

Typology: **Basic House**

Country: **Lebanon**



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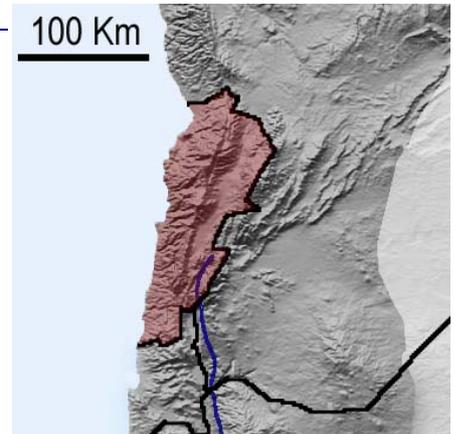
SYNTHESIS

The basic house is: four stone walls, an earth roofing on joists and beams, occasionally posts, pillars or inner arcades. This basic traditional house model in Lebanon can be found in two alternatives. The first alternative is a one unit, characteristic in rural; the second alternative is a multiple unit house, found in rural and urban environments, inland and on the littoral. These two dwellings are usually private, thus not very open onto the outside.

The one unit house is a parallelepipedal unit. It is made up of a single large, rectangular, one room unit, and includes load bearing posts, pillars, arcades and sometimes even vaults.

The inner layout is organized according to the load bearing structure which gives the area its pattern, and sets the limits of the areas dedicated to particular activities (sleeping area, food storage, animal shelter...). The origins of this typology with carrying posts presumably go back to Prehistoric times. With time, stone pillars, arcades and then vaults (perhaps introduced during the Arab period) have replaced the initial system. Only one door and few small windows open this house onto the outside. In mountain areas, it is often built with dry stone or local stone. The foundation layer blends into the landscape and terrace agricultural. In Békaa, the earth walls and rudimentary renderings make these houses hard to discern and locate.

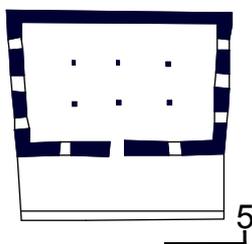
The multiple unit house is usually made with one to three cubical elements that can be lined up, superimposed or staggered. Elements generally do not communicate between each other, but open onto the outside through a door and several windows. Each is dedicated to a specific role: sleeping area, shelter for animals, storage of products and materials (silkworm rearing, weaving...). In cities, this house can have four floors: in this case, units are often rented separately.



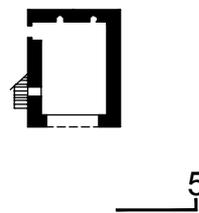
ANALYTICAL GROUP OF THE TYPOLOGY

Variation 1 rural	individual	fixed	permanent	permanent	rooted	Average and high	wide	Variation 1 rural
Variation 2 rural	individual	fixed	changing	permanent	rooted	Average and high	wide	Variation 2 rural
(environment)	(Implantation)	(Character)	(Origin)	(Use)	(Cultural)	(Economic level)	(Morphology)	(environment)

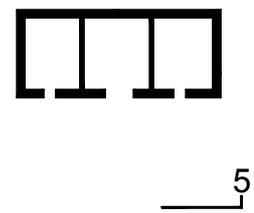
FORMS OF THE TYPOLOGY



Alternative 1
Basic single unit house



Alternative 2a
Multiple unit house with more than one floor



Alternative 2b
Basic multiple unit house

INVENTORY OF THE COUNTRY'S TYPOLOGIES

Troglodyte house	Shepard shelter	Nomadic habitat	Basic house
Iwan house	Riwaq house	Three-arch house	Court house

FORMS OF THE TYPOLOGY

VARIANTE 1 :PLAN COURT HOUSE EN O

Implantation

This dwelling can be found in all the rural areas of the country, in coastal or mountain areas and in Békaa. It is generally built alone, as a single unit. In a terrace culture environment called jall, or on a cultivated hillside. But one can still find grouped examples, making up a hamlet or village, as in the country of Batroun, or in Qaouzah, in South Lebanon.

