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LIVING ROOM FURNISHINGS IN SELECTED HOMES OF BEIRUT, LEBANON

by

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7677

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the Faculty of the Graduate School at
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This study concerns changes in trends of furnishings of living rooms of middle class families in Beirut from mid 19th century to the present. The first part deals with Arabic living room furniture from about 1850 to the end of World War II. Because very little source material about Lebanese furniture exists, most of the information was gathered from families owning old Arabic furniture and from a few old carpenters who were masters of arabesque wood carving. The second part indicates changes in living room furnishings in Beirut since World War II, present day preferences, and the supplying of customer demand by the furniture market. Information for this part of the study was gained through visits to homes and planned interviews with homemakers selected according to income and also according to religion. Selected interior decorators, furniture store owners, and furniture manufacturers were also interviewed.

Living room furniture in Beirut homes originally was a divan arranged along the walls of a room and one or more small tables. Gradually sofas and chairs came into use as a result of European influence. The furniture was skilfully carved in delicate arabesque design or inlaid with contrasting woods and mother-of-pearl. Even when padded and covered with rugs, and later with fabric, the massive sofas and chairs were uncomfortable. The reason was probably that the furniture makers

lacked both the ability and the materials to design comfortable furniture.

At the end of World War II western influence had created a demand in Beirut for better designed, well-constructed and more comfortable furniture. Better equipment was imported and furniture makers gained more skill. Louis XV style and later European and American contemporary design became popular. Recently a trend toward English classical furniture has developed.

The findings of this study show that the middle class in Beirut generally preferred early European modern and contemporary western living room furniture in informal arrangements. More sets were in use than individual pieces and sets of three small tables were favored over coffee tables. Oriental rugs were used almost exclusively. Natural fibers were preferred for both upholstery and drapery.

The survey of furniture suppliers indicated that in order of importance, general appearance, fiber content, construction, cost, and comfort were the main factors in customer selection of furniture. Modern European design was most popular; there was no demand for Arabic traditional. Customers most frequently chose sets of natural wood finish upholstered in a tweed fabric and padded with foam rubber. The furniture suppliers seemed ready to fulfill the changing consumer demand for better quality in construction and for good design.

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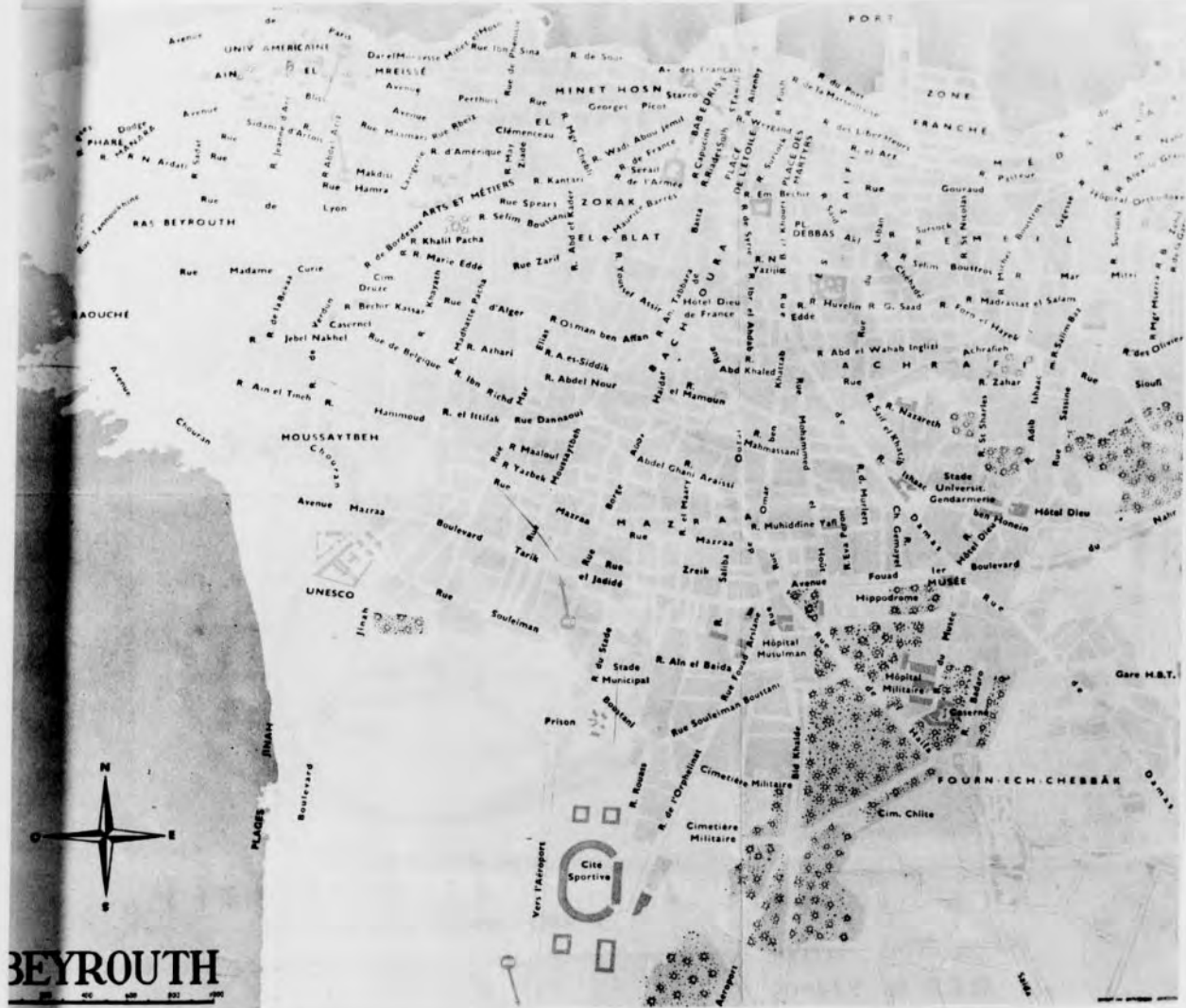
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BEYROUTH

INTRODUCTION

In the course of its history, Lebanon has passed through many different civilizations. It has made contributions to the culture of mankind during each of the successive periods, the Prehistoric, the Ancient Semitic, the Greco-Roman, the Arab, the Ottoman and the Modern. This is true partly because of its geographical location which has made Lebanon a crossroad between East and West since the beginning of recorded history both in trade and cultural exchanges. To the West Lebanon stretches along the Mediterranean Sea, to the South it is bordered by Palestine and to the East and North it is bordered by Syria. The country covers an area approximately four thousand square miles and of the one and a half million inhabitants, approximately one third populate Beirut, the capital city.

Throughout history the inhabitants have been exposed to a variety of currents and waves, cultural, religious and political, each of which brought about changes in the lives of the people. The variety of influences have created some interesting results in the arts and architecture, disputable though they might be as to the aesthetic value. Tracing stylistic origins of the traditional Beirut house and its furnishings is a challenging task.

This study is concerned, however, mainly with the changes that have taken place in the furnishings of living

rooms from about 1850 to the present time. Reasons for choosing this period as the point of departure for this thesis are: 1. There is almost no record of the type of home furnishings used prior to this date, although information on the architecture is known; 2. the old Arab furniture which made its appearance about this time is vanishing; and 3. the past ten years have brought about great changes in the home furnishings area.

This study is restricted to the middle class because one can follow a steady trend of the taste of a people through this class. Prof. Charles Churchill of the American University of Beirut defines the middle class as those people who receive a yearly income of the equivalent of from \$1,650 to \$8,200. The arbitrary division of the group forms three categories; the lower middle group, receiving a yearly income of about \$1,650 to \$3,250; the middle middle group receiving a yearly income of about \$3,250 to \$6,500; the upper middle group receiving a yearly income of about \$6,500 to \$8,200 or a little higher. The sub class ratio in Beirut according to Prof. Churchill's survey in 1954 was as follows: 65 per cent lower class, 30 per cent middle class, 5 per cent upper class.¹

The first part of the study deals with the Arabic living room furniture, its history, type and origin. Research sources

¹ Charles Churchill, The City of Beirut, A Socio-Economic Survey (Beirut: Dar El-Kitab, 1954), pp. 23-24.

are limited. Most of the information and the pictorial illustrations have been gathered from a few prominent Lebanese families who kept old pieces of Arabic furniture mainly as collectors items. A few old carpenters who were still masters of the arabesque wood carving craft also gave pertinent information.

The second part of the study is divided into three parts. 1. The changes that have taken place in the styles of the Lebanese living room furnishings, a transition which is supported by historical and social developments of the country. 2. Present-day preferences of living room furnishings by the Lebanese homemakers. This information was gathered through interviews and substantiated by a questionnaire with 40 selected Lebanese families living in Beirut. 3. How the present furniture market meets the demands of the consumer. This information was gathered from 25 sources from among interior decorators, furniture manufacturers, and furniture store owners, through the use of a questionnaire. The results are given in descriptive form and charts.

CHAPTER I
THE ARABIC LIVING ROOM

In order to understand a trend of any kind, material or philosophical one must have some knowledge of the history and the lives of the people involved. There was little progress in this country during the early part of the nineteenth century, or the so-called Late Ottoman Period due to political disturbances all over the country which was then part of Syria. Damascus was its major city. Two classes of people existed almost exclusively, an upper class of rulers, landowners and ecclesiae, and a lower class of tillers of the soil and manual workers. Despite disturbances, a movement of intellectual awakening started, which resulted in the emergence of a middle class composed mainly of businessmen, lawyers, physicians, and teachers. This movement was due to European influences, especially French. It was brought about through increase in trade, the establishment of foreign educational institutions, and travel.²

A Westerner visiting Lebanon early in the 1800s would have been impressed by the strangeness of the local scene. Men wore baggy trousers (sing. sirwāl) or kimono - like qinbaz, with tarbooshes, turbaned or loose; while women, whether Moslem or Christian, appeared in public with veils, and those of high rank with the silver horn-shaped tantūr. All squatted on cushions or low mattresses

² Philip K. Hitti, Lebanon in History (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1957), pp. 452-457, 471-472.

on the floor, ate from trays and drank from small jars with spouts, home-made like practically all other house-hold articles. Rare indeed was he among them who could speak any other tongue than Arabic. Their world did not move faster than a horse could gallop. The same visitor in the late 1800's would have felt almost at home at least in Beirut.³

Mr. Bliss, first President of the American University of Beirut, which was established as the Syrian Protestant College in 1866, in describing Lebanon of 1856 states:

Life was then both simple and complex: simple, in that the people's wants were few, and were mainly supplied from the resources of their own village; complex, by reason of the elaborate social code, inherited from a past rich in the nice appreciation of manners. If civilization consists in appliances for making home-life comfortable, agriculture intensive, travel easy, and communication rapid - then the Lebanese were most uncivilized. Their crude houses had little or no furniture; the roads were often hardly better than watercourses; agriculture followed Biblical methods of plowing and sowing and reaping; of grinding the wheat for flour; of pressing the olives for oil and grapes for wine. But if civilization takes account of an elaborate etiquette covering speech as well as conduct; delicately adjusting the laws of precedence; furnishing the lowliest peasant with a stereotyped phrase, always polite and often poetical, for every possible event or act - a birth, a death, a marriage, eating, drinking, bathing, hair-cutting - the wearing of a new coat or gown - surely the Lebanese possessed a highly complicated civilization.⁴

This way of life is still in part associated with the older families of today.

³ Hitti, Lebanon in History, p. 470.

⁴ Daniel Bliss, The Reminiscences of Daniel Bliss (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920), pp. 116-117.

To understand the meaning of a living room in the Arab house one must know first that the traditional houses had a general pattern which was almost always followed: a main central hall flanked on either side by smaller rooms for sleeping, eating, or reception. This main hall served as a means of communication between the different parts of the house and the main living area. The living room area was the room which could hold the most people at one time. It was used for informal gatherings of the family and close friends. Special guests were entertained in a smaller room which was designated as a reception room or salon. In the harem, or women's quarters in the Moslem house, the women had their own sitting-rooms where they stayed and entertained their female friends. They were allowed to join the men only by invitation from the master of the house. In Lebanon today this custom is quite rare, although in conservative families women still tend to group together separately from men.

One hundred years ago furniture was almost non-existent in the Arab home except to some extent in the palaces and ruling houses. The lack of its existence is obviously a legacy of the nomadic tent life. In his description of the social life of the Arabs in 1865 Lane-Poole mentions that the sitting-room was not over-cumbered with furniture.

A divan (a long low seat about 10 inches high) and a rug or two are all that custom requires, and at meal-time a little table is brought in, and a large brass or tinned tray is placed upon it, and the family squats round it on the floor.⁵

⁵ Stanley Lane-Poole, Social Life in Egypt (London: I.S. Virtue and Co., Limited, 1865) p. 13.

Wortabet also described a typical sitting room during his visit to a friend in Damascus in 1854. He said the furnishings of the sitting room were altogether oriental. They included the carpets, the divans, and a nargeele (water pipe). On a small scamla, or stool, about a foot high, a large round copper tray was placed from which food was served.⁶ These reports give a clear indication that the only pieces of furniture used then were the divan and the scamla. The divan usually extended along three walls (Figures 1a and 1b).

Accessories did not exist as such. An accessory, according to Webster's Dictionary is "any article or device that adds to the convenience or effectiveness of something else but is not essential." The rugs and cushions on the floor were considered a necessity because they made sitting on the floor more comfortable. Many times, especially during the winter months, rugs were also hung on the walls; again a necessity, to add warmth to the room. Another necessary item, often fashioned of very decorative brass or copper work, was a brazier (Figures 2a and 2b). This small heating device was usually placed in the center of the sitting room so that people could sit near it to warm themselves. The nargeele or water pipe shown in Figure 1b might also be considered an essential item, because, according to the culture, it was considered a sign of hospitality to offer the pipe to guests.

⁶ Gregory M. Wortabet, Syria and the Syrians (London: James Madden, 1856) Vol. I, p. 217.

