

= Ayyubid dynasty =

The Ayyubid dynasty (Arabic : دَوْلَةُ الأيوبيين al @-@ Ayy?b?y?n ; Kurdish : دۆلەتی ئەیوبییان Dûgela Eyûbiyan) was a Muslim dynasty of Kurdish origin , founded by Saladin and centered in Egypt . The dynasty ruled much of the Middle East during the 12th and 13th centuries CE . Saladin had been the vizier of Fatimid Egypt before he brought an end to Fatimid rule in 1171 . In 1174 , he proclaimed himself sultan following the death of the Ayyubids ' former master , Zengid ruler Nur al @-@ Din . The Ayyubids spent the next decade launching conquests throughout the region and by 1183 , the territories under their control included Egypt , Syria , northern Mesopotamia , Hejaz , Yemen , and the North African coast up to the borders of modern @-@ day Tunisia . Most of the Kingdom of Jerusalem fell to Saladin after his victory at the Battle of Hattin in 1187 . However , the Crusaders regained control of Palestine 's coastline in the 1190s .

After the death of Saladin , his sons contested control over the sultanate , but Saladin 's brother al @-@ Adil eventually established himself as sultan in 1200 and all of the later Ayyubid sultans of Egypt descended from him . In the 1230s , the Ayyubid emirs of Syria attempted to assert their independence from Egypt and remained divided until Sultan as @-@ Salih Ayyub restored Ayyubid unity by taking over most of Syria , except Aleppo , by 1247 . By then , local Muslim dynasties had driven out the Ayyubids from Yemen , the Hejaz , and parts of Mesopotamia . After his death in 1249 , as @-@ Salih Ayyub was succeeded in Egypt by al @-@ Mu 'azzam Turanshah . However , the latter was soon overthrown by the Mamluk generals who had successfully repelled a Crusader invasion of the Nile Delta . This effectively ended Ayyubid power in Egypt and a number of attempts by the emirs of Syria , led by an @-@ Nasir Yusuf of Aleppo , to wrest back control of Egypt failed . In 1260 , the Mongols sacked Aleppo and conquered the remaining territories of the Ayyubids soon after . The Mamluks , who forced out the Mongols after the destruction of the Ayyubid dynasty , maintained the Ayyubid principality of Hama until deposing its last ruler in 1341 .

During their relatively short tenure , the Ayyubids ushered in an era of economic prosperity in the lands they ruled and the facilities and patronage provided by the Ayyubids led to a resurgence in intellectual activity in the Islamic world . This period was also marked by an Ayyubid process of vigorously strengthening Sunni Muslim dominance in the region by constructing numerous madrasas (schools of Islamic law) in their major cities .

= = History = =

= = = Origins = = =

The progenitor of the Ayyubid dynasty , Najm ad @-@ Din Ayyub bin Shadhi , belonged to a Kurdish tribe whose ancestors settled in the town of Dvin , in northern Armenia . He belonged to the tribe of Rawadiya , itself a branch of the Hadhabani tribe . The Rawadiya were the dominant Kurdish group in the Dvin district . They were a member of the political @-@ military elite of the town .

Circumstances became unfavorable in Dvin when Turkish generals seized the town from its Kurdish prince . Shadhi left with his two sons Najm al @-@ Din Ayyub and Asad ad @-@ Din Shirkuh . His friend Mujahed al @-@ Din Bihruz ? the military governor of northern Mesopotamia under the Seljuks ? welcomed him and appointed him governor of Tikrit . After Shadhi 's death , Ayyub succeeded him in governance of the city with the assistance of his brother Shirkuh . Together they managed the affairs of the city well , gaining them popularity from the local inhabitants . In the meantime , Imad ad @-@ Din Zangi , the ruler of Mosul , was defeated by the Abbasids under Caliph al @-@ Mustarshid and Bihruz . In his bid to escape the battlefield to Mosul via Tikrit , Zangi took shelter with Ayyub and sought his assistance in this task . Ayyub complied and provided Zangi and his companions boats to cross the Tigris River to safely reach Mosul .

As a consequence for assisting Zangi , the Abbasid authorities sought punitive measures against Ayyub . Simultaneously , in a separate incident , Shirkuh killed a close confidant of Bihruz on charges that he had sexually assaulted a woman in Tikrit . The Abbasid court issued arrest warrants

for both Ayyub and Shirkuh , but before the brothers could be arrested , they departed Tikrit for Mosul in 1138 . When they arrived in Mosul , Zangi provided them with all the facilities they needed and he recruited the two brothers into his service . Ayyub was made commander of Ba 'albek and Shirkuh entered the service of Zangi 's son , Nur ad @-@ Din . According to historian Abdul Ali , it was under the care and patronage of Zangi that the Ayyubid family rose into prominence .

= = = Establishment in Egypt = = =

In 1164 , Nur al @-@ Din dispatched Shirkuh to lead an expeditionary force to prevent the Crusaders from establishing a strong presence in an increasingly anarchic Egypt . Shirkuh enlisted Ayyub 's son , Saladin , as an officer under his command . They successfully drove out Dirgham , the vizier of Egypt , and reinstated his predecessor Shawar . After being reinstated , Shawar ordered Shirkuh to withdraw his forces from Egypt , but Shirkuh refused , claiming it was Nur al @-@ Din 's will that he remain . Over the course of several years , Shirkuh and Saladin defeated the combined forces of the Crusaders and Shawar 's troops , first at Bilbais , then at a site near Giza , and in Alexandria , where Saladin would stay to protect while Shirkuh pursued Crusader forces in Lower Egypt .

Shawar died in 1169 and Shirkuh became vizier , but he too died later that year . After Shirkuh 's death , Saladin was appointed vizier by the Fatimid caliph al @-@ Adid because there was " no one weaker or younger " than Saladin , and " not one of the emirs obeyed him or served him " , according to medieval Muslim chronicler Ibn al @-@ Athir . Saladin soon found himself more independent than ever before in his career , much to the dismay of Nur al @-@ Din who attempted to influence events in Egypt . He permitted Saladin 's elder brother , Turan @-@ Shah , to supervise Saladin in a bid to cause dissension within the Ayyubid family and thus undermining its position in Egypt . Nur al @-@ Din satisfied Saladin 's request that he be joined by his father Ayyub . However , Ayyub was sent primarily to ensure that Abbasid suzerainty was proclaimed in Egypt , which Saladin was reluctant to undertake due to his position as the vizier of the Fatimids . Although Nur al @-@ Din failed to provoke the Ayyubids into rivalry , the extended Ayyubid family , particularly a number of local governors in Syria , did not entirely back Saladin .

Saladin consolidated his control in Egypt after ordering Turan @-@ Shah to put down a revolt in Cairo staged by the Fatimid army 's 50 @, @ 000 @-@ strong Nubian regiments . After this success , Saladin began granting his family members high @-@ ranking positions in the country and increased Sunni Muslim influence in Shia Muslim @-@ dominated Cairo by ordering the construction of a college for the Maliki school of jurisprudence of Sunni Islam in the city , and another for the Shafi 'i school , to which he belonged , in al @-@ Fustat . In 1171 , al @-@ Adid died and Saladin took advantage of this power vacuum , effectively taking control of the country . Upon seizing power , he switched Egypt 's allegiance to the Baghdad @-@ based Abbasid Caliphate which adhered to Sunni Islam .

= = = Expansion = = =

= = = = Conquest of North Africa and Nubia = = = =

Saladin went to Alexandria in 1171 ? 72 and found himself facing the dilemma of having many supporters in the city , but little money . A family council was held there by the Ayyubid emirs of Egypt where it was decided that al @-@ Muzaffar Taqi al @-@ Din Umar , Saladin 's nephew , would launch an expedition against the coastal region of Barqa (Cyrenaica) west of Egypt with a force of 500 cavalry . In order to justify the raid , a letter was sent to the Bedouin tribes of Barqa , rebuking them for their robberies of travelers and ordering them to pay the alms @-@ tax (zakat) . The latter was to be collected from their livestock .

In late 1172 , Aswan was besieged by former Fatimid soldiers from Nubia and the governor of the city , Kanz al @-@ Dawla ? a former Fatimid loyalist ? requested reinforcements from Saladin who

complied . The reinforcements had come after the Nubians had already departed Aswan , but Ayyubid forces led by Turan al-Shah advanced and conquered northern Nubia after capturing the town of Ibrim . Turan al-Shah and his Kurdish soldiers temporarily lodged there . From Ibrim , they raided the surrounding region , halting their operations after being presented with an armistice proposal from the Dongola based Nubian king . Although Turan al-Shah 's initial response was hawkish , he later sent an envoy to Dongola , who upon returning , described the poverty of the city and of Nubia in general to Turan al-Shah . Consequently , the Ayyubids , like their Fatimid predecessors , were discouraged from further southward expansion into Nubia due to the poverty of the region , but required Nubia to guarantee the protection of Aswan and Upper Egypt . The Ayyubid garrison in Ibrim withdrew to Egypt in 1175 .

