

The Suburban Villa (*munya*) and Court Culture  
in Umayyad Cordoba (756-976 CE)

by

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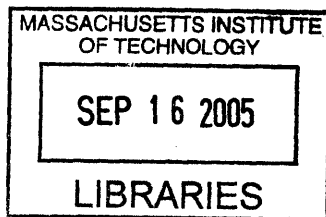
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ABSTRACT

As the capital of the Umayyad dynasty (r. 756 CE-1031 CE), the city of Cordoba developed into one of the most renowned urban centers of the western Mediterranean. The Great Mosque of Cordoba is the outstanding testament to the architectural activities of the dynasty, yet textual and material evidence indicates that the Great Mosque was but one facet of a broader program of Umayyad patronage. The dissertation focuses on the dynasty's secular monuments - the suburban villas (Arabic *munya*, *pl. munan*) constructed around the city by the Umayyad rulers and their courtiers. It analyzes the *munya* as a medieval architectural, landscape, and social phenomenon. By addressing issues of function, patronage, and meaning, the dissertation utilizes Cordoban villas as a vehicle for the investigation of Umayyad court society.

The dissertation is divided into two parts. Part One (Chapters I-IV) defines the architectural characteristics and agricultural functions of the *munya*. Part Two analyzes the social functions of the Cordoban estates as settings for Umayyad court activities, and the meanings associated with estate patronage and the Umayyad construction of a villa landscape. The dissertation contextualizes the *munya* within a broader constellation of Mediterranean villas and villa culture, and argues that the *munya* tradition informed subsequent developments in palace architecture on the Iberian Peninsula. Cordoban villas provided significant revenue for the state and patrons, supplied the court with the luxury crops considered necessary to refined life, served as settings for court activities, and demonstrated status and power among the Umayyad ruling class. The Cordoban rulers therefore attached a strong ideological importance to the estates. With the establishment of the caliphate in the tenth century, Cordoba's fertile villa landscape became entwined with Umayyad notions of sovereignty and good governance, in which a fertile landscape was conflated with political legitimacy, a theme that is also apparent in Umayyad court literature. Thus, the dissertation demonstrates that an appreciation of the many links between the villas and the Cordoban ruling class is central to comprehending Umayyad court society.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Umayyad Cordoba*

In 711 the Iberian Peninsula, made up of present-day Spain and Portugal, formed the western frontier of the Islamic empire, ruled by the Umayyad dynasty of Syria (r. 660-750 CE) (Figs. 1, 2). The rise of the 'Abbasid dynasty after 750 destroyed Umayyad hegemony, but the destruction of the Umayyad dynasty in Syria simultaneously initiated the beginning of Umayyad rule on the Iberian Peninsula, or al-Andalus (Fig. 3). 'Abd al-Rahman I, grandson of the Umayyad caliph Hisham, survived the 'Abbasid coup, and with an army of Arabs and Berbers mustered in North Africa, established himself as the amir of the province of al-Andalus in 756 CE, and his descendents continued to rule the Iberian Peninsula from their capital, the city of Cordoba (Ar. Qurṭuba) (Fig. 4). Umayyad political power peaked during the reign of the eighth Cordoban Umayyad ruler, 'Abd al-Rahman III (r. 912-961), who reclaimed the title of Caliph for the Cordoban Umayyads in 929, an office that was officially abolished in 1031 CE following the decline of Umayyad political power during a period of effective rule by the 'Amirid regents from 981 CE.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For an introduction to the political history of Umayyad al-Andalus see Mahmoud Makki, "The Political History of al-Andalus," In *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 3-87. On the political and social history of Umayyad al-Andalus see Hugh Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus* (Harlow-New York: Longman, 1996), 1-130; Pierre Guichard, *La España Musulmana. Al-Andalus Omeya (s. VIII-XI)*, Historia de España, de Historia 16, no. 7 (Madrid, 1995); and E. Lévi-Provençal's classic work, *Histoire de l'Espagne Musulmane*, 3 vols. (Leiden/Paris, 1950-53), covering the period between 711-1031. This volume has been continually revised as part of Menendez Pidal's Historia de España series, most recently as E. Lévi-Provençal and Leopoldo Torres Balbás, *España Musulmana hasta la caída del califato de Cordoba (711-1031) de J.C.: Instituciones y vida social e intelectual*, Historia de España de Menendez Pidal, no. V, trans. Emilio

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As the Umayyad capital of the Islamic Iberian Peninsula, Cordoba developed into one of the most renowned cities of the western Mediterranean, famous in the history of architecture for the Great Mosque established by ‘Abd al-Rahman I around 784 CE, which his successors continued to expand and embellish (Figs. 7, 8).<sup>2</sup> The Great Mosque of Cordoba is the outstanding testament to the architectural activities of the Cordoban Umayyads, yet archaeology and texts indicate that it is one monument out of a broader program of Umayyad architectural patronage in and around the city, encompassing an urban palace, baths, and an entire city – the palace city of Madinat al-Zahra’, begun in 928 CE – at which archaeologists have excavated houses, baths, a mosque, and official reception halls. Between the eight-century transfer of the dynasty to the Iberian Peninsula, and the unraveling of their power in the early eleventh century, the Umayyads of Cordoba and some of their courtiers also founded estates (Arabic *munya*, pl. *munān*, but henceforth *munyas*) outside Cordoba’s walled antique center (Figs. 9, 10), and it is this aspect of Umayyad patronage upon which the dissertation focuses. In the millennium since the disintegration of Umayyad hegemony in al-Andalus the *munyas* have been largely erased from the landscape. However, numerous references to *munyas* in the

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García Gómez (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1990 (6th ed.)). On the political and ideological dimensions of the Cordoban caliphate see Safran, Janina M, “The sun rises in the west: the ideology of the Umayyad caliphate of al -Andalus,” (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 1994), published as *The second Umayyad caliphate: the articulation of caliphal legitimacy in al-Andalus*, Harvard Middle Eastern monographs, no. 33 (Cambridge, MA: CMES, Harvard University, 2000), and Gabriel Martinez-Gros, *L'idéologie omeyyade: la construction de la légitimité du Califat de Cordoue (Xe-XIe siècles)* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the medieval literary evidence for Cordoba as a cultural center see Robert Hillenbrand, “ ‘The Ornament of the World’: Medieval Córdoba as a Cultural Centre,” In *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* ed. Salma Khudra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 112-136.

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Arabic histories and court chronicles of Umayyad Cordoba indicate that the creation and embellishment of suburban estates was perhaps the most frequent type of secular architectural patronage by the Umayyad rulers and high-ranking members of their court.

In “An Outline of Shifting Paradigms in the Palatial Architecture of the Pre-Modern Islamic World,” the foreword to a 1993 special issue of the journal *Ars Orientalis*, Gulru Necipoglu noted that studies on palace architecture offered a means of addressing the overwhelming focus on religious monuments that has traditionally characterized the study of Islamic Architecture.<sup>3</sup> Recent works have begun to answer the challenge with regards to al-Andalus. Despite the importance of the Umayyad period in the history of al-Andalus, the *munyas* have received little attention, especially in comparison to sites, like the Alhambra, which boast significant remains. Although the dearth of material evidence renders the study of these Umayyad estates problematic, their study is important to accounting for the development of Umayyad architecture, especially the tenth-century palace city of Madinat al-Zahra’.<sup>4</sup>

My approach to the Cordoban estates has been profoundly shaped by many historians of Andalusī art, architecture, and history. Although I will have occasion to discuss them at greater length in the chapters to come, I count myself particularly fortunate to have been able to draw upon the works of D.F. Ruggles, Cynthia Robinson, Antonio Vallejo Triano, Antonio Arjona Castro, Antonio Almagro, Luis Laca, Mariam

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<sup>3</sup> Gulru Necipoglu, “An Outline of Shifting Paradigms in the Palatial Architecture of the Pre-Modern Islamic World,” In *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993), p. 3-26, esp. 3.

<sup>4</sup> For overviews of Madinat al-Zahra’ see Antonio Vallejo Triano, “Madinat al-Zahra’: The Triumph of the Islamic State,” In *al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, ed. Jerrilyn Dodds (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), p. 27-41 and Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p. 53-68.

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Rosser-Owen, and many others as part of this examination of the Cordoban estates. D. F. Ruggles has explored the intersection of architecture and landscape in Cordoba in numerous articles, and especially in her book *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (2000).<sup>5</sup> This work places the *munyas* into a lucid framework of medieval social, architectural, and landscape history. Ruggles' book is a long-needed statement of the *munya* problems and possibilities to date, and in it she paves the way for all subsequent discussions of the Cordoban estates. Antonio Arjona Castro's work on the Arabic texts relevant to Cordoban history, and his provocative examinations of such textual evidence in light of the last decade's archaeological excavations, offered intriguing glimpses of the *munya* as part of Cordoba's urban development. Antonio Vallejo Triano's extensive studies on the Umayyad architecture of Madinat al-Zahra' and the urban development of greater Cordoba constitute, and the work of Antonio Almagro Gorbea, Luis Laca, Julio Navarro, and Antonio Orihuela's incredible analyses of Andalusí domestic architecture. These works constitute enormous contributions to the study of Islamic architecture, and provide rich material with which to compare the fragmented material remains which are all that are left of the Cordoban *munyas*. Cynthia Robinson's 2002 volume *In Praise of Song: The Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005-1134 A.D.*, which illuminates the complex and layered connections between architecture, literature, and social history in an analysis of the twelfth-century Aljafería palace in Saragossa, inspired many of the questions which later became central issues in this study, while her application of visual and textual evidence served as a

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<sup>5</sup> D.F. Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain*, (University Park: Penn State Press, 2000).



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model for my own attempt to mine Arabic texts for what information they might hold about the social history of the *munyas*.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, Mariam Rosser-Owen's critique of the 'Amirid reign and artistic patronage, including that of estates and luxury objects, offered a compelling reevaluation of a period of Cordoban history of which, while so closely related to that of the Umayyads, I have long been largely ignorant.<sup>7</sup> Many more scholars than I could possibly acknowledge specifically here have shaped this study through their works, and the impact of their scholarship will, I hope, emerge clearly in the pages to come.

This dissertation examines the estates, not only as they relate to other works of Cordoban Umayyad architecture, but also as they fit into a more expansive historical and geographical context of villa cultures around the Mediterranean - from ancient Roman villas to the monasteries and rural palaces of Byzantine and Umayyad Syria. The dissertation seeks to broaden the picture of urbanism and court architecture in a frontier area of the Islamic empire during the "classical" period of Islamic art, a picture that has largely been shaped by the study of the Abbasid palace city of Samarra in Iraq, and to offer a case study of the interconnection between architecture, landscape, and social history in a medieval court society.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song: The Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005-1134 A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Mariam Rosser-Owen, "Articulating the *ʿijaba*: 'Amirid Artistic and Cultural Patronage in Al-Andalus (c.970-1010 AD)," (Ph.D. diss., Trinity College, University of Oxford, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Analyzed with a variety of methodologies in Chase Robinson, ed., *A medieval Islamic city reconsidered: an interdisciplinary approach to Samarra* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001).

*Historiographical contexts*

Interest in the monuments of Islamic Spain, including the Cordoban *munyas*, is evident by the second half of the nineteenth century, in large part due to the translations of Arabic texts related to Islamic Spain that began appearing at the time. The agricultural context of the Cordoban *munya* had already been established with the translation of the twelfth-century Sevillian Ibn al-‘Awwam’s *Kitab al-Filaha* into Spanish in 1802. Ibn al-‘Awwam’s treatise was the first Arabic agricultural treatise to be translated by European Orientalists, with a French translation completed between 1864 and 1867. The seventeenth-century Maghribi historian al-Maqqari’s history of al-Andalus, *Nafh al-Tib*, was the most notable of the Arabic texts available to Europeans.<sup>9</sup> The Spanish Arabist Pascual de Gayangos (d. 1897), a student of the eminent Orientalist Silvestre de Sacy, prepared an English translation for the Royal Asiatic Society between 1840 and 1843. This was followed by the Dutch Arabist Reinhart Dozy’s 1861 *Histoire des Mussulmans d’Espagne, jusqu’à la conquete de l’Andalousie par les Almoravides, 711—1110*. Drawing upon his vast knowledge of Arabic primary sources, Dozy’s history, as well as the numerous other histories, translations, and editions of relevant texts that he published before his death in 1883 whetted an interest in the monuments of Umayyad Cordoba, described by medieval authors in laudatory terms. The Romantic’s preoccupation with an exoticized “Moorish” Spain, embodied in Washington Irving’s fanciful *The Alhambra* (first published in 1832), was a second catalyst in creating interest in the monuments of Islamic Spain.<sup>10</sup> Whereas Irving’s book represents the literary facet of this interest, a

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<sup>9</sup> Al-Maqqari, *Nafh al-tib*, ed. Ihsan ‘Abbas (Beirut, 1968).

<sup>10</sup> A revised edition of *The Alhambra* was published in 1851.

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number of illustrated books on the antiquities of Spain that appeared around the same time embody the visual side of a fascination that ultimately resulted in Owen Jones' interpretation of the Alhambra's Court of the Lions at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London. Spurred by the references to rich palaces and estates in the histories of Islamic Spain which were now available, the Arabist Pascual de Gayangos and the Spanish art critic Pedro de Madraza located the tenth-century palace city of Madinat al-Zahra' in 1843.<sup>11</sup> In 1911 the archaeologist Velazquez Bosco excavated the palace city and a nearby site identified as a tenth-century *munya*. The remains of the structures found at these and other sites, especially fragments of architectural ornament, have fueled the imagination of Spanish Arabophiles and archaeologists.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1937 book, *La poésie andalouse en arabe classique au XI<sup>e</sup>me siecle: ses aspects generaux et sa valeur documentaire*, Henri Pérès characterized the *munyas* "chateaux de plaisance" or "lieux de plaisance," which medieval poets used as poetic devices to express their attachment to al-Andalus.<sup>13</sup> Allusions to such pleasure gardens are common in poetry produced after the disintegration of Umayyad hegemony on the Iberian Peninsula in the eleventh century, when *taifa* poets elevated two poetic genres

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<sup>11</sup> See D.F. Ruggles, "Historiography and the Rediscovery of Madinat al-Zahra'," In *Islamic Studies* 30 (1991), 129-40.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133-40.

<sup>13</sup> Henri Pérès, *La poésie andalouse en arabe classique au XI<sup>e</sup>me siecle: ses aspects generaux et sa valeur documentaire* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1937), p.121-57. Pérès's compilation of Andalusi poems, in which the *munyas* of Cordoba were a dominant subject, complimented the Arabic chronicles and historical annals that formed the majority of the textual evidence for the *munyas* of Cordoba, and the cities of al-Andalus in general. It is nearly impossible to extract information about *munyas* as actual places from these poetic works, however, which are concerned with the evocation of gardens and palace settings as literary devices.

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characterized by the minute description of flowers (*nawriyyat*) and the poetic evocation of gardens (*rawdiiyyat*).<sup>14</sup> These genres are particularly associated with the later *taifa* period, but may have had their initial impetus at the end of the Cordoban Umayyad reign under the patronage of the vizir al-Mansur, who consolidated power under his authority following the death of al-Hakam II.<sup>15</sup> In this eleventh-century poetry gardens, usually evoked only in a general abstract sense, form the setting for the pleasures of wine-drinking and love, hence Pèrès' characterization of *munyas* as simply pleasure gardens.<sup>16</sup> One of the central issues which this study takes up is this long-standing conception of the Cordoban estate as predominantly a pleasure garden. When examined from the perspectives of the Cordoban estates' various functions in Umayyad court society, can this reductive characterization remain valid?

Leopoldo Torres Balbas, an architect and a major figure in restoration and historical studies of the architecture and urbanism of al-Andalus between the 1930s and 1950s, saw in the Cordoban *munya* an urban phenomenon that deserved the attention of historians of architecture and urbanism. Torres Balbas based his discussions of the *munya* on textual evidence, but rather than poetry, he gleaned information from court histories. In a 1950 article on the cities of al-Andalus Torres Balbas analyzes the significance of the *munya* in the urban scheme of the major cities of al-Andalus,

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<sup>14</sup> For overviews see Salma Khadra Jayyusi, "Nature Poetry in al-Andalus and the Rise of Ibn Khafaja," In *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 367-397 and William Stoetzer, "Floral poetry in Muslim Spain," In *The Authentic Garden: A Symposium on Gardens* ed. L. Tjon Sie Fat and E. de Jong (Leiden: Clusius Foundation, 1990), 177-188.

<sup>15</sup> For updated bibliography and an analysis of the "courtly" themes present in Andalusi poetry following the tenth-century disintegration of Umayyad power see Robinson, *In Praise of Song*.

<sup>16</sup> H. Pèrès, p. 119.

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especially Cordoba.<sup>17</sup> While Torres Balbas based his analysis solely on references to the *munya* found in the Arabic texts; his chapter on the Andalusí *munya* is important not only for the urbanistic approach which he brings to the subject, but also for the way he situates the theme within the larger discourse of architectural history. Torres Balbas opens his analysis of the Andalusí *munya* by disputing Jacob Burckhardt's valorization of the Florentine role in reviving a love of the natural landscape, and with it ancient Roman villa culture.<sup>18</sup> Torres Balbas argues that Burckhardt's attribution of the renaissance of the love of nature and country life to Italy is based on Burckhardt's ignorance of the history of Islamic Spain, where centuries before the Florentine country houses and villas existed, a flourishing villa culture existed, in the form of the *munyas* that grew up around the great cities of al-Andalus. It is by critiquing the role traditionally given to Florence in reviving the notion of the villa that Torres Balbas introduces his analysis of the *munya*.

In 1965, not long after Torres Balbas' article, the Spanish Arabist Emilio Garcia Gomez, published the article "Notas sobre topografía cordobesa en los Anales de al-Hakam II por 'Isa Razi," based on his edition and translation of a tenth-century annal of

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<sup>17</sup> L. Torres Balbas, "Los contornos de las ciudades hispanomusulmanes," In *al-Andalus XV* (1950), 437-486. The series of articles on Andalusí cities was published posthumously with stripped-down footnotes as *Ciudades hispanomusulmanes*, 2nd ed. with Introduction and Conclusion by Henri Terrasse (Madrid: Inst. General de Relaciones culturales Inst. Hispano-Arabe de cultura, 1985). See the section on urbanism in the bibliographic essay by Thomas Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages: Comparative Perspectives on Social and Cultural Formation* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979), 309-10.

<sup>18</sup> First published as Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien: in Versuch* (Basel: Schweighauser, 1860). In the English edition *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy: An Essay* (New York: Phaidon Publishers Inc., 1951 ed.) see "Discovery of the Beauty of Landscape," and "Domestic Life – the villa and country life," p. 178-83, 245.

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the reign of the Umayyad caliph al-Hakam II.<sup>19</sup> Garcia Gomez extracts the brief information regarding the proprietors of the estates, their location with respect to Cordoba, and any dates and events associated with the estates, constituting a useful source of demographic information on the later Cordoban estates.

Adding to the evidence for the study of the *munya*, the second half of the twentieth century witnessed the discovery of archival records that offered glimpses of medieval Cordoba and its landscape. Cordoba is unfortunate in that its medieval *repartimiento* documents, which recorded the division of Andalusian territories to Castilian nobles following Fernando III's conquest of Cordoba in 1236 CE, have not survived intact. Whereas Seville, for example, retains the full documentation for its *repartimiento*, recording topographical information and land use for estates within and without the Islamic city, Cordoba's survives only in partial form. The surviving manuscript is known as the *Libro de las Tablas*, and it records in part the division of suburban and rural Cordoban lands to Castilian nobles in 1236 (Fig. 58).<sup>20</sup> The *Libro de las Tablas* mentions olive groves, irrigated orchards, and areas of cereal cultivation located in the suburb of "Arruzafa," which the Castilian king claimed for the crown, and which is presumably the suburb which developed around 'Abd al-Rahman I's *munya* al-Rusafa.<sup>21</sup> The *Libro* also mentions the division of lands around Guadarroman in the countryside west of Cordoba to a number of Castilian nobility, including the Lords of

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<sup>19</sup> Emilio Garcia Gomez, "Notas sobre topografía cordobesa en los Anales de al-Hakam II por 'Isa Razi," In *al-Andalus* 30 (1965), p. 319-79.

<sup>20</sup> Miguel Muñoz Vázquez, "Notas sobre el repartimiento de tierras...", B.R.A.C. (1954), 251-270.

<sup>21</sup> *Idem*, the phrase is "oliveras, viñas, huertas, and hazas de levar [sic] al pan". The reference to Arruzafa and its productive lands appears on Folio 147 of the manuscript.

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Aguilar. Guadorroman is the Castilianization of the Arabic Wadi al-Rumman, the river near which the *munya* al-Rummaniya was located, and in an article on the fountain basins discovered at the al-Rummaniya site, Rafael Castejon mentions that after the Castilian conquest the property had passed to the Fernández family, the Lords of Aguilar.<sup>22</sup> The *Libro de las Tablas*, then, offers a glimpse of the fate of the lands associated with two of the Cordoban *munyas* after the Castilian conquest.

In the second half of the twentieth century additional sources of primary material relevant to the Cordoban *munya* appeared. In 1979 the archivist of the archives of the Cordoba cathedral, Manuel Nieto Cumplido, published the *Corpus Mediavale Cordubense*, a two-volume collection of edited documents related to the thirteenth-century Castilian conquest of Cordoba and the city's post-conquest history which contain some brief references to the Cordoban *repartimiento* which are relevant to the investigation of the *munya*.<sup>23</sup> The Cordoban historian Antonio Arjona Castro followed three years after with the publication of the fourth volume in the series of published primary sources on Cordoban history of which Nieto Cumplido's *Corpus* had formed the first two.<sup>24</sup> Arjona Castro's collection consisted of passages relevant to Cordoban history culled from the Arabic works of the important pre-modern Arabic historians of al-Andalus: Ibn Hayyan, al-Maqqari and others who wrote about al-Andalus before the abolishment of the caliphate. Though Arjona Castro relied upon the editions and

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<sup>22</sup> Castejón, "Alamiria," 150-158.

<sup>23</sup> M. Nieto Cumplido, "El "Libro de diezmos de Donadíos de la Catedral de Córdoba: estudio critica", " *Cuadernos de Estudios Medievales* IV-V (1979).

<sup>24</sup> A. Arjona Castro, ed., *Anales de Cordoba Musulmana 711-1008*, trans. A. Arjona Castro (Cordoba: Monte de Piedad y Caja de Ahorros de Cordoba, 1982).

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translations of earlier Spanish and French Arabists, his translated and edited collection of formerly dispersed Arabic textual evidence brought the number of references to Cordoban *munya* in the Arabic texts into relief.<sup>25</sup>

Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahhab Khallaf, in his 1984 history of Cordoba, *Qurtuba al-Islamiyya*, devoted a brief section to palaces and estates of Cordoba, “*al-Qusur wa al-muntazahAt* (Palaces and Parks)”.<sup>26</sup> He has little to say about the *munyas*, which is perhaps revealing considering that the importance of his book lies in his extraction of information from *fatawa* (sing. *fatwa*), or legal judgments of Andalusī religious scholars. The brevity of the information on *munyas* in this literature may indicate that the possession of rich estates was not seen as problematic by the ‘ulama, perhaps because of their productive capacity and their integral role within the general economy at all levels of society. Indeed, by the reign of al-Hakam II textual references show that prominent members of the ‘ulama owned *munyas* and hosted social activities at them, just as Umayyad courtiers did.

James Dickie’s article “Gardens in Muslim Spain”, published in 1986 may stand as the first discussion of the Cordoban *munya* in English-language scholarship. Within his discussion of Andalusī gardens and their typologies and meanings Dickie points to four Arabic terms used in texts that mention gardens. The terms differ according to

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<sup>25</sup> Arjona Castro is a somewhat problematic figure in scholarship on the archaeology of al-Andalus. Though trained as a medical doctor, he is an Arabist and member of the Real Academia de Cordoba de Ciencias, Bellas Letras, y Nobles Artes and has published regularly on the topography of caliphal Cordoba in Cordoban academic journals – most regularly that of the Real Academia, but also in *Qurtuba*. His work brings together current archaeology and Arabic textual sources, but ascribes specific caliphal identities to found sites, with insufficient evidence.

<sup>26</sup> Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahhab Khallaf, *Qurtuba al-Islamiyya* (Tunis: Dar al-Tunisiyya, 1984). I am indebted to Ahmad Damaj for bringing this work to my attention.



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geographic region, according to Dickie: in Almeria (*burj*, “tower”), in Cordoba (*munya*, “a thing desired”), in Granada (*manjarah*, “orchard”), and in North Africa (*riyad*, “garden.”).<sup>27</sup> Scholarship of the 1990s has tended to place the *munya* either within the sphere of urban-rural relations or as part of the process of urbanization in al-Andalus. Exemplifying the former, the French historian of Andalusí agriculture Vincent Lagardere produced a 1993 book on the countryside and the rural population of al-Andalus in which a section on *munya* appears in a discussion of the different types of productive properties in al-Andalus.<sup>28</sup> In 1995 Antonio Vallejo, director of excavations at Madinat al-Zahra, mentioned the *munyas* of Cordoba in an article about the role of the palatine city in the urban development of Cordoba.<sup>29</sup> Vallejo interpreted the role of the palatine city as a catalyst for the intense foundation of estates in the western zone of the city, though he also describes the debt which Madinat al-Zahra’ owed to the first Cordoban *munya*, al-Rusafa, in its siting and formal conception. Vallejo argued that existing estates and those created after Madinat al-Zahra’ depended upon their service to the court at the palatine city.

The architect and garden historian Luis Laca examined the *munya* as part of his 1998 dissertation, *Simbiosis arquitectura-paisaje. Evolucion de los contornos de cuatro ciudades (Cordoba, Toledo, Sevilla, y Granada)*, which analyzed the relationship

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<sup>27</sup> James Dickie, “Gardens in Muslim Spain,” *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1 (1986), 78-83.

<sup>28</sup> Vincent Lagardere, *Campagnes et Paysans d’Al-Andalus (VIIIe - XVe S.)* (Paris: Edit. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1993).

<sup>29</sup> Antonio Vallejo Triano, “El Proyecto Urbanístico del Estado Califal: Madinat al-Zahra,” *La Arquitectura del Islam Occidental* (Lunweg Editores S.A., 1995), 69-81.

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between city and countryside in al-Andalus.<sup>30</sup> Laca reviews the historiography and the material remains in situ for the estates and their infrastructure, arguing for a symbiotic relationship between architecture and landscape, on the urban scale between city and surrounding palaces, as well as on the smaller level of palace and garden. Drawing upon the documentation of the material evidence *in situ*. Laca argues that the remains, though fragmented, are numerous and are clearly linked to pre-Islamic sites and infrastructure, in particular to monastic foundations in Cordoba's western extramural zone. Laca's theory about the importance of a pre-Islamic built environment to the development of a medieval architectural and landscape phenomenon accords with the picture of Syrian Umayyad and Abbasid palaces as I discuss them in Chapter Four. Christine Mazzoli-Guintard, a historian of Andalusian urbanism, briefly summed up the *munya* phenomenon in *Ciudades de al-Andalus: España y Portugal en la Época Musulmana* (2000), highlighting the multiple roles assigned to the *munya* in the Arabic texts and the consequent difficulty in clearly defining and describing estates encompassed by the term "munya."<sup>31</sup> She poses the question of how the image of a recreational property surrounded by gardens is to be reconciled with those that are primarily agricultural in character, or those whose profits were used to support charitable or civic foundations. As I will argue in the coming pages, the combination of agricultural productivity and court

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<sup>30</sup> Luis Ramón-Laca Menéndez de Lúcar, "Simbiosis arquitectura-paisaje. Evolucion de los contornos de cuatro ciudades (Cordoba, Toledo, Sevilla, y Granada)," (Ph.D. diss., Politécnica de Madrid. Escuela de Arquitectura, 1998). I am grateful to Dr. Laca, with whom I was able to discuss his work on the Cordoban *munya*, and who provided me with access to the dissertation and an unpublished report on Madinat al-Zahra' directed by José Ramón Menéndez de Lúcar, with plans and figures by Pau Soler and Lucrecia Enseñat.

<sup>31</sup> Christine Mazzoli-Guintard, *Ciudades de al-Andalus: España y Portugal en la Época Musulmana* (Granada: Editorial al-Andalus y el Mediterraneo, 2000), 220-21.

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social functions is a striking characteristic of the Cordoban estates, standing in contrast to a long-standing characterization of the *munya* as pleasure garden, an image which belies the importance of the Cordoban estates to Umayyad court society.

The most extensive discussion of the Cordoba *munya* is found in D.F. Ruggles's book, published in 2000, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain*.<sup>32</sup> Ruggles devotes two chapters to the Cordoban estates, reviewing Arabic texts in order to construct a chronology of Cordoban Umayyad estates, and discussing the one *munya* site, al-Rummaniya, for which there exist both plans and material evidence for the character of the estate's residence. Ruggles work is key to creating the background context for this study of the Cordoban estates, as it places the Cordoban *munya* within a context of agriculture and palace patronage in al-Andalus in which sovereignty was partly expressed through the manipulation of views of, and within, palaces, gardens, and the larger landscape.

### *Approaches*

Umayyad Cordoba evolved over centuries of pre-historic, Roman and Late Antique occupation and approximately three hundred years of Umayyad rule. Despite its long history Cordoba's medieval landscape has for the most part been overlooked in favor of the tendency to concentrate on discussions on the Umayyad capital on its Great Mosque, while the material culture associated with the Umayyads and their court is studied in isolation from the physical contexts within which they came into being and

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<sup>32</sup> D.F. Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, esp. Chapter 3, "Palaces and Estates of Cordoba, 711-936," p. 35-52, and Chapter 6, "Later Cordoban Palaces and Gardens," p. 110-28.

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were used. This is due in part to the incomplete archaeological evidence for the center and suburbs of the medieval city. Several factors have led to this focus; Arabic sources describe how security of the city was compromised in the wake of the power struggles which took place after the disintegration of the caliphate. Arabic historians describe how, during this turbulent period of political and social upheaval, Berber troops destroyed many of Cordoba's suburban monuments, including the first Umayyad *munya* al-Rusafa, and the palace city of Madinat al-Zahra', which fell into ruin.<sup>33</sup> With the conquest of Cordoba in 1236 by Castilian forces, even more of the material evidence for the estates was destroyed, either through the processes of neglect and the subsequent disappearance of buildings, or in the opposite way, through appropriation and processes of addition and change that rendered the earlier structures unrecognizable.

The objective of this study is to move beyond the difficulties posed by the fragmented evidence for Cordoba's history and to frame the rise of the *munya* in a way that offers a richer social and material context for understanding the phenomenon than has yet been provided. I have particularly found the expanded conception of "landscape" advocated by cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove useful for thinking about the Cordoba *munya*.<sup>34</sup> Cosgrove's conception of landscape encompasses a geographical area, its population, and built works along with other types of representations of the land - texts, buildings, urban schemes, or visual representations. Such an approach rests on the belief that we can learn from studying the relations between land and the people and social

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<sup>33</sup> On Madinat al-Zahra' as a ruin and focus of later nostalgia for the Umayyad age, see D.F. Ruggles, "Arabic Poetry and Architectural Memory in al-Andalus," In *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993), 171-180.

<sup>34</sup> Denis Cosgrove, *The Palladian Landscape: Geographical Change and Its Cultural Representations In Sixteenth-Century Italy* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), esp. p.5-9.

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processes that have shaped it. This landscape approach is especially useful, I believe, for studying the Cordoban *munityas*, which tend to blur when examined solely through the lens of art history or textual criticism. The *munityas* require reconstitution through the assemblage of many types of evidence; the picture that it is possible to reconstitute from social history, material culture, the history of agriculture, technology, landscape, and of course art, architecture, and urbanism is greater than the sum of the parts.

The same issues that I believe are significant for understanding the *munityas* – the social implications of agricultural production, the significance of estates to elite patrons and their role as settings for elite activities, for example – have been addressed in recent studies of ancient Roman, Byzantine, and Italian Renaissance and Baroque villa cultures. The work of art historians who have branched into the study of historical landscapes as part of their inquiry into villa cultures has been particularly useful. Mirka Benes' work on the villas of Baroque Rome, and Dianne Harris' study of the villas of eighteenth-century Lombardy have been particularly important for my thinking about the Cordoban *munityas*.<sup>35</sup> Benes' and Harris' conception of early modern European gardens as "a particular kind of spatial container for court society and its functions in the lives of European monarchies and principalities" describes the attitude with which I approached the study of the Cordoban estates.<sup>36</sup> The work of D.F. Ruggles, on the gardens and

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<sup>35</sup> Miroslava Benes et al., ed., *Villas and Gardens in Early Modern Italy and France* (Cambridge/NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Also, for the social importance of the transformation of landscape, Miroslava Benes, "The Social Significance of Transforming the Landscape at the Villa Borghese in Rome, 1606-1630. Transpositions of Territory, Trees, and Agriculture in the first Roman Baroque Park," In *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires: Theory and Design, Muquarnas Supplement Vol. 7*, Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture ed. A. Petruccioli, (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1-31.

<sup>36</sup> Benes et al., *Villas and Gardens in Early Modern Italy and France* p. 3.

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palaces of al-Andalus, and Scott Redford, on Seljuk gardens and pavilions in Anatolia, are contributions that bring to the study of Islamic villas and villa cultures similar approaches to understanding architecture as part of broader landscape and social contexts.<sup>37</sup>

My study is founded upon an assumption that the inclusion of Islamic case studies can enrich the field of villa studies. However, the question of just how to approach the study of villas in the Islamic tradition remains problematic. Islamic architectural history has existed as a discipline for only a fraction of the time that scholars have studied ancient Roman and later Italian villas. The idea of Islamic villas has yet to be elaborated; a reconsideration of Islamic gardens and related architecture as social spaces in a way that brings more complexity to a subject that is often interpreted solely in terms of the supposed paradisaical symbolism of “the” Islamic garden, to the exclusion of the many other meanings that may have been attached by their creators, users, and observers. As Gulru Neçipoglu has remarked, regarding the similar problem of the palace in Islamic art history, the problem of the villa in Islamic art history may lie in the fact that examples of Islamic villas are few in number and understudied, especially in comparison to Islamic urban and/or religious monuments.<sup>38</sup> There may also be a general assumption on the part of art historians that because the estates existed in Islamic lands, they must be considered separately from the history of “western” villa cultures. Villa studies of the past two

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<sup>37</sup> Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*; Scott Redford, *Landscape and the State in Medieval Anatolia: Seljuk Gardens and Pavilions of Alanya, Turkey*, w/ chapter by Timothy Beach and Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> Gulru Necipoglu, “An Outline of Shifting Paradigms in the Palatial Architecture of the Pre-Modern Islamic World,” In *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993), 3.

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decades have been particularly helpful, in that they constitute a departure from past approaches to the villa that tended to emphasize the luxurious residence or aspects of its decorative program as de-contextualized art objects. Archaeological and art historical preoccupation with remains considered valuable as art objects in themselves (especially mosaics) meant that in the past the broader contexts of landscape and the areas of the villa devoted to agricultural functions were ignored and often did not survive intact. In recent decades approaches to the study of villas have expanded to consider the larger physical, social, and historical contexts for villas, including the vernacular buildings and complexes that might have been overlooked by art historians in the past.<sup>39</sup> Archaeologists now interpret the villa residence (when one exists) as but one part of a larger architectural complex with a variety of functions, which in turn is examined as part of a historical landscape. Rather than limiting the examination of the formal qualities of the villa residence or certain parts of the villa (mosaics or paintings) as art objects in isolation from their architectural and social contexts historians now frame the investigation of villas with an eye to understanding their significance.

My argument for including the *munya* within the broader history of villas has been shaped by the work of Oleg Grabar, James Dickie, and D.F. Ruggles. Both Dickie and Grabar have argued that the palaces of al-Andalus (in particular the Cordoban *munyas*), with their combination of gardens, residences, and pavilions, were heirs of the

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<sup>39</sup> A trend that Jeremy Rossiter noted approvingly over a decade ago in his review “Some Recent Books on Roman Villas.” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 6 (1993): 449-54.

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ancient Roman villa tradition, an assertion which Ruggles has taken as a point of departure in her work on Andalusí gardens and landscape.<sup>40</sup>

The work of scholars of other villa cultures who have examined issues similar to those I believe are critical for understanding the *munyas*, has also been instrumental to my approach. Nicholas Purcell's 1995 article "The Roman Villa and the Landscape of Production" in particular resonated with my belief that the rise of the *munya* in Cordoba could not be understood apart from the Andalusí agricultural literature, and it was the initial inspiration for the argument about the relationship between cultivation and elite tastes and concerns that I make in Chapter Three. Purcell argues that the interpretation of the Roman villa since the Renaissance - that the villa were about a life of leisure, not about production - has led scholars to misinterpret Roman villas as symptomatic of Roman social decadence and economic sterility. Archaeology, Purcell notes, has aided this misconception of the villas as site of leisure by focusing either on the luxurious aspects of the villa or on the productive components, without investigating how the two might be related. Instead, Purcell suggests, villas should be analyzed as part of a larger picture of landscape management, as part of a "productive ensemble" that aims to investigate how villas fit into the concept of landscape control, with its implications for social history. The realm of abstract values should not be separated from the economic realities of the villa – scholars should turn their attention to investigating ideological

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<sup>40</sup> James Dickie, "The Hispano-Arab Garden, its philosophy and function," In *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies XXXI* (1968); *ibid.*, "The Islamic Garden in Spain," In *The Islamic Garden* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1976), 87-105; *ibid.*, "The Hispano-Arab Garden: Notes towards a Typology," In *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*; *ibid.*, "Gardens in Muslim Spain," *Environmental Design*. Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978), p. 132, citing Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, Vol. II, p. 132 and Pérès, p. 129.



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goals implicit in the patronage of villas, and the villa's multiple functions within Roman society. Purcell's observations on ancient Roman villa culture can apply equally well to the Cordoban *munyas*, long characterized as pleasure-gardens where elites indulged in illicit wine-drinking and amorous pursuits, and a subject to which I will return in Chapter VII.<sup>41</sup> In addition to their agricultural functions, Arabic texts indicate that the Cordoban *munyas* were used as settings for Umayyad court activities like hunting and feasting, and were also incorporated into Umayyad processional routes. Studies on ancient Roman villa gardens, convivial culture, and most recently spectacle, along with studies of similar issues in the context of Byzantine court culture provide useful comparative material for the issues that arise in the context of the Cordoban estates.<sup>42</sup>

In attempting to place Umayyad Cordoba within a broader historical context I have most frequently looked to the Islamic lands under the Syrian Umayyads and the 'Abbasids of Baghdad, as well as to the Byzantine capital of Constantinople and its territories and the medieval Mediterranean in general. Two of the most important sources for my conception of the medieval Islamicate Mediterranean have been Marshall G.S. Hodgson's 1978 *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*

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<sup>41</sup> Nicholas Purcell. "The Roman Villa and the Landscape of Production." In *Urban Society in Roman Italy*, edited by T. Cornell and C. Lomas, (London, 1995), 151-79.

<sup>42</sup> A.R. Littlewood, "Gardens of the Palaces," In *Byzantine court culture from 829 to 1204*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997), 12-38. Work on how Byzantine villas, palaces, and even monasteries, along with the gardens associated with each, were used by the Byzantine court as settings for the same types of activities associated with the *munyas* suggests an important parallel for the Cordoban phenomenon.

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and S.D. Goitein's *A Mediterranean Society*, first published in 1967.<sup>43</sup> The general attitudes toward the history of architecture and urbanism that underlie my approach were first inspired by James Ackerman's *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses*, and Jerrilyn D. Dodd's *Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain*, a work that served as an early model in my mind for architectural history's relevance to other branches of history.<sup>44</sup>

The dissertation focuses on the rise and formative period of the phenomenon between 756 and 975 CE, when Cordoba attained a position of political and cultural authority in the Western Mediterranean. Chapter Two uses archaeological evidence to discuss the *munya* as an architectural type, comparing it with evidence for the Umayyad architecture of the Iberian Peninsula. It places the *munya* within a broader history of villas and villa cultures around the Mediterranean. It reviews the architecture and social roles of villas, emphasizing aspects of continuity, architectural and social, between the Islamic and pre-Islamic periods on the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa, and Syria and Iraq. Chapter Three draws on tenth-century Umayyad agricultural texts to argue that, far from functioning simply as "pleasure gardens," the *munyas* were sites of cultivation for crops valued by Umayyad courtiers specifically as foods, fragrances, and pharmaceuticals. Chapter Four explores the possibility of medieval Islamic villa cultures in Syria, Iraq, and North Africa, paying special attention to the transition from antiquity to the medieval period. Chapter Five builds upon Ruggles' chronology of estate

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<sup>43</sup> Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1974-); S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967-).

<sup>44</sup> Jerrilynn D. Dodds, *Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1994).

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patronage. It examines the social dimensions of patronage, not only by the Umayyad rulers, but by elite slaves, freedmen, and Arab and Berber aristocrats within the court. Through estate patronage, Umayyad rulers used an artificial aristocracy of elite slaves to balance the power of powerful family dynasties in the administration. Chapter Six discusses the role of the *munya* as a setting for various court activities, especially hunting and feasting. The chapter relates these activities, particularly the latter, to medieval Islamic ideas about refinement as it was expressed through preferences in clothing and through other external means. Chapter Seven analyzes the use of the Cordoban estates as way stations along Umayyad processional routes for which the *munyas* served as important stations along the processional routes, and concludes that by the second half of the tenth century the landscape of estates had become a significant aspect of Umayyad sovereignty, one which particularly emphasized the connection between a flourishing and landscape and good government. The study emphasizes throughout how the estates are relevant to understanding Umayyad court culture on numerous levels.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE *MUNYA*

#### *Introduction*

The city of Cordoba and its surrounding province are situated in the Guadalquivir Valley, a geographical region in southwestern Spain formed by the Guadalquivir River and bordered to the north and south by mountains.<sup>1</sup> The province includes three different types of regions: the fertile river valley proper, in which the city is located, the arid slopes of the Sierra Morena mountain range just to its north, and the fertile, rolling territory (*la campiña*, Ar. *al-Qanbaniyya*) which spreads southward from the Guadalquivir River. The Umayyad rulers inherited an ancient city. In 152 BCE it became a Roman garrison, and by the second century it had developed into the most prominent town in the southern Roman province of Hispania Ulterior.<sup>2</sup> By this time the Roman city boasted the urban markers that signaled its status as an important senatorial colony: aqueducts, public fountains, a forum, and the great stone bridge over the Guadalquivir River (Latin *Baetis*).

Within the city walls, archaeologists have identified the location of the Roman forum, including a temple, as well as a theater and houses. Outside the walls, the Aqua Vetus (c. 45 B.C.E.) and the Aqua Nova aqueducts (late first century) brought water into the city from the mountains north and northwest of Cordoba. The latter had a 20,000 cubic meter daily capacity to serve the new suburbs, fountains, and baths that accompanied the population of the growing Roman city. Likewise, remains of a third-century palatial complex, located four kilometers northwest of the walled center, suggest

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<sup>1</sup> John Edwards, *Christian Córdoba: The city and its region in the late Middle Ages* (Cambridge/NY: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 1-6.

<sup>2</sup> Robert C. Knapp, *Roman Córdoba* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1983), 9-12.

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that during the late imperial period Cordoba remained a city of some importance. While Roman Cordoba's prosperity was compromised with the movement of Germanic tribes into the Iberian Peninsula during the fifth and sixth centuries, archaeological evidence from the seventh and early eighth centuries suggests that Cordoba continued to be a site of architectural patronage in late antiquity.<sup>3</sup>

With the Arab-Berber conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 711, and the subsequent shift of the capital from nearby Seville to Cordoba between 716 and 719 C.E., important urban elements like the Roman walls and the bridge spanning the Guadalquivir were refurbished and expanded. A few references to the Peninsula's Roman remains indicate that vestiges of the Iberian Peninsula's Roman past were visible as late as the twelfth century, while in Umayyad Cordoba Roman remains were appropriated and used for new functions.<sup>4</sup> The tenth-century Umayyad chronicler al-Razi, for example, mentions that a statue of a woman, perhaps a Roman Venus, decorated one of Cordoba's city gates, while late antique sarcophagi were reused in Umayyad palace settings.<sup>5</sup> The Umayyad rulers appropriated and enlarged the late antique urban palace (located in the

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<sup>3</sup> Jerrilyn Dodds analyzes the historiographical issues for Visigothic architecture in Chapters One and Two of *Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain*. In the remaining chapters she analyzes Visigothic church architecture and explores the ramifications in religious architecture, of the confrontations between Muslims and Christians on the Peninsula.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Maqqari, for example, devotes a section to Roman remains of al-Andalus. See al-Maqqari, Gayangos ed., p.77-83. The twelfth-century author Ibn Abī Zar' mentions the Roman remains of temple porticos visible in Seville. Cited in Magdalena Valor Piechotta et al., ed., *Sevilla almohade* (Sevilla-Rabat: Fundacion de las tres culturas del Mediterraneo/Univ. de Sevilla, 1999), p. 185-90.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis fi akhbar bilAd al-Andalus* ed. A.A. al-Hajji (Beirut: DAr al-Taḥqāfah, 1965), p. 50, 120. It also appears in al-Maqqari, *Analectes*, I:344 and in *Akhbar Majmu'a*, 132.

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southwestern quadrant of the walled city, but no longer extant) and the Great Mosque was built on the site of the Visigothic church of St. Vicente.<sup>6</sup>

### *Greater Cordoba*

The city's Roman walls encompassed an area of roughly twelve hectares, which constituted the walled core of Umayyad Cordoba, whose southern half acquired a concentration of government, religious, and commercial institutions. A traveler coming from the fertile hinterland to the south would have crossed the bridge and been greeted with the sight of the Great Mosque opposite the bridgehead, the market for luxury goods (*al-qaysariyya*) immediately to its left, and the walls and towers of the Umayyad palace (Ar. *al-qasr*, Sp. *Alcázar*), and various buildings associated with the administration beyond. Ibn Hawqal reported that a conglomeration of inns, taverns, and other services used by the broader populace stretched along the river east of the Great Mosque. Beyond, the Umayyad city had expanded outside the limits of the city's Roman walls, with extramural quarters (Ar. *rabaḍ*, pl. *arbāḍ*) of about sixteen hectares total area having sprung up east of the old intramural center by the tenth century.<sup>7</sup> In the twelfth century these eastern quarters (Sp. *Ajarquía*) were also enclosed within a wall, and it is the combination of the earlier walled garrison city, with what had originally been the city's eastward expansion, which forms the medieval section of contemporary Cordoba.

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<sup>6</sup> The remains of the Visigothic church are documented in Manuel Nieto Cumplido, *La Catedral de Cordoba* (Cordoba: Pub. de la Obra Social y Cultural de CajaSur, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> The term *rabaḍ* refers simply to civil quarters located outside the central part of a city; Dozy, in his dictionary of Andalusí Arabic, simply defines the term as "parish." R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1881), s.v. "r-b-d"

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Beyond the walled antique city and the eastern suburbs which together comprised the dense core of Umayyad Cordoba, archaeologists have discovered remains of additional extramural development which suggests the extent of greater Cordoba: cemeteries have been found within a kilometer of the city's western wall and on the bank of the Guadalquivir opposite the Great Mosque, and extramural quarters have been excavated west and north of the walled center to a distance of four kilometers.<sup>8</sup> By far the most evidence for the extramural expansion of the city is to be found west of the urban center, in the territory beginning just outside the walls and stretching in a rectangle that extends westward nearly thirteen kilometers, and approximately five kilometers from the Sierra Morena mountains northwest of present day Cordoba south to the Guadalquivir River.

Beginning just outside Cordoba's walls, and moving westward, traces of suburbs provide a rough sketch of the suburban contours outside the Umayyad city. In 2001 archaeologists excavated an Umayyad suburb approximately one kilometer southwest of the walled center, on the site presently occupied by Cordoba's municipal zoo (located on the bank of the Guadalquivir (Fig. 6). The evidence indicates that during the site's latest phase of medieval occupation, in the tenth century, streets, a sewer system, and a series of ramps, stairs, and terraces that connected the site to the river grew up around an earlier

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<sup>8</sup> Maria Teresa Casal García, "Los cementerios Islámicos de Qurtuba," In *Anuario Arqueológico Cordobés* 12 (2001), 283-313; For an overview of recent archaeological discoveries of extramural development see A. Arjona Castro et al., *Urbanismo de la Cordoba califal: tras las huellas de la Cordoba califal* (Cordoba: Edic. de la posada, 1997), p. 17-20.

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structure.<sup>9</sup> The archaeologists conclude from the ceramics, remains of walls and foundations, and other material remains that the structure was a *munya*, founded between 756 and 928 CE, which had been constructed on the remains of a second-century Roman villa, oriented toward the Guadalquivir. Unfortunately, the remains recorded during this excavation are not complete enough to allow conclusions about the plan of either of the structures identified as a villa and a *munya*. However, if the archaeologists' conclusions are correct, the excavation suggests a level of continuity in site occupation and use between Cordoba's antique and Umayyad periods, and suggests that *munyas* acted as foci for extramural development.

Beyond the four-kilometer zone that appears to have marked the limit of Cordoba's western expansion, the most significant remains are those belonging to the Umayyad palace city of Madinat al-Zahra' (Figs. 10, 11). 'Abd al-Rahman III founded it in 936 CE, eight years after assuming the caliphal title, to serve as the new center of the Umayyad court.<sup>10</sup> Located ten kilometers west of the old city walls, Madinat al-Zahra'

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<sup>9</sup> Dolores Ruiz Lara, Juan Francisco Murillo Redondo, "Resultados de la intervención arqueológica realizada en el zoológico municipal de Cordoba," In *Anuario Arqueológico de Andalucía: Informes y Memorias (AAA)* (1996), 123-42, esp. p. 142. Material evidence of fire and numerous abandoned, but whole, glass and ceramic vessels indicates that occupation of the site ended suddenly and violently in the eleventh century. This is evidence that the archaeologists believe to support textual descriptions of the *fitna*, the period of civil unrest that accompanied the dissolution of Umayyad power in the first decades of the eleventh century. Arabic texts describe how during this period of turmoil Berber troops sacked Cordoba and Madinat al-Zahra', killing inhabitants of both. Cordoba's fertile landscape was also targeted – in the case of al-Rusafa the trees and gardens surrounding the *munya* were cut down as well.

<sup>10</sup> Several Arabic historians discuss the foundation of the city, among them Ibn Hayyan, al-Himyari, Ibn Idhari, al-Nuwayri, and al-Maqqari. Ruggles summarizes and compares the textual evidence in *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p. 53-68. Also see Rosario Castejón, "Madinat al-Zahra en los autores árabes," In *Al-Mulk* 1 (1959-60), 63-106. Ruggles analyzes the palace city's affinities with both 'Abbasid palace design and the



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consists of three broad terraces ascending the lower slopes of the Sierra Morena mountain range.<sup>11</sup> In plan the city forms a rectangle of approximately fifteen hundred by seven hundred and forty-five meters, with fortified double walls enclosing an area of nine hectares (Fig. 11). The city was arranged hierarchically, with the lowest level used for markets, housing for soldiers, and other functions associated with city life. The administrative, residential, and official buildings of the Umayyads and their court were situated upon the two upper terraces, separated from the lower level by walls and gates, and oriented toward the south (Figs. 12, 23).<sup>12</sup> The city was thus designed to take

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importance of the gaze and of views of the landscape in Chapter Five, pp. 86-109. For a discussion of the city's relationship to urban development in Cordoba, contextualized within a political framework, see See Antonio Vallejo Triano, "El Proyecto Urbanístico del Estado Califal: Madinat al-Zahra," In *La Arquitectura del Islam Occidental* (Lunwerg Editores S.A., 1995), 69-81.

<sup>11</sup> For a more recent review of the excavated structures as they compare to the texts see Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p. 68-85.

<sup>12</sup> Under the direction of Antonio Vallejo Triano, excavations ongoing since the late 1970s have revealed houses, service quarters, and reception halls, which yet constitute only a fraction of the site as a whole. Antonio Vallejo Triano has published extensively on its architecture and its relevance for Andalusí Umayyad urbanism. See his "El Proyecto Urbanístico del Estado Califal," op. cit.; as well as the recent "Un Elemento de la Decoración Vegetal de Madinat al-Zahra': La Palmeta," In *Al-Andalus Und Europa zwischen Orient und Okzident* ed. Martina Müller-Wiener, Christiane Kothe, Karl-Heinz Golzio, Joachim Gierlich (Düsseldorf: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2004), p. 208-224; *ibid.*, "El baño próximo al salón de 'Abd al-Rahman III," *Cuadernos de Madinat al-Zahra* 1 (1987), 141-168. Studies and excavation reports are also published regularly in the journal *Cuadernos de Madinat al-Zahra'*. I am grateful to Dr. Vallejo for providing me with a copy of his book *Madinat al-Zahra': Guía Oficial del Conjunto Arqueológico* (Cordoba: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, 2005) in time to include the reference in the dissertation. An invaluable summary of the state of the investigation of the site, the guide includes useful new maps, reconstructions, and summaries of the excavations and the official and residential spaces. The section on the city's relationship to the surrounding territory is particularly helpful, as is the information for locating other Umayyad remains which are scattered throughout the Cordoban countryside (the Umayyad quarry, roads, bridges, and water infrastructure) on p. 178-82.

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maximum advantage of a site that afforded dramatic vistas of the fertile plain that stretches from the mountain range south to the Guadalquivir (Figs. 23, 24).

The majority of the structures found within the new palace city of Madinat al-Zahra' remain unexcavated. However, since the 1920s a number of structures identified as administrative and palatial buildings, along with residences and service areas (all of which are centrally located on the upper two terraces) have been excavated and reconstructed during the course of ongoing excavations. At the northeastern end of the upper terrace archaeologists found the remains of a monumental gate, which has been identified as the *Bab al-Sudda*, mentioned often in Arabic texts as the main entrance for visitors to the court. After passing through the central arch, visitors would have entered the city via a narrow street or passage, easily defensible thanks to the sharp left turn which had to be navigated before the visitor reached the upper terrace.

Upon emerging, the visitor found himself in an expansive, paved court located in front of a structure that has been identified as the *Dar al-Jund*, (literally, "Palace of the Army") the headquarters of the Umayyad military. The *Dar al-Jund* is rectangular in plan, divided into five interior naves, separated by arcades and situated perpendicular to the entrance hall that stretches along the length of the façade. In contrast to other buildings on the upper terrace, the *Dar al-Jund* is plain of all ornament, save the red and white voussoirs of the arches on its entrance façade, and the stone capitals of its arcades. Stables and service areas have been identified immediately west of this administrative building, while courtyard structures believed to be the residences of court officials, and other service areas like kitchens and latrines, are found further west on the upper terrace.

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I will return to examples of court residences, specifically the two structures currently known as the Dar al-Mulk and the Vivienda del Alberca, or Small Garden, shortly.

Located about nine meters south of the Dar al-Jund is the most celebrated of the structures discovered at Madinat al-Zahra'. Popularly called the Salon Rico ("rich hall") and also known as the Salon de 'Abd al-Rahman III or the *Majlis al-Sharqī*, ("eastern hall"), the building is believed to be the reception hall mentioned in Arabic texts as the site of many Umayyad court ceremonies (Figs. 12, 13). Epigraphic fragments found on the site identify the building's architects, and name 'Abd al-Rahman III as its patron, and the archaeological evidence suggests that it replaced earlier structures located on the same site. Similar in plan to the military building, the reception hall consists of a rectangle divided into long naves within. One entered the reception hall through the arcade of the façade, whose five horseshoe arches with red and white voussoirs are carved with vegetal ornament, and supported by columns of pink and blue stone topped with small marble capitals whose deeply-drilled vegetal ornament illustrates the Cordoban participation in Byzantine techniques of carved decoration.

Upon penetrating the arcade, the visitor enters a wide rectangular hall that stretches the length of the façade, and which is separated from the interior hall by a tripartite opening separating the entrance hall from the triple-aisled space within. Paved in white marble and with a dado of the same material, the remainder of the wall surfaces in the Salon Rico were covered by stone panels carved with vegetal motifs, mainly scrolling vines and palmettes. The artistic vocabulary of the ornament, with its emphasis upon panels of leafy and flowering vines and scrolls, betrays an archaizing tendency that

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recalls Syrian Umayyad ornament, rather than the abstracted, flat scroll motifs displayed in the carved architectural ornament of Abbasid Iraq (Figs. 16-18, 25).

The reception hall faced a large walled garden, and commanded a panoramic view beyond the terrace to the river valley to the south (Fig. 12). Access to this garden area was possible from the Dar al-Jund court, from the raised passageway (*sabat*) that led to the city's mosque to the east, from a lower walled garden situated to the west, and from an underground passage from the south. A smaller pavilion faced the reception hall from the center of the garden, which was divided into four quadrants by walkways. The pavilion was flanked on three sides by small square pools, and faced the reception hall across a pool measuring nineteen meters per side.

### *The Architecture of the Munya*

The sites discussed above provide a rough sketch of domestic architecture during the Umayyad period. Beginning with the remains closest to the Umayyad city, a series of sites stretching westward along the bank of the Guadalquivir, and identified as Umayyad *munyas*, indicate that large and luxurious structures once occupied the riverbank west to a distance of just over three kilometers. The Casillas site, located at the far end of this group, at just over three kilometers from Cordoba's southwestern corner, provides the most information of the sites near the river (Fig. 6). The occupation history of the complex consists of two Islamic phases: the first occurred in the ninth or early tenth century, while the second period of occupation dates to the eleventh, and perhaps into the

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early twelfth centuries.<sup>13</sup> The earlier phase of occupation is characterized by remains that the archaeologists identify as the residential portion of a larger *munya* complex extending from the river inland to the north.<sup>14</sup> Based on the remains of walls, foundations, architectural ornament, and other associated material evidence, the archaeologists believe the remains to be part of a large residence, decorated with marble ornament, and constructed around an irrigated interior garden surrounded by porticos. The residence was walled on the east and south sides (perhaps for protection against possible flood periods), and was provided with a structure that gave access to the residence from the river below. The identification of the remains as a residence, rather than structures associated with primarily agricultural or industrial functions, is based on the presence of common ceramics associated with cooking and food storage, and fragments of marble architectural ornament in the form of moldings, friezes, and pavements.

Approximately four kilometers northwest of Cordoba's walled urban center, at the site known as Cercadilla (Fig. 39-41) archaeologists have excavated a tenth-century suburb with a number of houses which correspond to the courtyard type found at Casillas. Elena Castro del Rio argues that the evidence from thirty-eight Umayyad-era houses excavated at the site between 1991 and 2000 points to a consistent typological group. Ranging in area from 85 to 200 meters squared, the common characteristic of the

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<sup>13</sup> While the first phase of occupation of the excavated structure seems to have been solely residential, during the second phase of occupation the building acquired some industrial functions related to ceramic production.

<sup>14</sup> The excavation was conducted under the auspices of the Confederación Hidrográfica del Guadalquivir, ostensibly as a prerequisite before development can take place on the site. Gloria Galeano Cuenca, *Informe-Memoria Intervención Arqueológica de Urgencia, Yacimiento "Casillas" (T.M. Córdoba)* (Cordoba: Confederación Hidrográfica del Guadalquivir (Vías y Construcciones- OHL), 2002). The excavation report is filed in Cordoba's municipal archives.

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Cordoban houses is the arrangement of rooms around a central rectilinear courtyard (usually square, but sometimes rectangular or trapezoidal), accessible through an entrance passage (*zaguan*), and featuring a pool, a basin, or a well in the courtyard space (Span. *alberca, pileta, pozo*). While all the excavated houses share an arrangement along a north-south axis, a courtyard with a water feature, a rectangular room opening onto the courtyard and functioning as the main living and reception space, and an entrance hall, the houses vary in the combination of other rooms that might be present: for example, reception halls, bedrooms, latrines, kitchens, storage areas, and stables also appear in varying combinations, though always arranged around the central court (Figs. 40, 41).<sup>15</sup>

Residences at Madinat al-Zahra' generally correspond to the courtyard type as well, though of the two court residences which are of special interest to this discussion – known currently as the Vivienda del Alberca and the Dar al-Mulk – only one corresponds to this type.<sup>16</sup> The Vivienda del Alberca (House of the Pool, or the Small Garden in Ruggles), is believed to have served as a residence for an important member of the Umayyad family or the court, based on its proximity to the residence known as the Dar

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<sup>15</sup> Elena Castro del Río, “La arquitectura doméstica en los arrabales de la Cordoba califal: la Zona Arqueológica de Cercadilla,” In *Anales de Arqueología Cordobesa* 12 (2001), 241-81.

<sup>16</sup> On the domestic architecture of Madinat al-Zahra' see Antonio Vallejo, “El Sector Privado del Alcázar,” In *Madinat al-Zahra': Guía Oficial del Conjunto Arqueológico*, p. 129-54; Antonio Almagro, “Análisis Tipológico de la Arquitectural Residencial de Madinat al-Zahra',” In *Al-Andalus Und Europa zwischen Orient und Okzident*, ed. Martina Müller-Wiener, Christiane Kothe, Karl-Heinz Golzio, Joachim Gierlichs (Düsseldorf: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2004), p. 117-24; and D.F. Ruggles, *Gardens*, p. 71-72.

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al-Mulk, and for its secluded, luxurious quality (Figs. 18-20).<sup>17</sup> Measuring approximately twenty meters long by nineteen meters wide, the House of the Small Pool consists of a square courtyard flanked on the east and west by rectangular double halls (those on the west side measure five x 12.5 meters, or 62.5 meters squared each, while the eastern halls measure 4 x 14 meters, or 56 meters squared each). These double halls open onto the courtyard through a wall pierced by a central triple-arched opening (Fig. 18). The 209 square meter courtyard itself is divided into two rectilinear garden spaces, arranged along an east-west axis, which flank a square pool located at the western end of the courtyard, directly in front of the entrance to the double hall.

The residence currently known as the Dar al-Mulk is believed to have been the residence of the Umayyad caliph himself (Fig. 14-17). Totalling approximately 70 meters wide by 20 meters deep, the Dar al-Mulk is not a courtyard residence but consists of a wide rectangular block raised above the structures to its south. A raised terrace, approached from two flights of stairs, fronted the residence and probably provided panoramic views of the lower sections of the city and the landscape beyond. In contrast to the square courtyard complexes that characterize the majority of the residences in the palace city, the Dar al-Mulk is distinguished by its wide rectangular composition, the central element of which is formed by two parallel rectangular halls, each of which measures 17 m wide x 5 meters deep, with an area of 85 square meters. These double halls are separated from one another by three arched openings, and flanked by smaller square chambers, each of which is 25 square meters in area. Behind the two central halls,

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<sup>17</sup> Castro del Rio, p. 245; 249-50. For the Vivienda del Alberca see Almagro, "Análisis Tipológico de la Arquitectural Residencial de Madinat al-Zahra", p. 123; Ruggles, *Gardens*, p. 72 and figures 19, 20, and 21 on pages 74-75.

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a third rectangular space serves as a corridor. Rooms arranged around a square court west of the double hall may have been service quarters. Access to this area could be achieved by one of two paths. Entering from the southern, or front façade of the Dar al-Mulk, one would proceed inward to the second of the two rectangular halls, entering the square chamber on the eastern side. From there one would pass through a smaller square chamber, emerging into a space divided into three rectangular rooms. Proceeding across two of these rectangular rooms a doorway provided entry to a courtyard of about ten meters square, onto which opened four rooms, a smaller space (perhaps a latrine?), and a narrow room leading to the rear main passage.

The closest parallel to the Dar al-Mulk plan comes from a site known as al-Rummaniya, located some three kilometers west of Madinat al-Zahra', which as Ruggles has noted, stands as the sole Cordoban Umayyad *munya* for which significant remains have been preserved *in situ* (Figs. 26, 30, 31).<sup>18</sup> Al-Rummaniya is consequently of great importance for understanding the architecture of the Cordoban *munyas*, of Madinat al-Zahra, and more broadly, Andalusí palaces. In 1911 the Spanish archaeologist Velázquez Bosco excavated the ruins of buildings and a water system at the site (Figs. 27-29, 34-36).<sup>19</sup> Although Velázquez Bosco believed the site to be the estate al-Amiryya, mentioned in Arabic texts as an estate founded by the Umayyad regent al-Mansur, in 1984 the Arabist Manuel Ocaña Jimenez argued, based on epigraphic and new textual evidence,

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<sup>18</sup> D.F. Ruggles, *Gardens*, p. 114-18.

<sup>19</sup> Ricardo Velázquez Bosco, *Medina Azzahra y Alamiriya* (Madrid: Junta para Ampliación de Estudios é Investigaciones Científicas, 1912).



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that the estate was most likely the estate founded by an elite slave in the court of al-Hakam II, and mentioned by Ibn Hayyan. (Figs. 9, 10).<sup>20</sup>

Al-Rummaniya's remains consist of four rectangular terraces that ascend the slopes of the mountain range, and which measure approximately 160 x 150 meters overall (Fig. 26). Velazquez Bosco describes the site as follows:

[The *munya*] occupies an area of about 4 hectares, at the foot of the Sierra, some nine kilometers from Cordoba. . . The terrain was leveled in order to construct the complex, which is divided into four horizontal terraced platforms, the whole of which is surrounded by a strong wall that is partly conserved. The perimeter wall is composed of a plinth of three or four rows of masonry, upon which alternating stone and concrete courses were constructed. Thick stone retaining walls support the three upper terraces, and may also have supported defensive walls...<sup>21</sup>

The walls of the four terraces, which ascend the foothills of the Sierra Morena mountain range, are still visible, along with a monumental pool located on the uppermost terrace (Figs. 26, 31, 33, 35). Velazquez Bosco observed that al-Rummaniya's materials, construction techniques, and decoration were comparable to those at Madinat al-Zahra' (Fig. 38).<sup>22</sup> Paralleling the reception halls, houses, and pools located on the upper two terraces of Madinat al-Zahra', the uppermost terrace of al-Rummaniya featured a structure interpreted by Velazquez Bosco as the estate's residence (Figs. 27, 34). He describes the plan of the central portion of the structure as follows:

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<sup>20</sup> M. Ocaña Jiménez, "Las ruinas de 'Alamiría', un yacimiento arqueológico erróneamente denominado," In *al-Qantara* 5 (1984), 367-82; D.F. Ruggles, *Gardens*, p.111-14.

<sup>21</sup> Velázquez Bosco, *Medina Azzahra y Alamiriya*, p. 23.

<sup>22</sup> Based on the similarities in arrangement and siting between the complex and the palace city, Ruggles sees the estate as evidence of the palace city's profound influence on the architecture of the palaces which were constructed after Madinat al-Zahra' Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p. 118.

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The palace is composed of one or more courts surrounded by narrow halls. The central body of the palace is very regular in distribution, and is composed of three parallel rectangular chambers of equal width. These are crossed by two walls, which divide them into square rooms at their extremes. These square rooms were probably barrel-vaulted, and connect to other rectangular chambers flanking the central composition.<sup>23</sup>

Arranged along an east-west axis, oriented toward the south, and measuring approximately fifty meters wide by fifteen meters deep, the front façade of al-Rummaniya's residence opened onto a paved patio from which stairs descended to the terrace below (Fig. 32). The plan of the residence can be read as a tripartite arrangement in which a central double hall is flanked on either side by what appear to be two residential suites (Fig. 27). As at the Dar al-Mulk, two wide rectangular halls, arranged one in front of the other form the central portion of the plan. The two rectangular halls (at 15 m wide x 5 meters deep (49 ft. wide x 16 ft deep), and with an area of 75 square meters each, they are slightly smaller than those at Madinat al-Zahra) were divided one from the other by a wall in which there were three openings; the front façade of the residence also opened to the exterior through three openings, similar perhaps to the courtyard façades of the Vivienda del Alberca/Small Garden (Figs. 18, 19).

Also as at the Dar al-Mulk, al-Rummaniya's residence features square chambers flanking the central double hall to the east and west, and measuring approximately 4 x 5 meters each. Along with rectilinear chambers that extend around and behind the double hall to the north, these flanking chambers can be read as two separate residential suites (Fig.27). The western suite appears to be the more private and extensive of the two. Of the four chambers directly adjacent to the central double hall, only the first chamber

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<sup>23</sup> Velázquez Bosco, p. 23. Ruggles describes the plan of al-Rummaniya and provides the historiographic background for its attribution, p. 114.

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opens onto the central portion of the residence. In contrast, both of the flanking chambers that form the first two spaces of the eastern suite of rooms open onto the central halls. Moving northward, the second chamber of the western suite provides access to a group of four rooms arranged around a small courtyard, in what also appears to be a residential unit. From this small courtyard a passage leads to two rooms on the extreme west end of the residence that provide exits to the west and to the north. On the east side of the Rummaniya plan, the series of five chambers that forms what may be a second residential suite does not provide access to the rooms that occupy the far eastern end of the Rummaniya block. Instead, the five-chamber suite is completely separate from a long rectangular passage that extends the entire depth of the residence's block. This passage in turn opens onto six interconnected chambers whose function is unclear.

The majority of the evidence for the decoration of luxurious Cordoban residences comes from al-Rummaniya and Madinat al-Zahra'. The interior surfaces of the residence at al-Rummaniya, Velázquez noted, were covered with stucco up to a distance of half a meter, and painted red with white horizontal bands (with patterns or epigraphy apparent in some places). Painted wall decoration of this type is visible at Madinat al-Zahra' and at the Umayyad bath recently excavated near the Great Mosque of Cordoba (Fig. 38). The floors of al-Rummaniya's residence were paved with red and white marble laid in parallel bands and rectangular tiles, also similar to the residences at Madinat al-Zahra'.<sup>24</sup>

Velazquez discovered only a few fragments of decoration during his excavation of al-Rummaniya; his photograph of the pieces: a volute, a part of a column capital, an

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<sup>24</sup> He interprets the flanking wings as entrances to stables or, based on the presence of stone latrines, to a guard room.

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epigraphic fragment, and two rectangular pieces from larger friezes or borders (Fig. 37), indicates that the decorative program at al-Rummaniya was characterized by a reliance on vegetal ornament in the form of vine scrolls and stylized leafy vines, the predominant type of decoration at Madinat al-Zahra' (Figs. 17, 19).

In contrast to the decoration at Madinat al-Zahra', the appearance of birds, dragons, lions, and rams on the few decorative fragments unearthed at al-Rummaniya constitute a striking contrast to the almost complete absence of figural motifs among the innumerable fragments of ornament that appear everywhere at Madinat al-Zahra' (Figs. 17, 19, 25). This is a peculiarity that Rafael Castejon and, more recently Mariam Rosser-Owen, have interpreted as evidence that the site was appropriated by an 'Amirid patron following the death of al-Hakam II in 975 CE, when the al-Mansur ruled al-Andalus as a regent to al-Hakam II's young son and successor Hisham.<sup>25</sup> The decorative fragments from al-Rummaniya are comparable, however, to the striking combination of animals and vegetation that distinguish the ivory caskets produced in the court of al-Hakam II. As I will discuss later, the ivories parallel the Cordoban *munya*s as luxury objects associated with the highest court circles. It may be, therefore, that the decoration found on the

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<sup>25</sup> Rafael Castejón, "Alamiria," In *B.R.A.C* 25, no. 70 (1954), p. 150-158. Like Velazquez Bosco, Castejon believed that the al-Rummaniya site was al-'Amiriyya, a *munya* belonging to al-Mansur, but Castejon ascribed the decorative fragments to the 'Amirid period based on the proliferation of animal themes. It is likely, if Castejon's stylistic judgement stands, that the *munya* passed into the hands of al-Mansur, or a favored member of his family or administration during his rule as *hajib*, or vizir in the final years of the Umayyad caliphate, and that the pieces found there were additions to the estate from this period. Mariam Rosser-Owen has addressed this issue in "Articulating the 'ijaba: 'Amirid Artistic and Cultural Patronage in Al-Andalus (c.970-1010 AD)," (Ph.D. diss., Trinity College, University of Oxford, 2002).

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surface of the ivory caskets also appeared within the private spaces of luxurious court villas.

