

= Al @-@ Rahba =

Al @-@ Rahba ( / ALA @-@ LC : ar @-@ Raʔbah , sometimes spelled Raʔabah ) , also known as Qal 'at ar @-@ Rahba , which translates as the " Citadel of al @-@ Rahba " , is a medieval Arab ? Islamic fortress in Syria . It is located off the western banks of the Euphrates River , adjacent to the city of Mayadin and 42 kilometers ( 26 mi ) southeast of Dayr az @-@ Zawr . Situated atop a mound with an elevation of 244 meters ( 801 ft ) , al @-@ Rahba oversees the Syrian Desert steppe and historically guarded the Euphrates valley . It has been described as " a fortress within a fortress " ; it consists of an inner keep measuring 60 by 30 meters ( 197 ft x 98 ft ) , protected by an enclosure measuring 270 by 95 meters ( 886 ft x 312 ft ) . Al @-@ Rahba is largely in ruins today as a result of erosion .

The original site , which was known as " Rahbat Malik ibn Tawk " after its Abbasid namesake and founder , was located along the Euphrates . It was viewed by Muslim armies , caravans and travelers as the key to Syria from Iraq and sometimes vice versa . Bedouin tribes often took control of it and used it as a launching point for invasions of northern Syria . Because of its strategic location , al @-@ Rahba was frequently fought over by Muslim powers , including local lords , the Hamdanids , the Uqaylids , the Mirdasids and the Seljuks , among others . Rahbat Malik ibn Tawk was destroyed in an earthquake in 1157 .

A few years later , the current fortress was built close to the desert edge by the Zengid ? Ayyubid lord Shirkuh . The latter 's descendants held al @-@ Rahba as a hereditary fief granted by Saladin until 1264 . One of them , Shirkuh II , oversaw a third major reconstruction in 1207 . Through the early Mamluk era ( late 13th ? 14th centuries ) , the fortress was continuously restored and strengthened as a result of frequent sieges by the Ilkhanid Mongols of Iraq . Al @-@ Rahba was the most important Mamluk fortress along the Euphrates , an administrative center and the terminal stop on the sultanate 's postal route . It fell into disuse during Ottoman rule ( 1517 ? 1918 ) and from then until the early 20th century , the fortress primarily served as a shelter for local shepherds and their flocks . Excavations were carried out at the site between 1976 and 1981 .

= = Location and etymology = =

Throughout Islamic history , al @-@ Rahba was considered , in the words of the 14th @-@ century traveler Ibn Batuta , " the end of Iraq and the beginning of al @-@ Sham [ Syria ] " . The fortress is located about 4 kilometers ( 2 @.@ 5 mi ) southwest of the Euphrates River , 1 kilometer ( 0 @.@ 62 mi ) southwest of the modern Syrian city of Mayadin , and 42 kilometers ( 26 mi ) southeast of Dayr az @-@ Zawr , capital of the Dayr az @-@ Zawr Governorate , of which al @-@ Rahba is part . According to the 13th @-@ century geographer Yaqut al @-@ Hamawi , the site 's name , al @-@ rahba , translates from Arabic as the " flat part of a wadi , where the water collects " ; al @-@ Rahba 's original location was on the western bank of the Euphrates . The current fortress is situated on an artificial mound detached from the plateau of the Syrian Desert to its west . Its elevation is 244 meters ( 801 ft ) above sea level .

= = History = =

= = = Rahbat Malik ibn Tawk = = =

= = = Founding = = =

According to historian Thierry Bianquis , " Hardly anything definite is known about the history of the town [ al @-@ Rahba ] before the Muslim era . " Medieval Talmudic and Syriac writers ( such as Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus ) identified it with the Biblical town of Rehobot han @-@ Nahar ( " Rehobot by the river [ Euphrates ] " ) . Some medieval Muslim historians , among them al

