

المجلة الدولية للشريعة والدراسات الإسلامية

International Journal of Sharia and Islamic Studies

مجلة علمية - دورية - محكمة - مصنفة دولياً



THE FUNCTIONS AND PARAMETERS OF AL-ROZNAH IN OMANI ARCHITECTURE HERITAGE

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٢٠٢٤/٨/٢٨ تاريخ استلام البحث:

KEY WORDS:

AL-Roznah, Omani Architecture Heritage.

ABSTRACT:

The paper sheds light on the diversity of the use of the AL-Roznah as an essential element in Omani Architecture and its influential role in the functional aspect is clear as a source of lighting and ventilation of rooms by day and night, a place for cooking and a means of defence by pouring hot oils through the deep holes that are scattered in the AL-Roznah element. The paper aims to reveal an aspect of interior design that has been overlooked in Omani architecture research. This paper aims to reveal an aspect of interior design that has been overlooked in Omani architecture research. The study will examine the importance of AL-Roznah and how the Omanis have designed it intelligently to meet their needs, and how it has formed a sober social lifestyle. The study relied on field visits in order to collect data accurately and illustrate it as well by taking measurements of the logs on average such as length, width and depth of the logs according to their location inside the house and their use. To provide a better understanding of the element of AL-Roznah in the old Omani house, the data was analysed by editing drawings and sketches using the AutoCAD program, as well as manually drawing the arches, the data was analysed based on what was observed in the field visits. A lot of data related to the types and uses of AL-Roznah inside the Omani house and the reasons for the difference in use and design. This study contributes to transferring the Omani concept of AL-Roznah in history, civilization and local architecture to future generations. This paper will provide comprehensive information to the concerned authorities about AL-Roznah that has not been documented before in previous research. It is a reference and a good destination for project owners interested in adding the AL-Roznah element to contemporary architecture in the future, as well as a basic addition to the literature of Omani architecture.

وظائف الروزنة ومعالمها في التراث المعماري العماني

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الكلمات المفتاحية:

الروزنة، العمارة العمانية.

مستخلص البحث:

منذ العصور القديمة، شهد العالم تطور في إنتاج وتصميم قطع الأثاث بجميع أنواعها، مما كان له تأثير في تغيير نمط الحياة على المستوى الاقتصادي والاجتماعي مقارنة باليوم الذي لم يكن فيه أي من هذه القطع متاحاً، كالخزائن والأدراج والطاولات. كان عنصر الروزنة من أذكي وأفضل الحلول في المساحات الصغيرة من الغرف لققوم بدور الخزانات والطاولات في عصرنا، تم بناؤها بأشكال وتصاميم وأحجام مختلفة كعنصر أساسي في العمارة العمانية. حيث لا يخلو جدار من تكرارها بأحجام وأشكال متنوعة مزينة بالأصبار والتفصيل والتحف أحياناً. يتضح من خلال البحث أن الروزنة لها دور بارز من الناحية الجمالية لتخزين وعرض الممتلكات القيمة مثل الكتب والتحف وأحتياجات المرأة التي تخص جمالها كالطوطور والزيوت والكلح. ويتبين دورها الفعال في الناحية الوظيفية كونها مصدراً للإضاءة وتهوية الغرف نهاراً وليلًاً ومكاناً للطبخ، وكوسيلة للفاع وصب الزيوت الساخنة من خلال التفوب العميق المنتشرة في عنصر الروزنة. يهدف البحث إلى الكشف عن جانب من جوانب التصميم الداخلي تم التغاضي عنه في أبحاث العمارة العمانية. وسيبحث البحث في أهمية الروزنة وكيف صممها العمانيون بذكاء للتلبية احتياجاتهم اليومية وكيف شكلت أسلوب حياة اجتماعي رصين. يسلط البحث الضوء على مدى تنوع استخدام الروزنة كعنصر أساسي في الأماكن العامة والخاصة في المنزل القديم من خلال دراسة مئات البيوت في أربع حارات مختلفة في محافظة الداخلية. اعتمدت الدراسة على الزيارات الميدانية من أجل جمع البيانات بشكل دقيق وتصوير كذلك عن طريقأخذ قياسات الروزنة في المتوسط كالطول والعرض وعمق الروزن بحسب موقعها داخل البيت واستخدامها ، و تمت بعض المقابلات مع خبراء العمارة العمانية و من عاصروا و سكناوا في بيوت الحرارات القديمة من أجل تقديم فهم أفضل لعنصر الروزنة في البيت العثماني القديم و قد تم تحليل البيانات من خلال تحرير الرسوم و الأسكنشات باستخدام برنامج الأوتوكاد، وكذلك الرسم اليدوي للأقواس و التفاصيل والخارف، تم تحليل البيانات بناء على الملاحظة في الزيارات الميدانية. فقد سجلت الكثير من البيانات التي تخص أنواع واستخدامات الروزنة داخل البيت العثماني، وتم شرح أسباب الاختلاف في الاستخدام والتصميم والكثير من التفاصيل الشيقة. تساهم هذه الدراسة في نقل مفهوم الروزنة العثماني في التاريخ والحضارة والعمارة المحلية للأجيال القادمة كما تساهم في الحفاظ على التراث من خلال التوثيق الدقيق للروزنة وأهميتها الجمالية والوظيفية. سيوفر هذا البحث معلومات شاملة للجهات المعنية حول الروزنة التي لم يتم توثيقها من قبل في بحث سابق، وإنها مرجعية ووجهة جديدة لأصحاب المشاريع المهتمين بإضافة عنصر الروزنة إلى العمارة المعاصرة في المستقبل، كذلك إضافة أساسية لأدب العمارة العثمانية.

