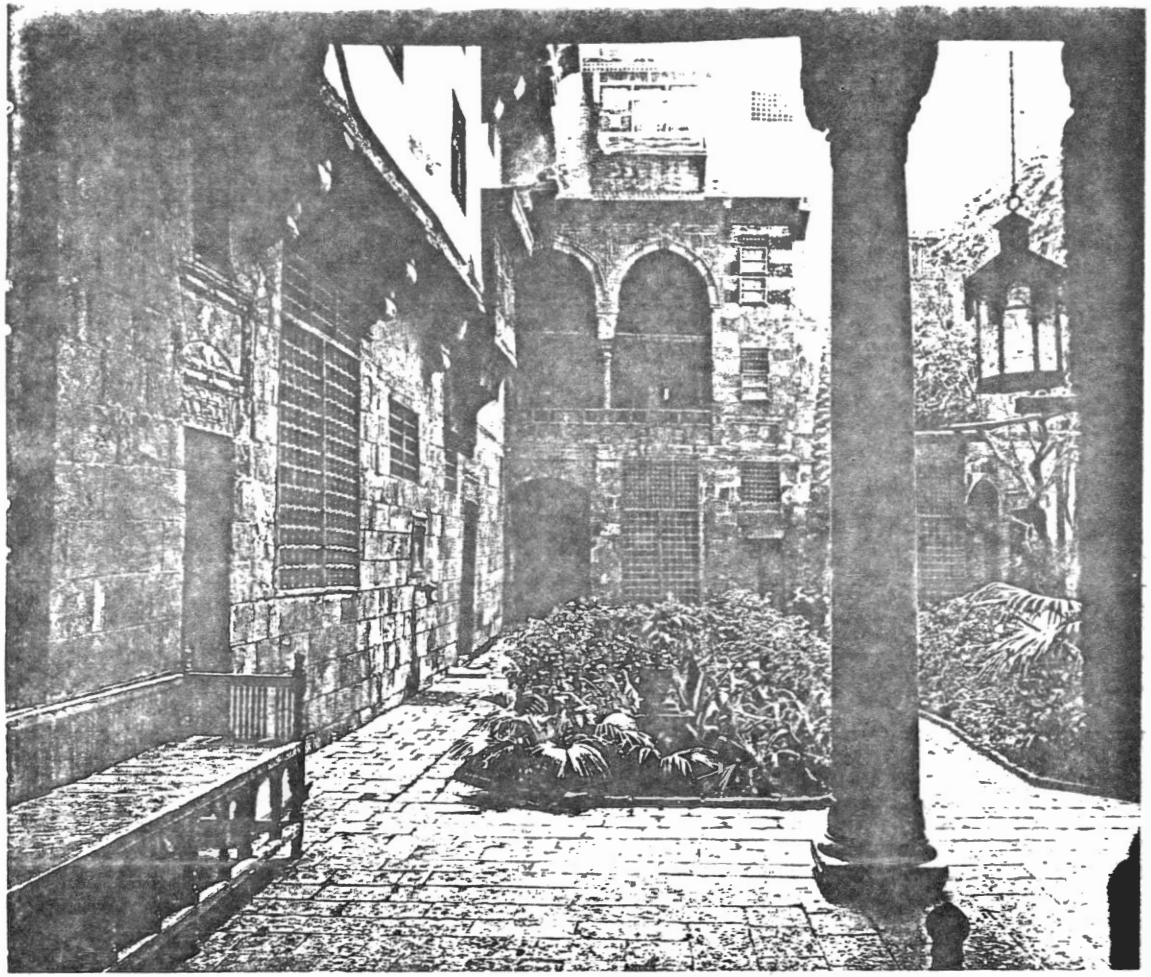
Source: Stanley Lane-Poole, Cairo (London, 1898), p. 11.

Figure 9. Private Houses



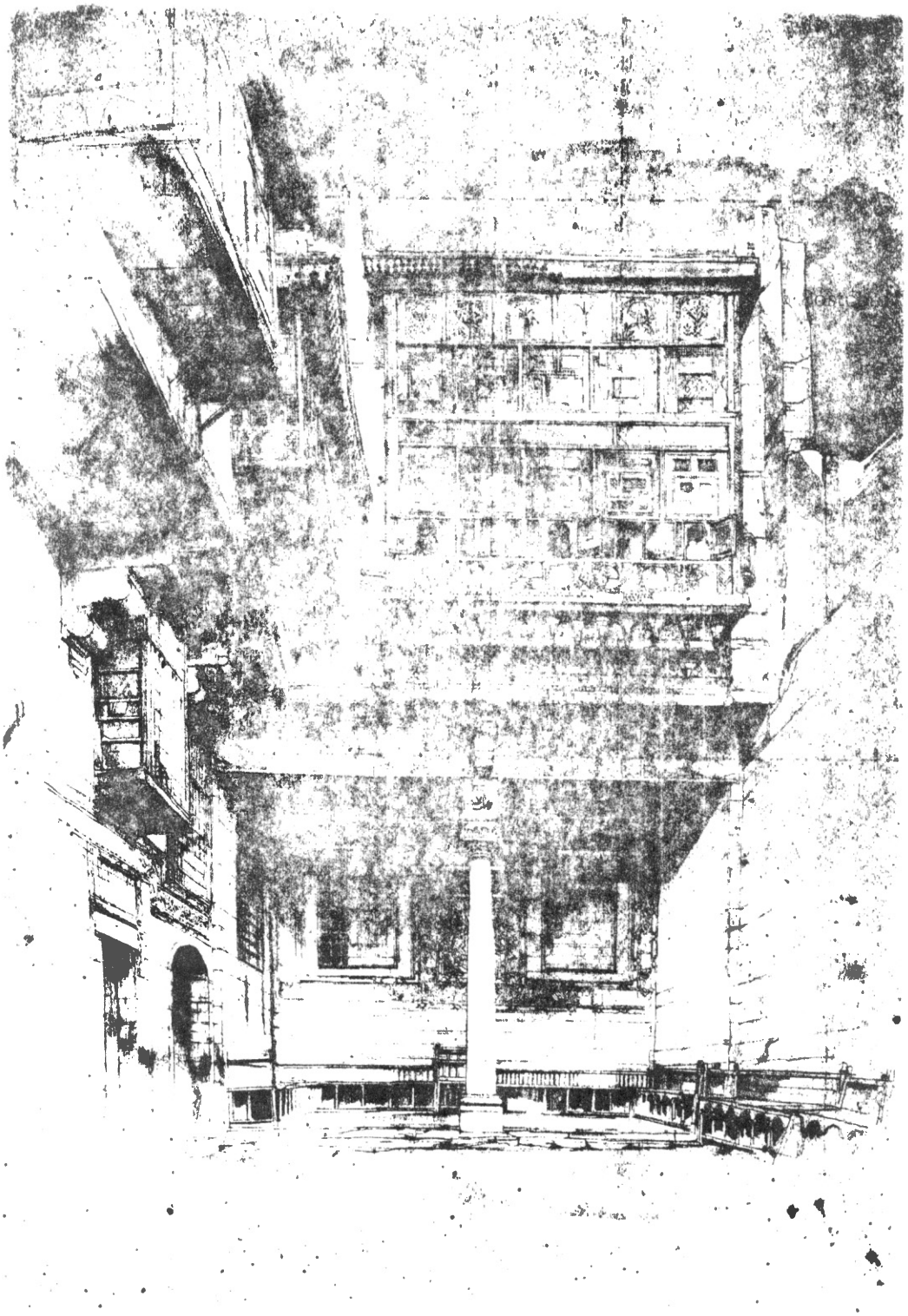
Source: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Proceedings of Seminar Four (October, 1979), p. 80.

Figure 10. A Narrow Street in Fez



Source: George Michell, ed. Architecture of the Islamic World (New York, 1978), p. 185.

Figure 11. Shady Courtyard



Source: Victoria and Albert Museum (London).

Figure 12. Courtyard of the Painter's House by John Frederick Lewis R. A. 1805-1876

delay entry into the interior of the house by using indirect passages, that is, bent or baffled corridors or one or more vestibules beyond the front door. Not only did this slow entry, but, prevented anyone from seeing immediately into the interior of the house. The third device in the traditional Islamic dwelling was the seclusion of private family and women's quarters on upper stories or in the more remote parts of a house or palace. The use of the first two devices established the sense of enclosure and was a prelude to this third and most important aspect of the traditional residence, the Hareem. Hareem means "forbidden" or "sacred" and the quarters reserved to the women constituted a true sanctuary from intrusion by men to whom they were not related in an acceptable degree.[4] Even the windows of the women's quarters enhanced privacy and seclusion; shutters or lattice work were used so the women could look out and receive light and air without being observed.

The elements of architectural design used to ensure privacy and seclude women were used persistently in much of the Islamic world since the early years of the civilization. The devices were indeed a reflection of aspects of Muslim culture that have lasted even up to the present day in some countries.

Plain Facades

Just as Islamic architecture in general is inward-looking, "hidden architecture" which does not reveal by its exterior, the functions and configurations within, so too, does the house, by its plain facade at street level, fail to reveal the life within or allow intrusion into the privacy of the inhabitants.

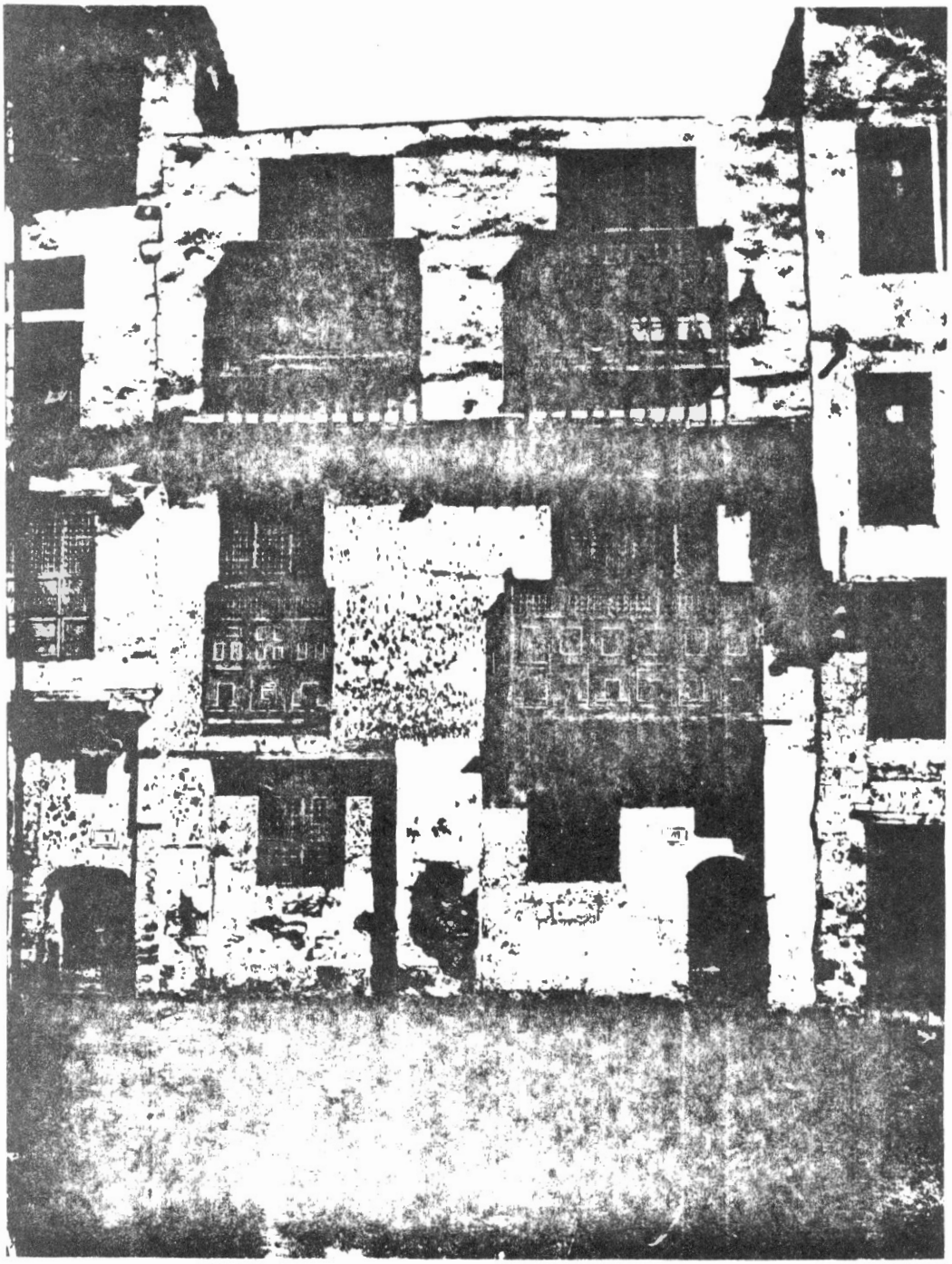
> External house walls must be built to a height that ensures that the domestic interior cannot be overlooked, and that

> intruders are discouraged. Any openings at ground level are small, grilled and above the line of vision of passers-by.[5]

"The street facades of the handsomest house give no indication to distinguish them from meaner ones."[6] The typical Nineteenth Century house in Cairo had a plain facade; any windows facing the street were placed high above the street so that a passer-by, even on horseback, could not see into the house.[7] Marcais described the facades of houses in Morocco as "nude," (nues); in Algeria, windows on the outside were rare.[8] In Iraq, even modest mud houses have high walls and blind fronts.[9] Thus, the facades presented a visual and structural barrier symbolizing the private nature of the territory within. Figures 13 through 20, which follow, illustrate some examples of the use of plain facades at street level.

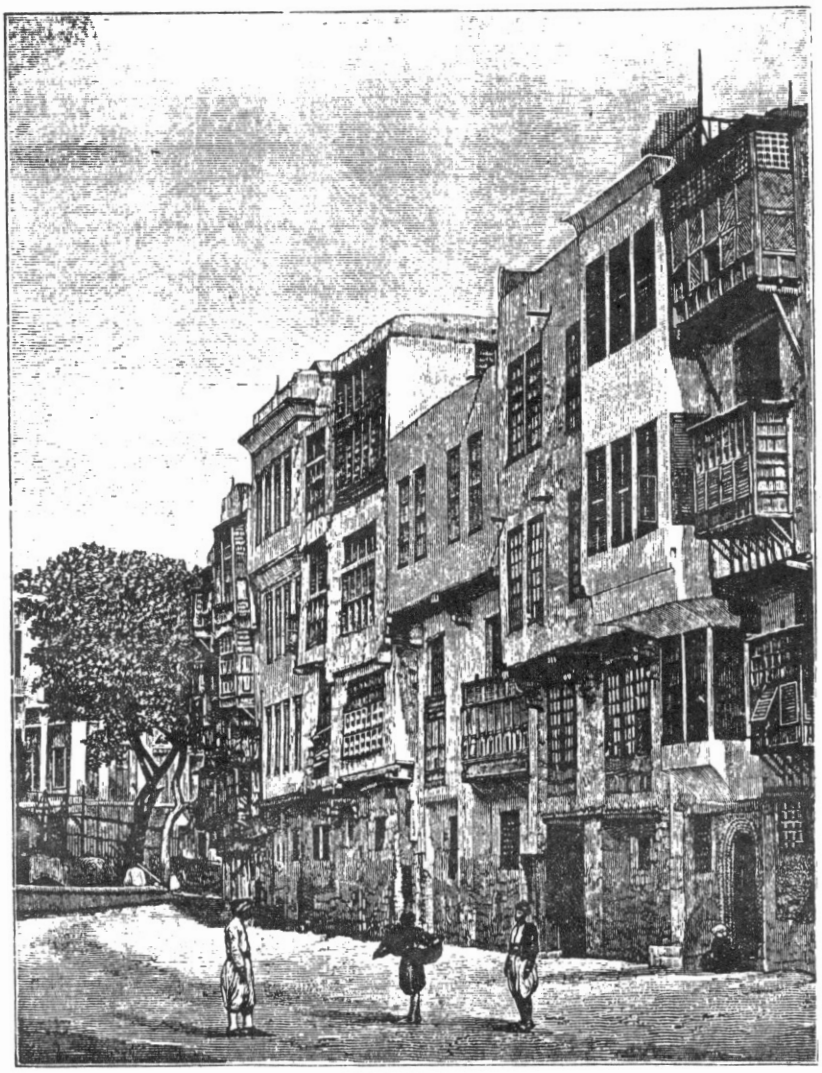
Indirect Entries

The second characteristic typical of the traditional Muslim house was the use of devices to delay, and make indirect, entry into the semi-private part of the house. Access to the interior was usually achieved through a bent or baffled corridor or through a vestibule or vestibules and a series of doors. In Fustat, where Cairo was founded in the Seventh Century A. D., the houses had "L" shaped corridors leading from the front door to the main corridors of the house. In Cairo, it became customary also for a porter to have a bench, mastaba, or lodge from which to control access to the inner court. Houses in Algeria used vestibules to provide the transition.[11] In Tunisia, one house had a three chambered vestibule. Another house used both devices; two vestibules formed a bend before opening onto a patio.[12] Figures 21 through 25 which follow, show plans illustrating the designs of entries.



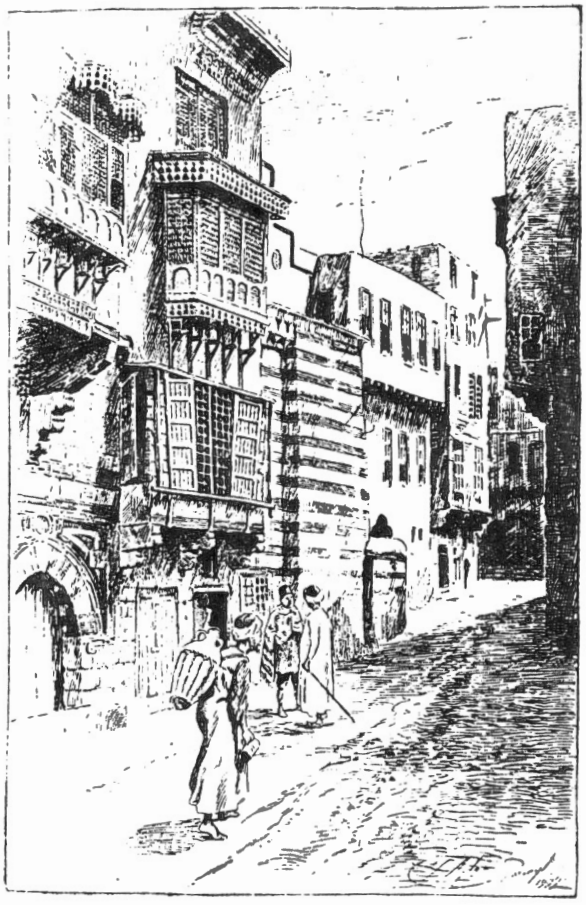
Source: Gernsheim Collection Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Figure 13. Houses in the Uzbekeh-Cairo by John Shaw Smith, 1851



Source: Stanley Lane-Poole, Cairo (London, 1898), p. 8.

Figure 14. The Ezbekiya in the Old Days

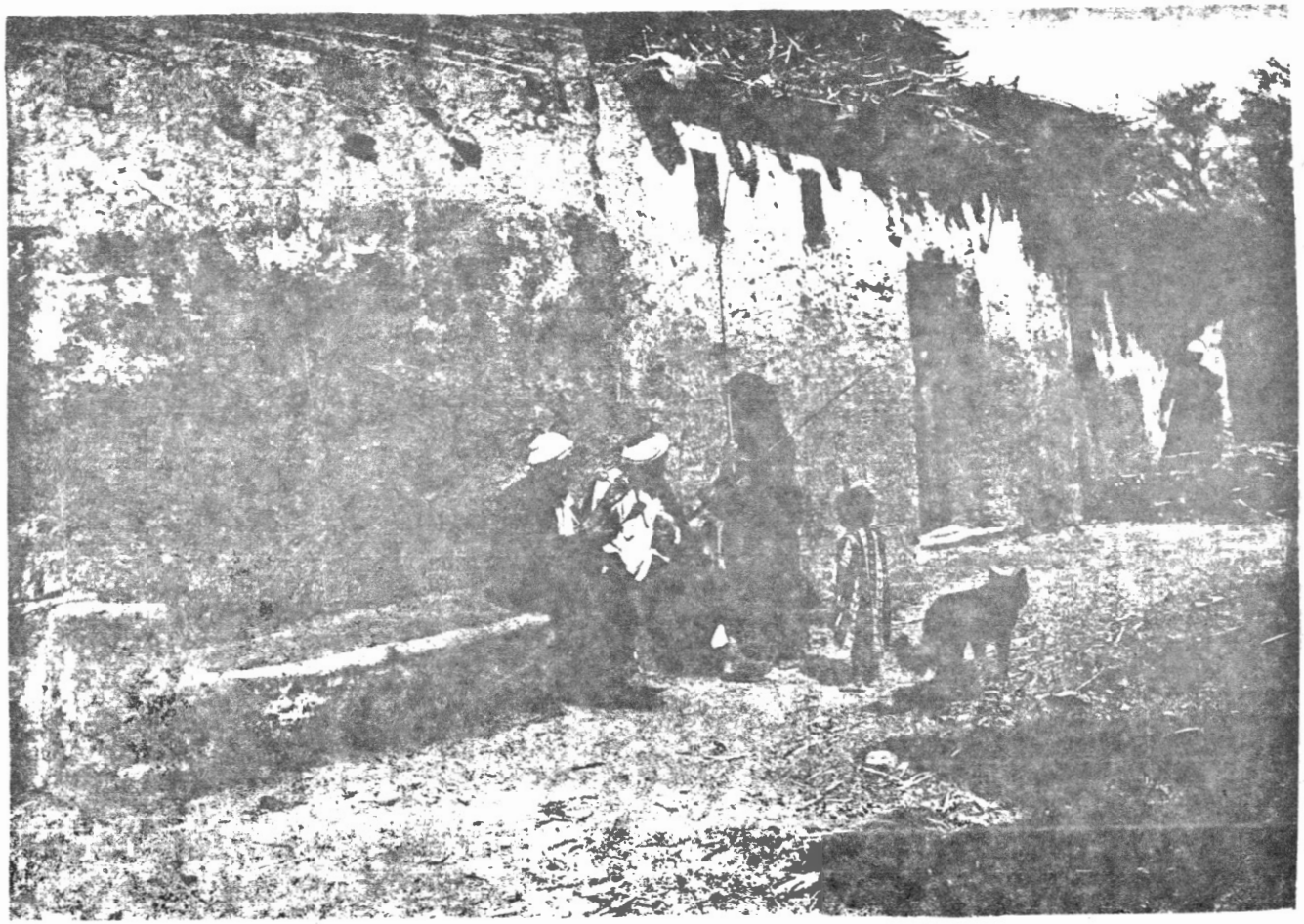


Source: Stanley Lane-Poole, The Story of Cairo (London, 1906), p. 105.