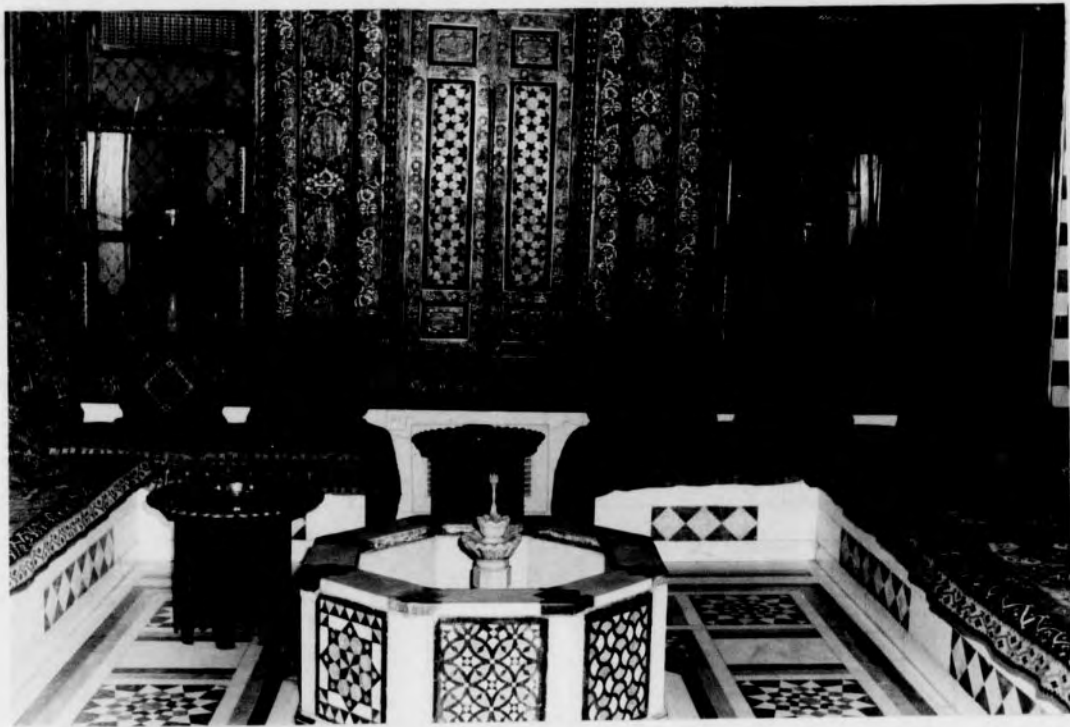


Figure 1a. Arrangement of a divan along three walls.

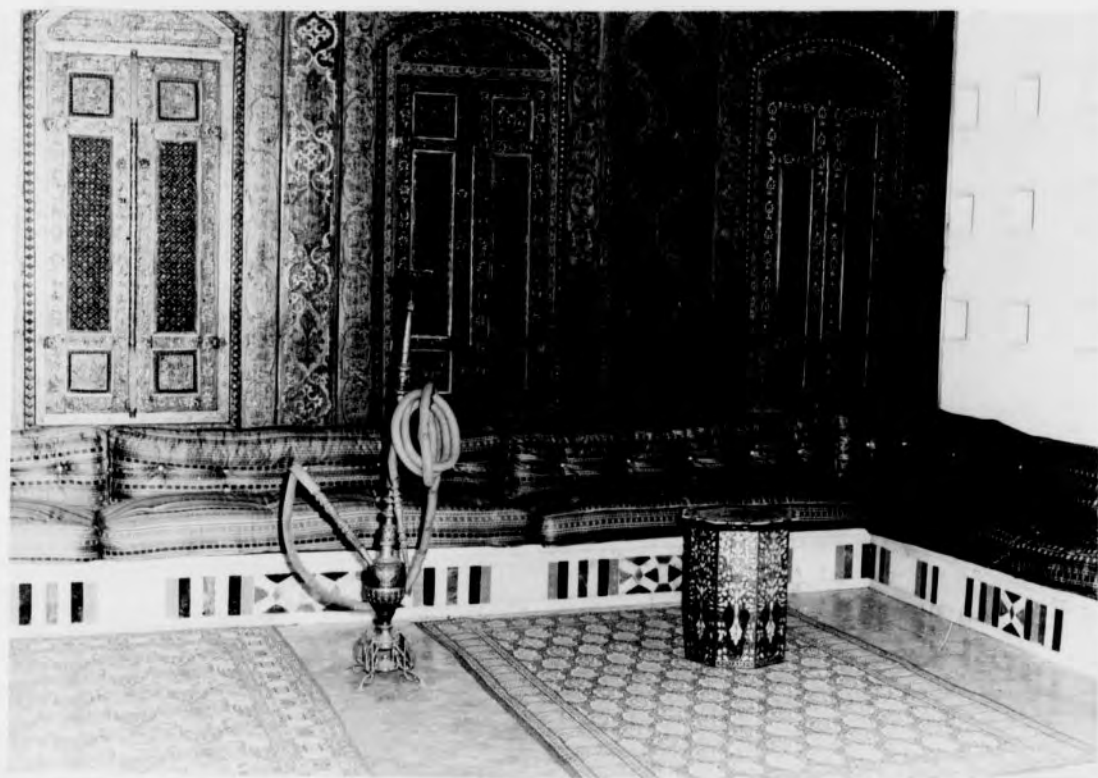


Figure 1b. Arrangement of divan along three sides of a room with nargilee and scamla.



Figure 2a. Brass brazier of Turkish design with center support and star and crescent decoration.



Figure 2b. Brass brazier of typical Syrian or Lebanese design with low support of three legs.

It was also the only means both men and women had to occupy their leisure hours while sipping coffee and visiting with each other.

In the Moslem home another important feature was the folding screen (Figure 3) and the mushrabiyyah panels.⁷ Both of these are good examples of the use of the turned-wood art. Women could see through them and speak through them without being seen. The mushrabiyyah was often an architectural feature in the form of a projection or small balcony, or in place of a window which allowed the women to watch the street scenes. This feature can still be noted in the older sections of homes in Damascus and Aleppo, but they have almost entirely disappeared from Beirut.

Another feature which was important in the old Arab house until about fifteen years ago was the yūk. This was usually found in the family sitting room. It was a built-in type of closet with decoratively painted doors or with a curtain. The purpose of this was to store the mattresses during the day. Bedrooms had no place in the Arab's life then. Beds were of European heritage. The Arab was accustomed to sleeping on the floor on a cotton mattress. The mattresses were stacked in the yūk during the day-time. At night they were brought out, placed next to each other on the floor in the sitting room where the whole family slept together. The depth of the yūk

⁷ See details of mushrabiyyah work in Figure 5.

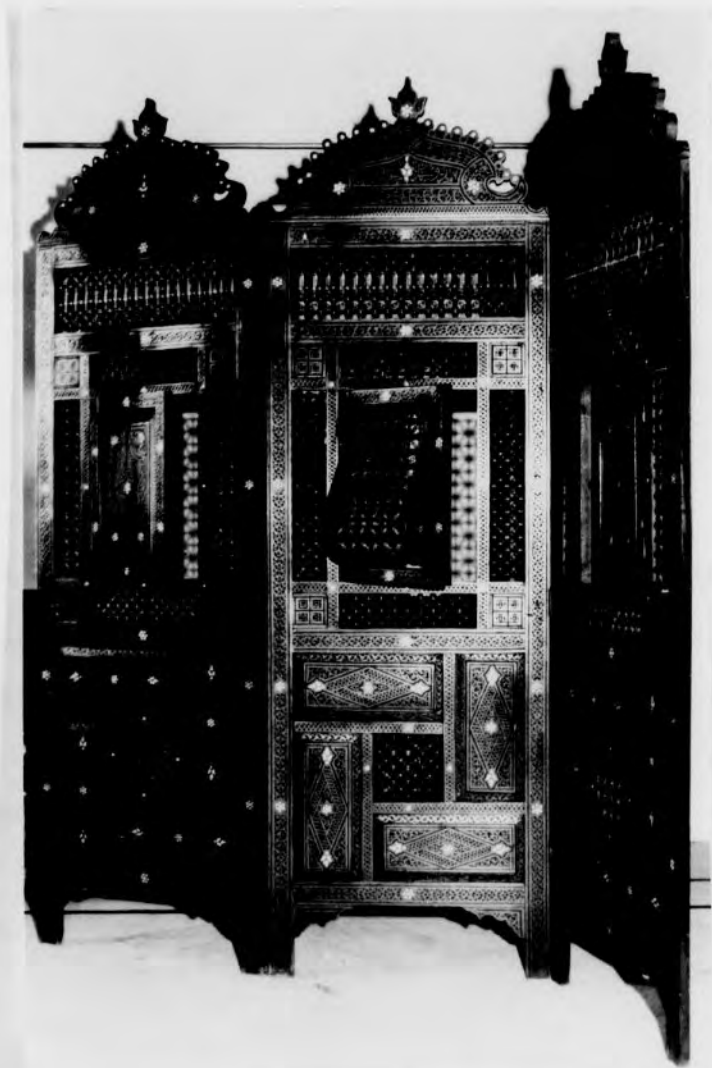


Figure 3. Folding arabesque screen showing Damascus carving and mushrabiyyah work. (The bay window-like aperture opens so that articles can be passed through.)

was the width of a single mattress, approximately 36 inches, Besides being a functional storage space it was a favorite spot for children because it provided them with a good hiding place when playing.

A decorative piece often found in the sitting room was a chest used to store extra bedding for guests. In the Beirut tourist market reproductions of the Druze Chest can be found most commonly (Figure 4). There are two explanations of why it became known as the Druze Chest: one was that it originated in Jebel Druze, a town in Syria; the other explanation was that the chest was first used by the people living in the Mountains of Lebanon. Since many of these mountain people were of the Druze sect, the chest became known as the Druze Chest. The latter seems to be a more valid reason because the town of Jebel Druze is not as old as the existence of the Druze Chest. According to the Arab's concept of artistry and beauty, the Druze Chest was of little value aesthetically. Its carved design is crude and also it is nailed together instead of being assembled with wooden pegs and glue.

As the merchant group and upper middle class grew and became more prosperous, they replaced the simple divan with sofas and chairs. The name divan, however, is still used. The term "sofa" is rarely used even today. Basically the construction of the sofas and chairs remained the same as the divan. The wooden seat was covered with a layer of straw

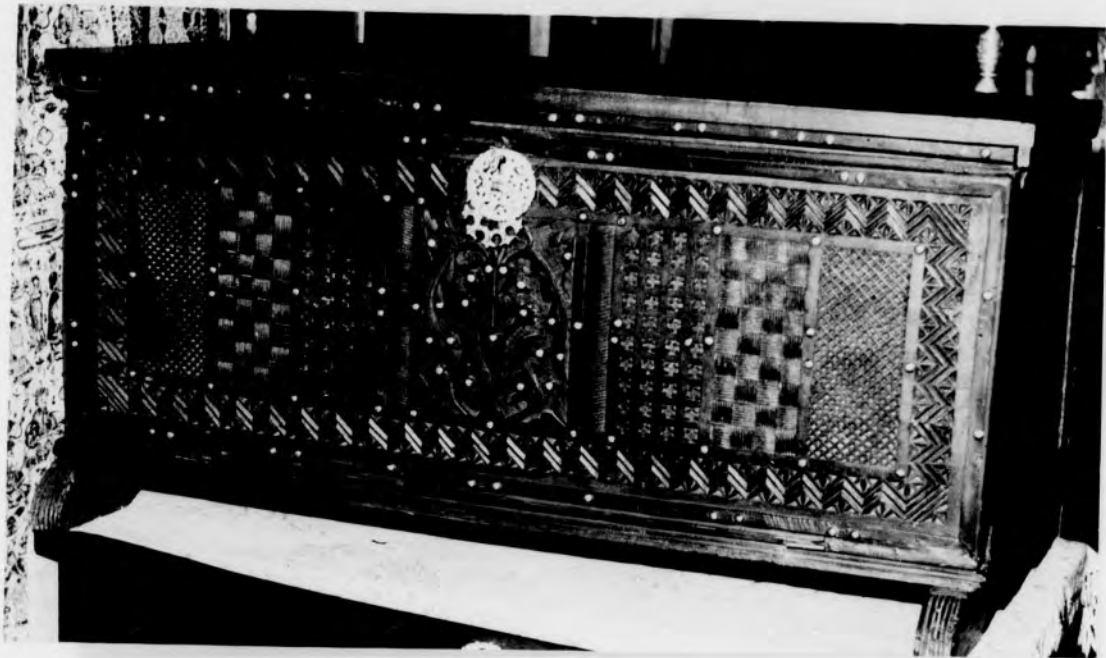


Figure 4. Druze chest.

or similar pulpy material, then upholstered with a brocade fabric (Figure 10), or gillabīyah cloth. The gillabīyah cloth has the appearance of satin and is always woven in a stripe either with or without a pattern running within the stripe (Figures 19a and 19b, pages 31 and 32). Later cushions stuffed with cotton were added. This furniture was constructed not for comfort, but for appearance.

The decorative motifs are purely arabesque. To trace the derivation of arabesque art, one must go back in history to the Arab Era, approximately 640 to 1500. Arabesque motifs flourished during the Ummayyad, Abbasid and Mamluk periods. Arabesque art is based on the principles of geometry and stylized floral patterns (Figures 5,6,7,8,9). Both are used in rich abundance.⁸ Although arabesque art is generally associated with the Arab Era because of the rise of Islam, no one has actually discovered where or when the true origin of this characteristic Moslem art appeared.⁹ According to Islamic precept representational art is prohibited. "The figures of man and beast were rigorously excluded, for the Arabesque does not exalt man's feeble imitation of what God has created: it is geometrical, two-dimensional and shadowless."¹⁰

⁸ Jules Bourgoïn, Les Arts Arabes et le Trait General de L'Art Arabe (Paris: Vvr A. Morelet Cie, Libraires, 1873) pp. 1-23.

⁹ Helen Gardner, Art Through the Ages (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1926), p. 255.

¹⁰ Rom Landau, The Arabesque (San Francisco: The American Academy of Asian Studies, 1955), p. 6.