INTRODUCTION:

The essential elements that formed the interior design of Omani houses have not been adequately studied. One such interior element that is of interest to this study is the AL-Roznah (Shelves that are built into the wall). The importance of the AL-Roznah in old Omani houses lies in the fact that they replaced furniture, especially with the small interior spaces of the rooms of the house, which reinforced its spread throughout the house. The Omani culture contributed to strengthening the presence of the AL-Roznah element in the old house, where the Omanis relied on sitting and sleeping on the carpeted floor, talking, eating and reading on the floor, and this culture made them dispense with pieces of furniture. Today, despite the vast spaces of the homes filled with furniture and decoration where the Omani family enjoys meals on the ground, the family gathers to talk, laugh and eat. It is one of their sacred times; this culture continues till the present day. Contributed to AL-Roznah's survival to this day from hundreds of years ago as a witness to the intelligence and good management of the Omani architect at that time. With the scarcity of building materials, the most important of which was timber and the lack of specialized carpenters, the reason for the delay in the issuance of pieces of furniture suitable for small spaces through which it is difficult to insert pieces of furniture. Inside the house, they compensated for it through the shelves built inside the thick walls without affecting the area of the room, which does not exceed two meters or three meters as a maximum. The importance of AL-Roznah comes through its use in many aspects of social life, military,

construction, and aesthetic, which will be discussed in details. Furthermore, the research intends to investigate its functional facet, which is demonstrated through a case study in four of the essential settlements that have proven that the AL-Roznah is a way of life. Correspondingly, different stages of restoration have been carried out to preserve these old houses and invest them in projects that would raise the Sultanate of Oman's economy, tourism, and cultural level. One of the disadvantages is that these changes and new additions in the restoration and reform of the houses are for investment purposes, and thus may delete and hide many essential details over time, which will pose a risk to the disappearance and loss of heritage. Therefore, this paper contributes to preserving the Omani architectural heritage by documenting the AL-Roznah in the old Omani house, urging the concerned authorities to conduct similar studies for future generations. Moreover, similar cultures from the countries of this region can benefit from this documentation as well.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Although there is a large amount of literature about Omani architecture, there is a lack of study of Omani interior elements. This chapter reviews the literature to understand the history of AL-Roznah or furniture in wall niches, its functions and the places where they are located, its etymology, and the factors that led to its disappearance from contemporary architecture.

DEFINITION OF AL-ROZNAH:

AL-Roznah is a wall cavity or a niche that is formed from any geometric shape and has an elongation that ends with a pointed or

rounded arch. Built into it are wooden and sometimes stone shelves that decorate the interior walls, and have aesthetic as well as functional purposes (Figure 2.1(A)). The AL-Roznah became an important element in the daily life of Omanis as a means of storage of functional or decorative elements. The AL-Roznah immediately replaces furniture that would have taken up a lot of space in houses, as shown in (Figure 2.1(B)).



Figure 0.1 AL-Roznah with the different Arches in Harat AL Aqr in Bahla, Oman (2024)

The origin of the term AL-Roznah is found in many reliable Arabic dictionaries, and in many Arabic literatures, it is also known as Al-Kuwa الْكُوَّة (niche). Below are some definitions of Al-Kuwa that are similar to AL-Roznah:

1. It is the 'niche' in the language of Abyssinia (Mujahid, 2018).
2. It is the niche that has no outlet (Al-Waseet Dictionary, 1960).
3. It is the ironwork where the lamp is attached and the niche is the place of the wick (Mujahid, 2018).
4. A hollow in the wall, not a window, where a lamp is placed (Niche, n.d.).

5. Round or oval niche for ventilation and lighting. The hole for the ventilation was also used for the defense of the house (Qudamaa, 2017).

6. An interior wall opening without a window is represented by wall shelves that are built into the walls in the form of recesses or voids in the interior walls (Ismael A Hejles, 2019).

7. Shelves that are built into the wall represent spaces and cavities in the inner wall of some house parts similar to a square (Ismael A Hejles, 2019).

8. It is the cavity between the columns of the rooms that are built of stone (Majid Al Muzayin, 1996).

9. Recesses in geometric shapes come with tapered ends with either single or double shelves (Zakaria Al-Qudah, 2021).

Every definition describes the functional importance of the AL-Roznah as a storage place, a space to place a wick to light up the rooms, and a source of ventilation. The hole is also a means to defend the house from attackers.

AL-ROZNAH IN THE HOLY QUR'AN:

Some architectural terms were mentioned in many Suras in the Noble Quran, such as Surat Al-Kahf. In Surat Al-Kahf (The Cave), the Noble Qur'an provides an accurate architectural description of the cave in which the boys stayed for hundreds of years in verse No.16. "Now that you distanced yourselves from them, and from what they worship besides Allah, take shelter in the cave. Your Lord will unfold His mercy on you, and will set your affair towards ease."

وَإِذَا اغْتَرَ لِتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يَعْنِدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَلَوْرَا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَتَّشَّذُ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَرْفَقًا (١٦)

And in verse No.17: "And you would have seen the sun, when it rose, veering away from their cave towards the right; and when it sets, veering away from them to the left, as they lay in the cave's midst. That is

among the wonders of Allah. Whomever Allah guides is rightly guided. But whomever

سورة النور – الآية ٣٥
Surat Al-Noor, verse 32 (Al-Quran, 24:32)

[35] Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and a lamp enclosed in Glass within it.

سورة النور - الآية ٣٥

٣٥

He leaves to stray, you will never find for him
a guiding mentor".

وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَرَاوِرٌ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا
عَرَبَتْ تَقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشَّمَائِلِ وَهُمْ فِي فَحْوَةٍ مِنْ ذَلِكَ مِنْ
آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مَنْ يَهْدِي اللَّهَ فَهُوَ الْمُهْدَىٰ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلْ فَلَنْ يَجِدْ لَهُ وَلِيًّا
﴿١٧﴾ مُرْسَلًا

And in Surat Al-Hujurat in verse No. 4: "Those who call you from behind the Al-Hujurat (rooms), most of them do not understand".

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادِيُنَّكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجْرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ (٤٠)

The term Al-Hujurat means the nine rooms of the prophet Mohammed's wives, where each of them had a room. In addition, some architectural elements have been cited as evidence of Islamic architectural style, as in Surat al-Noor, in verse No. 35 (Table 2.1), with the term Al-Mishkat (Table 2.1), which means niche.

Table 0.1 Surat Al-Noor, verse 35 (The Holy Quran)
Kamish'katin (Mishkat) is like a Niche.

Definition
مشكّاة: تجويف أو كُوَّة في الحائط غير نافذة يُوضع عليها مصباح.

Table 0.2 Description of the term Mishkat

Source: (Niche, n.d.)

In the history of Omani architecture, the niche mentioned above is called AL-Roznah. Notably, AL-Roznah is also used in other countries in this region but with different dialects of the AL-Roznah.

Significantly, this research benefits all neighboring countries and enhances the understanding of the function of this architectural element.

In Surat Al-Noor, Allah Almighty said: "Like a niche with a lamp, one of the functions of the AL-Roznah is clear, i.e., to place lamps in order to illuminate the rooms and be in a suitable location away from danger" – thus within a niche. The AL-Roznah is usually blackened due to the heat and smoke of the lamp. As it is an impermeable gap and not a window in the wall, it confines and gathers the light making it appear strong and radiant: (Like a niche in which there is a lamp.) The lamp is in a bottle. It protects it from the wind. It filters its light to shine and increase; where the Niche gathers the lamp's light, it does not disperse (Sayyid Qutb, 1966).

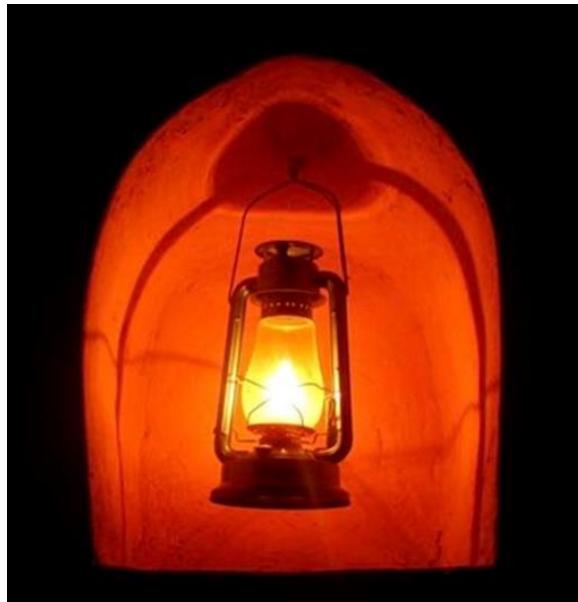


Figure 0.2 Photo showing a lamp placed in an AL-Roznah or Mishkat or Niche

ETYMOLOGY:

The scarcity of literature that dealt with AL-Roznah as an element and as a term led the researcher to search using different terms to reach the most accurate data and gain a

deeper understanding of this element. Through careful investigation and research on the origin of the word and its synonyms in different languages of various countries and regions, especially in the Arab countries, may contribute to obtaining a sufficient amount of data available in the literature, which will also contribute to its documentation in this research. A good number of terms synonymous with AL-Roznah were collected after tracing the historical origin, source and meaning of the word AL-Roznah:

1. (Definitions of etymology from Oxford Languages Dictionary © Oxford University Press) is the study of the origin of words and the way in which their meanings have changed throughout history.
2. (Definition of etymology from the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary© Cambridge University Press) is the study of the origin and history of words or a study of this type relating to one particular word.

Based on the geographical proximity between the Arabs and the Iranians, the Persian Gulf separates the Arabian Peninsula from Iran. The Arab-Persian relations have matured and are completed and have reached their climax with the entry of Islam into Iran. The Persian language was the first foreign language that was known to the Arabs of the island since the dawn of history. Thus, it can be seen that the linguistic relations between the Arabs and the Persians are much older than many scholars think. The commercial caravans never stopped making their journeys from Iran to the Arabian Peninsula and from the Arabian Peninsula to Iran, India, and China (Budva Mustafa, 2017).

biographies, Arab merchants spent most of their free time listening to Persian stories, anecdotes, hadiths, and legends when completing the chores of buying and selling and making deals. If this merchant or the group of merchants return to his or their tribes, what is heard, memorized, seen, and understood from the hadiths of the people are bound to spread quickly; as is known oral literature spreads fast among people.

The books of Al-Ma'rib by Imam Al-Jawaliqi (١٩٦٦) and Fiqh Al-Lughah by al-Ta'Ālibī (٢٠٠٠) are two of the most important books to elaborate on the effect and the mutual linguistic influence between the Arabs and the Persians. The researcher utilized many Persian vocabularies daily and may not have realised that the origin of the vocabulary may have been acquired by an Arab. The term 'AL-Roznah' is a Persian word that means light, but it is Arabized and came to mean wall cavities instead. These cavities were considered to be a source of light and ventilation. The pronunciations of 'AL-Roznah' are pronounced similarly in both Persian and Omani (Arabic),

Some important facets of the word 'AL-Roznah' are explicated below:

1. The word 'AL-Roznah' is originally Persian and means light or glow.
2. In the dialect of the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine), AL-Roznah means a small window or niche in the wall or ceiling, which refers to light and glow (Youssef Damra, 2014).
3. The plural of AL-Roznah is Rwazin.

