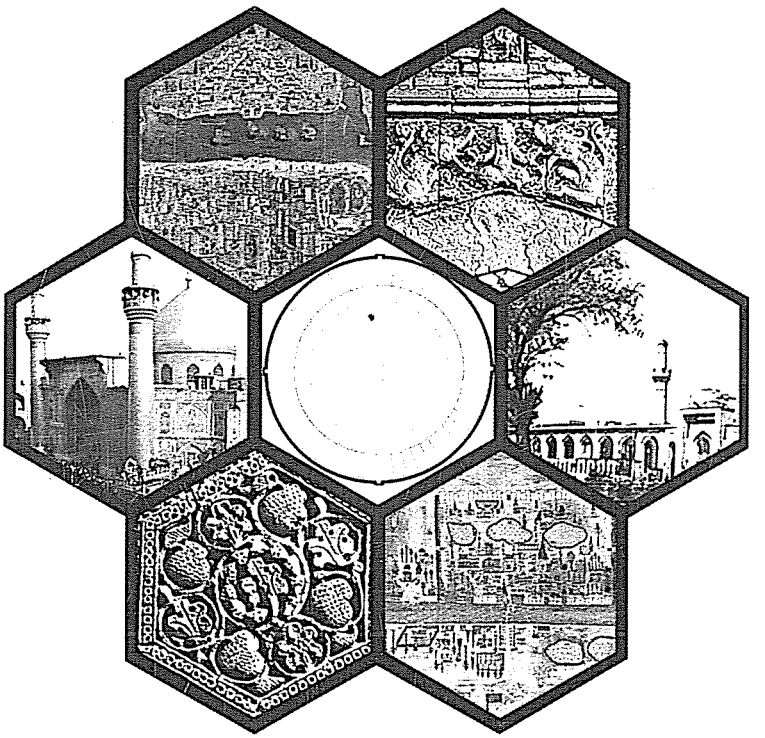
İSLAM MEDENİYETİNDE

BAĞDAT

(MEDÎNETÜ'S-SELÂM)

ULUSLARARASI SEMPOZYUM

7-8-9 KASIM 2008



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IRCICA
İSLAM TARİH SANAT VE KÜLTÜR ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ

Ümraniye Belediyesi

Marmara Üniversitesi, İlâhiyat Fakültesi, İslâm Tarihi ve Sanatları Bölümü
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SYMBOLISMS IN THE PLANNING OF THE ROUND CITY OF al-MANṢŪR (Madīnat al-Salām) IN BAGHDĀD

Dr. Ṣubhī Al-'Azzawī[*]

Introduction

On 14 Ramādān 132 AH / 26 April 750 CE Abul 'Abbas al-Saffāh was proclaimed in Damascus as the first Caliph of the newly founded 'Abbasid Dynasty (132-656 AH / 750-1258 CE), (Creswell, EMA, p 2). Since Damascus was the capital city of the previous rival Umayyad Dynasty (41-132 AH /661-750 CE), the seat of Caliphate was transferred to Kūfa. The latter was the first capital city in Islam outside the Arabian Peninsula during the Caliphate (35-40 AH / 656-661 CE) of the fourth Guided Caliph, the Imām 'Alī.

During the first few years of the establishment of the 'Abbasid Dynasty (132-656 H /750-1258 CE), the first 'Abbasid Caliph, Abul 'Abbas al-Saffāh (132-136H /750-754 CE) had resided in four capital cities. The second Caliph, Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr, had resided in three capital cities.

It should be pointed out that the name al-Hashimiya was a generic term given to the administrative capital of the Abbasid Dynasty before the building of the Round City at Baghdād; it did not refer to a single place but to the location where the caliph resided and established the seat of his caliphate. Hence, there were four locations called al-Hashimiya: first, the site of Qaṣr ibn Hubayra; secondly, the site opposite that between Kūfa and Baghdād; thirdly, at

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al-Hashimiyya between Kūfa and al-Hīra[1] and fourthly, at al-Hashimiyya (also called al-Ruṣāfa or Ruṣāfat Abī al-'Abbas) near al-Anbār.[2]

It should be pointed out that the name al-Hashimiyya was given to the 'Abbasid party, which had defeated the 'Umayyad Dynasty. It was originally thought that it "referred to Hashim, the common ancestor of al-'Abbas, 'Alī and the Prophet" Muhammad. It was also a generic term used as a reference to where the 'Abbasid Caliph was residing and where the seat of his caliphate was. However, modern researchers believe that it refers to Abī Hashim 'Abd Allāh bin Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya (the latter was the son of the fourth Guided Caliph, Imām 'Alī)[3].

Context

The concepts of planning, architecture, urbanism and the environment and their symbolisms are reflected in the context of inception, design, construction, execution and completion of the capital city of the mighty 'Abbasid Dynasty. A dynasty that is Islamic in faith, multi-ethnic in social inter-action and cohesion, and intellectually hunger driven for knowledge in the arts, humanities, sciences, technology and civilisation. This was evident in the establishment of Bayt al-Hikma during the reign of the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (170-193 AH / 786-809 CE), and the extension and expansion of it to become truly Dār al-Hikma (the House of Wisdom) during the reign of his son, the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (198-218 AH / 813-833 CE); He had been described by 'Arab historians as "the Genius of 'Arab Civilisation" despite the fact that his mother was Persian.[4] The Islamic concept and idealism of equality before the faith that is Islam for the benefit of the whole community, that is the **'Umma**, may last the whole of humanity, that is **al-'Alamīn**, a civilization based on multi-national, multi-ethnic, and multi-faith.

Questions Raised

To understand the problems and appreciate the solutions to them, it is vitally important to raise the following fundamentally essential questions.

1. What were the reasons for the need to establish a new capital city for the 'Abbasid Dynasty during the reign of the second Caliph Abī Ja'far al-Manṣūr?

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[1] Lassner, al-Hashimiya, pp 265 & 266.
[2] Bosworth, al-Ruṣāfa, p 629.
[3] Lewis, p 15
[4] 'Azzāwī, 2006 and 2007

2. Why were the earlier capital cities of Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, during the reign of the four Guided Caliphs, and during the 'Umayyad Dynasty unsuitable politically and strategically (namely, al-Madīna, al-Kūfa or Damascus)?

3. Why were the earlier capital cities of the 'Abbasid Dynasty unsuitable (namely, al-Kūfa, the city of ibn Hubayra (the first Hashimiyya), the (second) Hashimiyya of al-Kūfa, the (third) Hashimiya of al-Anbār, the (fourth) Hashimiyya of al-Manṣūr opposite the site of the city of ibn Hubayra, and al-Ruṣafa behind al-Kūfa)?

4. What were the geographic, political, strategic, defensive and security factors?

5. What were the criteria for the location of the fresh (virgin) new site for the new capital city?

6. Why was the province of 'Iraq chosen for it rather than that of al-Hijāz in 'Arabia (where Makka and Madīna were located), the Levant (Bilād al-Shām), where Damascus was situated, or even Persia where the 'Abbasid uprising started?

7. Why was the region of Baghdād chosen rather than that of Kūfa or Baṣra?

8. What were its basic and fundamental characteristics (geographically, regionally, locally, topographically, strategically, politically, agriculturally, commercially, climatically and environmentally)?

9. Why was the fresh (virgin) site of the new capital city chosen on the Tigris rather than the Euphrates?

10. Why was the new capital city built on the Western rather than the Eastern Bank of the Tigris?

All these crucial and fundamental questions are important and valid to ask, and their answers form the pertinent foundations for understanding the milieu in which the new site for the capital city was chosen. However, the detailed answers are outside the scope of the present paper, but the author had already provided answers to them in 1967 [5] Nonetheless, some answers will be included the section on Symbolisms.

[5] 'Azzawī, Planning, pp 2-11 & 13-29

SYMBOLISMS IN THE CHOICE OF THE SITE FOR THE ROUND CITY

Symbolism of a Fresh Start (in a new location and on a virgin site)

Within a period of four years, Abul 'Abbas al-Saffāh had four capital cities: first, at al-Kūfa, but departed from it because its population were Shi'aites pro 'Alawids or 'Alids; secondly, at the site of Qaşr Ibn Hubayra itself (the first al-Hashimiyya), where he began construction of a new city, but soon abandoned it because the local population kept on calling it by its original name after its founder Yazīd ibn 'Umar ibn Hubayra, the last Governor of 'Iraq under the Umayyads; thirdly, at a site opposite Qaşr Ibn Hubayra (the second al-Hashimiyya); and fourthly, at a site near al-Anbār where he built a city for his Persian (Khurāsāni) troops with a great palace in its centre, but he died in 136 AH / 754 CE before its completion. This was previously the Persian city of Firuz Shapur; it was re-built by Shāpūr I (241-72 CE) as a garrison town with a double line of fortifications and a citadel.[6]

Although the 'Arabs retained the name Firūz Shāpūr, the name al-Anbār came into use in the 6th Century CE; it is Farsī meaning "store-house" or "granary" because of the existence of storehouses in the citadel.[7]

When Abū Ja'far al-Manşūr became Caliph in 136 AH / 754 CE, he established his seat of Caliphate near al-Kūfa at a site adjacent to Madīnat ibn Hubayra. This site was not the same as Qaşr ibn Hubayra (the first al-Hashimiyya), which was located half way between Baghdād and Kūfa).[8]

Al-Manşūr also resided in Firūz Shāpūr before the completion of the Round City.[9]

Therefore, the constant moving of the seat of Caliphate had forced the Caliph al-Manşūr to look for a fresh location and a more suitable site for a new capital city as the seat of his residence, caliphate and government.[10] In addition to sending emissaries to search for a new site for his capital city, the caliph al-Manşūr personally travelled up and down the Tigris for such a location. Eventually, he decided on the location of the site at Baghdād.[11]

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[6] Lassner, al-Hashimiyya, pp 265 & 266; Qaşr ibn Hubayra, pp 728 & 729 in E of I; Streck & Dūri, al-Anbār, pp 484 & 485 in E of I.
[7] Streck & Dūrī, al-Anbār, p 484 in E of I.
[8] Lassner, al-Hashimiyya, p 266 in E of I.
[9] Streck & Dūrī, al-Anbār, p 485 in E of I.
[10] Lassner, al-Hashimiyya, p 266 in E of I.
[11] Jawād & Sousa, Guide, p 45

Symbolism of Macro-Geographic Location

The site of the Round City of al-Manşūr was located in 'Irāq and was therefore away from the Levant (Bilād al-Shām) the population of which was pro Umayyad Dynasty. It was also nearer Persia, which was the power base of the 'Abbasid uprising against the Umayyads.

Symbolism of Regional Location

The site of the Round city was in the middle of 'Irāq and therefore it was situated midway between the various provinces of the Islamic State in order to administer and control them efficiently, and to facilitate communication with them during any possible provincial uprising, especially in Kūfa and Başra.

Symbolism of Strategic, Defensive and Military Location, or alternatively,

Symbolism of Water Protection against External Invaders

The site of Baghdād was adjacent to the Tigris and was surrounded by many tributaries, rivulets and canals; it was also not far away from the Euphrates (being only 65 Km from its nearest bend to the Tigris in that locality). Hence, it was protected from the east by the Tigris and from the west by the Euphrates. It was also protected on all sides by the number of tributaries, rivulets and canals. Therefore it was surrounded by water on all sides, which made it very difficult for an enemy army to approach it (never mind to attack it) by land without having to build and cross so many bridges on the Tigris, the Euphrates, their tributaries, rivulets and canals. Alternatively, it would have had to use boats if it were to approach it by water. (Fig 1)

Symbolism of Local Topographic Location, or alternatively,

Symbolism of a Flat Plain Location

The site was located in the middle of a flat plain without hills or mountains behind which an enemy army could hide for a surprise attack. Also, by being in a flat plain (rather than in a hilly or mountainous region) an enemy army would have been easily spotted advancing on the horizon from a long distance whether approaching by land or by river; this would have given defenders of the region time to locate it, track its movements carefully and accurately, as well as to retaliate immediately by suitable means and to repel it.

Symbolism of Political Location

Politically, the site of Baghdād was away from the Levant (Bilād al-Shām), the population of which was more loyal to their previous rulers, the 'Umayyads. It was also nearer to Persia, which was the power base of their uprising. Additionally, it was away from Kūfa the population of which was Shi'aite pro 'Alids or 'Alawaites. The same was true of Baṣra. Furthermore, it was far away from the Hijāz, the population of which was unhappy (if not angry) about the assassinations of the last three Guided Caliphs, and the massacre at Karbalā' of the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad; hence, they avoided politics whenever possible. Therefore, Hijāz became politically isolated at the end of the 'Umayyad Dynasty, and the people of Hijāz became more interested in pleasure and entertainment (music and singing) than politics.

Symbolism of a Settled Region and of Existing Habitation

The chosen site for the new capital city was a cultivated farm (**Mazra'at al-Mubāraka**, namely, the Blessed Farm, which the 'Arab Muslims had settled in after the occupation of 'Irāq, and which al-Manṣūr purchased from its owners. The region of Baghdad was not uninhabited or deserted; on the contrary, it was populated with residents living in eleven existing villages (one of which called Baghdād), seven monasteries (one of which was on the east bank, and another was to the far north) and two famous bazaars (that of **Sūq Baghdād** on the west bank and that of **Sūq al-Thalāthā'** (Tuesday Market) on the east bank of the Tigris). It also had the Sassanian Palace of **Sāpūr** overlooking the river. To the north, there was also an orchard (**Bustān**) belonging to one of the Sassanian kings.[12] However, it had no town as such. (Fig 1).

