

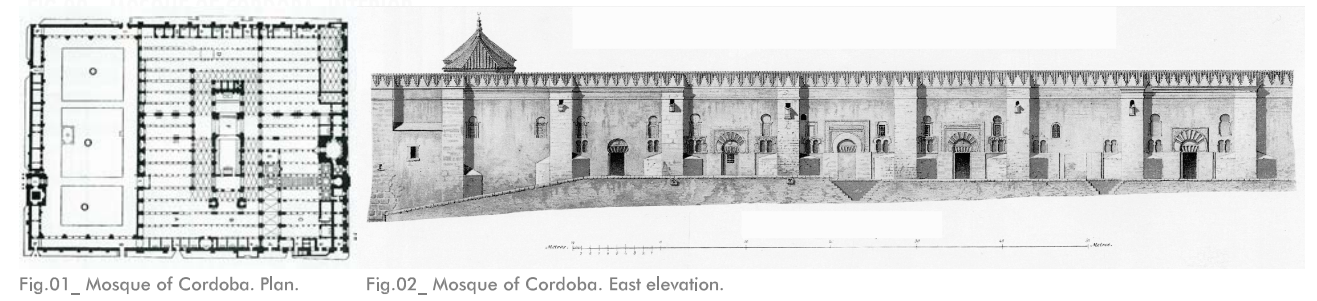
# HAMMAN IN NEW GOURNA, EGYPT

Hispalyt's Chair Ceramic for Building. 4th Edition

**POROSITY - HAMMAN PH1111.** A 'hamman' is a public space; it is a very important part of the social life in Muslim culture. But besides that, is the place to purify the body and, as a result, the mind. A 'hamman' is a place for the body to re-encounter with the soul; getting in touch with light, air and water, our senses are able to achieve a new spiritual status. The process of ablution is purification through water, a cleaning of the soul, a way of getting connected again with nature.

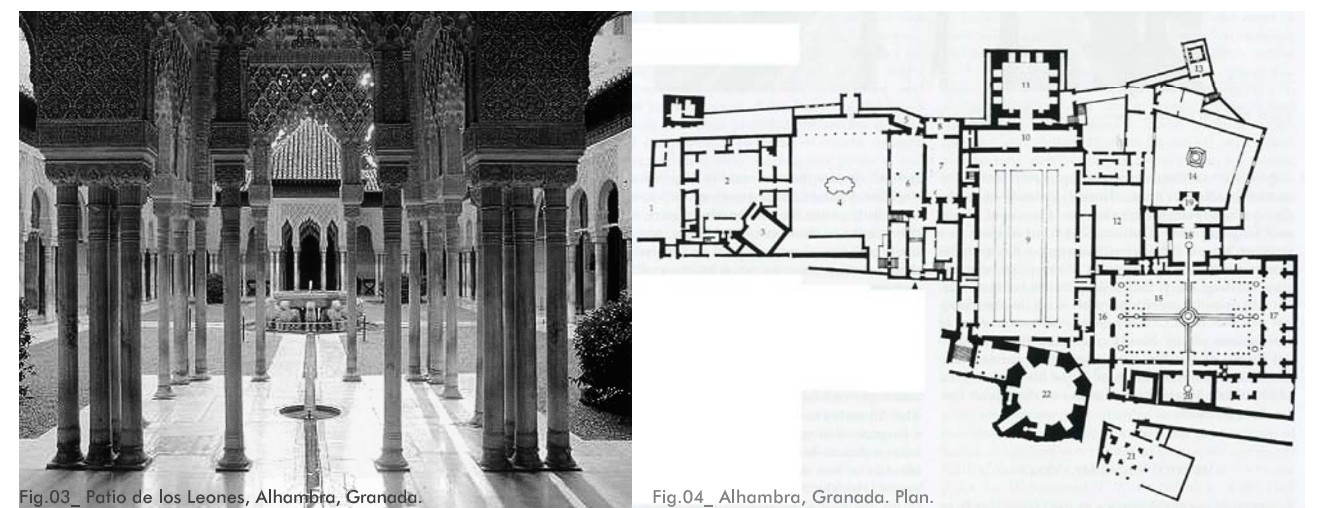
The project faces the desert through abstraction, and at the same time joins with several spatial and material Concepts which are present in history of the Muslim culture and architecture:

**Inside-Outside.** As ever in Muslim architecture, outside is sober and measurable while inside is rich and immeasurable. As in every Arabic building, this is reached playing with the limits, with the light and the sensuality of the materials. The encounter between inside and outside occurs through the limits of the space, a dick space itself which modulates the transition from the society outside to a new personal cosmos inside. The key role in this architectural process is played by the limit. A rhythmic succession of brick walls which articulate all the concepts of the project: the transition *inside-outside*, the *constructive system*, the *illumination*, the *spatial concept* and the *material presence* of the building, giving as a result an abstract and material symbolism.



