

NESLIHAN KAYA

(Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes (IFEA), Istanbul)

ORCID: 0000-0001-8401-6306 

Architects, Stonemasons and Craftsmen of the Ayyūbid Period in Upper Mesopotamia (12th–15th centuries)¹

Abstract

This article focuses on the architects, stonemasons and craftsmen of the Ayyūbid period (12th–15th centuries) in Upper Mesopotamia. Founded in Egypt in 1174, the Ayyūbid dynasty spread to Syria, Palestine, Yemen and Upper Mesopotamia, making significant artistic and architectural contributions to these regions. From 579H/1183 the Ayyūbids were active in important cities such as ‘Ayntāb, Ar-Ruhā, Harrān, Āmid, Mayyāfāriqīn, Ḥiṣn Kayfā and Si‘irt in Upper Mesopotamia. Ḥiṣn Kayfā became one of the most important centres of the Ayyūbids in the region from the 12th to the 15th century. In addition, in cities such as Āmid, Mardin, Dūnaysīr and Mayyāfāriqīn, the Artuqids lived under the Ayyūbids and minted coins reflecting this affiliation, bearing the names of Ayyūbid rulers. Arabic inscriptions on buildings often include the names of craftsmen. Examples of architects working with the Artuqids and Ayyūbids can also be found in Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn. The Ayyūbid craftsmen included architects, stonemasons, *minbar* makers and plasterers. This study represents the first comprehensive examination of the workers of Ayyūbid architecture in Upper Mesopotamia from the 12th to the 15th centuries.

Keywords: Ayyūbids, Artuqids, Upper Mesopotamia, 12th–15th centuries, architects, stonemasons, craftsmen

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Introduction

While the Ayyūbid dynasty has often been closely associated with the battles and wars of the Crusader era, Ayyūbid military architecture has naturally been of most interest to contemporary chroniclers and researchers. Those involved in the construction of these buildings have been largely forgotten in historiography. However, traces of their work can be identified through the diversity of sources available for this period. In addition, Egypt and Syria have been the most common areas of study for Ayyūbid architecture, due to the number of remarkable remains preserved from this period, but also due to less investment in other regions of the Ayyūbid domain, notably Upper Mesopotamia, called *Al-Ğazīra* by Arab geographers, which means “island” or “peninsula”². This region, however, highlights different architectural influences and provides material that is well worth considering.

The region of *Al-Ğazīra* was divided into three provinces based on the names of three Arabian tribal groups that settled in Mesopotamia during the Sasanian period (3rd to 7th centuries) and that continued their movement northwards after the Arab-Islamic conquest: Diyār Rabī‘a, Diyār Muḍar and Diyār Bakr³. Medieval geographers reported that the main districts of *Al-Ğazīra* included Ar-Ruhā (Şanlıurfa), Ḥarrān, Al-Bīra (Birecik), Qal‘at Rūm (Halfeti), Hizan, Arzān (Erzen), Āmid (Diyarbakır), Mayyāfariqīn (Silvan), Ḥiṣn Kayfā, Si‘irt, Ḥānī, Ḥazrō, Tall Fāfān, Mardin, Tūr ‘Abdīn (“the mountain of the servants” in Syriac), Dārā, Nişībīn, Ğazīrat Ibn ‘Umar (Cizre), Mosul, Singār, Ra’s al-‘Ayn (Ceylanpınar), Qal‘at Nağm, Qal‘at Ğa‘bar, and Ğisr Manbiğ, as well as Dūnaysīr, Ḥābūr, Samosate (Samsat), Al-Muwazzar (Viranşehir), Raqqā, and Sarūğ (Suruç)⁴. The geographical term *Al-Ğazīra* continued to be used during the Ayyūbid period to refer to this region.

Originally from the town of Dvin in Armenia, the Kurdish commander Saladin and his family first appeared in the Zengid state. Taking advantage of the political vacuum created by the death of the Zengid leader Nūr ad-Dīn Maḥmūd (r. 541H/1146–569H/1174)⁵, Saladin officially established the state of Ayyūbid, named after his father. The borders of

² The region of *Al-Ğazīra* was referred to in ancient Greek as Mesopotamia, derived from the words *mesos* and *potamos*, meaning “between the rivers”. This term theoretically encompassed all the lands between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Abdūlgani Bulduk, *el-Cezire’nin Muhtasar Tarihi*, (trans.) Mustafa Öztürk and İbrahim Yılmazçelik, Elazığ 2004, p. XIX; Marius Canard, *Histoire de la dynastie des Hamdanides de Jazira et de Syrie*, Alger 1951, p. 75.

³ Marius Canard, *Histoire de la dynastie des Hamdanides de Jazira et de Syrie*, Alger 1951, p. 77.

⁴ Abdūlmü’mīn b. Abdilhak İbn Şemāil el-Katī’i Safiyyüddīn (v. 739/1338), *Merāsidi’l-ittilā‘ ‘alā esmāi’l-emkineti ve’l-beka’*, 1. bs., Beirut 1992, 1, pp. 331–332. The names of the cities we indicate in parentheses are the ones currently used. In particular, names of medieval cities within the current borders of Turkey were generally changed with the establishment of the Republic.

⁵ Bahā’ ad-Dīn Ibn Şaddād, *Nawādir*, Al-Qāhira 1964, (trans.) D. S. Richards, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, Aldershot, 2001, p. 17; Ibn al-Munşī’ al-Ḥisnī, *Hasankeyf Vekayinamesi (Nuzhat an-nāizr fī rāḥat al-ḥāṭir)*, (trans.) Eyyüp Tanrıverdi and Adnan Çevik, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Wien, nr. Cod. ixt. 355, 4b; Vladimir Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian history: I. New light on the Shaddādids of Ganja. II. The Shaddādids of Ani. III. Prehistory of Saladin*, London 1953, p. 123; Anne-Marie Eddé and Françoise Micheau, ‘Saladin et la dynastie des Ayyoubides’, Paris 2001, pp. 17–18; Anne-Marie Eddé, *Saladin*, Paris 2016, pp. 10–34.

the Ayyūbid state covered a vast area stretching from Egypt to Yemen, including Palestine (Jerusalem), Syria and Upper Mesopotamia. In the *Al-Ğazīra*, Saladin maintained territorial integrity under a single authority from 579H/1183 to 589H/1193. After Saladin's death, the government was divided between his brother Al-Malik al-‘Ādil Sayf ad-Dīn and his children. The names of the Ayyūbid rulers, indicating their allegiance to the Ayyūbids, can be found on the Artuqid coins minted in the cities of Āmid, Mardin, Dūnaysīr and Hışn Kayfā⁶. With the Mongol invasion of 1260, the territorial integrity of the Ayyūbids was largely lost; only Hışn Kayfā and its environs remained under Ayyūbid control until the mid-15th century. The Ayyūbids of Hışn Kayfā kept the traces of their dynasty by minting coins and undertaking extensive building work in Hışn Kayfā. Arabic inscriptions and coins left by descendants of the al-Ayyūbī lineage are common in the remains from this period. Hışn Kayfā underwent a process of transition between the Aq Qoyunlus (“White Sheep”) and later the Ottomans in the mid-15th century. This marked the end of the Hışn Kayfā Ayyūbids (630–866 H/1232–1462), the longest-lived branch of the Ayyūbid dynasty. The last branch of the Ayyūbids had maintained their rule in Upper Mesopotamia, where the dynasty had originated four centuries before. Despite their expansion across vast territories, their legacy eventually returned to the lands of their origin, illustrating how historical power dynamics can shape the fate of a dynasty over time.

In Upper Mesopotamia between the 12th and 15th centuries, builders or building experts played a crucial role in promoting Ayyūbid architecture, complementing that of the patrons. The names of the patrons who funded the Islamic and Christian buildings are afforded notoriety, but the architects and craftsmen of these buildings are equally significant artisans. The beauty and strength of these buildings are influenced not only by the ideas of their patrons, but also by the skill and creativity of the architects and craftsmen who turn those ideas into reality. Understanding the relationship between these two groups is essential to the appreciation of our architectural heritage. This article examines the architects and stonemasons of Upper Mesopotamia, highlighting the lack of detailed studies of Ayyūbid craftsmen in the region.

A total of 27 artists have been identified from inscriptions on public, religious and military monuments. Some sites have several inscriptions by the same craftsman. It was therefore necessary to compare the epigraphic evidence with literary sources, which focus on the political context rather than the biographies of the architects. Unlike in other regions, the builders who signed the inscriptions were usually responsible for the entire monument. Although direct evidence is limited, inscriptions and literary sources together suggest that these builders played an extensive role in the design and construction of their respective structures⁷.

⁶ See İsmail Galip Edhem, *Catalogue des Monnaies Turcomanes, Beni Ortok, Beni Zengui, Frou Atabegyh Et Meliks Eyoubites de Meiyafarikin*, Constantinople 1894; Ramazan Uykur, ‘Artuklu Sikkelerinde Yazı ve Süsleme Kompozisyonu’ (PhD diss., Ankara Gazi University, 2010); Necla Akkaya, ‘Mardin Müzesi’ndeki İslami Dönem Sikkelerinden Örnekler’ (PhD diss., Konya Selçuk University, 2011).

⁷ This interpretation is based on the analysis of inscriptions and the roles described in literary sources, including Sevay Okay-Atılğan, ‘Ortaçağ Anadolu Türk-İslâm Mimarisinde Sanatçılar’, *Erdem*, 12/34, (1999), p. 164.

After compiling the vocabulary used to describe those involved in construction during the Ayyubid period, we will analyse the various Ayyūbid inscriptions from Upper Mesopotamia, which provide information about the workers who contributed to the construction of the buildings, and place them in their ancient context. In each case we will look at the vocabulary used, the date of the material analysed, and the individuals involved.

