

# The Muslim West | Seats of Power: Palaces

Palaces, the real seats of power.

As a whole, palaces were the real place of representation where power was exercised, with the sovereign publicly imparting justice or receiving administrators or ambassadors according to strict protocol. They consisted of sumptuous monumental spaces where state business was carried out in large, richly appointed rooms around garden courtyards. These spaces were accessed via long and complex routes, not just to improve security, but also to symbolise the inaccessibility of power.



**Name:**

Capital

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 4th century / AD 10th century Umayyad of al-Andalus, Caliphate period

**Details:**

Silves Municipal Archaeology Museum  
Silves, Faro, Portugal

**Justification:**

While the sumptuous decoration of the palaces symbolised the sovereign's power, the beauty of the courtyards, gardens, fountains and pools created a harmonious and elegant environment that resembled paradise.

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**Name:**

Arch

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 437–73 / AD 1064–81 Taifa kingdoms; Banu Hud dynasty, Abu Yafar Ahmad al-Muqtadir (r. AH 437–73 / AD 1064–81)

**Details:**

National Archaeological Museum  
Madrid, Spain

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**Name:**

Fountain spout

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 339–90 / AD 950–1000 Umayyads of al-Andalus, Caliphate period

**Details:**

National Archaeological Museum  
Madrid, Spain

**Justification:**

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**Name:**  
Alhambra

**Dynasty:**  
From Hegira 636 / AD 1238 to the reign of Muhammad V (AH 754–94 / AD 1354–91) Nasrid

**Details:**  
Granada, Spain

**Justification:**  
Partial Gardens, Alhambra, Granada.



**Name:**  
Batha Palace

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 13th / AD 19th century 'Alawid

**Details:**  
Fez (Old Town / Medina), Morocco

**Justification:**  
Batha Palace, Fez.

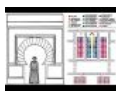


**Name:**  
Madinat al-Zahra

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 324–65 / AD 936–76 Umayyad of al-Andalus, Caliphate period

**Details:**  
Córdoba, Spain

**Justification:**  
Each room had a specific use, the protocol dictating that one room should be used to receive ambassadors and ministers, while another would be used to impart justice before a public audience.



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**Name:**  
Site of Qal'at Bani Hammad

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 397-398 / AD 1007-1008 Hammadid

**Details:**  
Qal'at Bani Hammad, Msila, Algeria

**Justification:**

The palace and the palace mosque symbolised the sovereign's political and religious power. The sovereign would have presided over prayers from a reserved area in front of the mosque's mihrab.

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