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THE MIRADOR IN ABBASID AND HISPANO-UMAYYAD GARDEN TYPOLOGY

Madinat al-Zahra',¹ the most outstanding example of Hispano-Umayyad palace architecture, was built on the slope of a mountain west of Cordoba in order to exploit the views this elevated site offered. Along with the ring of suburban palaces surrounding the Umayyad capital of Cordoba, Madinat al-Zahra' has often been compared to Abbasid Samarra, a 35-kilometer stretch of palaces built in the middle of the ninth century along the Tigris River outside of Baghdad.

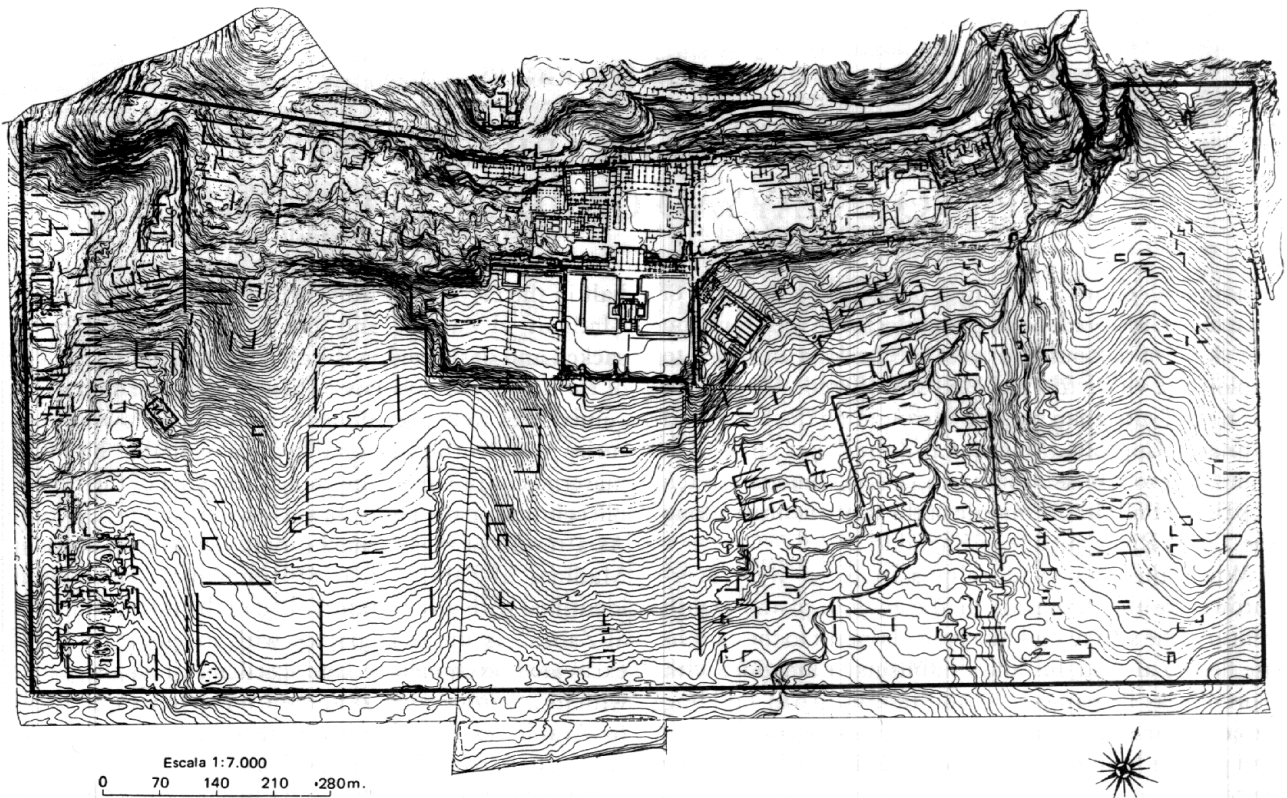
When the Umayyad caliphs in Syria were overthrown by the Abbasids in the middle of the eighth century, the surviving Umayyad claimant to the caliphate fled to al-Andalus and established a kingdom with Cordoba as its capital. In addition to urban building projects such as the monumental mosque, the Umayyad princes built palatial villas, called *qasūr* (sg. *qasr*) or *munan* (sg. *munya*), in the countryside around the city. One of the last of these, Madinat al-Zahra', was a city in its own right.

Madinat al-Zahra' is located seven kilometers west of Cordoba. It was begun in 936 by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir; construction continued throughout his reign and that of his son al-Hakam. At the latter's death in 976, his vizier al-Mansur seized power from al-Hakam's son, the child-prince Hisham, and began to build his own palatial estate on the other side of Cordoba, calling it by the strikingly similar name of Madinat al-Zahira. Al-Razi and al-Maqqari list some thirty palaces, not all of them caliphal constructions, that were built on the outskirts of Cordoba.² Such a figure puts Madinat al-Zahra' in a new perspective: it was not an entirely unique city built on the personal whim of one caliph, but was part of a longer Islamic building tradition that had been introduced to Spain several centuries earlier. Beginning with al-Rusafa, built by 'Abd al-Rahman I in the third quarter of the eighth century and situated to the north of Cordoba, *extra muros*, the practice of building suburban recreation palaces was continued by succeeding rulers, members of the aristocracy, and wealthy merchants.

The construction of these palaces came to an abrupt

halt in the eleventh century when Madinat al-Zahra', Madinat al-Zahira, and many other palaces were sacked and destroyed in the civil wars signaling the fall of the Umayyad dynasty. They were not rebuilt. The ruined sites were abandoned, and in the following centuries were ruthlessly quarried for valuable building materials until hardly anything remained of their marble columns, pavements, basins, wood, and metalwork. As a result, of these palaces, only the sites of Rusafa, Madinat al-Zahra', and al-Rummaniya have been identified with any certainty, and of the three, Madinat al-Zahra' is the only palace with extensive areas of excavated architecture and gardens. This, together with its monumental size and the importance given to it by Arabic texts, makes it a critical monument for the study of Hispano-Islamic gardens.³

