

Islamic Interior and Exterior

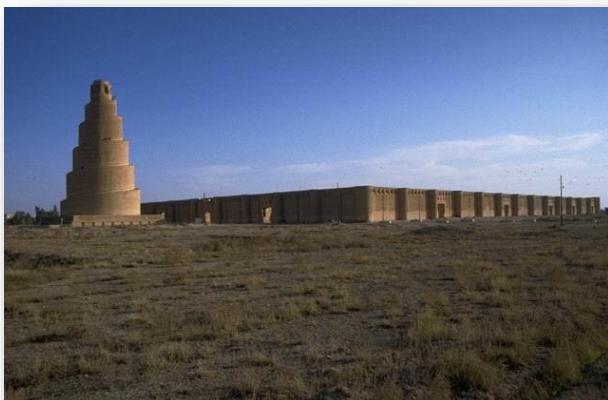
Eighth Lecture

Supervised by
M.Sc. Nazik Jamal
2018-2019

Abbasid Style, Great Masjid of al-Mutawakkil

Al-Mutawakkil commissioned the construction of the Great Masjid of Samarra .

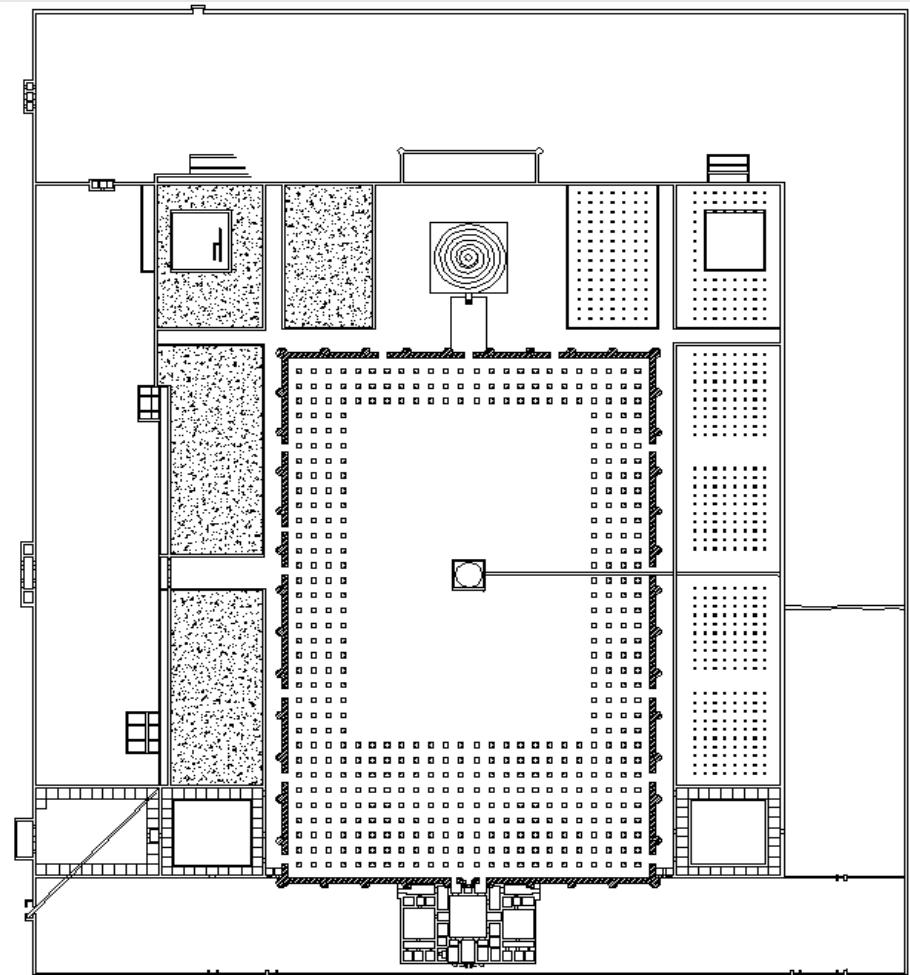
The **outer walls** of its massive prayer hall still **stand**, as does its famous **spiral minaret**, known as **Malwiyya**.