**Constructive System.** As in Islamic architecture, mastering matter and technique provides the rules and the dimensions to modulate the space. As in every example of 'nazarí' architecture, the spaces are linked and joined, creating several scales and a play of promenades, which avoiding a deep perspective graduate privacy.

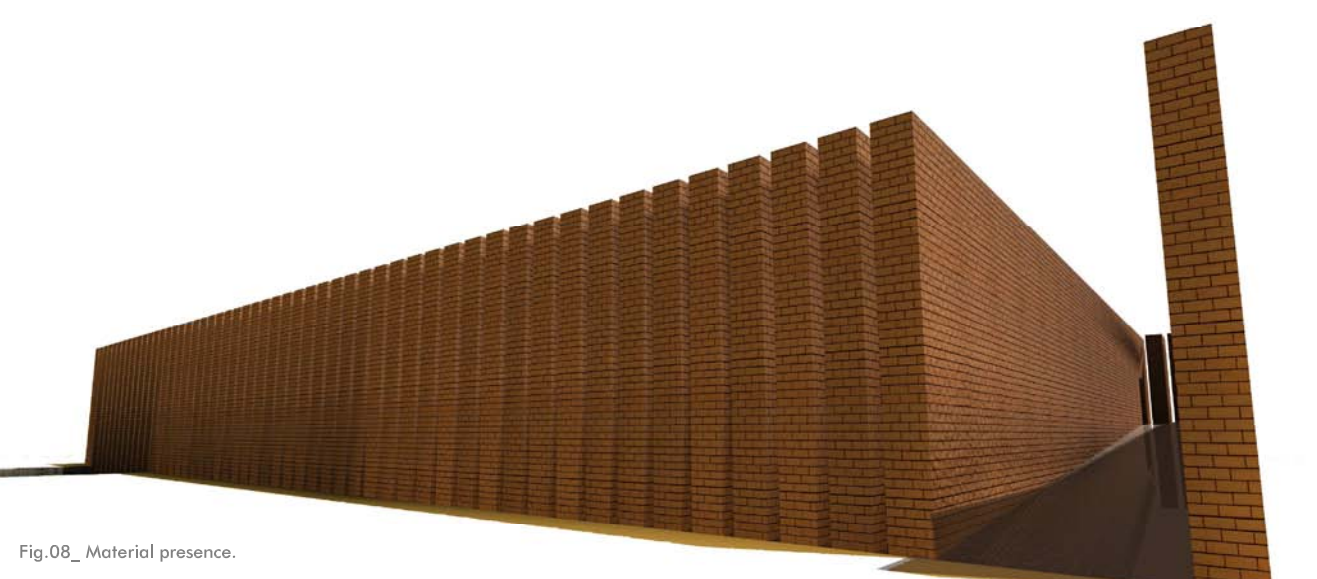
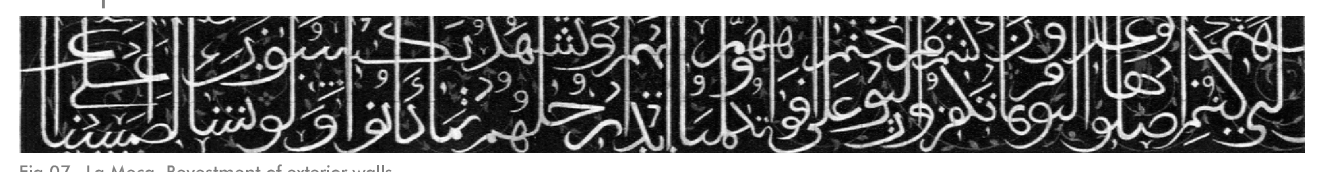
**Spatial Concept - the Limit.** Form and geometry disappear in favour of space. The clay limit permeates light, air, water and sand providing a kind of new relationships between these elements. All these elements fuse together in an ambiguous and porous limit. The space is created by this material limit: a limit of clay; a limit of light; a limit of air; a limit of water; a limit which is alchemically transformed by the conjunction of all this materials into a mysterious and rich space. The spaces are atomised and sequenced, creating several inner spaces which are walked avoiding perspective, looking for the sky, the water or the light.



