

Jordan University of Science and Technology
College of Architecture and Design
Department of Architecture
Islamic Architecture
Dr. Raed Al Tal

Abbasid Palatial Architecture

The Abbasids:

Abu jafar al saffah put an end to Umayyad in 750

They took there name from prophet mohammad's uncle Abbas

The second Islamic dynasty (flourished 750-950)

- **Abu Ja'far al-Mansur:** (754-75) Second caliph and founder of Baghdad.

- **Haroun al-Rashid** (786-809): Established many large settlements along the Tigris and the Euphrates. His name became inexorably linked to the tales of Arabian Night.

- Abbasids took the method of revolutions until they took the role from Umayyad
- They expanded from Persia to South Egypt
- Then those small – wilayat- started to be divided because of internal conflicts
- Why it was divided ?
 1. They mainly relied on the slave army brought from Turkey then those later managed to take role in many areas and became an influential power and took administrative roles
 2. It expanded widely so internal conflicts resulted

Figures of interest here are:

- Abu jafar al saffah
- Abu jafar al mansour
- Haroun al rashid

The Architectural Precedents:

- **Culture**

- **Cultural setting (Umayyad from Byzantine and Romans) (Abasssyds from Persians)**

- **Abbasids were influenced by Persians with the: image of the caliph**

Abbasids = monumentality

Iwan concept

hierarchy of space- separation

- 
- **The Umayyad Palaces**
 - **The Iwan of Kisra (Khosroe) : The Seat of Sasanian Kings**

The New Image of the Ruler:

The influence of Persian traditions and court ceremonials

The gradual isolation of the ruler behind walls and courts

Caliph was separated from locals, in addition to Persian influence they took something from Umayyad

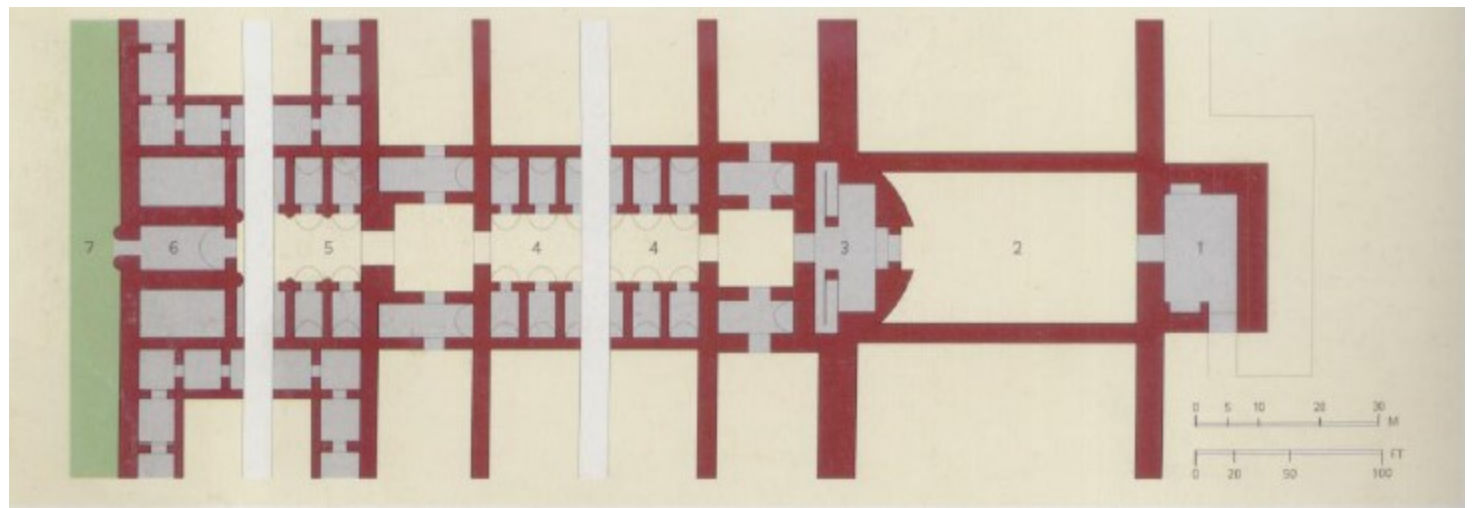
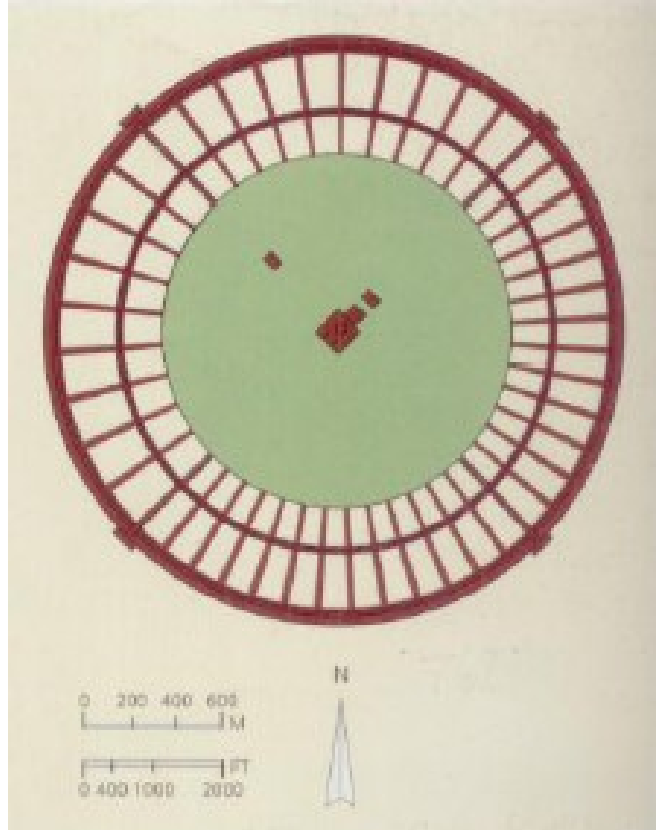
The Foundation of Madinat al-Salam

(City of Peace, later Baghdad), 762-67: ABU JAFAR AL
MANSOUR

The new, ordered capital of the Empire, with all the appropriate symbolism of a round city with axial division.

