

# ISLAMIC MANSIONS OF THE Umayyad Era until The Mamluk Era (Study of the most important mansions in The Levant, Iraq and Egypt)

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## **Abstract**

In the dawn of Islam, there was no major development created in the field of construction and architecture within the Arabian peninsula, because people were not familiar with a lot of life in cities, but they have got used to the life of the desert, so they were not interested in luxury and wellbeing, but after the spread of Islam in civilized area of long history, at this time the (Mesopotamian art) has affected clearly on the Persian art, and also the byzantine art which was bring in Syria and central Asia. When Islam appeared in the area which these two civilizations were found, it definitely inherited the traditions and gets benefit from these distinctive and flourished civilizations, coexisted and mixed with it. When Umayyad state was developed on 40 AH and Damascus became the capital; people started to get interest on the life of cities, and that clearly seen in the building of sporadic mansions in different cities of the Levant, and they initially bring the most skilled constructors for building there mansions, which characterized by accurate and perfect construction with creativity in the decoration. This qualitative jump – in the life of caliphs – was not arbitrarily, but it occurred due to the economic and political situation of the state in that period.

The Abbasids followed them on the same way, and they created more development on the construction, architecture and ornamentation of their mansions, which appeared through the architecture art at that time, and their excellence on ornamentation and construction.

This development and interest were continued with the Muslims caliphs all over the Islamic state. In Egypt, the creativity and excellence appeared in the era of Tulunid, Alikhchidip, Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamlk states, so these eras created wonderful examples of mansions which have been built in this period.

History books have stored the description of many of these mansions, which indicated the continuous development of the architecture art in the Islamic eras, and it considered rightly the building pride in that period.

## **Introduction**

Islamic architecture is one of the most important fields where the superiority of Muslims. Islamic architectures were built many types of buildings which characterized by the variability, so there were general, special, mundane and religious buildings such as mosques, schools and mansions which are the subject of this study.

The fact is that, building of mansions was known by Arabs since long time ago, but these mansions later acquired their own design, and the style differed according to time and territory.

Because mansions are one of the most beautiful architectural features, I chose to study Islamic mansions of Umayyad era until Mamluk era, and I need through this study to give an idea about the development of Islamic architecture art in that period, introducing samples of some mansions and their palaces and architectural characters in the Levant, Iraq and Egypt and clearing the events of fast development in this stage which reflected on construction, ornamentation of mansions, and inventing of new artistic elements showing the Islamic and Arabic effect on construction with the continuous development from era to another.

Despite the lack of effect of these mansions – because they affected by destruction and distortion – and the residual is little, but these effect has a major role in appearing the character of Islamic architecture in each Islamic era and it provides valuable information.

Old history books, recent studies and excavations have collected much valuable and rich information and excavations have discovered the residual of these mansions and their building methods.

Definitely, these mansions were like a mirror reflecting the era and thoughts of Islamic nation through masterpieces of art which it has produced.

### **Mansions of the Umayyad Era:**

Islam has appeared in Arabian Peninsula in culturally poor environment and Hejaz had not known - till that date – a significant architectural works. Islam – when appeared – has characterized by very simplicity that reflected on the architectural art, and after Prophet Mohammed died, the period of caliphs had expired and the Umayyad state had been established, the simplicity era had expired, to begin a new stage in the art of construction and architecture.

The Umayyad state has been established in the Levant, and Damascus became its capital. It was known that –before Islamic conquest – the Levant was part of the Byzantine state, so when Umayyad state has been established, Umayyads have clearly affected by the byzantine architecture style with insertion of some characters of Islamic civilization, and that has appeared in building of their mosques and mansions. This means that, at this period the Islamic architectural art was mixture of the ruling arts in the Levant in addition to some features of Islamic architecture, this resulted in: production of architectural merge manifested by creativity and originality, appearing of the ability of artists in developing of excerpted elements, modifying and using them according to their need and the Arabian taste. The effect of that manner was seen especially in building of mansions, because the Umayyad caliphs – after the established their state in the Levant – had become familiar with life of cities, and they keen to excel earlier civilizations which were ruling in the area, and that explained by their strong interest in building mansion for them in sporadic places.

### **We have two types of mansions:**

(1) Bawadi: which are rural mansions, simply established in sporadic places of Badia far from cities, which fit their desire to enjoy simple life of Badia and to get away from the noise of the city.

(2) High Mansions with High Walls and Fences: they constructed mansions on the mountaintops for summer residence, as they built warm mansions for winter.

This types of mansions was characterized by capacity, beauty, accuracy of ornamentation, marble columns and mosaic, and also they were decorated with different birds, trees, foliage, and fruits forms. These mansions were also characterized by the great number of rooms especially the upper sides which were specified for women. These superior sides were surrounded by (Mashrabiya) windows of woods for entrance of air and light and to prevent seeing from outside. The lower floors were specified for reception. On the other side, these mansions were surrounded by gardens full of different trees of palms and grapes, to make these mansions royal places, where caliph spends a lot of time to plot affairs of the state.

The general designing of Umayyad mansions: these mansions have established according to similar designing and united architectural form, based on the principle of surrounding fence and internal plate faced by corridors followed by rooms in one or two floors, and the external fence takes impregnable form without openings or ornamentations.

These towers and fences may be for showing the building with the appearance of stamina and strength, or because they were found adjacent to the Badia and near to the tribes which can attack for spoliation especially in the absence of caliph, so these mansions have established in the form of defensive castle from inside and outside, supported by towers and free of openings.

The fact is that, Umayyad mansions were characterized by simplicity of external form, but from inside they were an encaustic, decorated with motifs and mosaic and stone ornamentation.

The Umayyad mansions have acquired the development of the life of luxury which experienced by caliphs, so that was reflected on the mansions; small mansions and stately mansions which reflect for us the greatness of this era and the surprising victories achieved by Muslims.

The era of Walid bin Abdul Malik is the era of entrance of the Islamic architecture the field of ornamentation and the stylishness of construction, and that returned to the political stability and flourishing of economy in his era.

The fact is that, the architecture and ornamentation of all mansions built in the Umayyad have expressed the big advantage acquired by Arabs from the arts of the countries which they have conquered, and it – at the same time – was an evidence of the greatness of the Umayyad architecture art.

### **The most important mansions built in Umayyad era:**

Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan has established – in the first century of Hijra – Al khadra mansion in Damascus, which have not left any trace of it. Its location was southern to the Umayyad mosque, and it was mentioned by Almagdisi :” from Alkhadra Dar – which is sultan dar – there are doors leading to the compartment (which is a place for caliphs and price to say prayers)”, he said.

Yazid bin Muawiyah has resided in Hawarin mansion, but Marwan bin Mohammed has resided in Jabiyah mansion. Abdul Malik bin Marwan has established the three mansions in Jerusalem (Alsanbarh, Baalbek and Guensrin).

In the era of Walid bin Abdul Malik, there were many mansions have constructed. He has established the mansions of Manniah, Sarh, Amra and Assis. Suleiman bin Abdul malik has established a mansion for himself, and Yazid II bin Abdul Malik also has established Al Muwaqqar mansion in Balqa. The architecture has flourished in the era of Hisham bin Abdul Malik, who built in Resafa Al-Hayr Al-Gharbi palace, Al-Hayr Al-Sharqi palace and Al-Mafjar palace. Yazid II bin Yazid has established Mushatta and Tuba palace, but Marwan bin Mohammed – the last caliphs of Umayyad – has established Harran palace.

### **Amra Palace:**

Located about fifty kilometer western to the northern tip of Dead Sea, its construction was due to the era of Alwalid bin Abdul Malik – the 6<sup>th</sup> Umayyad caliphs – and consisted of: (1) rectangular reception room with two vaults dividing it into three corridors, each corridor has a roof with semicircular cellar, the middle corridor in the southern side was connected with a big bend, which there were two small rooms without windows at its two sides, (2) rooms, (3) stores and (4) barns.

At near distance from this big seat, there was a bathroom consisting of three small rooms, the first has roof with semicircular cellar, the second has roof with tow facing cellars, and the third has hemispherical dome. This bathroom was similar to that which were known in this area in Roman era, and also there was a big room for the dressing, and near to it, there were two compartments, then the cold hall, the cool hall and the hot hall which prepared with steam tubes.

This building was characterized by wonderful wall drawings. There are drawings of hunting and bath on the walls of the palaces, in addition to nominal drawing for the gods of poetry and philosophy, birds and animals drawing and plant decorations.

The most important carving of this era, is a drawing of caliph on his throne, his head was surrounded by corona, above him there was a sunshade carried by two spiral columns and he was surrounded by two persons. There was a keffiyeh writing on the vault of the sunshade, circumventing many of its parts.

**Assis Palace:**

Located on the south-east of Damascus. It is one of the Umayyah Badia palaces, consists of the first mosque and bathroom, which considered the oldest Islamic bathroom located outside the cities. It was characterized by its plaster ornamentation which was the oldest in the history of Islamic ornamentation. The mansion was composed of a surrounding fence; there were three circular towers in its corners and in the middle of its three sides. On the middle of the northern wall there was an inlet which surrounded by two towers. The length of fence side was about sixty six meters and the inlet passageway ended by the plate which surrounded by halls in two floors, and the most important of both was the halls of the five units which were parallel to the middle tower from the three northern directions.