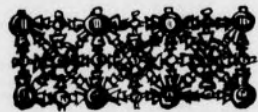


Fig. 5 Details of a
Mushrabiyyah

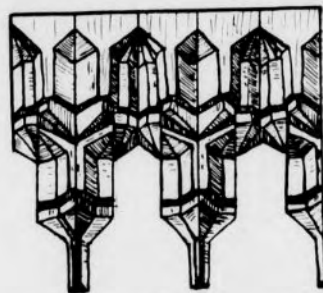


Fig. 6 Stalactite

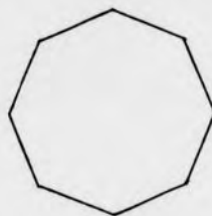
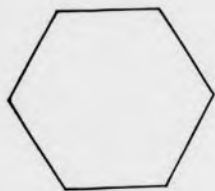


Fig. 7 hexagon - octagon



Fig. 8 stylized
floral design



Fig. 9 three-arched
window

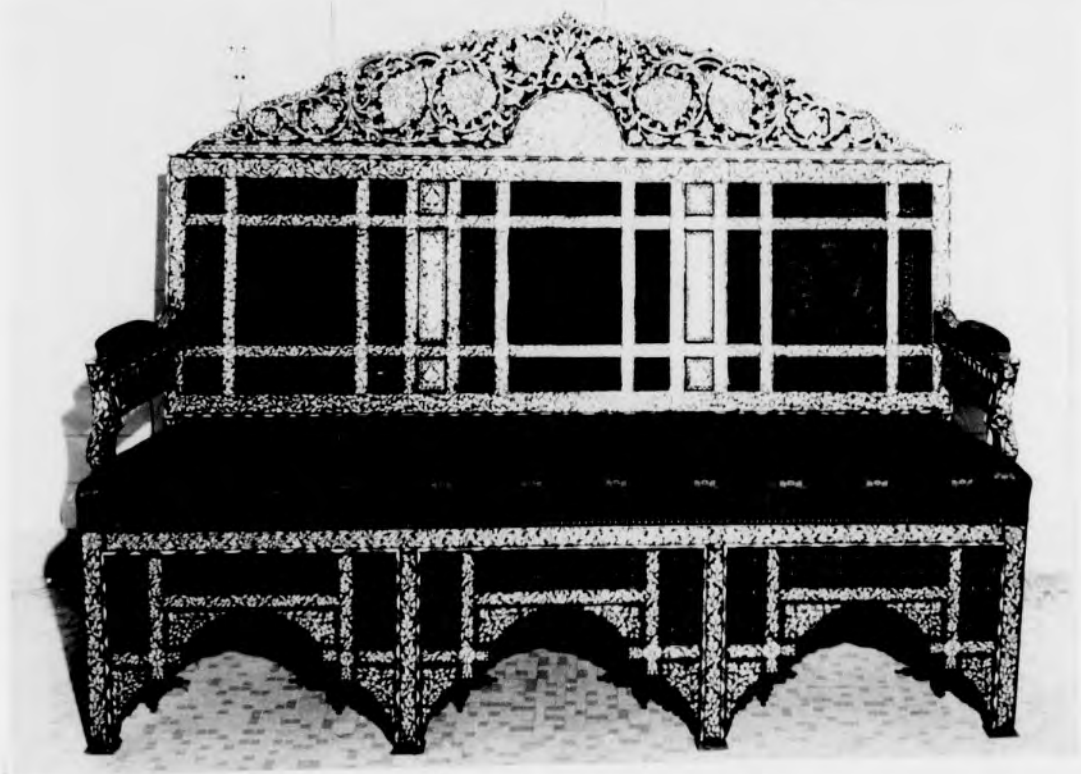


Figure 10. Upholstered sofa with Damascene design and mother-of-pearl inlay work.

The excellent Damascene woodcarving craft is illustrated in Figures 19a and 19b, pages 31 and 32. The overelaboration of decoration is also a good example of what Landau describes as the Arab's tendency of passion, when he says,

Their entire history is a product of that passion, whether religious, martial or intellectual. The Arabesque, too, is the product of a strong passion; its very concentration and intensity would be inconceivable without passion.¹¹

In general the furniture is massive, heavy and bulky. Its proportion is in keeping with the rooms of the Arab house, which was large and had very high ceilings. The furniture was placed in the large central room of the house, the main living area from which the other rooms opened. Architectural features, particularly arches were usually employed in the construction of the legs and the back of chairs and sofas, as well as on the bases of the tables (Figures 15 and 16, pages 26 and 27). Another architectural feature frequently used in arabesque art, are stalactites such as seen in the decorative facade in the ornate piece of furniture which combines the divan with storage cabinets and display space for objects' d'art. Stalactites (Figure 6, page 17) are a characteristic architectural feature of the Umayyad Period. This motif is a decorative feature in some Moslem homes built approximately fifty years ago. Usually it is in the form of a painted stucco border around the ceiling and above doorway (Figure 14 upper right-hand corner, page 24). Gene-

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 19-20.



Figure 11. Upholstered armchair matching sofa in
Figure 10.



Figure 12. Front and back views of straight chair completing set shown in Figures 10 and 11.

rally it harmonizes with a decorative stucco ceiling. These ornate designs on ceilings and borders are derived from the Abbasid and Umayyad Periods when they were fashioned mostly of sculptured and painted wood.¹² The design was repeated in furniture the latter half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. At this time there was a revival of interest in arabesque design in furniture. Because the technique of wood carving required a hard wood, Anatolia or Turkish walnut was used for the most part. The decorative piece of furniture shown in Figure 13 was made to order for the specific room in which it was seen, as was the rest of the furniture used in the same room (Figures 15 and 16, pages 26 and 27). Ordered from Damascus when the house was built circa 1910, the set took approximately one year to be completed.

Research, based mainly on personal interviews with collectors of Arabic furniture and with expert craftsmen of this type of artisan work both in Beirut and Damascus, reveals that six styles of chairs were characteristic at the turn of the last century when the Arabic style furniture flourished. Many variations of these styles were in existence. Since all the work of these pieces was done by hand one can detect slight differences even in a pair such as in Figure 17, where

¹² Selim Abdul-Hak, The Treasures of the National Museum of Damascus (Damascus: Publications of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums, n.d.) pp. 26-27.

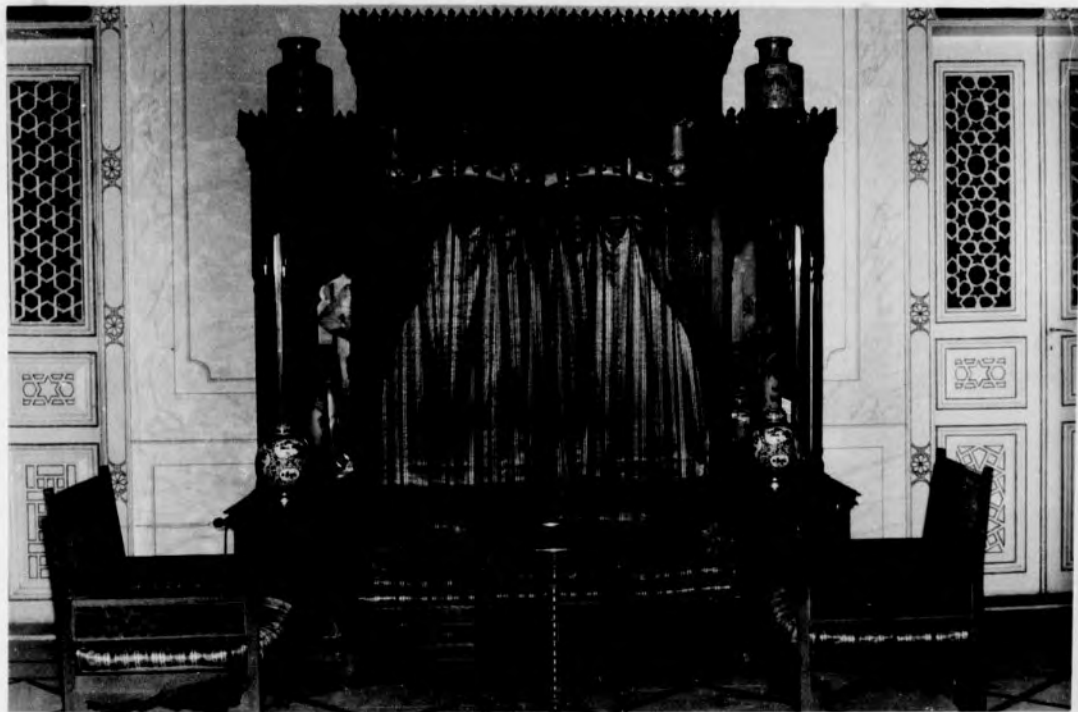


Figure 13. A grouping of decorative divan, chairs, and tray stand. (The arabesque design is also carried out on the doors at the right and left of the grouping.)



Figure 14. A doorway between a sitting room and dining room. (Stained glass is combined with a lacey pattern in the arched portion; frosted glass is used in the door sections. Marbeling outlines the arched doorway. The stalactite border motif can be seen in the upper right-hand corner).

the decorative motif may be seen to vary only slightly. Figures 10, 11, 12 and 17 (pages 18, 20, 21 and 28) show the Gothic influence. In Figures 10, 11 and 12 (pages 18, 20 and 21) the floral Damascene design and the Egyptian geometric design are combined. Figure 17 shows two examples of fine marquetry. This type of inlay work is still done today in Damascus, especially for the tourist trade. It is still beautiful work, but it does not compare with the work of the old masters of the art. This intricate work is carried out by the parquetry method. Different colored woods, such as beech, apricot and teak, as well as pieces of mother-of-pearl and ivory form a geometric patterned surface.

Figure 18 shows typical example of a folding chair. Its woodwork is rather delicately carved with Arabic lettering interwoven as part of the design. The geometric patterns made of the striking mother-of-pearl-inlay typify it as arabesque. The lines of the chair, however show the Italian influence of the Dante chair. The traces of Italian design are the result of the influences of the Venetian craftsmen who taught their method of carving and design to the local craftsmen during the period of the Crusaders. An interesting feature of this chair is that it is a type of folding chair. Pegs can be removed so that the chair can easily be disassembled and reassembled.

The more commonly used chair and sofa sets have the massive square form as seen in Figures 19a and 19b and Figure

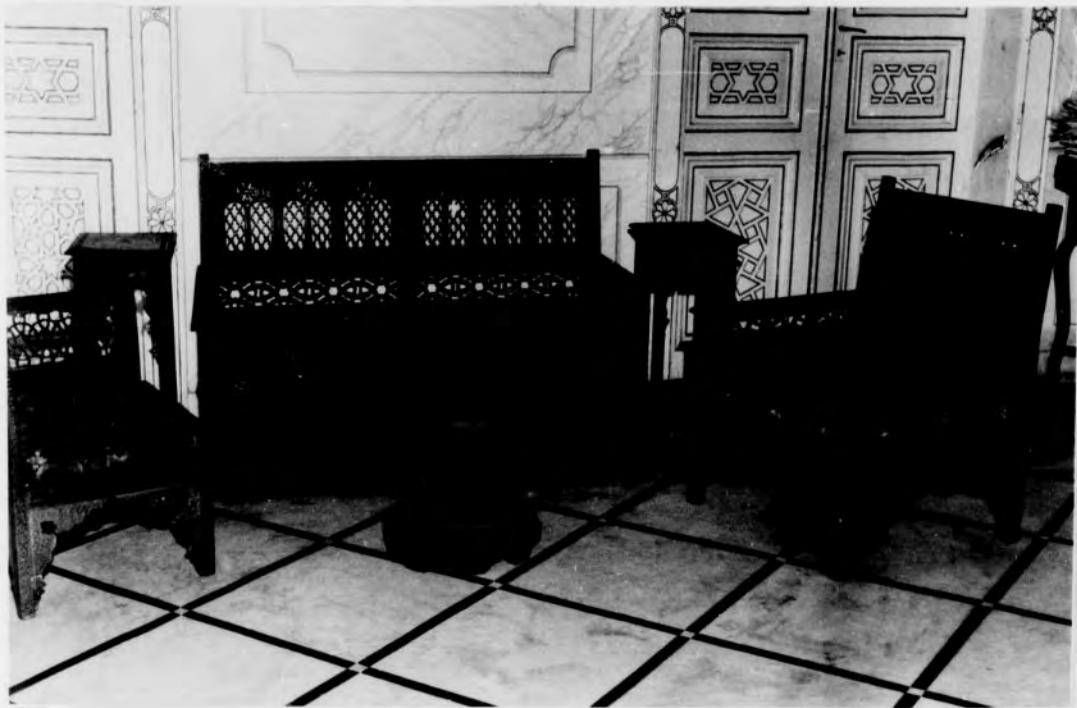


Figure 15. Grouping of two chairs and a sofa in hand-carved arabesque design. (The octagonal table in the foreground and the stands on each side of the sofa were typical).

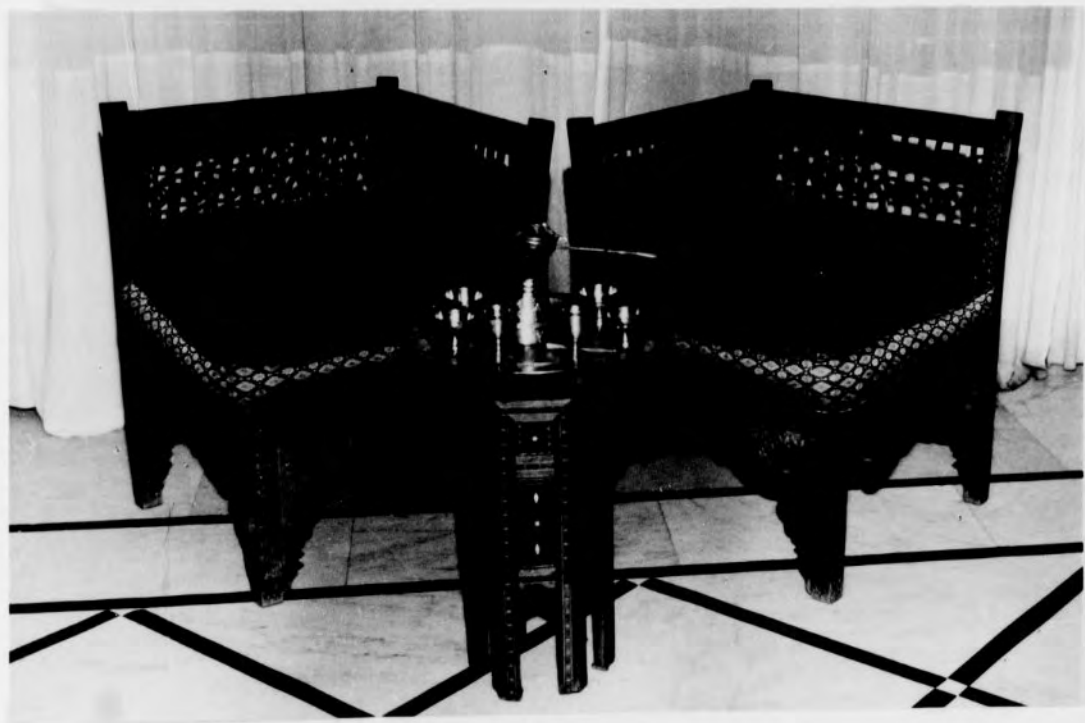


Figure 16. Chairs of square form and low backs
(The cushions are covered with brocade. On the scamla
is a brass tray with traditional coffee-serving set).