Samarra, Great Masjid, 847-61, outer wall east façade, gate in the external wall

Abbasid Style, Great Masjid of al-Mutawakkil

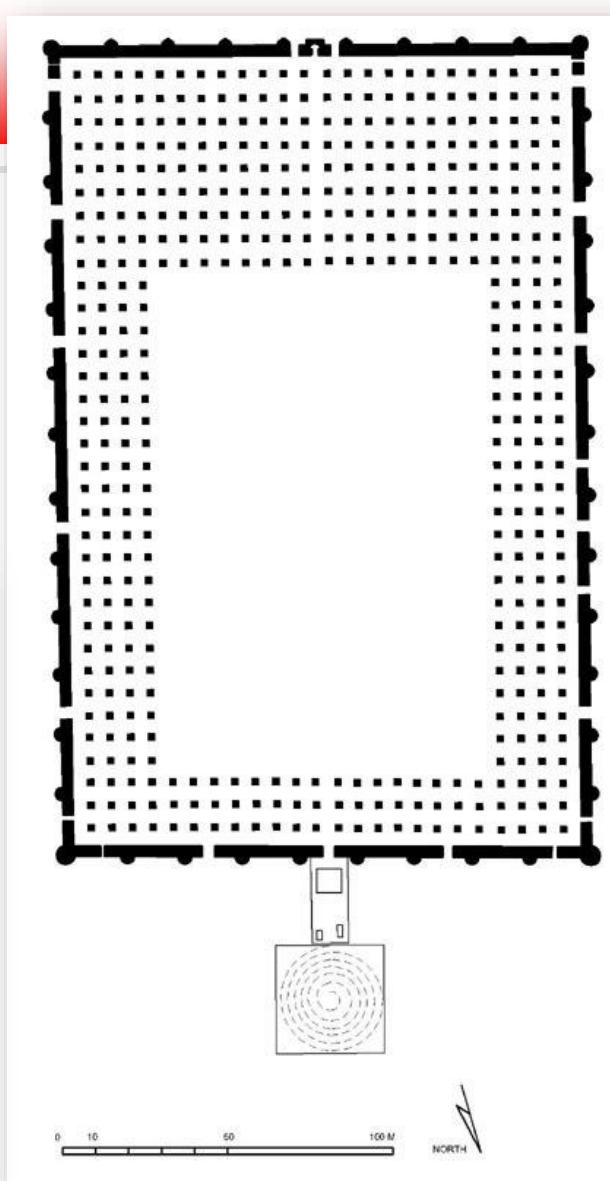
The Masjid is set in **an outer enclosure** measuring 374 x 443m. In this enclosure there are **covered porticoes** to accommodate additional faithful at the Friday prayer (**ziyada**) , and a **building** behind the **niche** which seems to have been intended to **receive the Caliph**, and perhaps **accommodate the imam** of the Masjid.

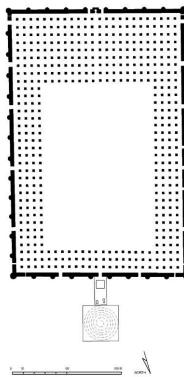


Abbasid Style, Masjid of al-Mutawakkil

The **Masjid itself** measures 239 x 156m, with 17 aisles in the **prayer hall** and a **triple portico** around the **courtyard**.

This sizable **rectangular structure** measured approximately 38,000 square meters and was encompassed by an **outer baked brick wall** supported by a total of **forty-four semi-circular towers** including **four corner ones**. One could enter the Masjid through one of **sixteen gates**.





Abbasid Style, Great Masjid of al-Mutawakkil

The roof of the Masjid was supported by twenty-four rows of nine piers in the **prayer hall**, three rows of nine piers again in the **riwaq** to the north, and each side having twenty-two rows of **four piers**.

The prayer hall featured a **monumental mihrab**.

The mihrab[niche] took the form of a **pointed arch** supported by **two sets of engaged columns** on either side.

