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## The Mentioned Facilities in the Book 'Al-Rawdatayn in the Chronicles of the Norian and Salahian States' by Abu Shama Al-Maqdisi (665 H / 1267 CE)

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### **Abstract**

*Urban development, particularly historical and civilizational structures, holds a valuable cultural treasure. It serves as an authentic witness and symbol of human advancement throughout history. This is exemplified in our study of the work of Abu Shama al-Maqdisi, "Al-Rawdatayn fi Akhbar al-Dawlatayn al-Nuriyah wa al-Salahiyah" (The Two Gardens in the History of the Nur and Salahi Dynasties). The research delves into institutions such as hospitals, wells, water facilities, baths, and bridges, highlighting their significant roles in providing essential services to the region.*

**Keywords:** *Abu Shama, hospitals, bridges, baths, The Two Gardens.*

### **Introduction**

The book "Al-Rawdatayn fi Akhbar al-Dawlatayn al-Nuriyah wa al-Salahiyah" by Abu Shama al-Maqdisi stands as a valuable historical work, encompassing material that is both historical and civilizational, distinguished by its richness. It is considered one of the significant sources documenting the Crusades in the Levant, providing extensive coverage of the reigns of Nur al-Din Zengi and Saladin. Our study focuses specifically on the essential service facilities, which form the fundamental structure supporting the existence of the country, serving as a testament to its progress and prosperity. We have organized our research into several key aspects.

**Axis 1:** (Bimaristan)Hospitals

**Axis 2:** Wells and Water Facilities

**Axis 3:** Baths

**Axis 4:** Bridges

**Axis 1:** Hospitals (Bimaristanat)

The term " Bimaristanat " is derived from the Persian language, consisting of two parts: "Bimar" meaning sick or ailing, and "Stan" meaning house or dwelling. Therefore, the general meaning of " Bimaristanat " translates to "the house of the sick" or "the dwelling of the ailing" [Al-Zubaidi, 2001, Vol. 16, p. 500; Al-Fayoumi, Vol. 2, p. 585]. These medical facilities, known in the singular form as " Bimaristanat," are designated places for accommodating patients. In addition to being healthcare centers, Bimaristanat are integral structures characterizing the

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Islamic Arab city [Aneezan, 2023, p. 138].

It is noteworthy that the concept of Bimaristanat finds its roots in Islamic history, with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) setting a precedent during the Battle of the Trench. When Sa'd ibn Mu'adh was wounded, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered him to be carried to the tent of a Muslim woman known as Rufaydah for treatment. This marks the first instance of a mobile military hospital in Islamic history [Al-Asami, 1998, Vol. 2, p. 195; Issa, 1981, p. 9]. And Al-Maqrizi mentioned, saying: "The first person to establish a hospital (Maristan) in Islam and a house for the sick was Al-Walid ibn Abd al-Malik. He was also the first to establish a guesthouse in the year eighty-eight. In the hospital, he appointed physicians and provided them with salaries" [Al-Maqrizi, 1997, Vol. 4, p. 267].

There were two types of hospitals, including the stationary type, whose structure was fixed in a particular location and did not move. This type was widespread in Islamic countries, especially in major cities like Cairo and Damascus. The second type of hospital was mobile, moving from one place to another according to the circumstances of diseases and epidemics. It was particularly essential in times of war [Issa, 1981, pp. 10-11].

Additionally, there is a type of mobile hospital known as (Bimaristan al-Sabeel), which accompanies pilgrims coming to the Holy Kaaba, as well as traveling with trade caravans to provide medical treatments for their participants [Miran al-Rawi, 1250 AH, p. 77].

Some of the most important hospitals mentioned in the book "Al-Rawdatayn" by Abu Shama al-Maqrizi include:

### 1. **\*\*Al-Bimaristan Al-Nouri (562 AH/1166 CE) \*\***

One of the most significant urban facilities completed by King Al-Adil Nur al-Din Mahmud Zengi in Damascus is Al-Bimaristan al-Nouri. Abu Shama mentions, "Nur al-Din built hospitals in the country, and among the greatest is the hospital he built in Damascus. It is extensive, providing numerous benefits, and he did not restrict it to the poor alone but made it accessible to all Muslims, both rich and poor" [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 1, p. 105].