Symbolism of a Sense of Pride and Joy

The inhabitants of the region of Baghdād were naturally urging the Caliph al-Manṣūr to chose the site for his new capital city because of the many advantageous characteristics it afforded, including strategic, defensive, military, agricultural, commercial (trade routes), favourable climate, etc. They were obviously delighted and overjoyed to have the seat of the Caliphate in their midst and in their region with all the financial benefits that would accrue on them as well as with all the status that would be bestowed on them and their region.

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[12] Sousa, 1952, Atlas, pp 2 & 3

Symbolism of Climatic Location

The site was located in a climatic region, which may well have been potentially hot and dry; however, this was ameliorated by the waters of the rivers, rivulets and canals, as well as by agricultural green landscape. All must have helped to produce pleasant summer evenings and nights, as well as mild winters.

Symbolism of Environmental Location

The site was located in the middle of a green plain, which mitigated any potential extreme environmental conditions. The fact that a number of palaces (such as **Sāpūr Palace**) belonging to Persian Princes were built next to the Tigris was taken as an encouraging sign about its agreeable, if not desirable, environment.

Symbolism of Health Location

The site of Baghdad was free from mosquitoes (compared with that of al-Anbār, which was infested with fever and flees).[13]

Symbolism of Agricultural Richness and Abundance

The site was located in the middle of a fertile agricultural plain with, inter alias, date palm groves and orchards spread over four districts, which were rich in agricultural produce; two of them were located on the east bank of the Tigris while the other two on the west bank of it. Hence, if crops were to fail in one district, produce could be had from the other three. There was therefore an abundance of daily and seasonal provisions of fruits and vegetables, as well as dairy food and meat from domestic animals kept in the region farms; one must also add to this the ample supply of fresh fish from the nearby rivers.

Symbolism of Self Sufficiency in the Region

The region, where the site of the Round City was located, was self-sufficient in water and a multitude of agricultural crops, as well as by animal produce and by fish.

Symbolism of Trade Routes Location

The site was located on the criss-cross of trade routes by land and by rivers to the sea. Hence, trades were possible and in reality with far away prov-

[13] Streck & Dūrī, al-'Anbār, p 485 in E of I

inces of the Islamic State, as well as with India and China, in addition to the Christian Byzantine world to the north in Anatolia.

Symbolism of Commercial Activities and Enterprise

The caliph was advised that the site of the proposed new capital city was in close proximity to the then existing famous Baghdad Bazaar (**Sūq Baghdād**) on the west bank, where merchants from far and wide, gather there at the end of each year for the purchase and exchange of goods (including gold and silver).[14] There was also the Tuesday Bazaar (**Sūq al-Thalathā'**) on the east bank of the Tigris, where merchants from Persia and other places would gather there on the first Tuesday of every month.[15] (Fig 2).

Symbolism of River Location, or alternatively

Symbolism of Life and Death

The site was located adjacent to the Tigris and was in the middle of a network of rivers, rivulets and canals; it was also not far away from the Euphrates (being only 65 Km away from its nearest bend to the Tigris in that locality). Such a location represented the symbolism of life in the ample provision of water for daily needs of the population (for drinking, cooking, cleaning, washing and bathing), and for agriculture, building and industry, as well as for transport and access to the sea for trade and commerce with India and China.

At the same time, such a location represented the symbolism of death and destruction due to the threat of flooding every year. Until 1956, Baghdād used to be flooded once every 25 years by the Tigris or the Euphrates or by both of them simultaneously. However, in 1956, two flood protection schemes were completed: the Tharthār dam and depression on the Tigris to the southwest of Samārrā', and the Habbāniyya dam and lake on the Euphrates to the southeast of Ramādī.

Such river location also gave rise to the symbolism of leisure and pleasure where boats sailed along the Tigris and its tributaries, the banks of which were lined with orchards and gardens as well as private pavilions.

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[14] Jawād and Sousa, Guide, pp 13 & 14

[15] Jawād and Sousa, Guide, p. 16

Symbolism of Unity and Division

After the eastern bank (**Ruṣafa**) was built (151-159 AH / 768-776 CE), the Tigris embodied the symbolism of unity in the need of the population of both banks for its waters for their daily sustenance, as well as for agriculture and other uses. The Tigris also represented the symbolism of division between the eastern bank (**Ruṣafa**) and the western bank (**Karkh**) in the need for bridges to connect the two halves of the same city.

Symbolism of Favourable Location

Considering the many symbolisms discussed here, the caliph al-Manṣūr was advised by his special search team, as well as by dignitaries from the local population, that, from many aspects, the site had a favourable location for the building of his proposed new capital city.

PLANNING SYMBOLISMS IN THE PLAN OF THE ROUND CITY

Symbolism of Cosmic Aspiration and Inspiration as well as Representation

Is it possible that the different concentric rings of the plan of the Round City might have been envisaged to represent the orbits of the Planets in the Heavens in outer space with the Sun in the centre? Metaphorically, could this be inferred from the fact that the Caliph's Palace at the centre of the Round City was called the Golden Gate Palace (Qaṣr Bāb al-Dhahab)? Could this be reinforced by the fact that, according to Herodotus and other ancient historians, that the various Planets were represented by the name of various metals, such as silver for the Moon and gold for the Sun?[16] (Fig 12).

Stereographic Projection Symbolism

The conceptual plan of the Round City may well have been designed using stereographic projection of the Equator and the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn; here, the vertical axis (pointing north-south) represented the meridian, while the horizontal axis (pointing east-west) represented the equinoctial line.[17] Could the three concentric circles of these have represented the three concentric walls of the Round City? Could the spaces between them have

[16] 'Allawī, p 66, fig 6
[17] 'Allawī, p 66

represented the residential development zone, the State Departments, while the inner circle was that of the Caliph's Palace? (Fig 12).

Astrological Symbolism

It would seem that the entire design of the plan of the Round City in concept, in plan and in execution was based on a definite astrological cosmic astrolabe[18] ; the aim was to find the most auspicious moment in date (month and day) and in time (hour and minute) to start the actual building of the Round City by excavating the trenches for the foundations of its three concentric walls and for digging up the concentric moat.

The ceremony for these starting activities was attended by the Caliph al-Manşūr himself on 04 Jamādī al-'Awwal 145 AH (31 July 762 AD) at 13:57 hours. From the horoscope of Baghdād, this was judged to be the most auspicious day, date and time for this ceremony to take place as had already been worked out astrologically, astronomically and mathematically by the leading luminaries in these fields at the time.[19] (Fig 11 & 11A).

That festive ceremony of plotting out on site the plan of the city with ash was also attended by the Princes, Ministers, Governors, Commanders and leading luminaries in the arts and sciences, and presumably by the public as well.[20] According to Creswell, that particular moment in time was chosen by the astrologer Nawbakht,[21] who was the official astrologer of al-Manşūr, and according to Ya'qūbī, he was assisted by a Jewish astrologer Māsha'-'Allāh ibn Sāriya.[22]

Symbolism of Historical Datum

The caliph al-Manşūr wanted the date of the start of the building of the Round City to record not only the position of the various planets in the cosmos, but also to provide a starting point or a historical benchmark in time from which other events could be dated in relation to it.[23] Such a concept would seem to be sacrilegious because it would have interfered with the Islamic calendar (**Taqwīm Hijrī**) dating from the day of the Migration (**Hijra**) of

[18] 'Allawī, p 62
[19] 'Allawī, pp 64-66
[20] Jawād & Sousa, Guide, p 48
[21] Creswell, ASA, p 163
[22] Creswell, EMA, p 7
[23] 'Allawī, p 62

the Prophet Muhammad from Makka to Madīna in 01AH / 622 CE to save his life, and therefore, the survival of Islam.

Symbolism of Concentric Circular Planning

The concept of the Plan of the Round City of al-Manşūr was that of a series of concentric circles with a diameter of 5093 cubits (2.638 Km) at its great defensive wall, and 5283 cubits (2.737 Km) to the outside of the moat (where a cubit (**Dhirā'**) is equal to 51.8 cm).

The Round City consisted of the following elements from the perimeter to the centre.[24](Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 8A & 8B).

- A deep moat (**Khandaq**) surrounding the Round City (the depth and width of which had not been stated by historians), but Creswell[25] deduced its width to be not more than 12 cubits (6.216m) wide. According to ibn Rusta, both sides of which were lined with burnt or fired brick (**Āajurr**). It was filled with water by a canal from Karkhāyā river, which was a tributary of the Rufayl river, which in turn was a tributary from that which branched off the Euphrates. Across the moat, there was a drawbridge (**Qanṭara**) at each of the four outer gates.[26]

- An embankment wall, the height and width of which were not stated by historians.[27] However, Creswell assumed its height and width to be four fifths that of the main wall, namely 28 cubits (14.50m) high and 8 cubits (4.144m) wide at the base.

- An outer empty separation space (**Faşīl Khārijī**) or intervallum, 75 cubits (38.85 m) wide encircling the city; it would also have acted as an arterial supply routes for defenders of the city in case of attack or siege.

- A great defensive wall (**al-Sūr al-A'żam**) with a total of 113 towers (28 towers between every two consecutive gates, except those between Başra gate and Kūfa gate where there were 29 Towers).

It was built with sun-dried mud-bricks, each measuring one cubit by one cubit (51.8 cm by 51.8 cm), with 16,000 cubits to cover its circumference, giving a diameter of 5,093 cubits or 2.638 Km.[28] Reeds were placed between successive horizontal courses to act as reinforcements to strengthen the bond be-

[24] Creswell, EMA, pp 7-18, & ASA, p 163 quoting Ya'qūbī
[25] Creswell, EMA, p 11
[26] Creswell, EMA, p 10 & 11
[27] Jawād & Sousa, Detailed Guide, p 49, quoting Ya'qūbī
[28] Creswell, ASA, p 163

tween them.[29] Two sizes of sun-dried mud-bricks were made on site, namely, a whole one measuring one cubit by one cubit and weighing 200 **Raṭl**, and a half one measuring one cubit long by half cubit wide and weighing 100 **Raṭl**. At least two sizes of moulds must have been made and used, but historians had made no reference to any. Hezfeld suggested the thickness of a brick to be one-third of a cubit, namely, 17.30cm.[30] The author wonders whether the thickness of the vertical joints between bricks had been taken into account when working out the length of circumference, and hence, the diameter of the Round City?

Its width at the base (and up to the lower third of its height) was 10 cubits (5.18m); its width at the middle third of its height was 9.25 cubits (4.79m) and its width at the top third of its height was 8.5 cubits (4.4m). [31]

Its height (without the crenulations) was 30 cubits (15.54m); the height of the crenulations was 5 cubits (2.59m).[32] Again, the author wonders whether the thickness of the horizontal joints between brick courses (which contained reeds for reinforcements) had been taken into account when calculating the height of the three concentric walls?

- An outer ring road, 25 cubits (10.45m) wide encircled the Round City between the four city gates and giving access to the radial streets (**Sikkat**, singular **Sikka**) in each of the four quadrants of the city.

- An inner development (residential building) zone (**Faṣil Dakhilī**), 538 cubits (278.684m) wide, subdivided into an unequal number of segments by radial streets.

- An inner ring road, also 25 cubits (10.45m) wide encircled the Round City between the four city gates and giving access to the radial streets in each of the four quadrants of the city

- An inner wall (**al-Sūr al-Dakhilī**), the width and height of which were not stated by historians, was more of a separation or screen wall than a defensive one, which defined the very large central area. It incorporated narrow blind arcades on the inside, and they were known as the little arcades (**al-Ṭāqāt al-Ṣūghrā**).[33]

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[29] Creswell, ASA, p 164
[30] Creswell, EMA, p 8
[31] Creswell, ASA, p 164
[32] Creswell, ASA, p 164
[33] Herzfeld, fig 181, p 124; Creswell, EMA, p 17; & fig 3, p 13; ASA pp 169 & 170 & fig 33, p 171

However, according to Lassner, the little arcades were similar to the larger arcades but smaller in number[34] (Fig 9A & 9B). This would confirm Jāwād and Sousa's [35] description, "upon leaving the (third) courtyard, one entered the small arcades then a third vaulted passage (**Dihlīz**) and a third wall and when leaving it one entered the courtyard (**Rahba**) around al-Manşūr Palace". However, their reconstruction plan does not show such little arcades (Fig 8B)

- The Great Central Area (**al-Rahaba al-Wūstā** or **al-Rahaba al-'Użmā**), which included the following buildings: the State Departments, the Palaces of the Caliph's younger Sons, the Caliph's Palace, the State Mosque, a building for the Chief of the Guard (**Ṣahib al-Haras**) and a big portico (**Saqīfa**) for the Chief of Police (**Ṣahib al-Shurṭa**) as described below.[36]

However, according to Lassner in his publication of 1970, the State Departments (presumably including the palaces of the younger sons of al-Manşūr) formed an inner development ring zone contiguous with the third wall.[37] This plan was also published in 1987 by Creswell and Allan[38] (Fig 9A, 9B, 10A &10B).

'Allāwī, in his publication of 1988, takes this idea further by identifying the State Departments and the Palaces of the younger Sons of al-Manşūr and placing three of the twelve departments in each of the four quadrants according to a statement by Ya'qūbī. [39] (Fig 14). However, it should be pointed out that the plan of the Round City presented by 'Allāwī to the International Symposium held on 6-8 November, 1987 at the AKP at Harvard University and MIT showed an inner development zone with radial streets along the lines of those of the outer development zone. It also showed an inner independent third wall overlooking the central area. (Fig 13). The author can only assume that in 1987 Oleg Grabar must have pointed out the publication of Lassner to 'Allāwī since Grabar had written an excellent foreword to it.[40] However, 'Allāwī does not acknowledge in his paper Lassner's publication at all!