Framing the arch was a rectangular molding.



Exterior view of northeast wall of prayer hall.



Mihrab -Niche

Abbasid Style, Great Masjid of al-Mutawakkil

The **courtyard's fountain** was domed was elaborately decorated with **mosaics** and **marble paneling**.



View of **windows** at clerestory level on **qibla wall**



Detail view of southeastern wall of **prayer hall** showing **brickwork**.

Abbasid Style, Great Masjid of al-Mutawakkil

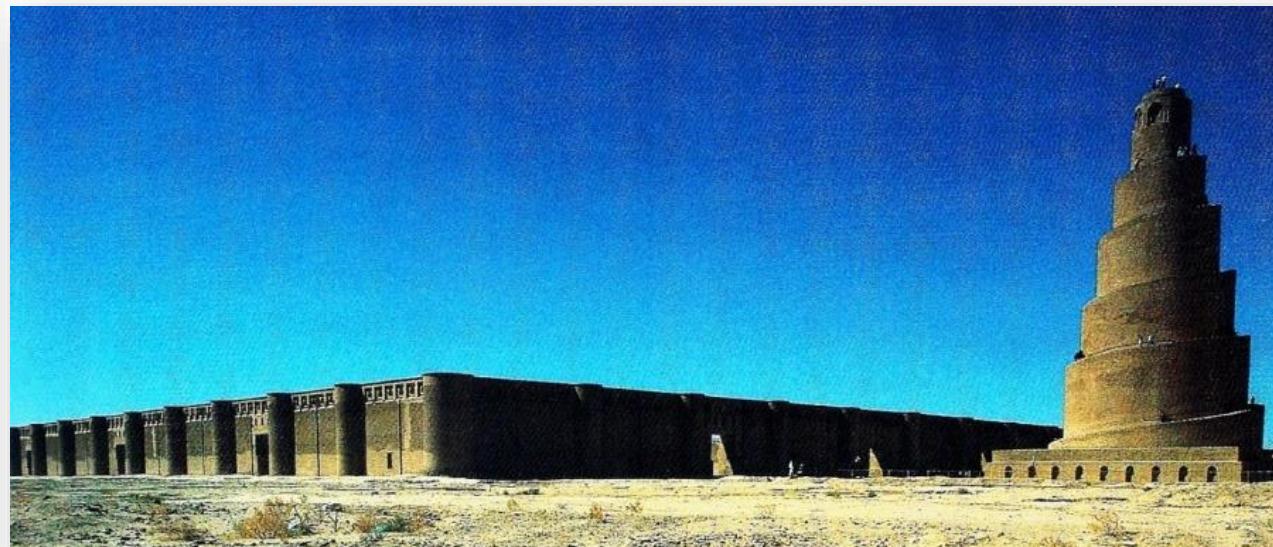
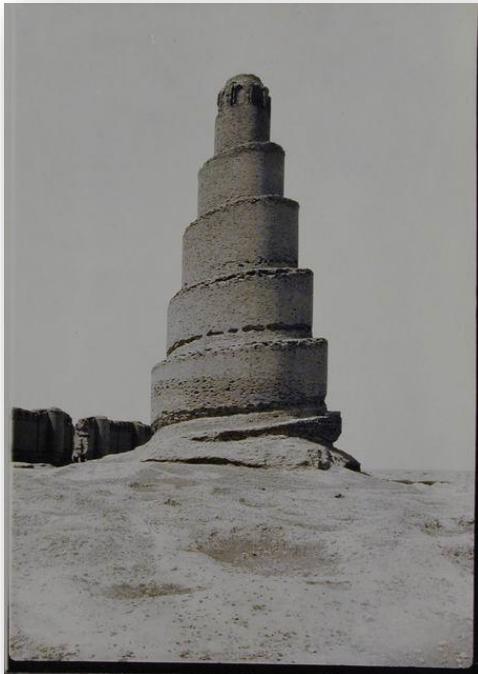
Directly **27.25** meters from the **center** of the Masjid's **north face** stands the Minaret **al-Malwiya**, approximately **55** meters high. The base of the minaret measures **thirty-three square meters** and rises to a **height** of almost **three meters**.