CENTRAL

PERFECTION



SYRIAN GATE

KHURASAN GATE

BASRA GATE

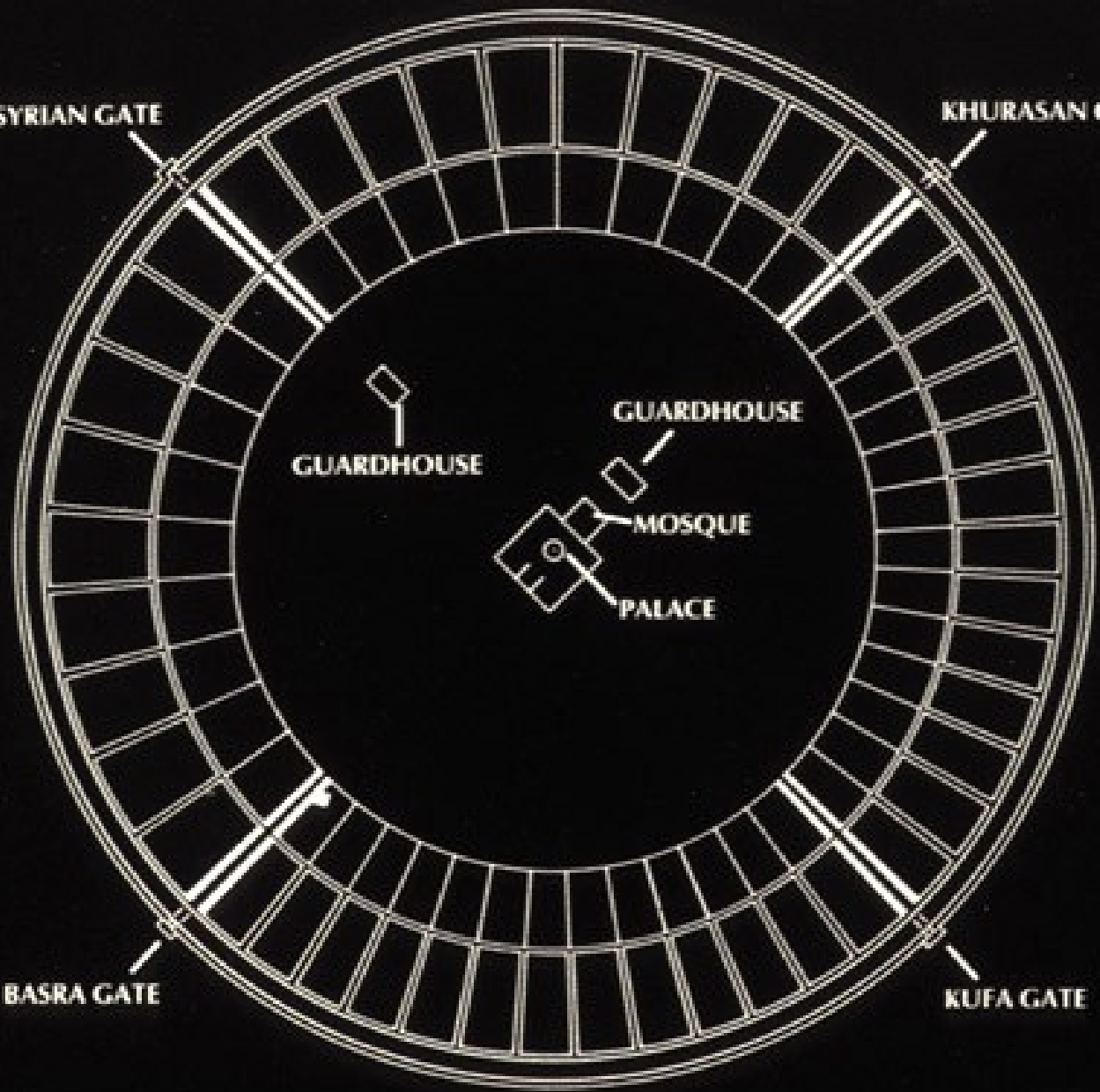
KUFA GATE

GUARDHOUSE

GUARDHOUSE

MOSQUE

PALACE



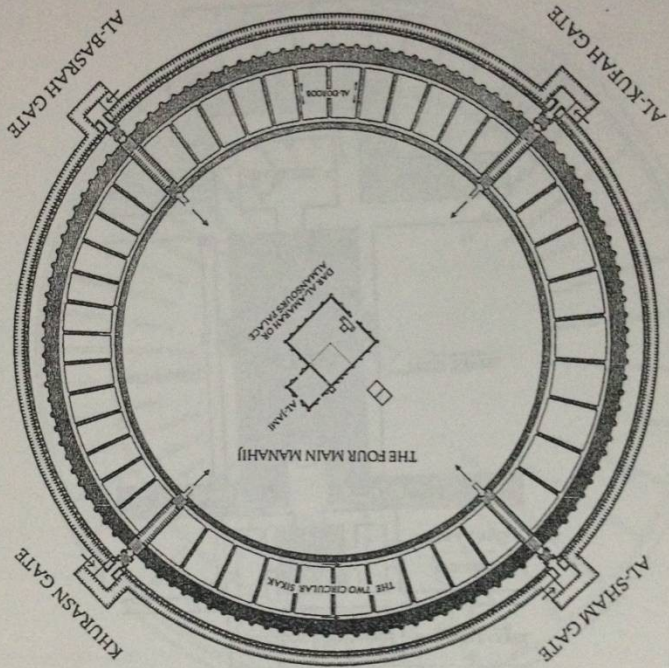
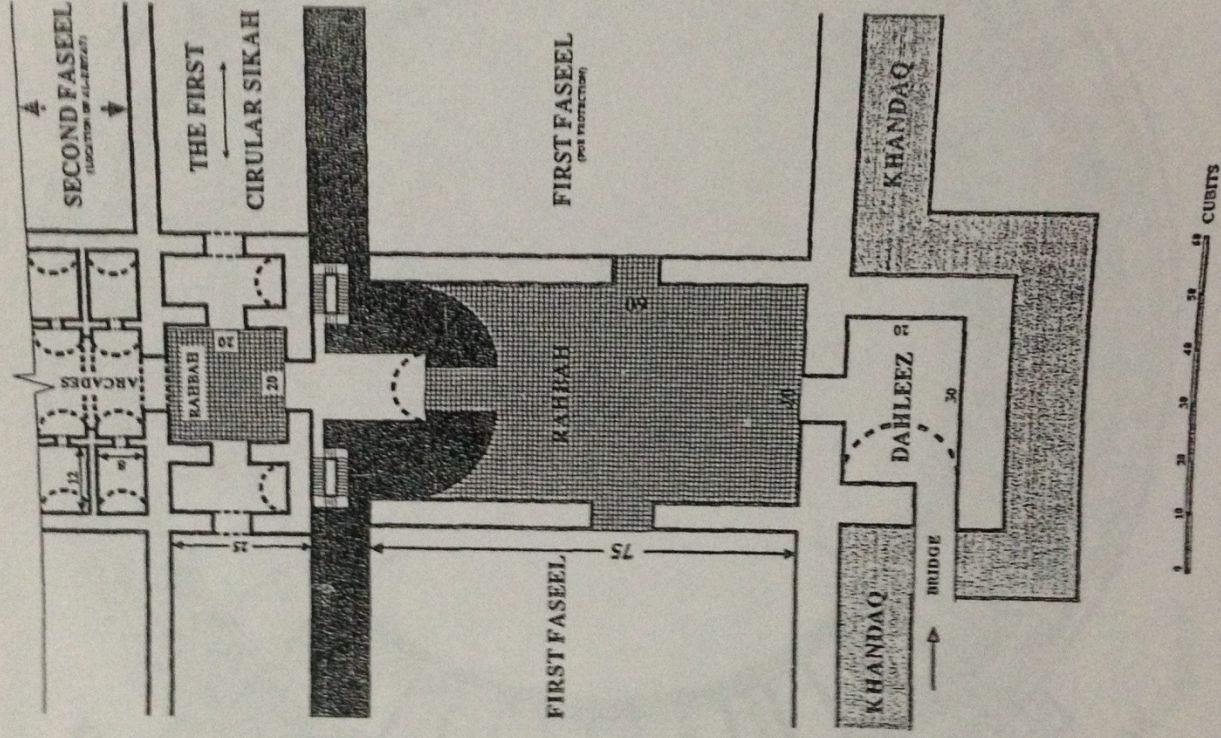


Figure 2.18: The communication network in the Round City, Baghdad showing the main gates, the four main Manahij (Arcades), the two circular Sikak, and Al-Dorrob.

Figure 2.19: Details of one of the four principal forecourts on the main Manahij in the Round City, Baghdad.
 Source: Reproduced from Creswell: Early Muslim Architecture, Vol 2, page 13.



What is the meaning of a circular ?city

1. Cosmology
2. Centrality of the image of the caliph being the center and all around him are protection...

About the circular Baghdad

- Layout very defensive
- Defensive wall
- Four gate entrances
- Baked brick
- Entrance is not direct, there are kind of corridors and on the sides there are markets
- The center is empty has only the palace, the mosque and the military protection
- The rest sections in the boundaries form the city
- One problem: all walled and gated cities are almost impossible to expand
- And also lack of public spaces

