

# The Atabegs and Ayyubids | Court Life

‘A plethora of smaller courts co-existed, with complex political alliances.’

There was no central court in Syria and Northern Iraq during the 4th–6th / 10th–12th centuries, rather a plethora of smaller courts co-existed with complex political alliances. The rulers often began as atabegs appointed by the Seljuqs of Iran (r. 429–590 / 1038–1194), but they soon established courts of their own. They built their palaces within citadels to protect them from the constant threat of the Crusaders, the best surviving example of which is the palace within Aleppo Citadel.

**Name:**

Gold necklace

**Dynasty:**

Approximately hegira mid-7th century / AD 13th century Ayyubid

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art  
Cairo, Egypt

**Justification:**

A gold filigree necklace that probably belonged to a queen; once the Atabegs and Ayyubids came to power life at court reflected their privileges.

**Name:**

Pitcher

**Dynasty:**

Around hegira late 6th century / AD 12th century Atabeg

**Details:**

National Museum of Damascus  
Damascus, Syria

**Justification:**

A painted pitcher depicting courtly entertainment. The Atabeg court enjoyed lavish entertainment, employing singers, dancers and musicians.

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National Museum of Damascus  
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**Justification:**

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**Name:**

Armlet

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 5th century / AD 11th century Late Fatimid or Atabeg

**Details:**

National Museum of Damascus  
Damascus, Syria

**Justification:**

A heavy gold bracelet that was probably worn on the upper arm by a court dancer.

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**Name:**

Citadel of Aleppo

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 6th–7th century / AD 12th–13th century Zangid, Ayyubid and Mamluk

**Details:**

Aleppo, Syria

**Justification:**

Palaces were constructed within the region's massive citadels, such as Aleppo Citadel, which was fortified by the Atabegs and Ayyubids.



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**Details:**

Aleppo, Syria

**Justification:**

Aleppo Citadel, exterior view illustrating its magnificent size.

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