

The Muslim West | The Co-existence of Three Cultures

Religious institutions as custodians of property

There are examples of religious institutions keeping holy objects from other religions, sometimes because of their historical value, occasionally because they could be reused and often simply because of their material value. This phenomenon tells us more about the varied culture and heritage of the Muslim West.



Name:

Qarawiyyin Mosque

Dynasty:

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

Details:

Fez (Old Town), Morocco

Justification:

Under the Marinids, Christian bells were turned into lamps to illuminate the prayer room of the Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez.



Name:

Zamora Cathedral chest

Dynasty:

Hegira 6th century / AD 12th century Almoravid

Details:

National Archaeological Museum
Madrid, Spain

Justification:

This Islamic chest, now kept in Zamora Cathedral, was adapted for Christian religious use by the addition of paintings.



Name:

Font

Dynasty:

Hegira 8th–9th centuries / AD 14th–15th centuries

Details:

City Museum
Lisbon, Portugal

Justification:

This font was taken from a demolished mosque and used in the construction of a Christian building.



Name:

Carpet with flowering tree motif

Dynasty:

Hegira 8th century / AD 14th century Nasrid

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification:

This carpet was kept in a church in Tirol, Austria, until the late 19th century, possibly having arrived there from a Spanish synagogue.