That Madinat al-Zahra' was profoundly influenced by Abbasid palace typology is evident when the plan of Madinat al-Zahra' (fig. 1) is compared with two Samarran palaces, the Jawsaq al-Khaqani (fig. 2) of ca. 836 and Balkuwara (fig. 3) built between the years 849 and 859.⁴ Both resembled miniature cities, deep within which the caliph and his throne room were located, attainable only via a long route through gates, courtyards, garden spaces, antechambers, and reception halls. In Baghdad, the Abbasid caliphs had begun the process of removing themselves from the populace for reasons of security, emulating the legends of the Sasanian kings. Al-Mansur constructed a huge, planned Round City consisting of a series of concentric defense walls which enclosed rings of residential quarters and in the heart of which were the caliphal palace and administrative quarters. As the caliph removed himself from ordinary interaction with his people, he became a more mysterious and remote figure.⁵ When Baghdad became too confining and the unruly behavior of the military troops caused disturbances between the soldiers and inhabitants, the caliph moved his residence to Samarra. There he constructed for himself and his sons monumental palaces which were entered through extensive courtyards and multiple walls with limited points of ac-



1. Plan of Madinat al-Zahra'. (After Lopez Cuervo, *Medina az-Zahra'* : *Ingeniería y Formas*.)

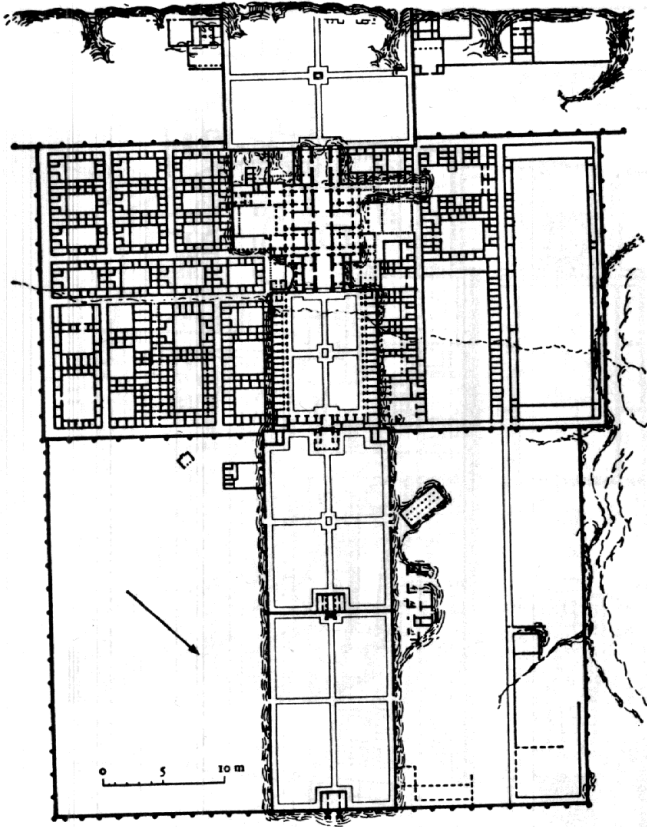
cess, thus satisfying his complementary desires for security and extravagantly luxurious ceremonial spaces.

The plan of Madinat al-Zahra' reveals a similar concern for multiple enclosure walls containing a variety of residences, administrative quarters, and ceremonial spaces. Instead of building merely a more elaborate version of the simpler Umayyad suburban palace type already adorning the outskirts of Cordoba, 'Abd al-Rahman adopted the architectural typology of the Abbasids because it seemed an appropriate vehicle for elevating himself to more exalted status. In a fashion similar to the caliphs of Samarra, the Umayyad caliph removed himself from the urban population of Cordoba, bringing with him those attendants, administrative officials, merchants, and craftsmen deemed necessary for his new role as caliph. He had adopted the caliphal title, Amir al-Mu'minin, or Commander of the Faithful, in 929, six years before embarking on his lifelong building campaign at Madinat al-Zahra', and in proclaiming himself the legitimate Umayyad heir to the caliphate, he upgraded his rank from prince of a small,

backwater kingdom on the western fringe of the Islamic world to one of theoretically international stature, contraposing his claim to the caliphate with that of the Abbasids and the Fatimid pretenders. The Abbasidization of the administrative structure of al-Andalus had begun as early as the ninth century and was soon followed by cultural and artistic emulation as well, until by the tenth century, the prince of Cordoba had more in common with his Abbasid rival than with his Syrian ancestors.⁶

The Abbasids had redefined the cultural and political role of the caliph and set new standards of cosmopolitan sophistication in their magnificent Samarran palaces surrounded by poets, musicians, scholars, and artists, and it was the Abbasid style of leadership that 'Abd al-Rahman adopted rather than the old-fashioned, more restrained version of his Umayyad forebears. Lévi-Provençal wrote:

Il deviendra un personnage compliqué, mystérieux, et lointain, qu'on n'entreverra plus qu'à des occasions fort



2. Plan of the Jawsaq al-Khaqani at Samarra. (After K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*.)

espacées, lorsqu'il daignera se montrer au milieu d'un éblouissant cortège et recevoir les acclamations du populaire. A ses audiences, seule une classe privilégiée et très peu nombreuse, la *khassa*, sera admise. . . pour la masse de ses sujets, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir sera de plus en plus [un] maître fastueux et quasi-inaccessible. . .⁷