Figure 15. A Street in Old Misr

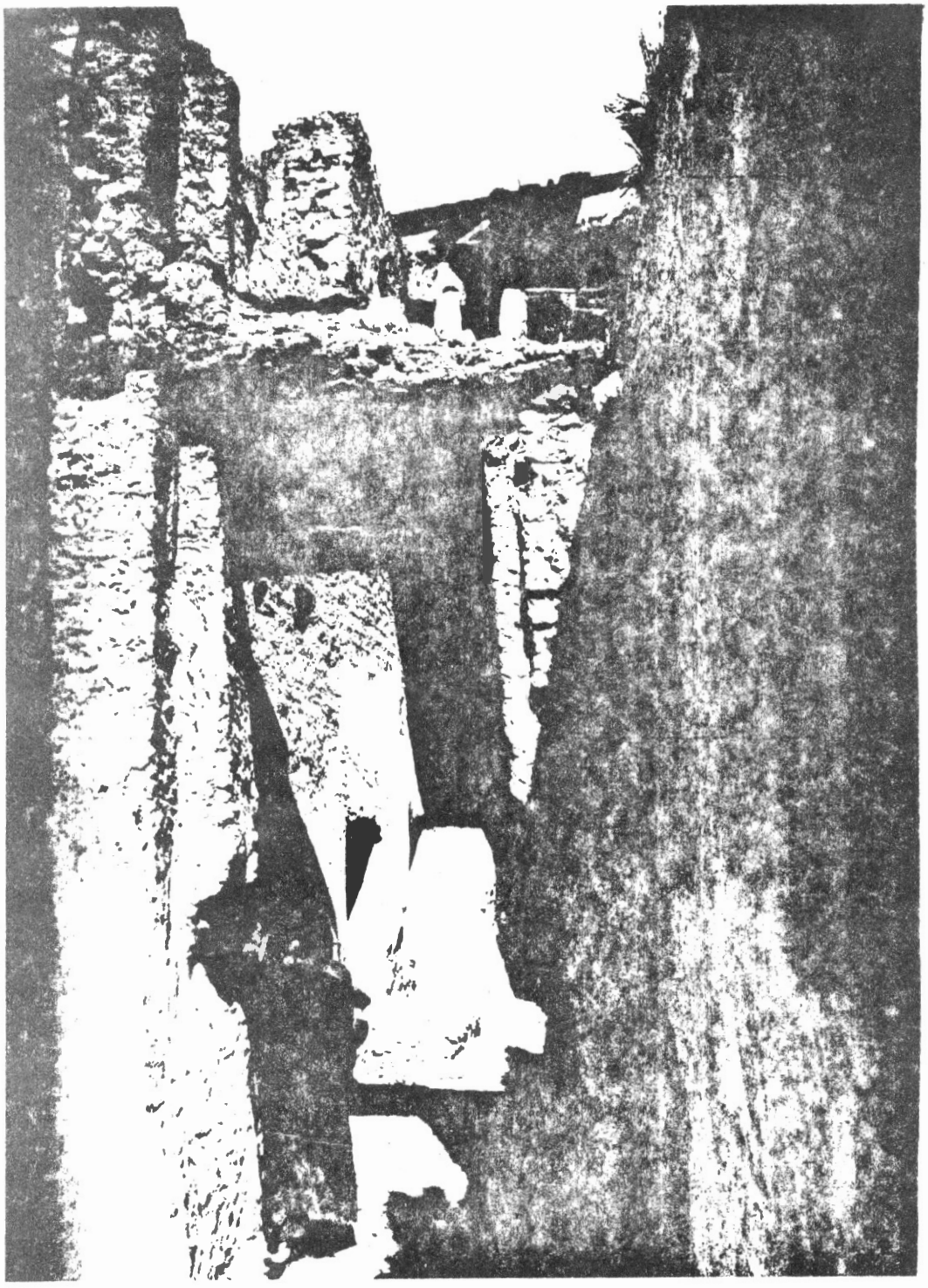
Source: Stanley Lane-Poole, The Story of Cairo (London, 1906), p. 275.

Figure 16. In the Darb el-Ahmar



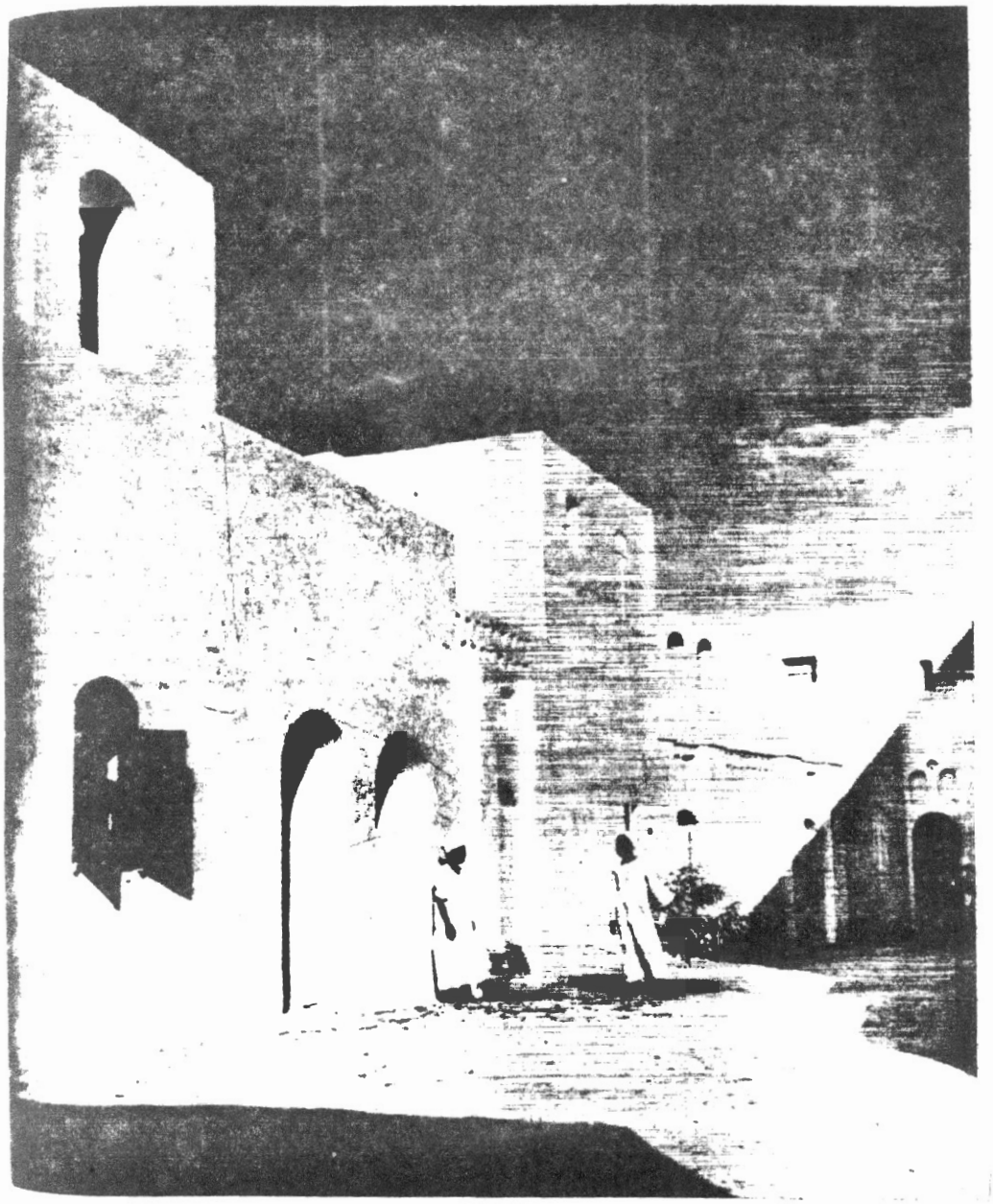
Source: Ludwig Borchardt and Herbert Ricke, Egypt (New York, n.d.), p. 223.

Figure 17. Scene in a Village



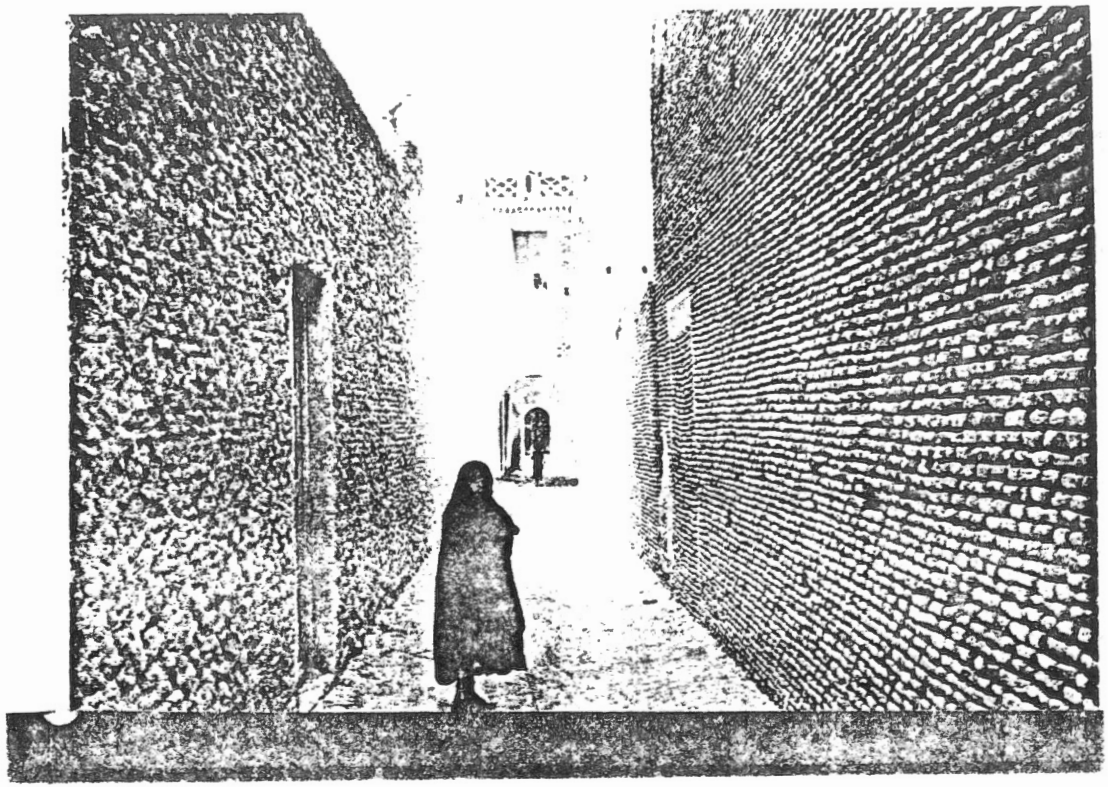
Source: Ludwig Borchardt and Herbert Ricke, Egypt (New York, n.d.), p. 153.

Figure 18. Dakhla Oasis. Street in El-Kasr.



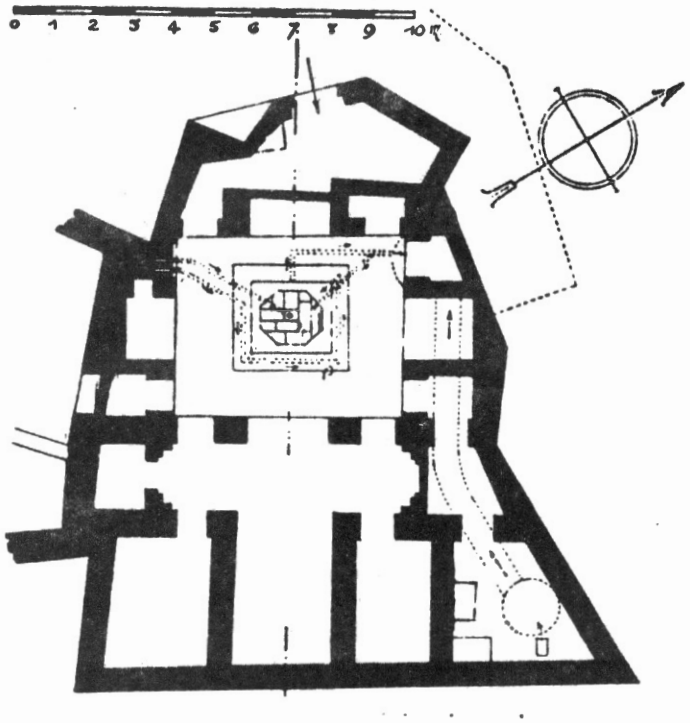
Source: Hassan Fathy, Architecture for the Poor (Chicago, 1973), Pl. 69.

Figure 19. Facade of House, New Gourna



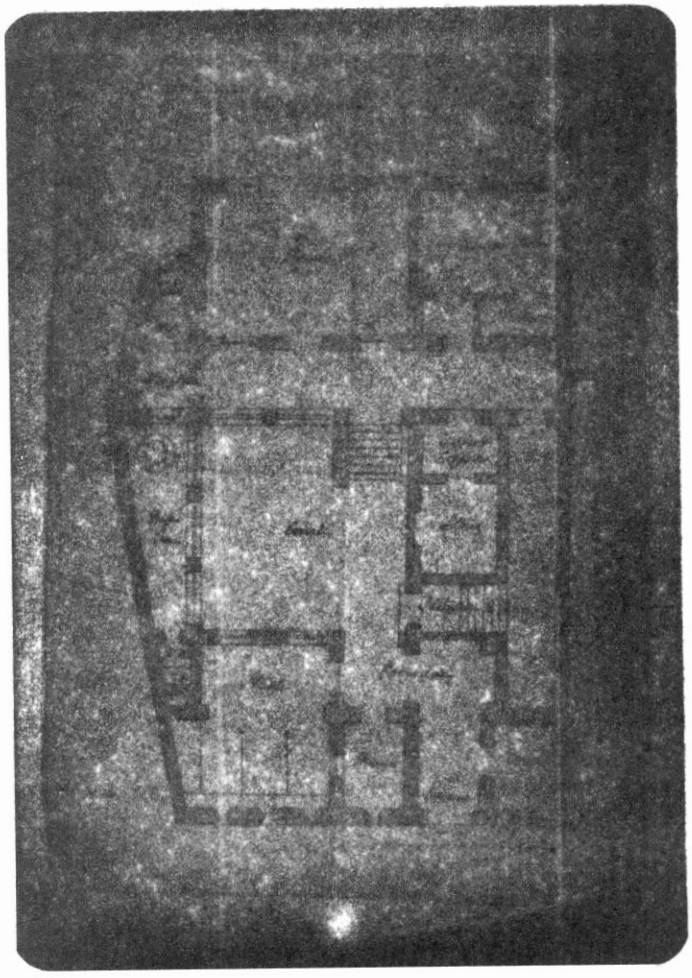
Source: George Michell, ed., Architecture of the Islamic World (New York, 1978), p. 183.

Figure 20. Street in Tunisia



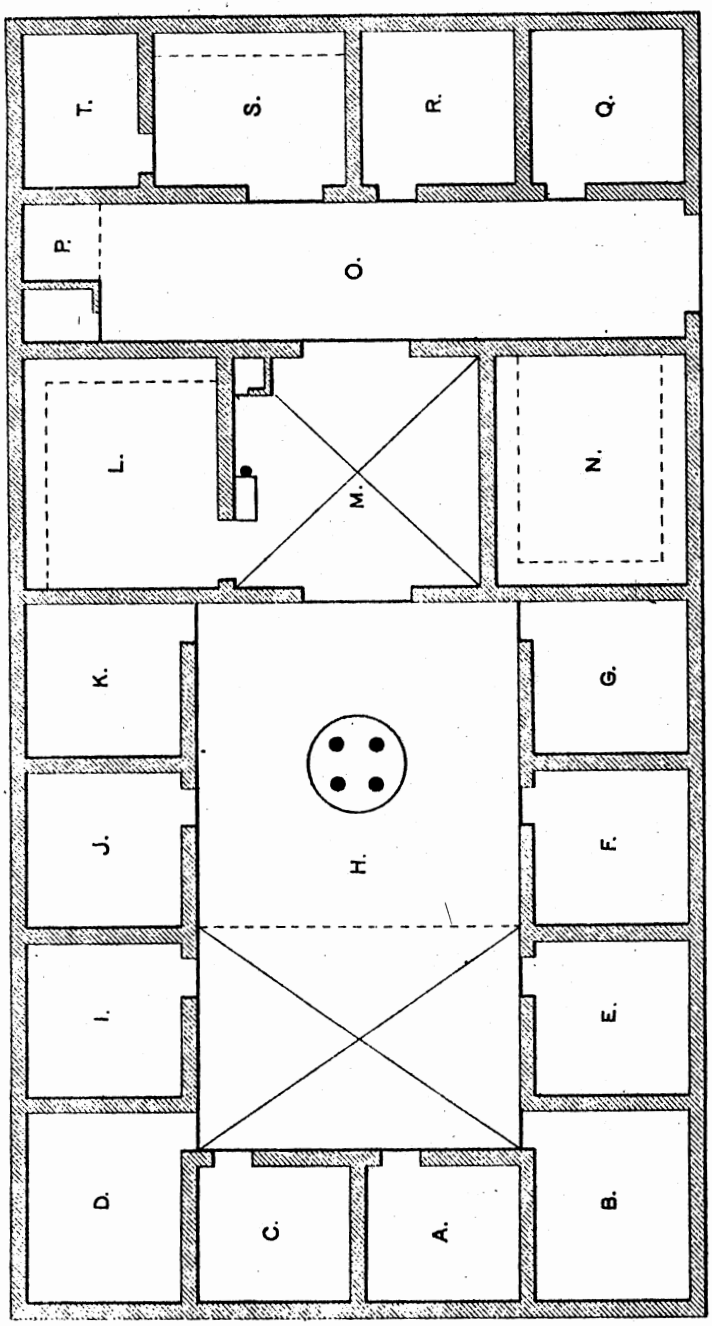
Source: John D. Hoag, Western Islamic Architecture (New York, 1963), Pl. 77.

Figure 21. Plan of House at Al-Fustat Eleventh Century



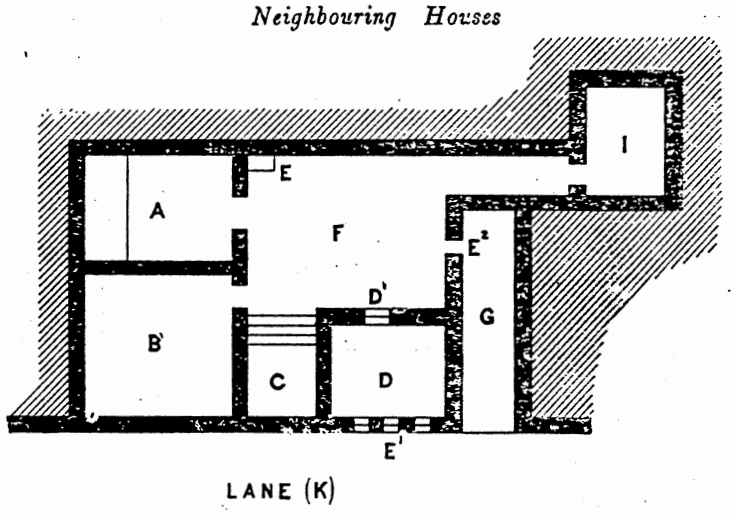
Source: Dr. Vasco Mancini and Gail McKissick.