In addition to the decoration at al-Rummaniya and Madinat al-Zahra', evidence for the decorative programs of *munya* residences has also been unearthed at sites along the Guadalquivir River west of the city walls. For example, in a 1949 article, "Vestigios de alcazares musulmanes," Castejon described the standing walls, extant pavements, and the remains of rich sculptural fragments at a site known as the Huerta de Valladares (Figs. 23-25) located three kilometers from the southwest corner of Cordoba's walled core.<sup>26</sup> The dimensions of the blocks found at the site, and the incised vegetal ornament on the sculptural fragments are comparable in quality and technique to the caliphal works at Madinat al-Zahra' (Figs. 42, 43). Likewise, in 1956 a number of large panels of carved stone ornament were excavated at a site known as the Cortijo del Alcaide, somewhat west of the Huerta de Valladares site (Figs. 45-52, 56, 57).<sup>27</sup> Felix Hernandez Gimenez described the circumstances of the carved panels' discovery and their stylistic characteristics, which he also found comparable in quality and style to ornamentation at Madinat al-Zahra', a judgement with which Christian Ewert generally concurs in a 1998 analysis of the decorative language presented in the panels.<sup>28</sup> Based on the high quality of

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<sup>26</sup> Despite Castejon's desire that the Valladares site be excavated, little if anything else was accomplished there; nevertheless the material evidence from the site currently is housed in the collections of the archaeological museum in Cordoba. Rafael Castejon and Martinez de Arizala, "Vestigios de alcazares musulmanes," *B.R.A.C.* 20 (1949), 213-22; D.F. Ruggles, *Gardens*, p. 119.

<sup>27</sup> Felix Hernandez Gimenez, *Madinat al-Zahra'*, p. 176-81.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* Christian Ewert, "Die Dekorelemente des Spätumayyadischen fundkomplexes aus dem Cortijo del Alcaide," In *Madriider Mitteilungen* 39 (1998), 356-532. A Spanish version was published the following year as "El arte omeya andalusí en su último fase: El

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the carved stone panels, and textual references, Hernandez suggested that the Cortijo del Alcaide site was actually a famous Umayyad *munya* known as Dar al-Na'ura (Palace of the Waterwheel), an opinion which Castejon supported in a 1960 article, "Los Monumentos árabes de Córdoba: Excavaciones en el cortijo El Alcaide. Dar al-Naura?"<sup>29</sup>

The Cortijo del Alcaide panels with their horseshoe arches, red and white voussoirs, and their fields of carved vegetal ornament (Figs. 45, 46, 48) clearly resemble in composition and technique the decoration of the Salon Rico, the Dar al-Mulk, and the Vivienda del Alberca/Small Garden (Figs. 13, 16, 19). Other sites have yielded a wealth of similar carved stone fragments, along with remains of pottery, and glassware, most of which remain uncatalogued in the storage warehouse of Cordoba's archaeological museum (Figs. 53, 54), but which on the whole present a consistent decorative vocabulary for luxury secular architecture under the Umayyads.

### *The presence of water*

One of the most striking aspects of the material evidence associated with Cordoban houses and palaces is the ubiquitous presence of water structures. The most monumental evidence for the role of water in the overall conception of the Cordoban *munya* appears at al-Rummaniya, where a monumental pool (measuring 49.7 x 28 x approximately 3 meters deep, and with a water capacity of 1,372 cubic meters) is located

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Cortijo del Alcaide," In *La Peninsula Iberica y el Mediterraneo durante los siglos XI y XII - II: Almanzor y los terrores del milenio* (Palencia: Fundacion Santa Maria La Real, Centro Estudios del Romanico, Monasterio de Santa Maria la Real, 1999), 111-131.

<sup>29</sup>Rafael Castejon, "Los Monumentos árabes de Córdoba: Excavaciones en el cortijo El Alcaide. Dar al-Naura?" *al-Mulk: Anuario de Estudios Arabistas* 1, Real Academia de Cordoba Inst. de Estudios Califales, Suplemento al "BRAC" (1959-60), 163-66.

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northwest of the pavilion on the upper terrace (Figs. 26, 34). Miguel Barceló, a historian of medieval Andalusí water systems, studied the pool two decades ago and found it was fed by a subterranean reservoir and aqueduct line located to the north (Figs. 27-29). A drainage system in turn carried water from the pool to the lower terraces. The al-Rummaniya pool may have served other functions, in addition to that of irrigation. For instance, Velazquez Bosco interpreted the massive buttresses that punctuate the perimeter wall at regular intervals as the supports for a suspended walkway around the pool, thus speculating that the pool had recreational functions (Fig. 35). Likewise, references to fishponds in Arabic texts about Madinat al-Zahra' also raise the possibility that the pool might have provided fresh fish for al-Rummaniya's patron.<sup>30</sup>

Al-Rummaniya boasts the largest and best-preserved *munya* pool, but water tanks also appear at most of the other extramural locations discussed above. For example, at the Cortijo del Alcaide site located some three kilometers west of the city walls near the bank of the Guadalquivir, the interior walls of the pools are ornamented with a pattern of interlacing arches (Figs. 56, 57). At Madinat al-Zahra' the pool in the courtyard of the Vivienda del Alberca boasts two sets of steps which would have descended to the water's surface (Fig. 18). This type of pool also appears in the courtyard of a large house excavated at the tenth-century suburb at Cercadilla (Fig. 42), although the majority of the Cercadilla houses were provisioned simply with a well, while others contained water basins approximately two meters in length and arranged along the dwelling's north-south axis. Though it appears in an official reception area, rather than a domestic space, the

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<sup>30</sup> The Arabic term *birka*, used to refer to *munya* pools, is also used to refer to fishponds. Other terms include *mahkân*, *djals*, *ikhādha*, *faḍla*, *birka*). See the article on fish in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; s.v. "samak."

lavishly-decorated reception hall at Madinat al-Zahra' faces a garden whose centerpiece is a large pool, upon whose surface a pavilion would have appeared to float, mirroring the reception hall which it once faced (Fig. 12).

Al-Maqqari preserved an account of the construction of an aqueduct during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III, which illustrates the importance of water to one of the most famous of the Umayyad *munyas*:

In Sadr of this month al-Nasir ['Abd al-Rahman] completed the construction of the remarkable aqueduct (*al-qanāt al-gharība*), in which fresh water flowed from the mountain of Cordoba to the palace (*qasr*) of al-Na'ura west of Cordoba, in a remarkable feat of engineering, creating a path to carry the water. The water flowed along a path carried atop the arcades of the aqueduct (*al-hanāya al-maq'ūda*), a feat of wondrous planning (*bi-tadbīr 'ajīb*) and precise technical skill...<sup>31</sup>

The explicit purpose of the aqueduct was to supply water to the caliphal estate, Dar al-Na'ura (Palace of the Waterwheel). Part of the aqueduct, a tenth-century appropriation and rebuilding of a pre-existing Roman aqueduct, can be seen today at the point where it emerges from its subterranean route to cross a valley in the mountains northwest of Cordoba and Madinat al-Zahra' (Fig. 66).<sup>32</sup> This stretch of the aqueduct's course is

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<sup>31</sup> Al-Maqqari, *Nafh al-tib*, I:564-65.

<sup>32</sup> The fact that the Umayyad engineers were building upon an existing system does not detract from the tenth-century achievement of the refurbishment and expansion of the Roman water system; the fact that the project took fourteen months to complete, a period of time in which an entire palace could have easily been constructed, suggests that the project entailed a complete rebuilding and expansion of the earlier aqueduct system. The aqueduct was not the only Umayyad work to have been attributed to the Roman period; as recently as 1982 Maria Cruz Castro's *Villas Romanas de España* identifies an important medieval *munya* site, the Cortijo del Alcaide (dated to the late tenth or early-eleventh century), as one of the three significant Roman villa sites of the Cordoba region. See Cruz Castro, *Villas Romanas*, 42-43. Its inclusion here is puzzling. There is no plan of the site, to my knowledge, all excavation reports from the mid-twentieth century having been lost. The material remains, consisting of carved stone panels housed in the Cordoban archaeological museum but not currently on display (Figs. 26-31), and



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characterized by the use of horseshoe arches with alternating red and white voussoirs, characteristic of Umayyad construction at the Great Mosque of Cordoba and at Madinat al-Zahra'.<sup>33</sup> But the account continues with a description of a marvelous fountain and pool that marked the arrival of the water at the estate, indicating that water was also exploited at such sites for dramatic architectural and aesthetic display:

... The water flowed into a great pool (*birka 'azīma*), which had a statue of a great lion (*'alayha asadun 'azīmun al-šūra*). . . A more splendid creation did not exist among all the works of the kings of the past (*fī-mā sawwara al-mulūk fī ghabir al-dahr*). The waters that spilled forth from this lion could water all the gardens of the palace, despite their great extent, before its surplus overflowed

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uncatalogued fragments of sculptural decoration at the museum's storage site (Figs. 32,33), seem clearly Umayyyad. On the decorative panels see Christian Ewert, "Die Dekorelemente des Spätumayyadischen fundkomplexes aus dem Cortijo del Alcaide," *Madriider Mitteilungen* 39 (1998), 356-532 and Christian Ewert, "El arte omeya andalusí en su último fase: El Cortijo del Alcaide," In *La Peninsula Iberica y el Mediterraneo durante los siglos XI y XII - II: Almanzor y los terrores del milenio* (Palencia: Fundacion Santa Maria La Real, Centro Estudios del Romanico, Monasterio de Santa Maria la Real, 1999), 111-131. The other two sites noted as Roman villas in Cruz's book are "Valenzoneja" in the town of Alcolea, and "El Encinarejo de los Frailes" in the town of Villarubia, both in the province of Cordoba.

<sup>33</sup> The Umayyad appearance of the structure, coupled with the Arabic text cited above, has long been taken to indicate that the aqueduct was a medieval construction in its entirety. In fact, it has only been within the last two decades or so that archaeologists have recognized and studied the Roman layers underlying those of the aqueduct's Umayyad reconstruction. It is interesting that the Arabic author underscores the impressive engineering achievement of the project without acknowledging the antique provenance of the aqueduct that had been refurbished. Indeed, although the reference to "the works of ancient kings" might allude obliquely to the Roman origins of the aqueduct, the account gives no indication that the aqueduct was anything other than an entirely Umayyad creation. Such an interpretation is understandable, given the Umayyad appearance of the fraction of the aqueduct visible aboveground. This example of the Umayyad appropriation of Cordoba's Roman remains is significant however, in my opinion, because it offers another example of the conscious Umayyad appropriation of antique remains in Cordoba. The evidence for the Umayyad reuse of works of Roman art, architecture, and aqueducts in and around Cordoba suggests that we should not necessarily take the lack of references to Roman remains in Arabic texts that mention the *munyas* as an indication that the Umayyad appropriation of Roman villa sites in the city's western extramural zone did not occur.

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and ran down into the Guadalquivir. This aqueduct, and the pool and lion fountain into which its waters flowed, were among the most significant ancient monuments of the kings of the past, considering the distance the aqueduct traversed, the changes in direction that it had to make, the magnificence of the construction, and the height of its towers, which raised the water within them so that it flowed correctly. The construction of this aqueduct, from its emergence from the mountain of Cordoba to the arrival of the waters at the pool, took fourteen months.<sup>34</sup>

The notion of the display and visual celebration of water in Cordoban residences is reflected in a group of water basins excavated at Cordoba, or attributed to the city during the caliphal period. For example, in the collection of the Museo de la Alhambra in Granada there is a white marble basin measuring 41.6 x 61.6 x 15 cm which A. Fernandez Puertas attributes to tenth century Cordoba. Its rim is decorated with two scrolling, interlaced vines, while its long sides are decorated with a symmetrical arrangement of large vine scrolls flanking a central pinecone.<sup>35</sup> Another rectangular basin, plain but for the carved molding of its rim, was unearthed in the rooms adjacent to the reception hall at Madinat al-Zahra'. Dated to 960 CE, it measures 23.5 x 76.5 x 64 cm.<sup>36</sup> In the collections of the Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Granada there is a round, lobed basin of white marble (measuring 65 cm in diameter and 25 cm in depth) whose inscription states that it was created under the direction of an elite freedman (*fatā*),

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<sup>34</sup> Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tib*, I:564-65.

<sup>35</sup> See *El Esplendor de los Omeyas Cordobeses: La civilización musulmana de Europa Occidental*, [catalogue of the exhibition held at Madinat al-Zahra, Córdoba 3 May-30 September 2001] (Granada: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, El Legado Andalusi, c. 2001), p. 152 for description and bibliography.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153 for description and bibliography.

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Ja'afar, in the court of al-Hakam II in 970-71 CE.<sup>37</sup> To these Cordoban pieces we can perhaps add three more basins whose places of origin and dates of manufacture have yet to be satisfactorily determined. One is held by the Hispanic Society of New York; also rectangular, this basin bears an inscription (untranslated) around its rim, while its sides are ornamented with palmettes at the corners, and with medallions - centered on an unornamented field - in which a central palmette is flanked by symmetrical curling leaves.<sup>38</sup> Of the other two basins whose provenance is unclear, the Museo de la Alhambra holds a shallow, square, sandstone basin measuring 8.6 x 30 cm, which has been attributed to tenth century Cordoba.<sup>39</sup> Finally, a rectangular limestone basin in the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla has also been attributed to tenth-century Cordoba.<sup>40</sup> Its decoration, however, marks a departure from the vegetal ornamentation of the aforementioned basins, consisting of two registers. The uppermost register forms a band around the top of the basin in which two groups of three ducks flank the central figure of a small turtle. In the lower register two superimposed rows of deeply-carved trilobed elements suggest gently waving water plants.

At al-Rummaniya alone three basins were unearthed between 1920 and 1950, further underscoring the prominence of water on a smaller scale in the Cordoban *mynyas*.

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151 for description and bibliography.

<sup>38</sup> I am grateful to Mariam Rosser-Owen for alerting me to the existence, and providing photographs of, the Hispanic Society basin. The photographs show the basin displayed atop a Corinthian column, whose relationship (if any) to the basin I have not yet determined.

<sup>39</sup> *El Esplendor de los Omeyas Cordobeses: La civilización musulmana de Europa Occidental*, p. 149.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

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In 1926 workmen found the first fountain basin, measuring .95 x .68 x .26 meters and decorated with acanthus leaves, bi-part scrolls, and lion's and ram's heads (Fig. 36a).<sup>41</sup> Its unusual appearance led the art historian Henri Terrasse to argue in 1932 that the basin was actually a pre-Islamic piece, an opinion that the Cordoban antiquarian Rafael Castejon contested in later articles.<sup>42</sup> In 1945, some twenty years after the discovery of the first marble basin, workmen discovered a second marble basin at al-Rummaniya, similar in some respects to the earlier find (Fig. 36b).<sup>43</sup> The new basin was smaller than the original, measuring .68 m x .52 m x .18, and boasted a similar, but more complex decorative scheme. Whereas the earlier basin was encircled with the heads of rams and lions, the second basin depicted whole figures of lions or leopards along with the acanthus leaves and bi-part scrolls familiar from the piece discovered earlier. Castejon related these two basins to a third located in the courtyard of a house in the eastern zone of the walled urban center (not pictured). This third basin was larger (1.05 m x .67 x .30 m) than the previously-discovered ones, but Castejon wrote that it was similar in ornament to the other two, with acanthus leaves and other vegetal motifs, as well as a sculpted lion's head serving as an outlet for water. Archaeologists did not record the

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<sup>41</sup> In 1926 a group from the Cordoba Commission of Monuments visited the al-Rummaniya site, citing concern for the site in the face of the new construction which the proprietor of the estate was undertaking when the marble basin was discovered. The published report of the Commission also mentions the Committee's desire to investigate rumours circulating around Cordoba in the wake of Velazquez Bosco's early excavations at the site that the hajib, or vizier al-Mansur's *munya* al-'Amiriyya, known only from textual evidence, had been discovered.

<sup>42</sup> Henri Terrasse, *L'art hispano-mauresque des origines au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1932); Rafael Castejón, "Nueva pila almanzoreña en Cordoba," In *B.R.A.C.* 20, no. 61 (1949), 235-40; Rafael Castejón, "Alamiria," In *B.R.A.C.* 25, no. 70 (1954), 150-158.

<sup>43</sup> Castejón, "Nueva pila p. 235-40.

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exact locations at which these basins were unearthed, making it impossible to determine what the relationship of the basins to the architectural or garden spaces might have been.<sup>44</sup>

Clearly, however, the presence of water was an important component of the *munya* as an architectural type in Umayyad Cordoba, as it also seems to have been in North African palaces of roughly the same time period. The most celebrated example of this monumental incorporation of water into a palace complex occurs at the eleventh-century palace known as the Qal'a of the Banu Hammad in Algeria, which Ruggles and Velazquez Bosco both mention in connection to the pool at al-Rummaniya. The incorporation of water into domestic architecture, as well as the emphasis on water infrastructure in the broader landscape on the scale found in Umayyad Cordoba, is unusual at this moment in the Islamic world, nor are their comparable examples from the Roman architecture of the Iberian Peninsula or North Africa. However, after the tenth century large pools of water are a signal element of palace architecture on the Iberian Peninsula, and are ubiquitous in later medieval Morocco as well. Great pools like that of al-Rummaniya, as mentioned earlier, served functions that ranged from the pragmatic to the pleasurable. Likewise, the incorporation of water pools into domestic architecture at this time can probably be explained by the favorable climactic effect produced by the presence of large areas of water within the domestic architecture of an arid climate. Proponents of sustainable design have analyzed the process known as evaporative cooling, whereby air temperature is appreciably lowered by the presence of water, as

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<sup>44</sup> And the staff of Cordoba's Archaeological Museum is unaware of the existence of any of the records or materials of Velazquez Bosco's or Rafael Castejon's excavations.

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latent heat energy in hot air is transferred to water, which then evaporates.<sup>45</sup> This process, which operates even when water is present only in small amounts, creates passive ventilation, in which the cooler, heavier air pushes hot, dry air up, thereby creating a natural cooling cycle. The courtyard residence with central fountain is the ideal architectural form to produce evaporative cooling. In the Cordoban *munya*, therefore, the ubiquitous presence of water combines the functional with the aesthetic.

### *Architectural Contexts: Roman villas and Islamic palaces*

Because the Cordoban Umayyad dynasty was an offshoot of the Umayyad dynasty of Syria, and considering that many of the Arabs who settled in Cordoba following the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula came mostly from Syria, including ‘Abd al-Rahman I, the rich Hellenistic and Late Antique architectural tradition of Syria – both ancient Roman villas such as those of Antioch, and the rural estates (*qusūr*) of the Syrian Umayyads – are part of the *munya*’s immediate architectural context. The estates of Daphne, an elite suburb of Antioch known for its abundant waters and the vistas of the surrounding landscape, illustrate Syria’s important suburban villa tradition (Fig. 75). The plans of two houses excavated at Daphne show suites of rooms arranged around courtyards or disposed along interior porticos (Figs. 76).<sup>46</sup> Though entrances and the relationships between individual rooms are difficult to identify with certainty, architectural ornament and the plans appear to work in tandem to lead the eye

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<sup>45</sup> “Evaporative Cooling ,” <http://www.arch.mcgill.ca/prof/bourke/arch672/fall2002/evapor.htm> (August 5 2005).

<sup>46</sup> John J. Dobbins, “The Houses at Antioch,” In *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City*, ed. Christine Kondoleon (Princeton: Princeton UP/Worcester Art Museum, 2001), 51-62.

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of a viewer within along certain axes to views of interior water features or outside to the landscape beyond. (Fig. 78).<sup>47</sup>

In addition to the suburban villas of Antioch's Daphne suburb, Syria also offers some of the most detailed information on late antique rural architecture in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>48</sup> Hundreds of ancient villages with well-preserved domestic and agricultural buildings have survived, especially in the limestone massif area of northern Syria, where they are known as the Dead Cities (Fig. 79, 80).<sup>49</sup> Nearly all of the structures found in these rural settlements are houses that follow the same basic plan (two-story with courtyard) and which had the same functions: a residential upper story and space for animals and the processing and storage of olives, wine, and cereal on the ground level.<sup>50</sup> These rural farmhouses were extremely well built of local stone, often carved and ornamented.

Interpretation of the decoration and construction of these structures has changed significantly over time. Archaeologists of the early years of the twentieth century,

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<sup>47</sup> J. Dobbins (see above) argues that the idea of "urban armatures" outlined by William MacDonald as a way of understanding the disposition of Roman urban space works well with the evidence from Antiochene houses. For "urban armatures" see William L. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire, vol. 2, An Urban Appraisal* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986).

<sup>48</sup> For an historiographical overview of the studies on rural settlement in the ancient Mesopotamia see C. Foss, "The Mesopotamian countryside in late antiquity: a review article," *The Roman and Byzantine Mesopotamia: Vol. 2 Some recent archaeological research*, JRA supplementary series, no. 14 ed. J.H. Humphrey (Portsmouth R.I., 1999), 213-34.

<sup>49</sup> See Fergus Millar, "The Tetrapolis and northern Syria," Chapter 7 in *The Roman Near East, 31 BC-AD 337* (Cambridge, MA, 1993).

<sup>50</sup> Ignacio Peña, "Dwellings," In *The Christian Art of Byzantine Syria* (London: Garnet, 1996) 161-76.

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principally Howard Crosby Butler of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria (carried out in 1899-1900, 1904-1905, and 1909) interpreted the rural remains as well-built villas and houses owned by a wealthy and refined population of independent landowners based on analysis of the elegantly constructed remains of stone houses, embellished with carved ornament, porticoes, and courtyards. Although Butler noted the ubiquitous presence of olive and/or wine presses throughout the Syrian rural settlements, consideration of the region's social or economic history did not play a role in his interpretation of the rural remains.<sup>51</sup>

The revision of this early interpretation begins in the mid-twentieth century, when the rural remains were considered in relation to the social and economic history of the region rather than as autonomous objects of mainly art-historical value.<sup>52</sup> The quality of this rural architecture continued to be explained through their interpretation as either the villas or public buildings of a wealthy leisured class until the 1970s, when excavations carried out by the Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient (IFAPO)

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<sup>51</sup> H.C. Butler, *Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria, vol. II, Architecture and other arts* (New York, 1903).

<sup>52</sup> Georges Tchalenko, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du nord: 3 Vols.* (Paris 1953-58). In addition to providing detailed maps, plans, and photographs of architectural remains and their landscape context, as Butler's publications had done, Tchalenko's work provided the geographical, social, and historical contexts for the Syrian countryside that were not present in the earlier work. Tchalenko, an architect, not only provided detailed analyses of the built landscape, but thoroughly grounded the rural settlements into the social and economic history of the region utilizing textual and archaeological evidence (however, the archaeological evidence came from surface survey, not excavation). Theorizing from the combination of survey data and textual evidence, Tchalenko proposed differentiations between types of settlement in the Syrian countryside, and proposed that olive cultivation, for trade within the region and perhaps internationally, was the source of the significant wealth of the rural population.



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demonstrated that the remains were actually farmhouses.<sup>53</sup> The excavations, conducted in the center of the central Syrian village of Déhes, showed that structures earlier identified as public buildings were actually all farmhouses that functioned as strictly utilitarian residences, incorporating the living areas of the upper stories with courtyard spaces below for livestock and grain storage. A combination of animal husbandry and cereal production, rather than olive cultivation, formed the basis of an economy that persisted through the ninth or tenth century, though with signs of stagnation (specifically, no new building activity, and squalid conditions in existing structures) after the seventh century.

However, archaeologists and historians are still divided over the significance of the new archaeological evidence to understanding the farms' role in the social history of late antique Syria. In the most recent treatment of the subject, archaeologist Georges Tate argues that the Syrian countryside saw a flourishing population of prosperous and independent small landowners that grew steadily until the mid-sixth century through a combination of animal husbandry, cereal, olive, and wine production for personal consumption and for trade with the surrounding urban centers.<sup>54</sup> Architecturally, according to Tate, rural settlements throughout the Syrian countryside conform to a highly uniform village system composed of houses of the same type, constructed near to

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<sup>53</sup> J.-P. Sodini et al., "Déhes (Syrie du nord), Campagnes I-III (1976-78): recherches sur l'habitat rural," *Syria* 57 (1980), 1-304.

<sup>54</sup> Georges Tate, *Les Campagnes de la Syrie Du Nord I*, Inst. française d'archéologie du proche-orient, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, no. 133 (Paris: Geuthner, 1992). Tate picks up the thread begun by the French excavators (not surprisingly, since he was one of the leaders of the IFAPO excavations). Tate uses inscriptions, stylistic criteria, and comparisons of construction techniques to provide a chronology for forty-six villages in northern Syria.

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one another but with little evidence for planning. These conglomerations of farmhouses sometimes shared what appear to have been communal open spaces. The archaeological evidence from these Syrian farms, Tate argues, indicates that contrary to traditional interpretations, relations between town and countryside in the late antique period were mutually beneficial, and even that the government or urban elite did not or could not extract surplus wealth from the rural population.

Historians Nicholas Purcell and Peregrine Horden, in *The Corrupting Sea*, a multi-disciplinary examination of the Mediterranean landscape from antiquity into the medieval period, offer an opposing interpretation regarding the exploitative relations between town and country at the end of the Roman Empire. They dismiss as “simply incredible” Tate’s argument, which they paraphrase as follows:

...neither the rapacious landowner, nor the city council, nor the imperial government was competent to dent the accumulative complacency of these satisfied farmers, answerable only to themselves in their Mediterranean garden.<sup>55</sup>

Purcell and Horden propose instead that the farmhouses of the Syrian countryside were owned and tightly controlled by the class of wealthy Antiochenes who constructed the luxurious retreats of the Daphne suburb, and were populated by their largely powerless dependants.<sup>56</sup> Purcell and Horden’s view is supported by textual evidence, in the form of a satire against the wealthy citizens of Antioch, composed by the Emperor Julian. The emperor criticized wealthy Antiochenes for holding “tens of thousands of lots of land” for which they did not pay taxes, and for contributing to an economic crisis among the

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<sup>55</sup> Nicholas Purcell and Peregrine Horden, “Anatomy of the Mediterranean Countryman” In *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford, U.K. and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), p. 274-75.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 275.

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populace by hoarding corn in their granaries and selling it in the countryside at inflated prices. As a result, Julian writes, “I saw that there was truth in the outcry of the populace, and that the pressure in the market was due not to any scarcity but to the insatiate greed of the rich. . .”<sup>57</sup> The archeological evidence, however, supports the interpretation offered by Tchalenko and Tate.

In fact, there is a clearer context for the Cordoban *munya*, architecturally and in terms of climate, land usage, settlement patterns, and other factors related to the establishment of villas, in the ancient Roman villas of the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa. Both were wealthy Roman colonies and have yielded significant material evidence for Roman and Late Antique villas.<sup>58</sup> Keeping in mind T.W. Potter’s caution against generalizing about “the” Roman villa, let alone villas in other geographic areas, the archaeological evidence for Roman villas on the Iberian Peninsula suggests that most were of the peristyle type.<sup>59</sup> Plans are generally asymmetrical and quadrangular, and are

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<sup>57</sup> Emperor Julian, *Mispogon (or “Beard-Hater”)*, Wilmer Cave Wright, transl., (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1913).

<sup>58</sup> On Roman Cordoba see Robert C. Knapp, *Roman Cordoba* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1983); Desiderio Vaquerizo, ed., *Cordoba en tiempos de Seneca* (Cordoba: Convenio de Colaboracion Cultural, 1996). On the Roman Iberian Peninsula see Cristóbal González Román, *Ciudad y privilegio en Andalucía en época romana* (Granada: Univ. de Granada, 2002); A.T. Fear, *Rome and Baetica : urbanization in southern Spain c. 50 BC-AD 150*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) and Simon Keay, *Roman Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). On Roman North Africa see Susan R. Raven, *Rome in Africa*, 3rd ed. (London, New York: Routledge, 1993) and B.D. Shaw, *Rulers, Nomads and Christians in Roman North Africa* (Aldershot, 1995). On the latifundia see Dennis P. Kehoe, *The economics of agriculture on Roman imperial estates in North Africa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988.); David L. Stone, “The development of an imperial territory: Romans, Africans, and the transformation of the rural landscape of Tunisia,” (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Michigan, 1997).

<sup>59</sup> T.W. Potter, “Villas, Farms and the Countryside,” In *Roman Italy* (Berkeley: Univ. of CA Press, c. 1987), 94-124. On the villas of Roman Iberian Peninsula see: Maria Cruz

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often located on elevated sites with a southern or eastern orientation. Most of the villas excavated on the Iberian Peninsula appear to have been the residences of wealthy landowners, combining luxurious residential quarters with agricultural facilities. They were clustered around the important provincial cities and associated with the extensive road system that connected the urban centers of the three Roman provinces of Spain (Fig. 59). Accessibility to cities meant that wealthy noblemen could easily enjoy access to their villas without sacrificing access to urban amenities. The economic relationship between urban centers and the country villas was also an important factor in how estates were sited; the cities provided markets for the agricultural production that undoubtedly formed an important part of the villas' character.

In contrast to the large latifundia of the western part of the Peninsula (present-day Portugal), the villas of the southern part of the Peninsula are much smaller, usually less than two hectares in area.<sup>60</sup> Villa complexes do not seem to have been walled off from the surrounding countryside, suggesting a stable and peaceful political situation that would have encouraged their proliferation.

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Fernandez Castro. *Villas romanas en España*. [Madrid]: Ministerio de Cultura, 1982; Jean G. Gorges, *Les villas hispano-romaines: inventaire et problematique archeologiques*, Publications du Centre Pierre Paris (Bordeaux: Universite de Bordeaux, 1979); Isabelle Morand, *Ideologie, culture et spiritualite chez les proprietaires ruraux de l'Hispanie romaine*, Publications du Centre Pierre Paris, no. 27 (Paris: de Boccard, 1994); Alberto Balil, *Casa y urbanismo en la Espana antigua*, *Studia archaeologica* (Santiago de Compostela: Seminario de Arqueologia, 1972); *Implantation Rurale Antique sur le Bas Guadalquivir*, vols. I-IV. Paris: Ponsich M., 1979-1985; Javier Arce, ed., *Centcelles: El Monumento Tardorromano: Iconografia y Arquitectura*, Bibliotheca Italica, Monografias de la Escuela Espanola de Historia y Arqueologia en Roma, no. 25 (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002).

<sup>60</sup> Gorges, *Villas Hispano-Romaines* p. 87, 94, 98. Cited in Thomas F. Glick, *From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle*, p. 4.

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The Guadalquivir valley boasted many villas during the Roman period, with an especially high concentration of remains excavated in the countryside around Seville.<sup>61</sup> Since Cordoba was the capital of the Roman Baetica (the southernmost of the three Roman provinces on the Iberian Peninsula) one would expect an equally high concentration of villas around the city, but only a few have yielded significant remains in the province to date.<sup>62</sup> Maria Cruz Fernando Castro's 1982 book *Villas Romanas en España*, a synthetic survey on the subject, notes the remains of three villa sites in the Cordoban province.<sup>63</sup> However, beyond providing their names and dates, and classifying the sites as "villas señoriales," Fernando Castro provides no other information on the sites (Fig. 39). Excavations conducted since 1982, however, have yielded evidence for additional villa sites in or near Cordoba. The most substantial evidence comes from two sites: the first, Cercadilla, is located within the present-day boundaries of the city of

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<sup>61</sup>Jean G. Gorges, *Les villas hispano-romaines*, p. 55, 82; Kevin Greene, *The Archaeology of the Roman Economy*, p. 110. Cited in Glick, *From Muslim fortress to Christian castle*, p. 3 with a caveat that the appearance of dense settlement may be genuine, or just an "epiphenomenon of modern survey methods."

<sup>62</sup> Though this may have more to do with money and politics than with a dearth of sites. It seems that many of the sites are damaged in the course of construction projects like highways, and are also victims to the prioritization of new infrastructure over archaeology. Nevertheless, Spanish archaeologists publish excavation data regularly in the *Anuario Arqueológico de Andalucía*, with separate volumes for established excavation sites and emergency excavations.

<sup>63</sup> The villa identified as Valenzonaja, located in the town of Alcolea, is dated to the middle of the second century and is closest to the city of Cordoba. The next closest is a villa site known as "El Encinarejo de los Frailes," in Villarrubia. Farthest from the city, the third to fourth-century villa known as "Fuente de las Piedras (Fountain of the Stones)," is located in the town of Cabra, southeast of the city of Cordoba in the fertile Campiña region of the Cordoban province.

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Cordoba, while the second, known as El Ruedo, is located southeast of Cordoba in the fertile Campiña region of the province that stretches south of the Guadalquivir.

The villa site known as Cercadilla is located 700 m northwest of Cordoba's walled urban center, beneath the present-day railway station (Fig. 60). The site was initially uncovered in the late nineteenth century during the construction of the rail line, but excavations were not begun until 1922.<sup>64</sup> Excavations conducted since 1991 have uncovered an architectural complex spread over an area of more than eight hectares, though most of it remains beneath the rail line, whose path was not diverted to protect the remains (Fig. 61). Cercadilla's distinguishing feature is a semi-circular cryptoporticus that recalls North African mosaic depictions of similar structures, and which archaeologists have interpreted as an imperial palace (Figs. 61-63). The lead excavator, Rafael Hidalgo, has suggested that the palace was constructed between 290 and 303 C.E., perhaps for the Tetrarch Maximian during his Iberian-based campaign against North Africa, but the identification is tentative.<sup>65</sup> Measuring 109 meters in diameter, the

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<sup>64</sup> A brief overview with bibliography appears in Desiderio Vaquerizo, ed., *Cordoba en tiempos de Seneca* (Cordoba: Convenio de Colaboracion Cultural, 1996), p. 122. The detailed studies are Ma. C. Fuertes Santos and Rafael Hidalgo Prieto, "La evolución urbana del arrabal noroccidental de Qurtuba. El yacimiento de Cercadilla," In *Anales de Arqueología Cordobesa* 12 (2001), 159-75; On the central structure and baths see *Espacio público y espacio privado en el conjunto palatino de Cercadilla (Córdoba): el aula central y las termas* (Sevilla: Consejería de Cultura, Junta de Andalucía, 1996); R. Hidalgo et al., "Excavacion Arqueologico en la zona arqueologica de Cercadilla," In *Anuario Arqueologico de Andalucia* III (Consejería de Cultura de la Junta de Andalucía, 1995), 95-106; Rafael Hidalgo Prieto et al., "Cercadilla. Un yacimiento clave para la historia de Cordoba," *Revista de Arqueología*, no. 163 (1994), 40-51.

<sup>65</sup> Epigraphical evidence is scarce and is mostly funerary, taken from the Roman necropolis located northwest of the city and re-used in the walls of the tenth-century suburb or by the Visigoths and Mozarabs who used the necropolis as a cult center and Christian necropolis. Only two epigraphs have been related to the initial phase of occupation of the palace. The first consists of three gilded bronze letters: P, D, and O,

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semicircular cryptoporticus supported a large, leveled terrace from which a series of apsed halls and baths protruded, with smaller buildings framing the large central apsed hall (Figs. 61, 62)<sup>66</sup> The reconstruction of the exterior facade of the terrace shows a fortified appearance, flanked by two semicircular towers, but the "closed" appearance of the facade is reversed upon entering the terrace, where its height, combined with the radiating arrangement of the halls which opened off of it, would have presented dramatic vistas. The Cercadilla site is significant because it suggests that suburban villas did exist around Roman Cordoba, specifically in the same extramural territory west of the city that later witnessed the construction of *munyas* and suburbs during the Umayyad period. The location of building materials and infrastructure from such Roman villas may partly explain why the Umayyads chose to build in the western extramural zone.

Excavations of the villa site known as El Ruedo, located southeast of the city of Cordoba in the fertile plains of the Campiña region, yield enough evidence to allow a discussion of a Cordoban villa as both an agricultural complex and a luxurious

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between 18 and 19 cm tall, found in the sixth-century layer inside the cryptoporticus. They may have formed part of a dedicatory inscription. The second piece is a fragment of white marble, found within one of the pools of the frigidarium in the 6th c. layer, interpreted as possibly forming part of the phrase *Constanti et Maximiani - nobilissimorum - Caesarum*.

<sup>66</sup> This central apsed hall dominates the composition and was rectangular in plan with an apse at its far end. Spoliation in the sixth century has left little evidence for the nature of the pavement in this important space, but there are remains of a small fountain. A bath was located north of this central apsed hall, and may have been connected directly to it. The approach to the cryptoporticus and terrace lies between two long rows of doubled square rooms whose functions are unclear, but that created a longitudinal axis for the architectural composition.

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residence.<sup>67</sup> Oriented to the east, the villa began as a primarily agricultural complex in the second century, and was expanded and embellished up to the fourth century until it consisted of a luxurious residential core of domestic spaces arranged around a central peristyle, with agricultural buildings arranged on either side of the main residence and separated from it by narrow lanes (Fig. 64). In its final phase of expansion, around the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century, the residential core of the villa was transformed into a truly luxurious space. A bi-apsidal pool was constructed in the center of its colonnaded peristyle, along with a dining room with a built-in dining couch (*stibadium*), and an ornamental program that included mosaics, wall paintings, and a sculptural program. (Fig. 65).<sup>68</sup>

Agriculture was a fundamental part of the El Ruedo complex, whose periods of expansion coincide with the rise of the Iberian Peninsula's role in exporting grain, olive oil, and wine to the central Roman lands, and the period of general decline and abandonment for many villas on the Italian mainland. The luxury that characterizes the later expansions at El Ruedo likely points to the enrichment of the villa owners in this lucrative economic trend, while the villa's ornamental program from the expansions relates Roman Iberia to the wider context of villa life in the rest of the Roman empire. With its interior portico, fountains, sculptures, mosaics, and elegant dining room El Ruedo attests to the participation of its patrons in an elite lifestyle associated with late

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<sup>67</sup> El Ruedo is located in the village of Almedinilla, located east from Priego de Córdoba towards Alcalá la Real. Analyses of the excavations have been published in English in D. Vaquerizo Gil and J.R. Carrillo Diaz-Pines, "The Roman Villa of El Ruedo (Almedinilla, Cordoba)," In *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 8 (1995), 121-157.

<sup>68</sup> On the sculpture see *La Villa de El Ruedo, Almedinilla, (Cordoba): Decoracion Escultorica e Interpretacion*. Murcia: FG Graf, 1997.



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Late Roman luxury villas of the same period as distant as those of Antioch.<sup>69</sup> Certainly, Roman Cordoba and the southern province in general participated actively in Roman culture; both Senecas and Lucan were from Cordoba, while Martial, Quintillian, the agronomer Columella, and the emperors Trajan (r. 98-117), Hadrian (r.117-138), Theodosius I (r.378-395), and Magnus Maximus (r. 383-388) were all from the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>70</sup>

The geographical proximity of the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula to North Africa, just a few miles across the Straits of Gibraltar, historically encouraged migration and settlement between the two regions. The Vandals invaded North Africa from Spain in the fifth century, and during the medieval period the two regions were considered as more or less one geographic and political unit (Fig. 67). The region was known in Arabic as the Maghrib, a name that referred to the region's location at the western extreme of the medieval Islamic territories. North Africa was incorporated into the Syrian Umayyad empire in the seventh century, and the Iberian Peninsula was conquered in 711, after which it fell under the jurisdiction of the Islamic governor of North Africa, based either in the city of Qayrawan (in present-day Tunisia) or Fustat (old Cairo) in Egypt. Many Berbers settled on the Iberian Peninsula after its conquest in 711, and when the founder of the Cordoban Umayyad line, the Syrian Umayyad prince 'Abd al-Rahman b.

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<sup>69</sup> See the exhibition catalogue Christine Kondoleon, ed., *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* (Princeton: Princeton UP/Worcester Art Museum, 2000), esp. relevant articles by Kondoleon, John Dobbins, Anna Gonosová, and James Russell.

<sup>70</sup> Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400-1000* (London: MacMillan Education, 1983), 3. On the material culture of Roman Spain in general see Javier Arce et al., ed., *Hispania romana: da terra di conquista a provincia dell'impero* (Milan: Electa, 1997) and *La Ciudad hispanorromana* (Madrid, Barcelona: Ministerio de Cultura/ Ambit Servicios Editoriales, 1993).

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Mu'awiya, fled Syria to escape the massacre of his family that accompanied the 'Abbasid coup he took refuge with the Nafza Berbers of North Africa, his maternal relations.

During the five years that he lived in North Africa, the future Cordoban Umayyad ruler mustered a significant part of his army of supporters from North African Berbers. With an army composed of Berber and Arab (mainly Syrians who had been clients of the Syrian Umayyads) 'Abd al-Rahman then conquered the Iberian Peninsula from its Islamic governor in 756, establishing the Cordoban line of the Umayyad dynasty that would rule the Peninsula for the next several hundred years.<sup>71</sup>

Like the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa had been a prosperous Roman colony known for its enormous private agricultural estates (*latifundia*) as well as for cosmopolitan Punic cities like Carthage and Volubilis. The villas of Roman and Punic North Africa are especially well known for their mosaic floors; North African mosaic workshops developed styles distinct from those of the Italian mainland in subject matter and technique.<sup>72</sup> In addition to the geometric patterns, mythological subjects, and allegorical scenes that are typically portrayed in Roman mosaics, a group of North

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<sup>71</sup> On the conquest of al-Andalus see Hugh Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus* (Harlow-New York: Longman, 1996), p. 1-29; E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane*, 3 vols. (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1950-53), I, p.1-89; Pedro Chalmeta, *Invasion e Islamizacion: la sumision de Hispania y la formacion de al-Andalus* (Madrid, 1994); A.D. Taha, *The Muslim Conquest and Settlement of North Africa and Spain* (London and New York, 1989).

<sup>72</sup> On the Roman mosaics of North Africa see S. Ferdi, *Mosaïques des Eaux en Algérie: un Langage Mythologique des Pierres* (Algiers-Paris: Éditeur Régie Sud Méditerranée, 1998); F. Ghedini, ed., *I Mosaici Romani di Tunisia* (Milan: Editoriale Jaca Book SpA, 1995); M. Yacoub, *Splendeurs des Mosaïques de Tunisie* (Tunis: Editions de l'Agence Nationale du Patrimoine, 1995) (reviewed recently by David Parrish, "Recent books on Tunisian and Algerian mosaics," *JRA* 13 (2000), 716-718), as well as Katherine M.D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

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African mosaics depict buildings that scholars have interpreted as villas. The portrayal of estates became common in fourth century North Africa mosaics depicting hunting scenes, in which the hunters are shown leaving or returning to their estates.<sup>73</sup> These mosaic depictions of the estates constitute an important body of evidence for what the ancient and Late Antique villas of North Africa may have been like.

The most celebrated depiction of a villa in a North African mosaic is probably the Mosaic of Dominus Iulius, or Lord Julius. Currently in the Bardo Museum, the mosaic was excavated in Carthage and has been dated to the late fourth or early fifth century (Fig. 68).<sup>74</sup> The depiction of the villa is located in the center of the composition, surrounded by representations of agricultural activities, and a man and woman who have been interpreted as the owners of the estate. The villa's wide central block appears constructed of ashlar blocks. A portal is centered on the façade, and what appears to be a second-story arcade runs the length of the central block. The villa's façade is framed by rectangular towers, each of which has a single door at its base and a single window near its pointed, tiled roof. Behind the central block a square building with a pitched roof and single window appears beside a group of four round, domed structures that Dunbabin interprets as baths.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> K. Dunbabin, p. 46-64.

<sup>74</sup> On this mosaic see Dunbabin, p. 119; Plate XLIII, Fig. 109; I. Lavin, "Hunting Mosaics of Antioch and their sources," In *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17, 1963, p. 179-286 but in particular p. 249; A. Merlin, 'La Mosaique de Seigneur Julius à Carthage,' In *Bulletin Archéologique du Comité des Travaux*, 1921, p. 95-114, pl. XII.

<sup>75</sup> K. Dunbabin, p. 119.

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The building depicted in the Mosaic of Lord Julius bears some resemblance to two others depicted in two apsidal mosaics excavated in Tabarka and dated to the late fourth or early fifth century. The Tabarka mosaics depict villas with rectangular, arcaded central blocks framed by square towers, much like the structure shown in the Mosaic of Lord Julius (Figs. 69, 70). However, the Tabarka mosaics do not depict two-story structures with an arcade superimposed above a ground floor, as historians have interpreted a depiction of the villa in the Mosaic of Lord Julius. Instead, as Tadeusz Sarnowski's proposed reconstructions of the Tabarka villas make clear, the arcaded block with framing towers appears as part of a square, walled courtyard plan.

The architectural type portrayed in the North African mosaics has parallels on the Iberian Peninsula, in the Villa de Murias de Beloño (Orviedo) and the Villa de Centroña (La Coruña) (Figs. 71-73). The plan and reconstruction of the former show two rectangular blocks, one with a tower at one end, and the other framed by two rectangular wings, that are similar in conception to those portrayed in the mosaics from Carthage and Tabarka. Likewise, the plan of the Villa de Centroña, shows how one façade of the rectangular block opened to the exterior through a colonnade (Fig. 71).

Considered on the whole, the extramural remains of houses and estates discussed above illustrate the extent to which Cordoba expanded beyond its antique walls between the eighth and tenth centuries. The remains provide a sketch of Umayyad domestic architecture, as it developed free from the constraints that must have hampered residential construction within the walls of the crowded antique city. The archaeological sites discussed above help to form an image of how Cordoba's fertile western plain, bounded by river and mountain, developed into a flourishing landscape of *munyas* (Figs. 6, 9, 10).

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The river would have provided the water necessary for irrigating the walled gardens attached to the residences, water which would have been easily obtainable with the construction of the waterwheels for which Cordoba was well known. As the population of Cordoba grew, development accelerated beyond the walls of the old urban center, and suburban quarters grew up around the early estates. During the reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman III, the resulting economic and social stability which accompanied his consolidation of political power was translated into a new impetus for building projects, which peaked with the foundation of the new palace city in 936 CE. The construction of Madinat al-Zahra, with its accompanying roads and water infrastructure, spurred courtiers to found new villas within easy access to the court.

Insofar as the architecture of the *munya* is concerned, this chapter has argued that the Cordoban estates belong within the broader picture of villas in the ancient and Islamic Mediterranean, and that two types of *munya* plans were present in Umayyad Cordoba: the courtyard type typical of the majority of Cordoban domestic architecture, and the double hall type represented by the Dar al-Mulk and al-Rummaniya. These two types in turn could be combined, as in the plan of the Vivienda del Alberca at Madinat al-Zahra’, in which two double halls face an interior garden courtyard, an arrangement that prefigures later Andalusí palace architecture. The material evidence indicates that the *munyas* were rich structures whose decoration clearly demonstrates their participation in the same court artistic vocabulary displayed at the major structures at Madinat al-Zahra’. We can therefore conclude that the material evidence for the residential components of the estates, despite its fragmented and incomplete nature, corroborates the picture set forth in

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the Arabic chronicles, of the Cordoban *munya* as a building type associated with the highest circles of the Umayyad court.

### CHAPTER III

#### CULTIVATING REFINEMENT

##### *Introduction*

Arabic texts indicate that the Cordoban *munyas*, in addition to providing their patrons with sites of leisure and recreation (*nuzah*), served agricultural functions. For example, speaking of the Umayyad amir ‘Abd Allah’s foundation of the *munya* known as al-Na‘ura, the tenth-century Umayyad chronicler Ibn Hayyan says that the amir founded a marvelous *munya* on a vast plot of land (*ansha’aha munya ‘ajība wāsi’a al-khitta*), and that while he intended that it serve as a place of delight (*arāduhā lilfurja*), the amir enlarged the size of the estate’s lands (*aws’ua khitta*) and increased its cultivation (*akthara ghirāsā*).<sup>1</sup> Likewise, in an oft-quoted passage, Ibn Hayyan mentions that the estate of a high-ranking Umayyad courtier in the court of al-Hakam II encompassed, in addition to a rich residence, irrigated gardens (*al-basātīn al-masqīa*), cultivated lands (*al-arāḍīn al-mazru’a*), and riding animals.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, passages like these offer little that could be used to conjure a more detailed image of the estates as productive properties. Such allusions raise the question of what it was that was being cultivated, an issue that this chapter addresses. The chapter addresses the question of what type of cultivation was associated with Cordoban *munyas* by first examining how the Cordoban *munya* has been defined historiographically, and then by examining textual evidence, in the form of agricultural texts attributed to the Umayyad

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis: tome troisieme, chronique du regne du calife umaiyade ‘Abd Allah a Cordue, texte arabe* ed. P. Melchior M. Antuña (Paris, 1937), p. 38-39.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis fi akhbar bilād al-Andalus* ed. A.A. al-Hajji (Beirut: Dar al-Tahqafah, 1965), 106-107. I will discuss this passage again later in this chapter, as well as in Chapter IV.

reign in al-Andalus, to more precisely define the *munya* as architectural and agricultural entity.

*Interpreting munya functions: historiography*

Based on allusions to *munyas* in the tenth-century court chronicles of ‘Isa Ahmad al-Razi and Ibn Hayyan, in 1965 the Spanish Arabist E. García Gomez summarized the basic definition of the Cordoban *munya* that appears in all subsequent historiography:

The word “almunia’ (*al-munya*) was used in the Muslim East with the vocalization ‘minya’, connoting a ‘station, port of navigation, monastery.’ In our peninsula the word was undoubtedly vocalized as ‘*munya*,’ as indicated by the toponym “Almunia,” which generally designates a “cortijo,” a country house surrounded to some extent by garden and worked lands, which served as an occasional residence, and which was simultaneously a recreational and productive estate. [Ibn Hayyan] provides us with a brief and synthetic definition of a *munya*, when he tells us that the great *fata Durri* presented his beautiful *munya* of Guadarroman to the Caliph, “with all that was within and without it: watered gardens [Ar. *al-basātīn al-masqīā*], cultivated lands [*al-arādīn al-mazru‘a*], male and female slaves [‘*abd, ama*], and riding animals/beasts of burden [*thaur*].<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> “La palabra ‘almunia’ (*al-munya*)...se usó en Oriente musulmán con la vocalización ‘minya’, y con el sentido de ‘estación, puerto de navegación, monasterio’. En nuestra península, con vocalización ‘*munya*’ indudable y atestiguada por los topónimos ‘Almunia’, designaba, en cambio, por lo general un ‘cortijo’: una casa de campo, rodeada de un poco o un mucho de jardín y de tierras de labor, que servía de residencia ocasional, y era, al mismo tiempo, finca de recreo y de explotación.” See Emilio García Gómez, “Notas sobre topografía cordobesa en los Anales de al-Hakam II por ‘Isa Razi,” in *al-Andalus* 30 (1965), p. 334. Similarly, Ruggles defines *munya* as “a country house that is surrounded by gardens that are agriculturally productive and revenue producing as well



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While García Gómez's general definition is ubiquitous in contemporary discussions of the *munya*, historians have focused on the particular functions or characteristics of the *munya* relevant to each one's disciplinary focus. For instance, D.F. Ruggles, a historian of landscape as well as architecture, has framed the Cordoban *munya*s within the larger context of how Andalusí rulers expressed certain ideas about rulership in their patronage of gardens and palaces and in their shaping of the land through such patronage and through agriculture.<sup>4</sup> Historians of Andalusí urbanism, meanwhile, have underscored the role of the *munya* in the urban development of Andalusí cities. Luis Laca, whose work addresses the *munya* as it relates to architecture, urbanism, and landscape history, sees the *munya*s as the fundamental feature of the suburban landscapes of Cordoba as well as Seville, Toledo, Granada.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, Antonio Vallejo and other Cordoban archaeologists, whose excavations at the tenth-century palace city of Madinat al-Zahra' and in the

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as recreational, and that provides a seasonal or temporary residence for the owner." In *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p. 36. I will return to Ibn Hayyan's passage on Durri's *munya*, in *al-Muqtabis*, ed. Hajji (Beirut: Dar al-Tahqafah, 1965), p. 106-107, below and in the following chapters.

<sup>4</sup> On gardens in al-Andalus see D.F. Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, passim; *ibid.* "The Gardens of the Alhambra and the Concept of the Garden in Islamic Spain," In *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* ed. Jerrilyn Dodds (New York, 1992), p. 163-71; James Dickie, "Gardens in Muslim Spain," In *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1 (1986), p. 78-83; *ibid.*, "The Hispano-Arab Garden: Notes towards a Typology," In *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Jayyusi, p. 1016-1035; *ibid.*, "The Islamic Garden in Spain," In *The Islamic Garden* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1976), p. 87-105; Esteban Hernández Bermejo, "Botanical foundations for the restoration of Spanish-Arabic gardens: study of the plant species used and their introduction during the Andalus period," In *The Authentic Garden: A Symposium on Gardens* ed. L. Tjon Sie Fat and E. de Jong (Leiden: Clusius Foundation, 1990), 153-164, and in the same volume, Expiración Garcia Sanchez, Angel López y López, "The Botanic Gardens in Muslim Spain," p. 165-176.

<sup>5</sup> Laca Menéndez de Luarda, "Simbiosis arquitectura-paisaje," p. 39.

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suburbs of the Umayyad city, have illuminated the processes of the urbanization of the Cordoban countryside in the tenth century and noted the *munya/s*' importance in this process.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, recent historians of agriculture focus on the *munya* as part of a larger system of Andalusí cultivation. For example, Vincent Lagardere defines the *munya* as a combination of spaces with a range of purposes:

Some of these tenanted farms in the area around the large cities, Cordoba, Seville, Granada were laid out around pleasure houses, creating the *munya*, which included not only the caliphal residence surrounded by pleasure gardens, but also settlements, defensive towers, vast spaces for threshing grain, dovecotes and poultry-yards, and fertile cultivated lands belonging to various farms.<sup>7</sup>

Likewise, Expiración García Sanchez and Angel López y López, specialists on the Andalusí agricultural treatises, define the *munya* by the presence of small-scale agricultural land (Ar. *bustān*), which they equate with the Latin *hortus*.<sup>8</sup> From the point of view of economic history, the *munya*'s agricultural functions translated into real wealth,

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<sup>6</sup> Antonio Vallejo Triano, "El Proyecto Urbanístico del Estado Califal," p. 69-81; Ana Ruiz et al., "Los Arrabeles de la Córdoba Musulmana," p. 145.

<sup>7</sup> "Certaines de ces métairies aux abords des grandes villes, Cordoue, Séville, Grenade s'agençaient autour de résidences d'agrément, formant les *munya munān* constituées non seulement par la résidence califale entourée de jardins d'agrément mais aussi d'habitats, de tours de défense, de vastes aires à battre le grain, de colombiers et de basses-cours, et des bonnes terres de labour des diverses métairies..." Vincent Lagardere, In *Campagnes et Paysans d'Al-Andalus (VIIIe - XVe S.)* (Paris: Edit. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1993), p. 69.

<sup>8</sup> Expiración Garcia Sanchez, Angel López y López, "The Botanic Gardens in Muslim Spain," In *The Authentic Garden*, ed. L. Tjon Sie Fat et al., p. 166.

as Emilio Molina López has pointed out in his work on the private property of the Cordoban Umayyad rulers.<sup>9</sup> According to Molina López, Arabic texts give particular prominence to *munya*s and to similar properties known as *day'a*, usually found in rural districts, as the two most important sources of the Umayyad rulers' personal incomes. Molina López points out that the texts highlight the processes whereby "caprice, confiscation, donations and gifts, and successive inheritances resulted in the inclusion of these estates into the royal patrimony."<sup>10</sup> Such a process implies that these properties were an important aspect of the Umayyad state's economic policy. In other words, textual evidence for the giving of *munyas* as gifts between the Umayyad ruler and courtiers, suggests that the estates functioned as part of system of land control that provided both the ruler and the courtiers with income from agriculturally productive estates.

*The agricultural context*

The economic importance of the *munya* as agricultural entity can be placed within a broader framework of the role of agriculture in the Iberian economy, both before and after the Islamic conquest of the Peninsula. Agriculture played a significant role in the history of the pre-Islamic Iberian Peninsula, as a significant source of olive oil, wine, and

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<sup>9</sup> Emilio Molina López, "El Mustajlas Andalúsí (I) (s. VIII-XI)," *Revista del Centro de Estudios Históricos de Granada y su Reino* 13-14 (1999-2000), p. 99-189. I am grateful to Dr. Ahmad Damaj in Granada for drawing my attention to Professor Molina López's work in this area, and to Professor Molina López for alerting me to his forthcoming *El Mustajlas: Introducción al estudio del patrimonio privado de los monarcas omeyas andalusíes* (I) (in press). For his related work on the private patrimony of the Nasrid rulers see Emilio Molina López, "Más sobre el Mustajlas nazarí," In *Estudios Arabes Dedicados a D. Luis Seco de Lucena: al-Mudun* (Granada: Univ. de Granada, 1999), p. 107-118.

<sup>10</sup> Molina López, "El Mustajlas Andalúsí," p. 119.

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grain for the Roman market. The fertile Guadalquivir Valley, particularly the countryside stretching between Cordoba and Seville, was one of the most important areas for the cultivation of wheat, grapes, and olives; in the fourth century, a time of economic prosperity that saw the spread of *villae* across the Iberian Peninsula, archaeological survey suggests the settlement density of the region between Cordoba and Seville approached that of Roman Italy.<sup>11</sup>

Visigothic settlement and hegemony on the Iberian Peninsula in the fifth and sixth centuries seems to have had little effect on the practice of agriculture in Iberia. The Germanic tribes who settled in Iberia formed a significant minority in the overall population, and continuity in the material culture evidence following Visigothic settlement in the southern part of the Peninsula suggests that the newcomers largely adapted the agricultural practices of the populations among which they settled. However, archaeological evidence does indicate a decline in cultivation following the Germanic invasions. Several factors led to the agricultural and economic decline of the Iberian Peninsula under Visigothic rule in the sixth and seventh centuries: Iberian towns grew economically isolated from their surrounding territories, canal systems which had sustained agricultural production during the Roman imperial period were eroded, and a series of natural disasters all contributed to an agricultural crisis.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas F. Glick, *From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle :Social and Cultural Change in Medieval Spain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 3; Jean G. Gorges, *Les villas hispano-romaines: inventaire et problematique archeologiques*, Publications du Centre Pierre Paris (Paris, 1979), 48, 51, 55, 82; Kevin Greene, *The Archaeology of the Roman Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 110.

<sup>12</sup> Glick also sees the nomadic character of the Visigoths as an important factor in the subsequent decline of agriculture on the Iberian Peninsula during their rule. Thomas F.

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The eighth-century Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula began a process of reversal of the agricultural and economic decline that had characterized the Late Antique Iberian Peninsula. The Arabs and Berbers who settled the Peninsula after 711 CE invested so heavily in agriculture that it thereafter became intimately connected to the image of al-Andalus. Writing in the fourteenth century Ibn Khaldun observed, “As we know, the people of Spain, of all people, are the ones most devoted to agriculture. It rarely happens among them that a man in authority or an ordinary person has no tract of land or field, or does not do some farming,” suggesting the extent to which agriculture was tied to the image of al-Andalus in the medieval Islamic imagination.<sup>13</sup> Whereas the use of irrigation had declined under the Visigoths, the new settlers systematically refurbished and expanded existing Roman hydraulic systems and introduced devices like the waterwheel (*na‘ūra*, Castilian *noria*) and subterranean canals (*qanāt*) commonly used in the Islamic eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamian lands.<sup>14</sup> The highly diversified and complex agricultural system created in al-Andalus was so dramatic that it has long

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Glick, *From Muslim fortress*, 10-12; Simon Keay, *Roman Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 211.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* ed. N.J. Dawood, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1967 (1989 ed.)), p. 278.

<sup>14</sup> For introductions to the *na‘ura* and *qanat* in al-Andalus see Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain*, p.74-76; M. Barceló, “Qanat(s) a al-Andalus,” *Documents d’Análisis Geográfica* 2 (1983), 3-22. The historiography on water technology in al-Andalus is vast. For an historiographical analysis see Glick’s chapter “Irrigation in al-Andalus: a reassessment” in *From Muslim fortress*, p. 64-91. Glick’s essays on the topic are collected in *Irrigation and hydraulic technology: medieval Spain and its legacy* (London: Variorum, 1996); for his overview of the topic in this volume see “Hydraulic Technology in al-Andalus,” p. 974-986. For the state of the question and recent bibliography see Miguel Barceló, Helena Kirchner, Carmen Navarro, *El Agua Que No Duerme: Fundamentos de la arqueología hidráulica andalusí* (Granada: El Legado Andalusi, 1995).

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been characterized as a “green revolution,” and a key factor in the success of the Andalusí economy under Umayyad rule.<sup>15</sup>

#### “*Munya*” as defined in Arabic and Castilian

F. Corriente’s contemporary dictionary of Andalusí Arabic simply defines *munya* as a “country house.”<sup>16</sup> Dozy, whose *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* remains a basic source on the particularities of Andalusí Arabic, defined *munya* as a “vast garden” based on classical authors like Tha’alibi, Bakri, and al-Muqaddasi.<sup>17</sup> In the Arabic lexicons, at its most basic level of meaning *munya* was understood to include a *bustān* (“garden”, pl. *basātīn*) a broad term used to refer to various themes associated with the entire range of gardens in Islamic history, from modest kitchen gardens to palace gardens, to the gardens of the Qu’ranic paradise.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, in English the term “garden” is loaded with an entire range of associations from the mundane to the sacred. Its basic meaning, as defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is “an enclosed piece of ground

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<sup>15</sup> Nicholas Purcell and Peregrine Horden questioned the notion of the Andalusí “green revolution” in *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford, U.K. and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), p. 263, a point to which I will return in the following chapters. Foundational texts on the “green revolution” are Andrew M. Watson, “The Arab Agricultural Revolution and its Diffusion,” In *Journal of Economic History* 34 (1974), p. 8-35; *ibid.*, *Agricultural Innovations in the Early Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983); and Lucie Bolens, *Agronomes andalous du moyen âge* (Geneva: Droz, 1981). For overviews and basic bibliography see Expiración García Sanchez, “Agriculture in Muslim Spain,” In *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, p. 987-999 and Glick’s “Agriculture, Settlement, and the Moving Frontier,” In *Islamic and Christian Spain*, p. 51-109.

<sup>16</sup> F. Corriente, *Dictionary of Andalusí Arabic* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), s.v. “*munya*.”

<sup>17</sup> R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, vol. II (1967), s.v. “*munyah*.”

<sup>18</sup> *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “*bustān*.”

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devoted to the cultivation of flowers, fruit, or vegetables; often preceded by some defining word, as flower-, fruit-, kitchen-, market-, strawberry-garden, etc.”<sup>19</sup>

The tenth-century geographer al-Muqaddasi who, ignorant of the meaning of the word, asked what a *munya* was and received the answer “a garden” (*bustān*), was defining a term whose Cordoban use had to be explained to non-Andalusis.<sup>20</sup> As noted earlier in the chapter, the word *munya* was not used in the central Islamic lands in the same way that it was used in al-Andalus. For reasons to which I will return, it is significant that many Arabic lexicographers defined *bustān* primarily in olfactory terms, as “a place of odor and fragrance.”<sup>21</sup> Considering the Arabic lexicographers’ linking of *munya* with *bustān*, and keeping in mind the ambiguity inherent in the translation of *bustān* as simply “garden,” understanding the specific meaning of *bustān* in al-Andalus is key to understanding the nature of the Cordoban *munya*. Dozy provides the specificity required for understanding the meaning of the word as it was used in al-Andalus.<sup>22</sup> *Karm*, a term for the walled urban gardens of Granada, is defined by Dozy as “a plot of land, surrounded by a wall and containing a number of trees planted too closely to allow for

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<sup>19</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. s.v. “garden.”

<sup>20</sup> Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape and Vision*, p.36; al-Muqaddasi, *Description de l’occident musulman au IVe=Xe siècle*, Bibliothèque arabe-française, no. 9, trans. Charles Pellat (Algiers: Carbonel, 1950), p. 38-39.

<sup>21</sup> E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. I (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1984 (reprint of 1863 ed.), s.v. “bustān.” Lane used a variety of well-known classical lexicons to prepare his dictionary, still a standard reference work in Arabic philology.

<sup>22</sup> To my knowledge, no one has defined *bustān* as it was used in connection with the Cordoban *munya*, perhaps because Dozy doesn’t define *bustān* independently in his work on Andalusī Arabic. Dozy’s definition of *bustān* in al-Andalus arises rather accidentally in the definition of the word *karm*, a term which was not used in tenth-century Cordoba but which is significant for Nasrid Granada (see below).

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sowing.”<sup>23</sup> Dozy contrasted this specific meaning with that of *bustān*, which in contrast indicates a plot of land that could accommodate sown crops. *Bustān*, as it was used in association with the Cordoban *munya*, therefore, indicates a plot of land, surrounded by a wall and probably planted with trees, though arranged at enough of a distance from one another to accommodate the cultivation of sown crops.

The association between *munya* and the idea of a walled piece of cultivated land persisted after the Castilian conquest of Cordoba. The earliest instance of the Castilian version of *munya*, “*almunia*,” appears in a 1734 dictionary of Castilian Spanish, that defines “*almunia*” as a “*huerto*,” indicating “a walled site, of small circumference, and planted with fruit trees for recreation, and sometimes with vegetables and beans for household use,” indicating that the *munya/bustān* relationship in Arabic was transferred intact into Castilian Spanish as *almunia/huerto*.<sup>24</sup>

The Arabist García Gómez, whose 1965 definition of *munya* was cited at the beginning of this chapter, drew from Arabic historical texts in order to expand upon the limited definition found in the Arabic lexicons. Al-Razi and Ibn Hayyan, two tenth-

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<sup>23</sup> “*karm*,” *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, II (1967), p. 459. In a commentary on the thirteenth-century *hisba* treatise of al-Jarsifi J. Derek Latham points out the important distinctions in terminology used for urban and suburban lands used for cultivation. Latham points out that that Dozy specifies that in al-Andalus the term *karm*, which can mean “vineyard,” had a specific meaning as “a plot of land surrounded by a wall and containing such a number and arrangement of trees that it may *not* be sown” (my italic), in contradistinction to *bustān*. The term *karm* was specific to Granada. Its Castilian derivation *carmen* is still used to refer to houses containing a garden courtyard, which while often planted with grapevines, fruit trees, and ornamental plants, are urban gardens that are not sown for cultivation as the suburban *munyas* of Cordoba were. J. D. Latham, “Observations on the text and translation of Al-Jarsifi's treatise on 'hisba',” In *Journal of Semitic Studies* 5 (1960), p. 124-143.

<sup>24</sup> *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Real Academia Española, por los herederos de Francisco del Hierro, 1734--), s.v. “*huerto*.”



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century chroniclers for the Umayyad court refer to *munyas* in their histories of the Cordoban Umayyad rulers. Though such references are generally brief and lacking in the kind of detail most valuable to architectural historians, information about the functions of the Cordoban *munya/s* can be extracted from these texts. I will return to these texts in Chapter IV, where I will use them to discuss the issue of *munya* patronage. In the meantime, one example of the kind of information contained in such texts is appropriate to convey a sense of the *munya* as an agricultural entity. Ibn Hayyan's passage on the estate of Durri al-Saghir, to which I have already alluded, is the most detailed description of a Cordoban *munya*. In the passage the chronicler alludes to the estate's "watered gardens" (*al-basātīn al-masqīa*), "cultivated lands" (*al-arāḍīn al-mazru'a*), "male and female slaves" (*'abd, ama*), and its riding animals and/or beasts of burden (*thaur*).<sup>25</sup> Ibn Hayyan's description suggests that a wealthy *munya* could incorporate more than one of these walled, cultivated, and tree-filled plots in addition to other (larger and/or unirrigated) parcels of cultivated land. The author's allusion to livestock also indicates that animal husbandry was present to some degree on the estate as well.<sup>26</sup> Ibn Hayyan's brief passage on this particular *munya* establishes a clear productive function to the Cordoban *munya*.

#### *Agricultural literature and the munya in Umayyad Cordoba*

Two of the earliest known works of Andalusī agronomic literature, both of which are attributed to Umayyad Cordoba, supplement the general picture of cultivation

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<sup>25</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis*, ed. al-Hajji, p. 106-107.

<sup>26</sup> *ibidem*.

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associated with the *munya/bustān* combination. The first, the *Kitāb fī tartīb awqāt al-girāsa wa-l-magrūsāt*, has an uncertain attribution but internal references suggest a late tenth or early eleventh century date, during the reign of the second Umayyad caliph al-Hakam II or his heir Hisham.<sup>27</sup> The second work of agricultural literature relevant to understanding cultivation and the Cordoban *munya* is the *Kitāb fī tartīb al-Anwā'*, commonly known as the *Calendar of Cordoba*. This work was completed in 961 at the end of the reign of the first Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Rahman III, and dedicated to his son and heir al-Hakam II.<sup>28</sup> These two works stand at the beginning of a trajectory of Andalusī agricultural literature collectively characterized as the most important material of its kind to emerge from the medieval Islamic lands, if not the entire medieval world.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Edited Arabic with Castilian translation and a useful glossary of plants: Angel C. López López, ed., *Kitāb fī tartīb awqāt al-girāsa wa-l-magrūsāt t : un tratado agrícola andalusí anónimo*, trans. Angel C. López López (Granada: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), 1990).

<sup>28</sup> The *Calendar* has been attributed to 'Arīb b. Sa'd, known in Latin sources as Recemund. He was an important Christian official (*kātib*) in the court of the first Cordoban Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Rahman III. In addition to his status as bishop of the province of Elvira, 'Arīb b. Sa'd, was a prominent diplomat, known for his missions to the Ottonian court, to Constantinople, and to Jerusalem on behalf of the Cordoban Umayyads. R. Dozy, ed., *Le Calendrier de Cordoue*, Medieval Iberian Peninsula Texts and Studies, no. I, trans. Ch. Pellat (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1874, 1961 ed.), p. ix.

<sup>29</sup> As an introduction see the section on agriculture in the Islamic west in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. s.v. "Filāha," in which G.S. Colin states, "so far as we know at present, it was exclusively in the Iberian Peninsula...that an agricultural literature in the Arabic language was created and developed." (Actually, an earlier tradition of agricultural writing is represented by Ibn Washshiyya's Nabataean agricultural treatise, see note below.) Ruggles provides a summary of the issues and historiography in "Botany and the Agricultural Revolution," *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p.15-34. For a survey of the treatises, and information about extant manuscript copies (mostly preserved in collections in Spain and Morocco), see Julia Maria Carabaza Bravo, Expiración García Sanchez, Eloisa Llaveró Ruiz, "Obras manuscritas de los geóponos andalusíes (siglos X-XII)," *Homenaje al Profesor Jacinto Bosch Vilá*, V. II (Granada,1991), p. 1115-1132.

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Scholars identify Umayyad Cordoba as the earliest center for the development of this agricultural literature that, although rooted in Roman and Late Antique works from both the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia, developed in new directions. Rather than simply passing along information from earlier works, Andalusi agronomers increasingly focused on recording their botanical observations and the results of agricultural experimentation.<sup>30</sup> The eleventh century was the high point in the development of the Andalusi agricultural treatises, a phenomenon that is likely linked to the diffusion of Cordoban court culture across the Peninsula by the establishment of the independent (*taifa*) courts following the disintegration of the caliphate in the 1030s.<sup>31</sup> At this time agronomers trained in Cordoba moved to independent courts to oversee the creation of gardens for new rulers. There they composed treatises that both collected the agricultural writings of previous authors and, beginning with the Sevillian agronomer Ibn Bassal, recorded the results of their direct experimentation.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> On the Nabataean agricultural treatise see T. Fahd, "L'agriculture nabatéenne en Andalousie," In *Journal for the History of Arabic Science Majallat al-`Ulum al-`Arabya* 11, no. i (1995), p. 21-31. On classical sources utilized by Andalusi agronomers see Julio Samsó, "La tradición clásica en los *Calendarios* agrícolas hispanoárabes y norteafricanos," In *Actas del II Congreso para el Estudio de Cultura en el Mediterráneo Occidental* (Barcelona, 1978), p. 177-86.

<sup>31</sup> Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p. 15-34.

<sup>32</sup> Two overviews of the developments in the study of the agricultural literature of al-Andalus are Julia María Carabaza Bravo and Expiración García Sánchez, "Estado actual y perspectivas de los estudios sobre agronomía andalusí," In *Saber en al-Andalus: textos y studios*, III ed. Fatima Roladán Castro and Isabel Hervás Jávega (Seville: Univ. de Sevilla, Fundación el Monte, 2001), p. 101-118; and Camilo Álvarez de Morales, "Agrónomos Andalusíes y sus legados," In *La Herencia Árabe en la agricultura y el bienestar de Occidente*, ed. Fernando Nuez (Valencia: Univ. Politécnica de Valencia, c. 2002), p. 9-69.