Identifying the building workers of the “Ayyūbid” period

The most common formula used in Arabic inscriptions to identify master builders of Ayyūbid architecture is the Arabic root *‘amal* (عمل), which can be read as either the noun *‘amal* (“work of”) or the past conjugated verb *‘amala* (“has done”)⁷. In addition, the root *‘umr* (عمر), which means “to repair, restore (a building)”, can also be found. Following these roots, titles and functions are often added as epithets before or after the person's name. The active participle *‘āmil* (عامل), meaning “one who builds”⁸, was used alone or with additional epithets, similar to inscriptions found on medieval Anatolian monuments. Additionally, the title *al-bannā’* (البناء), which translates as “the builder, the architect”, refers to a master builder or monument builder. This term may sometimes precede the name of the builder in the form *‘amal al-bannā’* or be combined with *‘āmil*. In addition, *al-mi’ mār* (المعمار) refers specifically to “the architect”, and this term, derived from the root *‘umr* (“to repair, restore”), is used before the expert’s signature. Another important title is *al-ustād* (الأستاذ), meaning “the master”, which emphasises the authority and expertise of the individual, often due to their seniority and experience. This epithet can be used alone or in conjunction with the root *‘amal* or the active participle *‘āmil*, which serves as a true professional title⁹. In some contexts, the term *ṣāhib* (صاحب) is used, meaning “owner”. Although it does not denote a specific profession, in certain contexts it refers to the manager of an establishment who can organise and manage it¹⁰. The term *tarsīm* (ترسيم), meaning “drawing, plan”, when associated with a person, refers to the indicated architect. In rare cases, the presence of the roots *‘amal* and *‘umr* or the use of titles such as *al-bannā’*, *al-mi’ mār*, or *al-ustād* may not identify a master builder. In such cases, whether the person was an architect or a stonemason can only be determined by the context and content of the inscription. In rare cases, identification as a builder cannot be made either by the presence of the roots عمل and عمر or using an epithet (the noun *tarsīm*, titles such as *al-bannā’*,

⁷ Albert Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français, contenant toutes les racines de la langue arabe, leurs dérivés, tant dans l’idiome vulgaire que dans l’idiome littéral, ainsi que les dialectes d’Alger et de Maroc*, Paris 1860, p. 364.

⁸ Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, ‘Yapı Faaliyetlerinin Organizasyonu: İşveren, Mimar ve Sanatçılar’, *Anadolu Selçukluları ve Beylikler Dönemi Uygarlığı: Mimarlık ve Sanat*, Ankara 2006, p. 128.

⁹ Zafer Bayburtluoğlu, *Anadolu’da Selçuklu Dönemi Yapı Sanatçıları*, Erzurum 1993, p. 25; Sevay Okay-Atılğan, ‘Ortaçağ Anadolu Türk-İslâm Mimarisinde Sanatçılar’, pp. 161–162; Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, ‘Yapı Faaliyetlerinin Organizasyonu: İşveren, Mimar ve Sanatçılar’, pp. 128–130.

¹⁰ Leo Ary Mayer, *Islamic Architects and their works*, Genève 1956, p. 27.

al-ustād, etc.). Only the context and content of the inscription can then help to identify this individual as an architect or stonemason.

In the rather unique case of the Ayyūbid emirate of Ḥiṣn Kayfā, it is worth noting that a unique term is once used to describe a professional builder in this city. In the 14th century, the Ayyūbid historian Ibn Munšī, in his chronicle about Ḥiṣn Kayfā, refers to individuals involved in the construction of a building as “*fāsūl-s*”. This word has no equivalent in Arabic and can only be understood as “stonemason” when referring to the Syriac term “*fosūlo*” (فوسلو)¹¹. The term does not appear in the Ayyūbid inscriptions of Ḥiṣn Kayfā. It is not entirely surprising to find a term borrowed from Syriac in the writings of an Arabic-speaking and Muslim author from Ḥiṣn Kayfā. This city lies on the northern edge of the Syriac Orthodox heartland that was and still is Ṭur ‘Abdin. The region, situated between Mardin, Nişībīn and Midyat, remained an important centre in the production of Syriac texts and some inscriptions. It is highly likely that the Syriac Christian populations living in the area played an active role alongside Muslims in the region’s construction activities. This interaction also influenced the technical vocabulary of occupational names in the area. Furthermore, during fieldwork in Ḥiṣn Kayfā in 2018, I noted the presence of a small church opposite the Ar-Rizq Mosque, which may have belonged to the Syriac rite. The materials and techniques used in the construction of this church were similar to those used in buildings from the Islamic period. These elements strongly suggest a mutual exchange in architectural and artistic traditions between the different religious communities, especially Christians and Muslims, under the Ayyūbid rule. The role of Christians in the construction of buildings is undoubtedly significant in a region where their presence persisted considerably.

In Ayyūbid Upper Mesopotamia, however, an important example is the wooden *minbar* of the Great Mosque of Si‘irt, now in the Ethnographic Museum in Ankara¹². The calligrapher of the *minbar*, Yūsuf al-Ḥayālī, signed his name with the title *mudarris* (مدرس), which means “teacher” or “instructor”. Apart from these examples, epigraphy of the same period contains the verbal roots كُتِبَ (*kataba*), “to write”, and حُرِرَ (*harrara*), “to write, to compose carefully”, which precede the names of calligraphers who composed inscriptions on *minbar-s* and *miḥrāb-s*¹³. Therefore, the practice of signing calligraphic works was virtually absent during the Ayyūbid period in Upper Mesopotamia, and the evidence for this observation is limited.

The Arabic inscription found on the northern exterior wall of the Šāfi‘ī *madrassa* within the *kulliya* Šalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī in Ar-Ruhā (**Image 1**), an important Ayyūbid city in

¹¹ Ibn al-Munšī’ al-Ḥisnī, *Hasankeyf Vekaynamesi (Nuzhat al-nāzir fi rāḥat al-ḥātir)*, p. 92a; Baluken Yusuf, ‘Hasankeyf Eyyübileri (630–866/1232–1462) / The Ayyubids of Hasankeyf (630–866/1232–1462)’ (PhD diss, Erzurum Atatürk University, 2016), p. 338.

¹² Zafer Bayburtluoğlu, *Anadolu’da Selçuklu Dönemi Yapı Sanatçıları*, p. 77; Sevay Okay-Atılğan, ‘Ortaçağ Anadolu Türk-İslâm Mimarisinde Sanatçılar’, p. 70.

¹³ Semra Ögüt, *Anadolu Selçuklu Sanatı Üzerine görüşler*, İstanbul 1986, p. 45.

Upper Mesopotamia, was written by a person named Ḥamza¹⁴. The craftsman's name appears in the seventh and last line of the inscription, where the Arabic phrase على يد (‘*ala yad*’), which translates into English as “by, by the hand of”, is present. This craftsman has no title or filiation and is referred to only by his first name. While he may be the engraver of the inscription, it is also possible that he was the master builder responsible for the construction. According to the inscription, the al-Šāfi‘ī *madrasa* was built in 587H/1191¹⁵. The craftsmen thus worked in the service of the Ayyūbid sultan Al-Malik an-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Yūsuf (r. 578–589H/1183–1193). Based on this date, he can be considered one of the earliest known craftsmen working during the Ayyūbid period in Upper Mesopotamia.

‘Ayntāb was an important Ayyūbid city in western Upper Mesopotamia, close to the northern border of Syria. In this city, which has architectural features similar to those of Aleppo, the last line of a two-line restoration inscription on the right side of the entrance to the ‘Umariyya Mosque contains information dated to 607H/1210 (**Image 2**). The name ‘Alī does not appear with any of the special titles commonly used for craftsmen, such as *al-bannā*’ or *al-ustād*; nor are they identified by a *laqab* or a *nisba*. However, the phrase عمله على (‘*amalah* ‘*Alī*’) indicates that they were responsible for these works, meaning “was done by ‘Alī” or “‘Alī did”. Zeki Sönmez has suggested that ‘Alī belongs to the Seljuq period, while Halil-İbrahim Yakar dates the restoration of the mosque to the reign of the Seljuq sultan ‘Izz ad-Dīn Mas‘ūd (r. 1116–1156). By this time, however, the Ayyūbids were in control of ‘Ayntāb under the authority of Al-Malik aḏ-Zāhir (r. 1193–1216), the Emir of Aleppo. The craftsman ‘Alī was therefore working within an Ayyūbid principality and not during the Seljuq period. Since the literary sources do not help to clarify the biographies of these individuals, it can be noted that ‘Alī’s choice of materials and construction techniques in the ‘Umariyya mosque suggest that he may have been a resident of this region, or even of Syria. Indeed, the use of local basalt is practical, as it is abundant in the northern and southern parts of the ‘Ayntāb region; furthermore, the bichrome design (*ablaq* technique), typically consisting of either black and white or red and white, found in the mosque’s facade, entrance, floor, and *miḥrāb*, is a feature commonly found in Zengid and Ayyūbid buildings in Syria. For example, this technique is evident in several notable structures such as the Mosque of Nūr ad-Dīn (1164) in Hama¹⁶, Mārīstān Nūrī (1154), *Madrasa* al-‘Ādiliyya (592–615H/1196–1218), *Madrasa* Rukniyya (1224), *Madrasa* Šāḥibiyya (1232), *Madrasa* Atābakiyya (1242), *Madrasa* Nāṣiriyya (1255) in

¹⁴ Neslihan Kaya, ‘Émergence et développement de l’architecture Ayyoubide en Haute Mésopotamie (XII^e–XV^e siècles): éléments pour une histoire architecturale, épigraphique et ornementale’ (PhD diss., University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2023), p. 119.

¹⁵ Kemal Kapaklı (trans.), *Urfa Hakkında Salsaneme* (1927), İstanbul 1998, pp. 39–40; Albert Gabriel and Jean Sauvaget, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, Paris 1940, 1940, p. 356; Neslihan Kaya, ‘Émergence et développement de l’architecture Ayyoubide en Haute Mésopotamie (XII^e–XV^e siècles)’, pp. 117–119.

¹⁶ Abd al-Razzaq Moaz and Zena Takieddine, ‘Ayyubid Art and Architecture’, in: *The Ayyubid Era: Art and Architecture in Medieval Syria*, Vienna 2015, p. 63.

Damascus¹⁷, *Madrasa* al-Firdaws (1235), *Madrasa* az-Zāhiriyya (1220), *Madrasa* aş-Şazbaḥtiyya (1193), *Ḥanqa* al-Farāfira (1237), and *Madrasa* al-Kāmiliyya (1230) in Aleppo. These examples illustrate the widespread use of the *ablaq* technique in the architectural heritage of the Zengid and Ayyūbid periods.

The three-line Arabic inscription on the southern entrance of the Yeni (New) ‘Umariyya Mosque/ *masğid* in the centre of Ar-Ruhā (**Image 3**) indicates that the mosque was built by Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad. The name of the craftsman is preceded by the professional title *al-ustād*. According to the inscription, the mosque was built in 610H/1214¹⁸. The period of the craftsman who built the structure coincides with the reign of the Ayyūbid Al-Malik al-Aşraf Muẓaffar ad-Dīn Mūsā (r. 607–617H/1210–1220) over Ar-Ruhā and its surroundings.