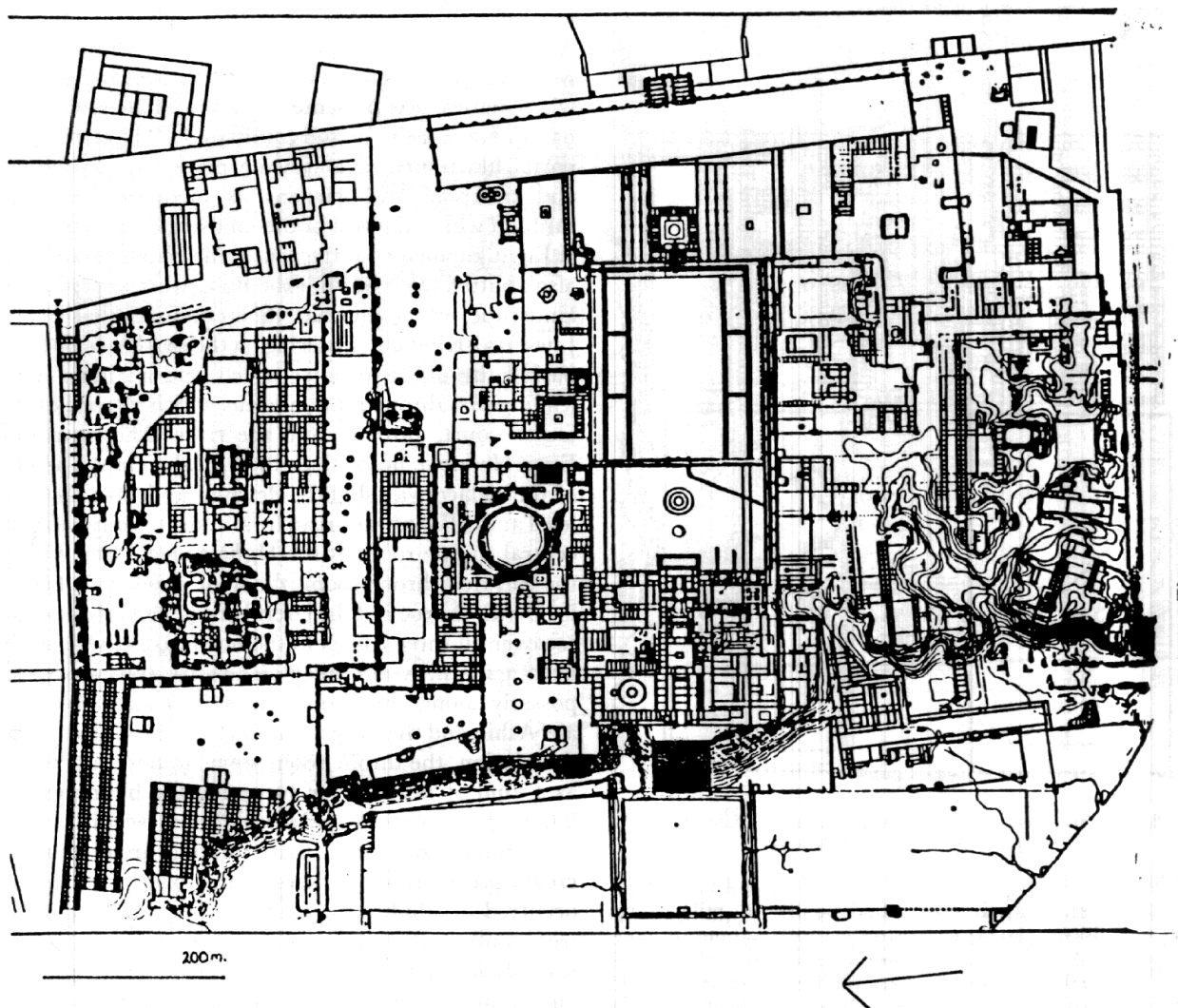
Topographically as well, Madinat al-Zahra' followed the precedent set at the Jawsaq and Balkuwara palaces of placement on high ground in order to contrive views toward the exterior landscape. At the Jawsaq al-Khaqani, a view of the exterior landscape was offered from the monumental entrance on the west side of the palace (fig. 4). The long axis around which the palace was organized began from this portal of three iwans which led eastward into the palace proper but opened westward to an enormous flight of steps. The steps rose at a gentle incline seventeen meters above a great square pool flanked by gardens on either side. Between this tank and the bank of the Tigris River further to the west was a small pavilion with views of the

tank as well as the river and the landscape opposite. Above, the three-ivan portal and terrace afforded views with two focal lengths: a view onto the pool and gardens where nature was presented on an intimate scale and a panorama of the river and countryside. The terrace and portal functioned as a viewing platform, or *mirador*, and the pool and gardens as mediating elements through which the rest of the landscape was seen.

Eight kilometers to the south, the Balkuwara Palace also abutted the river, but the Balkuwara's response to landscape was somewhat different from that of the Jawsaq al-Khaqani. Entering on the northeast side, one passed through two outer courts and an inner court leading to a throne room nucleus which opened onto a fourth court, gardens, and the river. The excavator, Ernst Herzfeld, noted that the central rectangular area of the palace was slightly elevated and that the floor level at the Balkuwara rises from court to court with the central throne room at the highest level.⁸ Standing in the elevated throne room, the floor of which was on a level with the roofs of the lateral areas, he said one could see over all three courts to the northeast as well as the halls, garden, river, and plains to the southwest, and possibly along the transverse axis toward the Qasr al-'Ashiq and the tower of al-Qa'im.⁹ From Herzfeld's description, the throne room seems to have functioned as a kind of *mirador* for surveying the buildings and landscape beyond the palace walls.

A similar interest in manipulating architecture to create predetermined views of the exterior landscape occurred at Madinat al-Zahra'. There the buildings were built on three large, stepped terraces cut into the skirt of a low mountain. Commanding a central position on the middle level, the so-called Salon Rico opened from a slightly elevated position onto the Upper Garden (figs. 5 and 6), an extensive walled space measuring approximately 150 by 130 meters and divided into four quarters by paved walkways, the north arm of which was taken up by a large rectangular basin and a pavilion surrounded by smaller basins.¹⁰ The Salon Rico was composed of three naves on column arcades, with side chambers, running perpendicular to a longitudinal hall that opened on its south side toward the garden. Similarly, the garden pavilion which was on level with the Salon Rico was composed of three naves on the same axis as the Salon Rico's naves and fronted by a similar longitudinal hall. The overall effect is of a slightly smaller mirror image of the Salon Rico.