In 1174 , Sharaf al-Din Qaraqush , a commander under al-Muzaffar Umar , conquered Tripoli from the Normans with an army of Turks and Bedouins .

=== Conquest of Arabia ===

In 1173 , Saladin sent Turan al-Shah to conquer Yemen and the Hejaz . Muslim writers Ibn al-Athir and later al-Maqrizi wrote that the reasoning behind the conquest of Yemen was an Ayyubid fear that should Egypt fall to Nur al-Din , they could seek refuge in a faraway territory . In May 1174 , Turan al-Shah conquered Zabid from a Kharijite dynasty and executed its leader Mahdi Abd al-Nabi , and later that year Aden was taken from the Shia Banu Karam tribe . Aden became the principal maritime port of the dynasty in the Indian Ocean and the principal city of Yemen , although the official capital of Ayyubid Yemen was Ta'iz . The advent of the Ayyubids marked the beginning of a period of renewed prosperity in the city which saw the improvement of its commercial infrastructure , the establishment of new institutions , and the minting of its own coins . Following this prosperity , the Ayyubids implemented a new tax which was collected by galleys .

Turan al-Shah drove out the Hamdanid rulers of Sana'a , conquering the mountainous city in 1175 . With the conquest of Yemen , the Ayyubids developed a coastal fleet , al-asakir al-bahriyya , which they used to guard the sea coasts under their control and protect them from pirate raids . The conquest held great significance for Yemen because the Ayyubids managed to unite the previous three independent states (Zabid , Aden , and Sana'a) under a single power . However , when Turan al-Shah was transferred from his governorship in Yemen in 1176 , uprisings broke out in the territory and were not quelled until 1182 when Saladin assigned his other brother Tughtekin Sayf al-Islam as governor of Yemen .

From Yemen , as from Egypt , the Ayyubids aimed to dominate the Red Sea trade routes which Egypt depended on and so sought to tighten their grip over the Hejaz , where an important trade stop , Yanbu , was located . To favor trade in the direction of the Red Sea , the Ayyubids built facilities along the Red Sea Indian Ocean trade routes to accompany merchants . The Ayyubids also aspired to back their claims of legitimacy within the Caliphate by having sovereignty over the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina . The conquests and economic advancements undertaken by Saladin effectively established Egypt 's hegemony in the region .

=== Conquest of Syria and Mesopotamia ===

Although still nominally a vassal of Nur al-Din , Saladin adopted an increasingly independent foreign policy . This independence became more publicly pronounced after Nur al-Din 's death in 1174 . Thereafter , Saladin set out to conquer Syria from the Zengids , and on November 23 he was welcomed in Damascus by the governor of the city . By 1175 , he had taken control of Hama and Homs , but failed to take Aleppo after besieging it . Control of Homs was handed to the descendants of Shirkuh in 1179 and Hama was given to Saladin 's nephew , al-Muzaffar Umar . Saladin 's successes alarmed Emir Saif al-Din of Mosul , the head of the Zengids at the time , who regarded Syria as his family 's estate and was angered that it was being usurped by a former servant of Nur al-Din . He mustered an army to confront Saladin near Hama . Although heavily outnumbered , Saladin and his veteran soldiers decisively defeated the Zengids . After his victory ,

he proclaimed himself king and suppressed the name of as al-Salih Ismail al-Malik (Nur al-Din 's adolescent son) in Friday prayers and Islamic coinage , replacing it with his own name . The Abbasid caliph , al-Mustadi , graciously welcomed Saladin 's assumption of power and gave him the title of " Sultan of Egypt and Syria " .

In the spring of 1176 , another major confrontation occurred between the Zengids and the Ayyubids , this time at the Sultan 's Mound , 15 kilometres (9 @. 3 mi) from Aleppo . Saladin again emerged victorious , but Saif al-Din managed to narrowly escape . The Ayyubids proceeded to conquer other Syrian cities in the north , namely Ma'arat al-Numan , A'zaz , Buza'a , and Manbij , but failed to capture Aleppo during a second siege . An agreement was laid out , however , whereby Gumushtigin , the governor of Aleppo , and his allies at Hisn Kayfa and Mardin , would recognize Saladin as the sovereign of the Ayyubids ' possessions in Syria , while Saladin allowed for Gumushtigin and al-Salih al-Malik to continue their rule over Aleppo .

While Saladin was in Syria , his brother al-Adil governed Egypt , and in 1174 ? 75 , Kanz al-Dawla of Aswan revolted against the Ayyubids with the intention of restoring Fatimid rule . His main backers were the local Bedouin tribes and the Nubians , but he also enjoyed the support of a multitude of other groups , including the Armenians . Coincidental or possibly in coordination , was an uprising by Abbas ibn Shadi who overran Qus along the Nile River in central Egypt . Both rebellions were crushed by al-Adil . For the rest of that year and throughout early 1176 , Qaraqush continued his raids in western North Africa , bringing the Ayyubids into conflict with the Almohads who ruled the Maghreb .

In 1177 , Saladin led a force of some 26 ,000 soldiers , according to Crusader chronicler William of Tyre , into southern Palestine after hearing that most of the Kingdom of Jerusalem 's soldiers were besieging Harim north of Aleppo . Suddenly attacked by the Templars under Baldwin IV of Jerusalem near Ramla , the Ayyubid army was defeated at the Battle of Montgisard , with the majority of its troops killed . Saladin encamped at Homs the following year and a number of skirmishes between his forces , commanded by Farrukh Shah , and the Crusaders occurred . Undeterred , Saladin invaded the Crusader states from the west and defeated Baldwin at the Battle of Marj Ayyun in 1179 . The following year , he destroyed the newly built Crusader castle of Chastellet at the Battle of Jacob 's Ford . In the campaign of 1182 , he sparred with Baldwin again in the inconclusive Battle of Belvoir Castle in Kawkab al-Hawa . The Ayyubid na'ib (deputy governor) of Yemen , Uthman al-Zandjili , conquered the greater part of Hadramaut in 1180 , upon Turan Shah 's return to Yemen .

In May 1182 , Saladin captured Aleppo after a brief siege ; the new governor of the city , Imad al-Din Zangi II , had been unpopular with his subjects and surrendered Aleppo after Saladin agreed to restore Zangi II 's previous control over Sinjar , al-Raqqah , and Nusaybin , which would thereafter serve as vassal territories of the Ayyubids . Aleppo formally entered Ayyubid hands on 12 June . The day after , Saladin marched to Harim , near the Crusader-held Antioch and captured the city when its garrison forced out their leader , Surhak , who was then briefly detained and released by al-Muzaffar Umar . The surrender of Aleppo and Saladin 's allegiance with Zangi II had left Izz al-Din al-Mas'ud of Mosul the only major Muslim rival of the Ayyubids . Mosul had been subjected to a short siege in the autumn of 1182 , but after mediation by the Abbasid caliph al-Nasir , Saladin withdrew his forces . Mas'ud attempted to align himself with the Artuqids of Mardin , but they became allies of Saladin instead . In 1183 , Irbil too switched allegiance to the Ayyubids . Mas'ud then sought the support of Pahlawan ibn Muhammad , the governor of Azerbaijan , and although he did not usually intervene in the region , the possibility of Pahlawan 's intervention made Saladin cautious about launching further attacks against Mosul .

An arrangement was negotiated whereby al-Adil was to administer Aleppo in the name of Saladin 's son al-Afdal , while Egypt would be governed by al-Muzaffar Umar in the name of Saladin 's other son Uthman . When the two sons were to come of age they would assume power in the two territories , but if any died , one of Saladin 's brothers would take their place . In the summer of 1183 , after ravaging eastern Galilee , Saladin 's raids there culminated in the Battle of al-Fule in the Jezreel Valley between him and the Crusaders under Guy of Lusignan . The mostly hand-to-hand fighting ended indecisively . The two armies withdrew to a mile from each

other and while the Crusaders discussed internal matters , Saladin captured the Golan Plateau , cutting the Crusaders off from their main supplies source . In October 1183 and then on 13 August 1184 , Saladin and al @-@ Adil besieged Crusader @-@ held Karak , but were unable to capture it . Afterward , the Ayyubids raided Samaria , burning down Nablus . Saladin returned to Damascus in September 1184 and a relative peace between the Crusader states and the Ayyubid empire subsequently ensued in 1184 ? 1185 .

