

The Muslim West | Funerary Steles: Memorials in Stone

Tombstones, geographical and social differences.

A wide variety of tombstones appeared at different times and in different places reflecting regional differences: the cipo appeared in Ifriqiya (Tunisia) in the 3rd / 9th century, although they have also been found in Andalusia around Toledo; the maqabriyya was used in Andalusian and Maghrebi cemeteries from the time of the Almoravids; and circular steles were common from the 8th / 14th century in towns with large ceramic industries, such as Malaga, Granada and Murcia.



Name:
Memorial stone

Dynasty:
Hegira 447 / AD 1055 Taifa kingdom of Toledo, dynasty of Banu Dhi'l-Nun (Dhu'l-Nunids)

Details:
National Archaeological Museum
Madrid, Spain

Justification:
The cipo, a cylindrical or semi-cylindrical stele, would have been placed at the head of the grave of an important person. It was the most monumental stele used in the Muslim West.



Name:
Funerary stele (gravestone)

Dynasty:
Hegira Dhu'l-Hijja 423 / AD November 1032 Zirid

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
The maqabriyya is sculpted in marble or stone and has a characteristic long, pyramidal shape. Maqabriyya would have been placed horizontally over the tombs of important families.



Name:
Funerary stele of Abu 'Abdallah ibn Khalifa

Dynasty:
Hegira 488 / AD 1095 Hammadid

Details:
National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts
Algiers, Algeria

Justification:
The maqabriyya is sculpted in marble or stone and has a characteristic long, pyramidal shape. Maqabriyya would have been placed horizontally over the tombs of important families.



Name:
Funerary stele of Mukhlef ibn 'Uthman

Dynasty:
Hegira 406–547 / AD 1015–1152 Hammadid

Details:
National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts
Algiers, Algeria

Justification:
The maqabriyya is sculpted in marble or stone and has a characteristic long, pyramidal shape. Maqabriyya would have been placed horizontally over the tombs of important families.



Name:
Prismatic stele of Ibrahim

Dynasty:
Hegira 490-541 / AD 1097-1147 Almoravid

Details:
Museum of the Udayas
Rabat, Morocco

Justification:
The maqabriyya is sculpted in marble or stone and has a characteristic long, pyramidal shape. Maqabriyya would have been placed horizontally over the tombs of important families.



Name:
Funerary stele 'with ears'

Dynasty:
Hegira 9th century / AD 15th century Nasrid

Details:
National Archaeological Museum
Madrid, Spain

Justification:
Circular, ceramic steles tended to be small with gold, reflective decoration. They would have been placed at the head and foot of graves.
