

Ghazi Bisheh

Qasr al-Mshatta in the light of a recently found inscription*

Perhaps no early Islamic monument has been so thoroughly discussed as the imposing ruins of the unfinished palace of Mshatta which is situated some 48 kms to the southeast of Amman, close by the new Queen Alya international airport.¹ Nevertheless the palace, famous for its elaborately carved stone facade, has not yet been placed in its proper historical context; and despite K. A. C. Creswell's detailed and cogent arguments for an Umayyad date for the palace,² there are a few prominent scholars, like Monneret de Villard and Dus-saud, who still doubt the Umayyad attribution and argue for a pre-Islamic date.³ Therefore, there is still a 'Mshatta problem' and any evidence which sheds light on its date would be of interest to both historians and archaeologists.

The purpose of the following note, which deals with an inscribed brick found at Mshatta, is twofold: first, to argue for a late Umayyad date for the building and place its construction in the last decade of Umayyad rule, which came to an end in AH 132/AD 750.⁴ Second, in view of the predominance

of Iraqi influences at Mshatta⁵ and the unique layout of its plan (FIG. 1), an analysis of the inscription may help to provide a better understanding of the circumstances of the construction of the palace, the channels of transmission of the Iraqi features, and why those features were adopted. It should be emphasised, however, that the following discussion should be viewed not as a decisive argument for a precise identification, but as a

where no settlement exists even if the term is understood in the narrow sense of its usage. Second, the topography of Mshatta is hard to reconcile with the emphasis of the text on the difficulty of providing water for the site, because a mere five miles from Mshatta there still stands the reservoir of Zizyā which was in use and repair in the time of al-Walid II (Hillenbrand, *ibid.*). Also the dams, barrages, and cisterns near Qas-tal—which is situated no more than five miles from Mshatta—could have been available to provide water for the construction of the palace. For the dams and cisterns around Qastal, cf. P. Carlier, *Qastal, Château Umayyade*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Provence Aix-Marseille, 1984, p. 27; carte f.

To these arguments might be added a third one against the attribution of Mshatta to al-Walid II. It is a well-known fact that Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik wanted to exclude al-Walid II from the succession in favour of his own son Maslama. He started by promising al-Walid huge financial compensation, and when this failed, Hishām began to snub al-Walid at court and to treat him in a discourteous and even humiliating manner in an effort to make him renounce his right. When this method also failed to produce the desired result, Hishām started a smearing campaign against al-Walid, attributing to him every vice in order to discredit him. As the pressure from Hishām mounted, al-Walid finally detached himself from the court of Ruṣāfa and struck out into the Jordanian steppe, living between Azraq and Bāyir. Hishām, still not satisfied with al-Walid's banishment, kept him short of money and cut off his financial allowances: cf. al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Asbrāf*, a photocopy in the Orientalisches Seminar der univ. Tübingen of the MS. in the Suleymaniye Library, Istanbul (no. 598), p. 313; hereafter referred to as *Ansab*: Tübingen. cf. also al-Nuwayri, *Nihayāt al-Irab*, ed. A. M. al-Bijāwī (Cairo, 1976), Vol. xxi, 464.

It is doubtful whether al-Walid II, who was in exile and with funds cut off, could have built such an unusually magnificent palace as Mshatta. This palace must have been built by someone who was in close contact with Iraq and had considerable funds at his disposal. Moreover, the basilical hall which precedes the tri-apsidal room at Mshatta does not necessarily imply that Mshatta belonged to a princely member of the Umayyad house. Such a feature also appeared in the *Dār al-Imāra* (government house) of Kūfa and in the Umayyad palace on the Citadel in Amman which might have served a similar function. M. A. Muṣṭafā, 'Taqrīr Awwali 'an al-Taḡīb fi al-Kūfa', *SUMER*, Vol. XII (1956), pp. 3–32; FIG. 1. A. Almagro, *El palacio omeya de Amman* (Madrid, 1983) FIG. 2.

