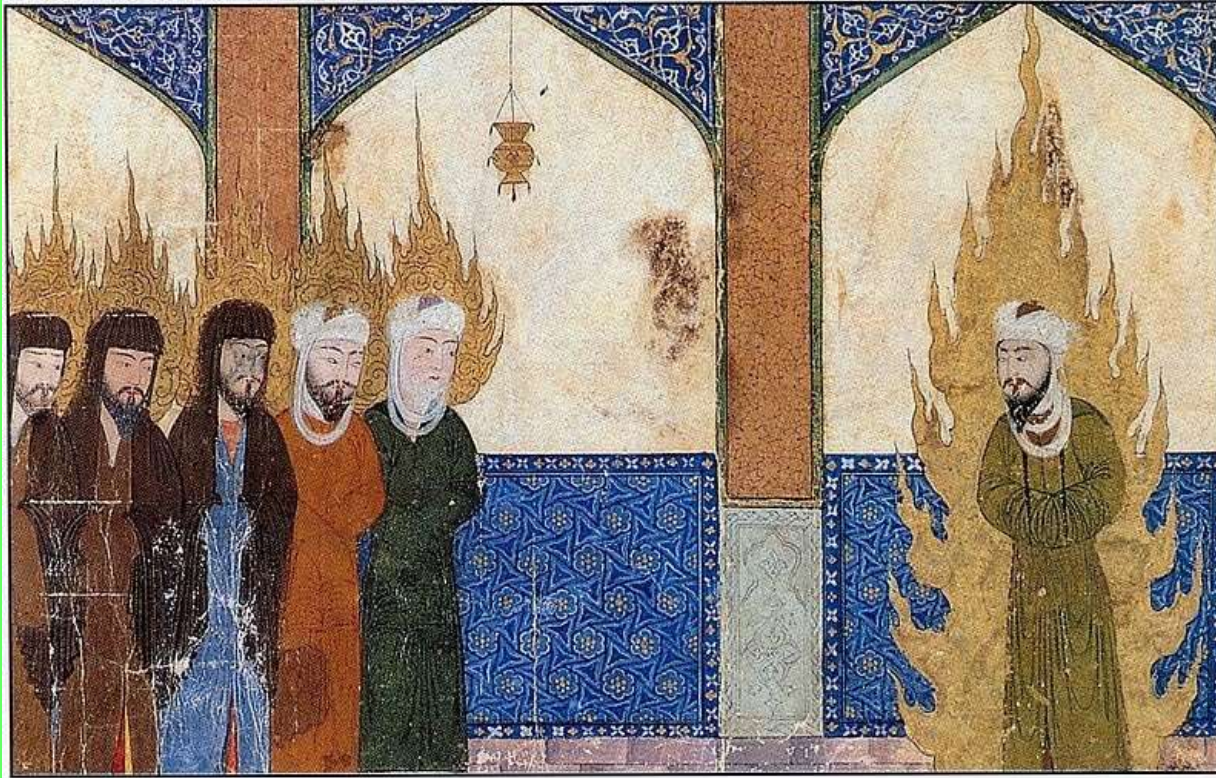


# Islamic Architecture

**Islam arose in the early seventh century under the leadership of the prophet Muhammad. (In Arabic the word Islam means "submission" [to God].)**

**It is the youngest of the world's three great monotheistic religions and follows in the prophetic tradition of Judaism and Christianity.**



**Muhammad leads Abraham, Moses and Jesus in prayer.**

**From medieval Persian manuscript**

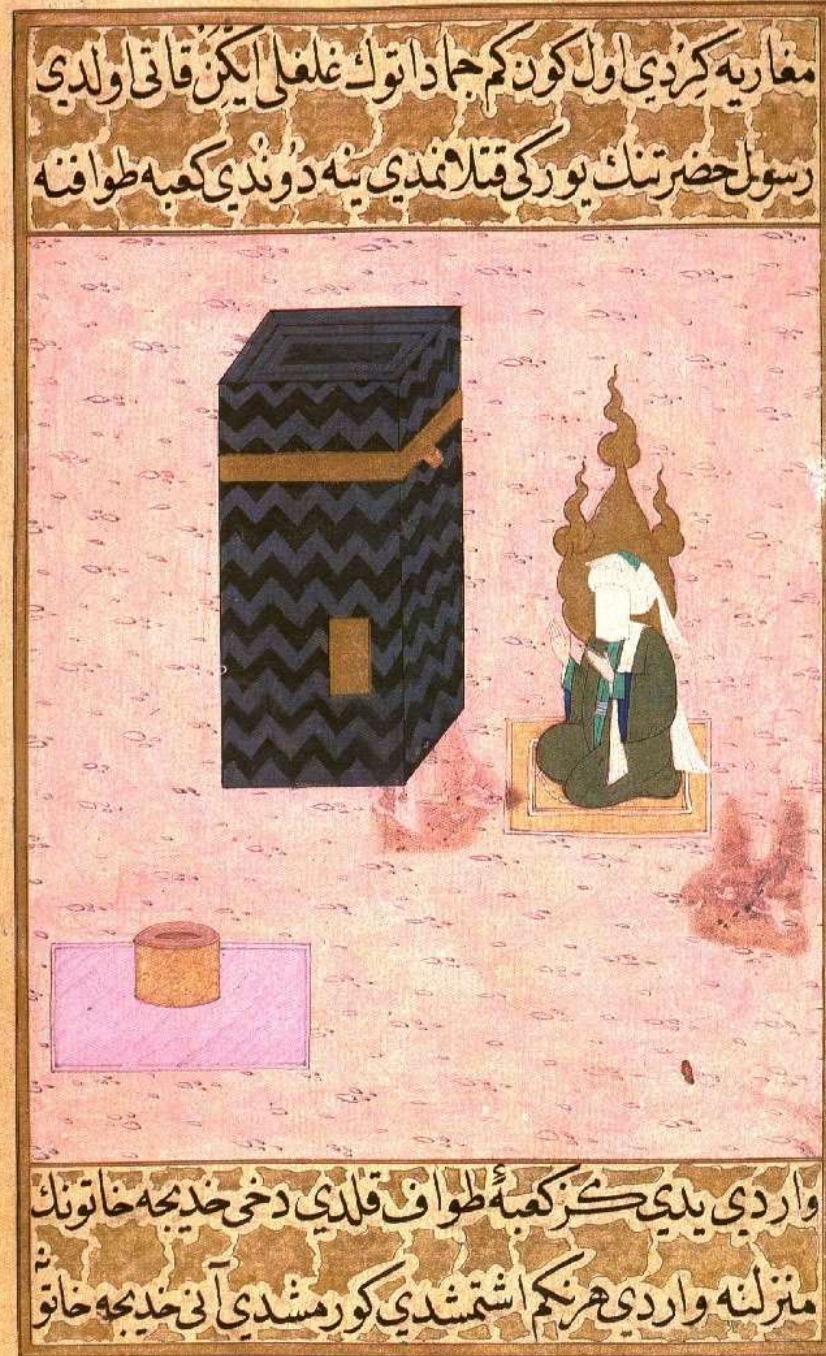


# Muhammad (ca. 572-632)

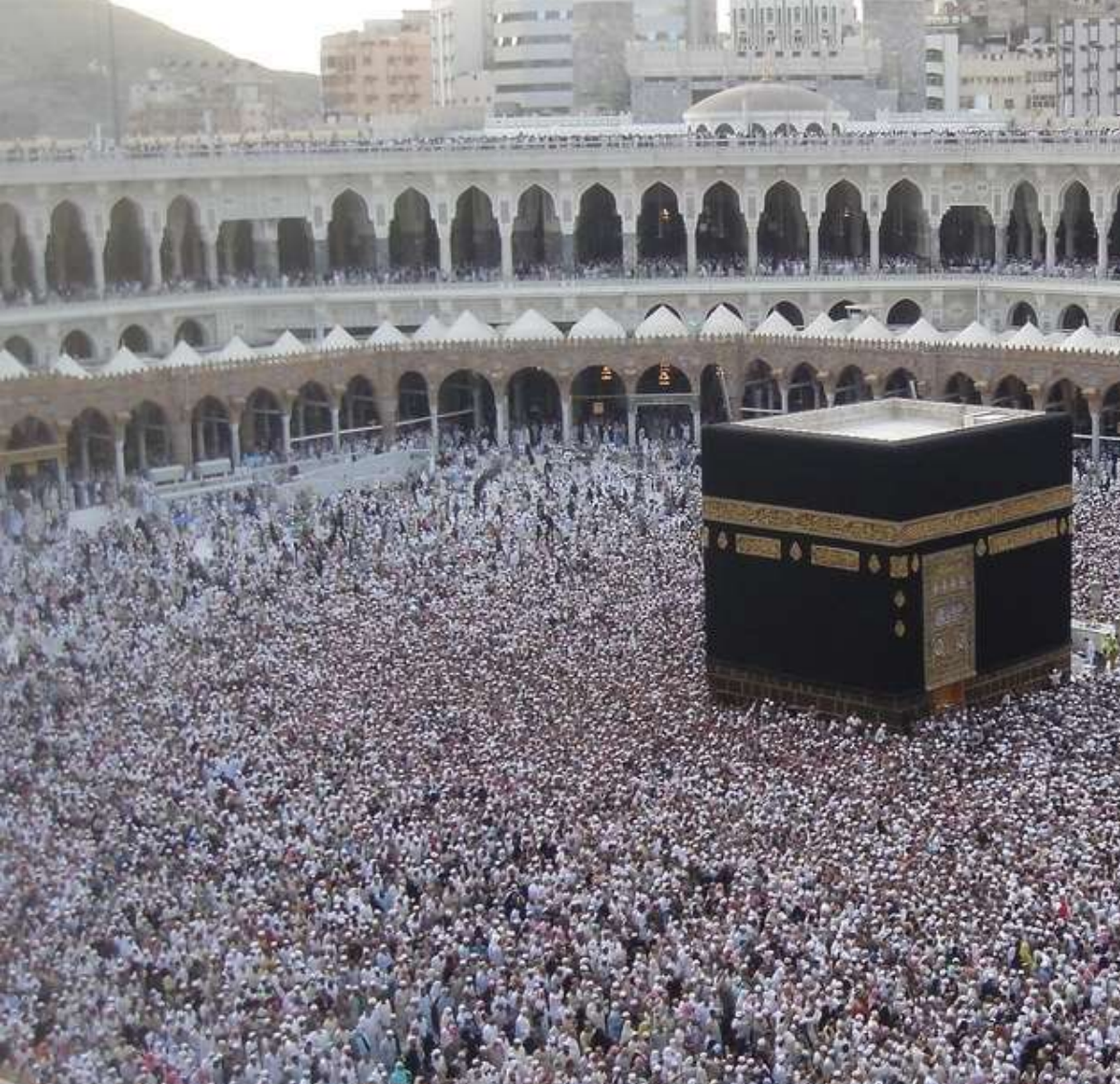
prophet and founder of Islam.