~~Palaces near Baghdad~~

~~At first all Abbasids palaces shared :these features~~

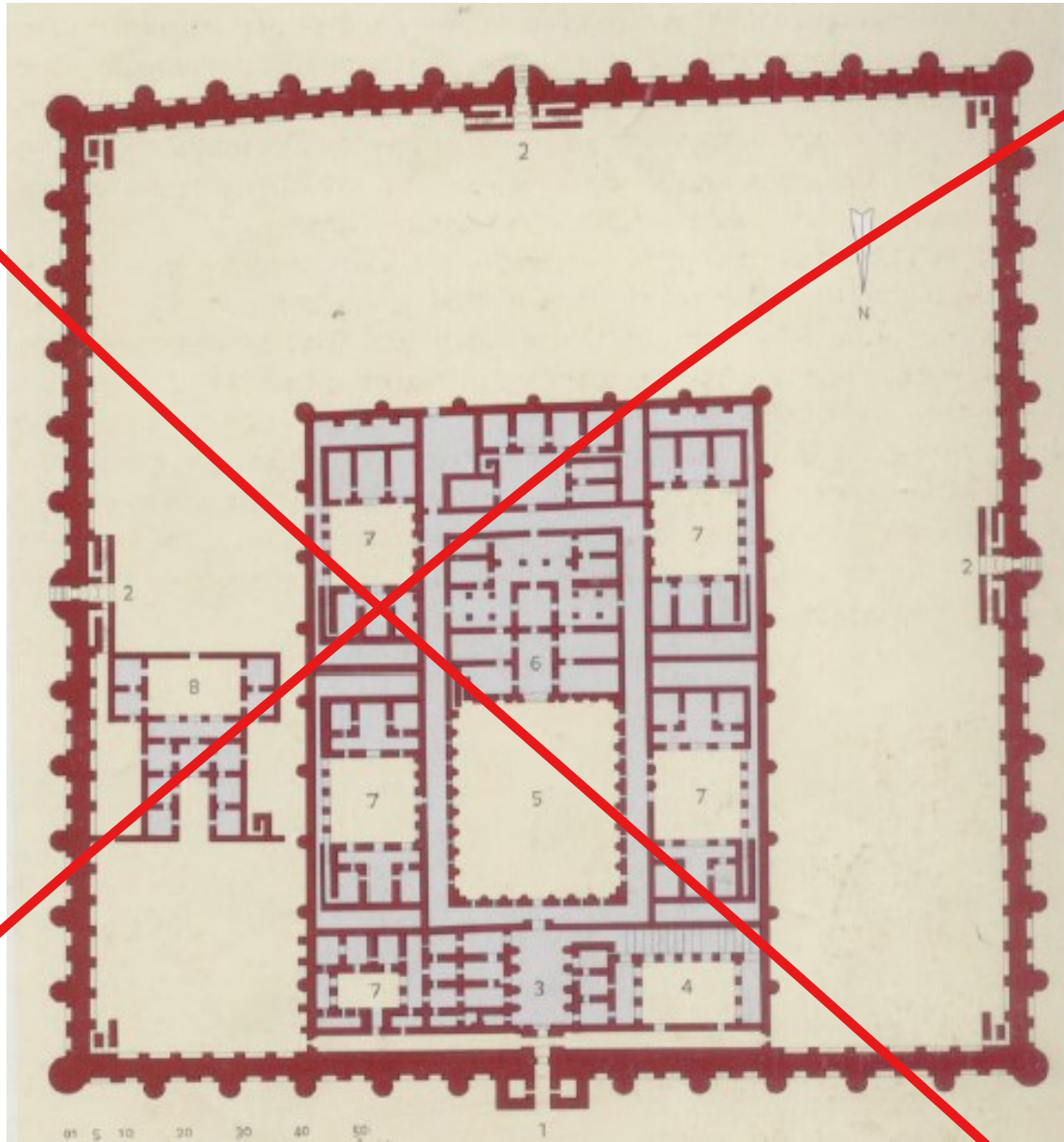
- ~~1. Fortified~~
- ~~2. Circular tower~~
- ~~3. Grid~~
- ~~4. Shared walls~~
- ~~5. So compact, no spaces between structures~~
- ~~6. Monumental scale~~
- ~~7. Considerable height~~
- ~~8. Defensive stone structure~~
- ~~9. Magnificent court and honor on Iwan~~

) : The Palace of Ukhaydir, south of Baghdad (probably 778

Ukhaidhir, the colossal pre- or early Abbasid (late 8th century) fortified pleasure palace is 50 km south west of Kerbala and about 173 km south west of Baghdad

~~The Palace of Ukhaydir, south of Baghdad (probably 778):~~

- Four gates
- Controlled series of gates
- Enclosure within enclosure
- A monumental princely retreat composed of a fortified enclosure.
- Defensive stone structure with a magnificent court of honor and an iwan
- 4 rounded towers and , 44 Half towers
- Enclosure 170*170 m.
- Palace 112*80 m.
- Double layered gateway
- There is a structure near the palace which is multi purpose