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#### *Textual evidence*

The author of the first work relevant to our discussion of the *munyas* as sites of cultivation, the *Kitāb fī tartīb*, provides advice on growing specific varieties of productive trees, vegetables, and other plants, along with suggestions on matters of domestic economy like the cutting of wood and methods for preserving harvested fruits.<sup>33</sup> The specific advice and practical tone of the *Kitāb fī tartīb* suggests that it was composed for the use of gardeners associated with Cordoba's suburban estates. D.F. Ruggles has posited that the Andalusī agricultural treatises were circulated among an elite audience of decision-makers, and that their proliferation reflected the need to record the increasing data on agricultural techniques, which had begun to outpace traditional oral methods of passing on knowledge.<sup>34</sup> It seems reasonable to suggest that the audience for a work like the *Kitāb fī tartīb* might have been "head gardeners," employed by *munya* patrons to oversee the different types of productive land mentioned by Ibn Hayyan.<sup>35</sup> In any case, considering its practical character, and its specificity regarding the types of trees and plants discussed in it, the *Kitāb fī tartīb* likely provides a reasonable idea of the types of plantings that would have been cultivated on a Cordoban *munya*. The first chapter of the

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<sup>33</sup> On the composition of the treatise and this omission, see the Introduction to *Kitāb fī tartīb*, p. 23-26.

<sup>34</sup> Ruggles, *Gardens*, p. 6-32.

<sup>35</sup> Medieval Islamic culinary texts provide a useful parallel. David Waines has suggested that such texts were aimed at an audience of house stewards in charge of overseeing the kitchen of a wealthy household: "The culinary manuals we have looked at briefly were compiled by their authors for use in households of the urban bourgeoisie, probably for the particular use of the house stewards in charge of the daily running of what could be sizeable enterprises." David Waines, "'Luxury foods' in medieval Islamic societies," In *World Archaeology* 34, no. 3 (Feb. 2003), 571-80.

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treatise discusses arboriculture, outlining the best times and methods for planting the trees that would have provided the basic elements of the Cordoban *munya*/s walled gardens. The first three named in the treatise are the fig (*shajara*, literally “tree,” for reasons which will be discussed below), the grapevine (*‘inab*), and the olive (*zaytuun*). These three appear almost exclusively in references to crops that appear in the post-conquest *repartimientos* documents.<sup>36</sup>

The *repartimientos* documents detail the Castilian crown’s division of the province lands to knights who had participated in the conquest of the city in 1236.<sup>37</sup> Only records of the division of the territory immediately surrounding the city of Cordoba itself have survived. Fernando III’s division of Cordoba’s suburban lands a few years after the conquest of the city in 1236 is preserved in the document known as the *Libro de diezmos de Donadíos* (named for the manuscript in which it is bound). This document, and others preserved in archives in Cordoba, Seville, and Madrid that detail the later histories of the conquered territories as they exchanged hands, support the picture of the ubiquitous presence of figs, olives, and grapevines in and around the city. Such documents provide intriguing glimpses of the city’s thirteenth-century built, as well as its cultivated landscape.

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<sup>36</sup> The document is bound within the *Libro de diezmos de Donadíos de la Catedral de Córdoba* (see note below). The edited document is published in Manuel Nieto Cumplido, *Corpus Mediaevale Cordubense: 1106-1255*, Vol. I (Cordoba: Publicaciones del Monte de Piedad y Caja de Ahorros de Cordoba, 1979), p. 123-27.

<sup>37</sup> On the Cordoban *repartimientos* see M. Nieto Cumplido, “El “Libro de diezmos de Donadíos de la Catedral de Córdoba: estudio critica,” In *Cuadernos de Estudios Medievales* IV-V (1979).

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To give one example, a document, dated October 10, 1244 and preserved in the archive of the Cordoba cathedral, describes the transfer of a property consisting of eight *aranzadas* of vineyard, along with its houses and tower (*ocho aranzadas de viñas...con sus casas y su torre*). The land and buildings, the document notes, had been given to a Don Juan de Funes by the king - presumably in 1241, the date of Fernando III's division of the Cordoban suburban lands as recorded in the *Libro de Donadíos*. The document in turn records de Funes' transfer of the property to the Cordoban church.<sup>38</sup> The term *aranzada* (literally "plowing") refers, according to the earliest dictionary of Castilian Spanish, published in 1726, to the amount of land a pair of mules or oxen could plow in one day.<sup>39</sup> The exact measurement differs according to region; a Cordoban *aranzada* measures 3.62 square meters, giving a total of 24.62 square meters of land.<sup>40</sup> The document notes that de Funes relinquished his claim to the income derived from the property's cultivation (*se le conceda el usufructo de estos bienes hasta su muerte*), indicating that the vineyards would have been a possible source of income.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Nieto Cumplido, *Corpus I*, p. 144-45.

<sup>39</sup> Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua castellana, en que se explica el verdadero sentido de las voces, su naturaleza y calidad, con las frases o modos de hablar, los proverbios o refranes, y otras cosas convenientes al uso de la lengua [...] I*, (Madrid: Imprenta de Francisco del Hierro, 1726), s.v. "aranzada" and "arar."  
<<[<sup>40</sup> Real Academia Española, \*Diccionario de la lengua española: Vigésima primera edición\* \(Madrid: Espasa-Calpa, 1992\), s.v. "aranzada."  
<<\[<sup>41</sup> De Funes made the gift, the document tells us, for the absolution of his sins \\(\\*para la remission de sus pecados\\*\\). The vellum document, measuring 173 x 158 mm, is located in the Archivo de la Catedral de Cordoba, Caja T, n. 437, and edited and published in Nieto\]\(http://buscon.rae.es/ntlle/SrvltGUI/MenuNtile?cmd=Lema&sec=1.1.0.0.0.>>\_ May 20, 2005.</p></div><div data-bbox=\)](http://buscon.rae.es/ntlle/SrvltGUI/MenuNtile?cmd=Lema&sec=1.1.0.0.0.>>_ May 20, 2005.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

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Glick has also noted the importance of these three particular crops in the Cordoban landscape as well. Regarding figs, for instance, the Latin version of the *Calendar of Cordoba* translates Arabic “tree” (*shajar*) as “fig,” (*ficus*) indicating that in Umayyad Cordoba the fig became, “by antonomasia, *the tree*.”<sup>42</sup> The use of olive oil for cooking as opposed to animal fats, peculiar in the medieval Islamic lands to al-Andalus and Syria, indicates the importance of the olive to the culinary culture of Umayyad Cordoba, while the fertile *campiña*, the agricultural lands stretching south of the urban center, produced among other crops the famous *qanbanī* grape, a Cordoban variety used for wine as well as for cooking.<sup>43</sup> Their privileged position within this text suggests that olives, figs, and grapevines would have been found within the walled gardens of the Cordoban *munya*. Today, more than a thousand years after the author of this agricultural manual wrote his text, the olive and the fig are still ubiquitous in the Cordoban landscape, and contemporary local wine production attests to the continuing presence of the vine as well.

If the order in which the author of the *Kitāb fī tartīb* lists the plants is a reflection of their interest to *munya* gardeners, a variety of fruit and nut trees (including the pear (*kummatra*), apple (*tuffāḥ/tuffāḥa*), cherry (*ḥabb al-mulūk*), pomegranate (*rummān/rummāna*), apricot (*miṣmāṣ*), and quince (*safarjal*), the walnut (*jawz*), almond

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Cumplido, *Corpus* I, p. 144-45. Documents like this also provide intriguing glimpses of Cordoba’s built landscape shortly after the city’s conquest. The same document, for instance, specifies the location of the vines as being “near the caves of the old quarry beyond [the suburb of] al-Rusafa” (*cerca de las Cuevas de la cantera vieja más allá de la Arrizafa*.)

<sup>42</sup> Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain*, p.79.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 78-80.

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(*lawz/lawza*), and chestnut (*ṣāh ballūt*), to name a few) followed the olive, fig, and grape in popularity as plants of choice to be cultivated within the walled *bustāns* of Cordoban estates.<sup>44</sup> A partial list of the vegetables (treated in their own chapter in the *Kitāb fī tartīb*) includes turnips, carrots, lettuces, onions, garlic, leeks, cabbage, endive, and spinach.<sup>45</sup>

The second relevant text, the *Kitāb al-Anwā'*, or *Calendar of Cordoba*, like the *Kitāb fī tartīb*, adds an important level of detail to our understanding of agriculture under the Cordoban Umayyads.<sup>46</sup> The character of the *Calendar* is very different from that of the *Kitāb fī tartīb*, however. In contrast to the straightforward and practical tone of the *Kitāb fī tartīb*, the *Calendar* is part of an Arabic literary genre (*anwā'*, sing. *naw'*) that initially explained Bedouin astronomical systems for marking the passage of time,

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<sup>44</sup> In order, the fruit and nut trees listed in the *Kitāb fī tartīb* with their Arabic names are: pear (*kummatra*); apple (*tuffāHtuffāHa*); walnut (*jawz*); almond (*lawzlawza*); avellano (*jillawz*); grapefruit (*turunj*, 'utrunj, 'utrujj); mulberry (*firṣād*); durazno (*jūj jūja*); apricot (*miṣmāṣ*); quince (*safarjal*); cherry (*ḥabb al-mulūk*); pomegranate (*rummān rummāna*; *Punica granatum L.*); chestnut (*ṣāh ballūt*); piño (*ṣanawbar*); alfoncigo (*fustuq*); azufaifo (*nabq*). Angel C. López López, ed., *Kitāb fī tartīb*, Chapter I.

<sup>45</sup> The complete list of vegetables appears in the following order: Turnips (*laft*); Carrots (*jazar*); Lettuces (*jaṣṣ*); Onions (basal); Garlic (*ṭawm*); Leeks (*kurrāt*); Verdolagas (*rājila*); Cabbage (*kurunb*); Cauliflower (*qunnabīṭ*); Armuelles (*baql al-rūm*); Bledos (*baqla yamāniya*); Endive (*hindibā'*); Spinach (*'isbināj*); Eggplant (*badinjāl*); Gourd (*qar'*); Radish (*fajal*). *Kitāb fī tartīb*, Chapter V.

<sup>46</sup> The most recent critical edition of the *Calendar* is based on a manuscript in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris written in Arabic, but in Hebrew characters. See G. Vajda, *Index général des manuscrits arabes musulmans de la Bibl. Nat. de Paris* (Paris, 1953). p. 653. Dozy published it as *le Calendrier de Cordoue de l'année 961. Texte arabe et ancienne traduction latine* (Leiden, 1873). Dozy's edition is based on his comparison of a 13th c. Latin version of the text (known as *Liber anoe*) and the Paris manuscript. The 1961 Brill edition includes the Arabic and 13th c. Latin texts alongside the French translation. Antonio Arjona Castro, working from Dozy's French translation, includes a Castilian translation of the *Calendar* in Antonio Arjona Castro, ed. and transl. *Anales de Cordoba Musulmana 711-1008*, (Cordoba: Monte de Piedad y Caja de Ahorros de Cordoba, 1982).



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providing tables for the rising and setting of stars and the systems of the winds and rains along with poetry and maxims; after the ninth century, the genre incorporated the types of information associated with almanacs, in which agricultural information related to solar cycles was included as well.<sup>47</sup> The author of the *Calendar*, for instance, not only includes references to astronomical phenomena, Andalusī fauna, the various crops cultivated in Umayyad al-Andalus, but also includes events from the Christian liturgical calendar, observations regarding medicine and the relationship between the health of the body and natural cycles, and allusions to the interconnections between the Umayyad court and the Andalusī countryside. Because of the *Calendar*'s participation in an established literary genre, scholars of Andalusī agriculture haven't yet determined to what extent the crops mentioned in the *Calendar of Cordoba* reflect the reality of cultivation in al-Andalus, let alone in and around the capital city itself. Yet the *Calendar* may still be usefully compared to the *Kitāb fī tartīb* as an indicator of the types of plants that could have been cultivated on the Cordoban *munyas*.

References to agriculture in the *Calendar* arise in the context of providing information about their associated cycles of sowing and gathering, as well as references to the products prepared from them, commentary on the medicinal purposes of certain foods, and the times of the year conducive to the consumption or preparation of certain types of foods and drinks over others, based on their qualities of heat and humidity. The *Calendar* refers to the gathering of truffles, saffron crocus, acorns, and myrtle seeds, and

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<sup>47</sup> Charles Pellat notes, "although we only have the almanac of Sinān for 'Irāk, it is probable that Egyptian authors composed them at an early stage, as is proved by certain chapters of Ibn al-Mammāṭī and al-Maḳrīzī, and by the names of the Coptic months which appear in the calendars produced in Spain." See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. "anwā'."

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to the preparation of juices, conserves, and syrups from the kinds of fruits mentioned in the *Kitāb fī tartīb* as well as from other plants, such as roses, violets, poppies, and myrtle seeds. Along with such references to the variety of flora probably cultivated in al-Andalus, there are also numerous references to birds (pigeons and quail, as well as hunting falcons) fish (sturgeon, sardines), and cows and sheep that would have served as sources for beef, veal, and mutton as well as cheeses, imply the importance of animal husbandry in Andalusí agriculture as well.

The variety of plants mentioned in the *Calendar* corresponds with those mentioned in the *Kitāb fī tartīb*, and encompasses varieties that were cultivated on the Iberian Peninsula before the Islamic conquest and those which were introduced afterward. There has been an ongoing debate about the extent of the Islamic introductions; recent scholarship on the history of agriculture on the Iberian Peninsula now sees more continuity between the flora of the pre- and post-conquest Iberian Peninsula than had been supposed in earlier works. For instance, the botanist Esteban Hernández Bermejo has identified only twelve plants mentioned in the *Calendar of Cordoba* that do not appear in relevant pre-Islamic works (like Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*), and which Hernández therefore posits were introduced under Islamic rule.<sup>48</sup> Significantly, even a superficial comparison of the plants singled out by Hernández as those introduced under Islamic rule suggests that the majority of them were associated with the tastes in cuisine and cosmetic and pharmaceutical substances associated with

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<sup>48</sup> Esteban Hernández Bermejo, "Botanical foundations for the restoration of Spanish-Arabic gardens, p. 153-164, esp. table 4 on p. 161-62. Some of his arguments appeared in an earlier article focused on Madinat al-Zahra': J.E. Hernández Bermejo, "Aproximación al estudio de las especies botánicas originariamente existentes en los jardines de Madinat al-Zahra," In *Cuadernos de Madinat al-Zahra* 1 (1987), 61-80.

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Andalusi elites. Plantain, rice, sugarcane, pistachio, Mediterranean sumac (used as a spice), eggplant, saffron, and lemon are singled out as introductions by Hernández, and all appear in dishes associated with an urban elite class.<sup>49</sup> The remaining plants were valued for cosmetic and pharmaceutical uses: henna (used cosmetically), jasmine (used for perfumes), marshmallow (used in the preparation of confectionery and pharmaceuticals).<sup>50</sup>

### *Cultivation of fragrant plants*

Significantly, the references to the cultivation of fragrant plants raises the issue of the emphasis on the quality of fragrance, which I earlier pointed out in Arabic definitions

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<sup>49</sup> For an introduction to culinary culture in al-Andalus see David Waines, "The Culinary Culture of al-Andalus," In *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, vol. 2, paperback ed. ed. Salma Khudra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 725-738. See also Lucie Bolens, *La cuisine andalouse, un art de vivre: XIe-XIIIe siècle*, (Paris, 1990); Expiracion Garcia Sanchez, "La alimentación popular urbana en al-Andalus," In *Arqueología Medieval* 4 (1996), 219-35; *ibid.* "La alimentacion en la Andalucía Islamica. Estudio historico y bromatologico I," In *Andalucia Islamica. Textos y Estudios II-III* (1983), 139-178; *ibid.*, "La alimentacion en la Andalucía Islamica. Estudio historico y bromatologico II," In *Andalucia Islamica. Textos y Estudios IV-V* (1986), 237-278; *ibid.*, "Fuentes para el estudio de la alimentacion en la Andalucía islamica," In *Actas del XII Congreso de la U.E.A.I.* (Malaga,1984), 269-88.

<sup>50</sup> Renata Holod and Manuela Marin have pointed out the importance of foods and fragrant substances (used for a variety of culinary, cosmetic and pharmaceutical purposes) as luxury items in al-Andalus and specifically in Cordoban Umayyad court culture, a subject to which I will return in Chapter VI. Renata Holod, "Luxury Arts of the Caliphal Period," In *al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* ed. Jerrilyn Dodds (New York1992), 41-47 clearly summarizes the relevance of such substances to our understanding of Umayyad court culture and provides the basic bibliography. Manuela Marín gives a broader picture of how medieval Islamic culinary texts suggest a widespread aesthetic pleasure derived from food and fragrance in "Beyond Taste: the complements of color and smell in the medieval Arab culinary tradition," In *Taste of Thyme: Culinary Cultures of the Middle East* ed. Sami Zubaida and Richard Tapper (London: Tauris Parke, 2000), 205-214.

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of the term “*bustān*.” Contrary to contemporary expectations about gardens as primarily ornamental and floral, flowers do not make an appearance in the *Kitāb fī tartīb* until after the sections on the cultivation of trees, fruits, and vegetables. Even then, it is not the appearance of the flowering plant so much as *the quality of its fragrance* that dictates the inclusion of the plants named in the chapter. For instance, the myrtle appears first in the list of plants treated. Though it was highly prized in al-Andalus for its distinctive fragrance, myrtle blossoms are so small as to make almost no visible impact.

While the other fragrant plants mentioned in the treatise happen to be prized for their blossoms (including the rose, white and yellow narcissus, jasmine, and the white lily), their appearance in the gardens of the Cordoban *munya*s had as much to do with their value as sources for the perfumes, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals that were important to Umayyad court life as it did with their beauty.<sup>51</sup> I will return to the subject of the Cordoban Umayyad conception of refinement, and connections between Islamic refinement and the crops associated with *munya* cultivation in Chapter Six. For now, I wish only to point out that the treatise includes flowering plants, primarily on the basis of the desirability of their fragrance, and only secondarily (if at all), it seems, according to

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<sup>51</sup>See R. Holod’s article cited above. The section on fragrant plants in the anonymous *Kitāb fī tartīb* presents the following plants in this order: rosal (*ward*); white narcissus (*naranjas ‘abyaḍ*); yellow narcissus (*naranjas ‘aşfar*); jasmine (*yāsamīn*); White lily (*sūsan kasrawī*); Lirio blanco (*naylūfar*); Junquillo (*nisrīn*); Red alheli (*khīrī ‘aHmar*); Yellow alheli (*jīrī ‘aşfar*); Albahaca (*Habaq*); Yerbabuena (*na‘ana’*); Almoradux. Angel C. López López, ed., *Kitāb fī tartīb*, Chapter IV. Leslie Brubaker, in a study on Byzantine gardens, makes the same point when she notes that it is impossible to fully understand the meanings of Byzantine gardens without comprehending the multiple and layered meanings associated with plants that appeared in the gardens. She gives the example of the pomegranate, which while associated with fertility, was also a key ingredient in a Byzantine formula for contraceptives. Leslie Brubaker, “The Vienna Dioskorides and Anicia Juliana,” In *Byzantine Garden Culture* ed. Antony Littlewood, Henry Maguire, Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 189-214.

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their ornamental or visual qualities. While the vision of flowering plants within the garden becomes an important theme in later Andalusī court poetry, clearly their cultivation in the gardens of a Cordoban *munya* was not primarily based on their ornamental value, but on their olfactory value.

The evidence that the *Calendar of Cordoba* and the *Kitāb fī tartīb* provide for the cultivation of crops valued for such uses suggests a division in agricultural production between Cordoba's immediate countryside and its rural provinces: one in which the hinterland raised grains like wheat and barley and suburban cultivators produced the variety of fruits, vegetables, and flowers mentioned in the texts discussed above. This image of agricultural division is supported by a list of the taxes collected from the districts (*iqḷīm*) surrounding Cordoba. These accounts, provided by the eleventh-century Andalusī geographer al-'Udhri, list wheat and barley as the sole agricultural products collected from eleven rural Cordoban districts (along with coin). The fact that the *Kitāb fī tartīb* is completely silent on the topic of cereal and legume cultivations, crops that the tax accounts indicate formed a basic component of Andalusī agriculture in the rural countryside, points to the role of agricultural treatises like the anonymous *Kitāb fī tartīb* of Cordoba as handbooks meant specifically for overseers responsible for cultivation on the Cordoban suburban estates.<sup>52</sup>

Considered in conjunction with the material evidence for the *munyas* as works of architecture, the textual evidence for agricultural and economic practices in Umayyad al-Andalus corroborates Umayyad court chronicles that describe the Cordoban *munya* as both luxurious occasional residences and as productive estates. The texts discussed in

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<sup>52</sup> al-'Udhri, *Tarsi' al-Ajbār: Fragmentos geográficos e históricos de al-Masālik ila gami' al-Mamālik*, ed. 'Abd al-Ahwani (Madrid, 1965), p. 124-27.

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this chapter provide a more precise conception of the crops produced on *munya* lands, which consisted of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and herbs valued as foods and pharmaceutical ingredients valued by urban elites. The material and textual evidence thus clearly point to the appropriateness of viewing the Cordoban *munya* within the context of the history of villas and villa cultures as linked with the highest strata of social hierarchies throughout history. The following chapter therefore argues that the *munya* should be considered as part of a broader constellation of villas in the Roman and Late Antique Mediterranean.

## CHAPTER IV

### VILLA CULTURE AND MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC SOCIETIES

The term “villa” does not imply a precise architectural type, but has been applied to buildings, and their associated grounds and gardens, which have historically fulfilled a range of functions from agricultural production to the pursuit of pleasure. As Ackerman established in his 1990 book *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses*, the villa is a meaningful historical phenomenon discernible throughout history, which fulfills “a need that never alters, a need which, because it is not material but psychological and ideological, is not subject to the influences of evolving societies and technologies.”<sup>1</sup> In pointing out the overarching ideological dimensions of villa cultures in different societies, and examining case studies that vary widely in time and space, Ackerman’s book continues to invite an expansion of villa studies. The aim of this dissertation is at its root a response to the invitation implicit in Ackerman’s work.<sup>2</sup>

The previous chapters have addressed the architecture of the Cordoban *munya*, as well its agricultural functions, while the chapters that follow consider the *munyas*’ functions within the sphere of the Umayyad court. The present chapter is intended to link these two fundamental aspects of the *munya*’s character –agricultural production and their connection to court elites. It does so by noting relevant critiques of the current boundaries of villa studies. In the last fifty years historians of ancient Rome, of Islamic art, and of Andalusí architecture have separately posed isolated challenges to the

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<sup>1</sup> James Ackerman, *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses* (Princeton, 1990), p.9.

<sup>2</sup> For this reason I will use the terms “*munya*,” “villa,” and “estate” interchangeably throughout the remainder of the text.

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domination of ancient Rome and Renaissance Italy in studies of the villa as an historic phenomenon. The work of Oleg Grabar and James Ackerman has already been mentioned in this regard. To their work we can add that of others: Nicholas Purcell, a historian of ancient Rome, noted in his 1995 article “The Roman Villa and the Landscape of Production” how scholarship problematically tends to view the villa as a specifically Roman phenomenon, despite literary evidence suggesting that the Romans themselves were drawing upon Greek and "eastern" traditions.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Ottoman art historian Gülru Neçipoglu, in a 1997 article on the Ottoman gardens of Istanbul, noted that art historical discourse does not acknowledge medieval Islamic villa/garden traditions in the larger narrative about the Renaissance revival of antiquity, despite indications that there are often more similarities between antique villas and medieval Islamic villas, like those of al-Andalus or Ottoman Constantinople, than there seem to have been between the villas of Renaissance Italy and the antique models which they claimed to revive.<sup>4</sup> Purcell’s critique suggests one means by which to move beyond traditional disciplinary divisions between “Eastern” and “Western” historical traditions in a way that could expand villa studies. Torres Balbás and Neçipoglu are correct, I believe, in suggesting that al-Andalus and the *munyas* of Cordoba offer a significant medieval Islamic example of a flourishing villa culture that may also have implications for understanding the transition from antiquity to the medieval period.

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<sup>3</sup> Purcell. “The Roman Villa and the Landscape of Production,” 151-79.

<sup>4</sup> Gülru Neçipoglu, “The Suburban Landscape of Sixteenth-Century Istanbul as a Mirror of Classical Ottoman Garden Culture,” In *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires: Theory and Design*, (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 32, 45.



*Monasteries and villeggiatura in Syria and Mesopotamia*

In the Byzantine period we can discern connections between estates and monasteries that have implications for the continuation of aspects of villa culture in Early Islamic Syria and Mesopotamia. For example, one Cassiodorus converted his estate at Scylacium into a monastery following Justinian's conquest of Italy.<sup>5</sup> At the estate-turned-monastery the fortunate monks enjoyed irrigated gardens and fresh fish that were enticed into a water feature consisting of a tunnel and chamber carved into rock and known as "the Gates of Neptune." Scholars have argued that Roman villas in the western provinces were converted into religious sites, basilicas associated with the cults of certain saints, for instance, and took on the quality of small villages in late antiquity. In the eastern lands of the Byzantine empire, gardens generally went hand-in-hand with monasteries, which were often sited with an eye to the same things that had formerly been important for the foundation of villas: an elevated (and thus healthful) site enjoying views of the landscape, fertile soil in which monastery gardens, orchards, and vineyards might flourish, and access to water.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Var.* 12.15; *Instit.* 1.29 cited in Littlewood, "Gardens," 31 n. 130.

<sup>6</sup> Alice-Mary Talbot, "Byzantine Monastic Horticulture: The Textual Evidence," In *Byzantine Garden Culture* ed. Antony Littlewood, Henry Maguire, Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 50. Talbot describes how some Byzantine monasteries were also intentionally sited in areas inimical to delight in the natural surroundings or to agriculture, with a view toward the ascetic lifestyle that such surroundings would reinforce. However, their existence depended upon the excess produced at monasteries that enjoyed fertile, pleasant sites.

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In this way Byzantine monasteries are associated with some of the same characteristics formerly associated with villa life and came to serve as sites of aristocratic retreat, not only for the Byzantine aristocracy of Constantinople, but also for the Ghassanids,<sup>7</sup> a Christian Arab tribe who ruled as clients over the Byzantine territories of Syria. Irfan Shahid has argued for the Ghassanids as significant patrons of religious art and architecture in late antique Syria; as frequent visitors to Constantinople they would have known Byzantine church and monastic architecture firsthand.<sup>8</sup> Remains of a Late Antique structure, attributed to the Ghassanids, at the Umayyad city al-Rusafa (antique Sergiopolis) suggest one way that Byzantine traditions could have been incorporated into the formative period of Islamic architecture under the Early Umayyad dynasty (Fig. 80). Even before the rise of the Umayyads, however, in the eastern Mediterranean the Ghassānids reputedly converted existing Roman forts along the *limes*, or frontier, into monasteries.<sup>9</sup>

Byzantine monastic complexes may therefore be key to understanding one way in which some of the ancient notions of villa culture survived into the early Islamic period. Especially significant for our understanding of the Cordoban *munya* as a villa, there is ample evidence that monasteries in the eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamia served as sites of recreation and leisure. Monasticism was a major aspect of Byzantine religious

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<sup>7</sup> Irfan Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. 2.1, *Toponymy, Monuments, Historical Geography, and Frontier Studies* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 143-219.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Isfahāni's passage on *philoktistai*, quoted by Bakrī, Yāqūt, (in *Mu 'jam*, s.v. Dayr Najrān) and al- 'Umarī (Masālik al-AbSār, I, 309). Cited by Shahid, 160-61. For the Ghassānids' ties to Byzantine culture and their patronage of religious foundations see Shahid, 374-94.

<sup>9</sup> Shahid., 143-219.

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life, not only in the capital of Constantinople, but throughout the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamia under the purview of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>10</sup> In the fifth and sixth centuries the lands of the eastern Roman empire were endowed with an unprecedented number of churches and monastic complexes that ranged from small foundations with only a few monks to (especially by the thirteenth century) elaborate complexes that included inns for visitors, hospitals, and other services.<sup>11</sup> In the eastern Roman provinces of Syria and Palestine monastic complexes were important agricultural centers that provided a means for the colonization and exploitation of rural lands.<sup>12</sup>

Not only Byzantine, but Muslim elites were enthusiastic visitors to monasteries (Ar. *Dayr*) in Byzantine Syria and Iraq. Their visits had no religious basis, but were expressly for the enjoyment of the monastery gardens, food, and wine. The evidence for this phenomenon is abundantly provided in an entire genre of Arab literature about the natural and culinary delights of monasteries in Syria and the Fertile Crescent, of which the best known is probably al-Shābushtī's *Kitāb al-Diyārāt* (*Book of Monasteries*).<sup>13</sup> In their evocation of the beauties of the well-watered monastery gardens and their enthusiasm for the wines and the foods to be enjoyed there, these Arabic poems often resonate with the themes associated with the literature of Roman villa culture. References to Muslim visits to Christian monasteries also occur in geographical works like those of

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<sup>10</sup> Talbot, 37-69.

<sup>11</sup> Beatrice Caseau, "Sacred Landscapes," In G. W. Bowersock et al., ed., *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1999), 21-59.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas F. Matthews, "Religious Organizations and Church Architecture," In *The Glory of Byzantium: Art & Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843-1261* ed. Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom (NY: MMA, 1997), 20-36, esp. 22-24.

<sup>13</sup> al-Shābushtī, *Kitāb al-Diyārāt* ed. G. Awwād (Baghdad, 1966, 2nd ed.).

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‘Umari and Yaqūt, as well as in other works of literature like the tenth-century *Book of Strangers* – a work on the theme of nostalgia. On the whole, the texts indicate that members of the Arab aristocracy used Christian monasteries as lodgings while traveling (as did medieval elites in Europe) but significantly, that Muslims also visited monasteries specifically to enjoy the gardens, the architecture, the food and the wine – in short, to relax – much in the way that Roman aristocrats made for their suburban villas to escape the cares and confinement of the antique city.<sup>14</sup> For instance, Yaqūt notes that when traveling, Abbasid caliphs and functionaries often lodged at the monastery of Mār Yūnān, near the Euphrates, whose gardens inspired the following lines, included in al-Shabushti’s book:

Like a lover’s eyes watching his beloved so the narcissus are, without fear  
or caution And when the red anemones appear in full bloom glowing like fiery  
flames/ Or like a vast red carpet unrolling in honor of a mighty king/ And the  
tender violet in the garden resembles a pinch brought on a virgin’s cheeks/ Daisy,

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<sup>14</sup> See Yaqut, *Mu‘jam al-Buldān* (Beirut, 1956), II: 495-543; Encyclopedia of Islam 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “dayr”; Robert W. Hamilton, *Al-Walid and His Friends: An Umayyad Tragedy*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, no. VI ed. Julian Raby (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988), p. 86-91; Qasim al-Samarrai, “The ‘Abbasid Gardens in Baghdad and Samarra,” p. 115-117. While literary evidence regarding the Umayyad caliphs is problematic because it postdates the period that it purports to describe and was composed for rulers of a dynasty hostile to the Umayyads (the *Kitab al-Aghani*, especially portrays one of the last Umayyad rulers, Al-Walid ibn Yazid, as an impious figure almost solely concerned with the sensual pleasures), epigraphic and other textual evidence points to the same phenomenon amongst the Abbasid rulers, and in other parts of the Islamic empire as well, particularly in Egypt. Rather than dismissing such evidence as historiographic slander by disapproving medieval Muslim authors, however, perhaps we can interpret the Muslim pursuit of recreation and leisure at the monasteries as simply the continuation of well-established practices associated with antique villa life.

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lily of the valley beautifully blossoming together with ox-eyes and wormwood  
gloriously brilliant<sup>15</sup>

Two monasteries, located in the fertile hinterland of Damascus known as the Ghuta, were often visited by both Umayyad and Abbasid rulers and their courtiers. One, known as Dayr Murran, was located on a rise overlooking fields of saffron and was known in medieval Arabic literature for its tree-filled and well-watered gardens, and for the monastery church and its decoration.<sup>16</sup> The second monastery, known as Dayr Saliba, was located outside Damascus on the side of the Bab al-Faradis, or the Gate of the Garden.<sup>17</sup> It is said to have boasted walled gardens and water features of some sort in addition to the fine architecture of the monastery and a nearby convent. One poet reminisced about the sounds of the Dayr Saliba, “When I remember the twin monasteries my heart melts to hear the clucking of chickens and the clanging of clappers.”<sup>18</sup>

Likewise, al-Shābushtī’s work contains numerous references to monasteries and their gardens located in Iraq and favored by the Abbasid rulers and courtiers. For example, in one poem included in his work, a poet praises the gardens of the Iraqi monastery of Dayr al-‘Athārā (Monastery of the Virgins) to a friend, comparing the gardens of the monastery to “an embroidered garment adorned with new colors every day,” and refers to the fruit trees whose branches, laden with fruit, are compared to

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<sup>15</sup> Yaqut, *Mu‘jam* (Beirut, 1956), II:537. Al-Shābushtī, p. 259; Translated in Qasim al-Samarrai, p. 116.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Umarī (1924 ed. p. 353, 355-56. Yaqūt (1866-73 ed.), II: 696-97; Hamilton, *Al-Walid and His Friends*, p. 89.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Umarī (1924), p. 349-50. Translated in Hamilton, 89.

<sup>18</sup> *ibidem*.

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maidens attired in green and adorned with pearl necklaces.<sup>19</sup> In another poem celebrating an Iraqi monastery and its gardens, the poet Bakr ibn Kharija of Kufa wrote the following verses extolling the pleasures of the monastery Dayr Hanna, located outside the pre-Islamic Iraqi city of Hira:

A place beloved, by gardens fair embraced,  
From whence Khawarnaq's waters flow,  
Dayr Hanna! Bless the days we passed in you,  
With wine's enchantment morn and eve;  
The one of us with flowery garland crowned,  
The other's curls with saffron drenched.  
As clouds are gilded by the lightning flash  
Your watery meads with flowers glow.  
Trees in their ranks, as evening shadows fall,  
Are camels filing through the dusk.  
Would you have pearls? The chamomile is there.  
Or rubies? See the anemones!"<sup>20</sup>

In the anecdote which included the above verses, the man who eventually leads his companions to the monastery exhorts them: "This is the time to visit it, in the spring; while the gardens are in full bloom, and the pools are yet standing after the rain." Anecdotes show Muslim visitors briefly inhabiting spaces within the monastery proper or

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<sup>19</sup> Al-Shābushtī, p. 109; Translated in Qasim al-Samarrai, p. 116.

<sup>20</sup> 'Umari (1924), p. 313; Hamilton, Appendix III, n. 25.

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somewhere on the grounds; the poet Jah̄za recalls that upon arriving at the celebrated monastery of Dayr Hanna, “we found the Dayr indeed a beautiful building, encompassed by its gardens, with the river of Hira... flowing near by. So there our tents were pitched.”<sup>21</sup>

In these references to monasteries and gardens, sociability is emphasized, with groups of companions (sometimes including women members of households) enjoying poetry, music, food, and sometimes dance within a monastery building or within the grounds. In addition to the beauty of flower and tree-filled gardens, scenic prospects, and water features like rivers, fountains, and pools, the convivial prospects of a monastery visit were often mentioned. Jah̄za remarks that after he and his companions’ tents had been pitched “the monks came out bringing us such gifts and favours as they had,” with ostrich eggs and truffles noted especially.<sup>22</sup> In another account, Harun al-Rashid, the Abbasid caliph, stops at the monastery with the intention of enjoying a light picnic, and is invited by the abbot to partake of their food. The caliph accepted, and was joined at the picnic by the abbot.<sup>23</sup>

Along with the anticipation of beautiful surroundings and culinary delicacies, monastic wines are cited as an attraction for some of the Muslim visitors. Jah̄za so

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<sup>21</sup> Hamilton, 87-88.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Alice-Mary Talbot’s analysis of Byzantine texts, including monastic records and hagiographies, indicates that the monastic diet was largely composed of bread, vegetables like lettuce, cabbage, and other leafy greens, onions, beets, squash, leeks, carrots, garlic, and cucumbers, legumes like broad beans and chickpeas, fruits that may have included apples, peaches, pears, figs, mulberries, cherries, grapes, melons, pomegranates, oranges, dates, and carobs. Grapes would also have been used to produce wine, raisins, and vinegar, while orchards produced nuts and olive oil. Dairy products, eggs, and fish were consumed less frequently. Talbot, 37-69.

<sup>23</sup> Hamilton, 89.

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enjoyed the Dayr Hanna's vintage that he was moved to write some lines about it after returning to his home of Kufa:

Oh the days we had in al-Hira  
And al-Ukayrah, so fine!  
When the water got too much for us  
We mixed the wine with wine!<sup>24</sup>

Texts like these indicate that the leisurely enjoyment of nature and convivial entertainments was operative in the central Islamic lands. Terms like *nazh*, (derived from the root [n-z-h], which connotes the idea of being far away or distant) are often used in the Arabic texts, where they convey, according to Hamilton, "the notion of clean air and pleasurable remoteness from the common ills of every-day life" when describing the benefits of places like the monasteries of Dayr Hanna and Dayr Saliba.<sup>25</sup> The root is used in Andalusí texts about the foundation of *munyas*, as well. For instance, in the account of 'Abd al-Rahman I's founding of al-Rusafa, Ibn Hayyan cites "leisurely enjoyment and relaxation" (*nazh wa sakan*) as the reasons that compelled the Umayyad ruler to found the *munya*, and notes that the Umayyad emir used the estate known as the *Munya Nasr* during his times of leisurely enjoyment (*awqāt nuzh*).<sup>26</sup> In such terms we may see the medieval Islamic equivalent of the notion of *otium*, or relaxation in a rural setting, which

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<sup>24</sup> 'Umari (1924), 321. Arabic text reproduced in Hamilton's appendix III, n. 27. Considering the emphasis upon the enjoyment of nature and convivial pursuits, it is perhaps not too surprising that the anticipation of amorous pursuits was also counted among the attractions of monastery visits.

<sup>25</sup> Hamilton, 86-91.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Maqqari, *Nafh*, ed. Abbas (Beirut, 1968), I: 466; Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis* (III), ed. Antuña (Paris, 1937), p. 38-39.



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partly informed Roman villa culture. The monasteries of Syria and Mesopotamia seem to have taken on at least some of the roles associated with the Roman and Late Antique villa.

### *The Umayyad Qaṣr*

With the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty in Syria in the seventh century many of the themes associated with both Byzantine aristocratic estates and with monasteries – agriculture, and the use of estates as aristocratic retreats for hunting and other recreational activities, surface in relation to the group of early Islamic estates, (Ar. *qaṣr*, pl. *qusūr*) attributed to Syrian Umayyad patronage.<sup>27</sup> The direct connection between the Syrian Umayyads and the offshoot Cordoban dynasty renders the Umayyad *qusūr* particularly important as a context for the combination of agricultural and court functions characteristic of the Cordoban *munya*, as well as the significance attached to the villas by Umayyad patrons (subjects to which I will return in the following chapters).<sup>28</sup> Ibn Hayyan asserts a literal connection between the Syrian estates and those of Umayyad Cordoba, through the translation of plant materials from the dynasty's homeland to the

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<sup>27</sup> For the debate on the meaning of “*qaṣr*” see Irfan Shahid, 67-75; and L.I. Conrad, “The *Qusūr* of Medieval Islam: Some implications for the Social History of the Near East,” In *al-Abhath* 29 (1981), 7-23.

<sup>28</sup> There is a vast literature on the Umayyad *qusūr*, but basic works include: J. Sauvaget, “Châteaux umeyyades de Syrie. Contribution à l'étude de la colonisation arabe aux Ier et IIe siècles de l'Hégire,” In *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 35 (1967), 1-49; Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven 1987, revised and enlarged ed.); Oleg Grabar, “Umayyad Palaces Reconsidered,” In *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993), 93-108; Oleg Grabar et al., *City in the Desert: Qasr al-Hayr East*, Harvard Middle Eastern Monograph Series (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978); Jere L. Bacharach, “Marwanid Umayyad Building Activities: Speculations on Patronage,” In *Muqarnas* 13 (1996), 27-44.

Iberian Peninsula.<sup>29</sup> The chronicler describes how ‘Abd al-Rahman I specifically collected plants from Syria to cultivate in al-Rusafa’s gardens, providing the example of a famous Andalusí variety of pomegranate, known as “Saffari,” named for the ambassador who brought the cultivar back to Cordoba from Syria.. The author takes care to connect the Cordoban al-Rusafa to its Syrian namesake, indicating that the pomegranate cultivar brought to Cordoba originated came from ‘Abd al-Rahman I’s grandfather Hisham’s al-Rusafa estate in Syria.<sup>30</sup> This story of the Saffari pomegranate points to a shared functional program between the Umayyad estates in Syria and in Cordoba, in that cultivation of valued food crops was present in both. Do the connections that the Andalusí chroniclers are at such pains to emphasize between the Syrian qasr and its

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<sup>29</sup> Historians of Andalusí agriculture interpret Ibn Hayyan’s account of the founding of the Cordoban al-Rusafa, with its emphasis on the cultivation of “exotic plants and trees,” (*ghara’ib al-ghurUs wa ’akArim al-shajar*) as proof of the creation of al-Andalus’s first botanical garden. M. Marin, in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. s.v. “al-Rusafa.” I argued that one can also interpret the passage’s linking of the Syrian and Cordoban estates as the chronicler’s desire to underscore the legitimacy of his patrons to the caliphate by emphasizing continuity between the Syrian Umayyads and the Cordoban branch of the dynasty: see “Identity and the Transplanted Dynasty: the country estates of Umayyad Cordoba,” In *Chicago Art Journal* 13 (Spring 2003), 33-45. In the *Akhbar Majmu ‘a*’s account, the personal significance of the *munya* to the founder of the Cordoban dynasty is overlaid with contemporary political concerns; the text asserts that it was at Hisham’s al-Rusafa that the Syrian ruler recognized his grandson’s future importance to the Umayyad line. *Akhbar Majmu ‘a fi Fath al-Andalus wa Dhikri Umara’ iha*, ed. Emilio Lafuente y Alcántara, (Madrid, 1867), 52-54; Nuha Khoury, “The meaning of the Great Mosque of Cordoba in the tenth century.” *Muqarnas* 13 (1996), 80-98, n.25.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Maqqari, *Analectes*, I:304, lines 12-16. “From this garden [of the Cordoban al-Rusafa] come the pomegranates known as “Saffari”, which regarding flavor, the smallness of their seeds, and the abundance of their juice, had no equal in the world and were superior to all the fruits which were produced in al-Andalus. The following tale is told about their introduction into al-Andalus and the origin of their name. They say that one of the diplomats sent by ‘Abd al-Rahman to Syria with the mission of taking all the exotic plants that he could, brought from Damascus, among other rarities, a variety of pomegranate from the garden named Rusafat Hisham...” Transl. Manuela Marín in *Encyclopedia of Islam* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Rusafa.”

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Cordoban namesake in accounts like this one point to a conscious continuation between the Syrian qusuur and the Cordoban *munyas*, at least in terms of functional program?

Ibn Hayyan's account of the Saffari pomegranate symbolizes the process of the "Syrianization" of the Cordoban landscape under the hands of the numerous Syrians who settled in Cordoba in the eighth century.<sup>31</sup> Discussing this process of landscape change, Thomas Glick points out the logical process by which the early Arab and Berber settlers on the Iberian Peninsula chose territories that resembled the landscapes with which they were already familiar. Glick has pointed out the significance, in terms of the change to and perceptions of the land, of the frequent comparisons between the Andalusi and Syrian climates and landscapes that form a running theme in Arabic sources.<sup>32</sup> In attempting to understand how the Cordoban *munya* were conceptualized at the beginning of the Umayyad reign in al-Andalus, it stands to reason that 'Abd al-Rahman's familiarity with his grandfather's Syrian estates and the activities and lifestyle associated with them would also have informed his conception of the *munya* that he founded just outside Cordoba. The Syrian origins of his supporters who followed him to settle in Cordoba also imply a general familiarity with the tradition of the Syrian qusuur that could have shaped the general conception of *munyas* from the beginning of the Umayyad rule in Cordoba. Even in the tenth century the literature composed for the Cordoban elites shows an ongoing familiarity with the Syrian Umayyad rulers in the form of anecdotes

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<sup>31</sup>Thomas Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages: Comparative Perspectives on Social and Cultural Formation* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979), 53-56.

<sup>32</sup>The author al-Himyari, for example, described al-Andalus as comparable to Syria in fertility and the purity of its air. *Ibid.*, 55.

included in works like the Cordoban author Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s *‘Iqd al-Farīd*, the most famous Andalusī work of *adab* (belles lettres).<sup>33</sup>

Architecturally, the Umayyad estates, or *qusūr*, which have survived in present-day Syria and Jordan constitute a recognizable group characterized by square plans consisting of rooms on two levels arranged around an interior courtyard, and exterior walls which rely on elements borrowed from urban or military architecture (buttressing, corner towers, crenellations) to lend the appearance of fortification. (Fig. 81).<sup>34</sup> The sculpture, carved stucco, frescos, and mosaics with which the *qusūr* were sometimes ornamented illustrates the Umayyad reinterpretation of Late Antique Hellenistic and Byzantine architectural traditions during the early Islamic period (Figs. 82-89). Literary anecdotes about the Umayyad caliph Hisham Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik (uncle of the founder of the Spanish Umayyad dynasty) and his nephew al-Walid indicate that bathing, hunting, horse racing, conviviality, and poetry were among the activities that the Syrian Umayyads enjoyed at estates like the one known as Khirbat al-Mafjar (c. 740 CE), probably the best-studied of the Umayyad *qusūr* (Figs. 87-89).<sup>35</sup> Khirbat al-Mafjar’s plan combines the square courtyard residence and bath hall associated with Umayyad

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<sup>33</sup> For example, Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi relates an anecdote about the Syrian Umayyad caliph Hishām that emphasizes the caliph’s reputation for being the best-dressed and most perfumed of the Umayyads. Hamilton, *Walid and his friends*, p. 75.

<sup>34</sup> Oleg Grabar, “Umayyad Palaces Reconsidered.” Grabar identifies the major sites as “Khirbat Minyah, Qusayr Amrah, Khirbat al-Mafjar, Jabal Says, Qasr al-Hayr West, Qasr al-Hayr East, Mshatta, and Ukhaydir, the latter being the only example found in Iraq rather than in the western half of the Fertile Crescent,” See Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, p.141. For individual sites see: Oleg Grabar, et al., *City in the Desert*.

<sup>35</sup> Hamilton, *passim*. Hamilton addresses these themes as they apply to the figure of al-Al-Walid, the nephew of Hisham Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, whom Hamilton believes to have been the patron of Khirbat al-Mafjar.

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residences like Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi (c. 728) and Qusayr Amra (c. 715), while its mosaic decoration continues antique and late antique mosaic traditions (Figs. 81-89)

Oleg Grabar has referred to the leisurely and official aspects associated with the Umayyad *qusūr* as two “moods,” one pleasurable and one official, which can also describe the functions of the monasteries of Syria and Iraq for Umayyad and Abbasid elites. Grabar links the pleasurable mood to the association of the Umayyad *qusūr* with hunting, drinking, music, feasting, and the presence of gardens, while the official mood derived from the use of the estates for official activities.<sup>36</sup> For example, an anecdote about a visit which al-Walid ibn Yazid made to the monastery of Dayr Saliba illustrates how monasteries were also used for activities associated with the administration of rural territories, though the original point of the account was probably to illustrate just how the behavior of this particular Umayyad prince conflicted with Muslim social mores. The anecdote relates that Walid and his companions (including women in his entourage) were enjoying a meal and music in one of the monastery rooms, while in the meantime “the chamberlain was sitting there waiting for Walid to begin receiving the public in audience – a number of Arab shaykhs were already gathered.”<sup>37</sup> When Walid and his companions arise and dance out of their room into the main hall, inspired by their singing and instruments, the chamberlain narrowly averts an awkward glimpse of the ruler’s

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<sup>36</sup> Grabar, *Formation*, p. 141-64.

<sup>37</sup> In Hamilton, 90-91. Anecdotes about al-Walid Ibn Yazid like this one, which highlight his refusal to conform to medieval Muslim social mores must be taken with a grain of salt as an Abbasid historiographical effort to discredit the dynasty which they had overthrown. However, the anecdote implies that the reception of local shaykhs by an Umayyad in the space of a monastery was not out of the ordinary, and was perhaps expected if a ruler were known to be present at a monastery – an example of Grabar’s “official” mood.

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scandalous behavior on the part of the local Muslim leaders. Thus it seems that both the monasteries and the Umayyad *qusūr*, in addition to serving as spaces of leisurely retreat, could serve as temporary spaces for the administration of a territory through hearings on local concerns, providing convenient locations for meetings between the rulers and the rural tribes. As the following chapters discuss, the same “moods” apply to the Cordoban *munya*, which were used as retreats for the Umayyad rulers and certain court elites, but which also were given roles in official activities like civic processions.

Just as Irfan Shahid has emphasized the connection between Late Antique monasteries in Syria and the Umayyad *qusūr*,<sup>38</sup> Qasim al-Samarrai has emphasized the importance of Late Antique Iraqi monasteries and their gardens to the siting and conception of the Abbasid palaces of early Baghdad and Samarra.<sup>39</sup> For example, soon after completing the round city of Baghdad, the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur founded the palace known as the Qasr al-Khuld (Palace of Eternity) in the nearby gardens of the Mar Fathion monastery.<sup>40</sup> Al-Mansur justified his choosing the site because of its beautiful

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<sup>38</sup> Irfan Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, Vol. 2.1, p. 374-94.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Samarrai describes the Abbasid palaces and gardens based on a combination of archaeological and textual evidence, and his own observations of the sites in “The Abbasid Gardens in Baghdad and Samarra,” p. 117-21. Also see Alastair Northedge, “The Palaces of the Abbasids at Samarra,” In *A medieval Islamic city reconsidered: an interdisciplinary approach to Samarra* ed. Chase Robinson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), p. 29-68; Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p. 88-100; Ahmad Susa, *Rayy Sāmarrā fī ‘ahd al-Khilāfa al-‘Abbāsiyya* (Baghdad, 1948); Ernst Herzfeld, *Geschichte der Stadt Samarra* (Hamburg-Berlin, 1948), *ibid.*, Ernst Herzfeld, *Samarra, Aufnahmen und Untersuchungen zur Islamischen Archeologie* (Berlin, 1907).

<sup>40</sup> M. Jawad and A. Susa, *Dalīl Khāritat Baghdad* (Baghdad: Iraqi Academy, 1958). Cited in al-Samarrai, p. 116-17.

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gardens and the view it offered of the landscape of the Tigris river.<sup>41</sup> When the Abbasid court moved to the city of Samarra, according to the ninth-century geographer al-Yaqubi, part of the caliphal palace known as the Dar al-‘Amma was constructed in the garden of a Christian monastery.<sup>42</sup>

### *Islamic North Africa*

The Umayyad *qusūr* and the were not the only early Islamic buildings to manifest some continuity with pre-Islamic villas. To return to North Africa, though now moving forward in time to the tenth and eleventh centuries, palaces constructed by the Fatimid dynasty of North Africa (r. 909-1171 C.E.) and by the the Zirid and Hammadid dynasties of Algeria provide examples of North African Islamic estates that are slightly later in date to the Cordoban *munyas*.<sup>43</sup> Remains of a throne room of a palace constructed at the Fatimid capital, Sabra-Mansuriya (near the city of Kairouan), feature long, rectangular spaces; the use of three parallel halls, arranged longitudinally and fronted by a wide rectangular hall is similar to the plan of the reception hall of ‘Abd al-Rahman III at Madinat al-Zahra’ (Fig. 91). Long rectangular halls are also used for both residential quarters and reception areas at the tenth-century Zirid palace of Ashir in Algeria, and in the residential quarters of the palace complex founded by the Berber Hammadid dynasty

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<sup>41</sup> Jawad and Susa, p. 36-37, 75.

<sup>42</sup> al-Ya‘qubi, *Kitāb al-Buldān* (Leiden, 1861), p. 29, 32; al-Samarrai, p. 117.

<sup>43</sup> A brief consideration of the three appears in Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam, 650-1250* (Harmondsworth & NY: Pelican, 1987). p. 167-72.

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of Algeria around the first decade of the eleventh century (Figs. 92, 93).<sup>44</sup> The chronological and geographical proximity of these North African palaces to the court architecture of Umayyad Cordoba suggests that architects and patrons in the Maghrib utilized similar architectural solutions in the creation of court spaces. However, while wide rectangular halls arranged around a courtyard appear in the plan of the Qal‘a Banu Hammad, the arrangement of the double rectangular hall facing into a garden courtyard or outward toward a panoramic view of the landscape, characteristic of the elite houses at Madinat al-Zahra’ and al-Rummaniya, are not apparent in these North African palaces. This suggests that the domestic architecture of the Umayyad capital had evolved a local approach, distinct to those utilized by North African architects, to address the tastes and requirements of Cordoban courtiers.

I have already suggested that enough textual and material evidence exists to make the case that the appropriation of Roman remains in Umayyad Cordoba would not have been an uncommon occurrence. In the case of North Africa, material evidence does exist for continuity in building and building techniques between antique and early Islamic North Africa. For example, archaeologists are currently investigating the transition from Late Antique to Islamic North Africa as revealed by the case study of the important Punic

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<sup>44</sup> On the Qal‘a see L. Golvin, *Recherches Archeologiques a la Qal'a des Banu Hammad*, CNRS, Paris 1965; A. Lézine, “Le Minaret de la Qal'a des Banu Hammad,” In *Bulletin d'Archeologie Algerienne* 2:261-70, p. 1966-67. D.F. Ruggles has compared the Qal‘a to Umayyad architecture in Cordoba in “Vision and power at the Qala Bani Hammad in Islamic North Africa,” In *Journal of garden history*, 14, no. 1 (Jan-Mar 1994), p. 28-41.



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city of Volubilis, which was still inhabited by Romano-Berbers when Idris I, a descendent of the prophet Muhammad through 'Ali, arrived there in 789.<sup>45</sup>

Descriptions of North African estates from the fourteenth century and later offer compelling parallels to the Cordoban *munya* date. Ibn Khaldun, for example, describes the landscape of a thirteenth-century North African villa founded by the Hafsids ruler al-Mustansir, (r. 1249-77). The vast estate, known as Abu Fihir, was located outside the Hafsids capital of Ifriqiya. Ibn Khaldun writes:

One found there a forest of trees, some of which were trained on to trellises, while the rest were left to grow in complete freedom. The branches of the lemon and orange trees mingled with those of the cypress, while, below, the myrtle and jasmine smiled upon the water-lily. In the midst of these groves, a large garden encircled a lake so vast that it might be taken for an ocean. Water was brought there by the ancient aqueduct [which in former times supplied Carthage and which the Hafsids al-

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<sup>45</sup> Elizabeth Fentress, as one of the Directors of Excavations at Volubilis, is also presently working on this issue as well: Elizabeth Fentress, "Islamizing the Berbers: Excavations at Volubilis and the first centuries of the Arab conquest of North Africa," Archaeological Institute of America Lecture Series (NY Society) (February 1 2005): "In 789 Idriss, great-grandson of Ali and thus a direct descendent of the prophet, fled Baghdad and made his way across North Africa to Morocco, where he was told that the major city was Walili, Roman Volubilis. There he was welcomed by the Berber tribe that controlled the city and created imam. Using this power base he went on to control northern Morocco so effectively that within three years his kingdom was stable enough to survive his death and pass to his infant son. My excavations at Volubilis since 2000 have revealed a substantial section of the new area of the town that Idriss I seems to have built, including the earliest Islamic Baths in North Africa, as well as on some of the older city, still inhabited by Romano-Berbers. This new evidence throws light on the Arabization of housing and city-planning, as well as on the continuity of buildings and building techniques from the Roman period. This new view of Volubilis can be put in the wider context of what we know about the transition from Late Antique North Africa to Islam." See "Archaeological Institute of America Lecture Program: Lecturer Information," <http://www.archaeological.org/webinfo.php?page=10224&lid=18> (January 2005).

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Mustansir had had repaired]. Following this conduit, the waters gush through a huge outlet into a square reservoir [serving as a decantation basin] and, thence, through a fairly short canal, to the great pool which they fill in swirling torrents...<sup>46</sup>

The description of trees of all kinds, of fragrant flowers, and of a vast pool fed by a refurbished antique aqueduct parallels textual evidence for the Roman aqueduct that was refurbished to bring water to the Cordoban *munya* Dar al-Na‘ura, as well as the remains of the monumental pool (also fed by an aqueduct) at the al-Rummaniya site, which at present stands as the lone existing plan for a Cordoban *munya*.

The Marinid dynasty (r. 1196-1549) founded estates near their capital city, Fez al-Jadid, suggesting similarities to the Cordoban *munya* (Fig. 94). For example, Georges Marçais describes the Marinid estate of Amina al-Mariniyya, adjacent to the capital city of Fez al-Jadid, as an enormous cultivated enclosure “in which terraces and raised pavilions dominated the plantations and the surrounding countryside,” recalling the terraced plan of al-Rummaniya.<sup>47</sup> Though founded by the Idrisid dynasty in the eighth century, Fez was ruled by the Umayyads of al-Andalus for nearly a century, and one of its quarters was established by a group of Cordoban emigrants who settled in the city in the ninth century.<sup>48</sup> Is it possible that these Cordoban emigrants brought with them the

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<sup>46</sup> Cited by Georges Marçais in the section on gardens in the Muslim west: *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “bustān.”

<sup>47</sup> *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “bustān.”

<sup>48</sup> These settlers from Cordoba established the mosque of the Andalusians (al-Andalusiyyin), that continued to be expanded and embellished into the thirteenth century. See the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Fas;” Terrasse, Henri. *La Mosquee des Andalous a Fes*. (Paris: Les Editions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1942).

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practice of creating *munyas*? Georges Marçais' definition of the later North African *agdals*, large enclosures associated with the later capital cities like Marrakesh and Meknes (Figs. 96, 97), recall the Cordoban *munya* tradition in their evocation of estates located near the dynasty's capital, and which the ruler used for production and recreation:

Away from the dense urban centres, the *agdal* is adjacent to the official quarter, a rural annex to the urban palaces. It is profit-making land, enriching the coffers of the sovereign. It also provides a place of recreation and repose...<sup>49</sup>

In the emphasis upon both agricultural and leisure functions for the ruler and court, Marçais posits that *agdals* may be the continuation of earlier Iberian practices, via tenth or eleventh-century North African estates that have not survived. Evidence for the existence of suburban estates in the near vicinity of other North African cities, as pictured in an undated view of Algiers, for example, suggest that the practice was not limited to Marinid Morocco (Fig. 98).

The architectural and functional connections between monasteries in Syria and Mesopotamia and the Umayyad *qusūr* that I have noted here demonstrates that the villa culture of the Roman and Late Antique Mediterranean persisted, albeit with changes induced with the Christianization of the region, into the Islamic territories of the Eastern Mediterranean, Iraq, and the Maghrib. Rather than basing my argument that the *munya* is

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<sup>49</sup> Appears in Marçais' discussion of gardens in the Islamic West. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. "*bustan*." On the *agdals* of North Africa also see Federico Cresti, "Agdal, Jenan and Riyad in the African Maghreb," In *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1 (1986), 58-64. Cresti includes several pre-modern views of North African cities with suburban estates, like the view of Algiers on p. 62 (Fig. 81), but does not provide further information on the sources for these views or details regarding the estates depicted in them.

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part of the history of villas upon strict architectural or typological factors, I have focused on villas as both agricultural foundations and as sites for various activities associated with recreation and, to some extent, official or administrative functions. The Arabs and Berbers who settled in Cordoba between the eighth and tenth centuries would have been familiar with both the Roman and Late Antique remains of the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa and the medieval Islamic lifestyles associated with palaces and estates. Their familiarity with those material and historical traditions, as well as material continuity from antiquity into the medieval period, would have informed their absorption of the villa contexts outlined in this chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF *MUNYA* PATRONAGE

‘Abd al-Rahman I founded the first of what would become a succession of Umayyad suburban estates. He is said to have named the estate al-Rusāfa, after a celebrated estate founded by his grandfather the Syrian Umayyad caliph Hisham (r. 724-743 CE) outside the antique Syrian city of the same name.<sup>1</sup> Hisham’s name is connected with several of the Syrian Umayyad *qusūr*.<sup>2</sup> ‘Abd al-Rahman I’s founding of the Cordoban al-Rusafa suggests the conscious continuation, on Iberian soil, of the Syrian *qusūr* tradition from the beginning of the Cordoban Umayyad reign. The account of the founding of the first Cordoban *munya* emphasizes the perceived connection between the Syrian and Cordoban estates and landscape, and by implication, the two dynasties:

One of the great works that ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Mu‘āwiya had carried out at the beginning of his rule was the *munya* of al-Rusāfa, for his enjoyment

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<sup>1</sup> On the pre-Islamic history of the Syrian Rusafa see M.J. Mackensen et al., *Resafa I: Eine befestigte spätantike Anlage vor den Stadtmauern von Resafa* (Mainz: Philippe von Zabern, 1984). On the gardens excavated at the Syrian site by the German Archaeological Institute of Damascus see Thilo Ulbert, “Ein umayyadischer Pavillon in Resafa- Ruṣāfat Hishām,” In *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 7 (1993), p. 213-31 and Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p. 42-44. On the part of the site identified as Hisham’s palace see E. Key Fowden, “An Arab Building at al-Rusafa Sergiopolis,” In *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 12 (2000), p. 303-24; Katharina Otto-Dorn, “Grabung im Ummayyadischen Ruṣāfa,” In *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957), p. 119-33. There were also settlements called al-Rusafa in Abbasid Iraq, including one of the quarters that developed outside al-Mansur’s Baghdad. The name al-Rusafa in this case referred to “the paved, embanked causeway across the swampy ground enclosed by the bend of the Tigris within which the quarter was laid out.” This Abbasid al-Rusafa consisted of a palace complex that included spaces for the army and estates granted to other members of the Abbasid family and important military commanders. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “al-Rusafa.”

<sup>2</sup> Jere L. Bacharach, “Marwanid Umayyad Building Activities: Speculations on Patronage,” In *Muqarnas* 13 (1996), 27-44.

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[*nuzh*] and relaxation [*sakan*] for long periods [*'akthar awqAt*] He built a splendid royal palace [*qasr hasan*], and laid out extensive gardens [*jinān wāsi'*] in which exotic plants and trees from all parts [*ghara'ib al-ghurūs wa 'akArim al-shajar*]. He ordered the planting of stones from special fruits, as well as rare seeds brought by Yazīd and Safar, his ambassadors in Syria, so that with the benevolence of destiny and careful cultivation, the surrounding gardens became the home of luxuriant trees producing exotic fruit, which shortly spread to all parts of al-Andalus, where the supremacy of these fruits over other varieties was soon recognized... He called it al-Rusāfa after the favorite residence in the Syrian desert of his grandfather, Hisham, who he rivaled with in choosing the site of this palace.<sup>3</sup>

Jerrilyn Dodds argued that a well-known poem alluding to al-Rusafa's landscape, and which the fourteenth-century author Ibn Idhāri attributed to 'Abd al-Rahman I, illustrates the importance of the notions of exile, memory, and cultural transfer to the Cordoban Umayyads:

I saw the lonely palm tree in the midst of al-Rusafa,  
here in the west, far from its land,  
And I said: you suffer, like I, in exile and with nostalgia,  
and the same prolonged separation from my children and my people.

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<sup>3</sup> Al-Maqqari, *Nafh*, ed. 'Abbas, I: 466-467; Al-Maqqari, *Analectes*, I:304-305. On the Cordoban al-Rusafa see Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p. 42-45; *ibid.*, "Il giardini con pianta a croce nel Mediterraneo islamico," In *Il giardino islamico: Architettura, natura, paesaggio*, ed. Attilio Petruccioli (Milan: Electa, 1993), p. 143-54, esp. 150.

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You have grown up in a land in which you are a stranger,

and like me, suffer the remoteness and distance;

Let the morning rain from the scurrying clouds fall upon you,

and let the stars weep their tears upon you.<sup>4</sup>

The naming of the Cordoban site after Hisham's important estate, and Ibn Hayyan's account of the transfer of Syrian vegetation to Iberian soil epitomizes 'Abd al-Rahman I's conscious connection to the Syrian Umayyad dynasty and the *qusūr* that functioned agriculturally and as sites of leisure.

Following 'Abd al-Rahman I's foundation of al-Rusafa, the next reference to *munya* patronage in Cordoba is associated not with an Umayyad ruler, but with a woman of the dynasty. According to Ibn Hayyan the *Munya* 'Ajab, founded by the wife of 'Abd al-Rahman I's successor, al-Hakam I, was located across the Guadalquivir River from Cordoba's walled urban center, in the extramural zone known simply as the Suburb (*al-Rabaḍ*). The *Munya* 'Ajab's exact location, as with all but one of the Cordoban estates, remains unknown. Textual references to the estate are extremely brief, but convey some insight on the possible roles of estates in the Cordoban economy and urban development.

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<sup>4</sup> Jerrilyn Dodds, "The Great Mosque of Cordoba," In *al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York, 1992), p.[?]. Ibn al-Abbar, *al-Hulla al-Siyaraa'*, ed. H. Mu'nis, Cairo, 1963, vol. I, p. 37; Garcia Sanchez and Angel López y López, "The Botanic Gardens," p.169. The poem is also reproduced in Al-Maqqari, *Nafh al-Tib*, I: 466-467; al-Maqqari, *Analectes* I:304-305. Nykl provides an alternate version which reads: 1. Oh palm, you solitary one, like myself, grow / In a land where you are distant from your kindred / 2. You weep, while your leaves inarticulately whisper / Not being human in species, not able to speak / 3. Were you renowned with mind, you would weep recalling /Euphrates and the homeland of the palm tree groves! / 4. But you cannot return, and were driven away / By the 'Abbasids' hatred, from my kindred! In A.R. Nykl, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry and its Relations with the Old Provençal Troubadours* (Baltimore: J.H. Furst, 1946), p. 18.

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A reference to the *Munyat* 'Ajab appears within the section on the month of July in the Latin version of the *Calendar of Cordoba*:

For the Christians it is the day of S. Christopher, buried in Antioch. He is honored in (the church of the quarter of) the *Munyat* 'Ajab, which is situated on the other side of Cordoba, where the lepers are.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps reflecting the text's orientation toward a predominantly Muslim audience, the corresponding Arabic text notes simply, "For the Christians it is the day of S. Christopher, buried in Antioch."<sup>6</sup> These brief textual indicators of the existence of the *Munyat* 'Ajab bring up two points of interest about the Cordoba *munya*, though the dearth of information makes it impossible to do anything more than simply point them out. First, the foundation of an estate by a female patron deserves notice. Scholars, to my knowledge, have not devoted sustained attention to the subject of women's patronage in Umayyad Cordoba, though recent socio-historical research on women in al-Andalus may help to illuminate the topic.<sup>7</sup> However, even brief textual references like that to the *Munyat* 'Ajab, along with epigraphic evidence like a dedicatory inscription in the Cordoban archaeological museum, which identifies the patron of a minaret as a woman, suggest that material exists that might illuminate the extent to which women were patrons in their own right in Umayyad Cordoba. The second point of interest connected with the *Munyat* 'Ajab arises from the reference to the endowment of the estate's income to a

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<sup>5</sup> R. Dozy, ed., *Le Calendrier de Cordoue*, Medieval Iberian Peninsula Texts and Studies, no. I, trans. Ch. Pellat (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1874, 1961 ed.), p. 110-111.

<sup>6</sup> Dozy, *Calendrier*, p.110-111.

<sup>7</sup> Randi Deguilhem et al., ed., *Writing the Feminine: Women in Arab Sources*, Islamic Mediterranean Series, no. I (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).



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charitable function – the leper colony located somewhere in the suburb or beyond in the fertile plains (*kanbaniyya*, Sp. *campaña*) south of Cordoba proper.<sup>8</sup> This supports the argument in Chapter Three, that the estates of Umayyad Cordoba were more than just pleasure gardens, as *taifa* poetic evocations of flowery gardens suggest, but that they also encompassed agricultural functions significant enough to provide their patrons with a source of income.<sup>9</sup>

‘Abd al-Rahman II (r. 822-852 CE), who succeeded al-Hakam I as the third Umayyad amir of Cordoba, is not associated by name with the founding of any specific Cordoban estates, though Ruggles has suggested that he may have founded the *Munyat al-Bunti*, known only from a textual reference in connection with Umayyad hunting excursions.<sup>10</sup> Instead, the main estate associated with ‘Abd al-Rahman II’s reign was founded not by the Umayyad ruler himself, but by an elite slave in his administration. The incorporation of slave elites into the Umayyad court actually began earlier, during the reign of the second Umayyad amir of al-Andalus Al-Hakam I (r. 796-822). By

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<sup>8</sup> al-Idrisi, *Description de l’Afrique et de l’Espagne* ed. Dozy and De Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1866; reprinted Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1969), p. 174, 209; *Encyclopedia of Islam* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, s.v. “Kanbaniyya.”

<sup>9</sup> Spanish historian and Arabist Emilio Molina López is studying the topic of Andalusí rulers’ personal property (*mustakhla*). His article “Más sobre el Mustajlas nazari,” *Estudios Arabes Dedicados a D. Luis Seco de Lucena al-Mudun* (Granada Univ. de Granada, 1999), p. 107-118 focuses on the personal property of the Nasrid rulers, which included income-producing suburban estates, but includes discussion relevant to the Cordoban Umayyads. This author’s forthcoming *El Mustajlas: Introducción al estudio del patrimonio privado de los monarcas omeyas andalusíes* (I) (in press) promises to shed more light on this important topic.

<sup>10</sup> Mentioned by al-Razi in his chronicle of the reign of al-Hakam II. Emilio Garcia Gomez, “Notas sobre topografía cordobesa en los Anales de al-Hakam II por ‘Isa Razi,” In *al-Andalus* 30 (1965), p. 340-41.

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incorporating slave soldiers into the Umayyad army in the ninth century, al-Hakam I introduced onto Iberian soil a phenomenon that had taken root in the central Islamic lands during the reign of the 'Abbasids. This reliance upon a professional slave military would become a hallmark of Islamic rule throughout the later medieval period in the central and eastern Islamic lands.<sup>11</sup> Andalusian slave elites were known collectively as *ṣaḡaliba* ("Slav") reflecting their non-Arab ethnicity; they were usually imported from Christian Spain or eastern Europe as adolescents. Divided from their families and the lands of their birth and at first alien to the Arabic language and the Islamic culture of al-Andalus, the elite slaves constituted a distinct population within the Umayyad court, in which over the course of Umayyad rule they came to play an increasingly important role.<sup>12</sup> A similar system characterized the 'Abbasid administration in Iraq, which relied upon Turkic troops. The system of elite military slavery in the central and eastern Islamic lands worked so well precisely because this deliberate cultivation of an ethnically, and at first culturally, alien elite class guaranteed that the elite slaves' loyalties would remain fixed upon the ruler, who after all was the sole reason for their presence there, and whom they

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<sup>11</sup> For this phenomenon in the central and eastern Islamic lands see Patricia Crone, *Slaves on horses: The evolution of the Islamic polity* (Cambridge, 1980) and Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: the Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1981). For the phenomenon in al-Andalus see E. Levi-Provençal, *Historia de España 711-1031 de J.C., España musulmana hasta la caída del califato de Córdoba*, no. IV ed. R. Menéndez Pidal, trans. E. García Gómez (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1950), 328-32; and Hugh Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus* (Harlow-New York: Longman, 1996), 85-87.

<sup>12</sup> On the system in al-Andalus see Ahmad Muḡtar 'Abd al-Fattah al-'Abbadi, *Los Eslavos en España: Ojeada sobre su origen, desarrollo y relación con el movimiento de la Sh 'Ubiyya*, with author's Arabic text, trans. Fernando de la Granja Santamaria (Madrid, 1953). This system became a key feature of later medieval and early modern Islamic political systems, the Ottoman empire for example.

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consequently relied upon in turn for protection against the established elites upon whose power they encroached.

