

# Women | The Private Lives of Muslim Women

'In Islamic culture houses and palaces were designed to ensure privacy for women.'

In Islamic culture, houses and palaces were designed to ensure privacy for women, shielding them from the intrusion and inconvenience of strangers. Within this exclusively private sphere, women were free to go about their domestic business, see to their family commitments, socialise with other female members of the extended household, relatives or friends and look after their own needs and affairs. Women had the right to their own property and the dowry, including jewellery, which they had received from their groom when they married, remained theirs even in the case of a divorce. In the context of the royal court, women lived lavishly with all material comforts provided, within palace quarters exclusive to them.



**Name:**

Çakırcı Mansion

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 13th century / AD 19th century Ottoman

**Details:**

Birgi-Ödemiş, İzmir, Türkiye

**Justification:**

The owner of this mansion had each of his wives' rooms decorated with depictions of their hometown so that they might feel less homesick.



**Name:**

Çakırcı Mansion

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 13th century / AD 19th century Ottoman

**Details:**

Birgi-Ödemiş, İzmir, Türkiye

**Justification:**

The room for the wife from Istanbul has a painting of Istanbul.



**Name:**

Çakırcı Mansion

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 13th century / AD 19th century Ottoman

**Details:**

Birgi-Ödemiş, İzmir, Türkiye

**Justification:**

The room for another wife depicts Izmir, her hometown.



**Name:**

Ewer

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 872–901 / AD 1468–96 Mamluk

**Details:**

Victoria and Albert Museum  
London, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

Affluent women commissioned their own private furniture and utensils. This ewer belonged to the wife of the Mamluk Sultan Qaytbay.



**Name:**  
Gold necklace

**Dynasty:**  
Approximately hegira mid-7th century / AD 13th century  
Ayyubid

**Details:**  
Museum of Islamic Art  
Cairo, Egypt

**Justification:**  
A spectacular necklace that has been ascribed to the Ayyubid Queen Shajar al-Durr; it demonstrates the considerable wealth of some Muslim women.

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**Name:**  
Amir Bashtak Palace

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 740 / AD 1339 Mamluk

**Details:**  
Cairo, Egypt

**Justification:**  
The third storey of this palace housed the women's quarters, which had screened balconies from which the ladies could observe the activities in main hall below without being seen.

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**Name:**  
Pendant earring

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 5th–6th centuries / AD 11th–12th centuries Fatimid

**Details:**  
Museum of Islamic Art  
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

**Justification:**  
The display of adornments was confined to the home and immediate family in line with Islamic conventions.

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**Name:**  
Earrings

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 524–668 / AD 1130–1269 or Hegira 627–982 / AD 1229–1574 Almohad or Hafsids

**Details:**  
National Museum of Setif  
Setif, Algeria

**Justification:**

The display of adornments was confined to the home and immediate family in line with Islamic conventions.

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**Name:**  
The Tavira Vase

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira end of 5th or beginning of 6th century / AD end of 11th or beginning of 12th century Almoravid

**Details:**  
Tavira Municipal Museum  
Tavira, Faro, Portugal

**Justification:**  
An extraordinary example of popular art probably representing the ceremonial abduction that took place before a wedding ceremony, in which the animals are intended to be an allegory of good fortune for the couple.

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