Symbolism of Restricted Admission and Controlled Access

This concept is illustrated by the way the Round City is approached and entered along any one of its four radial access routes. (Fig 5).

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[34] Lassner, Topography, fig 2, p 207
[35] Jāwād and Sousa, 1968, p 20
[36] Creswell, EMA, p 17; ASA, p 170
[37] Lassner, Topography, fig 2, p 207, fig 3, p 208 & fig 9, p 213
[38] Creswell and Allan , ASA, fig 138, p 231
[39] Allāwī, pp 68 and 69, and fig 10, p 68
[40] Lassner, Topography, pp 11-15

Radial Access Along Each of the Four City Gates (Abwāb al-Madīna)

The only identical radial access along each of the four identical city gates consisted of the following. (Fig 5).

- A drawbridge across the moat and into an arched gateway 8 cubits (4.044m) wide and 10 cubits (5.18m) high leading into the entrance lobby (**Dihlīz**).

- A bent, crooked or non-axial form of entry from the drawbridge to the first courtyard (**Rahaba** or **Rahba**) via an oblong, enclosed and covered space (**Dihlīz**), 30 cubits (15.54m) wide and 20 cubits (10.36m) deep. This was adopted for defensive reasons.

- A rectangular courtyard (**Rahaba**) 40 cubits (20.72m) wide and 60 cubits (31.08m) deep with access on each side to the first enclosing ring road; the courtyard incorporates the projecting part of a heavily fortified main gateway.

- A heavily fortified main gateway incorporating a vaulted passage (**Dihlīz**) 12 cubits (6.216m) wide and 20 cubits (10.36m) deep with a staircase on either side leading to an observation hall at first floor, which is covered by a dome.

- A second square courtyard (**Rahaba**), 20 cubits (10.36m) a side, with a vaulted chamber on each side, and with direct access to the first encircling ring road.

- A series of cross-vaulted arcades (**Tāqāt**, singular **Tāq**) of 54 bays, each 15 cubits (7.77m) wide with a vaulted chamber (shop) on each side (except the first one on the left hand side which was a ramp leading up to the first floor). These 107 shops were the bazaar (**Sūq**) in each of the four city gates until 157 AH (773/4 CE) when they were abandoned and given over to the guards (1,000 men and their officers in each set of arcades (**Tāqāt**) of each city gate), namely, they were turned into barracks. These were referred to as the greater or larger arcades (**al-Tāqāt al-Kubrā**).

Creswell, quoting 'Arab historians, reported that this change of use was done after a casual remark by the Greek Ambassador to the effect that it was unwise to have the bazaars so close to the Palace Area (for safety and security reasons).[41]

However, 'Allāwī asserted that the bazaars were removed outside the City Walls not because of the critical remarks by the Greek Ambassador, but after the revolt of the merchants headed by **al-Muhtasib.**[42] (**Al-Muhtasib** was an

[41] Creswell, EMA p 17 and 18
[42] 'Allāwī, pp 69 and 70

official charged mainly with monitoring the standards set in weights and measures to prevent cheating in the markets).[43] 'Allawi also seems to indicate that, according to Ṭibarī, the original position of the bazaars was the central ring (**Faṣīl Dākhilī**) around the State Departments (**Dawāwīn**, singular **Dīwān**) before being moved to the Greater Arcades (**al-Tāqāt al-Kubrā**),[44] and then presumably outside the walls and the moat. In other words, they had been moved twice! Such a suggestion would seem to be unrealistic and illogical since it would have brought the public in the bazaars directly into the Central Area and in immediate contact with the caliph's palace. Such a location would have compromised the safety and security of the Caliph himself and those of his court.

Lassner relates three shortcomings mentioned by the Byzantine Ambassador: first, the distance of the palace from the water, secondly, the absence of a garden in the palace, and thirdly, the caliph's subjects were with him in the palace, which meant that they knew his secrets and these would be disclosed.[45]

The author thinks that it was also probably aesthetically unacceptable for the Caliph Procession to pass through such a confined and covered space (despite it being ventilated through sky lights), not to mention the important aspect of safety and security of the Caliph, his Sons, Ministers, etc. while passing through them.

- A third square courtyard (**Rahaba**) identical to the second one, and also with a vaulted chamber on each side communicating directly with the inner encircling ring road.

- A final passage (**Dihlīz**) 8 cubits (4.144m) wide and 10 cubits (5.18m) deep (including the thickness of the third wall, with its small blind arcades (**al-Tāqāt al-Ṣūghrā**) leads into the Great Central Area (**al-Rahba al-Wūstā** or **al-Rahba al-'Uẓmā**).

It is important to mention that Lassner had suggested an alternative plan of the small arcades (**al-Tāqāt al-Ṣūghrā**) as mentioned above. (Fig 9B & 10B).

- The twelve State Department Buildings (**Dawawīn al-Dawla**) were arranged along the third encircling wall. Those from the Gate of Baṣra to the Gate of Kūfa were of al-Manṣūr's Sons, of the Slaves, and of the Treasury; those from the Gate of Baṣra to the Gate of Khurāsān were of the Armour, of Correspondence, and of Land Tax (**Kharāj**); those from the Gate of Kūfa to

[43] al-Dūrī, Baghdad, E of I, p 898
[44] 'Allāwī, p 67
[45] Lassner, Topography, pp 57 & 58

the Gate of al-Shām were of the Seals, of the Troops, and of the Provisions; those from the Gate of al-Shām to the Gate of Khurāsān were of the Servants, of the Public Kitchen, and of the Expenditure.[46] (Fig 14).

It should also be pointed out that 'Allāwī seems to have introduced a separation zone between the inner ring road and the State Departments which was not in the original description of the Round City by Ya'qūbī[47], nor by al-Khaṭīb[48] and nor by al-Khaṭīb supplemented by Ya'qūbī[49]. However, Lassner solves this problem better by access to them through the courtyards.[50]

- The Palaces of the Caliph's younger sons (**Quṣūr Awlād al-Khalīfa** or **Qusūr Abnā' al-Khalīfa**) were located on the inside of the State Department. However, see Lassner's plan and 'Allāwī's plan as discussed above.

- A separation space around the Caliph's palace.

- The Caliph Palace, a square of 400 cubits (207.2m) a side, known as the Golden Gate Palace (**Qaṣr Bāb al-Dhahab**), was located in the centre of the Great Central Area, which was also the centre of the whole edifice. It was covered with a green dome (**Qubba Khadrā'**), perhaps emulating that of the palace of the former strongman and much-feared Umayyad Governor of 'Irāq, al-Hajjāj, in the city of Wasit. An automaton horse rider with a lance was mounted on top of the green dome, perhaps indicating where the danger was coming from in times of war and siege.

- The State Mosque (**Jāmi' al-Manṣūr**), a square of 200 cubits (103.6m) a side, attached to the Caliph's palace but was only a quarter of its area and was built after it.

The niche (**Mihrāb**) in its **Qibla** wall indicating the direction of Makka was out of correct alignment (**Mizwarr**) by about 13 ½ degrees with it (according to 'Allāwī in a lecture at the AKP at MIT in November 1987) because it was built to be in harmony with the axes of the Caliph's palace rather than with the direction of Makka! Hence, the reference to the Round City as the "eccentric" city (**Madānat al-Zawrā**).

However, one should also examine the extensions of the mosques according to Creswell, Herzfeld and Lassner.[51]

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[46] 'Allāwī, p 69 and fig 10; Jawād & Sousa, Guide, p 54
[47] Creswell, EMA, p 10
[48] Creswell, EMA, p 14
[49] Creswell, EMA, pp 164 and 165
[50] Creswell and Allan, fig 140 (b), p 234
[51] Lassner, Topography, figs 10-14, pp 214-218

Symbolism of Potential Danger of Spying and Espionage

The presence of the bazaar (**Sūq**) in each of the four radial axes could have been a danger of State security, especially to the health and safety of the caliph himself, his sons, court officials, etc. as discussed above. The four bazaars had the potential of being places of possible spying and espionage.

Symbolism of Axes of Approximate or Near Symmetry

In the reconstruction plans of Herzfeld (1920), Creswell (1940), Sousa (1952), Ma'rouf (1966), Jawād and Sousa (1968), Lassner (1970), Oleg Grabar (1987 after Creswell and Lassner), the axis of approximate or near symmetry (with regard to the radial streets (**Sikkāt**) is the diameter connecting the Gate of Baṣra and the Gate of al-Shām. The assumption in all these plans (with the exception of that of Grabar) is that the gateways were facing exactly northeast-southwest and southeast-northwest without investigating the true or exact direction or orientation of these gates or of their axes. The plan of Oleg Grabar (1987) is the only one which shows the gateways and their radial axes facing the cardinal points without any reason or explanation given. In the opinion of the author, this is inaccurate.

In the reconstruction plan of Ibrahīm 'Allāwī,[52] the axis of near or approximate symmetry is also the diameter connecting the Gate of Baṣra and the Gate of al-Shām, but this time the axes are rotated in a clockwise direction by 69 degrees, namely, 24 + 45 = 69. This is because 'Allāwī's reconstruction plan is based on the horoscope of Baghdād on the very day the construction on site had begun, which was 04 Jamādī al-'Awwal 141 AH / 31 July 762 CE. It shows the Ascendant to be 24 degrees east of north and west of south[53] (Fig 11). Therefore, the orientation of Khurāsān Gate is at 24 degrees south of east, that of Baṣra Gate at 24 degrees west of south, that of Kūfa Gate at 24 degrees north of west, and that of al-Shām Gate at 24 degrees east of north[54] (Figs 13 & 14).

Symbolism of a Deliberately Intended "Eccentric" Design in Plan

The Round City was divided into four equal quarters by its four radial axes; it incorporated 40 radial streets (Sikkat, singular Sikka). However, each of its four quadrants contained an unequal number of radial streets. The quadrant between the Gates of Baṣra and Khurāsān incorporated twelve (12) radial

[52] 'Allāwī, pp 66-71
[53] 'Allāwī, p 64-66 & fig 4, p 62
[54] 'Allāwī, fig 10, p 68

streets (which was the largest number), while the quadrant between the Gates of Baṣra and Kūfa contained eleven (11). The quadrant between the Gates of Kūfa and al-Shām incorporated eight (8) radial streets (which was the smallest number), while the quadrant between the Gates of al-Shām and Khurāsān contained nine (9).

Hence, the number of radial streets on either side of the SSW half of the Ascendant were 12 and 11, while their number on either side of the NNE half of the Ascendant was 8 and 9. There was therefore a deliberately intended "eccentric" design in the plan of the Round City. Also, the number of radial streets on opposite quadrants was 20, namely, 12+8=20 and 11+9=20.[55] There is an explanation in astronomy to this distribution of the radial streets within the Round City; it can be related to the different length of the days in relation to the position of the apogee of the sun. The apparent movement of the sun here is slow and the days appear to be long; at the same time, the apparent movement of the sun at the perigee (the opposite side of the apogee) is relatively fast and the days appear to be short.

It should be pointed out that in the reconstructed plans of the Round City, the historians seem to disagree about the number of radial streets in the quadrant between the Gates of Baṣra and Kūfa. Herzfeld (1920), Creswell (1940 and 1958), Lassner (Topography, 1970), and Creswell and Allan (1987) make it 12, while Sousa (1952), Ma'rouf (1966), Jawād and Sousa (1968) and 'Allāwī (1987 and 1988) make it 11. However, Ma'rouf gives the names of 12 radial streets in the text, while in plan shows 11 with an insertion of another name only to make it 12. The two radial streets in question are adjacent to each other; they are **Sikkat** 'Aṭiyya and **Sikkat** Mujāshi', and whether they could be one and the same bearing the name of **Sikkat** Aṭiyya Mujāshi'?

Symbolism of A Huge Number of People Involved

It should be mentioned that the Caliph al-Manṣūr did not start building the Round City until he had assembled from the various provinces of the 'Abbasid State about 100,000 people of different skills in surveying, and building know-how, such as architects, engineers, land surveyors, master-builders, bricklayers, blacksmiths, carpenters, craftsmen, artisans, etc. .[56]

A team of three people was in charge of each of the four quadrants of the city; each team consisted of an overseer (**Mushrif**), a commander and an ar-

[55] Ma'rouf, 1966, 'Allāwī 1988

[56] Creswell, EMA, p 6 quoting Ya'qūbī

chitect. According to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, the architect who planned the Round City was al-Hajjāj bin Arṭa't.[57]

One of the four overseers was al-Imām Abū Hanīfa al-Nu'mān bin Thābit (founder of one of the four of the Sunnī schools of thoughts in Islām, the Hanafī sect). He and al-Hajjāj bin Arṭa't were chosen by al-Manşūr himself for their honesty, integrity, logic and jurisprudence. He was the overseer (**Mushrif**) or superintendent of the brick making, and hence was charged with counting the number of bricks produced., which had important financial implications on the budget. Rather than counting the bricks individually as they were being made, which would have been very slow and laborious, he opted for using a graduated measuring rod (**Qaşaba**) to establish the number of bricks produced by measuring the stacks and computing the number of bricks from the measurements obtained.[58] However, sadly, Abū Hanīfa did not live long enough to see the expansion of Baghdād, he died in 150 AH / 767 CE about five years after the start of its building and about one year after its completion; he is buried in the area of Baghdād known as al-A'żamiya named after his appellation as "**al-Imām al-A'żam**" (literally, "The Great Imam"). However, the cemetery was previously known as **Maqbarat al-Khayzarān**.[59]

As stated earlier, the building of the Round City took four years to complete (145-149 AH / 762-766 CE). It should be mentioned that a graduated rod has been in use for decades by archaeologists for measurements on excavated sites of plans and sections. It has also been used by quantity surveyors for measuring areas of building materials (such as bricks, stones, blocks, plaster, etc.) after being built.

