

Eastern Elements in Umayyad Architecture: Audience Hall and Ceremonial Space in Residences

There is some consensus that architecture under the Umayyad caliphs in the Levant continued and developed local and Mediterranean forms of Roman-Byzantine architecture in historic Syria and Palestine. Eastern, Sasanian, Mesopotamian, and Arabian models are mainly considered significant for motifs and materials of decoration. Palaces and residences and their formal, ceremonial spaces are a case in point. In the most widely spread textbook of the field, O. Grabar presented Umayyad audience halls as a successor to Roman and Byzantine architecture. Stating that »the remaining examples at Mshatta and Khirbat al-Minya used the ubiquitous basilical hall of the Mediterranean world« (figs 1. 6), this summary view rests on his extensive earlier comparative discussion¹. It is much indebted to J. Sauvaget and his seminal book on »les origines architecturales de la mosquée et de la basilique«, who wrote in the 1940s »le salle principale des palais et châteaux omeyyades est [...] une basilique«². While Grabar acknowledged for some features an impact of Mesopotamian architecture³, these appear marginal within this overall image. Even from an Eastern perspective, L. Bier limited the role of Sasanian models to be »largely in the realm of poetry and metaphor«⁴.

A view that attaches more significance to Mesopotamian and Sasanian parallels, which today are somewhat better known and more numerous, without denying continuity in Syria-Palestine, has been expressed by some, pointing to single cases or features, but it remains without consequence for the overall image. A. Northedge and I. Arce discussed the Sasanian parallels in the Umayyad palace in the citadel of 'Amman (fig. 11), and the latter offered a severe critique of Bier's scepticism. R. Hillenbrand emphasized the axial sequence in Mshattā, similar to the Sasanian motif of an *aywān* with a domed room. S. Urice noted Mesopotamian features in the

small residence Qaṣr Kharāna. B. Finster suggested a relation between Umayyad country residences in Syria-Palestine, as a courtyard building with round exterior towers, and smaller buildings of Arabia in the Sasanian period⁵. Despite such observations, to which more could be added, a general and comparative discussion of Eastern, that is Mesopotamian and Sasanian features in Umayyad architecture, and of how to reconcile them with the existing overall image, remain *desiderata*.

The present contribution offers such a discussion on what has been called »audience halls« or, more generally, formal spaces in Umayyad residences and palaces. Both terms are used here to designate rooms, of various types, for gathering, entertaining and receiving people. The discussion concentrates on forms and spatial patterns, which may have changed from the period of the Sufyānid line of the dynasty, until 684, to the Marwānid period, until 750; at this point it refrains from connecting to textual sources⁶. From a survey of Umayyad formal spaces it moves to a re-evaluation which demonstrates that the designation »basilical« scheme is misleading for both Umayyad and Roman-Byzantine audience halls⁷. An analysis of the archaeological evidence of Umayyad residences serves to bring out individual characteristics and a distinct concept of three-aisled halls with a space dignified by a symbol of authority. Turning to Mesopotamian and Sasanian parallels, this view is extended to other types and a spatial pattern, discussing their Umayyad continuity or adaptation.

Umayyad formal spaces

The great palaces of Umayyad caliphs at Damascus and al-Ruṣāfa, and the famous governor's palace at al-Wāsiṭ are only known from textual sources which mention a domed

1 Ettinghausen/Grabar/Jenkins-Madina, Art 41; and *verbatim* Ettinghausen/Grabar, Art 52. Earlier discussion: Grabar, Ceremonial 148-153, and Grabar, Formation 141-142.

2 Sauvaget, Mosquée: book title and p. 124.

3 At Mshattā and at Qaṣr Kharāna, Ettinghausen/Grabar/Jenkins-Madina, Art 39. 41.

4 Bier, Sasanian 62.

5 Northedge, Survey; Northedge, 'Amman. Arce, Amman 196-198. – Hillenbrand, Mshatta 71-73. – Urice, Kharana. From a dated graffito it is clear that the build-

ing existed before 710. Urice argued for an attribution to the Sufyānid period, 661-684, based on historical thoughts (*ibidem* 86-88), but the evidence also allows an attribution to the first Marwānid decades. – Finster, Tradition 46-47; Finster, Kastele 118-119. Cf. Monneret de Villard, Introduzione 237, on al-Wāsiṭ.

6 For a use of textual sources relating to the theme, see Sauvaget, Mosquée, and Grabar, Ceremonial 49-106.

7 Initially, with regard to the three-aisled hall in Khirbat al-Minya, I fell victim to the designation »basilical« (Ritter, Ornament 115; Ritter, Inscriptions 59) but later abandoned it (Ritter, Minya 71-73. 211-212).

room as the main formal space⁸. Out of the archaeologically known Umayyad residences⁹, mostly from the Marwānid period, some have specific formal spaces clearly identified by the type of room. Their presence seems to indicate a specific palatial status and function of the building. Four cases, to be discussed below, with a three-aisled hall which leads to a particular space, a conch, or a domed room, stand apart from more than a dozen buildings without a formally specific room on the ground floor¹⁰. Of these four, ‘Anjar and al-Kūfa (figs 4-8) are a *dār al-imāra*, a governor’s and administrative palace close to the main mosque inside a city. Of the two countryside residences, Mshattā (figs 6-7) appears to be a palace by its large size and rich decoration, and Khirbat al-Minya (figs 1-2), smaller but equally rich, a palatial mansion or *villa*. Both are from the residences often called »desert castles«, a misnomer as none are in the desert and many are related to water management and agricultural infrastructure.

Other types of Umayyad formal spaces are known from a few cases. One, already mentioned, is the courtyard with *aywān* and domed square room in the citadel of ‘Ammān (fig. 11)¹¹. A hall with conch within a square enclosure, identified as part of the early, Sufyānid residence al-Ṣinnabra, would present another case (fig. 5)¹². A further type in Mesopotamia, also to be discussed below, is the T-shaped hall, or triple portico with niche-like room flanked by two side rooms such as at al-Kūfa and Tulūl al-Shu‘ayba (figs 12-13) in Lower Mesopotamia and Balis (figs 15-16) in Upper Mesopotamia.

Related features have been noted in the entrance and reception halls of Umayyad bath complexes, at ‘Anjar, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī, Quṣayr ‘Amra, Ḥammām Sarakh, and Qaṣṭal¹³. They are built as a three-aisled hall with arcades on columns or as a tripartite hall with two wide arches, in both cases terminating with a niche-like room, or alcove, flanked by two side rooms (tab. 1). Both patterns conform to formal spaces

in residences, but a generally much smaller ground space; the connection to a bath which serves to leisure, and the absence of a courtyard place these halls in a separate category, here not to be discussed. Yet other types are the great multi-pillared and cross-axial nine-bay hall with a central dome and the domed room with conch connected to the bath in Khirbat al-Mafjar, Palestine¹⁴.

A further category of formal spaces in residences, here not pursued, is the room in the upper storey above the portal. At Khirbat al-Minya such a room can be reconstructed with a dome and was accessed through a ramp which started from the entrance hall (fig. 1); similar rooms have been reconstructed or proposed at Khirbat al-Mafjar, Qaṣṭal, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī and Says¹⁵. Yet, by their location, access and function, they differ from the large halls on the ground floor.

The problem of Roman-Byzantine parallels

At this point the apparently familiar relation of the three-aisled hall in Umayyad residences to a basilica scheme in Roman-Byzantine architecture needs to be reconsidered. Grabar started this argument with the assertion that formally »the basic plan of Umayyad throne rooms can best be compared to that of a Christian church«¹⁶. Earlier, Sauvaget saw a »basilique« which he traced back to Oriental Hellenistic models¹⁷. K. A. C. Creswell called the Umayyad halls at Khirbat al-Minya and ‘Anjar »throne-room« and »basilical hall«, but discussed only Mshattā and saw the model of its long hall with a domed triconch in Egyptian churches of the 5th-6th centuries¹⁸. Apart from the difference in function, the formal comparison is very questionable, and the focus on the specific case of Mshattā is misleading if one looks to the more general pattern of Umayyad halls¹⁹.

8 See below with notes 57-58.

9 The bibliography on Umayyad residences is vast, see the following works. For a recent study with particular attention to the agricultural aspect, see Genequand, *Établissements*. For a very condensed summary, see Ritter, *Minya* 4-8. Earlier scholarship can be accessed through Creswell/Allan, Short and Creswell, *EMA-I*. Recent archaeological research has been conveniently gathered in some edited volumes including Bartl/Moaz, *Residences*, and Sack/Spiegel/Gussone, *Repräsentation*. The following notes restrict references for basic data to Creswell/Allan, Short.

10 The buildings include Umm al-Walīd, Khān al-Zabīb (on both see Genequand, *Trois*), Qaṣr Kharāna, Jabal Says, al-Qaṣṭal, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī, Qaṣr al-Tūba, the two residences FP 106 and FP 220 at al-Ruṣāfa (see Konrad 2015), the courtyard residential building in Khirbat al-Mafjar, and Hirbat al-Baidā (see Gaube, *Palast* who attributed it to a Ghassānid patron and later, Gaube, *Baydā*), conceded the possibility of an Umayyad date). Others such as Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya not yet fully excavated (Shdaifat/Ben Badhann, *Compound*), may be added in the future. Unless stated otherwise, see in Creswell/Allan, Short and the volumes mentioned in note 9.

11 Creswell/Allan, Short 169-173, and see note 5.

12 See below with note 60.

13 Sauvaget, *Mosquée* 126-127, introduced them to this discussion. Grabar, *Ceremonial* 143-145, noted the formal comparison but later partially abandoned it, *Grabar Formation* 148-149, in favour of a shared functional pattern. The examples known today include: columnar halls in ‘Anjar, Lebanon (Finster, ‘Anjar-I 227-228 fig. 22; Creswell, *EMA-I* 480 fig. 542) and at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī, Syria (Creswell/Allan, Short 159-160 fig. 92); three cases of wide-arched and

tunnel-vaulted buildings in Jordan, at Quṣayr ‘Amra, Ḥammām Sarakh (Creswell, *EMA-I* 391-392. 498-499; Creswell/Allan, Short 106-107 fig. 66; 165-166 fig. 94) and the more recently discovered bath at Qaṣṭal (Bisheh, *Qaṣṭal* fig. 1).

14 Creswell/Allan, Short 186-200 figs 100. 108-109.

15 Ritter, *Minya* fig. 24; pp. 69-70. 213-214; on the other cases, see in Creswell/Allan, Short and recently Arce, *Qaṣṭal*. Sauvaget, *Mosquée* 127-129 noted Says and the modest domical vault in the upper storey room at Qaṣr Kharāna. Grabar, *Ceremonial* 140-142, expanded the examples of rooms above the portal and their concept as »throne room« and, Grabar, *Formation* 142, as »reception hall«.

16 Grabar, *Ceremonial* 148. Cf. Sauvaget, *Mosquée* 124-125.

17 Sauvaget, *Mosquée* 124-125. 158-161. 176-183.

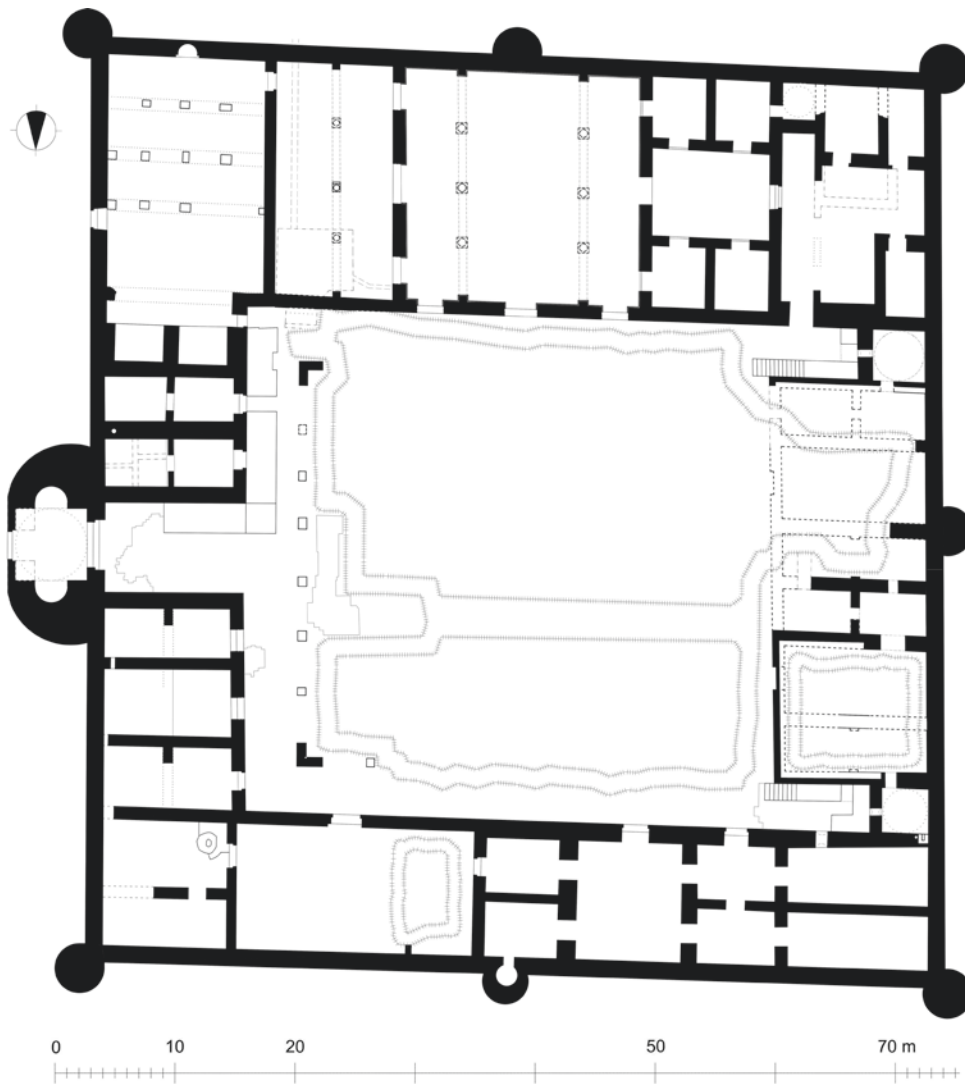
18 Creswell, *EMA-I* 384. 479. 616-619; Creswell/Allan, Short 212-214.