The wooden *minbar*, made using the *kundakarī* technique and belonging to the Grand Mosque in Si‘irt, has Arabic inscriptions bearing the names of seven different craftsmen. Originally part of the mosque, the *minbar* is now exhibited in the Ankara Ethnography Museum (**Image 4**). The names of the craftsmen are ‘Abd al-Fatāh Ibn *al-ḥāğğ* Ismā‘īl, ‘Alī Ibn Abū Bakr, ‘Alī Ibn *al-ustād*, ‘Umar Ibn *şayḥ* ‘Uṭmān, Muḥammad Ibn *şayḥ* ‘Uṭmān, Ḍiyā al-Arḍurūmī, Ilyās al-Mawşulī, and Yūsuf al-Ḥayālī. This work is an important example of Ayyūbid art from a period when the craftsmen were at their most prosperous. The name of ‘ ‘Abd al-Fattāh Ibn *al-ḥāğğ* Ismā‘īl appears in the inscription on the door of the *minbar*, indicating that it was built in 611H/1215¹⁹ during the Ayyūbid reign of Al-Malik al-Aşraf Muẓaffar ad-Dīn Mūsā (r. 607–617H/1210–1220). However, the inscription on the *minbar*, dated 611, most likely refers to renovation and restoration work carried out in the late Ottoman period. This is because the format of the date in the inscription differs from the traditional way in which dates are usually written in other inscriptions. Normally, dates in inscriptions are given in full and clearly, but in this inscription only the Arabic numerals (611) are used. This unusual situation suggests that the *minbar* may have been damaged and had to be rebuilt. In such a case, the craftsmen involved in the original construction of the *minbar* may have reproduced the same inscription after the damage, creating a restoration that remained consistent with the original. The name of Ḍiyā al-Arḍurūmī is found on the cone of the *minbar*²⁰, preceded by the term *عمله* (*‘amalah*), meaning “was made by”. His name also includes the designation Al-Arḍurūmī, indicating that he was from the Erzurum region, where he helped to build the wooden *minbar*. Ilyās al-Mawşulī’s name appears next to Ḍiyā al-Arḍurūmī’s on the cone

¹⁷ François Bogard, ‘Décor architectural et mécénat à Damas aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles’ (PhD diss, Aix-Marseille Université, 2011), pp. 443–447; Ernst Herzfeld, ‘Damascus: Studies in Architecture’, Part I, *Ars Islamica* 9 (1942), pp. 2–11.

¹⁸ Max Van Berchem, *Inscripfen aus Syrien, Mesopotamien, und Kleinasien gesammelt im Jahre 1899 von Max Freiherrn von Oppenheim, I, Arabische Inscripten*, Leipzig 1909, p. 61; Mahmut Karakaş, *Şanlıurfa ve İlçelerinde Kitabeler*, Konya 2012, pp. 164–165.

¹⁹ Mehmet-Zeki Oral, ‘Anadolu’da San’at Değeri olan Ahşap Minberler, Kitabeler ve Tarihçeleri’, *Vakıflar Dergisi* 5 (1962), p. 39; Gülay Apa-Kurtişoğlu, *Anadolu Selçuklu Dönemi Ahşap Minberleri*, Konya 2015, p. 148.

²⁰ Mehmet-Zeki Oral, ‘Anadolu’da San’at Değeri olan Ahşap Minberler, p. 40; Gülay Apa-Kurtişoğlu, *Anadolu Selçuklu Dönemi Ahşap Minberleri*, p. 150.

of the *minbar*, indicating that they worked together. Like Diyā al-Ardurūmī, Diyā's name is preceded by عمله (*ʿamalah*). Both craftsmen came to Si'irt from different regions to build the *minbar*; Ilyās is from Mossoul in Iraq. 'Alī Ibn *al-ustād* is referred to by the title *al-ustād* in the inscription on the *minbar*. The name of *al-hāgg* Muḥammad Ibn *ṣayḥ* 'Utmān appears alongside that of *al-hāgg* 'Alī Ibn 'Abī Bakr in the inscription on the *minbar*, suggesting that they worked together on the *minbar*. It is also known that *al-hāgg* Muḥammad Ibn *ṣayḥ* 'Utmān and *al-hāgg* 'Umar Ibn *ṣayḥ* 'Utmān were brothers. These two siblings assisted the craftsman known as *al-ustād* 'Alī Ibn Abī Bakr. Yūsuf al-Ḥayālī's name is inscribed on the wooden *minbar*²¹, preceded by the title *mudarris*. As the calligrapher of the *minbar*, Yūsuf al-Ḥayālī signed with the title *mudarris*, which means "teacher" or "instructor".

Abū al-Farağ, the façade of the basalt semicircular tower (XI), located between the Harput (Dağ) and Urfa (Ar-Ruhā) gates of the surviving Āmid city walls, bears a three-line Arabic inscription (**Image 5**). This inscription refers to Abū al-Farağ with the title *al-bannā* (البناء) preceding his name. According to the text of the inscription, this craftsman was involved in the construction of the tower in 634H/1236 and served under the Ayyūbid ruler Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih. Sultan Al-Malik al-Kāmil I conquered Āmid completely from the Artuqids in 630H/1232 and appointed his son Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih as governor of the city²². After the conquering of Āmid, Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih initiated the first restoration of the city walls. The same inscription also mentions another craftsman named Ğa'far Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī. According to Zeki Sönmez, Abū al-Farağ was a disciple of Ğa'far Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī²³.

The name of 'Īsā Abū Dirham appears in Arabic inscription on the front of the semicircular tower (X) of the basalt city walls in Āmid (**Image 6**). Like Abū al-Farağ, this craftsman is referred to by the title *al-bannā* (البناء). According to the inscription on the tower, this structure was built in 634H/1236 in the service of Ayyūbid Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih, and the inscription indicates that he participated in the construction of the tower alongside Ğa'far Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī. In addition to this tower, the name of 'Īsā Abū Dirham is also found in the inscription of Bāb al-Farağ ("The Gate of Liberation"), one of the walls of Āmid, built in 595H/1198 by the Artuqid ruler Al-Malik al-Mas'ūd Sukmān Ibn Muḥammad²⁴, who served under the Ayyūbids. In addition, the name of 'Īsā Abū Dirham appears on a basalt stone on the southern facade of the courtyard gate of the Zinciriyе *madrasa* in Āmid. However, this inscription does not include the date of construction of the *madrasa* or any information about the sultan or malik of the period, leaving open the

²¹ Mehmet-Zeki Oral, 'Anadolu'da San'at Değeri olan Ahşap Minberler, p. 40; Gülay Apa-Kurtişoğlu, *Anadolu Selçuklu Dönemi Ahşap Minberleri*, pp. 148–150.

²² R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193–1260*, Albany 1977, pp. 221–222; M. Remzi Ataoğlu, 'Hisn-ı Keyfa Artuklu Devleti' (PhD diss, Ankara University, 1989), pp. 155–156.

²³ Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, *Başlangıçtan 16. yüzyıla kadar Anadolu Türk-İslâm mimarisinde sanatçılar*, Ankara 1989, p. 152.

²⁴ Albert Gabriel and Jean Sauvaget, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 322; Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, *Başlangıçtan 16. yüzyıla kadar Anadolu Türk-İslâm mimarisinde sanatçılar*, pp. 101–103.

question of whether the structure was built during the Artuqid or Ayyūbid periods. In other words, it is not possible to determine under which dynasty this craftsman was working for when he built the Zinciriye *madrassa* (late 12th to early 13th century). That said, it can be noted that the Ayyūbids attached great importance to the construction of *madrassa*-s, especially *šāfiʿī* *madrassa*-s. Albert Gabriel suggests that the Zinciriye *madrassa* was built during the reign of the Artuqid ruler Sukmān II²⁵. Based on this assertion, he indicates that the aforementioned craftsman worked here during the Artuqid period, which is supported by the presence of the architect's name on the inscription of the Bāb al-Farağ gate. According to the inscription of Bāb al-Farağ, it is certain that ʿĪsā Abū Dirham worked during the Artuqid period and continued to serve the Ayyūbids thereafter. The situation of this craftsman is similar to that of Ġaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, who also worked on monuments for both the Artuqids and the Ayyūbids. The first inscription to mention ʿĪsā Abū Dirham dates from 595H/1198 at the Bāb al-Farağ gate, while his last known project was the construction of the tower in 634H/1236. In addition to the religious structure of the *madrassa* in Āmid, ʿĪsā Abū Dirham also constructed military buildings such as city towers and defensive gates.

Ġaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī stands out among the surviving craftsmen as his name appears in various works. His name appears in two inscriptions on the facades of the X and XI semicircular towers (**Images 5–6**) of the city walls in Āmid²⁶. In his signature, his name is preceded by the term “*tarsīm*” (ترسيم), which means “plan” or “design”; this is the only example found in our study. The Arabic term suggests that this person was responsible for drawing up and designing the plans for the large basalt towers, specifically towers X and XI of the Āmid city wall. Ġaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī worked with two different architects in the construction of these towers. According to the two inscriptions, he drew the plans for tower XI with the craftsman Abū al-Farağ, and he also worked with ʿĪsā Abū Dirham on the construction of tower X. Thus, Ġaʿfar b. Maḥmūd can be characterised as the head architect of the Ayyūbid period. The inscriptions indicate that this work dates from 634H/1236, which corresponds to the reign of Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih. As his *nisba* (al-Ḥalabī) indicates, the craftsman was not from Āmid, but rather a Syrian from Aleppo. However, the researcher Güner İnal has noted that after the activities of Ġaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd, there are no further traces of Syrian architects in Upper Mesopotamia from the second half of the 13th century and the late 14th century²⁷. This situation raises questions about the recruitment of local architects following the involvement of Syrians in construction in Upper Mesopotamia. Besides Ġaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd, other craftsmen of Aleppo origin are known to have worked for the Anatolian Seljuqs. Only the name of Abū ʿAlī Ibn Abī ar-Rağā al-Kattānī al-Ḥalabī has survived from an inscription found in the castle of Sinop

²⁵ Albert Gabriel and Jean Sauvaget, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 323.

²⁶ Max Van Berchem and Josef Strzygowski, *Amida: matériaux pour l'épigraphie et l'histoire musulmanes du Diyar-Bekr*, Paris 1910, pp. 105–106; Albert Gabriel and Jean Sauvaget, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 325.

²⁷ Güner İnal, ‘Orta Çağlarda Anadolu’da çalışan Suriye ve Mezopotamyalı Sanatçılar/ Mesopotamian and Syrian artists working in Anatolia in the Middle Ages’, *Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı* 11 (1981), p. 85.