Scholars of al-Andalus have noted how ‘Abd al-Rahman II adapted many aspects of ‘Abbasid administration, of which the introduction of a professional slave military was one important aspect. ‘Abd al-Rahman II’s introduction of the administrative post *al-Fatā al-Kabīr* (“the Great Fata”), translated by Hugh Kennedy as “chief page,” is one example of the Andalusī adaptation of a specifically ‘Abbasid administrative position. *Fatā* (pl. *fityan*, literally “young man”) in Umayyad al-Andalus was the term used to designate the highest-ranking leaders of the *ṣaqaliba* elite slave corps. The Andalusī *fatā* is the equivalent of the central Islamic lands’ *ghulam*, used to designate the ethnically-alien military slave elites in the central Islamic lands, and the position of *al-Fatā al-Kabīr* was the highest position within the court administration which an elite slave could hold. As contemporary historians of al-Andalus have pointed out, the rise of these slave elites in the Umayyad administration occurred at the expense of the established Umayyad client (*mawālīd*) families, usually Arab, who had formed the Umayyad rulers’ principal power base since the beginning of Umayyad rule on the Iberian Peninsula and who formed the majority of the urban elite. Not surprisingly, as these slave palace elites came to dominate the military and a great part of the administrative positions within the Umayyad court, their encroachment upon the privileges of the powerful Arab urban elites, from whom the Cordoban *‘ulama* and the viziers of the Umayyad administration were drawn, was the cause of significant social and political tension.

The slave palace elites were acculturated to the refined court culture of Umayyad Cordoba, producing their own literary figures, poets, and bibliophiles. However,

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references to how the cresting tensions between the palace and urban elites were fought out on the literary battlefield during the reign of al-Hakam II's young son Hisham II offer a hint of the ethnically-different palace elite's struggle for social acceptance and status among the established urban elite. Al-Maqqari notes that one of the slave elites, Habīb al-Siqḷabi, redacted a work dedicated to considering the merits of the slave and freedmen elites, and significantly, refuting the opinions of those who would negate them.<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that the work was written during Hisham II's reign, the period that historians have traditionally interpreted as the beginning of the end of real Umayyad political power. This was the moment when the prime minister Ibn Abi Amir (later known by his honorific al-Mansur) successfully wrested political control away from Umayyad palace elites like Durri al-Saghīr and consolidated it within the ranks of the urban elite.<sup>14</sup>

During the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman II (r. 822-52) the elite slave Abu-l-Fath Nasr (simply Nasr in the literature) held the highest-ranking of the slave elite posts, *al-Fata al-Kabīr*. As the first of the elite slaves to rise to real prominence within the Umayyad administration Nasr was an important figure in 'Abd al-Rahman II's court. According to Ibn Hazm, Nasr was originally one of three slaves castrated at al-Hakam I's order to serve the ruler of Carmona who had converted to Islam.<sup>15</sup> Eventually Nasr joined the

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<sup>13</sup> Al-Maqqari, *Analectes*, II: 57.

<sup>14</sup> For a reconsideration of Ibn Abi Amir and his role in Umayyad politics and artistic patronage see Mariam Rosser-Owen, "Articulating the 'ijāba: 'Amīrid Artistic and Cultural Patronage in Al-Andalus (c.970-1010 AD)," (Ph.D. diss., Trinity College, University of Oxford, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> E. Levi-Provençal, *Historia de España*, 1950, p. 170-71.

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court of al-Hakam I's successor, 'Abd al-Rahman II (r.822-52), eventually rising to become the Umayyad amir's favorite companion and advisor. The Andalusí population regarded Nasr, along with 'Abd al-Rahman II's *hājib* Muhammad b. Rustum, as a hero for his role in defending Andalusí territories from the Viking (*majūs*) incursions of the ninth century. Nasr's initial success as a military leader apparently paved the way for his rise in the Umayyad administration.<sup>16</sup>

In the wake of Nasr's military successes, 'Abd Allah expanded Nasr's responsibilities to encompass other duties. For example, in 848 CE Nasr was involved in overseeing the expansion of the prayer hall at the Great Mosque of Cordoba, a responsibility that suggests the high public profile and social status that he must have enjoyed. Nasr was also given responsibility for scheduling the execution of a participant in the Cordoban martyrs movement, an event which he arranged to fall on a major religious festival day (first day of Shawwal, 235 AH 18 April, 850 CE) so that the execution would gain maximum publicity.<sup>17</sup>

Over the course of 'Abd al-Rahman II's thirty-year reign, Levi-Provençal noted that the *fatā* Nasr's power grew to such an extent that his authority was second only to that of the Umayyad ruler himself.<sup>18</sup> Ibn al-Qutiyya (known for the "gossipy" tone of his reports, Hugh Kennedy has pointed out) relates that Nasr schemed, along with Tarub, the mother (*umm walad*) of one of 'Abd al-Rahman II's sons, to poison 'Abd al-Rahman II,

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, p.154.

<sup>17</sup> E. Levi-Provençal, *Historia de España*, 1950, p. 154.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149-50.

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his master, and to place her young son on the throne, thus leaving herself and Nasr as the powers behind the throne.<sup>19</sup>

Even if Ibn al-Qutiyya's anecdote was nothing more than rumor, it illustrates the discomfort of the Cordoban Arab elites about the increasingly important role that palace elites had come to occupy within the Umayyad administration, beginning in the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman II. Such a fear was well founded, since similar processes taking place at the same time in the 'Abbasid court at Baghdad had led to that dynasty's domination by the Iranian Buyids. Against this background of the changing character of the Andalusí administration and a shifting of the balance of power within the court in favor of the slave elite, Nasr's role as the first patron outside the Umayyad family proper to found a villa becomes particularly important to our understanding of some of the political meanings associated with *munya* patronage in Cordoba.

Ibn Hayyan relates that, like the *Munya* 'Ajab associated with al-Hakam I's wife, Nasr's eponymous estate was located in the suburb (*al-Rabaḍ*) on the opposite bank of the Guadalquivir. Ibn Hayyan reveals slightly more about the *Munya* Nasr when he remarks that it was built along the bank of the river near the suburb's cemetery.<sup>20</sup> Cordoban archaeologists recently excavated one hundred sixty-two medieval Muslim graves in the area just east of the later medieval fortress that stands at the bridgehead on Cordoba's left bank, suggesting a general location for Nasr's estate further upstream.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibn al-Qutiyya, *Iftitah*, p. 76-7. Levi-Provençal notes that Ibn al-Qutiya is the only author who reports this anecdote: E. Levi-Provençal, *Historia de España*, 1950, p. 175.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *Muqtabis*, ed. Antuña, p. 38-39; Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape*, p. 45.

<sup>21</sup> Maria Teresa Casal García, "Los cementerios Islámicos de Qurtuba," In *Anuario Arqueológico Cordobés* 12 (2001), p. 283-313, esp. p. 304-306.

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The location of Nasr's estate may have been related to the partly military function of the left bank suburb during al-Hakam I's reign when, according to the anonymous chronicle *Akhbar al-Majmu'a* the Umayyad ruler quartered cavalry in the area:

Al-Hakam I had two thousand cavalry quartered on the bank of the river opposite the palace, grouped in two barracks, each of which housed ten 'arifs. Every 'arif was in charge of 100 horsemen who they supervised, supplied and changed those who needed to be replaced so that the force would be ready to deal with any emergency which might arise. . .<sup>22</sup>

Nasr's early rise to power as a military commander may explain in part the construction of his villa in the suburb across the Guadalquivir, where he would have been near the troops that he would have commanded. Despite the fact that al-Hakam I infamously razed the suburb in the year 818 CE, references to both the *Munyat 'Ajab* and the *Munyat Nasr* in later texts indicate that the two estates continued to be used and (at least in the case of the *Munyat Nasr*) enlarged into the tenth century. Nasr died in the winter of the year 850 CE the victim, according to Ibn al-Qutiyya, of his own failed attempt to poison his master 'Abd al-Rahman II in the coup which he had planned with Tarub.<sup>23</sup>

Following Nasr's death the villa that bore his name surfaces again in the Arabic texts in connection with one of the most celebrated figures associated with Umayyad Cordoba. At some point after Nasr's death in 850 CE, Ziryab, a Baghdadi courtier

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<sup>22</sup> *Akhbar al-Majmū'a*, ed. E. Lafuente y Alcantara (Madrid, 1867), p. 129; Kennedy, *Muslim Spain*, p. 49.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn al-Qutiyya, *Ta'rikh iftāh al-Andalus* (Beyrouth, 1982), p. 76-77; E. Levi-Provençal, *Historia de España*, 1950, 175.

credited with introducing the Umayyad court to a dizzying range of ‘Abbasid customs relating to fashion, music, cuisine, and etiquette, took up residence at Nasr’s former estate.<sup>24</sup> The link between Nasr’s *munya* and probably the most famous figure of the ninth-century Umayyad court suggests that by this time *munyas* were likely the residence of choice amongst court elites.<sup>25</sup> Ziryab spent the last seven years of his long and illustrious Cordoban career living at the *Munyat Nasr*. Following Ziryab’s death in 857 CE, the amir ‘Abd Allah (r. 888-912 CE) took possession of the *Munyat Nasr*, illustrating the Umayyad ruler’s legal claim to the villa, and the means by which it functioned within the state’s system for controlling land ownership, providing favored courtiers with income.<sup>26</sup> For example, Ziryab reportedly drew a total annual income of forty thousand dinars, derived from the Cordoban estates which ‘Abd al-Rahman II gave to him, and gifts of money, which he received on ‘Id and midsummer feast days.<sup>27</sup>

Ibn Hayyan remarks that ‘Abd Allah was very fond of the *Munyat Nasr* (*kalifan bihā*), and that he perfected its decoration (*atqana maṣāni’a*).<sup>28</sup> In time the estate became

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<sup>24</sup> E. Levi-Provençal and Leopoldo Torres Balbás, *España Musulmana*, 1990, 6th ed., p. 246 n. 122. Illustrating the connections between elite figures and *munyas* in Cordoban society, Ziryab’s oldest daughter married Nasr’s fellow hero of the Viking battles, Ibn Rustum. Biographies of two of Ziryab’s daughters appear in Ibn al-Abbar, *Takmila Kitab al-Takmila li-Kitab al-Sila*, Bibl. Ar. Hisp., no. V-VI ed. F. Codera (Madrid, 1887). Also see E. Levi-Provençal, *Historia de España* IV, 1950, p. 169-73 and n. 89.

<sup>25</sup> As such the Cordoban *munyas* were the setting for many of the important social activities of the Umayyad court, a subject that I address in Chapter Five.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis*, ed. Antuña, p. 38.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Maqqari, ed. Gayangos, II:118.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *Muqtabis*, ed. Antuña p. 38-39. Ibn Hayyan also says that ‘Abd Allah constructed the *munya*’s buildings (*shaid bunyanaha*), presumably meaning that he expanded the existing estate.



a recognizable landmark within the Cordoban landscape. According to al-Himyari, its grove of olive trees, located at the southeast corner of the estate along the Guadalquivir River, was a popular promenade for elegant Cordobans who enjoyed walking in the refreshing shade beneath the trees.<sup>29</sup>

‘Abd Allah is also given credit for founding the estate known as Dar al-Na‘ura (Palace of the Waterwheel), a property which would acquire special prominence as a site of court activity in the tenth century. Al-Maqqari, quoting Ibn Hayyan, writes that ‘Abd Allah founded a marvelous *munya* on a vast plot of land (*ansha’aha munyatan ‘ajībatan wāsi’at al-khitta*).<sup>30</sup> Although we are told that ‘Abd Allah intended the villa to be a place of delight (*arādahā li-l furja*), it is al-Na‘ura’s productive capabilities that are emphasized when the chronicler writes that the ruler expanded the estate’s land (*awsa’ a khitta*), increased its cultivation (*akthara ghirāsā*), and that the al-Na‘ura repaid ‘Abd Allah’s investment by providing him with a means by which to understand the surrounding fertile territory (*al-muhīta bihā*), indicates that the estate’s importance to the Umayyad ruler stemmed in part from its usefulness as an agricultural model, or stand-in, for a broader Andalusī territory. Does this passage provide a clue about the role of the pre-caliphal *munyas* in the process of establishing Umayyad dominion over the land?

*Palace Elites* (fityan, ṣaqaliba) vs. *Urban Elites* (mawālī) (c. 928-975)

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<sup>29</sup> Al-Himyari, *La péninsule ibérique au Moyen Age d’après le ‘kitAt al-Rawd al-Mi’ tar’*: Texte arabe des nouvelles relatives à l’Espagne au Portugal et Sud Ouest de la France, ed. Levi-Provençal, (Leyde, 1938), no. 180; Ruggles, *Gardens*, p. 45-46.

<sup>30</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *Muqtabis*, ed. Antuña p. 38-39; Al-Maqqari, *Anal.* I: 371; *al-Bayan*, II:99, 102.

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‘Abd Allah’s successor, ‘Abd al-Rahman III (r. 912-975 CE), publicly claimed the title of caliph in 928 CE, in defiance of the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad and the growing threat of the Fatimid caliphate of North Africa. The Abbasids had risen to power in the mid eighth century CE, in a revolution that witnessed the destruction of the Umayyad caliphate. The rise of the Fatimid caliphate in North Africa was symptomatic of the political fragmentation of the Islamic empire by the second half of the tenth century. The Abbasid caliph had yielded real political power to members of the Iranian Buyid dynasty, who now dominated politics in Mesopotamia and the Iranian lands. While ‘Abd al-Rahman III’s decision to assert an Umayyad claim to the title of caliph may not have had political ramifications beyond the Maghrib, the establishment of a Cordoban Umayyad caliphate marks an unprecedented expansion of *munya* patronage to and in the significance of suburban villas to Umayyad court life. Significantly, ‘Abd al-Rahman III’s establishment of the caliphate doesn’t seem to have led to the creation of entirely new *munyas* on the part of the Umayyad ruler. Instead, the texts reveal a new emphasis on *munya* patronage by palace and urban elites.

‘Abd al-Rahman III continued to support administrative policies that had been introduced by his predecessors. One of the distinguishing policies of his reign was his intensification of policies that generally excluded members of established Arab Andalusí families (*mawāli*) from positions in the military. Instead, the military came to be dominated by slave elites (*ṣaqaliba*, “Slavs”). These slave elites were meant to provide the Umayyad ruler with a dependable corps of loyalists whose outsider status would

insulate them from the internecine politics of the established Andalusí elite families.<sup>31</sup> The posts occupied by Umayyad slave elites were initially military in nature, in keeping with similar practices in ‘Abbasid Mesopotamia.’<sup>32</sup> Hugh Kennedy has interpreted this process as the demilitarization of the Andalusí population in favor of a foreign, professional military. Kennedy posits that the creation of slave elites to serve in the military functioned as part of an Umayyad attempt to create a stable fiscal system for the Umayyad state; because they were not required to serve in the military, the Andalusí civilian population was free to invest in agriculture and commerce, important sources of revenue for the Umayyad state.<sup>33</sup>

Ibn ‘Idhāri put the elite slave population of Córdoba at three thousand seven hundred and fifty.<sup>34</sup> *Ṣaqaliba* were given other duties within the administration instead of or in addition to, military service. The new positions were sometimes financial in nature, one important slave to whom I will return shortly served as the caliph’s treasurer (*khazin*) for example. The slave elites dominated palace positions related to the goods and services central to medieval Islamic court life. For example, slave elites under ‘Abd al-Rahman

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<sup>31</sup> E. Levi-Provençal, *Historia de España: 711-1031 de J.C., España musulmana hasta la caída del califato de Córdoba*, no. IV ed. R. Menéndez Pidal, trans. E. García Gómez (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1950), p. 328-32.

<sup>32</sup> In addition to serving as soldiers and military commanders, elite slaves served in the “paramilitary” police forces (*al-shurta*). Hugh Kennedy, 85-87. For a discussion of the positions, including the references to the posts from Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Sa‘id see E. Levi-Provençal and Leopoldo Torres Balbás, *España Musulmana*, 1990 (6th ed.) 87-91.

<sup>33</sup> Hugh Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, p. 85-87; Mahmoud Makki, “The Political History of al-Andalus,” In *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, p. 3-87. On the economy in al-Andalus see E. Ashtor, “Prix et salaires dans l’Espagne musulmane aux X et XI siècles,” In *Annales* 20 (1965), p. 664-679.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn ‘Idhāri, *Bayan*, II: 247.

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III served as head of the kitchen (*sahib al-matbakh*), head of the royal stables (*sahib al-khayl*), and the head falconer (*sahib al-bayazira*).<sup>35</sup> Paralleling the slaves who ensured the availability of services associated with Islamic court life - a specialized cuisine and the horses and falcons necessary for hunting, for example - other slave elites supervised the production of the workshops (*dar al-sina 'a*) that specialized in the most prized material goods central to court life: the textile workshops (*tiraz*), the ivory workshops, and the armories.

Following 'Abd al-Rahman III's establishment of the caliphate in 928 CE, the slave elites acquired new level of importance in the Umayyad administration. The close identification of elite slaves with the Umayyad ruler, first exemplified in the aforementioned Nasr's rise to power, reached an unprecedented level, illustrated by 'Abd al-Rahman III's going so far as to adopt four of the palace elites holding the title of *fata* (pl. *fityān*), the highest position slave elites could attain. Following their adoption by the caliph, the elite slaves are afterward called *abna'* - "sons." Thereafter their full names included "ibn 'Abd al-Rahman," reflecting an artificially-created kinship that tied them even more closely to the caliph, and effectively raised them to a level of social equality, as freedmen, with members of the established Arab and Berber elites who formed the Umayyad rulers' primary supporters in a patron-client system.<sup>36</sup> This process, in which 'Abd al-Rahman III effectively promoted certain elite slaves to the status of freedmen,

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<sup>35</sup> E. Levi-Provençal, *España musulmana*, 1950, 328-32.

<sup>36</sup> These adopted slaves included, besides Ghalib and Durri, others named Aflah, Tarafa and Ja'far. See Mohamed Meouak, *Pouvoir souverain, administration centrale et élites politiques dans l'Espagne umayyade (IIe-IVe-VIIIe-Xe siècles)* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1999), p. 195-201.

paved the way for the Umayyad ruler's placement of elite slaves to some of the highest positions in the court's social hierarchy.<sup>37</sup>

By elevating elite slaves to the status of freedman 'Abd al-Rahman III created an artificial elite, unconstrained by complex ties of loyalty that characterized relationships within the established client (*mawla*, pl. *mawali*) families that made up the rest of the court elite, and which are referred to here as the urban elite. By adopting elite slaves who were loyal only to him, 'Abd al-Rahman III consolidated power decidedly in his favor. Can we therefore explain the shift in *munya* patronage that takes place during 'Abd al-Rahman III's reign, in which former elite slaves who had achieved *mawla* status as freedmen, and the free *mawali* elites of the established Arab families become *munya* patrons, as symptomatic of court power struggles that were played out through control of the land, in the form of suburban and rural estates? As the following chapters discuss, the *munyas* associated with patrons from both groups were used as the settings for many court activities: feasts commemorating weddings and circumcisions, for instance, as well as key sites along caliphal and military itineraries. The Cordoban villas therefore acquired a new importance as a main site of court interaction, and, when integrated into state processional routes and itineraries, served as props for public spectacles in the theater of the Cordoban landscape.

The contemporary Fatimid court, the Umayyads' great rival, provides parallel examples of an Islamic court reliance on an elite slave corps involved in luxury court arts. In the North African Fatimid capital of Mahdiyya, for example, the Fatimid ruler al-

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<sup>37</sup> E. Levi-Provençal and Leopoldo Torres Balbás, *España Musulmana*, 1990 (6th ed.) p. 108.

Qa'im promoted a eunuch named Jawdhar to the directorate of the Fatimid general treasury as well as of textiles and clothing.<sup>38</sup> The Fatimid caliph later freed Jawdhar, who served as the director of the Fatimid tiraz workshops. Paralleling the inclusion of Durri al-Saghir's name on the Cordoban ivories, Jawdhar's name appeared in the embroidered epigraphy that announced "made under the supervision of Jawdhar, *mawla* of the Commander of Believers, in al-Mahdiyya the Pleasant," and which by caliphal decree appeared on precious textiles.<sup>39</sup> Following his manumission by the Fatimid caliph, Jawdhar rose to the third highest position in the Fatimid state.<sup>40</sup>

This brief consideration of the slaves and freedman who made up the palace elites, and the important roles they played in palace administration, forms the backdrop against which the information on individual slaves for which we have some textual information becomes especially significant to our understanding of palace elites as

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<sup>38</sup> Abu 'Ali Mansur al-'Azizi al-Jawdhari, *Sirat al-Ustadh Jawdhar*, ed. Muhammad Kamil Husayn, Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi Sha 'ira (Cairo, 1954), 39; Marius Canard, *Vie de l'Ustadh Jawdhar* (Algiers, 1957), 52. Discussed in Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Origins of Fatimid Art," *Muqarnas* III (1985). 26.

<sup>39</sup> al-Jawdhari, *Sirat*, 52; Canard, *Vie* 75; Bloom, "Origins," 27.

<sup>40</sup> In addition to supervising the production of portable objects, slave elites served as supervisors of construction (*sahib al-bunyan*) and, as the signatures documented in the epigraphy at Madinat al-Zahra' indicate, perhaps as designers of architectural projects as well. While the processes of artistic production in Umayyad Cordoba have not been definitively worked out, María Antonia Martínez Nuñez has argued that high-ranking members of the caliphal administration may have played a more active role in artistic production, probably as designers, than has been realized. Martínez Nuñez bases her argument on the signature of an elite slave that appears in the epigraphy of 'Abd al-Rahman III's reception hall at Madinat al-Zahra'. The slave, she points out, was also an important member of the caliph's circle of advisors and instrumental in helping the caliph to formulate a program of propaganda against heretics. María Antonia Martínez Nuñez, "La epigrafía del Salón de 'Abd al-Rahmân III," *Madînat al-Zahrâ': el salón de 'Abd al-Rahmân II* ed. Antonio Vallejo Triano (Cordoba Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, 1995), 107-52.

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members of the Cordoban elite and, eventually, as *munya* patrons. The ability of elite slaves, with caliphal support, to attain important court positions, and to therefore to amass considerable wealth, is exemplified by the case of Durri Ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman, a slave adopted by ‘Abd al-Rahman III who held several high-ranking posts in the first caliphal administration. Durri Ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman’s first position gave him oversight of cases of inheritance in which there were no legal heirs. The post (*sahib al-mawarith*) was an important and potentially lucrative one for the state because the properties in question and the rents derived from them went directly into the administration’s central finance rather than into the treasury of the pious foundations.<sup>41</sup> Durri Ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman also occupied the position of *al-shurta al-kabir*, which he held consecutively between 920 and 927.<sup>42</sup> The post of *al-shurta*, encompassing what Kennedy terms “paramilitary” police duties, was introduced in the ninth century by ‘Abd al-Rahman II and based upon Abbasid administrative models.<sup>43</sup> In caliphal Cordoba the post came to encompass judicial responsibilities which for one reason or another did not fall within the jurisdiction of the *qadi*, or chief judge, and was further divided into three grades which may have mirrored the social division of Cordoban society into three classes: the *khaṣṣa*, or aristocracy and highly-ranked members of the administration, the *a‘yan*, or middle

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<sup>41</sup> Ibn ‘Idhāri, *Bayan*, Fagnan ed., II: 277; Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, p. 85-87; E. Levi-Provençal, *España Musulmana* (1990, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 86-87

<sup>42</sup> al-Maqqari, *Analectes*, I:134, E. Levi-Provençal, *España Musulmana* (1990, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.), 89.

<sup>43</sup> Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, p. 85-87

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class composed of merchants and minor members of the administration, and the common ('*amma*) class.<sup>44</sup>

The position of *al-shurta al-kabir* was the highest-ranking of these posts; Ibn Khaldun noted that the position's jurisdiction encompassed the common people ('*amma*) as well as elites, making Durri Ibn 'Abd al-Rahman one of the most powerful men in the caliphal administration, despite his slave origins.<sup>45</sup> The status that he occupied in Cordoban society is reflected in his inclusion in Ibn al-Faradi's (d. 1013) biographical dictionary of prominent Andalusis.<sup>46</sup> Although the biographical notice is brief, it nevertheless is informative for the details that it does provide. For example, Ibn al-Faradi's remark that Durri was known as the father of Uthman (*yukanna Abu Uthman*) indicates that not all the elite slaves of Slav origin were eunuchs. Ibn al-Faradi identifies Durri as the caliph's client (*mawla*), a relationship to the Umayyad ruler that had formerly been the province of the Arab families that had initially supported 'Abd al-Rahman I in his bid to seize power in al-Andalus. Ibn al-Faradi goes on to note that Durri was a Cordoban (*min ahli Qurtubati*), that he was a pious man (*rajulan salihan*) who had traveled to Mecca on pilgrimage and written an account of his discussion with a man of learning there.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, and Mohamed Meouak, *Pouvoir souverain, administration centrale et élites politiques dans l'Espagne umayyade (Ile-IVe/VIIIe-Xe siècles)* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1999), p. 195-216.

<sup>45</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*, ed. Slane, II: 35-36.

<sup>46</sup> Ibn al-Faradi. *Ta'rikh al-'ulama' al-Andalus*. (Cairo, 1966), p. 146, #433.

<sup>47</sup> "Kana rajulan salihan. Rahala ila al-mashriq hajan. Fa sami'a bimakkah min Ibn al-'Arabiyya wa ghayrihi. Haddatha wa kataba 'anhu." Ibn al-Faradi, p. 146, #433, lines 4-5.



‘Abd al-Rahman III’s son and heir al-Hakam II continued to promulgate the delicate balancing act that pitted the slave elite against the powerful non-slave members of the court in the Umayyad administration. It is in al-Hakam II’s reign that a second slave named Durri, distinguished as al-Saghir (the Younger) from his eponymous predecessor, emerges as an important figure for our understanding of *munyas* and *munya* patronage in Umayyad Cordoba. The relationship between Durri al-Saghir (fl. 973) and the Durri who was adopted by ‘Abd al-Rahman III (fl. 930s) is unclear.<sup>48</sup> Mohamed Meouak, whose research has illuminated the ties of family and clientage that formed the power structures of the Umayyad administration, does not include Durri al-Saghir among the Banu Durri, a group of *saqlibi* slaves loyal to ‘Abd al-Rahman III and named for the Durri Ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman discussed above.<sup>49</sup> It is possible that the younger Durri could have been the Elder’s son; *fityan* were often, but not always eunuchs, and there are other instances of elite *fityan* producing offspring.<sup>50</sup> Alternatively, there may have been no blood tie between the two Durris, in which case the status of the second Durri and his

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<sup>48</sup> Safran, in her discussion of one of the military processions that took place in 971 during the caliphate of al-Hakam II seems to conflate the Durri who took part in the ceremony as Durri ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman, who was active in the 920s and 930s. Janina M. Safran, *The second Umayyad caliphate: the articulation of caliphal legitimacy in al-Andalus*, Harvard Middle Eastern monographs, no. 33 (Cambridge, MA CMES, Harvard University, 2000), 77-78. As far as I can tell, it is Durri b. al-Hakam al-Mustansir, Abu ‘Utman al-Saqlabi al-Mustansiri, i.e. “the Younger,” who takes part in the 971 ceremony. References to Durri the Younger’s occupation of important posts begin in the 960s and continue into the 970s. See Meouak, 215-16.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. 199-200 and 215-16.

<sup>50</sup> Ghalib, the illustrious military commander of al-Hakam II, for instance, had a daughter who married Ibn Abi Amir, the future al-Mansur. E. Levi-Provençal, *España musulmana*, 1950 ed. p. 330.

occupation of some of the same posts within the administration of al-Hakam II is simply a coincidence.<sup>51</sup>

Like his eponymous predecessor who was adopted by ‘Abd al-Rahman III, Durri al-Saghir was an elite member of the Umayyad military, and was adopted by the caliph he served. His artificially-created kinship link to al-Hakam II is reflected in his full name, Durri b. al-Hakam al-Mustansir, Abu ‘Utman al-*ṣaqḻabī* al-Mustansiri.<sup>52</sup> Ibn Hayyan identifies Durri al-Saghir as the patron of an estate founded west of Cordoba near the Wadi al-Rumman (River of the Pomegranate), and Ibn Hayyan notes that Durri al-Saghir, like the other elite slaves in the Umayyad administration, was not an Arab, but was of Slavic or Germanic ethnicity (*ṣiqḻabī*), who held the title of *al-fatā* and *khazin* (treasurer) in addition to overseeing the stables for troops on campaign in North Africa in 974.<sup>53</sup>

Durri al-Saghir’s status within the caliphal administration is significant for understanding the social milieu within which his estate was created. During the caliphate of al-Hakam II Durri al-Saghir’s title, *al-Fatā al-kabīr*, was one of two that were the most prestigious positions allotted to the elite *ṣaqḻiba* slave class. Between his rise to power in the 960s and his death in 976, Durri is identified as a patron of architecture and

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<sup>51</sup> Meouak, p. 202-218.

<sup>52</sup> Meouak, 195-201.

<sup>53</sup> “the Slavs and other fair-haired, ruddy-complexioned peoples of northern Europe; ethnic groups of central or eastern Europe; white slaves of European origin; Germanic tribes. Encyclopedia of Islam, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. I:490b; IV:1088b; V:1120b; VIII:872b; its singular was often used in the medieval period in the sense of ‘eunuch’, I:33a.” P.J. Bearman et al., ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition: Glossary and Index of Terms*, s.v. “*ṣaqḻiba*.” His military activities are discussed in Ibn Hayyan, *Muqtabis VII*, ed. Hajji, 1965, p. 151; Meouak, p. 216.

associated with the production of some of the ivory caskets that constituted some of the most prized of Umayyad court objects. In the 960s, with the ascension of al-Hakam II to the caliphal throne, Durri al-Saghir's name is mentioned on an inscription associated with a minaret (*sawma 'a*) in the provincial town of Baeza between 962-76 CE.<sup>54</sup> In the same period Durri's name also appears on two important ivory boxes dating from the reign of al-Hakam II. These luxurious ivory containers, attributed to the court workshops of Madinat al-Zahra,' were given as gifts to the caliph's family, important members of the court, and foreign dignitaries.

The Cordoban ivories have received a great deal of attention from scholars due to their intrinsic artistic quality and the personal and political meanings that may have been attached to their production and distribution both within and outside of the Cordoban court.<sup>55</sup> The earlier of the two ivories on which Durri's name appears is a pyxis made for Subh, the favored wife of al-Hakam II and mother of the caliph's heir Hisham (Fig. 104). The inscription of the Subh ivory reads:

The blessing of Allah upon the Imam, the servant of Allah, al-Hakam II  
al-Mustansir billah, Commander of the Faithful. This is what he ordered to be

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<sup>54</sup> Meouak, p. 215-16.

<sup>55</sup> The bibliography on the Cordoban ivories is extensive, and the pyxis of al-Mughira has been an object of speculation by numerous scholars including Gomez-Moreno, Ernst Kühnel, Oleg Grabar, Renata Holod, and recently Francisco-Prado Vilar and Sophie Makariou. See Ernst Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen, VII-XIII. Jarhundert* (Berlin, 1971); John Beckwith, *Caskets from Cordoba* (London, 1960); Grabar, *Formation*, p. 165-66; Renata Holod, "Luxury Arts of the Caliphal Period," In *al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* ed. Jerrilyn Dodds (New York, 1992), p. 41-47. Bibliographies and differing interpretations of the object, can be found in Sophie Makariou, "La pyxide d'al-Mughira," *L'Andalousie Arabe* (Paris: Hazan ed., 2000), p. 46-49 and Francisco Prado-Vilar, "Circular Visions of Fertility and Punishment: Caliphal Ivory Caskets from al-Andalus," *Muqarnas* 14 (1997), p. 19-41.

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made for the noble lady, the mother of ‘Abd al-Rahman under the direction of Durri al-Saghir in the year 353 [964].<sup>56</sup>

The surface of the Subh pyxis is carved with a field of intricate vegetal ornament in which scrolling flowers or trees form vertical axes symmetrically balanced by creatures that face each other across the axis of the central floral stems. Peacocks stand upon platforms created from individual leaves branching from the central stem. Beneath the peacocks’ leafy platforms pairs of antelope prance in the vegetal scrolls that form both part of the overall vegetal design and constitute a border around the bottom zone of the pyxis.

Renata Holod and Francisco Prado-Vilar have commented upon the significance of predominantly vegetal motifs on ivories commissioned for women. Holod has suggested that the absence of the specific figural imagery on the ivories made for Subh and other women in the Umayyad court reflects either a notion that “more ornamental, less specific imagery than that carved for men was considered appropriate for women recipients,” or “the fact that cloistered women patrons did not enjoy the same direct access to the agents and carvers available to men.”<sup>57</sup> Prado-Vilar links the dominance of the vegetal ornament with Subh’s status as the mother of al-Hakam II’s first son, arguing that the vegetal theme was symbolic of fertility, and that this general meaning took on a specifically celebratory meaning in the context of Subh’s status as *umm walad*, the mother of al-Hakam II’s son.<sup>58</sup> An alternative explanation for the predominance of the

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<sup>56</sup> Beckwith, p. 10.

<sup>57</sup> Renata Holod, “Catalogue entry I,” *al-Andalus*, p.191.

<sup>58</sup> Prado-Vilar, p. 19-41.

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vegetal motifs on the ivories should be sought in the importance of the *munya* to Umayyad court culture, with its emphases on cultivation, recreation, and court refinement, as well as on the fact that the production of these ivories was controlled by the one of the most important of the palace freedmen, who along with the Umayyad rulers and their family members, was himself a *munya* patron. Durri's name appears a second time, in the epigraphy of another ivory casket, commissioned circa 965 (Figs.):

The blessings of Allah upon al-Hakam al-Mustansir billah, Commander of the Faithful. This was ordered to be made under the direction of Durri al-Saghir.<sup>59</sup>

Whereas the casket produced under Durri al-Saghir for Subh forms part of a group of pyxides, ivories distinguished by their cylindrical shape and domed lids, this vessel is round, with shorter, wider proportions that are markedly different from those that characterizes the pyxides. Whereas the pyxides are distinguished for the combinations of vegetal and/or figural imagery, the primary ornamentation of al-Hakam II's casket takes the form of eagles encircling the lid (Fig. 99). Despite the epigraphic information that both the Subh casket in Madrid and the casket of al-Hakam II were made under Durri al-Saghir's direction, the commissioning process that led to the creation of these ivories remains unclear, though as a *munya* patron, the depictions of themes intimately entwined with the *munya* as I have depicted it are surely not accidental.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> In the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (217.1865). See Kühnel, cat. No. 27.

<sup>60</sup> The carver associated with the Subh pyxis, and with Durri al-Saghir's tenure as supervisor of the ivory workshop at Madinat al-Zahra', is Khalaf. See Holod, *al-Andalus*, 191 n. 7. While art historians have generally seen little if any connection between the design of the Cordoban ivories and the elite slaves who directed the ivory workshops,

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Ghalib, another elite slave who, like Nasr, achieved unprecedented status in the Umayyad court, is also named in the court chronicles in conjunction with a Cordoban *munya*. Ghalib earned his status through his position as a military commander under both ‘Abd al-Rahman III and al-Hakam II. As the latter’s general, Ghalib achieved great prestige within the court at Cordoba when he captured the leader of the North African dynasty, the Idrisids, which constituted the most serious local threat to the Cordoban caliphate’s hegemony in the Maghrib.<sup>61</sup> While texts disclose little to nothing about the location and character of Ghalib’s *munya*, the tenth-century chronicler al-Razi’s mentions it in connection with the military processions that constituted an important category of caliphal ceremonial during the Umayyad caliphate. Al-Razi alludes to Ghalib’s *munya* as an important point on the route taken by the military as they processed to and from the old caliphal palace in Cordoba.<sup>62</sup>

Elite slaves like Durri al-Saghir and Ghalib, whose wealth and ability to wield power stemmed directly from the strong ties of loyalty and kinship which bound them to the caliph as part of an artificial aristocracy, constituted a serious threat to the privileges of the Arab and Berber urban elite, against whom they served as a source of political and military power for the Umayyad ruler. The status of elite slaves as high-ranking military

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Sophie Makariou argues that Durri actually did play an active role in the design of the Pyxis of al-Mughira. Sophie Makariou, “The al-Mughira Pyxis: Aims and Tools of Power,” In *Al-Andalus: Perspectives on the Art and Material Culture of Islamic Spain* (forthcoming).

<sup>61</sup> Al-Razi’s description is reported by Ibn Hayyan, *Muqtabis VII*, p. 28-31, 59-62, 81-86, 93-95, 119-23, 136-38, 155-69, 184-187, 229-33. See Safran, p. 76-78.

<sup>62</sup> The *munyas*’ ceremonial role in the urban ceremonies of Umayyad Cordoba is addressed in Chapter Five.

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officers, *munya* patrons, and overseers of the luxury goods produced for court consumption indicates that the *munyas* and the creation of an artificial slave aristocracy was key to maintaining the ruler's control over the means by which status within the court was evaluated, displayed, and disseminated. Norbert Elias has described, in the context of the court of Louis XIV, the process by which the ruler consolidates his own power by skillfully pitting groups of courtiers against one another within the inescapable strictures of court hierarchy.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, by creating a powerful class of courtiers from the slave ranks who depended solely on his favor and protection for their status within the court hierarchy, 'Abd al-Rahman III capitalized upon tensions between the slave elite and the powerful non-slave elites in Cordoba to ensure the balance of power in his favor.

As a system of consolidating power, 'Abd al-Rahman III's use of elite slaves, from whom he could selectively "adopt" new clients loyal only to him, deteriorated during the reign of his son and successor al-Hakam II. The unraveling of this system had important reverberations in the realm of *munya* patronage. During the period of nearly one hundred and fifty years of Umayyad rule in Cordoba that preceded the reign of al-Hakam II, elite slaves constituted the only non-Umayyad patrons of *munyas* around Cordoba. In contrast, the reign of al-Hakam II witnesses a surge in textual references to powerful Arab and Berber functionaries as *munya* patrons. Among the urban elites mentioned in this respect are al-Mushafi, the Imam of al-Hakam II, and Ibn Abi 'Amir, the future al-Mansur. Between 968 and 976 CE, three *munyas* associated with these figures are mentioned in al-Razi's court chronicle: the *Munya* of al-Mushafi, the *Munya*

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<sup>63</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

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of al-Muntali, which was the residence of al-Hakam II's imam, and al-Mansur's two estates, the *Munya* of al-'Amiriyya, and the *Munya* al-Sughūr.<sup>64</sup>

Durri al-Saghir and Ghalib thus stand out in al-Hakam II's reign as the final examples of the established system in which *munya* patronage was associated mainly with the ruler, his immediate family, and the highest-ranking of the military slaves and freedmen. The moment at which patronage of *munyas* in Cordoba shifted from the Umayyad ruler and the most powerful of the palace elite in favor of Arab court functionaries coincides with al-Mansur's growing influence in the Umayyad court. Considering the tensions between the palace elites like Durri al-Saghir and al-Mansur, the unprecedented number of references to al-Mansur and other Arab and Berber aristocrats as *munya* patrons appears symptomatic of their bid for power against the palace elites who had dominated the Umayyad administration during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III. The rise in *munya* patronage on the part of the family dynasties reflects their attempts to gain political power through the acquisition of estates, and the means by which social status was displayed within the court. This shift during the reign of al-Hakam II suggests that the competition between these two groups of Umayyad courtiers was to a great extent played out in the realm of *munya* patronage.

The decision, on the part of the powerful functionaries like al-Mushafi and Ibn Abi Amir, to act against the powerful palace slaves and freedmen came to the fore with the death of al-Hakam II and the ensuing battle over which claimant to the Umayyad throne would prevail. Palace functionaries like Durri al-Saghir supported the accession of

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<sup>64</sup> Al-Razi mentions two *munyas* about whose namesakes nothing is known, but which were used for diplomatic business by the Umayyad court (*Munyat* 'Abd al-'Aziz, *Munyat* Najd). Garcia Gomez, 1965, 341-42.



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al-Hakam II's brother al-Mughira. The family dynasties, on the other hand, supported the young Hisham. With the death of al-Hakam II the palace contingent lost their buffer against the rival family dynasties. In 976, soon after his master's death, Durri al-Saghīr, patron of the *Munya* of al-Rummaniya, was executed at the orders of Ibn Abi 'Amir. Al-Mughira, the slave elites' candidate to the throne, was also executed. Of the two other powerful slave elites, one was executed and one died in exile by the orders of the two leaders of the urban elites, Ibn Abi 'Amir and al-Mushafi. These two figures are the most visible of the new Arab aristocratic *munya* patrons during the reign of al-Hakam II, an indication of the battle for political power between these two competing groups of courtiers that was waged in the Umayyad court.

Clearly, *munya* patronage in Umayyad was not only a source of income for courtiers, but a sign of political and social status among Umayyad courtiers, reflecting political realities at the highest levels of Cordoban society. This chapter has used the chronology of *munya* patronage by the Umayyad rulers and courtiers established by Ruggles and other scholars to examine the social significance of *munya* patronage, based on tenth-century Arabic court chronicles, from the initial moment of Umayyad rule on the Iberian Peninsula to the end of the reign of al-Hakam II in 975 CE. This consideration of Umayyad estate patronage reveals that, in addition to the early recreational and quasi-administrative functions associated with the estates under the patronage of the rulers (functions which the *munyas* never ceased to accommodate), the *munya* became a means by which the Umayyad administration controlled the ownership of potentially lucrative lands, and most importantly for our understanding of Umayyad court culture, the cultural capital that came with the staging of court activities within *munya* settings. The

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exchange of entire estates, or the gifts of valuable materials from estates, that the Arabic texts document between Umayyad rulers and courtiers shows that *munya* patronage was part of an Umayyad court system of land control that provided significant income to favored courtiers and to the Umayyad treasury. The importance of the Cordoban *munya* is not limited to its role within a state system of land control and economy, however. As the texts discussed in this chapter illustrate, the suburban villas were part and parcel of politics and social life in the Umayyad court.

## CHAPTER VI

### LEISURE, FEASTING AND REFINEMENT

In addition to the cultivation of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and other plants, the Cordoban *munyas* were used as sites of recreation, where the ruler and his intimates could repair to enjoy leisurely pastimes. According to Ibn Hayyan, ‘Abd al-Rahman I founded al-Rusafa for his enjoyment (*nuzh*) and extended periods of relaxation (*sakan ‘akthar awqāt*), providing the estate with an excellent palace (*qaṣr hasan*) and extensive gardens (*janān wāsi‘a*).<sup>1</sup> Hunting is often mentioned as an activity for which the Umayyads and their intimates retreated to their estates. ‘Abd al-Rahman I was reputed to be a passionate hunter, and the first official excursion taken by ‘Abd al-Rahman III upon ascending the throne was a hunting trip to the *munya* of al-Bunti, said to have been located east of Cordoba. When the ruler of Zaragoza, Muhammad b. Hashim al-Tujibi, visited Cordoba in 937 CE he was housed at ‘Abd al-Rahman III’s villa, al-Ramla, where he sometimes joined the visitor during hunting trips.<sup>2</sup> Across the medieval Islamic world, hunting was one of the activities most favored by rulers and nobility.<sup>3</sup> Falconry (*bayzara*) was extremely popular, and at the Cordoban court the positions of Grand Falconer (*Ṣāhib*

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqqari, *Nafh al-Tib*, ed. ‘Abbas (Beirut, 1965), I: 466-67.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabas V, Cronica del Califa ‘Abdarrahmhan III an-Nasir Entre los Años 912 y 942* ed. M. Jesus Viguera and F. Corriente (Zaragoza: Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura, 1981).

<sup>3</sup> *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Leiden 1960-), s.v. “bayzara,” for discussion and bibliography, including the following encyclopedic works which contain sections on falconry: *Kitab al-Ḥayawān* of Al-Djāhiz (Cairo 1947), the *Al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ* of Ibn Sīda (Alexandria 1904, vol. viii, and indices by M. Ṭālbī, Tunis 1956), the *Kitab Ṣubḥ al-Aṣḥā* of Al-Ḳalkaṣhandī (Cairo 1913, vol. ii), the *Kitab Murūdj al-Dḥahab* of al-Mas‘ūdī.

*al-bayāzira*) was an important office.<sup>4</sup> Dodds has argued that hunting in the Umayyad court had significance beyond mere recreation, serving also as an expression of rulership over territory.<sup>5</sup> As she notes, the depictions of hunters, complete with horses, hounds, and falcons, on the Cordoban ivories can be interpreted as symbolic of kingly virtue and sovereignty. Similarly, the function of the Cordoban *munyas* as hunting lodges for the Umayyad rulers and other nobility, acquire symbolic value. Scattered about greater Cordoba, the estates also conveyed a message about Umayyad sovereignty over the land.

Gatherings for the purpose of listening to poetry took place at the Umayyad suburban estates. For instance, Muhammad II (r. 852-86) commissioned a new reception hall (*majlis*) at al-Rusafa, which would have functioned as the setting for poetic recitations.<sup>6</sup> During the reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman II (r. 822-52) the *munya* of al-Rusafa had itself become the subject of court poetry; Ibn Hayyan alludes to numerous poems that

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<sup>4</sup> Mentioned by Ibn Idhari in E. Levi-Provençal, *L’Espagne musulmane au Xème siècle : institutions et vie sociale; avec vingt-quatre planches et une carte hors text* (Paris: Larose, 1932), p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Jerrilyn D. Dodds, “Hunting for Identity,” In *Imágenes y promotores en el arte medieval: miscelánea en homenaje a Joaquín Yarza Luaces* (Bellaterra (Barcelona): Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Servei de Publicacions, 2001), p. 89-100. Dodds discusses the wall paintings at the hermitage of San Baudelio de Berlanga, linking their hunting imagery to other depictions of the hunt in al-Andalus and elsewhere. On the hunting symbolism in Christian art, see Andre Grabar, “Programmes iconographiques a l’usage des propriétaires des latifundia romains,” In *Cahiers Archeologiques* 12 (1962), p. 394-395, cited in Dodds, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis*, ed. Makki (Beirut, 1973), p. 170, 226, and *Ibid.*, ed. Antuña (Paris, 1937), p. 39. Of course, gatherings for the purpose of listening to poetry were one of the most popular pastimes of the Syrian Umayyads as well. Al-Isfahani, for instance, relates an anecdote about one such gathering at the Syrian al-Rusafa, at which Hisham asked a group of poets to extemporize on the theme of camels going to drink water. Hisham, according to the story, angrily banished from Rusafa one poet who used an infelicitous metaphor about squinting, thereby drawing attention to Hisham’s own squint. Isfahani (1905), ix, 75. Cited in Hamilton, 79.

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were composed about it, and transmits an example composed by ‘Abas b. Firnas, a poet active in the court of ‘Abd al-Rahman II.<sup>7</sup> The poetry to which Ibn Hayyan refers describes al-Rusafa’s architecture, its natural setting, and the flora and fauna that were found there. One can easily imagine that such poetry, celebrating the surroundings in which it was performed, would have been enjoyed by the Umayyad ruler and his intimates during interludes at the estate.<sup>8</sup>

The display of wealth, status, and refinement through the exchange of lavish gifts and through the hosting of elegant feasts, emerges as one of the most significant themes attached to the estates, often mentioned in Arabic court chronicles as settings for court feasts, or as particularly lavish gifts exchanged between the ruler and powerful members of the administration. To give an example of the former, the amir Muhammad II, when he wished to construct the new *majlis* at al-Rusafa, charged his wazir Hashim b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz with the task of overseeing the construction of the new building, for which the Umayyad ruler provided ten thousand dinars. The wazir carried out his task, but paid for the new reception hall himself. He then returned Muhammad’s ten thousand dinars and surprised the Umayyad ruler with a lavish feast.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis*, ed. Makki (Beirut, 1973), p. 170, 226. Cited by Marin in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. s.v. “al-Rusafa – In Spain.” The history of al-Rusafa and the poet are entwined, because as Marin notes, it was at the estate that the poet attempted unsuccessfully to fly with the help of a winged garment of silk and feathers.

<sup>8</sup> Marin, *op. cit.*, notes the subject matter of the poem, which I was unable to acquire in time to include here. To my knowledge this poetry has yet to be analyzed or translated, and so must be addressed in future work on the *munyas* before conclusions can be reached. It seems likely, however, that such poems constitute an Andalusí parallel for the poetry in which the pleasures of monastery settings are evoked.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis min anba ahl al-Andalus, li-Ibn Hayyan al-Qurtubi*, ed. Makki (Beirut, 1973), p. 170, 226. Dominic Brookshaw has discussed the convivial aspects of

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In Andalusī Arabic the term *hadiyya* was specifically used to designate gifts given for political reasons.<sup>10</sup> While the presentation of this particular type of gift by an individual was considered relatively unusual in the medieval Islamic world, as most such gifts were presented from one sovereign to another of equal rank, or from a group to a sovereign, Umayyad al-Andalus offers multiple instances of high-ranking individuals giving presents of great value or curiosity (*turaf*, *tuḥaf*, *gharā'ib*) to the sovereign in order to retain or regain official favor. For example, the *wazīr* Abu 'Umar Ahmad Ibn Shuhayd, a member of one of the most illustrious of the established Arab elite families, presented a gift to 'Abd al-Rahman III on March, 939 CE, which al-Maqqari claims became proverbial among Andalusis as one of the three richest presents ever given to a sovereign. Ibn Khaldun and Ibn al-Faradi enumerate the components of Ibn Shuhayd's gift, which included gold and silver in coin and bullion form, hundreds of pounds of fragrant aloe-wood, approximately one hundred ounces of musk, similar amounts of amber and camphor, silk cloth embroidered with gold and suitable for the caliph, furs from Khorasan, ten chests of sable skins, an array of rich robes, cloaks, and sleeping garments, six Iraqi tents, forty-eight Baghdadi horse-cloths, four thousand pounds of spun

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*majlis* gatherings held at suburban garden pavilions at the 'Abbasid court at Baghdad and at the various Iranian courts. Dominic P. Brookshaw, "Palaces, Pavilions and Pleasure-gardens: the context and setting of the medieval *majlis*," In *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6, no. 2 (July 2003), 199-223.

<sup>10</sup> Whose root [h-d-ī] means to guide, show, or supply. On gifts and gift exchange see *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. s.v. "Hiba;" F. Rosenthal, "Gifts and bribes," In *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, cviii (1964), 135-44, and al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, (Cairo 1352/1933), II:136-8. Specifically regarding the Muslim west, see Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, IV:138, 144; and the eleventh-century Fatimid text by Qāḍī Abu 'l-Ḥusayn Ahmad b. al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-Dhakhā'ir wa 'l-tuḥaf* ed. Muḥ. Ḥamīd Allāh, (Kuwait, 1959).

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silk, a thousand pounds of raw silk, thirty woolen carpets, one hundred prayer rugs, fifteen silk cushions, eight hundred suits of armor for horses especially for use in processions and public exhibitions, one thousand shields from Sultaniyya, one hundred thousand arrows, numerous Arabian horses (some destined for the caliph, and some trained for war), richly caparisoned mules, forty male and twenty female slaves, completely outfitted with clothes, jewels, ornaments, and musical instruments, and ten *kintars* (hundred weights) of white sugar.<sup>11</sup>

The grand finale in Ibn Shuhayd's lavish present to 'Abd al-Rahman III consisted of a profitable rural estate (*qariya*) located in the fertile Qanbaniyya territory south of the city of Cordoba.<sup>12</sup> Ibn Shuhayd explained the circumstances of his making a gift of the villa, in the elegantly-composed epistle that accompanied the present to the ruler:

When I heard that [the *qariya* Shayrah] had been described to the Caliph, who was pleased to inquire about it, I never ceased importuning the owner of it until he sold it to me, with all its buildings, plantations, fields, woods, and waters; the whole being duly transferred to Ibn Bakiiyah, who, I hope, will reap the next harvest thousands of *mudd* of every kind of grain. When, moreover, I ascertained that it was the Caliph's wish to build upon the latter estate, I immediately gave all my attention to forestall his wishes, and thought of the many spots which his gracious majesty had been pleased to visit, in order to perpetuate his memory in their buildings...Knowing that the foundations, the pillars, and the greater portion of the house were built of free-stone, I conceived and fixed upon a plan of improvement, which I caused immediately to be executed; having spent in one year only what I received from his servant, Ibn 'Assim, for twenty consecutive years [as the amount of my salary], since the total expense incurred in the building amounted to about eighty thousand dinars, without counting the produce of the estate during that time, which was likewise spent in the object, nor the sale of timber, which is so abundant that when his servant Ibn Khalil wanted upwards of three hundred and twenty thousand trees [for the purpose of building], and could only procure about two thousand every year, I undertook to furnish him the remainder out of this estate, which I did; the value of the timber which I then

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<sup>11</sup> Al-Maqqari, *Gayangos ed.*, II: 150-53.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

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delivered into his hands being, at the lowest estimate, between fifty and sixty thousand dinars.<sup>13</sup>

This account of Ibn Shuhayd's gift to 'Abd al-Rahman illustrates that rural estates (*qariya*), were similar in conception to the *munyas* of Cordoba, in that they also consisted of stone buildings, water features, and cultivated lands, and that the Umayyad ruler and courtiers also used their rural estates as sites of leisurely retreat. In keeping with the texts discussed in Chapter Three, the main difference apparent between *munyas* and *qariyas* was therefore the type of cultivation associated with each category of estate; grains and timber making up the production on the rural *qariyas*, and foods, fragrances, and pharmaceuticals forming the bulk of production on the suburban *munyas*.

The *qariya* thus extend our picture of Umayyad villa culture from the immediate vicinity of Cordoba and its suburbs into the Cordoban countryside, while the account of Ibn Shuhayd's gift illustrates the emphasis which the Umayyad court placed upon the display of wealth. This was accomplished within the court through the presentation of luxury goods (preferably in multiples or great quantities) ranging from money, to fragrant substances, to clothing and weapons, to animals, and estates – both the suburban *munyas* and the rural *qariyas*. The *qariya*, as a productive venture whose value was measured in basic grains and natural resources, appears as one of the economic foundations of the Umayyad upper classes. The *qariya/munya* system appears to have been one in which the rural estates generated real wealth for the nobility, while the suburban estates generated the products used to demonstrate cultural capital within the closed circle of the Umayyad court, thereby serving as one of the society's most potent status symbols.

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153-54.



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An emphasis upon the display of Umayyad wealth, power, and generosity is central to the account of a court feast given by ‘Abd al-Rahman III, in March of 941 CE, at the *munya* of al-Na‘ura. The occasion for the feast was a celebration of the completion of an aqueduct commissioned by the ruler to supply the villa with fresh water from the mountains northwest of the city.<sup>14</sup> Al-Maqqari tells us that on the very day that the water arrived, pouring dramatically from the mouth of a lion-shaped fountain, into an enormous pool, ‘Abd al-Rahman III used the occasion to commemorate the feast to a select audience of Cordoban elites:

and on the day of the water’s arrival al-Nasir issued a generous, excellent invitation (*wa kanat al-Nasir fi hadha al-yawm bi qarṣ al-Na‘ura daw‘a hasana afḍala*) / to the members of his government, and all of his courtiers (*‘ala ‘amma ahala mamlakatiha*) to come to the palace of al-Na‘ura / and he bestowed (*waṣala*) upon the hydraulic engineers and the directors of the work (*al-muhandisīn wa al-qawwām bi al-‘amala*) good and generous gifts (*ṣilāt hasana jazīla*).<sup>15</sup>

The feast provided the sovereign with an opportunity to demonstrate his beneficence to the Cordoban court, through the provision of gifts to the officials responsible for the successful completion of the aqueduct. Considered against the context of the extravagant statement of wealth and status embodied in Ibn Shuhayd’s present of two years before, this feast might also have served as a means by which ‘Abd al-Rahman III could reassert his greater wealth and status through the production of an alternative spectacle, also

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<sup>14</sup>al-Maqqari, ed. ‘Abbas, I:564-65. An abbreviated version appears in al-Maqqari, *Analectes* I:371.

<sup>15</sup>al-Maqqari, *Nafh al-tib*, ed. Ihsan ‘Abbas, I:565.

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addressed to a court audience, in which his wealth and his power is reasserted through his demonstrated ability to commission an expensive and long-term building project.<sup>16</sup>

The use of *munyas* as settings for court feasts designed to show off the wealth and social status of the host, and the giving of villas as extravagant gifts (with likely political implications) continued during the reign of al-Hakam II (r. 961-976 CE). The feast, mentioned by the tenth-century Umayyad chronicler Isa ibn Ahmad al-Razi, was held at the estate known as the *Munya* of al-Muntali in 973 CE. In contrast to the feast held at al-Na'ura, this court feast took place at the residence of the caliph's imam, and it is therefore significant that, in contrast to the *munyas* of the Umayyad rulers and the *Munya* of al-Rummaniya, the villa of al-Muntali was located east of Cordoba's urban center. Although other *munyas* are known to have been located east of Cordoba, the villa's location in this eastern zone, as opposed to the western zone where the patronage of the Umayyad rulers and palace elites was concentrated, is revealing when juxtaposed with the location of Durri al-Saghir's *munya*, west of Cordoba. In the tenth century the western suburbs and *munyas* were associated with the Umayyad rulers and with palace elite *munya* patrons like Durri and Nasr. Ibn Abi Amir's rise to power in the Umayyad administration during the reign of al-Hakam II was marked by his patronage of estates in this eastern zone. Thus, the fact that the *munya* was located on the east side of Cordoba gains significance when considered along with the identification of the *munya* patron as the imam of al-Hakam II. As a figure of religious and legal authority, the patron of al-Muntali would have been associated with the urban elite, not the palace elites.

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<sup>16</sup> The aqueduct project, from its initiation in the mountains northwest of Cordoba to the arrival of the water to the great pool, took fourteen months – a lengthy period of time, comparable to the time it took to construct entire palaces, according to accounts of building projects from other Islamic courts.

Whereas ‘Abd al-Rahman III’s feast had marked the completion of a royal building project, the feast which took place at the *Munya* of al-Muntali served as an opportunity to recognize a new development in the Umayyad political situation, through the celebration of a circumcision ritual. Al-Razi described the event:

[At the beginning of Sha‘bān, 973] the Hasanids... were taken in by the imam of the caliph, and their sons were to be circumcised in the *munya* of al-Muntali, east of Cordoba, which was the imam’s residence... The caliph paid for everything and ordered that they celebrate a solemn feast at the *munya*, and they agreed enthusiastically and invited all the important people of Cordoba. The *wazīr ṣāhib al-madīna bi-qurṭuba*, Ja’far b. ‘Uthmān, was charged with arranging the feast. He extended the scope of the celebration by enlisting the aid of many secretaries and other officials, until it arrived at the height of perfection. All of the members of the Quraysh tribe [*al-aṣṅāf min qurayshī*] were invited to help, along with the leading functionaries and Berber nobles who had arrived in the capital, as well as representatives from the principal surrounding districts of Cordoba [*ahl al-qurṭuba*] and wealthy merchants [*b-ī-ā-d ahl al-sūq*]. They were given a feast, and after being perfumed with incense, their heads were anointed with pure civet musk<sup>17</sup> [*al-ghāḥīya al-khāliṣa*], honoring everyone. The two Qurayshies, fathers of the circumcised boys, expressed to the caliph their recognition of the new distinction and honor of which they were the objects, and rejoiced in having embraced the good cause.<sup>18</sup>

This feast, though on the surface celebrated the circumcision of the sons of the leaders of the Hasanid tribe, was a highly significant political event, as the references to the various

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<sup>17</sup> *Al-ghāḥīya* (also known as *zabd*) was a perfume derived from the musk of the civet cat; the most valuable musk came from the deer or gazelles found in China (A. Dietrich, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. s.v. “misk,” “hiba.” *Al-ghāḥīya* was sometimes used by ‘Abbasid courtiers to perfume the roots of their hair, and this appears to be its use in the context of the Cordoban feast at al-Muntali. Musk was believed to stimulate the senses, among other medicinal properties, a desirable trait in the context of a feast. According to a hadith, “musk is the best and strongest-smelling perfume,” and according to al-Mas‘ūdi, in Spain musk was the most important perfume. (Wensinck, *Concordance*, vi, 224a, 10-1; *idem*, *Handbook*, 184b; al-Mas‘ūdi, *Murūj*, ed. and tr. Pellat, § 407. Arabic texts mention musk forming part of rich gifts given to the Umayyad sovereigns; it was used to perfume foods and drinks, and in al-Andalus, was also an ingredient in preparations used by the wealthiest classes for cleansing before and after eating. David Waines, “The Culinary Culture of al-Andalus,” In *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, II:725-738.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis*, ed. El-Hajji (Beirut, 1965), p. 109-110.

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administrative groups involved in the preparations signal. The Hasanids were a North African Berber tribe who had recently renounced their alliance with the Fatimids, the Umayyad state's most serious political rival in North Africa and the western Mediterranean. Like the court feast which marked the completion of 'Abd al-Rahman III's aqueduct, a *munya* served as the setting for a feast involving the Umayyad caliph, court nobles, and other politically important social groups (lower-ranking administrative functionaries, provincial representatives, Berber nobles, the Umayyad extended family, and wealthy merchants) together. As with the feast held at al-Na'ura during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III, the representation of the various elite groups of Cordoba, the ceremony surrounding the circumcision, the elaborate feast, and the representation of the principal members of the important social classes constituted a spectacle orchestrated to convey specific political meaning. In this case, as Safran has argued of other Cordoban ceremonies of the caliphal period, the circumcision feast provided the occasion for the ceremonial incorporation of a former enemy into the Umayyad fold.

A third court feast, held in May at the *munya* of al-Rummaniya, just a few weeks after the circumcision feast at the *Munya* of al-Muntali, demonstrates how such occasions could also serve as vehicles for court political maneuvering on an individual level. In contrast to the aforementioned *munya* feasts, the feast at al-Rummaniya was not an event distinguished by its formal court ceremonial. Rather, a much more circumscribed group, whose principal members were the host, Durri al-Saghir, al-Hakam II, and the heir to the throne, the prince Hisham. The political and social contexts which lay behind this particular feast can be inferred from a passage by the chronicler al-Razi, who mentions that in April of 973 CE, just a few months before the feast at the villa took place, Durri

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had been removed from his high position at Madinat al-Zahra' in disgrace, for reasons which the chronicler does not reveal.<sup>19</sup> Durri occupied an office at Madinat al-Zahra' near the Bab al-Sudda, and according to al-Razi, Durri was ordered to move from the palace at Madinat al-Zahra' to the old Umayyad palace within the walled center of Cordoba. This move, away from the center of power and the palace administration signaled significant loss of status within the court hierarchy, and in addition, his monthly salary was reduced to ten dinars a month. Durri's disgrace persisted for four months, and it is in the midst of his disgrace that Durri decided to present his villa to the caliph. As Ruggles has pointed out, Durri al-Saghir's presentation of al-Rummaniya to al-Hakam II in May must have been an attempt to reinstate himself into the caliph's favor, and it was a gesture perfectly in keeping with the precedent set in the Umayyad court by Ibn Shuhayd's legendary gift to 'Abd al-Rahman III.<sup>20</sup>

The use of the [h-d-ī] root for both the verb and the noun indicating the transfer of the estate to the caliph are therefore significant in this context ("Durri approached the caliph *to present* to him his *munya*" and then Durri *presented* the *munya* "as a gift"). Following the ceremonial transfer of the *munya* to al-Hakam II (ceremonial because the caliph asked Durri to stay on as the estate's overseer (*wakīl*), charged with ensuring that the estate lost none of its value), Durri invited al-Hakam to a feast at al-Rummaniya:

Durri asked the caliph to honor him by attending a banquet he was preparing for him [at al-Rummaniya] so that the caliph might see it with his son,

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<sup>19</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *Muqtabis VII*, ed. Hajji, p. 103-104.

<sup>20</sup> Safran identifies Durri as treasurer in her account of the 971 ceremony while Meouak gives his title as *Fatā al-Saghīr* ("lesser Fata"). The inconsistency may stem from a conflation of the two Durris. For Durri's time as treasurer see *Muqtabis VII*, 1965 Hajji ed. p.104.

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prince Hisham, and his children, and assume a position of honor as appropriate for him...

Accompanied by his son and heir, the prince Hisham, and an entourage of slaves and servants the Umayyad caliph al-Hakam II rode from the palace at Madinat al-Zahra' to the estate, whereby the caliph decided to spend the night. Ibn Hayyan offers us a glimpse of the event:

The interior [of the *munya*] was put into order as sleeping quarters while tents and structures were set up around it for those servants and slaves who surrounded it. [The caliph] rested in it most of that day, absorbed in a happiness whose source he would not divulge [but] which was cleansed of any sin that might blemish him.<sup>21</sup>

The chronicler then provides the description of the feast:

Durri,] the host of the banquet, poured forth to all of those present inside and outside unusual kinds of foods and varieties of delicious fruits that overwhelmed their appetites and filled their plates. They agreed they had never witnessed (anything) in the royal outings more perfect, more refined and more expansive than this, Durri's banquet.<sup>22</sup>

The strategy eventually succeeded since, according to al-Razi, four months after Durri's fall from caliphal favor the prince Hisham and two other high-ranking slaves in the administration managed to convince the caliph to pardon the freedman, who was subsequently reinstated to his previous positions and rank.<sup>23</sup> Hisham's involvement is

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, p. 107.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>23</sup> This continued, until the first day of *dhu-l-q'ada* of this year (August 973) [until] he got out of this situation through the caliph's pardon, through the intervention of the prince Abū-l-Walīd Hishām, in his favor, and also the favor of the fatā al-kabīr Ja'farī Majṣūr and of Ahmad ibn Bakr al-Zanji, who also fell into disgrace after him. The three, in effect, guided to the caliph a letter from the prince Hishām, in which, in his own hand, demanded that Durri be returned to favor. The Prince of the Faithful hastened to comply, returning him to good opinion and returning his posts and positions. Al-Razi, *Anales palatinos*, p. 132.

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puzzling, considering his youth, but makes sense if, as seems likely, he was susceptible to the wishes of the two other *fityan*, both of whom were high-ranking officials in the palace administration. The account provides an intriguing glimpse of palace politics in action, as the powerful slaves manipulate al-Hakam II's fondness for Hisham as a means of restoring their unfortunate colleague to a position of power and privilege within the court hierarchy. In Durri's presentation of his villa to al-Hakam II the account also reveals how the *munyas* of Cordoba functioned as political capital within the Umayyad court.

Ibn Khaldun emphasized the spectacular aspect of medieval court feast, which he interpreted as one of the most important means (along with the construction of monuments) by which dynasties manifest power.<sup>24</sup> By way of illustration, he describes one of the most famous feasts of Islam, held to celebrate the marriage of the 'Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun. In its vivid evocation of the air of spectacle associated with medieval Islamic court feasts, it deserves to be quoted at length:

Looking at the reports of Mas'udi, al-Tabari, and other (historians) concerning the wedding of al-Ma'mun to Buran, daughter of al-Hasan b. Sahl, one will be amazed... They tell about the expenditure for the wedding and the gifts al-Ma'mun gave her. On the wedding day, al-Hasan b. Sahl gave a lavish banquet that was attended by al-Ma'mun's retinue. To members of the first class, al-Hasan distributed lumps of musk wrapped in papers granting farms and estates to the holders. Each obtained what chance and luck gave him. To the second class, he distributed bags each of which held 10,000 dinars. To the third class he distributed bags with the same amount in dirhams. . . He burned candles of amber each of which weighed one hundred *mann* - a *mann* being one and two thirds pounds. He had laid down for her carpets woven with threads of gold and adorned with pearls and hyacinths (rubies). One hundred and forty mule-loads of wood had been brought three times a day for a whole year to the kitchen in readiness for the wedding night. All that wood was consumed that very night. Palm twigs were set alight by pouring oil on them. Boatmen were ordered to bring boats to

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<sup>24</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* ed. N.J. Dawood, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1967 (1989 ed.), p. 143.

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transport the distinguished guests on the Tigris. The boats prepared for that purpose numbered 30,000, and they carried people back and forth all day long.<sup>25</sup>

The scale of this particular feast would undoubtedly qualify as spectacle by any definition. The allusions to the luxury objects distributed to the various “spectators,” the display of conspicuous consumption calculated to impress the wealth and power of the patron (and by extension the dynasty), and the implied urban and architectural settings for the wedding feast hint at the relationships that might be explored between feasts as spectacle in medieval Islamic court cultures and the objects and architectural settings that served as the settings for such displays.

G. J. H. Van Gelder’s book *God's banquet: food in classical Arabic literature* (2000) explores the pervasive culinary themes in Arabic literature, highlighting the rich social meanings attached to eating and drinking in medieval Islamic courts.<sup>26</sup> Recent interdisciplinary studies on dining in the ancient world offer parallel examples of the social meanings implicit in convivial occasions.<sup>27</sup> For example, John D’Arms’ exploration of how Roman feasts functioned as a type of social spectacle offers an intriguing case study with which to compare the court feasts of Umayyad Cordoba.<sup>28</sup> The

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<sup>25</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, p.139.

<sup>26</sup> G. J. H. Van Gelder, *God's banquet: food in classical Arabic literature* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> For example, see the essays in W.J. Slater, ed., *Dining in a Classical Context* (Ann Arbor, 1991), especially Jeremy Rossiter, “Convivium and Villa in Late Antiquity,” p. 199-214.

<sup>28</sup> John D’Arms, “Performing Culture: Roman Spectacle and the Banquets of the Powerful,” *Art of Ancient Spectacle*, Studies in the History of Art, no. 56 ed. Bettina Bergman and Christine Kondoleon (New Haven: National Gallery of Art/ Yale UP, 1999), 301-321.



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literary evidence analyzed by Van Gelder suggests that notions of display and spectacle are equally useful for understanding the intersection of art and architecture and convivial gatherings in the medieval Islamic world. Feasts (*simāt*, pl. *asmīta*) were among the most important ceremonial occasions in medieval Islamic courts, with Ramadan, the two ‘Id festivals, the New Year, and the birthday of the Prophet, of particular note.<sup>29</sup>

Paula Sanders 1994 book *Ritual, Politics and the City in Fatimid Cairo* uses textual evidence to analyze the elaborate ceremonial and urban processions that accompanied such feasts in Fatimid Cairo.<sup>30</sup> Unlike Umayyad Cordoba, where court feasts are mentioned only within the setting of the *munyas*, Fatimid court feasts took place within the audience hall of the Fatimid palace in Cairo, where guests were arranged according to their rank within the court hierarchy, as in other court ceremonies. Feasts also took place outside the Fatimid palace during urban processions to the Nile, where tents specially erected on the riverbank served as the settings. Participants and observers of the Fatimid feasts were treated to a variety of delicacies, including figures and buildings molded from sugar.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> “The feast (every feast) is an important primary form of human culture. It cannot be explained merely by the practical conditions of the community’s work, and it would be even more superficial to attribute it to the physiological demand for periodic rest,” Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA & London: MIT Press, 1968), p. 9. On feasts in the medieval Islamic courts see *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. VI: 520-21.

<sup>30</sup> Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), *passim*.

<sup>31</sup> See Ibn Taghbirdi, *al-Nujum al-zahira*, IV: 97-8; al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I:387-8; *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. VI: 520; *ibid.*, s.v. “mawākib.”

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On the opposite end of the Islamic world, at the Ghaznavid court of Iran, the ruler was expected to provide feasts for his tribal supporters. When holding court feasts the Ghaznavid ruler Mas'ud b. Mahmud would sit upon a large leather tablecloth, spread in a garden or in a garden pavilion, upon which he would invite dignitaries to sit with him.<sup>32</sup> A description of a court feast held in 924 in 'Abbasid Baghdad also suggests the broader context within which the Cordoban feasts operated:

In the year 312/924 Muflih, the black eunuch, invites the caliph al-Muqtadir and his retinue to his garden, in which he has arranged rivulets of water and sharab<sup>33</sup> (apparently wine) sweetened with sugar and cooled with 50,000 pounds of ice. On the banks of these streams food is set down in decorated containers; lamb and poultry are hung from the trees. The eaters are provided with fruits, flowers and various kinds of perfumes and incense...<sup>34</sup>

The reference to the eunuch's garden suggests that the feast took place at one of Baghdad's suburban palaces, which as settings for court activities offer a Baghdadi counterpart to the Cordoban *mynyas*. The details of the food, drink, and fragrance emphasize the sensory pleasure, the elaborate preparations, and the richness of this feast.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Abu'l-Fadl Bayhaqi, *Tarikh-i Mas'udi*, ed. 'Ali Akbar Fayyad Mashhad A.H.S. 1350/1971, p. 439, 734-5; *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. VI: 521.

<sup>33</sup> Van Gelder interprets *sharab* as wine, but it might also have referred to a non-alcoholic drink, lemonade perhaps.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn al-Zubayr, *Kitab al-Dhakhā'ir wa-l-Tuḥaf* ed. Muhammad Hamid Allah (Kuwait, 1959), p. 107-108. Cited in G. J. H. van Gelder, *God's banquet: food in classical Arabic literature* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000), p. 69.