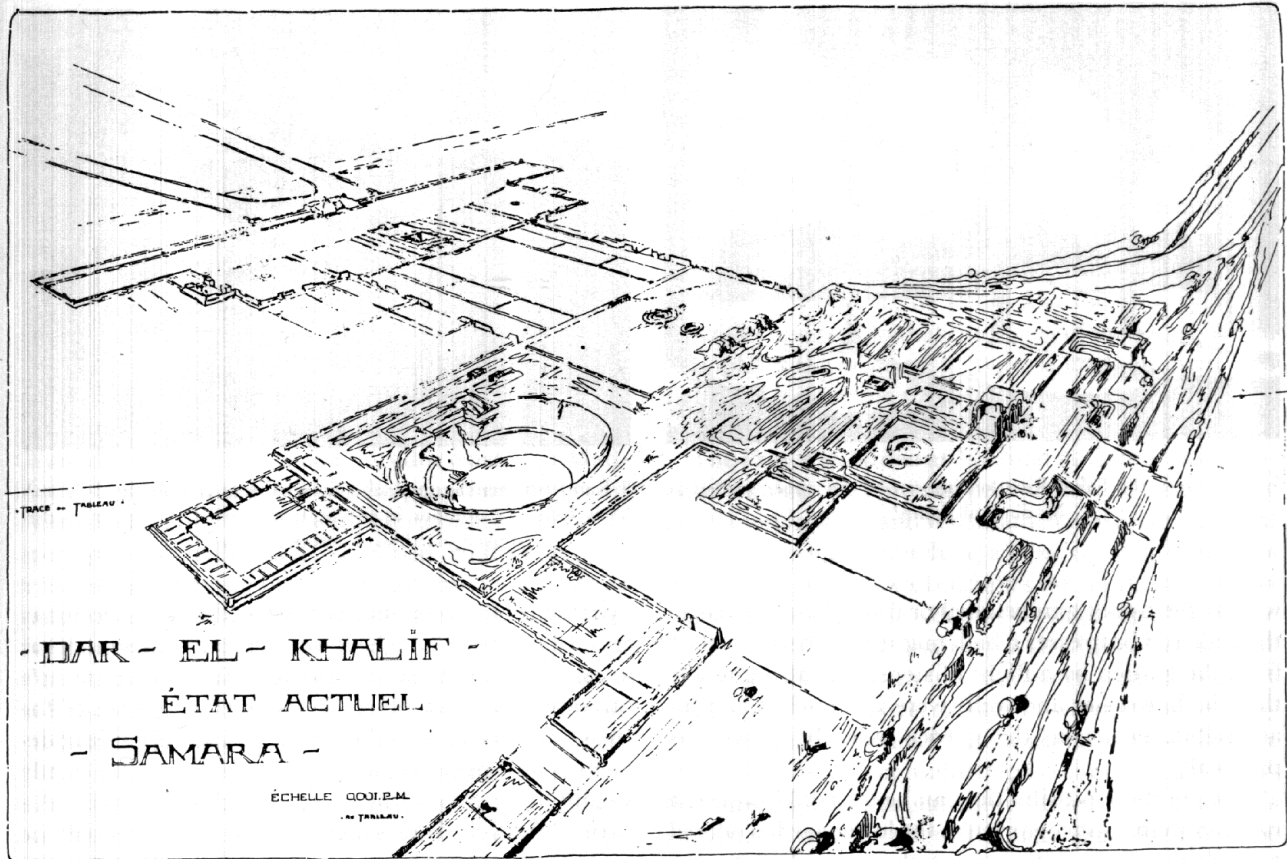
Although what the pavilion's above-ground structure was like is unknown, one can imagine by comparisons



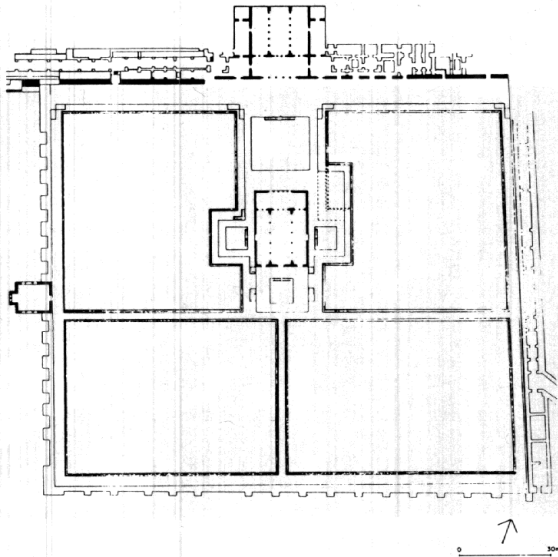
3. Plan of the Balkuwara Palace at Samarra. (After K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*.)

with later structures that it opened on all four sides to the garden and water basins, perhaps even giving the illusion that the pavilion was afloat in a tank of water.¹¹ Within the upper garden's walled enclosure were at least two fixed stations for viewing nature: the Salon Rico, which formed a box-like space, blind on three of its sides but opening southward to permit a carefully directed view of the pavilion, pool, and gardens (fig. 7), and the pavilion which offered four equally calculated views. Three of these views were of gardens and water, and the fourth of the Salon Rico itself and the large pool which, from the vantage point of the pavilion, would have reflected the image of the Salon Rico illuminated by the southern rays of sunlight.

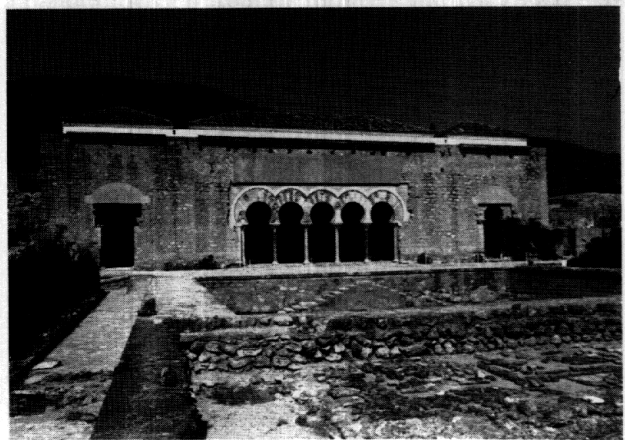
Elsewhere in Madinat al-Zahra', other buildings provided garden and landscape vistas. A former director of Madinat al-Zahra', Félix Hernández Giménez, believed that one of the buttresses bracing the west wall of the upper garden's terrace contained a mirador in its tower which looked across the lower garden, twelve meters below, toward the landscape beyond the walls of the palace city (fig. 8).¹² Since neither the buttresses nor the walls survive intact at the level of the upper garden, there is no archaeological evidence to prove or disprove his mirador theory. While it is perfectly possible that panoramic vistas could have been enjoyed from any of the buttresses, either through windows pierced in the



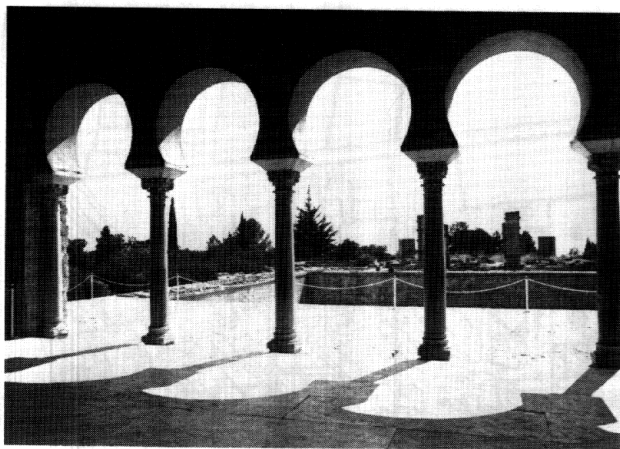
4. Sketch of the Jawsaq al-Khaqani at Samarra. (From Viollet, "Description de palais de al-Moutasim.")



