

The Atabegs and Ayyubids | Travelling and Trading

‘The travellers found suqs selling an impressive range of goods such as silk, perfume, jewellery and gold.’

Muslim merchants frequently travelled in the same caravans as those on pilgrimage, stopping for the night at caravanserais, or khans, most commonly built on trade routes, and within the main cities. Both provided shelter, food and water for travellers and their animals. Once in a city, the travellers would have found markets (suqs), selling an impressive range of goods such as silk, perfume, jewellery, gold, spices, glassware, metalwork and ceramic vessels. The suq in Aleppo, for example, contained a khan, a hammam and a mosque ensuring that all the travellers’ needs were met.



Name:
Raqqa lustre bowl

Dynasty:
Hegira late 6th–early 7th century / AD late 12th–early 13th century Ayyubid

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification:
A precious commodity, the production of lustre-painted pottery flourished in Egypt and Syria during the 5th / 11th century.



Name:
Bowl

Dynasty:
Hegira 5th–6th century / AD 11th–12th century Atabeg or Ayyubid

Details:
National Museum of Damascus
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
A precious commodity, the production of lustre-painted pottery flourished in Egypt and Syria during the 5th / 11th century.



Name:
Fils (copper coin)

Dynasty:
Hegira 541–69 / AD 1146–74 Atabeg/Zangid

Details:
National Museum of Damascus
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
A copper fils; the monetary system was essential to the commercial success of the suqs which were found in, for example, the main cities of Aleppo and Damascus.



Name:
Fils (copper coin)

Dynasty:
Hegira 541–69 / AD 1146–74 Atabeg/Zangid

Details:

National Museum of Damascus
Damascus, Syria

Justification:

A copper filis: while one side is clearly influenced by Byzantine coins, the other bears the name of Nur al-Din Manmud bin Zangi.

**Name:**

Khan al-'Arus

Dynasty:

Hegira 577 / AD 1181–2 Ayyubid

Details:

On the Damascus–Homs road, Syria

Justification:

Khan al-'Arus, a caravanserai situated on the Damascus to Homs route, had formidable fortifications.

**Name:**

Khan al-'Arus

Dynasty:

Hegira 577 / AD 1181–2 Ayyubid

Details:

On the Damascus–Homs road, Syria

Justification:

View of the entrance to Khan al-'Arus.