The palace was decorated with plaster ornament in its face with mural ornament on the top of windows forming arches, and the halls were also carved with single color drawings or plant decorations. The second floor was covered with drawings.

**Al-Hayr Al-Gharbi palace:**

Established by Husham bin Abdul Malik, located on the south-west of Tadmor, its side length square was 70 × 71 m and its external wall was supported by circular towers except the north-west angle which Byzantine tower found, and semicircular towers supporting the midlines of the three walls except the eastern wall, where there was an opened gate surrounded by two semicircular and decorated towers from the two ends.

This palace has built from stones to height of two meters, then from brick with wooden beams, and the gate was connected through passageway to the courtyard surrounded by corridors carried on old columns. In the middle of the courtyard there was a small basin. Houses were surrounding the courtyard in two floors, and you see the halls and rooms of the palace arranged within six houses, which were separated from each other.

There were two wooden stairs indicating that there was another floor with houses and room matching to their parallel in the first floor, and the light enters through apertures, but openings were windows with plaster net of fantastic form.

There was water tank, where water reached it from Kharbaqa dam, supplying the mosque and the bathroom and there were divisions found in the stone channels which were transferring water. The bathroom was located to the north of the palace, about thirty meters far from the old tower, which was composed of hot and cold divisions, its ground was brushed by marble, and the walls was colored by paste colored according to the marble, and the steam was passing through the spaces under the ground similar to bathroom of short life.

**Al-Hayr Al-Sharqi palace:**

Located north-east Tadmor, at distance of sixty kilometer from Rusafa. It was an integrated cities, its landmarks are still found and the most prominent of these landmarks is two palaces. Each palace is supported by semicircular towers. There is a gate in the big palace with two towers at its two margins, then a passageway ends in courtyard surrounded by rooms in two floors, so this palace has many number of inlets. The small palace has only one inlet and its courtyard is surrounded by wide rooms, which was constructed by stones with variable ornaments of geometric and plant drawings.

**Kharbat – Al-Mafjar palace:**

Located near to Jericho and was established by caliph Hisham bin Abdul Malik to be a royal lounge, characterized by the abundance of decoration and the excavations have discovered that there was a palace, mosque, bathrooms, anterior courtyard with columns and a pool decorated with ornaments.

It looks like Romanian castles in its planning. There are supported towers in its four corners and an anterior space with columns extends until the northern boundaries of the bathroom.

Most of the courtyard space has left empty, except in the center where a pool found with variable ornaments. The pool is square in shape, topped by a great dome with eight sides over four arches, and it was decorated with the most beautiful ornaments. The palace was composed of two floors with balconies in the top.

The mosque was located northern to the palace, but was not roofed except the southern part, which Mihrab located.

Bathrooms were located in the north side and consisted of large number of large halls. There were halls for hot bathroom, cold bathrooms and a room for the steam. In the north-west corner there was a room for rest, and its floor was decorated with the finest mosaics.

#### **Al-Moshatta Palace:**

It is a big palace with high walls and fences, located south-east of Oman city and has established by Umayyad Caliph \ Alwaleed II. The palace is surrounded by square fence, its side length is 144 m, and also by twenty five circular towers except the two towers of the inlet which are half octagon. The palace is characterized by its division, it is divided into three sides, the middle one is divided into three parts, the north and south parts are composed of main buildings but the third part consists of passages and rooms of the mosque, and from it the single gate opens which adorned from outside by frontage decorated with forms of upright and upturned triangles and prominent drill in a form of rose.

The most aesthetically prominent landmark in Al-Moshatta palace is the ornaments drilled on the limestone in the frontal side where the inlet located. This frontage has transferred to the Islamic department at the museum of Berlin.

The main features of stone ornament of the palace frontage is that, it was made by mixture of Byzantine, Hellenistic, and Sassanid methods, and it looks like Ghassanid construction of palaces in the Levant and Iraq.

#### **Toba palace:**

Located at far south of Umayyad palaces in Jordan desert in Algadaf valley at a distance of hundred kilometer from south-east Oman. Its length is 140 m and its width is 73 m. there are five circular towers supporting its external walls from north, and two towers from east and west, in addition to four towers in the corners with circular shape.

In the south, there is one tower in the middle of the wall with unfamiliar planning and to the sides of the two inlets there are two square towers and each inlet opens toward a courtyard surrounded by different-space rooms opening toward each other. This palace really divided into two identical separated by a passageway. This palace is characterized by Umayyad style in stone sculpture, as it has established by stones and bricks.

#### **Feature of Umayyad Architecture:**

We you see the Umayyad palaces, you notice that the Umayyad style of Islamic architecture, which has developed in the Levant, has excerpted its first constituents and its artistic features from the environment which it has been borne, in addition to some effects which form together the artistic characters of the Umayyad style.

The Umayyad art has flourished in the first century and the beginning of the second century of Hijra. It was a luxury model which had spread all over Islamic regions as well as Andalusia. The palace established in that era has inherited its first origins from artistic schools which were spreading and flourished in the Levant such as Hellenistic, Romanian sassanian arts, by virtue of neighboring.

It is worth mentioning that, the artistic manner in the Umayyad era had reached its top of development due to the system followed by Umayyad caliphs, as they depended on skilled builders and artists from the neighboring regions, and providing of industry and construction materials. Despite the Umayyad architecture has taken its architecture origins from old artistic traditions which were ruling at that time, but it still maintaining Islamic spirit, and it has created its own architectural and artistic elements.

The architectural elements were similar in these mansions, so you find semicircular vaults, neighboring vaults and domes and they were almost similar in all palaces which established by Umayyad. In the artistic designs, mosaic was mostly used with Sassanid style especially in inscriptions and statues. Definitely, the architecture and ornamentation explains the greatness of Umayyad architecture.

Umayyad also excelled in building of palaces, bathrooms and lounges, and they left a group of palaces in cities or desert. Most of these palaces have constructed in one manner to be as small fortresses bounded by high fences and supported by towers.

**Palaces in Iraq in the Abbasid era:**

After the capital of authority had transferred from the Levant to Iraq, the architecture had affected by the natural element of the region as well as the architecture of the past civilization in Mesopotamian and Sassanid, which had left its effect on that region before Islam. Abbasids has increased their connection with different civilizations and their interest in the architecture and ornamentation. After Iraq state has established, the concern of building of luxury palace has increased, so there was mixture of Islamic architecture in Abbasid era and architecture of other civilizations resulting in extravagance in building of palaces with some differences which distinguished Abbasid architecture and made its own style.

**The most prominent Abbasid palace:****Bab Al thahab palace:**

The palace of Al Mansoor was known as Bab Al thahab or Al thahab because the gold (thabab) that used to decorate a door in the palace, and also was called Dar Caliph Palace because it was set of caliph, Assalam palace refered to Baghdad which called Assalam city by caliph, and Abi Jafar palace.

Located in the center of Baghdad and it was the first palace that Al Mansoor has established by himself since 145 AH, then he resided on 149 AH.

The palace space was four hundred arm with a green dome in the center which seen from boundaries of Baghdad. Under the dome these was a divan at the level of the ground with twenty arm space. There was great Ewan of Persian style and a vaulted passage - under a dome - from the door of the palace leading to Dar (house) fenced by columns and has closets with upholstered walls and floor. There was a fantastic dome where the light passed.

When Baghdad had developed, Al Mansoor has established a new mansion and called it "Al Khold palace", then he went to, so Al thahab palace was left to be used for hospitalit, which ambassadors spent before they permitted to meet caliph.

**Al Khold palace:**

Al Khatib Albaghdadi said about it:" Al Mansoor palace was called Alkhold palace as it looks like Janat Alkhold (perpetuation paradise), because it has nice views and fantastic sense..." it was one of the palaces established by Abo Jaafar Al Mansoor in Baghdad on 157 AH after completion of his city building and extending to its roads. The builders were Al rabea bin Yonos and Ebban bin Sidqa and its site was behind Bab Khorasan (Khorasan door).

It was mentioned by Al Khatib Albaghdadi on 463 AH, but now it has been lost, so no trace.

History did not mention any thing about the palace constituents, but normally, no one of the luxury palaces built without Ewan, and this constructional method remains till the least eras.

This palace was famous by the marriage of Zubaida bint Jaafar Al Mansoor by Haroon Ar-rashid, where he had spent before he became caliph, Alfadl bin Yahya had visited him there, Almoatasim was born here on 161 AH, and Alameen had been staying in Alkhold palace when he listened that his fater Haroon Ar-rashid died.

**Jaafari palace:**

It is one of the famous Baghdad palaces in abbasid era, established by Jaafar bin Yahya Albarmaki in the eastern side of Baghdad. Alyaghoot Alhamawi has mentioned that it has constructed in the known area in Baghdad – Almostansir road. He had provided the palace with garden full of plants and trees which yielded a very beautiful fruits, so he expense so more. Almamoom went to spend there, which became the most places he loved.

