The Abbasids | The Aghlabids: Shield of the Abbasid Dynasty

‘The Aghlabids conducted themselves in the image of their patrons – the Abbasid caliphs.’

In addition to central North Africa, Malta, Sicily and southern Italy became part of the Aghlabid domain. They considered themselves as vassals of the Abbasids, although with great autonomy, and they maintained their links with Baghdad – the Abbasid capital – with many commercial and scientific convoys despatched and received, including one that brought back the lustre tiles used to decorate the mihrab (prayer niche) of the Great Mosque of Kairouan. In return for Aghlabid loyalty, the Abbasid Caliph al-Musta‘in (r. 248–52 / 862–66) ordered the construction of the dome above the mihrab in the Great Mosque of Zaytuna.



Name:
Fortress of Mazzallaccar

Dynasty:
Aghlabid / Fatimid / Norman?

Details:
Sciacca, Sicily, Italy

Justification:
A fortress near Sambuca which was built by the Aghlabids to guard the communication routes of the newly captured territories in western Sicily.



Name:
Remains of the Great Mosque in Palermo inside the Chapel of the Incoronata

Dynasty:
Hegira 3rd century / AD 9th century Aghlabid

Details:
Palermo, Italy

Justification:
The Aghlabids built a Great Mosque on this site, the column and pillar bases of which are imbedded in the walls of the apse area of the Cappella.



Name:
Great Mosque of Kairouan

Dynasty:
Hegira 221 / AD 836 Umayyad, Abbasid

Details:
Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
The 139 lustre tiles that decorate the mosque's mihrab were transported from Iraq. The varied decorative elements that distinguish the niche reveal Byzantine influences via Umayyad art from Syria.



Name:
Coin (dinar)

Dynasty:
Hegira 286 / AD 899 Aghlabid

Details:

National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts
Algiers, Algeria

Justification:
This Aghlabid gold dinar was minted in 286 / 899; it was based on Abbasid-style coinage.



Name:
Great Mosque of Zaytuna

Dynasty:
Hegira 248 / AD 863 Aghlabid, Abbasid

Details:
Tunis, Tunisia

Justification:
The Caliph al-Musta'in ordered that a dome be built above the mihrab in the Great Mosque of Zaytuna.



Name:
Great Mosque of Zaytuna

Dynasty:
Hegira 248 / AD 863 Aghlabid, Abbasid

Details:
Tunis, Tunisia

Justification:
Detail of the mihrab at the Great Mosque of Zaytuna.



Name:
Great Mosque of Zaytuna

Dynasty:
Hegira 248 / AD 863 Aghlabid, Abbasid

Details:
Tunis, Tunisia

Justification:
Detail of the arched and columned nave of the Great Mosque of Zaytuna.