Symbolism of Logical and Practical Economics

For the same area enclosed either by a circle or by a square, the circumference of a circle is shorter than the perimeter of a square by 11.38%.[60] Hence, it was economically cheaper and logically more practical to build the three concentric walls (and to dig the moat) of the Round City as a circle rather than a square as follows.

- In material (whether of sun-dried brick (**Laban**) or fired brick (**Ājurr**).
- In the time taken to make the two types of brick.

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[57] Creswell, EMA, p 6; Marouf, pp 6-8; Jawād & Sousa, Baghdād, IHE, p 17
[58] Creswell, EMA, p 6; Jawād & Sousa, Guide, p 62
[59] Jawād & Sousa, Guide, p 62
[60] Creswell, EMA, p 21, fig 13

- In the time taken to build the walls and to excavate the earth to form the moat.

- In financial cost in paying the wages of all the workers involved.

- In occupying the new capital sooner rather than later.

Symbolism of Structural Stability and Strength

From a structural point of view, a circular wall (when rammed in on its convex side) is stronger and more stable than a straight wall of the same thickness, height and material, as well as undergoing the same impact force.

Symbolism of Supervising the Horizon

A city surrounded by a circular wall would enable its defendants a better uniform view and supervision of its environs and horizon than a square one. According to Vitruvius a circular city would give a view of an approaching enemy army from many points.[61]

Symbolism of Analogy

Although at first glance, the plan of the Round City may look like the spokes of a bicycle wheel, it differs from it in two respects: first, the spokes of a bicycle wheel are all of equal angles subtended at the hub in the centre, while the radial streets of the Round City have different angles because each of the four equal quadrants has a different number of radial streets; secondly, the spokes of a bicycle wheel all end up at the centre where the hub is, while the streets of the Round City stop far short from the centre, namely, at the inner concentric road next to the third concentric wall.

Symbolism of Self-Sufficiency within the Round City

Each of the four great arcades (**Tāqāt Kubrā**) had 54 vaulted chambers on each side, which were the individual shops (**Dakakīn**, singular **Dukkān**); However, the first chamber on the left-hand-side was occupied by a ramp leading up to the first floor. These bazaars would have contained enough food to last for a few months in times of siege.

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[61] Jairazbhoy, p 24

Symbolism of Increasing Power Towards the Centre, or alternatively,

Symbolism of Diminishing Power Away from the Centre

State power (whether political, military or administrative) increased as one moved from the outer gateways towards the central area where the State Departments, Palaces of the younger Sons of the Caliph, and the Palace of the Caliph himself were situated. The reverse is also true as one moved away from the centre and towards the outer gateways.

Symbolism of Equality and Avoidance of Favouritism

All forty radial streets were located at equidistance from the central area where the Palace of the Caliph himself was, namely, from the Golden Gate Palace with its Green Dome. Hence, there was no favouritism awarded to the inhabitants of any of the forty radial streets; instead, they were all treated equally by virtue of their location within the identical radial streets in the plan of the city. One could also assume that they were at equidistance from the inner development zone, namely, from the Palaces of the younger Sons of the Caliph, and from the State Departments.

Symbolism of Clan or Tribal Divide

Each tribe or clan was allocated a radial street (**Sikka**) so that there was homogeneity within each street, and also to avoid any friction between different clans or tribes if they were to live in the same street.

Symbolism of Loyalty and Allegiance, or alternatively,

Symbolism of Inclusion and Exclusion

Only those people whose loyalty and allegiance to the Caliph himself, the Caliphate and to the 'Abbasid Dynasty were well known and assured, were given permission to live within the Round City and were granted land to build houses for themselves in one of the forty radial streets. However, those who were not well known in their support of the Caliph or were ambivalent about it (or even against the caliphate) were naturally excluded from the city and had to live outside it.

Symbolism of Racial and Ethnic Cohesion and Inclusion, or alternatively,

Symbolism of Racial and Ethnic Segregation

Loyal Arabs, Persians (Khurāsānīs) and Khwārizmīs were included in the radial streets (**Sikkāt**) where they were allocated separate streets designated for their racial and ethnic groups. Such a concept could be taken either as symbolism of ethnic cohesion, inclusion and recognition, or alternatively, as a concept of ethnic segregation to avoid any possible friction between them.

Symbolism of Religious Sectarian Divide

One of the radial streets was called **Sikkāt** al-Husayn; (could it have been named after the revered Shiaite Imām al-Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, and the son of the fourth Guided Caliph, Imām 'Alī, and his wife Fātima?). Another of the radial streets was given the name of **Sikkat** 'Abī Hanīfa (presumably named after the founder of the Hanifī School of Thoughts in Sunnī Islam); it was also in recognition of his help as an overseer during the construction of the Round City. A third radial street is called **Sikkat** al-'Abbās (presumably a reference to 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the great, great grandfather of al-Manşūr?).

Symbolism of Religious Representation of the three Abrahamic Faiths

One radial street was given the name **Sikkat** Israel; did this represent the Jewish faith? Another was given the name **Sikkat** Sarjis or Sargis; did this represent the Christian faith? If the answer were to be yes in both cases, could that have implied symbolism of the three Abrahamic faiths since all the others were of Muslim names?

Symbolism of Segregation According to Employment, Work or Trade

Some radial streets were also designated for people according to their type of employment, work or trade.

VISUAL SYMBOLISMS IN THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL FORM OF THE ROUND CITY

Symbolism of a Series of Concentric Circles

This is exemplified by the concentric forms of the moat, the three defensive walls, the two ring roads, the separation space, the residential development zone, the twelve State Departments zone, and the central area (as discussed above).

Symbolism of Radial Streets

There was a series of a total 40 radial streets (**Sikkāt**, singular **Sikka**) between the four city gateways each extending between the outer concentric ring road and the inner concentric ring road, and pointing towards the centre where the caliph's palace was located. The 40 radial streets were arranged unequally into four equal quadrants, each extending between two consecutive gateways. There were 12 streets between the Khurāsān Gate and the Baṣra Gate, 11 streets between Baṣra Gate and Kūfa Gate, 8 streets between Kūfa Gate and al-Shām Gate, and 9 streets between al-Shām Gate and Khurāsān Gate. Hence, the sub-total number of streets on opposite quadrants was 20 (namely, 11+9=20 and 12+8=20). (Fig 13 & 14).

Symbolism of Gated Communities

Each of the forty radial streets had a gate at its junction with the outer ring road, and another at its junction with the inner ring road. These doors were kept shut at night for safety and security reasons; they were also kept closed during periods of unrest and disturbances. Hence, those living in any particular street were effectively living in a "gated community" separated from similar ones by race, ethnicity, (possibly religious sectarian divide), employment, work and trade.

Symbolisms of Two Main Diameter Axes, or alternatively,

Symbolism of Four Radial Axes

There were two main diameter (or alternatively, four radii) axes at right angles to each other along which their four, strictly controlled gateways were located (with a series of five doors along each of the four radial axes) with their axial, arcaded and covered bazaars leading to the centre; two of the doors were made of iron. (Figs 4, 8, 8A, 8B, 9A, 9B, 13 & 14).

Could the concept of these two perpendicular axes within a circular enclosing wall have their origin in the planning of military camps? An illustration of this was found in the Palace of Sennacherib at Nineva dating back to 705-681 BCE [62] (Creswell, EMA, fig 7, p 18; Jairazbhoy, p 24).

Symbolism in the Nomenclature of the Four Gates, or alternatively,

[62] Creswell, EMA, fig 7, p 18; Jairazbhoy, p 24

Symbolism of Acknowledgement, Recognition and Appeasement in the Naming of the Four City Gates.

The name of each of the four gates was supposedly chosen because each one indicated the direction it faced or that from which people were approaching it. However, such names were deliberately chosen to satisfy a political end and to gain the approval of the inhabitants of that province or city. (Figs 4, 8, 8A, 8B, 9A & 9B).

- The name of the Khurasan Gate (also known as **Bāb al-Dawla** or the State Gate) was chosen to acknowledge, recognise and pay homage to the province which was the birthplace of the 'Abbasid revolution and the origin of the 'Abbasids uprising against the Umayyads.

- The name of al-Baṣra Gate was chosen to indicate that they were still in the caliph's thought despite their revolt against the 'Abbasids.

- The name of al-Kūfa Gate was chosen to show that despite the fact that the population of Kūfa was 'Alids or 'Alawites, their city was still being acknowledged.

- The name of al-Shām Gate was chosen to prove that despite the fact that the Levant (**Bilād al-Shām**) was the base power of the 'Umayyads, the province and its people were being acknowledged as part of the Abbasid Dynasty and not enemies of it.

Symbolism of a Centrally Located Palace

The palace of the caliph was built first at the centre of the Round City with its Green Dome symbolising the exact centre of the palace as well as that of the city.

Symbolism of an off-Centre State Mosque

The Mosque of al-Manṣūr was built after the palace had been completed; hence, it was not located in the centre of the city but off it as the caliph's palace occupied that position. Effectively, its position was subsidiary to that of the palace; did this imply that political power was more important than religious power despite the fact that the caliph represented both of them simultaneously?

Symbolism of Deterrent Fortification, Defiance and Intimidation to External Invaders, and also,

Symbolism of Protection against Inside Opponents and Subversives

This is visually illustrated in the plan and three-dimensional form of the Round City, and as practically felt by anyone approaching it through any one of its four axial entry points, proceeding from the drawbridge, to the outer gateway and the series of five doors (two of which were of iron) to pass through. (Figs 5, 6, 7, 8, 8A, & 8B).

Symbolism of Power and Prestige, or alternatively,

Political Power Embedded or Reflected in the Plan and Form of the Round City

These are reflected in the following.

- A central authority and of centralised power.

- An absolute power.

- A concentration of power in one man (the caliph), in one family (the caliph and his sons), and in one tribe or clan (the 'Abbasids).

Symbolism of a Solid Buffer Zone of Buildings

According to Lassner's plan of the Round City, there was a buffer zone of buildings, which formed a ring round the inner court where the caliph's palace was situated.[63]

And according to 'Allawī's plan of the Round City, the twelve State Departments were identified by name and distributed around the caliph's palace; there were three per each of the four quadrants.[64]

This means that in both reconstructed plans of the Round City, the State Departments formed a buffer zone of buildings between the Residential Development Zone and the Inner Court; a perfect symbol of physical, visual and aural separation between the trusted people and the caliph for safety and security for the caliph himself and his family.

However, there are problems or reservations about 'Allawī's plan of the Round City of 1987 (which was distributed during the International Symposium held in November 6-8, 1987 at the AKP at Harvard and MIT) in the fol-

[63] Lassner, 1970, fig 2, p 207, fig 9, p 213; Creswell & Allan, fig 140 (b), p 234

[64] 'Allawī, 1988, pp 68-69 & fig 10, p 68

lowing ways (which was neither in al-Khaṭīb's description nor in that of Ya'qūbī).

- The introduction of a narrow separation space between the inner ring road and the State Departments.

- The introduction of another ring road leading to the State Departments.

- The introduction of a similar number of radial streets (**Sikkat**) to that of the residential zone in each of the four quadrants leading to the State Departments.

- The introduction of another ring road next to the third wall.

Symbolism of 20 / 20 Vision

Since the sub-total of the number of streets in opposite quadrants make 20, this gives rise to the analogy with the modern notion of perfect vision of 20 / 20. In the context of the plan of the Round City, it can also represent the following.

- A perfect illustration of a concept or of an idea.

- A perfect geometry in the form of a circular plan for a unique city.

- A perfect concept for a hierarchical power.

- A perfect diagram for a radiating authority.

- A perfect vision of concentrated power.

- A perfect layout for absolute political rule.

- A perfect symbol for concentric power of a ruling family and of a mighty dynasty.

Symbolism of Pride and Self Satisfaction

The caliph al-Manṣūr must have felt a sense of pride, and must have been very pleased with himself in planning and building the Round City as follows.

- In proposing the concept of concentric circles (of a moat, three walls, two ring roads, etc.) to the architects to work it out and to draw it up.

- In ordering its plan to be traced with ash on the ground of the site.

- In trying it out by entering every gateway and moving along its radial access.

- In ordering cotton wool to be placed on its concentric circles thus marked out, saturate them with oil, and then to set them on fire while watching from a nearby height to appreciate its form.

- In calling it "**Dār al-Salām**" (Abode of Peace) in echoing the same name in the Holy-Qur'ān (Ch VI, verse127, and Ch X, verse 25), which is a reference to Paradise!

Symbolism of Fire at Inception

Before giving the order to start digging the trenches for foundations of the three concentric walls of the Round City and for excavations for the moat, al-Manṣūr wanted to visualise its concept, plan and size. He therefore ordered that its plan be marked out on the ground of its site with ash. He then tried it out himself by moving through each of its four gateways, passing into its **Dihlīz**, **Rahaba**, **Faṣil**, and **Ṭāqāt**. When he had satisfied himself, he then ordered that along the lines of its concentric plan, balls of cotton wool be placed and oil be poured on them, and then they were set alight while the caliph observed from a height near-by to comprehend its size and to appreciate its size and form. The moat and the foundations of the three concentric walls were dug out according to these lines.[65]

Symbolism in the Nomenclature of the New Capital City

The fame and legendary reputation of the city is expressed in the number of names given to it as a sign of pride and admiration.

Dār al-Salām (Abode of Peace) was the official name given to it on all documents, as well as on all new coinage and weights. Perhaps this name recalls the two passages in the Holy Qur'ān (Ch VI, verse 127; Ch X, verse 25).

Madīnat al-Salām (City of Peace) was a variation on the official one.