Saladin launched his last offensive against Mosul in late 1185 , hoping for an easy victory over a presumably demoralized Mas 'ud , but failed due to the city 's unexpectedly stiff resistance and a serious illness which caused Saladin to withdraw to Harran . Upon Abbasid encouragement , Saladin and Mas 'ud negotiated a treaty in March 1186 that left the Zengids in control of Mosul , but under the obligation to supply the Ayyubids with military support when requested .

= = = = Conquest of Palestine and Transjordan = = = =

Saladin besieged Tiberias in the eastern Galilee on 3 July 1187 and the Crusader army attempted to attack the Ayyubids by way of Kafr Kanna . After hearing of the Crusaders ' march , Saladin led his guard back to their main camp at Kafr Sabt , leaving a small detachment at Tiberias . With a clear view of the Crusader army , Saladin ordered al @-@ Muzaffar Umar to block the Crusaders ' entry from Hattin by taking a position near Lubyia , while Gokbori and his troops were stationed at a hill near al @-@ Shajara . On 4 July the Crusaders advanced toward the Horns of Hattin and charged against the Muslim forces , but were overwhelmed and defeated decisively . Four days after the battle , Saladin invited al @-@ Adil to join him in the reconquest of Palestine . On 8 July the Crusader stronghold of Acre was captured by Saladin , while his forces seized Nazareth and Saffuriya ; other brigades took Haifa , Caesarea , Sebastia and Nablus , while al @-@ Adil conquered Mirabel and Jaffa . On 26 July Saladin returned to the coast and received the surrender of Sarepta , Sidon , Beirut , and Jableh . In August , the Ayyubids conquered Ramla , Darum , Gaza , Bayt Jibrin , and Latrun . Ascalon was taken on 4 September . In September ? October 1187 , the Ayyubids besieged Jerusalem , taking possession of it on 2 October after negotiations with Balian of Ibelin .

Karak and Mont Real in Transjordan soon fell , followed by Safad in the northeastern Galilee . By the end of 1187 the Ayyubids were in control of virtually the entire Crusader kingdom in the Levant with the exception of Tyre , which held out under Conrad of Montferrat . In December , an Ayyubid army consisting of the garrisons of Saladin and his brothers from Aleppo , Hama , and Egypt besieged Tyre . Half of the Muslim naval fleet was seized by Conrad 's forces on 29 December , followed by an Ayyubid defeat on the shoreline of the city . On 1 January 1188 , Saladin held a war council where a withdrawal from Tripoli was agreed .

While they fought the Crusaders in the Levant , the Ayyubids under Sharaf al @-@ Din wrested control of Kairouan from the Almohads in North Africa .

= = = = Third Crusade = = = =

Pope Gregory VIII called for a Third Crusade against the Muslims in early 1189 . Frederick Barbarossa of the Holy Roman Empire , Philip Augustus of France , and Richard the Lionheart of England formed an alliance to reconquer Jerusalem . Meanwhile , the Crusaders and the Ayyubids fought near Acre that year and were joined by the reinforcements from Europe . From 1189 to 1191 , Acre was besieged by the Crusaders , and despite initial Muslim successes , it fell to Richard 's forces . A massacre of 2 @,@ 700 Muslim inhabitants ensued , and the Crusaders then planned to take Ascalon in the south .

The Crusaders , now under the unified command of Richard , defeated Saladin at the Battle of Arsuf , allowing for the Crusader conquest of Jaffa and much of coastal Palestine , but they were unable to recover the interior regions . Instead , Richard signed a treaty with Saladin in 1192 , restoring the Kingdom of Jerusalem to a coastal strip between Jaffa and Beirut . It was the last major war effort of Saladin 's career , as he died the next year , in 1193 .

= = = Quarrels over the sultanate = = =

Rather than establishing a centralized empire , Saladin had established hereditary ownership throughout his lands , dividing his empire among his kinsmen , with family members presiding over semi @-@ autonomous fiefs and principalities . Although these princes (emirs) owed allegiance to the Ayyubid sultan , they maintained relative independence in their own territories . Upon Saladin 's death , az @-@ Zahir took Aleppo from al @-@ Adil per the arrangement and al @-@ Aziz Uthman held Cairo , while his eldest son , al @-@ Afdal retained Damascus , which also included Palestine and much of Mount Lebanon . Al @-@ Adil then acquired known as al @-@ Jazira (upper Mesopotamia) , where he held the Zengids of Mosul at bay . In 1193 , Mas 'ud of Mosul joined forces with Zangi II of Sinjar and together the Zengid coalition moved to conquer al @-@ Jazira . However , before any major results could be achieved , Mas 'ud fell ill and returned to Mosul , and al @-@ Adil then compelled Zangi to make a quick peace before the Zengids suffered territorial losses at the hands of the Ayyubids . Al @-@ Adil 's son al @-@ Mu 'azzam took possession of Karak and Transjordan .

Soon , however , Saladin 's sons squabbled over the division of the empire . Saladin had appointed al @-@ Afdal to the governorship of Damascus with the intention that his son should continue to see the city as his principal place of residence in order to emphasize the primacy of the jihad (holy struggle) against the Crusader states . Al @-@ Afdal , however , found that his attachment to Damascus contributed to his undoing . Several of his father 's subordinate emirs left the city for Cairo to lobby Uthman to oust him on claims he was inexperienced and intended to oust the Ayyubid old guard . Al @-@ Adil further encouraged Uthman to act in order prevent al @-@ Afdal 's incompetence putting the Ayyubid empire in jeopardy . Thus , in 1194 , Uthman openly demanded the sultanate . Uthman 's claim to the throne was settled in a series of assaults on Damascus in 1196 , forcing al @-@ Afdal to leave for a lesser post at Salkhad . Al @-@ Adil established himself in Damascus as a lieutenant of Uthman , but wielded great influence within the empire .

When Uthman died in a hunting accident near Cairo , al @-@ Afdal was again made sultan (although Uthman 's son al @-@ Mansur was the nominal ruler of Egypt) , al @-@ Adil having been absent in a campaign in the northeast . Al @-@ Adil returned and managed to occupy the Citadel of Damascus , but then faced a strong assault from the combined forces of al @-@ Afdal and his brother az @-@ Zahir of Aleppo . These forces disintegrated under al @-@ Afdal 's leadership and in 1200 , al @-@ Adil resumed his offensive . Upon Uthman 's death , two clans of mamluks (slave soldiers) entered into conflict . They were the Asadiyya and Salahiyya , both of which Shirkuh and Saladin had purchased . The Salahiyya backed al @-@ Adil in his struggles against al @-@ Afdal . With their support , al @-@ Adil conquered Cairo in 1200 , and forced al @-@ Afdal to accept internal banishment . He proclaimed himself Sultan of Egypt and Syria afterward and entrusted the governance of Damascus to al @-@ Mu 'azzam and al @-@ Jazira to his other son al @-@ Kamil . Also around 1200 , a sharif (tribal head related to the Islamic prophet Muhammad) , Qatada ibn Idris , seized power in Mecca and was recognized as the emir of the city by al @-@ Adil .

Al @-@ Afdal strove to retrieve Damascus a final time , but failed . Al @-@ Adil entered the city in triumph in 1201 . Thereafter , al @-@ Adil 's line , rather than Saladin 's line , dominated the next 50 years of Ayyubid rule . However , az @-@ Zahir still held Aleppo and al @-@ Afdal was given Samosata in Anatolia . Al @-@ Adil redistributed his possessions between his sons : al @-@ Kamil was to succeed him in Egypt , al @-@ Ashraf received al @-@ Jazira , and al @-@ Awhad was given Diyar Bakr , but the latter territory shifted to al @-@ Ashraf 's domain after al @-@ Awhad died .

Al @-@ Adil aroused open hostility from the Hanbali lobby in Damascus for largely ignoring the Crusaders , having launched only one campaign against them . Al @-@ Adil believed that the Crusader army could not be defeated in a direct fight . Prolonged campaigns also involved the difficulties of maintaining a coherent Muslim coalition . The trend under al @-@ Adil was the steady growth of the empire , mainly through the expansion of Ayyubid authority in al @-@ Jazira and Armenia . The Abbasids eventually recognized al @-@ Adil 's role as sultan in 1207 . A Crusader

military campaign was launched on 3 November 1217 , beginning with an offensive towards Transjordan . Al @-@ Mu 'azzam urged al @-@ Adil to launch a counter @-@ attack , but he rejected his son 's proposal . In 1218 , the fortress of Damietta in the Nile Delta was besieged by the Crusaders . After two failed attempts , the fortress eventually capitulated on 25 August . Six days later al @-@ Adil died of apparent shock at Damietta 's loss .

