



THE ARCHITECTURE OF ABBASID PALACES AND
MOSQUES (750 - 945 CE)

BY

ZEHRA UZUNKAYA

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degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and
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Kulliyyah of Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This research explores Abbasid palace and mosque architecture from 750 till 945 CE. The primary focus of this study is to examine the external features, ornamentation styles, and materials used in the construction of the palaces and mosques, and the impacts of other dynasties and cultures upon their architectural styles and techniques, using qualitative and content-analysis methodological approaches, rather than purely analytical research. Moreover, this study highlights that the Abbasids had outstanding palace and mosque structures relative to comparable civilizations. This research collected relevant data from both primary and secondary sources, which were used to demonstrate cosmopolitan elements, particularly Roman, Sassanid, and Umayyad impacts, upon Abbasid architecture. The findings of this research present the continuity of Islamic architecture from the Prophet Muhammad's period until the Abbasid era, as well as including new elements deriving from diverse cultures.

خلاصة البحث

يكشف هذا البحث عن قصور وتصاميم المساجد التابعة للعباسيين من سنة ٧٥٠ إلى ٩٤٥ م. تركز هذه الدراسة بشكل أساسي على السمات الخارجية، وأنماط الزخرفة للقصور والمساجد هذه، كذلك تبحث في المواد المستخدمة في هذه الإنشاءات وعند السلالات الأخرى التي أثرت في تقنياتها. هذه الدراسة دراسة وصفية وكيفية عبر تحليل للمحتوى، وفضلاً عن ذلك، فإن هذه الدراسة تؤكد على أن للعباسيين قصوراً ومساجد ذات تصاميم عظيمة مقارنة بالتصميمات الأخرى في ذلك الوقت. جمع هذا البحث البيانات ذات الصلة بكل من المصادر الأولية والثانوية، والتي استخدمت لإظهار العناصر العالمية، وخاصة الآثار الرومانية والساسانية والأموية، على العمارة العباسية. تعرض نتائج هذا البحث استمرارية العمارة الإسلامية من حقبة النبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم حتى العصر العباسي، فضلاً عن عناصر جديدة مستمدة من ثقافات متنوعة.

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.....
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.....
Arshad Islam
Examiner

This thesis was submitted to the Department of History and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (History and Civilization).

.....
Mohd Helmi Mohd Sobri
Head, Department of History and
Civilization.

This thesis was submitted to the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (History and Civilization).

.....
Shukran Abd. Rahman
Dean, Kulliyah of Islamic
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Firstly, it is my utmost pleasure to dedicate this work to my dear parents and my family, who granted me the gift of their unwavering belief in my ability to accomplish this goal: thank you for your support and patience.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Abbasid rule in Iraq can be divided neatly into two periods. The first begins with the foundation of the dynasty and lasts until approximately 945 CE, when the Buyids of northern Iran, especially under Adud al-Daula (949-983), rose to power, entered Baghdad, and finally reduced the caliphs to puppet status. In the second period, which lasted until the fall of Baghdad, real power in Iraq and Iran was transferred from a series of nominal caliphs into the hands of first the Buyids (945-1055), and then the Seljuks (1055-1194), Persian and Turkish dynasties respectively.¹

In 750 the Abbasids seized power from the Umayyad rulers, who lost control over all of their dominions except Spain.² The Abbasid caliphs ruled over Mesopotamia, Iran, much of Central Asia and parts of India, Arabia, and various lands in the eastern and southern Mediterranean. The period between 750 and 945 has been described as the Islamic Golden Age.³ During this epoch, Baghdad and Samarra' functioned as the cultural and commercial capitals of the Islamic world. The long period of Abbasid rule was coincidental with the classical age of Islamic civilization, when the Arabic language and its associated culture spread from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and from Central Asia to the Sahara, and people from all over the Muslim world looked to Baghdad and the culture of Iraq for artistic and scientific inspiration. Under al-Mansur, his sons al-Mahdi (775-785) and Harun al-Rashid (786-

¹ Hattstein, M., and Delius, P, *Islam: Art and Architecture*, (H.F. Ullman, 2007), p. 90.

² Petersen, A, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*, (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 1.

³ Bloom, J., and Blair, S, *The Grove Encyclopaedia of Islamic Art & Architecture*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 78.