**Atmosphere-Light.** Light is permeated through the materials, gaining a new dimension and creating a new atmosphere. The brick walls filter the light and make it smoother to reach the human skin. The strong light of the desert is controlled through walls and roof, creating spaces in the penumbra which changes along the daytime, but keeping always in mind this dramatic light of the Arabic baths, the 'hamman'.



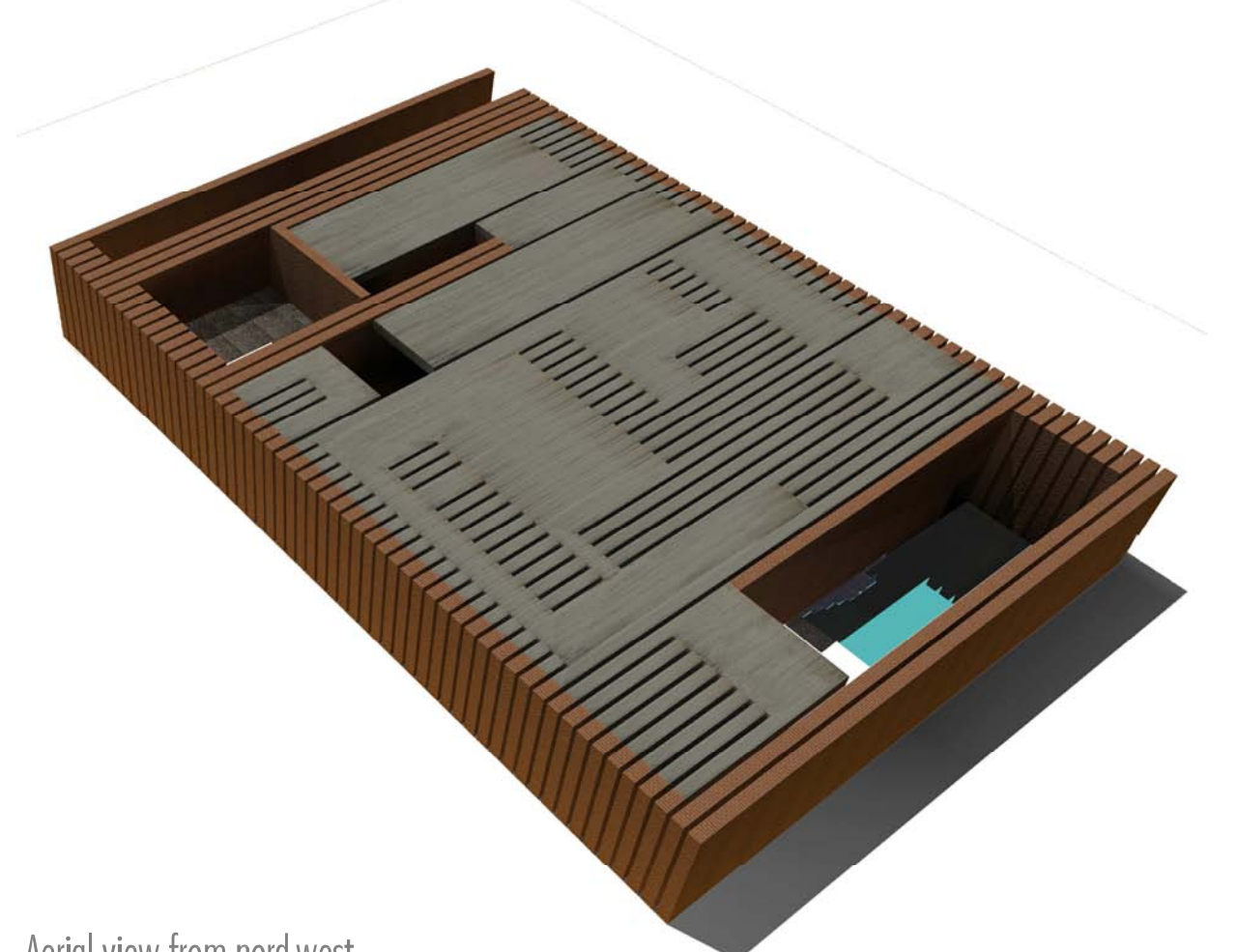
**Symbolism - Material Presence.** This way, the 'hamman' is built with Clay, Light, Air, Earth and Water. The sequence of brick walls is the support for all this elements, the structure of the space and at the same time the symbolism of the building. As if they trigger an alchemic reaction, these four elements: water, air, earth and fire, these two in form of brick, are transmuted into a 'Hamman', representing Muslim culture in a contemporaneous architectonic interpretation of its architectural values.