Al @-@ Kamil proclaimed himself sultan in Cairo , while his brother al @-@ Mu 'azzam claimed the throne in Damascus . Al @-@ Kamil attempted to retake Damietta , but was forced back by John of Brienne . After learning of a conspiracy against him , he fled , leaving the Egyptian army leaderless . Panic ensued , but with the help of al @-@ Mu 'azzam , al @-@ Kamil regrouped his forces . By then , however , the Crusaders had seized his camp . The Ayyubids offered to negotiate for a withdrawal from Damietta , offering the restoration of Palestine to the Kingdom of Jerusalem , with the exception of the forts of Mont Real and Karak . This was refused by the leader of the Fifth Crusade , Pelagius of Albano , and in 1221 , the Crusaders were driven out of the Nile Delta after the Ayyubid victory at Mansura .

= = = Disintegration = = =

= = = Loss of territories and ceding of Jerusalem = = =

In the east , the Khwarezemids under Jalal ad @-@ Din Mingburnu captured the town of Khilat from al @-@ Ashraf , while the normally loyalist Rasulids began to encroach on Ayyubid territorial holdings in Arabia . In 1222 the Ayyubids appointed the Rasulid leader Ali Bin Rasul as governor of Mecca . Ayyubid rule in Yemen and the Hejaz was declining and the Ayyubid governor of Yemen , Mas 'ud bin Kamil , was forced to leave for Egypt in 1223 . He appointed Nur ad @-@ Din Umar as his deputy governor while he was absent . In 1224 the local al @-@ Yamani dynasty gained control of Hadramaut from the Ayyubids who had held it loosely due to the troubled situation of their administration in Yemen proper . Following Mas 'ud bin Kamil 's death in 1229 , Nur ad @-@ Din Umar declared himself the independent ruler of Yemen and discontinued the annual tribute payment to the Ayyubid sultanate in Egypt .

Under Frederick II , a Sixth Crusade was launched , capitalizing on the ongoing internal strife between al @-@ Kamil of Egypt and al @-@ Mu 'azzam of Syria . Subsequently , al @-@ Kamil offered Jerusalem to Frederick to avoid a Syrian invasion of Egypt , but the latter refused . Al @-@ Kamil 's position was strengthened when al @-@ Mu 'azzam died in 1227 and was succeeded by his son an @-@ Nasir Dawud . Al @-@ Kamil continued negotiations with Frederick II in Acre in 1228 , leading to a truce agreement signed in February 1229 . The agreement gave the Crusaders control over an unfortified Jerusalem for over ten years , but also guaranteed Muslims control over Islamic holy places in the city . Although the treaty was virtually meaningless in military terms , an @-@ Nasir Dawud used it to provoke the sentiments of Syria 's inhabitants and a Friday sermon by a popular preacher at the Umayyad Mosque " reduced the crowd to violent sobbing and tears " .

The settlement with the Crusaders was accompanied by a proposed redistribution of the Ayyubid principalities whereby Damascus and its territories would be governed by al @-@ Ashraf , who recognized al @-@ Kamil 's sovereignty . An @-@ Nasir Dawud resisted the settlement , incensed by the Ayyubid @-@ Crusader truce . Al @-@ Kamil 's forces reached Damascus to enforce the proposed agreement in May 1229 . The siege put great pressure on the city , but the inhabitants rallied to an @-@ Nasir Dawud , supportive of al @-@ Mu 'azzam 's stable rule and angered at the treaty with Frederick . After one month , however , an @-@ Nasir Dawud sued for a peaceful outcome and was given a new principality centered around Karak , while al @-@ Ashraf , the governor of Diyar Bakr , assumed the governorship of Damascus .

Meanwhile , the Seljuks were advancing towards al @-@ Jazira , and the descendants of Qatada ibn Idris fought with their Ayyubid overlords over control of Mecca . The conflict between them was taken advantage of by the Rasulids of Yemen who attempted to end Ayyubid suzerainty in the Hejaz and bring the region under their control which they accomplished in 1238 when Nur al @-@ Din

Umar captured Mecca .

===== Syro @-@ Egyptian divide =====

Al @-@ Ashraf 's rule in Damascus was stable , but he and the other emirs of Syria sought to assert their independence from Cairo . Amid these tensions , al @-@ Ashraf died in August 1237 after a four @-@ month illness and was succeeded by his brother as @-@ Salih Ismail . Two months later , al @-@ Kamil 's Egyptian army arrived and besieged Damascus , but as @-@ Salih Ismail had destroyed the suburbs of the city to deny al @-@ Kamil 's forces shelter . In 1232 , al @-@ Kamil installed his eldest son as @-@ Salih Ayyub to govern Hisn Kayfa , but upon al @-@ Kamil 's death in 1238 , as @-@ Salih Ayyub disputed the proclamation of younger brother al @-@ Adil II as sultan in Cairo . As @-@ Salih Ayyub eventually occupied Damascus in December 1238 , but his uncle Ismail retrieved the city in September 1239 . Ismail 's cousin an @-@ Nasir Dawud had Ismail detained in Karak in a move to prevent the latter 's arrest by al @-@ Adil II . Ismail entered into an alliance with Dawud who released him the following year , allowing him to proclaim himself sultan in place of al @-@ Adil II in May 1240 .

Throughout the early 1240s , as @-@ Salih Ayyub carried out reprisals against those who supported al @-@ Adil II , and he then quarreled with an @-@ Nasir Dawud who had reconciled with as @-@ Salih Ismail of Damascus . The rival sultans as @-@ Salih Ayyub and Ismail attempted to ally with the Crusaders against the other . In 1244 , the breakaway Ayyubids of Syria allied with the Crusaders and confronted the coalition of as @-@ Salih Ayyub and the Khwarizmids at Hirbiya , near Gaza . A large battle ensued , resulting in a major victory for as @-@ Salih Ayyub and the virtual collapse of the Kingdom of Jerusalem .

===== Restoration of unity =====

In 1244 ? 1245 , as @-@ Salih Ayyub had seized the area approximate to the modern @-@ day West Bank from an @-@ Nasir Dawud ; he gained possession of Jerusalem , then marched on to take Damascus , which fell with relative ease in October 1245 . Shortly afterward , Sayf al @-@ Din Ali surrendered his exposed principality of Ajlun and its fortress to as @-@ Salih Ayyub . The rupture of the alliance between the Khwarizmids and as @-@ Salih Ayyub ended with the virtual destruction of the former by al @-@ Mansur Ibrahim , the Ayyubid emir of Homs , in October 1246 . With the Khwarizimid defeat , as @-@ Salih Ayyub was able to complete the conquest of southern Syria . His general Fakhr ad @-@ Din went on to subdue an @-@ Nasir Dawud 's territories . He sacked the lower town of Karak , then besieged its fortress . A stalemate followed with neither an @-@ Nasir Dawud or Fakhr ad @-@ Din strong enough to dislodge the other 's forces . A settlement was eventually reached whereby an @-@ Nasir Dawud would retain the fortress , but cede the remainder of his principality to as @-@ Salih Ayyub . Having settled the situation in Palestine and Transjordan , Fakhr ad @-@ Din moved north and marched to Bosra , the last place still held by Ismail . During the siege , Fakhr ad @-@ Din fell ill , but his commanders continued the assault against the city , which fell in December 1246 .

By May 1247 , as @-@ Salih Ayyub was master of Syria south of Lake Homs , having gained control over Banyas and Salkhad . With his fellow Ayyubid opponents subdued , except for Aleppo under an @-@ Nasir Yusuf , as @-@ Salih Ayyub undertook a limited offensive against the Crusaders , sending Fakhr ad @-@ Din to move against their territories in the Galilee . Tiberias fell on 16 June , followed by Mount Tabor and Kawkab al @-@ Hawa soon thereafter . Safad with its Templar fortress seemed out of reach , so the Ayyubids marched south to Ascalon . Facing stubborn resistance from the Crusader garrison , an Egyptian flotilla was sent by as @-@ Salih Ayyub to support the siege and on 24 October , Fakhr ad @-@ Din 's troops stormed through a breach in the walls and killed or captured the entire garrison . The city was razed and left deserted .

As @-@ Salih Ayyub returned to Damascus to keep an eye on developments in northern Syria . Al @-@ Ashraf Musa of Homs had ceded the important stronghold of Salamiyyah to as @-@ Salih Ayyub the previous winter , perhaps to underline their patron @-@ client relationship . This troubled

the Ayyubids of Aleppo who feared it would be used as a base for a military take over of their city . An Nasir Yusuf found this intolerable and decided to annex Homs in the winter of 1248 . The city surrendered in August and an Nasir Yusuf 's terms forced al Ashraf Musa to hand over Homs , but he was allowed to retain nearby Palmyra and Tell Bashir in the Syrian Desert . As Salih Ayyub sent Fakhr ad Din to recapture Homs , but Aleppo countered by sending an army to Kafr Tab , south of the city . An Nasir Dawud left Karak for Aleppo to support an Nasir Yusuf , but in his absence , his brothers al Amjad Hasan and al Zahir Shadhi detained his heir al Mu 'azzam Isa and then personally went to al Salih Ayyub 's camp at al Mansourah in Egypt to offer him control of Karak in return for holdings in Egypt . As Salih Ayyub agreed and sent the eunuch Badr al Din Sawabi to act as his governor in Karak .