809), all field of scientific and technical knowledge, the arts, law, and theology were greatly advanced.⁴

During this period the Muslim world became the unrivalled intellectual centre for science, philosophy, medicine, and education as the Abbasids championed the cause of knowledge and established 'House of Wisdom' in Baghdad, where both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars sought to translate and gather all the world's knowledge into Arabic.⁵ When the Abbasid Caliph Abu Ja'afar al-Mansur (r. 754-775 CE) founded the new capital of the Islamic Caliphate at Baghdad in 762 CE, they needed a lot of new buildings to make it functional as a political, economic, and cultural centre, as well to beautify it as the crowning symbol of their enlightened rule.

They built innumerable magnificent buildings throughout their realm, including mosques, palaces, public buildings, bazaars, caravanserais, and mercantile buildings, but the quintessence of their vision was Baghdad, which was essentially constructed as a new, model city, embodying the Abbasid worldview, and a centre of Muslim and global learning, culture, and trade. The many buildings, palaces, and mosques were among the most enduring and striking legacies of the Abbasids. The Abbasid Caliphs built huge luxury palaces (known as 'palace cities') and mosques, and these architectural structures were decorated with stucco, brickwork, wall paintings, and thousands of textiles. Abbasid wealth and greatness supported artistic work in silver, crystal, gold, bronze, and ivory. For palaces and mosques, they used bricks for architectural works rather than using stone, enabling innovative designs and constructions laid out over huge sites. The palaces and mosques of Samarra for

⁴ Hattstein, M., and Delius, P, *Islam: Art and Architecture*, (H.F. Ullman, 2007), p. 90.

⁵ Syed, M.H., Akhtar, S. S., and Usmani, B.D, *A Concise History of Islam*, (India: Vj Books, 2011), p. 51.

instance sprawled along the shores of the Tigris for 40 kilometres (25 mi).⁶ During this period (i.e. 750-945 CE), the Muslim world was a melting pot of different cultures which collected, synthesised, and significantly advanced the knowledge gained from the ancient Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Chinese, Egyptian, Indian, and Persian civilizations.⁷ Consequently, during this period, a distinctive form emerged and new techniques were developed that spread throughout the Muslim world and greatly influenced Islamic art and architecture.

The Abbasids constructed tremendous mosques and palaces in Baghdad, Samarra, Raqqa, and Kufa. The best preserved of the early Abbasid palaces is, paradoxically, the one about which contemporary texts have the least to say: Ukhaidir, located almost 125 miles south of Baghdad on the steppe to the northwest of Kufa. It remains one of the most impressive and awesome Abbasid monumental structure. Of the mosques, one magnificent architectural structure is the ninth century Great Mosque of Samarra.⁸

This research aims to shed light on the relatively little-known architecture of the Abbasids during the period of 750-945 CE. The majority of scholars who have studied Iraq so far have focused either on the pre-Islamic past or on the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods, with little attention to architectural history in any of these contexts, thus there is a need for more comprehensive studies and summations of the present state of knowledge on architectural phenomena, particularly to provide new, additional information on Abbasid architecture.

⁶ Petersen, A, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*, (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 1.

⁷ Syed, M.H., Akhtar, S. S., and Usmani, B.D, *A Concise History of Islam*, (India: Vij Books, 2011), p. 52.

⁸ Hattstein, M., and Delius, P, *Islam: Art and Architecture*, (H.F. Ullman, 2007), p. 99.

This thesis focuses on palaces and mosques, since both types of structures have important roles in Muslim society and serve as landmarks of Islamic civilization. In addition to considering the various features and functions of the buildings under investigation, this study also highlights the different elements that influenced Abbasid civilization, such as Sassanid, Byzantine, and Umayyad traits. For instance, the composition of early palaces was mostly affected by Sassanid and Umayyad architectural styles. This study mainly concerns the period before 945 CE, which marked the beginning of the decline of effective Abbasid political power (signalled by the ascent of the Buyids). Another reason why this study covers the years 750-945 CE is that it was the most dynamic and productive period of classical Islamic architecture, with the most magnificent mosque and palace structures being constructed during this epoch.

1.2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Abbasids' predecessors, the Umayyads, had conquered the enormous region between the Atlantic Ocean and the Oxus River, but their culture was concentrated in Syria and Palestine, the heartland of the Arab-Islamic world. Because of its restricted geographical and written record content, their architectural design displayed a particular but restricted vogue, and it is not possible to describe or even to contemplate an 'Umayyad' design reflected in common themes in different regions, such as Iran and North Africa.