Abbasid Style, Great Masjid of al-Mutawakkil

It supports a **spiral ramp** that winds **counterclockwise** five times up the minaret beginning on the side closest to the Masjid. **At the top** of the tower rests a round **vestibule**, which is adorned with **eight pointed-arched niches**.

This minaret is **influenced** by a specific type of **Mesopotamia ziggurat**.



The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir



The **Fortress of Al-Ukhaidir** or **Abbasid palace** of Ukhaidir is located 50 km south west of **Karbala** and about 173 km south west of **Baghdad** ,Iraq .

The word **Ukhaidir** means "small green place".

The **palace** consists of **two fortified enclosures**. On the **outer enclosure** there is a **17 meters** high robust rampart made from **limestone slabs** and **mortar** strengthened by **corner and intermediary towers** alternating with **pairs of blind arches** on **columns**.



The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir Palace

These **defensive arrangements**, were known to the **Romans** but this was perhaps their **first use in Islam**. Another **defensive scheme** employed in Ukhaidir was the use of **arrow-slits**, which were served by the **wall walk**. The **gateways** were also fitted with **slits** in their vaults.

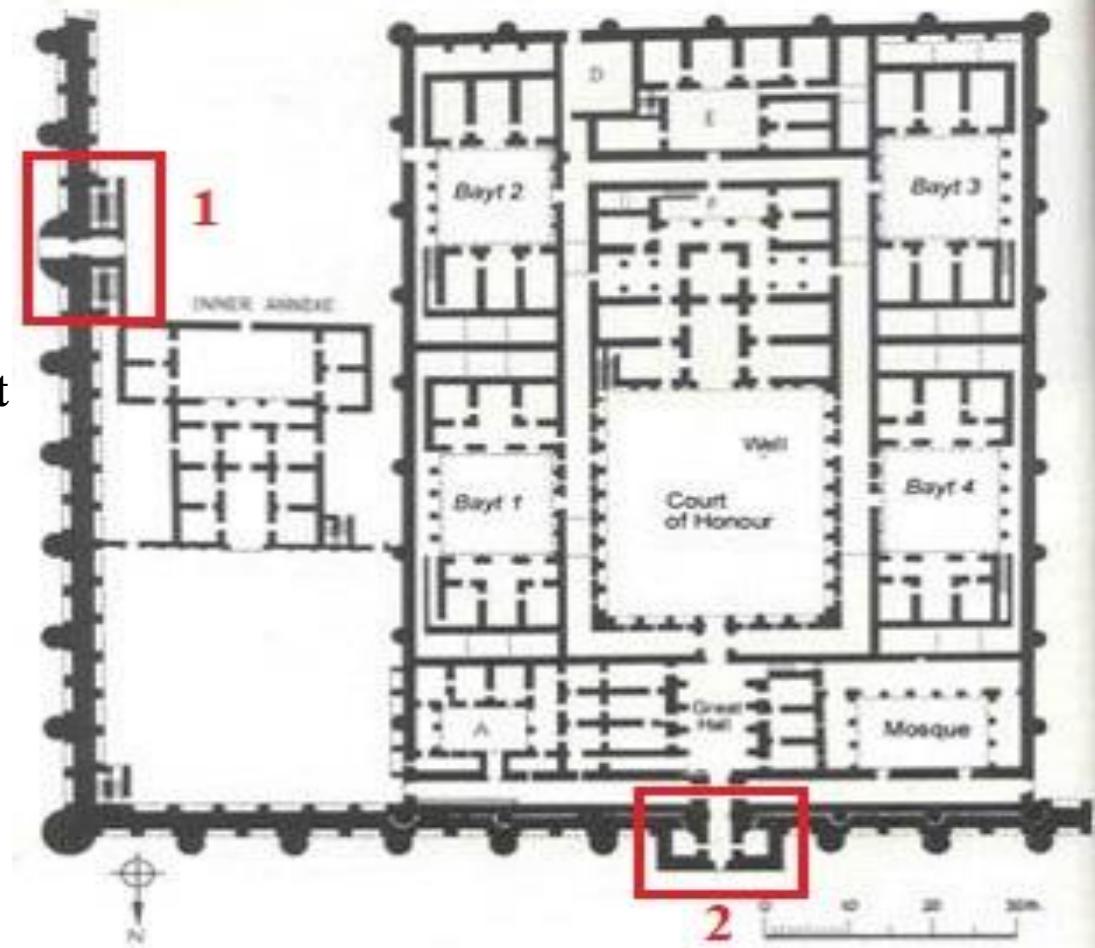




The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir Palace

The enclosure was pierced, in the center of each side, with gateways flanked by quarter round towers. On the main gate, in the northern side of the wall, we find the earliest appearance of the arched portal, set within a rectangular frame rising above the walls (pishtaq).

This gateway leads into a pointed barrel-vaulted hall made of seven transverse arches. The vault incorporated slits defending the entrance from the room above.



The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir Palace

Through the entrance hall one progresses into a **square chamber** covered by a **fluted dome**, the **first of its type in Iraq**.

This is followed by a **narrow corridor** and a set of **internal curtain walls** protecting the palace proper.

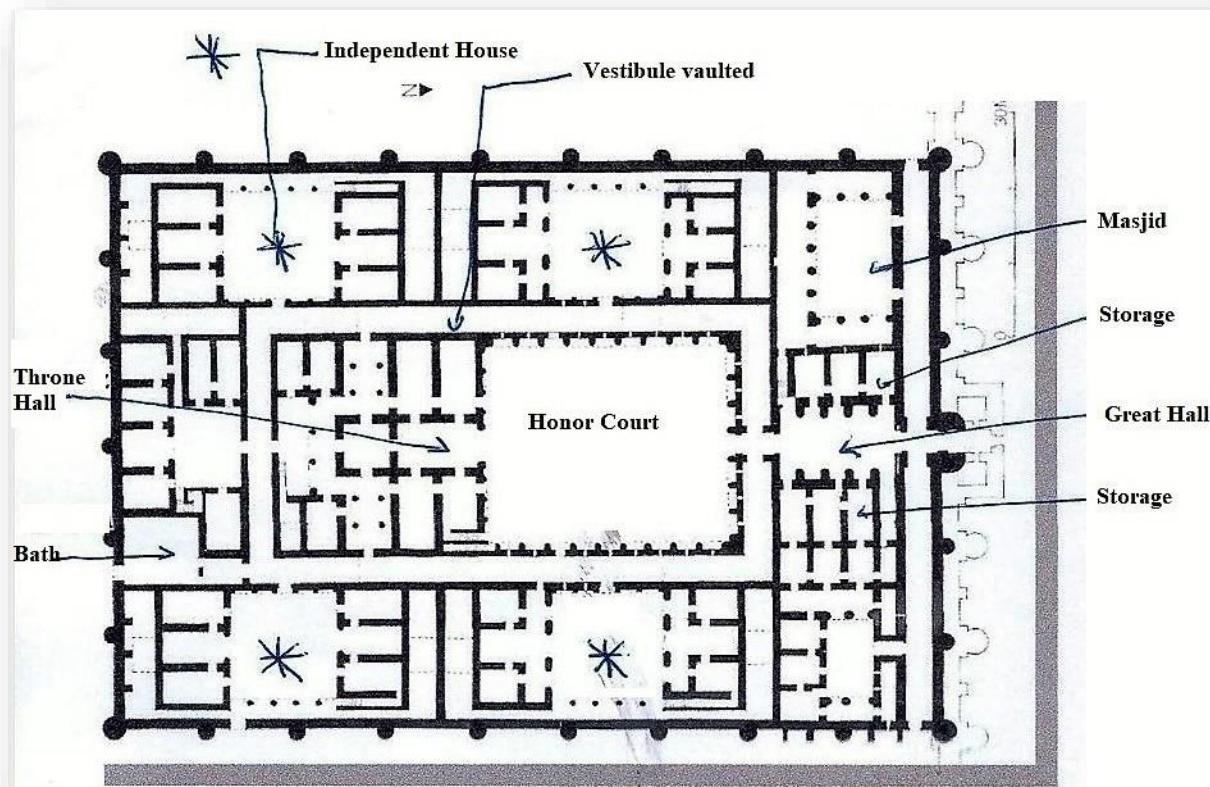
Following **this corridor**, towards the west, one reaches a larger open space extending the whole **length of the palace**.