(612H/1215), one of the Seljuq cities in Anatolia that coincided with the Ayyūbid domination of Upper Mesopotamia. This person was the same architect who built the “Red Tower” in Alanya in 628H/1231²⁸. The inscription is incomplete because other lines have been damaged, though it appears that the craftsman was an architect who worked under the Seljuq sultan ‘Izz ad-Dīn Kay Kāwūs. According to Scott Redford, this inscription emphasises the close links with the Ayyūbids in Syria more than other inscriptions in Sinop²⁹. In addition, the name of Ğa‘far Ibn Maḥmūd appears in the Al-Mas‘ūdiyya *madrasa*, located within the walls of Āmid. The inscription referring to him is located in the southern part of the courtyard of the *madrasa*, and he is referred to by the titles *tarsīm* and *al-ustād*. In the inscription of the *madrasa*, Ğa‘far Ibn Maḥmūd worked with *al-bannā* Mas‘ūd³⁰. In his identified inscriptions of Ğa‘far Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, he always mentioned the names of the craftsmen with whom he worked. As seen in the previous examples of inscriptions, Ğa‘far Ibn Maḥmūd participated in important local projects and contributed to group efforts, always mentioning the names of the craftsmen with whom he worked in his inscriptions. There is no example of an inscription in which only the name is mentioned without specifying the person. On the other hand, four other inscriptions found in the Al-Mas‘ūdiyya *madrasa* indicate that the building was constructed during the Artuqid period under Ayyūbid rule. Ğa‘far Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī was commissioned to expand the *madrasa* in 620H/1223, a date that coincides with the reign of the Ayyūbid Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih. According to Güner İnal, Ğa‘far Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī also worked on the construction of the Artuqid Palace in Āmid during the reign of Mas‘ūd Rukn ad-Dīn Mawdūd (619–629H/1222–1231), who lived during the Ayyūbid period³¹. The name of the craftsman who worked during the Artuqid period, before he began to serve the Ayyūbids, is also mentioned in the inscription on the Halilviran (Devegeçidi) bridge between Āmid and Eğil. According to the inscription, the bridge was built by Ğa‘far Ibn Maḥmūd in 615H/1218 under the Artuqids. The architect is referred to here with the title *al-ustād*³². The name of Ğa‘far Ibn Maḥmūd also appears on the Ambarçayı bridge (early 13th century) between Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn³³. According to this text, Ğa‘far Ibn Maḥmūd worked alongside ‘Utmān Ibn Tākāk, who held the title of *gūlām*. During the Artuqid period, this person is also referred to as *al-ustād*. After the Ayyūbids completely took over the regions of Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn from the Artuqids, this architect continued to construct monumental buildings in the city of Āmid, including two towers. In his signature he is referred to by the title *Šuğā‘ ad-Dīn*, which means “the brave of the faith”. The construction

²⁸ Leo Ary Mayer, *Islamic Architects and their works*, pp. 35–36; Şakir M. Ülkütaşır, ‘Sinofta Selçukîler Zamanına ait Tarihî Eserler’, *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi* 5 (1949), pp. 119–120; Scott Redford, ‘Sinop in the Summer of 1215. The Beginning of Anatolian Seljuk Architecture’, *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 16 (2010), p. 6.

²⁹ Scott Redford, ‘Sinop in the Summer of 1215’, pp. 6–32.

³⁰ Hüseyin Karaçam, ‘Artuklu kitabeleri (1102–1409)’ (MA thesis, Marmara University, 2012), p. 123.

³¹ Güner İnal, ‘Orta Çağlarda Anadolu’da çalışan Suriye ve Mezopotamyalı Sanatçılar / Mesopotamian and Syrian artists working in Anatolia in the Middle Ages’, p. 85.

³² Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, *Başlangıçtan 16. yüzyıla kadar Anadolu Türk-İslâm mimarisinde sanatçılar*, pp. 132–139; Zafer Bayburtluoğlu, *Anadolu’da Selçuklu Dönemi Yapı Sanatçıları*, pp. 189–192.

³³ Albert Gabriel and Jean Sauvaget, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 341.

date of the Halilviran (Devegeçidi) bridge is 615H/1218, which is the first work mentioned by this architect. The last structure he built were the towers in the centre of the city, dated 634H/1236. The inscriptions indicate that this architect was involved in the construction of two bridges, a *madrasa*, a palace, and finally the city towers. This indicates that he is one of the rare individuals who built both religious and military buildings as well as bridges. He is also the architect whose name appears on the largest number of surviving works, with more structures than other well-known architects in the region. Ġa'far Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī reached the highest level of architecture during the Ayyūbid period and held the most diverse range of titles and honours, such as *al-bannā'*, *al-ustād*, *šugā' ad-dīn* and *tarsīm*.

The name Abū al-'Alā' Ibn Abī al-Faṭḥ appears in an inscription on the keystone of the arch of the Qulfaḥ gate (**Image 7**), east of the city of Mayyāfāriqīn³⁴. No descriptive titles such as *al-bannā'* or *al-ustād* are used before his name. However, the use of the root عمل (*'amal*) indicates that he was the builder of this structure. The architect's signature is inscribed on a rectangular block of limestone carved in the shape of a *tabula ansata* at the centre of the arch. While the names of architects are usually included in inscriptions relating to construction and repairs, the independent mention of this individual's name on a single stone inscription is unusual. Moreover, this positioning suggests that he was one of the most important architects of the period. Just above the inscription bearing the architect's signature, there is another three-line Arabic inscription on the upper part of the Qulfaḥ gate. The date of this inscription indicates that the architect, Abū al-'Alā', lived during the reign of Al-Malik al-Ašraf Muẓaffar ad-Dīn Mūsā (607–617H/1210–1220) and contributed to the construction works under his service. Zeki Sönmez mistakenly identifies this architect as one who worked under the Ayyūbid Al-Malik al-'Ādil Sayf ad-Dīn Abū Bakr (588–595H/1193–1198)³⁵. In addition, there is another inscription by Abū al-'Alā' Ibn Abī al-Faṭḥ that has not been mentioned or noted by previous scholars; this inscription is located under the door frame of the Šalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī mosque (**Image 8**) in Mayyāfāriqīn. This information is found only in Gertrude Bell's photograph in 1911³⁶. The inscription in the Šalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī mosque is the signature of an independent architect and contains phrases similar to those in the inscription on the Qulfaḥ gate. However, the materials and techniques of the two inscriptions are different. While the inscription on the Qulfaḥ gate is written in *nashī* script on carved limestone, the inscription on the Šalāḥ ad-Dīn mosque is executed in a graffiti style. Unfortunately, the inscription bearing the architect's signature could not be found in situ in the mosque. According to another Ayyūbid inscription on the *mihrāb* of the Šalāḥ ad-Dīn mosque, the niche was added to the *qibla* wall of the mosque by Al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Šihāb ad-Dīn Ġāzī. It can therefore be presumed that Abū al-'Alā' Ibn Abī al-Faṭḥ may have worked under the Ayyūbid sultans Al-Malik al-Ašraf (607–617H/1210–1220) and Al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Šihāb ad-Dīn Ġāzī (617–644H/1220–1247).

³⁴ Leo Ary Mayer, *Islamic Architects and their works*, p. 35.

³⁵ Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, *Başlangıçtan 16. yüzyıla kadar Anadolu Türk-İslâm mimarisinde sanatçılar*, p. 147.

³⁶ Viewed 5 October 2024, <https://gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/p/gb-3-1-19-1-121>.

In the mid-19th century, J. G. Taylor, visiting the region of Mayyāfāriqīn, read the name of a certain ‘Uṭmān, without any lineage, on the inscription of the eastern facade of the Malābādī bridge, east of Mayyāfāriqīn. According to the British historian, the text contained the date 643H/1245, indicating that it dated from the Ayyūbid period; the remainder of the inscription had become illegible³⁷. Almost a century later, Basri Konyar was able to observe this inscription on the Malābādī bridge and provided a description: the text was engraved on limestone in three or four lines, but was already quite damaged. Konyar was able to read the *basmala* introducing the text and the name of ‘Uṭmān³⁸. It is important to note that Konyar wrote down what he observed in Latin letters, and there is no Arabic version of the inscription. There is therefore no doubt that the inscription seen by Taylor is indeed the one identified by Konyar. Neither researcher has specified whether the ‘Uṭmān mentioned had a title or professional designation. Unfortunately, the inscription is no longer visible. There is also no photograph of it. It is known that the bridge underwent several restorations during the 20th century, but no scholarship is available regarding when the Ayyūbid dedication was lost. If the bridge was built during the Artuqid period, the inscription identified by Taylor and Konyar refers to an old restoration that took place in 643H/1245 under one of the Ayyūbid rulers, Al-Malik al-Kāmil Naṣīr ad-Dīn Muḥammad II (r. 644–658H/1247–1260). No ruler named ‘Uṭmān is known at this time. A few years earlier, another ‘Uṭmān is mentioned in the inscription of another bridge: ‘Uṭmān Ibn Tākāk. It is very likely that the two refer to the same person. The name of ‘Uṭmān Ibn Tākāk also appears on a restoration inscription dated 620H/1223 on the Ambarçayı bridge (**Image 9**), which stands on the road linking Mayyāfāriqīn to Āmid³⁹. Here he is referred to by both the titles *al-bannā*’ and *gūlām* (غلام). The first term clearly identifies him as an architect, while the second indicates his bond of loyalty and affection to the Artuqid ruler of the time. Another architect, Ğa‘far Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, who worked with him on the Ambarçayı bridge, is referred to by the title *ṣuġā’ ad-dīn* (شجاع الدين)⁴⁰. In the context of Islamic production, the term *gūlām* has been known to refer to metalworkers⁴¹. Thus, if there is a consensus on the identity of the architect, the epigraphic data would suggest that ‘Uṭmān Ibn Tākāk first carried out the restoration of the Ambarçayı bridge and later the restoration of the Malābādī bridge east of Mayyāfāriqīn during the Ayyūbid period. The quality of the second structure suggests that his experience had increased. ‘Uṭmān worked with other architects involved in the Artuqid and Ayyūbid constructions in Āmid, such as ‘Īsā Abū Dirham and Ğa‘far Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī⁴². Therefore, his title during the first part of his career under the Ayyūbids is not known, but it is known that he was called *al-bannā*’ during the Artuqid period.

³⁷ John George Taylor, ‘Travels in Kurdistan with Notices of the Sources of the Eastern and Western Tigris, and Ancient Ruins in Their Neighbourhood’, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 35 (1865), p. 25.

³⁸ Basri Konyar, *Diyarbakır Yılığı*, Cilt III, Ankara 1936, pp. 322–325.

³⁹ Basri Konyar, *Diyarbakır Yılığı*, Cilt II, Ankara 1936, pp. 142–143.

⁴⁰ Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, *Başlangıçtan 16. yüzyıla kadar Anadolu Türk-İslâm mimarisinde sanatçılar*, pp. 142–144.

⁴¹ Leo Ary Mayer, *Islamic Metalworkers and their works*, Geneva 1959, pp. 13–14.

⁴² Sevay Okay-Atılğan, ‘Ortaçağ Anadolu Türk-İslâm Mimarisinde Sanatçılar’, p. 175.