Figure 17. Occasional chairs showing typical Damascus inlay work in different colored woods, mother-of-pearl, and ivory.



Figure 18. Folding chair of Italian influence.
(Inlay amid the carving is mother-of-pearl).

15 (page 26). Figures 19a and 19b show the typical sculptured wood carving, whereas Figure 15 shows the typical open-carved woodwork. The present owners of the chair have added rollers on the bottom of the legs of the chair for easier handling when it needs to be moved for cleaning purposes. Through design the square form appeared more delicate in the chair in Figure 16 (page 27). Although the chair is almost a square, it has a triangular appearance because of the two low backs which meet at an angle. Generally two chairs were grouped together with the scamla between, not consciously for the purpose of conversation, but rather for the sake of convenience in serving coffee to a guest. This was probably the earliest attempt made in arranging a conversation group.

The characteristic scamla or small low table throughout the period studied retained the geometric pedestal or column-based form with either the hexagon or octagon shaped top, as illustrated in Figure 7 (page 17). As in the chairs, the architectural feature of the arch is predominant. In place of the solid table, the folding-leg stand was used occasionally on which a decorative brass or copper tray was placed as seen in Figure 13 (page 23). A somewhat higher square table made its appearance also. This was usually referred to as a stand. Basically the design of the small tables is the same but in the decorative quality there are many interesting variations such as the sculptured wood-carved ones, and the almost jewel-like ones which are

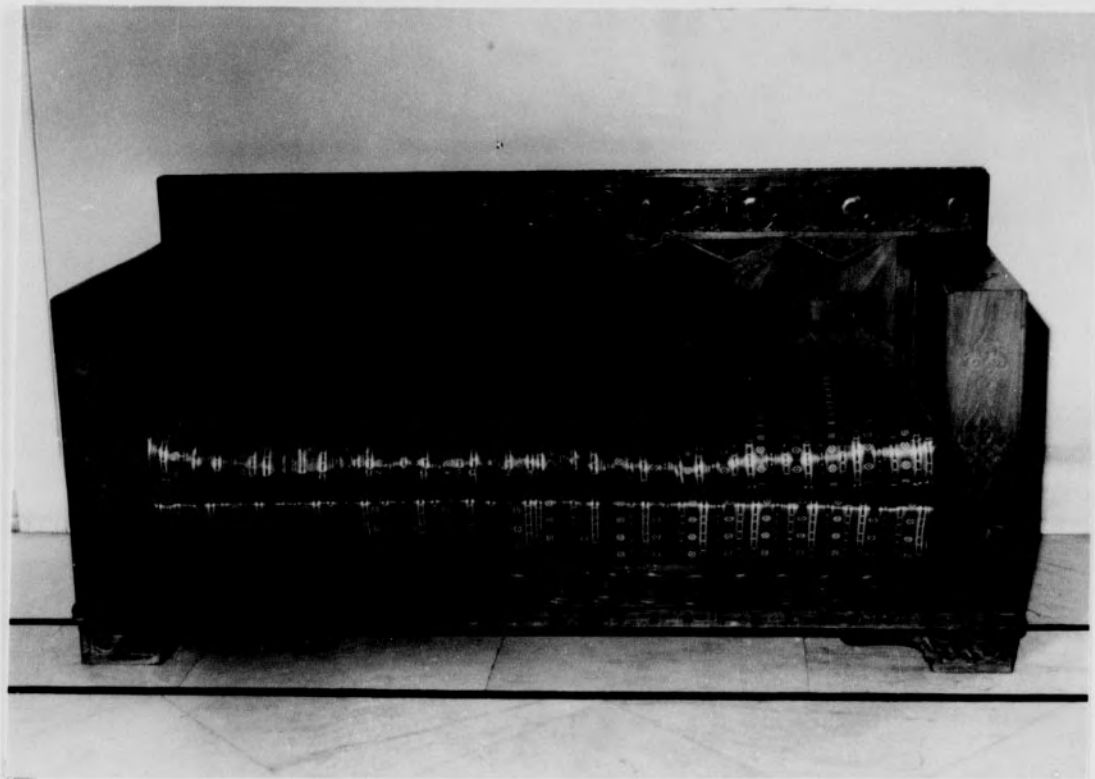


Figure 19a. Massive Arabic sofa upholstered in stripe-patterned cloth.

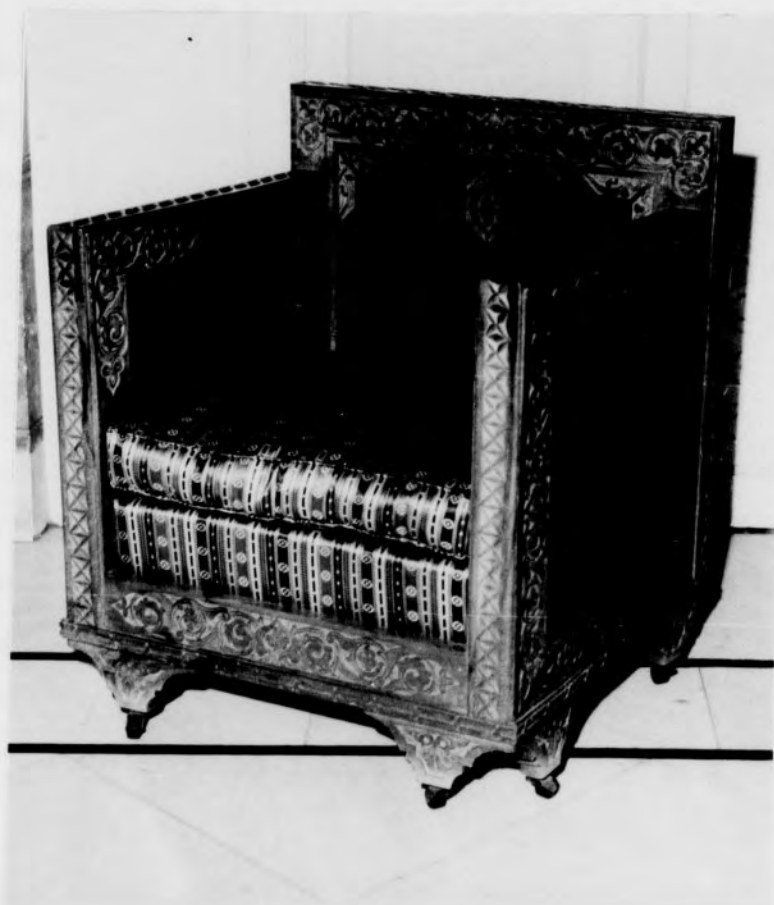


Figure 19b. Matching arm chair illustrating Damascene carving.

nearly completely covered with white mother-of-pearl face pattern.

Accessories still did not exist at the turn of the last century. As a matter of fact, no need seems to have been felt for accessories. The Arabesque patterns of design on furniture and architectural feature added enough enhancement to a room. The tall, triple-arched windows or doors between rooms were usually very decorative with their intriguing lace-like patterns. Stained glass of blue, green, red and yellow often added to their unique charm. (Figure 9, page 17; Figure 13, page 23; Figure 14, page 24).

Lighting was poor. In general one ceiling light was considered adequate in a room. A chandelier-type of fixture usually made of long, glass-beaded fringe attached to a metallic cylinder tended to dim the light and thus created an effect of dreariness.

To complete the interior of this luxuriant, charmingly ornate, but uncomfortable living room the Oriental rugs were an essential floor covering. For an effect of warmth Oriental rugs were often hung on the walls. Harmonious combinations of patterns and colors were not usually taken into consideration. During the summer season it was, and still is important in most houses today, to remove all the rugs so that the marble or stone tile floors add to the coolness of the room. The floors themselves were often as colorful as the rugs with the tiles forming interesting characteristic geometric patterns.



Figure 20. Screen and table made of old arabesque pieces and used as decoration in a modern living room. (The screen is made of two very old wooden carved doors from an old mosque. The base of the table is a section of an old mushrabiyyah panel).

CHAPTER II
CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

Interior decoration is a relatively new concept in Lebanon. Until comparatively recently the comfort and individuality of the family had not been considered in the same way that western culture prides itself. The western concept that a home function well and at the same time express a sense of beauty and good taste according to the principles of art established as guides by aestheticians was accepted here after World War II.¹³ The Lebanese were receptive to a new mode of life when Europeans brought with them new ideas. Lebanon became prosperous because of its trade. Contributing to the change in the way of life was the change in the pattern of family life itself. Following the patriarchal family institution three consecutive generations often lived together under the same roof.¹⁴ Western influence brought about a gradual change in the patriarchal institution and sons began to establish their own households when they married instead of bringing their new wives to live in the houses of their fathers. "Following the Western pattern, the youth began to exercise the privilege of the choice of wife outside the narrow family circle and part company with the older generation."¹⁵

¹³ Anna Hong Rutt, Home Furnishing (Second Edition, New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1957), p. 2.

¹⁴ Hitti, Lebanon in History, pp. 472-473.

¹⁵ Ibid.

These factors resulted in the creation of a new market for home furnishings because the number of homes increased. The change in the pattern of family life has been gradual and is still in the process.

During the French Mandate from 1918 to 1942 when Lebanon gained its independence, the French saturated the Lebanese with French culture. The educational system and even the language in the upper circles were predominantly French. Their influence is seen in all the arts and interior decoration. The professional French interior decorator was the first in this field to bring his talents and goods to this country, particularly to the city of Beirut. He popularized what the Lebanese call "Style" furniture, which we know as the Louis XV style. As French taste impregnated the Arab household, an undercurrent of a transition was inevitable. Since not even the middle class could afford the French decor, it became a mark of status for the upper class and the rapidly increasing "nouveau riche." Even today this mark of prestige is still so deeply imbedded among the Lebanese that the goal of almost every one is to be able to furnish a living room or salon in the Louis Quinze style. Socially, it is now unquestionably felt that people whose living rooms are decorated in the Louis XV style are to be respected even though the owners might be of the upper-middle class group rather than the definitely upper class group. Among the forty families interviewed for this study, only three had the actual Louis XV style, but several had modern adaptations



Figure 21. "Contemporary Western" living room showing French influence. (The forest green upholstered chairs and sofas are arranged around three walls with the three glass-topped tables in the center. A bouquet of artificial flowers adds the ornamental touch. The window treatment is done in the formal French mode. The draperies are of matching green velvet with nylon glass curtains).

of the style which the Lebanese call "Contemporary Western" (Figure 21, page 37).

The Lebanese craftsman has a keen sense of creativity and the ability to imitate or copy. This ability, however, does not include an understanding of functional qualities or a sense of proportion. Consequently the first imitations of early European styles which were gradually being produced in the small carpenter shop on custom orders were large, awkward and heavy pieces. In appearance and construction the furniture became a modernized version of the heavy Arabic style (Figures 19a and 19b, pages 31 and 32). The "new" furniture was as uncomfortable as the old. This development supports Calla Van Syckle's statement in "Consumer Use and Purchase of Furniture in Flint, Michigan". She says:

The local market and periodicals are the great shapers of consumers' ideas about furniture. Most consumers are limited in their knowledge of possibilities, and certainly in their choices to what is commonly displayed in the market within the town.¹⁶

The Lebanese consumer was ready for a change, but he was at the mercy of the raw material available and the local furniture makers. Indirectly the mode of living of the foreigner who came to live in Beirut with his family affected the lives of the local people. The manufacturers, who were only small-time carpenters, could not service western tastes and needs

¹⁶ Calla Van Syckle, Consumer Use and Purchase of Furniture in Flint, Michigan, Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State College, Technical Bulletin 233 (East Lansing: Michigan State College, October, 1952), p. 5.

mainly because of the lack of raw materials. Also, since they were skilled only in the old methods of workmanship, a mere picture could not convey to them details of construction and measurements.

When the French mandate came to an end, French ideas, of course, lingered on in Lebanon, mainly because of the educational system, which is still the French system in most schools today. The field of interior decorating began to flourish for the French-trained decorator who returned from Paris with new ideas. The import market, however, became free and all Western and American products became available. The availability of a variety of woods and upholstery materials made possible improvements in construction methods of furniture. Professionally trained workers and skilled draftsmen and designers, however, were still not available. As a result, the so-called "Early European Modern" was badly proportioned, unattractive, and uncomfortable furniture.

People still followed the traditional way of arranging the new style of living room furniture. Since the old type of divans had been lined up along three walls of the room, it was only natural to line up the chairs next to each other along the walls of the room in order to create the same seating arrangement. It is also said that another reason for this type of arrangement is the Oriental custom of an "Isticbal". This is a designated day once a week, or once a month when friends meet at a mutual friend's or relative's house. Since these are

large gatherings, it was felt that conversation can be carried on more fluently across the room with this arrangement. Usually a rectangular table in the center of the room replaced the ornate low scamla which was far more in keeping with the spirit of the culture. A tall vase with artificial flowers and often some type of candy or cigarette box was placed on the table. It is the Arab custom to offer candy to a guest after coffee has been served. The offering of cigarettes to the guest is also a custom of the Arab culture. This gesture replaces the older gesture of offering the nargeele, water pipe, to the guest. The offering of coffee and cigarettes resulted in the introduction of a piece of furniture often referred to as a smoking stand. The number of these stands, as well as of the number of chairs placed along the walls, depended on the size of the room. The first design of these small stands was a simplified form of the scamla with either the plain octagonal or hexagonal top and a plain solid pedestal-type base. Later the design developed into the small rectangular table with the two-columned base, such as the one in Figure 22. In the conservative homes where the coffee table has not yet been introduced these small tables are still used. Usually they are placed in a corner of the room. When the guest is seated in a chair one of these small tables is placed in front of him for his convenience.