In contrast, the Abbasids were able to extend their culture over a vast territory and it is possible to speak of 'Abbasid' architecture and art in diverse provinces, from Transoxiana to Egypt. Abbasid culture was also emulated in Ifriqiya, the province corresponding to modern Tunisia, and even in al-Andalus, governed by the

descendants of the Umayyad rulers that the Abbasids had displaced. This is not to say that the Abbasids enforced a new monolithic culture, nor that they devised a totally new style; rather they synergised numerous pre-existing styles into an organic, cosmopolitan cultural identity that was distinguishably ‘Abbasid’. For instance, early Abbasid architecture was coloured by pre-Islamic Iranian or Sassanid influences; the adoption of the Iranian concept of kingship, coupled with the concern for political security, contributed to the creation of the three royal cities at Baghdad, Samarra, and Raqqa, as well as to the building of the fortified palace at Ukhaydir.

The institution of the mosque itself and its roles changed under the Abbasids. In the time of the Prophet and his immediate successors the mosque was a multi-purpose building that combined several functions.⁹ While its primary function was to host the five daily prayers and religious sermons, it was also the social and political hub of the nascent Muslim community. Under the Abbasids, the emergence of other specialised structures for social and political functions led to the mosque developing a new character as an exclusively spiritual institution devoted to prayer and Islamic teaching. This was accompanied by the emergence of mosque structural elements, styles, and motifs, whereas in earlier times there had been no architectural uniformity, as mosques were made out of older structures or were constructed in local vernacular (often primitive) styles.¹⁰

Under the Umayyads, the grand ‘Friday’ (congregational) mosques of the major cities such as Damascus, Jerusalem, and Medina were monumentalized with the panoply of late antique architectural forms and decoration, but the effective confinement of Umayyad power to greater Syria meant that the ‘imperial style’ such

⁹ Grube, E.J., Dickie, J., Grabar, Oleg, Sims, E., Lewcock, R., Jones, D., and Petherbridge, G.T, *Architecture of the Islamic World*, (Thames & Hudson, 1995), p. 245.

¹⁰ Hattstein, M., and Delius, P, *Islam: Art and Architecture*, (H.F. Ullman, 2007), p. 94.

as it was, was limited to the core Umayyad region. All this changed in the Abbasid period. The great power of the early Abbasid caliphate, combined with the growing role of the *ulama*, meant that a standard type of Friday mosque evolved over a wide geographical area, although individual examples might differ in the use of local materials and techniques of construction. The typical Friday mosque in the Abbasid period was a rectangular structure, somewhat longer than it was wide, with a rectangular courtyard in its centre. On the opposite of the courtyard from the *mihrab* (prayer room) stood a tower, usually called a minaret (from the Arabic *manara*, ‘place of or thing that gives light’), which later became associated with the place from which the muezzin issued the call to prayer, but there is little contemporary evidence that Abbasid minarets were used for this purpose. Rather as the name suggests they were used as beacons (with lamps inside), and their monumental size and prominent placement advertised the presence of the congregational mosque from afar, and symbolised the vision of the Islamic animating principle of Abbasid urban life.

In the same way that a standard mosque style was spread throughout the Abbasid domains, many other forms and techniques that had been developed in the capital were disseminated to the provinces. For instance, in contrast to the Umayyad stone structures in Syria, following on from Roman patterns (and indeed re-using Roman-hewn stones), Abbasid builders favoured mud and baked brick constructions, covered with a rendering of gypsum plaster, often painted, carved, or moulded with geometric and vegetal designs.¹¹ In part this choice of materials may have been due to the lack of suitable building stone in the heartland of Abbasid power, but in practical terms it meant that Abbasid-style buildings could be erected wherever ubiquitous raw materials – clay, lime, and gypsum – were found, and styles and techniques could

¹¹ Ibid., p. 94.

easily be replicated in disparate cities. The Abbasid style of moulded stucco decoration, which combined late antique Mediterranean motifs with materials and techniques used in Sassanid Iran, could also hide indifferent construction under a showy but inexpensive revetment.¹²

As with mosques, Abbasid palaces (the official residences of governors) were large and monumental buildings, displaying few unique styles, as illustrated in the Samarran palaces, of which our knowledge is fragmentary. They were constructed very quickly in mud brick and seem to have disappeared as rapidly when they were abandoned, and their materials were plundered for other building purposes. These multiple functions demonstrate the importance of mosques and palaces for the Muslim communities and thus make them worthwhile to study. Moreover, due to extensive and various architectural buildings erected by the Abbasids, the focus must be restricted to only the most outstanding architectural structures, namely mosques and palaces, to illuminate the most remarkable achievements of the Abbasids in architecture, providing information on the magnificent monuments of artistic Abbasid architecture.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the aspects of continuity in the Abbasid architecture from the previous era?
2. What are the new artistic features that Abbasids introduced into architecture?
3. What are the amazing features that influence the Abbasid architecture?

