

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.



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.



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.