== Fall ==

=== Rise of the Mamluks and fall of Egypt ===

In 1248 , a Crusader fleet of 1 , 800 boats and ships arrived in Cyprus with the intent of launching a Seventh Crusade against the Muslims by conquering Egypt . Their commander , Louis IX , attempted to enlist the Mongols to launch a coordinated attack on Egypt , but when this failed to materialize , the Crusader force sailed to Damietta and the local population there fled as soon as they landed . When al Salih Ayyub , who was in Syria at the time , heard of this , he rushed back to Egypt , avoiding Damietta , instead reaching Mansurah . There , he organized an army and raised a commando force which harassed the Crusaders .

As Salih Ayyub was ill and his health deteriorated further due to the mounting pressure from the Crusader offensive . His wife Shajar al Durr called a meeting of all the war generals and thus became commander in chief of the Egyptian forces . She ordered the fortification of Mansurah and then stored large quantities of provisions and concentrated her forces there . She also organized a fleet of war galleys and scattered them at various strategic points along the Nile River . Crusader attempts to capture Mansurah were thwarted and King Louis found himself in a critical position . He managed to cross the Nile to launch a surprise attack against Mansurah . Meanwhile , as Salih Ayyub died , but Shajar al Durr and al Salih Ayyub 's Bahri Mamluk generals , including Rukn al Din Baybars and Aybak , countered the assault and inflicted heavy losses on the Crusaders . Simultaneously , Egyptian forces cut off the Crusader 's line of supply from Damietta , preventing the arrival of reinforcements . As Salih Ayyub 's son and the newly proclaimed Ayyubid sultan al Mu 'azzam Turan Shah reached Mansurah at this point and intensified the battle against the Crusaders . The latter ultimately surrendered at the Battle of Fariskur , and King Louis and his companions were arrested .

Al Mu 'azzam Turan Shah alienated the Mamluks soon after their victory at Mansurah and constantly threatened them and Shajar al Durr . Fearing for their positions of power , the Bahri Mamluks revolted against the sultan and killed him in April 1250 . Aybak married Shajar al Durr and subsequently took over the government in Egypt in the name of al Ashraf II who became sultan , but only nominally .

=== Dominance of Aleppo ===

Intent on restoring the supremacy of Saladin 's direct descendants within the Ayyubid family , an Nasir Yusuf was eventually able to enlist the backing of all of the Syria based Ayyubid emirs in a common cause against Mamluk dominated Egypt . By 1250 , he took Damascus with relative ease and except for Hama and Transjordan , an Nasir Yusuf 's direct authority stood unbroken from the Khabur River in northern Mesopotamia to the Sinai Peninsula . In December 1250 , he attacked Egypt after hearing of al Mu 'azzam Turan Shah 's death and the ascension of Shajar al Durr . An Nasir Yusuf 's army was much larger and better

@-@ equipped than that of the Egyptian army , consisting of the forces of Aleppo , Homs , Hama , and those of Saladin 's only surviving sons , Nusrat ad @-@ Din and Turan @-@ Shah ibn Salah ad @-@ Din . Nonetheless , it suffered a major defeat at the hands of Aybak 's forces . An @-@ Nasir Yusuf subsequently returned to Syria , which was slowly slipping out of his control .

The Mamluks forged an alliance with the Crusaders in March 1252 and agreed to jointly launch a campaign against an @-@ Nasir Yusuf . King Louis , who had been released after al @-@ Mu 'azzam Turan @-@ Shah 's murder , led his army to Jaffa , while Aybak intended to send his forces to Gaza . Upon hearing of the alliance , an @-@ Nasir Yusuf immediately dispatched a force to Tell al @-@ Ajjul , just outside Gaza , in order to prevent the junction of the Mamluk and Crusader armies . Meanwhile , the rest of the Ayyubid army was stationed in the Jordan Valley . Realizing that a war between them would greatly benefit the Crusaders , Aybak and an @-@ Nasir Yusuf accepted Abbasid mediation via Najm ad @-@ Din al @-@ Badhirai . In April 1253 , a treaty was signed whereby the Mamluks would retain control over all of Egypt and Palestine up to , but not including , Nablus , while an @-@ Nasir Yusuf would be confirmed as the ruler of Muslim Syria . Thus , Ayyubid rule was officially ended in Egypt . After conflict arose between the Mamluks and the Ayyubids reignited , al @-@ Badhirai arranged another treaty , this time giving an @-@ Nasir Yusuf control of the Mamluks ' territories in Palestine and al @-@ Arish in Sinai . Instead of placing Ayyubids in charge , however , an @-@ Nasir Yusuf handed Jerusalem to a Mamluk named Kutuk while Nablus and Jenin were given to Baibars .

For over a year after the settlement with the Mamluks , calm settled over an @-@ Nasir Yusuf 's reign , but on 11 December 1256 he sent two envoys to the Abbasids in Baghdad seeking formal investiture from the caliph , al @-@ Musta 'sim , for his role as " Sultan " . This request was connected to an @-@ Nasir 's rivalry with Aybak , as the title would be useful in future disputes with the Mamluks . However , the Mamluks had sent their envoys to Baghdad previously to precisely ensure that an @-@ Nasir Yusuf would not gain the title , putting al @-@ Musta 'sim in a difficult position .

In early 1257 , Aybak was killed in a conspiracy , and was succeeded by his 15 @-@ year @-@ old son , al @-@ Mansur Ali , while Saif ad @-@ Din Qutuz held an influential position . Soon after al @-@ Mansur Ali 's ascendancy rumors of another conspiracy to which an @-@ Nasir Yusuf had an alleged connection emerged . The accused conspirator , al @-@ Mansur Ali 's vizier , Sharaf ad @-@ Din al @-@ Fa 'izi , was strangled by Egyptian authorities . The Bahri Mamluks in Syria led by Baibars pressured an @-@ Nasir Yusuf to intervene by invading Egypt , but he would not act , fearing the Bahri dynasty would usurp his throne if they gained Egypt .

= = = Karak asserts independence = = =

Relations between an @-@ Nasir Yusuf and the Bahri Mamluks grew tense after the former refused to invade Egypt . In October 1257 , Baibars and his fellow Mamluks left Damascus or were expelled from the city and together they moved south to Jerusalem . When the governor Kutuk refused to aid them against an @-@ Nasir Yusuf , Baibars deposed him and had al @-@ Mugith Umar , the emir of Karak , pronounced in the khutba at the al @-@ Aqsa Mosque ; over the years , al @-@ Mugith Umar had allowed the political dissidents of Cairo and Damascus , who sought protection from either the Mamluk and Ayyubid authorities , a safe haven within his territory .

Soon after gaining Jerusalem , Baibars conquered Gaza and an @-@ Nasir Yusuf sent his army to Nablus in response . A battle ensued and the Mamluks ultimately fled across the Jordan River to the Balqa area . From there they reached Zughar at the southern tip of the Dead Sea where they sent their submission to Karak . Al @-@ Mughith Umar 's new relationship with Baibars solidified his independence from an @-@ Nasir Yusuf 's Syria . To ensure his independence , al @-@ Mughith Umar began to distribute the territories of Palestine and Transjordan among the Bahri Mamluks . The new allies assembled a small army and headed for Egypt . In spite of initial gains in Palestine and al @-@ Arish , they withdrew after seeing how overwhelmingly outnumbered they were by the Egyptian army . Al @-@ Mughith Umar and Baibars were not discouraged , however , and launched an army 1 @-@ 500 regular cavalry to Sinai at the beginning of 1258 , but again were defeated by

the Mamluks of Egypt .

= = = Mongol invasion and fall of the empire = = =

The Ayyubids had been under the nominal sovereignty of the Mongol Empire after a Mongol force targeted Ayyubid territories in Anatolia in 1244 . An @-@ Nasir Yusuf sent an embassy to the Mongol capital Karakorum in 1250 , shortly after assuming power . These understandings did not last , however , and the Mongol Great Khan , Möngke , issued a directive to his brother Hulagu to extend the realms of the empire to the Nile River . The latter raised an army of 120 @, @ 000 and in 1258 , sacked Baghdad and slaughtered its inhabitants , including Caliph al @-@ Musta 'sim and most of his family after the Ayyubids failed to assemble an army to protect the city . That same year the Ayyubids lost Diyar Bakr to the Mongols .