The actual development of interior decorating within the framework of a modern concept, but still not within the scope of

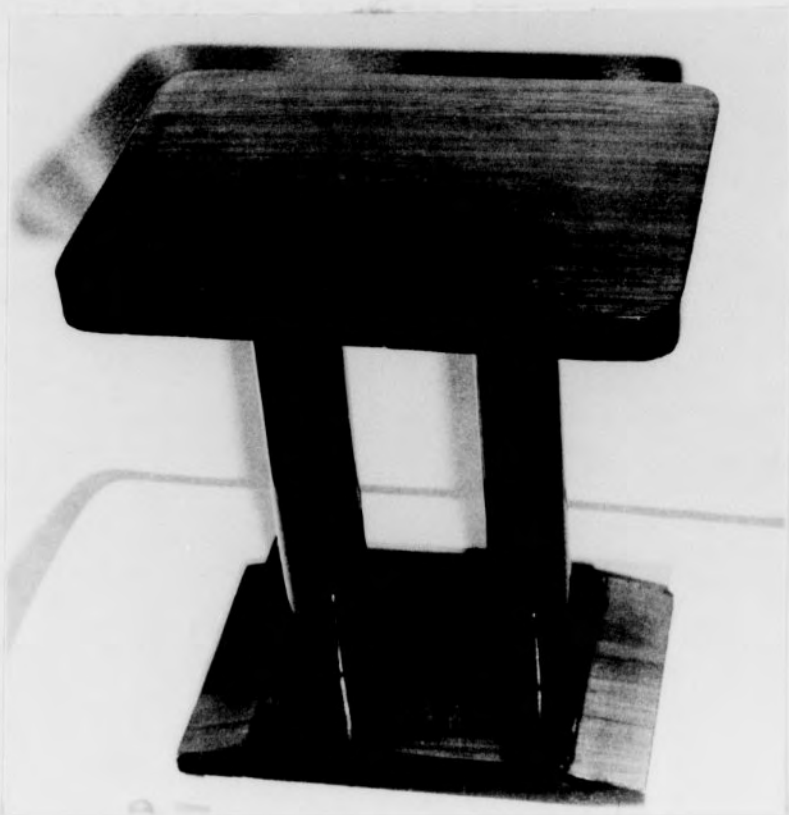


Figure 22. Small rectangular table (scamla) with the two-columned base.

the American interior decoration, began in Beirut soon after World War II. With the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city, due to foreign business ventures, increased higher education at foreign institutions in Lebanon, education of many Lebanese abroad, and the influx of tourists in this country, desire for changes in the home was inevitable. The introduction of modern architecture is another contributing factor which brought about the need for a new type of furniture more suitable to the interiors which were being created by the European and American trained architects.

The present revolutionary trend of modern interior decorating in Beirut is generally attributed to a German decorator, Fritz Gotthelf. He had lived and worked in Palestine, was interned there during the war, and came to Beirut in 1947. He created new designs in furniture until he went out of business early in the 1950's. A number of furniture manufacturers and carpenters interviewed for this study admitted that they learned a great deal while working for him. The younger generation, mainly newly-married couples, formed the market for his new ideas with built-in furniture being a main characteristic (Figures 23a and 23b) a feature which had been popularized much earlier in Europe and in the States. The overall design of the modern interiors created during this period was pleasing. The workmanship in the construction of the furniture itself was excellent but limited availability of raw materials restricted furniture makers. Veneers were still unavailable. Tables and



Figure 23a. Part of a built in wall unit of living room designed by Fritz Gotthelf. (Textural interest is created by the use of red brick for the base, the porous natural colored marble background, the oak used for the woodwork, the fabric for the cushions, the terrazo-tiled floor, and the leather oriental hassock. The color scheme is green, rust, and mustard yellow).



Figure 23b. Overlapping continuation of built-in wall unit.



Figure 24. Modern chair designed by Fritz Gotthelf. (Lines are severe and massive. Accessories on the cabinet include an Italian glass vase, an oriental inlay tray and a cigarette box).

case goods had to be made of solid walnut, oak, or mahogany which made the furniture very heavy and expensive (Figure 24). In the past eight years quite a few young Lebanese men have recognized the opportunity in interior decorating caused by the growing demand for better homes and good design, a result of rising standards of living. These young men went abroad to study interior decorating, still mainly to France, because of their familiarity of that language and because of the saturation of French culture in Beirut. Only three decorators trained in America were discovered in extensive research for this report. All three were women who were practicing in Beirut on a small scale basis. The competition appeared to be keen and the field seemed to be opening to women.

CHAPTER III
RESULTS OF SURVEY OF SELECTED LIVING ROOMS

This survey is unique. Lebanon is not a survey-minded country. Almost everyone either accepts things as they are, or in typical Arab fashion feels very strongly about an issue, but somehow never quite does much about it. Some statistical surveys have been made and also foreign industrial firms have made some surveys as a guide in business ventures. None, however, has considered interior decoration important enough to make a survey about it with the exception of a few Home Economics undergraduates of the Beirut College for Women.

Everyone contacted in this survey was extremely interested in the study, not only because of a foreigner being genuinely interested in Lebanese culture, but also because the people felt this study to be an educational contribution to the Lebanese people.

The interviews with the forty Lebanese homemakers were conducted in an informal manner. The Lebanese custom of hospitality had to be observed. Each interview demanded social conversation, the acceptance of Arabic coffee, cigarettes, and candy. Cigarettes could be refused, but not coffee and candy. Because of the length of time a guest is required to stay at each home according to the Lebanese etiquette, no more than two interviews a day were possible, and very seldom more than one. As time consuming as the demands of custom were, they

provided opportunities to make many observations.

INTERVIEWS WITH 40 SELECTED HOMEMAKERS IN BEIRUT

Forty Lebanese homes were selected for the survey of living rooms. The criteria for the selection of the homes were: 1. that they were Lebanese; 2. that they were in Beirut; 3. that they were of the middle class and of the same socio-economic level.¹⁷

Most of the contacts were made through friends or students, mainly because it was necessary that the people understand the purpose of the study. The people would otherwise have been reluctant to answer the questions of a stranger, particularly personal questions which concerned their pride. The limitations of the selection had to be respected and a random sample, therefore, was impossible.

Whenever it was possible, distribution according to sections of the city was considered in the selection of interviewees. The city of Beirut is divided into sections or quarters (See map p. viii). Originally these sections indicated the grouping of the different religions and religious sects. This division, however, was not quite so marked at the time of this survey. To some extent, particularly among the educated people, segregation according to religion is no longer followed. Lebanese people of different religions living together in the same area was especially apparent in Ras Beirut, the foreign quarter.

¹⁷ Charles Churchill's survey was used as a basis.

Prof. Charles Churchill cautioned about the validity of some answers. He knew from his own experience that, since the Arabs are a proud people, they sometimes prefer to present a picture of themselves more idealistic than true. Much of the factual information in this survey, therefore, was gained through personal observation.

The educational background of all the people interviewed was French, American, or British. The dress of all members of the families is western. The women preferred French and Italian fashions and consider the American fashions too simple in style. Women had freedom both in the home and in social life. (In 1953 the women in Lebanon were granted the right to vote). All women interviewed were educated and came from educated families and all answered that their way of thinking had become westernized. They attributed their westernization to their schooling where they said their minds had been molded in the western ways of thinking. In fact, they often spoke disparagingly of the "typical Arab mentality" when discussing various issues concerning people with little education. They felt that people of little education were uncultured and somewhat uncivilized in their manners and habits of living because these people were not trained to think for themselves. Occasionally, however, even the people who derogated the "typical Arab mentality" lapsed into lack of logic and the way of thinking they had criticized.

Religion has always given impetus to historical events in this part of the world where Christianity began and Islam was established.¹⁸ The people of each religious belief had contact with different cultures. In the selection of the forty homes, it was felt that having representation of the three main religious groups in Lebanon, Moslems, Christians, and Druzes was very important. 18 Christian, 15 Moslem, and 7 Druze homes were selected. Very little difference in the selection of living room furnishings among the religious groups was discovered (See Table 1, p.98). The similarity in the furnishings may be assumed to be the result of the western cultures which had penetrated into religious sects.

The occupations of the heads of the homes ranged from professional people, doctors, lawyers, and teachers, to business people and administrators.

The people interviewed said that they were not following the cultural patterns of their parents. A few wealthy families who have extra rooms and who can afford to buy very old and very expensive Arab furniture often furnish a room completely with antique Arab furnishings. Arab culture was not reflected, however, in the furnishings of the living rooms of the middle class who could not afford such luxury. The culture of past generations was generally not seen in home furnishings of the people interviewed but was apparent in some of the needle-

¹⁸ Nicola A. Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1957), p. 25.

work and in some of the recipes for food prepared for special occasions.

In former times, people who could afford to had a large formal living room and also a smaller living room in addition to the harem or the room in which the family spent its leisure time. Today many people in the middle class in Beirut have only one living room. The change from two or more living rooms (or salons) to only one was a result of the breakdown of the tradition of the harem and the high cost of rents. People with the limited means of the middle class prefer to forego the luxury of a living room and a salon to the luxury of central heat and a central water heating system and fewer rooms and less overall space. The few in this socio-economic range who can afford two living rooms usually furnish one of them completely with Louis XV furnishings and use the room only for formal entertaining. As the results of the survey indicate, the middle class families of Beirut in general have only one living room.

The average size of a living room was approximately 10 feet by 15 feet. The size today differs from that of the old Arab homes in which the average living room was about 20 feet by 30 feet. Although the size of the room has decreased, the average size of the furniture has changed little; therefore, the furniture was generally out of scale with the room. Consequently, the living rooms often look overcrowded (Figure 21, page 37). Fifteen homemakers said they wished their sitting

rooms were larger because they would like to be able to spread out more and arrange their furniture in conversation groupings and according to family activities. They feel that the size of the room often limits arrangement of their furniture to the traditional arena fashion.

The family activities which took place in the living rooms of about 75 per cent of the families are those listed in the questionnaire with the exception of watching television. These activities included entertaining friends, family gatherings, reading, listening to music, and playing games. (Only approximately one third of the families had television sets.) The remaining 25 per cent have two living rooms or a living room and a salon. In these cases the family activities took place in the living room but guests were entertained in the salon.

The knowledge of the people about styles of furniture was generally limited. Although the classification used on the questionnaire was clear, the interviewees themselves limited the terminology even farther to "Old Arabic," French, Louis Quinze," and "Modern." By "Old Arabic" they indicated the style described in Chapter I. The general comment on this style was to the effect that why would anyone want to use the style when it was not comfortable and was too bulky and heavy both in appearance and for convenience. They considered the care of it time-consuming. The four Moslem families who did have their living rooms furnished with traditional Arabic furniture, however, showed great pride in their cultural heritage. Most of

the illustrations in Chapter I were photographed in those homes. It is interesting to note that all four families had an additional living room furnished in western fashion which was more comfortable than the traditional Arabic one.

There was no such style as "Modern Lebanese" with the exception, perhaps, of the small table (Figure 22, page 41), which, as has been explained, is an outgrowth of the small scamla. A trend of adapting arabesque designs in present interiors is being introduced by a few interior decorators. Adaptations were found only in the homes of the wealthy, mainly because the interior decorators interested in arabesque were very expensive. Within the past six or seven years the interior of some new hotels have included arabesque adaptations. Arabesque design, however, has not been limited to Lebanon, but is used in all Arab culture. Therefore, one cannot logically call arabesque adaptations "Modern Lebanese" style.

French Louis XV and some English styles were the only period furniture used by the middle class homes included in this survey. As was mentioned before, the cost of period furniture was very high. What is called the "English classic" style was just beginning to appear on the market. The English classic style is an adaptation of both Chippendale and the Empire Periods.

The people who preferred comfort to appearance but still wanted to have period style chose the English type of furniture because it is simpler in design and is far more comfortable than

the Louis XV. It was, furthermore, just as much an indicator of status as the French, if not more so, since a strong trend away from the French influence had begun.

Discernible styles in existence since World War I are classified as follows: "Modern," from 1920 to 1940; 'Utility,' from 1940 to 1950; and 'Contemporary,' since 1950."¹⁹ Thus the "Early European Modern" is very nondescript, not at all attractive, and still uncomfortable. "Contemporary Western" includes modern influences from Europe as well as from America. It appeared to be very popular (Table I, page 98).

The people interviewed did not look favorably on the mixing of Arabic and western styles. Only two families blended the small Arabic scamlas with contemporary furniture. In both cases the reason for mixing the two styles was mainly sentimental. The people had inherited the pieces and were attached to them.

In general the living rooms looked orderly and had what was apparently a standard number of pieces of furniture. Depending on the size of the room, the furniture was usually composed of sets, a sofa and two upholstered chairs. The chairs, which were almost always alike, matched the sofa. If the room was sufficiently large, it contained two sets consisting of two identical sofas and four identical chairs matching the two sofas, three low tables and a console radio set or a stand

¹⁹ David Reeves, Furniture (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1959), p. 185.



Figure 25. Modern sofa and chair set upholstered in rose colored wool, trimmed in light wood. (Set of three tables in the center are of the matching light wood with formica tops. The ceiling light is a modern multiple light fixture. Area light is added by the combination table-floor lamp of wrought iron with artificial flowers decorating the base. Plastic shades are used).

with the radio on it (the radio being covered with a decorative piece of cloth or material matching the slip covers), and sometimes a bookcase or a television set. Of the three tables, one was usually larger than the other two, and the remaining smaller two were alike. The large table was placed in front of the sofa and the other two were placed next to the chairs or are grouped together in the center as in figures 21 and 25. When the three tables were grouped together, they were moved when needed to the front of the chairs in which guests sit. 90 per cent of the tables were covered with glass tops.

Furniture arrangement, in general, does not follow a planned pattern. People place their furniture the way they like it. The majority prefers an informal arrangement (Table I, page 98). The formal symmetric pattern and the arena-type of arrangement were about equally distributed, whereas the conversational grouping was being accepted very slowly.

About 90 per cent of the floor coverings were that of Oriental rugs. Several small ones were used rather than one large one. The remaining 10 per cent of the families used European machine-made rugs. The solid colored ones with a little contrasting line design lead in popularity.