METHODOLOGY:

This study used the A case study design is proposed to explore this research area. The case study method selects a remote geographical location or a few

individuals as the study subjects. In their true essence, case studies explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships (Zaidah, 2007) It is possible to collect data about the current (case) situation and its previous conditions, as well as to know the factors that have affected it and from past experiences To obtain rich data and in-depth information in the study of the target element of the research, as these data cannot be analysed statistically, but should be obtained through interviews, observations, and visiting the targeted sites. Therefore, gathering information takes a long time (Sarantakos, 1998).

FINDING AND RESULTS:

After the research and field visits to the old settlements in Oman, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, it was determined that the AL-Roznah performed multiple functions, which cannot only be attributed to the aesthetic role of AL-Roznah although it was known to display and preserve collectables. Through the analysis, it also held the role of an architectural element that contributed to the establishment and construction of the old Omani house. Understanding its multiple benefits, the field study has shown that the AL-Roznah's roles are at the building and structural level, through its relationship with the thickness of the walls in the old house and the aesthetic, functional, and security level, makes the AL-Roznah a part of the element that organizes the life of the Omani resident in the home. The role of the AL-Roznah is divided according to its uses into the following, as displayed in (Figure 4.1).

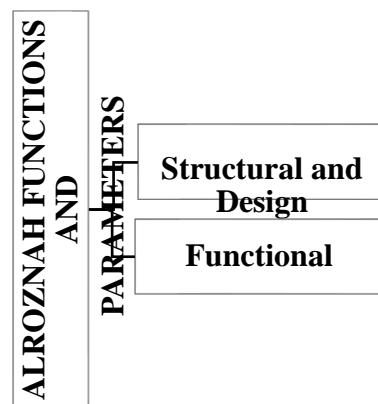


Figure 0.1 The Functions and Parameters of AL-Roznah

STRUCTURAL AND DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AL-ROZNAH

The Omani Harrah were formed from hundreds of compact mud houses that had been constructed in rectangular and square geometry. Among these houses were narrow lanes made from a mixture of the basic materials for making bricks, which showed the movements throughout the Harrah in organized and straightforward ways. The Omani builder excelled in shaping and designing the old house. The design of the house comes with an interior courtyard that often mediates the yard of the house, which is surrounded by rooms from all sides, moving from the first floor to the second floor through a substantial clay staircase. The thick walls of the house show the creativity of Omani design in delivering the aesthetics of the Omani elements that have been established for the benefit of the residents of an old house and its usefulness in the building and construction. The Omani builder added remarkable and distinctive details in making the doors and windows with decorations and inscriptions of a unique Omani character. The ceilings are made of Cedarwood and palm trunks, and sometimes imported wood is added where attractive floral and geometric patterns characterize the roofs. The ceiling is painted in different

colours such as dark red, brown, and green, and is decorated with white and black, and sometimes yellow is present (Figures 4.2 & 4.3).



Figure 0.2 A partial view of an Omani Harrah showing the geometrical blocks, lanes and courtyards, indoor and outdoor (Source: Author, 2024)

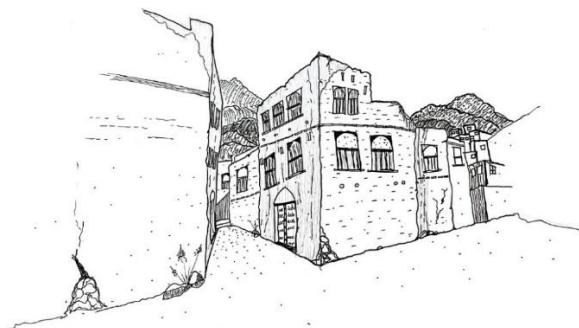


Figure 0.3 View of old Houses with narrow alleyway in an Omani Harrah (Source: Author, 2024)

It has been noted that the wall of the old Omani house is built from simple, local raw materials of clay and sand and takes a substantial thickness of 50 cm and 80 cm and up to 1 meter and 1.5 meters. The wall's thickness of 1.8 meters and 2 meters was also found. There are several main reasons for the thick walls:

1. The Omani house consisted of two floors, and sometimes three floors with connecting stairs made from the same material up to the upper floors. Therefore, the construction was a solid load-bearing and weight-resistant building. The walls bore heavy

weights as the wooden ceilings were made of palm trunks and Cedarwood. Likewise, the doors and windows were also very heavy as they were formed from heavy wood and metal.

2. Weather factors such as cold, heat, wind, sunlight, and rain were also factored in for the houses to become safe and comfortable for their residents. The thick walls protected them from the harsh cold and hot summer heat through the known physical properties of clay that kept inside the homes cool during the hot summer days and warm in cold winter and on rainy days.

The field visits during the data collection period revealed that the AL-Roznabs reached 6 to 8 in numbers in the private spaces and more than that in the more public guest and family spaces. The main functions were to solve the storage of household items due to the small interior spaces and rooms, where the majority of the rooms were sized between 3 x 2.5 and 4 x 2.5 meters. These rooms were small and elongated hence making the AL-Roznah within the thick walls, the ideal solution for storing clothes, books, weapons, utensils, lotions and antiques, as furniture would crowd the space as well as being difficult and expensive to get, as shown in (Figure 4.4).