An @-@ Nasir Yusuf sent a delegation to Hulagu afterward , repeating his protestations to submission . Hulagu refused to accept the terms and so an @-@ Nasir Yusuf called on Cairo for aid . This plea coincided with a successful coup by the Cairo @-@ based Mamluks against the remaining symbolic Ayyubid leadership in Egypt , with strongman Qutuz officially taking power . Meanwhile , an Ayyubid army was assembled at Birzeh , just north of Damascus to defend the city against the Mongols who were now marching towards northern Syria . Aleppo was soon besieged within a week and in January 1260 it fell to the Mongols . The Great Mosque and the Citadel of Aleppo were razed and most of the inhabitants were killed or sold into slavery . The destruction of Aleppo caused panic in Muslim Syria ; The Ayyubid emir of Homs , al @-@ Ashraf Musa , offered to ally with Mongols at the approach of their army and was allowed to continue governance of the city by Hulagu . Hama also capitulated without resisting , but did not join forces with the Mongols . An @-@ Nasir Yusuf opted to flee Damascus to seek protection in Gaza .

Hulagu departed for Karakorum and left Kitbuqa , a Nestorian Christian general , to continue the Mongol conquest . Damascus capitulated after the arrival of the Mongol army , but was not sacked like other captured Muslim cities . However , from Gaza , an @-@ Nasir Yusuf managed to rally the small garrison he left in the Citadel of Damascus to rebel against the Mongol occupation . The Mongols retaliated by launching a massive artillery assault on the citadel and when it became apparent that an @-@ Nasir Yusuf was unable to relieve the city with a newly assembled army , the garrison surrendered .

The Mongols proceeded by conquering Samaria , killing most of the Ayyubid garrison in Nablus , and then advanced south , as far as Gaza , unhindered . An @-@ Nasir Yusuf was soon captured by the Mongols and used to persuade the garrison at Ajlun to capitulate . Afterward , the junior Ayyubid governor of Banyas allied with the Mongols , who had now gained control of most of Syria and al @-@ Jazira , effectively ending Ayyubid power in the region . On 3 September 1260 , the Egypt @-@ based Mamluk army led by Qutuz and Baibars challenged Mongol authority and decisively defeated their forces in the Battle of Ain Jalut , outside of Zir 'in in the Jezreel Valley . Five days later , the Mamluks took Damascus and within a month , most of Syria was in Bahri Mamluk hands . Meanwhile , an @-@ Nasir Yusuf was killed in captivity .

= = = Remnants of the dynasty = = =

Many of the Ayyubid emirs of Syria were discredited by Qutuz for collaborating with the Mongols , but since al @-@ Ashraf Musa defected and fought alongside the Mamluks at Ain Jalut , he was allowed to continue his rule over Homs . Al @-@ Mansur of Hama had fought alongside the Mamluks from the start of their conquest and because of this , Hama continued to be ruled by the Ayyubid descendants of al @-@ Muzaffar Umar . After al @-@ Ashraf Musa 's death in 1262 , the new Mamluk sultan , Baibars , annexed Homs . The next year , al @-@ Mughith Umar was tricked into surrendering Karak to Baibars and was executed soon after for having previously sided with the Mongols .

The last Ayyubid ruler of Hama died in 1299 and Hama briefly passed through direct Mamluk suzerainty . However , in 1310 , under the patronage of the Mamluk sultan al @-@ Nasir

Muhammad , Hama was restored to the Ayyubids under the well @-@ known geographer and author Abu al @-@ Fida . The latter died in 1331 and was succeeded by his son al @-@ Afdal Muhammad , who eventually lost the favor of his Mamluk overlords . He was removed from his post in 1341 and Hama was formally placed under Mamluk rule .

In southeastern Anatolia , the Ayyubids continued to rule the principality of Hisn Kayfa and managed to remain an autonomous entity , independent of the Mongol Ilkhanate , which ruled northern Mesopotamia until the 1330s . After the breakup of the Ilkhanate , their former vassals in the area , the Artuqids , waged war against the Ayyubids of Hisn Kayfa in 1334 , but were decisively defeated , with the Ayyubids gaining the Artuqids ' possessions on the left bank of the Tigris River . In the 14th century , the Ayyubids rebuilt the castle of Hisn Kayfa which served as their stronghold . The Ayyubids of Hisn Kayfa were vassals of the Mamluks and later the Dulkadirids until being supplanted by the Ottoman Empire in the early 16th century .

= = Culture = =

= = = Government = = =

= = = = Structure = = = =

Saladin structured the Ayyubid empire around the concept of collective sovereignty i.e. a confederation of principalities held together by the idea of family rule . Under this arrangement there existed numerous " petty sultans " while one family member , as @-@ Sultan al @-@ Mu 'azzam , reigned supreme . After the death of Saladin , this coveted position became open to whomever was strong enough to seize it . Subsequent rivalry between the Ayyubids of Syria and Egypt reached a point where the rulers of each territory would at times collude with Crusaders against the other . Ayyubid rule differed in these two regions . In Syria , each major city was ruled as a relatively independent principality under an Ayyubid family member , while in Egypt the long tradition of centralized rule enabled the Ayyubids to maintain direct control over the province from Cairo . It was Baghdad , seat of the Caliphate , however , that exercised cultural and political hegemony over the Ayyubid territories , particularly those in Southwest Asia . For instance , the qadi (" chief justice ") of Damascus was still appointed by the Abbasids during Ayyubid rule .

Political power was concentrated in the Ayyubid household which was not necessarily characterized only by blood relation ; slaves and intimates could acquire great , and even supreme power within it . It was a common occurrence for the mothers of young Ayyubid rulers to act as independent powers or in a few cases , rulers in their own right . Eunuchs exercised substantial power under the Ayyubids , serving as attendants and atabegs within the household or as emirs , governors , and army commanders outside the household . One of Saladin 's most important supporters was the eunuch Baha ad @-@ Din ibn Shaddad who helped him depose the Fatimids , dispossess their properties , and construct the wall of Cairo 's citadel . Following the death of al @-@ Aziz Uthman , he became the regent of his son al @-@ Mansur and effectively ruled over Egypt for a short time before the arrival of al @-@ Adil . Later sultans appointed eunuchs as deputy sultans and even awarded them sovereignty over certain cities , such as Shams al @-@ Din Sawab who was given the Jaziran cities of Amid and Diyar Bakr in 1239 .

The Ayyubids had three principal means of recruiting the educated elites whom they needed to administer their cities and towns . Some of these local leaders , known as shaykhs , entered the service of an Ayyubid ruling household and thus their bids for power were supported from Ayyubid household revenues and influence . Others were paid directly out of revenues made from the diwan , a high governmental body of the state . The third method was assignment to the shaykhs of the revenues of charitable endowments , known as waqfs . The Ayyubids , like their various predecessors in the region , had relatively few state agencies by which they could penetrate their cities and towns . To link themselves with the educated elite of their cities , they relied on the

political usage of patronage practices . The assignment of waqf revenue to this elite was similar to the assignment of fiefs (iqta 'at) to the commanders and generals of the army . In both cases , it enabled the Ayyubids to recruit a dependent , but not administratively subordinate elite .

Following their conquest of Jerusalem in 1187 , the Ayyubids under Saladin may have been the first to establish the position of Amir al @-@ Hajj to protect the annual Hajj caravans leaving Damascus for Mecca with the appointment of Tughtakin ibn Ayyub to the office .

= = = Seat of government = = =

The seat of Ayyubid government from Saladin 's rule from the 1170s up to al @-@ Adil 's reign in 1218 had been Damascus . The city provided a strategic advantage in the constant war with the Crusaders and allowed the sultan to keep an eye on his relatively ambitious vassals in Syria and al @-@ Jazira . Cairo was too remote to serve as a base of operations , but had always served as the economic foundation of the empire . This rendered the city a critical constituent in the repertoire of the Ayyubid possessions . When Saladin was proclaimed sultan in Cairo in 1171 , he chose the Fatimid @-@ built Lesser Western Palace (part of a larger palace complex in Cairo isolated from the urban sprawl) as the seat of government . Saladin himself resided in the former Fatimid vizier palace , Turan @-@ Shah took up a former Fatimid prince 's living quarter , and their father occupied the Pearl Pavilion which was situated outside of Cairo overlooking the city 's canal . The successive Ayyubid sultans of Egypt would live in the Lesser Western Palace .