Madīnat Abī Ja'far (the City of Abī Ja'far).

Madīnat al-Manṣūr (the city of al-Manṣūr).

Al-Manṣūriyya.(a reference to al-Manṣūr).

Al-Madīna al-Mudawwara (the Round City).

Madīnat al-Manṣūr al-Mudawwara (the Round City of al-Manṣūr).

Madīnat al-Khulafā' (the City of Caliphs).

Al-Zawrā' or **Madīnat al-Zawrā'** (the Eccentric City), which has three possible explanations;

- A reference to the "eccentric" (**Inhirāf**) or out of alignment of the **Qibla** wall and its **Mihrāb** in the mosque of al-Manṣūr in the Round City from the true direction of Makka. This was because the mosque was built after the Ca-

[65] Creswell, EMA, p 6; Jawād & Sousa, Guide, p 48

liph's Palace, and the former was made to conform and coincide with the axes of the latter.

- A reference to the "eccentric" (**Izwirār**), bent (**Mi'wajj**, **Mun'atif** or **Munkasir**) or non-axial form of entry into each of the four outer gateways of the Round City from the outside to the inside via a vestibule (**Dihlīz**), where one had to turn left at right angle to proceed; this was adopted for defensive reason against any invader.

- A reference to the "eccentric" (**Izwirār**) or (**Dawra**) or huge bend of the River Tigris in the region of Baghdad, south of the site of the Round City.

- A reference to the "eccentric" arrangement of the forty radial streets (**Sikkāt**, singular **Sikka**) within the Round City, where their numbers were 12, 11, 8 and 9 respectively from Khurāsān Gate to Baṣra Gate, to Kūfa Gate, to al-Shām Gate, and to Khurāsān Gate.

Baghdād (there are many variations on the name of Baghdād, such as Baghdhādh, Baghdān, Baghdayn, Baghdām, Bahdād, etc.); it is a pre-Islamic name with many different opinions about its linguistic origin, etymology and meaning; their discussion is outside the scope of the present paper.[66]

Symbolism of Increasing Power Towards the Centre, or alternatively,

Symbolism of Decreasing Power Away from the Centre.

Although all the forty radial streets (**Sikkāt**) were at equal distance from the Caliph's Palace, nonetheless, power in its many manifestations increased towards the centre and decreased away from it towards the outer concentric wall and moat.

Symbolism of a Fortified Castle, Citadel or Fortress

(Rather than that of a truly inclusive walled city)

Since the great majority of the population of the region lived outside the concentric circular walls and moat of this magnificent edifice, would it be more appropriate to describe it as a fortified castle, citadel or fortress for the caliph, his sons, members of his caliphate court, and his loyal supporters rather than a true city?

[66] Herzfeld, p 104; Muhīṭ al-Muhīṭ, p 46; Haidarī, p 4; Dūrī, Baghdād: E of I, pp 894 & 895

Symbolism of Cultural and Intellectual Centre of the Islamic World

The reputation of Baghdad gathered momentum with the establishment of the House of Wisdom (**Bayt al-Hikma**) by the Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd. When his son al-Ma'mūn became a caliph, he extended and expanded the House of Wisdom to become **Dār al-Hikma**. In it, the rooms overlooking each colonnaded arcade (**Riwāq**) were designated for a particular subject. It was a huge Library as well as a Scientific Academy to encompass all the arts and the sciences as well as the humanities. It was also a thriving publishing house. The spoken and written languages included Arabic (as the lingua franca), Farsī, Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, Greek and Latin; sometimes, even Sanskrit was used in translating the works of Indian mathematicians and astronomers.[67]

Tragic End

The Round City of Baghdād was still in tact by the death of the Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd. It endured its first siege in 198 AH / 813 CE at the hands of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn at the unseating of his half brother the Caliph al-Amīn. It suffered its second siege in 251 AH / 865 CE during the reign of the caliph al-Musta'īn. Baghdad (as a city stretching along both banks of the Tigris) suffered the ultimate death and destruction during the Mongol invasion in 656 AH / 10 February 1258 CE at the hands of Hulegu, the grandson of Chingis Khān; the Caliph and his family, as well as his entourage, were put to death, and the city was ransacked with its hundreds of thousands of books either burnt or thrown into the river Tigris.

Symbolism of Fate (Qisma) of Later Wars and Destruction

(Embedded in the Plan of the Round City)

The author is of the opinion that the dates of the following wars are embedded in the plan of the Round City.

- The occupation and destruction of Baghdād at the hands of Hulegu (the grandson of Chingis Khan) on 10.02.1258.

- The bombing and setting on fire of areas of Baghdād (and other cities in Iraq) at the start of the First Gulf War (Operation "Desert Storm") on 17.01.1991.

- The bombing and occupation of Baghdād by the American Marines on 09.04.2003.

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[67] 'Azzawī, T H of W; and T A H of W

However, the calculations of these dates are outside the scope of this paper.

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ILLUSTRATİONS

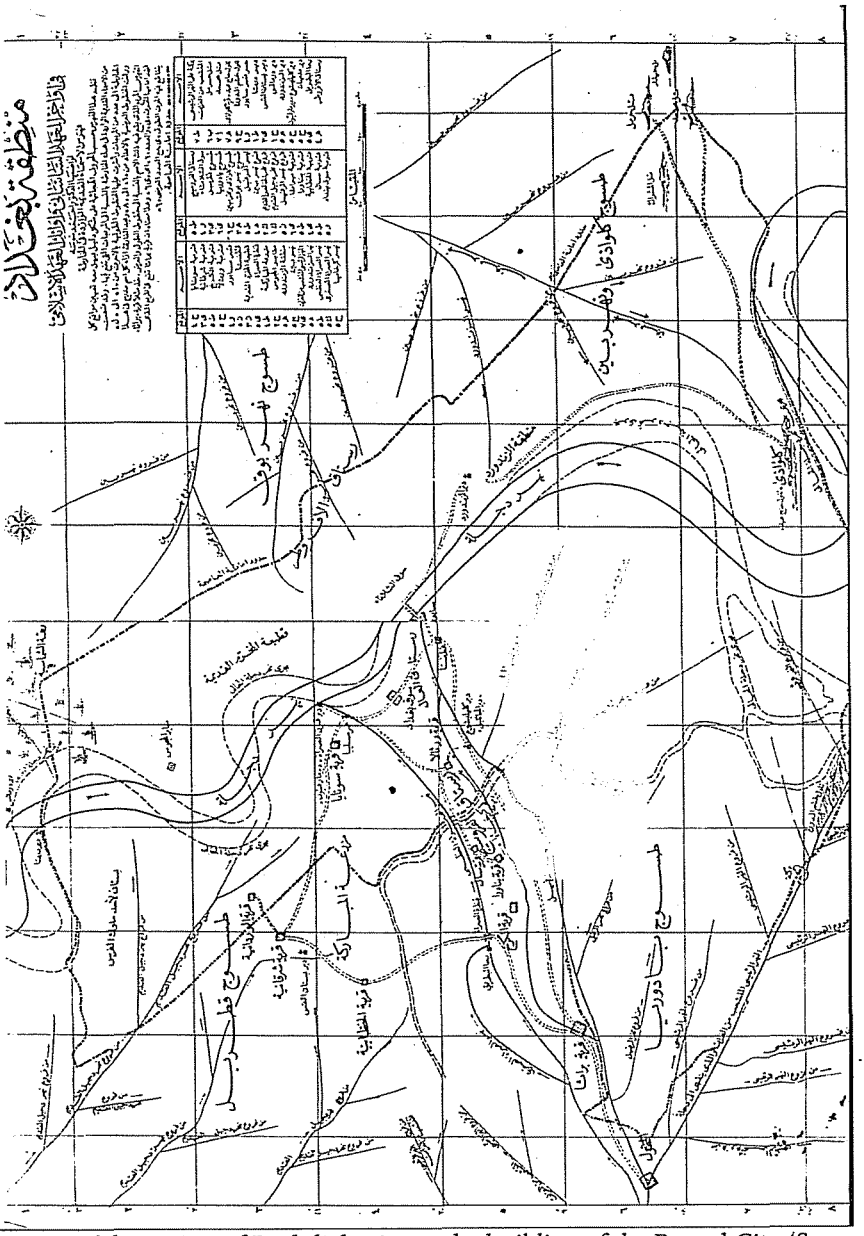


Fig. 1: Map of the region of Baghdād prior to the building of the Round City (Sousa, 1952, pp 2 & 3).

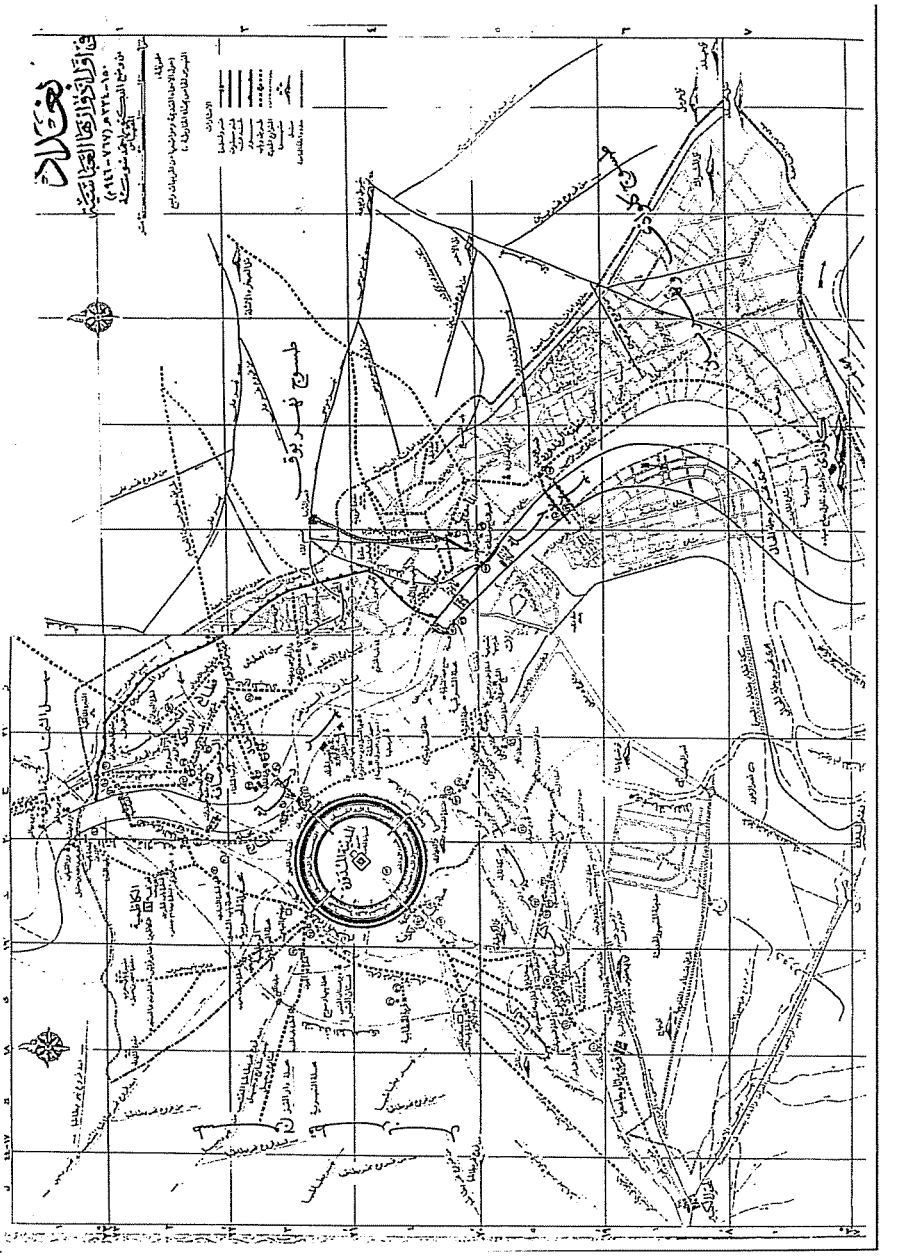


Fig. 2: Map of the region of Baghdād after the building of the Round City (Sousa, 1952, pp 4 & 5).