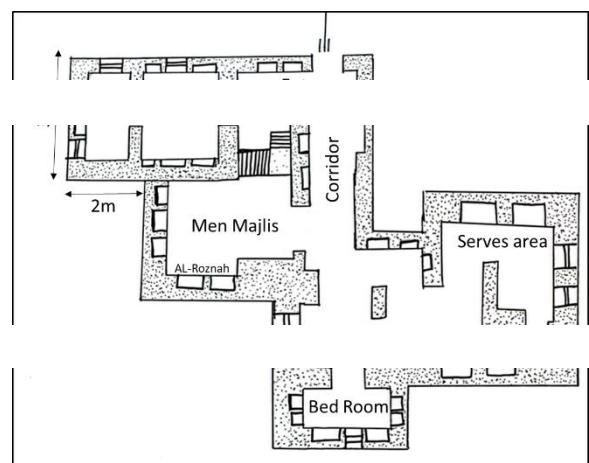


Figure 0.4 Plan of an old house in Harrat ALBilad showing the heavy wall thickness
(Source: Author, 2024)

The AL-Roznah made the best use of the space of the small rooms - to sit and sleep without any other obstacles, as the Omani family usually comprised of 7 to 12 people in one house. It was prevalent in that era that the man would take between one and four wives, hence, with the grandparents, and unmarried uncles/aunts all residing under the same roof, within the confines of the small spaces of the rooms. However, through the design of the AL-Roznah the movements in one space were smooth and easy, and its inhabitants could coexist in a healthy and orderly manner. This has been proven by the tales of the Omanis who have lived through that remarkable era between the walls and alleys of the old lanes. Through the stories and memorable adventures, social cohesion, and links, the beautiful brotherhood reflected how Omani architecture had a significant role in creating these social ties due to the adhesion of houses to one another and the small interior spaces in the old house.

According to an interview with a participant, she explained that the AL-Roznah is an intelligent solution to reduce the weight of the construction load, especially when the house has two or three floors. The AL-Roznah element reduces the clay material, which is known for its weight, that is used for construction. In addition, the building methods and tools that were used in that era are local and simple to ensure that they did not collapse because of the heavy load on the walls. Moreover, the presence of the cavities was significant, i.e., their relationship in reducing the weights

naturally lowered the cost of the construction, where the cost of making the clay bricks were decreased.

FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTIC:

From the data collection of the Omani homes, the AL-Roznah was mainly for aesthetic, display and storage purposes of many household items. But digging deeper the AL-Roznah fulfils also many functional purposes: such as ventilation, as a source of lighting, the safekeeping of money and documents, as well as for cooking and hanging pottery to cool water, and in some cases as means of protection from robbers or bandits. These functions reflected the importance of the AL-Roznah for the Omanis who lived in the mud houses and how they benefited from the element's repetition which facilitated their daily life and affairs in a manner that was commensurate with their capabilities. Each function of the AL-Roznah can tell a story about the social level, the economic status, the security situation of the settlement, the culture and also the intellectual. The AL-Roznah also reflected the technical and scientific knowledge of the builders in introducing lighting in the absence of electricity and natural ventilation in the hot and dry climate.

The AL-Roznah is the furniture for the storage of many household items and they were found in almost all spaces in an Omani home. such as books and manuscripts including the revered place for the Quran and religious documents. It is worth noting that for a long time, the Omanis have had a great interest in books, manuscripts, written letters, and poetry collections. As such, the Omani proudly displayed them on the AL-Roznah, as proof of the cultural level of the family, for instance, books were usually

displayed in the men's councils and boards, thus conspicuous to the visitors' eyes (Figure 4.6).



Figure 0.5 Sketch-Books, manuscripts displayed on AL-Roznah's shelves (Source: Author, 2024)

In the old days, Omani women had unique ways of creating adornment. Choosing to be friendly with the vocabulary of their environment, they discovered many herbs that could be made into lipstick, eyeliner, hair dye, skin cream, essential oils, sandalwood, saffron, and henna. Therefore, a woman shows her stuff in the AL-Roznah, flaunts what she has to reflect the extent of her self-care, and shares cosmetics with friends and neighbours as a kind of hospitality. Omani women have mastered the ancient ways of displaying valuable collectables that are related to their beauty, such as handcrafted metal cans with the most beautiful details (Figures 4.7 & 4.8).



Figure 0.6 Women's beauty collectables displayed

(Source: Author, 2024)

What is familiar to the community at the Gulf or the local level is that the AL-Roznah is a purely aesthetic element. The reason for this is that in its transition from one period to another, society has lost the culture of the AL-Roznah. Much of the information about its role in designing an old house is only as an aesthetic character. Nevertheless, the AL-Roznah continues to this day. The public thinks that the function of the AL-Roznah is limited to displaying antiques and possessions that reflect the material and social level and the preservation of personal tools of the family members

Perforations and slots in geometric shapes on some of the AL-Rwazin are to support the function of the windows in providing ventilation and in regulating high temperatures by introducing cold air currents into the interior spaces. The Omani builder and designer have implemented these elements in areas that are not in the direction of sunrise or sunset in order to avoid excessive heat from entering the mud houses that have thick walls. This measure is to achieve a comfortable living environment that negates the high summer heat as the Sultanate of Oman is located on the equator where the weather is scorching and dry, and rainfall is little. The desert climate forced the Omanis to create the best ways to exploit the elements of nature for their benefit and not against them. Therefore, these techniques and experiments on the AL-Roznah appeared to be their attempts to make life more comfortable inside the mud houses.