@-@ Tabari , have written that it was a place called " Furda " or " Furdāt Nu 'm " , named after a monastery that supposedly existed in its vicinity called " Dayr Nu 'm " . However , the 9th @-@ century Persian historian al @-@ Baladhuri asserts that there was " no trace that ar @-@ Rahba ... was an old city " , and that it was first founded by the Abbasid general Malik ibn Tawk during the reign of Caliph al @-@ Ma 'mun ( 813 ? 833 CE ) . As such , the fortress town was often referred to " Rahbat Malik ibn Tawk " by Muslim historians . According to Syrian historian Suhayl Zakkar , al @-@ Rahba held significant strategic value as it was " the key to Syria and sometimes to Iraq " and it was the first stop for Syria @-@ bound caravans coming from Iraq . From al @-@ Rahba , travelers , caravans and armies could proceed northwestward along the Euphrates route to Aleppo or traverse the desert route to Damascus . Because of its strategic value , it was frequently fought over by rival Muslim powers . Bedouin tribes in particular used al @-@ Rahba as a main launch point for invasions of northern Syria , and as a safe haven and marketplace . Malik ibn Tawk served as its first lord , and after his death in 873 , he was succeeded by his son Ahmad . The latter was expelled following al @-@ Rahba 's capture in 883 by the Abbasid lord of al @-@ Anbar , Muhammad ibn Abi 'l @-@ Saj . By the 10th century , al @-@ Rahba had become a large town .

In 903 , the Qarmatian leader al @-@ Husayn ibn Zikrawayh was imprisoned in al @-@ Rahba before being transferred to Caliph al @-@ Mustakfi 's custody in al @-@ Raqqa . At the time , al @-@ Rahba was the center of the Euphrates province and headquarters of its governor , Ibn Sima . Al @-@ Husayn was executed , prompting his partisans from the Banu Ullays tribe to submit to Ibn Sima in al @-@ Rahba in early 904 . However , shortly after , they turned against Ibn Sima , whose forces routed them in an ambush in al @-@ Rahba 's environs in August . Following further battles , Ibn Sima received another round of surrenders by Qarmatian chieftains and da 'is ( Ismaili religious leaders ) . In March 928 , the Qarmatians under Abu Tahir al @-@ Jannabi conquered al @-@ Rahba and massacred scores of its inhabitants . Its residents faced hardships for several more years due to civil strife in the surrounding region . Peace was established in 942 with the arrival of a certain Abbasid commander named Adl who was dispatched by Bakjam , the strongman of the Baghdad @-@ based caliphate . Adl subsequently became governor of the Euphrates and Khabur valley regions .

= = = = Hamdanid period = = = =

Al @-@ Rahba came under Hamdanid rule a few years later , becoming part of the Euphrates district ( tariq al @-@ Furat ) of the Mosul @-@ based emirate . At the time , the town was described by the Persian geographer al @-@ Istakhri , as being larger than the ancient Circesium on the opposite side of the Euphrates . The lord of al @-@ Rahba , Jaman , rebelled against the Hamdanid emir of Mosul , Nasir al @-@ Dawla ( r . 929 ? 967 ) . Jaman fled the town and drowned in the Euphrates but not before al @-@ Rahba was heavily damaged in the rebellion 's suppression . Nasir al @-@ Dawla granted his favored son , Abu 'l Muzzafar Hamdan , control of al @-@ Rahba , its district of Diyar Mudar , and the district 's revenues .

Nasir al @-@ Dawla 's sons contested control of al @-@ Rahba in the aftermath of their father 's deposition in 969 . It ultimately passed to his son Abu Taghlib when his brother and subordinate commander , Hibat @-@ Allah , captured it from Hamdan in a surprise attack . Abu Taghlib had al @-@ Rahba 's walls rebuilt . He restored al @-@ Rahba to Hamdan to preempt the possibility of his Buyid enemy , Izz al @-@ Dawla al @-@ Bakhtiyar , forming an alliance with Hamdan to undermine Abu Taghlib . The Hamdanids lost control of al @-@ Rahba in 978 , after which it was captured by the Buyid emir ' Adud al @-@ Dawla ( r . 949 ? 983 ) . In 991 , al @-@ Rahba 's inhabitants requested and received a governor assigned by ' Adud 's son , Emir Baha ' al @-@ Dawla ( r . 988 ? 1012 ) . The town was described by Jerusalemite geographer al @-@ Muqaddasi in the late 10th century as being the center of the Euphrates district , located on the edge of the desert , having a semi @-@ circular layout and being defended by a strong fortress . He also noted that the wider vicinity was characterized by highly irrigated and productive lands , with abundant date palms and quince groves .