Part of the yard has been separated to become a field for horses' race and Alsoalj game. This palace has been transferred to Mu'tadid Abbasi, who had extended it and added a fence as well as he gave an order to build a new mansion in the land of Jaafari palace. This least mentioned palace adjacent to Degla River with a great whetstone in order to resist water flow. The palace was constructed on five vaults, each vault on ten cylinders with five arms.



Almoktafi has established a dome - near to the palace – known later as Alhimar (the donkey) dome, because caliph has climbed riding a small donkey. It was high and looked like a semicircle. Despite there was a blot that had attacked the palace, burned it and continued nine days, but it had re-built again in the era of Abbasid caliph\ Almogtafi then Almostadhae on 574, but nothing has been left from this old palace except its name in the late of Abbasid state.

#### **Jawsage Khaqani Palace:**

Jawsag is a Persian Arabized word means palace. It is one of the most important palace established and resided by Almoatasim for a long his term of reign and when he died buried there.

It was characterized by high construction as it had established on land facing the left riverbank of Degla. The frontage contained three Ewan, the middle was used for receptions, which was a hole with width of eight meter and depth of seventeen meters, but other Ewan was littler than the middle. This Ewan leads to sequential group of wide rooms with sequential door, then a big plate of square-shape found which decorated by mosaic, followed by another buildings which may be for women. After that, there is an extended empty space penetrated by a flowered channel and far away from this empty space there is a hollow bended by small corridors and cellars playing the role of crypt, which apparently are underground halls used in summer. This huge group ended by a wide playground for horse racing and Jawkan football sport. This palace was characterized by large number of mural decorations which were prominent plaster decorations.

#### **Balkuara Palace:**

It believed that was established in the era of caliph Motawakil. It looked like Almoshatta, Ukhaydir and Jawasg palace. There were two sequenced fences, in the middle part of the first two rectangular plates, in its joint there was separated pavilion. The middle part of the second fence included a beautiful group of corresponding buildings and a plate as a complementary for this building. We find the three Ewans in these buildings opened into two anterior and posterior frontages, there were four rectangular-shaped halls arranged as a cross surrounded by a big hole. There were intersected passages extended in the courtyard separating spaces which may be had been planted.

This palace was characterized by its many murals which had harmonic ornaments from brick and plaster.

#### **Al Aashig Palace:**

Known as Almaashooq and mentioned by Yaqoot Alhamawi:”it is name for a great palace” he said. It was constructed on the right riverbank of Degla in the era of Almoatamad caliph. It looked like a castle rather than caliph house. It composed of external rectangular-shape fence supported by rounded struts, there were converged sanctuaries – its upper arch was segmented - carved between them. Each one of the four corners of the fence had a tower, six medium towers in the east and west sides, four towers in the south side and only two towers in the north side because there was a prominent gate.

But it has broken down by Moez Aldawla Albuehi and transferred its bricks in order to build his own palace known as Al Dar Al Moeziya.

#### **Al Ukhaydir Palace:**

Located in Iraq about fourty meters south-west from Karbala, where found within Iraq Badi (desert). At the time when it has been established, the ground was rich, supplied by Al Forat via channel system.

This palace was referred to the prince Isa bin Musa one of the members of Abbasid family, and consisted from innovative elements in the art of immunization and military architecture. The castle consisted of square courtyard bounded by high fence with 21 m, each one of its side was 169 m and it was supported by a series of towers from all direction with a large tower in each corner of 5 meters in diameter. There was a big tower with a door in the middle of each side, so the number of towers bending this palace from all directions was 48, and there were arch-shaped walls that extending between towers.

The palace which established inside the castle had rectangular shape and looked like Almoshatta palace style, with five part division, the first contained the official divan with sets for suite and guests, the second was reception lounge, the third and fourth was women seat and the fifth contained sets for servants, kitchen and bathroom.

The most distinct feature of this palace was the throne hall which located on the axis of main entryway with frontage raised over the lateral rooms. It was a large Ewan covered by a cellar with square-shape hall at its end. The frontage of throne has divided into three floors. There were cavities in the balcony space with vaulted curvatures decorated with overlapped bricks in different forms. The balcony space the throne halls and its rooms was bounded by a passageway with four surrounding separated houses. There were many types of ornaments and methods have been used in roofing and decorating palace rooms and its passageways such as; semi-barrel-shaped cellars, intersected cellars separated by vaults of bricks and this manner had known in Sassanid construction appearing the effect of Persian architecture principally the Ewans, in addition, there were new forms of arched had appeared known as Abbasid arches.

Through studding of some models of Abbasid palaces, we knew that Islamic architecture in Abbasid era has characterized by many artistic features; palaces was large with wide space and courtyards, and its room was rich in decoration. Because Abbasid state has been developed in Iraq, it benefited from the effects and arts of Persian and Mesopotamian. It has inherited a lot of architectural inherit from old civilizations in Alhilar Alkhasib (Fertile Crescent) land, and converted it to Islamic and Arabic architecture. Abbasid architecture of palace has reflected another manner of Islamic architecture conversion. The decoration elements had spread use in Abbasid buildings on plaster dress which done by molding method on the frontage of Abbasid buildings from inside and outside, the vaults margins and windows openings.

Thus, combination of Islamic civilization in Abbasid era with other civilization had led to Abbasid's interest in ornamentation and their prodigality for building large yards of palaces and decorating them, that considered as developed which was not found in the simplicity of the first Islamic era. Abbasid architecture also was characterized in building thick fences supported by semicircular towers. The fact is that, all architecture that had reached us from that era is really an architectural miracle certifying the greatness of Islamic architecture at that time.

### **Palace Building in Egypt in Islamic Era**

#### **Tulunid State Era:**

Not just the events which had happened in Egypt certifying that Ahmad Tulun was an excellently fighter and politician, but all buildings that he had established in Egypt indicating that he was also a great constructor and had tended to construct luxury buildings commensurate with the king of Egypt.

Bin Tulun had started to establish Alktaea city on 256 AH for insuring his competition with court of Abbasid caliph in samarra and to take his disproportionate army away from residents of Fustat.

He has established his palace which became as nucleus of the city and the palace known as Maydan palace was one of the most important building established by Bin Tulun in Alktaea city.

Bin Tulun was supervising the builders by himself in executing palace building as mentioned by Albalawi that he had being early visited workers in the worksite and given them a lot.

Despite that this palace had been completely studied, but we can read the features of Tulunid art generally as it had been affected – in its design and ornamentation – by the Abbasid architecture and palaces. So Egypt was a theater for the Abbasid effect came from the east, and this indicates that Abbasid era in Baghdad and architecture art in Egypt were connected to each other. This confirmed by the architectural traces found behind Tulunid, Okhchidan, Fatimid and Mamluk.

#### **Almaydan Palace:**

“Ahmed Tulun had constructed his palace below to the air dome, extended and beautified it. He made a large field for Alsoalj, and called Almaydan palace because of Maydan (field)”; the Arabian sources describing.

He had made doors for the field each with its name; the Almaydan (field) door, for entrance and exist of most army, and also known as Alsoalj door, Alkhassa (private) door, Aljabal (mountain) door, because it was facing Mokkatam, Alharam door, for their servants and wives only, Aldarmon door, for the doorkeeper, Alsaj door, which



had made from Alsaj (teak) wood, As-salat door, leading to the mosque which he had established and Alsibaa door, because there were two lions had been drawn on it.

The road which Bin Tulun had been exist through was long, so he cut it with a wall and made three doors, but he had used the middle one.

The palace had windows opened to all sides of doors and faced them.

He had constructed at Alsibaa door a divan in order to overlook – on the night of Eid – Alktaea, to see boys and their movement, preparedness and behave in their needs, and also to see the sea and Fustat city.

Water had reached the palace through the southern desert via hanging aqueducts, which their traces has remained till now.

Architecture had not affected by the death of Tulunid state founder on 270 AH, but it had continued and extended in the era of his son Chmarawiyeh. Bin Dammaq has described this activity:” he had not abated construction during his life, and his son had continued and increased it by adding crown, mercury pool and golden dome”, he means his increase in Tulunian palace and the field.

#### **Al thahab house:**

In the era of Chmarawiyeh bin Ahmed Tulun the palace had been interested, he has extended it and added a new industrial park with different types of rare trees and basils. He had covered the roots of trees with golden cooper, which was a manner known in Irag.

History sources have mentioned that: Chmarawiyeh had made - in his house – a divan called “Al thahab (gold) house” inasmuch as its walls had been pasted with gold and lapis lazuli.

He had made prominent pictures on its walls made from wood 2 meter height which were his image and his courtesans. He had made jeweled crowns from pure gold on their tops and heavy weight earring on their ears. These picture had been fixed on walls by pins, and their bodies had been dressed with clothes stained with marvelous colors, so this palace was one of the most wonderful buildings.