The holes of the perforations and slots have noticeably appeared to be small in size

to regulate the number of air currents entering the house; the temperature of the air currents changes when it is passing through the thick clay material, which decreases and cools the air as it enters into the interior spaces. There must be an alternative to ventilate the rooms, especially at bedtime after dinner. At night, the atmosphere cools, and the temperatures are lowered, as such pleasant breezes enter through the holes that cool the rooms, thus keeping the mud walls cold for more extended periods due to their properties. In this way, the family members get a good night's sleep with good ventilation. This is how the holes serve the house day and night; the Omanis innovation in finding solutions. The holes are also small or narrow to reduce solar gains into the interior but with enough lighting, as seen in (Figures 4.11, 4.12 & 4.13).



Figure 0.7 Small holes to allow sufficient light and regulate the air in the house at Harrat AL-Bilad, Manah, Oman (2024)



Figure 0.8 Holes in a house at Harrat ALBusaid in Adam, Oman (2024)

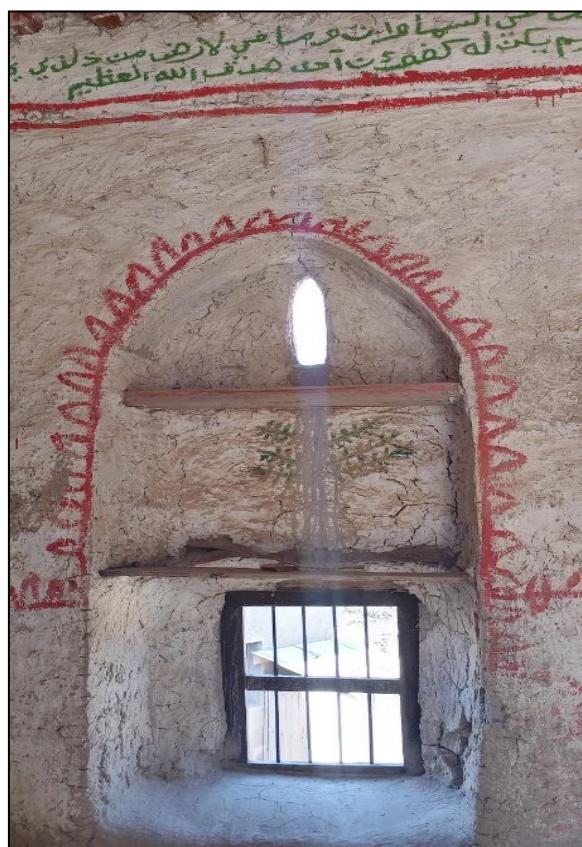


Figure 0.9 High-level small rectangular holes for removing hot air flow purpose at Harrat AL-Busaid, Adam, Oman (2024)

When the Harrat was first built, there was no electricity or connections for lighting. Therefore, the reliance was on lanterns, fire, candles, and wicks to provide homes with light to facilitate living at night. In the daytime, natural lighting from the sun came through the windows. However, it seems that the windows were insufficient, thus AL-Roznah's that are crowned by small arches have openings in the shape of rounded, triangular, and sometimes rectangular hollows to bring in sunlight. The thick walls, however, prevented the sun from entering directly into the house, and these holes are used to facilitate the sun's rays into the rooms and corridors, which are lit beautifully and attractively (Figure 4.14).

Some of these holes were also located at the lower level of the AL-Roznah, due to the Omani culture of sitting on the ground with the family- to talk, sleep and eat. Through these lower holes, they can enjoy the indirect sunlight at face level and be able to see each other. Perforations at the higher levels of the AL-Roznah allow diffused lighting into larger areas inside a room. The Omanis' intelligence in designing and building the house, and their study of the nature and direction of the sun to make the best use of these resources, is in the service of man and enables him to live in comfort day and night.



Figure 0.10 Openings in the shape of rounded, triangular, and sometimes rectangular hollows are created to bring in sufficient daylight (2024)

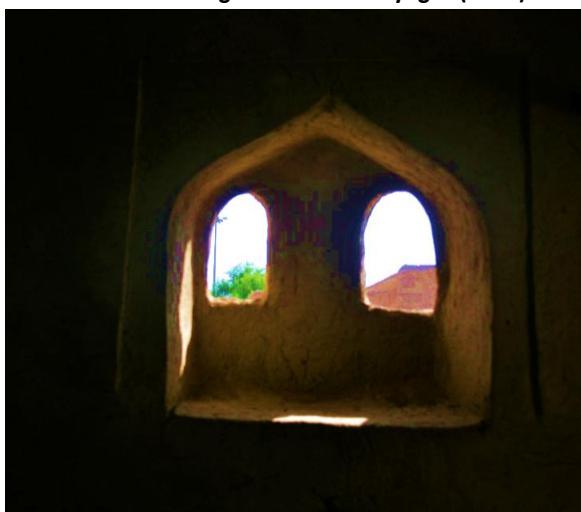


Figure 0.11 Opening in the shape of small arches to diffuse the daylight (2024)