As Morony pointed out, the governors of the provinces, especially those of Umayyad Iraq, combined military, fiscal, and religious responsibilities, thus their office came close to the Sasanian concept of monarchy, and therefore it was only natural to give such a concept an architectural expression. M. G. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim conquest* (Princeton, 1984), p. 32.

The implication of this rather lengthy digression is that Mshatta could have belonged to a powerful tribal Chief or a wealthy governor who accumulated his wealth during his tenure.

⁵Since the theme of Oriental influences is a familiar one in the literature of Mshatta there is no need to cover the same ground here. Suffice it to say that these influences were reflected in the use and technique of brickwork, in the roofing system with vaults,

* This paper is an expanded version of a short article published in Arabic in *ADAJ*, Vol. xxvii (1983), pp. 5–7. Thanks to a two month study visit to the Federal Republic of Germany in April and May, 1985, provided by the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD), I was able to carry out my library research in the rich and congenial atmosphere of the Orientalisches Seminar of the University of Tübingen. I am most grateful to Professor Heinz Gaube and his family who were not only helpful friends but also marvellous hosts throughout my stay in Tübingen.

¹The fullest account of the palace is that of K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture: Umayyads, AD 622–750*, Second edition (Oxford, 1969) Vol. 1, pt. ii, pp. 578–606; 614–41. A complete bibliography arranged chronologically is to be found on pp. 604–6. All the references concerning this work that follow, refer to the same volume and division.

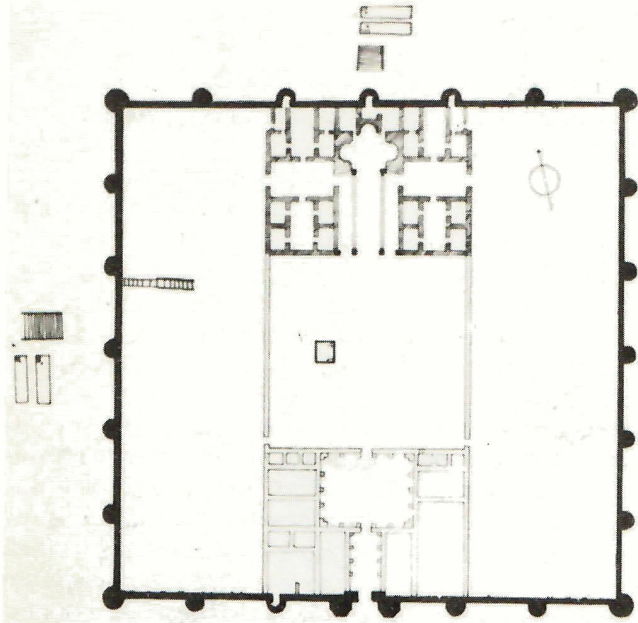
²*Ibid.*, pp. 623–41.

³U. Monneret de Villard, 'Il tāj di Imru'1-Qais', *Rendiconti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, ser. 8, Vol. VIII (1953), p. 229. R. Dus-saud, *La pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam* (Paris, 1955), pp. 64ff.

⁴Such a date has long been suggested by Lammens. Quoting a passage from a 10th-century church history text, 'The History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria', by Severus ibn al-Muqaffa', Lammens associates Mshatta with al-Walid II (AD 743–44): cf. H. Lammens, *Études sur la siècle Omayyade* (Beirut, 1930), pp. 348–50 where a translation of the passage in question appears. The same passage has also appeared in Creswell, *op. cit.*, p. 631, who seems to support Lammens' suggestion, and in Sauvaget, 'Remarques sur les monuments Omeyyades', *Journal Asiatique*, CCXXXI (1939), pp. 31–32, whose translation is slightly different from that of Lammens, and in R. Hillenbrand 'Islamic Art at the crossroads: east versus west at Mshatta' in *Islamic Art and Architecture in honor of K. Otto-Dorn*, ed. A. Daneshvari, p. 67.