Use/associated activity

This is a general-purpose dwelling. It is used as home, but also as a shelter for animals and a warehouse.

Dating

The origins of this dwelling seem very old and could go back to Prehistoric times. This shape was built until the XIXth century.

Altitude

From sea level to about 1 700 m high.

Orientation

The orientation of this house is relative to the location. The door generally opens on the valley. In Békaa, it turns its back to dominant winds. In mountain areas, it follows the topography.

Ground surface covered

This dwelling takes up from 1 to 20% of the area where it is established.

Surface area of housing

It varies from 20 to 50 m²

Number of floors

1

Number of homes

1

Number of families

1 family.

Average number of members per family

4 to 10 people



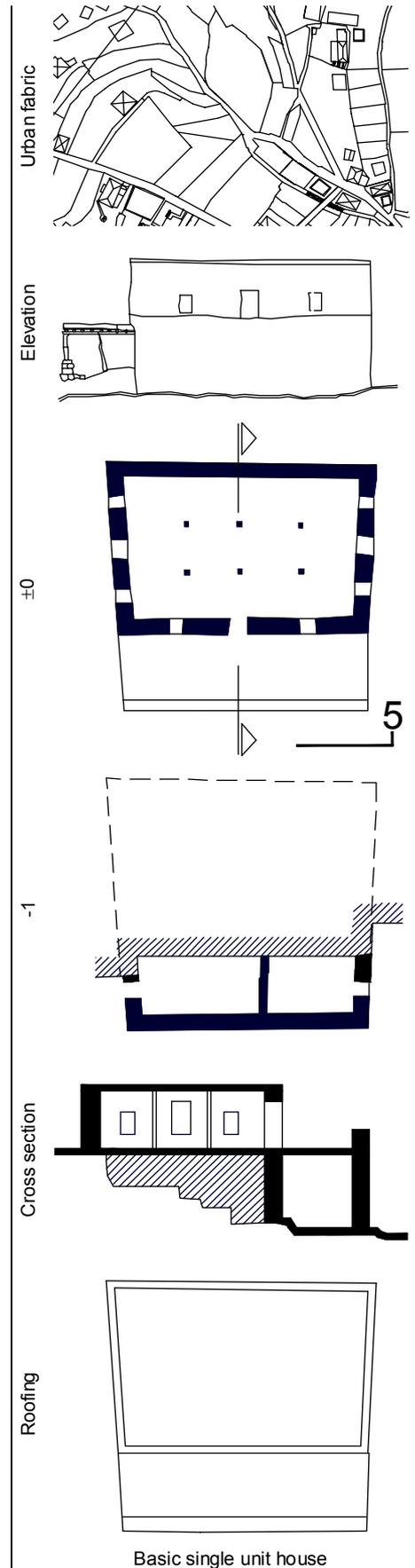
Basic single unit house in Douma



Basic single unit house in Kfan Abidar

Functional outline

The single unit of this dwelling is subdivided into functional areas with unspecific furniture (youk, curtains or simple wooden partition). The house must satisfy Minimal needs: sleeping area, shelter, a place to get warm. This explains the scarcity and size of openings. The door is generally low and small. It opens on a flat open external area where most household activities take place (cooking, eating, resting, working, hand craft...). This house can also have a fenced area in the front. It can be associated to a barn, called zribeh, and built behind or at the foot of a terrace.



Basic single unit house

Walls

The walls are carried out with two facing stone masonry. They are approximately 80 cm thick. They keep heat in winter and a pleasant coolness in summer. In Békaa, they are made with mud.

Framework

The walls are stone, with central or peripheral posts or pillars, Arcades, and in certain cases even vaults. The floor is made with wood, supported by wooden joists and beams. In Wadi Khaled, stone flooring replaces the joists.

Roofing

It is made with hard-packed earth. The layer of earth rests on a bed of plants and a lattis of branches supported by beams and joists.