This hospital, constructed by King Al-Adil Nur al-Din in the year 562 AH (1166 CE), stands as one of the largest healthcare endowments in Damascus, catering to the needs of the impoverished and vulnerable [Al-Doudari, 1972, Vol. 7, p. 43]. It housed a collection of medical books stored in the two libraries at the forefront of the Diwan. Ibn Badran notes that the responsibility for medical affairs was assigned to Abu Mijjad ibn Abi al-Hakam. He treated patients, monitored their conditions, and conducted medical discussions in the grand hall of the hospital. Additionally, a group of physicians would sit with him to engage in medical consultations, and students received medical instruction within the hospital at specified times [Ibn Badran, 1985, p. 259]. Indeed, the hospital not only fulfilled the role of treating patients but also played a significant part in educating students to become physicians. Students would attend lessons within the hospital premises and engage in training under the supervision of experienced physicians [Al-Himsi, 1982, p. 85; Abdullah Al-Baba, 2009, p. 32]. The hospital had a rare story, as narrated by Abu Shama: "Nur al-Din, may God have mercy on him, was captured by some of the Frankish kings.

To secure his release, he pledged a considerable sum as ransom. Nur al-Din consulted his commanders, and each one advised against releasing him due to the harm it would cause to Muslims. Nur al-Din, after seeking guidance from God, decided to pay the ransom secretly at night to prevent his companions from knowing. The money was handed over, and when the

Frankish king felt secure, he died. When Nur al-Din learned of this, he informed his companions, who marveled at God's kindness to the Muslims. Nur al-Din, may God have mercy on him, used the ransom money to build this hospital" [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 1, pp. 105-106].

The (Bimaristan)hospital faced a seismic event in the year 597 AH (1200 CE), originating from Egypt and extending to Damascus. This earthquake impacted some buildings, causing parts of the hospital to collapse [Ibn al-Jawzi, 2013, Vol. 22, p. 90; Ibn Taghribirdi, n.d., Vol. 6, p. 174]. However, when Badr al-Din 'Umar came, he expanded the hospital by purchasing adjacent buildings and integrating them into Al-Bimaristan al-Nouri. He enlarged its halls, initially small, with skillful construction, and ensured a water supply to the extent that the hospital became a model of perfection [Al-Dhahabi, 2003, Vol. 49, p. 319]. Due to its greatness and significance, the traveler Ibn Jubayr mentioned, "Its daily expenses were around fifteen dinars. It had a committee holding the list of patients and the expenses required for medicines, food, and other necessities. Physicians would visit every day, check on the patients, and prescribe suitable medicines and food according to each individual's needs" [Ibn Jubayr, n.d., p. 255].

## **2. (Al-Bimaristan) Hospital of Al-Mujahidi (572 AH/1176 CE)**

Attributed to Mujahid al-Din Qa'imaz, his mention appears in the events of the year 572 AH (1176 CE) within the book "Al-Rawdatayn." During the recounting of the events of that year, the text states: "In the year seventy-two, Mujahid al-Din, meaning Qa'imaz Dazdar, began the construction of the Jame' mosque in the apparent part of Mosul, near the Bridge Gate. It is one of the finest mosques. Subsequently, he built the Ribat, the school, and the hospital, all of them adjacent" [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 2, p. 298; Ibn Hamdun, 1996, Vol. 2, p. 362].

Al-Bimaristan al-Mujahidi stands out as one of the prominent achievements initiated by Mujahid al-Din in Mosul in the year 572 AH (1176 CE). Hassan ibn Ali served as the supervisor of the hospital. Upon the death of Mosul's minister, he visited Nur al-Din and became devoted to his service until his passing [Issa, 1981, p. 200].

When the voyger Ibn Jubayr visited the city of Mosul in the year 580 AH (1184 CE), he described it, stating: "One of the princes of the city, known as Mujahid al-Din, built a mosque on the banks of the Tigris, ... and in front of it is the Bimaristan Hafeel, built by Mujahid al-Din" [Ibn Jubayr, n.d., p. 210].

