

The Atabegs and Ayyubids | Court Life

'Palaces were filled with sumptuous carpets, fine metalwork and glass vessels.'

Following his capture of Damascus in 547 / 1154, Nur al-Din Mahmud bin Zangi united Syria and many of the cities became political, economic and cultural centres each with its own thriving court life. The Atabegs and Ayyubids were dedicated patrons of architecture, restoring city walls and citadels, commissioning new madrasas, bimaristans, hammams, suqs (markets) and mosques. Palaces were furnished with sumptuous carpets, fine metalwork and glass vessels.



Name:

Madrasa al-Shamiyya

Dynasty:

Hegira 576–616 / AD 1180–1220 Ayyubid

Details:

Damascus, Syria

Justification:

A considerable number of noblewomen of the Ayyubid court were notable patrons of architecture, particularly madrasas. This one was built by Saladin's sister, who was known as Sitt al-Sham.



Name:

Glass carafe

Dynasty:

Hegira 7th century / AD 13th century Ayyubid

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

An elegant enamel-painted glass vessel that belonged to the Ayyubid Sultan al-Nasir Yusuf II, ruler of Aleppo and Damascus up until 658 / 1260.



Name:

Damascus Citadel

Dynasty:

Hegira 599–610 / AD 1202–14 Ayyubid

Details:

Damascus, Syria

Justification:

While Saladin's son resided in the palace within Aleppo Citadel, his brother, the Just King al-Malik al-Adil, lived in the palace within Damascus Citadel.



Name:

Citadel of Aleppo

Dynasty:

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

Details:

Aleppo, Syria

Justification:

While Saladin's son resided in the palace within Aleppo Citadel, his brother, the Just King al-Malik al-Adil, lived in the palace within Damascus Citadel.



Name:

Qal'a Shayzar

Dynasty:

Hegira 4th–7th century / AD 10th–13th century Byzantine, Fatimid, Banu Munqidh, Seljuq, Ayyubid, Mamluk

Details:

Hama region, Syria

Justification:

The fortress where Saladin's military commander, the Arab knight Usama bin Munqidh (d. AH 584 / AD 1188) resided, and whose memoirs have survived.