The name Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn Abī Saʿīd appears in a two-line Kufic inscription on the first floor of the west facade of the “broken minaret” of the Ayyūbid Mosque outside the walls of Mayyāfāriqīn (**Image 10**). The mosque is commonly referred to as the “Broken Minaret” due to the damaged upper part of the minaret. Only the minaret of the mosque remains standing and preserved, and it is on this minaret, rich in decoration and inscriptions, that the artist’s inscription is found. His name is preceded by the expression *ʿāmil al-ustād* (عامل استاد) together with the title *al-ustād*. According to Aynur Durukan, those who bear this title are considered both practitioners and experts in the field of construction. In other words, Durukan suggests that this title designates the person responsible for all construction work⁴³. As there is no date in the architect’s signature, the names of the sultans on the minaret and the dates of other inscriptions suggest that he worked on the minaret between 1212 and 1260. Bülent-Nuri erroneously claimed that the name Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn Abī Saʿīd was also mentioned in the inscription of Al-Malik al-Aṣraf Muẓaffar ad-Dīn Mūsā on the Qulfaḥ gate of the walls of Mayyāfāriqīn⁴⁴. However, an examination of the inscription on the Qulfaḥ gate reveals that only the name Abū al-ʿAlāʾ Ibn Abī al-Faṭḥ is mentioned, suggesting that these two architects are different individuals.

The name Muḥammad Ibn Tammām *al-Miʿmār* appears in a four-line Arabic inscription found in the Bazda quarry (**Image 11**) in the Tek Tek mountains of Ḥarrān⁴⁵. The title *al-miʿmār* at the end of his name indicates that his father was an architect. It is very likely that Muḥammad Ibn Tammām continued in the profession of architecture. According to the date mentioned in the inscription, he was active in Ḥarrān in 649H/1251. At that time, the Ayyūbid emir Al-Malik an-Nāṣir Yūsuf II (r. 644–658H/1247–1260) ruled over Ḥarrān and its surroundings. Therefore, Muḥammad Ibn Tammām pursued his career during the reign of Al-Malik an-Nāṣir Yūsuf II. He was a craftsman who used the carved limestone from the caves of Bazda in Ayyūbid monuments. The inscription reads “for the sun/*šams*”. The Bazda quarries were carved deeply and to great depths. It is believed that these areas were also used as living quarters, as they provided a cooler working environment for stonemasons and architects and protected them from the sun. Given that Ḥarrān was historically a very hot region, it is likely that this design was intentional and that the inscription was written inside the quarry for this reason. Most of the stone from these quarries was used in the construction of buildings in Ḥarrān and its environs. He is considered a rare example of an “architect” named in an inscription found in a quarry. However, he remains unidentified by modern scholars, as no inscription attributed to him has been deciphered. His name has only been found in the quarries mentioned above, with no other contextual references identified in the available sources.

⁴³ Aynur Durukan, *Anadolu Selçuklu Sanatında Kurucular ve Sanatçıları*, Ankara 2002, pp. 39–40.

⁴⁴ Bülent-Nuri Kılavuz, ‘Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi Minareleri’, I (PhD diss., Van Yüzüncü Yıl University, 2005), p. 191.

⁴⁵ Mahmut Karakaş, *Şanlıurfa ve İlçelerinde Kitabeler*, p. 418; Neslihan Kaya, ‘Émergence et développement de l’architecture Ayyoubide en Haute Mésopotamie (XII–XVème siècles)’, p. 530.

Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān’s name appears in a seven-line Arabic inscription in the Bazda quarry (**Image 12**) of the Tek Tek mountains of Ḥarrān⁴⁶. His name is found on the third line of the inscription. The contents indicate that he commissioned a *sabīl* (fountain) and that it belongs to him. The part in front of his name and the part after it in the line of the inscription are not clearly legible. However, it is believed that he was either an architect or the owner of the quarry where the inscription was found. According to the date given in the inscription, this fountain was built in the Bazda quarry in 653H/1255, during the reign of Ayyūbid Al-Malik an-Nāṣir Yūsuf II over Ḥarrān and its surroundings. On the other hand, although the inscription refers to the fountain, its exact location has not yet been identified. It is hoped that future extensive archaeological studies will help to determine its exact location.

The name Muḥammad al-‘Aḏār⁴⁷ is found in the quarries of the Tek Tek mountains in Ḥarrān (**Image 13**). On the ceiling of one quarry, several metres high, an Arabic blessing inscription, engraved and painted in red, refers to Muḥammad al-‘Aḏār as *ṣāhib* (صاحب), a term that can be understood as a manager or contractor in the quarry. Considering the elegance of the writing, the meticulousness of the engraving, the location of the inscription, and simply the importance of having an inscription, it can be inferred that this individual held an important status within the operation. He may have been a team leader and had some experience as a stonemason. There are two other inscriptions on the front face of the quarries in the Tek Tek mountains in Ḥarrān. One inscription reads “‘Alī marches as a saviour”, while the other bears the name ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Ḥakkārī/al-Ḥaqqārī. Since the texts consist of only a few words, the context surrounding these names remains limited. However, by examining the three inscriptions found in the Bazda caves, it can be concluded that both names probably belong to architects, stonemasons or owners of the quarries. It is important to note that it is unlikely that an ordinary person would have inscribed their name in these quarries. This suggests that these people had a significant professional or social status and played a crucial role in the activities of the quarries. Another possibility is that the phrase related to “‘Alī” was written as a saying to encourage the workers in the quarry and keep their hopes alive⁴⁸.

In Upper Mesopotamia, in Hiṣn Kayfā, one of the last cities where the Ayyūbids lived for the longest time, the names of six craftsmen can be found. One of these craftsmen, Fārābī Ibn ‘Uṭmān, is mentioned in the Arabic inscription of the minaret to the north-west of the Great Mosque of Hiṣn Kayfā (**Image 14**). There are no titles such as *al-bannā*’ or *al-ustād* before his name; instead, the verb *عمل* is placed before it. This indicates that the architect who built the minaret is Fārābī Ibn ‘Uṭmān. The date in the inscription suggests that the minaret was built in 727H/1326⁴⁹. Jean Sauvaget and Mayer L. Ary inaccurately

⁴⁶ Neslihan Kaya, ‘Émergence et développement de l’architecture Ayyoubide en Haute Mésopotamie (XII–XVème siècles)’, pp. 528–529.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, pp. 525–526.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, pp. 524–527.

⁴⁹ Hüseyin Yurttaş, ‘Hasankeyf Yapılarının Sanat Tarihimizdeki Yeri’, I (PhD diss., Erzurum Atatürk University, 1991), pp. 73–74; Gabriel Albert and Sauvaget Jean, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 306.

suggested that the minaret was built in 927H/1521⁵⁰, but this is incorrect. They also added *as-Sa'īd* to the artist's name, but this word does not appear in the inscription on the minaret. The architect mentioned on the wooden *minbar* of the same mosque is identified as Muḥammad al-Faḳīr al-Qāḍī Ibn as-Sa'īd. It is thought that the two authors may have made a mistake here. The inscription does not mention the name of the reigning king, but the date of 727H/1326 suggests that Fārābī Ibn 'Uṭmān was involved in architectural work during the reign of the Ayyūbid ruler Al-Malik al-'Ādil Muğīr ad-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 727–733H/1326–1333).

Muḥammad al-Faḳīr al-Qāḍī Ibn as-Sa'īd aš-Šāfi'ī is the person who constructed the wooden *minbar* in the Great Mosque of Ḥiṣn Kayfā using the *kundakarī* technique. The *minbar* is currently preserved in the Batman Museum. According to the Arabic inscription on the *minbar*, the work was completed in 798H/1395⁵¹. At that time, the Ayyūbid ruler Al-Malik al-'Ādil Faḥr ad-Dīn Sulaymān (r. 780–827H/1378–1424) was in charge of the administration of the city of Ḥiṣn Kayfā. Therefore, this person was a woodworker working in the service of Al-Malik al-'Ādil Faḥr ad-Dīn Sulaymān. No title precedes his name in the inscription. However, the Arabic inscription clearly identifies this work as the work of Muḥammad al-Faḳīr al-Qāḍī. The presence of Aš-Šāfi'ī at the end of his name indicates that he belonged to the Šāfi'ī *madḥab*, which was adopted and gained prominence by Šalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī. Similarly, the date of construction of the Šāfi'ī *madrasa* in the Great Mosque of Ar-Ruhā serves as another example of the importance of the Šāfi'ī *madḥab* during the Ayyūbid period. The construction of this *madrasa* and its inscription, which dates from the Ayyūbid period, is evident from the existing Arabic inscription.

On the left wall of the entrance to the Ar-Rizq Mosque in Ḥiṣn Kayfā (**Image 15**), there is a two-line Arabic inscription mentioning the names *al-ḥāğğ* Muḥammad and 'Umar⁵². The inscription includes the Arabic expression أخيه, “his brother”, indicating that they were brothers. The term عمل in the first line of the inscription indicates that they were involved in the construction of the mosque. We do not know for certain whether they were local artists, but the title *al-ḥāğğ* before *al-ḥāğğ* Muḥammad's name suggests that he was a Muslim craftsman who had completed the pilgrimage. His brother 'Umar's name does not appear with this title. Although the inscription does not give a definite date, according to the inscription on the main entrance door of the Ar-Rizq Mosque, the door was built in 811H/1409. This suggests that the mosque was built around the same time. At that time, the Ayyūbid ruler of Ḥiṣn Kayfā was Al-Malik al-'Ādil Faḥr ad-Dīn Sulaymān, so it is likely that the craftsman brothers worked in his service. Archaeological and historical texts confirm that Al-Malik al-'Ādil undertook numerous building projects in Ḥiṣn Kayfā. Prior

Sauvaget incorrectly interpreted the minaret's date as 927H/1520 instead of 727H/1326, and failed to read the name of the architect.

⁵⁰ Gabriel Albert and Sauvaget Jean, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 306; Leo Ary Mayer, *Islamic Architects and their works*, p. 61.

⁵¹ Gabriel Albert and Sauvaget Jean, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 306; Hüseyin Yurttaş, ‘Hasankeyf Yapılarının Sanat Tarihimizdeki Yeri’, pp. 75–76.

⁵² Gabriel Albert and Sauvaget Jean, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 307.

to the opening of the gates of the new Hışn Kayfā Dam, Ar-Rizq Mosque's minaret, rectangular main entrance door, prayer hall and entire southern wall were moved to the Archaeological Park in New Hasankeyf in 2018. In 2019, these structures were reassembled piece by piece, like a jigsaw puzzle, in their new location. The artist's inscription was also moved. However, other architectural remains of the mosque were submerged by the dam.

In Hışn Kayfā, on the banks of the Tigris, there is an Arabic inscription on the wall of the Ar-Rizq Mosque (**Image 16**). It is rectangular in form, written in three lines of *nashī* script, and mentions a person called 'Alī Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn 'Izz ad-Dīn. According to the inscription, water was brought to the mosque by 'Alī Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn 'Izz ad-Dīn. The word *بانيها* (*bānīhā*) is used in the middle of the second line of the inscription, indicating that he was a builder. Furthermore, it is assumed that the person responsible for bringing water to the mosque must have been an engineer in the city of Hışn Kayfā during the Ayyūbid period. There is no exact date in the inscription, but based on the style of writing, it is believed that he worked alongside other architects of the Ar-Rizq Mosque, such as *al-ḥāğğ* Muḥammad and his brother 'Umar, during the reign of Al-Malik al-'Ādil Fahr ad-Dīn Sulaymān, which corresponds to the late 14th and early 15th centuries. In addition, the date 811H/1409 is inscribed on the door of the mosque. It is unclear whether 'Alī Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn 'Izz ad-Dīn was a local builder or someone from outside the region. However, the Chronicle of Hışn Kayfā states that in 731H/1331 the Ayyūbid emir ordered canal builders to be brought from Mosul to extract water from the citadel of Hışn Kayfā and build a canal⁵³.