Born in Mecca (Saudi Arabia) into a noble Quraysh clan, he was orphaned at an early age. He grew up to be a successful merchant, then according to tradition, he was visited by the angel Gabriel, who informed him that he was the messenger of God. His revelations and teachings, recorded in the Qur'an, are the basis of Islam.

**Muhammad (with veiled face) at the Ka'ba** from *Siyer-i Nebi*, a 16th-century Ottoman manuscript. Illustration by Nakkaş Osman





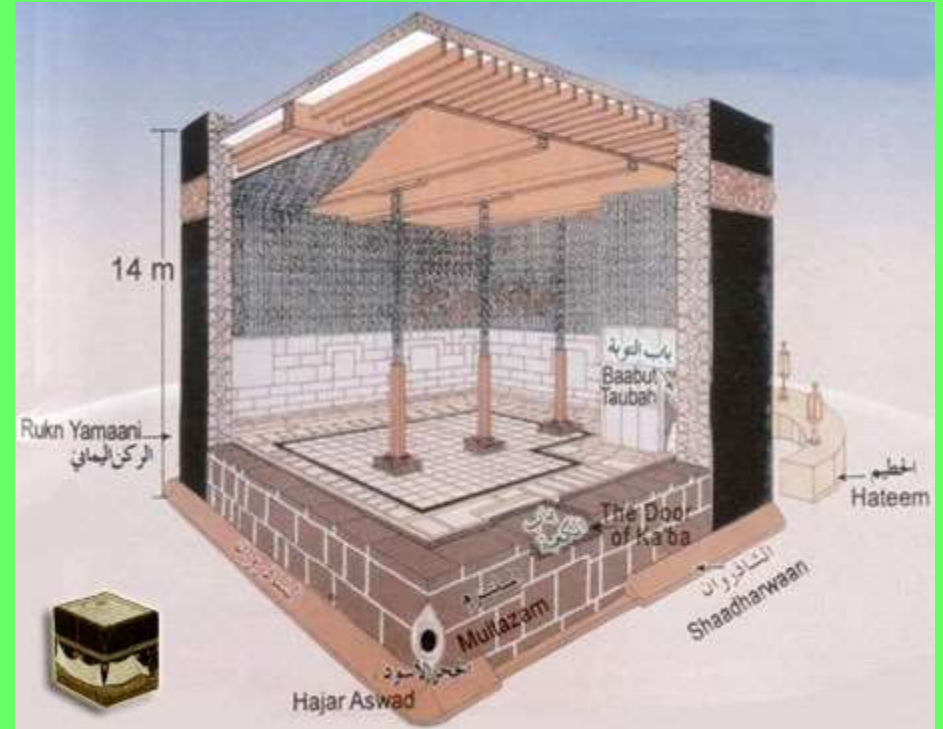


## **Five pillars of Islam:**

- 1. The profession of faith in the one God and in Muhammad as his Prophet**
- 2. Prayer five times a day**
- 3. The giving of alms to the poor**
- 4. Fasting during the month of Ramadan**
- 5. The *hajj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca**

**Kaaba - the shrine in Mecca that Muslims face when they pray. It is built around the famous Black Stone, and it is said to have been built by Abraham and his son, Ishmael. It is the focus and goal of all Muslim pilgrims when they make their way to Mecca during their pilgrimage – the Hajj.**



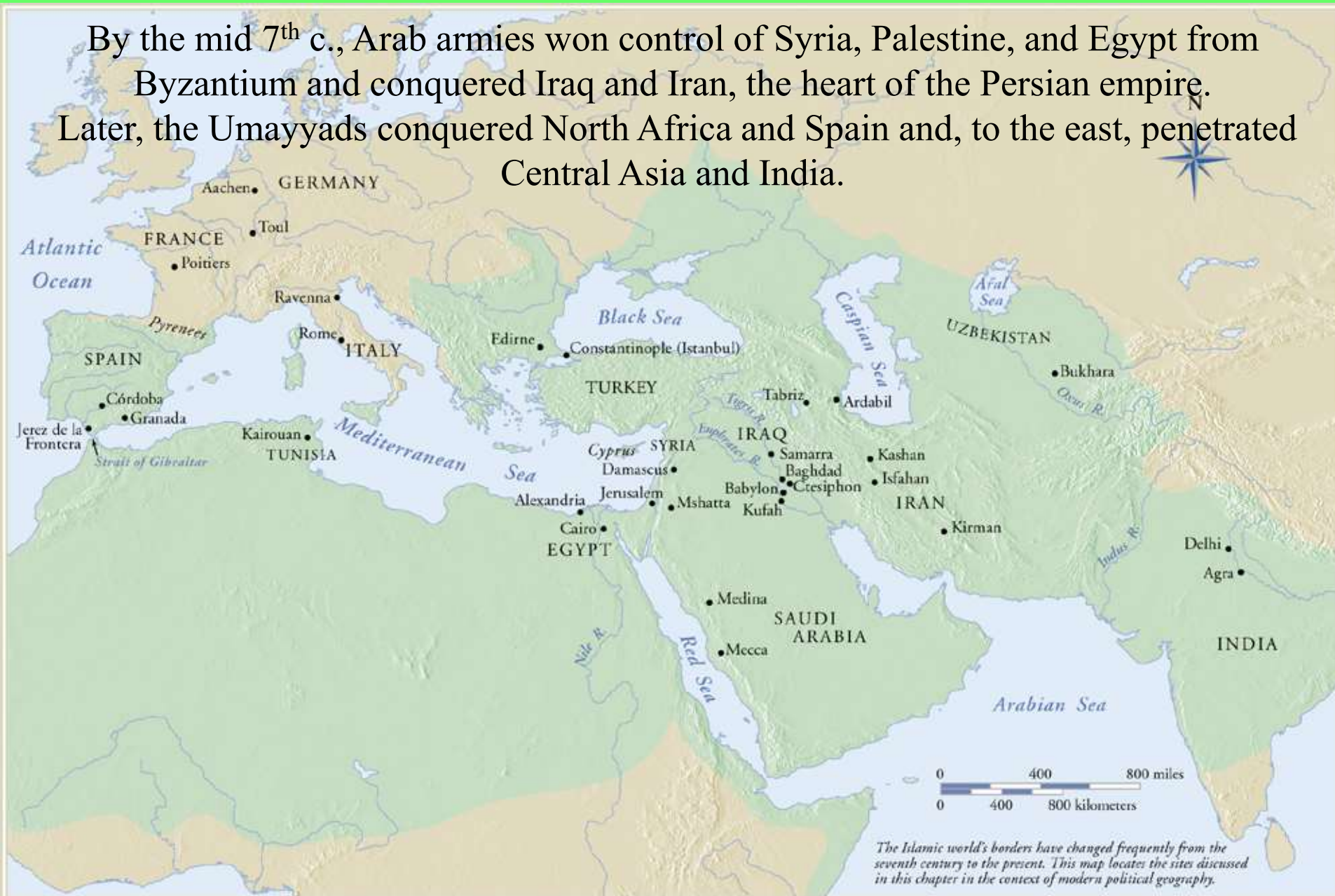


**Muslims believe that the "black stone" is a special divine meteorite, that fell at the foot of Adam and Eve. It is presently embedded in the southeastern corner of the Kaba.**

- [https://youtu.be/q7q\\_LcqbvKI](https://youtu.be/q7q_LcqbvKI)

# Map of the Islamic World (15<sup>th</sup> c.)

By the mid 7<sup>th</sup> c., Arab armies won control of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt from Byzantium and conquered Iraq and Iran, the heart of the Persian empire. Later, the Umayyads conquered North Africa and Spain and, to the east, penetrated Central Asia and India.



# Early Islamic Architecture

7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> c.



The Umayyads were the first Islamic dynasty and ruled from their capital at Damascus in Syria. The first monumental Islamic building is the Dome of the Rock.



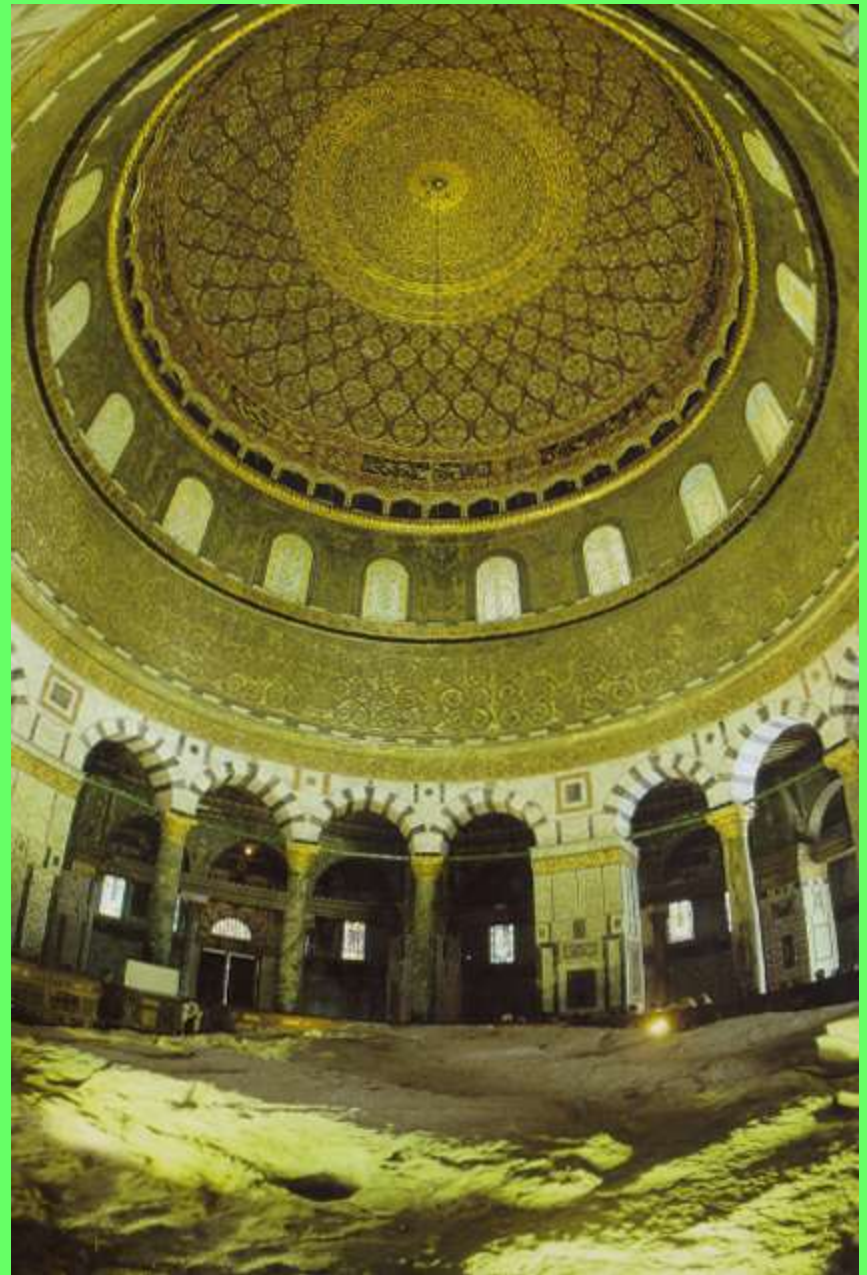
**Aerial view of the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, 687–692. Built by the Umayyad caliph Abd al Malik**