The mercury pool which was famous in that era, had been established in the center of Al thahab house. It was established because Chmarawiyeh had insomnia and his doctor advised him to make a pool filled with mercury 50×50 arms space. He had made plowshares of pure silver with belts of silk in a ring of silver, and counterpane filled with air, which set down on the pool and the belts of silk tightened for the prince to lay down, so the counterpane shakes and the mercury moves till the prince sleeps.

Chmarawiyeh had built in this palace air dome-shaped house called: Ad-dakka”, so it was one of the most beautiful building, and he had put luxurious carpets and curtain to prevent heat and cold. He was often sit in this dome to overlook all what were found in his home such as gardens and so on, and to see the desert, the mountain and the city.

Unfortunately, no nothing remains from this greatness after few years except some traces of the mercury pool.

Study of palace architecture in Tulunid era shows that Egypt was a theater for Abbasid effect which came from the east as the effect of Samarra had maintained in the urbanized Tulunid buildings. Tulunid architecture was a mirror reflecting Samarra arts, whereas the pictures and wooden statue decorating Al thahab house confirm this idea, in addition, this manner is the same manner of decoration used in Samarra.

Tulunid decoration has depended on use of carved plaster ornaments, whereas walls had been built from bricks and covered with decorated plaster of many forms such as geometric, plants, grape foliage forms, which is the same manner used in Sammara buildings.

Tulunids seem to have used some artists and skilled makers from Irag to seek help in planning and building their palaces, spans and religion facilities, so, the artistic manner became similar to construction and decoration manner in Baghdad and Samarra.

**Palaces in Alakhchidi era:**

The family of Chmarawiyeh Ahmed bin Tulun did not last more, but it had extirpated in a worsen way and their buildings and palaces had destroyed including its luxury and pageantry and nothing remains except some trace building.

The authority had transferred to one of the strong Turkish called Mohammed Taghj Alakhchid to create Alakhchid state, but the luxury of Alakhchid and who came after cannot be compared with Tulunid.

The most famous palace of this period was Albostan Alkafoori (camphor garden) palace, which located outside the city, and may be in the garden known as (camphor garden).

He had built for himself a new palace at a cost of hundred thousand dinar adjacent to Karun pool near to Bin Tulun Mosque, but the rottenness that regenerated from still water encouraged him to leave the palace.

Some historians told us about the luxury of albostan where Alakhchid had spent, but it was a little luxury when compared with that of Tulunid. They mentioned that it had been established in that camphor garden with doors made from iron, racetrack, and horse stable. It had also garden, house for guards and boys, stores for clothes and furniture. Mohammed Taghj Alakhchid had spent in this palace and walked, then his caliphs had followed him till Kafoor era. The western small palace had been built in of corners of it – in Fatimid era – so, it became a park for Fatimid where they had made sceneries.

The most feature of Alakhchid palace was the large quantity of its engarvings on walls, roofs, doors and windows, as well as use of many types of fantastic pictures and ornaments. They had favored using of plaster ornaments which had common use in that era. The most famous plasterer in this period was (Abi Omer) Osman, known as Aljassas (the plasterer).

**Fatimid Palaces:**

After he had succeeded in occupying Fustat on 358, the Fatimid leader / Jawhar Al- sikilly (the Sicilian), he had planned a new capital to meet Fatimid state needs, so he had established a big palace in the north plain for resident of Muiz when comes to Egypt. He had built house for solitaires and officers, bended the site with a fence of bricks which had seven doors, and converted it into a city called Cairo.

Historians – especially Almaqrizi - had taking a lot of about palaces and buildings of Fatimid in Cairo, and they gave us valuable information about this palaces, but nothing remain and all what we know, has been taken from history sources.

The general nature of Fatimid architecture is that it was in the north of Africa, and was characterized by simplicity with a great effect of local barbaric architecture. After transferring of Fatimid capital to Egypt and establishing of Cairo; the architecture style had become different. Egypt had benefited from Fatimid interest and become a prestigious cultural center, because Fatimid had aimed to compete with the capital of Abbasid – Baghdad, so Cairo become full of mansions, religious and civilian facilities which expressed the development and growth of Islamic and Arabic architecture in Egypt in that era until their state become famous for the big number of palaces and known as Al-Alawia Alqasriya state (mansion state of Ali). They had aimed – by this palaces – to express about their pageantry, luxury and prosperity, and their prestige and power, so they had interested in building palaces. Almaqrizi accurately described these palaces with what was found in them such as antiques, decorations and precious things.

**The most famous Fatimid palaces are:****1\ Great Eastern Palace:**

Its location was on the eastern side of Cairo, and globetrotter Nasir Khasro mentioned that:” the palace was found in the core of Cairo surrounded by an extent space from all directions and no body allowed to build near it.

The general planning of this palace was about seventy acres of space, and contained twelve wings and small palace in addition to ten prominent doors bending the palace.

The palace has been connected to other palaces by passageways engraved underground, which prepared for caliph to move from palace to other.

The most important feature of these palaces were Al thahab (the gold) hall. There were two halls; gold hall and silver hall, the first was for throne and the second was for meetings. Walls had been covered by gold, and the throne had been jeweled by gemstone, put on a golden platform and banded by brushwood of palms of gold, heavy with fruits and roses from gemstone and it had birth of gold decorated by varied color enamel.

The eastern palace initially consisted of three buildings, rectangular in shape of different sizes, but all were considered as three quadrant of the squares, and the remained north-east square was the salon where celebrations take place.

The studies and excavations had discovered number of houses dating to Fatimid era, and most of them consisted of a geometric system based on two perpendicular axes met in the middle of opened courtyard, square or rectangular, in each side there was a corridor with three openings. The middle opening was wider than other two opening where two buttresses of bricks separated from them. In the vertex of the corridor – which was a large hall – there were two small separated rooms, and that means it was a group consisted of a corridor with a hall inside it.

The gold hall was designed according to this style which transferred to Cairo buildings from Fustat, and it believed that, this style was common in this era.

The gates of Fatimid palace was opened in long and dark passageways leading to several rooms and halls, but the big Ewan established by Al-Aziz in the palace was where he sit to read records and to meet people.

It had believed that, the idea of building Ewans has transferred from Persian to Islamic architecture in Iraq, and used first in palaces and then to all over Islamic state.

Caliph palace was the most wonderful building, because its ground had been brushed by large carpet made of silk and golden fibers of all colors, its walls were covered by drawings of people, animals, birds which aglow with red jewel and emerald, and by thousands of gemstones, in addition to two great seats for caliph made of pure gold and ornamented by gemstones and precious lobes.

The palace also includes many underground passages connecting it to small western palace.

## **2) Small Western Palace:**

Its location was on west of the great eastern palace, established by Al-Aziz on 450 AH, its width was 275 meters and its length reached the gulf. It had many gates, connected to the eastern palace by underground passageway, also known as the sea palace, and faced camphor garden.

There was a wide space known as (between the two palaces). Fatimid had overstated on ornamentation and beatifying this palace, as its ground was paved by mosaic, its roof was ornamented by beautiful decoration and in the middle there were founts where clear water had flow through tubes of gold and silver.

There were many other palaces established in Fatimid era, the most important palaces were; the gold (Althahab) palace, the sea (Albahr) palace, the tree (Al-shajara) palace, the emerald (Az-zumurrod) palace, the thorn (Ash-shawk), the breeze (An-nasim) palace and harem palace. It had been believed that, all these palace were halls and views use by caliphs and their families for rest and hiking, so they were known as flourishing or populated palaces.

## **Features of Fatimid architecture:**

Fatimid architecture styles were distinguished from other Islamic architecture styles, and have had its own impression of palaces and buildings established in this period.

The planning was prior to building, so they had imported skilled engineers and builders, and their experience was expressed on passages and cellars – which they had built - that connected the palaces with each other. They also interested on decoration walls and buildings that appeared on their palaces and artists had competed in this field. Marble and brick were commonly used, and their abundance all over the state – especially stone pit of Aswan - had encouraged Fatimid to use them in their palaces and buildings, so they had been used on walls. The artists had made and left behind marble drawings, niches and floors, some of them had made of colored marble pieces and others from seashell inlaid marble pieces.

There is no doubt that, what had been mentioned in describing these palaces in history source is just reflecting the ability level of builders and constructors and interest of Fatimid caliphs in building palaces, and showing the development of plaster and marble manufacture and their use in decorating of palaces and other facilities until their palaces become one of the verses of beauty and art and a good indicator of architecture development and what was left by Islamic architecture behind in its flourished eras.

#### **4\ Architecture in Ayyubid era:**

After two centuries and half of Fatimid rule, the Fatimid state had been overturned and one of the ministers of Fatimid caliphs\ Salah Ad-din Al Ayyuby had succeeded in establishing Ayyubid state in Cairo, then extended to involve all Egypt, the Levant and Hijaz.

Ayyubid style in building had been affected by war and its preparations, so most facilities of Ayyubid era was on a high level of immunity and readiness to war and that appeared on immune palaces and castles.