19 Creswell acknowledged that a triconch was variously used in Roman-Byzantine architecture including residences in Syria but focused on churches and concluded, as three of his parallels were in Upper Egypt, that the specific combination with a three-aisled hall »was due to Egyptian influence«. This is already weakened by Krautheimer, *Byzantine* 113-117, who considers this type an »Egyptian variant of Aegean church building« and includes more examples. Yet the comparison with Egyptian churches must be entirely rejected because, firstly, the colonnades of the aisles are continued on the entrance side, thus enveloping the central aisle on three sides, which is completely different from the Umayyad halls. Secondly, they were trabeated and carried a second tier of columns, while the Umayyad halls used arches.

facade	size, c. m ²	width x depth inter- nally, m	central and side aisles, m (ratio, rounded)	inter- columnia	axial room or space	date
Three-aisled hall with axial room or space						
Qaṣr Muqātil	110	10 x 11	4.6 : 1.55 (3 : 1)	3	oblong room with central square, domed ?	6 th century and 7 th -8 th centuries
al-Kūfa	290	17.86 x 16.2	5.24 : 4.2 (1.2 : 1)	3	domed square room	c. 670 or c. 724-743
Mshattā	400	17.42 x 23.03	7.19 : 4.09 (1.8 : 1)	6	domed square room with conchs, or triconch	c. 743
Khirbat al-Minya	380	19.66 x 19.40	9.5 : 4.44 (2.1 : 1)	4	none, two-aisled hall left, five-room group right	707-15 or c. 724-743
'Anjar	165	c. 12.85 x 12.85	6.65 : 3.1 (including half width of arcades)	4	conch and side rooms	> 709
al-Ṣinnabra	590	c. 20.3 x 29	8.5 : 4.5 (1.9 : 1)	4	conch and side rooms	639/661-680
Triple portico with open room and side rooms (T-shaped hall)						
Tulūl al-Shu'ayba	90	13 x 5.1 portico 4 x 5.3 room			open rectangular room and two side rooms	c. 724-743
Balis	140	16.8 x 5 portico 5.5 x 10 room			open rectangular room and four side rooms, together a bayt	c. 700-750
Aywān with domed room						
'Ammān	65	6.8 x 9.6			domed square room	c. 724-743
al-Ukhayḍīr	64	6 x 10.74			domed square room	c. 762/778
Three-aisled or tripartite hall at bath						
Qaṣr al-Hair al-Sharqī	300	15 x 20		6	none, space flanked by two water basins	
'Anjar, north gate	268	16.53 x 16.2	6.15 : 4.9	3	rectangular niche, possibly with basin	
Quṣair 'Amra	64	8.5 x 7.5			square alcove	
Ḥammām Sarakh	71	8.95 x 7.9			square alcove	

Tab. 1 Formal and ceremonial spaces in residences built or used in the early Islamic period: measurements and data.

Fig. 1 Khirbat al-Minya, residence, ground plan. – (After Ritter, *Minya* fig. 21).



The main part of the argument sees parallels in audience halls of Roman and Byzantine palaces. For them a »basilical«, in the sense of three-aisled, scheme was considered common at the time of writing²⁰. Yet today the evidence for the cases cited has faded away or is less convincing²¹ and the conflation of »basilical« and three-aisled has been abandoned. Instead the basilica as audience hall is understood as an *aula*, an aisle-less large hall which impressed as an uninterrupted wide

and lofty space terminated by a huge apse, or exedra, where the emperor or his representative sat in splendour. Such apsed audience halls are considered to be common in early Byzantine palaces of the 5th-6th centuries, like the one excavated in the southeastern area of the Great Palace in Constantinople (16.5 m × 32 m)²². Early examples include the Villa Casale at Piazza Armerina (4th century), the hall excavated at Cercadilla, Spain (c. 296, 17 m × 32 m) and the *aula* at Trier, which sur-

20 Grabar, *Ceremonial* 148-150. This line has been expanded into a historical grammar of formal schemes by Arnold, *Rezeption* figs 5, 11, when discussing precedents for the 10th-century audience halls at Madinat al-Zahrâ' in Arab Spain, and Arnold, *Western* 7-9.

21 Cases cited by Sauvaget, *Mosquée* and Grabar, *Ceremonial*: The hall in the imperial palace of the *Domus Flavia* in Rome (inaugurated in 92) has a huge central space and colonnades close to the walls. Not only is the building far removed in time and geography, but it is different from the three-aisled scheme in question, and apparently it was not even the audience hall of the complex; see Ward-Perkins, *Roman* 80-84 figs 36-37. – The *Magnaaura* hall within the Byzantine Great Palace of Constantinople features as a key example in Grabar's argument but is known only from textual sources. Mango, *Vestibule* 57-58, reconstructed it as three-aisled, but Krautheimer, *Byzantine* 349, notes that it may have been an aisle-less hall with an apse, similar to other known cases, and this has been given more weight in a reevaluation of the texts by Kosteneč, *Observations* 45. – The hall with apse excavated in the so-called »Palace of Theodorik« at Ravenna (c. 5th-6th c.) is now considered an aisle-less room; Augenti, *Ravenna*. – In the hall in the palace of Diocletian at Split (c. 300-306)

only a tripartite substructure was excavated which gives no clue whether to reconstruct a three-aisled or rather an aisle-less hall; Ward-Perkins, *Roman* 454 fig. 308; McKay, *Villen* fig. 199. – The Syrian *praetoria* at al-Qanawât, al-Uđruh and in the camp of Diocletian in Palmyra are either without colonnades or the evidence is inconclusive; on Palmyra, see Kowalski, *Praetorium* and Perich Roca, *Palacio* fig. 34. – Additional cases cited by Arnold, *Rezeption*: The three-aisled hall in the late Roman palace of Cercadilla at Córdoba (ibidem 262 fig. 7, B) apparently was not the main audience hall, as it is in a peripheral position within the ensemble, while the axial position is occupied by the familiar aisle-less hall with large apse (ibidem fig. 7, M). Indeed, the latter is now considered as the *aula* of the complex; Gallochio, *Aule* fig. 3a. – The palace at Pliska in Bulgaria is much later, attributed to Khan Omurtag (r. 814-831), and only substructures were excavated. Earlier scholars reconstructed a three-aisled structure, but Krautheimer, *Byzantine* 315, concluded that »the hall itself was presumably aisle-less preceded by a porch and terminated by an apse«; for the earlier view, see ibidem 498 n. 32.

22 Krautheimer, *Byzantine* 348. 498 n. 33; Rice, *Palace* 24-26.

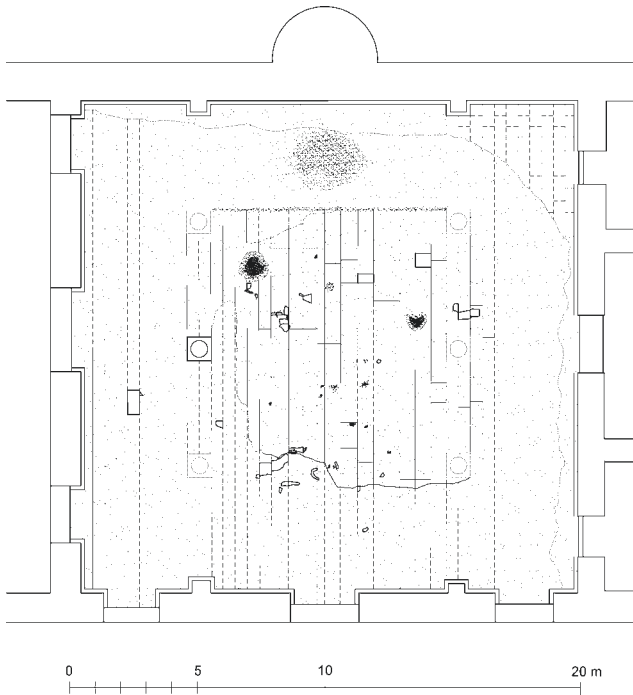


Fig. 2 Khirbat al-Minya, three-aisled hall, floor plan (corners schematically right angles), with remains of mortar bedding and marble tiles indicating the pavement. Drawing after excavation photos. – (Drawing M. Ritter / B. Tajer 2018).

vives in imposing scale and loftiness, with a reconstructed flat coffered ceiling (305-331, internally c. 26m x 54m plus apse, 33m high)²³. The scheme was used at a provincial level and on a smaller scale in residences and *praetoria* of governors and military commanders. An *aula* with *exedra* on a peristyle courtyard is found in the residence of the *Dux Ripae* at Dura Europos, Syria, in the camp of Diocletian at Palmyra and in the palace of the *dux* at Apollonia, Libya²⁴.

The known late Roman and early Byzantine palatial or residential buildings in Syria and Palestine, at Bosra, Qaṣr ibn Wardān and Dura Europos, do not feature a three-aisled hall²⁵. An interesting case could be the building with an inscription in the name of the Ghassānid Arab Christian king al-Mundhir (r. 569-581) outside Resafa, but the function, audience hall or church, is unclear and controversially debated. The square and tripartite scheme with three doors at the front and axial side doors seems to embody aspects seen in the Umayyad concept of an audience hall²⁶. Yet, the free-standing building without courtyard and the centralized quincunx plan with angular piers around an emphasized central bay are clearly different and in any case not »basilical«.

23 Gallochio, Aule fig. 1, and further examples at other places. – Ibidem fig. 3a; Arnold, Rezeption fig. 7, M. – Ward-Perkins, Roman 442-445 fig. 229.

24 Perich Roca, Palacio figs 33-34. 36.

25 At Bosra, and Qaṣr ibn Wardān, the *aula* is a triconch, at Dura it is an apsed hall; see notes 54-55.

26 Krautheimer, Byzantine 342 fig. 301; Mango, Byzanz 54-58 Abb. 75; Fowden, Sergius 149-159, who compares these with churches of a similar plan and the baptistry near Basilica A *intra muros*. Brands, Resafa, argued in favour of a

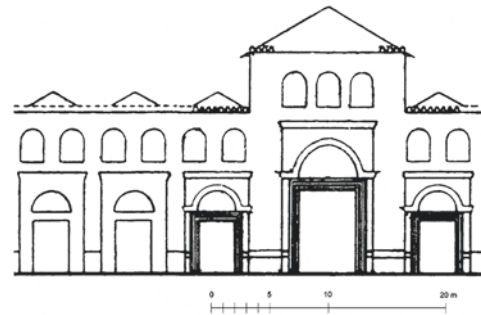


Fig. 3 Jerusalem, detail of facade of al-Aqṣā Mosque, phase II, reconstruction by Hamilton. – (After Creswell/Allan, Short fig. 52. Detail, construction lines removed, new scale).

As evidence for three-aisled audience halls in late Roman architecture is non-existent and for early Byzantine architecture at best inconclusive, even if we keep in mind that less is known from Syria-Palestine, there is serious reason to question that »the Umayyad throne room [...] was a direct heir to the larger throne of the Roman empire«²⁷.

Umayyad three-aisled halls with an axial space

The majority of known Umayyad residences with specific formal spaces use a three-aisled columnar hall with various forms of a subsequent axial space. The following analysis of four buildings serves to identify individual and common features, paying equal attention to all cases and counterbalancing the former focus on Mshattā. Basic measurements and data on the buildings are assembled in **table 1**.

Khirbat al-Minya (figs 1-2)

Clear in form, imposing in size and richly decorated, the three-aisled hall occupies a central position in the palatial residence of Khirbat al-Minya, on the shore of Lake Tiberias near the city of Tiberias, Israel. The residence is built around a peristyle courtyard with a monumental portal facing east, which can be reconstructed with a domed room above the gate. The masonry is of ashlar facing a core of rubble and mortar; the foundations use basalt. Some rooms were vaulted in stone; brick also may have been used. The building has been dated after 711 to the reign of the caliph al-Walīd I (705-715); a

church, Konrad in Ulbert/Konrad, Resafa, for an audience hall or *praetorium*. The latter hypothesis was introduced by Sauvaget, Ghassanides. Cf. Sauvaget, Mosquée 158-159, while the speculation, Grabar, Ceremonial 150, »that the Umayyad throne room evolved from what could [...] be called a Ghassānid type as it is expressed at al-Ruṣāfah, towards a longitudinal type finding its most complete expression at Mshattā« remains without any basis in formal evidence.

27 Grabar, Ceremonial 153-154; or: »the Umayyad throne room reflects more or less directly Roman and Byzantine types«, ibidem 156-157.

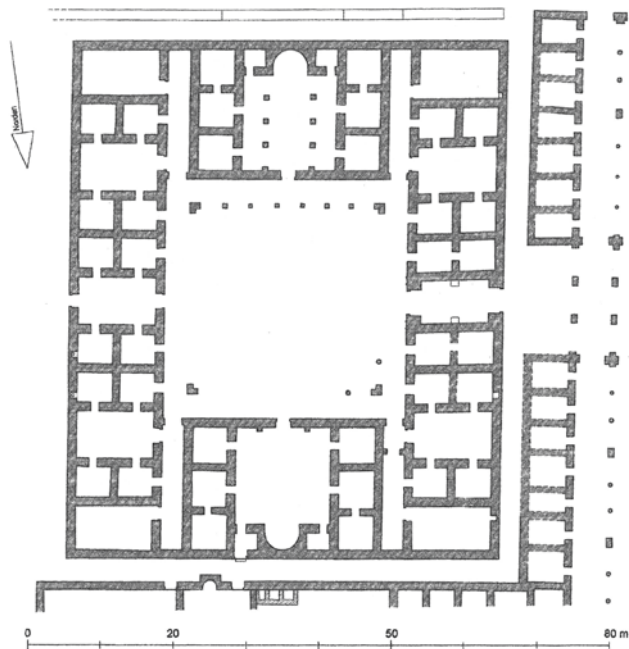


Fig. 4 'Anjar, Greater Palace (*dār al-imāra*), ground plan. – (After Finster, 'Anjar-(III) fig. 4. Room numbers removed for clarity).

recent re-evaluation demonstrated the possibility of a later date under Hishām (r. 724-743) and al-Walīd II (r. 743-744)²⁸.

The hall is situated in the middle of a larger unit in the south wing, which is twice as deep as the other wings. Three doors, the middle one wider, lead into a large square space, slightly wider than deep, internally c. 20m on each side. Two colonnades, almost certainly arcades, on three columns and two wall pillars, separate a wide central aisle more than double the width of the side aisles. The walls were decorated with polychrome marble incrustation, bands of carved and coloured marble relief and glass mosaic using gold *tesserae*. White-greyish marble slabs, the continuous joints running parallel to the colonnades, paved the floor²⁹ (fig. 2).