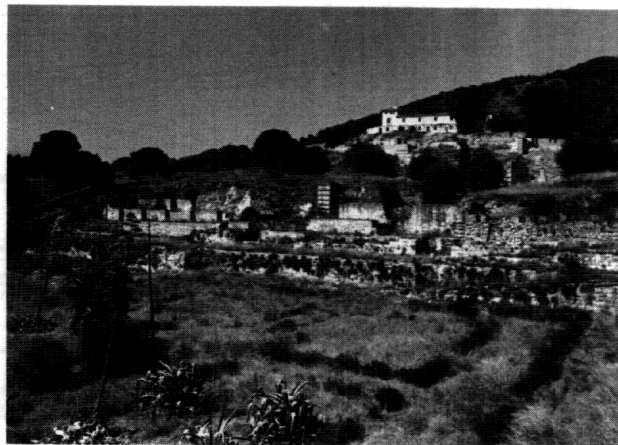
5. Plan of upper garden at Madinat al-Zahra'. (After Jiménez Martín, "Los jardines de Madinat al-Zahra'.")



6. Salon Rico at Madinat al-Zahra'.



7. View from the Salon Rico looking out to the upper garden at Madinat al-Zahra³.



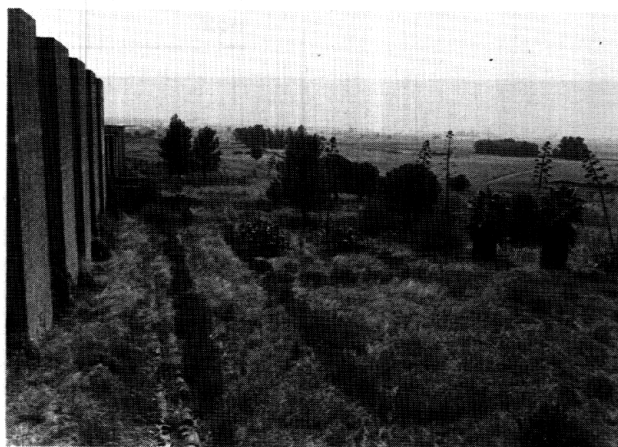
9. Ramp between the upper and lower gardens at Madinat al-Zahra³. View from the mirador in the buttress wall of the upper garden, looking northward across the lower garden.

wall at the upper garden level or from the ramparts of the wall and buttresses which might have been reached from the garden by a flight of steps, it is also possible that the buttresses and walls were windowless and inaccessible, enclosing the garden visually as well as physically.

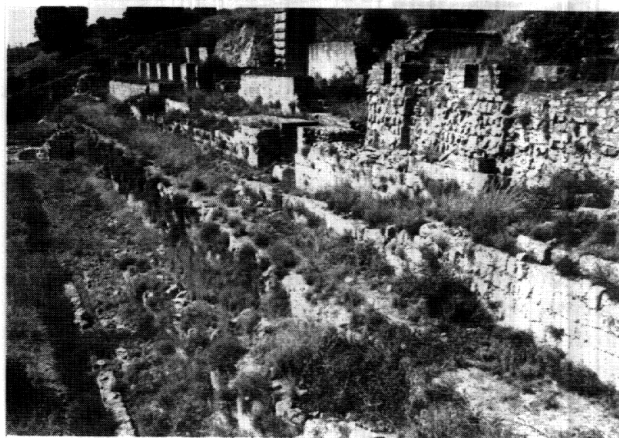
None of these possibilities can be tested. However, a ramp from the upper garden to the lower garden offered a similar view onto the gardens below and across the "natural" landscape of the plains beyond (figs. 9 and 10).¹³ The upper portion of the ramp, where it joined the

upper garden, was enclosed by walls that are today crumbling away, but the lower portion does not appear to have been enclosed. Although much of the ramp's physical fabric was buried under the collapse of the structures above it to the north, the ramp's zigzag descent is still passable, and it is evident that the gently sloping segments of the ramp would have provided a variety of levels from which the lower garden could be seen (fig. 8).

The ramp arrived at a paved terrace running across the north side of the lower garden, which gave an elevat-



8. Buttress wall and lower garden at Madinat al-Zahra³. View from the garden ramp looking south. Hernández Giménez's mirador is in the center of the wall on the left, which separates the upper garden from the lower garden twelve meters below.



10. Ramp between the upper and lower gardens (detail) at Madinat al-Zahra³.

ed perspective onto a large rectangular pool and the garden itself, cross-axial in plan like the upper garden. Although the south wall of the lower garden has not been excavated, it is abundantly clear that it could not have been high enough to block the extensive views from either the ramp or the terrace. Like the Jawsaq al-Khaqani's monumental steps and portal, the ramp and terraces provided views of two focal lengths: one looking onto the vegetation, pools, and pavilions of the enclosed garden, and the other looking across the garden to the landscape of the plains beyond.

Hernández Giménez's hypothetical mirador suggested itself to him from the Alhambra's many towers and miradors with their views of the hilly landscape of Granada.¹⁴ Whether or not a mirador existed at Madinat al-Zahra' in the location he proposed, however, I cannot help but concur with Hernández Giménez's assumption that the palace city was built in stepped terraces on a sloping hillside to take advantage of the panoramic vistas offered by such an elevated site. Furthermore, Arabic texts corroborate the existence of miradors, for al-Nuwayri's description of Madinat al-Zahra's terraces refers to miradors overlooking gardens ("basātin taht manāzirihī").¹⁵ Al-Razi uses *nāfa 'alā* to describe the same relationship of an elevated hall overlooking gardens, stating that al-Hakam sat "*'alā al-sarīr fī mihrāb al-majlis al-sharqī al-munīf 'alā al-riyād.*"¹⁶ As evidenced by the two Samarran palaces built one hundred years earlier, the notion of architecture oriented to offer landscape views was a fundamental characteristic of Abbasid palace architecture which was borrowed and elaborated upon by the Umayyads of Cordoba.