Similarly, Ibn Battuta, another traveler, described Mosul when he visited the city: "Mosul has a large cemetery with mosques, baths, hotels, and markets. It has a grand mosque on the banks of the Tigris ... and in front of it is a hospital" [Ibn Battuta, 1996, Vol. 2, p. 81].

## **3. (Al-Bimaristan) Hospital of Al-Atiq (Al-Salhi) (577 AH/1181 CE)**

Mention of this hospital is found in the book "Al-Rawdatayn" within the events of the year 572 AH (1176 CE) while discussing the deeds of Sultan Salah al-Din. The text states: "The Sultan Salah al-Din ordered the establishment of a hospital for the sick in the palace, seeking Allah's forgiveness and satisfaction through this act. He endowed the hospital and the school with a charitable waqf" [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 2, p. 94; Ibn Wasil, 1387 AH, Vol. 2, p. 55].

This hospital was constructed in Cairo in the year 577 AH (1181 CE) when King Sultan Salah al-Din visited the Egyptian territories and took control of the Fatimid Palace. Within the palace, there was a hall built by Al-Aziz bin Al-Mu'izz in 384 AH (994 CE). Sultan Salah al-Din repurposed this hall into a hospital, known as Al-Bimaristan al-Atiq, which remained in its

original form until the days of Al-Qalqashandi [Al-Qalqashandi, n.d., Vol. 3, p. 417]. The reason cited for the Sultan's choice to convert this hall into a hospital was its containment of a charm that prevented ants from entering [Al-Qalqashandi, n.d., Vol. 3, p. 417].

This hospital is considered one of the remarkable structures built by Sultan Salah al-Din in Cairo. The renowned traveler Ibn Jubayr, when visiting Cairo in 578 AH (1128 CE), described it as follows: "Among the splendid monuments of this Sultan, we observed the hospital in the city of Cairo. It is a magnificent palace, well-constructed and spacious. Its most prominent feature is its virtue, leased and appointed with a supervisor from knowledgeable individuals. It houses repositories of medications and provides various types of beverages. The palace is furnished with beds for patients, and under the supervision of the appointed supervisor, they diligently check on the patients in the morning and evening. They provide them with suitable food and drinks. Adjacent to this location is a separate area for sick women, also taken care of by appointed individuals. Another spacious courtyard is dedicated to the insane, with iron windows serving as barriers. They, too, have appointed personnel who check on them daily and provide what is suitable for them. The Sultan is deeply involved in investigating and inquiring about all these conditions, emphasizing his commitment to their care" [Ibn Jubayr, n.d., p. 26].

From the above text, it is evident to us that this hospital contains halls for men and others for women. It also includes a dedicated storage room for keeping medications, a kitchen for preparing food and drinks for patients and staff, and private rooms for isolating mentally ill patients from others. Al-Qalqashandi mentioned, "This hospital remains in its current form until now" [Al-Qalqashandi, D.T., Vol. 3, p. 417].

### **Akka Hospital (583 H / 1187 CE)**

Its mention appears in the book "Al-Rawdatayn" as part of the events of the year 583 H (1187 CE) during the discussion of the siege of Tyre. The text states, "Sultan Salah al-Din established a hospital in the bishop's residence" [Abu Shama, 2002 CE, Vol. 3, p. 268; Ibn Wasil, 1387 H, Vol. 2, p. 247; Al-Alimi, D.T., Vol. 1, p. 350]. This occurred when Sultan Salah al-Din opened AL Quds in the year 583 H (1187 CE), then headed towards Damascus and, on his way to Akka, upon arrival, he stayed in its castle. He proceeded to rebuild the city, including the bishop's residence, which he turned into a hospital, endowing it with numerous benefactions [Issa, 1981 CE, p. 233].

