

The Abbasids | Managing Prosperity

'The Aghlabids in Kairouan built water reservoirs designed to collect rainwater from the nearby valleys.'

The health and wealth of society depends to a large extent on good management of resources, such as food and water, and efficient government. Many engineering solutions were devised by the Abbasids to maintain and improve their agricultural systems and water resources, while medical advances helped to improve the health of the population. In Kairouan, for example, in 248 / 862, the Aghlabids built a series of water reservoirs designed mainly to collect rainwater from the nearby valleys. Their ingenuity lay in the fact that they devised the means to collect water, purify and store it, and then make it available to the inhabitants of the city, herdsmen of the area and caravans passing by: all free of charge.



Name:
Aghlabid Reservoirs

Dynasty:
Hegira 248 / AD 862 Abbasid

Details:
Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
This reservoir is composed of two pairs of circular basins. About 15 similar reservoirs originally surrounded the area outside Kairouan. In addition to rainwater, water from the tributaries of the Merguelil Valley was directed into them.



Name:
Aghlabid Reservoirs

Dynasty:
Hegira 248 / AD 862 Abbasid

Details:
Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
Map of the Aghlabid reservoirs outside the walls of Kairouan.



Name:
Aghlabid Reservoirs

Dynasty:
Hegira 248 / AD 862 Abbasid

Details:
Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
Detail of the four-section column that stands in the centre of one of the large basins of the Aghlabid reservoirs just outside the walls of Kairouan.



Name:
Aghlabid Reservoirs

Dynasty:
Hegira 248 / AD 862 Abbasid

Details:
Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:

Detail of the buttresses that line the Aghlabid reservoirs.



Name:
Aghlabid Reservoirs

Dynasty:
Hegira 248 / AD 862 Abbasid

Details:
Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
Tar was used to purify the water by killing parasites and deterring fungus and mould. These measures helped to preserve the health of the people of Kairouan and their cattle.



Name:
Aghlabid Reservoirs

Dynasty:
Hegira 248 / AD 862 Abbasid

Details:
Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
Detail of the Aghlabid reservoirs at Kairouan showing part of one of the basins.



Name:
Aghlabid Reservoirs

Dynasty:
Hegira 248 / AD 862 Abbasid

Details:
Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
Detail of the Aghlabid reservoirs at Kairouan showing the centre of one of the basins.
