4th year Architecture – 1st semester
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Islamic city
Lecture (8)

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The city in general, and Islamic city in particular, is more than just a geographical or historical phenomenon. Rather, it is a cultural-religious phenomenon characterized by the reconstruction and organization of its place, and in the material laws and Islamic spiritual values are mixed.
The emergence factors of Islamic city:

1- The religious factor:
An example is the many settlements between Baghdad and Najaf, and between Baghdad and Makkah Al-Mukarramah.

2- Administrative (political) factor:
for example, the city of Fustat, Baghdad and Kairouan

3- Defensive (military) factor:
The caliphs wanted to show strength to their neighbors, in addition to their fear of living without protection in cities that were not previously under their protection. These factors have been translated into building camps and castles, and have transformed over time into great cities, examples of Islamic city defense cities: Basra, Kufa, Tunisia, Damascus, Saada and Sana'a.
4. The natural factor (position and location):
Some Islamic cities did not choose a place randomly, but rather relied on a number of natural factors:

a. Choose a strategic location, such as on a hill, near a river (like Baghdad and Samarra), or near the desert border (like Kufa).

B. Proximity to arable land.

C. Health care taken into consideration (Fresh Air)

5- The economic factor (especially the commercial factor):
the caliphate to spend huge sums in search of a luxurious life.

6- The social factor:
During the expansion of the Islamic empire, the caliph wanted to compete and imitate neighboring empires, which were famous for their architecture and urban structures. The Caliph set out to establish new cities due to his belief in the necessity not to stay in the cities that were established before Islam.
Islamic city

• A typical Islamic city would have a mosque in the center, surrounded by the market place and then the residential areas.
• Many Islamic cities had two nodes, the mosque and the citadel.
• Public buildings were on the main arteries
• In all the cities, the first step was to decide the location. This was done after a long study of the environmental and geographical characteristics of the region.
• After deciding the location, the site of the mosque was chosen, and the building was planned. Then main streets were laid parallel and perpendicular to the mosque’s walls, defining a grid.
• The city was then divided among the people. Each part was called **khitta** and given to a specific tribe.
• Finally a protection wall was built around it.
• This was the case for all the cities except the administrative capitals. Many cities followed this planning system, especially the ones that were aimed to situate the armies and their families, like Fustat in Eygypt, Kufa and Basrah in Iraq, Qairawan in Tunis.
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Administrative Cities

• Some cities were built as capitals of the different nations and states. And the Emirs or Sultans wanted to show their power through these cities.
• Here the planning principles were altered a little, to give place for the large buildings and functions, and open way for monumental planning.
• Many cities were built as capitals such as: Baghdad and Samarra in Iraq, Cairo in Egypt, Marrakesh in Morocco, etc.
• These cities represented the personal choice in planning, through the location of its different parts
planning elements of the Islamic city

A - City Center:
The central area consists of a dense fabric of religious, commercial, administrative and social activities, as the Jama Masjid often occupies a central location in the heart of the city at the intersection point of the main roads.

1 Jama Masjid:
The mosque plays an important role in the spiritual and religious life of the city's residents, and it is the religious, cultural, political and social center of the Islamic city, as it is the center of all activities in it and the center of spiritual and intellectual activity for Muslims, as many religious and worldly activities are performed in it.

4 The palace and its administrative extension appeared at times within the city's compounds.
2 public squares:
The public squares in the Islamic cities almost disappeared in their form known in other cities, because the courtyard inside the mosque has this function, and from here the public squares in the city center did not appear a prominent element in their planning.

3 Markets:
Markets are the most important element in the city after the mosque and one of its essential requirements. Its distinctive characteristics, development and urban integration are one of the tributaries contributing to the development of the city. Therefore, it is an important input in the planning of commercial areas as one of the important elements to link the contemporary Islamic city with its ancient civilizational heritage.
B- Movement Network:

1 Public Road Network:

They are on three levels, the first level, which are the main roads and form the backbone of the traffic system in the city. The streets of this level sometimes connect the main gates of the city to its center, as the mosque and the main markets are located. The second level is the main local roads and links between the first level streets, and it also serves as the main arteries that connect the neighboring shops. The third level is the secondary roads in the locality, which in turn achieve interconnecting corridors for the areas within a single locality that are not served by the roads from the second level.
2 : Dead-end streets can be divided into two parts:

a. **It can be striped**, in which a group of individuals splits a piece Land and part of it set closed streets.