<sup>35</sup> I will return to this subject in the following chapter, in which I argue that the two courts shared a common conception of refinement that informed elite social occasions like the feasts.

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Ibn Khaldun's passage, considered in conjunction with the accounts of the feasts that took place in Cordoba and the courts of other Islamic rulers indicates that feasts had an important social function in medieval Islamic courts, as instances of conspicuous consumption at which rulers and court elites to demonstrate (in the case of the ruler) their wealth, power, and generosity and (in the case of the court elites) their wealth and social status within court hierarchies. These messages point to the court feast as one of the most important types of medieval Islamic spectacle, occasions upon which a multiplicity of messages about the ruler's wealth, and about social values and relationships were enacted between the feasts' patrons, and the various participants.<sup>36</sup>

In the tenth century the convivial gatherings associated with the Cordoban *munyas* took on a somewhat more official character, as they served as the sites for court feasts commemorating important events. Such occasions fell somewhere between the leisurely excursions associated with the eighth- and ninth-century use of the *munyas* as the settings for hunting parties or *majlis* gatherings and the formal ceremonies associated with official events like the reception of ambassadors or the swearing of oaths of loyalty to the ruler that took place within the official spaces of the reception halls at the Umayyad palaces of Madinat al-Zahra' or Cordoba proper.<sup>37</sup> In the broader picture of

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<sup>36</sup> The notion of spectacle in the Arabic Islamic context is a subject that needs further exploration. Sanders' *Ritual, Politics and the City in Fatimid Cairo* is an important work contribution. In al-Andalus the term *mawakib* seems to have been used in the sense of "spectacle." *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. s.v. "mawakib." Bettina Bergmann discusses the Greek and Latin terminology in the introduction to *Art of Ancient Spectacle*, Studies in the History of Art, no. 56 ed. Bettina Bergman and Christine Kondoleon (New Haven: National Gallery of Art/ Yale UP, 1999), p. 9-35, esp. p. 11.

<sup>37</sup> On ceremony within the main reception hall at Madinat al-Zahra' see Miquel Barceló, "El Califa patente: el ceremonial omeya de Córdoba y la escenificación del poder," In *Madinat al-Zahra': el salón de 'Abd al-Rahman III* ed. Antonio Vallejo Triano (Cordoba:

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feasts and medieval Islamic court culture, the *munyas* of Cordoba stand out as the preferred settings for this type of court activity.

### *The context of refinement*

The use of the estates to cultivate the crops central to court life is grounded in a notion of refinement shared by the elites of the Umayyad court. *Majlis* gatherings for the enjoyment of poetry and perhaps wine, hunting parties, and especially the feasts held in *munya* settings served as important occasions for the articulation of cultural capital within court ranks. By demonstrating adherence to codes of behavior encompassing etiquette and culinary culture, as well as intellectual matters, nobles demonstrated their social status to an audience of other court elites. Cordoban aristocrats shared ideas about outward manifestations of sophistication with ‘Abbasid Baghdad; such shared ideas about the cultivated persona expected of the courtier seem to have been pan-Islamic. With regards to al-Andalus, Cynthia Robinson has explored in great depth the relationship between court gatherings and aristocratic culture in *taifa* Zaragoza, where such occasions also took place in a *munya* setting – the Aljafería palace.<sup>38</sup> The Aljafería represents the metamorphosis of the *munya* type in response to the changed socio-political conditions of

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Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, 1995), p. 153-75. On the poetic recitations performed during the ‘Id festival ceremonies at Madinat al-Zahra’ see Susan Stetkyvich, “The Qasidah and the Poetics of Ceremony: Three ‘Id Panegyrics to the Cordoban Caliphate,” In *Languages of power in Islamic Spain* ed. Ross Brann (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1997), 1-48.

<sup>38</sup> Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, p. 42-43 in which she argues for the palace as a *munya* because of its function as an exclusive retreat. Robinson is in agreement with Christian Ewert, who also sees the Aljafería as a *munya*: Christian Ewert, *Die Aljafería in Zaragoza* (Berlin/ Madrid: Deutsches Archäologisches Institute/ Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1978), I, p. 4, notes 19-22.

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post-caliphal al-Andalus, and thus Robinson's analysis of the palace as the setting for certain court activities is closely linked with the story of the Cordoban estates as well. Because references to feasts and perfumes are explicitly mentioned in texts about the Cordoban *munyas*, this chapter will devote particular attention to refinement as it was related to Cordoban culinary culture and to fragrances.

In the social sciences "taste" is defined as "the ability to make discriminating judgments about aesthetic and artistic matters" and is understood as one means by which social groups define, construct, and classify themselves in relation to others.<sup>39</sup>

Sociological works written since the late nineteenth century offer relevant models for framing the role of the suburban villa in Cordoban Umayyad society. For example, the economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen (d. 1929), in his 1899 book *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, formulated the idea of conspicuous consumption, in which he argued that the display of wealth is a universal human trait that serves to manifest economic and social status.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, the 1939 book, *The Civilizing Process*, written by the historical

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<sup>39</sup> For an overview of the subject see M. Ollivier and V. Fridman, "Taste and Taste Culture," *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 23 (2001), p. 15442-15447. Important works relevant to conceptualizing the *munya*'s importance in Umayyad society include Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1899); Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. E. Jephcott (Blackwell, 1994 ed.); *ibid.*, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983); and Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (London, New York: Routledge, 1984). A recent elaboration upon these important models is Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A conceptual and historical investigation* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994). Also see H.D. Meyer, "Taste formation in pluralistic societies. The role of rhetorics and institutions," In *International Sociology* 15, no. 1 (2000), p. 33-56.

<sup>40</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Ed. Simon Blackburn, (Oxford University Press, 1996), s.v. "Veblen, Thorstein."

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sociologist Norbert Elias, analyzed the handbooks of etiquette that began to appear in fifteenth century Europe in order to explain the evolution of means by which European elites distinguished themselves from the mass of the non-elite population.<sup>41</sup> In *The Court Society*, published in 1969, Elias used the example of the French court of Louis XIV to demonstrate how etiquette and ceremony provided court elites with a means of measuring prestige within a competitive hierarchical social system.<sup>42</sup> These works offer useful models for conceptualizing the social roles of the suburban villa in Umayyad Cordoban court culture, in which the patronage of *munyas*, and the activities associated with the estates, exercised a discernible role in the construction and display of social status among Cordoban elites.

The Arabic root [z – r – f] and its derivative nominal form *zarf*, connote qualities of elegance, refinement, and good taste in medieval Islamic social and literary contexts.<sup>43</sup> The noun *zarīf* (pl. *zurāfā'*) is used for a man or woman deemed to possess such qualities, and when used in the plural indicates “the refined people.”<sup>44</sup> The earliest Islamic text on the notion of refinement dates from the tenth century and was composed

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<sup>41</sup> Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 1994 ed.

<sup>42</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983 ed.)

<sup>43</sup> For an overview of the Islamic etiquette traditions see *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “zarīf,” “al-Washsha’,” and “marasim.” In al-Andalus the term *rusum* was used to denote the court ceremonial and etiquette encompassed by the term “marasim” (both derived from the same [r-s-m] root, connoting ?). The two tenth-century texts are that of al-Washsha’ (see notes below) for ‘Abbasid Baghdad, and for al-Andalus, especially in a section on eating and drinking, Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s *Iqd al-Farīd*.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, That the term applied to both men and women is evidenced by the reference to “some refined women of the palace” (*ba‘ḍ mutazarrifāt al-kuṣūr*) in al-Washsha’, *Kitāb al-Muwashshā*, ed. Brünnow, (Beirut, 1965 ed.), p. 42.

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in the ‘Abbasid court at Baghdad. Al-Washsha’ (d. 937), a courtier there, codified the notion of refinement current at the court in a handbook of etiquette in which he described the tastes of refined courtiers for an audience that wished to conform to the standards of elegance current in the ‘Abbasid court.<sup>45</sup> In this work al-Washsha’ creates a rhetoric of elegance as both an innate quality and as a detailed set of rules governing the behavior and external appearance appropriate to the refined courtier. The latter, the outward manifestation of refinement as reflected in the substances one consumed (or more often, disdained to consume) and the manner in which one adorned the body through the use of fragrance, are of particular interest for understanding the display of refinement in the context of the Cordoban *munya*.<sup>46</sup>

The courtier Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi (d.940), a contemporary of Al-Washsha’ in the court of ‘Abd al-Rahman III, wrote the *‘Iqd al-farīd* (“The Unique Necklace”), a literary anthology considered the most famous work of Andalusī literature.<sup>47</sup> Though Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s work was not a handbook, it also was intended to provide the refined courtiers of Cordoba with the store of literary and social knowledge with which a refined courtier

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<sup>45</sup> *Kitab al-Washsha’* (ed. from the unique Leiden ms. Or. 1440 by R.E. Brünnow, Leiden 1886; Beirut ed. 1965). *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Al-Washsha’.”

Coincidentally, the one pupil of Al-Washsha’ known by name was a woman named *Munya*, a slave of the ‘Abbasid caliph al-Mu’tamid. Her name meant “an object of desire.” Slaves in medieval Islamic courts were usually named for precious objects - jewels, for instance, or objects of beauty familiar from literary conceits, like the moon and stars. For example, the name of the elite slave in al-Hakam II’s court and the patron of the *Munya* of al-Rummaniya, Durrī, refers to the brilliant, glittering quality of a star.

<sup>46</sup> Along with the sections on the intellectual and moral qualities expected of the refined courtier, Al-Washsha’ discusses food and drink, and the clothing (including jewelry and other accessories, and footwear), and perfumes considered appropriate for elegant women and men of the court.

<sup>47</sup> Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, *al-‘Iqd al-farīd*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn et al., (Cairo, 1948-1953).

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would be expected to be familiar. The anecdotes contained in the work illustrate Cordoba's conscious participation in a broader Islamic literary and social culture through its form and content, which were modeled after other works produced by well-known 'Abbasid authors.<sup>48</sup> Cordoban participation in a broader Islamic court culture is underscored by the story of the Persian Buyid vizier Ibn 'Abbad's remark upon reading the *Iqd*: "This is our merchandise. Give it back to us!"<sup>49</sup> While Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's anthology of "the entertaining, the informative and the edifying"<sup>50</sup> is not a prescriptive handbook of etiquette like the *Kitab al-Washshā'*, its anecdotes and rules on courtly behavior illustrate that the notions of refinement and taste current amongst the elegant elites of the Cordoban court were, as their literary tastes were, in keeping with a broad Islamic notion of refinement codified by Al-Washsha' for the 'Abbasid court.<sup>51</sup>

Al-Washsha' devotes two chapters in his treatise to the rules that governed the culinary preferences of the refined courtiers in the 'Abbasid court. His tone is prescriptive rather than anecdotal; he specifies the foods whose consumption marked one as either refined or vulgar. While he mentions a few foods favored by courtiers, these are far

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<sup>48</sup> The section on eating and manners appears in V. II, p. 456-59, and can be considered in the context of earlier works like that of the 'Abbasid author Ibn Qutayba. See Van Gelder, *God's Banquet*, p. 42-43.

<sup>49</sup> Cited in Robert Irwin, Robert Irwin, *Night, Horses, and the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature*. (New York: Anchor (2001 ed.), p. 247.

<sup>50</sup> As Van Gelder characterizes it in his study of food in classical Arabic literature: p. 42-43.

<sup>51</sup> A study of how the notion of *zarfīs* presented in the *Iqd al-fariid*, and how Cordoban notions thus compared with the notion of *zarfās* it was understood in the 'Abbasid court at Baghdad lies outside the scope of this chapter, but would help clarify the differences and similarities in the otherwise similar conception of refinement within those two courts in the tenth century.



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outnumbered by the detailed references to foods which were to be avoided because of something disagreeable in their appearance, their smell, the effect they had on the body, their association with people who were considered common, or even because the names by which the foods were called carried unpleasant associations or offended the refined sensibility in some other way.<sup>52</sup> For example, meats that were to be avoided included those containing nerves, organ meats, salted fish, anything preserved in brine, and lobsters (which offended the refined through their resemblance to the hind parts of animals).

In contrast to the focus on variety that marked cultivation on the Cordoban *munya*, the list of fruits and vegetables that Al-Washsha' warns his audience to avoid is much lengthier than the list of those favored by the refined. Apricots, peaches, plums, dates, pomegranates, and figs were all to be avoided according to al-Washsha' because they contained pits and were consumed by common people. Likewise, the refined did not eat radishes, watercress, leeks, garlic, and onions (because of their odor), lettuce, eggplant, cucumber, asparagus, and legumes.<sup>53</sup> Al-Washshā''s chapter on drinks and aperitifs favored by refined courtiers is brief.<sup>54</sup> He emphasizes the preference for pure wines, of which those made from honey, raisins, and grape syrup were desirable, while date wine was to be avoided because of its association with vulgar, common people like

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<sup>52</sup> Al-Washsha', *al-Muwashsha*, p. 129-31. Some of the behaviors to be avoided at table include included dipping bread into vinegar, slurping one's soup, sucking one's fingers, soiling oneself or one's surroundings with grease, and taking large bites.

<sup>53</sup> Though Van Gelder has observed that the extremely strict diet reflected in al- Al-Washsha''s book of etiquette was probably not a reflection of actual practice within 'Abbasid elite circles. Gelder, p. 101.

<sup>54</sup> al-Washsha, *El Libro del brocado*, Garulo ed., p. 209-10.

shopkeepers and servants. Regarding the aperitifs that were consumed with wines, the refined disdained colocasia, acorns, dates, wheat, pennyroyal, chestnuts, and Syrian carobs. They preferred salted hazelnuts, peeled pistachios, nafta salt, Indian aloes, earth of Kurasan, Sana salt, quinces of Balkh, and Syrian apples instead.

The restrictive picture of the refined diet that al-Washsha' presents may not have been followed in actual practice; both literary anecdotes and the varied ingredients called for in medieval cookbooks from the eastern Islamic lands indicate that 'Abbasid rulers and courtiers, like those of Cordoba, in reality enjoyed a wide range of foodstuffs, including those associated with lower social strata.<sup>55</sup> In fact, Al-Washsha' himself notes on several occasions the divergence between actual practice and the strict ideals of refinement which he describes.<sup>56</sup>

Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi touches on the subject of food and court culture in two separate parts of the *'Iqd*: first, in the part devoted to "knowledge and good manners" (*al- 'ilm wa-l-adab*), composed mainly of what Van Gelder characterizes as "illustrative and entertaining" anecdotes rather than rules (as opposed to Al-Washshā', who is all rules and no anecdotes).<sup>57</sup> Food is discussed for a second time in the *'Iqd* in the second to the

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<sup>55</sup> As Van Gelder suggests, p. 101: "It is difficult to determine how widespread such restrictive eating habits were; one can be sure that most of the numerous persons called *zarīf* are merely being described as 'witty' or 'elegant,' without any implications that they adhered to the strict behavioural rules outlined by Al-Washsha'."

<sup>56</sup> See David Waines, "Luxury foods' in medieval Islamic societies," *World Archaeology* 34, no. 3 (Feb. 2003), 571-80. Waines relates the story of an 'Abbasid caliph who, attracted by the smell of a sailor's pot of *sikbaj* (a type of stew), appropriated the pot, consumed the contents, and rewarded the sailor richly for what he proclaimed was the best *sikbaj* he had ever tasted.

<sup>57</sup> Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al- 'Iqd al-Farid*, II: 456-59; Van Gelder, p. 43 n. 22.

last chapter, devoted to the subject of eating and drinking. The importance of food and drink, as stated by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi at the beginning of this chapter, stems partly from the role of sustenance in preserving the human body and its vital spirits (*al-arwaH*).<sup>58</sup> Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi also demonstrates Cordoban participation in ‘Abbasid conventions regarding food, and therefore ‘Abbasid notions of refinement as related to food, by describing and naming foodstuffs and dishes in a way reminiscent of Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s model, the ninth-century ‘Abbasid author Ibn Qutayba (828-89).<sup>59</sup> Unlike Al-Washshā’, however, Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s anecdotes and literary references emphasize the delights to be enjoyed from food.

*Perfumes, refinement, and cultivation*<sup>60</sup>

Perfumes have a long history as luxury substances, and fragrance was another means by which Islamic elites demonstrated their adherence to court models of refinement.<sup>61</sup> The tenth-century courtier and literary figure Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, for

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<sup>58</sup> *ibid*, p. 43.

<sup>59</sup> According to Van Gelder Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s method of naming and describing food follows that of the author Ibn Qutayba, whose *adab* collection served as a model for Rabbihi’s work. See Van Gelder, p. 42-43.

<sup>60</sup> See Holod, “Luxury Arts,” esp. 42-43. On perfumes’ importance in antique social history see Bowersock, G. W., “Perfumes and power.” In *Profumi d'arabia: Atti del convegno a cura di A. avanzini (saggi di storia antica, 11)*, (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1997), p. 543-556. For al-Andalus see Cherif Abderrahman Jah, *Los aromas de al-andalus: La cultura andalusi a traves de los perfumes, especies y plantas*, (Madrid: Alianza, for Fundacion de Cultura Islamica, 2001).

<sup>61</sup> See Holod, “Luxury Arts,” p. 42-43 for references to the tenth-century medical treatise produced by ‘Abd al-Rahman III’s personal physician al-Zahrawi (known to the west as Abulcasis).

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example, relayed to his Cordoban audience an anecdote about the Syrian Umayyad caliph Hisham's reputation for personal elegance; he was reputedly the best-dressed and most perfumed of the Syrian Umayyads.<sup>62</sup> Al-Washshā's chapter on fragrances states that the perfumes preferred by the refined included those made by crumbling musk with rosewater, aloe perfumed through the process of mixing amber with the water of carnations, sultaní incense, the amber of Bahrain, and saffron and fragrant powders mixed with diverse essences.<sup>63</sup>

Some fragrances, like foodstuffs, were to be avoided because of their association with particular social classes. For example, a type of incense identified as *barmakiyya*, though Al-Washsha' acknowledges to be very pleasing, was not a favorite with the refined because it was associated with people who practiced modesty in dress. Perfumes that were very strong in odor, and those which might run and leave marks were also to be avoided, while others were undesirable because of their association with women and slaves. Al-Washsha' points out, for example, that the perfume called *khuluuq*, for example, was only for women. There was some room for flexibility. For instance, while al-Washsha' states that the fragrance made from civet musk (*al-ghāliya* in al-Andalus) was generally associated with women and slaves, he notes that it was acceptable when used to anoint the roots of the hair, since used in this way the perfume would not run and leave marks. The account of the circumcision celebration held at the Cordoban *munya* of al-Muntali specifies that the guests were anointed with *al-ghāliya* after partaking of the feast.

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<sup>62</sup> Al-Washsha', *El Libro del brocado*, Garulo ed., p. 200.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*.

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Some fragrances were unsuitable for general use on the body because they had specific medicinal uses or were better for perfuming one's surroundings. Al-Washsha' points out that this was the case with camphor, which stimulated the property of coldness and therefore was to be used only when an increase in the property of heat was necessary. When he goes on to state that camphor mixed with essences of musk and turmeric and burned in a brazier was the best of the incenses, al-Washsha' provides a glimpse of the presence of fragrances in the spaces inhabited by the refined. That the musk and ambergris were associated with luxury during the reign of the Syrian Umayyads is indicated in Hammad al-Rawiyah's (a literary encyclopedist) account of his reception by the caliph Hisham in a Damascus palace, transmitted by al-Isfahani. Hammad al-Rawiyah writes that, upon being summoned by the Umayyad caliph,

I put my foot in the stirrup and rode off, travelling continuously for twelve days and nights until I found myself at Hisham's door in Damascus. I was admitted to his presence and found him in a spacious house paved with marble; and he was in a *majlis* also paved with marble. There, between every slab of marble and its neighbor was a strip of gold; and so it was also on the walls. Hisham was sitting on a red carpet and his clothes were of red silk perfumed with musk and ambergris. In front of him were containers of gold filled with crushed musk, which he stirred with his hand to diffuse the scent.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Al-Isfahani, V:157-58; Hamilton, 76.

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The previous chapter discussed the status of musk as a perfume in Umayyad Cordoba. Cordoban elites also favored rosewater and other perfumes made from other flower essences; the *Calendar of Cordoba* notes the times of the year at which the flowers were gathered to make rose, violet, and chamomile oil, for example.<sup>65</sup>

In addition to perfuming ones body, clothing, and surroundings, fragrances were also important to medieval Islamic culinary culture, used as part of refined table etiquette and in the preparation of the dishes to be consumed. As Manuela Marin points out, based on her comparative study of medieval Islamic cookbooks:

Scents are held to be among the good things of the earth, things to be enjoyed and appreciated . . . It is therefore not surprising to see how the culinary tradition incorporated the use of perfumes as a necessary complement to the pleasure of eating and drinking.<sup>66</sup>

Saffron and rosewater, both mentioned in the Cordoban agricultural texts discussed earlier, were used to perfume prepared dishes, and in addition to their value in the preparation and scenting of the varied dishes that appeared on elite tables, perfumes were used to cleanse the utensils used for cooking. Refined diners also relied on perfumes as

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<sup>65</sup> *Le Calendrier de Cordoue*, p. 74-75. On the use of flower essences to launder clothing in the Umayyad court see al-Maqqari, ed. Gayangos, VI:iv, p. 120. On rosewater in al-Andalus see E. Garcia-Sanchez, "Les techniques de distillation de l'eau de rose a l'andalus," In *Parfums d'Orient. Textes reunis par R. Gyselen*, no (1998), p.125-140.

<sup>66</sup> On fragrance and food see Manuela Marin, "Beyond Taste: the complements of colour and smell in the medieval Arab culinary tradition," In *A Taste of Thyme: Culinary Cultures of the Middle East* ed. Sami Zubaida and Richard Tapper (London: Tauris Parke, 2000), p. 214; and F. Aubaile-Sallenave, "Parfums, épices et condiments dans l'alimentation arabe médiévale," In *La Alimentación en las Culturas Islamicas: Una Colección de Estudios*, ed. Manuel Marin and David Waines (Madrid: Agencia Espanola de Cooperacion Internacional, 1994), p. 217-249.

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part of the cleansing process that preceded and followed a meal. In al-Andalus for example, a powdered substance (*ghāsūl* or *ushnān*) was used to cleanse the hands, body, and the mouth, and the preparation used by “kings and great personages” contained camphor and musk.<sup>67</sup>

Clearly fragrances were an important dimension in medieval Islamic elites’ conception and display of refinement. The varied uses of perfumes by elites resonates with the tenth-century Cordoban agricultural texts discussed in Chapter II; in the *Kitāb* immediately following that on the cultivation of vegetables is devoted to the cultivation of plants valued for their fragrances. Might the cultivation of fragrant plants in *munya* gardens, as indicated by the textual evidence discussed in Chapter Three, have had economic as well as social implications for Cordoban Umayyad elites? A passage written in the fourteenth century by Ibn Khaldun, about the suburban gardens (*agdal*) of Morocco, indicates that the cultivation of fragrant plants was indeed profitable:

[the *agdal*] was an immense park or rather a group of gardens planted with one or two species of *fruit trees* or *perfumed flowers*, either indigenous or imported, *cultivated for sale* ... Away from the dense urban centres, the *agdal* is adjacent to the official quarter, a rural annex to the urban palaces. *It is profit-making land, enriching the coffers of the sovereign.*<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> David Waines, “The Culinary Culture of al-Andalus,” In *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, vol. 2, paperback ed. ed. Salma Khudra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), p. 730.

<sup>68</sup> My emphasis. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. s.v. “bustaan.”

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All of these connections converge in the Cordoban ivory caskets, whose decoration resonates so strongly, I believe, with the culture of the *munyas*, and which functioned in part as receptacles for highly prized perfumes. The oft-quoted inscription on the Hispanic Society of America's cylindrical pyxis (dated 966) makes this function clear (Fig.85):

The sight I offer is the fairest, the firm breast of a delicate girl. Beauty has invested me with splendid raiment, which makes a display of jewels. I am a receptacle for musk, camphor, and ambergris.<sup>69</sup>

Courtiers on Cordoban ivories like the Pyxis of al-Mughira (968) are depicted holding perfume bottles before them (Fig. 102a), suggesting the extent to which fragrant substances were held to be an accoutrement of refined life (Figs. 101, 106). Given the importance of cultivation and activities like hunting and feasting to the social life of the Umayyad court as it was conducted within the setting of the *munya*, the motifs present on the Cordoba ivories, which Grabar characterized as puzzlingly specific, lend themselves to interpretation within the culture of refinement current in the Umayyad court, in which slave aristocrats like Durri al-Saghir wielded a level of control over its production, consumption, and display. Thus, the luxuriant fields of vegetation (Figs. 102-105, 107), and the scenes that speak to both aristocratic and agricultural pursuits (102b, 105, 107) on the ivories of the Umayyad court make sense visually when seen against the backdrop of the *munya* as a primary setting for Umayyad court life.

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<sup>69</sup> The pyxis is in the collection of the Hispanic Society of America. Ernst Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen, VII-XIII. Jarhundert* (Berlin, 1971) and Also see Renata Holod's remarks on perfume in al-Andalus in the *al-Andalus* catalogue, p. 42-43.



*Interpreting Food, fragrance, and refinement*

Ibn Khaldun observed that in addition to the monuments a dynasty constructed, it was through the display of wealth during feasts that a dynasty's power was manifested. Ibn Khaldun's statement gives the textual references to the feasts held at Cordoban *munyas* a greater importance than we might otherwise give such court activities, suggesting the importance of the feast as an opportunity for court elites to demonstrate both their material wealth and their "cultural capital" that constituted their engagement with an accepted notion of refinement as a way of demonstrating social status.<sup>70</sup> Insofar as culinary culture, through the consumption of certain foods during court feasts, was a marker of refinement in medieval Islamic court culture, the notion of refinement of which culinary tastes formed one part constitute an important context that is distinct from, but closely related to, the agricultural role of the *munyas* of Cordoba that I tried to sketch out in the previous section.

The presence of the numerous types of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and other crops highlighted in the *Kitāb fī tartīb's* sections on arboriculture and vegetable cultivation, and throughout the *Calendar of Cordoba*, are clear indications of the types of foods that would have been cultivated by and for the Cordoban nobility. The crops discussed in Chapter Three are consistent with the picture of the varied dishes associated with the culinary culture of al-Andalus, as presented by David Waines, Manuela Marin, Expiracion Garcia-Sanchez, and Lucy Bolens, who have all examined Andalusí cuisine

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<sup>70</sup> Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "cultural capital" alludes to the societal value attached to certain kinds of social and cultural knowledge.

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and its relationship to the broader picture of medieval Islamic high culinary culture.<sup>71</sup> For example, in an article on luxury foods in medieval Islamic societies David Waines pointed out the importance of variety, both in the kinds of food available and the different variations on the way basic dishes could be prepared, to medieval Islamic culinary cultures associated with courts and elite urban consumers.<sup>72</sup> Significantly, Purcell and Horden, addressing the question of variety and diversification in medieval food cultivation in the Mediterranean, explicitly connect culinary culture and elites in the medieval Mediterranean in a way that has important implications for our understanding of the role of the Cordoban *munya*s as sites of production geared toward elite tastes and as sites of court display.<sup>73</sup> Questioning the established model of medieval agricultural revolution as stated by figures like Andrew Watson, Purcell and Horden see variety and diversification as symptomatic of elite concerns:

A minutely subdivided taxonomy of foodstuffs is a sign of the refined taste of elite consumers rather than of flourishing agriculture. Introducing exotics and attempting to improve strains of plants or animals genetically is very often primarily intended to serve luxury consumption. The spectacular improvements and striking professionalism in agriculture found in the privileged environments of the intensively farmed garden-belts round great cities from classical Greece to the medieval Middle East

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<sup>71</sup> Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi names and describes some foods in a chapter of his *adab* anthology, *al-‘Iqd al-Farīd (The Unique Necklace)*, and includes what may be the earliest Islamic ‘gastronomical’ poem, by the eighth-century ‘Abbasid author Musāwir al-Warrāq.

<sup>72</sup> Waines, “Luxury foods, p. 575-76.

<sup>73</sup> Purcell and Horden, *The Corrupting Sea*, p. 263.

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are hardly evidence of Mediterranean-wide agricultural boom. We should not elevate to the status of “agricultural revolution” the onset of a lively but fitful interest among city notables in dramatically improving the returns of their estates or in the variety and quality of what they served at dinner.<sup>74</sup>

Thomas Glick made a similar point two decades ago; in discussing the significance of irrigation-intensive agriculture introduced after the Islamic conquest and settlement of the Peninsula, Glick noted that attention should be paid to the stratum of society that benefited most from the increase in production made possible by irrigation, as well as to how local surpluses were converted into tokens of power and prestige.<sup>75</sup> Glick was speaking of the irrigated territories of eastern al-Andalus, specifically around Valencia, while Purcell and Horden are speaking in general terms about suburban agricultural production in the medieval Mediterranean. However, both sets of observations accord with the specific example of the Cordoban *munya* as a phenomenon with implications for understanding how agriculture, the economy, and social history were intertwined in the Umayyad capital. By interpreting the agricultural production that I am arguing occurred on Cordoban *munyas* as part of a broader system of wealth production by and for an urban elite system, the Cordoban *munya*, to use Bourdieu’s terms, became a means of both generating and displaying cultural capital, as both the source for luxury goods and the setting within which their consumption took place. The *munyas* of Cordoba were

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259-260.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*, p. 60. Glick cites Robert Hunt’s argument for this point against Karl Wittfogel’s belief that irrigation systems influenced power structures primarily through “administrative or labor requirements.”

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clearly tokens of power and prestige in Umayyad Cordoba, creating wealth for elite patrons and providing the setting within which courtiers demonstrated their adherence to notions of refinement shared by the Umayyad Cordoban and the 'Abbasid courts in the context of court feasts. In this context, the luxury objects associated with the table and with the storage and consumption of fragrant substances, like the Umayyad green and manganese ceramics with their epigraphs of sovereignty - "al-Mulk" ("power"), the metal ewers, bottles, ivory vessels, and incense burners - take on heightened importance, suggestive of the meanings associated with such luxury goods within Umayyad court circles (Figs. 98-106).<sup>76</sup>

The notion of refinement illustrated in the sources that I have discussed so far was not a product of the tenth century, but already had an established history in medieval Islamic elite culture.<sup>77</sup> Literary anecdotes about the Syrian Umayyad caliphs hint at the earlier existence of notions of refinement consistent with those current in the tenth century, in which the appearance and personal habits of the courtier marked them as one of the refined. Earlier in the 'Abbasid period Persian courtiers probably played a key role in transmitting to the 'Abbasid court the attitudes that were later codified in the treatise of al-Washshā'.

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<sup>76</sup> Guillermo Rosselló Bordoy provides current bibliography on the ceramics, as well as overviews of the other material evidence for the furnishings of medieval Andalusí households in his book *El Ajuar de las Casas Andalusíes* (Malaga: Consejería de Cultura de Junta de Andalucía/Editorial Sarriá, 2002). For overviews of the ceramics see especially Rosselló, p. 31-39, in addition to Holod, "Luxury Arts of the Caliphal Period," in *al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, p. 41-47.

<sup>77</sup> The root of this concept of refinement probably lay in pre-Islamic Sasanian court culture.

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In Cordoba the ninth-century reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman II (r. 822-52) marks a discernible moment in which the Cordoban court consciously participated in an international Islamic notion of refinement. During his reign, as Arabic historians of al-Andalus are unanimous in pointing out, Cordoban courtiers consciously adopted ‘Abbasid court fashions in dress, grooming, and cuisine. Such adaptations form the social parallel for the Umayyad adaptation of specific ‘Abbasid administrative practices that took place at the same moment.<sup>78</sup> The process by which the courtiers of Umayyad Cordoba chose to signal their adherence to a conception of refinement current in the ‘Abbasid court is personified in the figure of Ziryab, a Baghdadi courtier who, according to various and sometimes conflicting accounts, emigrated to the Cordoban court of ‘Abd al-Rahman II. In a social parallel to the administrative shift “east,” Ziryab stands as the emblematic figure in the Cordoban court’s adaptation of an ‘Abbasid conception of refinement current in Baghdad.

Abu-l Hasan ‘Alī b. Nāfi ‘, known by his nickname Ziryab, (“the blackbird”) is difficult to pin down with historical exactitude. Though he is mentioned in a number of early Arabic texts, the earliest of which is Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih’s *Iqd al-Farīd*, the accounts of the details of his life and his importance differ.<sup>79</sup> He seems to have been a Persian

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<sup>78</sup>One of the most notable of which was the increased reliance on elite slaves (saqaliba) in the palace administration, a practice that had ramifications for *munya* patronage in Cordoba, as I discuss in Chapter Four). See Hugh Kennedy on the reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman II, p. 44-62.

<sup>79</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Dwight Reynolds for clarifying the state of the question among Arabists regarding Ziryab’s existence and significance. According to Professor Reynolds, Ziryab’s existence is not contested, based on references to him in the works of Ibn Hayyan, Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, ‘Isa Ahmad al-Razi, Abu l-Walid b. al-Faradi, ‘Ubada b. Ma’al-Sama’, and a source called simply “Kitab akhbar Ziryab”. As Owen Wright [see

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client of the ‘Abbasids, was born around 790, and was reputed to have made a name for himself as a musician at the court of Haroun al-Rashid in Baghdad.<sup>80</sup> Some accounts cite professional rivalry with his teacher as the reason Ziryab left Baghdad for the Maghrib, where he said to have worked at the Aghlabid court at Qayrawan before accepting ‘Abd al-Rahman II’s invitation to join the Umayyad court at Cordoba.<sup>81</sup>

Ziryab is particularly well known for his contributions to Andalusī music.<sup>82</sup> His fame as a musician was so great that he is the sole Andalusī musician mentioned in Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s *‘Iqd*, a work that was criticized by some Andalusīs because with the exception of Ziryab, Andalusī contributions to music were ignored by its author.<sup>83</sup> While music and poetry were no doubt important in Cordoban Umayyad court life, the textual evidence for the Cordoban *munya*s is explicit only regarding aspects of *zarf* related to culinary matters and perfumes and is silent, so far as I can tell, on the subject of the presence of music and poetry in the activities which took place in *munya* settings. Given

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note below] points out, the problem lies in determining the extent of Ziryab’s contribution to Andalusī court culture. Personal communication, January 23, 2005.

<sup>80</sup> E. Levi-Provençal, *Historia de España*, 1950 ed., 169-173.

<sup>81</sup> *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Ziryāb,” which cites the following sources: Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, *al-‘Iqd al-farīd*, Cairo 1949, vi, 34; Ibn Ḥazm, *Ṭawḥ al-ḥamāma*, Cairo 1975, 153; Ibn al-djāḥḥān, *Hāwī al-funūn wa-salwat al-funūn*, facs. ed. Frankfurt, 1990, 95; Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muḥtabis*, Beirut 1973, 87; Ibn Sa‘īd, *Mughrib*, Cairo 1964, i, 51; Ḍabbī, *Bughyat al-multamis*, Madrid 1884, 138-9, 192, 224-5; Maqqarī, Abbas ed., I: 344, III:122-33, 615.

<sup>82</sup> Owen Wright, “Music in Muslim Spain,” In *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* ed. Salma Khudra Jarryusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), p. 555-79.

<sup>83</sup> Henry George Farmer, *Music: The Priceless Jewel: From the Kitaab fī tartīb al-‘iqd al-fariid of Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi (d. 940)*, Collection of Oriental Writers on Music, no. V (Bearsden, Scotland 1942), p. 1-2.

the many anecdotes related to the popularity of music and poetry among prominent figures in Islamic history, disseminated in works like al-Isfahani *Kitāb al-Aghani* and Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s *Iqd*, it seems reasonable to assume that music and poetry were likewise enjoyed by courtiers in the setting of the Cordoban *munyas*. The silence of the sources in this respect most likely has to do with the official character of the texts within which the *munyas* are mentioned, as court chroniclers either weren’t invited to such activities and therefore didn’t witness them, or because they held a negative opinion of such activities.<sup>84</sup> The Umayyad court chroniclers, trained as legalists, likely adhered to the common Islamic legal opinion that musical performances were associated with “gambling, drunkenness, fornication, and *luwāt*, among the *malāhī* or forbidden pleasures.”<sup>85</sup> Consequently, it is Ziryab’s enormous influence on other aspects of court culture in Umayyad Cordoba that is immediately relevant to a discussion of the concept of refinement that informed the rising importance of the *munyas* in Umayyad court culture.

Pre-figuring al-Washsha’s preoccupation with the eating habits of the *zarīf* by a century, Arabic authors gave Ziryab sole credit for introducing the ninth-century Cordoban court to the contemporary court culture of Baghdad. During the nearly three

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<sup>84</sup> The idea is Nasser Rabbat’s, who has made a similar argument regarding the silence of Mamluk sources on matters related to architecture. Professor Rabbat’s opinion is that the authors of these kinds of official sources were much more concerned with economic issues, i.e. with the expense of what was being discussed, than with conveying the sorts of details that would be of interest to the contemporary architectural historian. This seems a useful way of looking at the emphasis on variety and yield that I have suggested is discernible in the texts related to Cordoban *munyas* and agriculture. See Nasser Rabbat, “Who was al-Maqrizi? A Biographical Sketch,” In *Mamluk Studies Review* 7, no. ii (2003), p. 1-19.

<sup>85</sup> Farmer, p. 1-2. Farmer notes that the other extreme in attitude was expressed in the eleventh century by Sufi authors condoning musical performance as a means by which divine ecstasy might be reached.

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decades that he lived in Cordoba Ziryab, with the help of his four sons, is said to have disseminated Baghdadi recipes and to have encouraged the Cordobans to adapt the ‘Abbasid practice of using crystal glasses rather than vessels of precious metal<sup>86</sup>, of using fine leather table coverings rather than coarse linen ones, and especially for convincing the Cordobans to serve meals as a series of courses, beginning with soup, followed by seasoned meats and an array of accompanying dishes, and ending with desserts like pastry with almonds and honey, or fruit pastes perfumed with vanilla and stuffed with nuts.<sup>87</sup> Significantly, a relevant parallel for my argument about an Islamic notion of refinement already in place in the ninth century at least comes from textual evidence for ‘Abbasid culinary culture. The earliest Islamic cookbook, the *Kitāb al-Tabīkh*, dates from the tenth-century. However, this tenth century cookbook, according to David Waines, actually reflects an earlier tradition – that of early ninth-century ‘Abbasid Baghdad.<sup>88</sup> Ziryab thus stands as a key figure in my argument that in the ninth-century the courts of Umayyad Cordoba and ‘Abbasid Baghdad shared a broad Islamic notion of refinement.

Underscoring this idea, Ziryab’s influence extended beyond culinary matters to the appearance of the courtier – a key component of *zarf* according to al-Washsha’ later. In addition to changing what Cordoban courtiers ate and how they ate it, Ziryab is also said to have exercised an influence on the hygiene and personal appearance of the Cordoban court, making shaving, the use of deodorant and toothpaste, and the adaptation of hairstyles and sartorial practices current in the ‘Abbasid court de rigueur amongst

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<sup>86</sup> E. Levi-Provençal, *Historia de España*, 1950 ed., 169-73.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* Also see Holod, “Luxury Arts,” p.43-44; Bolens, *La cuisine*, 27-36.

<sup>88</sup> Waines, “Luxury foods,” 574.



refined Cordobans. Conflicting accounts of Ziryab's transfer to Cordoba, and historians' tendency to credit him with single-handedly introducing (or outright inventing) various refinements to Umayyad Cordoban court life should not overshadow the significance of the Ziryab story to understanding court culture, the notion of refinement, and the rise of the *munya* in ninth-century Cordoba. Cynthia Robinson has argued that the notion of *zarf* consistent with al-Washshā's model probably didn't enter al-Andalus until the later years of the caliphate.<sup>89</sup> Ziryab's reputed influence in the cuisine and personal appearance of refined courtiers in ninth-century Cordoba illustrates the existence of a notion of refinement (*zarf*) consistent, at least in the outward manifestation of elegance through one's preferences regarding food and personal presentation, with the notion of refinement codified in the tenth century by al-Washshā'. It seems reasonable to suggest that Ziryab, who lived in Cordoba for 28 years, was just the most famous personality of many involved in a complex process of interchange between 'Abbasid Baghdad and other Islamic courts that created a broad Islamic notion of refinement.

Owen Wright's observation on the significance of Ziryab to the history of Andalusī music applies equally to Ziryab's purported influence on the court culture of ninth-century Cordoba:

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<sup>89</sup> Robinson bases this on the fact that Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi doesn't include in his *Iqd* the necessity of a courtier to be good at writing poetry, also noting that he doesn't discuss "themes concerning elegance and the elegants, and the scenarios in which they were most likely to appear." According to Robinson al-Himyari is the earliest Andalusī author to use terms associated with elegance and the elegants. Conversely, while the term itself is, for the most part, absent from later taifa court literature, as evidenced by al-Faḥ ibn Khāqān's anthologies, its concepts are still present. Robinson writes, "Thus we might argue that the social code of *zarf*, modeled on codifications such as al-Washshā', if not on his very treatise, entered Andalusī court society sometime during the later years of the caliphate." See *In Praise of Song*, p. 73.

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The importance of Ziryab himself, it might be argued, is also primarily symbolic. According to this view he embodies the introduction, establishment and diffusion of a certain tradition in a way that confirmed the nascent cultural equality between Cordoba and Baghdad and the increasing self-confidence that went with it...<sup>90</sup>

Ziryab's supposed transfer to Cordoba marks a moment at which the Umayyad court consciously chose to model its standards of refinement after those of 'Abbasid Baghdad, and his story intersects with that of the rise of the Cordoban *munyas*. As discussed in Chapter Four, the first reference to an elite *munya* patron other than the Umayyad ruler (or an immediate family member, in the case of 'Ajab) also first occurred in the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman II, when the powerful *fatā* Nasr founded his eponymous *munya* on the banks of the Guadalquivir. Ziryab came to be associated with this very *munya* when, upon Nasr's death in 850, the famous courtier was given the *fatā*'s celebrated *munya* for his own residence.

In the last half of the ninth century, therefore, and especially throughout the tenth century, the *munyas* came to be associated with figures other than the Umayyad ruler. This shift is significant because it illustrates how the pan-Islamic notion of refinement that marked 'Abd al-Rahman II's court in the ninth century may have exercised an influence upon a tradition that up to that point was associated primarily with the Umayyad rulers. The reign of 'Abd al-Rahman II, in addition to marking a conscious shift toward the adaptation of an 'Abbasid conception of courtly behavior and administrative practices within the government itself, thus marks a turning point in the

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<sup>90</sup> Wright, p. 558-59.

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history of the Cordoban *munyas*. The Cordoban court's adaptation of a notion of refinement associated with the 'Abbasid court at Baghdad occurred at the same historical moment at which a broadening of *munya* patronage to important slaves, who dominated the palace administration in the tenth century, is discernible. The *munyas* of Cordoba were the most important social spaces of Umayyad Cordoba. The tensions that arose between the established Arab aristocracy and the artificial slave aristocracy had political implications that have been explored by historians of Umayyad al-Andalus. This chapter has argued that the *munya* was another field upon which competition between these two groups was conducted; the rise of *munya* patronage among the aristocratic Arab and Berber functionaries in the Umayyad court during the reign of al-Hakam II mirror the struggle for political, economic, and social power taking place at that moment in time, which resulted in the triumph of the Arab aristocracy over the court slaves like Ghalib and Durri al-Saghir following the death of al-Hakam II.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE LANDSCAPE OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

The Cordoban estates' functions were not limited to their use as hunting lodges, retreats, or the settings for court feasts. Manuela Marín has drawn attention to al-Rusafa's importance as an occasional site of administration, based on accounts of 'Abd al-Rahman's attending to matters of state while in residence at the *munya*, and because, upon 'Abd al-Rahman's death, his sons hastily traveled to Rusafa to secure the disputed right of succession.<sup>1</sup> 'Abd al-Rahman I's practice of conducting administrative affairs from his *munya* is consistent with Jere Bacharach's interpretation of the ruling practices of the Syrian Umayyad caliphs, who held court at their estates rather than from the city of Damascus.<sup>2</sup> While Bacharach may have overstated the case for the Syrian Umayyads in his argument that "the court was wherever the caliph resided," in Cordoba, too, 'Abd al-Rahman I and his successors continued, to a lesser degree the practice of migrating to favorite *munyas* for periods of residence, during which they sometimes attended to matters of state which one would not expect to take place in the *munya* setting. For example, in March of 939 CE Ibn Hayyan mentions that the caliph happened to be at Dar al-Na'ura when one of his military leaders arrived in Cordoba with one hundred prisoners of war, captured in a frontier battle.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, the prisoners of war were marched to

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<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. s.v. "al-Rusafa."

<sup>2</sup> Jere L. Bacharach, "Marwanid Umayyad Building Activities: Speculations on Patronage," In *Muqarnas* 13 (1996), 27-44.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabas V, Cronica del Califa 'Abdarrahmhan III an-Nasir Entre los Años 912 y 942* ed. M. Jesus Viguera and F. Corriente (Zaragoza: Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura, 1981), p. 322.

the estate, where they were executed before ‘Abd al-Rahman III, who sat in a part of the estate overlooking the Guadalquivir and watched as each prisoner was beheaded.

The administration normally housed visiting dignitaries at *munyas*, an additional role which the estates played in the workings of the state. Early in the reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman III, for example, nobles from Seville (which had just been conquered by the Cordoban ruler), were lodged at al-Na‘ura. There, Ibn Hayyan notes, they were treated like kings.<sup>4</sup> In the spring of 937 CE, ‘Abd al-Rahman III entertained Muhammad b. Hashim al-Tujibi of Zaragoza at the caliphal estate known as al-Ramla, which Ibn Hayyan places on the left bank of the Guadalquivir.<sup>5</sup> Likewise in May of 940 CE, Muhammad b. Madjan b. Musa b. Abi al-Afiya al-Miknasi of North Africa, along with an entourage of family members and nobles, was housed at the estate of al-Bunti, the same used to house a Byzantine embassy in 972 CE.<sup>6</sup> Using the *munyas* as lodging for important visitors provided the administration with yet another audience upon whom to impress the wealth, luxury, and sophistication of the Umayyad court through material means. The North African ambassadors’ arrival in Cordoba, for example, was greeted with caliphal pomp. According to Ibn Hayyan:

when close to the palace, Ordoño and his suite entered into a passage formed on each side by bodies of infantry placed in such admirable order that the eyes were dazzled at their uniformity, and so thickly set that the mind was bewildered at their numbers. Such was,

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316-317.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346.

## Chapter VII

moreover, the brightness of their armour and weapons, and the variety and richness of their uniforms, that the Christians were actually stupefied at what they saw.<sup>7</sup>

During their stay ‘Abd al-Rahman III provided for them generously, including giving them gifts of clothing, jewels, mounts, and textiles of great value. Likewise, when in 962 CE the Christian monarch Ordoño visited Cordoba, he and his retinue were housed first at Dar al-Na‘ura and then al-Rusafa, which in preparation for their stay had been provided with “a variety of furniture, carpets, and cushions, ...with every article suitable to one of his rank, - furniture, beds, earthenware, etc.”<sup>8</sup> Not every group of visitors housed in *munyas* were high-ranking dignitaries. The estates increasingly were used for some military purposes as well; estates often served as temporary encampments for the military en route to expeditions to the frontier regions. For example, in 973 a group of seventy Berber soldiers who had fought for Umayyad side against the Hasanids in North Africa were housed at a *munya* for which little is known save its name, “Najda,” or sometimes “Aqra.”<sup>9</sup>

In the later tenth century *munyas* acquired a role as stations along processional routes of civic ceremonies in which the military, along with members of the administration, made up the cortege.<sup>10</sup> For example, Safran analyzes two such occasions that took place during the reign of al-Hakam II. The first is al-Razi’s description of a 971

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<sup>7</sup> Al-Maqqari, *History of the Mohammedan Dynasties*, ed. Gayangos, II:160-65.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *Muqtabis*, ed. Viguera, Corriente, p. 96.

<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to Jerrilyn Dodds for the idea of the estates as way stations.

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ceremony in which three official banners were taken from the royal storehouse at Madinat al-Zahra', brought to the Dar al-Wuzara to be blessed, and then formally presented to the military by the caliph.<sup>11</sup> Elite slaves dominate al-Razi's account of the event. For instance, after the banners were blessed the chronicler describes how Durri and two officers from the caliph's elite slave army ceremonially tied the banners to lances and marched them to the public gate of Madinat al-Zahra' (*Bab al-Sudda*) accompanied by pages and muezzins chanting the *takbir*. Al-Razi goes on to describe how the banners were then accompanied to Ghalib's *munya*, where the famous commander ceremoniously met them at the entrance, and from which the entire martial ensemble then processed in military splendor out of the city.

Ghalib and his *munya* also play an important role in a similar public ceremony held four years later in 975. By that year al-Hakam II had given Ghalib the honor of a new title: *Dhu al-Sayfayn* (Holder of Two Swords). Ghalib's new status was visually heightened by al-Hakam II's gift to him of two gilded swords and by the honor of having his seat in the Dar al-Wuzara raised higher than anyone else's. This distinction, given to an elite slave, may have added fuel to the tensions between the slave and non-slave elites in the Umayyad administration over the status to which elite slaves had risen since the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III.<sup>12</sup> In this second procession, the order of departure-station/destination was reversed. This time, rather than beginning the ceremony at the palace of Madinat al-Zahra', this procession began at Ghalib's *munya*, where al-Razi

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<sup>11</sup> al-Razi's account is cited and discussed by Safran in *The second Umayyad caliphate*, p. 76-77.

<sup>12</sup> Safran discusses Ghalib's new status and the second urban ceremony in which he and his *munya* play leading roles (see below). Safran, 77-78.

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notes that many turned out to catch a glimpse of the famous commander girded with the two gilded swords that advertised his new status. Preceded by squadrons (presumably of elite military slaves) that al-Razi wrote filled the roads and horizons, Ghalib marched to the old palace (*al-Qasr*) in Cordoba where al-Hakam II and his heir Hisham were waiting for the commander's arrival on a terrace. There they presumably would have provided a rare sight to the crowds who had turned out to witness the squadrons of richly caparisoned and armed slave soldiers and the famous military commander. The important role which the palace slave elites (*fityan*) – Durri, the two officers who accompanied him in the tying of the banners, and Ghalib himself, al-Hakam II's supreme general, played in caliphal public ceremonies is a significant indicator of the status which this group had attained under the Umayyad caliphs, an impression that is underscored by the identification of both Durri and Ghalib with important Cordoban *munyas*.

The processions that accompanied the movement of the Umayyad ruler, his entourage, and the military between estates were known in al-Andalus as *mawakib* (sing. *mawkib*). Ibn Khaldun noted that Umayyad sovereignty during such processions was manifested through symbols like the canopy (*mazall*) carried above the caliph, the display of banners, and the sounding of drums and horns.<sup>13</sup> The incorporation of *munyas* into such civic ceremony was the local manifestation of trends that were also evident in the rival 'Abbasid and Fatimid courts. Since the ninth-century rule of 'Abd al-Rahman II, the Cordoban Umayyads generally shared in the conception of rulership and its articulation in court ceremony as defined by the 'Abbasids of Baghdad. However, the elaborate civic ceremonies for which the Cordoban estates served as way stations have more in common

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<sup>13</sup> Cited by P. Chalmers in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. s.v. "mawākib – in Muslim Spain."



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with the Fatimid court, rather than 'Abbasid practices. Paula Sanders has demonstrated that the Fatimids of Cairo, while also sharing a conception of the ruler based on the normative practices of the 'Abbasid court, differentiated their rule in part by developing perhaps the most elaborate processions of the medieval Islamic courts. While the court ceremonies of the 'Abbasids were set largely within the main public palaces of Samarra and Baghdad, the Fatimids moved court ritual into the streets of Cairo and beyond, even incorporating the city's larger landscape into the realm of urban space by including the Nile within certain court rituals. The incorporation of *munyas* into Cordoban Umayyad processions in the second half of the tenth century suggests a similar approach as that taken by the Fatimids. The reasons for the development of such ceremonial in the Umayyad and Fatimid courts, and its absence in 'Abbasid Samarra, lies in the difference between each dynasty's capital city. Both the 'Abbasids and the Fatimids had constructed new royal cities, Samarra and al-Qahira, designed to accommodate the ceremonial associated with each court.

The vast scale of 'Abbasid Samarra, a palace grown to the size of a city, makes sense if accounts like that of the reception of Byzantine ambassadors (involving great numbers of people and objects meant to impress the visiting dignitaries) truly reflects the scale of 'Abbasid court ceremonial. Both the palaces and the urban spaces of al-Qahira served as theater for Fatimid court ceremony, while the *munyas* and the suburban landscape in which they were located served as the Cordoban parallel. In some cases, the gates of *munyas* are specifically mentioned as the point of departure, or the ceremonial goal, of the Cordoban processions. For example, in the elaborate procession of 975 CE, which marked al-Hakam II's transfer from the palace at Madinat al-Zahra' to the urban

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palace of Cordoba, the parade stopped at the *munyas* of Arha' Nasih and Dar al-Na'ura en route.<sup>14</sup> Ibn Hayyan tells us that the vizirs, the *ashab al-shurta*, the high palace functionaries, the *hukkam* and other dignitaries of the state had previously been ordered to meet the caliph at al-Na'ura. When they were all gathered there, the caliph then left al-Na'ura from its portal, the Bab al-Mansaba, in the company of his son the prince Hisham, and an entourage of nobles. The solemn procession wound its way to Cordoba, ending at one of the gates of the urban palace. *Munya* gates are mentioned briefly in accounts of other processions as well, for instance those in which Ghalib led the military between his estate and the palaces at Madinat al-Zahra' and Cordoba.<sup>15</sup> The special use of *munya* portals in the ceremonial accompanying processions implies that *munya* gates acquired some meaning as symbols of authority and sovereignty, as Sanders has argued was the case with the Fatimid palace gates in Cairo, where the ruler mounted and dismounted and which officials sometimes kissed even in the caliph's absence.<sup>16</sup>

The use of the *munyas* as way stations along processional routes, and of their portals as symbols of the Umayyad state in the processions discussed above, connect the creation of a flourishing villa landscape around Cordoba with Umayyad conceptions of sovereignty and political legitimacy after the establishment of the caliphate in the tenth century. The civic ceremonies in which the *munyas* played a role functioned as important

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<sup>14</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis VII* ed. El-Hajji (Beirut: Dar al-Tahqafah, 1965), p. 229.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215. Cited in Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate*, p. 97.

<sup>16</sup> Sanders cites al-Maqrizi's *Khitat*, I:389-90, and his *Itti'az al-hunafa'* (Cairo, 1967), II:71-72. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. s.v. "marāsīm."

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collective rituals for the Umayyad state. Sociologists define collective ritual as a structuring aspect of cultural/historical forces, meant to

lend authority and legitimacy to the positions of particular persons, organizations, occasions, moral values, view of the world, and the like. In these matters, ritual and ceremony are employed to structure and present particular interpretations of social reality in a way that endows them with legitimacy.<sup>17</sup>

As civic rituals, the processions shored up the Umayyad social system, propagating the “myth of cultural unity and social continuity” which is one of the main functions of collective ritual. Safran demonstrated that in Umayyad court culture these processions affirmed a social and administrative order created by the ruler, in which slaves and freedmen acted to strengthen the caliph’s power by serving as a check against the interests of the urban elites. The legitimization of the status given to elite slaves and freedmen vis a vis the ruler and the urban elite families was therefore one of the most important themes underlying such processions. The incorporation of the gate of the estate belonging to the highest-ranking of the military freedmen, Ghalib, for instance, into major military processions underscores that message. The Cordoban *munnyas*, and by extension the suburban landscape within which they were disposed, thus functioned as a key part of the message about the nature of Umayyad rule. While the old Umayyad

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<sup>17</sup> Sally F. Moore et al., ed., *Secular Ritual* (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1977), p. 4. On ritual as a means to not only propagate cultural ideas, but to shape them, see Clifford Geertz, “Religion as a Cultural System,” In *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ASA Monograph, no. 3 ed. M. Banton (London: Tavistock Publications, 1966), p. 1-46, and Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969). Also see Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. J.W. Swain (New York: Collier Books, 1915 (1961 ed.), p. 388, 391-432.

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palace within Cordoba's walled urban center and the new royal reception halls at Madinat al-Zahra' served as the architectural emblems of the Umayyad rulers, the *munyas*, which both palace and urban elites patronized by the late tenth century reign of al-Hakam II, conveyed an unmistakable message about Umayyad sovereignty over the land to a broader audience than the nobles who participated directly in social gatherings at the estates. The *munya* gate thus presents an architecture parallel of the social message implicit in the spectacle of the procession itself.

### *Sovereignty and the flourishing landscape*

Approximately one hundred years after the disintegration of Umayyad rule the twelfth century Sevillian author Ibn 'Abdūn explicitly connected good government and agricultural prosperity:

The ruler must order that a greater effort be invested in the cultivation of the soil... The ruler must order his viziers and the important people in his capital to undertake agricultural endeavors of their own. This will better profit both him and them; their fortunes will increase, and the people [as a whole] will gain because of their greater ability to provision themselves and to prevent hunger. The country will prosper, life there will be more pleasant, and its defense will be more efficient and reliable. For agriculture is the base of civilization; on it depends life and all its benefits.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape and Vision*, p. 30-31; *Sevilla a Comienzos del Siglo XII: El Tratado de Ibn 'Abdūn*, ed. and transl. Emilio García-Gómez, E. Lévi-Provençal, (Sevilla: Biblioteca de Temas Sevillanos, 1992 ed.), p. 42-43.

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The connection between Umayyad rule and the prosperity of the Peninsula is a theme that appears in various types of literature produced in the Umayyad court. For example, in a diplomatic letter written around the year 960 CE, Hasdai ibn Shaprut, a Jewish official in the Umayyad court, highlights the bounty derived from cultivation before he enumerates the Peninsula's other natural resources:

The land is rich, abounding in rivers, springs, and aqueducts; a land of corn, oil, and wine, of fruits and all manner of delicacies; it has pleasure-gardens and orchards, fruitful trees of every kind, including the leaves of the tree upon which the silkworm feeds, of which we have great abundance. In the mountains and woods of our country cochineal is gathered in great quantity. There are also found among us mountains of crocus of different kinds, also veins of silver, gold, copper, iron, tin, lead, sulphur, porphyry, marble, and crystal...Our king has collected very large treasures of silver, gold, precious things, and valuable such as no king has ever collected.<sup>19</sup>

'Abd al-Rahman III's court poet Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi also articulates the connection between the landscape and Umayyad rule in several lines of an epic poem (*arjuza*) celebrating the caliph's victory over a rebellious group that refused to submit to the dynasty's central authority:

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<sup>19</sup> Albert Löwy, ed., "The Epistle of R. Chisdai, son of Isaac (of blessed memory), to the King of the Cusars," In *Miscellany of Hebrew Literature*, vol. I (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975 (reprint of 1872-77 London ed.), p. 95-96.

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Nor did [‘Abd al-Rahman III] leave behind for them any crops or  
fruits, nor any precious object or rich furnishing,

Cutting down its vines and trees...

After that [‘Abd al-Rahman III] turned back, having destroyed the crops  
and food

supplies...<sup>20</sup>

...and [the ruler] left not a single green stalk in it,

Breaking down plants and standing corn,

and tearing up crops and fields.<sup>21</sup>

In Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s epic poem the Umayyad ruler’s power is such that he determines whether the landscape flourishes or fails. The contrast between the state of the lands loyal to the Umayyad ruler as depicted by Hasdai ibn Shaprut stand in dramatic contrast to the decimated landscape, divested of its agricultural possibility, of those who challenged Umayyad authority.

In its intermingling of the events, activities, and products associated with both the natural and the bureaucratic calendars of Umayyad al-Andalus, the tenth-century *Calendar of Cordoba* is the most striking literary articulation of this conflation of the fertile landscape and Umayyad good government.<sup>22</sup> Chapter Two discussed the *Calendar* as evidence for cultivation in Umayyad Cordoba, but the work also resonates with the

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<sup>20</sup> James T. Monroe, “The Historical Arjuza of ibn Abd Rabbihi, a Tenth-Century Hispano-Arabic Epic Poem,” In *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91, no. 1 (1971), lines 76-78, p. 83.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 185-86, p. 86.

<sup>22</sup> To my knowledge, the *Calendar* has not been interpreted in this way by others.

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themes of good government, and in this sense it is significant that the *Calendar*, written during the reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman III, was dedicated to al-Hakam II, the heir to a kingdom that had achieved unprecedented wealth and stability under the rulership of ‘Abd al-Rahman III. Through its textual evocation of the seasonal rhythms of agriculture, administration, and animal life (for the hunt), the *Calendar* provided the future caliph with a literary picture of an orderly, well-administered kingdom. The *Calendar* is a document that embodies the connection between agriculture and good government as it was perceived and achieved at the height of Umayyad hegemony on the Iberian Peninsula. It does so by creating an image of an ordered and fertile landscape in which the rhythms of the natural world (cosmological, agricultural, and animal) are entwined with the rhythms of Cordoban Umayyad society, themes that also resonate with the combination of courtly and agricultural scenes on the Cordoban ivories. In the *Calendar*, the rhythms of the natural world are embodied in the notation, day by day, of the times of sunset and sunrise, or the days on which particular agricultural activities were carried out, or by referring to the life cycles of certain animals.

The rhythms of Cordoban Umayyad court society, on the other hand, are embodied in the references to the various feast days of the Christian liturgical calendar, and especially in the notation of the points at which official orders for raw materials were sent from the administration in Cordoba to the provinces. Materials conscripted included silk, soap and dyes for the royal textile workshops, troops for summer military campaigns, horses for the Umayyad governors, parchment for the chancery, and the antlers of deer and horns of goats that were used to craft bows. The message implicit in these carefully interwoven strands is one of natural and social order under Umayyad

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governance, and the prosperity that was the natural result of legitimate rule. In the Calendar's descriptions of the agricultural and civic activities associated with each month, al-Hakam II, to whom the Calendar was presented, was presented with the textual embodiment of the Umayyad state, flourishing and ordered thanks to the success of his father in consolidating dynastic power on the Peninsula.

Anecdotes about the Syrian Umayyad caliph Hisham, the grandfather of the founder of the Cordoban dynasty, by the tenth-century authors Tabarī, Mas'ūdī, and the Cordoban Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi indicate that there was a perceived connection between Umayyad rulership and agriculture that predated the transfer of the dynasty to the Iberian Peninsula. For example, Tabarī tells of how Hisham charged a freedman with the care of one of his estates, and generously rewarded him when the freedman collected two bumper harvests in a row.<sup>23</sup> A second anecdote by Mas'ūdī shows Hisham taking a direct and proprietary interest in cultivation:

The Caliph [Hisham] was strolling one day with some companions through one of his orchards. The others began to help themselves to fruit from the trees as they passed. "God's blessing on the Caliph," they said, "for these fruits." "Can God bless me," he said, "if you eat them all?" He then sent for the gardener and told him to uproot the fruit trees and plant olives in their place. "No one can eat those," he said.<sup>24</sup>

In a similar (and more flattering) anecdote, Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi relates:

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<sup>23</sup> Tabarī (1966), II:1732); Hamilton, p. 78.

<sup>24</sup> Mas'ūdī, (1830), ii, 184); *Ibid.*



Hisham was one day with a companion passing by an enclosure where there were olive trees. Hearing someone shaking a tree he stopped and sent a man in to tell them to pick the fruit by hand, not shake the tree. “Or,” said he, “they will be splitting the berries and smashing the branches.”<sup>25</sup>

Hugh Kennedy has argued that the establishment of a sound fiscal policy, enabling the raising of revenues, was paramount to establishing the legitimacy of Cordoban Umayyad rule. This concern is reflected in medieval Islamic philosophical texts that emphasize the connections between agriculture, the economy, and good government. For example, al-Fārābī, whose treatise *Fuṣūl al-madanī* discusses the ideal city and deals expressly with the notion of good government, specifically names “cultivators” (*al-fallāḥīn*) as one of the five members of the ideal city because they were “gainers of wealth for the city” and would ensure the prosperity of the city.<sup>26</sup> As *munya* patrons, the Cordoban Umayyad rulers’ preoccupations with fertility and production emphasized in the early accounts of *munya* like that of the ‘Abd al-Rahman I’s horticultural efforts in the gardens of al-Rusafa and those of ‘Abd al-Rahman II at Dar al-Na‘ura is compatible with al-Farabi’s connection of agriculture and good government. Productive estates would have been one

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<sup>25</sup> Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi (1876), II: 250. *Ibid*, p. 77.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Fārābī’s enumeration of the most important residents of the ideal city states, “The members of the ideal city are five: the most virtuous or excellent, the interpreters, the assessors or measurers, the fighting men and those concerned with the provision of wealth (*al-maaliyūn*)...[who are] the gainers of wealth in the city, such as the cultivators (*al-fallāḥīn*), herdsmen, merchants and the like.” *The Fuṣūl al-madanī of al-Fārābī*, ed. D.M. Dunlop, Cambridge, 1961, p. 50; Ann K.S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam: An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory: the Jurists* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981 (1991 ed.), p. 323.

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source available to the emerging Umayyad state to enrich its coffers. Of much greater importance, however, was the ideological dimension of the creation of a flourishing landscape. The incorporation of the estates into civic ceremonies, especially official processions, had the effect of marking Umayyad kingship on the landscape, where they were linked indelibly, in the perception the public audience who witnessed the associated ceremonies, with the state. Thus *munyas*, situated within the broader panorama of Cordoba and its famously fertile lands, became the embodiment, in architecture and landscape, of Umayyad ideals of sovereignty.

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### CONCLUSION: ANTECEDENTS AND LEGACIES

Oleg Grabar, in his 1978 book *The Alhambra* argues that the Nasrid palace belongs to a tradition encompassing monuments ranging from ancient near eastern walled citadels such as Khorsabad, to ancient Roman villas around the Mediterranean, such as Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli and the villa of Lord Julius at Carthage (as it is known from a mosaic description), to late antique fortified villas like Diocletian's palace at Split and the Umayyad "desert castles" of Syria, as well as the garden pavilions of ancient and medieval Iran, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. Likewise, in the 1973 book *The Formation of Islamic Art* Grabar observed that the Syrian Umayyad villas, were not only related typologically to ancient Roman buildings, but that that they also share with Renaissance and Baroque *castelli*, northern Italian villas, and later English country houses and French chateaux, similarities in purpose.<sup>1</sup> The same can be said of the Cordoban *munya*.

I have discussed the *munyas* of Cordoba against the backdrop of the villa cultures of the ancient Iberian Peninsula, North Africa, and Syria, not in order to argue that the examples I have chosen are clearly connected to one another typologically, but rather to point out that each of these regions had a flourishing ancient and Late Antique villa culture which persisted in some aspects (as visible remains in the landscape, for instance) into the early medieval period. Furthermore, the people who settled in Umayyad Cordoba came largely from the Eastern Mediterranean (particularly Syria) and from North Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> Oleg Grabar, *Formation*, p. 134-35.

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The connection of such settlers – mainly Arabs from Syria and Arabs and Berbers from North Africa – to the antique remains of their homelands and to whatever continuities in attitudes toward architecture and lifestyle may have lingered from antiquity constituted one means by which the Cordobans absorbed the pre-Islamic villa context that partly informed the rise of the Umayyad *munya* and the persistence of the *munya* tradition on the Iberian Peninsula even after the disintegration of Umayyad political hegemony in the early eleventh century.

The material evidence for the architecture of the *munya*, scant though it is, demonstrates that the suburban estate was the defining aspect of extramural Cordoba, with early estates nuclei for the development of the suburbs of greater Cordoba. The wide rectangular reception halls looking out onto the landscape, or inward into a courtyard with water and/or vegetation, is characteristic of the *munya* type, while the fragments of ornament which have been recovered at several sites indicate that the same court language of decoration prevalent in Umayyad architecture and the portable arts – specifically ivories – characterized *munya* decoration. As the estates of the upper strata of Umayyad society, the Cordoban estates belong within a broader history of villas around the Mediterranean, even as they diverge typologically from other buildings encompassed within those traditions. One of the most intriguing divergences discernible in the *munya* type is the ubiquitous role of water in the overall conception of the estates, from the large scale of irrigation to the details of architectural ornament. In their inclusion of large expanses of water in the form of pools especially, the *munyas* appear to be part of a regional practice whose North African example is the slightly later Qal'a of the Banu Hammad. While the incorporation of water into architectural design undoubtedly evolved

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in response to the arid climactic conditions, its elevation to one of the signal elements of architectural design stands out as perhaps the resounding contribution of the estates to the history of medieval Islamic architecture. Clearly, the *munyas* of Cordoba belong within the broader history of the villa in the term's broadest sense – not only ideologically, in the sense explored by James Ackerman, but architecturally as well, in keeping with the enormous variations in villa architecture that arise to accommodate the particular environmental, material, social, and economic factors of each villa tradition's geographical and chronological context.

### *Critiquing the munya as pleasure garden*

One of the central issues of this study has been the examination of the long-standing notion of the Cordoban estates as largely pleasure gardens. The fame of the eleventh-century nature poetry examined by Pèrés, which differs significantly from the formal laudatory poetry composed at the Umayyad court in Cordoba,<sup>2</sup> has led to this reductive conception of the Umayyad *munya*. With the notable exception of Ruggles' book *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* the productive character of the *munya* for which I have argued here has yet to be comfortably reconciled with this image. Indeed, the *munya* has proven challenging to define in the scholarship, its aspect shifting and changing depending upon the point of view of the historian. The contrast between the idea of the *munya* operative in taifa poetry, and the evidence for the agricultural functions of *munyas* found in non-poetic textual sources, led the urban

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<sup>2</sup> On the shift and its relevance to Andalusí court culture and architecture see Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, p.88-123.

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historian Christine Mazzoli-Guintard to point out the difficulty of even compiling an inventory of *munya* in view of the different functions associated with *munyas* in Arabic texts:

The references to *almunias* [the Castilian derivate of *munya*] have created in the majority of cases the image of sumptuous palaces surrounded by gardens “the fruits which are collected are delicious and the perfumes that are breathed are exquisite...[but] the function of the *almunia* is not in reality defined with clarity. A recreational property exclusively for some, others had agricultural functions, hence the difficulties which multiply when one simply tries to create an inventory of the *almunias*...”<sup>3</sup>

The ambiguity regarding the character of the *munya* that Mazzoli-Guintard finds so problematic stems, I believe, from scholars’ valorization of medieval Islamic literature to the exclusion of more prosaic aspects of medieval Islamic culture (in this case agriculture and culinary culture). As a result, our picture of the *munyas* has largely been skewed to reflect their image in literary culture, with attention only recently paid to the *munyas*’ relevance to other facets of the history Umayyad Cordoba. While Mazzoli-Guintard implies that the evidence for a range of functions encompassing pleasure and utility is contradictory and problematic, it simply illustrates the necessity of considering other types of evidence, in addition to that which can be gleaned from poetry, to bear on our understanding of the Cordoban *munya*. Such a process has occurred in the study of Roman villas. Consequently, the picture of the Roman villa that has emerged as a result

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<sup>3</sup> Mazzoli-Guintard, *Ciudades de al-Andalus*, p. 220-21.

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presents the villas as more than mere luxurious pleasure retreats, but as complex entities in which a range of functions and possible meanings can be discerned. Cynthia Robinson pinpoints exactly the problematic implications of defining *munya* as a pleasure palace, when she registers her unease with calling the Aljafería a *munya* because the term, “at least its use by “scholarship to date, carries connotations of the frivolous, of the “not serious’.”<sup>4</sup> This study has demonstrated, I hope, that one could hardly hope to find a more serious architectural phenomenon than the *munya*. Indeed, the previous chapters collectively argue that one can scarcely understand Umayyad court culture without appreciating the roles these estates played at nearly every level of aristocratic society.

I have argued that, rather than understanding the estates as pleasure gardens, the *munyas* must be understood as centers of production, where cultivation was geared toward the pleasures of the highly sophisticated court life of Umayyad Cordoba. What is most significant about *munya* cultivation is that the crops cultivated on estate lands were determined by the demands of a court elite, specifically for consumption within a very circumscribed circle.<sup>5</sup> The luxury crops cultivated on *munya* lands were currency in a court in which one’s outward manifestation of wealth and refinement signified one’s social status. The debate over the long-established idea that in medieval Iberia a profound agricultural change occurred is therefore relevant to understanding the *munya*’s

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<sup>4</sup> Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, concern with production and wealth does not preclude aesthetic concerns; what Nicholas Purcell has argued of Roman villas also likely holds true of the *munya* - that the presence of production does not detract from the villa aesthetic, but suggests that we reevaluate the roles and meanings of the villa and its aesthetic within its particular socio-historical contexts. Purcell, “The Roman villa and the landscape of production,” In *Urban Society in Roman Italy* ed. Tim J. Cornell and Kathryn Lomas (New York, 1995), p. 151-179.