An example of these architectural masterpieces is castle of Salah Ad-din, which is his most prominent building, and thanked him for the expansion of the capital and its luxury ornamentation.

#### **Castle of Salah Ad-din:**

Established by Salah Ad-din on 584 AH on the eminence of Mokattam mountain and he had given an order to build; a fence bending Cairo, and Aljabal (mountain) castle. He had charged the prince Baha'a Ad-din Karakus to supervise this huge work and he had added new facilities to it, but building of the castle had not been completed till the era of the king \Kamil when he became Sultan on Egypt later. The king Kamil had added many modifications that changed the castle landmarks; one of them was building of the first palace in the castle and main towers to be the government house, and continued so till establishing of Abdin palace.

The castle was consisted of two areas according to mountain relieves; the north area was rectangular in shape with prominent tower and the south area was smaller than the northern one and its fence had no towers and separated from the north area by a 50 meters long wall, which was a thick fence with towers and had a door called A Ijawani. The south is included different facilities such as palaces, houses and stables. It was one of achievements of Almalik Al Kamil. The north castle had been established by Salah Ad-din Al Ayyubi which was more impregnable. The castle had many gates, one of them called Almodarraaj which was the main gate of the castle with memorial writing for name of Salah Ad-din and his vizier Baha'a Adin Karaku, and the other was Aljabal gate which established by the prince Ridwan Katakhtha on 1168 AH.

Andalusian globetrotter Ibn Jubair who had visited Egypt on 621 AH and seen the work of castle building, when the work was in progress, said that, it was an impregnable castle built by a great number of builders and cost great amount, whereas marble had been sawed, stone had been incised and a big trench had been excavated.

Other palaces had been established in Ayyubid era in Cairo such as As-salihiya palace which established by Najm Ad-din As-salih in Ar-roud castle and Alkamil palace which overlooked Nile.

Thus, Egypt had unique architectural activity in Ayyubid era, manifested by expansion of the city, renewal of its fence, and constructing of many palaces and castles which filled of mosques, palaces, bathrooms, (Qaysarria) and other places, so this architectural activity must had a great growth noticeable on the architectural arts.

The Ayyubid buildings were characterized by simplicity of ornamentation because of war, but it was strong, firm and masterly designed as well as it depended on largely carved stone, as Ibn Junair had mentioned when he had visited Egypt in that period. The towers and fences were bigger and stronger than what was known before, and also the gate had become higher with small Ewan topped by cornice vaults with colored parts, and despite of simplicity, but the engraving arts on woods and plaster had become better with nice samples.

## 5\ Palaces in Mamluk Era:

Mamluk also had interested in palaces architectures as other sultans had done, but it was too marvelous for them to establish many palaces while their lives were full of wars.

Arabic sources provided us large numbers of names of palaces established by Mamluk in Cairo, but they had been disappeared due to continuous distresses and nothing remains except their descriptions provided in history books. Many of these palaces were: Mankotmer palace, Aqoosh As-salahidar palace, Prince Burbis palace, Prince Slar palace, Khond palace, An-naq palace, palace of Prince Tinkiz who lined between to palaces, but nothing remains except little traces such as: palace of Prince Qosoon, palace of Bishtak and Palace of Saif Ad-din Taza.

An-nasir At-tawil era was a golden era of Mamluk building and architectural art, and the most prominent remained historical palaces of Mamluk which had wonderful decoration is the remains of Ablaq palace in Damascus, which established by the king Al Nasir Mohammed Qalawun on 718 AH in western side of the castle. There was a foyer with columns, constructed from black and white stones, and its cost was millions of pounds as what was said. These were passageways in the palace gate brushed by marble.

The palace had two Ewans, the greater one is the northern where Sultan overlooked on sultan stables, and in the second Ewan a special gate for existence of Sultan and his viziers to the great Ewan.

It was characterized by its captivating frontage with pictures of lions and tigers. The prince Saif Ad-din Qosoon had established Qosoon palace on 738 AH, located on western side of Sultan Hassan mosque, but nothing remains except the main entrance which contained architectural elements, and it was a big entrance similar to entrances of Mamluk era, with vaults, minute stalactites and covered by marble in addition to its establishment picture since era of King Al Nasir Mohammed bin Qalawun and the constructor Mohammed bin Ahmed and Ahmed Zaalash Al Shami.

One of palaces established in this era was Bashtak palace, which established by the prince Saif Ad-din Bashtak Al Nasiri on 735 AH, located in front of Sultan Bargoog School, and its entrance was composed of three intersected vaults with two terraces of two meters in its sides. Main entrance led to a passageway covered by cellar till the stable. Main hall was consisted of a large hall with four Ewans roofed by wood with decoration of wooden pieces and stalactites loped from its corners, and there was a fountain hall in the middle of the house made of colored marble flying out water to moisturize the ambience of the prince and his viziers.

Mamluk Sharaka was not less than their ancestors in architecture and building engineering, especially the era of Qaitbay which was a repetition of Al Nasir Mohammed Al Zahir era in architecture, whereas it reached the level that attracts hearts of visitors because of wonderful, taste, system, consistency, accuracy and skill which they found there. One of the most prominent palaces of this period was the palace of Prince Saif Al Din Taz, who is one of the famous princes in the era of marine state of Mamluk – and it was one of the most greatest palaces in Islamic Egypt in its space and construction, whereas the decoration that had been carved on a layer of minute plaster by hand instruments had been used there, in addition to ornamentation of walls by mosaic and the sidewalks by marble.

This study of palaces clarifies that, they were generally composed of a large hall including central hall with perpendicularly built four Ewans in form of a cross, in addition to other accessories such as rooms and hall.

The most import feature of palace architecture of Mamluk was the effect of wars but less than what was found in Salah Aldin era. The Islamic architecture had flourished in the era of Mamlik, whereas many distinct palaces had been constructed reflecting rich of art in that period.

in the term of architectural elements, we notice that, there was a development in construction of gates, whereas their Ewan became more high with extend windows, they also had overspent in decoration and used coloration in building blocks of walls, balconies and decorative tapes, they also had used coloration in inlaying wall pictures with marble or faience or mosaic which made of marble sweat of glossy seashell, in addition to carving on stone to form plant and geometric ornaments, a stalactites.

There was a common use of adjacent peaked vaults with black and white stone pieces in their marshes, peaked half-cylindrical cellars, intersected cellars and wooden roofs. Whereas the frontages was characterized by luxury to show pageantry and greatness appearance in their buildings and ornaments.

## Conclusion

Islamic civilization had unmasked superiority of Muslims architects in the field of architecture and construction, whereas they constructed many palaces throughout Islamic eras, which had used for residence of caliphs and princes and their corteges and had their cultural and political concern. These palaces were characterized by luxury, strength immunity, and had been interested by engineers and artists, so they were the spirit of creativity in field of architectural art and its progress as well as its great effect on history events.

Most of these palaces had been lost and nothing remains except traces, and although there are many studies of this architectural and civilizational wealth, many procedures of excavations to reach these wealth, but this is not enough and considered very little comparing with this great heritage and needs more search and study to extract more of this buried wealth that may discover more facts and information to get access to more about that period.

There were many features of palaces of Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Uyybid and Mamluk which built in the era of aldermen in the Levant, Iraq or Egypt, but the most important features are:

- Islamic art of architecture had affected by art of other civilizations which governed by Islam, and sure that nations are a city of closely similar cultures and arts, but Islamic art had succeeded in imbibition of different arts, affected and accepted their impression, because Islam had received its architectural source and its first constitutes from Islamic doctrine. On the other hand, Islam had benefited from old artistic tradition (Sassanid, Helinistid and Byzantine), but it still maintains its Islamic and Arabic spirit, and devised its special artistic and architectural elements, that had appeared on palaces building and ornamentation in that period.

- General planning of these palaces was similar, whereas it based on a surrounding fence and internal courtyard with facing corridors followed by rooms with one or two floors, with respecting that the fence takes an immune manner free of openings and decoration. This planning had appeared in palaces of Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Ayyubid, Mamluk and the era of aldermen, as building of palaces with high fences beatified by towers and the fearful huge gates where guards had shifted. Tower may be constructed in order to show building in strength and invincibility appearance.

- There were general features of those palace are; involvement of moaques, bathrooms, reception halls with different forms and levels, foyers of fountains and gardens, great number of wings associated to residence, and servants wings. Any one of these can be considered as a separate architectural facility.

- Palace that established after the third century of Hijra were more able to remin than what had been established in first Islamic civilization, and that had reflected on architecture of Abbasid palaces, which were a manner of conversion in Islamic architecture of palaces in that period, whereas it was characterized by unusual sizes as we can imagine that the palace is an independent city.

- A palace was a free field for encouragement of decoration, whereas mosaic, colored pictures, stone and plaster carvings had been used. We can clearly see that in the initial diversified Islamic palaces which have appeared after discovery of Amra and Mashatta palaces, as they contained ornaments of Islamic origin characterized by accuracy and beauty. Unfortunately, the remained decoration of these palaces and this wealth is just a very small part either intact or destroyed, and scientists of our era are working for drilling and detecting of this wealth and its landmarks and traces.