¹² Hattstein, M., and Delius, P, *Islam: Art and Architecture*, (H.F. Ullman, 2007), p. 94.

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY STRUCTURAL

1. To study the aspects of continuity in Abbasid architecture from the previous era.
2. To examine the new artistic patterns that Abbasids introduced in their architecture.
3. To identify the outstanding elements that shaped or influenced Abbasid architecture.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research uses academic sources to discover the study of architecture during the Abbasid era, particularly palace and mosque architecture from 750 until 945. This research analyses relevant information, starting from the background of the mosque and palace architecture of the Abbasid dynasty in a specific period of time, to be followed by various elements that shaped the character of the Islamic architecture. This research is also beneficial in improving understanding of mosque and palace architecture under the Abbasids during the years 750-945 CE, which pertains to numerous dynamic research interests. The findings of this research are useful for students or researchers considering the role of architecture in Islamic civilization.

One of the best-preserved early Abbasid palaces is Ukhaidir, which displays great Sassanid influences. At the time of its construction (the second half of the 8th century), the elliptical arch had been used extensively by the Sassanids, and the whole palace had a very Sassanid character; indeed it was regarded as an original Sassanid (pre-Islamic) structure until the discovery that one of the chambers on the ground

floor was actually a mosque.¹³ Through this study, researchers therefore will be aware of new patterns or foreign influences in Abbasid architecture. Another reason why this study is important is to see the continuity of early Islamic architecture from the period of the Prophet Muhammad and the Umayyad era to the Abbasid period. Moreover, it contributes to the literature on Abbasid architecture in the English language and facilitates access to understand this tradition in the current universal language.

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach of this study is qualitative, and requires collecting relative facts from the certain documents and references, and evaluating these sources in order to reach a comprehensive understanding of the palace and mosque architecture of the Abbasid dynasty from 750 to 945 CE. Detailed examination of historical books, encyclopaedias, primary sources, library researches, articles, and online journals was undertaken to collate the historical data analysed in this study. For theses and dissertations, those kept in University of Malaya, National Library, and ISTAC were referred to. For primary sources the researcher consulted histories by al-Tabari, al-Baladhuri, and Najeebabadi, which have invaluable primary evidence about the Abbasid era.

1.7. LITERATURE REVIEW

In conducting this study, the researcher made use of numerous key academic works and literature. While there is a dearth of work considering Abbasid palace and mosque architecture, especially the particular period of 750 to 945, there are some studies that shed light on the relevant historical background, the reasons behind the building those

¹³ Rice, D.T, *Islamic Art*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), p. 31-32.

structures (palaces and mosques), and the impacts of other cultural traditions on Abbasid architectural styles. In the case of the style of Abbasid palaces and mosques one of the best discourses to be reviewed is the work of Dr. Tariq Jawad al-Janab entitled as *Studies In Mediaeval Iraqi Architecture*.¹⁴ Dr. al-Janab gives details from the mid-12th to the 14th century CE concerning Iraqi architecture. According to the author, these centuries saw development, maturity, and extensive Islamic architecture built in this period of time. Long and peaceful reigns, such as those of the Caliphs al-Nasir, al-Mustansir, and Shaikh Uwais, saw the construction of many remarkable buildings. The author wrote this book in the hope of shedding light on the comparatively little-known early architecture of Iraq. Moreover, this work focuses only on types of mosques and palace structures, rather than exploring their holistic architectural history.

The other great work upon this subject is written by Robert Hillenbrand, with a breadth of knowledge of Islamic art and architecture reflected in his extensive *Islamic Architecture*.¹⁵ In this work, Hillenbrand critically evaluates Islamic architecture and issues his professional opinions on the subject, which he approaches by a taxonomy of building type, rather than chronological period. Thus, there are sections on the mosque, the madrasa, the palace, the minaret, and caravanserai. Each one of them is dealt with for the expanse of classical Islamic history, i.e. from the beginnings of Islam to 1700 CE, looking at the palace and mosque structures in the Abbasid era from many perspectives.

