

# The Abbasids | Al-Raqqa: Caliph Harun al-Rashid's Capital in Syria

'Al-Raqqa's own glass and ceramics industries also flourished during this period.'

After Harun al-Rashid's death in 192 / 809 the government returned to Baghdad, but the city of al-Raqqa remained important, being in a strategic position on the doorstep of the Byzantine Empire. It became the governor's seat for the region of al-Jazira – between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris in northeastern Syria and northwestern Iraq. During the time of Caliph a-Mu'tasim – the builder of the city of Samarra in Iraq – al-Raqqa witnessed a new era of restoration and construction, with architecture that was very much influenced by the architectural and decorative schemes of Samarra. Al-Raqqa's own glass and ceramics industries also flourished during this period, influenced by contemporary ceramics produced in Damascus and various cities of Iraq.



**Name:**  
Goblet

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 218–27 / AD 833–41 Abbasid

**Details:**  
National Museum of Damascus  
Damascus, Syria

**Justification:**  
Found in Palace B, this glass is decorated with lustre and blue. Excavations have revealed an industrial area to the north of al-Raqqa where glass- and pottery-making workshops produced sophisticated items similar to this goblet.

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**Name:**  
Glass tumbler

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 3rd century / AD 9th century Abbasid

**Details:**  
National Museum of Damascus  
Damascus, Syria

**Justification:**  
Excavated at al-Raqqa, this tumbler is decorated with a five-line lustre inscription wishing the drinker enjoyment, and stating that the cup was made in Damascus.

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**Name:**  
Glass tumbler

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 218–27 / AD 833–42 Abbasid

**Details:**  
National Museum of Damascus  
Damascus, Syria

**Justification:**  
Found at al-Raqqa, this tumbler is decorated with engraving that was executed most probably with a diamond. Contemporary examples have also been found in Fustat in Egypt and Nishapur in northeastern Iran.

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