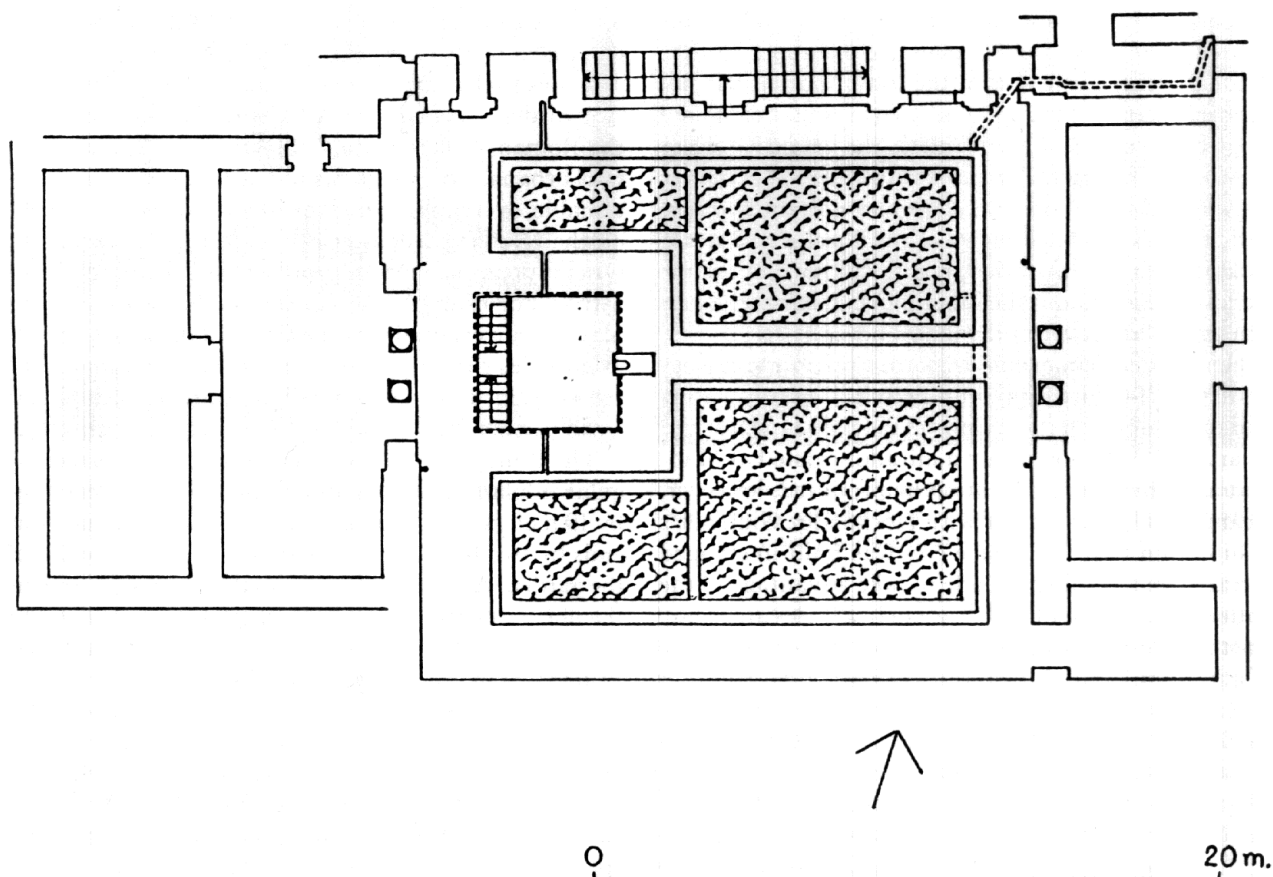
The magnitude of the vistas sweeping across both garden and landscape at these palaces belies the traditional conception of the Islamic garden as an enclosed, private space. Indeed, the term "Islamic garden" *per se* is meaningless unless, like the categorization of Roman or French gardens, it is qualified by date, place, and even style. At Madinat al-Zahra' at least two garden types existed at the same time. The upper garden and the lower garden exemplify the first: large in scale, crossed by two intersecting axes, and traversed by panoramic views passing through and beyond the confines of the garden. The second — the so-called Prince's Garden (fig. 11) — situated to the north of the lower garden and at a considerably higher elevation, is an elegant construction representing an altogether different garden type. This type is characteristically intimate in scale, with one long axis or an abbreviated version of

a cross-axial plan, and is visually as well as physically contained by its enclosure walls.

James Dickie convincingly argues for the existence of two garden types at the Alhambra, one derived from the Roman "villa rustica," the other the Roman "domus urbana." Although his use of Latin terms is questionable, overemphasizing the Mediterranean influence on the Islamic gardens of Spain, in other respects his observations on garden typology are extraordinarily astute. For example, he notes that the two styles are playfully inverted so that the Court of the Lions, which exemplifies the large rustic type, is made intimate and self-contained, while the small urban type, exemplified by the Generalife, is endowed with exterior vistas.¹⁷

The Prince's Garden at Madinat al-Zahra' is rectangular in plan, measures approximately 20 meters long by 19 meters wide, and is contained at its east and west ends by two halls stretching almost the entire width of the garden. A blind wall occupies the south side, and on the north side there is a double flight of steps leading to the top of the thick containing wall which separates the Prince's Garden from the buildings and circulatory road of the level above. A paved walkway bordered by water channels extends from the portal of one hall to the other, forming a longitudinal axis that divides the garden into slightly unequal halves. Like the Salon Rico's garden, an axially aligned square pool occupies the space in front of one of the halls. Although a transverse axis is provided by the thin strip of pavement that crosses the slightly sunken zones of vegetation in front of the pool, in so small a space the organizing power of a true cross-axial plan is unnecessary, and the garden "reads" as a bipartite composition. Any opportunity for a panoramic view from the Prince's Garden toward the lower gardens below was prevented by the height of the south wall. Even standing at the top of the steps on the north side and assuming vision was not curtailed by the kind of curtain wall that enclosed the topmost segment of the upper-lower-garden ramp, it was not possible to see over the south wall.

We can deduce that the Prince's Garden was a private space, since neither al-Maqqari nor Ibn Hayyan, who between them describe the physical construction and courtly life of Madinat al-Zahra' in ample detail, refer to any garden or *dār* that matches the appearance of the Prince's Garden. Doubtless it was omitted from their histories because none of their sources or their sources' informants had ever seen it. In contrast, the upper and lower gardens were more public spaces that figured prominently in ceremonies associated with reli-



11. Plan of the Prince's Garden at Madinat al-Zahra'. (After A. Jiménez Martín, "Los jardines de Madinat al-Zahra'.")

gious holidays, such as the breaking of the Ramadan fast, and the reception of important visitors and foreign embassies.