As Hillenbrand points out there are serious arguments against the identification of the city with Mshatta in Ibn al-Muqaffa's passage. First, the term *Medīna* (city) which al-Walid II is alleged to have started to build in the desert does not fit al-Mshatta,

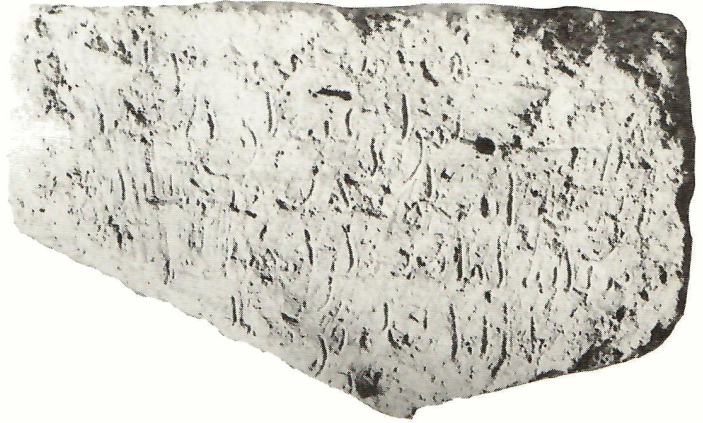
1. Plan of Qasr al-Mshatta.



hint at the possible date of the construction of the palace which could be corroborated by other archaeological evidence.

The inscription under discussion was discovered within the palace in the course of clearance work carried out by the Dept. of Antiquities in June, 1964.⁶ It consists of five lines of simple Kufic script incised on a baked brick whose maximum dimensions are 20 × 11.5 × 6 cm. Unfortunately the brick is broken at the lower left and right edges and many letters are hardly distinguishable because of weathering, as can be seen in the accompanying photograph which is supplemented by a drawing (FIGS 2–3). The inscribed brick is now preserved and exhibited in the Amman Archaeological Museum and bears the number J9883. The inscription reads as follows:

2. Inscribed brick found at Mshatta (Amman Archaeological Museum J. 9883).



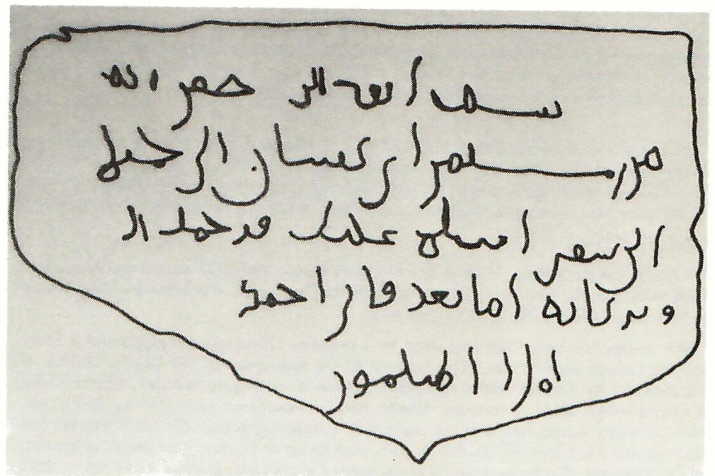
- (١) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 (٢) من سليمان بن كيسان الى (خيلا...؟)
 (٣) ابن (...) سلم عليك ورحمت (الله)
 (٤) وبركاته أما بعد فاني أحمد (اليك الله)
 (٥) المسلمون

Translation

- 1) In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.
 2) From Sulaymān⁷ ibn Kaysān to (Khayla...?)
 3) Ibn (...) peace and God's mercy
 4) and blessings be upon you. I praise God to you
 5) the Muslims.