Figure 22. Plan of Egyptian House at Cairo from the Notebooks of James Wild, Victoria and Albert Museum, London



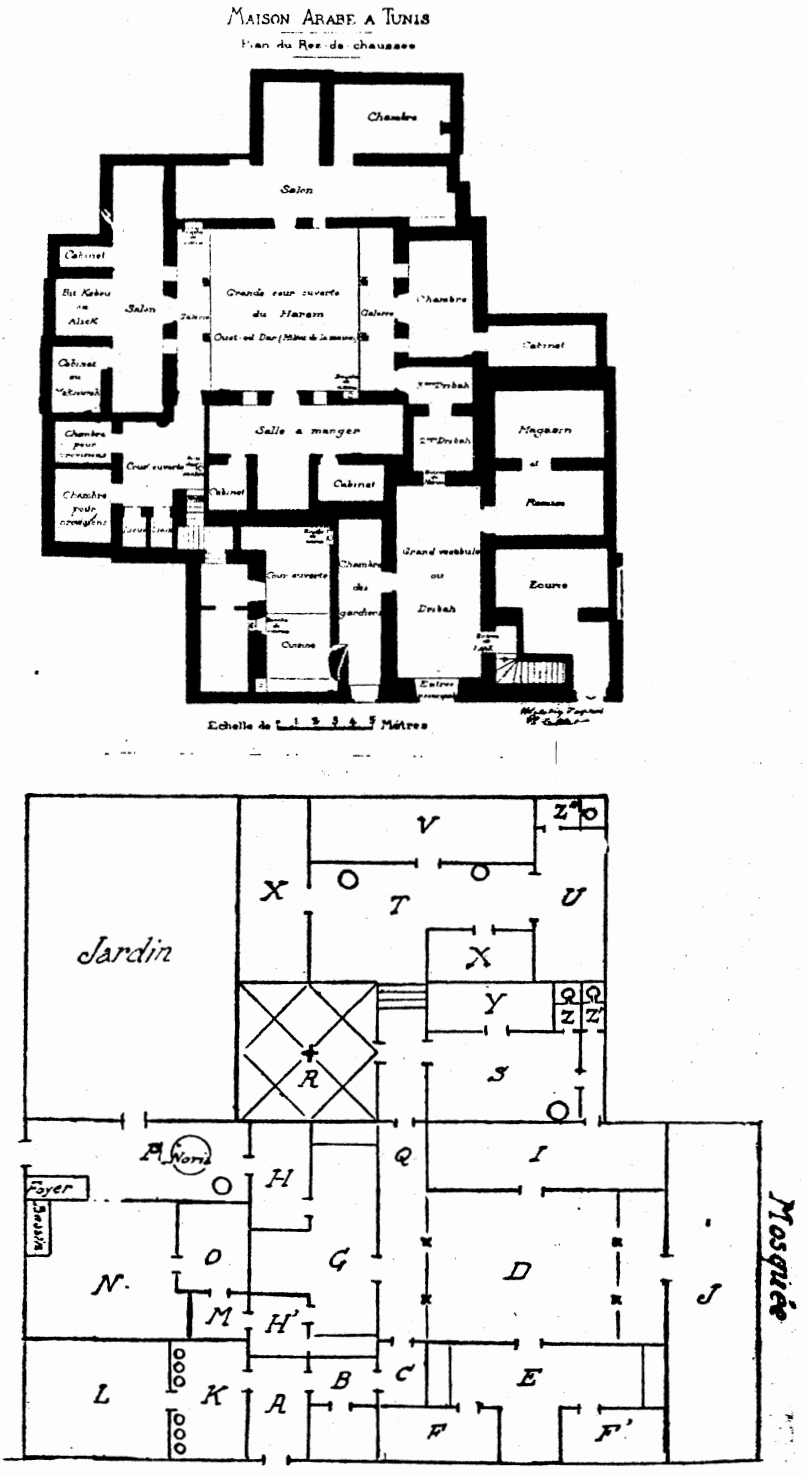
Source: E. M. Dowson (Survey. 1907. p. 361.

Figure 23. Plan of Village Omda's House



Source: E. T. Richmond (Survey, 1906), p. 85.

Figure 24. Plan of a House



Source: Georges Marcais, Manuel d'Art Musulmane (Paris, 1927), pp. 872, 873.

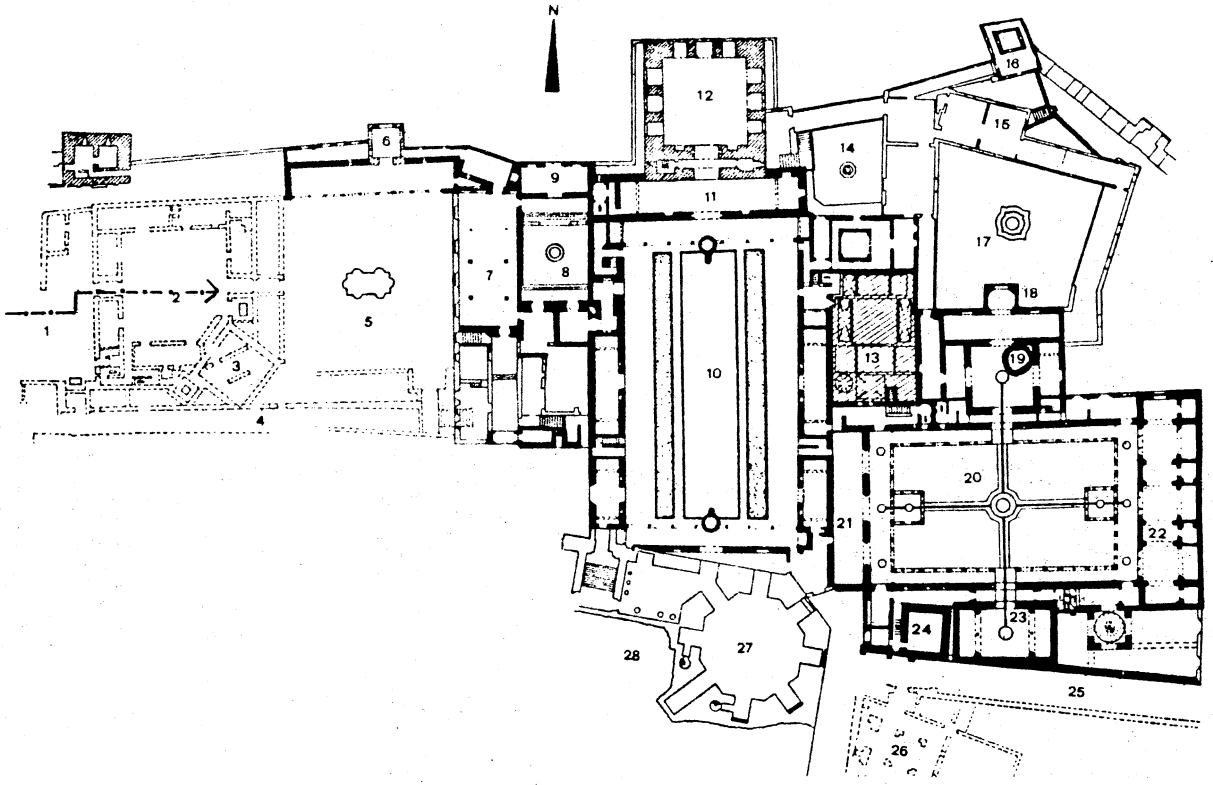
Figure 25. Plans of Houses

Seclusion of Women--The Hareem

The use of the first two devices to establish the sense of enclosure and transition into private territory, were but a prelude to the third and most important aspect of the traditional dwelling, the seclusion of women in the hareem. In traditional houses, when the seclusion of women was practiced, the upper floors or remote areas of the house were reserved for the master and the women and children of the family. The lower floors, and rooms closer to the entrance, were designated as the Salamlik, for the greeting and receiving of male visitors. The plans and arrangement of rooms in the houses of the Islamic world during different periods show similarities in their placement of the hareem.

In the labyrinthian palaces of Arab Spain, such as the Alhambra, the hareem had a place in the rear of the palace complex.[13] (See Figure 26.) The Moorish villas usually had an isolated section with a private garden for the women and children of the household.[14] In Fustat, some houses had two courtyards which were not connected to one another. "It is probable, too, that one of the yards was for men and the other for women." Care was also taken that in the early two story houses, no one could see into that of his neighbor. A Fatimid palace had a special section for women.[16]

Elsewhere too, the traditional plan prevailed. In Mughal, India, a dwelling kiosk in Jodh Bay palace was a separate unit for the hareem, the Zenana.[17] In Ottoman, Turkey, separation of women from men by use of different entrances, staircases, and living areas was consistent in all parts of the country. Two factors governed the design of the houses:



Source: John Hoag Western Islamic Architecture (New York, 1963), Pl. 65.

Figure 26. Plan of Alhambra (Hareem No. 19)

> The geographical nature of the region [and] the Islamic custom of women only being allowed to meet the men of the family when veiled. This accounted for the strict division between men's and women's quarters. Even houses consisting of only two rooms were divided into a 'harem' (women's quarters) and a 'selamlik' (men's quarters).[18]

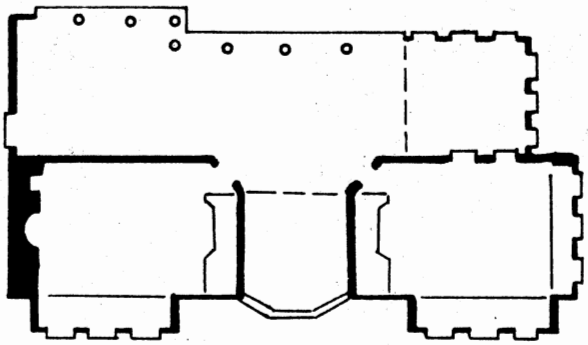
The windows of the houses were usually divided into two parts; the lower part consisted of a latticed sash, the fixed upper part of stained glass.[19] These houses had projecting alcoves, which allowed the ladies to look out onto the street without being observed (Figure 27). An important feature of the houses was the hall or sofa which ran the width of the back of the house and allowed the women, particularly in summer, to enjoy the gardens, their sole contact with the outdoors (Figure 28).[20]

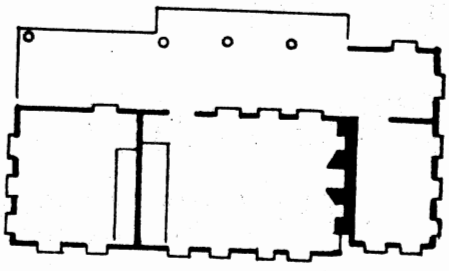
Cairene Architecture

There remain few examples of old residential architecture throughout the Islamic world. While public buildings and monuments were built to last, houses were not. Many have been ruined or altered. Some of the best examples of classic Muslim architecture have survived in Cairo.[21] From the Twelfth to the early Nineteenth Century the style of the houses changed little.

> The metropolitan status of Cairo, coupled with the comparative lack of building acticity in the provinces favored the emergence of a distinctive style of architecture in the capitol.[22]

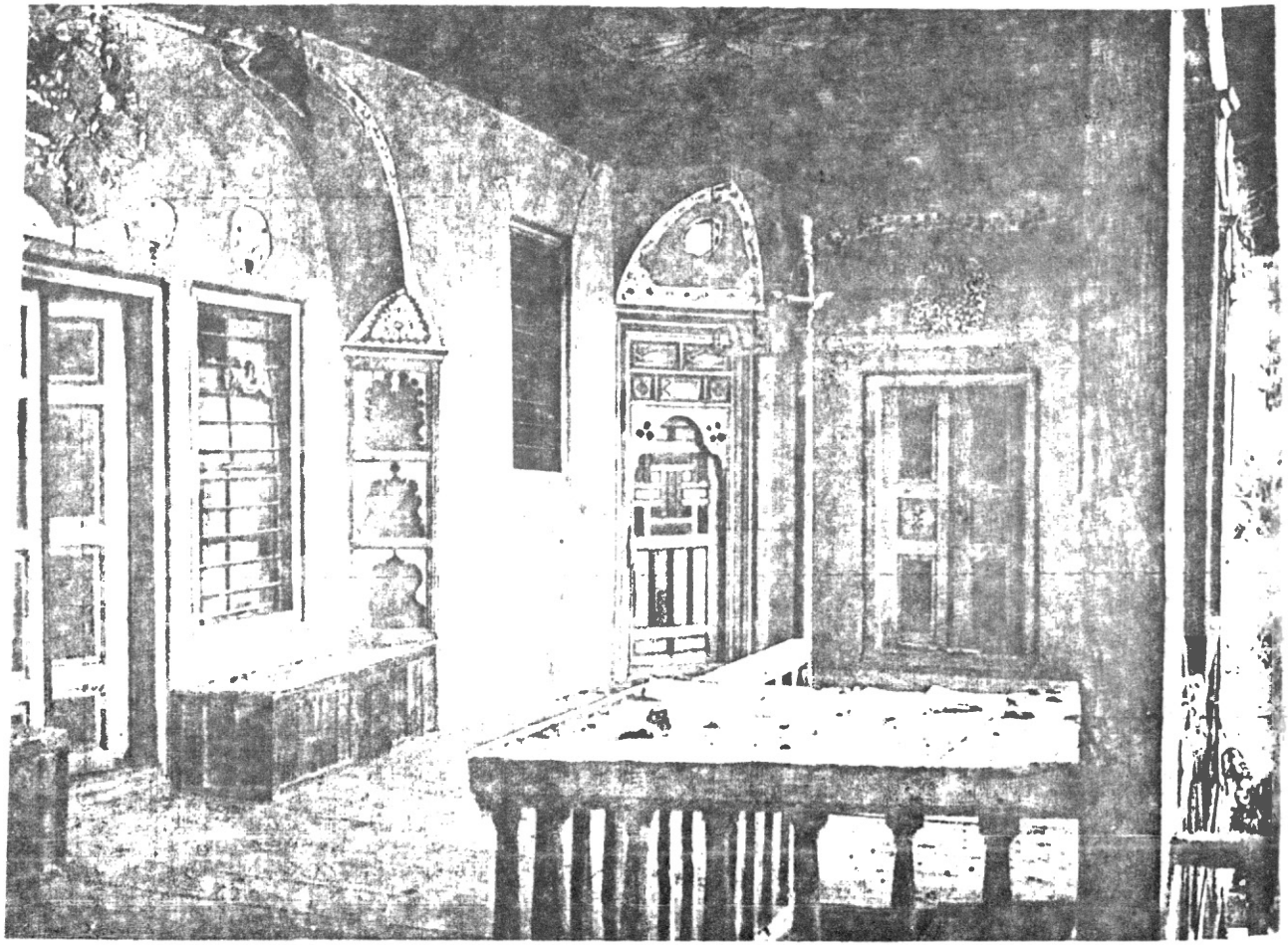
This style while generally Islamic was distinctly Cairene.[23] Thanks to the publications of the Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale du Caire, it is possible to know a great deal about the houses and palaces of the Twelfth through the Eighteenth Century. The work done by Pauty, Revault and Maury, and by Lezine has been invaluable in providing descriptions, photographs and plans of some of these houses. The





Source: Ulya Vogt-Goknel, Living Architecture: Ottoman (New York, 1966), p. 140.

Figure 27. Plans of Two Houses in Turkey



Source: "Design in the Spirit of Islam," Architectural Record (March, 1979), p. 120.

Figure 28. Loggia-Sofa in Turkish House

customary elements of architectural design and planning are consistent in the separation of men's quarters, the salamlik, on lower floors, from those of the women in the hareem, on upper stories.

The houses were built around inner courtyards. To a visitor arriving in the court of an old Cairene house, the division would have been unmistakable; the windows of the salamlik had simple grills with large links, while those of the hareem on upper stories had projecting bays, mashrabiyyas, with elaborate shutters of turned wood in intricate designs. The salamlik consisted of reception rooms for male visitors, annexed chambers, and common rooms such as the kitchens.

In summer, greeting was done on the porch, tachtabush and loggia, maq'ad, which usually faced north to catch the cool evening breeze.[24] In winter, visitors were received and entertained in the mandara. This reception room called a qa'a developed a classic form. The center of the room, called the dorqa'a was depressed several inches and often had a central fountain. Usually the ceiling of this part was two stories high. On two or more sides flanking the dorqa'a were raised alcoves called iwans, whose ceilings were only one story high. Sometimes these mandaras had projecting into the room loges des femmes, or balconies, from which the women of the hareem on an upper floor could watch the festivities below without being observed.[25] On the upper floors were the rooms of the hareem including one or more qa'as for family gatherings. The plans of the houses and palaces show the intricacy of the design; the rooms of the hareem were reached through turned stairways of several flights and through labyrinthian corridors. The qa'as of the hareems were often the most beautiful rooms of the house and had elaborate mashrabiyya balconies and windows looking on to the inner court

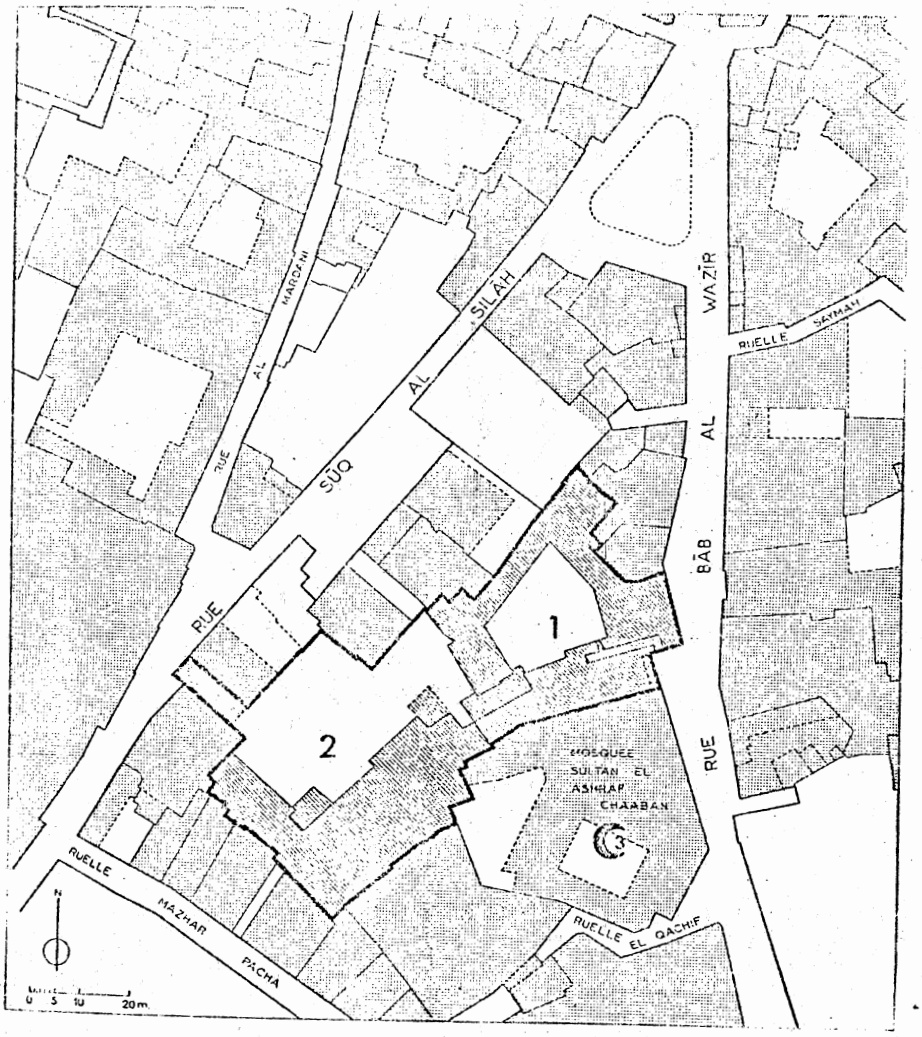
and onto the street. Care was taken that the windows of the house did not face directly those of another, though sometimes the hareem of one house communicated with that of another, by a passageway over the street.[26] The following section discusses examples of domestic architecture which typify these structural features.

Al-Razzaz Palace

The Fifteenth Century Al-Razzaz palace is a fine example of high style Cairene architecture. Built around two courts, the palace had the classic elements of the era in its facades, mode of entry and division into hareem and salamlik. Figures 29 through 34 show the site location, reconstructed axonometric view, facades and plans of the ground, and second floors of the first court.

