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Giorgio Rota

- 1 This article is a rich and learned *excursus* about the meaning of arches and arcades (*ṭāq*), based on a survey of the literary and iconographic sources, which has as its starting point the importance of the Ṭāq-e Kasrā at Ctesiphon for the Islamic architecture of the Middle Ages. The Author takes into consideration the meanings provided by the lexicographers and concludes that *ṭāq* indicated originally “a sense of volume” (p. 359), and that only at a later stage passed from a three- to a two-dimensional sense: since something similar happened to the word *mihrāb*, for which *ṭāq* is sometimes used as a synonym, the Author wonders whether the two words underwent one and the same process. He also remarks the connection existing between the *mihrāb* and the typological domain of the gate. Finally, remarking the hierarchical symbolism of the façade of the Ṭāq-e Kesrā, the Author notes the presence of similar architectural forms in an early iconographic representation of Mecca and elaborates on the relationship between the palace of the ruler (which can also be indicated as *ṭāq*) in the Islamic Medieval city and the lesser *ṭāqs* around it, which host artisans and traders: “cette exigence de représentation [of the ṭāq] coïncide avec celle de représenter le domaine

personnel des souverains” (p. 367). Finally, the Author stresses the importance of the literary genres known as *maqāma* and *šahrāšūb* for a better understanding of the complex interplay between architecture and society, literature and iconography.

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Thèmes : 5.1. Monde iranophone

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