- Architecture in Egypt: although there was a deep rooted civilization in Egypt , but it had increased its heritage since Abbasid succession in Baghdad, with connected architectural arts and engineering, and that confirmed by the effects left by Tulunid, Fatimid, Ayyubid, Mamluk and prices of aldermen. Features of each era and stages of developments affirmed that Egypt is a country distinguished by correlation and gradation of that heritage and its architecture seemed to be a horizontal continuation of architecture transferred from east.

- We can estimate the value of simplicity of thinking, lack of complexity and flexibility of planning and designing in details and decoration in Islamic architecture throughout the features and characters which distinguish Islamic Architecture of palaces in that period and throughout architectural samples reached us via books of history sources or the remaining traces of these buildings or what was discovered by excavation.

We can say that, most bases and mores of Islamic and Arabic architecture – in terms of planning, formation and elements –are still useful to meet people needs, and surely, Islamic architecture had left a clear impression on history of the civilization which cannot be forgot.



Researcher.

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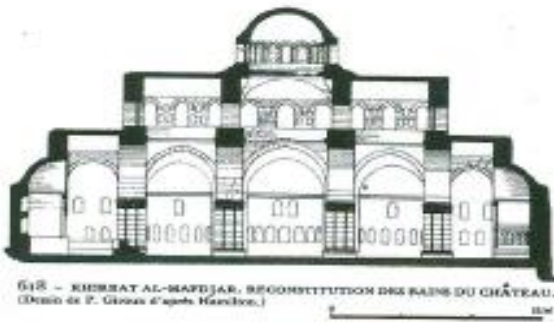
Attachment (1)

Architecture in the Umayyad period

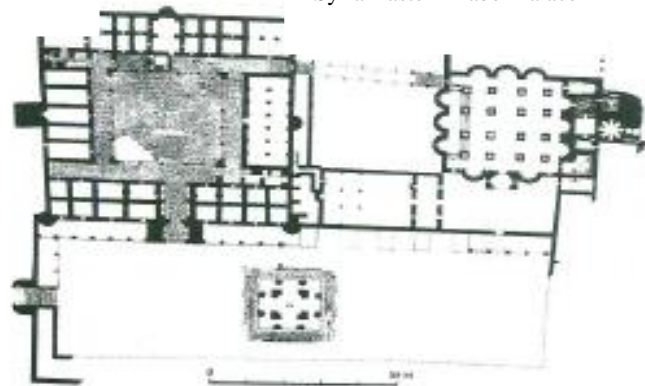


Jorden-Omra Palace

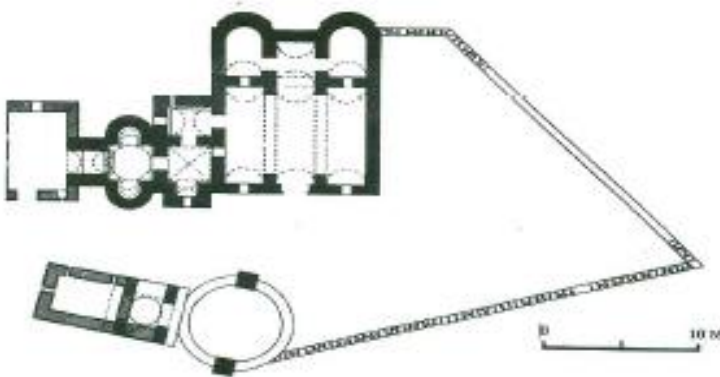
Syria-Eastern Haber Palace



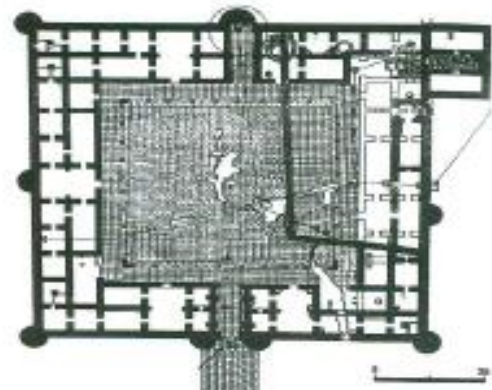
Aryha- Kimrat Al Mafjar-section



Aryha- Kimrat Al Mafjar-Map



Jorden-Omra Palace Map



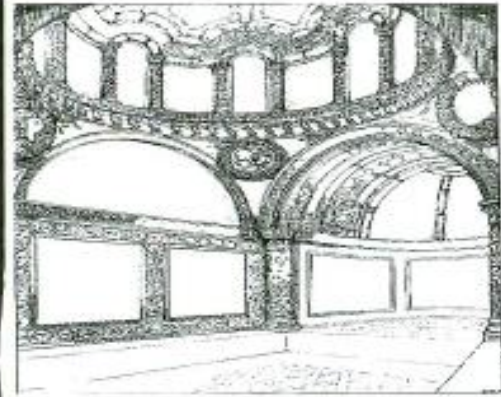
Western Haber Palace-Map

تصميم المهندس: الفهد -



Umayyad palaces in Sham Desert

سور القصر الأموي في بعلبك - وادي القصر -  
شاخت و بوزوريش: المرجع السابق ص ٧



شاخت و بوزوريش: المرجع السابق ص ٧  
شاخت و بوزوريش: المرجع السابق ص ٧

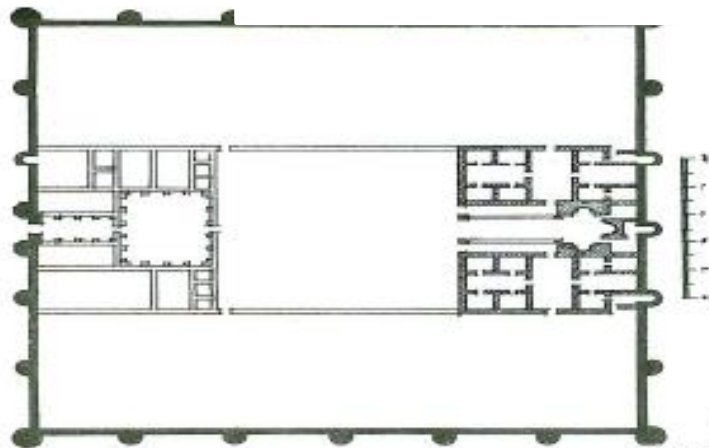


جزء من سور قصر المشفى - الأردن  
سنة ١٢٧ - ١٣٣ هـ ( ٧٤٤ - ٧٥٠ م )  
متحف برلين

( ص ٢٥ - الآثار الإسلامية )

Part of Mashta Palace -Jordan

(744-750) Berlin Museum



شاخت و بوزوريش: المرجع السابق ص ٧

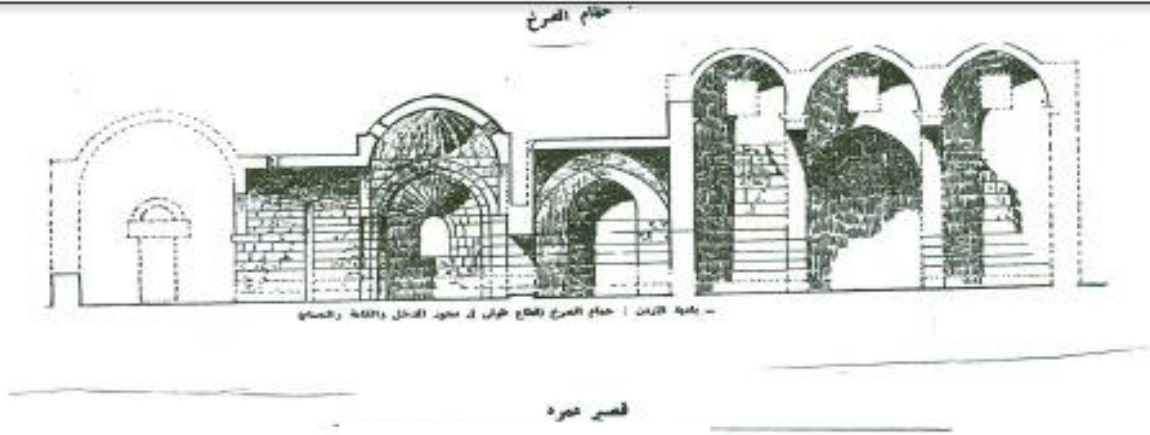
Mashta Palace: Jordan Desert

Attachment (2)



Attachment

(3)



Omra Palace



Omra Palace: Cross section for Hall and restroom



Omra Palace: for entry door

خريد الشاه



Attachment (4): Some models of the decoration in the Umayyad palaces



Mosaic in One of Hashem Palace Hall's floor at Rima



Attachment (5): Architecture in the Abbasid era

Old Palaces in Iraq Desert



Iraq Desert: Akather Palace Map



Iraq Desert: Akather Palace Map

بازار

Aerial photography



Attachment

(6)