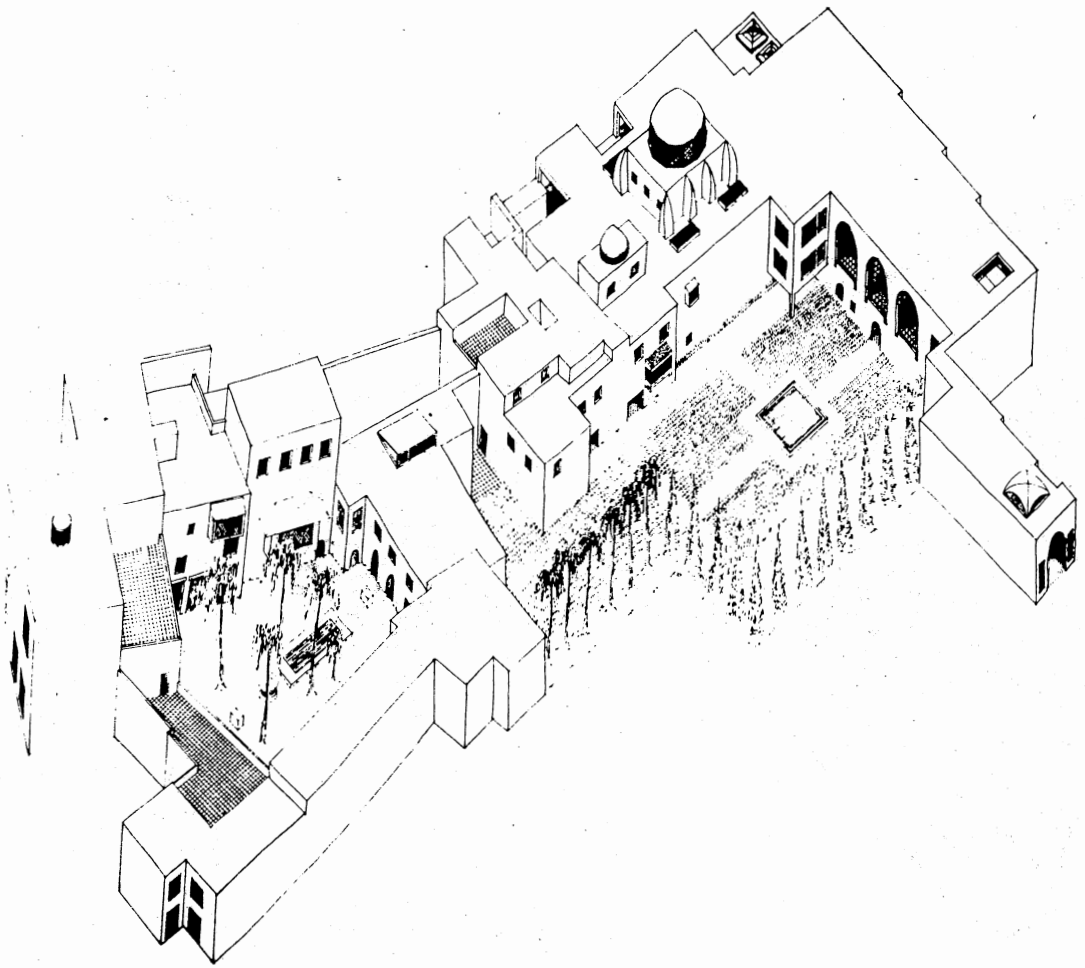
The door to the hareem (10, on the plan) leads to the upper floors by a stairway of several turnings. These doors were characteristically elegant and recognizable (Figure 35).[27] On the third floor was the qa'a whose mashrabiyya balconies look out on the Rue Bab-al-Wazir (Figure 36, 37 and 38). One can imagine the sheltered ladies watching activities in the street below or sitting on the cushioned divans, benches, which surrounded the three sides of the iwans and enjoying the colors of the beautiful carpets that usually decorated the rooms.[28] Everything was done in these rooms to ensure that the cloistered life within was pleasant.[29]

The other part of the palace on the south did not differ essentially from that on the first court. The classic divisions into hareem and salamlik held true.[30] The entry of this part from the Rue Suq-al-Silah was characteristic of late Fourteenth or early Fifteenth Century



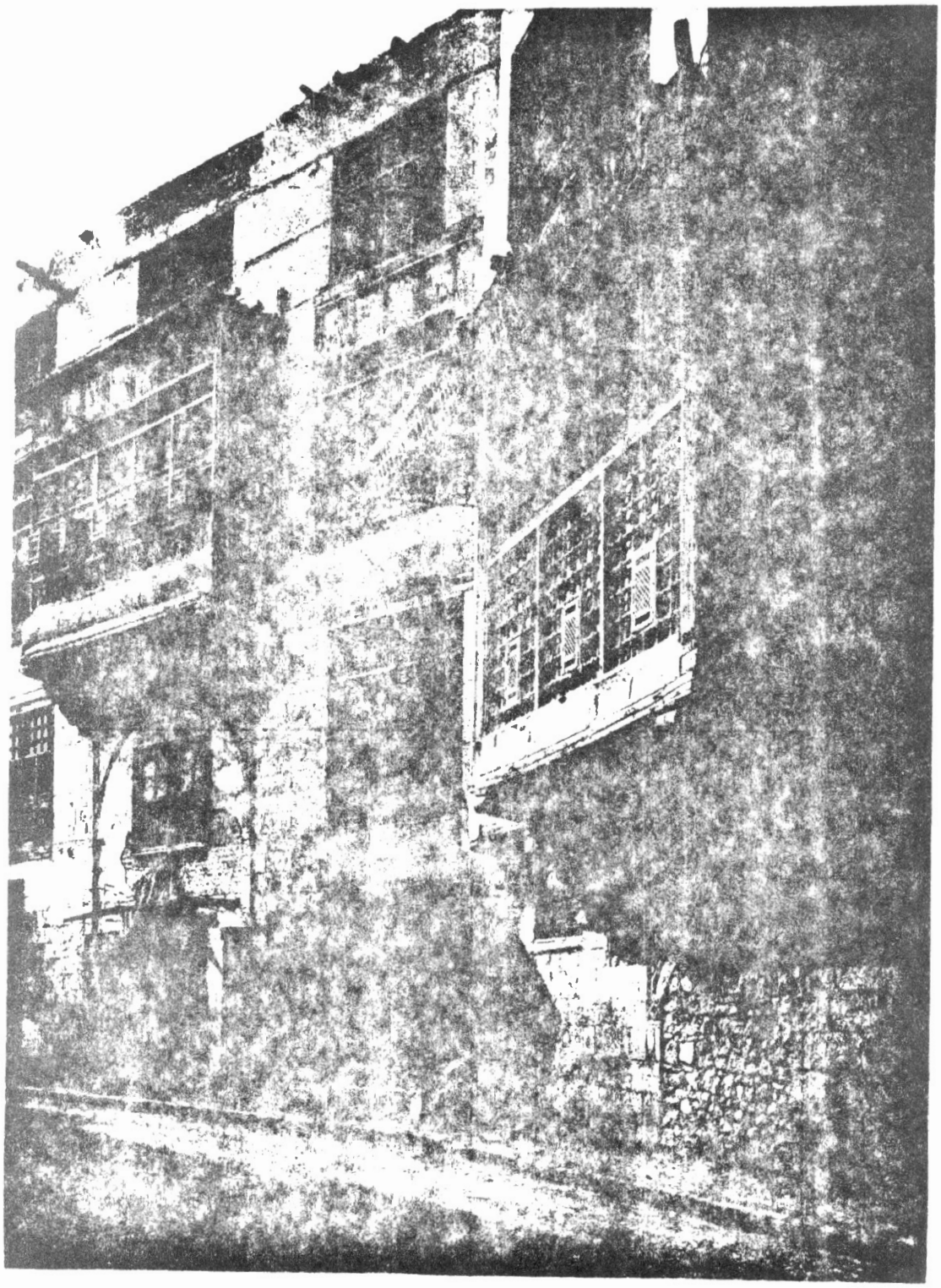
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maisons du Caire du XIV^{e} au XVIII^{e} Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Fig. 11.

Figure 29. Plan of Location of Al-Razzaz Palace



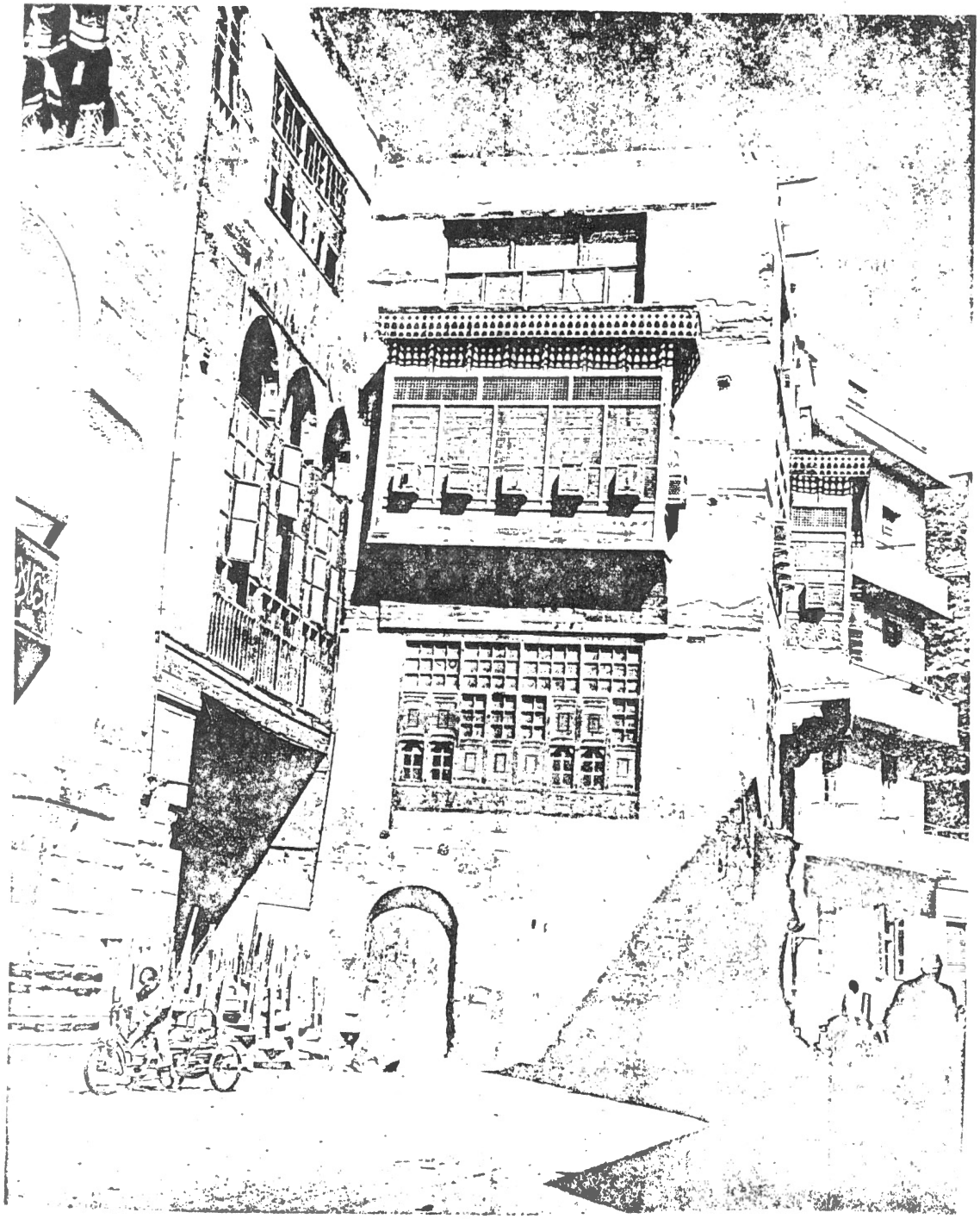
Source: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Proceedings of Seminar Two (September, 1978), p. 70.

Figure 30. Axonometric View of Al-Razzaz Palace



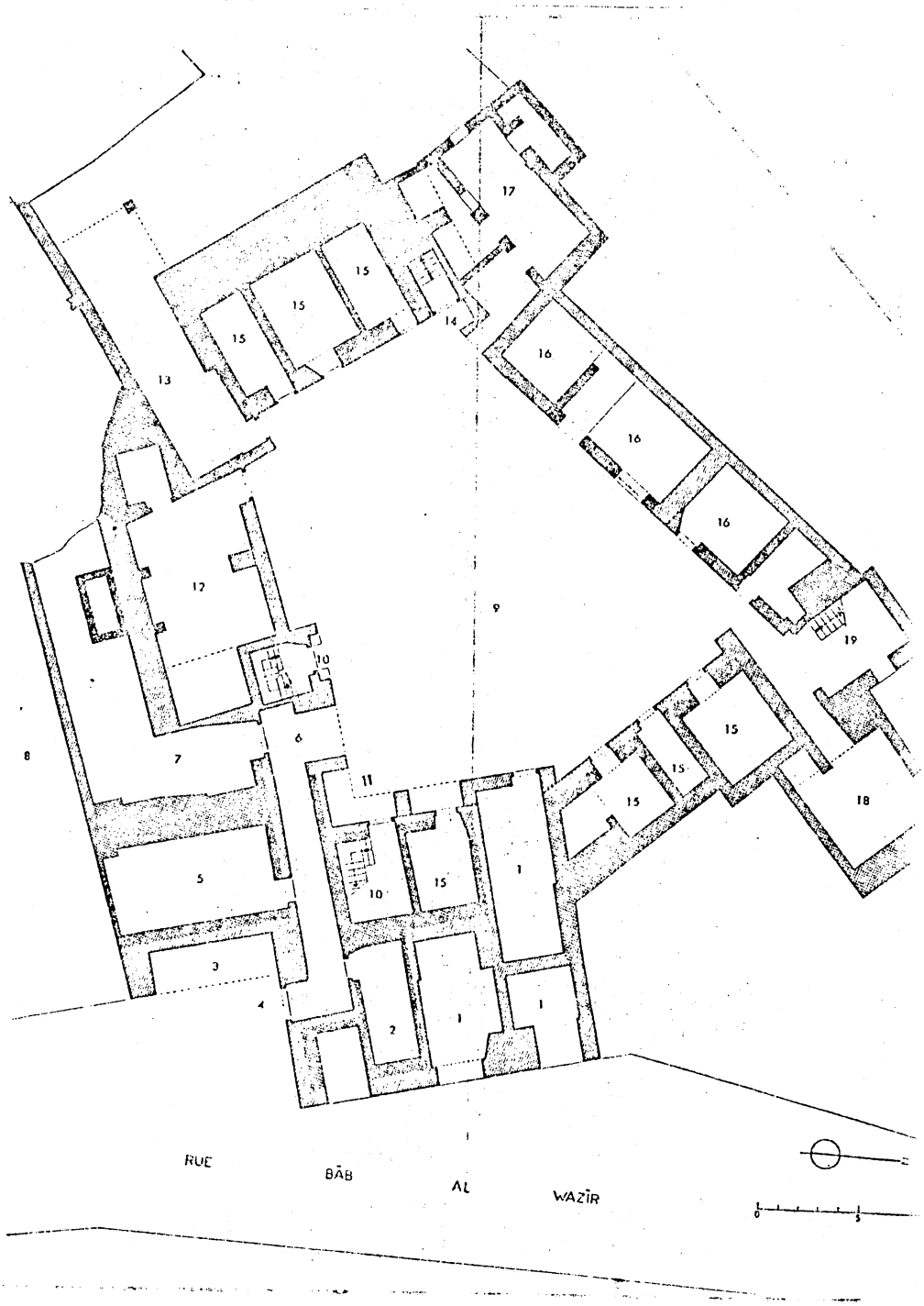
Source: Ludwig Borchardt and Herbert Ricke, Egypt (New York, n.d.), p. 9.

Figure 31. Cairo: Shara Bab el-Wazir



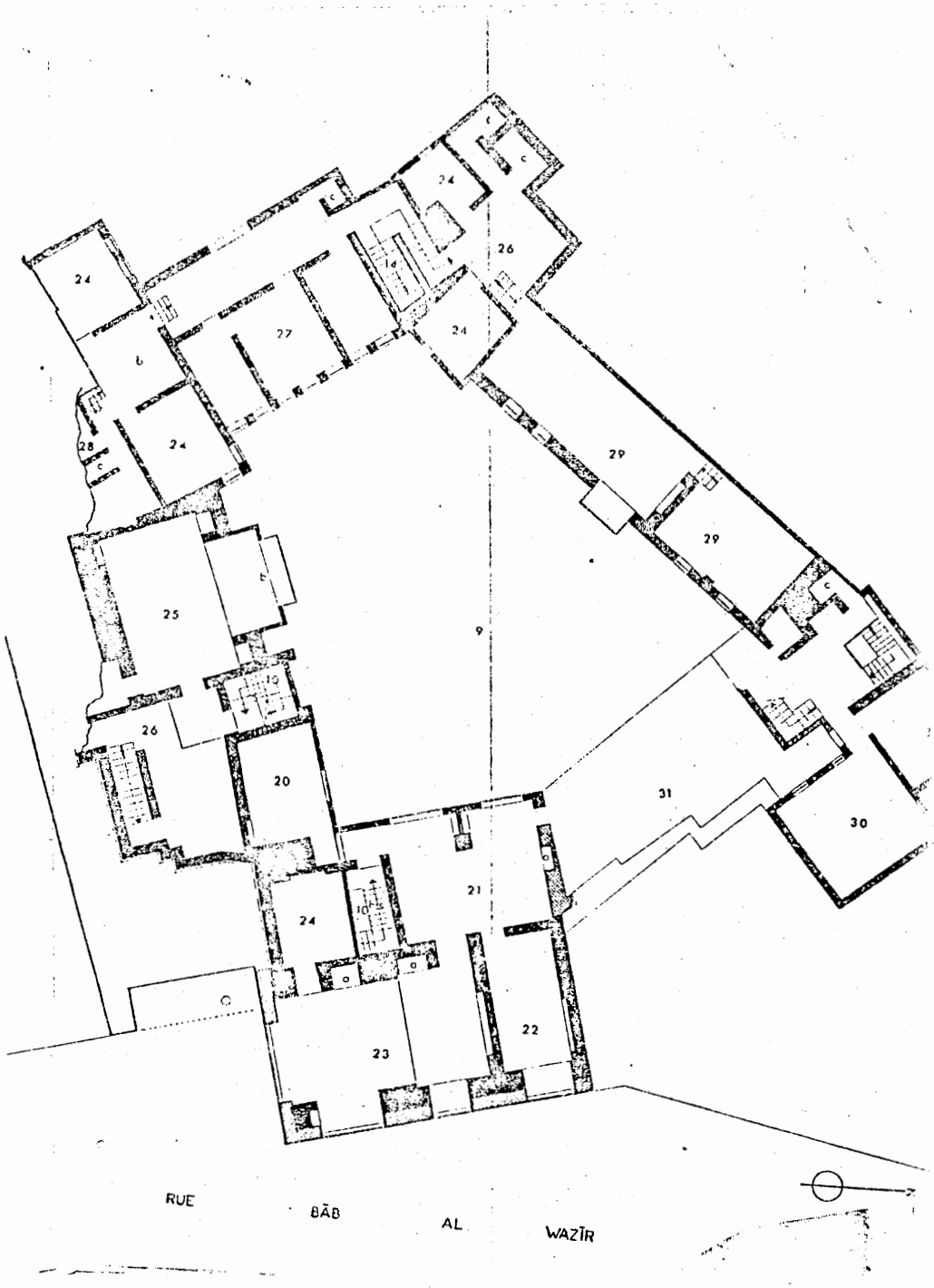
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maison's du Caire du XIV^{e} au XVIII^{e} Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Pl. XVIII.

Figure 32. Facade of Al-Razzaz Palace



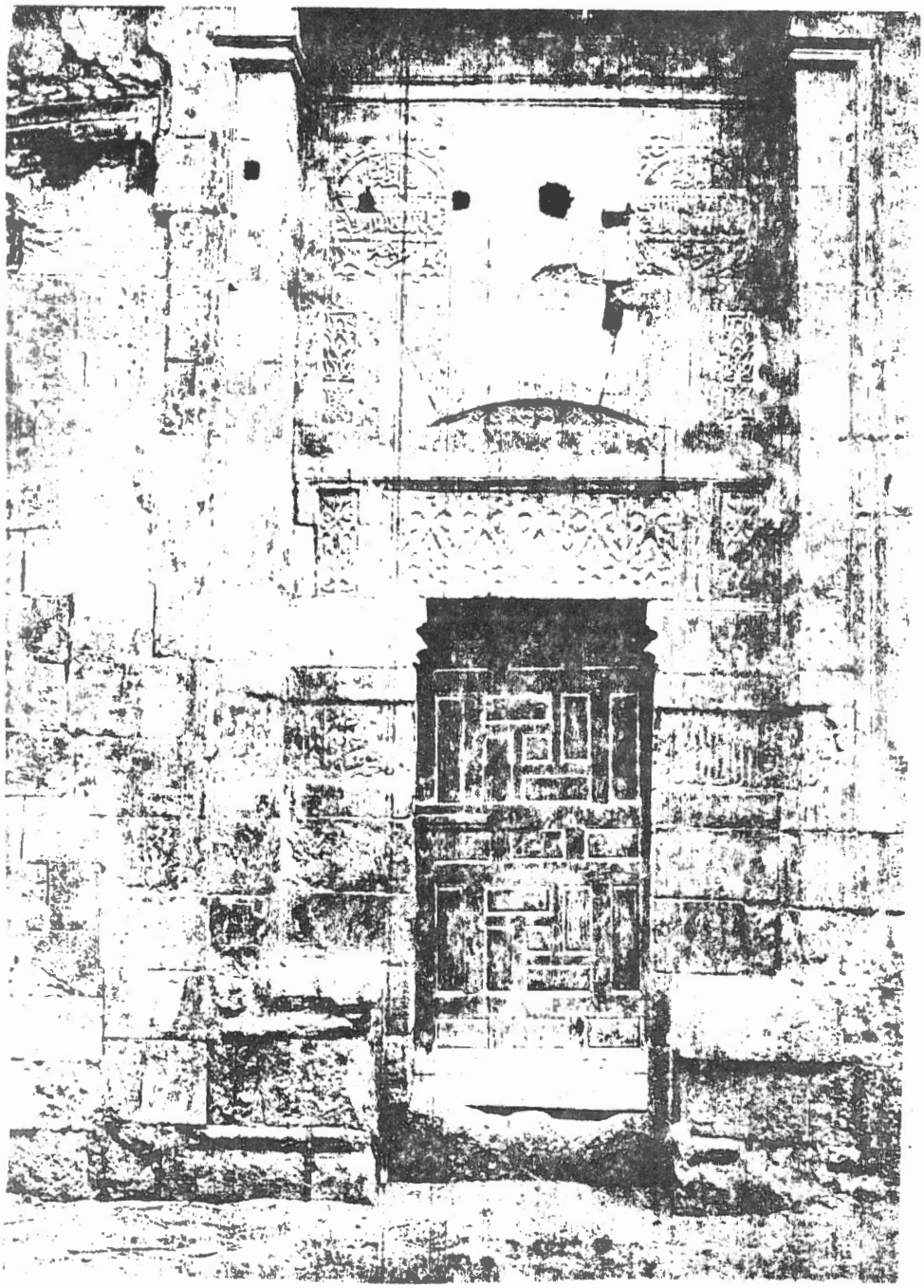
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maisons du Caire du XIV^e au XVIII^e Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Fig. 12.

