

# The Atabegs and Ayyubids | Madrasas and Education

'Both male and female members of the Turkish and Kurdish elite sponsored the madrasas.'

The construction of 100 new madrasas in Damascus reflected the desire of the Atabeg and Ayyubid dynasties to change and educate society. Both male and female members of the Turkish and Kurdish elite sponsored the madrasas and participated in nourishing the rich educational atmosphere within them. In his History of Damascus, the historian Ibn 'Asakir (d. 571 / 1176) expressed gratitude for his teachers, counting 80 women among them.



**Name:**  
Madrasa Gumushtakin

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 530 / AD 1136 Atabeg/Seljuq

**Details:**  
Bosra, Syria

**Justification:**  
The earliest surviving example of a madrasa in Syria. It already follows the Iranian-inspired architectural plan, as can be seen by the iwans and axial symmetry.



**Name:**  
Madrasa Gumushtakin

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 530 / AD 1136 Atabeg/Seljuq

**Details:**  
Bosra, Syria

**Justification:**  
Detail of the locally quarried basalt ceiling slabs at Madrasa Gumushtakin; basalt is stronger than limestone or brick allowing construction of a flat ceiling.



**Name:**  
Madrasa al-Sahiba

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 630 / AD 1233 Ayyubid

**Details:**  
Damascus, Syria

**Justification:**  
Both Madrasa al-Sahiba in Damascus and Madrasat al-Firdaws in Aleppo were built by powerful female patrons of the Ayyubid Dynasty.



**Name:**  
Madrasat al-Firdaws

**Dynasty:**  
Begun before hegira 633 / AD 1235–6 and completed before AH 642 / AD 1240  
Ayyubid

**Details:**  
Aleppo, Syria

**Justification:**

Both Madrasa al-Sahiba in Damascus and Madrasat al-Firdaws in Aleppo were built by powerful female patrons of the Ayyubid Dynasty

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**Name:**

Door knocker

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 589 / AD 1193 Ayyubid

**Details:**

National Museum of Damascus  
Damascus, Syria

**Justification:**

The knocker from Madrasa al-Shadhbakhtiyya in Aleppo bears the name of its patron, Shadhbakht, the freed slave of al-Malik al-Adil (r. 541–69 / 1146–74) and a member of the ruling elite.

**Name:****Dynasty:****Details:****Justification:**

Madrasa Shadhbakhtiyya, view of the exterior.

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