Rendering

- the interior is generally rendered with lime.
- the outside is bare, generally dry stone, and is covered with a wash or a mud rendering, depending on the areas and materials available.
- the floor is made with hard-packed earth.

Openings and projections in the facade

The openings are rectangular or symmetrical, with no protruding shapes. Lintels are made with monolithic stone blocks or juxtaposed wooden elements. A rudimentary joinery (frameworks) links these openings.

Traditional systems of air-conditioning

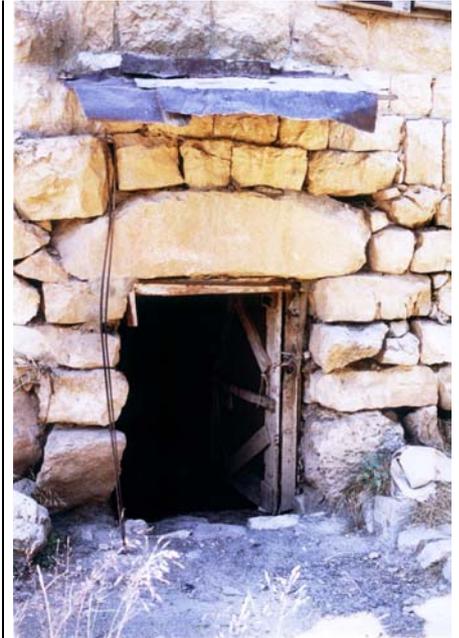
Ventilation is ensured through the openings and the heating by the means of decorated earth hearths, braziers and fireplaces, using the coal. The smoke is evacuated by small openings, generally on the top windows.

Drinking water supply systems

Water comes from sources, particularly wells or public fountains.

Waste water drainage systems

There is no collectively organized drainage system. Main drain outside.



Door closeup



Single unit house (Douma)



Inside: wooden posts (Kobayyat)

CURRENT STATE OF VITALITY AND PRESERVATION

Basic one unit houses, as they are small rudimentary structures, are not considered to be very functional and are naturally no longer appreciated. Some peasants, however, have no other choice as a home. Today, they are increasingly abandoned for more comfortable modern dwellings. In Lebanon, this type of dwelling is neither considered interesting by the population in general, nor preservation associations or public authorities. Restored basic houses are rare.

TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

Effect / Cause

Typological transformations

- **Volume :**
Major transformations are rare. One however notes an addition of volumes, to separate inhabitants from animals for example, or for toilets.
- **Façades séparations :**
Few transformations to façades: use of cement rendering on earth walls, and a more elaborate metal joinery since the 1970s.
- **Structure :**
The hard-packed earth roofing is now replaced by reinforced concrete flooring in covered with a thin reinforced concrete blanket. Concrete Pillars, posts and pillars replace stone elements. Concrete lining inside.
- **Layout organization:**
The area is divided into subspaces: rooms, living room, and kitchen. The interior partitioning becomes solid and concrete. The heating comes more and more from cast iron (or sobia) fireplaces whose smoke is evacuated through white iron pipes, through existing openings. As for the drainage used, public networks were set up in certain large towns.

Change in use

Little change in use. This house, when it is not given up, is still used for homes, sheep-folds or areas for storage and tools.

Change in use of construction materials and techniques

- **In use, living:**
- **Little used, in decline :**
Wood, natural stone.
- **No longer used :**
Lime, the hard-packed earth
- **Recent incorporations :**
Concrete, concrete blocks, stone plating, metal structure, metal openings.



Basic one unit house (Mtein) with late additions



Inside: Structure in arcades (Qawzah) with additional concrete pillar.

Implantation

This typology is adaptable to every type of ground and situation. It can be isolated, used on a mountain terrace or in fields, and city suburbs. It is found near mountain areas, especially in the dense fabric of historic city cores. Units are either joined by kind, or combined to other typologies.

Use/associated activity

- In rural environment, this dwelling was used as: a home, shelter for animals, workshop (place for silkworms cocoons for example) or as room for agricultural needs.