Figure 33. Plan Ground Floor (Rez-de-Chausee)
Al-Razzaz Palace



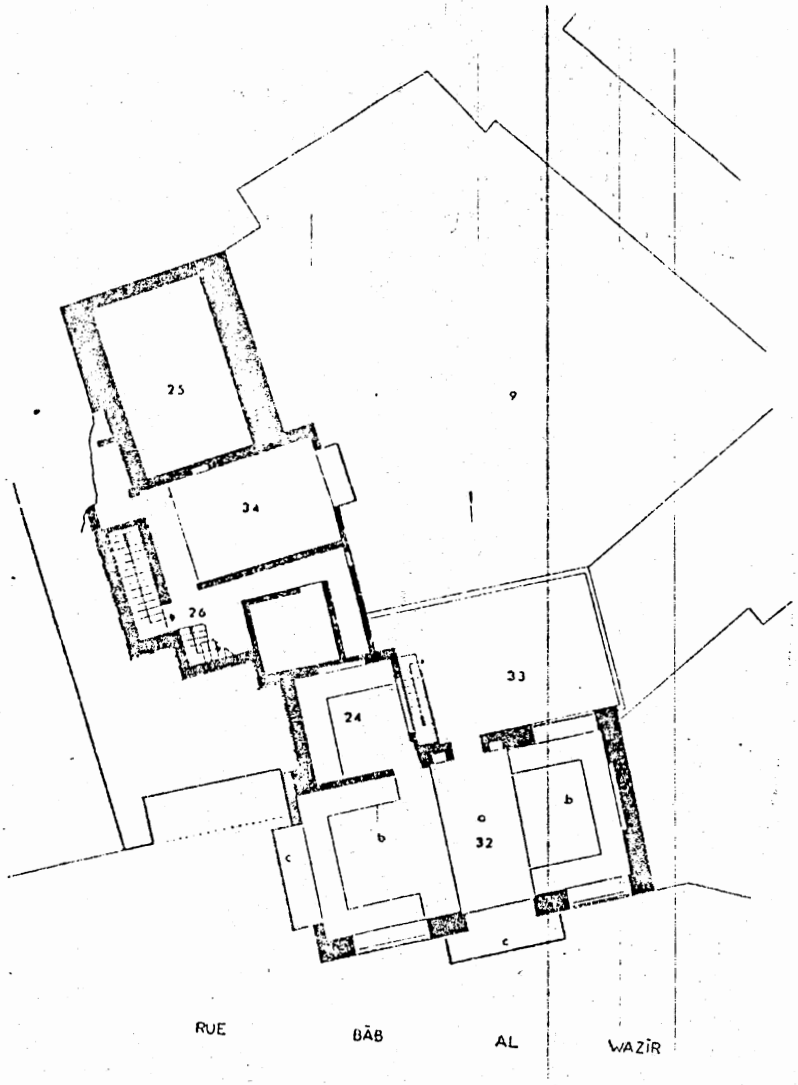
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maisons du Caire du XIV^{e} au XVIII^{e} Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Fig. 13.

Figure 34. Plan Second Floor (Premiere Etage) Al-Razzaz Palace



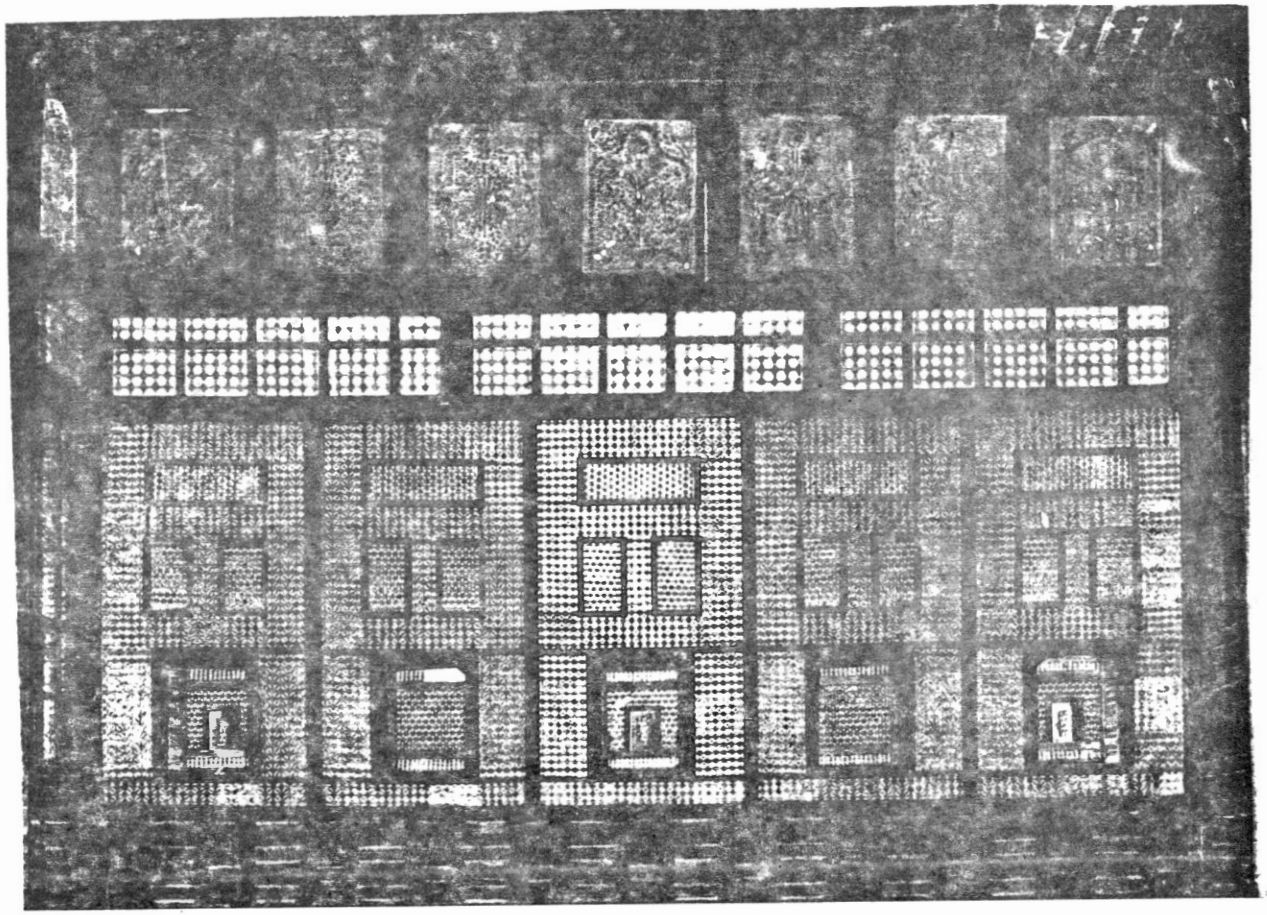
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maison's du Caire du XIV^{e} au XVIII^{e} Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Pl. XXI.

Figure 35. Door to the Hareem, Al-Razzaz Palace, First Court



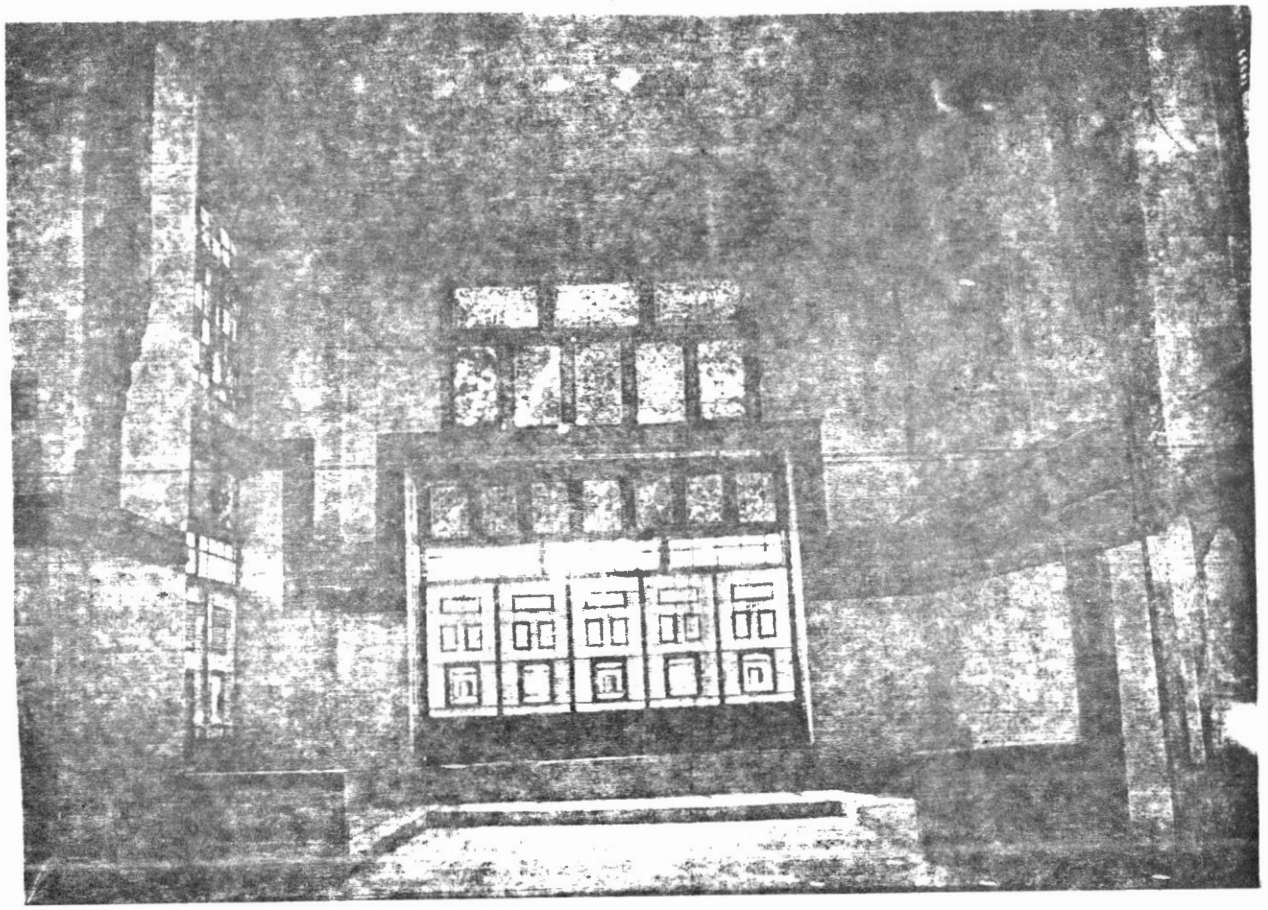
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maisons du Caire du XIVe au XVIIIe Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Fig. 14.

Figure 36. Plan Third Floor (Deuxieme Etage) Al-Razzaz Palace



Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maisons du Caire du XIV^{e} au XVIII^{e} Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Pl. XXX.

Figure 37. Mashrabiyya Over Bab-al-Wazir Al-Razzaz Palace



Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maisons du Caire du XIV^{e} au XVIII^{e} Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Pl. XXIX.

Figure 38. Mashrabiyya Window in the South Iwan Al-Razzaz Palace

style.[31] The entry passage was not bent, but consisted of a vaulted hall leading to a large door which opened onto the court. This passage as the one on Rue Bab-al-Wazir was large enough to accommodate a man on horseback (Figure 39 shows plan).[32]

The rooms of the salamlik and the hareem on upper floors were arranged around the court (Figure 40 shows second floor plan). The mandara had a loge des femmes projecting into a niche and a small stairway leading up to the hareem, (h, on the plan). Figures 41, 42 show the mandara and the mashrabiyya on the court.

House of Gamal ad Din

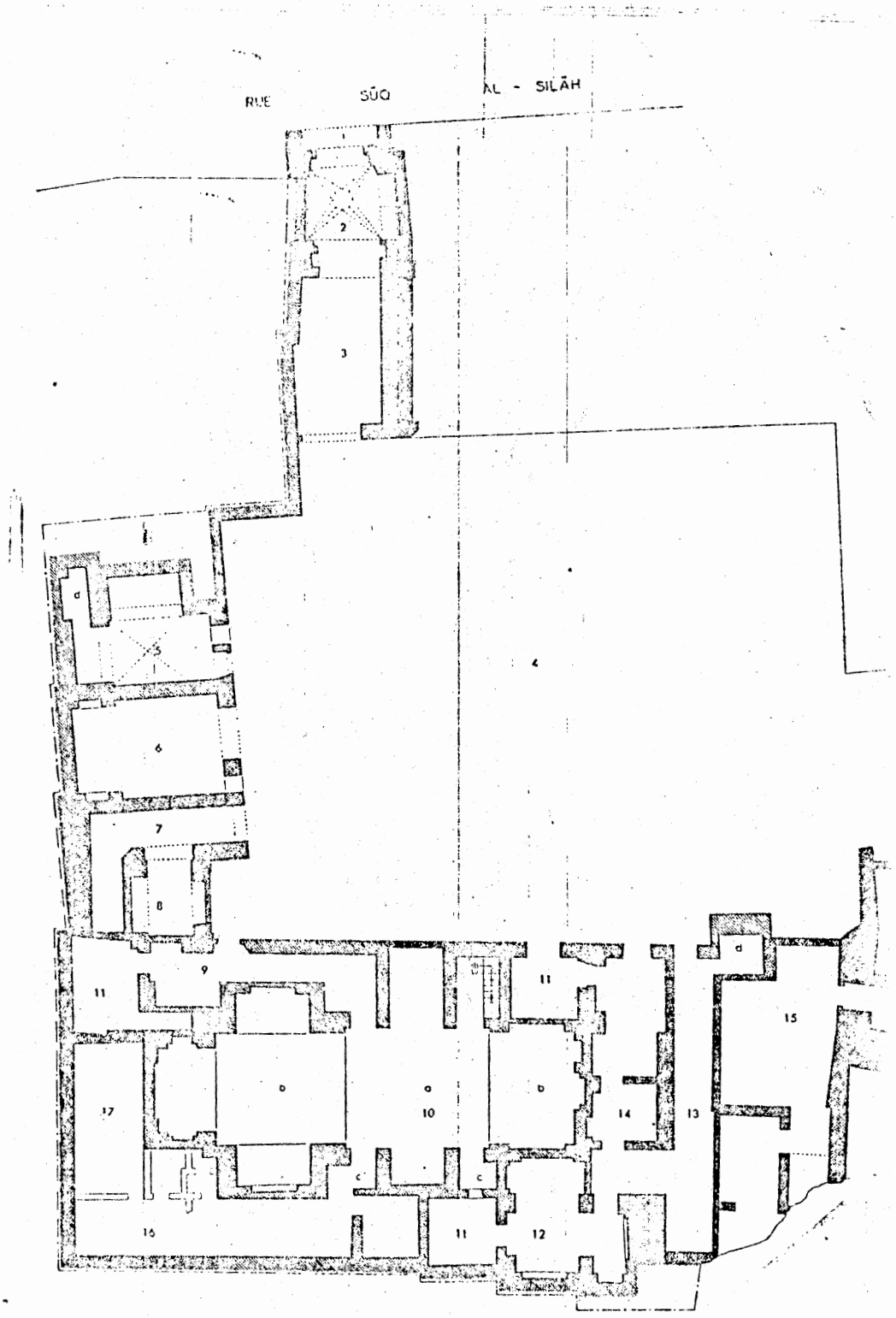
Another example, the house of Gamal ad Din, built in the Seventeenth Century, is more modest in proportions. It has been restored and is now a tourist attraction in Cairo. This house too, was built around two courts, one of which is presumed to have been for the women of the house.[33] Figures 43 and 44 show plans of the house.

The classic elements of the Cairene house were present, but because of restorations and changes, authentication of some elements is questionable.[34] For example, the maq'ad on the second floor now has a mashrabiyya which seems an anomaly (d, on the plan).

The mandara or qa'a on the east is considered one of the best examples of Fifteenth Century style.[35] Above the iwan on the north were loges de femmes which could be reached by the stairway on the right (Figure 45).

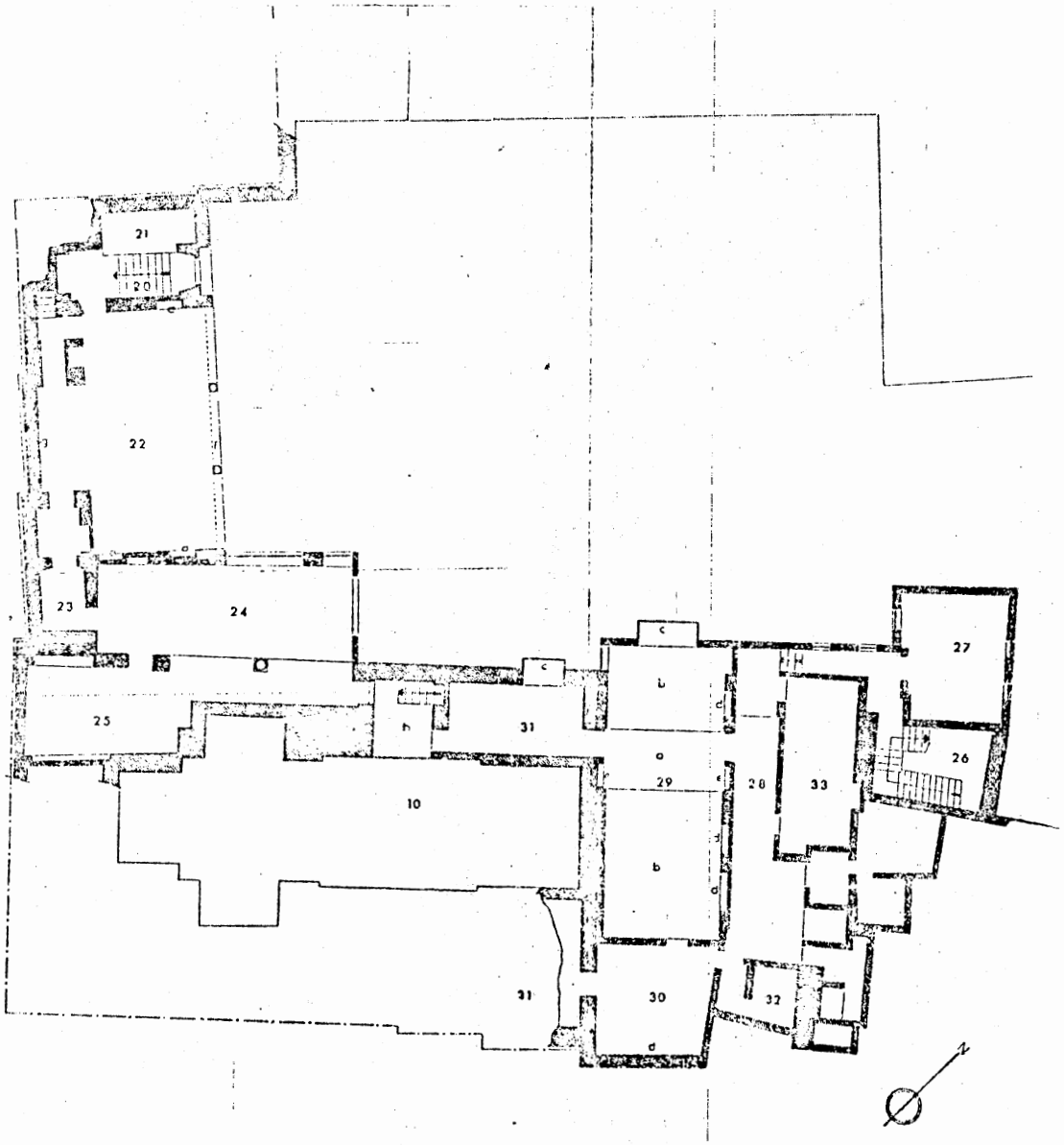
Manzil al-Sinnari

Still another example of old Cairene architecture is Manzil



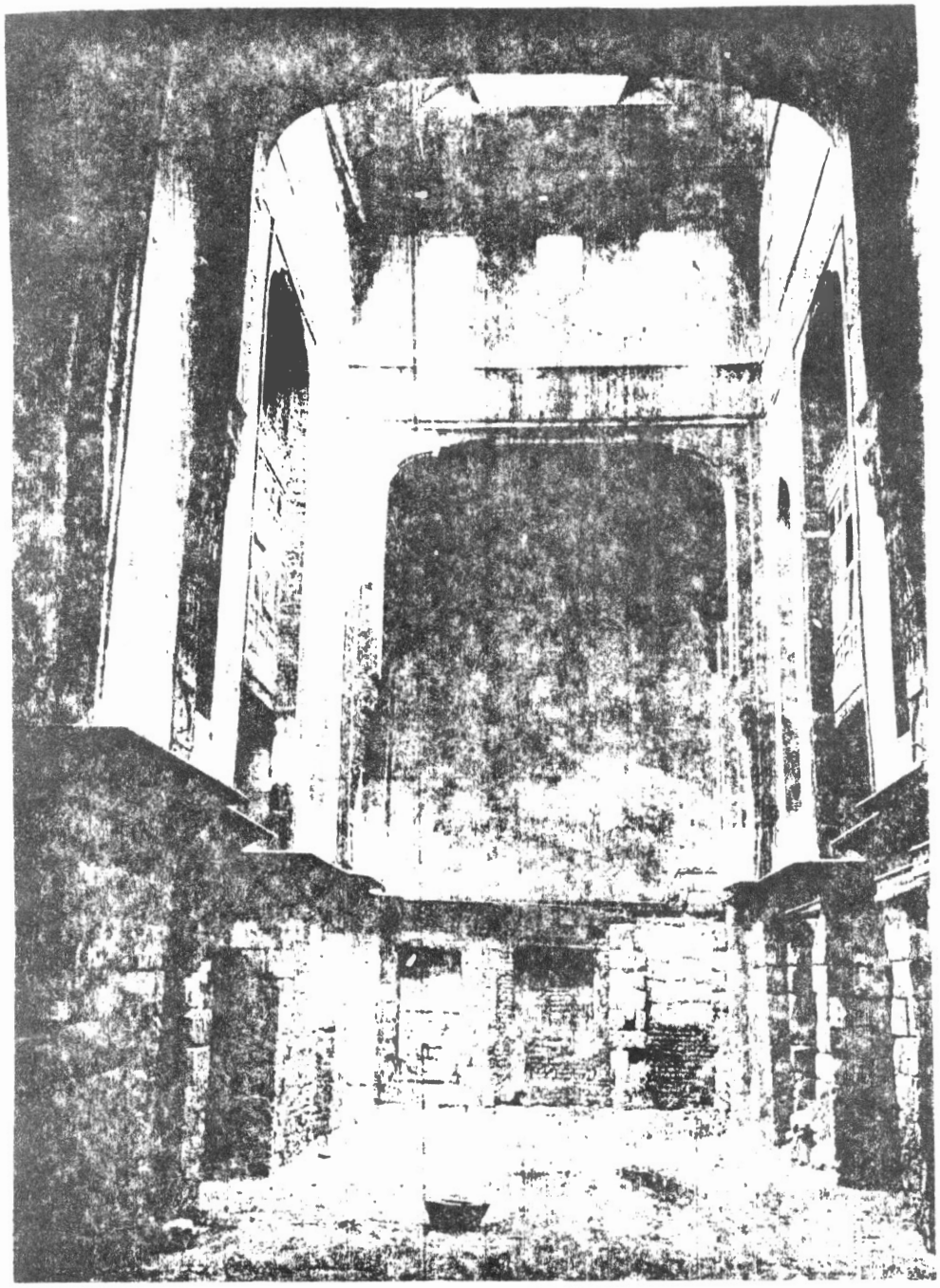
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maisons du Caire du XIV^{e} au XVIII^{e} Siecle (Cairo, 1975).