It is clear from the contents of the inscription that we are dealing with the text of a letter similar to the one found at

3. Drawing of inscription on brick shown in FIG. 2.



and in the lengthy axial layout of the central tract. Even the triconch which dominates the plan of Mshatta was seen as an assimilation of the Sasanian square domed chamber with flat niches and local building tradition. H. Stern, 'Notes sur l'architecture des Châteaux Omeyyades', *Ars Islamica*, XI–XII (1946), p. 89f. In the sphere of decoration, oriental features appear in the adoption of animal and floral motifs like the griffin, the senmurv, the winged palmettes and pinecones. Furthermore, the whole carved facade in its sheer exuberance was thought to reflect surface stucco decoration of Sasanian Iran and Mesopotamia. Creswell, *op. cit.*, pp. 614ff. Hillenbrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–72.

The markedly strong Mesopotamian features of Mshatta baffled several first-generation scholars who dealt with the palace, so that it has for long been regarded as a pre-Islamic monument of Lakhmid or Ghassanid origin. Such bafflement is clearly reflected in Brünnow's explanation of the building: 'Built with Byzantine gold under Byzantine rule, designed by a Ghassanid after a Lakhmid model, and restored under Persian rule.' R. E. Brünnow, 'Zur neuesten Entwicklung der Meschatta-Frage', *Zeitsch. für Assyriologie*, xxvii (1912), fp. 138. As translated by Creswell, *op. cit.*, p. 630.

⁶ The inscription was published in a preliminary form by Sulaymān Da'na in the publication of the fifth Congress of the Arab Departments of Antiquities (Cairo, April 19–24, 1969), pp. 473–77; pl. 2. For a modified reading with brief comments, see: G. Bisheh, 'An Arabic inscription from Mshatta and its significance' (in Arabic) *ADAJ*, xxvii (1983), pp. 5–7; pls 1–2 (p. 135).

⁷ Admittedly the name could also read as Salmān. The short vertical stroke which precedes the letter *mīm*, however, is more likely to be *yā* rather than *lām*. The vertical stroke of the letter *lām* which appears in the words 'Salām' and 'al-Muslimūn' in the third and fifth lines respectively are longer. Therefore the reading of the name as Sulaymān is preferable.

Khirbet al-Mafjar which was written in black ink on a marble fragment.⁸ The letter was written by Sulaymān ibn Kaysān and addressed to a person whose name is no longer distinguishable. The question which arises is who was the person mentioned in the inscription? The following discussion will attempt to identify the person in question and point out the role which some members of the Kaysān family played in the Umayyad administration.

The family of Kaysān was affiliated as *mawālī* (clients) to Banū Kalb, one of the most powerful and influential tribes in Syria during the early Umayyad period.⁹ Its members occupied important positions in the Umayyad administration, especially during and after the caliphate of al-Walid I (AH 86–96/AD 705–15). For instance, Šāliḥ b. Kaysān supervised the demolition and reconstruction of the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina during AH 88–91/AD 707–10.¹⁰ He was regarded as a sound and trustworthy transmitter of early Islamic traditions, and was employed as tutor to the sons of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz before he became caliph. Acknowledging his wide knowledge and honesty, the caliph al-Walid I summoned him to join the entourage of his son, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz who was the governor of the military district (*jund*) of Damascus.¹¹ Another member of the Kaysān clan, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaym al-Kalbī, was a governor of ‘Umān during the caliphate of al-Walid I.¹² Later on, during the reign of Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik (AH 101–5/AD 720–24), he was in charge of the security guards (*Šāḥib al-Shurtah*) of Basra in Iraq, and led the summer campaigns until Yazīd’s death.¹³ One of the sons of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaym, Ya‘qūb, appears in AH 126/AD 743–44 as a leader of a contingent fighting against al-Walid II.¹⁴