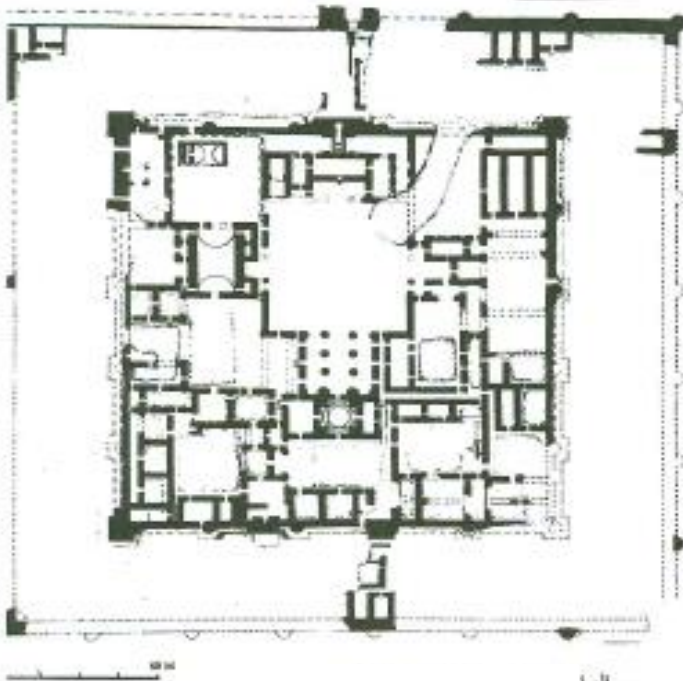
Bagdad- Abass Palace-Hall



Iraq-Akather Palace-Hall



Iraq-Akather Palace



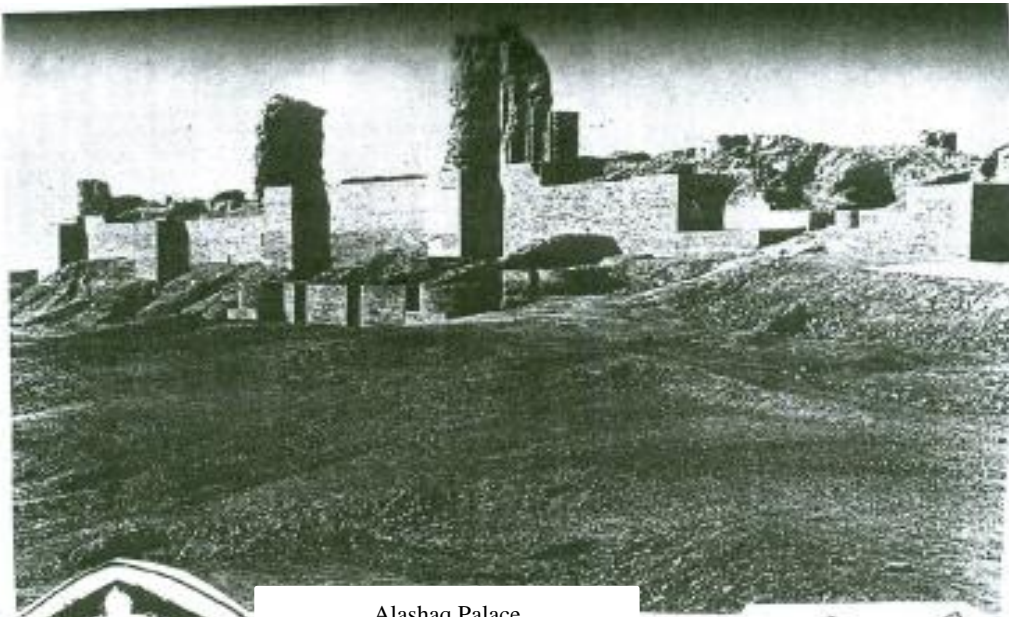
Iraq-Kofa Palace-Map



Bagdad- Morgan caravansary

Attachment

(7)



Alashaq Palace



Floral decoration of the Abbasid era



Floral decoration of the Abbasid era



Floral decoration of the Abbasid era



Floral decoration of the Abbasid era



Floral decoration of the Abbasid era



Floral decoration of the Abbasid era

طالب علي الشرنوبية: العرافة العربية والاسلامية (٢٠١٥) ٢٧٥-٢٧٦-٢٧٧  
 تصور



Attachment (8)



بامرا

Watermark image of Duke Fresco Palace in Samarra (836-839)

خليفة الرشيد المرحوم السابع ٢٠٠٩

(9) Attachment: Architecture in the Age Tulunid

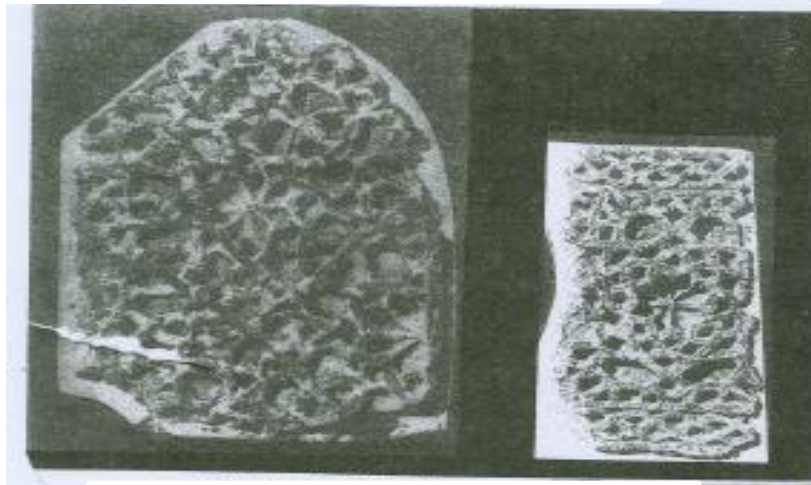
Tulunid of plaster decorations



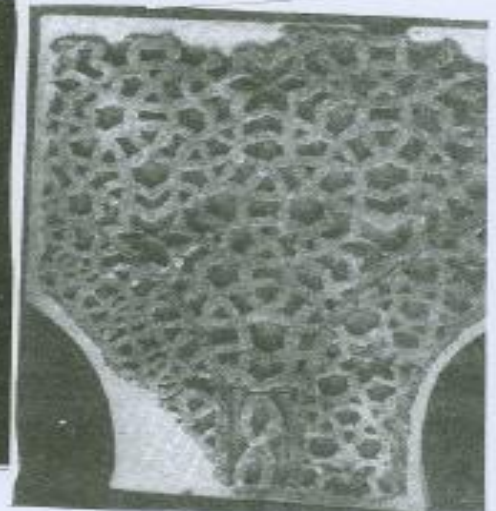
Fustat: geometric motifs of plaster



Fustat: geometric motifs of plaster



Fustat: geometric motifs of plaster



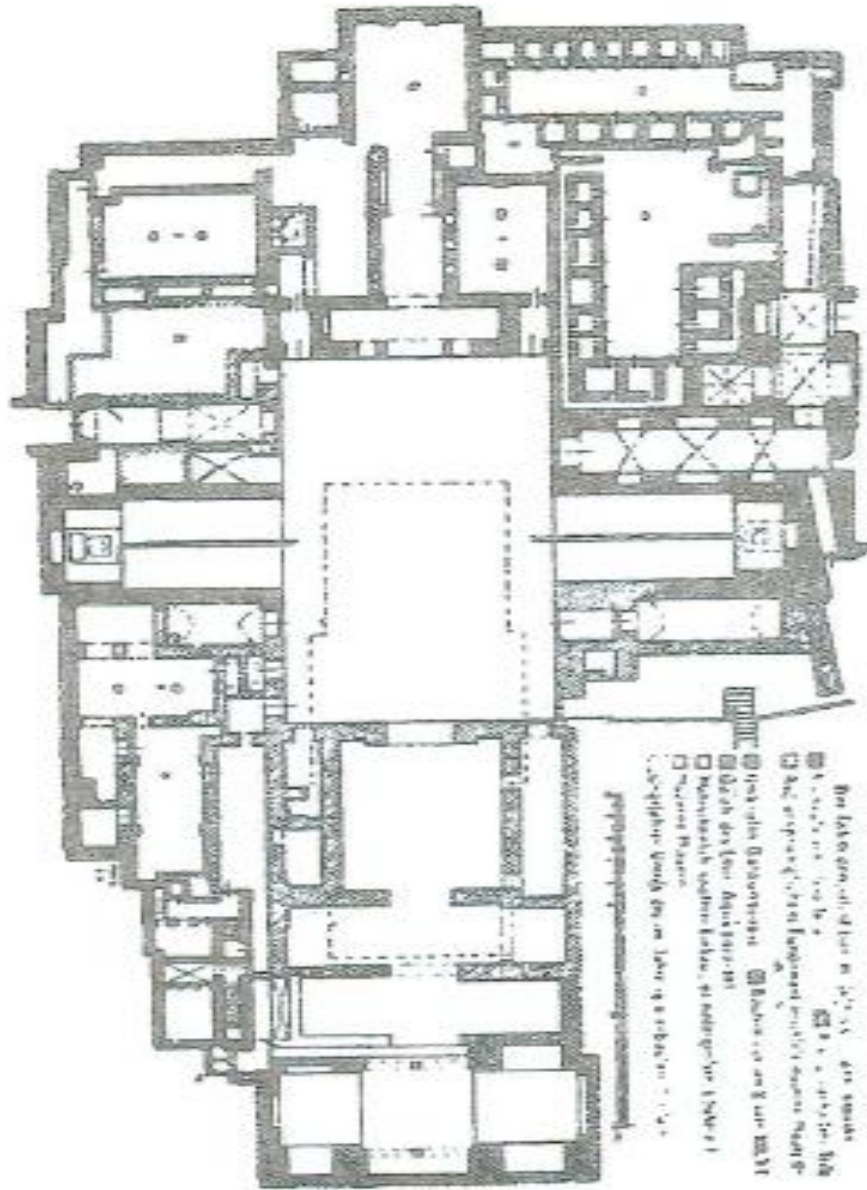
Fustat: geometric motifs of plaster stuffed