All of the upholstery and curtain fabrics used by the people interviewed were imported. The homemaker usually did not know where the fabrics had been imported from and it made no difference to her. People generally assumed that fabrics were imported from England, Switzerland, Germany, or Italy.

Knowledge about fabrics was generally limited. Even the sales-people in fabric stores were not usually reliable sources of information about their merchandise. There were no labels listing fiber content or instructions for proper care. It was generally believed that fabrics bought from a well-known established firm were good fabrics and that the fabrics will live up to expectations as indicated in Table II. Thirty-eight homemakers preferred wool for upholstery fabric, while only two had man made fiber. Wool was considered the most durable and most attractive material for upholstery. Of those who had draperies, fifteen preferred cotton fabric and seven, rayon. Cotton stands the strong Mediterranean sun better than rayon does. A search of the market revealed that blends were not yet available in household fabrics. Almost all of the homemakers who used glass curtains chose "tergal", a European trade-name for a synthetic fabric. Fiber glass was available and two of the selected homemakers had selected it for glass curtains. It is very new on the market and very expensive. Unless professional advice was sought for window-treatments, the window covering is generally very unimaginative. If professional advice was obtained, the window treatment is usually formal in accord with the French style (Figure 21, page 37 and Figure 26, page 58). The triple arched window presents a problem and most often only the lower part was covered with soft glass curtains.

In about 90 per cent of the homes the lighting appeared to be



Figure 26. Formal drapery treatment over the open doorway between two salons.

inadequate according to American standards of illuminating areas in a room to fulfill the requirements of efficient lighting needed for the different activities of the family. Here again the socio-economic division within the group was apparent. The lower-middle class most often has only the center ceiling light suspended about three feet down from the ceiling and covered with a modern plastic shade. Only recently was it considered aesthetically in poor taste to leave the electric bulb uncovered. The middle-middle group generally selected a modern chandelier fixture with multiple bulbs (Figure 25, page 55), and sometimes added a floor lamp to the room, but a table lamp was rare. As a rule the upper-middle class had crystal chandeliers. Among the forty families interviewed for this survey, 15 had a single ceiling light, 21 had a multiple ceiling light fixture, and 4 had crystal chandeliers. In general the lighting was glaring according to American standards, yet inadequate to do fine work.

Planning a harmonious color scheme was quite a novel idea to the majority of the middle class. The selection of colors for a room was usually based on personal likes or dislikes of colors and many times even that selection was limited to colors available in the market. Since the planning of color in homes was still a comparatively new experience, the colors ran the gamut of basic primaries and secondaries in rather intense values. As a result, color schemes often

seemed harsh and overwhelming rather than harmonious.

Planning accessories in keeping with the decor of the living room is also still a rather new and foreign idea. Consequently, accessories are a mixture of knick-knacks, vases, artificial flowers, and pictures of various sizes. The pictures are usually religious, European landscapes, or needle point work done by the female members of the family. Unless professional advice was used, pictures are always hung high, well above eye level (Figures 26 page 58 and 27 page 62). Portrait-size photographs or actual portraits of family members, mostly of the head of the household or of religious leaders quite often adorned the walls of the living rooms. Some conservative families use no accessories at all (Table I, page 98). Their walls were completely bare. Bare walls were considered a concept of modernism. Where professional advice was taken, on the other hand, the accessories appeared to be well chosen and were kept to a minimum.

The choice of vases and ash trays also indicated a preference for European goods. Italian glass vases and ash trays were the most frequently seen. Middle Eastern brass or other accessories, held in high esteem in the homes of foreigners such as flower containers, trays, hassocks and camel saddle stools were not used by the local people. If an oriental tray or scamla, as a smoking table was used, no pride was attached to it. Since cigarettes have become the customary smoking device, the small tables were of great

importance as were ash trays and sometimes fancy imported combination of cigarette containers and lighters.

Inhabitants of Beirut must usually choose between the spaciousness of older buildings with large rooms with high ceilings and the comfort of newer buildings with central heating but fewer and smaller rooms. Most of the interviewees had selected central heating instead of spaciousness. Several of the homes visited, however, did not have central heat. The space heater (Figure 27, page 62) was in such instances a part of the furnishings. For the summer months the space heater was usually stored.

Only three of the forty families had their living room planned by an interior decorator. The other thirty-seven said that they had decorated the room themselves. The custom in Beirut, however, was for the person from whom furniture was purchased to make suggestions. The customers often considered the carpenter or furniture dealer an authority and followed his advice.

Although no one interviewed admitted to having assistance in decorating a room, other than the three who employed a professional interior decorator, some families appear to have been guided by non-professional decorators, such as carpenters, sales people, or furniture manufacturers. In one case a homemaker had employed an interior decorator but admitted that later she had changed the decor to her own taste.



Figure 27. Space heater in the corner of a sitting room.

In the rooms which were professionally planned the idea of introducing some textural interest was evident as seen in the divider treatment (Figure 29, page 65).

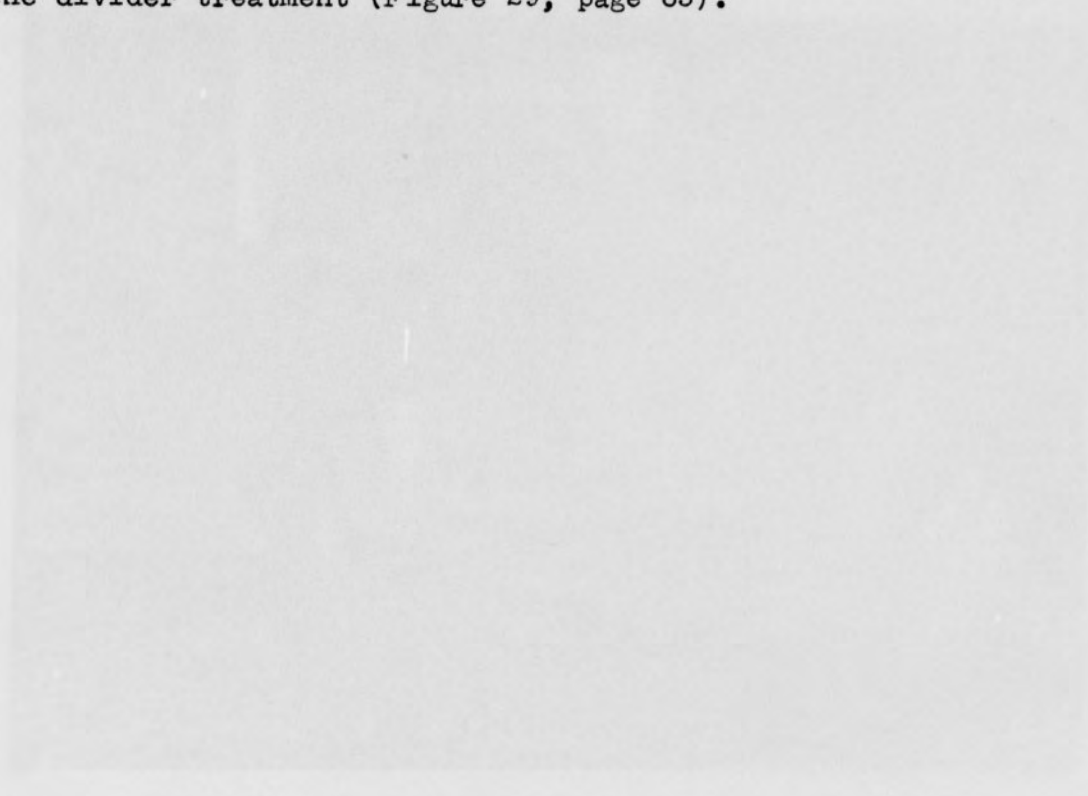


Figure 29. Room divider with matching coffee table and chairs.



Figure 28. Section of a contemporary living-room with English-inspired upholstered furniture glass-topped coffee table and Oriental rug.

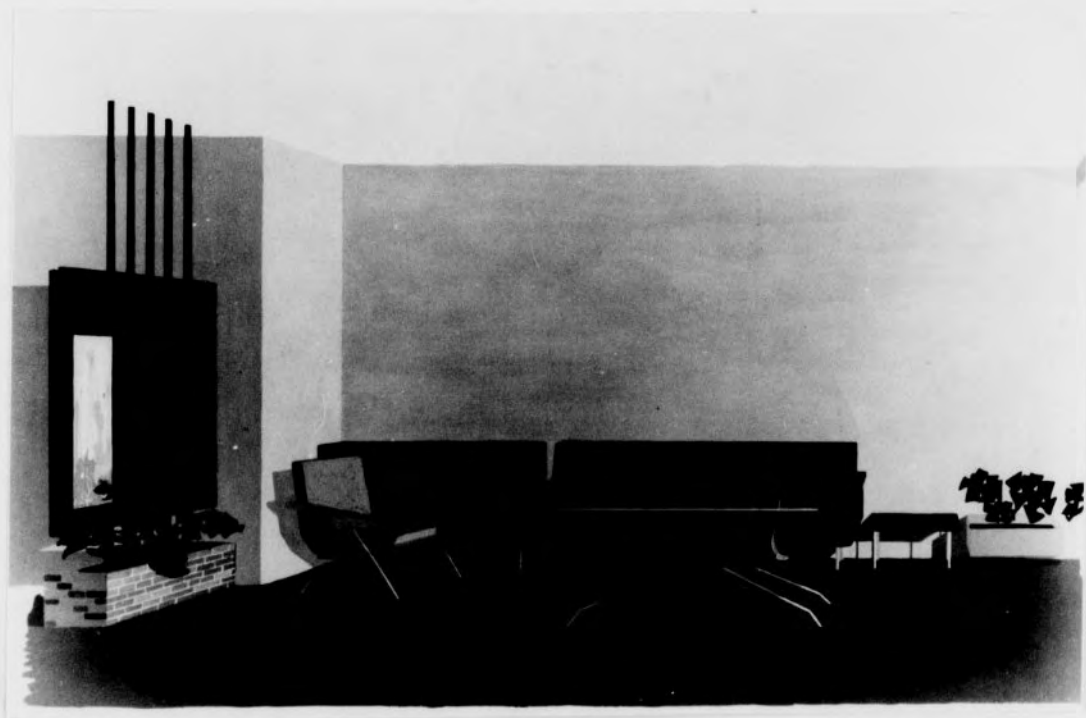


Figure 29. Section of a modern living room designed by a professional interior decorator in Beirut. (Textural interest is created by interesting room divider and planter).

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS OF THE MARKET SURVEY

Interior decoration is a new field in Lebanon. This study disclosed that the concept of interior decoration even among the professional people differs from that of the American concept. Very little distinction has been made between the furniture designer, the interior decorator, and the furniture store owner. Very often one person carries out the function of all three; the result frequently was undesirable. Some of the shop owners said that they employed a professional interior decorator who advised them on their designs and helped customers with selections. The selections, of course, had to be made from the store employing the decorator. Of the three manufacturers one employed a well-trained, experienced decorator. The answers given to the questions on the questionnaire made obvious the fact that interior decorating had not in general reached the middle class. The interior decorators catered to the upper-middle class and the upper class, mainly because their fees, while reasonable according to American standards, were too high for the Lebanese middle class.

Furniture stores in Beirut differ considerably from those in the United States. In the first place all but one of the stores in Beirut were much smaller than the average furniture store in the United States; in fact most of them

were smaller than the furniture department of an average American department store. The selection was therefore limited. If a potential customer wished to look at different styles, he had to visit various stores or shops because usually a store carried only a few items of only one style. The store owner seldom had knowledge of the construction of the furniture he sold unless he also owned the small workshop where he had his furniture made. Actually there was little customer demand for such knowledge about ready made furniture. Since the stores were comparatively small and were owned entirely by one person or by a family, furniture was bought or made by the store owners and also sold by them. Merchandising as practiced in the furniture business in the United States was non-existent in Beirut. All stores made furniture to order at little more cost than that of the ready-made.

Until recently furniture was made to order only by individual carpenters in small shops. Of the three manufacturers interviewed, two began factories as an expansion of the family's carpenter shop. The third case was one in which the family was in the wood supplying business. (All wood is imported into Lebanon) The two brothers decided to invest money in a furniture factory, hired what are called cabinet makers in the United States, and thus became furniture manufacturers.

Furniture manufacturing in Beirut also differs from that in the west in that manufacturers offer a general line. Only

one manufacturer in Lebanon, however, had his own store. All others sold from the factory. Some store owners bought from the factories, but most sales were made to individual customers at the factories. The manufacturers made furniture to special order. Furniture designers or interior decorators often designed pieces and had them made at the factories. It was apparent, therefore, that the manufacturing of furniture in Beirut is, for the most part, an expansion of the smaller scale furniture or carpenter shop.

For the survey of the furniture market, nine interior decorators, thirteen furniture store owners, and three furniture manufacturers were selected. The interior decorators ranged from quite a young decorator recently started in the business to a well established decorator with an excellent reputation whose services were very expensive. The range of furniture store owners was similar, some of the stores are rather small new stores while others were larger, older, well-known, and highly reputed stores. Since furniture factories were a fairly recent innovation, all three manufacturers had opened their factories within the past five years. One started independently with little experience in the field about one and a half years before. Another family enterprise was expanded from a carpenter shop to a factory about six years earlier and opened another very large plant and show rooms that year. It would appear that this sampling represents each field.

The survey on the furniture market was not thought as reliable by the researcher as the one on living room interiors. Although an excellent interpreter was used in order to be sure that the interviewees understood both the purpose of the survey and the intention of each specific question, neither the interpreter nor the interviewer were at all sure in many cases that accurate answers were given. As was previously mentioned, the Lebanese often give answers that they would like to be accurate or that they think are wanted rather than answers that are factual. The information some of the interior decorators and furniture store owners gave, for instance, may have been influenced by pride and a desire for a better reputation than they had because they recognize their own professional shortcomings. The manufacturers, who were westernized enough to have established a successful furniture factory, on the other hand, were likely to give factual information even when it was not complimentary to themselves.

The reason given for being in the furniture business varied. Two thirds of the interior decorators said they entered the profession because they felt they had the artistic inclination for it. Two felt that the field of interior decoration was a good business opportunity, and one inherited an established business. In spite of the increasing competition all the decorators interviewed seemed to be successful and in demand. Five out of the thirteen store owners entered the business because they believed the time to be opportune.