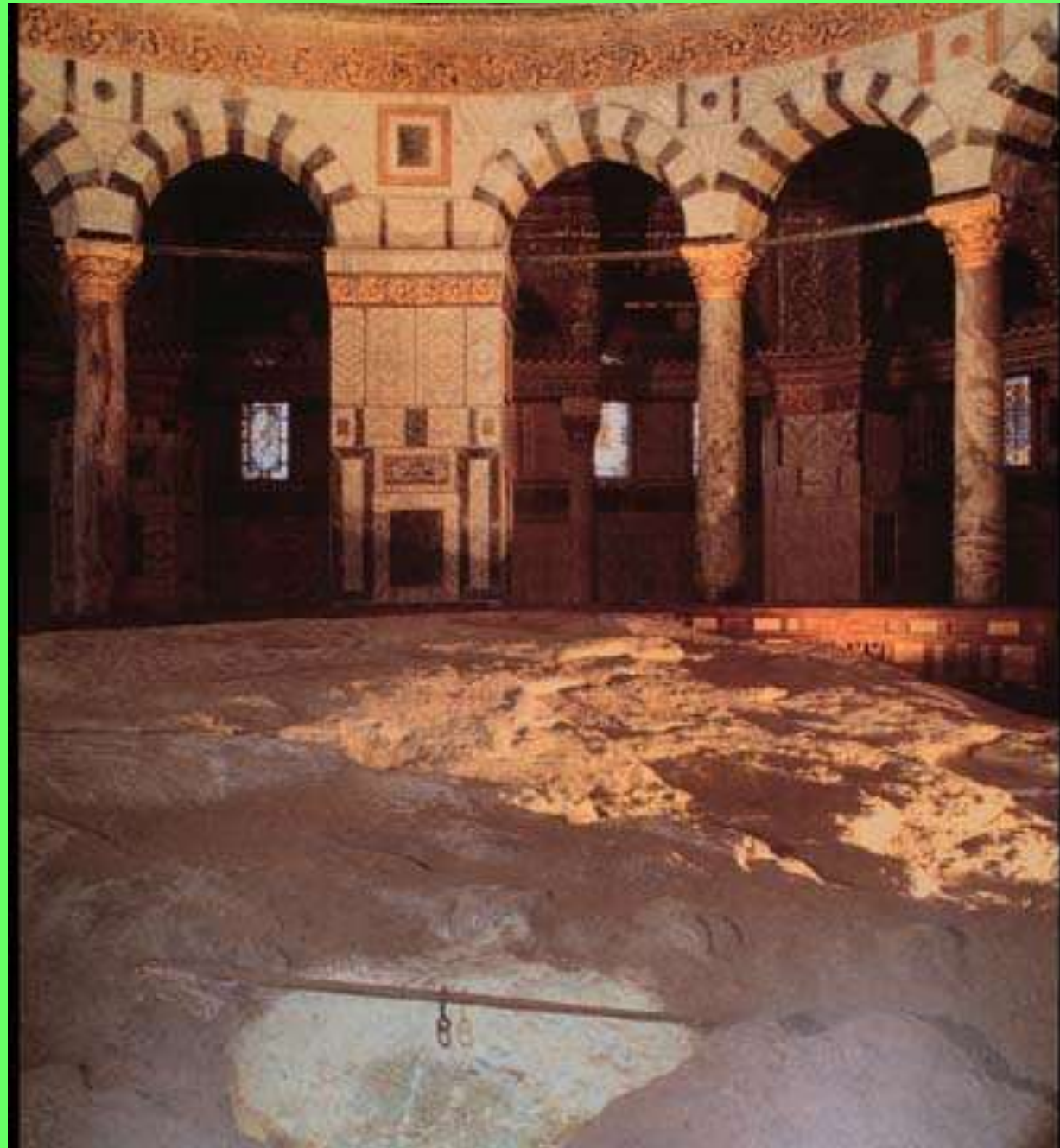
***Dome of the Rock (7<sup>th</sup> c.)  
and Western Wall (1<sup>st</sup> c.)***

al-Haram ash-Sharif (Sacred Noble  
Sanctuary) / Temple Mount, Jerusalem



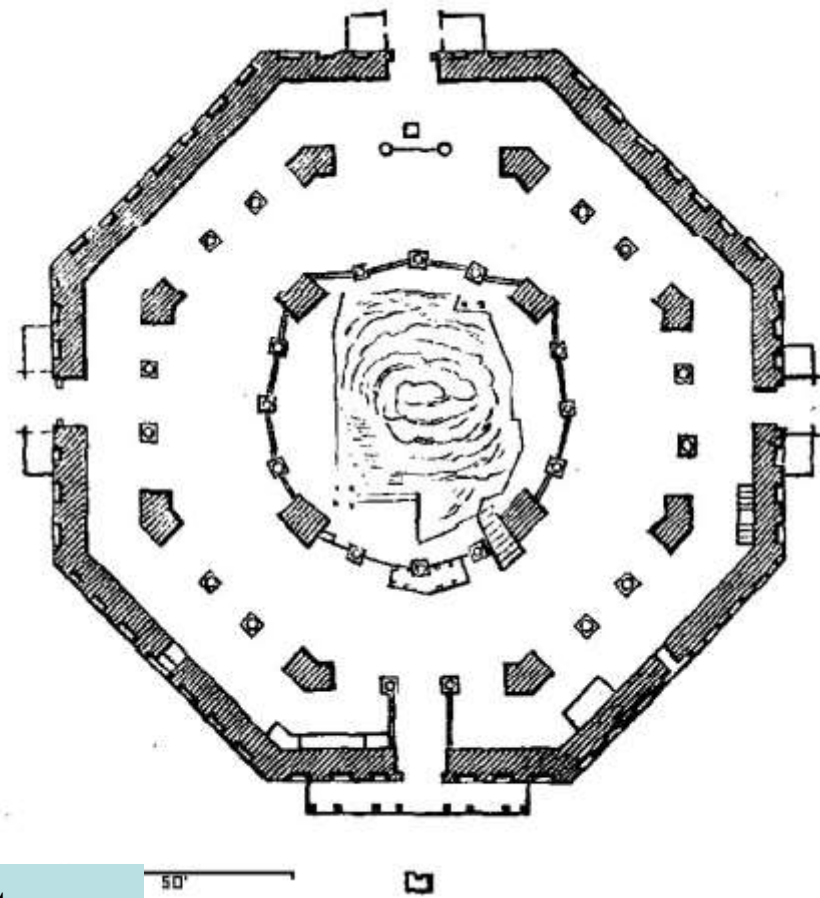
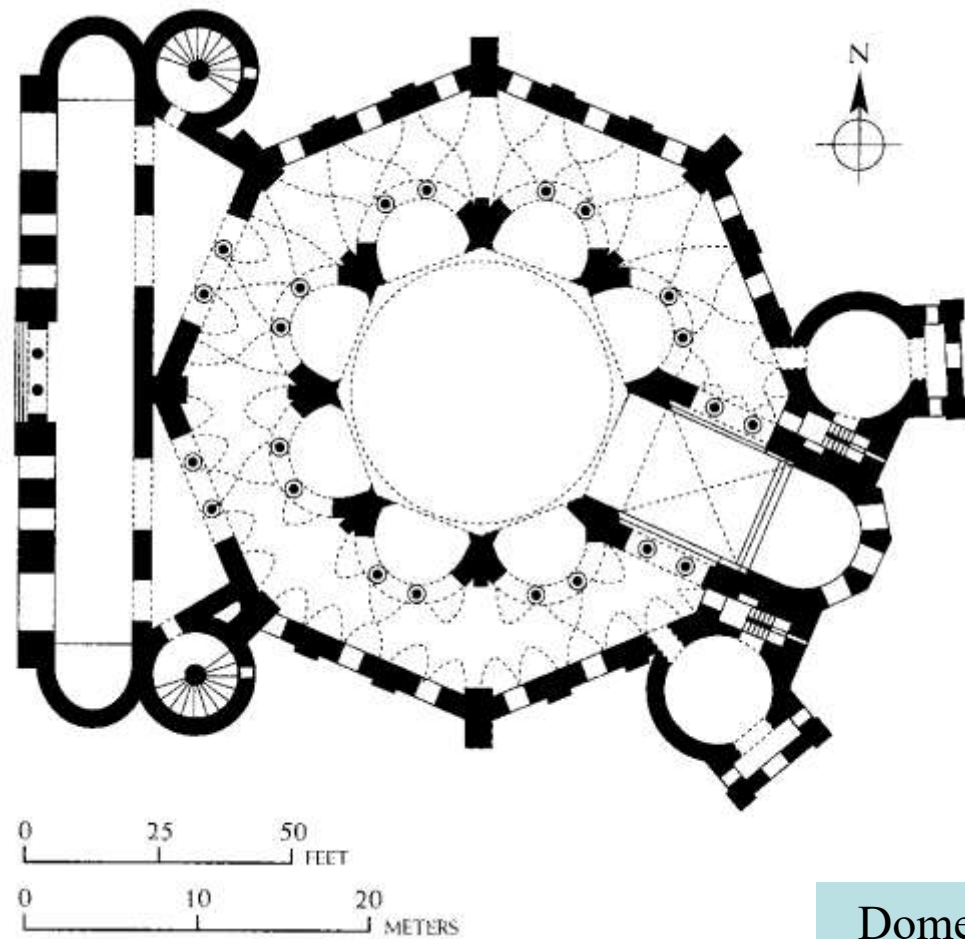
**According to tradition this is the place where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac/ Ishmael.**