The architectural description of this hospital indicates that it includes separate halls for men and women. Additionally, it contains halls designated for patients with fever and others for those with mental and psychological illnesses. Furthermore, there are halls where the chief physician imparts lessons to his disciples, equipped with a private library [Al-Salabi, 2008 CE, p. 350]. It becomes evident from this that this hospital was not only dedicated to treating patients but also served as a school, producing numerous students. It effectively combined both health-related functions and educational purposes simultaneously.

### **5 (Bimaristan) Hospital of Al Qudas (588 H / 1192 CE)**

This hospital was previously the site of a church for Christians established by the Franks, called the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. It was a grand church and a place of worship for Christians, where they gathered for their prayers. The church was adorned with lofty carpets and covered with textile and silk curtains [Abu Shama, 2002 CE, Vol. 3, p. 259].

It was built by Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine when she traveled to AL Quds in

search of the Holy Cross, on which, it is claimed, Christ (peace be upon him) was crucified. When she arrived in AL Quds, she constructed this church [Abu al-Fida, D.T., Vol. 1, p. 38; Ibn al-Wardi, 1996 CE, Vol. 1, p. 33; Al-Alimi, D.T., Vol. 1, p. 44]. The Christians continued to worship there until Sultan Salah al-Din came and conquered AL Quds. He removed all traces of polytheism, ordered the closure of the church, and prohibited Christians from visiting it. There was debate among the people about its fate, with some suggesting its demolition and conversion of its land for cultivation [Abu Shama, 2002 CE, Vol. 3, p. 259]. However, Sultan Salah al-Din decided to close it and imposed taxes on Christians who visited it [Ibn Wasil, 1387 H, Vol. 2, p. 231; Al-Alimi, D.T., Vol. 1, p. 341]. This information is documented in the book "Al-Rawdatayn" as part of the events of the year 588 H (1192 CE) during discussions about AL Qudas.

"And Sultan Salah al-Din appointed the church on Qamama Street for the hospital and transferred to it medications and remedies of all kinds and colors" [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 4, p. 194]. He endowed it with numerous benefactions and assigned the judge, Baha al-Din ibn Shaddad, to oversee its administration and education [Al-Nawiri, Vol. 28, p. 437; Issa, 1981 CE, p. 134]. The reputation of this hospital spread during the Ayyubid era and the subsequent period, as it provided medicines and remedies to the people free of charge [Issa, 1981 CE, p. 134]. It seems that Sultan Salah al-Din did not demolish the church due to its solid and majestic structure. Instead, he transformed it into a hospital that would be available to serve the public. This decision reflected the Sultan's appreciation for the architectural excellence of the building, and he repurposed it for the benefit of the general population.

## **Second Axis: Wells and Water Facilities**

There was significant attention to the issue of water from various aspects, particularly in the forefront, providing pure drinking water [Sadeq, 2018, p. 2797]. Many Ayyubid sultans and princes undertook various charitable works, including the digging of wells and the supply of water to areas in need, especially during specific seasons such as the Hajj season. Therefore, Imam Abu Shama mentioned in his book "Al-Rafadtayn" and its appendices numerous wells that were established in Mecca, including:

1. What Sultan Malikshah accomplished, as mentioned by Abu Shama, saying: "Sultan Malikshah engaged in numerous acts of charity and righteousness, among which was the improvement and construction of facilities along the road to Mecca and the digging of wells" [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 1, p. 144; Ibn al-Athir, 1997, Vol. 8, p. 361; Ibn al-Wardi, 1349 AH, Vol. 2, p. 6].
2. When the Minister of Mosul, Jamal al-Din, journeyed to Mecca, he left beautiful traces there, including the construction of water facilities at Arafat. Water was brought to them from Numan in a well-structured manner under the mountain, built with limestone. He spent a considerable amount of money to ensure that water flowed to it during the days of Hajj, providing great comfort to the people [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 1, p. 371; Subut Ibn al-Jawzi, 2013, Vol. 21, p. 481; Ibn Taghribirdi, n.d., Vol. 5, p. 365].
3. What Zumarrud Khatun, the mother of Caliph al-Nasir li-Din Allah (575-622 AH/1180-1225 CE), did when she performed Hajj in the year 585 AH (1198 CE). She spent a significant amount, approximately three hundred thousand dinars, in repairing the wells and facilities to provide water, especially during the Hajj season [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 5, p. 51; Subut Ibn al-Jawzi, 2013, Vol. 22, p. 129; Abdullah Qudahat, n.d., pp. 16-17].