===== Uqaylid and Mirdasid period =====

In the early 11th century , control of al @-@ Rahba was contested between the Uqaylids of Mosul and the Fatimids of Egypt . Preceding this conflict , the Fatimid caliph al @-@ Hakim appointed a member of the Al Khafajah tribe , Abu Ali ibn Thimal , as lord of al @-@ Rahba . Abu Ali was killed in 1008 / 09 during a battle with his Uqaylid rivals led by Isa ibn Khalat . The latter lost al @-@ Rahba to another Uqaylid emir , Badran ibn Muqallid . The latter 's victory was short @-@ lived as the Fatimid emir of Damascus , Lu 'lu , soon captured both al @-@ Rahba and al @-@ Raqqah , a fortified city to the northwest . He appointed a governor for al @-@ Rahba and returned to Damascus .

A wealthy resident of al @-@ Rahba , Ibn Mahkan , revolted against the Fatimids and took control of the town shortly after Lu 'lu departed . Though able to oust the Fatimid governor , Ibn Mahkan was unable to hold the town without outside support since al @-@ Rahba was located amid the crossroads of several regional powers who coveted the town . Thus , he gained the backing of the Mirdasid emir of the Banu Kilab tribe , Salih ibn Mirdas . Conflict arose between Ibn Mahkan and Salih leading the latter to besiege al @-@ Rahba . The two reconciled and then Ibn Mahkan and his men captured the fortified town of Anah in Anbar . However , when Ibn Mahkan sought Salih 's support in suppressing a revolt in Anah , the latter used the opportunity to kill Ibn Mahkan .

After eliminating Ibn Mahkan , Salih became the lord of al @-@ Rahba , and made his allegiance with the Fatimids . Al @-@ Rahba was the first major territory Salih held and was the touchstone of the emirate he would establish in Aleppo and much of northern Syria . His son Thimal later succeeded him as emir of Aleppo , and al @-@ Rahba became his principal power base from which many of his wazirs ( advisers or ministers ) originated . He was later compelled by the Fatimids to hand over al @-@ Rahba to their ally Arslan al @-@ Basasiri , a Turkish general who revolted against his Seljuk masters and the Abbasid Caliphate . The ceding of al @-@ Rahba to al @-@ Basasiri was the first step in Thimal 's loss of the Mirdasid emirate . Together with the loss of al @-@ Raqqah , it provoked dissension within the Banu Kilab , with Thimal 's brother Atiyya resolving to restore the Mirdasid emirate . Al @-@ Basasiri 's revolt ultimately failed and he was killed in 1059 , prompting Atiyya to capture al @-@ Rahba in April 1060 . Later , in August 1061 , Atiyya successfully defended al @-@ Rahba from Numayrid advances .

The Mirdasids lost al @-@ Rahba in 1067 to the Uqaylid emir , Sharaf ad @-@ Dawla , a vassal of the Abbasid @-@ affiliated Seljuks . Beforehand , Atiyya and part of his army had been in Homs , allowing Sharaf ad @-@ Dawla the opportunity to rout al @-@ Rahba 's Banu Kilab defenders . Afterward , the name of the Abbasid caliph was read in the town 's khutba ( Friday prayer sermons ) instead of the Fatimids , a formal recognition of al @-@ Rahba 's change of allegiance . In 1086 , the Seljuk sultan Malik @-@ Shah granted al @-@ Rahba and its Upper Mesopotamian dependencies , Harran , al @-@ Raqqa , Saruj and Khabur , to Sharaf ad @-@ Dawla 's son , Muhammad .

===== Seljuk period =====

At some point the Seljuks or their Arab allies lost al @-@ Rahba , but in 1093 the Seljuk ruler of Damascus , Tutush captured it along with several other Upper Mesopotamian towns . Following his death , possession of al @-@ Rahba reverted to the Uqaylids , but in 1096 , Karbuqa of al @-@ Hillah captured and looted the town . He held onto it until 1102 when Qaymaz , a former mamluk ( slave soldier ) of the Seljuk sultan Alp Arslan , took control of it . Tutush 's son Duqmaq and the latter 's deputy Tughtakin besieged the town , but failed to capture it . Qaymaz died in December 1102 and al @-@ Rahba passed to one of his Turkish mamluks named Hasan , who dismissed many of Qaymaz 's officers and arrested several of al @-@ Rahba 's notables due to suspicions of a coup against him . Duqmaq renewed the siege , but this time was welcomed in by al @-@ Rahba 's townspeople , forcing Hasan to retreat into the citadel . Hasan surrendered after receiving guarantees of safe passage from Duqmaq as well as an iqta ( fief ) elsewhere in Syria . According to the 12th @-@ century chronicler Ibn al @-@ Athir , al @-@ Rahba 's inhabitants were treated well

by Duqaq , who reorganized the administration of the town , established a garrison there , and assigned to it a governor from the Banu Shayban tribe , Muhammad ibn Sabbak .