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relationship to those who dictated the nature of cultivation carried out on the estate lands. The long established argument for agricultural change under Muslim rule, as stated by Andrew M. Watson and others, is that the variety of crops grown in al-Andalus amounted to an agricultural “revolution” that dramatically transformed the Peninsula.<sup>6</sup> Nicholas Purcell and Peregrine Horden have challenged the notion of agricultural revolution in their recent examination of medieval Mediterranean history, *The Corrupting Sea*. Purcell and Horden argue that the transformation of Andalusí agriculture was not an agricultural revolution, but a reflection of the importance of elite interests in shaping agricultural change, an interpretation that seems particularly appropriate to understanding the *munyas* of Umayyad Cordoba.<sup>7</sup> Purcell and Horden interpret the diversity of plant types mentioned in Andalusí agricultural texts as an indication of elite cultivators’ attempt to lessen the possibility of risk in agricultural production. Risk, according to the authors, is a central concern to medieval Mediterranean elites, who determined which crops are grown and who provided the capital for the investment, and who sought to protect their investment by avoiding agricultural monocultures that constituted a particular risk in the Mediterranean economy.<sup>8</sup> The agricultural diversity reflected in agricultural texts is

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<sup>6</sup> Some of the classic statements being Andrew M. Watson, “The Arab Agricultural Revolution and its Diffusion,” In *Journal of Economic History* 34 (1974), p. 8-35; *ibid.* *Agricultural Innovations in the Early Islamic World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983); Lucie Bolens, *Agronomes andalous du moyen âge* (Geneva: Droz, 1981).

<sup>7</sup> Purcell and Horden, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> The authors argue, “the background to the opportunism of Mediterranean agriculture is in the end the simple fact that monoculture entails starvation in a year when circumstances conspire against that product. Spread the risk by exploiting as many different ecological niches with as many products as possible. This is the maxim that prevents innovation from being revolutionary in Mediterranean history.” Purcell and Horden, p. 263.



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therefore not so much a revolution as it is pragmatism on the part of the elites who, in order to reap the greatest possible economic return and to satisfy the demands of urban consumption, determine the nature of agricultural production. Such an interpretation accords well with a conception of the *munyas* as productive agricultural estates keyed to aristocratic consumption.

### *A villa culture*

One of the most intriguing aspects of the *munya* to arise from this study is the fact that, not only did the estates produce some of the goods considered requirements of elegant society, they were at the same time the primary settings for the court activities at which those goods were enjoyed, displayed, and consumed, and the vehicle by which the Umayyad state presented itself as powerful, legitimate, and worthy to challenge the rival Fatimid and Abbasid courts. The *munyas* clearly lie at the very heart of Umayyad court culture, and one cannot be fully understood without the other. In *The Court Society*, the sociologist Norbert Elias described the French court of Louis XIV as “the theatre of social life, [and] a formative influence on convivial culture.”<sup>9</sup> In Umayyad Cordoba, we can discern a similar role for the *munyas*. Just as Versailles offered an alternative space to Paris for the activities of the French court during the reign of Louis XIV, the *munyas* served as alternative settings to the urban palaces of Umayyad Cordoba and Madinat al-Zahra’, particularly for court activities in which the display of political and cultural

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<sup>9</sup> Elias, *The Court Society*, p. 79.

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capital through articulation of political relationships was celebrated and articulated as spectacle.

*Munya* patronage – on the part of established family dynasties, and their competitors for power, the highest-ranking slaves and freedmen - has emerged in this study as one of the key areas in which the study of architecture can reveal something of Cordoban Umayyad court life which might not otherwise be immediately apparent. This study has demonstrated that one of the primary means by which the struggle for political power and social status between the family dynasties and the elite slaves, and on the part of the Umayyad ruler who sought to balance those interests in his own favor, was played out in the realm of *munya* patronage. The implications of elite slaves' and freedmen's connection to *munya* patronage adds an interesting dimension to the established evidence of their involvement in other facets of Andalusí art production as well. Since some *munya* patrons also directed the production of luxury goods, notably the ivories, for the court, the study of the objects and the estates could benefit from being studied together in the future. Because the estates were central to Umayyad court life, the luxury objects –the ivories, ceramics, metalware, textiles, etc. – take on much greater meaning when considered in conjunction with the architectural settings and social events in which they were used, displayed, and enjoyed. Ironically, it is the estates which have vanished. These small objects alone remain to convey something of the meanings that luxury and refinement bore in the Umayyad court, and I have argued in the previous chapters that the thematic parallels between the estates and the ivories suggest that the two subjects would benefit from being studied in tandem.

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By their nature the *munyas* went beyond portable luxury objects like the Cordoban ivories in conveying meaning to a broad, even a public, audience. Whereas the ivories could only be viewed and appreciated fully by a small audience, the Cordoban estates were symbols of power, wealth, and social status made visible on the landscape of Cordoba itself. Thus, the estates emerge as a landscape, as well as a social, phenomenon. In addition to their agricultural and recreational functions, in the reign of al-Hakam II the estates become way stations along the processional routes which connected Madinat al-Zahra', the caliphal *munyas*, and the old urban palace of Cordoba. The spectacle of the caliphal and military corteges winding their way along the ceremonial routes, through the flourishing estate landscape, became one of the most compelling statements of Umayyad sovereignty. Unlike the closed court circles which participated in the recreational excursions and feasts held within the confines of the *munyas*, their incorporation into the civic realm as key points along processional ways broadcast an unmistakable message about Umayyad ownership of the land, and good government, to a public audience. In architecture and landscape, therefore, the *munyas* parallel such themes, which are discernible in court literature and in art objects made for the court – especially the ivory caskets.

Yet, even at the same moment that the Cordoban estates takes on perhaps their most highly visible aspect in connection with such activities, they also become the setting for a new and diametrically opposed dynamic in the Umayyad court, one emphasizing intimate gatherings of a highly circumscribed group of urban elites. Cynthia Robinson has argued that the genesis of the small gatherings (*majlis*, pl. *majālis*) associated with taifa courts like that of twelfth-century Saragossa is to be found in the intimate gatherings

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which al-Mansur encouraged at his own estates, once *munya* patronage had spread to the ranks of the established family dynasties.<sup>10</sup> According to Robinson, as he rose to prominence in the Umayyad court of al-Hakam II, al-Mansur cultivated a new kind of court culture in which intimate companionship between a small group of boon companions (*nadīm*, pl. *nidām*, *nudamā'*, or *nudmān*) created a new “courtly” dynamic which became the model for ruler-courtier interaction by the end of the taifa period.<sup>11</sup> This move away from the highly visible role of the *munya* within the larger Cordoban landscape and within court ceremonial intended for a wide audience marks a break with previous practice that is a direct consequence of the shift in *munya* patronage from high-ranking slaves and freedmen to the established family dynasties. Robinson sees al-Mansur’s patron al-Mushafi, one of the most prominent of the urban elites of the tenth-century Umayyad court, as a key transitional figure in the shift toward a later “courtly” taifa court culture. Al-Mushafi served as *hajib* under both ‘Abd al-Rahman III and al-

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<sup>10</sup> Robinson, “The Andalusī ‘Loving Subject’: Early Appearances at the ‘Amiri Courts,” In *In Praise of Song*, p. 105-15.

<sup>11</sup> The *nadīm* is defined as a “drinking companion, and, by extension, friend, courtier (or confidant) of kings or of wealthy persons; his function is to entertain them, eat and drink in their company, play chess with them, accompany them in hunting and participate in their pastimes and recreations,” P.J. Bearman et al., ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition: Glossary and Index of Terms to Volumes I-IX and to the Supplement* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., VII: 849b. This new model for interaction, in which the relationship between ruler and courtier is couched in a courtly literature that depicts the ruler as the beloved and the courtier as abject lover who is made lovesick by the object of his affection, was cultivated among al-Mansur’s small, select group of supporters. Robinson presents Al-Mushafi as perhaps the earliest of the non-slave elite in the court of al-Hakam II during al-Mansur’s period of ascendancy to present a literary persona of himself as a slave held in lovesick thrall – not to al-Hakam II, who is conspicuously absent from such gatherings Robinson tells us – but to the caliph’s *hajib*, who was engaged in concentrating power in his own hands. “Love in the Time of Fitna,” *passim* (forthcoming) and *In Praise of Song: The Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005-1134 A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

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Hakam II, but he is also an early figure in the promulgation of intimate gatherings of courtiers (*majalis al-uns*), which must have taken place at his *munya*, and of which he seems to have been an early and enthusiastic proponent.<sup>12</sup> These small gatherings of al-Mansur and his intimates strongly contrast with the picture of Umayyad court life as it was played out in the setting of suburban estates. Thus, al-Hakam II's reign, the moment at which the *munya* is intimately intertwined with every aspect of Umayyad rulership and court culture, is also the moment at which a new conception of the *munya* – whose reception halls largely turned inward to sequestered vistas of water and vegetation, rather than outward to the greater landscape setting – takes hold.

Clearly, even as the *munyas* occupy a place within a broader constellation of villas and villa culture in the Mediterranean and Iraq, they also constitute a dramatically individual phenomenon, one that shaped the post-Umayyad palace tradition in al-Andalus. After the disintegration of the Umayyad state, the spread of the Cordoban *munya* phenomenon took on a pan-Iberian momentum with the political fragmentation of the taifa kingdoms. The ensuing migration of Cordobans, who left their ravaged city and its *munyas*, then established the estates and palaces associated with the later Islamic dynasties on the Peninsula. For example, the taifa ruler Ma'mun of Toledo consciously evoked one of the most famous of the great *munyas* of Cordoba when he named his estate outside the walls of Toledo al-Na 'ura. The Toledan version was said to have boasted, like its Cordoban namesake, extensive gardens and a pool fed by a fountain in the form of a lion. In this Toledo estate we see the first of the descendents of the Cordoban *munya*, a legacy expressed finally on the Iberian Peninsula in Nasrid Granada. Elizabeth

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<sup>12</sup> Robinson, "Love in the time of Fitna," p. 13.

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Hermann has demonstrated how the Nasrid rulers of this last Islamic territory on the Iberian Peninsula similarly transformed the landscape by constructing estates, a process whose ideological implications she discusses thoroughly.<sup>13</sup> In the Generalife, from which Nasrid courtiers enjoyed views over the cultivated lands of the villa itself, as well as over the broader landscape of Granada, we may see the last of the Cordoban estate's Iberian offspring (Fig. 108). While the *munyas* of Cordoba vanished, the idea of the *munya* therefore spread throughout the Iberian Peninsula, and beyond.<sup>14</sup> Carried by successive groups of Cordoban emigrants beginning in the ninth century, the conception of the Umayyad suburban estates crossed the Straits of Gibraltar to take on new functions and characteristics as the *agdal* of North Africa.

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<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Dean Hermann, "Urban Formation and Landscape: Symbol and Agent of Social, Political, and Environmental Change," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> Later the estates became the focus of nostalgia, as both Ruggles and Robinson have argued. See D.F. Ruggles, "Arabic Poetry and Architectural Memory in al-Andalus," In *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993), p. 171-180; and Cynthia Robinson, "Ubi sunt: memory and nostalgia in Taifa court culture," In *Muqarnas* 15 (1998), p. 20-31.



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## FIGURES

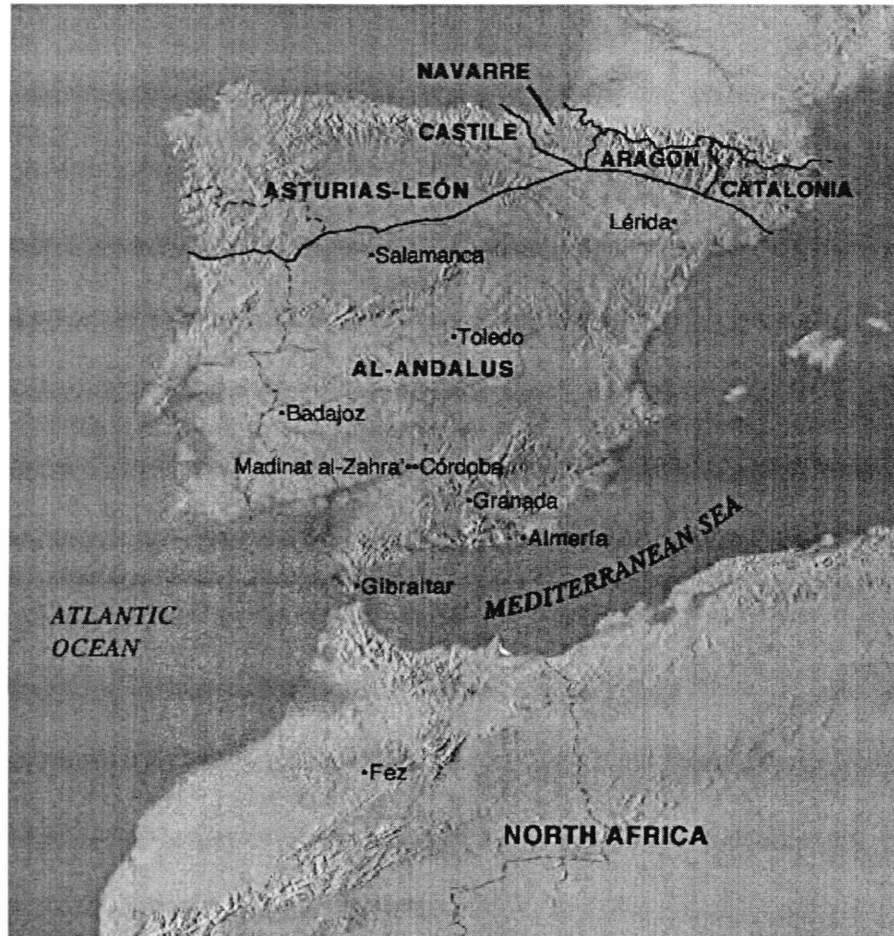
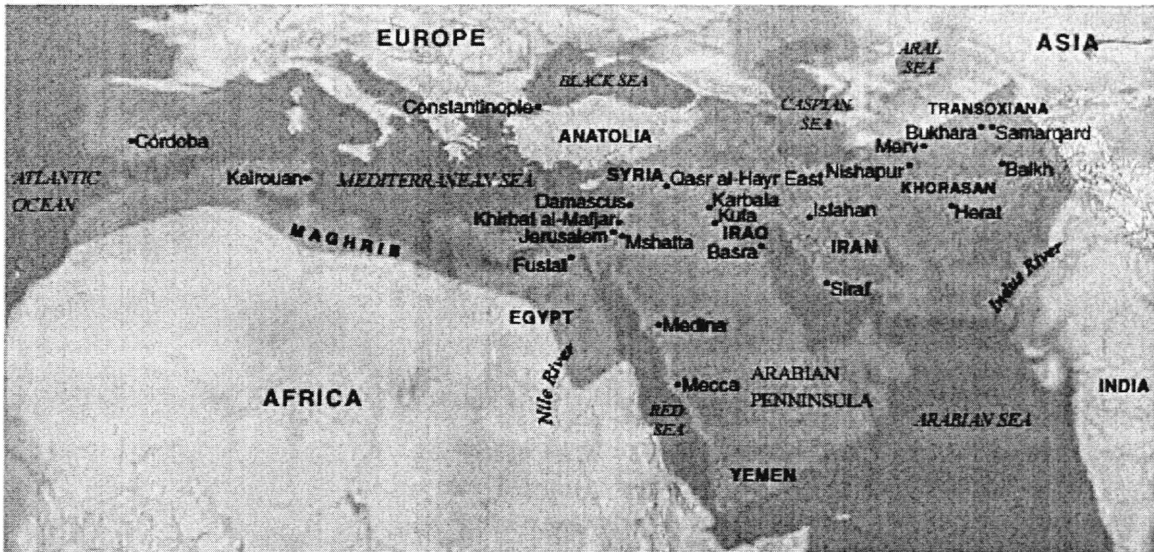
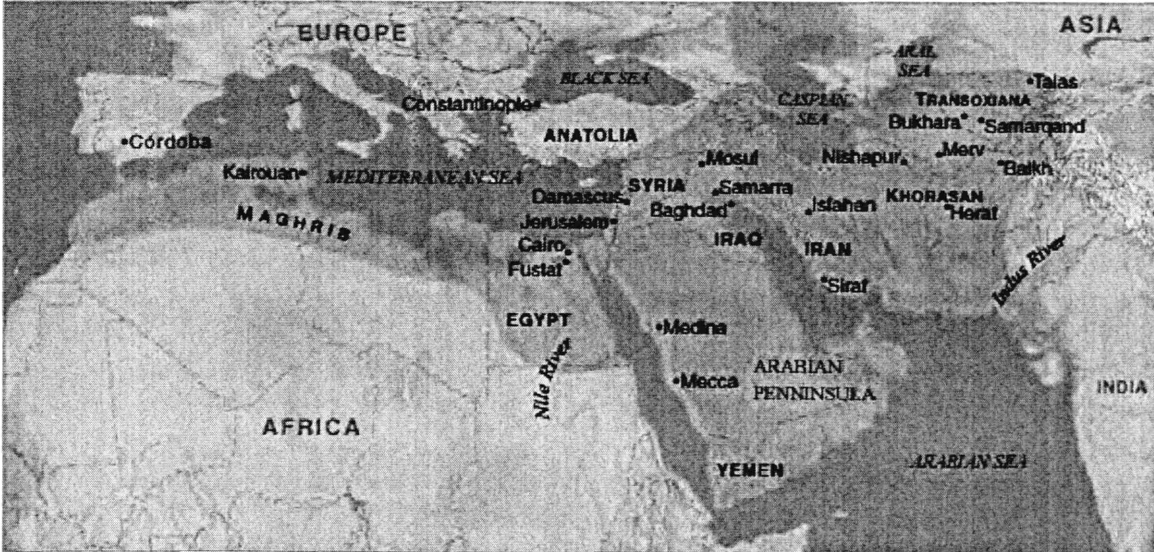


Figure 1 Islamic Iberian Peninsula (al-Andalus). “Metropolitan Museum of Art.” <http://www.metmuseum.org>. February 2005.



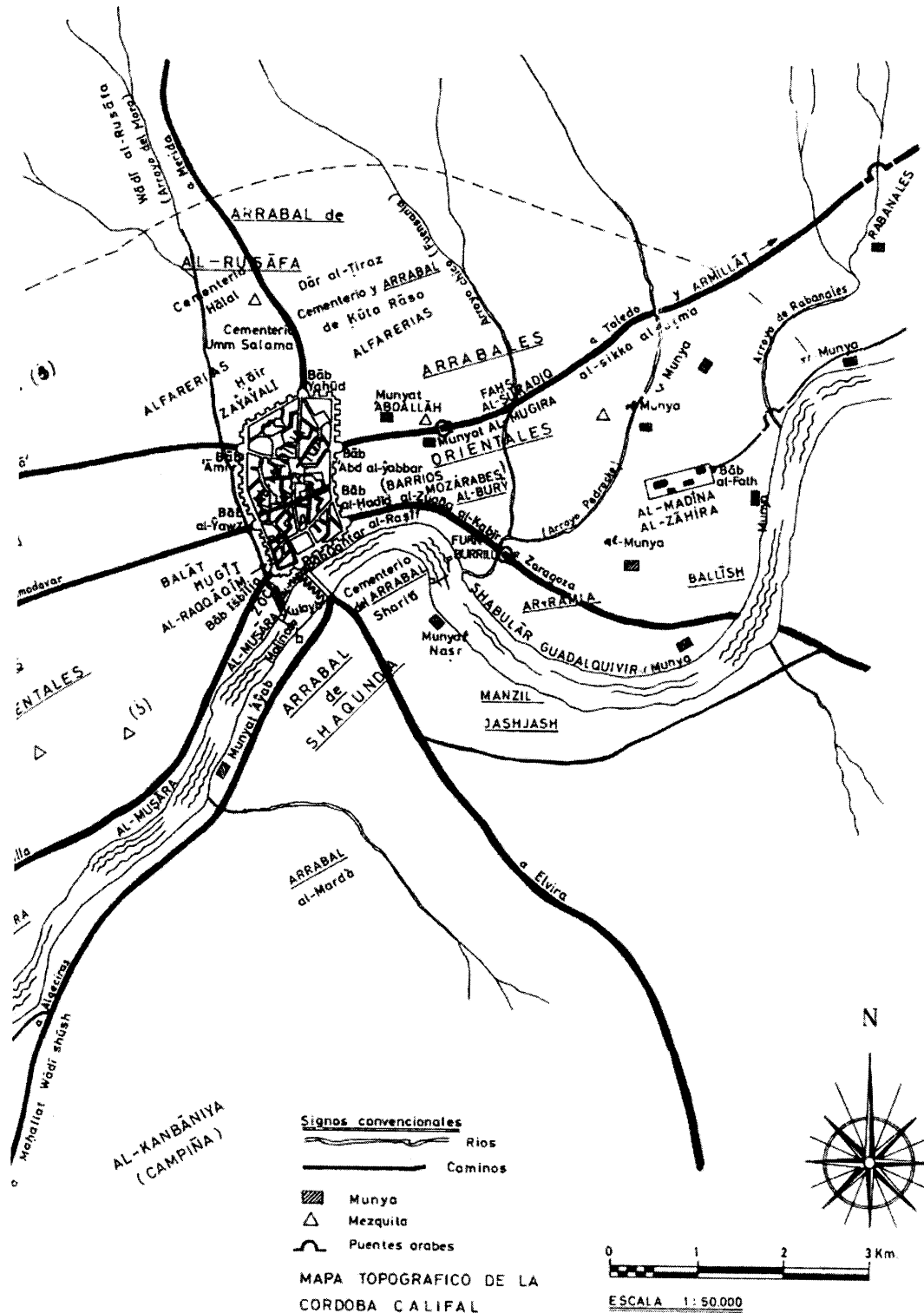


**Figure 2 Greatest extent of the Syrian Umayyad empire.** (“The Art of the Umayyad Period (661-750 A.D.),” Metropolitan Museum of Art, <http://www.metmuseum.org> (February 2005).

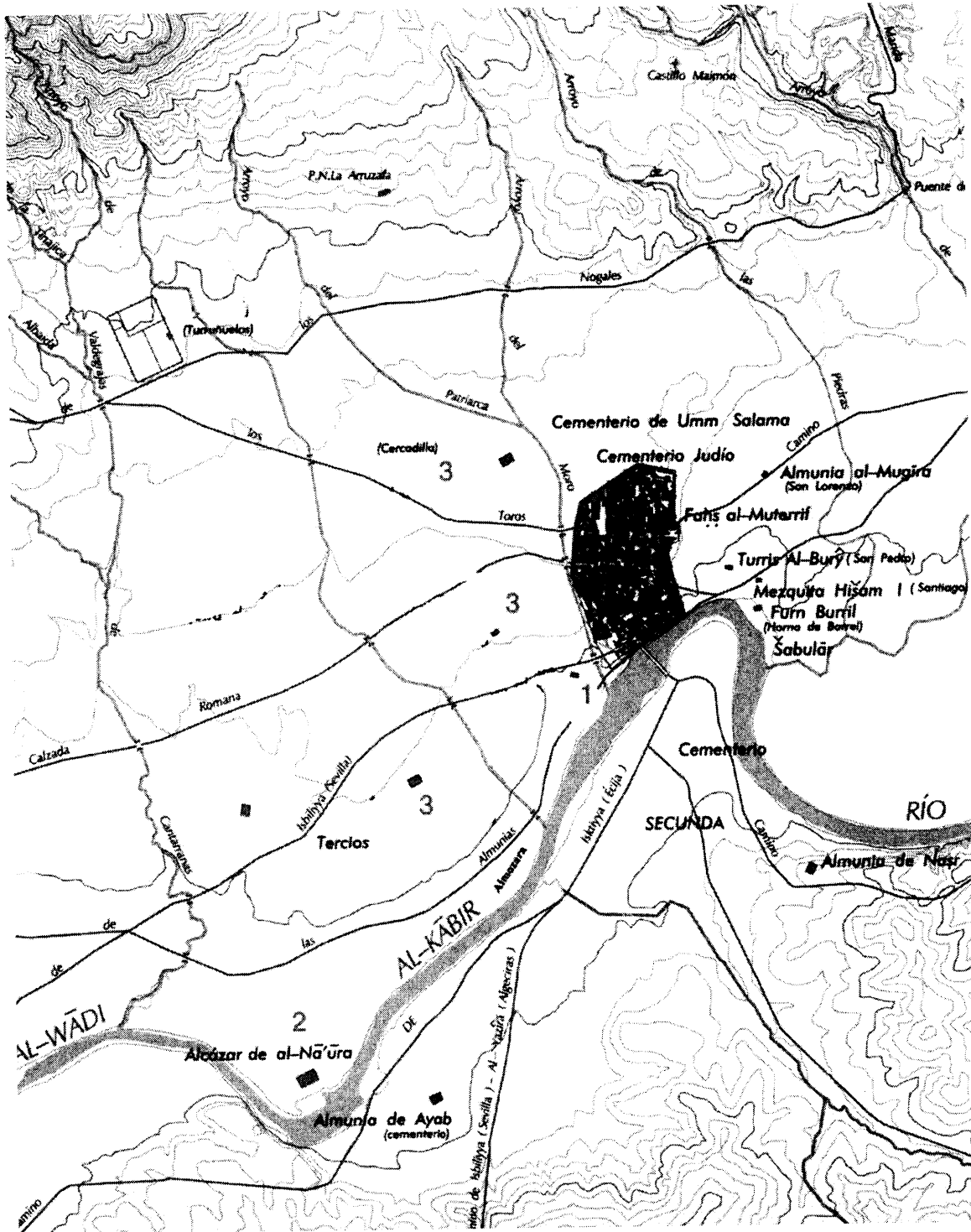


**Figure 3 Abbasid empire at its greatest extent (750-1258)** (Metropolitan Museum of Art [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/abba/hd\\_abba.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/abba/hd_abba.htm))

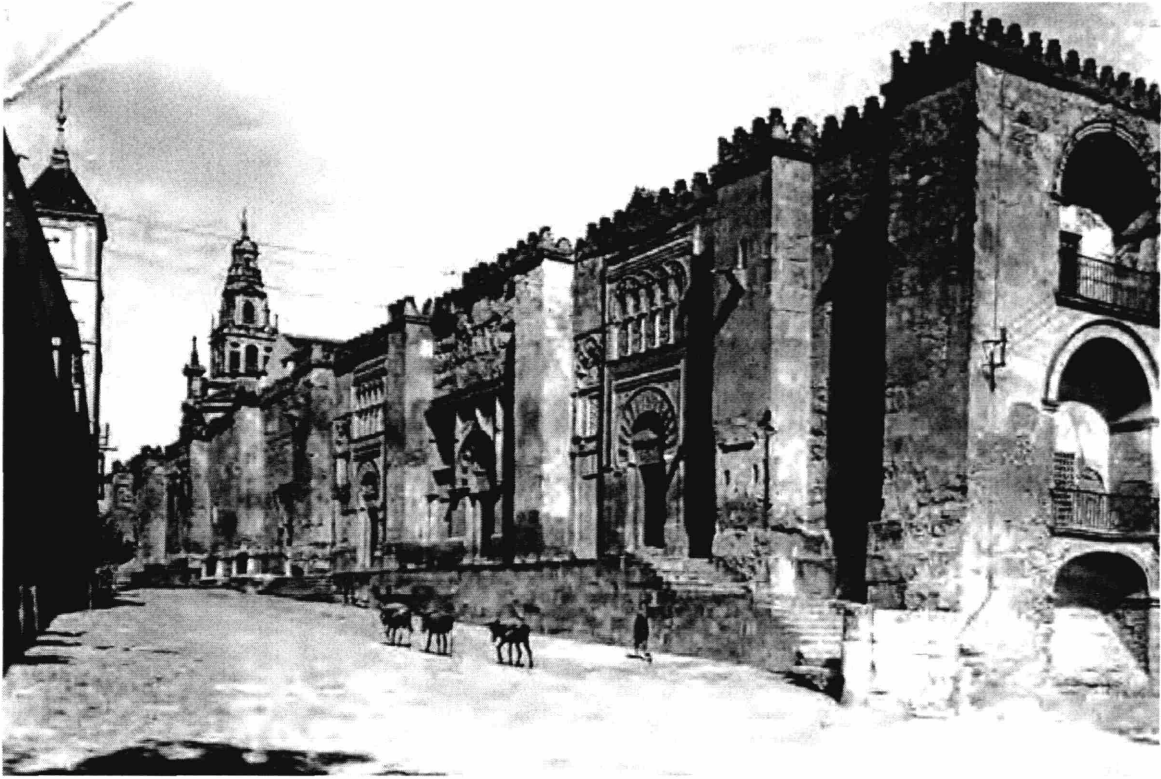




**Figure 5** Map, Umayyad Cordoba and its immediate surroundings. The Guadalquivir river flows along the urban center's southern wall, dividing it from the southern extramural quarter and the fertile Campiña area. (Arjona Castro, *Anales de Cordoba Musulmanes*)

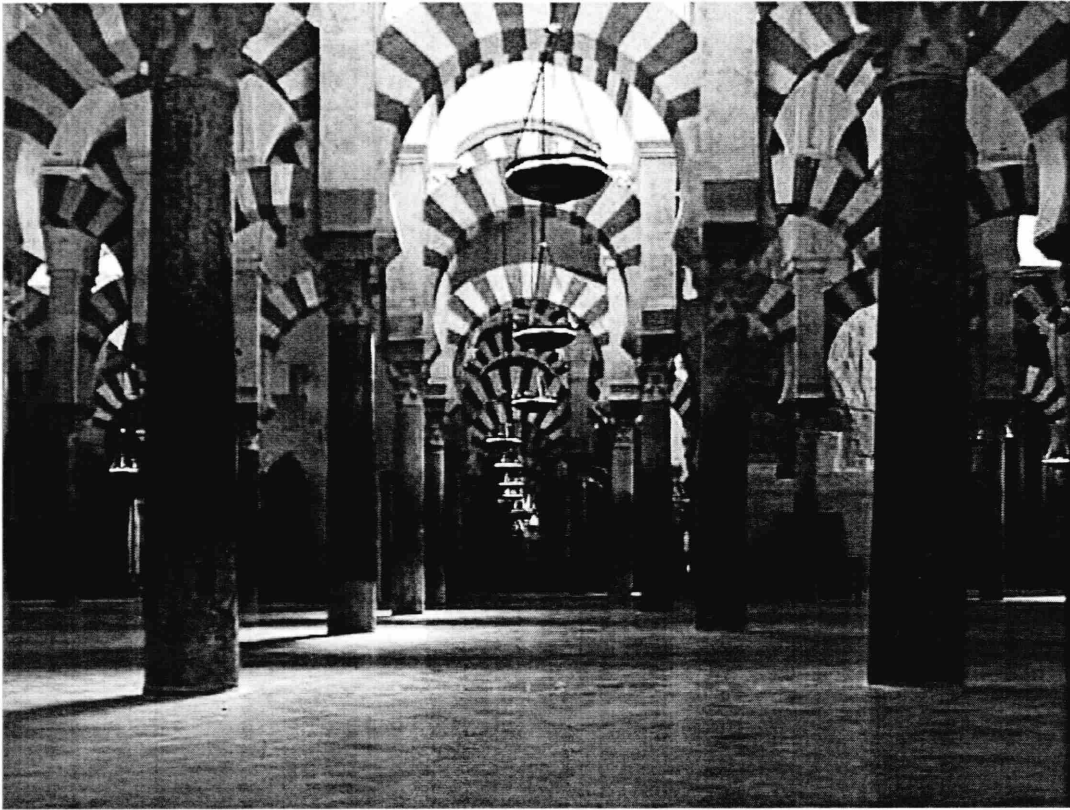


**Figure 6 Map, Cordoba. Walled urban center and suburban territory. 1) Zoological park 2) Casillas site 3) Evidence of Umayyad suburbs (After Arjona Castro)**



**Figure 7 Exterior view, Great Mosque of Cordoba c. 1900**

(Fine Arts Library of the Harvard College Library)



**Figure 8 Prayer hall, Great Mosque of Cordoba**

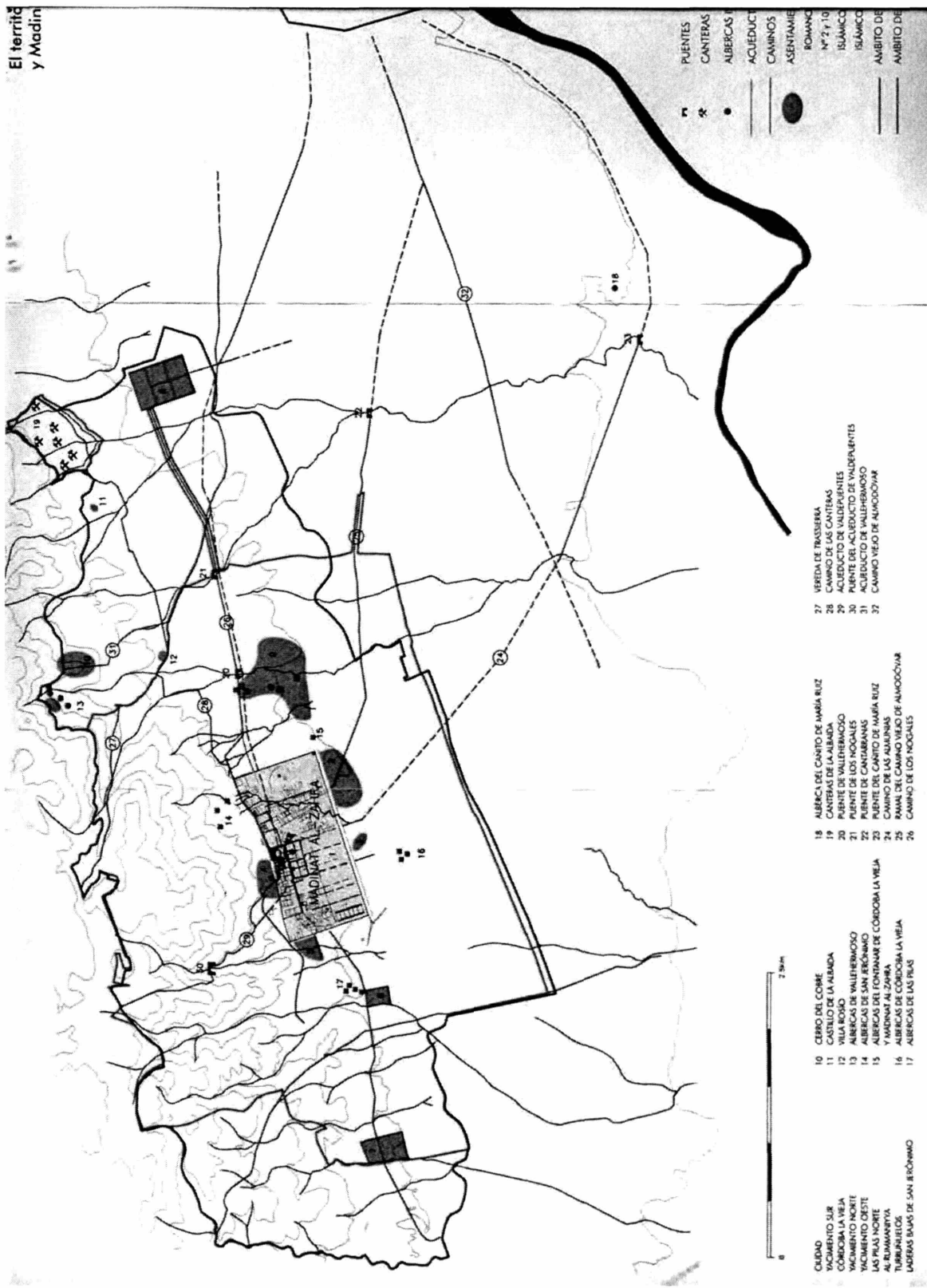
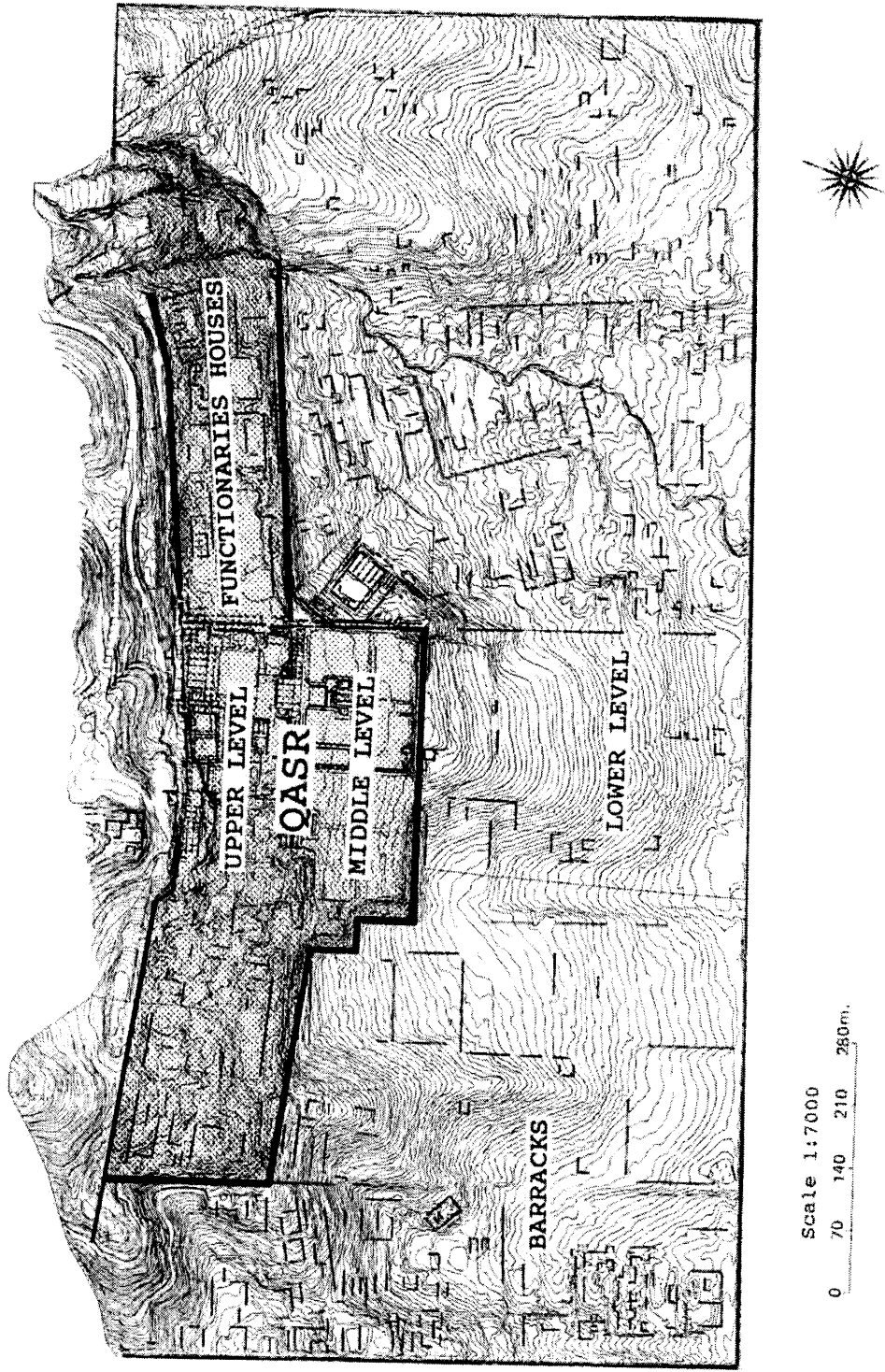


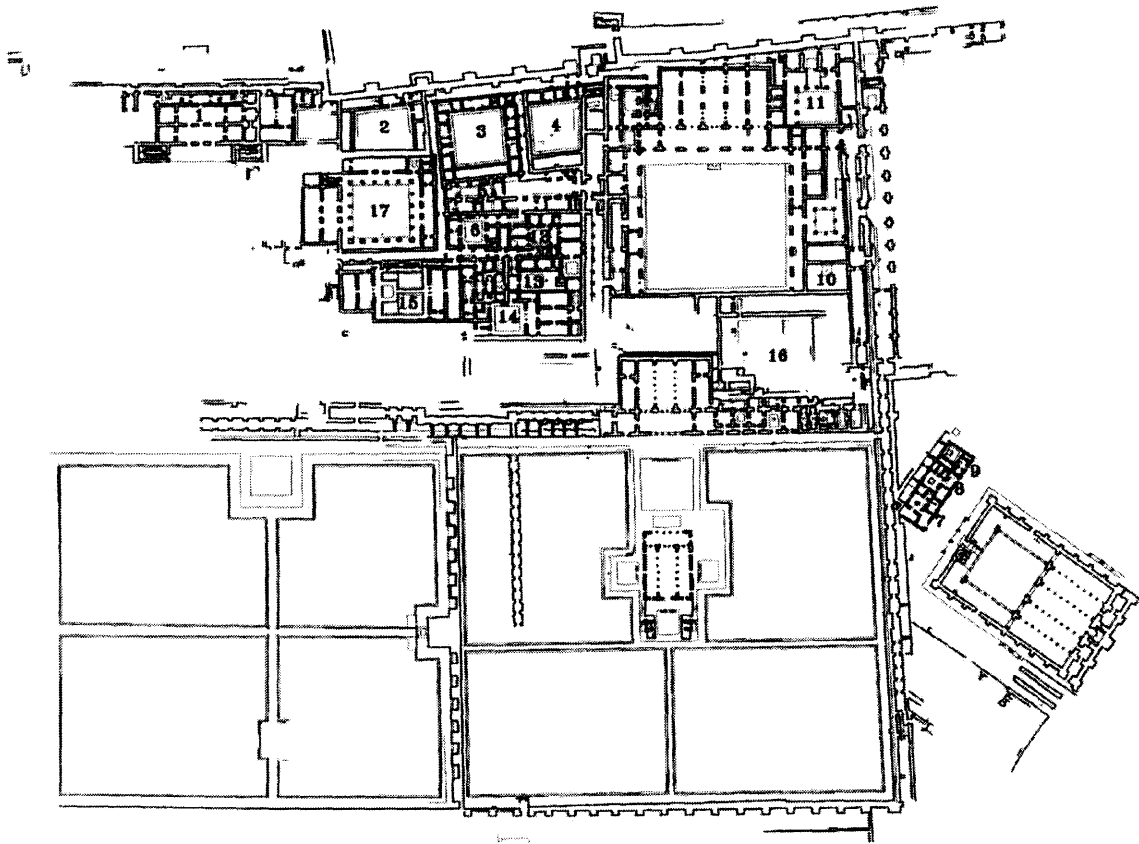
Figure 9 Cordoba's western suburban territory (Conjunto Arqueológico Madinat al-Zahra')



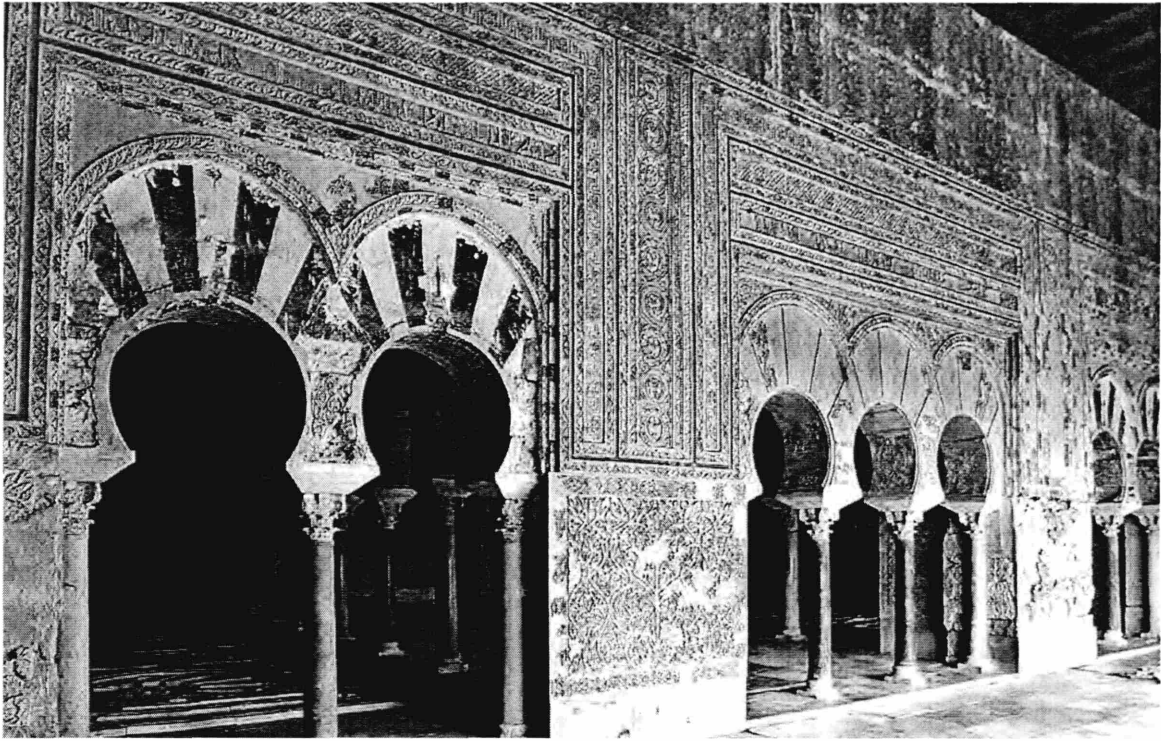




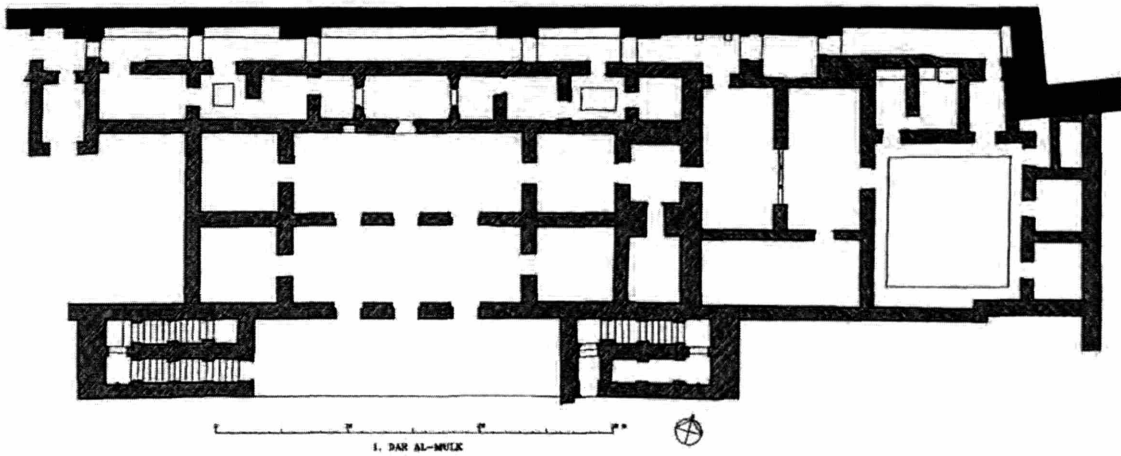
**Figure 11 Topographic plan of Madinat al-Zahra'**  
 (Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, after S. López Cuervo)



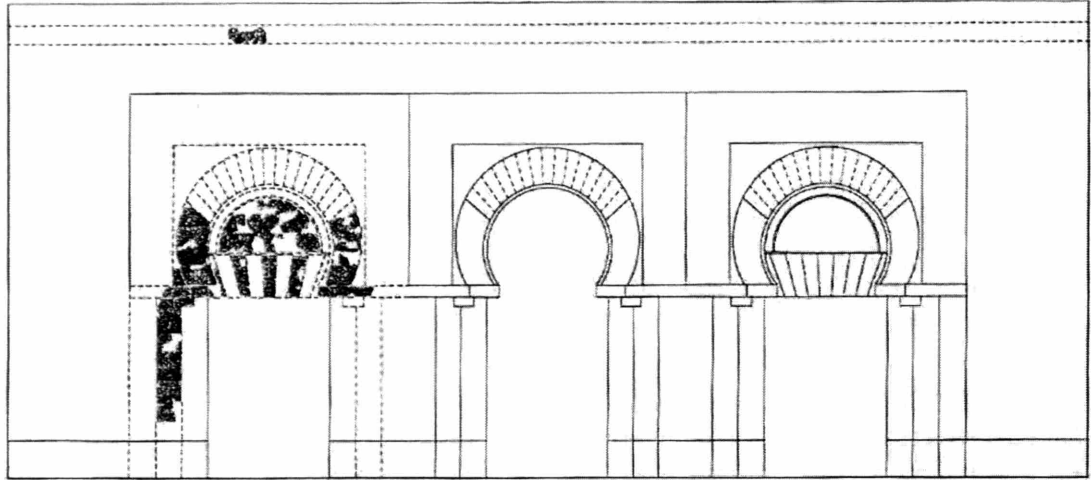
**Figure 12 Houses, Madinat al-Zahra' 1. Dar al-Mulk 15 Casa del Alberca (aka Casa del Alberquilla, or Small Garden) (Conjunto Arq. de Madinat al-Zahra')**



**Figure 13** Entrance, Hall of 'Abd al-Rahman III. Madinat al-Zahra'. (Conjunto Arq. Madinat al-Zahra')



**Figure 14** Plan, Dar al-Mulk (Residence of the Caliph). Madinat al-Zahra' (Almagro Gorbea)



**Figure 15 Elevation, façade. Dar al-Mulk. Madinat al-Zahra' (Conjunto Arq. Madinat al-Zahra')**



**Figure 16 Interior doorway. Dar al-Mulk. Madinat al-Zahra' (Conjunto Arq. Madinat al-Zahra')**

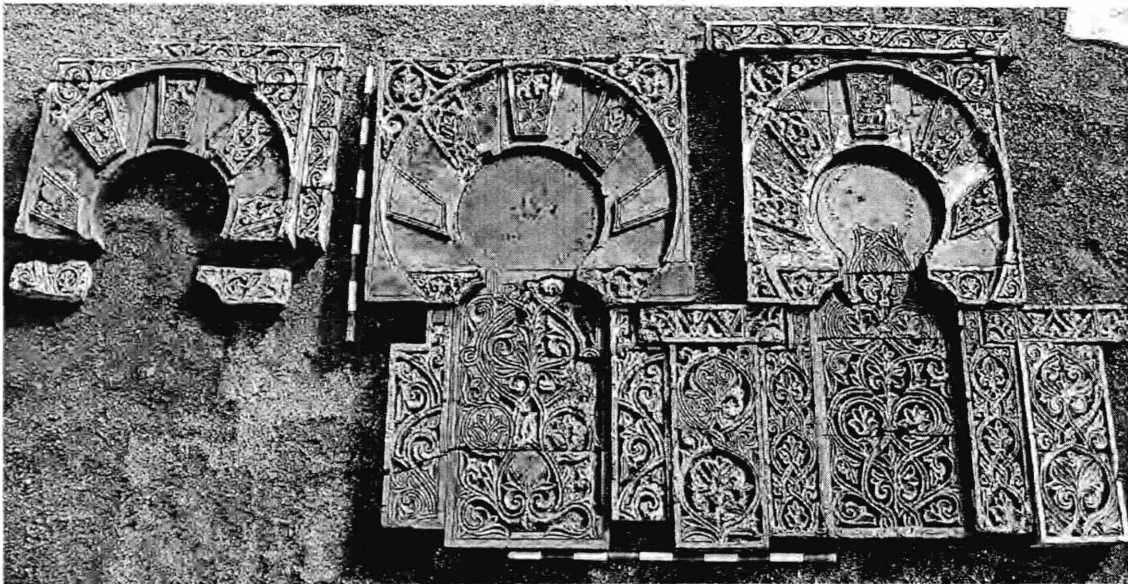


Figure 17 Sculpted panels. Dar al-Mulk. (Conjunto Arq. Madinat al-Zahra')



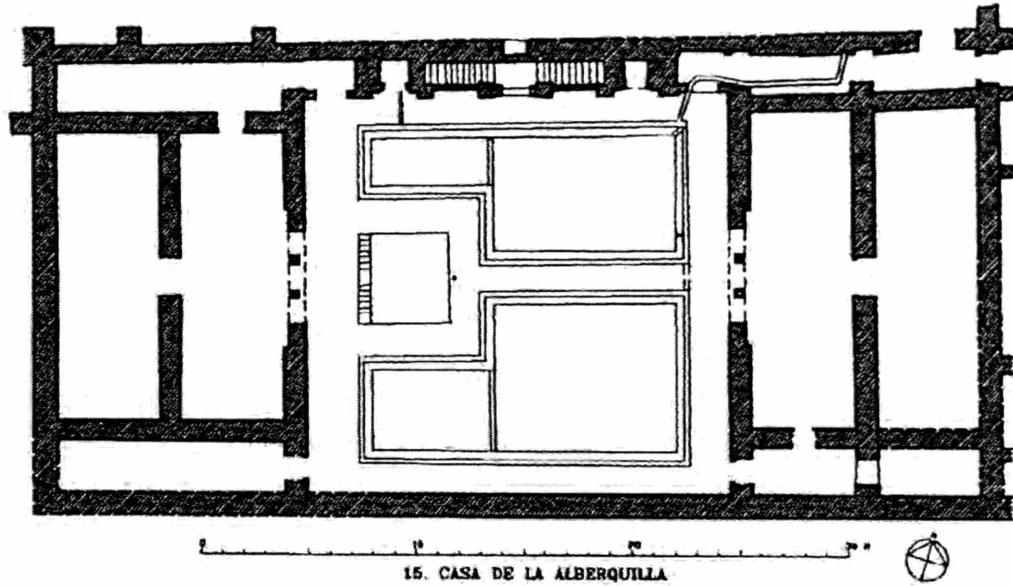


Figure 18 Plan, Casa de la Alberca. Madinat al-Zahra' (Antonio Almagro)

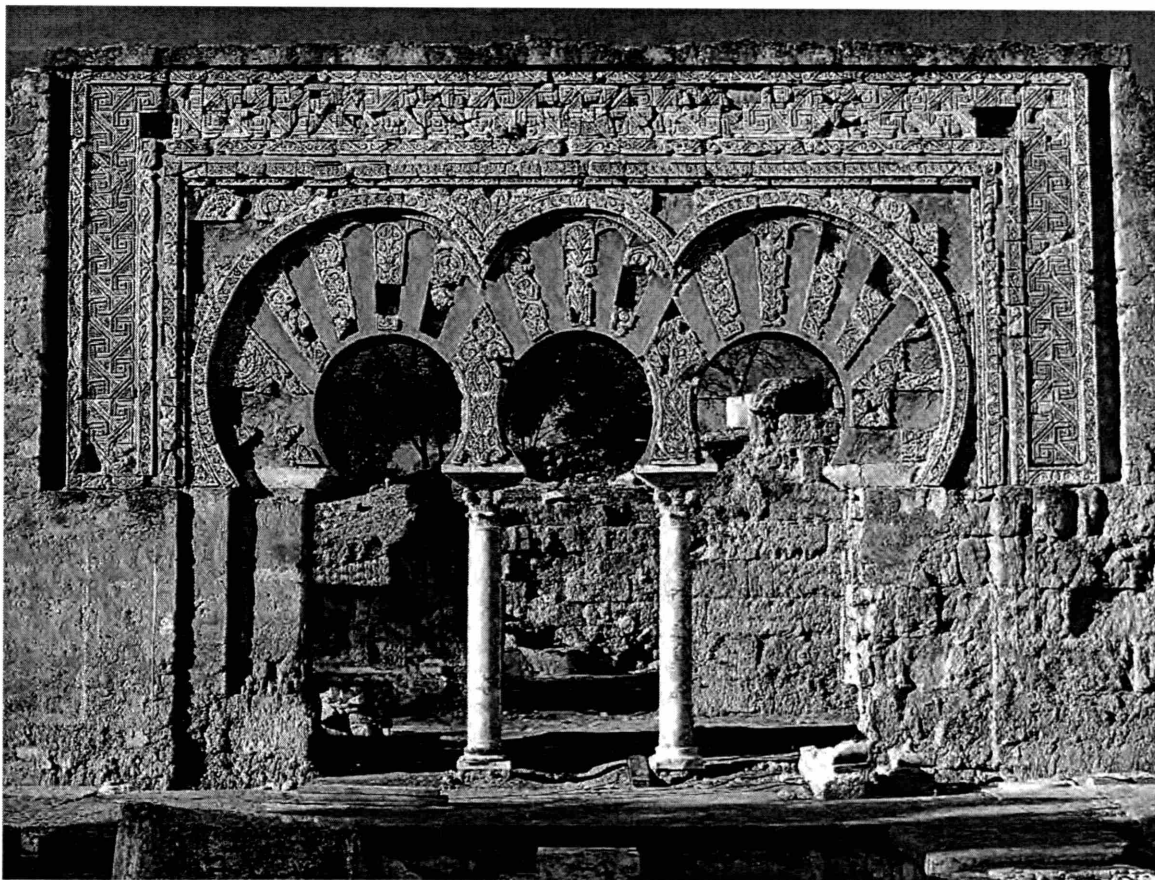
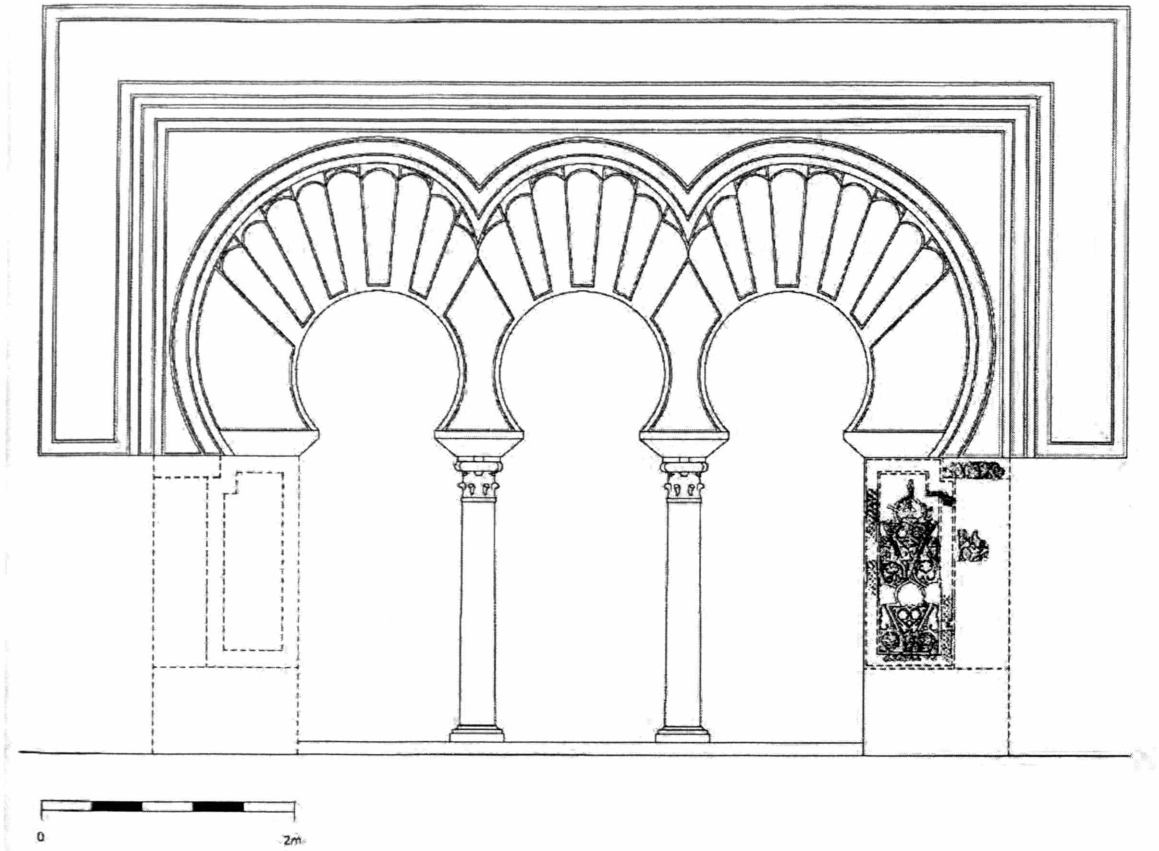


Figure 19 Court façade, western hall, Casa de la Alberca. Madinat al-Zahra' (Conjunto Arq. Madinat al-Zahra')



**Figure 20** Elevation, court façade of western hall, Casa de la Alberca. Madinat al-Zahra' (Conjunto Arq. Madinat al-Zahra')



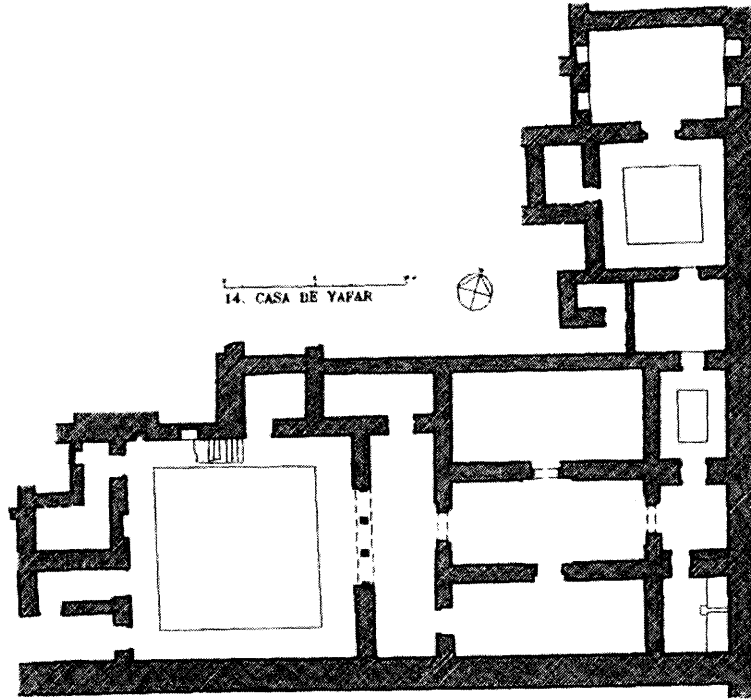


Figure 21 Plan, House of Jafar. Madinat al-Zahra' (Antonio Almagro)

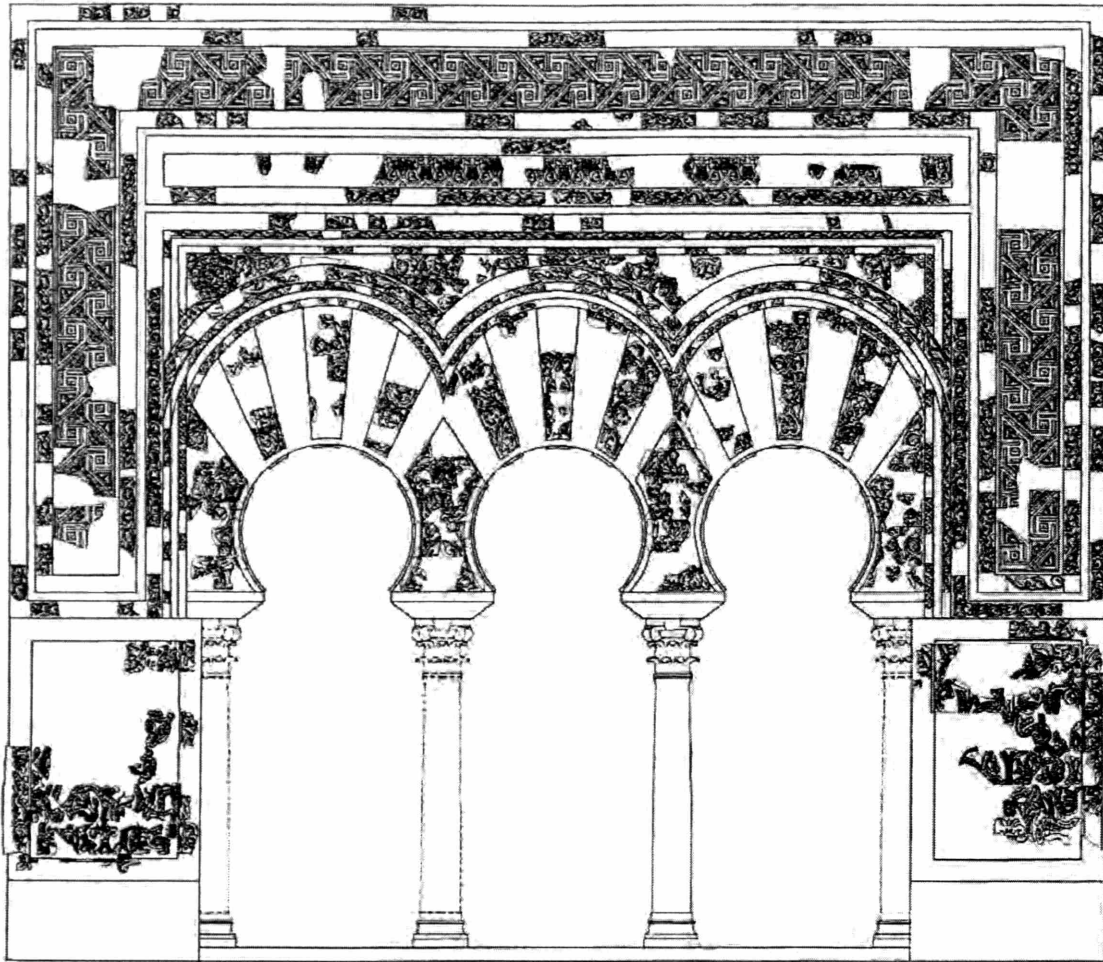


Figure 22 Elevation, court façade. House of Jafar, Madinat al-Zahra' (Conjunto Arq. Madinat al-Zahra')



**Figure 23** View of lower terraces, Madinat al-Zahra'



**Figure 24** View of landscape from upper terrace, Madinat al-Zahra'



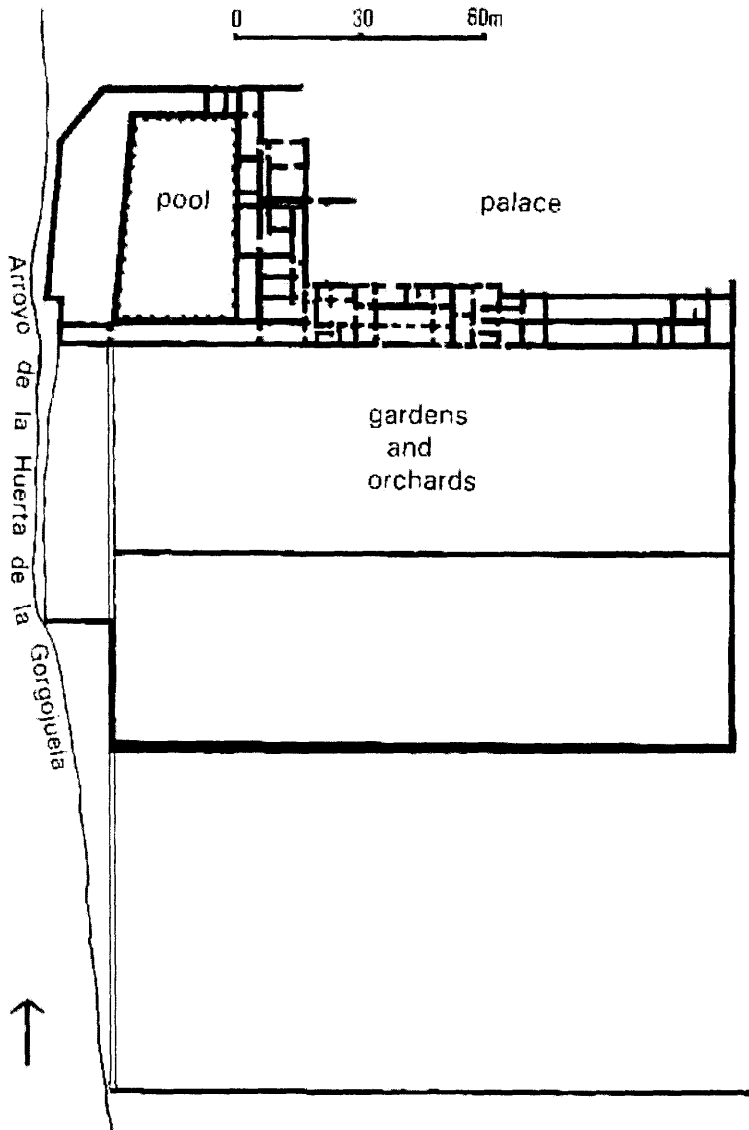
**Figure 25 Capital, 10th c.**

Spain, probably Madinat al-Zahra'

Carved marble; H. 14 1/2 in. (36.8 cm), Gr. W. 13 1/2 in. (34.3 cm)

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Theodore D. Davis collection, Bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1930 (30.95.134)

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/06/eusi/hod\\_30.95.134.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/06/eusi/hod_30.95.134.htm)