¹⁴ Al Janabi, T.J, *Studies in Medieval Iraqi Architecture*, (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, State Organization of Antiquities and Heritage, 1982).

¹⁵ Hillenbrand, R, *Islamic Architecture*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

Another detailed sourcebook is *The Art and Architecture of Islam (650-1250)*¹⁶ by Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, who made important contributions to the study of Islamic Art. This work pinpoints the development of various local centres of art and culture in Iraq, Egypt, Anatolia, Yemen, Spain, and some provinces of Iran. The work approaches art and architecture in a distinctive style, with a notable focus on the early Abbasid architectural style, dated from 750 till 950 CE. The authors spent almost 50 pages dwelling on ‘Abbasid Tradition’, including architecture and architectural decoration, the decorative arts, and the arts of calligraphy, book binding and illumination, and painting. Additionally, foreign elements on palace and mosque structure are well-detailed in this work.

The best source in terms of its specifically treatment of palace and mosque architecture under the Abbasid dynasty from 750 to 945 CE is *The Grove Encyclopaedia of Islamic Art & Architecture*,¹⁷ edited by Jonathan Bloom and Shelia Blair. Spanning three volumes, this is the most extensive reference work in this context, covering various areas of Islamic art and architecture. This book contains almost 500 illustrations of mosaics, ceramics, metalwork, calligraphy, and most importantly architectural structures of the Islamic world. It gives signs to its readers that Islamic art is not limited to a specific region, or to a certain period of time. In dealing with Abbasid mosque and palace architecture, this source remains the most comprehensive among others, as mentioned earlier.

¹⁶ Ettinghausen, R., and Grabar, O, *The Art and Architecture of Islam (650-1250)*, (Penguin Books, 1987).

¹⁷ Bloom, J., and Blair, S, *The Grove Encyclopaedia of Islamic Art & Architecture*, (Oxford University Press, 2009).

Another crucial work on Abbasid's palace and mosque architecture is *Islam: Art and Architecture*,¹⁸ edited by Markus Hattstein and Peter Delius. This work presents a good background and historical developments of the Islamic dynasties and regions, plus it shows the diversity of their architectural shapes from their origins to the present. In this major source, it is easy to find substantial data about the history of the Abbasids and their successors. From my point of view, the illustrations and images in the book are of very high quality and are worthy of being cited and referred to in any discussion of Islamic art. The source is very didactic for the history of the Abbasid era, and it directly addresses the issue of the cultural and architectural unity of the Abbasid style. The authors cover the architecture of Iraq, Iran, and Egypt during the Abbasid era.

K. A. C. Creswell's book, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*,¹⁹ is a concise and insightful précis that provided the standard view for future generations of students of Islamic architecture. Creswell divided his book into two parts, covering the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties. The book is conceived of as a developmental history, with a panoramic view from the primeval beginnings until the peak point of Umayyad and Abbasid art and architecture, covering the period of almost two centuries. The relevant explanations of palaces and mosques of the Abbasid dynasty are sufficiently elaborated in this source.

Another more modest source regarding the culture of the Abbasid dynasty is *Damascus and Baghdad Empires*²⁰ by M. I. Naved, in which the author analyses the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates (respectively). Under the Abbasid dynasty he deals with the rise of the Abbasids, the political situation, the 'Fracture of Central

¹⁸ Hattstein, M., and Delius, P, *Islam: Art and Architecture*, (H.F. Ullman, 2007.)

¹⁹ Creswell, K.A.C, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1989).

²⁰ Naved, M.I, *Damascus and Baghdad Empires*, (India: Anmol Publications, 2010).

Authority,' the 'Golden Age,' the rise of the Mamluks, and relations with the Byzantine Empire, in addition to a section dedicated to the art of the Abbasid period, along with information on Umayyad art.

J. D. Hoag's *Islamic Architecture*²¹ also sheds light on the research area, giving a history of Islamic architecture from the 7th to 17th centuries CE in the Middle East, Spain, Africa, and India, including pictures and plans of the most significant and well-known mosques, palaces, madrasas, and other Islamic buildings in the world. In this book the palaces and mosques are well described together with their names.

Another source on this subject is Richard Coke's *Baghdad: The City of Peace*,²² which contains comprehensive data on the history of Baghdad from the pre-Islamic era to the 20th century. This source is intended primarily for general readers who are seeking to learn about Baghdad's pre-Islamic history. It is not difficult to understand from the author's manner that the present work makes no pretension to fill the gap in Baghdad history. He sheds light on Iraq architecture from the pre-Islamic era to the beginning of the 20th century.