### **Third Axis: Bathhouses**

Bathhouses play a significant role in socio-historical studies [Sadeq, 2006, p. 382]. The bathhouse is a place commonly sought by people for cleanliness and health preservation. The term "hammam" is derived from bathing in hot water, signifying the original concept of bathing in hot water, which later evolved to include washing with any type of water [Ibn Sayyidah, 2000, Vol. 2, p. 552; Ibn Manzur, 1993, Vol. 12, p. 153].

The origin of bathhouses is not exclusive to Islamic civilization; their traces can be found since ancient times, appearing in Egyptian temples. However, their architectural development reached its peak during the Islamic era. Initially, they were small chambers attached to temples for the purity of priests, and hot water was not a prerequisite [Maawad, 2014, p. 23].

Al-Qalqashandi mentioned, "The first to construct a bathhouse was Solomon (peace be upon him), built for him by the jinn" [Al-Qalqashandi, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 485]. Subsequently, bathhouses became widespread during the Islamic period, spreading across various regions. Rulers excelled in their construction for several reasons, with the paramount importance being cleanliness and purity. Among the bathhouses mentioned in the book "Al-Rawdatayn" are:

#### **1) Hammam Ibn Naja Al-Wa'iz (577 AH/1181 CE)**

Abu Shama mentioned it in the events of the year 577 AH/1181 CE, stating: "I entered the bathhouse that Zain al-Din Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Naja al-Wa'iz built in his residence outside the Zuwaila Gate in Cairo in the month of Dhu al-Qa'dah" [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 3, p. 50].

The sources and references available to us did not provide any additional information about this bathhouse. However, Abu Shama noted that when the historian Al-Imad al-Katib visited Ibn Naja, he said:

"No dwelling exists wherein  
Vices and shame do not intertwine.  
In it, troubles are dispelled,  
And disgraceful matters are repelled.  
Life in it finds its settlement,  
And heedlessness in it is met with dignity" [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 3, p. 50].

#### **2) Hammam of Sultan Salah Al-Din (581 AH/1185 CE)**

Its mention is found in the book "Al-Rawdatayn" as part of the events of the year 581 AH/1185 CE, during the discussion of Sultan Salah al-Din's illness. When he was transferred to his residence known as Dar al-Aafiya, a bathhouse was built beside it, completed in a period not exceeding five days [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 3, p. 156; Ibn Wasil, 1957, Vol. 2, p. 173].

It seems that the construction of the bathhouse in this short period indicates that the building was very simple, possibly erected for the Sultan's recovery until his return to his palace.

### **Fourth Axis: Bridges**

In the language, a bridge (Jisr) refers to a structure, whether built or not, and the plural is "jusur" [Al-Humairi, 1999, Vol. 2, p. 1093; Al-Fayumi, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 101]. The person responsible for building bridges is called the "kashif al-jusur", and the kashif had a secretary who recorded all the Sultan's decrees and brought them to him. The kashif also had engineers

and dedicated workers for the construction of those bridges [Al-Qalqashandi, n.d., Vol. 3, p. 515].

### **1. Jamal al-Din Bridge (559 AH/1163 CE)**

It is mentioned in the book "Al-Rawdatayn" as part of the events of the year 559 AH/1163 CE, during the discussion of Jamal al-Din's death. The text reads: "Among the marvelous constructions of Jamal al-Din that people have not seen the likes of is the bridge he built over the Tigris near the island of Ibn Umar, made of carved stone, iron, lead, and lime. However, it was not completed because he passed away before its completion" [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 1, p. 371]