Figure 39. Plan Ground Floor Second Court Al-Razzaz Palace



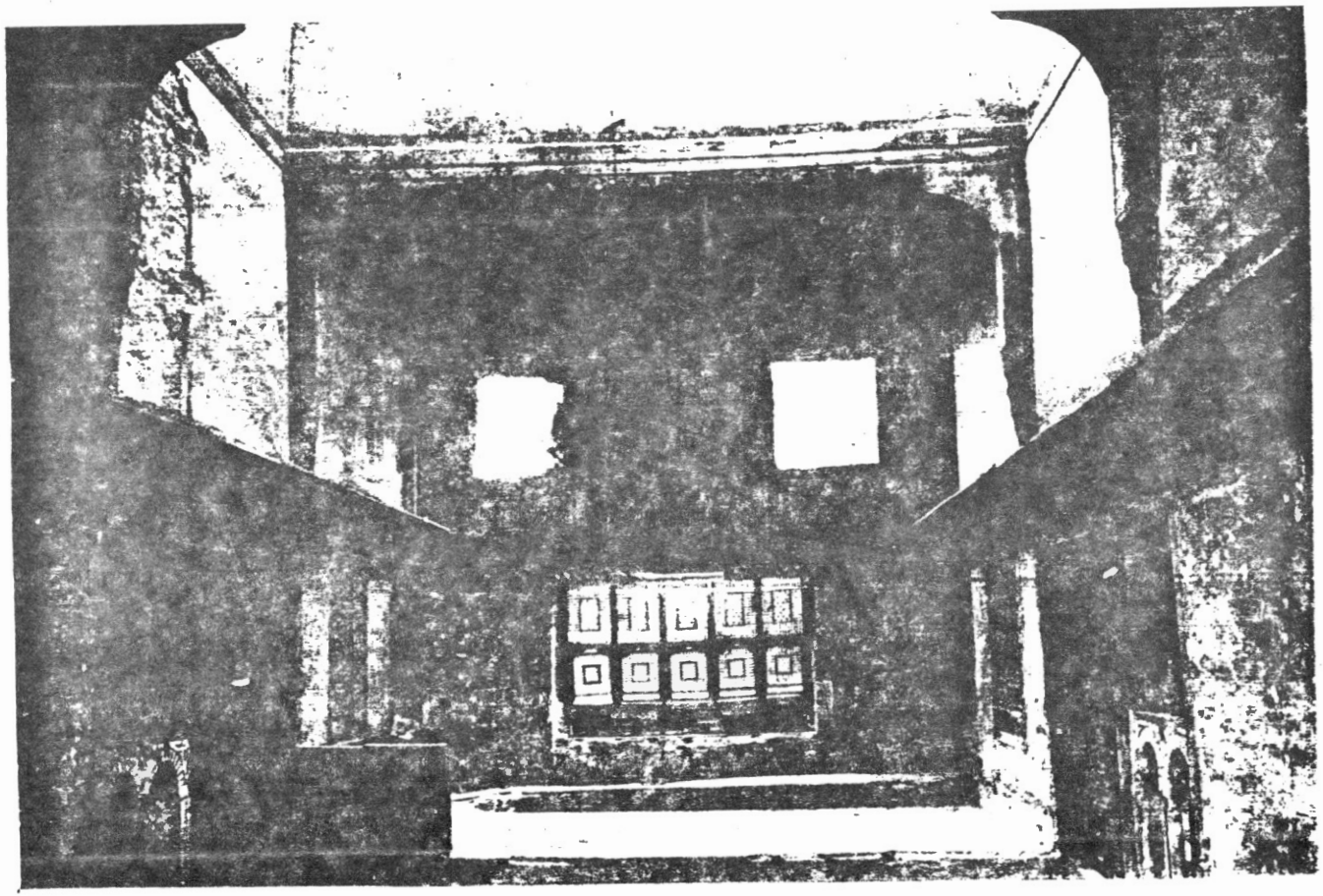
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maisons du Caire du XIV^{e} au XVIII^{e} Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Fig. 17.

Figure 40. Plan Second Floor Second Court Al-Razzaz Palace



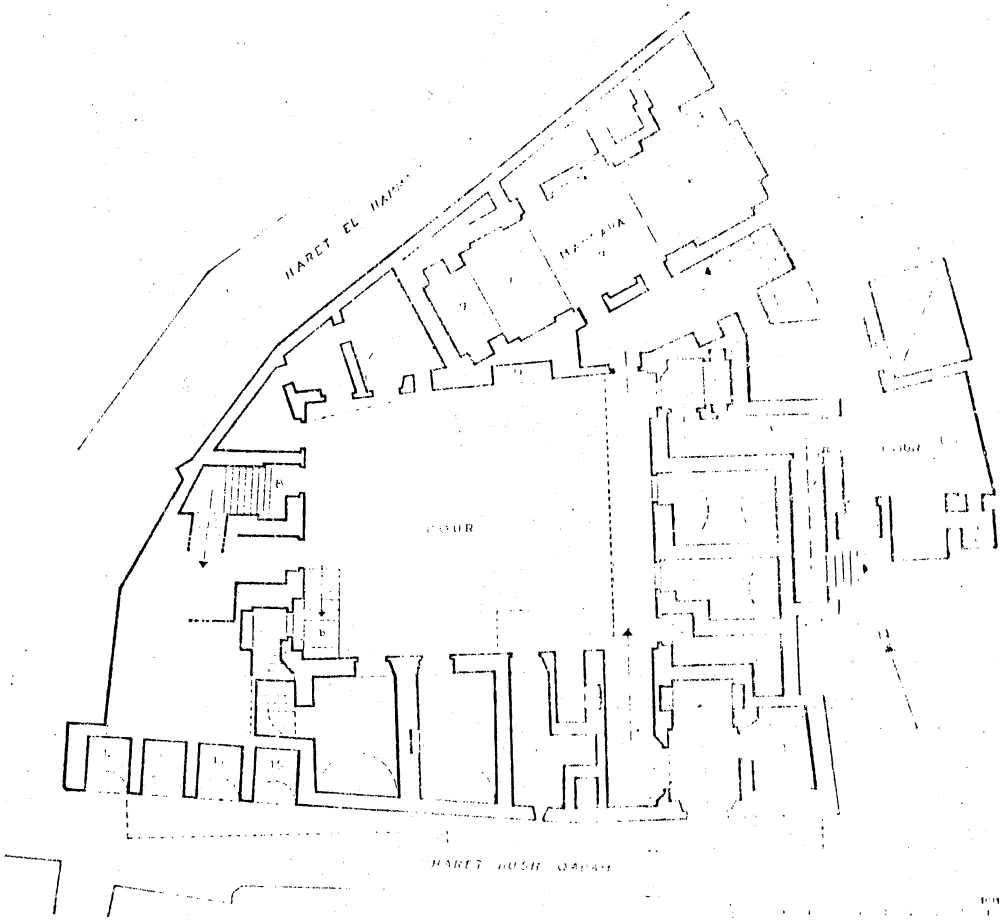
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maison's du Caire du XIV^{e} au XVIII^{e} Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Pl. XXXVIII.

Figure 41. Mandara Second Court Al-Razzaz Palace With Loges des Femmes



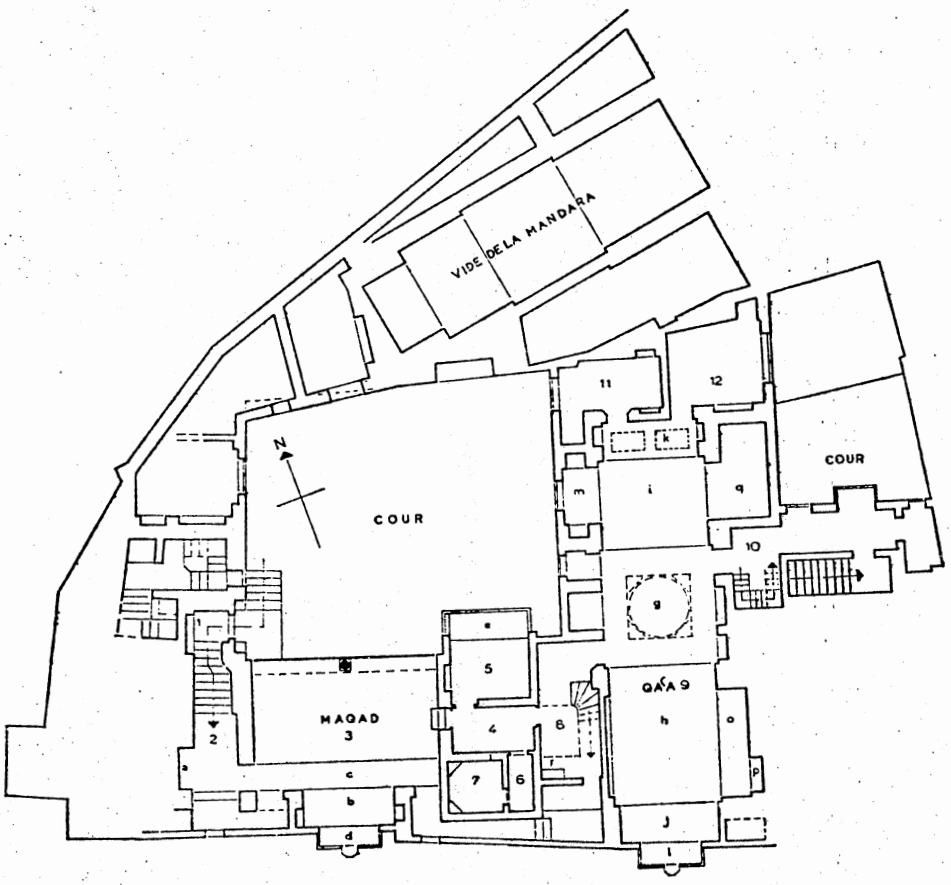
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maison s du Caire du XIV^{e} au XVIII^{e} Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Pl. XLV.

Figure 42. Qa'a With Mashrabiyya on Second Court of Al-Razzaz Palace



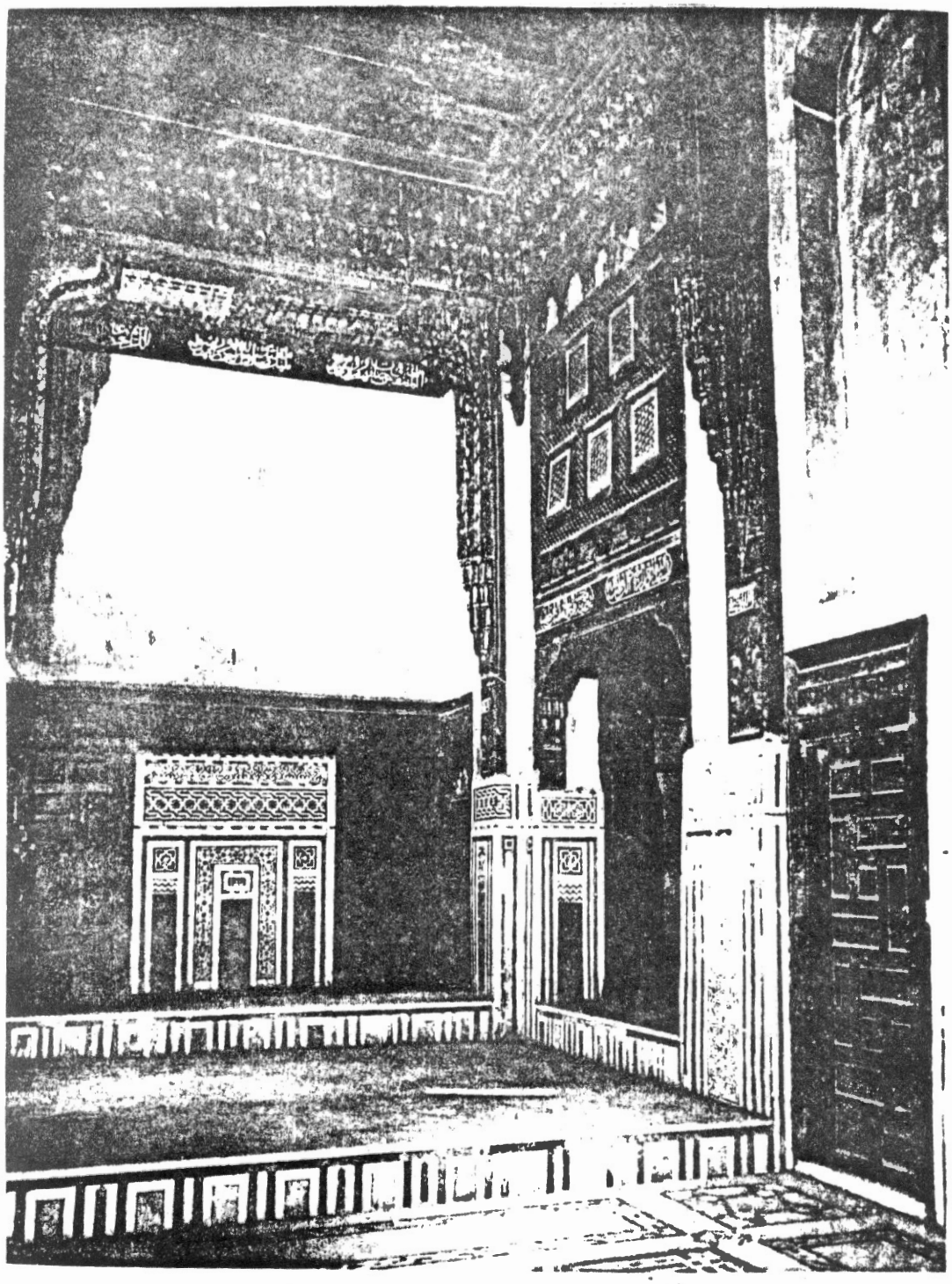
Source: Alexandre Lezine, Trois Palais d'Epoque Ottomane au Caire (Cairo, 1972), p. 5, Fig. 2.

Figure 43. Plan of Rez-de-Chaussee (Ground Floor), House of Gamal ad Din



Source: Alexandre Lezine, Trois Palais d'Epoque Ottomane au Caire (Cairo, 1972), p. 7, Fig. 3.

Figure 44. Plan of Premiere Etage (Second Floor), House of Gamal ad Din



Source: Alexandre Lezine, Trois Palais d'Epoque Ottomane au Caire (Cairo, 1972), Pl. VI, B.

Figure 45. North Iwan of Qa'a, House of Gamal ad Din With Loge des Femmes

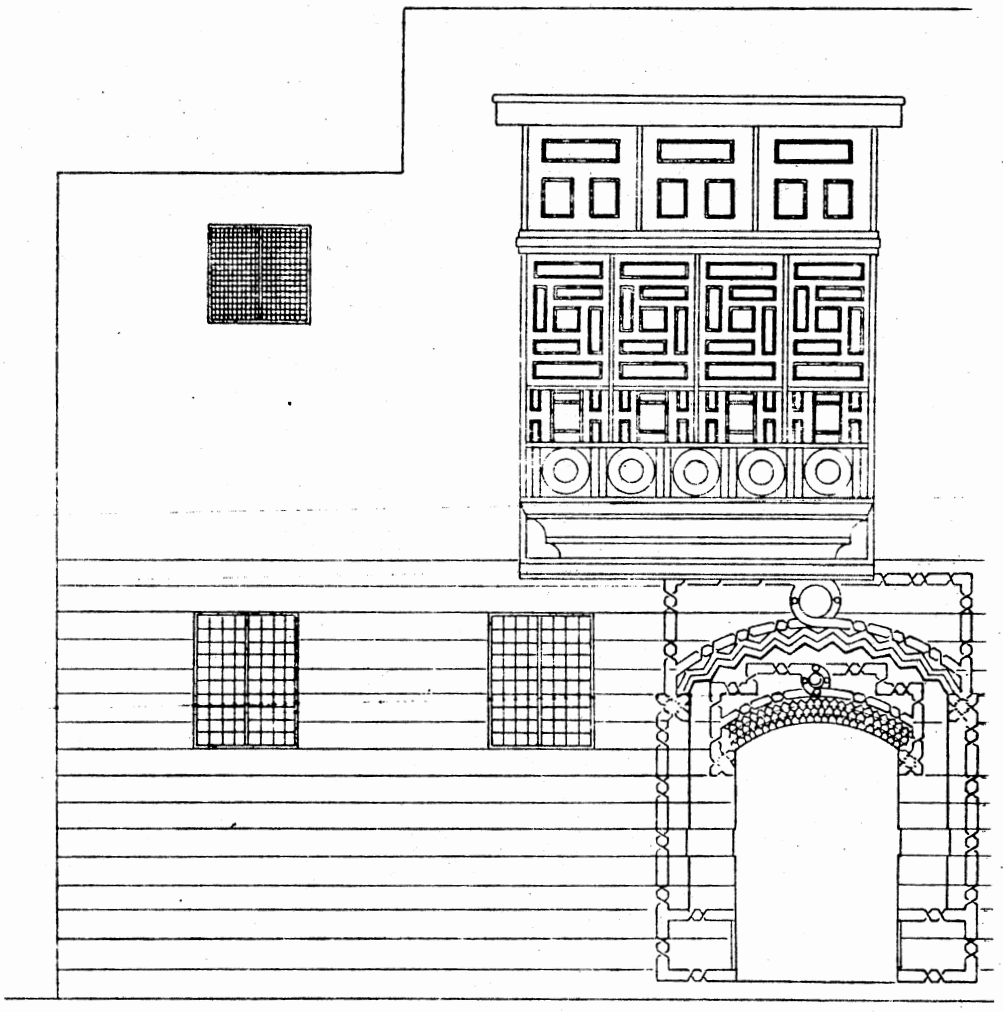
al-Sinnari, an Eighteenth Century maison de plaisance or vacation house, near a canal on what was then on the periphery of Cairo. Some of the savants accompanying the French Expedition to Cairo in the late 1790's lived there.[36] The gardens have not been maintained, but faithful restorations and alterations have preserved the original character of the house.[37]

The entry passage like those in other houses of the period contained a porter's lodge and bench for surveillance and bent passage leading into the court.[38] In this house, the mandara was surprisingly close to the entrance. It is possible that as this was a summer house, the mandara was not in its customary place inside the court as was the case in town houses. The court had the usual tachtabush and maq'ad (Figures 46, 47, 48, 49 show plans and drawings).

There were two gathering rooms for the master and his family on the second floor. One of these qa'as had a mashrabiyya overlooking the entry. This ornate balcony was characteristic of those of the preceding two centuries in Cairene architecture.[39] From this window the ladies would have had a view of the gardens.[40] The other smaller qa'a had two mashrabiyya balconies over the courtyard (Figures 50, 51).