Within the unit, the hall is closely connected to large side rooms which otherwise are without direct access from the courtyard. Each is entered by three openings, the middle one wider, emphasizing the transverse axis. The doors to the left, eastern side are larger and lead to a second hall with the same depth, which is divided by one colonnade in two aisles like the side aisles of the main hall. A small door connects it to a mosque further in the southeast corner. On the right,

western side there is a five-room group, or *bayt*, fitted with beautiful floor mosaics, and an external latrine room.

The height of the hall was probably equivalent to two storeys, c. 13-15m, maybe with three parallel gable roofs and a further two above the side hall, similar to the central part of the al-Aqṣā mosque in Jerusalem (fig. 3)³⁰. The other wings had two storeys, attested by the spacious stairs in the western corners and the ramp on the southeast side. There cannot have been a storey above the hall, as it would have made the hall awkwardly low.

'Anjar (fig. 4)

The two halls in the so-called Greater Palace in the new Umayyad city of 'Anjar, Lebanon, are much smaller but terminate in a large conch on the central aisle. The palace is situated just south of the main mosque, the main entrance on one of the colonnaded streets. The layout emphasizes a cross-axial and symmetrical arrangement of rooms around the peristyle courtyard. Two large, and apparently identical, halls are placed opposite each other across the courtyard, on the north-south axis. The main entrance and a secondary entrance mark the west-east axis. The masonry, different from Khirbat al-Minya, consists of alternate layers of ashlar and brick. The building of 'Anjar was in progress by 714-715 and may have started around 709-710. It has been assigned to the patronage of the caliph al-Walīd I or his son al-'Abbās (d. 750)³¹.

Both halls are flanked on each side by three small square rooms and form with them one unit. The south hall, which is better preserved, occupies a square of 12.85 m. Arcades on three columns and on wall pillars divide it into a central aisle and quite narrow side aisles³². The central aisle is extended by a conch, 4.83 m wide³³; the side aisles terminate in a door to small square corner rooms. In each side wall, two doors lead to the flanking side rooms.

The appearance of the elevation is disputed. After the excavation, columns were put up in the hall in the eastern arcade and the western arcade was reconstructed as a two-tiered structure. The upper tier columns are narrower but as high as in the lower tier. This would have created an interior space higher than wide³⁴. Yet the proportions of such a two-tiered arcade are curious and at odds with the convention to

28 The site was excavated by P. Mader in 1932, A. M. Schneider 1936, O. Puttrich-Reignard 1937-1939 and a group with O. Grabar and M. Rosen-Ayalon in 1959, all with preliminary reports. Ritter, *Minya* (2017) provides the monographic study monographic study. On the architecture of the south wing and the mosque, *ibidem* 63-90; the dating, *ibidem* 37. 46-48. 218-220; and Ritter, *Inscriptions*.

29 On the decoration of the hall, Ritter, *Minya* 141-144 pls. 15. 55. 68 (incrustation); 145-164 pls. 56-59. 69 (carved marble friezes); 201-208 pls. 66-67 (wall mosaic); 166-167 pls. 14. 59. 18 (pavement).

30 Ritter, *Minya* fig. 24 with a hypothetical reconstruction of the portal with an upper storey above entrance hall and vestibule.

31 The site was excavated by M. Chéhab who provided the principal report, Chéhab, 'Anjar (1963), and, *ibidem* 17-21, the main dating evidence of inscriptions in a

near-by quarry and textual sources; extended by Chéhab, *Identification*. A new planning and discussion of the site were provided (2003, 2008) by B. Finster, 'Anjar-I; 'Anjar-II; 'Anjar-(III). Finster, 'Anjar-I 238 opines that the city was ordered by al-Walīd and, after his death in 715, partially continued by al-'Abbās.

32 No measurements have been published. Those given here have been calipered from the scaled groundplan, Finster, 'Anjar-(III) fig. 4.

33 This measurement is given by Creswell, *EMA-I* 479. Calipered from the plan, Finster, 'Anjar-(III) fig. 4, it is 4.65 m.

34 The facade of the hall, which according to the excavator, Chéhab, 'Anjar 23, had »fallen *in situ*« into the court, would confirm this. It was reconstructed matching the internal height. A large elongated tripartite window lights the central aisle; two smaller windows open on each side aisle. The same doubts, however, must be applied to the arcades.

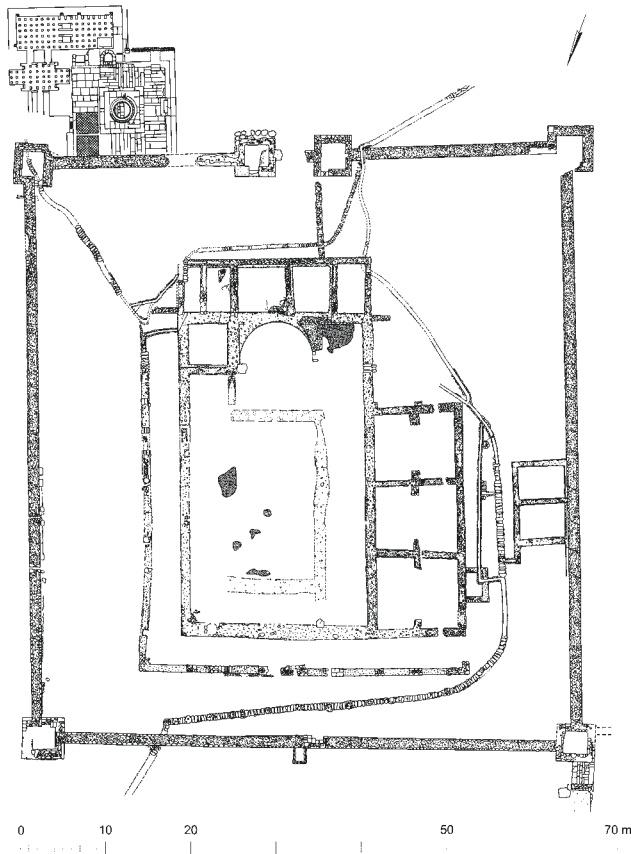


Fig. 5 al-Šinnabra (Khirbat al-Karak), building within enclosure, plan of foundations and remains of walls. – (After Da'adli, Šinnabra 136 »Plan 8.2.« Numbers removed, new scale added).

use an upper tier that is lower or a dwarf arcade³⁵. This raises serious doubts about the reconstruction, without a possibility to check the evidence, as no detailed excavation report was published³⁶. If one assumes that the interior was not much higher than the ground tier of the present arcades, about 8m, the hall would have had a broad facade and cross-section, comparable in proportion to other Umayyad halls.

Al-Kūfa (figs 8. 13)

The *dār al-imāra*, or official and administrative palace, in the city of al-Kūfa is located, unlike the two preceding cases, in the architectural landscape of Lower Mesopotamia, Iraq. The hall leads to a domed room and opens on a courtyard without

a peristyle; the construction material is of baked clay bricks. The excavators detected three building phases, of which the relevant Umayyad phase has been dated early, to after 670 during the reign of Mu'āwiya (r. 661-680) or, more recently, to the later Umayyad period c. 724-743³⁷.

The central courtyard has a cross-axial scheme, each side with a triple-arched opening that rests on two thick columns, or rather round pillars, and two engaged half-columns. The larger triple opening on the south side leads into the three-aisled hall.

It is built over a square markedly wider than deep. The ground size is halfway between 'Anjar and Khirbat al-Minya, but, due to the thick round pillars of c. 1.86 m diameter, there are only four *intercolumnia*: one column in the courtyard, two inner columns and a half-column engaged to a pilaster on the back wall³⁸. The colonnades form a central aisle and side aisles that are comparatively wide, fitting the broad rather than long space. In each side wall, three openings connect to a corridor that passes between the central courtyard and the back of the building.

In the central aisle, an opening leads to a square room, 5.9m a side, extended on all four sides by niches to an axial length of 9.6m. These most probably formed arches which carried a dome over the square. Two openings in the transverse axis lead to side rooms, another in the back to a yard and further on to courtyards in the corners of the building.

The height of the hall has not been discussed, but in analogy to Mshattā, which has the same scheme with three arched openings directly on the courtyard and almost the same width, the interior height would be similar, about 10m.

Mshattā (figs 6-7)

The hall in the palace of Mshattā, Jordan, also opens with three arches on pillars on a central courtyard without peristyle and leads into an axial domed room, much larger than at al-Kūfa. The lower parts of the walls, corners and piers are made of ashlar; baked brick was used for the upper parts and for vaulting. The commonly accepted date for the beginning of building is towards the end of the Umayyad period under al-Walīd II (r. 743-744)³⁹.

The hall is, unlike the preceding cases, a long rectangle with a ratio of 3 : 4, 17.42 m × 23.03 m. The colonnades had six arcades on five marble columns and on wall piers. This

35 Such as in the courtyard arcades of the Great Mosque of Damascus (Creswell/Allan, Short fig. 31) or in the interior of the al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem (ibidem fig. 48).

36 Finster, 'Anjar-I 223, suggesting, ibidem 221, that the columns used in the reconstruction of the upper tier of the western arcade might originally have been part of the eastern arcade while the latter's columns were brought from another place. However, as noted above, the columns in the upper tier are narrower making them different from the columns used on the ground.

37 The building was excavated by the Directorate of Antiquities in Iraq in 1938, 1953 and 1956. The principal reports and the dating are by M. 'A. Muṣṭafā. Creswell, EMA-I 48-58 summarized and discussed them. Both scholars dated

phase I to the pre-Islamic or earliest Islamic period; phase II to the reign of the first Umayyad caliph Mu'āwiya and his governor Ziyād ibn Abīhi (Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān) after 670; and phase III to the Abbasid period. Santi, Kūfa re-evaluates the evidence and redates phase I to the reign of Mu'āwiya and phase II to the reign of Hishām (r. 724-743).

38 Measurements according to Creswell, EMA-I 49.

39 The first main studies were by R. E. Brünnow in 1895-8, and by B. Schulz, Mschatta (1904), summarized and supplemented by Creswell, EMA-I 578-606. 623-641, and Creswell/Allan, Short 201-208. 211-214. Recent research has provided a more detailed basis and discussion in the monograph study by Cramer/Perlich/Schauerer, Mschatta.

Fig. 6 Mshattā, residence, ground plan, partly reconstructed. – (After Cramer/Perlich/Schauerte, *Mschatta*, folding plan after p. 440).

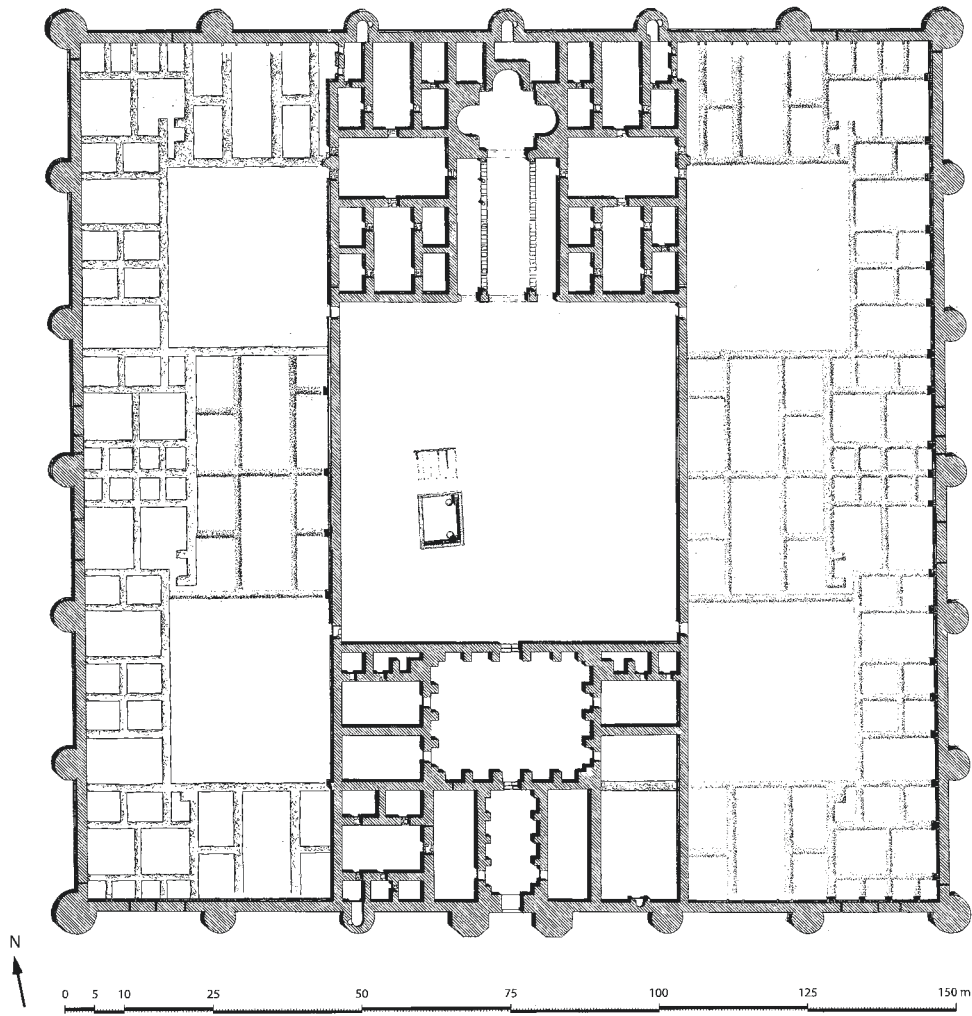


Fig. 7 Mshattā, facade of three-aisled hall, reconstruction by Schulz. – (After Schulz, *Mschatta* pl. IV. Detail, new scale).

