A Sacred Space for a Holy Icon: The Shrine of Our Lady of Saydnaya
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The monastery of Our Lady of Saydnaya, located 22 km east of Damascus, still proves to be one of the most important cult-centres of present-day Syria; although it is inhabited and controlled by Christian (i.e. Greek Orthodox) nuns, its church, housing a very famous icon of the Virgin Mary, is daily visited also by a great many Muslim worshippers. Its renown dates back to the late 12th century.

The convent of Saydnaya is specially distinguished for its hospitality. Orthodox families of Damascus and other cities traditionally spent the summer there. The convent maintains an orphanage for girls, which now houses 37 orphans. It is managed by five Religious, directed by Sister Febronia. In 1948, the mother superior, Maria Hassoun el-Maalouf from Bikfaya in Lebanon, founded a school for the nuns and established an order consisting of pupils from the orphanage. The school was officially recognized in 1950, and it offers a scientific diploma accredited by the Patriarchate. This article or section needs to be rewritten to conform to standard encyclopedic style. Specific recommendations may be found on the talk page. You can help OrthodoxWiki by editing it. The Convent of Our Lady of Saydnaya is located in the mountains north of the city of Damascus of Syria, the seat of the ancient Patriarchate of Antioch. It is said that Justinian I, Emperor of Byzantium, while crossing Syria with his troops either on his way to the Holy Land or on a campaign against the Persians, came