**Also it is the spot from which Muhammad journeyed to heaven and at the same night returned to Mecca.**









Domed Octagon

**Comparison: Byzantine. Plan of Church of San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy, 526–547.**

**Plan of the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, 687–692.**



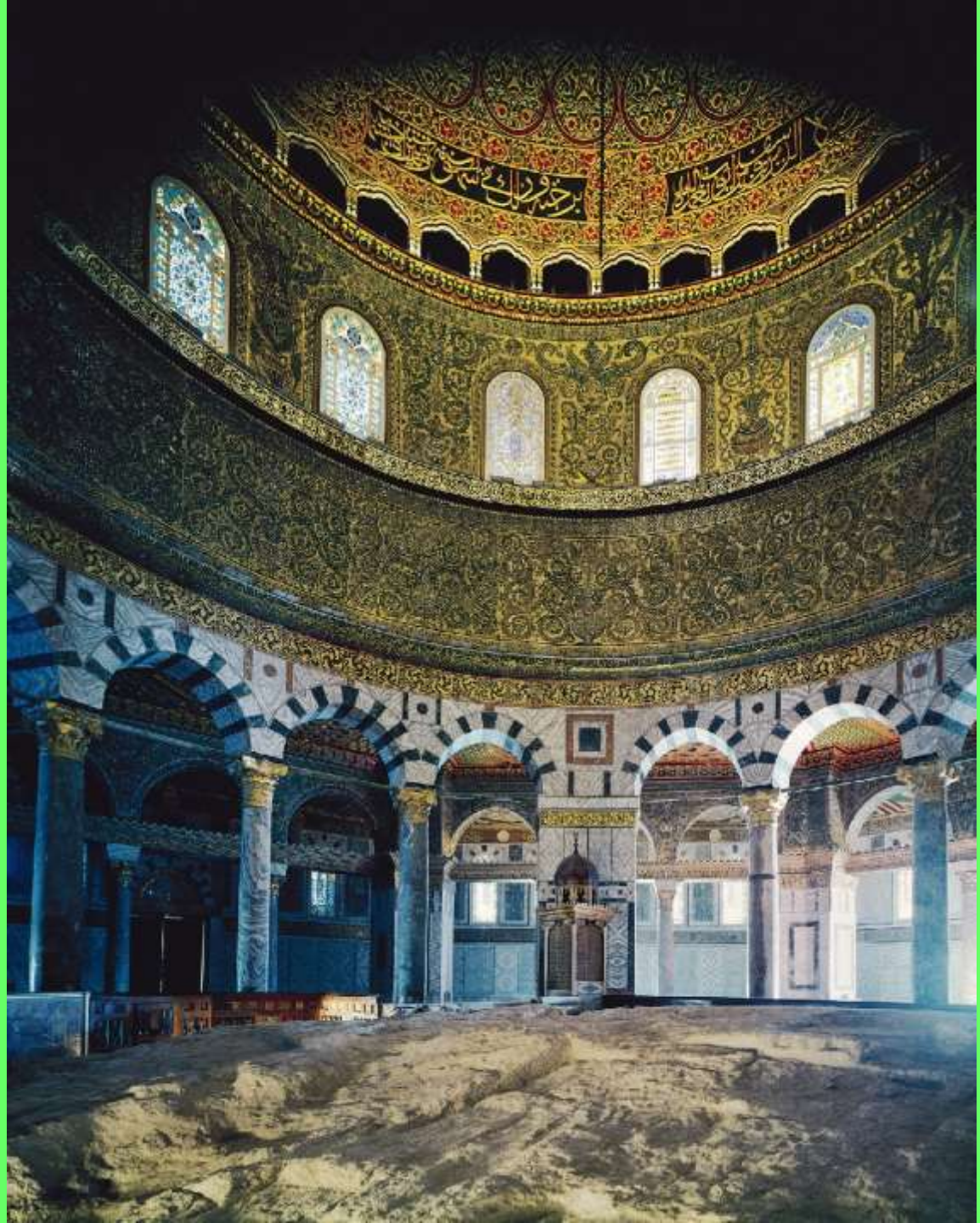
**Church of the Holy Sepulcher**



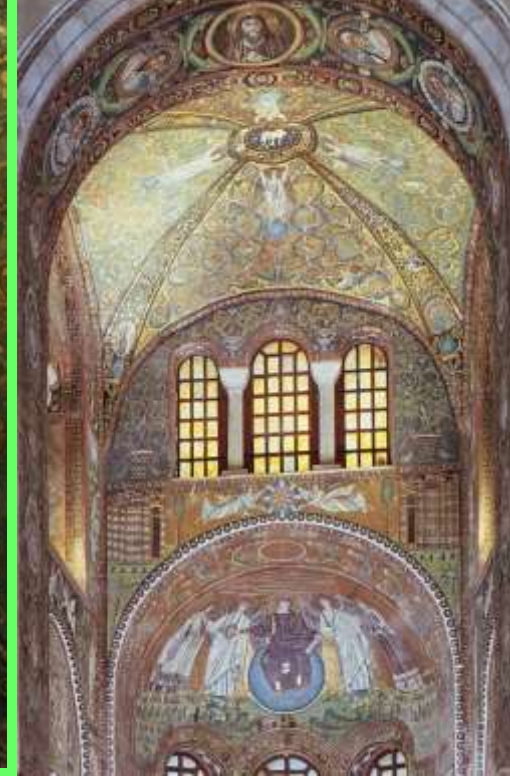


**Oldest surviving Koran verses, and first use of monumental Koranic inscriptions in architecture.**

*Interior of the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, 687–692.*







Comparison: Byzantine. *Choir and apse of San Vitale*. Ravenna, Italy, 526–547.

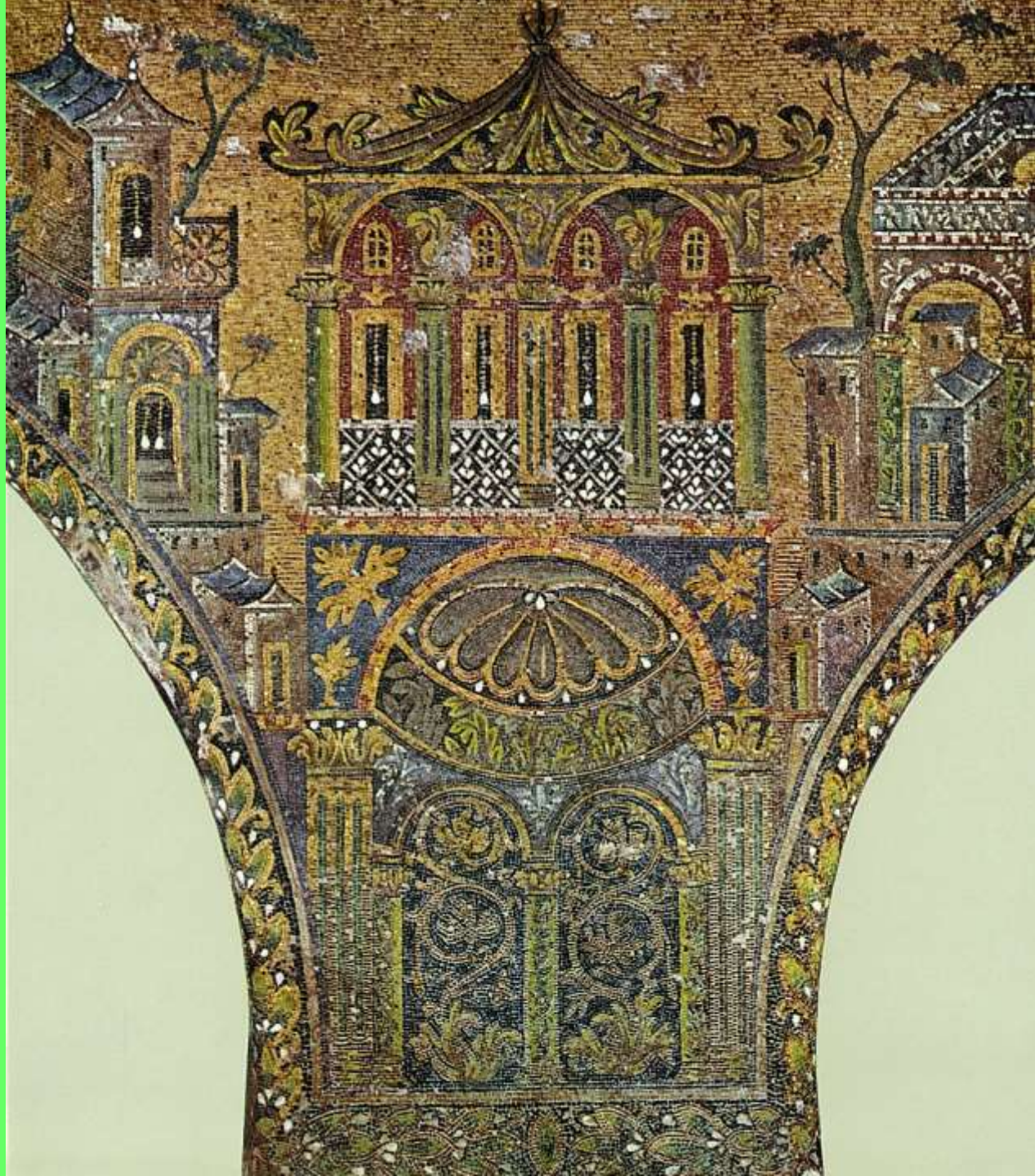
## Aniconism

Opposition to the use of visual images to depict living creatures or religious figures.

*Interior of the Dome of the Rock*, Jerusalem, 687–692.



**Detail of a mosaic in  
the courtyard arcade  
of the Great Mosque,  
Damascus, Syria, 706–  
715.**





**Islamic belief in Aniconism and the doctrine of unity/oneness (al-twahid) demanded a rich vocabulary of abstract, geometric forms.**

**Artists reiterated these forms in complex decoration that covered the surface of many works of art from large buildings, to rugs, paintings and small objects.**

