

## Women | Muslim Women as Patrons

'Muslim women generously provided patronage for the interior enhancement of religious buildings.'

Muslim women generously provided patronage for the interior enhancement of religious buildings; in the supply of elegant Qur'ans and other high-quality mosque furnishings. One of the most admirable is the intricate, inlaid-teak prayer niche for the shrine of Sayyida Ruqayya, the patron of which was the wife of the Fatimid caliph, al-Amir bi-Ahkam Allah in 527 / 1133. There are a number of Qur'anic manuscripts commissioned by Zirid princesses that were intended for use in the Great Mosque of Kairouan, among them Umm Milal's Qur'an and that of Umm al-'Ilu, the sister of the Zirid prince al-Mu'izz ibn Badis. A third manuscript was presented by Fatima, governess to the prince Badis Bin al-Mansur.



**Name:**

Page from a Qur'an

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 410 / AD 1020 Fatimid-Zirid

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art  
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

**Justification:**

Fatima, governess to the Zirid prince Badis, endowed this Qur'an to the Great Mosque of Kairouan. Interestingly it was compiled under the supervision of another woman, 'Dura al-Katiba' – 'Dura the lady-scribe'.



**Name:**

Qur'anic illumination

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 295 / AD 907 Aghlabid

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art  
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

**Justification:**

A Qur'an manuscript that was executed and dedicated to the Great Mosque of Kairouan by a local woman.



**Name:**

Mihrab

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 6th century / AD 12th century Fatimid

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art  
Cairo, Egypt

**Justification:**

An inscription on this mihrab (prayer niche) tells us that it was made by order of Sayyida 'Ulam al-Amiriyya (d. AH 535 / AD 1140), wife of Caliph al-Amir bi-Ahkam Allah, for the tomb of Sayyida Ruqayya.



**Name:**  
Mihrab

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 6th century / AD 12th century Fatimid

**Details:**  
Museum of Islamic Art  
Cairo, Egypt

**Justification:**  
Detail of the mihrab made for the Shrine of Sayyida Ruqayya;  
now in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo.

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**Name:**  
Ceramic tile with a picture of the Ka'ba

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira last quarter of the 10th century / AD 16th century Ottoman

**Details:**  
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
The granddaughter of Sultan Bayezid II (r. 886–918 / 1481–1512), commissioned the Nesli#ah Sultan Mosque in Istanbul, embedding this tile depicting the Ka'ba into one of the walls; the tile was still in situ right up until 1914.

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