

The Atabegs and Ayyubids | War and Horsemanship

‘Saladin – the most famous Muslim hero of the crusader era – was buried in Damascus.’

Syria was one of the main battlegrounds during the Crusader period, and witnessed the construction of many Muslim citadels and Frankish castles. Saladin (d. 589 / 1193) — the most famous Muslim hero of the Crusader era – was buried in Damascus. His successful campaigns saw the conquest of some 50 Crusader positions, including Chateau de Saone which he besieged in 584 / 1188. Now known as Qal’at Salah al-Din, or Saladin Castle, this is one of the finest examples of a castle from the period extant.



Name:
Mausoleum of Saladin (Salah al-Din)

Dynasty:
Hegira 589–92 / AD 1193–6 Ayyubid

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
Built for Saladin by his son al-Malik al-Afdal Nur al-Din 'Ali in 1195, this mausoleum is constructed in the local style of Damascene architecture.



Name:
Mausoleum of Saladin (Salah al-Din)

Dynasty:
Hegira 589–92 / AD 1193–6 Ayyubid

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
Detail of the two cenotaphs of Saladin, the original wooden model and the more recent white-marble one presented to the Mausoleum of Saladin by the German Emperor Guillaum II in 1903.



Name:
Mausoleum of Saladin (Salah al-Din)

Dynasty:
Hegira 589–92 / AD 1193–6 Ayyubid

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
Detail of Saladin's fine wooden cenotaph that covers his grave at the Mausoleum of Saladin.



Name:
Mausoleum of Saladin (Salah al-Din)

Dynasty:
Hegira 589–92 / AD 1193–6 Ayyubid

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:

Detail of an interior wall at the Mausoleum of Saladin which has been decorated with 'Damascus'-type Iznik tiling (coloured in blue, green and white).



Name:
Tombstone of al-Hakkari

Dynasty:
Hegira 587 / AD 1191 Ayyubid

Details:
Islamic Museum, al-Aqsa Mosque / al-Haram al-Sharif
Jerusalem

Justification:
Tombstone commemorating al-Hakkari, a soldier killed on the battlefield during the Crusader period.



Name:
Ajlun Castle

Dynasty:
Hegira 579–658 / AD 1184–1260 Ayyubid–Mamluk

Details:
Ajlun, Jordan

Justification:
Founded by Saladin in 580–81 / 1184–5 Ajlun is an interesting example of a castle built entirely by Muslims.



Name:
Ajlun Castle

Dynasty:
Hegira 579–658 / AD 1184–1260 Ayyubid–Mamluk

Details:
Ajlun, Jordan

Justification:
Ajlun Castle, general view from a distance showing the ruins on the hill top.



Name:
Qal'at Salah al-Din (Saladin)

Dynasty:
Hegira 4th–7th century / AD 10th–16th century Hamdanid; Byzantine; Seljuq;
Crusader; Ayyubid; Mamluk

Details:
Latakia region, Syria

Justification:
Conquered and refortified by Saladin the castle was subsequently named after him.



Name:
Citadel of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi

Dynasty:
Hegira 579 / AD 1184 Ayyubid

Details:
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
Conquered and refortified by Saladin, the citadel was subsequently named after him.