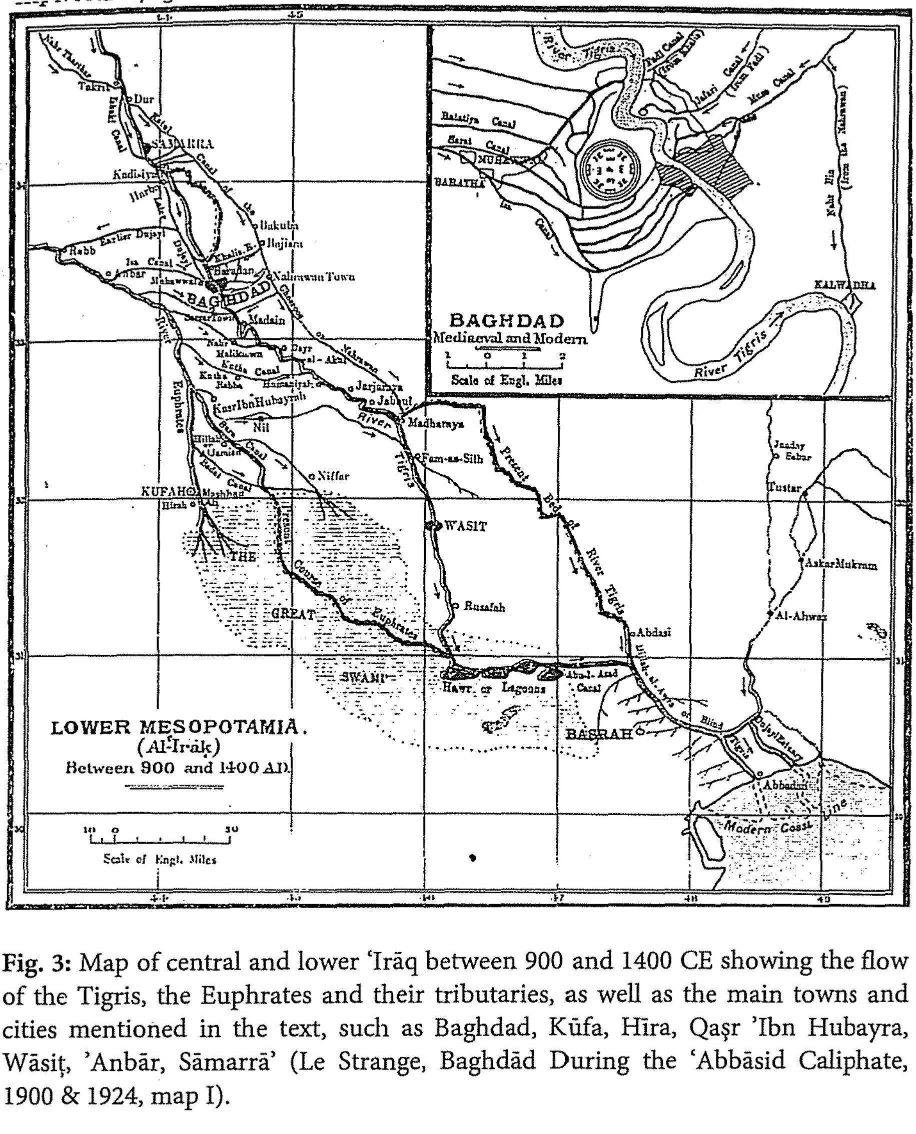


Fig. 3: Map of central and lower ʿIrāq between 900 and 1400 CE showing the flow of the Tigris, the Euphrates and their tributaries, as well as the main towns and cities mentioned in the text, such as Baghdad, Kūfa, Hīra, Qaṣr 'Ibn Hubayra, Wāsiṭ, 'Anbār, Sāmarrā' (Le Strange, Baghdād During the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate, 1900 & 1924, map I).

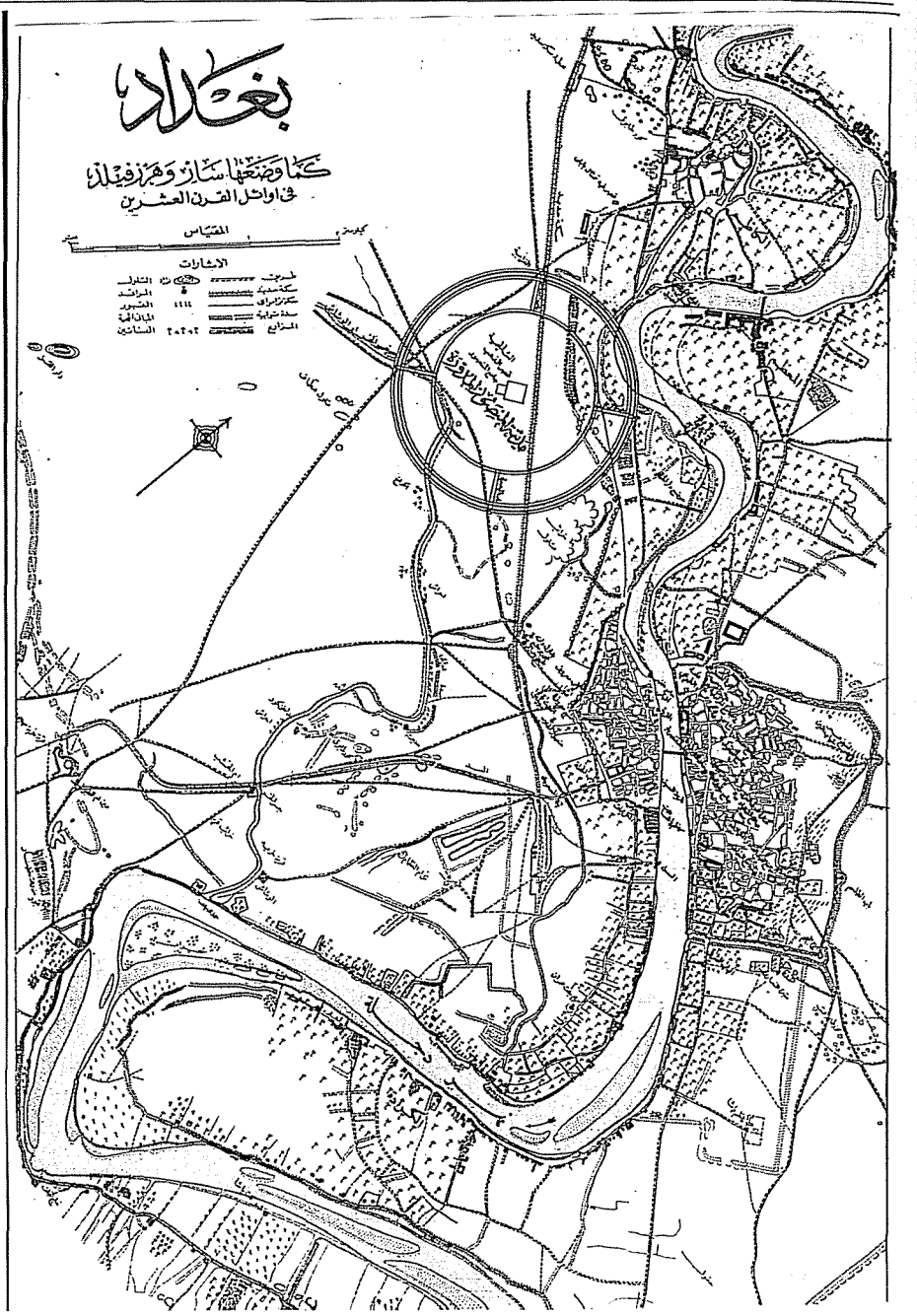


Fig 4: Plan of the city of Baghdād in 1911 with the plan of the Round City superimposed on it according to Herzfeld (1920, large map; Sousa, 1952, p17).

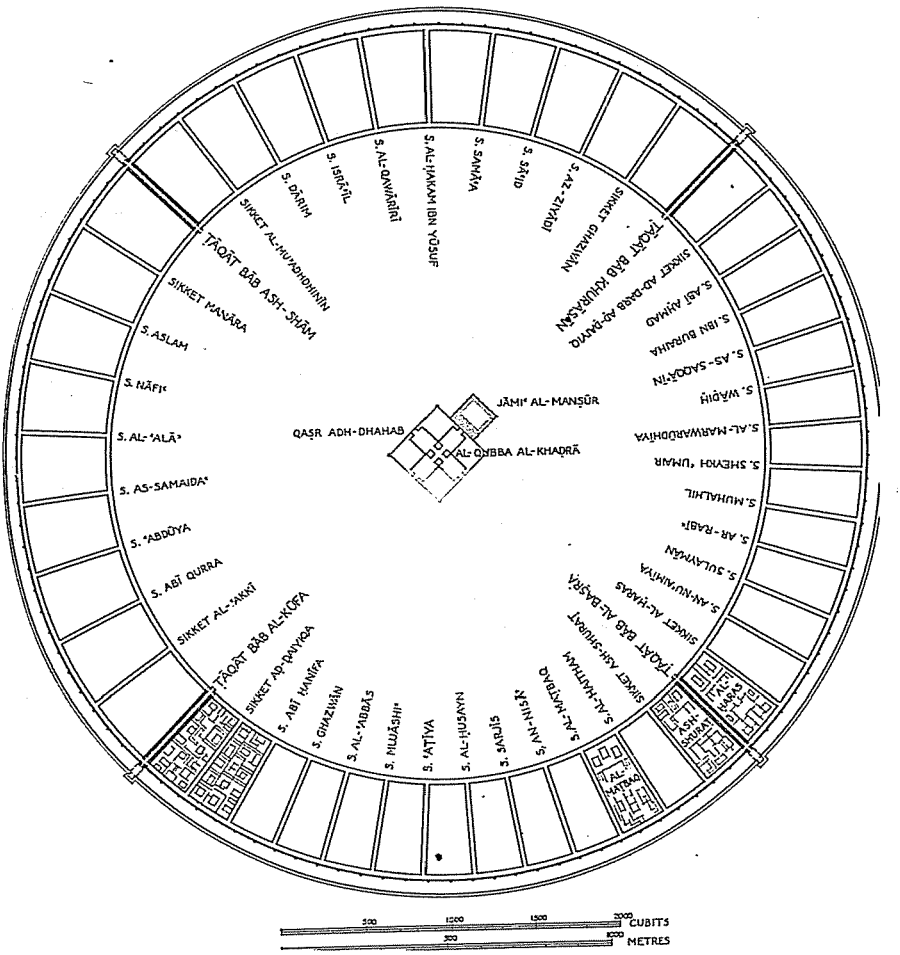


Fig. 5: Plan of the Round City according to Herzfeld (1920, fig 180, p 120) and Creswell (1940, EMA, fig 3, p 13). NB. There is one street (Sikka) extra (12 instead of 11) between the Gates of Baṣra and Kūfa. Also note that Herzfeld places al-Manṣūr's mosque contiguously with the south-western side of the caliph's palace, while Creswell places it contiguously with the north-eastern side of the palace.

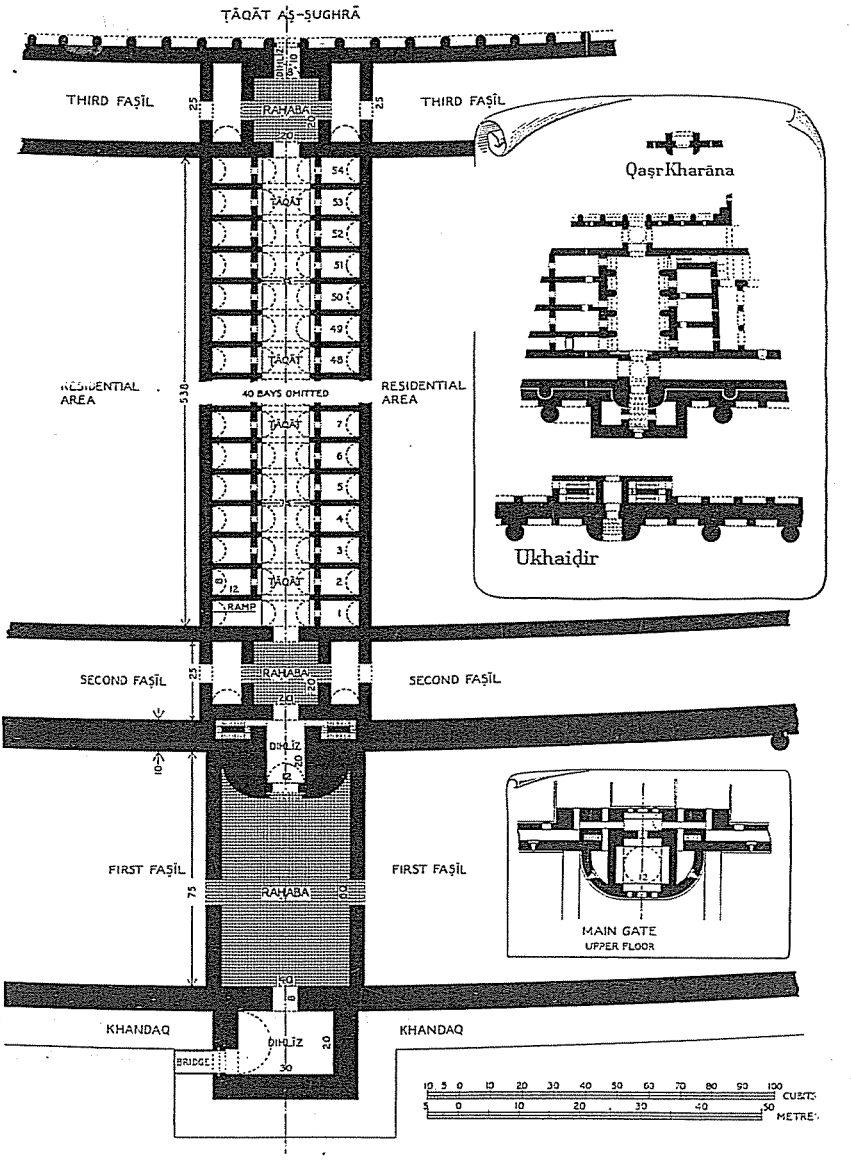


Fig. 6: Detail Plan of one of the four Radial Axes of the Round City according to Herzfeld (1920, fig 181, p 124) and Creswell (1940, EMA, fig 3, p 13).