- In urban environment, it was especially a collective dwelling and investment real-estate, initially playing a residential role (hiring), but it could be associated to commercial activities.

Dating

This type of house was built until the beginning of the XXth century.

Altitude

This house is rather rare in very high mountain areas. One finds it from sea level to average heights.

Orientation

In mountain areas, the door naturally opens on the valley. In the suburbs of littoral cities, it is generally directed north.

Ground surface covered

In rural zone, this house can exceed 50% of the plot. In urban zones, it can reach 100%.

Surface area of housing

It varies from 30 to 100 m².

Number of floors

This type seldom exceeds two levels. In urban areas, it can however reach 3 or 4 floors.

Number of homes

In the countryside, this housing usually concerns a large family. In cities, one can regard it as real-estate, usually divided into rooms of rented to several families. One or more

Nombre de familles

1

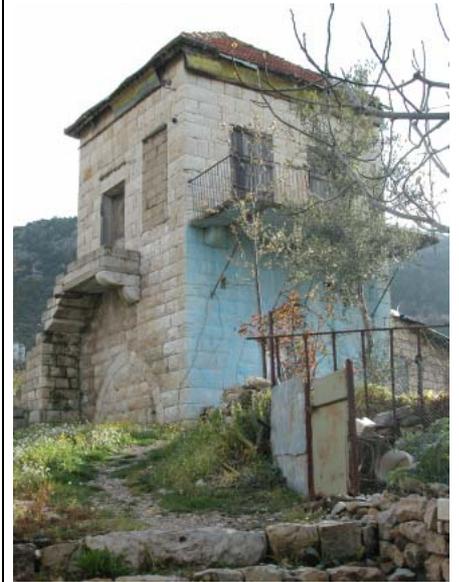
Average number of members per family

5 to 10 people per family.

Functional outline

In rural areas, elements are added as the family grows, or when new needs occur. The new elements are added on the side or superimposed. The house is general-purpose, but with multiple uses, serving as bedrooms, silkworm farming, storage, and also shelter for livestock or servants. The elements seldom communicate, with doors open on the outside, defining separation and function. Minimal functions: sleeping, shelter or animal and tool shelter; whereas the outside is livelier: kitchen, place to eat, to rest, and various domestic and economic activities.

