

The Umayyads | Official Patronage

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Umayyad palaces, known as 'desert castles' such as the palace at Minya, have received widespread interest. The location of some of these monuments on extensive and well-irrigated land suggests also that they were centres of agricultural enterprise. Some researchers have also suggested that they were built to maintain close contact with the local Arab tribes, who were strong supporters of the Umayyad Dynasty.



Name:

Qasr al-Hallabat

Dynasty:

Hegira, first third of the 2nd century / AD first half of the 8th century Umayyad

Details:

Wadi al-Dhlayl, Jordan

Justification:

Originally a pre-Islamic fortress, Qasr al-Hallabat was converted into a luxurious palace complex by order of the caliph Yazid I (r. 60–64 / 680–3).



Name:

Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi

Dynasty:

Hegira 109 / AD 727 Umayyad

Details:

Syrian Desert, Syria

Justification:

Built for the caliph Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik (r. 105–25 / 724–43), Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi was a palace complex that included lodgings and storage (a khan) for travellers and merchants.



Name:

Door Lintel

Dynasty:

Hegira 109 / AD 727 Umayyad

Details:

National Museum of Damascus
Damascus, Syria

Justification:

A marble door lintel from the khan at the Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi complex. The inscription mentions the caliph Hisham as patron in 109 / 727.



Name:

Qasr al-Kharanah

Dynasty:

before Hegira 92 / AD 710 Umayyad

Details:

Kharanah, Jordan

Justification:

Qasr al-Kharanah, probably completed in 91 / 710, may have been a place for the caliph (possibly al-Walid I) and his royal entourage to meet with the desert tribes.

**Name:**

Khirbat al-Mafjar

Dynasty:

The end of hegira the 1st century / AD the first half of the eighth century Umayyad

Details:

Jericho, Palestine*

Justification:

The palace was part of a luxurious royal complex that included a mosque and hammam. It is associated by some scholars with the Umayyad caliph, Hisham bin Abd al-Malik, and by others with the caliph al-Walid II (r. 125–6 / 743–4).

**Name:**

Qasr al-Mushatta

Dynasty:

Hegira, early 2nd century / AD mid-8th century Umayyad

Details:

Amman, Jordan

Justification:

The late-Umayyad Palace of Mushatta was probably commissioned by the caliph al-Walid II but was never completed due to his death in 126 / 744.

**Name:**

Façade of the Palace of Mushatta

Dynasty:

Probably Hegira first half of the 2nd century/ AD 8th century, c. AH 125–6 / AD 743–4 Umayyad

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification:

The Mushatta facade is part of the decorated outer enclosure wall of the palace; the entrance into the palace complex is extensively decorated with figurative and floral motifs.

**Name:**

Lion from the Palace of Mushatta

Dynasty:

Hegira 125–6 / AD 743–4 Umayyad

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification:

A lion that was found in the audience hall of the Mushatta Palace. The lion was a powerful icon of the ruling classes of late antiquity.