In the case of the upper garden, the beholder sat on the elevated platform of an axially placed pavilion or hall, raised above a garden too large to be encompassed in one glance. In the case of the Prince's Garden, the beholder viewed the garden from within the garden itself, enjoying nature on immediate terms and delighting in its smallest components: in fact, an overall view of the garden's plan was precluded by its tight, enclosed properties. Thus, the structure of the small garden's composition is subordinated by the enhancement, through physical proximity, of the color and smell of the plants and flowers and the sound of the trickling water. The distinction between the two garden types, that of the Prince's Garden and that of the upper and lower gardens, proves that Madinat al-Zahra's designers

were familiar with at least two well-developed types and that by at least the middle of the tenth century, garden type, like architectural type, was a matter of choice. More than anything else, the direction, distance, and angle of viewing were manipulated in such a way as to be an essential stylistic element imbued with semiotic value that served 'Abd al-Rahman and the Abbasid caliphs well.

While the Umayyad desert palaces of Syria and Jordan were situated in artificial oases made verdant by qanat irrigation, nothing in their architecture would indicate that nature was enjoyed for its own sake or given aesthetic value. Palaces such as Qasr al-Hayr West and Jabal Says did not exploit topographical variations of their locale, but rather were oriented to the cardinal directions.¹⁸ Nor did they have exterior windows or elevated vantage points from which to survey the cultivated fields and orchards surrounding them.

Similarly in al-Andalus, until 'Abd al-Rahman's changes, it is likely that the recreation estates in Cordoba's suburbs were relatively simple, symmetrical structures. They were built on the flat countryside bordering the river, predominantly to the west of Cordoba (although a northern suburb with Rusafa as its nucleus and east suburbs were also developed). Since their raison d'être was recreation rather than defense, they may have been made more open to the landscape around them with the use of windows and planted courtyards. One thing is quite certain, however: like the "desert" palaces, the Hispano-Umayyad recreation estates were not located on the kind of sloping terrain that permitted long vistas.

In contrast, the Abbasids were keenly sensitive to the placement of architecture in landscape, emphasizing not just the view of nature but its view from a particular location — the mirador. The mirador, whether a pool-side pavilion, three-iwan portal, or a throne room, fixes the direction of gaze and dictates what is seen, and for this reason the locus of a mirador is invariably the intersection of two crossed axes, which emphasize the rigidity of the structure, or one of their terminal points. In addition, just as the prince is raised on his throne or diwan and looks down at his subjects, so too the mirador is elevated, directing the eye's gaze downward so that the garden is seen like a carpet from above. When the mirador is a place associated with a prince, such as a throne room or reception hall, the centrality of the mirador replicates the central importance of the prince. By such means, perception is guided by a sharply focused lens that objectifies the view of garden and landscape and signifies its owner. The mirador, as the origin of seeing, represents the real viewer, the prince, and the view that is proffered is seen through his perspective, emphasizing by its breadth and its limits the extent of his lordship over the visible landscape, his domain.¹⁹ Thus the miradors of palaces such as Madinat al-Zahra', the Jawsaq al-Khaqani, and Balkuwara, which looked outward from axially determined loci toward the exterior landscape, signified the princes who inhabited them, and the views they delivered served to connote princely proprietorship over the land.

The exaltation of the king/viewer, learned from Sasanian models, was introduced into the Islamic context by the Abbasids at Baghdad in the late eighth century and was developed further in their sprawling complex of palaces at Samarra in the ninth. The innovative contrivance of views toward garden and landscape, through the exploitation of topographical elevation and mira-

dors, became part of Islamic palace typology and was transported abroad to the Maghreb where it appears in the stepped plan of the Dar al-Bahr in the Qal'a of the Bani Hammad, and to Afghanistan where it figured in the elevated situation of the South Palace of the Lashkari Bazar. In al-Andalus, 'Abd al-Rahman III incorporated such views into the three-tiered plan for Madinat al-Zahra', employing the architectural models of the Abbasids despite his inimical relations with them, to enhance his new stature as prince of al-Andalus, international potentate, and Commander of the Faithful.

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NOTES

1. This paper has been extracted from my doctoral dissertation, "Madinat al-Zahra's Constructed Landscape: A Case Study in Islamic Garden and Architectural History" for the University of Pennsylvania. Research conducted in 1987-89 was assisted by a grant from the Joint Committee on the Near and Middle East of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council, with funds provided by the Ford Foundation and the Flora Hewlett Foundation.
2. I count more than thirty palaces dating from the tenth century or earlier, among them al-Rusafa, al-Dimashq, Munyat al-Nasr (and the adjoining area known as al-Rakin), Munyat al-Na'ura, Munyat Arha, Nasih, Munyat Ibn al-Qurashiya, Munyat Najda, Munyat al-Rummaniyya, al-'Amiriya, Munyat al-Mugira, Munyat 'Abd-Allah, and a palace built on pilings on the banks of the Guadalquivir River. These are mentioned in al-Razi, *Anales palatinos del califa de Córdoba al-Hakam II*, trans. Emilio García Gómez (Madrid, 1967); Arabic text in Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis*, ed. A.A. al-Hajji (Beirut, 1965). See also Ibn Bashkuwal in al-Maqqari, *Nafh al-tib*, ed. Dozy et al. (Amsterdam, 1967), and *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Pascual de Gayangos (London, 1840, 1843). L. Torres Balbas, relying on secondary sources and translations, lists twenty-three palaces in *Ciudades Hispanomusulmanas*, 2d ed. (Madrid, 1985), pp. 138-42.
3. Excavations in Madinat al-Zahra' have been conducted and published sporadically for eighty years. Published reports include R. Castejón, "El plano de Medina Azahara," *Boletín de la Real Academia de Córdoba*, 11 (1925): 22-25; R. Jiménez Amigo et al., *Excavaciones en Medina az-Zahra (Córdoba): Memorias de la Junta Superior de Excavaciones y Antigüedades*, no. 67 and 7 (Madrid, 1924), and no. 85 and 3 (Madrid, 1926); R. Castejón, "Nuevas excavaciones en Madinat al-Zahra: el salón de Abd al-Rahman III," *al-Andalus* 10 (1945): 147-54; and F. Hernández Giménez, *Madinat al-Zahra': Arquitectura y Decoración* (Granada, 1985), published posthumously with neither plans nor illustrations.
4. E. Herzfeld and F. Sarre, *Erster vorläufiger Bericht über die Ausgraben von Samarra* (Berlin, 1912), excerpted and trans. in K. A. C.

- Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 2 vols. (1940; reprinted New York, 1969), 2: 232–42, 265–70. See also H. Viollet, "Description du palais de al-Moutasim à Samara" and "Fouilles à Samara," *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, ser. I, v. 12, pt. 2, (1909 and 1911): 567–94, 685–717.
5. J. Lassner, *The Shaping of 'Abbasid Rule* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 169–75, 184–203, and "The Caliph's Personal Domain: The City Plan of Baghdad Re-examined," in *The Islamic City: A Colloquium*, ed. Albert Hourani and S. H. Stern (Oxford-Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 103–18.
 6. E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane*, Part III: *Le siècle du Califat de Cordoue* (Paris, 1953), pp. 6–10, 488–96. Also F. Gabrieli, "Omayyades d'Espagne et Abbasides," *Studia Islamica* 31 (1970): 93–100.
 7. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, Part II: *Le Califat Umayyade de Cordoue (912–1031)*, 2d ed. (Paris-Leiden, 1950), pp. 116–17.
 8. The elevation of buildings for the purpose of giving a perspective onto the grounds below was by no means an Islamic innovation. Persian palaces such as the 'Imarat-i Khusrau at the Qasr-i Shirin and the Hawsh Kuri, both built in the reign of Khusrau II Parviz (591–628), stood on high terraces from which the surrounding gardens could be viewed. (See Ralph Pinder-Wilson, "The Persian Garden: *Bagh* and *Chahar Bagh*," in *The Islamic Garden*, ed. Elisabeth MacDougall and Richard Ettinghausen [Washington, D.C., 1976], pp. 72–73.)
 9. Herzfeld in Creswell, *EMA*, 2: 265–70.
 10. Hernández Giménez, *Arquitectura y Decoración*, p. 62; exactly 163 by 144 meters as measured from the exterior of the thick containing walls.
 11. Typologically the idea of pavilions illusionistically floating on water and the introduction of water and nature into architectural settings owed a great deal to Imperial Roman villas (See Zoja Pavlovskis, *Man in an Artificial Landscape: The Marvels of Civilization in Imperial Roman Literature* [Leiden, 1973]). For example, at Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli, built in A.D. 125–30, the Teatro Marittimo consisted of a circular island retreat surrounded by a moat which was bridged by a single walkway. The effect was primarily architectural, however, with only brief glimpses of nature allowed through portico and wall apertures. In contrast, at Madinat al-Zahra' and in later, more fully developed water structures such as the black marble pavilion in the Shalamar Bagh at Kashmir, the pavilion and pool stood amidst greenery, the water acting as a horizontal frame across which the viewer looked for an unimpeded view of the surrounding garden.
- Although in the Islamic context the floating pavilion is an architectural device more commonly associated with Mughal India, Madinat al-Zahra's garden pavilion appears to be an early experiment with the idea on the Iberian Peninsula. Madinat al-Zahra', which became the prototype of royal architectural magnificence in al-Andalus, undoubtedly inspired the close association of water and pavilions in Ta'ifa, Almohad, and Nasrid palaces. Most notably, in a palace built by al-Ma'mun (1043–75), the Ta'ifa king of Toledo (that is, the ruler of one of the kingdoms that sprang up after the disintegration of the Caliphate of Cordoba), there was a garden with a large pool in the center of which stood a pavilion of glass etched with gold. By an ingenious device, water was made to cascade over the dome of the pavilion while al-Ma'mun sat inside, dry, yet in the very center of a gushing fountain (al-Maqqari, *Nafh al-tib: Analectes sur l'histoire et la littérature des arabes d'Espagne*, ed. R. Dozy et al., 2 vols. [Leiden, 1855–1861; reprinted Amsterdam, 1967] 1: 347–48, 2: 673).
12. Hernández Giménez, *Arquitectura y Decoración*, pp. 61–62. The mirador theory has been echoed most recently by Alfonso Jiménez Martín, "Los jardines de Madinat al-Zahra'," *Cuadernos de Madinat al-Zahra'* 1 (1987): 81–92.
 13. Since the countryside around Cordoba had been successively cultivated by Romans, Visigoths, and Muslims, it can hardly be termed natural in the sense of being untouched by human hands. Nonetheless, in the tenth century, Madinat al-Zahra' marked the westernmost edge of the developed area of Cordoba. Although there were probably several farmed estates on the plain below Madinat al-Zahra' ('Abd al-Rahman III had given his court officials economic incentives to build houses near Madinat al-Zahra'), most of the land between the palace city and the river five kilometers to the south was neither bound by walls nor furrowed by the plow. To the eye, it would have appeared an entirely natural landscape.
 14. Hernández Giménez, *Arquitectura y Decoración*, p. 62; the Alhambra's Comares Tower in particular.
 15. Al-Nuwayri, *Historia de los musulmanes de España y Africa. Nihāyat al-'arab fi funūn al-adab*, ed. and trans. M. Gaspar Remiro (Granada, 1917), p. 62.
 16. Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis*, ed. El-Hajji (Beirut, 1965), p. 21.
 17. James Dickie, "The Alhambra: Some Reflections Prompted by a Recent Study by Oleg Grabar," in *Studia Arabica et Islamica* (Beirut, 1981): 127–49.
- Interestingly, the axial water channels of the Lions Court make subtle reference to the typological inversion. The water emanates from the terminal points of the lateral axes, overflowing from basins on raised platforms in fantastically muqarnas-vaulted chambers that replace the pavilion/miradors of an outdoor garden. Just as the muqarnas vaults denote garden pavilions, the channels themselves, in extending beyond the visual parameters of the compressed space of the Lions Court, may allude to the more expansive scale of the large garden type of which it is a variation.
18. For Qasr al-Hayr West, see Daniel Schlumberger, "Qasr al-Hayr," *Syria*, 20 (1939): 195–373, and *Les Fouilles de Qasr el-Heir el-Gharbi* (Damascus, 1939); Henri Seyrig, "Les Jardins de Kasr el-Heir," *Syria* 12 (1931): 316–18. For Jabal Says, see Klaus Brisch, "Das omayyadische Schloss in Usais," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Kairo* 20 (1965): 163–72. Both sites are discussed in Creswell, *EMA*, vol. 1, part 1, chaps. 15 and 18.
 19. For a discussion of the semiotic significance of landscape vista and perspective in an altogether different context, see the chapter on Constable's landscape paintings in Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition 1740–1860* (Los Angeles and Berkeley, 1986).