The *nisba*⁵⁴ "Tawrīzī" has been identified on a medallion prominently displayed at the entrance to the Koş Mosque in Hışn Kayfā (**Image 17–18**), which is decorated with stucco. The figure's function is indicated by the presence of the Arabic verb *'amal* (عمل), suggesting that he was an expert in designing the stucco decoration at the mosque's entrance. Given the stylistic similarities, it is likely that he also designed the decoration of the *miḥrāb* on the *qibla* wall. This master plasterer has not yet been discussed in the scholarly literature, apart from the reading proposed by L. Kalus in 1992, based on a photograph provided by M. Meinecke, who interpreted the inscription as *عمل توريزي*⁵⁵. Due to extensive damage to the inscription, the names of the individuals are not clearly legible, and the work is thought to have been made by a Tawrīzī craftsman. Examples of Tawrīzī craftsmanship can be found in various materials in other buildings in Anatolia, Syria and Damascus. For example, on the right side of the tile *miḥrāb* in the Yeşil Mosque

⁵³ Yusuf Baluken, 'Hasankeyf Eyyübileri (630–866/1232–1462) / The Ayyubids of Hasankeyf (630–866/1232–1462)', p. 333.

⁵⁴ The *nisba* "Tawrīzī" refers to individuals or craftsmen from Tabriz, Iran, a city renowned for its stucco artistry. In this case, the *nisba* not only indicates the origin of the craftsman but also links his special knowledge of stucco decoration to a well-established Tabriz tradition. The presence of the *nisba* in inscriptions within the structure suggests the importance of the craftsman's identity and origin in the context of the artistic decoration of the mosque. This detailed investigation provides a clearer understanding of the role and expertise of the craftsman, and how the *nisba* functions within the broader context of the inscription.

⁵⁵ Viewed 5 October 2024, https://www.epigraphieislamique.uliege.be/Thesaurus/User/EpigraphyDisplay.aspx?id=33228&pan=1&st=TURQUIE-Hasankeyf*&sc=5.

in Bursa (822H/1419–837H/1424) there is a single-line Arabic inscription that reads “The Work of the Masters of Tabriz”. In addition, the wooden doors of the tomb in the Yeşil Mosque bear the signature of a craftsman who claimed to be from Tabriz: ‘Alī Ibn *hāğğ* Aḥmad al-Tabrīzī, who was undoubtedly a calligrapher⁵⁶. Furthermore, the name of Ibn Ġaybī al-Tawrīzī appears on a plaque now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Finally, there is a mosque in Damascus called Ġars ad-Dīn Ḥalīl al-Tawrīzī⁵⁷. The *nisba* “al-Tawrīzī” indicates that these individuals or their families came from the city of Tabriz in Iran; the name Tabriz is sometimes spelled Tawrīz/Tevriz in various languages. It is well known that Tabriz, like other Iranian cities, has developed a long tradition of stucco sculpture since the Sasanian period (3rd–7th centuries). Therefore, the Tawrīzī mentioned in the inscription of the *Koş* mosque entrance would have been a master stuccoer of Iranian origin from the first half of the 14th century, whose expertise warranted his name being mentioned on such a prestigious entrance. It is therefore highly probable that he was the creator not only of this composition but also of the *mihrāb* in the mosque. During the same period, three other buildings in Ḥiṣn Kayfā were decorated with stucco: the dome of the sultan Sulaymān Mosque, the arch of the northern entrance of the Great Mosque, and the interior walls of the Small Palace. L. Kalus has only read the inscription of Tawrīzī, but by comparing it with other stucco decorations in Ḥiṣn Kayfā, it can be argued that, on the basis of stylistic similarities and the ornamental patterns of the period, stucco decorators from Tabriz, Iran, probably played a significant role in the interior decoration of Ayyubid mosques, madrasas and palaces in Ḥiṣn Kayfā during the same period. The other parts of the *Koş* mosque, which was part of a large architectural complex, were covered with concrete and completely submerged under the water of the dam in 2019. In the same year, a mosque similar to the original was built in the New Hasankeyf Archaeological Park. The original stucco *mihrāb* of the mosque and the stucco door with the artist’s inscription are exhibited in the Hasankeyf Museum.

Conclusion

To date, 27 artist names have been identified in the seven major Ayyūbid cities of Upper Mesopotamia. The *minbar* in the Great Mosque Si‘irt contains seven names, the highest number of names found in a single work. Given the length of Ayyūbid rule in Ḥiṣn Kayfā, it is not surprising that this city has the highest number of identified craftsmen (6). It is followed by Ḥarrān (5), Āmid (3), Mayyāfāriqīn (3), with Ar-Ruhā (2) and ‘Ayntāb (1) trailing behind. The language of the inscriptions in these cities is Arabic. The predominance

⁵⁶ Savaş Yıldırım, ‘Bursa Yeşil Camii Mihrabı’, *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 47/1 (2007), p. 169; Khalida Mahi, ‘Les Maîtres de Tabriz, céramistes dans l’Empire ottoman : Une mise au point sur leur identification’, *Eurasian Studies* 15/1 (2017), pp. 40–41; Sandra Aube, *La céramique dans l’architecture en Iran au xve siècle : Les arts qarā quyūnlūs et āq quyūnlūs*, Paris 2017, pp. 195–196.

⁵⁷ Patricia Blessing, ‘Blue-and-White Tiles of the Muradiye in Edirne: Architectural Decoration between Tabriz, Damascus, and Cairo’, *Muqarnas* 36 (2019), p. 120.

of Arabic in the inscriptions of Saladin, who is said to have been of Kurdish origin, can be explained by the political and religious ideals of the time. Saladin's goal of establishing a strong and tolerant Islamic state led to the perception of Arabic as a sacred language, as the Koran, the holy book of Islam, is in Arabic. Similarly, the preference for Arabic in the inscriptions of the Seljuqs and Artuqids, despite their Turkish origins, reflects the need to use this sacred language and the cultural unity of the Islamic world at the time. This situation suggests that the preference for Arabic in the architectural inscriptions of Islamic states may have been linked to the aim of establishing religious and political cohesion. However, according to Anne-Marie Eddé, Saladin's family and their close circle preferred to speak Kurdish⁵⁸, suggesting that he maintained his Kurdish identity in his personal life.

The fact that the Artuqids lived under the protection of the Ayyūbid state from 1183 to 1260 is evident in both political and economic contexts. For example, coins minted in Ḥiṣn Kayfā, Āmid, Mardin, Mayyāfāriqīn and Dūnaysīr show the names of Ayyūbid rulers on one side and the names of Artuqid rulers on the other, illustrating a balanced relationship between the two powers. However, the exclusive mention of Artuqid rulers in architectural structures signifies the tolerant and unifying policies of the Ayyūbids. This is in stark contrast to other states such as the Seljuqs, Timurids and Ottomans, where the inclusion of ruler's names in architecture was often mandatory, even in autonomous regions.

The Ayyūbids and the Artuqids used the same architects and engineers to construct buildings in Āmid and its surroundings. While the Ayyūbid patrons employed the skilled craftsmen of the period, they tolerated the involvement of these architects in Artuqid constructions, despite their authoritarian rule over the region. This reflects the Ayyūbids' tolerant and flexible attitude towards architectural activities. The names of the architects are sometimes found within a single inscription, along with additional information about their nationality, school of law and region. In some cases, it is clear that the profession was passed on from father to son, or that siblings worked together. In Si'irt, Ḥiṣn Kayfā, and Āmid, inscriptions provide examples of fathers and sons, brothers, or apprentices working together on the same site. Architects and engineers usually worked only in their own cities, depending on whether they were stonemasons or carpenters. This is true of craftsmen such as 'Īsā Abū Dirham, Ġa'far Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, and 'Uṭmān Ibn Tākāk, whose names appear in the inscriptions of monuments in Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn. The presence of these artisans' names in both regions during the Ayyūbid and Artuqid periods indicates that the Ayyūbids, having fully incorporated Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn from the Artuqids in Upper Mesopotamia, supported and protected their artists and allowed for their continued development.

In summary, Ayyūbid architects played a major role in the construction of monuments such as towers, mosques, *madrasa*-s and bridges in the major cities of Upper Mesopotamia, as well as wooden *minbar*-s and plasterwork. In addition to local craftsmen from the region, there were also non-local craftsmen from places such as al-Ḥalabī (Aleppo) in Syria, al-Mawṣilī (Mossoul) in Iraq and Tawrizī (Tebriz) in Iran. This led to collaboration between local and foreign builders on Ayyūbid sites. Prominent architects such as

⁵⁸ Anne-Marie Eddé, *Saladin*, p. 37.

Ğa‘far b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī were involved in the construction of bridges, *madrasa*-s, and city towers in Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn. Promisingly, the names of five individuals in the Ḥarrān region have been identified who are likely to be associated with the operation of the Bazda quarry. These names do not appear in public, religious and military monuments in other areas of Upper Mesopotamia. Thus, the presence of Ayyūbid artists’ and quarry owners’ names in these quarries reflects a phenomenon not commonly found in the Ayyūbid period or in other medieval Islamic states.

Table 1. List of Inscriptions and Translations

N ^o	Location	Arabic text	English translation
1	Šāfi‘ī <i>madrasa</i> , <i>kulliyya</i> Šalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī, Ar-Ruhā (Image 1); northern exterior wall	١- بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ٢- أمر بعمارة هذه المدرسة المبار ٣- كة العبد الفقير إلى رحمة ربه عمر ابن شاهان ٤- ابن أيوب رحمه الله تعالى وأمر ٥- بكمالها ولده المرابط المنصور ناصر الدين محمد بن عمر ٦- في دولة مولانا الملك صلاح الدين يوسف بن أيوب على اصحاب الامام الشافعي ٧- على يد الفقير إلى رحمة الله حمزة سنة سبع وثمانين وخمسمائة	1. In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 2. Ordered the construction of this blessed school, 3. the poor servant, seeking the mercy of his Lord, ‘Umar b. Šāhān, 4. son of Ayyūb. May God have mercy on him. And ordered 5. its completion his son, the guardian, the victorious, the supporter of the faith, Muḥammad b. ‘Umar, 6. during the reign of our lord, King Šalāḥ ad-Dīn Yūsuf b. Ayyūb, upon the followers of Imam aš-Šāfi‘ī. 7. At the hands of the poor servant seeking the mercy of God, Ḥamza, in the year five hundred and eighty-seven [AH].
2	‘Umariyya Mosque, ‘Ayntāb (Image 2); right side of the entrance	١- بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ رَحِم ٢- الله من عمر هذا في سنة سبع وستمائة عمله علي	1. In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, May 2. God give his mercy on the one who carried out this in the year six hundred and seven [AH], ‘Alī made it.
3	<i>Yeni</i> ‘Umariyya Mosque, centre of Ar-Ruhā (Image 3); southern entrance	١- بسملة عمر هذا المسجد المبارك الأستاذ محمد بن أحمد لأجل إقامة الصلوة سنة عشر وستمائة	1. In the name of God, this blessed mosque was built by <i>al-ustād</i> Muḥammad b. Aḥmad for the purpose of establishing prayers in the year six hundred and ten [AH].

