

The Abbasids | Managing Prosperity

‘They built towns and cities where special attention was given to communications and transport routes.’

With an expanding population and an awareness of how valuable was good urban planning, the Abbasids built a number of towns and cities where special attention was given to communications and transport routes. While the Aghlabid rulers of Ifriqiya built Raqqada – a town some 8 km from Kairouan – to house their palaces, parks and gardens; further east in Abbasid Syria, new housing developments were developed in Kharab Sayyar – a fortified town on the main route between al-Raqqa and Mosul in Iraq.



Name:
Kharab Sayyar

Dynasty:
Hegira 2nd–4th century / AD second half 8th–mid-11th century Abbasid

Details:
Raqqa region, Syria

Justification:
The public bathhouse (hammam) was essential to the good health and wellbeing of the inhabitants of Kharab Sayyar, which also had two large cisterns that supplied the fortified town with water.



Name:
Kharab Sayyar

Dynasty:
Hegira 2nd–4th century / AD second half 8th–mid-11th century Abbasid

Details:
Raqqa region, Syria

Justification:
Houses in Kharab Sayyar were well planned and decorated; detail of the interior stucco wall decoration of a house at Kharab Sayyar.



Name:
Kharab Sayyar

Dynasty:
Hegira 2nd–4th century / AD second half 8th–mid-11th century Abbasid

Details:
Raqqa region, Syria

Justification:
Detail of one of the stucco panels in a house at Kharab Sayyar.



Name:
Palace B

Dynasty:
Hegira 180–92 / AD 796–808 Abbasid

Details:
Raqqa, Syria

Justification:

The Abbasid caliph Al-Mansur built al-Rafiqa adjacent to the city of Raqqa to accommodate his family and entourage. Caliph Harun al-Rashid built this palace and resided at al-Rafiqa for about 18 years of his reign.



Name:

Goblet

Dynasty:

Hegira 218–27 / AD 833–41 Abbasid

Details:

National Museum of Damascus
Damascus, Syria

Justification:

A glass goblet, found in Palace B at al-Rafiqa in the Raqqa region.



Name:

Jug

Dynasty:

Hegira, late 2nd–early 3rd century / AD second half of the 8th century Abbasid

Details:

Jordan Archaeological Museum
Amman, Jordan

Justification:

An example of a domestic water vessel that was used for the storage and use of water; such devices ensured the health of the population by keeping the water clean and fresh.



Name:

Tunic

Dynasty:

Hegira 3rd–4th centuries / AD 9th–10th centuries Abbasid

Details:

Bardo Museum
Tunis, Tunisia

Justification:

Despite scientific advancements in healthcare, Abbasid Muslims were aware of the power of fate and unforeseen circumstances. This garment has protective sayings written round the upper arms and shoulders.