The fluted dome supported on triangular slabs bridging the corner of the square is an early version of erecting domes on a square bay.

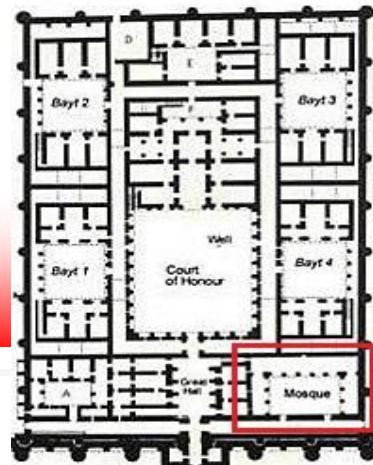


The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir Palace

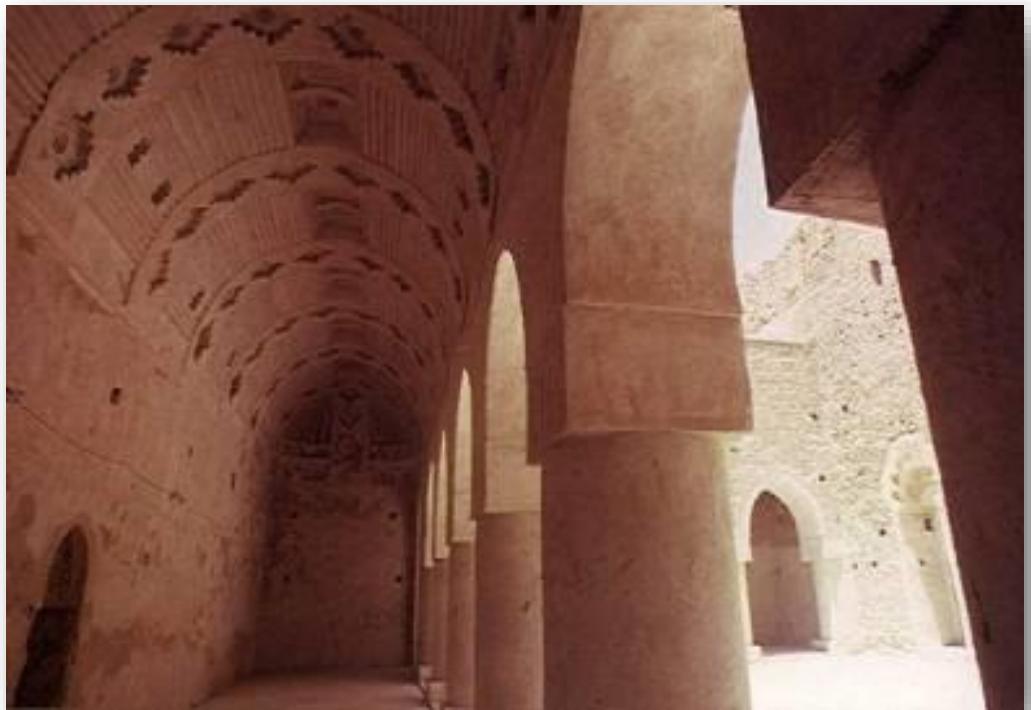
The palace complex consists of series of functional units; the **great hall**, **Masjid**, **court of honor**, **audience or throne halls** and four **domestic compounds** called **bayts**.