**B may appear over time**, by increasing growth in the contiguity of properties as a necessary space for movement

c. **Residential neighborhood:**
   The traditional residential neighborhood (Mahalla) represents a unit consisting of demographic elements with a homogeneous social structure united by the religious, tribal or national bond, and these shops perform residential, military and religious functions as well.
Baghdad

1. Abu Jaʿfar al-Mansur Abbasid Caliphate founded Baghdad in (762-766)
2. Baghdad, formally Madinat al-Salam (City of Peace), was laid out in a way that developed from the amsar.
3. At the center, on the west bank of the Tigris, was the caliph’s circular city, called Madinat Abi Jaʿfar (known to us as the Round City)
Characterized by:

1- its foundation Baghdad was a circular city, a tightly controlled form of Cosmo gram with the palace of the caliphs at its center,

2- From the four gates of the Round City, the four Grand Avenues extended into the suburbs. The suburbs were divided into four quarters, and each was governed by an associate of al-Mansur. There was a further Grand Avenue (shari‘ a‘zam) on the Tigris.

3- The new element in the plan, apart from the fact that the quarters were no longer divided by tribe, was the Round City, famous for being circular, with the mosque and the caliph’s palace placed in the center.

4- Present thinking of researchers is that the Round City was about 2500–2638 m in diameter.
elements of the city:

1. In the center of the (courtyard) lay the palace of al-Mansur, whose gate was called Bab al-Dhahab (Golden Gate), and the mosque.

2. The residences of the younger children of al-Mansur, and his vassals (mawali) who are close to him in his service,

3. The bayt al-mal (the treasury)

4. The arsenal, the diwan al-kharaj (the land tax), the diwan al-khatam (the seal), the diwan al-jund (the army), the diwan al-hawā’īj (requirements), the diwan of the entourages (ahsham), the public kitchen, and the diwan al-nafaqat

5. Then there were four vaulted streets (taqat), which led to the gates of Kufa, Basra, Khurasan, and al-Sham (Damascus).

6. There were also 45 radial streets (sikka), which were known by the names of his mawali.
Al andalusia (Al Andalus)

(Originally, the Spanish territories were administered by a provincial government established in the name of the Umayyad caliphate based in Damascus. But when that dynasty was overthrown, its last surviving member, Emir Abd al-Rahman I, fled to Spain. Under him, Córdoba became the quasi-autonomous (semi-independent) capital of a vibrant Islamic culture. By the end of the 10th century, it had become the largest city in Europe, with a population of about one hundred thousand. It was also an important center of Arabic learning, making crucial contributions to European civilization).
Because of its strategic location the city had served as the capital of the Roman province Hispania Ulterior Baetica, though Seville (Išbīliya, ancient Hispalis), a harbor city of economic importance at the then- mouth of the river, had sometimes taken its place.
Characterized by:

1- At the end of the third century a huge palatial complex was built outside the city walls, either by Emperor Maximian or—what appears more likely—by the provincial governor.

2- The first Islamic governors appointed by the Umayyad caliphs to the Iberian Peninsula stayed at Seville, In 717 the governor al-Ḥurr moved his capital to Cordoba, taking residence in a building near the bridge, in the Balāt al-Ḥurr.

3- The horseshoe-shaped arches are thought to have been adapted from the remains of local Visigoth architecture
4. During the period of the Umayyad caliphate, Cordoba was a flourishing urban center, parallel only to Kairouan, Cairo, and Baghdad.

5. Cordoba became the center of Islamic culture in the west, its influence eventually spreading to neighboring Christian regions and across the western Maghreb.

6. The cityscape was dominated by huge avenues, many more than 10 meters wide.

7. Streets had boardwalks, as well as a developed system of drainage channels. Some streets were even paved.

8. Many residential quarters had an orthogonal plan, probably not evidence of centralized planning but a reflection of the regular division of plots by commercial sellers of land. The houses were often constructed according to standardized types; houses of the same kind were placed in long rows or even blocks and Larger houses.
9- The blocks were higher than they were wide, either in a proportion of 3:4 or 1:2. The standard block size was about 40 centimeters high, 20 centimeters wide, and 100 centimeters long.

10- Public buildings were larger sizes used, for example in the Great Mosque, where blocks are 70 centimeters high and 47 centimeters wide. The size of walls was largely determined by the size of the stones. Most walls are therefore 90–100 centimeters thick.
Thanks