

# 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.

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**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.

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