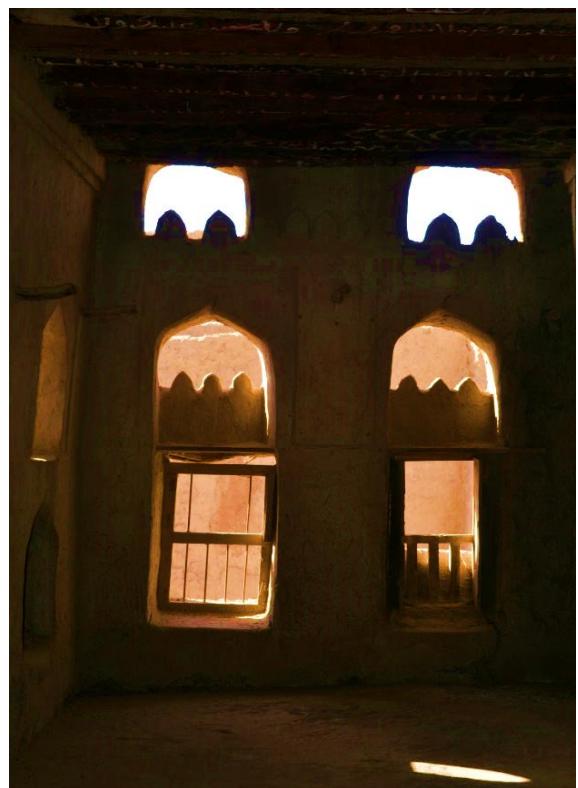


Figure 0.12 Indirect sunlight at the top and body level in a house at Harrat ALBilad in Manah, Oman (2024)

There were some AL-Rwazin with large openings, some of them were overlooking the inside of the house, some of them overlooked the neighbour's house, while some were outside near the corridors and farms. These AL-Rwazin were aimed to create direct and indirect communication with others. Notably, these large openings are used in different ways, but they aim to develop a means of social communication, which are as follows:

This type of AL-Roznah, as in (Figure 4.17), has a communication hole or cavity within the AL-Roznah itself, where the guest/owner could communicate with each other without either one having to enter or leave the room. In this manner, a high level of privacy is created for the owner of the house and also the guest. The guest room in (Figure 4.17) in Al-Bait Ala'ali is located on

the third floor alone, only the punishment room is adjacent to it, so privacy is at its highest levels for the guest of the house. Therefore, this window does not constitute any inconvenience to them.



Figure 0.13 Opening in AL-Roznah guest rooms for communication in Harrat AL-Bilad, Oman (2024)



Figure 0.14 Opening in AL-Roznah guest rooms in Bait Asafah, Oman (2024)



Figure 0.15 Opening in AL-Roznah guest rooms at Harrat Nizar in Izki, Oman (2024)

spotted an interesting outdoor open AL-Roznah like a small window to view and monitor the conditions of the farm or farmland within the confines of the house. This was done without revealing the privacy of the house or the user, especially if the viewer is a woman and thus she can enjoy the green scenery with complete privacy.



Figure 0.16 An opening in an outdoor AL-Roznah to overlooks the farms at Harrat AL-Aqar in Bahla, Oman (2024)



Figure 0.17 Another outdoor AL-Roznah at Harrat AL-Aqar in Bahla, Oman (2024)

Figures 4.22 & 4.23 show two examples of AL-Roznah on the external wall of the houses. The AL-Roznah is used in communicating with the neighbours to hold brief talks, and to enquire about a situation without the need to leave the house. This type of AL-Roznah was usually located facing the lanes and other houses and was mostly used by the womenfolk to watch the street life and enjoy watching the movement of the neighbours. The women can watch the events in the Harrah with complete privacy keeping with Muslim tradition.



Figure 0.18 An opening in AL-Roznah for communicating with the neighbours at Harrat AL-Aqar in Bahla, Oman (2024)



Figure 4.23 AL-Roznah opening to watch the street life in Harat AL-Bilad, Oman (2024)

The depth of the walls to fit the AL-Roznah is more than 1 meter so as to enable the Omanis to find a way to safeguard their personal items like money, documents, and jewellery as well. The openings are hidden from view and sometimes the AL-Roznah is a small room with a door that is secured with

locks, which is built into the walls to serve as a money bank. Its complete secrecy characterizes it, whereby some of the displays on the Roznah are there for a camouflaging effect. The money bank was spotted in the walls instead of the AL-Roznah and was registered in the AL-Khadeemah in Al-Hamra, in the Willayah of Manah in the neighbourhood of the country. The culture of a money box is often present in most of the Harrat here. The culture of saving is reflected in what the family earns - from money through agriculture, trade, travel, and the daily chores of the old Omani family of its men and women who work hard to secure a happy and prosperous life. Figures 4.31 - 4.35 show the different types of hidden holes for the money bank found in

the Harrahs.



Figure 0.19 The money bank with a hidden hole at Izki-Harat, Nizar, Oman (2024)



Figure 0.20 The money bank with a hidden hole at Harrat AL-Busaid, Adam, Oman (2024)



Figure 0.21 The money bank with a hidden hole at Harrat AL-Aqar, Bahla, Oman (2024)



A

B

Figure 0.22 The money bank with a hidden hole at AL-Khadeemah, ALHamra, Oman (2024)



Figure 0.23 The money bank with a hidden hole at Harrat AL-Aqar, Bahla, Oman (2024)

Some houses in the settlements appear to have a military character because the Omani architecture is an army building that is equipped with all security equipment to maintain its security and stability. Houses that are close to the entrances and exits of the settlement are to be militarily equipped

and prepared to confront the enemies in case of war. Here, the military Roznah plays an essential role in defending the family's security in the house. This AL-Roznah is located near the entrances to the neighbourhood and is equipped with small holes that are at different levels, these holes were used to enter the weapon and to aim at the enemies safely and secretly to protect the cannons from the enemy's shots, as they cannot be seen through the tiny holes. Also, the slightly larger holes that appear on the lower AL-Roznah are used to pour hot oil on the enemies when they enter the lane or make any attempt to target the houses. As such, it is not surprising that the AL-Roznah has been chosen and employed as an essential military element, because of its depth, it enables the defender to succeed in the defence mission. Moreover, the military AL-Roznah is stationed at the main entrance to the house, and the main entrance to the settlement as these are the closest to the dangerous areas. For this type of AL-Roznah, the researcher has selected the AL-Bait Al-Aali in Harat al-Bilad in the Wilayah of Manah, as it is the best option to present the concept of the military Roznah and its uses (Figures 4.36 - 4.42).