Ya‘qūb was also included in a delegation sent by Yazīd III (AH 126/AD 743–4) to Marwān b. Muḥammad, the governor of the Jazīra, in an attempt to win his support and allegiance.¹⁵ Yet another member of the Kaysān clan, Sulaymān b. Sulaym b. Kaysān al-Kalbī, to give his full name, was entrusted by the Caliph Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik (AH 105–25/AD 724–43) to tutor one of his sons, Muḥammad, with a monthly salary

of one thousand dinars.¹⁶ One of Sulaymān’s sons, Dā‘ūd, was accused of having fatally wounded the Alid leader Zayd b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥussein during the uprising of AH 122/AD 740, an accusation denied by the descendants of Dā‘ūd.¹⁷ When Sulaymān b. Kaysān is next mentioned in the sources, he appears in Iraq where he had apparently held an important administrative or military position since the caliphate of Yazīd II. He is reported to have been ordered by the ‘*Amīl* (administrator) of Kūfa for Yazīd II to look for and arrest Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, who had escaped from the prison.¹⁸ Later on, following the murder of al-Walid II in Jumāda II, 126/April 744 and the accession of Yazīd III, an army contingent of five thousand men, under the leadership of Manšūr b. Jumhūr, was despatched to take over Iraq. When Manšūr reached ‘Ain al-Tamr, he sent out messages to the Syrian leaders stationed at al-Ḥīra informing them of the death of al-Walid II and instructing them in no uncertain terms to arrest Yūsuf b. ‘Umar al-Thaqafī, the governor of Iraq.¹⁹ All the messages were sent first to Sulaymān b. Kaysān for delivery to the Syrian leaders. Sulaymān, however, withheld the letters and revealed their contents to Yūsuf b. ‘Umar.²⁰ Moreover, Sulaymān b. Kaysān helped the demoralized governor find a temporary hiding place in the house of a prominent member of the Sufyanid family, ‘Amr b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd b. al-‘Ās.²¹ After three days of hiding, Yūsuf b. ‘Umar, together with sixty male and female members of his family, slipped through the city of al-Ḥīra and escaped to al-Belqā,²² once again with the help of the sympathetic Sulaymān b. Kaysān, who also sent with Ibn ‘Umar, Sufyān b. Salāma b. Sulaym b. Kaysān.²³ However, Ibn ‘Umar’s stay in the Belqā turned out to be short. As soon as word reached Damascus of his escape, Yazīd b. Khālid b. ‘Abd-Allah al-Qasrī, the head of the security guards for

¹⁶ Ibn ‘Asākir, *op. cit.*, Vol. vi, pp. 279–80.

¹⁷ Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Asbrāf*, ed. M. B. al-Maḥmūdī (Beirut, 1977), p. 250. For the uprising of Zayd b. ‘Alī, cf. J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and its fall*, trans. M. G. Weir (Calcutta, 1927), pp. 337–38.

¹⁸ Balādhurī, *Ansāb*: Tübingen, p. 203.

¹⁹ Earlier in his career, Yūsuf b. ‘Umar was the governor of Yemen. In Jumada I, 120/May 738, the caliph Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik appointed him to the governorship of Iraq, a position which he retained until the murder of al-Walid II in AH 126/AD 744. It is interesting to note that Yūsuf b. ‘Umar seems to have moved the centre of local rule from Wāsiṭ, the city which the redoubtable al-Ḥajjāj founded to accommodate the Syrian troops stationed in Iraq, to al-Ḥīra, the old Lakhmid centre in Iraq. Also, the two subsequent governors of Iraq: Manšūr b. Jumhūr and ‘Abd-Allah b. ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, both established their residences at al-Ḥīra. J. Lassner, *The shaping of Abbasid rule* (Princeton, 1980), p. 148.

²⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 272ff. al-Nuwayrī, *op. cit.*, XXI, pp. 491ff.

²¹ al-Nuwayrī, *ibid.*, Vol. XXI, p. 492.