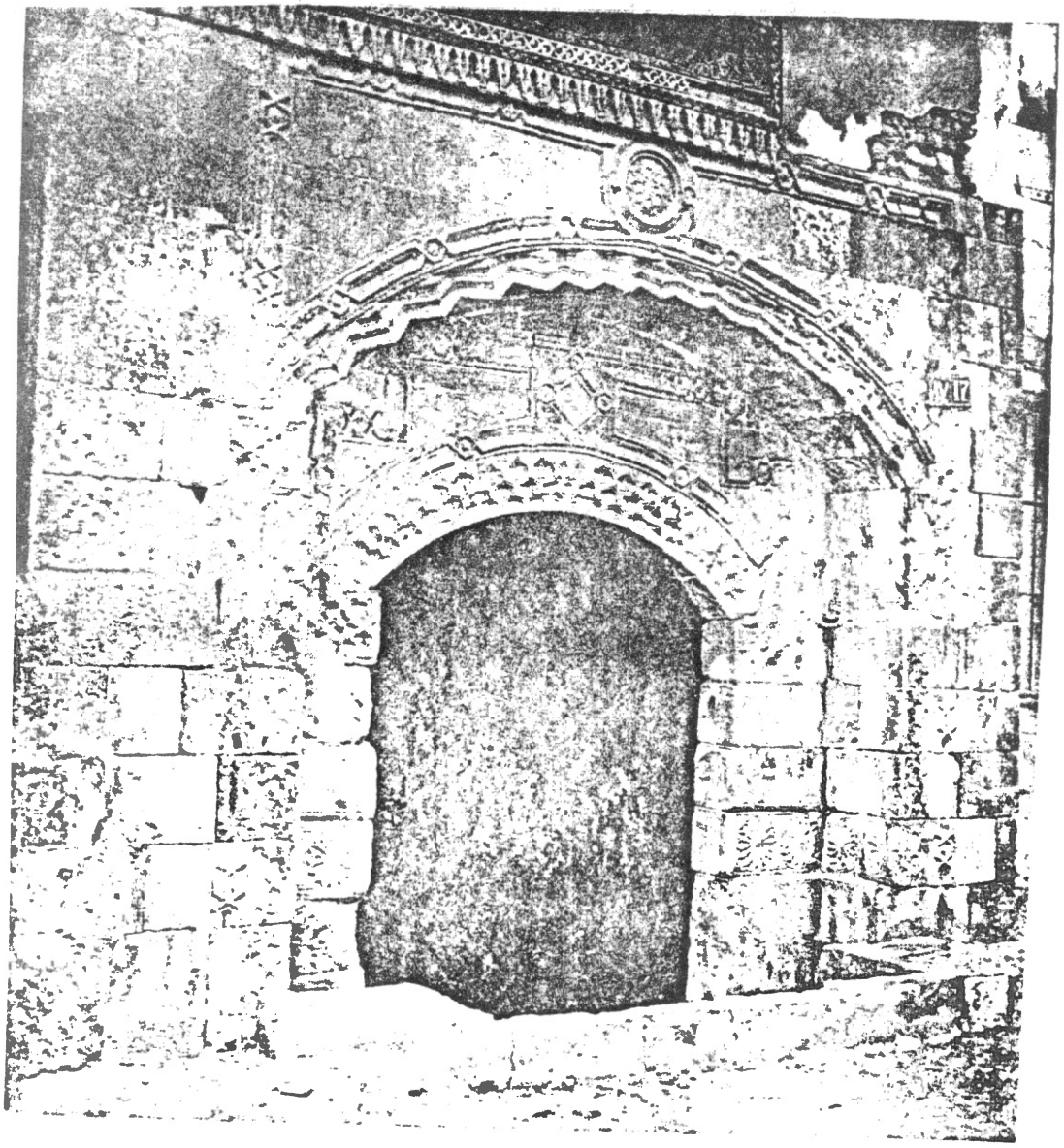
Multi-Family Dwellings

Other examples of the use of similar devices can be seen in multi-family dwellings of the same period. There was a sort of tenement called a rab' in which many middle class Cairenes lived. These were located in quarters of the city on main streets near the bazaar and other commercial centers. The multi-storied buildings often had shops and workshops on lower floors. Through independent entrances and



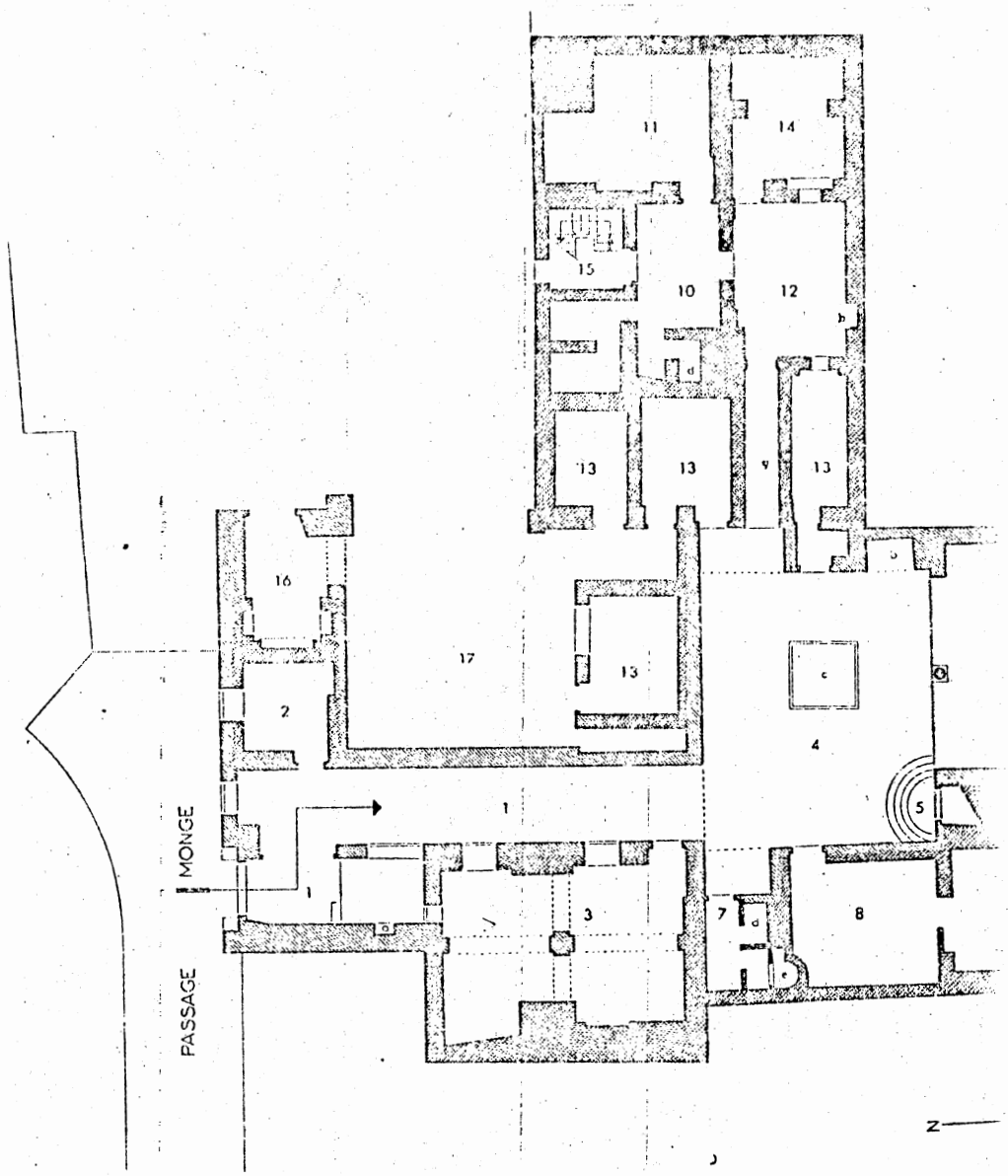
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury (Cairo, 1975), Fig. 36.

Figure 46. Drawing of Entry of Manzil al-Sinnari



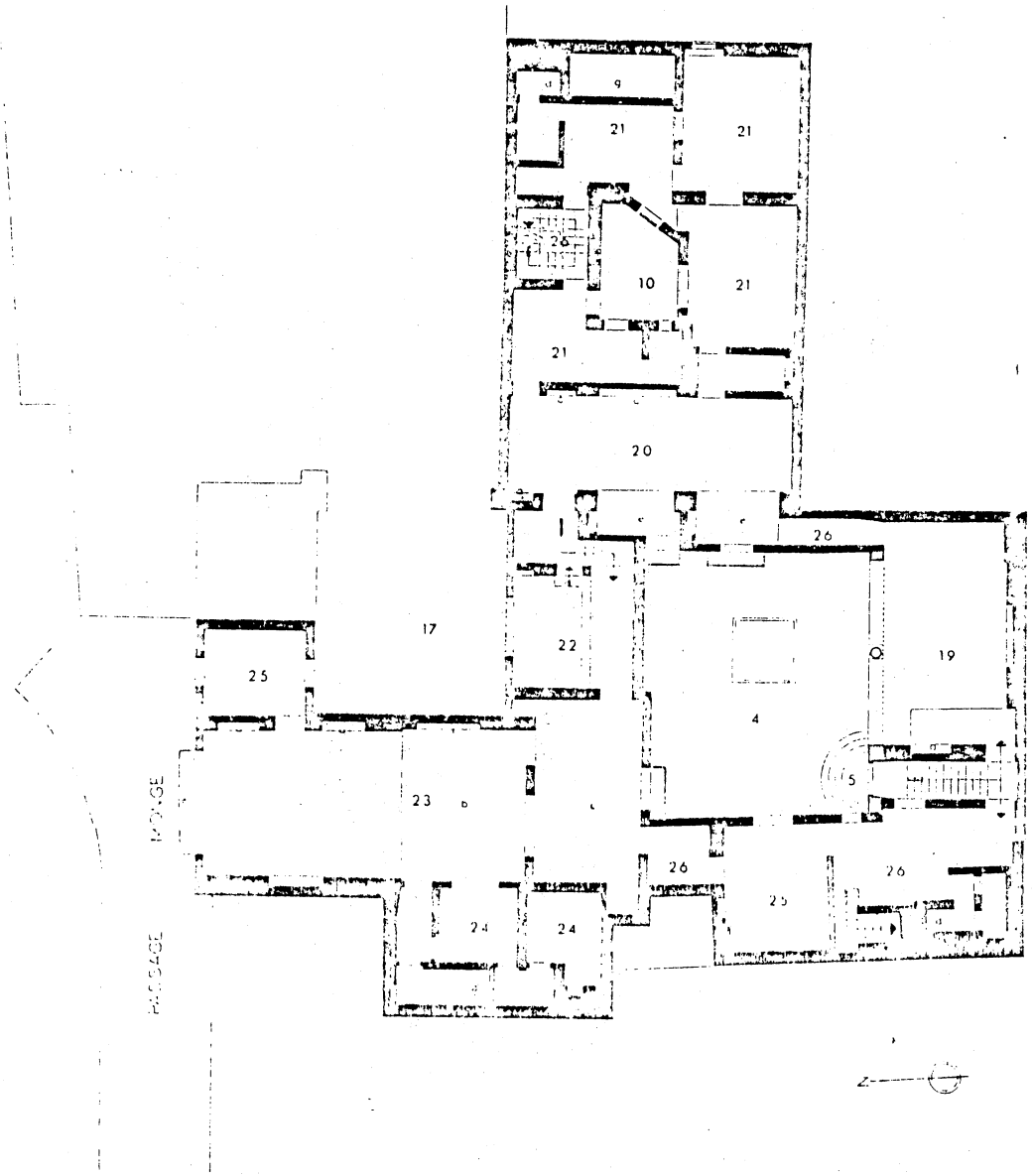
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury (Cairo, 1975), Pl. LVI, B.

Figure 47. Entry Door of Manzil al-Sinnari



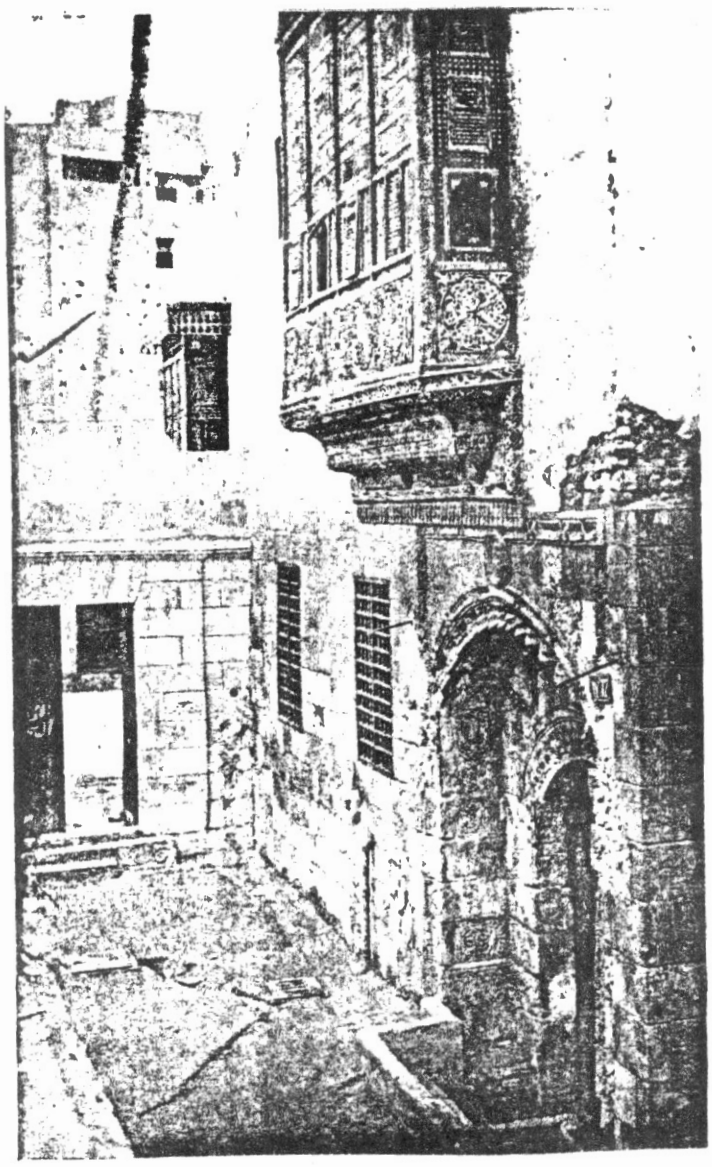
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury (Cairo, 1975), Fig. 24.

Figure 48. Plan of Ground Floor of Manzil al-Sinnari



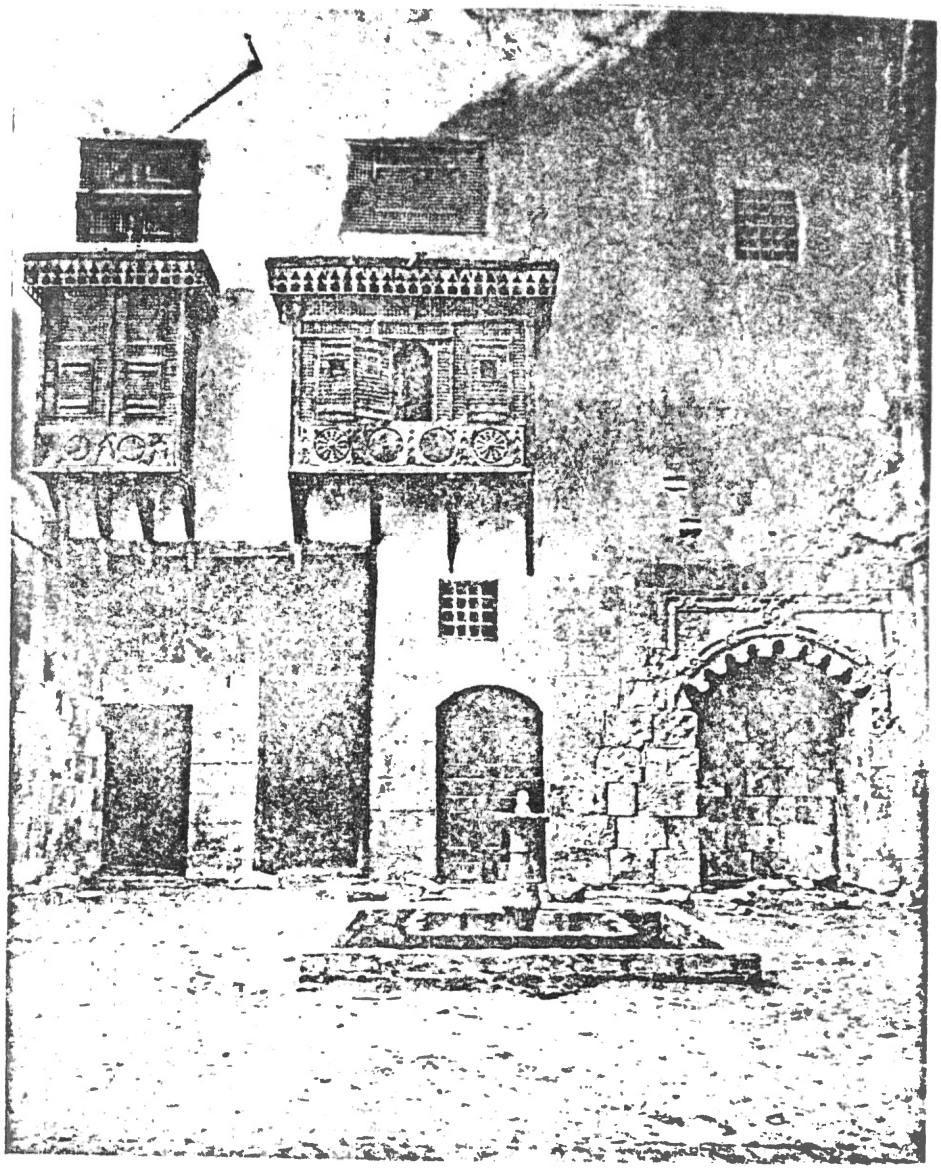
Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maisons du Caire du XIV^{e} au XVIII^{e} Siecle (Cairo, 1975), Fig. 25.

Figure 49. Plan of Second Floor Manzil al-Sinnari



Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury (Cairo, 1975), Pl. LVI, A.

Figure 50. Entry Facade of Manzil al-Sinnari



Source: Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury (Cairo, 1975), Pl. LIX, B.

Figure 51. Courtyard With Mashrabiyyas of Qa'a, Manzil al-Sinnari

stairways, residents could reach their private apartments on upper floors, each with its own interior stairway and individual terrace.[43] The dwellings usually had a two story reception room called a riwak, which was divided into dorqa'a and iwan. On the third level were the more private rooms. The rab' Wakala al Ghuri epitomized the form of this type of multi-family dwelling (Figure 52). The lower two floors were for commercial activities; the third and fourth stories consisted of the reception room; on the fifth floor, the mashrabiyya balconies indicate that there was the hareem. While these residences did not afford the privacy of a single family dwelling, it is clear that efforts were made to maximize the isolation of each unit and to ensure the seclusion of the women within (Figures 53 and 54 show plans).

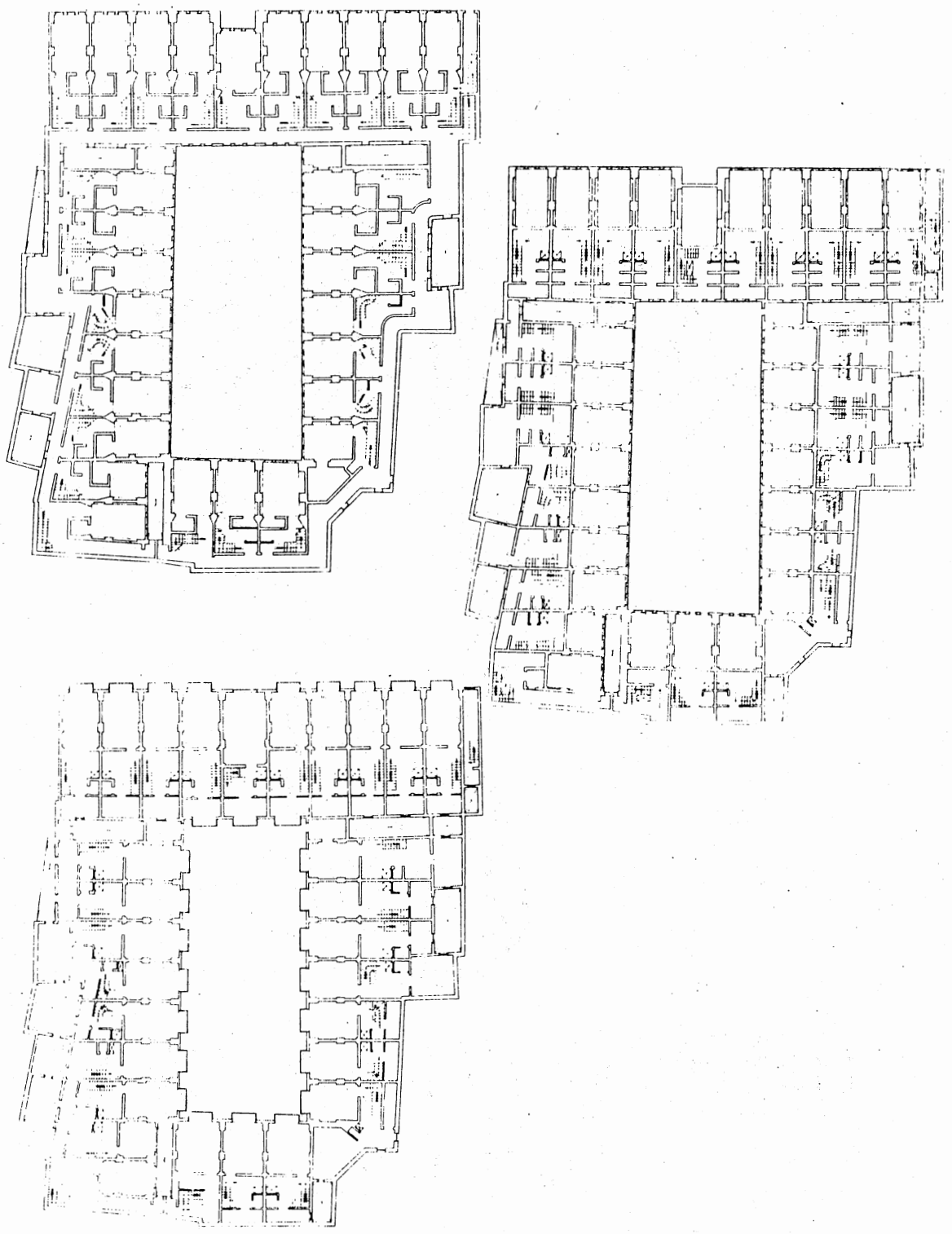
Selected Examples of Contemporary Domestic Architecture

In the Twentieth Century, the work of Hassan Fathy, renowned Egyptian architect, is further evidence of the continuation of the desire for privacy. Fathy was involved in the creation of a new town for the peasants of Gourna who were being moved by the government. When Fathy wanted to know the requirements of the peasants, his task was made difficult by the fact that the men seemed indifferent, in part because houses were women's domain; he could not ask the women themselves "because they were kept jealously out of the way."[44] It was his aim in New Gourna to build a village "that should not be false to Egypt."[45] To that end, "the people's style had to be rediscovered . . . ."[46]

Fathy's designs for the new village followed the traditional principles of division into public, semi-private, and private areas. The

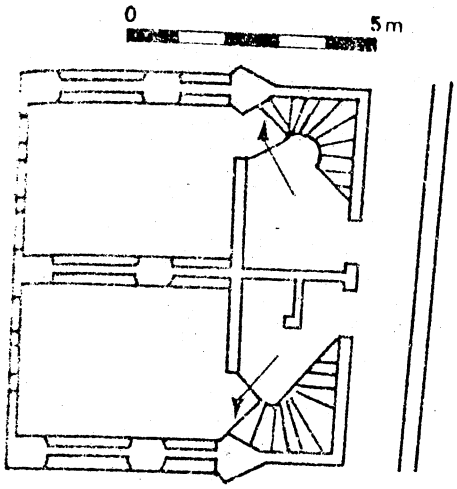
Source: George Michell, ed, Architecture of the Islamic World (New York), p. 91.