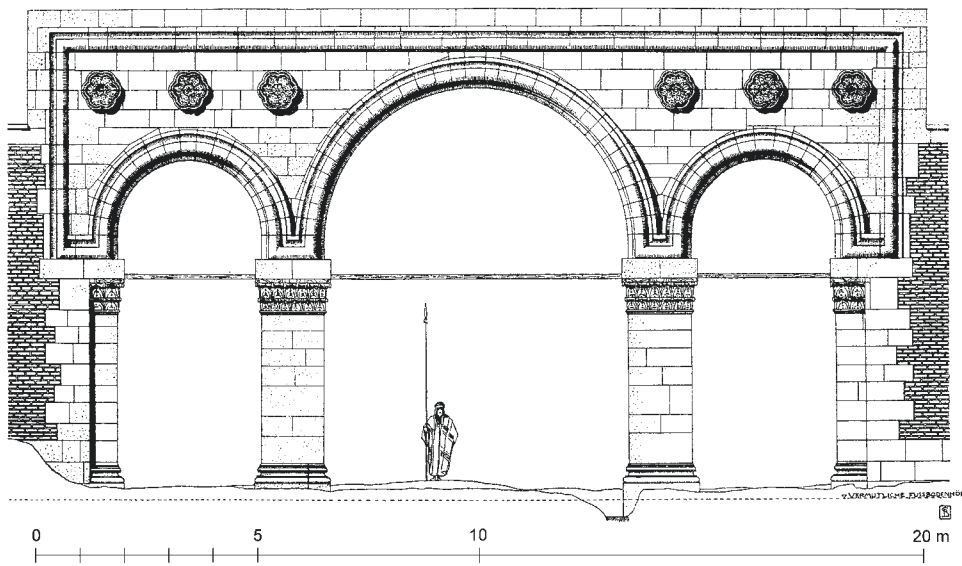
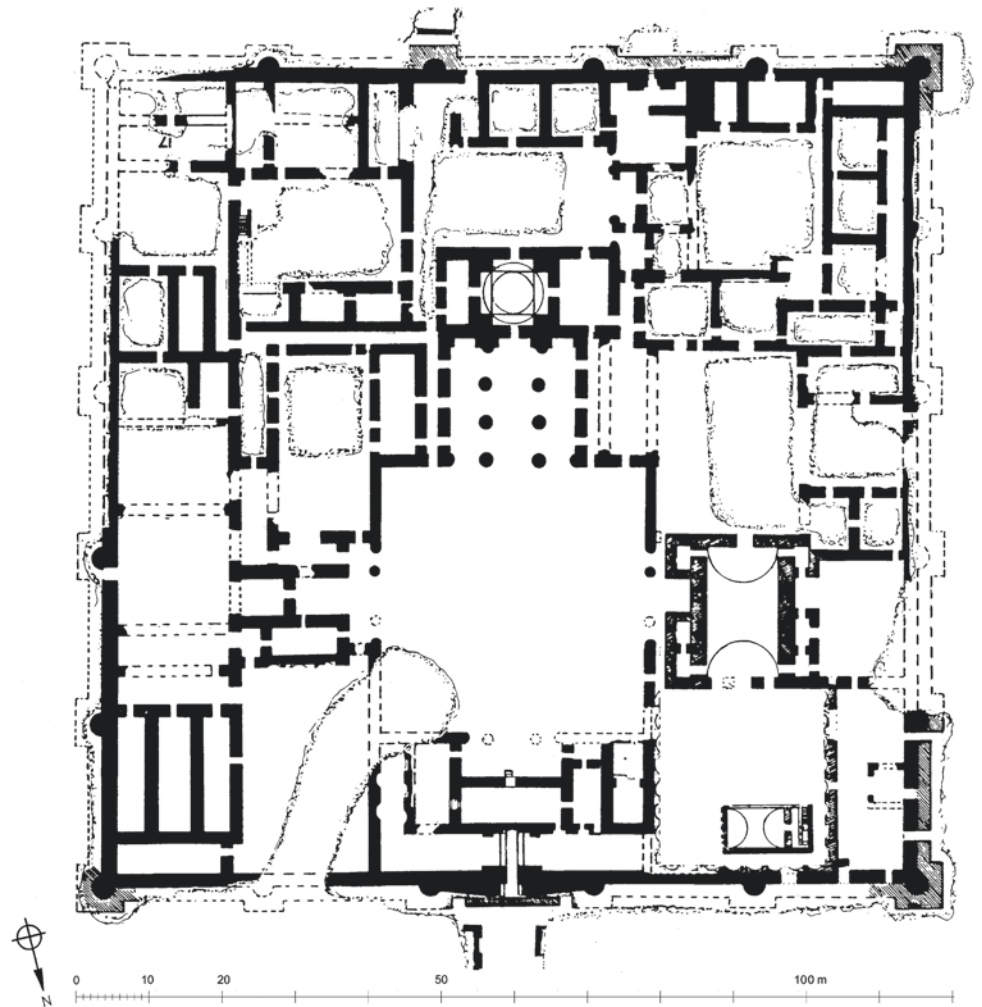


Fig. 8 al-Kūfa, governor's residence (*dār al-imāra*), ground plan. – (After Creswell/Allan, Short fig. 2. Detail, numbers removed, new scale).



makes two *intercolumnia* more than in Khirbat al-Minya, but as the aisles are narrower, the ground size is almost the same⁴⁰. The central aisle leads through a wide arch, matching the arched opening at the courtyard, to a monumental triconch room, a square of 9.17 m a side, extended on three sides by large conchs, 5.2 m wide. The square carried a dome on pendentifs, the conchs half-domes⁴¹. Fragments suggest a floor of stone mosaic in the hall while the triconch was probably paved with green-greyish stone slabs⁴². The unit of hall and triconch is bordered on each side by a courtyard and two five-room groups. Communication with them is kept to the minimum of one door on each side of the hall. Behind the triconch, and entered through it, are two rectangular rooms. The right, eastern one is extended to an L-shape and includes a latrine.

In the hall, a column height of c. 4.9 m can be reconstructed. Schulz had proposed a second tier of supports above the arcades, but a newly discovered sketch on a wall indicates arcades carrying a wall as high as the columns⁴³. The fact that the courtyard facade of the hall, securely reconstructed from the pieces fallen to the ground, ends with a continuous horizontal line c. 10.8 m high, suggests a uniform height of all aisles. Internally, it may have been a flat ceiling of transverse beams across the aisles, externally, a flat roof or three parallel gable roofs⁴⁴.

40 These measurements after Cramer/Perlich/Schauerte, Mschatta 235 result in a ground size of c. 401 m². Measurements noted in the plan by Creswell, EMA-I fig. 644, are slightly smaller: 17.3-17.34 wide and 22.91-23 m deep, which results in a size of c. 398 m².

41 Perlich in Cramer/Perlich/Schauerte, Mschatta 235. 237. Measurements after ibidem while Creswell, EMA-I fig. 644, notes 9.78 m for the sides of the square.

42 Perlich in Cramer/Perlich/Schauerte, Mschatta 238. See the photos of green-greyish stone slab fragments, ibidem 143-144 figs 166-168. A photo of the tesserae, ibidem 140 fig. 161 shows white, different shades of grey, and

also beige. Black is shown in a photo of stone chips from the workshop, ibidem 141 fig. 164.

43 Perlich in Cramer/Perlich/Schauerte, Mschatta 245 fig. 258; 83 fig. 77.

44 Schulz, Mschatta 218, had suggested a flat ceiling of uniform height, see Creswell, EMA-I fig. 639. Perlich in Cramer/Perlich/Schauerte, Mschatta 245-247, leaves the question of roofing open in the text, but a reconstruction rendering of the interior, ibidem fig. 259, shows a flat wooden ceiling with beams, lower above the side aisles. A schematic reconstruction of the exterior, ibidem fig. 256 (both S. Jerichow), shows a gable roof, maybe too low, above the central aisle only and flat roofs above the sides.

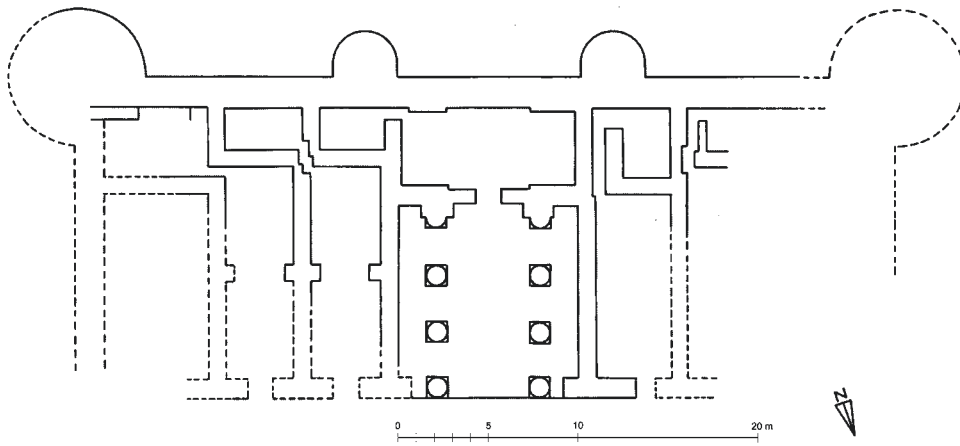


Fig. 9 Qasr Muqātil (Tulūl al-Ukhayḍīr), ground plan of excavated south wing, partly reconstructed. – (After Finster/Schmidt, Muqatil fig. 5. New scale).

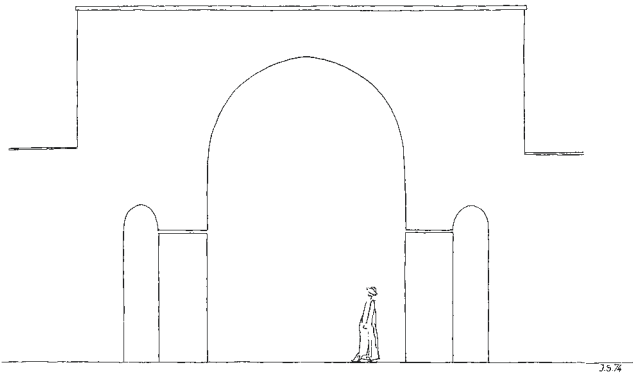


Fig. 10 Qasr Muqātil (Tulūl al-Ukhayḍīr), facade of three-aisled hall, reconstruction by Schmidt. – (After Finster/Schmidt, Ruinen fig. 22a).

The pattern and the larger space

From the foregoing evidence, three common aspects of these halls emerge. Firstly, there is a pattern of an axial sequence of three spaces: from a courtyard into a large space, or hall, which leads to a smaller space, or room. Functionally the roofed space is divided into a room for many people and a room for a limited number. Secondly, the three-aisled hall shows a distinct concept in various forms. Thirdly, the smaller space is dignified by forms which relate to late antique architectural symbols of authority. Some or all of these aspects also characterize other types of formal spaces in Umayyad residences, to be discussed below: the *aywān* with a domed room and the T-shaped hall. At the same time it is clear that the hall in each residence presents a specific formal realization, since the range of function varies, and since the buildings are in diverse architectural regions and draw on different formal vocabularies and traditions. This is already evident from the variety in building materials and masonry techniques.

The axial pattern usually does not include the portal. Portal and hall are placed on different axes forcing the visitor to turn

at Khirbat al-Minya and ‘Anjar. Although at al-Kūfa the portal is on the axis, the path of access is bent and leads to a corner of the courtyard. A comparable case is Tulūl al-Shu‘ayba (fig. 12) where the portal is consciously placed near the corner of a cross-axially organized courtyard. An unbroken axial access from the portal across the courtyard to the hall exists only at Mshattā.

In the overall plan, the hall is placed on the north-south axis of the courtyard. The usual location is the south side. This might have climatic reasons, as an opening on the south side catches less direct sun⁴⁵. The hall in the south is mirrored by one in the north at ‘Anjar. A hall on the north side is seen only at Mshattā. Yet the orientation of the residence is in most cases dictated by the axial relation to a mosque and its *qibla* orientation towards the south or southwest, situated either outside (al-Kūfa, ‘Anjar) or inside (Minya, Mshattā) the building.

In the concept of the three-aisled hall, an evenly sided, transparent and lofty space is formed. It is set out over a square, more or less wider than deep, and divided by columns or round pillars into three longitudinal spaces, or aisles. The central aisle is wider, has the main access from the courtyard and leads to a formal room or terminates in a formal space. The aisles are closely integrated, the floors on the same level and with the same pavement, as can be seen at Khirbat al-Minya (fig. 2)⁴⁶. Other factors are more flexible. The ratio of the width of central and side aisle ranges (tab. 1) from almost equal at al-Kūfa (1.25:1) to more than double at Minya (2.14:1) and ‘Anjar. The long hall at Mshattā is an exception from the square scheme, which may result from the overall layout of the plan with deep side units.

The facade on the courtyard is characterized by a triple motif of openings, emphasized in the middle, which give access to the hall. These are arches at al-Kūfa and Mshattā, open almost as wide as the aisles and directly on the courtyard, like an *aywān*. In a peristyle courtyard, three doors are used at Minya while the access is restricted to just one door at ‘Anjar.

45 This is also the position of the halls, different in shape, in the early Abbasid palaces of al-Ukhayḍīr (fig. 21) and at al-Raqqa.

46 The rendering of the interior of the hall in Cramer/Perlich/Schauerte, Mshatta fig. 259, shows a higher floor level between the columns and another pavement in the side aisles, yet both are hypothetical; cf. note 42.



Fig. 11 'Ammān, palace on the citadel (*dār al-imāra*), northern part, ground plan. – (After Arce, Amman 212. Labels removed, new scale).

The differences in ground size matter for function, as they result in differences in the number of people that could gather there (tab. 1). The largest halls are in Mshattā and, following closely, Khirbat al-Minya. The hall in al-Kūfa is considerably smaller while 'Anjar provides by far the smallest space, maybe compensated by the existence of a second hall across the court. Despite their differences in length and width, the halls at Mshattā and Minya offer a similar ground space for roughly the same number of people, which might indicate a similar status of their owners⁴⁷.

The interior elevation appears to have had a height of about two-thirds the width of the hall and exceeds the height of other rooms and of a peristyle around the courtyard. The columns apparently were connected by arches, forming arcades. As the central aisle is wider, one would imagine it higher than the side aisles. Yet this is not evident from the courtyard facade in Mshattā, which can be securely reconstructed as a broad rectangle, not stepped but even in height (fig. 7)⁴⁸. Indeed, at al-Kūfa the difference in the width of aisles is just 1 m, allowing an equal height to the vaulting which seems to have been used here on account of the thick

round pillars. On the other hand, at Minya a width of more than double the side aisles would call for a higher central aisle, maybe comparable to the reconstruction of the al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem, with one large and two smaller wooden gable roofs (fig. 3)⁴⁹. A clerestory seems improbable at al-Kūfa and Mshattā and is not compulsory at Minya⁵⁰.