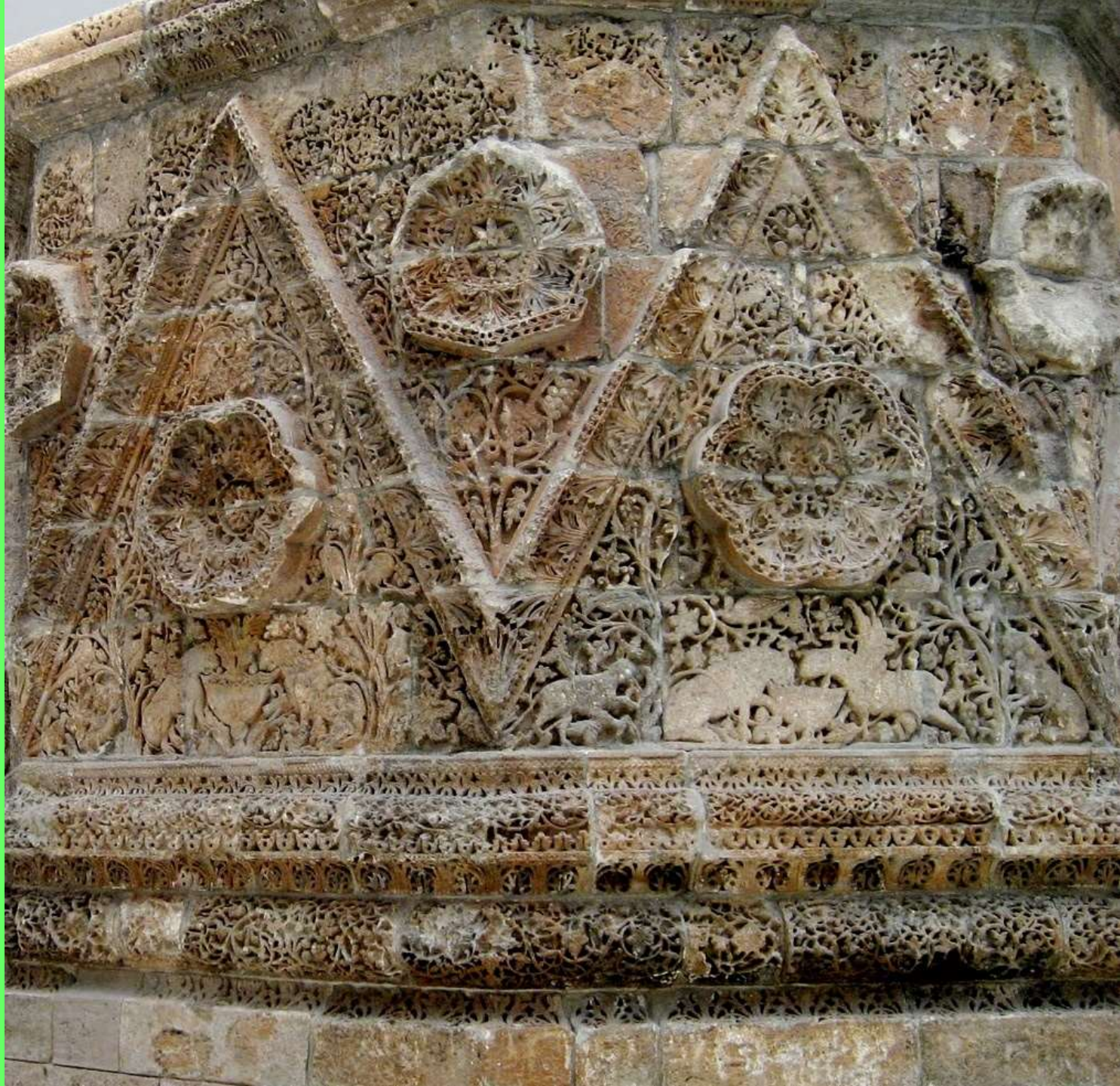


***Frieze of the Umayyad Palace.*** Mshatta, Jordan, ca. 740-750. Limestone, 16'17" high. Staatliche Museum, Berlin



*Frieze of the  
Umayyad  
Palace.* Mshatta,  
Jordan, ca. 740-  
750. Limestone,  
16' 17" high.  
Staatliche  
Museum, Berlin

- No animals appear on the exterior wall of the palace's mosque







*Frieze of the Umayyad Palace.*  
Mshatta, Jordan, ca. 740-750.

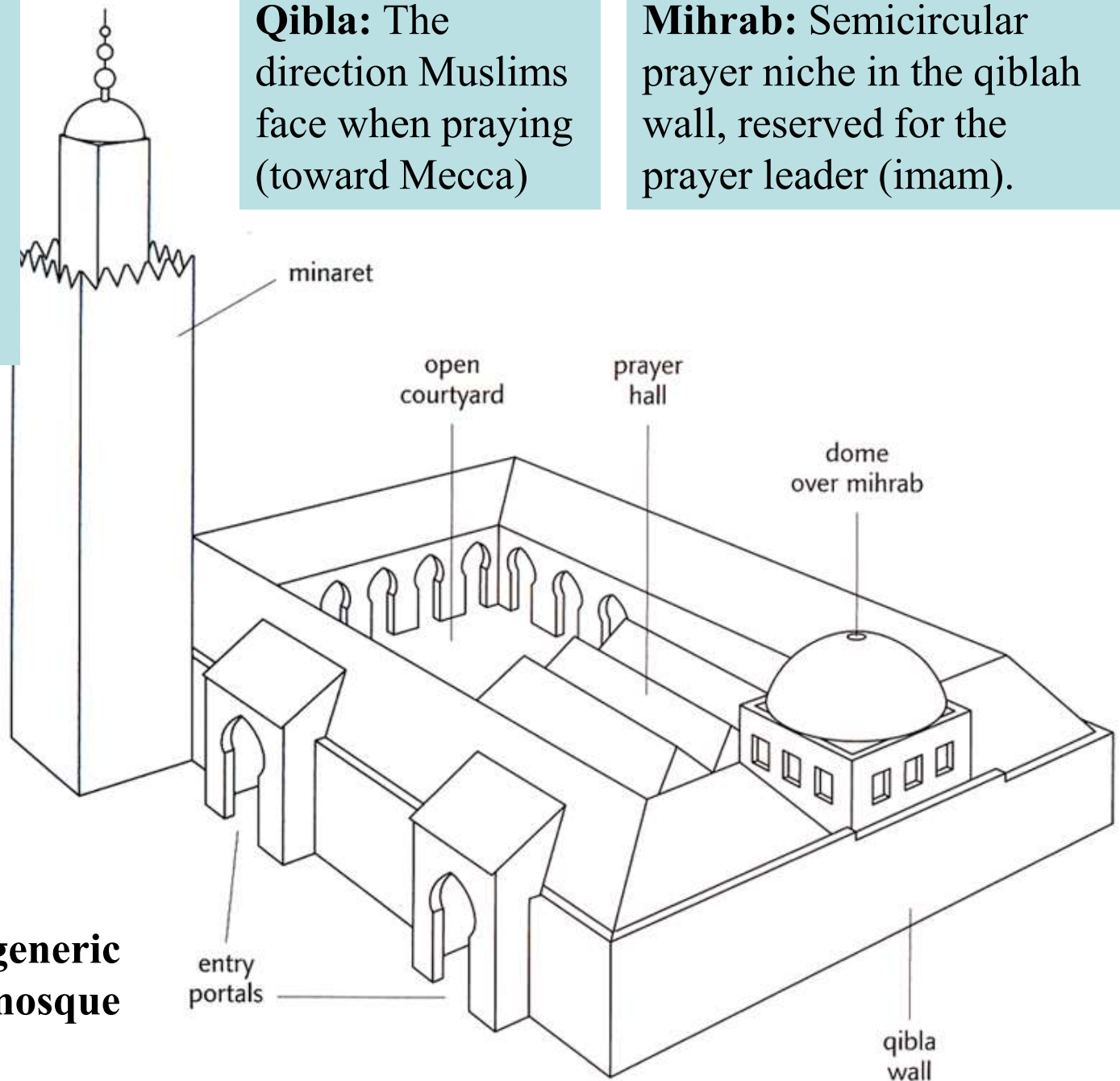
Comparison: Persian. *Rosettes flower and geometric pattern.* Terrace of the royal audience hall (apadana), Persepolis, Iran, ca. 521–465 BCE. Louvre. Paris



**Minaret:** mosque tower with projecting balconies from which a muezzin summons the people to prayer.

**Qibla:** The direction Muslims face when praying (toward Mecca)

**Mihrab:** Semicircular prayer niche in the qiblah wall, reserved for the prayer leader (imam).



**Hypostyle Hall:** Communal worshipping hall with roof supported by many columns

**Schematic of a generic Arab Hypostyle mosque**





**Aerial view of the Great Mosque, Damascus, Syria, 706–715.**  
can you find the Minaret, Hypostyle Hall, Dome over mihrab?

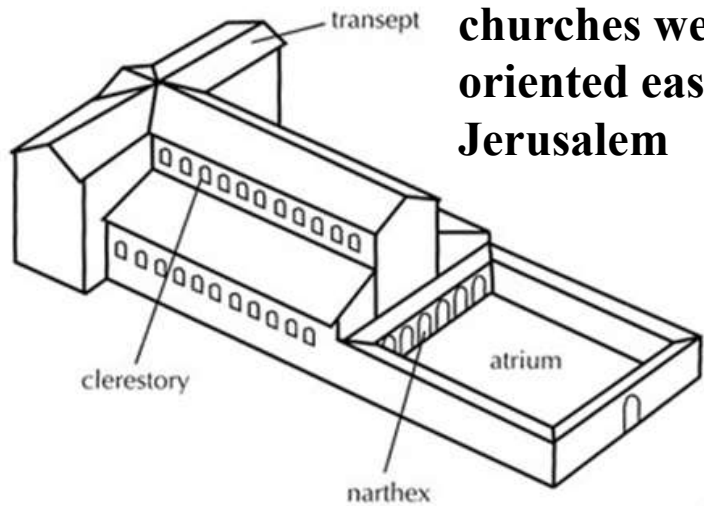




The first mosque was built by Muhammad next to his house in Medina. It had a square court with rows of palm trunks supporting the roofs and a raised platform for the reading of the Qur'an.

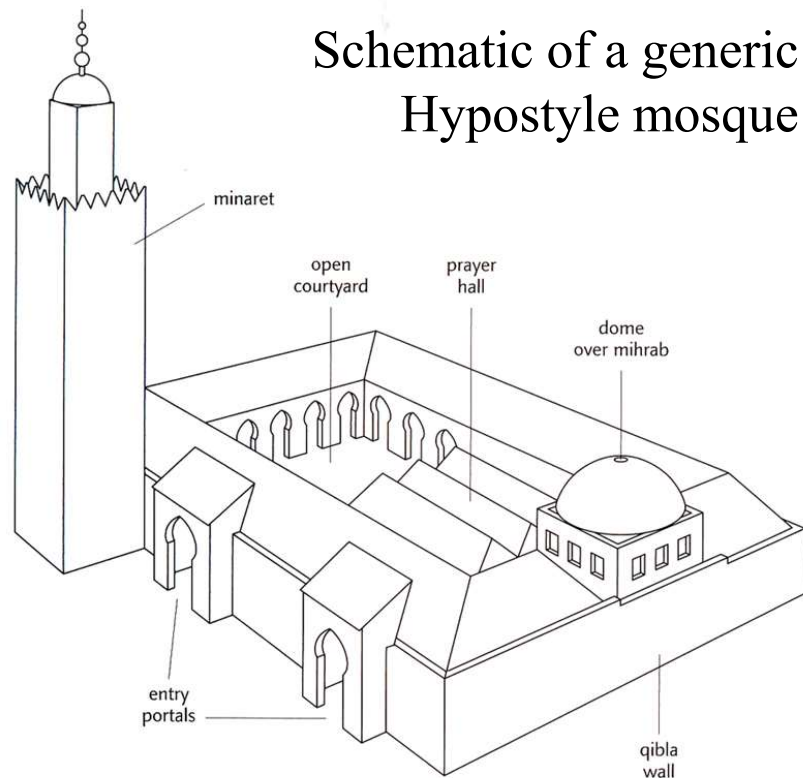
Comparison: Roman. Apollodorus of Damascus, *model of Forum of Trajan, Rome, Italy, 112 CE.*

Early Christian churches were oriented east toward Jerusalem



basilica-plan church

Schematic of a generic Hypostyle mosque







**Aerial view of the Great Mosque, Kairouan, Tunisia, ca. 836–875.**



*Minbar.* From the Kutubiya Mosque.  
Marrakesh, Morocco. 1125-1130. Wood and  
Ivory, 12'8"X11'4"X2'10". Badi Palace  
Museum, Marrakesh

## Minbar

A pulpit in the mosque where the  
imam (leader of prayer) stands to  
deliver sermons. The minbar is  
situated to the right of the mihrab



*Minbar and mihrab.* Haram al-  
Ibrahimi, Hebron. PA. 1043.