Jawali , a general of the Seljuk sultan Muhammad I , conquered al @-@ Rahba from Ibn Sabbak in May 1107 , after a month @-@ long siege . Ibn al @-@ Athir recorded that al @-@ Rahba 's inhabitants suffered greatly during the siege and that some townsmen informed Jawali of a weak point in the fortress 's defense in return for promises of safety . When Jawali entered the town and sacked it , Ibn Sabbak surrendered and joined Jawali 's service .

In 1127 , the Seljuk lord of Mosul , Izz ad @-@ Din Mas 'ud ibn al @-@ Bursuqi besieged and conquered al @-@ Rahba as part of an attempted invasion of Syria . However , he fell ill and died there shortly after . His lordship in Mosul was taken by Imad ad @-@ Din Zengi , while al @-@ Rahba was left under the control of al @-@ Bursuqi 's mamluk , al @-@ Jawali , who ruled it as a subordinate of Zengi . Zengi 's son Qutb ad @-@ Din captured al @-@ Rahba some years later . In 1149 , Qutb ad @-@ Din 's brother Nur ad @-@ Din received al @-@ Rahba in Seljuk @-@ sponsored negotiations between the Zengid lords .

= = = Al @-@ Rahba al @-@ Jadida = = =

= = = = Ayyubid period = = = =

Al @-@ Rahba was destroyed in an earthquake in 1157 . Four years later , Nur ad @-@ Din granted the territories of al @-@ Rahba and Homs as a fief to Shirkuh , who had a certain Yusuf ibn Mallah administer it on his behalf . According to the 14th @-@ century Ayyubid historian , Abu 'l Fida , Shirkuh rebuilt al @-@ Rahba . Abu 'l Fida 's assertion may have been incorrect or the fortress built by Shirkuh fell into a ruinous state at some point before the century 's end . In any case , the new fortress , which became known as " al @-@ Rahba al @-@ Jadida " , was relocated about five kilometers west of the Euphrates ' western bank where the original site , " Rahbat Malik ibn Tawk " , had been situated . When Shirkuh died , his territories reverted to Nur ad @-@ Din . However , Shirkuh 's nephew and the founder of the Ayyubid Sultanate , Saladin , conquered much of Muslim Syria from the Zengids ( the Syrian coast had been in Crusader hands since the early 12th century ) by 1182 and granted Homs and al @-@ Rahba to Shirkuh 's son , Nasir ad @-@ Din Muhammad , as a hereditary emirate .

According to the Ayyubid @-@ era chronicler and one @-@ time resident of al @-@ Rahba , Ibn Nazif , the fortress of al @-@ Rahba again rebuilt by Shirkuh 's grandson , al @-@ Mujahid Shirkuh II ( r . 1186 ? 1240 ) , in 1207 . Al @-@ Rahba was the easternmost fortress of Shirkuh II 's Homs @-@ based emirate , and was one of the four principal centers of the emirate , the other three being Homs itself , Salamiya and Palmyra . He personally oversaw the demolition of al @-@ Rahba 's ruins and the construction of the new fortress . Al @-@ Rahba remained in the hands of Shirkuh 's descendants until a few years after the annexation of Ayyubid Syria by the Mamluk Sultanate in 1260 .

= = = = Mamluk period = = = =

In 1264 , the Mamluk sultan Baybars ( r . 1260 ? 1277 ) replaced the Ayyubid governor of al @-@ Rahba with one of his mamluk officers from Egypt . Al @-@ Rahba 's garrison and its commander held a high place in the Mamluk military hierarchy . The fortress , along with and al @-@ Bira to the north , emerged as the principal Mamluk bulwark against Mongol invasions of Syria 's eastern frontier . It was the Mamluks ' most important fortress along the Euphrates , supplanting al @-@ Raqqa , which had been the traditional Muslim center in the Euphrates valley since the 10th century . A large population of refugees from areas ruled by the Mongols settled in al @-@ Rahba as did many people from the adjacent , unfortified town of Mashhad al @-@ Rahba ( former site of Rahbat Malik ibn Tawk , modern @-@ day Mayadin ) . It was also the terminal stop of the Mamluk barid ( postal route ) and an administrative center .