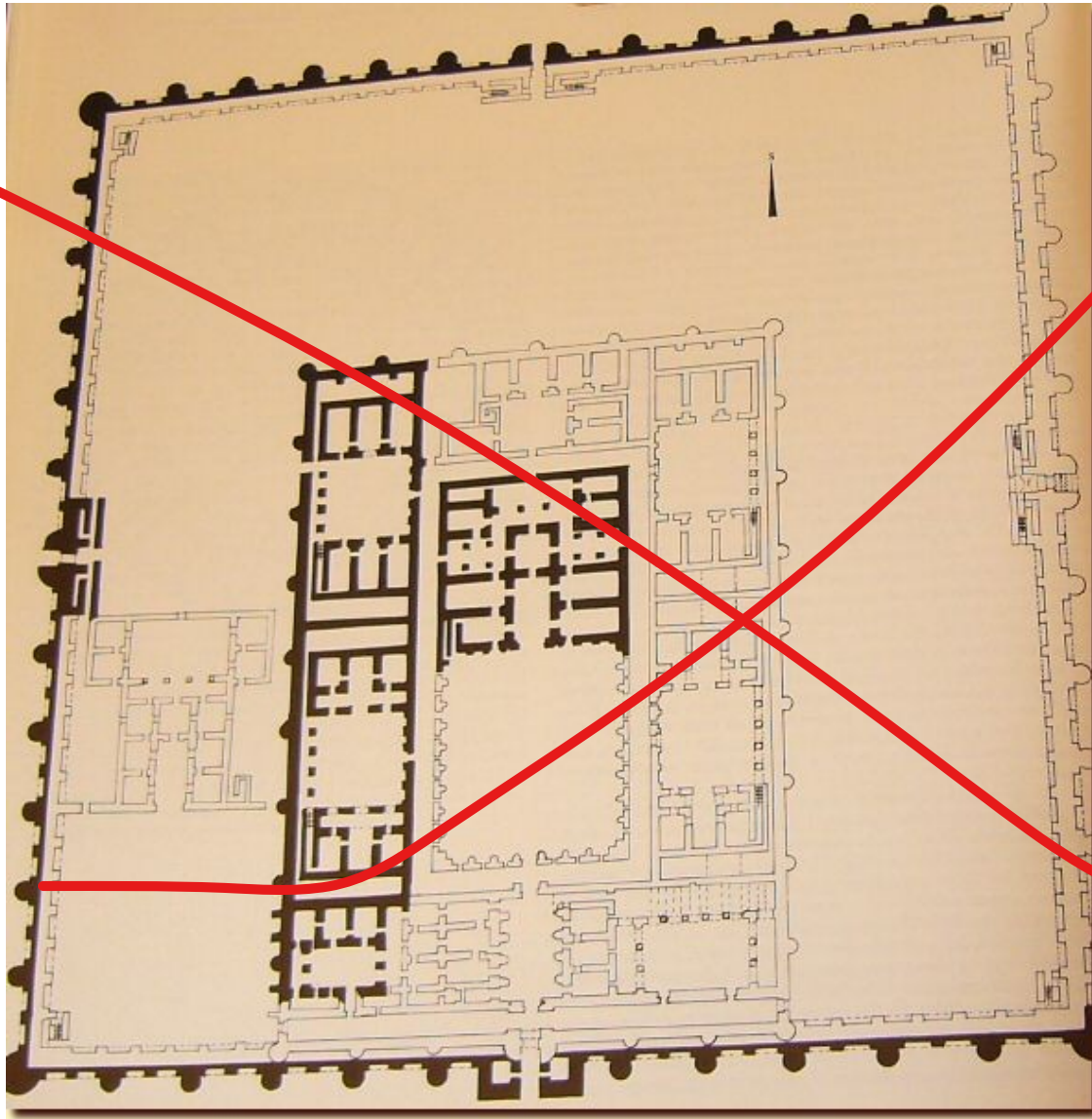


Series of courtyard



Persian style door frame





Ukhaydir, palace, 142-166, (764-788)



Inside the gate, Abassid Palace at Ukhaider. Photo © Iraqi State Antiquities Authority



Inside the courtyard, Abbasid Palace at Ukhaider. Photo © Iraqi State Antiquities Authority



Second floor view at the Abbasid Palace, Ukhaidir. Photo © Atlastours

Samarra:

لوضع الجيش الانكشاري فيها

The new capital city established on the Tigris, 60 miles north of Baghdad, by caliph al-*Mu'tasim* in 836 to house his personal army of Turkish slave-warriors (*mamluks*).

Grid system but not divided into 4 parts

It developed into a conglomeration of secluded caliphal palaces and houses for the troops on a grandiose scale.

The city remained capital of the Abbasid Empire until 883.



Iraq, Samarra aerial view

Samarra palace Balkuwara

The Balkuwara Palace was constructed between 549-859 AD on the east side of the Tigris River, six kilometers south of Samarra, by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil for Prince al-Mu'tazz

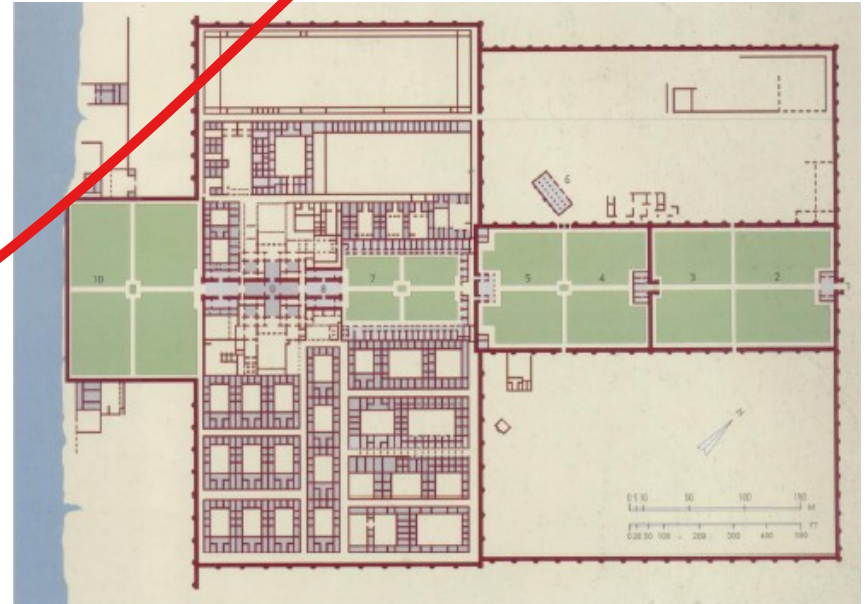
Now in ruins, the palace was massive, including three courtyards, nine halls, residential suites, mosques, and quarters for infantrymen in a fortified complex measuring approximately 1,250 meters per side and .15 meters in height

The palace occupied the southern half of a complex surrounded by private houses each containing sixteen . rooms around a central courtyard

The northern part of the complex was composed of two central courts and accommodations for 12,000-man standing army, including a polo field, bazaars, baths, and . small mosques

Samarra palace Balkuwara

- Defensive
- Hierarchy
- Semi circular palace
- Axis
- Courtyard house – Umayyad layout- five houses opened to a court
- Monumentality
- Concept of Iwan- large arch- it's the central hall that opens to the courtyard



Palaces of Al Mutasem

- The Juasaq al Khaqani
- Samarra palace Balkuwara
- Al Istabulat : residences for the Troops

The Jawsaq al-Khaqani

On the shores of the Tigris River, he constructed his palace,
. the Jawsaq al-Khaqani

It integrates elaborate gardens, baths, residential suites,
.courtyards, and audience halls into a sizeable walled complex

, Constructed in baked and unbaked brick

The Jawsaq al-Khaqani is widely recognized for its elaborate ornamentation of .