**Minbar and Detail.** From the Kutubiya Mosque. Marrakesh, Morocco. 1125-1130.

Wood and Ivory

Finely cut wooden pieces framing small panels of inlaid ivory to create the appearance of interlacing ribbons.



# **Islam in Spain**

**When the Umayyad were toppled in 750 by the Abbasid, Abd al-Rahman I, the only survivor, fled to southern Spain, where he established himself as the ruler, or emir. The Christian reconquest of Spain began in the 11th century and ended with the Moors' final defeat in 1492**

## **Moor**

**Any member of the Muslim population of Spain, of mixed Arab, Spanish, and Berber origins.**



## Cathedral–Mosque of Córdoba

7<sup>th</sup> c. – Christian Visigothic church built on the site of a Roman temple dedicated to Janus

8<sup>th</sup>- 10<sup>th</sup> c. – Islamic Mosque

13<sup>th</sup> - Present – Christian church, the Catedral de Córdoba



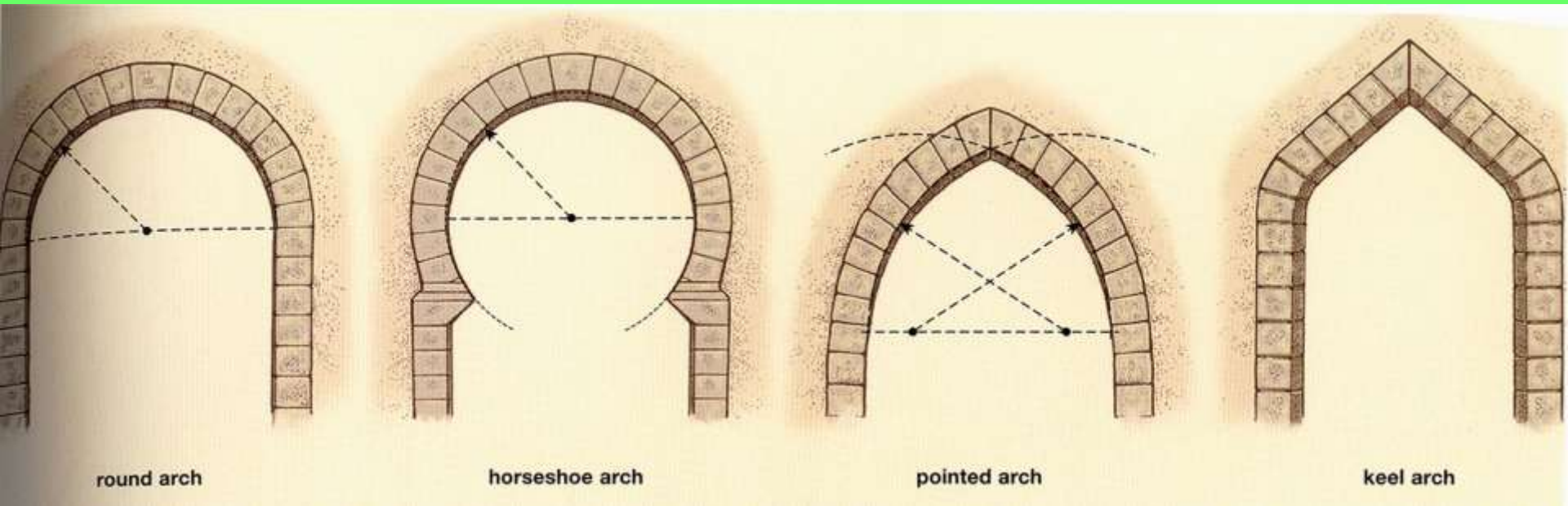
*Hypostyle Prayer hall of the Great Mosque, Córdoba* (capital of the Umayyad dynasty), Spain, 8th to 10th centuries. It has 36 piers and 514 columns made of jasper, onyx, marble, and granite with double arches

*Great Mosque,  
Cordoba, Spain,  
Begun 786 C.E.*





**Islamic builders used a variety of different arches types:**



*Mihrab.* 10<sup>th</sup> c. Great Mosque, Córdoba, Spain

It once housed the Koran and relics of Muhammad.







*Mihrab. Detail. 10<sup>th</sup> c. Great Mosque, Córdoba, Spain*



Comparison:

Jewish

Synagogue.

Interior of the  
synagogue at

Dura-Europos,

Syria, with wall-  
paintings of Old

Testament themes,

ca. 245–256



*Mihrab.* 10<sup>th</sup> c.

Great Mosque,

Córdoba, Spain



*Comparison:*  
*Christian Coptic*  
*Decorated prayer*  
*niche*

Tempera

Monastery of St.

Apollo, 6th / 7th

century

Bawit, Egypt



Comparison:

Byzantine. *Apse*

*of San Vitale.*

Ravenna, Italy,

526–547.







**Multi-lobed/Foiled arches**

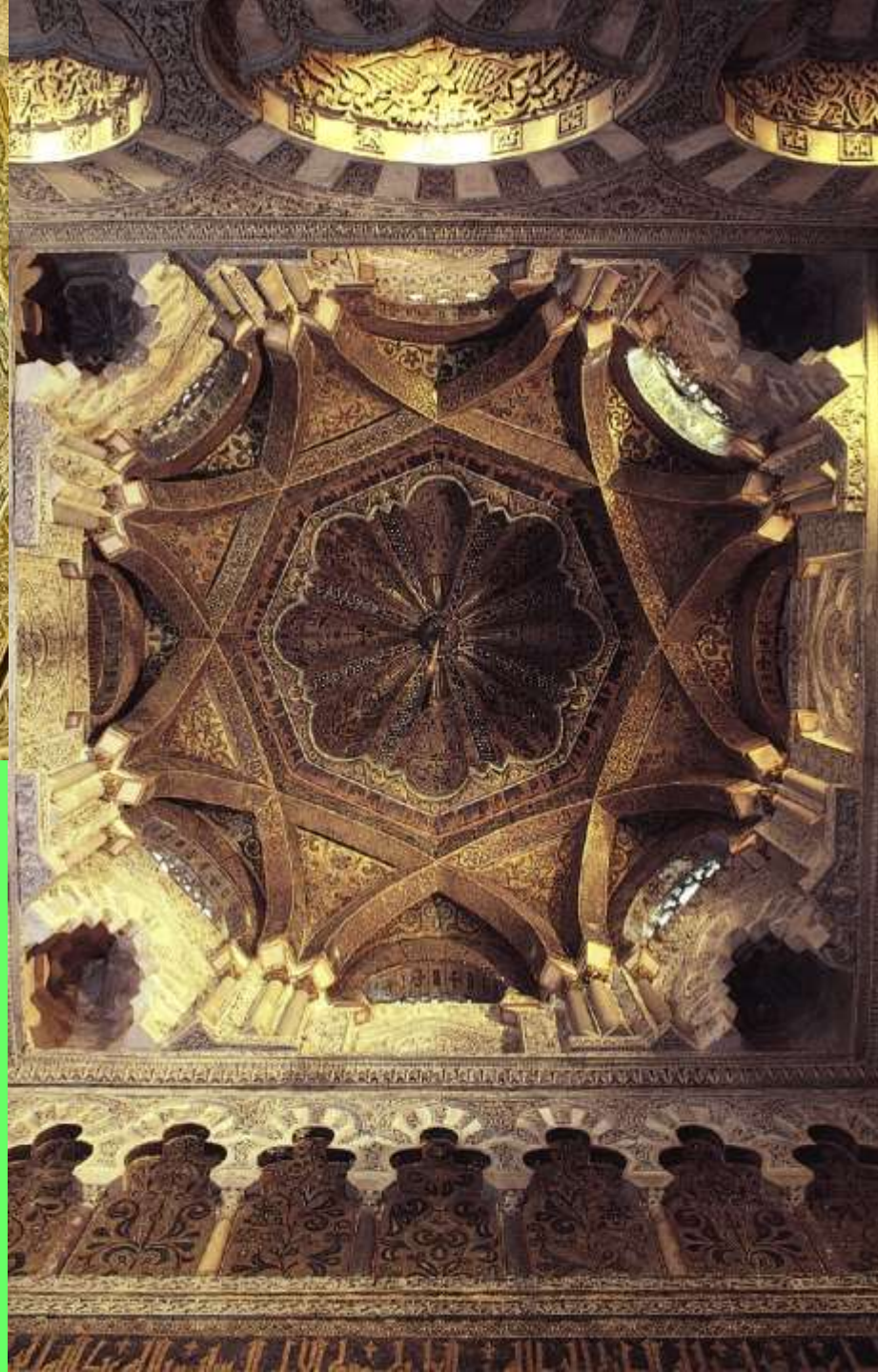
*Maqsura* (enclosure in front of the mihrab reserved for the caliph) of the *Great Mosque*, Córdoba, Spain, 961–965. Mosaics by Byzantine artists