In the overall layout, the hall forms a backbone with side rooms of various patterns and sizes. The hall is the centre of two closely connected side wings in Khirbat al-Minya, a secondary two-aisled hall on the left and a five-room group on the right, each linked by three doors⁵¹. It is the centre of four living units of five-room groups, two across one court on each side, in Mshattā. Here communication with the hall is restricted to one door on each side. A similar pattern with four peristyle courtyards is seen at 'Ammān (fig. 11) and, with more irregular court units, at al-Kūfa. There, three openings on each side communicate with a corridor and across it with side halls, while the corridor leads to the units in the rear. The three side rooms at 'Anjar may have had administrative functions; the hall is not connected to the living units of the residence.

47 Actually, at Khirbat al-Minya the ground size of the three-aisled hall together with the two-aisled side hall is exactly equal to the size of the hall with triconch at Mshattā, see in note 64.

48 A moderate rise may have been hidden behind it or just have been visible, such as in the central nave of the Great Mosque of al-Qairawān. The building is essentially from 836 but the main part of the hypostyle hall relates to the building of 773 which in turn has Umayyad precursors from 724, 703 and 670; Creswell/Allan, Short 315. 324. 329 figs 200. 202.

49 Following R. Hamilton's reconstruction and dating of »Aqṣā II« to the period of al-Walid I (r. 705-715) as shown and summarized in Creswell/Allan, Short 79-82 figs 49. 52.

50 Thus, the use of a clerestory in the axial nave of the Umayyad mosques in Damascus, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī and Jerusalem would have been a specific case of religious architecture.

51 The pattern with a triple opening on three sides of the hall reminds one of the cross-axial central space of a domed chamber with side halls in Abbasid palaces in Mesopotamia, such as in al-Ukhayḍīr (fig. 21), the Dār al-Khilāfa, Balkuwāra and Qaṣr al-Jiss in Sāmarrā'.

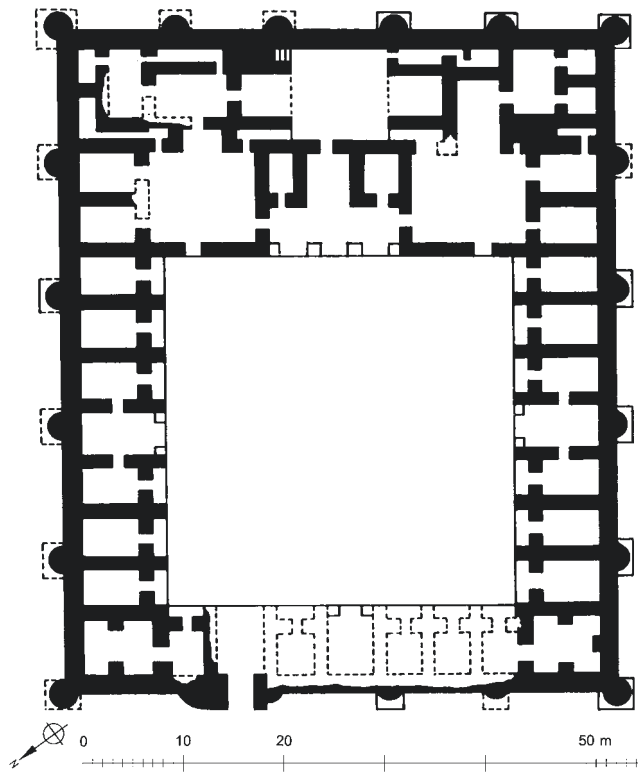


Fig. 12 Tulūl al-Shu'ayba, residence, ground plan. – (After Creswell/Allan, Short fig. 134. New scale).

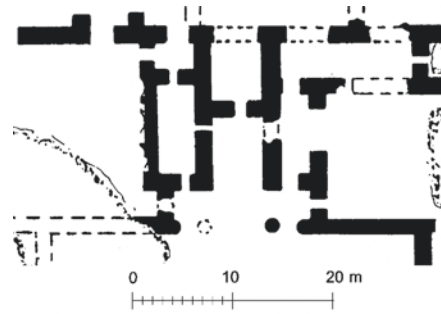


Fig. 13 al-Kūfa, governor's residence (*dār al-imāra*), T-shaped hall at east side of courtyard, detail of ground plan (detail from fig. 8).

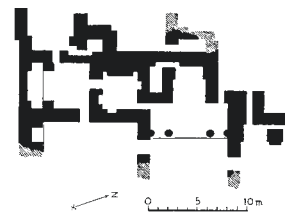


Fig. 14 Ctesiphon, house Ma'āriḍ IV, detail of ground plan. – (After Reuther, Architecture fig. 156 b. Detail, new scale).

The smaller space and symbols of authority

The different forms of the smaller space to which the central aisle leads have more in common than is immediately apparent. The triconch at Mshattā provides a large and separate room but is in the same way fully open to the central aisle like the conch which terminates the central aisle at 'Anjar. In both cases, the axial space extends the aisle and is closely linked with the hall. The triconch is usually considered a discrete motif but it can also be seen as a domed square inserted between conch and central aisle and extended by two side conchs, a motif used for the vestibule of the portal at Khirbat al-Minya (fig. 1). The axial conch with side rooms at 'Anjar and Mshattā is in the scheme of an »apse with *pastophoria*« in Byzantine churches in Syria-Palestine, but it also embodies the pattern of a niche-like room with flanking rooms in the Mesopotamian T-shaped hall (figs 12-14)⁵². By contrast, the square domed room in al-Kūfa and 'Ammān (figs 8, 11) is much more divided from the hall by a wall with a door, similar to Sasanian palaces (fig. 22).

These motifs relate to forms that can be associated with the place of the ruler in Sasanian or Byzantine architecture, hence to late antique symbolic forms of authority. The pat-

tern of a three-aisled hall with domed room at al-Kūfa and Mshattā is paralleled by the *aywān* with domed room in the palace of the citadel in 'Ammān (fig. 11). This combination is considered a core element in Sasanian palaces, mentioned below, where the domed room is thought to have been the place of the ruler before he was seen in the *aywān* (fig. 22)⁵³. At Mshattā, the domed square is a triconch, an established motif in Roman-Byzantine palatial architecture, used in the so-called »Roman Palace« (actually attributed to the 5th-6th centuries) and the »Episcopal Palace« (dated 512) at Bosra and the residence of a Byzantine official at Qaṣr ibn Wardān (564-572) in Syria⁵⁴. Recent research has suggested that these were without a dome⁵⁵.

Hence, the Umayyad dome may be an innovation in palatial residences of the region, and one that parallels Sasanian models. The importance attached to the presence of a dome in early Islamic palaces is apparent from textual sources, which refer to palaces with a »*qubbat al-khaḍrā'*«, or »Dome of Heaven«, as an audience room. They add to the archaeologically attested Umayyad residences with a dome which include, besides the cases with a preceding hall at al-Kūfa, Mshattā and 'Ammān, also the great hall with a central dome and the smaller domed reception room at Khirbat al-Mafjar⁵⁶.

52 See below.

53 On Sasanian audience ceremonial, see Canepa, *Two Eyes* 138-144.

54 Creswell, *EMA-I* 616-618 figs 669-671, based on H. C. Butler. Perich Roca, *Palacio* figs 31-32, referring for Bosra to recent research by P. Piraud-Fournet. Qaṣr ibn Wardān is attributed to the *magister militum per orientem* or a local *dux*; *ibidem* 48. 65-67.

55 See the discussion of Qaṣr ibn Wardān by Perich Roca, *Palacio* 61, and his reconstruction, *ibidem* figs 10. 14. 24. For the former reconstruction with a dome by H. C. Butler, see *ibidem* fig. 5.

56 Creswell/Allan, *Short* figs 100. 108-110. 113.

The earliest *qubbat al-khadra'* is mentioned for Damascus, built by the Umayyad Sufyānid, then governor and later caliph, Mu'āwiya⁵⁷. Others were ordered by the governor al-Ḥajjāj at al-Wāsiṭ, the Umayyad caliph Hishām at al-Ruṣāfa, and the Abbasid al-Manṣūr at Hāshimiyya near al-Kūfa and in his round palace city of Baghdad. The spatial relation of the domed room to the palace is unclear in the texts⁵⁸. Similar to the archaeologically known buildings, they could have been preceded by a hall, either three-aisled or an *aywān*, and been situated on a courtyard.

The conch at 'Anjar parallels the apse or exedra, which marks the place of the emperor or his representative in the Roman-Byzantine *aula* and, at a provincial level and in smaller scale, in residences and *praetoria* of governors and military commanders, as noted above. The use in the *dār al-imāra* at 'Anjar would confirm an association with authority, but also limits it, as it is used twice, in both halls. In the small domed room at Khirbat al-Mafjar the exedra with higher floor was obviously the seat for the owner and host, and two conchs with sitting benches flank the vestibule in Khirbat al-Minya (fig. 1). A similar function may apply for the three conchs framing the domed room at Mshattā (fig. 6) and the succession of conchs that envelops the great hall at Mafjar. This may suggest the more restricted meaning of a conch as a dignifying motif.

A hall with a conch is used earlier in Khirbat al-Karak near Tiberias, if one accepts the identification with the Umayyad residence al-Ṣinnabra founded by Mu'āwiya in the Sufyānid period (fig. 5)⁵⁹. T. Da'adli describes the remains, mostly mere foundations, as a three-aisled building with an apse flanked by two square side rooms and three annex rooms at one side, and interprets them as an audience hall. The interior covers a large rectangle c. 20.3 m × 29 m, extended by the conch with a monumental width of 8.5 m⁶⁰. The ground size is close to the hall with triconch in Mshattā and to the hall with side hall in Khirbat al-Minya⁶¹. The building is orientated south-south-west and has porticoes along the north entrance side and the long west side. It stands in the middle of an enclosure, 68 m × 74 m, with square towers on the corners and on a main gate in the middle of the south side. A secondary entrance was on the north side, an external bath attached to the south-

east corner. D. Whitcomb suggested that a smaller courtyard building in the north may have been a residential unit⁶².

An association with authority similar to the late antique models from which they derive seems clear from the way these forms are used in Umayyad architecture. Yet, the formulation differs and indicates more adaptation and translation than mere continuity. The range in size and expressive quality may reflect a variety or hierarchy in semantics⁶³. A conch, or apse, on the end of the central aisle provides not just less space but is also a lesser statement compared to a separate room with dome or the monumentality of a domed triconch. The apparent absence of such a space at Khirbat al-Minya raises questions. Actually, some evidence suggests that in the central aisle the marble incrustation in the middle of the back wall and the pavement in front of it may have had a particular design, different from the rest; thus, the decoration could have highlighted an axial space within the hall (fig. 2). Since an architecturally announced space is absent unless one of the side rooms acted as such⁶⁴, the residence might have had a more informal function, or it did not claim the same status as palaces featuring a hall with a domed or apsed space⁶⁵.

Umayyad pattern and types, Mesopotamian and Sasanian parallels

The pattern and aspects noted in residences with three-aisled hall can be considered for other types of Umayyad formal spaces and compared to Mesopotamian and Sasanian parallels, for some of which continuity into the early Islamic periods can be shown.

The pattern with an axial sequence and a domed room

The Umayyad axial sequence parallels the succession of *aywān* and domed room which is considered an essential motif of Sasanian royal palaces. The *aywān*, a barrel vaulted structure over a rectangle, is fully open at the front side; an opening on the other side connects to a square domed room⁶⁶. Early ex-

57 Bloom, Qubbat 135. He has shown, ibidem 136, that »*qubbat al-khadra'*« refers metaphorically to the »dome of heaven«, not literally to a dome with the colour *akhḍar*, green or blue. For a discussion of the palace in Damascus, see Flood, Damascus 147-149. 165-167 fig. 80; and cf. here note 69. The caliphal palace in al-Ruṣāfa has not yet been located, see suggestions by Gussone, Resafa 619-620.

58 Bloom, Qubbat 135. Grabar, Ceremonial 162-164.

59 Whitcomb, Sinnabra had first suggested the identification of the site Khirbat al-Karak with Umayyad al-Ṣinnabra. Earlier and recent excavation work is summarized and presented by Da'adli, Ṣinnabra.

60 Measurements calipered from Da'adli, Ṣinnabra 135, Plan 8.2. He states, ibidem 145, the width of the central aisle as 8.5 m, the side aisles 4.5 m. The publication supersedes the interpretation by Whitcomb, note 13 fig. 1.3, based on incomplete earlier evidence, as a peristyle courtyard with exedra and the ensuing comparative discussion.

61 At al-Ṣinnabra c. 588 m² without a conch, a bit more than the two other residences, for which see in note 64.

62 Whitcomb, Sinnabra.

63 Cf. Ritter, Minya 211-212.

64 Grabar, Formation 142, speculated that the five-room group with mosaics, to the right of the hall, served as such a space. This runs into the problem that the accepted understanding of such a *bayt* is as a living unit. Rather, a more formal space is provided by the two-aisled hall to the left of the main hall. Interestingly, the three-aisled hall (19.42 m × 19.66 m = c. 382 m²) and the two aisled hall (19.52 m × 9.68 m = c. 189 m²) together provide exactly the same ground space of c. 571 m² as the hall with the triconch at Mshattā. The difference of less than 1 m² is in the error margin of deviating measurements.

65 In later Andalusian-Umayyad architecture, columnar halls of caliphal residences were without a dome or a conch, such as the large hall, or »edificio superior«, and the hall of 'Abd al-Rahmān III, or Sal6n Rico, in Madinat al-Zahrā' (953-957). The latter is built over a rectangle wider than deep, 20.35 × 17.7 m, covering c. 360 m²; see plan and measurements, Arnold, Rezeption 257 fig. 2a. In North Africa, the three-aisled columnar hall of the palaces in Aghlabid Raqqāda (9th c.) and in Fatimid al-Mahdiyya (916-921) have a shallow niche in the middle of the back wall; see Arnold, Western figs 1.1; 2.1.