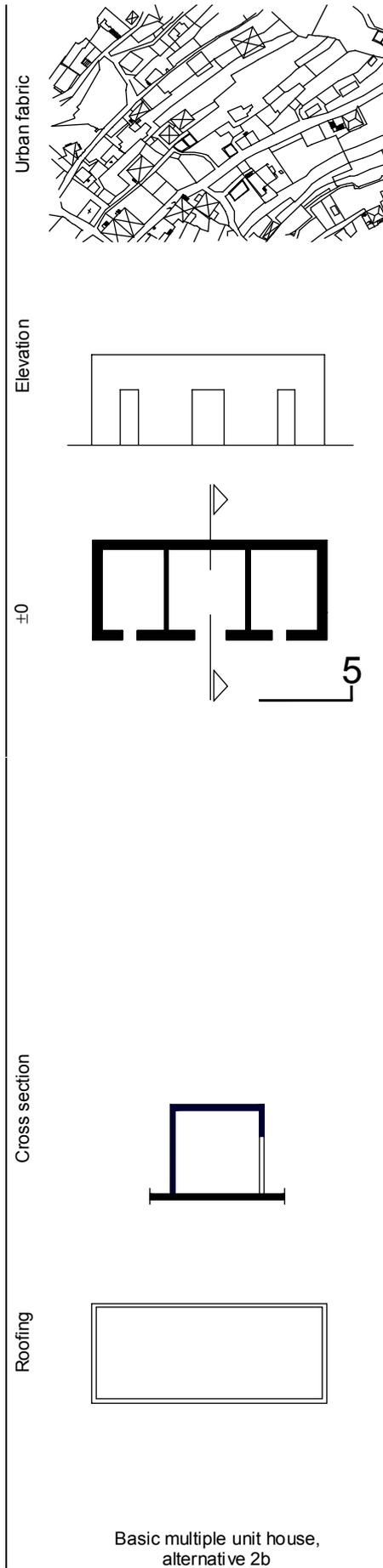
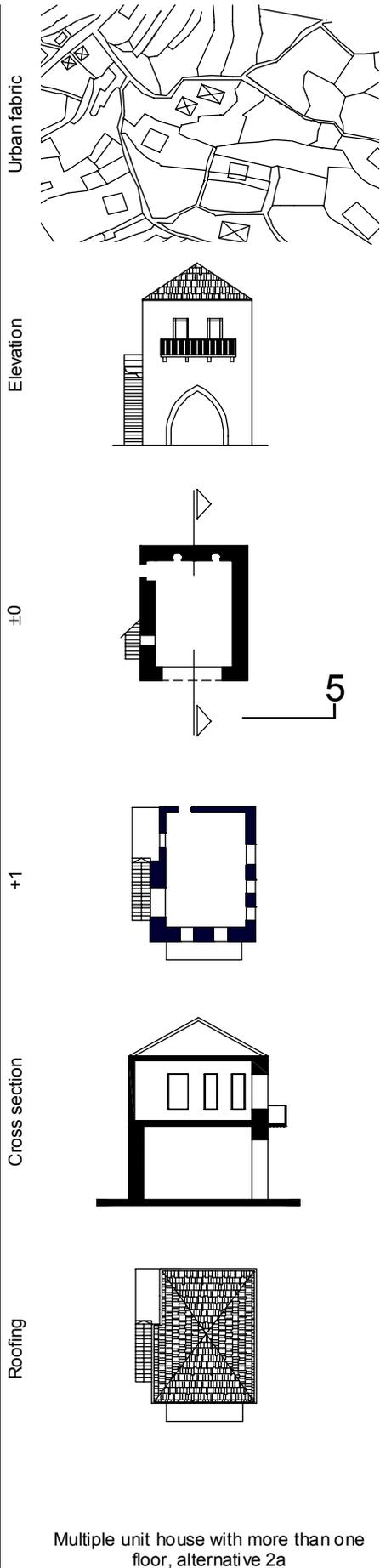
In the suburbs of cities, this general-purpose house is the standard housing of sharecroppers. In this case, an extra floor was used for surveillance, giving the house a tower house aspect. Downtown, this dwelling usually has a residential function, the household life is indoors.



Sharecropper house in Douma



Basic multiple unit house in Qlayeh



Walls

The walls are load bearing and generally in ramleh stone or embossed stone. Their thickness ranges from 35 to 100 cm.

Framework

It is made with wood, with tree trunks used as beams and joists. Downtown, this system is usually painted and better finished.

Roofing

It is made with hard-packed earth, from 40 to 50 cm thick. The layer of earth is supported by beams and joists.

Rendering

- the interior is rendered with lime.
- According to area, the outside is embossed stone or ramleh stone, covered with wash or rendering.
- the floors on the first level are generally maad, and the area reserved for animals is in hard-packed earth.

Openings and projections in the facade

The openings are scarce and rectangular, with stone or wooden lintels. The joinery is rudimentary. No projecting shapes.

Traditional systems of air-conditioning

Ventilation is through the openings, and the heating provided by coal braziers.

Drinking water supply systems

This housing is generally near water points. In cities, drinking water comes from public fountains.

Waste water drainage systems

Main drain systems are common practice in the rural world. In cities, waste water is evacuated towards public gutters.



House in Hazmieh



Basic multiple unit house in Majeyoun.



Basic multiple unit house in Wadi Faara

CURRENT STATE OF VITALITY AND PRESERVATION

Exiguous from the start, elements are poorly adaptable for interior transformation. These houses thus are naturally not appreciated anymore. They remain nevertheless inhabited by families who cannot afford another home. In this case, the households are restructured to fulfil the requirements of modern life. They are growingly given up, or recovered for economic use (storage, shops...).

TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

Effect / Cause

Typological transformations

— Volume :

Towards the end of the XIXth century, many multiple unit houses were entirely or partially covered with Marseilles tile roofings. Transformations consisted in adding floors and volumes, to adapt the house to modern life (inside toilets and bath room, for example).

— Façades separations :

Few transformations for the façades. However, cement rendering on the walls and metal fittings were reported.

— Structure :

The hard-packed earth roofing is now replaced by a reinforced concrete flooring resting on metal joists and beams.

— Layout organization:

Changes were carried out to integrate a kitchen, toilet and bathroom inside this dwelling. Extra balconies, verandas and staircases were also reported.

Heating is more and more provided by cast iron fireplaces. As for water drainage, public networks are used today, but only in large cities and several large towns. .

Change in use

These dwellings have almost become limited to a single role:

- in mountain boroughs, they are still inhabited, but after having undergone volume changes
- in city suburbs, the houses of sharecroppers have become storage buildings.
- downtown, they are transformed into small snack bars, small trades, offices...

Change in use of construction materials and techniques

— In use, living:

— Little used, in decline :

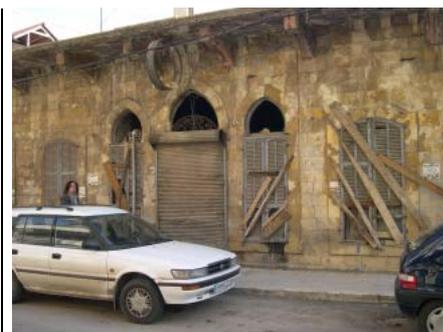
Wood, natural stone.

— No longer used :

Lime, hard-packed earth

— Recent incorporations :

Concrete, concrete blocks, stone plating, metal structure, metal openings.



Rundown basic multiple unit house in Zahleh.



Basic multiple unit house with a concrete roof in Marjeyoun.

CAPACITY FOR REHABILITATION

Aspects of the typology

Score from 0 (very poor) to 10 (excellent)

- . Capacity for sale or rental on the property market | 3
- . Capacity for adaptation to present-day family and social requirements | 2
- . Capacity for adaptation to present-day comfort requirements | 2

Score from 0 (insignificant) to 10 (major)

- . Technical difficulty of rehabilitation | 2
- . Administrative difficulty of rehabilitation | 4
- . Financial difficulty (high-cost) of rehabilitation | 5

Obstacles preventing rehabilitation/causing the user to decide not to rehabilitate

Score from 0 (does not represent an obstacle) to 10 (represents a major obstacle)

- . Administrative difficulties | 4
- . Major technical difficulties | 2
- . Irreversible deterioration of the structure | 9
- . Listed/protected building | 4
- . High cost of rehabilitation | 5
- . Absence of aid/subsidies | 8
- . Cost of the project and permits | 5
- . Status of building/lease | 8
- . Inflation of property prices | 2
- . Social decline (delinquency, ...) | 2
- . Poor environmental conditions (absence of minimum infrastructures, ...) | 8
- . Desire to change the building for a modern one | 8
- . Lack of sensitisation/appreciation on the part of the users | 8
- . Not considered necessary (by the user) | 7

Comments

This typology is becoming extinct in Lebanon. The great majority is in bad condition today. The small size of these units discourages preservation and restoration, as well as new projects.

In the capital, the rent law, blocked since the 1940s, rendered these dwellings unprofitable, leading owners to giving them up.

LEXICON

- bayt:** house
- hammam:** bathroom
- jall:** agricultural terrace
- madd:** layer of mortar spread over the floor of dwelling elements.
- sobia:** cast iron fireplace
- youk:** wall cupboard or cupboard
- zribeh:** cattle shed

Références :Lebanese Academy of Arts (ALBA) : Plans, Cross sections, Façades

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