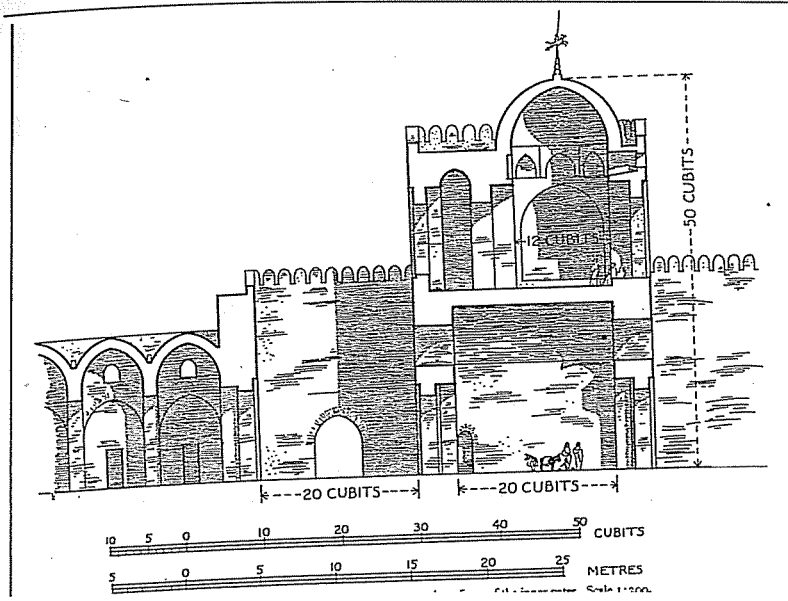


Fig. 7: A section through one of the four Main Gateways of the Round City according to Herzfeld (1920, fig 182, p 126) and Creswell (1940, EMA, fig 4, p 15).

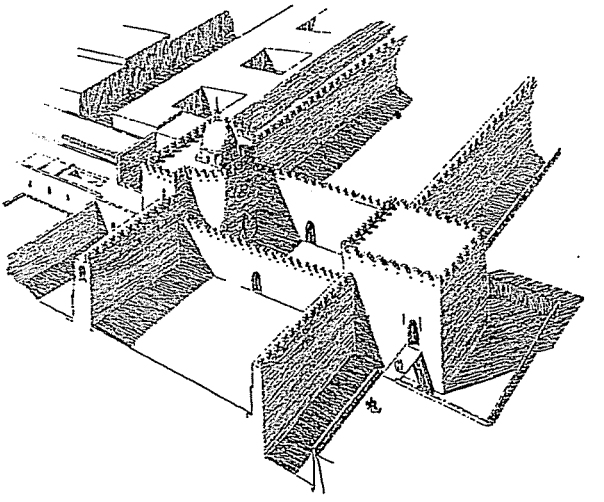


Fig. 8: A bird's-eye view of the moat, outer gateway with its drawbridge, first defensive wall incorporating the outer gateway, first separation space, main defensive wall with its inner main gateway topped by an observation hall and covered by a dome, and outer ring road; all according to Herzfeld (1920, fig 183, p 127) and Creswell (1940, EMA, fig 5, p 15).

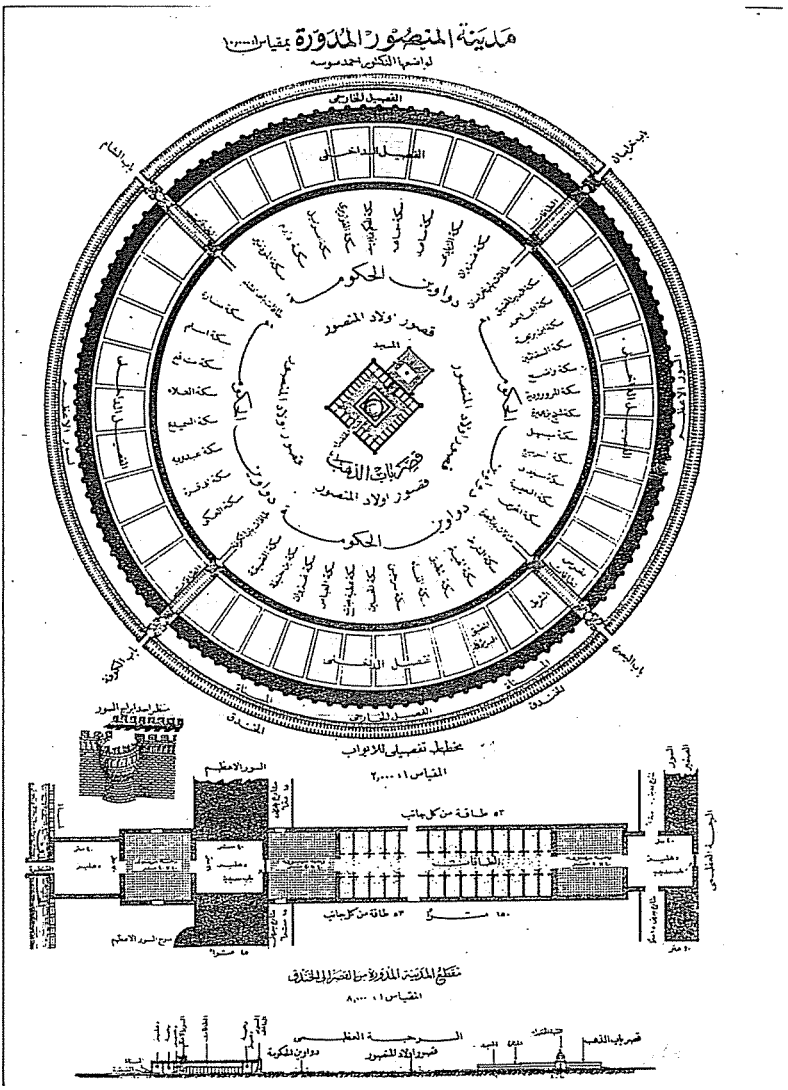


Fig. 9: Plan of the Round City (with a detailed plan of one of the four radial axes, and a section through it) according to Ahmed Sousa (1952, p 7). NB. The entrance through the outer gateway is incorrectly made axial; it should have been drawn bent or non-axial. Also, the thickness of the outer wall is made very insignificant, and made into a quay (Musannāt); it should have been made substantially thicker as the first defensive wall. Additionally, the main defensive wall is shown as 40-45m thick, which is unrealistically too thick. Furthermore, the third defensive wall is shown as 20m thick, which is also unrealistic. The correct plan shows a total of 40 radial streets.

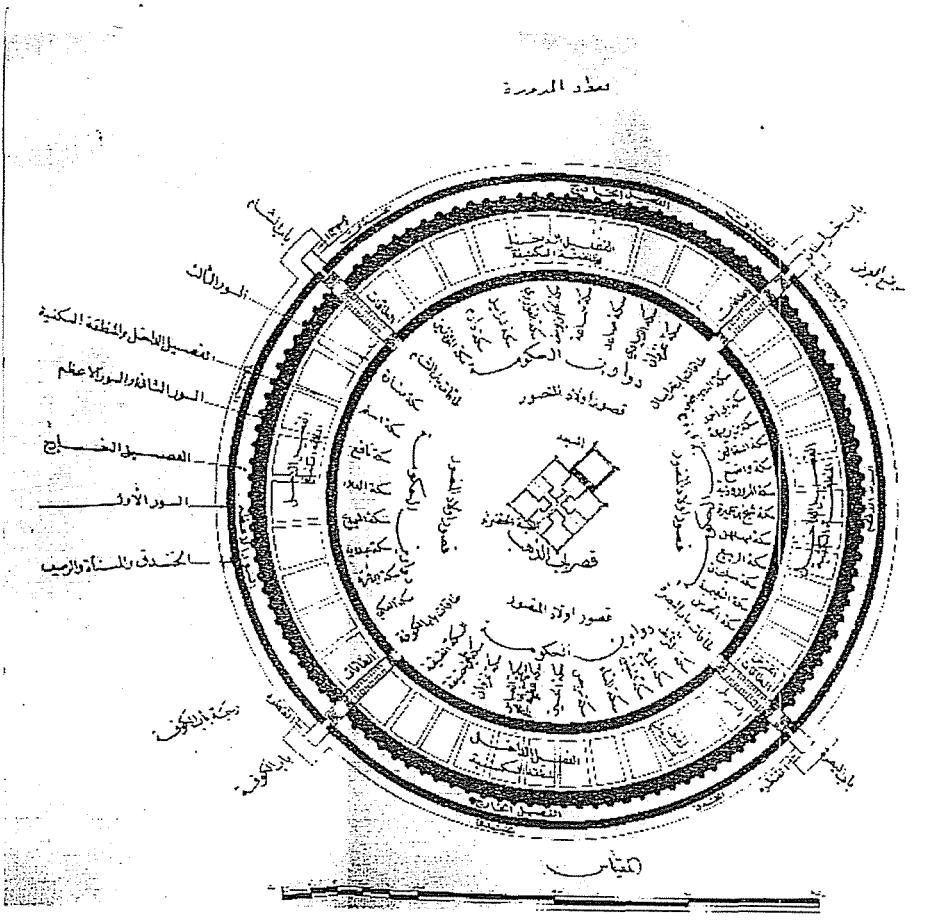


Fig. 10: Plan of the Round City according to Nājī Ma'rouf (1966) with its four outer projecting gateways, three definite defensive walls, and a total of 40 radial streets.

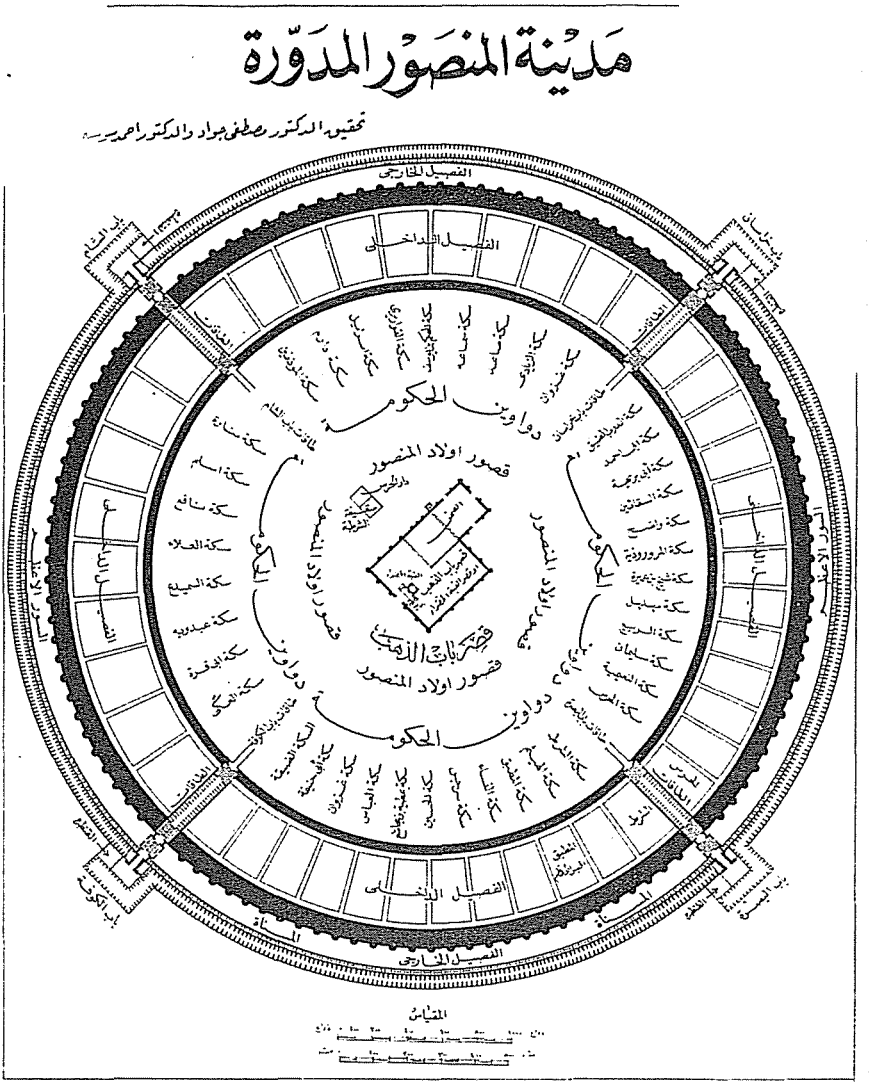


Fig. 11: Plan of the Round City according to Muṣṭafā Jawād and Ahmed Sousa (1968) with its four projecting outer gateways and three concentric walls; however, the first outer wall is still shown as insignificant in thickness, and made into a quay (Musannāt). The plan shows a total of 40 radial streets.

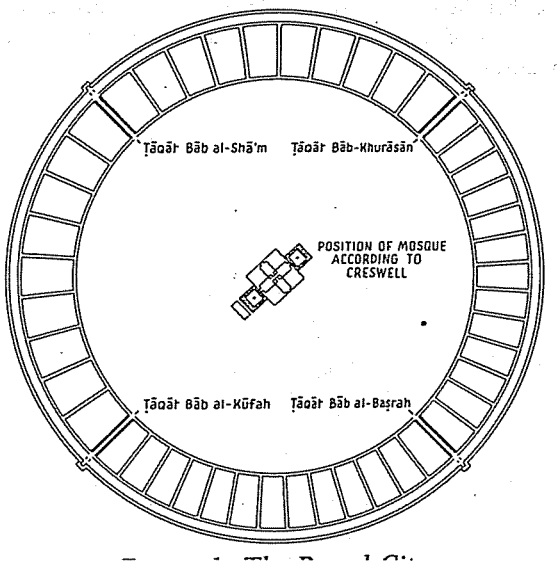


Fig. 12: Plan of the Round City after Herzfeld and Creswell (Lassner, fig 1, p 207).