Throughout the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods , al @-@ Rahba was situated near the tribal territory of the Al Fadl . About four hundred Al Fadl tribesmen joined the small army of Caliph al @-@ Mustansir , the Egypt @-@ based Abbasid caliph dispatched by Baybars to recapture Baghdad from the Mongols , when he reached al @-@ Rahba . The latter was al @-@ Mustansir 's first stop after he rode out from Damascus , but his campaign ultimately failed and he was killed in a Mongol ambush in al @-@ Anbar . The Mongols of Ilkhanid Iraq inflicted significant damage on al @-@ Rahba during their wars with the Mamluks . The fortress was restored by Baybars at some point toward the end of his reign . In 1279 , the Mamluk viceroy of Syria , Sunqur al @-@ Ashqar , rebelled against Sultan Qalawun ( r . 1279 ? 1290 ) and took refuge with the Al Fadl chieftain , Isa ibn Muhanna , at al @-@ Rahba , where he requested the intervention of the Mongol ruler Abaqa Khan . When the Mongols could not help him , Sunqur fled the incoming Mamluk army , while Isa barricaded himself in the fortress . The Mongols ' failure to capture al @-@ Rahba after a month @-@ long siege commanded by the Ilkhanid ruler Öljaitü in 1312 / 13 marked the Ilkhanate 's final attempt to invade Mamluk Syria . Isa 's son Muhanna rebelled against Sultan an @-@ Nasir Muhammad ( r . 1310 ? 1341 ) in 1320 , and was pursued by the Mamluk army as far al @-@ Rahba . During the ensuing confrontation , the fortress may have been destroyed .

= = = = Ottoman era = = = =

Under the Ottomans , who conquered Syria and Iraq in the early 16th century , al @-@ Rahba 's military use apparently diminished . During the Middle Ages , the road between Palmyra and al @-@ Rahba was the most important Syrian desert route , but its importance declined during Ottoman rule . From then on , al @-@ Rahba was mostly used as a shelter for shepherds from nearby villages and their flocks . In 1588 , it was visited by the Venetian traveler Gasparo Balbi , who noted a dilapidated fortress and inhabitants known as " Rahabi " living below it . The French traveler , Jean @-@ Baptiste Tavernier , mentioned Mashhad Rahba , 9 @-@ 7 kilometres ( 6 @-@ 0 mi ) southwest of the fortress , during his travels there in circa 1632 . In 1797 , French traveler Guillaume @-@ Antoine Olivier passed by al @-@ Rahba , mentioning that it was a fortress and a ruined site .

= = Excavations = =

The fortress has deteriorated considerably as a result of erosion . Excavations were carried out at al @-@ Rahba , including the presumed site of Rahbat Malik ibn Tawk along the Euphrates bank , between 1976 and 1981 under the auspices of Syria 's General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums , the Institut Français d 'Etudes Arabes de Damas and the University of Lyon II . In later years , surveys of the site and the surrounding desert and Euphrates and Khabur valleys were carried out by multi @-@ disciplinary teams of Syrian , American and European archaeologists . One of the French surveyors , J. L. Paillet , sketched the plans and elevations of the fortress , which are detailed in his 1983 dissertation , *Le château de Rahba , étude d 'architecture militaire islamique médiévale* .

Excavations at the foot of the fortress between 1976 and 1978 revealed a medieval settlement within a quadrangular enclosure , some of whose walls measured up to 30 meters ( 98 ft ) long and 4 meters ( 13 ft ) high . The walls generally have a thickness of 1 meter ( 3 @-@ 3 ft ) . Among the unearthed structures were the probable remains of a khan ( caravanserai ) , a congregational mosque with a small oratory , and a cavalry barracks . There was also a system of canals that brought in fresh water and emptied sewage . Among the artifacts found at the fortress and the former settlement beneath it were pottery sherds and coins ( mostly Mamluk and a few Ayyubid ) and numerous feather fletches belonging to arrows left over by Mongol besiegers . During the ongoing Syrian Civil War , looting and illegal digging for antiquities have occurred at al @-@ Rahba . Affected areas include the fortress 's storage rooms and courtyards , as well as the medieval settlement at its foot .