تمديد الشانين: المرجع سابقه ٢٠١٥، ص ٢٥٩



Attachment (10) Architecture in the Fatimid era

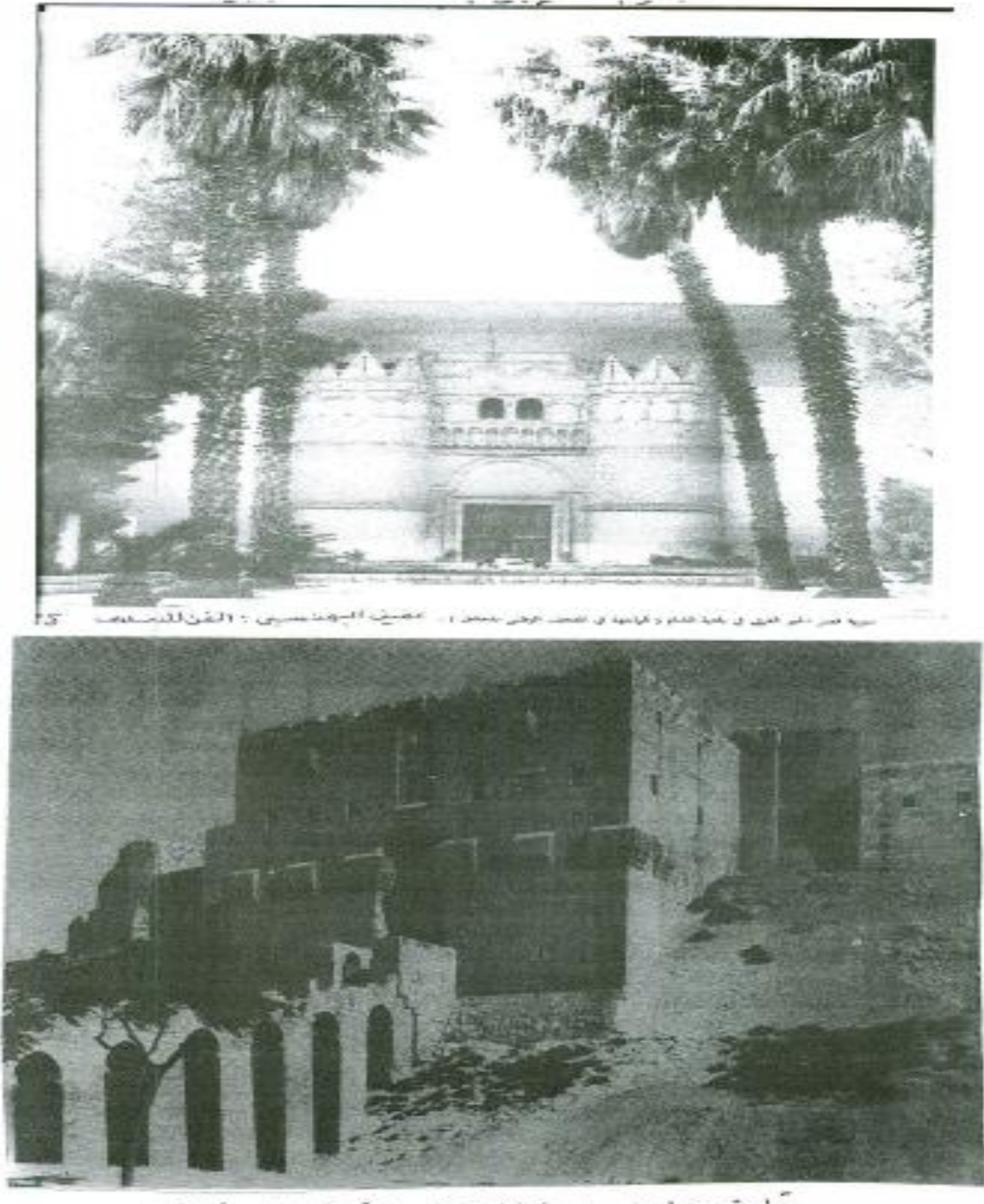
The remnants of the western Fatimid palace



Fatimid Cairo: The remnants of the western Fatimid palace

من الباشا: المرجع لاجل ٤١٠

Attachment(11): Ayyubid architecture in Syria



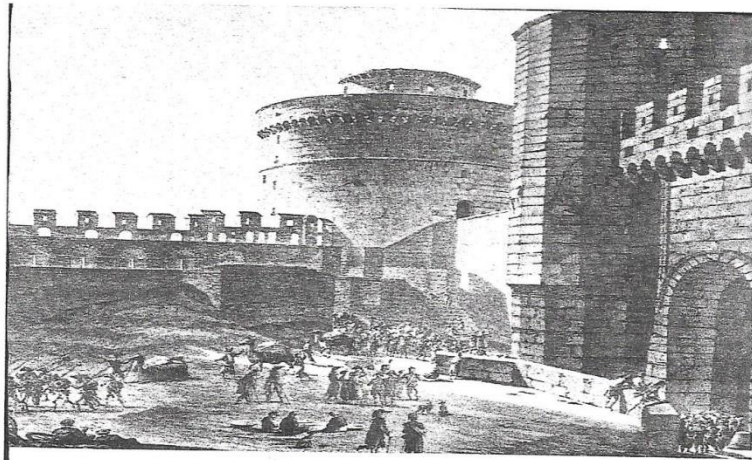
Halab Castel 1210 AH Second entry door in Qantra



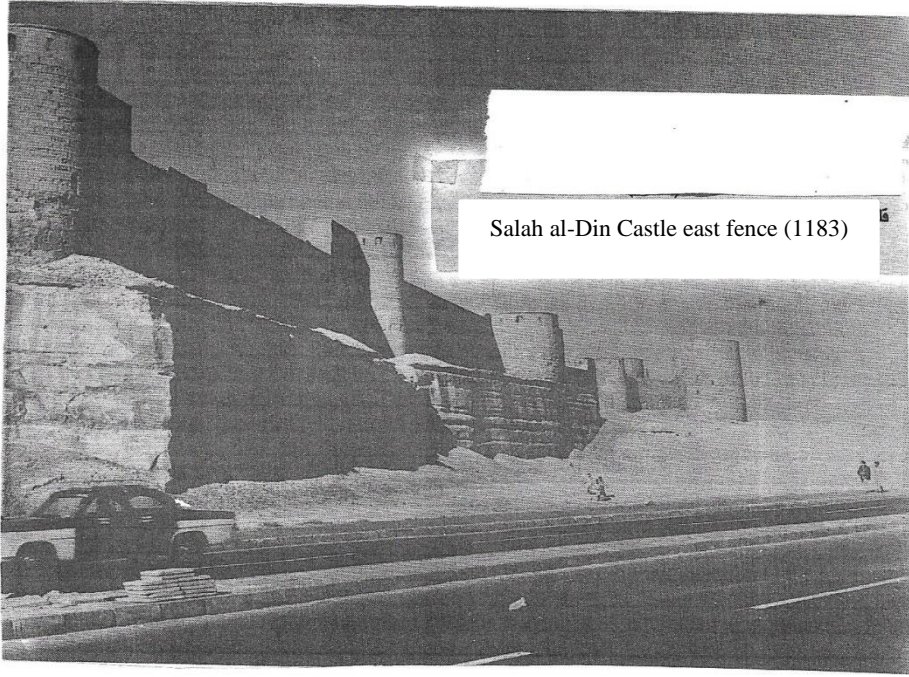
Attachment (12)

(١٢) *نحو*

Ayyubid architecture in Egypt



عصبة الهندسة المعمارية  
قلمه الطامرة



Salah al-Din Castle east fence (1183)

حصن صلاح الدين  
٣٥٩ م

Attachment (13)

(١٣) نسطو

Koson remnants palace

Ablaq Palace Sultan's Palace in Damascus Rukn al-Din Baybars

<http://www.forcabarca.com/vb/showthread.php?t=515356>

Starry Strata Mamluk

فريد الشافعي  
العمارة العربية في عصر المماليك: ص ٢١٨