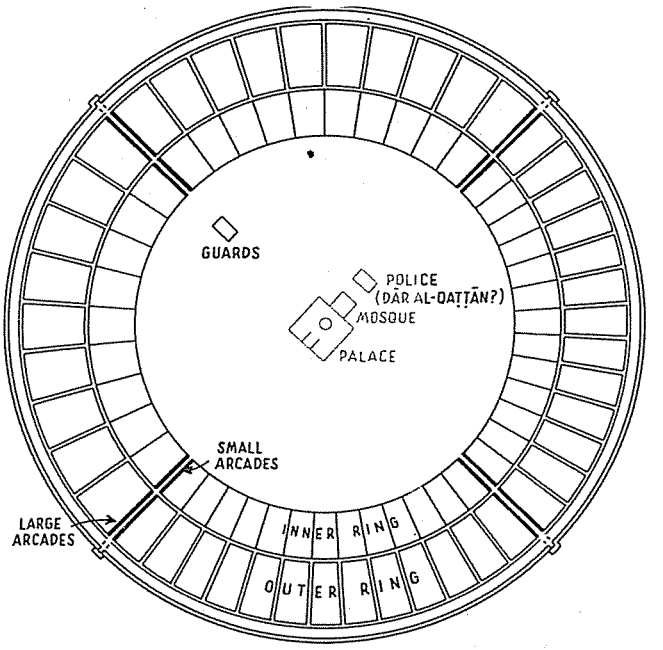


Fig. 13: Plan of the Round City (drawn to the same scale) according to Jacob Lassner (1970, fig 2, p 207). NB Note the two building / development zones: an outer one for residential and an inner one for the State Departments (which is subdivided along the lines of the radi-

al streets). Also note that there is one street (Sikka) extra (12 instead of 11) between the Gate of Baṣra and the Gate of Kūfa as in the Herzfeld plan and the Creswell plan, which is also shown for comparison.

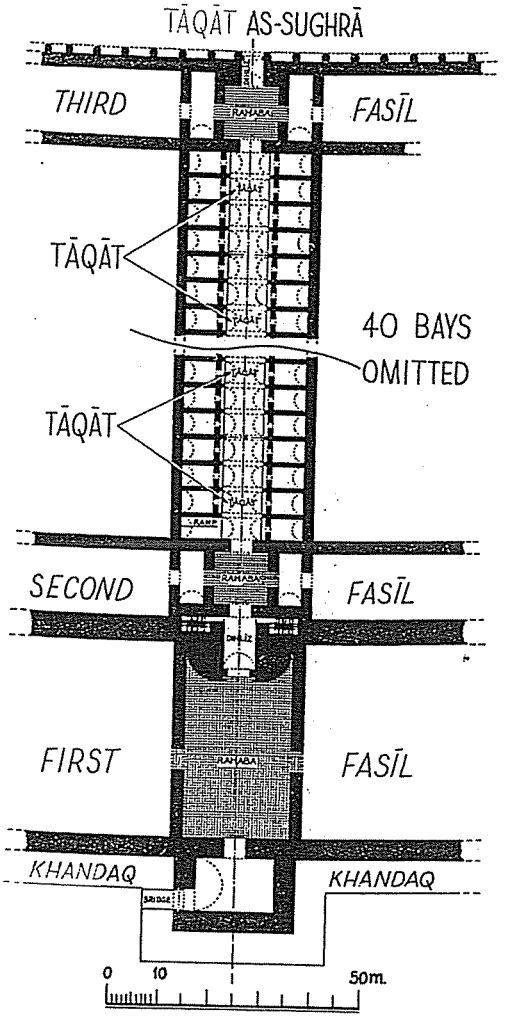


Fig. 14: A detailed plan of one of the radial axes of the Round City according to Creswell (Creswell & Allan, 1987, fig 140a, p 234).

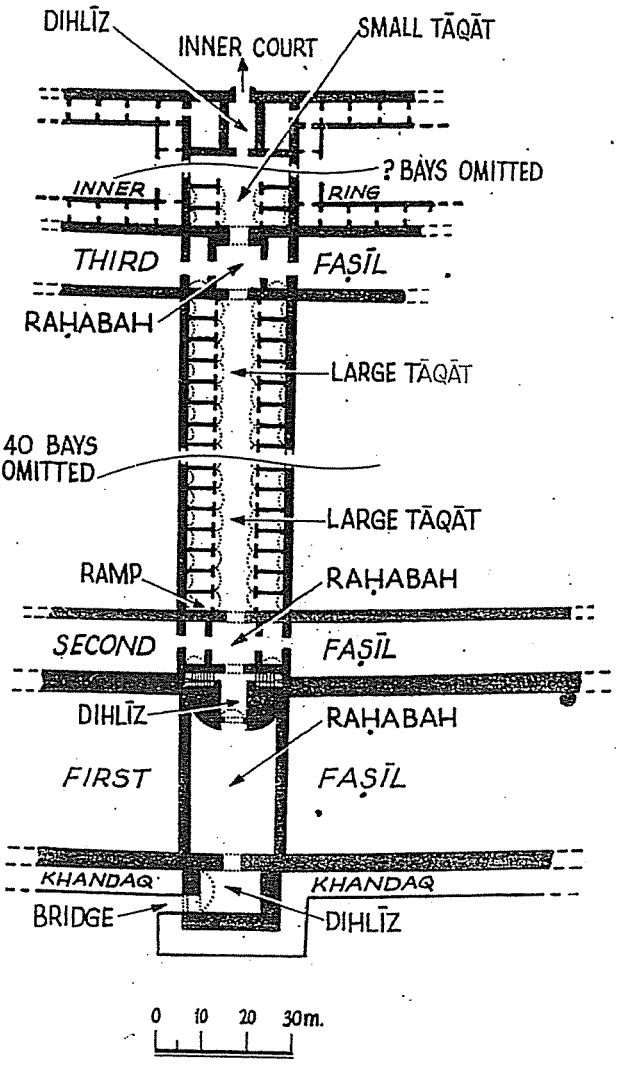


Fig. 15: A detailed plan of one of the radial axes of the Round City according to Lassner (Creswell & Allan, 1987, fig 140b, p 234).

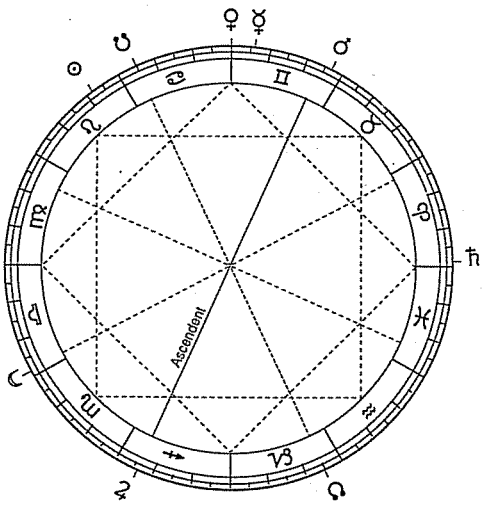


Fig. 16: The horoscope of Baghdad as on 04 Jamādī al-'Awwal 141 AH / 31 July 762 CE (according to 'Ibrāhīm 'Allāwī, 1987 and 1988) showing that the Ascendant was at 24 degrees east of north and 24 degrees west of south; this diameter fixed the axis of the Gate of Baṣra and the Gate of al-Shām (indicating the direction of Makka); the other diameter was made at right angles to it and fixed the axis of the Gate of Khurāsān and the Gate of Kūfa; hence, it was the Gate of Baṣra that faced Makka and not that of Kūfa ('Allāwī, fig 4, p 62).

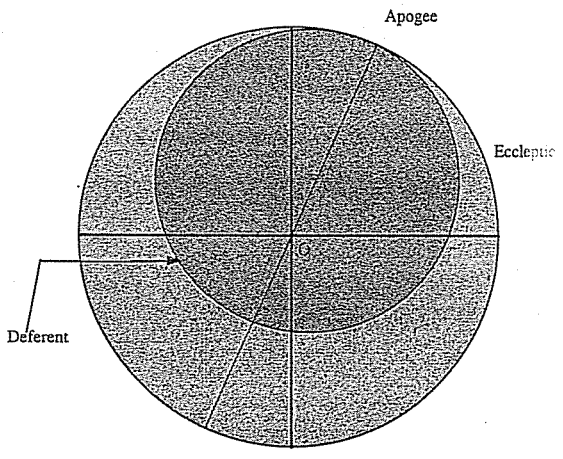


Fig 17: The apparent eccentricity of the Sun's orbit on the day of the horoscope of Baghdad (according to 'Ibrāhīm 'Allāwī ('Allāwī, 1988, fig 9, p 68).

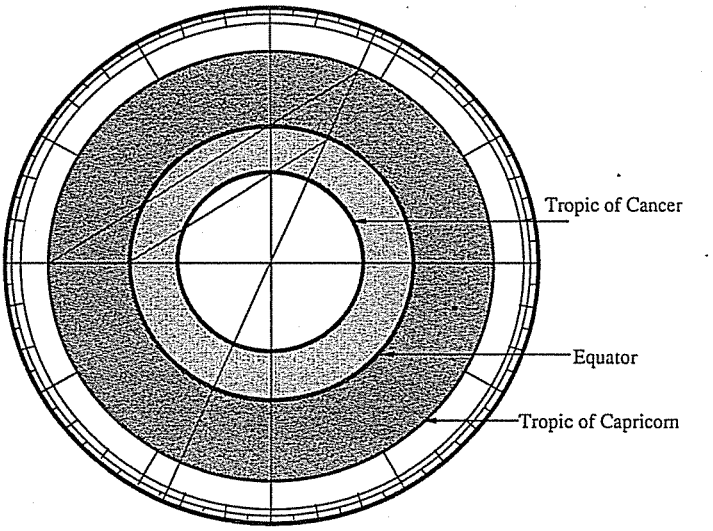


Fig. 18: Stereographic projection of the Round City ('Allāwī, fig 6, p 66).

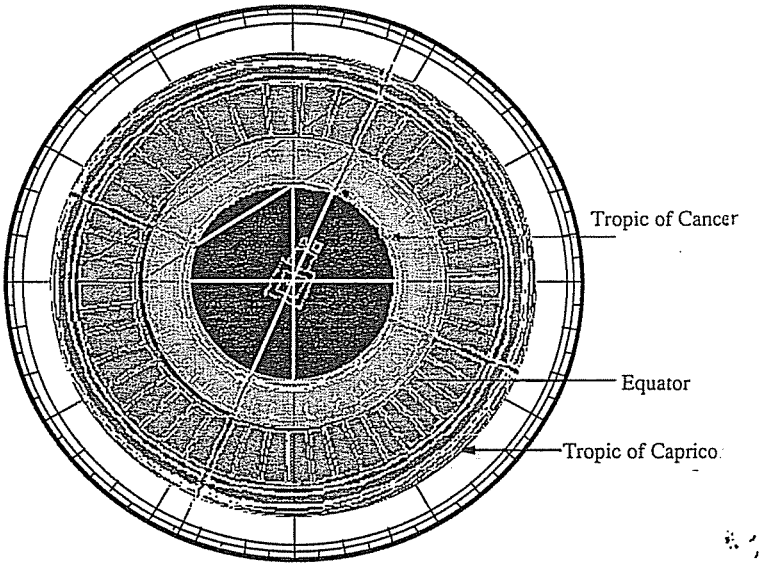


Fig. 19: Plan of the Round City superimposed on its stereographic projection ('Āllāwī, 1988, fig. 7, p 66).

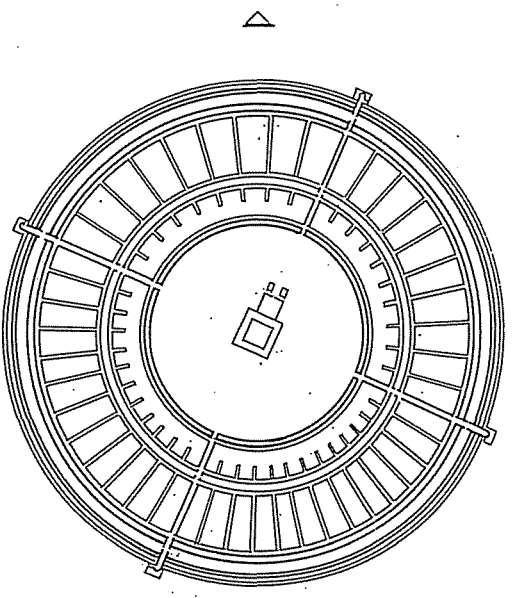


Fig. 20: Plan of the Round City according to Ibrāhīm 'Allāwī (1987, distributed at the International Symposium of 6-8 Nov held at the AKP at Harvard and MIT).

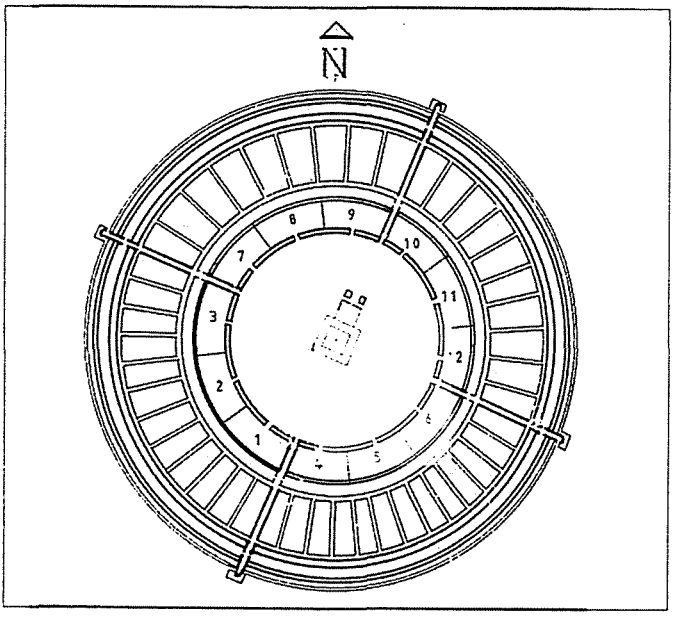


Fig. 21: Plan of the Round City according to 'Ibrāhīm 'Allāwī (1988, fig 10, p 68) showing the original location of the markets according to text by Ṭibarī, before they were moved, first to the Great Arcade, and secondly to outside the walls and the moat.

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