Table 1. (cont.)

N ^o	Location	Arabic text	English translation
4	Wooden <i>minbar</i> of the Grand Mosque, Si‘irt (Image 4); now exhibited in the Ankara Museum of Ethnography	[أ] ١- تاريخه الاصلی ٦١١ هـ ٢- عمره المتولی الحاجي عبد الفتاح ابن الحاجي اسماعيل ٣- ماشا الله ٤- وهو العلی العظيم. هذا ما تطوع بعمله الحاجي ٥- علی بن أبو بكر والحاجي علی ابن الاستاذ ٦- رحمهم الله واعمل الحاجي عمر والحاجي محمد أولاد ٧- الشيخ عثمان رحمهم الله تعالى بتاريخ [...] [ب] ١- عمله ٢- ضيا الارضرومی ٣- إلياس الموصلی [ج] ١- حرره المدرس ٢- يوسف الخيالي	[A] 1. Its original date is 611 [AH]. 2. Its renovator <i>al-ḥāḡḡ</i> ‘Abd al-Fatāh b. <i>al-ḥāḡḡ</i> Ismā‘īl. 3. Mā šā Allāh 4. And He is the Most High, the Most Great. This is the work he volunteered for, <i>al-ḥāḡḡ</i> 5. ‘Alī b. Abū Bakr and <i>al-ḥāḡḡ</i> ‘Alī b. al-Ustād. 6. May Allāh have mercy on them, and the work of <i>al-ḥāḡḡ</i> ‘Umar and <i>al-ḥāḡḡ</i> Muḥammad, the sons of 7. <i>šayḥ</i> ‘Uṭmān. May Allāh have mercy on them, on the date of [...] [B] 1. The work of Dīyā al-Arḡurūmī [i.e. from Erzurum] and Ilyās al-Mawṣilī [C] 1. This has been written carrefully by the teacher 2. Yūsuf al-Ḥayālī
5	Semicircular basalt tower (XI), between the gates of Harput (<i>Dağ</i>) and Urfa (<i>Ar-Ruhā</i>), Āmid, “Scorpio tower”; on the wall (Image 5)	١- بسم الرحمن الرحيم ٢- عز لمولانا السلطان الملك الصالح نجم الدنيا والدين سلطان الإسلام والمسلمين أبو (كذا) الفتح أيوب بن السلطان الملك الكامل أبو (كذا) المعالي محمد بن أبي بكر ابن أيوب ظهير أمير المؤمنين ٣- البناء أبو الفرج ترسيم شجاع الدين جعفر ابن محمود الحلبي وذلك في سنة أربعة وثلاثين وستمائة	1. In the name of the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 2. Glory to our master, Sultan, the righteous king, the star of the world and the religion, the Sultan of Islam and Muslims, Abū al-Fath Ayyūb, son of Sultan Al-Malik al-Kāmil Abū al-Ma‘ālī Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr b. Ayyūb, supporter of the Commander of the Faithful. 3. The builder, Abū al-Farağ, the master architect Šuğā‘ ad-Dīn Ġa‘far b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, (completed) this in the year six hundred and thirty-four [AH].

N°	Location	Arabic text	English translation
6	Semicircular basalt tower (X) of the walls of Āmid; on the walls (Image 6)	١- بسم الرحمن الرحيم ٢- عز لمولانا السلطان الملك الصالح نجم الدنيا والدين سلطان الإسلام والمسلمين أبو الفتح أيوب بن السلطان الملك الكامل أبو المعالي محمد بن أبي بكر ابن أيوب ظهير أمير المؤمنين ٣- /البنا عيسى أبو درهم/ ترسيم شجاع الدين المقدم جعفر ابن محمود الحلبي في سنة أربعة وثلاثين وستمئة	1. In the name of the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 2. Glory to our master, the Sultan, the righteous king, the star of the world and the religion, the Sultan of Islam and the Muslims, Abū al-Faṭḥ Ayyūb, son of Sultan Al-Malik al-Kāmil Abū al-Ma‘ālī Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr b. Ayyūb, supporter of the Commander of the Faithful. 3. The builder, ‘Īsā Abū Dirham / the master architect Šuḡā‘ ad-Dīn Ġa‘far al-Muqaddam b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, completed this in the year six hundred and thirty-four [AH].
7	Bāb al-Faraġ, Āmid (gate); on the walls	١- أمر بفتح هذا الباب المبارك مولانا الملك المسعود سلطان ديار بكر أبو المظفر سكران بن محمد بن ارتق ٢- نصير أمير المؤمنين والبناء عيسى أبو درهم بناء الدر باب الفرج سنة خمسة وتسعين وخمسة مائة	1. Ordered the opening of this blessed gate, our master, King Al-Mas‘ūd, Sultan of the Diyār Bakir, Abū al-Muẓaffar Sukmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Artuq, the supporter of the Commander of the Faithful. 2. And the builder ‘Īsā Abū Dirham, builder of the gate Al-Faraġ, completed it in the year five hundred and sixty-five [AH].
8	Zinciriye Madrasa, Āmid; Southern façade of the courtyard	البنا عيسى أبو درهم	The builder, ‘Īsā Abū Dirham
9	Al-Mas‘ūdiyya madrasa, Āmid; Southern part of the courtyard	١- البناء مسعود ترسيم الأستاذ جعفر بن ٢- محمود الحلبي وذلك في سنة عشرين وستمئة	1. The builder, Mas‘ūd, designer master Ġa‘far b. 2. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, and this (was done) in the year six hundred and twenty [AH].

Table 1. (cont.)

N ^o	Location	Arabic text	English translation
10	Halilviran (Devegeçidi) Bridge, between Âmid and Eğil; Southern face	١- بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٢- تطوع بعمارة الجسر المبارك مولانا السلطان الملك الصالح العالم العادل المؤيد المظفر المنصور ناصر الدنيا والدين سلطان الاسلام والمسلمين ابي الفتح محمود بن محمد بن قر [] ارسلان بن ارتق نصير امير المؤمنين ٣- الاستاذ جعفر بن محمود الحل [بى] ٤- وذلك في سنة خامس عشر و ستمائة	1. In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 2. He volunteered for the construction of the blessed bridge, our master, the Sultan, the righteous king, the just, the supporter, the victorious, the protector of the world and the religion, the Sultan of Islam and the Muslims, Abū al-Faṭḥ Maḥmūd Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Qur[ā] Arslān Ibn Artuq, the supporter of the Commander of the Faithful. 3. The master, Ġa‘far b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥala[bī]. 4. And this (was done) in the year six hundred and fifteen [AH].
11	Ambarçayı Bridge, between Âmid and Mayyāfāriqīn; destroyed (Image 9)	١- بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ تطوع بعمارة (هذا) ذلك الجسر وجدده طلب [...] ٢- العبيد الفقير الى رحمة الله تعالى محمد ابن احمد الرا [...] الله المعروف بابن ٣- بأمره ولديه على واحمد رحمهم الله اجمعين ذلك في شهر رجب سنة عشرين وستمائة ٤- البنا عثمان بن طاكاك غلام الاستاذ جعفر بن محمود الحلبي	1. In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. volunteered for the construction of (this) that bridge and renewed it as requested [...]. 2. the poor servant seeking the mercy of Allāh, Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-[...] Allāh, known as Ibn al-[...] 3. By his command, and his sons ‘Alī and Aḥmad, may Allāh have mercy on them all, this was done in the month of Rağab, in the year six hundred and twenty [AH]. 4. The builder ‘Uṭmān b. Ṭākāk, servant of the master, Ġa‘far b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī.
12	Qulfah gate, Mayyāfāriqīn; keystone of the arch (Image 7)	١- عمل أبي ٢- العلاء بن ٣- أبي الفتح ٤- [كلمة] رحمه الله	1. Work of Abū 2. al-‘Alā’ b. 3. Abū al-Faṭḥ. 4. May Allāh have mercy on him.

N°	Location	Arabic text	English translation
13	Şalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī mosque, Mayyāfāriqīn; under the door frame (no more <i>in situ</i>) (Image 8)	عمل أبو العلاء بن أبي الفتح؟	Work of Abū al-‘Alā’ b. Abū al-Faṭḥ
14	Malābādī Bridge, East of Mayyāfāriqīn; destroyed	?	1. In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 2. [...] Uṭmān 3. 643 [AH].
15	“Broken Minaret” of Ayyūbid Mosque, Mayyāfāriqīn; first floor of the Western façade (Image 10)	١- مولانا الامير فخر الدين امن الدنيا والدين ٢- عمل الأستاذ أبو الحسن ابن إيو سعيد	1. Our master, the Prince, Faḥr ad-Dīn, the protector of the world and the religion. 2. Work of the master (<i>al-ustād</i>), Abū al-Ḥasan b. Abū Sa‘īd.
16	Bazda quarry, Tek Tek Mountains, 40 km East of Ḥarrān; upper part of a wall about 6 metres high (Image 11)	١- بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٢- فتح هذا العمل للشمس ٣- محمد ابن تمام المعمار رحمه الله ٤- سنة تسع وأربعين وستمائة	1. In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful 2. Opened this work to the sun, 3. Muḥammad b. Tammām <i>al-Mi‘mār</i> . May Allāh have mercy on him. 4. The year six hundred and forty-nine [AH].
17	Bazda quarry, Tek Tek Mountains, 40 km East of Ḥarrān; upper part of a wall about 4 metres high (Image 12)	١- بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٢- فتح هذا السبيل/العمل المبارك؟ ٣- محمد بن عبد الرحمن ال[...] ٤- وهذا السبيل/العمل؟ له، غفر ٥- [شفع] الله له ولجميع المسلمين ٦- في شهر ربيع الول ٧- سنة ثلاث وخمسين وستمائة	1. In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful 2. This blessed? path/work? was opened 3. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-[...] 4. And this path/work? is for him, may Allāh forgive him 5. May [intercede] Allāh for him and for all Muslims. 6. In the month of Rabī‘ al-Awwal, 7. year six hundred and fifty-three [AH].