66 Hoffmann, Palastarchitektur 130-131; Kr6ger, Stuckdekor 268.

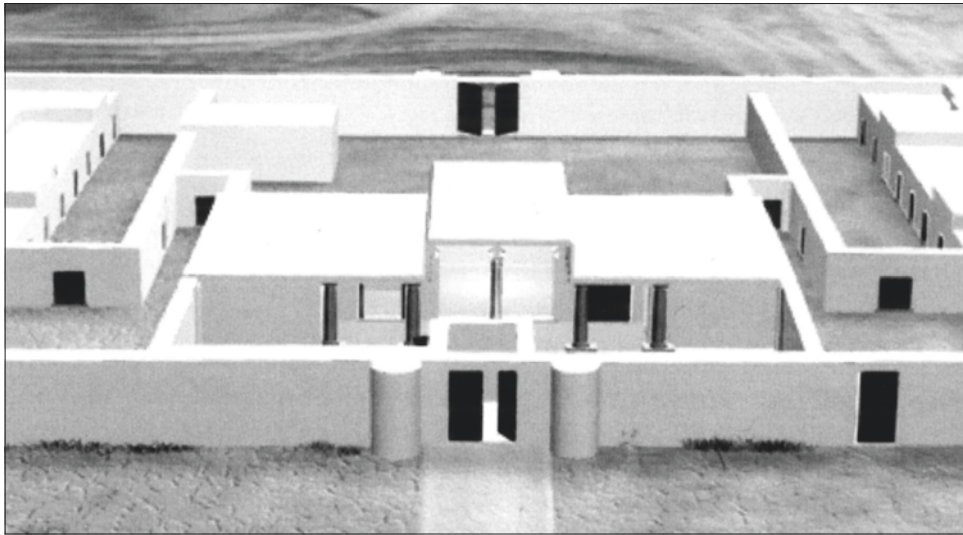


Fig. 15 Balis, residence, rendering, detail. – (After Leisten, Balis fig. 4. Detail).

amples include, in Iran near Shīrāz, Qalʿa-i Dukhtar (first half of 3rd c.) on top of a steep hill and Firūzābād with an *aywān* internally 13.3 m wide by 27.4 m deep and a large domed square of the same width, flanked by two more domed rooms (built under Ardashīr I, r. 224-242, **fig. 22**). Later examples in Mesopotamia are the Ṭāq-i Kisrā at Ctesiphon near Baghdad, with a huge *aywān* of 25.6 m × 43 m and a small square room, mirrored by a second *aywān* on the opposite side of the courtyard (Khusraw I, r. 501-579); and Qaṣr-i Shīrīn (probably Khusraw II, r. 590-628) west of Kirmānshāh⁶⁷.

A direct reflection is seen in the Umayyad citadel of ʿAm-mān, with a courtyard surrounded by a peristyle on three sides. Interestingly, the domed room is given more emphasis in relation to the *aywān* than in Sasanian palaces, which would accord with the importance of a *qubbat al-khadrāʾ* in textual sources, as noted above (**figs 11. 22**). Another Eastern model is seen in the concept for the palace at ʿAnjar. Even though the halls are closed and three-aisled, the cross-axial layout with two halls across the court (**fig. 4**) recalls a Sasanian two-*aywān* courtyard such as, in Mesopotamia, in residential architecture and, on a monumental scale, in the palace of Ctesiphon⁶⁸.

More generally, the Mesopotamian and Sasanian pattern resonates with the Umayyad pattern of a domed room preceded by a hall of whatever type, including probably the textual cases of a *qubbat al-khadrāʾ*, that is, the *dār al-imāra* of a governor and the palace of the caliph. All Umayyad residences with such a »Dome of Heaven« reported in texts were located in Lower Mesopotamia. This ties in with the

archaeologically known Lower Mesopotamian case of al-Kūfa, to which Mshattā is comparable. The other use outside Mesopotamia is the palace with a domed room in Damascus. Some textual sources relate that it continued a Byzantine precursor⁶⁹. Others report that it was built with burnt brick and timber, materials also used in Mesopotamian architecture, but too little is known for either comparison.

The three-aisled columnar hall

Columnar halls with three aisles and a subsequent domed room are known in Sasanian architecture, but surrounded by difficulties of interpretation and, sometimes, of evidence. The two first excavated, at Kīsh in Central Mesopotamia and Dāmghān in Iran⁷⁰, have been understood as palaces (**figs 17-18**). The hall on round pillars with narrow side aisles opens on a courtyard and leads to a square room with cross-axial niches which differs significantly in the two cases. In Dāmghān it has the peculiar plan of a domed canopy on angular pillars with distance from the side walls, placed inside the square, and followed by a small room in the back. Earlier scholarship, in line with the interpretation as a palace, called these halls a »basilica-like *aywān*«, or something similar, and pointed them out as parallel to the halls in the Umayyad palaces of al-Kūfa and Mshattā⁷¹. Similar halls exist in several buildings in Iran: near Tehran at Chal Ṭarkhān (**fig. 19**) with a subsequent small square room and at Tepe Mīl; at Takht-i Sulaymān in North-

67 See the summary, Huff, *Architecture*, 50-53 (cf. Huff, *Plansystem* 192), and the evaluation of archaeological and dating evidence, Hoffmann, *Palastarchitektur* 29-52. 72-84. 98-107. Cf. Reuther, *Architecture* 533-545 figs 150. 153. 155; Erdmann, *Sasaniden* 25-34. 146. Measurements given here are cited after Reuther. Bier, *Sasanian* 58-59, suggested an Abbasid date for Qaṣr-i Shīrīn. While the use of the building may have been continued into the early Islamic period, Hoffmann adheres to a Sasanian dating.

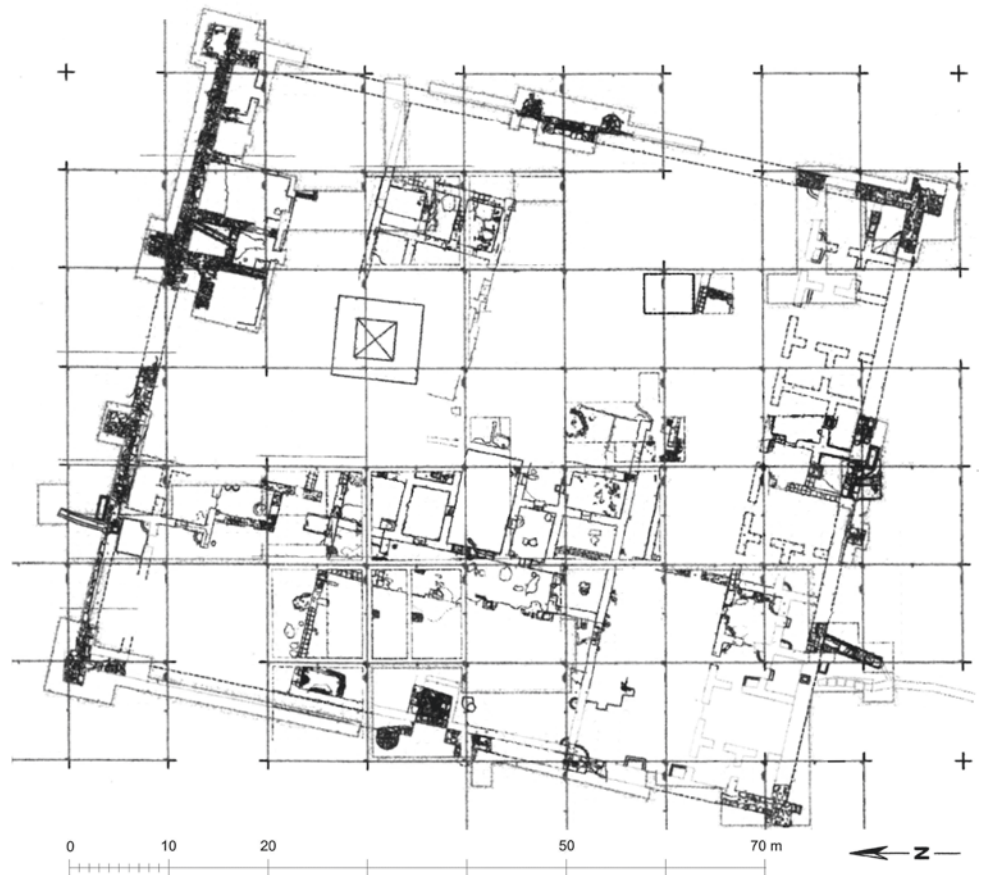
68 Noted by Finster, ʿAnjar-(III) 31. For the palace at Ctesiphon, see the plan, Kröger, *Stuckdekor* fig. 5. Houses with a two-*aywān* scheme include at Ctesiphon: Maʿāriḍ I and V, on account of the decoration, and Umm al-Zaʿātir (ibidem 271 figs 5. 21, on the latter Wachsmuth/Kühnel/Dimand, *Ausgrabungen* 5 fig. 2); at Kīsh: »Palace I« (Watelin, *Kīsh* fig. 169a).

69 Flood, *Damascus* 147-148, discussed these and suggested a comparison with the Great Palace at Constantinople.

70 »Palace II« at Kīsh, dated to 309-379: Watelin, *Kīsh* 584-587 figs 169b. 170; Kröger, *Stuckdekor* 190 fig. 119b. Some points of the architectural evidence in the ground plan are problematic. – Larger building at Dāmghān: Schmidt, *Damghan* 327-338 fig. 170; Kimball, *Dāmghān* 579-583 figs 166-167. It is attributed to the 6th century; the decoration shows a refurbishment in the early Islamic period: Kröger, *Stuckdekor* 193-194 fig. 124.

71 The conflated term appears to be more problematic than helpful. It originated from the discussion on Sasanian architecture. Reuther, *Architecture* 538, described Dāmghān in the words »the ivān there was a three-aisled hall« and compared it and »Palace II« at Kīsh with Mshattā. Erdmann, *Sasaniden* 39

Fig. 16 Balis, residence, ground plan after excavation 2006. – (After Leisten, Balis fig. 3. Detail, metering grid removed for clarity, scale added).



west Iran with two consecutive halls (fig. 20)⁷². In the latter case a careful excavation has proven a cultic function related to the complex of the fire temple⁷³. An analogous function as a cultic ceremonial hall, probably restricted to the aristocracy and related to royalty, has now also been suggested for the halls in Kish, Dāmghān and other places, based on the iconography of the decoration⁷⁴. In all of them, the side aisles are rather narrow, possibly lower than the central aisle. One might speak of an *aywān* with side aisles, or open corridors, different from the more unified space in the Umayyad halls at Kūfa and other places.

This refutes the former interpretation as a palace yet retains a royal context. Indeed, in one instance a three-aisled hall was used in Lower Mesopotamia in a residence of the Sasanian period. A partial excavation of Tulūl al-Ukhayḍīr west of Karbalāʾ discovered the south wing of a baked brick courtyard building with two building phases (figs 9-10)⁷⁵. B. Fin-

ster proposed an identification with Qaṣr Muqātil known from texts, assigning the first phase to the Christian chieftain Muqātil ibn Ḥasan from Lakhmīd al-Ḥīra, c. 650; the second to the Umayyad period after 710 before the establishment was destroyed c. 762⁷⁶. The hall is set out on a square slightly deeper than wide, c. 10m × 11m with two rows of thick columns or round pillars in three *intercolumnia*, which end with half columns attached to pilasters at the wall. The side aisles are quite narrow in proportion to the central aisle. The openings in the three-arched facade are even narrower as they rest on engaged half columns, giving pre-eminence to the central arch. At the back an opening led from the central aisle into an oblong room, as wide as the hall, but with faint edges marking a central square. Whether it was domed or roofed in another way is unclear. Finster and J. Schmidt compare the hall with Umayyad al-Kūfa (fig. 8) and more closely with the Sasanian halls at Kish and Dāmghān (figs 17-18)⁷⁷.

followed with »dreischiffiger Iwan« for Kish and Dāmghān. Sauvaget, *Mosquée* 163, called both »salles d'audience de plan basilical« and Dāmghān »une réplique exacte« of Mshattā. The term was taken up by Ettinghausen, *Comments* 284 n. 27, referring to al-Kūfa as a »basilica-like *aywān*«. Golombek, *Balkh* 185-186, called the three-aisled halls, or round pillar halls, in Dāmghān and Sarwistān an »*aywān*« [...] divided into three parallel corridors by two rows of columns [...] like that of a basilica« and compares it, *inter alia*, with the hall in Mshattā. Grabar, *Formation* 156, saw at al-Kūfa an »iwan-like basilical hall« and, comparing it with Mshattā, a »combination of Sasanian and Mediterranean features«.

72 Kröger, *Stuckdekor* 201 fig. 130; 202 fig. 132 (groundplan unpublished); 141 fig. 79.

73 D. Huff in Naumann/Huff/Schnyder, *Bericht* 147-149.

74 Kröger, *Stuckdekor* 266-270. 272. 274; Kröger, *Stucco* 12. Cf. Callieri, *Architecture*, Huff, *Architecture*, 53, and Hoffmann, *Palastarchitektur* 11-14, who include the so-called »residence« at Ḥājjiābād in the discussion, on which see Azarnoush, *Manor*, and the comments by Huff, *Review* and Boucharlat, *Review*. It must be noted, however, that the plan disposition at Takht-i Sulaymān is a specific case which may restrict a generalization based on it.

75 The site was excavated in 1973 and 1975, see the report Finster/Schmidt, *Ruinen* 57-150 pls. 25-51. The reassessment, Finster/Schmidt, *Muqatil* fig. 5, provides a more complete ground plan of the excavated south wing.

76 On phases and dating, see Finster/Schmidt, *Ruinen* 67-69. 149-150; Finster/Schmidt, *Muqatil* 343-344. 346-348. Cf. Creswell/Allan, *Short* 221. 263.

77 Finster/Schmidt, *Muqatil* 345; Finster/Schmidt, *Ruinen* 74-75.

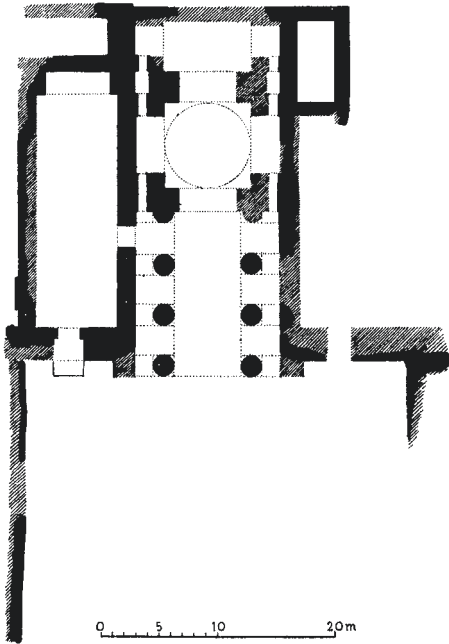


Fig. 17 Dāmghān, columnar hall with domed room, ground plan. – (After Kimball, Dāmghān fig. 166).