= = Architecture = =

= = Specifications and components = =

The citadel of al @-@ Rahba is described by historian Janusz Bylinski as " a fortress within a fortress " . Its core consists of a four @-@ story , pentagon @-@ shaped keep , roughly measuring 60 by 30 meters ( 197 ft × 98 ft ) . The keep is enclosed by a pentagon @-@ shaped wall , roughly measuring 270 by 95 meters ( 886 ft × 312 ft ) . The outer wall 's shape was described by Paillet as a triangle with its two parallel angles having been chamfered and substituted with short curtain walls . Around the artificial mound upon which the fortress sits is a moat with a depth of 22 meters ( 72 ft ) and a width of 80 meters ( 260 ft ) . Al @-@ Rahba 's moat is considerably deeper than the Ayyubid @-@ era desert fortresses of Palmyra and Shumaimis . A large cistern makes up the lowest floor of the keep .

Several bastions were built along the external walls of the fortress . The western and southeastern sides contained al @-@ Rahba 's four largest bastions , with the largest measuring 17 @.@ 2 by 15 @.@ 2 meters ( 56 ft × 50 ft ) and the smallest being 12 @.@ 4 by 12 @.@ 4 meters ( 41 ft × 41 ft ) . These bastions supported heavy defensive artillery . Their height surpassed the towers of Palmyra and Shumaimis probably because the latter forts ' locations on isolated hills did not necessitate " state of the art defensive artillery " , according to Bylinski . By contrast , at al @-@ Rahba , enemy siege engines could be placed at the close @-@ by plateaus , which were almost at level with the fortress . Al @-@ Rahba 's smallest bastion is on its northern , less vulnerable wall and measures 5 @.@ 2 by 4 @.@ 4 meters ( 17 ft × 14 ft ) .

Both the external walls and those around the keep were fitted with merlons and parapets , with the parapets of the keep positioned 6 @.@ 5 meters higher than their counterparts along the external wall . This was done to establish a secondary defensive line that enabled the building 's defenders to shoot arrows at attackers who breached the external walls . The core building was linked to the external fortifications by corridors and chambers .

= = Construction phases = =

Though large parts of the building are in ruins , excavations have determined that al @-@ Rahba went through at least eight undated construction phases probably starting from the early Ayyubid period . For the most part , each phase utilized different architectural techniques and fortification concepts , and none of the phases affected the entire extent of the building at one time . One common theme of the phases was the restoration or strengthening of al @-@ Rahba 's western and southeastern sides , which faced the desert plateau and were the most exposed areas of the fortress . In contrast , the northern side facing the population centers remained largely unchanged .

The first phase saw the walls built with mudbrick , a very common feature of Euphrates @-@ area structures . Although the shape of the building after its initial phase cannot be determined , Paillet presumes that its size likely corresponded to that of the current building . The small salient bastion that juts out of the northern wall dates to the first phase .

The second phase of construction added three salient bastions , each of which were over twice the size of the northern bastion . The new bastions were placed along the part of al @-@ Rahba 's citadel that faced the desert to the west . The builders in the second phase also reinforced al @-@ Rahba 's walls with roughly cut conglomerate blocks fixed together by high @-@ quality mortar . In the third phase , higher quality mudbrick was used , the western curtain wall was elevated and the southwestern curtain wall was replaced and decorated with bands of Arabic inscriptions . In addition , a large , brick dome was built atop the ground @-@ level chamber of the northwestern bastion . The external walls of the fortress reached their final form during the third phase , though there would be further restorations in later decades .

In the fourth phase , low @-@ lying casemates were added to the western and southwestern curtains to provide an additional platform for al @-@ Rahba 's defenders to use . The walls ,

particularly on the eastern side , were reinforced in the fifth phase , which Paillet attributes to the efforts of Shirkuh II and his Ayyubid contemporaries to strengthen the fortresses of Syria . The building technique used in this phase likely necessitated significant funds , equipment and technical expertise . Several changes were made including the southeastern tower being rebuilt and the northeastern tower being reinforced by an additional wall and a vaulted story . Moreover , the northern slope of the outer wall was further strengthened with a glacis built from large conglomerate blocks . A building in the center of al @-@ Rahba was erected during this phase , likely replacing an older structure or a courtyard .

The last major building phase was the sixth , which saw the restoration of the eastern and western external walls after they were severely damaged by Mongol besiegers . A northeastern salient bastion , much smaller than the eastern and western bastions , was also built . Masonry from the fifth phase was reused for the reconstruction along with new gypsum , limestone and other materials . The seventh and eighth phases both consisted of heightening al @-@ Rahba 's western external walls .