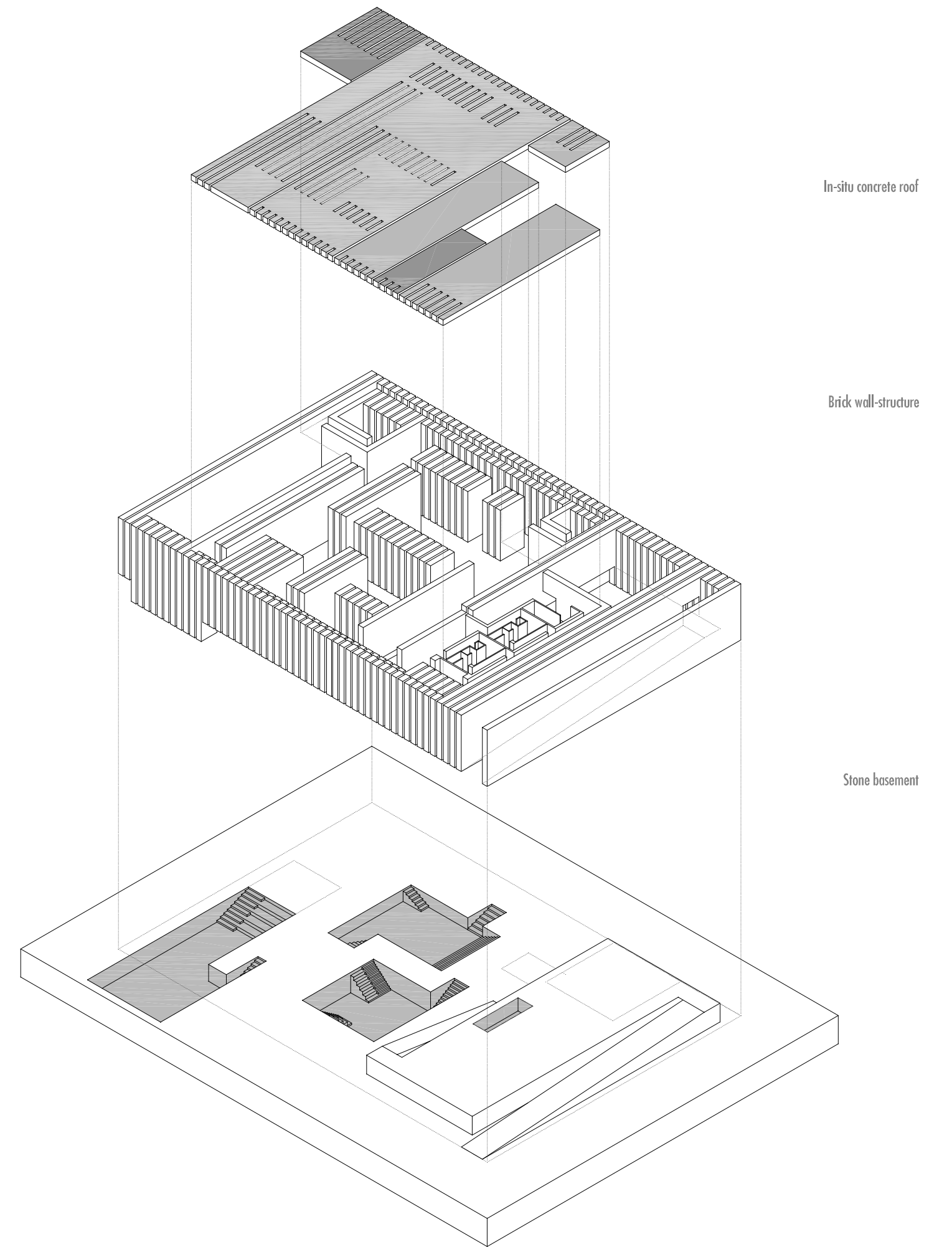
New Gourna. Site Plan, 1/500 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50m.



Aerial view from south-east.



Aerial view from north-west.



Isometric view, 1/500



Site view