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Dacca. *See* DHAKA.

Dalgıç Ahmet Ağa. *See* AHMED DALGIÇ.

Damascus [Arab. Dimashq, Dimashk, Dimishk, al-Sham; Fr. Damas]. Capital city of Syria. Built on the lower slopes of Mt. Qasiyun, known in antiquity as Mons Cassius, Damascus lies on the Barada River and dominates a great oasis, the Ghuta. The situation of the city to the east of the Lebanon barred access to the Mediterranean and forced it to turn towards the caravan cities of the desert. Trade routes led from it east to the Euphrates River and thence downstream to the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, north to Aleppo, Antioch and Anatolia, and south to Palestine, Arabia and Egypt. An important city in antiquity, Damascus became an international capital after the Muslim conquest in 635–6, the building of its Great Mosque a symbol of its status.

I. History and urban development. II. Center of production. III. Great Mosque.

I. History and urban development. In 635–6 Muslim armies conquered Damascus, and in 661 Mu'awiya, the first caliph of the Umayyad dynasty (r. 661–750), made this provincial center the capital of his vast empire. Under his successors the city dominated a realm stretching from the frontiers of China to the southern borders of France, but it was never a metropolis on the scale of other medieval Islamic capitals such as Baghdad or Cairo. Only the Great Mosque (*see* §III below), one of the masterpieces of Umayyad architecture, survives from this golden age, although many buildings, palaces and residences erected for members of the ruling family or their associates are mentioned in later texts. The city preserved vestiges of the grid plan from Classical and Byzantine times, but a souk gradually encroached on the western part of the Street Called Straight and on the streets that opened on to it. Situated near the Jabya Gate, the souk symbolized the privileged position that the city always enjoyed in its commercial relations with the Hawran, the grain-producing region to its south.

With the transfer of the capital to Iraq after the Abbasid revolution in 750, Damascus became the modest capital of a region in decline. Until the 11th

century the city was a pawn in the struggles among various political forces and suffered almost ceaseless disturbances. The urban fabric was slowly but definitively modified. In the absence of any stable authority capable of maintaining security, religious and social communities regrouped in well-defined sectors. The Classical grid plan, which had already begun to loosen in Byzantine times, was transformed into an amorphous agglomeration pierced by several major arteries serving quarters of varying sizes. Great gates blocked off these quarters, within which a network of lanes and blind alleys gave access to dwellings. In the 9th and 10th centuries Damascus was briefly occupied by the TULUNID and Ikhshidid governors from Egypt and then by FATMID governors, who were ousted in 1076. To this interim period must date the growth of the three principal medieval Muslim cemeteries, outside Bab ("gate of") Tuma, Bab al-Faradis and Bab al-Saghir, although this last is traditionally associated with the burials of the companions of the Prophet who died in the capture of Damascus.

With the arrival of the Saljuq Turks in 1079, Damascus entered a period of political stability that continued under their successors, the ZANGID dynasty (r. 1154–86 in Damascus). The city expanded beyond its walls, and new quarters developed along the great axes of communication leading north to Aleppo and south to Jerusalem and Cairo. According to the local historian Ibn 'Asakir (1105–76), Christians and Jews had regrouped in the eastern part of the walled city, while the Muslims were concentrated in the west; more than 400 places of worship dotted the urban landscape. Nur al-Din (r. 1146–74) built a hospital (Arab. *maristan*; 1154–5; *see* color pl.) and a funerary madrasa (1172), among other buildings. Both have similar plans, consisting of a central court with paired iwans, and domes and portals decorated with *muqarnas* (*see* ARCHITECTURE, §V, B, 5). The hospital was a model for others throughout the Islamic world.

Under the Ayyubid dynasty (r. 1186–1260 in Damascus) the city became the seat of a princely court and experienced increased prosperity and architectural vitality. The citadel was totally reconstructed to house a palace, and male and female members of the dynasty, military officers and religious dignitaries erected many monuments in the city and