Women | Muslim Women as Patrons

‘Influential Muslim women engaged in charity work and patronised good causes.’

Influential Muslim women engaged in charity work and patronised good causes. As Islamic law clearly stipulated their rights in terms of income and inheritance, many could do so on the basis of generous funds allocated for their personal use. They played a vital role in consolidating Islamic society by promoting support and solidarity between the various social classes. Many commissioned mosques and other public buildings for posterity. Thus, in Morocco, the Fihri sisters built both the Qarawiyin Mosque and the Andalusian Mosque in Fez during the 3rd / 9th century. In Turkey, Nilüfer Hatun, the mother of Murad I, had a religious structure built in Iznik in 789 / 1388, while Sultan Abdülaziz’s mother built the Pertevniyal Mosque Complex in Istanbul in 1288 / 1871, including a shrine, fountain, school and library.

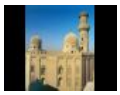


Name:
Inheritance document

Dynasty:
Hegira 793 Dhu al-Qaeda (AD October 1st 1391) Mamluk

Details:
Islamic Museum, al-Aqsa Mosque / al-Haram al-Sharif
Jerusalem

Justification:
In this document a man outlines what is due to his wife with regard to the balance of the bridal dower and in terms of the lease of his shop.



Name:
'Umm al-Sultan Sha'ban Madrasa

Dynasty:
Hegira 770 / AD 1368 Mamluk

Details:
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
An imposing complex that encloses a large mausoleum designated to the woman who gave it her name: the mother of Sultan Sha'ban, Khawand Baraka (d. 774 / 1373).



Name:
Shrine (Mausoleum) of Sayyida Ruqayya

Dynasty:
Hegira 527 / AD 1133 Fatimid

Details:
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
The wife of the Fatimid caliph, al-Amir bi-Ahkam Allah (r. 495–524 / 1101–30) commissioned this shrine to mark the resting place of Sayyida Ruqayya, daughter of the Imam 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, cousin of the Prophet and the fourth Righteously Guided Caliph.



Name:
Andalusian Mosque

Dynasty:
Hegira 245 / AD 859 Idrisid

Details:
Fez (Old Town / medina), Morocco

Justification:
Meryem al-Fihri was the patron of the Andalusian Mosque, built during the 3rd / 9th century.



Name:
Qarawiyyin Mosque

Dynasty:
Hegira 3rd–4th centuries / AD 9th–10th centuries Idrisid

Details:
Fez (Old Town), Morocco

Justification:
Fatima al-Fihri was the patron of the Qarawiyin Mosque, built during the 3rd / 9th century.



Name:
Pertevniyal Valide Sultan Mosque Complex

Dynasty:
Hegira 1288 / AD 1871 Ottoman

Details:
Aksaray, Istanbul, Turkey

Justification:
An eclectic religious complex due to the mother of the Ottoman Sultan Abdülaziz, Pertevniyal Valide Sultan (d. 1301 / 1883).