²² The large number of Umayyad sites and monuments concentrated in the Belqā region reflects the close attachment of the Umayyads to that region. This attachment apparently has its roots in the period preceding the Muslim conquest. Abū Sufyān, Mu‘āwiyā’s father, owned an agricultural estate named Biqinnis which was located in the Belqā. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu‘jam al-Buldān* (Beirut, 1955), Vol. I, p. 472. For the geographical boundaries of the Belqā, cf. *EI*², Vol. I, pp. 997f.

In the aftermath of the second civil war, al-Ḥuṣayn b. Numayr from Sakīn (a component clan of Kinda) stipulated, as the price for his support to Marwān b. al-Ḥakam at Marj Raḥit, that he should be granted the district of the Belqā as a region for settlement by the Kinda of Syria and as a source of subsistence (*mu‘ālaq*). al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, Vol. V, p. 544. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Asbrāf*, Vol. V (Jerusalem, 1936), p. 149.

²³ al-Ṭabarī, *ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 273.

⁸ D. C. Barmaki, ‘The excavations at Khirbet al-Mafjar, III’, *QDAP*, Vol. VIII, no. 1 (1938), pp. 51–3; pl. xxxiv: 2.

⁹ For Banū Kalb and their influence in the early Umayyad period cf. A. A. Dixon, *The Umayyad Caliphate: 65–86/684–705* (London, 1971), pp. 83ff. P. Crone, *Slaves on horses: the evolution of the Islamic polity* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 34ff.

¹⁰ al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān* (Beirut, 1957), p. 13; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* (Cairo, 1961–1968), Vol. VI, p. 435; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-Wafā’ bi-Akbbār Dār al-Mustafā* (Cairo, 1315 AH), p. 370.

¹¹ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tabdhīb Tarīkh Dimashq al-Kabīr*, ed. A. Badran (Beirut, 1970), pp. 380–81. Khalifa b. Khayyāt, *Tarīkh* (al-Najaf, 1967), Vol. I, p. 315. al-Safaḍī (Šalāḥ al-Dīn Khalil b. Aybak), *Kitāb al-Wafā’ bi al-Wafā’*, ed. W. al-Qāḍī (Wiesbaden, 1982), Vol. VI, pt. 16, p. 286 where more references are given.

¹² Khalifa b. Khayyāt, *ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 315.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 335; 338; 343. al-Balādhurī, however, mentions that the tenure of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaym in Baṣra was of short duration, and that he was later appointed to the governorship of ‘Umān by the half-brother of Yazīd II, Maslama b. ‘Abd al-Malik, the governor of Iraq in AH 102–3/AD 720–22. Balādhurī, *Ansāb*: Tübingen, pp. 221–22.

¹⁴ Balādhurī, *ibid.*, p. 331.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

Yazīd III, sent fifty horsemen under the leadership of Muḥammad b. Sa'īd al-Kalbī to search for Yūsuf b. 'Umar and arrest him.²⁴ Ibn 'Umar was soon found in a farm (*mazra'a*) which he possessed, and was hurriedly packed off to imprisonment in al-Khaḍrā²⁵ in Damascus. For Yazīd al-Qasrī it was time to settle old scores with Yūsuf b. 'Umar, who was responsible for the ignominious murder of Khālīd b. 'Abd-Allāh al-Qasrī, the haughty and energetic governor of Iraq from AH 106–20/AD 724–38.²⁶ It was not long before Yūsuf b. 'Umar was murdered, together with the two young sons of al-Walīd II, by a *mawlā* (client) of Khālīd al-Qasrī. Sulaymān b. Kaysān, however, lived until the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty in AH 132/AD 750. He seems to have returned to Damascus after his tenure in Iraq came to an end. When the Abbasid army under the command of 'Abd-Allah b. 'Alī triumphantly entered Damascus, Sulaymān b. Kaysān was put to death together with several of his brothers.²⁷