Table 1. (cont.)

N ^o	Location	Arabic text	English translation
18	Bazda quarry, Tek Tek Mountains, 40 km East of Hārārān; on the ceiling (Image 13)	١- صاحب هذا الموضع ٢- محمد العذار ٣- رحم الله من ترحم على الفقير	1. The owner of this place 2. Muḥammad al-‘Aḍār 3. May God have mercy on those who show mercy to the poor.
19	Great Mosque, Hışn Kayfā; North-West of the minaret (Image 14)	١- سنة سبعة وعشرين وسبعمائة ٢- عمل أحوج الناس إلى الرحمن فربي بن عثمان رحمه الله	1. Year seven hundred and twenty-seven [AH]. 2. Work of the most in need to the Most Merciful, Farabī b. ‘Utmān, may Allāh have mercy on him.
20	Wooden <i>minbar</i> , Great Mosque, Hışn Kayfā; currently in the Batman Museum	عمل في حجة ثمان وتسعين وسبعمائة باجتهاد محمد الفقير القاضي ابن السعيد الشافعي	It was done in the year eight hundred and ninety-eight [AH], by the efforts of Muḥammad al-Faqīr al-Qāḍī b. as-Sa‘īd aš-Šāfi‘ī.
21	Ar-Rizq Mosque, Hışn Kayfā; Left wall of the entrance (currently in New Hasankeyf) (Image 15)	١- عمل الفقير إلى رحمة الله تعالى الحاج ٢- محمد وأخيه عمر رحمهم الله تعالى	1. Work of the poor, in need of Allāh’s mercy, <i>al-ḥāḡḡ</i> 2. Muḥammad and his brother ‘Umar, may Allāh have mercy on them.
22	Ar-Rizq Mosque, Hışn Kayfā; exterior of the prayer hall (Image 16)	١- خلد الله [...] تعالى ملك بانيها ويجل بالماء إليه العبد الفقير إلى الله ٢- تعالى على ابن الحسين ابن عز الدين تغمدهم الله برحمته	1. May Allāh eternalize [his memory]. Exalted is the King, the builder of it, and may the water flow to it through the servant, the poor one, to Allāh. 2. Exalted is ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Izz ad-Dīn. May Allāh envelop them with His mercy.
23	Koş Mosque, Hışn Kayfā; <i>mihrāb</i> (currently in Hasankeyf Museum) (Image 17–18)	عمل توريزي؟	The work of Tawrīzī ²

Table 2. Architects, stonemasons and craftsmen of Ayyūbid monuments in Upper Mesopotamia: A Comprehensive List

N ^o	Name	Title	Verbal/ Nom. form	Profession	Monument/ Inscription	Inscription's dating
1	Ḥamza	No	على يد	Engraver, Calligraph or Architect [?]	Šāfi'ī <i>madrasa</i> , Ar-Ruhā (Inscr. 1)	587H/1191
2	‘Alī	No	عمل	Engraver, or Architect [?]	‘Umariyya Mosque, ‘Ayntāb (Inscr. 2)	607H/1210
3	Muḥamma d Ibn Aḥmad	<i>al-ustāḍ</i>	عمر	Master Architect	<i>Yeni</i> ‘Umariyya Mosque, Ar-Ruhā (Inscr. 3)	610H/1214
4	‘Abd al-Fattāh b. <i>al-ḥāğğ</i> Ismā‘īl	<i>al-ḥāğğ</i>	عمر	Craftman [?]	Wooden <i>minbar</i> of the Grand Mosque, Si‘irt (Inscr. 4A)	611H/1215
	‘Alī b. Abū Bakr	<i>al-ḥāğğ</i>		Craftman [?]		
	‘Alī b. <i>al-ustāḍ</i>	<i>al-ḥāğğ</i>		Craftman [?]		
	‘Umar b. <i>šayḥ</i> ‘Uṭmān	<i>al-ḥāğğ</i>	اعمل	Craftman [?]		
	Muḥamma d b. <i>šayḥ</i> ‘Uṭmān	<i>al-ḥāğğ</i>		Craftman [?]		
	Ḍiyā al- Arḍurūmī	No	عمله	Craftman [?]	(Inscr. 4B)	
	Ilyās al- Mawṣilī	No		Craftman [?]		
	Yūsuf al- Ḥayālī	<i>al- mudarris</i>	حرر	Engraver/ calligraph	(Inscr. 4C)	
5	Abū al- Farağ	<i>al-bannā</i> [?]	No	Builder (Assistant architect [?])	Tower XI, Āmid (Inscr. 5)	634H/1236

Table 2. (cont.)

N ^o	Name	Title	Verbal/ Nom. form	Profession	Monument/ Inscription	Inscription 's dating
6	ʿĪsā Abū Dirham	<i>al-bannāʾ</i>	No	Builder (Assistant architect [?])	Tower X, Āmid (Inscr. 6)	634H/1236
		<i>al-bannāʾ</i>	بَنَاء		Bāb al-Farağ, Āmid (Inscr. 7)	595H/1198
		<i>al-bannāʾ</i>	No		Zinciriye <i>madrasa</i> , Āmid (Inscr. 8)	Late 12 th – early 13 th C.
7	Ğaʿfar b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī	<i>Tarsīm</i> , <i>al-ustād</i>	No	Designer/ Architect, Master Architect	Al-Masʿūdiyya <i>madrasa</i> , Āmid (Inscr. 9)	620H/1223
		<i>Tarsīm</i>	No		Tower XI, Āmid (Inscr. 5)	634H/1236
		<i>Tarsīm</i>	No		Tower X, Āmid (Inscr. 6)	634H/1236
		?	?		Artuqid Palace, Āmid	Between 619 and 629 AH (1222–1231 CE)
		<i>al-ustād</i>	No		Halilviran Bridge (Inscr. 10)	615H/1218
		<i>al-ustād</i>	No		Ambarçayı Bridge (Inscr. 11)	620H/1223
8	Masʿūd	<i>al-bannāʾ</i>	No	Builder	Al-Masʿūdiyya <i>madrasa</i> , Āmid (Inscr. 9)	620H/1223
9	Abū al-ʿAlāʾ b. Abū al-Faṭḥ	No	عمل	Builder/ Assistant architect, or Architect [?]	Qulfaḥ gate, Mayyāfāriqīn (Inscr. 12)	Between 607 and 617 AH (1210–1220 CE)
		No	عمل		Şalāḥ ad-Dīn mosque, Mayyāfāriqīn (Inscr. 13)	Early to mid-13 th C.

N ^o	Name	Title	Verbal/ Nom. form	Profession	Monument/ Inscription	Inscriptio n's dating
10	ʿUṭmān b. Tākāk	<i>al-bannāʾ</i> , <i>gūlām</i> , <i>al-ustād</i>	No	Builder/ Assistant architect	Ambarçayı Bridge (Inscr. 11) Malābādī Bridge (Inscr. 14)	620H/1223 643H/1245
11	Abū al-Ḥasan b. Abū Saʿīd	<i>al-ustād</i>	عمل	Master architect	“Broken Minaret”, Mayyāfāriqīn (Inscr. 15)	Between early to mid-13 th C.
12	Muḥammad b. Tammām	<i>al-</i> <i>Miʿmār</i>	فتح	Architect/ Engineer	Bazda quarry (Inscr. 16)	649H/1251
13	Muḥammad b. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān	<i>al</i> -[...]	فتح	Architect/ Engineer [?]	Bazda quarry (Inscr. 17)	653H/1255
14	Muḥammad al-ʿAḍār		No	Owner/ Manager [?]	Bazda quarry (Inscr. 18)	13 th C.
15	Fārābī b. ʿUṭmān	No	عمل	Engraver, Calligraph or Architect [?]	Great Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā (Inscr. 19)	727H/1326
16	Muḥammad al-Faqīr al-Qāḍī b. al-Saʿīd al-Šāfiʿī	No	عمل	Craftman [?]	Wooden <i>minbar</i> of the Great Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā (Inscr. 20)	798H/1395
17	Muḥammad	<i>al-ḥāğğ</i>	عمل	Engraver, or Architect [?]	Ar-Rizq Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā (Inscr. 21)	811H/1409
18	ʿUmar	No	عمل	Engraver, or Architect [?]	Ar-Rizq Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā (Inscr. 21)	811H/1409
19	ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿIzz ad-Dīn	No	تعالی	Architect [?]	Ar-Rizq Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā (Inscr. 22)	731H/1331 [?]
20	Tawrīzī [?]	No	عمل	Stucco expert [?]	Koş Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā (Inscr. 23)	14 th C.

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Images



Image 1. Arabic inscription found on the wall of the Šāfi'ī *madrasa*, Ar-Ruhā (N. Kaya, 2020)



Image 2. Inscription on the right side of the entrance to the 'Umariyya Mosque, 'Ayntāb (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 3. Inscription on the southern entrance of the *Yeni* 'Umariyya Mosque, Ar-Ruhā (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 4. Wooden *minbar* of the Grand Mosque of Si‘irt, with its inscriptions (n° 4–A, B, C); currently in the Ankara Museum of Ethnography (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 5. Inscription on the wall of the tower (XI) of the Āmid city walls (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 6. Inscription on the wall of the tower (X) of the Āmid city walls (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 7. Inscription on the keystone of the arch of the Qulfah gate, east of the city of Mayyāfāriqīn (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 8. Inscription under the door frame of the Şalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī mosque (Gertrude Bell, 1911)



Image 9. Inscription on the Ambarçayı bridge (Basri Konyar, 1936)



Image 10. Inscription on the first floor of the west facade of the minaret outside the walls of Mayyāfāriqin (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 11. Inscription with the name Muḥammad Ibn Tammām *al-Mi'mār*, Bazda quarry in the Tek Tek mountains East of Ḥarrān (N. Kaya, 2020)



Image 12. Inscription inside the Bazda quarry dated 653H/1255 (N. Kaya, 2020)



Image 13. Inscription with the name of Muḥammad al-'Adār, Bazda quarry, Tek Tek mountains East of Ḥarrān (N. Kaya, 2020)



Image 14. Inscription on the minaret to the north-west of the Great Mosque of Ḥiṣn Kayfā (N. Kaya, 2017)



Image 15. Inscription of the Ar-Rizq Mosque of Ḥiṣn Kayfā mentioning the names *al-ḥāğğ* Muḥammad and ‘Umar (N. Kaya, 2017)



Image 16. On the wall of the Ar-Rizq Mosque, inscription mentioning a person called ‘Alī Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Izz ad-Dīn (N. Kaya, 2017)



Image 17. The *nisba* “Tawrīzī” on a medallion at the entrance of the *Koş* Mosque in Hışn Kayfā (33228 01 Archives M-Fondation Max van Berchem)



Image 18. Entrance of the *Koş* Mosque and its medallion (center) (N. Kaya, 2017)