

Pilgrimage | Pilgrimage Routes and Holy Sites along the Way

'Egypt was the assembly point for pilgrims from North and Central Africa.'

Egypt was the assembly point for pilgrims from North and Central Africa. They arrived in Alexandria and proceeded to Cairo, where they embarked at Fustat and sailed 640 km up the River Nile to the city of Qus, in the South. Camels then carried them to 'Ayzaab, one of the most important Red Sea Ports. From there sailing boats ferried them across to Arabia. The crossing was hazardous: many ships sank and a number of pilgrims drowned.

**Name:**

Ayla (Aqaba)

Dynasty:

Hegira 1st century / AD mid-7th century Islamic, pre-Umayyad

Details:

Aqaba, Jordan

Justification:

'Ayla on the Red Sea was a key post on the pilgrimage route from Egypt to Mecca.'

**Name:**

Gold coin (dinar)

Dynasty:

Hegira 380 / AD 990 Fatimid

Details:

Aqaba Archaeological Museum

Aqaba, Jordan

Justification:

A Fatimid gold dinar used by North African pilgrims on the Hajj route via Aqaba.

**Name:**

Pilgrim's Flask

Dynasty:

Hegira 742–6 / AD 1341–5 Mamluk

Details:

National Museum of Damascus

Damascus, Syria

Justification:

A pilgrim's flask to hold drinking-water or for religious ablutions when on pilgrimage.

**Name:**

Sidi Sahib Zawiya and Madrasa

Dynasty:

Hegira 11th century / AD 17th century Muradid (Ottoman)

Details:

Kairouan (Qayrawan), Tunisia

Justification:

Pilgrims from North Africa would often visit local Holy sites on their way to Mecca.
