

# The Atabegs and Ayyubids | Religious Life

'Islamic religious art is most eloquently expressed in mosque architecture.'

Damascus's role as a starting point for the yearly pilgrimage, or hajj, adds to the city's religious character. During the Ayyubid period, a suburb known as al-Maydan grew around the hajj road and became an important centre for the production of religious art. Islamic religious art in the Atabeg and Ayyubid periods is most eloquently expressed in mosque architecture and illuminated Qur'ans. Masonry and woodwork on minarets, mihrabs, maqsuras and minbars exemplify this pre-eminence.



**Name:**

Mihrab of the Madrasa al-Halawiyya

**Dynasty:**

Madrasa, Hegira 543 / AD 1149; mihrab, AH 643 / AD 1245 Zangid/Atabeg and Ayyubid

**Details:**

Aleppo, Syria

**Justification:**

Mihrab or prayer niche indicating the direction of prayer; the Halawiyya Madrasa in Aleppo.



**Name:**

Mihrab of the Madrasa al-Halawiyya

**Dynasty:**

Madrasa, Hegira 543 / AD 1149; mihrab, AH 643 / AD 1245 Zangid/Atabeg and Ayyubid

**Details:**

Aleppo, Syria

**Justification:**

Qu'ranic inscription in symmetrical triangular formations which flank the mihrab of the Halawiyya Madrasa.



**Name:**

Two wooden columns

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 7th century / AD 13th century Ayyubid

**Details:**

Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**

Woodcarving is a prominent feature of Islamic art in the Levant.



**Name:**

Panel from a cenotaph

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 613 / AD 1216 Ayyubid

**Details:**

Victoria and Albert Museum

London, England, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

Woodcarving is a prominent feature of Islamic art in the Levant.

---



**Name:**

Incense burner

**Dynasty:**

Hegira mid- to late 7th century / AD 13th century Ayyubid

**Details:**

National Museums of Scotland (NMS)  
Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

An incense burner executed in a Syrian or Mesopotamian workshop and commissioned by one of the region's thriving Christian communities for religious use.



**Name:**

Incense burner

**Dynasty:**

Hegira mid- to late 7th century / AD 13th century Ayyubid

**Details:**

National Museums of Scotland (NMS)  
Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

The representations on this incense burner depict saints taking part in a religious ceremony.

---