The choice of al-Belqā as the place to which Yūsuf b. 'Umar escaped should not surprise us. He not only had relatives and family connections there, but also his abode was in the Belqā, where he owned a house and an agricultural estate. Al-Balādhurī explicitly states that Ibn 'Umar escaped to his abode (*ilā Manzilihī*) in the Belqā.²⁸ The connection of the Banū Thaqīf with the Belqā region apparently dates back to the time of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī, the governor of Iraq from AH 75–95/AD 694–713. It is reported that al-Ḥajjāj kept his family and treasuries (*khazā'in*) in the Belqā. When Yazīd b. al-Muhallab was appointed as governor of Iraq by Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik (AH 96–99/AD 715–17), he ordered the arrest of al-Ḥajjāj's family who were in the Belqā, and the confiscation of their property. They were all brought to Yazīd and subjected to humiliation and torture.²⁹ During the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik (AH 65–86/AD 685–705), the governor of al-Belqā was Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Thaqafī, a brother of Yūsuf b. 'Umar.³⁰ It is not surprising, therefore, that the latter

should have chosen al-Belqā as the place to which to escape from Iraq.

Two conclusions might be drawn from the preceding discussion: first, it is evident that the inscription bears no precise evidence as to the specific date of Mshatta or its owner. But if our identification of the person mentioned in the inscription as Sulaymān b. Kaysān is correct, there might be some justification for placing the date of construction of the palace towards the end of the Umayyad period. Such dating might be supported by the discovery of two bronze coins (*fulūs*) of the post-reform period of 'Abd al-Malik (FIGS 4–5).³¹ They were both found in one of the rooms along the south wall to the west of the gateway block in the course of clearance work carried out by the Dept. of Antiquities in April, 1984. The larger of the two coins was minted at al-Ramla in Palestine (FIGS. 4 and 5). Since the earliest coins of that mint are dated to the year AH 101 (AD 719–20),³² that year may provide a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the unfinished building of Mshatta.³³ Second, the analysis of the inscription sheds light on the close relations between the Belqā region and Iraq which may explain the strong Mesopotamian features of al-Mshatta. It might be instructive at this point to remember that the building of Wāṣīt by al-Ḥajjāj in AH 81/AD 700 coincided with the introduction of a large Syrian garrison into Iraq, and as it happened, this garrison was largely recruited from the southern districts of Syria.³⁴ Most of the soldiers stayed in Iraq for a relatively long time and later returned to their native lands, thus providing an important channel of transmission. The importance of this fact emerges more fully in the light of Professor Grabar's suggestion that Mshatta reflects the largely vanished Umayyad architecture of Iraq,

For instance two daughters of Abī Sufyān, the father of the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, were married to al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba al-Thaqafī and 'Abd-Allāh b. 'Uthmān al-Thaqafī. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Asbrāf*, Vol. iv, pt. 1. (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 5.

In the Umayyad period the Thaqīf continued to maintain close ties with the Umayyad family and to serve them as holders of important political offices, especially in the restless province of Iraq. These close ties between Banū Umayya and Thaqīf are indicated by several examples. For instance, 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān named one of his sons after al-Ḥajjāj; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Asbrāf*, ed. Ahlwardt (Greifswald, 1883), p. 155. Another son of 'Abd al-Malik married a daughter of al-Ḥajjāj, while a grandson of the same caliph married another daughter. A niece of al-Ḥajjāj was married to Yazīd II; cf. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*: Tübingen, pp. 190; 199; 228. For the offices which members of Thaqīf held in the Umayyad administration especially in the short reign of al-Walīd II, cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansāb al-'Arab* (Cairo, 1963), pp. 262–68.

³¹ The larger of the two coins, which was minted at Ramla in Palestine, bears the following legends:

<i>Obverse</i>	لا إله إلا الله وحده	<i>Reverse</i>	محمد رسول الله
Field:	لا إله إلا الله وحده	Field:	محمد رسول الله
Margin (between two circles)	لله الملك... فلس واف	Margin (two circles enclosing legend)	ضرب بالرملة

³² J. Walker, *A catalogue of the Arab-Byzantine and post-Reform Umayyad coins* (London, 1956), p. 255, note 2.