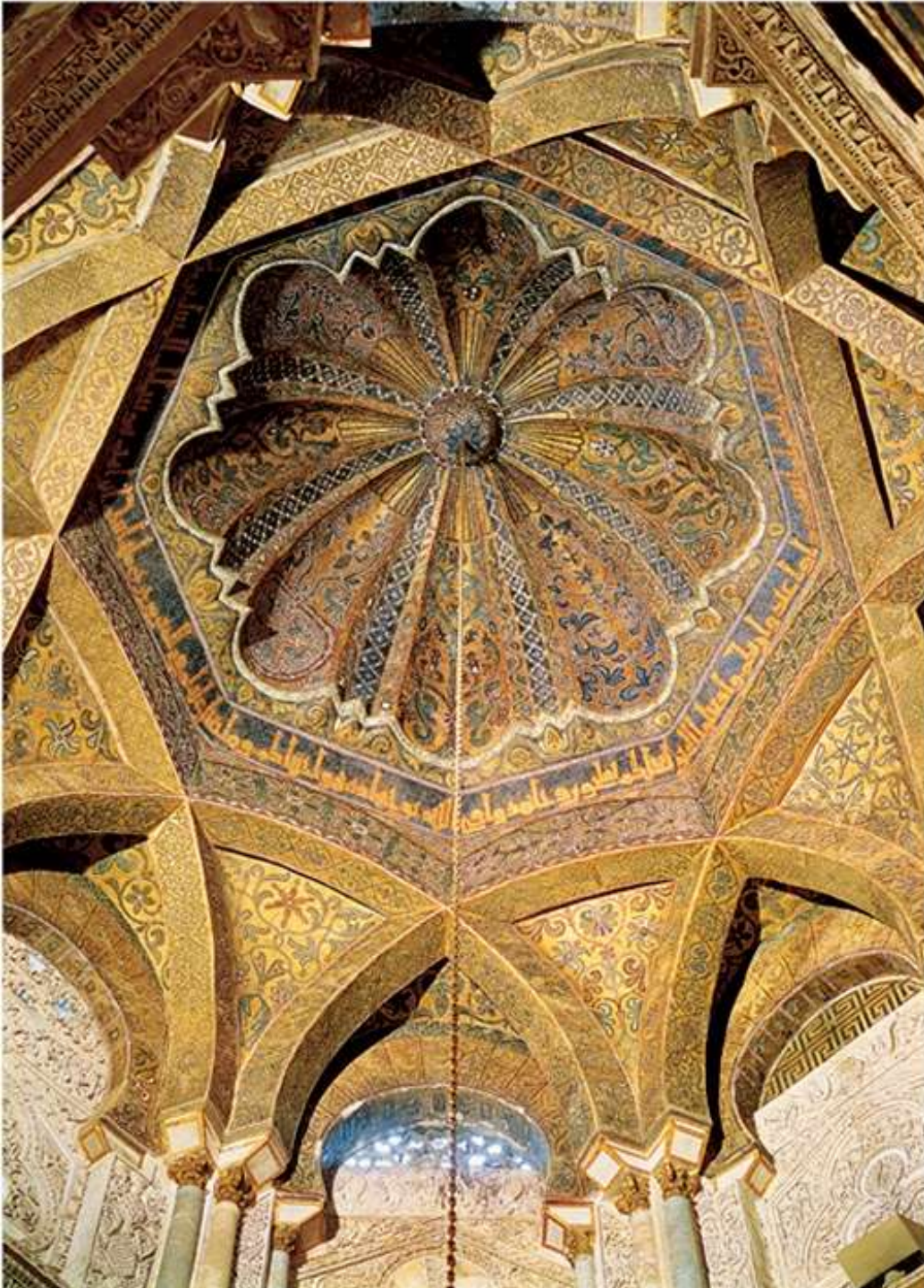
*Maqsura of the Great Mosque, detail. Córdoba, Spain, 961–965.*





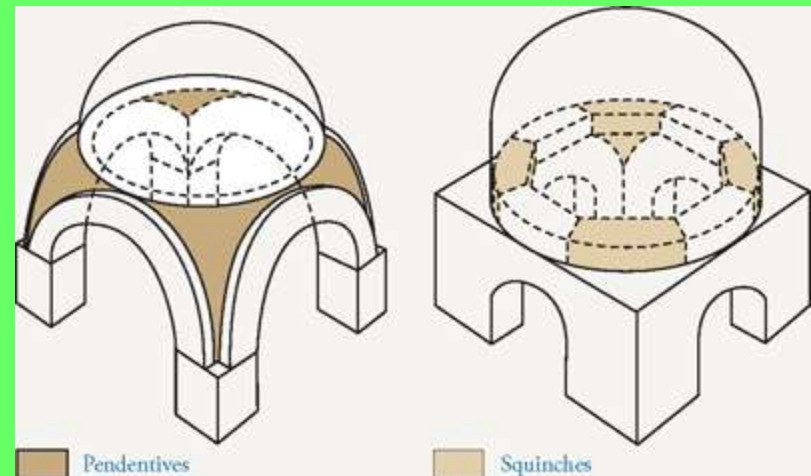
**Dome in front of the mihrab of the  
Great Mosque, Córdoba, Spain, 961–  
965. Mosaics by Byzantine artists**





**Dome in front of the mihrab, Great Mosque, Cordoba, Spain, c. 961-965**

**The dome rests on an octagonal base of arcuated squinches**







In 1236, Córdoba was captured by King Ferdinand III of Castile in the Reconquista, and the mosque was turned back into a Christian church.

The minaret of the mosque was converted to a bell tower and in the 16<sup>th</sup> c. a cathedral was built in the middle of the mosque.





# Discussion Question

What are the typical features of the hypostyle mosque? How do these features support its purpose of creating an Islamic sacred space? Discuss the architecture as well as interior decorations.



*Hypostyle Prayer hall of the Great Mosque, Córdoba, Spain, 8th to 10<sup>th</sup> c.*



*Dome in front of the mihrab of the Great Mosque, Córdoba, Spain, 961–965.*

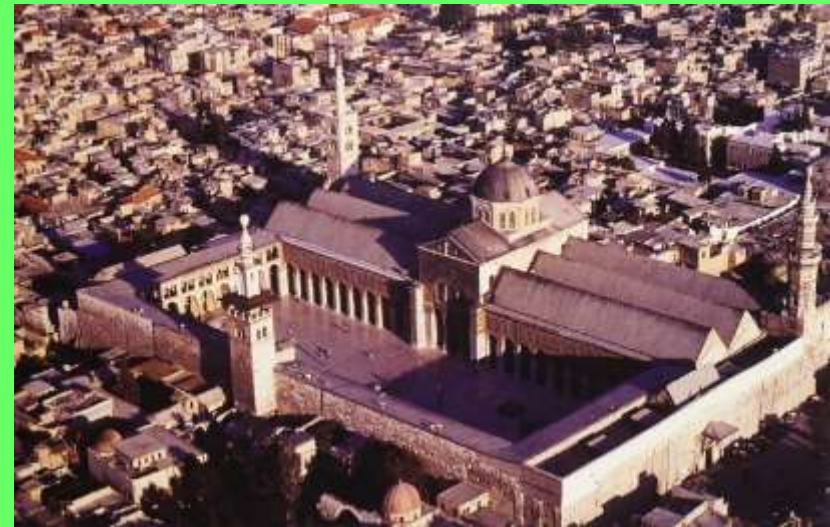


*Minbar. From the Kutubiya Mosque. Marrakesh, Morocco.*

*Mihrab. 10<sup>th</sup> c. Great Mosque, Córdoba, Spain*



*Aerial view of the Great Mosque, Damascus, Syria, 706–715.*





# Late Islamic Architecture

14<sup>th</sup> c to 20<sup>th</sup> c.

The late Islamic period was an age of empires, when the Islamic world was governed by three powerful dynasties:

- the Safavids in Iran
- the Mughals in India
- the Ottomans, who ruled Anatolia, the Arab lands, and much of eastern Europe.





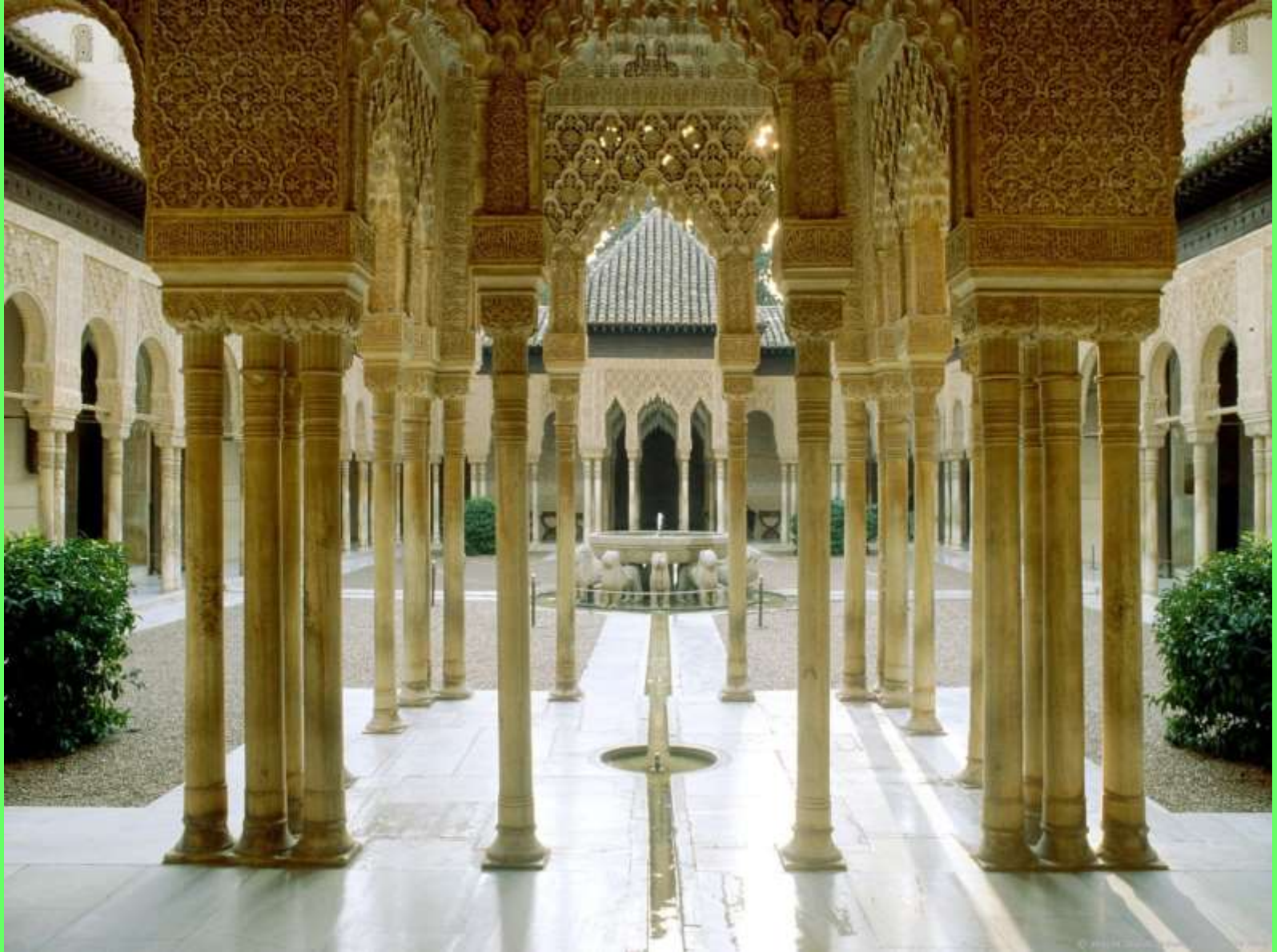
**After the fall of Cordoba to the Christian forces, the Narsids ruled the remaining Muslim territories in Spain from Granada.**

**Alhambra Palace, mid. 14<sup>th</sup> c., Granada, Spain**

**Palace of the Moorish monarchs of Granada. The Alhambra is made up of a series of rooms and gardens clustered around three principal courts, with extensive use of fountains and water basins.**

**<https://youtu.be/wBsDDGCIFLQ> 4:45**





**Court of the Lions, Alhambra Palace,  
Granada, Spain, mid. 14<sup>th</sup> c.**





**Court of the Lions,  
Alhambra Palace,  
Granada, Spain,  
mid. 14<sup>th</sup> c.**







**Court of the Lions, Alhambra Palace,  
Granada, Spain, mid. 14<sup>th</sup> c.**





Patio de los Arrayanes  
(Court of the Myrtles),  
Alhambra Palace,  
Granada, Spain.

