The Atabegs and Ayyubids | Religious Life

‘Christian churches and monasteries experienced a renaissance of their own.’

Along with the dynamic revival of Islamic institutions, Christian churches and monasteries experienced a renaissance of their own. New cycles of wall paintings were commissioned, the like of which had not been witnessed in Syria since the frescoes of the Umayyad period. Deir Mar Yakub (Monastery of St Jacob) and Deir Mar Musa al-Habashi (Monastery of St Moses the Ethiopian) survive as excellent examples of medieval Christian art and Syrian monasticism.



Name:
Fragment of a fresco panel

Dynasty:
Hegira 6th–7th century / AD 12th–13th century Ayyubid

Details:
National Museum of Damascus
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
Fragment of a fresco panel from the Church of the Monastery of St Jacob.



Name:
Deir Mar Musa al-Habashi (Monastery of St Moses the Ethiopian)

Dynasty:
The oldest part of the monastery (currently serving as the kitchen area) was originally a pre-Islamic Byzantine tower dating back to the AD 5th or 6th century. The monastery's church dates to AH 450 / AD 1058 Byzantine, Seljuq, Ayyubid

Details:
Qalamun Mountains, East of Nebek, Syria

Justification:
Fresco in situ at the Monastery of St Moses the Ethiopian, depicting the Day of Judgement; the weighing-scales in the centre are there to measure the virtue and sin of the risen dead.



Name:
Deir Mar Musa al-Habashi (Monastery of St Moses the Ethiopian)

Dynasty:
The oldest part of the monastery (currently serving as the kitchen area) was originally a pre-Islamic Byzantine tower dating back to the AD 5th or 6th century. The monastery's church dates to AH 450 / AD 1058 Byzantine, Seljuq, Ayyubid

Details:
Qalamun Mountains, East of Nebek, Syria

Justification:
Aerial view of the Monastery of St Moses the Ethiopian.



Name:
Incense burner

Dynasty:

Hegira 596–647/ AD 1200–1250 Ayyubid

Details:
The British Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:
An incenser embellished with Christian imagery but which was made by Muslim craftsmen; it demonstrates a thriving cultural exchange between Christians and Muslims.