The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir Palace



West of the **great hall** and to the right of the **main entrance**, there is the **palace Masjid**, a **hall consisting of a single aisle of five arches** raised on **cylindrical piers** made of limestone and mortar.



The vault of the Masjid portico showing the innovative flattened arches used as both decorative and support for the vault

The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir Palace

The **architects** and **masons** of Ukhaidir introduced, for the **first time**, an elaborate **technique** based on the construction of **elliptical (pointed) barrel vaults** with **bricks** in **similar technique** to **building a wall** which therefore made the **way vaults** were built considerably **easier**.



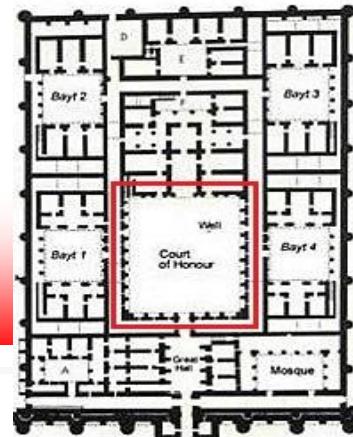
The pointed barrel vault and arches of the great hall

The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir Palace

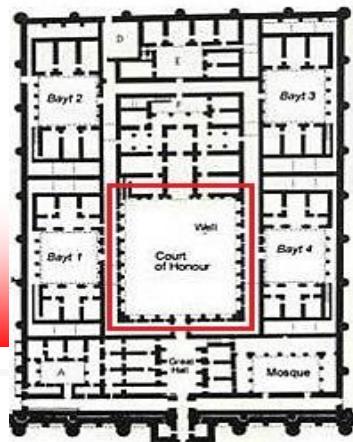
The **center** of the palace is occupied by the **court of honor**, a large court decorated with **blind arcades**, incorporating in its **top sections** brick **decoration of geometric patterns**.



Court of honor showing the **pishtag gate** of the **Audience Hall**, the **well** in the center, and the **blind arch decoration** on the **walls**.



The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir Palace

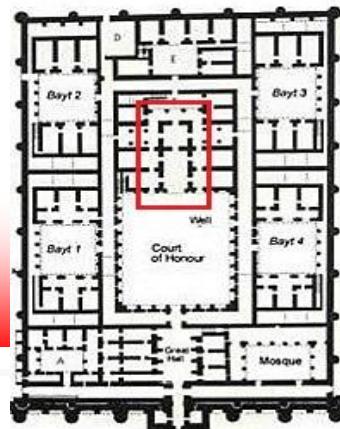


The **northern side** of the court is a 6 m high **wall arcades** on round **engaged columns**, above which a **second storey block** with **blind pointed arches**, and rising still further above a **set-back wall** crowned by a **parapet frieze of recessed niches**.