### **2. Shaw Bridge (564 AH/1168 CE)**

Abu Shama mentioned it in the events of the year 564 AH/1168 CE, during the discussion of the conflict between Asad al-Din and Shawar in the land of Egypt. When the Franks gathered with Shawar in Bilbays, Asad al-Din learned of it and sent a messenger to him with a letter stating: "I swear by Allah, there is no god but He, and by every oath trusted by a Muslim from his brother, that I will not establish myself in the land of Egypt, nor will I ever return to it. I will not allow anyone to approach it. Whoever opposes you in it, I will be with you against him. I expect nothing from you except the victory of Islam alone. This enemy has gained control of this land, and assistance for him is distant, and his salvation is difficult. I want us to meet and take advantage of the opportunity that has presented itself"

[Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 2, p. 64]

However, Shawar did not respond to Asad al-Din, killed the messenger he sent, and said, "The Franks are nothing but Franks." Asad al-Din regretted his defiance and said, "If he had obeyed me, none of these Franks would have remained in Syria." Shawar then ordered the construction of the bridge between Giza and the island. He commanded boats loaded with men and ordered them to come from behind Asad al-Din's army [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 2, p. 64; Al-Maqrizi, 1997, Vol. 3, p. 283]. Thus, this bridge was established during the conflict between Asad al-Din and Shawar to facilitate the crossing of the army.

### **3. Mujahid Al-Din Bridge (572 AH/1176 CE)**

Attributed to Mujahid al-Din Qaymaz, his mention is found in the book "Al-Rawdatayn" as part of the events of the year 572 AH/1176 CE, during the discussion of his activities in the city of Mosul. One of these activities was the construction of a bridge over the Tigris River [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 2, p. 298].

Mujahid al-Din observed the need for a bridge other than the existing one, as it was insufficient for the people. He then built a bridge on the banks of Mosul and the Tigris, constructed with wood like other bridges. This project by Mujahid al-Din encouraged transportation and communication between Mosul and its surroundings, providing convenience for the citizens [Ibn Khalikan, Vol. 4, p. 83; Jouda, 1985, p. 55].

### **4. Bridge of Al-Bayra (578 AH/1182 CE)**

Its mention is found in the book "Al-Rawdatayn" as part of the events of the year 578 AH/1182 CE, during the discussion of Sultan Salah al-Din's arrival at the Euphrates. The text reads: "The sea reached the Euphrates and camped on its western side near Al-Bayra. The bridge was extended, and Al-Bayra had been coveted by the lord of Mardin, who seized some of its

territories. When he heard about the Sultan, he abandoned it" [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 3, p. 77; Ibn Wasil, 1957, 1994, Vol. 2, p. 166].

The Sultan erected the bridge on Al-Bayra to facilitate the crossing of the Sultan's forces towards the east. The Sultan set up his camp on the western bank, towards Aleppo, and ordered the commanders to cross to that side. Later, he directed the troops to follow so as not to overcrowd the bridge. Although the bridge was well-constructed, it was also used by boats secured with chains. Nevertheless, it was not a fixed structure underfoot, and it would sway when crossed [Ibn Taghribirdi, n.d., Vol. 15, p. 13].

### **Sultan Salah Al-Din's Bridge (581 AH / 1185 CE)**

News of it came in the book "Al-Rawdatayn" during the events of the year 581 AH / 1185 CE. In the midst of discussing Sultan Salah al-Din's descent upon the city of Mosul, the text states: "The Sultan began to divide the lands and assign them to the troops. The Amir Saif al-Din Ali bin Ahmed, known as Al-Mashṭūb al-Hakkārī, along with the princes from his tribe and the Kurds from his Shia sect, marched to the land of Hakkārī. Also, a group of princes from the Hamidiyya tribe marched to Al-Aqr, initiating the opening of its fortresses, exploiting its territories, setting up the bridge, and establishing control over the matter" [Abu Shama, 2002, Vol. 3, p. 147].

### **Conclusion**

- The study highlights the policies and reforms of the kings, sultans, princes, and governors who took turns in governing Syria and Egypt, particularly in the urban aspect, and their impact on the development of architecture in those regions.
- The study reveals that the health aspect represented by hospitals was not only dedicated to treating patients but also served as a place for receiving medical knowledge and applying it to patients at the same time.

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