Three main reasons were given. People wanted ready-made furniture because they wanted to furnish a home in a short time. Previously young couples waited to marry until all the furniture had been made to order and since they usually placed their entire order with one carpenter the waiting period was long. Another reason given was that the older craftsmen and carpenters could not work fast enough to supply all demands and did not meet deadlines. A third rather questionable reason was that returning Lebanese emigrants who had acquired wealth abroad found that the ready-made furniture suited their taste. No statistical information was available on the returning emigrants.

Two manufacturers inherited furniture businesses. Their fathers had had successful carpenter shops which they had expanded somewhat by adding some space and additional workers. The present manufacturers, built factories. With imported equipment, good organization, and their fathers' good reputations, they became successful furniture manufacturers. The third factory was started by a family that had been dealers in wood. Through close contact with the furniture makers who bought wood, they became interested in the business opportunity the manufacturing of furniture offers. The two sons of the family, therefore, began a factory and were successful.

The question concerning professional training proved to be a delicate one. Even though the meaning of "training" was explained carefully to the interviewees, they gave the

impression that they interpreted "training" as they wished. Only one interior decorator admitted that he had received his training locally at the Academie de Beaux Arts. Since the program offered very little instruction in interior decoration, it can hardly be called adequate preparation for the field. All other decorators indicated they had studied interior decoration abroad either in France or in America. The time spent abroad, however, ranged from "several trips", to two months, to eight years. The important factor was that they could state that they had received their professional training abroad. No one seemed to question the amount or quality of the training.

Even among the "gallerie" (furniture store) owners a western training was considered very advantageous. Five out of the thirteen interviewed stated that they had spent from two and half months to two years in Europe. These five were the ones who had entered the furniture business because they were interested in interior decorating. They felt that a European training would qualify them and give them immediate recognition by the public.

All the manufacturers had received a university education locally and were trained locally. The two who inherited the business had been trained by their fathers and all had observed western furniture and read books about western furniture manufacturing.

The income level of clients was not a difficult question

because the interviewer could easily infer the answer from the work done by the decorators and the price of the furniture. Interior decoration was still too new and too expensive for lower middle and middle middle class clients. Observation of the forty homes and deductions made after the visits to them indicated that interior decorators served mostly only the upper class, but that the furniture stores and manufacturers served both the upper and the middle class. The latter two could supply furniture at less cost than an interior decorator can because they eliminated the cost of an original design. The decorator often designed the furniture as well as executed a decorating scheme.

The training of the employees followed a general pattern among the three groups. The employees received training from the owner, gained experience with another employer, or served an apprenticeship. The answer by the employer that his employees served an apprenticeship was questionable. When asked what the terms of apprenticeship were, several of the interior decorators and store owners were so vague as to suggest that a formal apprenticeship did not exist. Vocational training in Beirut was minimal. There is only one trade school. Although this government directed school was excellent, the enrollment is naturally limited and the school could accommodate only a small percentage of the applicants. The school did not, furthermore, offer any courses in interior design or furniture making.

The validity of the answers to the question on factors influencing the selection of furniture by customers was dubious but revealing. In most interviews, the interpreter and the interviewer both felt that the interviewees did not quite understand what was meant by "factors influencing customers", even when it was explained carefully in their own language. One interior decorator answered that all the factors listed influence his customers. General appearance ranked the highest among the answers given and comfort and cost followed closely. There was a strong indication that the main influencing factor was the decorator, store owner, or manufacturer selling to the customer.

According to this survey, customers were interested in the construction of furniture and in the type of wood used. This factor was apparent also in the interviews of homemakers. Some homemakers stated that their husbands had spent a great deal of time at the carpenter shop during the construction of their furniture to assure themselves that the proper materials were being used. This distrust might have been the fault of both the carpenter and the customer, especially when furnishings were ordered from a carpenter shop. The customer's persuasive bargaining power and the competition the small shop operator faced often forced him to lower the price to such an extent that he made very little profit, if any. Consequently he was tempted to cut corners when given the opportunity.

When fiber content was questioned, the customer expressed a desire that it be of good quality wool. The fiber of the other materials or items did not seem to be important to the customer.

The pattern of purchasing furniture has changed from the times when the head of the family made all the purchases for the household (including food and clothing) to the time of this research when the wife now did most of the purchasing. Of the nine interior decorators, six said that only the wives consulted with them but that husbands sometimes went through the formality of giving final approval. Two said that both husband and wife together generally consulted them. One said that his clients were comprised both of wives alone and of husbands and wives together. The furniture store owners and manufacturers said that there was an equal distribution between wives selecting furniture by themselves and husbands and wives selecting it together. The manufacturers in Beirut unlike those in the United States sold directly to customers who came to the factory as well as filled orders for interior decorators and store owners.

The interior decorators, furniture store owners, and manufacturers agreed that the preference of style of furniture depended on the socio-economic status of the customers within the middle class. It was obvious during the interviews that with the exception of one in each group, no one made any distinction between "Modern European" and "Modern Western". The

concept of "modern" did not go back to the time when adaptations of the Early European styles were made. Most of the interviewees made distinction only between modern and period styles. By period styles, Louis XV and the "English classical", mainly a combination of Empire and Chippendale were mentioned. Modern appeared to be preferred in general over period styles. It appeared that the socio-economic reason involved in the preference was that the lower and middle middle class preferred modern because it was less expensive than the period furniture and it was also more comfortable.

Shop owners and the manufacturers frequently worked with a European or an American catalogue, from which the client selected a model, or from any picture of a piece of furniture which the client might have chosen. After the selection of style was made, the store owner ordered and/or the manufacturer made up a standard set consisting of two chairs, one sofa, and a set of three low tables. The average cost of such a set was about \$650.

Concerning the type of tables selected by customers, interior decorators indicated that people ordered more of the larger variety. The furniture stores, on the other hand, sold more small tables. The manufacturers found distribution of preference equal. The selection of tables for a living room was often a barometer indicating that the interior decorator influenced his clients to follow the newer fashionable ideas. The furniture store owner served people lower in the socio-

economic scale, the middle middle class and lower middle class whose taste followed the tradition of buying the standard set of furniture including two small tables and one somewhat larger table but not as large as a coffee table. The manufacturer served interior decorators, store owners, and individual customers and therefore indicated little difference in preference for small or large tables.

The most popular wood finish was a light rather than a dark finish. Store owners and manufacturers supplied the demands of the average middle class who tended to select furniture with a light finish. Interior decorators, however, used dark wood finishes. Their clientele was usually of the wealthier upper middle class and upper class who preferred the dark walnut and mahogany finishes. The most popular light wood, according to this survey, is zean (beechwood). Formerly it was imported from Turkey, but at the time of this study was imported mainly from Yugoslavia and Roumania. The next in preference was the more expensive sindian (oak), also imported from Europe. Among the dark woods gooz (walnut) is considered the best. The best quality is imported from France although wood suppliers and furniture makers import walnut from other European countries too. Other dark woods used to a lesser extent, more for quality furniture, are mogano (mahogany) and teak, which were imported from Germany, and palssandre (violet ebony), imported from France. Lebanon at the time of this study had two factories which produced core board.

Walnut and mahogany were still imported mainly in veneer form. A paint finish was less in demand than natural wood finishes and it was found mainly on expensive period furniture.

All furniture was locally made with the exception of comparatively few pieces imported from France, England, and the Far East. These pieces are generally classified as antique and were imported to meet the demands of the upper class group.

Sets of upholstered furniture were in much more demand than were individual pieces. The desire of the consumer seemed to be to have what their friends had rather than to express individuality.

The choice of an upholstery fabric followed the selection of the style of furniture. Tweedy fabrics, consequently, were used most, being more suitable with the modern styles. Luxury fabrics, such as brocades, antique satin, and velvet, were used on period furniture. Knowledge of synthetic fabrics was so limited that the people of Beirut preferred not to use them. One interior decorator indicated a preference for perlon, a synthetic fabric produced in Germany.

Generally there was not much interest shown by clients in fiber content or fabrics, except that nearly everyone preferred wool for upholstered furniture. The preference in fabrics for curtains and draperies was related to the preference of style of furniture. Cotton, rayon, nylon, and linen were used with informal settings, while silk, velvet, and fiber glass were preferred with period furniture.

Within the past five years, the use of foam rubber as upholstery material has become the popular filling. The interior decorators, furniture store owners and manufacturers made a distinction between Dunlop foam rubber and ordinary foam rubber. Although they use both, they claim that Dunlop is the better quality. It is perforated latex foam rubber, whereas the foam rubber is the less expensive polyfoam. Foam rubber was used with springs in most ready made furniture. Kapok was used to some extent. Cotton and straw were used for the lowest grade furniture but rarely with ready made and better quality furniture. Only one of the interior decorators and one store owner indicated the use of feathers for upholstered sofa and chair cushions. The use of feathers was rare because of their high cost.

In addition to the 25 interviewees of this survey the director of the "Gallerie Itihad" was consulted. "Itihad" refers to cooperative or union. The "Gallerie Itihad" is a cooperative furniture business venture which was established nearly two years before through the combined efforts of 12 men. It was of interest because it will affect the ready-made furniture market. The organization operated as a showroom for 50 carpenters. Within the next year they expected to increase that number to 100 carpenters. The carpenters brought their merchandise to this six story building where it was displayed and sold for them. The merchandise included all kinds of furniture. Much of it could be classified as "borax". This type

had a ready market here for people from Kuwait and Syria. The organization reserved the right to be selective in the membership of the carpenters and to control the quality standard of the merchandise. They took 10 per cent of the sales price of the merchandise. The director felt that they could do a tremendous business once they became well established. The advantages they offered to the public are: 1) a wide choice of furniture styles, 2) a price suitable to every customer, ranging from low to high, 3) the convenience of a large parking area. The entire set-up was patterned after European cooperatives.

Although the validity of some of the information given by interior decorators and furniture store owners may be questionable, the survey proved valuable. The answers given to the questions were informative, often revealing more than the questions indicated about the decorators and store owners. Regardless of the validity of the answers, a great deal was learned about the furniture market, merchandising (or the lack of it), and furniture making in Beirut. The manufacturers were especially pleased to be of help because no survey of furniture designing and furniture making in Beirut nor of consumer demand was available.

SUMMARY

In order to substantiate this study on the living room furnishings in selected houses in Beirut, Lebanon, it was necessary to conduct a survey on an interview basis among a group of local people who represented the middle class according to this interviewer's judgment. Due to the interviewer being a foreigner and due to local apprehensions it was impossible to establish a proper sample group. The forty selected families interviewed are therefore as fair a group as it was possible to get under the prevailing circumstances, from whose furnishings conclusions were drawn.

It was also desirable in the course of this study to investigate the local furnishings market in order to draw some possible comparative conclusions concerning the influence of the market on the furnishings used in the living rooms in the homes. Twenty-five furniture distributors, including interior decorators, furniture store owners, and manufacturers were interviewed. This seemed to be a representative group of professional people from whom fairly reliable information was secured. The professional training among this group varied somewhat. The majority of them stated that they had studied abroad for short periods of time; mainly in France. France was chosen more frequently probably because of the French educational system here, and also because of the familiarity

with that language. It was found that those who went for further training to the States came from an Anglo-Saxon school system. The employees generally received their training by working at the trade and learning at a firm then moving to another company which offered a better salary. Almost all the furniture available in the market was produced by these local craftsmen who learned the trade locally.

The survey furnished information upon which some concrete assumptions can be based. The religious background of the forty families interviewed seemed to have some bearing on the choice of the style of the furniture for the living room, the arrangement of the furniture, and the accessories used. Among the Christians no Arabic style furniture was found, whereas some of the Moslems have clung to their own culture in both the choice of Arabic furniture and the traditional way of arranging it around the room. In general there was a tendency among the Moslems to prefer a mixture of poorly selected knick-knacks rather than well-selected accessories. The Druzes, the smallest religious group interviewed, followed the taste of the Christians more closely than that of the Moslems in the type of furnishings they used.

Textiles for upholstery, drapery and curtain fabrics were mainly of natural fiber, either wool or cotton, whereas nylon was used almost exclusively for glass curtains. Blends were unfamiliar to the families interviewed. Solid colors were more popular, particularly reds, greens, golden yellow

and grey. The glass curtains preferred were off-white or tan.

The professional groups were asked which factors influenced their customers most in the selection of living room furniture. General appearance was stated to be the main factor, especially among the furniture store owners where the customer could step into the store and make a selection from a variety of ready-made items. The customer generally did not know what to look for. The appeal of the general appearance seemed to be the main concern. Cost was the second influencing factor. This factor was often one the customer argued about in the hope of bargaining the price down. In general the customer knew nothing about hidden values of upholstered furniture, for instance, but he wanted the best as it looked to him. Construction and fiber content were also important factors, especially in the ready-made category of furnishings selected in shops. Decorativeness was an influencing factor to some extent among the groups, probably because simplicity was not generally accepted as being in good taste. All the professional groups claimed that customers generally did not concern themselves with such factors as durability, color, usefulness, and fiber content.

It was found among the furniture makers that clients usually, preferred the modern European style, and what the families interviewed often referred to as "Contemporary Western". According to their definition, this style of furnishings is patterned after designs of present-day European styles, as

compared to "Modern Western", which means to them a style copied from a present-day American design and fashioned as closely as possible according to American standards. The cost of this style of merchandise was somewhat higher than that of "European Modern" and therefore generally too expensive for the average middle class family.

None of the professional groups dealt with traditional Arabic furniture. The obvious reason for this was the lack of demand and the cost of its production. In the homes where this style of furniture was still used it had been in the family for a long time. If a piece had to be repaired or an additional piece was wanted, an independent carpenter was engaged.

Store owners and manufacturers sold more ready made sets of upholstered furniture than individual pieces, as well as more small tables than large coffee tables. The interior decorators were introducing the idea of creating a more interesting interior by using individual pieces of upholstered furniture and large coffee tables. The idea of the large coffee table was more readily accepted, but the idea of purchasing pieces of upholstered furniture was not yet popular.

The survey showed that the light finished woods were more popular than dark finished woods. A trend towards the preference of the dark finished woods, particularly walnut and mahogany was apparent.