After al @-@ Adil I seized the throne in Cairo and with it the sultanate of the Ayyubid oligarchy , the period of rivalry between Damascus and Cairo to become capital of the Ayyubid empire commenced . Under al @-@ Adil and al @-@ Kamil , Damascus continued as an autonomous province whose ruler reserved the right to designate his own heir , but during as @-@ Salih Ayyub 's rule , military campaigns against Syria reduced Damascus to a vassal of Cairo . In addition , Ayyub established new rules both in administration and government in order to centralize his regime ; he conferred the most prominent positions of the state to his close confidants , instead of his Ayyubid relatives . His wife Shajar al @-@ Durr , for example , managed the affairs of Egypt while he was in Syria . Ayyub officially delegated his authority to his dead son Khalil and made al @-@ Durr act formally on Khalil 's behalf .

= = = Demographics = = =

= = = Religion , ethnicity and language = = =

By the 12th century , Islam was the dominant religion in the Middle East . It is not certain , however , if it was the religion of the majority outside the Arabian Peninsula . Arabic was the language of high culture and of the urban population , although other languages dating to pre @-@ Islamic rule were still being used to a certain extent . Most Egyptians were speaking Arabic by the time the Ayyubids took power there .

Kurdish was the mother tongue of the early Ayyubids , at the time of their departure from Dvin . Sultan Saladin spoke both Arabic and Kurdish , and likely Turkish as well . According to Yasser Tabbaa , an anthropologist specializing in medieval Islamic culture , the Ayyubid rulers who reigned in the late 12th @-@ century were far removed from their Kurdish origins , and unlike their Seljuq predecessors and their Mamluk successors , they were firmly " Arabized . " Arabic culture and language formed the main component of their identity instead of their Kurdish heritage . Arabic surnames were much more prevalent among the Ayyubids , a tribe that had already been partially assimilated into the Arabic @-@ speaking world before its members came to power , than non @-@ Arabic names . Some exceptions included the non @-@ Arabic surname Turan @-@ Shah . Most of the Ayyubid rulers spoke fluent Arabic and a number of them , such as az @-@ Zahir Ghazi , al @-@ Mu 'azzam Isa and the minor emirs of Hama , composed Arabic poetry .

The Arabization of the Ayyubid ruling families differed starkly from the ranks of their armies , which

lacked cultural cohesion , with Turks and Kurds dominating the cavalry and nomadic Turcomans and Arabs filling the ranks of the infantry . These groups typically settled in the pastoral areas outside of the cities , the centers of cultural life , and as such they were relatively isolated from the Arabic @-@ dominant urban environment . This isolation allowed them to preserve their traditions . It is thought that Saladin spoke Turkish to his military commanders . Like their Fatimid predecessors , the Ayyubid rulers of Egypt maintained a substantial force of mamluks (military slaves) . By the first half of the 13th century mamluks were mostly drawn from Kipchak Turks and Circassians and there is strong evidence that these forces continued to speak Kipchak Turkish .

The majority of Syria 's population in the 12th century consisted of Sunni Muslims , typically from Arab or Kurdish backgrounds . There were also sizable Muslim communities of Twelver Shias , Druzes , and Alawites . The Ismaili presence was small and most were of Persian origin , having migrated from Alamut . They mostly resided in the mountainous area near the northern Syrian coastline . Large Christian communities existed in northern Syria , Palestine , Transjordan and Upper Mesopotamia . They were Aramaic @-@ speaking and indigenous to the area , mostly belonging to the Syriac Orthodox Church . They lived in villages of Christian or mixed Christian and Muslim population , monasteries , and in small towns where they appear to have been on friendly terms with their Muslim neighbors . Ideologically , they were led by the Patriarch of Antioch .

In Yemen and Hadramaut , much of the population adhered to Shia Islam in its Zaydi form . The inhabitants of Upper Mesopotamia were made up of Sunni Muslim Kurds and Turks , although there was a significant Yazidi minority in that region as well . Jews were spread throughout the Islamic world and most Ayyubid cities had Jewish communities due to the important roles Jews played in trade , manufacture , finance , and medicine . In Yemen and some parts of Syria , Jews also lived in rural towns . The Ayyubid emir of Yemen in 1197 ? 1202 , al @-@ Malik Mu 'izz Isma 'il , attempted to forcibly convert the Jews of Aden , but this process ceased after his death in 1202 . Within the Jewish community , particularly in Egypt and Palestine , there existed a minority of Karaites .

In Egypt , there were large communities of Coptic Christians , Melkites , Turks , Armenians , and Black Africans ? the latter two groups had a large presence in Upper Egypt . Under the Fatimids , non @-@ Muslims in Egypt generally prospered , with the exception of Caliph al @-@ Hakim 's reign . However , with Shirkuh 's ascendancy to the vizier position , a number edicts were enacted against the non @-@ Muslim population . With the advent of the Syrian expeditionary force (consisting of Oghuz Turks and Kurds) into Egypt , waves of maltreatment of minorities occurred , irrespective of religion . These incidents occurred while Shirkuh and Saladin were viziers to the Fatimid caliph .

At the beginning of Saladin 's reign as sultan in Egypt , upon the encouragement of his adviser , Qadi al @-@ Fadil , Christians were prohibited from employment in the fiscal administration , but various Ayyubid emirs continued to allow Christians to serve in their posts . A number of other regulations were imposed , including the bans on alcohol consumption , religious processions , and the ringing of church bells . Conversion of formerly high @-@ ranking Christians and their families to Islam took place throughout the early period of Ayyubid rule . According to historian Yaakov Lev , the persecution of non @-@ Muslims had some permanent effects on them , but nonetheless , the effects were local and contained . To manage Mediterranean trade , the Ayyubids permitted Europeans ? mainly Italians , but also French and Catalans ? to settle in Alexandria in large numbers . However , in the aftermath of the Fifth Crusade , 3 @,@ 000 merchants from the area were arrested or expelled .

The Ayyubids generally employed Kurds , Turks , and people from the Caucasus for the higher @-@ ranking posts of the military and bureaucratic fields . Not much is known about the foot soldiers of the Ayyubid army , but the numbers of cavalymen are known to have fluctuated between 8 @,@ 500 and 12 @,@ 000 . The cavalry was largely composed of free @-@ born Kurds , Turks , and Turcomans whom Ayyubid emirs and sultans purchased as slaves (mamluks) . In addition , there existed Arab auxiliaries , former Fatimid units such as the Nubians , and separate Arab contingents ? notably from the Kinaniyya tribe , who were largely devoted to the defense of Egypt . Rivalry between Kurdish and Turkish troops occurred occasionally when leading positions were at stake and towards the end of Ayyubid rule , Turks outnumbered Kurds in the army . Despite their

Kurdish background , the sultans remained impartial to both groups .

=== Population ===

There is no accurate figure for the population of the various territories under Ayyubid rule . Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones suggest that in the 12th century , Syria had a population of 2 @. @ 7 million , Palestine and Transjordan had 500 @, @ 000 inhabitants , and Egypt had a population of under 5 million . Josiah C. Russel states that in this same period there were 2 @. @ 4 million people in Syria living in 8 @, @ 300 villages , leaving a population of 230 @, @ 000 ? 300 @, @ 000 living in ten cities , eight of which were Muslim cities under Ayyubid control . The largest were Edessa (pop . 24 @, @ 000) , Damascus (pop . 15 @, @ 000) , Aleppo (pop . 14 @, @ 000) , and Jerusalem (pop . 10 @, @ 000) . Smaller cities included Homs , Hama , Gaza , and Hebron .

Russel estimated the Egyptian village population to be 3 @. @ 3 million in 2 @, @ 300 villages , a high density for rural populations in the time period . He attributes it to the high productivity of Egyptian soil which allowed for increased agricultural growth . The urban population was much lower , 233 @, @ 100 , consisting of 5 @. @ 7 % of the total Egyptian population . The largest cities were Cairo (pop . 60 @, @ 000) , Alexandria (pop . 30 @, @ 000) , Qus (pop . 25 @, @ 000) , Damietta (pop . 18 @, @ 000) , Fayyum (pop . 13 @, @ 000) , and Bilbeis (pop . 10 @, @ 000) . Numerous smaller cities dotted the Nile River . Among the latter were Damanhur , Asyut , and Tanta . Cities in Egypt were also densely populated , mainly because of greater urbanization and industrialization than elsewhere .

=== Economy ===

Having pushed the Crusaders out of most of Syria , the Ayyubids generally adopted a policy of peace with them . The war with the Crusaders did not prevent Muslims under Ayyubid governance from developing good commercial relations with European states . This led to fruitful interaction between both sides in different fields of economic activity , particularly in agriculture and trade .

Numerous measures were undertaken by the Ayyubids to increase agricultural production . Canals were dug to facilitate the irrigation of agricultural lands throughout the empire . Cultivation of sugarcane was officially encouraged to meet the great demand of it by both the local inhabitants and the Europeans . Several new plants were introduced to Europe in trade with both the Zengids and Ayyubids , including sesame , carob , millet , rice , lemons , melons , apricots , and shallots .