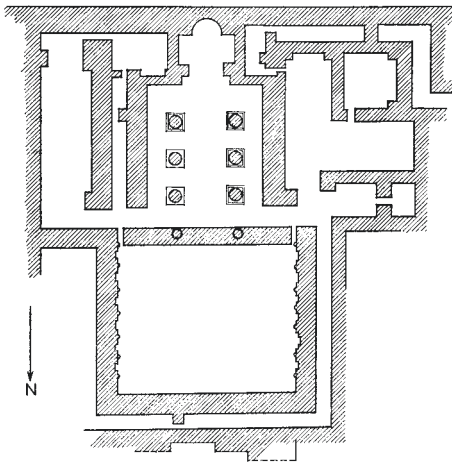


Fig. 18 Kish, columnar hall with axial room («Palace II»), ground plan. – (After Watelin, Kish fig. 169).

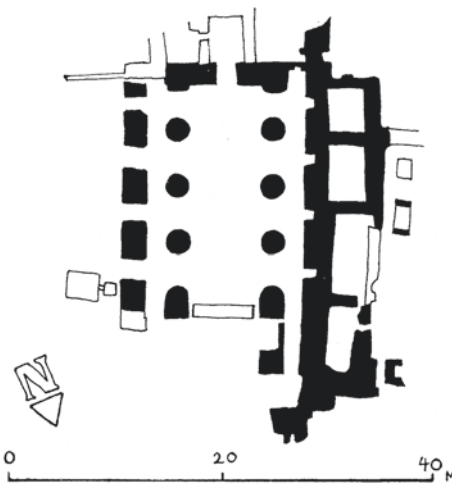


Fig. 19 Chal Tarkhān, columnar hall, ground plan. – (After Kröger, Stuckdekor fig. 130. Detail).

The difficulty is how to explain the use of similar schemes in a cultic, Zoroastrian-Sasanian and a residential, Christian-Arab, context. The answer might be that both were aristocratic gathering spaces dignified by an axial pattern comparable to Sasanian palaces, but this would assume a degree of flexibility in form and meaning that needs further proof. In any case, the use in the residence Qaṣr Muqātil cannot have been unique and must have been more widespread in Lower Mesopotamia. The model might have been present in Lakhmid al-Hīra, whence the founder of Qaṣr Muqātil originated and where in the Islamic successor city, al-Kūfa, a similar hall was used in the Umayyad *dār al-imāra* (fig. 8). The latter parallel acquires even more weight if the Umayyad building had a Sasanian or early Islamic precursor⁷⁸. Qaṣr Muqātil continued to function as a residence in the Umayyad period when the hall was refurbished with stucco decoration, which indicates that it conformed to the norms of a formal space in that period. The plan scheme, the position on the south side of the courtyard, and features like the wall pilasters are similar to the hall in al-Kūfa. The narrow side aisles and the isolated position in the plan layout, without communication to adjacent rooms differ from Umayyad examples, particularly al-Kūfa where the hall is much larger and unified and leads into a domed room⁷⁹. Such differences may be due to administrative needs in an official residence and a more developed Umayyad ceremonial.

The triple portico with niche room (T-shaped hall)

A similar axial pattern underlies the simpler type of formal space which can be shown to have a tradition in Mesopotamia from the Sasanian into the early Islamic period. It was used in the Umayyad residences of Tulūl al-Shu‘ayba near Basra (fig. 12)⁸⁰ and in North Mesopotamian Balis, Syria (figs 15-16)⁸¹, both dated to the later Umayyad period. Placed on the main axis of the courtyard opposite the entrance side, this was a gathering and reception space. A facade with a triple doorway on columns leads into a transverse hall, or portico, and to an open, niche-like rectangular room in the middle, flanked by smaller side rooms⁸². The hall and the middle room form an inverted T. For the facade horizontal beams were suggested at Balis, arches at al-Shu‘ayba⁸³. The scheme was also employed, with round pillars, probably arched, in the *dār*

78 For the debate on the dating of phase 1 and 2, see note 37.

79 For the comparison with al-Kūfa, cf. Finster/Schmidt, Ruinen 69-74.

80 Majhūl 1972, 244-245 pls. 1. 4-5. His preliminary comparison of stucco finds would suggest a date c. 724-743. Summarized in Creswell/Allan, Short 222 fig. 134.

81 Leisten, Balis 378-379 figs 3-4.

82 At Balis, the main room and four side rooms form a five-room group, or «Syrian bayt» preceded by the portico. The room group formed a pavilion between two courtyards.

83 Majhūl, Shu‘ayba 244 describes (my translation) »three entrances with arched supports, the middle one wider than the two side entrances (*bi-thalātha madākhal ma‘qūda alā a‘mida, al-madkhal al-wuṣṭā akbar min al-madkhalayn al-jānibayn*).«

al-imāra of al-Kūfa on the sides of the courtyard (fig. 13). A Mesopotamian continuity into the Abbasid period is apparent from the use of this scheme in the larger side courtyards of the palace al-Ukhaidīr (dated to 762 or 778, fig. 21)⁸⁴ and in many houses of 9th-century Sāmarrā'. In both places the triple opening rested on wall piers, probably with arches⁸⁵.

At least three examples attributed to the Sasanian period are known from Central Mesopotamia⁸⁶. In the house Ma'ariq IV in Ctesiphon (6th century, fig. 14), the eastern courtyard had a portico with four columns, two placed immediately on the side walls just like at Tulūl al-Shu'ayba and Balis. Wachsmuth noted the similarity to the T-shaped pattern at al-Ukhaidīr (fig. 21) and Sāmarrā'⁸⁷. A second one is to be found in the small courtyard building of Tell Abū Sha'af near Jalawlā', northeast of Baghdad, where four columns are placed in the same way as at Ma'ariq IV⁸⁸. A third example, not far away, is the side courtyards of the palace Qaṣr-i Shīrīn west of Kirmānshāh (attributed to the time of Khusraw II, r. 590-628, possibly used into the Abbasid period)⁸⁹.

This type of a room group with a triple opening and a T-shaped hall was once labelled »Persian *bayt*«⁹⁰, which points to an Eastern tradition but obscures its frequent appearance in Mesopotamia. The excavator of Tulūl al-Shu'ayba, D. Majhūl, relates it to a type which Iraqi archaeologists commonly associate with al-Ḥīra in Lower Mesopotamia⁹¹. This modern usage of the term »*ḥīrī* type« must be distinguished from, but may reflect, the historic use in a textual source by the medieval Arab scholar al-Mas'ūdī (d. 957). He narrated that the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847-861) introduced a reception hall with a central and two side rooms, or wings, modelled on the palace of a Lakhmid king at al-Ḥīra which emulated the battle array of an army⁹². T. Leisten discussed this passage extensively and related it to the T-shaped hall in houses of Abbasid Sāmarrā', referring also to texts which call a similar pattern in contemporaneous houses of Fuṣṭāṭ in

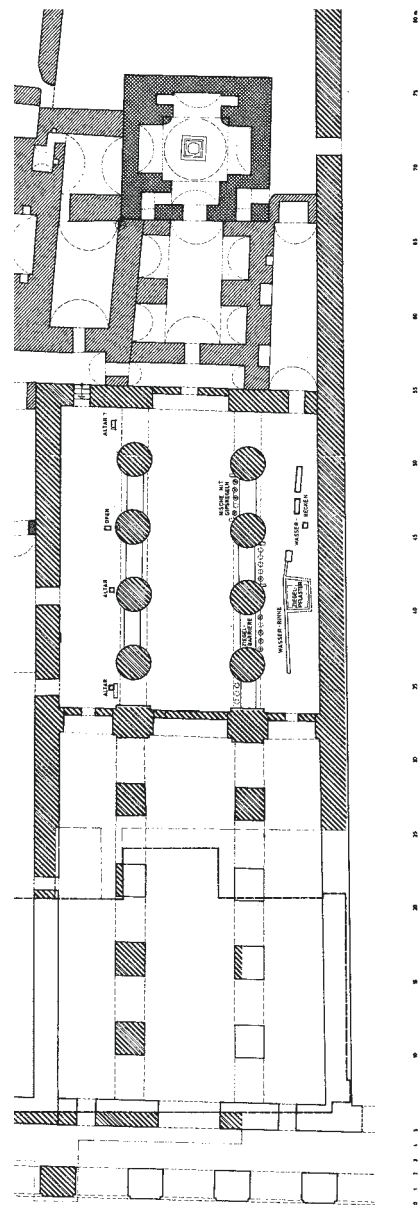


Fig. 20 Takht-i Sulaymān, pillar hall and columnar hall with axial rooms, ground plan. – (Dietrich Huff; after Kröger, Stuckdekor fig. 79. Detail).

84 Creswell/Allan, Short fig. 147.

85 Leisten, Hira: figs 74. 76. 78. 81. 83. 85-86. 93. – The scheme is also seen in 10th-century Arab Spain in the »casas con patio y un portico« at Madinat al-Zahrā'; see Almagro, Análisis fig. 4.

86 A fourth one, from Lower Mesopotamia and attributed to the 6th century, has been found at al-Ḥīra in recent excavations of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage of Iraq; kindly communicated by 'Abd al-Razzāq 'Abbūdī, December 18, 2018. In view of the fact that earlier and recent work, Rice, Excavations and Müller-Wiener/Siegel, Survey, found predominantly early Islamic remains at the place today called al-Ḥīra, it will be important to scrutinize the dating evidence for this building.

87 Wachsmuth/Kühnel/Dimand, Ausgrabungen 9-10 fig. 5. Reuther, Architecture 548 compared the inverted T-plan with the *tarma*, or loggia, in 19th-century Iraqi houses. Cf. Kröger, Stuckdekor 93 fig. 49, who confirms, *ibidem* 134. 255, the dating of the finds of decoration to the late Sasanian period, the 6th century.

88 Excavation report by al-Kassar, Sha'af; discussed by Hoffmann, Palastarchitektur 95-97 pl. 41 and Finster, Kastelle 110 fig. 11b. The site is 25 km from Jalawlā' which is about 120 km from Baghdad. Four columns form a portico with a wide middle opening and two narrow ones. It leads into an open room flanked by two side rooms. Based on seal impressions, the building might go back to Seleucid times but was used and apparently refurbished in the Sasanian period.

89 Leisten, Hira 383; Creswell/Allan, Short 146 fig. 85, C. On the dating, see Hoffmann, Palastarchitektur 83-84; and here note 67.

90 Creswell, EMA-I 518 fig. 566; Creswell/Allan, Short 146 fig. 85. The term intended to distinguish it from the »Syrian *bayt*«, the five-room group in Umayyad residences of Syria-Palestine.

91 Majhūl, Shu'ayba 244 (my translation): »This type of entrance is similar to that in the so called buildings of al-Ḥīra, in which each of the entrances corresponds with the opening of the rooms enclosing on two sides an *aywān* in the middle. There is a large arch (*kildūr*) which is opposite the central *aywān* (*qalb*). The two side rooms are flanking it.«

92 Masudi, Prairies 192-193: »Motewekkil se fit construire, pendant son regne, un palais d'une forme inconnue jusqu'alors et qui reçut le nom de *El-Hīri*, »de deux ailes et des portiques« (*al-ḥīrī wa-l-kummayn wa-l-arwiqa*). [...] un édifice rappelant une armée rangée en ordre de bataille. La partie supérieure du palais (*rivāq*), destinée au logement (*majlis*) du roi, figurait le centre de l'armée (*sadr*), les deux ailes (*kummān*) représentant la droite et la gauche de l'armée étaient réservées à ses principaux courtisans; le pavillon de droite renfermait le vestiaire royal, et le pavillon de gauche tout ce qui servait à ses festins; la partie élevée du palais commandait le centre et les deux ailes, et les trois portes du palais y conduisaient. Tel est l'édifice qui porte encore aujourd'hui le nom des *deux ailes* et celui d'*el-hīri* [...].« The passage has been used by E. Herzfeld with another interpretation that sees a reference to the layout of the plan of palaces in three strips and to an audience hall flanked by residential rooms, which supposedly existed in al-Ḥīra and was continued in early Islamic palaces. See Leisten, *ibidem* 379-380, who refutes the theory. Curiously a third, different interpretation of al-Mas'ūdī's passage by Creswell is not mentioned, see below note 96.

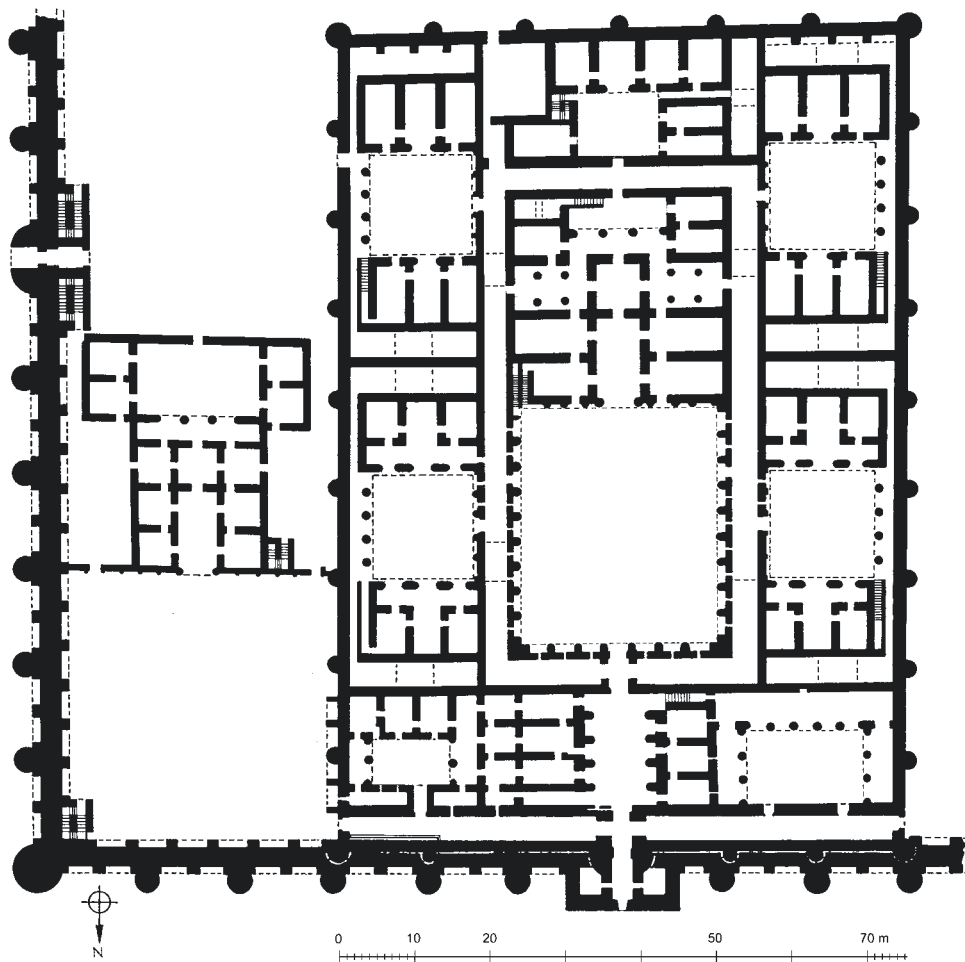


Fig. 21 al-Ukhaydīr, residence, main building and inner annex within the enclosure, ground plan. – (After Creswell/Allan, Short fig. 147. Labels removed, new scale added).