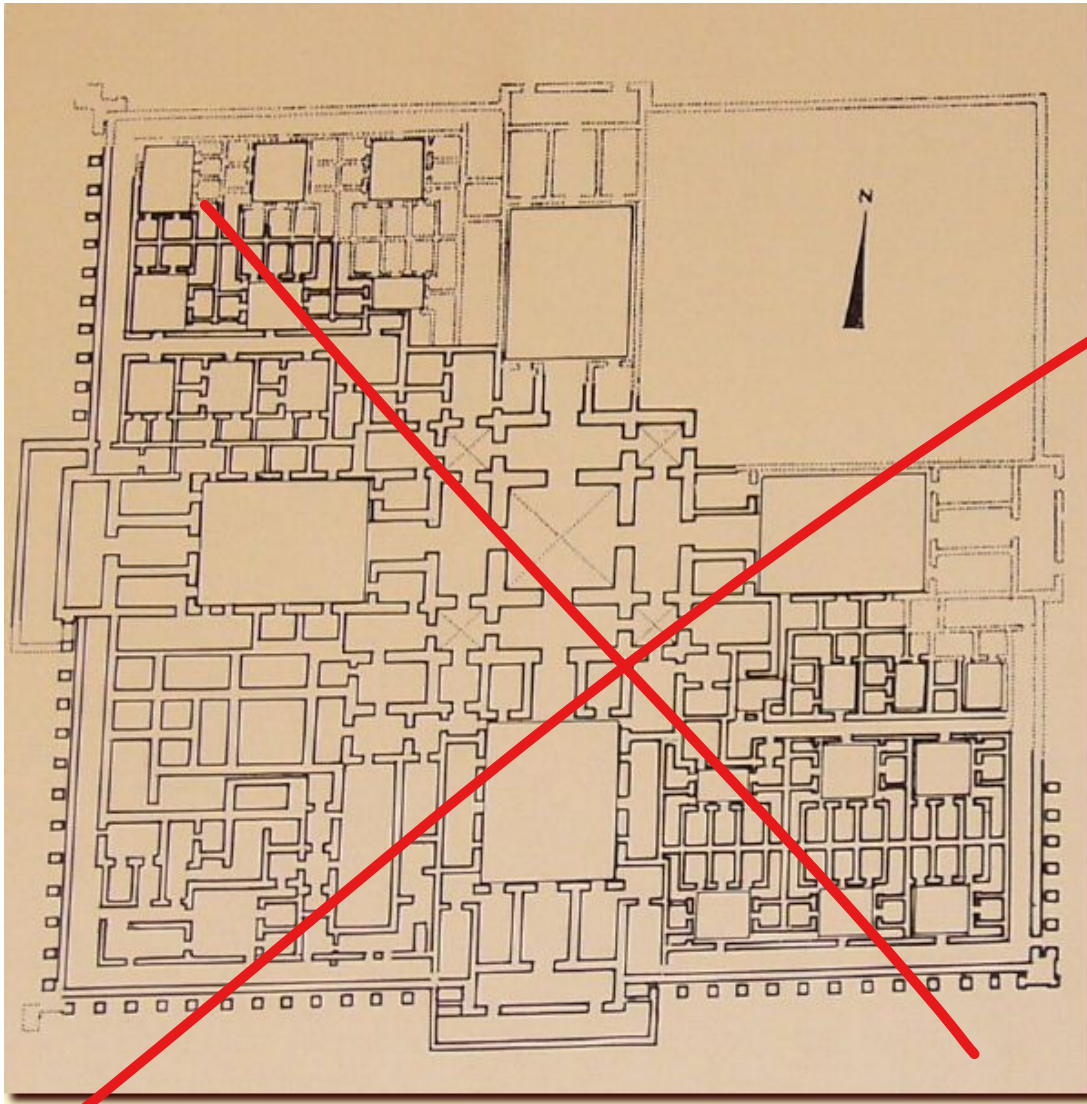
, stucco and marble dados-

, frescoed paintings-

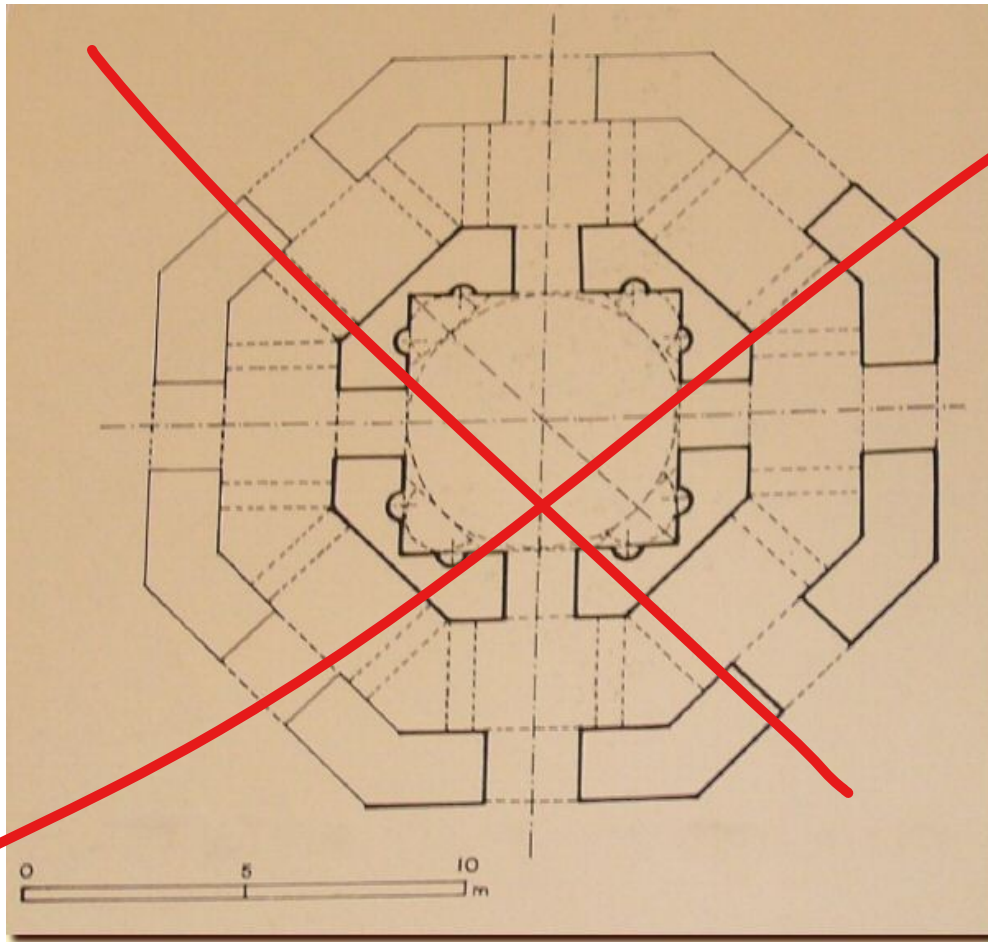
. and the finest sculpted and painted teak woodworking-