**Figure 26 Plan, Munsyat al-Rummaniya**  
(Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*)

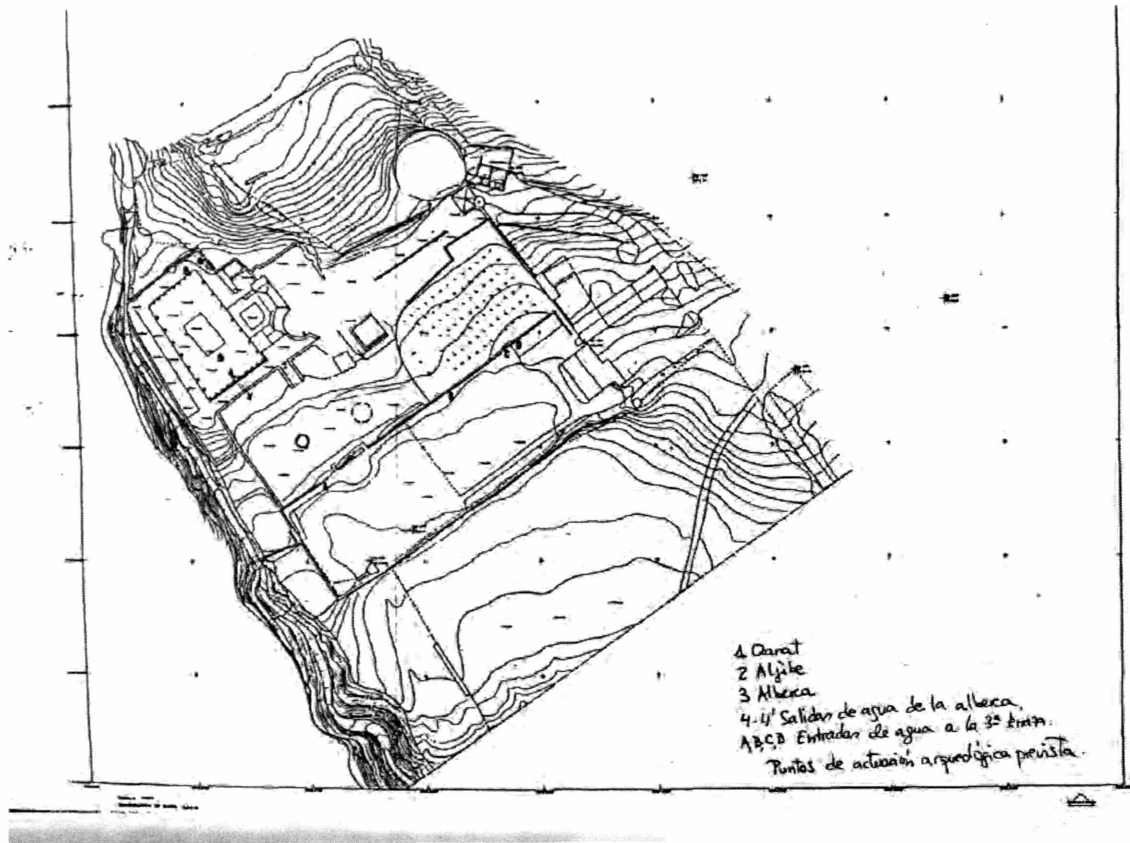
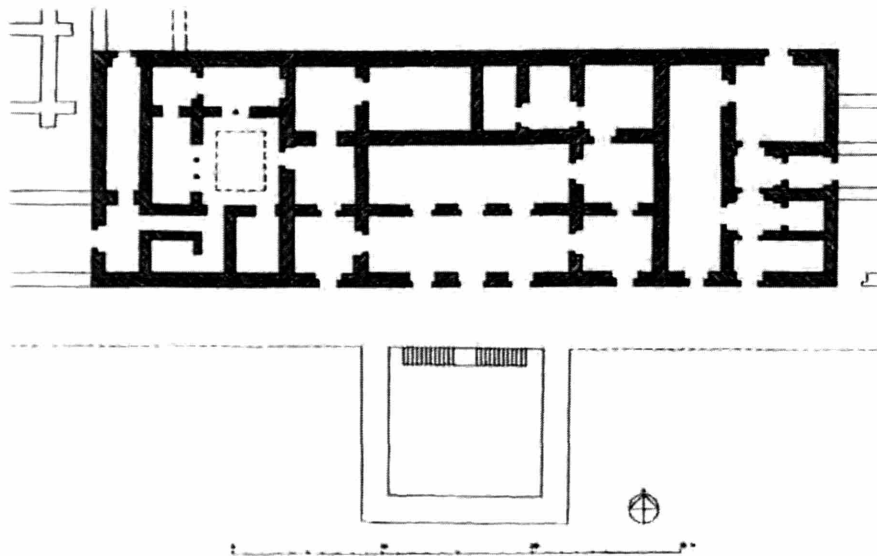
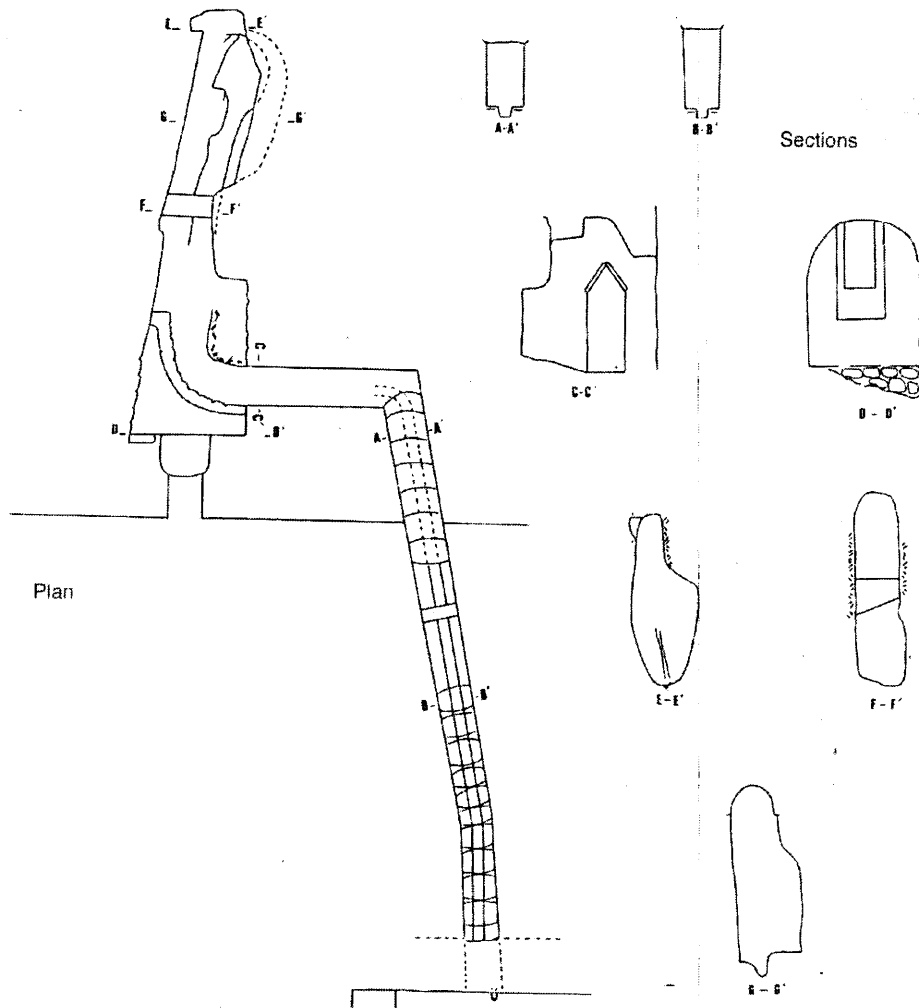


Figure 27 Plan of al-Rummaniya with water system (Barcelo)



Plan, Residence. al-Rummaniya (Almagro Gorbea)



**Figure 28 Plan and sections of al-Rummaniya qanat (Barcelo)**

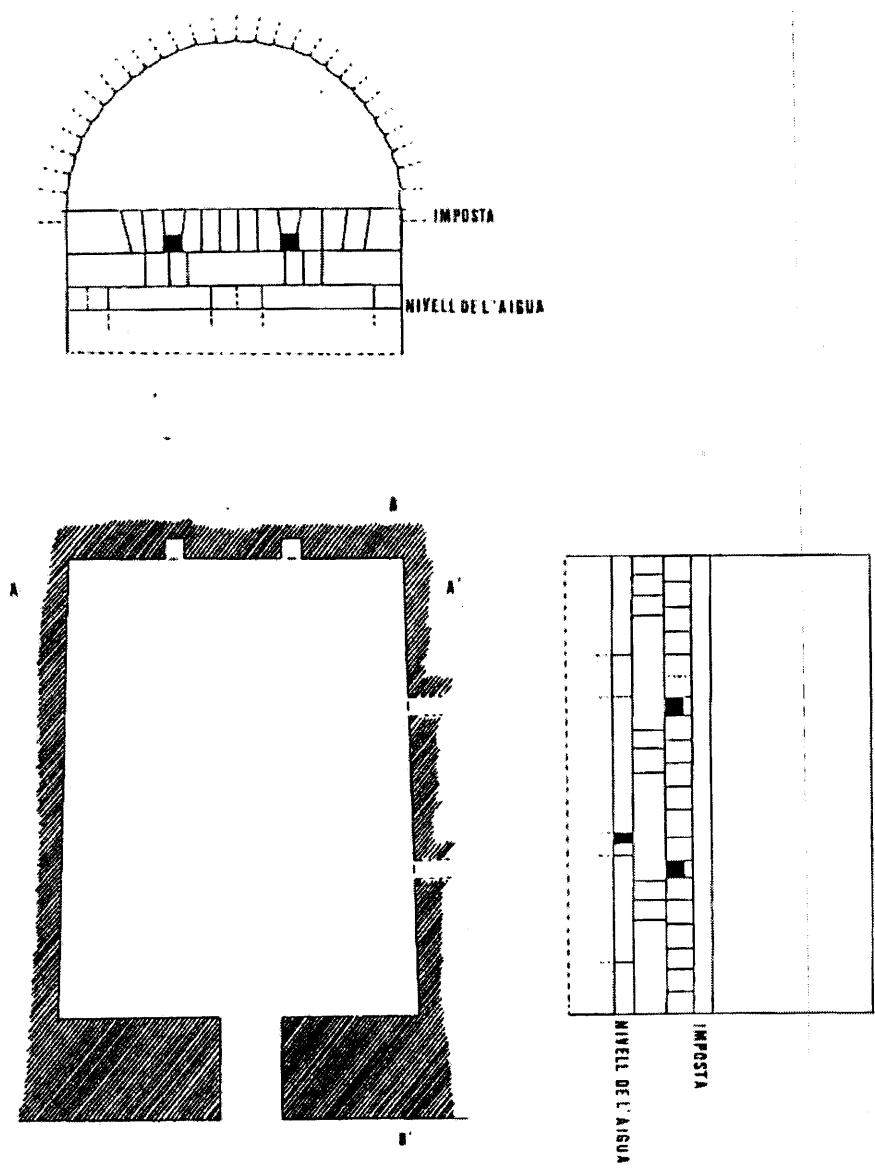


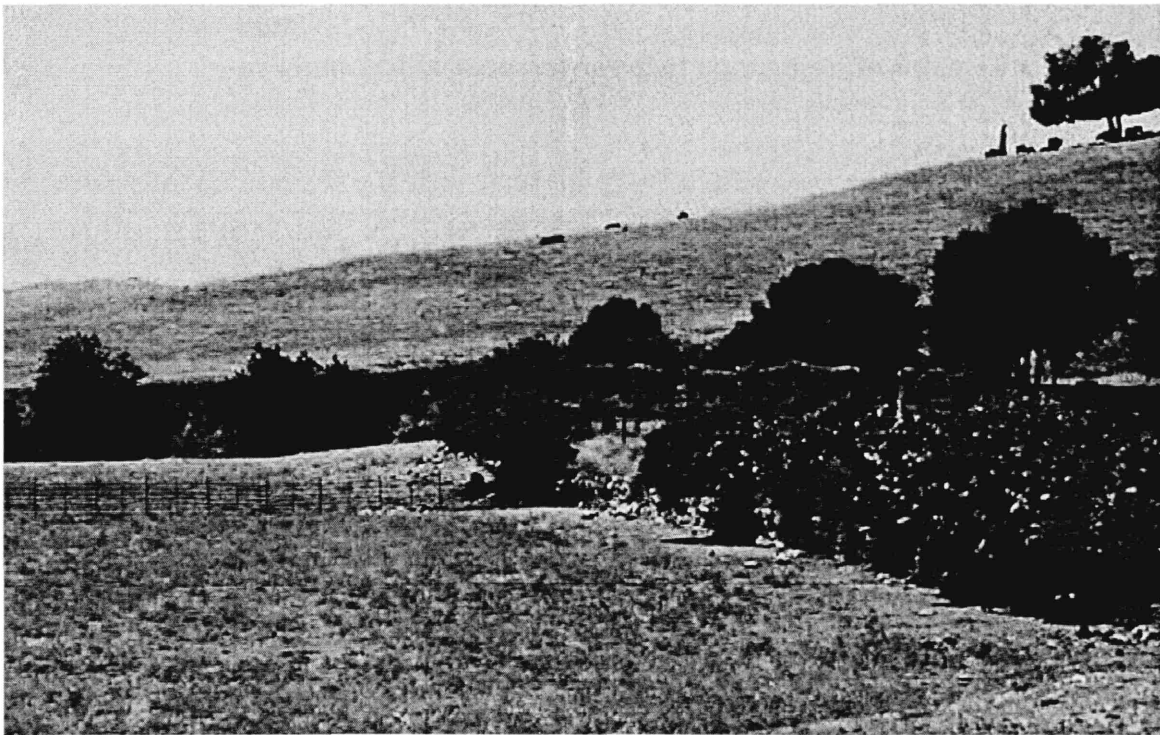
Figure 29 Plan, al-Rummaniya cistern (Barcelo)





**Figure 30 Distant view, al-Rummaniya site.**

(author's photo)



**Figure 31 Remains of perimeter and terrace walls, al-Rummaniya.**



**Figure 32 Remains of steps/ramp to lower terraces, al-Rummaniya**



**Figure 33 Retaining wall of upper terrace, al-Rummaniya**



**Figure 34 Views of remains on upper terrace, al-Rummaniya c. 1912 (Velazquez Bosco, Medina Azzahra y Alamiriya)**



**Figure 35** Remains of monumental pool, upper terrace. Al-Rummaniya



**Figure 36** Detail, buttress of monumental pool. Al-Rummaniya





a

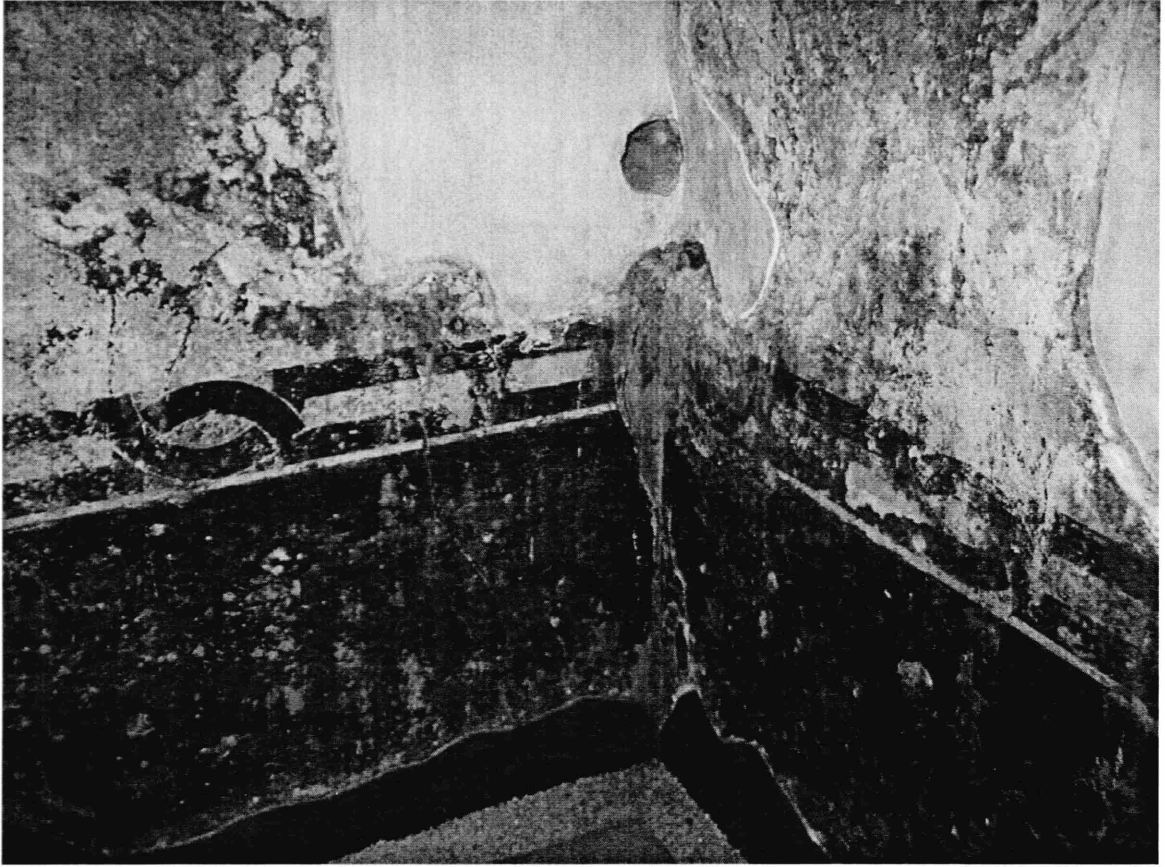


b

**Figure 37 a) Marble basin w/ animal heads and scrolls. Al-Rummaniya (R. Castejon, Medina Azahara). b) Second al-Rummaniya basin. Detail of scrolls and animal figures**

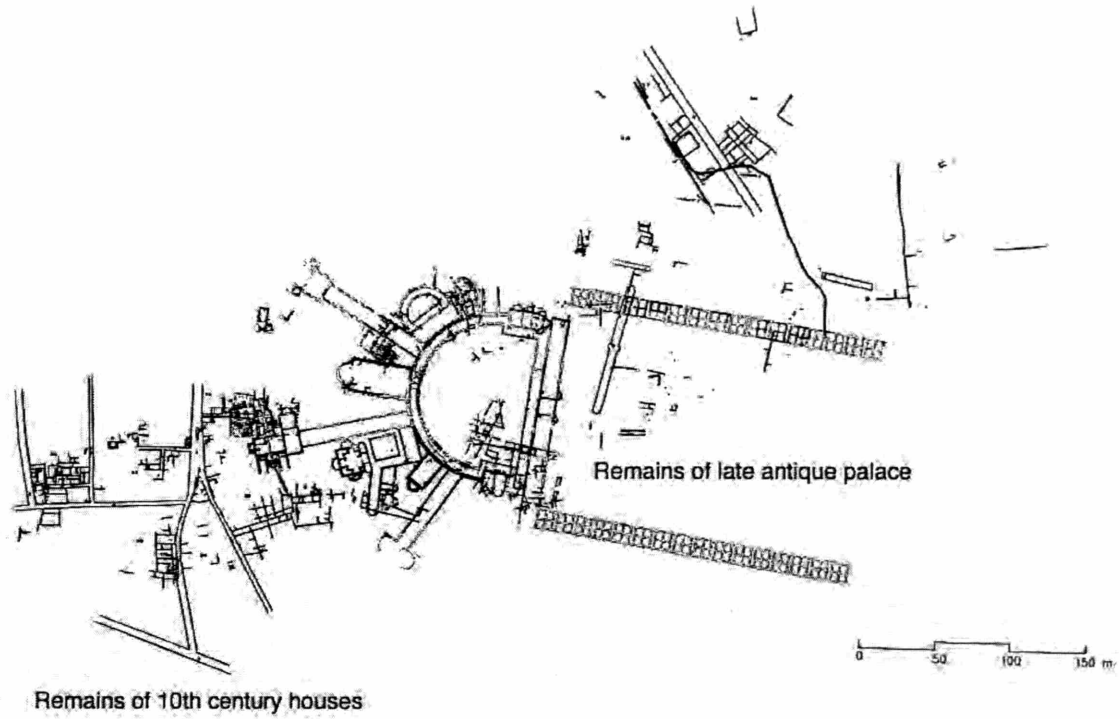


Figure 38 Sculptural fragments excavated at Al-Rummaniya c. 1912 (Velázquez Bosco, *Medina Azzahra y Alamiriya*)

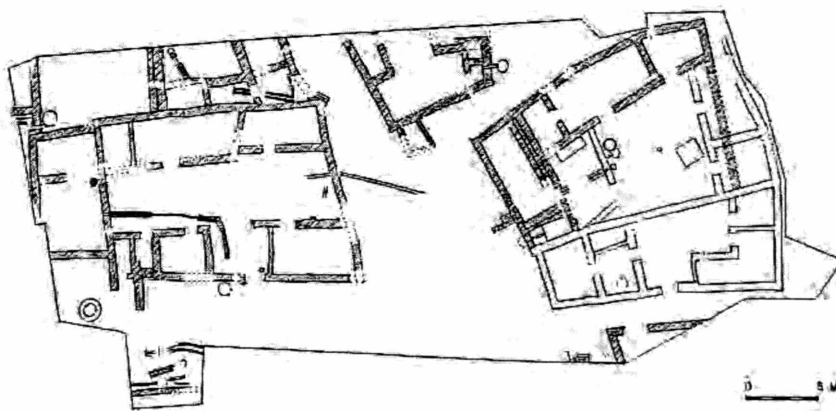


**Figure 39 Painted wall decoration, Umayyad baths, Cordoba**





**Figure 40** Cercadilla site with remains of 10th century suburb and Late Antique palace complex (after Rafael Hidalgo et al.)



**Figure 41** Plan, 10th century houses excavated at Cercadilla site (Elena Castro del Río,)



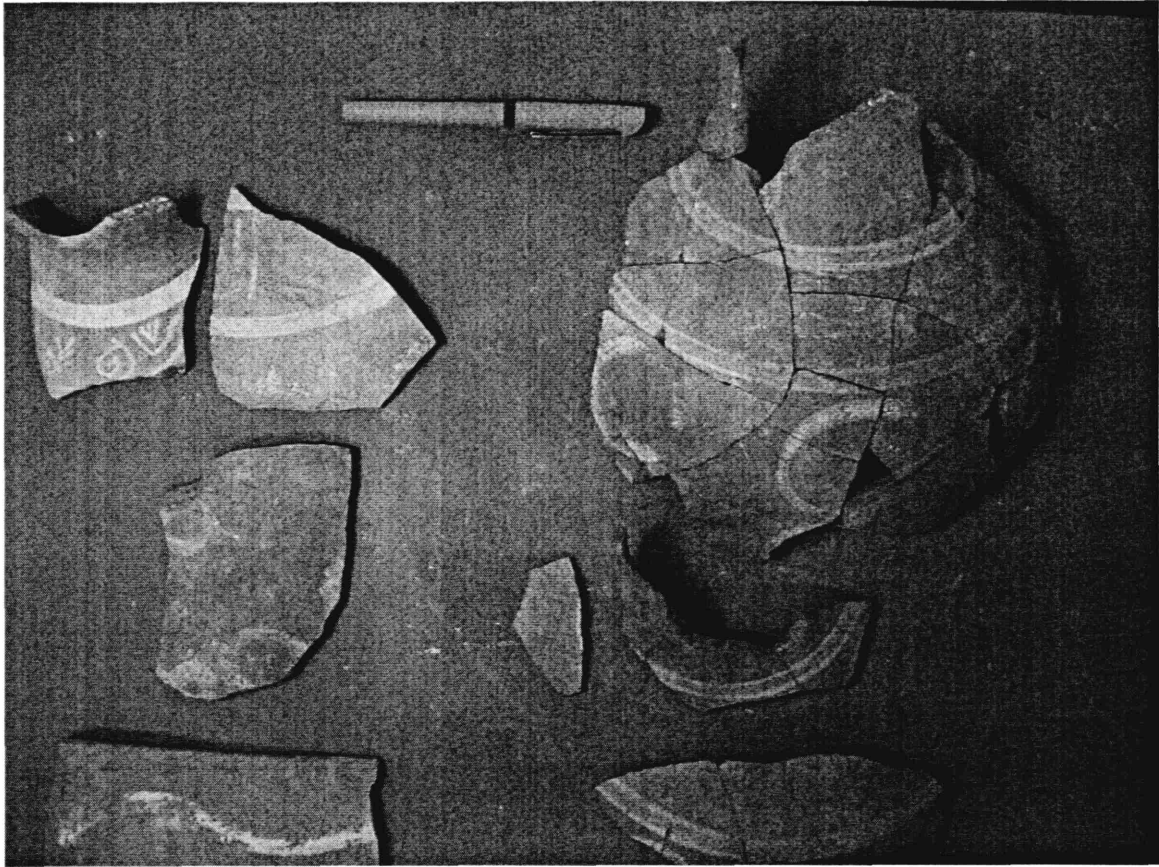
**Figure 42 10th c. courtyard houses, Cercadilla. Remains of courtyard garden with stepped pool at upper right**



**Figure 43** Fragments of carved stone ornament excavated west of Cordoba (Valladares site). Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Cordoba



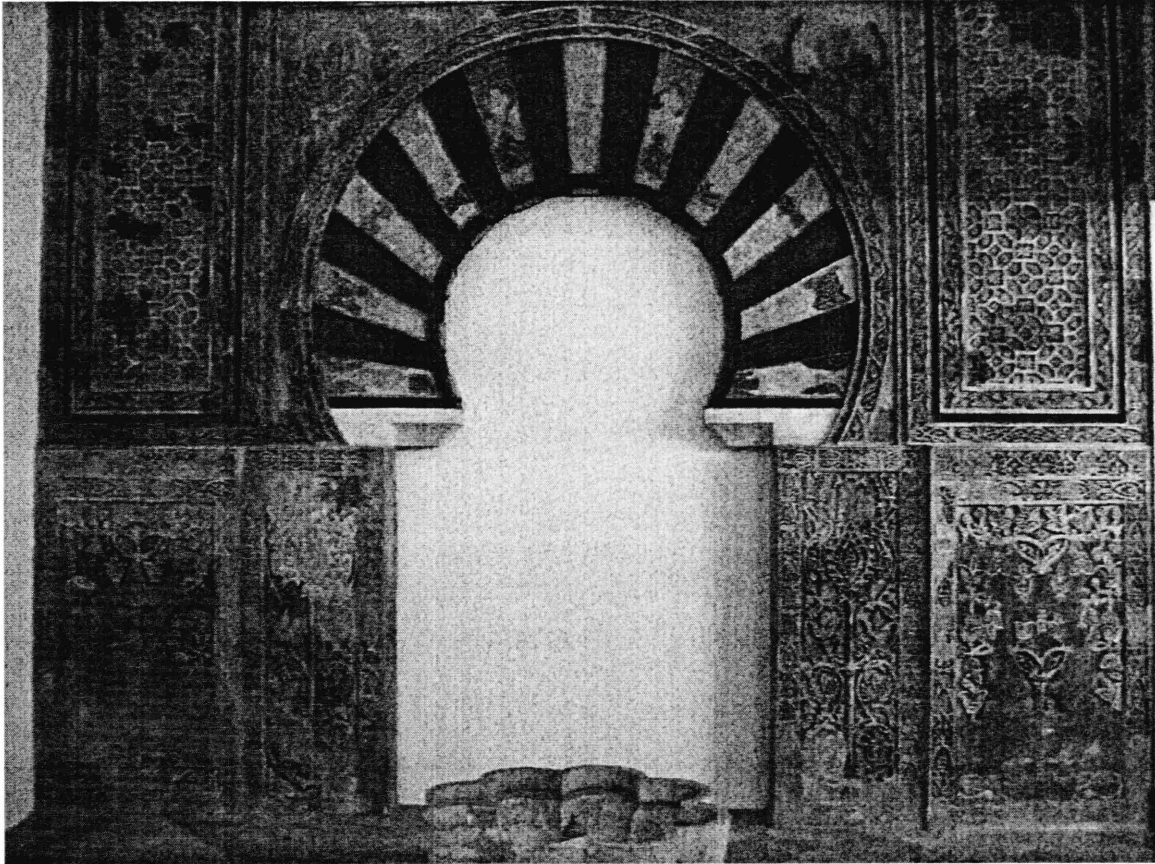
**Figure 44 Detail, carved stone ornament (Valladares site). Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Cordoba**



**Figure 45 Pottery excavated at Valladares site. Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Córdoba**



**Figure 46 Carved stone panels w/ horseshoe arch opening excavated west of Cordoba (Cortijo del Alcaide site). Other panels from the same site appear on adjacent walls. Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Cordoba**



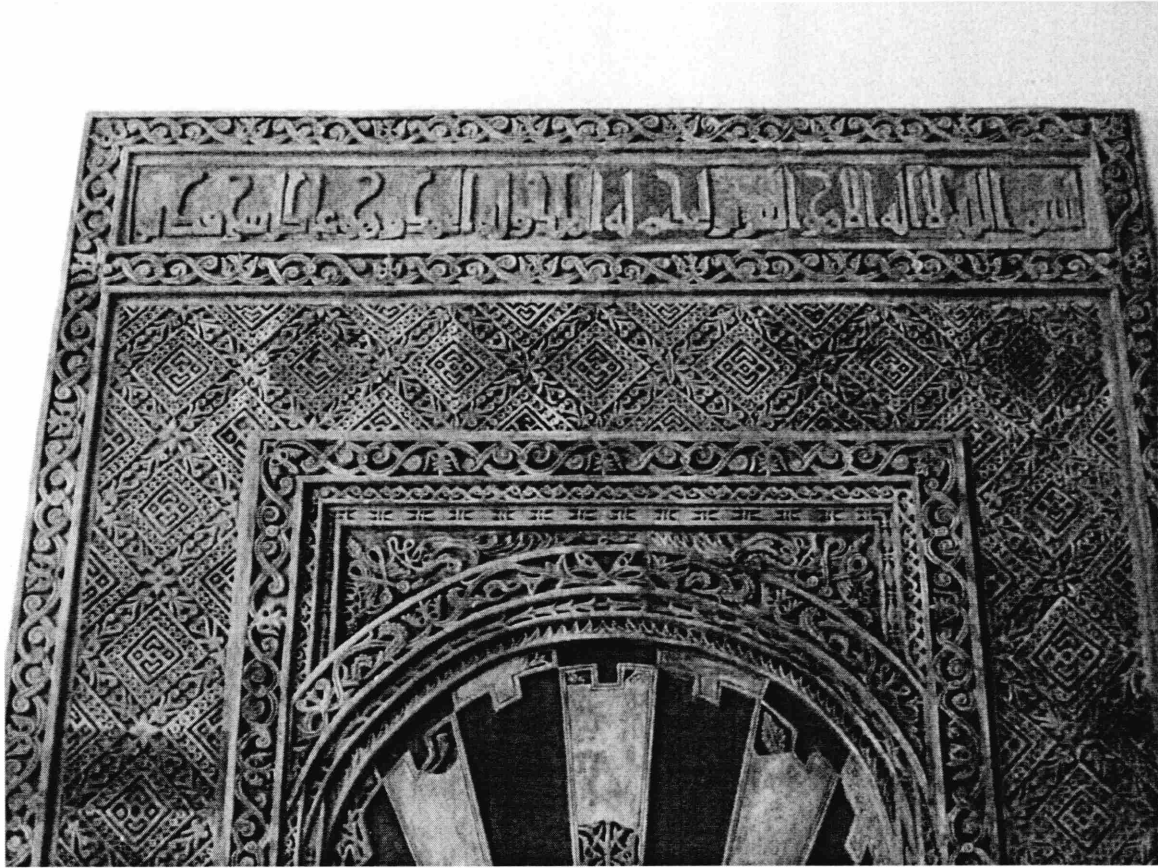
**Figure 47 View, Cortijo del Alcaide carved stone panel and arch**





Figure 48 Detail, carved stone panel (Cortijo del Alcaide site)

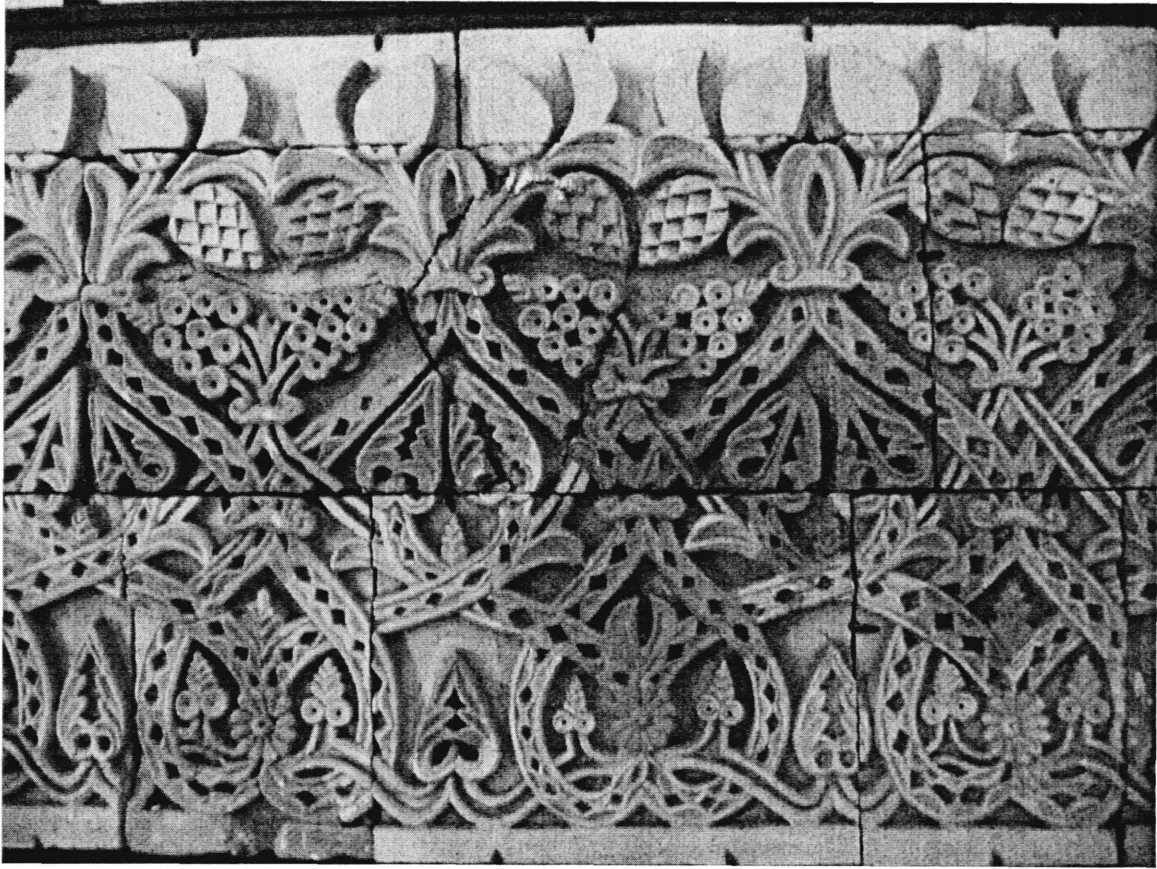




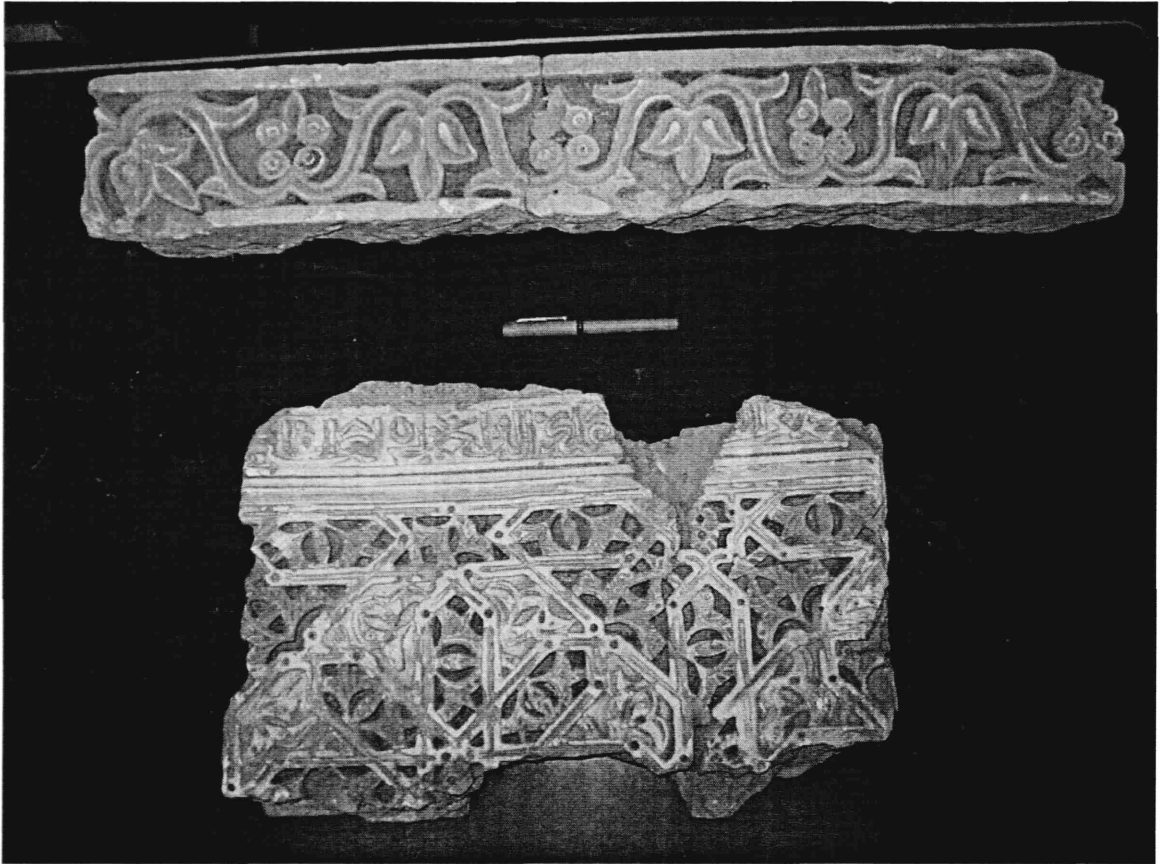
**Figure 49** Carved stone panel with epigraphic inscription. (Cortijo del Alcaide site)



Figure 50 Carved stone panels excavated at Cortijo del Alcaide site



**Figure 51** Detail, carved stone panel. Cortijo del Alcaide site



**Figure 52** Carved stone fragments from Cortijo del Alcaide site. Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Cordoba.



**Figure 53** Carved stone fragments from Cortijo del Alcaide site. Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Cordoba. The epigraphy is illegible as Arabic





**Figure 54** Carved stone ornament (Chinales site). Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Córdoba



**Figure 55 10th century bridge west of Cordoba's urban center (Cañito de Maria Ruiz site)**



**Figure 56 Remains of 10th c. pool or planting bed (Cañito de Maria Ruiz)**





**Figure 57** Detail, interlacing arches on inner face of pool or planting bed (Cañito de Maria Ruiz)

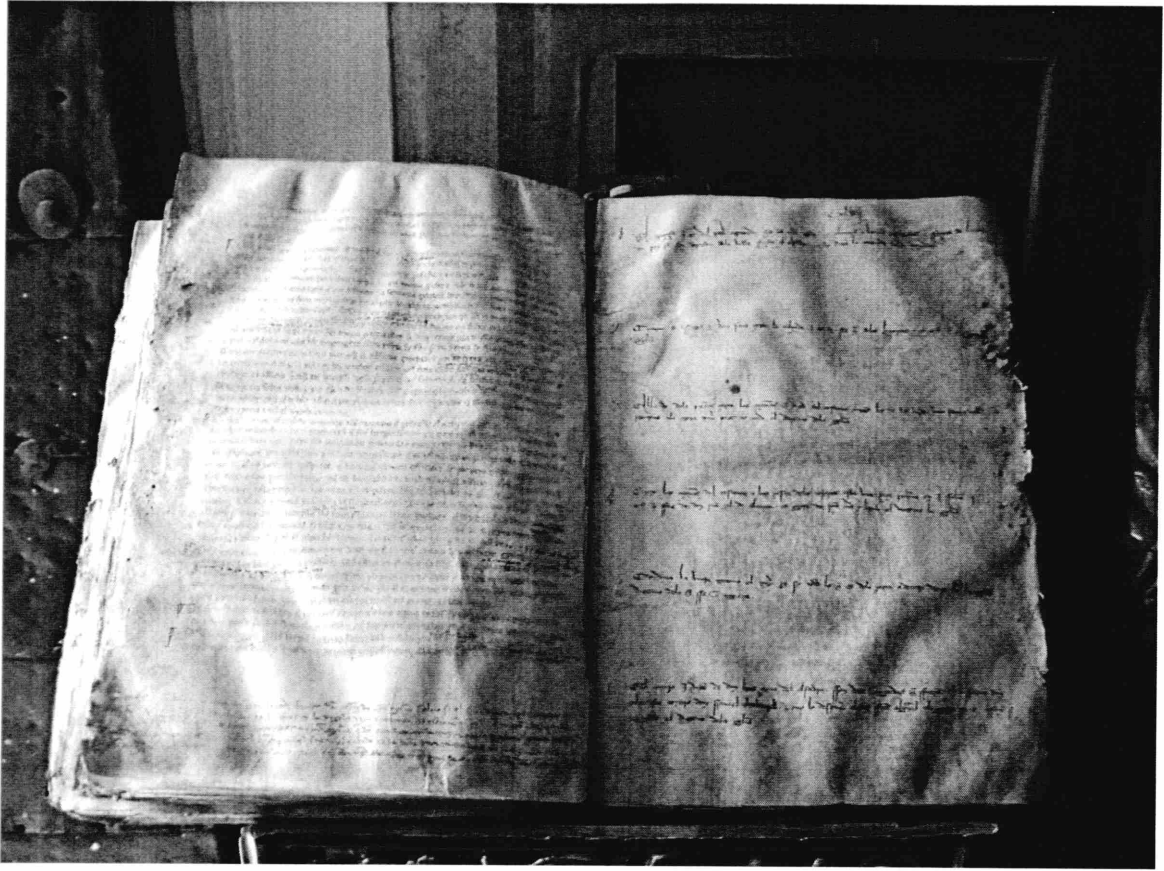
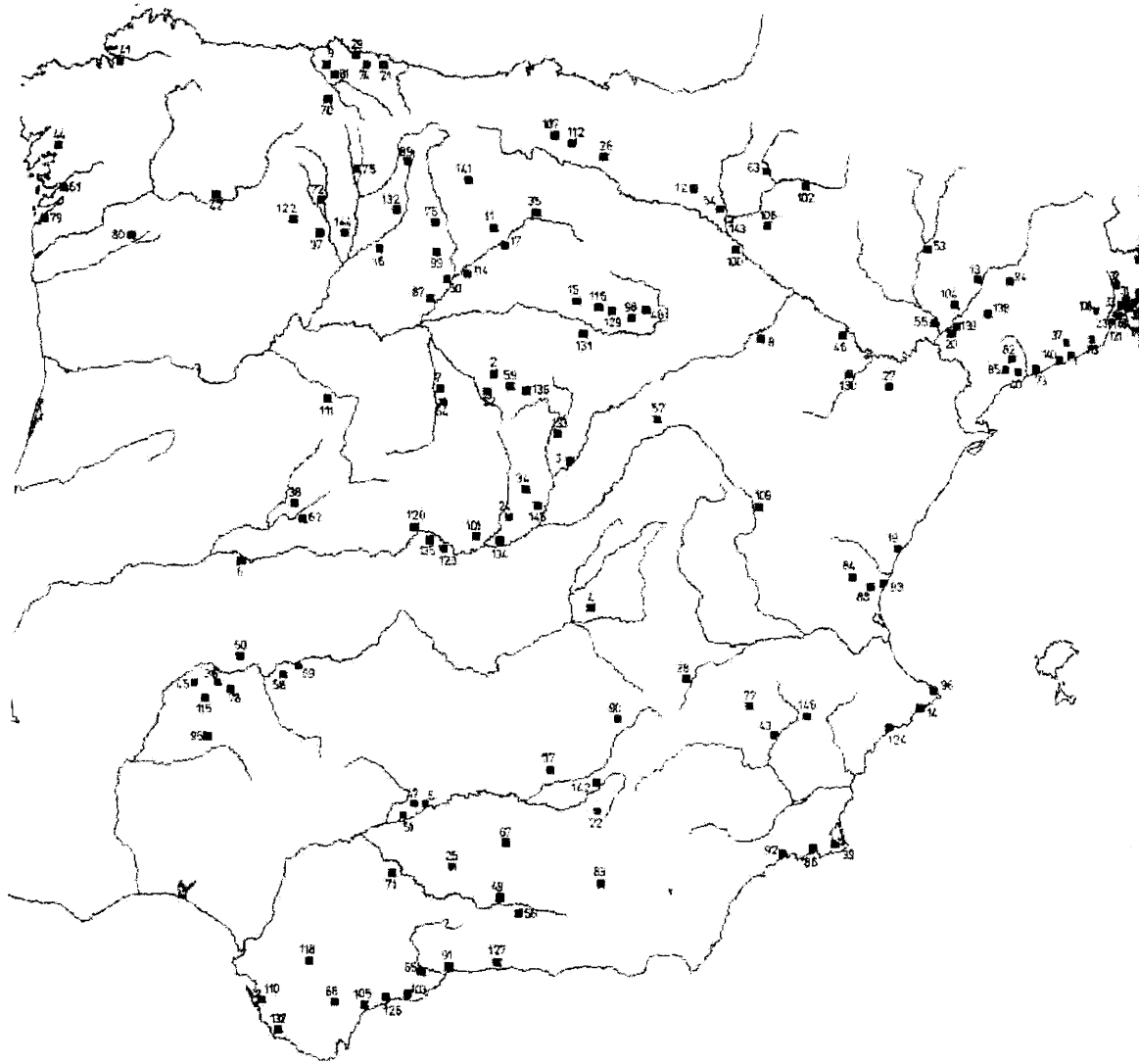
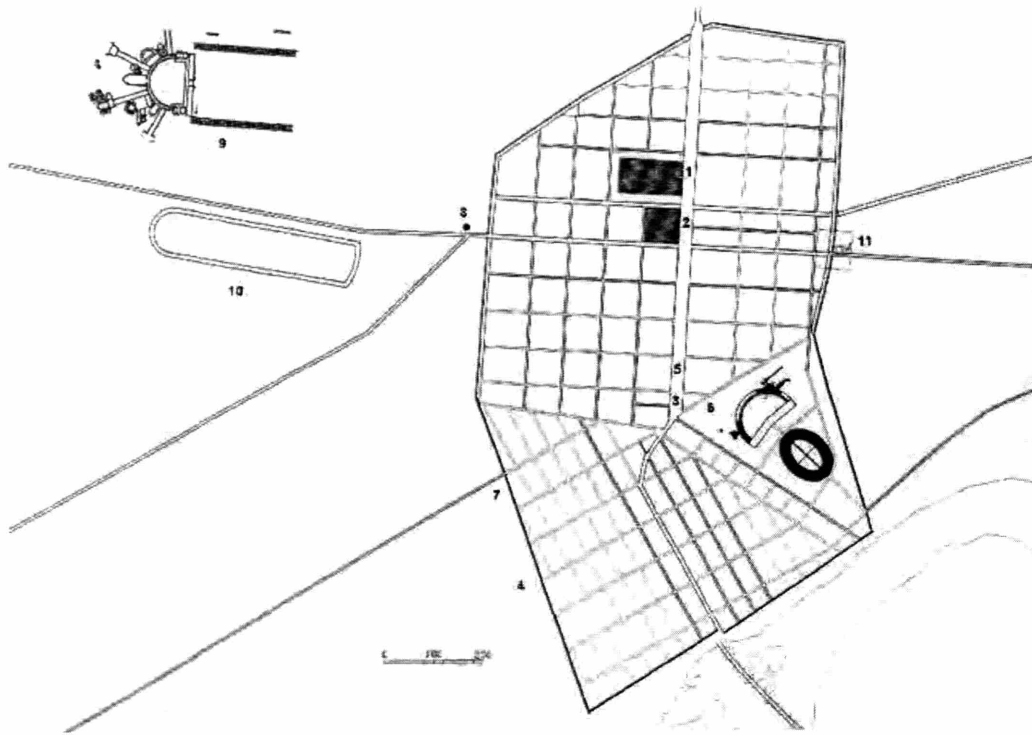


Figure 58 13th c. Libro de Donadios. Archivo Catedral de Cordoba



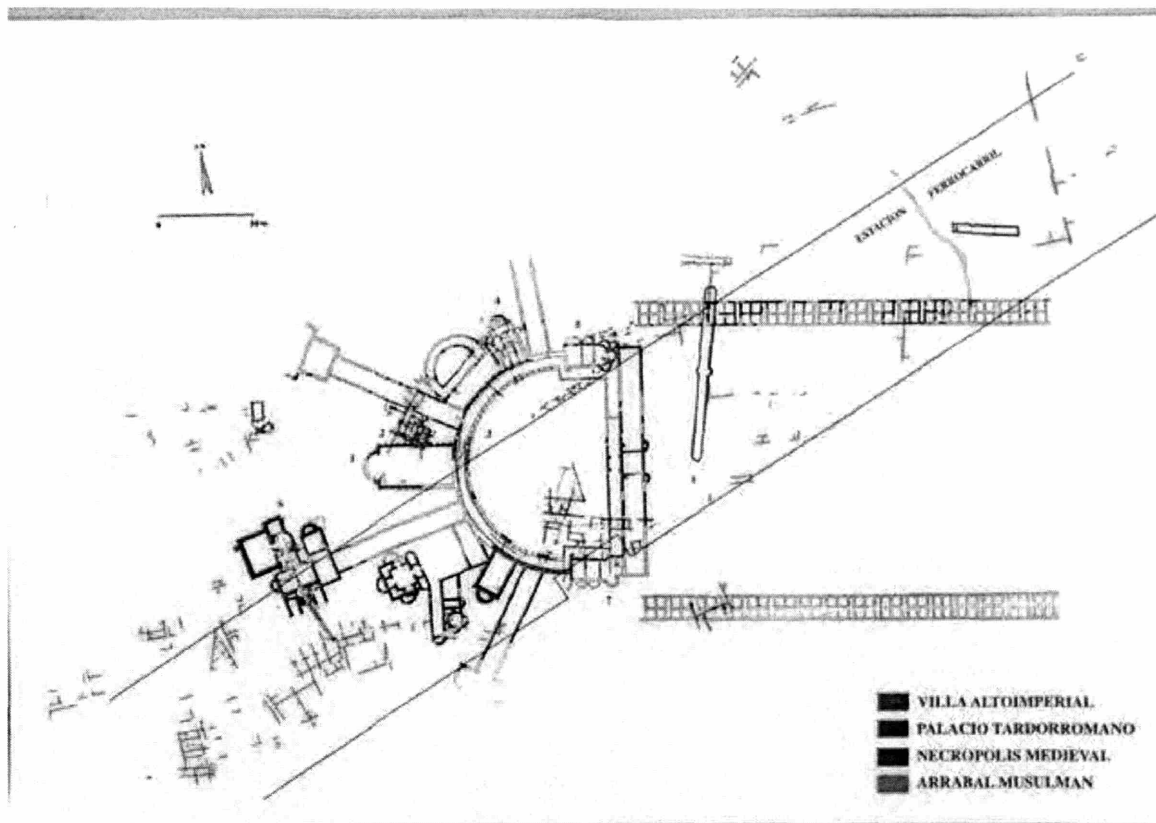
**Figure 59 Map of Roman villa sites in Spain. Those located in the province of Córdoba are numbers 5 (Villa de Valenzoneja, Alcolea), 25 (Fuente de las Piedras, Cabra), 47 (Cortijo del Alcaide), and 51 (Encinarejo de los Frailes, Villarubia). Number 47, Cortijo del Alcaide, is presented by Cruz Fernandez as a Roman villa site, but is well known as an Umayyad site (10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century) from which carved stone panels were excavated in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.**

(Ma. Cruz Fernandez Castro, *Villas Romanas en España*)



**Figure 60 Roman Cordoba with Cercadilla at upper left.**

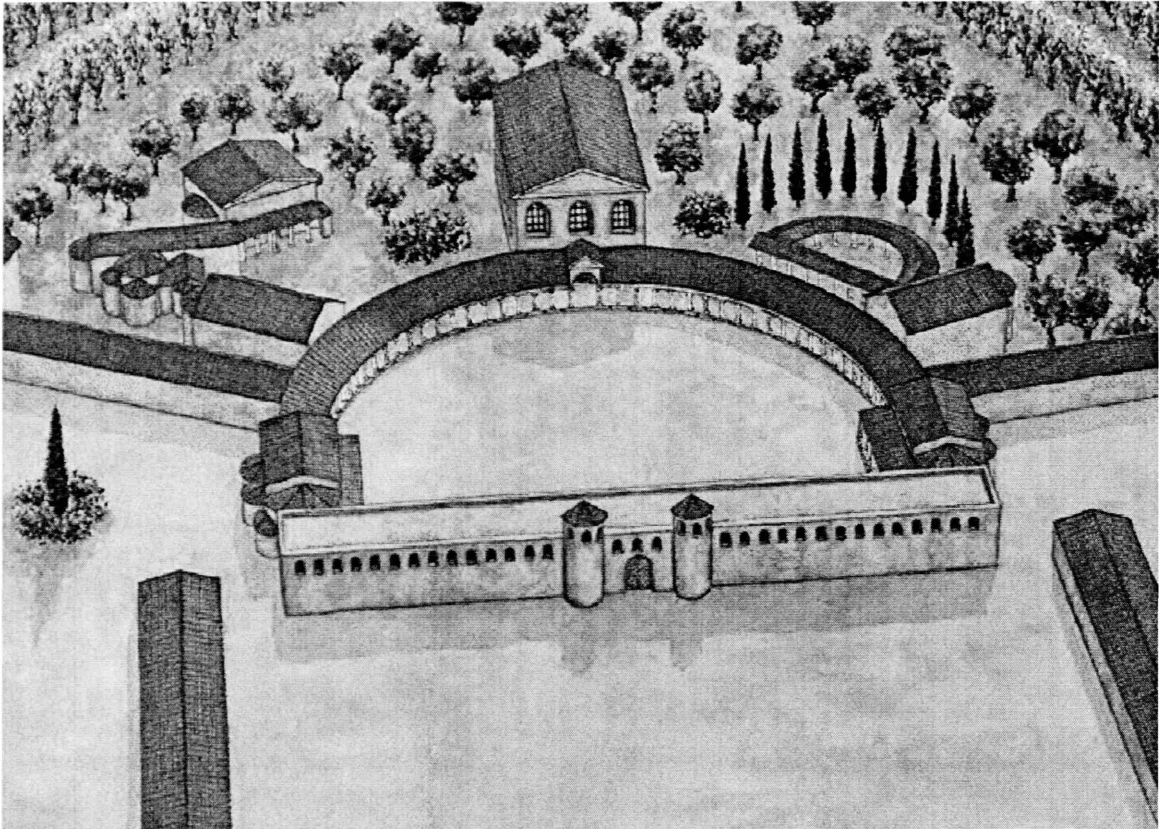
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/5936/docs/urcrom.htm>



**Figure 61 Reconstructed plan, Cercadilla.**

(Rafael Hidalgo, J.C. Fuertes, A. Montejo  
"Site Archaeologique de Cercadilla,"

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/5936/fotos/mapa.jpg>)

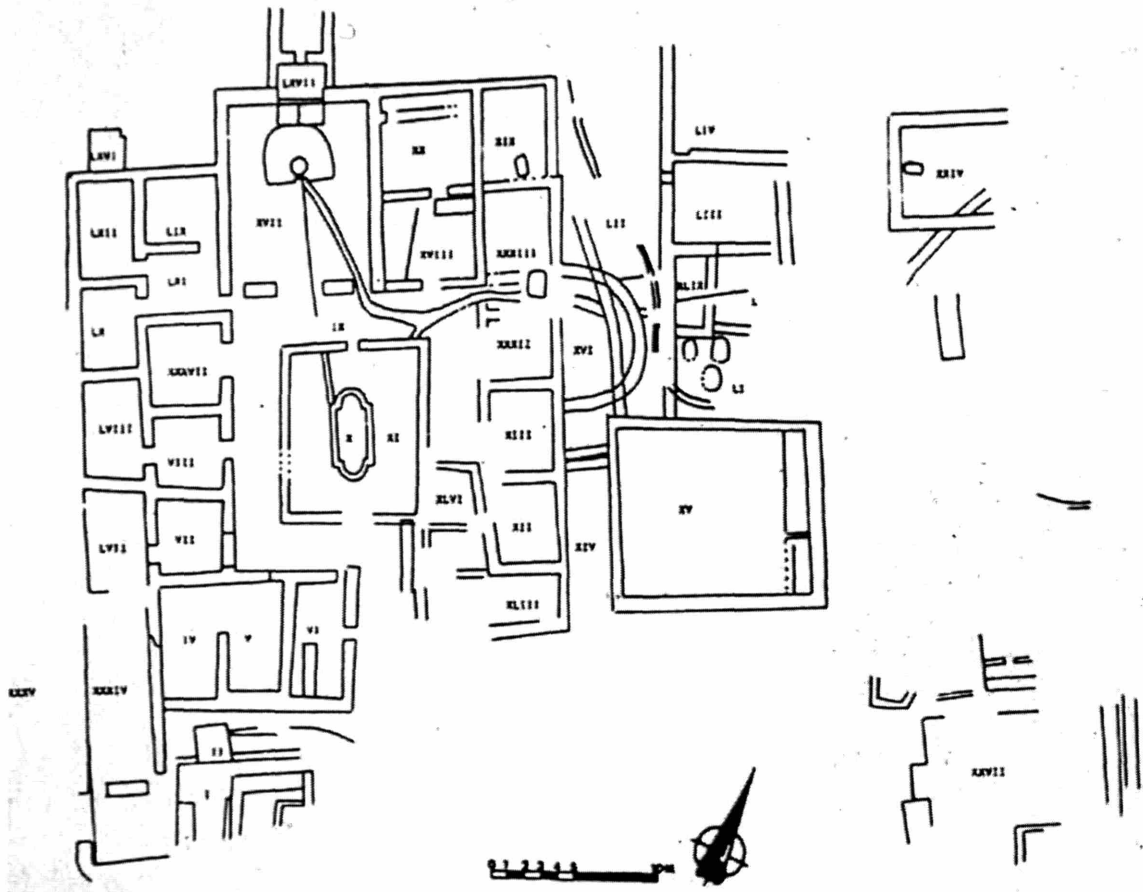


**Figure 62 Proposed reconstruction, palace at Cercadilla.**

Rafael Hidalgo, J.C. Fuertes, A. Montejo, "Site Archæologique de Cercadilla,"  
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/5936/fotos/rom1b.gif>



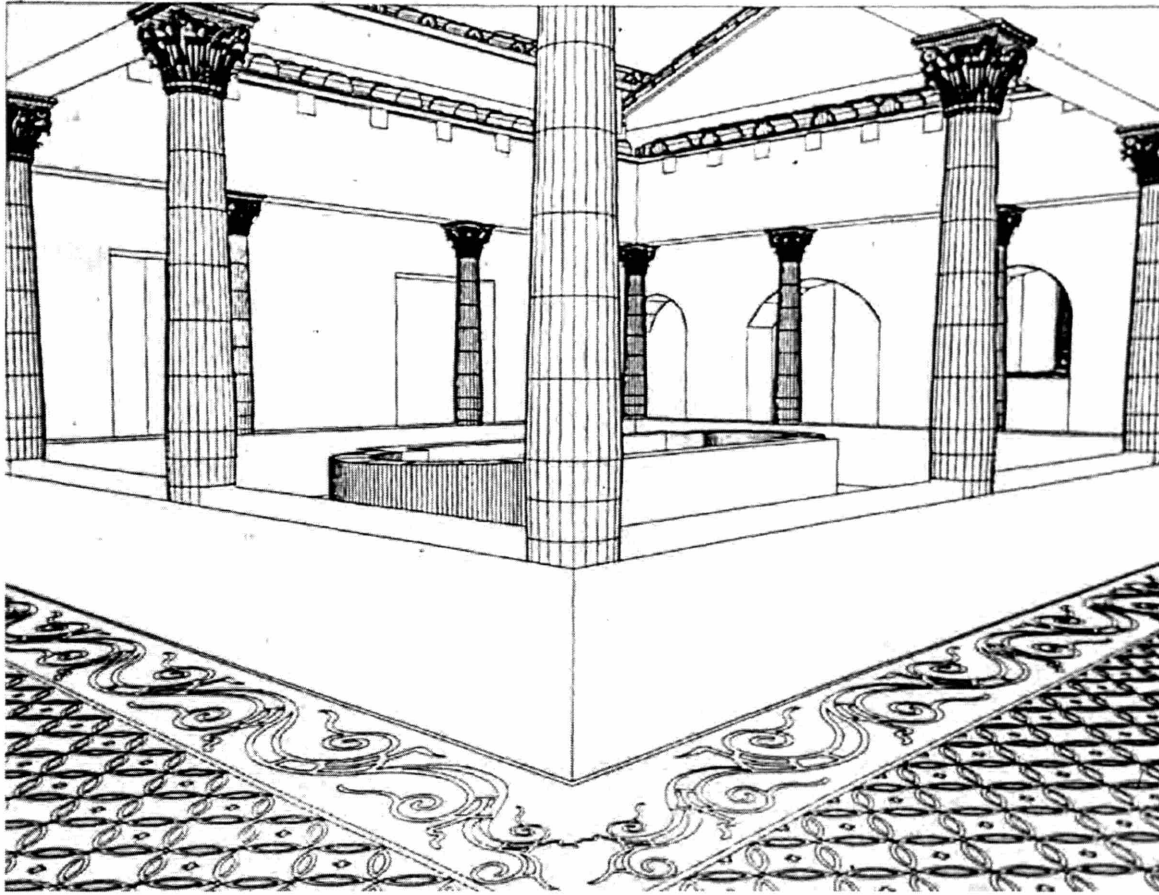
**Figure 63** Mosaic of Henchir Toungar with depiction of semi-circular portico.  
(Sarnowski, *Les Représentations de Villas Sur Les Mosaiques Africaines Tardives*)



**Figure 64 Plan, Villa of El Ruedo, Córdoba.**

(D. Vaquerizo and J.R. Carrillo, "The Roman villa of El Ruedo (Almedinilla, Córdoba)," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 8 (1995), p. 121-151.)





**Figure 65** Reconstruction of peristyle, Villa of El Ruedo, (Córdoba. D. Vaquerizo and J.R. Carrillo, “The Roman villa of El Ruedo (Almedinilla, Córdoba),” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 8 (1995), p. 121-151.)

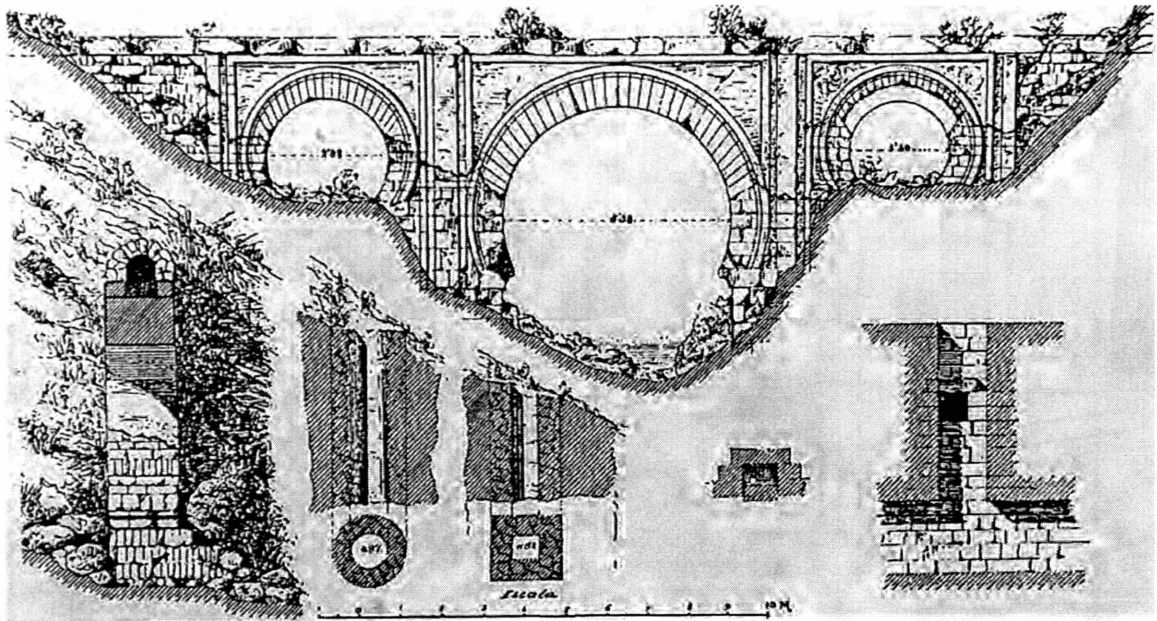


Figure 66 Valdepuentes Aqueduct near Madinat al-Zahra'. (Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape and Vision*, after Velazquez Bosco)

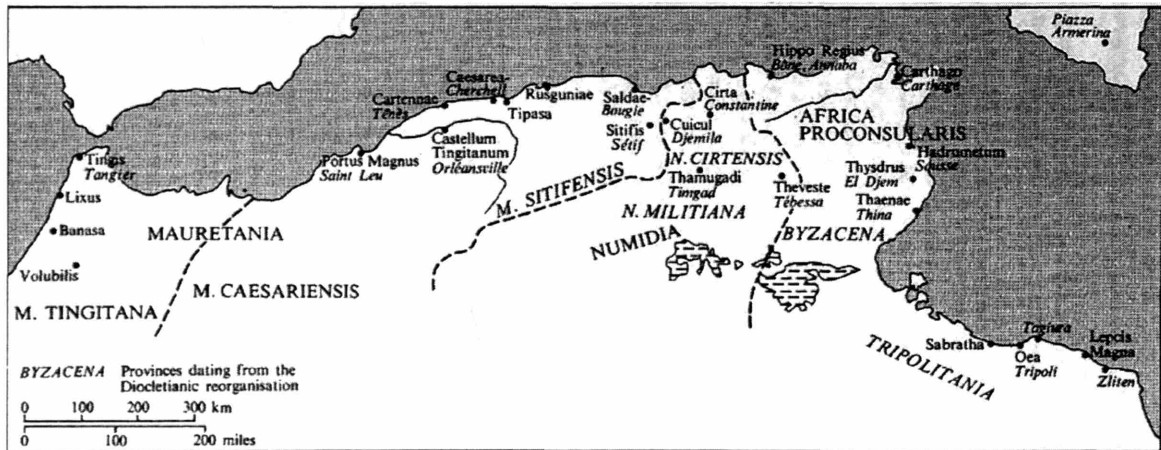
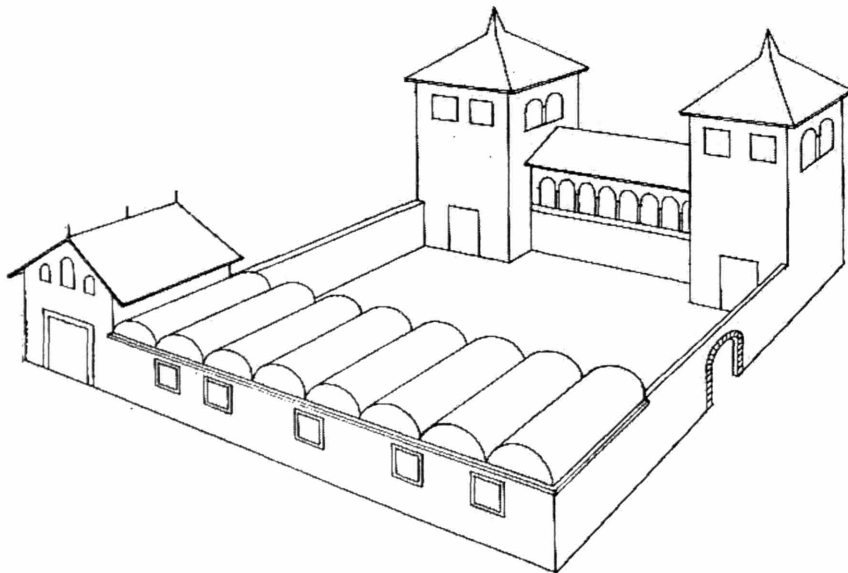


Figure 67 Roman North Africa (Dunbabin, *Mosaics of Roman North Africa*)



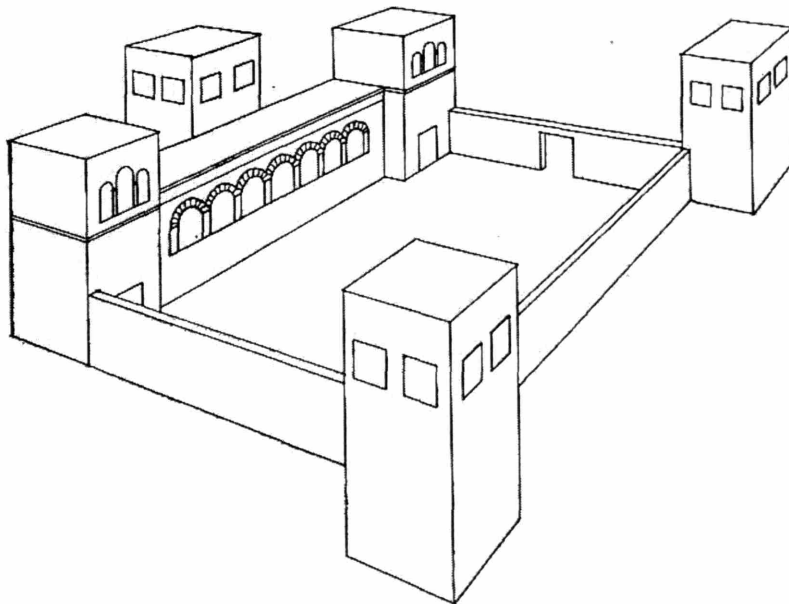
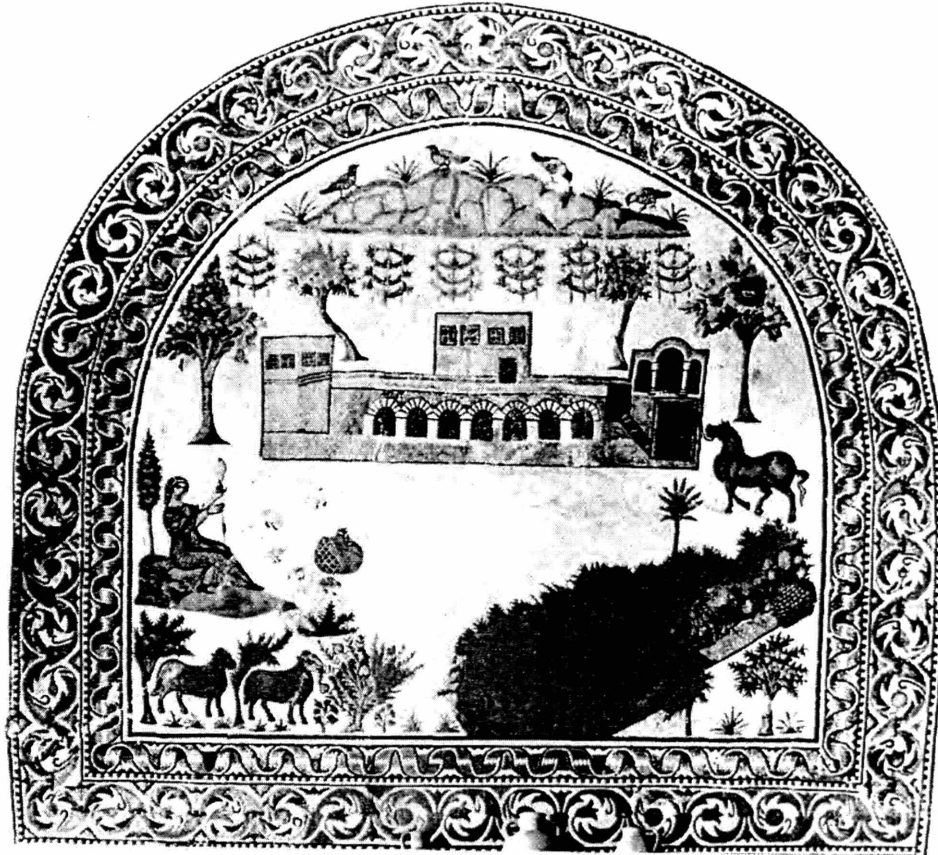
**Figure 68 Mosaic of Lord Julius, Carthage (Bardo Museum, Tunis). Katherine Dunbabin, *Mosaics of Roman North Africa***

112. Tabarka, Villa Mosaics  
(Tabarka I, i)



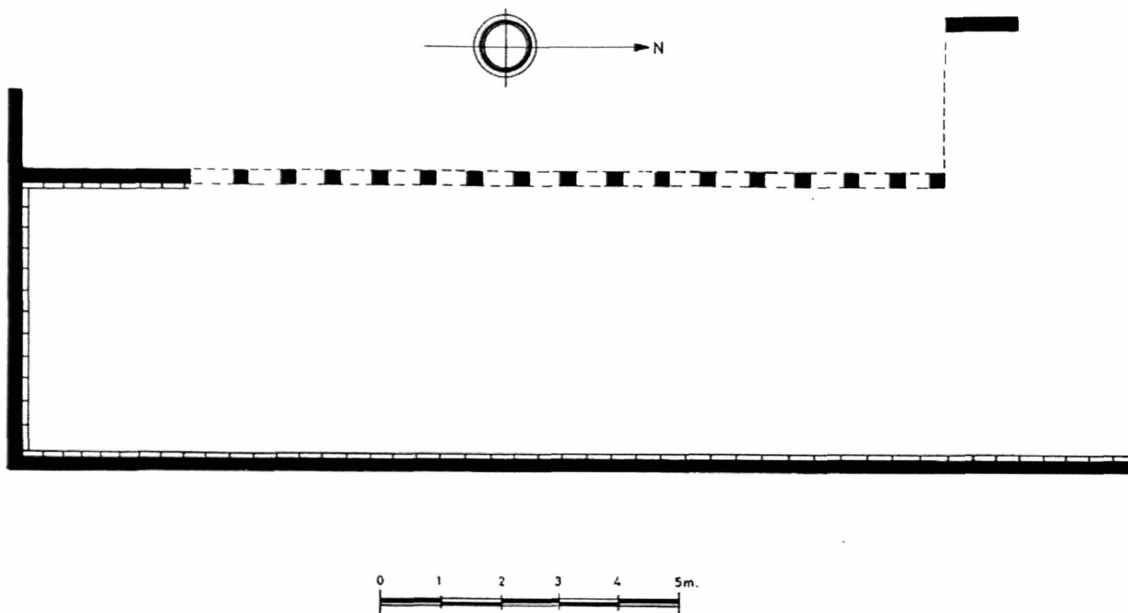
**Figure 69** Apsidal mosaic, Tabarka (Bardo Museum, Tunis).& proposed reconstruction

