

The Muslim West | Settlements and Domestic Life

Townhouses, the intimacy of private life.

The urban residences were more suited to the Muslim sense of intimacy than rural ones. With their open, porticoed courtyards furnished with a pool or a well, the family had space to gather and spend time together. The courtyard was surrounded by living rooms and sleeping annexes, the kitchen and the latrines, the latter of which would have been placed directly over cesspools or, more commonly, equipped with pipes to carry waste to cesspools in the street.



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Islamic quarter

Dynasty:

Hegira last quarter of 6th / AD 12th century Almohad

Details:

Mértola, Beja, Portugal

Justification:

The private nature of the home can be appreciated from the outside by its apertures, which were limited in number and size and placed high up and closed with wooden lattice panels (mashrabiyya). A single door would lead to an elbow-shaped passageway that prevented people from seeing inside the house.



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