## **Muqarnas**

**Stucco decorations in which stalactite-like forms break a structure solidity**



**Muqarnas dome, Hall of the Two Sisters, Palace of the Lions, Alhambra, Granada, Spain, 1354–1391.**





**Muqarnas dome, Hall of the Two Sisters, Palace of the Lions, Alhambra, Granada, Spain, 1354–1391.**





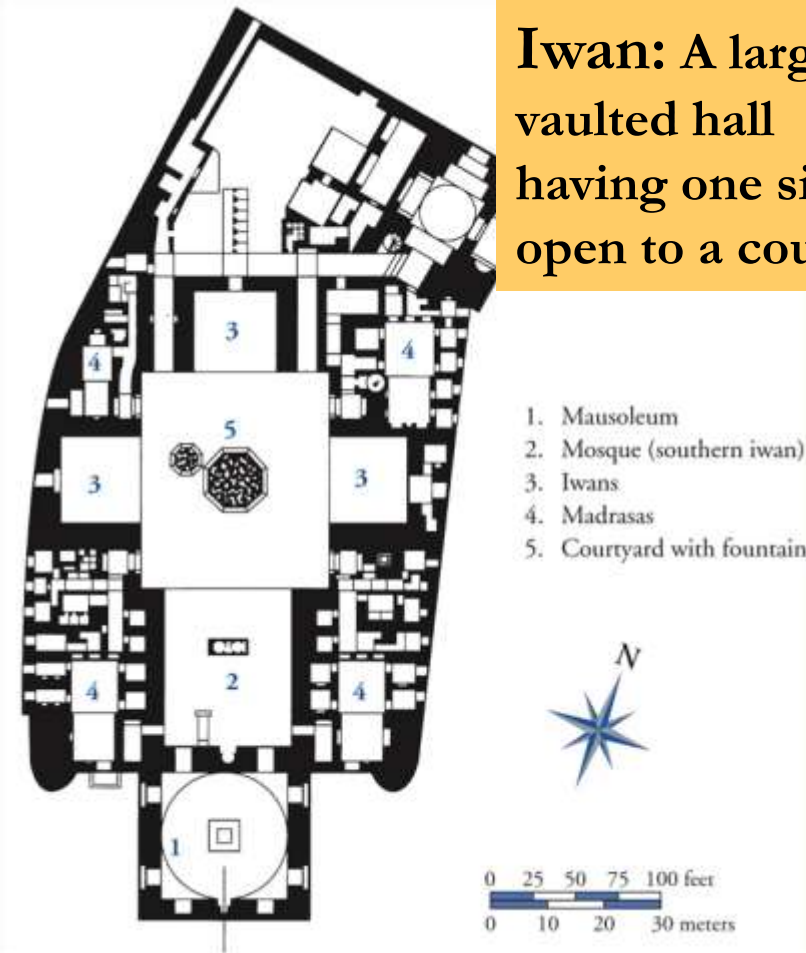
*Expulsion of the Moriscos at the port of Dénia*, by Vincente Mostre.

On April 9, 1609, King Philip III of Spain decreed the Expulsion of the Moriscos. The Moriscos were the descendants of the Muslim population that converted to Christianity under threat of exile from Ferdinand and Isabella in 1502.

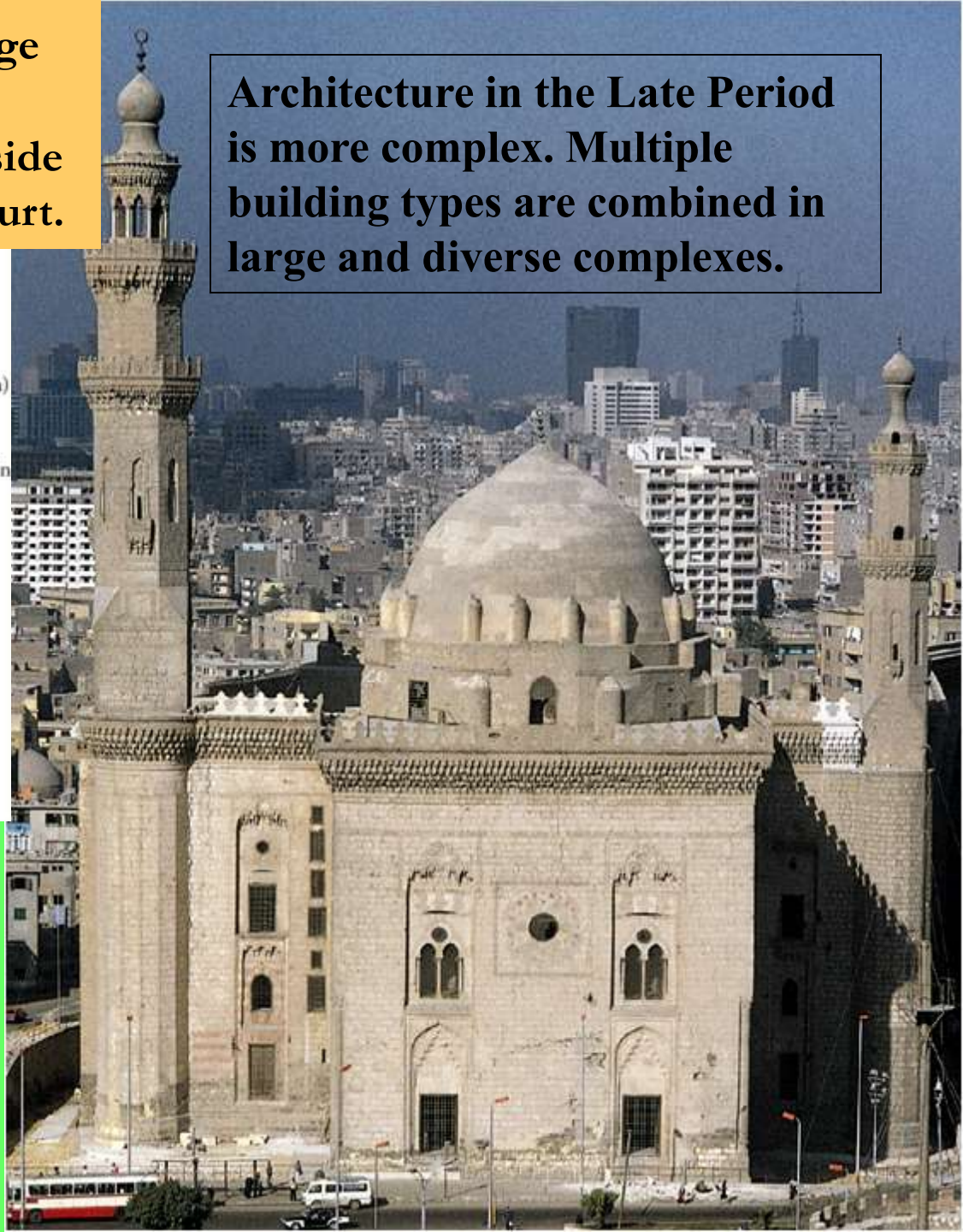


**Iwan:** A large vaulted hall having one side open to a court.

Architecture in the Late Period is more complex. Multiple building types are combined in large and diverse complexes.



**Madrasa** (theological college)-  
**mosque-mausoleum**  
**complex of Sultan Hasan**  
(looking northwest with the  
mausoleum in the foreground),  
Cairo, Egypt, begun 1356.









**SINAN** (chief court architect  
for Suleiman), *Mosque of  
Selim II, Edirne, Turkey,*  
1568–1575.



**SINAN, *Mosque of Selim II,***  
Edirne, Turkey, 1568–1575.



**ANTHEMIUS OF TRALLES and  
ISIDORUS OF MILETUS, *Hagia Sophia,***  
Constantinople (Istanbul), Turkey, 532–537.

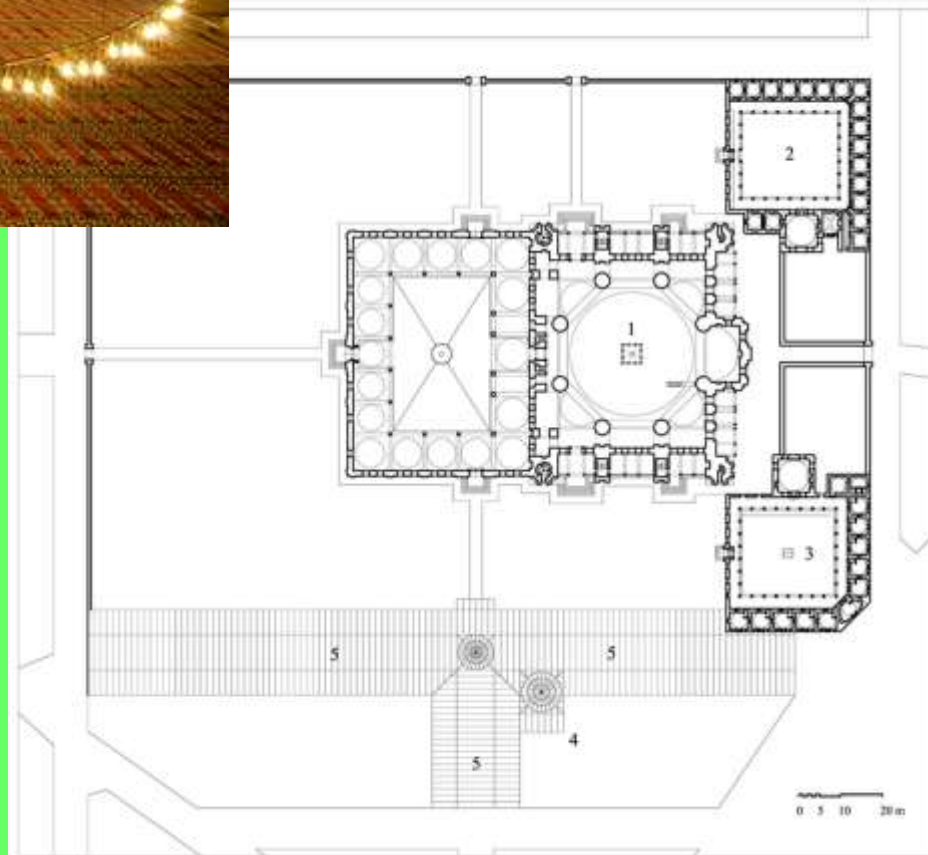


**SINAN, interior of the  
Mosque of Selim II, Edirne,  
Turkey, 1568–1575.**





Floor plan of the complex showing  
(1) mosque, (2) madrasa (hadith college), (3) madrasa (Koran recitation school), (4) elementary school, (5) bazaar (*arasta*).







**Sinan. Süleymaniye Mosque, 1557. Istanbul**

<https://youtu.be/Q48ddBmCjQA>