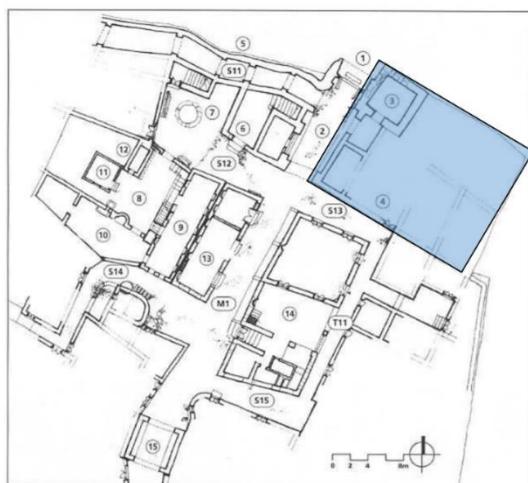


Figure 0.24 Plan of Harrat ALBilad - Manah, Oman (2024)

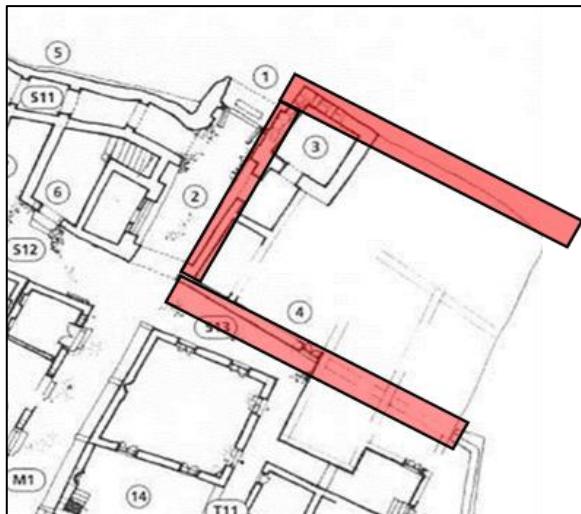


Figure 0.25 Military Roznah is located near the entrances to the neighbourhood and is equipped with small holes that are at different levels to enter the weapon and to aim at the enemies safely (as illustrated in Figure 4.38)



Figure 0.26 The Military AL-Roznah (Source: Author, 2024)

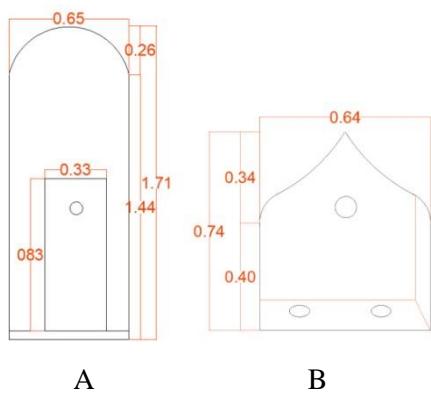


Figure 0.27 The dimensions of the Military AL-Roznah (Source: Author, 2024)



Figure 0.28 Military Roznah-Harrat ALBilad, Oman(2024)



Figure 0.29 Military Roznah-Harrat AL-Aqar in Bahla, Oman (2024)



Figure 0.30 Military Roznah in ALBait Ala'ali, Oman (2024)

CONTRIBUTION:

This study contributes to the body of knowledge of AL-Roznah in Omani Architecture in the following ways:

1. This study contributes to preserving the heritage through careful documentation of the AL-Roznah and its aesthetic and functional importance.
2. This study contributes to the transfer of the concept of Omani AL-Roznah in history, civilization and local architecture for future generations.
3. This study contributes to the sustainability of the AL-Roznah by displaying the different types of AL-Roznah available that is related to its importance.
4. This research will provide comprehensive information to the concerned authorities about the AL-Roznah that has not been documented before in previous research.
5. It is an essential addition to the literature of Omani architecture.
6. It is a good reference and destination for project owners who are interested in adding the element of AL-Roznah to contemporary architecture in the future.
7. This is a contribution to the sustainability of the AL-Roznah at the international level as it is a reference for countries that are similar to Omani architecture.

CONCLUSION:

Architectural heritage is the basis that has shaped civilisations. It is the pillar through which each nation's architecture is what it is and has achieved to date. Therefore, a country's architectural identity needs to be cared for and preserved for future generations. Oman is not a new country; it has a long history and good international relations with all nations. Therefore, it is imperative to be proud of the reasons that

have shaped Omani architecture. The architectural aspect is a prominent aspect that reflects Omani's creativity and thought in dealing with the terrain, climatic and economic conditions, which is evident in the settlements that are scattered throughout the country. The architecture tells the whole story about the lives of the Omanis and how they have adapted to the conditions and the economy; how they lived within these settlements and created architectural elements that facilitated ways for them to coexist in their daily lives. One of these elements appeared in the form of the AL-Roznah, which at first glance is thought to be an aesthetic element. However, through in-depth study, it became clear that it had critical functional tasks in daily life such as ventilation, lighting, cooking, preservation, and military and social connections with the other houses. The loss of the details of the AL-Roznah implies its disappearance and that it is being forgotten in between generations. Therefore, this research has provided invaluable information about the Omani Roznah that can be used in the future. One of the challenges that must be taken seriously in light of the absence of the AL-Roznah in Omani homes is to know the mechanisms and methods that can resurrect and sustain the development and continuity of the AL-Roznah to be commensurate with contemporary architecture in the presence of modern building materials and contemporary designs.

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