Egypt »*ḥayrī*«⁹³. Thus, a Mesopotamian tradition of this type from the Sasanian into the Umayyad and Abbasid period can be proven from archaeology. The tenth-century narrative that the »*ḥīrī* type« of the Abbasid caliph was based on the palace of a king in al-Ḥīra constructs a literary link between two glorious Arab pasts⁹⁴, but this does not exclude the possibility that indeed a palace of such a type existed in Sasanian al-Ḥīra and that it had an impact on early Islamic architecture⁹⁵.

The Mesopotamian T-shaped and three-aisled halls share some features. Both are open on the court, similar to an *aywān* but without full visibility. They have a three-arched facade, emphasized in the middle and opening into a tripartite space, short and broad in one case and a deep square in the other. The niche-like room flanked by two side rooms in the T-shaped hall provides an axial space analogous to the room after the three-aisled hall. The relation of both types is clear in the cross-axial courtyard at al-Kūfa, where the three-aisled hall on one side is matched by a triple portico with a

T-shaped hall on the other sides (fig. 8). The analogy might suggest that the two types represent the simpler residential and the larger stately form of a similar concept for receiving people, possibly strengthening the assumption that the three-aisled hall had a history of residential use in Sasanian Mesopotamia⁹⁶.

Conclusion

The assessment of Eastern elements in Umayyad architecture is contained by the significance attached to Mediterranean traditions in Syria-Palestine and the comparatively much lesser archaeological knowledge from Mesopotamia. In the early Islamic period both regions became intimately linked, overcoming the former border situation between the Byzantine and Sasanian empires. Mesopotamia was a highly important though unruly province in early Islamic territory, attested by

93 Leisten, Hira 382-384; cf. Leisten, Balis 379.

94 See on this aspect Toral-Niehoff, Hira 87. One may add that al-Mas'ūdi himself originated from al-Kūfa, the successor city of al-Ḥīra, which might lend his view more credibility as local historical tradition as well as explain it as local patriotism.

95 For an example in residential architecture, recently excavated at al-Ḥīra and said to be of 6th-century date, see note 86.

96 Creswell, EMA-I 53 n. 4 and, giving it more weight, Creswell/Allan, Short 15, suggested that the reception hall described by al-Mas'ūdi may relate to a three-aisled hall such as in the Umayyad *dār al-imāra* of al-Kūfa, which then would have a model in al-Ḥīra (different from Herzfeld's interpretation and understanding of the three-aisled hall at Mshatta as the addition of a »Syrian basilica«, see note 92). This appears untenable if one follows Leisten's identification with the T-shaped hall.

newly founded cities in the south such as al-Kūfa, al-Baṣra and al-Wāsiṭ. The fourth caliph ‘Alī resided in al-Kūfa; al-Wāsiṭ was the city of the powerful Umayyad governor al-Ḥajjāj; and al-Ruṣāfa at the border of Syrian Upper Mesopotamia became the residence of the Umayyad caliph Hishām. For the west of this territory, the modern countries of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories, a great deal of early Islamic archaeological information is available and has enormously increased over the past decades. Yet, there is far less for the East, Mesopotamia, modern Iraq and Iran. Particularly in Iraq, several wars, civil war and the difficulty of accessing the country for almost four decades have resulted in a discrepancy between its great historical importance and the comparatively limited archaeological knowledge about it.

The foregoing discussion offers lines of inquiry for Mesopotamian and Sasanian elements in Umayyad palatial architecture rather than relating it predominantly to Roman-Byzantine architecture in Syria-Palestine. It shows for Umayyad architecture in Mesopotamia an inventive use of pre-existing elements similar to what can be observed in Syria-Palestine and suggests a spread of concepts from East to West and possibly from South to North.

The Umayyad three-aisled hall, with an axial room and the powerful symbol of a dome over it, is a formula unknown in Roman-Byzantine audience halls. The general pattern of an axial sequence of courtyard, hall and domed room or a similar space resonates with the sequence of the *aywān* and domed room in Sasanian palaces and has an analogy in Sasanian columnar halls with a domed room. For the latter, a function as a cultic ceremonial hall has been proposed, but Qaṣr Muqāṭil demonstrates that a three-aisled columnar hall with an axial room was also used in an Arab residence of the Sasanian period in Lower Mesopotamia. Such use must have been more common in the region and its centre al-Ḥīra. More obviously, the courtyard with *aywān* and domed room at ‘Ammān realizes a Mesopotamian and Sasanian model though in a specific form. The scheme of a cross-axial two-*aywān* courtyard is present on a conceptual level at ‘Anjar, embodied in a peristyle court with two three-aisled halls. Continuity is seen in the Umayyad adoption of the T-shaped hall, not only in Lower and Central Mesopotamia, where Sasanian precedents can be made evident, but also in Upper Mesopotamia. Given that the earlier parallels occur in smaller residential units or in houses, the Umayyad use in larger courtyard residences and the inclusion in a »Syrian« five-room group and in a cross-axial arrangement indicate processes of adaptation and translation.

The impact of Sasanian Mesopotamia can be traced in Marwānid buildings of Syria-Palestine, but not enough Sufyānid buildings are known to see a chronology with a shift of models. It is conceivable, though, given the historical changes of the Marwānid period, such as in the relation to tribes, in the transformation of the state under ‘Abd al-Malik and al-

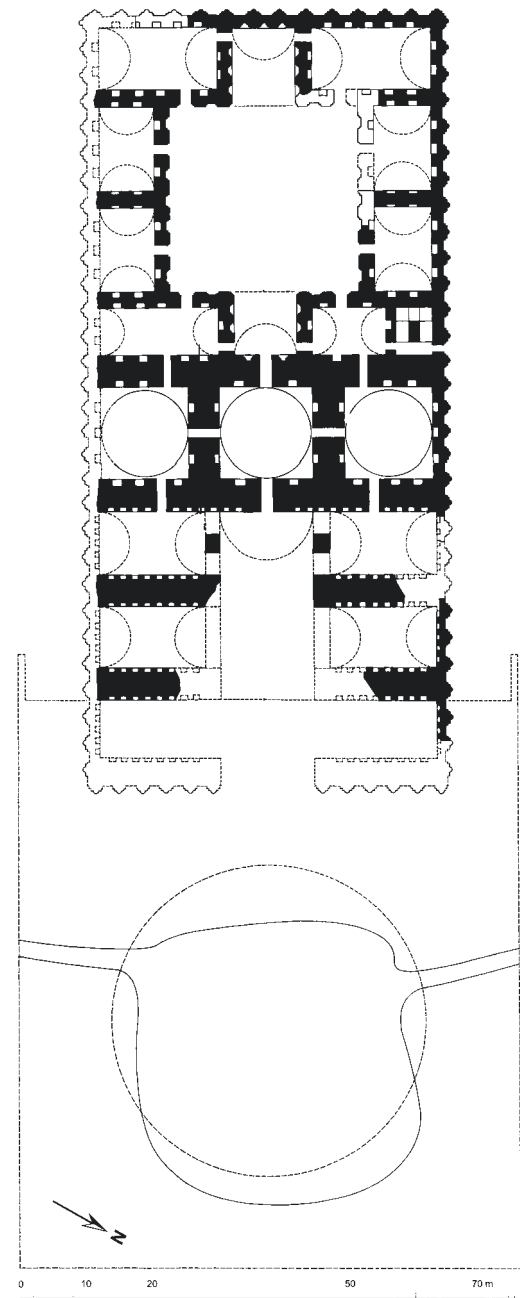


Fig. 22 Firūzābād, building interpreted as palace, and artificial lake, ground plan. – (Dietrich Huff; after Hoffmann, Palastarchitektur pl. 15. Labels removed, new scale added).

Walīd I, when the governor al-Ḥajjāj turned Mesopotamia into a reliable province; and in the economic importance of estates in Iraq under Hīshām⁹⁷. Whether earlier or later, such impact must have been mediated in some way, by reference to models of Arab and Sasanian kingship, similar to al-Mas‘ūdī’s line of thought, by princely ceremonial and social function, or by architects and patrons.

97 Shaban, History 100-101. 113-116. Hawting, First 81.

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Östliche Elemente in umayyadischer Architektur: Audienzhalle und Zeremonialraum in Residenzen

Allgemein geht man davon aus, dass Architektur unter der Kalifendynastie der Umayyaden (661-750) sich überwiegend in der syro-palästinensischen Levante, den Bilād ash-Shām, und aus spätromischen und frühbyzantinischen Traditionen entwickelte. Obwohl eine Fülle von Motiven sasanidischer Kunst in umayyadischen Dekormedien verwendet wurde, blickt die Fachliteratur skeptisch auf Umfang und Art sasanidischer Elemente in umayyadischer Architektur, vielleicht auch weil in der Vergangenheit »sasanidischer Einfluss« recht großzügig skizziert wurde.

Dieser Beitrag spricht die Frage erneut an und erörtert die dreischiffigen Hallen, die in umayyadischer Palastarchitektur als formale Räume der Repräsentation und des Empfanges verstanden werden. In der Literatur wurden sie mit einem mediterranen »basilikal« Schema verbunden, doch scheint die Bezeichnung wenig hilfreich. Vielmehr lassen sich umayyadische Charakteristika und ein spezifisches räumliches Muster quadratischer Säulenhallen herausarbeiten. Die dreischiffige Halle mit einem achsial anschließenden Raum, den eine Kuppel oder eine Apsis als Zeichen der Autorität und Macht auszeichnet, ist als Formel römischer und byzantinischer Audienzhallen unbekannt. Vielmehr lassen sich mesopotamische und sasanidische Parallelen erörtern, und die umayyadische Kontinuität östlicher Elemente, so des Aiwāns und des dreiteiligen Portikus mit Nischenraum, oder T-förmigen Saals. Diese Diskussion von Elementen mesopotamischer Bauten sasanidischer Zeit in umayyadischer Architektur basiert auf formaler und räumlicher Analyse, kann aber auch auf Architektur motive ausgedehnt werden.

Eastern Elements in Umayyad Architecture: Audience Hall and Ceremonial Space in Residences

General opinion holds that architecture under the Umayyad caliphs (661-750) developed in the Syro-Palestinian Levant, or Bilād al-Shām, and was indebted mostly to late Roman and early Byzantine traditions. Despite the fact that a wealth of motives from Sasanian art was used in Umayyad decorative media, scholars have remained sceptical about the amount and nature of Sasanian elements in Umayyad architecture, perhaps because in the past »Sasanian influence« beyond the place and time of Sasanian rule has been argued in quite sweeping terms.

This contribution reviews the discussion and re-addresses the question starting from the three-aisled halls in Umayyad palatial architecture, which are considered formal spaces for representation and audience and have been related to a Mediterranean basilical scheme. Contesting the designation »basilical«, the discussion of formal and textual evidence brings to light specific characteristics and a distinct Umayyad spatial pattern. The three-aisled square columnar hall with an added axial room heightened by a powerful symbol of authority, a dome or an apse, is a formula unknown in Roman and Byzantine audience halls. Turning to Mesopotamian and Sasanian parallels, the discussion is extended to the Umayyad adoption of the *aywān* and of the triple portico with niche room, or T-shaped hall. This reconsideration of elements, from Mesopotamia under Sasanian rule, in Umayyad architecture is based on spatial analysis but may well be extended to architectural motifs.

Éléments orientaux dans l'architecture omeyyade: la salle d'audience et l'espace cérémoniel dans les résidences

On pense généralement que l'architecture des califes omeyyades (661-750) a pris son essor dans le Levant syro-paléstinien, ou Bilad ash-Sham, et s'inspirait essentiellement des traditions du Bas-Empire et de l'époque byzantine précoce. Les spécialistes sont restés sceptiques quant à la nature et à l'importance des éléments sassanides dans l'architecture omeyyade, malgré le fait qu'un grand nombre de motifs de l'art sassanide ait été utilisé dans les décors omeyyades, ceci peut-être parce que, par le passé, on a abordé de manière trop générale l'« influence des Sassanides » au-delà de leurs territoires et de la période de leur règne.

L'auteur réexamine cette discussion et reformule la question à partir des salles à trois nefs des palais omeyyades que des publications antérieures ont rattachées à un schéma basilical méditerranéen. Examinant les arguments formels et textuels, l'auteur conteste le terme « basilique » pour mettre en évidence des caractéristiques spécifiques et un modèle spatial omeyyade propre. La salle carrée à trois nefs, prolongée d'un espace axial, qui se distingue par un symbole fort d'autorité, un dôme ou une apside, est une formule inconnue des salles d'audience romaines ou byzantines. Considérant des parallèles mésopotamiens et sassanides, la discussion aborde aussi l'adoption par les Omeyyades de l'*ayvan* et du triple portique, ou salle en T. Le réexamen d'éléments architecturaux omeyyades qui révèlent des parallèles avec la Mésopotamie sassanide se base sur une analyse spatiale, mais peut très bien s'élargir à des motifs architecturaux.

Traduction: Y. Gautier