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ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

and it has remained famous down to our own day
al-Hiras architectural charisma and its supra-regional
context in the Early Islamic period

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Abstract

This paper examines the residential architecture of al-Hira in the Early Islamic period within the supra-regional context of late Umayyad and early Abbasid architecture.

After the Islamic conquest of Mesopotamia and the founding of Kufa, al-Hira, the former capital of the Lakhmid dynasty, attracted further settlement and building activities. During the Umayyad period, the site remained an important reference point or counterweight to nearby Kufa. Of particular importance is the reign of Harun al-Rashid, who had residences built near al-Hira and allocated land to his retinue before establishing his residence at al-Raqqa in 796/180.

Starting with the palace designs of al-Mutawakkil in Samarra (847/232-861/247), allusions to the architecture of al-Hira reported by al-Mas'udi, also provide an essential frame of reference for the development of early Islamic architecture. Until now, these issues of al-Hira's far-reaching charisma have been treated without consideration of the material evidence or its actual architectural remains.

This situation has changed with the results of a survey (2015-2018), recent excavations and further documentation work on which this paper is based. It is now possible to discuss the development of late Umayyad and especially early Abbasid residential architecture in relation to the actual architectural findings documented at al-Hira.

Keywords

al-Hira , Early Islamic , residential architecture, supra-regional contextualisation , architectural history

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