Samarra, Djausaq Al Khakani



Samarra, Qasr Al Djiss, 214-215, (836-837)



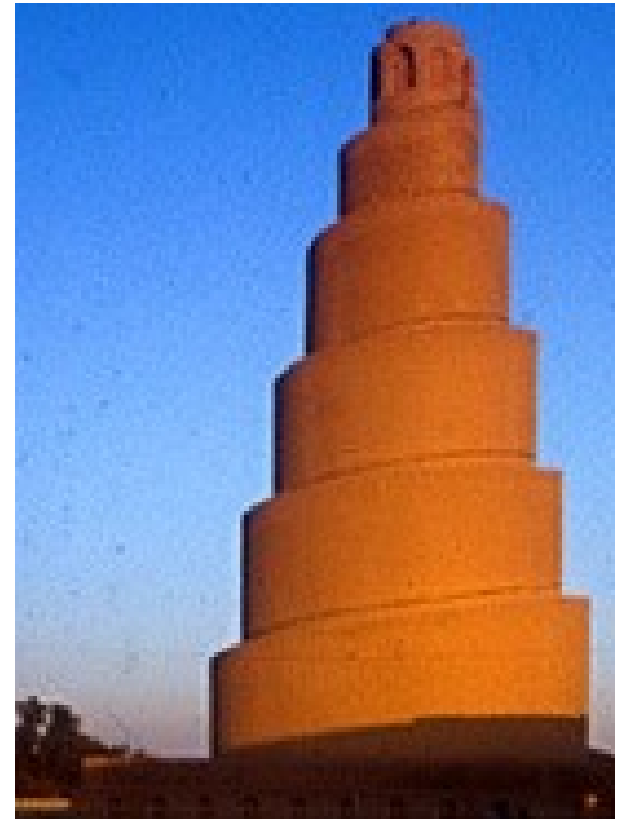
Samarra, Qubbat Al Sulaybiyya, 240, (862)



The Great **Mosque** at **Samara** **AL MUTAWAKEL MOSQUE**

The Great Mosque of Samarra was built in 848-852 AD on an open plan principle, it is the largest mosque of Islam (748 x 512 ft).

The minaret was built in about 850 AD and is a 52m-tall spiral "al-Malwiya"