R. A. Jairazbhoy's *An Outline of Islamic Architecture*²³ arranges data according to region and introduces readers to the architectural magnificence of the Islamic world. This work contains about 70 architectural drawings, as well as maps of eastern and western Islam. Among the book's most attractive features is its inclusion of colourful quotations from medieval sources, and inventive paragraphs. Besides these features, there is lack of specific information given in the source regarding the subject under study, i.e. Abbasid palaces and mosques.

²¹ Hoag, J. D, *Islamic Architecture*, (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1975).

²² Coke, R, *Baghdad: The City of Peace*, (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1927).

²³ Jairazbhoy, R.A, *An Outline of Islamic Architecture*, (Oxford University Press, 2003).

Another relevant source for this study is Richard Yeoman's *The Story of Islamic Architecture*.²⁴ This includes an Islamic world map, and an analysis of the religious basis of form and function in Islamic architecture. It covers the architecture of numerous Islamic dynasties, and deals with Abbasid palaces from numerous perspectives, including design, location, and new architectural patterns.

Grube et al.'s *Architecture of the Islamic World*²⁵ provides information about the background of Islamic architecture and defines how theological, sociological, economic, and political aspects played an important role in Islamic architecture. Unlike some other sources, the detailed explanation about Abbasid palaces and mosques is not well covered in this book.

Another important source for this study is written by Hugh Kennedy's *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World*.²⁶ It is a well-written general history of the Abbasid era, dealing in particular with cultural aspects associated with Harun al-Rashid and the Golden Age, including a detailed discussion on 'Poetry and Power' at the Abbasid court, the Harem, and palaces and mosques. This book has rich information pertinent to this study, including over 30 pages specifically on Abbasid mosques and palaces. It should be noted that the book deals with the entire Abbasid world, and is by no means confined to the history of Baghdad, although the latter naturally consumes a lot of its focus due to its fundamental importance as the greatest Abbasid city. A more general overview of similar subjects is given in *Islam: Early Architecture from Baghdad to Cordoba*²⁷ by Henri Stierlin. It defines Islam and explores its role in architecture, focusing on Umayyad and Abbasid mosques and palaces, with a broad geographical

²⁴ Yeomans, R, *The Story of Islamic Architecture*, (NYU Press, 2000).

²⁵ Grube, E.J., Dickie, J., Grabar, Oleg. Sims, E., Lewcock, R., Jones, D., and Petherbridge, G.T, *Architecture of the Islamic World*, (Thames & Hudson, 1995).

²⁶ Kennedy, H, *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World*, (Da Capo Press, 2004).

²⁷ Stierlin, H, *Islam: Early Architecture from Baghdad to Cordoba*, (Koln: Taschen, 1996).

scope spanning the entire Muslim world. It has almost 30 pages of detailed information about Abbasid mosques and palaces.

Spahic Omer's *Islamic Architecture: Its Philosophy, Spiritual Significance & Some Early Developments*²⁸ comprehensively studies Islamic architecture over four chapters. The first chapter in this book basically focuses on understanding Islamic Architecture itself, while the second presents a conceptual framework for understanding it. The third part of the book looks at Islamic architecture from the Prophet Muhammad's time, while the final part is more relevant to this study, explaining the development of Islamic architecture after the Prophetic Era.

1.8. CHAPTERIZATION

This study comprises five chapters, as described below.

Chapter 1 explains the title of my study, *the Architecture of Abbasid Palaces and Mosques (750-945CE)*. It presents the background of the study, statement of problem, research questions and objectives, significance, and methodology, followed by a review of relevant literature, and this section explaining the chapterization of the thesis.

Chapter 2 mainly discusses early Islamic architecture and its salient features before the Abbasid dynasty, with particular consideration of the Umayyad dynasty, which introduced innovations in decoration and new types of building structures, such as mosques with mihrabs and minarets.

Chapter 3 focuses on the administrative and residential palaces in Abbasid Iraq, from 750 to 945 CE. It traces Umayyad influences on Abbasid architectural styles. In the palaces of early Abbasid Iraq constructed between 760 and 860, the most

²⁸ Omer, S, *Islamic Architecture: Its Philosophy, Spiritual Significance & Some Early Developments*, (A.S. Noordeen Publications, 2009).