Katherine Dunbabin, *Mosaics of Roman North Africa*, Sarnowski, *Les Représentations de Villas Sur Les Mosaïques Africaines Tardives*)



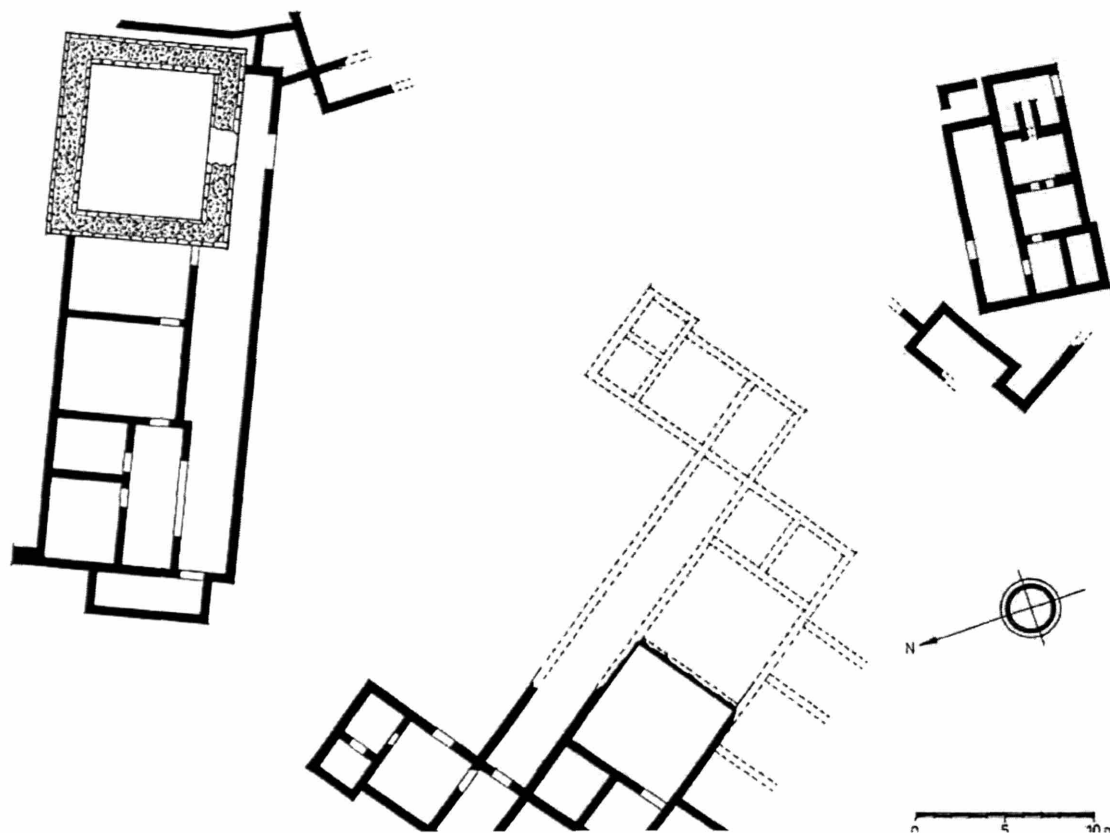
**Figure 70** Apsidal mosaic, Tabarka (Bardo Museum, Tunis), & proposed reconstruction

Katherine Dunbabin, *Mosaics of Roman North Africa*, Sarnowski, *Les Représentations de Villas Sur Les Mosaiques Africaines Tardives*)



**Figure 71 Plan, Villa de Centroña, La Coruña, Spain.**

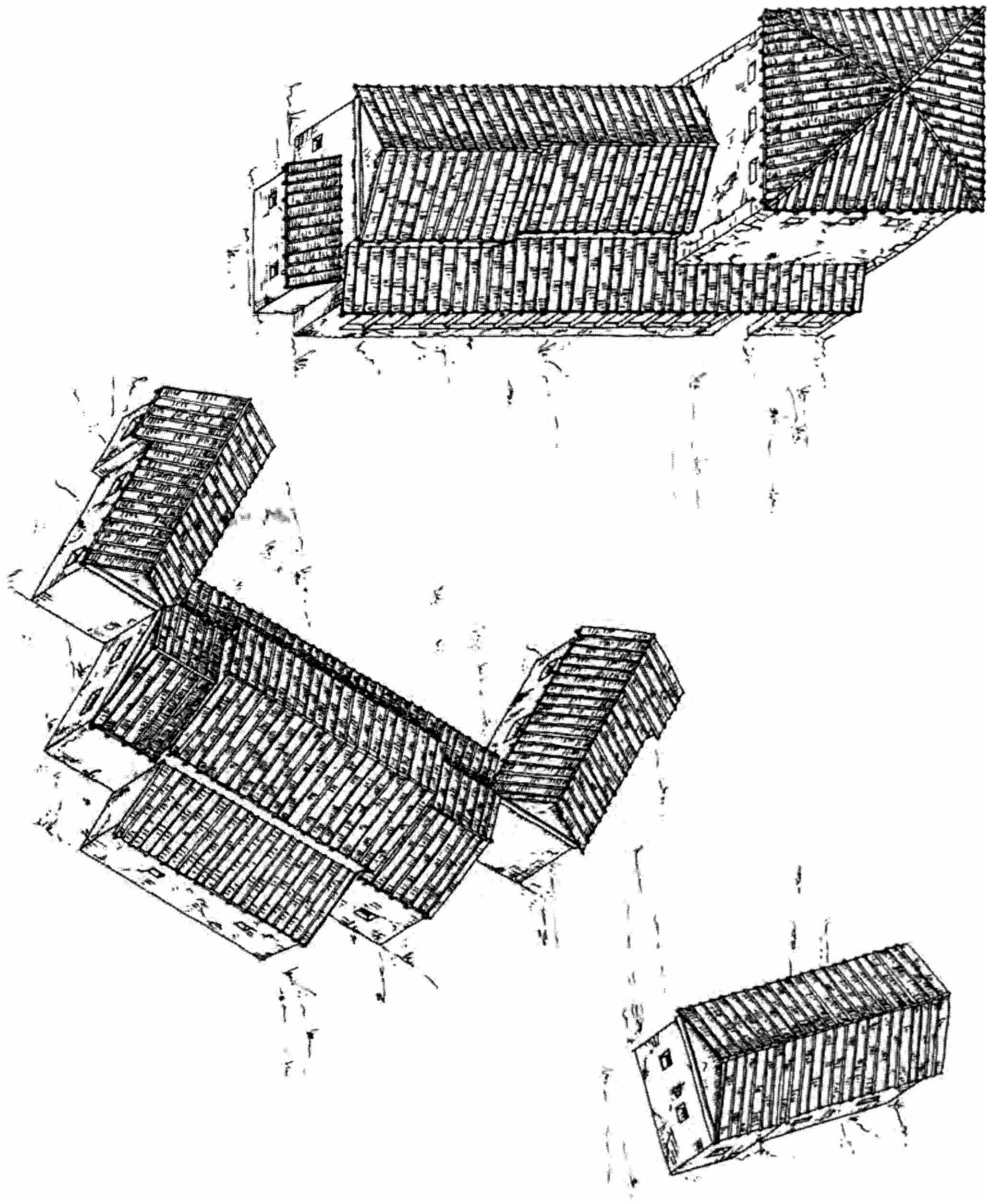
(Fernandez Castro, *Villas Romanas en España*)



**Figure 72 Plan, Villa de Murias de Beloño (Cenero, Oviedo, Spain)**

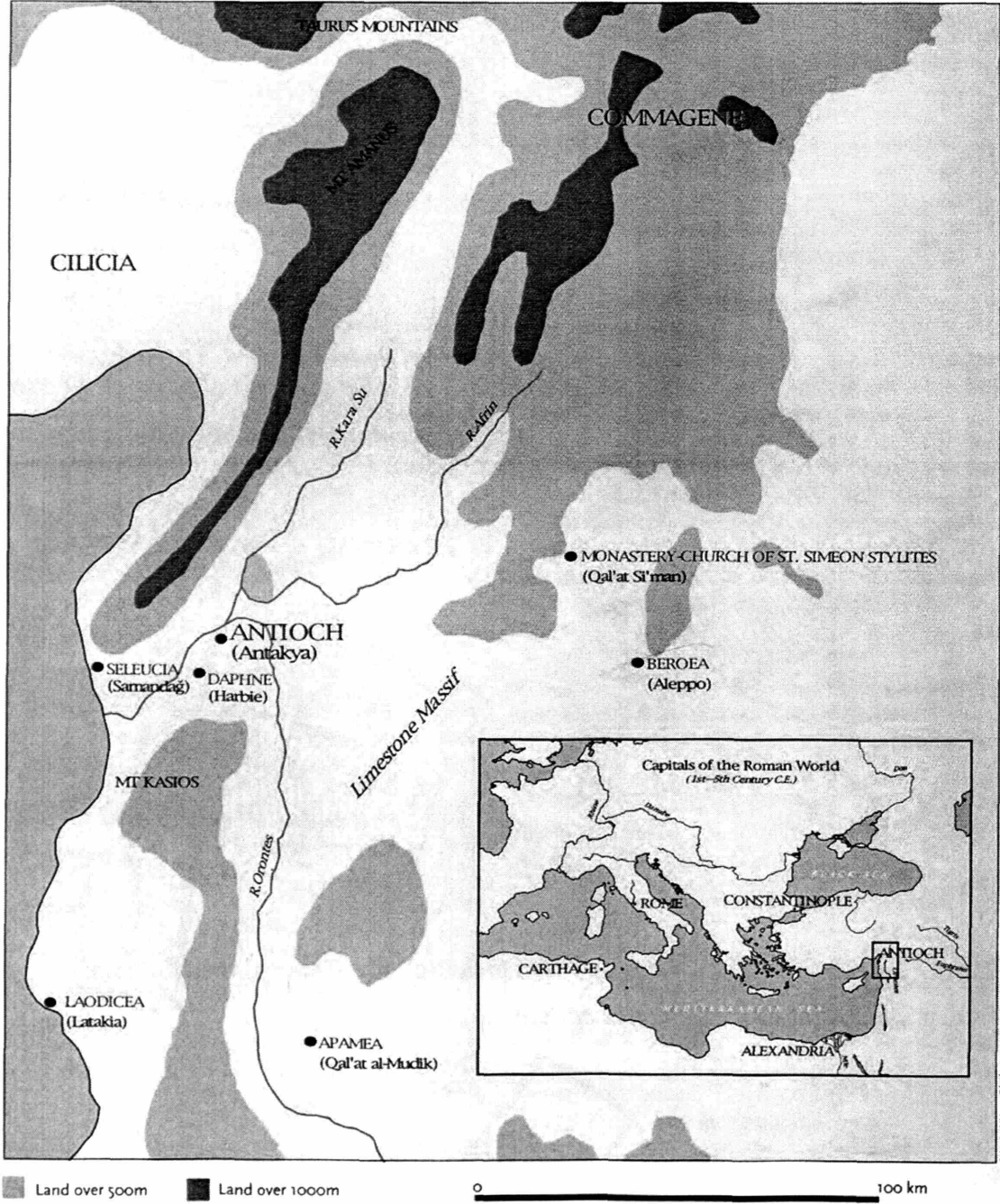
(Fernandez Castro, *Villas Romanas en España*)





**Figure 73 Reconstruction, Villa de Murias de Beloño (Cenero, Oviedo, Spain)**  
(Fernandez Castro, *Villas Romanas en España*)

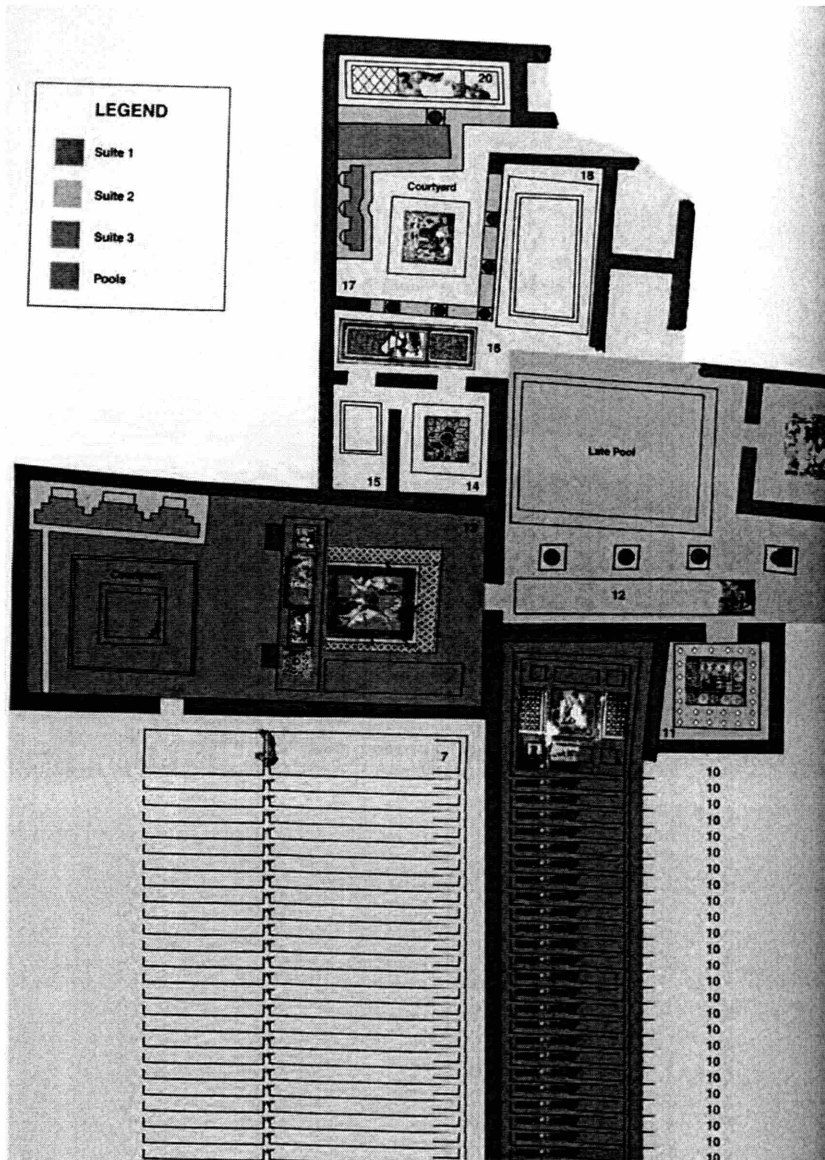
**ANTIOCH AND SURROUNDING REGION**



Map: Wes Chilton, Victoria I, Mary Todd

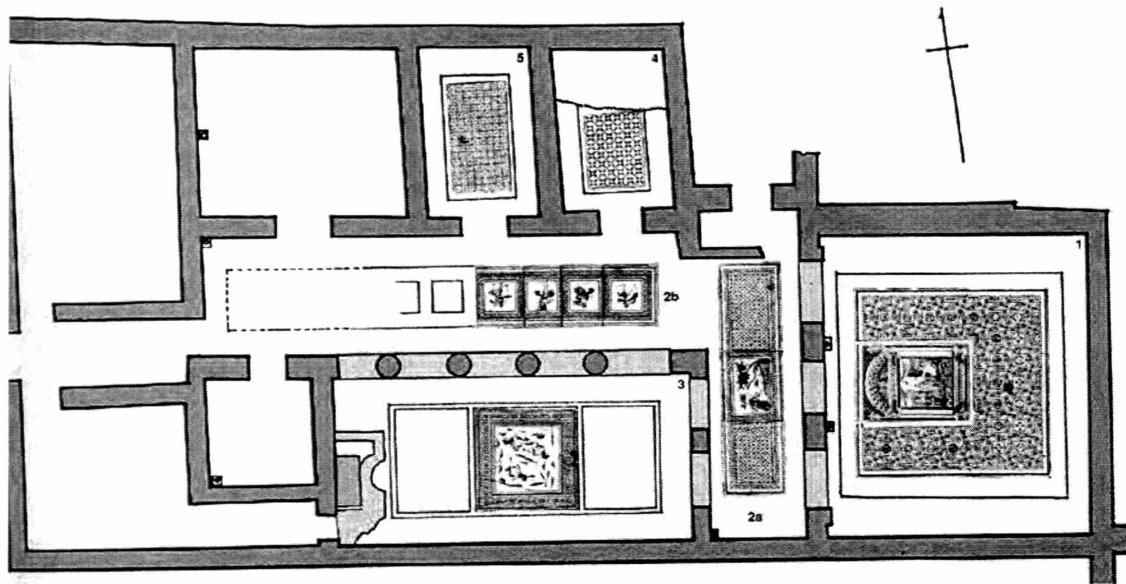
**Figure 74 Map, Antioch and its region. Daphne suburb 9 km south of Antioch.**





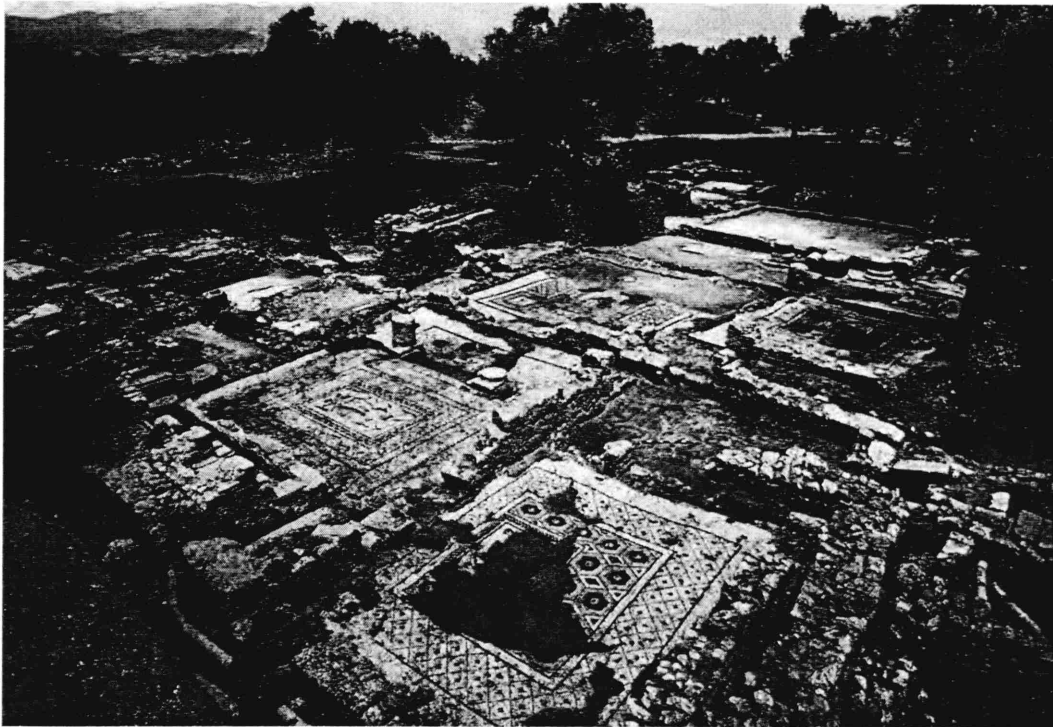
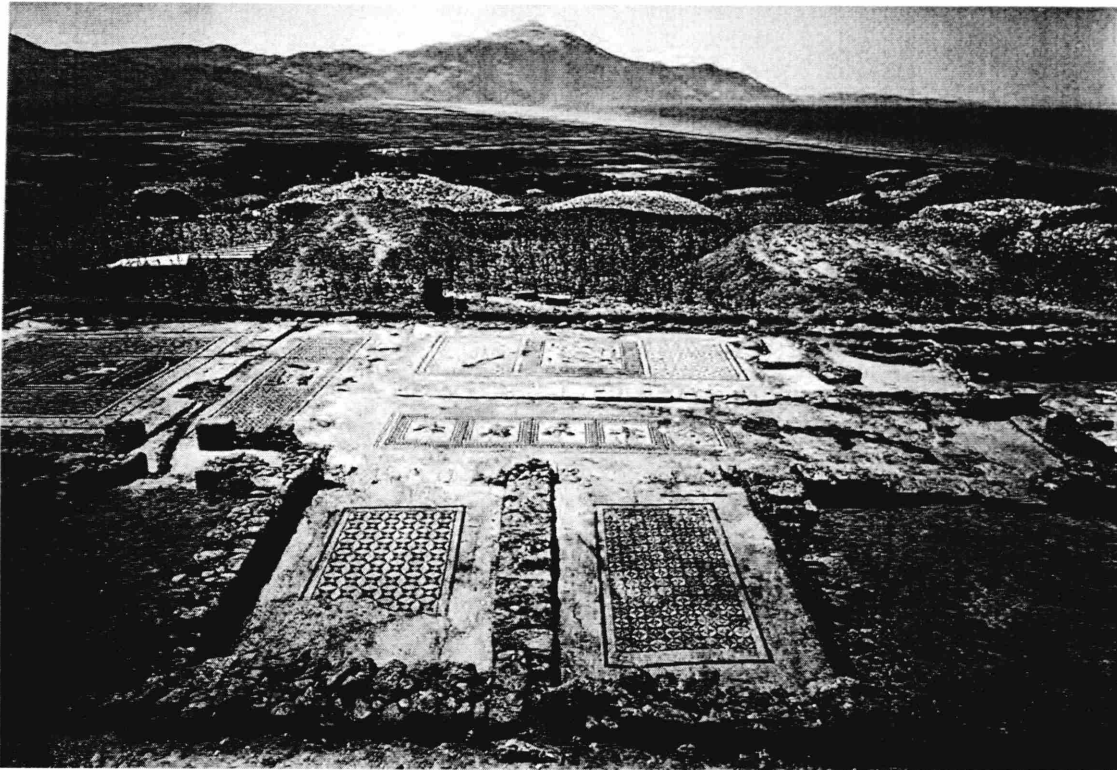
**Figure 75 Plan, House of Menander (Antioch)**

(John J. Dobbins, "The Houses at Antioch," part Antioch: The Lost Ancient City ed. Christine Kondoleon (Princeton: Princeton UP/Worcester Art Museum, 2000), 51-62.)

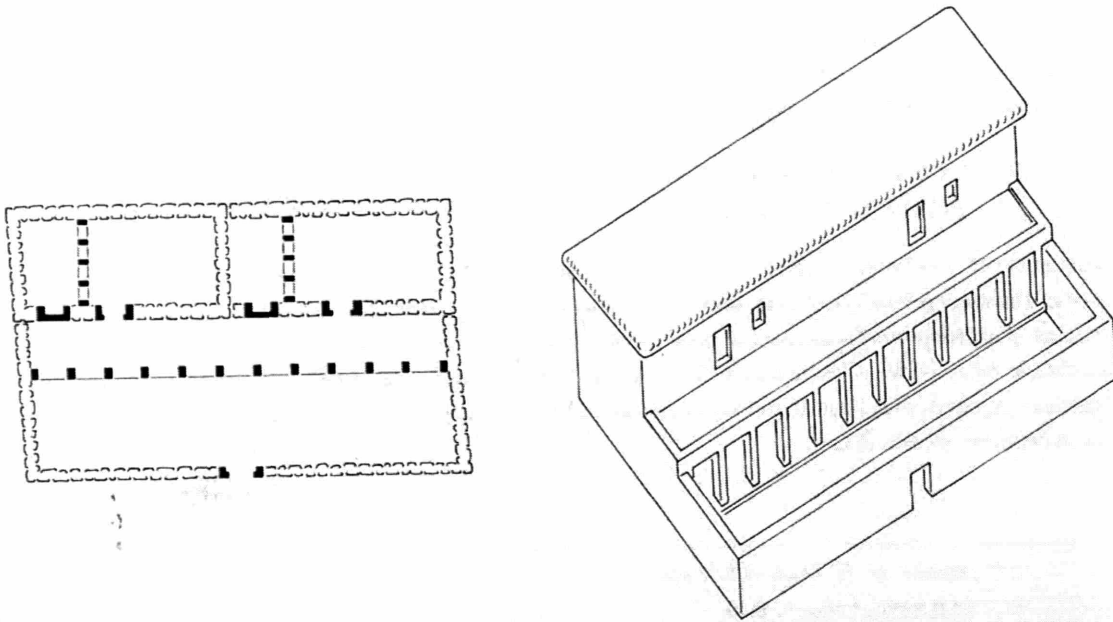


**Figure 76 Plan, House of the Drinking Contest, Seleucia Piera.**

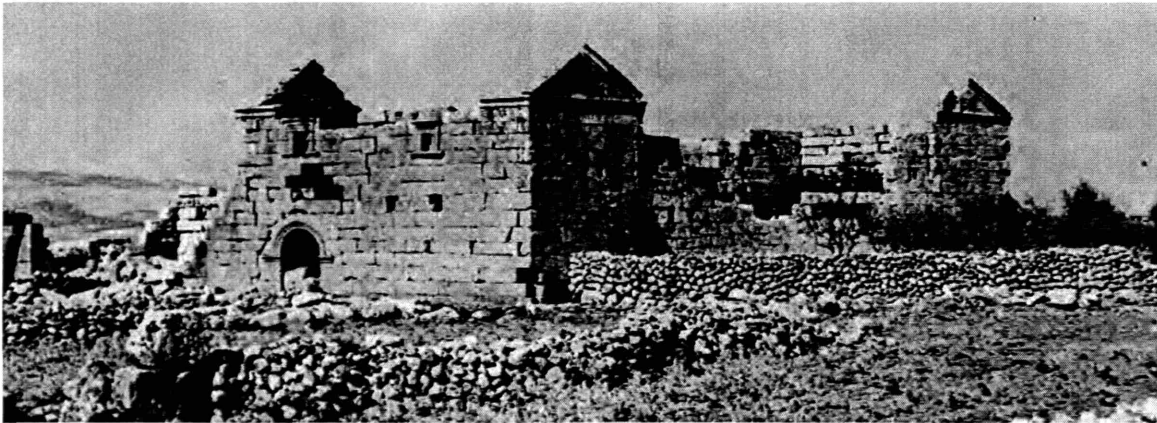
(John J. Dobbins, "The Houses at Antioch," part *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* ed. Christine Kondoleon (Princeton: Princeton UP/Worcester Art Museum, 2000), 51-62.)



**Figure 77** Views of House of the Drinking Contest (**top**) and House of Menander (**bottom**)(John J. Dobbins, "The Houses at Antioch," part Antioch: The Lost Ancient City ed. Christine Kondoleon (Princeton: Princeton UP/Worcester Art Museum, 2000), 51-62.)



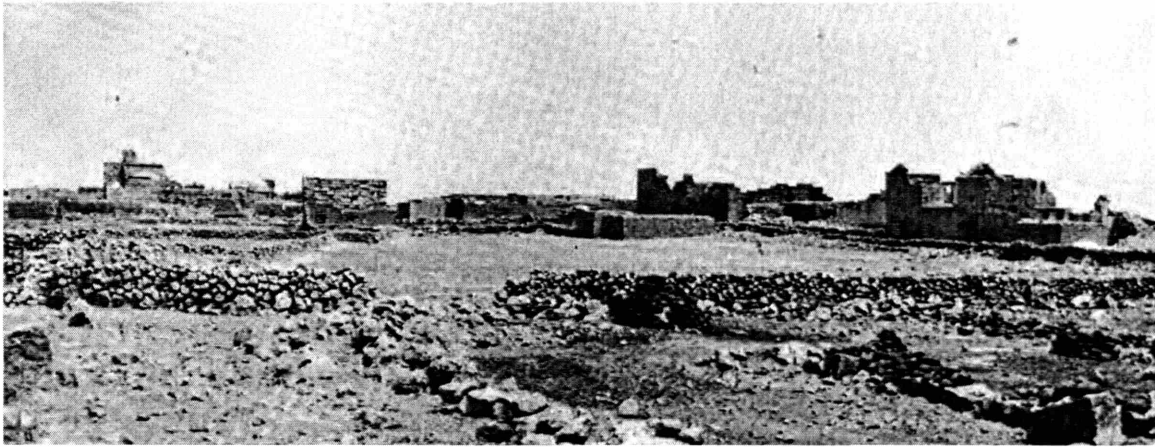
a



b

**Figure 78 a) Plan and reconstruction, farmhouse of Late Antique Syria (Maison de Taqle); b) View, House 25 in Ruweiha;**

*(Tate, Les Campagnes de la Syrie Du Nord I)*

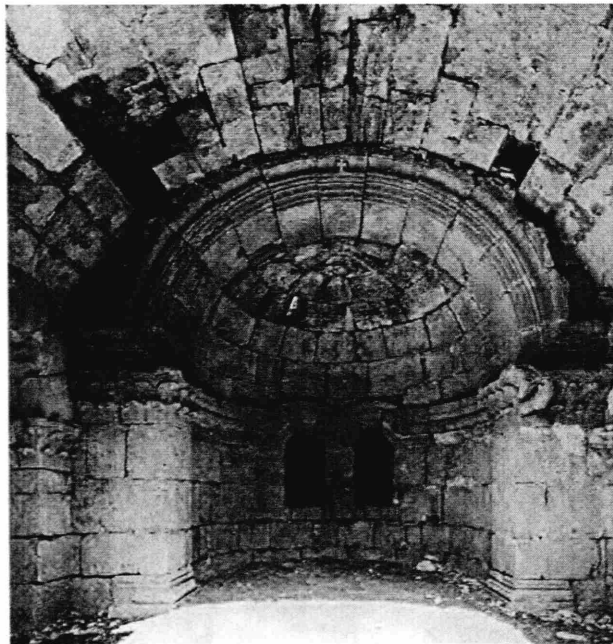


**Figure 79** View, Late Antique Syrian village of Ruweiha

(Tate, *Les Campagnes de la Syrie Du Nord I*)



a



b

**Figure 80** Ghassanid building, al-Rusafa (Syria). (a) interior, view from west entrance. (b) apse.

Elizabeth Key Fowden, "An Arab building at al-Rusafa-Sergiopolis," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 12 (2000), 303-324. pl. 72).



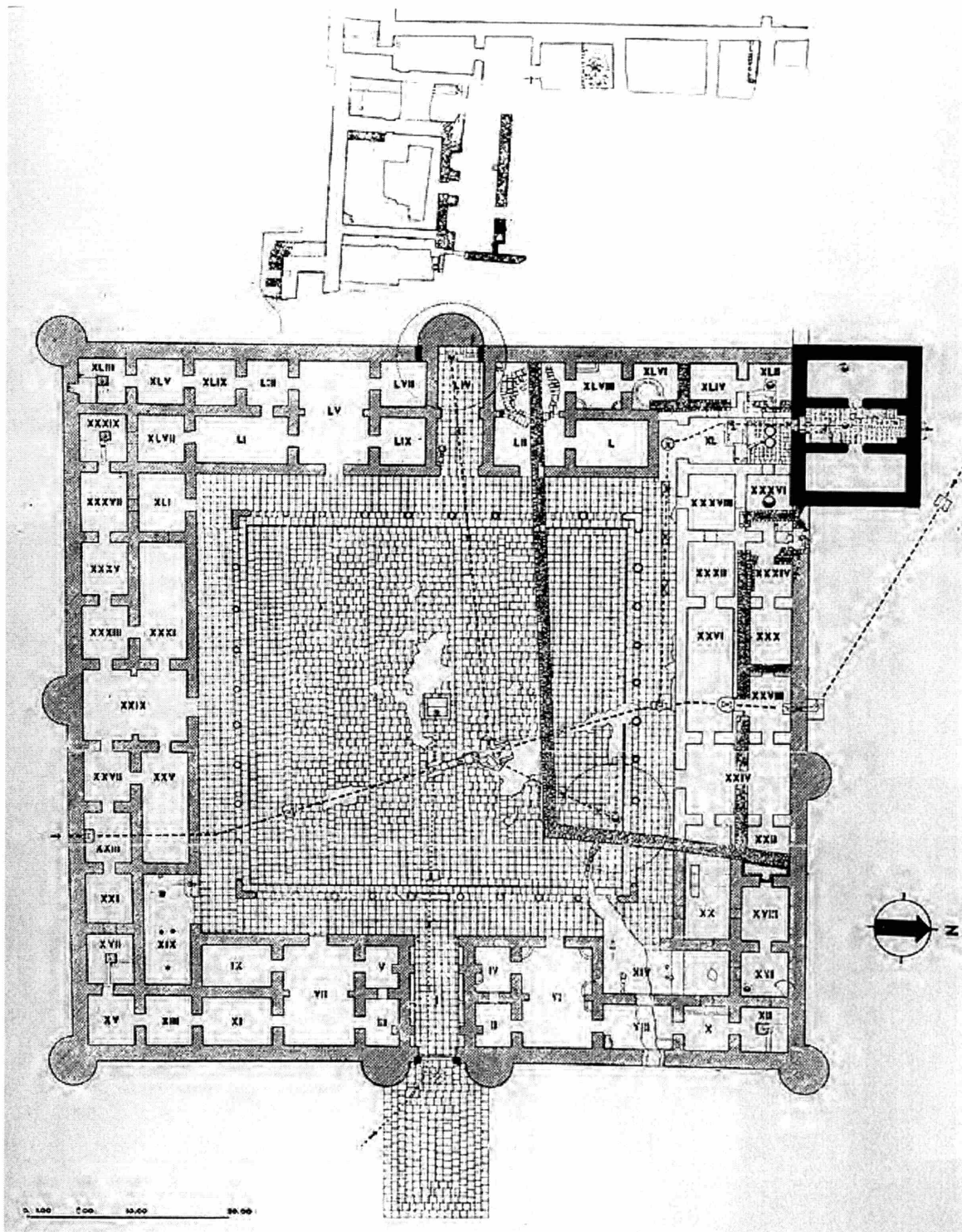


Figure 81 Plan, Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, Palmyra, Syria (after Schlumberger)

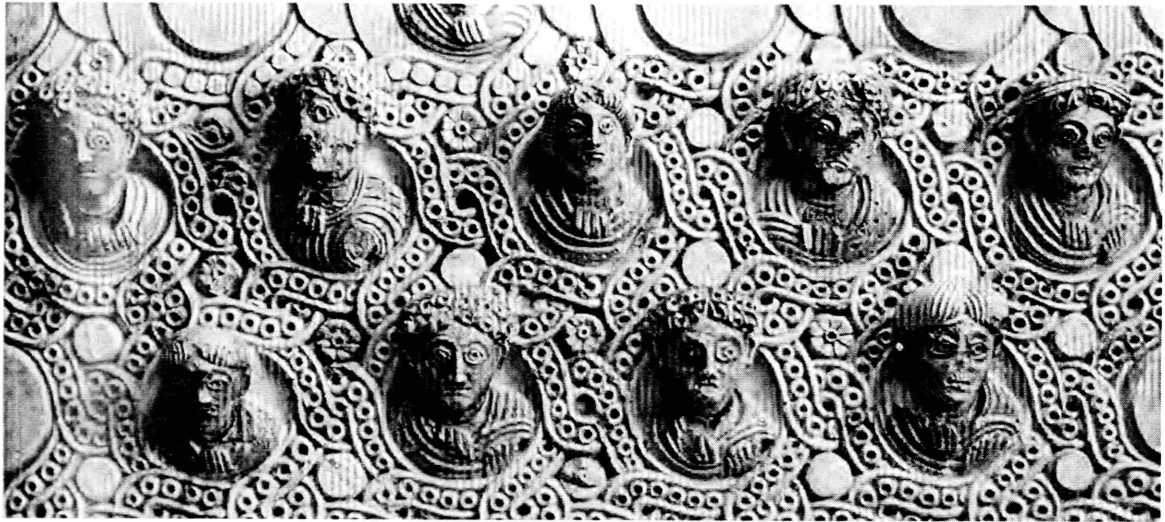


Figure 82 Sculpture, Khirbat al-Mafjar

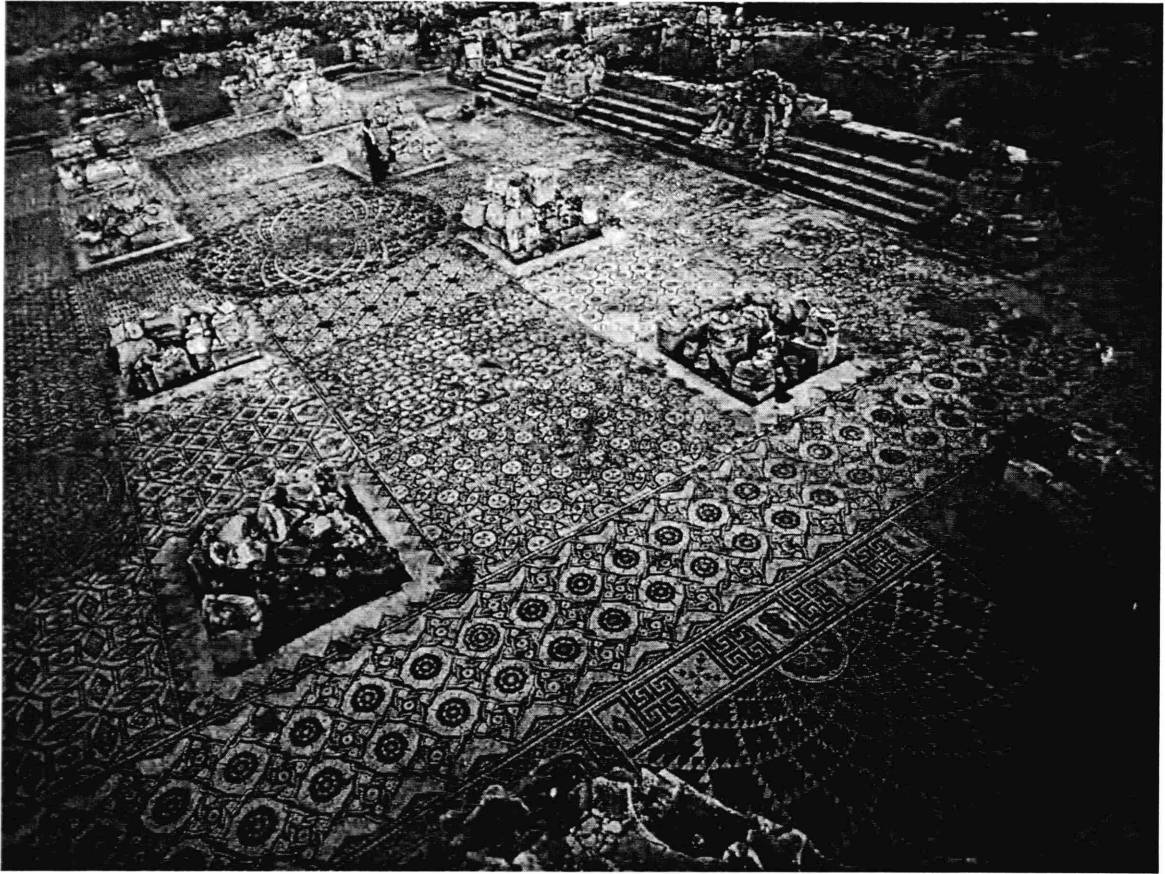


Figure 83 Sculpture, Khirbat al-Mafjar  
(Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Islamic Art and Architecture*)

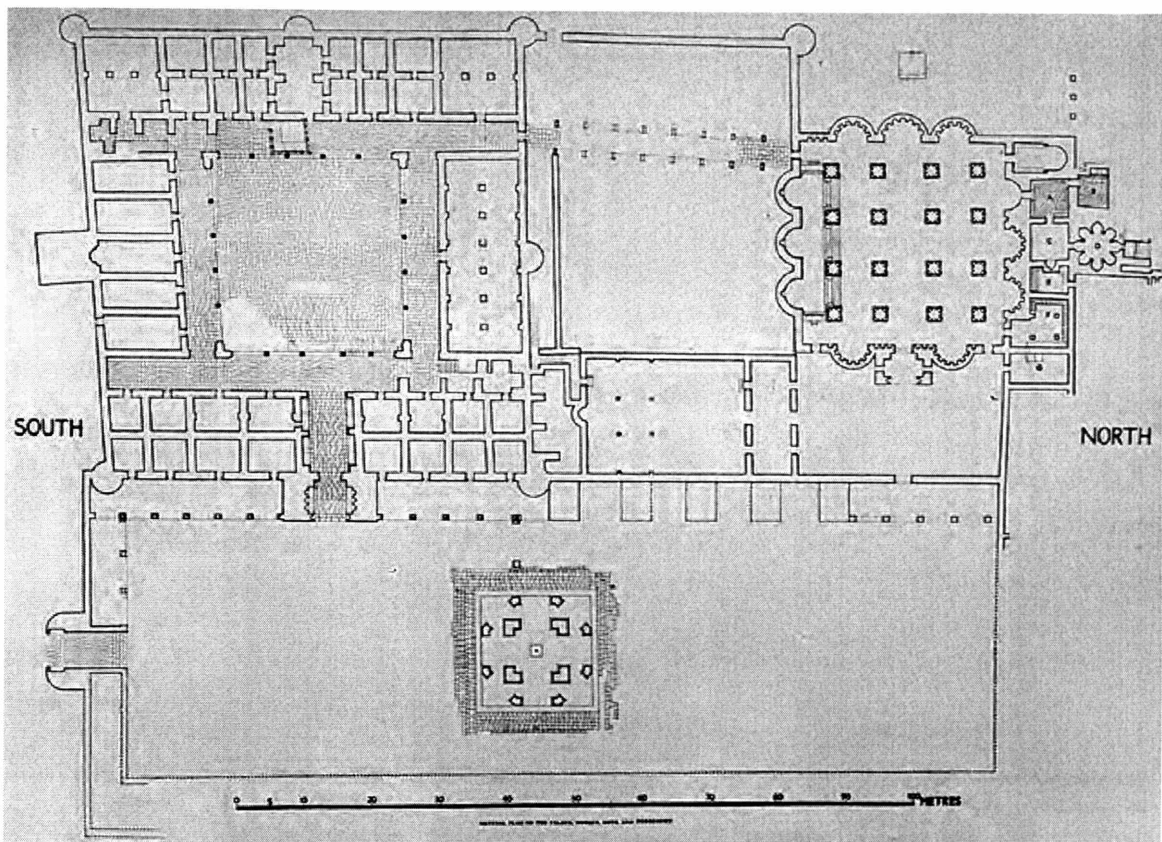




**Figure 84** Fresco of musician, Qusayr ‘Amra, Jordan  
(Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Islamic Art and Architecture*)

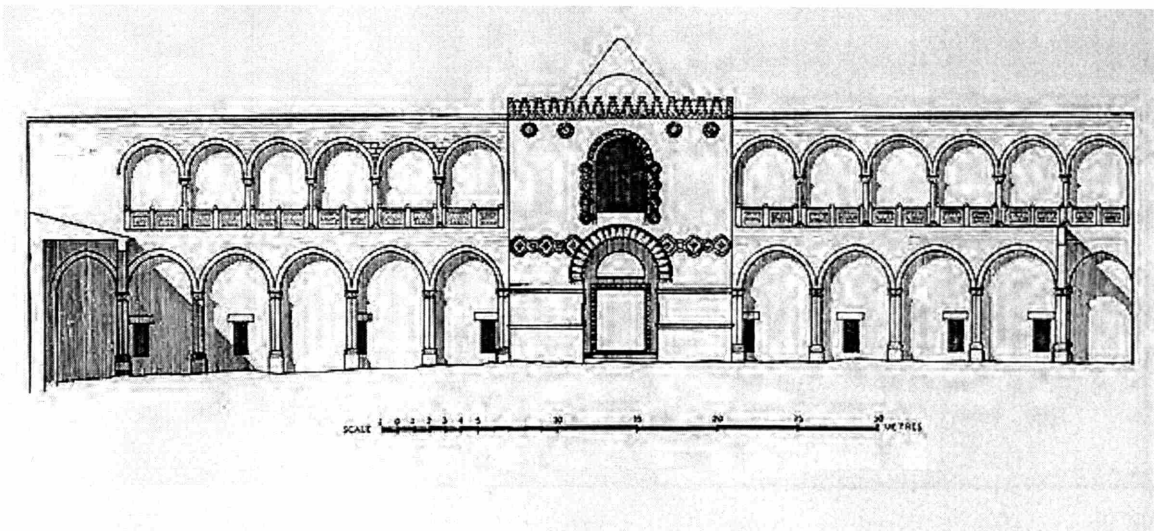


**Figure 85** Mosaic floor in bath hall, Khirbat al-Mafjar. Jericho, Palestine  
(Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Islamic Art and Architecture*)



**Figure 86 Plan, Khirbat al-Mafjar, Jericho, Palestine.**

Robert Hamilton, *Walid and His Friends: An Umayyad Tragedy*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, no. VI ed. Julian Raby (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988).



**Figure 87 Courtyard elevation, Khirbat al-Mafjar (after Hamilton)**

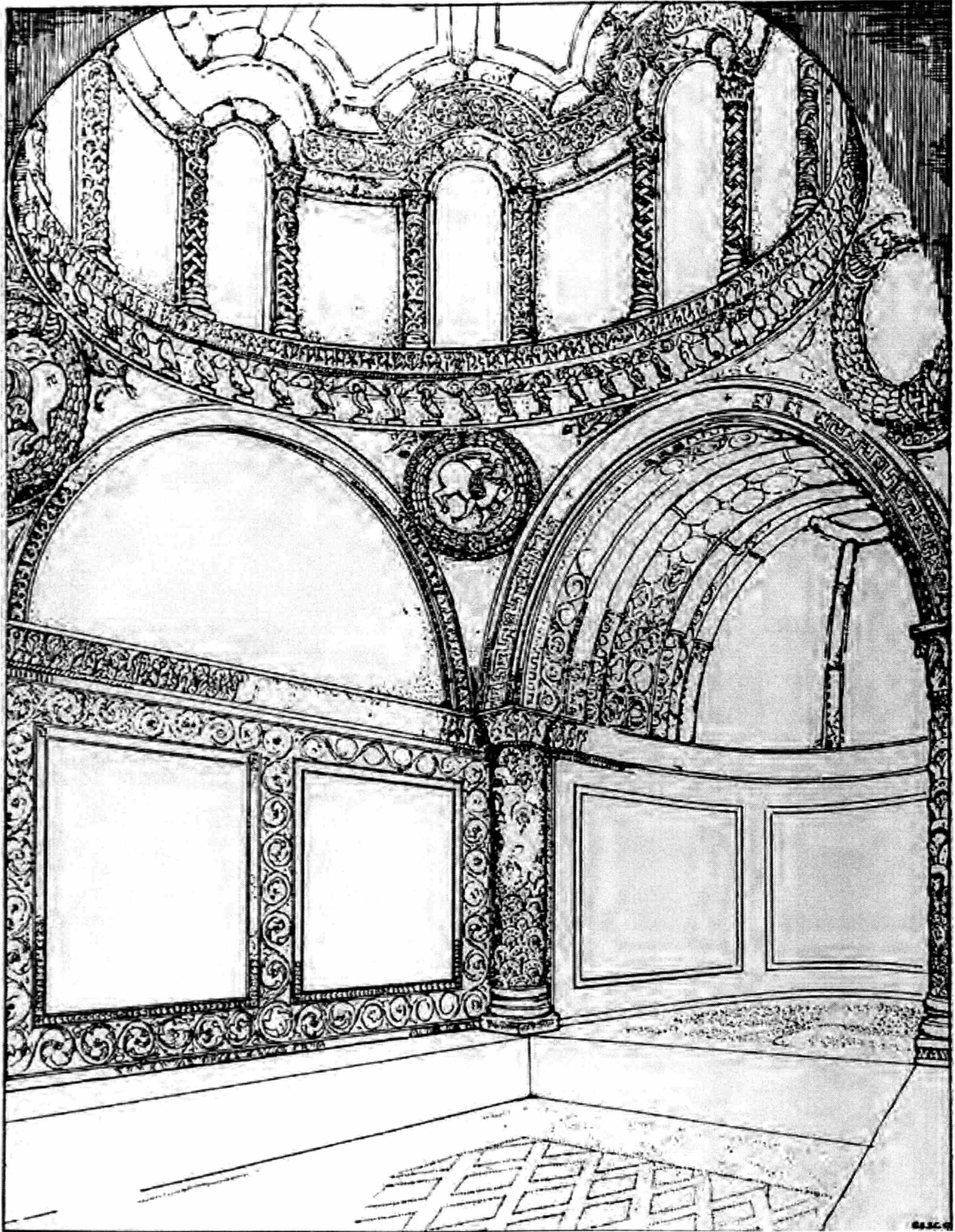
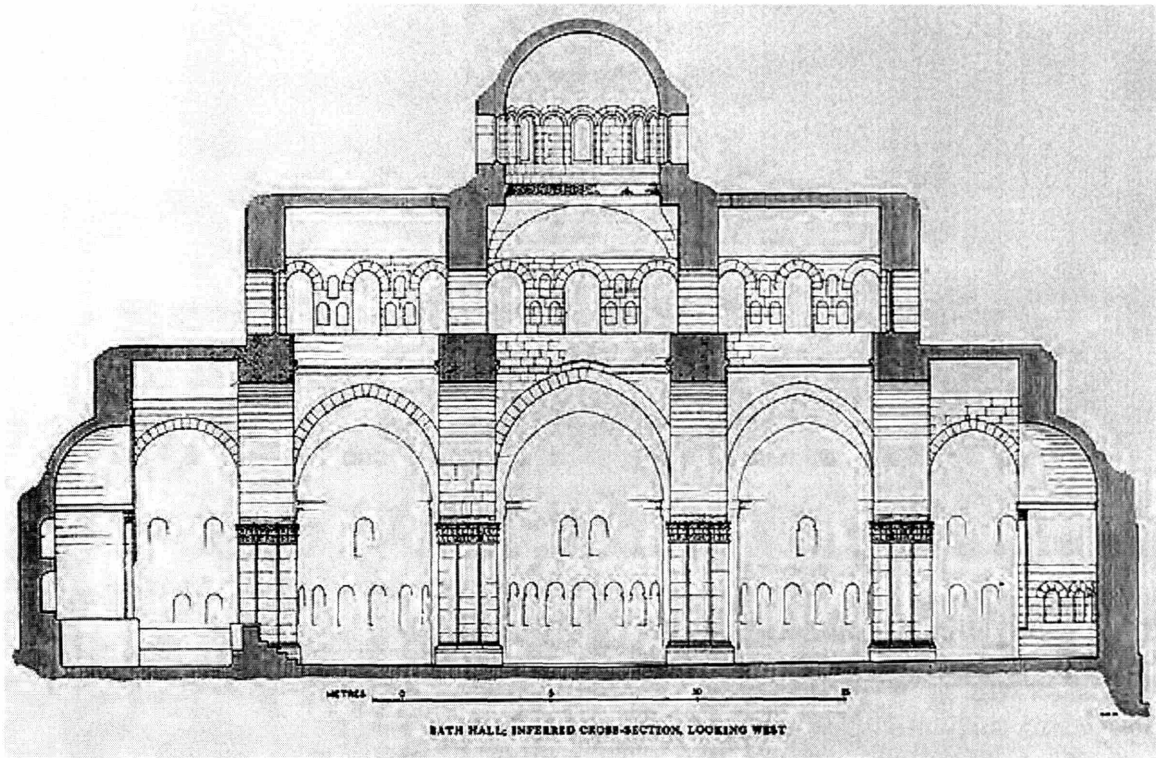
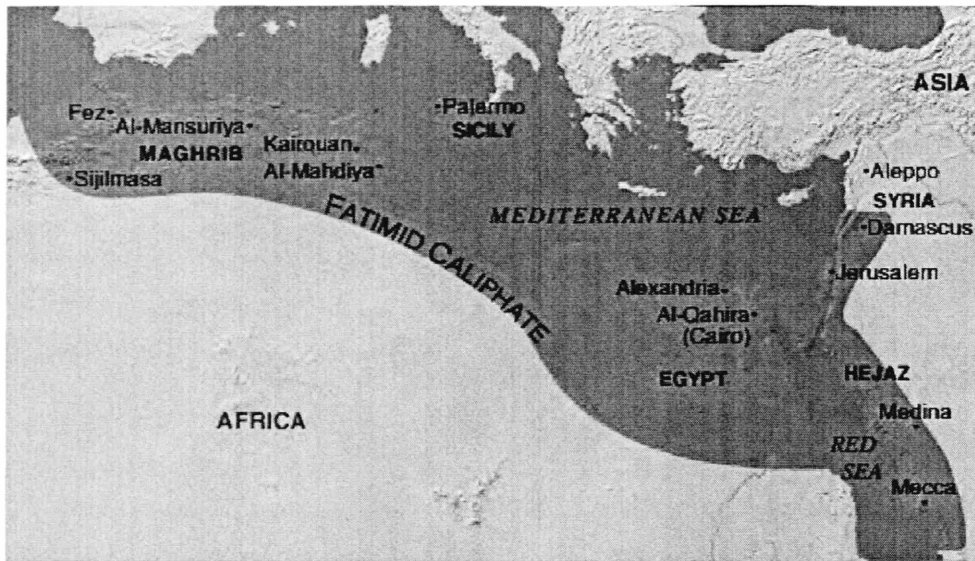


Figure 88 Bath interior, Khirbat al-Mafjar (after Hamilton)





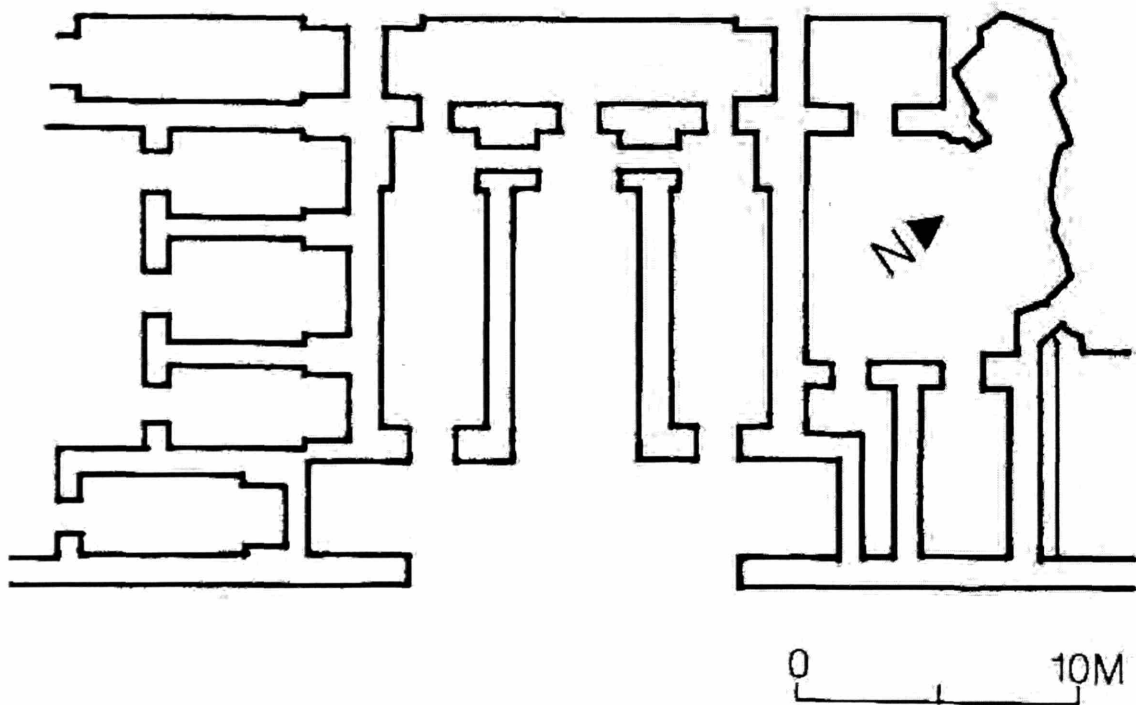
**Figure 89 Cross-section of bath, Khirbat al-Mafjar (after Hamilton)**



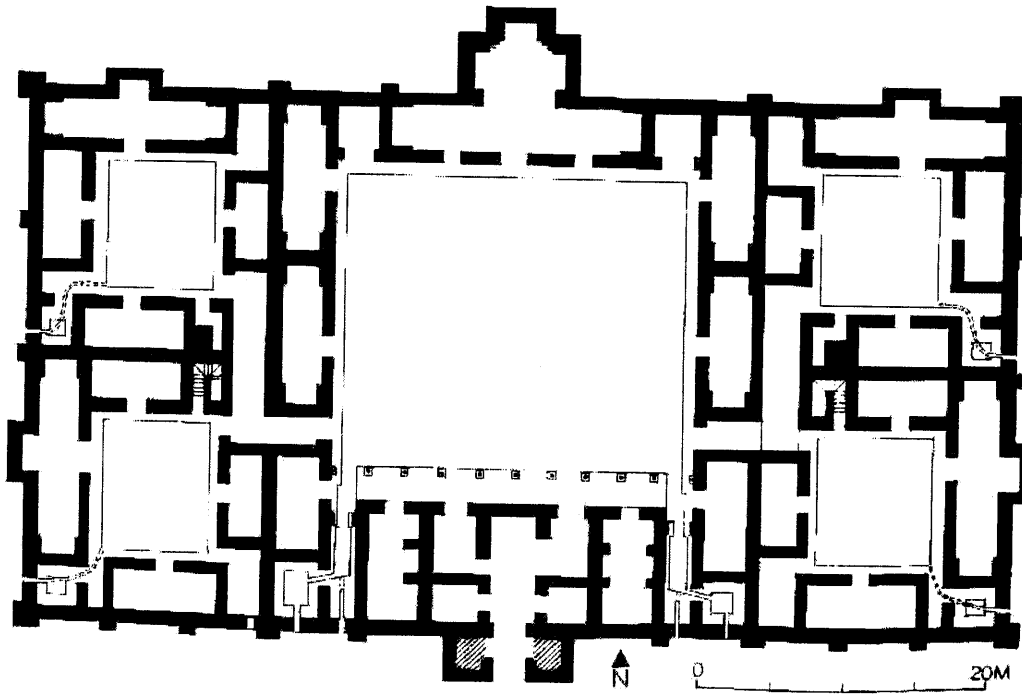
**Figure 90 Fatimid Caliphate (909-1171 CE)**

(Metropolitan Museum of Art

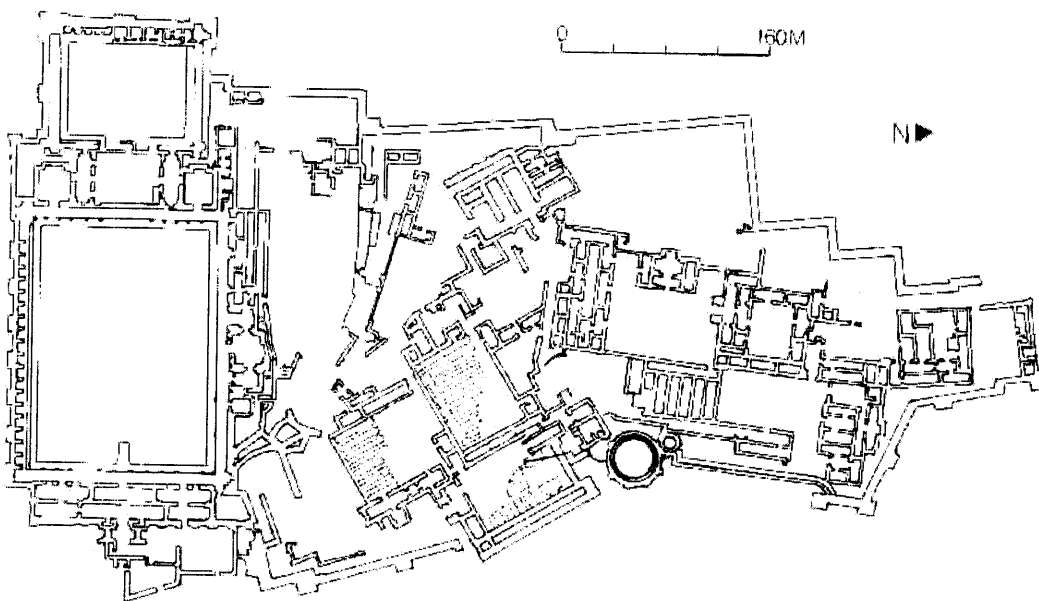
[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/fati/hd\\_fati.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/fati/hd_fati.htm)



**Figure 91 Plan, Throne room at Sabra Mansuriya (Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Islamic Art and Architecture*)**



**Figure 92 Plan, Zirid palace of Ashir**  
(Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Islamic Art and Architecture*)



**Figure 93 Plan, Qal'a Banu Hammad, Algeria**  
(Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Islamic Art and Architecture*)



Figure 94 Marinid Fez (Le Torneau, *Fez in the Age of the Marinids*)



Figure 95 Garden (agdal) adjacent to Royal Palace, Marrakesh  
(Khalid Asfour)





a



b

**Figure 96 Reservoir and pavilion, Menara gardens, Marrakesh, Morocco (A. Ersoy)**

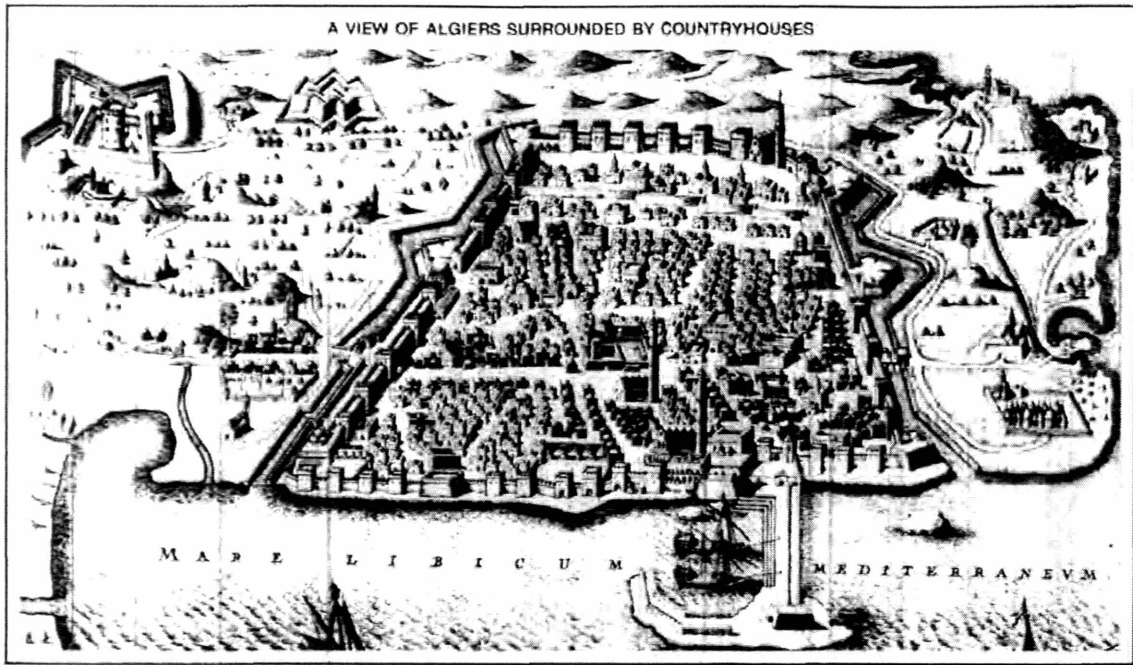


Figure 97 View of Algiers showing suburban estates. (In Federico Cresti, "Agdal, Jenan and Riyad in the African Maghreb," *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1 (1986), p. 62.)



**Figure 98 Pyxis, c. 964. Cordoba, Spain. Ivory, Height 7.5 cm  
Diameter 10 cm (Victoria and Albert Museum)**



Figure 99 Green and manganese ceramic plate with epigraphic ornament (al-Mulk, "Power"). Madinat al-Zahra', 10th c. (*El Esplendor de los Omeyyas*)



**Figure 100 Silver perfume bottle. Cordoba, 10th c.**  
*(El Esplendor de los Omeyyas)*



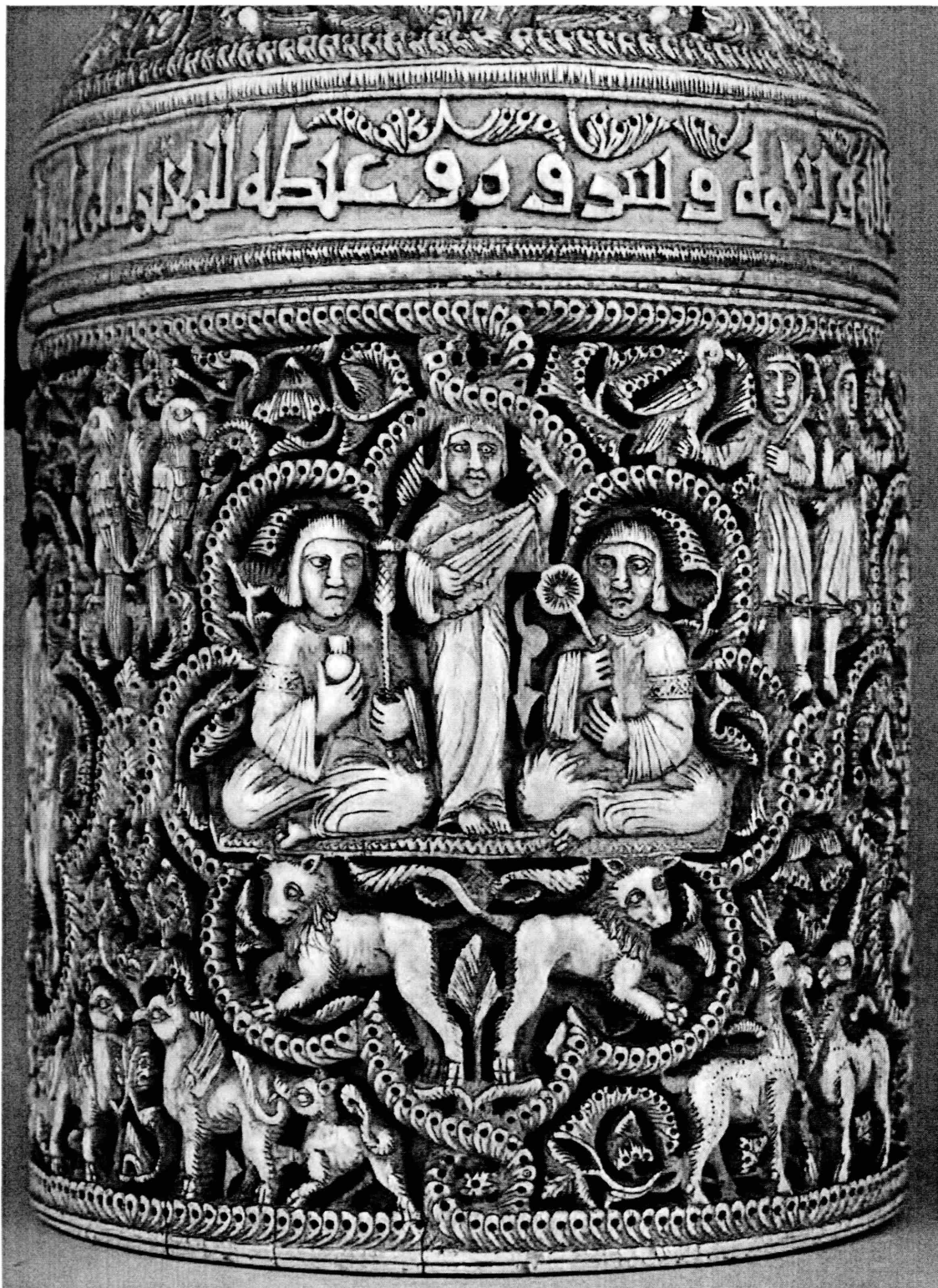


Figure 101a Pyxis of al-Mughira, 968. Courtier at left holds a perfume bottle.  
(Jerrilyn Dodds, ed. *al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain*)



**Figure 101b** Pyxis of al-Mughira. Detail, riders plucking dates.

(Jerrilyn Dodds, ed. *al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain*)



**Figure 102 Ivory pyxis, c. 966**  
(Beckwith, *Caskets from Cordoba*)



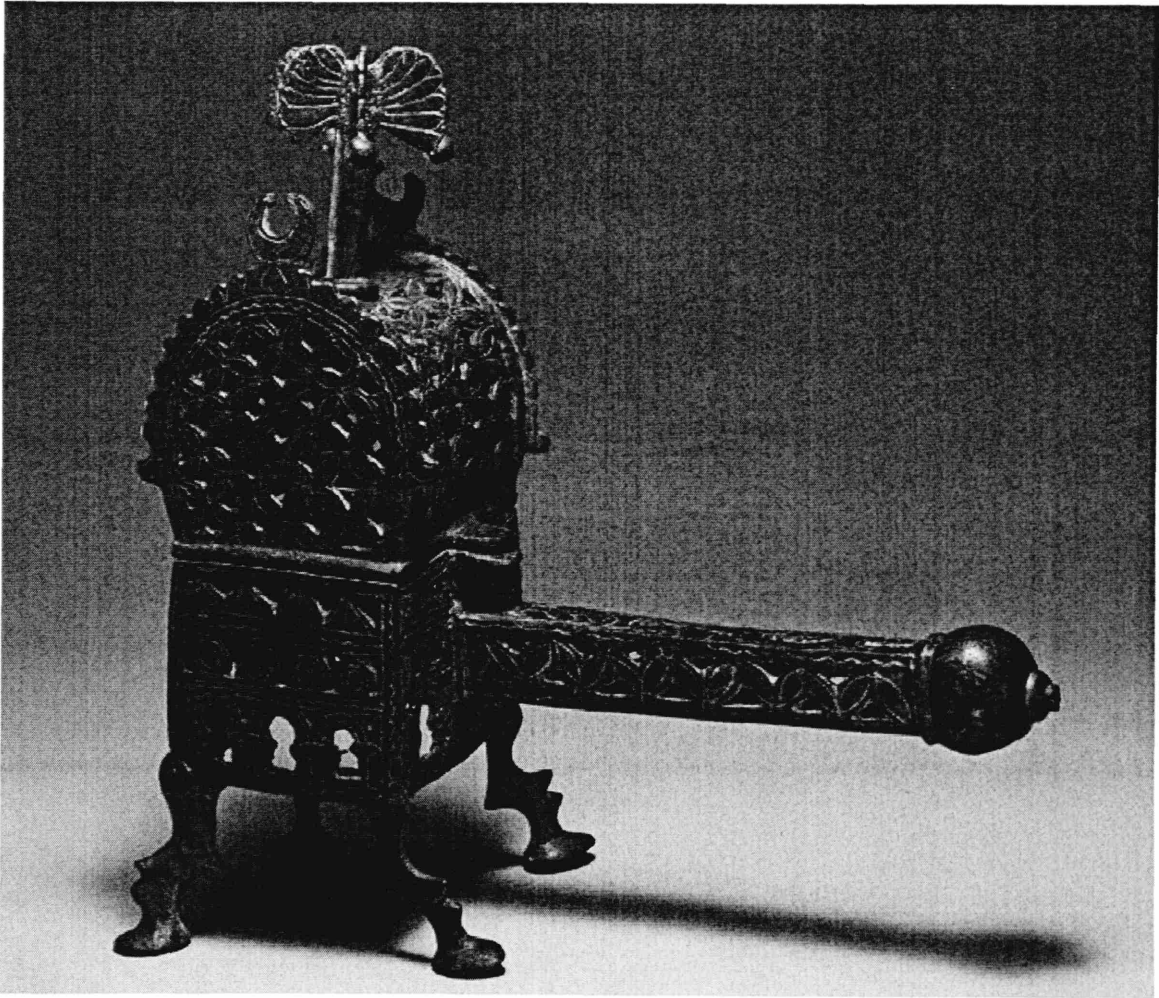


**Figure 103 Ivory casket of Subh**  
(Beckwith, *Caskets from Cordoba*)



**Figure 104** Pyxis of Sayf al-Dawla, 1004-8

(Jerrilyn Dodds, ed. *al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain*)



**Figure 105 Incense burner, 11th century**

Spain (Andalusia)

Cast bronze, openwork and incised; (a) Gr. H. 4 7/8 in. (12.4 cm), Max. L. 10 1/4 in. (26 cm), Max. Diam. 4 in. (10.2 cm)

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Louis V. Bell Fund and Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1967 (67.178.3a,b)

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/07/eusi/hob\\_67.178.3ab.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/07/eusi/hob_67.178.3ab.htm)



**Figure 106** Ivory plaque, 10th–early 11th century; Attributed to Córdoba, Spain  
(Jerrilyn Dodds, ed. *al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain*)



**Figure 107 Generalife, Granada with cultivated landscape**