Figure 52. Courtyard Rab' Wakala al Ghuri, Mamluk Caravanserai

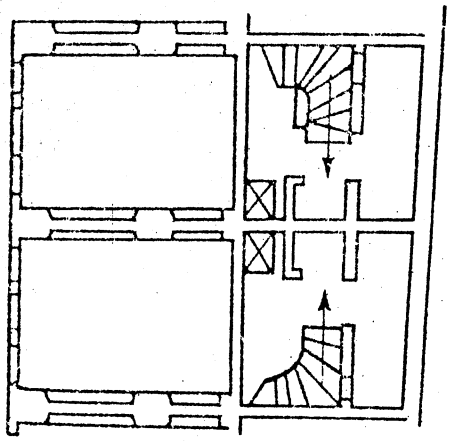


Source: Laila 'Ali Ibrahim, "Middle Class Living Units in Mamluk Cairo: Architecture and Terminology," AARP (December, 1978), p. 29.

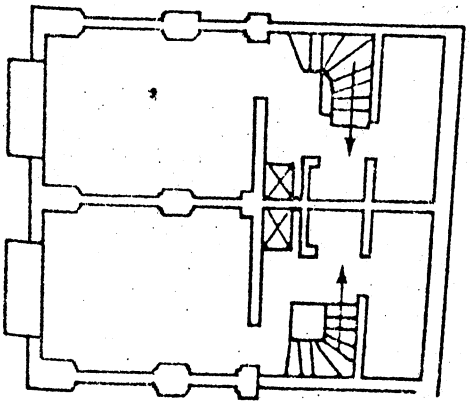
Figure 53. Plans of Third, Fourth, and Fifth Floors of Rab' al-Ghuri



First floor



Second floor



Third floor

Source: Andre' Raymond, "The Rab': A Type of Collective Housing in Cairo During the Ottoman Period," in Proceedings of Seminar Four, Aga Khan Award for Architecture (October, 1979).

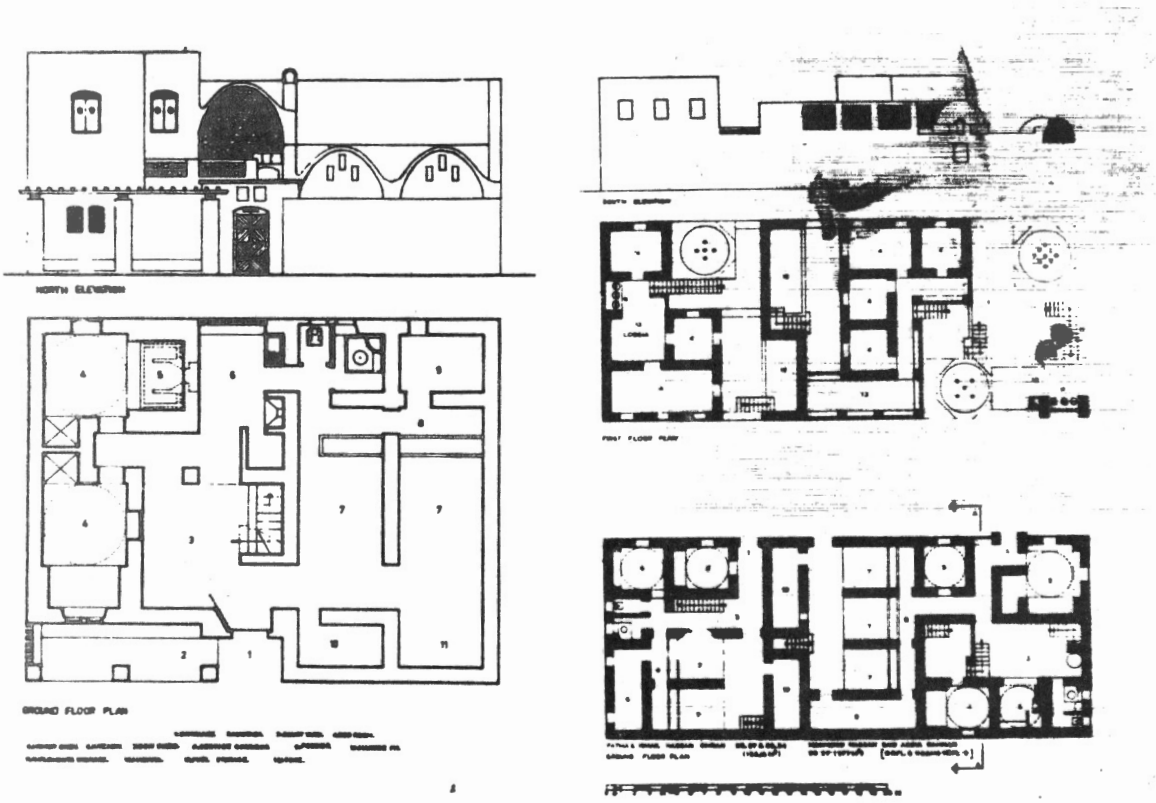
Figure 54. Plans of an Apartment in Rab' Wakala al-Ghuri

city was laid out with a main square with mosque, khan, theatre, and exhibition hall. The broad main streets delineated quarters belonging to different tribal groups. The street leading to the semi-private squares belonging to each badana (tightly knit tribal group) were purposely narrower not only denoting the semi-private quarter, but slowing traffic. The lanes of each quarter were bent to discourage through traffic by strangers.[47] Each house had its own courtyard.[48]

> I feel that the square and courtyard are particularly important architectural elements in Egypt. Open spaces like this, within buildings, are part of the character of Middle Eastern architecture are found, in fact, from Morocco right through the desert lands to Syria, Iraq and Persia, and reach perhaps their finest expression in the town houses of old Cairo.[49]

Fathy sees the Arab house as a manifestation of Arab culture. (We can by extension see it as a Muslim expression as well though not all Arabs are Muslim nor Muslims only Arab.) The courtyard house gave its owner a "private piece of sky" and provided the inhabitant with serenity, privacy, and protection from the busy and sometimes harsh world outside. The new courtyard houses thus provided an inward facing sanctuary characteristic of traditional Islamic dwellings. Each square would have a guest house madyafa and each house, too, would have its own guest room which opens off the bent corridor, and near the entry, is isolated from the private part of the house. Figure 55 A, B shows plans of two peasant houses and of the neighborhood plan.

Elsewhere, too, in the contemporary Muslim world, the desire for privacy and/or the requirement for seclusion continues to result in the use of architectural devices to serve cultural needs. In rural Iraq, Elizabeth Fernera found that each of the wives in a sheik's hareem had her own quarters within a house which was built into a walled compound away from other buildings of the complex.[50] When discussing house plans



54. Family neighborhood, ground floor plan. Legend: (1) Private square. (2) Guest house. (3) Houses. (4) Mill

Source: Hassan Fathy, Architecture for the Poor (Chicago, 1973), Pl. 53.

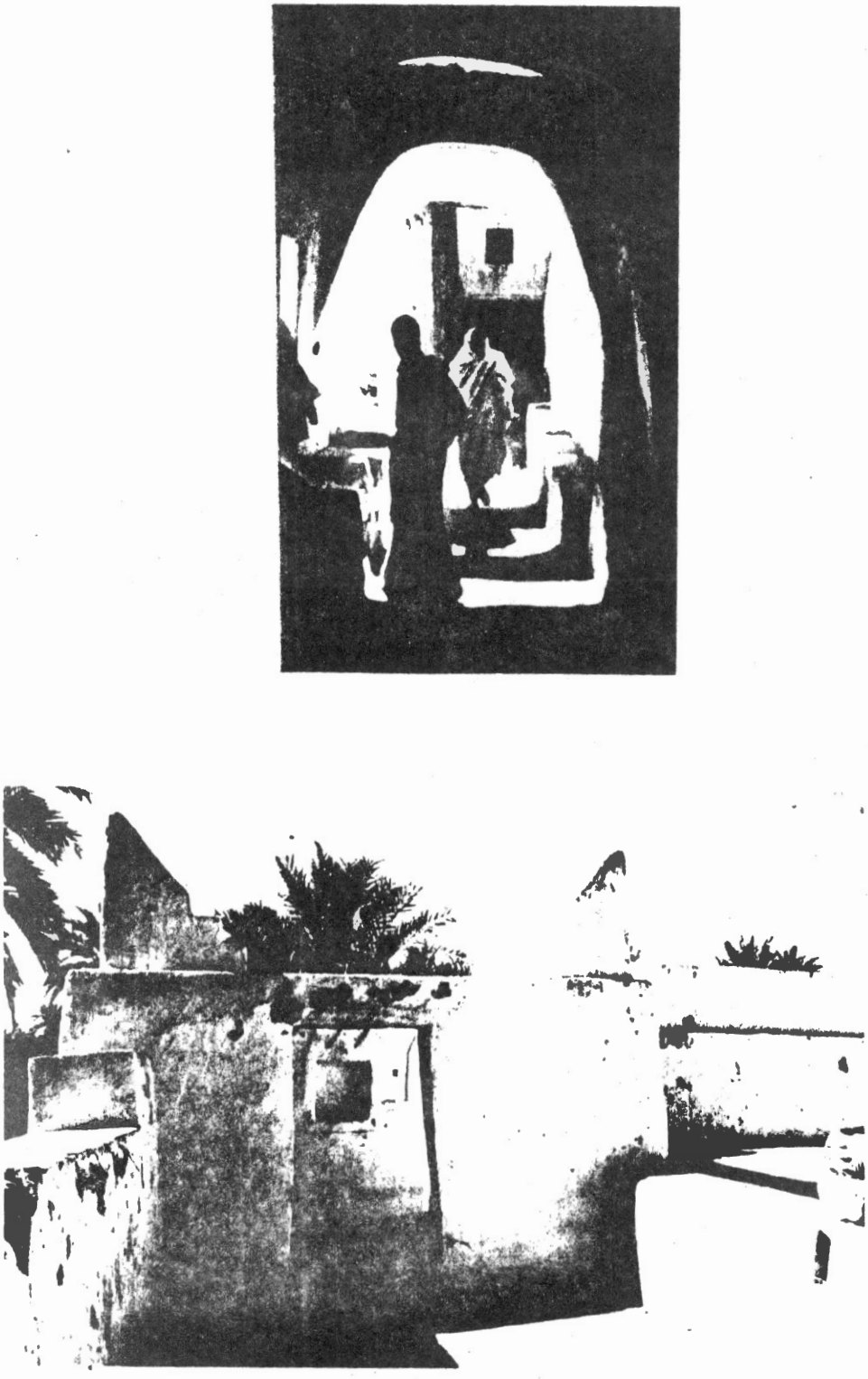
Figure 55. A. Plans of Peasant Houses. B. Plan of Family Neighborhood

with his western educated colleague, professor and architect, George Baumiller found that the desire for traditional zoning emerged even among those who considered themselves "modern". Stairways to the upper floors must be placed near the kitchen at the back of the house. In village houses, there was a guest house near the entrance.[51]

In Saudi Arabia, seclusion is still strictly practiced. New apartment buildings have separate stairways for men and women and entry corridors are bent.[52] In Libya, as well, urban apartments preserve the distinction between reception rooms for visitors and the more private family living room. "Not all my friends will meet my wife," said one young man educated in the United States.[53] One small town in Libya even has segregated passageways: a lower passage at street level for men, while the rooftop communications between the houses are reserved for women (Figure 56).[54]

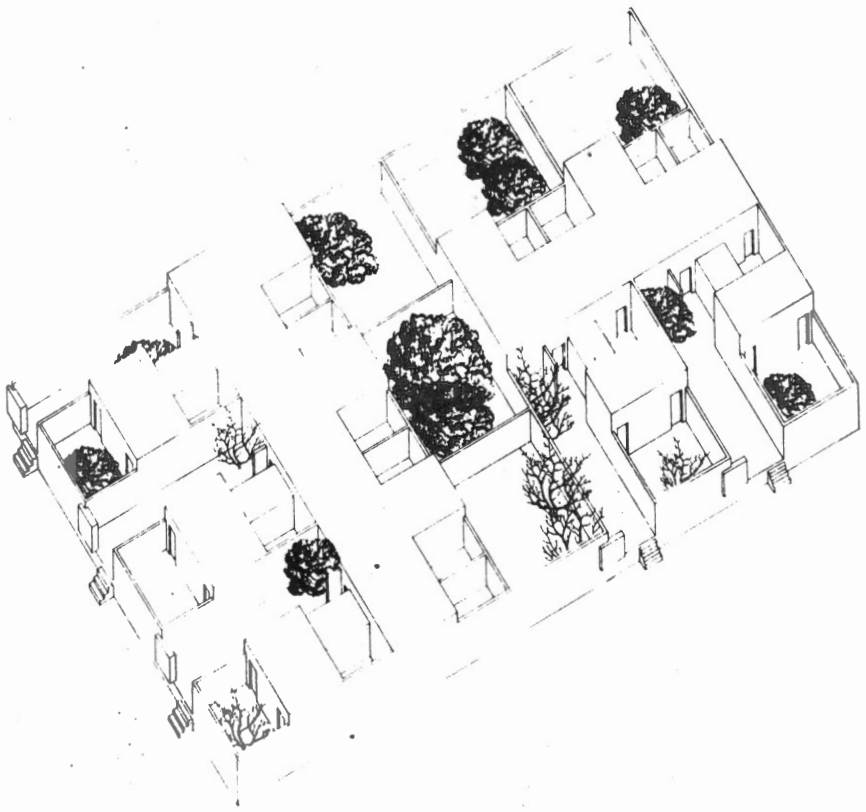
The Aga Khan Award for Architecture was established to encourage designs that maintain the spirit of Islam rather than succumbing indiscriminately to modern western ideas.[55] The 1980 Awards recognized a design for courtyard row houses in Morocco which used "traditional language" in contemporary building. The houses "are quietly turned inward away from the street . . . within the house, the separate guest salon and high patio enclosures further guarantee family privacy" (Figure 57).[56]

These contemporary examples of Islamic architecture, as those of preceding centuries, continue to provide structural support for traditional mores. The architectural features of plain facades, indirect entries, and seclusion of the women in the enclosed space, reinforce the family values and ensure the privacy that is so important in the world of Islam.



Source: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Proceedings of Seminar Five (May, 1980), p. 120.

Figure 56. Town in Libya: A, Passageway for Men; B, Rooftop With Passageways for Women



Source: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Awards, 1980, n.p.

Figure 57. Courtyard Houses in Morocco, 1964

ENDNOTES

[1]Guy T. Petherbridge, "Vernacular Architecture: The House and Society," in Architecture of the Islamic World, ed. George Michell (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1978), p. 195.

[2]Ernst J. Grube, Introduction, "What is Islamic Architecture?" in Architecture of the Islamic World, ed. George Michell (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1978), p. 13.

[3]Petherbridge, "Vernacular Architecture," p. 199; and Amos Rapoport, House Form and Culture (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 65.

[4]Edward William Lane, An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, ed. Stanley Lane-Poole (London: John Murray, 1871), p. 127.

[5]Petherbridge, "Vernacular Architecture," p. 197.

[6]"R" "Domestic Architecture--Modern Buildings" in Correspondence, of The American Architect and Building News, V: 178, 1879.

[7]Lane, Manners, p. 9.

[8]George Marcais, Manuel d'Art Musulmane (Paris: Editions Auguste Picard, 1927), pp. 722, 804.

[9]Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, Guests of the Sheik: An Ethnography of an Iraqi Village (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, 1969), p. 125.

[10]'Abd Ar Rahmān Zakī, "ad-Dār al Islamīya fi Misr," ["The Muslim House in Egypt"], Al Muqtataf, Vol. XCIX (Cairo: 1941), p. 107.

[11]Marcais, Manuel, p. 804.

[12]Ibid., p. 871, figs. 478, 479.

[13]Ibid., pp. 537, 543.

[14]Sherrill Whiton, Interior Design and Decoration, 4th Edition (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1974), p. 115.

[15]Zaki, "ad Dār al Islamīya," p. 108.

[16]Ibid., pp. 109-110.

[17]Ernst Kuhnel, Islamic Art and Architecture (London: Bell, 1966), p. 163.

[18]Ulya Vogt-Goknel, Living Architecture: Ottoman (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1966), p. 139.

[19]Ibid., p. 141.

[20]Ibid.

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[23]Robert Hillenbrand, "Introduction," in Islamic Architecture in North Africa by Derek Hill and Lucien Golvin (Hamden, Connecticut: Anchor Books, 1976), pp. 32 ff.

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[25]Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, Palais et Maisons du Caire du XIVe au XVIIIe Siecle (Cairo: Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale du Caire, 1975), p. 29.

[26]Petherbridge, "Vernacular Architecture," p. 197; and Saleh Ibrahim, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, October, 1980.

[27]Edmond Pauty, Les Palais et Maisons d'Epoque Musulmane au Caire (Cairo: Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale du Caire, 1933), p. 50.

[28]Revault and Maury, Palais et Maisons, p. 48.

[29]Pauty, Les Palais et les Maisons, p. 13.

[30]Revault and Maury, Palais et Maisons, p. 53.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Alexandre Lezine, Trois Palais d'Epoque Ottomane au Caire, (Cairo: Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale du Caire, 1972), p. 4.

[34]Ibid., p. 39.

[35]Ibid., p. 9.

[36]Revault and Maury, Palais et Maisons, p. 87.

[37]Ibid., p. 87.

[38]Ibid., p. 89.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid., p. 99.

[41]Laila 'Ali Ibrahim, "Middle Class Living Units in Mamluk Cairo: Architecture and Terminology," AARP (Art and Architecture Research Papers), December 1978, pp. 24-31.

[42]Andre Raymond, "The Rab': A Type of Collective Housing in Cairo During the Ottoman Period," in Architecture as Symbol and Self-Identity, proceedings of Seminar Four (Philadelphia: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1979), p. 57.

[43]Ibid., pp. 58-59.

[44]Hassan Fathy, Architecture for the Poor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973) pp. 39-40.

[45]Ibid., p. 44.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid., pp. 70-71.

[48]Ibid., p. 57.

[49]Ibid., p. 55.

[50]Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, Guests of the Sheik, pp. 126-127.

[51]George Baumiller, Personal Interview, Department of Architecture, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, April, 1981.

[52]Aziz Sharara, Architect, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, December 7, 1979.

[53]Hussein Zawi, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, May, 1981.

[54]Intisar Azzouz, Informal Seminar Sessions: "I Ghadames, Libya," in proceedings of Seminar Five, Places of Public Gathering in Islam (May 4-7, 1980), p. 120.

[55]Mildred F. Schmertz, "Designs in the Spirit of Islam," Architectural Record, March, 1979, p. 117.

[56]"Search for Contemporary Use of Traditional Language: Courtyard Houses, Agadir Morocco, Completed December, 1964 in Awards 1980, Aga Khan Award for Architecture, n.p.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The preceding inquiry into the traditional status and roles of Muslim women, and the study of some examples of domestic architecture, has yielded some initial conclusions. It is clear that while there may not have been a cause and effect relationship between the status of women in traditional roles and the use of architectural forms, the two factors reflect each other. The persistent practice of controls and seclusion in some societies and the concommitant use of architectural devices to promote privacy and enhance seclusion suggests a strong link. Were it merely a matter of securing privacy, the first two devices, plain facades and indirect entries would have sufficed. It is the concept of the Hareem that provides the best clue about the devices. It is reasonable to conclude then, that the devices were used persistently because they supported the social requirements of the culture.

Analysis

It became clear after minimum research that one cannot generalize lightly about women in the Islamic world. The tradition of restriction and controls that evolved out of the original Islam seems not inherent in the original doctrines and practices of the time of the Prophet, but a response to the social and eonomic needs of the societies that embraced Islam. The inferior position of women that resulted is

contrary to the spirit of the original Islamic concept of justice and partnership between men and women which intended to establish a stable compassionate and just society.

The concept of justice implies as much a process as it does an ideal. In the process of translation of justice into practice, equality and freedom for women have suffered from the influence of social and economic societal needs. The focus in the traditional societies upon the privacy of group welfare, the good of the whole, rather than the goal of maximum individual liberty, has resulted in a philosophical and practical conflict that is not peculiar to the Muslim world.

In the changing world of the Twentieth Century, traditional and "modernized" societies alike are put to the test of responding to the forces of change while preserving the best of the spirit of old mores and forms. As societies attempt to meet the challenges of technological, economic and social change, the dilemma remains as to how much alteration of old ways is required to achieve a just society which maximizes individual freedom while maintaining a stable social framework.

Recommendations for Further Study

The research for this study represents just the beginning of an inquiry into the status of women and domestic architecture in the Muslim world.

In a deeper and broader inquiry into the historical context, it would be desirable to continue readings of studies of women, as they become available. In addition, a look at literary works and poetry especially those by women authors would be enlightening. Traveller's accounts, too, might be helpful in giving further insight into the

status of women in the past.

Arab and Muslim women's growing self-awareness and the international women's movement should lead to many books and articles for future study. As history unfolds, it will be possible to see how women's status and roles change.

For a continued study of traditional architecture, examination of descriptions, photographs, drawings and paintings, and travellers' accounts would be essential to a fuller understanding of forms of the past.

To observe the changes in architecture and planning as they take place, a scholar need only read books and journals as they are published to see how societies deal with the challenge of providing structures for changing societies. The Aga Khan Award for Architecture should provide a most valuable resource as to the translation of traditional language into contemporary forms.

The study of the past and observation of changes as they occur in both the realms of women and domestic architecture will give the scholar a deeper understanding of each facet of the society as a reflection of the other. Unfortunately, societies too often tend to bulldoze old housing without regard for the significance of the old forms, not only as a window to the past but as a lesson to contemporary designers.[1] It is vital, therefore, that conservation be given a greater priority through the education of governments, bureaucracies, and the general public.

ENDNOTE

[1]L. Andrej Basista, Lecture on Kadhmiya, Iraq, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 25, 1981.

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