The families interviewed preferred the natural fibered fabrics for upholstery and drapery fabrics, the interviews of

the furniture sellers confirmed the interviews of families. Wool was most popular among upholstery fabrics and cotton among drapery fabrics. The preferred fabric for the upholstered pieces was the tweedy type. For the filling of the upholstered chairs and sofas foam rubber was selected more than any other type of filling. A factor influencing this preference might be that foam rubber was the newest filling on the market. The manufacturers were just beginning to use springs in the construction of their better quality furniture. A combination of springs and foam rubber seemed to be predominant.

From the findings of the interviews with the forty selected families and the twenty-five professional and business people, it might be deduced that the furnishings used in the living rooms in the selected homes had undergone changes brought about by changing cultural patterns. The merchandise found in the market at the time of this study reflected this trend. The furniture manufacturers, furniture dealers, and interior decorators seemed ready to meet this development and to encourage it.

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FAMILY

Modernized	Traditional
a) Education _____	a) Education _____
b) Status of women _____	b) Status of women _____
c) Dress _____	c) Dress _____
d) Way of thinking _____	d) Way of thinking _____
Christian _____	Muslim _____
Druid _____	Other _____
Occupation of the head of the house _____	

APPENDIX

LIVING ROOM

1. Do you have a living room or parlor? _____
2. What is the approximate size of your living room? _____
3. Do you wish it were larger? _____
4. Smaller? _____

What are some of the activities you and your family use the living room for?

1. Visit with friends _____
2. Family gatherings _____
3. Reading _____
4. Listening to music _____
5. Playing games _____
6. Watching television _____
7. Other activities _____

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOME VISIT

FAMILY

Westernized

Traditional Arabic

a) Education _____

a) Education _____

b) Status of women _____

b) Status of women _____

c) Dress _____

c) Dress _____

d) Way of thinking _____

d) Way of thinking _____

Christian _____ Moslem _____ Druze _____ Other _____

Occupation of the head of the house

To what extent are you keeping your own cultural background?

LIVING ROOM

1. Do you have one living room or two? _____

2. What is the approximate size of your living room? _____

3. Do you wish it were larger? _____

4. Smaller? _____

What are some of the activities you and your family use the living room for?

1. Visit with friends _____

2. Family gatherings _____

3. Reading _____

4. Listening to music _____

5. Playing games _____

6. Watching television _____

7. Other activities _____

STYLE OF FURNITURE

1. Traditional Arabic _____
2. Modern Lebanese _____
3. French (Predominantly Louis XV) _____
4. Early European modern _____
5. Present-day Western modern _____
6. Combination of modern and traditional _____

APPEARANCE OF ROOM

1. Crowded _____
2. Orderly _____

FURNITURE ARRANGEMENT

1. Formal _____
2. Informal _____
3. Conversational Grouping _____
4. Arena type grouping _____
5. Built-ins _____
6. Other _____

Floor Coverings

1. A variety of Oriental rugs covering entire floor _____
2. One large Oriental rug _____
3. Several small Oriental rugs _____
4. European rug with modern design _____
5. Solid colored imported carpeting _____
6. Other _____

UPHOLSTERY AND CURTAIN FABRICS

1. Fabrics used are imported _____
2. Fabrics used are native _____
3. Textures and patterns of fabrics harmonize _____
4. Textures and patterns of fabrics do not harmonize _____
5. Other _____

LIGHTING

1. Overhead lights only _____
2. Chandelier _____
3. Some tables and floor lamps _____
4. Indirect lighting _____
5. The researcher's appraisal of quality of light _____
6. The researcher's appraisal of quantity of light _____

WINDOW TREATMENT

1. Formal _____
2. Informal _____
3. Glass curtains only _____
4. Glass curtains and draperies _____
5. Other _____

COLOR

1. Colors harmonize _____
2. Too many colors are used _____
3. Colors are intense _____
4. Colors are neutral _____
5. Other _____

TYPES OF ACCESSORIES USED IN THE ROOM

1. Vases _____
2. Ash trays and smoking equipment _____
3. Paintings _____
4. Wall hangings _____
5. Other _____

USE OF ACCESSORIES

1. Accessories make the room appear cluttered _____
2. Accessories are in keeping with the decor of the room _____
3. Accessories are a mixture of knick-knacks _____
4. Accessories are well selected _____
5. Others _____ Brass _____ Vases, ash trays _____
Smoking Equipment _____

SOURCE OF DECORATING HELP

1. Room was decorated by a professional decorator _____
2. Room was decorated by the family _____
3. Other _____

CHECK LIST USED AFTER HOME VISIT

	Answers
1. Does the family have a living room and a salon?	1. _____
2. Is the living room used by the family or only when the family has visitors?	2. _____
3. What style furniture is prevalent?	3. _____
4. Does the room look over-crowded?	4. _____
5. Does the room appear well arranged?	5. _____
6. Is the furniture arrangement formal?	6. _____
7. Is the furniture arrangement informal?	7. _____
8. Were the chairs arranged in the traditional oriental manner, along the wall around the room?	8. _____
9. Are there a sofa and individual chairs instead of a set?	9. _____
10. Is there a set of chairs with matching sofa?	10. _____
11. How many tables are there in the room?	11. _____
12. Were the tables of varying heights?	12. _____
13. Are additional smoking stands placed near the chairs?	13. _____
14. Were there any other pieces of furniture in the room? If so what other pieces?	14. _____
15. Was the room furnished with the idea of comfort?	15. _____
16. Was the room furnished for prestige only?	16. _____
17. What was the predominant wood used in the furnishings?	17. _____
18. What was the predominant wood color?	18. _____
19. Was formica used in some pieces of furniture?	19. _____
20. Was the overall color harmony a pleasing one?	20. _____
21. What colors were used extensively?	21. _____

22. Was the upholstery fabric formal or informal? 22. _____
23. Was the upholstery fabric chosen because of its appearance or its wearability? 23. _____
24. What was the fiber content of the upholstery fabrics? 24. _____
25. Were rugs used in the room? 25. _____
26. Were the rugs Oriental rugs or European carpeting? 26. _____
27. Are the rugs wool or nylon? 27. _____
28. Did the colors of the rugs harmonize with the rest of the decor? 28. _____
29. Are both glass curtains and drapes used or just one type? 29. _____
30. Is the window treatment a formal one? 30. _____
31. What type of fabric is used for the curtains? 31. _____
32. Is the desire for privacy an influencing factor in selecting the type of window treatment? 32. _____
33. Does the curtain fabric harmonize with the decor of the room? 33. _____
34. Is the lighting of the room well planned? 34. _____
35. Does the room have both overhead lights and table or floor lamps? 35. _____
36. Does the room have a chandelier? 36. _____
37. Do the light fixtures have shades or exposed bulbs? 37. _____
38. Are most of the items in the room imported? 38. _____
39. If the furniture is imported, where did it come from? 39. _____
40. If the furniture is locally made was it ordered directly from a craftsman or was it ordered thru an interior decorator's studio? 40. _____
41. What accessories are used? 41. _____

42. Are the accessories well chosen? 42. _____
43. Did the family seek the advice of an interior decorator plus add their own opinion? 43. _____
44. Was the entire room executed by a professional decorator without the family's interference? 44. _____
45. How many members are there in the family? 45. _____
46. Does the general decor of the room suit the family? 46. _____
47. Does the living room fulfill the need of the family? 47. _____
48. What is the occupation of the head of the house? 48. _____

QUESTIONS FOR MARKET SURVEY

(Questions asked Shopkeepers and Interior Decorators)

1. Why did you get into the furniture business?

- _____ Inherited business
_____ Decided it was a good opportunity
_____ Other (Specify) _____

2. Where did you learn the business?

- _____ Studied about furniture locally
_____ Trained by family
_____ Went abroad to study interior decoration.
If this answer is checked, state country _____
and how long spent there _____
_____ Other (Specify) _____

3. Which income group do you cater to in your business?

- _____ Working class
_____ Middle class
_____ Upper class

4. Where do your employees receive their training and information?
Check one or more.

- _____ From the owner of the business
_____ From other similar firm
_____ Serving as an apprentice
_____ From a trade school
_____ Other schooling
_____ Other (Specify) _____

5. Which factors influence your customers most when they select any piece for the home? Check one or more.

_____ Appearance
 _____ Style
 _____ Comfort
 _____ Cost
 _____ Decorativeness
 _____ Usefulness
 _____ Color
 _____ Durability
 _____ Materials
 _____ Other (Specify) _____

6. Does the customer ask questions about the following? Check one or more.

_____ Fiber Content
 _____ Construction
 _____ Other about materials (Specify) _____

7. Who makes the major purchases for the home? Check one.

_____ The head of the family (father, husband, older brother).
 _____ Wife
 _____ Husband and wife
 _____ Other (Specify) _____

8. What styles of furniture are your best sellers? Check one or more.

_____ Modern (European)
 _____ Modern (Western)

_____ Period
 _____ Arabic (Traditional)
 _____ Other (Specify) _____

9. In selecting tables for the living room what do people buy more of? Check one.

_____ Small tables (smoking stands)
 _____ Large coffee tables
 _____ Other (Specify) _____

10. What finish of woods do you sell most of? Check one.

_____ Light
 _____ Dark
 _____ Painted
 _____ Other (Specify) _____

11. Where do you buy the furniture you sell to your customers?

_____ Local craftsmen
 _____ Import from Europe
 _____ Other countries (Specify) _____

12. If you import furniture, state the countries from which you import in order of importance.

13. What upholstered furniture is more popular? Check one.

_____ Sets
 _____ Individual pieces

14. What type of upholstery fabric do people prefer? Check one or more.

_____ Brocade
 _____ Antique satin

_____ Tweedy fabrics
_____ Other (Specify) _____

15. What fiber do people choose if they have a preference in upholstery or drapery materials? Check one or more.

_____ Cotton
_____ Wool
_____ Silk
_____ Nylon or other synthetic
_____ Rayon
_____ Velvet
_____ Other (Specify) _____

16. What is used for filling in upholstered pieces of furniture? Check one or more.

_____ Cotton
_____ Foam rubber
_____ Kapok
_____ Other (Specify) _____

TABLE I
 FURNISHINGS USED IN FORTY SELECTED LIVING ROOMS IN BEIRUT
 ACCORDING TO RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

Furnishings used	Religious background			Total
	Christians (18)	Moslems (15)	Druzes (7)	
Style				
Arabic furniture	0	4	0	4
Period furniture	5	3	1	9
Early European modern	6	3	1	10
Contemporary Western	5	5	5	15
Mixture - Arabic and Western	2	0	0	2
Furniture arrangement				
Formal	4	3	1	8
Informal	9	5	3	17
Arena-type grouping	3	5	1	9
Conversational grouping	2	2	2	6
Rugs				
Oriental	15	15	6	36
European - solid	1	0	0	1
European - with design	2	0	1	3
Accessories				
Mixture of knick-knacks	8	10	2	20
Lack of accessories	2	4	1	7
Well selected for room	8	1	4	13

TABLE II

UPHOLSTERY, DRAPERY AND CURTAIN FABRICS USED IN FORTY SELECTED
LIVING ROOMS

Fabrics	Fiber content			Solid color only	Patterned design only	Both
	Natural fiber	Man-made fiber	Blend			
Upholstery	38	2	0	29	5	6
Drapery	15	7	0	16	6	0
Glass curtains	2	15	0	17	0	0

TABLE III

OCCUPATION OF SELECTED FURNITURE DEALERS OR
DISTRIBUTORS

Reason for occupation	Interior	Furniture	Manufacturers (3)
	Decorators (9)	Store owners (13)	
Business inherited	1	3	3
Good opportunity	2	5	0
Artistic inclination	6	0	0
Interest in interior decoration	0	4	0
No special reason	0	1	0

TABLE IV

TRAINING OF PROFESSIONALS AND OF EMPLOYEES OF
SELECTED FURNITURE DISTRIBUTORS

Training	Interior Decorators (9)	Furniture Store owners (13)	Manufacturers (3)
Professionals			
Studied locally	1	5	3
Studied abroad	8	5	0
France	5	2	0
America	3	0	0
Italy	0	1	0
Denmark	0	1	0
Turkey	0	1	0
No special training	0	3	0
Employees			
From owner	4	4	1
From other firms	3	8	0
Apprenticeship	2	7	2
Trade school	0	1	0
Other school	1	0	0
No employees	2	0	0

TABLE V
FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER SELECTION OF FURNITURE

Factors	Interior Furniture		
	Decorators (9)	Store Owners (13)	Manufacturers (3)
General appearance	7	12	2
Style	3	2	1
Comfort	6	7	2
Cost	5	9	2
Decorativeness	4	1	1
Usefulness	1	1	1
Color	1	1	3
Durability	3	1	1
Materials	2	0	0
Good taste	1	0	0
Fiber content	2	11	3
Construction	7	11	3

TABLE VI
 DESCRIPTION OF FURNISHINGS SELECTED BY
 CLIENTS FROM FURNITURE DISTRIBUTORS

Description of furnishings	Interior decorators (9)	Furniture store owners (13)	Manu- facturers (3)
Source			
Local craftsmen	9	12	3
Import from France	1	1	0
Import from England	1	2	0
Import from China	1	1	0
Style			
Modern European	7	10	2
Modern Western	1	1	1
Period	6	6	0
Arabic	0	0	0
Type			
Tables			
Small (smoking stands)	4	13	3
Large coffee table	8	11	3
Upholstered furniture			
Sets	7	13	3
Individual pieces	3	1	1
Wood finish			
Light	3	12	2
Dark	8	9	1
Painted	2	0	0
Units preferred			
Sets	7	13	3
Individual pieces	3	1	1

TABLE VI (Continued)

Description of furnishings	Interior decorators (9)	Furniture store owners (13)	Manu- facturers (3)
Upholstery and drapery fiber			
Cotton	4	5	0
Wool	5	8	3
Silk	3	2	1
Nylon and other synthetic	3	1	0
Rayon	2	1	0
Linen	1	0	0
Fiber glass	1	0	0
Upholstery filling			
Cotton	2	3	0
Foam Rubber	7	5	0
Kapok	4	2	0
Feathers	1	1	0
Cotton with spring	0	2	0
Foam rubber with springs	2	7	0
Straw with springs	0	0	0
Upholstery fabric preferred			
Brocade	5	2	0
Antique satin	4	1	0
Tweedy fabric	7	10	0
Perlon	1	0	0
Velvet	3	2	1