³³ The late Umayyad date of Mshatta can also be supported by its developed plan, which Creswell terms as 'the symmetrical subdivision into three' (Creswell, *op. cit.*, pp. 581–82). Set against other Umayyad buildings in Syria, where we find the rooms arranged in one or two storeys around a central courtyard, Mshatta with its axial planning exhibits a more developed form, and anticipates the large-scale Abbasid palaces of Ukhaidir and Sāmarrā.

³⁴ al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, Vol. vi, pp. 258–9; 332–347. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* (Ahlwardt), pp. 338–39. P. Crone, *Slaves on horses; the evolution of the Islamic polity* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 47; 235 N, note 333.

²⁴ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*: Tübingen, p. 334. al-Nuwayrī, *op. cit.*, Vol. xxi, pp. 492ff. This episode incidentally indicates that administratively the Belqā region was under the jurisdiction of Jund Dimashq.

²⁵ al-Khaḍrā (the palace with a green dome) is the palace built by Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān. It was situated behind the Great Mosque of Damascus to the south. When 'Abd al-Malik became Caliph, he bought it from Khālīd b. Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya for forty thousand dinars, in addition to four agricultural estates situated in different localities. Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, ed. Ṣ. al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1951), pp. 133–34.

²⁶ The wealth of Yūsuf b. 'Umar might be judged from the large sum of money, amounting to fifty million dirhams, which he paid to al-Walīd II just to have Khālīd al-Qasrī handed over to him. The old but proud Khālīd was taken to al-Hīra where he was tortured to death by Ibn 'Umar. al-Azdī, *Tārīkh al-Muṣil* (Cairo, 1967), pp. 52–53.

²⁷ Balādhurī, *Ansāb*: Tübingen, p. 392, where the names of Sulaymān's brothers are enumerated.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 199. Among those who were brought to Yazīd b. al-Muhallab was a niece of al-Ḥajjāj who was married to the future caliph Yazīd II (AH 101–105/AD 720–24) whose residence was at al-Muwaqqar. She bore to him al-Walīd II, who succeeded Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik to the caliphate. Prof. Bosworth erroneously states that al-Walīd II was the first Umayyad caliph to be born of a slave mother. C. E. Bosworth, 'Rajā Ibn Ḥayya and the Islamic Caliphs', *The Islamic Quarterly* (January–June, 1972), p. 49, note 4.

³⁰ Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Tārīkh*, Vol. 1, p. 301. The Banū Thaqīf, who lived in the city of al-Ṭā'if, had long been tied to the Quraysh of Mecca through kinship and commerce.

4. Bronze coins of the post-reform period, found at Mshatta.



5. Reverse of coin (shown on left in FIG. 4), minted at Al-Ramla, Palestine, and found at Mshatta.



numerous Umayyad and early Abbasid buildings like Mshatta, the Umayyad palace on the citadel in Amman, Ukhaidir, and al-Manşūr's palace in Baghdad, exhibited similar features in their plan, indicates the strong interrelations between Iraq and and especially the palace of al-Ḥajjāj in Wāṣit.³⁵ Thus al-

Ukhaidir and Baghdad—especially the palace of Abū Ja'far al-Manşūr there—appear not as imitations of the Umayyad buildings in Syria as exemplified by al-Mshatta, but as a continuation of Umayyad architecture in Iraq.³⁶ The fact that the southern districts of Syria, especially the Belqā region where the largest number of Umayyad buildings and sites are concentrated.

³⁵ O. Grabar, 'al-Mushatta, Baghdad, and Wāṣit', in *The World of Islam: Studies in honour of P. K. Hitti*, ed. J. Winde (London, 1959), pp. 99–108.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 101ff; 107.