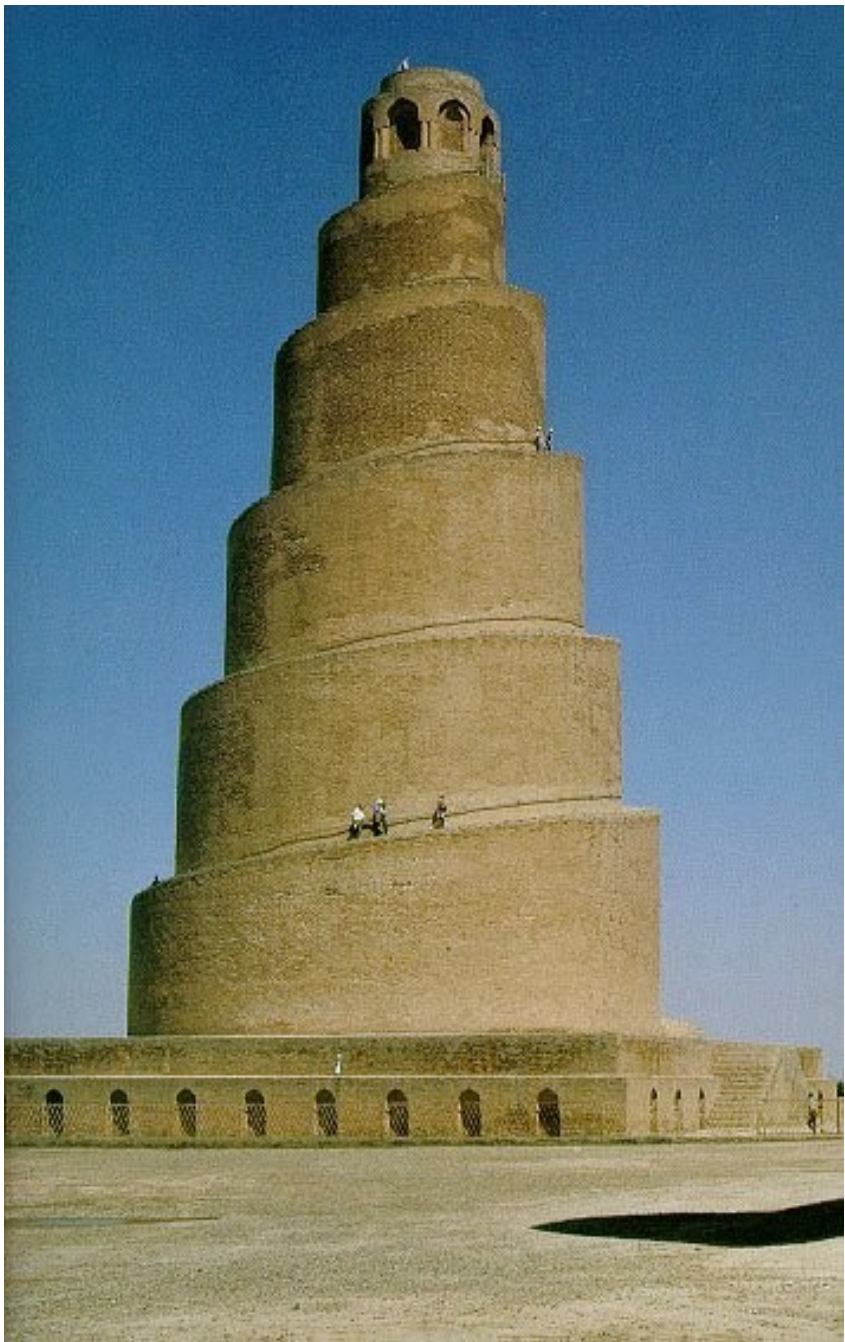
The great mosque at Samarra

- Hypostyle layout
- Open plan principle
- Largest mosque of Islam
- 14 gates
- This means it was inhabited
- Communal mosque – for the public
- 2 arcades running round its side around prayer hall
- Spiral minaret about 20 floors
- A solid muscle structure in the desert
- Some say it was a watching tower
- They say minaret was a separate part
- A free standing tower
- Built of baked brick
- Concept of snail shell taken from ziggurat
- Semi circular towers
- Very solid

- One problem that the ziggurat with water it expands, so Assyrians put a Bitumen cover over it for it not to explode
- But here nothing was put
- A great notion of monumentality of large arches IWAN is a Persian influence
- The mosque had 17 aisles, and its walls were panelled with mosaics of dark blue glass.
- It was part of an extension of Samarra eastwards.
-







Ibn Tulun Mosque, Cairo

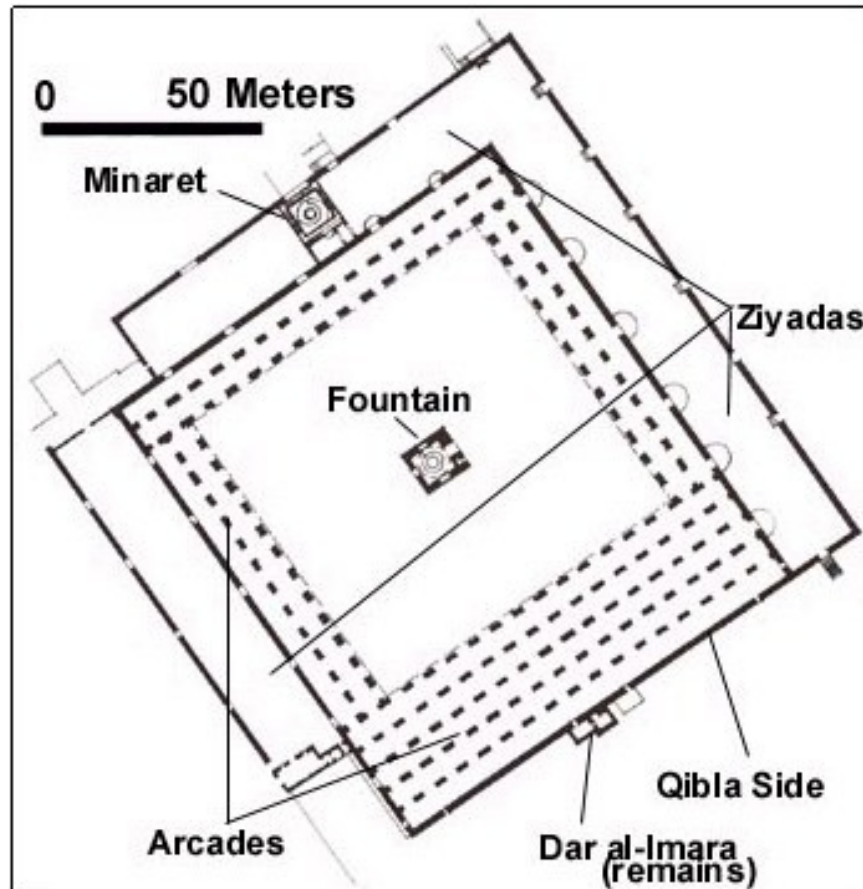


Figure 1. The Mosque plan in details















Stucco Decoration:

Samarra Style: Three styles have been identified following their degree of abstraction:

Style A: Vine-leave ornament still bearing resemblance to the Hellenistic, naturalizing origin.

Style B: Vegetal ornament with some abstraction.

Style C: Molded pattern, very abstract and have a combination of vegetal and geometric motifs. Patterns are normally inscribed within borders.

Style A: Vine-leave ornament still bearing resemblance to the Hellenistic, naturalizing origin



Style B: Vegetal ornament with some abstraction.



Style C: Molded pattern, very abstract and have a combination of vegetal and geometric motifs. Patterns are normally inscribed within borders.