The main factor which boosted industry and trade under the Ayyubids was the new interests Europeans developed when they came into contact with the Muslims . Commodities included incense , scents , fragrant oils , and aromatic plants from Arabia and India , as well as ginger , alum , and aloes . Likewise , Europeans developed new tastes in the matter of fashions , clothing , and home furnishing . Rugs , carpets , and tapestries manufactured in the Middle East and Central Asia were introduced to the West through Crusader @-@ Ayyubid interaction . Christian pilgrims visiting Jerusalem returned with Arab reliquaries for the keeping of relics . In addition , eastern works of art in glass , pottery , gold , silver , etc . , were highly prized in Europe .

The European demand for agricultural products and industrial commodities stipulated maritime activity and international trade to an unprecedented extent . The Ayyubids played a leading role in this as they controlled sea @-@ trade routes which passed through the ports of Yemen and Egypt via the Red Sea . The trade policy of the Ayyubids placed them in a position of great advantage ; although they cooperated with the Genoans and Venetians in the Mediterranean Sea , they prevented them from having access to the Red Sea . Thus , they kept the trade of the Indian Ocean exclusively in their hands . In the Mediterranean trade , the Ayyubids drew large benefits in the form of taxes and commissions which they learned from the Italians .

Upon the development of international trade , the elementary principles of credit and banking were developed . Both Jewish and Italian merchants had regular banking agents in Syria , who transacted business on behalf of their masters . Bills of exchange were also used by them in their dealings with one another and money was deposited in various banking centers throughout Syria . The

encouragement of trade and industry provided the Ayyubid sultans with the funds needed for military expenditure as well as for developmental and everyday lifestyle works . Special attention was made to the economic state of the empire under al @-@ Adil and al @-@ Kamil . The latter maintained a strict control over expenditure ; it is said that on his death he left a treasury which was equivalent to the budget of one full year .

= = = Education = = =

Being well @-@ educated themselves , the Ayyubid rulers became munificent patrons of learning and educational activity . Different madrasa @-@ type schools were built by them throughout the empire , not only for education , but also to popularize knowledge of Sunni Islam . According to Ibn Jubayr , under Saladin , Damascus had 20 schools , 100 baths , and a large number of Sufi dervish monasteries . He also built several schools in Aleppo , Jerusalem , Cairo , Alexandria , and in various cities in the Hejaz . Similarly , many schools were built by his successors also . Their wives and daughters , commanders , and nobles established and financed numerous educational institutions as well .

Although the Ayyubids were from the Shafi 'i denomination , they built schools for imparting instruction in all four of the Sunni systems of religious @-@ juridical thought . Before the Ayyubid takeover , there were no schools for the Hanbali and Maliki denominations in Syria , but the Ayyubids founded separate schools for them . In the mid @-@ 13th century , Ibn Shaddad counted in Damascus 40 Shafi 'i , 34 Hanafi , 10 Hanbali , and three Maliki schools .

When Saladin restored Sunni orthodoxy in Egypt , 10 madrasas were established during his reign , and an additional 25 during the entire Ayyubid period of rule . Each of their locations had religious , political , and economic significance , in particular those in al @-@ Fustat . Most of the schools were dedicated to the Shafi 'i denomination , but others belonged to the Maliki and Hanafi madhabs . The madrasas built near the tomb of Imam al @-@ Shafi 'i were located adjacent to the important centers of pilgrimage and were a major focus of Sunni devotion . About 26 schools were built in Egypt , Jerusalem and Damascus by high @-@ ranking government officials , and unusual for the time , commoners also founded in Egypt about 18 schools , including two medical institutions .

Most schools were residential whereby both teachers and students resided as a rule . The teachers appointed were jurists , theologians , and traditionalists who received their salary from endowments to the institutions they taught in . Each student was offered a lodging where he would resort , a teacher to instruct him in whatever art he requested , and regular grants to cover all his needs . Madrasas were considered prestigious institutions in society . Under the Ayyubids , it was not possible to obtain a job in the government without receiving an education from a madrasa .

= = = Science and medicine = = =

The facilities and patronage provided by the Ayyubids led to a resurgence in intellectual activity in different branches of knowledge and learning throughout the territories they controlled . They took special interest in the fields of medicine , pharmacology , and botany . Saladin built and maintained two hospitals in Cairo emulating the well @-@ known Nuri Hospital in Damascus which not only treated patients , but also provided medical schooling . Many scientists and physicians flourished in this period in Egypt , Syria , and Iraq . Among them were Maimonides , Ibn Jami , Abdul Latif al @-@ Baghdadi , al @-@ Dakhwar , Rashidun al @-@ Suri , and Ibn al @-@ Baitar . Some of these scholars served the Ayyubid household directly , becoming the personal physicians of sultans .

= = = Architecture = = =

Military architecture was the supreme expression of the Ayyubid period , as well as an eagerness to fortify the restoration of Sunni Islam , especially in a previously Shia @-@ dominated Egypt by constructing Sunni madrasas . The most radical change Saladin implemented in Egypt was the enclosure of Cairo and al @-@ Fustat within one city wall . Some of the techniques of fortification

were learned from the Crusaders , such as curtain walls following the natural topography . Many were also inherited from the Fatimids like machicolations and round towers , while other techniques were developed simultaneously by the Ayyubids , particularly concentric planning .

Muslim women , particularly those from the Ayyubid family , the families of local governors , and the families of the ulema (" religious scholars ") took an active role in Ayyubid architecture . Damascus witnessed the most sustained patronage of religious architecture by women . They were responsible for the construction of 15 madrasas , six Sufi hospices , and 26 religious and charitable institutions . In Aleppo , the Firdaws Madrasa , known as the most impressive Ayyubid building in Syria , had regent queen Dayfa Khatun as its patron .

In September 1183 , construction of the Cairo Citadel began under Saladin 's orders . According to al @-@ Maqrizi , Saladin chose the Muqattam Hills to build the citadel because the air there was fresher than anywhere else in the city , but its construction was not so much determined by the salubrious atmosphere ; rather it was out of defensive necessity and example of existing fortresses and citadels in Syria . The walls and towers of the northern section of the citadel are largely the works of Saladin and al @-@ Kamil . Two of Saladin 's towers were totally encased by semi @-@ circular units . Al @-@ Kamil completed the citadel ; he strengthened and enlarged some of the existing towers , and also added a number of square towers which served as self @-@ contained keeps . According to Richard Yeomans , the most impressive of al @-@ Kamil 's structures was the series of massive rectangular keeps which straddled the walls of the northern enclosure . All of al @-@ Kamil 's fortifications can be identified by their embossed , rusticated masonry , whereas Saladin 's towers have smooth dressed stones . This heavier rustic style became a common feature in other Ayyubid fortifications , and can be seen in the Citadel of Damascus and that of Bosra in Syria .

Aleppo underwent major transformations in the Ayyubid period , specifically during the reign of az @-@ Zahir Ghazi . Ayyubid architectural achievements focused on four areas : the citadel , the waterworks , fortifications , and the extramural developments . The total rebuilding of the city enclosure began when az @-@ Zahir Ghazi removed the vallum of Nur ad @-@ Din ? which by then outlived its temporary need ? and rebuilt the northern and northwestern walls ? the most susceptible to outside attack ? from Bab al @-@ Jinan to Bab al @-@ Nasr . He parceled out the building of the towers on this stretch of the wall to his princes and military officers ; each tower was identified with a particular prince who inscribed his name into it . Later , az @-@ Zahir Ghazi extended the eastern wall to the south and east , reflecting his desire to incorporate a dilapidated fortress , Qala 'at al @-@ Sharif , outside the city into Aleppo 's enclosure . Bab Qinnasrin was completely rebuilt by an @-@ Nasir Yusuf in 1256 . This gate stands today as a masterpiece of medieval Syrian military architecture . Cumulatively , Ayyubid architecture left a lasting impression in Aleppo . The citadel was rebuilt , the water network was expanded , and streets and quarters were provided fountains and baths . In addition , dozens of shrines , mosques , madrasas , and mausoleums were built throughout the city .

The Ayyubid period in Jerusalem following its conquest by Saladin was marked by a huge investment in the construction of houses , markets , public bathes , and pilgrim hostels . Numerous works were undertaken at the Temple Mount . Saladin ordered all the inner walls and pillars of the Dome of the Rock to be covered in marble and he initiated the renovation of the mosaics on the dome 's drum . The mihrab of the al @-@ Aqsa Mosque was repaired and in 1217 , al @-@ Mu 'azzam Isa built the northern porch of the mosque with three gates . The Dome of the Ascension was also built and restoration work was done to the existing free @-@ standing domes of the Temple Mount .