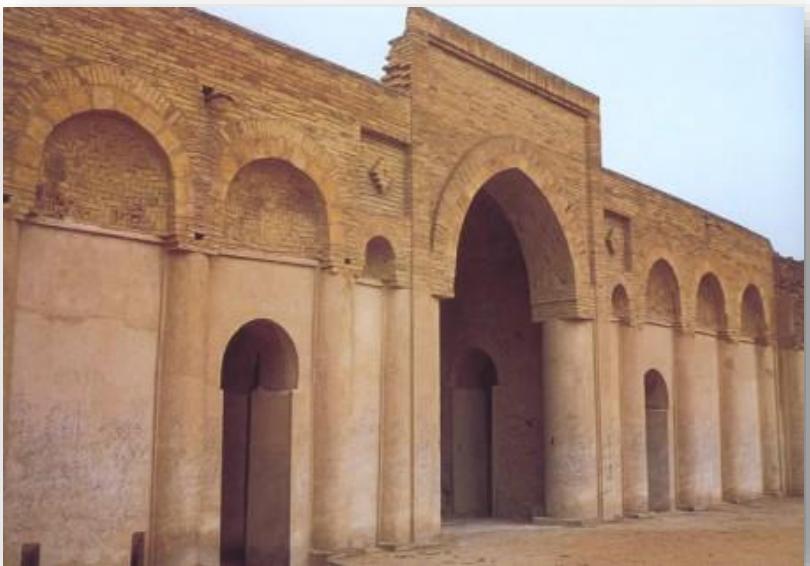


The northern side of the Court of Honor, showing the upper floor

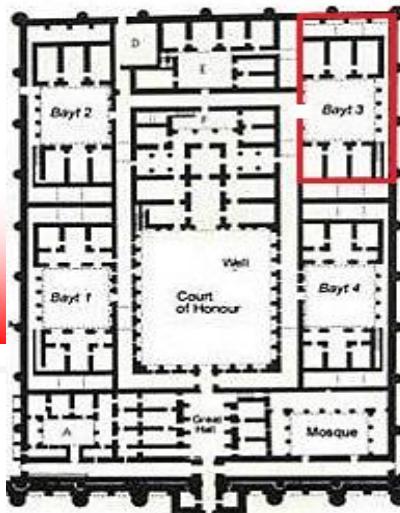
The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir Palace



The **south side** once incorporated a **vaulted iwan** framed by a **rectangular elevation** in the form of *pishtaq*. Behind it, there was a **long chamber** for **private audience** connecting with a **square room** fitted with **four doors**, one in the center of each side; this must have been the **throne room**.



The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir Palace

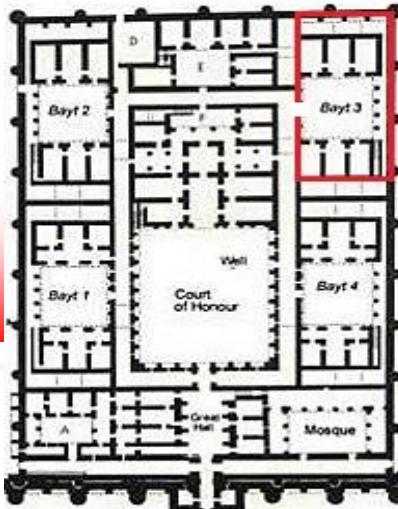


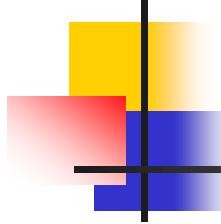
The **four living compounds** "Bayts" were **self-contained units** consisting of a **courtyard** flanked by **two symmetrical built sections** (north-south) **containing three rooms** each.



The Abbasid Style, Ukhaidir Palace

They were distributed in pairs on the east and west sides of the court of honour, but kept in isolation from its ceremonial function by a tunnel-vaulted corridor encircling both the court and the audience hall.

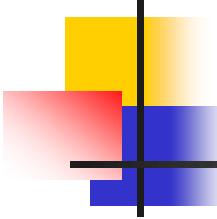




The Abbasid Style

Fundamental changes

- A - The use of **bricks** instead of **stone** .
- B - The use of the **buttresses** instead of **columns**.
- C - Preferred the **stucco decoration** instead of **stone decoration**.
- D - The use of **rectangular planning**.
- E -On urban planning level **circular design** appeared for the first time (caliph al-Mansur) assigned to **Persian engineer** to build his **new capital**.
- F- The **Abbasids** transfer the idea of **fortifying** the city **walls**, supported by **guard towers** from the **walls of Babylon** **fortified city** .



The Abbasid Style

Fundamental changes

G - Unique and new **minarets** are appeared (**spiral minaret**) and built minarets **outside the Masjid** , those minarets reminds us of the **Babylonian towers** (**ziggurat**),may have derived its idea from the **Persian(temples of fire)**,

This shape of minarets **have not used outside of Iraq** except in the **Masjid of Ibn Tulun in Egypt**.

H-The **roof of the Masjid** is covered by **domes of bricks and plaster**, contain **ornament** like the **Samarra , Ibn Tulun Masjid**.

I - **Abbasid Art** affected by the **arts of Turks** who appeared in the Abbasid period where he gained Islamic art motifs **derived from Central Asia** were **not known** in the **Sassanid or Byzantine art**.